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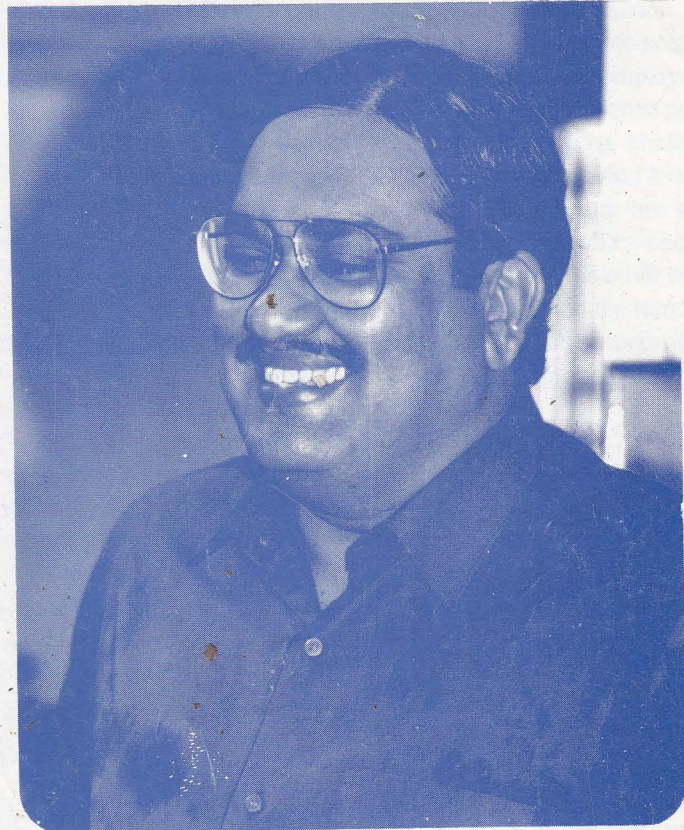
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ANURA: SENSE OF DESTINY

— *Haris Hulugalle*
Mervyn de Silva



CONFLICT AND COLD WAR THINKING

— *Kumar Rupesinghe*

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The Anura factor in the new equation

Mervyn de Silva

To his admirers he is the last bright hope for the preservation of democracy, liberal values and ordinary decencies. To his critics, he is THE SPOILT BRAT in capital letters. Even to some Sri Lankans who know him quite well, Anura remains an enigma. Is he truly the last Liberal Democrat? Or is he the incorrigible feudalist, the *punchi haamu*, the only son of two prime ministers, who has inherited the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and is convinced that he must be crowned Leader, that being the natural order?

There is some merit in all these questions since he is a far more complex personality than his "spoilt brat" image projects. And there is little doubt that the assassination of his father at No. 65 Rosmead Place, on Sept. 26, 1959, left the deepest impression on his only son, the youngest child.

Reading maketh the man. Travel broadens the mind. While his passion for going abroad has inspired many a wisecrack in Colombo's posher parlours, the love for books, the best and the latest, is little known. The English-educated middle-class, particularly, the anti-UNP persists in pinning the "Sir John the Second" label on Anura but if UNP parallels need to be found for a full and proper profile of Anura, it is Dudley Senanayake that we should bear in mind. Like Dudley he delights in hearing a racy yarn, a mischievous prank re-constructed but is quite uncomfortable with malicious gossip or vindictive plots. These are not trifles. The pursuit of power, certainly since the 1970's, has become such a cold-blooded and cynical vocation that the personality of the politician, certainly at the level of party and national leadership, is no trifle.

From personality then to the terrain of politics, the party contest, as we approach

1994, the year of the Presidential polls. Though there is speculation about the UNP's candidate, there is really no reason to believe that President D.B. Wijetunge will NOT contest. What the opposition strategists are relying on most is what they perceive as a post-Premadasa lack of direction. For the opposition, the absence of Premadasa is a disadvantage because his style of presidential politics — the centralisation of authority and the projection of a single image, the so-called ONE-MAN SHOW — won votes for the Opposition, certainly middle-class votes. Nobody has yet examined carefully whether those anti-personality votes were potential SLFP or DUNF votes. The DUNF's exceptional performance on its first outing, would suggest that Lalith's calculations were pretty sound.

Question: How many DUNF votes has returned or will return to a Premadasa-less UNP? We are now talking about a million or at least half a million votes, quite critical in a close contest.

While personality is all-important in a presidential face-to-face, it is not all that vital in a parliamentary election. However the result of the first will also affect the parliamentary, specially the marginal seats.

Question: How many votes can Anura pull out from the traditional SLFP bag?

The answer to that question is likely to be determined by the **psychological** impact of the Anura defection. An SLFP minus Anura will be immediately read by the more conservative pro-SLFP constituents as an SLFP + Chandrika, + the (Marxist) Left. So, it is the **psychological** impact of the Anura defection on the SLFP voter that the leadership has to worry about.

It is possible of course that the SLFP believes that the Poland-Greece Pakistan trend suggests a "socialist" revival inspired by a strong reaction to the new IMF-World Bank market-economics, inflation, privatisation, unemployment etc. It is this issue — the economic policy platform — which is now a challenge to the SLFP-Left coalition, and it is on this question that its advisers are working. The War and a devolution package to the Tamils represent the other vital issue. Will Mrs. B., a traditionally hardline Sinhala-Buddhist "buy" an autonomy, quasi-federal package wrapped up by the radical think-tanks.

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First Among Equals

Haris Hulugalle

Would one apply this description of British Prime Ministers to Anura Bandaranaike, now like Winston Churchill, cast into the wilderness in mid career?

Anura certainly has no equals in the Cabinet, in the Opposition or in Parliament. Coming closest to him are Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Prime Minister and Anura's sister Chandrika, the Chief Minister of the Western Province and a potential Opposition Leader. Ranil executive but unfortunately lacks the platform presence or the television personality to move the masses. Chandrika's day is hopelessly disorganised.

However, though he towers above his Parliamentary colleagues, Anura remains one of us, sharing our virtues and weaknesses. Anura's unique virtue is his inheritance as an aristocrat. He has dedicated his life to public service in a country in which such commitment is rare. Many of our politicians are in it for the money and especially since 1977 have transmitted these vices to all of society. No one

can accuse Anura of such greed. He was born to generations of wealth and even though his mother's brand of socialism deprived him of a greater part of his inheritance, he still has assets substantial enough to keep him in bonny style. In the long term however, his life is one of sacrifice to his sense of destiny. He is well equipped for this task. He was the best speaker in Parliament. He has a superb platform presence and privately, an infectious charm made even more endearing by his boyish sense of humour. Anura is a voracious reader who would enjoy 'Peanuts' as much as John Mortimer for puckish fun as he would Disraeli or Jeffrey Archer for byzantine intrigue. Internationally, he has an enormous range of contacts and has the confidence and the manner to intermingle with ease and on equal terms with the Gandhi family in India or Gaddafi in Libya because he is one of them. But Anura enjoys himself more with very ordinary people, intellectually far below his own level but in whom, nevertheless, he sees decent human qualities to which he can relate.

Then why is he not leading the country? One obvious reason is that his frank and open nature has been too vulnerable to the subtle treachery of the lesser men who surround his mother, Mrs Bandaranaike, now sadly deprived of her acumen by time and age. Anura is no hypocrite and has never concealed his contempt for such people as a clever politician should, in order to survive in a Party which is now devoid of policy or principles. Less obvious reasons can be observed in Anura's own character. He is too sensitive. He should perhaps reduce his indulgence in the good life. He needs to apply himself conscientiously to the mundane in political activity, to the organisation of his base, to the planning of his tactics, to the implementation of his strategy and above all, to defining his own political philosophy. No man can do all these things by himself. Anura's failure to date has been that he has not selected a team of supporters who specialise in these skills. He has finally arrived at the flood in his tide, which can either carry him effortlessly to the position he has always sought or drown him.

Mrs. Bandaranaike Speaks

Q: The leadership of the SLFP has been a family affair. Why don't you promote a person outside your family circles for leadership?

A: As I told you earlier in this interview I can't produce leaders of the party. It is up to those who aspire to be leaders, and the people of this country. However, they can be given opportunities. I am sure everyone in the SLFP is allowed to prove himself or herself for leadership.

Q: Many in the SLFP seem to have a conspiracy against him or her. Do you also feel that there is one against you?

A: Yes. There is one to take Anura away from the party. You should have seen those who were demonstrating against me in front of my house recently. It is a UNP conspiracy to oust me. For they fear me. They need a leadership in the SLFP

that could be manoeuvred to ruin the party. They have attempted to oust me several times but in vain. However, they don't seem to have given up. They are bent on destroying the SLFP. And some who claim to be members of the SLFP too are involved in this conspiracy. We must be careful not to fall prey to the UNP.

Q: Beside the internal politics of the SLFP, how would you observe the Sri Lankan politics with special emphasis on the post assassinations (those of President Premadasa and DUNF leader Lalith Athulathmudali) era?

A: There has been very little change. Under the new administration some thought there would be some kind of difference. But you will see that violence has not ceased. There are still reports of bodies of youths being found killed and abandoned. There is very little demo-

cracy. The whole nation witnessed how the UNP government made a mockery of norms and traditions and even laws of this country where it illegally appointed two of its people as the Chief Ministers of the South and the North West. Despite the fact that the government had created the trouble by not complying with the court orders and the will of the people, it had two people killed in Galle. They were two innocent people who knew nothing about what was happening around them. In the North and the East thousands of the country's youths are sacrificed. Tens of thousands are bereft. A war is said to be fought. People are kept in the dark as to what is happening in the North and the East. You the press are threatened when you try to tell the people the truth of what is happening in the country. The public sector has been ruined. Despite cooked up figures and statistics the country's

economy is crumbling. This is exactly the same that we experienced before the new administration came in.

Q: The SLFP is described by sceptics as an ailing giant for its failure to campaign hard and capture state power. They say the SLFP is patiently waiting state power to be offered on a platter. Your comments please?

A: Even if state power is offered to us on a platter we wouldn't accept it unless it is given by the people of this country. It is wrong to say we are not campaigning hard. We are! You should understand our hardship under an administration indulging in all sorts of undemocratic acts. Bureaucracy has been politicised in favour of the UNP. So have been many other institutions that are required to function impartially. They are manoeuvring to disrupt the SLFP by promoting certain factions against the leadership.

Certain newspapers are hostile to us. They jump at statements made by government politicians and some trouble-makers in the SLFP. But they don't publish our version of the issue. Can you say even your newspapers are not guilty of this kind of violation of journalistic ethics? We on the other hand are facing a campaign against us by international forces that favour the UNP government which is "on a campaign to sell Sri Lanka" to foreigners. It is against all these forces that we are campaigning. Therefore our campaign may appear to be slow. Whatever our enemies say about us we will win!

Q: Because you say your version of the SLFP's problems is not published, is there any message for our readers?

A: The SLFP is a people's party. It doesn't depend on personalities for survival. Its policies are in favour of the people of this country. It is true it has its problems the way other parties have theirs. But the problems in the SLFP are deliberately magnified by certain sections with vested interests.

Some who claim to support the SLFP by forming certain groups in a subtle campaign attempt to portray it as a racist party so as to play it against the ethnic

minorities of the country and to deprive it of their votes. It is because of these votes that the UNP has always won.

People must understand this situation. The UNP despite its media campaign is a spent force. This was evident in the last Provincial Council elections. The SLFP is being restructured with the next election

in mind. The party convention will be held before the end of this year. I assure that there will be no reprisals in the party against anyone for their allegiance to anyone of the SLFP leadership. Ours is a democratic party. Anyone can leave us or join us.

(ISLAND)

The Scholars Tale

Part VI

*Maybe whatever appeared Spontaneous
In the dark events that unfolded hence-forth
Was really all in a days work for our Hero
As he counted each Operation down to Zero*

*There was the very first August rehearsal
Prologue to all regression and reversal
While History was delivered in between
Of bastard events the future could not wean*

*Revanchist Capital took an ugly turn
Killing, like Profit, became a holy term
The knife finally meant for the workers back
Glinted at practice first on the Racial track*

*The Free-market Mafia strode the City stage
Trampled stickers down at the barricade
Letting in the Fascists on their chain and leash
To wolf the striking unions piece by piece
And pices by pice the Fascists built their Squads
In open alliance with JSS Sods.
Mobilized again on the polls for the DDC'S
The Facists swore they would cross with blood the T's
Of indelibly inked fingers casting ballots
For those other than chosen Freemarket Zealots*

*Suddenly the air on each election day
Became as dismal and chill as a funeral lay
Dharmisterror clouded what had been old carefree times
Of happy flags and bawdy Bus stand rhymes*

*Which recalls reports by recent Election observers
That people poll fearfully huddling their shoulders
In a revealing Stone Age reflex reaction
To Free Market marketing of fearfully free elections
Fear of Violent Death being sometimes second
To the Janasaviya fear of losing the family ration*

*Prancing frantic in these furious times
Democracy was the Monovirates constant chime
Our Hero programme stored this chime to mean
That the T-56 was yet not on the Scene*

(Continued)

U. Karunatilake

Ranil meets Christopher

Berta Gomez, Russell Dybvik

WASHINGTON

The experience of Sri Lanka "clearly demonstrates that there is no better form of political and economic organization than a market democracy", Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe said during his first visit to the United States since assuming that office.

In an address to the Overseas Development Council (ODC), the prime minister strongly endorsed the global trend toward market democracy and urged leading economies and financial institutions to provide adequate backing.

"They must support democracy, good governance and human rights. We must create a healthier world political and economic environment that would provide a stable foundation for the 21st century", he said.

Sri Lanka, he added, welcomes the Clinton administration's policy of expanding the world's "free community of market democracies" and "looks forward to active American leadership".

Wickremasinghe, held his first-ever meeting with Secretary Christopher.

It was also the first high-level dialogue between the two governments since the assassination of former President Rana-singhe Premadasa last May. Christopher congratulated the prime minister on the smooth transition following that tragic event.

Christopher told reporters before the meeting that he would discuss the human rights situation in Sri Lanka with the prime minister, which the secretary said is "improving, but leaves still some room for improvement".

"There's been real progress on the economic front in Sri Lanka", Christopher said, noting that during his visit, the prime minister will sign an agreement between his government and OPIC, the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

"The people of Sri Lanka deeply appreciate the support and the encouragement extended to the administration of President Wijetunge by President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and you, Mr. Secretary, during and after the traumatic events in my country recently", the prime minister said.

State Department sources described

the half-hour meeting between Christopher and Wickremasinghe as "productive and friendly". In addition to human rights, they discussed the expanding U.S.-Sri Lankan economic relationship and the prospects for resolving the ongoing conflicts in Sri Lanka.

The prime minister's schedule for October 14 also included meetings with National Security Adviser Anthony Lake; Undersecretary of State for Economic and Agricultural Affairs Joan Spero; Thomas Foley, speaker of the House of Representatives; and Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Other senior officials — including Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin Raphel and the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Teresita Schaffer — attended his early morning address at the ODC.

His remarks there concentrated on Sri Lanka's experience with democracy and economic reform, and on how that experience compares to changes now sweeping much of the world.

Sri Lankans, Wickremasinghe pointed out, "have enjoyed universal adult suffrage since the 1930's and were among the pioneers in the march to economic liberalization 16 years ago, in 1977 — long before others in South America, Eastern Europe and South Asia took the same path".

In contrast, "We were an established democracy, the oldest in Asia. We had to travel in the other direction, to carry out economic reforms in a pluralistic society, in a democratic environment", the prime minister said.

He described his country's post-World War II experiment with a state-run economy as a "costly mistake", but stressed that the reform process begun in 1977 has been a clear success.

(USIA)

Jobless may lead revolt

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe warned Commonwealth heads of government in Cyprus that unemployment problems in developing countries could result in revolt and the "advocacy of extremist measures".

"The failure to resolve the unemployment problem in developed countries may result in change of governments, but

in developing countries failure to do so means revolt, insurgency, and also advocacy of extremist measures, he said intervening in the executive session of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, a Foreign Ministry communique said.

BRIEFLY...

China comes in too

China has bought a Sri Lankan state owned textile mill. A Chinese state corporation has paid a total Rs 110 million for the Mattegama Textile Mills — Rs 50 million for stock and Rs 60 million for shares. Four Chinese nationals will be on the new board. The Mattegama Mills supplies yarn to the handloom industry and cotton, polyester and viscose yarn to the power loom industry.

Refuge in the thotams

Police sources reported an exodus of LTTE activists from metropolitan areas into the up-country tea estates as a result of on-going cordon and search operations by the army and the police in Colombo and the suburbs. They had moved into areas in and around the Eliya district and were offering large sums of money for shelter, police sources said.

End of CGR

The Ceylon Government Railway (CGR), a more than a century old government department, is to be converted into a Railway Authority by statute. Faced with trade union protests following the announcement, the Government has declared the railways an essential service. Transport Minister Wijeyapala Mendis told a press briefing that the Government had decided to convert the department into an Authority because the Railway had been losing an annual Rs 400 million.

Airbus deal: no win

A committee appointed by Government to probe the controversial multi-billion rupee Airlanka airbus deal has reported that a cancellation of the deal now would result in a loss to the airline of 90 million US dollars.

After entering into a contract to buy six aircraft it was found that Airlanka did not have the money to pay for them.

Military stalks Jaffna

Richard Cowper

Sri Lanka's military top brass, angered by months of political prevarication and the assassination in May of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, say they now have the go-ahead to regain the rebel-held northern peninsula of Jaffna.

Of course, no one will say when the main offensive — across the war-torn area that is also home to about 600,000 Tamil civilians — will be launched, but army commanders hint that it is likely to be in the new year.

The over-stretched Sri Lankan army, well below strength from casualties and injuries in a war that has claimed 32,000 lives since 1983, has been rapidly rebuilding. Some 10,000 new recruits are in training to join the 80,000 already under arms. The target is 100,000.

The military plans to purchase helicopter gunships, landing craft and fast patrol boats in preparation for the big push.

Setting off from their strategic army base at Elephant Pass — which seals off the largely guerrilla-held Jaffna Peninsula from the mainland — the government troops thrust north. But on the second day they were caught by surprise in a murderous crossfire from 1,000 well-dug-in Tamil Tigers.

In a pitched battle, involving dozens of women and some of the fiercest hand-to-hand fighting of the war, the army lost 118 men and killed at least 150 guerrillas. The soldiers held their ground and went on to destroy the port of Kilaly before returning to base.

Senior commanders are optimistic they will be ready to take Jaffna soon — after all, they say, it is a comparatively tiny piece of land just 50 miles long and 20 miles wide.

Others believe this is wishful thinking. The Sri Lankan armed forces lost their

most experienced commanders in a land mine explosion more than a year ago and, it is argued, is no match for the fanatical and tightly organised Tamil Tigers.

The guerrillas, whose well armed and trained members in the north may amount to just a few thousand, were able to defeat 120,000 Indian troops in the late 1980s.

They are so single-minded that every combatant carries a cyanide pill around the neck, which they swallow rather than allow themselves to be taken alive.

A number of preparatory tactical thrusts may already have begun. Earlier this month 4,000 soldiers, backed by tanks, fighter jets and gunboats, launched an operation to destroy the Tamil Tiger (LTTE) rebels' main port on the Jaffna lagoon which is used to bypass the army land blockade.

The group is led by Velupillai Prabhakaran, an autocrat, one of the world's most wanted terrorists and a brilliant military strategist who commands almost religious obedience from his fighters.

Mr S Thondaman, Sri Lanka's most famous Tamil and a minister in every cabinet since 1978, is not convinced that the army will go in. "They have been saying they will take Jaffna for years. In the latest offensive, what happened? They withdrew", he says.

Many in the government, however, say the impossibility of negotiating with Mr Prabhakaran has at last persuaded the

cabinet it has no alternative but to go all-out for the military option.

The final straw is said to have come in May when a Tamil suicide bomber with explosive strapped round his waist, assassinated President Premadasa at a political rally in Colombo.

His successor, President D.B. Wijetunge, has publicly vowed to crush terrorism.

"There is no ethnic problem in the north, only terrorism", he says.

Success over the past 12 months in reducing terrorist control in the country's Eastern province could free thousands of Sri Lankan troops for operations in the north.

In addition there is some evidence of growing Tamil resentment of the LTTE's iron grip on the lives and pockets of inhabitants in the Jaffna Peninsula.

These have added to Colombo's belief that the time is right for military action. The fallout, should the army defeat the guerrillas and regain control of the peninsula in a relatively short period, is unclear. The biggest fear is that the price which may have to be paid in terms of loss of life, foreign investor confidence and international opprobrium may be more than the country can bear.

Says one International Red Cross official who regularly goes to Jaffna: "If the army besieges the city of Jaffna with its half-million citizens and leaves the Tigers no escape route it will be murderous hand-to-hand fighting with civilians caught in the middle. Many thousands of non-combatants will die. The best we can hope for is that the population will be able to go to designated safe areas and that the LTTE will be allowed to retreat southward into the jungle".

Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Text of a Public Lecture by Kumar Rupesinghe,
Director, International Alert

Reverend Sirs, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to welcome you on behalf of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies to a public lecture and discussion. The capacity crowd this evening can be regarded as a compliment to the persuasive powers of our Director, Mr Ray Forbes, who has always argued for the BCIS to be more than an academic institution, making international affairs and foreign policy a subject for public discussion and debate. In that connection, this evening is a doubly happy occasion for me, as the lecturer and I were present when this institute was created as a tribute to Bandaranaike, the internationalist, and my own contribution consisted of a project proposal sent to the then Prime Minister Mrs Sirimavo R D Bandaranaike.

I now present Dr Kumar Rupesinghe with whom I have shared happy occasions in Oslo at the International Peace Research Institute where he was director and lately in London, where he holds the position of Secretary General of International Alert. The organisation was inspired and founded by the legendary Martin Ennals who used to visit Sri Lanka quite often. Dr Rupesinghe now specialises in conflict resolution. The title of the lecture indicates the subject clearly, which is the major post Cold War phenomenon, the sudden and dramatic eruption of various forms of conflict, primarily nationalist conflict which not only threaten domestic / regional peace, but even the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation states.

I am sure it will be dealt with adequately by Dr Rupesinghe as he explains the tension throughout the world due to the breakdown or restraints imposed by the Cold War, the threats to the nation states and national sovereignty, and on the other hand, the determination of certain people or groups of people asserting their own collective will in the name of some kind of group identity. This is a very difficult, complex, subject debated throughout the world and I am proud and feel privileged to present a Sri Lankan who has achieved great eminence in this field to address us.

My thanks to Mr Mervyn de Silva for his words of welcome and introduction and to the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies for giving me this opportunity to share with you some of the issues on which I have worked for the last ten years. My congratulations to the Centre for its growth and development over the last few years, particularly in the study of international relations, the diploma course which has reached eminence, as well as the series of lectures and research which it is undertaking particularly on issues arising after the end of the Cold War. After my departure from this country in 1982, I served the International Peace Research Institute for ten years and had the opportunity of reflecting on, reading the relevant background literature and visiting some of the regions of conflicts, as well as becoming involved in peacemaking efforts in several of these war torn countries. It gives me great pleasure to address this gathering.

The subject of my lecture is in a way deeply personal to us all whether as individuals, as families or as nations. We have witnessed violence, been affected by it

and we are still in the midst of war violence. July 1983 is still with us and its ramifications go across the borders of this country to many cities where refugees from both sides live now. The internal repercussions of July 1983 and the violence which was unleashed then has continued to exist in different forms during the last ten years. This makes us therefore, reflect on the fundamental questions of violence, conflict, war, resolution and transformation and how we can deal with these issues. I consider the subject of violence and war as one of the fundamental issues in the global agenda for the 21st century. My presentation is intended to be conceptual in nature and it will try to examine some of the critical issues which, I think, need your attention and consideration. It is obvious that the end of the Cold War will have fundamental repercussions on some of the more traditional concepts of nation, state, community, war and peoples.

I would suggest that after the Cold War there has been a fundamental shift evolving the paradigm whether it is in international relations, political science of

all social science which deal with the evolution of nations and peoples. But whilst the Cold War has disappeared the institutions and thinking which governed that era continue to be with us and old ways of thinking haunt us when we reflect on the future. You may remember that immediately after the Cold War there were many theses of potimism which were backed by several important propositions. I will try to share very briefly some of those theses. Francis Fukuyama, for example, celebrated the end of the Cold War as the end of history. He saw the end of this war the demise of communism as the alternative to the capitalist project and held that with the demise, the liberal democratic western world view was triumphant. His view was that there were no contenders, no universal alternative thesis which would challenge the hegemony of the capitalist project.

Another thesis which emerged was by Moeller and others who wrote several books celebrating the end of war. The argument was that humanity had developed a culture of abhorrence of war and that western democracies have expanded

and developed a way of handling issues peacefully and that the democratic zone was expanding from a few countries to large numbers of countries where peoples would find new ways of resolving the issue of war and peace. A more pessimistic thesis was presented by Mershheimer and others who suggested that we are emerging into a more turbulent period in history reflected by the shift from bi-polarity to multi-polarity. By multi-polarity I express the view that there is no single epicentre which can govern the world but there are many epicentres in the world between which there occur shifting alliances and coalitions, and these fluctuating alliances and coalitions between small and big states could not only lead to greater turbulence but result in war. In terms of research findings, all periods of multi-polarity have resulted in a greater number of warlike situations. Another theory which is gaining currency is the thesis that whilst westernisation has triumphed for the moment there are new centres emerging which would challenge westernisation. It is argued here that fundamentalism would be a major challenge to the thesis of westernisation, whether it is Islamic or Hindu fundamentalism or any other fundamentalism which acts as an antithesis to the continuing project of westernisation.

There are those who would argue that in the future westernisation's greatest area of confrontation will be in South East Asia and the Pacific regions where the peoples of the Confucian tradition, whether Japanese or Chinese, are forming a new epicentre of economic growth which is likely to result in a greater escalation of confrontation and war with the western project. My own thesis however is that we will experience a major increase in internal wars. I foresee not so much an increase in the number of inter-state wars, as in wars within countries and between their peoples. One of the challenges for humanity is to develop ways whereby we can stop such wars, resolve and reduce them, and alleviate the suffering caused by the growing inhumanity of warring groups. Before we elaborate on that particular thesis, I would like to talk for a few minutes on some of the concepts of conflict. Conflicts are a civilisational motor of growth, the essence of civilisation. Conflicts are

seen sometimes as bad or good. Some people see conflicts as management from above, some as resolution. Others see conflicts as a positive means of transformation within individuals and society. Conflicts are the essence of everyday life. Not only has civilisation discovered many ways through which we can have peaceful relations and interactions with each other, but also over time, civilisation has developed extraordinary numbers of cultural norms and rules which govern our behaviour. And it is in this aspect therefore that conflict and its transformation becomes a strategic issue, in the form of deciding who will capture the democratic space. Will it be the forces of violence or the forces of peace?

Another issue that we will have to reconsider is that the dialogue on conflict resolution has been dominated by a linear approach. This particular approach assumes that human beings are rational, that conflicts are solvable, that there is in fact an agreement by all parties that they want to resolve a particular conflict. The literature on conflict resolution is based on this premise, that there is an egalitarian climate of opinion in which people really want to resolve their conflicts. The literature coming from the United States, which is vast, developed a culture of dispute resolution, whether it is family disputes or disputes between trade unions and entrepreneurs, and has made them assume that there is rationality in the discourse on conflict resolution.

In Asia, a healthy contribution to this particular linear approach has been supplied by those who see conflict as a process. The conflict process has stages of formation, maturation, a static stage and finally, transformation. Those who talk of a process of conflict also talk about the deconstruction of the accepted history of each conflict, and the reconstruction of a series of conflict phases, a concept which I will expand later. Another concept which we need to rediscover is the concept of violence. Violence has been defined by many as structural. That is caused by the systematic denial of humanity's basic needs, whether through conditions of poverty or deprivation. Structural violence is a well known concept. Direct violence is the subject of war. I will go into the issue

of violence in a moment. What has been neglected in the literature on this subject is cultural violence. Cultural violence is the way in which a culture mediates and legitimizes violence, whether it is violence between man and woman, or whether it is violence between peoples. It is culture which legitimizes and gives force to violence in any particular society. And would suggest that the denial of identity, the denial of another language, or the denial of another heritage constitutes cultural violence or is the fundamental source of violence. The way we reconceptualise the concept of violence must be applicable to peace too. Are we talking about peace as structural, as the absence of structural and cultural violence, or of another type of peace?

One concept which has been in the news and continues to do so is the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty is not an age old concept and has a history of only about three hundred years. It has been associated with the development of the state and the centralized state. After the Second World War the inter-state system which grew and evolved out of this war introduced the concept of relative sovereignty. States, if they wanted to be members of a civilized club, the club of the United Nations, had to pool part of their sovereignty in return of right to belong to that club. Member states therefore signed protocols and conventions agreeing to a minimum of civilized behaviour. The international community on the other hand on the basis of those state obligations, therefore had a right to criticise those governments or other actors who did not adhere to those norms to which these states have been signatories. So out of these new conditions a relative concept of sovereignty evolved.

We can see in the evolution of the relative sovereignty, particularly in the European Common Market, that many states are prepared to give up more and more of what they call sovereignty to a higher body which can begin to manage the affairs of Europe more competently. Whilst on the one side we have development of largest states and units, we also have the fragmentation and the decimation of states which number one hundred eighty five today. Given the proliferation

of states one can ask the question whether in fifty years time we have one thousand states, five hundred states or fifty. But the fact is that the concept of sovereignty is a major theoretical and political issue today. Under what circumstances can international obligations and international actors intervene in the internal affairs of a country? The human rights domain has over the years developed a system of monitoring and accountability of state actors. The refugee system of law has evolved a system of protection whether they are internally displaced or externally defined refugees. The concept of collective security implies that there are areas where a states individual sovereignty or the peoples security is a matter for an international community rather than just an internal matter for a state. The subject of genocide and consistent human rights violations is no longer the internal monopoly of any single state. A new international system of accountability has evolved and these are its great achievements in the last forty years.

The second part of my presentation will provide you with some empirical data of the changing nature of war. War is no longer necessarily inter-state war. Today war is usually internal war within existing state boundaries. From 1989 to 1992 if we take note of the many research studies done in this area, we will come to some very surprising conclusions. An armed conflict is defined as a situation where you have casualty rate of twenty five battle related deaths a year. A minor armed conflict is defined as a situation where there are less than one hundred casualties during the course of a conflict. Intermediate conflicts are defined as situations where there are one thousand casualties over a period of conflicts, and war is defined as where you have one thousand casualties a year. All the studies show very clearly that at the moment the world has about thirty five internal wars where the casualty rate is over one thousand a year.

It is also clear to us that the plateau of war may increase from thirty five to forty five or fifty. Research regarding small wars which are still not classified as wars but as armed conflicts raise the question which is, what are the conditions under

which a small war becomes a major one? I would suggest that we have a situation of increasing volatility in the region of internal war. In Europe after the Cold War, we see a new theatre of war which is revealed in ex-Yugoslavia. You may remember that in the seventies there were two countries which were held up by the international community as shining examples of modern development. One was Sri Lanka and the other Yugoslavia. These two countries were hailed by the international community as models of development. Both these countries today belong to the thirty five countries which are torn by war. In Europe it is not only Yugoslavia that is at risk. There is a great danger that this theatre of war will spread to Kosovo, Albania and to Macedonia, perhaps leading to a Balkan war.

It is only the internal war which is of consequence to us but also the fearsome concept of ethnic cleansing which has become legitimized in that particular war, where the forceful displacement of hundreds and thousands of people from their land has become respectable and legitimized. Ethnic cleansing has not been restricted to the borders of Bosnia. Already the repercussion are seen in Germany where the Neo-Right is articulating its own form of ethnic cleansing the local migrant population, whether they be Turks, or other ethnic groups. Certainly the Baltics are an area of turbulence. In the new light thrown on the internal wars in the Baltics, the Russians were, a nation building people who had migrated to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania where they are today, minorities without citizenship. Therefore the concept of citizenship is a subject for debate, who is going to be in or out in the New Europe. In the former Soviet Union there is going to be an extremely volatile situation. The new theatre of war can be any where in that country. Not only do we have war in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, but there is likely to be war within the Russian Federation. People are now talking of the disintegration of this Federation. One factor is that twenty five million Russians live outside the boundaries of the Russian Federation. The new dynamics will create mass movement of populations. Once the new independent republics reassert their own nationhood and the concept of citize-

nship, it would mean serious implications for the twenty five million Russians living outside its borders.

In Asia at the moment there are seven wars and there are eighteen potential wars in the making. South Asia may emerge as a new theatre of war. When Sri Lanka was in the throes of its present conflict, there were many friends in Delhi who reminded us that the conflict was very much a southern problem and that this would never be a part of Indian reality. As you all know, the upsurge and expanding concepts of Hindu fundamentalism have since given cause for concern, that in fact there is a likelihood of the disintegration of the Indian Empire. The landscape under which fundamentalism thrives and derives its nourishment in India is extremely alarming and disconcerting. And the reaction to Hindu fundamentalism whether it comes from the Muslims, or from other ethnic groups or other tribal groups is equally disconcerting.

In Africa too we see an enlargement of theatre of war. Some of the old wars derived from the Cold War may be disappearing as in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola. But new wars emerge on stage and the old wars do not pass away but re-invigorate themselves in new forms. I feel that what we see now is only the disintegration of societies as in Somalia. But the question arises that with the disintegration of some states, whom does one talk to when there is no state? Will there be dialogue when criminal armed bandits capture the terrain? My opinion is that this problem is not going to be confined to Somalia as there is already a likelihood of repetition of the Somali situation in other places.

The theatres of war will increase and these wars are those over rights of self-determination. Or to put it in another way, over the question of state formation. How does one develop from strong centralized unitary states to multi-ethnic plural states? This is the challenge which is on the global agenda. States which can develop a multi-ethnic plurality and democracy will survive.

(Next: UN Role)

Ruralisation of the UNP (3)

Mick Moore

One may approach an explanation of the ruralisation of the UNP vote by highlighting two apparent puzzles arising from the information presented so far:

1) As is explained above, not only is there no plausible 'voter interest' explanation of the changing voting pattern, but some reason to see this pattern as a little perverse in the light of the relative prosperity of the Colombo area. One can add to this a related puzzle about the solidity of Indian Tamil support for the CWC. One result of the CWC-UNP alliance was that the publicly-owned estate companies agreed to provide a minimum number of days of work to each worker per month. This was greatly to the advantage of the Indian Tamil population. In 1992, the government privatised the management of the estates to consortia of foreign and local companies, with the support of the CWC leadership. Since they took control, the new private managements have been attempting to remove, formally and/or in practice, these employment guarantees. The CWC leadership has fought hard to retain them. This has become a significant national political issue. The CWC has come under increasing challenge from a range of small political parties and trades unions seeking to cut into its large membership and vote bank on the grounds that it has 'sold out' the workforce by (a) agreeing to privatisation in the first place, and (b) continuing to support it. There is no doubt that the CWC membership is very opposed to privatisation; CWC support for the policy arises from the fact that it is dominated by one man, S. Thondaman, who has not only been a (powerful) Minister since 1977 but is also himself from a plantation-owning family. It is then a little puzzling that, despite these major concerns and intra-CWC differences, at the 1993 elections, the Indian Tamil voters gave their customary massive support to Thondaman and the CWC, and thus to the UNP.

2) Similarly, there are puzzles in the connection between the ruralisation of the UNP vote and the symbolic dimensions of voting. Suppose one finds plausible the case that this ruralisation has been accentuated by the populist dimensions of President Premadasa's imagemaking despite his own very urban background. We then find at least two pieces of apparently-contrary evidence, pointing to the apparent insignificance of symbolic identities in shaping changing voting patterns. One

has already been mentioned above: that the ruralisation of the UNP support base in large part took place under a leader (J.R. Jayawardene) whose style was distinctly 'urban patrician', and indeed, after he became President, to some degree 'imperial'. This was a great contrast with Premadasa's populism, yet the ruralisation of the UNP vote took place while both were in power. The other piece of evidence concerns Jayawardene's overt borrowing of the image and symbolism of the former Sinhalese kings of the Low Country, as opposed to those of Kandy, in re-creating a quasi-imperial style. The most marked illustration was the construction of a new official capital just outside Colombo, which was named Sri Jayawardhanapura after the historic Low Country Sinhalese kingdom of that name. Jayawardene, a man of the Low Country, like most of his Cabinet members, was potentially appealing to an old distinction between the Low Country and the Kandyan Sinhalese, one which had been politically salient earlier this century, and one imposed on all Sinhalese in the census classification as recently as 1971. The 'homelands' of the Kandyan Sinhalese are the more remote districts in and around the central Kandyan hills, i.e. those more 'rural' in the classification of districts used here. In the 1960s and 1970s, the SLFP was generally electorally relatively more powerful than the UNP in the Kandyan areas. The leadership of the SLFP was correspondingly to a substantial degree Kandyan, and that of the UNP Low country.

Kandyan Voter

That J.R. Jayawardene should attempt to celebrate the Low Country rather than the Kandyan 'inheritance' is not in itself surprising. It however sits oddly with the fact that the ruralisation of the UNP's electoral base, which started at this time, involved increasing dependence of the Kandyan Sinhalese voter. 1971 was the last time the Kandyan-Low Country distinction was made in the census. At that point, of the eight most rural districts Kandyan Sinhalese constituted the largest ethnic group in six cases, and the largest enfranchised group in one other. It is these districts which have become more attached to the UNP over time.

This all begins to look rather confusing — at least as long as one clings to the assumption implicit in the discussion so far: that voting choices largely reflect the genuine and autonomous preferences of

voters. But that assumption must be questioned. Let us do so by looking first at the figures at voter turnout. In the three decades leading up to 1977, rates of voter participation in Sri Lankan general elections had become higher 'than in almost any competitive democracy with voluntary voting'. 'What is particularly remarkable about Ceylonese voters is that they vote in equally large proportions in municipal contests and at by-elections'. In the 1982 Presidential election, turnout fell for the first time for decades. This was also the first election which was substantially unfair: the SLFP was unable to field its leader, Mrs Bandaranaike, as a candidate because retrospective legislation had been used to deprive her of her civic rights on the grounds of 'abuse of power' during her previous Prime Ministership in 1970-1977. A few weeks later, the government called a Referendum to extend for a further six years the life of the Parliament elected in 1977, and already more than five years old. The motivation was to enable the UNP to retain control of 80% of Parliamentary seats, and thus the ability to amend the constitution at will — a capacity liberally used at that time. The Referendum campaign was not free and fair; it was marked by considerable intimidation. Voter turnout fell very markedly compared with the Presidential elections. As has been explained above, the Presidential elections of November 1988 and the Parliamentary elections on February 1989 were held during an insurrection and complex patterns of intimidation and inter and intraparty violence. The turnout levels were 55% and 64% respectively.

There was a partial reversal of this downward trend at the 1991 local and 1993 Provincial elections, with a turnout rate of 74% in each case. The turnout of valid votes however recovered to a much lesser extent: the proportion of votes found to be invalid became very high. The major reason for this big increase in invalid voting is probably changes in the electoral system of a kind that makes voting difficult for poorly educated people. At the 1991 and 1993 elections, voters were faced with a proportional representation system in which they had to both choose a party and cast preference votes for a number of individuals from the party list. Yet we cannot dismiss recurrent newspaper reports that these high rates of invalid voting also reflect deliberate spoilage of votes as a protest against the limited choices available. This latter interpretation looks all the

more plausible, while in 1982 the distribution of spoiled votes across districts was random, in 1991 and 1993 it conformed to a very clear pattern: it was high in districts where the rate of voter turnout was high. The statistics extend this conclusion. They show that, in 1991 and 1993, there was a high, positive and, in most cases, statistically significant relationship between five variables at district level:

- 1) The proportion of votes cast that were declared invalid.
- 2) The rate of turnout of registered voters.
- 3) The proportion of the adult population with low levels of formal education.
- 4) The proportion of the employed population working in agriculture.
- 5) The UNP share of the vote.

The relatively uneducated rural voters have the greatest difficulties coping with complex voting forms is not surprising. What is interesting is that they should be the most assiduous in turning out to vote, and should have become so over the same period of time that they became relatively more attached to the ruling UNP. What this all seems to point to is the increasing importance in shaping electoral behaviour of the UNP/CWC — party machinery, supported most of the time by the state apparatus which the UNP controls.

It is difficult to identify precisely the mechanisms at work here. On the basis of the aggregate statistical patterns and fragmentary reports about what happens in party politics and elections at local level, I suggest that the following processes may be the most significant:

Significant Processes

- 1) A large proportion of the population have become disillusioned with and perhaps fearful of politics. Bear in mind the massive slaughter of JVP suspects in 1988 and 1989 and the endemic nature of political violence over the last decade. There are substantial populations uninterested in voting, but perhaps willing to go to the polls to please the local cadres of the ruling party.
- 2) It is generally where the UNP/CWC is strong — and where the costs of displeasing the party's local cadres by not voting are relatively high that relatively large numbers of the politically uninterested are being herded into the polling stations. It is they who are likely either to spoil ballot papers in protest against this coercion, or to lack the knowledge and motivation to correctly complete the new and relatively complex voting forms.

3) In the more remote and rural areas, where education levels are low, it is more difficult for the opposition parties to sustain the cadre commitment that is needed to counter the coercive forces of the UNP/CWC and their members in the state apparatus. There is less access to external material and moral support, fewer independent professionals who can form the nucleus of resistance, and greater scope for local tyranny to flourish.

4) The UNP has become skilled in the art of mass distribution of patronage resources to individuals: housing grants and loans; inclusion in the list for the Janasaviya anti-poverty programme; free school uniforms for children; public sector jobs; subsidised food rations etc. The party does not depend entirely on coercion. Once again, this simple purchasing of support will tend to be more effective in the remoter areas that have little access to alternative doctrines of the purpose and nature of politics, such as Marxism or 'Western' liberal constitutionalism. Such doctrines are fairly deeply rooted in some of the more urbanised rural districts.

It is in this general light that we can understand the loyalty of the Indian Tamil voters to the CWC despite the vulnerability of the CWC to charges that it betrayed them over privatisation of the estates. In the relatively totalistic environment of the tea estates, it is difficult to pose effective challenges, intellectual or organisational, to the entrenched CWC apparatus.

A final piece of evidence in support of this general thesis is perhaps the most convincing. It concerns the pace and timing of the ruralisations of the UNP's support base. The big shift came over a two month period between October and December 1982. In October, at the Presidential election, the UNP obtained 37% of its support in the eight most rural districts. Two months later, on the same voter registration lists, 42% of its support came from these same districts. It was particularly districts with a tradition of substantial 'left' voting — which in Sri Lanka meant access to a democratic and relatively egalitarian alternative political culture — that turned against the UNP between these two elections, repelled by the authoritarianism and repression that were coming to characterise UNP rule. The converse was the relative willingness of the more remote populations to go along with Jayawardene's 'constitutional coup' — or their inability to organise themselves to fend off the pressures that the dominant party was bringing to bear. The increasing ruralisation of the UNP electoral base that has occurred since that time appears to reflect the intensification of these same processes: the increasing domination of the UNP/state apparatus over local poli-

tics in the more vulnerable rural areas.

Concluding Comments

The vulnerability of dispersed and unorganised 'peasant' populations to the political overtures of the state executive was explored most memorably in Karl Marx's study of the French peasantry under Louis Bonaparte in the mid-nineteenth century. This was the work that gave us the famous 'sack of potatoes' metaphor for peasant political action. In contemporary Asia, 'peasant' support for authoritarian regimes is more clearly the product of dominant party apparatuses. Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are all examples of contemporary or recent regimes that have survived for long periods by exploiting a relatively passive rural vote, having first introduced rural reform and some guarantee of the living standards of large sections of the rural population. It is appropriate to conclude with a few points of similarity between the contemporary Sri Lankan polity and Taiwan, one of the most successful of the 'guided democracy' models:

- (a) Both have a dominant party of essentially urban origins well entrenched in the state apparatus.
- (b) In both cases, the votes of the agricultural population are significantly more likely to go to the ruling party than to the opposition, while the opposition has its major base in the non-agricultural sector.
- (c) The regime holds a wide variety of types of elections, using this discretion both to maximise its own electoral chances and to keep the opposition in a continual state of tension, never knowing which electoral challenge it will face, and when.
- (d) There is a complex voting system that focuses attention on the personal characteristics of candidates rather than on general political issues and clear-cut policy choices, and advantages the well-organised ruling parties that are best able to deploy their resources in an efficient way.
- (e) While voter turnout tends to be relatively high because of the efforts of party organisations, significant proportions of the population are relatively apathetic about the outcomes of elections.

This contrast with Taiwan is provocative. The ruling UNP party-state in Sri Lanka has much less effective control of election results than has the Guomindang in Taiwan over recent decades; there remain greater opportunities for the electoral overthrow of the ruling party. Sri Lanka has however moved substantially in the direction of a 'guided democracy' since 1977.

Sihanouk's Remarkable Return

Chanaka Amaratunga

It is a hackneyed wisdom that politics is the art of the possible. My observation of the development of politics, here in Sri Lanka and in the wider world has convinced me that politics can more aptly be characterised as the art of the improbable.

Not long ago Cambodia (or Kampuchea as its Communist rulers of both the pro-Chinese and the pro-Soviet/pro-Vietnamese variety insisted on referring to it) was known as a land ravaged by civil war, a place first destroyed by its belated involvement in the American war in Indochina and subsequently as the land of the killing fields of Pol Pot. It did not seem likely that Cambodia would ever rid itself of the ruthless ravages of the Khmer Rouge or of the Vietnamese-installed pro-Soviet Heng Samrin regime. Yet in this world that has seen so many unpleasant surprises, miracles do sometimes happen, and it was such a miracle, the climax of which was witnessed on 24th September 1993, when the Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was once more proclaimed the King of Cambodia, once again ascending a throne on which he had first sat as far back as in 1941.

Ever since the late 1960s Cambodian affairs have exercised a great fascination on me. This fascination reached a high point following the CIA-backed coup led by General Lon Nol which overthrew Prince Sihanouk on 18th March 1970. The coup was the result of the Prince's unwillingness to commit the Royal Cambodian Army into the war against North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces which were operating sometimes from bases in areas near the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. He had been consistently committed to a policy of Cambodian neutrality which had permitted the combatants on both sides of the ideological divide to make incursions into Cambodian territory provided they confined themselves to areas close to the border.

Although this policy had for awhile

proved acceptable it was by 1970 no longer convenient for President Nixon and his National Security Adviser (subsequently Secretary of State) Dr. Henry Kissinger, who wanted the support of the Royal Cambodian Army to relieve the pressure faced by the American and South Vietnamese forces in South Vietnam. Thus it was that General Lon Nol who had been Chief of Staff and had subsequently been appointed Prime Minister by Prince Sihanouk, along with his own cousin Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, led the successful coup against him which resulted in the abolition of the Cambodian monarchy.

When Sihanouk was overthrown Cambodia was a monarchy of which he was Head of State but not King, yet I did say previously that he had been crowned King of Cambodia in 1941. The explanation for this is rather complex and helps to convey the rather unique role that Sihanouk has played in the life of his country.

In 1941 Sihanouk was designated (by the French Colonial authorities), King of Cambodia, when he was not quite twenty years of age, as the successor to his maternal grandfather King Sisowath Monivong. His mother, subsequently the Queen Sisowath Kossamak, was not deemed an appropriate successor. After a reign of 14 years, Sihanouk felt he could play a more effective political role in Cambodian affairs than the neutral position of the monarch permitted him and in 1955 he took the extraordinary step of abdicating in favour of his parents, King Norodom Suramarit and Queen Kossamak, who were proclaimed joint sovereigns. Prince Sihanouk (as he became) then formed his own political party the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and having won the subsequent parliamentary election became Prime Minister.

In 1960, Sihanouk's father, King Norodom Suramarit died, but he did not resume the throne, leaving his mother on it and assuming the additional title Head of State which allowed him to carry out his mo-

ther's functions as monarch, in her name.

After his overthrow and that of the monarchy in 1970, Sihanouk formed a government in exile which received wide diplomatic recognition. He also formed an alliance with the Communist Guerrillas, the Khmer Rouge who had been a small group of little influence when Sihanouk ruled Cambodia. The corruption, incompetence and dictatorial nature of the Lon Nol regime and the immense prestige of Sihanouk's name greatly enhanced the strength of the Khmer Rouge. By 1975, some months before the collapse of South Vietnam itself, the Khmer Republic of Lon Nol was totally defeated and Sihanouk was once again proclaimed Head of State of the new regime which was installed. Just before his return to Phnom Penh. Sihanouk's mother Queen Kossamak died. Sihanouk again did not proclaim himself King but retained the concept of Cambodia as a monarchy which had a "vacant throne".

This was however, soon merely academic for the Khmer Rouge, which had in 1970 been the junior partner of the coalition against the Lon Nol regime, had taken full control and reduced Sihanouk to a figurehead under virtual house arrest, paraded in public only when it suited his Communist captors, and sometimes not even provided with food for several days.

When, as part of the rivalry between Moscow and Peking, Pol Pot, the 'Kampuchean' dictator took a strong anti-Vietnamese line and Vietnam in response invaded Cambodia, Sihanouk was released to act as an international propagandist against the invasion. Further coalition governments in exile followed, and many rounds of talk and even more of armed conflict all of which were, one more futile than the other.

Sihanouk was back on the international stage and became a powerful spokesman for the restoration of a free and neutral Cambodia. The Vietnamese invasion took

(The Liberal party leader is a regular L. G. columnist)

place in 1979, but until 1992 there seemed little hope when, as a consequence of the global collapse of Communism and perhaps a general war-weariness, the United Nations-sponsored agreement took place.

Once more Sihanouk was in Phnom Penh, as Head of State in the transitional regime consisting of the four parties to the Cambodian conflict. In the elections held some months ago, despite a call for a boycott from the Khmer Rouge, a massive 90% of the voters of Cambodia voted in their first free election in decades. The result produced a narrow victory for the royalist party FUNCINPEC, led by Sihanouk's eldest son Prince Norodom Ranariddh. The Cambodian People's Party of the reformist ex-Communist leadership under Hun Sen came a close second.

When the outcome of the election appeared to be disputed by the Cambodian People's Party, fearful of their future if consigned to the Opposition, Sihanouk, was able to use his immense moral authority to persuade the victorious Prince Ranariddh to compromise and accept a power sharing agreement which made him and the CPP leader Hun Sen, Co-Prime Ministers.

In characteristic style Sihanouk appeared 'reluctant' to accept the throne but allowed himself to be persuaded, by an overwhelming vote of the Cambodian National Assembly which voted by 113 votes to 5, to declare Cambodia once more to be a constitutional, parliamentary monarchy.

On 24th September 1993, twenty three years after the military regime of Lon Nol abolished the monarchy, thirty eight years after his abdication and fifty two years after his previous accession to the throne, Norodom Sihanouk, once more took his oath as King of Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge is deserting to the new Royal Army in large numbers and its own leadership has accepted Sihanouk as Cambodia's King

The wheel has turned full circle, and a nation once called the 'smiling country' seems to be smiling again.

PART 3

Cambodia: Polls, Human Rights and NGO's

Jeevan Thiagarajah

Training Election Monitors

In early May, responding to requests from the four human rights groups plus the more recently active LCDHC, the Task Force conducted training sessions for a core group of trainers from each organization:

8 May — LICADHO	-42	trainers	who then trained	700	monitors;
10 May — Vigilance	-20	-do-		100	monitors;
11 May — Outreach	-10	-do-		40	monitors;
15 May — ADHOC	-30	-do-		700	monitors;
18 May — LCDHC	-97	monitors			

During election week, the 1,650 monitors, under the supervision of their supervisors, proceeded to each polling site nationally, using a concise form to report on any substantial abuse at his/her site. The supervisors collected the forms and sent them to Phnom Penh. These reports will be used in reports produced by each group.

The training series effectively mobilized a large number of Cambodians in an exercise which liked to two important achievements:

- 1) the participation of a large number of Cambodian monitors in their own electoral process that was administered by an external body; and
- 2) the complementary support from a local and neutral monitoring force to the international election observers.

Planning Long-Term International Support for Cambodia

To address this, the Task Force has organized various missions/conferences to enlist the support of Asian NGOs in strengthening the development of the NGO sector in Cambodia, and on the human rights situation in Cambodia in general.

In late March, the Task Force coordinated the visit of Cambodian NGOs to the

Asian Pacific Conference on Human Rights in Bangkok held in connection with the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UN World Conference on Human Rights (see above). At that meeting, the Task Force successfully pioneered an "NGO adoption" strategy to enlist Asian partners into undertaking projects in Cambodia and developing links with their Cambodian counterparts.

In April, the Task Force organized a mission of Asian NGOs and legal experts to Cambodia for the purpose of identifying the Cambodians' concerns, needs and priorities; and evolving an ongoing program of international support. The mission was led by Justice P.N. Bhagwati, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, and included Dr. Clarence J. Dias, President of the International Centre for Law and Development (ICLD); Helia Hai from Asian Regional Resource Centre for Human Rights Education (ARRC); Govind Kelkar of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD); and M.A. Sabur, Coordinator of the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD).

The delegation met with various Cambodian human rights NGOs, women's groups, journalists and officials from the UN Development Program and UNTAC (Human Rights and Electoral Components). Its five major recommendations for

long-term programs include: reconciliation and healing; building the legal infrastructure for human rights, development and democracy; developing and strengthening the human rights community and the NGO sector in Cambodia; democratizing development activities in Cambodia; and ensuring the UN's continued support to Cambodian NGOs.

In the context of building the legal infrastructure, the delegates identified a need for an in-depth and focused discussion about the new Cambodian Constitution. Hence, on 13-14 May, the Task Force organized, in addition to a meeting between Cambodian and Thai human rights groups, a meeting "Dialogue on Constitutionalism" at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. The participants included the leaders of the four Cambodian human rights NGOs, the Cambodian women's group Khemara, Khmer student leader the head of the nascent Cambodian Human Rights Institute, two community leaders, and foreign legal and constitutional experts. These experts included the delegates of the April mission; Nimalka Fernando, Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development - Malaysia; M. Diokno, Coordinator Arena - Philippines; Ratna Kapur, Gender Justice Specialist of ICLD; and Dr. Suthy Prasarsset from Chulalongkorn University. Senior representatives from UNTAC Human Rights responsible for Education, Information and Training and for Monitoring and Investigations also attended the dialogue.

The issues examined included the impediments to the Cambodian constitutional drafting process; the relevant Asian comparative experience; and the constitutional principles for human rights protection, namely, the Bill of Rights, the Judicial Independence, the Rule of Law, and the Separation of Powers.

During the dialogue, the participants reiterated the importance of having a constitution with "practical" impact. In this respect, they highlighted the essence of understanding the unique situation in Cambodia and adjusting suitable experience from other countries, especially, other Asian countries who share similar background and have developed many ideas throughout their history, in particu-

lar, during this century.

The Task Force also convened in Bangkok international funding agencies in the hope of developing a comprehensive "country program" to support Cambodia and its NGOs. In attendance were Asia Foundation, SIDA, F. Ebert Stiftung, Terre des Hommes, NORAD and JRC (Japan). On the basis of the needs identified through the various consultations, the Task Force is serving as intermediary in the development of international NGO assistance projects in four areas:

1. Reconciliation
2. Trauma Victims
3. Rehabilitation of the judicial structure
4. Documentation and fact-finding
 - a) human rights violations
 - b) monitoring the protection of vulnerable groups
 - c) monitoring the environment

In addition FORUM-ASIA which was launched in December 1991 to facilitate collaboration among human rights organisations in ASIA sent a mission in August, 1993 to specifically assess needs for para-legal training and fact-finding training for Cambodian groups. Task Force Detainees of Phillipines, (TFDP) has also conducted two training programmes for Cambodian Human Rights Groups. The Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development (APWLD), Malaysia is I believe hoping to initiate Women and development related programmes with Cambodian NGO's. The Cambodian Human Rights Task Force referred earlier, under its regional programme effort for Cambodia, is undertaking a rapid appraisal of trauma victims using resource persons from Phillipines. As part of the same regional programme an exposure visit to Bangladesh, Pakistan and India for Cambodian activists is planned for later this year. The ASIAN CULTURAL FORUM ON DEVELOPMENT (ACFOD). Thailand is collaborating in this initiative.

As this article is being written, discussions are taking place in Pyongyang,

between Prince Norodom Sihanouk and a team of persons from the 12 member drafting Committee of the new constitution. It is said that the options being discussed are a Republican Constitution with Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Head of State and the other the 1947 Monarchical Constitution. Input from the rest of the populace towards the new Constitution has been limited to a three page letter sent to the new Cambodian Government and to Mr. Akashi the Special Representative, by a 14 member coalition of NGO in Cambodia named 'Ponleou Khmer'. In part it say, "we have the right to ask all the elected representatives about what they are going to include in the constitution. They should let us know openly what their intentions are. The drawing up of the Constitution is not a secret" The primary concern of this group relates to individual and group rights. Notwithstanding this representation, the drafting committee met behind closed doors. No open discussions or dialogues with people as it happened in Nepal during the transition to democracy has taken place in Cambodia.

Whatever may be the form of constitution, the condition of the traumatised populace would need a lot of sensitive assistance in their task of rebuilding a new nation. In this task, I believe that a generation of new children who have been born over the last decade would motivate the adults to keep the family units together in their quest for a better life.

The question is asked now whether, Cambodia would slide back to war, especially with the recent clashes that have taken place between Khemer Rouge and Government forces. My reasoning is that they are more politically oriented clashes which would not spread into a large scale civil war. For the Khmer Rouge, Government and the UN, Cambodia's new destiny was personified by the over 90% turnout of people during election week. It was an expression of popular will for a 'break from the past'.

Note

The author, Jeevan Thiagarajah is Assistant Director I.C.E.S. Colombo was co-ordinator of the Cambodian Human Rights Task Force from February to June and is at present Regional Programme Officer of the Task Force.



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Kalawana, Panadura and Pottuvil

Arden

Mr. A.B.H. Pilapitiya was declared elected to the Kalawana seat in the July 1977 general election. He was appointed Deputy Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. An election petition was filed by certain parties challenging the legality of Mr. Pilapitiya's election on the grounds of corrupt practice by his supporters. On 24 September 1978 Mr. Pilapitiya met with a serious motor car accident. He absented himself from parliament. Although it is customary for the party whip to keep an eye on such matters, Pilapitiya did not seek leave of absence from the house nor did any party colleague do so on his behalf. When he had absented himself without leave for 3 months his parliamentary seat automatically fell vacant, on 5 January 1979. The Secretary-General of the U.N.P. then nominated the same Mr. Pilapitiya as the new M.P. for Kalawana, and on 10 January he took his oaths in parliament.

On 28 January the election judge declared Mr. Pilapitiya's election to parliament in July 1977 null and void. Mr. Pilapitiya was allowed leave to appeal, which he did.

On 9 October 1980 the supreme court upheld the election judge's order and held that there had been no due election to the Kalawana seat. Mr. Pilapitiya continued to attend parliament as nominated member for Kalawana. The opposition challenged him as "a stranger in the House" and the Deputy Speaker, who was presiding, asked Mr. Pilapitiya to withdraw.

Following the supreme court's decision, Mr. M.A. Piyasekera, the Commissioner of Elections, made arrangements to hold a by-election for Kalawana and directed the Government Agent Ratnapura to accept nominations on 10 December 1980. In the meantime Mr. Pilapitiya petitioned Mr. Speaker: "The judgment of the supreme court contains no decision that my nomination to the seat on 10 January

1979 was invalid... There is today no vacancy in the Kalawana seat. I continue to hold to my position as M.P. for the Kalawana electoral district".

On 9 December, the eve of nomination day, Mr. Speaker (Bakeer Markar) ruled that Mr. Pilapitiya was member for the Kalawana constituency by virtue of his nomination.

On 10 December, the Commissioner of Elections announced that the by-election for the Kalawana seat would be held on 12 January 1981.

Mr. Speaker and the Commissioner of Elections were apparently on a collision course. The SUN of 11 December reported: "After the result of the by-election is announced, the Commissioner of Elections is expected to inform the Secretary-General of Parliament of the candidate who is duly elected. Political circles point out that it is at this stage that a crisis situation would arise. The newly elected candidate would not be able to have himself sworn in because the Kalawana seat in parliament is occupied".

On 10 December, President Jayewardene, speaking at the inauguration of a Human Rights Day seminar, said that "there was no other political party in Sri Lanka or outside it that could profess to have such high ideals with regard to human rights as the U.N.P. had done with its Manifesto of a Free and Righteous Society". On 17 December the Minister of State, A. de Alwis, who was cabinet spokesman, said that the prime minister would move a special resolution in parliament to enable the seating of two members to represent the Kalawana constituency, at a special session on 6 January 1981. (SUN of 18 December 1980).

The opposition parliamentary group asked Mr. Speaker for a date in late January 1981 for debating a vote of no

confidence in him.

It was next announced that the government would introduce the third amendment to the constitution to enable Kalawana to be represented by two members. On 27 December, before a five-judge bench presided over by the chief justice, the attorney-general argued that the proposed constitutional amendment was to accommodate whomever was elected to the Kalawana seat at the 12 January by-election, since there existed no vacancy for him in parliament.

The supreme court held that parliament had no right to accommodate an extra member over and above 168 without the consent of the people. The proposed third amendment would therefore need both a two-thirds vote in parliament and a referendum. The amendment bill was passed in parliament with the required two-thirds vote.

On 12 January Mr. S. Muttetuagama of the Communist Party was elected to the Kalawana seat. The U.N.P. had fielded no candidate. There were now two members for Kalawana, which the supreme court had ruled was contrary to the constitution.

On 17 January Mr. Pilapitiya resolved the *impasse* by resigning his seat. He was appointed chairman of the State Distilleries Corporation.

The government now was under constitutional obligation to hold a referendum as ruled by the supreme court, since the amendment bill had been passed in parliament with the required number of votes. The Civil Rights Movement urged the government to regularise the position with a constitutional amendment empowering parliament to authorise the president not to proceed with the referendum. The government simply ignored the problem and held no referendum! The whole exercise had been a barefaced attempt by the

government to abuse its great powers and it failed. The president did not seem overly upset.

According to the parliamentary democracy of the variety Lankans had become accustomed to, a government held office while it enjoyed the confidence of parliament. With crossing the floor turned into a one-way street there was no way for any loss of confidence in the government to be registered by parliament. Any rebels would be sacked by the ruling party and replaced by more docile nominees. Since the ruling party itself was controlled with an iron hand by the president, what the 85% vote in parliament the U.N.P. had amounted to was that one man, not himself a member of parliament, decided what parliament should and should not do.

Kalawana ended in a loss of face for the government. To avoid further loss of face it evaded its constitutional obligation to hold a referendum. Commented the Lanka Guardian (1 February 1981): "Rarely (before) has a ruling party tried to fool some of the people most of the time and only succeeded in making a monumental fool of itself".

A further loss of face awaited the government, once more obliging it to defy the constitution.

Dr. Neville Fernando, U.N.P. member for Panadura, was expelled from the party to which he belonged in September 1981.

Under the second amendment he could have challenged the expulsion in the supreme court; but Dr. Fernando got clever. Instead of challenging the expulsion, he sat in parliament as an independent member and continued to do so for three months.

Under the amended constitution the speaker then appointed a select committee to inquire into his expulsion from the U.N.P. and to report to the house. Once the select committee had done this, a resolution was introduced in parliament calling for Dr. Fernando's expulsion. Dr. Fernando made his parting speech and, before the resolution could be put to the vote, submitted his resignation. When he resigned from parliament he was not a

member of the U.N.P. but an independent. The government was obliged to hold a by-election.

The Lanka Guardian (15 January 1982) posed the question: Will the U.N.P. risk a by-election which Dr. Fernando, incidentally, can contest? Or will it amend the constitution once more? The Lanka Guardian perceived only two possible alternatives. The government had a third. It ignored the constitution and nominated Mr. P. Fonseka to the seat, just as if it had been a U.N.P. seat that had fallen vacant. It got away with it. Mr. Fonseka took his oaths in parliament on 21 January 1982.

The government's action was in contravention of an appeal court ruling given in the Pottuvil writ application.

Mr. M. Canagaratnam, T.U.L.F. second M.P. for Pottuvil crossed over to the U.N.P. in December 1977; he was shot in his Colombo home by separatist terrorists on 24 January 1978; he died on 20 April 1980.

The T.U.L.F. applied to the appeal court for writs of mandamus and certiorari against the Commissioner of Elections and the Secretary of the U.N.P. and asked for a direction that a T.U.L.F. nominee be appointed to the vacant Pottuvil seat. The T.U.L.F. averred that Canagaratnam had been elected to parliament as a T.U.L.F. candidate, that he had not at any stage resigned from the T.U.L.F. nor had he been expelled from the T.U.L.F. The secretary of the U.N.P. produced documentary evidence that Canagaratnam had joined the U.N.P. and had been a member of the U.N.P. at the time of his death. The court held, *inter alia*, that mandamus could not be issued in the face of the evidence that Canagaratnam was a member of the U.N.P. at the time he died. The interesting point about the case is that it seemed to settle that in making a nomination to a vacant parliamentary seat, it was the party to which the previous member belonged at the time he ceased to be a member that was relevant, and not the party to which he belonged at the time of his original election. When much later the ruling party made its nomination to the Panadura seat, it was obliged to ignore this constitutional position.

A witticism that was current at the time was that the difference between the 1972 constitution and the 1978 one was that in 1972 there was an appointed president and an elected parliament while in 1978 there was an elected president an appointed parliament. The number of appointed M.P.'s was certainly increasing rapidly.

CORRESPONDENCE

Federalism — Then and Now

I refer to your commentary entitled, "The End of Jaw-Jaw — and now?" (LG, Oct. 1). There is no comparison between the 1956 federalism proposal by S.J.V. Chelvanayakam and the current federalism proposal by K. Srinivasan, the purported "MP for Jaffna". Then, Chelvanayakam as the leader of the Federal Party received a majority mandate for his proposal from the Tamil speaking voters in the Northern and Eastern provinces in the 1956 general election. A couple of Muslim MPs were also elected on the federalism ticket. When did Srinivasan receive this type of comparable mandate from the Tamil speaking voters for his federalism proposal? Only gullibles can be convinced that Srinivasan is on par with Chelvanayakam.

The current Tamil MPs representing the Northern and Eastern provinces resemble the aging Chinese mainlanders who were elected in 1947 to represent mainland constituencies and who continued to maintain their seats in the National Assembly of Taiwan following their retreat from mainland China in 1949. Though they were given labels such as "Hon. member of Manchuria", "Hon. member of Fukien" and "Hon. member of Hunan" and so forth, they never set foot in mainland China after their escape in 1949. In his "Urgent Appeal" (LG, Oct.1), K. Srinivasan mentions that "I have discussed in detail at home and abroad with most of the concerned people about the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka". Well, may I know when did Srinivasan pay last visit to his "Jaffna constituency", and how many people did he hear from directly?

Sachi Sri Kantha

Osaka BioScience Institute,
Japan.

Consociational Democracy

A. M. Navaratna and Sumanasiri Liyanage

Dr. N. M. Perera a leader of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) said:

I thought racialism of this type had died with Houston Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler. I do not believe that anyone claiming to be a statesman would ask us to accede to a bill of this nature... We cannot proceed as if we were God's chosen race apart from the rest of the world: that we and we alone have the right to be citizens of this country. (Parliament of Ceylon, 1948)

When an threat from the left and the working class were removed, the grand coalition began to collapse gradually. In 1949, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, E. M. V. Naganathan and C. Vanniasingham left the Tamil Congress to form a new party called the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK). ITAK stood for a 'Tamil linguistic state within the framework of a Federal Union of Ceylon'. The Resolution adopted at the first National Convention held in Trincomalee in 1951 recognized that 'the Tamil speaking people constitute a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood' (Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, 1974). S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike also left the United National Party (UNP) government in 1951 on the issue of succession. The UNP-Tamil Congress coalition was now challenged not only by the left parties but also by the ITAK (popularly known as the Federal Party (FP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) led by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. However, the Tamil community continued to support the UNP-ACTC coalition, and refused to elect the FP candidates in 1952 election in Tamil areas except in Trincomalee and Kopay. As Kadiragamar pointed out 'the 1962 election result could be interpreted as a rejection by the Tamil people of the Federal Party's assertion that the Tamils constituted a nation with the right to self-determination' (1989: 188). Although it had been weakened by the splits, D. S. Senanayake's grand coalition existed until the UNP adopted 'Sinhala Only' policy just before 'The UNP lost its electoral base in Tamil areas, which it never regained. In fact, it ceased to be a party.' (Kadirgamar, 1988, 189) Whatever the limitations of Senanayake's pro-

ject, it included partly because of the threat of working class politics, at least to some extent, one consociational element, namely the idea of a 'grand coalition' though outside the constitution.

C. Confrontational Politics

Bandaranaike's 'Sinhala Only' policy marked the turning point. As a member of the Board of Ministers and the President of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, he had advocated the view that in order to build a Sri Lankan nation. In the first instance the unity of the Sinhala people had to be achieved. (State Council of Sri Lanka, 1939) This implied that Sinhalese should face the other communities from a position of strength, Bandaranaike's 'Sinhala-Only' policy was included together with policies extending the rights and interests of common people giving his policy package a 'progressive' character. However, the Sinhala-Only policy had given the impression that the benefits should first go to the Sinhalese majority thus arousing fear in the minds of the Tamils. The Tamil reaction to the 'Sinhala policy' was strong adherence to the concept of a 'Tamil Homeland'.

The Tamils have claimed that the Eastern Province, including the district of Trincomalee with its strategically located harbour, should constitute together with Northern Province one single unit entitled to autonomy within the framework of a federal constitution. This has become the key issue on which every attempt at a political solution has floundered, beginning with the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact in 1957, (Kadirgamar, 1989: 190-91)

The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957 was a compromise which could have been used to end the confrontationalist politics at the very outset had Sinhala politicians shown a genuine interest in solving the problem and building a Sri Lankan nation. The Pact made possible the amalgamation of the North and Eastern Provinces under one council. It also recognized Tamil as the administrative language of the two provinces. The abrogation of the Pact was a victory for

the Sinhala communalist forces and marked the beginning of a new era of communal politics. The Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact in 1966 also ended in failure.

The 1972 Constitution made the situation worse. The demand by the Federal Party for autonomy was rejected and Tamil representatives protested by boycotting the Constituent Assembly proceedings.

Far from meeting the aspirations of the Tamils, things were made worse by enshrining 'Sinhala Only' in the Constitution. In addition, an entirely new provision was written into the Constitution, giving Buddhism a special place in the State. (Kadirgamar, 1959: 196)

Having failed to arrive at negotiated settlements, Tamil political parties and groups which had formed the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) decided in favour of a separate Tamil *Eelam*. At the first national convention held at Pannakam, Vaddukkodai: in May 1976, the following decision was taken:

The restoration and recognition of the free, sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam based on the right of self-determination inherent to every nation, has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in this country. (quoted in Kadirgamar 1989: 198)

This was the turning point. Tamil youth thoroughly dissatisfied with the politics of moderation and faced with many problems decided to take up arms and to confront the Sinhala state and its forces and the process of Sinhalaization of Sri Lankan state. (Akram-Lodhi, 1987) After 1977, the Sri Lankan government had hardened in the attitude in the name of political stability especially because of its new economic imperatives, and passed repressive legislation followed by repressive interventions to meet the militant Tamil movement. In the late '70s, government action had become relatively

easier owing to the fact that the Sinhala masses in general were openly or tacitly ready to endorse such anti-democratic actions by the government. Separatism is not only a Tamil phenomenon. It is at the heart of Sinhala politics as well. The way the demands for 'national unity' and 'territorial integrity' were posed by the Sinhala politicians and a substantial section of the Sinhala masses reveal that they too are really separatist in their political practice. 'Separatist tendencies once allowed to arise and develop can culminate readily in the direction of the country into two separate states' (Samasarnajist, 1955). For further understanding of this separatist consciousness and the weakening of democratic culture, we have to look at, even though briefly, the role of the left in Sri Lankan politics.

D. Left Parties on the Ethno-Nationalist Problem

The left parties had stood for ethnic harmony and equality. As Kadirgamar points out 'the Youth Congress was one element among several others that led to the formation of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in 1935' (1989: 185). The left parties were the first to organize plantation workers in trade unions and to challenge the communal, anti-Indian politics of A E Gunasinghe in the urban working class movement. As the name suggests the principal aim of the LSSP was to build an equal and egalitarian society. The left (LSSP and CP) seemed to have believed that socialism would finally remove not only class contradictions in society but also the contradictions based on caste, race and religion. This theoretical absolutism led to their underestimating the gravity of the ethno-nationalist problem and prevented them from finding concrete ways to solve the ethnic problem. They did not accept either balanced representation or the federal constitution nor did they propose alternative constitutional safeguards for the national minorities. Dr N M Perera did not deal with the issue when he spoke in the debate on constitutional reforms in 1939. The left parties accepted the Federal Party's demand for parity of status for Tamil and citizenship rights of the plantation workers. Dr Colvin R De Silva was prophetic when he posed the alternatives before Sri Lankans in the Parliament in 1956. He said 'two languages, one nation or one language, two nations'. Although, most of their demands and struggles are associated with general democratic rights and not with particular democratic safeguards for minorities, the left parties were

able to mobilize a substantial number of people in the North and Eastern Provinces and also the Tamil plantation workers and had become truly national parties.

This situation changed when the democratic emphasis of the left parties was subordinated to their socialist absolutism. In 1964, their unprincipled alliance with the SLFP and the subsequent political activities led the left parties to distance themselves from the minorities, particularly with the Tamils. Their opposition to the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1965, the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act of 1986, the acceptance of the 'Sinhala-Only' policy and the Sirima-Sastry Pact and especially their role in drafting the 1972 constitution resulted in their degeneration into parties with a strong Sinhala bias. Communalism among Sinhala masses was adequately countered by the campaign of the left in the 1950s, and early 1960s, but after 1961, no strong force appears in the Sri Lankan political scene to fill this vacuum. This was a tragic outcome of the degeneration of the left in Sri Lankan politics.

Section 3: A Consociational Solution; An Outline

In this section, we suggest necessary consociational measures which may bring about a consensus on what has to be done to manage the ethnic conflict in the short-run and to defuse ethnic tension between the major communities. We are proposing an outline to form the basis of a discussion which may generate new ideas. Consociational politics which is necessarily conciliatory in approach is not new to Sri Lanka. Bandaranaike's federalism in the 1920s, Ponnambalam's fifty-fifty or balanced representation, Senanayake's grand coalition in the late 1940s and democratic politics of the left parties until 1964 are some examples of this. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1956, the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1965, the system of proportional representation, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 were definite steps, even though not properly implemented, in this direction.

An attempt to suggest measures to transform the existing system of government into a consociational form may not be an easy task mainly because of the conflicting ethno-nationalist claims over territory, deep-rooted disagreements on powersharing, and mutually exclusive perceptions of Sinhala and Tamil ethnic

groups. The problem has economic, social, political and psychological dimensions which require an in-depth examination to identify the consociational features that may suit the situation in Sri Lanka. However, a detailed analysis is not attempted here and the essay will confine itself to giving a brief outline.

The experience of the past decade or so demonstrates that extreme solutions i.e secession and ethnic cleansing and repression envisaged by the contending forces on both sides of the ethnic divide are not possible in the current international and regional context and would only lead to further loss of human life and the disruption of society.

In our opinion, a power-sharing democratic framework may reduce the tension and intensity of violent politics and the current secessionist situation, and create an institutional framework for a fresh attempt at nation building. It is in this belief that we wish to start a new dialogue on how to redesign and structure the very basis of the democratic political system in Sri Lanka.

A. Devolution of Power

Since the contending forces have been engaged in a prolonged secessionist civil war for nearly a decade, and a claim by the Tamils for an exclusive ethnic homeland is at the heart of the conflict, "devolution of Power" or "territorial autonomy" is the central focus of any amicable settlement. Hence, we may begin with the problem of power-sharing and devising a consociational power-sharing structure at the provincial level.

In the political discourse, devolution is defined as a political and organisational arrangement by which a central government within a unitary system, or within states or regions of a federal system sets up new units of government with defined boundaries at the regional or provincial level, or strengthens the powers and functions of already existing regional governments (MacMahon 1969: 19-20; Sherwood 1969:68; Smith 1985: 11-17; Rondinelli 1984: 138).

A system of power-sharing in Sri Lanka may include many options. A first option is to implement fully the existing devolutionary package as envisaged by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, and make fresh efforts to enhance the powers of the

provincial governments. In doing so, leaders of the minority communities may be invited to submit their proposals. This may be less revolutionary, but has the advantage of commencing a dialogue to develop a more acceptable devolution system starting from the system which has been now operating, though with serious weaknesses for half a decade. A second option is to follow the general principles suggested by the Parliamentary Select Committee chaired by Mr Mangala Munasinghe, viz, the establishment of a governmental system similar to the Indian system with an acceptable solution for North-East me-

mer. A third option is a federal system of government with more consociational features. Since the present constitution is a subject of a long controversy, this can be done by convening a constituent assembly through a general election and a nation-wide debate on constitutional reform.

However, a most important point which should be appreciated by the political parties at the centre is the necessity for a compromise agenda for the creation of a devolutionary system by the leaders at the centre belonging to political parties

representing different ethnic interests in our society. Every effort must be taken to reach a consensus by compromise, viz "following the principle of give and take" or "of the giving of concessions to the weaker by the stronger", and to avoid taking any decision which may lead to the suppression of the minority by the majority. Any attempt to impose even a "power-sharing" system by majority decision cannot succeed as it may lead to the minority leaders going back to confrontational politics.

Next: Eastern Province

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Tarzie Vittachi

Chanchal Sarkar

Very, very seldom does one come across a figure who influences people not simply by sparking talent but a gift for friendship and empathy. In the world of journalists such persons are as rare as the unicorn.

Tarzie Vittachi was born with ink on his fingers. D. R. Wijewardene and Lake House recognised that early enough to give him editorial responsibility. But circumstances pushed him out of Sri Lanka into the wider of South, South-East Asia and very soon all the notable owners, managers, editors and journalists the young no less than the old, in this wide parish were his friends. He was able to persuade many of them that they could turn out much better papers and that journalist needed training in the craft and in ideas. His methods were 'hands on' and there was hardly a major paper in this country that he didn't visit. Even those who thought that he was unnecessarily shaking things up remained his friends because of his charm, open-hearted generosity and his unparalleled gift as a raconteur.

But those who had the immense good fortune to know him well and draw his affection had their professional and personal lives changed. He symbolised the obsolescence of frontiers. Whether in Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Korea and only a little less in Japan he was accepted as a native. This multiculturalism he managed to pass on to his colleagues. Throughout the region he was able to transmit a vision of better papers, better editing and better journalism which sustained those who worked with him, often in establishments which he had made accessible by winning over the owners and editors.

In a number of countries where he worked, crisscrossing the region time and again, newspapers were tolerated but adversarial freedom was not. Tarzie Vittachi himself was a total libertarian but he realised, and convinced his colleagues that one has to work within the limitations and prepare for better days. His own view

of ownership was akin to stewardship and as an editor he himself did not brook interference. But despite his strong instincts he was not always able fully to influence the craft of newspaper making in papers owned by interests and by conservative families.

At home in Sri Lanka he faced ironic frustration. In the last dozen years or so he was feted and 'consulted' by J. R. Jayawardene and Premadasa ("Every time I meet you I learn something") and hypocritically asked for advice but was not allowed to do anything about the controlled press that exists there.

WHATEVER the burden of work in the International Press Institute, the Press Foundation of Asia and, later, the UN Fund for Population Activities and UNICEF, his fingers itched to write. And write he did in hotel rooms, aeroplanes and dak bungalows and there was a constant flow of articles and books. Always a gifted writer with time his style acquired a simplicity and sheen that was enviable.

When the lights of freedom began to go out one by one in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Burma, India and Pakistan he moved to the UN and became a very atypical international civil servant. Beginning with the UNFPA and then much more with the UNICEF where he had the rank of an Assistant Secretary General of the UN, he pioneered many innovative forms and methods of communication and stuck to his roots of supporting the training of good communicators. The State of the World's Children reports was his idea, in fact he started it with UNEPA and later it was imitated by many UN agencies. His views were eagerly sought because they were fresh, non-conformist and very much on target.

Though he made his work absorbing it was never Tarzie's principal concern. The search for his mystic inner self took him to many places and sources, Gurdjieff, Krishnamurti, Indian *siddhapuruṣhas* in

remote corners, and Pak Subuh in Indonesia. Those who knew him could not fail to sense the inspiration and serenity he drew from the spiritual wellspring. In his last grave illness this was shinningly apparent.

His friends were in every continent, he was at home everywhere and he will be greatly missed. Most perhaps by those whom he drew to himself with forgiving affection and to whom he was teacher, leader, kindly critic and friend. His home was their home, his family and theirs often merged, his time was their time and all he had was generously theirs.

(The writer was Director of the Press Institute of India)

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There is laughter and light banter amongst these rural damsels who are busy sorting out tobacco leaf in a barn. It is one of the hundreds of such barns spread out in the mid and upcountry intermediate zone where the arable land remains fallow during the off season.

Here, with careful nurturing, tobacco grows as a lucrative cash crop and the green leaves turn to gold... to the value of over Rs. 250 million or more annually, for perhaps 143,000 rural folk.

Tobacco is the industry that brings employment to the second highest number of people. And these people are the tobacco barn owners, the tobacco growers and those who work for them, on the land and in the barns.

For them, the tobacco leaf means meaningful work, a comfortable life and a secure future. A good enough reason for laughter.

 **Ceylon Tobacco Co. Ltd.**
*Sharing and caring
for our land and her people.*



PEOPLE'S BANK

Celebrating Three Decades of Dynamic Growth

In 1961 People's Bank ventured out in the challenging world of Banking with a staff of only 46... and a few hundred customers.

Today, just 32 years later

*People Resource exceeds 10,000
Customer Listings at a staggering 5.5 Million
Branch Network in excess of 328, THE LARGEST
in Sri Lanka*

In just three decades People's Bank has grown to become a highly respected leader in the Sri Lankan Banking scene. Their spectacular growth is a reflection of the massive resources at their command dedicated to the service of the common man — a dedication that has earned them the title "Banker to the Millions"

PEOPLE'S BANK

Banker to the **M**illions

