

10
LANKA

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BACK TO WAR-WAR

— *Mervyn de Silva*

THE BATTLE FOR JAFFNA

— *Indra de Soysa*

SINHALA-BUDDHIST CHAUVINISM

— *reply by H. L. D Mahindapala*

S.W.R.D. — THE OXFORD YEARS

— *Ananda Welihena*

DELHI'S SECURITY CONCERNS

— *K. M. de Silva*

WHY GALLE WAS BURNING

— *independent report*

DEVOLUTION DEBATE

— *S. Sathananthan*

ENGLISH WRITING

: THE BURGHERS

— *Kamalika Pieris*



Black Knight
It's your move

BRIEFLY...

India wants Prabhakaran

Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told a news conference at the United Nations that his country's request to the Sri Lanka government to arrest LTTE leader Prabhakaran and hand him over still stood. "We have asked Sri Lanka to expedite it", he said.

India wants Prabhakaran for the murder of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

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India's opposition to the LTTE's separatist cause was also implicit in the Foreign Minister's statement at the news conference that Sri Lanka's ethnic problem was a domestic one "to be resolved within the Sri Lankan constitution in keeping with the territorial integrity of the country".

Death threat to Chandrika Akka

An open letter to 'Chandrika Akka' (President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga) in the LTTE's official journal *Viduthalai Puligal* says: "..... you have created so many problems for us that I realise that you have placed yourself in the position of Rajiv Gandhi, Premadasa, Athulathmudali, Gamini Disanayake, Ranjan Wijeratne....." All of these personalities were assassinated by the LTTE. The letter is signed with the pseudonym Dhanu.

Tigers mauled

The LTTE has suffered casualties of upto 500 cadres killed and a thousand more wounded in six days of fighting in the on-going 'Operation Thunder Strike' a military spokesman told the media at a briefing. The spokesman described the security forces operation as one of the worst defeats suffered by the LTTE in twelve years of war.

President denounces war-mongers

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga denounced war-mongers and opposition political parties that were trying to disrupt the Government's peace

initiative. The President was speaking at a ceremony honouring trade union leaders.

President Chandrika said: "Are we prepared to mobilise another 100,000 youths for the forces? If those who want war can find another 500 billion rupees we might then succeed in this effort".

A Sri Lankan victory

Sri Lankan cricketers beat Pakistani cricketers in a Test cricket series in Pakistan. This was Sri Lanka's first ever Test series victory, against Pakistan.

Sri Lanka lost the first Test by an innings but rallied and won the remaining two by 42 and 144 runs.

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CONTENTS

News Background	2
Low Intensity Containment	3
The Violence in Galle (3)	4
P.A.'s Devolution Plan (2)	7
Tamil=LTTE=Prabhakaran	9
S.W.R.D.: The Making of an Intellectual	11
Conflict and Foreign Policy (3)	14
English Writing (2)	19

Goodbye to the Peace Dividend

Mervyn de Silva

Has the tide finally turned in Colombo's favour? It is Sri Lanka's protracted war against the separatist Tamil "Tigers" we have in mind. The army has done surprisingly well in the four large operations which started with LEAP FORWARD, followed by HANDSHAKE 1 and 2 and finally THUNDER STRIKE.

If only Commander-in-Chief Chandrika Kumaratunga had done her job as well as the army is now doing its job, Sri Lanka's chances to recover her old and new image — tropical paradise, booming economy, excellent investment prospects — would have been much stronger. Instead all we read in the regional-and-international press is how "big investors" are taking a good look at Bangladesh and Burma, after Vietnam perhaps. And our own business/investor community remains deeply disturbed.

What's the problem? Governance. Not the "good governance" which the pompous authors of the P.A. manifesto pledged as Item No. 1, together with "transparency" and "accountability". What is now manifestly obvious is that the U.N.P.'s "one-man shows" have been replaced by a dozen extravaganzas, which may have proved quite entertaining but for the "little war" in the North-and-East, where Commandante Velupillai Prabhakaran fooled the P.A. leadership with four long months of "peace talks", while he built up his armoury. In itself, the peace initiative was a good move, if only the P.A. had kept its powder dry and gone for its gun as soon as the LTTE fired the first shot. Far from being ready for a fast-draw, the P.A.'s massive publicity cam-

paign "Peace in our Time" (and the Nobel prize for the P.A.) lulled the Sinhalese, including the decision-makers in every ministry. What is more, the P.A. committed itself to a "Devolution Package" which was generous enough to satisfy ALL but the LTTE. However that P.A. offer was perceived by hardline Sinhala opinion as full-blooded federalism. And federalism is a four-letter word — the F-Word as we have introduced it — in the view of the Sinhala intelligentsia, and conservative Buddhist opinion-leaders.

Anybody can be duped — certainly by an organisation as cunning as the LTTE. The newly elected P.A. led by a bunch of educated and intelligent politicians and professionals, had however no seasoned strategist. The only exception was SLFP leader, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, the former prime minister who in 1970 did put together a United Front too. Alas, the ailing Mrs. Bandaranaike was made Prime Minister but the prime minister's office was little more than ceremonial.

Though it is no secret that the P.A.'s "brains trust" (the hard core is Colombo campus and associated think-tanks) was assisted, if not tutored, by a small well-knit group of NATO diplomats, it does strike a detached observer of the prevailing confusion, that the teachers don't deserve even a B minus.

Why is the P.A. administration in such a mess and the business community so obviously worried?

While candidate Chandrika's charisma was the simple explanation to the astounding 63% vote at the Presidential polls, the "brains trust" of the P.A. was

an elite corps of academics. "Peace" and the "peace dividend" were the two vital assumptions of the politburo's 'grand strategy'. The co-optation of all the "minority" parties, [Tamil, Muslim, Indian plantation Tamil] was imperative once the electoral arithmetic was clear. No party, UNP or SLFP, could be certain of victory without these voting blocks. That suited the P.A.'s foreign tutors and patrons perfectly..... a peace candidate supported by the Tamil/Muslim parties could work out a formula, an offer of devolution, which the LTTE will find it difficult to reject. If the negotiations with the LTTE at least produces a stable ceasefire, NATO diplomacy would make sure that the Eelam diaspora (the fund-raisers of the LTTE) subjected the LTTE to sustained pressure. [The western donors in turn could arm-twist the P.A. to accept the Tamil exiles].

The LTTE may not be advised by Phd's and Professors. And yet Velupillai Prabhakaran had the cunning and the "feel" for warfare (plainly a gift) to deceive the Indian foreign service and intelligence *apparatus*. President Chandrika and Colombo campus 'conflict resolution' *pothay gurash* have proved easy meat for an operator of Prabhakaran's class.

So EELAM WAR 3 has now taken a predictable course — an advance on Jaffna before the rains hold up the offensive. The army has done exceedingly well. The LTTE has taken heavy casualties — at least 150 in the last encounter, and close to 300 since "LEAP FORWARD".

But what happens when the monsoon rains begin and the LTTE guerrillas return to their anti-IPKF campaign tactics?

Low intensity containment: the only option?

Indra de Soysa

It has been over a year now since the Peoples' Alliance government and its leader Chandrika Kumaratunga promised to solve the LTTE/Tamil problem. The peace package that the government offered, apparently one with a significant devolution of power to the North and East, was rejected by the Tigers. They are now back to doing what they do best. The euphoria surrounding the issue of "peace at last" is all but dissipated and the men and women of the armed forces continue to die, with large civilian casualties too and enormous costs incurred in material destroyed. This is the reality. Peace is the only hope.

The popular consensus, however, seems to be that since peace has failed through political means, the final solution must rest with the military. Of course, the PA and the president can fervently hope for any peace, regardless of the means by which it is achieved, thus prudently following both strategies. This strategy, however, is ironically the very same strategy that the UNP governments had followed vainly for so long. Further, this approach can only help the Tigers because it plays into their overall strategy, which is to "talk, talk, fight, fight." I argue that the efforts at bringing about peace is largely fueled by the domestic political imperative of "putting an end to the problem," popularized in the Sinhala phrase "*iwarakalla danna*." It is argued here, however, that the solution lies neither in anticipating a military "victory" nor in negotiating a "just political" settlement involving the LTTE, both of which seem to be the only options for the government. I will show that what is politically expedient, once again, has tremendous short and long-term costs. It will be shown here why the war cannot be "won" and why a just political solution with the LTTE is not feasible. The "only solution" I outline below.

The Tiger strategy of "talk, talk, fight, fight" is typical insurgent warfare. This is the strategy of the weak, outlined by Sun Tzu and Mao Tse-tung and practiced to the letter by General Giap in Vietnam. This is a different kind of war which holds that winning the war is not necessarily a matter

of winning battles. After all, the US won every battle in Vietnam but lost the war. Likewise, let us assume that the Sri Lankan army is victorious in the battle for Jaffna, but what guarantees are there to ensure that the Tiger problem goes away? More than likely, it will be back to "square one" after tremendous costs. The president is absolutely correct to see many Prabhakaranes waiting in the wings if the present one should somehow be got rid of. Thus, bending to pressure from groups that want to see the destruction of the LTTE is shortsighted. Ultimately it will be too costly too.

Why would a military solution not work? The Sri Lankan army initially (in the early eighties) tried to fight a conventional war because that is all it knew. The first JVP insurgency in 1971 was a thorough flop because it violated every principle of insurgent warfare by taking on the forces head on. The JVP insurgency, thus, was decided by a few conventional battles. Nevertheless, in the early stages of the conflict in the North, the armed forces, led by Gen. Tissa "Bull" Weeraratna, treated the Tigers the same way. His strategy was one made famous at Sandhurst, which simply put, is meeting the enemy and defeating him. In conventional wars, such as W.W.I and W.W.II, defeating the enemy necessarily involves the destruction of the ability of the enemy to field forces. The scenario is defined as two armies knocking heads together. This necessitates also the use of massive force to destroy the "center of gravity" of the enemy which essentially is the destruction of the enemy's industrial capability (war machine) with strategic bombing, denying the enemy the ability to bring more fire-power to the "head banging." In purely military terms, the war will be decided on the basis of one side's "hostile ability" overcoming the other's "hostile will."

On the other hand, the "centre of gravity" of an insurgency is "people," hence the term "people's war." Thus, in an insurgency, the most effective way of upsetting the centre of gravity of the enemy is to win "hearts and minds," which is extremely difficult if the war is fought conventionally. Strategic bombing and other me-

thods of conventional warfare tends to create a better centre of gravity for the enemy, mainly by raising the "hostile will" of the populace at large. Besides, insurgents do not depend on an industrial war-machine to carry out their struggle, for them it is warfare on the cheap, depending solely on the active or passive support of the populace. Insurgents win by not completely losing, governments and their forces can lose by not completely winning. Bombing every Tiger "out-house," therefore, does not cause much damage. They can be out from behind a tree in seconds to attack you while you are enjoying creature comforts. Bombing and other destructive "conventional offensives" also serve to alienate the populace further. In post-Vietnam US military parlance, counter-insurgency requires a "Captain's war," not a Colonel's. Again in purely military terms, superior "hostile ability" of the government provides no guarantee for overcoming the "hostile will" of the guerrillas.

There is no real way in which the Sri Lankan government forces can lose completely on the battlefield, except if the Tigers win what they are fighting for in a political settlement. I also hold that it is not feasible to think of the Tiger problem as something that can be solved by winning a huge victory such as a "battle for Jaffna." I believe that the failed counter-insurgency phase (initially not fought as one) of the conflict in the north was purposefully abandoned (lost) by the government forces, either to turn a hopeless situation into a conventional war rather brilliantly sometime in the late eighties, or as the only possible thing to do; i.e. falling back on defensible positions, thus minimizing costs and incidentally handing the Tigers a de facto state of Eelam, albeit only of Jaffna town. However, the conventional standoff between Tiger forces and government forces is merely a strategic change in a military sense, which brings me back to the point of not expecting the problem of Tiger insurgency to go away even if the "big battle for Jaffna" is won. Merely controlling the entire Jaffna peninsula will not mean the end of the LTTE.

NEXT: POLITICAL SOLUTION

Witnesses Testify

Mr. K.V.:

On the 2nd of June we were repeatedly warned by some well wishers and friends about the possibility of violence against Tamils. We did take that seriously. I, personally, went to the Police station and complained. That was around 5.30 p.m.. I also asked Mr. Sivasubramaniam to lodge a complaint with the HQI. My shop was closed at 5.15. I was not satisfied with the answer from the police. So, I went again to the station around 7.00 p.m. to see whether I could meet some senior officers. I could not meet any officers but lodged a complaint again and returned home. Around 8.00 p.m. we heard explosions in the bazaar area. We were too afraid to go out but managed to find refuge with a Muslim family. The next day around 4.00 p.m. we came to this refugee camp. I have lost all my belongings.

Mr. R.:

We have been listening to various rumors and stories since the killing of Ven. Dimbulagala Thera. On the afternoon of the 2nd, friends came and told us that a group of people are planning to attack Tamil shops. They said that they heard the story at the Galle market. Our shop was set on fire around 9.00 p.m.. There are eye witnesses to this. We have already identified a person called Ranji, a supporter of the ruling party who actively took part in burning our shop. We told the police about him and no action has been taken so far.

An Employee of One of the Shops:

We received information from some of our Sinhalese friends that bombs were being produced by a group of people. I informed the OIC, Galle and he assured me that nothing would happen. I closed the shop around 3.00 p.m. and returned home. We live close to the Kathiresan temple. From 8.00 p.m. onwards we heard explosions and shouting. This lasted until 3.35 a.m.. I saw a group — 50 to 60 people — running down the streets shouting around that time.

Ms. K.T.:

It was between 9.30 and 10.00 p.m. on Friday the 2nd when a mob of about 100 men making a loud noise came to our house. We ran through the back door and hid in a Muslim neighbor's house. About 25 - 30 Muslim boys stood in front of our house and tried to prevent the mob from attacking the house. Our house is owned by a Muslim family. The mob did not harm the house, but went inside and destroyed all our things and left. Our store also has been burned. We hid in our neighbor's house until the police came the next day, in the late afternoon and took us to the Sivan Temple. The Muslim people saved our lives. If not for them we would all be dead.

Mr. S.S.:

I am a student who is studying business. I was in the Bazaar on the 2nd and saw the attacks. I have come to the Sivan Temple because it is not safe. Right now it's too dangerous for us to go back to our homes.

Everybody knew something was going to happen that day. About ten days before, I called the police and asked them for

protection. But they didn't do anything. At 3.00 or 4.00 p.m. on the 2nd we began calling the police again. We called them every half-hour. We told them about the people who were coming into the shops and harassing the shopkeepers. Each time we asked for protection but the police told us not to worry. The attack was planned but I don't know by who.

When I came to the Sivan Temple it was very unsafe. There was no police protection. But now it's safe here. The police and officials have told us that we should go home and continue with our businesses. They haven't told us how they will protect us.

Mr. S.:

Our shop was set on fire after 12.30 a.m.. I know this for sure because I asked a Sinhalese friend of mine to go and check the bazaar to see whether my shop was burned or not. That was around 12.00 a.m. He returned and told me that other Tamil shops were all on fire but not mine.

I have made several complaints to the police. They have not responded to any of our complaints. The transferred police officers have been very cooperative with us. We do not know why these officers have been transferred. I see this violence as a well organized job of a group with vested interest. The idea behind these events is to chase us out of Galle.

Mr. S.S.:

I have been in Galle since 1968. I haven't gone to Jaffna since 1983. My children, one son and one daughter, have been educated in the Sinhala medium. We loved peace. Due to the present situation in Jaffna we couldn't go there. As it is, we live in peace. I am fluent in all the three languages. So are my children. There are rumors that no houses will be given to Tamils.

I feel if we are sent out of Galle it will facilitate the division of the country. I don't like that. Sri Lanka should be one country. My son told me we should have a caravan so that if there is trouble in the South we can go to the North and if we are chased out of the North, we can come to the South.

ANALYSIS OF THE ACCOUNTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Governor Kanakeratna's assessment (see Appendix III) that there were no violations of the human rights of the people in Galle is clearly erroneous. While the fact that no one was killed in the Galle attacks is indeed fortunate, human rights guarantees protect more than individual life and bodily integrity. The human rights of the people affected by the Galle attacks were, in fact, violated.

One of the fundamental tenets of international human rights law is nondiscrimination. Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that:

[a]ll persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and gua-

rantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language or other status.

Thus, according to international human rights standards, the human rights of the Tamil shopkeepers impacted by the fires were violated by the racially motivated attacks. The state of Sri Lanka in general, and the Southern Province in particular, failed to protect Tamil shopkeepers from the discriminatory attacks despite warnings of impending violence and requests for protection against such violence. Whether the attacks arose from business or political competition, retaliation, or something else, they were nonetheless racially motivated; Tamils were directly targeted by the attacks.

Furthermore, in violation of international human rights standards, the police failed to provide equal protection to the Tamil people of Galle. Implicit in Franklin Burke's admission that the lack of police protection was directly linked to Sinhalese pressure against providing such protection is an acknowledgment of the racial bias with which the police acted.

The failure of the police to provide protection to the Tamil shopkeepers before the attacks was compounded by their lack of response during and after the attacks. The Governor admitted that the 'police were a little late in coming' and that, had they responded promptly, they may have been able to prevent the damage.

Lastly, a component of the racially motivated harassment, intimidation, and attack of Galle shopkeepers is an attempt to disrupt an ethnic minority's right to community within the city of Galle. Again, the failure of the state to protect this right to community violates international human rights law. Article 27 of the ICCPR states that:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right to community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

President Chandrika Kumaratunga issued an immediate response to the attacks in Galle, deploring the violence that took place and appealing to the citizens of Sri Lanka to assist the government's efforts at peace. (See Appendix IV) She reported that the police, army and other authorities had been ordered 'to take stern action to quell any acts of violence'. The President also reported that the police had been able to bring the situation under control within one hour. Accounts by the individuals targeted by the attacks as well as Governor Kanakeratna, however, refute this claim.

Additionally, the President appealed to the public for any information regarding the identity of those individuals responsible for the attacks. Although the President accused the opposition UNP of involvement in the Galle violence, the UNP responded that the President's allegations were 'baseless'. The Committee of Inquiry, however, did not have information sufficient to establish the responsible parties.

SECURITY MEASURES

As a result of the Galle attacks and a general escalation of tension in the area, the government has taken steps to increase security. There is presently a visible military presence in the Bazaar area of Galle.

While in Galle, the Committee attempted to take photographs of the destroyed shops. The military, however, quickly responded to the Committee's initial attempts, demanding that the Committee relinquish their camera. The Committee refused to comply with this demand, choosing instead to leave the area and seek assistance from the local police. Ultimately, the Committee secured a police escort that, in turn, allowed them to return to the scene to take photographs. The military personnel patrolling the Bazaar were noticeably irritated by the return of the Committee.

Additionally, on their way to Galle the Committee was subject to irregular scrutiny. They were subjected to two security checks. The first occurred as they exited a restaurant. The committee was met by several uniformed and undercover police officers who targeted two members of the team, requesting I.D. from each of them. In a subsequent roadside stop, these two members of the committee were again specifically targeted. That time, however, the police also thoroughly searched the vehicle.

Although there is a recognizable need for increased security during times of increased tension, security measures cannot target individuals based on race or ethnicity. Article 4 of the ICCPR states that:

[I]n time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed, the States Parties to the present Covenant may take measures derogating from their obligations to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation, provided that such measures do not involve discrimination solely on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The parties responsible for the Galle attacks must be promptly identified and swiftly brought to justice.
2. The Government must provide just and appropriate restitution to the shopkeepers and their families, including adequate compensation for their losses and financial support sufficient to reestablish their businesses.
3. The Government must provide just and appropriate restitution for those whose houses and property were damaged, destroyed or stolen.
4. The Government must ensure that the shopkeepers are able to maintain their businesses in their original locations.
5. The Government must aid the people displaced by the attacks in securing adequate housing.
6. A Government commission should be established to further investigate allegations of police and government mismanagement.
7. The Government should issue an official acknowledgement of responsibility based on their failure to adequately respond to the attacks.
8. Guidelines should be adopted to provide clear standards and guidance for coordinated and collaborated efforts of the police and military.
9. A public education campaign should be employed in Galle for better police and ethnic community relations.
10. An anti-racism campaign should be initiated in Galle, led by prominent leaders of the community.

11. The Police should be given leadership and emergency response training.

Appendix I: Tamil Business Establishments Burned in the Fires

Name of Business Establishment	Name of Proprietor
1. Pettah Agency	1. Sivasubramaniam
2. R.A.T. Traders	2. Arul Murugathas
3. Raj Ran	3. S. Thramaraj
4. Latha Stores	4. Navarathnam
5. Rolands	5. Nadarasamany
6. Abaya Stores	6. Parath Kumar
7. Pathma Stores	7. Rathnarajah
8. Rani Stores	8. P. Shanmuganathan
9. Sun Agency	9. P. Shanmuganathan
10. Nilo Traders	10. Chandran
11. Nava Colombo Stores	11. Rathnarajah
12. Vanee Video	12. Krishnan
13. Siva Stores	13. Sundarampillai
14. Siva Hotel	14. Suntharampillai
15. Prasad Trades	15. K. Varatharajah
16. Ananda Stores	16. Varatharajah
17. Krishna Stores	17. Krishnan
18. Cigar Factory	18. Arulananadasundaram
19. Ramachandran Stores	19. Ramachandran
20. Wijaya Stores	20. Wijayan
21. Stores	21. Mrs. P. Kanagalingam

Appendix II: Sinhalese and Muslim Business Establishments Burned in Fires

Sinhalese Business Establishments	Muslim Business Establishments
1. Ratna Pharmacy	1. S.U. Mohamed Hajjar Building
2. Visaka Printers and Booksellers	2. Vega Electricals
3. Gamini Stores	
4. Orappuwatte Wine Stores	
5. Ponnampereuma Stores (Damaged)	

Appendix III

Account of Neville Kanakeratna, Governor of the Southern Province:

According to Governor Kanakeratna, Friday, June 2, at approximately 10.00 p.m., 22 shops were burned in Galle of which 17 were owned by Tamils, 3 were owned by Muslims, and 2 were owned by Sinhalese. The Governor denied that there had been any violations of human rights because no one had been killed or injured in the attacks in Galle.

Governor Kanakeratna contends that neither he nor the police had any warning of the attacks prior to June 3, rebuffing rumors of riots by stating that ultimately there were no riots. Furthermore, he claimed that intelligent people should not heed rumors.

The Governor stated that the attacks in Galle were not racially motivated and speculated that they were the result of business competition. He maintained that it was not logical to link the events in Galle with the assassination, six days prior, of Ven.

Kithalagama Seelalankara Thera. According to the Governor, there are many places besides Galle where such a retaliation would have occurred. He asked why Galle would have been the site for such actions.

In regard to the attacks, Governor Kanakeratna admitted that the 'police were a little late in coming' to the scene, stating that the police might have been able to prevent the damage if they had responded more promptly.

In response to a question posed regarding other incidents, he reported that there had been one subsequent incident in Galle Fort. According to the Governor, a Tamil house had been set on fire in the Fort after a molotov cocktail was thrown into the house. He did not, however, feel that there was necessarily any connection between the attacks on the shops and the Galle Fort incident.

The Governor stated that two refugee camps had been established for the approximately 85 Tamil families who have left their homes as a result of the attacks of June 2. He reported that each camp shelters approximately 40 families or 200 individuals, stating that the conditions of the camps were unsanitary and crowded and that efforts were being made to move people promptly back to their homes. He said that protection would be provided to the people when they returned to their homes.

According to the Governor, the Army and Navy had been deployed to the area on June 3. He also said that measures had been undertaken to secure the Bazaar area. The Governor assessed the current situation as 'under control'. He reported that 11 individuals responsible for the Galle attacks had been arrested and were currently in police custody.

Appendix IV

The following is the full text of a statement issued by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga following the attacks in Galle, as reported by The Island, Sunday Edition (June 4, 1995).

In the heart of Galle yesterday the 2nd of June 1995, several shops were damaged and burnt, and the government and the police were able to bring this situation completely under control within an hour.

It is very clear that a leading opposition party is involved in this incident having pre-planned with the motive to instigate communal violence in order to achieve its narrow political gain. It is obvious from the statement made by certain members of Parliament of the Opposition in the press during the last few days that they have tried to provoke the people. It is evident that these conspirators do attempt to lead the people of Sri Lanka to the period of terror by provoking the people of the South to create another Black July. The Government has ordered the police, the army and other authorities concerned to take stern action to quell any acts of violence that would help the separatist terrorists achieve their objectives.

I appeal to you to provide any information to the Police and the government, Members of Parliament in regard to those responsible for the Galle incident and the elements behind this move.

I earnestly appeal once again, to all citizens of this country to rally round at this moment to protect the efforts of the government consolidate the democratic and peaceful atmosphere in the country after a period of seventeen years.

P. A.'s Devolution Plan

S. Sathananthan

Economic resources

(a) The President's Proposals include only Agriculture, Forestry and Energy in the Regional List. Moreover, they are silent on the basis of power-sharing. For instance although "Agriculture" is allocated to RCs the Central Government has reserved for itself powers over "national standards relating to research and development and training" in Agriculture.

(b) More ominously, the Proposals reserve "National Planning" for the Centre (Reserved List). It follows that all powers of RCs with respect to resource utilization will be directly subordinate to the Central Government.

(c) Most economic resources needed for regional development are included in the Reserved List. Similar provisions had been made in

- the 1972 Model Constitution (art 16),
- the 1985 Draft Framework (annex 2),
- the 1987 13th Amendment (list II) and
- the 1991 Thondaman Proposals (list I).

Economic infrastructure

(a) The President's Proposals allocate only "Transport", "Minor Ports and Harbours" and "Roads and Waterways" to RCs (Regional List).

(b) On the other hand infrastructure vital for regional development are included in the Reserved List. Similar provisions had been made in

- the 1957 BC Pact (part B),
- the 1972 Model Constitution (art 16),
- the 1984 Annexure C (para 10),
- the 1985 Draft Framework (para 4),
- the 1985 TULF Proposals (list I),
- the 1987 13th Amendment (list II) and
- the 1991 Thondaman Proposals (list I).

Education

(a) The President's Proposals declare that "Education and Higher Education will be devolved subjects" (sec 5.1). This is

an apparent improvement on the 13th Amendment (list I). However this proposed transfer of authority is restricted by excluding schools and universities classified as "national institutions", which will remain under the Central Government (sec 5.2).

(b) The Proposals specify that a National Educational Commission (NEC) will be set up "composed of representatives of the Centre and the Region" (sec 5.6). However, there is no indication of the weightage between the Centre and the Region.

(c) The NEC is to be appointed by the Centre and one of its functions is "identifying national schools and universities in consultation with regional Chief Ministers and stipulating criteria for admission" (sec 5.6a).

The appointment of the NEC by the Centre and the preference for "consultation", instead of "concurrence", implies that the sharing of power imputed in the term "Union of Regions" cannot obtain in practice.

Employment

(a) The President's Proposals make an oblique reference to "Youth and women's Affairs" in the Reserved List. No powers in regard to employment is included in the Regional List. However,

— the 1972 Model Constitution enshrined the "right to work" (art 28);

— the Report of Committee "A" at the 1984 APC provided for the delegation of function related to "organizing Special Employment Programmes" (annex 2.7); and

— the 1985 Draft Framework specified that employment would be "non-discriminatory" (para 17).

Culture

(a) The President's Proposals limit the powers of RCs to "the regulation of cultu-

ral activity within a Region, including public performances" (regional List). The 1972 Model Constitution similarly vested powers in the Central Government (art 16).

(b) In contrast, some previous initiatives provided slightly more powers to PCs:

— the 1984 Annexure C allocated "Cultural Matters" to RCs (para 5);

— the Report of Committee "A" of the 1984 APC reserved the subject for Central Government while delegating to regions the functions of "organising religious ceremonies and festivals", "promoting drama, art and music" and "award of prizes for artists and craftsmen" (annex 2.5);

— the 1985 Draft Framework provided for delegation to regions the functions related to "religious ceremonies and festivals" and "development of arts, drama, music, etc" (annex 1); and

— the 1987 13th Amendment vested limited powers in PCs over burials and burial grounds, "libraries and museums" and "ancient and historical monuments" (list 1).

Inter-regional relations

(a) The President's Proposals vest powers regarding inter-regional relations exclusively in the Central Government (Reserved List).

(b) In contrast, powers were allocated to regions in

— the 1957 BC Pact, which provided for "two or more regions to amalgamate" and for "two or more regions to collaborate for specific purposes of common interests" (part B);

— the 1972 Model Constitution provided that "states may conclude agreements among themselves" whilst it granted the Central Government veto power "to prevent the execution of such agreements" under specified conditions. (art 8);

— the 1984 APC Statement of the President declared that two or more Districts in a Province could amalgamate "where the District Councils resolve to join";

— the 1986 Chidambaram Proposals envisaged powers for PCs "to consult with each other and act in coordination on matters of mutual interest and concern" (preamble); and

— the 1986 Bangalore Discussions provided for the creation of an "Inter-Provincial Ministerial Council" if the PCs resolved to do so (para 3).

National flag and anthem

The President's Proposals are silent on the subject. However, provisions regarding national flag and anthem were included in the 1964 Annexure C (para 12) and the 1984 APC Statement of the President (para 3).

Concluding remarks

Power-sharing

The method and degree of decentralization imputed in the Proposals do not conform to the extensive devolution held out by the term "Union of Regions". The word "Union" appears irrelevant, like the word "Socialist" in the country's name which never had any relevance whatsoever to its market economy.

Moreover, even the limited provisions made public in the Proposal arm RCs with powers to enact only subordinate legislation. And the Central Government could impose its will on the RCs and/or CMs through "consultation". These characteristics are typical of a unitary State and reveal the underlying tendency towards centralization of decision-making in the Centre. If devolution is to make any sense, it is imperative that the Centre be required to secure the concurrence of the Region in Centre-region interactions.

Indeed any remaining illusion of a "federalistic" power-sharing within a "Union of Regions" — primarily because the Proposals deny the Centre powers to unilaterally dissolve a RC — is shattered by the sweeping amendment to the Proposals which Prof Peiris reportedly intends to introduce: "If the President is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the regional administration is promoting an

armed rebellion or insurrection or engaging in an intentional violation of the Constitution, which constitutes a clear and present danger to the unity and sovereignty of the Republic, the President may by proclamation assume to himself/herself all or any of the functions of the administration of the region and all or any of the powers vested or exercisable by the Governor, the Chief Minister or the Board of Ministers or the body of authority in the Region. The President shall also have powers to dissolve the Regional Council by proclamation in these circumstances" (*Sunday Times*, 13/8/95). The amendment requires the President to only be "satisfied" that there is a need to bring a Region under his/her direct rule. Moreover, the terms "satisfied", "promoting", "engaging", "unity" and "sovereignty" are open to extremely wide interpretations and offer the President precisely the "open-ended power" which Prof Peiris claims ought to be avoided (*The Island*, 6/8/95). And the absence of provisions requiring concurrence of the RC and judicial review of the President's decision will further reinforce the current extreme centralization of power and make a mockery of the term "Union of Regions".

National questions

The Proposals fail to identify the unit of decentralization for the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Up-Country Tamil ethnic groups. The emphasis is placed on geographical borders rather than on ethnic boundaries. Consequently, whilst the State continues to represent largely Sinhala national aspirations under the cloak of national policy, the Proposals fail to address the national aspirations of Tamils, Muslims and Up-Country Tamils. Improvement in the Proposals must remedy this shortcoming.

Toward bantustans

The Proposals ignore the reform of Central Government to allow power-sharing between ethnic groups in the Centre. As a result, the Proposals do not envisage federal structures; instead they advocate **regionalism**: a compromise solution based on decentralization through elected councils but within the framework of a unitary State. Such decentralization of authority could in general help to dilute the concentration of power in the Central Government and encourage democrati-

zation. But in the specific context of solving the national questions, decentralization **without** a reform of the Central Government will prevent power-sharing between ethnic groups in the Centre; and so deny minor ethnic groups access to a veto or even decisive power in the Central Government. Thus where such decentralization coincided with territorial boundaries of ethnic groups, the minor ethnic groups will be further regionally and politically marginalised. At the same time the major ethnic group will consolidate its grip on the Central Government.

Power-sharing in the Centre is an indispensable pre-condition for successful devolution of power to the Regions. However, as the Proposals stand now the delegation of authority to the Regions will be carried out without a simultaneous power-sharing in the Centre. It follows that the Central Government will continue to be controlled by the Sinhala major ethnic group; and that it will create Bantustan-like units for Tamils, Muslim and Up-Country Tamils. The resulting regional and political marginalization of Tamil, Muslim and Up-Country Tamil minor ethnic groups will intensify ethnic conflicts and again justify separatist demands and agitation.

The military option

The Proposals themselves are appearing increasingly superfluous. After the Proposals were released Prof Peiris announced that the Government will NOT Communicate them to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), because the LTTE unilaterally ended the cessation of hostilities (COH) and allegedly spurned previous offers (*The Island*, 10/8/95). This is an obviously irresponsible approach. Moreover there is no record of previous proposals submitted to the LTTE. Indeed the President failed to publish her Proposals **before** the breakdown of the COH. Given this background, the present refusal to re-establish communications with the LTTE holds ominous implications. It confirms that the so-called "peace process" which ended on April 19 was in fact an eye wash; and it indicates that the Proposals are one more ploy to politically legitimate the impending military assault on Jaffna. Like its predecessors, the PA Government too was and still is bent on a military solution to the national questions. History teaches us that the military option will fail.

Tamil = LTTE = Prabhakaran

— Reply to Bramaganani

H. L. D. Mahindapala

There are several points raised by *Bramaganani* who criticised Dayan Jayatillaka's book, *Sri Lanka. The Travails of a Democracy. Unfinished War, Protracted Crisis* (L. G. September 1, 1995). I will confine myself only to a few of the many points that need to be corrected.

The first is that Dayan Jayatillaka, once the supporter of the Tamil armed struggle for self-determination, has abandoned it and become (1) a Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist and (2) a proponent of counter-insurgency theories. Had *Bramaganani* being less vituperative and more balanced he would not have mixed up (1) with (2). As far as I am aware, Dayan Jayatillaka interests in insurgency and counter-insurgency movements stem not only from his being a committed left-winger (Marxist-Leninists) but also as a serious student of Sri Lankan politics which, from the seventies, were distorted and misdirected by insurgents of the South and the North. Anyone familiar with his writings will be aware that he has been a consistent and an unrelenting critic of these insurgency movements because he sees them as grotesque expressions of monstrous fascism. When he was a regular contributor to the *Sunday Observer* he played the JVP fascists mercilessly. They were the Sinhala-Buddhist "revolutionaries" plugging an anti-Indian and anti-Tamil line. In fact, if my memory serves me right, it was precisely the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism of the JVP that he exposed in his analytical and authoritative style. *Bramaganani* who evinces a familiarity with Dayan Jayatillaka's career obviously decided to skip this inconvenient and embarrassing fact, because if he did acknowledge it he could not have castigated him as a Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist.

Of course, in the political vocabulary of the *Bramagananis* "Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism" is the most overused phrase which expresses everything that they love to hate in the South. It is also a label readily pasted on two categories (1) those who attack their holy trinity residing in Jaffna, i.e. Tamil=LTTE=Prabhakaran, and (2)

those who oppose the extremist demands of the Tamils. Clearly, Dayan Jayatillaka is targeted because he falls into both categories. It does not enter their heads that the Southerners can oppose the LTTE and the extremist Tamil demands for reasons other than Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. For instance, there is a vast community of Sinhala Christians who oppose both the LTTE and the extremist demands. Sinhala and non-Sinhala intellectuals too have mounted well-researched analyses and rational arguments to oppose both the LTTE and their extremist demands. The pro-LTTE lobby, however, has a pathological tendency not to see the other side of the argument which is not in any way motivated by Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism. To these lobbyist, any writer who does not subscribe to their propagandist line that 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" is either "paranoid" or "lost his senses".

To the *Bramagananis* the only acceptable political reality is the one borrowed from fascist Germany: Ein Volk; ein Reich; ein Fuehrer! The Tamil adaptation of this formula has been elevated by LTTE lobbyists like *Bramagananis* to the status of a holy doctrine. Mr. Prabhakaran's claim to be "the sole representatives of the Tamils" is only another variation of this political equation: Tamil=LTTE=Prabhakaran. Dayan Jayatillaka, quite correctly, has rejected this equation because it is a perverse political ploy to justify Mr. Prabhakaran's one-man regime in Jaffna. It does surprise me in any way that Dayan Jayatillaka, adhering to his principles, should sever all connections with Tamil Fuehrers. Now that *Bramaganani* has pointed this out, I must congratulate Dayan Jayatillaka for returning to his revolutionary principles rather than embracing any fascist group in Jaffna. Incidentally, he is not the only one who abandoned the "the armed struggle" of the fascists. Practically, all the other Tamil revolutionaries who, like Dayan Jayatillaka, joined the armed struggle in the early stages, have

abandoned it. Is it because they are Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinists or is it because these Tamil militants too have realised that the primary task is to liberate Jaffna from the "latest and the cruelest Pol Pot in Asia", as stated by the prestigious *New York Times*? (More of this later.)

The call to delegitimise the fascist regime in Jaffna has come also from Tamils intellectuals like Prof. Rajan Hoole who, in publications of the University Teachers Human Rights, Jaffna and in a forthright article in the *Sunday Times* (November 6, 1994), has documented the atrocities of the Jaffna gulag. Is he also a Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist? Or is he a concerned and sensitive Tamil intellectual who has courageously resisted compromising with the LTTE crimes perpetrated in the name of "liberating" the Tamil-speaking people? Dayan Jayatillaka is not doing anything different to this. The humane world, shocked by the monster bred in the womb of Jaffna, agree that the one-man rule in Jaffna must be delegitimised. Dayan Jayatillaka's crime seems to be that he has expressed it with analytical skill and a degree of honesty that cuts deep into the clichés and the rhetoric of a ruthless regime and its propagandists like *Bramaganani*.

Besides, it is quite clear that *Bramaganani*, is arguing, under cover of self-determination, for the establishment of a racist state in the North of Sri Lanka. All this flapdoodle about the so-called liberation struggle is nothing but a naked attempt to legitimise a racist state. In fact, by labelling the movement to set up a racist state as a "liberation movement" *Bramaganani* has revealed his hidden racist agenda. So how can *Bramaganani* who roots for a racist state accuse others of being racist? If he is also prepared to take an honest look, he will realise that racism flows more copiously in his text than *sambhar* on *thosai*. (In case he comes back saying that this reveals my racist bias let me confess that any day I will swap Dom Perignon and Beluga malasol for *sambhar* and *thosai*.) He is only deceiving himself if he thinks that he can hoodwink those

who have witnessed the unfolding horror in Jaffna by repeating, like a caged parrot, the political jargon of LTTE apologists screeching about "self-determination", "the liberation struggle" and "the oppression and the repression of the Tamil people by the Sinhala state".

The *Bramagananis* must cling on to these cliches to justify their mindless violence which they shamelessly glorify as a "liberation struggle". *Bramaganani* sheds crocodile tears for the civilians caught in the crossfire in the event of any army assault on Jaffna. If he is genuinely concerned about violations of human rights why isn't this anonymous person raising his/her angry voice against the atrocities of the most abominable type in any Asian country since Pol Pot. Before *Bramaganani* brands me as another Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinist, let me quote an unimpeachable source. In the respected *New York Times* of May 28, 1995 John Burns reported under the headings of *A Sri Lankan evokes Pol pot, Asia's Latest master of Terror*: "It is a safe bet that not too many people outside Sri Lanka and its neighbour India, know much about the Tigers; fewer still would recognise their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. But they should. He has shown a bloodthirstiness in dealing with opponents that has been compared with some of the cruelest figures in recent Asian history, including Pol Pot.... Meanwhile, Mr. Prabhakaran has established a rule of terror in the city of Jaffna. According to scores of accounts from defectors and others who have escaped the Tiger tyranny, many of his own lieutenants have been murdered; Tamils who have criticised him, even mildly in jest, have been picked up, tortured and executed; others have been held for years in dungeons, half-starved, hauled out periodically for a battering by their guards....." Do the *Bramagananis* dismiss this also as the analysis and interpretation of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinists? Or are the *Bramagananis* mortally afraid of the reality threatening to destroy the invented illusions about their "liberation" movement? Against the mounting evidence, against the grim realities of tyranny and oppression in Jaffna the *Bramagananis* keep repeating their cliches partly to reassure themselves that they are doing the politically correct thing, and partly to prevent the reality from dislodging the illusions controlling their febrile minds. To accept the hard reality is to drop the scales

blinding their vision, to drop the cliches and the jargon, to drop the illusions of a racist state and face the horrors of their history and their Jaffna society which bred the LTTE monster.

Of course, they can't and they won't because since the fifties the Tamil propagandists, particularly among the English-educated diaspora, have been inventing a racist "nation" for the Tamils — an elusive concept which, instead of liberating them, has imprisoned them. In pursuit of this elusive state the *Bramagananis* banded together and unleashed violence in 1976 with the passing of the Vaddukoddai Resolution. This led directly to the arming of the Tamil youth and the subsequent rise of the LTTE. Having given birth to the LTTE the *Bramagananis* now blame the "Sinhala state oppression" for the brutal violence of the Tamils master-minded by the LTTE. Whether the "Sinhala state oppression" is the sole cause or not is an issue which I reserve for another day. But please note how the political language is distorted deliberately to justify Tamil violence. The Tamil grievances, which certainly deserved attention, are magnified and orchestrated as "oppression".

Incidentally, the fascists of the North and the South both used the same language to justify their violence. If they defined their problems as "grievances" there would have been no justification for violence. So they use the emotive term "oppression" which, in the Marxian sense, justifies revolutionary violence. Marxism has been used to justify both pre-revolutionary violence against the state and post-revolutionary violence of the state. What is relevant here is that Marxist revolutionary violence was conceptualised as a weapon against an oppressive ruling class which ends up producing fascist dictators. In this context it is legitimate to ask: who are the oppressors of Tamils and who are the oppressed Tamils of Jaffna today? It is the Tamils fleeing the horrors of Jaffna who are increasingly questioning the legitimacy of the self-proclaimed "liberator" in Jaffna. Nor do all Tamils see this "liberator's" desperate attempts to retain his one-man rule in Jaffna as a "liberation struggle". *Bramaganani* will, I hope accept this, and concede that those who oppose the "armed liberation struggle" (e.g. Dayan Jayatilaka) need not be even remotely connected to Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinists.

Waiting — 10 Cocoon

*I could be spared the pain
Of Reason, however plausible
What further need for clarity
When plainly I could see
Your eyes did not stir like then
While mine still leapt in flame.*

*Time has fettered me
Spinning surely from bond to bond
These years we tread together
They cannot be
Just a cocoon spun by my vanity
Passion and reminiscence tied me within
Though you teased with your gentle smile
This silken skein.*

U. Karunatilake

S. W. R. D.: The making of an intellectual

Ananda Welihena

The aim of this paper is to examine an aspect of Mr. SWRD Bandaranaike's academic career during his time as an undergraduate at the University of Oxford (1921-1924). At that time, Oxford was "the focus of artistic life and energy of England" (Hollis, C. 1965, 102).

The emphasis of this study will be on the features pertaining to the Oxford Union and its debates which might have either directly or indirectly influenced or contributed to his political career in Sri Lanka. His return from Oxford was in March 1925 and his untimely demise was on 26 September, 1959. The Union served Mr. Bandaranaike as the first perch on the flight to political eminence and the first rung of the political ladder of success.

It is possible to identify a few factors which originated from his relationship with the Oxford Union. They have contributed to his national political option which he took in favour of the common man.

They are: 1) his first speech; 2) the role of the Union; 3) Union debates; 4) his contact with Mr C. Suntheralingam; 5) his success as an Oxford debater; 6) his attitude to India; 7) offices held in the Union; 8) his life of silent reflection and active listening.

(1) His first speech

"The inner portals of Oxford at which I had been fumbling so long, were at last open to me".

These were the sentiments expressed by Mr. Bandaranaike after his first speech at the Oxford Union Society debate on 17 Nov., 1921. The motion for the debate was "that the present Parliamentary system does not answer the needs of modern democracy".

The writer is a Lecturer in Political Science at the Department of Political Science, University of Peradeniya.

The speech was enormously successful; his experience was a landmark in his political career. He began to command recognition and his outlook on political issues became wider since then.

The University Magazine *The Isis* reported that he, "in the best speech of the evening", laid stress on the word 'modern'. He pointed out that the old division of King vs. People had now given way to that of Capital vs. Labour". In his own writings, he recollected this momentous event and its impact on him.

"A few days later I literally woke up to find myself famous like Byron: for the Isis hailed my speech as the best in the evening".

E. Marjoribanks, who eventually became a Member of Parliament, and V.A. Cazalet, failed to address the issue dexterously while Mr. Bandaranaike succeeded. As he wrote:

"My progress at the Union was rapid. Within a fortnight of my first speech, I received a note from the President, asking me to act as a 'teller' at the next debate. This is the first rung of the Union ladder, and betokens definite recognition".

He revealed that after his first speech, one of his boyhood dreams had apparently come true. He was destined for a brilliant political career. But he had misgivings too:

"... but I felt the torture of the thirsty wanderer who sees a bubbling stream in the distance, but fears that it may turn out to be a mirage after all. Was my speech a mere accident, a flash in the pan, or was I really a good speaker and able to achieve success at the union? Whenever I spoke therefore, I endeavoured to give my best and summoned to the task every resource I possessed,

which, added to the fact I perhaps had a real talent for speaking, produced a result that was overwhelming in its triumph" (Ibid.).

Mr. Bandaranaike, participated conscientiously in the Oxford debates, used every resource at his disposal to cultivate his fluency, eloquence and debating skills and techniques. He gained clarity of thought and precision in expression. This was one reason why he believed that Union debates exerted a profound impact upon his future life, outlook and political career.

(2) THE OXFORD UNION

The Oxford Union originated from the United Debating Society (UDS) formed in 1823 by a group of twenty five Oxford men. They prepared a code of rules. The motions to be debated according to the rules were "the historical previous to the present century and the philosophical exclusive of religion" (Hollis, 1965, 15).

The first debate was held on 5 April, 1823. The UDS was dissolved on 3 December, 1923 and on the same day it was revived and named as the *Oxford Union Society*. The role of the Union was described by Hollis as:

"Oxford was a High Tory place. The new debating society was an aristocratic club, consisting largely of titled members with a high subscription of two guineas, exclusion of undesirable candidates by blackball and no pretence of dates and quite confessedly formed a clique. It was for Old Etonians and the like, who saw before them the career of cabinet ministers in an unreformed Parliament" (Ibid., 16).

Oxford was not originally planned to train students of social science but those seeking to enter Holy Orders. The training in sacred eloquence was compulsory as they were obliged to preach the Word of

God from the pulpit. As time passed by, power political eloquence replaced the existing sacred pulpit eloquence; As Hollis says:

"Politically minded aristocrats were not as a whole inclined to mix themselves in debating until debating was recognised a sufficiently respectable to be a handicap in a subsequent career, and speechifying was a sport mainly indulged in by those who wanted to acquire practice for their subsequent exercise in the pulpit" (Ibid., 14).

Oxford and the Union in particular, witnessed a change from the religious to the political. Its purpose was "to be a nursery of statesmen" (Ibid., 176). As he says:

"It is indeed certain that in more recent years it has still proved itself capable of as the first stepping stone to power. Look through the list of its officers and you will find name after name that was afterwards to attain some post or other of political importance" (Ibid.).

However, Hollis has admitted that there was a remarkable difference between the Union then and now and that it was not universally popular in modern Oxford: "Many undergraduates will not join it. Many will not attend its debates" (Ibid., 226).

Evelyn Waugh in his *The First Volume of an Autobiography* comments on the role of the Union and its members during his time. Anyone with a small subscription could join it and in effect, it has now become more cosmopolitan with Asiatics being referred to as "black men" (Waugh, E., 1964, 184). He says:

"In fact, not many of the Presidents of my day have risen to great heights. My only contemporary to become Prime Minister (apart from the ill-fated Bandaranaike) was Sir Alec Home, then named Lord Dunglass. He never spoke at the Union nor did he, as I remember, take an active part in any of the political clubs" (Ibid., 185).

The Union invited eminent personalities to speak at its meetings. Mr. Bandaranaike came in contact with such persons at this forum. Mr. C. Suntheralingam and Annie Besant were some of those about whom he has commented briefly in his writings. The visit paid by the illustrious poet Rabindranath Tagore and his address on "A Voice from the Forest" made a deep impression on him:

"His personality and eloquence made a deep impression on all those who listened to him".

The Oxford Union Debate Society Hall was the meeting point for students and visiting intellectuals. Its construction was unique; it began in 1853, designed by Benjamin Woodward from Dublin and structural alterations were carried out by Francis Jeune. It was completed in 1857 and resembled the form and structure of the House of Commons. Debates were held in this hall regularly, every Thursday night during term. The seating accommodation was similar to that of Parliament and the President of the Union was like Mr. Speaker. The members of the Proposition and the Opposition, regarded themselves as the government parliamentary group and the Opposition party respectively. It had committee benches, members benches and a visitors' gallery. The portraits of old Unionists were hung on its walls. It had marble busts of ex-presidents; some of whom had become British Prime Ministers. In short, the debating hall was "a miniature Parliament" (see Hollis, 1965, pp 161 and 193 for photographs of the Union Debate Society Hall). Mr. Bandaranaike writes:

"The whole atmosphere of the place is calculated to prove a supreme inspiration to a speaker. It always had that effect on me. The great traditions of the Union, that surrounded one like an army of impalpable ghosts, the brilliant lights that revealed the faces of the elite of Oxford youth, turned up to one from the hall, the cold, attentive gaze of Gladstone and Asquith, always spurred me to give of my best" (Ibid., 27).

(3) UNION DEBATES

Mr. Bandaranaike thought that his relationship with the Union constituted an important part of his recollections of Oxford and that it really had a contribution to his education and development. For him, the Union was "both the mirror and the cradle of university thought".

He also noted that the Union drew together all intellectuals who were active. Gladstone, the first Secretary of the Union, Salisbury and Asquith became Prime Ministers. Mr. Bandaranaike was elected Secretary of the Union and he recalled the day when he thumped through the pages of the Union minutes' book and compared his handwriting with those of his predecessors.

It is wellknown that those who actively participated in the Union debates were talented. The new recruits were identified at this forum and socialised so that they might function as link belts between their party and the Union Society. The Conservative, the Liberal and the Labour political parties demonstrated concern over the debates with this motive of recruiting new members. The Conservative party had much influence in the Union during the pre-war era as Oxford was a High Tory Place. Its members were a group of "exquisitely garbed and rather supercilious young aristocrats" (Ibid., p. 29). Subsequently, there was an influx of relatively poor students, whose aim was to earn a living after receiving their degrees. This segment was inclined to think and act in a radical, socialist fashion. They received the support and good will of the Labour party. The Liberal party adopted the middle path strategy. However, Mr. Bandaranaike admitted that voting at elections in the Union did not take place on a rigid party basis. He did not claim membership in any of these three parties but called himself a nationalist. These Parties maintained links with the Union students through their respective party journals: the *Isis* was liberal, the *Oxford Magazine* was moderately conservative and the *Fortnightly Review* was Conservative. Labour did not have a journal of its own.

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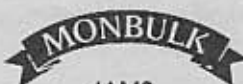
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Indira's Regional Concerns

K. M. de Silva

India in the initial years of its independence was busy making itself a nation-state out of a huge and diverse state-nation under the able leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Economically and militarily, India then was far below the level that would be commensurate with its potentialities. By the mid-1970s, however, India had become a formidable power of consequence in the South Asian/Indian Ocean region and even beyond.

During the early years of the tight bipolarity and the containment policy in the international system, Sri Lanka assumed more strategic significance to the West as reflected, *inter alia*, in Great Britain's continued defence links with its former colony and in Colombo's virulent anti-Communism. India, during the time, earned the wrath of the West for its 'immoral' nonaligned policy. The global system became diffused in the 1970s and 1980s, spelling general uncertainty for small powers like Sri Lanka and according more leverage to regional great powers like India.

In the late 1970s, there was a rapid deterioration in the general global politico-strategic climate. The Sino-American normalisation, that began with President Nixon's historic 'rapprochement visit' to Beijing in 1972, was consolidated in the latter half of the decade. In South-east Asia, pro-Soviet Vietnam militarily intervened in Kampuchea in 1978. China then invaded Vietnam and engaged in a short but bloody war. All this witnessed the intensification of the two superpowers' involvement in the region. In the Middle East, the events were more dramatic and significant. An anti-American, radical Islamic revolution swept Iran in 1978 representing a threat to the conservative Arab

countries and marking an end to the monarchy of Reza Shah Pahlavi who made his country a bulwark of U.S. interest in the region. Then, hot on the heels of this change, came the episode of the American hostage crisis. Then came the Iraqi aggression of Iran in September 1980. In 1978, there was a Marxist coup d'état in South Yemen, constituting a serious threat to the conservative Arab regimes around and consolidating the Soviet position in a strategically significant place in the north-western quadrant of the Indian Ocean. Earlier in 1977-78, Moscow had gained another strategic foothold by switching sides from Somalia in favour of Marxist Ethiopia where the Soviet Union and Cuba deployed forces following their successes in Angola and Mozambique. As a result, the Naval Arms Limitation Talks (NALT), that began in Moscow in June 1977 concerning the Indian Ocean, were broken off by the United States in February 1978.⁷¹ Earlier, the Soviets sought naval facilities at Gan Island of the Maldives and was politely rebuffed by President Ibrahim Nasir.⁷²

But the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 broke the camel's back. The superpower detente, epitomised by the signing of SALT-I and the Helsinki Final Act in 1972 and 1975 respectively, came to a juddering halt. An "arc of crisis"⁷³, in the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, developed by the end of the decade of 1970s "stretching along the shores of the Indian Ocean" with a renewed intensification of the rivalry between the "Great Irresponsibles"⁷⁴, who "find themselves locked into a kind of perpetual claim to a historical task historically justified in terms of the present and the future...."⁷⁵

Northern Tier

As the 'Northern Tier' was in disarray by the late 1970s, the American policy was devoted to the twin objectives of preventing a projection of Soviet power southwards towards Pakistan and the Persian Gulf area, and to maintaining a naval presence in the Indian Ocean in the interest of American global deterrent strategy as well as for the purpose of countering an Indo-Soviet build-up of naval forces in the South Asian region.⁷⁶ This policy called for a revision of the "Vietnam syndrome" and it was reflected in the "Carter Doctrine"⁷⁷ on the use of military force in the Persian Gulf as an "inviolable sphere of U.S. interest" and in the resurrection of American self-confidence and a resumed policy in American global responsibilities under the Reagan administration which took detente as a fundamentally mistaken concept and was bent on reestablishing the power position of the United States through a policy of strength, including military. The United States, therefore, concentrated its policy mostly on the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf area with a view to upgrading the facilities at Diego Garcia and with an eye on Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

India found its strategic environment seriously threatening to its security interests. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated in Parliament that "the focus of the Cold War has shifted from Europe to the Indian Ocean littoral... Our South-west and South-east Asia flanks are flash points. New armament are being piled up in our region, not only around the Indian Ocean but in a number of island countries.... Never in the last two decades has the international outlook been as grim as it is today".⁷⁸ Members of the Lower House

of Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha), while debating on the Defence Ministry Demands for Grants, also painted a grim picture of the security impinging on India's interests. They stated that "the outbreak of armed conflict between Iran and Iraq..... and developments in Afghanistan and the competition of big powers for making their presence felt in the Indian Ocean are additional burning issues of vital importance....".⁷⁹ Earlier on, in 1978, Prime Minister Morarji Desai, his External Affairs Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and several other MPs had expressed their concern at the presence of superpowers in the Indian Ocean, particularly at that of the U.S. strengthening of its base at Diego Garcia.⁸⁰

Clearly, the oceanic front assumed greater significance for India. As India began to orient itself in an extended strategic framework from the later half of the 1970s, when India had already established its predominant status in South Asia by means of the 1971 victory over Pakistan and the 1974 nuclear explosion, the altered strategic scenario came as a challenge to her 'natural status and role' making it vulnerable, in its own perceptions, through its vast and exposed southern oceanic front. India, therefore, became sensitive about its neighbours' stability and their foreign policy and security postures, particularly of those in its south.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka under President Jayewardene followed a pro-West foreign policy. There was, indeed, a pronounced pro-American tilt in his policy. While this pro-Western orientation was clear to all Sri Lanka, the views on the causes attributable to such a course varied. Some people, representing the whole spectrum of Sri Lanka's power elite, including the government and Opposition, officials, and the academic and media world, contended that the determining factor in the foreign policy orientation of the post-1977 UNP administration was its economic compulsions; these apparently pushed the country to the doors of the Western nations which are capable of

releasing the much-needed inflow of foreign capital to Colombo. But in reality Jayewardene's new open-door economic policy, which of course strengthened his foreign policy, was a mere coincidental priority. At a later stage, President Jayewardene himself made it clear when he stated: "The main purpose of any foreign policy of a country is the preservation of its independence and thus its defence."

The second important factor would be the preservation of its food supplies. Thirdly, its trade, both export and import. Even the ideological friendships and attachments depend mainly on these factors".⁸¹ Clearly, the principal objective of Sri Lanka's foreign policy was to ensure its security. But security against what?

Obviously, it was against India, because of its increased power capabilities consciously built up over the years. Jayewardene was apprehensive of the potential threat from a more powerful India for his country's security, despite his Indo-phile past. Even before becoming Sri Lanka's leader, he once asked: "... how are the people who live in the small countries around the Indian Ocean to defend themselves against a huge and mighty nation [India] of five hundred million people....."⁸² Sri Lanka's security strategy, therefore, continued to be the building of counterbalance against India. It may be mentioned that while India's Janata Party government was attitudinally softer and bilaterally more accommodative and its leaders personally not being imperious and domineering towards the neighbouring countries and their leaders, the Congress (I) administration was much less so,⁸³ leading respectively to a warmer and more tense atmosphere in the South Asian regional relationship. However, on the question of India's security, there was no let-up in its eternal vigilance irrespective of the complexion of the party in power in New Delhi.

Jayewardene's UNP government apparently found this counterbalance in the United States, Pakistan and, to a

lesser extent, in China. But it was essentially more of a strong pro-American bias than anything else. As mentioned earlier, the UNP has always been an advocate of a West-oriented foreign policy, and Jayewardene himself was known as 'Yankee Dickie'. Nonalignment, the second of Sri Lanka's security 'tripod', was downgraded but redirected in favour of the West, while the UNP government was practically not interested in vigorously pursuing in the efforts to implement the UN resolution on IOZOP.

In Sri Lanka, it is a commonly held view that President Jayewardene's foreign policy was too obviously pro-Western, that was essentially prejudicial to India as it appeared to be oblivious to India's security sensitivities and ignored the regional geo-strategic fundamentals intrinsic in a situation of proximate and asymmetric power balance. Such trends and turns in Sri Lanka's foreign policy was observed in her nonaligned policy, in her attitudes towards the concept of IOZOP and U.S. bases in Diego Garcia, in its position on certain important international issues, and in the nature of relationships with the U.K., China, Pakistan and the ASEAN.

Jayewardene government's Nonaligned Policy

The UNP government of President Jayewardene officially professed adherence to nonaligned policy. In his inaugural address to the Colombo Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau of Nonaligned countries in June 1979, President Jayewardene stated: "Non-alignment runs like a golden thread through the fabric of our country's foreign policy..... At no stage has our country deviated from that policy. At no stage, I will make bold to say, will it do so in the future".⁸⁴ But in his policy statement made on 4 August 1977 in the National State Assembly, there was no mention as to what its policy towards NAM would be. Instead, he declared that the principles of Non-Alignment which were first adopted at the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955 will be supported. In fact, stress was laid on 'strict non-align-

ment, ostensibly to 'correct' Mrs Bandaranaike's with a 'bent towards one side'.⁸⁵

Although President Jayewardene once stated to the press that he was more non-aligned than Mrs Bandaranaike who had leaned more towards some states than the others⁸⁶, his assurance of pursuing a strict or genuine non-aligned policy was, as rightly told by Naveed Ahmad, "an implicit promise to be more friendly to the U.S. and other Western countries, instead of being more partial towards the socialist states".⁸⁷ As a matter of fact, the rhetoric of the Sri Lankan leaders did not accord with the substance of the country's foreign policy. One Opposition MP aptly put it when he stated in Parliament that "Non-alignment can only mean non-aligned. A circle is a circle. One cannot be more round than the other. You cannot truly say you are non-aligned".⁸⁸ Whether this pro-Western strand in Sri Lanka's non-aligned policy was governed by economic factors⁸⁹ or not, it appeared to many as a harking back to the foreign policy of the UNP regimes of the 1950s with its overtones of anti-Indianism.⁹⁰ Kodikara aptly put it when he wrote that "the UNP and the government led by it, while adopting non-alignment as a general principle of foreign policy, have always been more prone to seek reinsurance against India in the West, that is Britain and the United States".⁹¹ While India's Janata government had found some sort of similarity with Jayewardene's brand of non-alignment, Mrs Gandhi was clearly irritated by it. This was evident from the way she resented Jayewardene's proposal at the NAM summit in 1983 in New Delhi for a non-aligned initiative to acquaint countries of the North with the economic plight of the South. The proposal envisaged visits by a roving team of Heads of Government led by the Indian Prime Minister to important world capitals. Indira Gandhi sharply reacted by saying that she would not like to go abroad with a begging bowl in hand. She betrayed her resentment again when replying to a query at a press conference later on.⁹²

Jayewardene government's Indian Ocean Policy

Although Sri Lanka continued to support the IOZOP in principle,⁹³ the initial enthusiasm indeed declined sharply after 1977. President Jayewardene was apprehensive of India's filling the power vacuum that would be created in the Indian Ocean in the event of withdrawal of the external powers from the area.⁹⁴ He, therefore, favoured a balance of power in the Indian Ocean that would safeguard his country's security. In practice, however, Sri Lanka exhibited an explicit pro-U.S. tilt. This was manifested in the following:

First, Sri Lanka's position on the U.S. military build-up at Diego Garcia was favourable to Washington. India was opposed to it as it resented the naval competition between the superpowers in its immediate neighbourhood. Second, in 1982, Sri Lanka abstained from a U.N. resolution calling on all nuclear states to refrain from stationing nuclear weapons on the territories of other states. India supported the resolution.⁹⁵ Third, Pakistan presented at the Seventh NAM Summit in New Delhi in 1983 a proposal wanting the entire Indian Ocean area to be declared a Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ), including the littoral and hinterland states. Sri Lanka, along with Bangladesh and Nepal, supported it. India rejected it as she thought that it was aimed at bringing in the old Pakistani proposal to make South Asia a NWFZ, and also including within the scope of the proposal the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Earlier, India had also rejected a Pakistani proposal for a regional collective security in the Indian Ocean in 1979.⁹⁶

Fourth, in 1981 Sri Lanka withdrew its candidate, Ambassador Christopher Pinto, for the post of Chairman of the Third Law of the Sea Conference to pave the way for Singapore's Ambassador Tommy Koh. One eminent Sri Lankan commentator was of the view that the U.S. would be happy to note that Sri Lanka was not lobbying too hard for IOZOP.⁹⁷ And fifth, Sri Lanka was the Chairman of the UN

Special Committee on the Indian Ocean. But President Jayewardene was not keen on the convening a conference of this committee. He tried to avoid responsibility by saying "what can we do if one or both of the superpowers do not agree to come to the conference. I am afraid we cannot do much. It is up to the United Nations to think of what to do".⁹⁸

The developments in the Indian Ocean area and the changed perspective of Sri Lanka regarding the IOZOP were perceived by India as having deleterious effect on her security. After all, the IOZOP is the maritime corollary of India's regional strategic policy⁹⁹, which is to deny or neutralise any extra-regional role, to maintain the status quo in the South Asian power balance and to maintain stability in the region. India was concerned about its security as it believed that the Indian Ocean/South Asian region became a possible arena of cold war confrontation which would also undercut her politico-military primacy in the area. Sri Lanka's revised Indian Ocean policy just compounded India's security concerns. The other trends in Colombo's foreign policy did so still more. India appeared to have been most concerned over Sri Lanka's alleged offer of base facilities to the U.S. Navy at the Trincomalee Port, over the grant of contract regarding the Oil Tank Farm (ITF) at Trincomalee to a U.S.-affiliated consortium, and over the Voice of America (VOA) agreement between Washington and Colombo.

(To be Continued)

Notes

71. See for details of NALT talks P.S. Jayaramu, *India's National Security and Foreign Policy*, ABC Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 96-99.
72. Sheila Harden, *Small is Dangerous: Micro States in a Macro World*, Frances Pinter, London, 1985, p. 6.
73. *Time* magazine, 3 January 1979, p. 4.
74. Hedley Bull, "The Great Irresponsibles? The United States, the Soviet Union, and World Order", *International Journal*, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, Summer 1980, p. 437.
75. Philip Windsor, "Superpower Intervention" in

Hedley Bull (ed.), *Intervention in World Politics*, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 58.

76. Shelton U. Kodikara, "International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka", An Unpublished research paper, Colombo, undated, p. 30; Paul X Kelley, "Putting 'Lethal Teeth' in U.S. Foreign Policy", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 20 August 1980, p. 22.
77. See President Carter's State of the Union Message, 23 January 1980 in *Current Policy*, No. 132, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.
78. Lok Sabha Debates, Seventh Series, Vol. XV, No. 39, 9 April 1981, Cols. 365-366. In 1980 she stated that "....today, we find it [Indian Ocean] churning with danger.... The frantically increasing pace of militarisation in the Indian Ocean makes the 3,500 miles of our coast more vulnerable.... Any big power conflict in our ocean or neighbourhood will hit us hard. All this tension has built up because of the collapse of detente and the resultant renewal of the cold war with all its severity". *Selected Speeches and Writings of Indira Gandhi*, Vol. IV, January 1980-December 1981, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 513-14.
79. *ibid.*, Col. 264 and *ibid.*, Vol. XXVI, No. 25, 25 March 1982, Cols. 339-410.
80. Lok Sabha Debates, Sixth Series, Vol. X, No. 6, 27 February 1978, Cols. 260-281. Later on, in 1982, one MP states in the Lok Sabha that "by establishing a military base at Diego Garcia, America has, as in the game of chess, put a check on the sovereignty of the Indian nation. No patriot can tolerate this". Lok Sabha Debates, Seventh Series, Vol. XXVI, No. 25, 25 March 1982, Col. 410.
81. See foot note no. 7.
82. Report of Proceedings of the Twentieth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Colombo in September 1974, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, London, n. d. p. 44.
83. Under the Janata government "India gave top priority to improving its relations with its immediate neighbours among its foreign policy objectives. These relations, developed on the basis of equality, goodwill and mutual trust, helped towards creating a climate of normalisation and friendship, thus promoting the cause of peace in the region". See Ministry of External Affairs Report, 1977-78, New Delhi, 1979, p. 1. By contrast, the central theme of the neighbourhood policy of the Indira Gandhi government was "India's desire to promote the establishment of peace in the region to enable individual countries to pursue their efforts for economic and social amelioration of their peoples, free from outside interference.... Reciprocity... would... form the basis of good neighbourly relations" [emphasis added]. See *ibid.*, 1980-81, p.v.
84. Text of Speech in Sri Lanka Foreign Affairs Record, Vol. 1, July 1978-June 1979, Colombo.
85. H.S.S. Nissanka, *Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy: A Study in Non-Alignment*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1984, p. 345; T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka, J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka, Swastika Press, Colombo, 1977, pp. 70-72; President Jayewardene said in an interview: "To me both sides are equal. I would like to be

friendly with all countries". Dawn, Karachi, 9 September 1977.

86. Sunday Observer, Colombo, 11 September 1977.
87. Naveed Ahmad, "Recent Developments in Sri Lanka", *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, Third Quarter, 1979, p. 42.
88. See for Dharmalingam's statement, National State Assembly Debates, Official Record, Colombo, Vol. 25 (1), No. 2, 6 December 1977, Cols. 359-360.
89. Karunadasa is of the opinion that Sri Lanka's interest in non-aligned politics was governed more by economic factors rather than political. See Ph.D. Thesis of Wadu Mestrige Karunadasa, *Non-Alignment: A Case Study of Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy With Special Reference to 1970-1982*, University of Colombo, Colombo, 1988. Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed also laid emphasis on the economic dimension of non-alignment, but especially so in the North-South context. See his statement in Parliament, Vol. 25 (1), No. 2, 6 December 1977, Col. 418 and at the 32nd Session of UNGA, New York, 29 September 1977, in Hameed, *Selected Speeches*... p. 12.
90. For example see Shelton U. Kodikara, Keynote Address: Geo-strategic Perspectives of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations" in His (ed.), *Dilemmas of Indo-Sri Lankan Relations*, BCIS, Colombo, 1991, p. 26.
91. Shelton U. Kodikara, Paper presented at the Marga Institute seminar on Political Dimension in South Asian Cooperation, 7-9 November 1987, Colombo, p. 21.
92. Hindu, Madras, 27 April 1983.

93. Foreign Minister Hameed told the Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau in Havana in May 1978 that "We stand uncompromisingly for a total elimination of great power military presence and bases, as being the only certain means of removing tension and conflict in the area". See Weekend, Colombo, 21 May 1978. Tyrone Fernando, Deputy Foreign Minister, stated in Parliament that his government was fully committed to the concept of IOZOP. See Parliamentary Debates, (Hansard), Official Report, Colombo, Vol. 24, No. 5, 10 June 1983, Col. 496.
94. See President J. R. Jayewardene's Address at Convocation of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies on 24 September 1987, in J. R. Jayewardene, *My Quest for Peace: A Collection of Speeches on International Affairs*, Stamford Press Pvt Ltd., Singapore, 1988, p. 204.
95. UNGA, 37th Session, Provision Verbatim record of the 101st Meeting, 13 December 1982, Resolution No. 37/89/A.
96. Times of India, New Delhi, 10 March 1983; Indian and Foreign Review, New Delhi, Vol. 16, No. 10, 1 March 1979.
97. Mervyn De Silva, "Operation ASEAN", *India Today*, New Delhi, 16-31 May 1981, p. 116.
98. Far Eastern Economic Review, Hongkong, 18 June 1982, p. 38.
99. Onkar Marwah, India's Strategic Perspective on the Indian Ocean" in William L. Dowdy and Russel B. Trood (eds.), *The Indian Ocean Perspectives on a Strategic Arena*, Himalayan Books, New Delhi, 1987, p. 301.

An Aussie Bird

*As extinct as the Tasman,
Ugly, according to ones preconceptions.
Unique, and irreplaceable,
Looking for mercy, finding none,
The Kakkapo, easy meat
For hungry convicts and imported cargo rats,
That lost flight and fight sans natural predators.
Darwin would see him fat,
Flightless, unadaptable
For survival.
His Zeitgeist was not right —
There is no Ahimsa here.
Kakkapo or Tasman,
Here cometh doom, the White Man Death.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

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The non-formal sector

Kamalika Pieris

Into this genre of comic literature comes the recent writings of Carl Muller. His first work, *The Jam fruit tree* won the Gratian Prize, went into several editions, was greeted with reserve by the local critics, and with some degree of annoyance by the Burghers. This work and its sequel, *Yaka Yaka*, have obvious artistic weaknesses which hardly need mention. However, they have provided us, (the long suffering readers of Sri Lankan fiction in English) with a much needed break. Muller's work is a 'good read', something which most creative writing in English is not.

There is some excellent comic writing in Muller's work. The books are full of it and it is difficult to select examples. There is comic monologue. Look at the section which begins "It had been hard since Clarence died... Every All Souls Day she would go to the cemetery and grumble at his grave..." to "Why you die and give me all this trouble I don't know. Now must go. Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name..." (p 10) There is supremely comic dialogue, as when Colontota goes to meet Cecilprins to ask for the hand of his daughter, Anna.

"My parents have paddy fields in Gampaha and coconut and jak and buffaloes also" "Buffaloes", said Cecilprins weakly "Six-seven buffaloes" (p 36)

Yaka Yaka also has an entertaining dialogue between Sonnaboy, who is discussing a cinder in his eye and an Englishman who wishes to challenge him to a fight. (p 56-57)

There is amusing description. "The British had in a fit of rare humour named their engines mostly after governors and other colonial big brass... thus did Sir Andrew Mackenzie race upcountry Sir William Horton to the south, Sir Frederick North to the north and Henry McCallum to somewhere in between." (p 9)

There is accurate rendering of mispronunciation and local variants. "Who? that profferso fellow" (7) "He was pooshing" (8) "Vy iss she not married yif nineteen ears... You wait. I vill yarrange if I can" (9)

Recollections of Sri Lankan life, written in English, form another small but clearcut genre. The earlier writings, such as those of Vijayatunge, Kenneth de Lanerolle (10) and M Chandrasoma (11) were in a pastoral, belles lettres style. The work by Carl Muller described earlier and Conrad Fel-

singer's *It was the babblers nest* written in a simple unacademic style, provides us with the 'truly national, authentically Sri Lankan experience' Goonetilleke spoke about (12) They write in a refreshing, relaxed manner, without inhibition, with gusto, and do not have much trouble with identity or style.

Muller and Felsinger deal with their own class, the middle class Burghers in the 1930's. Felsinger's is a first person account of an enjoyable but rather unorthodox childhood, with several unusual past-times, bird watching, hunting and rearing game birds. Muller describes the Dehiwela and Wellawatte Burgher community of the 1930's. Those holding respectable positions in the railway, the postal service, and the customs. He describes the Burgher skill at 'putting a party' and takes us through a Burgher wedding, Burgher funeral and Burgher Christmas, in his first work, *Jam fruit tree*. Those familiar with this lifestyle have affirmed the authenticity of some of his descriptions.

Because they deal clearly circumscribed sub-cultures their work contains a considerable amount of genuine social detail. This is a rare feature in our English writing. They provide us with a picture of the Burgher life style of the period, but in addition, in Felsinger there are descriptions of illicit cock fighting that when on places such as Nedimale, where the audience was exclusively Sinhalese. A list of the places where cock fighting was conducted is also given (p 119, 123) Arrack was a drink 'kept in those days to be used for making milk wine and for giving the lavatory sweepers on their festive occasions'. (p 112) There is also a reference to an 'Englishman borne and bred in Ceylon, of poor parents. He had had practically no education and his speech often made me gasp'. (p 129)

Muller's work provides support for the existence of racial stereotypes. "The Tamils were clannish anyway. In the schools and colleges the Burghers and Sinhalese gravitated towards each other..." (13) His work also adds weight to the Burgher stereotype as fun loving, improvident. Further, he says 'Carloboy at eight knew that the most gallant British sea dog of the days of timbered ships was Admiral L. T Jones but he did not know how many rivers flowed to the sea in Ceylon and the distance from Colombo to Jaffna'. (p 173 (14)

Moving now from the informal to the more established forms of writing, it is clear that the time is now ripe for a positive overview of the overall output of post independence writing. "The love affair of the Lankan elites with the English language began almost as soon as the first British sails appeared off the Western seaboard. In 1811 even before the British were masters of the whole island, two young Sinhalese Christians were sent to England for their education and were soon well schooled in the protective mimicry typical of a colonial elite... A century passed before Lankans graduated from flirtations with belles-lettres and album verse with the appearance of the first novel in English, in 1917". (15) Among the major publications thereafter, were J Vijayatunga's vignettes from rural life *Grass for my feet* (1935) Of this Yasmin Gooneratne says 'his characters caught midway between autobiographical reminiscence and fiction, and his evocations of a richly humane and tranquil way of life created a new regard for the local environment as a suitable setting for fiction, and a new respect for the values and traditions of rural Sri Lanka'. (16)

This was followed by the 'poised literate' poems of Patrick Fernando, *The return of Ulysses* (1954), Fernando's poems, which even to the uninitiated are a decided cut above the usual Sri Lankan effort, took the position that 'a Ceylonese writing to be read by anybody anywhere cannot move in a field that is exclusively Ceylonese, where the idiom and fields of reference and themes are specifically Ceylonese'. Fernando selected biblical literature, catholic rituals, Greek and Roman mythology as his external framework and Kuruvilla poses the question as to whether his poems could be considered lacking in relevance to the local scene. (17)

There was a lull in English writing, with the emergence of Sinhala nationalism in the 1950's, but English writing did not disappear completely. Punykanti Wijenaike's *The third woman* was published in 1963. English writing gathered momentum in the two decades that followed and by 1990 the output was such that Halpe felt that English writing from Sri Lanka was entitled to be viewed as one of the literatures of the country. (18) The academic community, which, initially had looked down on Sri Lankan writing in English, began to take a sympathetic and positive look at the material. Sri Lankan writing

began to be increasingly published abroad, and many pieces were included in anthologies. In addition, fiction written by Sri Lankans was taught in university courses outside Sri Lanka. (19)

A knowledge of English was one of the defining characteristics of the urban middle class, and quite naturally the Sri Lankan writer of English generally came from this class. Within this group there exists a distinct sub group of writers, who should now be assessed as an entity — the Burghers, whose first language was English. They led in the realm of creative writing, at the outset, for the first novel ever published here, was Lucian de Zilwa's *Dice of the gods* (1917). For "anything adventurously creative" thereafter, one looked to the 'ambiguous and distinctly surrealist poems of George Keyt of the thirties, and the wit of S.J.K. Crowthers satiric novel *The knight errant* (1928). (20) At the present moment, there is the work of Michael Oondatije, Carl Muller and Jean Arasanayagam. One recalls from the '50's R. H. Bassett's *Tales of Nariya the Jackal*'.

The Burghers were joined by English language writers from other communities, notably Sinhala. The common view of literary critics is that the English speaking class in Sri Lanka did not participate in the serious life of the country and had nothing to say. This argument cannot be sustained, for it was the English speaking class, the 'comprador' class, that controlled the plantations, the professions and industry. But it is easier to accept the position that this group, being westernised and relatively affluent, were unable to empathise with any other class in the country. It has been suggested that this group only came to life with the conflicts of 1971 and 1983. Certainly the whole flock did sit down and write on these events, but the output was not significant in quality. It is anyway difficult to believe that a whole group could only be energised by national catastrophes.

An examination of the literature indicates that the Sri Lankan writer in English, totally independent of 1971 and 1983, has shown a capability of empathising with other segments of society and of representing it in evocative terms. In fact that is all these writers do, as regards fiction. They avoid looking at themselves and there is virtually nothing where the writer examines his/her own circle and its experiences. That could be attributed to prudence.

Post independence Sri Lanka did not have elites of the "Let them eat cake" type. Most of the urban elites only hit the city about two generations ago. Even then links with the rural areas were maintained through grandparents, the mahagedera and subsequent ownership of those same

lands. In the urban sector, there is contact with the poorer classes through the service sector, such as servants and labourers. It is of interest to mention that as early as 1927, the *Kandy High School Magazine* had a short piece by a schoolgirl, "The great event in the life of a damsel" on the thoughts of a low caste girl who was asked to cook for a pirith ceremony at the Walauwva. (21)

It would be useful to include at this point, some observations made by Yasmine Gooneratne, in 1980, on commonwealth literature. 'The Sri Lankan of today still looks to Europe for his literary standards, unable to derive inspiration or help from traditional sources, and attaches himself to an English literary tradition that evolved independently of him and that in its continuous development does not, naturally, include him at all. His attempts to write freshly of the local scene and to interpret contemporary local society are hampered at every turn by the intrusion of literary modes and conventions of which he has no clear understanding, but which appear to have always been there'. (22) She sees tradition for the Indian writer of English as a complex and complicated inheritance containing indigenous elements of social experience combined with 'imported material' — the ideas, attitudes, and concepts regarding literary style carried to India from the west through the medium of the English language. (p 35) She argues that the theme that dominates third world fiction, poetry and drama is the search of a national, personal or an artistic identity. "I have stressed the theme of cultural and psychological conflict on a personal as well as on the societal level because in a very large proportion of the Third World fiction, whether overly comic or tragic, satiric or dramatic, every other theme treated is interwoven with this major pre-occupation. (p 2,8)

Carl Muller has solved the problem of identity by gross exaggeration. But there is some good writing in Muller's bawdy and hilarious *The Jam fruit tree*. There is an ability to sketch a character in a few lines. There are striking personal names such as Richard Dionysius Colontota. It has been pointed out that The Sri Lankan writer, while able to write effectively in a humorous or satirical mode, is not able to depict deep emotions or traumatic experiences. Muller however, moves smoothly from the comic to the sad in describing the death of Maudiegirl. "Cecil-prins stood looking bleakly at his wife and not caring what he would do for he could not imagine what it would be like with her gone..." (p 72) This novel is also remarkable for its use of patois. Just tell will you, if have". (p 30)

The Sri Lankan writer also on occasion deals with universal issues. Punykanti

Wijenaike, in "Potter and his trade deals with the perennial issue of the father-son conflict, heightened in the rural sector by the added issues of unemployment, frustrated ambitions, and the clash between traditional and modern values. She is able to illustrate with telling details. "One day he had bought his son a bicycle out of his hard earned money. The boy had looked at him for a second with softness in his eyes. But the next moment he had turned away and once more a barrier had come between them". One characteristic feature in Sri Lankan writing is the introduction of some gentle humour into even the most serious story. The boy's mother wonders what her son would bring her this time as gift. Last time he had brought her a tin of powder and a jar of foreign cream.

The themes of poverty and rural deprivation were, as shown, dealt with very artistically in the children's stories discussed. Suvimala Karunaratne's *The festival stall* also deals with the theme of making a small amount of money. The story is about Nandasiri, a municipal labourer, who sets about the business of financing a small stall at the Esala perahera. He borrows money from everybody he knows, has to bribe the 'ralahamy' to retain the stall, and supplements his earnings with providing some ganja to tourists. Chitra Fernando's 'The little deer' deals with jealousy and the belief in black magic. Also the helplessness of those with little actual power in the community.

The landmark achievement in the genre of the short story is, in this writer's opinion, Chitra Fernando's 'Missilin', the story of a servant in an urban household, told from beginning to end. The only critic who has given this story the prominence it deserves is Yasmine Gooneratne. (23) It is tightly structured, carefully crafted, with effective use of language. The very next day Missilin was bundled off to the Chest Hospital. There is considerable observation and empathic understanding of the feelings and experiences of a lone servant in a lower middle class household. Virtually all the main issues that arise are included and beautifully woven into a continuing narrative. The loneliness, the occasional feelings of insecurity, dependence on her mistress, short lived flirtations, secret overtures to accept service in other houses, developing friendships with the few contacts available to her, such as the vegetable seller, the extraction of her saving by her relatives, and the denial of leave to go home for either the New Year or Wesak.

This essay has dealt briefly with several 'minor' forms of English creative writing, to which assessments of translations into English, from the indigenous literature should also be added. (24) In addition the essay ends with some observations regarding writing in the formal sector.

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