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THONDAMAN AND THE K.G.B. FACTOR

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Black Knight
It's your move

TRENDS

Dissolved Council: protests

Outgoing Chief Minister Amarasinghe Premadasa vowed that the PA - DUNF (People's Alliance - Democratic United National Front) combine would mobilise the people to protest the dissolution of the Southern Provincial Council where they held brief power. They would also take the issue to the courts of law, Premadasa told the media.

A new governor appointed by the centre dissolved the Council after the abduction of a member upset the balance of power in an assembly where the ruling anti-UNP coalition had only a one vote majority.

Power cripples

The Ceylon National Chamber of Industries has warned that the electricity price hike expected this month will cripple local industry. Sri Lanka will lose its competitive edge in the world export market, CNCI Chairman Nihal Abeysekera has told the government.

The Ceylon Electricity Board has announced a 30 per cent power price increase, to go up to 100 per cent by the end of 1995. The increase has been called for by the World Bank.

BRIEFLY...

SPC nominations

Nominations for the Southern Provincial Council will be received from January 18 to January 25. The Council was dissolved after a brief existence when the ruling coalition's

one-man majority was upset by the abduction of a member. On the eve of a vote on the council's first budget.

Only by default

MEP leader Dinesh Gunawardena told a public rally that the UNP Government's longevity was not because of a mandate from the people but because of the weakness of the opposition. Fear and the violation of human rights ruled today as never before in the history of the country, he told a meeting at Kiribathgoda.

The MEP leader also warned of a local and international plot to destroy the culture and heritage of Lanka.

Language rights denied

The Democratic People's Liberation Front has complained to the Commissioner of Elections that Tamil persons were being sent forms for filling in the Sinhala language, despite Tamil also being an Official Language. The forms have been sent out by the Commissioner's Colombo Division office.

Anura holds talks

Higher Education Minister Anura Bandaranaike met the Vice Chancellors of the nine universities and the Chairman of the University Grants Commission and talked of remedies for major problems. Among them: queues of students awaiting admission; staff pay structure; affiliated colleges.

Sedition clause rescinded

President D.B. Wijetunga has rescinded the recently introduced Emergency regulations on "Sedition" and "Incitement" which threatened offenders with 20 year prison

terms. The Opposition, civil rights organisations and trade unions protested vehemently when the new laws were announced on December 21. An amended set of regulations were announced on January 5.

The amended regulations retain the 20 year jail term for those who "bring or attempt to bring the Constitution or the administration of justice into hatred or contempt. Also, no person shall "affix in any place visible to the public or distribute among the public any posters, handbills or leaflets, the contents of which are prejudicial to public security, public order or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community".

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D B FACTOR IN NEW EQUATIONS

Mervyn de Silva

Suddenly the pace of politics has quickened. President Wijetunge is a quiet soft-spoken, self-contained man with no taste for high-intensity politics quite unlike his predecessors, President Premadasa who lived from crisis to crisis, or President Jayawardene who had a passion for personal intervention, stage-management and manipulation of national politics.

And yet the Wijetunge Presidency is now fighting on many fronts, some of these opened by his own interventionist initiatives e.g. the Southern province, and the dissolution of the Opposition-controlled Council.

The UNP effectively blocked the CWC-DUNF move to make Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Chief Minister, with CWC support. The DUNF move failed because there was a revolt in the CWC led by his General Secretary. For 15 years Mr. Thondaman has been a minister in the UNP government, a privileged person in both the JRJ and Premadasa cabinet. He enjoyed a freedom, or autonomy, that no other minister enjoyed. His proven utility value was such that both President JR and Mr. Premadasa responded to his requests/demands connected with plantation labour, his constituency. Like the **two leaves-and-a-bud** that the worker plucks, Thondaman did the plucking at elections, and put what he collected on polls day into the UNP basket.

In a study of the UNP's changing electoral base, Dr. Mick Moore of Sussex Univ. observed:

"There is a clear, steady shift, towards the UNP in the *most* rural districts and an equally steady shift away, at least since 1982, in the *least* rural districts. We know that the re-enfranchisement of the Indian Tamil population and the UNP-CWC alliance is an important cause of this pattern, especially in the Nuwara Eli-

ya district. However the CWC has no influence in rice growing districts of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. They have also shifted to the UNP" (LG Nov. 1).

Does Dr. Moore's rather surprising comparison with TAIWAN hold? These were some of his conclusions in his analysis of the PC polls:

- (i) Both have a dominant party of essentially urban origins, well entrenched in the state apparatus,
- (ii) in both, the votes of the agricultural population are significantly more likely to go to the ruling party than to the opposition.

In that study of course the phenomenon of "Premadasaism" was a significant consideration. Now we have a different, one might even say, radically different presidential *persona* — a middle-class Kandyan rather than a city slicker of quite humble beginnings. He was a "minority" man in the larger sense, though Sinhala-Buddhist by race and religion. Caste made him so. It also made him the target for an elite-ma-noeuvre, the impeachment motion.

President DB is a Kandyan, a middle-class Kandyan, not a *radala* (like Ratwattes, Kobbekauwes etc). But that may prove to be President DB's strength. And standing up to "Thonda" may make him a hero in the eyes of the Kandyan poor and lower middle class who resent not just the invasion of the 'white' planters and the indentured Indian Tamil labour the tea companies introduced into "the traditional home-land" of the Kandyans. Can we then look forward to a Kandyan "peasants revolt" in the polling booth while the tea-pluckers in Thondaman's *thottam* vote for their "God Father's" CWC and its ally? But meantime, how much of the million-plus DUNF vote has returned to the UNP?

THE ECONOMY

Privatisation, work-days and wages were the CWC's main grievances as the IMF-World Bank supervised re-structuring exercise moved into the next phase. A Norwegian (NORAD) vocational training institute was the immediate provocation. The Presidential Secretariat wrote to Mr. Thondaman informing him that a committee had been appointed to inquire into the project since the money had **not** been channelled through the appropriate channels.

For once Mr. Thondaman was caught napping. His own General Secretary, Mr. Sellasamy had a sizeable group within the CWC committee and in the Central Province council. Mr. Thondaman knew nothing about the internal revolt until his move to get DUNF leader Gamini Dissanayake the post of Central Province Chief Minister, was scuttled. Rallying his forces, Mr. Thondaman has counter-attacked and seized the initiative once more.

The CWC commands about half a million votes. Can the anti-Thondaman sentiment in the Kandyan areas win for the UNP half a million Sinhala votes? President D.B. evidently believes that his tough line on Thondaman and the LTTE will see a swing of the Sinhala Buddhist vote. On this, he is more S.W.R.D. than D.S. but he does reflect something of their political approach and electoral tactics, certainly in contrast to SLFP-PAP leader Mrs. Bandaranaike whose strategists are busy building a "peace constituency" in the belief that the vast majority of Sinhalese are war-weary. The 'peace constituency' will of course include **all** the non-LTTE Tamil groups, which can influence the middle-class Tamil vote. But it cannot convince, let alone convert, the LTTE. And Prabhakaran, having proved he can take on the army and the navy, (he is only vulnerable to air strikes), is now in no mood to accept anything but a merger.

Media without walls : South Asian initiative

New Delhi Statement

Media persons from five South Asian countries, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India, meeting in New Delhi on December 11-13, 1993 at the invitation of the Nmedia Foundation, have after extensive discussions come to the firm conclusion that democracy having become a norm in South Asian over the last few years, a pluralist society and media are imperatives for reinforcing and developing the democratic edifice in this part of the world. In fact these are becoming more and more visible in different countries of the region today in spite of several impediments in certain areas.

2. Acknowledging the fact that there are barriers to communication among South Asian nations and conscious of the need to remove these barriers which impede the free flow of information, this Colloquium on "Media without Walls: A South Asian Initiative" is of the firm opinion that specific measures must be undertaken to enhance the exchange of media programmes on the radio and TV, as well as news content between member-states of South Asia for the purpose of fostering mutual understanding and appreciation, and to remove misunderstanding and distrust.

3. The Colloquium felt that the Media needs to give due recognition to the shared heritage of the region, while drawing inspiration from our respective national cultural identities.

4. With these ends in view, this Colloquium makes several recommendations to the Media practitioners in South Asian nations:

(1) The establishment of a South Asian Media Commission to study the condition of the Media and propose appropriate steps for its advancement in the region.

(2) The setting up of a South Asian Media Centre to monitor the functioning of the media in the region.

(3) The publication of a journal for research on media content and trends in South Asia.

(4) Through individual and institutional membership, the strengthening of voluntary multi-media organisations such as the South Asian Media Association to increase networking and cooperation.

(5) The forging of direct exchange linkages among media institutions and organisations with the aim of providing facilities for exchange of staff and sharing their experiences.

(6) The development of a syndicated service for the dissemination of news analyses and features by offering a wide range of materials derived from the media of the region among the South Asian countries.

(7) Media groups in the individual nations should regularly interact with each other and when necessary, mobilise opinion for concerted action on matters of common concern.

5. The Colloquium urges the governments of South Asian countries:

A. To waive the requirement of visas for South Asian journalists to facilitate their travel in the region (on the lines of the facility enjoyed by journalists in the ASEAN member-states).

B. To give due prominence to the subject of media and communications at the Eighth SAARC Summit to be held in 1994.

C. To amend media-unfriendly legislation like the Official Secrets Act to increase public access to information. The Colloquium notes with regret that despite all South Asian governments being signatories to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (wherein Article 19 guarantees freedom of information and expression) no country in the region has adopted a Freedom of Information Act.

D. To end the contradiction between being democratically elected, and not permitting the expression of pluralism in state-owned media. The first requirement is to terminate the government monopoly over the electronic media.

E. To evolve low, uniform rates among South Asian countries for the two-way communication of media content (fax, telex, postal and satellite facilities).

F. To share satellite facilities available in the region among countries on an equitable basis.

G. To facilitate free exchange of newspapers, magazines and books.

6. The Colloquium also identified issues of long-range importance for media in the region:

(I) The establishment of a South Asian newspaper;

(II) The setting up of a South Asian news agencies pool;

(III) The development of a pool of South Asian media practitioners who would cover world events from a South Asian perspective.

New Delhi, December 1993

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JAG Mohan, Executive Secretary, Namedia.
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R. Dyal, Adviser, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
Ms Beate Martin, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.
Kabir Seth, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

The Scholar's Tale Part 9

*The Cleansing our Hero framed in Punched Mathematics
Had co-ordinates which may have been somewhat arthritic.
His theorems in their digital metamorphosis
Were programmed to primordial praxis.*

*One Axiom was that Power dissipated
Unless Governance was with untruth well baited
So Cultural History and Geography
Were scrambled and scanned electronically
In an exercise where an erasure of memory
Got old crossings cleansed ethnically.*

*Since the South Western Dravidian Marizones
Chanted Pali in Sinhala baritones
Tapping, fishing and peeling
Had become righteous living and dealing
And Low, Mid and Upcountry Hettiers
Mixed Ge-names and brides with the Goviars
While Kandyan seed of Malabar princelings
Waddled with ceremonial thinkings.
The deep South's Arabian gene bank,
Boosted trade on the Sinhala main flank
Taking over City Bank and Bazaar
With noses curved like a Scimitar
Exhorting the Yakkas, Hewas and Nagas
To die on the beaches and passes
While upholders of the Faith and the Nation
Tore apart each constituent portion.*

*To his cleansing modelled in Mathematics
Our Hero's thrust applied Economics,
In his putsch through the ethnic undergrowth
For a Race that was Class and Money wrought.*

*With this Programme the Monovirate called on
All the Kings Men, Mafia, and hoodlums
To rend apart in that guilty July
Civil norms on which he could not rely*

U. Karunatilake

Media without walls

Kiran Karnik

Satellite communication technology has, particularly in the last few years, virtually abolished distance and made geography irrelevant. Gone are the days when communicating to distant places was difficult or time-consuming; gone too are the problems posed by terrain, or by river and ocean. When one communicates via satellite, any place on earth is as close (or far) as any other because the distance from the satellite to any place within its reach is almost the same.

Not only does satellite communication call for a drastic redefinition of our concept of "distant" in terms of kilometres or miles, but its cost is distance-insensitive. Thus, in theory, the cost of sending a message via satellite from one part of a city to another is the same as the cost of sending the message from one city to another or even to some other continent.

The technology of satellite communication is well proven and operational — even in South Asia. Other technologies — like data channels, facsimile, E-mail, modems — have thrown open a vast range of possibilities. Some of these — satellite communication, facsimile, photocopying — have been called "technologies of freedom", since they are reputed to have triggered and sustained pro-democracy and freedom movements in East Europe and China. Undoubtedly, they make it well nigh impossible for a government, any government, to control the flow of information and views within a country and from a country to other countries. Small portable satellite terminals — sometimes only as big as a brief-case — can be used to send out voice, printed text, or even pictures from within a country to anywhere else.

With these realities (not mere possibilities) it is indeed strange that governments feel that they can continue to control information flows. In fact, many continue physical controls which ban the entry of printed material, videos/films etc. Also, the routing of communication is sometimes circuitous and the tariff structures unnecessarily high. It is true that the combination

of physical controls and high costs has succeeded in reducing the flow of communication material. However, the moot point is how long will this be tenable.

An outline of Keynote presentation at NAMEDIA-FES Colloquium on "Media Without Walls: South Asian Initiative", New Delhi, December, 1993.

Media, thanks largely to technology, are today slipping beyond the control of governments. Technology has already torn down most of the walls blocking media flows. Some remain, and new ones may be erected, but technology is not going to let them survive. New technologies hold the promise of making possible even easier and cheaper communication flows. The ground equipment will get smaller, cheaper and easier to use, while the satellite channel will cost even less per unit of data. New systems (like a hand-held satellite telephone) will make it possible to speak (or send data or a fax) from anywhere on earth to any other individual anywhere else. This satellite-based system (being worked on by INMARSAT and by Motorola, amongst others) will completely by-pass the telecommunication infrastructure of the country. In such a situation, what meaning do physical controls have? An article from a newspaper can be sent by fax to reach readers in other countries in a matter of minutes. Costs too will be determined not by the countries of the sender and receiver, but by the international operating agency. Clearly then the days of government control over media flows are numbered!

Unfortunately, despite the obvious, governments continue to stifle information and media flows, due to political reasons. The wastes and opportunities lost are phenomenal. In this, the South Asian region heads the list (as it unfortunately does in areas like poverty and illiteracy). In spite of the good fortune of having an excellent multi-purpose operational satellite system (India's INSAT), there is practically no regional use of the system — in striking contrast with our ASIEN nei-

ghbours, where Indonesia's Palapa system is extensively used, with obvious mutual benefit.

The "footprint" of the INSAT system is such that it can easily provide services in the South Asian region. Even its meteorological payload provides data over the whole region; unfortunately, though, the weather forecasts put out over Indian television limit themselves to the borders of India. Weather — cyclones, rains or heat waves — however, is not restrained by man-made lines on maps. It is, therefore, a pity that crucial information — which could help farmers or even save lives — is not available because of the walls in the minds of men.

My own organisation broadcasts educational "enrichment" programmes (Countrywide Classroom) for college students. These programmes are in English and, given the common inheritance of a British educational system, could be of direct relevance to students (and others) in neighbouring countries. The satellite "footprint" makes this easily feasible. One sees dreams of a South Asian Educational Channel, delivered via satellite with contents contributed by all the countries. The technological system for realisation of this dream is already in place, but is the will?

Yet experience indicates that technology has its own momentum. How long will political leaders be able to hold back this inexorable juggernaut? As mentioned earlier, technology has already freed media from Government. Now, with new developments, technology may free media from mediapersons. Individuals will be able to send and receive information, news or whatever — in print, audio or video form — from other individuals, directly. Governments and media persons can no longer act as information gatekeepers.

Are mediapersons, then in danger of losing their jobs? It would seem that their "job" of gatekeeping is doomed to extinction; however, mediapersons do play an important role in analysis and interpretation of information — in "adding value" to data. This is a specialised job and as long as the focus is on such value addition

— rather than on control — the new technologies will, in fact, provide more and not less opportunities to mediapersons.

Finally, one sees that the new communication technologies are creating new global communities — ones in which class, interests, professions and life-styles create closer bonds than nationality or proximity. At the same time, the rise of ethnicity provides a counterpoint. Will the dialectics between these two seemi-

ngly opposing thrusts result in a Hegelian synthesis? What form will this take? While a prediction with any degree of certainty would be foolhardy, it is already clear that the short-term trends (and benefits) are in regional groupings (some bordering on the supra-national) for trade, political harmony and, most definitely, free movement of ideas, communication and people. In this, we in South Asia are laggards, carrying the deadweight of recent animosities while unfortunately ignoring centu-

ries of shared heritage, language, life-style and oppression. Without moving quickly towards a "common South Asian homeland" we are in danger of being marginalised, and will continue our petty battles at the cost of the billion-plus people of this subcontinent.

Hopefully, the next meeting of this type will have the words of this year's theme slightly rearranged, so as to read: "South Asia Without Walls: Media Initiative".

CHESTER BOWLES (3)

Success in India

Howard Schaeffer

Bowles's influence and standing waxed and waned over the years, but he was always a unique and arresting figure. He had great strengths: his enthusiastic and indefatigable energy, his creative skills as a wordsmith, his long-sighted approach to the great changes coursing through the mid-century world, especially in the developing countries, and his ability to inspire younger people with his realistic idealism and devotion to public service. But he also suffered from glaring weaknesses: an inability to master the game of bureaucratic politics, a cultural insensitivity which led him to underestimate seriously the obstacles to the kinds of social and economic change he wanted the developing countries to undertake, a reputation in Washington as a visionary unwilling or unable to deal with immediate pressing problems, and an overidentification with the Third World in general and India in particular that reduced his credibility and effectiveness.

He was enormously successful in his first assignment to India, where his role in winning greater understanding for U.S. policies and fostering the newly established economic assistance program contributed to a decided improvement in relations at a time when these had become badly frayed. As a leading Democratic foreign affairs spokesman later in the 1950s, he effectively propagated his liberal interventionist approach to foreign policy both within the party and outside. Perhaps his most important contribution in those years was the lead he took in persuading Americans to recognize, if more dimly than he wished, that something significant to U.S. interests was going on in remote, newly emerging countries of which they had known or cared little or

nothing, and in calling for the United States to bring about a more equitable, democratic world by abandoning its support for the status quo and becoming instead a driving force for political, social, and economic change. His failure to become a strong voice within the Kennedy administration and to persuade it to place less emphasis on military power was a great disappointment to him, especially since he had viewed the 1960 election, which brought Kennedy to power, as an opportunity for a historic breakthrough in America's approach to international affairs.

His early dismissal from the number two position in the State Department was an especially grievous political and personal blow from which he never fully recovered. The most important factor in Kennedy's decision to sack him was probably Bowles's opposition to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and his blunders in reminding the president of this opposition after the fact also allowing it to become public. I have dealt carefully with his brief and difficult tenure at the State Department. Readers interested in the way the United States makes foreign policy will find instructive the account of his efforts to reform the machinery and personnel practices of the department to make it more responsive to his conception of mid-century political realities, and my discussion of the personality clashes and stylistic differences he had with President Kennedy and Secretary of State Rusk that frustrated these initiatives.

Bowles's long, second ambassadorship to India in the 1960s was less productive than the first. He played a major part in the effort to bring about the reforms in food and agricultural policies that led to

the Green Revolution. But he was less successful in his campaign to strengthen U.S.-Indian security ties. To his consternation, the outbreak of the second India-Pakistan war in 1965 led the United States to reduce sharply its political interest in India (as well as in Pakistan). In his final years in New Delhi he saw India slip downward on the Johnson administration's foreign policy agenda, which was increasingly dominated by Vietnam.

Throughout his years in foreign policy, Bowles seemed to alternate between moments of great hope and others of almost bitter despair. But over those two decades, he never flagged in his persistent efforts to promote the fundamental changes he believed necessary for the preservation of American security and the flowering of American ideals in the postcolonial Cold War world. He would no doubt have seen in the outcome of the Cold War the triumph of these ideals and the vindication of his belief that they represented universal aspirations. Although the United States and the rest of the world are vastly different now from what they were in Bowles's time, I am sure that if he were alive and active today he would be in the forefront of those urging Washington to employ its resources to sustain and strengthen free political institutions and more liberal and equitable economies in the former Communist countries, much as he had called on it to do in the Third World in the 1950s and 1960s.

In this brief account I have tried to give you at least some idea of the main points about Bowles I sought to bring out in *New Dealer in the Cold War*. I would hope that some of you will take the plunge and go through the book to get the full story.

NGO's : The question of accountability

(d) Trust Ordinance

A charitable trust includes any trust for the benefit of the public (within or without Sri Lanka) of any of the following categories:

- i) relief of poverty;
- ii) advancement of education or knowledge;
- iii) advancement of religion, and
- iv) any other purpose beneficial to or for the advancement of mankind.

A trustee is under a duty to take care of trust property as if it were his own.

There are separate provisions as to the maintenance of accounts and as to the investments allowed to trustees. A trustee is bound to keep clear and accurate accounts of the trust. He is entitled to have the accounts of his administration of the trust property examined and settled.

There is special provision for suit by persons interested in religious trusts which exposes them to a level of scrutiny not generally obtaining in the context of charitable trusts. The court is also invested with further investigative powers concerning the accounts of religious trusts. A court may, with respect to religious trusts, set up a scheme of management with provision for, among other things, periodical auditing of accounts.

(e) Tailored Acts of Parliament

It is also apparent that some NGOs derive their existence and juristic capacity by virtue of specific legislative enactment. Such NGOs are deeply rooted in history and tied to the controlling constitutional and operational provisions in their respective governing statutes. It is questionable whether such statutorily created NGOs should, as a matter of policy, be subject to any higher level of regulatory and administrative supervision given that, on the whole, the relevant ordinance makes detailed provisions for matters such as the filing of accounts and external investigation.

(f) Unincorporated Associations

Many NGOs exist as unincorporated

associations. No enactment giving unincorporated associations legal form and capacity exists in Sri Lanka, unlike other jurisdictions. Such bodies may, with the permission of the Court, be sued in the name of the President, Secretary and Treasurer of the association. There is a question as to whether such bodies can hold property. However, there is scope for reading a grant of property to an association as to its present members.

Unincorporated associations may validly open accounts, enter into leases, enter into rental agreements, give receipts and otherwise deal effectively with others so as to function for the achievement of their objects.

5. Is there a need for Reform?

The operations of NGOs at times requires an NGO to stand in opposition to the policies or philosophies of a particular government in power. The fear of unprincipled interference with the work of an NGO by a regime driven by political motivations necessitates acceptance that, in some areas, such as human and civil rights work, there is simply no scope for government supervision of the activities of NGOs. It is, however, acknowledged that where NGOs approach the public for funds, legitimate interest in how those funds are utilized may be manifested in regulatory control. Additionally, NGOs remain accountable to their donors.

An argument is raised that NGOs obtain financial benefits from their status and, are therefore, open to scrutiny. The argument, it is submitted, justifies only so much scrutiny as is strictly necessary to ascertain whether the NGO merits the award of its status which attracts the financial benefits.

The operation of NGOs in the public, as opposed to the private, sphere is a further base relied on by proponents of control. However, the scope and effect of the criminal law would tend to suggest that further control is unnecessary.

Three concerns inform, and have instigated, the debate over effective and ele-

mentary, in the sense of universal, regulation of NGO's. First, the proliferation and pervasive influence of the NGO's has initiated examination of their governance. Secondly, there is the spectre of impropriety and misappropriation raised because of fears that in the absence of close scrutiny, NGOs can engage in activities detrimental to public order and cultural harmony. The third concern is the most tangible: it legitimately questions the extent to which NGOs are accountable. Accountability involves several aspects: financial accountability in the sense of substantiated ascertainable expenditure on proper purposes; and operational accountability involving the achievement of established objectives in conformity with the law. It is therefore submitted that the prior question with respect to most NGOs (leaving aside those who raise funds from the public) is whether they must be accountable. In a larger sense, the operations of NGOs are but extensions of the work of individuals. Any challenge to the right of association must, therefore, be seen as a challenge to individual rights.

No concern individually subsists as a rationale for reform. The mere number of NGOs and the breadth of their activities marks them as a phenomenon meriting some policy. However, this concern implicitly recognizes that a global approach to regulation, in an environment where among NGOs there is no uniformity in form or function, is not feasible. The fear of maladministration and improper action is closely tied to the expressed need for accountability. However, a real question exists as to whether, if at all, these misgivings as to the duty of accountability are well founded.

Two distinct strategies may be used to tackle the accountability issue. First, the extant legislative framework may be amended to bolster and strengthen provisions for accountability. Secondly, the introduction of a voluntary code of conduct, capable of universal application, and addressing, on a consensus basis, all major concerns may resolve the accountability problem without impinging on the fundamental principles of autonomy and independence crucial to the efficacious and sound functioning of NGOs.

(a) Amendments to Existing Legislation

i. No Extension to Ambit of Application

The existent statutory framework should continue to apply to those entities which, either because of their form or due to the activities undertaken by them, fall within the purview of the relevant enactment. The arbitrary extension of the scope of an enactment is more likely to complicate than to clarify the system of control.

ii. Enhancement of Disclosure Requirement as to Operations

The precise objectives of an NGO must be stated in a constituent document to be filed at the stage of formation. Provision for the bi-ennial review of this statement of objectives should be inserted into the relevant enactments.

iii.) More Stringent Financial Disclosure Requirements

The provisions contained in the Companies Act may be adopted as a model law and included in all other enactments, such as the Trust Ordinance, having application to NGOs including specific acts establishing NGOs. Further the provisions in the Companies Act may be bolstered in the following manner:

(a) Disqualification of status as a company or deregistration for the unexplained failure to file annual returns; and

(b) Provisions for powers of investigation in cases of inadequate compliance with the accounting provisions (in amplification of section 431(d) of the Companies Act).

iv. Enforcement Mechanisms

Failure to comply with requirements as to disclosure concerning operation and accounting should entail deregistration or removal of status.

v. Comments on Disclosure Requirements

Two issues are pertinent to consideration of the validity of a recommendation as to the strengthening of disclosure requirements. The first relates to compliance and practicability: it is pointless to impose duties of disclosure of which there is little fulfillment and no real means of achieving compliance. In this regard, a voluntary code, founded on consent, may produce better results. The second issue concerns the appropriateness of enhancing disclosure requirements at a time when the trend is to limit the applicability of disclosure requirements (for example, paragraph 13.8 of the Discussion Paper of October 1993 on Company Law Reform, by the Advisory Commission on Company Law) and serious questions exist as to the functional relevance of disclosure requirements. In other words, by whom and for what purpose is information, provided in connection with disclosure requirements, utilized? Debate and conclusions on this issue may control the adoption of the recommendations made in paragraph (iii) above.

priateness of enhancing disclosure requirements at a time when the trend is to limit the applicability of disclosure requirements (for example, paragraph 13.8 of the Discussion Paper of October 1993 on Company Law Reform, by the Advisory Commission on Company Law) and serious questions exist as to the functional relevance of disclosure requirements. In other words, by whom and for what purpose is information, provided in connection with disclosure requirements, utilized? Debate and conclusions on this issue may control the adoption of the recommendations made in paragraph (iii) above.

(b) Voluntary Code of Conduct

The primary element of a voluntary code is the fact that it is a voluntary system based on self regulation within the NGO sector. Therefore it would involve the preparation of a voluntary code of conduct, primarily in respect of financial and substantive accountability and the voluntary element in this scheme would relate to membership and a willingness to adhere to the terms of the Code.

The implementation and execution of the Code of Conduct by member organizations could be monitored by a committee comprised of representatives of the organization concerned. Such members could be elected by secret ballot, thus hopefully minimizing factional loyalties.

Those organizations that 'volunteer' or take membership, would do so only to the extent that they would undertake to adhere to those terms incorporated within the Code.

(c) The Criminal Law

The Penal Code renders it an offence for a person entrusted with property to misappropriate it or convert it for his or her own use, in violation of any discretion of law or contract. The existence of offence as to criminal breach of trust indicates that scope now exists for the control of corruption as to the application of funds held by NGOs.

There is also the offence of cheating created which relates to actions causing a person to hand over property to another, that can also be used as a means to regulate activity and after punishment in the case of conviction, function as a deterrent effect.

The availability of the full gambit of offenses (others include cheating by personation) suggests that there is now a

means to meet the fears of impropriety concerning financial misfeasance without the need for any other scheme.

6. Summary of Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the legislative framework of NGOs contained in section 4, the description of the fundamental nature of the right of association presented in section 2 and on the consideration of whether there is a need for reform set out in section 5, the firm submission is that:

(a) There is no clear foundation for the existence of controls over and supervision of NGOs. Indeed, it becomes wholly unacceptable for the state to infringe on the operations of certain NGOs, such as those working in the human rights area, by seeking to exercise measures as to supervision or even requiring the disclosure of information.

(b) It is inappropriate and impracticable to establish a universally applicable framework for the supervision of all NGOs. A global approach to regulation, in an environment where among NGOs there is no uniformity in form and function, is neither feasible nor desirable. Accordingly, both the Bangladesh model for regulation, which involves a central supervisory agency, and the Indian model for control, which revolves around a prohibition on the receipt of funds by a NGO except with State approval, must be rejected.

(c) The diversity of the activities of NGOs which includes key development work, and the work of some NGOs, which involves, at times, criticism and scrutiny of Government policies and operations, is predicated on and necessarily an absence of measures which threaten or impair the integrity and independence of NGOs.

(d) The goals of transparency and accountability can be achieved by the twin strategies of strengthening the existing legislative framework and the implementation of a voluntary code of conduct, providing for provisions as to registration, accountability, dispute resolution and the establishment of a monitoring committee composed of NGO representatives.

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The State Department Report

Arden

In a report to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives and to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate, the State Department, in 1984, said:

"Matters peaked on July 23 when Tamil terrorists ambushed and killed 13 Sri Lankan soldiers (all of them Sinhalese) in the Jaffna peninsula. In a backlash of anger by the Sinhalese majority, there followed the most serious and widespread violence directed against the Tamil community since independence. On July 24, according to government figures, soldiers in Jaffna killed 51 unarmed Tamils. Violence against Tamils in the city of Colombo spread throughout the Sinhalese majority areas. At the end of a week of killing, burning and looting by Sinhalese mobs, the government said that 387 people, mostly Tamils, were dead, among them 53 convicted prisoners and detainees who were killed in prison by other prisoners. This figure also includes some 34 persons, mostly Sinhalese killed by the security forces for engaging in looting and arson.

According to government figures, 116 Tamil or Indian-owned large businesses were damaged, 38 of them completely destroyed. As many as 3,100 Tamil shops were damaged or destroyed, and thousands of Tamil-owned or occupied homes were burned or looted. Four thousand vehicles were burned. At the height of the violence more than 100,000 Tamils sought refuge in camps set up by the government and tens of thousand of them, many with transportation provided by the government, fled to the comparative safety of the north

and the east. Government officials, including the president, admit that some members of the security forces either actively participated in the violence or stood by unable or unwilling to stop it.

The events of July 1983 caused a backlash in world condemnation from which Jayewardene's government and even Sri Lanka itself never really recovered. From that time onwards the separatists could get away with murder.

On July 25, 35 Tamil prisoners, either convicted terrorists or suspects being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, were killed in Welikade jail, reportedly by other prisoners. Two days later, another 18 Tamil prisoners in the same jail were killed. A magistrate found the 53 deaths were homicides, and ordered the police to investigate. Prison officials claimed the deaths were the result of prison riots which prison guards had tried to stop. It is alleged that prison guards were partially responsible for these deaths due to malfeasance, but the government firmly denies this allegation and insists that the prison warders, who do not carry

firearms, were themselves overpowered by rioting prisoners. Police are investigating.

In June the government promulgated emergency regulations that permit the armed forces to dispose of dead bodies without post mortems or inquests. The Civil Rights Movement of Sri Lanka fears that these powers could be abused and could facilitate the destruction of evidence in cases of deaths by torture, indiscriminate killings, and execution without trial by security forces".

Such reports are annually submitted to Congress by the State Department in respect of countries receiving aid from the U.S. This is a requirement of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended. The figures the State Department report cites are government statistics. Others have made estimates which greatly differ from them. Dissanayake says there were 471 deaths and over 8,000 cases of arson. (Op cit)

The Tigers kept trying to provoke a repetition of July 1983. In doing so they slaughtered over three thousand civilians, some in the most brutal fashion. Small isolated villages in the jungle were surrounded by night and men, women and children burnt, shot or axed. Dollar Farm, Kent Farm, Kokilai, Nayar — the list is long. In May 1985 over 150 pilgrims in the sacred city of Anuradhapura were gunned down by the Tigers in an attempt to provoke a Sinhala Buddhist retaliation on innocent Tamils living amongst them. The Air-Lanka Tri-Star about to take off with

a load of tourists was bombed killing a large number of foreigners. Other bombings included the Central Telegraph Office in the Fort of Colombo, the Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd., the Oberoi Hotel and a trainload of passengers at Veyangoda. In 1987 came the gunning down of 127 bus passengers at Habarana and the bombing of the Pettah bus stand at rush hour — 113 dead, over 300 wounded. In all these instances, the government by taking swift measures was able to prevent a Sinhala backlash against peaceful Tamils. This made people wonder what had prevented the government from doing this in July 1983.

INDIA'S ROLE

The West German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in an editorial, on 24 April 1987 said:

"It was a grave mistake of Indira Gandhi to help Tamil guerrilla groups in the North of Sri Lanka to obtain weapons. India's help to rebels in a neighbouring country which had done India no harm is obvious, though India denies it. Sri lankan Tamils have had ideal retreat and supply bases in India for years. Without the logistic relations on both sides they would never have been able to fight the supposed oppression of the Tamil minority and for an independent state of Tamil Eelam.

It now occurs to Rajiv Gandhi, who has to carry the mess his mother left behind, that his country is on a dangerous tack.

It is a well-known strategy in Delhi to keep one's position strong by keeping the neighbours weak. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka seemed ideal for this purpose.

The Indian P.M. cannot keep pretending to be the honest mediator after all that has happened in the last few years. It will be difficult for the Indians to control the ghosts Mrs. Gandhi evo-

ked". (Quoted in the *Island* 26 April 1987)

What was the German editor on about?

India's intelligence agencies are the Research and Analysis Wing (R.A.W.) and the Intelligence Bureau (I.B.). Indira Gandhi started a Third Agency under her direct control with the innocuous name of Cabinet Secretariat (Security). The Third Agency was to cover activities in several Indian states such as Punjab, Kashmir, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and also one independent state, Sri Lanka. Indira Gandhi started her Third Agency in early 1983 under R.N. Kao, Chief Security Adviser to the P.M.

Rajiv Gandhi, anxious not to alienate Tamil Nadu, was reduced to having to take up positions in respect of Sri Lanka's separatist problem which are directly at variance with the stand he had to take in tackling similar problems in Punjab, Orissa and elsewhere in India. This frequently made him appear both foolish and disingenuous.

Mrs. Gandhi's daughter-in-law Menaka Gandhi, in the September 1984 issue of her magazine *SURIYA* told the story.

"M.F. Santook, ex-Chief of R.A.W., R.N. Kao and G.C. Saxena, Chief of R.A.W., with professional help from the intelligence agency of a country we do

not have diplomatic relations with, formed a new organisation.

The groundwork for the smuggling network for bringing in arms had been laid by Rabindra Ohri, Assistant Director in R.A.W. Ohri was rewarded with a posting to Sri Lanka. B. Sarup for whom things got too hot in Colombo R.A.W. Chief had him shuttled across to Kabul (sic). The R.A.W. Chief thought Sarup deserved a rest. After all, his work in Colombo had been brilliant. He had liaised with the Tamil terrorist groups in Sri Lanka and had been instrumental in establishing the first line of communication across Jaffna to Madras. After all, Punjab had done the trick (i.e. clinched the Hindu vote) in the North. Sri Lanka would do it in the South.

Sarup was replaced by Rabindra Ohri, the man who had streamlined the gun running operation in Rajasthan. It was at Ohri's behest that the specialised training camp at Chakrana, north of Dehra Dun got under way. Two thousand Tamil terrorists were given training there, by the special security bureau of R.A.W. under Nagrani and Arjunan of Counter-Intelligence.

In November 1983 the men were picked up from Dehra Dun and transported in batches of 500 to Madras.

Thereupon the local line to Sri Lanka took over and the terrorists crossed over to Jaffna.

A massacre of Tamils by a brutal Sinhalese army, with India stepping in as saviour of the poor oppressed people was the scenario that had been planned in Bikaner House. The heroine of Bangladesh wants a new role to play: 'The Devi of Tamil Nadu' will do just fine".

Many of the training camps the Indian government denied the existence of were in Tamil Nadu. *India Today* of 30 March

1984 gave the following picture:

The camp near Kumbakonam, like the one close to Meenambakkam on the outskirts of Madras, is just one of the dozens set up by the Lankan Tamil insurgents deep inside Tamil Nadu, where new recruits get ideological grounding from rebel theoreticians and elementary lessons in the use of firearms. Initial lessons over, they are split into small batches and sent for advanced training to the coast. Nearly two thousand armed men are now ready for battle; yet another 2000-3000 have been trained, but wait for arms from 'foreign sources', basically the Soviet-backed leftist guerrilla groups like the P.L.O. and Zimbabwe radicals. Armed with Kalashnikovs and G-3 rifles and driven by a strong emotion of ethnicity with a dash of left revolutionary fervour, they are keyed up to strike".

Gandhi's Dilemma

The Gandhi family's political base was in the south of India. The most powerful state in southern India is Tamil Nadu, which is the provenance of the Dravida Munethra Kazagam (D.M.K.) which spearheads a movement of Tamils all over the world. The D.M.K. leaders are very race-conscious and have high ambitions for ethnic Dravidians. One such ambition is Tamil Nadu as an independent state, separated from India. It was to people with such sentiments that the separatists of Sri Lanka appealed for assistance. Two rival Tamil Nadu leaders M.G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister and Karunanidhi vied with each other in espousing the Sri Lanka separatists' cause.

On 19 March 1987 All India Radio in its news broadcast said that the Indian government had indicated that it would not resume negotiations on the peace proposals with the government of Sri Lanka till the latter agreed to lifting completely the blockade on Jaffna. (Reported in The

Island 20 March). On 20 March a report was carried in the Daily News, from India Today, about the Indian government's decision to impose a blockade in Orissa; "The Indian government has resorted to a number of embargoes oddly at variance with its stance in relation to the Sri Lanka government's strategy in its war against separatist terrorists in Jaffna".

The Origins of the Tiger Movement

On 14 May 1972, when the United Front government was preparing to enact its constitution which the Tamil leaders regarded with dismay, three Tamil parties joined together at a meeting held in Trincomalee. They were the Federal Party, the Tamil Congress and Thondaman's Ceylon Workers' Congress (C.W.C.). This came into existence the Tamil United Front (T.U.F.) seeking autonomy within a united Sri Lanka. A teenager Velupillai Prabhakaran (b. 1955), at the same time formed a group calling itself Tamil New Tigers (T.N.T.).

Four years later, the T.U.F. met at Vaddukoddai and renamed itself the Tamil United Liberation Front (T.U.L.F.) and passed a resolution demanding a separate state for the Tamils. The T.N.T. changed its name to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (L.T.T.E.).

On 7 April, 1978 a police party of four led by Inspector Bastiampillai (3 Tamils and 1 Sinhalese driver) was ambushed by the L.T.T.E. and killed. The police weapons were captured. There had been sporadic killings by the Tigers before, beginning with the murder of Alfred Duraiappah, Mayor of Jaffna, but the ambush-killing of the police party in 1978 marked the beginning of organised violence in the fight for Eelam. Five months later Air Ceylon's Avro airliner was burned by the Tigers.

The Tigers split and splinter groups were formed. The L.T.T.E. led by Prabha-

karan remained the principal group. The People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (P.L.O.T.E.) was started by Uma Maheswaran, a former lieutenant of Prabhakaran. The Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (T.E.L.O.) was led by Thangadorai and Kuttimuni, both of whom were killed later in the Welikade prison riot. It was this group that the T.U.L.F. was closest to. After Thangadorai and Kuttimuni had been arrested leadership was taken over by Sri Sabaratnam (Tall Sri) who, in turn, was shot down and killed in 1986 on Prabhakaran's orders.

The Eelam Research Organisation (E.R.O.S.) is a London-based Trotskyist group of ex-patriate Tamils led by E. Ratnasabapathy. The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (E.P.R.L.F.) which contained within it the General Union of Eelam Students (G.U.E.S.) was a students' group.

The Tamil Eelam Army (T.E.A.) was led by Thambipillai Maheswaran. In February 1984 T.E.A. robbed a bank in Batticaloa and got away with fifty million rupees (nearly two million U.S. dollars at the rate then prevailing). It was T.E.A. that severely damaged Sri Lanka's tea export market in 1986 by threatening to introduce arsenic into tea packets.

There were a few smaller groups.

Both the L.T.T.E. and P.L.O.T.E. had a core of P.L.O. trained fighters; but Uma Maheswaran's connection with the P.L.O. was earlier and closer. He was the first to take his men to Lebanon for training under George Habash's People's Liberation Front for Palestine (P.L.F.P.).

NOTE:

Mr. C. Mahendran's article on *EAST ASIA* will appear in our next issue.

JVP: Thoroughly modern revolutionaries

Mick Moore

I. Introduction¹

The JVP (Janatha Vikramuthi Peramuna — the People's Liberation Front) first came to the attention of the world outside Sri Lanka when it launched an abortive insurrection in 1971. In 1987, the JVP made another bid to come to power by force of arms. The insurrection of 1987-1989 was better-prepared and more deeply-rooted than that of 1971; the human costs and societal consequences of its extirpation were correspondingly greater.² Although the JVP came close to achieving state power both in late 1988 and mid-1989, it was thereafter destroyed very rapidly.

This paper explains why the JVP became a serious insurrectionary force in the 1980s and why it fell apart so rapidly in the second part of 1989. The paper is especially concerned with the logistics of revolution: the nature of the JVP's cadres and support base; the organizational forms adopted; and the tactics and strategy used to combat the state. The central thesis is that the means the JVP used in pursuit of state power were shaped by and adapted to the environment — the economic, educational and occupational structures, demography and human geography — of the Sinhalese areas of Sri Lanka to which the JVP was confined. In sum, I suggest that the JVP's insurrection was very much formed by the fact that it took place in a relatively urbanized and commercialized environment characterized by a high degree of interpenetration of societal and state institutions. Although the JVP relied very heavily on claims to 'indigenism', it was in fact very different in organization and style from what might be considered the typical contemporary peasant-based Third World revolutionary movement. In order to illustrate this point, I draw some contrasts between the JVP and the other insurrectionary movement which has wracked Sri Lanka in recent years: that of the Tamil separatists in the North and East of the island.³ For, fighting the Sri Lankan armed forces mainly in relatively thinly populated agricultural areas with access to thick jungle, the Tamil separatist guerillas were (and are) engaged in a campaign that in many respects

resembles that of the characteristic peasant insurrectionary.⁴

My understanding of the JVP has been shaped by the impressive contemporary social science literature on revolution. In Section Two, I explain how this paper relates to some important issues in that literature. The central thesis concerning the linkages between the Sri Lankan material and institutional environment and the JVP's revolutionary practice is sketched out in Section Three. Section Four deals with the historical and political context, and Sections Five and Six with the history of the JVP. The connections between the environment and the JVP's organization and strategy are explored in detail in Section Seven.

II. Social Science and Revolution

The study of revolution is a field in which contemporary social science has considerable achievements to display. Stimulated by a whole series of rural insurrections and revolutions in the Third World, the literature on revolution has expanded very considerably over the past three decades. More impressively, our theoretical and conceptual understanding of revolution — and of related phenomena such as insurrection, guerilla warfare and counter-insurgency — has improved considerably.⁵ The most significant ways in which this literature, especially as it related to the causes of revolution, has informed my interpretation of the JVP are summarized here.

Firstly, and most importantly, the analysis of why revolutions occur has tended to shift from essentially *societal* (social or socio-economic) to *political* explanation. As Goldstone explains,⁶ the first generation of studies of revolution to be strongly informed by theoretical concerns — mainly those published in the three decades after the end of World War Two — were to an important degree reductionist. Revolution, an eminently political phenomenon, was interpreted in large part as some kind of reflection of events and processes taking place within the social or socio-economic spheres: mass socio-psychological disturbances; societal dysfunctions of a Parsonian character; poverty; or political competition resulting from the emergence of new socio-economic groups or classes in the course of economic change.⁷ A later

generation of theorists, prominent since the 1970s, shifted the focus of explanation to more directly political factors, especially to those generally termed *structural*: the structures of state systems and of peasant communities; the coherence or weakness of elites and armed forces; and the influence of international economic and political pressures on the capacity and autonomy of states. The structuralists produced much stimulating work which tended to interpret revolutions primarily as aspects of 'crises of the state'.⁸

Secondly, the emphasis placed on *structural explanations of the origin and course of revolution generated a natural reaction from scholars inclined to emphasize the agency dimensions of political action*: the motivations of revolutionary cadres and leaderships, and the nature of the choices open to them. Such a reaction was virtually inevitable in a situation in which, as evidenced by the abundance of ideological, political and military training facilities for aspirant revolutionaries in West Asia, in Communist countries and in many universities worldwide, revolution had become almost an established profession. Many scholars now see that the structural and the agency perspective can be accommodated to one another.⁹ The tension between them will no doubt continue, in this field of study as elsewhere, but there is no reason to expect that this will prove intellectually paralysing.

My interpretation of the JVP is more polity than society-centred, and incorporates both agency and structural perspectives, albeit with emphasis on the former. To a considerable extent, I interpret the JVP as an exercise in political entrepreneurship. An intelligent, creative and highly ambitious political leadership, dedicated to the achievement of state power but blocked from achieving it by electoral means, exploited both the reservoirs of political alienation found within Sri Lankan society and its own long experience of revolutionary endeavour to design political strategies and tactics that enabled the movement (temporarily) to achieve impressive results with relatively few resources and no external support. This emphasis on the creative role of the JVP leadership — and especially of the dominant individual leader, Rohana Wijeweera, who created the movement in the late 1960s and controlled it until he was captured and

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killed in November 1989 — in seeking out and exploiting opportunities to make revolution as a means to achieve power will no doubt seem excessively 'voluntaristic' to those observers who would emphasize the structural features of Sri Lankan society which made revolution so attractive to many people. I adhere to my view because of what appears to me to be an abundance of evidence about the extent of opportunism displayed by Wijeweera during his long quest for power.¹⁰

Thirdly, the shift of emphasis from societal to political explanation (see above) has gone hand in hand with an emphasis on the international dimensions of the causes of revolution. There is no unified theory or approach, and a variety of different kinds of international influences have been explored. For example, Gates has described the rather powerful processes, deriving from the considerable intellectuality characteristic of most modern revolutionary movements, through which the lessons learned from one revolutionary experience are transmitted to and imbibed — not always to good effect — by aspirant revolutionaries in other parts of the world.¹¹ Structuralist theorists have argued the existence of more consistent patterns of causation stemming from the 'world system', conceived as a politico-economic mechanism incorporating rooted inequality between economically advanced, capitalist 'core' states and various categories of 'peripheral' states. Skocpol, for example, has demonstrated that revolutions tend to occur in the countries occupying disadvantaged positions on the peripheries of the global politico-economic system.¹² More quantitative 'world systems' theorists have pursued the notion of causal connections between the incidence of insurrection or revolution on the periphery of the world economy and the degree of instability in political and economic relations among the dominant nations at the core of the system.¹³ More eclectic scholars have argued the importance of the global geo-political context in the more conventional and visible sense of that term. Building on their work,¹⁴ one can advance a few propositions about the changing relationship between the global geo-political situation and the nature of revolutions and revolutionary possibilities in the 'periphery' since, say, the end of World War Two:

1. The scope for anti-colonial revolutions — such as those of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Vietnam and Zimbabwe — has declined as direct colonialism has gradually been eradicated.

2. Correspondingly, the radical element

in revolutionary programmes tends to be directed increasingly against indigenous elites, albeit they are sometimes closely associated with putatively neo-colonial foreign powers, as for example in the cases of the United States in relation to Cuba, Iran and Nicaragua.

3. The bi-polarity of international politics in the early decades after World War Two was reflected in revolutionary alignments on the periphery: revolutionary movements tended to be tied to the Soviet Bloc, both materially and ideologically, and to express their objectives in terms of (secular) socialist principles, while anti-revolutionary forces became identified with 'Western' and 'capitalist' stances and sources of support.¹⁵ The simultaneous ideological collapse of communism in the late 1980s and the contraction of the Soviet Union's foreign policy pretensions appear to be leading to a completely new and less structured situation. The immediate post-war patterns had already undergone considerable change, notably as a result of the Sino-Soviet split. This provided alternative sources of ideological and material sustenance for revolutions, creating scope for 'competition in the revolution' between groups on the left.

4. As communism has declined as a source of ideological and material support for revolution, Islam has to some degree taken its place, albeit (a) only for that proportion of the world's population which is already Islamic, and (b) in a pluralistic form which embodies rivalries between many different Islamic states and between various Islamic 'churches'.

5. In consequence of the changes listed above, revolution in peripheral countries is tending to become more diverse and more localized, in the sense that it increasingly reflects competition between ideas and institutions couched and organized at a global level, and increasingly reflects competition within individual states, or between adjacent states, which is expressed in terms of rivalries between ethnic or religious groups.¹⁶

The JVP of 1971 provided an early example of this process of localization of the dynamics of revolution within the periphery. The JVP was hostile to the Soviet Union at the ideological level,¹⁷ obtained some material support from North Korea, and took the Maoist and Vietnamese models of 'peasant revolution' as its ideological reference points. The Sri Lanka Communist Party, supported by the Soviet Union, was a member of the coalition government against which the JVP launched its 1971 coup attempt. The recent

insurrection was even more local in orientation:

1. Scarcely any external material support was obtained, and that from non-socialist sources.¹⁸

2. The socialist or Marxist elements in the JVP's doctrine and practice were increasingly neglected in favour of a programme, style and tactics which were increasingly Sinhalese chauvinist and indigenist, and directed against both Tamil ethnic groups within Sri Lanka and against the Indian armed forces which were occupying the Tamil areas of the North and East.

3. Some of the JVP's main targets, in the literal sense of the term, were rival left parties, both the established Marxist parties and more populist groups — which provided more direct competition to the JVP for the support of low status social groups. The support given by these rival left parties to a negotiated solution to the Sinhalese — Tamil ethnic conflict, including the presence of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in the North and East, provided the JVP with an opportunity to brand them as traitorous.

It is explained in more detail below how the arrival in Sri Lanka of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in July 1987 provided the material upon which the JVP, having received only 4 per cent of the national vote in presidential elections in 1982, was able to obtain sufficient popular support to launch a campaign to take over power by force. It launched that campaign against a regime and a military apparatus which had already been weakened through Indian support for armed Tamil separatists. The international dimensions of the recent insurrection were therefore of great importance. And they were very much regional, South Asian, especially Indo-Sri Lankan issues, intertwined with ethnic and linguistic rivalries in both countries.¹⁹ The outside world was involved only indirectly.

While recognizing the importance of international issues, this paper focuses mainly on domestic dimensions of the JVP. For the central concern is to explore how structural features of the Sri Lankan economy and polity affected the way in which the JVP set out to achieve power. The argument is summarized in the next section.

III. The Material and Institutional Context

It has long been conventional to observe that the actual pattern of revolution in

the twentieth century has been almost the reverse of the Marxian expectation. In particular, revolution has taken place in the backward rather than in the advanced countries, has been rooted more in the peasantry (in the loose sense of the term) than in the industrial proletariat, and has been motivated by nationalism rather than international class solidarity. It has become conventional to think of insurrection and revolution in the peripheral countries as located principally in rural areas, albeit with external support to help overcome the acute obstacles to widespread collective action inherent in conditions of rural poverty.

The JVP of 1971 was largely a rural movement, especially in the sense that it was only in rural areas that it managed to organize sufficient force to control territory and populations for a few days or weeks. In the 1980s it retained strength in many rural areas, but was also more rooted and powerful in many urban or quasi-urban areas, above all in smaller towns and in the suburbs and the densely populated semi-urbanized surroundings of the capital, Colombo. To argue about labelling in rural — urban terms would not be very enlightening. The more important point is that the JVP (of the 1980s, in particular) differed very considerably from any concept of a 'peasant' movement, where that implies some combination of (a) 'rootedness' of cadres in particular localities; (b) dependence on knowledge of local physical terrain to combat government forces; (c) the attempt to deny the state control of rural populations by excluding the state apparatus, substituting the revolutionary organization for the state in rural areas, and finally moving on into urban areas from the rural base; (d) the creation of a mass political-cum-military organization to exploit force of numbers; and (e) the introduction of socio-economic reforms in 'liberated' areas which attract mass support by generating immediate benefits. One could find some elements of all these features of a 'peasant' movement in the JVP; they were, however, neither prominent nor characteristic. In somewhat stereotypical terms, one could describe the JVP's campaign as a hybrid between the strategy and tactics of the peasant guerilla and those of the urban terrorist, where the latter implies a premium on mobility, flexibility, secrecy, intelligence; the penetration of state institutions for information purposes; the existence of a large penumbra of supporters surrounding a very small core of managers and skilled operatives; and above all, military operations which are designed

very largely for their psychological and political impact.

The evidence on the nature of the JVP's tactics and strategy is presented below, especially in Section Six. The more immediate concern here is to explain why the JVP, which was after all operating in a poor and largely agrarian country, had so little in common with our stereotypical peasant guerilla. The answer is that it was operating in an environment which is in fact relatively 'modern' or 'developed', and in many respects similar to that of the more advanced countries where 'urban terrorist' (or 'urban guerilla') movements have become the characteristic form of insurrectionary activity.

Those aspects of 'modernity' which are especially pronounced in Sri Lanka (relative to its poverty) and directly relevant to present concerns are:²⁰

- (a) A high overall population density and, in particular, a dense, semi-urbanized rural population.
- (b) A relatively diversified occupational structure, including a heterogeneous agricultural economy and a high incidence of combination, within the same household, of agricultural with non-agricultural, and rural with urban, income sources.
- (c) A major structural and political problem of educated unemployment arising from the expansion of access to the formal school system in the context a modest long-run rate of economic growth and in an environment in which educational qualifications were the historic route to material and social improvement for much of the population.
- (d) A relatively large state, especially in terms of personnel employed, which is widely ramified, strongly represented at the village level, and has for several decades assumed major social welfare responsibilities.
- (e) A relatively commercialized and integrated national economy, originating in part in the penetration of the capitalist employment relationship into most sectors of the economy during the colonial plantation era.

The more significant consequences of this relatively 'developed' environment for the pattern of revolutionary enterprise were:

- (a) There are very few lightly-populated open space — jungles, plains, mountains, swamps or deserts — available for mobili-

zation, training or points of temporary retreat and concealment. Revolutionary activities had almost always to be conducted in densely populated areas. One result was that the mobilization of large groups of fighters was both difficult and of limited strategic value, given the relative invulnerability of a modern state to a direct but weak military challenge. Another was that the JVP were dependent for security on the support or acquiescence of surrounding populations, and thus very vulnerable once this support was withdrawn and information began to be passed on to the security forces on a substantial scale. The emphasis was placed instead on political organization and the use of political methods to undermine the state. This implied a large organization, but one subordinated to the political leadership, and requiring considerable internal differentiation according to function and degree of individual involvement.

- (b) The heterogeneity of the population in terms of socio-economic categorization and interest made it difficult for the JVP to generate mass support through a precise programme of socio-economic reforms.

- (c) The most promising revolutionary material were youth, both those in formal education and those frustrated by the failure of their educational qualifications to generate rewards which they considered reasonable. Finding a continuous supply of new recruits was relatively easy, but maintaining commitment and stability was problematic.

- (d) Social networks arising from experiences in (higher) education institutions provided many of the sinews of revolutionary organization, and were especially valuable in creating a national organization relatively free of the local particularism which tends to characterize poor agrarian societies.

- (e) The classic rural revolutionaries' tactic of cutting the linkages between the people and the state apparatus was neither feasible nor particularly desirable. The emphasis was placed instead on penetrating the state apparatus.

- (f) The highly commercialized and thus interdependent economy was vulnerable to disruptive actions in pursuit of revolutionary goals. However, the widespread material costs of these disruptions left the JVP vulnerable to popular reaction, and thus created pressures to seize power as rapidly as possible.

Next: Historical Context

Notes:

The following people are to be thanked, without implication of responsibility, for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of his paper: David Booth, W. Morris Jones, Bruce Matthews, Eric Meyer, V. Ramakrishnan and, above all, Jonathan Spencer.

¹ Most of those who were active in the recent JVP campaign, including the entire leadership, are dead. The JVP will never be able to tell its own story of the events of the late 1980s. The account provided here relies on several other sources. A specialist on Sri Lankan politics, I was resident in Colombo for three months in mid-1989 at the peak of the JVP's campaign and of the armed forces' counter-offensive. It would be difficult, and in many cases unwise, to mention by name all the people who provided useful information. A special debt is acknowledged to: the first-class journalism of Rohan Gunasekera of *The Island* newspaper (Colombo); and to the written accounts of the JVP produced by C.A. Chandraprema (*Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror. The JVP Insurrection 1987-1989*, Colombo, 1991) and Rohan Gunaratna, (*Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution? The Inside story of the JVP*, Kandy, 1990). Gunaratna's work was produced very rapidly, is heavily descriptive, and depends almost exclusively on military intelligence sources. While useful, and not in fact an anti-JVP tract, it cannot always be assumed to be fully reliable. Chandraprema is much more analytical and insightful, and had a more balanced portfolio of sources of information. It is, however, possible that his history as one of the most active and long-standing political and ideological opponents of the JVP has coloured his interpretation.

² It seems likely that 'only' two or three thousand JVPers or suspects were killed in the repression of the 1971 insurgency; six thousand is the maximum likely figure. By contrast, forty thousand is a likely order of magnitude for the recent killings.

³ In most cases I refer in this paper to 'Tamil separatists' or 'Tamil guerillas'. Largely as a result of internecine conflict, one particular organization, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the LTTE, or 'Tamil Tigers') emerged as dominant, and was the only organization to fight against the 'Indian Peacekeeping Force' when the latter occupied the Tamil areas between August 1987 and March 1990. Where appropriate, explicit reference is made to the LTTE.

⁴ The full story is, naturally, a little more complex than this. The ideological and organizational heartland of Tamil separatism is the Jaffna peninsula, which has a relatively dense population and depends more heavily than other Tamil areas on non-agricultural sources of income. In addition, by 1991 the Tamil Tigers had developed a considerable capacity to wage conventional warfare against the Sri Lankan armed forces. They had graduated from guerilla status to an army with territorial responsibilities.

⁵ For a good review of the literature, see J.A. Goldstone, 'Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation', *World Politics* 32,3 (1980), pp. 425-53.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ This latter perspective is epitomized in the substantial debate, triggered by the publication of

Eric Wolf's book (*Peasant Wars in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1971), over the question of which class or stratum among the peasantry was intrinsically the most revolutionary. The impact of emerging capitalism on different peasant strata was taken by Wolf, and many other participants in the debate, to be an explanatory variable of central importance.

⁸ An especially good example of the fruitfulness of the structuralist perspective is J.A. Goldstone's detailed analysis of the causes of the breakdown of the English state in the seventeenth century ('State Breakdown in the English Revolution: A New Synthesis', *American Journal of Sociology* 92,2 (1986), pp. 257-322).

⁹ Theda Skocpol, the most prominent of the structuralist theorists (*States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, Cambridge, 1979), has co-authored recent work on revolutions in the Third World which focuses on the issue of constructing revolutionary coalitions, gives considerable prominence to the entrepreneurial activities of professional revolutionary organizations, and this implicitly adopts much of the agenda of the agency perspective: J. Goodwin and T. Skocpol, 'Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World', *Politics and Society* 17,4 (1989).

¹⁰ The most eloquent statement of this position is to be found in Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, esp. chs 3,4,7,8,14 and 15. One must, however, bear in mind Chandraprema's hostility to the JVP (see footnote 1). See also S. Leelananda, 'The Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective (3)', *Lanka Guardian* (Colombo) 12, 18 (1990).

¹¹ J.M. Gates, 'Toward a History of Revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28,3 (1986). The JVP provides an illustration of this process in the way in which the mid-1980s they constructed a 'patriotic' ideological position — and attempted to construct a corresponding 'patriotic' coalition — modelled closely on the practices of the Vietcong in the 1960s and 1970s.

¹² Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, p. 41.

¹³ D. Kowalewski ('Periphery Revolutions in World-System Perspective, 1821 — 1985', *Comparative Political Studies* 24, 1, 1991) reviews some of this literature and presents data which indicate that there is a statistical association between instability at the 'core' and revolution on the 'periphery'.

¹⁴ See, for example, F. Halliday and M. Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London, 1981), ch.1.

¹⁵ This point applies particularly to the (early stages of) the revolutions in North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Ethiopia.

¹⁶ The nationalist idiom may continue to be as important in mobilizing mass support for revolutionary movements as it has been over recent decades. However, nationalism is increasingly being interpreted in terms of local differences.

¹⁷ This was related to Wijeweera's personal experiences as a student in the Soviet Union. He came into conflict with the authorities, and failed to complete his course.

¹⁸ Insofar as the JVP did receive any external support in the 1980s, this appears to have been confined to limited amounts of cash from Iraq (Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, pp. 59-60).

¹⁹ Indian support for the Tamil separatists reflected in part Delhi's persistent concerns about separatist sentiment among the Tamils of Tamil Nadu. To have failed to become involved would have risked the creation of strong, independent linkages between Tamils on both sides of the Palk Straits.

²⁰ Evidence for most of the points in this list may be found in M. Moore, *The State and Peasant Politics in Sri Lanka* (Cambridge, 1985); one might note in particular the evidence there on p.135 that, at the end of the 1970s, about one-third of the active labour force was employed in the state sector. Sri Lanka's superb record of high levels of education and literacy and low levels of mortality is widely known; see, for example, P. Isenman, 'Basic Needs: The Case of Sri Lanka', *World Development* 8,8 (1980). A few relevant comparative statistics which are easily available are as follows. They are given in the form of comparisons between Sri Lanka and the average of thirty-six other 'low income economies' (excluding China and India) at various points in the 1980s: (a) number of persons per square kilometre — 239: 32; (b) percent of Gross Domestic Production derived from agriculture — 27: 36; (c) infant mortality rate — 36: 112; (d) population per physician — 7, 460: 17,350; and (e) percent of school-age children enrolled in school — 103: 70. See World Bank, *World Development Report 1987* (Washington, 1987), pp. 202, 206, 258, 260 and 262.

Attrition

Soon I will be liberated.
My old foes are debilitated.
Long have they carried their vendetta,
Glaring with the eye of the cobra.
But my honest ruby out-glazes the serpent,
Permanent when their venom is spent.

Patrick Jayasuriya

Fighting youth revolts

S. Hettige

Sri Lanka in the recent decades had witnessed a number of serious social crises. The most recent and the most significant among them have been the ethnic crisis and the mass youth rebellion in the late 1980's. While the former is still growing in intensity in the form of an armed conflict between the state forces and the northern rebels, the latter has been virtually brushed under the carpet following the virtual elimination of its leadership and many of the youth directly or indirectly involved.

The two main social crises mentioned above are not historical accidents. While the ethnic crisis can be traced back to its deeper historical roots, youth rebellion in the south is of more recent origin. The circumstances that led to both these phenomena have now been fairly well documented. In other words, we are familiar with the historical, social, economic and political factors that directly or indirectly contributed to these crises. The way we have responded to both of them however indicates that, as a society, we are not capable of formulating our responses to such national issues on the basis of already accumulated knowledge on the subjects. What is behind this societal incapacity? In this short article, I wish to identify and describe the main factors that reduce our capacity to deal with national issues. In the present discussion, I will focus attention on the southern youth rebellion as an illustrative example.

As in many other post-colonial countries, the state in independent Sri Lanka began to play a dominant role not only in the provision of basic services but also in generating economic growth and direct employment creation. The result was that the general population, particularly those belonging to lower social strata, pinned their hopes on the state, whether it is for subsidies, productive resources or even jobs. The major political parties competing

for state power in turn tended to outwit each other more on the basis of patronage offered to the electorate than on long term policy packages. Such competition was also instrumental in raising the aspirations of the electorate so much so that no government could fully satisfy the expectations of all its supporters with the result that some of them join the opposition at the next election to defeat the incumbent government. This mode of politics persisted without much change till 1977. It was the government elected in that year which sought to change this pattern and share the burden of the state with the private sector in many spheres.

The transition involved has had many significant consequences, in particular with respect to the rural population. People in the rural areas who were very much dependent on the state for various services as well as white collar employment for the educated youth were adversely affected by the post-1977 reforms. This does not mean that they did not experience difficulties prior to 1977. It is just that the situation became worse after 1977.

Post-1977 reforms have adversely affected the educated rural youth in two significant ways. Firstly, the contraction of the state sector after 1977 has reduced employment opportunities available to them. As is well known, urban-based private sector firms prefer to recruit to their management staff people with an English education. Such people usually come from urban middle class backgrounds. The dismantling of the many state enterprises which hitherto provided a safety net for many upwardly mobile rural youth virtually deprived the latter of opportunities for social mobility.

The continuing expansion of the state sector until 1977 prepared the groundwork for the emergence of a system of status stratification focused on the state

bureaucracy. On the one hand, the holding of a position within a state agency at whatever level helped the holder of such position to distinguish himself or herself from those who did not occupy such positions. On the other hand, all those who belonged to state agencies in fact occupied distinct positions within a system of status stratification depending on their qualifications, training and seniority. Since state agencies, were bureaucratically organized, they were by and large guided by universal criteria such as qualifications, performance and seniority. The adoption of such criteria in turn gave legitimacy to the system of social inequality involved.

With the continuing privatization of state enterprises after 1977, a parallel system of stratification focused on the growing private sector is currently in the process of being formed. The process of recruitment to positions within the new hierarchy tends by and large to leave out the educated rural youth. This is largely because the private sector establishments can be more pragmatic in the recruitment of personnel and take into account non-universal factors such as social background, personal contacts, etc. Such pragmatism often favours the urbanites.

Given the above background, the educated rural youth today have limited opportunities for upward social mobility. This is particularly the experience of university graduates hailing from poor rural families. Most of them who are concentrated in Liberal Arts Faculties of our universities still rely very much on the state for employment. If not for periodic mass recruitment of school teachers, most of these graduates are bound to remain unemployed for an indefinite period. On the other hand, the few graduates with a working knowledge of English often experience no difficulties in finding employment in keeping with their aspirations and qualifications. These

graduates often hail from urban middle or lower middle class backgrounds. As far as the educated rural youth are concerned, the situation is unlikely to improve as the newly established private colleges and international schools are going to produce the kind of people demanded by the growing private sector. Some of them already find it difficult to go home after graduation, let alone remaining unemployed for an extended period. Some graduates in desperation take up unskilled manual jobs soon after graduation hoping that they will eventually be absorbed into the public sector at least as trainee teachers.

The discussion so far might give the wrong impression that the educated rural youths are concerned only with their own advancement. In actual fact, there are also equally significant non-economic forces at work. For want of space I am unable to discuss them in detail. So what is attempted below is only to outline them.

Educated rural youths in Sri Lanka in general have always been concerned with national politics. This is largely due to the pioneering efforts of the Marxist political parties in politicising the masses. The national leadership of these political parties soon found their youthful support base snatched away by newly-formed leftist parties. This was largely due to the fact that the traditional left leaders could not live up to the expectations of the young largely generated by the revolutionary rhetoric of the leaders themselves. The elitist orientation of the leadership also contributed to the alienation of the rural youth from the traditional leftist parties.

Recent political developments have no doubt contributed a great deal to the growing sense of frustration among the politically conscious youth in the country. Politically expedient manipulation of the electoral process that we witnessed in the 1980's exposed the sharp gap between precept and practice in both national politics and social policy. As is well known, it was similar situation in the West that largely prepared the groundwork for the mass youth protest movement there.

Next: Post-77 Change

CORRESPONDENCE

Towards a single Socialist Party

The two short statements appearing in the *'Lanka Guardian'* of the 15th of December 1993, exhibit more than anything else, the tiresome rhetoric and dogmatic complacency of an 'insider', and the welcome openness and intellectual freshness of a critic who has fought himself free of strangulating and inane party dicta.

I suppose it will not be altogether inappropriate to take the discussion a stage further, because the 'engagement' that was announced between the two parties at the Public Library with hardly any audible or visible fanfare was in stark contrast to the seismic performances in the fifties with massive rallies numbering tens of thousands at Galle Face when we were optimistically led to believe that the revolution was just round the corner. If the two parties hope to convince those who have been leading a precarious existence on the political fence during the last thirty or forty years, and those who were waiting far outside completely innocent of dialectical and historical materialism, they should discuss their errors openly in a language free of ill-defined and obscure Marxist jargon, and demonstrate that they are serious about their professions of being scientific and democratic. We have yet to hear of internal corrective action taken or planned, which must necessarily precede a final merger to form one homogenous socialist party. What guarantee is there yet that Trotskists have abandoned their attachment to Trotskism, and the Stalinists have been purged of their Stalinism? Do they hope to cohabit tolerating each other's irreconcilable differences? Is the mere pronouncement of a merger tantamount to an actual demonstratable political merger? Their lack of a galloping enthusiasm for an unbreakable alliance was amply manifested not only by the poor gathering at the Library, but also by the total absence of any visible response indicating even some feeble optimism on the part of the left leaning public. Would it be feasible to hand over power to a group who call themselves socialists, and not Trotskites or Stalinists, who in better times behaved so scandalously and recklessly not only spawning half a dozen other parties claiming to be the true believers and disciples of Marx, but also to the detriment of the whole left movement, engaging in stupefyingly destructive inter-party polemics, mergers, alliances, demergers, and splits on which their worst enemies grew and fed?

We have heard Marxist slogans relating

to the world crisis, and the imminent collapse of capitalism, ad nauseam, in sometimes technically brilliant academic studies, headlined in Marxist newspapers, factional broadsheets, in thousands of meetings up and down the country especially during election time. Alas the messianic pronouncements became feebler and feebler and less and less relevant in a political battlefield where the only serious contenders appeared to be two parties the Marxists characterised as being enemies of the working class. The two major Marxist newspapers collapsed even before the Eastern Europeans overthrew their dictatorial Marxist regimes. If there are now a few Marxist oriented countries still left, they prove their anachronistic nature rather than their viability. Large private foreign funded capitalist enterprises within a supposedly socialist milieu in China is about the last political and economic straw left for the hundreds of ineffective revolutionaries to clutch at before their inevitable doom in the world capitalist watery grave. But even that straw is deeply flawed, and how long it will be capable of providing psychological sustenance is anybody's guess.

Tilak. A. Gunawardhana

Dehiwala.

Human Nature

Other than the time spent on eating, relaxing, or sleeping, each and every minute of an adult's life is spent on trying to Increase one's wealth, Improve one's health, Create more avenues for sexual contact or Enhance one's fame, influence and power.

What makes one human being different from another is not their alleged "virtues" or "principles", but their "strategies" in achieving the above objectives.

If and when any human being does anything that would seem to benefit another person or organisation, it is not done for any altruistic or other selfless reasons. It is done primarily as part of the "strategy" to manipulate their sympathy, favour or other support to achieve one's own objectives.

This is equally applicable to all acts and omissions of organizations and countries too. After all, they arrive at their own policies and other strategies on the basis of the needs, wants and aspirations of human beings having the same self centered aims and objectives referred to above.

Bernard Wijedoru

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The TNCs' web of control

Richard J Barnet & John Cavanagh

A few hundred TNCs dominate the four intersecting webs of global commercial activity on which the fate of the world economy rests. Such TNCs exert a more profound influence on the lives of the people of the world than national governments who are increasingly finding it difficult to comprehend, still less control, these corporate giants.

The emerging global order is spearheaded by a few hundred corporate giants, many of them larger than most sovereign nations. Ford's economy is bigger than that of Saudi Arabia or Norway. Philip Morris's annual sales exceed New Zealand's gross domestic product. The multinational corporation of 20 years ago carried on separate operations in many different countries and tailored its operations to local conditions. In the 1990s large business enterprises, even some smaller ones, have the technological means and strategic vision to burst old limits — of time, space, national boundaries, language, custom, and ideology.

By acquiring earth-spanning technologies, by developing products that can be produced anywhere and sold everywhere, by spreading credit around the world, and connecting global channels of communication that can penetrate any village or neighbourhood, these institutions we normally think of as economic rather than political, private rather than public, are becoming the world empires of the 21st century. The architects and managers of these space-age business enterprises understand that the balance of power in world politics has shifted in recent years from territorially bound governments to companies that can roam the world. As the hopes and pretensions of government shrink almost everywhere, these imperial corporations are occupying public space and exerting a more pro-

found influence over the lives of ever larger numbers of people.

An excerpt from a chapter in a forthcoming book by the authors entitled *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and the New World Order*. The book is to be published by Simon and Schuster in February 1994.

Global corporations are the first secular institutions run by men (and a handful of women) who think and plan on a global scale. Things that managers of multinational companies dreamed of 20 years ago are becoming reality — Coca-Cola's ads that reach billions in the same instant, Citibank's credit cards for Asian yuppies, Nike's network for producing millions of sport shoes in factories other paid for. A relatively few companies with worldwide connections dominate the four intersecting webs of global commercial activity on which the new world economy largely rests: the Global Cultural Bazaar; the Global Shopping Mall; the Global Workplace; and the Global Financial Network.

The worldwide webs of economic activity have already achieved a degree of global integration never before achieved by any world empire or nation-state. The driving force behind each of them can be traced in large measure to the same few hundred corporate giants with headquarters in the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Switzerland, the Nether-

lands, and the United Kingdom. The combined assets of the top 300 firms now make up roughly a quarter of the productive assets in the world.

The Global Cultural Bazaar is the newest of the global webs, and the most nearly universal in its reach. Films, television, radio, music, magazines, T-shirts, games, toys, and theme parks are the media for disseminating global images and spreading global dreams. Rock stars and Hollywood blockbusters are truly global products. All across the planet people are using the same electronic devices to watch or listen to the same commercially produced songs and stories. Thanks to satellite, cable, and tape recorders, even autocratic governments are losing the tight control they once had over the flow of information and their hold on the fantasy lives of their subjects.

Even in culturally conservative societies in what we still call the Third World, the dinner hour is falling victim to the television. In bars, teahouses, and cafes and in living quarters around the world the same absence of conversation and human interaction is noticeable as family members, singly or together, sit riveted in front of a cathode tube. As in the United States, Europe, and Japan, centuries-old ways of life are disappearing under the spell of advanced communication technologies.

The cultural products most widely distributed around the world bear the stamp 'Made in the USA' and almost any Hollywood film or video is bound to offend traditional values somewhere. Scenes de-

Richard J Barnet is the author of *Global Reach* (with Ronald E Muller) and 10 other books. John Cavanagh co-directs the World Economy Project at the Institute for Policy Studies.

picting independent women, amorous couples, and kids talking back to parents upset all sorts of people across the globe as assaults on family, religion, and order. Because the steady streams of global commercial products in many places, including parts of the United States, are feared as barbarian intrusions, they are provoking local and nationalist backlashes, often carried out in the name of God.

The Global Shopping Mall is a planetary supermarket with a dazzling spread of things to eat, drink, wear, and enjoy. Dreams of affluent living are communicated to the farthest reaches of the globe, but only a minority of the people in the world can afford to shop at the Mall. Of the 5.4 billion people on earth, almost 3.6 billion have neither cash nor credit to buy much of anything. A majority of people on the planet are at most window-shoppers.

The Global Workplace is a network of factories, workshops, law offices, hospitals, restaurants, and all sorts of other places where goods are produced, information is processed, and services of very description are rendered. Everything from cigarettes to cars contains materials from dozens of countries pieced together in a globally integrated assembly line driven by the logic of the bottom line. Data processors, law offices, advertising agencies and insurance companies have become global assembly lines of a different sort. A worldwide labour market for creative merchandising ideas, computer knowledge, patient fingers, managerial know-how, and every other marketable skill co-exists with a global labour pool in which more and more of us, from the chief executive officer to the wastebasket emptier, are swimming. Hundreds of millions more of the world's uprooted and dispossessed are desperate to jump in.

The Global Financial Network is a constantly changing maze of currency transactions, global securities, MasterCard, euroyen, swaps, ruffs, and an ever more innovative array of speculative devices for repackaging and reselling money. This network is much closer to a chain of gambling casinos than to the dull gray

banks of yesteryear. Twenty-four hours a day, trillions of dollars flow through the world's major foreign-exchange markets as bits of data travelling at splitsecond speed. No more than 10% of this staggering sum has anything to do with trade in goods and services. International traffic in money has become an end in itself, a highly profitable game. John Maynard Keynes, who had intimations of how technology might one day be harnessed in the service of non-recreational gambling, predicted the rise of this 'casino economy', as he called it. Yet as banking activities have become more global and more speculative, the credit needs of billions of people and millions of small businesses are not met.

Viewed together, these four webs offer a picture very different from that of a global village. The Global Cultural Bazaar is reaching the majority of households with its global dreams. Much smaller numbers are playing any role at all in the three networks that produce, market, and finance the world's goods and services. In the new world economy, there is a huge gulf between the beneficiaries and the excluded and, as world population grows, it is widening.

The most disturbing aspect of this global system is that the formidable power and mobility of global corporations are undermining the effectiveness of national governments to carry out essential policies on behalf of their people. Leaders of nation-states are losing much of the control over their own territory they once had. More and more, they must conform to the demands of the outside world because the outsiders are already inside the gates. Business enterprises that routinely operate across borders are linking far-flung pieces of territory into a new world economy that bypasses all sorts of established political arrangements and conventions. Tax laws intended for another age, traditional ways to control capital flows and interest rates, full-employment policies, and old approaches to resource development and environmental protection are becoming obsolete, unenforceable, or irrelevant.

National leaders no longer have the ability to comprehend, much less control, these giants because they are mobile, and like the mythic Greek figure Proteus they are constantly changing appearances to suit different circumstances. The shifting relationships between the managers of global corporations and political authorities are creating a new political reality almost everywhere.

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