

• THE TOTAL ART — Kamalika Pieris •

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 18 No. 5 July 15, 1995 Price Rs.10.00 Registered at GPO, Sri Lanka QD/33/NEWS/94

ISRAEL

AND

THE P. A. CRISIS

— Mervyn de Silva



CYANIDE CAPSULE IN CANKAM WORLD

— Michael Roberts

JOYCE: THE EXILE AND LANGUAGE

— Regi Siriwardena

V. O. A.: THE P. A.'s IRANA-GATE

— Dr. Mervyn de Silva

HUMAN RIGHTS: A WESTERN WEAPON

— Renato Constantino

PONNAMPERUMA: TRIBUTE TO A SCIENTIST

— Sachi Sri Kantha



Black Knight
It's your move

Charisma and Credibility — going, going ...

Mervyn de Silva

It is not often that a governing party in a poor, developing country is suddenly seized by a major internal crisis over a foreign policy issue. When the 66 rebels are joined by five Cabinet Ministers, the backbench revolt becomes a serious challenge to the government, and its leader, the Executive President. When the SLFP-led government is an 8 party "grand coalition" [the "Peoples Alliance"] with no secure majority in Parliament, the government has a major crisis on its hands.

The Cabinet Ministers who oppose the restoration of DPL relations with Israel include the Media and Tourism Minister, Mr. Dharmasiri Senanayake (a frontrank SLFP'er) Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse, Labour minister and the SLFP's southern province stalwart, Mr. M.H.M. Ashraff, leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the P.A.'s Eastern province stalwart, Mr. Bernard Soysa, the veteran leader of the oldest Leftist party in the country, and finally the SLFP's Youth Affairs and Sports minister, Mr. S.B. Dissanayake.

And this crisis made front page news just when public attention was focussed on a far more serious political-constitutional issue — the dismantling of the J.R. Jayawardene-installed Bonapartist-Gaullist Executive Presidency of 1978. The Sri Lanka Freedom party's POLICY STATEMENT had a brief para which began: "Our primary objective is to abolish the executive Presidency and to establish an executive body which is subject to Parliament and in such manner as would safeguard the sovereignty of the people.

(I) The Executive to be appointed by and answerable to the Parliament. It's tenure of office to depend on continuing support by Parliament.

(II) The post of President to be above party politics and separate from the position of the chief executive of the government.

PLO Stance

It was the report in the *Sunday Leader* that provoked discussion in political and DPL circles. In a frontpage 'lead' story, the paper reported:

"The Palestinian Liberation Organisa-

tion (PLO) representative in Sri Lanka Athallah Khubia had also warned the government that any attempt to bring in the Israelis to Sri Lanka would seriously affect the country's relationship with the Arab world".

He had said he would call on Foreign Affairs Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar along with the envoys of other Arab countries to voice strong protest if the efforts to bring the Israelis to Sri Lanka were resumed, the S.L. added. Naturally this has alarmed the P.A. High Command and the Foreign Minister and of course all MP's identified by the pro-Palestinian group as keen advocates of a strong Sri Lanka-Israel connection.

Students of contemporary Sri Lankan politics and foreign policy are also certain to recognise the changing character of "the Israeli issue" in local politics, particularly in the context of UNP-SLFP rivalry. Though Mr. Bandaranaike permitted Israel to establish a legation in Colombo, his successor as SLFP leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike suspended relations. The only concern then was Sri Lanka's interest, in maintaining friendly ties with the Arab and Moslem world. The tea market was the overriding economic interest. Israel hardly mattered — except when a resolution came up in the U.N. Security Council or General Assembly. The Nonaligned had nothing to do with Israel. So our policy was clearly defined. The Egyptian recognition of Israel was the first event to signal important shifts in inter-state relations in the region, with Israel as the common factor.

In our region, it was India's decision to open an embassy in Israel that provoked new thinking in non-Moslem South Asia. The most outspoken advocate of DPL relations with Israel is Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an Oxford-educated advocate even more alien to the SLFP ethos than Prof. G.L. Pieris. Mr. Kadirgamar is the only Foreign Minister (or learned lecturer) I have heard who could speak in the finest English on the many achievements of Jawaharlal Nehru for over a hour without mentioning Krishna Menon!

Of course "foreign policy" is not the

issue. What this revolt reveals is the mounting strains within an 8 party coalition that was only united in its anti-UNPism and driven by the desire for office, though it does have many more honest, dedicated politicians than the U.N.P. The inexperience of the President has become a problem too, though her immense popularity keeps the P.A. going. The diversity of the alliance is a stronger force than the unity of the 8 parties. Personalities, ideological inclinations, regional interests and most of all constituency pressures have started to erode the unity of the P.A.

This explains why neither the President nor her top adviser, Constitutional Affairs Minister G.L. Pieris seems to regard the abolition of the Executive Presidency a high priority. Prof. Pieris is losing his credibility faster than President Chandrika is losing her charisma.

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 18 No. 5 July 15, 1995

Price Rs. 10.00

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

Editor: Mervyn de Silva
Telephone: 447584

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

CONTENTS

The Anti-Israel 66	2
The Irana-gate Scandal and the P.A. Somersault	3
LTTE Suicides and the Cankam World of Devotion	5
A Southern View of Human Rights	7
Joyce (2)	9
Islamic Fundamentalism	14
America vs. Iran	16
Letters	19
Books	20

The Anti-Israel 66

We, the undersigned members of parliament whose signatures appear below appraise the government of the under-mentioned factors.

Eleven years ago, on 6th June 1984, former President J.R. Jayawardene, allegedly because no other country was willing to help Sri Lanka to contain the 'Eelam' war which was then essentially in its first phase, permitted the opening of the Israeli Interest Sections in Colombo with the objective of helping Sri Lanka to crush the L.T.T.E.

Even after six years of active Israeli involvement in Sri Lanka, the Israeli military help, advise or involvement did not succeed in containing the L.T.T.E., The Israelis could not succeed in taking the war anywhere towards a Sri Lankan government victory, whereas even after six years of Israeli involvement the war slipped in favour of the L.T.T.E., and reached Eelam War II.

The Israeli help in Sri Lanka had not been a success is a fact admitted even by Israelis themselves, as evidenced in the book "The Israeli Connection — Whom Israel Arms and Why" written by Benjamin Beit Hallahmi, a Jewish lecturer in the University of Haifa, Israel.

After six years of Israeli failure, it was the U.N.P. administration itself, which terminated diplomatic relations with Israel on 20th April 1990.

Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in a statement published in the Sri Lankan papers of 6th October 1991 and which received worldwide publicity particularly in the Middle-Eastern countries stated inter alia:-

- (a) "When the S.L.F.P., came to power in 1970, one of the first steps we took was to close down the Israeli Embassy and send its staff out of the country.
- (b) "During a press interview in Hong Kong reported in the papers of 1st June 1984, President Jayawardene admitted that the Israeli Secret Service Organisation called 'Mossad' was helping the government to put down terrorism. The so called 'Israeli Interests Section' was only a false front for the notorious Zionist terror organisation called 'Mossad' which has been responsible for the torture, mutilation and massacre of untold numbers of Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
- (c) "The Island on 26th September (1991) carried an account of a recent interview with the ex-Mossad Officer Victor Ostrofsky in which he has categorically stated that Israel provided a variety of equipment to the Tigers giving a list of highly sophisti-

cated weapons. He points out that the deadly use of landmines which has killed and continues to kill our own soldiers in large numbers everyday is the handiwork of the Israelis.

Israeli supply of arms to the L.T.T.E., has been confirmed by the Australian Federal Police in a report published in February 1992 in the 'Telegraph Mirror' of Sydney, which reported the Australian Federal Police cracking a massive airline ticketing fraud involving some businessman in Sydney. According to this report, secret meetings had

taken place in Israel with arm dealers for the purchase of weapons which had been sent to Tamil guerillas in Sri Lanka, according to the investigations. A former *Observer* journalist Muditha Dias had filed a report from Sydney which was published in the *Observer* of 16th February 1992, under the title 'Australian Police confirm Israeli supply of arms to L.T.T.E.', according to which some of the Sydney based businessmen had visited Israel thrice in 1991 to arrange shipments of arms to the L.T.T.E.

(Continued on page 19)

Australian Police confirm Israeli supply of arms to LTTE

Hard evidence of Israel supplying arms to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was revealed when Australian Federal Police cracked a massive airline ticketing fraud running into millions of Australian dollars by Shri Lankan Tamil businessmen in Sydney.

Some of them had visited Israel thrice during the last year to arrange shipments of arms to the LTTE.

Former *Observer* journalist Muditha Dias reports from Sydney that a brother-in-law of the owner of a leading shopping plaza in Colombo is one of the businessmen involved in the fraud. The *Telegraph Mirror* of Sydney reported that the four-step operation was: 1 Shri Lankan Tamil businessmen arrive in Australia from the United Kingdom via Germany, 2 Funds from the travel fraud sent to Swiss and German bank accounts, 3 Secret meetings in Israel with arms dealers for purchase of weapons and 4 Guns sent to Tamil Guerillas in Shri Lanka.

In this "Australia's biggest-ever travel fraud" as described by the newspaper, Two Shri Lankan Tamil businessmen had established two travel agencies in Sydney. After obtaining IATA licence, they had defrauded six major airlines including the KLM of the Netherlands to the tune of millions of dollars. They had also printed 800,000 fake National Australia Bank and American Express travellers cheques.

It took more than four months for the Police to uncover the complete operation. Police have used electronic surveillance including Supreme Court approved phone taps, in a secret investigation involving more than 50 officers from New South Wales, the Victorian Fraud Squad, Federal Police, the National Crime Authority and Interpol agents in Europe. They had also sought the assistance of the Swiss police.

Federal Police found out that three rounds of negotiations had taken place in Israel for the purchases of arms to be supplied to Tamil Tigers in Shri Lanka. The four-month probe code-named "Operation Travellers Cheques," was aided by the Immigration Department, Customs, the Consumer Affairs Department, airlines and banks.

The intricate scam has left dozens of Australian travellers stranded overseas and ripped off more than six airlines and the New South Wales Travel Compensation Fund of almost two million Australian dollars.

Last December, armed with search warrants, detectives raided the travel agencies alleged to be the centres of the rip-offs. These two agencies went into voluntary liquidation and closed shop after refusing to allow independent audits into their books.

Interpol has been called in to help Australian authorities track down one of the culprits who had skipped the country and now believed to be in Germany.

Meanwhile, more misdeeds of the LTTE in India and Canada are also being uncovered now.

The Foreign Ministry in Colombo received a report from Shri Lankan Deputy High Commissioner in Madras that Indian Central Investigation Bureau (CBI) has unearthed a massive racket organised by some LTTE members to send Shri Lankan Tamils to Europe and Middle East with forged travel documents.

The leader of the group, Nadarajah Selvarajah, an LTTE activist with a German passport has been arrested by the CBI. The report said a Police Officer attached to the Narcotics Control Bureau of Tamil Nadu has also been arrested for aiding the LTTE gang in this operation. The investigators found 190 forged passports, visa seals of many European and Middle East countries.

A report from Ottawa said that the Canadian authorities were keeping a close watch on some Tamil immigrants to see whether they were involved in visa rackets to get illegal immigrants into the country. German authorities, too, have launched a similar investigation.

According to the Foreign Ministry, there are about 150,000 Shri Lankan Tamils in Europe, the Middle East, USA, Canada and Australia apart from the estimated 200,000 Tamil refugees in India.

(This document was also distributed with the Statement of the 66)

The Irana-gate scandal and the People's Alliance somersault

Dr. Mervyn de Silva, Ex-MP, (SLFP)

Never in the short history of post-independent Sri Lanka has a political party taken such a diametrically opposite stand on an important and sensitive issue as the PA-government. While in the 1989-94 opposition and during the last election campaign, its leader and the members of parliament representing this predominantly catholic coastal belt lent strong support to the struggles of the Iranawila solidarity group. The pledges held out by the Alliance made them their ardent supporters and incensed them to become fearless in their agitation. Two patriotic persons sacrificed their lives and the people have not forgotten it as yet. Although, the PA hauled their votes on the promise of abrogating the VOA 1983 agreement, for all their rhetoric and political gimmicks. They have now gifted on a platter to the USA government the main element of the VOA facility so that it can embark on its geopolitical ventures. Thus, the PA within a short span since assuming office in August 1994 has gone back on its word leaving the people of Iranawila and other concerned people of this country in the lurch without the slightest sign of remorse. Its political actions in contrast to earlier sermons and its apparent contempt for the moral obligation to honour the main election promises are no second to the UNP government of J R Jayawardene that broke the election promises with impunity.

The Irana-gate affair flared-up when the government of Sri Lanka and the USA signed a number of agreements permitting the setting up of a more technologically sophisticated and expanded VOA facility in Iranawila, Chilaw. A comparison of the main features of the facility under the original agreement of 1951 and the new agreement of 1983, given below, clearly points to the strong suspicion that the facility could be used for a hidden agenda beyond the innocent purported service to the third world peoples. Any student of the current issues of world politics will find it hard to believe the claim of the USA government, judging from its past records. One correspondent made

the point succinctly with the remark "whether we like it or not Sri Lanka has become the laughing stock of the International community as a place. Where aliens can have their fun and natives play the role of clowns". The latter role evident in the framing of government policies seems to continue today as a genetical inheritance from the 17 year UNP regime. The strong infusion of the UNP/DUNF political genes and outright UNP grafts in the Alliance is a good explanation for the current state of affairs and how they are tackled.

Politicians, scientists, environmentalists, the general public and, the people of Iranawila have condemned the VOA expansion facility from time to time focusing on the fears of the local residents, its use as a weapon of disinformation and destabilisation, and blatant cultural inva-

sion and information domination etc. and, nothing needs to be added. Apart from its demerits and dangers what is meant to be dealt with here is also the continuing practice of political parties taking people for a ride by promising to do what they never intend to fulfil — the Iranawila episode is an example par excellence. The PA spoke of transparency, decency, and of doing away with lies and deception. How is it to be judged today in the light of the stand it has taken on the Irana gate scandal, one of its senior cabinet ministers who raised the issue in parliament as a member of the opposition demanding its abrogation and now voting against its abrogation, and the pattern of voting by PA members on the private members motion of an LSSP member of parliament to abrogate the VOA agreement? — see hanzard extracts in next page:

Iranawila villagers protest against VOA

Villagers, waving placards and shouting anti-American slogans, marked American Independence Day with a rally against a Voice of America plan to go ahead with a new broadcasting station at Iranawila.

About 200 villagers, shouting "Clinton go home", demonstrated outside the U.S. embassy.

Parliament voted in May to continue with construction of the transmitting station at Iranawila, about 50 miles (80 km) north of Colombo despite the villagers' protests.

"The Iranawila People's Solidarity Forum has decided to observe this day as a day of mourning because of the persistent attitude of the American authorities to go ahead with this project," a spokesman said.

When construction of the shortwave relay station began in early 1994, local residents said the station would be used as a cover for military communications, emit radiation and disrupt village life.

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said at the time the construction project was an international agreement that could not be torn up.

In January, the government signed a new agreement with the United States adding safeguards such as the monitoring of radiation and regular site checks.

The U.S. Embassy says the new station, replacing 40-year-old transmitters elsewhere on the island, will improve VOA broadcasts to Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

— Reuter

Comparison of 1951-1983 VOA agreements

Feature	VOA-1951	VOA-1983
1) Extent of land	10 acre	1000 acres
2) Power of transmitters	105 kwts	2500 kwts
3) Owership	Sri Lanka government	USA government
4) Administration operation and maintenance	Sri Lanka government	USA government
5) Censoring of broadcasts	SL government has the right	SL government loses right
6) No of foreign personnel	one (1)	eight (8)
7) Supply of electricity	from National grid	from National grid or from US installed power plant
8) Period of Agreement	10 years	20 years plus one or more extension of 10 years

Hanzard of 8th September, 1993

— Mr. Nimal Siripala De Silva, MP.

- (a) Will the government place before this House, for the information of the general public, all the agreements that have been entered into between the government of Sri Lanka and the government of USA.
- (b) Will the government, without delay, inquire into the allegations made by various bodies regarding the continuation of the project and the harmful effects said to accrue from it? Further will the government **take steps to close down/modify** it and thus prevent the harmful effects referred to above.
- (c) Will the government take steps to halt the unlawful deployment of security personnel to restrain citizens who are only exercising their democratic rights to peacefully protest against this project.

Hazard of 6th October, 1993

— Vasudeva Nanayakkara, MP.

I challenge you to hold a referendum on the VOA in Iranawila. You will dare not.

In the meantime, when protest marches were in progress the *Ravaya* supported the cause and the PA by achieving a major scoop and publishing a translation of the 1983 agreement. Today, the same journal has taken the vow of silence on the Iranagate scandal.

Are these examples of the collective conduct of a ruling party that gave sermons on political and public morality that are being shown to our restless and disillusioned youth? And, do you think it will be possible to keep them within the democratic framework, which itself is a joke (UNP Nationalist Thondaman in PA cabinet etc); and in this manner, the body polity is getting newer and more potent doses of hypocrisy, corruption, and dishonesty, and, injustice marches triumphantly across the country? The next paragraph illustrates this point further.

Recently in parliament the majority of PA members voted against the private members motion brought before the House by an LSSP national list member to abrogate the 1983 VOA agreement. At division only four (4) voted for the abrogation and 125 voted against the abrogation. In other words, **in the Sri Lanka Parliament of 225 members only 4 were for the abrogation and 125 in favour of the agreement as it stands.** The PA that vehemently opposed the agreement 9-months ago has through the device of a private members motion "Covertly" "approved" the VOA agreement and have become the favoured and obedient god children of the US government (uncle Sam).

Nevertheless, (1) **are we to believe** that there was seriousness in wanting the Agreement to be abrogated? (2) **Are we to believe** that the mover of the motion was no innocent as to be unaware of the consequences of a defeat of the motion?

(3) **Are we to believe** that, if so he would not have taken the trouble to ascertain the voting pattern of the Alliance **before** placing the motion for debate? (4) **Are we to believe** that the motion was moved without the consent of the PA hierarchy and its leader? (5) **Are we to believe** that he did not foresee the consequences of a defeat which would result in a covert modus operandi to have the VOA agreement ratified by parliament? (6) **Are we to believe** that not with standing its slender majority in parliament, he would move a motion on such a controversial subject without the knowledge of the PAs minister of constitutional affairs and its leader?

If the new government used this method of achieving end of appeasing a foreign government then, it has lost its credibility and so-claimed transparency. If the UNP regime of 17 years attacked the foundation of democracy and democratic Institutions, then the PA would seem be on a mission to destroy their edifices as well lock stock and barrel.

The time is ripe for the emergence of a nationalist, patriotic, dedicated, and capable band of people who are honest and sound from centre to circumference, true to the hearts core to lead the country as one single united nation. Someone of a high calibre of Integrity and trust can fill the present vacuum for a strong leader, a man who will never be for sale and whose love and concern for the country is deep and strong.

LTTE suicides and the Cankam world of devotion

Michael Roberts

Anthropology, University of Adelaide

Since the Tigers, the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, have hit the headlines, their penetrating use of suicide bombers and the cult of cyanide suicides which has informed the practices of their military cadre have caught the world's attention. Whatever the forebodings elsewhere, to the immediate constituency which the Tiger leadership addresses the pictures of armed warriors with cyanide capsules on chains around their necks have been stirring messages, good fodder for mobilisation.

It would seem that the mythologies from the Tamil past, especially from the Cankam (pronounced Sangam) and Chola (Cola) periods, have been utilised by the Tiger leadership over the years to develop a cult of martyred action and military discipline. Indeed I am reliably informed that the Tiger high command is assiduously searching for material from the Cankam literature to sustain their ideological work.

This is an instrumentalist clarification on my part. While not incorrect it is nevertheless incomplete; it is not the whole story. The very endeavour on the part of the Tiger leadership indicates that time and heritage are a measure of value. And the instrumentalist theory of ideological manipulation says naught about the reasons why specific themes from the Cankam literature (from amidst a range of possibilities) have been selected in the first place. Nor does it clarify why these themes have such mileage, such resonances, among its audience of Tiger recruits — who we should not be treated as robots.

The significance of the Cankam literature for the understanding of Tiger ideology came home to me in the course of a conversation with Professor Ravinder Kumar. From his position as a secular North Indian, Ravinder Kumar had found the temper of Cankam poetry quite chilling, even frightening. Its emphasis on filial devotion, he felt, took religiosity and its bondages some leagues deeper than the religiosities with which he was familiar (personal communication). I am not able to comment on the comparison. But the translations and commentary in A.K. Ramanujan's *Poems of Love and War* (Delhi 1985, OUP) highlight the theme of martyred devotion to a cause/king which is one strand in the heterogeneous corpus of Cankam poetry.

For the most part Cankam poetry can be distinguished along two dimensions: the *akam*, meaning "interior, heart, household;" and the *puram*, meaning "exterior", outer parts of the body, yard outside the house, public. While being different genres *akam*, and *puram*, poems also have "many things in common, inhabit the same world" (Ramanujan 1985: 233, 234). Thus their relationship is not an opposition so much as a "consubstantial" difference — so that the syntactical artifice

to mark the relationship should not be a colon, or a stroke, but a hyphenated continuum: as "*akam-puram*", a form that should be extended to the "nature-culture" relation in the Indic world for which *akam-puram* is a gloss.

My interest is in the *puram* poems. While "*akam* poems are love poems," "*puram* are all other kinds of poems, usually about war, values, community, it is the 'public' poetry of the ancient Tamils, celebrating the ferocity and glory of kings, lamenting the death of heroes..." (Ramanujan 1985: 235). Thus, says Ramanujan, the "entire society in the *puram* poems, is geared to the values of war, to fashioning a warrior 'like a chariot wheel' Honour (*pukal*), fame, a good name (*peyar*) in life or in death... are what a man seeks: a sense of shame (*nan*) controls that seeking from within" (1985: 289).

Three illustrative poems, selected from a range of similar possibilities, are worth pondering over.

A.

Tirumal

In fire, you are the heat.
In flowers you are the scent.
Among stones, you are the diamond.

In words, you are the truth.
Among virtues, you are love.
In warrior's wrath, you are the strength.

In the Vedas, you are the secret.
Of the elements, you are the first.

In the scorching sun, you are the light.
In the moonlight, you are the softness.
Everything, you are everything,
the sense, the substance of everything.
(From *Peripatal* 3: 63-68 in Ramanujan 1985: 218)

B.

Not rice, Not water

Only the king
is the life-breath
of a kingdom.

And it is the duty
of a king
with his army of spears
to know
he's the life
of the wide, blossoming kingdom

(From *Purananuru* 186 in Ramanujan 1985: 158)

Mothers (3)

The old woman's shoulders
were dry, unfleshed,
with outstanding veins;
her low belly
was like a lotus pad.

When people said
her son had taken fright
had turned his back on battle
and died,

She raged
and shouted,

"If he really broke down
in the thick of battle
I'll slash these breasts,
that gave him suck,"

and went there,
sword in hand.

Turning over body after fallen body,
She rummaged through the blood-red field
till she found her son,
quartered in pieces
and she rejoiced
more than on the day
she gave him birth

(From *Purananuru* 278 Ramanujan 1985: 182)

These were the sort of sentiments that Ravinder Kumar found so ice-cold awesome, their intensity of filial devotion to a heroic centre so fiercely foreboding.

It remains for scholars of Eelamist and Tiger ideology (the two overlap without being synonymous) to decipher their texts in ways which test my suggestion that the revived Cankam traditions of the nineteenth century-and-after may have inspired and girded the ongoing suicide cult of martyrdom among the Tigers. This analytical work will have to be located within the broader context in which the suicide rate in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka has always — that is, since statistical time — been among the highest incidences in Sri Lanka. In this testing work the focus should be on the Eelamist thinking, and especially the poetry of Kasi Ananthan *et al*, in the 1970s and early 80s rather than the state ideology of the contemporary post 1986-87 LTTE regime.

Here, the thinking and practice of Ponnudurai Sivakumaran will be critical. From Narayan Samy's recent book on the Tigers it appears that he was among the earliest of the Eelamist

militants, and as a teen-ager unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Somaweera Chandrasiri and Alfred Duriappah in the early 1970's. When cornered by the police after a botched-up attempt at a bank robbery on the 5th June 1974, Sivakumaran swallowed a cyanide pill. His act, then, was the exemplary cyanide suicide.

Given the retrospective mythicizations it is unlikely that one can ever deconstruct the inspirations within Sivakumaran's thinking. But one can analyse the legends which developed — immediately, as with Jan Palach's self-immolation in Prague in 1969 — around his act. Sivakumaran's funeral in Jaffna, it should be emphasised, was a landmark event. The shops were shut, eulogies were distributed in pamphlet form and a multitude gathered. Several youths slashed their fingers and inscribed bloody dots on their foreheads, while "some youths attacked moderate Tamil politicians with slippers when they began speaking about Sivakumaran" (Narayan Samy 1994:29). Here, then, we see not only the religio-political fervour of martyrdom, but the crystallising peaks to which funerals 'elevate' persons.

In probing the connections between the *puram* poetry of the Cankam period and the suicide cult of Sri Lankan Tamil Eelamists, of course, one must be mindful of the differences in geo-political context, notably that between the dynastic kingdoms of ancient times and the nation states within a global order of rapid communication. Ramanujan warns us that in the Cankam poetry.

Not even the rousing abstraction of a whole nation or a kingdom is the subject of song — though a Tamil territory, a Tamilakam, is mentioned. Only the individual king or hero, his battles, his bounty, his justice, and his life, are poetic subjects. Loyalty is loyalty to a master, not to an idea or a community (1985:288).

However, the opposition which Ramanujan rightly marks can be merged, substantiated. Just as it was possible in medieval times for the capital in Asia and South East Asia to stand for the whole kingdom, in the Indic world past and present it has been possible for a single iconic figure to represent a nation or a cause (which is why statue building is of such symbolic import in Sri Lanka). In my argument, then, as the Tigers have emerged as the principal 'guardians' of the Jaffna people in the face of ravages from the threatening Sri Lankan state, Prabhakaran has become — for the true believers rather than all the Sri Lankan Tamil people — the embodiment of Eelam and the embodiment of the "Tamil people". (For this sort of reasoning the contours of the latter term do not need precise spelling out). In our deciphering of this reasoning what matters is the iconic consubstantiality between the three idealised images. To those personnel drawing strength from their filial devotion, in battle, in life, in death, Eelam-Tamilian-Prabhakaran become one, an "ambrosia" of fulfilment.

A Southern view of human rights

Renato Constantino

It is imperative, argues the well-known Filipino critic, that questions of democracy and human rights should be worked out among Southern nations in order to prevent the co-option of this issue by the North for its own purposes.

The human rights issue has been co-opted by Northern states and is being used as an excuse for intervention and as an economic weapon against Southern nations who defy Northern policies. Human rights violations affecting individuals are the most common subjects of accusations by Northern states and generally the targets are Southern states which are summarily adjudged guilty by international public opinion mobilised by Northern media.

But before going into how the human rights question has been utilised by Northern powers for their own purposes, let us make a brief historical reference to the evolution of the concept of human rights which goes beyond the rights of individuals and the violations thereof.

A historical perspective

A historical and holistic approach would reveal human rights as a dynamic concept undergoing transformation and expansion with every epoch. What was narrowly conceived as individual civil and political rights in relation to state power in the transition from a feudal to a capitalist social order became informed by new ideas originating from socialist thought.

It was no longer enough to talk about freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, the right to vote, the right to due process, etc. There was need to include in the discourse the right to work, to shelter, to education and medical care. Thus, human rights became more holistic and comprehensive, covering not only civil and political rights but also social and economic rights. The political freedoms and civil liberties of which the US is proud constitute only one-third of the global human rights agenda which includes national sovereignty and economic justice.

In the 1960s, Third World states banding together within the ambit of the United Nations articulated the concerns of the newly independent peoples in a situation continually threatened by ever greater exploitation and domination by their former colonial masters under new terms and conditions. Most importantly, the Covenant on Political Rights and Civil Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights guarantee as a collective right of a people the right to self-determination, which is the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development'. In other words, the primordial human right of a people is national sovereignty.

During the last few decades, social movements added more voices to the human rights discourse. The civil rights movement demanded the recognition of the rights of coloured people and successfully dismantled racial segregation in the US although it has not completely erased racial discrimination in that country. The labour movement worldwide sought the recognition of a large compendium of workers' rights. The feminist movement proclaimed that women's rights are human rights, and called for an end to all forms of sexual exploitation and gender violence against women: for example, rape, incest, spouse-battering, sexual harassment, prostitution, and pornography.

The current human rights discourse is therefore much richer and fuller than it ever was before, due to the confluence of various influences. When engaged in such a discourse from the perspective of North-South relations, the culpability of Northern elites can be established even more strongly.

Not only have they waged unjust to dominate weaker peoples and control strategic resources; not only have they continued to impose policies which cause poverty and disease in the South; nor

have they terrorised those without nuclear shields with the nuclear weapons in their hands; they have also engaged in the destruction of the environment and of the indigenous peoples who lived in harmony with it. They have also exploited the cheap labour of workers in the South, whose rights have consequently been suppressed. They have also commodified and violated the bodies of Southern women and children, through transnationalised prostitution and pornography, sex tourism and trafficking.

The North's hypocrisy

When the North criticises human rights violations in the South, they would have us think that their societies cannot be faulted for similar sins. In fact, vulnerable sections of the populations of the North — blacks, other coloured peoples, migrants, ethnic and religious minorities, women, children, gays etc. — have been frequent targets of human rights violations and abuse by those who are in power by virtue of their race, class, gender, ethnicity, age, and/or sexual orientation.

The Rodney King incident in Los Angeles, California is a graphic example. But such incidents seldom become the subject of a sustained orchestrated outcry similar to that raised against human rights violations which occur in the South. More often than not, the North conveniently turns a blind eye on its own shortcomings, and hypocritically sits in judgment against civilisations which it considers backward and inferior because these are non-European in origin.

The South, of course, cannot claim to be lily-white. There are venal and abusive Southern regimes which deserve international censure. There are assertive and justice-seeking Southern citizens who are being tortured, illegally detained, and/or summarily executed.

While the human rights question legally falls within the ambit of the state's jurisdiction based on its traditions and democra-

Renato Constantino is the author of numerous books on the Philippines and one of the best-known social critics.

tic development, the issue has become international in dimension. Thus, expressions of sympathy and solidarity from human rights quarters may not only mitigate the condition of those affected but could also catalyse the recognition of rights not yet within the cognizance of the erring state. However, these expressions of solidarity addressed to local organisations in certain states or those who have not had a history of Western-style political democracy should be carefully calibrated so as not to serve the interests of interventionist Northern powers who do not want to see a united South.

Violations in the US

Private groups like Amnesty International have been acting in behalf of political prisoners in various countries of the South. However, they should not be blind to the human rights violations being committed by Northern states against their own citizens and against other peoples. In fact, they should be more critical and condemnatory of these practices which are happening under the very noses of the self-appointed guardians of human rights worldwide.

Because the so-called 'global protectors' of the North are supposed to know a lot better, they should raise a ruckus whenever human rights violations are perpetrated by one of their own. But more often than not, they don't. And the reasons, as explained earlier, cannot be charged to ignorance and benign neglect.

A case in point is the 'new abundance, well-documented evidence that the death penalty (in the US) in its application is arbitrary, unfair and racially discriminatory', being 'imposed disproportionately on the poor, on minorities, on the mentally ill or retarded and — perhaps most crucially of all — on those without adequate counselling'. This according to an open letter of the Amnesty International, which further concludes that 'US citizens have been deprived of their lives at the hands of state governments following legal proceedings that were seriously deficient and in violation of the safeguards enshrined in international human rights instruments and the US Constitution.'

Amnesty International, according to one critic, failed to say what should have been said — that lynching against blacks and other minorities are still happening in the US, and worse, under the pale of the law; and that eugenics is being practised

against the mentally deficient. What right then does the United States have to censure others, given its own dismal failings? Why should it be the enforcer of standards it does not observe? This point seems lost on US officials who, like the proverbial pot, insist on calling the kettle black.

But beyond the home turf, there is need to criticise and condemn human rights practices of Northern states in their dealings with Southern peoples. The history of colonialism and neocolonialism is replete with horror stories of massacres, virtual genocidal campaigns, mass torture and rape, bombing of civilian populations, use of biochemical weapons, etc.

In my own country, American aggressors at the turn of the century violated our people's right to independence and self-determination when they took over as colonisers at a time when Filipino revolutionaries had already vanquished the Spaniards in the first anti-colonial revolution in Asia. Then, in the Philippine-American war which ensued, the American military proceeded to use the most cruel forms of 'pacification'. They invented novel methods of torture, such as the water cure, and in a fit of vengeance, turned the whole island of Samar into a 'howling wilderness' by killing every male over 10 years old.

But cruelty was not an American monopoly. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines during the Second World War, they slapped and manhandled civilians almost indiscriminately; they tortured and beheaded countless Filipinos; and they herded not a few Filipinos to serve as their 'comfort women' or in plainer terms, as their sexual slaves.

But the Northern states might argue that these are things of the past. They are now behaving in a more civilised way and adhering strictly to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed by most nations after the war. The facts belie such claims. Unilateral actions, invasions, bombings of civilian sites continue unabated well into the last decade of this century.

The US-led attack during the Gulf War was a classic case in overkill, using the most sophisticated weaponry to decimate the Iraqi army, leading to unnecessary loss of lives. It targeted oil refineries and other infrastructures essential to the maintenance and development of the Iraqi

economy. An economic blockade was even imposed, preventing the entry of essential imports like milk for Iraqi infants and children.

The invasion of Grenada, the police action in Panama and now Haiti cannot be justified on human rights grounds. Neither can such weapons as trade embargoes on Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua.

The right to life is perhaps the most fundamental right of all. If the Northern states agree with this principle, then weapons of mass destruction should be abhorrent to them. Yet it is a fact that the nuclear arms race was set primarily by the United States; the former Soviet Union had to keep pace with its enemy.

With the collapse of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, the Cold War should have been brought to a proper close by the dismantling of nuclear weapons on both sides of the former divide. But why is there no substantial progress in this direction? Why are the Northern nuclear powers holding on to their monopoly of nuclear weaponry? Isn't this the worst form of human rights violation, threatening the very fabric of civilisation, and even of life on this planet?

Indeed, the lenses for examining human rights as a global question need to be widened to include glaring inequities between North and South. Policies of multilateral institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which are dominated by the North, result in environmental destruction, displacing, harming, and therefore violating the human rights of whole populations. All economic impositions of the North that cause poverty and disease, specifically those packaged as structural adjustment programmes, should be examined in the light of a new understanding of human rights.

Because of the disappearance of the socialist bloc, the confrontation is now between North and South. Solidarity work among the countries of the South is therefore imperative. Questions of democracy and human rights should be worked out among Southern nations in order to prevent Northern co-optation of the issue for its own purposes. This is the urgent task of the moment.

— Third World Network

Joyce: The writer as exile

Regi Siriwardena

To the writer who is rooted in a particular language and in a particular community, separation from them often seems a kind of living death. I think of the two greatest Russian women poets of this century: Anna Akhmatova, who after the Russian Revolution refused to emigrate, in spite of her lack of sympathy for the regime, because the land was still the place where the 'great Russian word' belonged; and the opposite case of Marina Tsvetaeva, writing in Paris her great poems that she was unable to publish and lamenting that her audience was in Russia and beyond reach. Yet in this century where displacement and exile have been a frequent condition, there are writers who have confronted this predicament through bi- or multi-lingualism. There was, for instance, Arthur Koestler, migrating from Hungary to Germany to England, writing his early novels in German (which wasn't his native tongue) and his later books in English. There was Vladimir Nabokov, another displaced person, who wrote creatively in three languages, and who translated his early novels from Russian into English and some of his later English novels into Russian. There was Samuel Beckett, Irish-born, living for the most part in Paris, who wrote several of his works twice over — once in English and once in French. And there is Salman Rushdie, now suffering the ultimate exile, virtually from human society itself, who has drawn the life-blood of his imagination from the *Mahabharata* and Bombay cinema as much as from Rabelais, Cervantes and Joyce. It isn't an accident that of the four writers whom I have mentioned, the last three were drawn powerfully to the magnet of Joyce's art. Beckett, of course, most directly of all: he was Joyce's secretary at the age of 21, and parts of *Finnegans Wake* were dictated to him. And his first published work was an essay on *Work in Progress*, as Joyce's unfinished book was then called.

Where does Joyce himself stand in this spectrum of the exile's relationship to language? His response to the language of the imperial rulers was not to reject it, as did the sentimentalists of the Gaelic revival, but to make it his own by transforming it. The extraordinary linguistic innovativeness of *Ulysses* has behind it both his problematic relationship to an alien tongue and the sense of creative freedom that comes from his extra-territoriality. (I borrow this term from George Steiner's book *Extraterritorial*.) And though Joyce didn't write a whole work in a language to which he wasn't born, like Nabokov or Beckett, his polyglot European personality finally found expression in the multi-lingual texture of *Finnegans Wake*. Here English is enriched, subverted and transcended by the weaving of many other tongues into its polysemous fabric. A voice in the book asks: 'Are we speaching d'anglas landage or are you spraking sea Djoytsch?' It's a question that may well mirror the perplexity of the reader, transported from the solidity of a familiar 'landage' to one where he is at 'sea', uncertain whether s/he is 'speaching' or 'spraking' English or French or German or Dutch, or that tongue which is Joyce's individual creation, 'Djoytsch'.

I shall now take a fresh look at the three major works of Joyce in order to see where they stand more than half a century after his death. Of the three books, it's *A Portrait of the Artist* which has been diminished with the passage of time. Its technical originality, which was dazzling in 1916, has been dimmed not only by the further advances made by *Ulysses* but also by the fact that later novelists have absorbed its innovations. But there's a more intrinsic limitation in *A Portrait*. If both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* can be called polyphonic novels,³ where different voices are counterpointed against each other, *A Portrait* is wholly monophonic. Everything in it is centred in the consciousness of Ste-

phen Dedalus. And since the Stephen of the *Portrait* seems a priggish, humourless young man who takes himself all too seriously, the novel carries, in spite of the courage and honesty of the hero's rebellion, a sense of claustrophobia. Most of its original readers took it that Stephen was a faithful representation of the author. Though the narrative was fairly closely based on the events of Joyce's childhood and youth, we have it on the testimony of his younger brother Stanislaus that 'it is not an autobiography; it is an artistic creation'.⁴ Even of the later Stephen of *Ulysses* Stanislaus Joyce said: 'In temperament he [that is, Joyce] was as unlike that figure, mourning under the incubus of remorse, as he could well be. He had a lively sense of humour and a ready laugh'.⁵ It's true equally of the Stephen of the *Portrait* that there's a distance between the character and the author, and that the self-portrait is deliberately selective. In Zurich Joyce complained to his friend Frank Budgen that people who read the book forgot that its title was *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.⁶ That title shares in the ambiguity that is so pervasive in Joyce's work. In one sense, it means a self-portrait, but a portrait of the author in an earlier, immature phase of himself. In another sense, it means a portrait of a character who wants to be the artist, who has chosen this as his vocation, but who is unformed, undeveloped, who in fact is less artist than aesthete. It's easy enough to see this now, but it would have been hard for the book's original readers to do so because there was no other point of view within the book from which Stephen could be seen. Joyce had to write the book to exorcise his younger self; and we have to read it in order to measure the great act of self-transcendence that *Ulysses* represents. But if we know only the *Portrait*, we get a very partial and misleading picture of Joyce's work.

The first thing to be said about the two

later works — *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* — is that they confound all distinctions of genres. Is *Ulysses* a novel? The only possible answer to that question is, 'Ye-e-es, but...' It has characters who are recognisable as individual people; it has a kind of plot, in that events take place in sequence between 8 o'clock in the morning of the 16th June 1904 and 2 o'clock in the morning of the next day. But there are other features of the book's form that make it difficult to fit it into the category of novels, as they had been known up to 1922. One chapter of *Ulysses* — and that the longest as well as, I think, the most creatively original — is cast in dramatic form, where the real, the remembered and the imagined, people and things, have equal status as actors. Another chapter is cast in the form of a series of impersonations of prose style in English, from Anglo-Saxon to the performance of a modern American hotgospeller. While you can work out what is happening by way of plot while these parodies are being unrolled, it's quite clear that the narrative has been submerged by another interest — that language and its metamorphoses have upstaged the characters and their doings. Yet another chapter is constituted of a series of questions and answers, a kind of catechism, and who asks and who answers isn't evident. So one can only say that the text is interrogating itself, and often getting hilariously inappropriate answers.

Attempts have been made — and will continue to be made — to minimise the disturbing originality of Joyce's last two books by interpreting them in less radical terms. In the case of *Ulysses*, critics who were so disposed clutched at the interior monologue as a stay against confusion. Joyce, it was said, was trying to give a faithful picture of what went on in the mind; he was attempting to complete the external realism that the novel had already achieved by extending it into an inner, psychological realism. If you read the essay titled 'Modern Fiction'⁷ that Virginia Woolf wrote when *A Portrait* had been published and the early chapters of *Ulysses* were being serialised in the *Little Review*, you will find what a sensitive critic of the time thought was Joyce's intention:

Examine for a moment an ordinary mind

on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions — trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms, and as they fall, and as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old... Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.

Virginia Woolf went on to suggest that this aim was what animated Joyce in *A Portrait* and in *Ulysses*. The trouble with this account is that it throws a lot of light on what Mrs. Woolf was trying to do in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, but it will hardly do for Joyce. I don't think it's adequate even for those parts of *Ulysses* where Joyce uses the interior monologue; but, as I have already indicated, the interior monologue is only one of the narrative and stylistic modes in Joyce's armoury.⁸

All realist fiction rests on the premise that the reader will grant the supposition of a real world — real people, real places, real events — which the text is recording. In fact, of course, the people, places and events are illusions created by the verbal structures of the novelist. Joyce is the first modern novelist to foreground the activity of writing itself as the substantial reality that the reader experiences; and under 'writing' here I subsume also reading, since the reader is 'writing' her/his own text while going on. However, the relation between that activity and the imagined world of the novel, in the old realist sense, is itself shifting and changing in *Ulysses*. I think, for instance, that you can in the first chapter get along with reading the text in the realist fashion and not come to grief. In many of the other episodes, however, on the other hand, the relationship between text and reality is much more indeterminate.

Let's take a specific example from the text — what is known as the 'Nausicaa' episode — the voyeuristic encounter between Leopold Bloom and Gerty MacDowell on the seashore. The episode is

rendered in a continuing parody of the style of women's romantic novelettes. In keeping with the frequent tendency to assume that Joyce's main concern is to render the inner consciousness of his characters, this episode has usually been read as a rendering of the consciousness of Gerty MacDowell, with the implication that she sees life in terms of the clichés of the fiction she reads. Accordingly, at least one critic, S.L. Goldberg, has accused Joyce of 'cruelty' in this chapter: 'Joyce's ironic parody,' he says, 'is breaking a butterfly upon a wheel'.⁹ But there is no warrant for this construction except the critical tendency to see Joyce's main aim as that of psychological representation. As for his alleged 'cruelty', the Joyce who chose as his life's companion Nora Barnacle, who was entirely non-intellectual (she was a chambermaid in a Dublin hotel when Joyce met her, and she never read his books, but Joyce remained devoted to her for the rest of his life), wouldn't have been guilty of that kind of snobbery. Nor would he have made the error, to which literary intellectuals are so prone, of assuming that the quality of a person's emotional life is to be judged by what s/he reads.¹⁰ Just as Joyce impersonates Malory or Pepys or Gibbon or Dickens in the 'Oxen of the Sun', here he impersonates the authors of romantic novelettes and how they would represent Gerty MacDowell, and the laugh is on that representation, not on Gerty. It is possible that in a different way Joyce is also parodying himself, since the girl seen on the seashore in *A Portrait of the Artist* was the occasion of Stephen's recognition of his artistic vocation and his rhetorical outburst: 'A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory'. If the prose of 'Nausicaa' is steeped in the clichés of popular romance and magazine stories, so is Stephen's revelation in the *Portrait* derivative from the language of Walter Pater and Lionel Johnson. But in the latter case, the language is a mirror of Stephen's consciousness at that time, since *A Portrait* is really a 'psychological novel' of the kind that *Ulysses* has wrongly been taken to be. Breaking with the monophonic narrative of *A Portrait*, *Ulysses* opens itself not only to the differently constituted inte-

rior monologues of Stephen, Bloom and Molly, but also to the varieties of discourse in Dublin — middle-class conversation, popular slang and humour, the idioms of journalism and advertising, political rhetoric — as well as to the languages of literary tradition which it alternately exploits, undermimes, caricatures and transforms. *Ulysses* is a rich example of that 'heteroglossia' which Bakhtin regarded as representing the possibilities open to the novel more than to any other form.

Finnegans Wake has even less links with the traditional novel than *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* does move towards a kind of conclusion: it's evident that the ending of the 'Penelope' episode — Molly Bloom's soliloquy — represents an affirmation of life:

... and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.¹¹

Joyce told one of his French translators, 'The book must end with yes. It must end with the most positive word in the human language'.¹² But *Finnegans Wake* doesn't really have a beginning, a middle and an end, since the last sentence without a fullstop flows directly into the first sentence without a capital letter. And the last word of that unfinished sentence is the undefined 'the', which Joyce described as 'the most slippery, the least accented, the weakest word in English, a word which is not even a word, which is scarcely sounded between the teeth, a breath, a nothing...'¹³ It's possible to start reading *Finnegans Wake* anywhere in the book because its structure isn't linear but cyclical. As for characters, if you mean people designated by proper names, there's no lack of them, but you may find it difficult to assimilate them to the figures of the traditional novel when you discover that Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker is also Finnegans, is also Humpty-Dumpty, is also Adam, is also Parnell... and I could go on.

With *Finnegans Wake*, too, there are critics who have tried to psychologise it,

to explain the whole book in terms of the fantasies of a single dreaming mind. It would take too much time to demonstrate that a great deal in the book can't be interpreted in this way without distortion. But what I do want to suggest is that Joyce wasn't trying to give a literal, faithful picture of a mind dreaming. He was using the dream-form as a convenience because we do know that in dreams one place turns into another without warning, people change shapes and identities, even words metamorphose and coalesce. Joyce must have recognised that readers would find similar phenomena at least a little easier to accept if he situated them in the night-world than if he had planted them in daylight reality. But ultimately, what *Finnegans Wake* does is to carry to its limit the radical exploration of language that he began in *A Portrait* and took further in *Ulysses*. It's the terminus of the journey on which the little boy started when he discovered that he was 'baby tuckoo' and that the world revealed itself to him through names and words. But at the end of the journey the identities aren't simple and certain but multiple, shifting and problematic because that is the very nature of language, and therefore of the reality that we know through language. 'He was baby tuckoo,' Joyce had written on the first page of *A Portrait*. In *Finnegans Wake*, he writes: 'So This Is Dyoublong?' Instead of the statement, an unanswered question; and 'Dyoublong' is a multiple entity, combining Dublin, the doubt whether he belongs, and the French-sounding termination, which is eloquent of exile.

I want at this stage to make a personal reference. I first wrestled with *Ulysses* at the age of seventeen, and I have re-read it many times since. When I began there was hardly any guidance available for the reader who was making his first acquaintance with the book; and besides, the whole tradition of literary history, practical criticism and pre-conceptions about novel form that were then in force were the very reverse of helpful. As for *Finnegans Wake*, it came out soon after I entered the university, and I never dared even to touch it till many many years later because it was taken for granted that it was incomprehensible gibberish. I want to say that the young reader who starts on Joyce now is in a much better position. In the interve-

ning years a whole library of commentary has grown up around Joyce, as around Shakespeare or the Bible. Not all of it is useful; some of it may even deepen confusion, but at least the reader today can't complain of lack of guides. As far as *Ulysses* is concerned, I should like to recommend just one book — the recent annotated edition in the World's Classics series. It provides all the help with literary, historical and mythological allusions that the common reader may need; it's relatively cheap, in an Oxford University Press paperback, and the introduction is one of the best critical essays I know on Joyce.¹⁴ But quite apart from commentaries and explications, the general critical climate of today is much more favourable for the reception of Joyce. That language doesn't reflect a meaning that is given but creates it, that meaning is unstable and plural, that the reader is as much a participant in the production of meaning as the writer — these ideas that are so relevant to the reading of Joyce are by now part of the common resources of contemporary literary theory. In fact, it can be said that their evolution took place partly under the challenge that Joyce's texts represented.

But I am anxious not to leave the impression that reading Joyce is an esoteric activity that involves only difficulty, though I don't want to claim that *Ulysses* — still less, *Finnegans Wake* — is easy reading either. Of the latter book Joyce himself sounded a kind of warning within the text itself:

...and look at this prepronominal *funferal*, engraved and retouched and edge-wiped and puddenpadded, very like a whale's egg farced with pemmican, as were it sentenced to be nuzzled over a full trillion times for ever and a night till his noddle sink or swim by that ideal reader suffering from an ideal insomnia...

'Sentenced': a characteristic Joycean pun, because the book is constructed out of sentences, but also because the reader has to serve her/his term of hard labour with it. But notice that even while saying this, Joyce describes the book as a *funferal* — that is, a funeral and fun-for-all at the same time — a real Irish wake. And as Joyce said to Ezra Pound soon after

Ulysses was published, 'If only someone would say the book was so damn funny'. Nobody would have gone through the effort of reading either of Joyce's last two books if they weren't richly entertaining, captivating in their fertility of language, but above all, great comic works. I want therefore to end by quoting a passage from *Finnegans Wake* that affirms the comic spirit. It's from that section of the book which offers Joyce's last portrait of the Stephen Dedalus aspect of himself, here personified as Shem. It's to him that the passage is addressed. In reading it you must remember that *Finnegans Wake* was written between the two world wars. In *Ulysses*, begun on the eve of the first of these wars, Stephen had said: 'History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake'. In this passage from *Finnegans Wake* the nightmare of history and of its violence is behind the omens and signs which accumulate in the first part of the passage. Yet the paragraph — it's all one continuous sentence — moves from that menacing vision of a gloomy prophet to the joyous celebration of the creative act in the 'new Irish stew' that Joyce is cooking — the rich, diverse and comic art of the book itself. I have chosen this passage also because it is relatively lucid, in comparison with most of *Finnegans Wake*:

Sniffer of carrion, premature grave-digger, seeker of the nest of evil in the bosom of a good word, you, who sleep at our vigil and fast for our feast, you with your dislocated reason, have cutely foretold, a jophet in your own absence, by blind poring upon your many scalds and burns and blisters, impetiginous sore and pustules, by the auspices of that raven cloud, your shade, and by the auguries of rooks in parliament, death with every disaster, the dynamitisation of colleagues, the reducing of records to ashes, the levelling of all customs by blazes, the return of a lot of sweettempered gunpowdered didst unto dudst but it never stphruck your mudhead's obtundity (O hell, here comes our funeral ! O pest, I'll miss the post !) that the more carrots you chop, the more turnips you slit, the more murphies you peel, the more onions you cry over, the more bullbeef you butch, the more mutton you crackerhack, the more potherbs you pound, the fiercer

the fire and the longer your spoon and the harder you gruel with more grease to your elbow the merrier fumes your new Irish stew.

(Concluded)

Notes

3. The term 'polyphonic novel' was created by the Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, and used in his studies of Rabelais and Dostoevsky. It seems strange at first sight that Bakhtin never discussed Joyce, although both the concept of polyphony and that of the carnivalesque which Bakhtin developed are very relevant to *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. However, the explanation seems to be that in the Soviet political climate of the time Bakhtin wasn't free to write of Joyce.
4. Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper* (1968: Faber and Faber, p. 39).
5. Stanislaus Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 189.
6. Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (1972: Oxford University Press), p. 61.
7. Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (1st Series), 1938: Penguin, pp. 148-151.
8. It must be conceded that Virginia Woolf didn't have the later episodes of *Ulysses* before her when she wrote the essay. However, her Diaries show that her reaction to the completed book was distinctly more unfavourable than her first responses in 'Modern Fiction'. In spite of the professed emancipation of sexuality: 'And the pages reeled with indecency' (Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, 1953: Hogarth Press, p. 363). *Ulysses* was altogether too earthy for her: 'When one can have the cooked flesh, why have the raw?' (Ibid., p. 47). What must have seemed to her the 'refined sensibility' of Proust was more attractive to her.
9. S.L. Goldberg, *The Classical Temper* (1961: Chatto and Windus), p. 141. It must be said that here and in his shorter study, *Joyce* (1962: Oliver and Boyd), Goldberg, while deserving full marks for his recognition of the comic vitality of Joyce's art and its 'sane and joyful spirit', takes too little account of Joyce's break with the forms and purposes of the realist novel. It is revealing that he is dismissive of *Finnegans Wake*.
10. Or by what s/he writes. The letters that Nora Joyce wrote to her husband which are preserved in *Letters of James Joyce* are of such evident banality that many readers must have asked themselves what one of the subtlest and most original intellects of the century could have seen in so commonplace a mind. Such a question, however, would point to the questioner's simplified view of life rather than to the limitations of Nora Joyce.
11. In his letter to Frank Budgen after writing the 'Penelope' episode, Joyce said of Molly Bloom in German: 'Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht' (I am the flesh that affirms). (Stuart Gilbert, *Letters of James Joyce*, Vol. 1, 1957: Faber and Faber, p. 170). This seems to imply a contrast with a line in Goethe's *Faust* where Mephistopheles says of himself, 'I am the spirit that denies.'
12. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (1959: Oxford University Press, P. 536).
13. Quoted from Suzette A. Henke, *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (1990: Routledge), p. 264.
14. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, edited with an introduction by Jeri Johnson (1993: Oxford University Press). Perhaps for copyright reasons, it is the 1922 text that is reprinted, but all identifiable misprints are corrected in the notes. Because of the circumstances in which it was written and first published, there is in any case no singly definitive text of *Ulysses* (any more than there is of Shakespeare). Even the so-called 'corrected text', edited by Hans Walter Gabler and published in 1984, has been the subject of much scholarly controversy.

Waiting — 7 Old Digane Bridge

When the wind shook the water out of your hair
And danced ripples in your eye
I could not stay this Fancy grow
Life with Death, to vie

Will the river girl who plaited her hair
On a stone beside the street
Only remain a vision sent
Lifewards coy and sweet?

U. Karunatilake

COMPUTER

VISION

TESTING

VASA OPTICIANS

207, 2nd Cross Street,

Colombo 11.

Tracking fundamentalists and those who study them

A sequel to Sadik Al-Azm, "Islamic Fundamentalism Reconsidered..."

Bruce B. Lawrence

In his two part article published in *South Asia Bulletin* Sadik Al-Azm has presented a starkly revisionist and thoroughly brilliant estimate of Islamic fundamentalism.¹ Should one have expected anything less from a figure who more than any other in his generation has charted the way for a tough-minded secularist response to traditional and neotraditional forms of religious thought in the Arab/Muslim world? Probably not, except that the present article moves far beyond what he has previously done, even in his pathbreaking work *Critique of Religious Thought*, Written in Arabic and published in 1969 but, alas, never translated into English except in excerpts.² The present article also exceeds what now exists in the still thin field of comparative studies of Islamic fundamentalism(s). So much has been attempted in this brief piece that I will first summarize what Al-Azm has achieved before calling attention to underdeveloped aspects of his analysis. I will conclude this article by indicating what still needs to be done, that is, what is lacking in the current state of comparative studies of global fundamentalisms in general and Islamic fundamentalism(s) in particular.

Achievements

Sadik Al-Azm is still less well known than some other intellectual figures in the Arab/Muslim world, principally because of his country of origin. Syria is only now beginning to be understood as an Arab nation with cultural values and intellectual interests that are not easily pigeonholed by political or policy considerations of the post-Cold War era. Sadik Al-Azm is already recognized within Syria, and also within critical intellectual circles of Arab emigres, as a major critic of Arab/Muslim interests that he exposes as traditionalist and attacks as inadequate to modern-day challenges. Yet Sadik Al-Azm does not appear on the same stage of international conferences that host the Egyptian *soldisant* Marxist Hassan Hanafi, nor does he enjoy the notoriety of the Moroccan Althusserian dialectician Abdallah Laroui, nor does he hold the American academic position that allows the Iranian emigre philosopher, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, to project his views in several media fora,

from major newspapers to National Public Radio to Public Television. If Al-Azm is less well known than Hanafi, Laroui or Nasr,³ I would still argue that his rethinking of the categories of traditional/modern, the West and the rest is as profound as theirs, and perhaps in the long run will prove more influential.

The attempted assassination of President Mubarak of Egypt has turned the media spotlight once again on "ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM"

If I am correct in that estimate, it will be in part because of the kind of bold originality that marks the present article. It is a long article in several parts. In it he reviews terminological debates, then defends his own usage of terms before venturing some historical comparisons between "forces in their Arab-Islamic context" that unfold in such a way as to "produce results and reactions that bear strong family resemblances to the results and reactions generated in the original European and Western settings" (Pt. I, p. 101). In Geertzian terms his approach is marked by a thick description of deep currents, a subtle analysis of multiple subtexts, on a broad cross-cultural spectrum. By contrast, most observers of fundamentalist movements tend to look at local actors, surface events, and nation-specific data, privileging them as unique signposts, without parallel equivalents, for the understanding of fundamentalism.

The rest of Part One consists of numerous citations from Roman Catholic and Protestant fundamentalist texts, which are cross-read with documents and writings from the most radical of the Egyptian fundamentalist groups. The result is a kind of cognitive polyphony which allows one to hear voices from three insular traditions talking to one another on identical issues and, more surprising still, often in the same semantic field. In a less skilled hand, the resulting montage might sound like a cacophony, but from Al-Azm's deep read of

salient issues they appear as a new register for grasping the common purpose of groups that are utterly unrelated as historical collectivities and yet dramatically alike in their historical function. It is, as if to illustrate once again the dictum of Marx: "men make history but they do not know the history they make."

Four emphases illustrate the degree to which all three groups — Protestant, Catholic and Muslim fundamentalists — concur. First, they detect errors, they declaim heresies, they debar innovations. Only one Truth — ageless and unchanging — endures. Second, popular sovereignty is not just flawed, because too many groups have divergent levels of awareness and conflicting ambitions, it is wrong. It is wrong because the masses never know, and can never know, what is true or right. In their opposition to popular sovereignty, all three share a "deep-seated enmity and open hostility" to democratic ideals (Pt. I, p. 109). Third, they mark out, and then attack, again and again, the enemy within, that is to say, the modernists or latitudinarians, all those who support reform, liberty, and revolution as worthy ideals for the present or modern era. Finally, they gird themselves with special zeal on the side of religion in its battle with science. Not only do they undervalue and disparage scientific knowledge but some go so far as to claim that all forms of non-religious knowledge are to be regarded as invalid.

Unprecedented in this section is the range and rigor of the author's investigation of niter-creedal, cross-cultural comparisons. Protestant and Catholic fundamentalists, who do not recognize each other as believers, are here brought into conversation with one another. And both in turn become conversation partners with an unimaginable third set of fundamentalists, their look-alikes who happen to be Muslim. Perhaps the most compelling example of Al-Azm's razor-edged comparative insight is the following quotation:

The Koran is absolutely infallible, without error in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as well as in areas such as geography, science, history,

The author is a senior lecturer at Duke University, United States.

etc. The disintegration of our social order can be easily explained. Men and women are disobeying the clear instructions God gave in His Word.

"These (Al-Azm goes on to note) could have been the stereotypically fundamentalist words of Ayatollah Khomeini, Shukri Mustafa, Saleh Sirriyah, the assassins of President Sadat, the leaders of the Islamist band that occupied the holy shrine in Mecca in 1979; but in fact they are the words of the famous and highly influential American fundamentalist leader Jerry Falwell, with the exception of a single word that I altered, viz., substituting 'Koran' for 'Bible'." (Pt. I, p. 117).

Part Two of the *South Asia Bulletin* article takes up a more tightly focused two party comparison between Protestants and Islamists. It demonstrates that the American religious movement has become "the explicit and implicit paradigmatic reference point of the literature produced in the West about the fundamentalist phenomenon — Islamic and otherwise" (Pt. II, p. 73). And instead of bemoaning the American influence, as do many commentators, Al-Azm notes the feedback loop phenomenon, that is, the way in which Muslim fundamentalists, in particular "underground Saudi Islamist Shaikhs," uphold the American example for their own polemical ends: they both emulate their Protestant counterparts and go beyond them, especially when they condemn as utterly corrupt the entire official ranks of not only Muslim statesmen (those who claim to rule in the name of Allah) but also Muslim juridical and ritual specialists (those who control and direct others in the name of Allah and His Prophet).

What exceptionalizes this part of Al-Azm's article is the recurrent citation and relentless analysis of perhaps the most radical Egyptian Islamist, Shukri Mustafa. In mock-Lutheran fashion, Mustafa argues that scripture alone matters (in this case, Koran and Sunnah, which he deems to be equally authoritative), that the model of Muhammad alone can guide Muslims, that no other historical period and no other historical point of reference matters, and that all other Muslims who do not share this view of Muhammad and the Muslim past are unbelievers.

Mid-way through the exposition of Protestant fundamentalists and their Islamist counterparts, Al-Azm switches the lens and looks at the dominant American paradigm, detailing points of emphasis within

it that are matched by Islamist spokesmen: (1) It is thoroughly urban, functioning best in the socially unsettled, rapidly changing environment of modern-day cities. (2) It is prone to endless internal divisions, with each breakaway group or sect claiming to "speak and act in the name of universality". (3) It is intent on controlling the means of cultural reproduction, resacralizing a certain kind of gender hierarchy, the relationship of parents to children and also the division of labor between husband and wife. (4) It views divine election as a collective experience that happened once and can be recaptured, with Egypt and America occupying respectively the roles of vanguard for the Manifest Destiny of Islamic/Christian civilization. In each case, the role of the sectarian fundamentalist cadre is to perceive the unfolding of the divine plan, including the apocalyptic vision of Zion, which requires nothing less than recognizing and responding to the rise of modern Israel as a sign of "the end of times" (Pt. II, p.86).

The final section of Part Two moves beyond the in-depth comparison of the previous two sections by introducing a new American Protestant fundamentalist group, the Dominionists. Al-Azm painstakingly demonstrates how the Dominionist notion of inerrancy closely approximates that of Shukri Mustafa and his followers, at the same time that neither resembles the classical Muslim notion of Koranic infallibility, which functioned as "an overarching formal consensus, always highly elastic, expanding and contracting in response to Islam's changing historical conditions and the shifting circumstances of its politics" (Pt. II, P. 89). And so infallibility and inerrancy, though conceptually linked, have radically different social outcomes: "While infallibility could never be fully defined and/or exhausted by the multiplicity of the internal doctrines and 'ideologies' historically subsumed under it at any moment, inerrancy insists on totally and exhaustively determining itself by full identification with a single doctrine and a singular idea," announced by a single authoritative leader for an exclusive, elect group. The Christian *hakimiyyah* group, as Al-Azm calls it in a deft reversal of the usual cross-cultural flow of technical terms, represents a major strand in Christian fundamentalism that has affected other groups. They are hard-core Reconstructionists, who deny the American golden rule, that is, that Church and State have been, now are and always will be, separate. Instead, they proclaim that there

can be no separation of Church and State or, as one of their opponents put, "Dominion Theology says that Christians should take over the government" (Pt. II, p. 91). In other words, like their Catholic and Islamic counterparts, they assert God's dominion/sovereignty over everything natural, human and supernatural, with the result that "that man's proper state is one of total submission to God's *hakimiyyah* and obedience to His law" (Pt. II, p. 91). Hence present-day societies are condemned for their deviation from divine sovereignty: secularism, humanism, pluralism and antinomianism are merely modern names for what was once called paganism, idolatry, polytheism and *jahilism* (the period of ignorance prior to the coming of Islam).

It is due to this pervasive and overriding stress on Divine governance that in bringing closure to his extended comparison, Al-Azm notes that when one refers to the Muslim, Protestant and Catholic fundamentalists as "integralists," one is merely choosing for emphasis another major aspect of their program and belief-systems. Hence one can not only defend fundamentalism, revivalism and Islamism as analytical categories one can also underscore "the accuracy, adequacy and usefulness of the term *integrisme*." Integralism as well applies to the repeated emphasis on programs for the re-Christianization and/or re-Islamization of human knowledge. In such programs, post-Enlightenment science but particularly evolutionism is castigated, along with the idolatry of the modern secular state. What remains absolute, individual and subject to no human debate is God's Word and God's Law. The two are intertwined and inseparable.

Shortfalls

In the wake of Al-Azm's general arguments, the case material he adduces and also the outcomes he suggests, it is surprising to read the following conclusion to Part Two of his article:

Let me conclude by venturing the two-fold speculative thought that the American fundamentalists will most probably prove to be no more than "prophets facing backwards"... seeking to save modern civilization from its evils by digging up answers from the rubbish heap of a pre-capitalist history. (In other words, they will fail.) On the other hand, it is quite conceivable that our Islamists may still show themselves to be the

bearers of an "Islamic" movement bent on more industrialism, technologism, developmentalism, capitalism, nation-state building empowerment and catching up with the developed world, all to be implemented under the guise of an ideology which makes the fulfillment of this eminently modern, secular, bourgeois and originally European historical project look like a movement toward Allah's goals and a working out of His will in history instead of the opposite. In the longer run the resulting socio-historical secular reality will inevitably burst through the mystical shell of Islam (Pt. II, p. 96).

In other words, Islamists will succeed, only to fail, because it is an underlying non-Islamic result that they will have produced in the name of Allah.

What is most surprising about the above prediction is how little it seems borne out by the deft treatment of practical limits to fundamentalist discourse noted earlier in the article. For instance, in Part One, in establishing the utility of historical comparisons, he underscores how important it is to take the Islamic counter-reformation seriously as a reformation against some perceived wrong:

The emphasis should fall on the "reformation" aspect of the process and equation, and not just on its "counter" side. For in the Islamic counter-reformation, as in other counter-reformations,

the past is really invoked not for its own sake, but for rectifying a perceived rotten present (produced by the havoc wreaked by the reformation and its forces) and securing a precarious future. *How successful such a counter-reformation can be in practice is, of course, a question of a different order* (Pt. I, p. 100, emphasis added).

I stress the last sentence because it needs to be reformulated as the question that it is: How successful can such a counter-reformation be in practice? That is a major question that every reader of this nuanced, probing article would expect to be answered. A brief answer does appear in Part Two, when Al-Azm notes how his principal example of a Muslim radical, Shukri Mustafa, stumbles on "a certain unmediated paradox." He stumbles twice. First, because he argues for every Muslim to be open to the Word of God, and yet "he is nonetheless completely intolerant of any Muslim who goes through the exercise but sincerely arrives at conclusions very different from his own". Second, while he inveighs against a class of established religious specialists (*ulama*), "he nevertheless sets himself up as the sole super-*alim* of the undistorted and manifest meaning of Allah's Word" (Pt. II, p. 79). In other words, Mustafa invites, and himself promotes, rampant sectarianism on two counts: he allows no Islamic views but his own, and he rubber-stamps his own as the sole authentic voice of Islam.

This core paradox of Islamism has significant implications for its success that need to be spelled out. Whatever else this brand of sectarianism produces it will not produce consensus. Most Muslims have not followed, nor will they follow, the hieratic, exclusive, ironclad and eccentric mandates of either Mustafa or his Islamist clones. The final prediction therefore goes against the evidence of Al-Azm's own logic, that is, that this new breed of inerrantists do not represent, nor will they ever represent, the majority of religiously engaged persons in the societies of the Arab/Muslim or Euro-American/Catholic-Protestant world of today. Even if the Muslim world did become modernized, it would not be due to the leadership of the Shukri Mustafas of the future.

(To be Continued)

Notes

1. Sadik Al-Azm, "Islamic Fundamentalism Reconsidered: A Critical Outline of Problems, Ideas and Approaches," *South Asia Bulletin: Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, Pt. I, Vol. XIII, Nos. 1 and 2 (1993) pp. 93-121, Pt. II, Volume XIV, No. 1 (1994), pp. 73-98.
2. See, e.g., John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito (eds.), *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 113-119.
3. For a particularly egregious snub of Al-Azm's contribution, in a book where he should have been considered, see Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988). Laroui is treated at length in a chapter on "The Hermeneutic of Authenticity" (pp. 317-335), but Al-Azm and the issue of science/secularism vs. non-science/traditionalism which he raises in compelling terms, are alike ignored.

America versus Iran: The new phase

Mushadid Hussain

The United States announced of a total ban on trade with Iran marks an escalation of tensions between Washington and Tehran. In a speech made appropriately enough before the World Jewish Congress in New York, President Clinton personally announced this ban saying "I am convinced that instituting a trade embargo with Iran is the most effective way our nation can help to curb Iran's drive to acquire devastating weapons and its continued support for terrorist activities". This announcement follows the April 28 publication of the annual State Department report on terrorism which accused Iran of being "the most active state sponsor of international terrorism".

The writer is a distinguished Pakistani columnist wellknown in the region.

The immediate impact of the trade embargo would be on the annual American purchases of Iranian oil which are in the vicinity of \$4 billion. Interestingly, major European countries like France, Germany and Britain have rejected a trade embargo, urging instead the necessity of a "political dialogue with Iran." The European Union and Iran have bilateral trade which currently stands at \$14 billion.

The latest American action against Iran comes as no surprise since from the beginning of 1995, the United States has been following a three-pronged approach as part of its strategy to isolate Iran. This three-pronged strategy has taken the following forms:

- An orchestrated campaign in the mainstream American media that has pri-

marily promoted Israeli interests, the main motivation of this Iran-bashing exercise;

- A close coordination between the Republican Congress and the Democratic White House on Iran policy, with the congress egged on by the Israeli lobby urging "stronger measures." For instance, the Republican Senator from New York, Alfonse D'Amato, who is also chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, has sponsored a bill that would close U.S. markets to foreign corporations doing business with Iran.

The Republican leader in the Senate, Bob Dole, who is also the leading contender for the White House against Bill Clinton in the 1996 president elections, has even suggested that President Clin-

ton reconsider his upcoming trip to Moscow if Russia does not renege on its nuclear agreement with Iran;

- Playing up the "terrorist" issue and concurrently projecting, a "moderate-versus-fundamentalist" divide in the Muslim world, so that Iran is isolated in the Islamic community. It is, therefore, no accident that leaders of certain Muslim countries including Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia have also picked up this theme in their statements.

How has this nexus between Israel, the U.S. media and American policy worked in practice? A chronology of events since January 1995 shows how this nexus developed and how it was translated into policy through last week's announcement by President Clinton of the American trade embargo against Iran:

January 5, 1995: The opening salvo in this Iran-bashing exercises is fired through an article in the New York Times titled "Iran May be Able to Build an Atomic Bomb in 5 years, U.S. and Israeli Officials Fear." The timing of the story coincides with U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry's visit to the Middle East and South Asia;

January 8: Perry conveniently picks up this theme of an "Iran nuclear bomb" during his visit to Israel, although no evidence is provided to back up this allegation;

January 10: CIA Director James Woolsey, in testimony before Congress, latches on the terrorist label to Iran saying that Iran provides more than \$100 million annually to Hamas, the most prominent component of the Palestinian Islamic Movement. Later, it is leaked to the press, that the CIA has set aside \$5 million specifically for the destabilization of Iran;

January 15: An article in the New York Times titled "Israel Eyes Iran in the Fog of Nuclear Politics" admits that Israel has introduced the Iran factor in the context of the nuclear issue primarily to deflect Arab criticism of its nuclear program and the article says Israel "has turned the spotlight on Iran, whose nuclear potential is probably scarier to most Westerners than Israel's". The article adds in a comment that is remarkable for its prescience given the action taken recently by Clinton that "the Israelis talk about further isolating Iran — through an international boycott, for example, to dry up the oil money";

January 19: An article in the Washington Post titled "Dispute over Nuclear Weapons Strains Egyptian-Israeli Ties" presents the Israeli rejoinder on Egyptian

criticism of the Israeli nuclear program saying the Egyptians "don't understand which side they are on because in the long run we share the same enemy — Islamic fundamentalism and its state backers, including Iran and Sudan;

January 20: In a major foreign policy speech at Harvard University, the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, says that "the United States places the highest priority on denying Iran a nuclear weapons capability";

January 21: Interior ministers from six Mediterranean countries meet in Tunis to discuss "joint efforts to combat Islamic fundamentalist violence, fanaticism, extremism and terrorism" in the first meeting of its kind attended by two Muslim countries, Algeria and Tunis, plus France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. In other words, the Western and the American agenda of a threat from within the Muslim world of "fundamentalism and terrorism" is adopted publicly for the first time by some Muslim states;

January 24: President Clinton announces freezing of assets in the United States of organizations suspected of involvement in terrorism including Hamas and Hezbollah. This action comes three days after a suicide bombing in Israel which kills 19 persons, most of them Israeli soldiers, and causes injuries to 62 others;

January 31: Three weeks after his visit to Pakistan, in a speech to the Foreign Policy Association, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry defines America's "strong interest" in Pakistan in words which are meaningful since the connotations vis-a-vis are unambiguous: "Pakistan is a moderate Islamic state which serves as a counter-weight to the radical Islamic states in the region".

February 3: The new chairman of the House of Representatives Select Intelligence Committee, congressman Larry Combest, says that "the United States faces a wave of Middle East terrorism in the coming years that could kill thousands, and strong intelligence capabilities are needed to detect and prevent it";

February 8: The powerful speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, speaking to a conference of military and intelligence officers in Washington, publicly states that "the eventual forced replacement of Iran's Islamic regime is the only long term U.S. strategy that makes sense" in what is the first public enunciation of this American goal.

As regards the stories about an Iranian nuclear bomb, these clearly have no veracity at all. For instance, the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated in January 1995 that "it had no evidence Iran was building nuclear weapons or has flouted the NPT. And in its January 11, 1995 issue The New York Times carried a letter to the editor from an Iran expert working for the Washington based think-tank, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, under the title "Don't Exaggerate Iranian Nuclear Threat."

He quoted from the CIA director who had said in December 1992 that Iran was a decade away from a nuclear bomb, a statement reaffirmed by the CIA director in September 1994. The writer asked "have events turned drastically worse in four months?" adding "the real story here is the Israeli campaign to draw world attention to Iran, a security threat in Israeli eyes."

As far as the American criticism of the proposed sale of Russian nuclear reactors to Iran is concerned which, incidentally, would be under the supervision of the IAEA, the Russian foreign minister in a speech in Washington on April 29 retorted that "the reactors Russian is hoping to sell Iran are of the light-water variety, which the United States is offering to North Korea precisely on the grounds that their fuel is harder to use for nuclear weapons."

Clinton's invoking of the Iran "threat" at this point in time is easy to understand given the fact that he faces a tough reelection next year and appeasing powerful Jewish lobby would certainly be a political plus in a difficult and close election. Additionally, Clinton's headline on Iran helps him in the Congress as well since this is one issue on which there is apparently a bipartisan consensus since Clinton is following what Gingrich advocated last February and what the Israelis hoped the United States would eventually do as reported by the New York Times way back in January 1995.

As regards American policy towards the Muslim world, browbeating states through threats is not the answer but the real question that needs to be asked by American policymakers is that American's double-standards based on uncritical endorsement of all Israeli actions is leading to the isolation of the United States among Muslim peoples.

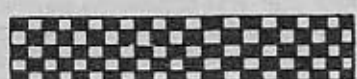
As the former American congressman and critic of the Jewish lobby, Paul Findley, wrote in the Saudi Gazette on May 1, that "the United States is seen, accurately as a full partner in Israel's conquests, especially the take-over of east Bait-ul-Moqaddas which is bitterly resented by a billion Muslims and all arabs". He concluded that "this is the right time to rethink America's role as Israel's war partner."

— Teheran Times

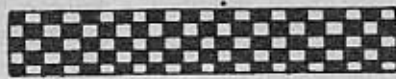
Ace Radio Cab

- Computerised meters • Can be summoned to your doorstep
- No call up charge within city limits • Vehicle access from selected stands
- Receipts issued on request • Company credit available

Call 501502 501503 or 501504



Aset Ltd



Another Aitken Spence Service



Cyril Ponnampерума : Scientist extraordinary

Six months have passed since the death of the most illustrious Sri Lanka born scientist of our times, Prof. Cyril Ponnampерума. As one belonging to Prof. Ponnampерума's chosen profession, permit me to say a few words about his contribution to science.

I believe that among the Sri Lankan born scientists, he has been one of the most prolific contributors to the science literature. He published over 300 research papers in the field of chemistry and chemical evolution, edited 16 books and authored a couple of books (vide, *The International Who's Who 1994-95*, Europa Publications) in his professional career which spanned almost 35 years. I believe that among the Sri Lankan scientists, only P.E.P. Deraniyagala, the former Director of the National Museums of Ceylon, could match this prolific record. According to a count published in the *Spolia Zeylanica* (1960, vol. 29), Deraniyagala had published 323 papers between 1923 and 1960. But it should be noted that Deraniyagala edited *Spolia Zeylanica* and majority of his publications appeared in this journal and probably without peer review. Ponnampерума did not have this luxury.

It is true that Ponnampерума was lucky to be at the right place at the right time and he was blessed in having two mentors (Prof. J.D. Bernal and Nobelist Prof. Melvin Calvin) who were internationally acclaimed for their pioneering contributions to science. So Ponnampерума was able to climb the ladders of scientific success with confidence. But this 'lucky break' should not take away credit from Ponnampерума's diligence. Other Oriental scientists who made their careers in the USA also had reputable mentors. For instance, Chen Ning Yang had Enrico Fermi and Susumu Tonegawa had Renato Delbucco.

To the question what did Ponnampерума do to gain international recognition, I could sum up by stating that he searched for the answers related to the meaning of life, especially the origins of life. In one of his last contributions to the science literature, published in the June 1994 issue of the *Chemistry in Britain*, Ponnampерума wrote, "We have studied this problem (origins of life) through both analytical and synthetic approaches. In the analytical method, we go back in time and examine the record of organic matter in ancient rocks and sediments on the Earth and extraterrestrial bodies such as the

Moon, Mars and meteorites. From the synthetic enquiry we have chosen three examples: the formation of small molecules by various forms of energy under plausible primitive Earth conditions; the interaction of small molecules with inorganic matrices; and the association between aminoacids and nucleotides as a possible basis for the origin of the genetic code".

Ponnampерума was lucky in that he worked for the NASA during its golden days (the 1960s decade) when the space exploration received favorable coverage. It was a glory time for scientists who projected the 'frontier spirit' in space research to the American public, who became disillusioned by the antics of politicians in the Vietnam War. After the landing of humans in the moon in 1969, the NASA became a bureaucratic jungle and Ponnampерума made a wise move to switch to the academic world by joining the University of Maryland in 1971.

I had only one chance to meet Prof. Ponnampерума in person. It was in May 1983 at Detroit during the annual sessions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. At that meeting he delivered an invited popular lecture which was well received. When I met him following that lecture, I was able to sense his child-like enthusiasm to understand the mysteries of science and his ebullient energy to spread what he had learnt by painstaking research. At that time, he also served as the Presidential advisor in science to J.R. Jayewardene. When I mentioned to him that I was studying the nutritional aspects of winged bean (dambala) for my doctoral dissertation at the University of Illinois, he inquired about the progress in that area and told his interest in popularising its merits to the American audience. This he did in the interview he granted to the *Omni* science magazine. Twenty of the best interviews published by the *Omni* was collected into a book in 1984, and Ponnampерума got the first billing in that collection among the illustrious names of contemporary science such as Francis Crick, Ernst Mayr, Jonas Salk, Roger Sperry, B.F. Skinner, E.O. Wilson, Hans Bethe, Brian Josephson, Ilya Prigogine and Freeman Dyson.

I was disappointed when I read recently the second volume of the J.R. Jayewardene biography, authored by K.M. de Silva, that not even once Ponnampерума was mentioned in its 730 pages, though he served Jayewardene as a special president-

ntial advisor in science. How could K.M. de Silva, an academic known for meticulous research into details, miss Ponnampерума? Or was it that Jayewardene did not take Ponnampерума and science seriously?

Sachi Sri Kantha

Japan.

Capital Idea?

It is psychologically curious that some newspaper editors advocate capital punishment for young university students who do wrong, while also supporting clemency for first-degree murderers!

Guillotine both with your paper-cutter.

Patrick Jayasuriya

Colombo.

The Anti-Israel 66

(Continued from page 2)

According to Mr. Mervyn de Silva, a reputed Sri Lankan journalist, considered an authority on Middle-Eastern affairs, it is dangerously foolish to assume that Israeli national interests coincided with Sri Lanka's national interest and some particularly with Sinhala interest. According to Mr. Mervyn de Silva "there are over 600 so called 'private' but actually state supported export-oriented companies in Israel. The sale of arms and expertise is a money spinning export industry in Israel. That industry thrives on conflict, the proliferation of conflict, not its resolution.

In our view, even after 6 year of active Israeli involvement in Sri Lanka's struggle against the L.T.T.E., the Israelis failed to contain the L.T.T.E., because Israel never wanted to. Israel's objective was proliferation of conflict and the upkeep of its armament export industry, in which Israel succeeded. It must be obvious to any patriotic Sri Lankan that the national priorities of a country exporting arms such as Israel, are obviously the cause of this country's curse and such priorities are obviously in conflict with the national priorities of Sri Lanka.

In today's context we understand that there are a large number of countries willing to help Sri Lanka. Whilst Sri Lanka may obtain arms from any source supplying them at the most competitive price, we wish to convey our strong opposition to Sri Lanka reopening diplomatic relations with Israel, as such moves are inconsistent with the national interest of Sri Lanka.

'This Total Art: Perceptions of Sri Lankan Theatre'

Kamalika Pieris

A small body of documentation is now emerging in the field of the performing arts of Sri Lanka. The most recent addition to this group is Shelagh Goonewardene's *This total art: perceptions of Sri Lankan theatre* published last March.

This book contains a collection of newspaper reviews, previews, radio broadcasts and sundry articles written by Shelagh Goonewardene between 1980 and 1984. Written in a mellifluous style, these outlines are nevertheless packed with detail and with practical, topical comment. Her approach is both academic and homely. The reviews are not based on absolute standards but in terms of the needs of the moment. Goonewardene has attempted to recognise several of the performing arts and the result is a miscellany which includes references to dance and puppetry as well as drama. She has had two objectives in mind when compiling this collection.

One objective was to pay tribute to those who had given dedicated service to the performing arts. In this connection, her thumbnail sketches of Chitraserena, Vajira Ludowyke, Sarachchandra and Wendt may not evoke much interest, since these persons have been studied in depth elsewhere, but her accounts of Karan Breckenridge, Richard de Zoysa, Harold Pieris and Arthur van Langenberg are to be applauded. The personal note in these biographical pieces add authenticity and charm.

Her other objective is to contribute to theatre history, specially considering the ephemeral nature of theatre. She has been successful in this intention and this work is a very effective contribution to the history of drama in Sri Lanka.

Up to now, all we had in respect of English theatre in Sri Lanka, were sophisticated reviews of performances and equally elevated literary assessments of texts. Goonewardene's coverage of original work in English is largely confined to assessments of the work of Ernest MacIntyre. There is also some reference to 'Rama and Sita'. Landmark productions of serious theatre, such as 'Death of a

Salesman' and 'Caucasian Chalk Circle' are reviewed, and other productions such as the highly praised 'Lark' are given mention. Light theatre is not forgotten and musicals are specifically included. There is a good review of 'Evita' and previews on 'Cats' and 'Tommy'. An original musical called 'Jeans' is included, but there is no mention of the very polished work by Nedra Vittachi. In addition to this, Goonewardene provides us with records of the work of two influential theatre groups, which deserve a niche in our theatre history — the DramSoc and Stage and Set. While the University DramSoc contributed greatly to the development of theatre from the 1920's to the 1950's, it was Stage and Set which dominated the theatre scene during the sixties and the seventies. Goonewardene was a member of this group and her account is detailed and extensive. It is undoubtedly the definitive account of this now defunct group, and well deserves to be reprinted here, from *Navasilu*.

Goonewardene does not claim to be equally conversant with Sinhala theatre, but her perspective definitely includes contemporary Sinhala theatre. Over a quarter of the items in the collection deal with Sinhala theatre and practically all of them have found a place in my recently concluded bibliography on Sinhala theatre. Her account of Stage and Set provides an authoritative record of the interaction between Sinhala and English language theatre with reference to the sixties productions of 'Caucasian Chalk Circle' and 'Hunuwataye Kathawa'. Four studies on theatre personalities are particularly striking. The accounts of Felix Premawardhana and Gamini Wijesuriya are the sole references which I was able to find on these two persons. There are two articles on Dhamma Jagoda, one of which is published for the first time in this book. Goonewardene focuses on two off-stage achievements, Dhamma's pioneering work in establishing drama as a part of the secondary school curriculum and his initiative in establishing the Art Centre Theatre Studio for theatre training.

Goonewardene's collection includes additional material which deals with the

unseen or peripheral areas of the local theatre scene. She lays great stress on the importance of school and community theatre and emphasises the inner satisfaction that association with theatre gives its participants. Peripheral theatre is seen as the catchment area for the more visible sections of our amateur theatre. One such catchment area, church plays, is represented by an account of a passion play in which the author participated.

Her emphasis on school drama is probably unique in collections of this nature. There is an account of the introduction of drama into the school curriculum. There are several references to school productions, including the occasional attempt at original work. There is a preview of 'Godspell' by St Peter's College, which depended largely on improvisation and collaboration by the school boys involved. She has also included an account of the very successful festival of dramatised ballads organised among 10 schools by Wesley College and the Interact Club. There are several references to school drama contests, such as the schools Shakespeare contest and the schools Sinhala drama contest, and the opportunities this provides for developing talent. 'Schools do not have all the constraints of adult theatre and most of them have reasonable stages of their own'. (p 122) Lastly, there are accounts of the many dramatisations and readings of classical texts organised by the English Association of Sri Lanka. Goonewardene views these as exercises in understanding and interpretation.

Yasmin Gooneratne in her foreword sees this collection as a natural development from the author's lifelong commitment to the art of the theatre. She prints out that until now nothing substantial has yet been written or published about English language theatre in Sri Lanka, 'a phenomenon of unusual interest since it often achieves professional results with limited resources and actors who must perforce regard themselves as amateur'. (pxiv) As an acclaimed actress, director and trainer, Goonewardene writes from first hand experience, and it is this which provides authenticity to this work.

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.*



INTEREST FREE CREDIT?

CONVENIENT REPAYMENT TERMS

LOWEST JOINING FEE?

**Yes. All and many more
benefits are yours with the
CEYBANK VISA CARD.**

Contact the Centre Manager,

**CEYBANK CARD CENTRE,
Bank of Ceylon**

No. 4, BANK OF CEYLON MAWATHA,
COLOMBO - 1.

BE WISE. CARD - WISE

BANK OF CEYLON

Bankers to the Nation



TELEPHONE: 447823 — Ex. 4180 & 4185