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DEEP SOUTH: LOUD AND CLEAR

Mervyn de Silva

It was not the victory itself but the margin of the Peoples Alliance polls victory that explains the stunning impact of the Southern province election result. The percentage makes a stronger impression than the number of seats — 53.3% to the UNP's 44.7%. The seats won (32) includes the 2 bonus seats. The UNP won only 23. If the PA/UNP gap (32/23 or even 30/23) does nonetheless make a strong impression, it is by contrast. Up to December last year, the PA Chief Minister Amarasiri Dodangoda could only count on the narrowest of majorities — ONE. Hence the scandalous FRANCISCU affair. Mr. Franciscu crossed over to the government after his late-night "disappearance". Chief Minister Dodangoda had no claim to the post of Chief Minister any more. But if the C.M. lost his post, Franciscu lost all sympathy from the voters of the south — pro-PA or pro-UNP. No

electorate, certainly not a constituency as mature as the Sri Lankan, likes its "verdict" treated with such contempt. It is now clear that this manoeuvre left a very bad taste in the southern voter's mouth when the Council was summarily dissolved to give the UNP another chance at controlling the province. The South is the most important after the Western province. And the PA had captured the Western province as well as the North-western province in the polls held after the assassination of President Premadasa.

The Southern province is one of the most politically conscious constituencies in the island with a strong Leftist tradition. Despite the dramatic decline of the official Marxist parties — the C.P. of Dr. S.A Wickremasinghe and the LSSP of Dr. Colvin, William Silva etc. Anti-UNP radicalism survives. The emergence of the JVP in the 70's is the most striking evidence of an irrepressible radical youth militancy. Unlike the SLFP, this militant Leftism has the spirit and the guts to stand up to the UNP. In this election, it did.

While the number of seats and the majorities at this PC poll do deserve much closer study, it is the number of Parliamentary seats lost by the UNP which must surely worry the Sri Kotha strategists. A simple projection on the Parliamentary screen shows that the UNP has lost 20 of the 21 constituencies. That is a shattering blow to UNP self-confidence. And even more so when the only exception was Balapitiya, President Premadasa's ancestral home.

PREMADASA POPULISM

Premadasa was hardly mentioned in the UNP polls campaign. The more monumental blunder was to ignore PREMADASAISM or PREMADASA POPULISM.

Mr. Premadasa's unending debate with the IMF-World Bank was that the poorest of the poor must be protected from the severe shocks and burdens of "structural adjustment". He didn't win the debate but he did extract enough concessions to introduce "janasaviya" etc. What's more, he dramatised his "concern" for the poor and the disadvantaged by projects like the presidential mobile secretariat. He worked more outside Colombo than in the city, despite the fact that he was a city-slicker himself. The Colombo municipal council was where the young Premadasa

started his political career. However reluctantly, the World Bank and the IMF accommodated President Premadasa's insistent demands.

His electoral politics was based also on working coalition that was much broader than the majority Goigama-Buddhist-Sinhala (GBS, the Shavian) and certainly not confined to the K.G.B., Kandyan Goigama Buddhist. Sri Lanka did have a Kandyan as Governor-General, Mr. William Goppallawa but it was a ceremonial post. Power under the Soulbury constitution and the 1972 (Colvin) Constitution introduced by the United Front was firmly placed in the hands of the elected prime minister. It was the 1978 JF constitution that made way for an all-powerful Executive Presidency.

DEEP SOUTH

President D.B. is the first Kandyan to be the Executive President. So we have two Kandyan leaders poised for the "Big One" in November/December. It was singularly unfortunate that Mr. Wijetunge had to fight his first major election battle in the deep south — south of the Bentara Ganga, as the phrase goes. The deep South.

This point was sharply dramatised when the frontpage of the national newspapers showed President DB, flanked by DUNF leader and ex-UNP minister Gamini Dissanayake, and Dr. Sarath Amunugama, former Secretary, Ministry of Information. In the ears of the average southerner, the "voice" was alien. This has little to do with President DB's political program or the economic policies his administration pursues. It is a matter of mass psychology, instinctive sympathies and prejudices.

So the two main contenders for the "Big One" have now six months in which to present a program and create an image that will win mass support. In the final analysis, the minorities — the Tamils, the Muslims, the plantation vote the Christians and non-goigama vote would prove the decisive factor.

IMF POLICY

Premadasa's populism did not meet ALL the challenges created by IMF 'structural adjustment' but it did give the poor and the deprived the impression of a

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leader who "cared". The cushioning effect of his poverty alleviation programs did keep a majority of the poor with the Premadasa regime, although that vote was steadily eroded. The PC polls result, which was no great victory for the UNP, indicated that the burden of prices had begun to alienate the lower-middle class, the salaried public servant in particular.

Last year, World Bank Vice-president for Africa Edward 'Kim' Jaycox made an extraordinary speech at the African-American Institute's annual conference, observes Ross Hammond. He reflected on the failures of the Bank policies and programmes in Africa. He said "We are now insisting that the governments generate their own economic reform plans. We'll help, we'll critique, we'll eventually negotiate and we'll support those things which seem to be reasonably making sense but we're not going to write these plans".

EPRLF against delinking

The EPRLF has asked the government to abandon any plans to delink the merged North and East. In a statement to the "Island" the EPRLF General Secretary Suresh Premachandran said: "We wish to caution the government that the unilateral implementation of any decision to hold a referendum without the consent of the Tamil people and their polity would amount to the ridiculing of those Tamil organisations which laid down arms and entered the democratic mainstream.

He called upon all political parties, diplomatic missions and the international community to urge the government to withdraw its attempts to demerge the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

A Lankan madam in Singapore

A madam from Maradana is running a rent-a-maid racket in Singapore. Police arrested her after three Sri Lankan housemaids complained of being "victimised" by the madam, named only Vasanthi and her two male accomplices. Police found more than a hundred Lankan passports belonging to housemaids on the madam's payroll. The Singapore media has splashed the story as a "rent-a-maid racket".

TRENDS

Protection for FTZ girls

Working girls in the Katunayake Free Trade Zone are to be protected from lechers, by the police. A plan includes "curative as well as preventive measures". Among them: deterrent punishment to those caught preying on FTZ girls (form of punishment not disclosed); strengthe-

ned police patrolling of FTZ locality; and better lighting for alleys, lanes and byways in the vicinity.

An alarming number of molestations had made these measures necessary, a police spokesman said.

Tab on NGOs

Following an NGO attempt at Geneva to push through an anti Sri Lanka resolution at the Human Rights Commission session, the Sri Lanka government has decided to closely monitor the activities of all NGOs operating in the island. Though a disclosure in due course was announced the identity of the NGO involved was not revealed.

A Government spokesman said that "foreign elements" backing the LTTE were also behind this NGO.

Batticaloa goes to TELO - PLOTE

In the recent Eastern Province local bodies elections the Batticaloa Municipal Council was captured by an "Independent Group" formed by TELO and PLOTE combined.

BRIEFLY...

Base intact, says UNP

Mr Cooray is not unduly upset by the UNP's humbling defeat at the Southern Provincial Council elections. "I must

emphasise that the UNP has not lost its base vote and the traditional UNPers have not deserted the party", the party's General Secretary Housing Minister Sirisena Cooray said. The SLFP-led People's Alliance won with 54.52 per cent of the votes, collecting 32 seats in the 55 seat Council. The UNP had 43.91 of the votes and 23 seats.

Had it been a parliamentary election under the old first past the post system the UNP would have been reduced to one seat (Balapitiya), the only electorate it won in the Southern Province.

A new era dawns, says SLFP

After the convincing win at the mini election in the South, SLFP General Secretary Dharmasiri Senanayake said in a media message: " (It) heralded the dawn of a new era in Sri Lanka's political scene during this election year. It sealed the fate of a regime which had lost its mandate long ago. It has paved the way for a new order, ensuring democratic freedom and the right to live".

"Iran-Gate Scandal"

The Iranawila People's Solidarity Movement is circulating a 60-page book titled VOA-Iranawila, sub titled Iran-Gate Scandal, listing the threats to local life styles and environment. The church led agitation against the construction of this massive Voice of America station on this fishing village continues.

Muslim Congress polled the highest Muslim votes in the East

Iftthikar Wahid

SRI LANKA MUSLIM CONGRESS	-	94,770 - 61.85%
ERAVUR PS IND I	-	15,584 - 10.17%
KATTANKUDY PS IND I	-	3,438 - 02.24%
KARUNKODITIVU PS IND I	-	2,377 - 01.55%
* UNITED NATIONAL PARTY	-	27,348 - 17.85%
* SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY	-	9,700 - 06.34%
		<u>153,217</u>

* Computed on Following basis

TOTAL VALID MUSLIM VOTES	=	153,217
Less MUSLIM VOTES POLLED BY SLMC AND MUSLIM IND. GROUPS	=	116,169
MUSLIM VOTES POLLED BY OTHERS	=	<u>37,048</u>

37,048 Muslim votes apportioned proportionately to UNP and SLFP according to the overall percentage polled by the parties.

The clear message from the above is SLMC polled 61.85% of the total Muslim votes polled.

A Turn in the South

Chanaka Amaratunga

My title is borrowed from the travelogue by V.S. Naipaul. The Sri Lankan South like its American counterpart has a distinct identity and to a significant degree its own political flavour. It seemed to me that during the past month when the good and the great of our principal political camps, aided by the not so good and the not so great of different political hues, descended on the South to seek its votes at the Provincial Council Election of 24th March 1994, its people reacted with a combination of pleasure, irritation, cynicism and amusement at the attention that was heaped upon them. Now that the people of the South have given an emphatic verdict I would like to indulge in some reflections on that verdict.

It was Adlai Stevenson who said "God bless partisanship. It is democracy's life blood". I could not agree more. My own instincts are always deeply partisan, I am always inclined to take sides, to decide which point of view or which personalities I prefer and am deeply suspicious of those who clothe themselves in the slippery garments of a specious neutrality. But although neutrality is often an indefensible course, objectivity is not always incompatible with partisanship. The intelligent partisan can and must view the object of his support in the plain light of reality. One can do one's cause no good if one cannot recognize the truth and act on it — it is hardly possible to achieve any worthy object ensconced in a fool's paradise.

It is no secret that the Liberal Party to which I belong, is allied with the United National Party and that some of my colleagues, Asitha Perera, Alexander Weeraratne, Kamal Nissanka and I actively campaigned for the UNP at the Southern Provincial Council Election. It is a fact that I addressed twenty four public meetings in support of the UNP campaign. My support and my sympathies were thus

with the UNP but I hope this does not deprive me of a degree of objectivity in assessing this campaign. I should perhaps add that my impressions were formed largely from participation at UNP meetings (since it was difficult for me to listen at People's Alliance meetings except very briefly) and from conversations with a wide cross section of Southern voters.

I must confess straightaway that I, like so many others including ardent supporters of the PA got this result wrong. My own assessment was that the UNP would obtain a narrow victory obtaining a maximum of 30 seats and more probably about 28 seats.

What did occur, was that I underestimated the negatives of the UNP campaign. For the Southern Provincial Council Election was **lost** by the UNP rather than **won** by the PA. In the celebrated phrase used in reverse when President Premadasa won the Presidential Election of 1988 while Mrs. Bandaranaike had been the favourite, on this occasion, the UNP snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory.

How did this happen ?

In reflecting on this, it is necessary to understand the true dimensions of this result. In terms of votes the UNP obtained 43.9% at the Southern Provincial Council Election of March 1994 as opposed to the 47.1% it obtained in the Southern Provincial Council Election of May 1993. The People's Alliance obtained 54.5% of the vote now, as opposed to 37.3% of the vote in 1993. This represents a decline of the UNP vote of approximately 3% and an increase in the PA vote by approximately 18%. While the decline in the UNP votes though significant, does not seem substantial, the increase in the PA vote seems phenomenal.

From this we arrive at the first erroneous assumption of the UNP campaign. President D.B. Wijetunge and those who have identified themselves with him appear to have made the rather naive assumption that with the divisions and confusion in the Democratic United National Front and the return of its Leader Mr. Gamini Dissanayake to the UNP, the DUNF vote which was almost 14% in the South in 1993 would fall into the UNP pile. This super-optimistic assumption was not shared by serious UNP strategists and campaigners including most of the UNP MPs from the South who estimated that 1/3 of the DUNF vote of 1993 would go to the UNP while 2/3 would go to the Alliance. On a merely rational analysis this seemed to me too, to be a likely outcome. Contrary to the facile belief that the DUNF vote was an exclusively UNP vote the decline in the PA vote in 1993 (37.3%) as opposed to votes of the SLFP and left in the 1991 local Election (44.0%) suggests that in the South the DUNF vote had a substantial component of disaffected SLFPers. It was also evident that in 1993 the DUNF obtained a high proportion of the new (youth) votes which are often votes of protest. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the UNP and even those like me, did not imagine that the DUNF vote would go en bloc to the PA which is precisely what appears to have happened.

Even an amalgam of the PA and DUNF votes would have taken the PA in 1994 to the 50.3% which they obtained together in 1993. A further 4% of the vote has been garnered by the victorious Alliance for which other explanations must be sought. These explanations are not unconnected to the failure of the UNP to obtain any DUNF votes.

Before I address myself to these explanations, a word must be written about the magnitude of the UNP defeat. The UNP

The writer is leader of the Liberal Party.

vote at this election remains a substantial 44%. Nevertheless, the anti-UNP vote never reached the substantial proportion of 54.5% in any province outside the North and East in the past twenty four years. The enormity of this is emphasised when one notes that in terms of the polling divisions that constitute the former parliamentary constituencies the score was 20 for the PA and only 1 for the UNP. Ten months ago the score was 12 polling divisions for the UNP and 10 for the PA. What has happened in this period to dramatically effect the balance of forces?

There can be little doubt that such factors as the negative image of individual UNP politicians at the Provincial and well as the national level (from the area) did have a bearing on the result. But this factor which was present even in 1993 could not have been decisive.

The principal reason for the decline of the UNP in the South is that the absence of President Premadasa was sorely felt in a variety of ways. In the Hambantota District this factor was, crucial, in the Matara District decisive, and in the Galle District, significant. With the death of President Premadasa the energetic pursuit of development in the rural areas and the deep commitment to welfare measures ended. Midday meals for school students had ended, uniforms were no longer being distributed and Janasawiya has been delayed. People accustomed to seeing their President energetically pursuing improvements to their lot at first hand when the late President was in office have reacted sharply against a remote and laid back Presidency removed from the people and pursuing idiosyncratic goals which fail to touch the lives of ordinary people.

President Wijetunge's quixotic pursuit of ultra Sinhala nationalism bordering on racism, which was his exclusive campaign theme has been utterly rejected by the people of the South who (as I can testify as one who listened to some of his speeches and observed the reactions of the crowds to them) reacted to them in bore-

dom or bewilderment. The presidential slogan pronounced with such gusto 'Eelam is not to be given in this epoch' (Eelam denna me kape) soon became a subject of humour to UNP campaigners and the average attender of public meetings. An attitude at once immoral and disastrous for national unity as well as for the political prospects of the UNP in Sri Lanka as a whole, has utterly failed even in the South where the minority vote was small and which was allegedly the home of Sinhala nationalism. The failure of the President's exclusive theme, which overshadowed the more rational and successful themes of other campaigners including the Prime Minister and Anura Bandaranaike on economic issues, the utter incompetence and paucity of vision of the Opposition, its lack of commitment to liberal democracy etc is further confirmed by the humiliation of the Sinhala Mahasammata Bhumiputra Pakshaya, a party of fanatical Sinhala racism. One of the most splendid consequences of this election was that the N SSP which stands for the right of self-determination of the North and East, obtained 5.9% of the vote at Ratgama, the home constituency of ex-naval rating Vijitha Rohana (who attacked Rajiv Gandhi) who led the list of SMBP, while his own party obtained 0.7% of the vote in the same constituency.

The impression created that the current Government was distancing itself from the work and the memory of President Premadasa was also a negative factor. Having addressed 24 public meetings in the South and having attended several more I can say confidently that the one sure reference that drew spontaneous applause at UNP meetings was a complementary reference to President Premadasa. The abandonment by the UNP leader of a significant electoral asset, perhaps erroneously influenced by the critics of the party, contributed substantially to the UNP's undoing.

It should be recognized also that young voters, particularly the better educated young were substantially anti-UNP. If

measures are not taken to overcome this, future elections too will produce bad results for the UNP and its allies. It must be recognized that there are many who feel that the UNP has abused power, that it has acted sometimes in an unfair, authoritarian and excessively partisan manner. This image must be addressed by the introduction of political reform. The open economy must be complemented by open politics.

As the UNP General Secretary, Minister Sirisena Cooray has said in response to the results, the UNP has retained a substantial base vote at almost 44%. It is by no means impossible for it to recover before Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. But for it to do so it must reestablish the winning coalition of voters and parties which President Premadasa had so successfully established. The UNP must win back the minorities and demonstrate that while it is the party of the market economy and enterprise it is also the party of generosity by restoring the welfare and development priorities of the Premadasa era. It must demonstrate that it and not a coalition of leftists, opportunists and feudalists, will give the lead to an agenda of liberal democratic reform.

An this can only be done by a radical change both of priorities and of leadership. Only if this is done can the verdict of the South on 24th March 1994 be prevented from extending itself to the whole country.

Return

*Spielberg's jinx is broken.
The fences are unmended.
The horses are wild again.
Winter howls in vain
For my heart is made warm
By a woman who has come again.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

An obstacle to South Asian Co-operation ?

Bertram Bastiampillai

Among the vital challenges that South Asia will have to meet in the coming years, most significant will be the challenges of alleviating poverty through economic development, conserving the environment through intercountry cooperation in the subcontinent, and solving regional as well as global problems such as arms and nuclear proliferation. Both India and Pakistan have a critical and crucial role to play if the South Asian region as a regional entity is to contend with these formidable issues. But it is from the tensions that persist and prevail between India and Pakistan that an impediment to closer regional cooperation in South Asia, it is feared, could arise. Crucial to successful regional cooperation will be India-Pakistan relations.

An arms race in South Asia really exists only between India and Pakistan as also there exists among them a race for nuclear superiority. A single but strong hindrance to regional cooperation and cohesion stems from "the one versus the other" syndrome which has characterized and continues to characterize India-Pakistan relations. Unsurprisingly, hence it is in these two countries, specially and for long, that economic planners had been competing with military strategists and tacticians for scarce resources. Consequently security concerns have grown worse, and stunted inter-state, and thereby regional cooperation.

More recently, there has also been another obstacle to regional collaboration that has become violently manifest in India owing to a trend that has grown strong there. On earlier occasions too, religious unrest had erupted sporadically in the subcontinental country, but it often had been contained within the national boundaries without much difficulty. But the religious disturbances of December 1992 caused following a group of Hindus destroying a mosque in Ayodhya led to volatile repercussions in the bordering countries, particularly in Pakistan and Bangladesh, both of which are overwhelmingly Islamic in population. The "fall out"

was so bad as to lead to a postponement of the annual summit meeting of the Heads of Governments in the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. And when the Heads of Governments did meet later the atmosphere was not so warm or cordial.

There is more than one cause that accounts for the implacable mistrust that has been characteristically endemic between India and Pakistan ever since the two countries emerged as independent entities. But now the threat from a section of the Hindus in India to set up a Hindu State, *Hindutva*, has added more venom to the suspicions, fears and security concerns of these two principal countries of the region. No doubt, India as well as her South Asian neighbours have to be vigilant to ensure that demonstrations of religious intolerance would not increase further the existing suspicions within the region particularly of Pakistan, and retard a more meaningful growth of regional cooperation.

Fortunately, Islamic fundamentalism has not posed a threat to the relations between the countries of South Asia but one cannot discount the danger of extreme Hindu revivalism in India triggering off reactive Islamic upsurges and reprisals, within and outside India. Then the fears owing to security that assail both India and Pakistan can only worsen and obstruct co-operation between the states and in the region ever more. Also, the fear expressed on February 24, 1993 in the United States Senate that "the arms race between India and Pakistan poses perhaps the most probable prospect for future use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons", again cannot be entirely written off. After all the rivalry between India and Pakistan is too deep rooted either to evaporate easily or to be eradicated soon by rational solution. Hostility and suspicion of each other has been a way of life for generations and unfortunately is not likely to be easily obliterated.

In reviewing how fears over security hamper co-operation, especially between India and Pakistan, and without India-Pa-

kistan co-operation there is little prospect of South Asian Regional Co-operation, the record of relations in the immediate past between these two countries is as important as their relations since independence in August 1947.

Of the South Asian countries, only Pakistan and India were more directly affected by the Cold War. Although the Cold War had ended, and the military rivalry of the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union had petered out the earlier arming of India and Pakistan, the allies of these two powers, had undoubtedly contributed towards aggravating their rivalry. And now it is possible, moreover, to continue that rivalry which had got stimulated by the added strength which the bequest of modern weapons had certainly reinforced.

The post Cold War scene in South Asia in regard to India and Pakistan, no doubt, indicated a dismantling of the past equation of strategic alliances. Also, there followed a change in the attitudes and practices of the powers and in the powers themselves that had lent political and military buttressing to both India and Pakistan. India could no longer take for granted the former Soviet Union's sure and certain diplomatic support at international levels or forums; there is now no such Soviet Union. More materially and vitally, India has also lost the earlier strategic support and defence supplies which the Soviet Union had provided her with. Neither the Commonwealth of Independent states nor will the Russian republic now come to India's support in similar fashion. For instance, this became quite clear over the "rocket engine" issue.

True, there was a renewal in September 1991 for another 20 years of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed in 1971, but it is now not of much use. As a commentator from Moscow remarked after the liquidation of the Soviet Union: "Officially the treaty is seemingly in effect. But in practise, there is no one in our side to implement it. Indeed further negotiations with the Russian government had proved inconclusive, especially on whether the security clauses should be retained". India cannot hope to obtain the

earlier "friendship prices" or "easy payment schedules" for her defence imports. As a result there has been a grave handicap to India's readiness to engage in combat to ward off sudden contingencies. India's military potential and preparedness has been somewhat blunted, and this consequence of the post cold war years could be an indirect blessing as it could contribute to lessen Pakistan's apprehensions and security concerns vis-a-vis India, and be more conducive to ease strains over security apprehensions between Pakistan and India.

This however may be a premature conclusion because India has shifted more in recent times towards the United States in order to find support. There indeed had been signs of such a stance even earlier when Indira Gandhi had established friendly relations with President Ronald Reagan during the Cancun Summit of 1981 on North-South relations. Moreover, the relations between Rajiv Gandhi and the other Prime Ministers of India with the United States had never badly plummeted since then. But India has still to define the issues specifically related to the character and volume of the Indian and United States co-operation in the defence and economic areas. More time and endeavour would be needed to forge a relationship with the United States before India could feel confident that she has found an alternative to the former Soviet Union from a strategic point of view. In the contemporary thinking of the United States the chances of such a relationship seems remote, and not so long ago India appeared to be not too happy with the US views on Kashmir.

Of course, in the rapidly changing current scene India could weigh other options available, such as forging closer relations with Europe, China, Japan, and even with the buoyant and lively economies of the Asia-Pacific region. No doubt, some trends in this direction are discernible but nothing tangible or promising has happened as yet. But evidently in the new international environment, India's propensity seems to be not to lean on one single nation whether it be in strategy, arms supply or in economic and trade relations. Nor will she replace her old relationship with the former Soviet Union with her new relationship with the United States. More likely will be a more active and earnest multi-dimensional foreign policy, including a further strengthening of relations with China so as to enhance India's image and position as a regional power. With China, recent developments indicate that relations are certainly turning to be strongly

warmer. Yet, just now, India still has cause to be seriously anxious with respect to the management of her security concerns especially in regard to Pakistan within the South Asian region. Therefore the recent changes in Indo-China relations do not necessarily give too much promise of closer or early co-operation between the two longtime hostile neighbours.

Pakistan is in a no better situation; it indeed appears worse. The uncertain and violently disturbed situation in Afghanistan poses concern for Pakistan even if the withdrawal of the Soviet Union had given her some solace immediately. Furthermore, in the equation of the United States the strategic significance of Pakistan has got sharply, although not totally, discounted following the break down of the Soviet Union and the consequences of the Gulf War. Hence Pakistan has been left without the ready assistance of a past ally to be taken for granted.

The United States however has now forgotten to a fair extent, her earlier security relations with Pakistan. Security aid to Pakistan from the United States had been stopped under the Pressler Amendment from October 1990. Indeed, the future of the United States-Pakistan relationship has taken a different turn in present times.

Pakistan however has endeavoured to salvage much of the earlier relationship, and even important quarters such as the Pentagon, the State Department, and the Congress would wish to preserve an alliance with her although the character of the alliance could never be the same.

The United States dismissed suggestions that closer US-India ties would inevitably lead to worsening relations with the rest of South Asia. "We are trying..... to have excellent relationships with every member of the SAARC community.... And we are not interested in forming any kind of new relationship which would drive a wedge between India and any other country in the subcontinent". (Griffin).

Washington seems to be bent on continuing a new sort of strategic co-operation with Pakistan notwithstanding the Pressler amendment on nuclear proliferation. Evidence of a transformation in the former relations has been furnished by the slight yet notable change in stance in the United Nations position on Kashmir; the United States has made clear that a solution could have been found within the ambit of the Simla Agreement of 1972 between India and Pakistan, although little had happened as a sequel to it. Also, Pakistan

has been told not to support the Kashmiri and Punjabi militants who are waging a war of secession against the Indian state, while in turn India has been cautioned not to ignore human rights, especially in Kashmir.

One step that Pakistan had taken to deal with the change wrought in the strategic relationship with the United States could be seen in her attempt to redefine the relations with the successor republics to the Soviet Union. Pakistan views the Central Asian Islamic states as the future arena of its diplomatic and economic initiatives. It foresees a new economic region emerging in a network of Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, and the Central Asian Muslim republics. In November 1992 the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) which already comprised Pakistan, Iran and Turkey saw Afghanistan and the Central Asian Muslim states enter into it. The interest of Pakistan in the ECO can mean in turn a lessening of interest in the SAARC and above all pose a security concern to other States such as India because of the banding together of countries on a religious basis.

Russian support and the aid of other republics had been sought on issues concerning Pakistan's security against India. The vote on Pakistan's proposal for South Asia to be a nuclear arms free zone in the United Nations, and the Russian "acknowledgment" of the proposal of Pakistan on Kashmir when Vice President Alexander V. Rutskoi visited in December 1991 can be reckoned perhaps as some success in this respect. To add to this comes the more recent statement of an official of the United States that Jammu and Kashmir constituted "disputed territory". But it may really not mean any tilt in favour of Pakistan. Nevertheless there is no doubt that all this proves how sensitive Kashmir is in India-Pakistan security and politics.

But the prospects of such support forthcoming always in favour of Pakistan are uncertain and look bleak. It is more likely that the present Russian republics and the Central Asian republican partners in the Commonwealth would prefer to be not overtly or overtly supportive of Pakistan in the India-Pakistan dispute. The former Soviet Union had been forthright on pronouncing a regional approach to solve the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the Kashmir issues. The Rutskoi-Ishaq Khan Statement too really reiterated the usual Soviet position of wanting the issue resolved peacefully through negotiation.

US model not right for South Asia

Batuk Vora

Here is a development of immense interest and importance for the Indian economists and academicians involved in chalking out the country's development strategy. The "structural adjustments" prescribed by the World Bank for Third World countries face a strong Japanese opposition — and for a fundamental reason — inside the governing body of the World Bank Japan is the second largest contributor after the United States.

The Japanese stance results from the realisation that their kind of capitalism was different from the American one, contrary to their earlier understanding through the 1980s that both were alike.

Better system

The Japanese are now asserting that their system is not only different but superior to the American style of economics, dominated as it is by the hard-core conservatives.

Japan has started to reject the economic advice that American academics and bank officials are giving to some Third World countries, including India. The structural adjustment loans, started by the World Bank since the 1980s require the recipient countries to meet certain conditions. These consist of eliminating tariffs and restrictions on foreign investment, privatising public banks, eliminating subsidies for local industries and removing any control on credit and currency. This also gradually eliminates the active role of government in planning.

The World Bank primarily provided loans since 1945 for dams, schools, roads and other infrastructure projects in the Third World. It changed since the 1980s when structural adjustment loans to developing nations were opened up.

The Japanese officials are arguing that these developing countries should look to East Asia rather than to the US and the

Great Britain for their model of capitalist development. The role of the governments in this East Asian model remains stronger. The ideal of the American conservatives is total emphasis on privatisation — what former President Bush used to describe as "thousand points of light."

The Japanese became more assertive after the East European and Russian economies crumbled under the burden of the World Bank sponsored "shock therapy". The Bank's other directors no longer found the Japanese argument easy to be dismissed. A study at the internal level was reluctantly undertaken but the US and UK directors opposed to make it public. The first time, it was in 1991 October's annual meeting of the World Bank that Japan dissented.

Japan's executive director at the World Bank, Mr. Masaki Shitatori, vigorously campaigned for the publication of that internal study report. Finally the Bank's new President, Mr. Lewis Preston, agreed to publish only a summary and commissioned a new public study under the control of the Bank's directors. A new kind of tactics was thus adopted to challenge the Japanese.

The Bank has now published that specially-commissioned study report — "The East Asian Miracle". According to the commentator, John Judis, of the *In These Times* weekly of Chicago, "this document is made into a masterpiece in obfuscation or bewilderment... While the factual accounts of the different countries are useful and accurate, the Bank's economists have superimposed their own ideological perceptions on it.

Facts evaded

The Japanese argument has been sought to be diluted and confused by presenting a plethora of debating devices used to evade the facts of East Asian success."

By comparing Hong Kong with South Korea, the Bank officials come to the conclusion that "there is no single East Asian model, as such." In reality, no one would even suggest Hong Kong — a longtime British colony and an outpost of London's financial district — as a model for Ukraine or Nigeria. Then they talk about a model all right, but given an example of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia (South East Asia) as more relevant to other developing countries than the success of Taiwan, Japan or South Korea (North Asia). They insist that these nations' success have nothing to do with "industrial policy" and government intervention.

The study asserts that the Asian countries succeeded because they paid attention to the fundamentals of fiscal and market discipline championed by the World Bank.

Disappointment

This assertion has already been challenged by the South Korean economist, Mr. Jene kwon. In a paper that will appear in the journal *World Development*, Mr. Kwon shows that in South Korea, the industries that enjoyed the highest increase in output, productivity and sales were those subsidised and overseen by the government. Japan and Taiwan present the same kind of results.

Now the Japanese officials have expressed their disappointment with the report. John Judis notes that at an October breakfast meeting at the Economic Strategy Institute, Japanese Finance Ministry official Eisuke Sakakibara reaffirmed Japan's conviction that America's and the Bank's "shock therapy" strategy was ill-suited for developing nations. Mr. Sakakibara, the author of an impressive new study *Beyond Capitalism: The Japanese Model of Market Economics*, also attributed part of the upheaval in Russia to Mr. Yeltsin's

acceptance of the dictums of the World Bank.

The Japanese had begun complaining about the Bank's aid policies in the early 1990s. They pointed out that Japan, Korea and Taiwan developed according to a far different model. In the East Asian 'dragons', the governments worked closely with business to develop strategies for growth. Nationalised banks gave low-interest loans and grants to selected industries. Governments restricted foreign investment to maintain control over the direction of economic development. Subsidies were granted to business — in exchange for specific performance requirements. Planners placed high priority on becoming competitive through higher productivity rather than through lower wages.

Those who followed the American model have floundered since the 1960s. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand grew three times as fast as Latin American and South Asian countries and five times faster than sub-Saharan Africa.

A recently published work, *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* edited by Wolfgang Sachs, Zed Books, London, throws enough light on this subject. Some of the contributors blast the idea that the US (and European) model represents the ideal end-goal of the historical process. The environmental crisis reveals the failure of this model, more than anything else. "If all countries of the South were to follow the industrial West, five or six planets would be needed to serve as mines and waste dumps... Western models would be rather seen as an aberration in the course of history", wrote Mr. Sachs.

Lesson for India

The Japanese have not gone in their critique of the American model to this extent but their challenge touches a vital point of great debate — the role of the governments. Where does India fit in here? Indian economists, academicians and ministries grappling with the country's development strategy have to wake up and take cognisance of the Japanese line and recast their development path now.

— IPA

How important is South Asia for the Americans ?

Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema

Appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations sub-committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Robin Raphel stressed that America's vital interests in South Asia include halting proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, promoting democratisation, human rights, economic reforms, encouraging trade and investment, development, population planning and resisting ecological deterioration. Few days later while addressing the Asia Society she reiterated the American interests in South Asia adding combating terrorism and narcotic trafficking to the already announced list.

In both speeches she highlighted the linkage between the creation of the Bureau for South Asian Affairs and the growing importance of the region for the Americans. But she also forcefully stressed that with the end of the Cold War, regions such as South Asia have gained increased importance because of America's global concerns. Does this mean that South Asia has been elevated to a higher rung on the American policy priority ladder?

Generally, South Asia has always remained an area of peripheral and derivative interests for the US. There is little that Americans obtain from this region which can be termed as crucial for their economy. Until recently neither American investments nor the volume of trade with the region was substantial. Almost always, the main consideration governing US South Asia policy has been its global pursuits. After the Cold War, the threat of nuclear proliferation seems to have contributed towards the enhanced American concerns for South Asia than other interests. While almost all the listed interests do contribute to some degree towards the

formulation of American South Asian policy, some do more than others.

Robin Raphel's list of American interests can be subdivided into two categories. Those which require immediate attention and those which are showpieces designed to make America look good but not necessarily be pursued with vigour.

Among the real interests, the American commercial interests and the quest for a non-proliferation regime seem to be on top of the list. South Asia is the third largest recipient of American development aid and the various US administrations have poured in more than 26 billion dollars in the form of economic assistance since partition. Further, the post Cold War period is witnessing vastly accelerated American commercial activities in South Asia. For obvious reasons, India gets the largest chunk of both investment and trading. To further expand the economic activities, the US supports the ongoing financial and commercial reforms. Since the US commerce department has already designated India as one of the ten big emerging markets of the world, India is viewed by the Americans as the harbinger of economic growth in the region. Thus increased economic and commercial activities of the Americans in India are in order and understandable. But despite this, the American influence in this areas has not grown. The Indians recognise the benefits of increased American commercial activities, but they give the impression that more is being done by the Indians rather than by the Americans to attain the current level of commercial interaction between the two countries. The second area of American interest revolves around nuclear non-proliferation. Ostensibly, this is an area to which President Clinton has accorded high priority. The US recognizes that both India and Pakistan are potential

nuclear states and that the trend should be reversed. However their policy in this behalf is flawed. The Pressler Amendment which is meant to prevent Pakistan's drift towards nuclearisation has had the opposite impact. It has let India off the hook. Prior to the application of the country specific Pressler Amendment to South Asia, the prevention of the area's nuclearisation was not all that difficult. It has changed now. Pakistan has to increase its reliance on nuclear capability as its conventional capability is badly hit by this Amendment. The result is the whole region's slow drift towards nuclearisation. Does this serve the American objectives in the area? Certainly not.

The recent statement of US Under Secretary of State International Security Affairs Lynn Davis that US non-proliferation policy will look at both India and Pakistan equally seems to be a first step in the right direction. The recently announced even-handed unclear policy of the Americans has many important dimensions. It seems that Pakistan will not be single out on the nuclear issue. Either this or that punitive measures would be simultaneously applied to both India and Pakistan. It also appears that the US has more or less realised that the best approach towards South Asia's nuclear issue is one that is regional.

How much of this policy is different from the previous American policies in South Asia? During the 1965 Indo-Pak war, the US imposed arms embargo and justified this on the grounds of even-handed approach. They disregarded the fact that Pakistan's arms procurement dependency upon US sources was over 80%, whereas India's arms procurement from America was less than 20%.

With this in mind, we would like the the US to spell out what exactly it means that from now on its non proliferation policy will look at both India and Pakistan equally? Robin Raphael's apprehension seems to be well founded that the US needed to navigate carefully in South Asian troubled waters as there exists a 'deep reservoir of suspicions and hostility between India

and Pakistan'. It becomes even more necessary to clearly spell out the parameters of this even-handed policy to avoid any confusion.

Among the American interests in South Asia that make the US look good in the world, include its repeatedly expressed enthusiasm and support for human rights and democracies. In almost all major speeches delivered by senior American officials, the theme of respect for the sanctity of human rights is vociferously projected. But the experience suggests that this stance has more froth than substance. The massive human rights violations in the occupied Kashmir have to be able to produce a substantive American policy a action to check Indian repression.

Robin's November 1993 speech in which she asserted that the US did not recognise the instrument of accession provoked strong reaction from the Indians. Her recent speech to Asia Society seems markedly different from the flamboyancy she had displayed in her Nov. 1993 statement. Her mild reference that 'State department's 1993 rights reports covering South Asia demonstrates how much more needs to be done' reflect considerable mellowing down of the US stance on this issue which, in turn could manifest in a 'neutral' posture at Geneva's ongoing discussion of UN Human Rights Commission.

Also Americans references of support to democracies do not convince many in the Third World. The past record clearly reflects that the US has always supported, like many other states, its own national interests. If the national interests warranted supporting a democracy, it become easier for the US to bridge the gap between words and deeds. But there are many examples from the past when the US supported, installed and protected dictators.

In sum, Robin Raphael's recent speeches are an attempt to give the impression that the South Asian region has become an important policy area for the US, while it might yet to be so in fact. They also

reflect that the US despite being 'involved' in the region is still treading cautiously. Perhaps the Americans are scared of being accused of demonstrating tilt towards Pakistan. It will be some time, therefore, before South Asia witnesses bold and ingenious initiatives from the Americans on core regional problems.

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The eye of the ethnic storm

Lynn Ockersz

"From nation-making to nation-breaking" — this was how a political analyst described the intensifying ethnic turmoil in South Asia. This region's agonies couldn't have been expressed more cogently. Nation-breaking is indeed the order of the day.

Still, this question can be asked: was nation-making undertaken in earnest? Didn't self-interest and short-term political gain take precedence over nation-building in the thinking and policies of most of South Asia's political leaders and 'statesmen' in the post-colonial era? Even a cursory glance at the political history of most South Asian countries will convince the observer that the golden rules of governance were repeatedly violated in the most cavalier fashion; poverty of thought and political myopia have continually masqueraded as sound government. One of the aims of this study is to lay bare these ill-concealed 'skeletons' of South Asia's past.

Nation-breaking is being variously referred to today and the most favoured catchwords are 'Lebanonization' and 'Balkanization'. And again, the expressions couldn't have been more apt or suggestive. South Asian states are being ripped apart by spiralling violence and deeply-divisive conflicts. Ethnic groups are growing impatient with their lot. In almost every state in the region disadvantaged ethnic groups in increasing numbers are clamouring for more freedom, power and contentment. They are calling for greater recognition and increased self-respect. They no longer like each other's company and are not hesitating to use bombs and bullets to prove their point. These men with guns are even ready to make the supreme sacrifice for the achievement of their aims. They are ready to kill and be killed in the name of ethnic group and community.

Minds are being brutalized and unprecedented bestiality unleashed, even in the name of religion. Thousands of lives are being lost daily; people who tilled the soil for ages and occupied homesteads bequeathed to them by their forefathers are being turned into homeless refugees overnight. Houses are being put to the torch; rape, arson and looting are fast be-

coming facts of life in most of South Asia's multi-religious and multi-ethnic states.

Ethnic groups which seemed to co-exist in perfect harmony are today literally at each other's throats. Long years of peace and quiet seem to have been shattered by volcanic, man-made violence. South Asia seems to be disintegrating beyond recognition.

How did this come about? Are there any identifiable processes at work? What are the socio-economic and political factors that led to such an explosive outcome? What impact do these wasting internal wars have on inter-state relations in South Asia? How do they affect the West and the world-at-large? These are some of the questions to which answers will be sought in this study.

There are a great number of conflicts of an ethnic nature in South Asia today. For the sake of cogency, clarity and conciseness, this study will be focussing only on the separatist rebellions in India's Punjab and Kashmir states, the Tamil separatist war in Sri Lanka, the Chakma uprising in Bangladesh and the ethnic problem in Bhutan. It is believed that they embody most of the essential features of South Asian separatism. The period in focus will be the post-Indira Gandhi era.

Divide and rule British style

It is argued that the seeds of separatism were first sown in South Asia by the British imperialists. Anti-imperialist sections of the Third World intelligentsia contend that by 'dividing and ruling' in multi-ethnic colonies, the British tried to undermine and render ineffective united nationalist struggles against their rule. The British aim was to ward off threats to their reign by pitting one section of their subjects against the other.

A study of the history of colonial rule would substantiate this contention, although it should be admitted that the explanation for the rise of ethnicity in South Asia doesn't end here. Besides the tactic of 'divide and rule' there are other processes at work which tend to intensify ethnicity and spark off inter-communal hostilities. More will be said of the processes later. Right now, it would be relevant to assess the manner in which 'divide and

rule' ignited the fuse of the time bomb of ethnicity.

Ethnicity broadly refers to an ethnic group's pursuit of power and dominance vis-a-vis other ethnic groups in a given body politic. An essential precondition for this is a feeling of one's distinctiveness in relation to others. This sense of 'separateness' could be based on a social group's ethnic origins, language, culture, religion or even special capabilities.

British colonial policy on the Indian subcontinent had the effect of promoting an ethnic consciousness or a feeling of 'separateness' among certain communities. One such community were the Sikhs.

In recognition of the loyalty of the Sikhs in the mid-nineteenth century, the British accorded them a special status in their army. For instance, special Sikh regiments were established. To strengthen this devotedness on the part of the Sikhs, and to consolidate their influence in the community, the British even patronised and protected the management of Sikh *gurudwaras* or religious shrines.

British policy in the twentieth century too had the effect of boosting the Sikhs' ethnic consciousness. The Morley-Minto Constitutional Reforms Committee established in 1909 made provision for separate Muslim representation. Consequently, the Sikhs also demanded separate representation. Under the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935 the right to separate representation was granted to numerous religious communities in India. The Sikhs too benefited from this controversial measure.

'Divide and Rule' was proving effective in India's Madras Presidency in the early part of this century too. This unit of administration roughly corresponded to today's Tamil Nadu state. Political power was concentrated in the hands of the Brahmins — the most powerful caste group in Indian society. It was a time when middle-rung non-Brahmin castes were vying with the Brahmins for socio-economic advancement. However, the dominant position of the Brahmins prevented these non-Brahmins from realising their aspirations. Political power was the only means through which parity of position could be attained.

(To be continued)

The writer is a wellknown Sri Lankan journalist

Mahindapala and Morality : A Political Reading

Regi Siriwardena

It's likely that a fair proportion of readers of the *LG*, seeing the headings of Mr. H.L.D. Mahindapala's three articles on Jane Austen (Feb. 15, Mar. 1 and Mar. 15) and remembering the boredom of their adolescent reading of *Emma* or *Mansfield Park*, would have turned the page over. My purpose here is to urge them to dig up those back numbers and see what they have missed. For my part, I found these articles fascinating — for the light they threw not on Austen but on Mr. Mahindapala himself.

Mr. Mahindapala is not just the editor of the *Observer*, he is one of the most singleminded and most enthusiastic operators of the State propaganda machine. There are other journalists who occupy important positions in the State media but who give the impression that they are just 'doing a job', and one suspects that their heart may not be in it after all. Not so with Mr. Mahindapala: whether he is singing hosannas to the Government or pronouncing anathemas on its opponents, he throws himself into it with the devotion and vigour of the true believer. So when such a writer who has served, not merely with fidelity but with fervour, two successive regimes that have not been particularly distinguished by their morality, chooses to discourse on moral values (the main burden of his articles on Austen), one must surely listen to him with an attentiveness whetted by curiosity.

I am not concerned here to contest as a literary critic the high valuation that Mr. Mahindapala sets on Jane Austen. All I will say on that subject is that I think that, as far as 19th century novels written in English are concerned, one page of *Wuthering Heights*, *Great Expectations*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* or *New Grub Street* is worth more than Austen's six novels put together. But what I really want to do is to read Mr. Mahindapala's three articles as a revelation of his world-view, and to demonstrate their profound congruence

with his public and political role; to take them as a confession, perhaps unintentional, of the convictions and motivations that sustain him in that role — a self-exposure, in short, of what makes him tick.

Mr. Mahindapala's fundamental praise of Jane Austen is that she realised that the true moral centre was to be found in 'the little social commonwealth' of family, friends and intimate associates. Outside was the disorder of 'nagging history': Austen's virtue was to have left 'the big, amorphous world out there severely alone' and to have confined herself to 'a cocooned world that comes to grips with the quintessence of subtle relationships and interpersonal forces that determine the character of a moral being'.

With an unerring precision Mr. Mahindapala focusses on just those parts of Jane Austen that I have been accustomed for years to use in teaching to demonstrate her social and moral complacency. For instance, the sentences at the opening of the last chapter of *Mansfield Park*: 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can ...' Like Austen and her heroine Fanny, their eulogist clearly feels an almost physical relief on leaving the poverty, the congestion and the squalor of Portsmouth for 'the orderliness, the moral tone, the tranquility' of the country-house world of *Mansfield Park* — a haven far removed from the tumultuous vulgarity of the outside world'.

I have no knowledge of Mr. Mahindapala's personal life, and I am ready to take it on trust that in his own 'little social commonwealth' of family, friends and associates he does practise the moral sensitivities that he finds in Austen. But the total separation between the private and the public realms that he upholds in his articles is an indication of what makes it possible for him to act as he does, and with the tone of dogmatic certainty and

self-righteousness manifested each week in his *Sunday Observer* middle page articles.

It is well known that in the Nazi concentration camps there were SS men who, after a day spent gassing Jews, would go home and read Goethe or listen to Beethoven — and no doubt many of them were fond of their children and loved dogs. They too believed that morality was to be maintained in one's 'little social commonwealth' and not in that 'big amorphous world out there'. Of course, Mr. Mahindapala hasn't gassed anybody; but is it very different, in point of moral integrity, to spend one's day covering up for the State and in the evenings to read Jane Austen and be nice to one's wife, children and friends?

The 'profound congruence' to which I referred between Mr. Mahindapala the admirer of Austen and Mr. Mahindapala the political agent can be illustrated from just one of many examples: a column written by him in the *Sunday Observer* of 20 February — just about the time he was beginning his Austen series. Ticking off those negative-minded intellectuals he loves to hate, Mr. Mahindapala claimed that Sri Lanka was actually a success story. Contrasting the Sri Lankan record of democracy with the one-party regimes and military dictatorships in several other Asian countries, Mr. Mahindapala went on to say: 'In Sri Lanka, however, the UNP and SLFP have been alternating regularly, as most democracies do, until 1977'. The intellectual dishonesty of this is evident from the fact that Mr. Mahindapala didn't mention that respectable democratic record was breached first in 1982 by a blatantly manipulated and illegally conducted referendum — a rape of democracy that had a great deal to do with the disillusionment with the democratic process that enabled the JVP to get the degree of support it did in 1988-89. But let other pens dwell on guilt and misery:

Mr. Mahindapala will not, like his heroine, merely quit such odious subjects but turn a completely blind eye to them.

There are, above all, two aspects of the moral degradation of public life in Sri Lanka over the last quarter of a century that should concern every person with a conscience. One is the progressive erosion of the restraints on the arbitrary exercise of power. Acts that were once thought an unthinkable misuse of power have become legitimised once they have been practised by one regime and then become a precedent for the next, and thus the frontiers of what is permissible in the State's illegal use of authority have period by period, year by year, been steadily advanced. The natural concomitant of this has been the cycle of State violence producing counter-violence producing more State violence and more counter-violence. This isn't Jane Austen country; only a Bunuel could do creative justice to it. In the absence of such an artist, let me quote an honest social scientist.

In the preface to his book, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, Gananath Obeyesekere turns from 'the global culture of violence' to the violence in Sri Lanka of the last decade. 'The terror', he writes, 'is practised by a variety of political groups, right and left, Sinhala and Tamil, Buddhist and Hindu, all of whom kill brutally yet with a devastating rationality. There are no good or bad guys in the deadly game of contemporary political violence; those who champion the cause of the oppressed can be as brutal as their oppressors'.

Who is there who possesses either a mind or a heart and can in the face of that reality adopt the triumphalist tone of Mr. Mahindapala in celebrating the victories of Sri Lankan democracy? Once again, however, let other pens dwell on guilt and misery: Mr. Mahindapala will wield his to lash those who speak of them. It may seem strange to find a Sri Lankan journalist in 1994 perpetuating the Anglo-Saxon literary cult of Jane Austen (it is Anglo-Saxon, not European, for what does she mean to French or Russian readers?). But no doubt the jarring actualities of Sri Lanka

in 1994 make it all the more consoling to live Mr. Mahindapala's double life. What a luxury! — to sustain in his working life 'the hectic world of the slogan-shouting, grandstanding political class' and in his

imagination withdraw to that 'cocooned world', the dream of the ordered, tranquil, elegant country-house world of Austen, so far from corruption, bombs, mass graves, political abductions and murder.

LETTER

Rule rather than Exception

The rift between V. Prabhakaran and G Mahendrarajah (Mahathaya) of the LTTE follows a predictable pattern, any political (or for that matter, hierarchical) organization would face with time. A cursory glance at the Sri Lankan political history reveals that fallout had occurred between the leader and deputy leader of every party and this phenomenon is almost a rule rather than an exception.

The SLFP was formed by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1951, when he felt that he was not given respect as No. 2 in the UNP of D. S. Senanayake, who was grooming his son Dudley Senanayake for the 'throne'. The rift between the leader Dudley Senanayake and his then nominal No. 2, J.R. Jayewardene, came out in the open after the electoral defeat of UNP in 1970. In the SLFP too, after Sirimavo Bandaranaike's elevation to the No. 1 position in 1960, the then senior leader of the SLFP, C.P. de Silva (after being dumped to the No. 2 position) felt that he had been insulted and he left the SLFP in 1964, making Sirimavo snort the act as a "stab in the back". Later, the newly promoted No. 2 in the SLFP, Maithiripala Senanayake, also fell out with Sirimavo Bandaranaike in the 1980s. For want of space, I omit examples from the traditional and 'neo'-Left parties, where the nominal No. 2 had parted company with the leader at the drop of a hat.

Among the Tamil political parties, S.J.V. Chelvanayakam (then No. 2 to G.G. Ponnambalam) left the Tamil Congress in 1949 to form the Federal Party. G.G. Ponnambalam's son, Kumar Ponnambalam also had to cross swords with Motilal Nehru (the purported No. 2) in the ghost of a Tamil Congress, whose membership

may not exceed hundred. Within the TULF (basically, the Federal Party, which was renamed), in the post-Chelvanayakam period, the relationship between the then leader Amirthalingam and his nominal No. 2s in the ranks of seniority (C. Rajadurai and V.N. Navaratnam) were not cordial at best. As a result, Rajadurai left the TULF to join UNP, and V.N. Navaratnam retired from active politics after 1983. In the Ceylon Workers Congress, veteran leader S. Thondaman is now having a headache with his nominal No. 2 M. Sella-samy. In 1960, Thondaman had to oust Azeez, who was causing trouble to him as then No. 2 in the CWC.

The rift between the No. 1 and No. 2 of a political organization is not peculiar to Sri Lanka. Every strong leader (in the democratic USA and India as well as 'undemocratic' Russia and China had to face this 'wall' in his or her life time. Abraham Lincoln had two vice presidents in his short tenure of 5 year presidency period. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in his 14 year period as the American president, had three vice presidents. In the Indian national scene, Indira Gandhi and later Morarji Desai (who was Indira's nominal No. 2, before being pushed out) as well as V.P. Singh, had to constantly look over their shoulders to assure that their 'thrones' were not toppled. While Indira succeeded, Morarji Desai and V.P. Singh succumbed. China's revolutionary leader Mao Ze Dong had to tackle his No. 2, Lin Piao, in a "not so comfortable manner", to assure his position.

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The Problem of Credibility

Rohan Samarajiva

Common sense suggests that communicators want to be believed. It is assumed that media organizations strive for credibility. Yet observation of the media in Sri Lanka flies against these common sense assumptions. In Sri Lanka, the major media organizations, particularly the government-owned Lake House and the electronic media, seem to be singularly unconcerned about credibility. Even the privately owned media do not seem to care that much about credibility. Sporadic efforts to achieve credibility such as in the early days of the Island Newspaper Group when it was trying to establish itself, suggest that media owners, journalists and the public do place a value in credibility. But the general pattern has been to publish/broadcast, credibility be damned. Is this a case of following Goebbels' rule of the big lie, or are there specifically Sri Lankan factors at work?

The Gramscian framework of hegemony is useful in understanding the role of credibility within media processes. Antonio Gramsci (1971) developed the concept of hegemony in formulating his answer to the perennial Marxist question as to why the oppressed majority did not rebel against the ruling minority. He understood society to be made up of multiple classes (more than two). There were two polar classes (capitalists and proletariat) but the other classes were not marginal, nor did they diminish in importance over time, as Marx incorrectly postulated. In Gramsci's vision, the intermediate classes were extremely important, being numerically larger than the polar classes and capable of playing a crucial role in the form of "blocs". He argued that the dominant class maintained its rule not by coercion, but through hegemony (a technical term connoting the winning over of the loyalty, or the consent to be ruled, of intermediate and subaltern classes). The class exercising hegemony had to make compromises, modifying the presentation of its class interests to make it appear that it was speaking for all of (or most of) society. The hegemonic thrust extended beyond the intermediate classes into parts of the opposing polar class itself. Hegemonic activity is the norm, and coercion the exception. When the state is strong, hegemony is the dominant form of state power. It is only when the state weakens that coercion comes to the fore. Hegemonic

activity is not the monopoly of the ruling class, though it is obviously very good at it. Within regions, blocs would be held together by the hegemonic activities of specific classes such as land-owners. The proletariat could build an alternative hegemonic alliance by speaking not solely for its interests but for all of (or most of) society, and thereby displace the rule of capital.

Gramsci's ideas have continuing vitality, being appropriated by theorists of communication (Gitlin 1980) and international relations (Cox 1987), among others. There are divergences between the pure Gramscian approaches whereby the notion of polar classes are retained and other less Marxist versions, but these differences are not of great significance to the present discussion. The interest within communication has been centered on the presentation of the interests of the ruling class as the interests of all of (or most of) society. Modern mass media play a central role in the presentation of class interests. If hegemony is to be successful, the groups subject to it must believe that the ruling class speaks for all; the messages carried in the media must be believed. Therefore the media must have credibility.

Three groups are involved in the media-journalists, the direct controllers of the media enterprises (government or otherwise), and the state. Journalists wish to be believed; they desire credibility. If they are believed, their earning power and job satisfaction will increase. In market democracies, the controllers of advertising/subscription-supported media enterprises are entrepreneurs who

wish to make money, hence who want to maximize audiences/circulation. Even in an imperfectly competitive marketplace people will not tune in/buy unless the media have credibility. Thus the media owners have an interest in credibility. To the extent that the primary persuasive purpose of advertising-supported media is the selling of goods and services which is not conducive to trust, there may be added incentive to maintain credibility in what appears in the news hole (the inside term used by editors to describe the page space that is left after all the ads have been positioned).

Power-holders in market democracies generally wish the media content to be taken seriously and believed so their hegemonic objectives are achieved. They want the media to have credibility. While there are exceptional instances of conflict between these three groups (where the state uses its coercive power), generally these interests mesh with each other. In fact, the power-holders in society exercise a form of hegemonic control over media owners, obtaining their support without coercion. Media owners exercise a form of hegemonic control over journalists, winning their voluntary compliance through professional standards and routine practices rather than through direct force. These conclusions are supported by research findings more than the alternate conception of media control through a conspiracy by media moguls (e.g., Tuchman 1978). Whatever their weaknesses and imperfections, media in the market democracies have tended to score higher on the credibility scale than media

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in command economies or in peripheral nations. This does not constitute an endorsement of the media in market democracies as fearless conveyors of The Truth. It merely acknowledges the efficacy of these media in getting their audiences to believe them. The possibility that the audiences are being hoodwinked into this belief is not excluded. Media in different peripheral countries exhibit differing degrees of success in achieving some form of credibility. India in Asia and Senegal in Africa have generally done better than others on this count. Admitting the possibility of some general causes, it may still be worthwhile to examine the reasons for the lack of credibility in Sri Lankan media. This article does not propose a complete answer. It merely proposes a hypothesis which, if nothing else, is likely to provoke a useful debate. The proposed explanation may be of applicability to a larger set of peripheral nations, but no claims of generalizability are made here.

The fundamental premise is that individual persuasion is secondary to group dynamics in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan society has not been fragmented to the individualistic level as much as Western societies. We still tend to think and function in terms of group identities such as region, village, batch, caste, party, and so on. Despite fifty plus years of the universal franchise (a political mechanism premised on the individual as the elementary unit), we still do not fully participate in the political process as individuals. The electoral process works in a way not fully explainable in terms of liberal democratic theory (Jiggins 1979; Jayantha 1992).

Sri Lankan group dynamics place great reliance on symbols. For example, many religious conflicts in the early part of the twentieth century were precipitated by symbolic violations of the territories of specific religious groups (Rogers 1987). One group would march in procession or engage in extra-loud tom-tom beatings or similar activities inside another group's territory or in front of a site of symbolic importance such as a temple or church. This would be interpreted as a challenge or as an appropriation of the territory which would then be met with a counter attack or a counter demonstration. There was little if any evidence that these activities had proselytization (which includes persuasion) as the objective. They were more in the nature of extensions of territory and/or reinforcements of group cohesion.

The blithe disregard of credibility by Sri

Lankan media, particularly the government-controlled electronic media, can be best explained in terms of symbol use in group dynamics. My experience as a Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation reporter and news editor in the late 1970s was that more weight was given to the order of presentation (the "story" with the President's speech was always given precedence over the "story" with the Prime Minister's speech even if the latter was more newsworthy) and the length of the various "stories" (the President would get more than the Prime Minister, who would get more than the Minister for Trade and Shipping, and so on), than to the actual persuasive content of what was carried in the "news". These ceremonial reports has very little substantive content, and it was difficult to think that any intelligent person would think they had great persuasive impact. Other news reports, which could have had more efficacy in mobilizing popular support for government policies, were generally squeezed out by these inane ceremonial reports. And of course, even the most newsworthy of reports originating from opposition sources did not find room in the newscasts. My interpretation is that the various groups that had captured parts of the political machinery (this was particularly the case during the Jayawardana regime) were attempting to extend/maintain their political "territories" and strengthen internal group cohesion. Observation of actual behavior by the various "representatives" of the factions, who earned their base salary as employees of the Corporation, supported this interpretation. Their methods ranged from a friendly request to a lowly editor, to a tirade in the Director-General's office, in the presence of third parties. These political factions were not engaged in persuasion of the listening public, but were posturing for their own supporters and for opponents, just like the religious processionists of the early 20th century.

It must be emphasized that I am not claiming that individual persuasion and credibility are completely absent in the media scene in Sri Lanka. I am merely pointing to the existence of other generally neglected factors that may be "washing out" the importance of individual persuasion, a foundational assumption of media analysis in market democracies. As with all social science explanations, the discussion here is in terms of tendencies and conditions rather than in terms of absolute causes. As an aside, the group-dynamics hypothesis can also explain Sri Lanka's

traditionally high electoral participation (numerically, as well as in intensity). Since participation in the political process primarily occurs in group terms, the stakes are higher. Individuals are subject to pressure from within the group (e.g., extended family, caste, village) to participate since the group as a whole benefits from the victory or suffers from the loss in the political battle. The roads, post offices, and other projects that get built in particular villages and get stalled in mid-course in others as a result of particular election results bear testimony to the rules of this political game.

Credibility is important where individual persuasion is important. In a society that has not undergone complete individualistic fragmentation characteristic of capitalism (where all relations are transformed into relations of money), group dynamics tend to take precedence over individual persuasion. Symbolic activity in the form of signaling and negotiation between groups tends to take precedence over persuasion, thus reducing the importance of credibility. The value of credibility is further reduced in societies where state power is weak, where coercion takes precedence over hegemony. Therefore, the conditions for credibility have not been strong in Sri Lanka. As market relations spread through society and weaken group identities, it is possible that the conditions for credibility will strengthen. This is not to claim that the cause of truth will be advanced; only that audiences will believe more in the veracity of what they see, hear or read.

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DRUGS ?

Amendment to Drug Regulation No. 34 of 1984 in Govt. Gazette Extraordinary No. 722/3 of Monday the 6th July 1992.

“No person shall dispense a prescription which does not specify the Generic Name of a drug.”

MSJ goes down in the history of Drug Rationalization in Sri Lanka as the first Company to collaborate with the Government on Generic Manufacture. MSJ swiftly moved over from two decades of Brand Manufacture for the biggest multinational Drug Companies operating in this region to almost exclusive Generic Manufacture for the people of this country. Our range of Generic drugs now serve a wide spectrum of Health Services from the big city Clinics and Base Hospitals to the remotest Govt. dispensary and General Practitioner in the country.

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Undermining the Regime

Mick Moore

The weakening of the political apparatuses of the UNP regime was a necessary condition for the JVP to come to power, but not a sufficient condition. Not only could the government continue to function but, in the last resort, it could rely on superior firepower. Lacking foreign support or sources of supply, the JVP suffered continuously from a shortage of armaments. Although the loyalty and commitment of sections of the armed forces and of the police were in doubt, there was no real prospect that they would turn against the government. Other armed groups, notably various army volunteers and reserves and the relatively professional police commandos, the Special Task Force, could generally be considered to owe loyalty more to the ruling party than to the state. And the UNP itself increasingly became an armed force. The JVP could not hope to win power in open battle, and appear never to have worked towards that option. The strategy was to so harass and exhaust the regime that its support, including its armed forces, would eventually begin to crumble, leaving no organized opposition to the entry of the JVP into the government. It seems likely that the JVP expected to come to power first by being invited to join some kind of coalition by an exhausted regime.

It was hoped to make the task of governing so difficult and so costly in terms of loss of public support and confidence that eventually government would cease to function. This strategy made all the more sense given the absence of major direct external support for the regime¹⁰⁵ and the continuing political divisions between the two major parties that constituted the political establishment, the UNP and the SLFP, as well as major divisions within the UNP itself. One element in the JVP campaign was to keep open some lines of communication with both these parties, and play them off one against another. One result was that the proscription on the JVP was lifted, and, for a brief period of time in late 1988, it was a formal member of a wide opposition alliance led by the SLFP.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, as is explained above, the JVP established a rapport with R. Premadasa, the man who was to take over as UNP leader and President in late

1988. The frequent release from custody of JVP suspects was one result (see above). The knowledge that the major political parties were eager to reach a political settlement with the JVP was welcomed by large sections of the public,¹⁰⁷ but could only damage the morale of the security forces attempting to combat the JVP's assaults.

Toying with the major parties was only a subsidiary aspect of the JVP's political campaign. The real effort went into direct harassment of the regime. The dominant features of this harassment were the variety of tactics employed, the innovativeness displayed in seeking out and exploiting political opportunities, and the speed with which tactics were changed. According to the metaphor widely used in Colombo at the time, the regime was kept off balance. The major tactics employed during this campaign were as follows:

(a) Attacks on military installations, including those in and around Colombo, clearly assisted from within the establishments themselves. These served not only as means of procuring arms, but also as very visible demonstrations of the JVP's reach and power.¹⁰⁸

(b) A bombing campaign against government offices, buildings occupied by Indian businesses, and other high profile targets.

(c) Demonstrations in provincial towns against the government and the presence of Indian troops which were organized by forcing each household to send a representative. These not only displayed the JVP's power, but in many cases succeeded in provoking the armed forces to fire upon the crowd and cause many civilian casualties.¹⁰⁹

(d) A campaign in 1989 to boycott the use and purchase of Indian products at the time when President Premadasa was in conflict with the Government of India over their rejection of his demand for the rapid withdrawal of the Indian Peacekeeping Force. The intention was to demonstrate that only the JVP was putting effective pressure on India. In fact, the campaign was not very successful, largely

because of the country's dependence on a wide range of Indian intermediate and producer goods whose import and use could not easily be policed. There was, however, some propaganda payoff in the form, for example, of the Minister of Agriculture publicly insisting that the most popular type of onions were not 'Bombay onions', as they had always been known, but simply 'big onions'.

(e) Attacks to disable major, visible infrastructural facilities such as television transmitting stations, electricity stations, and bridges.

(f) The periodic enforcement of limited work stoppages, especially in the public sector, to protest against the presence of Indian troops.

(g) The use of curfews for the same purpose. The point here was that the government used local or national curfews either to try to prevent the assembly of crowds at points of high political tension or to facilitate local 'cordon and search' operations. The mimicry of this practice by the JVP probably contributed more than any other single measure to its becoming referred to as the *punchi aanduwa* — the 'alternative government'.

(h) Attacks of various kinds on the official media, including banning the distribution of government newspapers in some areas, attempts to force television and radio staff to keep away from work, and the threatened or actual assassination of newsreaders and television personalities who could be said to have participated in programmes supporting the government. In a highly literate and politically aware society in which the official media were generally despised as government propaganda, this was a rather soft target. The sight of nameless young military officers stumbling to read the television news was a powerful reminder of the extent of the JVP's reach, as were radio news broadcasts prefaced by disclaimers on the part of the newsreaders of responsibility for the content of the bulletins they were about to present.

(i) The assassination of prominent figures, including businessmen and the

sister-in-law of ex-President Jayawardene, who were reported to have ordered their subordinate staff to defy JVP orders in relation to strikes or the boycotting of Indian goods.

(j) Most important of all, the exploitation of labour discontents to call major strikes with potentially-crippling economic impacts.¹¹⁰ The JVP's capacity to use the trades union movement in this way requires a brief background explanation. It constitutes a great contrast with 1971, when the JVP completely lacked a trades union base or support. In the 1930s and 1940s an active, class conscious trades union movement was constructed in Sri Lanka in close association with Marxist political parties. From the 1950s, when generous trades union and employee rights were granted in both public and private sectors, the trades union movement became stronger in numerical terms, but increasingly fragmented, politicised,¹¹¹ and weak. By the time the UNP was elected to power in 1977, little remained of the autonomous, democratic, left-inclined movement of previous decades. The UNP rapidly, and for the first time in its history, established the dominance of its own union organization, the JSS. The JSS was notorious for corruption and thuggery. Its members were bound to it by immediate self-interest and fear. Once the JVP had largely broken the back of the JSS in 1987 and 1988 through assassination and intimidation, they were able to exploit the vacuum created.¹¹² Previously, the JVP had no significant presence in the trades union movement. It had earned the hatred of much of the Marxist-cum-trades union left when, while still legal and on the parliamentary path in July 1980, it had refused to back a major public sector strike that the government had successfully crushed.¹¹³ The JVP did not exactly take over the trades union movement, but used intimidation, its reputation for effectiveness, and its excellent political intelligence system to exploit issues and turn organized labour into its most effective weapon. A series of strikes were called in different sectors of the economy, including the banks — leading to acute shortages of cash — and in fuel distribution. The most significant were in the public transport sector, especially in the publicly owned bus companies.¹¹⁴ One peak of disruption was attained in November 1988; the JVP hoped that victory was at hand, but was disappointed. There was then something of a respite during which Presidential and Parliamentary elections were held. In early and mid-1989 the combination of a series of 'genuine' strikes in the Sri Lanka Transport Board and supporting intimidat-

tion of labour on private buses, trucks and trains, brought the country to the verge of an economic crisis. Not only was production in general widely disrupted, but the export of tea, the major foreign exchange earner, was very much delayed. In July 1989, foreign exchange reserves were so reduced that they covered only a few days' imports.¹¹⁵ At about the same time the JVP intensified a campaign it had been pursuing among the health sector unions, and succeeded for a few days not only in emptying the hospitals but in virtually closing down all health services throughout the island. Stories of patients left to die unattended in hospital beds as staff fled in panic at calls for an immediate strike appeared to provide evidence of the invincibility of the JVP.¹¹⁶

The fact that the JVP was able to mount such a flexible, fastmoving and effective political campaign to undermine the regime appears to be due in large part to organizational factors already mentioned above: the existence of separate military and political wings and the subordination of the military to the political. In this respect the JVP provides a clear contrast with the Tamil Tigers, who were fighting a more conventional rural insurrection which aimed and succeeded in (a) controlling territory in which the inhabitants were supportive, and (b) in defeating through military harassment both the armies, Sri Lankan and Indian, sent against it. The Tigers had a single military-cum-political structure in which the military dominated almost totally. Wijeweera neither had nor sought combat experience, but lived in disguise in a relatively quiet rural area, from where he could direct the political campaign. Now, as throughout his political life, daring and surprise were weapons which he wielded most skilfully.¹¹⁷ It will be evident that in wielding these weapons, the JVP was not primarily seeking popular support. Indeed, it severely inconvenienced and alienated large sections of the population. The objective now was to undermine the regime before the population at large became sufficiently desperate to begin to ignore JVP instructions.

The Final Blow

The ultimate task faced by the JVP was to strike the final blow against the weakened regime and come to power, either directly or through being invited into a coalition government which they could then capture completely. It was here that the movement came to grief, and conventional wisdom claims that they made their one big mistake. In August 1989, emboldened by all the successes outlined above, the JVP began a major poster ca-

mpaign announcing to members of the armed forces that they had until the 20th of that month to leave their posts. If they failed to do so, their families would be liable to be killed. This was no idle threat: the JVP had already demonstrated its willingness to hit at hated but protected politicians and policemen by slaughtering their kin. Given the continuing unreliability of the armed forces and their lack of zeal for the anti-JVP campaign, it was hoped that many would desert, perhaps taking away their weapons to protect their families, and that the army would finally crumble away. But the JVP had mis-read the mood of the armed forces. Elements within the army immediately responded with a poster campaign of their own announcing the same message to the JVP: 'Give up or your families will be killed'. The threat to their families finally gave the armed forces the stimulus they had so far lacked to move decisively against JVP suspects. Relying partly on the political intelligence system that they had been building up, and partly on the merest whiffs of suspicion, the army,¹¹⁸ working closely with the various vigilante groups they had been sponsoring, set out to eliminate the JVP by eliminating anyone who appeared likely to be a JVP. Even before the end of August there was an intensification of attacks on the unprotected families of both military personnel and (suspected) JVPs. By the end of September the JVP was clearly badly battered. Within a few months almost the entire leadership, including Wijeweera, had been (captured and) shot.¹¹⁹

The threat to kill military families is generally held to have been a 'Himalayan blunder'. The evidence, however, points to a different conclusion. In mid-1989 the JVP appears to have felt obliged to do something further to push the conflict towards a final conclusion. A bid to come to power in July 1989 on the back of popular demonstrations on the second anniversary of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (i.e. the landing in Sri Lanka of India armed forces) had failed.¹²⁰ It was not adequate to carry on the political campaign to keep government off balance. While favourable in some respects, time was also running against the JVP on two counts. One was that the practice of assassination of JVP suspects was beginning to bite deeper.¹²¹ A combination of UNP and left politicians, elements from within the armed forces and, most importantly, relatives of people assassinated by the JVP, were countering terror with terror. More and more charred and burning bodies were being found on roadsides overnight; almost all were JVP suspects.¹²² That was a problem,

although not yet a serious one for the JVP leadership as at this stage they were largely untouched.¹²³ A more serious problem was that the campaign of economic disruption was costing the population very dear, and their enthusiasm for the JVP was clearly beginning to wane.¹²⁴ Obligatory strikes meant no income for casually employed workers. The general economic disruption meant that goods were often in short supply and scarce. The continual transport strikes made it difficult for many people to get to work. And the severe disruption of the medical system had shocked and alienated many people.

In a relatively integrated, commercialized economy such as that of most of the Sinhalese areas of Sri Lanka, insurgency imposed much higher economic costs on the mass of the population than in more rural and agricultural areas. In the latter, a substantial degree of local food self-sufficiency and the lack of widespread dependence on public transport for work purposes provided a degree of insulation against the disruptions of warfare. In the mainly-rural Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, the agricultural economy has kept ticking over, and people have mainly managed to eat, during several years of continual warfare.

That the JVP was acting according to the logic set out above appears to be confirmed by their behaviour in September 1989, after the armed forces counter-offensive was beginning to bite. Only then did they begin a general campaign of economic sabotage, directed especially at the tea industry. In particular, the destruction of tea factories prevented tea from being processed. Such destruction threatened to cut deeply into the economy, reducing export earnings immediately and causing many job losses. The damage would take years rather than months to restore. As targets they had been open to the JVP before. A major attack on the tea industry in July 1989, when the foreign exchange situation had been critical, could have inflicted enormous economic damage. The only plausible interpretation of the JVP's failure to attack previously is that they were well aware both of the particular issue at stake here — that such evident destruction of livelihoods would lose them support — and of the more general issue — the two-edged nature of the sword of economic disruption in a 'modern' economy. Such economies are vulnerable to widespread economic disruption from interventions concentrated on a few key points in the complex chain of economic interdependence. But populations adversely affected by such disrup-

tions may tend to turn against the agent of disruption. Perhaps the JVP did make a mistake in using threats to the lives of military families in order to bring the conflict to a successful resolution. But they appear to have understood both the weaknesses and the strengths of their position, and the constraints imposed by the socio-economic environment in which they were operating.

Concluding Comments

Revolutions are infrequent. Insurrections — attempts at revolution — are more common and, in long-run global perspective, occur with increasing frequency.¹²⁵ The JVP insurrection of 1987-1989 is in a statistical sense simply one more to add to the global numbers, albeit one that was marked by a very high degree of savagery and a large number of deaths within a small population and a short space of time.¹²⁶ It is, however, of special interest because it was in two senses particularly characteristic of 'modern' revolutionary movements in the Third World.

In the first place, because it took place in a material and institutional environment that was 'developed', although poor, the JVP's insurrection had few of the characteristics of a peasant revolution, but shared many of the features of urban-based movements of relatively wealthy countries. It has almost become part of the conventional wisdom of revolution studies in recent years to see Third World revolutions as essentially rural and peasant phenomena. While this has been a useful corrective to the previous tendency to anticipate that only relatively 'advanced', urban-based classes would be able to strike the sparks of genuine revolution, the 'revisionist' ruralist paradigm may find itself increasingly outdated. As Asia in particular becomes increasingly urbanized, densely-populated, formally educated and commercialized, insurrections may increasingly be organized along the lines followed by the JVP, rather than, for example, the Vietcong or the New People's Army.

In the second place, the JVP was especially 'modern' because, although it used the contemporary international (Marxian) language of revolution, the real arena within which the conflict was shaped was almost entirely local and regional. It reflects a world in which the aftermath of European colonialism and the Cold War no longer exercise a predominant influence over the pattern of revolutionary activity. The significant conflicts shaping the JVP were between India and Sri Lanka,

between ethnic groups within Sri Lanka, and between 'excluded' and 'included' groups among the Sinhalese. The major dimensions of inclusion-exclusion were: party political allegiance; caste; and status group membership — especially, among the middle classes, capacity in English. One looks in vain for any way in which the JVP — its membership composition, its support base, its tactics, or its political programme — could be validated in terms of the spirit of Marxian concepts of revolution. It has sometimes been suggested that one of Rohan Wijeweera's achievements was to produce a genuinely indigenous Sri Lankan variant of Marxism. It is perhaps more accurate to say that he indigenized it to destruction.¹²⁷

Notes

¹²³ In 1988 the JVP began a fairly successful campaign to block the distribution in many areas of newspapers printed by the government-owned Lake House group.

¹²⁴ See in particular the account in footnote 59 of the murder of Vijaya Kumaranatunga.

¹²⁵ Foreign aid continued to flow in relatively abundance throughout this period, and was indirectly of major political significance by permitting harsh economic policy decisions to be delayed until the end of 1989, when the JVP was already defeated. There was, however, no direct military support for the regime, mainly because no other power had sufficient interest in doing this that it was prepared to incur the displeasure of the Government of India, which had clearly reaffirmed that Sri Lanka was to be regarded as within India's geo-strategic domain.

¹²⁶ At the same time the heads of all the Buddhist orders issued a joint statement calling on the government to dissolve Parliament and hold elections under a caretaker government. This was one of the demands of the entire opposition, including the JVP.

¹²⁷ There was no sign in Sri Lanka of a right wing, business-backed movement to crush the JVP forcibly and use the opportunity to install a military-backed government of an openly capitalist and repressive nature.

¹²⁸ For example, the attack of 1 November 1988 on the Pannala Camp of the National Auxiliary Force, which is about thirty miles from the centre of Colombo, is estimated to have lasted about two hours. Three members of the Force had deserted with their weapons the previous night. See *Sunday Times*, 6 and 22 November 1988. The last attack of this nature was on the Thimbrigasyaya Police Field Force Station in central Colombo on 2 August 1989. The attackers escaped, and it was later revealed that some officers who should have been on duty there were absent at the time.

¹²⁹ Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, pp. 278-9.

¹³⁰ M. de Silva, 'The "Phoney Peace" is Over — Protracted War Begins', *Lanka Guardian*, 12, 5 (1989), p.3.

¹³¹ In the sense of being tied to a variety of political parties and vulnerable to control by the party in power.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 3; Leelananda, 'The Rise of the JVP — A Sociological Perspective', p.9.

¹³³ The JVP's concern was that involvement would expose their cadres to the police and threaten

the future of the organization (Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, p. 17).

¹¹⁴ The JVP was able to make deep inroads into the workforce of the Sri Lanka Transport Board in part because of major differences of strategy between senior politicians involved in the dispute.

¹¹⁵ The government faced a major credit crisis, and found the large international banks, by then very wary of any Third World involvements, unwilling to help. Salvation came from three smaller international banks with a substantial stake in Sri Lanka.

¹¹⁶ Other examples of successful involvement in trades union disputes include, for example, a pay grievance of the universities' minor employees in June 1989. The JVP insisted that the unions take a firm stand; a pay rise resulted. *Sunday Times*, 11 June 1989. For more details of the JVP's relations with trades unions, see Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, ch. 38; and Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, pp. 51-5).

¹¹⁷ Wijeweera was fond of quoting Danton's favourite maxim: 'Audacity, Audacity, and once more Audacity' (Leelananda, 'JVP Learning from Vietnam', p.6).

¹¹⁸ Intelligence operations had originally been the responsibility of the police. They failed completely. The army assumed responsibility for intelligence and propaganda in late 1988, and was far more effective.

¹¹⁹ For details of the way in which the armed forces and vigilante groups eliminated the JVP see Chandraprema, *Sri Lanka: The Years of Terror*, chs 45-50; and Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, pp. 274, 285-6 and 318-42. Success depended in particular in getting the armed forces out of barracks and into the streets and villages, operating in small groups, and equipped in particular with handguns and civilian vans.

¹²⁰ It failed partly because the armed forces were willing to fire on and disperse crowds of civilian demonstrators. Many if not most of the demonstrators had been forced onto the streets by the JVP. Several hundred were killed over two days.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, ch. 45.

¹²² The gross brutality of the methods of murder, torture and mutilation and display of corpses employed by both the JVP and their opponents is something that requires mention but no elaboration. It closely parallels the gory nature of much JVP propaganda. The story of the creation of anti-JVP 'vigilantes' is of more analytic interest. Most of the leading participants remain alive, and more details may emerge eventually. For present purposes it is adequate to mention a few key points. These units appear to have been created mainly through combining the equipment, information and resources available to the armed forces with the commitment, selfabnegation and bloodlust of those who had lost close family members to the JVP. In the initial stages at least, the physical and social space needed to establish vigilante movements when the JVP was felt to be everywhere was provided through the failure of the JVP, this time as in 1971, to generate support among the relatively small but well-organized and influential Sinhalese Christian communities. The JVP was identified as a Sinhalese Buddhist movement. The anti-JVP vigilante groups were largely created in the predominantly Sinhalese Catholic areas north of Colombo.

¹²³ Up to this point only one current JVP Politburo member had been captured (and killed) (Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka: A Lost Revolution*, p. 341).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

¹²⁵ Kowalewski, 'Periphery Revolutions'.

¹²⁶ The vast majority of deaths were those of actual or suspected JVPers.

¹²⁷ One could say much the same of the other contemporary revolutionary movement which bears so much similarity to the JVP — the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) movement in Peru. Both movements have used indigenism to build up a support base distinctively different from that enjoyed by established

left or communist movements with international connections, and assaulted the established left as traitors in the service of foreign powers. See R. B. Davis, 'Sendero Luminoso and Peru's Struggle for Survival', *Military Review* 70, 1 (1990); and D. S. Palmer, 'Rebellion in Rural Peru: The Origins and Evolution of Sendero Luminoso', *Comparative Politics* 18, 2 (1986).

The Scholar's Tale

Part 12

*While the new Civilization of 1977
Advanced technologically to T56 from AK47
The Monovirate's octopus Dharmisticity
Kept his Cabinet in strangled fidelity
Hence our Hero had much matter for Research
On which his Post Doctoral papers went beserk*

*He discovered (he said) the Herod Complex Surfacing
In ballad, legend and serious chronicling
Transiting the Global four dimensions
From old Thebes to our own Cinnamon Gardens.
Thus the Monovirate's Southern incarnation
Resurrected by Pardon and then Proscription
Microchipped into the Programme of Elimination
Terror-propping the whittled-off Constitution.*

*Thrown in with the Civil War and the Circuses
Were those accelerated Technological focuses
King Arthur's Round Table in the lake
As Parliament was somewhat a fake
Since those who arrived at Shallot by ballot
Remained referended on a promissory ticket.*

*Then there were the Mahaweli Merlins
Who spun gold out of World Bank pawnings
Caved-in tunnels and seeping dams providing
New Technology in millionairing*

*Twisting long researched data
Were the accelerator Mafia
Seeing that the million a metre spillway
Trickled down the drain and the by-way*

*The Principles of Trickle Economics
From the felons filtered through to the Academics
Trickle Theory they found did not fail
As an option to Monetary blackmail.*

*The Grand Vizier to the Executive Caliphate
Was told that trickle led to NIC State
Providing sour Academic consolation
For that rejected Asean application.*

(Continued)

U. Karunatilake

Why there's sound of laughter in this rustic tobacco barn....

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

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

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

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

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



PEOPLE'S BANK

Celebrating Three Decades of Dynamic Growth

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

Today, just 30 years later

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

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

PEOPLE'S BANK

Banker to the **M**illions

