

**LANKA**

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# P.A.: MINEFIELD AHEAD

Mervyn de Silva

How many divisions have the Mahanayakes got? None of course. Unlike the Pope, no Mahanayake is a head of State. Besides, *ahimsa* is the essence of the Buddha's teachings. Yet the Mahanayakes are its custodians, and in that capacity they do intervene. When Major-General Rohan Daluwatte, the hero of "Operation Riviresa" (SUNSHINE) called on the Mahanayake of Asgiriya, the Ven. Palipananda Sri Chandananda told the General that the LTTE should not only be crushed but the idea it stands for, the concept of a separate State, should be uprooted, the *ISLAND* reported.

Even as early as 1918 some Tamils had clamoured for a separate region for them. And later there were those who demanded 50-50. "If they get the slightest chance, they'll spring up" the Mahanayake warned. The Major-General also called on Venerable Rambukwella Sri Vipassi, the Mahanayake of Malwatte. These simple ceremonies have immense significance. Kandy, as we all know, was the last redoubt of the Sinhalese, and the British took quite some time to enter the holy city, with its "Temple of the Sacred Tooth". The last conquistadores were the most successful, and the smartest. The Kandyan Convention declared: "*The religion of the Boodhoo professed by the Chiefs and the inhabitants of these provinces is declared inviolable; and its rites, ministers and places of worship are to be maintained and protected*".

It is the same spirit that the United Front constitution of 1972, though drafted by a politician who had been a Marxist-Leninist all his adult life, com-

mitted the Republic to give "Buddhism the foremost place".

These highly publicised ceremonies — President Kumaratunga and Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, the politician most closely identified with the Operation were the first VVIP's to visit the Maligawa — are by no means "photo opportunities" for the ambitious politician. The Sinhala identity is purified and strengthened to become Sinhala-Buddhist if only because the "enemy" is Hindu Tamil, an invader from south India.

## THONDAMAN

And that places the C.W.C. leader, Mr. Thondaman in an extraordinarily awkward position, considering that he is a member of the Cabinet. And Mr. Thondaman still has a pact with the Opposition U.N.P. and the only reason why he enjoys these extraordinary privileges is that he is still the unchallenged boss of plantation labour. His renegade deputy, Mr. Sellasamy, a pal of the P.A., has not much clout. The P.A. is proceeding with its program of privatising the tea estates, despite protests from Mr. Thondaman.

But it is not just Mr. Thondaman who has been alienated recently but the other Tamil parliamentary parties that do speak for Tamil voters in the north and the east. The military victory has alienated the Tamil allies just when the Sinhalese-Buddhist constituency, with the Maha Sangha as its most strident voice, is wondering why the majority Sinhalese should "yield" when the toughest Tamil opponent has been forced to abandon Jaffna! Why compromise politically, when you have won militarily?

The P.A. had set about it from a somewhat different starting point. Prove militarily that the L.T.T.E. has no real EELAM option. Then isolate the wounded 'Tiger', and make a fair "devolution deal" with the parliamentary and the ex-militant parties/groups.

President Chandrika is walking through a minefield.

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# Challenges Ahead

*With Jaffna captured, the harder part begins — luring civilians back and setting up a working administration*

Nirupama Subramanian

As the national maroon-yellow-green flag replaced the red-and-yellow insignia of the Tamil Tigers in Jaffna on December 5, the eerie emptiness in the once most densely populated town of Sri Lanka was only too sombre a reminder of what lies ahead. President Chandrika Kumaratunge may have won the battle for the LTTE headquarters, but another battle is yet to begin.

This is the battle for the hearts of the Tamils who fled Jaffna a month ago and are now scattered across the peninsula and in areas of the mainland controlled by the LTTE. If, in the coming days, the Government is unable to convince them to return to their homes and live under Colombo's rule, the victory of Operation Riviresa, though unprecedented in Sri Lankan military history, will be destined to remain pyrrhic.

In an address to the nation after the capture of Jaffna, Kumaratunge made a fervent appeal to its residents to return, promising that her government would ensure that they lead normal lives in "peace and security". For that to happen, however, Colombo has to first remove the fear of the LTTE from the hearts of the Tamils and, what is more important, convince them of its own sincerity. Says K. Sriharan of the University Teachers for Human Rights organisation of Jaffna: "Colombo must accept that the Sri Lankan Government has lost its legitimacy among the Tamils and its thrust must now be to regain it."

To that effect, the Government has announced that it intends to restore the civil administration in the peninsula. As

of now, the government agent of Jaffna operates from Chavakacheri, the Tigers' new administrative base, under orders from the LTTE. So, a retired bureaucrat and a retired senior army officer have been appointed in the port town of Kankesanthurai to supervise distribution of food and essential items to the 6,000 civilians who remain in the "cleared" parts of the peninsula. But that, by itself, is not expected to prompt civilians to flood back into Jaffna.

What the Government seems to be banking on is the financial insecurity of Jaffna residents. All through the years that the LTTE controlled the peninsula and its people, Colombo continued to pay salaries to government employees in the peninsula. Most of them were either working under the direct supervision of the LTTE or simply did not report for work. In addition, pensioners were also being paid. The money was, incidentally, distributed by the government agent in Jaffna.

However, days after the army captured the town, in a strategy designed to pressure the LTTE to allow people to return, Kumaratunge announced that all employees would now have to collect their salaries in person in person in the newly liberated Jaffna town or from Vavuniya town. Those who did not report for work would face the threat of their jobs being taken over by retired bureaucrats who are expected to be taken to Jaffna from other parts of the country. "The LTTE will soon have to take a decision to let people go or forcibly stop them," says Sriharan. According to him, if the LTTE does not permit them to

return to Jaffna, it could be faced with unrest that it could well do without at the present moment.

Of course, the LTTE will first try its utmost to prevent people from returning to Jaffna. The Tigers office in Killinochchi issuing exit visas has been closed, which means that the LTTE has made even Vavuniya town out of bounds for the refugees. The Tigers are reportedly planning a new capital at Mankulam, 30 miles north of Vavuniya. It has also announced that civilians in Thenmarachi and Vadamarachi should shift out as the Government's next move would be to launch a military operation there. Analysts see this as the LTTE's strategy to prevent an exodus into Jaffna town and other areas in Valikamam in case the army continues with its plan to dislodge the LTTE from the eastern part of the peninsula.

So rather than enter into a confrontation with the Tamils at this juncture, the LTTE is expected to allow them to return, and then try to cash in on it. Analysts say that one way it can do this is by infiltrating the "cleared" parts of the peninsula along with the civilians. Subsequently, the Tigers are likely to launch a sustained low-intensity conflict. Just how effective this strategy will be is uncertain since the conflict may endanger civilians, as was evident last fortnight in Batticaloa, where 34 civilians were killed in an encounter between the LTTE and the police.

Also, there is a growing realisation



that though the LTTE can be defeated, it cannot be eliminated. It was, perhaps, in recognition of this that soon after the victory in Jaffna, Kumaratunge, who only last month offered Rs 2.5 crore for information leading to the arrest of LTTE supremo V. Pirabhakaran, went to the extent of offering the LTTE a government amnesty if it was prepared to lay down arms. Predictably, the LTTE is reported to have rejected this offer.

For the present, however, the Government is going ahead with an "action plan" for the rehabilitation of the few civilians who did not move to Thenmarachi. According to Housing Minister Nimal Sripala de Silva, who is in charge of the Presidential Task Force on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the northern region, the first priority is to provide food and other essentials to these people.

There are also plans to repair roads and houses as well as to restore electricity to the region. A plan submitted to the LTTE by the Government during the peace talks early this year envisaged a budget of Rs 3,900 crore for the reconstruction and redevelopment of Jaffna. Much of the money was to be raised in the form of aid from foreign countries. As it is doubtful how many countries will be prepared to come forward to pour money into a region where conflict has not yet been settled, it is expected, for the moment, that a major portion of the estimated Rs 300 crore — the budget for the redevelopment of the entire country in 1996 — will be diverted to the north.

However, governing Jaffna effectively is difficult, given that there is no land route between Colombo and the peninsula. Right now, the Government has no control over territory beyond Vavuniya town, with the LTTE occupying large regions in Vavuniya and Mannar dis-

tricts and controlling Mullaithivu and Killinochchi. With the air bridge between Colombo and Jaffna tenuous at the best of times, the safest route to the cleared areas of the peninsula is by sea. But even this is vulnerable to LTTE attacks. Kumaratunge has claimed that her armed forces may soon try to establish a land route, but there is no guarantee that they will be successful.

Apart from the short-term strategy to lure civilians back into Jaffna and establish a fully working civil administration there, Kumaratunge, observers say, must urgently give shape to her August proposals for devolution of powers to the minority Tamil community in order to consolidate the gains of the war. "The Government should now place the legal draft of the devolution proposals before the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) without delay," says M. Sivasi-thamparam, president of the moderate TULF. Sources in the Cabinet say that the legal draft is ready and its presentation to the PSC is a matter of the President's "political intuition and timing".

Kumaratunge has reiterated that her government can start a dialogue with the LTTE if it accepts the devolution package and agrees to a "substantial" surrender of arms as opposed to a "symbolic" surrender which she was demanding earlier. Going by the Tigers' past record, however, it is very unlikely that they will agree to this condition. After her bitter experience with the LTTE earlier this year, Kumaratunge is only too aware of this. And her strategy now will be to demonstrate to the Tamils of the north — rudderless and without a leadership for the first time in many years — that there is life after the LTTE. Doing this is not only essential for a long-term solution to the ethnic conflict but also necessary to prevent the military success in Jaffna from turning into a colossal waste of men and resources.

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## **“The fear of the LTTE must be broken”**

— *Lakshman Kadirgamar*

*Lakshman Kadirgamar, the articulate Oxford-educated foreign minister of Sri Lanka, is a Tamil himself. He has been branded as a traitor by the LTTE for his views on the ethnic conflict in the country. He spoke to Principal Correspondent Nirupama Subramanian in Colombo. Excerpts:*

**Q. How successful have you been, given that the LTTE has effectively crippled the Sri Lankan Air Force?**

**A.** Right now, no one in their senses is saying that the LTTE has been wiped out. Their capacity to inflict damage is still there. But though they can bring down a plane, they have lost Jaffna.

**Q. But the LTTE will now take recourse to guerrilla tactics and try to destabilise the east. Do your forces have the resources to hold Jaffna indefinitely**

**and fight a guerrilla war in the jungles and in the east?**

**A.** We are prepared for everything. People were saying all these years that we could never take Jaffna. That we can never make any progress against the LTTE in the north. All those critics are now confounded. The myth of the LTTE's invincibility has been very severely damaged, if not destroyed.

**Q. The Government says that immediately after taking Jaffna, it will set in place an administration to restore normalcy. Who is going to run this civil administration in Jaffna?**

**A.** There are plenty of civilians. The existing GA (government agent) and all his men, an immense number of people on the Government payroll who all these years have been drawing salaries and doing nothing. All those people will now be activated.

**Q. But do you see the LTTE allowing them to do this?**

**A.** Our army is perfectly capable of taking care of that situation. We are no longer interested in the prophets of doom. The fear of the LTTE must be broken.

**Q. How much of a victory is it to march into an empty Jaffna?**

**A.** Whether the city is empty or not has nothing to do with the military operation. People must come back one day. I don't see the people forever living in tents when they can come back to their homes. But first, Jaffna has to be made safe, civilian administration must be put in place and then the people will decide whether to comeback. We expect the LTTE to try its hardest to prevent them from doing so.

(LT)

## **“Colombo should stop the genocide”**

— *Anton Raja*

*The last week of November is commemorated as Heroes' week by Sri Lankan Tamils worldwide. It was on November 27, 1982, that the first LTTE activist was killed by the Sri Lankan Army. With the army now virtually in control of Jaffna, gloom has gripped the community. On November 26, Anton Raja, a key member of the LTTE's international hierarchy and in charge of its UK operations, spoke to journalist Pankaj Pachauri in London. Excerpts:*

**Q. After the fall of Jaffna, where does the LTTE go?**

**A.** LTTE activists are freedom fighters. We will continue our task against the Sinhala nation. Tamils are joining our ranks in overwhelming numbers; they are fleeing the genocide and the massacre in Jaffna and are going into areas controlled by the LTTE.

**Q. Why has the international com-**

**munity not extended any support to the LTTE during the current offensive?**

**A.** Because the whole truth is not coming out. Journalists are not allowed in Jaffna and all the information is coming through one military spokesman. There are dozens of TV crews in Colombo who are not allowed to go to Jaffna and bring back the picture of suffering.

**Q. But the Government has called the LTTE a terrorist outfit. Do you think the international community thinks so too and that is why it is silent?**

**A.** Definitely not. They (the Government) have demonised the LTTE by fabricating stories against us. We aren't terrorists, we are freedom fighters.

**Q. But you have killed Sinhala civilians.**

**A.** We have never killed civilians. This is the job of the army's death squads who

have put the blame on us. The Government is putting a wedge between the two communities by providing guns to Sinhala civilians.

**Q. Why are you against negotiations?**

**A.** Our position is that issues concerning two nations have to be negotiated by the two parties in conflict. The Lankan Government is talking only to Tamil MPs. They should talk to the LTTE.

**Q. What are the conditions?**

**A.** We have no conditions. The Government should prepare an environment for talks by conceding the demands of the Tamils. One, they should unconditionally withdraw the army from the north and east and stop the genocide. They should lift the ban on the supply of foodstuffs and medicine to Jaffna. These are concessions to Tamil people, not to the LTTE. If they do that, we are ready to talk.



# Dwindling support in Tamil Nadu

G. C. Shekhar

**W**hen Colombo began to step up the pressure on the LTTE, most political parties in Tamil Nadu were quick to seek New Delhi's intervention to put an end to the hardships of the Tamils of Jaffna. As the Tigers scored initial victories, like downing Sri Lankan air force planes, their leaders and much of the Tamil press hailed the Tigers. But with the Sri Lankan Army pushing into Jaffna, they are squirming with embarrassment, though, publicly, they urge for a halt to the war.

Once upon a time, pro-LTTE posturing was a good way to fetch votes in the state. For financial sustenance and political leverage, the LTTE had cleverly exploited the Dravidian leaders' weakness to be seen as protectors of Tamils. First, they had M.G. Ramachandran on their side. In

MADRAS

1987 they disowned him after he supported the IPKF offensive. But were quick to build bridges with the DMK's M. Karunanidhi.

When the DMK came to power in 1989, the Tigers began to enjoy a virtual free run in the state. The coastline was opened up and the Tigers set up units to manufacture weapons and grenades in the state. Karunanidhi scoffed at opposition warnings even though Tigers had embarrassed their benevolent host by gunning down 13 members of the EPRLF, including its leader Padmanabha, in the heart of Madras. He also boycotted a reception for the IPKF on its return, saying he "will not welcome a force that had killed his Tamil brothers and sisters". Later, he paid the price for the LTTE connection, when the Chandra Shekhar government, under pressure from the Congress (I), dismissed his government.

After the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the Tigers lost much of the sympathy of the Indian Tamils. Later, the Jayalalitha Government banned the LTTE and ensured that it received no organised or substantive assistance. They, however continued to get moral support from parties such as the PMK, DK and MDMK. In fact, the MDMK president, V. Gopalaswamy, has gone on record saying the LTTE did not assassinate Rajiv. "Till the courts give the final verdict, they cannot be held guilty," he recently said.

Ironically, those who criticised New Delhi for aggressive intervention in 1987 are the ones who are now demanding that India play a role in the war. But New Delhi has been silent so far, aware perhaps of the mess it got into barely a few years ago.

## South Asian nations take first step toward creating trade bloc

Shiraz Sidhva

NEW DELHI

**T**he seven member nations of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) took their first step towards creating a regional trade bloc by launching the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA). The accord provides for tariff reductions on specified items and commodities.

Political differences have marred economic co-operation in the region since SAARC — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives — was set up 10 years ago.

Though there is substantial informal trading, official trade among SAARC countries as a percentage of total world trade is only 3.4 per cent.

The dismantling of trade barriers under the World Trade Organisation is a strong reason for the south Asian countries to work more closely. SAARC countries are major textile exporters, and could benefit from trading as a bloc rather than competing with each other.

"The potential for economic co-operation is tremendous", says Mr Tejinder Khanna, secretary in India's commerce ministry.

Analysts describe the SAPTA agreement, reached with great difficulty, as a "token beginning". Member countries have identified 226 items for tariff reduction, but implementation of the pact will depend on bilateral relations between

the countries, notably India and Pakistan, which have so far not been able to resolve their mutual hostility.

India has agreed to grant tariff concessions on 106 items, with lower tariffs on 62 of these reserved only for the least developed countries in the region.

Pakistan has announced concessions on 35 items, Bangladesh 12, Nepal 14, Sri Lanka 31, and Bhutan 11. Analysts say the value of concessionary imports is less than 7 per cent of trade between SAARC countries.

A group of Indian and Pakistani businessmen are convinced that improved trade relations between the countries will help resolve the diplomatic impasse caused by political issues such as Kashmir.

According to estimates by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), India exports goods worth \$ 650 m a year to Pakistan, of which only \$ 150 m is official. The rest is routed through a third country, or smuggled.

"Indian consumer goods have a ready-made market at their doorstep in Pakistan", says an Indian industrialist who manufactures rubber tyres smuggled into Pakistan.

"It is absurd that textile machinery, for instance, is made in India, and exported to Pakistan through Europe. But diplomatic relations are so bad between our two countries that trade is an obvious casualty".

# Pause, Not Peace

Army recaptures Jaffna, but the war isn't over yet

Manik de Silva

For the first time in five years, Sri Lanka's flag, depicting a sword-wielding golden lion, was hoisted over the centre of Jaffna on December 5. The ceremony, broadcast live on state-run radio, marked the government's recapture of the northern city from Tamil separatists.

Despite the victory — a turning point in the government's 12-year-old campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam — what President Chandrika Kumaratunga has called the "war to win the peace" is far from over. The civil war is expected to drag on in the jungles that cover parts of the northern mainland outside the Jaffna Peninsula.

For their part, the Tamils have vowed to continue attacking areas in the north and east of the country and have stepped up their recruitment campaign. Just hours after the army's flag-raising, the Black Tigers, a suicide squad of Tamil rebels, struck at a military base in Batticaloa, a district in the east of the country. They killed 23 commandos in the army's Special Task Force, for the loss of at least 28 of their own cadres.

On December 8, the president told reporters the government planned to secure a land route through the peninsula so that the reconstruction of Jaffna can begin. "We will open a land route the same way we took Jaffna town," Kumaratunga said. Asked whether that meant another military offensive, she answered: "We will see."

Two days later, hundreds of elite police commandos, backed by the air force and army troops, fanned out in eastern Sri Lanka on a search-and-destroy mission against Tamil guerrilla bases in the jungle. "The idea is to keep the terrorists on their toes," says Brig. Sarath Munasinghe, the military's chief spokesman.

Now Kumaratunga will have to maintain a very tricky balance: keeping the military

pressure on to coax the Tigers back into negotiations, while making sure the majority Sinhalese don't turn against the Tamil population.

So far Kumaratunga has emphasized that the military victory at Jaffna was over the "terrorist" Tigers, not the general population of 2.5 million Tamils — tens of thousands of whom have been forced to flee the war zone and are living in crowded refugee camps, mostly in the north. The president also discouraged fireworks and celebrations by the Sinhalese in an effort to prevent Tamils from feeling humiliated and to encourage them to return to their heartland. Colombo repeatedly warned that Sinhalese rejoicing should not degenerate into attacks on Tamils.

In an address to the nation, Kumaratunga offered an amnesty to the Tigers. But she said the conflict could only be resolved through dialogue. Kumaratunga has indicated she's willing to resume talks with the Tigers if they accept the devolution package her government unveiled in August and agree to what she describes as a "substantial surrender of arms." The Tigers pulled out of peace talks in April, ending a six-month truce.

Moderate Tamil parties are pressing Kumaratunga to pursue an autonomy plan to end the war. Tamil MPs would like to see a ceasefire, and many of them favour third-party mediation, which the government has so far rejected.

The Tamil United Liberation Front said the army's capture of Jaffna should be accompanied by political moves to stop the bloodshed. M. Sivasithamparam, the TULF's president, expressed Tamils' feelings about the march on Jaffna: "The fact that the troops entering Jaffna is being discussed as the 'capture' or 'fall' of Jaffna has caused a great deal of anguish to the Tamil people. The government must do something to assuage the hurt feelings of the Tamil people."

One step towards this, he says, would be for the government to place a form of

its devolution package before a parliamentary select committee. The LTTE has not bought the package, and it is opposed by Sinhalese extremists and a section of the country's influential Buddhist clergy. But liberals have called it fair. Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwattee told a local newspaper reporter that the government's political package must be fully implemented for peace to be achieved. He said the military's success at Jaffna can be considered "the beginning of the end."

\* \* \*

So far, the Tamil Tigers have rejected Kumaratunga's amnesty offer. In a statement issued from his London office as Jaffna was falling to the army, LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran vowed the Tigers wouldn't participate in peace negotiations "imposed at the point of a gun — subjecting itself to military pressure."

Jaffna had been the base of the rebels' civil administration and the de facto government for about 1 million Tamils since Indian peacekeepers withdrew in 1990. Prabhakaran, however, called the Tamils' decision to abandon the city a "tactical withdrawal against an onslaught of heavier fire-power and air power." Although a devastating blow to their dreams of Eelam, an independent Tamil homeland, "today's setback is tomorrow's victory," he declared. "The invasion of Jaffna is a gigantic historical blunder made by the Chandrika regime."

Prabhakaran also boasted that the Tigers had made the army "pay a heavy price for its advance" during the 50-day Operation Riviresa (Sunshine). Although the rebels are thought to have lost about 2,000 fighters, the army also took a pounding, with more than 500 dead.

President Kumaratunga doesn't seem fazed. "The government can crush and eliminate the LTTE," she told reporters. "We don't want to eliminate anybody or any group if they fall in line with peace. If they want to fight us, we have no option."

The writer is former Editor of the *DAILY NEWS*, Colombo. The article appeared in the *F.E.E.R.*



# The Rapid Expansion of the Army

Humayun Kabir

Another aim was to prevent the Sri Lankan security forces from achieving military victory by destabilising the island by means of proxy war. In Tamil Nadu, both AIADMK and DMK, apart from their sympathy towards the TULF, had their clients among the militant groups. DMK had promoted the TELO led by Sabaratnam, while the AIADMK had supported the powerful LTTE led by V. Prabhakaran.

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Indian foreign intelligence agency that functions under the Indian Cabinet Secretariat, was also involved in the Sri Lanka affairs. It helped and armed the Tamil militants of Sri Lanka in Tamil Nadu. Contrary to popular belief that New Delhi did not turn its attention to Sri Lanka until the outbreak of violence in July 1983, India was indeed concerned about the island nation's foreign policy orientation and about the increasingly deteriorating ethnic scenario. RAW covertly recruited the Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu, trained them in espionage and sabotage in India and sent them across into Sri Lanka to spy on foreign naval movements in the Trincomalee harbour and defence installations in the north-east of the country. In 1982 agents of the RAW recruited the TELO, which reportedly had a large criminal element and was politically unsophisticated having no goals and ideology. After the July carnage, RAW began to recruit hundreds of members of the five Tamil militant groups. By late 1984, hundreds of trained fighters were back in Sri Lanka where they mounted acts of sabotage against government facilities and killing of civilians. By 1986, the number of Indian trained Tamil militants exceeded 20,000 and India used the militant factor to pressurise Sri Lanka to change its foreign policy direction and to be able to exercise influence on the island's domestic issues pertaining to the ethnic conflict.<sup>144</sup>

India also attempted to pressurise Sri Lanka at international level. The former attempted to arouse international public opinion against the latter. At the UN Commission on Human Rights, a resolution was passed on 13 March 1987 condemning both the government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil militants for their violation of human rights. In late May 1987, when Sri Lanka launched a major offensive

against the militants in Jaffna, India sent messages to its diplomatic missions abroad to influence their respective host governments to put pressure on the Colombo government to induce it to cease its military operations and come to the negotiating table.<sup>145</sup>

On its part, Sri Lanka also did not put all its eggs in the basket of the India-sponsored mediation process. Simultaneously, she pursued the option of military solution to the ethnic crisis. This approach of the Government of Sri Lanka might have been prompted by two considerations. One was that by following this course, Sri Lanka would be able to exonerate itself from India's involvement in the island's internal affairs. And the second was that the military solution would render redundant the 'undue concessions' that the Colombo government would otherwise be obliged to make to the country's Tamil minority. For the purpose of being able to militarily crush the Tamil insurgency, the UNP government of President Jayewardene took steps to beef up Sri Lanka's military power by way of expanding its armed forces and enlisting military support from non-Indian sources that included India's adversaries.

The size of Sri Lanka's armed forces grew very rapidly since 1983. From a small contingent in 1983 the island's defence force became quite sizeable in number by 1987. The defence budget of Sri Lanka increased over the years nearly twenty fold from Rs. 500 million in 1977 to Rs. 10,000 million in 1987.<sup>146</sup>

Sri Lanka's military links or attempts to forge such links with both regional and extra-regional countries included those with Pakistan, China, Britain, Israel and the U.S.A. Sri Lanka sought help from these sources in the form of military training for its armed forces personnel, and supply of arms and ammunition. Sri Lanka received from Pakistan certain quantity of military hardware including AK-47 and M-16 rifles and four helicopter gunships. Beside supplying weapons it is believed that Pakistan trained certain number of Sri Lankan military officers in counter-insurgency operations during the year 1985<sup>147</sup>, which continued until the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord was signed in July 1987. China was one of the important

powers which supplied arms to Sri Lanka in considerable quantity. This supply included patrol boats and assault rifles.<sup>148</sup>

A small quantity of arms including Cougar patrol boats, rifles, ammunition and armoured cars was flown into Sri Lanka from Britain. The British government denied that it had supplied them and maintained that Colombo had obtained the arms on a commercial basis. But former SAS personnel serving the Jersey-based private security organisation, Keeney Meeney Services (KMS), had been involved since 1984 in training the Sri Lankan security forces in counter-insurgency tactics. These mercenaries left Sri Lanka in March 1987.<sup>149</sup> While it is difficult to establish whether or not the British arms and KMS mercenaries came to Sri Lanka with official blessing, the fact remains that the source of this help to the beleaguered government of Sri Lanka was an extra-regional great power.

It was mentioned earlier that in keeping with its pro-Western proclivity, Jayewardene's UNP government sought U.S. security guarantee against possible threat from India. Following the July 1983 ethnic violence, it was strongly suspected that the USA was planning to become involved in Sri Lankan affairs. This speculation was prompted by a series of mutual visits by the dignitaries of the USA and Sri Lanka in the years 1983-86. Casper Weinberger, the US Secretary of Defence, made an unscheduled visit to Colombo in October 1983. Vernon Walters, the US Ambassador at large, came to Sri Lanka twice, in December 1983 and in December 1984. Then came the visits of Joseph Addabbo, Chairman of the House Defence Appropriations Committee, and Howard B. Schaffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, in January and February of 1984 respectively. It may be recalled here that during the same period, Sri Lanka hastened to conclude certain deals with the USA which carried strategic implications. The Indian government felt that the visits were intended to express US support to the Jayewardene regime and feared that it would only encourage the hardliners in the UNP Cabinet to adopt a tougher line towards the Tamils.<sup>150</sup>

India's apprehensions increased when Jayewardene visited the USA in June

1984 amidst speculation that he was going to sign a defence pact with the Western superpower. His powerful National Security Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali, went to Washington in January 1985 and again in June 1986 with a request for military assistance. Although these visits apparently drew a blank, there were reports that US mercenaries helped Sri Lanka's security forces in their fight against the Tamil militants.<sup>151</sup> More significantly, Sri Lanka's Israeli connection made the US role in the island more controversial.

Israel supplied arms to Sri Lanka and sent its intelligence agency, Mossad, for internal security and counter-insurgency purposes. There were speculations that Israel was serving as America's front in Sri Lanka and that Mossad was substituting for the CIA. These stemmed from the way Israel extended its support to Sri Lanka. It was reported that arms and ammunition came from Israel by unmarked Hercules aircraft and Mossad operated in Sri Lanka through an Israeli "interests section" in the US embassy. This interests section had a staff of 25 and a regular courier service between Colombo and Tel Aviv.<sup>152</sup> India was greatly concerned at the involvement of Israeli commandoes in strengthening the intelligence gathering and operational efficiency of the Sri Lankan security forces.<sup>153</sup> As a matter of fact, foreign involvement in Sri Lanka was construed as intervention by proxy, putting India's security interests at stake.<sup>154</sup>

All these developments took place against the background of regular clashes between the Sri Lankan security forces and Tamil militant groups. The UNP leadership tended to believe that the problem was one of terrorism which essentially had to be put down militarily. The militants also, particularly the LTTE, were determined to fight for their cause. They occasionally succeeded in their battles against the government forces and by the end of 1986, the LTTE virtually ran a parallel administration in the Northern Province. About that time, they also hit upon the idea of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) for the north of the island. In an attempt to preempt such a UDI, the government of Sri Lanka imposed an economic and communication blockade on the Jaffna peninsula on 2 January 1987, and sent troop reinforcements into the area.

The embargo caused considerable hardship to the civilian population in Jaffna. As the situation in Jaffna continued to

deteriorate, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent Dinesh Singh as his personal emissary on 13 March 1987 to Colombo. He met President Jayewardene and expressed India's grave concern. In response the Sri Lankan government announced a unilateral ceasefire for ten days beginning from 12 April. However, the violence escalated as the LTTE and EROS spurned this offer and perpetrated two most brutal massacres of over 300 people on 17, 18, 21 April in Colombo's main bus station and on the road from Trincomalee to Colombo. The government retaliated with indiscriminate bombings and attacks by security forces from 20 April.<sup>155</sup>

The government of India strongly condemned the aerial attacks and other military actions of the Sri Lankan security forces in Jaffna. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramachandran, reacted by declaring in the state Assembly that he would allocate 3.2 million US dollars to 'freedom fighters' in Sri Lanka. He added that he would channel this fund through the Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu to be distributed in Sri Lanka, and not through the government of Sri Lanka.<sup>156</sup> The Jayewardene government viewed this announcement as an open and direct military assistance to the LTTE, causing strains in the Indo-Lanka relationship. President Jayewardene, faced with such a scenario, launched 'Operation Liberation' on 26 May 1987 in the Vadamarachchi division of the Jaffna peninsula, in order to regain control of the area.<sup>157</sup> By the end of May, the government forces had gained control of the area, but there were heavy casualties on both sides and the question of the capability of the government forces to subjugate the entire peninsula and then holding on to it appeared debateable.<sup>158</sup> However, about this time a rumour spread in Jaffna that the Sri Lankan forces were preparing to move on to take Jaffna.

(To be Continued)

#### Notes

144. For details of the role of India's intelligence agencies in Sri Lanka see, Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The Role of India's Intelligence Agencies*, South Asian Network on Conflict Research, Colombo, 1993; Rajesh Kadian, *India's Sri Lanka Fiasco*, pp. 98-112; P.S. Suryanarayana, *The Peace Trap*....., p. 56; *Time magazine*, 3 April 1989, pp. 14-15.
145. *Times of India*, New Delhi, 14 March and 30 May 1987.
146. See *Military Balance*, IISS, London, for the relevant years.
147. *India Today*, New Delhi, 31 August 1985.
148. P. Venkateshwar Rao, "Foreign Involvement in Sri

Lanka", *The Round Table*, No. 309, January 1989, p. 96.

149. *ibid.* p. 93.
150. P. Venkateshwar Rao, "Foreign Involvement in Sri Lanka", *op. cit.*, p. 89.
151. During his visit to the USA in January 1987, India's Foreign Secretary, A.P. Venkateswaran, raised the issue in his discussions with US Under Secretary of State, Michael Armacost. *Hindu*, Madras, 18 January 1987.
152. For details about Sri Lanka's Israeli connection, see *Foreign Report*, London, 23 August 1984, pp. 5-6. According to later studies, the Israeli connection was effected on American advice. See Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, *The Israeli Connection*, excerpted in *Lanka Guardian*, Colombo, Vol. 11, No. 2, 15 May 1988, p. 10. See also Jane Hunter, "Sri Lanka and Israeli Connection: Trouble-Shooter Walters Paves the way for Mossad" in *ibid.*, pp. 11-13. All quoted in Partha S. Ghosh, *Cooperation and Conflict in South Asia*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.
153. For details about foreign involvement in Sri Lanka and India's concerns, see S.D. Muni, "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Convulsions", *Mainstream*, New Delhi, Annual 1984, pp. 51-52.
154. Such opinion is held by several scholars. For example, Rita Manchanda, "Sri Lanka Crisis: Conflict and Intervention", *Strategic Analysis*, IDSA, New Delhi, Vol. IX, August 1986, p. 586; C. Raja Mohan, "The vast global reach through proxies", *Hindu*, Madras, 14 July 1987; Ashok Kapur, "Indian foreign policy: perspectives and present predicaments", *The Round Table*, London, No. 295, July 1985, p. 239. There is, however, an opposite view which contends that the US policy took no serious part in the Sri Lankan crisis and left it to India's management. See P. Venkateshwar Rao, "Foreign Involvement in Sri Lanka", *op. cit.*, pp. 88-100.
155. *Lanka Guardian*, Colombo, Vol. 10, No. 4, 15 June 1987, p. 18.
156. *ibid.*
157. President Jayewardene said: "We have decided to fight them and we will go on until they win or we win". Andrew Tarnowski, "Military Option", *Lanka Guardian*, Colombo, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1 June 1987, p. 3. Commenting on the operation, Lalith Athulathmudali said: "We will prove to them that they cannot possibly achieve their aims by violence and, by doing so, hope that they will see the wisdom of political settlements". Mervyn de Silva, "UNP: Offensive in the North and Defensive in the South", *Lanka Guardian*, Colombo, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1 June 1987, p. 3.
158. 27 soldiers were killed and 150 wounded, while 126 militants and several civilians were killed. *The Island*, Colombo, 30 May 1987. Opinions among the policy-makers and opinion-makers in Sri Lanka about the success of the "Operation Liberation" varied. Some were of the view that the military thrust was a great success and the island government was about to be successful in militarily solving the ethnic issue, while some others maintained that although the Vadamarachchi operation was successful, the government troops would not have been able to hold on to their gains in a territory inhabited by hostile population. There was a third dimension to the whole episode. And that was that some elements in the Sri Lankan armed forces got through the message to President Jayewardene that they were not willing to fight any longer. These opinions are collated from my extensive interviews and discussions in May 1991 and January 1995 with a cross-section of policy-makers and opinion-builders in Sri Lanka.



## Deadline for feud of Bangladesh's 'two ladies'

Mark Nicholson

After 20 months of a paralysing political feud marked by boycotts, parliamentary resignations, strikes and rising violence, Bangladesh's political leaders — more precisely the "two ladies", Mrs Khaleda Zia, the Bangladesh Nationalist party prime minister, and Sheikh Hasina, leader of the opposition Awami League — have been given a deadline to reach accommodation.

Mr Justice A K M Sadeque, the country's chief election commissioner, on Sunday set an election date for January 18. The date is not immutable. The two women could agree to defer polls — though no later than February 20 under the present constitution.

But the announcement begins a constitutional countdown against which the two women must decide whether to allow a vote to settle their increasingly debilitating impasse or see the country lurch into constitutional crisis, civil disorder and economic dislocation.

If the row cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the biggest losers are likely to be Bangladesh's 120 m generally poor people.

Whatever its alleged sins, the present government had been successful in stabilising the economy, deregulating trade and industry and freeing a business sector — notably in the booming garment industry — which has pushed economic growth above 5 per cent and raised exports by a third.

But the recent series of lengthening *hartals*, or political stoppages, called by Sheikh Hasina and her opposition partners, the Jatiya party and the Jamaat-e-Islami, have already started to threaten Bangladesh's fragile economy.

The stoppages, though manifestly unpopular with the mass of poor daily-waged labourers, traders and frustrated businessmen, have been enforced by gangs of stone-throwing "supporters".

If their demands remain unmet, Sheikh Hasina says, the opposition will call an indefinite road, rail and air blockade. This

would be a severe blow to the garments sector — the country's biggest export industry.

"The tragedy is that this comes at a time when the country has the opportunity to raise its growth rate from about 5 per cent towards 7 or 8 per cent — to really get motoring", says a diplomat. "In terms of lost opportunity, the politics are really getting in the way".

The dispute centres on Sheikh Hasina's claim that "free and fair" elections are impossible under Mrs Zia's BNP government. They would be possible, she claims, only if Mrs Zia and her government resigned and an election were held under a "neutral caretaker government".

The call has become Sheikh Hasina's political mantra since she and her 90 MPs began boycotting parliament, along with two smaller opposition parties, after a by-election in March 1994 which she alleges the BNP won from the Awami League by vote rigging.

Her party resigned from the 330-seat assembly which was dissolved on November 24, requiring polls within 90 days.

Mrs Zia has so far resisted opposition demands, arguing that no such "caretaker government" is possible under Bangladesh's constitution. This was agreed by both the BNP and Awami League after the 1991 poll that ushered in democracy when popular protests forced out General Hossain Mohammed Ershad's military administration.

She has offered to stand down 30 days before the elections. Not good enough, says Sheikh Hasina.

To date, the distrust between the two women over this single point has proved immune to the most strenuous diplomacy.

Sir Ninian Stephen, the eminent Australian lawyer, spent four fruitless weeks last year on a Commonwealth conciliation mission, leaving blame for the continued impasse largely at Sheikh Hasina's unshifting feet. Bangladesh's main aid donors, most publicly the US, have since, and equally unsuccessfully, taken up the case.

Much of the problem, Dhaka's political commentators point out, is personal rather than political. Enmity dates from the earliest of Bangladesh's power struggles. Sheikh Hasina's father, General Mujib, who founded the country after a war of independence against the Pakistani government, was assassinated by army officers in 1975 while Mrs Zia's then husband, General Zaiur Rahman, was a senior figure in the military. General Rahman later became head of state and was himself assassinated.

Bitterness and suspicion deriving from perceived historical wrongs arguably separate the two women far more than policy differences between their parties.

On economic policy, for instance, Sheikh Hasina easily admits that there "isn't much difference" between them.

The prospect of Bangladesh's 52 m voters going to a contested poll in January therefore seems to depend on the two finding a face-saving formula.

However, if Sheikh Hasina and her political partners boycott the election, says Justice Sadeque, he could be forced to abandon it. In such circumstances, other officials even suggest that the army might feel obliged to intervene and hold elections under the "neutrality" of martial law.

More likely is an attempt to fudge a semi-constitutional solution, where by Mrs Zia would announce her resignation and entrust the president, the former BNP speaker of the house, to create a short-term election-holding administration under his vaguely defined "residual powers".

It is widely felt — by all but party officials — that while both the BNP and Awami League have lost support during the protracted feud, the unpopularity of the *hartals* has hurt Sheikh Hasina more.

On the evidence of the past 20 months, a poor performance in contested polls are likely to do nothing to persuade Sheikh Hasina, adamant that she speaks for the majority, that the polls could possibly have been free and fair.

# New Challenges

*How can organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the UN — in existence for 50 years — be reformed to deal with the problems confronting the international community in the 21st century? (A Japanese perspective)*

Yoshio Okubo

The world is very different from what it was 50 years ago when the Bretton Woods institutions were established. Global trade has expanded steadily, direct and portfolio investment flows have increased, and the world economy is rapidly being integrated. These developments signify the substantial achievement of the initial goals of the Bretton Woods institutions, which were founded to restore and develop the postwar economy, create a multilateral payment system for current transactions, and eliminate restrictions on foreign exchange. Also, by adapting to changing conditions, these institutions have been able to manage a variety of problems that have arisen during the process of postwar global economic development, including oil crises, debt crises, and emergency support for countries in transition working to adapt to market-oriented economic systems.

As capital markets have been liberalized and financial techniques revolutionized, economic trends and policies in one country are more likely to have an immediate effect on other countries. While economic integration has broadened business opportunities and contributed to greater convenience, it has also introduced new kinds of risk. These changes in the international finance market have affected private industry and governmental activity in all countries, while forcing the international community to reassess the roles of the IMF, the World Bank, and regional development banks.

The crisis in Mexico early this year symbolizes the changes that are taking place. Mexico has been one of the most successful countries at economic development. In the early 1980s it overcame its debt crisis, made progress in opening

its economy, relying increasingly on portfolio investment flows to finance its development. Last year, however, Mexico's deficit in its current account grew substantially, sustained by the nominal exchange market at a level that gradually diverged from its economic fundamentals; meanwhile, capital flow became dependent on short-term securities investment.

As a result, an adjustment became unavoidable in late 1994 and early 1995, which in turn triggered a financial crisis. The effects of the crisis spread to other emerging economies, making it temporarily difficult, for example, to secure adequate financing.

Through bold and appropriate responses by the international financial community, in particular by the IMF, this crisis is being overcome, and brighter prospects are on the horizon. Nevertheless, what happened in Mexico demonstrated that, in the midst of dramatic increases in private capital flow, international integration of capital markets, and the on-going renovations in new financial techniques, a financial crisis in one country can have an immediate effect on other countries, even those in other regions that were thought to be financially healthy. International institutions must therefore establish the systems needed to adequately deal with these potential risks.

As to how international financial institutions, particularly the IMF, should deal with these issues, it is first necessary for the IMF to strengthen its early-warning system. To that end, it must establish benchmarks for the timely publication of key economic and financial data, and also ensure that all member nations report standard sets of data in a full and timely manner. The IMF must also provide clearer policy advice to all governments.

At the same time, the IMF must develop

the ability to mount a quick and appropriate response in case a crisis does develop. In this sense, the Halifax Summit communique was well timed in its call for the establishment of an "Emergency Finance Mechanism" as a new standing procedure. Should a crisis arise, such a mechanism would provide faster procedure to resort to the IMF resources with high and up-front access.

To support this mechanism, the IMF's capital base must be strengthened, which means the following steps must be pursued: first, G-10 and other countries with the capacity to support the international financial system should develop financing arrangements with the objective of doubling, as quickly as possible, the possible amount currently available under the IMF's General Agreement to Borrow, thereby ensuring that the IMF can deal with financial emergencies; and second, discussions on the quota review should be continued to ensure that the IMF has sufficient resources.

Also, in view of changes occurring in the global financial system, a wideranging review should be conducted on the role and function of special drawing rights (SDR). In addition, agreement has been reached regarding the need for closer international cooperation in strengthening financial market supervision and regulation, with the aim of safeguarding the health of the financial system and preventing erosion of necessary prudential standards. Furthermore, the Halifax summit communique made many proposals concerning the role of international financial institutions in promoting sustainable development.

To ensure that international financial institutions are able to respond appropriately to changes in the global economy, the proposals described above should be implemented as soon as possible.

*The author is director of the Development Institutions Division at the International Finance Bureau of the Ministry of Finance.*



# The T.V. Debate

By Rohan Jayawardana

There is considerable controversy over amendments that may be effected to the Code of Intellectual Property Act No. 52 of 1979, particularly within the forum of local television.

When there is a high element of disagreement, it is of special importance to ensure that justice is indeed served by amendment of existing law which has so far been found to be acceptable.

The present statute is sixteen years old, or more precisely, sixteen years young. It must be borne in mind that statutes are formulated usually to serve several generations and not only the present or the near-future. The former so-called Companies Ordinance of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) remained in the books for over three decades prior to amendment although commerce is one of the most rapidly evolving spheres of human activity.

Therefore if a commercial — matter, or law relating to protection of a philosophy that may at least in some ways relate to commerce, needs amendment, it must be manifestly clear that the interest of the country as a whole be served and that one segment of the commercial fraternity only should not profit through such amendment, in a commercial sense.

The Intellectual Property law as it stands was based on an internationally accepted model and involved the participation of Lalith Athulathmudali PC, and Lakshman Kadirgamar PC. Both gentlemen have been active in the formulation of laws overseas.

It can therefore be assumed that the Code of Intellectual Property Act No. 52 of 1979 was carefully researched and was also up to date in application.

Focussing on the controversial aspect, the ETV television channel alleges that the MTV channel would profit out of the

amendment of the law, and that its own functions would be seriously affected with adverse national consequences.

The "serious affect" would be on the broadcast of the transmissions of STAR-TV received from abroad, inclusive of the BBC-TV programmes.

There is no doubt that at least the BBC-TV programmes are highly informative and also of priceless educational value. Their well-researched and vividly presented documentaries are of highest international class and are sometimes unrivalled anywhere in the world. They assist both adults and children in the development of their mind.

The loss of the BBC-TV programmes would be a blow of great magnitude in EVERY INTELLECTUAL SENSE!

It therefore appears that the amendment of the Intellectual Property law may, in fact, turn out to be intellectually dis-advantageous.

Further, the service performed by the ETV channel of Sri Lanka is in conformity with existing law. There is no doubt that considerable financial commitments have been made by them in equipment and staff for this purpose as they would not have envisaged amendment of up-to-date legislation which may undo their enterprise.

If any other channel in competition with them finds it a matter of commercial inconvenience to be a rival, that is one of the many risks of private enterprise and they should take the consequence fairly. Alternatively they ought to be spurred, through application of research and development methodology, into imaginative and popular endeavour if they find their existence at stake. The twin factors of **Supply** and **Demand** in a free enterprise system dictate that the public shall **Demand** only the **Most Acceptable of Supply**.

We could of course revert to Totalitarianism, which predetermines what is good for the public!

Let us now consider the disposition of the supplier of the electronic (TV) signal from overseas, namely STAR-TV.

In the jungle of competition within the free enterprise system many risks are taken so long as the Return is viable. "Win some, Lose some" is the philosophy and one stays in the game if the winnings prove the risks or some losses to be worthwhile gambles.

Therefore if a signal that is sent out into "open territory" such as the side open skies is also used by the skillful interception of a receiver operating within the laws of its country, that is one of the many aspects of commercial gambling in open territory. The fact that STAR-TV continues in operation manifests that it has been and is indeed a profitable gambling that they indulge.

Now, why should a government step into this scheme of things to alter the status quo, particularly if it works to the advantage of one commercial segment in Sri Lanka and to the intellectual detriment of the of the public?

In such a situation a government should be averse to pressures of any sort, whether they emanate from sources within or without the boundaries of this country. Interference by commercially-motivated activists is almost always anathema to the wider national interest, while it must always be obvious that the cause of justice is served by the process of law.

If it is apparent that the cause of justice is **not**, perhaps, being served, the public could well assume that the people's representatives do not serve the people's interest, and that government has enterprisingly ventured into the forum of fat cats.

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# The Treasures of a Lost Buddhist World

Michael Gibson

PARIS

About 130 years ago, for the first time in centuries, European travelers began to venture deep into the tremendous Taklimakan and Gobi deserts extending westward from China and northward from Tibet — a spectacular and inhospitable region archaeologists refer to as Serindia.

A small number of surprising objects these adventurous men brought back with them prompted archaeologists to prick up their ears and follow in hot pursuit. Most notable was a Buddhist scroll written on birch bark. Experts dated it around the second century, making it the oldest Buddhist manuscript in existence. The archaeologists, in turn, reaching these eroded hills populated by subsistence farmers, came upon lost cities, crumbling temples, Buddhist monasteries and frescoed caves. In one instance, a single walled-up cave turned out to be a veritable Qumran of Buddhism, yielding 40,000 precious manuscripts. A small but highly significant part of this material is the object of a 300-item exhibition at the Grand Palais, "Serindia, Terre de Bouddha" through Feb. 19.

Most of the objects, on loan from St. Petersburg, London, Berlin, Seoul, Nara, Tashkent, Dushanbe and other places — delicate manuscripts, paintings on silk, clay sculptures and mural paintings, many of stunning beauty — were brought back by such scholars as the brilliant young Frenchman Paul Pelliot (who was only 27 at the time), the Hungarian-born Sir Mark Aurel Stein, the Germans Albert Grunwedel and Albert von Le Coq or the Russian Demitri Klementz, during the first decade of this century.

It was soon acknowledged that they had discovered a forgotten nexus of civilization that had first flourished 2,000 years ago in a belt of oases passing north and south of the terrible waste and grandly described as kingdoms: Khotan, Kashgar, Kucha, Turfan, Loulan and Dunhuang.

Inhabited at first by an Indo-European population, the oases were taken over by constantly turning tides of Tibetans, Uighurians and Chinese.

Through them passed not only the traders of the Silk Route, braving the bandits who occasionally took them for ransom or robbed them and slit their throats, but also lone Buddhist monks carrying precious cargoes of scrolls in their backpacks, white-robed Manichean sages from Iran and austere Nestorian clerics who founded Christian monasteries even in remote Tibet.

Ten centuries later, the advances of Islam and the weariness with which the Chinese thereafter viewed the turbulent world to the west of the Great Wall led to the decline of these towns. They were ultimately abandoned and lay forgotten for close to 1,000 years.

The Manichean trove was a boon for historians who knew little about that vanished religion beyond what such adversaries as St. Augustine had reported. But much had been irretrievably lost in the decade preceding the discoveries. Le Coq experienced the ultimate archaeologist's nightmare in 1904 when a peasant told him how he had demolished a Manichean temple a few years earlier to make way for a field. Yes, it had been full of illuminated manuscripts, but the writing had struck him as sinister so he had taken the whole lot, five wagon loads of books, and dumped them into the river.

\* \* \* \*

But Serindia was above all the key vector for the development and propagation of Buddhism to China. The celebrated Chinese monk Xuanzang traveled through Khotan on his way to India in the seventh century. He had set out in search of Buddhist sources, remained in India to study for many years, finally returning to China with a great store of books, relics and statues. A ninth-century painting on silk depicts just such a figure of a monk striding through the waste, weighed down by an enormous hamper full of scrolls and escorted by a vigilant tiger.

The emperor summoned Xuanzang on his return, heard him and commanded a report on his travels that survives to this

day. His exploit also gave birth to that great Chinese classic, the *Si Yeu Ki* or "Journey West" in which the monk and his motley escort (including the Monkey King), brave tigers, dragons and monsters in pursuit of their sacred quest.

The local people were Buddhist at the time. When Marco Polo passed through Khotan five centuries later, on his way east, he noted that the inhabitants "worshiped Mohammed."

Both esoteric Tibetan and Manichean influences are discerned in a splendid, ninth-century painting on silk depicting the doomed efforts of the forces of evil led by Mara to prevent Sakyamuni from reaching enlightenment. The painter displays imaginative resources worthy of Hieronymus Bosch in portraying monsters from hell assaulting the serene figure seated in the lotus position in the middle of the painting.

Experts may be ecstatic about the material, which is of crucial historical importance, and enthralled by the exhibition, which allows them to compare objects now preserved in museums in various parts of the world, but even those who are not familiar with the daunting intricacies of the Buddhist pantheon cannot but be stirred by the beauty of many of these paintings and sculptures, and touched by the pathos of time which all but wiped out the memory of a crucial moment in the history of Asia.

The extreme aridity of the climate nonetheless preserved such frail objects as a sutra scroll on yellow silk, dating from the fifth century, that has come down to us in an state of incredible, pristine freshness. The frescoes have suffered from the depredations of farmers who fancied them as fertilizer, but poignantly beautiful seventh- or eighth-century fragments brought back from Kizil or Shorchuk, with their subtle colors and flowing draftsmanship, once again demonstrate that there is no such thing as progress in art but an almost timeless constant to which all true artists refer.

The exhibition will be at the Metropolitan Museum in Tokyo, April 20 to July 7.

## Colonized Turn Colonizers

Jeanne Thwaites

If they had been contemporaries it is unlikely that they would have become friends for Woolf would have had to break out of the social barriers that had been forced on him and overcome his contempt of people who enjoyed what he did not — and possibly had not been exposed to — horse racing, playing bridge, or singing around a piano, it was at such occupations he would have found such legendary Ceylonese as D.S. Senanayake, Arthur vanLangenberg, Bevis Bawa, Oliver Goonetilleke Lakdasa de Mel relaxing off hours.

That Daniel and Woolf chose to become colonizers can be seen a need to legitimize themselves in a system where they had the misfortune to be sired by an unlucky sperm. Daniel says, "When I was at a school here (Ceylon), we spoke nothing but English, and although the servants at Royden (his parents' home) were Sinhalese, they preferred to speak English rather than their mother tongue" (7). At every level the colonized were eager to anglicize:

It made them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with what is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own (Ngugi 3).

British colonialism seemed rock-solid at that time, and none of the game players had any reason to believe that they would live to see independence for Ceylon. In Ngugi's words they had been planted "with serious doubts about their oral rightness of struggle" (3). Woolf, meanwhile, when he joined the C.C.S., must also have expected anti-Semitism to continue for many years. Correctly so, for it had taken hold in Europe, where it was to escalate into Hitler's Holocaust.

The depersonalization of the colonized is one of the most insidious evils of the system. In Woolf's case he had suffered depersonalization in England, for even his liberal wife was to speak of him in a cliché. On their engagement she wrote that she would be marrying a "penniless Jew;" she could as easily have said a "penniless Englishman," or "penniless writer," but chose instead an expression developed by racists — one impoverished Jews do not use to describe themselves. Daniel was also somewhat depersonalized in Ceylon for if he was not considered a "real" Dutch Burgher what was he? Like Woolf, an escape into a world of absolutes would have seen attractive and so he threw in his lot with the English upper class.

Daniel's father and grandfather were wealthy enough to send their children to England, a three week voyage from their own country, to be educated along British upper class lines (1 & 4). My father was to inflict such a separation on his own children,

sending his son Patrick to England and my sister Barbara to an English school in India — I was only six when first separated from my parents for ten months of each year at a stretch. Our parents thus set out to reconstruct their children to a mold outside their own culture. Because he showed no sign of his Sinhalese blood, for his schooling had corrected his accent and given him the style of an Englishman, Rex Daniel became indistinguishable from upper class Englishmen, with amusing consequences. He was frequently waved to by the Royal Family, both at Ascot and Wimbledon — he had become someone they probably thought they must know.<sup>4</sup> In England, for the first time, he found a place where he was given instant respect by strangers. In Ceylon however, he still could not enter an English club:

I regarded myself as a true loyal subject of the British government, I was not regarded as such by the Britishers in Sri Lanka. I was not eligible for membership to the European Club on the ramparts, a club I had to pass and re-pass at least four times a day on my way to the Kachcheri, where the Government Agent worked (7).

Paradoxically it was in England that Woolf was the outsider and in Ceylon that he became a "real" English gentleman. He wrote, "we were grand because we were a ruling caste in a strange Asiatic country," and "in Ceylon we were all always, subconsciously or consciously, playing a part, acting upon a stage" (24/25). In Ceylon his Jewishness could be successfully concealed and he does not mention it. He says more than once he would have become the Governor if he stayed (247 et al) but knew that the English colonial governors were politically appointed from England, that is, they were not Jews.

In the comparison of their writing, it is obvious that Daniel is much the more secure, for he does not Woolf's compulsion to assure the reader that he is intelligent. He does not even mention his other natural attributes. He has entirely forgotten to mention that he was a considerable athlete and presents himself as a sports junkie who had a need to be at every championship tennis match and other game. He does not mention he was well read.<sup>5</sup> Woolf, praises himself without embarrassment.

The ideal human adult, from the colonial English point of view, was a heterosexual English-born Protestant male, extroverted, courageous, with some money in the family. He must have attended a Public School, graduated from either Oxford or Cambridge, fought for England, and married an English woman. It was best that he have children, and that at least one be male.

Daniel and Woolf, as the chart shows, had both pluses and minuses when judged by this criteria:



	DANIEL	WOOLF
<i>Nationality</i>	minus (Ceylonese)	plus (English)
<i>Sex</i>	plus (male)	plus (male)
<i>Sexual preference</i>	plus (heterosexual)	plus (heterosexual)*
<i>Religion</i>	plus (Protestant)	minus (Jew)
<i>Marriage</i>	minus (Barbie: Ceylon)	plus (Virginia: English)
<i>Children</i>	plus (five, one male)	minus (none)
<i>War service</i>	plus (W.W.I)	minus (medical exemption)
<i>Personality</i>	plus (extrovert)	minus (introvert)
<i>Physical courage</i>	plus	minus
<i>Financial stability</i>	plus	plus
<i>Public School</i>	plus (Bedford)	plus/minus (St. Paul's)**
<i>University</i>	plus (Oxford)	plus (Cambridge)
	10 plus	6-1/2 plus
	2 minus	5-1/2 minus

\* He appeared to be heterosexual, but as I discuss later, there is some possibility he was not.

\*\* Woolf's education was at St. Paul's an authentic Public School, but a day school, "lacking the essential qualifications of catering specifically for the upper classes (Bamford xii).

The very fact that the two men's education included both Public schools and a major university shows how well they and their families understood the importance of doing things the "right way." As Daniel was much closer to the English colonial mode than Woolf, it is obvious why his self-image was stronger, for he would have been fighting fewer demons. This also may be why he was so often able to stand up against the colonial system even when working in it. Before I made the chart I had become repelled by Leonard Woolf, as revealed by himself, particularly when compared to the cheery optimism of Daniel. Now I have nothing but sympathy for the older man for it is evident that he carried a far greater burden.

The heaviest burden Woolf must have carried was that even his wife Virginia sneered at his Jewish family. Woolf's Public School would have made certain that his behavior was in place before he went on to Cambridge but boys who came from a different cultural home life often had to face that they had now stepped into social world where their parents could not follow. Woolf did not invite his mother to his wedding. Quentin Bell writes about this occasion: "Did they perceive that she thought their furniture hideous? Did she seem to them a haughty goy thinking herself too good for the family of their brilliant son? I am afraid that probably they did." She described her first visit to them:

"A sandwich, Miss Stephen — or may I call you Virginia?"  
 "What? Ham sandwiches for tea?"  
 "Not Ham: potted meat. We don't eat Ham or bacon or Shellfish in this house."  
 "Not Shell fish? Why not shell fish?"  
 "Because it says in the Scriptures that they are unclean creatures & our Mr. Josephs at the Synagogue — & —"  
 It was queer (1912-1915 3).

How she sneers: ham is Ham, and shell fish is Shellfish — how queer they are. She is confident that her friends will also find them queer. "Work and love and the Jews in Putney (Leonard's family) take it out of me," she was to write to one. "The Jews in Putney," is much like an American white calling her Black in-laws, "the Blacks in Watts," as if it is an affront

to her that they live in a neighborhood where there are many other Blacks.

The purpose of English Public schooling was not so much to educate, as to rearrange the thinking of the students along some very particular lines. Their accent had to become uniform British upper class. Parents were now to be referred to as "Mater and Pater." A father could not be hugged or kissed in public — his hand was shaken — but a mother could be kissed on the cheek and embraced with restraint. A barrier was thus introduced both into the home, and also into friendships.

First names were dropped in English Public Schools, and Daniel's and Woolf's writing show how this rule often prevented them from sounding close to other men, but also how it allowed them to show special affection by breaking it. Daniel calls most Ceylonese and his personal English friends by their first names, but the English members of the C.C.S. by their last only. The effect is to suggest that he had little affection for his English colleagues.

Woolf, on the other hand, calls just one man by his first name-Lytton Strachey is "Lytton." His English colleagues are usually called by their last name only or by their job: the "G.A.," "A.G.A." and so on. The Ceylonese are further demoted: "an engineer," "the dogboy," even when they are in his life every day. He thus sounds cold and unfriendly.

Making a person nameless, Memmi calls a colonist's way of depersonalizing the colonized whose self-image then becomes one of the interchangeable cog they truly are in their oppressor's eyes. It also makes others see the nameless one as a colonized stereotype. When a prostitute Woolf has sex with is called "a Burgher girl" (Growing 67), there is an implication that prostitute and Burgher are synonyms of each other.

### Colonization and the family

Both Daniel and Woolf chose to marry brilliant out-spoken women whose social positions legitimized them so these wives' influence was profound. Woolf was a bachelor in Ceylon but

wrote *Growing* after many years as a married man. Daniel also started out his C.C.S. life as a bachelor but married five years later. If he had been only seeking to legitimize his position through marriage, however, he would surely have chosen an English woman.

Those who colonize or are colonized subconsciously recreate similar hierarchical relationships in every aspect of their lives, and it is particularly noticeable that the patterns are repeated in their relationships at home, where they reproduce many of the insidious aspects of domination that they may actually deplore. Men who come from a culture of indulgent husbands will suddenly become tyrants, wives begin to domineer rather than guide their children, and the children react to hierarchic notions by jostling for dominance one over the other. To establish a pecking order is any animal's nature, of course, but other signs of oppression have to be learned. If a family has already started to emulate the oppressor's behavior, the pattern becomes entrenched into successive generations. We see the connection in uneducated American Blacks who are often criticized by middle-class whites for beating their children for infractions that seem minor — a pattern of behavior which is still mirroring white slave masters' treatment of their grandparents. I have met American Blacks who boast of being beaten by their parents as if it somehow made them the better for it.

Daniel's Ceylonese family was anglicized and it was one of intense sibling rivalry. In *Letter*, he comments that he was astonished that his own children were not quarrelsome or jealous of each other, but "your mother took it for granted because her own brothers and sisters were like that" (83). Barbie was also a colonized woman but "the woman as an oppressed person is almost more free, in a way, than the man is. She has fewer principles dictating her behavior. She has more disrespect" (Sartre 109)

Under Roman Dutch law Barbie would personally have owned nothing after her marriage. In a divorce, their children would have belonged to their father only. She would not, therefore, have taken the matter of marriage lightly nor would Reg if only because the care of the children was strictly a woman's duty in Ceylon, as was the running of the household. Men did not have the home-training to handle such matters and his account of his early C.C.S. days as a bachelor show how incompetent he was at it (10/17). Most men in Ceylon, after a divorce, find having to run their households a most disagreeable task.

It was love at first sight for both Barbie and Reg: "She entered the train I was traveling in. I immediately attached myself to her... There was a dance that evening...I proposed to her that night" (18). To his chagrin Barbie laughed at him, but he knew he was in love when the next day, "I refused a girl's invitation to take her to the G.O.H. dance that night, which was very unusual for me!" He proposed again, and was accepted. "Barbie told me that she had been in love with me ever since she had seen me on my return to Sri Lanka five years earlier... When she was only fifteen." It would seem that this particular young woman, though shy of strangers, was unusually sure of her emotions. When he talks of Barbie, however, it is rarely to comment on her appearance and charm, what a loving mother she was, or to admire her as an artist and musician. He looks back on their life together as two friends who were

constantly coming at life from different directions but were totally committed to the relationship. Towards the end of the book he briefly analyzes their relationship and why they lived "happily ever after" (144). He gives her all the credit.

As a husband and father, however, Daniel shows himself at his worst — intensely selfish, particularly at the beginning of his marriage — and cruelly unsupportive of his wife. They were seldom without company during their six-month honeymoon in Europe, and even after she became pregnant his friends and relatives traveled with them on occasion. Reg's callousness is appalling. He does not change their itinerary when she gets ill frequently and leaves her in hotel rooms to go sight-seeing alone. Barbie makes a bet with his nephew Jack that she will eat every cookie offered her at the Peak Frean factory: "Needless to say, she was quite ill on the way back and Christy<sup>6</sup> and I walked on, completely disowning her and Jack never stopped laughing at your mother all the way home" (42). She eventually becomes so ill that her doctor sternly tells him she must slow down or find another doctor. Reg promises to see she does but continues as before. He does not seem capable of seeing marriage other than a convenience for himself and this is exactly what the colonials do when moving into the colonizer's country.

Their relationship quickly changes from idyllic to dysfunctional yet he does not seem aware that it was or that it came to an impasse which she, in a stunning reversal, managed to correct. She had never had to deal with social onepmanship until her marriage. When she finds her husband's Englishness is nothing like as uncomplicated as she has presumed, for he alternately bullies and neglects her, she uses her first pregnancy as an excuse to return home:

Hi<sup>7</sup> came up and drove her down to Colombo... She told me she would not be returning until after the Christmas holidays. It was now the 14th (of December). She was sorry to go but thought it best to do so. She said she was feeling thoroughly scared and needed to be reassured about the business of having a baby (55).

Instinctively, she uses another man (her brother) as an ally to make her husband listen to her. She stayed with the vanLangenbergs until her first child was born the following April. Only when she was a mother could she instill her own value system on her new household and when she returned had changed from a shy dependent girl to a strongly assertive woman who changed what she didn't like about their life. She broke hierarchical rules without hesitation: hugged naked Rodiya (untouchable) babies (57), and cleaned out dirty rest houses herself to shame the staff (127). She did not, however, try and curb her husband's hectic social life but now filled it with her own Ceylon friends as well as his. In the process he became more Ceylonese. In *Mannar* Daniel describes taking over 'as A.G.A. from Sandys, a bachelor Englishman, whose sister has been acting as his hostess.

#### Notes

3. Personal Recollection.
4. Personal Recollection.
5. He was very well read. Personal Recollection.
6. His sister.
7. Nickname for her brother Henry.

*NEXT: THE LONELY WOOLF*



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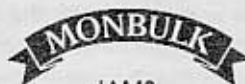
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***Ethnic Strife and Politics in Sri Lanka: An Investigation into Demands and Responses***, New Delhi: Navrang

(In Collaboration with Lake House, Colombo) 1994, pp 252; Rs. 750.

**W. A. Wiswa Warnapala**

*Reviewed by Ananda Welihena*

One of the crucial issues in Sri Lankan politics, since 1983, is the ethnic strife. What are its demands and responses?

The ethnic issue is crucial because it has spawned a political crisis and debilitated the Sri Lankan State which has manifested a significant stability in the past. In the acknowledgement of the book, the author Prof. Wiswa Warnapala, Member of Parliament and the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, has stressed that *"Sri Lanka, in the last two decades experienced a political crisis unprecedented in the history of the country which for years, remained comparatively a stable political system based on the British parliamentary tradition. Ethnic strife has been the major element in the continuing political crisis....."*

Ethnic strife is not restricted to the Sri Lankan polity. At the international level too, it can be seen particularly, in the polities of Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa which are multi-ethnic, linguistic and religious in character.

The ethnic strife has assumed a political role in these countries. It is a power-oriented struggle seeking to establish an ethnic identity by exploring a homeland and a Separate State based on the historical past.

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**Multi-ethnic Setting**

Sri Lanka is defined as a pluralist polity by the western scholars consisting of three small ethnic groups with a majority community of Sinhala Buddhists at the centre. A violent revolutionary leadership is manipulating the Tamil ethnic minority to acquire a political role; the failure to discover a peaceful co-existence with the majority community has spawned the crisis of the national question. It implies that a multi-ethnic polity must have a political frame work to ensure the peaceful co-habitation of all groups.

The centri-fugal tendency of the Tamil militant group can be resolved by a solution. The conflict resolution necessitates an investigation into the demands of the ethnic strife because of their energising effect on the forward march of the strife. The struggle will continue slowly but relentlessly until the demands are met.

What are the responses of successive governments to satisfy these demands? Why have they not gained the approval of the parties in disputes? What would be the solution that will win their approval?

The investigation into this crisis of the State, propelled by the ethnic strife, without looking into the demands of the ethnic group and the responses of the decision-making institution of the political systems of the past, is a futile effort. The study reveals that there have been continuities and changes in this task over years.

The decision-makers of the present

People's Alliance (PA) government will be pleased to go through the demands and responses, that this strife has experienced in the past years, to offer an appropriate solution.

The study on the ethnic strife of Sri Lanka was planned in Sri Lanka but done at the University of Antwerp in Belgium during the sabbatical leave of Prof. Wiswa Warnapala for which encouragement was extended by Prof. W.A.S. Cornelis of the College of Developing Countries at the University of Antwerp and Prof. R. Doom, the Director of the Centre for Third World Studies of State University of Gent. Prof. Cornelis writes that "the Publication of this most interesting document is again the final step of another encouraging and enriching research experience, based on a ten-month collaboration between Prof. Wiswa Warnapala (Then Head of Department of Political Science, University of Peradeniya) and Prof. R. Doom".

Contacts with Universities, institutions and organizations interested in Third World development enabled the completion of this project. These organizations were keen to develop a dialogue between the developed and developing countries.

Belgium was chosen for this research for two reasons: 1. Belgium is one of the industrialised states which has adopted a friendly and co-operative attitude towards the developing countries of the Third World; 2. the socio-political system of Belgium is useful for a comparative study because it has successfully introduced a re-structuralization of its polity in response



to the demands of the 55% of the Flemish speaking people and 45% of the French speaking population. The integrity of the State is not bifurcated nor its sovereignty violated. The conflict resolution strategy of Belgium serves as a model and an eye opener for Sri Lanka to resolve the present ethnic strife.

### Political Crisis

The investigation into the Sri Lankan Political crisis and its ethnic strife addresses the demands and responses that this issue has generated over a period. The first chapter is devoted to the explication of the multi-ethnic plural setting of the Sri Lankan polity. The analysis reveals that its integrity and oneness is threatened by the Tamil ethnic militancy. Will the multi-character of the polity remain intact and stable over the years? Will the forces of religion, language, ethnicity, and caste threaten its national integrity and sovereignty? Will the plural society create "imagined communities" by inventing traditions and myths from the ancient past? Will it assist in the exploration of the historical past with a view to legitimising the struggle to attain political goals? Will it jeopardise the power of the majority Sinhala Buddhist population which is imputed as a hegemonic force seeking to threaten the rights of the minorities?

The author argues that the pre-eminence position granted to Sinhala Buddhism is never intended to be used to the detriment of small minority groups. If the small ethnic groups are ready and willing to co-operate and accommodate with a spirit of give and take then much progress can be achieved. This is important because it is the Sinhala community, by virtue of its numerical strength, controls the State (p. 17).

However, care must be exercised to ensure that policies and programmes are not introduced to gratify the needs of the dominant group only. When the dominant group exercises power and authority, it can shift towards the majority. Its status, wealth and power, would arouse a feeling of deprivation among the minorities, resulting in diverse political strategies to gain their rights and culminating with an armed struggle: a war waged at two fronts of the State and ethnic group incurring heavy destruction of people and property.

### Sinhalese-Tamil Identity and Issues

In the next chapter, discussion is centred on "Sinhalese-Tamil Identity" which is recognised as the major cause of the ethnic strife. The concept of identity induces nationalistic feelings due to number of factors. For the Buddhists, the Mahavamsa Chronicles provide incentives towards the unity of religion and nation (p. 23). Buddhism, Sinhala culture and language are intermingled to provide for a separate ethnic identity which has to be not only saved and protected but advanced and improved. But this task has its adverse repercussions: 1) it retards the progress of constructing a common working class consciousness because the trade unions were attempting to adopt ethnic tendencies to attract better leverage for their struggles; 2) it retards the progress of constructing one nation. The British favoured a divided polity with ethnic divisions based on communal representation for the perpetuation of their power. It is to achieve this aim that they practised a divide and rule strategy.

The Third chapter addresses the diverse issues emerging out of the ethnic division. (1) The issue of English educated elite who perpetuated the British rule failed to cement the ethnic division. The elite sought avenues to meet their own political interests through representational politics. (2) Representation was the other issue which exacerbated the ethnic conflict shifting from the communal to territorial. (3) The disenfranchisement of the Indian plantation workers was another issue which augmented the communal strife with the formation of the Tamil Federal Party. (4) The other issues were language, education (university admission) and employment. However, the crucial land issue is focussed in the fourth chapter under the "Traditional Homeland" issue.

### Homeland Responses

The Homeland issue, one of the most controversial demands of the Tamil militants, which the author has analyzed, documented and explicated with facts and figures based on statistical data. This chapter incorporates the schemes of reconciliation of the conflict emerging from the homeland issue. The emphasis is provided to the responses of the successive governments from the early 1950s beginning from the responses of Mr

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The successive conflict resolution strategies employed were: the District Development Councils, the dialogue and negotiations with the Tamil militants in India and Thimpu and the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. The failure of these strategies, particularly the latter to satisfy the demands of the Tamil militants pertaining to the homeland issue, had induced them to a commitment to fight for a Separate State. Political parties have attempted to resolve the homeland issue by advancing a proposal for a federal system which has resulted in a new political discourse in the polity. The state is searching for an alternative proposal to settle the conflict of the homeland issue.

### The Federalist Solution

In the political discourse, this alternative proposal of federalism has been the focal point which the author has dwelt extensively in chapter five. It is the most interesting piece of writing for it contains diverse opinions expressed by political parties, organizations and individuals. The author has presented the facts in a value-free way or as objectively as possible by placing before the readers, the pros and cons of the debate on the federal solution. The Federal principle is seen in the light of what Prof. Dicey said: "a political contrivance intended to reconcile national unity and power with the maintenance of state rights" (p. 155).

The sixth chapter encapsulates the facts and figures related to violence and the State. The debilitating trend of the state is addressed in this chapter for which the "ethnic factor has been central" on account of which constitutional authoritarianism was brought in (p. 160). The author revealed that "the politicised ethnicity is now a formidable threat to the prevailing political order" that the capacity of the State to bring law and order, peace and security, harmony and prosperity has become a necessity, but which it failed to generate. The state was experiencing a crisis, manifesting incompetency to perform its functions. People questioned the legitimacy of the State as their Custodian. But the response of the State was to reinforce its power by assuming an authoritarian feature; relying on its coercive power, to repress and regulate the social forces.

## Violence and Authoritarianism

State authoritarianism reached the culminating point with the former President J.R. Jayewardene and his Executive Presidential system. Power was used unjustly in 1980 to stifle the power of the organised trade union movement and the Indo-Sri Lanka Pact was signed with Rajiv Gandhi under an imposed curfew. These examples reveal that power was personalised under J.R. Jayewardene. The confusion worsened when former President Mr. R. Premadasa continued the same programme of degeneration of democracy in which the right to dissent was curtailed, rigging at the elections and post-election violence were common. This era was marked with violence. Prof. Wiswa Warnapala has analyzed Sri Lankan violence in detail.

Two types of violence were observed: the Tamil militant violence and J.V.P. violence. In order to respond to the Tamil violence, the State used its violence with the help of the IPKF. The number of killings, disappearances were incredibly high. The State was able to control the J.V.P. insurgency by its violence, but it did not usher in an era of peace, law and security to people. It was not able "to establish its authority throughout the island" (p. 201). The principal reason was the crisis within the political system, exacerbated by the incompetence of the state to find a durable settlement to the Tamil ethnic strife. The mere victory over Sinhalese insurgents "did not prove its skill and prudence as a capable State" (201). As the author argued: "The failure to find a solution to the ethnic conflict, will not improve its capacity to consolidate itself. It must remove the impediments which it created for instance by massive human rights violations and employment of repressive tactics for the de-stabilization of the country's democratic order".

## Internationalist Perspective

The final chapter gives an account of the ethnic strife in the world. This international perspective provides insights to comprehend the nature and functions of the ethnic strife within a comparative framework, enabling to produce similarities and differences and draw significant lessons to approach the Sri Lankan ethnic strife and place it within an international context.

The author's intention was to explicate the thesis that the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka has resulted in a crisis of the State. His concern was to drive home the urgency to work towards an enduring conflict resolution strategy.

The message that this work intends to communicate must be noted by the decision makers of the present People's Alliance government, if they are keen to establish peace, unity and stability. This book was written at the tail end of the former President Mr. R. Premadasa's UNP government. It has encapsulated the features characteristic to the seventeen year UNP rule. The necessity for an alternative government was predicted in this book by the analysis of the political crisis.

## Relevance for Today

A student of politics and government of Sri Lanka who intends to read on the seventeen year UNP rule, its precipitation

of the crisis and the escalation of abuse of power, is certain to benefit from this work. The system capability and performance of the State under the UNP was questioned in this work. The state of nature prior to the assumption of power by the PA government can be explained as a social contract that people decided to enter into.

If this book is read carefully, then the maintenance, consolidation and expansion of power by the PA government would be less difficult. It can learn lessons from what was and decide on what should be done for the future. Each chapter of the book provides information to create an unviolent, democratic society. The book illustrates that the political system experienced a crisis due to the ethnic strife. The resolution of the ethnic strife, in effect, must be the first responsibility of the PA government. Its failure would affect the polity adversely as it did to the UNP rule.

Waiting — 15

## Kundasale '51

*It was a crossing*

*From December to January*

*A passage from boyhood to care*

*A time crossing and a river crossing to where*

*Narendra Singha had once held court*

*The Palace?*

*Only an excavation site*

*With old SEAC bungalows straddling the hill*

*Above the Mahaweli's gliding moat*

*The World War Two doorway held you*

*Wisped from river mist and light*

*Dawn light, noon tide and bamboo*

*Gold limbed in the tresses of night*

*May be I yet walk up from the river*

*where Mountbatten once moored his boat*

*And you trip down from girlhood*

*And we startle Narendra Singha's queens at their sport.*

U. Karunatilake





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