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Black Knight
It's your move

THE UNP'S TWO FRONTS

Mervyn de Silva

With his massive parliamentary majority, J.R.J installed his Executive Presidency. Given his style, the UNP ruled and reigned. The Executive was the focus, the power-centre. When the parliamentary balance changed, the legislature became a more active arena. Hence the "impeachment plot" that nearly toppled President Premadasa. And now the judiciary intervenes.

Post-Premadasa politics may be less tense but far more complicated. The "One-man Show" attracts as well as repels. With his five-sixths majority, the authoritarian J.R. presided over a U.N.P. that few dared to defy. As he used to boast so often, his government could do what it pleased, except make a man a woman or vice versa. Wholesale desertion could have altered the balance of power in parliament but such a conspiracy would not have remained a secret too long. To everybody's surprise, Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali and company succeeded in deceiving President Premadasa almost up to D-Day. The Executive President would have been ousted in a "constitutional coup" if the President had not been tipped off just in time.

Last week, the Appeal Court held that the decision of the Governors of the Southern and North-Western provinces in the appointment of Chief Ministers after the last polls "unreasonable and illegal". In both provinces the UNP fared quite well but not well enough to win a simple majority, or more seats than the SLFP and DUNF combined. The Bench (Justice Palakidnar, Court of Appeal president, Justice Sarath Silva and Justice D.P.S. Gunasekera decided unanimously to ask the Governors to "appoint Provincial chief ministers according to law". On Saturday, Mr. G.M. Premachandra took his oaths as NWP chief minister before the governor, Mr. Montague Jayawickrema, former UNP Cabinet minister. Mr. Premachandra is not a member of the S.L.F.P., the main opposition party. In fact, he was a staunch UNP'er until the impeachment motion against President Premadasa.

The politics of the Southern province council is somewhat different. There the SLFP won more seats than the DUNF but not a clear majority. But once again, could have hoped for a stable working majority if all the anti-UNP groups combined. Next to the western province, the southern is probably the most important Sinhala-majority province. The South has also been in the pre-1977 era, a traditional bastion of radical-Leftwing opinion. With the SLFP's Chandrika Kumaranatunge as

Chief Minister of the western province, two Opposition Chief Ministers in the South and North-west could be a strong position from which the combined Opposition (the PEP or Peoples' Alliance) could launch their Presidential campaign by November-December next year. (Of the island's nine provinces, the North and East cannot be confidently included in the 1994-5 electoral agenda).

The balance of power in the 7 provinces thus tilts a little more against the UNP with this month's developments.

Southern Front

In the past fortnight, public attention focussed not on the South but on the North. The war — OPERATION YAL DEVI, the most ambitious "joint operation" that armed forces have undertaken since Lalith Athulathmudali's OPERATION LIBERATION, the provocative prelude as we now know to the Indian intervention.

President Wijetunge has done an exceptionally good job in reducing the mounting tensions in Southern society and on the party-political front. The soft-spoken Mr. Wijetunge and his low-profile presidency have been warmly greeted, particularly by the middle-class, and in this island, that class is a large sprawling community.

But no governing party can win on style alone — certainly not after 16 years in office.... 17 by the time the presidential contest is held. The government had hoped that an assertive policy on the war (no more jaw-jaw, like President Premadasa) would do the trick. OPERATION YAL DEVI marked a significant change in military approach, in strategy, but its gains were psychological rather than gains on the ground. Colombo took the offensive; the army was not merely re-active. It was taking the war to the enemy. But the large casualty figures tended to reduce the psychological gains — morale, not just military morale but Sinhala morale. President Wijetunge had created the correct climate for it with his "There is no ethnic problem, only a terrorist menace".

So now the government must concentrate once again on the strategically vital 'Southern front', the political struggle, the long war.

The UNP has always outwitted this "enemy" though it has been much less successful with the other, non-traditional foe in the battleground — the LTTE, largely because it cannot really read the mind of the enemy, or if you prefer, Prabhakaran.

What is it that the UNP does NOT wish to see? A grand alliance — SLFP-led PEP

which makes a deal with the DUNF. The DUNF mustered close to 15% at the provincial polls against President Premadasa, in a fight led by Mr. Athulathmudali, no mean anti-Premadasa strategist. Mr. Dissananyake lacks the single-minded, driving ambition of Lalith. Any newspaper sees his tactical manoeuvres as forwards-sideways-backwards; far too sharply focused on himself than on the party. Besides, he is less popular than Mr. Premachandra, a top pro-DUNF professional claimed the other day at a seminar. And yet, he will be an asset.... if only the UNP makes it clear that he cannot return to the old JR heirarchy, as No. 2.

Even at the best of times, President D.B. is street-smart enough to realise the UNP, the spokesman of the Colombo-based business/professional classes, cannot have two Kandyanas as No. 1 and No 2.

After the DUNF issue is settled the UNP will maximise the advantage of the Anura-Chandrika schism in the SLFP-PEP. It is not clear how many MP's, Anura can mobilise but.... a divided SLFP is a divided enemy.

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Anura Makes His Move

Who says Sri Lankans cannot keep a secret? Well, seven Sri Lankans can! And who are the Magnificent Seven who knew Anura Bandaranaike was ready to make his move. Ah, that's secret! Many SLFP'ers and some family members realised that Anura was heartily sick of what this student of history described to this journal as a "byzantine conspiracy" against him. In his statement, he has identified some of them. But the political reasons for this the most crucial decision in his political career are best described by him:

"Today, perhaps, is the saddest day of my political life. I have after consideration and much thought, decided to resign from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, with immediate effect. I have already written to the President and the General Secretary of the S.L.F.P. informing them of my decision, and my letters have been hand-delivered to them both. I have been forced by events, engineered and manipulated by a few conspirators who have taken absolute and total control of the S.L.F.P. to take this momentous decision.

It is now 89 days since I have been suspended and I still do not know why I have been suspended. I have waited patiently for a charge sheet to be sent to me, and the party has neither, the courage nor the guts to present a single charge against me. It is a gross violation of all known canons of civilised behaviour. Even a person accused of a serious crime has to be produced before a Magistrate within 24 hours and the maximum period he can be remanded without bail is 15 days.

Politics is my life and my life has been the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. I have never done business or made money out of politics. The only wealth I had was the vast estate left to me by my grandfather Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike and subsequently taken over without compensation by the United Front Government. Honesty has been my forte and not even my sternest critic can ever point a finger at me on this score."

BRIEFLY...

War on Tigers

Three hundred dead was the official figure. That included the "enemy" too, and civilians. A hundred and twenty-five soldiers had been killed, it was admitted, in the battle for a boatyard in the North from where the LTTE was launching men and materials in their Eelam war. The government forces assault on Kilali, code named 'Operation Yaldevi', was a success, the authorities announced. One hundred and twenty rebel boats had been captured.

With Kilali secured government forces have effectively cut off all land and sea routes to and from the Jaffna peninsula, a Defence Ministry spokesman said. The army withdrew to base after the successful attack, because of bad weather, it was stated. But the Tigers resumed boat traffic the next day.

Government loses Chief Ministers

The Court of Appeal held on October 8 that the UNP nominees Jayawickrema Perera and M.S. Amarasinghe had been illegally and unreasonably appointed as Chief Ministers by the Governors of the North Western Province and the Southern Province. The appointments were quashed.

In delivering the unanimous judgment of the three judge Bench on the writ applications filed by Mr. G.M. Premachandra (DUNF — North Western Province) and Mr Amarasinghe Dodangoda (People's Alliance — Southern Province) Justice Sarath N Silva, with the other two judges agreeing, said: "The power of appointing a Chief Minister is vested in the Governor by the Constitution being the Supreme Law of the land. The constitution lays down the criteria on which such appointments should be made. The discharge of this power is a matter of grave public concern. It cannot be shrouded in a veil of secrecy. We have to observe that the claim of each Governor that he made the appointment on the basis of undisclosed confidential inquiries tends to cast the basis of the respective decisions into secrecy. Such a process of decision making is repugnant to Administrative Law. The review of the decisions made in the exercise of statutory power on the basis of unreasonableness, taking into consideration proper matters, the exclusion of irrelevant matters and acting on evidence, being basic tenets of Administrative Law, would be tendered illusory, if the authority vested with power is permitted to take refuge in confidentiality and secrecy as to

the true basis of his decision. Although non-disclosures and confidentiality may be permitted in rare instances in public interest or that of good government, such a plea cannot hold water where the other side has made full disclosure of firm and verifiable evidence to the contrary.

"The same matter may be viewed from the perspective of the fairness of the decision making process. At the stage the persons appointed Chief Ministers made unsupported claims of support outside their party ranks, the Governors were possessed of declarations and affidavits of all other members pledging support to the petitioners. Therefore the fair procedure to be adopted at this stage by the Governors consistent with the principles in Administrative Law was to have confronted each of the two Chief Ministers (second respondents) with the material in hand and require them to produce evidence to the contrary for their claims to be considered. Instead the Governors claim to have hurriedly embarked on confidential inquiries to seek support for such claims. This shows a tilt on their part in favour of the persons appointed as Chief Ministers. The irresistible inference is that the decision making process is thereby flawed.

"On the aforesaid review of the relevant facts and the applicable law we hold that the decision of the first respondents (the Governors) in each of the applications, to appoint the Chief Ministers of their respective Provinces as unreasonable and illegal. We accordingly grant to the petitioner writs of quo warranto and certiorari as asked for".

"They are terrorists" — Europeans told

President Wijetunga told a visiting European parliamentary delegation that the LTTE were terrorists who had cloaked themselves with a garb of ethnicity and a theory about a traditional homeland. "We are for a political solution to restore peace in the North and East", the President told the delegation. But the violence unleashed by the LTTE had created a terrorist problem, he said.

"Everyone can see that it is not an ethnic problem. It is a creation of the terrorists. As you can see for yourself Tamils live peacefully among the Sinhalese in every part of the country outside Jaffna whereas they would not allow Sinhalese and Muslims to travel freely or live in Jaffna. They even harass their own Tamil people who do not toe their line. All peace loving Tamil people feel more free to live outside the North now than in the North itself", the President said.

Reporting Parliament

Izeth Hussain

It would be unfair not to acknowledge that even if freedom of expression is still not entirely satisfactory in Sri Lanka, there has been a vast improvement from what it was under our 1977 Government.

My first-hand experience of the Philippines from 1982 to 1985 showed that there was far more freedom of expression under the Marcos dictatorship than under our five-star democracy. There was no fear psychosis there during those years. Retrospectively it seems that what we had under the 1977 Government was really a reign of terror.

Under President Premadasa there certainly was an improvement. But as soon as the press became too outspoken for the comfort of a Government having to face Provincial Council elections before long, there was violence against the journalists. Patriots from places like Maradana and Wanatamulla had apparently convinced themselves that Sri Lanka had to be saved from its journalists. Thrashings, and in one case knifing, of our journalists followed in the second half of last year.

The tactic of violence was abandoned this year, probably because it was causing a bit of an international rumpus, our journalists having done a good job in alerting their co-practitioners abroad to what was happening in Sri Lanka. The new tactic, a less unintelligent one, was to exploit the financial vulnerability of some of our publications to try to silence them. But the tactic was applied extremely unintelligently, because it was all so blatant. The 1988 Government showed no understanding that the art of controlling people, and making it seem acceptable, requires finesse.

That tactic too appears to have been abandoned by the present Government. Or it may be, and it seems more realistic to think, that it is being applied intelligently. Newspaper magnates and humbler owners of small-circulation publications having financial problems are expected to know where their true interests lie, and behave accordingly. In other words self-censorship, which is the most democratic method available to control democratic freedom of expression in democracies.

I do not believe that we can realistically expect much more at the present stage of our slow progress from slavery to freedom. People on the whole dislike change, more particularly abrupt change, and there is a lot to be said after all for gradualism. The Sinhalese people have historically shown a mastery of the art of gradualism, part of their ancient folk wisdom shown in the expression "Heming-heming". That mastery means a capacity to roll with the punches, and survive one's tormentors. We have to recover our freedoms slowly-slowly.

The portents for press freedom seemed to read quite favourably when the present Government assumed office in May this year. On the whole, I do not think those portents have been belied. But we were given a nasty jolt more recently.

I refer to the restrictions imposed on press coverage of what happens in Parliament. After some confusion it was clarified that the press can cover Parliamentary proceedings straightaway, but there should be strict adherence to the official version after Hansard appears. The Government should rethink its position on this, taking into account something that happened in the British Parliament in 1939.

At a time when it had become apparent that there was no alternative to declaring war against Germany, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain got up to make a speech showing clearly that he wished to go on temporizing. When the Acting Labour Party leader Arthur Greenwood got up to speak a voice was heard from the Tory backbenches exhorting him, "Speak for England, Arthur!" He did his best, and war had to be declared.

The British people came to feel that "Speak for England" represented one of the great moments, perhaps the greatest, in the long history of the Mother of Parliaments. There comes a time in the history of a people when they have no alternative but to stand up, and try to rise to greatness. The British people stood up and made a grand contribution towards the extermination of Hitler and his gang of racist criminals, whose victory would have ended

Western civilization and every other civilization in a global barbarization. British pride in "Speak for England" is understandable. We must acknowledge that fact, even though our feet may itch with the desire to kick our former colonial masters.

But the greatest moment in the history of the British Parliament was never reported in the Hansards. Historians and others had to painfully reconstruct what actually had happened, establishing that it was Leopold Amery who spoke those historic words. If the British people had been prohibited from referring to anything excluded or omitted from the Hansards, they would have been prohibited from writing about the greatest moment in the history of their Parliament.

Our Government must certainly re-think its position. I can think of only one counter-argument that might seem to be convincing. It is that whatever may happen in the British Parliament, or half a hundred other Parliaments, there can be no great moments in the Sri Lankan Parliament.

We seem to be having some peculiar notions about democracy in Sri Lanka. One is that Parliament is supreme over the people, even though the Constitution states in Article 3 that sovereignty is in the people and is inalienable. We, the sovereign people, can therefore be told by the representatives whom we have sent to Parliament what we can say or not say about what actually happens in Parliament.

In terms of yet another peculiar notion, we can elect a Party and our representatives, but thereafter the representatives become the creatures of the Party with the sovereign people being allowed no further say in the matter. A recent judicial decision has called that notion into question.

As such profoundly anti-democratic notions are prevalent in Sri Lanka, it becomes all the more important for the sovereign people to have full freedom of expression and a fully free press. Let the politicians speak for themselves and their Parties. But none must be stopped from speaking for Sri Lanka.

UNP's Changing Base

Mick Moore

In an analysis of the mainstream districts classified according to the degree of rurality, i.e. dependence of the population on agricultural employment, the figures would suggest that the UNP has become steadily more dependent on the support of voters in the most rural districts since 1970; in part a product of the changing geography of the electorate, which has steadily become more rural. For this there are two reasons: the gradual re-enfranchisement of the Indian Tamil population; and the movement of population into the Dry Zone for agricultural purposes.

Given these changes in the spatial distribution of the electorate, some ruralisation of the UNP's electoral base is not unexpected. However, figures which standardise results for the changing geographical distribution of the electorate, still reveal ruralisation. While there are no clear trends in the two intermediate district groups, there is a clear, steady shift towards the UNP in the most rural districts, and an equally steady shift away, at least since 1982, in the least rural districts. We know that the re-enfranchisement of the Indian Tamil population and the UNP-CWC alliance is an important cause of this pattern, especially in Nuwara Eliya district. However, the CWC has no influence in, rice growing districts of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. There voters have also shifted towards the UNP. There has been a broad and gradual change in the pattern of electoral behaviour which cannot be explained only by short term phenomena such as the political style of the President.

Statistical analysis

The results of the statistical analysis summarised throw useful further light on the issues. Those readers who understand statistics will be able to check my conclusions against the results. I hope the other will excuse me for not attempting to explain in detail what the various statistical measures are and how they are to be interpreted. In essence, I have used regression analysis to see how far, at each of the six elections, district-to-district variations in the percentage of the vote obtained by the UNP could be explained by two other variables, separately and jointly: 'RURAL' — the percentage of the emplo-

yed population employed in agriculture in 1981, and 'SINHALA' — the percentage of the 1981 population who were Sinhalese. These are the two variables which have been found significant. There are two major findings, explained in more detail below:

1) The first is a confirmation of evidence discussed above. Even when ethnic voting preferences are held constant, there has been a gradual shift in the electoral base of the UNP, especially since 1982, such that it is currently strongly associated with 'RURAL' (see Below).

2) The second finding is that the UNP has been through a period when it has been distinctly unpopular with Sinhalese voters (compared with voters of other ethnic groups); this unpopularity persists, but at much lower levels than in the early 1980s.

For 1970 and 1977 there is no statistically significant connection between the UNP's share of the vote, by district, and either 'RURAL' or 'SINHALA'. This does not mean that Sinhalese voters — more accurately, Sinhalese Buddhists, as opposed to the minority of Sinhalese Christians — did not in general tend to favour parties other than the UNP. They certainly did: rural Sinhalese Buddhists were the 'traditional' constituency of the opposition to the UNP in the mainstream districts, especially the SLFP. It is simply that this relationship was not strong enough for it to emerge from the kind of statistical analysis conducted here with the district as the unit of analysis. In the 1982 Presidential election, the affinity between the opposition and Sinhalese Buddhists emerged again very strongly. This has already been identified in earlier statistical analysis, and precisely reflects the overt politics of the time. President Jayawardene was personally very unpopular with many Buddhist monks, and especially with their leaderships, because of his own rather intellectual approach to Buddhism and his limited respect for their eminence. Economic liberalisation, and a sudden and rapid opening up to foreign trade and culture, created a natural alliance between the Buddhist establishment and the opposition political parties opposed to economic liberalisation. The weakness of the SLFP, fractured by family disputes among the

Bandaranaiques, had helped propel some Buddhist monks and the militant lay Buddhist organisations into prominent positions among the organised political opposition to the UNP government. By the time the 1982 Presidential election was held, it was widely known that UNP thugs had beaten up Buddhist monks demonstrating against the government. The strong Sinhalese Buddhist dimension to the anti-UNP vote was no surprise.

At the 1982 Presidential election, there was a small and statistically just significant negative relationship between 'RURAL' and the UNP share of the vote: everything else being equal, the UNP did rather better in the more urban districts. The dominant statistical relationship was however the strong negative association between 'SINHALA' and the UNP vote share. The distribution of votes changed considerably in the Referendum held a few weeks later. The UNP did relatively much better in the more rural districts, and relatively worse in the more urban districts.⁸ The shift was however insufficient for 'RURAL' to have a statistically significant connection with the UNP vote share in the regression analysis. There was still a statistically significant negative relationship between the UNP vote share and 'SINHALA', but weaker than in the Presidential election.

At the 1991 local elections, 'RURAL' (positively) and 'SINHALA' (negatively) were both associated with the UNP vote share in a statistically significant way, with both variables being of about equal influence. Nearly 60% of district to district variations in the UNP vote share was 'explained' by these two variables, and each had about equal influence with the other. The 1993 results indicate a further shift: a full 86% of variation in the UNP vote is explained, but it is 'RURAL' which does the lion's share of the explaining. While Sinhalese voters still tend to prefer the opposition over the UNP when other factors are held constant, the dominant factor explaining the UNP's share of the vote is the degree of rurality of the district. These results are statistically very significant. We can be confident that the visible shift in the basis of electoral support for the UNP to the more rural districts is genuine; it is not a coincidental by-product of changes in ethnic voting preferences.

Explanation

I have already referred above to the two most popular explanations of those dimensions of the ruralisation of the UNP that was evident from the results of the 1993 Provincial Council elections. There can be no doubt that part of the explanation lies in the UNP-CWC alliance, and the increasing number of Indian Tamil voters. It is also at least feasible that part of the explanation for ruralisation, for the 1991 and 1993 elections, lies in the populism and popularity of ex-President Premadasa, who was in power from the end of 1988. Even if this is accepted — and I suggest below that there may be a better interpretation of the same evidence — we are left with only two partial explanations — one locationally limited and the other short term — of a general, more long run pattern. What other explanations are available?

I will deal first with two potential explanations that are unsatisfactory:

1) The first is also short term: the role in the 1993 elections of the Democratic United National Front (DUNF), a breakaway from the UNP, which obtained almost 15% of the total vote. The overt lines of conflict between Premadasa and the DUNF leadership precisely reflected the class issues raised by Premadasa's Presidency: a man of low caste and poor origins had virtually monopolised power, was appealing materially and symbolically to the poor, the non-*Goigama* castes and to those who lived in remote areas, against the 'traditional' UNP elite — urban, wealthy, educated, and predominantly *Goigama*. The DUNF was almost exclusively a Sinhalese and *Goigama* party.

Since the DUNF collected nearly 15% of the vote in the May 1993 elections, with a high of 22% in Colombo district and a low of less than 9% in Ratnapura, its performance influenced the distribution of the UNP vote. Generally speaking, the DUNF did better in the more urbanised districts than did the UNP: compared with 57% of the UNP vote. This reflects in part the origins of the DUNF as an 'elite' reaction against the more offensive and personalistic dimensions of Premadasa's rule. There was however no close connection between the DUNF's vote share and district characteristics. District variations appears to have reflected in part the local influence of those prominent ex-UNPers attracted into the DUNF. The DUNF also obtained a great deal of its support at the expense of the other opposition parties,

notably the SLFP. Overall, the presence of the DUNF in the 1993 polls does little to explain the further ruralisation of the UNP's electoral base. Had it done so, one would still need an explanation of why the UNP maintained a better hold on the voters in the more rural districts in the face of the DUNF challenge.

2) The second potential explanation for the ruralisation of the UNP — and the one some observers would *a priori* explore first — would lie in the realm of material interests and government policy. Have the rural areas shifted to support the UNP because the UNP governments since 1977 have pursued an economic policy that has favoured agriculture? One can reject this suggestion because of three related factors. One is that the most rural districts have radically different economic policy interests because of differences in economic structure. In Nuwara Eliya and most of Uva province, the main crop is tea, an export product grown on large estates; wage labour on the estates is the major source of livelihood. By contrast, the populations of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts depend mainly growing rice, an import-substituting product grown largely on a family-farm basis. There is not even a latent common 'agricultural interest' between these two areas. The second factor is that, in recent years as throughout the period since Independence, the occupational interests of farmers, of whatever kind, have never been significant in shaping the Sri Lankan political agenda; voters have voted for other reasons.¹¹ And the third factor is that the UNP governments in power since 1977 have not been proagriculture in policy. Indeed, their policies of economic liberalisation have meant that new economic activity has been largely of an urban/industrial nature, and concentrated around Colombo. This latter point also indicates that an explanation of the ruralisation of the UNP vote cannot be found through looking for location-specific public redistribution policies. It is true that, for example, the large Mahaweli power-cum-irrigation project has brought new land under irrigation in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts, and some distribution of land to new settlers. If however we are to find in this an explanation of the increasing preference of the voters in those districts for the UNP, we have to explain why the same did not happen around Colombo, where massive public investments have been made in new urban infrastructure, and new jobs have been concentrated.

CORRESPONDENCE

Israel/PLO — South Africa

It is well timed — the Government's decision to send a Trade Mission to South Africa. It is as premature to open an Embassy in South Africa just now as it would be premature and politically unwise to open a Shri Lanka Embassy in Israel.

However, the Government should take immediate steps to send a high powered Trade Mission to Israel and also to the PLO. Diplomatic Missions to both countries can wait for a year or eighteen months, so we may see how the "accord" works.

Tissa Wijeyeratne

Kandy

J.R. Justifies the Mob

I refer to the article by Dr. Chanaka Amaratunga titled "J.R. Justifies the Mob" at page 5 of your issue of 1st August 1993.

That the Liberals have tragically undergone a metamorphosis of late is further underlined by the statement made by Dr. Amaratunga in the last paragraph on that page where he asks the question "whose idea was it to add insult to injury to a grievously wronged ethnic minority by imposing the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution which banished the moderate elected representation of the Tamil people from Parliament and from the political mainstream for over five years?"

That the Sixth Amendment was adding insult to injury will not be denied by anyone. That the Tamil community is a grievously wronged ethnic minority will also not be denied by all and sundry. But that the Sixth Amendment banished the moderate elected representation of the Tamil people from Parliament, I am not so sure.

If Dr. Amaratunga is referring to the TULF, he, of all people, should know that the TULF took a decision, on the 23rd of July 1983 at their Mannar Convention, not to go to Parliament after the 22nd of July 1983 because they (like Dr. Amaratunga, I hope) were morally against the extension of the life of Parliament. The TULF had also taken a public stand to this effect in the Referendum of December 1982. This decision was, therefore, taken much before the passing of the Sixth Amendment, which was in mid-August 1983.

How, then, could it be said that the Tamil representation was banished from Parliament by the Sixth Amendment?

If my facts or reasoning is wrong, perhaps Dr. Amaratunga, will be kind enough to place his new line of argument before the readers of "Lanka Guardian"?

G.G. Ponnambalam (Jr.)

General Secretary
All-Ceylon Tamil Congress

The need for vigilance

Dr. Dayalal Abeysekera and Dr. W. Indralal de Silva

Sri Lanka is one country that has caught the eye of demographers for demonstrating a noticeably declining population growth rate in spite of a fairly low per capita GNP (usually there is a visible inverse relationship between the two). During the decade of the 1980s, the population growth rate of Sri Lanka declined from 1.8 percent in 1980 to 1.1 percent per annum in 1990. The latest available provisional figure for the year 1992 is 1.0 percent.

'How does this low population growth rate match up to the growth rate of the voters?' was the question we aspired to pursue. The population growth rate of the country is a function of births minus the deaths plus or minus net migration during a given period of time. The growth rate of voters of the country, on the other hand, is a function of the entry of persons into the 18 years or more age group minus exits from this age group due either to death or out migration. Thus, what we expected to find was not a one-to-one correspondence between the two growth rates but a reasonable level of compatibility between the two.

The near-16 year period between the General Elections of 21st July 1977 and the Provincial Council Elections of 17th May 1993 was picked out for perusal with this period being further punctuated by the Presidential Elections of 20th October 1982 and 19th December 1988. This, in effect gave us chance to monitor the growth rates of voters between three inter-election periods, i.e., 1977-82, 1982-88 and 1988-93 with the fourth period spanning the near 16 years between 1977-93. As the Northeast was left out of the Provincial Council Elections of 1993 due to the breakdown of social order, this analysis is carried out within the 17 districts of Sri Lanka outside the Northeast of the country. (Furthermore, the higher incidence of death and out-migration due to the war, places the Northeastern districts well outside the vital demographic experiences faced by the rest of the country and would have unduly confused the present analysis.)

What disturbed us at the outset was the relatively high growth rate of the registered voter population of the 17 districts between 1977-93 which was 3.02 percent per annum. In layman's terms this meant

that during each year of this 16 year period, every 10,000 voters at the beginning of the year increased to 10,302 by the end of that year. Since this was perhaps twice as much as the average growth rate of the total population of the country we decided to pursue the analysis in earnest in respect of the 17 districts.

Columns i through iv in Table 1 provide the registered voters by district at each of the elections held in 1977, 1982, 1988 and 1993, respectively as given by the Department of Elections. Columns v through viii reveal the percent exponential growth rate per annum of this voter population for the inter-election periods of 1977-82, 1982-88, 1988-93 and 1977-93, respectively. The somewhat erratic nature of the growth of the voters is manifested in these columns with the 1982-88 period showing a marked depression of 2.13 in contrast to the two other periods which are well above 3.0. We can only raise the question as to whether the breakdown of social order under the onslaught of the JVP had an effect of even depressing voter registration in addition to precipitating the dismal turnout of voters at the 1988 Presidential poll.

Table 1

Number of registered voters and estimated population 18+ years at the elections of 1977, 1982, 1988 and 1993, rates of growth during inter-election periods and percent voters of population 18+ in 17 districts of Sri Lanka.

Electoral District	Registered Number of Voters at Elections held on				Annual growth rates of Voters (percent)				Population 18+ years estimated from '81 Census & adjusted for mortality during				Annual growth rates of 18+ Population (percent)				Voter Population as % of 18+ Population during			
	21.07.77	20.10.82	19.12.88	17.05.93	77-82	82-88	88-93	77-93	1977	1982	1988	1993	77-82	82-88	88-93	77-93	1977	1982	1988	1993
Colombo	825,908	972,196	1,088,780	1,258,566	3.11	1.84	3.28	2.66	978,220	1,088,847	1,186,306	1,229,779	2.04	1.39	0.81	1.45	84.4	89.3	91.8	102.3
Gampaha	705,636	835,265	969,735	1,117,073	3.21	2.42	3.20	2.90	784,314	861,559	944,374	986,328	1.79	1.49	0.98	1.45	90.0	96.9	102.7	113.3
Kalutara	432,854	499,215	570,118	639,275	2.72	2.15	2.59	2.46	463,817	502,024	551,292	579,323	1.51	1.52	1.12	1.40	93.3	99.4	103.4	110.3
Kandy	475,170	564,767	628,240	719,288	3.29	1.73	3.10	2.62	543,230	606,270	688,920	728,841	2.09	2.07	1.27	1.66	87.5	93.2	91.2	98.7
Matale	148,244	187,266	214,938	255,493	4.45	2.23	3.91	3.44	177,638	201,575	230,616	245,172	2.41	2.18	1.38	2.03	83.5	92.9	93.2	104.2
N'Eliya	158,920	201,878	229,769	367,189	4.56	2.10	10.61	5.29	317,596	353,000	389,769	411,054	2.01	1.61	1.20	1.63	50.0	57.2	59.0	89.3
Galle	443,143	512,489	571,303	622,134	2.77	1.76	1.93	2.14	444,458	485,068	541,351	571,002	1.67	1.78	1.21	1.58	99.7	105.7	105.5	109.0
Matara	333,419	399,888	451,934	494,076	3.46	1.98	2.02	2.48	338,827	374,130	421,314	446,582	1.89	1.93	1.32	1.74	98.4	106.9	107.3	110.6
Hambantota	187,557	241,956	295,180	323,647	4.85	3.22	2.08	3.44	208,277	237,510	270,321	288,524	2.50	2.10	1.47	2.06	90.1	101.9	109.2	112.2
Kurunegala	568,362	717,505	784,989	858,638	4.44	1.46	2.03	2.60	630,069	707,991	798,994	841,909	2.22	1.96	1.18	1.83	90.2	101.3	98.2	102.0
Puttalam	215,405	267,675	319,003	371,192	4.14	2.64	3.43	3.44	249,990	278,713	313,190	333,685	2.07	1.89	1.43	1.82	86.2	96.0	101.9	111.2
A'pura	200,273	278,594	334,074	398,937	6.29	2.94	4.01	4.35	271,774	315,608	362,496	390,357	2.85	2.24	1.68	2.29	73.7	88.3	92.2	102.2
Pokonnaruwa	88,168	127,624	163,741	196,031	7.04	4.04	4.07	5.04	126,664	148,483	167,654	178,321	3.03	1.97	1.40	2.16	69.6	86.0	97.7	109.9
Badulla	217,243	280,187	329,462	433,862	4.85	2.63	6.23	4.37	312,419	357,127	411,629	439,104	2.55	2.30	1.46	2.15	69.5	78.5	80.0	98.8
Monaragala	86,104	126,558	161,927	200,601	7.34	4.00	4.85	5.34	123,975	144,918	167,096	179,505	2.97	2.31	1.62	2.34	69.5	87.3	96.9	111.8
Ratnapura	325,537	402,202	457,224	546,982	4.03	2.10	4.06	3.28	418,310	464,387	518,820	545,569	1.99	1.73	1.22	1.68	77.8	86.6	88.5	100.3
Kegalle	351,333	406,548	437,178	494,746	2.78	1.18	2.80	2.16	374,481	411,278	457,916	479,760	1.79	1.74	1.05	1.56	93.8	98.8	95.5	103.1
Sri Lanka (17 Dists.)	5,763,276	7,021,833	8,007,595	9,297,742	3.76	2.13	3.38	3.02	6,764,059	7,538,488	8,420,058	8,874,815	2.06	1.79	1.19	1.71	85.2	93.1	95.1	104.8
Column No.	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x	xi	xii	xiii	xiv	xv	xvi	xvii	xviii	xix	xx

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At the district level, the growth of voters reflects the general pattern of population growth with the dry zone districts generally showing higher rates of growth than the rest of the country and the southwestern coastal districts revealing low growth. Nuwara Eliya reveals a massive 10.6 percent growth rate during 1988-93 due mainly to the hitherto disenfranchised estate Tamils of Indian origin receiving citizenship. Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts had 42.7 and 20.2 percent Indian Tamils respectively, the highest proportionate representation of this ethnic group in the districts as at the 1981 Census of Population of Sri Lanka.

In order to answer the question of whether or not the growth of the voters (as provided by the Department of Elections) was compatible with the growth of the voting age population, we had to obtain an estimate of the latter through a different source. The most authoritative source for providing this information is the Department of Census and Statistics which usually conducts decennial censuses of population. Although we should have had two censuses during our period of concern, we have to be contented with only the 1981 census, the 1991 census scheduled being postponed due to the Department's inability to cover the Northeast encapsulated in bitter hostilities at that time. (Incidentally, this is only the second instance during this century that Sri Lanka had to postpone taking a decennial census, the other being in 1941 due to the World War II, which was ultimately taken in 1946.)

There is some evidence to suggest that the voter register accepted as valid for an election is generally compiled about a year in advance of the election. (Table 255 of the Statistical Abstract of Sri Lanka, 1989 reveals the 1987 voter register rather than the 1988 register as being valid for the 1988 Presidential Election which was held at the tail end of the year, i.e., 19th December.) Thus, we could somewhat safely assume that the population enumerated as 18 years or more on 17th March, 1981 (date of census) would in fact have come very close to the register of voters for the 1982 Presidential Election. Accordingly, we retain the population 18+ as at the census (see column x) as the comparable population to the voter population of 1982.

Although we do not have the benefit of a second census we are in a somewhat lucky situation of being able to estimate the comparable populations over 18 years at the other election years. Even in respect of the 1993 election (the farthest away from the actual census), the 1981 census provides us with valuable information helpful for the estimation of the 18+ popula-

tion. It must be remembered that all the new entrants to the 1993 voter register had already been born at the time of taking the 1981 census. Thus, the population 7 years and over at the '81 census would be eligible to vote at the 1993 election; similarly the population 11 years and over would be eligible to vote at the 1988 election. What remains to be done is to estimate how many of these would have died before each election (and if possible, adjust for net migration) since dead persons rarely vote! With regards to the voters at the 1977 election, the population 23 years and above at the '81 census survived backwards would provide us with an estimate of the 18+ population at the '77 elections. By wading through the district reports published by the Department of Census and Statistics, the 18+ populations at 1977, 1988 and 1993 were obtained for each of the 17 districts; at the national level, these figures are 6,159,351, 9,477,778 and 10,631,067, respectively (not in Table 1).

Using Life Table technique (which ultimately facilitate the derivation of 'life expectancy' figures with which most laymen are familiar) three survival ratios were derived (from Life Tables prepared for Sri Lanka by the Demographic Training and Research Unit [DTRU] of the University of Colombo in respect of 1981) so as to adjust the census-obtained figures for mortality. These survival ratios are 0.9106, 0.8884 and 0.8348 and are applicable respectively to the 1977, 1988 and 1993 populations 18 years and over estimated from the 1981 census.

(While there may be an aura of 'magic' associated with these survival ratios for the layman, the robustness of estimates derived from life table techniques have been demonstrated time and again. This is due primarily to the fact that these ratios are derived by the simulation of the actual mortality experiences of a given population at a given point in time — or period — to a massive sample of 100,000 new born babies — known as the radix — and by surviving them through their lifetime.)*

However, by applying a single ratio across the 17 districts we are implicitly assuming that mortality conditions do not vary appreciably across these districts. This is usually not the case as there have been notable mortality variations between districts like Gampaha and Nuwara Eliya, for example, the latter usually depicting a higher proportionate incidence of death. Our stand, however, is that for the purpose at hand (i.e., to arrive at a census-based estimate of the population 18+ during the election years in question), the application of one survival ratio suffices for the sake of both practicality and convenience.

The resulting population 18 years and over adjusted for mortality is revealed in columns ix through xii in respect of 1977, 1988 and 1993. (1982 was not adjusted since it is the census population which in effect counts only the living.) The percent growth rates per annum of these 18+ population figures are detailed in columns xiii through xvi in respect of the inter-election periods. If the voter registration system is to be held in high esteem, there should have been a near one-to-one correspondence between the number of voters and the 18+ population in terms of identical locality and time. This is because the number of registered voters in a reliable system should be equal to the population 18 years or more if universal suffrage is an enshrined human right of that population as is in Sri Lanka.

The two sets of figures reveal that this is not so. Columns xvii through xx which provide the voter population (columns i through iv) as a percent of population 18+ (columns ix through xii) show that at the national level it appears to have changed from a substantial under-registration (85.2 percent during 1977) to an over-registration (104.8 percent) by 1993. It is possible that this under-registration of voters in 1977 resulted in there being the highest voter turnout of 86.7 percent recorded in any election during the postindependence period to date.

What is even more revealing is the wide difference between the growth rates of voters and that of the population 18+. While the 18+ population grew at 1.71 percent per annum during the 16-year period in the 17 districts, the registered voters as compiled by the Department of Elections grew by 3.02, 76.6 percent faster than the former. During each of the three inter-election periods the voters have consistently grown at a faster pace than the 18+ population though at quite varying paces; during 1977-82 the rate of growth of the voters grew by more than 82.5 percent dropping to an almost insignificant 19.0 percent more during 1982-88 but leaping to almost three times the pace of the 18+ population during 1988-93, a phenomenal 184.0 percent increase.

These differential rates of growth are manifested in each of the 17 districts during each inter-election period. The districts of Gampaha, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa, Badulla and Monaragala reveal a voter growth of more than twice the rate of growth of the 18+ population in that district during the 16-year period. Both Nuwara Eliya (whose voters depict a growth rate more than three times in excess of that of the 18+ population) and Badulla would have this growth rate due to the high proportion of Indian Tamils

receiving citizenship; Monaragala and Polonnaruwa have been high in-migration districts situated within the dry zone. The proportionate difference between the two rates of growth is higher in Anuradhapura, Ratnapura, Puttalam and Colombo than the national difference.

What transpires from the foregoing is that a much higher growth of voters has been witnessed devoid of a compatible level of growth in the 18+ population of the country without there being a plausible rational explanation for this difference. This situation is further exacerbated when one brings in the net migration patterns that have occurred during these years. According to the Department of Immigration and Emigration, the country has lost 806,921 persons due to net-migration during the 16 years between 1977 and 1992 losing 50,432 persons on an average during each calendar year. If one is not resident in the country, the chances of entering the voter list on a de facto basis should be zero, though this may not be happening in actuality. Thus, if these out-migrants were deducted from the figures revealed in Table 1, the rate of growth of the 18+ population would be depressed even further thereby increasing the differential growth between the latter and that of the voters.

Those that might be interested in defending the credibility of the present voter registration system may try to counter our analysis by pointing out that our estimations of the 18+ population are 'unacceptably low'. While grating the fact that we would have liked to work with a second census in addition to that of the 1981, the absence of such leaves us with no alternative but to use this estimation procedure. If contestants of this methodology can furnish us with a superior estimation procedure, we would be most willing to look at such data with an open mind.

In the meantime we would like to present a 'check back' procedure as a verification of our estimates. The government of Sri Lanka works on projected national population figures and the mid-year estimate for 1992 (as given in Table 4 of Population Statistics of Sri Lanka published by the Population Information Centre of the Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs) is 17,480,000. What does our 18+ population estimate of 8,874,815 in 1993 translate into as a national population estimate?

Reaching-out once again into the 'known and trustable' 1981 census, the ratio of 18+ population in the 17 districts to those in the Northeastern districts needs to be worked out. Table 250 of the Statistical Abstract of Sri Lanka 1989 reveals that in 1981 the Northeastern di-

stricts carried 1,131,833 persons who were 18 years or more to the 7,538,488 persons in the 17 districts outside the Northeast. This works out to a ratio of 1:0.15014 in 1981. If we assume that this same ratio persisted to 1992 (the year of compilation of the voter register, valid in respect of the 1993 elections), the number of 18+ population in the Northeast would be 1,332,465. This would give us an estimate of 10,207,280 persons in the 18+ population for the entire nation in 1992. The ratio of the nation's 18+ population to those under 18 years of age at the 1981 census was 1:0.71236 (population 18+ = 8,670,321; population < 18 = 6,176,431 — same source as above). Assuming that the same ratio persisted into 1992, the population under 18 years of age at 1992 works out to 7,271,258. When the under 18 and 18+ populations are taken together which constitutes the population of the entire nation at 1992, the figure works out to 17,478,538 which deviates by a mere 1,462 population from the mid-year estimate of 17,480,000 published by the Population Information Centre. This is as close to verification vindication of our methodologies as we may get in terms of demographic estimates.

The prime aim of this analysis is neither to point fingers nor to apportion blame. It is motivated and propelled through the fostering of the inquiring and questioning spirit, vital to be vibrant among at least the intelligentsia (if not among the entire population) of a country which is yearning to achieve Newly Industrialized Country status before the turn of the century. What appears quite clearly from this analysis is that the voter registration machinery in this country needs to be tightened-up so that the system's output approaches near-total enumeration of the eligible and does not suffer from either under-or over-enumeration of voters.

To achieve this, mass scale awareness campaigns targeting adolescent school children as well as the general public with specific instructions being given to the Grama Niladharis who ultimately are responsible for compiling voter lists within their divisions would have to be undertaken on a concerted scale. A policy decision as to whether or not the voter registration should be done on a de facto or de jure basis has to be first taken. Then a series of detailed but simple instructions as to how to determine if a given person is an eligible voter in a particular locality should be given to the GNs. Since duplicity or multiplicity of residence may be an overwhelming cause of higher voter growth, a straightforward mechanism needs to be evolved for ensuring a single registration for all eligible voters. With the establishment of the national identity card system in Sri Lanka and its approach

towards total coverage of the adult population, it is proposed that the same NIC number be recorded on voter registration lists and the data computerized so that periodic checks could be run to identify and remedy duplicity or multiplicity of registration. Those dying also need to be eliminated promptly from the register. Serious consideration should be given to whether or not the establishment of the fact of intentional attempt to initiate or maintain duplicity of registration be made a punishable offence.

Opponents of registration systems may be up in arms saying what is proposed herein is yet another step in the direction of establishing the police state paving the way towards curbing human rights. What happens in the absence of a fool-proof registration system is that human rights of the unsuspecting majority are violated by an unscrupulous handful by padding or deflating voter lists. One should not forget that the existence of data banks and registration systems do not necessarily lead to abuse; internalized restraint and etiquette backed-up by enforceable rewards and punishments have proved that such systems are more a boon than the bane of humanity. The Scandinavian countries which are the modern-day epitomes of democracy have what are called 'continuous population registers' dating back from the feudal period which are capable of providing the vital events of birth, death and migration on an individual basis. Democracy in these countries has apparently not suffered due to the existence of these registers which were initiated by and linked to parishes of the days gone by.

Within the current clime of constitutional reform in the offing, the establishment of a accurate voter registration system cannot be over-emphasized. No less an eminent personality than Mr. Justice Mark Fernando in a recent address to the University of Colombo (50th anniversary celebrations) stated that "the legislative, executive and judicial powers (enjoyed by persons through representatives) and fundamental rights and franchise (enjoyed individually), thus constitute the five principal building blocks of the constitution". The practical exercise of franchise is determined by the efficacy with which the register of voters is compiled. Thus, our earnest appeal to the authorities to seriously indulge in this exercise as an integral part of the total effort to improve Sri Lanka's constitution.

- * A technical note on the Life Table Technique and how these survival ratios were derived can be obtained from Dr. W. Indralal de Silva of the DTRU, University of Colombo, Colombo 7 by writing to him.

“The Empty Years”

John Gooneratne

The next phase in the Middle East peace process, which was earlier referred to as beginning from about 1980 was quite barren when compared to the achievements of the Camp David Accords. President Carter was quoted in a recent news report, as saying that “there were too many empty years between the 78-79 Camp David Accords and the present achievements”. Part of the reason could well be that other world issues dominated the attention of the U.S. The latter part of 1979 saw the fall of the Shah of Iran in whom the US had invested heavily. There was also the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which was to consume the attention of the U.S. for the next decade. September 1980 witnessed the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq. All these events worked to divert the attention of the U.S. away from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

November 1980 also saw a U.S. Presidential election where Mr. Reagan was elected. His world view was dominated by the Soviet threat in different parts of the world. In the Middle East his preoccupation was not with the Palestine question and occupied territories but with the Soviet threat to the Gulf area. Prime Minister Begin who was first elected in May 1977, was re-elected in June 1981. October 1981 also witnessed the assassination of President Sadat. The accumulation of these events tended to slow down the Middle East peace process.

It did not mean, however, that the Middle East remained quiet or lacking in tension. The events that did take place, when viewed in retrospect, did have a bearing in clarifying the forces at work in Middle East politics. These events could be grouped under the following headings:

- (a) Events in Lebanon
- (b) The fortunes of the PLO; and
- (c) US-Israel relations

The writer, Sri Lanka's former Ambassador in Baghdad concludes, his analysis of the Middle-east peace process.

(a) The events in Lebanon:

Several struggles were being fought out in Lebanon. There was the contest between the Muslim and the Christian groups for control of the Government. There was the Palestinian involvement in this civil war. And, lastly, there was the Syrian interest in maintaining their influence and extending their control over Lebanon. It was often difficult to disentangle the three conflicts. Each fed the other.

An earlier bout of civil strife in Lebanon in 1975 had been settled after Arab League mediation. But with the latest eruption of fighting in early 1982, Israel was concerned over the frequent attacks launched across the northern part of Israel. In June 1982 the Israeli Army invaded Lebanon. While initially the stated objective was to drive the PLO beyond a line 20 miles from the Israeli border, the Israeli invasion eventually took them as far as Beirut. The conditions for lifting the siege of Beirut was the evacuation of the PLO and its troops from Beirut in August of that year. It was many more months before the Israeli Army seeing impracticality of their mission withdrew from Lebanon in the summer of 1983. A political fall-out of this fruitless campaign was the resignation of Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Begin in August 1983.

The United States saw the conflict in Lebanon in terms of a Soviet threat to its interest in the region, through the support given to Syria by the Soviet Union. It was such a perception that led U.S. to intervene with France and Britain in having a Multi National Force in Lebanon. The Multi National Force was ultimately withdrawn in early 1984, after a spate of suicide-bombings that left 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French soldiers dead in one incident.

With Syrian prestige increased by its successful confrontation with the US, Syria next turned its attention to eliminate the remnant of the PLO troops which were based in the northern Lebanon town of Tripoli. This engagement with the pro-Arafat Palestinians ended with Arafat's departure from Tripoli in December 1984, along

with his supporters under the protection of the UN flag.

Over all the events in Lebanon during this period would fall into the category of inter-Arab conflict. The only relationship one could trace to the Middle East peace process was that it strengthened the hand of Syria.

(b) The fortunes of the PLO:

It is a testimony to the strength and survival qualities of PLO Chairman Mr. Arafat that, on leaving Tripoli, he started out on several diplomatic initiatives to rebuild the strength of the PLO. He visited Egypt, and sought to organise a moderate Arab alignment between Egypt, Jordan, and the PLO. He sought the re-establishment of more Arab diplomatic contacts with Egypt. In December 1985 Jordan restored diplomatic ties with Cairo. These moves at forming an alignment of moderate states were opposed by Syria, Libya and the PLO's left wing factions.

A more serious development that took place about this time was the Palestinian uprising in Gaza and the West Bank in December 1987, called the intifada. It was a mass Palestinian demonstration against Israeli rule. By January 1988 it had become clear that what was underway in the occupied territories was a mass popular revolt. This was worrying to the PLO and its local leadership. While there was a working relationship between the underground leadership of the intifada and the various PLO factions in the occupied territories, it marked a new departure in that the PLO leadership outside the occupied territories was not instrumental in organising and sustaining it.

As the intifada progressed over the coming period, a new force emerged, namely an autonomous Islamic fundamentalist group in Gaza, called the Islamic Resistance Movement known by its Arabic acronym Hamas.

(c) US-Israel Relations:

US-Israel relations during this period grew closer especially with the US perce-

ption being dominated by a Soviet threat. About the time that the United States participated in the Multi National Force in Lebanon, the new U.S. strategy was for even closer identification of its interests with those of Israel. President Reagan on being re-elected in November 1984 for the second term, concentrated on accelerating the US-Israel strategic relationship. The U.S. strengthened its anti-terrorist legislation aimed mainly at the Palestinians. And accusing it of supporting terrorism, the US attacked targets in Libya in April 1986.

At the 19th Session of the Palestine National Congress held in Algeria in November 1988, the PNC declared the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with its capital as Jerusalem. Later, in a press conference at the end of the PNC session, Mr. Arafat explained that he sought the acceptance of the UN Security Council resolution 242 as a mandate "to actively pursue peace" and challenged the US to respond to the PLO's overtures. The American response was not positive. In fact the U.S. refused the grant of a visa to Mr. Arafat to attend UN General Assembly in New York in December 1988.

However, later that year the PLO did achieve a significant breakthrough, as a result of the pressure applied by President-elect George Bush. On 16th December 1988, the US Ambassador to Tunisia, on instructions from his Government, held talks with representatives of the PLO. The PLO thus achieved its most important diplomatic breakthrough, although it did not necessarily expect any concrete advances in the peace process to follow quickly. This dialogue was, however, suspended in June 1990 when the U.S. accused the PLO of failing to condemn in sufficiently strong terms an attempt by a Palestinian group, to land guerillas on Israel's Mediterranean coast.

Although this period was described as "the empty years", there were certain areas in which one could say that some advance in the peace process was achieved. The European countries were beginning to show a certain impatience with the US attitude towards recognising the PLO. The Irish Foreign Minister, speaking at the UN General Assembly in 1979 on behalf of the E.C. voiced Europe's strong criticism of Israeli policy, and mentioned for the first time a role for the PLO. In 1980 the E.C. countries produced their Middle East statement at a meeting in Venice on

June 13. In this statement the E.C. countries, for the first time collectively declared that the Palestinian people must be allowed "to exercise fully its right to self-determination", and called for the PLO "to be associated with the negotiations".

Peace Process...The Post-Cold War:

In the third phase of events beginning around 1990 there had occurred a very significant change in the international environment. The cold war structures had collapsed, with the collapse of Soviet Union. The hold that the Cold War had exercised on world events had now been broken. And in its place a unipolar configuration of power began to take hold. The U.S. was the sole super power.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, there was no Soviet Union to provide a counterweight to the U.S. And one of the far reaching effects of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was the completely new alignment of forces in the Arab world. And the PLO, in casting its lot with Iraq suffered tremendously both in political support for its cause, and also financially.

In trying to drum up support for its side Iraq tried to portray the invasion of Kuwait as designed to bring support for the Palestinian cause by bringing pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. However far-fetched they were, the US understood the potency of such arguments in the Arab world. While not making any promises on this score, nor promising any linkages between joining the anti-Iraq coalition with a solution to the Middle East problem, the U.S. made known its desire to find a equitable solution to the Middle East problem, once the Gulf war was over.

The U.S. taking advantage of the changed circumstances both with the end of the Cold War and the victory over Iraq, in late 1991 renewed its efforts to seek lasting solutions to the Middle East problem. Secretary of State James Baker undertook a series of visits to Israel and several Middle East countries at the end of the Gulf war, and obtained agreement on general negotiating principles for a solution to the Middle East question. Countries like Syria, and the PLO would also have been aware that they would not be having the customary support from the Soviet Union, as a counterweight to U.S. support for Israel. Further the U.S. would have seen it to be in their own interest to be more even-handed than before, considering the fact that the strategic importa-

nce of Israel had diminished somewhat now, and consequently the importance of the Arab countries had increased.

The outcome of these efforts was the convening of the Madrid Conference in October 1991. The framework of negotiations called for bilateral discussions between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon and Israeli and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. There were also to be multilateral discussions on issues of regional importance such as, arms control and regional security, water, economic development, the environment and refugees.

An important aspect of the Madrid Conference process is that the Arab countries are meeting and negotiating directly with Israel on the problems between those countries. And equally difficult problems of a regional nature are being discussed in multilateral groups.

A noteworthy feature of the series of negotiations is that all countries have persisted in keeping the negotiations going, without walking out as before whenever disagreements arose. The very habit of meeting and discussing with one's opponents has had a beneficial psychological effect in breaking down earlier barriers and promoting a willingness to negotiate with each other.

The Madrid Conference process is still underway. However, the recent agreements between Israel and the PLO can to an extent be attributed to the improvement in the political atmosphere following the Madrid Conference negotiations. And as in the case of Egypt and Israel, the decisive change was the agreement of the PLO and Israel to meet face-to-face thus recognizing the legitimacy of each other. Following the breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestine negotiations, an agreement between Israel and Jordan is reportedly imminent. A further agreement between Israel and Syria is now well within the realm of possibility. An agreement with Israel and Lebanon would follow an agreement between Israel and Syria.

When such agreements are finally concluded one stage of the Middle East political process, would have been completed. Israel would not be surrounded by countries with which she has only armistice agreements as was the case in 1949, but countries with which she has peace treaties.

16 September 1993.

ADIPA Conference

Godfrey Gunatilleke

On behalf of ADIPA — the Association of Development Research and Training Institutes of Asia and the Pacific — let extend to all of you a very warm welcome to this inaugural session of our 10th bi-ennial Conference. Today, I enjoy the happy position of representing both the Association as well as the host Institute for the Conference — the Marga Institute. Therefore at the same time let me take this opportunity to bring to you greetings from the Marga Institute and to express our very deep appreciation of your presence with us.

Your Excellency, we are deeply honoured that amidst all your heavy responsibilities as Head of State you have so graciously consented to inaugurate our conference. The community of development research and training institutions in Asia and the Pacific have always regarded this bi-ennial event as an opportunity to strengthen their links with the world of policy making and action and to make their activities more relevant meaningful to that world. The inauguration of the Conference by your Excellency helps us to place our deliberations in that larger context and truly enhances the stature and significance of the Conference.

The Conference is also a special event for ADIPA for another reason. It marks the twentieth anniversary of the association. ADIPA has a membership representing 18 countries in the Asia Pacific region. It includes all the sub-regions of Asia. As a community of research and training organisations ADIPA has maintained a distinctive character. The main concern of the member institutes is the field of development. The focus of their work is on the major social, economic and political changes that are taking place in their societies. The Association combines both research and training and tries to build on that complementarity. ADIPA is a partner of the international development information network which links nearly 1000 institutions and has a global data base covering 4800 projects and 7500 researchers. Therefore, while one section of the membership is engaged in research, study and analytical work that could hopefully enhance our understanding of the development problems and help in finding solutions to them, the other section is concerned with the application of that knowledge in developing the skills and human

resources for managing development. ADIPA's membership is actively involved tasks which help the policy makers and key actors in development; they directly participate in the upgrading of skills of the administrators and managers of development. Therefore, the potential of ADIPA to make both a theoretical as well as a practical contribution to development is substantial. It could do so both at the national and regional levels.

ADIPA also has another unique feature. It is a multi-disciplinary association. Its membership comprises institutions working in a wide range of disciplines — economics, sociology, political science and management sciences. It is perhaps the only organisation in the field of development research which provides a multi-disciplinary forum in the region and brings together the different disciplines in the social sciences to address the problems of development. We all have come to realise over the last two decades, that the condition of well-being we describe under the term development comprises many more elements besides the economic condition; that the enjoyment of political freedoms, equitable distribution and ecological balance are all an intrinsic part of development and that ultimately development has to be perceived as an indivisible whole. We need to design strategies which maintain and promote equity with fast growth, combine law and order with participation and freedom, protect and enhance the quality of the environment with rapid structural changes. This also means that the rapid processes of change which our societies are undergoing are far too complex to be contained, analysed and understood within one single discipline. For this we need constantly to identify and examine the larger patterns, the systems and composite wholes in which development takes place. The social sciences for their part have to be equal to that task. It requires more intensive interaction among disciplines than we have had in the past; more integrative methods of study; a more unified structure and body of knowledge drawn from different disciplines. ADIPA, both at the national and regional levels provides a unique multi-disciplinary network of institutions and a community of scholars for those purposes.

The bi-ennial conference has always

provided the Association with an opportunity to apply that multi-disciplinary perspective to selected development issues. The themes that have been generally selected for the bi-ennial conferences have had that objective in view. They are broad enough in scope and content to enable the membership to apply their knowledge and experience to issues of major national and regional significance and interact with each other across a wide range of disciplines. Accordingly for this conferences, we have selected the theme: The Economic Transformation of Asia: Social, Political and Ecological Perspectives.

The economic performance of the region taken as a whole during the 1980's, and continuing to the 90's, has been widely acclaimed and has been the subject of extensive report and analysis. Both the speed of the transformation as well as its multi-faceted character affecting as it does the economies, the politics, the social structures, the life styles of the region are unprecedented in human history. In the 1950's, development economists would have dismissed as mere fantasy the high growth rates achieved and sustained by East Asian economies over three decades. The scenario of Asian growth has opened entirely new vistas for the region which contains well over half the world's population. What we as a community of research and training institutions would be most concerned with is gaining a clearer understanding of the nature of that transition and contributing to the processes which help to direct it to desired human goals.

Our Conference is a modest effort in that direction. The conference has been organised in four working sessions which follow three keynote addresses. The working sessions focus on four major areas of development — economic, social, political and ecological. Each working session deals with the trends, prospects and challenges in the selected area. We would be examining the perspectives in the main sub regions — East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific. These will be supplemented by papers on selected issues which bring together the findings of individual scholars, institutes and international agencies relating to the development problems and prospects of the region. We have also tried to reflect the complementarity of effort in ADIPA as be-

tween research and training. The sessions examine the need for developing new skills and capabilities that are demanded for managing the rapid transition that is taking place in all parts of our societies.

We are looking forward to a discussion which will be of value in strengthening and promoting the links and forms of co-operation for development within and among the main sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific. The pattern of development that we are witnessing in the region is one which holds great promise for such co-operation. We have groups of countries at different levels of development covering the entire range from the most developed to the least developed. The structural changes and transformation that have taken place in Japan and East Asia have demonstrated how countries at different levels of development can mutually benefit from the comparative advantages that flow from these differences. These mutual benefits have flowed from the shifts in industrial production, transfers of technology, investment and trade flows and access to markets. We are now witnessing these same processes taking place in South East Asia, and they are poised for a take-off in South Asia as well. This gradation of development from the least to the most advanced, also offers other unique opportunities for learning from each other — opportunities for the most appropriate forms of technical assistance and co-operation among Asian countries. Each level can benefit from the experience and lessons of the level which has gone before it. Out of these processes we also see new patterns of interdependence emerging as between developed and developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. These can give a new dimension to the traditional North-South relations. Our conference sessions, hopefully, will examine various aspects of these changes and the immense potential they hold for Asian co-operation.

The Conference will go on to deal with the other far-reaching changes which accompany the rapid economic growth of the Asian region. The session devoted to the political perspectives deal with a set of inter-related themes; all of them in one way or another concerned with two basic questions: First, how and to what extent is the process of democratisation and the empowerment of people in the societies of Asia keeping pace with rapid economic development and what are the means of promoting this process? and second, how are the Asian societies dealing with their internal divisions arising from their multi-ethnic multi-religious character and what

are the systems and institutions that are being evolved for that purpose?

The session on social perspectives will again provide a rewarding opportunity for the sharing and comparative analysis of the experience in Asian societies. There are hardships and disciplines which are intrinsic to any process of growth—whether it be that of an individual or a society. The initial phase of structural adjustment which many societies have had to undertake to lay the foundations for their renewal and growth has been particularly difficult. The political management of that process is full of hazards. We have not found satisfactory answers to many of the questions. How can we protect the very poor against the hardships of adjustment? We have to remember that the very poor comprise a large section of the low-income Asian societies. How can we achieve rapid growth in a market economy and at the same time make the large scale interventions needed to alleviate poverty?

The session will deal with other social outcomes of development. They cover a wide canvas. The quality of life which comes with development depends on how the structures that govern human relationships change. The changes in gender relations become a central issue. We need to address squarely the role which religion, value systems and culture play in development. On the one hand we have the rise of fundamentalist ideologies which are opposed to the liberal democratic values and institutions. On the other, there is the spread of materialistic ideologies which erode the value systems which have traditionally ordered social relations and enriched and given meaning to the life of the individual. The session on social perspectives will address some of these issues.

Similarly the session on ecological perspectives will deal with the crucial environmental challenges facing Asian societies. The physical man-built and natural environment of the Asian region is changing beyond recognition and an entirely new habitat is taking shape. Among the many emerging issues there are two which stand out. First, Asian societies must design and pursue development strategies which avoid the heavy environmental costs that have accompanied rapid economic growth, industrialisation and urbanisation. Second, their rapid development also raises global environmental issues, as it will have a significant impact on global climatic changes that are affecting the planet as a whole. Asia as a region will have to act collectively to

ensure that the responsibility for protecting the global environment is equitably shared. They need to find sufficient room for their rapid growth within the global environmental constraints.

The scenario that is implicit in my remarks is one which is hopeful and optimistic; it projects the vision of a resurgent dynamic Asia. Of course there are many pitfalls and constraints on the way, but there is little doubt that in the next quarter of a century, Asia, developing Asia in particular, will emerge as a key actor on the global stage will assume a major role in shaping the world order of the 21st century. And this means that Asia will need to identify its collective and common interests in many areas ranging from the world trading system, and the international division of labour to issues such as nuclear non-proliferation, the custody of the world's nuclear arsenal and the global compact on environment.

ADIPA with its wide ranging membership can gear itself to tasks which deal with critical aspects of the many problems that have been flagged. ADIPA is well equipped to play the overarching role. For instance, the resources of its network could be engaged for developing the long term future scenario of Asia.

Before I conclude I wish to convey ADIPA's deep appreciation of the support it has received from several organisations for financing this Conference and supporting the participation of member institutes and other scholars. We would not have been able to organise this conference if not for the generous assistance given by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, The Seoul University, Korea, the International Development Research Centre Canada and the Australian International Development Assistance Board. ADIPA is deeply indebted to the Asia Pacific Development Centre which provided the Executive Secretariat for the Association. Last but not least in my capacity as President of ADIPA I must convey the Association's thanks to my colleagues in the host institute, the Marga Institute, for the share of responsibilities and local costs that the Institute has borne and the untiring efforts of Institute's staff in organising this conference.

Once again let me convey my deep gratitude to Your Excellency for agreeing to inaugurate this conference and express my sincere appreciation of the encouragement given by all of you, our distinguished guests, by participating in this inauguration.

Cambodia : Polls, Human Rights and NGO's

Jeevan Thiagarajah

General Concerns

In addition to the two concerns mentioned above (the need for financial support for their human rights education program and the fear that human rights associations may be locked out of the constitution drafting process), the ADHOC representatives also note:

- the need for ADHOC to conduct an internal evaluation of its training needs; and
- the general issue of security, and their fears regarding reprisals and harassment by the authorities both now and in the post-transitional period.

LICADHO — Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights

1. Background

LICADHO was established in July 1992 and now has a membership of 120,000 members. Of these, approximately 160 are active members who work for the association. 21 are in the Phnom Penh head-office while the remainder are distributed throughout 16 provinces in 22 offices, 3 located in pagodas. Most of the provincial offices have 4-6 staff, while the largest (Kompong Chhnang) has 18. The provincial representatives are drawn mostly from Phnom Penh, receive accommodation, transport and living expenses but no wages. LICADHO is attempting to decentralize its structure and to make the provincial offices more independent.

LICADHO receives a substantial amount of financial support from the EEC amongst other donors.

2. Areas of work

- Human Rights Education: The primary function of the 140 representatives is human rights education, "though each is also is a potential investigator". (LICADHO receives an average of 10 complaints a month of human rights violations which are transmitted to the appropriate Cambodian authority or to UNTAC.) The representatives go out to villages and gather a group of people for a 2-4 hour discussion, using an illustrated Khmer language Universal Declaration of Human Rights which

LICADHO has developed. People who wish to take up the offer of free membership are then photographed and the trainer returns in a couple of days with their membership cards. There has been opposition from some provincial authorities with this "outreach" approach.

- Election Monitoring: LICADHO members were trained as monitors by the Election Taskforce. LICADHO too mobilized a further 1400 observers during poll week.
- Fostering Special Interest Groups: LICADHO has assisted a number of smaller associations to establish themselves, namely groups of students, intellectuals, women, disabled people, and those interested in the arts. They are in the process of assisting a group of muslims to form in Kompong Cham. These associations have space in LICADHO's head-office.
- Planned Areas of Future Work: LICADHO has plans to:
 - Produce a newsletter;
 - establish a system of defenders (some members are currently being trained in the Human Rights Component's course);
 - more systematically document human rights abuses;
 - sponsor international experts to teach people small enterprise skills; and
 - organize a "think-tank" comprised of monks and overseas Khmers.

3. Concerns

LICADHO is currently being obstructed in its work by some provincial authorities in two ways:

- a) The head-office is receiving reports that the SOC authorities in the provinces where LICADHO offices are located in pagodas are pressuring the monks to evict them (Battambang, Kompong Thom, Kompong Cham, Kandi and Stung Treng).
- b) In some (unspecified) regions, the LICADHO representatives are being told that they are only permitted to run human rights classes in their offices, i.e., they should not go the villages. This pressure is coming from the commune chief level as well as higher authorities. LICADHO is responding

by attempting to negotiate with the authorities on a case-by-case basis. Local representatives are being reinforced at these negotiations by a flying squad of head-office staff (3 Khmer and 2 foreigners).

The other major concern expressed by LICADHO are the transport and communication difficulties they expect to face in the next few months when they open offices in Ratanakiri, Monduliri and Preah Vihear — areas which can realistically only be reached by helicopter. On the same theme, the representative note that communications between their head-office and provincial representatives are hindered by their lack of phones or two-way radios. To overcome the problem, the representatives from nearby provinces come to the head-office daily, while the leaders of all the offices meet in Phnom Penh every 5-6 weeks. In emergencies, LICADHO use UNTAC communication channels and will have difficulties when this backstop is removed with UNTAC's departure.

OUTREACH — Human Rights and Community Outreach Projects

1. Background

OUTREACH was formed in September 1992. It is a small organization and apparently has no interest in mustering a large base of inactive members. Its emphasis instead is on developing a core of people who will work virtually full-time for the association. Currently OUTREACH has approximately 50 workers.

OUTREACH's philosophy is that human rights work and development work must go "hand-in-hand". The leader believes that, in a country as poor as Cambodia, the two are intertwined". The two will always be connected as long as there is a Cambodia. We cannot just teach human rights in the abstract. She also noted that the balance between human rights work and development work should not be fixed but should change as the objective conditions in the country alter. "As peace and human rights ideas spread and take root, then may be there will be both more time and more need for development work". At this point in Cambodia's history, OUTREACH is concentrating on human rights education and monitoring; but hopes to be able to supplement this with development work in the future as the political situation improves and funds become available.

A member of the Sri Lankan team associated with UNTAC, the writer played a key role in the Human Rights Task Force.

2. Areas of work

- Human Rights Education: In a three month period (to the end of February), OUTREACH conducted six human rights courses for 200 people. Exceptional students were selected to become teachers and 10 have already been trained. They will conduct further programs when funding becomes available.
- Election Monitoring: 50 OUTREACH members were trained by the Taskforce and were monitors in both the pre-election period and poll week.
- Constitutional Work: OUTREACH has a strong interest in being involved in the Constitution drafting process, particularly to ensure that the situation of women is given full consideration.
- General Monitoring and Defence of Human Rights: 10 OUTREACH members have received paralegal training by overseas judges and lawyers. They will act as general human rights monitors and advocates for victims of human rights abuses.
- Women and Children: OUTREACH is particularly dedicated to addressing the needs of women and children. (Half of its workers are women). It was actively involved in the National Summit on Women, and will have a representative on the Working Group which will coordinate the implementation of that Conference's "Five Point Agenda for Action". In addition to their concern at improving the economic and social rights of women, OUTREACH is keen to work for the inclusion of women in all areas of decision-making and political life.

3. Concerns

The OUTREACH representative expressed a need for assistance with formulating a comprehensive organizational plan. The Human Rights Component will assist with this task.

Vigilance — Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia

1. Background

Vigilance was formed in December 1990 and operated clandestinely until it could officially register with the SNC in June 1992. It has a membership of 13,000 (3000 women), of whom 120 actively work for the organization in a voluntary capacity. Vigilance has offices in Phnom Penh (14 staff) and in 14 provinces — four of them in rented premises and the remainder in the homes of members. Vigilance has no plans to specialize, insisting that its mandate covers all human rights.

2. Areas of work

- Human Rights Education: Vigilance

has approximately 30 members trained as human rights educators, who conduct classes in both Phnom Penh and those provinces where the organization has established a presence. The organization does both training of citizens and training of trainers. It has experienced no restrictions from the authorities in its educative work in the provinces.

- General Monitoring and Investigation of Violations: 24 Vigilance members have been trained as pre-election human rights monitors by the Taskforce and observed the situation in 18 provinces.
- Vigilance has received 120 complaints regarding human rights abuses since its establishment. The cases fall into two classes:
 - * serious human rights violations (such as murders by police), which are referred to UNTAC's Human Rights Component; and
 - * land disputes, in which Vigilance takes a more active role and mediates between authorities and the victim.

Vigilance sees the exposure and denunciation of violations as an important part of its work, and has members keen to undertake the defenders' training course.

- Constitutional Work and Post-Electoral Period: Vigilance will work to ensure that human rights are protected in the new Constitution. It has participated in a workshop conducted by the Asia Foundation on the US Constitution and sees this as a viable model. The organization will use its contacts with political parties to advocate for its ideas. Vigilance already has supporters in various parties — the CPP, FUNCINPEC, BDLF and the LDP.
- Future Plans: Vigilance will continue to work in the areas of monitoring/representation and education/training. It also hopes to initiate some development projects, such as teaching sewing to women.

L.C.D.H.C. — Ligue Cambodigienne Des Droits De L' Homme Et Du Citoyen

1. Background

LCDHC was formed in July 1991 in France with the goal of achieving peace and democracy in Cambodia through the promotion of human rights and rights of citizens. In November 1992, LCDHC opened an office in Phnom Penh. It has around 30 members in France and the same number in Cambodia. The Phnom Penh office has 3 official representatives.

LCDHC believes that the role of "the citizen" is particularly important in a country such as Cambodia, where there is no

real rule of law and where the formal civil society is non-existent or underdeveloped.

2. Concerns

ASIAN NGO Response

Responding to the needs and aspirations of the Cambodian people and groups a few regional NGO's have responded by their operational presence in Cambodia as well as by periodic review visits with a view to formulating programmes of assistance. Such initiatives included the Cambodian Human Rights Task Force, consisting of the International Human Rights Law Group, USA, Union of Civil Liberties, UCL, Thailand, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, ICES, Sri Lanka, L.B.H. Indonesia and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, H.R.C.P. which came together as a coalition to provide an operational presence by locating one Sri Lankan co-ordinator and a American on-site human rights monitor to work closely with the Cambodian groups over a period of 4 months from February. Amongst its activities in the 4 month period, it has —

- (1) conducted training workshops for the Cambodian NGOs in human rights fact-finding and elections; using forms designed for the workshops, the Cambodian NGOs provided the Task Force with regular reports on human rights violations and election-related incidents from all over Cambodia.
- (2) assisted the Cambodian human rights groups to issue several joint statements on the human rights situation, including condemnations of the slaughter of ethnic Vietnamese, as well as individual, pre-election position papers;
- (3) published regular reviews of the human rights and electoral situation, using information provided by the Cambodian human rights groups;
- (4) trained a cadre of election observers from the human rights groups who went on to train a nationwide network of poll-watchers;
- (5) Planned long-term international support for Cambodia through a mission of leading Asian NGOs to assess the needs of the Cambodian judiciary, a "Dialogue on Constitutionalism" as well as donors meeting of future support for assistance to the NGO sector, in Bangkok in mid-May;
- (6) conducted an election observer mission.

Part 3: Mobilising World Support

Sri Lankan Conflict: Consociational Solution

A. M. Navaratna Bandara and Sumanasiri Liyanage

The Sri Lankan ethnic conflict escalated into a civil war in 1983. In the Northern and Eastern Provinces, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, a civil war situation became the normal way of life; the only exception was the early days of the Indian peace keeping force intervention. Every 'attempt' by the Sri Lankan government to find a solution to this serious problem of civil war which has shaken the island nation, ended in failure. This failure can be attributed to two main factors: (i) the government's failure to put forward, with a firm commitment, a genuine solution to the problem, and of its inability to face Sinhalese-Buddhist chauvinistic elements, (ii) the intransigence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and also of the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinistic forces. The latest attempt — the Parliamentary Select Committee headed by Mr. Mangala Munasinghe has not yet resulted in any solution. It appears that Sri Lanka and its people have to go on living with this problem in a war ridden country suffering enormous hardships imposed by the war situation.

The ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka has led to a proliferation of literature on the subject and in certain instances, has also become a profitable business for academia. These studies approach the subject using different but complementary methods, substantive foci and theoretical perspectives. This paper is a fresh attempt to propose an alternative solution to the ethnic problem. We are under no illusions that these views are likely to receive wide acceptance by the Sri Lankan masses in general or by political parties and pressure groups in particular. But, the continuing ethnic war with no viable solution might have serious repercussions for the future. A correct understanding of the problem and the creation of essential democratic prerequisites for its solution may at least be a step forward. What we have suggested here emphasizes the need for democratic cultural norms and values in the Sri Lankan society. It involves the 'remaking' of the mass consciousness.

We argue in this paper that moving away from majoritarian democracy towards consociational democracy can provide a fresh beginning for redesigning the

Sri Lankan polity in accordance with its multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic character. The paper presents consociationalism both as an empirical theory and as a normative and prescriptive theory. As Lijphart points out;

The empirical theory tries objectively to explain and predict where power-sharing has been or likely to be adopted and how well it has worked or is likely to work. The normative theory advocates power-sharing for multiethnic societies because it is the optimal — indeed, usually the only — solution, regardless of whether the background conditions are favourable or unfavourable. (1990:199)

The paper consists of three parts: In section one we summarize the basic premises of the consociational theory; Section 2 gives a brief summary of the Sri Lankan ethnic problem; An outline of the consociational solution to the ethnic problem is attempted in Section 3.

Section 1: The Consociational Democracy Model

The Consociational Democracy Model (CDM) challenges two widely accepted but erroneous paradigmatic notions, namely, (1) the equation of democracy with majority rule and (2) the non-viability of a democratic system in deeply divided societies. Although, these two seemingly mutually exclusive notions are propagated by two rival schools, it is quite clear that the two positions are very often interrelated and interdependent both in theory and practice. When democracy is equated with majoritarian rule, the democratic system may not be a viable form of government in culturally, ethnically and racially divided societies. In such a situation, majority rule may take the form of authoritarianism. Thus, one premise feeds the other. How can this paradox be resolved? Does it need a paradigmatic shift to disprove these notions? Lijphart who is the principal proponent of CDM writes:

My argument will be, in the first place, that there are two principal types of democracy: in addition to majoritarian democracy there is a distinctly different alternative type that I have labelled "consociational" democracy. Instead of majority rule, consociationalism stresses consensual decision-making, proportionality, and minority rights. Secondly, I shall argue that democracy is not inevitably destined to fail in deeply

divided societies; if a democratic government belongs to the consociational type or if it incorporates consociational elements to a significant degree, it should have a good chance to be viable and effective. (1977: 113-14)

What is meant by consociational democracy? How does it differ from majoritarian democracy? Majority rule has been given legitimacy by referring to the majority rule/minority rule dichotomy. In the absence of a general consensus, the decisions taken by the majority are more democratic than the decisions taken by the minority. When there is no practical mechanism available to get minority participation in the decision making process, a majority decision is the only logical rule of democracy. The Westminster model has thus been accepted as the democratic norm for other countries with minor modifications. Two questions can be posed: Is this majoritarian democracy truly democratic? Would it give even a semblance of democracy in a deeply divided society? Lijphart's answer to the first question is:

.. [T]he primary rule of democracy should be that citizens have the opportunity to participate, either directly or indirectly in making decisions. The second meaning of democracy, that the will of the majority must prevail, violates the primary rule if the representatives are divided into a government and an opposition: it excludes the minority from the decision-making process for an extended period. (1977: 15)

As Lijphart points out, the exclusion of a minority can be partially overcome 'if majorities and minorities alternate in government'. In societies where the minority/majority distinction is not fixed and interchangeable in time and space, majoritarian democracy may work reasonably well and the basic democratic rights may prevail. However, in the societies which were characterized by historically determined, and fixed majority/minority dichotomies based on ethnic, religious and cultural-linguistic differences, the condition of alternation in government will rarely be fulfilled. As Arthur Lewis has said in such a context, majority rule is 'totally, immoral, inconsistent with the primary meaning of democracy, and destructive of any prospect of building a nation in which different peoples might live together in harmony' (1965: 66). Many countries, in different degrees, belong to this category. However, it is true that majoritarian democracy

This paper was presented at the CEYLON STUDIES SEMINAR by Dr Sumanasiri Liyanage and Dr Navaratna Bandara held in Colombo last month. Authors wish to thank Mr Krishnaraj Selvanam for editorial help.

can work reasonably well even in multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural societies like those of United Kingdom, the United States of America. This is due to two reasons: First, in addition to the condition of alternation in government, various constitutional guarantees and conventions which protect minority rights exist in these democratic societies. Secondly, as Gramsci (1971) correctly notes, in Western democracies, the civil society structures are sturdy and deep rooted in these societies and the power exercised by the government of the majority is limited. The civil society which is like a mosaic, is pluralistic and distinguishable from the unified state apparatus. But even in these societies, the experience of the recent past demonstrates that the minorities have begun to feel that their position is not secure. The emergence of the Scottish National Party with a secessionist programme, *Plyd cymra* in Wales, block rebellion and the dissent of Asians in the United Kingdom are clear indications of an emerging ethnic consciousness.

The concept of democracy as majority rule in deeply-divided societies has been questioned. John Stuart Mill says:

Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist. (Quoted on Lijphart, 1977: 116-17)

If this is so, what can we suggest as an alternative? As Lipset (1960) argues, the chances for democracy may be enhanced if the 'crosscutting, political relevant affiliations' are present. But the situation, by definition, is inherently weak and unstable. This gives a kind of legitimacy to non-democratic method of control. Lijphart is not so pessimistic and thinks that a better form of democracy can be designed.

Consociational democracy is characterized by four principles: grand coalition government, mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy. All four principles deviate from majority rule. ... The consociational model described in terms of these four characteristics is not just a theoretical construct. There are several empirical examples of consociational democracy in various parts of the world. (1977: 118-19)

How the major components of consociational engineering are assembled may depend on the situation. Its effectiveness

will be a function of several complex variables. As Lijphart notes, 'the application of the CDM is not a sufficient condition for the success of democracy in plural societies' (1977: 120). However, what is important in this approach is that it provides constitutional guarantees for power-sharing between different communities. Power-sharing, said Lijphart, 'in grand coalition can take a variety of forms: a grand coalition cabinet in parliamentary systems, grand councils with important advisory or coordinating functions, and a grand coalition of the president and other high political functionaries in presidential systems' (1979: 500). The principle of segmental autonomy means a devolution of power. Devolution is something qualitatively different from decentralization, while devolution means 'the transfer of power to geographic units of local government that lie outside formal command structure of the central government' decentralization implies 'the dispersal of power throughout the structure' (Sherwood, 1969: 68). '(Devolution of power) complements the grand coalition principle: on all issues of common interest, the decisions are made jointly by the segment's leaders, but on all other issues, decision-making is left to each segment' (Lijphart, 1979: 500). This characteristic is common in a federal system so that federations in plural societies can be consociations provided that a decentralized government exists. The minorities may exercise a veto over legislation which are of a discriminators nature. This is similar to John C Calhoun's 'concurrent majority' or Hans Daalder's 'mutual veto'. Proportionality ensures 'the overrepresentation of small minorities and parity of representation'. Power-sharing includes the joint exercise of legislative and especially executive power, group autonomy, proportionality and minority/mutual veto as the last weapon. Thus, consociational democracy is not only an alternative to majoritarian democracy but is an alternative to partition and secession. To see how consociational engineering would work in war-ridden Sri Lanka, it is necessary to look at the nature of the ethnic problem.

Section 2. The Ethno-Nationalist Question in Sri Lanka

A. Pre-Independence Period

This is a comparatively new problem with no direct connection with the conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese in the early history of the island. Kadirgamar thinks that 'it was the failure of the Soulbury Constitution of 1947 to provide adequate safeguards for the minorities that set in motion the vicious circle of suspicion,

animosity, hatred and violence that country has experienced since 1948' (1989: 183). However, signs of the future ethnic conflict may be seen in the constitutional reform movements in the 1920s and after. The Tamil leaders seem to have thought that arrangements for power-sharing between minority ethnic groups and the majority ethnic group could be made with a due place for minority communities by demanding adequate representation in the Legislative Council. In 1918, speaking on the question of constitutional reforms, an outstanding Tamil leader, K Balasingham said:

I wish to bring to your Excellency's notice that the Tamils desire that whether under a territorial or racial basis of representation there should be the existing proportion of representation between the principal races maintained in any reformed council. (Quoted by G G Ponnambalam in State Council of Ceylon, 1939: 896)

In 1921, the Tamil Maha Jana Sabha passed a resolution according to which 'no electoral scheme will be acceptable to the Tamils unless provision is made for Tamil seats in the Legislative Council equal in number to two-thirds that of the Sinhalese'. S W R D Bandaranaike was the first to propose a different constitutional framework to safeguard the minority interests. At a meeting held in Jaffna, he suggested a federal constitutional structure for Sri Lanka, but nobody seems to have taken this proposal seriously. The formation of the Pan-Sinhalese or Sinhalese-only Board of Ministers in the second State Council in 1936 indicated clearly the possibility of Sinhalese dominance, if not monopoly, in the state and polity in post-independence Sri Lanka. However, the leaders of the Jaffna Youth Congress (JYC) who took a definite for a united Sri Lanka and total independence from British rule felt that Sinhalese dominance would only be a transient phenomenon. Addressing the Youth Congress sessions in 1928, Nadesan said 'that after long years of being subjected to foreign rule, the chances were that the majority community, at the beginning of self-government would use power for narrow and selfish ends; but some years of experience in self-government would teach them that strength required national unity ... that parochialism would cease and that people would think of the "nation" first and that self-government would provide the remedy for the ills of the country' (Ceylon Daily News, 1928, quoted in Kadirgamar, 1980 and 1989). This position was reaffirmed in the criticism by the Jaffna Youth Co-

gress of G G Ponnambalam's long speech at the State Council in 1939. Ponnambalam anticipated discriminatory rule by the majority Sinhalese after independence and proposed balanced representation known as fifty-fifty as a constitutional guarantee for the defence of minority rights. He said that an institutional safeguard was necessary so that mutual trust and interdependence between different communities would be achieved.

If the various sections of the people of this country are to develop the virtues of compromise and co-operation, one condition precedent to that development is a feeling of interdependence, a feeling that any single community by itself will not be able to administer the government of the country. (State Council of Ceylon, 1939: 1004)

Tamil politics in pre-1948 period was dominated by this demand for balanced representation within the framework of a unitary system of government. The fact that 'no Tamil leader of importance fought for a federal constitution at Independence' (Hoole et al, 1990: 1) was an historical irony. The explanation given by the Tamil intelligentsia shows that they themselves had misunderstood the nature and the effectiveness of unitary government in a multi-ethnic context. The following quotation proves this point:

If Tamils did not show an interest in federalism before independence, there were sound material reasons for this. Their middle class depended on government jobs outside the Tamil speaking areas. A unitary state is not a moral issue and in Ceylon such a state could have been workable with adequate devolution such as in Britain. The peoples of Ceylon after all have much more in common in terms of origin and culture than to the people of Britain. Conflict of the past too have been dynastic rather than along lines of language or religion. (Hools et al, 1990: 11-2)

Democratic institutions, the existence of a strong civil society definitely would help the minorities and as we indicated in Section 1, these institutions also introduce certain consociational elements into the unitary structure. But what has been revealed by recent experience in many countries is that in the absence of precisely defined constitutional guarantees, minority rights are invariably at stake. The failure to understand the need for a suitable constitutional structure is one of the reasons for the decline of the JYC and the left political parties and some left-oriented

academics seem to have shared this opinion. In this respect, Ponnambalam's proposal for balanced representation can be seen as a more concrete and practical approach than the abstract ideas of the Jaffna Youth Congress and the Sri Lankan left. The left political formation or the Jaffna Youth Congress did not come out with alternative concrete constitutional framework to counter Ponnambalam's proposal. The reply to Ponnambalam's speech in the State Council by the JYC reveals that a section of the Tamil elite were in the forefront in fighting against the 'poisonous vapours of communalism' (Youth Congress, 1939: 4). With some justification, JYC interpreted Ponnambalam's proposal as pro-imperialist and they argued that it might lead to increased communal prejudice among the Sinhalese. In our opinion, the narrow definition given by them to term democracy might have caused them to reject the fifty-fifty proposal. 'Democracy is the government by the majority', so that 'the so-called balanced representation would be highly undemocratic' (Youth Congress, 1939: 30). The speeches by the left leaders who had close links with the JYC in this State Council on the Reforms Dispatch showed that they also did not think in terms of specific constitutional protection for the minorities although they firmly stood for minority rights. Both the JYC and the Sri Lankan left seemed to have assumed that class contradictions were more important and dominant than contradictions based on ethnic-nationalism. This was not unique to the Sri Lankan left. The eradication of class contradictions was been by the world Marxist movement as the basis on which the other contradictions could be resolved without much difficulty.

The Tamil leaders finally agreed in 1947 to a centralized constitution for independent Sri Lanka. The only provision written into it to protect minority rights was Section 29 (2) under which Parliament's power to make certain laws was restricted. (For the effectiveness of this clause, see Weerawardhena, 1960 and Wilson, 1960) D S Senanayake's project to build a Sri Lankan nation accommodating minority interests was aimed at forming a 'grand coalition' type of party either including the leaders of minority communities or collaborating with them and organizing the party along class lines to take over the post independence administration. Jennings has described it as 'a non-communal party, a party to which members of all communities could belong because it proposed to treat public policy on non-communal lines' (1945: 135). The name the United National Party indicates this grand

design of D S Senanayake.

[I]t is probably wrong to say that Mr D S Senanayake was involved in a deep anti-Tamil conspiracy to bring about Sinhalese domination. Nor is it possible to make a case that Mr Senanayake was hatching a diabolical master plan to colonise Tamil areas with Sinhalese. When work for the Gal Oya settlement scheme in the Eastern province had been completed, first preference was given to people from the province. It was only after about six months, when faced with the paucity of local applicants, that the doors were opened to applicants from other provinces. (Hools et al, 1990: 2)

The grand coalition was facilitated by the tacit agreement among all parties and political groups that both Sinhala and Tamil be regarded as national languages. In 1944, J R Jayawardene moved a resolution in the State Council proposing that 'Sinhala should be made the medium of instruction in all schools'. However, he later accepted to incorporate the amendment proposed by V V Nalliah, member for Trincomalee and Batticaloa North, that Tamil be also given the same status. (State Council of Ceylon, 1944, also see, Russell, 1982) The basis of this agreement was the proposal passed by the State Council in 1943. Until Bandarnaike put forward the Sinhala Only policy in his party manifesto, no one had seriously challenged this position. Until 1958, Sinhala was taught in Jaffna schools as a third language.

B. The Break-Up of the 'Grand Coalition'

D S Senanayake's project worked reasonably well for a short period immediately after independence. He thought that the immediate threat to his regime would come not from the Tamil minorities but from the working class and the parties which represented them. During this period, the plantation workers voted for the left parties or the candidates associated with and supported by the left. The Citizenship set of 1948 and the Parliamentary Election Amendment Act of 1949 disenfranchised the plantation workers and paved the way to a reduction in the minority representation in Parliament and the support for the left in it. G G Ponnambalam, then a Cabinet Minister, opposed the first but voted for the second. The main objection to this undemocratic legislation came not from the Tamil representatives but from the parliamentarians of the Left parties.

Jaffna Polls : A Tale of Two Ministers

Arden

Though in its Manifesto the U.N.P. had said it would call an all-party conference to solve the ethnic dispute once and for all, Jayewardene did not do this; he could hardly call an all-party conference when the elimination of Mrs. Bandaranaike from the political arena was his foremost priority. However, he gave Tamil a constitutional status as a national language, abolished the much resented standardisation of marks in the university entrance examinations and got ready to enact the District Development Councils law (which was based on the report of a 10-member Presidential Commission appointed to report on decentralisation of the administration. The Commission submitted its report in February 1980.) No doubt Jayewardene reckoned that these *ex parte* but progressive measures were adequate substitute for dialogue with the Tamil leaders and the others concerned. A senior Tamil academic Professor A.J. Wilson commented: "Too little, too late".

In the meantime, by mid-1979, the president stationed a full brigade in Jaffna under the command of Brigadier Tissa Weeratunga, Chief of Staff of the army, and ordered him to wipe out terrorism in the peninsula within 6 months. By the beginning of 1980 Weeratunga reported to the president that he had carried out his orders and that all was now well in Jaffna. For the whole of 1980 not one police officer or serviceman was killed in Jaffna as against 3 in 1977, 8 in 1978 and 3 in 1979. It certainly looked as if the brigadier had worked the oracle. What he had in fact done was to prove to the Tigers that it was time they got some training abroad and put their act together. Not having the training and equipment to take on a whole brigade the self-styled Tigers moved out of the country. Some settled

down in Tamil Nadu where they set up military training camps; others went to Lebanon for training.

"16 associates of Uma Maheswaran left for training in Lebanon. The training was arranged by a London-based Marxist and Eelam supporter Eliathamby Ratnasabapathy. In the meantime another component of the Tiger movement, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (T.E.L.O.), led by Thangadorai and Kuttimuni, was based in Madras. Both were well-known smugglers and, with their knowledge of the underworld of Tamil Nadu, they were able to arrange for training facilities there. In a clever manoeuvre they recruited retired Indian army instructors who were Tamils. In this manner, 46 Tigers, including Thangadorai, Kuttimuni, Jegan and Oberoi Thevan from T.E.L.O., Prabhakaran, Charles Anthony (alias Seelan) and Chelvanayagam (alias Sellikili) from the L.T.T.E. were trained in guerilla warfare in Tamil Nadu".

(T.D.S.A. Dissanayake: The Agony of Sri Lanka).

On 30 September R. Balasubramaniam, U.N.P. Organiser in Killinochchi was shot dead by Uma Maheswaran's Lebanon-trained killers. This was the only case of Tiger violence for the whole of 1980. When 1981 came round the District Development Councils Act had been passed and, coincidentally, the foreign-trained Tigers were ready for a guerilla war.

The L.T.T.E. under Prabhakaran and the T.E.L.O. under Thangadorai teamed up to rob the People's Bank at Neerveli and got away with 8 million rupees. In the attack, which took place on 25 March, two

policemen, both Sinhalese, were killed. They were no longer killing only Tamils.

A wholly new situation had come about in the peninsula. The Eelam fighters had acquired new skills, new techniques and a new ruthlessness. Incredibly, the president engrossed in his own plans and concerns, did not seem to notice.

The next big step on the president's programme was the D.D.C. elections under the P.R. system which were scheduled for 4 June. Incredibly, the president had hopes of winning the election in Jaffna. He sent some high officials to study the situation in Jaffna and report back to him. They advised him that it would not be advisable to try to hold an election in Jaffna. But Jaffna was what the D.D.C. elections were all about. The president decided to have the elections under emergency. He sent two of his ministers Cyril Mathew, who was the president of the U.N.P. union the Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya (J.S.S.) and Gamini Dissanayake, who was the president of the Lanka Jathika Estates Workers Union (L.J.E.W.U.) to see what could be done.

On 24 May A. Thiyagarajah, who headed the list of U.N.P. candidates for the election, was shot dead at Chankanai by Uma Maheswaran's P.L.O.T.E. men. On 31 May four policemen on duty at a T.U.L.F. rally near Nachchimar Kovilady temple in Jaffna were shot in the back by Maheswaran's killers. Two of them died. A story was put about that while on duty the policemen suddenly decided to shoot at each other. This story was widely believed; no one thought to ask how it was possible for four men to shoot each other in the back simultaneously. This was perhaps the earliest instance of Tiger disinfo-

mation which was to become a regular feature after each atrocity.

That very night a large number of police personnel brought to Jaffna for the elections from other parts of the country mutinied and ran amok. The Jaffna Library which contained thousands of priceless books was burned. Also burned were the house of the M.P. for Jaffna Yogeswaran, the M.P.'s vehicles, the T.U.L.F. office and many shops in the bazaar.

Although a press announcement indicated that the government would appoint a Commission of Inquiry this was not done. The C.R.M. made a strong protest to the government.

The elections were duly held on 4 June.

The S.L.F.P. having decided to boycott the elections, the U.N.P. won very easily in Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Matale, Galle, Hambantota, Ampara, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Badulla; but other than in Ampara, wherever it was opposed by the T.U.L.F. it lost. Even in Trincomalee the U.N.P. polled only 42,388 votes to the T.U.L.F.'s 44,692.

In Jaffna things went seriously wrong. Exactly what the two U.N.P. ministers were supposed to be doing in Jaffna in the days preceding the poll and on polling day itself was anybody's guess. They had no legitimate status there; the election was in the charge of the Commissioner of Elections and his Returning Officer, the Government Agent of Jaffna. But it was rumoured that the two ministers had pulled rank with the Government Agent and countermanded the instructions of the Commissioner of Elections.

At the end of the poll the Returning Officer Yogendra Duraiswamy informed the Commissioner of Elections that the poll "had not been conducted in a proper manner". He added: "Certain ballot boxes had arrived late. Certain ballot boxes had not arrived at all. A substantial number of counting officers had not conformed to the requirements stipulating that written state-

ments should be delivered of the number of votes cast for each political party or independent group".

The Commissioner of Elections consulted the Attorney-General 'who told the Commissioner that he had no power to invalidate an election and that he should direct the Returning Officer to count the available votes in the presence of the representatives of the parties and independent groups. (The SUN 10 June 1981). In spite of Jayewardene's best efforts, in spite of ballot boxes going missing, the T.U.L.F. won handsomely:

T.U.L.F.	263,369
U.N.P.	23,302
T.C.	21,369

The Nation of 19 June had this to say:

"At the election to the Jaffna District Development Council held on 4 June 150 officials picked by the Commissioner of Elections were replaced by nominees of the ruling party just before the poll. For the first time in the history of this country the conduct of an election was wrested from the control of the duly constituted authority and exercised by a political party. Thus has the ruling U.N.P. celebrated the golden jubilee of universal adult suffrage in Sri Lanka. The Nation learns from reliable sources that the Commissioner of Elections Mr. M.A. Piyasekera may tender his resignation as a protest against the government's attempt to rig an election".

Mr. Piyasekera sent in his papers shortly after the election and was appointed Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Rome.

As a postscript to the violence of May-June 1981 the following extract from an interview given by President Jayewardene to S. Venkat Narayan, Senior Editor of India Today, and published as part of the cover story in that paper, gives an indication of what the president thought of these events:

S.V.N: In Jaffna people are very upset.

The policemen set fire to the 50-year old library and burnt 97,000 valuable books. They also set fire to a T.U.L.F. M.P.'s house.

J.R.J: That's because they think he is in touch with the terrorists.

S.V.N: It seems they were trying to catch him so they could kill him.

J.R.J: Terrorists do that too.

S.V.N: So it's tit for tat? This kind of situation is causing a lot of alienation. Therefore, if you go there and assure them of your concern for their safety, they may feel relieved. It may go a long way to ease the tension.

J.R.J: I want to do that but I must find the time. I don't want to go with so much security (sic). If something happens it will be worse.

(Daily News 7 September 1981).

In the event, the president did not find the time. One year later a seminar was held at the Central Y.M.C.A. in the Fort of Colombo by the C.R.M. on Free and Fair Elections. S. Nadesan speaking at it said:

"On the day before the (Jaffna D.C.C.) election the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, on the orders of the President, had given certain directives to the Returning Officer. One hundred and fifty Presiding Officers at polling booths had been removed and others substituted. Some of the substitutes were peons in government departments who knew nothing of election procedure. At the end of the election six ballot boxes were missing. When the Returning Officer asked the Commissioner of Elections what to do the Commissioner had told him to declare a result on available material and ignore the missing ballot boxes." (This was on the advice of the Attorney-General that the Commissioner had no alternative course under the law.)

(Nation 30 July 1982)

Cricket Chauvinism

D. A. de Silva

Wettimuny was unbeaten at the close of play with 180 or so and Amal Silva shone in the second innings with a century of his own. Then there was captain Duleep Mendis's singular achievement. With a century under his belt in the first innings, he missed by just four runs the rare double of twin centuries in a Lord's Test and the unique one of achieving it on one's first appearance. What has all this got to do with Richie Benaud? Well, he did praise the quality of our batting in his BBC summaries of the day's play. But the crime for which he stands charged occurred five years later when he produced a video of eight outstanding performances he had witnessed in his 25 years association with the BBC. South Africa, for obvious reasons, was not among the then Test-playing countries represented but every other country was — bar Sri Lanka. No country had made as stirring a debut as Sri Lanka at the Mecca of cricket yet Benaud chose to leave that game out of his anthology. Face the wall, Richie, that was a naughty thing to do!

There is another cricketer who would also qualify for his country's eleven of all-time greats but is high on my personal black list. Step forward, Martin Crowe. He it was who in the late 'eighties argued vehemently (and successfully) for the abandonment of New Zealand's tour of Sri Lanka which had only just begun. Terrorist action was the reason given but was it just a coincidence that the English cricket season had opened and Crowe was under contract to an English county? He almost scored a double in late '92 when there was a bomb blast in Colombo outside the New Zealanders' hotel and he again favoured calling off the tour. Fortunately wiser counsel prevailed and he was persuaded, reluctantly by his own account, not to join his five teammates who chose to leave. As captain, he could hardly do less.

The wag who suggested at the time that New Zealand should henceforth be noted for chicken rather than lamb was carrying things too far and Crowe could be forgiven if those incidents alone summed up the case against him. What were unforgivable were his transgressions on the second tour. Given out to a doubtful catch in the Second Test, Crowe did not walk but chose to stay his ground until, following consultations between the two umpires, the decision was reversed. That he was right and the original decision wrong is not the point. Crowe would not have dared to do this in a test outside Sri Lanka. It was in that same test too that he accused

Warnaweera of chucking — the same Warnaweera, be it said, who went through a tour of New Zealand in 1991 without being called.

Chucking on the part of our off spinners was part of the explanation given for England's defeat in the single test played this year in Colombo. Not just the tabloids but some of the quality English newspapers suggested as much. So did the "Cricketer" magazine which displayed photographs of poor Muralitharan and Warnaweera in compromising positions so to speak. The 'Sunday Times' was an honourable exception. "Can't bat, can't bowl, can't win" was its pithy headline over its story of England's defeat. I suggested, in a letter to their Sports Editor that he might have added: "Can whine". It wasn't published.

Wining and dining which used to reflect the harmony of tours gone by have now given way to whining and slighting or — to use the current expression — sledging. Sri Lankan batsmen have suffered the experience of needling in the middle — aggravated by the occasional obscenity as in their Australian tour — and Sri Lankan umpiring has been singled out for criticism on the grounds of bias. That charge has this old codger spluttering.

In the old days when Sri Lanka was a stopover to allow Australian and English touring teams to stretch their sea legs on their way to each others' territory, our umpires leaned over backward to favour the visitors. One was reminded of the story of W G Grace playing in a village match. A tearaway young bowler had him plumb lbw early in the innings and appealed with much vigour. "Not out" said the umpire "and no more of that, young fellow. The people have come to see the doctor bat, not you bowl". So it was with our umpires in those bygone days. It was as much as their lives were worth to respond positively to an appeal against a Bradman or a Hammond. The pendulum now seems to have swung in the opposite direction and it shouldn't bother us one whit. As they say of questionable decisions, they tend to even out over the long run.

Does this mean that Sri Lankans alone are pure as the driven snow? Not at all. We have learned to play hard ball (as Americans call it) and it does this old heart good to have John Reid's selection as Match umpire for the South African series questioned on the ground that he had made his home in South Africa. Even though we went along with it eventually, we served notice that we are not disposed to take things lying down; that is as it

should be.

The chauvinistic cricket fan does not let his mind dwell on such slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The fact is that the good memories far outweigh the bad. There was the time when Keith Miller and C I Gunasekera were engaged in a long partnership at our Oval playing against an England XI. Both were racing towards a century and then Miller, almost imperceptibly, slowed down to let CI get there first. That showed class.

Then there was Jim Laker. Never a commentator given to excessive praise, he was fulsome with it in reporting on our batting in that Lord's inaugural Test. When he died, I paid my own tribute to him in verse recalling that matchless performance of his in 1956 when he took 19 Australian wickets in the Old Trafford Test. Surrey County published it in their Yearbook and the veteran commentator, Don Mosey, included it in his biography of Laker published in 1989.

One tribute I would like to reproduce here is to another English spinner who had nice things to say about us. Derek Underwood returned from a England tour of India and Sri Lanka full of praise for our country, its people and its cricket. That did not go unnoticed and when he took six wickets for some 20 odd in a one day game against Sussex, it seemed right to reciprocate. My verses were published in the 'Cricketer' magazine of November 1984.

"Hastings, July 1 1984

They told me, Derek Underwood, they told
me spin was dead
They brought me bitter news to hear and
bitter tears to shed
And then you came to Hastings and on
a feather bed
You spun and wove that magic web which
batsmen always dread.
We saw again that sequence, too long
denied our eyes —
The flighted ball, the groping bat, the foot's
reluctant rise,
The whipped off bail, the loud appeal, the
batsman's sure demise.
Thrice did all this unfold, 'neath Hastings'
cloudless skies.
Eight overs you delivered with guile or
deadly spin;
Six times in all, we marvelled, as you
gathered wickets in.
And then you ceased your ration
spent and left us savouring
The memories of bygone years when
Kentish spin was king".

We may be cricket chauvinists but we honour those who honour our own.

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