

**LANKA**

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# P. A. : THE SURPRISING PRICE OF VICTORY

Mervyn de Silva

There is much in the P.A.'s constitutional reforms package for the Tamils of the north-and-east but not enough. The government's overriding concern was not to alienate majority Sinhalese opinion or offend the Buddhist clergy, the Maha Sangha, while responding to the long-standing Tamil demand for regional autonomy in the so-called "traditional homeland", the north-and-east. This was not the handiwork of the cock-a-hoop P. A. we saw in action soon after the "Lion Flag" was hoisted in Jaffna, the triumphant climax of "Operation Riviresa". President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her closest advisers had evidently observed a change in the mass mood and it took them by surprise. Soon they were on the defensive, Constitutional Affairs Minister, G. L. Pieris most of all.

To attribute this change in the climate of opinion only to the Maha Sangha and the Sinhala-Buddhist hardliners is to oversimplify. The truth is that the L.T.T.E., over-estimating its military strength, had established a mini-state in Jaffna. It had convinced its guerrillas, the Jaffna middle class and the Tamil people that the L.T.T.E. had the military capacity to defend its "capital" even against an onslaught by a well-equipped conventional army. But for once the Sri Lankan army was advancing according to a plan, and most of all, was in no hurry, and not under pressure to take Jaffna in order to boost mass morale in the South.

What the P. A. strategists did not anticipate was the Sinhala reaction to the news that the army had taken Jaffna and the "Tigers" had fled. The Sinhala ego had taken such a battering these past years that the reaction of the Sinhala voter was certainly not what the P. A. had confidently anticipated — an electorate prepared to accommodate the Tamils and concede at least some of their long-standing demands. "We have the Tigers on the run,

why concede, why compromise?" The Maha Sangha, Sinhalese middle-class and the intelligentsia took the P. A. by surprise.

What is more, the army had "arrived". The army had pulled it off... on its own. The army had grown up. It had a voice; it had a right to speak. This new opinion-climate had such a strong impact on the P. A. policy-makers, and the parliamentary back-benchers that the old action-plan had to be abandoned. i.e. to offer the Tamils substantial concessions, on the assumption that the military victory had softened even the Sinhalese hardliners.

If we have ousted them from Jaffna, and Prabhakaran is on the run, why "concede?" It is possible that Colonel Ratwatte, the Deputy Defence Minister, who was identified by every TV viewer and newspaper reader as the "politician" at the front, took this line of argument at the highest policy-making levels of the P.A.

What is important is that the army had taken a seat at the meeting of the inner Cabinet, so to say. The army had arrived.

The L.T.T.E.'s own reaction strengthened the army's position. The 'Tigers' opened or rather re-opened the Eastern front. And that front in a way is a more complex military challenge ..... in what is after all an ethnic conflict. The ethnic complexion of the east — Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese as well as the different terrain make the East quite a different challenge. The war goes on, the P. A. policy makers dare not offer the Tamils a deal that Sinhala opinion will denounce as a "sell-out" to the enemy, and what's worse, a stab in the brave Sinhala soldier's back.

Thus, the "Devolution package" which nearly all Tamil parties have rejected as disappointing or inadequate or a shameless somersault, will hardly be the basis

of a negotiated settlement. Or the first step in a "conflict resolution exercise".

The P. A. in fact has mounted a self-protective rear-guard action. "The government's devolution plans do not include any special privileges for the Northern and Eastern provinces" said Prof. Pieris on Monday 29. (Interestingly, he was addressing a gathering of monks at the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall!) "All powers regarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country will be vested with the Centre. Devolution is essential to preserve the country's territorial integrity!"

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# Pakistan's Kashmir Tangle

Eqbal Ahmad

**There are striking similarities between five decades of Pakistan's entanglements in Kashmir and the Arab states policy on Palestine from 1930 to 1980.**

Rhetoric, strident in both cases, obstructed serious examination of realities. There was an absence of attention to comprehending the resources, methods, and strategies of the adversary. Little respect was shown toward and no effort was expended to mobilise the aspirations and resources of the peoples in question — Palestinians and Kashmiris. Their pliability and sacrifices were presumed. Political opportunism, the exegesis of personal ambitions and domestic politics shaped the activities and proclamations of politicians and governments, and these passed as policy. Diplomacy was reduced to legal argumentation and references to U.N. resolutions. By and large posturing substituted for policy making. Above all the pressures for conformity were such that the intellectual class either fed the prevalent illusions or remained silent to the detriment of the countries and peoples concerned.

When policy was actually discussed and formulated, it was conceived mostly in military term, and without serious and dispassionate consideration of the adversary's or one's own political and economic capacity or will to sustain war. Illusions substituted for analysis, bluster for planning and design. Naturally, miscalculations resulted: In 1948 the Arabs grossly underestimated their enemy's strength no less than their own weakness. In the same year, Pakistan miscalculated the strength and popularity of Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference, the nature of India's interest in Kashmir, the effectiveness of Pakistani tribals as a fighting force, and the command and cohesion of its own army. In 1965, Pakistan's highest officials miscalculated three-fold: Kashmiri response to Operation Gibraltar, the Pakistani force's capability to carry out Sledgehammer, and India's riposte to both. Similarly in 1967 when it closed the Gulf of Aqaba, Egypt disregarded Israel's strategic objectives and will to make war, America's lack of interest in restraining Israel, and also Egypt's own military capability.

In both regions wars did break out,

costing dearly in men and material, and resulting either in defeats as in 1948, 1967, and 1972, or in unfavourable stalemates as in 1965 for Pakistan and 1973 for Egypt and Syria. A notable feature in both cases was the willingness of the warring sides to accept cease-fires sponsored by superpowers and supervised by the United Nations. Yet, war's end did not lead to serious and fruitful negotiations for peace. The vicious cycle of posturing, miscalculations, costly spending on arms, and warfare has finally ended for the Arabs in abject surrender by the PLO, unequal peace for Egypt and Jordan, and a risky stalemate for Syria and Lebanon. Pakistan and India continue in their old ways, and Kashmir remains contested betwixt — bleeding, suffering, brutally suppressed.

Recently I have been inquiring into Kashmir's prospects. Since India will not allow a Pakistani into Jammu and Kashmir my Observations are based on research and conversations with informed Pakistanis, Kashmiris, and Indians:

The evidence is overwhelming that India's moral isolation in Kashmir is nearly total, and unlikely to be overcome by military means or political manipulations. It commands not a shred of legitimacy among Kashmiri Muslims. India's problem is not communal although sectarian Hindu and Muslim ideologues view it in communal terms. Their claims notwithstanding, Kashmiri alienation from India is based on lived realities not on religious preferences. Nor did Pakistan have any thing to do with igniting Kashmir's extraordinary rebellion. The roots of the popular uprising in 1989 lay in Kashmiri discontent with neglect and the Indian government's unconscionable manipulations of Kashmiri politics. The protracted and brutal repression which proceeded has merely consolidated Kashmiri people's deep alienation from India.

Ironically while India's moral isolation in Kashmir has augmented, Kashmir appears farther from the goal of liberation today than it was in the years 1989 to 1992. Kashmir's brave and long suffering people are merely caught now between the rock and a hard place. Pakistan's decision makers will do Pakistan, and the Kashmiris, great favour if they would take

a break from rhetorical exercises and international travels to ponder this reality. In this space one can offer only the outlines of a framework for their reflection.

History of liberation struggles in twentieth century suggests that movements which succeeded owed their successes to seven primary and four secondary factors. The following are primary requirements: (i) popular support for the liberation movement and augmenting moral isolation of the incumbent; (ii) a dominant and unified leadership and organisation; (iii) primacy of politics and subordination of the military to the political leadership; (iv) rebel organisation must outadminister the incumbent, not merely outfight it; (v) clarity of goals is essential; objectives must not be in dispute; (iv) the ideology and style of the movement should be in harmony with the inherited culture of the people; (vii) support of foreign countries which mobilise international opinion and also help to sustain morale.

The secondary factors entail the logistics of waging protracted struggles; favourable terrain, availability of food, supply of arms, and dependable external sanctuaries. Historically, movements which fulfil the primary conditions fully but are deficient in secondary advantages have tended to succeed. The Mujahideen's struggle against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, widely deemed as being successful, was unique in the sense that while it was exceptionally well endowed on the secondary resources it was deficient in the areas of primary requirements. But then its weaknesses were offset by the extraordinary support it had of the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran and, above all, Pakistan which had long and open borders with Afghanistan. A senior diplomat in Delhi observed that the "failure to comprehend the uniqueness of the Afghan experience and Kashmir's contrasting patterns have contributed to Pakistani blunders in the Valley."

A brief look at the Kashmiri environment today leads to unhappy conclusions: (a) At the outset, the uprising which began in 1989 was popular, politically rooted, and converging around one dominant party — the JKLF. Today there are



upwards of thirty groups, ideologically diverse, competing, often undercutting each other. In this free-for-all India's counter-insurgency operatives have introduced their own players. The most notorious and powerful of those is the group led by Kuka Paray which has cut significantly into some strongholds of Kashmiri resistance. (b) Militarisation has reached in the resistance movement to the point that political and military relationship has been reversed. The armed ones have primacy over the political wing of resistance. (c) By all accounts the parallel hierarchies — administrative organs, justice, and policing — which had begun to develop during 1989-1992 have all but disintegrated as militarisation augmented and resistance groups multiplied. (d) Appearances notwithstanding, Kashmiri resistance is deeply divided today over the question of objectives. Pro-Pakistan and pro-independence, Islamists and secularists have little in common except their opposition to India, and this makes collaboration and coordination difficult and, in some cases, impossible. (e) With few exceptions, the ideology and style of the resistance groups — some are linked to Pakistan's Islamic parties — run counter to Kashmiri political culture which is by and large mystical, temporal, and pluralistic.

Above all, news from Pakistan undermines Kashmiri morale and undercuts their cause. The violence in Karachi — murders in government custody, siege of mohallas, incarceration of people without charges and trials, and extortion by militia — closely parallels Kashmiri experience today. A group of Kashmiri intellectuals, a few of them on a visit from Srinagar, gathered one afternoon in Delhi to meet me. Their anxious questions about Pakistan were painful to answer. What they had to say was even more difficult to swallow.

"Riaz Khokar Sahib (Pakistan's High Commissioner in India) has Karachi thrown at him whenever he speaks of Kashmir", said one man. And a woman professor: "We have had two choices. One, India has been a bitter experience for us. The other, Pakistan looks no better now. So we want a third option." Said a well known political figure: "India is spending fifty billion rupees a year on Kashmir. Pakistan is losing three hundred billion rupees annually in Karachi. Who will last longer. We worry." And so it went. Would some one in Islamabad care to answer?

## Immigration major issue in Australia

Kalinga Seneviratne

SYDNEY

Immigration looms large as a major issue in Australia's upcoming general elections, with a maverick Labour Party MP threatening to run as an independent on anti-immigration platform.

Graeme Campbell, federal MP or Kalgoorlie in the Western Australian gold mining belt for more than a decade, lost Labour's endorsement in November due to his criticism of the government's policies on immigration, multi-culturalism and the environment.

He has announced plans to form an independent national senate ticket with the Australian Against Further Immigration (AAFI) party, which won up to eight per cent of votes in recent state by-elections in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. He is expected to launch his campaign on Australia Day later this month.

AAFI has been accused of being an xenophobic anti-Asian political movement, although the party platform says the racial background of immigrants is immaterial.

One critic wrote in a recent newspaper article AAFI would not exist "if more migrants were called Smiths instead of Nguyen".

Now that Asians make up more than half of immigrants here, any group calling for cuts in the immigration programme could be suspected of being anti-Asian racists. Asian migrants say anti-Asian racism remains ingrained in the Australian psyche.

In an interview with IPS, AAFI president Rodney Spencer said the planned senate ticket with Campbell for the coming federal elections is not purely an anti-immigration campaign.

"We've really got a one-party system. There's little difference between the (two major) parties," he said. "We want an alternative. The alternative basically is a sort of a nationalistic Australian party. What we have is an internationalistic one-party system".

AAFI wants immigrant arrivals limited to

30,000 a year, about a third of current levels and a fifth of the rate five years ago.

Spencer, a medical practitioner, does not dispute the business community's argument that immigration boosts economic growth, but says growth by itself is not necessarily a good thing.

"I don't want growth that creates big cities, so that I can't drive around. I don't want growth that creates pollution so that I can't breathe the air," he said.

He adds that Australia is not only importing people but also dropping protection for its industries. "We don't believe it is right to drop our tariff barriers, destroy our industries and import everything we want from overseas. That's globalisation and it's not in the best interest of the Australian people".

Emeritus Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya of the Centre for Development Studies at Perth's Edith Cowan University says Australians are beginning to see the economic impact of the immigration policies of the recent past, and this will bring the issue of racism into the centre-stage of the public agenda.

"Racial issues have been driven under the carpet by saying it's only the lunatic fringe (which gets involved), but it's no longer so," he says. "We now find a more competitive labour market... so one is going to find all kinds of scapegoats".

The deregulation of the labour market and the increasing withdrawal of protectionism have affected migrants more than anybody else, but Jayasuriya notes that ironically they are being blamed for the problems.

"What Graeme Campbell is arguing is not really racist or anti-green, but he's really challenging deregulation and non-protectionist policies (which) really boils down to the question of jobs for Australian workers," he says.

The media have branded Campbell's planned ticket as an anti-Green campaign. But Western Australian Senator Dee Margetts agrees with Campbell on the need for a public debate on issues like population and immigration policy.

— IPS

## C.P.: Post-Polls Resurrection

Horace Perera

Philip Taubman writing in the New York Times posed a question to the peoples the Russian Federation. "How could you" he asked vote communist, "after enduring all those endless lines in the Arctic Winter to buy a stunted head of cabbage, after suffering all the grandiloquent nonsense of Lenin's ideals and studying Marxism-Leninism until your mind went dumb, and after watching your country sink into an economic stupor". This is just what millions of Russians did on Sunday 17th December 1995 in voting to fill half the seats of the 450 places in the Duma, the "Lower House" of the Parliament of the Russian Federation, thereby resurrecting the Communist Party from the dead and making it and its allies the most powerful political organization in the Federation.

The most significant thing about the election, apart from the shift towards Communists and Nationalists was that the elections occurred as there were serious doubts that it would be held at all. As a matter of fact, as many as 43 political parties fielded candidates and voter turnout exceeded the 60% expected. Moreover the 660 odd team of international observers reported that, but for the voting in Chechnya where the war was still continuing and a few negligible irregularities, the election was well conducted. The serious unfair element was the extent to which the government party, "Our Home is Russia," monopolised the electronic media in the campaign leading to the election.

No time was given to the other parties. The Communists with their likely Agrarian allies and other leftist parties can together hold about 200 seats in the Duma. With Zhirinovskiy's ultra-nationalists, whose economic programme is not very different they can command a majority in the House. President Yeltsin has gone on record

as saying "we have no reason to worry, or assess the elections as a tragedy". while Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin has declared that they "will not change course". In spite of these and other assurances that Russia will stay on the "Road of Reform" there is no doubt that the election results constitute a stinging defeat of the government and a vote of No to democracy and market reforms as so far experienced by the Russians. Grigori Yavlinsk the determined leader of the reformist Yabloko block was more realistic when he told Flora Lewis, a regular political commentator to the *International Herald Tribune* that "..... people hate the government so much they support its all-out enemies".

### Communist Return not Unexpected

The return to popularity of the Communist Party was not unexpected as the day of reckoning, 17 the December, approached. Western optimists had quite unrealistically expected democracy and a market economy to take root in the sprawling sub-continent that is the Russian Federation bringing with them considerable benefits to its peoples. Many Russians, however, particularly those outside Moscow and St Peter'sberg, as well as some other urban centres, perceived things very differently. They saw political and economic reform bring with it only confusion, chaos, economic misery, specially in the form of galloping inflation and widespread unemployment, suspicion and crime.

Their disillusionment was heightened by Yeltsin's frequent resort to rule by decree rather than acceptance of rule by parliament, his novel dissolution of parliament by the use of tanks and by his economic measures which according to Stephen F Cohen "have impoverished nearly half the nation while unleashing a bacchanalia of official corruption and enriching 5 to 8 percent of the population". These naturally generated a hazy nostalgia for what many remembered as a time when law and order prevailed, bread was excellent and cheap, unemployment almost non-existent, education universal, health-care free and vacations subsidized. It was evident that reform was facing

a formidable obstacle which strangely enough was "THE PAST". To make matters worse the West continued, in spite of official Russian warnings, plans to extend NATO eastward thereby offending the entire Russian political spectrum. This, together with Turkey's efforts to extend its influence into the largely Muslim dominated former Soviet states of Central Asia, raised among Communists and Ultra-nationalists the spectre of "encirclement" of the Russian Federation. These and other considerations contributed to people increasingly identifying with the dictators who used the monolithic machinery of the state to secure unquestioning obedience than with the neo-democrats who claimed to liberate them. They probably felt about communism what Churchill is reported to have thought about democracy "that it is the worst form of government but there is nothing better".

### Kto Vinovat?

This question which means "Who is guilty"? Tends to be raised by Russians whenever the country is engulfed in a deep crisis. In today's chaotic and confused situation many of the political class, among them Yeltsin's allies, seem to have no difficulty in pointing an accusing finger at Yeltsin. The most damning "indictment" of the President was made by his onetime ally, the Editor of *Obshchaya Gazeta*, who early this year screamed in a two-page headline in his paper "Boris Yeltsin is Guilty Before the law, Before the People, Before History".

The second accused in the eyes of many are the Western Governments and the International Aid Agencies which failed to provide the financial backing to honest, though inexperienced, reformers led by Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar. The conditionalities that aid organizations laid down showed a colossal ignorance and therefore a total lack of appreciation of the nature and magnitude of the problems facing the reformers. Complaints were heard from the most pro-western to the most nationalistic states of the miserly treatment received from those whom they expected to be their partners. In the eyes of many, both inside and outside Russia,

*The writer is a honorary, President of the World Federation of U.N.A. He acknowledges a debt to the Washington Post, NYK Times, The Guardian and I.H.T. He wishes also to thank Prof Wolfgang Leonhard for his brilliant BMICH lecture and response to questions.*



the West and the aid agencies "were guilty of squandering the moment in early 1992" when they could have stepped up aid and helped Yeltsin and his then powerful team of reformers. Because of the lack of outside support Boris Yeltsin had to compromise with the corrupt old guard. Most of the reformers were pushed from power and by the end of 1992 the apparatchiks had seized control of the Central Bank and much of the government.

There is a third guilty party not as visible to Russian voters as to competent Russia Watchers outside. The "accusation" against them is made by Jeffrey D Sachs, a Harvard economist who was adviser to Russia's Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar in 1992 and to Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov in 1993. One can do no better than make considerable use of the "charges" he made against the "accused" in a contribution he made to the New York Times. He points out that Russia has "always lacked a political tradition, even the rhetoric, of civic mindedness" Moreover "Few politicians even profess a standard of public service or public morality". While "almost all post communist states have experienced corruption scandals (largely because civil society is weak and still unorganized) Russia's corruption is singularly deep". One reason Jeffrey Sachs gives for this "is that the Communist Party Central Committee, the breeding ground of much of today's leadership, was profoundly corrupt". It comes as no surprise therefore to learn that "In the Soviet Union's waning years, senior apparatchiks converted political power into financial stakes" and that in the "spontaneous privatization" (a term with a cynical connotation) that followed much of the billions of dollars, originally earned by the state, especially from the export of oil, gas, diamonds and metal..... flowed into private pockets "creating shortfalls in the government's budget. Prime Minister Viktor S. Chernomyrdin has overseen a process under which prized government assets were turned over to political insiders for a fraction of their worth and huge privatized companies paid little or no taxes. Corrupt practices such as the few mentioned" stripped the government of revenue which could have been used to ameliorate the impact of inflation and other market dislocation. It is not surprising that to many a Russian market economy became inextricably linked with "corruption" and came to be played up as such by the media that was now free but not necessarily responsible. The corruption was a major campaign issue for opponents of

reform in the 17 December elections and undoubtedly contributed to their success.

Finally it can be said that the "democrats" also share a part of the "guilt". Most of them seem to have had a hazy idea of the entire democratic process. Even the little they knew was not conveyed to the voters, to a large majority of whom free elections alone was the litmus test of democracy. International NGO's appealed in vain to the European Union to undertake crash education programmes on democracy. At every biennial Conference of European United Nations Associations since 1991 these appeals

were repeated. It was pointed out that as democratic institutions came to be introduced in to the Scandinavian countries the Danish Bishop Gruntwig urged widespread education of the people for democracy "If this democracy is not to be stifled in its infancy". The warning was taken seriously and by the beginning of this century democratic institutions were taking firm root in the countries concerned. With the modern electronic media available today such programmes could have been carried out more effectively and in a much shorter time.

**NEXT: PRESIDENTIAL STAKES**

## Waiting — 16

### Kundasale Vihare

*Had we been here before?  
Perhaps in a previous life  
Also as man and wife.*

*Wed in a crisp, blue, January  
The four months before Wesak  
For me  
Were no where near satiation  
For even a days renunciation  
So this was my very first lesson  
Seeing you go forth  
White clad and kiss forbidden  
At dawn for wesak sil.*

*In my sudden loneliness  
You made one concession  
I could bring your dana to the Temple  
And there I was, solemn and anxious  
For a glimpse of your consecration  
In a new rare radiance  
Four months of love hadn't lit.*

*I knelt slightly behind you  
Since on the Path I wasn't abreast  
The Pali chants linked us  
Under the sky by the old Stupa,  
The Bo-tree and muralled Vihare  
Deva lit.*

*Then in the old Kandyan pansalge  
To the venerable elder  
Reclining among betel-spice smells  
And green parrots with lotus beaks  
I was suddenly proud when you said  
This is my husband, O monk  
And his blessing intoned like the bells.*

**U. Karunatilake**

# Indian Role: Examining the Accord

Humayun Kabir

What I am concerned about is just to briefly highlight the relevant clauses and provisions of the Accord that bear evidence of India's entrenched role in Sri Lanka's internal and external affairs.

For Sri Lanka, a major gain from the Accord was that its unity and territorial integrity was safeguarded. Another gain was that the government could transfer troops from the North to the South where the JVP insurgency was just erupting. Yet another benefit was that violence ceased, temporarily though.

The Sri Lankan government met some of the Tamil demands. Tamil and English were made official languages, alongside Sinhalese. The Northern and Eastern provinces were amalgamated with more powers devolved. However, the merger required to be popularly upheld in a referendum by the people of the Eastern province after the expiry of one year.

But the gravest flaw in the Accord was that Hamlet was enacted without the Prince of Denmark. The Tamils were not made a party to it. They were not even consulted well in advance by either signatory.<sup>173</sup> It was the responsibility of the Government of India to bring the TULF and Tamil militant groups to agree to the provisions of the Accord and underwrite and guarantee them which included surrendering of arms by the militants within 72 hours without looking into the problem of security for the disarmed Tamils. But more significantly, as Bastiampillai contends, India's role was unusual as it was well over and above that of mediator.<sup>174</sup>

The provisions laid in the Accord demonstrated how substantial and powerful a role was assigned to India in the process of settling Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.<sup>175</sup> In fact, in sub-clause 2.14 of the Accord, the Government of India obligated itself "to underwrite and guarantee the resolutions, and cooperate in the implementation of the proposals" in the following manner: (i) Indian observers were to be invited for the provincial council elections in the north and east. (ii) Sri Lanka would rehabilitate the disarmed Tamil militant youth and accommodate them in the mainstream of

national life with Indian help. (iii) Ensuring the security and safety of all communities in the north-east of the island was the joint responsibility of India and Sri Lanka. (iv) That the Sri Lankan government was to ensure free and fair election in the country's north-east had to be an undertaking in an inter-state agreement. (v) The Sri Lankan government was to invite a representative of the Government of India as observer in the elections to the provincial councils of northern and eastern provinces of the island. (vi) The referendum on the merger of these two provinces was to be observed by a representative of the Election Commission of India. (vii) The surrender of arms by Tamil militants was to be under joint observation of Indian and Sri Lankan representatives. (viii) The monitoring of cessation of hostilities, due from 31 July 1987, was to be done by a joint Indo-Lankan observer group. (ix) To guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities the President of Sri Lanka could invite an Indian peace-keeping force. (x) The residual matters, not finalised during negotiations, were also to be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within a period of six weeks of signing the Accord.

India's security concerns were outlined in Rajiv Gandhi's letter to Jayewardene. The latter's positive response was unusually brief and instantaneous. Sri Lanka was obligated to be mindful of India's security concerns in the conduct of its foreign and security policy, particularly in four respects. (i) Sri Lanka will not prejudice India's security sensitivities by employing foreign military and intelligence personnel. This had relevance to the role of Pakistani military, British KMS and Israeli Mossad in Sri Lanka. And Sri Lanka eventually stopped using them. (ii) Sri Lanka was to make Trincomalee and any of its other ports unavailable for military use by any other country in a manner that India would consider to be inimical to her interests and concerns. This had the implied reference to Sri Lanka's alleged granting of base facilities in Trincomalee to the US Navy. (iii) India's fears of the Trincomalee oil tank farm being put to military use by unfriendly foreign powers were also taken

care of. The restoration and operation of the farm was to be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka. And (iv) Sri Lanka was to review its agreements with foreign broadcasting organisations to ensure that any facilities set up by them in the island were not used for any military or intelligence gathering purposes.

In return for these extra-ordinary gains in its relationship with Sri Lanka, India had only to make some dubious gestures to the island. India agreed to expel Sri Lankan citizens engaged in terrorist activities or advocating separatism from Indian territory. This could not be a serious reciprocal undertaking on the part of India, for it is in any case expected or incumbent on the part of a country that professes to be a good friend of a domestically-insecure neighbour of hers not to grant sanctuary, arms, training and finances to the militant elements who were fighting to secede from that neighbour. By the way, such assurances coming from India also implied that there were camps on its territory for Tamil militants who had received arms and training there, a truth which the Indian authorities almost ritualistically denied before. Another assurance that India gave to Sri Lanka was that the former would provide training facilities and military supplies for the latter's security forces. In fact, India did it in order to reinforce its influence over Sri Lanka as well as to obviate the island state's needs to receive such assistance from other sources which could be deemed to be compromising to India's perceived interests.

Thus, with the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, Sri Lanka's status vis-a-vis India underwent a fundamental change that was exemplified by the novelty in the tenor and texture of their bilateral relationship.<sup>176</sup> Sri Lanka formally came under hegemonic influence of India as far as the island's ethnic conflict, and its foreign and security policy were concerned. Before, the Sri Lankan governments, whether of UNP or SLFP, could handle the ethnic issue as an internal problem in which India had no role to play. From after the signing of the Accord,



India's role in such a domestic issue of Sri Lanka came to be legitimised. Similarly, until the 1980s, the Sri Lankan governments were independent in charting the country's foreign and security policy course, each adopting its own strategy to deal with the 'India factor' depending on the country's internal situation, on the ideological inclination of the ruling party/coalition or the idiosyncrasies of their leaders, and on the prevailing regional and global politico-strategic scenarios. After 1987, Sri Lanka's autonomy in the conduct of its external relations and policy seems to stand considerably curtailed, for India set up a particular framework in the Accord within which the Sri Lankan rulers, regardless of their party affiliation, have to operate. India was, thus, able to put its attitudinal hegemony into behavioural hegemony by having made the UNP government of Jayewardene obliged by means of a formal undertaking to accept such a position for Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka came under India's hegemony for several reasons. (1) Sri Lanka became vulnerable to various forms of Indian intervention due to its own internal turmoil, which was an extreme outcome of Sri Lanka's failure in its national integration. (2) The Jayewardene government was 'unmindful'<sup>177</sup> of the regional geo-political realities. The Sri Lanka government did not realise or care how would its non-conformist, divergent foreign policy be viewed by its great neighbour India. (3) The Colombo government could not sufficiently comprehend the undercurrents of changes in the interests and in the alignment patterns of the great powers since the mid-1980s, as a result of which Sri Lanka turned out to be their devalued friend.<sup>178</sup> That perhaps explains why all the great powers welcomed the Peace Accord. (4) Also, Sri Lanka could not or did not recognise the policy implication of India's increasing economic strength and military power. All in all, the UNP government of President Jayewardene was, by 1987, stripped of both its first and second lines of defence, namely the inherent strength of a state in its domestic stability and social harmony, and its diplomacy.

Although the Accord ignited massive protests in Sri Lanka,<sup>179</sup> and indeed there has been continuous Sinhala opposition since it was signed, the Accord seems to have been in operation ever since, the paradigm shifts associated with the end of the Cold War notwithstanding.

**NEXT: IS ACCORD STILL VALID**

## TRENDS

### Conflict Resolution

*President Chandrika Kumaratunga has instructed Education Minister Richard Pathirana to set up a "Peace Education Centre". Its main task will be to train teachers in "Conflict Resolution". The teachers in turn will introduce the subject to the higher grades in the state-run schools. The subject will also be popularised via the government-owned mass media, the SLBC and Rupavahini in particular.*

### C. E. B. Strike

*Electricity supplies may be disrupted if the government does not settle a serious dispute in the C. E. B. Some 350 electrical engineers are threatening to strike if their demand for a substantial salary rise is not granted. But if the C. E. B. agrees to the union's terms, electricity rates are bound to go up. What's more the other employees unions are certain to ask for more too. However the engineers who get tax-free salaries (about 25,000 rupees a month) realise that they could earn much more abroad — certainly in the oil-rich Gulf states.*

*There is another problem. Some of the labour unions are affiliated to political parties or organisations that are pro-Peoples Alliance.*

## BRIEFLY...

### Bitter Blow

One of our M-17 helicopters is missing! There were 5 officers on board including a Lt. Colonel and Lt. Commander Martenstyn whose son Jason died when an Air Force AN 32B aircraft crashed off Ja-ela. Jason Martenstyn was the navigator. The M-17 had taken off from Palaly, the only airport used by the services. Engine-failure or Missile or....?

### Secret Proposals?

The S.L.F.P.'s allies in the P.A. are annoyed, the *ISLAND* claimed in a prominent frontpage report on the 'problems of the Presidency'. "The coalition partners, the DUNF, CP, LSSP, SLMP and the SLMC who are members of the Peoples Alliance Executive Committee was never given the chance to discuss the amendments (to the Constitution) before these were made public".

### Collision Course

"Obviously, the government needs the support of the main opposition party, the U.N.P. which, in principle, is in favour of devolution. However the ruling People's Alliance is set on a collision course with the U.N.P. which it ousted from 18 months ago. In the past fortnight two UNP-ruled provincial councils have been dissolved by the Executive President, Chandrika Kumaratunga." *ECONOMIST*, London.

#### Notes

<sup>172</sup> Some of them are, Shelton U. Kodikara (ed.), *Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987*, A publication of the International Relations Programme, University of Colombo, Colombo, 1989; Shelton U. Kodikara (ed.), *South Asian Strategic Issues: Sri Lankan Perspectives*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1990; Shelton U. Kodikara (ed.), *Dilemmas of Indo-Sri Lankan Relations*, BCIS, Colombo, 1991; K.M. de Silva and S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe (eds.), *Peace Accord and Ethnic Conflict*, Pinter Publishers, London, 1993; S.D. Muni, *Pangs of Proximity: India and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1993.

<sup>173</sup> According to Vellupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE supreme, the provisions of the Accord did not go far enough in meeting their demands and safety requirements. For example, Tamils were not recognised as a nation; the Sinhala colonisation was technically justified; the North-East merger was temporary; and

the Sri Lankan government troops were to be confined to barracks and not withdrawn from the Tamil area. *India Today*, New Delhi, 15 August 1987, pp. 78-79.

<sup>174</sup> Bertram Bastiampillai, "Ethnic Conflicts in South Asia and Inter-state Relations", op. cit., pp. 100-101.

<sup>175</sup> See *Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka* of 29 July 1987.

<sup>176</sup> Bradman Weerakoon, adviser on international affairs to late President Ranasinghe Premadasa, holds a different view on the Accord. He is of the opinion that the Accord was not imposed on Sri Lanka and that there has been no fundamental change in the Indo-Sri Lanka relationship as a result of the Accord. This was evident from my interview with him in Colombo on 13 January 1995.

<sup>177</sup> This 'soft' term was used by one of the suave advisers of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, with whom I had an extensive interview in Colombo in January 1995.

# Structural Adjustment Policy and Its Impact

Bertram Bastiampillai

Although it may sound simple, several continue to use structural adjustment as words about whose meanings they are not quite clear. Loans are given out to countries often by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) which along with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was spawned at an international conference that was held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire in 1944. The IBRD plus the International Development Association (IDA) compose the World Bank.

The Bank consisting of the IBRD and the IDA set up in 1960 have lent together by the nineties to diverse countries 312 billion Dollars from their funds. This however is not alone reflective of their actual financial influence. It is the Bank's involvement in a project that would as a rule generate substantial co-financing. Moreover, the *imprimatur* of the World Bank provides an essential guarantee before private investors get involved in a country or private banks provide capital. It is these factors that make the World Bank a potent force in the financial world, a force to be not ignored.

Structural Adjustment Loans (SALs) like the Sectoral Adjustment Loans (SEALs) are termed by the Bank as non-project or policy based loans. They are paid out quicker than project loans ("quick disbursing loans") and aim to assist debt stricken countries to re-organise their entire economies or large sectors of them. Unfortunately we have to get mixed in jargon when dealing with a subject like Structural Adjustment and its impact.

The Bank started using SALs and SEALs in 1979. They could be catalytic and help liberalization of a country's rules and regulations in the desired direction. The desired direction is decided upon by the developed countries in the World Bank who have the clout. When a Government undertakes policy changes that could be broad and detailed, specified by the Bank, the Bank provides a multi million Dollar loan expected to assist in easing the travails of restructuring. But the country has capitulated to the Bank's dictates surrendering a quantum of its independence and sovereignty.

The SALs and SEALs are fundamental to the Bank's policy dialogue with governments, and particularly become more highly important in the 1980s. They

could measure up to about 15% of the Bank's all time lending and about a third of the IBRD loans or for a total of about 20% from the late 1980s into 1993.

Generally Structural Adjustment Loans were supposed to relieve a country's debt crisis, help convert domestic economic resources to production for export; and promote the penetration of Transnational Corporations into previously restricted economies. Thus they facilitate the entry of the "robber barons" and local enterprises suffer in the process of competition. Production is also determined for outside consumption more than to meet internal wants whatever the implications be.

Really Structural Adjustment imposes on developing countries, and most of them had to undertake it, austerity programmes on the indigenous population. Structural Adjustment comes into the poorer countries through the auspices of the World Bank and the IMF. By the 1990s, Structural Adjustment programmes had been foisted on the former Soviet Union, the earlier Socialist Eastern European countries and India and other countries.

Structural Adjustment lending introduced along with it the privatization of government corporations and severe reduction of public employment and of Government Servants with a worsening of unemployment. SAL inevitably affected most the public service Ministries particularly such as Health, Education, Transport Housing and Environment through unavoidable drastic budget reductions. The painful impact therefore on the society and economy of a country subject to SAL can be easily imagined.

The process of Structural Adjustment also implied the promotion of exports of raw materials and of export industries to earn foreign exchange. Import Liberalization and elimination of trade barriers or quotas were also unavoidable measures to be adopted. It is clear thereby whose interest gains priority and paramountcy — certainly not that of the victim country.

Countries that accept Structural Adjustment have either to do away with or steeply decrease subsidies for agriculture, staple food, health care, Education and other such areas. The malign impact of this on the younger generations and the country as a whole can be visualized. Strangely, reduction of expenditure on the military is not called for. Clearly the lending institutions of the developed world would like law and order to be rigorously maintain-

ed in developing countries subject to the pangs of Structural Adjustment's consequences so that the transformation which is beneficial to them remains unchallenged by manifestation of popular discontent.

Another characteristic noticeable in a country that has introduced Structural Adjustment is the adoption of restrictive monetary policies and high interest rates so as to curtail inflation. More significantly, a reduction in real wages has to be undertaken, especially in regard to lower wage earners. This is termed euphemistically "demand management" and is also meant to contain inflation. But how explosive and unsatisfactory the observance of such a measure in practice could be need not be recounted; it is patently obvious.

Broadly, Structural Adjustment following borrowings have generally stipulated the free market, competitive individualistic ethos popularly called "Thatcherism" in the United Kingdom or "Reagonomics" in the United States. The World Bank had adopted Structural Adjustment as one of its principal means to attain the ultimate purpose of its activities such as the "development of the productive resources of members, thereby assisting in raising productivity, the standard of living and conditions of labour". No doubt a laudable objective indeed but in practice the record of the Bank shows that it has fallen far short of attaining it.

For example, initially, the Philippines benefitted from a Structural Adjustment loan as the Government had initiated all the Bank's recommendations on export promotion inclusive of most important and difficult measures. Likewise, in the 1980s and 1990s many other countries undertook Structural Adjustment. The noticeable results that followed were entrenchment of poverty and frustration, and also a sort of exhaustion of potential opposition forces. Suffering and deprivation of the absolute poor occurred but they did not readily cause revolution. Instead they were bogged in deeper despair.

Much of the hard earned foreign exchange following the pursuit of Structural Adjustment has to be spent on interest payments. Therefore the only goal that had evidently been reached is an assurance of debt servicing. Yet apart from the Bank's defenders from within, the USAID is certain that Structural Adjustment has seemed the most important way to help the poor and that it had no general negative impact on the poor. The Organization

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for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concludes clearly that adjustment does not necessarily lower growth or increase existing poverty.

On the contrary, others, especially associated with non-governmental organizations, who deal with poor people or the environment in developing countries assert that adjustment is an unmitigated social and ecological disaster. As an NGO communique strongly states adjustment and policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund "undermine the well-being of families, food producers, workers and the natural environment as well as the viability of fragile democracies".

Even Japan a major shareholder and financial power in the Bank, has through an Agency, Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund, sharply criticized the Bank's approach to Structural Adjustment quoting its heavy reliance on market mechanisms and regulations of State intervention, excessive liberalization of trade and financial institutions, and indiscriminate privatization. It takes little effort to recognize the valid relevance of these identified characteristic experiences in relation to countries like Sri Lanka.

Japan's agency discredited the Bank's optimism in expecting industries that sustain the coming generation would automatically arise from the private sector's activities.

It is, according to Japan, impossible to gain an optimum allotment of resources by taking recourse in market principles alone. The Government has to provide some subsidies, and especially subsidized interest rates, for socially beneficial activities. Thus did Japan herself propose ideas unwelcome to the Bank, in spite of its involvement in it.

Furthermore, the Japanese Agency observed that different conditions of individual countries needed to be carefully reckoned. But the World Bank looked at all countries alike. Also it criticised the gospel that the private sector, be it foreign or national, had to be treated alike. Japan's Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF) considered the notion of transferring the basic industries to foreign capital extremely serious.

The Bank lacked a long term view of developing export industries for it believed that the private sector's activities alone would suffice to attain that end. Japan became a success through pursuing policies different from those now advocated by the Bank and did not hesitate to indicate its view. Thus within the Bank's big voices differences on its Structural Adjustment and other policies have existed.

The impact of Structural Adjustment can best be illustrated by the case of Zimbabwe which Professor Colin Stoneman of York University had studied. All World Bank or IMF reports, as Stoneman commented, ultimately recommended for Zimbabwe the free market package which invariably demanded currency devaluation, removal of foreign exchange controls and import restrictions, cut backs or removal of subsidies, adaptation of relative price structures to the world market, and depression of the State's role in the economy. The World Bank used its domestic resource cost (DRC) analysis approach in 1987 to offer this prescription to Zimbabwe, which otherwise on its own was doing well although it had to borrow but still could not settle debts. The domestic Resource Cost is an important instrument in the Bank's ideology though economically it could be faulted.

The World Bank failed to recognise that Zimbabwe had progressed using precisely the policies it wanted restricted there. The Bank did not want to accept that the Asian Dragons like Korea or Taiwan took off in the 1960s in an environment of protectionism and subsidies for the industries they professed to favour. But instead the Bank cautions that Government interventions should be not utilised in today's changing global economy.

As Stoneman argued the Bank cannot plan for a future in which world markets might change or industries might realize economies of scale, improve their technology or simply venture out and find more customers. The Bank shows no grasp of dynamic comparative advantage. Its only panacea is Structural salvation. It however is yet surprised by the failure of those who apply the policies but nevertheless do not question them! After all the Bank cannot err-it is infallible.

Structural Adjustment results in freeing countries in existing patterns of production which are on the whole, ones left over from colonialism. This is an extremely serious political consequence that should not be overlooked. The imposition of Structural Adjustment universally is a deep ideological choice not only as it harms nature and the poor as claimed by the NGOs but also because it etches the New World Order unchangeably. The New World Order however turns out to be like the old one although it has been created by economists and not by armies.

By 1990-1991, a Bank thought out Economic Structural Adjustment Programme was introduced in Zimbabwe. Consequently the standard economic package got in place — further currency devaluation, good-bye to price controls, elimination of the minimum wage; and introduction of

cost sharing fees in health and education occurred. The impact of this drove those in the slums of Harare to call the New Order ESAP — Extreme Suffering for People.

Meanwhile between 1986 to 1991 Zimbabwe remitted over 2-6 billions of Dollars to service debts to creditors. Zimbabwe's debt enhanced in the six years by almost a fourth but adjustments and resultant efforts did not improve the country's external financial position. Acting on the Bank's advice transformed one of Africa's finest health and education records into shambles.

Women could not afford hospital births and children dropped out of schools. As an observer remarked girls short of food or examination fees compelled by immediacy of material needs ignored possibility of AIDS or pregnancy and sold sex in exchange for cash or food!

Stoneman foresaw de-industrialization as a major long term consequence of structural adjustment. Initially serious food shortages beset Zimbabwe. Structural Adjustment required inefficient State enterprises to break even. As a result the Grain Marketing Board had to close up operations just before drought and food shortage followed; previously self sufficient Zimbabwe now imported food. Zimbabwe had to sell Maize cheap and buy it day later from the World market because it no longer had stocks as a logical result of having adopted adjustment.

But that Structural Adjustment is beneficial to the country is an article of faith. The World Bank trades it like a missionary or insurance salesman would his wares, religion or insurance. For instance the Eastern bloc countries who traded mostly with each other were like all structural adjusters required to become economically "efficient" so as to compete in the global market place. Inevitably it implied few workers on the pay roll as could be achieved. Unemployment and misery multiplied.

The Bank like a religion believes that suffering has to be accepted and surmounted to be saved. Leaders and the elites rarely pay the human costs of adjustment and often become earnest supporters of it. Structural Adjustment demands the roll back of the state through privatization, deregulation and letting the market work its wonders. Weakening existing States is the endeavour of rival powers. Also, the Bank's increasing concern with issues of governance among its borrowers comes as a logical last step in its gradually expanding involvement in policy reform through adjustment lending which had been first extended to social sectors.



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# Conceptualising 'Difference' for a Changing Reality

Laksiri Jayasuriya

## Minority Status and Ethnicity

From the foregoing, it is clear that ethnic identity is a negotiated outcome in specific socio-cultural conditions which may involve conflict. In this reconceptualisation of ethnic identity Schlesinger (1987), quoting Postoi (1983) states that:

the critical factor for defining the ethnic group therefore [following Bath] becomes the social boundary which defines the groups with respect to ethnic groups of the same order, not the cultural reality within these bodies (1987, 235).

Implicit in this reformulation is the incorporation of the structural factors relating to ethnic group membership arising from the location of these groups and individual members in specific social situations. The latter refer to the complex pattern of social relations that impinge on a person and serves to give meaning to a sense of ethnic identity. It is an approach which characterises ethnic groups in terms of group relations and recognises that these groups are 'minority groups', not in an arithmetical sense, but ideologically. Membership status of ethnic groups, is characterised in terms of unequal power relations pertaining to the dominant groups and structures of society; and importantly, this is accompanied by differential and pejorative treatment, particularly in competitive situations such as in the labour market.

Importantly, this identification of ethnic groups in terms of *minority* status does not exclude a sense of group awareness and group identity arising from the possession of shared characteristics, such as cultural, linguistic, religious or national characteristics. Ethnic groups, in this sense, denoted appropriately by boundary markers, are seen as being dynamic, flexible, and responsive to varying socio-political circumstances. As the 'boundary markers' of ethnicity (i.e., the physical or cultural attributes used in defining an ethnic group), may change over time, as the groups themselves may undergo changes over time. For example, the second and third generation Australians of migrant origin who account for nearly 20% of the Australian population (ABS

1995) are likely to manifest their ethnicity in ways different from their parents (the first generation) or grandparents because of their particular social, political and economic circumstances (see e.g., Vasta 1995; Bottomley 1991; 1979). In view of this, Gans (1979) has suggested, that second and third generations of migrant or ethnic origin may attach only symbolic value to identity sentiments more characteristic of first generation settlers. The second generation, as a rule, manifests only a 'symbolic ethnicity' where there is only a nostalgia for the 'old ethnicities' and a looser sense of ethnic group affiliation.

Furthermore, considering the extent of mobility that exists in open societies like Australia, Weinrich (1986), De Vos (1975), and others maintain that mobility makes the sense of ethnic identity more fluid and dynamic. As an example of this fluidity, they cite the phenomenon of *passing* which occurs when:

people cross social boundaries [and] are likely to experience disjunctions in the way in which they relate to other people (Tajfel 1982, 304).

Therefore, depending on the social location of persons in terms of gender and class, people classified as belonging to a particular ethnic group may move from 'one boundary situation' to another (e.g., because of their marginality), and manifest their identity in different ways. For this reason alone, it would be highly misleading to assume that there is a fixed sense of 'ethnic identity' which always enter into the behavioural equation. To quote Olzak

Ethnicity emerges as a basis for collective action when there are clear advantages attached to ethnic identity (Olzak 1986, 254).

In other words, ethnicity is best regarded — in the context of a multicultural society such as Australia — more as a resource to be mobilised in defined circumstances (e.g., marginality, alienation, social discrimination, unemployment etc.) rather than in terms of a set of fixed archaic values. The extent to which ethnicity gains in salience will be a function of

the strength of one's sense of ethnic identity in terms of group affiliation, and this will be determined situationally. A more flexible and dynamic understanding of ethnicity, has, of necessity, to take into account the subjective (representations arising from one's own experience) and objective (social circumstances) aspects of ethnicity. Thus, researchers such as Bottomley (1992; 1991; 1979) who have researched the meaning of difference among first and second generations of ethnic origin, while not denying the reality of ethnicity, do not wish to reify it as a fixed and immutable identity.

The definition of minority groups offered by Dworkin et al. (1982) is more appealing because, when applied to ethnic groups, it offers a process oriented account of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Accordingly, 'a minority group is a group characterised by four qualities: identifiability, differential power, differential and pejorative treatment, and group awareness' (Dworkin et al. 1982, 21-2). This view, importantly, recognises that, depending on circumstance, groups can acquire as well as lose their minority status. A classic instance of the latter is that of the Irish Catholics in Australian history. Thus, at different periods of history a group or designated groups may have more or less power relative to others, be treated more or less differentially, and perceive themselves differently as regards their sense of ethnicity. In minority group formation, the pattern frequently observed is that a group is first *identifiable* (e.g., in terms of cultural or racial characteristics), then receives *differential treatment* because of the lack of power and resources, and over time evolves a *group awareness*.

Hence, ethnic groups as minority groups, may be identified as those singled out for differential and pejorative treatment which is what serves to differentiate them from the majority on the grounds of their ethnicity, based on cultural or physical attributes. As a result, they are regarded as 'status devalued' groups whose ethnicity is more instrumental than expressive, and operating as *interest groups* in the public domain (see Jeannie Martin 1991). This point of view, though lost sight of with

the dominance of the idealist/essentialist view of culture, was first expressed in the Australian context by the late Jean Martin (1978). Nearly two decades ago, Martin described Australian society as a 'genuinely pluralist society [where] ethnic minorities [are] legitimate interest groups' (1978, 75). As 'interest groups', what is important is the cross-cutting affiliations arising from a recognition of their common circumstances such as inequality, disadvantage, discrimination, or denial of access to resources. It is for this reason that it is widely recognised that ethnic identity is regarded as a 'politico-economic resource' that can be mobilised in the pursuit of group interests.

Castles (1992), is one contemporary Australian theorist who acknowledges that the interest group approach, when considered in the Australian context, is defensible and plausible in that it deals with 'the dilemma of inclusion versus ethnic rights and the... disparity between formal rights and real power' (1992, 199). Although Castles appears doubtful whether 'this type of mobilization is taking place' (1992, 189), there is increasing evidence of ethnic mobilisation (e.g., in the strong ethnic support for the 'racial vilification Bill, and use of community languages on SBS radio). Furthermore, ethnic politics have become more salient in New South Wales and Victoria, and there is a greater awareness among major political parties, of the influence of the 'ethnic vote'. More recently, Castles (1993) appears to have modified his earlier scepticism by correctly pointing out that the inclusionary model of citizenship adopted by Australia, 'ignores peoples' varying group identities and different social positions' (1993, 32). Similarly, Jayasuriya (1994; 1993) advocates a model of democratic pluralism based on a post-modern notion of citizenship.

### *Ethnicity and the Social Reality of the 1990s*

The Australian theorising on difference and diversity is based on the concepts of culture and ethnicity, and revolves around two alternative conceptualisations of ethnic groups: one, as *cultural groups*, and the other, as *minority interest groups*. Admittedly, in spite of the conceptual shortcomings, there may have been some justification for the culturalist approach to represent diversity in the early phase of mass migration, i.e., pre-1976. This period (see HREOC 1994) was dominated by European migrants for whom language was a key boundary marker of their ethnicity; and, in the context of a first generation

strategy of migrant adaptation in a period of relative economic affluence, a culturalist discourse had functional utility for ethnic groups as well as the dominant groups (Jayasuriya 1990a). However, the changing social demography and structural location of those described as migrants, or persons of ethnic origin, makes such a characterisation increasingly inappropriate and irrelevant.

The theorising and language of discourse used to portray the diversity of Australian society should not only be conceptually rigorous and defensible, but also be able to portray accurately the changing social reality, in particular, the complex variety of the social composition of the Australian population. To determine the concept and terminology of 'bestfit', it is necessary to identify the changing social demography of these groups. In brief, there are four distinctive features that are helpful in portraying the social reality of the present day ethnic composition of Australian society:

#### 1. The ethnic mix. 'Race' and new ethnicities

After 1976, as a result of new waves of migration from Asian and the Middle East, the 'ethnic composition of the population is characterised by a more varied and racial mix (see HREOC 1993, Chapter 6). The category 'race', often subsumed under 'ethnicity', continues to exist in popular discourse and has a range of social meanings. The 'racial' discourse cannot be subsumed by, or within, 'culture' theorising by rewriting the facts of 'race' and racism. Put differently, in one sense, Australia is not just a 'multicultural' but a multiracial society where the term 'race' is applied mainly to categorise Aboriginal and those of 'Asian' origin who are visibly different because of skin colour or eye shape.

According to *The State of the Nation* (HREOC 1993), there are

'two basic problems associated with post 1976 immigration remain those created by domestic circumstances rather than by the charter of immigrants:

- the inability of the economy to guarantee employment for new arrivals as it could before 1975, and
- the lingering prejudice that non-Europeans are essentially 'different' from Europeans' (p. 102).

Regrettably, the recent statement on multiculturalism pays little heed to this

reality, nor the problems of racism and prejudice identified by the HREOC Report on Racial violence.

#### 2. Adaptation and status of 'Asian' migrants

The new 'Asian' settlers (approximately 4.3% are classified as Asian born) who display a great variety in (their) social condition (HREOC 1993, Chapter 8) have needs and aspirations quite distinct from the earlier migrants drawn from Europe (Jayasuriya & Sang 1990). Unlike earlier waves of migrants from Europe, language is not a key marker of the ethnicity of 'Asian' settlers. Religion, and cultural values appear to be more salient in determining their distinctive ethnic identity, especially with Middle Eastern groups (see HREOC 1993, 98, on the growth of non-Christian religious groups). These new settlers who include a high proportion of refugees, are less concerned, with questions of cultural and linguistic maintenance. They are more oriented towards material advancement and striving for economic betterment in an adverse economic environment. While some of these new migrants, especially those from Indochina (Vietnam and Cambodia), have fared poorly in the labour market, other groups, especially skilled professional and business migrants, are over represented in the higher end of the occupational spectrum. This reveals a bi-modal pattern of occupational and economic adaptation which has significant implications in understanding the 'ethnic' strivings of these groups (Jayasuriya 1991).

#### 3. Migrants and those of ethnic origin in a changing economy

The dilemmas of economic growth, structural adjustment and restructuring of the economy have had a differential impact on ethnic groups. This is most apparent in the labour market position of older migrants (see HREOC 1993, 21), women, outworkers, and young people drawn from new migrant groups, especially Lebanese and Indochinese communities (Vietnamese, Cambodians). Furthermore, following the restructuring of the Australian economy, on a variety of indicators such as industrial accidents, compensation, and ageing, migrants of ethnic origin have, had to bear a disproportionate burden of the adverse social effects (see e.g., Taylor & MacDonald 1994). At the same time, older migrants are now increasingly part of the ethnic aged, and constitute a distinctive groups with social needs (see HREOC 1993, especially Chapters 3-5).

*(To be Continued)*



# Astronomy as Science

Chandra Wickremasinghe

## Acceptance of Sahabdeen Award

It is a great honour you have bestowed on me in the award of a Sahabdeen Prize. I accept it with humility, and in so doing would like to take this opportunity to commend the noblest ideals of distinction in scholarship and service to humanity to which the Sahabdeen Trust Foundation is pledged. This Foundation has had a relatively short history, but already its prizes rank amongst the most coveted of international awards. I also feel privileged to be the very first astronomer to receive a Sahabdeen Prize. And if I might say so, in recognising contributions to knowledge in the subject area of astronomy the Sahabdeen Trust has shown remarkable judgement and foresight. For, in the closing years of the 20th century astronomy is emerging as a science that can both capture imagination and unify our conflict-riddled planet. Pictures of the Earth from space, which are so commonplace nowadays, and of distant dust clouds and galaxies, taken for instance by the Hubble Space Telescope, provide the natural backdrop against which our human drama is to be enacted — the cosmic backdrop for both politics and history.

Astronomical science has its roots in diverse cultures and in many different parts of the world. It exemplifies man's insatiable curiosity to explore the world around him. The pursuit of astronomy was perhaps the first intellectual activity of man that was not directly linked to survival. And it is precisely this type of activity involving abstract contemplation of the Universe that sets man apart from all other creatures that inhabit our planet.

In the ancient world evidence of sophisticated astronomical thought invariably signifies high levels of civilization. Indeed archaeological records of astronomical activities, where they have survived, could often be used as the index of advancement of a particular culture. The Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Greeks, the Indians and the Chinese had all developed sophisticated traditions in astronomy, and they all had soared to the highest levels of civilization.

Perhaps the most important aspect of astronomy, now as in the past, is in defining the spatial and temporal framework within which our own terrestrial existences could be set. With a few notable exceptions the Western traditions in astronomy remained distinctly Earth-centred until the work of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and

Newton in the 15th and 16th Centuries AD. Thereafter our conceptual horizons expanded, and still continue to expand, seemingly without limit. The search to discover Man's place in the cosmos must inevitably begin with a statement of the geological history of the Earth, and of the evolution of life upon it.

The Earth, together with the other planetary bodies of the solar system, began its career as a collection of cosmic debris. The material of the Earth was ultimately derived from a cloud of dust particles that collapsed under its own self gravity and then contracted to form a solid object. This happened some four and a half billion years ago. In the beginning the Earth would have been too hot at its surface for living systems, or even organic molecules, to persist.

Comets, which are much in the news these days, came in from the outer regions of the solar system, collided with our cooling planet and deposited volatile materials, including water that subsequently formed the Earth's oceans. Evaporation of water molecules from the oceans, and the disassociation of water by ultraviolet light from the sun then gave rise to an atmosphere and cloud cover around our planet. Only after this had happened could the Earth have become a congenial home for life with its surface screened and well protected from the damaging ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The geological record traces in considerable detail the evolution of terrestrial life over some 3800 million years. The first single-celled life forms appear in the oldest Precambrian sediments dated at about this time. It is indeed quite remarkable that this was also the first moment in time when conditions on the Earth would have permitted life to survive. The development of life from single cells to highly complex life forms, eventually leading up to Man was evidently a slow and somewhat tedious process. To set our cosmic timescale in its correct perspective let us imagine that the entire history of terrestrial life — a timespan of some 3800 million years was compressed into a mere century — 100 years.

At the beginning of our compressed century of Earthly life we find the emergence of single-celled bacteria. Such humble life forms existed on the Earth, essentially unchanged and alone, for a full 75 years. Flowering plants came in about three years ago, and along with them came also many winged-insect species that served to pollinate the flowers. Our own direct line of descent, *Homo erectus*, a hominid walking upright on two legs made its first tentative appearance three weeks ago. And our immediate ancestor, *Homo sapiens*, hunter and food gatherer, with a brain equipped eventually to write the plays of Shakespeare as well as to unlock the secrets of the Universe, came

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in as late as 8 hours ago. Eight hours in a century-long span of terrestrial life! That is the sum total of our proprietary claim on this planet, no more, no less. The ancient Indus Valley civilization and the city of Moenjodaro is scarcely an hour old; the nuclear era only seconds old; the space age is virtually new-born. That defines a perspective in time.

To discover the place of our own planet in the wider cosmos turns out to be an even more sobering experience. In the contemporary view of the Universe the Earth is relegated to the status of a small planet orbiting around a fairly ordinary star, the sun. The sun is one of some hundred billion or so similar stars that make up our Milky Way system or Galaxy, and the Galaxy, itself is just one of a hundred billion galaxies in the observable Universe. The current belief, derived from recent Hubble telescope images as well as from infrared observations, is that planets like the Earth cannot be uncommon. Thus many billions of suitable homes for life must exist on a vast cosmic scale.

So much is more or less accepted by astronomers without dissent. But at earlier times bitter arguments raged in order to maintain a cosmic supremacy for both our species and our planet. The Earth was widely regarded as being at the centre of the Universe well into the 16th century; and all species of living things were regarded as eternal and immutable well into the latter half of the 19th century. The Copernican revolution of the 16th century demolished our status as a privileged planet, and the Darwinian revolution of the late 19th century diminished our status as a special species. Further humiliations followed from the great explosion of astronomical knowledge in the present century. Our planet, our solar system, our galaxy have all faded away to total insignificance as we have come to probe the Universe further and deeper than ever before.

An extension of the Copernican revolution that connects with my own collaborative researches with Sir Fred Hoyle, one that is long overdue, concerns the widely accepted premise that life is indigenous to the Earth. Ever since the experiments of Louis Pasteur, which already in 1860 put paid to the old ideas of the spontaneous generation of life, the suspicion had dawned in the minds of many people that

life may well be a phenomenon that has to be understood on a scale much much wider than the Earth. Thus the great physicist Helmholtz in 1876: wrote:

It appears to me to be fully correct scientific procedure, if all our attempts fail to cause the production of organisms from non-living matter, to raise the question whether life has ever arisen, whether it is not just as old matter itself, and whether seeds have not been carried from one planet to another and have developed everywhere where they have fallen on fertile soil...

These ideas were shared by other distinguished scientists of the day, notably by J. Tyndall and Svante Arrhenius. It was to Arrhenius, however, that we owe the first modern exposition of the concept known as panspermia. In his classic book *"Worlds in the Making"*, published in 1907, Arrhenius followed essentially the same logic as Helmholtz. He discussed the possibility that bacterial cells (spores, in particular) are lifted out of the gravitational potential wells of their planets by electromagnetic effects, and then came to be dispersed through space by the action of radiation pressure from stars.

My collaborator Sir Fred Hoyle and I approached the question of the origins of life through our long-standing interests in astronomy. The link between astronomy and biology followed naturally from our quest to discover the composition of cosmic dust. Cosmic dust particles occur in the form of gigantic clouds that show up as conspicuous dark patches and striations against the background of stars in the Milky Way.

In 1973 I made a prediction that the cosmic dust grains **must** have an exceedingly complex organic component, and this prediction was subsequently verified. In collaboration with Professor Vanysek of Charles University in Prague I further argued at this stage that comets must be largely organic, and again this prediction was checked with observations of Halley's comet made in the year 1986. With the exceedingly complex organic character of cosmic dust fully established Sir Fred Hoyle and I felt sufficiently emboldened through the 1980's to argue that cosmic dust grains were not merely organic, but

that they were biologic in character. After all it is biology on the Earth that accounts for pretty well all of the organic material that is found here. No other process can compete, it would seem, when it comes to converting inorganic material to complex organics on a vast cosmic scale. Cosmic dust according to our point of view could be thought of as the seeds of life in the Universe. Exactly as Helmholtz had suspected over a hundred years ago, life is then a phenomenon that must encompass the entire Universe.

These ideas, flew in the face of received scientific wisdom, were vigorously resisted in the 1970's and 1980's. But now there is little dispute that at least some aspects of our theory must be fully correct. For instance, with the discovery that cometary dust is largely of a complex organic nature, most scientists would now agree that the chemical building blocks of life came from comets. Even the idea of life itself arising from comets is not excluded any longer from serious discussions of the Origins of Life. A major paradigm shift is in sight.

As we approach a new millennium our planet is still in a state of chaos — a collection of nation-states engaged in bitter, trivial, tribal conflict. Such conflicts occur not only between nations, but also among smaller sub-groups — between ethnic groups, economic and political groups, even between young and old. At all levels modern science and technology has contributed to the potential ferocity of conflict, as for instance in the weapons that are deployed. The guiding principle in the conduct of human affairs is aggression — aggression directed towards grabbing the utmost of our planet's resources for the group to which one belongs. Regrettably the situation harks back to the ideas of social Darwinism that reared its ugly head in the early part of this century.

A correct world view, a cosmic world view, that includes the cosmic nature of life, could ameliorate the crises that face modern society. Indeed, it may well be that the very survival of our cherished social institutions into the next millennium will be contingent upon the acceptance of a world view that would displace the evils of egoism, ethnocentrism and ultranationalism.



# Cruelty, Humour and Homosexuality

Jeanne Thwaites

Both Daniel and Woolf were the first of their families to choose an occupation where the main function was control of others. Why they did so can be explained either as an innate need to dominate or simple expediency: a job presented itself and they took it. It is likely, however, that their schooling played the greater part in their decision for "the public school has rested on its assumed ability to create men specially suited for leadership and government" (Bamford 209). This schooling did more than create administrative leadership, it promoted the idea that both corporal punishment and callousness are a part of that concept. An old civil servant, Twynam, describes the military parades he witnessed in Colombo:

The parade took place at midday in the hottest season of the year and the troops wore thick stocks around their necks and high collars. Dozens of men fainted and were pulled out of the line and just left on the ground to recover — or not to recover for it was quite common for ten or twelve men to die of sunstroke (L.W. Growing 105).

Cruelty, and stoicism when dealing with it, was taught in Public Schools. Bamford describes flogging in the Victorian era as "simple caning to sheer atrocity" and says it was virtually impossible for a boy to go through his schooling without receiving such a punishment. The stiff upper-lip had to be developed and there was no time-off given to a boy with bleeding buttocks who had been unable to sleep all night (66). This toughening affected Daniel and Woolf differently: Daniel was extroverted, Woolf introverted; they came from different backgrounds: Daniel was brought up to feel superior, Woolf to feel inferior; Daniel was tall and athletic; Woolf small and bookish.

Although neither actually discusses any cruelty suffered at the hands of master and prefects in his Public School, Woolf's story

of his schooling in *Sowing*, is almost incoherent compared to his writing of other times:

There I at once began to develop the carapace, the facade, which if our sanity is to survive, we must learn to present to the outside and usually hostile world as a protection to the naked, tender, shivering soul... the male carapace is usually grown to conceal cowardice (78-9).

This is not the only time he talks of cowardice in connection with himself. When he arrived in Jaffna, he describes himself as a coward, who is therefore unacceptable to his associates, and says tongue-in-cheek that because his dog was not a coward he himself became acceptable (38). Yet he shows little evidence of physical cowardice. He plays football, ventures through the jungle alone and although he calls himself a poor swimmer makes frequently swims to a girder out at sea — which trip nearly drowns a visiting Mr. X. (L.W. Growing 223). The cowardly self-image to have come from an earlier time when he had not been able to hold his own probably in his Public School. As a schoolboy he had three strikes against him. He was physically small, a Jew, and a "scholarship boy," which facts other boys would have reminded him of every time they wanted to improve their own self-images. Although by going to a day school he would have avoided a cruel sport known as "fagging" which prefects vented on the boarders at night — the fact of his not being available for night bullying may also have given his companions an excuse to belittle him.

To sensitive Woolf school life had to have been intolerable. He agrees it was, but not because of being flogged or of suffering anti-Semitism. He painstakingly rationalizes his misery as coming from the fact that he was too intelligent for the system. But he actually absorbed the

values of the system he was too intelligent for. He was able to keep the required "stiff upper lip."

Rex Daniel too does not talk of receiving physical punishment in school. Accompanied by their father, he and his younger brother Emil arrive as teenagers at Bedford College and to their surprise the English boys immediately dub them "giants" and "niggers." Their father is dark-skinned and the boys tanned from the long sea voyage. The giant niggers become the subject of derision that same evening for they search their showers and beds for spiders and snakes and later get down on their knees to pray: to honor a promise they have made to their mother. They take the mocking laughter of their future companions that evening, but the next day Emil nearly kills the Head Boy who strikes him to bring him into line. They thus become candidates for expulsion only hours after having arrived but are quickly reinstated — a wealthy father no doubt has its advantages (4-6). This drama protects them permanently from future bullies and when they kneel to pray in future the laughter is friendly. The fact that there are two of them is also a protection, and it also seems from their insistence on continuing to pray on their knees at night that they wisely decided not to bend under intimidation.

The difference in this stage of their schooling obviously seems to have had a great deal to do with the way Daniel and Woolf treat subordinates. Daniel has no compunction in bringing down the law hard on miscreants but has greater difficulty being hard on someone who has committed no crime: "discovered that the cook had White Leprosy and, sad as it was, had to dismiss him and advised him to go to Mantivu for treatment" (10). Rather than lay down the law on minor matters he finds ways to avoid direct confrontation so others can "save face." He pays an unjust fine himself when the law

demands it be levied. He finds the property fence is being broken each night and repaired at dawn to avoid detection so that a small herd of cattle can graze on his plants. He does not confiscate the animals or arrest their owners but has the newspapers headline the fact that he has just issued himself a license to shoot stray cattle. The trespassing stops instantly (83).

Woolf never stops rubbing the village people up the wrong way with head-on confrontations and punishments for disobedience. Daniel is dealing with people from his own country, of course, and would have been more sensitive to how they would react. Woolf merely wants the "natives" to think as he does.

Rex was always spoken of as the "gentle" son by his mother and so may have developed a self-image to match for there is no cruelty in his writing and he was never physically violent.<sup>11</sup> John Madden, the sportscaster and Oakland Raiders' coach, in *One Knew Equals Two Feet*, says that men who have been unusually big and strong as boys find it difficult to be violent and have been trained to use their full strength against their opponents on the football field. The reason is that big strong boys have been told since childhood not to pick on those weaker than themselves. Daniel was just such a big strong boy. His book shows someone who rolls with the punches with little inner compulsion to strike out.

He also enjoys jokes played on him by his subordinates and develops a sense of camaraderie with them. The kachan is a hot wind on the east coast; one of his clerks tells him that during the time of the kachan women get pregnant, and Daniel finds himself making kachan jokes. He arrives late one afternoon and apologizes to a committee, explaining his absence as caused by heavy work. He says "and someone called out 'kachan' so the laugh was turned on me" (121).

The response from the village people was an open show of trust that occasionally astonished him in the forms it took. More than once a murderer insisted on surrendering to him personally, and one killer even refused to hand over his blood-stained weapon to anyone else (87).

Woolf admits he was ruthless when dealing with subordinates (111), and while his sense of humor is evident he frequently indulges it by making put-downs. He puts up with Singhalese and Tamil jokes against him but does not join in the laughter. Villagers suggest he shoot a particular wild buffalo which is dangerous and he later hears the animal was not wild at all: "I suggest the villagers wanted a little excitement to entertain a dull Sunday afternoon" (44).

The English in the C.C.S. were, more usually, not amused when jokes were played on them. Woolf deplores their lack of humor and Daniel finds his career threatened when he laughs at the wrong moment. At a variety show attended by Governor Thompson, a ventriloquist gets drunk and his dummy is irreverent:

"Say, guvner, what's a governor?"  
"One who governs."  
"Then, why doesn't he?"

There is much laughter, including Daniel's, although he is sitting next to Mrs. Thompson. He is unrepentant: "H.E. left, and with him went the G.A. It was an uproarious evening" (82). (Daniel refers to the Governor as "H.E." the common Sri Lankan abbreviation for "His Excellency"). But that laugh was to cost him dearly, and made him enemies who overlooked him for promotion later. Eventually he decided to start pulling strings himself with influential Ceylonese, and turned the situation around:

I was able to be happy and amused while doing so, you, my dear children, will understand, for you know by now that I found something to be happy and amused about in everything I did (144).

But being "amused" in this context implies patronization of those who amused him and there are mounting examples of his patronization of the British.

Both men had to witness hangings, bodies of murder victims, and other gory sights, but Woolf's attitude to corporal punishment is problematic. He calls himself politically schizophrenic (158), but seems also to be morally schizophrenic. He deplores being required to watch the flogging of a man in Kandy (166), but in

1906 when sent to supervise the Pearl Fishery at Marichchukaddi systematically abuses those under him. The pearls came out of the Gulf of Mannar and about 10,000 Arabs from the Persian Gulf as well as Tamils from India, came in dhows to do the diving. The British claimed these pearls and paid the divers by allowing them to take one-third the oysters found. The days were hot and the laborers became lethargic. Woolf wrote to Strachey:

... the Arabs will do anything if you hit them hard enough with a walking stick, an occupation in which I have been engaged for the most part of the last 3 days and nights (91 & Spotts 114).

Earlier in the same letter he wrote, "some Arabs (now at the Fishery I think) caught a missionary last year in the Persian Gulf & buggered him until he was all but dead," which anecdote he omits in *Growing*. He concludes, "It was their (the Arabs) attitude of human equality, which accounted for the fact, oddly enough, that I hit them with a walking stick, whereas in the whole of my time in Ceylon I never struck, or would have dared to strike, a Tamil or a Singhalese." The feeling of "human equality" he also explains was because the Arabs gave him gifts and would put their arms around his shoulders!

By his own admission Woolf was a cold man, "It's true that I'm cold and reserved to other people; I don't feel affection ever easily," he wrote to Virginia Stephens shortly before they became engaged (Spotts 173). There is no emotional coldness, however, when he suddenly starts gushing praises about the Arabs, and there is something strange about the sudden change in him. One example: "the Arab is superb, he has the grand manner, absolutely saturnine, no fuss or excitement..." (L.W. *Growing* 93). He says nothing as enthusiastic about anyone else in the book.

One explanation is that Woolf was a closet bisexual or homosexual, and that he became sexually aroused by the Arabs, and was indulging in a form of sadism or sex play with them. It could have been that hitting them was the only way he could touch them without threatening his career. Even if Woolf was bisexual he



would not have wanted it exposed, for when he was a boy Oscar Wilde had spent time to Reading Gaol for being careless, and homosexuality was still taboo in England. There had also been a few cases of blatant homosexuality in the English community in Ceylon resulting in Englishmen being disgraced — he would have heard of these. Perhaps the Arabs, a race more tolerant of homosexuality than the English, understood his dilemma and some therefore put a friendly arm around him with confidence in the knowledge that it would give pleasure and not be rejected, and for the same reason gave him gifts.

In their exchange of letters Woolf and Strachey, a known homosexual, developed a code word for homosexuality: "Morocco." Perhaps it is not a coincidence that there is an Arabian connection here. In the letter about the rape of the missionary and beating the Arabs, Woolf says other people reading Strachey's last letter to him might think "Morocco," but he understands that Strachey did not intend Morocco. There seems little point in quoting the letter he speaks of, except to say it refers to 1903-4 when they were in Cambridge together and in it Strachey is deeply affectionate and emotional. Talks about sodomy also come up in many of Strachey's letters (43). In one letter he writes to Leonard, "Your letter was wonderful, and I was particularly impressed by the curious masculinity of it. Why are you a man? We are females, nous autres, but your mind is singularly male..." (43). It seems possible, even likely, that they had once been lovers.

He often invited Strachey to visit him in Ceylon, but then at last when the other man agreed, quickly scotched the idea saying that he (Woolf) did not want to be seen in his "present state of mind (64)," and explains this statement: "I have no connection with yesterday: I do not recognize it nor myself in it." Yet, he is not talking about a desire not to have companionship for his sister visits him while he is in this same "present state of mind." His words to his friend seem to be a gentle way of explaining that his homosexual presence might be an embarrassment.

Woolf is usually presumed to be heterosexual because of his passionate pursuit of his wife, and he confided to others he

did try to have sex with her which act she found repugnant. But they were both writers and, while his letters to her are charged with emotion, the celebratory relationship may have been nothing like as strenuous on him sexually as has been supposed.

There is another episode in *Growing*, in the same context of homosexuality, that cannot be ignored. When Woolf first arrives in Ceylon he is posted to Jaffna where there is a shortage of houses. There he moves in with a man called Dutton whom he proceeds to insult for page after page. A fellow C.C.S. officer has already described Dutton to Woolf earlier as "a bloody unwashed Board School bugger (L.W. Growing 63), so it seems a very strange decision that Woolf would want to live with the man in any case, and he describes at length every detail of Dutton's lack of refinement. Eventually he marries a missionary which gives Woolf a chance to be nasty about the couple now. Years later he comes to feel sorry for Mrs. Dutton for he runs into her and she confides in him tearfully that her husband is 'queer' (69). It does not seem possible that Woolf whose best friend at home is a homosexual (Strachey), a man with whom he has a code name so they can write freely about homosexuality, could have lived months with one and been oblivious of it — even if they were not sexually involved. But if Woolf was a homosexual it does explain why he chose Dutton's house.

All Woolf's biographers agree that he stood loyally by his wife through her madness, frigidity, and lesbian affairs, eventually accepting her women lovers into their social circle. (Spotts 155/65 et al). There is also no evidence that he was unfaithful to her and after her death he did live with another woman. If he was bisexual the marriage must have been more self-serving that it appears and also Virginia's homosexuality would have protected her from knowing about his — for if they did not have sex together she would never have known how interested he was in heterosexual sex. This particular marriage would also have enabled him to be admired as a heterosexual man capable of perfect unselfish love of the woman of his dreams, while she would be the one blamed for the lack of sex in their lives, not him. If so, then he was a hypocrite who needed to be admired more than he

wished to be honest; and one already knows he was a hypocrite for he needed to be admired as the perfect imperialist although he did not believe in imperialism.

One cultural difference between Ceylon and most western countries is that homosexuality and creative talent are often spoken of as if they go hand-in-hand. Many of Ceylon's most towering creative talents in all fields were (and are) homosexuals. So ironically Woolf, by cutting himself from all Ceylonese, also would have cut himself off from some very interesting homosexuals if he was indeed craving their company.

Daniel's writing does not talk about homosexuals as such, but he and his wife were friends with many, and their names are in the text. The artist David Paynter was homosexual; this is how Daniel describes one of several meetings with him:

We saw a great deal of David Paynter. He was so charming and instructive, only a young fellow then... he told me he never read newspapers. The floor of his studio was black and his table just off the floor, the first time we'd seen one like it. I liked David very much. When I saw David's beautiful murals in the Trinity College Chapel for the first time, I remember feeling that it was all wrong to have Our Lord depicted as an Easterner when my own conception of Him was that he was a Westerner... Today David is no more, and I feel the loss a very personal one. When I was stationed in Nuwara Eliya I met the other members of the family (67).

This passage shows how accepting Ceylonese were, for Daniel was a very formal man of the old school and if David's sexual proclivity had troubled him he would not have associated with him, leave alone talked about any encounters. Although open-mindedness about homosexuality is not something exclusively Ceylonese, that it was able to continue without harassment in their world under the British to whom it was a crime, is an amusing insight into how little the colonials knew what was going on. Their own segregationist policies had made them blind.

(To be Continued)

#### Note

11. Personal recollection.

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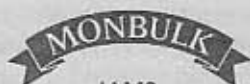
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## Caste, Buddhism and Japan

Due to some delay in delivery I received the Nov. 1, 1995 issue of *LG* only on Jan. 5th of this year. Permit me to comment briefly on H.L.D. Mahindapala's diatribe on the Tamils, which appeared in this particular issue.

I'm in agreement with Mahindapala that there existed a caste called turumbas among the Tamils, who were placed at the lowest rank of the caste hierarchy. But I'm surprised that he has not provided proper perspective by stating that this type of discrimination was not exclusive to Tamils. The caste group known as rodiyas among the Sinhalese shared the same hierarchical order similar to turumbas of Tamils. *The Area Handbook for Ceylon* (1971) published by the U.S. State Department states.

"In modern Kandyan society more than half the population are Goyigama. Next in order of size are the Vahumpura, Navandanna, Hena and Berava castes. Many of the remaining castes are represented by small groups; for example, the Rodiya, the lowest caste, probably number no more than several thousand."

About the depressing social status of the rodiyas in the traditional Sinhalese society, the same reference book mentions further:

"Among the most isolated groups are the Rodiya, who traditionally are not permitted to live in villages with the higher

castes. They are generally found in fairly isolated enclaves and have traditionally been institutionalized beggars. Their living conditions are generally inferior to those of the general population. Probably fewer than half are literate, and many suffer from unemployment."

Also, I wonder if caste system is not strictly adhered among the Sinhalese, similar to Tamils, why there are three major *nikayas* (sects) among the bhikkus? Why the Siam Nikaya is limited to Goyigama caste only? Why the Amapura Nikaya, consisting approximately 20 percent of the sangha was established by a monk of the Salagama caste in the 19th century? Isn't it an anachronism that such a caste hierarchy should exist among the priests who follow the precepts of the Enlightened One?

Mahindapala can take relief to hear that caste system is not restricted to Sri Lankan buddhists. Here in Japan, traditionally a buddhist country, there exist a caste named *Eta* (labelled as 'Japanese pariahs' by Basil Hall Chamberlain) whose rank is no less different to that of turumbas of Tamils and rodiyas of Sinhalese. Chie Nakane, one of the leading anthropologists of Japan, also stated in her book, *Japanese Society* (1970).

"There have been numerous studies of hierarchy in village politics by rural sociologists in Japan; indeed, the villagers'

sharp awareness of it compares with the caste-consciousness in a Hindu village".

Let us not forget the cradle of contemporary democracy, the United States of America. Few decades ago, the social status of the blacks (derisively called 'niggers' in the not-so distant past, even by the liberal U.S. Presidents like Harry Truman) were no less different to that of turumbas of Tamils or rodiyas of Sinhalese. Autobiographies of liberalminded movie stars like Katharine Hepburn and Shirley Maclaine describe poignantly about the humiliation faced by the blacks as untouchables in the so-called democratic America. Shirley Maclaine had written that her educated father even did not grant permission for her to invite her co-star Sidney Poitier for a meal at their home. This was a true life experience to Sidney Poitier who portrayed a similar situation in the classic movie *'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner'*, which he co-starred with Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. Every founding father of American democracy owned black slaves. Also, almost all democratic countries, do have an Intelligence Agency like the CIA, MI5, MI6, Mossad and RAW. The functions of these Intelligence agencies work against the basic principles of democracy. Thus, Mahindapala's hypothesis that "democracy and fascism cannot co-exist" is also not true.

Sachi Sri Kantha

Fukuroi City,  
Japan.

## Canard: Arabs Abused

A news item which appeared in a state-owned newspaper referred to the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran's disappearance out of the island to collect funds and support from a North African State.

This fabricated news item is a deliberate one to misdirect and divert the attention of the people from the real source of financiers and supporters to the LTTE Organisation which flourishes on funds and other support pumped by those countries where Tamils have residence as refugees.

This news item is intended to tarnish the relationship of the Muslim Arab States

with the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka; especially aimed at disrupting relations with Muslim Arab States of North Africa.

Any reasonable man will rule out such a proposition to help V. Prabhakaran or the LTTE in any form. No Arab country will ever dare to go to the assistance of such a man who had mercilessly massacred the innocent Muslims of Sri Lanka in such large numbers. Even the very latest genocide attempt directed at the Hulannuge police station and the village of Hulannuge is enough to prove their intentions.

The following factual reasons stand

against the LTTE for any assistance for that matter.

1. The LTTE Movement since its establishment was determined to massacre innocent Muslim in large number occupying North and East of Sri Lanka.
2. The LTTE also made the Muslims of North and East of Sri Lanka refugees and made them evacuate at very short notice.
3. Confiscated the hard earned wealth of the Muslims and made them paupers over night.

About these stubborn facts, all the

Muslim Arab Nations are fully aware. It is ridiculous to suggest that any Muslim nation would come forward to help the cause of the LTTE.

The Muslim Arab States of North Africa enjoy the most mutually cordial mutually relationship with Sri Lanka at all times. But the relationship is stronger than ever before after Madam Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga became the Executive President of Sri Lanka.

The planned massacres on Buddhist and Muslim villagers carried out by the LTTE since its appearance as a terrorist group are well known to the Muslim Arab world. These acts are deliberate and calculated amounting to genocide of the two races of people in Sri Lanka. This is enough to explain the LTTE's behaviour.

And the Muslim Arab Nations know it very well. It is puerile on the part of the

LTTE to expect any assistance from the North African State which condemns genocide and terrorism of any nature. For that matter no other African states like Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Egypt would ever support the cause of the LTTE carrying a genocidal campaign under the sovereignty of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka.

**A Patriotic Muslim**

## Malay Representation

The Devolution Proposals of the government are, according to Professor G.L. Pieris, not final but may be suitably amended after assessing the response from all political parties. This restriction to political parties is unfortunate as it leaves out contributions from such august bodies as the Maha Sangha and the Christian Church as well as the Muslim Community which had been closely associated with Constitution making in the past. It is now claimed that the Constitution in the making will be so formulated that all communities will receive just and fair treatment. Thus there is a chance for the Malays and other miniscule communities to find the representation so far denied to them. Representation is the quintessence of the well being of a minority. It is a sign of its recognition by the majority and an assurance that governmental activity will have due regard to its ethos.

The proposals hitherto made are planned to give satisfaction to Tamil demands. While falling over backwards to satisfy the Tamils the government has failed signally to consider the plight of the miniscule minorities — Malays, Burghers, Borahs, Memons — who form as much a part of the body politic as the Tamils. The recognition of the ethnic factor in the constitution of those countries professing and practising democratic ideals should make it necessary for the Sri Lankan government to give serious thought for the representation of these minorities in Parliament. The frustration felt by the Tamils led them to resort to violence to gain their demands. The smaller minorities, however, have to rely upon the sense of fair play and justice of the majority Community to obtain the recognition for which the Malays have been agitating since the Legislative Council days.

The road block to their representation in Parliament has been the paucity of their

numbers which preclude their entry into Parliament through election. However, the creation of the National List in the Jayewardene Constitution, offered an opportunity for representatives of such minorities to be appointed to Parliament. But in the absence of a statutory requirement the appointment of a Malay would only be a personal or whimsical choice as can be seen by the appointment of Mr. M. H. Amit to Parliament by President Premadasa and the absence of a Malay in Parliament after the 1944 elections. But the proposed abolition of the National List destroys even this slight hope of representation of a small minority. This is indeed a retrograde step. It removes from the government a means of rewarding persons of exceptional merit in the professions as well as adjusting any imbalance in minority representation.

In one form or another the principle of nomination has found a place in all Sri Lankan Constitutions, except the Constitution of 1972. The 1978 Constitution introduced the device of the National List which provided a means of entry into Parliament without recourse to elections. Now with a new constitution being formulated the retention of the National List in a modified form will certainly not conflict with any of the principles of constitution making adopted in past but will positively ensure its conformity with the ideals of a true democracy.

Our proposal is for a Parliament with election of Members on a territorial basis as envisaged in the Devolution Proposals together with an acceptable number of Members nominated by the party securing the largest number of seats at the elections. The nominated Members shall include, besides those appointed for pre-eminence in their respective professions, statutorily such Members of the smaller communities

as to provide representation for these minorities.

The importance of this device is self evident. A government would like to have a safe vote base in Parliament. Besides, there would be no other way to have in parliament persons of such outstanding achievement as Professor G. L. Pieris and Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in the Government and Mr. N. K. Choksy, P. C. in the Opposition. And, to convert the semblance of a democracy into a genuine democracy, through this means the smaller minorities can be provided with representation.

In remedying the situation in regard to the Tamils, the Government must not sweep the equally valid claims of the smaller minorities under the carpet. The peaceful acceptance of Sinhala rule by the smaller minorities is no indication of their acquiescence in the rejection of their claims for representation in Parliament. For the record, it has to be stated that in 1921 a Public Meeting of Malays from all parts of the Island, chaired by Mr. M. K. Saldin, President of the All Ceylon Malay Association, demanded a separate seat for the Malays although at the time there were three seats for Muslims in the Legislative Council. The demand for a seat for the Malays has been consistently made down the years and as consistently rejected by various governments.

The Constitution under consideration is a climactic one: on it will depend the happiness and welfare not only of the larger communities but also the well being of the smaller minorities whom an enlightened majority should certainly consider a vital and necessary component of the body politic.

**Enver C. Ahlip**

Former Principal,  
T. B. Jayah M. V.



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