

LANKA

GUARDIAN

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IN THE COURT OF SINHALA OPINION

MAHA SANGHA

VS

G. L. PIERIS

DEVOLUTION: a trade union view

— *H. A. Seneviratne*

PEACE HOAX — *S. Sathananthan*

SINHALA YOUTH: THE COMING STORM

— *Egerton Perera*

LANGUAGE AND CONFLICT — *Rohan Jayawardene*

T. B. SUBASINGHA: The last interview — *Sarath Perera*

HOW PATRIARCHY WORKS — *Eva Ranaweera*

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BRIEFLY...

'No Bosnia here'

— President Chandrika

Addressing a seminar for teachers, President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunga said: "Let us eschew communalism and embrace peace. Let us not allow a Bosnia type situation to develop in this country. Let us not allow this country to become a hell on earth".

The President said that the people now had "a historic opportunity" to resolve the ethnic conflict by supporting the government's peace efforts. The people had to face reality and realise that there was no military solution to the ethnic conflict, she said.

"If we destroy Prabhakaran without settling the issue politically there will be hundreds more Prabhakarans back on the scene", the President said.

Devolution plan will win approval

— TULF President

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) President M. Sivasithamparam told Radio Australia's "Network Asia" program that President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunga's devolution package was "fairly certain" to win the overwhelming approval of the majority Sinhala population at a nationwide referendum

PACIFIC REVIEW

The article on SINGAPORE (the politics of regional definition) by the Sri Lankan scholar, Kanishka Jayasuriya (15/8/95) was originally published in the *PACIFIC REVIEW* Vol. 7 (4) Routledge, edited by Prof. R. Higgote, Dept. of Government, Univ. of Manchester, Manchester, U.K.

and that it would definitely pass through parliament with a two-thirds majority.

The UNP would have no alternative but to go along with the PA Government, the TULF leader said.

He warned however that any dilution of the package under pressure would disappoint the Tamil people.

Tamilnadu CM wants more anti-Tiger powers

Tamilnadu Chief Minister Ms J. Jayalalitha has asked Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao for an amendment to the Foreigners Act to enable the State Government to deal more effectively with LTTE militants and their subversive acts.

Prime Minister Rao has detailed External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee to liaise with Chief Minister Jayalalitha on this.

More boats for the Navy

Sri Lanka Naval top brass are now abroad shopping for craft to boost SLN strength after the LTTE destroyed several vessels recently. Among the purchases will be gunboats and FACs (Fast Attack Crafts).

Mothers support package

Members of twenty women's organisations affiliated to the Joint Women's and Mothers' Federation demonstrated in Colombo near Lipton's Circus urging women and mothers to support the Government's devolution proposals to have the way for peace.

Their placards and slogans said: We will protect our children; devolution is democracy; war won't be a solution; devolution won't divide the country; a political solution will unite the country.

City fire — sabotage?

Police did not rule out sabotage in the major fire that broke out in the Bureau of Investment office in Colombo Fort. There had been an investigation on at the BOI into the issue of duty free vehicle import permits to non-existent export projects.

Editor's assailants identified

Four suspects have been identified as the alleged assailants in the assault on *Sunday Leader* editor Lasantha Wickrematunga in Colombo a few months ago. Those identified are M. Wijesiri Fernando, L. Joseph Fernando, A. Manjula and Sumana Janaka Attapattu, all of Colombo, according to Media Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake in parliament. He was answering a question by a UNP MP.

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THE MAHA SANGHA: NEW INTERVENTION

Mervyn de Silva

The P.A. administration was one year old last month, and already the strains of office are becoming increasingly evident. This is also true of President Chandrika Kumaratunga. That should be no cause for surprise since "Chandrika" is the P.A.

Last month, the P.A. found itself in trouble, perhaps serious trouble. Not only because of the war, and our 'little' insurgency has casualty figures that could match almost any other conflict of its kind in the world. Not just the war but its political consequences. And now the P.A. has a new, formidable foe — the Maha Sangha, partly because of the President's top adviser, Constitutional Affairs Minister, Prof. G. L. Pieris, the brains behind the P.A.'s "peace plan". But it has been blessed by the Clinton administration and the U.S. Congress (bipartisan Congressional backing), hailed by the European Union, the Bretton Woods twins, the major donors, and India.

And yet, it is clear that far from maintaining the record 62-63% vote that candidate Chandrika obtained at the Presidential polls, the P.A. is fighting hard not to slip below the modest 50% the 8-party 'grand coalition' reached at the parliamentary election in August.

Why? The mass mood (and therefore the political situation, the balance of forces) is shaped by two issues: the ethnic and the economic. I have placed the "ethnic" first because it is the more emotional and thus easier for any amateur "opinion-sampler" to gauge. But the economic can be the more important. What is absolutely certain is that the economic and the ethnic **together** could

make things exceedingly difficult for any regime. There is a third factor which is important in most democracies and proved crucial in 1994 — the clamour for change after an unprecedented 17 years in office of the island's conservative party, the U.N.P. Along with the cry for change came the mass expectations, most of all, lower prices for consumer essentials, a check on the soaring cost of living.

The deputy finance minister (Prof. Pieris, once more) insists that inflation has been effectively checked. "Tell that to the housewife" is the middleclass voter's ready reply.

NEW INTERVENTION

And now we have a dramatic turn on the ethnic front... an intervention, not by our great and friendly neighbour, India, nor by the U.N. but the Mahanayakes of Malwatte and Asgiriya, who are loosely introduced quite often by our anglicised elite as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York. Not pulling any punches, the Mahanayakes argue that the constitutional reforms package with a "Union of Regions", its central item, is not only a betrayal of Sinhala-Buddhist interests but a blueprint for fragmentation. In short, a dangerous assault on Sri Lanka's territorial integrity, and unity.

The Mahanayakes do not stop there. The Pieris package, they say, is also a serious threat to Sri Lankan sovereignty. They point to an important difference between this blueprint and the Indian constitution on which it is plainly modelled. In India, the central government in Delhi can dissolve a State Assembly just

like President Jayawardene dissolved the North-East Provincial Council, a merger of the North and the East after the Gandhi-Jayawardene 'Peace Accord'. President J.R. dissolved the council and its Chief Minister Vartharaja Perumal fled to India. Taking India as an example, the Mahanayakes declare that there is an abridgement of sovereignty together with a serious threat to the island's territorial integrity.

Another oft-repeated criticism is that the proposed North-East council would control about a third of the land and 60% of the coastline.

ISLAMIC FACTOR

EELAM strategists and ideologues have made a serious mistake in assuming that the Muslims would stand with them and not with the majority Sinhalese because both communities speak Tamil. The Muslims are entitled to their own council, argues Mr. M. H. M. Ashraff.

Apart from what the Muslim community perceives as a right to an autonomous area in the eastern province, there is the equally strong argument of geo-politics. I have introduced it as "Our Islamic environment" — Malaysia and Indonesia in the east, Bangladesh and Pakistan in the north (I shall not include the Muslims of India) and the Gulf west of Sri Lanka. This writer has also drawn lessons from Bosnia. So it was a comfort to hear President Kumaratunga say "We have lessons to learn from Bosnia".

But wait. The first party to demonstrate in the streets against the Kumaratunga Plan was the J.V.P., a fact it would be foolish to ignore.

Soldiers of Islam

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said that Pakistani troops are the soldiers of Allah Almighty and his Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and are ready to serve in any troubled spot in the Muslim world.

Pakistani soldiers are ready to reach wheresoever their Muslim brethren are in difficulties," she said in her address at the inaugural session of the one-day National Seerat Conference.

The conference was organised by the Ministry for Religious Affairs to mark Eid Milad-i-Nabi, the birth day of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

"These are the soldiers of Islam, of Allah and his Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), she said of Pakistan Army. "It is because of *Ishq* (love) Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)," she said that Pakistan army men are serving in Bosnia as well as in Somalia under the United Nations command.

She said *Isaq* Muhammad (PBUH) is a strong source of attraction and affinity among the Muslim Ummah and that is why that, "we in Islamabad are distressed over the plight of our brethren in Bosnia." "Twenty-first century of *Isaq-e-Muhammad* (PBUH)" she asserted

She added twenty-first century is the century of Asia where most of the Muslim countries are located."

Bhutto hoped that muslim countries would make strenuous efforts to make strides in the fields of science, technology and economics so that," they could talk with courage with the developed countries."

She said Pakistan has always played significant role to force unity among the

Islamic world and referred to the Islamic Summit Conference hosted in Lahore in 1974. "Pakistan has the honour to gather leaders from all Islamic world in Lahore where they offered collective prayer in Badshahi mosque and look very important decisions," she added.

She said present government is also making all out efforts for Muslim Unity and has recently organised first ever International Conference of Women Parliamentarians from Islamic World.

She said the moot provided Muslim women an opportunity to exchange views and share their experiences.

"Islam holds women in high esteem and the respect it accords to the womenfolk is unprecedented," she added.

She said history is witness that women have played important role in the preaching of Islam. Moreover, she said Pakistan has been imparting training to the nationals of other Muslim countries in the fields of diplomacy, economics and in various Islamic disciplines.

"Today is the era of diplomacy and economy," she said and added that Pakistan is poised to promote cooperation with the Muslim countries in the fields of science and technology. "We want trade not aid," she said, "as Islam forbids begging.

Prime Minister said Islam disallows humanity to bow before anybody but Allah. "No human being can give you anything," she added.

She said, "I am saying with full confidence," that the problems of the Muslims are the result of," our weak faith."

She said Muslims have digressed from the the path of Islam culminating in the weakness of their faith.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Islam lays great stress on the set up of a strong system and institutions but unfortunately, "we have a weak system and infirm institutions."

She said Islam abhors dictatorship and has always emphasised for consultation among its followers. "The daily five prayers, the weekly Friday prayers and annual Eid prayers and Haj," she said were the ample proof for the contention that Islam wants its followers to sit together and consult their matters.

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GIMWU and WSO on the Devolution Proposals

We propose to look at the devolution proposals officially released by the Government on August 03, 1995 from the standpoint of the exploited as opposed to that of the exploiters and their allies disguised as the guardians of the Sinhala race. Representing the modern and young workers employed mainly in and around the Export Processing Zone, Katunayake under the present open-market economic system the General Industrial and Media Workers' Union (GIMWU) and the Workers' Solidarity Organisation (WSO) cannot have any other perspective in this matter.

We believe that all legislation and more so the constitutions of countries reflect the nature and character of the ruling classes of those countries as governed by the balance of forces between the ruling classes and the ruled in a particular historical conjuncture. So are the present and the previous constitutions of Sri Lanka. So will be its constitutions of the future too.

The current devolution proposals of the Government reflect a reordering of the structure of the state under the onslaught of the ongoing ethnic war. Even ethnic war is a distorted outburst of conflicting class interests. The ethnic war in Sri Lanka is like the belated outburst in isolation of the ethnic conflict within India's greater struggle for *Swaraaj* against British imperialism because there was no such struggle here. When we say we look at the devolution proposals from the perspective of the exploited we include the oppressed sections of the ethnic minorities as well.

The most urgent task that any kind of devolution proposals in this Country should serve today is to end the ethnic war. We do not think the present proposals by themselves will serve that purpose because the Government whilst discussing its proposals with forces that do not really matter in the North-East is locked in War with the LTTE which is the most effective force in the area.

In our May Day resolution relating to the ethnic war we called upon the Government to make public its proposals for a political solution of the North-East war by a real devolution of power and to initiate

an immediate ceasefire with the LTTE on that basis before the self-destructive military option becomes the **only** option. It is also our view that the ground situation in the North-East is such that all devolution proposals that do not involve the LTTE will become mere intellectual exercises if not hypocrisy. These proposals should not be made to serve as an election platform for the Government whilst maintaining a warfront to satisfy the ethno-extremists.

Therefore all steps have to be taken to bring the LTTE to the negotiating table on the basis of these proposals which were missing in the earlier talks both this government as well as the last one had with the LTTE.

If this is not done without delay the self-destructive ethnic war will be the only alternative for this Country despite the devolution proposals. Then, whilst the government will be fighting with its proposals in one hand and gun in the other the ethno-chauvinistic opportunists on the right as well as the left will be supplying fuel to ignite the conflagration hoping that they could benefit by it. Although ultimately both parties are sure to end up together at the guillotine of history the country will end up in ruins. The LTTE should realise that in this sense their fate too is sealed.

The devolution proposals by themselves are by no means clear-cut and unequivocal on many matters. However, without jeopardising the historic opportunity it has offered the country to search for lasting peace we pose the following initial questions for now in order to encourage an essentially meaningful discussion before a final solution is evolved.

1. Why is it that these devolution proposals are not made part and parcel of the democratisation process wherein the executive is responsible to parliament?
2. Why is it that whereas executive power of the Regional Councils is clearly vested in the Boards of Ministers headed by the Chief Ministers and collectively responsible to Regional Councils the executive of the centre is vested in the hands of an

all powerful President who is not responsible to Parliament?

3. Why is it that eight Regional Councils have been proposed whereas what is sought to be resolved is the ethnic conflict in the North-East?
4. Why is it that it is proposed to bring Colombo and Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte directly under the Centre to be administered "in such manner as the Centre may think fit"?
5. Why is it proposed to have a system of specified Schools and Universities declared "National" which will lead to the perpetuation of the system of Schools for children of privileged families instead of abolishing such a system?
6. Why is it that the Minister in charge of Constitutional Affairs has publicly declared that a "Supreme Council of the Sangha" will be set up in connection with legislative matters although the proposals do not mention it and although secularism is a primary concept of modern governance?

Under cover of the devolution proposals the government should neither postpone nor suppress other issues. If that happens those other issues will aggravate and these proposals will be suppressed by the explosion of those other issues. Therefore the devolution proposals should be discussed whilst fulfilling and not ignoring the government's obligations regarding other issues.

The devolution proposals should be discussed freely, openly and in depth. It is the duty of both government controlled as well as privately owned electronic and print media systems to open their channels and columns for such a discussion.

It is with this hope that we present our preliminary statement to the President and release it to all media authorities.

H. A. Seneviratne
General Secretary

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ORGANISATION
GENERAL INDUSTRIAL AND MEDIA
WORKERS UNION

Awaiting Another Storm?

Egerton Perera, S. J.

In October 1989, President Premadasa commissioned an illustrious group of persons, headed by Prof. Lakshman Jayatileke, "... to inquire into unrest and discontent among youth and report on the causes for such unrest and discontent and make recommendations.....".

In January 1990, their inquiries completed, they submitted the 'Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth'. Whatever one may think of its recommendations or the obstacles that prevented their implementation, in my opinion, its analysis of the causes of youth unrest, in the North and especially in the South, was correct and incisive and is of immense assistance to understand the condition and the situation of the youth of our country today.

According to this Report the causes of youth unrest could be summarized in that popular phrase, '*Colombata kiri — apata kekiri*'. What this phrase meant to the youth who coined it was that the rural youth of our country were discriminated against.

A rural youth could be intelligent and may have obtained a Degree with distinction; and yet, if the youth was not fluent in English, could not wield the *kaduwa*, or did not have sufficient 'pull' or influence with the rich and the powerful, there would be no chance to prove herself or himself. The youth would not be given 'a place in the sun' in Sri Lanka and would end up frustrated and resentful and fall prey, easily, to the inciters of violence.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples:

Many people have told me that the peons in their offices or factories speak better English than our graduates and so that they would never employ a graduate in their firms. On the other hand, there is a friend of mine, a CEO of a large Company, who employed some graduates with the promise of promoting them to the executive grade if they proved themselves within a probationary period of two years. But, he soon found that half of these graduates were acquitting themselves so creditably that he promoted them within six months. It did not matter to my friend that these graduates were not fluent in English. He understood that they were the victims of circumstances having done their primary and secondary education, over a period of twelve years, in Sinhala or Tamil. What he sought — intelligence, initiative and industry — he discovered in them, because he gave them a chance of proving themselves.

It is this type of youth who mostly feel discriminated against.

And so, the Commission warned in the Preface of its Report: "Unless there is an urgent effort to alleviate suffering and to arrest the denial of basic amenities and opportunities for RURAL YOUTH (*emphasis mine*), the cycle of violence is very likely to recur with even greater frenzy and cause an even more real threat to the survival of democracy and the spirit of freedom".

And it made an impassioned appeal: "It is therefore time for the Nation as a whole to engage in a search for consensus, without arrogant self-righteousness or acrimony, but in the hope of building a better future for the next generation of our youth".

That was in January 1990. Five years have gone by. But, alas, that appeal has gone unheeded. No significant steps have been taken since then to eradicate this discrimination against our rural youth. Many of our rural youth, from the North as well as from the South, languish in the corridors of the unemployed even after graduation and — helpless to liberate themselves from this unjust situation — seethe with discontent, frustration and resentment.

As I have been working with the youth of the University of Peradeniya for over four years now as the Catholic Chaplain, it is possible that people would ask me what concretely could be done to eradicate this discrimination and build a better future for the youth of our country.

In reply, I wish to relate the story, the true story, of an enriching encounter I had with a graduate recently passed out from the University of Peradeniya. An Arts graduate, this young man found employment as a management trainee in the Provincial Administration. He was posted to the Matale District. His duties required that he periodically visit many villages in the Rattota area — an area scenically beautiful and ecologically quite unspoilt. He had not worked in this area for more than six months when I met him. And he told me with much joy and pride: "Father, our people, our rural people, are poor only in terms of money. Their land is beautiful and fertile; and the people, simple and rich; rich in human qualities and attitudes. I will not leave this area unless I am literally forced to". I confess: my eyes and my heart swelled up with joy and pride because it was heartening to see a person as young as this having such a clear perception of reality. It is a perception one just does not see among many of his elders, however educated, rich and powerful they may be.

One concrete and practical way, therefore, in which all of us could respond to the summons of the Youth Commission and wipe out discrimination against rural youth is to put aside whatever prejudices we may have and with eyes wide open discover the beauty and the richness, the intelligence and the capability, of our people, especially our youth.

This is just one way. Perhaps another is to 'expose' ourselves and our children to our rural people in different areas and to the circumstances in which they work and live, even if we come from rural areas ourselves. I have found these 'exposures' to be effective 'eye-openers', wiping out prejudices and deepening understanding, in a lasting way.

If we reflect upon this situation together and seek some concrete and practical ways in which we could do away with such discrimination, I am confident we would discover many others. And our youth would be so grateful to us for that. And what is more, this land of ours, Sri Lanka, will be a safer and a happier place for all of us, and the generations to follow, to live in with dignity.

During the past few years, I have predicted that there would be an Insurgency 1995, unless this discrimination against rural youth is eliminated. However, in my Annual Report this year, I said that I do not think this prediction of mine will come true in 1995, because our rural youth, with hope springing eternal in their breast, wish to give President Chandrika, whose sincerity and freshness as a politician they admire, yet a little more time.

But, for how long? Already, there are evidences of impatience and restlessness; already the storm clouds of insurgency seem to be gathering in the southern sky. Unless influential groups — the Temple, the Church, those employed in the private and public sector, NGOs, various Social Movements, and the nation as a whole — make a thorough study of this problem, of what is meant by '*Colombata kiri — apata kekiri*' unless they pool their resources and discover effective means of eradicating such discrimination from our midst and providing a better and more just future for our youth; and unless this is done without any further delay, we will soon be caught up in yet another violent and destructive insurrection in the south.

And yet, I think that it is still possible to stall this insurgency that seems to come rushing at us. The way to do it is for everyone to heed the appeal of the Presidential Commission on Youth, with the urgency it demands.

T. B. SUBASINGHA

The Testament of a Statesman

The interview given from the hospital bed, a few days before Mr. T. B. Subasingha passed away. [The interview by Mr. Sarath Perera appeared in the Silumina on 13th August 1995, a day after his funeral.]

Q: Mr. Subasinghe, as a person who has had a long and wide experience in the political sphere, what are your comments regarding the political package presented by the President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumartunga?

A: The President has gone the maximum length she could have along the road to the Devolution of Power. She has been honest and straight forward in her endeavour. Whoever wishes a better future for this country should support these proposals. If there are any deficiencies, these should be discussed and solutions found for them. I do not think could be very many deficiencies.

Q: But already criticism has been aimed at the package?

A: A person, be it a Sinhalese, a Tamil or a Muslim, who has genuine love for this country cannot disregard these proposals. There is no other alternative.

The only shortcoming is that during the last elections, the Government could have explained to the people, at least briefly, what they were planning to do and place it before them. The failure to do this is a drawback. Had they done so, there would have been no opportunity for those who were lying low at that time to raise their heads now. But we must not forget that the PA placed the basic concept of devolution of power before the people or that Chandrika, who spearheaded these proposals, obtained a majority of 62% in the presidential elections. Therefore, this was an endorsement of it.

Some people try to complicate matters by trying to interlink these political proposals to devolve power with the abolishing of executive powers of the President. Some sections of the PA itself are trying to do this. Without a new fundamental constituent instrument, you cannot achieve any of this.

Q: Some people believe that due to these proposals, the country will get divided.

A: These proposals will only unify an already divided country. I have been in politics for over sixty years. I was in parliament since 1947. Devolution of Power is an idea of the present era. In this era, no country, whether big

or small, can carry-out administration of peripheral areas and meet their needs and aspirations from its capital.

This misconception was there from the beginning. In 1948, independence was obtained after negotiations with the British rulers without resorting to a struggle for freedom. Due to the effects of the freedom struggles of neighbouring countries, we were given independence without sacrifice. The elite ruling class of the day were far removed from the masses. They were even opposed to the granting of the franchise. They had their own agenda and priorities. It was common to both the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In the end, these two groups too went in different directions.

See how these people created national questions. The best example of this is the plantation labour of Indian origin. As the governing class could not achieve what they wanted, they deprived the voting rights of these Tamil plantation workers. Although these same people who deprived the voting rights had to subsequently restore it, this problem has not been completely resolved.

This is a multi-national society. The elite governing class did not accept at the beginning the idea that the other sections apart from the Sinhala majority should also be involved in governance. But Mr. Bandaranayake accepted for the first time, in 1956, that this is a multi-national country.

Q: Do not some people say that the root cause of all these problems is Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake making Sinhala the official language in 1956?

A: It is a long story. I will tell you one thing. It was Mr. Bandaranayake who said for the first time that it would be a federal system that would be most suited for this country. His idea was that both Sinhala and Tamil should be made official languages. This can be proved from the speeches he made in the State Council.

During the 1956 election campaign, the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotalawela made a speech at the Deift islands and said that if he came into power, he would make both Sinhala and Tamil the official languages.

During this period, the MEP was formed. It was somewhat an amorphous Front. It consisted of extreme leftists as well as the extreme right wing. Also, in this Front, there were politicians who were businessmen as well as Buddhist priests who were businessmen. These people brought forward a proposal to Mr. Bandaranayake that only Sinhala should be made the official language. In the end, Mr. Bandaranayake had to bow down to these extremists.

Q: Was it after this the Bandaranayake — Chelvanayagam (BC) Pact was brought-out?

A: During this time, Mr. Bandaranayake was the Prime Minister and I was his parliamentary Secretary. He was in-charge of Foreign Affairs and defence.

Mr. Bandaranayake and I were very close to each other. I was the deputy in his ministries. For most conferences abroad he sent me as the representative. He sent me to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China. I was the representative at the discussions held in England regarding the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt. I can still remember of the words he spoke regarding this Conference.

“Sube, in this place there are people with outmoded ideas. They do not know our thinking on these matters. Sube, You know my ideas. You go for this discussion”

Q: Can you explain the situation which arose about the B-C Pact?

A: Yes, after the disturbances, as a step to ensure rights of all citizens, Mr. Bandaranayake signed the B-C Pact.

After this, a surprising situation arose. People like M/s. C.P. de Silva, Maithripala Senanayake, Phillip Goonewardene and Mrs. Vimala Wijewardene who were in the Cabinet opposed this Pact.

I can still remember, I was the only person out of those who held office at the time who supported Mr. Bandaranayake without reservation.

I will tell you a story to show how close I was to Mr. Bandaranayake. During this period, discussion were initiated to take-over the Katunayake Airport and the Trincomalee Harbour which were then under the British. Sir John Kotalawala expecting to return as prime minister had invited Lord Mountbatten to come to Ceylon to participate in ceremonies. Sir John lost the elections. But Mr. Bandaranayake who came to power confirmed the invitation to Lord Moutbatten. Only I was asked to participate in the discussions held between Mr. Bandaranayake and Lord Mountbatten. Even the Permanent Secretary to Mr. Bandaranayake's Ministry, Mr. Gunasena Zoysa, was not invited for this.

The discussion was held at the Prime Minister's office. By this time, Lord Mountbatten had gained experience as High Commissioner to countries like Burma and India.

Mr. Bandaranayake told Lord Mountbatten, “Sir, you know about people in our countries. They do not like to keep foreign forces. Therefore, please withdraw the British Navy from Trincomalee and the Royal Air Force from Katunayake. Lord Mountbatten assessed the situation and said “Mr. Prime Minister, I know their way of thinking. I will recommend your request to the British Government.”

It was after these discussions that the foreign forces were removed from Ceylon.

Q: But after this Mr. Bandaranayake, who was the author of the B-C Pact had to abrogate the Pact.

A: After the riots, Mr. Bandaranayake was compelled to take such a step. Many people from his Cabinet itself forced him to do so. Most of them are not living today.

I was distressed about all this. One day, I prepared my Letter of Resignation and met him at his residence at Rosmead Place. We discussed things for over two hours and he told me of the problems he had to face in his Cabinet. Mr Bandaranayake once offered to make me the Minister of Industries and on another occasion to make me Speaker. I recommended and he accepted the people whom I thought most suitable for these posts. When I handedover my Letter of Resignation to Mr. Bandaranayake, he said, “Sube, if you resign now it would appear as if you have stabbed me in the back. You are my deputy. At the end of the month there is going to be a Conference of the United Nations. You attend this. You also stay for the Annual General Assembly Sessions which is to be held in September and come back in January. On your return if you still feel that you want to resign, you can go ahead and do so”. I went on this assignment and when I returned, the situation had become worse. I resigned.

Q: Whatever it is, certain sections consider the Federal System or introducing a similar system as the first step towards a separate state.

A: As mutual trust and confidence develop among provincial entities, the economic interaction and relationship among these entities would be strengthened. Calcutta without Bombay or New Delhi without Calcutta is not feasible in India. Similarly, in Sri Lanka, Jaffna cannot survive without Colombo. The first thing is to clearly understand these proposals. In the final analysis, if all this is to be implemented and if the country were to prosper, I must emphasise that the people who are to serve as Ministers and Members of regional bodies must be those with a training and understanding of the issues involved and above all have a clear political commitment.

The Peace Hoax

S. Sathananthan

LTTE, the PA and the "peace process"

The arguments above were published about two months before the 1994 parliamentary elections. As predicted no political proposal for the resolution of the Tamil Question, or the peace package, was ever presented to the country in either the parliamentary or the presidential elections.

However, Mrs Kumaratunga continued to speak ambiguously about "peace" in the abstract during the campaign for the presidential election. The stated preference for peace was the SLFP's positive response to the wish among the vast majority of people in all communities for a negotiated solution to the civil war in the NEP. This "peace climate" was a product primarily of the successful armed resistance of the LTTE and sacrifices of Tamil people, which together neutralised the Government's military option. These arguments were fleshed out by the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC) in the article "Who Are the Peace Makers?" (*Sunday Observer*, 30/4/95).

Most Colombo-based Tamil parties had urged first the UNP and then the PA Governments to put forward a peace package. They argued that political negotiations for, and movement towards, the resolution of the Tamil Question will marginalise the LTTE in the NEP. For instance Mr D Sithardthan of the Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) advised the UNP Government to work towards a political solution; because "then only the LTTE can be alienated from the masses and then only LTTE can be defeated or weakened" (*The Island*, 10/4/94). A few Tamil parties formally declared that any negotiated solution should include the LTTE. But in fact Tamil parties, except All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), saw the destruction of LTTE as the immediate objective of the "peace process".

The concrete first step to initiate the "peace process" was taken by the LTTE in September 1994, two months before the presidential election. Mr Prabhakaran personally wrote to the PA Government "calling for peace talks". The Deputy Defence Minister Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte replied that "the government.... is prepared to enter into a process of negotiation to evolve a solution to the North-East conflict" (*The Island*, 8/9/94). In turn the LTTE announced that it is "prepared to accept a 'substantial [devolution] package' as an alternative to its demand for a separate State" (*The Island*, 22/9/94). A series of reciprocal actions followed between the LTTE and PA Government. Fighting however continued on the ground, including the Army operation in Achchuveli and the sinking of the naval vessel "Sagarawardena" by the LTTE off the coast of Mannar. Nevertheless TULF's Dr Tiruchelvam emphasised that "a strong political process must be set in action, hoping [for] a successful conclusion".

The widespread belief among anti-LTTE forces in the South was that the LTTE, being a guerilla organization, would naturally be reluctant to participate in political processes. So when the LTTE invited peace talks and took the unprecedented step of dropping the demand for a separate State, it was mistakenly assumed that the LTTE was being pushed into negotiations with Government by the overwhelming desire for peace among the Tamil people, as explained by the Information Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake: "The LTTE also surely feels the craving for peace" and "does not want to be seen as opposing that kind of movement" (*The Island*, 30/9/94).

The Government's strategy was to keep the "peace process" alive, to lure the LTTE into the "peace trap". One objective was not to let the LTTE escape from the

"peace trap" by resorting to violence, as it supposedly had done in June 1990.

The first round of talks was held on 13 October. The LTTE nominated ranking members Messrs Karikalan, Ilamparithi, Ravi and Dominic. Prime Minister Kumaratunga's delegation consisted of Messrs K P Balapatabendi (Private Secretary to President), Lionel Fernando (former Government Agent, Jaffna), and Rajan Asirwatham and Navin Gunaratne from the private sector. The Prime Minister's team contained neither ranking members of the SLFP nor members of the Cabinet. The delegation was seen as Mrs Kumaratunga's personal team with no official standing in Government. The suspicion arose whether the talks were window dressing with a view to attracting Tamil voters at the coming presidential elections. And doubts about the Government's stated commitment to peace were reinforced when "authoritative sources" explained that "it was..... decided to keep any ministerial-level discussion till after the presidential elections" (*The Island*, 18/10/94). Mrs Kumaratunga's sincerity was in question especially because she avoided presenting a peace package. In contrast the UNP presidential candidate Mr Gamini Dissanayake (who was assassinated before the election) did formulate a Scheme for Devolution of power in his "Gamini's Vision of the 21st Century" (*Island*, 2/11/94).

However, most Tamil parties, with the exception of the ACTC, supported Mrs Kumaratunga for the presidency. The EPRLF called on "all peace loving people and democratic forces to rally behind the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister and to ensure that she wins the forthcoming presidential election" (*Ceylon Daily News*, 2/11/94). TULF's Mr R Sambandan appeared on national television on the evening of 7 November to exhort Tamils to vote for Mrs Kumaratunga, to "streng-

then her hand". Tamils were assured that the Government will put forward a peace package after the presidential election.

Mrs Kumaratunga's position, of unconditional peace, began to shift three days before voting took place. At a campaign meeting in Nittambuwa on 7 November, she declared that "concessions, if any, will be granted to the LTTE only if it subscribed to peace" (*Ceylon Daily News*, 8/11/94). And she specified the PA Government's official policy on the approach to the "peace process" at the inauguration of the presidency on 12 November: "We will ensure that our approach to peace will fully address, the necessity to safeguard and strengthen the rights of the Sinhala people while recognising dignity, self respect and equality in treatment for all communities" (*Sunday Times*, 13/11/94).

President Kumaratunga's November 12th statement indicated that in the Government's view the rights of Sinhalese are in some danger. By implication the finger of accusation was pointed at the Tamils in general and the LTTE in particular. Secondly the refusal to refer to the rights of other communities can only mean that the PA Government prefers to ignore the rights of Tamils and Muslims as a matter of official policy. In the face of this chauvinistic policy, the "left-wing" partners of SLFP within the PA and many "progressive" supporters outside Government have been opportunistically silent. AGOTIC is perhaps the only organization which publicly questioned the Government's policy (*Sunday Observer*, 1/1/95).

In the view of critical Tamil analysts the "peace process" died with the November 12th statement.

The new President spoke of a robust "peace process" in motion. The LTTE in turn offered a unilateral cessation of hostilities on the next day (13th) effective for seven days (*Ceylon Daily News*, 15/11/94). However the Government claimed it was not officially notified of the offer. The LTTE as well as the Government continued to posture against, and trade accusations between, each other. And people of all communities awaited the Government's peace package, because

the history of abortive Pacts with Tamil politicians, repeated pogroms against Tamils and the failure to fully implement the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord placed the onus of putting forward political proposals overwhelmingly on the Government.

The PA Government announced that its peace package will be submitted to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reform in late November. But the November 24th working paper submitted by Government to the Committee dealt with the abolition of executive presidency, strengthening fundamental rights and judicial review of legislation (*Ceylon Daily News*, 26/11/94). No mention whatsoever was made of the peace package, which would form basis for negotiations with the LTTE. In mid-December the Government announced that it had "begun drafting its own proposals for a political solution to the ethnic conflict" (*Sunday Observer*, 18/12/94). Meanwhile the second round of talks took place in Jaffna on January 3rd 1995; and a cessation of hostilities was declared on January 8th.

After the second round of talks the Government began to lay greater stress on reconstruction of the NEP. The formulation of a peace package declined in importance. In the cocktail circuit in Colombo pro-Government Tamils began gleefully to describe the Government's tactic as the "entrapment of the Tiger". The "peace process" stood revealed as the Government's ruse to create divisions between the LTTE and Tamil people and thereby weaken the LTTE. AGOTIC has critically examined this futile approach in its article "Conflict Resolution or Counter Insurgency" (*Sunday Observer*, 19/3/95). Sadly most "progressives" and "left-wing" parties tacitly accepted the counter-insurgency approach. They opportunistically accommodated the delay in the formulation of the peace package until the "peace process" effectively weakened the LTTE.

The third round of talks was held on January 14th and ended inconclusively. In mid-February the Government announced that the peace package will be submitted at the next round of talks (*Sunday Leader*, 12/2/95). In early March the LTTE

reiterated its readiness to abandon the demand for a separate State and accept an alternative solution based on "nationality, motherland and self-rule". And the LTTE enumerated four issues (*The Island*, 6/3/95) which must be covered by the Government's peace package:

- The problem of the Tamils should be accepted as a national issue.
- The Tamil people should be accepted as a national entity.
- The traditional homelands of the Tamils should be accepted.
- The rights and sovereignty of the Tamils should be accepted".

This was followed by the LTTE demand that the Government should send a ministerial-level team for talks (*Sunday Leader*, 26/3/95).

The Government did not present a peace package at the fourth round of talks held on April 10th. Nor was the delegation upgraded to an official political level; it remained non-official, consisting merely of private individuals and military officers (*The Island*, 10/4/95). Thereafter it was a matter of time before the cessation of hostilities would end.

TULF and the peace trap

In retrospect it is evident that anti-LTTE forces in the South based their calculations on the assumption that a cessation of hostilities and peace talks will go against the LTTE. This is generally correct but only where a guerilla organization is fighting in the bush. This was the case with the LTTE at the time of the Indo-Lanka Accord.

In contrast, where a guerilla organization controlled liberated territory it can effectively engage a cessation of hostilities and constructively participate in political negotiations. Today the LTTE controls and administers territory and therefore has the political strength to initiate and participate in peace talks. Consequently AGOTIC repeatedly urged the Government to announce its peace package and negotiate with the LTTE precisely because the LTTE is strong enough to make peace.

But, in their unholy rush to "trap the Tiger", anti-LTTE forces forgot that the LTTE is NOT in the bush; that it administers territory and is politically powerful to be able to negotiate a solution to the Tamil Question. In their haste anti-LTTE forces misread the LTTE's invitation to Government for talks, concession to drop the demand for a separate State and its unilateral offer of a cessation of hostilities as signs of weakness. They naively believed that the LTTE was being pushed into the "peace process" against its will, by the popular demand for peace.

The fact that the LTTE now is in a position of sufficient strength to negotiate registered in the minds of anti-LTTE forces in the South after the second round of talks. And it came as a great shock to Colombo-based Tamil parties and Government that they were caught in a "peace trap" designed for the LTTE. The LTTE became an even greater enemy precisely because it could successfully sue for peace. By then it was obvious that the Government would not put forward a peace package for negotiations with the LTTE. Not surprisingly there was an almost audible sigh of relief among anti-LTTE forces when the LTTE ended the cessation of hostilities.

The Government is now taking measures to ensure that it does not fall into a "peace trap" again. Thus the decision to ban the LTTE (*The Island*, 1/7/95) seeks to deny the LTTE the opportunity to initiate conflict resolution processes or respond to the Government's initiatives for the duration of the ban. It will also legitimate the Government's resort to the military option to resolve the Tamil Question.

Among Tamil parties the TULF was quick to grasp the new reality: that if negotiations begin on the basis of a peace package the LTTE has the capacity to negotiate a solution to the conflict; that the TULF and other Colombo-based Tamil parties will then be all but consigned to political oblivion. Thus TULF's Mr A Than-gathurai conceded that "if the LTTE" accepts a political package of a federal system and is willing to implement it, then the TULF will give way to them" (*Sunday Observer*, 7/5/95). Elementary knowled-

ge of politics and power relations tells us that the TULF will diligently work against such an eventuality.

After 19 April the TULF is the first Tamil party to reject the call for a peace package. Dr Tiruchelvam argued that it is not appropriate to publish the peace package in the present unsettled conditions. Almost in the next breath he declared that the TULF does not believe that a permanent solution and peace can be found without the cooperation of the LTTE (*Thinakaran*, 7/5/95). And another TULF member Mr V Anandasankari informed that the devolution package must be announced in conjunction with the abolition of the executive presidency (*Virakesari*, 28/6/95). Reading between the lines it is evident that the TULF is against the publication of a peace package. Indeed a senior TULF member castigated a peace group for insisting on the publication of a peace package. He accused the peace group of "attempting to bring the Government down". Arguably the TULF prefers the Sri Lankan Army to destroy the LTTE before a peace package is made public.

Thus Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu found it "curiouser and curiouser" that the TULF is opposed to the Government publishing a peace package and instead it preferred a return to the talks interrupted on 19 April. The effect of TULF's position, he lamented, "is support by default for the current status quo and that as we all know, even if the TULF cannot, is preparation for all out war" (*Sunday Leader*, 25/6/95).

But here Dr Saravanamuttu unfortunately missed the point. The TULF DOES know. The TULF knows and is happy that it is virtually impossible to return to the talks. The TULF knows and fears that if a peace package is presented the LTTE has the capacity to negotiate peace. The TULF knows and welcomes that in the absence of a peace package war is inevitable. The TULF hopes that a renewed war will destroy the LTTE once and for all precisely because the LTTE has the capacity to sue for peace. Here the TULF has joined forces with the Government and Sinhalese chauvinism. This is a high water mark in the TULF's sordid history of treachery against the Tamil national struggle.

Waiting — 9

Drunken Sailor

*Woman, stirring to the tide of moon
I watched you push a flower in your hair
Wild drunken sailor with its white flecked plume
Of lamps swaying, night and gale to dare
Our home's heart beat and this balcony held the World
Wild serpent creeper with its clinging scent
Scaling the wall with tentacles unfurled
To a Wife waxing with her dream unspent*

*No thought then, this moment was fragile
As the white clouds that castled the moonswept sky
No thought that Death the Stalker would beguile
Us to this last thicket to hear us pant and sigh.*

U. Karunatilake

Fact and Fiction

Rohan Jayawardene

If we look again at our educational structure, which will come up from examination on the motion to be moved by the Minister of Education, we will find that we are spending over Rs. 20 million a year for maintaining a system of education which creates two classes. Over 80 per cent of our schools educate our children in Sinhalese and Tamil, while only about 6 or 7 per cent of the children are given an English education. But the official language is English, and that is why this country is always in danger of being governed by a small coterie who go through those English schools whereas the vast majority who go through the Sinhalese and Tamil schools must always be in the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

We have not only defects in our own system of education as an example and an argument for accepting this motion; we have also the example of other countries which have been for many centuries under foreign domination, and once they have become free or almost free they have dropped the foreign language and adopted their own language. I will take an example, first, the Irish Free State. After centuries of Anglicization, the native language of the people of Ireland, Gaelic, was forgotten; hardly 10 per cent spoke the language of the people. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Hyde later became the President of the Irish Free State, the Gaelic League was started, and Gaelic was again made popular among the people. When Mr. De Valera began his great fight for freedom, and succeeded, he insisted that native language of the people of Ireland, through it was spoken only by 10 per cent, unlike in Ceylon where only 10 per cent speak English, should be made the official language. He set aside all objections — he is an man who does not care for objections — and he made that language the official language of Ireland.

We also have the example of India where the Indian National Congress had insisted that English should be supplanted from its position as the official language, that linguistic provinces should be created, and that Hindi should be the official language. We see that in Hyderabad and

in the other native States of India the official language is the language of the people. No difficulty, I think, can be visualized once the spirit of the motion is accepted and the methods which I have outlined are put into effect

If only the Board of Ministers elected in 1931 and the Minister of Education who was elected in 1931 had taken the necessary steps with a vision that should have been theirs, to put into effect a proposal such as this, it may be that today we would be able to speak in the languages of the people in this Council and in our other legislative assemblies. It is not too late even at this stage to make a start to see that Sinhalese and Tamil are made the official languages of this country.

It becomes all the more important that we should adopt this motion at this stage, because the Minister of Education is introducing very far-reaching proposals next week in this Council, one of which is to make English education free. Before you create an educational system in which you teach English as a free and compulsory language, you must have clear before your eyes what is going to be the official language of this country. Are you going to educate the people of this country, 80 per cent of whom do not at present get an education, in English, while the official languages of the country are to be Sinhalese and Tamil? Or we in the future going to have English as the official language? I think that that is the most important decision which should be taken by the educational authorities before they decide whether the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue or English. The educational structure should be suited to the official languages. One might as well teach Dutch and not English if English is not going to be the official language.

Therefore, I would place this motion before the House; and I wish to speak a word of explanation with regard to my desire to include Tamil also. I had always the intention that Tamil should be spoken in the Tamil-speaking provinces, and that Tamil should be the official language in the Tamil-speaking provinces. But as two-thirds of the people of this country speak Sinhalese, I had the intention of proposing

that only Sinhalese should be the official language of the Island; but it seems to me that the Tamil community, who speak Tamil, wish that Tamil also should be included on equal terms with Sinhalese. The great fear I had was that Sinhalese being a language spoken by only 3 million people in the whole would suffer, or may be entirely lost in time to come, if Tamil is also placed on an equal footing with it in this country. The influence of Tamil literature, a literature used in India by over 40 million and the influence of Tamil films and Tamil culture in this country, I thought might be detrimental to the future of the Sinhalese language; but if it is the desire of the Tamils, that Tamil also should be given an equal status with Sinhalese, I do not think we should bar it from attaining that position.

I do not think there will be any difficulty in this House, which is composed of representatives chosen on a universal franchise, in securing the end we have in view. It is the universal franchise that has brought the English-educated and the masses together, and it is the impulse created by the use of the universal franchise, by the ideals realized by the grant of universal franchise which enable the people to choose their rulers, which will ultimately make Sinhalese and Tamil the official languages of this country. I would therefore suggest to this House that we anticipate that event, and give it the sanction of our vote and decision.

Language, Sir, is one of the most important characteristics of nationality. Without language, a nation stands a chance of being absorbed or of losing its identity, with language, it has a chance of living for centuries. It is because of our language that the Sinhalese race has existed for 2,400 years, and think that, composed as we are in this House, on the eve of freedom as a free country we should prepare for a national official language. This House, I am sure, will vote with me that English should be deposed from its position as the official language of the country and Sinhalese and Tamil, the ancient languages of our people, spoken by over 80 to 90 per cent of our people, should be made the official languages of Lanka."

(To be Continued)

Generic Drugs ?

The World Health Organization recommends that people should be kept informed about the facts on medication and provided with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves from the inappropriate use of drugs.

Public education in drug use will increasingly become a part of mass education via the mass media. The knowledge and skills thus acquired will still not provide adequate protection to the public if the items in doctor's prescriptions are effectively disguised by various brand names and promoted for indications which have not been fully validated.

Generic Drugs are those known by their pharmacopoeial names and can be prescribed only for their established clinical indications.

Most Pharmacopoeias now carry a section on Patient information giving a brief account of the indications, benefits and risks in use of a particular drug. Thus Generic naming and identification of use is a vital part of this public education programme advocated by WHO which aims to prevent brand name promotion making medication revert to being one of the Black Arts.

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Patriarchy in a Language

Eva Ranaweera

This paper attempts to decipher the concept of patriarchy, its power base and its manner of operationalisation through the various structures in the society. It also argues that the legitimisation it seeks, through the language leads to state oppression as well. The role played by language however, is the thrust of the deciphering exercise.

According to the Chambers Dictionary, Patriarchy is governing or ruling by paternal right; and patriarch is one of the early heads of families from Adam downwards to Abraham, Jacob and his sons. Continuing in the same context of religion, Chambers says patriarch is a bishop ranking above primates and metropolitans. The heads of certain Eastern Churches, a father or founder, leader of a flock. (Patriarchs — patria, family — pater, the father, arche rule)

Oxford dictionary defines "patriarchy as a system, society, or Government, rule by man and with descent through the male line.

I use both these meanings of patriarchy in combination.

These meanings are based on the acceptance of a rule by patriarchy and it is logical to state woman as opposed to man, the ruler is ruled by man through the system of patriarchy. Thus each patriarch, each father or potential father is a ruler or an anticipated ruler and each woman is a subject of the ruler.

We believe that any system that is dependant on subjugation does not work for the benefit of the subjugated. No form of domination is healthy or desirable. Based on this it is logical to consider that patriarchy exists for the benefit of the patriarch and his male descendants.

A patriarch's power lies in his supportive system for domination, in the form of its ideology and its implementation through the family, the religion, literature, social and cultural heritage, behaviour patterns, the language etc. There are many more forms in the supportive system but I limit myself to these, leaving out the huge patriarchal system of economy, its monopoly and its administrative infrastructures. Over the years, this system has been accepted by the majority female who in turn sees to the strict adherence and propagation, just as the majority in a colonised country accept and propagate the ideology and views beneficial to the colonial power. But, unlike in a colony the subjugated woman is far from being able to form a common front or for considering ways and means of releasing herself from the fetters of patriarchy as she is imprisoned in the patriarchal family unit in violation from each other, physically and ideologically. When she meets other imprisoned members she is indoctrinated to carry out her discussions and problems within the framework of the ideology of patriarchy and the family unit, because she knows only that and is unable to visualise another state outside it.

In the examination of various forms of implementation and propagation of patriarchy, a powerful system carries out its

subjugation and humiliation of the woman. At times to subtly and deceptively that the victim is truly unaware of it and considers herself a free person in a 'democratic' society.

Patriarchy is the right of the patriarch to rule because, he has inherited it by descent. It is a divine right similar to the divine right of Kings. It is not to be questioned, and it is to be accepted. From this arises the assumption that the woman is lost without the protective base of patriarchy.

She carries the brand mark of the family in the form of the surname, which is changed after marriage when she enters the home of another patriarchal family. Note the male child's surname does not change after marriage. His descendants will carry his surname which he inherited from his father. Under the Sri Lankan custom the majority of females did not/ do not change their surnames at marriage and continued/continues to use the surname of the father.

The patriarchal family unit is supposed to provide protection to the inmates of the house. This protection wards off threats of violation to the subjects within. Nevertheless, it is often revealed, how this claim to protection falls apart inspite of the patriarchal family unit and it's close relations with the police force in the infrastructure earlier referred to.

I will look at the family unit briefly because it was in the institution of the family that the free female individual lost her place and position and this was the beginning of women's subordination of subjection to a patriarchal order.

In the family the female soon became the second class citizen, burdened with the family chores, the bringing up of children, running of the house, seeing to the correct implementation of the patriarchal system according to the worldly instructions given to children as declared in ancient patriarchal wisdom and propagated through literature and religion which created a highly prejudiced state pushing the woman to a lower position. Here I cannot resist quoting a folk song which as usual hits out at the dignity of a woman. This particular one goes a step further and targets Brahma's Wife.

Wherever they go, the meritorious one heaps homage
The sinners gather but disgrace.

On the heads of the meritorious Maha Brahma inscribed
And on the heads of the sinners, his wife did the inscribing.

The set pattern of thinking, woman baiting is exposed.

"If marriage is the basis of the family, then this supposedly individual and freely chosen form, has a state instrument at it's heart" say Michele Barret and Mary Macintosh¹.

They continue

"Those who defend marriage as what people want and

need, must explain then why it has to be so massively privileged by social policies, taxation, religious endorsement and the accolade of respectability".

When the family unit breaks down for what was expected to be the end of all problems in life for the female it turns out to be a hell and domestic privacy then becomes an autonomy. An enraged man may beat his wife and it will become a "Private Matter".

"The bond between them is seen as so special that the outsider should not presume to take a stand, even when it is quite clear that what is happening is an extreme form of physical violence".

"The privacy of the family is cast in a new light if we realise that one quarter of reported violence is wife assault and that a very large proportion of rapes are carried out by men who know their victims as well, often husbands, boy friends, fathers and uncles²".

The mythology around the woman and the family unit, its sacredness, its romance lead us astray from our set purpose, the exposure of patriarchy in a language and we hasten to stop myself from wondering around in my own prison looking into its dark nooks and corners, for the presence of at least traces of a family unit and its sanctum.

Language

The second part of this paper deals with language. I will examine how patriarchal ideology is operationalised through the language. Language is described as a variety of speech, a body of words and idioms, mode of expression, a manner of expressing thought or feeling; communication. These descriptions of a language do not take into consideration the dominant effect of patriarchy which cripples and at times keeps away women writers from using it in a sense of equality. In a patriarchal society language is not simply a means of communication. It is one of the main instruments of patriarchy that obstructs the development of women intellectually and thereby creates a sense of inferiority. Patriarchal hegemony in a language is hidden under credibility obtained from the use of a terminology which describes patriarchal thought and expressions as scientific, unemotional lucid, factual etc. I will explore this point later in detail. Language the intellectual manifestation of patriarchy, has a deep social function. It is the main convenor of the ideology described earlier. It is also the most effective instrument or propagation of this ideology. It denies the marginal groups their adequate expression by,

- a. typification
- b. mystification
- c. establishment of a structural society in which the marginal groups find themselves unable to voice their needs (somebody's voice and my need).

We will not go into details about typification which categorises women as obedient, good, kind, generous, pretty etc, which itself is a means of enslaving and tying her to certain expectations such as the above.

2. Mystification-Elevation into a mystery, use of the feminine mystification which hides her reality in a patriarchal society which has defined the women as the mysterious other.
3. Establishment of the marginal groups into the concept of the second sex.

"The patriarchal elite defines reality through a selective language usage so that the present power structure is maintained, whilst disruptions to the established order are averted. The powerful (that is the main stream men) have no desire for social changes, therefore they do not need to engage in critical reflections and thus have little use for flexible language systems. The society is their construction and they work to maintain it so as to preserve their status. This then is the power of the patriarchal language³".

Patriarchal society has created a technical language which embodies the power structure of Politics, Economics, Management, Commerce and other disciplines and is outside the availability of the marginalised in society.

The conventional language, which is the male language in use today, has proved itself inadequate for the marginalised to voice their sufferings.

Going back to my reference to terminology, I present here a list of words which describe the male superiority in the language as opposed to the female inadequacy. This terminology is closely related to typification of woman and is discrimination.

Male Language

objective
scientific
logical
intellectual
systematic
credible
real
critical
detached
powerful
broad
distinctive

Marginalised Language

subjective
unscientific
illogical
chaotic
unsystematic
incredible
unreal
hysterical
introspective
stupid
narrow
womanly

In Sanskrit grammar obvious gender consciousness is revealed. Words associated with knowledge or wisdom *Prajna Vidya and Parijna* are feminine words while words associated with emotive states such as compassion and love *Preman and Sneha* are masculine⁴.

Burdened by criticism and labelled as mediocre the early women writers (English medium) concealed their identity and used pseudonyms and published their works anonymously. They used masculine names George Sand, George Elliott, Currer, Ellis, Action Bell. The attire of George Sand was masculine, in a vain attempt to claim equality.

They suffered from the danger of reading their fiction as autobiography. They feared but defied the critics who were men armed with male language.

"Many brilliant and competent women had so completely accepted the myth of female inferiority that they had no faith in their own sex and considered themselves superior exceptions. George Elliott and Elizabeth Barret Browning, or example approved of feminism in theory. But could not believe that Victorian women were ready to assume the responsibilities of equality. Mrs Browning a political liberal who wrote against American slavery and for the Italian liberation, and whose verse novel Aurora Leigh was attacked as propaganda for women's rights wrote nonetheless, that she was not a very strong partisan of the rights of Women side argument." *I believe that considering men and women in the mass, there is an inequality of intellect, and it is proved by the very state of things of which gifted women complain and more than proved by the manner in which their complaint is received by their own sister hood*⁵".

Woman writers were termed blue stockings, unwomanly, tough, aggressive, pedantic, vain and ugly.

In a letter written by Robert Southey, the poet Laureate, to Charlotte Bronte in 1837, we find in tolerance and prejudice towards women writers.

"Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and recreation".

Note — "proper duties". Her writing was an accomplishment and a recreation "only".

Her reply to this letter is noteworthy

I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all duties a woman ought to fulfil, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed for sometimes when I am teaching or sewing I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself and my father's approbation amply rewarded me for the privation".

Proper duties were teaching and sewing but "She would be reading or writing" and not carrying out her proper duties, Towards which she had no inclination. The manner in which these women began to use the male language to assert themselves from the oppressive conditions was both courageous and defiant. The quotation from the barbed pen of Thomas Moore addressed to Harrie Martineau reveals the extent of oppression exercised. (Showalter's Women Writers and the Double Standard.)

Blue Love Song & Women Writers

Come, be with me, and I will write
My Blue of Blues, from morning till night
Chased from our classic souls shall be
All thoughts of vulgar progeny etc.

It implied Blue stocking women writers were barren and unsexed.

Criticism & Women Writers

Earlier references to women writing under masculine names and pseudonyms illustrate their fear of criticism, if they used pseudonyms they hoped to receive impartial reviews. They were but keeping their "poor" femininity in hiding. Coming down to later times "On naming the oppressed or what Woolf avoids saying in A Room of One's Own" by J. Christine Salem notes Woolf's desire to protect herself from male criticism in her conspicuously pervasive choice of sentence structures where the agent is masculine or is deleted.

Obvious patriarchal domination of the language is seen in the use of generic masculine words e.g. man/mankind denotes man and woman as would be the term human or chairman.

under natural disasters **man** survives,
one expects justice to be meted out to **him** (man and he are synonyms).

Fellow of the Royal College of FRCS etc.

Generic masculine bias is accepted by the male and female in society, a dog is a male dog; lawyer/male bias. House wife but no house husband.

The third sector of the paper is on sexist words used in anger for the purpose of abusing and humiliating woman to break her and make her submissive. Foul words, dirty words, obscene words are all sexist. The woman is an obscene product. Gender specific terms considered obscene are body parts and functioning of the female body. Anger is most felt when mother, the big female is invoked on a connotation.

A woman is a bit, a cunt, a screw, a piece, a pussy, a prude, a whore a girlie, a dame a hussy. She is also referred to as a nymph, blue stocking petticoat (petticoat government) prostitute, strumpet, skirt, tart, tit, virago, vixen.

Because of a woman's vulnerable position in a patriarchal society she is considered a protected thing, thereby becoming feeble and weak. Thus her voice will be feeble and weak. Nevertheless she is held responsible for the house.

In conclusion I would say

- * Woman is a prisoner in a patriarchal family unit
- * The powerful instrument of male language is inadequate to voice feminine needs.
- * Women's oppression is legitimatised by the conventional language forcing her into a role of acceptance.
- * Obscenity in the male language is gender oriented.

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Hidden Racism in Political Theories

Bramaganani

Dayan Jayatilaka, once an ardent supporter of the Tamil struggle for self-determination and a sympathiser of the armed resistance movement of the Tamil youth, has now transformed himself into a champion of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism and a proponent of counter-insurgency theories. Having traversed a complicated political trajectory from revolutionary militancy to reactionary racism, Dayan has been expending his entire intellectual energy in the destructive criticism of the Tamil national struggle. The LTTE, which spearheads the Tamil freedom movement, is the central target of his critique. His particular brand of political theory does not offer any rational, objective analysis of the phenomenon of Tamil armed resistance but rather a blind, sweeping criticism of the LTTE. He advocates nothing other than the total destruction of the Tamil Tigers.

Sri Lanka political discourse, in recent times, has produced an amazing variety of political theorists and analysts whose main vocation seems to be to produce denunciatory criticisms of the politico-military strategy of the LTTE and offer ideas and solutions as to how to end the so-called 'terrorist menace'. Among these political theorists, Dayan Jayatilaka stands out as a unique character in his irrational and ruthless criticism of the LTTE. His pathological hatred and paranoia for the Tigers are so perverse that it makes one wonder whether he is tormented by schizophrenic delusions.

In his recent book entitled, *"Sri Lanka. The Travails of a Democracy. Unfinished war, Protracted Crisis"*, he portrays the LTTE as the most dangerous force constituting a serious threat, not only to Sri Lanka but also to the entire South

Asia. The LTTE has to be destroyed at any cost; otherwise, he warns, the Sinhala nation would perish. Prophesying a philosophy of doom, he paints a very gloomy miserable future if Sri Lanka loses the war with the LTTE. To quote him in this context:

"The consequence to Sri Lanka of losing this war will be both grave and dangerous. The Sinhala people could put up with 450 years of colonial rule, albeit with some rebellious and protest movements, because these colonial powers were mighty world wide empires. Even the recent Indian intervention could be absorbed, accepted and withstood by the Sinhala psyche as an imposition by the world's fourth largest army. To lose a war to a Tamil force, however, representing a minority and the most ancient historic enemy will cause terrible convulsions in Sinhala psyche. The humiliation and frustrated rage will cause a pathological condition that will last for generations. All social and personal relations will be poisoned. The whole social fabric may come apart. The state itself will find that it has been hollowed out from within due to erosion of credibility and legitimacy".

Surely this is not a balanced, rational, objective elucidation of the ethnic conflict. This is simply a manifestation of paranoid delusion. Maybe the war has already triggered off 'terrible convulsions' in the psyche of Dayan making him experience hallucinations of this kind.

First of all, Dayan should realise, if his senses are intact, that the phenomenon of armed resistance of the LTTE is the product of Sinhala state repression and violence. In other words the LTTE is the creation of Sinhala chauvinist oppression

against the Tamils. Having taken birth from the conditions of state oppression, the LTTE is fighting against the state repressive apparatus to win the political rights of the Tamils. Self-determination, the freedom of a nation of people to decide their own political destiny, is one of those rights. The LTTE is waging an armed struggle to realise this right. Since the Sinhala state has effectively repressed all forms of non-violent struggles undertaken within the confines of constitutional and democratic politics, the Tamils had no alternative other than to defend themselves with armed resistance. This is how the LTTE's armed struggle arose and developed. Now the question is how to bring the armed conflict to an end? Ignoring the historical root of the ethnic conflict, and callously disregarding the political struggle of the Tamils, Dayan, as well as several other theorists of similar brand, call for the defeat and destruction of the LTTE. Conceiving that the armed struggle of the LTTE and the political struggle of the Tamils are two sets of different phenomena, they attempt to characterise the armed resistance of the Tigers as a phenomenon of 'terrorism' divorced from the political discourse of the Tamils. It is here, in the isolation and identification of the armed struggle of the LTTE from that of the national struggle of the Tamil people, that Dayan as well as other political theorists make a grave blunder. This separation is only imaginary, a pure fantasy that occurs in the minds of these writers. In concrete reality there is no such separation. The armed struggle of the LTTE has taken a concrete form as the authentic political struggle of the Tamils and therefore they are one and the same phenomenon. Since the armed struggle is the mode of the national struggle of the Tamils arising from the conditions of Sinhala state oppression, it is undeniably a political

phenomenon which has to be resolved by political means. Unless the root causes of the armed struggle are resolved, i.e., the conditions of oppression are removed the conflict cannot be resolved by any other means. This is the hard reality. The advocates of military solution should realise this political truth.

But Dayan's political text is far removed from reality. In his paranoid phantasy he views the Tamil national struggle as a simple phenomenon of 'terrorism' with dangerous potential to destabilise the whole of South Asia. Therefore, he calls upon the South Asian nations to mobilise a formidable multilateral force to eliminate the Liberation Tigers. Since the Sri Lanka army is unable to carry out the task and the fourth largest army of the world has failed to do so, he thinks that it would be possible for the combined armies of South Asia to successfully crush the Tamil liberation struggle. This fantastic counter-insurgency theory, inviting foreign armies into Sri Lanka to resolve the ethnic problem can only be characterised as a perverted form of racism arising out of fanatical hatred.

Dayan's fanatical hatred of the LTTE transcends all bounds of rational thinking. He writes:

"So long as the LTTE is out there, there is no question of any real peace and prosperity, or any real development, over here. All the potential that Sri Lanka has, will come to nought. The Sri Lanka crisis will never end. The Southern front will also begin to boil and bubble again, because the war and its consequence can never be limited to North-east. These two power centres, these two 'Kingdoms' — Colombo and Eelam, the Lankan state and the LTTE, cannot coexist in one small island. Dual power and peaceful co-existence between the two is impossible. One will have to go; and one will".

In Dayan's political writings, one can find hidden streaks of racial hatred that portray the Tamils as the 'historic enemy' of the Sinhalese. Though the LTTE is treated as the arch enemy, a deeper analysis will show that the Tiger is dealt as a symbolic representation of the imagined power projection of the Tamil race. This is the dangerous element in Dayan's

distorted perception of the Tamil national question. His passionate dislike of the Tigers represents nothing other than a repressed hatred of the Tamils.

We find this element of racism cleverly rationalised in contemporary anti-LTTE writings of several journalists and commentators who maquerade as political theorists and analysts, whose biased and distorted vision will not in anyway contribute to solve the ethnic crisis, but rather would reinforce the hegemony of chauvinistic ideology that dominates the political world of the South.

The theorists of the final solution who advocate total destruction of the LTTE deliberately ignore or rather conveniently forget a crucial aspect in their grand strategies of war. That is the question of civilian casualties. The lack of concern about the catastrophic consequence that might befall the Tamil civilian population in the event of a total war, with the involvement of foreign armies as advocated by Dayan, shows very clearly that these theorists of war are essentially racists.

(Inside Report)

BOOKS

THE KANDY ROAD, Jennings, William Ivor, edited and introduced by H. A. I. Goonetilleke, posthumously published by the University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, 1993.

Alfred Jeyaratnam Wilson

And Jennings was a Welshman Who stole our mother tongue.

P. de S. Kularatne

I an Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka's renowned bibliophile, a national treasure veritably, has in his meticulous Introduction dealt with every facet of Jennings's University and public life in Ceylon. He also provides a penetrating study of Jennings's intellectual and academic attainments, the story of Peradeniya during his steward-

ship and the drastic transformation from the rarefied ethos in those times to the changes that followed after his departure in 1955. As Goonetilleke states, Jennings had hoped for a residential campus modelled on Oxbridge. It turned out into something else. Politics took command. The University became democratised in its

admissions policy. Jennings on the other hand, "had little respect and less time for.... populist tendencies....." (p.xiii).

Sir William Ivor Jennings tried externalising his autobiography while in Ceylon where he spent 15 of his valuable years from a youthful 37 to past the half century

mark of 52. Being the successful "scholarship boy" he wished Sri Lankan youth to succeed as he had done. He was somewhat a dreamer in his mistaken belief that the English language could become the mother tongue. Hence P. de S. Kularatne's ditty. He was disarmingly frank to the point of being misunderstood when he declared that he found the island "a little better than a cultural desert" (pp. xxi-xxiii). He minced no words in his assessments of the islands educational system, social welfare and political life. After some time, he ceased to think of himself as an outsider. In his Preface and in most places in the main text, Jennings used "we" not so much as the "royal we" but as a means of identifying himself with the people and their fortunes. The final chapter (vi) a "Descriptive Glossary" in which historic places outside of the Kandy road, Buddhism, some flowers, birds, vegetables and many varieties of fruit are explained in all their detail as well as the pains taken to caution the intending traveller of minor things such as drinking water, the malaria mosquito and other useful details bear witness to an abiding affection he had for Ceylon. Additionally Sir Ivor describes vividly what a curry means (pp. 82-4) and how when invited, the guest at a dinner party would be entertained with twelve curries, some meat, some fish, some vegetables and some fruit..." (p. 83), evidence of a deep liking for the Ceylon style dinner party. A little known fact of this affection for Ceylon from a man who was studiously aloof was evidenced by his taking to Cambridge his Sinhalese butler cum *Johannes factotum*.

Sir Ivor perhaps wrote *The Kandy Road* because, as he once told colleagues such as Professor J. L. C. Rodrigo, a popular Dean of the Faculty of Arts that he had a premonition which fortunately did not materialise that he would meet with his death somewhere on the road. The text of Sir Ivor's essay is divided into six chapters: on the people of the island, the Road, its starting point, Colombo, milestones that describe various places and temples on route, Kandy, and a "descriptive glos-

sary". There is much in the writing that indicates a deep affection for the people and the island. Indeed Sir Ivor must have been the most distinguished author of texts written on Ceylon, Robert Knox and Leonard Woolf included, and others to present times. His is a unique travel guide.

It is as contemporaneous as it could be given the lapse of time from when it was first written.

The Kandy Road is enriched by Ian Goonetilleke's lively language in the Introduction. It strikes a chord in the hearts of those of us who went through the mill of Sir Ivor's university. There is a poignant nostalgia as one savours of the University then and what it became after Sir Ivor's departure. Goonetilleke's chaste style and riveting prose have to be read thoughtfully for one to suffer nostalgic pangs of a Proustian remembrance of things past. Just to give one sample:

there was then the breeze in one's face, the wind in the hair, the fragrance of a myriad scents and breathtaking vistas around each corner or open stretch. One travelled in an unending green tunnel of emerald hues broken by the changing scenarios of village and town. One never tired, however often one travelled — each bend held a surprise as the unjaded ribbon of tarmac unrolled its fresh wonders and quickening glimpses of life on its edges.... (p. xxiv).

Goonetilleke's words remind the discerning reader of a book by another distinguished British civil servant; John Still and his inimitable style in his *The Jungle Tide*.

Sir Ivor left Ceylon in 1955 to take up the prestigious Mastership of Trinity Hall and a stint as Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University. Alas he did not live long enough. For he died of cancer of the oesophagus at the relatively young age of sixty two.

It might interest readers to know a little more of Sir Ivor and his involvement probably rather reluctantly, after his move to Cambridge. My reading of the Jennings archives in London disclosed some revelations. There are a few pages of a manifesto in Jennings's handwriting. It was for the United National Party, evidence of the expectation of a further general election in the offing should D. S. Senanayake's government of 1947 be defeated on the floor of the House in a division on the Vote of Thanks on the first throne speech. There is also a letter to Sir Ukwatte Jayasundara on the BC Pact. Sir Ivor states, if I remember rightly, that the Tamils had gained the substance of federalism. He speculated in this letter that if the Tamils were not satisfied and rose in rebellion, such a rebellion will have to be put down. But then he added that he did not think this would become necessary, for the Tamils would realise they had more to gain if they remained within the framework within which they could negotiate and bargain. Both these examples indicate how close he had come to identifying himself with even the domestic politics of Ceylon. Lastly there is a cryptic reference in a response to a VIP's (I forget who he was) letter on the question of Ceylon's independence. It refers to his satisfaction with everything except the choice of February 4th as the day of independence. Here, from other related material elsewhere I was able to make the connection, Sir Ivor wanted the 2nd February to be Independence Day, the occasion of his own wedding anniversary. The question arises as to why he expected so much. Lastly I was given the opportunity of reading a letter by Sir Ivor to a rather eccentric batch mate of mine. This acquaintance had written Sir Ivor a letter alleging, very unfairly, that a senior lecturer in economics had discriminated against him on grounds of caste. Jennings was quick to reply; dear mister. "There are limits to absurdity" etc. Jennings also commented quite a bit that he was the recipient of many an anonymous letter, about members of faculty at the University.

'THIS TOTAL ART: PERCEPTIONS OF SRI LANKAN THEATRE' By Shelagh Goonewardene

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 Chitrasena, 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 'Hunuwalaye 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 Peters 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 points 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.

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