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LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 16

No. 21

March 1, 1994

Price Rs.10.00

Registered at GPO, Sri Lanka QD/33/NEWS/94

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TRENDS

Gun toting politicians

The People's Alliance contesting the Southern Provincial Council elections has asked the Inspector-General of Police to disarm gun toting politicians before the SPC and Eastern Province local bodies elections due next month. The weapons were issued by the government to these politicians when they were members of the now dissolved SPC and other local bodies. The guns have not been returned.

The PA has also asked the IGP to prevent the operation of vehicles without number plates in the Southern Province. Such vehicles have been associated with death squads in the recent past.

Crack down on porn

Inspector-General of Police Frank de Silva has deployed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to crack down on pornographic publications that are now "flooding the country". Lewd magazines and other obscene literature are reaching the hands of school children and are sold near educational institutions, a police spokesman said.

Bogus tourists

Over 20,000 foreigners are overstaying their visas in Sri Lanka, engaged in "nefarious activities". They include "sex perverts" and illicit workers in mushroom business outfits the Immigration Department has told the police. Immigration Department staffers alone are not enough to flush them out, Controller of Immigration J.A. Ariyaratne has told the Inspector-General of Police.

BRIEFLY...

"LTTE wants peace"

Sarvodaya leader A.T. Ariyaratne, after a recent visit to Jaffna, told a Sunday Times interviewer that "LTTE cadres and Jaffna civilians genuinely yearn for peace". He was willing to act as a mediator between the government and the Tigers, he said.

Ariyaratne said that without violence change could come about through a process of give and take. War is madness, he said.

Sellaswamy accuses

CWC General Secretary M.S. Sellasamy, now embroiled in a power struggle within the hitherto monolithic and massive plantation workers union, accused an 'ambitious trio' of blocking a reconciliation between himself and union boss (and Cabinet minister) S. Thondaman. He named the trio as Thondaman's grandson Arumugam Thondaman and Congress politicians Sathasivam and Kandasamy.

Monitors welcome

Independent monitors would be welcome to keep a watch on the forthcoming Southern Provincial Council elections, Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) General Secretary Dharmasiri Senanayake said in a public statement. Considering what has gone on at previous elections, "anything is possible", the SLFP Secretary said.

Aid meet put off

An aid group meeting earlier scheduled for June 8 has been put off indefinitely. World Bank disapproval of a controversial Airbus deal and the loosening of budgetary restraints in the run up to elections, was the cause according to informed sources.

No justice says Mrs B

A presidential pardon for two convicted criminals was cited by Opposition Leader Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike as an example of the administration of justice in Sri Lanka hitting rock bottom. The two men were convicted of attempted culpable homicide by the High Court of Kurunegala and each sentenced to 3 years rigorous imprisonment. But they did not serve a day in jail. They were pardoned by the President.

"We are constrained to ask what respect for law and order and the Rule of Law there could possibly exist in such a society, and whether it is not incumbent upon the community as a whole to do all in its power to correct this deplorable state of things before the public begin to entertain absolute contempt for the institutions of justice", Mrs Bandaranaike said in a public statement.

Mahattaya's execution stayed

Tiger supremo Prabhakaran has temporarily suspended the death

sentence for treachery on his deputy 'Mahattaya', according to Lankapuvath. Prabhakaran has yielded to national and international pressure, the report said.

To 21st Century with UNP

Sri Lankan born British (Tory) MP Niranjan Deva Adithya told an Independence Day meeting in London that only the UNP had the economic vision to take Sri Lanka into the 21st century. "It is the only party the international community trusts", Deva Adithya said.

UNP against car loans

When Western Province Chief Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranatunga proposed car loans for WPC members, opposition UNP members got up and opposed it.

Ashraff will resign

If the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress lost even one of the six electorates it will contest in the Ampara district, he would resign from parliament, SLMC leader A.H.M. Ashraff told a press conference in Colombo. If his party lost even one electorate it would be due to rigging, he said.

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Vol. 16 No. 21 March 1, 1994

Price Rs. 10.00

Published fortnightly by
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.
No. 246, Union Place
Colombo - 2.

Editor: Mervyn de Silva
Telephone: 447584

Printed by Ananda Press
82/5, Sir Ratnajothe Saravanamuttu
Mawatha, Colombo 13.
Telephone: 435975

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DRUGS ?

Doctors are aware that Market Oriented Drug Policies are not always desirable.

The main reason is that out of a bewildering variety of derivatives that proliferate from a single scientifically validated compound, only one or two finally remain in any Rational Formulary. This means that many claims advanced for marketing purposes fail under extended scientific scrutiny.

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Provincial Polls and Tiger Tactics

Mervyn de Silva

Provincial polls do not decide any vital issue but the results of the elections in the East and the South will surely show how the tides of political opinion run right now. The South is not 100% Sinhala but it has always been regarded as a fair index of Sinhala opinion, particularly on the Tamil question. It is a politically conscious electorate. That is beyond dispute. And so the result will also be a fair test of Sinhala voter reactions to the economic; cost of living most of all. President Dingiri Banda Wijetunge is the first Kandyan President since Mr. William Gopallawa—post was purely ceremonial. On the economic, the ethnic and the new post-Premadasa style, the Southern response will prove an ideal case-study for the political analyst.

The East is not Sri Lanka's Bosnia but the ethnic composition (the percentages) may encourage such comparisons. The Muslim vote is the critical factor. How will the 33% Muslim vote in the East, where the Tamils constitute the largest group, affect the final result. It is also a test of group identity. Unlike their brothers in the rest of the island, the Muslims of the east, are Tamil-speaking. LTTE attacks on Muslim villages was widely regarded by both Muslim and Sinhala opinion as exercises in "ethnic cleansing". In any case, the worldwide Islamic revival "internationalised" the otherwise parochial outlook of the eastern Muslim. The 'Saddam Hussein' village was the most striking sign of this radicalisation. Diplomats from the Arab and Islamic countries have shown a special concern for the fate of the brethren in the East caught in the Sinhala-Tamil crossfire.

In short, the attitude of average Muslim family is no longer the parochial. He was alive to national, regional and international trends. Delhi was smart enough to spot this when it installed a Muslim general to command the IPKF's eastern theatre.

Though Prabhakaran is often dismissed as a "thug" by his critics and a narrow-minded, if brilliant militarist by others, the LTTE supremo has intuitively grasped the geo-political aspects of this secessionist struggle. "Eelam" confined to the northern province is neither viable

nor makes sense as a mini-state. He needs both space and green pastures.

WELIOYA ATTACK

What is the LTTE's attitude to the eastern province elections. Though the military rather than the political dominates his thinking, Prabhakaran is no crude militarist. He understands the importance of land, people, natural resources in short, the viability of his EELAM project. He also appreciates the significance of the external factors — India, world opinion, certainly the west and economic assistance (the aid group) propaganda abroad etc. A credible election in the east will strengthen the regime. Credibility lies in voter participation..... particularly Tamil and (Tamil-speaking) Muslim. His answer to those problems is characteristically militarist. Bust it up, the election exercise and reduce participation to a minimum.

The ambush in Welioya, which has a high percentage of Sinhala settler-families, was the LTTE's first serious effort to introduce violence to the area in the final week. It was the LTTE's misfortune that its pollbusting terrorist operation proved a fairly serious setback. The attempted ambush gave the well-armed soldiers the first chance to fight it out, face-to-face. As usual, the LTTE is using military means to achieve a political objective — to deny the government a morale-boosting political (propagandist) success. This unexpected setback won't stop the LTTE from trying again.

Lankan members leave For. Corr. Assn.

The bulk of the Sri Lankan members of the Foreign Correspondents' Association have resigned their membership last week over disagreements on the conduct of the association.

A spokesman for the dissenting members told 'The Island' that the disagreement came to a head at the association's annual general meeting in Colombo on Friday and most of the Sri Lankan members had announced their resignation at the meeting prior to the election of office-

bearers. The spokesman charged that a group of correspondents from the Subcontinent together with a few local members had manoeuvred to dominate the association's leadership.

The journalists who resigned include the correspondents for Reuters, IPS, Associated Press, Visnews, London Observer and the Daily Telegraph of London.

Stock market racket ?

Securities and Commission officials last week raided the offices of a reputed stock broking firm acting on complaints that staff of this firm may be involved in a multimillion rupee stock market racket. Stock market circles are worried that the suspected large scale fraud could hurt the international image of the burgeoning Colombo Stock Exchange.

SEC Director-General Ariththa Wickramanayake told 'The Island' that the SEC had so far received four unauthorised use of identities of genuine shareholders by certain individuals in share transactions with the possible help of staff of this stock broking firm.

JVP denies

An organisation claiming to be the United Kingdom branch of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna has issued a statement denying newspaper reports that the JVP has now disowned violent politics.

"No such statement was issued by the JVP UK Branch. The individual Chandana Clarence Pieris referred was a member of the JVP UK Branch but he ceased to be a member".

"The UK Branch of the JVP reflecting the views of the JVP as a whole believes that in the present political climate it is impossible to enter mainstream politics or take part in parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka. It is imperative as a first step to end the repression and emergency regulations and to restore democracy in the country before the JVP can return to parliamentary politics".

WAR AND PEACE: *Boutros Ghali speaks*

Question: As it looks now, it is going to take quite a long time, until the end of the year, before Mr. Ekeus's Commission can conclude whether or not Iraq has implemented the provisions of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). In the meantime, are you willing to engage, or are you in fact engaging, in any renegotiation of the conditions of limited oil sales? We understand that there is talk of raising the amount from 1.6 billion to 3 billion, but what about the conditions themselves? Secondly, there are many different views as to whether the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) should lead to the implementation of paragraph 22 of that resolution.

The Secretary-General: Let me begin with your first question. We began this negotiation during the month of July, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Carl August-Fleischhauer, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, and this was precisely to obtain a partial lifting of the oil embargo — oil in exchange for humanitarian assistance. At the last minute the Iraqis discontinued those negotiations. Since then I have mentioned to them that we are ready, if they want, to resume the negotiations, because we believe that it is in their interest. There is no incompatibility between a partial lifting of the oil embargo and a total lifting of it. If tomorrow the Security Council decided on a total lifting, then there would be no reason for a partial lifting. But a partial lifting. But a partial lifting of the embargo, or oil in exchange for humanitarian assistance — this was the point of view I defended — would create a new political atmosphere, a new atmosphere of confidence between the United Nations and Iraq, between the Security Council and Iraq. So the advantage of a partial embargo is not only that Iraq would receive money which would cover the distribution of additional humanitarian assistance, but that it may create a new political atmosphere in favour of Iraq.

As I say, if they decide tomorrow to begin to resume negotiations concerning a partial lifting of sanctions, we have no

objection and we are ready, because our role is to serve all States Members of the United Nations.

Question: Just to clarify, are you ready to renegotiate the conditions?

The Secretary-General: We are ready to renegotiate whatever has to be decided for the partial lifting of the oil embargo, and, by the way, whatever agreement is negotiated by us will have to be approved by the Security Council. So, as I mention very often to the Iraqis, it may be that what we do will not be approved by the Security Council. So we will present a draft agreement between the Secretariat and Iraq on how the partial lifting will be implemented — and here you have the problem whether the oil will go through the pipeline of Turkey or the pipeline of the Gulf, etc., etc. — but once this agreement is concluded we will need the agreement of the Security Council.

Question: Do you believe that it only takes Iraq to implement all that is demanded of it by Ekeus in order to lift the total oil embargo as in paragraph 22, or do you believe that the Iraqis should implement 688 and the demarcation of the borders resolution, and, you know, the ones related to ceasing the oppression, before paragraph 22 is implemented?

The Secretary-General: This question has to be decided by the Security Council, but according to the different declarations of the Member States — at least the three most involved countries in the Security Council — they have a broad interpretation or lifting the sanctions and not a legally restrictive one.

Question: Since you commiserate not only with atrocities, but with the atrocity of the whole situation in Bosnia, now, once it is established that regular armed forces of Croatia have invaded a Member State, Bosnia, would you bring the matter to the Security Council under Article 99 of the Charter?

The Secretary-General: First of all, to

give you an example, I just returned from The Hague in Holland, where I was received by the President of the criminal court. They are doing a wonderful job; we have overcome all the logistical difficulties in cooperation with the Government of Holland; they have the building, they have rooms, and they are beginning to work. This morning — and this is very important — we received a grant from Pakistan, Mrs. Bhutto, of \$1 million, which will help us to create a special fund to sustain the criminal courts. The criminal court will soon begin its work very seriously, and this is a very positive contribution, which is why I want to The Hague to confer with them.

Concerning your question, I will give the maximum information to the Security Council, but the Security Council has to decide — and I don't know what the decision will be.

Question: The Representative for Western Sahara just came back a couple of weeks ago. In your last report you warned that if one of the parties does not accept the plan of the Secretary-General you might go without it and hold the referendum. Are you still convinced of the need to do that? Are you willing to go ahead and override one of the major parties to the conflict in that area?

The Secretary-General: First, I will continue to try to provide direct contacts — last one failed, here in New York — between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) and the representatives of the Government of Morocco, because I believe that through direct contact between the two we will be able to establish a climate of confidence, again, with the same approach. Supposing that the referendum were to happen tomorrow. The implementation of the result of the referendum — whether the referendum is in favour of the Polisario or in favour of Morocco — will need the cooperation of the two protagonists on the ground. So it is important to carry out a double operation: one, the direct contact between.

The Security Council — another Achilles' heel

Need for reform

The composition, functions and powers of the Security Council are specified in Chapter V of the Charter of the United Nations and further details about its powers are spelt out in Chapters VI and VII. Its composition is such that it can make no claim to even an iota of democracy. Permanent Membership in any deliberative, legislative or executive body is the very antithesis of democracy. Moreover, endowing each of the Permanent Members with the power, by a negative vote, to veto any proposal, even if it is endorsed by all the other fourteen members, is to vest each of them with the potential to thwart the overwhelming will of the other members and, for all practical purposes, to paralyse the United Nations itself. The present Secretary-General, Boutros Ghali, has drawn attention to the fact that this power was used (up to January 1992) 279 times "thus rendering the United Nations powerless to deal with many of the (se) crises with which the UN was confronted" ("Agenda for Peace").

Permanent Membership with the "veto power" was a product of the Second World War. It reflected the thinking of the five major powers who having co-operated to defeat Nazi Germany and an expansionist Japan felt that they had a joint responsibility to maintain the peace. Today many consider the Council, particularly its membership, as not reflecting the principal elements of the current political spectrum which, briefly stated, are the following:-

- The marked reduction of East-West tensions and North-South confrontation,

- The emergence of one super power without whose leadership or, at least assistance, the Council appears unable to take effective action,

- The enlarged membership of the United Nations following the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, and

- The current surge of nationalisms,

the tendency to fragmentation of existing states and the ever present danger of the parties concerned resorting to force and involving their neighbours in the settlement of their disputes.

In the light of the above considerations and dissatisfaction in many quarters with the composition and functioning of the Council, the Secretary-General invited Member States to submit to him their ideas on Security Council "reapportionment". Among others the International Herald Tribune and the US Representative to the UN have made proposals for "Security Council Revision". In addition to these, some countries in the South reported to have staked claims to Permanent Membership of the Council.

Editorial myopia

The International Herald Tribune of 30 June 1993, in urging that "A UN Revision is Due" displayed, for a journal of its acknowledged international standing, a surprising myopia. To begin with this particular editorial dealt only with the Security Council as if it was the only organ of the UN that was in need of reform. The other principal organs (vide Article 7.1 of the Charter) were ignored or assumed to be functioning effectively. Secondly it suggested that Germany and Japan be granted Permanent Member Status in the Council with the right to a voice and a vote but without the "veto power", thereby assuming that these two major powers would accept a second class Permanent Membership Status. It is true that the "antimilitaristic constitutions" of these two countries prevent them from complying with Article 43 of the Charter which requires "All Members of the United Nations ... to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements armed forces ... for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security". Surely if these nations aspire to Permanent Membership in the Council all they have to do is to amend the relevant articles of their constitutions so as to make it legitimate for them

to send armed forces abroad only, and only, "on call" by the Security Council and "in accordance with a special agreement or agreements". It is very unlikely that great nations such as these two, whatever their recent past, will be looking for honour and prestige without the responsibility that goes with their membership of the UN.

Eurocentric myopia

The editorial referred to also displays a sad eurocentricism of with the US Representative to the UN is also guilty, though probably by an "act of omission". The journal concerned also proposes that "to maintain the balance between rich and poor countries, up to six new rotating seats might be added, to be filled on a regional basis". Neither the journal nor the US representative seem to realize that today the "poor nations" will not be satisfied with crumbs from the tables of the rich. They also seem to be ignorant of the fact that there is today among the nations in the South a deep concern that the Security Council has tended to be dominated by four "Northern" powers, led by the USA with the fifth permanent member going along with them though not always with the same enthusiasm. To add two more "Northern powers" albeit without the "veto power" will only deepen this concern. Finally the US representative to the UN and the International Herald Tribune seem to be blissfully unaware that some major Third World Power have been reported in the international media as "staking claims" to Permanent Membership in the Security Council.

The S.G.'s invitation

The Secretary-General has invited Member States to "submit their ideas on "Security Council reapportionment". It is hoped that all have done so. On such an important matter as this the views of "We the Peoples of the United Nations" should also be heard. The major International NGOs, Recognized Peace Research and other related Institutes, interested academics etc, should contribute to the thinking on this important subject. Foundations

such as the Ford and Stanley Foundations should organize symposia and other fora for exchanges of views on the subject. The International Herald Tribune can be a focal point for the "International Debate" that should precede any "reapportionment" of the Security Council. The Secretary-General would do well to take into consideration and to give adequate attention to views expressed by all quarters and not only by Member States which, "with a few notable exceptions, have not used the United Nations for the global purposes for which it was created, but often to serve narrow national and even commercial interests". (U. Thant 1970 at the March 25th anniversary of the UN)

Some considerations — membership

No claim is made that the questions raised below are comprehensive and cover all the issues. At their very best they are intended to stimulate further thinking.

(a) In view of the principal elements of the present international political spectrum (see the second paragraph above) and the increasing demand for democratization of the UN System should not the membership of the Security Council be increased to reflect better the present enlarged membership of the UN?

(b) In view of proposals, and even claims, being made by some Member States for Permanent Membership should not the international community formulate clear criteria on the basis of which States can be granted Permanent Membership in the Council?

(c) In the criteria formulated for the granting of Permanent Membership should not the aspiring State's adherence to the Charter of the United Nations be a paramount consideration, especially its human rights record, its respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of other Member States (Ch. I Art. 1 and 2), its participation in UN "Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and acts of Aggression (Ch. VII Art. 39 to 47) etc?

(d) Should not the constitutional disability of a State to participate in UN Action for Peace, as required especially by Arti-

cle 43 of the Charter, be an obstacle to its achieving Permanent Membership of the Council?

(e) Should Great Britain and France be replaced by the European Community notwithstanding the fact that these two countries have accumulated centuries of experience in international relations, still have considerable influence in the international community and whose record of adherence to the UN Charter can be considered comparatively high?

(f) Would not the proposal of the US Representative to the UN to extend Permanent Membership to Germany and Japan deepen the concern in the "South" about a Security Council in which the already dominant "North" is being reinforced by two more Northern powers which have the potential to exert pressure on the poor nations of the South, even if their number is increased by six?

(g) Should not due consideration be given to the claims now being made in certain quarters that Permanent Membership be granted to some selected "Third World States"?

(h) Is it likely that any Member State aspiring to Permanent Membership will be satisfied with a second class permanent membership as proposed by the writer of the editorial in the 30 June 1993 issue of the International Herald Tribune?

(i) If in dealing with the claims of new States for permanent membership, considerations such as those mentioned in (c) above are taken into account, which of the present Permanent Members of the Council will, in view of its own record vis-a-vis the UN Charter, be in a position to "cast the first stone"?

The questions raised in (h) and (i) above call for a consideration of the "veto power".

Other considerations — the "veto power"

(a) In any reorganisation of the Security Council is it likely that anyone of the present "Big Five" will surrender the "veto power"? The question has already been

raised whether any new permanent member will accept permanent member status without this power?

(b) To what extent has the likelihood of the use of the "veto" by the Russian Federation prevented the US from giving effective leadership to the international community in efforts to, even now to deal with the situation in the former Yugoslavia?

(c) To what extent has the possibility of the use of the "veto" by the Peoples' Republic of China prevented the US from seeking Security Council approval for sanctions against the Peoples' Republic of Korea for its refusal to permit complete and regular inspections of its nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency?

(d) In view of a likely increase, in an enlarged Security Council, of Permanent Members with the "veto power" should not provision be made in the Charter to prevent situations when, as has happened before, the will of a large majority of the Council can be thwarted and the UN paralysed by one single Permanent Member, or a very small number of them? Could not a modicum of democracy be introduced by provision being made in the Charter that a "veto" will take effect only if a specified number (say one-third) of the Permanent Members vote negatively on any proposed resolution?

Conclusion

In view of the divergent and conflicting interests involved any meaningful reform of the Security Council will take tough negotiations lasting months, if not years. Efforts to introduce even a modicum of democracy into functioning of the Council will call for even tougher bargaining over a longer time. If however, the political will is there and Member States strive with a deep commitment to the global purposes for which the UN was established a more representative and a far more effective Security Council can emerge from the General Assembly in 1995: the year which marks the Organization's Fiftieth Anniversary. Unfortunately it is this commitment and political will that is sadly lacking.

Ethnonationalism in South Asia : A comparative regional perspective

Shelton U. Kodikara

One of the most striking features of national and international politics over the last twenty years has been the emergence of ethnicity and religious fundamentalism as factors both defining and challenging the traditional concept of the nation-state. Since the late 18th and the 19th centuries, the nation-state was defined in terms of a group of people joined together by common ties of culture and descent, by a shared history, and which was bounded by a specific territory. In some cases (France, Japan, China), states were ethnically homogeneous and conformed to a common civilisational matrix. In some instances of recent state-formation, such as Pakistan, the aspiration to build a separate nation on the basis of a common religion led to geopolitically unviable structures which were again fragmented on the selfsame theories of separate nationhood.

In the larger number of cases, nation-states were multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and even lacking in the factor of a common descent. It is in these latter category of states that what is now being referred to as ethnonationalism — the consciousness of one's separate ethnic identity and religion is posing problems to the existence and stability of the nation-state.

"Ethnicity", says David Walsh, "has abundantly demonstrated its durability and its disruptive potential in the domestic politics of numerous states", and he cites Ronald Conen's view that "the nation-state may have been one of history's more serious mistakes".

Religious fundamentalism, taking its rise from the Iranian revolution, has spread to other parts of the world. Consciousness and assertion of ethnic identity has increasingly also become a world-wide phenomenon, epitomised most poignantly in the cases of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

In this paper, we are concerned with ethnonationalism as a pervasive feature of the politics of the states of South Asia, and with the commonalities which can be perceived in the ethnic conflicts and religious fundamentalisms which have emerged in the region. No conceptual clarification of ethnonationalism attempted in this

paper. Our approach is essentially empirical, based on a country by country analysis. We start from the premise that ethnonationalism in South Asia, as elsewhere, has security implications for the countries of the region. In the final section of this paper, an attempt is made to draw comparative conclusions.

Ethnonationalism in South Asia: The Case of India

India presents a case-study of a post-colonial state, or rather of a congeries of states, divided by hundreds of languages, thousands of castes, and a multiplicity of ethnically identifiable nationalities. Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism represent the major contending religions, with post-independence revival of Buddhism representing more a reaction against a caste-based discrimination than a genuine religious revival. Fissiparous tendencies have always been present in the Indian polity, but in historical times as well as at present, there have been unifying principles and tendencies which have held together what is Bharat, India, as a state or empire as a single, identifiable entity.

In historical times, there existed the Mauryan, Gupta and Mogul empires. The British empire of India was held together by the doctrine of British "paramountcy". The present Indian Raj, despite doomsday theorists, has continued to exist, not simply because of its appeal to secularism, but because there are common interests which bind people together. India today may be a land of many divided loyalties, but it is also a state which presents itself to the world as a viable and powerful political entity. Overriding the differences between Jats, Punjabis, Marwaris, Sindhis, Bengalis, Malayalees and Tamils, there does exist someone identifiable as an "ethnic Indian".

The conflict between Hindus and Muslims is primordial, in the sense that a religio-political rivalry between them has existed since the eighth century, and present characteristics of the Hindu-Muslim political discourse in India do come from a historic all legacy. Consciousness of linguistic identity has already resulted in the reorganisation of the states of the

Union of India on linguistic lines in 1956, more states have been created since then to accommodate other groups, such as tribals in Mizoram, and there are still pending demands for the creation of more states of the Union, for example the Gorkhaland demand of ethnic Nepalis in India, and the Jharkhand movement calling for a separate Jharkhand state comprising sixteen districts of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

In India, Hindu-Muslim rivalry has reference both to the escalating crisis in Kashmir and to the new phase of Indian politics which was ushered in by the destruction by Hindu activists, on 6 December 1992, of the Babri Masjid mosque built in 1523 by Babur, founder of the Mogul empire, on the spot on which Lord Rama was said to have been born. Escalation of the Kashmir crisis has resulted from three sets of factors. First, the inability of India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue by mutual accommodation as foreshadowed in the Simla Agreement of 1992 and the consequent rise of a Muslim militant movement, which seems to be increasingly supporting the creation of an independent Kashmir. Second, Pakistan's avowed support (political and diplomatic) of the Muslim militancy, and its arming and training of the Mujahideen. Third, the armed repression, involving torture, rape and killings by Indian armed forces, comprising not only the Border Security Force and paramilitary units but by army divisions as well, in many instances no doubt by way of reprisals against terrorist attacks by the militants and human rights violations, including rape, by them.

Confusion has become worse confounded because not only are arms from Afghanistan finding their way to Kashmir, but battle-hardened Afghans also appear to be joining in the fray on behalf of the militants. Since 1990, over 3500 civilians have been killed in Kashmir, 7400 Kalashnikovs have been seized, and six million Kashmiri Hindus have fled the Kashmir Valley.

The destruction of the Babri Masjid was a symbolic act highlighting the extent to which religion has become an issue in

contemporary Indian politics. The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been on an electoral upswing since 1984 was probably, not directly involved, in the destruction although the party chief minister in Uttar Pradesh at the time of the destruction, Kalyan Singh, together with senior party leaders, was present in Ayodhya at the site, and the chief minister, at least, expressed no regrets but, to the contrary, acclaimed his pride after the event.

The extent to which the destruction was pre-planned and, if so by whom, will remain uncertain, but certainly the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and other partners in the so-called sangh parivar — the saffron brotherhood — consisting of the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), the Bajrang Dal, and the Shiv Sena, were either individually, and/or collectively responsible for Ayodhya, and the manner in which the Congress government is now trying to ban the use of religion in politics, and the way the BJP itself played up the Hindu card at the mid-term elections for four erstwhile BJP-ruled states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan), might be an indication of the new role which religion is playing in Indian politics. The point is that the Babri Masjid destruction was not only an issue between Hindus and Muslims. It was meant to demonstrate that all was not well in the Indian polity, that the majority Hindus did not have their proper place in their own *rashtra*, that Muslims were being pampered at the expense of Hindus, and that it was necessary to re-establish Hindu dominance in India. The secularist state is alleged to cater more to needs of the minorities than the Hindu majority.

The changing social context of politics relates to the new asperity which has come to characterize both caste politics and communal politics. We do not concern ourselves here with caste politics. But in advocating Hindu *Rashtra*, the BJP and the *Hindutva* activists are not only attempting to reimpose the old Brahminical ascendancy in Hindu society, but also seeking to re-establish Hindu ascendancy over Muslims and other minorities in India as a whole.

The consequences of the Ayodhya events, socio-political as well as economic, have been devastating for India. The demolition led to communal violence in which Muslims figured overwhelmingly as the victims. In January 1993, as N. Ram of *Frontline* magazine put it, there was another round of "premeditated systema-

tic carnage of innocent Muslims by the Shiv Sena and its communal allies".

On 12 March 1993, a Muslim backlash engineered by underworld Bombay Muslims with connections in Dubai, unleashed on the city of Bombay a series of twelve bomb-blasts in selected areas of intense business activity, such as the Stock Exchange, Air India building, a petrol pump station near the Shiv Sena headquarters, Plaza Cinema, and three prominent hotels, "the most devastating and deadly peacetime episode of terrorist bombing the world had known". More than 300 were left dead and more than 1000 were injured on this one day of communal fascism. And this was not the end of the story because it has only geared extremist Hindu organisations to become even more communally assertive than they were before. The BJP leader L.K. Advani attempted to rationalise the Babri demolition by calling attention to its larger significance:

The Ayodhya movement, according to the BJP, is not just for building a temple. It is a mass movement — the biggest since independence — to reaffirm the nation's cultural identity.

This reaffirmation alone, we hold, can provide an enduring basis for national unity, and besides, the dynamo for a resurgent, resolute, and modern India. It is slanderous to say the Ayodhya movement is an assault on secularism..... The BJP is unequivocally committed to secularism.

Another interpretation of Ayodhya, however, lays emphasis on the class and caste implications of reordering Hindu society according to its traditional hierarchy.

The Ayodhya outrage has little to do either with religion or with Hindu-Muslim relationship. It is a manifestation of class war, waged upon the Constitution and its democratic secular character on behalf of the traditional owners of privilege in Hindu society. The Babri masjid is a symbol of the enemy not just because it is Islamic, but because its existence is a reminder of India's constitutional principle of secularism. To the traditionally privileged Hindu, the idea of democracy is equally abhorrent. He is simply not prepared to accept the equality of all human beings irrespective of caste, creed and sex, because it hurts his self-interest. If people of all classes have to be accepted as his equal, he loses his right to exploit the castes lower than his own. Ram is the symbol of this right to exploit.

The Narasimha Rao government proceeded to ban the RSS VHP, and the Bajrang Dal as communal organisations in December 1992. But Prime Minister Narasimha Rao himself has not been cleared of charges that he has been soft on communalism, and allegations have surfaced that the Congress Party itself, in previous years, used the Hindu card to win elections.

Sri Lanka

Elements of comparison with ethnonationalist politics in India are provided in the case of Sri Lanka which, though much smaller in size and population, replicates features of ethnicity and religion in the subcontinent. One is the existence of Tamil subnationalism, similar to and having links with the state of Tamilnadu in India, and of a more pronounced separatist ideal than has existed in India. A second element is the role of religion. Buddhism had a close link with the state in historical times, *Sinhala dvipa* itself having been consecrated as a land which would be hallowed by Buddhism for 5000 years, and attempts by the post-colonial state to restore Buddhism to its pristine state elicit the same responses from the Tamil Hindus as does the attempt to restore Hindus and Hinduism to their past ascendancy does in India amongst Muslims. A third is the same feeling of neglect and insecurity felt by the majority Sinhalese vis a vis Tamils as the majority Hindus are feeling in respect of the Muslims of India.

One school of thought in Sri Lanka — the so-called "jatika chintanaya" school — would describe Sinhala Buddhism as "the transcendent culture with its basic elements shared by all ethnic groups", but this is not a position ever supported by all Sinhalese, leave alone the minorities. The "minority complex" of the majority Sinhalese, however, is a reality, and this feeling of insecurity and inferiority is based not only on the relatively small size of the Island and the smallness of the Sinhala population, but also on the fact that there are 50 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in Tamilnadu.

Tamil feelings of insecurity and discrimination have been generated by the imposition of Sinhala as the only official language in 1956 (a grievance now redressed), by government attempts to reverse the advantaged position of Tamils in public sector employment and in admission to the universities, and most vividly by Sinhala "colonisation" in areas considered by Tamils to be the traditional "homelands".

(To be Continued)

Jane Austen and History

H.L.D. Mahindapala

Nor does Elizabeth I. Her vision indicated what history ought to be: a reign of "tolerable comfort" without "guilt or misery". History ought not to be the ever-simmering Macbethic cauldron brewed by demonic forces. The task of history is to deviate from its traditional course to avoid its agonizing sounds and furies, signifying nothing. It is this concept of history that pervades Jane Austen's world of fiction. This was not an escapist route. The history that was not dramatised before the readers eyes was not out of Jane Austen's mind. She kept out of that historical process because her vision extended beyond the constraints of time and space in recorded history. She wasn't escaping history; she was only pointing new directions away from its beaten-track.

As a perceptive reader and observer of history she rated it, at the peak of her maturity, as being on par with morals — and in her scale of values nothing was higher than morals. "Their conversation, however, were not always on subjects as high as history or morals",¹ she wrote. The obvious need to understand man in the "historical" context is underscored when she wrote: "... the chief object in seeking them (i.e. William recital of his past events) was to understand the reciter,"² and she was only too conscious that even a simple narrative of an individual's history revealed "proof of good principles, professional knowledge, energy, courage and cheerfulness — everything that could deserve or promise well".³ Embodying these positive principles she portrayed a new man, a new hero: not a Sisyphean hero chasing elusive historical forces that brings neither relief nor meaning but ordinary mortals engaged in normal pursuits or spontaneous gaieties, whilst watching each step for its moral content; not one who sets out in search of his own identity in encounters with titanic forces but one who evolves to a higher morality through the daily rounds of living. Her heroes and heroines remain as credible individuals who stumble through their diurnal paces upon the means of striking a discerning balance in their lives. Their balanced judgement, without any excesses, would preserve them in harmony not only with themselves but also with the rest of the community.

Her novels do not portend or portray great transformations of character driven by causes. There is only the slow and gradual movement towards self-realisa-

tion — and that too not by extraordinary feats but by normal means accessible to the average individual going through the basic domestic routine. Jane Austen's rational mind prefers to dwell and analyse the "little social commonwealth", with all its ceremonial domesticities, rituals and hassles, because, eventually, it is the most appropriate testing ground of the human race.

Though social scientists place individuals in movements and issues there is no absolute way of judging responsibility because of the innumerable variables, the erratic 'ifs' and 'buts', and the "chaos" of indeterminate forces contained in "the nothingness beyond our own circle". The "little social commonwealth" provide a clean environment for the individual to be probed by a rational mind. This unsophisticated, detached, rational approach elevates her to be one of the greatest realists in English fiction. She has, on the one hand, the vision to take men away from nagging history and, on the other, to invest in the new-found-land only that which can be realistically expected. Her underlying vision gravitates towards distant, but not unattainable, goals for individuals who are prepared to leave the miasmal maelstrom of history. Her enlightened expectations, without religious overtones, (e.g. MANSFIELD PARK) romantic obsessions or idealistic utopianism would preserve her as one of the finest products of the rational mind ever found in fiction. Her discerning mind is illuminated once again in the fact that though she decided not to be in history she remained an integral part of it. The history kept out of her framework is the history of Tolstoyan forces, of conflict and conflagration. Having eliminated those devastating elements she retained in her micro-societies some of the basic components that survive through all historical vicissitudes.

Firstly, there is the family unit which needs no elaboration. Secondly, she is concerned with the inter-personal relationships. Her constant pre-occupation is with the exploration of personal relationships, outside the stresses of history. While most other novelist would tend to describe or define relationships within the constraints of external forces, she boldly stepped "outside" it which enabled her to pursue her search exclusively for the moral relationships between persons. Thirdly, she dwells lovingly on domestic

felicities which climax in marriages. The thematic and the dramatic coherence of her works is derived from moves and countermoves leading to marriages. In weaving marriage as the central plot that runs through the lives of individuals Jane Austen once again broke new ground. She acknowledged marriage as the universal bond that can be shared by all individuals in any time and place. Besides, through the processes of marriage she lifted the individual out of the rut, out of the crowd to grant him/her a rare moment of recognition by placing both partners on the highest pedestal of domestic celebrations. She was the first to celebrate the personal glory of the anonymous individual who reaches the highest social stature in the ceremony of marriage. The unseen majority comes out of hiding to live one day in a lifetime (leaving aside multiple marriages) with an exclusive identity as an honoured and chosen individual on the occasion of his/her marriage. This is the only moment where the individual struts the stage in all his/her glory and finery to the applause of those around them. After taking centre stage on this day alone the individual fades once again into the amorphous mass of the majority. Isn't that also the day the individual celebrates his/her immortality by perpetuating his own kind through marriage?

What other meaningful or lasting mark can the individual, lost in a blank universe, make against total oblivion?

Jane Austen was the first to give pride of place to this grand, universal act. Her narrative concentrates on the inescapable domestic plotting that precedes weddings and marriages in any culture. These domestic manoeuvres assume the same kind of importance in the lives of the involved inner circle as diplomatic demarches, or economic bargaining that goes on in the wide world of global politics. It is the unwritten history of all individuals.

Finally her "little social commonwealth" is not the charmed circle it is supposed to be but an exclusive dimension where some of the fundamental moral issues of rational beings are tested. She picks up the dominant political concepts of her time which, influenced by the "enlightened" French Revolutionaries, determined public discourse, and redefines each one of those concepts as a new morality for individuals not involved in active politics.

Her phrasings, quite remarkably, are identical to that of classical political philosophy. Issues of "equality of alliance", "partialities and injustices", the "overthrow of all order..." in the "little social commonwealth" are raised in very clear, absolute terms. Jane Austen was categorical when she said (in *PERSUASION*) that "she wanted more vigorous measures, a more complete reformation, a much higher tone of indifference for everything but justice and equity." Despite this ideological position she stubbornly refused to step out of the domestic framework to deal with these issues at a political level. On the contrary, she relates the political principles to individual relationships. The fact that she has miniaturised the complex political concepts to domestic situations does not vitiate the meaning or the relevance to society or the individuals. By converting classical and grand political concepts to elementary active principles that individuals must pursue in personal relationships she not only rejected mass revolutionary and romantic movements, which in the post-French Revolution era were supposed to redirect the course of history, but also defined the altered society of the future as an exclusive domain where only the morally alert activists are admitted and ordained. She begins from the inner core of the individual, placing that to be the consecrated source for enshrining moral equality and justice. The application of the redefined political principles on a one-to-one basis in the day-to-day lives of individuals is a novel concept which can have far-reaching effects in transforming society and individuals without resorting to aggressive or even passive political action. In other words, Jane Austen's characters are not political animals battling for revolutionary justice in fierce constitutional or bloody contests but, by and large, elegant, cultivated, civil and rational minds "fully occupied in all other common subjects of housekeeping, neighbours, dress, dancing and music".⁴ Her creativity excelled in binding absolute principles to individuals pursuing such diurnal activities. Each little circle was constituted as an autonomous unit. She "acknowledged it to be very fitting that every little social commonwealth dictate its own matters of discourse; and hoped, ere long, to become a not unworthy member of the one she was now transplanted into".⁵ Being accepted as a worthy member of the inner circle is to be a moral being.

Jane Austen's study of a moral being in his/her natural habitat ranks her as the Margaret Mead of a new social order. Within that new order she sleuths, somewhat like Agatha Christie pairing, mis-pairing and re-pairing the wandering nubile who finally find the missing partners of their lives. And, over all this, she reigns

like a benign queen dispensing moral judgement in a realm without "guilt or misery". It is a realm where the individuals had freed themselves from the rigours of history to embark on the discovery of the exact moral center.

The journey of this discovery, through winding paths, was essayed in *MANSFIELD PARK* — the novel which Jane Austen said was on the theme of "ordination". *Mansfield Park* is a domain suffused with the air of unerring authority. The sombreness and the imposing features of *Mansfield Park*, its unwritten laws, its regulated internal movements, its symbolism, its theme, its setting and the aura of "sanctity" pervading the entire domain, together with Fanny's austere, unheated East Room in the deep recesses of *Mansfield* are strands that come together to weave an image of an inner sanctum which, in turn, proves to be a testing ground for various life styles chosen by individuals seeking in their own way their moral centre. Its exclusiveness, its seclusion makes it a distant variation of a Kafkaesque *CASTLE*, with many mansions, where the numerous inmates are called to indulge in their pursuits but only a few would be anointed. The "serpentine" and "great paths" weave alternate routes for those who wander in *Mansfield Park*. It is also a place which affords repose to those who seek it. Its specific laws inexorably selects its inheritors who become a part and parcel of *Mansfield* by adhering to its moral code. This underlying strand manifests itself in the progress of Fanny which is, by and large, the central moral and narrative thread that runs through it.

When Fanny enters *Mansfield Park* she finds it somewhat forbidding and disconcerting. Its authoritarian father-figure, Sir Thomas, is aloof and demanding. The new life-style puts her through a rigorous test. And yet, through the passage of time, she finds the self-same things endearing and comforting. In fact, she finds it uneasy living outside the moral code of *Mansfield*, which has become a delightful way of life to Fanny: ".... The evenings do not appear long to me. I love to hear my uncle talk of the West Indies. I could listen to him for an hour together. It entertains me more than many other things have done....."⁶ Fanny's re-entry into *Mansfield Park* is a moment of great relief and joy to her: ".... How her heart swelled with joy and gratitude as she passed the barriers of *Portsmouth*...."⁷ It is as if she had crossed the barriers of a sordid nightmare into a haven of repose: "... She was (at *Portsmouth*) in the midst of closeness and noise, to have confinement, bad air, bad smell; substituted (at *Mansfield*) for liberty, freshness, fragrance and verdure...."⁸ The orderliness, the moral tone, the tra-

quility, the freshness, the liberty, the fragrance and the verdure is suggestive of a haven far removed from the tumultuous vulgarities of the outside world — characteristics that suggest it to be the nearest to Jane Austen's vision of a pastoral Eden. The "release from *Portsmouth*"⁹ leads to a total change from one way of life to another, from one age to another: "Visions of good and ill breeding, of old vulgarisms and new gentilities were before her...."¹⁰ The crossing of "barriers" is of great significance to both Fanny and to the central theme of the book. There is a certain finality in the act, especially to Fanny. She has crossed the "barriers" of "old vulgarisms" to enter the order of "new gentilities". The "new gentilities" is the ordained way of life at *Mansfield*. She had been initiated into that way and she accepts it willing to bear its responsibilities and share its repose, which is altogether a life far superior to the tumultuous, seedy goings-on at the other side of the "barrier" — barrier that draws a distinct division between the world outside and the way out of it.

The crossing is also decisive to the overall structure of the novel. It is linked to Jane Austen's theme of "ordination" — a life-time commitment to an altered way of life. Though *Mansfield* is a theatre for all-comers to play their individual roles not all of them are chosen. Fanny, Grants, Crawfords, Rushworths and Yates come to *Mansfield* to be tested on selected principles which eventually pick the chosen one.

The major segment of *Mansfield Park* constitute the part played by a host of characters presenting their mercenary values, questionable virtues, tempting offers and easy pleasures at *Mansfield*. Characters varying from moronic Rushworth to versatile Henry Crawford are drawn towards *Mansfield*. Though each display their innate temperaments — e. g. intelligence, charm, vivacity, generosity etc — they are tested only on the basis of living up to the enduring principles enshrined at *Mansfield*. The corrupting apples, the tempting snakes lurk in *Mansfield* like in any other earthly place. These misleading temptations dragging the innocent are teased out in the lingering relationship between Mary Crawford and Edmund. This interplay goes on until it reaches the final segment — the crossing of the barriers. This signals the new phase: a total break from the past, leading towards a new inheritance, the altered society.

Clearly, what Fanny inherits is not position, power or property but what *Mansfield* represents — namely, a world away from worldly life. The way was cleared for her not by spiteful exiling of rivals who were supposed to be a threat to her ascendancy

to the throne at Mansfield but by the failure of the London-based interlopers and their collaborators to lure Mansfield into their corrupted ways. Their efforts were to drag Mansfield into the "serpentine path". But Mansfield triumphs in its principled refusal to deviate from the "great path". Their attempts to overthrow the moral authority at Mansfield and turn it into another bit of London (a corrupt citadel) fail ignominiously. After that their retreat into self-exile is inevitable. After that only one kind of new-comer could be admitted to Mansfield Park: Susan, a novice, with the full potential of growing into the new social order. Thus "old vulgarisms" and "new gentilities" become the fundamentals that distinctly separate the old societies (London, Portsmouth) from the altered society (Mansfield).

In the main then, Mansfield Park is a refuge from all vulgarities — vulgarities of individuals, majority and history: "At Mansfield no sounds of contentions, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence, was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; everybody's feelings were consulted. If tenderness could be ever supposed wanting, good sense and good breeding supplied its place; and as to the little irritations.... they were short, they were trifling, they were as a drop of water to the ocean, compared with the ceaseless tumult of her present abode. Here (Portsmouth) everybody was noisy, every voice was loud.... nothing was done without clatter, nobody sat still, and nobody could command attention when they spoke".¹¹ This passage could very well be Jane Austen's instinctive reaction to the constant chaos of the disorderly world outside, particularly the violent eruptions that were tearing Europe apart. The contrast becomes a dominant theme in the latter half of the book. Tranquillity becomes a key word in this theme. And the theme is orchestrated at every opportune moment: "The elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony, and perhaps, above all, the peace and tranquillity of Mansfield, were brought to her remembrance every hour of the day, by the prevalence of everything opposite to them here".¹²

(To be Continued)

Notes

- 1 Ibid. - p. 409.
- 2 Ibid. - p. 245.
- 3 Ibid. - p. 245.
- 4 PERSUASION - Jane Austen.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 MANSFIELD PARK - Jane Austen, P. 212.
- 7 Ibid. P. 433.
- 8 Ibid. P. 421.
- 9 Ibid. P.
- 10 Ibid. P. 434.
- 11 Ibid. P. 384.
- 12 Ibid. P. 384.

Outline for a New Constitution

Chanaka Amaratunga

Once more, those of us whose favourite past-time is the endless discussion at endless seminars of the elements that must constitute a reform of the constitution of Sri Lanka can look forward to many hours, days even months, of bliss. For this we must thank President D.B. Wijetunga, who in an unexpected speech to an audience whose constitutional expertise had hitherto been undiscovered, the good people of Anuradhapura, revealed that the UNP has proposed to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reforms that the method of election of the President be amended from election by the people to election by Parliament. What this proposal seeks is to amend the current constitution in the light of many assumptions which are contained in it. Whether or not the proposed amendment will improve things is not an issue, which interests me much, for I am, and have always been, a passionate advocate of the repeal root and branch, bag and baggage, of the current constitution which I regard as the highly dubious political legacy bequeathed this country by that champion of authoritarianism, opportunism and cynicism, President J.R. Jayewardene. In short, I am not satisfied with tinkering with the constitutional structure when what is required is the enactment of a new constitution drafted on the basis of very different assumptions from those which motivated the framers of the Constitution of the Second Republic (1978).

I must also emphasise that I do not subscribe to the simplistic, approach to the constitution, adopted by the SLFP and its allies in the People Alliance. Their approach is always to evoke the debate, Presidentialism vs Parliamentarism, in which by Parliamentarism they mean the Constitution of the First Republic (1972). That Constitution is for me, almost as obnoxious as, and in some respects, even more so, than the Constitution of 1978. I certainly do not want the current Constitution to be replaced by that Constitution which with dangerous simplicity fully takes on board, without the restraints which in practice operate in the nation of its origin, the British doctrine of the sovereignty of Parliament. Accordingly, the legislature under the Constitution of 1972, the peculiarly named National State Assembly was declared to be "the supreme instrument of state power" which even had judicial power which it exercised through the courts.

What then you may ask, is the type of Constitution I would favour. While an assurance is given that this column is not being converted into a seminar such as those of us who adore analyses of constitutional provisions find irresistible, I do think a brief outline for a new Constitution would not be wholly out of place.

What I advocate is the adoption of something new but since in this country we have an inordinate tendency to discuss even change in relation to what is tried and tested (and more often than not found wanting) I

too will play that game by saying that an amended version of the Soulbury Constitution, the only nonpartisan Constitution this country has operated since the achievement of independence, with several innovations to bring it into line with modern conditions would be far more satisfactory.

Such a new Constitution would accordingly contain the following features:

- 1) a non executive Head of State elected by the members of both Houses of Parliament and by Provincial Councils.
- 2) an executive consisting of a Cabinet of Ministers appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.
- 3) A Parliament consisting of two Chambers to be named perhaps (as in the Soulbury Constitution) the Senate and the House of Representatives.
- 4) A Senate which would consist of a majority (60%) of Elected Senators from the Provinces and a minority (40%) of Appointed Senators to represent political parties, the profession, academics and the arts and other distinguished persons.
- 5) A House of Representatives elected on a new system of Proportional Representation based on the German electoral system whereby 50% of the Membership will be elected from constituencies which would be larger than the present constituencies and the other half from a national list which would ensure strict proportionality of the overall result.
- 6) Senators and Members of Parliament shall have freedom of conscience and not to be subject to expulsion from the legislature.
- 7) Provincial Councils with enhanced powers within the framework of a Federal Constitution.
- 8) Judicial Review of Legislation, which would enable Acts passed by Parliament to be subsequently challenged before the Courts.

I recognize, of course, that with elections likely to take place soon, it may be inappropriate to enact a new Constitution until the conclusion of such elections. A constitutional amendment that introduces the electoral system I have outlined should, however, be enacted as a matter of the highest priority so that it can be used for the forthcoming Parliamentary Election. By this amendment the freedom of conscience of MPs should also be assured.

What is most important is that public awareness on constitutional issues must be enhanced and the appalling habit of the Bandaranaike and J.R. Jayewardene governments of partisan constitution making should be made a thing of the past, not a practice for emulation now and in the future.

Revolutionary Practice in a 'Modern' Environment

Mick Moore

The 'modernity' of Sri Lanka's economic, political and institutional environment resulted in the JVP pursuing a revolutionary strategy that lay somewhere between the classic, mobilizing peasant insurrection characteristic of poor agrarian societies and the urban terrorism associated with industrial societies. In particular, in contrast to the classic rural insurrection, the JVP campaign was marked by: the absolute primacy of political considerations and structures over their military equivalents; great tactical flexibility and rapid changes of approach; equal flexibility (or instability) in the personnel composition of the movement; the predominance of students (in a broad sense, including intellectuals and those who had previously experienced higher education) among the personnel of the movement as well as its leadership; and the need to give central strategic attention to the problem of making violent revolution in an environment dominated by the two great modern societal institutions — a complex state apparatus and a highly integrated market economy on which most of the population depend for their livelihood on a day-to-day basis. These arguments are elaborated below under seven sub-headings.

Personnel

The prior task for the JVP leadership in a logical sense — the recruitment of cadres — has in practice proved one of the least problematic aspects of the movement from its inception. For the enormity, in both demographic and psychological senses, of the problem of educated youth unemployment has provided a continual inflow of new cadres. There is a close affinity between the general ideological stance of the JVP and the fact that educational experiences, perceptions and institutions played a dominant role in the recruitment process.⁷⁰ In a society where (a) public sector, white collar posts have long been seen as the route to security and status for those with advanced educa-

tional qualifications but no significant capital assets or connections with the socially-exclusive private business sector, and (b) governments have routinely assumed responsibility for providing such posts, 'statisation is high on the agenda' of educationally-certificated youth.⁷¹ Humiliating personal experiences of unemployment appear to have left a deep mark on the attitudes of JVP leaders and members.⁷² The movement's declared economic policy programme has never been more than exiguous (see below). But the complete statisation of almost all economic activity has been the dominant theme, and one assumed to be so self-evident as not to require explicit justification.⁷³

The JVP leadership from the beginning ensured that they had a continual supply of fresh cadres by putting in considerable efforts to indoctrinate and recruit schoolchildren as well as university students.⁷⁴ These young people were easily swayed by Wijeweera's superb oratory and undoubted charisma. Reliance on such impressionable recruits in turn helped Wijeweera maintain his personal dominance over the movement. University students were mobilized first in the 1980s campaign, with the assistance of a government decision in 1982 to abolish all student representation in university decision-making structures. The informal Action Committees which sprang up as a result were dominated by the JVP. By the middle of the decade the JVP was largely in control of the student body.⁷⁵ It had destroyed the ruling UNP's student organization. The more orthodox Marxist — but very streetwise — Independent Students Union provided the only opposition to JVP dominance of the campuses. It, too, was defeated.⁷⁶ The fact that the campuses were virtually completely closed from 1987 meant that there were a large number of young people with JVP connections and time on their hands. The movement was able to use them. Past

investments in recruiting schoolchildren were also to pay dividends in 1987 and 1988, when schoolchildren all over the island were among the most eager participants in protests against the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord.⁷⁷ The police on occasion acted with predictable brutality, providing an excellent propaganda theme in the form of deaths of schoolchildren at the hands of the police.⁷⁸ The schools, too, were closed for about two years, providing more idle hands.

This high level of dependence on students and schoolchildren for activists solved one problem, but raised others. One was the continual need to train and assimilate new recruits. For the rate of turnover of JVP cadres was very high.⁷⁹ The movement depended heavily on a stratum of the population whose commitment, endurance and technical competence was always questionable.⁸⁰ A related problem was the danger of infiltration by the security forces. The organizational form adopted in the recent campaign was designed to cope with this situation.

The JVP departed substantially from both their own 1971 practice of the loosely organized movement and from the classic Leninist model of the relatively small party of committed cadres. The JVP's organizational pattern bore a close resemblance to that recommended by management specialists for large modern corporations attempting to deal with rapid and continuously changing conditions in the most competitive reaches of the contemporary world economy. That in turn is not surprising, for the JVP faced analogous problems. It was a large organization needing to adapt continuously to a competitive and fast changing external environment.

The similarities between the JVP and 'flexible corporation' are, at the abstract level: a small, generalist top executive cadre concentrating on strategic decision-

making rather than routine management; a relatively small cadre of permanent managers, supervisors and skilled workers; and a large peripheral body of people employed on specific limited contracts both for highly specialized operations and for unskilled tasks for which labour requirements are unstable. On the periphery of the JVP were large numbers of young people used only occasionally or temporarily for specific and relatively routine tasks, such as pasting up posters (a major channel of communication and propaganda), delivering messages calling particular institutions to participate in strikes or other actions, and monitoring compliance with such calls. To some degree at least, these 'irregulars' tended to be concentrated in the military wing of the JVP,⁶¹ leaving the dominant political wing less exposed to the danger of infiltration⁶² (see below). Another component of the 'periphery' of the JVP organization was small groups of professionals who were used for two kinds of military operations: professional criminals for major assassinations, and army deserters — and, indeed, soldiers on leave — for military training and some operations.⁶³ The inner, strategic leadership of the JVP was almost entirely 'political' in outlook and function. While many problems emerged in controlling the movement from the centre, the thinking of the centre was almost exclusively political, and for that reason all the more effective (see below).

Wijeweera appears to have learned a great deal from the fiasco which ensued when the JVP actually resorted to force in 1971: most of his cadres had been revealed to be inexperienced and incompetent in matters of armaments and tactics, and the more 'intellectual' elements in particular showed little inclination actually to fight. He introduced a substantial distinction between military and political functions, and ensured that the former were both executed professionally and subordinated to the political leadership. The problem that he was never able fully to solve was that of controlling units on the ground, whether political or military. This was especially true in 1989 when the movement came under pressure from the security forces. We do not know in detail how the different units of the JVP communicated among themselves and how the leadership obtained a very substantial degree of compliance with its orders⁶⁴ —

quite an achievement for an organization which, because of rapid cadre turnover, was always in a state of transition. It is certain that the personal linkages created in universities and other institutions of higher education played a major role.⁶⁵

The JVP needed to protect their organization — the more active cadres, their lines of communication their stores, their printing facilities and their mobile radio station — from discovery by the security forces. This was no easy task. Unlike the Tamil separatist militants fighting in the North, who had both access to dense jungle and, more importantly, training, supply, retreat and communication facilities in South India, the JVP had no secure retreats. They were obliged to operate almost continuously amid dense populations containing large numbers of political opponents and informers.

The JVP used two types of fixed points as cover. The first, rather surprisingly, were 'bunkers', i.e. small camps and stores specially constructed in areas often described as 'jungle' — which in most cases meant rather light scrubland. The construction of such bunkers appears to have been a lesson learned inappropriately from the Tamil guerillas operating in a different physical environment in the North. It was a mistake for the JVP, for most such bunkers seem to have been discovered by the armed forces fairly early. It is, however, unlikely that such bunkers played a major role in JVP logistics; more important to them were the Buddhist temples which they used as bases, stores, and places in which to hide from the security forces.⁶⁶ The almost exclusive focus of the JVP on 'patriotic' or chauvinist themes thus had its counterpart in their logistic dependence on 'patriotic' monks. In the early stages of the anti-JVP campaign, when the loyalties of the armed forces were in doubt, considerable difficulties were experienced by the armed forces command in their attempts to persuade their (almost exclusively Sinhalese, and mainly Buddhist) troops to search Buddhist temples. Later, when attitudes became hardened, 'patriotic' monks became acceptable targets for the security forces.⁶⁷

Notes

⁶⁶ JVP membership had been almost exclusively Sinhalese Buddhist and a degree of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism (or chauvinism) had always

been implicit or explicit in its programme and discourse. However, in the early 1980 the party adopted a fairly orthodox cosmopolitan Marxist stance in relation to the Tamil to national self-determination. When this position was rejected in favour of an explicitly chauvinist position in December 1983, the Secretary General left the party, taking with him a substantial fraction of the membership. The JVP's changing — and opportunistic — attitudes to the ethnic issues and to India are explained at some length in Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, chs 13-16.

⁷⁰ 'Undoubtedly the most powerful arm of the JVP, second only to the military wing, happened to be its student wing. It is from the student's wing that a considerable percentage of recruitments were made for higher and important positions of the JVP. It must also be clear that 90% of the JVP hierarchy happened to be either university graduates, drop outs or teachers' (Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, p. 45).

⁷¹ G. A. Chandraprema, *Putschism, Ethnic Chauvinism and Social Revolution: Reflections on the Sri Lankan Experience* (Colombo, Independent Students Union, 1989), pp. 28-9.

⁷² Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 12.

⁷³ Relatedly, the capture of state power has always appeared as the main JVP objective, an end in its own right rather than a means. This was especially evident in 1971, when the 'patriotic' objective lacked real potency. There are plausible accounts of how, once they attained local power in 1971, rather than creating a 'revolutionary administration', JVP local leaders elevated themselves to roles in the existing state apparatus.

⁷⁴ Chandraprema, *Putschism, Ethnic Chauvinism*, p. 29.

⁷⁵ Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 25; Matthews, 'The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna', p. 432.

⁷⁶ One of the first contract killings organized by the JVP was that of Daya Pathirana, the leader of the Independent Students Union, in 1986. See Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 23.

⁷⁷ See report in *Island International*, 21 September 1988.

⁷⁸ For example, a high school student was killed by police firing in the town of Badulla on 13 September 1988, allegedly because the police had exhausted their supply of rubber bullets (*Island International*, 21 September 1988).

⁷⁹ Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, p. 54 and *passim*. In some cases, large numbers of cadres left at one time. This, normally reflected some dispute at leadership level: 'By 1979 bickering within the party had emerged and a group headed by Nandana Marasinghe resigned from the party. After the JVP's decision not to participate in or support the general strike of 1980, a large group, among whom were several middle class young intellectuals who had been attracted to the JVP's "new image" after 1977, left along with H. N. Fernando and the Ceylon Teachers' Union. Another group headed by "Captain" Kularatne left the party in 1981 over differences with the party leadership. After the Presidential election fiasco in 1982, the JVP lost about half its "strength". In April 1983, Vaas Thilakarathne and

Mahinda Pathirana were removed from the party. In 1983 December, a large group among whom were Lionel Bopage, left the party because of the change of policy on the ethnic issue'. (*ibid.*, p. 54).

⁸⁰ 'Though we paid lip service to "the leading role of the proletariat" in the revolution, our emphasis has always been on the provincial sector in organising students and unemployed youth.... They will be the first to desert the party in a situation of repression'. This quotation is from the resignation letter of Lionel Bopage, the JVP's General Secretary, in 1983 (*ibid.*, p. 113).

⁸¹ The JVP named its military wing the DJV [*Deshapremi Janatha Viyaparaya* — the People's Patriotic Organization]. The name DJV first appeared in 1987 in the context of the reactions against the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, although the military wing was established in mid-1986 (*ibid.*, p. 65). The JVP position was that the DJV was a separate organization of patriots, not part of the JVP (See the interview with Rohana Wijeweera in *Sunday Times* (Colombo), 13 November 1988, pp. 9-10). While in 1987-89 the JVP was engaged in various kinds of dialogue with the major political parties, especially the SLFP and the UNP, in search of political advantage, it was convenient for all sides to attribute violence and murder to the DJV and thus absolve the JVP. The DJV was headed by a member of the JVP's Politburo (Alles, 'Wijeweera's Changing Political Ideology', p. 9).

⁸² Gunaratna (*Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, p. 279) claims that the JVP put more effort into rescuing from captivity their political cadres than their military cadres. It is not clear whether, on balance, this reliance on 'auxiliaries' made the JVP more or less vulnerable to counter-intelligence. It seems likely that, in the first two years or so of the recent campaign, when the state's security and intelligence services were weak and heavily penetrated by JVP sympathizers, use of auxiliaries presented few problems. However, once the security forces began their crackdown on the movement in August 1989, the whole movement became vulnerable to betrayal under pressure. The top leadership appears to have been traced and eliminated through the classic counter-insurgency technique of first catching the 'small fry' and forcing them to inform on the source of their information and instructions, leading eventually to the top.

⁸³ Alles, 'Wijeweera's Changing Political Ideology'; Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, chs 21, 23 and 31; Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, 221.

⁸⁴ The leadership appears to have remained physically dispersed, in many cases taking cover by leading the lives of relatively affluent members of the middle class. Wijeweera spent his last months living with his family in the guise of a retired plantation owner in a large house in a rural area. For more general information on the JVP's organization, see Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 2; and Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, pp. 22, 37-48, 213-20 and 324-5.

⁸⁵ On the importance of these linkages, see for example Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 22. Jonathan Spencer has provided me with some illustrations of this from his own experiences.

⁸⁶ Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, p. 200; R. Gunasekera, 'JVP Tactics', *Island International*, 23 September 1987.

⁸⁷ Generally speaking, the various orders of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka are drawn from and serve different caste groups. It seems that the monks which actively supported the JVP tended to represent those low castes which were especially active JVP supporters. The priesthood was to suffer grievously in the long run. Even before this time the priesthood was, in clear contradiction to what are often described as Buddhist ideals, widely involved in national electoral politics. The JVP, however, raised the stakes considerably by going

to the lengths of murdering those monks who stood in their way. When the counter-terror got underway, little compunction was shown about killing monks believed to have JVP connections. In addition, independent monks who tried to protest about the brutality of what was happening or demand the release of detainees were silenced by the cats, and in one or two cases of recalcitrance by the bullet. Gunaratne suggests that in 1989 at least a hundred monks were killed by anti-JVP forces.

The Scholar's Tale Part 10

*The MonoVirate was virile and vibrant
With his Legions' Northern encampment
So with much paternal condescension
He beamed at his ballot-fooled Nation
And with fluent Coramandel Plausibility
Expounded the Tri-Sinhala Trinity
(With a footnote on the Kotte Monarchy
Branching to yeild his Excellency)*

*Of Kotte's calculated caution
In scanning a foreboding horizon
The Pretender betrayed no notion
May be due to genetic abortion,
Or the imagined deprivation of being
Not Emperor but merely King
So that only a whiff of grapeshot
Was History's call on our Bona-Pot*

*So from Rajarata's historic confines
To his Excellency's extended front lines
His Legions leapt sand-waste and brine
To land on that fatal land-mine*

*The Signal flashed swiftly to Station
Triggering Operation Cleansation
Everything being fully automated
Our Hero played bridge while Death waited.
Since in his Programme Cremation preceded
Death, while Sanity receded
At midnight with pre-set precision
To stark madness in a branched chain reaction
The fall-out was even more lethal
Since shame begot guilt in most people
This guilt was crafted by leaders
To a witch-hunt for scapegoats and pleaders*

*And some scapegoats before they could plead
Were massacred in Jail by Hell's breed
Qualifying to be freed on a pardon
To multiply murder and mayhem.*

*Cocooned in Dharmishta Meditation
The King awaited Imperial transformation
Thus detained by anticipation
He would not speak to his Nation.
From his Capital's unfought flames
And some subjects battered remains
He sawely, nurtured the notion
That the City had faced an invasion*

*So while the hoodlum's faded away
This new phobia flaved on Friday.*

U. Karunatilake

Postscript

Arden

The Findlandisation of Sri Lanka

The news came as a bombshell. On 24 July 1987 the government-controlled Daily News carried the story that the previous evening President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Gandhi had reached an accord in terms of which the Lankan government was to concede a single "autonomous state" in the northern and eastern provinces, the very issue on which the fighting had been all about. (In the 1977 general election 67% of the voters in the eastern province had voted against separation). India, for its part, would ensure that the terrorists would surrender the weapons (which India itself had supplied them with) and see to it that Indian territory would no longer be used for "activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka". To enforce the accord Indian troops would move into Sri Lanka. With this accord Sri Lanka accepted Indian suzerainty after just less than four decades of independence.

In 1940 the Ceylon National Congress sent a delegation to the Ramgarh sessions of the Indian National Congress. The delegation, led by J.R. Jayewardene, had an interview with Mahatma Gandhi. It reported later: "we asked him what Ceylon could expect from a free India. Many in Lanka prefer to remain as a dominion in the British empire than to be free and run the risk of being exploited by India which could easily swamp Lanka. Gandhiji layghed and said, 'Ceylon has nothing to fear from a free India.'" (Michael Roberts, Documents of the Ceylon National Congress, quoted by K.M. de Silva.) Gandhi's view of India was romanticized and nowhere near reality.

At the 1955 conference in Bandung, Indonesia, at which the idea of a non-aligned movement was first mooted, Ceylon's prime minister Sir John Kotelawala, in his address, made some critical remarks about the Soviet Union, which had opposed Ceylon's entry into the U.N. Afterwards Nehru demanded to know from Sir John why he had not been shown the script of the speech before Sir John had delivered it. This drew a tart reply from Sir John who told Nehru: "you don't show me

your speeches; I won't show you mine". The matter ended there but it was a clear indication of the Indian prime minister's view of himself as big brother. The incident made Ceylon's leaders even more wary of India than they had been since the two countries became free. Nehru was not the knight in shining armour the world came to think of him as being. He was ambitious for India and unscrupulous in his ambitions.

Soon after independence he marched his troops into Kashmir and Hyderabad and forcibly appropriated those two princely states, which had not been part of British India, into the Indian Union.

In 1949 Nehru forced a treaty on the King of Bhutan under which India assumed responsibility for Bhutan's external relations. Today, forty years later, this treaty is still bitterly resented by the Bhutaneese.

In 1961 Nehru sent his army into Goa, alleging hostile acts by the Portuguese against Indian citizens. The world condemned India but Goa became "Union territory". This offence against the U.N. Charter was greeted with euphoria by Indians:

"The Indian government is riding on the crest of a unique upsurge of enthusiastic public support. Not a single critical voice has been heard here. The Opposition parties have generally acclaimed the 'liberation' of Goa. 'India once again leads the forces of freedom' said Mr. Asoka Mehta, one of the most sober and best-informed critics of the Nehru government".

(New Statesman of 22 December 1961)

The popular acclaim must have gone to Nehru's head. On 9 October 1962 he launched an offensive against China in Ladakh and India's north-east frontier claiming a large extent of Chinese territory for India on the basis of the so-called McMahon line drawn by the British in their imperial hey-day but never conceded by China. The Indian press called the confrontation "aggression" by China. Chinese troops gave the Indian army a severe beating, its famous Fourth Division being cut to pieces. Inexplicably the Chinese

then withdrew without pressing home their advantage. Nehru's death not long after was possibly hastened by this humiliation. The defeat led to a decision by India to build for itself the most powerful army in Asia. India, with a rate of illiteracy perhaps unequalled anywhere in the world, with crippling poverty affecting hundreds of millions of its citizens, rampant disease and malnutrition, with a caste-ridden, malechauvinist national ethic, would venture on a massive programme of militarisation. That this programme was carried through with an impressive wholeheartedness was mainly the achievement of Indira Gandhi who came to power promising to abolish poverty. She was prime minister of India for over 15 years.

If it was Nehru who dreamt up Indian hegemonism as a replacement for British colonialism in the sub-continent, the theoretical framework for the policy was the work of K.M. Panikkar,* whose writings are said to constitute the bible of the Indian diplomatic service. One of his oft-quoted passages says:

"Our vision has been obscured by an un-Indian wave of pacifism. Ahimsa is no doubt a religious creed but that is the creed which India rejected when she refused to follow Gautama Buddha. The Hindu theory at all times was one of active assertion of right, if necessary through the force of arms. It will be clear that Indian freedom can only be upheld by firmly deciding to shoulder, or share at all costs, in active defence of the areas necessary to security".

It was Panikkar's teaching that prevailed in the thinking of the new rulers of India, not Mahatma Gandhi's.

* This Panikkar was (according to M.O. Mathai's Days with Nehru) a slob who wore soiled clothes and left hair oil on the sofas he sat on. Nehru regarded Panikkar with amused contempt. He told Mathai that Panikkar reminded him of an African chief who had a passion for top hats and would present himself on formal occasions wearing his top hat and nothing else. This story, besides telling us something of the man who created India's foreign policy, reveals to us Nehru's crypto-racism.

Indira Gandhi enthusiastically followed the Panikkar doctrine. Having destabilised East Pakistan, leading to the birth of Bangladesh, she adopted a bullying attitude towards the new state. She made an agreement with Sheikh Mujibur about sharing the waters of the Ganges; but soon after his assassination reneged on it. She diverted waters from the Ganges at the Farrukha Dam, 11 miles from Bangladesh border, at the rate of 40,000 cubic feet per second, lowering the river's level in Bangladesh by 6 feet. India's attitude about the waters of the Ganges has been a festering sore in the relations between the two countries.

In his Memoirs Richard Nixon calls Indian leaders hypocritical and Mrs. Gandhi duplicitous.

"She earnestly assured me that India was not motivated in any way by anti-Pakistan attitudes ... I later learned that, even as she spoke, Mrs. Gandhi knew her generals and advisers were planning to intervene in East Pakistan, and were considering contingency plans for attacking West Pakistan as well".

Having successfully destabilised East Pakistan Mrs. Gandhi turned her attention to Sikkim.

The Sikkimese, ethnically and culturally close to Tibetans, had an ancient civilisation. Sikkim was one of the last of the few remaining Buddhist states in the world. Indira supported an opposition group in Sikkim and encouraged it to stage an anti-monarchical rising. She then sent in troops "to restore law and order". She appointed a Chief Executive for Sikkim. Soon after, the monarchy was abolished and Sikkim became India's 22nd state, in April 1975.

India's relations with Sri Lanka remained friendly; but in the 1977 election campaign J.R. Jayewardene, addressing a meeting in Galle, permitted himself a witticism: there were, he said, a cow and a calf in India and a cow and a calf in Sri Lanka. He was referring to Mrs. Gandhi and her son Sanjay and Mrs. Bandaranaike and her son Anura. (Mrs. Gandhi's election symbol was a cow and its calf). This crude remark received wide publicity in India and came to the attention of the imperious Mrs. Gandhi, then in the political wilderness. She never forgot it. Of such trivia is the stuff of history woven. Ten years later, Pranay Gupte, referring to Jayewardene's unwillingness to pay political homage to India wrote:

"This rankled (sic) Mrs. Gandhi, whom Jayewardene once characterised as a cow, and it has irritated her son". (Newsweek 15 January 1987)

The 'cow' remark undoubtedly was the cause of Indira Gandhi's implacable hostility to Jayewardene's Sri Lanka.

In William Shirer's "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich", he tells of Hitler's plan to take over Austria:

"Throughout 1937, the Austrian Nazis financed and egged on by Berlin, had stepped up their campaign of terror. Bombings took place every day in some part of the country ... The Austrian Nazis were to stage an open revolt in the spring of 1938 and ... when Schuschnigg attempted to put it down, the German army would enter to prevent 'German blood being shed by Germans'".

The plan for Czechoslovakia was not much different:

"In 1933 when Hitler became Chancellor ... the Sudeten German Party (was formed) under the leadership of Konrad Henlein ... Henlein sped to Berlin ... after the annexation of Austria and was closeted with Hitler for three hours. Hitler's instructions were that 'demands should be made which are unacceptable to the Czech government'. As Henlein himself summarised the Fuehrer's views: 'We must always demand so much that we can never be satisfied'".

India adopted such techniques. The Tamils were India's "Sudeteners" and, for this purpose, India claimed that the Tamils were ethnic kin to many millions of Indians and were of Indian origin. (The fact that all Lankan ethnic groups were of Indian origin was ignored).

When Jayewardene mishandled the July 1983 ethnic violence to the extent of seeming to encourage Sinhalese chauvinists to run amok among innocent Tamils in reprisal for violence in the north, Mrs. Gandhi acted swiftly to arm the separatists operating from bases in India. Thus began a bloody four year struggle which was euphemistically referred to as a civil war, but was actually India's war-by-proxy against Sri Lanka to assert her hegemony. It ended with the accord formally signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene in Colombo on 29 July 1987 in which the northern and eastern provinces comprising one third of Sri Lanka's land area claimed by the separatists as their "homeland" were to form a single

autonomous state (Subject to a referendum being held within a year in the eastern province to ascertain whether its voters would wish to separate from the north). India would disarm the terrorists and cease to provide logistical support for their war. To enforce the accord Indian troops would move into Sri Lanka.

It was a total victory for India, a defeat all down the line for Sri Lanka. Predictably, Jayewardene claimed the accord as an achievement by him: "The secret of all leaders — military, political, social — is to make the correct decision at the correct time, and that comes by intuition ... Inexperienced people do not get that ... I get that at times". (In an interview with the London Times and the New York Times). Not unpredictably, the world, too, saw it as an act of statesmanship by Jayewardene. It was the statesmanship of the bank teller who hands over the cash to the hold-up man pointing a gun at his head.

Stephen Solarz, chairman of the U.S. House Foreign Relations sub-committee for Asia and the Pacific, wrote to the Nobel Committee in Stockholm proposing Jayewardene and Rajiv Gandhi for the Peace Prize.

Time Magazine reported:

"Jayewardene's pro-Western attitudes and *laissez faire* economic policies have long irritated New Delhi, which describes itself as a non-aligned, socialist-leaning country and sees itself as the dominant force in South Asia. As part of the accord, Jayewardene agreed to deny military use of the naval base at Trincomalee and other Sri Lankan ports 'in a manner prejudicial to India's interests' and promised that foreign broadcasting facilities in Sri Lanka would have no 'military or intelligence purposes'. The latter concession was prompted by Indian concerns about a Voice of America transmitter under construction near the west coast town of Puttalam...

Sinhalese distrust of India runs deep. Over two milleniums, Sri Lanka's Buddhist majority has fought back periodic invasions from Hindu India". (Time: 10 August 1987)

After the Habarana massacre and the Pettah bombing, Jayewardene had finally decided that there was no other recourse left to him but to fight to a finish in the northern peninsula. His troops, under General Cyril Ranatunga, captured Vadamarachchi, the military base of the L.T.T.E.

and were moving on Jaffna when M.G. Ramachandran cried 'genocide' and called on Gandhi to make Jayewardene stop his troops. Exactly what threat was held out by Gandhi was not revealed but it was sufficient to make Jayewardene tell his troops not to advance further. With this, Jayewardene was left without further options. The Tigers next massacred another busload of 32 civilians, 29 of them being Buddhist monks. Events moved fast from this point onwards until Jayewardene's final capitulation.

Rajiv Gandhi sent a flotilla of fishing vessels bearing foodstuffs which he said was "humanitarian relief" for the people of Jaffna. The Lankan navy turned the boats back. In retaliation for this loss of face Gandhi sent some Soviet-built cargo planes escorted by Mirage jets to drop a token quantity of foodstuffs on the peninsula in violation of Sri Lanka's airspace. He claimed he did so to send a "message" to Jayewardene.

Gandhi ran the gauntlet of world-wide criticism for these acts. A senior Indian journalist, Mulgaokar, writing in the Indian Express, said bluntly that India's foreign policy was being run by juvenile delinquents. Christopher Dobson wrote of "the nauseating stink of hypocrisy rising out of Delhi", adding:

The fact is that it is India which is the colonial power in the region today. If the Indian navy had shut off the Palk Strait to Tiger reinforcements and supplies, if in fact Mr. Gandhi had behaved with that rigour he demanded from Britain in our treatment of the Sikhs, the terrorists would have been defeated by now". (Evening Standard, London)

"Mr. Gandhi's resort to big-stick diplomacy in Sri Lanka recalls Indira Gandhi's belligerence with small neighbours. Mr. Gandhi begins to look like his testy and authoritarian mother but without her cunning." (New York Times, editorial)

"A rogue elephant trampling upon its neighbours" (Wall Street Journal, editorial)

"Indian chauvinism makes the situation in Sri Lanka worse". (Die-Welt, Hamburg)

"New Delhi has no scruples ... This can come to a bad end". (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)

But Gandhi was deaf to these criticisms.

He was on a multi-purpose tack: he had to divert attention at home away from the outcry of corruption against his government; he had to win the Haryana election which was round the corner. (Gandhi was humiliatingly defeated in Haryana.) And most important of all, he had to further his dynasty's grand design of Indian hegemonism. He stepped up the pressure, and of a sudden Jayewardene caved in.

The accord was met with violent protests in the south of the island. Thousands of millions of rupees worth of damage was done to government-owned buses, cars, buildings, telephone exchanges, electricity stations etc. An attempt was made on Jayewardene's life in the course of which one minister was killed and several others seriously wounded. Jayewardene was unhurt.

The separatist terrorists were not happy with the accord, either. Their leader, Prabhakaran, said it was a stab in the back; but India had no further use for the Tigers after it had achieved its aims. Lamented Prabhakaran: "we cannot fight India". Reluctantly the Tigers agreed to surrender their arms. They realised that they had been used. (Later Prabhakaran went back on this and decided to fight on).

The U.S.A. hailed the settlement as a great achievement. The State Department, which had flatly turned down Jayewardene's request for help to restore law and order in the north and the east of the island (lest it offend India), readily responded to his post accord request for help to restore law and order in the south. In a press release issued by the United States Information Service in Colombo, it was stated that Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Peck had said "discussions were now going on with the Sri Lanka government to determine what would be appropriate and possible." America's message to Sri Lanka came through loud and clear: "In your part of the world, we have no use for friends without muscle. We'd just as soon you joined the other side".

At the interview he gave the London Times and the New York Times, Jayewardene was asked how he proposed to deal with opposition to the accord from the Sinhalese in the south. Plonking to the last, he replied: "I represent the Sinhalese. My government represents them. (The Sinhalese) have to follow (the accord) otherwise they will be locked up". (Quoted in the Sunday Times of 9 August 1987).

In explaining himself to his countrymen

after the signing of the accord Jayewardene said India would send 1700 troops to serve under Sri Lanka's Brigadier Gerry Silva and that India would compel the Tigers to surrender their arms within 72 hours. Before the ink was dry on the accord 3000 Indian troops landed in Jaffna, including several general officers all outranking Brigadier Silva. This number grew to 7000 in a week. The island was ringed with a large number of Indian warships. It was clear the Indians had come to stay a long while.

Commented Colvin R de Silva to a reporter: "My generation gained our independence from the British Empire. I hope your generation does not have to begin the independence struggle all over again". (Sunday Times: 28 June 1987)

Being Finlandised could, arguably, be a comfortable thing for a small country — it would have no defence expenditure, and perhaps, an occasional crumb may fall its way from the table of the metropolitan power. But India, prisoned in its Hinduistic casteism, is "an area of darkness" (V.S. Naipaul). A small country could not have a more rebarbative suzerain.

Muslim fundamentalism, if it appears harsh and cruel to the modern mind, is still equitable — it is after all, none other than the Old Testament ethic. Islam is totally egalitarian. Hindu casteism, on the other hand, is an appalling pyramidal social structure built on bizarre superstitions and barbarities unmatched in any other part of the world, not even among the savages of the Amazon jungles. There is a never-ending flow of news stories of casteist horrors from India. Suttee, the self-immolation of the Hindu widow on her husband's funeral pyre, banned by the British, is again viewed with approval. Thus:

"Hundreds of villagers, police and government officers looked on while a young Hindu widow hurled herself on to her husband's funeral pyre". (United News of India 1 October 1986)

It is common for a Hindu bride to begin her married life as a servant in her mother-in-law's kitchen. If there is any dispute about the payment of the dowry, the mother-in-law (often with the assistance of the bride's husband) will pour kerosene oil — readily available in the kitchen — on the young woman and set her on fire. Such bride-burnings are pandemic in India.

"At least 1672 Indian women were killed over the past 2 1/2 years in disputes over dowry", Junior Home Affairs Minister P. Chidambaram said today". (Reuter report from New Delhi 23 July 1986).

"Dowry Hunter Cuts off Wife's Breasts".
(Headline in the SUN 9 December 1980 D.P.A. from New Delhi).*

In India there survives, widespread, a form of slavery called indentured labour — it cannot be eradicated because of the appalling poverty of the masses. No African slave in the cotton-fields of the American South ever suffered the miseries of these indentured labourers.

Untouchability persists despite Mahatma Gandhi's preachings. V.S. Naipaul has written:

"The antique violence remained: rural untouchability as serfdom, maintained by terror and sometimes by deliberate starvation...

Untouchables can be killed for wearing their moustaches curling up rather than drooping down".
(India: A Wounded Civilisation).

Child sacrifice, to propitiate barbaric gods, is common:

"Police said 3 children were hit on the head and killed before the temple of a local goddess". (SUN 20 June 1985 D.P.A. from New Delhi)

"A gang beheaded a youth at a temple altar in northern India as a sacrifice to a Hindu goddess".
(Indian Express 23 August 1986)

"Fear of offending the god of measles has led to the deaths of at least 53 slum children in Ahmedabad. The measles would have been treatable but for their parents' determination to remain on good terms with Baliya Bapa, the god of measles".
(Times of India 8 January 1987)

* A February 1994 report says that a Tamil Nadu husband who was not satisfied with the dowry his wife had brought him kept her locked up in a room for three years and every evening syringed blood from her veins which he mixed with his drink of whisky. A report from Barmer has it that police there had got in on the current craze and cut off the penis of a man suspected of kidnapping. A report from Amritsar says that the police there brand the word "PICKPOCKET" on the foreheads of women suspected of theft.

Remarkably, these same gods were worshipped, these same superstitions shared, by the ruling dynasty. Durga Das ("India from Curzon to Nehru and After") has related that Nehru used to consult astrologers. (Quoted by Mervyn Jones in the New Statesman of 24 October 1969). Campaigning for the November 1978 by-election which brought her back to politics, Mrs. Gandhi "spent many hours in the ashram of Sringeri Swami... Prostrating herself at the Swami's feet, she asked for divine blessings in her attempt to cleanse India of the sins of the Janata Party".

(R. Sundar Rajan, New Statesman 2 November 1978)

Capitalists in India buy little children from their poverty-stricken parents and bring them up as prostitutes or mutilate them for employment as beggars. Uttar Pradesh police shoot rural law-breakers to avoid cumbersome court procedures. In Bihar police blind their suspects by pouring acid into their eyes, for similar reasons. All these horrors have been reported in the World's media. Many of them are recounted in Naipaul's books "An Area of Darkness" and "India: A Wounded Civilisation".

The Times of India of 4 September 1987 reported that "around 1000 Hindu families" in Rajasthan still followed a "centuries old tradition" of placing small sacks of sand in the mouths of new-born infant girls who then died of suffocation. They were regarded as "useless eaters". In some regions new-born girls were "left to starve or were given contaminated drinking water..." (Quoted in Weekend 6 September 1987)

India's central government, riddled as it is with corruption, at the highest levels (Rajiv Gandhi sacked his ablest minister V.P. Singh when the latter started investigating allegations of corruption against some of Rajiv's close personal friends) is bent on making India a world power and has little time to deal with the horrors of casteism, poverty, malnutrition, disease and ignorance among the hundreds of millions of India's masses. This then was the metropolitan power into whose clutches Sri Lanka had fallen under Jayewardene's leadership.

Robert B. Goldman writing to the Economist summed up Sri Lanka's predicament:

"Sri Lanka has lost control over both the northern and eastern provinces,

what with Indian troops in charge indefinitely, and the commander of the Tigers running matters there in co-operation with or under the guidance of India. This means — and the agreement seems to stipulate it — that the harbour of Trincomalee, until recently considered a potential strongpoint for western forces, will be 'realigned' to suit Indian terms.

"By extension this means that the Soviet Union has scored a strategic gain by having one of its, 'non-aligned' friends — Mr. Rajiv Gandhi — keep that strategic area under his control. As Mr. Gandhi himself said in a broadcast on August 1st, not only have the Tamils 'got more than they asked for' (in effect, if not name, a separate state) the agreement will also make certain that Sri Lanka returns to the path of 'true non-alignment', which is a euphemism for doing nothing that displeases India or the Soviet Union".
(Economist 15-21 August 1987)

After the accord was signed, the Heritage Foundation, described as a conservative think tank "with close links to the Reagan administration", provided a *drole* afterword to it. The foundation submitted to the administration a report 'A Key Role for the U.S. in a Changing Sri Lanka', prepared by "a senior policy analyst" Kenneth J. Conboy. The report recommended that "Washington take immediate steps to ensure that India's gains in Sri Lanka do not come at the expense of U.S. interests", adding:

"When Washington failed to respond with strong support for Sri Lanka in the conflict it led to a waning of confidence in the U.S. by Sri Lanka which, feeling isolated, concluded it had little choice but to make major concessions towards the Tamil minority and India. The U.S. stands to lose much by the accord. Sri Lankan diplomatic cooperation has helped temper Indian criticism on U.S. (sic) but this will not be forthcoming now... The accord legitimises Indian intervention in Sri Lankan domestic policies".

"This could threaten U.S. interests if it forces Sri Lanka to concede Indian hegemony in South Asia".
(SUN 24 August 1987)

The horse, however, had bolted.

(Concluded)

Nationalisms today : Western Europe and South Asia

S. Sathanathan

Eric J Hobsbawm and Anthony D Smith are two representative western theoreticians. Hobsbawm subscribed to the idea of "nation as progress" during 19th century Western European capitalist development in which "national movements were expected to be movements for national unification or expansion" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 33. Emphasis original). He readily admitted that "the other side of the coin 'nation as progress' was therefore, logically, the assimilation of smaller communities and peoples to larger ones". He hastened to assure that such assimilation is not ethnocide: it "did not necessarily imply the abandonment of old loyalties and sentiments, though it could" (Ibid:39). He used the two notions of administrative incorporation and citizenship to describe the construction of State-civil society relationships in Western European national States. In each country, the bureaucracy expanded and the State "ruled over and administered.... inhabitants directly, and not through intermediate systems of rulers and autonomous corporations.... The nineteenth century revolutions in transport and communications typified by the railway and the telegraph tightened and routinized the links between central authority and its remotest outpost" (Ibid:80-82). This new State-civil society relationship was constructed on the bedrock of "democratizing politics, i.e. of turning subjects into citizens" (Ibid:88). Under conditions of "increasingly unlimited electoralization of politics.... the need for State and ruling classes to compete with rivals for the loyalty of the lower orders therefore became acute" (Ibid:83). He implied that in Western Europe bureaucratic rationality and democratizing politics made national oppression politically counterproductive and virtually impossible. In contrast, attempts to construct culturally homogeneous nation-States, the normative States each encompassing exclusively one nation, in the 19th and early 20th century Central and Eastern Europe led to the expulsion or extermination of minor nations and forced "the greatest mass migration yet known, within and between States" (Ibid:91). State-building by Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian nations in the

former Yugoslavia are examples of the same today.

Smith too supported the idea of "nation as progress" and described it as a process which began with an "ethnic core". He explained the subsequent stages thus: "these subjectively unified communities of culture formed the core around which large and powerful States erected their administrative, judicial, fiscal and military apparatus, and proceeded to annex adjacent territories and their culturally different populations". Smith then drew on the examples of Britain and France: "Under Edward I, for example, the English (Anglo-Norman) State expanded into Wales, destroying the Welsh kingdoms and bringing most Welshmen into the realm as a peripheral cultural community under the domination of the English State. Something similar happened in France under Louis VIII to the *pays d'oc*, notably the County of Toulouse, at the time of Albigensian Crusade" (Smith, 1991:39). In other words, "progress" in constructing unitary national States then is a function of the vulnerability of peoples who were to be annexed as minor nations. "Progress" will be greatest in conditions where such nations are **militarily weak and politically unable to mount an organized defence of their national territory and rights as nations.**

From nation to minority

Smith tends to confuse two inter-related but distinct processes. The first, to take the British example, is the historical formation of the English nation. The evolution of its corresponding nation-State included the **national incorporation** of the English nation. In contrast the political construction of the unitary British national State was achieved by the prior **colonial incorporation** of Scottish and Welsh peoples. His perceptive analysis of the emergence of the English State contrasts sharply with the hazy description of the transformation of the English nation-State into the British national State. He used the notion of a "lateral ethnies", which is a "core ethnies" possessing links with neighbouring ruling groups or classes, to describe the constru-

ction of the British national State through "bureaucratic incorporation" (Ibid:54). He obliquely recognized that military conquest by a "lateral ethnies" could be one way to establish the "links" and "if successful, [the national State] proved able to weld often disparate populations into a single political community based on the cultural heritage of the dominant ethnic core" (Ibid:68).

But a crucial qualitative difference must be recognized. The growth of a nation-state by aggregating outlying sections of its OWN nation in fact consolidated and guaranteed national rights of that nation. In contrast the hegemonic incorporation of OTHER independent nations as minor nations and their unilateral redefinition by the State as subordinate "minorities" who are subject to forced acculturation in order to construct a unitary national State, even if engineered using economic and political leverage, is necessarily coercive and inevitably violates their national rights. Smith slurred over this **political distinction** because he ignored the COLONIAL dimensions of the incorporation. He presented the transformation of the English nation-State into the British national State as merely a question of scale, a "unificatory" continuum from small to large State forms, a part of the progressive local-national-regional-international integration. By ignoring the colonial incorporation of Scottish and Welsh peoples he implicitly justified their subordination to the English major nation and defended the legitimacy of the British national State.

Similar processes of national State-building could be observed in most other Western European national States in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But Hobsbawm concentrated on their undeniably "emancipatory" (Hobsbawm, 1990:164) aspect, the progressive impact of bourgeois democratic revolutions. He dug deep into the European Enlightenment and Age of Revolution to substantiate his belief that the incorporation of weaker nations by a rational bureaucracy was benign and that democratizing politics precluded their outright repression or forced assimilation.

At the level of psychology, Benedict Anderson (1983) employed the notion of "imagined communities" to study nationalism. His analysis of the origins of national consciousness may be valid in the formation of each nation. For instance, it could be argued that when England had been a separate nation, its members who were united by a common idiom may have imagined themselves to be bonded into a community regulated by its own, English, nation-State. But it is wholly fictitious to claim that the Scottish and Welsh peoples voluntarily chose to imagine themselves to be one with the English and willingly subordinated themselves to form the British national State. It is insufficient to argue even that "print capitalism" helped to construct the British "imagined community". Indeed the national movements of Scottish and Welsh peoples, their concern over the exploitative nature of relations with the British State and the response of the English, who never completely accepted the Scots and Welsh, exposed the liberal myth of a "consensus" which supposedly underpinned the "Union". In fact the "Union" was created and has so far been held together by the superior but now declining military and economic power of Westminster. Similar situations could be found in almost all unitary national States. As with Smith, Anderson too formulated his methodology based on the formation of nation-States and then applied it to explain national States, whilst ignoring the political distinction between the two forms. Consequently the notion of "imagined communities" mystified the colonial incorporation of minor nations and masked the intrinsically coercive processes of State-building. In effect it defended the legitimacy of unitary national States.

A crisis of legitimacy

Perhaps the single most important criterion used to legitimize the Western European "civic-territorial" State is the concept of nationality, or membership in a nation, based on citizenship. To justify the modern democratic content of the concept, the devaluation of collective national rights was mystified as a neutral market mechanism which "outbid" other atavistic loyalties; thus argued Smith: "citizenship is used not simply to underline the membership of the nation and differentiate 'us' from 'them' but even more to outbid the claims of competing allegiances and identities, notably ethnic ones.... Again, this is a conception more honoured in the breach than the observance, but it remains the touchstone of progress towards the nationalist ideal of the civic-territorial nation" (Smith, 1991:118). In contrast,

nationality under the "ethnic-genealogical" State in developing countries is in practice, if not in law, determined by inclusion within the ruling "ethnie". Loyalty to competing "identities" (linguistic, religious, etc) invariably took precedence over loyalty to the State as citizens. Members of other hierarchically subordinate "ethnie" were necessarily placed in an inequalitarian relationship with respect to the dominant "ethnie". Democracy, it was said, is foreign to this type of State. Hobsbawm's position was similar: democratizing politics in Western European countries supposedly converted a political community into equal citizens, a process which was absent in non-European countries.

Such political equality between individuals based on the theory of nationality by citizenship, as Smith noted, rarely obtained in practice. In France, for example, language was said to be irrelevant to nationality; but in practice nationality defined by citizenship "meant simply that the French, and anyone else who accepted this definition such as the Magyars, officially recognized only one [French] language within their borders". For Hobsbawm, this ethnocide of a minor nation by the French-speaking major nation was merely a situation where "the French simply neglected the others" (Hobsbawm, 1990:97). In Britain, cultural homogenization virtually decimated the Welsh language. One example of the systematic suppression of Welsh would suffice here. As recently as in the 1920s, Welsh schoolboys who spoke Welsh either in the class room or on the playing field were each forced to wear a notice around his neck; it read in English: "I am ignorant". Indeed the dominance of the English nation was so overwhelming in Britain that the term "multi-culturalism" was rarely used in respect of the Scottish and Welsh cultures. It entered popular usage only with reference to Afro-Caribbean and Asian minorities who settled in Britain in significant numbers in the mid-20th century.

Again, in Belgium the French (major) nation controlled the unitary national State. Despite formal allegiance to the concept of nationality through citizenship, "bureaucratic incorporation" of the Flemish nation included attempts to assimilate the Flemish people through cultural homogenization, by suppressing the Flemish language. For example, French was made the medium of instruction in all Flemish universities. But the Flemish national movement forced a further democratization of the Belgian State at the tail end of the 20th century to create a federal national State in 1993.

Letter

Evening with Zhirinovsky

Intrigued by Chanka Amaratunga's Cosy "Evening with Zhirinovsky" we are tempted to inquire from this head of "a well established and powerful party in a major country of the World", whether prior to December 1993 there were no elections to the Soviet Parliament after what he calls the "collapse of Communism"? If there were, did the results of that election support this Collapse Theory? If Collapsed, why did his paragon of Liberalism, Yeltsin, have to dissolve this freely elected Parliament with heavy artillery before Zhirinovsky was pulled of the petit bourgeois hat? It seems only chance that this particular Fascist Freak can be disclaimed by the mid wives of the Liberal Chintanaya.

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