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# WILL THE P.A. IMplode OR EXPLODE?

Mervyn de Silva

There was a flicker of light at the end of the tunnel last week when Colombo's posher clubs were swept by "reliable reports" (and rumours) of a Chandrika-Ranil summit. But no. The violence in Negombo and the disruption of the Church service wrecked all hopes of a serious P.A.-U.N.P. effort to agree on a negotiated political settlement of Sri Lanka's harrowing thirteen-year separatist insurgency. It happened at St. Mary's Negombo. A United National Party celebrating its 50th anniversary saw its supporters assaulted and the Church service at St. Mary's rudely disrupted by a gang of thugs described as supporters of a well-known local politician. The Vicar-General of the Colombo diocese has condemned the thuggery, the *Sunday Times* reported. He had evidently identified the ring-leader as "a petty P.A. politician", while Prime Minister Sirima Bandarnaike did not mince words when she addressed a meeting of ministers. "Faced with mounting difficulties on every front and losing its popularity every passing week, the P.A. was resorting to violence" observed the Opposition leader Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe at a meeting of the U.N.P.'s parliamentary group.

Two years in office, the "grand coalition" that won the parliamentary polls just two years ago, has lost its grip.

The P.A. which had struggled hard to pass the 50% mark at the mid-August polls in 1994, relies on the smaller parties — Tamil, Muslim, D.U.N.L.F., the Leftist L.S.S.P.-C.P., and the C.W.C. (plantation labour) and other assorted groups — for a stable majority in Parliament. In the absence of a common ideological outlook and firm leadership, the P.A. leadership cannot cope with the problems that keep piling up each passing month. "Governance", one of its major polls pledges, is gone with the wind. In desperation, some P.A. politicians are lashing out wildly, adding to poor President Kumaratunga's mounting pile of problems. The immediate beneficiary is the L.T.T.E., which after its massive blow at the heavily fortified Mullaitivu camp, has also re-opened the "eastern front", militarily a more formidable challenge to

the armed forces, the regime and the State, than the northern province. This is an ethnic conflict, primarily. The north is nearly 100% Tamil; the East is mixed, explosively so in view of the communal composition — the Tamils the largest group but not a majority, the Sinhalese only 25%, and the Muslims just over a third.

"Our Bosnia" is how many a participant at Colombo's busy seminar circuit describes the challenge the Eastern province represents.

## TIME FACTOR

The prophet of the space age, Arthur C. Clarke has proposed that Sri Lanka put the clock back by half an hour to cope with the new challenges of global electronic communications. But President Chandrika Kumaratunga has a problem that needs more urgent attention. Time is running out for the "Peoples Alliance" (P.A.) Things fall apart says every leader-writer and columnist quoting W.B. Yeats. Yes, strong divisive forces are at work in our conflict-torn society but it is the governing coalition which is tearing itself apart. And it insists on doing so in public — on the frontpage of the national newspapers, particularly on Sundays.

The reason is plain enough. First, the diverse interests of the constituent parties, and on some occasions, their ideological differences e.g. the residual Marxism-Leninism (Trotskyism?) of Comrade Vasu of the L.S.S.P. Second, and more crucially, the mounting pressure from the organisations and the interest groups that helped the P.A. to defeat the U.N.P. in August 1994, which in turn helped Candidate Chandrika Kumaratunga to win a record 62% vote some weeks later, thanks most of all, to the V.P.H. factor [*vaasi pathitha hoi-ya*] or "be smart voter, join the winning side." Thus the swing. The P.A. victory was as much a negative (anti-U.N.P.) swing as a pro-P.A. vote. But a fresh face and an attractive personality helped by the V.P.H. factor made the result look a magnificent runaway victory. We deceived ourselves by exaggerating the victory and glorifying the winner, when in fact the electorate was quite tired of the U.N.P. and looked for change, a new face.

Once the U.N.P. was defeated, two groups looked forward to change: (i) the national minorities, the Tamils in particular (ii) the wage-earner and the lower-middleclass salaried. The Tamils prayed for the resolution of the ethnic conflict. A desperate President J.R., having failed to resolve the problem militarily, trapped the well-intentioned, if naive, Rajiv Gandhi into sending the IPKF. (J.R. was ready to fight the L.T.T.E. to the last Indian). Obsessed with "sovereignty" President Premadasa helped the L.T.T.E. to get the I.P.K.F. out.



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THE IDEAS MAGAZINE

But Premadasa is dead and the P.A. is two years old. The wily J. R. Jayawardene's 'bread-and-Circuses' trick doesn't work any more. Not after two years, and certainly not with an S.L.F.P. so totally and visibly dependent on so many other parties for a stable parliamentary majority. The P.A.'s only advantage is that the U.N.P. certainly under Ranil Wickremasinghe, much younger than any of his predecessors, is no great hurry to defeat the P.A. in Parliament. Let the P.A. break-up on its own. Implode not explode. Besides, the situation is quite different. In J.R.'s time, goods were available freely; jobs were going a-begging, and inflation was not so oppressive as now. That of course is Prof. Pieris's nightmare, though the final decision on economic matters is in the hands of the President (Minister) and her top adviser, the Central Bank governor. Prof. Pieris gives excellent lectures in Parliament while Governor A.S. Jayawardene, in consultation with the President and the IMF-World Bank takes the decisions. Of course it is the familiar IMF route. Watch the US dollar on a steady climb as against the S.L. rupee.

And that leaves Prof. Pieris, who has to face Parliament, crying about soaring defence spending and supplementary estimates. As living costs rise, the trade unions get restive, and most of the unions (the C.W.C. of Mr. Thondaman is an exception) are run by the Leftist parties, allies in the Peoples Alliance. The speeches made by Comrade Vasudeva Nanayakkara, prompt some diplomats to ask whether he is an Opposition or P.A. M.P!

## DEFENCE SPENDING

After Mullaitivu (loosely termed the P.A.'s Dien Bien Phu) the army calls the shots. And the first demand is more men and material; once again, money. The P.A.'s great hope of a negotiated settlement and a steady reduction in military spending has been abandoned. Its new posture has alienated the Tamil parties that gave it a safe majority in the House. After two years, these parties, including the respectably parliamentarist T.U.L.F., demand settlement .... meaning DEVOLUTION, a package of proposals. And Prof. Pieris is ready. But President Chandrika and her Defence Minister, General Ratwatte, the hero of OPERATION RIVIRESA, is nervous to take any step that would provoke the Mahanayakes. For the Mahanayakes "devolution" means "division", the

nightmare of History — separate Sinhala and Tamil kingdoms. The P.A. and the President are too nervous to move on Devolution. Only Prof. Pieris is keen — and probably the Foreign Minister who is sensitive to the opinion of the DPL community, the donors. Again, economics.

The more influential donors know that it requires P.A. - U.N.P. cooperation. But the donors cannot persuade the U.N.P. to help produce a bipartisan devolution package. That is only possible if President Kumaratunga closes one front — her war against the U.N.P. and its leader. No governing party in today's Sri Lanka can conduct a two-front war. Some Sunday papers suggested that a Chandrika-Ranil "mini-summit" was on the agenda and mediators were at work. But the P.A. will fail if it persists in war-war, jaw-jaw with an Opposition that is too strong to be crushed, and in fact is getting more confident, thanks largely to the P.A.'s mistakes and "non-governance".

## ASHRAFF FACTOR

The "unit" is the issue. And here, the Muslims, certainly of the eastern province and their demand for a separate unit, is the crucial question. The once dormant Muslim community has seen a political awakening of its new generation — the impact of the global-regional Islamic revival. The emergence of the S.L.M.C. is the outcome. Mr. Ashraff is more

important than most ministers in the Kumaratunga cabinet. One sure sign of the impact of the Islamic revival is the S.L.M.C.'s current politics, in the Eastern province most of all. A more striking sign Deputy Media Minister Alavi Moulana's threat to lead a demonstration to the U.S. Embassy to protest against the U.S. missile attacks against Iraq. "The P.A. headed by President Kumaratunga will never approve this dastardly act. As long as there are leaders like Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein, no terrorising force can bring the Muslims to their knees."

How do the Tamil parties respond to the Muslim demand for a separate unit in the eastern province? "The unit of devolution is a critical issue that needs to be resolved if an enduring political solution is to be found", Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam (TULF MP) told the *Lanka Guardian*. "The P.A. in its August proposals outlined an approach to the question which envisages the re-demarcation of existing provincial boundaries".

The debate goes on while the crisis deepens, to reveal a P.A. leadership that is fast losing its grip on national politics.

Political dynasties have become a South Asian phenomenon. A legal battle between Anura Bandaranaike (UNP), the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Bandaranaike, both SLFP Prime Ministers, and General Ratwatte is the most striking symbol of a society and political system in deep crisis.





# AVERTING THE PRIVATISATION WAR:

## A CENTRIST COMPROMISE FORMULA

Tisaranee Gunasekara

It is important to bear in mind that the PA regime does not have a popular mandate to implement its current privatisation programme. This fact cannot be ignored because there is clear evidence that a majority of Sri Lankans are opposed to the privatisation of state assets. According to an opinion poll conducted jointly by the Mitofsky International of New York and the Research International (Pvt) Ltd., 73% of the populace disapprove of the privatisation of state institutions while only 21% support such a privatisation programme. The breakdown is given in the chart below:

Another interesting point is that "disapproval of privatisation seems to increase with education since 79% of the A/L educated people disapprove of privatisation of state institutions" while among those with no schooling, the disapproval rate is a slightly low 51%.

Ms. Gunasekara, formerly the Editor of the *Economic Review*, is currently a Director of the Premadasa Centre.

Therefore the PA regime's privatisation effort is an attempt to forcibly implement an extremely unpopular programme for which the government has no electoral mandate. In other words, it is highly undemocratic. Any attempt to bulldoze ahead with the privatisation programme disregarding these popular sentiments will only serve to exacerbate the political and economic crisis. **The only solution is to re-structure the privatisation programme in such a way that it is capable of neutralising or winning over a majority of the populace.** This cannot be done through the kind of manipulative advertising campaign launched by the Public Enterprises Reform Commission

(PERC). (Incidentally, it should not be forgotten that the PERC is far from being a democratic institution — it is not even accountable to the Parliament and the Supreme Court ruled that some of its provisions are unconstitutional). **What is necessary is a privatisation programme with a difference** — which will directly, immediately and visibly benefit the majority of the citizenry, by helping to eradicate poverty, hunger, illiteracy, homelessness, malnutrition and other social ills through contributing to the creation of a strong social welfare net.

What should be the basic policy matrix of such a programme?

1. Identifying the state enterprises which can be privatised without causing a negative impact on the interests of the nation, the development process and the welfare of the citizens.
  - a) No profit making state enterprises should be privatised.
  - b) State enterprises of strategic national importance and/or natural monopolies should not be privatised. This would include the plantations, the state Banks, electricity and water services, railways, ports & Air Lanka. Instead, efforts must be made to improve their efficiency. (This aspect will be dealt with later).
2. Ensure that the conditions of sale maximises the benefits to the country and the citizenry in general and the employees of those enterprises in particular.
  - a) a sale price which accurately reflects the value of the enterprise

Institution to be privatised	Approve	Disapprove	Not enough knowledge
State Banks	14.2	80.0	5.8
Insurance	16.9	76.7	6.4
Ports	13.6	80.0	5.7
Sri Lanka Telecom	18.9	73.4	7.7
CEB	13.5	80.6	5.9
Railway	14.5	79.2	6.3
Air Lanka	17.4	74.5	8.1
Corporations	14.8	77.9	7.3
Plantations	16.5	74.5	9.0

- b) a limit on upward price revisions of product/s at least for a certain time period
  - c) a ban on the creation of monopolies
  - d) a ban on employee retrenchment
  - e) a written commitment to safeguard the rights currently enjoyed by employees.
3. Appoint a Committee co-chaired by a representative of the Ministry of Finance or PERC and the Minister of Labour & Vocational Training (or his nominee) to oversee the privatisation process. This committee should be accountable to the citizens via the Parliament and should contain at least one member representing the Parliamentary opposition.
  4. All government enterprises which are being privatised should be converted into public limited liability companies.
  5. A certain percentage of shares (5%-10%) should be distributed among all the employees of the enterprise free of charge, thereby turning the employees into shareholders with full voting rights.
  6. Make provisions for the appointment of a Worker Director to the new Board of Directors. This director will be chosen by the employee shareholders from among their number, through a secret ballot, for a period of one year, with the right of recall. Any decision concerning the employees (such as wages, working conditions, etc.) should have to be approved by this worker director. This method can minimise industrial disputes and go a long way towards achieving industrial peace based on genuine consensus and increasing worker productivity and efficiency. This is necessary because profitability and providing the consumer a better service should be two of the most important objectives of privatisation.

The realisation that keeping one's work force happy is necessary both for profitability and increasing the quality of products is greater than ever today — which is why Employee Surveys are

becoming the vogue in developed countries. "..... As companies place more emphasis on providing quality products and services — not just cheap ones — they have realised that unhappy workers are more likely to churn out shoddy goods. It is that linkage that has elevated employee satisfaction readings to the point where many companies now use them as an element in reviewing the performance of all their manager, right up to the chief executive". (Erik Epses — *International Herald Tribune*).

Economics is not a religion, still less a monotheism. Therefore, it cannot offer us any panaceas. The fact that economic neo-liberalism has become dominant today does not mean that it is infallible and omniscient; that it has a monopoly on the truth and correctness. It is but one path, one strategy, which different countries have adhered to at different points of time, with its share of successes and failures. However, the Bretton Wood twins have taken upon themselves the role of economic inquisitors, threatening all recalcitrant Third World nations who deviate from the 'correct line' with auto-da-fes. As a result many policy makers (often because of the dire need for financial support for which they require a clean bill of health from the IFI's) take what they believe to be the path of least resistance, striving to implement the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes in toto, from rampant privatisation to slashing subsidies. The recent bread riots in Jordan should serve as a sharp reminder that this path of least resistance to external — IFI — pressures can also be the path of most resistance internally and therefore the most costly one — politically, socially and economically.

This practice was initiated by the ISS International Services System, the world's largest clearing company. "The Copenhagen based ISS which started surveying its employees in Scandinavia two years ago and credits the practice with helping to raise productivity, plans to expand its monthly polls worldwide". (Ibid). In fact, some analysts see this as a method of increasing employee commitment and productivity in a context of "shrinking willingness by employers to offer regular raises or even job stability". (Ibid). US Secretary of Labour, the wellknown economist Robert Reich, has been hammering home these points lately.

7. A parliamentary subcommittee headed by the Minister of Labour & Vocational Training should be appointed to oversee the functioning of all privatised state enterprises for a period not less than 5 years. This committee will act as a watch dog in the public and employee interests and will ensure that the rights of the consumer/citizens and employees are safeguarded. In the event of a dispute between the employees and the new owner or any consumer/citizen complaints, the committee will play the role of the arbiter.
8. At least 50% of the revenue generated by the privatisation should be spent in a way that immediately, directly and visibly benefits the citizens — particularly on education (including vocational training), health and poverty alleviation. The details concerning these allocations should be made available to the public through the Parliament. Such 'social transparency' and social accountability will create a solid mass support base for privatisation.

#### And What About State Enterprises?

The other axis of this effort at reforming and restructuring Public Enterprises should be a programme to improve the efficiency of the strategic enterprises which will remain in the hands of the state. International experience from Bismark's Germany to the East Asian NICs clearly prove that if properly guided/directed and managed, public enterprises can spur

(Contd. on page 14)



# THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF DEVELOPMENT

H. L. Seneviratne

*Prof. Seneviratne is with the Department of Anthropology, University of Virginia.*

I thought the best thing I could do within the few minutes allocated to me is to talk about development in a very general way but having in mind the problems and prospects of Sri Lanka.

Development is generally understood as something in the sphere of economics, and there is no doubt that there is some truth in that. But economic development is only one aspect, I would say an important aspect, of the total development of a society. When sociologists talk about development it is that total concept that they have in mind. In fact while no one in his sense would call a poverty stricken society a developed society, it is possible to imagine a developed society whose economic assets are relatively modest. **The index of development, I would like to suggest, is not a matter of quantity but a matter of process.** By that I mean the process known as self-generation.

What do we mean by self-generation? By that we mean the capacity or the ability a society has to launch itself into a certain trajectory and keep moving on a more or less unending voyage. If in the words I use, you notice the imagery of an object propelled into the atmosphere, like a satellite or a space ship, you have guessed rightly what I have in mind. I am comparing the development process to that of an object taking off from the ground and speeding forward endlessly by means of an unrelenting momentum. This is not so far fetched, or new, or exotic an image as it may appear. Because, economists have for quite some time used the term

Text of a talk delivered earlier this year at the inauguration of the Diploma course in Applied Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Colombo.

'take off' to describe the dynamic process that sparks the engine of an economy.

Some theorists have considered economic self-generation to be central to the general process of total social self-generation, but we have no reason to think so. Economic self-generation is made possible ultimately through a process by which a society learns to produce more wealth than it consumes so that there is always an adequate surplus of wealth that can be re-invested. The average economist is satisfied by the mere recognition of the availability of re-investible wealth as both the cause and the index of self generation.

In a total conception of development, that is not enough. **We have to ask the question as to why some societies are able to produce more wealth than they consume, and some fail to do so.**

The mere presence of factors like capital, labor and entrepreneurship is not enough to produce that surplus. We have examples, like Argentina, where these classical factors of production have existed but the development process has failed to take off. The catalyst of development ultimately lies not in the factors of production themselves but strong motivation and a culture of hard

work. These two are related. A culture of hard work is the institutionalization of motivation. That is to say motivation is historically prior to a culture of hard work, and once a culture of hard work comes into existence, it becomes an autonomous phenomenon. When that happens, a society has launched itself into the self-generative process of development.

What is a culture of hard work? An ideal culture of hard work means the internalisation, by all normal members of a society, of the idea that work is very important, that it is almost a sacred duty, it is a commitment, and it is not to be taken lightly. Above all, individuals in an ideal culture of hard work, have the unshakable feeling deep inside them that the wages they earn are deserved, and legitimate. Indeed, one could go a step further and say that what matters is the **work** and not the **wage**. You keep working with absolute indifference to what you earn. That is, there is the notion of duty, either because you feel a sense of dedication to the work itself, or some other cause that is higher than yourself. The most important point is that the idea of gain for oneself is totally absent. When you work for a higher cause out of a sense of duty towards that cause, or because work itself is a duty, you ensure the coming into being of a certain kind of personality, without whom the process of development cannot take place. Of the cluster features that would characterize that personality, let me list four: honesty, responsibility, efficiency, and discipline.

So far, we talked about the question of what a culture of hard work is. Let us now

ask the question of how a culture of hard work is brought about. The answer to that is already there in the idea of the sense of duty to work for a higher cause. Let me give you two examples to illustrate the idea of work constituting a sense of duty to a higher cause.

The first is a very well known example and is spelled out in one of the most famous books in the field of the social sciences. This is Max Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In that book Weber relates the rise of the capitalist spirit to the asceticism that grew out of the Reformation. That is, people worked endlessly with total dedication for a spiritual purpose, with no enjoyment of the fruits of their labor.

My second example is the culture of work in Japan. Each Japanese worker is totally dedicated to the business or institution for which she or he works, because all these companies or institutions ultimately function for the glory of Japan and its emperor. There is a pervasive feeling of patriotism that Japan must strive to be the best in the world. While Japanese industries compete with each other at one level they co-operate at another level. If an industry is under threat, other industries try to support it and bring it back to economic health. Workers feel they are part of the industry and workers' suggestions for improving the industry are accepted by the management. There are no desertions. People work for the same company for generations. Leaving one's company for better prospects in another is frowned upon by society and there are informal sanctions against it. There are no strikes. That reminds me of an incident. One morning my co-resident at the Lodge, a visiting Japanese professor, was reading the newspaper and suddenly started laughing. He was laughing uncontrollably. I asked him why. His laughter was such that he couldn't put his words together to tell me why. Finally he managed to tell me, still laughing, 'Doctors are on strike!' and returned to laughing again. It suddenly dawned upon me how ridiculous it would be for a person from a society where there is a culture of work, to hear that doctors, of all people, are on strike.

I have given enough of a sketch on development to understand what its opposite is like. We don't have to look far. Underdevelopment, or more correctly non-development is all around us. We

have, as a general rule in our society, an individual whose characteristic features are the opposite of those of the individual in a society with a culture of work. Instead of honesty we have dishonesty; irresponsibility instead of responsibility; inefficiency instead of efficiency; and indiscipline instead of discipline.

So far, I talked about honesty, responsibility, efficiency and discipline in relation to work. But in a total concept of development we must consider these, as not limited to one's work place, but generalized to all activities. This is what I meant by internalization of these as values and norms to be held by all normal members of a culture. To put this differently, development is matter internal to the individual; it is a matter of mental attitude. When we have an individual of this type with these mental attitudes, we have development. The complex of ideas that constitute this mental attitude is no less than a religion. We can call it a secular religion. It is only if we can practice that secular religion that we can have development.

Such a society is often dreamt of by social reformers, visionaries and great leaders moved by compassion and saddened by the miserable plight of the majority of their fellow citizens. Especially in the absence of great motivating social forces, such men became beacons of light and are able to awaken the masses of people to realise their plight, and to do something about it. Typically, such leaders exhort their fellow citizens to cultivate precisely the qualities we have listed: honesty, responsibility, efficiency, and discipline. In our country we had a great visionary of this type who had the potential, through his own extraordinary gifts and exemplary dedication, to wake up and inspire the sleeping masses to cultivate some of these qualities, and to move them to revolution, not a revolution of blood, but a revolution within themselves. This visionary was Anagarika Dharmapala. A proper evaluation of Dharmapala's work is yet to be made, but from the point of view our present topic, it is possible to say the following: Dharmapala unfortunately had one side of his thinking undoing the richness, imagination and creativity of the other side of his thinking. To be specific, he dreamed of a utopia of honest, disciplined citizens, but unfortunately it was dominated, if not exclusively populated by one ethno-religious group, the Sinhala

Buddhists. And unfortunately also, it was this bad side of Dharmapala that finally triumphed, and the good side has been forgotten. I hope a program like the one we are inaugurating today will help re-discover the good side of this great patriot, which is not far to seek. It is no more than striving to be honest, disciplined, efficient and responsible, not only in our jobs, but in all our day to day behavior.

A special responsibility lies on the elites if we are to successfully launch ourselves into development. By virtue of their talents and training, the elites, which include all of us here, have the knowledge and perception to understand the problem; and by virtue of their eminent positions they have the capability of influencing colleagues and subordinates to cultivate and nurture the values we have listed above as indispensable for a developing society. **A very special responsibility lies on the political elite.** In fact in societies like ours where the state is dominant, and local and voluntary organizations are weak, the problem of development becomes in very significant ways, the problem of political leadership. It is one of the biggest drawbacks in Sri Lanka that our political leadership is lacking in the dedication and the patriotism necessary to do anything beyond coming up with gimmicks to win the next election. Rational action towards development is easiest for the political leadership to take, but that leadership is too busy gambling for power. Gamblers are anxious to win, and that anxiety drives them, not to seek rational answers, but to seek supernatural aid in the form of vows, astrology, spirit channings and Bodhipujas. Our politicians are so ridden with anxiety that parliament is opened and closed, projects started, wars waged, all according to auspicious times. The Venerable Walpola Rahula wrote a book thirty years ago condemning these primitive beliefs. That book, titled *Satyodaya, or the Dawn of Truth*, is now available in a recent reprint. It is a brilliant book that should be read by everyone interested in development. Since I mentioned the obsession of politicians with astrology and auspiciousness, let me conclude by quoting in English translation a Pali verse from a Buddhist text that Bhikkhu Rahula quotes in that book:

'The fool who worships astrology neglects his work. Auspiciousness for doing the work is doing the work. What have the stars got to do with it?'



# TOWARDS AN EXPANDED FRAMEWORK FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Kumar Rupesinghe

*The writer is Secretary-General of International Alert.*

**H**ow can a state-based organisation play a meaningful role in the internal conflicts of its member states? The UN is criticised as an unwieldy and increasingly flawed instrument for solving these issues. The agenda has been further altered by NGOs who are now taking over a large number of roles that were previously the preserve of the UN, particularly in the field of humanitarian action, development programmes and the monitoring of human rights. Even the areas of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, which were the prerogatives and domain of the Security Council and the political office of the UN secretariat, have been opened up with new actors such as small states, eminent persons and NGOs — developing and creating mechanisms to address these issues.

The international system today is much more than a system of states. With a variety of transnational actors from business corporations, academia, non-governmental agencies, civic groups and religious organisations, it is an ever-expanding network which cuts across the state system. The communications revolution has enabled greater communication world-wide, and with regard to peace building and future security, there is a growing network of citizen based groups which are willing to shoulder much of the responsibility.

However the extended involvement of the non-governmental sector should not undermine the importance of the moral authority of the UN as a global organisation, and its wide technical capacity and expertise. The fact is that the problems which face the world today,

require solutions which cannot be met by the UN alone. The United Nations can often provide the strategic frameworks for preventive diplomacy. At the very least, a better form of partnership is needed at every level between UN bodies, governments, NGOs and regional organisations. Drug trafficking and international terrorism demonstrate the willingness of governments in every part of the world to collaborate with each other in preventive action. The need is for this cohesion to move onto additional areas of concern.

A structured response to crises should be developed, whereby a division of labour, based on the different comparative competencies of organisations is initiated. The aim is to ensure an increased coherence in the activities initiated by each organisation. The UN is a suitable forum to advocate just such challenges. Indeed it is well placed to co-ordinate a number of initiatives so that complementary strategies can be developed. It can build the framework under which a wide range of other actors — eminent persons, NGOs, regional organisations — intervene in the cause of peace.

## Early Warning

The early warning of conflict situations is seen as a necessary element in conflict prevention. The failure of conflict management in recent years has been due in part to the tardiness of the actions employed. **Protracted social conflicts have a determinable cycle and each phase of the conflict offers an opportunity for a particular kind of intervention.** In most cases however, intervention comes during the stage when the conflict has escalated and the parties

have entered a phase of attrition, when the spiral of violence and counter-violence has already begun.

An early warning system is one instrument to prevent the conflict from reaching this critical stage. When tensions and crises develop, the information which is available is fragmented, sometimes inaccurate, and this highlights the central problem of early warning. Warnings may be given by a number of organisations but they do not possess the ability to force the world's attention on these countries at risk. In April 1994 for example, when many of the world's journalists were congregating in South Africa for the elections, the warnings which were coming from Rwanda were effectively ignored.

## Early Warning centres

The establishment of one or two official centres for early warning and preventive diplomacy which would produce regular and authoritative reports, warnings and recommendations would be of great value. These centres would be able to receive reports from NGOs and other agencies. Specific public and private recommendations could be made to all the different actors of the international community including the UN, particular national governments and NGOs. In Europe, the initiative at the European Parliament to establish an early warning observatory has received support. However, few practical steps have been taken, as recent study shows. In examining the early warning and preventive actions of a number of inter-governmental organisations, the lack of effectiveness and cohesion in their operations was revealed. No well-developed early warning systems

have yet been developed, although many organisations such as the OSCE, ASEAN, ECOWAS, and OUA are aware of the need for such a system<sup>18</sup>.

The lack of effective early warning in the past has, in part, been due to the inefficiencies of centralised governmental systems, whose response to an impending emergency is time-consuming and will often be delayed until the crisis has struck. Bureaucracies in the donor countries are not geared to the needs of the recipients, and as decision makers are only indirectly linked to the victims, there is little accountability regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the response<sup>19</sup>.

Amongst members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the need for a division of labour and co-operation between donors and embassies within the region of conflict as part of an early warning system is increasingly acknowledged<sup>20</sup>. It is argued that with regular communication between these parties, the conflict situation could be diagnosed, and a 'common base of information' could be agreed upon which would then be used to formulate a coordinated strategy which would be recognised by outside governments, while being sensitive to the needs of the various factions involved in the dispute.

The UN has also become more active in the area of early warning and rapid response. Under the direction of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) the Relief Web<sup>21</sup> project has been launched, the purpose of which is to provide updated, on-line global information for conflict prevention, preparedness and rapid response for the humanitarian community, so that relevant actors, particularly in regions of conflict or disaster can make more effective use of information in developing complementary strategies for prevention and relief activities. Subject to following certain procedures regarding the collection and exchange of information, all organisations are welcome to join.

Since sovereign governments do not take kindly to being informed that their country is on the brink of disaster,

inter-governmental systems alone, are somewhat limited in building a capacity for early warning. So, their efforts need to be complemented by the citizen based, and NGO systems, but here, a number of practical issues must be taken into considerations. Firstly, many NGOs and international charities are limited by their mandates. For example, the ICRC has its own information gathering system, but cannot share this openly with other NGOs, nor can it act on data provided by others. Secondly, every organisation has its own priorities. So Amnesty's focus on Nigeria at a particular time for example, may not bear relevance to Oxfam's programme which may be focused on India at that same time. It is therefore necessary to develop a means through which all the organisations working in a specific region can co-ordinate their efforts and work towards a common agenda.

The creation of an early warning clearing house which could collect and disseminate regular early warning data to a network of early action agencies is a possibility today. With access to information databases world wide and a range of web sites on the Internet, the clearing house could synthesise the information gathered and offer a range of standardised reports on subjects such as countries at war, potential conflicts, minorities at risk, and thematic issues such as arms proliferation. The clearing house could also act as a referral system, pointing to recognised experts and information brokers who could provide more in-depth analysis<sup>22</sup>.

The search for a very effective early warning system is not an end in itself. A highly efficient early warning system will be useless if it results in effective action. It must be tied to a structured multi-sectored response. Furthermore, early warning is not just the function of network and the distribution of mandates, but also the empowerment of actors within the regions of conflict.

The early action network should also comprise human rights organisations, humanitarian agencies, development agencies, governments, regional and global inter-governmental organisations such as the OAU, EU, and UN, the

corporate sector and the academic community amongst others. The aim would be to ensure that a diverse set of organisations have access to regular and reliable information about ongoing and potential conflicts, upon which they could determine a co-ordinated plan of early preventive action<sup>23</sup>.

### Multi-track solutions to conflict

Multi-track diplomacy, defined as the application of peacemaking from different vantage points within a multi-centred network,<sup>24</sup> reflects the different levels and variety of factors which need to be addressed. It highlights the combination of elements which can work together successfully to bring together a conjuncture of forces, thereby creating the ingredients for a successful peace process. It has recently been described as a 'web of interconnected parts (activities, individuals, institutions, communities) that operate together, whether awkwardly or gracefully, for a common goal: a world at peace.'<sup>25</sup>

The design of the multi-track approach is based on the idea that all efforts can be complementary to each other and part of a larger framework of initiatives. The involvement of a variety of actors at different levels of a conflict is intended to bring greater accountability and adherence to human rights and humanitarian laws by all sides. For example, while NGOs may monitor human rights abuses at the grassroots levels, economic institutions such as the IMF or World Bank could press for a peaceful settlement, and national civic groups could form peace coalitions to bring pressure on the government and rebels to negotiate. Multi-track initiatives envisage a comprehensive, mutually reinforcing network with diverse actors intervening at different levels of the problem. It is clear that the world of conflict is multi-layered and different types of action must be used to address these different dimensions. Different organisations and groups, intervening at appropriate levels can be used so that there is a division of labour based on the comparative advantages of each group.

It is argued that official diplomacy and unofficial 'second track' approaches should be complemented by a range of



multi-track solutions. Official diplomatic manoeuvres are often circumscribed by political interests, a lack of trust concerning the intentions of the mediator, short-term domestic considerations, and an unwillingness to address the depth and complexity of social and economic problems that are caused by internal conflicts. Second track approaches, such as the Norwegian involvement in the Middle East, may stand greater chance of success, if it is intended to complement official negotiations, but cannot focus on all the other areas of concern which have affected the causes and duration of the conflict. Non-governmental or unofficial diplomacy may be effective in creating dialogue, but does not have the necessary resources or political leverage to bring about change. Yet the combined force of these approaches can address the fundamental issues, and still bring the necessary political momentum.

### 1. Tools and Approaches

Within preventive diplomacy, multi-track diplomacy is gradually being developed through a series of parallel stages<sup>26</sup>. On one level the development and analysis of theoretical approaches to peace building and preventive action are still taking place<sup>27</sup>. Studies are also being undertaken in building partnerships with international and local groups so that information about conflict prevention is shared and extended<sup>28</sup>. The next phase incorporates the development of regional working groups in the analysis of conflict scenarios by responding with practical initiatives<sup>29</sup>. The final stage is the establishment of a response mechanism that can respond during the early stages of the conflict situation, containing violence and making use of new opportunities to create peace initiatives with the help of NGOs, other institutions and local citizens.

A distinction can be made between the tools used in the various stages of conflict, particularly during the pre-negotiation and negotiation phase, when the challenge is to firstly bring the warring parties to the table, and introduce accountability. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch conduct intensive monitoring of human rights abuses, and

have been actively involved in holding non-state actors accountable. Local citizen groups can also create a framework to bring accountability amongst warring parties. The creation of peace zones and peace corridors in the Philippines did affect the actions of the fighters, as communities joined together to ban fighting in the zones.<sup>30</sup> The objective should be to create opportunities for dialogue.

Most of the classical literature on conflict resolution deals with negotiations and how to achieve successful outcomes on win-win solutions during the negotiations process itself. In internal conflicts however, the major problem is how to bring the parties to the table. As argued earlier, asymmetrical conflicts have a life of their own, and often the parties may want to prolong the war. Thus there is a need for more experience sharing and the development of new instruments through which the parties can be persuaded to come forward. Waiting for a hurting stalemate may be too costly and may prolong the war.

Listed below is only a selection of some of the methods and tools which can be useful in the expansion of multi-track diplomacy. Some are tried and tested approaches, however, often an organisation will only use one method. For multi-track diplomacy to be effective it is important that a more integrative, 'multi-tool' approach is used. In other words a menu of options could be developed providing a range of activities which could be tailored to the needs of each situation.

- *Peace Missions*-fact-finding missions to conflict area and citizens' missions to better define the problems.
- *Special Envoys* — a group of experienced and credible emissaries sent to speak to all parties in the conflict, exploring negotiation routes. By involving respected international emissaries, more attention is given to the area of conflict and more people, both at a local and an international level show interest in participating in the resolution process.
- *Peace Monitors*-peace/human rights

groups monitoring the safety of civilians, and offering recommendations for improvements. The development of a code of conduct for the adherence to human rights and humanitarian law is one step towards introducing accountability. Special 'peace brigades' can be formed to monitor ceasefires, secure the safety of peace corridors, and accompany human rights lawyers, acting as a deterrent against attacks.

- *Problem-solving* — informal discussions with and between disputants, or those close to them, to encourage alternative routes to conflict resolution. These workshops can be conducted over a period of time, giving each group a chance to express their emotions and voice their fears in a non-adversarial setting. Furthermore, the methods used in problem solving workshops should be integrated into a wider public and political sphere.
- *Training Workshops* — the objective is transfer mediation and reconciliation skills and to encourage disputants, and others affected by the conflict, to consider alternative routes to conflict resolution. Each workshop can be designed to fit the needs of the participants, starting from the pre-negotiation phase. Using these workshops it would be possible to develop local, regional and national platforms for conflict prevention and resolution.
- *Capacity-building* — technical and logistical assistance for mediation efforts to the relevant actors and communities. This is linked to the above, but also refers to the provision of material goods such as computers, books, and general office equipment. Training in the use of computers and administrative matters is also important.
- *Peace Conference or Peace Task Force* — citizen based peace groups or national peace conferences, bringing together different sectors of society and encouraging them to formulate a peace agenda. By establishing a forum for discussion, different working groups get the opportunity to exchange ideas and develop a common agenda and agreed plan of action.

- *Peace Initiatives* — community based initiatives such as 'peace zones' and 'days of peace' which facilitate the provision of food supplies to certain areas and strengthen confidence building in divided societies. These initiatives aim to galvanise local communities and villages into taking a more active role. It is also a means of bolstering people's confidence in a time when most feel despair and no hope for change.
- *Linking Differences* — informal setting where disputants can have a chance to understand opposing views. To avoid the embarrassment of official confrontation an informal gathering could be arranged through a neutral third party, where disputants have the chance to speak openly without fear of retaliation from their own supporters or the enemy. It is part of the 'humanising' process, in which disputants are encouraged to dispel stereotypical images of each other, so that they can once again talk as ordinary people relating to each other, not as soldiers and enemies.
- *Learning from Comparative Experiences* — experienced peace-makers can visit conflict area and share their knowledge with local actors. By exploring the issues of conflict in an objective way, they can offer concrete examples of ways in which particular problems have been resolved in past conflicts.
- *Economic Assistance or Political Packages* — economic incentives which draw attention to the advantages of economic co-operation between regions of conflict. By highlighting the advantages of reconciliation, such as investment and aid into the country, opportunities for work and development, disputants can be encouraged to enter into peace talks and discuss a more balanced political and economic power-sharing base.
- *Human Rights Standard-setting* — campaigns stressing the importance of adhering to international human rights standards, and the need for a framework for international standards on issues relevant to internal conflicts. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are amongst the largest organisations monitoring human rights abuses world-wide. By publicising their findings they do put pressure on governments to change their treatment of political

prisoners and inform the international community of the extent of abuse that exists. So they can be an enormous impact on the public's perception of a particular state, and thus also influence foreign and economic policy towards those states.<sup>1</sup>

- *Conflict Resolution Institution-building* — identifying and working local and national partners and helping them to build links with international organisations and networks. The purpose would be to make conflict resolution practice an inherent aspect of other civic groups. Additionally a network of conflict resolution practitioners would strengthen the practical and conceptual developments, as new ideas could be explored and tested on a world-wide basis.
- *Police and Military Training* — retraining the military and law enforcement agencies to complement and support peace processes. Often the police and military are one and the same. The purpose here would be first make distinctions between domestic policing methods and the role of armed soldiers in peace time, and to assist in the demobilisation and rehabilitation of soldiers into civil society.
- *Computer Networking for Early Warning and Peace* — establishing computer networks between conflict areas and a wider international audience, so that information can be exchanged about the conditions of conflict, and the potential of escalation. In the former Yugoslavia, an e-mail network was used by civilians to relay messages between isolated areas and to dispel propaganda that was being broadcast by the governments involved.
- *Mobilising the media for conflict resolution* — training the media to report events responsibly, and encouraging journalists to focus on the peacebuilding initiatives and positive elements within the conflict process. By informing the media of on-going peace efforts and projects, the focus could be taken away from just disaster and despair, to show that peace is possible and that local people are willing and able to make a difference. Images of

starving refugees or gun-toting militias creates an imbalanced perception of many developing countries.

Finally, it is important to recognise the benefits and drawbacks of neutral outsiders in the mediation process. While the *outsider-neutral* model of third-party mediation has proved invaluable in resolving many conflict situations, it has also demonstrated serious flaws and clearly is not applicable in all circumstances. In a broader context, it is increasingly apparent that in dealing with specific conflicts or emerging conflicts it is necessary to incorporate the *insider-partial* approach into the development of comprehensive peace processes, and often a combination of both is the most advantageous. Examples of prominent local individuals exerting a strong influence on peace processes include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Guatemala's Archbishop Quezada Toruño and Senator Bobby Tarada in the Philippines.

The neutral outsider cannot by necessity stay in the country for long time, they must often come and go. The committed insider, on the other hand, must live with the conflict, stay with the conflict and has day to day intervention with the conflict process. Such people are often well-known members of communities who, because of their roles as leaders, have access to the leadership of their particular country, as well as within and outside their regions. Furthermore, these people are generally recognised by the grassroots as well. Their positions are not based on political or military power, nor are they trying to secure it. Their position is unique also in the fact that they tend to have pre-existing bonds which cut across conflict lines. Drawing on the benefits of their unique position, along with the high degree of mobility they usually enjoy, middle-range leaders can harness all of these advantages to the benefit of the conflicting communities.

## 2. Citizen-based diplomacy

Citizen based peacemaking is the process of establishing peace constituencies within conflict areas, to create a common middle ground for dialogue. It is a necessary and vital ingredient of peace building efforts for it gives the people directly affected by, and involved in the conflict the opportunity to

<sup>1</sup> Their impact may not be immediate, but persistent pressure on the government does bear fruit.



voice their concerns, fears and grievances. Peace processes which impose solutions on the population, without sufficient consultation of their needs are likely to unravel at a later stage. Thus it is imperative that people are given the chance to reconcile their differences and partake in the resolution process. Within each country there is a huge reserve of skills and experience which can be tapped in pre- and post-conflict situations. Listen below are just some examples of citizen based diplomacy.

- In Somaliland tribal elders have used traditional kinship networks to resolve conflicts. In Israel the PEACE NOW group have been an effective voice of Israeli and Palestinian people. Through the youth division they have made attempts at bridging the gaps between the two sides, making each aware of the others history and culture. During the 1980s in the Philippines, rural villages, schools and universities took a stand against the army and rebel forces. Different sectors of society — the agrarian community, the fisherfolk, the urban poor — participated in the National Peace Conference, presenting their concerns and calls for social and economic reform<sup>31</sup>.

- *Ecumenical diplomacy:* Religious organisations can be effective at all levels of society. While the work of local church and religious leaders can complement the peace process at a grassroots level, international religious establishments such as the Quakers or the Catholic church can bring pressure and influence on a wider spectrum. In Mozambique for example, the Italian-based Catholic lay community of Sant' Egidio played a pivotal role in bringing the warring parties together. In Nicaragua in 1988 the Moravian Church and Protestant leaders facilitated the negotiations. In South Africa too, the church played a key role in addressing people's fears and anxieties and encouraging them to take a peaceful route toward reconciliation.

- *Social diplomacy:* Women's movements have immense potential for establishing peace-building networks. In many parts of the world women already play a key role in rehabilitating refugees and providing food and shelter. In India and parts of Africa although women play a major role in the economy, their potential role in politics is still overlooked. In Burundi

programmes are underway to mobilise existing networks of women's groups and to introduce the concepts of conflict resolution and preventive action. By increasing the participation of women in peace making or conflict prevention, it is possible to reach a much wider grassroots base. Furthermore local women's movements can link with regional and international organisations to create a platform on which their concerns can be expressed and addressed.

- A focus on youth groups is also important as often it is young men who are the first casualties of war. By forming youth groups focused on the need for preventive action, it may be possible to create an anti-violence constituency amongst the young. Peer pressure to join a rebel army or to incite violence could then decrease. Furthermore, by establishing these networks now, future wars could be more effectively avoided.

- *Community diplomacy* through social movements is a broader form of the citizen diplomacy described above. The work of the Community Relations Council (CRC) in Northern Ireland has been noted. In Cambodia Buddhist monks started peace marches, in Sierra Leone villages declared areas of neutral territory, and in isolated parts of Bosnia, Christian and Muslim women exchanged their children overnight as a means of protest. These are all small acts of protest but symbolic of a deeper sense of frustration and despair about war. They are effective in that sectors of a society in conflict are in practice denouncing the political rhetoric and acting for themselves.

- *Creative diplomacy:* through artists and personalities from the world of entertainment such as the British-based "Comic Relief" charity. Using high profile personalities with access to the media, it is possible to highlight the plight of war victims, and raise funds for projects. In addition since entertainers have mass audience appeal, they can be an effective means of informing the general public about conflict issues and the principles of preventive diplomacy.

In short, multi-track diplomacy advocates the involvement of every positive force within and outside the conflict arena in the resolution process. It is a means of including local communities and groups who ordinarily

feel excluded from the peace process. The objective is an attempt to address conflict when it is still at its formation phase, and not stall until multi-billion dollar emergency relief operations are needed. These operations provide governments with an excuse to avoid discussing the opportunities that existed in the earlier stages.

### 3. The Facilitating Role of NGOs

The UN charter has precipitated the development of human rights mechanisms and NGOs which have become a feature of international affairs in the post-war period. Their development has progressed with a creativity and commitment to social causes, which has often proved to be more effective than their slower, official counterparts. In particular, development and humanitarian NGOs are in a continuous process of re-thinking and revising their mandates to address the effects of war.

NGOs and other agencies can build issue-specific coalitions and national and regional platforms to advance preventive action. Working in co-ordination with IGOs and governments, NGOs can also provide the time commitment and low profile needed to build relationships with the parties and encourage progress to negotiations. Since they can be categorised as 'unofficial organisations' they have the advantage of building trust and confidence between the two sides and using their resources to work towards negotiation. In other words, with no strategic or political motivations, NGOs can initiate dialogue with the conflicting parties at times when there is a complete breakdown of communication. Furthermore, with the ability to provide long term commitments to social programmes and development projects, NGOs can act as catalysts nurturing the institutions of the state such as the judiciary, police, and civil service, and also civilian populations.

Alternative forms of diplomacy undertaken by NGOs have been particularly effective in South Africa, El Salvador and Northern Ireland but have rarely received public attention. South Africa's transition was a negotiated revolution where at every level of society, structures for the peaceful resolution of disputes were established. The National Peace Accord built local and national

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**B**andaranaike always maintained — i.e., before independence and after — that the provincial councils and the concept of regional autonomy these councils embodied were ideally suited to bring the island's various ethnic groups together in a constructive association for the common good. Once he became Prime Minister he was at last able to introduce his provincial councils scheme. But he did so under unpropitious circumstances, as an attempt to placate an aggrieved Federal Party in the wake of the controversies on the *Official Language Act*, and at a time when many among the Sinhalese suspected any reduction of the authority of the central government to be an unwarranted concession to Tamil pressure for a federal state. These Sinhalese critics believed that this was the first step on the path to establishing a separate Tamil state.

The draft bill published on 17 May 1957 was a confusing document which envisaged the establishment of regional councils based on the existing district boundaries rather than on the provinces. By 1955 the revenue district had replaced the province as the largest unit of administration. There were twenty two such districts as against the nine provinces inherited from the days of British rule.

Much of the ambiguity in the Regional Councils Bill of May 1957 arose from its being the lineal descendent of a bill outlined but not actually formulated in detail by the Executive Committee of Local Administration in the days of the second State Council in 1940. As we have seen the motion approved by the State Council on that occasion called them provincial councils when in actual fact they were confined to revenue districts. In the draft bill of July 1957, there was more precision in the terminology used but that was partly because the term province was carefully omitted. But section 2(1)(a) empowered the Minister to "declare the whole or any part of an Administrative district to be a Region". This concept of a "region" introduced a new element of confusion because, in the draft bill, a "region" was sometimes larger and sometimes smaller than a province. Indeed this concept of a "region" was introduced for the first time to the national debate on devolution of power through the draft bill of May 1957 thus not only causing confusion but also rousing suspicions in the minds of critics that it was part of a deliberate attempt to undermine the unitary structure of the country. The second feature of the draft bill, again

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something that flowed directly from the State Council debate of 1940, was the decision that members of the regional councils would be elected by local bodies in each such region from among their members. There would be no direct elections to these regional councils.

This draft bill proved to be a major turning point in the history of Bandaranaike's administration. It served to alienate him from a powerful and very articulate section of Buddhist activists whose support for him in the election campaign of 1956 had been invaluable if not indispensable in ensuring his victory. Secondly, it offered the defeated UNP a convenient point of opposition to Bandaranaike, and one that J R Jayewardene eagerly seized in a bid to embarrass him with his most powerful source of political support — the 'Sinhala-Only' enthusiasts. Thirdly, the eventual failure to introduce it disappointed the Tamils who, as we shall see, were persuaded to support it — with modifications introduced in response to their requests — as part of a package deal designed to bring about some settlement between the two estranged ethnic groups. Indeed the failure to implement it eroded the Prime Minister's credibility as a leader and eventually contributed powerfully to undermining the strength of his administration.

Bandaranaike's response to the agitation of the Tamil leadership was more flexible than that of the extremists in the coalition he led who could think of little else but confrontation and relentless pressure on them and rigid adherence to 'Sinhala-Only' as the guiding principle of any legislation on language policy. When the terms of the settlement reached with the Federal Party, the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact, were published on 26 July 1957 it was immediately evident that a far-reaching modification of the *Official Language Act* would be required because the Tamil language was to be given the status of

an official language for administrative purposes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Also the agreement went well beyond language policy. Indeed the proposal to amend the draft Regional Councils bill to accommodate some of the demands of the Federal Party became just as controversial, if not more so, than the modifications in language policy envisaged in it. Thirdly, there was the proposal to place limits on the settlement of Sinhalese peasant "colonists" in irrigation schemes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces so that the indigenous Tamils could maintain their majority position in those areas, and fourthly, the question of Sri Lanka citizenship for people of Indian descent, and the revision of the Citizenship Act of 1948 was to receive the early consideration of the government.

The moment the terms of the settlement were made public there was a storm of protests, chiefly from the language loyalists in Bandaranaike's own camp. The crucial factor in the opposition from the 'Sinhala-Only' fundamentalists within the SLFP was Bandaranaike's readiness to recognize Tamil as an official language for administrative purposes in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This concession, they argued, vitiated the 'Sinhala-Only' policy on which the constituent parties of the governing *Mahajana Eksath Peramuna* (MEP) coalition and their allies had campaigned and won what clearly was the overwhelming endorsement of the electorate. That the UNP itself held much the same views on this aspect of the pact that Bandaranaike negotiated with S J V Chelvanayakam, the leader of the Federal Party, gave the language fundamentalists in the MEP no great satisfaction. Indeed it greatly embarrassed them. The UNP also shared with them a strong opposition to the changes made in the Regional Councils Bill. The UNP's misgivings were really focussed on the clauses relating to peasant "colonization," especially the fact that settlement of such "colonists" in the newly opened irrigation schemes in the Eastern Province would have to stop. In addition, under the terms of this



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agreement — the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact as it came to be called — the draft Regional Councils Bill was to be amended so that, *inter alia*, the Northern Province was to form one regional area, while the Eastern Province was to be divided into two or more regional areas. This provision compounded the confusion caused by introducing the concept of a "region," and by reviving the use of the province as the principal unit of a administration and this only two years after the revenue districts, twenty two in all at that time, had been formally established as the largest units of regional administration. If the division of the Eastern Province into two or more regions was a concession to demographic realities, and could have been justified on that basis, the clauses in the agreement in which provision was made to permit two or more "regions" to amalgamate even beyond provincial boundaries seemed even more ominous to those who viewed the agreement as an unprincipled sell-out to the pressure of the FP: a "region" could divide itself into two or presumably more "regions," subject to ratification of such decision by Parliament, and collaboration for specific programmes of common interest between two or direct elections to these councils was considered. As we have seen the original draft envisaged only indirect elections.

The moment the terms of the settlement between Bandaranaike and the Federal Party were made public there was an outburst of protests from the die-hard language loyalists in Bandaranaike's own camp. And the UNP looking for a means of staging a political comeback were provided with an ideal opportunity to embarrass the Prime Minister on a politically sensitive issue, as well as to demonstrate their commitment to a 'Sinhala-Only' policy to an electorate skeptical of their motives. 'Sinhala-Only' ideologues argued that the concessions to recognise Tamil as an official language vitiated the 'Sinhala-Only' Act. This opinion the UNP shared. Their concerns extended to other main points in the settlement, i.e. modifications of the Regional Councils Bill and the presumed threat to halt colonization in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

In retrospect it would seem that the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact was doomed from the moment its contents were revealed. Confronted with mounting opposition to it the Prime Minister played for time. A march to Kandy by the UNP led by J R Jayewardene on 2 and 3 October 1957, in protest against the pact, made little impression on the country and none at all on the government which succeeded in stopping it before it proceeded very far<sup>24</sup>. However, having easily overcome the UNP's political

Led by a group of *bhikkhus* who performed a *satyagraha* on the lawn of the Prime Minister's private residence in Colombo on 9 April 1958, the extremists in his own party compelled him to abrogate the pact — he tore it up in a dramatic gesture — a full eight months after the UNP's protest march had fizzled out<sup>25</sup>.

initiative, the government succumbed to pressure from within its own ranks, as on the occasion when its language bill was first introduced in April 1956<sup>25</sup>. Led by a group of *bhikkhus* who performed a *satyagraha* on the lawn of the Prime Minister's private residence in Colombo on 9 April 1958, the extremists in his own party compelled him to abrogate the pact — he tore it up in a dramatic gesture — a full eight months after the UNP's protest march had fizzled out<sup>26</sup>. Once again the tensions generated, the pressures and counter-pressures, erupted in "race" riots in May 1958. Later in the year — in August — Bandaranaike secured parliamentary approval for the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act No. 28 of 1958. The Regional Councils Bill was abandoned, along with the pact with which it came to be associated.

In 1928, the Donoughmore Commission had recommended the creation of a second tier of government between the central authorities and the local government bodies. That it took 52 years before such a system could be introduced — in the form of the District Development Councils of 1980-1 — is explained in part by inertia. This was especially true in the 1940s, but later on there was a caution induced by a suspicion that any relaxation of centralization could culminate in the dismemberment of the Sri Lankan polity. The devolution of power to regional units had been accepted in principle by the State Council in 1940, without dissent if not unanimously. But legislation required for this purpose was not introduced in the 1940s. By the mid-1950s the consensus that had existed in regard to this had evaporated, and instead the creation of regional bodies had become one of the most controversial issues in Sri Lankan politics because of its association with the demands of the Federal Party and its successor the Tamil United Liberation Front. Two attempts to establish such councils failed hopelessly, the first time in 1957-8, and on the second occasion in 1968. The creation of a second tier of government succeeded only in 1980. Even so there has never been a consensus between the two principal national political parties on the establishment of such a second tier of government, and even less a national consensus reaching out beyond and above the party leaderships. Bandaranaike's failure to establish his Provincial Councils is an excellent case study on why it has been so difficult to reach such a consensus.

## Notes

22. CO54/980/15, minutes by G E J Gent and others on the proposal to dismiss Bandaranaike, 5-7 April 1941. Also in the same file are the minutes by Sir Sidney Abrahams and Sir George Bushe on the theme of "Powers to dismiss a Minister," 18-22 April 1951.
23. James Manor, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon*, op.cit., p 153, citing Governor Sir Andrew Caldecott's "Things Ceylonese," 1 May and 23 April 1941 in CO54/984/4.
24. K M de Silva and Howard Wriggins, *J R Jayewardene of Sri Lanka, A Political Biography Vol II*, London and Honolulu, pp 35-43, for the fiasco of the UNP's march to Kandy. The marchers managed to cover just 15 of the 72 miles of their journey.
25. *ibid.*, pp 48-50.
26. *ibid.*, p 50.

(Contd. from page 4)

economic growth/industrialisation as much as private enterprises. For example, it was public enterprises which provided the initial spur for South Korea's highly successful automobile industry and steel industry. South Korea's state owned steel producing enterprise POSCO began to provide technical assistance to steel plants in the USA in 1987 and the World Bank, which in the early '70s turned down a loan request for POSCO on the grounds that South Korea had no comparative advantage in steel, barely two decades later described this state owned enterprise as "arguably the world's most efficient producer of steel". (Korea: *Managing the Industrial Transition Vol. 1-1987-World Bank, Washington DC*).

According to in-depth studies of a number of state owned enterprises in Asia "though the overall performance of the public enterprises sector as a whole is not that good, there are some enterprises in almost all the countries, developed and developing, that have been very effective and efficient in the attainment of their objectives.....

- A) Public enterprises can be quite successful and sometimes their performance can be more or less similar to that of the private enterprises functioning in a similar context.
- B) They can be innovative in technology as well as product improvement.
- C) With regard to price and quality, they can be competitive in international markets.

These studies show that there is no inherent reason why the performance of public enterprises in attaining their major goals has to be poor, provided certain key decision mechanisms are institutionalised". (*Beyond Adjustment: The Asian Experience — edited by Paul Streeten — a publication of the IMF and the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations*).

Several suggestions have been put forward (based on the above mentioned studies) to improve the performance of public enterprises.

- (1) Improving the quality of top management —

- (a) "institutionalize the selection process (of the top management) so that purely political and bureaucratic influences are minimized; the process needs to be **depoliticized** and **debureaucratized**."
- (b) the existing top management team should deliberately groom its successors to ensure continuity and stability of enterprises functioning.

- (2) Provide mechanisms for a creative dialogue between the government and enterprise management on the top management tasks they share" (Ibid).

This should include the setting up of a "central body that has the expertise and competence to view the public enterprise system as a whole in the context of the national development objectives and strategy..... (for example) the Republic of Korea established in 1983, the Government Invested Enterprises Evaluation Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister at the Economic Planning Board and also a Management Evaluation Task Force.

- (3) The Public sector should have institutionalised machinery for project identification and formulation as well as for project appraisal, evaluation and selection for financing (because the failure of many public enterprises to perform well is due largely to (the) poor formulation and evaluation of projects". (Ibid).

### Economic Monotheism and the New Inquisitors

Economics is not a religion, still less a monotheism. Therefore, it cannot offer us any panaceas. The fact that economic neo-liberalism has become dominant today does not mean that it is infallible and omniscient; that it has a monopoly on the truth and correctness. It is but one path, one strategy, which different countries

have adhered to at different points of time, with its share of successes and failures. However, the Bretton Wood twins have taken upon themselves the role of economic Inquisitors, threatening all recalcitrant Third World nations who deviate from the 'correct line' with auto-da-fes. As a result many policy makers (often because of the dire need for financial support for which they require a clean bill of health from the IFI's) take what they believe to be the path of least resistance, striving to implement the neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes in toto, from rampant privatisation to slashing subsidies. The recent bread riots in Jordan should serve as a sharp reminder that this path of **least** resistance to **external** — IFI — pressures can also be the path of **most** resistance **internally** and therefore the most costly one — politically, socially and economically.

There can be little doubt that the PA regime is going in this same direction. Recent converts to the dogma of economic neo-liberalism, the PA top leadership is conducting itself like a bunch of zealots determined to press ahead with their rampant privatisation cum slash the subsidies programme, deaf and blind to resistance, opposition and danger.

The CEB strike was but an indicator of the battles which are looming, if the PA persists in implementing its neo-liberal agenda — battles which will cost the country, the economy and the citizens dearly. A privatisation programme which is indiscriminate and confrontational would only serve to alienate the majority of the citizens. **The resulting exacerbation of the political crisis will effectively discourage not just foreign investors but local investors as well, thereby further worsening the economic crisis.** Therefore, if the government disregards the danger signal symbolised by the CEB strike and presses ahead with its current privatisation offensive, it will create a vicious (and a violent) cycle which will threaten not just economic development and the well being of citizens, but the democratic system as well. ■



**A**re rebels born or made? In the case of Vivienne Goonewardene, environment and circumstances only helped to bring out those qualities that were innate in her: an intolerance of what she perceived as wrong or unjust.

Vivie's first playmate was Roslyn. Close to her in age, Roslyn was the daughter of the domestic help of the Goonetilleke household. One day the two toddlers, both dressed in white, set out for a walk in the vast garden which surrounded the house. A grazing cow, recently calved, mistaking the two little girls for her calf, attempted to nuzzle them. Seeing this and fearing possible harm to the children, Roslyn's mother ran to their rescue. She had to fight the beast to free the children. In the struggle with the cow, Roslyn's mother

British Empire, these years witnessed the awakening of the people to assert themselves in diverse forms — as religious groups, nationalists, ethnic communities and even to form a labour movement.<sup>1</sup> Vivie's maternal grandfather, Don Jacolynne Rupesinghe Goonewardene, better known as Boralugoda Ralahamy, was involved in the Buddhist revival of the period and was one of those incarcerated in the context of the anti-Muslim riots of 1915. Into this family Vivie was born on the 18th. of September of the following year. Her first home was in Tissamaharama (a remote but historical village in the dry zone) since Dr. Goonetilleke was stationed there at that time. Even now, in her 80th year, Vivie proudly proclaims that she was conceived in Tissamaharama, though born in Colombo. As a physician in the



# Vivie: The Early Years

Pulsara Liyanage

died. Roslyn made her home with the Goonetillekes. At the age of five (or thereabouts) Vivie heard her mother reprimand Roslyn, who retorted that if she was punished she'd jump into the well. Vivie promptly wrote to Roslyn's father asking him to take his daughter home immediately because her life was in danger. Accompanied by relatives, Roslyn's father arrived at the Goonetilleke's in Gampaha in haste. Vivie recalls this as the only occasion her father caned her. Roslyn remained with the Goonetillekes' till she married.

This spirited little girl was the eldest of the five children born to Dr. Don Allenson Goonetilleke and his wife Emily Angeline Goonewardene. Dr. Goonetilleke named his first born, Violet Vivienne, after the French nurse who helped to bring the little girl into the world. With these initials she became 'Vivie' to all, for all time.

1916 was a good year to be born in. The first decade of the 20th century in Ceylon was a period of political, social and economic turmoil. Still a colony of the

**September 18th Marks the 80th birthday of Vivienne Goonewardene, Sri Lanka's best known woman leftist. Her biography is being written by Pulsara Liyanage, Senior Lecturer in Western Classics at the University of Kelaniya and a former political prisoner. We feature here, the first chapter.**

service of the Crown, (as public service was then known), Dr. Goonetilleke was transferable and served in diverse parts of the island. Therefore in order to give their children a sound education, the parents decided to place them in boarding school. Vivienne, and later her sister Tulin, were boarded at Musaeus College Colombo where they also had their education up to the Cambridge Matriculation Examination. Except for the brief period when the father was stationed at Gampaha, school vacations and holidays were spent at the

maternal grandparents' at Boralugoda. Dr. Goonetilleke had instructed the school to permit their grandmother or their uncle Robert Gunawardene to remove them from the boarding school. (Vivienne was later to put this arrangement to very good use!) The close association with the grandmother was important and influential in the lives of both Vivienne and Tulin. Their grandmother, known as Gunasekara Hamine of Siyane Korale was a much loved and respected woman of Boralugoda. Of the landed gentry and of great wealth, she however did not confine herself to the *walauwwa*; but personally saw to the welfare of the village and the well-being of the villagers. With the lack of hospitals and midwives, Gunasekara Hamine filled the lacuna and assisted at the birth of every single child in the area and provided post-natal care and advice to the mothers. Vivie acknowledges this example of her grandmother's — along with the orientation of their school — with imbibing in Tulin and herself a strong sense of

service to the people. While Vivie devoted her life to Left politics Tulin joined the co-operative movement. A strong believer in the movement, the latter remains a committed and active, and perhaps also one of its longest serving, members.

At Gampaha the physicians' residence was quite close to the hospital. In fact the hospital's mortuary was just up the road. Memories of childhood recall visits to the hospital, the sick, the relatives of the departed and the pain of others. Between Boralugoda and Gampaha a little child's conscience is awakened to an awareness of the living conditions and the suffering of ordinary people, the poor, the less fortunate; those who were different from her immediate family and its environment. Her father's dedication to his calling and his selfless service to the sick, impressed her. She respected him and loved him for that.

### The Quality of Courage

Holidays at Boralugoda were a treat for the children; one filled with pleasant memories of adventure, daring and fun. Their playground was over 100 acres of land and the possibilities springing from the imaginations of children were endless. A bath meant a long walk over a paddy field and across a river to a pond. Their guide and chaperone was the best a child could hope for: none other than Aunt Caroline — Caro for short — who was less than ten years Vivie's elder and her favourite aunt. How so? "She was very naughty" replies Vivie with a smile and a twinkle in her eyes. On the way to the bath Aunt Caro taught them to swim. This was in the river and her teaching aids were dried coconuts. The nuts were tied to their chests and the children were asked to float and swim and Caro would slowly remove the nuts. Down would go the children. Caro was always there to rescue them and they had to try again with the coconuts. Small wonder, with such a persevering teacher, her star pupil is a good swimmer — good enough to save her puppy from drowning in the sea. A knowledge to swim was not the only attribute bequeathed to Vivie by Aunt Caroline. If there is any credence to the folk belief that running under the belly of an elephant makes you courageous, Aunt Caro should take a bow for that single quality Vivie is most famous for — her courage. Believing in the folk tale, or at least wanting her charges to, the young chaperone would induce the little children to run under the bellies of the elephants who had been brought for their daily baths. This too she would insist the children do many times. Every time her mother came to know of this escapade Caro would receive a caning for her efforts

in teaching the young to be courageous. Not that the grandmother did not fancy courage in her grandchildren, but that she feared the excitement of the tickled elephant, and its very probable after-effects on a little child i.e. mortality. The presence of the mahout was the only defence of all those involved in the sport. Caning notwithstanding, the lessons would be repeated.

Is this what she attributed her courage to? A quiet smile replies the query and names the owner of the elephants, none other than her grandfather and his family, for instilling that particular quality in a young, impressionable and receptive child. "Grandfather was a sort of a chief or headman in the village and as such he was also the chief arbiter of disputes in the village. He never gave way to cheating and lying and dishonesty."



**This spirited little girl was the eldest of the five children born to Dr. Don Allenson Goonetilleke and his wife Emily Angeline Goonewardene. Dr. Goonetilleke named his first born Violet Vivienne, after the French nurse who helped to bring the little girl into the world. With these initials she became 'Vivie' to all, for all time.**



After the many sports along the way the children would go to the pond for their bath. There the chaperone would perform her duty and see to it that the instructions were strictly adhered to — the children were not permitted to get into the pond; they had to stay out of the pond and perform their bath. This done, Aunt Caro would take the clean and well — exercised children safely home.

To the casual listener at the daily forums at Vivie's dining table, it was perplexing to hear of the many pranks she got up to at school and also be informed that she was appointed the head girl of that very same school, Musaeus College, in 1933. When asked in private exactly why she was appointed to that post in school, she looks startled, truly surprised if not a little annoyed at what must seem to her a stupid question. But then she smiles broadly and replies, "because I was a very good student. I was good in my studies, in drama, in sport." Going through the material carefully one also finds out that many of the more talked about acts of

defiance she got up to were precisely as the head-girl of the school! One must hasten to add that she had very commendable and logical reasons to explain each of these acts. Irrespective of the worthiness of the deed, she always took her inevitable punishment, even though it proved to be a non deterrent.

### The First Political Action

One such was the selling of the Suriya flower instead of the poppy on the 11th of November 1934. The proceeds from the sale of the poppy flower on Remembrance Day locally was to be for the welfare of the Ceylonese war veterans. Instead of this the British rulers sent most of the money back to England, leaving a meagre proportion to the local veterans. Dissatisfied with this arrangement the Ex-servicemen's Association along with the Marxist dominated Youth Leagues decided on the indigenous suriya flower to rival the imperialists' poppy. On Remembrance Day, instead of the poppy, was sold the suriya flower and the funds of the sale used for local purposes. Young Leftists including the British-born Doreen Wickremasinghe spearheaded the Suriyamal Campaign which heralded the entry of the Marxists into national politics.

On Remembrance Day young Vivienne Goonetilleke sold the suriya flower in her school to students and teachers. She recalls that it was a 100% success with students and only about half of that with the older generation, the teachers. Vivie however did not stop her campaign with the sale of the suriya flower. She went further. She also induced the students to place their boxes of instruments atop the blackboards and at 11.00 a.m. to topple these to obliterate the sound of the gun salute. The students responded. The sound of falling boxes of instruments with the blackboards making a deafening sound throughout the school was music in Vivie's ears. The culprit was found out to be none other than the head-girl of the school, who was duly punished at assembly.

This, at the age of 18 was her first act against imperialism. Starting with this she remains a staunch anti-imperialist, be the imperialists the British or the Americans and the affected state Sri Lanka or Cuba. Now at the age of 79 she continues to speak out against imperialism and solidarize with affected nations and peoples.

Getting involved in this manner in the suriyamal campaign was also Vivie's first



conscious political action; a culmination of sorts of several years of radicalization of the conscience in an environment enriched with political discussion, the activity of uncle Philip and Robert, and her own voracious reading. The two uncles played their part too in providing their young and intelligent niece with political literature. One of the memorable books given to her by uncle Philip was Lenin; **On Women**. Simplified books on Marxism were to follow.

This was also the year in which the island was hit by the most virulent epidemic of malaria. The burgeoning Left Movement plunged into work in the worst affected areas: nursing the sick, feeding them, etc. The Ex-Servicemen's Association donated the funds they had collected in the suriyamal campaign to these youth who were helping the sick. Young Vivienne was involved in a different way. The residence of Dr. Goonetilleke was converted in to a virtual hospital. The long 'L' shaped verandah was completely given over to the sick. While the father medicated, mother and daughter nursed the sick. "We kept ice packs on their heads to get the fever down and covered their bodies with thick blankets. A lot of the sick father kept in our home were little children." The salient feature of this whole experience to Vivie was that the most affected were also the poorest even from among the poor.

### Crisis At Home

Amidst all of this, the youthful student had arrived at a crisis in her own life. She who had hitherto combatted, albeit verbally, the conservatism of the older generation, now faced the whole weight of it in her father's refusal to consider his daughter proceeding in higher studies. That she was intelligent and clever he already knew, but the burden of conventional norms also bore heavily upon him. Young women of good family and wealth, with a secondary education, had then to be given in marriage to a young man of similar background and good education. Higher education was certainly a dis-qualification for a woman if the above were to be her aspirations. Very much a man of his times, Dr. Goonetilleke believed this. Vivienne had already passed the Cambridge Matriculation Examination at the age of 16 and while still residing at the boarding school at Musaeus College and encouraged by Marjorie Davidson, her teacher and the daughter of the Director of Education, had sat for the University's Scholarship Examination. Dr. Goonetilleke was ignorant of most of this activity. Uncle Robert's authority to

remove the children from school had been used by uncle and niece to attend classes and to sit for the examination. Vivienne had even been awarded an exhibition at the scholarship examination. With a scholarship to study for English Honours at the University College Colombo, she faced the father's conservatism. Her father's friends Perinpanayagam, V. Coomarasamy and J. N. Arumugam, came to her rescue. They reasoned with him, not on grounds of modernity but on social justice: she has won a scholarship to pursue English Honours and as such if she does not go, that placement is lost even to another student, which was a waste, they said. They went on to tell him that he will come under criticism by the people for a rich man's daughter wasting a placement at the university since now it could not be awarded to another. This argument worked and enabled the young women to embark upon a University education.

**This, at the age of 18 was her first act against imperialism. Starting with this she remains a staunch anti-imperialist be the imperialists the British or the Americans and the affected state Sri Lanka or Cuba. Now at the age of 79 she continues to speak out against imperialism and solidarize with affected nations and peoples.**

At University too she was boarded at the women's hostel on Queens Road. Having loved the theatre and especially acting and having hitherto been confined to school productions, Vivie revelled in the possibilities now open to her at University. She met Prof. Ludowyck<sup>2</sup> and expressed her wish to join the Dram Soc (as the Drama Society was known). The Professor said 'most certainly' but the father said, 'definitely not'. No, it was.

Even without the Dram Soc Vivienne's life at University proved to be quite dramatic. For instance there were Sydney Soysa and 'Jingle' Dissanayake<sup>3</sup>, colleagues at University, both of whom wooed her and both of whom she rejected. Sydney Soysa was helped by his pet leopard cub. One day as she sat reading by the window in her room a creature gave a low growl behind her shoulder. She looked out in alarm and there was the

young man who gave a bow and introduced himself, "Sydney Soysa, if you please". Romance and studies were not all there was to University life. There was politics too. In 1936 the Duke of Gloucester visited Ceylon. Professor Marrs was keen that the students meet him. The students, however demonstrated against the Duke's proposed visit. This was an eventful period in politics too. The LSSP had been formed in 1935. They led anti-fascist demonstrations against Franco, in Colombo, and Vivie joined these demonstrations along with other University students. All of this, the romance and the politics, was too much for the father. With only the first years' examination being completed, the young scholar was brought home with a firm negative concerning her University education. This time the father kept his foot down. Her lecturers at University pleaded with the father to let his daughter attend the University since they considered it a shame to disrupt the education of such an intelligent young student. Among these delegations from University to plead her cause was also a Buddhist Bikkhu, her lecturer in Pali. All these appeals fell on deaf ears.

Yet, undaunted, Vivienne decided on an External degree. Uncle Robert again came to her rescue to solve the problem of registration and examination fees. Since she could not attend lectures or classes of any sort, she had to abandon her love for an English Honours course. Instead she registered for a General Degree in Arts. Her perennial love of reading masked any hint of preparation for a University examination from her father. He never suspected the frequent visits of Harry Jayawardene<sup>4</sup> to be anything but what he was told they were all about — to discuss the many books Vivie so fervently read. In reality Harry Jayawardene was helping Vivie with her Economics paper. About the same time and unknown to the father, she also attended political rallies and meetings organized by the LSSP, where Philip spoke. As always, Uncle Robert was her accomplice in this too.

### Notes

1. K.M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* OUP Delhi 1981 pp. 402-416.
2. Prof of English at Ceylon University College, later University of Ceylon. In addition to being a teacher and scholar he was also an author and man of the theatre.
3. They later went on to become senior police officers with a reputation for toughness.
4. Of Padukka, A friend of the family.



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# CONFLICT IN CENTRAL AFRICA:

## *The Cases of Rwanda and Burundi*

Dilip S. Samarasinghe

**T**he recent military coup in Burundi which brought into power Pierre Buyoya, a former Tutsi leader is an indication of the dangerous situation building up in Central Africa. The new leader took power after making a pledge that he would stop the inter-ethnic killings and halt the expulsion to neighbouring Rwanda of Hutu refugees.

The military coup came in the wake of an incident where Tutsi demonstrators pelted President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya with stones and cow dung when he came to pay his respect to Tutsi victims of a Hutu gang. The President, a Hutu, fled to the American Embassy, paving the way for a military takeover.

The political changes in Burundi resemble in many ways, the deteriorating situation in Rwanda in 1994. Political scientists and journalists have in recent years described such events as "Tribalism". This is a convenient way to classify the numerous conflicts that have arisen since the end of the Cold War. Apart from Rwanda and more recently Burundi, other examples of "Tribalism" are the Somali and Bosnian conflicts.

In many ways both Rwanda and Burundi have the same problem and it therefore follows that they should be examined together. Both have a Hutu majority of about 80% and a Tutsi minority of about 15%. The animosity between these two "ethnic" groups has resulted in some of the worst "tribal" violence on the African Continent since both countries gained independence from Belgium in the early 1960's.

Rwanda, since its civil war in 1994 is today a devastated country which needs to be rebuilt almost from scratch. Burundi on the other hand is experiencing escalating civil strife between the Hutu and Tutsi Communities. Attempts to halt the bloodshed are being examined at a regional and international level at present.

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To understand the complex issues relating to the conflicts in both countries, this paper will analyse historical developments in Rwanda and then in Burundi.

### Colonial Rule in Rwanda

A study of Rwanda's pre-colonial history would confirm that there were no reasons to expect the bloodbath which took place in 1994. In fact all seems to indicate that conditions of strife were created by colonial powers who wanted to exploit differences between the various ethnic groups. Rwanda fits very well the stereotype of the "divide-and-rule" policy usually attributed to colonial rule. "Tribalism" therefore was not a home grown phenomenon in Rwanda — it was inspired by colonial policy.

This becomes very clear since in pre-colonial times, the country consisting of Rwanda and Burundi was inhabited by a majority of Hutu cultivators and a minority of Tutsi herdsmen who had displaced the Twas, a race related to the Pygmies. Language was not a barrier since both communities spoke Kinyarwanda, a tongue they adopted in the 17th Century.

It can therefore be established that before the arrival of the white man, Rwanda-Burundi was a caste-based society where a certain degree of interdependence existed between the two communities. The Hutu cultivators were of Bantu origin and the Tutsi herdsmen traced their ancestry to the Hamitic races. The country was a feudal

monarchy ruled by the Mwami (King) who was a Tutsi. Perhaps this was originally what fostered in the Tutsis their belief that they had a right to rule the land.

Tribal consciousness really appeared with the arrival of the first Europeans. In 1890, The Germans ventured into Rwanda from German East Africa (present-day Tanzania). They took control of the land but chose to rule it through the Mwami. In 1903 they made the territory a protectorate under the overall rule of German East Africa. This legitimized the position of the Mwami as an agent of German colonial rule. The Germans also identified the Tutsis as a "Compradore" class to help administer their new territory.

The choice seemed logical, since the local aristocracy consisted of Tutsis and the Germans assumed, rightly, that they were the overlords of the Hutus. But what they did was legitimize the situation and even increase the gap between the two communities. German "race-experts" further established that the very tall, often straight-nosed and sometimes fairer-skinned Tutsis were distant relatives of the white peoples of Europe and consequently the legitimate rulers of the land.

So they sent many young Tutsis to mission schools and the caste of herdsmen and feudal lords became a caste of administrators. The interdependence between the two communities was replaced by a situation where the Tutsis were much better prepared than the Hutus to meet the challenges of the 20th Century. Undoubtedly tribal awareness would have emerged at this stage with Tutsis feeling a sense of being in control and Hutus feeling left out.

After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, Rwanda was given to Belgium in 1919 to be ruled under a League of Nations mandate. In 1925, the territory was unilaterally incorporated into Belgian Congo.

Belgian rule over Rwanda followed the German policy of relying on a Tutsi oligarchy. The institution of the Tutsi Mwami was retained. As years passed the inequalities between the two communities further grew.

### Colonial Manipulation and the Independence of Rwanda

While tribalism may have been the Belgians' policy of administering Rwanda, tribal war was the colonial power's parting gift. When throughout Africa leaders such as Nkrumah, Lumumba and Kenyatta spoke of independence, colonial powers sought to leave behind problems which they could exploit in the future. The Tutsi leadership therefore believed that their time had come to rule Rwanda alone. This proved to be a fateful mistake.

It was at this stage that the Belgians were to "discover" the existence of the Hutu majority. The Belgians were to tell them that independence really means majority rule. So the Hutus were prepared for independence by the creation of Representative Councils. These opened the gates of the political system to the majority community which was eager to hold power.

But the main purpose of this move was to subvert the institution which the Germans and Belgians had built up over the years, the feudal monarchy of the Mwami. The monarchy was toppled in 1959 by the Hutus with behind the scenes Belgian support. The first massacres of Tutsis took place in 1959, during the last years of Belgian rule. The community which had served successive colonial masters with loyalty was tossed on the bonfire of independence.

"Tribalism" manifested itself again in 1962 when Rwanda gained its independence. The event was marred by anti-Tutsi riots in which thousands were reported killed. This led to the flight of thousands of Tutsis to Uganda where as early as 1963, they formed a guerrilla force aiming to return to power in Rwanda. Their raids into Rwanda were usually unsuccessful and triggered ferocious reprisals against Tutsis remaining in Rwanda. In the 1960's and 1970's between 10,000 and 30,000 Tutsis are believed to have been killed in such attacks.

### The Rwandan Tragedy

The situation changed radically when the Uganda-based Tutsis formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1980. In October 1990, the Front made a series of unsuccessful forays into Rwanda, was

rapidly defeated and retreated back into Uganda.

But these attacks succeeded in creating a feeling of insecurity among the country's Hutu rulers who realised that they had not heard the last of the RPF. This is perhaps what prompted the regime of President Juvenal Habyarimana to seek to implement a "final solution" to the Tutsi problem. Communal hatred was fostered by virulent anti-Tutsi broadcasts on Radio des Mille Collines, a station set up with this purpose in mind. At the same time, the Rwandan Army began training as many as 30,000 to 50,000 Hutus as militiamen. These were to be the "stormtroopers" of the proposed final solution.

External factors also played a part in these desperate moves to hold on to power. The increasingly isolated Habyarimana regime was under strong pressure from the

**A study of Rwanda's pre-colonial history would confirm that there were no reasons to expect the bloodbath which took place in 1994.**

Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN to engage in a power sharing deal with the RPF. Details of these were included in the Arusha Accord which was to be implemented with the help of the United Nations Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

The terrible massacre of the Tutsis in 1994 was therefore a last ditch attempt by extremist Hutus to pre-empt the international effort. The killings were triggered off when an aircraft carrying President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down by a surface-to-air missile believed to have been fired by the RPF. This was the spark which ignited the whole country. The 270 Blue Helmets of UNAMIR were unable to do anything and it took four weeks for it to increase to 5,500 peacekeepers. But this did not halt the general extermination of the Tutsis of Rwanda.

It is now estimated that about 1 million Tutsis may have died during the events of

1994, at the hands of Rwandan troops and machete-wielding Hutu militiamen. The scale of the loss of human lives and of the destruction of property can in part be blamed on the inaction of the international community.

### International Inaction

During the crisis of 1994, the International Community was conspicuous by its lack of action. The UN seemed unwilling to become involved in an internal conflict since this deviated from its traditional role of keeping warring armies apart and of enforcing ceasefires between independent States.

The USA on the other hand chose not to become involved in the messy tribal war. The US administration acted according to President Clinton's "Directive on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," which stressed non-intervention in conflicts where US National Security was not directly involved. It is needless to say that Rwanda with no oil reserves nor any historical link to the USA would in any way warrant the attention of the Pentagon's strategic planners.

Furthermore, the US was still smarting from the bitter lesson it learned in Somalia, where a humanitarian operation degenerated into a shooting-war with Somali warlords. The prospect of getting bogged down in an open — ended peacekeeping operation in Rwanda offered no attraction to the Clinton Administration.

The victory of the RPF was therefore greeted internationally with a sigh of relief since the pogrome initiated by the militias had come to an end. But this euphoria soon ended when hundreds of thousands of Hutus "internationalized" the problem by fleeing to Zaire. By setting themselves at Goma Refugee Camp, the Hutus had given the reluctant world bodies a humanitarian problem of gigantic proportions. In fact the problem had now been reversed with the Hutus becoming Rwanda's new victims.

The only intervention of significance was the two-month long French military intervention in June 1994 in Western Rwanda. Known as "Operation Turquoise," the exercise allowed fleeing Hutus to escape under French military protection to Zaire. The motives of this action are unclear, but France had replaced Belgium as the leading backer of Hutu dominated administrations since the end of colonial rule.

Although the war in Rwanda is over and the RPF have sought to ease tensions by



appointing Hutus as both President and Prime Minister, many problems lay ahead. Hutus believe that these measures are largely cosmetic and point to the fact that most of the cabinet are minority Tutsis.

They also do not believe that they would be spared by the Tutsis, in spite of pledges by the RPF that only those responsible for crimes would face prosecution.

It is therefore likely that the current situation is just another phase of a long drawn conflict where there is no middle ground. Hutus are reported to be arming themselves at Goma and have already begun hit-and-run attacks on the RPF in Rwanda. More significantly, Hutu guerrillas have become participants in the ongoing conflict in Rwanda's neighbour, Burundi.

### The Burundian Mirror

In many ways Burundi is an accurate description of what Rwanda may have looked like had the Tutsis not lost power. In Burundi a dominant Tutsi oligarchy has held power but has since 1993, tolerated a Hutu President. But this position of dominance is being challenged by Hutu political forces and by the destabilizing situation in neighbouring Rwanda.

The recent military coup which brought to power Pierre Buyoya may be a last-ditch attempt to defuse a conflict where the death toll has risen dramatically. Others see it as an attempt by Tutsi vested interests to remain in the driving seat. Although they are only 14% of the population of Burundi (the remaining 85% being Hutu) the Tutsis are 95% of the cadres of the ruling party, 88% of all magistrates, 88% of university lecturers, 14 out of 19 cabinet ministers and 20 out of 22 ambassadors. Tutsis therefore dominate Burundi's public life but they have to face demands by the Hutu majority to play a bigger role. These demands have often been backed by violent action.

It can therefore be said that the current situation in Burundi mirrors that of Rwanda in 1959, when the Tutsi Monarchy was overthrown. But in Burundi, the Tutsis have fought back to maintain their dominance and have suppressed severely any attacks against their kinsmen.

The escalation of the civil war in Burundi has therefore led to international efforts to set up a power-sharing mechanism between the two communities. The main effort was the meeting held in June 1996 at Mwanga in Tanzania chaired by Julius Nyerere. At the initial stage, the conference obtained a

commitment by the Zairean authorities to prevent their country being used for guerrilla attacks into Burundi.

But the initiative is not purely an African one headed by Tanzania's elder statesman. It is backed by the USA Western European States in addition to African powers. Its purpose is to stop the carnage which costs Burundi 10,000 lives every month. In other words, the international community does not want another Rwanda and therefore did its very best to pressurize the reluctant regime in Bujumbura.

This reluctance is understandable when one considers the fate that befell the Tutsis of Rwanda. It is therefore not surprising that Burundi's Tutsis show little enthusiasm in giving up control of the Army, the gendarmerie, security services and administration. Foot-dragging was therefore the tactic of Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo at the Tanzanian talks.

If the talks were held at all, it was because Burundi was starved of American and European aid. The UPRONA (Unité pour le Progrès National) regime badly needed funds to sustain the war and its Treasury only had reserves till next December. It is therefore realpolitik rather than a genuine commitment to power sharing that brought the Burundian authorities to the talks.

In addition, the conflict has become internationalized with Rwandan Hutus based in Goma joining the fight on the side of the Burundian Hutus. This in turn has led to close collaboration between the Tutsi dominated army of Burundi and the RPF in Rwanda. **What is now feared is that the conflict in Burundi is just the second phase of the Rwandan bloodbath.**

At this stage it is difficult to assess the real meaning of the 25 July Coup which brought Pierre Buyoya to power. Certainly the new president has indicated that he would not support the deployment of the US-funded and backed African Peacekeeping Force drawn from Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe and other African States. The scheme was a new step whereby the US would engage in peacekeeping without getting directly involved as it did in Somalia.

While the Buyoya regime has indicated that Burundi's problems can only be resolved by Burundians themselves, it is fair to say that the international initiative had become bogged down. In its final stages both the Tutsi led UPRONA and the Hutu dominated FRODEBU (Front pour la démocratie au Burundi) had been trading insults at

Mwanga. FRODEBU's refusal to condemn the action of machete-wielding Hutu irregulars in recent attacks on Tutsis was blamed for the deadlock.

Divisions within the political elite of the country were also apparent when both Burundi's Hutu President and Tutsi Prime Minister wanted to control the African Multi-National Force. The military coup therefore came at a time when the country's political rulers appeared to be losing control of the situation. It appeared to be the only solution to end a conflict which had already cost 150,000 lives.

### Conclusions

Both Burundi and Rwanda are unfortunate examples of instances where a misguided and self-serving colonial policy can lead to a human tragedy of monumental proportions.

Rwanda, for reasons examined earlier is the worst affected of the two with over a million of its population dead and hundreds of thousands living in refugee camps. **It is a country where virtually all infrastructures have been destroyed and where the intellectual and professional class has been annihilated. It is difficult to imagine such a country returning to normalcy. Perhaps a good description of the situation is to say that Rwanda in the 1990's is what Cambodia was in the late 1970's.** The only answer for that unfortunate state is like in the case of Cambodia, the implementation of a massive international relief effort.

The situation in Burundi is still fluid and the recent military coup by the Tutsi-dominated army could have two possible outcomes. Either it could serve as a means to retain Tutsi dominance or hopefully it may be an internal mechanism to end the violence in the country.

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# "LET MY PEOPLE GO"

Excerpted from the Proceedings of the International Conference on the Conflict in Sri Lanka: Peace with Justice, Canberra, Australia, 28th June 1996.

Rev. Dr. S. J. Emmanuel

**H**alf a million citizens of Sri Lanka, born and bred on that God-given sacred soil of the Jaffna Peninsula, which they loved as their motherland, cultivated and brought forth fruits for the whole island for many generations — this homeland adorned with beautiful houses and gardens and cultivations — all fruits of the labors of generations of Tamils — had to be abandoned in one night to an Army advancing to conquer and devastate that sacred city of Jaffna and hoist a Lion Flag on it. Generations of Tamils cannot forget this shameful and imperialistic act of the Sri Lankan Government.

Thousands of senior citizens who have served the Government by their dedicated services for many decades, were on the road, literally shivering and starving for days till they found another shelter. Mothers with their babies in hands crying for food were looking up to the dark clouds for relief. Boys and girls, who have been hard hit for decades by unjust discriminations with regard to their studies, who were literally burning bottles of costly kerosene oil to study hard and assure some success for their future, were now humiliated and chased away from their motherland — to carry not their books, but the old and the sick on their bicycles to safer places.

With regard to the return of the displaced people to the Jaffna Peninsula, it must be said in all fairness, that a people having lived for about six months under trying conditions of food, clothing and shelter, naturally grabbed the first chance to return to their homes, even if they had been badly damaged and robbed. They were not running into the arms of their lovers. But into their natural habitat even if it had been raped by the presence of an army of occupation.

And as it stands today, it is the Army that is given this non-enviable task of winning the hearts and minds of a war-weary people languishing on the borders of existence. A few smiles and some nice words in Tamil from a Sinhala army may sound sweet and enticing for a few days. And vice versa, a grateful response from the Tamil residents for sparing their lives from their weapons may be satisfying to the weary soldier. But this sudden relationship created by force of events and hidden agenda cannot last. A soldier is a combatant. And a Sri Lankan soldier has been selected, trained and commissioned to be an anti-Tamil combatant. He cannot overnight become the angel of Peace in the wartorn areas. When the very architects and agents of war who for decades have bombed and killed and destroyed and instilled only fatal horror into the hearts and minds of the Tamil people turn over-night into smiling friends and benevolent donors of gifts, it is but sound common sense to raise suspicions about their hidden intentions.

Can a military that was recruited, trained commissioned to fight and kill turn out to be peace-makers? And this explains clearly the meaning the Government is giving to its declared intention of the "War for Peace". It is not a preparatory phase before a political settlement nor a military way of imposing on the heads of an unwilling people a political solution prepared, discussed and defined by the will of the majority. It is a pure military solution in which the fighting is suspended and the army takes over the governance of the people. We asked for our rights and a peaceful environment to live and the government generously offers us an option between military action and military governance!

From the Capital of another peace-loving continent, let me make an appeal on behalf of my people for Peace. Not as a political leader, but as a religious leader from among the people caught in the war and thirsting for Peace, in the name of a people held incommunicado for many years from the rest of the world, in the name of a people struggling to survive and resist a genocidal

extinction — without sufficient food, medicine, transport, communication, in the name of the thousands of youth who have sacrificed their lives for a noble cause of freedom and dignity, truth and justice, in the name of future generations of all Sri Lankans, I appeal both to the Sri Lankan Government as well as to the de facto leadership of the Tamils. I also appeal to all the other political parties in Sri Lanka — be they Sinhala or Tamil —

- 1) not to play politics with the lives of a people
- 2) to halt immediately this senseless "war for peace"
- 3) to lift the economic ban to the North
- 4) to lift all media-censorship and allow journalists and other interested people to visit the war-torn areas and to be open to the truth of historical and contextual realities
- 5) to create military conditions conducive to peace-talks
- 6) to return as soon as possible to the negotiating table
- 7) to invite the assistance of some neutral but friendly governments or governmental organisations to help in the peace-talks.

I am standing here as a man of God in service to a suffering mankind. I have hope in the goodness of God and of men. From amidst the deafening sounds of thousands of bombs and shells falling on our soil and consuming scared lives, I cry out with Moses of old, "Let my people go from this slavery to freedom".

Rev. Dr. S. J. Emmanuel, is the Vicar General of the Diocese of Jaffna and Rector of St Francis Xavier Major Seminary in Jaffna. He has been the adviser to the Asian Bishops Conference for the past 8 years and is the founder Director of the Centre for Better Society in Jaffna.

## Waiting — 29

### Letter From Tintern Abbey

Where the Wye woodland wanders back  
It has stepped gently  
Cast seed on windy days like this  
Or shone with rain down slopes  
That witnessed the old unhurried years this Abbey rose.  
In stone quarried from the yielding hill,  
In timber hewn from auburn glants  
Sprouting ten to everyone that fell.

In these honey smelling woods, voices tell  
Of prayer and pageants past  
The same slopes saw  
Time reversing hard dream into ruin  
The process we have seen  
Fought out with the fiercer tide of the Jungle  
Back at home.

But here what boggles reality is not Times process  
Is the hoary raising of this great Abbey  
Its calm assured conception  
By ascetic monks (not kings commanding multitudes in faith)  
Just the firm faith of a band of wandering Cistercians  
Shaping stone to an austere vision  
That let them resolute till the task was done.

Now we far strangers straying here  
Read past and present, pulse and bone  
Touch in trance this sunlit stone  
Awhile a creeping doubt assails us  
Is this, or even our world, real?

U. Karunatilake

(Contd. from page 11)

mechanisms to resolve disputes, and a wealth of NGOs were instrumental in developing a grass-roots peace constituency. At the higher level, eminent persons and church leaders helped to facilitate negotiations when the discussions became deadlocked. Through the work of the Carter Centre, the former President has also been involved in a number of peace initiatives, including negotiations in Haiti in 1994, Bosnia and the Great Lakes Region.

### An Umbrella of Concern

It is the argument of this paper that multi-track solutions to conflict are the most credible and practical avenues available. A structured approach should promote complementarity of action, based on the comparative advantages of the widest circle of organisations, citizens and alliances as possible. A multi-track approach therefore achieves both a national and an international division of labour using not only NGOs, the UN, regional organisations, and independent governments, but also a network of businesses, the Church, and citizen.

The strategic aim in the coming years must be to create an umbrella of concern which involves the participation of the whole international community. Whenever there is this umbrella of concern, the greater the likelihood of reducing tension and resolving differences. Already a series of overlapping organisations such as the EU, OSCE, NATO and the High Commissioner for Minorities are focused on addressing European security issues in the future. With NATO membership expanding to include Eastern European states, and the continued evolution of the EU and the WEU (Western European Union), there is no single institution which has a monopoly on security matters. The objective now, is to develop a system based on bilateral, subregional and regional levels. Within these structures the question of sovereignty, non-intervention in domestic affairs, self-determination and integrity of the state are being examined. Democratization and respect for a series of adopted principles and norms in relation to the domestic arena; the 1994 code of Conduct between states; and arms control and arms reductions in the region, are additional issues which are being

integrated and developed within the common security framework<sup>32</sup>. This willingness to co-operate needs to be extended to other regional forums.

The greater the burden is shared by the community, the greater there is a chance of resolution. In Cambodia, for example, the agreement between China, Japan, Australia, France, Britain and the United States to work under a common framework was of immense significance. In Mozambique, in addition to the Sant' Egidio community, the Italian government, the Vatican, the British-based company Lonrho, the UN and the American government were involved in reaching a peace agreement. The success was due to the influence that all the actors bore in keeping the peace process on two simultaneous and complementary negotiating streams. The conflicts in Burundi and Sierra Leone also show the influence of third parties. The Burundi NGO networks that exist in Europe and the United States have been effective in keeping Burundi in on the foreign affairs agenda, while in the country itself, local peace initiatives are being supported by NGOs, humanitarian aid is being provided, and small scale development projects are underway.

The greater the concern that different levels of the international community show, the more it proves beneficial. Additionally, the more there is burden sharing between governments, human rights groups, regional organisations and the UN, the greater the degree of accountability of the parties to the conflict.

### Conclusion

The range and diversity of mandates amongst inter-governmental and regional organisations, NGOs and grassroots civic groups will necessarily involve differences in opinion, resources, flexibility, knowledge, commitment, competence, location and availability. Yet when difficulties arise in the peace process — as they necessarily do — it is precisely the alliance and synergy between these different "partners" which can play a critical role in sustaining the momentum for peace. A co-ordinated multi-track approach in preventive diplomacy aims to transform the handling of "conflict systems" from a reactive one to a preventive one.

This is a new form of diplomacy,

involving a *strategic shift* from purely state controlled diplomacy towards a greater division of labour between governments, NGOs and other organisations. Peace in internal conflict can only come through a process which involves the very people who were at war with each other. Preventive diplomacy does not provide quick responses to spiralling tragedies; it is a matter of long-term approach requiring sustained financial, technical and personnel support. The objective is to eliminate the cycle of violence in internal disputes.

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