

**LANKA • 18TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE •**

# **GUARDIAN**

Vol. 19

No. 1

May 1, 1996

Price Rs. 10.00

Registered at the GPO, Sri Lanka

**SIRIMA BANDARANAIKE**

**AN ENDURING**

**AT**

**CONTRIBUTION**

**EIGHTY**

— *Neelan Tiruchelvam*

**L.S.S.P : FROM RADICALISM TO LENINISM**

— *Regi Siriwardena*

**RUSSIA : NO ZERO-SUM GAME**

— *Dayan Jayatilleka*

**PHILIP**

*Lakmali Gunawardena*

**SAARC**

*John Gooneratne*

**WHITHER INDIA ?**

*Mark Tully*

**JAFFNA**

*Mervyn de Silva*

## ICES PUBLICATION

**JUST RELEASED!**

### **“SRI LANKA: THE DEVOLUTION DEBATE”**

ICES, 1996, 232pp.

#### **Articles:**

Introduction by Regi Siriwardena  
Towards Effective Devolution, by G. L. Peiris  
Some Thoughts on the Devolution Package, by  
Lakshman Marasinghe  
Devolution and Power Sharing, The Means to Peace and  
Development, by Bertram Bastiampillai  
Devolution of Power, The Problems and Challenges by  
Neelan Tiruchelvam  
Towards A Compromise Solution, by Sumanasiri Liyanage  
Breakthrough in Sri Lanka, by S. Guhan  
Control of State Land — The Devolution Debate, by  
Sunil Bastian  
The Structure and Content of Education: Policy  
Choices and Problems of Implementation in the  
Context of Devolution Proposals, by Sasanka Perera

#### **Appendices:**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's Address to the Nation,  
August 3, 1995  
Text of Government's Devolution Proposals of August 3, 1995  
Text of Government's Devolution Proposals of  
January 16, 1996  
A Commentary on the Devolution Proposals of the  
Government January 16, 1996, by G. L. Peiris  
The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact  
The Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact  
Annexure C  
Text of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 29, 1987  
The Interim Report of the Mangala Moonesinghe  
Parliamentary Select Committee, 1992  
Excerpts form Gamini Dissanayake's "Vision for the 21st  
Century"

**Price: Rs. 250**

U. S. \$ 15.00 for SAARC countries (Airshipment)

U. S. \$ 20.00 for other countries (Airshipment)

**All orders to: ICES, 2 Kynsey Terrace, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka.  
Telephone 685085/698048; Fax 696618**

# THE LIBERATION OF JAFFNA

Mervyn de Silva

Deputy Defence Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte has kept his promise. By the Sinhala-Tamil New Year 1996, he said, Jaffna will be "liberated". Thus, OPERATION RIVIRESA 2. Has the steady advance of the army into L.T.T.E. — held areas forced the "Tiger" units to abandon several heavily fortified positions? More significantly, the official spokesman also claimed that "a safe passage" had already been established for Tamil civilians displaced from Valikannam to return to their homes from Thenmaarachichi and Vadamaarachi, their present locations. If this is indeed the common response of these displaced Tamil families, OPERATION RIVIRESA 2 has made gains on the ground that could represent a significant victory, more important psychologically perhaps than militarily. After all the L.T.T.E. does claim that it is a "liberation movement". This is "peoples war" in that sense. Now

the army has "freed" those thousands of families that left (or were compelled to leave) Jaffna, the capital of "the traditional homeland". Some diplomats and foreign observers however remain sceptical. Perhaps they have their own sources of information.

Meanwhile the wellknown REPORTERS SANS FRONTIERES, an internationally known monitoring body, committed to press freedom, has criticised Sri Lanka's censorship regulations.

But this is a political-military problem. Both victories and reverses must be seen from that perspective. The army has "liberated" thousands of Tamil families but the main Tamil parliamentary party — the Tamil United Liberation Front (formerly Federal Party) issued the following statement:

"The TULF views with alarm and with the utmost concern the commencement of a new military offensive in the north. RIVIRESA 2 is apparently aimed at THENMAARACHI and VADAMAARACHI which have a high concentration of civilians. The TULF strongly objects to RIVIRESA operation conducted with heavy weaponry in an area with a high civilian concentration..... We urge both parties to de-escalate the armed confrontation and help bring an end to human suffering".

*Continued on page 2*

## **BRIEFLY. . .**

### **The Russel Affair**

While the British High Commission has discussed the issue with the relevant authorities, WOMEN FOR PEACE said in a statement released to the media that it was "outraged and appalled to witness the arbitrary arrest, detention and subsequent forceful deportation of Dr. Jane Russell on April 17 when the government was celebrating the birthday of the Prime Minister..... We, at WOMEN AND PEACE, therefore urge the government to redress the wrong done to Jane Russell and ensure her early return to Sri Lanka to continue her academic work..."

### **Tawakkal Inquiry**

How many full moons must pass before the Peoples Alliance decides to appoint an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Tawakkal transactions? The Opposition Leader, Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe and others in the opposition have urged the government which stands for "Transparency, Accountability and Good Governance" to prove that it takes its own credo seriously. And that can only mean an independent investigation and report.

**LANKA**

## **GUARDIAN**

Vol. 19 No. 1 May 1, 1996

Price Rs. 10.00

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

Editor: Mervyn de Silva  
Telephone: 447584

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

### **CONTENTS**

Mrs. B. at 80	3
Indian Polls	4
Remembrance of Politics Past	7
Crisis of Marxism (3)	11
Making of a Revolutionary	15
SAARC	18

## News in Brief

● President Chandrika Kumaratunga was told by President Jiang Zemin that the Peoples' Republic of China appreciated the P.A. government's proposals to resolve the island's ethnic conflict. The Chinese leader described the P.A.'s devolution proposals as "timely, prudent and just". The P.R.C. leader noted that Ms. Kumaratunga had visited China in 1974, and had chosen China for her first State visit. Sri Lanka will receive a billion rupees, about 20 million dollars as a grant and loan.

● No Sri Lankan has been killed or injured in the recent Israeli blitz in Lebanon. A few Sri Lankans living close to the Israeli border have been moved to safer parts of Lebanon. The Sri Lankan authorities have imposed a "temporary ban on housemaids" leaving for Lebanon or Jordan.

● A Defence Ministry communique claimed that "lakhs of people" in the L.T.T.E. controlled areas have been "liberated from the clutches of the Tigers". Displaced families are returning to their homes, the communique added.

## The Liberation of Jaffna

*(Continued from page 1)*

The T.U.L.F. was once known as the Federal Party. When the F.P. led by S.J.V. Chelvanayakam Q.C. could not succeed in persuading the S.L.F.P. or the U.N.P. to implement the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact or the Senanayake-Chelvanayakam, the credibility of Tamil parliamentary parties dropped steadily — certainly in the estimation of a new generation. That generation formed new groups, all challenging and denouncing the F.P. (T.U.L.F.) and waving the flag of "liberation", word made fashionable by Third World liberation movements. Soon they were trained and armed — by a big neighbour that deplored the manner in which Jayawardene abandoned Sri Lanka's traditional non-alignment, certainly the foreign policy of Mrs. Bandaranaike. Sad to say, some of these basic facts of recent history are ignored.

And now the T.U.L.F. "line" has resulted in an immediate response from five of the smaller organisations, all former militant groups — TELO, PLOTE, EPRLF, EPDP, and EROS. Representatives from these groups have met diplomats (including ambassadors) from the E.U. The diplomats were evidently pleased that these parties were committed to a political settlement.

Waiting — 21

## Kumbukkana Channel

*Yes, I walked alone along the channel  
The water was milk tea brown with the rain on far hills  
I dipped my hand in the water, thinking, may be  
This is the brown earth you trod on  
Washed down a myriad winding valleys  
For my hands lone reverence.*

*The Oya roars with rain fell your way  
On far blue slopes, so far  
That the thought of distance is pain.  
Pain hustles me where the channel leads away  
From the river down to the weir where we walked last May.*

*Then, the leaves screened us from the sky  
And, as we hoped in our haste from the glancing sunlit eye  
Of the jungle.  
And the water conspired to shut out other sounds  
As it gurgled at the weir.*

*Now, at an years full circle I lay alone  
Saw the sky through the leaves  
And the leaves kept falling down.  
I closed one eye and watched them floating past  
Falling and floating like the leaves of Time  
And I thought, love, if we ever come here together again  
These leaves will be falling and floating  
But will all else be the same?*

**U. Karunatilake**

# MRS. B. AT 80

Neelan Tiruchelvam

This House is today endeavouring to correct a resolution of Parliament which deprived a Member of this House of her civil rights, which included the right to vote, the right to contest an election, and the right to hold public office including Membership of Parliament. As a consequence Mrs Bandaranaike was deprived of her seat in Parliament from October 1980, until her pardon on the 1st of January 1986. She could not contest the Presidential Elections held in 1982 nor any other elective office until she received an executive pardon. No political leader could suffer a crueler fate which sought to obliterate her very identity as a political person.

Mrs Bandaranaike was no ordinary Member of Parliament. She had twice become Prime Minister of this country from 1960-65 and again from 1970-77. She was the leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and as the Head of Non-Aligned Movement she had an international visibility and recognition which no other Sri Lankan of our time has been able to rival.

Sri Lanka has been described as one of the few countries in South Asia which has had an effective two party system where political power alternated periodically between the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. This two system was critical to Sri Lankan democracy in presenting a genuine alternative to the electors through a clash of ideologies, programmes and political ideas. This two party system came under a cloud particularly during the period 1977 to 1988, when the Sri Lankan Freedom Party's Parliamentary strength had been reduced to a mere eight seats. In my view Mrs Bandaranaike's enduring contribution to the political history of this country is that she had she alone ensured the survival of the two party system when every effort was made to demoralise and even to coopt political opponents. Her stubborn refusal to compromise even she was subjected to political humiliation and intrigue, her fierce loyalty to her party, and her refusal

to be coopted has ensured the survival and the revival of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. This inurn ensured that the two Party system would survive.

In recalling Mrs Bandaranaike political record I do not wish to imply that it was entirely without blemish. To do so would be to falsify history and none in this House would want to deny history on a day when we seek to uphold the principles of truth and justice. Opportunities for ethnic accommodation were sadly missed. I recall as a schoolboy accompanying my mother in the early sixties to visit Mr. M. Tiruchelvan and other Federal Party leaders who had been unjustly incarcerated in Panagoda for democratic agitations for equality. No charges were ever framed against these political prisoners. Similarly in the seventies there was a failure to frame a consensual constitution which would genuinely address the demands for equality, fundamental rights and the sharing of power. I recall these events without any bitterness or acrimony as the pain and discomfiture of our family was miniscular compared to the subsequent sufferings of others. However we need to come to grips with the reality of our troubled history if are to find the strength to frame an ennobling future.

We are here to support this Resolution not merely because it concerns an important and eminent citizen of this country. This House views with concern that a legislative scheme was devised to subvert the democratic will of the Attanagalla electorate. Mrs Banaranaike was duly elected by an overwhelming majority of electors, and in our system of representative democracy it is will and legitimate expectation of the electors that their representative will serve her full term without impediment.

The first step in the legislative scheme was the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law which was enacted in 1978. Human rights activists and concerned lawyers were critical of several features of this law.

First the law empowers the Special Presidential Commission to inquire into

'any act of victimization, misuse or abuse of power, corruption or any fraudulent act, in relation to any court or tribunal or any public body, or in relation to the administration of any law or the administration of justice. There was concern that terms such as abuse of power had no precise legal meaning and were vague and nebulous.

Second the law was made retrospective and the Commission was not a mere fact finding body, but one that could make recommendations which had punitive consequences.

Third the law provided no procedural guidelines and the Commission was free to devise its own procedures.

Fourth section 7 (1) of the law permitted the Commission to ignore the rules of evidence. It was considered particularly disturbing that there was no right of appeal and that the seal of finality would be conferred on a recommendation based on testimony which could be in contravention of the evidentiary safeguards applicable to ordinary cases.

Fifth even though the Commission was composed of sitting judges, this provided no safeguard as their judicial outlook was often transformed when they sat as Commissioners.

In evaluating the fairness of the proceedings that were instituted against Mrs Bandaranaike it is important to recall the words of Lord Diplock in *Reg vs Commission for Racial Equality, Ex p. Hillingdon L.B.C.* (1982) A.C. 779 at p787 F-G, that a Commission which is a public authority must exercise its powers in accordance with well known principles of legality, rationality, and procedural propriety. We do not believe as Amnesty International pointed out in its statement on the Criminal Justices Commission, that these principles are safeguarded where the judicial process is 'diluted to serve political purposes. As the Civil Rights Monement pointed out, "The mere fact that judges of a superior court are appointed to a tribunal is no guarantee that its functioning will be fair and correct or command public confidence."

*Dr. Tiruchelvam, M.P. is a member of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).*

There were other aspects of this matter which offended a sense of fairness and of procedural justice. The Court of Appeal issued a writ of prohibition on the Commission on the ground that it had not been expressly conferred power to investigate matters relating to the period prior to 10th February 1978. On 20th November 78, the government introduced an amendment to the Constitution which retrospectively negated the effect of the Court of Appeal, and transferred its writ jurisdiction in respect of these matters to the Supreme Court. Further the day after Mrs Bandaranaike had been expelled from the House amendments were introduced to the Parliamentary Elections and Presidential Elections laws prohibiting persons deprived of civic rights from speaking or canvassing at elections. The Civil Rights Movement again protested against these bills on the ground that they sought to limit an effective Opposition campaign at the next Parliamentary and Presidential elections.

Much as already been said of the eloquent speeches made in defence of Mrs Bandaranaike by the then Leader of the Opposition Mr. Amithalingam and by Mr M Sivasithambaram. During the vote there were 139 votes in favor of the motion and 19 votes against. This included 14 members of the TULF who within three years of this event were to suffer a similar fate when the Sixth Amendment was introduced in the aftermath of the July 83 pogrom. The Sixth Amendment by requiring Members of Parliament to subscribe to a new oath of allegiance effectively disenfranchised the North-east and deprived most of this region of its Parliamentary representation. No doubt the TULF had opposed the Referendum and the extension of Parliament, but the Sixth Amendment was a supervening event which had immediate impact on their representation. Many political scientists have written on the disastrous political consequences of the Sixth Amendment, but I wish to briefly recall the terrible personal tragedies that followed. Of the fourteen

Members who forfeited their Parliamentary seats four were brutally murdered, while two others died in exile in Canada. Two faded out of politics and had more peaceful deaths, while a third died of a heart attack on the eve of a visit abroad. I recall these sad developments to make the point that no act of regret or apology for past wrongs can help us recover the lost lives or regain the wasted years. Similarly neither the pardon of January 1st 1986 nor this Resolution can give back to Mrs Bandaranaike those painful and wasted years. In passing this Resolution we do not confer any benefit on Mrs Bandaranaike but in humility acknowledge the fallibility of this representative body.

If this debate has any meaning we must do everything within our power to restore public confidence in the judicial process. If the Government introduces a Bill to abolish the Special Presidential Commissions Bill and the related provisions in the Constitution, we will support such a measure.

## INDIAN POLLS

# The Cassandras are prophesying again

Mark Tully

The Cassandras are uttering their dismal prophecies again, so it must be election time in India. This time they have plenty to be dismal about. All the parties are in a shambles, there seems to be no chance of a clear-cut result, there is no leader in sight with the charisma to carry the country with him, the World Bank/IMF-inspired economic reforms, almost universally accepted as essential for India to achieve a high growth rate, have ground to a halt, share prices are down, and so is the rupee. But Cassandras have been very good at prophesying India's future.

There were those who warned that Indira Gandhi's first election in 1967 would be India's last. The results were

indeed alarming. The Congress party, generally considered at that time the only party able to provide stability, won the parliamentary election but did not emerge with control of a single state government in the Gangetic plain. The Congress split, but Indira survived, and so did democracy. When she declared a State of Emergency in 1975, many commentators again shook their heads gravely, saying: 'We warned you democracy wouldn't in India.' In less than two years, Indira Gandhi called a general election and accepted the result, which went against her.

More recently, when Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated just before the final round of polling in the last general election, the Congress party was left leaderless and without an absolute majority. The last two short-lived governments had shown that the Janata Dal and its splinter

groups were so torn by internal strife that they could not rule the country. There was a political vacuum which only the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seemed poised to fill. The BJP was at its most strident then, and many feared that India was heading for Hindu fascism.

In fact, since Rajiv Gandhi's assassination India has enjoyed five years of stable government under Congress. It has been led by the 75-year-old Narasimha Rao, who was not given a chance of seeing out his term of office when he was elected simply because he was the least controversial candidate to succeed Rajiv Gandhi. Narasimha Rao had not even contested the general election because he had just recovered from an operation and thought his undistinguished political career was over. He had never been more than a faithful lackey of Indira Gandhi and her son.

*The author was BBC Delhi Correspondent for more than twenty years is now a freelance writer and broadcaster living in Delhi.*

## The edifice crumbles

So is India going to prove the Cassandras wrong again? The politics do not look hopeful. Whatever Narasimha Rao's successes have been, nurturing the Congress cannot be considered one. Well before the end of his term in office it had become clear that Rajiv Gandhi had become an electoral liability, yet when I asked a Congress veteran why they did not get rid of him, he replied: 'The Nehru-Gandhi family is the keystone of the Congress party. Take them away and the whole edifice will come tumbling down'.

That is what has happened — the edifice has not tumbled down, but it has crumbled away. Narasimha Rao has presided over a series of disastrous State Assembly elections, leaving only two major states in the hands of Congress. He has made no effort to rebuild the party in the states where it has been humiliated.

His failure to prevent Hindu fanatics from pulling down the mosque in Ayodhya means the Muslim vote is lost to him too. He himself is not a charismatic campaigner, and he has no national image to pull the crowds. It is difficult, therefore, to see how he is going to fight the campaign with a demoralised Congress or with leaders inside the party whose loyalty is suspect and some of whom have already deserted him.

## The magic of the name

Those Congress politicians who have been hoping that Rajiv Gandhi's widow Sonia will emerge as their saviour seem destined to be disappointed. Although she must fear that a non-Congress government might order her to move out of her official residence, remove her security and take away the other privileges the Narasimha Rao administration has given her, she has so far rejected all suggestions that she or one of her children should lend the magic of the Nehru-Gandhi name to the party's campaign.

There is, of course, in theory no reason why it should be the Congress party which governs India — indeed, Indian democracy would be healthier if there was an alternative national party. The BJP believed it was emerging as a national alternative because of its reputation for discipline and cohesiveness. But

the BJP has paid a high price for its expansion and now looks very little different from all the other flabby and fissiparous parties. It has allowed corrupt and self-seeking politicians to jump on its band-wagon, and its reputation for discipline has been shattered by the unseemly wrangling over the Gujarat chief ministership which almost brought down its government in that western Indian state.

The top BJP leadership is divided over whether to soft-pedal Hindu nationalism, or give the voter the impression of a responsible national alternative, or mount another strident campaign. Now the party president, L.K. Advani, faces corruption charges. Recent form is not encouraging either. State election results show that the BJP has been unable to extend its base beyond the North and the West, and there it cannot win enough seats to come anywhere near an absolute majority.

There is much talk of the 'Third Force'. By this is meant a ragged collection of parties with a base among traditionally deprived castes, regional parties, and communists. It was this combination which formed the unstable Janata Dal government after Rajiv Gandhi was defeated in 1989. It is still so unstable that no one can yet tell how the various parties in the so-called 'Force' will line up in this election.

I have managed to read all previous Indian general elections I have witnessed. That goes back nearly thirty years — but I am not betting this time. Earlier elections have all turned on the issue of whether the Congress will win or not. At present the almost universal wisdom is that the Congress has no hope of winning an absolute majority in this election, but neither does any other party. Much will depend on the final line-up, what alliances are made in the different states, making this an election which has to be read state by state. That is what makes any predictions so difficult.

The final outcome could well be a government cobbled together by deals between different party leaders. There will almost certainly be schisms and defections — hardly a recipe for political stability. Yet this would seem to be a

time when India needs a very stable government. When he became Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao found he had inherited a bankrupt India and realised he would have to swallow the medicine prescribed by the World Bank and the IMF to bail him out.

## The license-permit Raj

The regime they ordered was an end to more than forty years of socialism, and an economy open to international competition. Rapid progress was made at first. Western diplomats in Delhi talked of a revolution, as the Finance Minister, the economist Manmohan Singh, started to unravel the red tape tied around the economy. It looked as though India was at last seeing the end of what had become known as 'the license-permit Raj'.

Indian industrialists were allowed to make investment decisions without seeking government clearance, and foreign investors were actively encouraged for the first time. The rupee was partially freed and the share markets were opened to international investment funds. Foreign businessmen filled the five-star hotels of Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Bangalore. Even Calcutta, with its communist government, started to attract interest from abroad.

But the process gradually slowed down. The comparatively easy decisions were taken, but the Prime Minister balked at the changes which required real political courage. The result is that India's politicians, its bureaucrats, its army of government employees, and its pampered industrial labour force still have a lot more of that bitter medicine to swallow before the course prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank is complete. If it is not completed, bureaucracy will creep back.

The politicians and bureaucrats will have to surrender the patronage which the government's involvement in almost every activity provides. Organised labour, and in particular government employees, can no longer enjoy the absolute right of job security. The grossly overmanned government-owned industries will have to be privatised, or at least allowed to operate without ministerial and bureaucratic interference. Tax payers will have to accept that they must make realistic returns.

Discipline has to be restored in the services the government must continue to supply — doctors will have to attend the health centres they are paid to attend, and teachers their schools. In a recent book, the two distinguished economists, Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze, produced copious statistical evidence to show that there was a direct connection between India's economic backwardness and its failure to provide education and health services.

These and many other reforms will need a very firm government. But a convincing majority in India does not necessarily mean firm or good government. In 1971 Indira Gandhi won an overwhelming victory. By 1975 her back was to the wall and she had to declare a State of Emergency, without any notable achievements to her credit beyond the Bangladesh war four years earlier.

Her son, Rajiv Gandhi, had an even bigger majority. He promised to bring India into the twenty-first century and to end the influence of the power-brokers in his own party. India's administration, a legacy of the Raj, remained unreformed. The economy stayed tied up in red tape. The Congress continued to be a party of self-seeking opportunists. Although Narasimha Rao's reforms still have a long way to go, he has done more to alter India than any prime minister since Nehru, without even an absolute majority when he started.

### A clear game-plan

So a weak Narasimha Rao does not necessarily mean no more liberalisation. His game-plan is clear. He calculates he can win enough seats to be in the running to be prime minister, even without anything near an absolute majority. He will therefore demand absolute control over the distribution of the Congress party nominations for the general election, so that MPs elected on the Congress ticket will owe their loyalty entirely to him and will not be tempted to offer their support to any other leader. They will form a solid base for his post-electoral manoeuvring. It is a dangerous game which could end in disaster before the race for the prime ministership even starts, but Narasimha Rao has no alternative. Luckily for him, no other leader of his own or any other party is playing a stronger game yet.

It is difficult to assess Narasimha Rao's chances of success. Although he is often known as the 'Old Fox' because of the skill he has demonstrated in out-maneuvring his rivals over the past five years, he has never shown any aptitude for planning and winning elections. Therefore there must be a possibility that the Congress under his leadership will not win even enough seats to give him the base he needs to form a minority government, or lead a coalition.

### Waiting for others to make mistakes

On the other hand, Narasimha Rao is a man of great patience who has survived by waiting for his rivals to make mistakes. He allowed the BJP supporters to destroy the mosque in Ayodhya, knowing that they were killing the goose that laid the golden egg — the issue which breathed life into their strident Hindu campaign. He gave Arjun Singh, the only leader in the Congress to openly challenge him, a very long rope, and sure enough, his rival did hang himself in the end.

In the run-up to this election he has once again waited for others to make mistakes. He knows that it is not a question of how well he does, but of how badly the other parties do. It is beginning to look as though the waiting game may produce the winner again.

The Supreme Court, which is now a very active watchdog over the administration, has insisted that the police charge some of the politicians whose names have appeared in the diary of a man running a *Hawala*, or foreign-exchange racket.

Politicians in India have worn teflon *Kurtas*, and no one quite knows how the *Kurtas* have been stained this time. Some argue it is another Machiavellian plot by the Prime Minister. Others say he had to offer up some victims when the Supreme Court insisted on action. But whatever the truth, the charges have resulted in the unprecedented resignation of three Cabinet ministers, which has conveniently quashed yet another incipient revolt within the Congress party and removed the man most talked of as an alternative prime minister.

At the same time the BJP, which has always claimed it is the only honest party,

has found its president charged with receiving a very large sum of money illegally. This has not exactly helped its campaign to make government corruption the major electoral issue. The other opponents of the Congress are still arguing about alliances and the sharing of seats, and show no sign yet of forming an effective 'Third Front'.

### The beneficiary of disarray

There is only one slight problem for the Prime Minister. He has been named by the accused illegal foreign-exchange dealer in a statement he gave to the police. This is not as serious as appearing in that diary, but the Supreme Court has ordered the police not to spare anyone. It is therefore possible that Narasimha Rao could find himself charged too, in which case he would have no alternative but to resign.

Provided he is not charged with corruption. Narasimha Rao will be the beneficiary of the disarray in both his opponents' camps. He may also win more seats than expected by forming strategic alliances with different parties in different states.

So it is possible that, in spite of all the uncertainties of this election, India will emerge with a prime minister who knowing that age is against a third term, will want to go down in history as the Great Reformer. He would then be prepared to take the political risks involved in removing more of the hurdles in the way of economic growth. He might even take advantage of the fear the Supreme Court has created to start cleaning the Augean stables that India's public life has become. That would truly be the task of a Hercules, not a natural role for the elderly, indecisive Narasimha Rao.

If Narasimha Rao does not return to power, the general election will be another — and perhaps the last — nail in the coffin of the Congress, and there will almost certainly be an unstable government. Then the Cassandras might at last be proved right, because there will be no Congress party to pick up the pieces as it did when the previous non-Congress governments collapsed. It is sobering to remember that all non-Congress governments in Delhi have collapsed.



# Remembrance of Politics Past

## *The LSSP Documents of the 'Thirties and Early 'Forties*

Regi Siriwardena

The subject of this paper is the collection of documents relating to the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in the pre-war and wartime years down to 1942, edited by Wesley S. Muthiah and Sydney Wanasinghe, and recently published<sup>1</sup>. The greater part of this collection has been transcribed from the hitherto confidential documents in the Public Record Office, London, which have become open to the public after 50 years. These include communications between the Governor in Ceylon and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, internal documents of the Colonial Office, as well as police reports from Colombo. The editors appear to have made an effort to supplement the documents available in London with party documents obtained from local sources.

We must be grateful to the editors for the labour they have devoted to the collection and editing of these documents, thus making generally accessible a mass of valuable and interesting material. It's, however, a pity that the editing and presentation of the documents fall short of the importance of their subject-matter. What might have been adequate if the book was merely a party souvenir for its sixtieth anniversary is not good enough for a compilation which will naturally be consulted by students of colonial policy and administration and of the political history of that era. Even though the editors are not professional historians, some effort should have been made by them to meet the norms generally maintained in the publication of such documentary material. The book doesn't distinguish systematically between the documents derived from the Public Record Office in London and others; nor, in the case of the former, are file numbers given: this customary practice in quoting such source material would have assisted future researchers. It is not stated whether the documents bearing on the LSSP in the London records have been reproduced comprehensively or selectively. I shall refer later to one document that I have been told exists in the colonial records but isn't there in the book. Many

of the documents are undated, and while in some cases the originals in the Public Record Office may not have carried a date either, there are others where dating should have been easy, but hasn't been done owing to editorial indifference. For instance, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva's presidential address to the second annual party conference is dated by year, month and day, but his address to the third such conference doesn't carry even the year, though this is given as 1938 on page 22 of the editors' introduction. On the same page the editors state that they have reprinted three of Dr. de Silva's presidential addresses, and refer to Document No. 2 as the first of these. However, on turning to the text of that document, we find that it is an article titled 'What is Communism?' by Dr. de Silva, reprinted from the *Ceylon Daily News*, in which the author thanks the editor for the opportunity to place the Communist or Socialist view before the public. This article, too, is undated, though this deficiency could have been eliminated by a search in the back files of the paper. At the end of the book (pages 257-259) there is reproduced what seems to be a party document in Sinhala, but this is neither numbered nor identified.

Another editorial fault is that explanatory matter is sometimes inserted in parentheses into the body of a text instead of being given in footnotes or endnotes, or at least marked off by square brackets, as is the scholarly convention in respect of interpolated matter: failing this, the reader may be left in momentary confusion whether the explanation is part of the original text. Apart from the one contradiction between introduction and text that I have already noted, there is another serious inaccuracy in the editors' introduction. This is the reference on page 31 to the resolution moved by George E. de Silva in the State Council in May 1941 regarding the detention of four leaders of the LSSP. The introduction says: 'The resolution was worded as follows, "In the opinion of this Council, the four detenus at present detained in Kandy should be

forthwith released"'. However, on turning to the text of the debate included in the body of the book, we find that while the form in which the resolution stood on the order paper was indeed as stated in the introduction, George E. de Silva, on rising to move it, asked for and obtained leave to amend it. In its amended form the resolution read: 'That this Council requests His Excellency the Governor to release the four detenus at present detained in Kandy under the Defence (Miscellaneous No. 3) Regulations dated June 3, 1940. This represented a watering-down of the original wording of the resolution, perhaps due to political pressures, and the editors should have taken note of this. Although the introduction states on page 32, that 'the entire debate has been included', a reading of the text suggests that there are on pages 243 and 244 breaks and omissions, maybe of less important matter, interruptions and crosstalk, perhaps, but these hiatuses should have been explained. A further point regarding the shortcomings of the book concerns the incompleteness of the collection. It doesn't contain a single party programme — neither the one which the party issued at the time of its inauguration and which bore a reformist character, nor the later one, adopted, I believe, in 1941, which was based on a Marxist analysis and commitment to socialist revolution. The absence of these documents would seem to indicate that the party hasn't been as successful in keeping its records intact as the former imperial rulers!

In his preface to the book Mr. Bernard Soysa says: A general reader cannot be expected to see a living pattern of history in these documents. However, the sponsors in their narrative do to a small extent enable the reader to glimpse the living reality. 'In spite of the qualification, to a small extent', I think the editors' introduction is inadequate to perform this function.

Their narration of the history of the LSSP gives the impression that, with the exception of the expulsion of the Stalinists in 1940, that history was a seamless whole, while actually it was

marked by several breaks and transformations, some of which fell within the period covered by the book. I should therefore like to trace what I see as four phases in the history of the LSSP, so as to provide a context in which the documents can be placed.

The significance of the pre-war LSSP was that it represented the first attempt, indeed, the only one, to build a militant anti-imperialist mass movement on a national scale in Ceylon. A.E. Goonesinha's Labour Party had preceded it in rousing working-class consciousness and leading major strike actions. Goonesinha's role in almost singlehandedly agitating for and securing universal franchise at the time of the Donoughmore Commission has scarcely been given the recognition that it deserves. But Goonesinha lacked a coherent political perspective, and by the time of the foundation of the LSSP, he had declined into racist politics. In Jaffna the Gandhian agitation for Swaraj found its response in the politics of the Youth League and the boycott it organised in 1931 of the Donoughmore Constitution, on the ground that nothing short of independence was acceptable. The Jaffna Youth League was more radical than any political grouping in the South at that point of time; its leader, Handy Perinpanayagam, was later to work with the LSSP. But the national leadership which occupied front stage at the time the LSSP entered the political arena — the Ceylon National Congress — had not even a faint echo of the anti-imperialist commitment of their Indian counterparts. As the Ceylon National Congress avowed in its memorandum to the Donoughmore Commission:

Ceylon is one of the few British possessions in which the demand for political reform has never passed from constitutional agitation to hostile demonstration.

But the gentlemen leaders of the Congress, some of whom are still ritually celebrated every year as national heroes, were not only incapable of leading a popular movement against imperialism; they were against even universal franchise, which they opposed, to a man, at the time of the Donoughmore Commission. Marxists, in analysing the failure of the Ceylonese political leadership to promote a militant anti-imperialist movement, have emphasised the absence of an industrial bourgeoisie and the depen-

dent role of the indigenous landowning and mercantile classes in relation to imperialism. But it seems to me that one should also take into account the total cultural colonisation of these classes and their political representatives. It was left to the new generation of young political intellectuals who formed the LSSP, themselves by origin of the English-educated elite, to bring back from the West the theories of socialism and Marxism which were to stimulate a new political development in Ceylon.

I think we should be especially thankful to Messrs. Muthiah and Wanasinghe for reprinting from the pages of Hansard the 1941 State Council debate on the LSSP detenus to which I have already referred. It's a document that illuminates glaringly the political temper of the leadership of the so-called nationalist movement. Clearly, a large proportion of the membership of the State Council was more frightened of the 'subversive' politics of the LSSP than of any violation of civil liberties by the colonial government. Indeed, the Minister of Home Affairs and his Executive Committee, composed of State Councillors, had approved of the defence regulations which authorised the Governor to detain persons without trial, and the Minister had concurred in the order for the detention of the four Sama Samajists. During the debate, which took place nearly a year after the detention orders were made, G.G. Ponnambalam moved an amendment whose purpose was to make the request for the release of the detenus conditional on their undertaking 'not to engage in activities inimical to the successful prosecution of the war to subversive of the stability of the State'. This amendment, which was seconded by A.E. Goonesinha, was lost. But only a few members, like George E. de Silva himself and Siripala Samarakkody (who had a brother under detention), would even take the liberal position that they disagreed with the politics of the LSSP but would defend their right not to be detained without trial. Ultimately, the resolution, in the form in which it had been adulterated by the mover himself, squeaked through by a majority of a single vote, with nine abstentions.

The LSSP had germinated from the Surya Mal movement, which was an amorphous association of progressive nationalist elements (two of its leaflets and articles are in the book, one of them written by Doreen Young, later Doreen

Wickramasinghe). The party's public propaganda and agitation were originally on a broadly populist radical platform. It had from its beginnings a firm commitment to full national independence, but its popular base was also built up by its opposition to the headman system, its stand against police repression and violence, its advocacy of welfare measures and the leadership it gave to workers struggles. However, there was apparently an inner group within the leadership whose aim was to propel the party in the direction of a Marxist revolutionary organisation. But the LSSP's development from the condition of an open, radical populist movement to a Leninist-style revolutionary party wasn't consummated until wartime arrests and restrictions drove it underground. This second phase of the party's life was marked by the expulsion of its Stalinist wing, the adoption of a new, explicitly Marxist programme and the reconstitution of its membership on the basis of selected cadres. The period documented by the book falls within these two phases that I have outlined. I should like, for purposes of comprehensiveness, to indicate briefly what I regard as the two subsequent phases of the party's history. The third phase began with the resumption of open public life by the party after the end of the war. During that third period there was a gradual shift in the centre of gravity of the party from revolutionary to parliamentary activity, bringing it closer, in practice though not yet in theory, to the character of a social-democratic political organisation. That shift is, in itself, not to be regretted, since the earlier goal of proletarian revolution was a chimera. If nothing else had changed, the LSSP might have emerged as the effective social-democratic alternative to the UNP. But the dominance of Sinhala ethno-nationalism in the mid-fifties and the ascendancy of the SLFP presented the party with new challenges. Once class was overshadowed by ethnicity as the main basis of political mobilisation, the LSSP went into decline as an independent political force. This was the marker of the fourth phase of the party's life, as is evidenced by its twists and turns on the ethnic question in the last three decades, in response to external pressures. In 1955-56 the party had stood valiantly against 'Sinhala only'; it surrendered to that policy on entering the first coalition with the SLFP in 1964, and in 1965-66, it made a 180-degree turn from its position a decade earlier,

lining up behind the SLFP to oppose Dudley Senanayake's language regulations. In 1972 Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, on behalf of the United Front government, wrote Sinhala as the only official language into the Constitution. This meant that where the legal validity of 'Sinhala only' had until then rested on an Act of Parliament, which could have been amended by a simple majority, it now had a status that could be altered only by a two-thirds majority. The 1972 Constitution also gave Buddhism primacy of place, and made no concessions to Tamil demands.

To lament these shifts on the part of the LSSP is not just to make a fetish of consistency. In the 'fifties and early sixties the Tamil people could still look on the left movement as the significant political force in the south which defended their rights. In abandoning them, the LSSP (and CP with it) accentuated the ethnic polarisation of our politics, and thus contributed to the triumph of extreme nationalism and of separatism in the north. The 1972 Constitution, it may be recalled, was the precursor to the Vaddukodai resolution in which a leading Tamil party for the first time put separatism on the political agenda.

In recent years several people have quoted approvingly the dictum attributed to Dr. Colvin R. de Silva in 1956, 'Two languages, one country; one language, two countries'. Well, I suppose prophets should be honoured even when they have gone back later on their own prophetic insights. But if it has now become respectable to quote that dictum, it's because the two major Sinhala-based parties have themselves shifted from their original uncompromising positions: the Jayewardene government in 1987 enacting the 13th and 16th Amendments and the Provincial Councils Act, and the present President making since 1994 more extensive moves towards devolution. On both these occasions the LSSP supported the new initiatives, but one can hardly say that their political agitation or activity made a big difference in bringing about the changes. In the first case, it was Indian pressure that was decisive; in the second, it was the outlook of the new leader of the SLFP.

Having brought the history of the LSSP up to date — from my own point of view, of course — I wish to go back now in time to the year 1940 and discuss the first major transformation in the

orientation of the party. In that year the Executive Committee of the LSSP, by a majority of 29 votes to 5, adopted the following resolution:

In view of the failure of the Third International to guide itself by the needs of the international revolutionary working class movement, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, while re-affirming its support for and solidarity with the Soviet Union, the first workers state, declares that it no longer has confidence in the 3rd International.

That resolution led to the expulsion of the Stalinist group in the LSSP, who became the nucleus of the future Communist Party.

In his great three-volume biography of Trotsky, Isaac Deutscher noted the failure of Trotsky's adherents successfully to build mass parties anywhere, 'with the peculiar exception of Ceylon'. I had a personal conversation with Deutscher in London in 1952, in which he expressed his curiosity about how that 'exception' could be explained. I should like to suggest that the triumph of Trotskyism inside the LSSP was more than a fortuitous circumstance. Both Stalinism and Trotskyism have now receded in the perspective of history. The LSSP of today no longer pays even lipservice to Trotskyism, while the last surviving admirer of Stalin in Sri Lanka is probably Mr. Dayan Jayatileke. But I wish to argue that the question of Trotskyism vs. Stalinism was in 1940 a question that had very direct implications for the practical politics of a left party in Ceylon.

The gravitation of the LSSP leadership away from the Third International, or Comintern, had taken place in the context of the Popular Front policies which the International had imposed on all Communist parties. With the drift towards an European war, the Comintern's efforts had been concentrated on building up broad alliances of anti-fascist parties which would favour, in the international arena, an alliance between the democratic Western powers and the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. This line, which reflected the defensive needs of the Soviet Union, had, it is true, been temporarily submerged by the time the LSSP moved its anti-Comintern resolution. Stalin had started the world, and indeed the Communist parties themselves, by signing the non-aggression pact with Hitler's

Germany on the eve of the war. But the Popular Front line would be revived two years later once Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

What were the implications of this line for socialist parties in colonial countries like India and Ceylon? Once Britain became a wartime ally of the Soviet Union, the line involved suspension of the anti-imperialist struggle and support of the war effort in the interests of the 'defence of the Soviet Union'. The Communist parties of India and Ceylon proved this by changing their attitude to the war, proclaiming that the imperialist war had been transformed into a 'people's war', and, in India, opposing the 'Quit India' movement of 1942.

The LSSP's dissociation of itself from the Comintern was, therefore, farsighted in the context of the international situation and its possible repercussions on Ceylon politics. But there was another factor, more directly related to the character of class forces in Ceylon, which must have contributed to the LSSP's repudiation of the Comintern.

In the Popular Front period/s, the Comintern's policy for colonial countries was that Communist parties should support the national bourgeoisie in their countries in furtherance of the strategy of building broad national fronts. Against both Stalinists and Trotskyists, I would hold today that the question of the character of the national bourgeoisie, its role in relation to imperialism and the degrees of its progressive or reactionary nature, is one to which the answers had to vary from country to country, and even perhaps between one period and another. In India, for instance, there was indeed at this time a national bourgeoisie playing an oppositional role to imperialism. But in Ceylon, where the bourgeoisie and its political leadership were interested only in bargaining for favours from the imperial rulers, the Comintern line was politically stultifying. This was fully demonstrated in 1947 when the Communist Party, docilely looking round for a national bourgeois leadership to support, could find one only in the United National Party!

*(To be Continued)*

#### Notes

1. Wesley S. Muthiah and Sydney Wanasinghe (eds.), *Britain, World War 2 and the Sama Samajists* (1996: A young Socialist publication), Rs. 300.



OUR MISSION IS TO BE  
AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE  
FACILITATOR IN CREATING  
WEALTH THROUGH  
INNOVATIVE FINANCIAL  
PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. WE  
ENDEAVOUR TO ACHIEVE THIS  
BY PROVIDING THE BEST  
INVESTMENT BANKING  
SERVICES TO BUSINESS  
ENTERPRISES, AT THE HIGHEST  
PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL  
LEVELS, IN AN ENVIRONMENT  
OF ENTREPRENEURIAL  
SPIRIT.

**VANIK**  
INCORPORATION LIMITED

108, 2nd Floor, W. A. D. Ramanayake Mawatha, Colombo 2.  
Tel : 331462(8 lines). Fax : 330815.

6, D. S. Senanayake Veediya, Kandy.  
Tel : 24912-3. Fax : 24916.

VANIK-PIONEERING "FINANCE FOR THE FUTURE".

# Waiting for Zyuganov

Dayan Jayatilleka

*"Socialism must be the realisation of the banner of the French Revolution on which is inscribed liberty, equality, fraternity". — Karl Kautsky, 'Die Blutige Revolution' p 361 (1933).*

It all seemed to come together, for the first time, at the inception of the French Revolution. The main emancipatory yearnings of the oppressed were summed up in the slogan Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. There has been nothing before or since which encompassed so fully, the wishes and strivings of humanity for a different and better world.

The three key terms of this slogan correspond, to my mind, to three great psychological impulses of human beings. The tragedy of all revolutions from the American to date, has been the absence of one or the other, or the splitting up, the divergence, of these three noble impulses. The subsequent evolution of the French Revolution itself is stark testimony to this.

The 20th century has been an ideological Century par excellence. True, there have been centuries in which wars have been fought between those who had different ideas, but these were often not fought over those ideas; the exception being of course, religious wars. The Napoleonic wars were examples of conflicts between those who had very different governing ideas and philosophies. However, no century has been as dominated as ours by conflicts driven by secular ideas and belief systems. Furthermore, in no century have there been such elaborately worked out and powerful ideologies. Thus, the 20th century can be best defined as the century of ideological contestation, the ideological Century.

What were the main ideologies at play in our century? Democracy, National

Independence, Self Determination, Socialism, Communism, Fascism and Feminism. Of these Democracy and Self Determination could be said to have been the most powerful, since even Socialism and Communism may be interpreted as emphasizing social and economic democracy, in a radicalised form, as distinct from and most often, opposed to political democracy. In this sense, the struggle between those who upheld political democracy and those who championed socio-economic democracy, can be said to have been one of the main — if not indeed the main — ideological conflict of this century.

National independence, national liberation, sovereignty and even feminism could be said to stem from and emphasise the right to self-determination.

The dominance of the idea of democracy is demonstrable in negative, reverse fashion in that fascism, the other strong ideology of the century was a reaction to and the polar opposite of all forms of democracy — political and socio-economic — and to those political movements based on these two variants of democracy.

Democracy and Self Determination are thus, arguably the parent ideologies of this ideological century.

I would advance the hypotheses that firstly the main contending ideologies of this century — Democracy, Socialism, Communism, Self-Determination & Fascism, correspond to different psychological aspects, characteristics and impulses of humanity. Therefore, a history of ideas of the 20th century has to be a psychohistory of the 20th century.

Secondly, these ideologies are formed when the psychological impulses inter-face with uneven development.

Thirdly, the ebb and fall of the psychological impulses themselves are rooted in uneven development.

The Paris Commune, the Russian revolution of 1917 up until the dissolution in early 1918 of the Constituent Assembly, the Allende years in Chile, the Nicaraguan revolution until it changed its economic strategy — all these were moments when the troika of slogans held together. But these moments were few and far between. The norm was that some continued to uphold *liberte* while cracking down on those who stood for *egalite*, while in other cases, the egalitarian or social radical thrust was at the expense of individual liberty. In order for social justice to be realized, it was felt that individual rights and democratic liberties had to be jettisoned — not only those of the old oppressors but also of those who were opposed to the implementation of a more radical programme. Either of these two outcomes meant that the *fraternite* within the revolutionary ranks was also a casualty.

Most explanations of the unfreedom under the Socialism that 'really existed', source it in scarcity, itself due to the ghettoization of the revolution in backward Russia. Nomadic — pastoral societies are however a demonstration that unfreedom does not inevitably result from scarcity. The unfreedom under socialism stems perhaps from two other factors being present together with that of scarcity, or more correctly, two other factors operating upon that of scarcity. These were the attempt to achieve rapid development of the forces of production i.e. rapid growth to eliminate backwardness, while simultaneously eradicating inequality and the old class structure. There was no way to achieve both these objectives, in a context of backwardness and post-war chaos — Lenin expressed

more than once, in 1917, his fear of anarchy — other than through dictatorship.

A factor that is sometimes acknowledged, but never attributed anything akin to its true importance, is the impact that the defeat of the Paris Commune had on the Bolsheviks. True, the Commune was upheld as a model and true, the Commune operated on the elective principle, but it was crushed. Its crushing was attributed by Marx and Lenin, to its excessive democratism, to its excessive moderation ("they should have marched on the Bourse"). Lenin and the Bolsheviks were haunted by the possibility of the same fate befalling the Russian Revolution and they were determined, for the sake of the world proletariat, that this would not be allowed to happen again, whatever the cost. Though there are no explicit references that prove it, it is also highly probable that the Bolsheviks considered the direct democracy of the Commune to have been unwieldy when it came to decision-making in the context of bloody warfare.

Marx seemed to have been of this view too when he said, in a letter dated April 1871, that the Central Committee of the National Guard 'surrendered its power too soon to make way for the Commune'. (K. Marx to L. Kugelmann, 12th April 1871 SC p. 319 cited to Ralph Miliband 'Marxism & Politics' OUP. p. 135). Centralisation was necessary. Hence, even the Soviets were not fetishized or absolutised — and indeed were considered secondary and expendable. Still, it does not answer our question as to why the abandonment of political and individual liberty was not regretted as a retreat. Surely the explanations, regrets, debates and ambivalence that attended the NEP would have been as much warranted as concerns democracy?

Apart from the class analyses of these revolutionary processes, which have explained these trade-offs in terms of class or fractional struggles, there seems to have been psychological factors at work, which made the political actors hierarchise these emancipatory causes; which made them downgrade some and

even see them as choices — as a zero sum game. Why the readiness to sacrifice one cause for the other, to feel that this sacrifice was necessary; that it somehow made one purer, truer to one's cause? Why the incapacity to see the three great causes as interdependent, indeed as a symbiotic trinity? What psychological mechanism comes into play here?

In other words, what were the psychological factors which contributed to the split between those who upheld political democracy and those who privileged socio-economic democracy; between those who valued and defended liberty and those who advocated and fought for equality and fraternity?

For the political democrats, individual liberty was the cornerstone and this extended to private property. Any inroads into private property for the sake of greater equality was seen as the beginning of despotism and those who advocated it were perceived as highly dangerous to civilization. For the radical egalitarians, political democracy, since it did not address the issues of unjust social and economic structures, was seen as a sham, a hypocrisy. Social and economic issues were 'real', individual liberty and political democracy was not.

These came to be seen as something worse — a device for delay and dilution; a diversion, a trap. Due to these mutual misperceptions, polarization set in and the proponents of the two wings or faces of democracy became deadly enemies. On the left flank (even of the Left) gathered those who valued speed, rapid progress in tackling the 'real' issues of material injustice and poverty. Radicalism, extremism was felt to be an indicator of purity. Poverty was visible, material, its effects tangible; the consequences of the socio economic structures affected large numbers. No wonder then, that this dimension was seen as more real. Especially in the wake of the First World War, adherence to norms and values of pluralism and consensus, were, understandably, seen as a criminal delay.

The two ideologies that promised to adhere to all three tenets have failed. These are Anarchism and Social Democracy. (A third, Libertarian Communism, never really developed as a serious current). They have both broken on the rock of ensuring economic progress. Humanity's impulse for the new and for more, together with the far more mundane necessities of providing employment, for instance, have placed economic growth and modernisation inescapably on the political agenda. The Communists were able, for many decades, not only to meet the challenge but to credibly claim that they could do it better. The Anarchists have been manifestly and chronically unable to. This, together with their inability to forge an efficient disciplined fighting force in those situations where warfare had become necessary, demonstrated that the Anarchist synthesis of liberty, equality and fraternity had little practical utility. Indeed this failure reinforced the sense that the three slogans were incompatible. The Social Democrats merely managed the existing capitalist system, adapting to it and introducing reforms that were cosmetic or at least made no qualitative strides in the direction of equality and fraternity. Those Social Democrats who strove to do otherwise — the Left Social Democrats — either met with such fierce resistance as to cause their ouster or mellowing, or mismanaged the economy so badly as to wind up with one of the same outcomes. The critiques of Left Social Democracy made by those to the Right and Left of them, failed to address the problem of holding together the concerns of liberty, equality and fraternity. For instance the Chilean CPs critique of the leftwing of Allende's party, held that a more moderate economic course, which would have made possible alliances with a sector of Christian Democracy and the bourgeoisie, could have saved the regime. Whether true or not, this would have placed on the back burner, the quest for greater social justice and equality. The converse is true of the Chilean MIRs critique and proposals. Suffice to say, they strove — unsuccessfully and perhaps unconsciously — to be the Jacobins of the Chilean experiment. Quite the same set of

choices can be seen to have been in operation in the (often violently) contending lines during the Spanish Republic of the 1930s.

Perhaps the lesson then is that a synthesis is not possible when in power, or at war. Since it is usually the case that genuinely progressive and radical experiments meet with attempts at armed counter revolution and blockades i.e. finds itself under seige, the trade-off between the slogans is also usual, while in the case of a peaceful assumption of power, the economic stake holders are so entrenched that the dice is loaded against any attempt that goes beyond welfarism in the direction of equality and fraternity. Thus, the readiness with which the various currents of a liberatory movement diverge, each privileging one or the other of the three great slogans, is perhaps simply a recognition of necessity, of inevitability — and cannot be faulted. Nor can one fault the social radicals for contempt and hostility towards the liberals (bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia) and the latter's hypocrisy. This does not fully explain the disregard for **liberty**. The absence of any regret over these choices, the lack of any public recognition of a **retreat** from the ideal, the assertion that what is taking place is an **advance**, the zeal with which the new course is **prosecuted** — all these point beyond structural inevitability, or, beyond that **alone**, to the existence of a psychological mechanism at work.

Is it possible to sustain the combination of these three macro-values, for any significant period of time, be it out of power? I would submit that the answer lies in a study of the 1960's which witnessed, in the counterculture, the longest sustained upholding of these three commitments. Individual freedom, a sense of fraternity and a social egalitarianism; a high degree of individualism, a high premium on individual expression, went hand in hand with a certain collectivism, a sense of brotherhood and generational solidarity for over a decade, in what Charles A Reich called *Consciousness III* — and provided the best description of in his book *'The Greening of America'*. The *'Woodstock Nation'* of 1969 was the highwater mark

and most shining symbol of this consciousness. An important point to note is that the '60s consciousness had an **internationalism** that was almost axiomatic. It was transmitted and perhaps even created in large measure, by music. In the vanguard of the new internationalism were musicians, travelling troubadours who, this time, used jet planes. This internationalism's identity was mainly generational, but not exclusively so, as the strong anti-Vietnam War protests and the invocation of Ho Chi Minh (and Mao) showed. The anti-Vietnam War protests — which were not limited to the USA where the draft was in operation — proves that the internationalism was not simply musical, but also very much political. It was as if the slogan of the new internationalism was "Youth and oppressed peoples of the world, unite!"

The dominant forms of organization, the vanguard forms, of the 1960's were not trade unions and parties, but the guerrilla band and the rock band.

But, of course, this consciousness came, stayed and went. Its ending, its incapability to affect the economic structures of iniquity, show its limits. It came into being due to, or against the backdrop of, certain circumstances. Its failure to deal with State violence and to effect economic — structural change caused the emergence from the broad Movement, of many hard Left groups, who were no longer committed to the three major values of liberty, equality, fraternity — and, it must be added, were completely unsuccessful at tackling those problems that brought them into existence, though they did pose a psychological and symbolic challenge to the State at some points.

A number of dissident socialist movements, or movements in their (invariably early) dissident socialist phase, such as *Solidarinosc*, upheld the three values, but at a later stage, embraced quite Rightwing positions. Tito's Yugoslavia, no movement but a fully fledged state, was once upheld by Trotskyists as incarnating the values of democracy and socialism, but of course it did not. A fairly low premium on individual and political liberty went hand in hand with

a tilt towards the West in world affairs, which hardly constituted testimony of fealty to social equality and the fraternity of the oppressed!

Does all this mean that it is impossible to sustain the three great slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity if taken together? It seems so, at least in power. Also in conditions of warfare, though the Sandinistas and the Zapatistas of Mexico in the 1990s may be exceptions that do not prove the rule but rather provide a glimmer that possibilities exist for a synthesis. The youth movement of the 1960's deserves serious study since it constitutes perhaps the **longest persistence of this synthesis at the level of consciousness**, though its limitations, failures and eventual repercussions provide ample material for a **'Critique of Pure Consciousness'**.

What then are we left with? The ex-Communist parties coming back to power in Eastern Europe and the former Baltic Republics seem to be following the path of the Western Social Democrats or the British Labour Party, with some of them (e.g. Poland) wishing to join NATO. **For the first time in Russia though**, we are facing the possibility of a Communist Party, one which has not renounced Marx and Lenin, democratically assuming power in a major independent country, either on its own or at the head of a coalition. (In India of course, CPs have been in power in non-independent States). We shall see whether the party will go the old way of downgrading political and individual liberties in favour of 'real' issues of social equality, or place social concerns on the back burner while attempting to manage the fledgling capitalism or whether it will be able to avoid the Great Trade-off and hold up, **equally high**, the banners of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Perhaps for the first time, there is a real structural possibility and pressures for doing so, and structural constraints against doing otherwise. **Everything hinges on whether there is an economic embargo (a la Cuba) or armed counter revolution (a la Chile, Spain) or more simply, a return to the Cold War.**

*NEXT: CHINA*

# A Selection of the Finest International Brands.

**HAPPY COW**  
CHEESE



PRUNES



**BOUNTY**



**TOBLERONE**  
CHOCOLATES



PURE FRUIT JUICE



DIAPERS



DIAPERS



DENTAL CARE



PERSONAL CARE



JAMS



DAIRY PRODUCTS



HAIR CARE

Sole Agents



BREAKFAST CEREALS



COFFEE



CANNED FRUITS



BUTTER



SOUPS AND PASTA



FOODS



TOMATO PRODUCTS



INSTANT NOODLES



CANNED MEATS

833, Sirimavo Bandaranaike Mawatha, P.O. Box 1970, Colombo 14.

Tel: 522871-2, 522830, 522832, 522934, 522155, 522373.

Telex: 21418 Tasstea CE, 21991 Selpro CE, 23426 Seltea CE. Cable: Tasstea. Telefax: (941) 522913.

**Quality and Variety within your reach.**

Available at all Supermarkets & leading groceries



# Philip the Exile

Lakmali Gunawardena

I am pleased to have got an opportunity to add a few words to this short biography of Philip Gunawardena's early years.

When I was busy writing "The History of Buddhism in Ceylon" I spent a good deal of time at Samanabedda as the guest of Capt. D.S. Gunasekera. At that time his nephew Philip was a student in America. It was quite obvious to me that uncle Gunasekera thought very highly of his nephew Philip.

When Philip returned from USA I met him at Samanabedda and we became at once intimate friends. In political and social activities we were together. I can never forget the three days I enjoyed with him at Welikada prison when we were detained there for the "sake of law and order" during a strike.

One of Philip's important contributions to the political life may be his adapting Marxism to suite the traditional culture of our country.

During my close association with Philip I saw that he was really a leader.

**Prof. Dr. Walpola Sri Rahula**  
Chancellor, University of Kelaniya.

## The Young Anandian

Ceylon, before and after the first World War had been under British colonial rule for over a century. Although governed by an English governor and administered by the British civil service, with a plantation economy that fed the Raj, there was a conscientious and militant group of educated Ceylonese, forming themselves into a national movement. Among its leaders were F.R. and D.S. Senanayake, Arthur V. Dias, D.B. Jayatilke, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Victor Corea, and writers Rev. S. Mahinda and Piyadasa Sirisena. Several Buddhist schools, including Ananda and Nalanda College for boys, and Visakha Vidyalaya and Museaus College for girls, had been founded in the nationalist cultural revival. Popular plays written on themes based on Buddhism and Ceylonese history, such as John de Silva's *Sirisangabo* and *Vessantara*, began to be staged at Tower Hall theatre. The Mahabodhi Society founded by a breakaway group of the Buddhist Theosophical Society, was

enlarging its membership under the direction of the Anagarika Dharmapala.

The British administration seemingly tolerated all this but was prompt in quelling any disturbance of the peace with ruthless military force. This was evident in the riots that erupted in 1915, in protest against colonial rule, resulting in the imprisonment of several leading nationalists, which undoubtedly strengthened the zeal of the their movement for self rule.

The year was perhaps 1917. In the Ananda College hostel, the older students who had been in the habit of frequenting Tower Hall music plays around the corner, had invited some of the musicians they had befriended, to a variety entertainment. As the event had continued into the night, and the drummer lived too far to return at that late hour, the question came up of where he could be housed. A difference of opinion arose about putting him up for the night at the hostel, and the principal's permission was sought. He ruled that

the drummer should find sleeping accommodation outside for the night. Two young students sneaked him in and allowed him to sleep in their dorm. Some irate hostellers, piqued by a 'low caste' being lodged in their dorm, reported the two brothers, Harry and Philip Gunawardena to the principal.

The principal of Ananda College, Mr. P de S Kularatne, a strict disciplinarian, incensed at the defiance of the Gunawardena brothers, called up their guardian and uncle, Captain D.S. Gunasekera who was teaching at Nalanda College, and informed him that the boys would have to be removed from the hostel immediately, and found lodging elsewhere.

It was arranged that they room at the residence of a friend of Captain Gunasekera, Mr. T.B. Jayah, then a teacher at Ananda College, who was in the nationalist struggle for self rule and later became a cabinet minister in the governments of independent Ceylon. Recounting this incident in later years to Rev.

Walpola Rahula, Captain Gunsekere had said that young Philip, the fiery of the two brothers had accused the principal of insincerity.

Living at Mr. T.B. Jayah's, young Philip Gunawardena along with his brother Harry, came in contact with a group of intellectuals involved in the cultural revival of colonial Ceylon, who used to meet at Sravasti, the residence of Dr. W.A. de Silva, to discuss matters pertaining to the revival of a national identity. Among them were Victor Corea, Angarika Dharmapala and John de Silva. This was young Philip Gunawardena's first exposure to Ceylonese nationalist politics.

The eldest of the Gunawardena brothers, entered Law College in Ceylon after matriculation, and Philip the University College soon after, to study economics. After an year's study there, he expressed a wish to go overseas, to pursue his studies in a western country. Breaking with a tradition where sons of the Ceylonese elite were sent to British universities, Philip decided to pursue his studies in economics in the United States.

This decision was probably due to the antipathy towards the British in the family. Philip's father, D.J.R. Gunawardena, or Boralugoda Ralahamy as he was more popularly known, a wealthy planter from Hewagam Korale, who had also been imprisoned for a brief period during the riots of 1915, possibly told his son to choose to go elsewhere. In fact, even discussing his younger brother Robert's future studies after matriculation, Philip wrote to his brother Harry in 1924 from America.

"I hope he will do well in his matriculation exam, then he may go to Denmark and study agriculture",

never mentioning England.

The fact that the school they attended, Ananda College, had been founded by the American theosophist Colonel Olcott, who had contributed greatly to the revival of Buddhism in colonial Ceylon would have contributed to this decision.

So in 1922, Philip headed for the University of Illinois, in Urbana-Champaigne to further his studies in business and economics.

### In America

Young Philip Gunawardena arrived in America in 1922 at the age of 21, when the country was entering the "Roaring Twenties". It was a time of extravagance and excess in American society. Industry was thriving and business was booming. As President Calvin Coolidge who held office for the larger part of the decade said, "The chief business of the American people is business". Even Prohibition gave rise to bootlegging, made into a roaring business by Al Capone in Chicago. Henry Ford made his fortune producing the motor car, that gave mobility to the people as never before and Randolph Hurst built his publishing empire out of California. The telephone and telegraph services popularised and developed communication to give further impetus to accelerated business. In the arts, the silent movie made a megastar of Charlie Chaplin a radical actor who mocked the adverse effects of big industry in his films. Women were active in the Suffragette movement and started "bobbing" their hair in defiance of Edwardian norms.

Coming into American society in this dynamic age, the student from Ceylon, Don Gunawardena as he was called, would have had to buffer it's culture shock, when he first registered for his B.A. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaigne. In a letter to his brothers Harry and Robert, with whom he corresponded throughout his stay overseas, he describes the first impressions of winter, of a son of the tropics.

"For the last two weeks we have had sub-zero weather. A freezing temperature is nothing; but when it goes 20 degrees below zero, you can imagine what it would be — 58 degrees below freezing. You have to cover-up your ears and noses lest they freeze. The sidewalks are covered with ice, and you can just imagine how steadily one can walk on a polished glass surface".

After two years there, following cour-

ses in philosophy, economics and business, he transferred to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, which he described years later as

"a beautiful university situated on the banks of three lakes called Mendota, Monona and Kegonsa, one of the most beautiful campuses in America".

Teaching at Madison in the twenties was the distinguished political scientist Thorstein Veblen under whose guidance Philip formed a keen awareness of current events, as we see in a letter to his brothers in 1924, commenting on the political scene in the US and Europe.

"The country is about to have a very exciting period due to the Presidential nominations. Mr. Henry Ford has very wisely retired from his campaign in favour of Coolidge. President Coolidge who succeeded Harding is sure of his victory. Ford quietly traded his candidacy with the "Muscle-Shoals" water power plant. The moment Ford heard this he declined the invitation to run for Presidency, and began to negotiate for getting this hydroelectric plant — one of the largest in the country. So you can see that even democratic America is not free from graft and the influence of greed".

"I think even Europe is settling down to normalcy. But no longer is England the master of the house. France dominates the scene, as at no other time in her history, except the two Napoleons".

then on England,

"England is about to enter into a new experiment on Monday, 21st. I can not say what a Labour government will do under MacDonald and Snowden; especially when it is Liberal that makes a Labour Government even possible. Asquith has supported Labour with all his strength, unlike the opportunist Lloyd George"

and observes

"But we can be sure that Ceylon will not get self government even at the hands of Labour".

Young Don as he was called in Madison threw himself into student life and seemed to thrive in it. He moved from the University YMCA to a typical early American house with a wooden front porch overlooking Michigan Boulevard, that he would recall forty years later from the veranda of his house on Kirillepona Avenue. He bought an old Ford with a friend. In the summers he would go swimming in the lakes with his friends among whom were two Ceylonese, Don William and Chandra Gooneratne. He took lessons in karate and worked himself up to a blackbelt a skill he used in self defence on John Kotelawala in later years in the State Council. A photograph in the college magazine of 1924 of the International Club shows an intensely built, wiry, dark Asian with wavy hair, sporting a Chaplin moustache and a heavy overcoat, right fist clenched in posing.

Recounting the days in Wisconsin to his children, he remembered that once he had swum out far into lake Menona, when he felt a cramp twist in his right calf. Slowly he had turned on his back, and shouted for help to his friends who were closer to the shore. He had kept afloat, a dark figure in the immense waters of the lake, till they reached him and pulled him ashore.

Among the friends he made in the international community were three Indians with whom he kept the bonds of friendship throughout his life — Jayaprakash Narayan who like Philip Gunawardena entered politics on his return to India, Sitaramaiah who qualified as a scientist and went to work for the Soviet government, and Vishnu Nimbkar who returned to Bombay to take up his father's business. In 1964 Philip Gunawardena remembered his friendship with Jayaprakash Narayan thus in a parliamentary speech,

"I still remember the days I spent with Jayaprakash Narayan ..... In the campus at Madison, Wisconsin, in 1924 and 1925. We discussed whether Gandhian non-violence would be effective in securing independence for India. At that time I held the view

— because I had not started reading Marx — that Gandhian non-violence would be effective; but my friend Jayaprakash Narayan, who studied Chemistry at Wisconsin, held the view that it was not going to change the face of India — the social structure — in the way that Gandhi wanted".

Another strong friendship he formed, was with Scott Nearing, a young Socialist writer who deeply impressed the minds of the three Asian students. Nearing recalled their first meeting with Dinesh, Philip's third son who was studying in the U.S. in the early 70's, over a vegetarian Thanksgiving dinner, in his house in Greenwich Village, New York.

It was perhaps 1924. Scott Nearing had been in Madison, on a lecture tour of Midwestern Universities, to promote his book 'How to become a Revolutionary'. During the lecture, two Asian students had asked so many questions that he had found it hard to go on with his speech. So he had asked them to stop and let him continue, that he would gladly answer their queries after he had wound up. The two young Asians were Don Gunawardena and Jayaprakash Narayan. When he met them after his lecture, Scott took a liking to the two enthusiastic students and had invited them to dinner at a nearby cafe, where they had discussed the issues he had spoken on till the late hours. He had then left them, after giving them more of his books, which he had had piled high in the back of his car. Little did he realise then, that he had lit a spark in young Gunawardena and Narayan that would blaze into political movements ten years hence in far off Ceylon and India. Philip recalled the effect the meeting with Scott Nearing had had on him, forty years later.

"I remember discussing with Jayaprakash Narayan, and several others, far into the night, in the campus at Madison..... and by 1925 these discussions made both of us convinced of socialism".

Despite an active student life in Madison, Don Gunawardena decided to

transfer once more, to continue his undergraduate studies, this time to Columbia University, in New York. The harsh mid-western winters had not been kind to his health, and he began to suffer from acute sinusitis. So, after three years of study in business and economics with plans of completing his degree and setting up an office in the rubber trade for his father's business agency in Ceylon, he moved in 1925 to New York City.

#### PART 2: BUSINESSMAN IN U.S.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

#### Air Mail

Canada/U.S.A.

US\$ 65/ for 1 year  
US\$ 45/ for 6 months

\* \* \*

U.K., Germany, New Zealand, Australia, Netherlands, France, Japan, Holland, Phillipines, Austria, Norway, Sweden, China, Ireland, Switzerland, Nigeria, Belgium, Denmark, Paris, London.

US\$ 55/ for 1 year  
US\$ 35/ for 6 months

\* \* \*

Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Baharin, Arabian Gulf, Syria, Singapore.

US\$ 45/ for 1 year  
US\$ 25/ for 6 months

\* \* \*

India, Pakistan.

US\$ 40/ for 1 year  
US\$ 22/ for 6 months

\* \* \*

Local

Rs. 250/- for 1 year  
Rs. 150/- for 6 months

# Managing Strategic Issues

**John Gooneratne**

(Regional Centre for Strategic Studies)

*"Trust in Allah — But tie your camel!"*  
[Bedouin saying]

## Introduction

This paper is concerned with the area of strategic relations. A dictionary definition of 'strategic' speaks of the military aspect of the origin of the word. From this, the idea of strategy in international relations comes to comprise concepts such as power, security, national security, the application and exploitation of force in inter-state relations, intelligence, bargaining and negotiating among states, geopolitics etc. For purposes of a 'Sri Lanka perspective', one can work on the basis of the following description — how are Sri Lanka's interests furthered, and its national security preserved and/or strengthened through the mechanism of SAARC. And national security is not used here in the narrow sense of military security alone, but is taken to comprise other elements such as economic and social attributes also.

## Archaeology of SAARC

A very brief look at the archaeology of SAARC can help illuminate aspects of its personality. In terms of its age, it is a latecomer on to the scene of such institutions, having been set up only in 1985. The countries that comprise SAARC, however, are not all recent states: Nepal was already an independent state by 1923; India (1947); Pakistan (1947); Sri Lanka (1948); Maldives (1965); Bangladesh (1971); and Bhutan (joins UN in 1971).

SAARC was set up even by 1985, largely due to the determined push of Bangladesh. At its preparatory stages there was a considerable amount of suspicion and resistance to the formation of such a grouping for South Asia, on the part of India, who saw the whole scheme as an attempt by the Lilliputs to tie down Gulliver. When Indian suspicions were allayed, it resurrected Pakistani suspicions that anything that India agrees to must conceal an anti-Pakistani trap. A considerable amount of time was spent on trying to allay the different apprehensions of coun-

tries. There were certain subjects that some countries considered taboo. What was eventually agreed to was a lowest common denominator of subject areas for SAARC.

These suspicions and apprehensions are for real, and were reflected in the Charter of SAARC that was signed by the seven Heads of State or Government on 8 December 1985 at Dhaka, and set out what SAARC was designed to do.

The "Objectives" of SAARC included "to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia", "to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region", "to promote and strengthen collective self reliance", "to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries", "to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes" etc.

While the "Principles" of SAARC make ritualistic reference to "sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and mutual benefit", and also state that the seven states are "desirous of promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region"..... and recognize the need for "increased cooperation" to this end, it is also mentioned that:

"Such (SAARC) cooperation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation but shall complement them"; and "Such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligation".

Among the "General Principles" were that "Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity", and that "bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from deliberations".

## SAARC and Strategic Issues

Basically, it was not an exercise in describing what SAARC was to do, rather an exercise in circumscribing what SAARC should do.

There was strong opposition from India to include what one would call 'strategic' issues, and bilateral political subjects. The

choice was between having a SAARC with a limited agenda or no SAARC at all. In the event, accommodating the 'realities' of the situation, the emphasis of SAARC was to be on economic and social subjects. Excluded were political subjects, all bilateral matters, and any "contentious" bilateral subjects.

So the short answer is that strategic relations did not figure on the formal agenda of SAARC in the first ten years of its business. But, at the same time, it must be mentioned that it was not for want of trying. The need to discuss political subjects, especially contentious bilateral subjects, has always been brought up by various SAARC members. Pakistan has wanted to bring up the subject of Kashmir; Bangladesh has wanted to discuss the subject of its water-sharing problems with India; and Nepal has wanted to discuss some of the problems it has with India; and Sri Lanka, raised the issue of the invasion of Sri Lanka by India on 4 June 1987. There were also occasions when private discussions between Heads of States or Government led to fruitful outcomes, as for example when discussions (at the New Delhi Summit) between President Zia-ul-Haq and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi led to the subsequent agreement between the two countries not to strike against each other's nuclear installations. Discussions among the Heads of States at the 1985 Dhaka Summit gave the impetus to the formation of working groups and study groups to examine the questions of Terrorism and Narcotics, and which culminated in the adoption of two SAARC Regional Conventions on Suppression of Terrorism, and on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

## A Theoretical Perspective

In order to analyze the subject of the possibility of managing strategic issues within a SAARC framework, it is useful to examine in more depth the institution of SAARC. In this respect SAARC can be observed from two viewpoints: liberal institutionalism and realism.

Institutionalists believe that institutions can independently change state behaviour.

*The views are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of RCSS.*

Institutions can promote peace, as their argument goes, by convincing states to reject power-maximizing behaviour, and to accept outcomes that might weaken their relative power position. They argue that institutions can alter state preferences and therefore change state behaviour. Institutions can discourage states from calculating self-interest on the basis of how every move affects their relative power position. Liberal institutionalism does not directly address the question of whether institutions cause peace, but instead focuses on the less ambitious goal of explaining cooperation in cases where state interests are not fundamentally opposed. The theory becomes more problematic where states' interests are fundamentally conflictual and neither side thinks it has much to gain from cooperation. Therefore, the theory largely ignores security issues and concentrates instead on economic and allied issues. In fact, the theory appears to be built on the assumption that international politics can be divided into two realms — security and political economy, and that liberal institutionalism mainly applies to the latter, but not the former.

The realists believe that institutions cannot get states to stop behaving as short-term power maximizers. For realists, institutions reflect state calculations of self interest based primarily on concerns about relative power; as a result, institutional outcomes invariably reflect the capabilities of states and balance of power. Institutions, realists maintain, do not have significant and independent effects on state behaviour. Institutions are basically a reflection of the distribution of power in the world. They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behaviour. Realists therefore believe that institutions are not an important cause of peace. They matter only on the margins. Institutions are essentially "arenas for acting out power relationships". For realists, the causes of war and peace are mainly a function of the balance of power, and institutions largely mirror the distribution of power in the system. In short, the balance of power is the independent variable that explains war and peace, and institutions are merely an intervening variable in the process.

The difference between realism and liberal institutionalism lies in contrasting understandings on *why* institutions are created and *how* they exert their effects.

### South Asia — It's Strategic Configuration:

Bearing these two approaches in mind, one could draw the following picture of

South Asia, viewing the scene through 'realist' lenses. Dominating the politics of South Asia is what, one South Asia analyst (Stephen Cohen) called the "hostility consensus" between India and Pakistan. Between Partition and the mid-1950s a consensus developed in both India and Pakistan around the idea of hostility to the other. Flowing from this are very different ideas on what should be South Asia's "natural" or proper strategic structure. As a result, India and Pakistan remain each other's major threat. It is a structural fissure that affects all the South Asian countries. And there is no agreement on a structure in which the smaller South Asian states can coexist with a more powerful and developed India. Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have tried to accommodate Indian power in various ways, although they have each, at different times, sought political protection via close relations with major outside powers and have been enthusiastic supporters of a regional association (SAARC) that might tame Indian power. And India, in turn, develops its own politico-military linkages with outside powers.

Another way of looking at how the South Asian countries view their security concerns is through the concept of "security complexes" (Barry Buzan). A security complex is defined as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another". At the heart of the South Asia security complex is the rivalry between India and Pakistan. The insecurities of these two large states in the security complex are so deeply intertwined, that their national securities, both political and military, cannot be separated. Buzan describes this as a "tragic case of structural political threat" — the way each country views the other. A number of less powerful states — Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka are bound into the complex for geographical reasons. For nearly all these states, the major external security problem has been India. The principal conundrum of their foreign policy has been how to neutralize or, at least cope with India's overwhelming presence in ways that would not precipitate direct Indian action against them. What binds the South Asian security complex together is the dominant role of local issues and relations defining the national security priorities in it. In addition to the "structural threat" that India and Pakistan are seen as posing to each other, there are religious, national and historical links which run across state boundaries (overlap), making domestic problems interconnected with relations among the states. These local

rivalries, linked to the consequent inter-state disputes define the principal insecurities of the complex as a whole.

Just to give one more way the strategic configuration of South Asia is seen (Howard Wriggins), it is described as "a nearly ideal type of a sharply asymmetrical system with one power claiming hegemony". And given the anarchic self-help of the international system, countries attempt to offset these ambitions by pursuing a policy of external balancing, appealing to external powers from beyond the region e.g. US and China. This evoked a similar overture on the part of India to the Soviet Union.

Related to the security concerns mentioned above, and emanating from the power configurations in the South Asian region, are aspirations for leadership or hegemony among the States. The South Asian sub-system has been described by one writer (Shaheen Akhtar) as revolving around the 'core' power India, the 'bargainer' Pakistan, and the 'periphery powers', Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. This also reflects the geographical configuration where India is the only country which has common maritime and land links with the other regional states land frontiers with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, and maritime boundaries with Sri Lanka and Maldives, which make India the central state of South Asia. India, by virtue of its size and location, its enormous economic and military strength, aspires to regional leadership, or hegemony; and its policies are directed to achieving this central status. The view of things from India may not necessarily be couched in those same terms.

Among the strategies that India has adopted to achieve hegemony in South Asia was the politics of "bilateralism" in her relations with her South Asian neighbours. This enables her to maximize the advantages both of its size, and the fact that the neighbours all border India, but not each other. It helps India avoid internationalization of contentious issues. With Pakistan constantly attempting to surface the Kashmir issue at UN fora, at regional fora like the Organization of Islamic countries (OIC), at the UN Commission of Human Rights, India has accused Pakistan of trying to internationalize the issues, and cites the Simla Agreement of 1972, under which India and Pakistan agreed to negotiate bilaterally any subjects that are in dispute. While this strategy of "bilateralism" is not completely successful where Pakistan is concerned, India has been more successful in imposing this strategy on Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Thus the following provisions incorporated in the SAARC Charter, and referred to above, are designed to take care of India's concerns: "Such (SAARC) cooperation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation but shall complement them"; and "Such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligation". "Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity", and "Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from deliberations". Further, the activities of SAARC are concentrated only on the economic and social areas. There is no provision for states to discuss political and security issues. The above interpretation of the formation, structure and role of SAARC, in the realist mode of analysis, shows that institutions are shaped by the interest and resources of its members, and the more powerful are consistently privileged over the others. The stronger states in an institution seek to maintain a maximum degree of flexibility and autonomy.

Institutionalists, while not necessarily rejecting such a description of the South Asian political scene, believe that one can take a different tack, as it were, to the larger issues of avoiding confrontation and war, reducing tension and promoting cooperation among states. Following are some of the reasons adduced by institutionalists in support of their position. (Mearsheimer) The rules of an institution can increase the number of transactions between participating states over time. And this "institutional iteration" creates the prospect of future gains through cooperation. Secondly, rules can tie together interactions between states in different issue areas, creating an "issue linkage" promoting greater interdependence between states. Thirdly, a structure of rules can increase the amount of information available to participants in cooperative arrangements so that close monitoring of member states in such areas of cooperation is possible. And fourthly, rules can reduce the "transaction costs" of individual agreements, when states can devote less effort to negotiating and monitoring cooperative agreements. Liberal institutionalism is generally thought to be of limited utility in the security realm, because of the greater obstacles to cooperation when military issues are at stake.

These, in brief, are the twin forces working on SAARC as it begins the second decade of its existence. One can best peer into future developments by posing some questions:

#### Looking into the next decade:

(a) What is the global environment, as

SAARC starts on the second decade of its existence?

- (b) What is the South Asian environment, as SAARC starts on the decade of its existence?
- (c) Is SAARC geared to cope with changes?
- (d) Strategic concerns:.. some other models to follow?
- (e) What are some of Sri Lanka's strategic concerns? And how can they be looked after through the framework of SAARC?

#### (a) What is the global environment, as SAARC starts on the second decade of its existence?

The changes have indeed been quite drastic, causing fundamental and structural changes in the international system. The implosion of the Soviet Union, and the disintegration of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe radically changed the way the post-World War II system came to be configured, with the US and the USSR leading two blocs of countries confronting each other in a bipolar structured Cold War.

The world is still in the process of trying to figure out what the nature of the present system is: Unipolar (US)? Multipolar? West-centric? The aftershocks of the quake are still occurring. The immediate casualties are institutions like the Warsaw Pact and its economic counterpart Comecon. Former republics of the Soviet Union have broken off to form separate states, according to their nationalities. Russia is trying to salvage what is possible through arrangements such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and to draw the line against further fissiparous tendencies (Chechnya).

At the same time, the importance of economic factors have come to the fore, and into high salience in international relations. There is, at the same time, a marked tendency towards regionalization in both areas of economics and international security. The creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an example.

#### (b) What is the South Asian environment, as SAARC starts on the decade of its existence?

In the Cold War period, because of the splits among the countries in South Asia, especially between India and Pakistan, the area has been vulnerable to outside intervention by the super powers (United States and the Soviet Union) and China. But, in

the South Asian region itself, there were no super-power interests directly involved. It was somewhat out of the line of fire of East-West hostilities. The region was always an area of peripheral and derivative interest to United States. There is little by way of resources that America obtained from the region which was crucial to its economy. Neither American investments nor the volume of trade with the region was substantial enough to make the area an important partner. The area's importance fluctuated in rhythm with the shifts in America's global policies. In South Asia, there were no vital interests involved for either the United States or the Soviet Union. Pakistan and India seeking support from outside the region from one super-power or the other, brought in the super-power competition into the region. And China, the neighbour to the East gets drawn in, in the wake of the super-power intervention into the region. The super-power presence in the region, its extent and depth, had no roots of its own in the region, but was determined by the global US-Soviet politics elsewhere.

In the post-Cold War period also the strategic significance of South Asia remains marginal. The only area, however, which draws increasing attention by the US and the West, is the area of nuclear non-proliferation. Apart from this, South Asia often appears to be more endowed with "nuisance value" to the rest of the world, as one of the most conflict-prone regions with the full gamut of problems: ethnic violence, refugee problems, over-population, terrorist violence etc.

So the immediate effect of the post-Cold War changes is to leave the essentials of the South Asia region intact — a region with no sense of being a "security community" and with countries with "security dilemmas"; a "hostility consensus" holding India and Pakistan together; a region with a "coercive hegemon" in India, preferring a policy of "bilateralism" than cooperative action. Whether these will change are still in the future — whether India will become a "consensual hegemon" preferring cooperative action in the region.

And as far as Sri Lanka is concerned, the period of the first ten years of SAARC saw the ethnic bringing in India in an interventionist role, and resulting in the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987, which had far-reaching conditions on the future conduct of Sri Lanka's foreign policy.

*(To be Continued)*



**My family has been  
working on these estates  
for generations.  
What future do my  
children have with  
privatization?**

**- Estate Worker**

If they choose to remain on the estates, they can look forward to a variety of interesting prospects. With private ownership, long-needed investments can be made to replant the tea-bushes and improve yields. There will be diversification within the estates to vegetable crop farming, dairy industry and other integrated agro-based ventures. Estate schools and health services can improve. With privatization, your children will have many more choices and many more chances for rewarding employment.

It is important to realize privatization is a means to an end. It is a means to improve our living standards, foster technological progress, create employment and take our nation into a more prosperous tomorrow. In order to achieve these aims, privatization has to be executed in the appropriate manner.

That is the task of the Public Enterprise Reform Commission (PERC). Its mandate is to make privatization work for Sri Lankans today, and for generations to come.

Every privatization is a carefully considered decision that takes into account the interests of all sectors of society; the general public, the state employees, the consumers, the suppliers, as well as the country's overall economic vision.

PERC's mission is to see that privatization works. In doing so, your interests are always being well looked after.

**With privatization everybody has a stake.**



**PERC**

**WATCHFUL IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

**PUBLIC ENTERPRISE REFORM COMMISSION,**

Bank of Ceylon - 30th Floor, No.4, P.O. Box 2001, Bank of Ceylon Mawatha,  
Colombo 1, Sri Lanka.

Telephone: 94-1-338756/8. Fax: 94-1-326116

INTEREST FREE CREDIT?

CONVENIENT REPAYMENT TERMS

LOWEST JOINING FEE?

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

*Contact the Centre Manager,*

**CEYBANK CARD CENTRE,  
Bank of Ceylon**

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

BE WISE. CARD - WISE

**BANK OF CEYLON**

*Bankers to the Nation*



TELEPHONE: 447823 — Ex. 4180 & 4185