

**SRI LANKA'S ETHNIC CONFLICT — The first Chinese**



**LANKA**

# **GUARDIAN**

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## PRIVATISING EDUCATION

THE POLICE were back — if not on the campuses, close enough to the Colombo university to know that something was brewing. What was brewing became clear to any reader of the 'DAILY NEWS' which had a frontpage story the same day with a headline that announced "Student Relations Committee to be set up soon". Also on the same day, Parliament was taking up a new bill amending the Universities Act.

Evidently, the students didn't relate too well to the idea of a Student Relations Committee because the new body, in their view, will replace the old Students' Councils, a democratic body directly elected by the entire student community. (See NEWS)

Also on the same front page but right at the bottom was a another related matter. "No more State Varsities" said the headline. There will be no more State Universities . . . But there will certainly be new universities, privately-owned and managed. Such universities will have to obtain recognition from a mysterious Authority styled 'Specified Authority'.

In short, the Private Medical School was only the start, and this journal was right in placing that item of news in TRENDS. "Free State Education" a pre-independence 'sacred cow' of social welfarist Ceylon/Sri Lanka is now being slaughtered at the altar of the "open economy" to propitiate the gods of the World Bank and Free Enterprise.

Condemning the move the Kelaniya University Teachers Union has remarked on the speed and the surreptitious manner in which the move has been made. The K. U. T. A. did not have the advantage of even having a copy of the Bill for study and discussion.

## CANADIAN AID

"LEVERAGE ON AID" is the title of a recent editorial in Canada's foremost newspaper, the **Globe and Mail**. Like the Reagan administration across the

border, the new Conservative government is more sceptical about the whole philosophy of development aid to the Third World, and certainly more selective in its choice of worthy recipients.

The national newspaper concedes that few Third World countries are "beyond reproach" in the "absolute observance of civil liberties". It then argues however for Canada's need to "make a point about human rights" in particular cases. After citing half a dozen countries in the Third World, it takes up the case of Sri Lanka, which it says "would normally deserve our sympathy" because it is faced with a separatist threat. Then it urges that "continued aid" should be tied to the "fulfilment" of promises made by Sri Lanka. How credible are these promises, the paper asks.

## SLMP

Chandrika Kumaratunge, the S. L. M. P., Vice President has flatly contradicted a news report that S. L. M. P. had 'unity talks' with the S. L. F. P. "Our party will never team up with the S. L. F. P." she is reported to have told a Colombo rally. She contradicted another story about her fractured arm. She didn't hold 'unity talks'. So, there was no need for her husband to beat her up, as suggested by some columnist, she added sarcastically.

At the same meeting, the party secretary Vijaya Kumaratunge (the DAILY NEWS reported) said that Sri Lanka was fortunate in that the Buddha had visited this island in the remote past. If Gautama the Buddha had come here recently, he would have to produce his Identity Card since he was an Indian! We are living in such chaotic times "he said" that the founder of our religion may have been hauled away to remand custody".

## TRENDS + LETTERS

### Going against the tide

In the Lanka Guardian of 1 January 1985, Dayan Jayatilaka is being pedantic when he says that I confuse unitary with united. He is being patronizing when he asserts that I need to be reminded that S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was once a committed federalist. He is being pontifical when he declares that the only way to keep Sri Lanka united is to abandon the unitary system in favour of federalism.

There is no confusion whatsoever in my mind concerning what I consider to be a fair, just and workable solution to the problem of devolution of power in our country: it is the establishment of regional

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## Letters . . .

councils within the framework of a unitary State.

As to Mr. Bandaranaike's commitment to federalism, may I remind political scientist Dayan Jayatilaka that Mr. Bandaranaike who advocated federalism in 1926 persuaded the leader of the Federal Party Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam himself to accept the scheme of regional councils in 1957. What the youthful freshly-graduated Bandaranaike enthusiastically expounded in 1926, the older, politically-mature Bandaranaike authoritatively amended 31 years later. Perhaps it will take a few more years for youthful Dayan to realise that practical politics is the art of the possible and not the science of the impossible.

**Vijaya Kumaratunga**

Sri Lanka Mahajana Party

### **Dayan Jayatilaka writes:**

Would a guerrilla movement, at this stage of its struggle, gracefully accept the self-same reformist measures which the moderate parliamentarist representatives of another generation of the Tamil people approved but were denied nearly three-decades ago? If the mature Vijaya believes that such an acceptance is within the realm of 'the possible' he is certainly entitled to his opinion. Art and Science apart, those who have launched that struggle appear to be interested in a more radical alteration of the physiology of the body politic, to move away from my own political science.

### **C. P. on APC proposals**

The mountain laboured and did not even bring forth a mouse. The proposals submitted by the President to the All Parties Conference, after almost an year of deliberations, is totally inadequate as a solution to the problem of the Tamil-speaking minorities.

The APC was expected to evolve a set of proposals which

could be a viable alternative to the demand for a separate state of Eelam. What the President has proposed is simply an extension of local government but which is highly centralised and financially tied hand and foot to the centre. The proposed provincial councils do not have the right even to run a school or hospital or have jurisdiction over a court in their area. The whole point is that the government is not willing to recognise the right of self determination of the Tamil people.

To understand the complicated nature of the entire problem as it has developed today, one needs to look back to the past. From the days of the Second State Council the Tamils had put forward their demands as a linguistic minority in this country. First they demanded balanced representation. Then, they shifted to federalism.

The reaction of the Sinhala leadership was unfortunate. In 1935, D. S. Senanayake formed his pan-Sinhala Board of Ministries — shutting out the minorities. In 1948, the Tamil plantation workers were deprived of their right of citizenship and the right to vote. In 1957, the Sinhala Only Act was passed. In 1972, the Constituent Assembly rejected without discussion the demand of Federal Party for a federal state. Then, we had standardisation of marks for University entrants; and then the Job Bank.

When the Federal Party leaders performed peaceful satyagraha in the Galle Face Green against the Sinhala Only Act, they were assaulted and chased away by Sinhala thugs. In 1962,

when the Federal Party organised a campaign of peaceful satyagraha in Jaffna, the SLFP government dispersed them with the aid of the army. From 1958 there have been repeated communal violence against the Tamils in all parts of the country. The culmination of all these was the horrible holocaust of July 1983.

Even Mrs Bandaranaike has said in a recent statement: "Is it surprising that many Tamils are bitter, and have suspicions that the violence in 1983 was inspired by Government thugs and hoodlums in the first instance, though it got out hand later on". Is it any wonder, then, that the Tamils have lost all hopes of settling problems through peaceful, parliamentary means; and that the Tamil youth have resorted to armed struggle as the only way out?

The demand for a separate state of Eelam, put forward in 1976, was a cry born out of despair and frustration. But, the representatives of the Tamil people have declared their willingness to accept any viable alternative to Eelam. They have also indicated that any genuine form of autonomy along the lines of Annexure 'C' to which President Jayawardene gave his assent when he went to New Delhi in November 1983 for the Commonwealth Leaders' Conference, would be acceptable. Under these proposals, the Tamils can co-exist with the Sinhalese inside a single state but with regional autonomy and the right to run their own affairs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

But the autonomy must be real. In an excellent article, published in the Sunday Observer of December 9, 1984, Mr Reggie Siriwardene has cited the Basque territory. Sri Lanka can follow that example. The leaders of the government and of all Sinhala political parties must prepare the Sinhala

(Continued on page 8)



# INDIA-SRI LANKA : The Stormy Straits

NEWS  
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

**S**eventeen of theirs for seven of ours. To go by numbers, not much of a bargain. Yet, there's the question of quality, the difference between *haalmesso* and *thora*, the crucial distinction between a nondescript group of Indian 'skippers' of fishing boats, and seven members of the crew of Sri Lankan Navy patrol boat 448, including a lieutenant (equivalent army rank is Captain) Tissa Gunatilleke, trained in India and the U.S.

Sri Lanka is an island and its maritime boundary is the border. The 22 mile Palk Straits which separates the island from India, once a well-established passage for a flourishing smuggling trade, is now known to permit the two-way traffic of armed Eelam rebels whose headquarters are in neighbouring Madras. The Sri Lanka navy guards this passage, especially the lately established 'surveillance zone'. So 7 Navy men are several times more important than any band of Indian fishermen.

An unequal bargaining position from the start forced Colombo to move from the high ground it initially took on this issue. Sri Lanka challenged Indian jurisdiction and cited International customary Law. When India proposed a 'swap', Colombo replied somewhat haughtily that the question of 17 fishermen caught for poaching was not relevant to the patrol craft dispute. And it wasn't. But Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. M. K. Rasgotra suggested a gesture to "improve the atmosphere". Two days later Prime Minister Gandhi said the same thing in "no uncertain terms" (Hindu) to Mr. Bernard Tillekeratne our High Commissioner.

Finally, the exchange did take place on the basis of reciprocity proposed by Delhi, on Delhi's time-table and on Delhi's terms. And so we were given just a glimpse of the mailed fist in the kid's glove. (LG Jan 15)

The actualities of the Sri Lankan situation, its compelling needs and its pressures on the government — in this case, the need to maintain the morale of a crucially important institution the navy — prevailed over legalities, and rights and wrongs. Diplomacy was the instrument of a necessary compromise between the realities of practical politics and the theoretical concepts of sovereignty and equality.

The exchange of prisoners, our own 'boat people', resolved an issue which suddenly surfaced to focus attention in a most dramatic fashion on the Palk Straits, a strip of water on which this journal has steadily urged in the past few months its readers to keep a vigilant eye.

But the diplomatic 'swap' and the troubled waters of the Palk Straits constitute only a small part of the much larger question of India-Sri Lanka relations, currently more strained than at any time in recent years.

The government seems to be in two minds on this vital issue. Prime Minister Premadasa made a nice distinction between "discussing" matters with India and "negotiating". In that 'gray area' lie the real challenges which face Sri Lankan diplomacy. But this diplomacy itself is at the heart of the foreign policy problems which confront Colombo.

That becomes clear from the three visits undertaken last week by the three Cabinet Ministers who matter most in this area of politics and diplomacy. Washington has said there will be no "fundamental change" in its security assistance program to Sri Lanka although another report in the SUN indicated American assistance in the field of intelligence sharing. Equally or more important is the need for National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who was

also APC spokesman, to explain to Mr. George Schultz, who is Secretary of State (not Secretary of Defence) and the State Dept. about what happened to "the political settlement" which every US personality of consequence, from Mr. Reagan downwards, so confidently expected would be in place by year's (And were assured of it, a long time ago).

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, armed with his begging bowl has to face non-economic questions too and he was frank enough to admit it through his Ministry, to the *Daily News* "Mr. de Mel will be called upon in every capital he visits to put the record straight regarding the present political and ethnic situation in Sri Lanka after the collapse of the APC".

The connection between aid, political stability and the APC is obvious.

Foreign Minister Hameed is also travelling in Europe this week, and his Ministry says "he will brief his counterparts on the present situation in Sri Lanka".

While some UNP stalwarts insist on "no talks with Delhi", both the ISLAND and the SUN had a lead story which said that Mr. Athulathmudali will visit Delhi as President JR's special envoy. Perhaps the US may be asked to use its "good offices" to help ease growing tensions between Sri Lanka and its big neighbour when feelings on both sides of the Palk Straits are rapidly hardening. The London OBSERVER report headlined in the State-run *Daily News* "Seven page note on Delhi's links with terrorists" and the statement made by the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Khan, and the mood in the Indian parliament reflected in the Rajya Sabha debate (see excerpts) provide ample evidence of this hardening of respective positions.



# Aid and military spending

National Security Minister Lalith Atulathmudali's sudden trip to Washington appeared to be such a closely guarded secret that neither the SLBC nor the state-run newspapers announced his departure on the day he left for the US capital. He was not accompanied by any Foreign Ministry officials and the M. F. A was more tight-lipped than ever. Whether the Foreign Office knew nothing about it or merely feigned ignorance intrigued diplomats in Colombo.

"Matters of mutual interest" would be the main topic of talks with Secretary of State George Schultz said a US Embassy official using the standard expression which suggests anything and everything but reveals nothing. About military assistance, the US diplomat was more forthcoming. "We do not contemplate any fundamental change in security assistance" he said, explaining that military assistance program was "modest" (chiefly training of officers) and would "remain" so.

A SUN defence correspondent mentioned possibilities of the US

"sharing experience in combating terrorism". The report added that Mr. Athulathmudali would make "a strong bid" to obtain US military assistance. The same report made a distinction between arms aid which requires Congressional approval and the sharing of "information and intelligence".

The current defence budget is said to be between 4 billion and 5 billion rupees. This represents 20-25% of the overall budget deficit in 1983, of Rs. 21 billion. Of this foreign financing is just over 50%.

After the World Bank sponsored Aid Group meeting in July, both the Bank and the IMF have warned Sri Lanka about the growing external debt and debt service Ratio, and the tendency to resort to commercial bank borrowing. (see tables).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) announced a new loan of 12.4 million dollars for a power distribution project in Sri Lanka. It coincided with the visit here of ADB President, Mr. Masao Fujioka. The ADB, Finance Minis-

ter Ronnie de Mel told the press last week had given the country, about 40 million US Dollars in 1984 and he was hoping to double this sum in 1985.

But the ADB has been badly hurt by a reduction in the US contribution to its funds, a step which is likely to encourage other developed countries to make cut-backs too. The US and Japan are the main contributors. In Colombo Mr. Fujioka complained that other contributors are already 'lagging behind'. Particularly worrying to Sri Lanka is the effect of the US decision on "soft-loans". In the past, Sri Lanka has been a major beneficiary of the "soft loan window" said Mr. de Mel. But the prospects for concessionary loans have now dimmed. In these circumstances, the request for more 'soft loans' found a not too helpful response from Mr. Fujioka who asked the government to make use of the Bank's Ordinary Capital Reserve (OCR) which charges 9% interest. This rate may be reduced soon, the ADB president said.

More interesting however was the ADB chief's remarks on the political situation. The ADB is not concerned with politics" he said, adding "our decisions are based on economic considerations".

And then came the 'but'! "But if the political problems start to affect the economic and financial position of the country, then this would impose a constraint on ADB lending".

Turning to a specific issue, Mr. Fujioka said "if spending on defence becomes a big part of your budget, then the need for constraints will arise...!

In the meantime, a top World Bank consultant, Prof. Gustav Papanech visited the island to study the problem of "aid utilisation" and "avoidable waste". He has already identified several projects where expenditure has trebled and quadrupled original estimates.

Table I

(1) Aid as a proportion of Overall Deficit (= Revenue minus Total Expenditure: Recurrent + Capital)

	(Rs. Million)	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
1. Overall Budget Deficit	7,165	8,791	16,274	14,860	20,091	21,562	
2. Foreign Financing	4,454	4,237	6,735	8,208	8,794	10,902	
3. 2 as % of 1	62.2%	48.2%	41.4%	55.2%	43.8%	50.6%	

(1) Central Bank Report 1987 PXIV — Table 1.5

Table III

(1) Debt Service (Percentages)

Debt Service Ratio (Interest + amortization as % of Earnings from Merchandise Exports and Services)		1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
(a) Overall Ratio		13.0	12.4	16.8	18.9	21.6
(b) Ratio excluding		8.7	7.5	10.1	12.9	16.0

(1) Central Bank Report 1983 Page 93 — Table 1.46



# VOA — another kind of base !

When Sri Lanka was battling it out with the non-aligned Chairman, India, on the latter's own ground, Delhi about the inclusion of Diego Garcia in the resolution on the IOPZ in the final summit document, a veteran Indian editor told a group of journalists covering the 7th summit "India is really more worried about what Sri Lanka plans to do with Trinco and the VOA". While Mrs. Gandhi and top government spokesmen had frequently voiced displeasure and dismay about both, the coupling puzzled some. The same editor explained: "We consider both bases — though the other is only ideological and propagandist".

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's reaction to a book written recently by a not too wellknown American academic exposes Delhi's hypersensitivities on issues of this kind. (See Rajiv and the Texan study). If the material in that book would have been provocative in normal circumstances, it became explosive after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. India is a multi-ethnic nation which has at least half a dozen regional languages. The VOA station in Chilaw — the lease agreement for 20 years was signed recently — will use powerful transmitters (one 500 Kw, and three 250 Kw) to broadcast in regional languages. The station's range will cover the whole sub-continent, the Arab world, parts of China, Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and east Africa.

Much of the turmoil on the subcontinent are rooted in the politics of nationalities and sub-nationalisms. In all this language and culture is the key. The BBC which has the largest audience in the world (100 million listeners) counts this as its largest listenership. The 'target group' exceeds 35 million. But the BBC's audibility is already worrying the managers of what is universally regarded as the best broadcasting organisation in the world. It relies

on 250 k. w. transmitters and, on account of financial constraints, is already lagging behind its rivals. However it makes up for this weakness by the credibility it has acquired throughout the world.

The VOA has received 1 billion dollars for a worldwide modernisation program for the next 5 years. The BBC has been given 10 million pounds (less than 15 million dollars) for 1985 and 100 million pounds for the next five years. The VOA station in Sri Lanka will be the most powerful outside the U. S.!

What has caused concern in India and other neighbouring countries and beyond is not the power of the VOA signal alone. The anxiety is founded on two factors.

Firstly, the nature of the 'message'.

In a parliamentary debate in late 1981, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike quoted a report written in the "Washington Post" by one of its leading journalists, Murray Marder. The W. P. had scooped what was known as the "Nicolaidis Memorandum". Mr. Nicolaidis held the post of Deputy Director and was chief coordinator for overseas broadcasting "commentary and news analysis". The memo was submitted to Mr. John Conkling who was the VOA official that visited Colomco to negotiate the main agreement. What was recently signed was the 'lease agreement' for 1,000 acres of land in the Chilaw-Nattandiya area.

Mr. Nicolaidis argued that the VOA must abandon the notion that it was "a journalistic enterprise of some sort". He wrote "We are — as all the world understands — a propaganda agency" (LG. Vol. 4 No. 15). The memo said: "We must promote disaffection between peoples and rulers, underscoring the denials of rights, inefficient management, corruption, indifference to the real needs of the people, suppression of cultural diversity, religious persecution". The W. P. criticised this attempt to "politicise" the VOA and said

it was part of an ideological Reaganism. What effect will this doctrine have in practice have on India, Pakistan, BD, Nepal, Iran, Afghanistan? VOA and Radio Moscow, the propaganda agencies of the superpowers can battle it out on their own. What of the smaller countries?

Besides this will be done from Sri Lankan territory. And the government nor the SLBC will have any editorial control because of "instant switching" via satellite. That is the second factor. We will have no control over the day-to-day, 24 hours-a-day use of the air waves from our soil.

## Rajiv condemns U S book

NEW DELHI, Jan. 23

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi today condemned as "totally abhorrent" a section of a US report which studied the possible outcome in India if his mother died violently.

Gandhi, who took office hours after Indira Gandhi was assassinated last October, told Parliament: "The government finds the chapter... on Indira Gandhi's sudden death totally abhorrent."

"Indeed it raises many questions which are being examined... The government is examining the circumstances of the commissioning of this study and its implications," Gandhi added in response to a question in the House.

The report on Indian politics by Texas University Professor Robert Hargreaves hit the headlines just before national elections last month because of its section on "succession on the death of Indira Gandhi."

A State Department spokeswoman said in Washington the report was commissioned by the State Department but it expressed the views of its author.

Gandhi, who won a massive majority in elections which he held on schedule last month, said the government knew the State Department had commissioned a report in India.

The Indian Embassy in Washington received a final draft of the report last March, Gandhi said.

"Unfortunately the manuscript was not studied thoroughly at the time. We are looking into lapses that have occurred in this regard," Gandhi said

— (Reuter)



# Mini-referendum for students

But for the occasional by-election, the highly controversial and unprecedented Referendum of Dec. 1982, a watershed in the history of Sri Lankan democracy, effectively closed the system for the duration. The transition was gradually made into a new system of 'controlled democracy'.

The new Universities Act has two major political implications — first the surreptitious dismantling of the 'free State education system' (see TRENDS) and second a 'referendum' of a sort in the campuses.

The connection was made clear in the speech of the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, whose parliamentary contributions remain, whether one accepts the arguments and the point of view or not, the clearest and most cogent expression of UNP thinking as a whole. He said.

"Experience over the past six years has shown that elections to Student Assemblies result in a sort of mini-General election within the university campus. The constituencies of students are invariably delineated along political party lines"

For the Opposition, Mr. Sarath Muttettuwagama (Kalawana-CP) offered the sharpest and most discerning reply.

**Sarath Muttettuwagama** (CP — Kalawana) said these amendments were being debated under the most strange circumstances. He read a letter sent by the Students' Action Committee of the Moratuwa University which said that copies of the Bill were not available for sale at the Government Publication Bureau. The Government was keeping the people in the dark about the Bill.

The MP said the Bill was not isolated and had to be seen in the context of contemporary politics. It was an attempt to drag the country towards authoritarianism from which there is no return. There was a clearly discernible streak of authoritarianism and an attempt to stifle student opinion. The Government had lost credibility among the people and was frightened of public opinion. He was reminded of Bertolt Brecht who had once said about a certain Government that it had lost the confidence of the people and should therefore dissolve the people and elect a new people.

He said today everything was up for sale including education. This was the result of the Government's surrender to the IMF which wants the welfare state dismantled.

The MP said that all sections in universities were opposed to this Bill. There was a book in circulation which had been printed in 1981 by the present Government. He requested the Deputy Minister of Higher Education to study that book and learn the history of university education.

He said the Bill had been hatched in darkness and born through a Caesarian operation in Parliament. He further said a similar Bill had been withdrawn by the previous government.

Mr. Muttettuwagama referring to a report in 'The Island' of July 2, said that Dr. Kalpage had said at a Press Conference that some student bodies had been consulted with regard to the Bill. He asked what these bodies were.

The MP stated that a full committee stage debate was essential to discuss this Bill.

He also said that according to a news report, the Mahaweli Minister Gamini Dissanayake had summoned the Samavadi Students

in Kandy and had said that all undergraduates should be members of that union to get employment. It was virtually like holding a pistol at their heads, he added.

The MP said that no member of that society would be loyal but would be a member only to secure employment.

Mr. Muttettuwagama said that he did not know whose brain child the Private Medical College was.

He said that some persons even mortgaged their properties to enter the Private Medical College.

The UNP which claimed it had done so much on behalf of the free education scheme would go down in history as the party which abolished it in effect.

The Bill made provision to prevent the university's actions being challenged in Court. The Minister had power to revoke orders. He does not have to give reasons for revoking any orders.

He said that it had all the signs of bad drafting and bad thinking. It was the duty of the government to tell the people what kind of Private Institute would be set up to promote education. The country's experience in the past was that a foreign entrepreneur who came to do fastfood business under the FIAC entered the educational business and the Colombo International School was set up.

He agreed with the Baddegama MP that only the Arts Degrees would be available free in the state-run Universities soon. He said a crime was being perpetrated on the poorer class of the country.

While Mr. Richard Pathirana (Akmeemana-SLFP) paid special stress on the blow that the new



law aimed at the poor student and on the intention of the government to re-introduce and entrench privilege in the field of education, Mr. Ananda Dassanayake (Kotmale - SLFP) warned the UNP of the danger of alienating university student at a time when the government was pleading for 'Sinhala unity' in the South. "When you have already a fire in the north, why are you trying to kindle another fire in the South?" he asked pointedly.

Mr. Pathirana said the Degree Awarding Institutions for which provision was made would be nothing less than private universities.

He said that only rich parents were able to send their children to private Universities. It costs the parents over sixty thousand rupees to admit their children to private universities.

Mr. Pathirana said that the setting up of a Degree Awarding Institute was a step to deprive the common man's child of higher education.

The rights of student councils had been taken away by the new Bill introduced. This Bill wanted to bury the fundamental rights of university students.

#### **Ananda Dassanayake (Kotmale):**

We are faced with terrorism. Why do you seek to handle unnecessary issues in this situation?

The students will oppose the amendment, the public will oppose parents will also oppose. All these will create many problems.

Do you want to reform or ruin the students?

The President, Prime Minister traverse the length and breadth of the country and talk about democracy. But what do you do here?

Student representation is essential in university administration. But this is a dictatorial act.

If you think that you can contain the students, you are mistaken. You will fall into trouble.

#### **Deputy Minister of Education:**

You don't know what you are talking.

#### **Ananda Dassanayake:**

When there is already a fire, do not try to kindle another. Why do you want to push this Act through without consulting students?

**Opposition Members walked out in protest as the Member for Kotmale was interrupted while speaking.**

### **Ethnic Issue and Economics**

In a memo to the UNP's Working Committee (LG - Jan. 1) top Presidential Advisor Esmond Wickremasinghe argued that it was only the UNP's "popular ethnic policy" which helped to "mask" the party's present troubles.

The dismissal of Mr. Mathew may provoke the more intelligent observer of the political scene to question Mr. Wickremasinghe's self-assured assessment of the "popularity" of the government's "ethnic policy" unless of course he meant the successful manner in which the UNP is keeping mass emotions at a high pitch through a sustained media campaign. Propaganda based on history, on myth and primordial fears, is keeping the popular mind totally on the 'war', and therefore diverted from other questions. At the same time, the UNP cannot beat Mr. Mathew or other high-pitched Sinhala-Buddhist champions at that game.

Nor can the UNP totally conceal "the party's difficulties" to which Mr. Wickremasinghe referred. Mr. Mathew was a senior minister, JSS boss, the acknowledged leader of his caste — the second biggest in the country — and the author of "Kauda Kottiya?" (Who's the Tiger?) and other Powellite polemical tracts.

Last week Mr. Mathew managed to check two UNP moves — one to hold an inquiry into whether he had violated party rules and the other a meeting of the JSS, evidently to remove him from its post as boss. The District Court issued two interim injunctions.

Either because no opposition party will touch him with a barge pole (the JSS boss is the **bete noire** of all parties from Centre to Left) or because he wants to retain his UNP "loyalist" image, Mr. Mathew has been adopted by anti-JR (pro-Senanayake?) 'dissidents'. The lawyer who argued his case was Mr. A. G. Cooneratne QC, one-time UNP Working Committee member, and son of Mr. Nalin Gooneratne who contested a Colombo seat as an Independent when the UNP refused him nomination.

It was S.L.M.P. duo, Chandrika and Vijaya Kumaratunge who spotlighted the UNP tactic of using the ethnic issue as a diversionary device.

These days people talk about terrorism and the Eelam issue but not about hunger and poverty which in turn must be giving great pleasure to J. R. Jayewardene, the Vice President of the S. L. M. P., Chandrika Kumaratunga told the First Anniversary Rally of the party held at Dehiwala.

"Newspapers said that Chandrika and Sirima have got closer. They had even said that I was attempting to join the S.L.F.P. and that Vijaya Kumaratunge had assaulted me because of this and that my hand was fractured. My hand fractured by slipping and falling at home, she said.

I did not leave the S.L.F.P. and come to betray the people, Ms. Kumaratunga pointed out.

The Secretary of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party Vijaya Kumaratunga said that when the S.L.M.P. was formed madam casted horoscopes and said that the life span of the party would be six months. The son had done light-reading and told that the party would live only three months, but the party has now completed twelve months, he pointed out.

Mr. Kumaratunga went on to say, that today we do not have anybody's support in the terrorist issue. This government has marred the cordial relations that existed between Sri Lanka and India, he told.



He said that US President Reagan was telling President Jayewardene to "let the younger brother solve his own problems." He also said that though there was no communal conflict among the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the government was attempting to forget the poor person's hunger under the mask of terrorism.

He said that when a police officer dies at the hands of the terrorists, the people feel grieved. He appealed to them not to leave room to change this kind of sympathetic feeling on the part of the public into that of an undesirable satisfaction.

The President of the SLMP T. B. Illangaratne said that in Socialist countries all ethnic groups are brought together and a national plan was formed. He pointed out that national problems could not be solved by the bomb and the gun.

## Army and politics

A week after the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence, the L.G. asked Dr. Colvin R. de Silva to identify its political significance in terms of likely developments in the foreseeable future. 'It has thrust the army into politics' he observed.

The speed with which Mrs. Bandaranaike protested at a report in a newspaper and its re-publication in a Lake House daily and hastened to explain that she did not accuse 'the army' of killing civilians but the government and its policies, revealed the politician's current sensitivities to the army's role in society today.

While Mr. Maitripala Senanayake MP Madwachchiya became the army's advocate on the question of salaries and allowances and young Mr. Dinesh Gunawaadene, the MEP MP for Kesbewa its champion on the matter of more and better weapons, UNP politicians must keep both the army's and the Sinhala public's morale high on 'the winnable war'. Naturally, the role of chief spokesman falls on the broad shoulders of National Security Minister, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali

who made the following speech last week:

Every citizen who was against terrorism could be armed ultimately so that the country could face any attack foreign or local said Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security when he declared open a Sub-Post Office at Mata-lapitiya in the Matale electorate, recently.

He explained that the strength of the security forces has been increased eight-fold and soon it would be increased tenfold and the build-up would continue until every citizen who was against eelam and terrorism would be armed.

He said that from now on every peace-loving citizen should be security conscious and be ever so vigilant. The superiority of the security forces over the terrorists of all groups had been demonstrated often although the terrorists had taken to cowardly acts of hit and run.

"We will certainly win this war against terrorists, because there is no alternative to winning. With the systematic destruction of terrorists camps we will defeat the terrorists tigers", he stressed.

Mr. Athulathmudali explained that whenever the terrorists made an attack on the security personnel or the civilians or on any police station the people should not get disturbed or discouraged, they should remain calm, confident and determined and in the same way when the security forces scored a victory, they should not be lulled into complacency.

He advised the people to have complete faith in the ability of the security forces to handle the present situation as they had a planned strategy.

In the war that was being waged against the terrorists the government would neither seek advice nor assistance from any foreign power as the solving of the ethnic problem or the tackling of the terrorist menace was an internal affair of this country.

## Letters

(Continued from page 2)

people for such a reasonable solution instead of, as is being done now, rouse further communalism.

All these must be reversed if we are to preserve the unity of Sri Lanka where Sinhalese and Tamils can co-exist as equals.

Since 1958, our Party has advocated regional autonomy for the Northern and Eastern Provinces as a solution to the problem of the Tamil speaking minorities. We remain of that view even now. We have always advocated the unity of the progressive and revolutionary forces among both the Sinhalese and the Tamils to defeat the UNP and other reactionary forces and to set up a new democratic state, under the leadership of the working class, which will eventually pass on to socialism and under which there can be no question of the oppression of any minority.

If the ethnic problem is to be solved, we must recognise the right of self-determination of the Tamils, withdraw the army from the North and East, withdraw the Prevention of Terrorism Act and release all those detained under it, grant a general amnesty, withdraw the sixth amendment to the constitution and arrive at a political settlement on the basis of granting regional autonomy to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Let me end with a famous quotation of Karl Marx: "No nation which oppresses another can itself be free."

**N. Sanmugathasan**

General Secretary,  
Ceylon Communist Party



# Rajya Sabha debate on Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI, January 24

Initiating the discussion on an adjournment motion on Sri Lanka in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Jaswant Singh said Sri Lanka posed a crucial test to Indian diplomacy.

He said India was getting "trapped" by describing the problem as ethnic, thereby reducing its size. The problem was political and sociological, he said. He called for formulation of a rational policy on Sri Lanka without interfering in that country's internal affairs.

Mr. M. Kalyanasundaram (CPI) said that Tamils in Sri Lanka could not survive without arms.

He wanted to know what lawful steps the Government would take to protect the rights of Indian fishermen. The government should ensure that Sri Lankan boats did not enter India's maritime boundaries.

Mr. V. Gopalasamy (DMK) said for three decades the Tamils had been agitating through peaceful means to get justice in Sri Lanka. Terrorists must not be confused with armed resistance. He feared that by next year the entire Tamil community would be wiped out.

He said India had failed to mobilise international public opinion on the issue.

Netherlands had deported 45 Tamils. Other governments might follow suit.

Calling for stern action, the DMK member asked if the Government of India would recognise Tamil Eelam and be prepared to break diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka if it did not yield to India's requests.

Mr. Sushil Mohunta (Janata) said the government should intervene in some manner to stop the genocide of Tamils and safeguard Indian territorial waters.

Mr. M. C. Bhandare (Cong-I) urged the government to strengthen the deployment of Indian naval force to protect fishermen from further attacks by Sri Lankan patrol boats. He also wanted to know what steps the Government would take to raise the issue of violation of human rights at international forums like the United Nations.

Mr. Aladi Aruna (AIADMK) welcomed the statement of the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, on the Sri Lankan issue but said mere statements would not help solve the problem. He suggested some "drastic action" like a "military operation" to protect the Tamils.

Mr. K. Mohanan (CPI-M) disagreed with the AIADMK member and said his

party did not favour military intervention. It would not help solve the problem but would only complicate the issue and facilitate the intervention by the superpowers. Instead, we should mobilise world opinion against the oppression and killing of Tamils and take up the issue at forums like the NAM.

Mr. S. W. Dhabe (Cong-S) urged the Government to take the issue to the UN.

Mr. M. S. Gurupadaswamy (Janata) said by arresting the Indian fisherman in Indian waters, the Sri Lanka Government had actually resorted to "gun-boat diplomacy."

Sri Lankan Government appeared to be taking to "confrontation" with India if not collision. India should tell that country that any further attacks on Indian fishermen or fishing vessels would be taken an hostile act.

He also suggested that India invite the Sri Lankan President, Mr. Jayewardene, for talks here or that the Minister of Foreign Affairs visit Colombo.

Mr. B. Satyanarayana Reddy (Telugu Desam), said he was not in favour of a military solution to the problem.

— PTI

## Corea a victim of big-power politics?

T. M. Deen

UNITED NATIONS

**D**r. Gamini Corea, whose term of office as Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) expired last week, was the victim of big-power politics, according to diplomatic sources here.

Although there were strong sentiments favouring Corea's continuation in office until a new secretary-general was picked, the decision to name one of his deputies as acting head of UNCTAD was greeted with disappointment among Third World diplomats here.

The Geneva-based International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA) said in one of its recent publications that comments from people close to Asian delegations in Geneva were rather sad.

"Corea of course was not to stay forever," one diplomat was quoted as saying, "but it was not very elegant to inform him only a few days ago that he was expected to leave by December 31".

"This is not a proper way to thank someone whose competence and achievements are so widely recognised."

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is responsible for the appointment of the UNCTAD Secretary General, could not decide on competing African candidates for the post.

But in the absence of a candidate, he refused to extend Corea's term for the interim period.

The IFDA publication said that expected as it was, the New York decision was seen by many as an ominous sign for the United Nations.

The problem was not Corea's departure as such, but the manner and context in which it happened, IFDA said.

The publication charged that it was well known that the Reagan

administration wanted Corea out of the job he had for 10 years.

But some were still hoping that New York would resist the pressure. It was noted that other senior UN officials whose terms were expiring by the end of 1984 had their contracts either renewed or extended. Corea was the only exception to this rule.

Another element of dismay, IFDA said was the unfair procedure. Since no successor had been found in time for the General Assembly to ratify the appointment before December 18, the solution under normal circumstances would have been to ask the incumbent to stay on until a consensus candidate had been identified.

"But are the circumstances normal when one super power dictates its will and the UN Secretariat accepts it?"

— "Daily News"



# 'A unique island with one heart and one body'

Colombo December 30 (XINHUA)

One of the prominent features in Sri Lanka's domestic situation this year is the intensified clashes between the two major nationalities, the Sinhalese and Tamils.

It all began in January when 17 soldiers and 12 policemen were killed by the Tamil Militants at Chunnakam, a small town in the North. Direct conflicts between the Tamil separatists and the Army and police of the Sinhalese dominated Government have continued since then with over 400 people have reportedly killed to date. The worst clash came on November 20 when the separatists killed 29 Policemen during their attack on a Police station in Jaffna District, one of the foci of ethnic conflicts in the country, later Sri Lankan Tamils in Madras, Southern India, claimed in a statement that they were going to set up the "Tamil Eelam" (a separate state) by January 14, 1985.

This is in fact the continuation of a prolonged ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. During the past decades, bloody incidents erupted time and again in this South Asian Island, about 400 people, mainly Tamils, died in violence in July 1983, which further worsened the situation throughout the country.

Both the Government and the Tamils argue that they are fighting for a cause. The Government describes the Tamil Militants as "Separatists" and "Terrorists" who are trained in Southern India. Senior officials stated that the Government Forces are fighting for a United Sri Lanka and against those who are trying to break away from the country. However, the Tamils

who make up some 18 percent of the country's population claim they are discriminated against by the Sinhalese majority especially jobs and education. The Tamil separatists have been seeking by force the establishment of a separate state in the North.

The Government seems determined to crush the terrorists in the North by the might of its Army. Fresh reinforcements have been sent to the North and East in recent months. Prohibited and Security Zones have been set up in Jaffna and its surrounding areas. Curfews, some as long as 72 hours, have been imposed in many districts from the North Central Provinces. But there is still no sign that the situation has been improved.

Meanwhile, the Government is also making efforts to seek a political solution to the ethnic problem. The all Party Conference (APC) proposed by President J R Jayewardene himself opened in January. No concrete results were achieved at the 35 sessions during the first ten months. On December 14, President Jayewardene put forth a set of proposals for the creation of a "A form of Participatory Democracy" which will give district and provincial councils greater powers and functions than the present ones. "This is a kind of Autonomy", A senior official explained. However, the proposals met widespread opposition from the influential religious bodies, the Tamil United Liberation Front, and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, a major opposition which was absent from the All party Conference. Therefore, the Government had to drop the proposals in less than a week after the ending of the APC and requested the Presi-

dent to "Continue his efforts to find a political solution while taking all measures to eradicate terrorism".

"What is the way out of the situation?" Many Sri Lankan have been asking the question.

Most observers here believe that the ethnic problem and "Terrorism" in the North are interlocked and are difficult to be solved separately. Among the Tamil organisations, the Tamil United Liberation Front has been advocating the Liberation of Tamils through Non-violent means. But many other groups formed by young extremists believe in taking up arms to set up a separate state for the country's 2.6 Million Tamils. A political solution is possible only when most of the Tamil Organisations are willing to sit at the conference table.

On the other hand, what will the majority Sinhalese do? this will count heavily in the process of seeking a political solution to the problem.

Since all the efforts have ended in failure so far, the chance for an immediate solution seems slim, an analyst said.

A local source said, "We do hope to see some light at the end of the Tunnel. But is there any light at the end of the Tunnel?"

The Government is continuing its efforts for a political solution within the framework of a unitary country, which enjoys wide support of the people. A reader writes this to a local paper: "Divided we Fall" and it is "Unity" only that would truly cement a lasting and closely knit society — A unique Island with one heart and one body.



# The Sri Lanka elections

## Oct-Dec '82

David Selbourne (Ruskin College, Oxford, England)

**S**ri Lanka, which has enjoyed universal franchise since 1931 and even been regarded — the insurrection of 1971 notwithstanding — as an exemplar of Asian parliamentarism, has undergone in 1982 something of a political and constitutional sea-change. Indeed, the 20 October presidential election, which provided President Julius Jayewardene, the 76-year-old leader of the United National Party (UNP), with a further six-year term of office, and the 22 December referendum whose effect was to extend the life of the Sri Lankan parliament until 4 August 1989, have between them completed (with considerable deftness) the transformation of Sri Lanka's 'Westminster model' into what most observers regard as an autocratic presidential system.

Careful examination of how and why this has happened throws light not only on the familiar economic constraints which work against inherited democratic practice in the Third World, but also, incidentally, on the fatal political mishap which was threatening President Jayewardene as a result of the adoption, under his own 1978 Constitution, of a system of proportional representation for future general elections.

In his earlier and more modest incarnation as Prime Minister, he had taken office after the 27 July 1977 general election with an unprecedented five-sixths majority (140 of 168 seats) in the Sri Lankan parliament. And under the then unreconstructed 1972 Constitution, this majority permitted him and his party to amend, or replace, the Constitution as he chose; a perilous, but also familiar, circumstance in which the Constitution itself had become one of the spoils of office.

Its outcome was the creation by constitutional amendment of an

executive presidency, to which Jayewardene was translated from the prime ministership, followed by the introduction of the 1978 Constitution. Though the new dispensation armed the presidency with wide powers, its Achilles heel turned out to be the replacement of the first-past-the-post single-member constituency system with a system of proportional representation. Designed in large measure to prevent any other party — such as Mrs Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party — from gaining a sufficiently large parliamentary majority to overthrow the Constitution in its turn, the electoral reform served merely to undermine the stability of UNP rule itself. Though such an eventuality had been anticipated by political commentators in Sri Lanka, it was vividly borne in on the ruling party for the first time in the 20 October presidential election; an election which had itself been advanced — Jayewardene was not bound under the new Constitution to submit himself for popular election as president until 1984 — in order both to pre-empt the general parliamentary election due before October 1983, and to confirm his hold on the presidential office.

In fact, in the October presidential election, despite the disqualification and loss of civic rights imposed by special laws on his main political rival Mrs Bandaranaike (for her own abuse of power during the 1970s), the margin of Jayewardene's victory — with 52.9 per cent of the popular vote — was a highly unpromising augury for the expected general election. Indeed, the results indicated that the opposition's 16 per cent of parliamentary seats would have risen to between 40 and 45 per cent under a system of proportional representation. The resolution of this dilemma was logical, but drastic: the amendment of Article 161 of the 1978 Con-

stitution (its Fourth Amendment), in order to prolong the life of parliament until 4 August 1989. The people of Sri Lanka, as provided under the Constitution, were accordingly invited to assent to this measure by referendum on 22 December.

The outcome reinforced the validity of the UNP's original anxieties about what would have happened in the general election. On a reduced turnout (down 10 per cent, from October, to 70.89 per cent of total registered voters), and with widespread allegations of polling irregularities and breaches of the electoral laws, 3.14 million votes (54.6 per cent) were recorded for, and 2.60 million (45.3 per cent) against, the referendum proposal. A total of 62 per cent of the registered electorate of 8.1 million either opposed the amendment or did not vote at all.

The net effect for the Sri Lankan political system of the October-December passage of events has been substantial. The country now has its own 'Long Parliament' — with 84 per cent of its members now representing 38 per cent of the electorate — originally elected in 1977, and whose term (if it survives without upheaval) will thus last no less than 12 years. The scale of the consequential disenfranchisement — chosen, ironically, by what Jayewardene himself described as the 'supreme method of discovering the will of a sovereign people' — is such that, after a half-century of universal suffrage, it will be the end of the decade before two million new voters, who were not on the 1977 electoral register (and who by 1989 will be in their early thirties), get the chance to take part for the first time in a national general election.

In addition, it should be noted that under the 1978 Constitution



political parties were given the power to nominate to parliament replacements for their sitting members who resign or die. On 27 October 1982, one week after his victory in the presidential contest, Jayewardene obtained undated resignation letters from his party's MPs, thus gaining the power — as party leader — to fill up to five-sixths of the seats in the national parliament with his own nominees, who will not now have to submit themselves for six years to any kind of popular approval. That is, between now and 1989, the overwhelming majority of the legislature could have any number of its personnel changed by unaccountable executive decision.

Unexceptionally, the *force majeure* of developmental necessity — as a 'Naxalite' plot to seize power — was invoked during the campaign in aid of Sri Lanka's Fourth Amendment; or, as President Jayewardene put it on the hustings, 'Give us another six years to finish what we have begun'. Yet there were other and darker tones to the proceedings. Indeed, even during the presidential contest, when there had as yet been no formal suggestion of cancelling the 1989 general election, Jayewardene had hinted, the accents of the Younger Pitt, at 'rolling up the electoral map for ten years'. The referendum itself was held during a State of Emergency, after the banning of opposition newspapers, the seizure of presses, and the detention and interrogation of leading opposition organizers.

Moreover, local evidence collated during and since the referendum not only indicates that the referendum law, which makes illegal the display of posters and symbols, was widely flouted by the government, but also that the polling itself was not carried out with scruple. In fact, disturbing correlations can be discovered from studying the results in detail, which suggest that in those electoral districts and 'electorates' (or constituencies) from which there was a high incidence of reported acts of intimidation of voters, of polling officers and observers — and consequent impersonation — there were also a typically favourable swings

in support of the Fourth Amendment. It should be added that comparisons of the October and December results, being based on the same electoral register, and with only eight weeks elapsing between the two polls, have a stronger evidential value than might otherwise have been the case.

Thus in Attanagalla, from where there were bitter complaints of assault and intimidation — sufficient to have led to the withdrawal of opposition polling observers — and on a reduced turnout, there was a phenomenal swing of 58.60 per cent to the government between October and December. At Kekirawa, also the source of numerous reports of intimidation and other malpractice, a turnout increase of only 2.33 per cent on the presidential poll produced a 60 per cent swing in favour of the six-year parliamentary extension. Most extraordinary of all, in Matale electoral district, where recent floods and over 100 landslips had made roads impassable, cutting off voters from polling stations in conditions of what was called 'flood devastation', there was a reported 80 per cent turnout, 10 per cent higher than the national average, and with 50 per cent swings to the government. In the worst affected electorate of all, Laggala, the alleged turnout (at 85.8 per cent) was even higher.

But more significant is that the December referendum results reveal a divided country — already riven by competing Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms — with, among other areas, the South Western seaboard and the Northern provinces registering heavy defeats for President Jayewardene, which no amount of electoral management could disguise. Indeed, the paradox is that by substituting a referendum for a general election, the UNP's search for the political stability and national unity which the imperatives of economic development demand may have merely driven the polity into deeper trouble.

And even though yet another (post-referendum) constitutional amendment has made provision for the holding of parliamentary by-elections in those government-held electorates where the December

referendum result was an adverse one, this merely serves to compound the confusion. The greatest irony of all, however, is that the decision to introduce proportional representation for sound enough democratic reasons has been undone at the expense — at least until 1989 — of essential features of the Sri Lankan parliamentary system.

## Letter

### Resettlement

The president is quite right when he says the island of Sri Lanka belongs to all its citizens and every individual citizen has the right to live in any part of it.

The Sinhalese people have densely inhabited the south, centre and west of Sri Lanka for centuries, while the Tamils have densely inhabited the North and East for centuries. The Moors, Malays and Burghers' the other ethnic groups, are comparatively recent and are spread all over the island.

Just as the Sinhalese people enjoy the right to look after their own affairs, provide basic needs like food, health and employment and develop their language, religion and culture, the Tamil people, with a different language, religion, culture and ecology, ask that they too have the same privileges in a United Sri Lanka. This will not divide the country; it will strengthen it. The Tamil people, including the Tamil militant youth, are willing to negotiate.

To ask them to lay down their arms as a precondition is not realistic, specially after some of their leaders were brutally slaughtered while in Government custody — on two separate occasions.

The proposal to forcibly settle 30,000 Sinhalese families in the North and arm them is a sure method of creating a festering sore which will run for generations.

**Dr. R. W. C. Thambiah**



# Dilemma for the Left — the persistence of ethnic consciousness

Kumari Jayewardena

While it is generally recognised that socio-economic factors play a crucial role in ethnic conflict, it is equally important, in considering the persistence of ethnic violence, to take into account the role of ideology. Ideology can be defined as a set of systematically fashioned beliefs and symbols that make the social reality meaningful to a given group of people. An analysis of the beliefs and symbols of the Sinhala Buddhists, and the formation and evolution of Sinhala Buddhist consciousness and culture in early history, as well as the colonial and post-colonial periods, is thus of prime importance in understanding recent ethnic violence in Sri Lanka.

Careful historiographical analysis is needed to unravel the constituent elements of this consciousness and to expose the myths, falsehoods and misinterpretations that have become embedded in it. But mythology and history have been so inter-twined however, that recent attempts by scholars to separate the two, and give a scientific analysis of Sri Lanka history, have led to their being denounced as traitors by traditionalists and reactionaries who have a vested interest in misusing history to justify racist politics. (See *Ethnicity and Social Change*, and the interesting discussion on this book in the popular 'Sunday Divaina' from October to December 1984).

This has also been the experience in neighbouring countries; in India, when historians like Romila Thapar and Bipan Chandra, challenged the racist interpretation of Indian history and rewrote the school texts, they were vilified and called 'pro-Muslim and pro-Communist' by Hindu bigots and obscurantists who

campaigns for the withdrawal of the text books. Similarly in Tamilnadu, attempts by progressive scholars to demystify history, to challenge the glorification and romanticisation of Chola and Pandyan rule, separating myth from historical fact, and to analyse the socioeconomic base of the Dravidian movement, were met with extreme hostility. In Sri Lanka too, Tamil scholars like K. Kailasapathy, who challenged the prevalent views on the 'golden age' of the Cankam period and K. Sivathamby, who critically reassessed the class bias and pro-British attitudes of Arumuga Navalar, hitherto revered as a national hero above criticism, were also subject to condemnation by Tamil pundits. This racism permeates traditional scholarship whether Sinhala or Tamil, Buddhist or Hindu.

This process of analysis and reinterpretation must also be extended to the colonial and post-colonial periods. One should re-evaluate imperialist strategies of 'divide and rule' and the use of ethnic consciousness by ruling groups as a diversionary tactic or as a means of winning popular political support.

Part of the debate on the ideological roots of conflict hinges on a much wider issue and leads one to a discussion of the relative autonomy of ideology and forms of consciousness and their articulation with the economic base. According to some, ethnicity has to be viewed as a constituent part of an ideology that is rooted in the past and persists economic changes or transformations.

It is significant that the concept of nationalism, or of ethnicity as we understand the term, is increasingly attracting the attention of

Marxist scholars who find the Marxist (and Leninist) analysis of nationality to be inadequate today. Eric Hobsbawm, for example notes that "Marxist movements and states have tended to become national not only in form but in substance i. e. nationalist". Benedict Anderson noting this same tendency in the non-socialist world, reflects that "many old nations, once thoughtfully consolidated, find themselves challenged by sub-nationalisms within their borders — nationalisms which naturally dream of shedding this sub-ness one happy day". Indeed Anderson finds that this sense of nationality is "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time".

While commenting on the weakness of many existing analyses of nationalism and ethnicity, Anderson proposes the concept of the nation as an **imagined political community**; which in contrast to family & tribe, (whose members know each other), is —

**'imagined** because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion', and

**'a community**, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, it is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.'

Anderson adds —

'These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central



problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices?

Anderson believes that the beginnings of an answer to this phenomenon are to be sought 'in the cultural roots of nationalism' (Anderson 1983: 15-16)

Whatever the emphasis one gives to economic or ideological and cultural factors, the whole issue of ethnic and class consciousness and the inter-action of economic and political factors on consciousness and ideological must be closely analysed. The assumption that pre-capitalist ideologies based on caste, religion and ethnicity would disappear or at least diminish with the development of capitalism has also to be reconsidered and answers have to be found to the central question — **why does ethnic consciousness persist and indeed grow in strength during a period of development**, a period in which education permeates the country, scientific and technological knowledge becomes widespread and rationality, at least in theory, holds sway in the economic sphere? Those on the Left are also particularly concerned to understand why the working masses of Sri Lanka, who had attained a level of consciousness which enabled them to lead militant class actions based on unity between workers of all ethnic groups, have now become prey to ethnic prejudices.

What is more, while division along ethnic lines is detrimental to the interests of the working-class, intensification of ethnic antagonisms and their eruption into violence may also be against the interests of the bourgeoisie. Today the open-economy demands for its success a stable polity which will be attractive to foreign investors; but sections of the very bourgeoisie who are behind the open economy have been responsible not only for rousing ethnic emotions, but for taking up rigid positions which prevent a peaceful settlement of the ethnic issue. Why then is ethnic consciousness so powerful that it drives two classes — the

bourgeoisie and the proletariat — to forget their class interests as well as their antagonisms and band themselves into a block against other ethnic groups? This is one of the fundamental questions to which we must seek an answer.

It is also necessary to remind ourselves that the persistence of ethnic consciousness is not peculiar to Sri Lanka. Ethnic conflicts explode periodically in many parts of India; in Malaysia, in spite of rapid economic growth, serious race riots erupted in 1969 and today the doctrine of the **bumi putra** makes the Chinese a tolerated, but disfavoured group. In the case of Sri Lanka, as in some of other newly independent countries, we have to recognise that in the process of 'nation building' after decolonisation, the major ethnic group has attempted to equate its **own ethnic identity with the national identity**. Just as the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, the Arabs in Sudan, the Kikuyu, in Kenya, the Shona in Zimbabwe or the Fulani in Nigeria have attempted to achieve national integration through domination. This has often led to the marginalisation of other minority group and to overt expressions of frustration, which in turn have raised the levels of ethnic consciousness in the major group; this process has revived antagonisms that were dormant during colonial rule and has led to riots, guerilla warfare and even civil war.

The earlier articles in the series, discussed the contexts in which ethnic hostility has manifested itself in Sri Lanka at various periods over the last century and tentatively sought some explanations for these occurrences. Deeper studies are necessary of the complex ways in which ethnic and national consciousness originate and of the interaction and interplay of economic and political factors on consciousness and ideology. Such an analysis of chauvinism in the majority community and the reactions to such chauvinism in the minorities can only be done by scholars from all communities who are prepared to be objective and rational. Such studies can only be effectively done, however, in an atmosphere where academics and researchers are free from victimisa-

tion, witch-hunts and smear campaigns organised by petty-minded cliques and individuals, some masquerading as 'radicals' and 'progressives' and even as social scientists. To adapt a wellknown Palmerstonian maxim, we have Sri Lankan "scholars" who are racists at home and radicals abroad. In conclusion one must emphasize that Chauvinism is out in the interests of the working masses and that it is not central to Left ideology. The Sri Lanka workers can proudly claim that for forty years their organization (from the 1890s to 1930 followed policies of joint class action, even in periods when revivalists of various hues trying to promote antagonisms against minority groups. In fact, even after the working-class leaders of the 1920s became racist in the 1930s the organised workers, for the next thirty years gave expression to class as opposed to ethnic consciousness, in a series of militant struggles under Left leadership. Today too, it is the advanced section of the working people and the radical intelligentsia who can help to bring the country out of the ethnic mire into which it has descended. At the moment, rationality is at a low ebb. The newspapers significantly, are not full of racism and jingoism but also abound in astrological predictions and stories of ghosts, demons and poltergeists; an array of god-men, false bishops, charismatic monks, gurus, and mumbo — jumbo men are also active, reflecting the tensions and uncertainties of these troubled times. The struggle will therefore be a long and hard one, but one can only hope that reason will sooner or later prevail.

### (Concluded)

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# Power, nationalism and ideology

Radhika Coomaraswamy

If we were to analyse the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in terms of power and class interest, a clearer picture of the actual divisions in Sri Lankan society begin to emerge. Kumari Jayawardena in her analysis of century of ethnic conflict is convinced that the racist consciousness which has been accepted as Sinhalese nationalist ideology is the consciousness of the emergent but dependent Sinhalese mercantile class directed against its non-Sinhalese competitors who dominated the wholesale and retail trade. In addition, it was directed against non-Sinhalese creditors who were willing to give credit to this class, when British banks found them unworthy.<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that the leading theoretician of an exclusive Sinhalese nationalism, Anagarika Dharmapala was the son of one of the few Sinhalese families which was successful in this area of trade. Newton Gunasinghe in his article on the open economy and ethnic conflict argues that even today, this same class which was expanded during the protectionist phase (1970-1979)<sup>9</sup> and therefore became dependent on state patronage and state subsidy, greatly resented the successes of the non-Sinhalese traders once the economy was opened up. He attributes the recent riots to this growing feeling of disenchantment.

Though impressionistic field research by scholars such as Jehan Perera appear to confirm these points of view,<sup>10</sup> the ideology of an exclusive Sinhalese nationalism would not be so virulent unless it found resonance in the experience of other classes in Sri Lankan society. As for the professional and bureaucratic classes, the presence of American missionaries in the North — a presence resisted in the South by the organised Buddhist clergy — had given many middle-class Tamils an English edu-

cation which allowed them comparative advantage at the time of independence. "Sinhalese only" therefore served as an automatic divestiture, and was therefore a slogan for not only mercantile interests but for Sinhalese professionals, bureaucrats, school teachers, clerks, etc. ... who had much to gain from expanding opportunities in the salaried, formal sector. Even working class experience allowed for ideological resonance with regard to Sinhalese racist policies. During the time of the Depression, the British imported Malayali workers from the South of India to work on industrial sites, despite rising Sri Lankan unemployment. This was deeply resented by the Sri Lankan working classes and greatly exploited by working class political leaders. Even though the Malayalis were not Ceylon Tamils, for the Sinhalese all people of Indian origin were perceived as "Tamil" — a reflection of their lack of understanding of the Tamil social composition. The imagery of the "Tamil Scab" therefore allowed anti-Tamil racist feeling to be embedded in working class consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Even the peasantry was not immune from developing anti-Tamil feeling. The creation of plantations in Sinhalese areas and the importation of Indian Tamil labour from South India was deeply resented by the Kandyan peasantry who witnessed diminishing returns from their traditional lands. Again, even though Indian Tamils were socially separate and distinct from the Ceylon Tamil — the catchword "Tamil" easily evokes hostility from members of the Kandyan Sinhalese peasantry.

Therefore, even though the first to give expression to anti-Tamil feelings, ignorance of the Tamil social composition and the short-sightedness of the Sinhalese political leadership, allowed the racist sentiment to acquire a

pan-Sinhala status and to thereby acquire a dynamic, independent of class and social structure. As a result, except for two short periods in post-independent Sri Lanka, and a few left intellectuals speaking in the wilderness,<sup>12</sup> the Sri Lankan left has been enslaved by a nationalist consciousness unable to create a truly Sri Lankan — as opposed to Sinhalese or Tamil — class consciousness. As a result, the Sri Lankan left, new or old, stands accused of failing in its duty to create a left alternative to nationalism and chauvinism.

The complexity of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict cannot be understood without a proper analysis of the character of the Sri Lankan State. Despite the important role that the Sri Lankan State has played in politics and economic life, there have been very few studies on its role and character. Development theory and international economic policy have always placed a premium on the important role of Sri Lankan State. With regard to social welfare programmes, projects for infrastructure development and programmes for planned development, the Sri Lankan State has perhaps earned more kudos than states in other third world societies. In many instances the state has intervened to assist underdeveloped sectors and to protect unrepresented interests through a benign paternalism. The Marga Institute study on Welfare and Growth in Sri Lanka published in 1977 indicates the positive role of the Sri Lankan State and the resultant high PQLI which Sri Lankans enjoy. One must, however, point out that this was in the pre-1977 period when IMF policies with regard to the removal of subsidies had not been implemented. Nevertheless, the welfare success of post-independent Sri Lanka has always cast the Sri Lanka state structure in a positive light.



However, the Sri Lankan state, like all states, is composed of disparate fractions which set the priorities and goals of national development. In addition, the character of the State has changed over time, reflecting the interests of different power-blocs. With regard to the ethnic issue, however, the Sri Lankan state has been quite consistent — consistently negative — in its "malignant neglect" of Tamil grievances and economic demands. This is primarily because Sinhalese political leaders have never had to cater to a Tamil voter base, and the representatives from the Tamil regions have been in opposition since 1956. This "neglect" however is all the more ironic because one of the major grievances of the Sinhalese at independence was that the Tamils were 40% of the Civil Service. By 1978, Tamil intake into the state administrative sector was near 0%.<sup>13</sup>

Sinhalese policy-makers have always put forward the argument that the Tamils were an achievement minority, that they had economic power and that they were dominant in civil society. The State, therefore, protected the interests of the "underdog" Sinhalese majority. However, these assumptions have never been tested against a realistic appraisal of Tamil Social Structure, but have been determined by popular prejudices as to what is a Tamil. It is undoubtedly true, that certain sections of the Tamil middle-classes, like the Sinhalese Karava elite, the Matara middle-classes, etc. ... made the most of opportunities provided. It is also true that 21% of the Tamil population is illiterate,<sup>14</sup> that the Indian Tamil population is exploited, perhaps in a different way than the Monaragala peasantry and that the success of the Nattukodai Chettiars does not inure to the benefit of the untouchable caste in the Jaffna peninsula. If a Tamil national identity has been created over-riding these differences, Sinhalese state policy must in fact take much of the credit.

Secondly, the importance of the State in directing and controlling economic benefits and political pat-

ronage is today unparalleled in civil society. The economic elite is often said to be dependent on and related to the political elite. Post 1977 figures on the economy reveal that despite the open economy, no major project has been inaugurated in the Northern district and that foreign aid utilisation in the Jaffna peninsula till 1981 has been 0.<sup>15</sup> Though Tamil entrepreneurs in Colombo may have benefited from open-market policies, lack of investment in the North — where the separatist movement is gathering strength — cannot really ameliorate present conditions.

Finally, the political violence which characterises Sri Lankan society today has led to the creation of what is termed — "A National Security state", where the military arm of government — once an irrelevant factor in the Sri Lankan power-bloc — is playing an extremely important role. In this context, many commentators have noted that the Sri Lankan armed forces — especially the rank and file — are not disciplined and their sense of "trial retribution" outweighs their sense of professionalism. By force of circumstance, the Sri Lankan State is beginning to represent what has come to be known as "the bureaucratic-authoritarian" model.<sup>16</sup> In this model, the technocracy of the "Chicago boys" combines with the national security apparatus to discipline society and to propel national economic development. This type of state is new to Sri Lanka where authoritarian models were primarily linked to the parliamentary process and local elites. Whether the model will take hold is greatly dependent on the peaceful resolution of the ethnic conflict, since increase in "terrorism" is the primary justification for its existence. If it does take hold, it would have an even more repressive effect on an existing ethnic conflict as well as the democratic forces, since the military is perhaps the most "anti-Tamil" element in government, having suffered casualties at the hands of the Tamil guerrilla movements. In addition in recent times, the security apparatus has shown little patience with Sinhalese expressions of dissent in the south.

In such a situation the Sri Lankan State would have moved far away from the PQLI model which once made it the darling of the developing world.

The political leadership of the two communities has also played a major roll in determining the nature and degree of ethnic conflict. Ironically, the composition of the political leadership of both communities appears to parallel each other. A. J. Wilson in his study of the 1970 elections traces the development of the political leadership of the two major Sinhalese parties.<sup>17</sup> At independence, the leadership was drawn from the Colombo-Urban elite — those liberal gentlemen who inherited the British legacy. Until 1960 they remained in control of government, though by 1956 they had begun to cater to populist pressures in their predominantly Sinhalese constituencies. By 1970, local level elites began to play a prominent part in party politics, though the Colombo urban elite still maintained control of Cabinet level decisions. Today, parochial elites from the vast majority of parliamentary members. They are strong believers in an exclusive Sinhalese nationalist ideology and in recent times appear to be closely linked to local level mercantile interests. In fact, most village-level studies after 1977, seem to highlight this new congruence of political forces — the local level politician, the local level merchant and the local level "thug".

Professor K. Sivathamby also traces a similar development with regard to the Tamil political leadership.<sup>18</sup> Until the 1960s, the leadership was drawn from the Colombo-based Tamil Urban elite which often had gone to school with their Sinhalese counterparts. Like their Sinhalese friends, they responded to populist pressure from Tamil areas. By 1970, the leadership had shifted to the local level elites in Jaffna and Batticaloa. These groups like their Sinhalese counterparts were strong believers in a National Identity — this time of the Tamil variety — and were middle-lower-middle class in origin. However, unlike their Sinhalese counterparts, this leadership was



in no position to deliver their promises either of a separate state or rapid economic development for the North and the East.<sup>19</sup> So while Sinhalese parochial elites still remain firmly in control of the political process in Sinhalese areas, by 1980, leadership in the Tamil areas had shifted in favour of radical youth movements pledged to a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary struggle for a separate state. Though very little is known about these groups, and as no studies provide research data on their social composition, one may perhaps conclude from the background of their leaders that they are drawn from the same social background as the Sinhalese Youth who led the 1971 insurrection — rural-educated, unemployed. In this context it is interesting to note that while the unemployment rate for Sinhalese educated youth is 29%, for Tamil youth it is 41%.<sup>20</sup>

In reflecting on the issues of power, class and leadership and the intensity of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, Benedict Anderson's thesis on "print-capitalism" and the control of the "vernacular speaking elites" has important relevance for the Sri Lankan experience.<sup>21</sup> The Sinhalese identity of Aryan race, Buddhist religion and Sinhalese language — the basis of this "imagined community" — was really created at the end of the last century when printing presses were easily accessible to the new Sinhalese speaking intelligentsia. In fact, as historians have noted, the concept of "Aryan" race was never a part of Sinhalese history but a creation of nineteenth century European linguists. In addition, the Sinhalese language was unimportant in past Sinhalese dynasties — many chronicles were kept in Pali, and Tamil was very much a court language, especially for the last kings of Sri Lanka. Only Buddhism has an unbroken association with these Sinhalese identity, though recent scholars have pointed out that Buddhism was not exclusively linked to the Sinhalese, and that until the ninth century it was an important force in Tamil Nadu and inspired many Tamil works of literature. Therefore, this modern "created identity", propagated by

the vernacular press in the nineteenth century, was not really modelled on the Sinhalese dynastic past but on the nationalist models of western Europe especially the officially created nationalism of Germany — with its strange mixture of populism and pride in language and culture.<sup>22</sup>

The importance attached to the Sinhalese language and the "purity" of the Sinhalese linguistic form, especially in post-independent Sri Lanka, attests to Anderson's thesis that members of the Sinhalese-speaking intelligentsia remain the ideological mentors and perpetuators of an exclusive Sinhalese nationalism which they term "primordial". They control the media, the primary school system and the literature of the society — the very institutions which are important in creating imagined national identities.

If it is in fact the "vernacular educated elites" through control of the mass media and the primary education system, who are responsible for the creation of a national identity, then the present crisis in Sri Lanka may be easily explained. The "official language policy" of the 1950s ensured that the Sinhalese were educated in Sinhala and the Tamils in Tamil without any link language or any school courses teaching the language of the other community. As a result, Sri Lanka produced two "vernacular educated elites", one Tamil and one Sinhalese, each projecting a national identity based on an imagined community of race, language and religion. Though Tamil nationalism is in protest form, it appears to contain the same virulent, exclusive tendencies as its Sinhalese counterpart. Arasaratnam writes that though Ceylon Tamil nationalists initially drew inspiration from Tamil Nadu nationalists, by 1960, it had a Sri Lankan Tamil content.<sup>23</sup> The many nationalist songs which are presently being written, the literature on "Tamil Ealam", all project a populist community of interest based on "homeland" and "language" — the emphasis is on Tamil-speaking peoples. Except for purely Marxist tracts, the literature contains similar imagery of "heroic

culture", and "martyrdom", "oppressive demons" which animated the writings of Sinhalese nationalists at the turn of the century. Benedict Anderson's thesis therefore explains both the emergence of the two Sri Lanka nationalisms and also explains its ideological power — the control over the mode of communication in the vernacular by nationalist elites with special pride in the nationalist languages and special interest in populist mass communication. Though these Asian nationalisms claim 2,500 years of dynastic history, they are in fact modelled on the nation states of nineteenth century Europe and the Americas — when printing presses and primary education allowed for the creation of imagined communities without face to face interaction.

A discussion of power interests relevant to the present conflict in Sri Lanka cannot avoid analysing the regional implications of the mounting crisis. Until July 1983, Indian involvement in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict was minimal, and if anything, supportive. This was due to the fact that good relations existed between governments and more importantly previous riots were situations where governments were thought to have taken the necessary precautions to prevent a total breakdown in law and order. By 1983, this situation had changed. Sri Lankan Tamil emigration into Tamil Nadu had created a new pressure for Indian concern over the lives of Sri Lankan Tamils — 30,000 refugees entered India in July 1983. Sri Lankan exiled groups have grown close to Tamil Nadu politicians and have thereby become a factor in Indian politics.

Secondly, the government of J R Jayawardene did not really develop cordial relations with Mrs Gandhi who was in fact a close friend of Mrs Bandaranaike, the former Prime Minister. As a result, Mrs Gandhi felt little hesitation over expressing displeasure over some of the actions taken by the Jayawardene regime. In response, instead of attempting to strengthen relations with New Delhi, the Sri Lankan government



expanded its contacts with India's "bete noire" — the USA, and at a certain period even brought in Israel's Mossad. This only compounded regional insecurity and perhaps ensured that Tamil extremist groups would continue to have a secure and comfortable haven in Tamil Nadu.

Finally, the Jayawardene regime's response to the 1983 riots was qualitatively different to its earlier responses in 1977 and 1981 — the President went on record saying that this was a "natural response" of the Sinhalese to the separatist demand. In addition, the security services were no longer considered to be impartial enough to protect the lives of the Tamil civilian population. The outrage in Tamil Nadu created by the July incidents was extreme enough to force the Indian Foreign Minister to fly to Sri Lanka during the height of the crisis.

The Indian factor is an important one in Sri Lankan politics. On the one hand, it allows the government to play underdog to the expansionist Indian threat and thereby divert attention from the pressing problems of finding a political solution to the current conflict. At the same time, it does strengthen the hand of the Tamil minority, especially in its search for regional autonomy as part of a negotiated political package. Having outlawed the TULF (the Tamil parliamentary opposition) only six months earlier, the government in 1984 was compelled to invite them to an all-party conference. The proposals before the conference, negotiated in New Deihi, provided a blueprint for regional autonomy, only to be refused by Buddhist interest groups and the President's own ruling party. The Round Table continues, but unless the December 1983 sessions have something new to offer, it may be seen as only an exercise in futility. If the conference fails there is no doubt that the violence will escalate leading to what has to be a depressing and pyrrhic finale.

There are many scenarios being circulated in Sri Lanka with regard to the form and content of this

finale. The three worst scenarios are: 1. Violence increases to genocide proportions in the North, forcing an Indian intervention and an externally induced solution. 2. Violence increases, the military become frustrated and the lower rungs stage a coup d'etat supported by a civilian fraction, or by Buddhist interest groups — again perhaps forcing Indian intervention and an externally induced solution. 3. Violence increases, India is reticent so a unilateral, bloody solution results — either a final military solution or the creation of a separate Tamil State.

The most peaceful alternative is gradually becoming discounted as the all-party conference heads towards failure—i.e. the government negotiates a settlement with the moderate Tamil parties based on regional autonomy, the settlement is supported by the Indian government, approved at the polls by the people of the North and the East. After a short period of amnesty, extradition agreements are signed between India and Sri Lanka and India agrees to co-operate in containing future Tamil guerrilla movements.

### Nationalism and Ideology

Nationalist experience throughout the third world does seem to suggest that the ideological power of nationalism rests on the successful creation of myths and cultural symbols which bond together peoples within a particular community. This type of experience has often been accepted as a positive step forward in history, allowing for mass participation in government processes. However, the Sri Lankan experience does appear to suggest that nationalism contains within itself a destructive force which, if uncontrolled, will lead to a process of balkanisation and racial superiority. The need to demystify the myths and symbols of nationalism is therefore a much needed exercise if we are to overcome the present crisis in Sri Lanka.

The official nationalism of the Sinhalese, which is propagated by the State controlled media and by political discourse of all Sinhalese political parties, sees Sri Lanka as the mystical homeland of the

Sinhalese and the Buddhist religion. This in itself is perhaps not as destructive as the myths of the "other" — the Tamils who are seen as a historical threat to the Sinhalese people. Structuralist theory, in anthropology as well as linguistics, has pointed out that many of our "created identities" receive sustenance from opposition to another "demonic myth", the "horrendous other".<sup>24</sup>

An analysis of Sinhalese mythology, from historical chronicles to present-day schooltexts, clearly indicate that this "horrendous other" has been constantly depicted as "the Tamil". Historical chronicles portray them as the enemies of Buddhism — in fact after a bloody war a Sinhalese king is reassured by Buddhist monks that he need not feel sorrow for the many lives lost, since most of them were Tamil. Sinhalese school-children are often told that if they do not behave themselves, "gonibillas" will carry them away. School texts carry stories about gonibillas being kidnappers from South India who capture children by throwing ashes into their mouths. A study of schooltexts by the Centre for Media and Development shows how the terms "cruel", "dark", "threatening" are used to describe Tamils in historical short stories. Some of these texts have been recently changed, but they must have left a lasting impact on two generations of Sinhalese school-children.<sup>25</sup>

Many foreigners have been shocked by the intensity of violence directed against the Tamils during times of communal rioting — the stabbing, the burning, an impassioned hysteria — not the detached systematic violence of Western society. The recent attacks (November 1984) by Tamil guerrillas on Sinhalese settlers displayed a similar quality of viciousness. This viciousness can only be linked to the creation of identities based on myths of "the other". Since Sinhalese school-children learn about Tamils in terms of "demonology", it is perhaps natural that the violence directed against Tamils replicates the violence which is for example directed against demons in mythology and in exorcism practices in



popular cults.<sup>26</sup> Such violence requires humiliation and fire, in Eastern mythology is the cleanser of the soul. Though this type of psychoanalytical approach is often scoffed at by third world intellectuals, one need only to pick up the Sri Lankan newspapers to realise how this cult of Tamil demonology is perpetuated. Today, we have the "Tamil terrorist", not a product of social and historical forces, but a disembodied spirit roving around Tamil Nadu and the Jaffna Peninsula waiting to devour the innocent Sinhalese. This approach to the problem, especially in the mass media, not only encourages an irrational attitude toward the problem of political violence, but ensures that blind revenge and irrational justice will be the "natural" responses to the political violence of the Tamil extremists.

Ironically, Tamil nationalist myths based on territory, dynasty (the Nallur Kingdom), and language have since the 1950s also built up a mythology of "the other" — Sinhalese bucolic hordes, bent on brutal oppression. At this point of history, the Tamils do not have a State and cannot perpetuate this myth through official school-texts. However, if indeed a separate state is established, I have no doubt that the "Sinhalese bucolic hordes" will make an early appearance in the pages of schooltexts.

At a more general level then, we find that we are really caught in an "ideological double bind". What is currently needed — besides a negotiated political solution based on regional autonomy — is an ideological assault on the seeming unity of nationalist myths and symbols which foster exclusivity and racial hatred. In this context intellectuals and educationists have an important role to play — they must analyse political and cultural discourse — **especially the discourse in the vernacular languages** — and expose the power interests and historical lies which help perpetuate an ideological block to a rational approach and a negotiated settlement of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.<sup>27</sup> However if Benedict Anderson's thesis is correct, it is precisely members of this intelligentsia, with a stran-

glehold on the vernacular media and the system of education, who perpetuate nationalist myths and symbols and who now find themselves trapped by the monsters of their own creation.<sup>28</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

8. K. Jayawardena, "Some Aspects of Class and Ethnic Consciousness in Sri Lanka in the Late 19 and 20th Centuries" in SSA ed., *op. cit.*, p. 74-92.
9. See generally, J. Perera, "Exploring the Solution to the Communal Problem" in SRD ed. *op. cit.*, Chapter Three and also "Interviews" in *Lanka Guardian*, June 15th, 1984.
10. See generally, N. Gunasinghe, "The Open Economy and its Impact on Ethnic Relations", in SRD *op. cit.*, Chapter Six.
11. K. Jayawardena, *Lanka Guardian*, May 20th, 1984.
12. The two periods — 1955-1958 when the old left parties such as the LSSP and the CP stood for parity with regard to the Tamil and Sinhalese languages; 1977-1980 when the JVP argues for Tamil autonomy and the right to self-determination. See also articles by D. Jayatilaka, writing as Chintaka in *The Lanka Guardian*, 1979-1982.
13. These were the figures for 1980 given in Parliament by the Leader of the Opposition during the 1980 budget speech, not denied by government. See also Census of Public and Corporation Sector Employment, 1980. Table 5 on Public Sector Employees by Major Occupational Group and Race.
14. Report of the Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey, 1978/1979, p. 28, Table 15.
15. CRD, "Myths and Realities", in *op. cit.*, p. 4.
16. See D. Collier, "Overview of the Bureaucratic Authoritarian Model" in D. Collier, ed., *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 19-32.
17. A J Wilson, *Electoral Politics in an Emergent State; the Ceylon General Elections of May 1970*, Montreal, McGill, 1971.
18. See generally, K. Sivathamby, "Some Aspects of the Social Composition of the Tamils of Sri Lanka", in SSA ed. *Ethnicity and Social Change*, *op. cit.*, Chapter Eight.
19. See generally articles by N. Tiruchelvam, "Politics of Decentralisation" and Politics of Resource Distribution" in Goldman Wilson ed., *op. cit.*
20. Ministry of Plan Implementation and Department of Census and Statistics, Labour Force and Socio-Economic Survey, 1983.
21. B. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
22. See articles RALH Gunawardena *op. cit.*, and also Senake Bandaranaike, "The Peopling of Sri Lanka: The National Question and Some Problems of History and Ethnicity", and S. Goonatilake, "The Formation of Sri Lanka Culture; Reinterpretation of Chronicle and Archaeological Material" in SSA ed., *op. cit.* Chapters 1, 2.
23. See S. Arasaratnam, "Nationalism in Sri Lanka and the Tamils" in M. Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

(Continued on page 24)

## Campbell Park in the War

Peace holds like glass around the town  
This Sunday morning etched with bells  
With football noises in the park  
Where gold wild-Ehela drizzles down.

No menace in this yellow rain  
No menace in the football yells  
No menace in the smoke that curls  
From leaves piled up by sweeping girls.

Chatter rises by the trees  
No racial bars to workers tongues  
Linked branches shade their Sunday ease  
From labours done in many suns

No racial bars in lovers touch  
As footfalls tarry on the walks  
No panic as they come and go  
While round the park the chariots flow  
With the well-fed and their cries of war

U. Karunatilake



# Soviet resurrection of Stalin is raising questions

Dusko Doder

## MOSCOW

The Russians have had glimpses of him for some time, the profile of the dictator with the jet-black mustache appearing for a few seconds in documentaries about World War II.

But during the past few months, Stalin's image and name have been reappearing with a frequency and regularity to suggest more than the pendulum swing of time.

Some argue that possibly an effort is under way to provide a more objective picture of at least some aspects of Stalin's activities, to stop falsification of history, of which Stalin was an acknowledged master. Others believe that the development is connected largely to the celebration next year of the 40th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany.

The current revival involves not only Stalin's record as a military leader and diplomat, but also his economic leadership and his role in the 1917 Revolution.

In the past few months, millions of Soviet viewers have seen for the first time documentary films that had been gathering dust in the archives. Stalin was shown in a variety of settings: planning the defense of Moscow in the summer of 1941, in his white marshal's uniform posing for pictures with Roosevelt and Churchill at Tehran and Yalta, and at Potsdam with Truman and Attlee.

A few days ago, Stalin was showed on television speaking to the troops in Red Square Nov. 7, 1941. Hitler's armies were close to Moscow, near what is now the international airport. The soldiers were about to march to the battle. Stalin's speech was remarkable, invoking the names not of Marx and Engels but of ancient saints and heroes of Russia.

But not all references to Stalin are linked to his military role in World War II.

One of the most authoritative Soviet publication, the monthly journal *Kommunist*, in its November issue had some positive things to say about Stalin's economic policies during the war.

Stalin's name also is being rehabilitated in connection with the Bolshevik takeover in 1917. A front-page editorial on the eve of the 67th anniversary of that event referred to Stalin and four other Old Bolsheviks as men whose "revolutionary passion and power" were directly linked to the "ideas and activities" of Lenin, the founder of the Soviet state.

Perhaps even more significant was the scene in a new feature film about the revolution based on the book, "Ten Days That Shook the World", by the radical American journalist, John Reed.

On the eve of the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, Lenin's Politburo was meeting to make the fateful decision. The historical record of this gathering indicates that Lenin made the decision to go ahead despite the opposition of all the others. But the movie shows Stalin, smoking his pipe and pacing around the table, as supporting the leader. "If we do not do it tomorrow, we never will," Stalin says.

In many cases, Stalin's resurrection has been made indirectly.

One vehicle was a new book about Roosevelt, written by Alexander Chakovsky, a prominent public figure and editor in chief of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, the largest weekly newspaper.

The book, "An Unfinished Portrait," purports to be a biography

of Roosevelt. But larger portions of it are devoted to Stalin's dealings with Roosevelt and their meetings. Mr. Chakovsky's Stalin is a tactful and considerate man, a great diplomat and a wise military leader.

Another vehicle is a new 90-minute documentary film about Marshal Georgi Zhukov, Stalin's deputy during the war. It contains long excerpts from a filmed interview with Zhukov made before his death in 1974 and never shown before.

In the movie, Zhukov only hints at Stalin's confusion on June 22, 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. It was Zhukov who informed Stalin about the attack. But Zhukov continues to describe Stalin as a great commander in chief who successfully guided the Red Army to victory. "And I think" so today," Zhukov added.

To weigh the impact of all this, it must be recalled that the adulation of Stalin, which once had mammoth proportions, stopped in April 1953, about a month after his death.

Except for an occasional mention during the next few years, the word "Stalinist" became a pejorative term. Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes in 1956, at a closed session of the Communist Party's 20th Congress. Later, Khrushchev's speech was read to all party members in closed sessions. Stalin's name was swiftly removed from bookshelves, and film footage of him was relegated to the archives.

Khrushchev again denounced Stalin in 1961 at the 22nd party congress. Shortly thereafter, Stalin's body was removed from the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square and placed in a simple grave near the Kremlin wall marked with a plain flat slab.



# What is to be done?

Amaradasa Fernando

**T**o get a consensus of National opinion within the Framework of a Unitary State, I believe the following things should be done:—

(1) Invite the Tigers to the Round Table Conference. Even the Prime Minister has come round to this opinion as stated in Parliament recently. If it is impractical to hold such a Conference in Sri Lanka for the safety of Tigers, then the venue for a Conference, could be in a neutral country. We should not think that this is a come down. (Mrs. Indra Gandhi before her death invited the insurgents in Mizoram for formal peace talks to New Delhi. In fact peace talks commenced only last week between the Indian Government representatives and the MISO National Front).

(2) Give back Mrs. Srima Bandaranaike her civic rights, by a Presidential pardon.

(3) Declare an amnesty for proscribed parties.

(4) Withdraw the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

(5) Call for a cease-fire, and confine the Army to barracks, before a gradual withdrawal.

(6) Recall those parties which have walked out, or are not attending the R.T.C.

(7) Concede Regional Autonomy for the Tamil speaking people in the North and East, the Central Government keeping the portfolios of Finance, Defence, National Security, Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

(8) State controlled colonization to be done without imbalance to the existing Tamil population in predominantly Tamil Areas.

(9) University entrance and jobs to be given without discrimination with merit as the criterion.

This last is a tricky problem, because there is discrimination even

when a boy from Royal College is chosen by marks against a boy from Polonnaruwa. This is because the former has better facilities. While merit is important, in recruitment to the University and for jobs there should be area quotas, to avoid the type of discrimination referred to earlier. This is what is obtained in the U.K. now. The question of discrimination can be solved by Regional Councils, which should be given an opportunity for development of financial, cultural and social development. Once this decentralization takes place, there will be more jobs and schools and universities, thus relieving the pressure in the centre.

Recently the Spanish Government under the Socialist Government of Felipe Gonzalez gave limited autonomy to the Basque Separatists. What even General Franco in 1934 could not achieve by military suppression, Gonzalez has been able to achieve by negotiation.

There is one thing I would like to allude to the side of the protagonists of separation. That is, they in their despair, driven to the wall are taking a leap into the dark. The Jaffna economy in the past was a "Postal order economy", depending largely on the pensioners from Malaysia, Singapore, Borneo, etc. Now it is mainly agricultural, depending on their chillies, onions, potatoes, vegetables, and of course fishing. If they separate, where are they to sell their stuff to? Tamil Nadu? (where these commodities can be bought cheaper). The South Indian Tamils will give their moral support, but certainly their business, men are not going to sustain the Jaffna Tamil Nad by giving better prices.

Then some Tamil might say, "Our Tamil expatriates will help industrialise Jaffna and the East like Singapore. But how? There is no infrastructure at all there, when even in the south there is any

hardly worth talking of. In spite of the bounteous aid from the World Bank, the I.M.F. etc. which Mr. Ronnie de Mel has obtained during the UNP Regime, we yet remain a poor Third World Country. The case of Singapore is in many ways unique.

## Dead-end of Communal Politics

Several decades of Communal politics by people like Mr. K. M. P. Rajaratne and the late Mr. F. R. Jayasuriya have raised the conditions for a de facto division of the country. The Communalists of the day find psychological solace by harking back to the Golden Era of Duttugemunu. Jawaharlal Nehru once wrote about such people. He said, "This constant arking back to the past is an unhealthy sign, in the nations as well as in individuals. It reflects a sense of hopelessness, an inability or unwillingness to find a way out of adversity to a better future."

Then there are the Buddhist monks who feel that a threat to the Sinhala nation is a threat to Buddhism. They have come out as the "Fidei Defensor" (of Buddhism). In the process of sabre-rattling they have forsaken the teachings of the Buddha, which they loudly profess.

The teachings of the Buddha are universal. The Buddha never believed in a racial superiority. The Buddha would say of them "Save me from these Buddhists".

If these Buddhists know the teachings of the Buddha, then they would know, the concepts of Karma and Sansara. It is by accident that one is a Sinhala or Tamil. In Sansara, one who is a Sinhala today may be born a Tamil in another birth. The only criterion is that we are all human beings.

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# Farewell to Clive the colossus

John Arlott

**T**HIS week one of world cricket's major figures, physically and in terms of performance, slouched off the scene. C. H. Lloyd of Guyana; Haslingden, Lancashire; and West Indies — Clive to the media, Hubert to his friends — had by then become the most successful Test captain the game has ever known.

Indeed, his record may never be equalled except by another West Indian with perpetually renewed resources of pace bowling. He led West Indies into 74 Tests, of which they won 36, lost only 12, and lost only two out of 18 series. Until a few days ago they had won an unparalleled 11 successive Tests, had gone 28 undefeated, and had twice won the World Cup.

It had all been done in his apparently contradictory blend of the spectacular and the relaxedly calm.

In individual terms he appeared in 110 Tests between 1966-7 and 1984 and — just — 1985; only Cowdrey (114) has played in more. In his 479 matches in all first-class cricket between 1963 and this week, he scored 30,597 runs with 77 centuries at an average of 49.27; took 114 wickets, made 373 catches and was responsible for many run-outs.

If the figures of his success are impressive, the manner of its achievement has been splendidly handsome, the more so for his unhappy start. As a boy trying to stop two others fighting he was hit in the eye with a ruler; that injury, plus many hours of study in bed light, permanently affected his eyesight. Soon afterwards a leg injury was so badly infected by tetanus as to bring him near death. Remarkably, while he was confined to his bed, he grew fantastically — six inches in a month.

Despite those handicaps his

cricketing ability was early apparent. Such is the concentration of talent in West Indies, though, that ability is not enough: it must be rapidly by achievement, chosen for Guyana against Jamaica in 1964, Lloyd scored only 12 and was dropped until 1965 when scores of two and 17 against the Australians cost him his place once more.

Recalled again in the match against Barbados, he scored 0 in the first innings, and there is little doubt that his first-class career was then in jeopardy. In the second innings he made a fine, forcing 107. He did not miss an opportunity again.

When he first broke upon the first-class scene here, he caught the eye by his fielding — perhaps the most effective ever seen at cover point. He had the immense advantage of his height, over 6ft 4in; and, even at that, having unusually long arms and legs.

He ambled, apparently abstractedly in the field, sun hat brim folded up like some amiable Paddington Bear, but upon the cue of a stroke played near him he leapt like some great cat into explosive action. His huge strides made his action area immense. In that respect he outstripped the Rhodesian Colin Bland, who may have looked more graceful but could not match Lloyd's vast dives, goalkeeper-fashion, to cut off a ball that seemed far beyond his reach.

Then he returned with a whip of a mighty right arm or, off balance, a strikingly powerful and accurate palm push. In fact, by the hypnotic influence of his fielding presence he scared many batsmen, not only out of barely possible runs but of some that would have been easy.

When leg injuries restricted his speed over the ground he took those vast hands and rapid reflexes

into the slips where he proved equally valuable.

As a batsman he has always used a weighted bat with extra grips on the handle to hit with unusual force. Against Surrey at The Oval he once pulled a straight ball from Robin Jackman from a wicket on the gasholder side of the ground into the yard of Archbishop Tenison's School, on the other side of the Harleyford Road.

Physically his great reach enabled him to drive "on the up" deliveries to which ordinary men would play back. This combination of reach, enormous strength, natural timing and instinctive attacking urge has made one of the most effective and powerful, controlled hitters the game has known. His 201 for West Indies against Glamorgan in 1976 equalled Gilbert Jessop's record for the fastest double century.

Once he had found his feet his advance was never checked. In his first Test — against India at Bombay — he made 82 and a match-winning 78 not out. On his first appearance against England he scored 118 at Bridgetown; in his first against Australia 129. He has in his time bowled in three different fashions; slow leg-spin, medium seam-up and, briefly, at quite brisk pace. After his league cricket days, though, he bowled little.

In 1967 he came to England to join Haslingden in the Lancashire League because, he said, "I thought it would improve my batting technique". On a bleak London night during the following winter he agreed — exciting for Desmond Eager and myself — to join Hampshire. He had, though, developed an affection for Lancashire and its people; and when having been outbid for Garfield Sobers, that country authority approached him, he agreed to join them.

He and Farook Engineer gave an immense fillip to their cricket,

(Continued on page 23)



# A captain and a king

IT IS difficult to become an adopted Lancastrian, but Clive Hubert Lloyd, the master batsman from Guyana has made it. As he gave up his captaincy of what is arguably the greatest national team cricket has ever known, his fans in his country club were queuing up to say nice things about him.

The reason for the euphoria in Manchester is that though Lloyd is giving up his West Indian leadership, he has said he will turn out for Lancashire next season. So there are no flags flying at half mast at Old Trafford.

But there were emotional scenes at the end of the Fifth Test in Sydney this week. No captain has bowed out after an innings defeat in a Test more gracefully. Even the Australian press, no friends of opposing national teams, dipped their pens in honey to record the passing of a great captain. The

captains and the kings depart, but Lloyd was something rather special.

But moving from sentimentality to statistics, he is among the select few — including Geoffrey Boycott, Collin Cowdrey and Sunil Gavaskar — to have played more than 100 Test matches, the last 74 as West Indies captain, although he was a less prolific run-getter than Gavaskar and Bradman.

What made him one of the great captains? He was able to read a game down to the last ball, his placing of fielders was perfection and his control of players could never be faulted.

And he was a master of the politics of the game, from back-room battles to bringing wisdom to incidents in the crowds that sometimes rivalled League soccer for hooliganism.

He adapted himself to his own

As a keynote of his "captain character" he invariably responded to high challenge, that was apparent in his last innings when, in a losing side against Australia, his 72 was both the highest and the most convincing innings of his team.

Lloyd's captaincy has been impressively marked by dignity; firm, unfussy discipline; and cool, realistic strategy. Some among his opponents have criticised him for the ruthless use of his mighty battery of fast bowlers. He, in typically relaxed fashion, has indicated that, given the sharpest of cricketing weapons, he will employ it and that the matter of intimidatory bowling is one for the decision of umpires.

He retires a well-liked and respected cricketer; a philosophic man who managed to play and conduct his matches in a fashion refreshingly free from the acrimony which has infected the cricket of some of his opponents.

— 'Guardian'

advancing years. So in the field he moved from cover to slips — the legs may have weakened but the reflexes remained razor sharp. No wonder they called him the Big Cat and Paddington Bear, a tribute to a combination of stealth and power.

There was a time in 1983 when Lloyd almost gave it all up. He was left out of games against the Australians. A year later he fought back from a back injury to start his unbeatable run.

One of Lloyd's friends is Philp Ettinger, who also manages some of his business affairs. "As a captain, I don't think he was a taskmaster, but if anything went wrong with the discipline of the team he could make his views well known."

He has shown some signs of human fallibility. The experts say he should not have batted on the last day of the Fourth Test and he should have included a spin bowler in that disastrous Fifth. And of course, he did not always win the toss.

Ettinger said yesterday: "I can't see him leaving Lancashire at the moment. I know there has been talk of him going into West Indian politics, but we shall have to wait and see."

Lloyd has strong views on the politics of the game. He turned down an offer, reported as in the region of £200,000 to tour South Africa at the time Boycott, Gooch and Company went out there.

Of his personal political plans, Lloyd seems to be playing backward defensive strokes. He admits he is attracted to a political career in the West Indies. "Whether you like it or not as captain of a cricket team you're involved in politics somewhere or other. I'll think about it, and if I can do a decent job, I'll do it."

Another friend in Manchester said:

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## Farewell. . . .

(Continued from page 22)

especially in the limited-over game with five Gillette Cup wins and two John Player League championships in seven years; and in 1981 he was appointed county captain.

For the 1974-75 series in India, though, he had already been made captain of West Indies in succession to Rohan Kanhai. From that day until he retired this week he captained his country in every match they played except when injured and, briefly, during the dispute with the Packer "World Series".

Captaincy has affected the play of many cricketers but Lloyd took it in his buoyant stride. In his first match as touring captain, he made 163 at Bangalore; in his first series scored 636 runs at 79.50. As Bill Frindall's valuable figures show, in 36 matches as a member of West Indies teams he scored 2,282 runs at 38.67; in 74 as captain, 5,233 at 51.30.



## What is . . .

(Continued from page 21)

This idea is eloquently voiced by Montesquieu in "FRANCE MES PENSEES" 1689-1755. He said:—"if I know of a thing useful to my nation, but ruinous to another, I would not propose it to my prince, because I am a man before being a French, (or again) because I am of necessity a man, and only French by chance".

### Only under socialism

Just as the "Indian Problem", was an economic and human problem which was used by the communal parties to castigate the Left in the 1940's so is the "Tamil Problem", which has a similar genesis, is now being used to attack the Left once again. The communal problem can be solved once and for all only under a Socialist Government. Those Tamil Capitalists who today will espouse the cause of Eelam, will always go in for the cheaper labour, irrespective of communal considerations. Only if the difference is marginal will communal considerations affect the selection. The

same is true of the Sinhala. The capitalist system, where profitability is the only motive. In a system where exploitation of man will cease, only will the communal problem be solved.

The only way that as a Separate State that they will be able to exist is as a client state, like Israel.

It should be remembered that those who do not learn the lessons of history will be forced to re-live it. Therefore it is best that Tamils and Sinhalese reach a modus-vivendi and solve their problems amicably.

### A captain . . .

(Continued from page 23)

"I can't see him leaving Lancashire at the moment." So for at least another year he will be back with his wife and family — his interests outside cricket are music, reading, squash and the theatre. At the Old Trafford they were saying: "They'll have to drag him away from Lancashire screaming."

Back to Australia. The Sydney

Morning Herald's Warren Ryan said it all in his column: "Leading one of the finest cricket machines of all time will fade, but his personal deeds will shine brightly in cricket's history books forever."

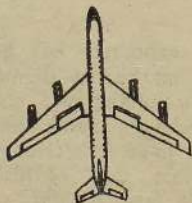
— FINANCIAL TIMES

### Power . . .

(Continued from page 19)

24. Generally, Claude Levi Strauss and Structural Anthropology have maintained that "difference" is as essential to the understanding of symbolism as Unity and perhaps provides a better analytical reading of social structures and the human psyche.
25. See generally Center for Media and Development, "Communal Conflict and School Texts", Colombo, 1982, and R. Siriwardena, *op. cit.*
26. J. Stirrat and E. Nissan — papers presented at Social Anthropology Seminar, University of Sussex, November 1984.
27. We need to evolve a methodology along the lines suggested by M. Foucault in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* — but that is a subject for a different analysis.
28. For a comprehensive bibliography, see I. Goonetilleke, July 1983 and the National Question — A Bibliography" *ub CRD op. cit.*, Chapter Nine.

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