

LANKA

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TRENDS

Gone missing

A Sri Lankan army officer has gone underground in the United States after being sacked from a military training course for alleged theft. Lt. Col. Jayantha Kotelawala has gone missing along with his wife and daughter. Kotelawala has figured twice in shop-lifting incidents in a military mall. He was removed from the Fort Benning Military Academy where he was under training and asked to return to his own country. The family has since gone missing and US officials are reported to be unable to trace them.

Wanted: DPL businessmen

Trade chambers have asked the government to post businessmen as diplomats in Sri Lankan missions abroad. The government has agreed, according to trade sources.

BRIEFLY...

Wrong man

How did a military man get into a human rights delegation? Foreign Minister Shaul Hameed has ordered a probe. One Mr. D. Wijesekera listed in the four member delegation headed by Attorney General Tilak Marapone scheduled to represent Sri Lanka at the 50th sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission from January 31 to March 11 in Geneva it has turned out is Brigadier Daya Wijesekera. The selection made by the human rights division of the Foreign Ministry has been over-ruled by President D.B. Wijetunga.

US SS-men for SL VIP security

Two men from the US Secret Service are in town now to help Sri Lanka set up a VIP protection unit. The new unit will be responsible especially for the security of President and the Prime Minister. In the US the President and the VP are protected by the Secret Service.

Early elections?

Political observers are talking of a snap election this year. The Presi-

dential election is due to be held at the end of this year and some analysts believe that the Government will go for a parliamentary election before that though parliament can run till March next year.

While political observers project such a possibility economists predict a rise in the budget deficit in such an eventuality. They say that Government will then not be concerned about targets but only with high spending image building with vote catching projects.

An IMF team is now in the country, keeping an eye on all this.

Election fever

Election fever is rising in the South with the approach of the Provincial Council polls. Nominations have been handed in by the UNP and the People's Alliance (SLFP and Left parties). The DUNF is expected to support the UNP this time round.

Bomb in a bus

Thirteen people were killed and about fifty more injured when a bomb exploded inside a bus in North Central Sri Lanka. The blast ripped through the fully loaded passenger bus at Rambewa on the Anuradhapura-Vavuniya road. Police suspect the LTTE.

SL to chair NTP conference

Jayantha Dhanapala, Director-General at the Foreign Office will preside over the forthcoming conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons (NTP). His selection was unanimously endorsed by the UN when Foreign Minister Shaul Hameed proposed his name.

The conference is scheduled for April in New York. Dhanapala is a seasoned UN hand.

Revamping higher education

A three-year plan to be launched this month is expected to clear problems in the universities. Among the problems: queues for admission; irrelevant courses; inadequacy of English knowledge.

Devolution: a fact of life

President D.B. Wijetunga told a seminar in Colombo that devolution was a fact of life today and had come to stay. The President was speaking at the inauguration of the National Conference on the Devolution Experience organised by the Centre for Regional Development Studies. There were however problems such as the reconciliation of devolution with the implementation of national policy for which the people had given a mandate to the government, he said.

A parade of rejects

SLFP MP Mangala Samaraweera said in a statement that the so-called SLFPers who were claimed by the UNP to be joining that party were in reality rejects and failures. The MP gave a case by case analysis of the paraded "converts". Some had been removed as party organisers, others had repeatedly lost elections and some had never been in the SLFP to begin with, the MP said.

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SRI KOTHA SEIZES THE DAY

Mervyn de Silva

From "Premadasaism Without Premadasa", the L.G.'s post-assassination thesis, we now have "Jayawardenism without President Jayawardene". It is the spirit that counts, and the spirit of Jayawardene, 83 and kicking, haunts the political scene.

But what is still not fully appreciated is a point that this journal has spotlighted quite early in the career of President D.B. Wijetunge. We identified a new personality factor that seemed to be capable of changing the national political equation, certainly in the South. (See PRESIDENT D.B. HERE I STAND, 1/9/93, DBW's North-South Fronts 15/10 and Thondaman, Gamini and the UNP 15/12/93 and Thondaman and the KGB Factor 15/1/94.)

When I talk of 'Jayawardenism' I mean of course the talent for skilful manoeuvre — of course with enemies or opponents that operate on the same turf as you, not Indira Gandhi the IMF or Prabhakaran but the SLFP, the Left, the clergy, the Sinhala ultras (JVP), the bureaucracy, judiciary, the private sector, the press etc. President D.B. brings to the arena of political power an entirely new psychology, largely moulded by upbringing and environment (what I have termed the KGB factor) and a highly individualistic approach to "power". Right now, it is the gift for highly skilled manoeuvre (persons, posts, issues) that reminds us of 'Jayawardenism', encouraging the persistent yarn about Dicky's Brain Working (DBW).

If in the current crisis this myth has been strengthened, the explanation is quite simple. President D.B., just like J.R. in his time, has two targets — Mrs. Bandaranaike, the only credible challenger to any UNP president, and secondly, a Sirimalled coalition or a united SLFP leading a large coalition with Mrs. B. as "the candidate". JR split the SLFP, and crippled Mrs. B. politically.

J. R. - THONDAMAN

Thondaman looks like the great exce-

ption. Not really.. President JR wanted the CWC vote and the plantations quiet. The JEDB and SPC were losing 400 million rupees a month, nearly 10 million dollars. J.R. gave the CWC boss a portfolio and his 80,000-100-000 stateless, citizenship. At the back of his mind was a major security threat. What if Prabhakaran succeeded where some other separatist northern groups failed? Guerrilla war in the *thottam*? What could the State do? Set the tea bushes ablaze to smoke out the 'tigers' or bomb Nuwara Eliya or Badulla?

Far better to let Thondaman do the policing. His 'boys' will spot an infiltrator in a way no N.I.B. agent could.

For, President D.B., this was a war on his home turf..... the longest war on the traditional homeland against the 'invaders' and the new settlers, introduced by the only foreign power which had taken the last kingdom, the Kandyan, where all other colonisers, Dutch and Portuguse had failed. This was the traditional homeland from which the peasant had been uprooted, the environment altered, and the way of life threatened.

The British had left but Thondaman was still there with his plantation vote. But for that vote, the UNP would really have been in deep trouble at the Provincial Council polls.

And now to the recoup-recovery exercise. But as soon as President D.B. got down to that task, the CWC boss attacked on another front, a typical Thondaman move — take the offensive. The letter from the Presidential Secretariat on the NORAD matter (a vocational training Institute) was converted into a *casus belli*. It was an affront. Neither JR, the last Emperor, nor Premadasa, the tough guy, had treated Thondaman in this fashion.

When the Presidential Secretariat proceeded to name an Inquiry Committee, Thondaman opened a new front having formed a new alliance, the CWC-DUNF.

And so the no-confidence motion on the UNP administration in the C.P. council, and the whole unseemly affair, and the melee in and outside the chamber.

BATTLES AHEAD

In an exhilarating exhibition of JR-like manoeuvres, move and counter move, the CWC-DUNF alliance or rather the Gamini-Thonda front was seriously weakened.

Now the main target was not Mr. Thondaman but the DUNF via Gamini. The front was thus broadened. Not just the Central province; not simply the UNP rebel Gamini but a rudderless DUNF. The brief respite (the DUNF-CWC front in the Central Province) was over.

Now the UNP took the offensive determined to use the opportunity of broadening the front to make 1994 the Year of Battles. The preparation for the Big One in December, the Presidential poll. The North and East — the fronts of the real war — were the Army's business. Or rather the new Army Chief's task.

The war in the South is the real war.... or the beginning of the real war — for political power.

So Central Province, Southern Province, and finally the Western Province. With the "DUNF" stalwarts, Gamini and Premachandra back in the UNP fold, it is now a question of winning these three battles, one way or another, in preparation for the BIG ONE.

To recover, the SLFP or PAP will have to re-group, re-think tactics and strategy. So what will be the outcome of the battle for the South?

NOTE:

The man to watch, apart from the President, Prime minister Ranil, General Secretary Cooray, Gamini and Thondaman is..... Anura B.

The proposed changes

A. Jayaratnam Wilson

It is almost certain that there will be some tinkering with the Constitution. A cabinet committee is looking into this question. There are three major barriers to be crossed. Firstly the government has to muster a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Secondly to obtain this majority the main opposition grouping, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party will have to cooperate to enable amendments to conform to the required two-thirds majority. This may be impossible. The SLFP may insist on a total package of reforms including the abolition of the Executive Presidency and the restoration of cabinet/parliamentary government. It could refuse to support piecemeal changes which do not radically depart from the present structure. It might be wiser however if it accepted changes to the system of proportional representation (PR) and modifications to the provisions for the referendum in the Constitution, reserving to itself the right to abolish or amend the powers of the Presidency when it takes office. Thirdly the Supreme Court must pronounce on the constitutional validity of proposed changes and whether, in certain instances, a referendum will be required. The Supreme Court is supposedly an independent institution and virtually a third chamber of government. But it has already been constituted by UNP presidents.

The government has declared that it has no intention of abolishing the Executive presidency. There is a possibility of it modifying its stand. There may be niggling attempts to have President and Cabinet share power. For example the practice of the President holding portfolios in which subjects there is no minister accountable to Parliament may be done away with. In the past, not even the Prime Minister (in particular Mr. Premadasa) answered for the President's actions in the latter's capacity as Minister of Defence. Another possibility is for there to be a Deputy Minister (of, for example, Defence) who could then be responsible to the legislature. Whether this will be acceptable to the Opposition is another question. Ideally the President should divest himself of all cabinet portfolios because he is not present in Parliament to answer. Yet another is for the Prime Minister to take responsibility for all the portfolios held by the President. But why should he or how can he because

he has no control over any of the departments attached to these portfolios.

One last possibility is for the President to share power with the Cabinet. The question of power sharing will not arise if there are contradictory majorities. Then the Prime Minister who will command the support of a party different from that of the President will advise the President to appoint ministers of his/her choice. But two obstacles stand in the way. What if the President refuses? And what remedies are available to deal with a recalcitrant President? The second hurdle follows on the first.

The blessed vagueness of the Constitution as outlined in Article 37 (1) and (2) could provide a way out of such an impasse but only if the President realises the impotency of his situation. Article 37 (1) states that if the President "is of the opinion that by reason" of, among other things (such as illness, absence from Sri Lanka), "he will be unable to exercise, perform and discharge the powers, duties and functions of his office, (in this case, because he has no majority in Parliament), he may appoint the Prime Minister to perform his functions "during such period". This would thus be the way out, should there be a contradictory majority in parliament. The intention of including the words "during such period" was clearly intended to be for a temporary phase. But it could, in view of its vagueness, be interpreted as meaning for the entire period that the Prime Minister commands a majority.

But what if the President remains obstreperous. Again the vagueness of Article 37 (2) can be utilized. Here the assistance of the Chief justice will have to be invoked. This subsection states that "if the Chief Justice in consultation with the Speaker is of the opinion that the president is temporarily unable to exercise" his functions, "he shall communicate in writing his opinion to the Speaker and thereupon the Prime Minister" shall assume the functions of the President. "Temporarily" again was intended as a short period but in order to enable the constitution to work, "temporarily" can mean where there are hostile majorities as between President and Parliament and "temporarily" can therefore be regarded as

the whole of the Prime Minister's term in office while he/she commands a majority.

One way thus of remedying the situation without amending the Constitution is to provide for the Executive President not to hold any portfolio whether or not the majorities coincide and secondly for the Prime Minister to assume the functions of the President if the President is of the party with a minority of seats in the legislature. Article 31 (1) and (2) can be underscored as coming into operation in the circumstances mentioned. In the latter event, the President merely remains ceremonial head of state.

The question of power sharing in normal situations as when there are coincidental majorities is beset with problems. How can the executive power be divided? Either it must be possessed by one or other institution, President or Prime Minister (and Cabinet). Or the President must delegate power in specific areas. Firstly this cannot be done by constitutional amendment for the Opposition will not cooperate. Secondly the one who delegates can always recall such delegated powers or closely oversee its operationalizing. The latter provision will not prove satisfactory because bureaucrats must then satisfy two masters, the President and the Minister. In which case, it is the President whose authority will prevail. For instance, a minister might require a bureaucrat in his ministry to perform certain tasks inimical to certain interests and interest groups. Under the Constitution the President can if sufficiently pressured by the vested interests concerned, countermand the directives of the minister. Interviews with public servants indicated such problems. They said they preferred the former system where they were only answerable to the minister. Under the existing dispensation, a conflict of loyalties arises. Public officials will in the end have to follow the President's orders and this will create dissension between the bureaucrat and the ministers.

Oppositional cooperation for a constitutional amendment might be possible if provision is made for both President and Parliament to face the electors at **one and the same time**. That is, there should be no fixed term for a President. The President goes to the polls with members of

the dissolved Parliament. At the end of an election there will then be a President and a Parliamentary majority of the same party or coalition of parties. The question of contradictory majorities will then not arise.

Even with such a change there is still the problem of an Executive president overriding ministerial orders to bureaucrats. This can be resolved in two ways by constitutional amendment. Ministers should be made answerable and accountable to Parliament for the actions of bureaucrats in their respective ministries. This would mean that a President will be obligated to obtain the consent of a minister before he gives a directive to a bureaucrat in a department of the minister. Alternatively the President directs the minister to give bureaucrats orders. If the President and minister cannot agree, the minister must resign or the President has the constitutional right to replace the minister.

On this aspect, there is, the problem of the duties of the Prime Minister. During President Jayewardene's two terms, the Prime Minister did not see eye to eye with the President on a number of crucial matters. Both men however avoided a head on collision. But when it came to President Premadasa he resolved the possibility of a clash between him and the Prime Minister by making it clear that the latter office was available to the holder for only one year at a time. This was a crude attempt to conserve power. The President will have to ensure that he appoints a PM on whom he can depend. Alternatively he will have the constitutional right to dismiss the PM and find a replacement.

There is however a more intractable problem. What are the duties and responsibilities of the Prime Minister? The Constitution only makes references to the President consulting with the PM on stated matters and for the latter to act for the President on given occasions. But consultation does not imply that the President **must** act on the Prime Minister's advice. So what does a Prime Minister have to do under the Constitution? It may be noted that the two prime ministers under the 1978 constitution were given an additional portfolio. Or else they would merely have functioned as chief of the government's majority and Leader of the House. The Prime Minister does not command authority whatsoever over ministers. Only the President does. One alternative therefore is to abolish the prime ministerial office. Another is for the Prime Minister to shepherd the government's majority and function as leader of the House and these duties are better if speci-

fied in the Constitution. He can still hold the titular office of Prime Minister.

There are two other areas that need examination. The system of proportional representation requires wholesale revision. The intention in introducing PR to ensure that parties obtained seats in proportion to the votes polled. For one thing the high cut off point of 12 1/2 percent should be reduced to five which is pretty universal. The other is to adapt the German method of combining PR with the single member constituency, ensuring however that in the ultimate reckoning parties obtain their due share of seats in proportion to the votes polled. Under the German system the much needed contact between an MP and his/her constituency is ensured.

Briefly the German PR system adapted to Sri Lanka will be as follows: (1) a party must win 5 percent of the total national vote or 3 constituencies in the whole island to qualify (2) the voter receives two ballot papers, one for the election of representatives for each constituency in a province and the other for the list presented by each party for each province. These can be two separate ballot papers or a single ballot sheet which contains on the top half the constituency list and on the lower half the provincial list (3) each party will be awarded seats in a province on the basis of its winning seats on the first past the post system which is the same as a plurality of votes cast (no absolute majority is required). For the list, it will receive seats in proportion to the votes cast **but** the proportion of seats will depend on the national proportion of votes polled. So if party A wins 10 seats in a province on a constituency basis in a house of 800 members with 100 members assigned to each province, and 20 percent of the national vote, it will receive 10 additional seats from its provincial list thus ensuring that it has obtained a total number of seats in proportion to the national votes polled. But what if Party A obtains 40 percent of the votes cast? It will then be awarded 40 of the seats allocated to the province, that is 10 constituency seats and 30 list seats, thus being permitted to retain a "superproportion". This means that the total number of seats in Parliament can vary depending on the assignment of seats and the proportion of the national vote won. On the other hand Party B might win 5 constituency seats and obtain 30 percent of the national vote. Then it will receive 25 additional seats from the provincial list to ensure that it obtains seats which will be in proportion to the percentage of national votes it polled (4) Party C may fail to win any constituency seats in a province but if it has qualified by obtaining 5 percent or

more of the national vote and obtains 6 percent of the vote in the provincial list, it will be awarded 6 seats notwithstanding its failure to obtain any constituency seats.

The other is the referendum. A well stated aphorism is that the referendum implies the transfer of power from knowledge to ignorance or even to mass hysteria. Parliament is specially equipped to enact legislation. There is no necessity to require the input of the electorate. If it is retained, specific provision needs to be made that it not be used to, for example, extend the term of Parliament. This instrument has potential for the emergence of dictatorship. A self willed President under the existing provisions can appeal to the electors the head of the cabinet of ministers and of Parliament and have legislation endorsed without the participation of Parliament. The best remedy is to do away with the referendum in view of the possibility of the supremacy of Parliament being undermined. If there is strong feeling that there are provisions in the Constitution that require the dual endorsement of Parliament and the people, the better route would be to entrench such provisions in perpetuity so that they cannot be changed even by constitutional amendment. If amendment must be made, a special constitutional convention could be summoned for the purpose.

Lastly there is the role of the Supreme Court whose independence is provided for in Article 107 and its composition in Article 119; it will consist of not less than 6 and not more than 10 judges besides the Chief Justice. So no additional judges can be appointed by a new government. The Supreme Court has been involved in making political decisions since independence. In political cases, the trend has been for the Court to be the handmaid of the executive. This need not be a problem since the Court cannot, except in glaring instances of contingent injustice, hamstring the executive. The situation could however become difficult if the Court had been originally constituted with one President's yes men and a President from a different party has to confront a hostile Court. Usually the Court will be pragmatic. But it could also be obstructionist. There is only one avenue available to a President of a different party. He can offer alternative appointments, such as ambassadorships, governorships, chairmanships of various corporations and commissions and have amenable judges take the place of difficult judges. In this way a reconstituted Supreme Court can be less recalcitrant. Any other change will require a constitutional amendment which will not be available to any government without oppositional cooperation.

Public morality necessary for settlement

Izeth Hussain

The purpose of this article is to argue that unless the Government respects reasonable standards of public morality there will be no solution to the ethnic problem. Instead, Sri Lanka could well breakup.

My approach is based on Rousseau's view that "Those who want to understand politics and morality separately will never understand anything about either of them". He was reaffirming a traditional way of thinking about politics which, in the West, went back to Plato and others in Greek antiquity.

The polar opposite of that view is supposed to be that of Machiavelli, who allegedly justified the practice of sub-moral realpolitik just for the sake of power. It is a mistaken notion, as an attentive reading of his works will quickly show. His Discourses in particular show an obsession about the central importance that should be given to the civic virtues in politics.

My concern in this article is particularly with the notion that without respect for public morality a country can disintegrate. It arises from the idea that a society is a moral community, or it is not a society. The last of the great public philosophers of the West, Bertrand Russell, could have sometimes seemed naive in some of his crusades, but in his philosophical writings he was always the hard-headed relentless rationalist. He wrote, "Without civic morality communities perish; without personal morality their survival has no value."

I have invoked the names of Rousseau, Plato, Machiavelli and Russell, all of whom were intellectuals. We have recently had

notice that some at least in the ranks of the Government's supporters do not take kindly to intellectuals. A recent article could have reminded the reader of Mussolini's declaration that whenever he heard the word "intellectual" he pulled out his gun. To be quite fair, however, the objection was really to intellectuals who allegedly have their heads in the clouds and yet babble impractically about politics, not to all intellectuals. That objection might seem to be particularly potent against intellectuals who give the impression of playing around with moral fiddlesticks while Sri Lanka burns.

It will be useful to make some clarifications before proceeding further. The intellectuals whose names I have invoked were all of them involved in public affairs, and thought deeply about the stuff of politics. Only one of them had a notoriety for having his head in the clouds, namely Rousseau. But he, as it turned out, had got his hands on the levers of revolution and became a major force to destroy the ancien regime in France, shake the whole of Europe through the Napoleonic wars, and change the course of human history. It appears that those intellectuals who insisted that there can be no dissociation between morality and politics were hard-headed realists who were very much down to earth.

Another clarification that has to be made is that the notion of an integral connection between politics and morality and the notion that a society without respect for public morality can be expected to disintegrate are not confined to people with powerful intellects like Rousseau and Russell. They seem to be shared by the common people, who everywhere in the world evidently have a conviction that it is perilous for a society to go against its

moral order.

The point was brought home to me through my experience as an inmate of the State, that is as a Government official, for three and a half decades. I use the word "inmate" because the experience was just like being the inmate, more particularly after 1977, of a lunatic asylum. The kind of sub-moral moronism that one expects to find in a lunatic asylum came to characterize our post-1977 UNP State.

I was very much struck by a class difference in the responses to wrong-doing by that Government, with clerical officers who usually come from a lower-middle class origin showing a noticeably greater sense of outrage than staff officers. Over one case of grotesque injustice they used to spontaneously exclaim "There will be nothing left of this country at this rate". That response was in exact conformity with Russell's dictum quoted above and, of course, by 1988 Sri Lanka was in fact in a state of disintegration.

The explanation for the class difference to which I am pointing probably arises from the fact that there are no such things as just societies, apart perhaps from some very primitive ones. All other societies have to varying degrees been unjust, systems of oppression and exploitation, including the declaredly classless ones. It is to be expected that the rulers and their henchmen, the upper class, and the more comfortably ensconced among the middle class, can expect to benefit from the wrong. The others, to escape oppression, have to clamour for the right. I wonder if that is implicit in Hegel's profound analysis of the master-slave dialectic.

In any case, it is reasonable to think that the insights of the Platos and the Rou-

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sseaus about the integral connection between politics and morality are shared by the common people. Those who are supposed to inhabit some kind of empyrean of abstract thought and the wretched of the earth who have to struggle for existence, and have to be down to earth to survive, are at one. A properly realistic approach to politics requires that we think of the implications of sub-moral politics.

One more clarification has to be made. It is arguable that since human beings are moral beings by their very nature, everyone and not just the poor and lofty philosophers, thinks of politics in terms of right and wrong, that is in moral terms. True enough, but there are very widely varying degrees in the importance given to the moral factor in politics. At one extreme the recognition of that factor can be perfunctory and incidental, which at the other it can lead to the perception that unless the Government respects reasonable standards of public morality there will be no solution to the ethnic problem, and Sri Lanka can break up. The Government's behaviour, and what might be called the establishment discourse on the ethnic problem, are very far from showing any such perception.

I will now proceed to substantiate my argument, beginning with some observations on the point that a society is a moral community or it is not a society. I have to go into some detail on this point as it is of crucial importance for my argument.

I will consider here the civil society in the Hegelian sense, that is the society beyond the family and below the state. It is supposed to be an arena of conflict, sometimes conceived of in terms of the Hobbesian state of nature in which practically everyone is at war against everyone else. The society is held together, according to that conception, by law and the co-ercive apparatus of the state.

It is a misconception based on bourgeois individualism which, contrary to what Fukuyama and others think, is really part of a passing phase of history. That

conception of society was challenged in the West through the profound insights of Rousseau, and even more of Hegel, about the social nature of human beings. That it is a misconception is shown by the fact that a society is held together not only by law, meaning positive law, and fear of the co-ercive power of the state but far more by custom and convention and norms and expectations. And behind all that are shared conceptions of morality, which in the societies beyond the primitive stage take the form of coherent ethical systems.

The civil society is certainly an arena of conflict, far more so than the family, but it is more than just that. It has to have a consensus underlying conflict for the society to hold together at all, and that consensus is a moral consensus. This can be seen in the way conflicts are actually resolved in the civil society. Far more of them are resolved on an informal basis of mutual understanding and agreement rather than through adjudication by the law courts, and the informal resolution is possible at all only because there are shared notions of fair-play, justice, and equity, that is to say moral conceptions. A society is therefore a moral community, or it is not a society. It can expect to break up without the moral consensus.

A certain kind of transaction which goes on in the day-to-day life of a society is very relevant to our ethnic problem. I refer to the agreements entered into on an entirely informal basis, which are infinitely more numerous than agreements backed by legally binding documents. They range from matters which are of no great importance to those which engage the serious financial or other interests of the parties involved, and the basis for these agreements is trust and nothing else. I have in mind also the normal everyday transactions which take place in society on a basis of trust. The daily life of a society is possible at all only because of the trust that expectations will be fulfilled in terms of prevailing moral norms.

What happens when the factor of trust is absent? Say when an informal unde-

rstanding or agreement is in question with a moral moron who is known to be quite capable of playing out his own grandmother. The other party will briskly take to his heels. Should reaching an agreement be absolutely necessary for some reason, he will insist on a legally binding document and sign with his heart in his boots, knowing that the moral moron could cause endless difficulties notwithstanding the might and majesty of the law backing that document. The relevance of these commonsensical observations to our ethnic problem will be made plain shortly.

I will now apply the foregoing observations on society as a moral community to the ethnic problem. It will be generally agreed that the 1977 Government was not notable for high-toned morality, that in fact it operated too often on a sub-moral plane. I will not here go into details to show that things like elementary decency and fair play were not its forte in its dealings with the minorities, nor for that matter with the majority Sinhalese. I will merely refer to the fact, which has been examined at length in an earlier article, that the post-1977 UNP created the Eelam problem in its present militant and terrorist form through state terrorism beginning with the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1977 and reaching its apogee in the Hitlerite horror of the 1983 pogrom. There certainly was a terrifying moral failure behind that state terrorism. By 1988 it was quite clear that Sri Lanka was in a state of disintegration, which continues to this day. Plato, Rousseau, Russell, and even Machiavelli, would have nodded in understanding.

We have for long been trying to put the pieces together again, hoping for a negotiated settlement which can be sighted nowhere on the horizon. Why should this be so? The question arises because it can be argued very plausibly that there is no good reason why our ethnic problem should have proved to be so intractable. A very important part of the answer is that we have failed to understand the problem in all its magnitude because we have failed to give any importance to the moral factor in the problem.

I have pointed out that it is very difficult to reach agreement in the civil society without a basis of trust, a point which should obviously apply to agreements with the State as well. The State has to show that it is trustworthy by respecting reasonable standards of public morality. At one time we did have such standards, but after 1977 a sub-moral gangrene ate into the vitals of the State, a charge that can be substantiated in half a hundred ways. I will refer here only to the blatant contempt shown for public morality by the unleashing of hooligans on Supreme Court judges.

Was it realistic to expect a negotiated settlement under the 1977 Government? The TULF thought so, and struggled desperately for years to reach accommodation with that Government, having the wits to understand that the failure of the moderates would only lead to the triumph of the Tamil extremists. The TULF did reach several understandings with that Government, something like nineteen according to the late Mr Amirthalingam. The Government promptly went back on sixteen of them. The LTTE was proved right that there could be no negotiated settlement with the 1977 Government. The extremists triumphed over the moderates, as should have been foreseen by what had been happening in the Punjab.

I have referred to the performance of the 1977 Government only to substantiate my point that no negotiated settlement can be expected with a Government which refuses to respect reasonable standards of public morality. The important question now is whether the present Government respects such standards. Apparently not. The Udugampola affidavit scandal has provoked widespread moral outrage among the public, as shown by articles, editorials, and letters to the editor in the non-Government press, and even seminars on the subject. More recently outrage has been caused by the affair of the mass graves, leading to allegations of a cover-up to protect the murderers of thirty-one schoolchildren at Embilipitiya. The case may not be proven. The important point

is that there is obviously a widespread perception that the Government's standards of public morality are really not very much better than those of its two predecessors.

It is arguable that while that may be true as a generalization, the Government could nevertheless show reasonable standards in dealing with the ethnic problem. The test, in that case, will be how the Government behaves over the problem of devolution. The reason why that is the test is that, as is well known, a certain category of ethnic problems, namely the ones in which a homeland is claimed, can only be solved through substantial devolution. Therefore if the Government wants a negotiated settlement, it has to show that the Provincial council system works.

But what has been happening in recent weeks? The Governors of two Provinces refused to appoint Chief Ministers from the coalition of parties which had the majority of seats, and even after the Court gave its verdict there was shilly-shallying which led to a killing. Then followed an alleged abduction to change a majority into a minority. And thereafter the Southern PC was dissolved without the slightest justification.

As if all that is not enough, it appears that the forthcoming elections to the Eastern Provincial Council are already made into a farce. It is alleged that a climate of terror has been created by people being abducted and forced to sign UNP nomination papers. According to the TULF MP Suresh Premachandran the Army and the STF are responsible for the abductions. The victims fear for their lives at the hands of their abductors if they refuse to sign, and at the hands of the LTTE if they return to their villages. "Is this democracy?" he asked. (Island 21/1/94).

What is the explanation for that kind of weird misbehaviour? The Government cannot be unaware that our kind of ethnic problem cannot be solved without a considerable measure of devolution. It cannot be unaware that the Sinhalese people

never asked for devolution and that the PC system was instituted only to solve the ethnic problem. It cannot be unaware that if the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam or the Dudley-Chelvanayagam pacts had been implemented there would today be no ethnic problem. And yet the Government persists in making a farce of devolution, showing clearly that neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamils can expect anything from devolution, whether in the form of Provincial Councils or semi-federalism or full federalism. In practice, the whole caboodle will be reduced to nought.

What has been happening cannot be explained without taking the moral factor into account, and it can be explained only in the perspective of what happened under the 1977 Government. That Government claimed absolute power, and as always happens in such cases there followed a weakened grasp of reality and an erosion of the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. The consequence had to be contempt for public morality, and from that followed public crime on a scale never before known in our modern history. The present Government, which includes many good men and true, is in the unfortunate position of having to live with that legacy of crime and it has to fight tooth and nail to keep power as losing it will lead to rather uncomfortable consequences for a great many bigwigs and their henchmen. It cannot afford too much scruple about the ways in which it holds on to power. The claims of public morality cannot be taken too seriously.

Therefore the very pre-condition for a meaningful and lasting negotiated settlement, which as I have argued in this article is respect for reasonable standards of public morality, does not exist. Most of us recognize that the LTTE cannot be trusted because it wants nothing less than Eelam. We have not recognized the other part of the ethnic problem, which is that the State cannot be trusted either. The reason was provided by Rousseau long ago. We can understand nothing of either morality or politics if we try to understand them separately.

Roots of discontent

Mohamed Nasheed

The disintegration of the Soviet Empire has not only created immeasurable confusion among the peoples of Eastern Europe, but also created a similar states fall dumbfoundedness among policy makers of Western governments. Western think tanks started talking about the "end of history". President George Bush after bombing Baghdad to kingdom come, emitted utterances about a 'new world order'. The nature and the form of this new order, we are yet to see. Presently, this order seems more to take the order of "disorder" with regional conflicts, now in full fling in Eastern and central Europe.

The essence of the whole concept of 'order' carries connotations of; Security, which in-turn implies a perception of a threat. The threat apparently was communism. That has fallen, and with this fall it became important that a new threat be conceived. The perceived threat has been termed Islamic Fundamentalism. While the question whether this fundamental brand of Islam is a threat to world order or not needs discussion, what is also important is to comprehend the nature of the rise of theocracies in a contemporary context.

Although, today fundamentalism was meant to imply radicalness, it actually is an idea of going back to the fundamentals. In the case of Islamic fundamentalism, it is an aspiration of returning to a once upon a time. Wahhabism which takes its name from the movement's founder Abd al-Wahhab was the first of its kind. Before his death in 1787, Abd al-Wahhab is the man who joined forces with Ibn Saud, then a head of a small tribal dynasty in Central Arabia. This is the dynasty that now rules Saudi Arabia.

Mohamed Nasheed is a well known Maldivian writer. He was the Sub Editor of 'Sangu' a fortnightly magazine. The paper was banned and Mr. Mohamed Nasheed arrested. Recently he was realised.

Wahhabism has been one school of thought that is increasingly capturing the imagination of many Maldivians. It has become a "presence", making itself felt in Maldivian affairs.

Similar to most traditional societies, religion for the Maldivian person has been a matter very close to heart. Nevertheless to pronounce this person as being totally obsessed with religion would be off the mark. Material interests of the religious institutions has always been more prominent in the daily Maldivian life, than any other single country. The mosques, in every inhabited island has been the most prominent structure that existed. They were maintained and served both a social and an economic function.

The building and the up-keep of the mosque, historically has been made possible by what has been termed as *Waqf* grant system, which is the disposal of land revenues as bequest for religious or charitable purposes. Partly due to the extent of corruption that the system involved, during the 1960's it was abolished. This abolition created a void. The mosques and the schools connected with them were neglected.

If these schools were functioning, people who would have gone to such schools, some now found themselves in Pakistan and India, learning the rudiments of Arabic, going through extremely hard times. The institutions that they went to, through Saudi Arabian funding, found placement for them in Saudi Arabian Universities, who taught a puritanical version of Islam. These students became the initial propagandists of Wahhabism to Maldivians. Through giving assistance to Maldivian Pilgrims on Pilgrimage to the holy places in Mecca and Madina, these students in Saudi Arabia were able establish contact with a group of Maldivians who were relatively more religious minded. By the mid 1970's, with the active involvement

of a Maldivian business man and the assistance from Saudi Arabia, an Arabic medium school was opened in Male'.

While this was so, other parallel developments were taking place. The present Maldivian President Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, foreign Minister Mr. Fathuhualh Jameel and Mr. Zahir Hussain, a minister without portfolio, and a few others after completion of higher education in Egypt, were also in the Maldives by the mid 1970's. The Egypt group was more western in out-look and thought, but had the necessary terminology to capitalize on the marginalisation of religion, which was depicted by the neglected state of the mosques in the islands. When the then President Mr. Ibrahim Nasir closed down the Saudi funded school in Male', it was soon followed by the banishment of Mr. Gayoom to internal exile for his religious views. This further led to closer association of Gayoom with religion, a state of affairs that later helped him to gain a certain amount of grass-roots support at the early stages of power in 1979.

In 1979, when President Gayoom started his first term of office, Saudi returnees considerably increased in number and were in the act of preaching their brand of Islam in the Maldives. Still, as it is now, never was the liberal minded elements a minority within the Maldivian intelligensia. Since the mid 1960's the education system that had political backing was the newly created English medium schools in Male', which completed the education of the students by sending them abroad for higher studies. This system created more people than the Saudi returnees could ever out number. Nevertheless those with liberal views never reached the same level of as the Saudi returnees did in propagating their point of view. This was not only due to the nature of the ideology that the Saudi returnees were propagating; the thought that Islam needs purifying and it was their 'duty'; a jihad to do so,

but also due to the doings of the newly established ruling elite, then. The present day ruling elite.

President Gayoom when he first came to power was a man taken to be religious. This was both due to the nature of his character, then, and his image creation exercises. Exhaustive use of religion as a political tool by the Gayoom government created conditions whereby religious hysteria could surface. Thus, while the Saudi returnees had ideal situation for their preaching, the very first of the Gayoom government purges under the pretext of a bid for power by the former President Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, the liberal minded elements were silenced. The Wahhabies by then were receiving regular funding from Saudi Arabia.

Wahhabism to a very great extent can be a liberation philosophy, in that it can depict an alternative form of behavior but also government. It can be a vehicle through which opposition to the existing corrupt, unfair and authoritarian form of governance can be made. This element to a certain extent exists as the Wahhabi movement started its thrust in to Maldivian affairs.

The first real target of the Wahhabies in the Maldives was the rural islands. By the mid 1980's the presence of Wahhabism was much felt all through out Maldivian islands. The government crack down on preaching had limited effect, while crack down on liberal forms had greater impact in that the Liberals did not have the organizational structure; definite ideologies; foreign backing and funding as the Wahhabies had.

In the mid 1980's the Wahhabi movement in the Maldives embarked on a second stage, so to speak. The business community and sports crazy youth was targeted as a second group of people to be converted. Even in this endeavor they have to very great extent been successful, and as it stands today, if a free and a fair election were ever held in the Maldives it is most probable that the Wahhabi strength in the Parliament would constitute the majority. So political dissension is still viewed by the ruling elite as more of threat than religious radicalism.

The Mahattaya case exposes dissensions in the LTTE

P. Jayaram

Any traitor caught passing state secrets to the enemy can expect to be sentenced for life or to death. The LTTE chief Vellupillai Pirabhakaran chose death for Gopalasamy Mahendrarajah, having decided that the former deputy commander had indeed violated the LTTE's code of loyalty by passing information to the Indian and Sri Lankan security agencies. It could well be a ruse the LTTE supremo is using to get rid of a highly-ambitious and popular colleague but the fact that the organisation has acknowledged Mahendrarajah's "treason" is seen as a great blow to the LTTE which prides itself on the total loyalty of its cadres.

That it was no easy task for the LTTE to try Mahendrarajah, popularly known as Mahattaya (Sinhalese for gentleman), was borne out by a single factor — it had to create a kind of euphoria that would help eclipse the embarrassment of his trial and the consequent execution on the extraordinary charge of being an agent of India's Research and Analyses Wing and the Sri Lankan National Intelligence Bureau.

The LTTE did this by getting Mahattaya captured from near his home in Pudukudiyiruppu in North Sri Lanka by three senior LTTE cadres the day after Pirabhakaran's fighters over-ran the Janakpura army camp in Weli Oya, killing about 50 Sri Lankan soldiers and looting the armoury some months ago. Pirabhakaran had been waiting for such a triumph before accusing Mahattaya of leaking information about the movement of his major rival, Kittu, another top LTTE leader, who committed suicide on his arms-laden vessel after being intercepted by Indian Navy ships off the Madras coast last year.

Former Tamil militants say Pirabhakaran saw the victory at Weli Oya as an opportunity to move against Mahattaya, whose increasing assertiveness and popularity among the ranks he considered as a challenge to his undisputed leadership, although an LTTE-sponsored smear campaign against Mahattaya had already been launched in Jaffna to make his imminent arrest free of any controversy. Says a source in EROS, a former ally of the LTTE: "Pirabhakaran will wait for one or two more major attacks on the

security forces, like Pooneryn, before executing Mahattaya. That is the opium he feeds the people so that there is no protest."

Sri Lankan newspapers, who have based their reports on the episode on what has been published in Tamil magazines in Canada and London, however, wrote that the execution will take place soon. One date being mentioned was January 16 — the first anniversary of Kittu's death. But many observers believe that the execution has, in fact, already been carried out.

Tamil sources say that although 200 of Mahattaya's supporters have been arrested by the LTTE and will probably face the death squad. Mahattaya himself still has powerful sympathisers in the organisation, including Pirabhakaran's confidant Ranjith Appa. Hence, any extreme step taken against him may invite trouble. This was echoed by an Indian diplomat familiar with the history of Tamil insurgency. Says he: "By moving against Mahattaya, Pirabhakaran will be causing disquiet among the Jaffna university students and Tamil expatriates who consider him a moderate. Those who are close to Pirabhakaran are all tainted with the Rajiv Gandhi assassination and Pirabhakaran felt comfortable with them. Mahattaya was too innocent, too cosmopolitan for Pirabhakaran's liking".

No wonder, then, that the simmering differences between Pirabhakaran and Mahattaya, who are related to each other, took a turn for the worse when Mahattaya questioned the wisdom of the LTTE's decision to assassinate Rajiv Gandhi and later Premadasa.

One force watching this episode with some delight is the Sri Lankan Army. And it will continue to look forward to more factional quarrels for it feels that such fissures will ultimately destroy the LTTE. This was best summed up by one army officer who said that a scheduled aerial strike on Jaffna town some time ago was deferred after intelligence reports said Pirabhakaran's men were conducting search operations to catch Mahattaya's supporters. "We thought we would allow them to do their dirty work for themselves".

An evening with Zhirinovsky

Chanaka Amaratunga

Suddenly, the world has had to come to terms with a new demon who bounced onto the stage out of the ballot boxes in Russia — Vladimir Zhirinovsky the radical nationalist, populist and perhaps even Fascist leader of Russia's misleadingly-named Liberal Democratic Party. At the counting of the votes in Russia's first ever democratic election (the previous election that could even remotely lay claim to such a status was the election conducted after the March 1917 liberal democratic revolution, and that election was conducted amidst the chaos and dislocation of the collapse of Tsarism and the First World War) Zhirinovsky's potent witches' cauldron of fierce anti-western nationalism, anti-semitism, Russian imperialism, and statism as well as skillful exploitation of the hardships that have been the initial consequence of President Yeltsin's economic reforms in the direction of a market economy, enabled him, without any previous base in Russian politics to obtain 24% of the vote and the second largest number of seats in the newly established Russian Parliament, once more named the Duma. Since his election Zhirinovsky has dominated the headlines on several occasions, appearing on the cover of *TIME* magazine, being interviewed on BBC television and getting himself deported from Bulgaria for calling for the replacement of Bulgaria's liberal President Zhelyu Zhelev by one of his ultra nationalist counterparts in that country. He has also been refused entry to Germany, a nation which he has threatened with a Third World War!

In October 1990, long before the world had heard of him, when it was not quite so evident that he was the maverick and highly successful extremist he has now proved himself to be, I dined with Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

I was in Helsinki, attending the annual congress of the Liberal International the world union of Liberal Parties of which my own party is a member. The collapse of communism had taken place, though not yet that of the Soviet Union itself. As Finland was right next to the Soviet Union and had long been a buffer state between liberal democracy and communism, it was only natural that a large contingent of newly established or recently restored liberal parties from the states of Central and Eastern Europe which had emerged out of Communist dictatorship, was in attendance at Helsinki, seeking membership of the Liberal International. Unless the party that is seeking membership is

a well-established and powerful party in a major country of the world, this is no easy task and requires the careful lobbying of existing members whose votes are crucial in the Executive Committee.

Zhirinovsky was in Helsinki to seek membership of the LI for his party and to lobby member parties to support its application. It was at a dinner that we first met. While many of the representatives of parties who knew each other were engaged in convivial discussion, a small group of three persons was seated alone. It was obvious to me that they were strangers to the LI and I decided therefore to join them, to make them feel welcome. It soon became evident that the trio represented a newly formed Russian Liberal Democratic Party. A spare, rather angular-faced, man introduced himself to me as its leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky. At the time that name, of course, conveyed little. He was anxious for support from the LI and was rather critical of other Russian parties which claimed to be Liberal.

One of Zhirinovsky's companions spoke better English than he did and whenever he found expression difficult he went back to speaking in Russian then reverted to rather halting English, repeating this process.

He seemed very anxious to impress upon me and upon a friend of mine who ~~seeing~~ me at that table joined us (Richard Moore, a British Liberal who was formerly Secretary-General of the Liberal International and now works for the Liberal Group in the European Parliament) how hard life was in Russia. The picture he painted of economic conditions was grim and he pointed out that the non convertibility of the rouble meant that he and his colleagues could not have travelled even to Helsinki, which is adjacent to Russia, had their travel and expenses not been sponsored by Liberal foundations based in Western Europe and North America.

In that conversation over dinner, the man some, no doubt with a degree of exaggeration but not wholly unjustly, excoriate as "the Russian Hitler" did not articulate the extreme as well as maverick positions, for which he has subsequently become notorious. Nevertheless, there was something in his manner which made me very skeptical as to his liberal credentials. He did not seem concerned about individual rights or about political reforms. Instead, he was strongly and personally critical of both Gorbachev (who when our conversation took place was still Presi-

dent of what is now only history, the Soviet Union) and Yeltsin.

There was one thing that he did say which invoked in the fervent anti-Bolshevik in me, a measure of sympathy. He said that all the symbols and personalities of the Communist system in Russia had become objects of hatred and contempt. He said people now detested those who had formerly been hailed as heroes, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev. He said that there was much nostalgia for Tsarist days, particularly by the young and that his fourteen-year-old son insisted on wearing tea-shirts with the image of Tsar Nicholas II. I asked him whether Kerensky was not admired as well. He looked blank for a moment. Then perhaps having realised that at a liberal conference, one ought to sound reasonably sympathetic to the leading figure of Russia's liberal revolution in March 1917, he said that Kerensky had been in power for too short a time to make his mark upon the Russian imagination. I thought his response was perhaps the truth — but it did not prevent me from thinking that many truths are exceedingly unfortunate. Nicholas II had been a willful and very unwise autocrat. Lenin had been a ruthless, totalitarian visionary. They were both responsible for the tragedy of Russia. The leaders of the March Revolution on the other hand, Prince Lvov, Rodzianko and Kerensky had battled honourably, peacefully and ceaselessly for a liberal democratic Russia. Surely a leader of a Russian Liberal Democratic Party should have been more effusive in his attitude to Kerensky.

As information on Zhirinovsky's party reached the Executive Committee of the LI it was the overwhelming opinion that his party, despite its name was not liberal and did not belong in the Liberal International.

As the stridency of Zhirinovsky's nationalism and the absurdity of his intolerance began to be noted in the leading newspapers and newsmagazines of the world I began to suspect that the man whose name I had not noted in Helsinki, was indeed the object of these reports.

When, at the conclusion of the Russian Parliamentary Election in December 1993, the ghost at Russia's feast of freedom was shown repeatedly on the television screens, I had proof. My dining companion was indeed the man who has sent shivers down the backs of Western political leaders. Vladimir Zhirinovsky had shared an evening with me on an autumn day in Helsinki in 1990.

The Tamil Diaspora and Eelam Lobbies

Arden

With the introduction in 1956 of Sinhala as the only official language a large number of educated Tamils emigrated. Many settled down in the U.S.A. and in Great Britain. Most of them prospered in their new life, and many became quite wealthy. Many Lankan Tamils, mostly specialist doctors with high qualifications, settled in Boston, Massachusetts. These expatriate Tamils began telling the world the story of Eelam as sketched out in the Vaddukoddai Resolution. They were so persuasive that by 1979 the Tamils of Sri Lanka were regarded all over the English-speaking world as an oppressed minority.

The Minority Rights Group of London ran an advertisement in October 1979 in some British journals of progressive opinion under the heading 'Some Minorities Need You To Stand Up For Them'. Among the minority groups listed in the advertisement were Israel's Orientals and Druzes, Europe's Gypsies, India's Nagas and Untouchables and the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

In the U.K. they organised "The Central British Fund For Tamil Refugees' Rehabilitation". One advertisement published by this Fund read: "1979 is Children's Year but not for these Tamil Children and thousands more born into oppression, and victims of racial hatred in Sri Lanka".

Another advertisement said: "Ceylon Tamil Refugees supported by Oxfam will fast for Cambodian Children on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Come and join us. Donations welcome".

On 9 May 1979 the Massachusetts House of Representatives adopted a resolution about the Tamils of Eelam, "an oppressed minority in Sri Lanka", urging the President of the United States and the Congress to protest and to rectify the gross injustices inflicted on the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

In November 1980, speaking at a New York Seminar on "The Tamil Situation". N. Balasubramaniam, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to France, expressed a view quite at variance with that of the Massachusetts legislature "For many years the Tamils, 12% of the population, enjoyed over 50% of the privileges and they now feel threatened to lose this status quo in the face of more realistic approaches. The majority

of ambassadors representing Sri Lanka and manning foreign embassies are Tamils. In every aspect of Sri Lanka society today, Tamils though only 12% have 25 to 60 and sometimes even 90 per cent representation in government organisations and universities". Mr. Balasubramaniam surprised the predominantly American audience by saying he was a Tamil. (Quoted in The Journal 27 November 1980).

Gamini Jayasuriya, Minister of Agriculture, speaking in Parliament on 25 August 1983 had this to say about discrimination against Sri Lanka Tamils:

"Sri Lanka is a small island with only 15 million people. 74% of them are Sinhalese, numbering nearly 11 million. Sri Lanka Tamils are 12.6% numbering 1.8 million. Tamils of recent Indian origin are 5.6% numbering a little over 800,000. In such a situation if the Tamils agitate to claim that they have been discriminated against in education, employment opportunities or development assistance, it is far from the truth. In actual fact, they have more than 2 or 3 times their ethnic proportions in the most important positions in the public and corporation sector as well as in private enterprise.

It is a fact that as a part of the divide and rule policy of the colonial rulers, religious and ethnic minorities received more privileges and preferential treatment in educational and employment opportunities at the expense of the majority community.

Today this 12.6% of the population has 34.9% of the engineers, 28.9% surveyors, 35.1% doctors, 38.8% veterinary surgeons, 30.2% medical technicians and 33.1% accountants in the public service".

The Eelam lobbies organised all over the world by the Tamil diaspora were articulate and well-funded by wealthy expatriate Tamils. They were quick off the mark, were committed to their cause and were able to infiltrate or, at least win the sympathy of prestigious bodies like the I.C.J. Secretariat, the B.B.C., the World Council of Churches and many progressive journals like the Guardian and the New Statesman in the U.K.

To counter such efficiently organised propaganda the government of Sri Lanka fielded A. de Alwis, Minister of State, in charge of information. Minister de Alwis was given this assignment presumably because he was once a reporter on a newspaper and later ran a modest commercial advertising company. This made him the government's media expert. The task was hopelessly beyond him; he was matched against professionals. Dr. Mick Moore, Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, gave a talk on "Sri Lanka's propaganda war in Europe". He said:

"The propaganda machinery of the Tamil Eelam lobby in Britain is much more effective and efficient than the government's efforts to counter it. Tamil propaganda has greater finesse and finds greater acceptance among the British public. For instance, the Tamil Times is not dismissed as mere propaganda as it is not conspicuously and totally one-sided. The government's approach is more or less defensive, focussed mainly on scrutinising the media for unfair bias and complaining against them".

Dr. Moore added that Sri Lanka's credibility abroad was poor because of the government's violations of civil rights. He said:

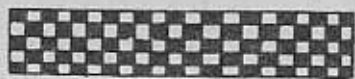
"Instances of allegedly government-inspired violations of civic rights that took place between 1977 and 1983 give rise to the idea that the present government of Sri Lanka is extremely repressive and not to be trusted.

Some of the incidents that have been cited in support of this view are: the alleged use of violence on Buddhist monks and striking trade unionists in 1980; the use of 'polls control' at the Jaffna D.D.C. elections in 1981; the use of state power to win the referendum in 1982 and the subsequent detention of opposition political leaders for reasons which are still to be substantiated; and allegedly organised intimidation of members of the judiciary. In this type of context the public is inclined to believe that there is 'no smoke without fire'. (The Island 2 July 1986)

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Post - 77 Change

S. Hettige

Post - 1977 reforms brought about significant changes in the social landscape of the country. The rapid expansion of the private sector focused mainly on the capital city, Middle East migration, establishment of the Free Trade Zones, spread of consumerism, widening of the gap between the rich and the poor exemplified by the conspicuous display of wealth, increasing influence of the West on the country due to growing trade, media and other linkages and the growing assertiveness of the Westernized elite in diverse spheres have in different ways posed challenges to rural, swabhasha educated youth constituency. In the face of such challenges, the latter has realized that there are real limits to not only their much desired social mobility but also their capacity to mould their own destiny as well as that of their society. It is this realization that is perhaps at the root of the defensive posture they have adopted and their attachment to nationalistic movements.

Some of the recent developments in the country have produced a rupture in the traditional moral fabric of our society. In the sphere of politics the open and unrestrained violation of the long established 'rules of the game' have turned many people into cynics, while such trends have infuriated the educated youth. The gradual replacement of argumentation, debate and open discussion by arrogance, intimidation and unrestrained use of physical force in the sphere of political competition has drastically changed the image of the politician in the eyes of the public. This has largely undermined the credibility of the political leaders. He is no longer held in respect and veneration, but rather much suspected and feared. These developments are certainly not in the interest of the politicians and the country at large.

In line with the growing power and arrogance of political leaders, there has also been a significant concentration of wealth and privileges in them so much so that there are not many poor politicians today. While there have always been wealthy politicians, there have also been

many poor ones in the past.

As an undergraduate in the late sixties I used to travel from Colombo to Galle every month to see my parents there. On this journey, I often met senior politicians in the bus travelling home after attending parliamentary sessions in Colombo. Today, many politicians travel in four wheel drive jeeps at break-neck speed as if they are taking part in a motor car racing competition. In a society which has always been characterized by social inequality, what is resented is not so much inequality itself as its arrogant display, particularly by those who have vowed to fight social injustice.

The growing tolerance of corruption and malpractices as demonstrated by the persistent inaction against those who resort to such practices has also made a considerable contribution to the rupture of the moral fabric of our society that I mentioned earlier. "We could not care less" attitude often adopted by the political leaders may help them to demonstrate to the public how powerful they are but such an approach to issues of public interest is unlikely to help build a positive image of themselves.

So far I have outlined only a few of the large number of moral issues that have surfaced over the years. The other issues which are of equal significance cannot be discussed for want of space. Today's youngsters who are by and large exposed to a liberal education through our school system have no difficulty in realizing that our society is drifting away from the ideals they have internalized since their childhood. It is only natural if at least some of them wish to arrest such trends.

So far an attempt has been made to outline the circumstances that encouraged youth to rally round the anti-systemic movement in the South. The methods, the strategies and the style of the anti-government campaign spearheaded by the JVP have been severely criticized by many. Yet, very few would deny that the youth who joined the movement had genuine grievances.

The question that should be posed today is whether the crushing of the JVP has made many people complacent. One reason why many youth rallied round the JVP is that the country's opposition has been highly disorganized and ineffective ever since the election of the 1977 UNP government. In the face of growing anti-democratic tendencies and the changing political culture in the country, the opposition did not emerge as a superior political and a moral force capable of meeting the challenges posed by the regime in power.

As I mentioned at the outset, following the suppression of the youth uprising in the late, 1980's many people seem to have forgotten that the youth movement was a manifestation of a deep seated social crisis which not only requires to be carefully analysed but also deserves a positive collective response. It is a national issue which deserves the attention of the policy makers, planners and intellectuals.

Youth discontent which a few years back culminated in widespread violence and counter-violence throughout much of the country is a national issue that deserves a response now, not when it explodes into open violence. In fact, open violence is only a rare manifestation of youth discontent. Other manifestations are more common and can be observed all the time. In the case of Sri Lanka, a few of such manifestations are high rates of suicide, drug abuse, indiscipline at institutions of higher learning, mental illness and crime. Many of the people affected by these phenomena often suffer in silence and therefore, do not catch the public eye in the same way as violent youth revolts.

A few may feel that there is no need to worry about the young till they run riot again. Such people may also be thinking that, when the need arises, they can rely on the efficiency and the firmness of the law enforcement agencies. Such thinking is undoubtedly short-sighted, irrational and anti-social.

(To be continued)

The Historical and Political Context

Mick Moore

There are two, equally valid, perspectives on Sri Lankan political history in recent decades which appear to point in very different directions. The first, comparative, perspective draws attention to the dominantly pacific and democratic nature of the island's politics. Until recently, it was governed by democratically-elected governments, based on two relatively stable major political parties, which were regularly defeated at almost every general election. These parties had relatively distinctive electoral bases, and pursued policies which bore a clear affinity to those bases — a more (economic) liberal and conservative United National Party (UNP) supported especially by more privileged social strata, and a more statist and radical Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), generally in alliance with smaller Marxist parties. The judiciary and the public service retained considerable autonomy from the party in power. The armed forces — and their budgets — were minimal. Firearms of any kind were scarce. Notions of constitutionality appeared entrenched in the political culture.

Any satisfactory explanation of the uncharacteristically (in the Third World context) constitutional and democratic nature of Sri Lankan politics would involve reference to a wide range of structural and conjunctural factors. Particularly important is the character of the elite and the pattern of its political involvements. Relatively capitalist in its economic base, having roots in most socio-cultural groups, yet at the same time intensively socialized into the colonial variant of British upper class culture, this elite was early on permitted to engage seriously in the exclusive local political arena which was formed around the colonial administrative system. Intra-elite contestation — both between Sri Lankans and British and among Sri Lankans — was the prime motive force behind the expansion of the electoral and political arenas, to the extent that sections of the elite had always appeared, until the emergence of the JVP, to have taken the lead in furthering the radical political age-

ndas of 'nationalism' (especially, since Independence in 1948, Sinhalese Buddhism chauvinism) and of 'socialism'.²¹ The Sri Lankan political system became one of the most democratic in the world. Not only was it marked by high levels of pluralism (or contestation), but it became highly inclusive and exhibited unusually high rates of voter registration, electoral participation, and general politicization of social, economic and cultural life.²²

The alternative perspective focuses more on the internal trajectory of the Sri Lankan political system, above all on the fact that the frequency and seriousness of political violence and of extra-constitutional techniques of rule have tended to increase over time since Independence in 1948.²³ Governments increasingly infringed on the autonomy of the judiciary and the public service. The very active but fragmented trades union movement became a battleground between competing political parties. Ethnic violence, mainly directed against the minority Tamils by the majority Sinhalese, began in 1956 and, after a respite in the 1960s, became increasingly serious from the mid-1970s. From the 1950s, units of the Sinhalese-dominated armed forces were posted in the Tamil areas of the North to counter smuggling between Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu state in South India; by behaving rather like an army of occupation they contributed to the alienation of the Tamil minority.²⁴ From the mid-1950s, non-Sinhalese minorities were gradually squeezed out of public sector posts: the state was 'Sinhalezed' both symbolically and in personnel. A Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, was assassinated in 1959. Serious plans for a military coup were hatched in 1962, and others were rumoured. In 1971 the JVP launched its first insurrection by attacking police stations in various parts of the island. The poorly equipped and unprepared armed forces did not fully re-assert control for several weeks; several thousand young people suspected of being JVP supporters were slaughtered in the process.

It is after the 1971 insurrection that the causal linkages in the gradual escalation of political violence begin to appear relatively transparent. The 1970-1977 SLFP-Marxist coalition government, shocked by its unpreparedness and the fact that the JVP had been supporting them in the recent 1970 general election campaign, began to act in a relatively authoritarian fashion. Attempts by the opposition UNP to conduct mass propaganda exercises were met by large-scale physical intimidation. A rudimentary intelligence force within the police began to take steps against businessmen who were breaking the rules of the heavily-statist economic policy. A new constitution effectively subjected the judiciary and the public service to the government of the day. The introduction of the new constitution was used as an excuse to extend the maximum life of the existing Parliament from five to seven years. Rule under emergency regulations became the norm; many of the radical economic measures taken in response to the JVP insurrection, notably the nationalization of much of the plantation sector, were conducted in an 'emergency' fashion with little apparent regard for appropriate legal or administrative process. The unsubtle use of political position for immediate personal gain had become both widespread and widely visible.

The tougher climate of politics had its effect on the opposition. Tamil separatist groups began to collect arms and foreign training in the early 1970s.²⁵ At the end of the decade they began to assassinate Tamil policemen, destroying whatever rudimentary intelligence apparatus the state had available to monitor their activities. In 1973 the leadership of the opposition UNP was taken over by J.R. Jayawardene, a very accomplished political tactician who could rely on others to provide muscle in the streets without compromising his public persona as an urbane and cultured gentleman. Until that time the UNP had remained a relatively loose organization bearing the marks of its origin as a coali-

tion of 'notables' elected to the legislature by virtue of their individual local eminence. Jayawardene gave it a much tighter organization, albeit one which was very loyal to him personally, and inducted into its ranks, as members, organizers and sometimes as Parliamentary candidates, people able to meet violence with violence.

It was soon after this reorganized UNP was elected to take over government in 1977 that serious questions began to be raised about Sri Lanka's status as a model Third World democracy. The era that President Jayawardene proclaimed to be one of *dharmista* ['righteousness'] in politics became the obverse.²⁶ Most publicized has been the descent into near-civil war on ethnic lines in 1984-87 (and again in mid-1990), following on large-scale attacks on Tamil civilians in July 1983 which were supported by some elements within the state and the ruling party and actively opposed by few.²⁷ The deterioration of ethnic relations and the growing frequency with which force was used against Tamils were, however, intimately related to other processes of 'political decay'. Two are of particular significance. One was the increased use of violence against all opponents of the governing party — the democratic Sinhalese opposition, striking trades unionists, civil rights protestors, and even Buddhist monks.²⁸ The other was the increasing centralization of political power around Jayawardene and a few ministers and bureaucrats close to him personally. This was reflected in, and furthered by, changes in the constitution which elevated Jayawardene to the executive presidency in 1978 and gave him considerable power to control his own Parliamentary party. In fact, as is explained below, this attempt to consolidate central executive power largely crumbled as the whole political system began to disintegrate.²⁹

The History of the JVP³⁰

The real threat to the integrity of the Sri Lankan polity was to come from the JVP, although the ethnic conflict played a crucial role in preparing the way. The analysis of these interactions is presented below. The emphasis here is the chronology of events leading up to the JVP's second, major, insurrection in 1987-89.

The 1971 JVP had been a youth move-

ment, and almost exclusively Sinhalese Buddhist.³¹ Its national leadership was closely linked with the many small Marxist parties and factions which have been a characteristic feature of Sri Lankan politics. At both national and local levels the leadership came from 'middle class' strata, especially from people with relatively advanced educational qualifications who felt excluded from the (state) employment rewards that they believed themselves to merit. Few of the leaders spoke English, which was perhaps the most powerful single indicator of their non-elite status.³² The JVP was the first significant political movement to emerge in Sri Lanka independently of the leadership of members of the English-speaking elite. At that stage the JVP was a very loosely organized 'movement' characterized by considerable internal dissension. The 'Insurrection' of April 1971 was extremely ill prepared. Despite the smallness of the island, the first attacks in different localities — mainly on police stations — were spread over a full week.³³ Insofar as there was a common characteristic uniting the leadership and the local activists and supporters of the JVP, it was a sense of grievance at exclusion from the fruits of access to the state.

Many of the leaders of the 1971 JVP coup, including the leader, Rohana Wijeweera, survived to be tried and imprisoned.³⁴ They were all freed by President Jayawardene in 1977, soon after his UNP won the general elections. The formal reasons were clemency and reconciliation, but the main motivation was the undermining of the main opposition party, the SLFP. The SLFP and the JVP shared the same social base: rural Sinhalese Buddhists. Both tended to draw their cadres from the rural lower middle classes. The most visible difference was that the JVP has comprised youth almost exclusively. The JVP had supported the SLFP-led coalition at the 1970 general elections, yet the SLFP Prime Minister, Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, was seen to be largely responsible for the slaughter of youth that had occurred in some areas as the 1971 insurrection was being crushed. She had certainly exhibited little regret. In some areas an important motive force behind the JVP had been the resentments against the hegemonic *Golgama* caste of the numerous but oppressed *Vahumpura* and *Batgam* castes.³⁵ These oppressed

castes had generally supported the SLFP since the party was established in the early 1950s. It was mainly in the areas where they were concentrated that the slaughter of JVP 'suspects' had been widespread. This appeared to many to reflect — and, in an indirect sense almost certainly did — Mrs Bandaranaike's casteism and social snobbery.³⁶ Relations between the SLFP on the one hand and, on the other, both (ex) JVPers and the *Vahumpura* and *Batgam* castes, were poisoned. Jayawardene had already begun to exploit this when he reconstructed the UNP after 1973, drawing many members of these lower castes into his party for the first time, along with former (and future) JVPers. He now attempted to exploit it further. The release of the JVP leaders from prison and their engagement in legal politics would provide more electoral competition for the SLFP. A degree of active support for the JVP was one of the techniques used by the ruling party.³⁷ For almost a decade after 1977 the SLFP appeared to be Jayawardene's plaything. He deprived its leading figure, Mrs Bandaranaike, of her civic rights for seven years from 1980, thus preventing her from contesting elections.³⁸ Knowing that she would not relinquish the effective leadership of a party that had never had an organization independent of the Bandaranaike family,³⁹ Jayawardene concentrated his campaign on keeping the family divided. The rival ambitions of the next generation of the family served him well. The SLFP split and split again in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many members were persuaded to join the UNP. When the UNP used muscle to intimidate the SLFP at the local level, there was no effective protection or response.

(To be continued)

Notes

²¹ For evidence to support the interpretation made here see especially Moore, *The State and Peasant Politics*; and M. Moore, 'Sri Lanka: The Crisis of the Social Democratic State', in S. Mitra (ed.), *The Post-Colonial State in Asia* (New York and London, 1990). J. Manor (*The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon*, Cambridge, 1989) provides evidence on how far the apparent leader of the Sinhalese Buddhist electoral uprising in 1956, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, was in fact responding as best he could to 'grassroots' (middle class) forces which he did not control.

²² See J. Jupp, *Sri Lanka: Third World Democracy* (London, 1978).

²³ This pattern is not completely linear. For example,

changes in voting arrangements introduced in the late 1950s reduced the degree of physical intimidation of (mainly lower caste) voters (Manor, *The Expedient Utopian*, p. 321).

²⁴ This episode is very rarely mentioned in interpretations of recent Sri Lankan history. I am grateful to Jagath Seneratne for providing information on this from his current research.

²⁵ Most of the training was conducted in India, but some of the smaller groups had cadres trained by Palestinians and others in the Middle East. See interview with the former military commander of the Eelam Revolutionary Organization in *Island International* (Colombo), 15 March 1989, p.6.

²⁶ Details and evidence on the events summarized in this and succeeding paragraphs may be found in J. Manor (ed.), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (London and Sydney, 1984). A number of reports from international human rights organizations also document the situation. See for example P. Sieghart, *Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors. Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in January 1984 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists and its British Section, JUSTICE*, International Commission of Jurists (1984).

²⁷ Because this incident evokes such strong emotions it seems necessary to say that it was triggered by some combination of: (a) political incitement on the Sinhalese side; (b) a genuine Sinhalese reaction against the killing of thirteen soldiers by Tamil militants; (c) the deliberate attempts by the Tamil militants to provoke such reactions; and (d) the clear unwillingness of the police and the armed forces to take any action to prevent the anti-Tamil violence.

²⁸ These were monks belonging to various militant Sinhala Buddhist organizations.

²⁹ For more details on the various dimensions of this 'political decay' see M. Moore, 'Economic Liberalization versus Political Pluralism in Sri Lanka', *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 1 (1990).

³⁰ Almost the entire leadership survived the defeat of JVP's first insurrection in 1971. Most leaders left the movement, and several have provided their own interpretations of what happened. Good sources, for both analytic and descriptive purposes, are: P. Alexander, 'Shared Fantasies and Elite Politics: The Sri Lankan "Insurrection" of 1971', *Mankind* 13, 2 (1981); J. Jiggins, *Caste and Family in the Politics of the Sinhalese*, Cambridge (1979); and G.B. Keerawella, 'The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the 1971 Uprising', *Social Science Review* (Colombo) 2 (1980). For the more recent period, see A.C. Alles, 'Wijeweera's Changing Political Ideology', *Island International*, 21 February 1990, p. 9; Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*; Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*; S. Leelananda, 'The Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective', *Lanka Guardian* 12, 15 (1989); S. Leelananda, 'The Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective (2)', *Lanka Guardian* 12, 16 (1989); S. Leelananda, 'The Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective (3)', *Lanka Guardian* 12, 18 (1989); S. Leelananda, 'JVP Learning from Vietnam?', *Lanka Guardian* 13, 19 (1990); B. Matthews, 'Sinhala Cultural and Buddhist Patriotic Organizations in Contemporary Sri Lanka', *Pacific Affairs* 61, 4 (1988-89); and B. Matthews, 'The

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the Politics of the Underground in Sri Lanka', *The Round Table* 312 (1989).

³¹ Except for a small but influential Christian minority, virtually all Sinhalese are Buddhists.

³² The JVP leader, Rohana Wijeweera, 'stood out as the only individual with a background of foreign travel and at least a smattering of English. He was thus able to overawe the others by exuding an aura of learning on account of his access to literature in English and his course work in Marxism while in Russia' (Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, P. 21).

³³ Alexander, 'Shared Fantasies and Elite Politics'; Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 5.

³⁴ Wijeweera himself was in prison at the time of the insurrection; the general looseness of the JVP organization is reflected in the fact that a number of other leaders of the movement did not participate in the coup.

³⁵ These castes comprise about one-third of the Sinhalese population, and one-quarter of the total population (Jiggins, *Caste and Family*, p. 35).

³⁶ Mrs Bandaranaike was a member of the so-called 'Kandyan aristocracy', the pinnacle of the 'traditional' social hierarchy.

³⁷ Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, p. 98; Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, p. 144.

³⁸ This measure was undertaken by a Presidential Commission which assumed retrospective powers — powers which were declared *ultra vires* by the courts but reinstated through constitutional changes made possible by the fact that the UNP held 80% of Parliamentary seats.

³⁹ The SLFP was founded by Mrs Bandaranaike's assassinated husband, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, and run as a personal fief (Manor, *The Expedient Utopian*). She succeeded to the leadership soon after his assassination, and continued the tradition.

Circus Imperial

(Clown's Cantos - 4)

When Viet-weary Nix was in a fix
Kissingarth bared his bag of tricks
What Butsh said then he did Espy
Helped neither Nix nor Garth get by
What the CIA had to bust or boost
Shrank from Opium Triang to Cocaine roost

When Butsh next balanced on the rope
The Cocaine Counts sprayed on the Soap
Till Clinchtin' Ton came on the stage
And had the Law on Noriege
And while he lynched the Multi-Men
For the space of his campaign
There is no need to heal the poor
Where in the saddle and Secure

So the dogs bark and the Circus moves
Via Washington to each televised Truce.
If the fights frisk up again
Just lobby for the UN men.
They have the hardware technology
Of the new Veto-less globology
For Tyrants that recessed demand made
On Killing Fields and Hi-Tech Aid.

Once signed on the Uruguay Round
Even refugee Camps won't be quite sound
Unless they pay those Royalties
Or canvass Aid for Patent fees

Being Unipolar and the same time Global
Means treading the trapeze when slumped and feeble
With Tweedle Sin too in gyrating orbit
On the tail-spin of the Century Summit.

U. Karunatilake

Sri Lanka and Korea

C. Mahendran

In discussing Korea we must remember that the Peninsula which was divided after the second world war, continued to remain two countries to date. The Northern half is called the Democratic Republic of Korea, and is a government which upholds an ideology that was built on socialist lines similar to the former Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China. The Southern half of the country which is known as a Republic of Korea since the second world war, has been an ally of the United States of America has adopted a liberal constitution and recently has successfully ventured into democratic elections with Kim Young Sam being the popularly elected President.

Sri Lanka since independence has followed a policy of equidistance between the two Koreas. During the SLFP government of 1956, and again in 1964 and 1970 since non-alignment was fashionable; relations between this government and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea was closer than that towards Republic of Korea. The UNP government always made it a point to continue dialogue with the Republic of Korea viewing that country as a source of funds for industrial activities in Sri Lanka.

In our relations with Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea; for the first time in 1970 (Mrs Bandaranaike was the Prime Minister) an Embassy was opened in Colombo by that country. The Embassy of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea in Sri Lanka was closed in 1971. The government requested the North Korean mission to close down the Embassy for national security reasons. Thereafter our governments have consistently adopted a policy of accepting only concurrent accreditation of the North Korean Ambassador in Delhi to be the concurrently Ambassador to Sri Lanka. Similarly Sri Lanka has always had concurrent accreditation to the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea by our Ambassador in Beijing.

In the case of the Republic of Korea, the South Korean government was very keen to open an embassy in Colombo; but all along from 1965 onwards, only a trade representative was present in Colombo. Though the South Korean Ambassador in India visited Sri Lanka often an embassy in Colombo was opened only in 1977. At

the 1977 elections the UNP government came to power and one of the first acts of the government was to allow the Republic of Korea to establish an embassy in Colombo. This event proved to be a landmark in our relations with the two Koreas. From 1977 onwards we find the input of the Republic of South Korea in Sri Lankan industrial activities to be phenomenal. In 1987 Sri Lanka established her first mission in the Republic of Korea. Prior to this date the Sri Lanka Ambassador in Japan was concurrently accredited to the Republic of Korea; which was considered an inadequate response by the Korean government. With the establishment of Sri Lanka embassy in Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea; investments from that country to Sri Lanka increased a hundred fold. Today there are around 50 Korean companies in Sri Lanka ranging from textiles, garments, footwear and many other industries that can be serviced by our labour force in Sri Lanka.

This is perhaps one of the most fruitful and productive relationship that has enriched mutual relations and strengthens our ties with the Republic of Korea. Ever since the opening of the embassy of the Republic of Korea in Colombo; and our embassy in Seoul in the Republic of Korea, the political relationship between the two countries also gained in momentum leading to the visits by several dignitaries of the two countries. President Jayawardene visited the Republic of Korea so did then Prime Minister R Premadasa. Mr Premadasa attended the inauguration of the first Popularly elected President when he visited Korea in 1988 to attend the inauguration of President Roh Tae Woo. Thereafter we find visits from both countries taking place leading to increased economic cooperation.

In 1989 for the first time the Republic of Korea granted Sri Lanka a concessionary loan for highway construction. The Republic of Korea had now become a creditor country and has started disbursing funds to developing countries, and Sri Lanka was the recipient of the initial concessionary loans.

In the case of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea even though several attempts were made by that government to re-establish her embassy in Colombo, the government of Sri Lanka whether it

was the SLFP or the UNP, have had reservations on allowing the establishment of an embassy by the government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea in Colombo. Having said this I must emphasise that the government of Sri Lanka has all along consistently maintained that our relationship with Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea is correct and given the level of activity between the two countries whether it be political, economic, social, cultural or other relationships the representation was adequate. There was thus no need to upgrade the level of the embassy of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea in Colombo.

Therefore one observes that in our relations with the two Koreas, Sri Lanka has over recent years more interactions with the Republic of Korea since the economic imperative serves our policies in Sri Lanka and has led to a fruitful and dynamic relationship in which the Korean economic inputs in our country has gathered momentum.

Since the stated objectives of the government of Sri Lanka is the achievement of NIC status by the year 2000, it is said that the economic model seen in the Republic of Korea; and the management techniques, as well as the transfer of technology and industry to Sri Lanka by that country would be an advantage in our overall policy on industrialisation. Hence our leaders pay great attention to this relationship.

Furthermore the normalisation of relations between the Republic of Korea and the other countries around including the Peoples Republic of China and Russia, is a positive development. The Republic of Korea has over the years in recent times developed a very healthy foreign policy of her own, which was made her one of the dynamic powers in the Far East. The APEC which comprises all East Asian countries including Australia and New Zealand as well as the United States of America, emphasises the need for the greater coordination of their effort in economic development of the Pacific Rim.

Given this premise it is in the interest of Sri Lanka to cultivate this relationship avidly, since Sri Lanka can benefit by increased economic activities in the Pacific Rim by participating in industrial activities that might take place.



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Globalisation : Samir Amin

S.C: You had referred in your speech (at the Fourth Indira Gandhi Conference) to the necessity of mutual adjustment in the post-Cold War world instead of unilateral adjustment as is being imposed by the sole surviving superpower. Would you kindly elaborate on that? And in that context I would also like to ask for your views on the structural adjustment programme which is now being sought to be imposed on the developing countries in general in an uniform way.

S.A: Well, in the first place I should like to indicate that in my opinion structural adjustment is not really something new. It is something which has been constant in the process of global capitalist expansion. Global capitalist expansion is a process of the centre dominating the whole system and forcing the periphery to adjust in order to fulfill a number of conditions which favour the reproduction of the system as a whole as an unequal system. Polarisation, if you call it by this name, is inbuilt in the global expansion of capitalism and is not a byproduct of some specificities, here and there, of differences.

I have always been against the theories of gradualism, that underdevelopment/backwardness was a historical backwardness and that you have to and you can catch up by reproducing what has been done in the centre. I was even against the theory of stages of development before it appeared in 1960. My Ph.D. dissertation in 1957 was against that theory (which had not yet been published by its own title), that is, that capital accumulation is a process which operates on a world scale by submitting the peripheries to the centre and is, therefore, a process of constant structural adjustment of the peripheries to the centre. This is point number one.

Point number two is that the problem does not appear constantly. There are in history periods of high growth, relatively easy growth and, therefore, the illusion for the peripheries that they can catch up is developed. During those periods there is usually high growth everywhere — in the

centre and in the peripheries — but the high growth in the peripheries lead to growing contradictions, coming out of steam,...

SC: Increasing disparities?

SA: Yes, increasing disparities. And at a certain point the whole system enters into a crisis. At that point there appears the necessity of the so-called structural adjustment, which is again unilateral structural adjustment of the peripheries to the new stage of global growth.

Now, if this thesis is correct then we should develop a counter-strategy, counter-politics, and mobilise forces with a view to modifying the rules of the game, modifying the logic of the system. I don't want to oppose in an abstract way capitalism with socialism by saying that capitalism is bad and we should have another system to oppose the gradualist view, of how to move out of the system and its polarising effect so that another social and global system can be reached. I don't want to go into that and oppose artificially to a large extent and in a very abstract way.

What, therefore, I am saying is the following: let us look at, what I feel, are going to be the tools of polarisation in the coming future, in the visible coming future. We may say that polarisation has been enforced in different forms historically from the mercantile capitalist period to the multinational corporations' pattern which emerged after World War II and was dominating the four-five past decades. I feel that we are moving into a new stage in which polarisation will proceed from what I describe as the five monopolies of the centre. Those five monopolies are the following:

First, the monopoly of high technology (if only because of the enormous financial capacity which is needed to be competitive during the development of modern technologies).

Second, the monopoly of control over financial flows (that is, through the integration of the financial system at the global level recapture the savings from any part

of the world and channel them according to the logic of global capitalism). A few decades ago in a country like India — and certainly in a country like Egypt or Mexico — 90 per cent of the national savings were channelled through the national institutions, whether public or private. Now I can say for a country where there have been studies, a country like Mexico, 80 per cent of the national savings goes into the American or North American global financial system.

SC: Through the MNCs?

SA: Yes, through the MNCs. In Egypt it is the same. I don't have the figures for India but probably it has increased, it is going up.

SC: It is rising.

SA: Third, the monopoly on the decision for the access and use of natural resources. This is going to be a growing important monopoly of the centre. We speak, for instance, of Arab oil. Actually there is no Arab oil. There is oil on the territory of the Arab countries. It is the decision of the major forces dominating the world that matters on the access and use of this oil. We know it, we have seen it — the Gulf war had proved it.

Fourth, the monopoly on mass media and through mass media culture and sub-cultures and political manipulation of public opinion and so on. Not only due to the development of technologies which has turned the world, as we say, into a single village but also due to the centralisation of capitalist domination over the gigantic means of communication and media. This is really an enormous monopoly.

And fifth, the monopoly over weapons of mass destruction — nuclear and others...

Now I submit that through the working of these five monopolies we are moving into a new phase of further and deeper polarisation. It is being said very often that the Third World does not exist any more and that the differentiation within the Third

World has been so large — how can you put South Korea and Burundi in the same basket? I would answer that in the following way.

The Third World has been always differentiated, the peripheries should be always entrusted with a variety of different functions in the system at every point of time, but also in the pattern of international division of labour for a very long historical period from the beginning of the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution in the West to the end of colonisation with World War II—indeed polarisation was quasi-synonymous of the industrialised centres versus the non-industrialised, and vastly rural peripheries. And that was true for Asia, Africa and Latin America until very recently some half a century ago, not more. But gradually we have moved — through the industrialisation of the peripheries (industrialisation, urbanisation) associated with the achievement of political independence, even if that industrialisation was very unequal among the so-called developing countries, the peripheries — into a new stage in which, I submit, industrialisation of the peripheries will be a kind of gigantic putting out system controlled by the centre through those five monopolies which include, as you have seen, not only economic in the normal sense but also political and military tools. I mean mass communication and armaments are political in a very direct way.

SC: Would you say that this trend was visible even during the Cold War but in the post-Cold War period this tendency has become more pronounced?

SA: Yes, of course, the trend was already operating during the Cold War. Except that the Cold War overshadowed it to a certain extent and we did not see it clearly. Now it has appeared very clearly.

In that sense and through those monopolies, therefore, industrialisation is no more synonymous with catching up but is a new form of polarisation, a kind of putting out system.

The old putting out system to which Marx referred was at the time mercantile capital was controlling the producers, the handicrafts by providing to the handicrafts, the producers raw materials and having the monopoly of that and the monopoly of the commercialisation of the product. And thus extracting the surplus through this monopoly. We can see this

operating similarly on a gigantic scale — industries in the peripheries will be controlled by those five monopolies and the labour in those industries. Not only labour but also capital is going to be more and more devalourised while labour and capital associated with the operation of the five monopolies are over-valourised. And therefore the surplus sucked out of the industries in the peripheries will go to the benefit of the centre.

This new pattern of the new putting out system is...

SC: A new form of neo-colonialism?

SA: We can call it so at the political level, that is, a new form of neo-colonialism.

Now to come back to the beginning of your question..

SC: Well, that you have indicated also in your counter-strategy.

SA: Yes, counter-strategy.

SC: The counter-strategy of mutual adjustment.

SA: Yes, yes, let me explain. The question is: how to fight those five monopolies, isn't it? I don't see any of the countries of the periphery — there are only two or two-and-a-half big countries in the periphery (China and India for sure and Brazil perhaps) no other one capable of fighting these monopolies. Not that they are necessarily small countries. They can have 200 million people like Indonesia, they can have 50 million people, a figure close to the figures of the major European countries...

SC: You won't place the countries of the former Second World in this category with these states?

SA: I will, I'll come to that. Perhaps Russia will be a major power again. But there are so many question-marks. So let us focus on the traditional Third World states.

Therefore, if we need to fight those monopolies there must be a very strong concept: regionalisation. There should be large, regional — I would go upto confederation of states based on serious political understanding of a common future. There are almost natural bases for that in Latin America, Arab states, Africa — in Asia you have two giants China and India but you have other countries too in South-East Asia.

If you look at each of those regions you will find a number of common features. Of course, you will find a high degree of inequalities not only between countries but within at least larger, countries as well — regional inequalities of all kinds and so on. But you will find a number of common features both at the level of development, cultural patterns to a certain extent, geo-strategic — by nature of geography — positions. And, therefore, the capacity to negotiate collectively. With whom? With not the North as one entity but taking it as three or perhaps four units — that is, North America (US and Canada), Japan, EEC-Europe and perhaps tomorrow again Eastern Europe and Russia. And to have those collective negotiations, a system of mutual internegotiation, interdependency between vast regions of the world, we should allow for what I am calling mutual adjustments. While the process that we know is the most unequal process it is one-by-one: one country negotiation with the global system as represented by the World Bank and the IMF: the World — as you have Gambia versus the World. In some cases you may have India but even India is not so strong. So in theory what does the 'Gambia versus the World' syndrome mean? Instead, we can have regional negotiations and thereby the real capacity of enforcing mutual adjustment.

Mutual adjustment with a view to reducing the negative impact of those five monopolies, that is, instead of global negotiations intra-regional or inter-regional negotiations on trade, instead of one GATT a series of different arrangements, instead of one IMF a series of financial and monetary arrangements and communications among them, instead of one capital market a series of capital markets, instead of one World Bank ten regional banks and communications among them, etc. etc. At that regional level also we could have a serious capacity to move into science and technology and reduce the monopoly on science and technology. We could have also — even within the perspective of global disarmament and prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and their targets — development of collective defence capacities keeping out of the agenda the military intervention which is going on now as we have seen from the Gulf war to Somalia and the small wars here and there.

(To be continued)

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