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Contents

Pravada in contemporary usage has a range of meanings which includes theses, concepts and Propositions.

RAMA JANMABHUMI TO DHAMMADIPA

As indicated by our feature in this issue on the insanity at Ayodhya, India's rational voices are not mute: at least a few historians have spoken up. As W. H. Auden said, the fight against the false and the unfair is always worth it. *Pravada* salutes these courageous men and women of learning who have stood up to challenge one of the most dangerous trends in contemporary South Asian politics: majoritarian fundamentalism and its attempt to monopolize history.

What the Hindu extremist *sadhus* (what a misnomer!) and their 'volunteer' mob did, at the behest of the RSS, VHP and the BJP, at Ayodhya on December 6, was not merely demolish a 400-year old Muslim place of worship; they also enacted a particular contestation of 'history'—a history presented as the Hindu extremist-nationalist gospel. For them, it was a holy act to restore to the Hindus the *Janmabhumi* (the birthplace) of Rama. To parody Marx, when a myth is repeatedly deployed to sow ethnic bigotry and hatred, it sometimes becomes a material force capable of driving entire communities into the most frenzied and hysterical acts of vandalism and destruction.

The implications of Ayodhya for Sri Lanka are many. They are based on a fundamental parallel that runs through the two countries: the danger of majoritarian ethnic nationalism. Sinhalese nationalist ideologues reacted to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in their own inimitably biased way. They warned Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka of possible Hindu terror. 'What Hindus are doing in India they may do in Sri Lanka too' is the preposterous lesson they have drawn from the Indian experience. The nationalist mind's simplistic view doesn't seem to perceive the logic of politics. It refuses to understand that it is majority nationalism against minorities that has been in action in Ayodhya, in Bombay, in Delhi and elsewhere.

As we noted in the last issue of *Pravada*, one redeeming feature of the otherwise violent ethnic politics of Sri Lanka is that there is still no political space for religion-based violence. Nevertheless, many actions and utterances of extremist Sinhalese intellectual groups have the potential to breed inter-religious hatred and religio-communal violence.

A major lesson to be learned from India is that recent anti-minority mob violence has been preceded by intense ethnic propaganda aimed at depriving minorities of an 'authentic history.' This was achieved by means of 'communalising' history. While political leaders of the BJP communalized politics, Hindu right-wing intellectuals played the vanguard ideological role in projecting a Hindu ethnocratic India— supposedly to recreate the 'golden' Hindu past. Even professional historians,

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aligned with groups ranging from the RSS to the BJP, became leading ideological cadres for the project of re-writing Indian history in such a way that ethnic and religious minorities were portrayed as illegitimate and alien communities who were depriving the 'sons of the soil'—the Hindus— of their 'due' place in Indian society and polity. The demolition of the Babri-Masjid by Hindu mobs was an attempt aimed at both the erasure of Muslim history of India and the creation of a Hindu *Rashtra* (a Hindu State) out of the ruins of minority histories.

The erasure of the history of minorities is a major intellectual pre-occupation of militant majoritarian nationalism. In Sri Lanka, the *jathika chinthanaya* and *Bhumiputra* ideologues are the Sri Lankan counterparts of the *Hinduthva* intellectuals of India. Some leading figures of this narrowly ethnic intellectual stream are university professors, including professors of history. The denial of an indigenous history to Tamils has been a recurrent motive in their polemics.

In this Sinhala communalist appropriation of Sri Lankan history, a number of new 'theories' have been developed. The foremost among them is the thesis that the 'Tamil nation' in Sri Lanka is a creation of British imperialism of the 1830s. At one level, this is a response to Tamil nationalist claim to a 'Tamil homeland'; at another , it counterpoises the short history of the Tamil 'nation' with the 'long, continuous and unbroken history' of the Sinhalese which is posited to run as far back as the mythical age of Ravana.

Re-working the myth of Sinhalese racial origin by the jathika chinthanayites and other ideologues in the past few years is a part of the exercise of re-writing history. Students of current ideological debates in Sinhalese society may not have missed the recent revival of theories of the pre-Aryan origins of the Sinhalese. In mainstream Sinhalese nationalist historiography, the Aryan myth has played a central role in positing the racial superiority of the Sinhalese vis-a-vis all other ethnic communities. Now, the Ravana myth serves the purpose of countering the Tamil nationalist notion of a 'traditional homeland' in Sri Lanka— yet another exercise in ethnicized history—by creating a race history which could be traced back to greater antiquity. Thus, the Sinhalese are the only true sons of the soil!

This ancient-ness of the Sinhalese race, then, is juxtaposed with the lack of authenticity of the Tamils. One argument used constantly to deny Tamils their history as a coherent ethnic group is that they have, until recently, been a migrant community without a cohesive culture or a permanent place of habitation. It is also argued that Tamils in their long migrant-settler existence had no enduring attachment to this island.

All these arguments, analyses and theses have the cumulative effect of creating in Sinhalese society a distinctly negative perception— an image of a demonic other— of the entire Tamil community. Their legitimate home on this island as a community is thus questioned and repudiated. This image of minorities as 'undesirable aliens' can easily be transmitted to the minds of the majority community particularly against the backdrop of heightened ethnic tension generated by the separatist war. The LTTE's atrocities do, in no uncertain terms, re-inforce such 'intellectual' analyses which repeatedly find generous space in the Sinhalese press.

No one should be complacent about this scholarship of demonising minorities, on the assumption that it is an inevitable part of the ethnic animosities roused in the Sinhalese people in the course of the separatist war launched by Tamil Tigers. Even assuming—not entirely correctly— that ordinary men and women are usually susceptible to ethnic stereotypes and hostilities, we should not underestimate the inflammatory role being played by the Sinhala and Tamil nationalist intelligentsia, to create and disseminate mythology as history, prejudice as analysis, fiction as fact and fantasy as solution.

This is where the relevance of secularism to our political debate becomes more important. The attack on the Babri Masjid is a frontal assault on the secular bases of the Indian polity. Secular politics in the present historical context has two levels of meaning: non-religious and non-communal. Ethno-nationalist politics pre-supposes that the state should be based on religious or communal identities. It does not accommodate differences; it pledges, menacingly, their erasure. Ayodhya's lesson is too evident to be disregarded: ethnic scholarship legitimizes ethnic mob violence in politics, and the latter promises barbarism, not civilisation. **P**

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Pastoral Peace Moves

The consecration of Bishop Kenneth Fernando, as the episcopal head of Sri Lanka's Anglican Church, took place in December in a glare of publicity. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself was here to grace this solemn occasion. A few weeks later, the silver-haired scholarly Bishop was once again the centre of greater public attention - this time as a peace-maker. On January 6, the Bishop went to Jaffna, met Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran and came back to Colombo with a peace message. At press briefings and public appearances, he has made a strong appeal for a negotiated settlement of the war.

There is nothing new in Pastoral visits to Tiger-held Jaffnaland. Last year a number of such visits took place. Impassioned peace-appeals were always the end result of such visits. But Bishop Fernando's call on Jaffna was different in at least three aspects. Disregarding the warnings of the military, he crossed by boat the high-risk 'no-go zone' of the Jaffna lagoon which separates the Peninsula from the mainland. ('A Bishop is there to take risks, even of being shot, when it comes to God's calling,' responded Rev. Fernando to a question at a recent diocesan meeting.) Then he met and held discussions with the elusive and dreaded Mr. Prabhakaran, the LTTE supremo, this being the first audience that Mr. Prabhakaran has granted to a visitor from the South in recent years. Colombo newspapers flashed colour photographs of the smiling and relaxed Prabhakaran exchanging niceties with the Bishop and accompanying clergy. Then Bishop Fernando succeeded in getting two Sinhalese POWs released from the LTTE's custody; the release of two policemen, from among 40 odd other POWs, was Prabhakaran's 'gesture of goodwill' to the South.

The clergy who met Prabhakaran are of the view that the LTTE leaders were willing to negotiate with the South, if an alternative to Eelam was offered. Did the LTTE have any alternative in mind? The Bishop says that Prabhakaran was reluctant to discuss constitutional matters. 'Let intellectuals from the south come and discuss these things' was his curt but polite response when the Bishop pressed for the rebel leader's views on the Select Committee's proposal. He had, however, promised to 'study the Select Committee proposal carefully.'

Sinhalese nationalist spokespersons were quick to pounce on the Bishop and his mediatory efforts. Some even called on the government to take legal action against the Bishop for violating the emergency law that prohibits passage across the Jaffna lagoon. Others characterized the Bishop's move as part of an international conspiracy to promote Eelam. Some are simply infuriated that the Bishop described a 'cold-blooded murderer' as "a man of human qualities." The Sunday press, both Sinhala and English, were replete with denunciations of the Bishop and his peace moves.

Two incidents that occurred soon after the pastoral group left Jaffna, weakened the Bishop's case somewhat for further peace visits to Jaffna. Two days after Prabhakaran had released the two policemen to the Bishop's custody, LTTE fighters killed six policemen in an attack. Then came the sensational story of LTTE deputy leader Kittu's death on the high seas, aboard a ship that was reportedly carrying a huge quantity of arms. All this reinforced the view in the South that Prabhakaran was merely taking a naive Bishop for a propaganda ride. Thus, the Sinhalese militarist lobby made its own day out of the visit.

Ironically, Bishop Fernando's peace move failed to enthuse even the human rights and peace community in the South. Many of them were skeptical of the political purpose and outcome of meetings with Prabhakaran. "God knows no politics," commented a Colombo-based HR activist, after listening to the Bishop's fervent appeal to Christians to abide with God's calling.

Pastoral energies could better be spent on organizing meetings between Tamil and Sinhalese citizens' groups in war-torn Jaffna. A genuine North-South dialogue needs to be initiated. Yet, Southern civilian groups meeting with Northern military men will hardly serve any purpose for peace.

Deaths in Exodus

The shocking report of the discovery in Austria of the battered bodies of five Sri Lankan youth, dead due to suffocation or freezing, raises many troubling questions about illegal migration from Sri Lanka which has now reached proportions of a mass exodus. Agency reports say these young men may have died in the early hours of January 25. Their bodies had been dumped on the side of a freeway to Vienna, indicating that deaths had occurred while they were being smuggled inside a car boot or a container truck.

A few weeks ago, there was a report about a Sri Lankan youth whose frozen body was discovered in the Pyrenees.

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According to some of his acquaintances, he was crossing the Spanish border on foot, heading towards Italy. The Pyrenees winter was too harsh for him to survive the arduous journey. In Colombo, there are stories of many Sri Lankan men and women stranded in border areas of European countries, facing the risk of death due to severe cold and starvation. Some even seem to risk the possibility of being shot by border guards and pirates.

Why this diaspora of mostly young men and women? The question becomes all the more difficult to answer when we encounter an important facet of it: a sizeable section of these youth are from the South.

Tamil migration from the war-torn North-east to all parts of the world is perhaps easy to explain. Human condition is such that no hardship or risk can deter the will to escape death. While one section of young Tamils is ready to face the bullet or to bite the cyanide capsule for the dream of an Eelam, the other crosses rivers, mountains and deserts, to find safe havens for itself and its families. Until recently, Tamils constituted the majority of both legal and illegal immigrants from Sri Lanka. When Sinhalese youth, in their thousands, also join the hazardous trek to the unknown, at a time when the South is relatively free of violence, one wonders.

We recently had occasion to encounter some of the potentially 'abroad-bound' men and women. In terms of economic standing, their backgrounds vary. Amazingly, a few of them held well-paid jobs. They abandoned all this to be in Canada, Germany or France, working as casual laborers or to live on the dole. A young couple—the wife drew a very comfortable salary from an airline—are now farm laborers in Japan. A private sector executive, who enjoyed perquisites which University academics still dream about, left his job, went to France via a shady route and ended up as a cab driver. Another well-paid executive of a corporation went to Canada after much effort only to work as an assistant to a grocer. Unemployed and under-employed youth also constitute the bulk of the exodus.

Some anecdotes may tell us how deep seated, though complicated, is this desire to leave the country. One man got a court warrant issued against him, obtained the services of a human-smuggler to reach an European country and filed for political asylum. Another whose final destination was Germany trekked to Afghanistan to join his contact man. In March last year, two batches of Sinhalese 'refugees' landed at the Honolulu Airport on two consecutive days without any travel documents or money. Among these 'refugees' were married men, with employment. But they had documentary evidence to prove that back home they ran the risk of being arrested or 'disappearing'.

A new wave of migration of the youth has arisen in Southern Sinhalese society, too. Two generations died in 1971 and 1988-89. A third is now fleeing the country. Europeans may tell them, 'Oh, but your land is beautiful.' Yet, they take tremendous risks, undergo unanticipated hardships, or subject themselves to utter humiliation. Why?

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... Wrists in blood, teeth clenched, feet bare
on this soil that's like a silk carpet —
this hell, this paradise is ours.
Shut the gates of servitude, keep them shut,
stop man worship another man —
this invitation is ours.
To live, free and single like a tree
but in brotherhood like a forest —
this longing is ours.

From Invitation
Nazim Hikmet
1947

Politics - 1992

A YEAR OF POLITICAL CONFUSION

Jayadeva Uyangoda

The year 1992 began with hope for the betterment of Sri Lanka's politics, but ended in confusion and disarray. The short-term beneficiary of a whole year of political stagnation is President Premadasa who, thanks to his own opponents as well, could consolidate his power and also define the path of events for 1993.

There were three themes that dominated a larger part of the previous year and carried their impact through 1992: (i) the politics of the impeachment crisis, (ii) the Presidential election petition, and (iii) the Select Committee exercise on the ethnic question.

Aftermath of Impeachment Crisis

The attempt made by the Opposition in parliament and some sections of the UNP itself to remove Mr. Premadasa from office by means of an impeachment motion in Parliament technically ended in November 1991. Yet, the course of events which it activated had a number of other implications for 1992 as well.

The first concerned the question of Mr. Premadasa's own strategy to consolidate his authority within the ruling party and the hegemony of the office of Executive President, which was considerably undermined by the re-invigorated Opposition. The first objective Premadasa achieved in a way that was uncharacteristic of himself; He did not remove the MPs who had most probably signed the Impeachment motion at the behest of Athulathmudali, Dissnayake *et al.*, from the UNP. Making a statement of allegiance to Mr. Premadasa's leadership was, curiously enough, adequate to save the political life of many a UNP back-bencher in parliament. This non-move to purge nearly 40 members of the UNP's parliamentary group belied speculations that Premadasa would show no mercy to the dissident elements in the party. Instead of completely cleansing the party, Premadasa made a rather unanticipated move: he created new positions in his administration for the disgruntled members and made them supervisory MPs attached to various ministries. Obviously, Premadasa was shrewd enough not to strengthen the Democratic United National Front (DUNF) of Messrs. Athulathmudali, Dissanayake and Premachandra by expelling his own members of Parliament. And indeed, by keeping the second-rung of dissident elements under his control and thereby severely curtailing their option to join any other party, Premadasa proved himself to be a politician of somewhat unconventional and unpredictable temperament.

To ensure the continuous hegemony of the executive President *vis a vis* parliament, Premadasa was ably supported by the Opposition. Of course, the opposition was in a belligerent mood throughout the year, attacking the Premadasa administration on a number of fronts. However, by excessively focussing on issues that had the potential to generate anti-Premadasa controversies, the opposition parties let slip away one of the most important themes that they, themselves, had introduced to the political debate in the previous year: constitutional reform.

In the debate provoked by the impeachment controversy, the opposition initially concentrated its political arguments on the need to abolish the executive presidential system. Restoration of parliamentary sovereignty was the consensual option offered. Although this proposal for the re-introduction of a parliamentary system of government was limited in scope as the objective of a broad democratizing project, it nevertheless had kindled the democratic expectations of the people. None of the opposition parties, however, appeared to know the need to sustain mass democratic aspirations by means of widening the terms of the political debate. Instead, they made every effort to conduct the debate within the narrow confines of anti-regime agitation.

Udugampola Controversy

The opposition, nevertheless, had a few good opportunities to keep public interest alive in its anti-regime mobilization. The controversy surrounding the revelations made by ex-deputy inspector general of police, Premadasa Udugampola, was an instance that had the potential to weaken and isolate the Premadasa administration.[1]

Udugampola, who had earlier played a major role in cracking down on the JVP, had also figured in a High Court judgment on the death of a lawyer, Wijedasa Liyanarachchi—a suspected JVP activist, in police custody. The court ruling had suggested Udugampola's complicity in the death of Liyanarachchi and requested the Attorney General's department to take necessary legal

steps to prosecute him. The government's reluctance to do so appeared to have angered the international donor and human rights community which had been putting pressure on the Premadasa administration to improve the country's human rights conditions. In order to improve its international image, the government apparently decided to 'sacrifice' Udugampola, despite his connections with leading political figures. Udugampola struck back by going underground and releasing to the press what he claimed to be the details of political killings carried out by unofficial death squads.

The Udugampola revelations pointed an accusing finger at a killer squad called the 'Black Cats,' and long lists of names of purported 'Black Cats victims' were published in the opposition tabloid press. Udugampola quickly became a close ally of the Opposition which had earlier made many unsuccessful attempts to establish links between politicians of the ruling party and the extra-judicial killings that took place in 1988-89. Deeply embarrassed, the government took the rather peculiar step of filing cases against Udugampola and the tabloid press on charges of bringing the government into disrepute. The government's real intentions of prosecuting Udugampola and the press were transparent: to prevent an opposition campaign on Udugampola's disclosures, hiding behind the principle of *sub judice*.[2] However, the so-called 'Black Cat killings' were too public a controversy to be hushed up by the government's legal manipulations. On May Day 1992, the Opposition's main theme in processions and rallies was 'Black Cat killings.'

The opposition's politics seemed to be bridled by their own construction of a demonic Premadasa, thereby narrowing the bases of political issues that were broad enough to expand the focus of political conduct on a reform project.

The Udugampola affair revealed some disturbing tendencies in Sri Lanka's current politics. Firstly, it amply demonstrated the government's callous determination to shun the responsibility for grave human rights violations even after revelations by a top official in the security apparatus. Instead of initiating inquiries into disclosures made by Udugampola, the administration resorted to a strategy of stone-walling any official investigation into activities of dreaded death-squads. Secondly, the Opposition's response to the Udugampola episode revealed the limits of its own capacity to broaden the terms of the democratic agenda. In all its political campaigns, the Opposition has indicated a tendency to marshall democratic issues in a campaign to oust Premadasa from power. The Opposition's politics seemed to be bridled by their own construction of a demonic Premadasa, thereby narrowing the bases of political issues that were broad enough to expand the focus of political conduct on a reform project. Failing that, the opposition allowed the Human Rights issue to be subsumed by partisan politicization. Thirdly, the Opposition failed to present an alternative vision of governance in which recently emerged repressive apparati could have been dissolved, human rights honoured and the state become responsive to human and civil rights needs of society. Udugampola may have been heroic in challenging an entire regime alone, but the opposition should have taken steps to expose the very repressive institutions of which Udugampola himself was a leading functionary.

Politics of Death: Kobbekaduwa Episode

An event that led to a major political controversy in 1992 was the death of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, the Northern Military Commander, along with nine other senior officers. The explosion that took place on August 8 in Kytes, Jaffna, cost the Sri Lankan state its entire leadership in the Northern military command. This was the gravest military setback suffered by Colombo since the ethnic war began ten years ago.

The explosion in Kytes set in motion a political chain-reaction in Colombo. Rumours had it that Kobbekaduwa was not killed by the LTTE, but by sections of the state that wanted to prevent the General from entering politics after retirement that was due shortly. At the funeral of Kobbekaduwa held in Colombo, large crowds gathered to pay homage to a 'national hero.' In an emotionally charged atmosphere, coloured by political antipathies to the Premadasa regime, violent mobs ran amok, assaulting government politicians and supporters attending the funeral. Mass hysteria, reminiscent of the circumstances that led to the anti-Tamil riots of August 1983, returned to politics nine years later at the same burial ground.

Public anger and mistrust in the government over the unconvincing and hurriedly made official explanation of the Kytes explosion, in turn, exposed the vulnerability of the Premadasa regime. An entire series of events in the previous couple of years had by this time led to the accumulation of suspicion in the manner in which the government was handling the North-East war. In fact, one of the major accusations made against Premadasa

during the impeachment crisis was that the regime had supplied large quantities of arms and money to the LTTE. Sinhalese militarist elements had also accused the government of conducting a 'fake' war in the North, with no clear commitment to a military triumph over the LTTE. Even the regime's half-hearted support for a negotiated political settlement to the ethnic question had been interpreted by the Sinhalese war lobby as a measure of betraying Sinhalese interests.

Party Politics

Fragmentation of political parties has been a frequently visible trend in contemporary Sri Lankan politics and 1992 witnessed further developments in inter-party rivalries. The only exception is perhaps the UNP, the outward unity of which is largely the result of two factors: Mr. Premadasa's firm grip over the party, which was tightened after the expulsion of Athulathmudali and others, and the advantage that a ruling party would normally enjoy in managing dissent. In any case, after powerful politicians like Athulathmudali and Dissnanayake were treated with such a contempt and enmity by Premadasa, no lesser politician of the UNP would have dared to challenge the monolith that was the post-impeachment UNP.

The re-emergence of the UNP as a monolith, in response to the impeachment crisis, further highlighted a long-term negative trend in Sri Lanka's party politics: continuous rise of authority of the party leader. One would have expected the UNP leadership to respond to the party crisis by reforming its internal structures so that dissidence is accommodated and ambitions addressed. Meanwhile, with the departure of Athulathmudali and Dissanayake, the shift of the social bases of the UNP's leadership, from the traditional bourgeois elite to the new elite with non-bourgeois class origins, reached the point of completion.

The internal crisis of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, meanwhile, carried in it far reaching implications for the entire political party system in the country. The year 1992 saw intensification of rivalries within the Bandaranaike family about the party leadership. Mrs. Bandaranaike's induction of her daughter, Chandrika Kumaranatunga, into the party central committee, angered Anura Bandaranaike who had been battling with his mother and sister for party leadership. Combative interviews, to the chagrin of party faithfuls, given by the Bandaranaike trio, with accusations and counter-accusations, were regular features in Sunday newspapers throughout 1992. The split between Mrs. Bandaranaike and her son affected the ability of the party to carry out its own work and further demoralized party activists. The SLFP began to look more like a troubled and disintegrating coalition of two rival antagonistic factions, led by brother and sister.

A symptom as well as a consequence of the SLFP's internal crisis was the emergence of the *Hela Urumaya* group among Sinhala nationalist sections of the SLFP's parliamentary group. Formed in late 1991, this group which militantly opposed any political concessions to Tamils before achieving a military victory over the LTTE, launched its propaganda campaign early in 1992. *Hela Urumaya*'s extreme Sinhala chauvinism caused tremendous embarrassment to Mrs. Bandaranaike whose party had been involved in the parliamentary Select Committee proceedings aimed at finding a political solution to the ethnic conflict. Mrs. Bandaranaike once moved to suspend *Urumaya*'s leader, Tilak Karunaratne; but Anura Bandaranaike's backing helped Karunaratne remain in the party.

Hela Urumaya, however, could not mobilize much public support for its Sinhala racist platform. Alliances with much smaller militant Sinhalese groups—notably, *Jathika Chinthanaya* and Sinhalese Defence League—could not add much to its already non-existent public enthusiasm. This was notwithstanding the fact that *Hela Urumaya* received massive publicity and generous propaganda space in the *Island* and *Divayina* newspapers. Yet, *Hela Urumaya* succeeded in achieving one objective: it frightened away minority religious and ethnic groups from the SLFP. Mrs. Bandaranaike's inability to take disciplinary action against this faction and Anura Bandaranaike's alignment with it resulted in further political decline for the SLFP which earlier had some sympathy among minority communities. The SLFP is now a party which has no firm constituency among minorities.

The newly established Democratic United National Front consisting of ex-UNP dissidents faced 1992 with tremendous enthusiasm, yet saw the year pass by without much headway being made. Its main failure could be seen in its inability to emerge as a party with a new set of policies and programmes, alternative to those of the UNP and to some measure of the SLFP. Indeed, the DUNF's decline towards the end of 1992 proved that in Sri Lankan politics today there is hardly any room for a second major party which is merely opposed to Premadasa being the President. The DUNF leaders also failed to fulfill a promise which they made to the electorate, namely, to issue its party manifesto. Squabbles among three top party leaders—Athulathmudali, Dissanayake and Premachandra—added to the party's own political poverty.

With regard to smaller parties, a nice combination of decline and apathy appears to have made them tag along with major parties. An already fragmented Sri Lanka

Mahajana Party, founded by Vijaya Kumaranatunga, saw its factions drifting in a number of directions. While Chandrika Kumaranatunga went back to the SLFP along with a group of followers, one faction led by Ossie Abeygunasekera aligned itself with the UNP. Mr. Abeygunasekera took a further step in 1992 by volunteering to be a major public speaker at Mr. Premadasa's propaganda rallies. The third faction of the SLMP, led by Y. P. de Silva, is engaged in a legal battle with the Abeygunasekera faction for the mantle of the party.

With regard to the Left parties, no significant trend towards the regeneration of socialist politics developed in 1992. The CPSL and the LSSP, the two main Left parties, were essentially gravitating towards what was termed as anti-UNP opposition unity, while the NSSP argued for the Left to remain independent within a general opposition grouping.

Minority Parties and the Ethnic Question

For the minority parties, 1992 was a year of compromise-seeking parleys which ended in disappointment and frustration.

The Tamil and Muslim parties first found themselves in a mini forum, created by the All Party Conference. Beginning in 1991, they had been negotiating among themselves the thorny issue of devolution of power in the Eastern Province, so that both Tamil and Muslim interests could be better accommodated. Their negotiations went on till the middle of 1992 with no conclusion reached. Tamil and Muslim parties appeared to have been holding on to positions that were not conducive for a compromise. While the Tamil parties constantly held the view that the North-East merger was non-negotiable, the Muslim parties opposed the merger and pressed for special arrangements for the Muslim areas. Failing to reach a compromise on the Tamil-Muslim issue, the APC also found itself in a state of deadlock. Subsequently, the APC deliberations came to halt in May.

The second forum on which the minority parties met was the Parliamentary Select Committee, the mandate of which was to find a consensus for a political solution among parties represented in Parliament. In addition to the larger question of an all party agreement among Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities, the nature of political arrangements for Eastern province Muslims constituted a particularly complex theme for negotiations and compromise. In the Select Committee deliberations, the Muslim factor assumed greater complexity in the light of a series of mass killings of Muslim civilians in the East, carried out by the LTTE in 1992.

Indeed, the LTTE's massacres of Muslim civilians was described by Muslim leaders as well as by the Colombo press as an act of 'ethnic cleansing', similar to that in Bosnia. The leader of the Muslim Congress, M. H. M. Ashraff, went to the extent of reminding the Muslims that they would have to prepare themselves for a *jihad* against the LTTE.

The Tamil-Muslim tension in the East, precipitated by LTTE atrocities, in turn, made the envisaged compromise between Muslim and Tamil parties still more difficult. Most of the Tamil political leaders had meanwhile been re-iterating the position that a solution to the ethnic question should be worked out on the basis of the notion of a 'Tamil speaking people,' an umbrella formulation to include both Tamil and Muslim communities. However, Muslims were in no mood to accept this notion, particularly after the LTTE's anti-Muslim pogroms. The security of the Muslims in a devolved set- up thus became a crucial issue for inter-ethnic negotiations in 1992.

Grass-Roots Politics

A noteworthy feature of contemporary Sri Lankan politics is the emergence and spread of issue-oriented grass roots movements. The first to emerge in recent years is the Mothers' Front, an organization of women whose children had either been killed or had 'disappeared' during the crack-down on the JVP in 1988-90. The Front's activities in 1992 included the mobilization of the parents of the disappeared in a number of religious rituals. Sponsored by the opposition political parties, these activities also took the form of mobilization against the government, highlighting issues of democracy and human rights. The anti-government character of this type of politics in a way resulted in depriving the movement of the autonomy from partisan politics, which is very vital for grass roots social movements.

Two agitations, initially spearheaded by religious groups and later developed into social movements of significant popular support, emerged in 1992, incidentally on a similar theme: opposition to the intrusion of urban capital into the rural society. The first, led by the Catholic clergy, organized fisher communities in the North-Western sea coast against the setting up of a tourist resort in Iranawila. The second, led by the Buddhist clergy, was opposed to the construction of a tourist hotel in Kandalama, a village near Dambulla. The central argument made in these two campaigns was that the construction of tourist hotels in rural locations would be detrimental to the rural communities, the environment and the traditional religio-cultural settings. The second, popularly known as the Kandalama protest movement, attracted greater political interest with the participation of opposition political parties and groups, the NGO community and

many activist groups. It also brought Buddhist and Christian clergy together. Meanwhile, the government's hostile reaction to the campaign made it into an oppositionist movement as well.

Although the Kandalama campaign was able to arouse tremendous public sympathy and interest in such issues as environment, negative consequences of urban-led development projects in the countryside and social consequences of the arbitrary movement of urban capital, it gradually lost its dynamism and energy. This was primarily due to the attempts made by opposition parties to direct the campaign along partisan political agendas. Attempts made by some political groups to give the Kandalama campaign a Sinhala chauvinistic character finally contributed to its gradual loss of vitality.

Media Freedom in Grass Roots Politics

Yet another grass roots movement which aroused considerable public interest is the movement for media freedom. This campaign sprang up in a new context for Sri Lanka's media culture. The latter part of 1991 had witnessed an explosion of media freedom: in the midst of the impeachment crisis, the opposi-tion press, which had remained dormant for many years, began to indulge in a great deal of freedom in political journalism. Themes that were usually ignored by the mainstream press—controversial political issues, human rights, corruption and political favoritism—became the hall-mark of the new media culture. Parallel to the assertion of more freedom by journalists were the hostile responses to the press by the state, the police, politicians and their like. Political and police assaults on media persons, harassment of newspapers in a number of ways compelled journalists to close their ranks and launch a public campaign for media freedom.

> The credibility crisis of the regime was further aggravated by the recurrent revelations of political corruption highlighted by the tabloid press, along with 'insider disclosures' made by ex-ministers Athulathmudali and Dissanayake and the ex-top cop Udugampola.

Initially launched by journalists, the free media campaign soon received the support of the opposition political parties and university students. Propaganda rallies, usually with significant public attendance, were held in Colombo and provincial towns. An important feature of this campaign was that journalists of the tabloid press began to play an active role in it. This prompted the pro-regime media and the ruling-party politicians to brand the free media movement as one of openly anti-government political intention. Even granting that the free media campaign had a strongly activist orientation, the fact remains that it is the first organized public campaign launched by journalists for media freedom.

Vicissitudes of Premadasa Regime

A brief look at President Premadasa's high-profile activism reveals some of the political constraints and contradictions with which the regime has been grappling. Continuity of the regime had hung in doubt till the Supreme Court delivered its judgement on the Presidential election petition. In fact, the entire opposition was counting on a verdict that would unseat Mr. Premadasa; the Opposition's line of action was largely dependent on this possibility. However, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous determination delivered on September 1, found Mrs. Bandaranaike's allegations unsubstantiated. This removed the juridical hurdle—a formidable one, indeed—to Mr. Premadasa's legitimacy as a duly elected President.

Although the outcome of the election petition placed Mr. Premadasa's incumbency on a firm legal footing, the regime's legitimacy was not fully established. Probably, Mr. Premadasa too is acutely aware of the fact that in Sri Lankan politics, today, regime legitimacy is a matter of great consternation. Hence his agit-prop campaigns that reached an intensive phase after the Supreme Court judgement on the election petition.

Despite Premadasa's attendance of regularly held mass meetings—mass mobilization is a distinct feature of Mr. Premadasa's presidential style—and the feverish propagation of his messages through all forms of state media, the regime continued to face a severe credibility crisis. One instance where this became evident was the reluctance of many people—notably, the 'man in the street'—to accept the official version of the demise of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and nine other senior military officers in the North. The government's explanation of the explosion that killed the entire leadership of the Northern military command was that the LTTE had triggered off a land-mine. Later on, the LTTE too claimed responsibility for the explosion. The opposition immediately seized this event, casting serious doubts on the official version and even suggesting Colombo's complicity. Quite apart from the fact that the opposition had on many occasions managed to undermine the credibility of the Premadasa administration, it is also a political fact that large sec-

tions of society tend to believe any, even unfounded, rumours rather than official versions of controversial political issues.

The credibility crisis of the regime was further aggravated by the recurrent revelations of political corruption highlighted by the tabloid press, along with 'insider disclosures' made by ex-ministers Athulathmudali and Dissanayake and the ex-top cop Udugampola. A theme continuously stressed by them was the alleged supply of arms to the LTTE by the government in 1989.

The State

A significant feature in Sri Lankan politics during the past four to five years has been the transformation of the state in the context of macro-economic re-structuring, induced by international capital. In the Sri Lankan case, however, there have been some notable specificities which were highlighted by the developments in 1993.

Privatization of state economic ventures, a key component of the structural adjustment programme, took a rapid turn in 1992; its main implication for politics was the withdrawal of the state from the sphere of economic production and exchange. Theoretically, this would have implied the lessening of the traditional interventionist role of the state. But, the Premadasa administration has belied this assumption. It has accorded to itself new and increasingly interventionist tasks in social engineering and political manoeuvres. Meanwhile, the *Janasaviya* welfare programme was the populist mainstay during the first three years of the Premadasa presidency. 1992 saw an astonishing dimension in the interventionist project of the administration when the three objectives of social welfare, economic control and social engineering were fused into a single programme: the scheme to set up 200 garment factories. This narrowly conceived and politically inspired programme of 'export-oriented industrialization' introduced in mid-1992, operates under the direct guidance and supervision of the President. Capital for the manufacturers is partly provided by the state through state banks. Meanwhile, the President has announced the setting up of 300 hospitals during 1993. In January, the government executed another massive welfare programme: provision of material for uniforms to all school children in the country.

This brings up some engaging questions concerning the way in which the state is being transformed in Sri Lanka today. Reconstitution of the state is surely a part of the politics of macro-economic re-structuring. In Sri Lanka, this process has assumed a somewhat unorthodox character. If the state under the previous UNP regime of J. R. Jayewardene (1977-88) was gradually withdrawn from the sphere of social welfare, it was also underlined by the policy disregard for social engineering projects attached to the state. In contrast, the reconstitution of the state in the post-1988 period has entered a different desideratum, defining a new economic sphere for the state in conjunction with short-term political imperatives of the regime.

A second question to be posed in this context concerns the apparent accomodationist attitude shown by the IMF and World Bank towards the regime's high-spending welfare programmes. These indeed go against the grain of IMF-World Bank policy prescriptions. What appears to have evolved, nevertheless, is the informal division of labour, or even of priorities, between political imperatives of the President and the economic policy fashioned by the IMF, the World Bank and the local economic bureaucracy.

Notes.

1. See, 'The Fall and Rise of Udugampola,' *Pravada*, Vol.1, No 4, March/April 1992.
2. See, 'Sub Judice?', *Pravada*, Vol.1, No 5, May 1992.

The city lies still, but why are there armed men?
The Governor's palace lies at peace
But why is it a fortress?

From The Caucasion Chalk Circle
Bertolt Brecht

GROWTH VS. WELFARE POPULISM CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR, 1992

Sunil Bastian

A principle source of tension in the development debate as well as in economic policy making in Sri Lanka has been the relationship between the need for economic growth and constant pressure to maintain and even increase current levels of social welfare.

The interaction between these two factors is usually mediated through politics, the medium by which demands for social welfare are articulated. As a result, issues on social welfare tend to be highly politicised, giving rise to an ideology of welfare populism within a context of capitalist development.

The contradiction between welfare populism and the demands of the capitalist growth process has affected, at different points of capitalist development, the actual path of economic growth, the types of welfare policies to be followed and ultimately the political process itself.

Some major reasons which contributed to the emergence of this contradiction can be traced to the colonial period. Universal adult franchise and the emergence of a vibrant multi-party system, while helping to establish a functioning democracy, also made it difficult to ignore populist pressure from the electorate.

The left movement also contributed to the ideology of welfare populism. In fact, social welfare has been a major plank in the platform of the left both within and outside the government; when in government, they have promoted many policy measures which emphasized a welfare orientation in development.

It is also important to note that in Sri Lanka this ideology of welfare populism has often overlapped with the ethno-nationalism of the majority Sinhalese community. Many welfare oriented policies, specially those with a strong element of state intervention, have had the backing of Sinhalese nationalism. The social basis of this tendency has been the Sinhala peasantry, an important segment of the electorate; satisfying the economic and social needs of the Sinhala peasantry has thus become a major concern with political parties. Subsidising the small peasantry on a large scale at both the production and consumption levels has therefore become a component of welfare populism.

The ideology of welfare populism has had a tendency to become dominant in times of conflict in the 'Southern' part of the country where Sinhala population is concentrated. The JVP insurgencies of 1971 and of the late eighties prompted the governments in power to implement policies of a populist nature. The Land Reforms of the seventies and the *Janasaviya* programme of 1989 constitute two such policy responses.

Therefore the so called Sri Lankan model of development, characterized by significant improvements in social welfare indicators in a context of low economic growth, is a result of the politics of welfare populism rather than of any ingenuity of the development model itself. Welfare populism also forms a part of the ideologies of all parties. Consequently, all governments, despite their commitment to capitalist growth, had to respond to strong populist currents within themselves. Therefore populism was not only merely an ideology that emanated from the 'ruled'; a significant section of the 'rulers' were also imbued with this ideology. In fact in many regimes it was the populism of the ruling party that had created barriers to capitalist growth rather than demands originating from the opposition.

Post -'77 Capitalism and Welfare Populism

This contradiction appears in the post '77 period of liberalised capitalist development too, but in a different environment characterised by a significant shift towards linking the economy to the international capitalist market. The liberalisation has decisively affected the exchange of goods, services and finances in relation to the international system; policies have been enacted to 'get the prices right', with greater emphasis on market forces, the private sector and foreign investment; attempts are made to restructure the state through the privatization of state holdings and reduction of the state administrative structure.

This renewed link with the international system has also meant the strong influence in policy formulation of multilateral bodies like IMF and World Bank, which,in the present phase of capitalism manage development policies on a global scale.

Some policy shifts introduced in the post '77 period appear to be irreversible, specially the set relating to the international system; in other words, the 'closed economy' period of capitalism has ended. For future capitalist development, countries like Sri Lanka have few options outside the utilisation of accumulation, markets, and technology of the developed capitalist world.

The recognition of the importance of economic growth constitutes another important ideological shift in the development debate. Many currents of thought in the seventies tried to de-emphasise economic growth by redefining the word 'development' so as to include other dimensions of growth. Thus the goal of economic growth became a part of what was called 'holistic development'. However the eighties have shown that the necessity for 'economic growth' cannot be wished away through redefinitions. The material base of society has to be secured in order to achieve other social objectives.

Several developments - primarily the demise of 'Eastern European Socialism' due mainly to a slow rate of economic growth and the possibility, as demonstrated by experience, of capitalist development in the countries of the 'periphery' - have emphasised the necessity as well as the possibility of economic growth. The ascendancy of capitalism at the end of the twentieth century has been primarily because of its success in delivering growth, although even apologists for capitalism would like to legitimise it through other liberal values like democracy, freedom of the individual, etc.

Liberalised Capitalism and Changes in Welfare Policies

Policy shifts in the welfare sector in the liberalised phase of Sri Lanka's capitalism can be considered in three sections. These are:

i. Reduction of transfer payments to households in the form of subsidies.
ii. Restructuring of polices in the rural sector in order to reduce subsidies for the small holder.
iii. Attempts to reduce the burden on the state in the fields of health and education while maintaining state control.

Transfer Payments

During the pre '77 period, one of the principal methods of state intervention for the benefit of the poor was the enforcement of price controls and the provision of subsidies for certain commodities and services. The basket of commodities that was subsidised and the specific forms of subsidy have varied from time to time but the general idea has been to keep the prices of essential commodities like rice, flour, sugar, kerosene, milk powder and sometimes drugs at a low level.

The post '77 period has seen a significant move away from such policies. The state has withdrawn its interventionist presence in the market for welfare objectives. Price controls have been removed, although some prices in the public sector still seem to be determined by non-market considerations; the quantum of subsidies transferred directly to the consumer has also been reduced.

Table I shows this change,indicating that both the value of the subsidies and the proportion of the population in receipt of subsidies have been curtailed.

Table I

Welfare Expenditure as a % of GDP

	Health	Education	Food Subsidy
1948 - 52	6.0*		2.7
1953 - 57	6.0*		1.4
1958 - 62	2.3	4.4	2.8
1963 - 67	2.1	4.4	3.2
1968 - 72	2.2	4.1	3.1
1973 - 77	1.5	2.8	4.0
1978 - 82	1.6	2.6	3.6
1983 - 87	1.4	2.4	1.1
1988	1.6	2.4	0.9
1989	1.7	2.9	2.7**

* Includes education
** Includes 0.3 % for JSP and 0.9% for wheat and rice subsidies eliminated in 1990

Source: *Sri Lanka : Sustaining the Adjustment Process*, World Bank 1990.

Table II

Current Transfers to Households (1985-1989), Rs. Mln.

	'85	'86	'87	'88	'89
Total	7546	7100	8606	9621	12541
Food stamps	1339	1398	1477	1587	3573
Kerosene stamps	389	407	423	482	519
Infant Milk Subsidy	100	95	84	97	99
Mid day meal	31	25	61	147	653
Free Text Books	154	102	108	314	135
Janasaviya	-	-	-	-	705
Welfare payments	133	179	517	1181	438
NSB interest	495	199	174	72	110
Fertilizer	788	614	511	600	346
Pensions	2718	2984	3242	4128	4569
Others	1309	1097	2009	1013	1394
Total as % GDP	4.7	4.0	4.4	4.3	5.0

Source : *Sri Lanka: Sustaining Adjustment Process*, World Bank, 1990.

However, more recent data show evidence of the populist pressures that the system has to respond to. The Food stamp scheme which replaced the rice subsidy was meant

to be the primary welfare measure for the poor. This policy was in line with the general principle of replacing general subsidies with targeted welfare programmes, the policy prescription for the poor under liberalised policies.

The Food Stamp scheme in its initial stages covered almost half the population (7.2 million people) of the country. The number of persons receiving stamps for the period covering 1st April 1989 to 31st March 1990 was as follows:

Under 8 yrs	8-12 yrs	over 12 yrs	Total
1,443,959	852,988	5,456,849	7,743.796

During this same period 1,886,491 Kerosene stamps were issued to households of Food Stamp holders living in villages without electricity.

The main criticism made by the World Bank of the scheme was that the number of recipients was too large and that a number of people not eligible received Food Stamps. There was constant pressures on the government to minimise this 'leakage'; however, as it usually happens in welfare programmes, it has been difficult to remove people from the scheme once they were included.

As shown in Table II, total transfer payments since 1989 have increased due to the introduction of new programmes, chiefly Janasaviya and the expansion of the mid-day meal programme for school children. As a result, by the end of 1989, total welfare payments going direct to households stood at about 5.0% of GDP.

Although all food stamp recipients have Janasaviya entitlement certificates (around 2.3 mln. households) only 156,245 families had received Janasaviya payments up to the end of 1990. This group, the first round of Janasaviya recipients, received assistance till September 1991. By the end of this period they were expected to generate self-sustaining sources of income and move out of the scheme. In December 1990 another group of 77,260 households were identified for the second round of Janasaviya.

These policies go against the need to maintain fiscal balance, a principle requirement of the World Bank. Nevertheless, it is precisely their political importance that is responsible for their continued existence; all that can be done is to minimise costs and reduce adverse impacts by 'restructuring.'

Another set of transfer payments which the IMF/WB would like to reduce but finds difficult to insist upon due to possible political repercussions is the pension benefits enjoyed by government servants. In 1990 Government departments employed 609,750 persons, all of whom have the benefit of a pension scheme. The actual expenditure for pensions in 1989 was Rs. 4,569 mln. This amounted to about 36% of direct transfers to households for that year. One proposal to reduce its cost is to increase the present minimum of ten years of service needed to qualify for pensions.

Restructuring Support for Small Holder Peasantry

An important factor that has contributed to the formation of a welfarist ideology and policies in Sri Lanka has been the political commitment to the small holder peasantry by almost all political parties. This was due partly to the electoral strength of rural society; until the proportional representation system was introduced, the electoral system had a conscious and positive bias towards rural areas. There was thus a built-in advantage enjoyed by the rural sector and all political parties have found it expedient to placate the rural voter. This was reinforced by the dominant Sinhala nationalist ideology which saw rural peasantry as the repository of traditional Sinhala culture; to claim that it stands for rural society has been important for the legitimacy of all governments. One could argue that many of the country's welfare policies concerned with consumption needs had rural society as the main target and beneficiary. There was at the same time a package of assistance on the production side as well; peasant settlement schemes, subsidies for agro- inputs, credit facilities, crop insurance, guaranteed prices were the principal means of state support for agricultural production. These policies were rationalised by the economic argument for developing production levels and production forces in agriculture.

The gradual removal of production-oriented subsidies for the peasant small holder has been a consistent policy implemented during the post '77 period. The government has actually been more successful in carrying out these changes than in removing consumption subsidies. It has, for example, introduced a water-tax to get the small farmer to pay for irrigation facilities provided by the state, which were earlier given free.

Changes in agrarian legislation have meanwhile favoured the rich farmer's access to the land at the expense of the small farmer. Act No.58 of 1979 was designed to restructure agrarian relations so as to reinforce the rights and interests of landlords. The security of tenency has been tied to the productivity of the tenant. The de-facto share going to the landlord has increased, while ensuring that big tenants will not emerge.

New schemes have been introduced to make state land more accessible to the commercial farmer as well as to the corporate sector. By leasing out land to private entrepreneurs, the government has managed in fact to avoid infringing the Land Reform Laws of 1972. This same phenomenon is taking place with regard to irrigated Mahaweli land as well.

The emphasis on market oriented policies has also meant allowing the market to determine the prices of agricultural inputs as well as of agricultural machinery. The private sector dominates now in this area of business. The last subsidy to be removed was that on fertilizer in 1990; along with this, steps are now being taken to privatise the Fertiliser Corporation.

Credit policies in the rural sector have become more restrictive since 1978, when the Central Bank withdrew its guarantees on agricultural loans. This has made commercial banks more cautious in disbursing agricultural credit. This tendency will be strengthened further when the recent demands by the IMF and World Bank to run the two state owned banks on a basis of commercial viability. Finally, with the removal of the rice subsidy, the state has drastically reduced its role as a major buyer in the paddy market. The functions of the Paddy Marketing Board have been severly curtailed and this has effectively ended the policy of 'guaranteed prices' to the small farmer. The involvement of the state in purchasing paddy is now minimal as the price offered is usually lower than that offered by private buyers.

There are also institutional reforms intended to reduce the state's role in running agrarian extension services. Farmer's organizations formed under the Amended Agrarian service Act of 1991 are expected to take over the management and operation of these services. Such organizations have been already established in some of the major irrigation schemes.

These policy changes in the rural sector, basically a part of the overall strategy of capitalist growth, are backed by the promotion of an ideology of 'self-reliance.' There are two different shades of meaning given to the slogan of self reliance. The first is the lessening of the small farmer's dependence on the state for inputs, services and markets. The second meaning implies the goal of making farmers economically viable within a market economy. The ultimate goal is to make the farmer more commercially minded and market oriented. Accordingly, farmers are motivated to pay back agricultural credit rather than to view it as a form of subsidy. Diversification of output to include commercially viable crops is another aspect of this process.

NGOs too play an important role in promoting this ideology. The notion of self reliance has become an integral part of the ideology of many NGO projects. In some instances, NGOs merely replace the state in carrying out social services; in others, specially when they work with more successful farmers, NGOs help to develop entrepreneurship among farmers. However, the success of these strategies will be determined by the overall dynamics of the liberalised economy.

Against this background, there are clear signs that a new process of capitalist accumulation is taking place in the rural sector. While this tendency may vary depending on production conditions, it is more visible in the irrigated dry zone areas, where there is a greater thrust towards commercial crops and away from paddy.

Along with the new accumulation process, the corporate sector in agriculture is expanding. The corporate sector is highly involved in the provision of agro-inputs through the market. They use intensive advertising campaigns, using even the TV medium, to market their products among farmers. The corporate sector is also expanding its investments in commercial agriculture. The market liberalisation process in the agricultural sector and the government's policy of making state land available to the private sector under various lease agreements have contributed to increased corporate investments in agriculture.

Then there are the problems of the small farmer. There seem to be very few examples where the small farmer has been able to survive in the market. Once the subsidy schemes were withdrawn,survival has become difficult. Even most NGO projects do not identify small farmers as a special target group for assistance. The approach is through a community development perspective where the entire village is the target. The ultimate beneficiaries of such an approach in the present context are the economically better-off farmers.

Low unskilled wage rates have been a primary reason for poverty in Sri Lanka and a large proportion of the poor are found among small farmers.

Education and Health

Another component of welfarist ideology in Sri Lanka has been the notion that the state must bear the responsibility for providing services in the areas of education and health. The role of the state sector in providing health care has been dominant right from the beginning, even during the colonial period; in the case of education, state domination became complete in the sixties through the state take-over of Grant-in-Aid schools.

State intervention in these areas was backed by social justice arguments. The growth of a state monopoly was supported as a means of redressing economic disparities and delivering distributive justice. The presence or entry of private initiatives in these areas was seen as either helping to continue existing disparities or even aggravating them.

The post '77 period has, however, seen a shift in these attitudes. Private ventures in education and health have emerged in urban centers. In education, private sector

invovement is mainly in the secondary and intermediate stages. Political pressures have kept private capital away from higher education. Similar developments have occurred in the health sector. A network of private clinics and hospitals has been set up, supplementing individual private practice which was the dominant mode of earlier private health care.

However, the expansion of private initiatives in the areas of Health and Education has not so far meant a dismantling of state managed institutions, whose overall structure has been maintained. Instead, the main attempt has been to reduce the burden on the state either by reducing current expenditures or by motivating the institutions themselves to find supplementary resources for capital expenditure. On the other hand, populist measuress in the area of education like the distribution of free school books and uniforms have increased government expenditure on social welfare.

Both the practice as well as the debates on educational expenditure shows political pressure that no government can easily ignore if steps are taken to dismantle the state sector in education. Even relatively small attempts at reducing expenditure have become controversial, as, for example, the present attempts at establishing School Development societies.

While the institutions are being maintained, however, education and Health are two sectors where government expenditures have been stagnant for many years; this means that the resources allocated to these areas have not kept pace with either inflation or the increase in demand. Neither has the state found it possible to remove regional and other disparities in the education structure.

Another problem is the internal efficiency of the state system and the quality of services provided. Attention to the quantitative expansion of educational facilities in the past has led to relatively little attention being paid to the question of the quality of education. However current growth processes are likely to demand from the system a different and better kind of education.

But improvement of quality will demand additional resources. As it is doing now, the government will try to look for donor assistance to meet these needs. The question then will be the kind of reforms the donors demand as the proce of their assistance. The education and health sectors will both probably face this critical question in 1993. In these reforms, the more efficient use of resources presently available, more encouragement to private initiatives and introduction of some form of user-fees are likely steps.

Concluding Remarks

This survey of current welfare polices has shown the continuous pressure of populist ideologies that impinge on policy formulation. What we see is an attempt to move in the direction of capitalist growth while managing populist pressures, from both within and from outside the ruling group itself.

The reduction of subsidies to peasant agriculture and the steps taken in this sector to release market forces has resulted in an accentuated social polarisation; within this process, the condition of small farmers has deteriorated.

The other sectors of the economy are not growing adequately to absorb them. Various attempts to convert small farmers who have depended on subsidies into viable small producers within a market economy do not seem to have been successful either. Even non-governmental efforts with their so called 'income generating projects' are unable to survive within the market.

Steps to regularise and improve wages in the agricultural sector, on which a large number of small peasants depend, seems one possible way of redressing their condition; however this alone will not be sufficient to overcome the problem.

The basic question then arises: has the market alone the capacity to satisfy the needs of the rural poor? Some form of state intervention appears to be needed. Such interventions are not unheard of even in developed capitalist societies. However what form this intervention should take and how to ensure that it does what is intended are questions that remain.

Populist pressures have been stronger in the case of transfer payments to households, specially after the Premadasa regime came into power, with new programmes like the Janasaviya.

Although introduced primarily due to political reasons, these programmes play an important role in the survival strategies of those who find it difficult to survive on agriculture in the rural areas. Assistance given by these programmes and income earned through casual labour seem to be the main sources of income for the rural poor. However these programmes are beset with enormous problems of efficiency and reach; because of political expediencies, they are unable to play even their potential role as a welfare net.

Note

1. Conflicts that have an ethnic base, such as the struggle of the Sri Lankan Tamil minority, do not evoke similar responses. This shows the link between welfare populism and the ethno-nationalism of the Sinhala majority.

A DISMAL RECORD

Charles Abeysekera

There is one word that has been considerably and consistently overused in discussions about human rights in Sri Lanka in 1992 and that is the word "improved." Government spokespersons, from the President downwards, have claimed that this improvement, as shown by various indicators is primarily due to certain positive actions taken by them.

The evidence cited by them is diverse. Disappearances are down from the massive 20,000 referred to by the UN Working Group on Disappearances; the number of detainees has been reduced from over 10,000 to about 5,000; there have been no large-scale massacres or reprisals by the security forces against Tamil civilians; there have been no publicised cases of extra-judicial executions or of police brutality.

The government also points to the various mechanisms instituted to deal with human rights violations: the Human Rights Task Force, the Presidential Commission to Investigate involuntary Disappearances, the Commission to investigate the Kokkadicholai massacre, various high-level committees or one man inquiries set up to investigate specific instances. These are cited as evidence of the government's serious and sincere concern to stop violations of human rights and its commitment to respect and honour its obligations in terms of international covenants and conventions.

The acceptance of visits by various organs of the United Nations - the Working Group on Disappearances, the invitation to the Special Rapporteur on Torture (not yet implemented) for example - and missions from international human rights groups such as Amnesty International are also brought forward as instances of the government's openness and concern for human rights. The invitation to the International Committee of the Red Cross to work in the country is also construed in the same way.

This is, however, a very selective picture. It contrives to keep the searchlight on specific and particular instances and to keep in the shadow the structures and institutions that make continued violations possible and which still continue to be maintained in place by the government. It is, in effect, a picture produced by the government for international consumption, an exercise in image-building.

Reality Behind the Picture

Let us look at some of the main violations.

Disappearances still continue. The commission on disappearances, with the mandate to inquire into disappearances that have taken place since 11.1.1991, had received, upto September 1992, about 3000 complaints, of which it had accepted 453 cases as falling within its mandate for investigation; of these about 275 were reported from the Eastern Province and were a direct consequence of the ethnic conflict. But disappearances also continue to occur, with alarming regularity, in the South too; during the first half of the year, the Commission had recorded and accepted for investigation 45 cases from the South, nearly 8 cases per month.

To cite a few illustrative cases: one night in August 1992, 8 youth were abducted by armed men in civilian clothes from a few villages in the Anuradhapura district. Four of them were later discovered in police custody; the others have disappeared. Sonny de Zoysa 'disappeared' from police custody at Urugasmanhandiya, also in August.

Extra-judicial killings continue to occur. A few cases have been reported from the South but the large majority takes place in the Eastern province, where about 125 deaths of civilians and 'suspected' LTTE cadres have been attributed to the security forces. A particularly telling example was the discovery of 5 bodies, handcuffed and shot in the head, in June in the Batticaloa district; they had been among many arrested earlier in the course of a cordon and search operation. Over a 100 deaths have been attributed to Muslim homeguards and anti-LTTE Tamil militants, who nominally are under army or police control. Muslim homeguards have killed Tamil civilians in reprisals against LTTE attacks on Muslims, which increased in frequency and savagery during 1992.

Physical harassment and torture by the police,leading sometimes to **death in custody** continue. The case of Juse Appuhamy, 60 years old, of Kuliyapitiya who died while in police custody is one example; his relatives have

declared that assaults by the police caused his death. There are numerous reports of inhuman treatment and torture of Tamil prisoners taken into custody by the security forces in the Eastern province; many of them are documented in Report No. 10 of the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna).

The problem of **detainees** still remains. At the year's end there were in the three detention centres at Boossa, Pelawatta and Weerawila, in the prisons in Colombo and Kalutara and in Rehabilitation centres a total of 3208 persons; besides, there were an unknown number of persons being held in various police stations and army camps. It is true that large numbers have been released, based apparently on the recommendations of the Jayalath Committee which had classified detainees in terms of the degree of their involvement in terrorist activity. However, the problems of detainees do not end even with their release. Many have complained of continued harassment by the police after they have returned to their homes. At least 14 of them have been rearrested and are being prosecuted on the basis alleged new evidence.

Thus violations of basic human rights—the right to security, to freedom from arbitrary arrest, to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment, to legal process—continue to be a part of our life. The government's argument, basically, is that some violations did occur in the face of violent insurgencies in the north and the south in the past, that in the circumstances it was forced to condone or grant immunity for these acts, that the present acts are not government policy but the aberrant acts of individuals and that these acts are now being investigated and punished. Some of these arguments will be examined later and their truth questioned. For the present, we shall look into the mechanisms set up by the state to record, investigate and punish violations and see how effective they have been.

Response of the State

Let us take the case of disappearances first. The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Involuntary Removal of Persons (PCIRP), set up on 11.1. 1991, continued its work right throughout the year. It has concluded hearings in **five** of the cases accepted for investigation; reports have been submitted to the President but have not been released to the public. PCIRP is a fact finding investigation; if its facts indicate a prima facie case against any person, then the Attorney-General is expected to file a case. A case has been filed only in one instance, against Assistant Superintendent of Police K.Sugathadasa concerning the disappearance of police constable Basnayake in January 1991; the Magistrate discharged the accused and stated that he was doing so on the basis of the findings of the PCIRP. This gives rise to a curious situation - of a man being accused and then discharged on the basis of the same findings; since the PCIRP reports are not available to the public this curiosity is one that cannot yet be satisfied. However, after two years of work, one cannot but come to the conclusion that it is a time consuming exercise that may accomplish very little.

The **Human Rights Task Force** is another highly publicised mechanism set up to deal with the problem of detainees. Set up in August 1991, its primary tasks were to prepare and maintain a central register of all detainees and to monitor the conditions of detention to ensure that the fundamental rights of detainees were not violated. It has made some improvement in the conditions of detention, but, in 16 months of work, it has failed in its task of preparing a complete register of detainees. It has compiled a partial listing, based on its visits to some prisons, detention camps, rehabilitation centers and police stations. This situation arises because there is no legal compulsion on officers arresting or taking anyone into custody to inform the HRTF promptly. In the absence of such regulations, the HRTF is reduced to discovering detainees.

As a response to sustained pressure, the government set up a **Commission of Inquiry into the Kokkadicholai Incidents** in June 1991. The Commission concluded its hearings in January 1992 and found, in very restrained language, that the deaths of 67 Tamil civilians had been caused by the "unrestrained behaviour of certain soldiers who were provoked by the deaths of two of their colleagues." The offenders were subsequently brought up before a Military Court; it acquitted the 17 army men implicated in the killings but found the officer in charge, Captain Kudaligama, guilty on two counts—failure to control his subordinates and the disposal of dead bodies. The army announced in December 1992 that the officer had been dismissed.

The state has consistently sought to deflect criticism by appointing committees of inquiry or one-man investigations into incidents, for example, the Alanchipotana massacre of April 1992, the Kirankulama bus bomb of July 1992, the Palliyagodella killings of October 1992. However, no reports have been published; nor has the public being made aware of any subsequent remedial action.

It is this recurrent pattern of activity—the establishment of seemingly acceptable mechanisms, the unwillingness or incapacity to arm them with sufficient powers and resources, the non-publication of their findings and the totally inadequate punishments in the very few cases

that have come up to that stage—cannot but lead to the conclusion that these are only part of an image building exercise.

Structures that Permit Violations

We spoke earlier of the government's attempt to depict violations as the acts of a few aberrant individuals and to hide the perpetuation of structures that not only permit but encourage violations.

The maintenance of emergency regulations throughout the country is the chief of these; Sri Lanka has been governed under a state of emergency in 1992, in terms of which state authorities have been granted wide powers of arrest and detention for long periods, acquisition of property, restriction of the rights of association, assembly and publication. Another facet of these powers is that no one, not even lawyers, are really aware of the emergency regulations in force at any given time; there is no central place in the government machinery at which one can find out the whole of the regulations in force. However, it is these emergency powers which enable the state and its officials to violate human rights with impunity.

There are also other indications that the government is taking for granted the restrictions on fundamental rights brought into being by the emergency regulations; it is using them in areas totally irrelevant to the needs of 'national security' and in order to serve its political interests. In March 1992, School Development Boards were set up under Emergency regulations, bypassing the need for Parliamentary debate. Proper legislation was promised but had not been presented by December 1992. In August 1992, Emergency Regulations were briefly used to deprive trade unions and labour organisations of their fundamental rights of action in those sectors of the economy producing for export.

The maintenance of the emergency is justified on the basis of the ethnic conflict; this, of course, is also the basis for the denial of their fundamental and democratic rights to the Tamil people. The conflict which pits the state and a few armed Tamil groups against the LTTE has resulted in massacres perpetrated by both sides; thousands on non-combatants have been killed and lakhs of people have been displaced. There is talk of a political settlement but there have been no signs, in 1992, of any serious attempt to end this conflict. However, it is increasingly clear that such a settlement is an absolute pre-requisite for the creation of a climate within which the respect for human rights can be affirmed.

The continuing conflict has also led to a growing prevalence of violence in society, helped along by the easy availability of arms. The state has yet found it impossible to recall all the arms distributed to politicians and their body guards in 1988 and 1989. Deserters from the armed services who have left with their arms adds to this number. It is difficult to estimate the number of unauthorised arms but there is no doubt that they are being used to settle political disputes and add to the number of violations. Further evidence of this climate of violence is the large number of police and army personnel who were being tried for crimes such as theft, extortion, rape and murder.

The maintenance of the emergency, the lack of political will to seek a settlement to the ethnic conflict, the lack of a serious drive to remove arms from unauthorised civilians and the seeming condonation of violations and violators, all deriving from the political imperatives of the government are part of what we refer to as structures that permit and even encourage violations.

Also very disturbing in this context are some recent government statements arguing that human rights are primarily an internal matter and protesting that attempts to link human rights with aid issues are a violation of the country's sovereignty. The concept that human rights are 'Western' in origin and have to be adapted to our cultural needs is also part of this argument. This kind of attitude is common to many developing country regimes; it is a subject that will be pursued in a subsequent article.

1992 has also seen serious attacks on other rights such as association and expression to which we shall refer briefly.

Freedom of Association

Trade unions and organised groups of workers have been violently deprived of their rights; many pickets, demonstrations and leaflet distributing campaigns have been disrupted by the police, with tear gassing and baton-charging in many instances.

Meetings organised by human rights groups on December 10 were violently broken up by the police.

The Presidential commission of Inquiry into Non-Governmental Organisations has continued its sittings throughout the year. The thrust of its inquiries into several NGOs has raised fears that its findings may lead to a regime of regulation that will interfere with the rights of free association.

Freedom of Expression

There have been attacks on the media and on media personnel right through the year. A previous issue of *Pravada* has documented these attacks.

Several newspapers and editors have been charged with attempting to bring the government into disrepute for publishing the affidavits purporting to be from former Deputy Inspector of Police Udugampola and detailing alleged death squad activities. In one of these cases, the Colombo High Court held that the press was "free to publish news and opinion that may be distasteful to the government"; the Attorney-General has now appealed against this decision.

Attempts have also been made to forcibly prevent the distribution of papers. The weekly tabloid, *Yukthiya*, has, for example, filed a fundamental rights case alleging forcible seizure and destruction of the paper in Nuwara Eliya by the mayor.

These attacks have brought many journalists and other media personnel to form the **Free Media Movement** in an effort to beat back attempts to muzzle the media.

Conclusion

It is difficult, in the light of what has been said above, to see any signs of improvement in the human rights picture in 1992. The legal regimes and other structures that permit and encourage violations are still in place. The government's commitment to respect human rights and to punish violators is dubious. The ideology of human rights is subject to constant attack. While the magnitude of violations of some rights has decreased, other rights appear in greater danger than ever before. All in all, it is still a situation where human rights are being violated with impunity.

Conclusion of the ***T.B. Davie Academic Freedom lecture, 1991,*** *delivered by* ***Edward Said,*** *the first part of the text of which appeared in the previous issue of* ***Pravada.***

IDENTITY, AUTHORITY, AND FREEDOM: THE POTENTATE AND THE TRAVELLER

Edward Said

What kind of authority, what sort of human norms, what kind of identity do we then allow to lead us, to guide our study, to dictate our educational processes? Do we say: now that we have won, that we have achieved equality and independence, let us elevate ourselves, our history, our cultural or ethnic identity above that of others, uncritically giving this identity of ours centrality and coercive dominance? Do we substitute for a Eurocentric norm an Afrocentric or Islamo-or Arabocentric one? Or, as happened so many times in the post-colonial world, do we get our independence and then return to models for education derived lazily, adopted imitatively and uncritically, from elsewhere? In short, do we use the freedom we have fought for merely to replicate the mind-forged manacles that once enslaved us, and having put them on do we proceed to apply them to others less fortunate than ourselves?

Raising these questions means that the university - more generally speaking the academy, but especially, I think, the university - has a privileged role to play in dealing with these matters. Universities exist in the world, although each university, as I have suggested, exists in its own particular world, with a history and social circumstances all of its own. I cannot bring myself to believe that, even though it cannot be an immediately political arena, the university is free of the encumbrances, the problems, the social dynamics of its surrounding environment. How much better to take note of these realities than blithely to talk about academic freedom in an airy and insouciant way, as if real freedom happens, and having once happened goes on happening undeterred and unconcerned. When I first began teaching about thirty years ago, an older colleague took me aside and informed me that the academic life was odd indeed; it was sometimes deathly boring, it was generally polite and in its own way quite impotently genteel, but whatever the case, he added, it was certainly better than working! None of us can deny the sense of privilege carried inside the academic sanctum, as it were, the real sense that as most people go to their jobs and suffer their daily anxiety, we read books and talk and write of great ideas, experiences, epochs. In my opinion, there is no higher privilege.

But in actuality no university or school can really be a shelter from the difficulties of human life and more specifically from the political intercourse of a given society and culture.

This is by no means to deny that, as Newman said so beautifully and so memorably:

> *The university has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to educate the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.*

Note the care with which Newman, perhaps with Swift, the greatest of English prose stylists, selects his words for what actions take place in the pursuit of knowledge: words like *exercise, educates, reach out,* and *grasp.* In none of these words is there anything to suggest coercion, or direct utility, or immediate advantage or dominance. Newman says in another place:

> *Knowledge is something intellectual, something which grasps what it perceives through the sense; something which takes a view of things; which sees more than the sense convey; which reasons upon what it sees, and while it sees; which invests it with an idea.*

Then he adds:

> *Not to know the relative disposition of things is the state of slaves or children; to have mapped out the universe is the boast, or at least the ambition, of philosophy.*

Newman defines philosophy as the highest state of knowledge.

These are incomparably eloquent statements, and they can only be a little deflated when we remind ourselves that Newman was speaking to and about English men, not women, and then also about the education of young Catholics. Nonetheless the profound truth in what Newman say is, I believe, designed to undercut any partial or somehow narrow view of education whose aim might seem only to re-affirm one particularly attractive and dominant identity, that which is the resident power of authority of the moment. Perhaps like many of his Victorian contemporaries—Ruskin comes quickly to mind—Newman was arguing earnestly for a type of education that placed the highest premium on English, European, or Christian values in knowledge. But sometimes, even though we may mean to say something, another thought at odds with what we say insinuates itself into our rhetoric and in effect criticizes it, delivers a different and less assertive idea than on the surface we might have intended. This happens when we read Newman. Suddenly we realize that although he is obviously extolling what is an overridingly Western conception of the world, with little allowance made for what was African or Latin American or Indian, his words let slip the notion that even an English or Western identity wasn't enough, wasn't at bottom or at best what education and freedom were all about.

Certainly it is difficult to find in Newman anything like a license either for blinkered specialization or for gentlemanly aestheticism. What he expects of the academy is, he says:

> *The power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence.*

This synthetic wholeness has a special relevance to the fraught political situations of conflict, the unresolved tension, and the social as well as moral disparities that are constitutive to the world of today's academy. He proposes a large and generous view of human diversity. To link the practice of education - and by extension, of freedom - in the academy directly to the settling of political scores, or to an equally unmodulated reflection of real national conflict is neither to pursue knowledge nor in the end to educate ourselves and our students, which is an everlasting effort as understanding. But what happens when we take Newman's prescriptions about viewing many things as one whole or, referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, we transpose these notions to today's world of embattled national identities, cultural conflicts, and power relations? Is there any possibility for bridging the gap between the ivory tower of contemplative rationality ostensibly advocated by Newman and our own urgent need for self-realization and self-assertion with its background in a history of repression and denial?

I think there is. I will go further and say that it is precisely the role of the contemporary academy to bridge this gap, since society itself is too directly inflected by politics to serve so general and so finally intellectual and moral a role. We must first, I think, accept that nationalism resurgent, or even nationalism militant, whether it is the nationalism of the victim or of the victor, has its limits. Nationalism is the philosophy of identity made into a collectively organized passion. For those of us just emerging from marginality and persecution, nationalism is a necessary thing: a long-deferred and-denied identity

needs to come out into the open and take its place among other human identities. But that is only the first step. To make all or even most of education subservient to this goal is to limit human horizons without either intellectual or, I would argue, political warrant. To assume that the ends of education are best advanced by focusing principally on *our own* separateness, our own ethnic identity, culture, and traditions ironically places us where as subaltern, inferior, or lesser races we had been placed by nineteenth century racial theory, unable to share in the general riches of human culture. To say that women should read mainly women's literature, that blacks should study and perfect only black techniques of understanding and interpretation, that Arabs and Muslims should return to the Holy Book for all knowledge and wisdom is the inverse of saying along with Carlyle and Gobineau that all the lesser races must retain their inferior status in the world. There is room for all at the rendezvous of victory, said Aime Ceasaire; no race has a monopoly on beauty or intelligence.

A single overmastering identity at the core of the academic enterprise, whether that identity be Western, African, or Asian, is a confinement, a deprivation. The world we live in is made up of numerous identities interacting, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes antithetically. Not to deal with that whole - which is in fact a contemporary version of the whole referred to by Newman as a true enlargement of mind - is not to have academic freedom. We cannot make our claim as seekers after justice that we advocate knowledge only of an about ourselves. Our model for academic freedom should therefore be the migrant or traveler: for if, in the real world outside the academy, we must needs be ourselves and only ourselves, inside the academy we should be able to discover and travel among other selves, other identities, other varieties of the human adventure. But, most essentially, in this joint discovery of self and Other, it is the role of the academy to transform what might be conflict, or contest, or assertion into reconciliation, mutuality, recognition, and creative interaction. So much of the knowledge produced by Europe about Africa, or about India and the Middle East, originally derived from the need for imperial control; indeed, as a recent study of Rodney Murchison by Robert Stafford convincingly shows, even geology and biology were implicated, along with geography and ethnography, in the imperial scramble for Africa. But rather than viewing the search for knowledge in the academy as the search for coercion and control over others, we should regard knowledge as something for which to risk identity, and we should think of academic freedom as an invitation to give up on identity in the hope of understanding and perhaps even assuming more than one. We must always view the academy as a place to voyage in, owning none of it but at home everywhere in it.

It comes, finally, to two images for inhabiting the academic and cultural space provided by school and university. One the one hand, we can be there in order to reign and hold sway. Here, in such a conception of academic space, the academic professional is king and potentate. In that form you sit surveying all before you with detachment and mastery. Your legitimacy is that this is your domain, which you can describe with *authority* as principally Western or African, or Islamic, or American, or on and on. The other model is considerably more mobile, more playful, although no less serious. The image of traveler depends not on power, but on motion, on a willingness to go into different worlds, use different idioms, and understand a variety of disguises, masks, and rhetoric. Travelers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. Most of all, and most unlike the potentate who must guard only one place and defend its frontiers, the traveler *crosses over,* traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions, all the time. To do this with dedication and love as well as a realistic sense of the terrain is, I believe, a kind of academic freedom at its highest, since one of its main features is that you can leave authority and dogma to the potentate. You will have other things to think about and enjoy than merely yourself and your domain, and those other things are far more impressive, far more worthy of study and respect than self-adulation and uncritical self-appreciation. To join the academic world is therefore to enter a ceaseless quest for knowledge and freedom.

INDIA'S SANE VOICES: HISTORIANS SPEAK

THE POLITICAL ABUSE OF HISTORY

The following statement, issued two years ago by a group of academics at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, responds to the Hindu fundamentalist appropriation of Indian 'history' in militant communal politics. It is signed by the following historians: Muzaffar Alam, Neeladari Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, Kunal Chakravarti, R. Champakalakshmi, Bipan Chandra, B. D. Chattopadhyaya, Sarvapalli Gopal, Rajan Gurukkal, Suvira Jaiswal, Bhagawan Josh, K. Meenakshi, Aditya Mukherjee, Mridula Mukherjee, Harbans Mukhia, Madhavan Palat, S. F. Ratnagar, Himanshu Ray, Satish Saberwal, Yogesh Sharma, Dilbag Singh, Romila Thapar, K. K. Trivedi and R. N. Verma

Behind the present Babrimasjid-Rama janma-bhumi controversy lie issues of faith, power and politics. Each individual has a right to his or her belief and faith. But when beliefs claim the legitimacy of history, then the historian has to attempt a demarcation between the limits of belief and historical evidence. When communal forces make claims to "historical evidence" for the purposes of communal politics, then the historian has to intervene.

Historical evidence is presented here not as a polemic or as a solution to the Rama janmabhumi-Babri masjid conflict, for this conflict is not a matter of historical records alone. The conflict emerges from the widespread communalization of Indian politics. Nevertheless it is necessary to review the historical evidence to the extent it is brought into play in the communalization of society.

I

Is Ayodhya the birth place of Rama? This question raises a related one: Is present day Ayodhya the Ayodhya of Ramayana?

The events of the story of Rama, originally told in the Rama-Katha which is no longer available to us, were rewritten in the form of a long epic poem, the Ramayana, by Valmiki. Since this is a poem and much of it could have been fictional, including characters and places, historians cannot accept the personalities, the events or the locations as historically authentic unless there is other supporting evidence from sources regarded as more reliable by historians. Very often historical evidence contradicts popular beliefs.

According to Valmiki Ramayana, Rama, the King of Ayodhya, was born in the *Treta Yuga*, that is thousands of years before the Kali Yuga which is supposed to begin in 3102 B.C.

i) There is no archaeological evidence to show that at this early time the region around present day Ayodhya was inhabited. The earliest possible date for settlements at the site are of about the eighth century B.C. The archaeological remains indicate a fairly simple material life, more primitive than what is described in the Valmiki Ramayana.

ii) In the Ramayana, there are frequent references to palaces and buildings on a large scale in an urban setting. Such descriptions of an urban complex are not sustained by the archaeological evidence of the eighth century B.C.

iii) There is also a controversy over the location of Ayodhya. Early Buddhist texts refer to Shravasti and Saketa, not Ayodhya, as the major cities of Koshala. Jaina texts also refer to Saketa as the capital of Koshala. There are very few references to a Ayodhya, but this is said to be located on the Ganges, not on river Saryu, which is the site of present day Ayodhya.

iv) The town of Saketa was renamed Ayodhya by a Gupta king. Skanda Gupta in the late fifth century A.D., moved his residence to Saketa and called it Ayodhya. He assumed the title Vikramaditya, which he used on his gold coins. Thus what may have been the fictional Ayodhya of the epic poem was identified with Saketa quite late. This does not necessarily suggest that the Gupta king was a *bhakta* of Rama. In bestowing the name of Ayodhya on Saket he was trying to gain prestige for himself by drawing on the tradition of the Suryavamsi kings, a line to which Rama is said to have belonged.

v) After the seventh century, textual references to Ayodhya are categorical. The *Puranas*, dating to the first millennium A.D. and the early second millennium A. D. follow the Ramayana and refer to Ayodhya as the capital of Koshala (*Vishnudharmottara Mahapurna*, 1.240.2)

vi) In a way, the local tradition of Ayodhya recognises the ambiguous history of its origin. The story is

that Ayodhya was lost after the *Treta Yuga* and was rediscovered by Vikramaditya. While searching for the lost Ayodhya, Vikramaditya met Pragaya, the king of tirthas, who knew about Ayodhya and showed him where it was. Vikramaditya marked the place but could not find it later. Then he met a yogi who told him that he should let a cow and a calf roam. When the calf came across the *janmabhumi* milk would flow from its udder. The king followed the yogi's advice. When at a certain point the calf's udders began to flow the king decided that this was the site of the ancient Ayodhya.

This myth of "rediscovery" of Ayodhya, this claim to an ancient sacred lineage, is an effort to impart to a city a specific religious sanctity which it lacked. But even in the myths the process of identification of the sites appears uncertain and arbitrary.

If present day Ayodhya was known as Saket before the fifth century, then the Ayodhya of Valmiki's Ramayana was fictional. If so, the identification of Rama janmabhumi in Ayodhya today becomes a matter of faith, not of historical evidence.

The historical uncertainty regarding the possible location of the Rama-janmabhumi contrasts with the historical certainty of the birth-place of the Buddha. Two centuries after the death of the Buddha, Asoka Mayura put up an inscription at the village of Lumbini to commemorate it as the Buddha's birth-place. However, even in this case, the inscription merely refers to the village near which he was born and does not even attempt to indicate the precise birth place.

II

Ayodhya has been a sacred centre of many religions, not of the Rama cult alone. Its rise as a major centre of Rama worship is, in fact, relatively recent.

i) Inscriptions from the fifth to the eighth centuries A.D. and even later refer to people from Ayodhya but none of them refer to its being a place associated with the worship of Rama. (Epigraphica Indica, 10. p 72; 15 p. 143; 1.p.14)

ii) Hsuan Tsang writes of Ayodhya as a major centre of Buddhism with many monasteries and stupas and few non-Buddhists. For Buddhists Ayodhya is a sacred place where Buddha is believed to have stayed for some time.

iii) Ayodhya has been an important centre of Jain pilgrimage. To the Jains it is the birth place of the first and fourth Jaina *Tirthankaras*. An interesting archaeological find of the 4th-3rd century B.C is a Jaina figure in grey terracotta, being amongst the earliest Jaina figures found so far.

iv) The texts of the eleventh century A.D. refer to the Gopataru *tirtha* at Ayodhya, but not to any links with the *janmabhumi* of Rama.

v) The cult of Rama seems to have become popular from the thirteenth century. It gains ground with the gradual rise of the Ramanandi sect and the composition of the Rama story in Hindi.

Even in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Ramanandis had not settled in Ayodhya on a significant scale. Shaivism was more important than the cult of Rama. Only from the eighteenth century do we find the Ramanandi *sadhus* settling on a large scale. It was in the subsequent centuries that they built most of their temples in Ayodhya.

III

So far no historical evidence has been unearthed to support the claim that the Babri mosque has been constructed on the land that had been earlier occupied by a temple.

i) Except for the verses in Persian inscribed on the two sides of the mosque door, there is no other primary evidence to suggest that a mosque had been erected there on Babur's behalf. Mrs Beveridge, who was the first to translate the *Babur Nama*, gives the text and the translation of these above verses in an appendix to the memoirs. The crucial passage reads as follows: "By the command of the Emperor Babur, whose justice is an edifice reaching up to the very height of the heavens, the good hearted Mir Baqi built the alighting place of angels. *Bawad [Buwad] khair baqi* (may this goodness last forever)" (*Babur Nama*, translated by A.F. Beveridge, 1922, II,pp LXXVII, ff).

The inscription only claims that one Mir Baqi, a noble of Babur, had erected the mosque. Nowhere does either of the inscriptions mention that the mosque had been erected on the site of a temple. Nor is there any reference in Babur's memoirs to the destruction of any temple in Ayodhya.

ii) The *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to Ayodhya as "the residence of Ramachandra who in the Treta age combined in his own person both spiritual supremacy and kingly office." But nowhere is there any mention of the erection of the mosque by the grandfather of the author's patron on the site of the temple of Rama.

iii) It is interesting that Tulsidas, the great devotee of Rama, a contemporary of Akbar and an inhabitant of the region, is upset at the rise of the mleccha but makes no mention of the demolition of a temple at the site of Rama *janmabhumi*.

iv) It is in the nineteenth century that the story circulates and enters official records. These records were then cited by others as valid historical evidence on the issue.

This story of the destruction of the temple is narrated, without any investigation into its historical veracity, in British records of the region. (See P. Carnegy, *Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad, Zillah Fyzabad*, Lucknow, 1870; H.R. Nevill, *Faizabad District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1905).

Mrs. Beveridge in a footnote to the translated passage quoted above affirms her faith in the story. She suggests that Babar being a Muslim, and "impressed by the dignity and sanctity of the ancient Hindu shrine" would have displaced "at least in part" the temple to erect the mosque. Her logic is simple: "...like the obedient follower of Muhammad he was in intolerance of another Faith, (thus he) would regard the substitution of a temple by a mosque as dutiful and worthy." This is a very questionable inference deduced from a generalised presumption about the nature and inevitable behaviour of a person professing a particular faith. Mrs Beveridge produces no historical evidence to support her assertion that the mosque was built at the site of a temple. Indeed the general tenor of Babur's state policy towards places of worship of other religions hardly justifies Mrs Beveridge's inference.

To British officials who saw India as a land of mutually hostile religious communities, such stories may appear self-validating. Historians, however, have to carefully consider the authenticity of each historical statement and the records on which they are based.

While there is no evidence about the Babri mosque having been built on the site of a temple, the mosque according to the medieval sources, was not of much religious and cultural significance for the Muslims.

The assumption that Muslim rulers were invariably and naturally opposed to the sacred places of Hindus is not always borne out by historical evidence.

i) The patronage of the Muslim Nawabs was crucial for the expansion of Ayodhya as a Hindu pilgrimage centre. Recent researches have shown that Nawabi rule depended on the collaboration of Kayasthas and their military force was dominated by Shivaite Nagas. Gifts to temples and patronage of Hindu sacred centres was an integral part of the Nawabi mode of exercise of power. The dewan of Nawab Safdarjung built and repaired several temples in Ayodhya. Safdarjung gave land to the Nirwana akhara to build a temple on Hanuman hill in Ayodhya. Asaf-ud-Daulah's dewan contributed to the building of the temple fortress in Hanuman hill in the city. Panda records show that Muslim officials of the nawabi court gave several gifts for rituals performed by Hindu priests.

ii) In moments of conflict between Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim rulers did not invariably support Muslims. When a dispute between the Sunni Muslims and the Naga Sadhus over a Hanumangarhi temple in Ayodhya broke out in 1885, Wajid Ali Shah took firm and decisive action. He appointed a tripartite investigative committee consisting of the district official Agha Ali Khan, the leading Hindu landholder, Raja Mansingh, and the British officers in charge of the Company's forces. When the negotiated settlement failed to control the build up of communal forces, Wajid Ali Shah mobilised the support of Muslim leaders to bring the situation under control, confiscated the property of Maulavi Amir Ali, the leader of the Muslim communal forces, and finally called upon the army to crush the Sunni Muslim group led by Amir Ali. An estimated three to four hundred Muslims were killed.

This is not to suggest that there were no conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, but in neither case were they homogeneous communities. There was hostility between factions and groups within a community as there was amity across communities.

The above review of historical evidence suggests that the claims made by Hindu and Muslim communal groups can find no sanction from history. As a sacred centre the character of Ayodhya has been changing over the centuries. It has been linked to the history of many religions. Different communities have vested it with their own sacred meaning. The city cannot be claimed by any one community as its exclusive sacred preserve.

The appropriation of history is a continual process in any society. But in a multi-religious society like ours, appropriations which draw exclusively on communal identities engender endless communal conflicts. And attempts to undo the past can only have dangerous consequences.

It is appropriate, therefore, that a political solution is urgently found: "Rama janmabhumi-Babri Masjid" area be demarcated and declared a national monument.

REASON AMIDST MAYHEM

The following excerpts of interviews with two distinguished Indian historians are reproduced, courtesy ***Frontline*** *January 29, 1993. Professor Ifran Habib is with the Centre for Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Luknow. He is also the Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). Professor Sarvapalli Gopal is with the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

Interview with Ifran Habib

As a historian, how do you view the events of December 6 at Ayodhya?

First of all, I would like to say that a structure which is more than 450 years old is normally, in a civilised country, not destroyed. Even in this country, it is protected by the Ancient Monuments Act— if ought to have been so protected. The Prime Minister himself now says it was a structure which was so old and it should not have been destroyed. But he should have gone further and seen that under the Ancient Monuments Act, it is the responsibility of the Central Government. So first of all, purely as a citizen, this is my response.

Was the Babri Masjid an important monument?

I cannot say the Babri Masjid was a major monument , but it is a monument all the same. And it is a significant instance of Sharqi architecture. Essentially, this school of architecture developed around the Jaunpur region during the Delhi Sultanate. Jaunpur was built in the time of Mohammad bin Tughlaq-the latter half of the 14th century. Previous to that, Ayodhya (or Awadh) has been the capital.

Awadh or Ayodhya began to lose its importance in the 14th century. Earlier it was the centre of the kingdom and had a big Muslim settlement. The VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) historians who say Ayodhya had no Muslim settlement prior to Babar have simply not read their history. Outside Jaunpur, the Ayodhya mosque was the most significant Sarqi monument. It is not in the classical Mughal style. It is pre Mughal, in an architectural sense. For that reason perhaps, its destruction is an even greater assault on our heritage than the destruction of a Mughal monument-which I hope will never take place.

How about the recurrence of non-Islamic motifs within the mosque? Is that a feature of Sharqi architecture?

How do you define 'non-Islamic'? There are floral designs often found in mosques, about which there is nothing Islamic. What happens often is that in mosques, as in temples, stone pillars are used. Nobody is denying that the Babri Masjid contained slabs and stones obviously taken from temples.

What the VHP forgets is that each of these pillars is of a different pattern. They do not come from the same temple. To go on saying that there was a Ram temple at the very site where the mosque was built — that is not justified. Because, if that was so, there are several inscriptions from that period and they would certainly have said that a temple at Ayodhya was converted into a mosque. Why should they have suppressed a fact like that, since it only adds to the merit of the construction?

Some observers have referred to the destruction of the Babri Masjid as a reversion to medieval ways of thought and action. Others have said it was a peculiarly modern phenomenon — that religious intolerance was not of quite such an order in those days. How do you react, as someone who has studied the medieval period in some depth?

The question is whether this kind of behaviour is sanctioned by medieval precedent. Now, in one way it is, and in another, it is not. If you believe that India now is no longer in 1992 but, let us say, in 1492 — not Akbar's time but in Babar's of Lodi's time — then I would say that destruction or usurpation of religious places has occurred. The Mahabodhi temple is one well-known example — it was built in the time of the Sultans, the early 14th century according to the inscription. It was purely a Buddhist place of worship, but it was later occupied by Saivites. The Parsis usurped Buddhist viharas — Alberuni has pointed this out, and there is archaeological evidence that this has happened. In India, of course, the Muslim rulers did it. So the first question is whether we are going to repeat that kind of thing.

But in another way, this is totally different from medieval times. First of all, when those things were done they were done by individual rulers. They did not mobilise large mobs and carry out a general slaughter, It never was a political programme of this dimension, which means that the object is not merely building a place of worship. Rather, the object is the total change of a state, a polity and culture, and the decimation of a large section of the population. That is, I think, very modern.

Secondly, from medieval times, there are also the positive features—Hindu masons building mosques were allowed to leave invocations to their gods; Rana Kumbha, building his famous Victory Tower, put 'Allah" in Arabic characters on it. And then, Akbar is so will known that I heed not mention his case — the immense grants to temples which marked his reign and the reign of his successors. So I don't know if destruction of places of worship

is the only medieval precedent. Because the other kind of precedent—of tolerance and coexistence—is also there.

Would you say that religion was in those days a political institution in a manner that it should not be today, in a secular republic?

The state then was different. The concept of a secular state is very recent in origin. It has grown along with the concept of the nation. First there were the nation-states which were not secular. And then the concept of the secular state was developed basically from the French Revolution and also partly from the American Constitution. When we in India constructed a nation from the 19th century onwards, with the national movement, we also took over the vision of the secular society — in the Karachi Congress resolution of 1931, for instance.

As far as the medieval times are concerned, the concept of a religious community as a political entity is not present. The concept of religion is present. There is a conception that since a particular religion is that of the ruler, he would have an interest in showing its superiority, But that is totally different from the concept of a religious community as a ruling community—which belongs to modern communalism. That Muslims, for example, are a political community, or that Hindus are not only a political community, but the Indian nation, Now it is this kind of concept which is totally modern. This is totally different from the medieval concept of religion.

Are you saying the medieval ruler was obliged to seek legitimacy by portraying his religion as superior...?

I do not think rulers in India rested their sovereign power on religion. So this legitimisation theory —that sovereignty is based on religion — has really come from Europe, from the church's theory (though not actual practice). There is no similar concept in India, where the possession of power was in itself sufficient legitimisation. What I wanted to say is that in order to stress the power of the sovereign, a particular emphasis would be given to the religion of the sovereign—either by building a big mosque or a big temple or whatever. That emphasis was not given to the religious community of the sovereign. In the Vijayanagar empire, for instance, there is no concept that there is a Hindu community which constitutes in any sense a political community. Or even in the Sultanate or the Mughal empire, there is no concept of a Muslim community. There is a concept of a particular class— the nobility, which also includes Rajputs and Marathas, and other Hindu elements.

Does this mean the religious identity was in a popular sense not very strong in medieval times, that there was no differentiation between people on the basis of their religion?

Statistically, if one knew the religion of the ruler, one could say to which community most of the nobility would belong. Say, for a Rajput ruler, if he had ten nobles in all, two or three of them would be Muslims. This is a peculiar feature of the Indian polity. Right from the Delhi Sultanate, there are always Hindu nobles occupying important positions in the polity which is not the situation in any country outside India.

But as far as ordinary people were concerned, they were the subjects— they were subjected to the same kind of oppression, In India, there was no provision that Muslims should pay a lower amount of land tax than Hindus. There is no real evidence of such discrimination.

Interview with Sarvapalli Gopal

After the demolition of the Babri Masjid, several rationalisations of the act have appeared. An instance is the belief expressed by certain commentators in the national press that Muslims act as cultural drag upon the rest of the country — that the consolidation of the Indian identity is impeded by their insistence on maintaining a separate identity. By implication, the Indian identity is synonymous with the Hindu identity. How do you view this line of argument?

I don't accept for a moment the argument that Indian nationalism can only be rooted in a Hindu ethos. I don't think any such an argument is in accord with our own history. Indian nationalism has never been a religious nationalism and to the extent that religion has come into politics it has weakened our nationalism What we have had in India for centuries is that Hindus and Muslims lived side, by side, interacted with each other, and produced a composite culture— in music, architecture, food, dress. Even in matters of religion, the Sufis have drawn much from Hinduism and the Bhakti movement owes a great deal to Islam.

There was one weakness, of course, and that is the dichotomy in social habit— Hindus and Muslims did not inter-marry or dine with each other.

This was the flaw which the British exploited to create two imagined religious communities. The British worked on an understanding that Indians are not a nation, but a cluster of religious groups. This suited the British in the maintenance of the raj. And, therefore, we had the introduction of this phenomenon of communalism— which, to our shame, is our contribution to political practice in the world. I think communalism, looked at in historical perspective, is only skin-deep. Communalism in the sense of claiming a real, distinct identity in politics on the basis of religion does not go back more than 150 years. As it suited the British, they developed it through the creation of separate electorates and pitching Muslim politicians against Hindu politicians. And with all that, of course, we had the horrors of Pakistan.

I am of the view that Indian nationalism has to be rooted in secular ways of thinking. Even more important, I am of the view that secularism is not, as some people suggest, something that we have borrowed from the West. Of course, our secularism has had weaknesses. It is our duty to strengthen secularism and get rid of those weaknesses—the weaknesses of our social practice, the weaknesses foisted by the British— rather than say that nationalism is basically religious, and that Indian nationalism is Hindu nationalism. That is something which I find abominable as a thought, and totally incorrect as a statement of the historical processes in our country.

The theme of Partition has come up repeatedly in relation to the Ayodhya dispute. Commentators seeking to justify the demolition have said effectively, that the country is entitled to demand recompense from Muslims for Partition. In fact, the VHP, when asked by the Babri-Masjid Action Committee how it accounted for the sudden and mysterious appearance of the Ram idols in the masjid, replied that as Muslims had voted overwhelmingly for Partition in 1946, this was a natural backlash from the Hindu community. And that indeed the Muslims who had stayed back in India should respect the sentiments of the Hindu Majority and hand over the sacred spot at Ayodhya to them. There is a tendency, even today, to hold Muslims responsible for Partition. How do you react to this?

Obviously nobody is happy about Partition. We would all have liked to have seen, after the British left, the old boundaries of India retained. But there has been a Partition, and that is an accomplished fact. As to who is responsible for it, I think many people are. I think the British are responsible, I think the desire for office and the frustrations of politicians such as (Mohammed Ali) Jinnah are responsible. And I think the leadership of Indian nationalism made a gross number of mistakes. I think, for example, that the Mahatma is a very great individual—probably one of the greatest of the 20th century. But the Khilafat campaign was a mistake. Then, Gandhiji tended to talk in the religious idiom, and that obviously offended the religious susceptibilities of those who did not belong to the Hindu faith. I think the Congress made a mistake in accepting office in 1937 in the provinces with very little power. It only made it easier for the Muslim League to say that the Congress has a majority since the Hindus are in a majority, and therefore the Congress is a Hindu party.

I do not think the responsibility for Partition can be laid at the door of any one individual or any one party. But there it is, you accept that as they are. Let us also face this fact, that since 1947, we have had no occasion to question the loyalty of those Muslims who have stayed in India. Therefore, I think it is totally wrong on the part of anybody to hold the present generation of Muslims in India responsible for Partition.

Here, I would like to add that if we are to treat all Indians, whatever their religion, as equal before the law, we must introduce a common civil law code. I do not believe the Muslim minority in India has in any way been appeased by the governments that have been in power. But if everyone is to be of equal standing, and there are to be no second-class citizens in India, then I do not see why women who belong to the Islamic faith should be denied the rights and the privileges which Hindu women enjoy. One great bastion of secularism is a common civil law code, and the sooner we introduce it the better.

How do you assess the current state of the Muslim psyche, in relation to the post-Partition situation? All through the 1980s we have had a series of communal riots — and Muslims have been the disproportionate sufferers. And now we have this ultimate atrocity — the pulling down of the Babri Masjid. Do you think the circumstances are in any way better than they were in the 1950s for the introduction of a common civil code?

Well, I think various factors have developed since 1948. The growth of the urban middle-class, the influence of the non-resident Indians, the growth of communal consciousness... Therefore, even

though the third party—that is, the British- have left the scene, we have not really been able to establish a secular atmosphere. And here again, one of the weaknesses is that we have not had the development of universal primary education. If we have an educated electorate in a democratic polity, and we have a government which establishes a common civil law, then I think the forces of secularism would be strengthened.

We have had some laws passed, we have had the idea of secularism put into the Constitution, but we have not really created the atmosphere for the development of secularism. That is why we have had communal rioting in various parts of India. There are economic, sociological and historical reasons for it, and we have not taken sufficient counter-measures.

Now this of course, this last horror—the destruction of the mosque—is obviously going to have a profound impact on Muslim attitudes and thinking. I think they will feel that however they may behave, they have not and will not be accepted as equal citizens. And that I would say is a dreadful thought.

THE WORLD BANK AND THE NEW POLITICS OF AID

[Part Two]

Peter Gibbon

The World Bank and Poverty Since 1985[2]

The issue of poverty in LDCs—which more or less disappeared from donor agendas in the early 1980s—was received in 1983-5 by the like-minded countries and by UN agencies with poverty-related mandates [UNICEF,ILO etc,] in the form of criticism of the impact of stablization and adjustment 'policy reforms' on socially vulnerable groups [see *Svendsen, 1987; Meinecke, 1989*]. This issue was potentially an extremely damaging one for the unity and coherence of the still fragile regime and for the World Bank in particular as the principal architect of its economic policies. Arguably, a hard-hitting critique of the effects of adjustment, coupled with a serious exposition of an alternative redistributivist development model could have rallied broad international support and have led to at least a thorough review of the principles of economic liberalization. If nothing else, this would have had the effect of obliging adjustment and its authors to concede greater transparency and accountability on their own part.

For reasons which are unclear, this approach was not adapted. Instead, the line of argument opened up by the poverty critics within the UN system was that adjustment in principle was desirable, or at any rate irreversible, but that its effects on the vulnerable required mitigation. The latter should be via a reduction in levels of demand compression and domestic disabsorbtion and the introduction of a series of measures to raise the incomes of the poor and/or safeguard the provision of services to them. These were in terms conceptualized in terms 'targeted' transfers, subsidies and supports [*Gonia, Jully and Stewart: 1987.*] The content of this 'alternative' was almost directly borrowed from the World Bank's own treatment of poverty issues immediate before its conversion to an entirely 'hardnosed' neo-liberal agenda in 1981 [cf. *World Bank:1980*].

The World Bank began responding to the line of critique around 1986, initially through setting up and partly funding an adjustment-mitigation exercise in Ghana - the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment or PAMSCAD. The latter consisted of a set of projects put up by the Ghana government, with supposed poverty mitigation implications, and with a total of USD 86 m. In fact many of the projects, including some quite expensive ones, had no relation to assisting what are normally considered poor groups and were instead focused on providing compensation for retrenched civil servants or support of various kinds to the national secondary school system [cf. list of projects in *Jully 1988.*] The choice of Ghana is of interest, as it had been certainly the most cooperative adjusting country in Anglophone Africa since 1983. As such, it should have maximized trickle-down benefits and hence have been in least need of poverty mitigation. Its choice was presumably there-

fore as a reward to the Rawlings government for good behaviour. Also of interest was the decision to tackle poverty via the project form — an approach which was intrinsically piecemeal and arbitrary.

The World Bank deflected criticism along the latter lines by slowly initiating plans for 'conceptual work' to study how adjustment packages could be redesigned to mitigate their effects on the poor and for an international data gathering exercise to gather data on vulnerable groups and assess the impact of adjustment on them. Along with some promised further programmes of mitigative projects, these were to jointly comprise its still-continuing 'Social Dimensions of Adjustment in Africa' [SDA] initiative, launched in 1987 and planned to run for four years.

This initiative cannot be considered a serious one, on three counts. Firstly, it has proceeded at a snail's pace. For example, by 1991, only 5 national poverty surveys had been completed and there were only 9 national 'Social Action programmes' of mitigative projects [besides *PAMSCAD*.] Secondly, the programme has so far relied almost entirely on raising additional funding from the 'soft' donors themselves and the World Bank's commitment of resources to it has been relatively small and in a generously-casted 'in kind' form. Thirdly, each of the three components of the initiative have serious internal flaws.

The costly [USD 0.6 m] 'conceptual exercise' on redesign of adjustment packages confined itself to listing a narrow range of changes in public finance strategy, credit policy, exchange rate policy and trade liberalization procedures which could be introduced 'without distorting economic (ie. free market, P.G.) mechanisms' (*World Bank 1990:87*). These related almost entirely to sequencing matters. It also discussed, in an extremely general way, some issues of 'targeting' government subsidies and services on the poor.

What seem to have been completely absent are new country adjustment packages which in any way reflect poverty concerns, if only through the changes in sequencing or the targeting of subsidies and services suggested in World Bank documentation in some cases since 1980.

Meanwhile, the central poverty issues were characterized by inaction, even in the tendentiously narrow form they had been defined by the World Bank itself. As indicated, the World Bank had managed to get those who had originally raised the issue to pay for this whole charade.

By 1990-91 the patrons of SDA were becoming restive and vented a series of criticism of it at meetings with the programme organizers [*World Bank: 1991.*] The World Bank's responses were defensive and evasive; LDC governments were blamed, for example, for the bias of mitigatory projects toward the non-poor (ibid). The likelihood of these criticisms going further were slight however. In fact, at the same time as they were being made, the World Bank was announcing a second phase of SDA. The like-minded countries, having demanded that something be done, and having accepted the parameters of the UNICEF criticism in the first place, had probably too much invested to reopen the debate in a public way; meanwhile indigenous NGOs were being tempted into silence by the offer of managing the mitigating projects themselves.

World Bank and The Environment Since 1985

Environmental issues with aid regime implications began to be raised by northern social movements, international NGOs, a few indigenous southern NGOs, a (very) few southern governments and a number of 'softer' northern ones from around 1983 [cf. *The Bruntland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development: 1983).*] The issues concerned were further-reaching than those raised in relation to poverty, and were raised in forms which shared few if any of the main assumptions of the regime's central players.

By the second half of the 1980s the principal features of a popular 'northern,' environmental agenda had emerged. The northern agenda revolved around controls on the non-cleaned burning of fossil fuels, reductions in pre consumption of other environmentally depleting or harmful substances (e.g. packaging), substantial investment in public transport and stronger international environment rule enforcement, for example with regard to exploitation of tropical rainforests. The southern one mainly concerned issues of desertification, soil erosion and extending the availability of clean water supplies and also asserted that the costs of any raising of international environmental standards should be entirely born by the north. More controversially,it called for the international recognition of southern government royalty rights on the exploitation of resources from both the south itself and from global commons. Relations between the northern and southern agendas were congruent in some respects and not in others. Northern environmental lobbies emphasized southern problems with respect to debt and terms of trade in perpetuating the poverty which was partially responsible for ecological degradation in the south and supported calls for an international transfer of resources to remove southern poverty. On the other hand, they also called for trade bans and import levies and duties on resource depleting imports and imports of products produced or harvested in environmentally unfriendly ways. Demands such as these or related proposals for an environmental code to be added to the

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) clearly cut across the interest of primary product exporters. Northern environmental movement opposition to particular large-scale infrastructural or forestry-related projects with severe ecological consequences also proved a source of anger both with donor agencies and southern governments.

Both agendas influenced the few international environmental agreements which were reached in the 1980s. The Law of the Sea Treaty (1982) included provision for a transfer of UN expertise and financial assistance to help protect coastal areas in LDCs and for a sharing of revenues from the mining of international seabeds. The Montreal protocols of 1987 and 1989 Chloroflouro carbons (CFCs) was accompanied by the launching of a fund of USD 240 to help developing countries produce or purchase substitutes.[3] In 1989 the EC countries inaugurated a community-wide tax on carbons and a number of member states meeting at the Hague signed a declaration calling for a new UN environmental agency empowered to take binding decisions on a simple majority basis.

The US government, while enacting certain domestic environmental reforms, proved extremely hostile to two of these three agreements or declarations. It refused to sign the Law of the Sea treaty, refusing even to try to negotiate changes in it, and was not invited to the Hague meeting as its position was known in advance. Later, at the 'Earth Summit' at Rio in 1992, it refused to sign the Biodiversity Treaty, which incorporated claims for legal recognition of southern government rights to indigenous knowledge of local plant and animal varieties and enshrined the principal that these could be exchanged for bio-technologies. Finally, it (and most of the rest of the donor community) vetoed the creation of a 'Green Fund' worth USD 125 bn per annum and controlled by the UN to step up the transfer to the south of capital and technology and provide northern compensation for intensified controls on southern extraction. The idea of such a Fund had been put forward by a meeting of the so-called Group of 77 (LCD) countries in Beijing in June 1991.

Defences of central planks of the new aid regime were implicit in most of the US's objections to the treaties proposed at Rio. These were said to threaten incentives to free enterprise by challenging patent protection laws and the integrity of GATT and free trade generally, besides involving demands for major new aid commitments and a reassertion of economic regulation.[4] However, the mode of defence adopted by the US government has proved extremely difficult to sustain diplomatically. It threatens inter-donor consensus by refusing to acknowledge that some donors have enthusiastically championed green causes, while also potentially undermining constituency-building exercise in the south through its naked defence of northern self-interests.

The yawning chasm between the US government approaches and those of the G77 on the one hand and other northern governments on the other has ironically created important opportunities for the World Bank. These opportunities have been to develop a series of stances on the environment of a more ecologically-friendly character than the US government, while still preserving the aid regime's basic integrity; and secondly, to further advance its own position within the aid regime by securing control of new environment-related aid funding. In the process a further opportunity has been created, namely to strengthen the aid regime itself by feeding environmental aid into the general system of policy-based cross conditionality.

The World Bank's environmental policy-related activity has proceeded on three complementary fronts. These in some ways mirror its activity on the poverty front. The first of these has been to establish an 'environmental conscious' profile. This dates from 1987 when 'sustainable development' was formally adopted as an organizational priority and an environmental department established, along with environmental units in each regional bureau. The most important practical step taken as a result of this was the belated introduction in 1989 of environmental impact assessments for all new projects. Although revised in 1991 so that assessments must precede project loan approvals and address global as well as local environmental issues, these are essentially mechanisms for ensuring that mitigatory plans are in place for populations and the ecology in target areas rather than means of completely screening out environmentally dangerous projects.

A second front has been the elaboration of a specific discourse on environmental questions, which received its public baptism in two major reports of 1992, *World Development Report 1992 and Trade and the Environment.* The basic message of this discourse is that the central issues raised by the different environmental lobbies all have a certain degree of validity (although not to the extent claimed by the green movement), but can be most effectively addressed by less and not more economic and environmental regulation. This argument rests on the twin assumptions that environmentally-clean industry is necessarily more efficient and therefore profitable than environmentally-dirty industry, and that efficiency is best promoted by open markets and deregulation. By contrast, environmental degradation is said to stem principally from protected markets, state industries and absent or unclear property rights. In the same way that poverty was viewed in the early 1980s, environmental

degradation is therefore a by-product of underdevelopment (and/or socialism, which amounts to the same thing) and will go away with growth.

Within this discourse, special cases of various kinds are also acknowledged. One of these is pollution of commons which cannot be subject to individual ownership and which therefore nobody has an interest in defending. Another is the absence of pollution-free technologies in those LDCs where there are environmental resources (e.g. rainforests) whose preservation there is a global interest for. The first of these are said to require a system of incentives (not controls) to regulate, although no examples of the successful application of such incentives is provided. The second is said to require access to less polluting technologies and some sharing of costs. Where these technologies already exist they should be via "access to commercial financial markets -coupled with expanded foreign investments" [1992:24]. Where there is scope for new ones this could also be through aid-based 'pilot programmes and innovative approaches'.

World Bank 'Governance' and Political Conditionality

'Governance,' referring to forms of political management, and political conditionality, referring to types of political representation, arose as issues for the aid regime at the end of the 1980s, from slightly different but overlapping sources.

The issue of 'governance,' at the time defined in ways which included some aspects of political representation, emerged as an intrinsic part of the 'enabling environment' discourse in the period 1985-89. As such it was part of the assertion of a claim by the World Bank to broader and broader areas of policy expertise, connected to and ideologically justifying expansions in the scope both of the regime itself and the World Bank's own role in it. AT the same time both the enabling environment discourse generally and the sub-discourse expressed a growing contradiction and antagonism between the economic and social forces laying behind the World Bank and bourgeois elites in LDCs - a marked contrast to the positive relations of the pre-adjustment era when aid flowed in larger and less restricted quantities.

The basic content of this regional governance agenda has already been suggested. It involved a critique of the African state as a degenerated patrimonial institution. The origin of this patrimonialism lay in a combination of a rapid expansion of post-colonial state functions on the basis of socialist/nationalist claims, coupled with a lack of internal constraints and regulations. Hence, in the absence of countervailing powers, an institutional order flourished which was characterized by arbitrariness, non-accountability and non-transparency and therefore incapable of effective economic and political management. Few, if any, specific remedial measures were prepared to deal with this situation. Rather the World Bank emphasized the importance of 'deconstructive' institutional reforms (unbundling the sate in terms of centralization and sources of revenue), promoting non-state players (especially NGOs) and grooming new kinds of leaders or reeducating existing ones. None of these tactics, especially not the last, was particularly novel.

A political conditionality agenda had always been present to one degree or another in superpower dealings with LDCs and, in the case of the US, its content had always involved reference to multiparty democracy and human rights (albeit applied in highly arbitrary ways). Following the breakdown of communism in Eastern Europe and the emergence of 'unipolarism,' it was formally adopted as an aid regime principle by the EC Council of Ministers in 1989 and elaborated in slightly more detail by the French, British and German governments the following year. The new 'political conditionality' agenda typically contained 'governance' issues as enunciated by the World Bank with calls for reforms in the sphere of political representation, as enunciated by the U.S. Invariably, also an explicit linkage was made between economic and political reforms.

The spread of explicitly political conditionality was problematic for the World Bank for a number of reasons, of which two were central. In the first place, it was felt to threaten the viability of or at least lead to a slow down of economic reform, by 'overloading' governments with additional 'difficult' reforms *[cf. Nelson 1990 a]*. Besides this, the World Bank has always been subjectively attached to the idea that a combination of 'enlightened' authoritarian leaders and technocrats given a reasonable amount of space represent the ideal background for successful economic reform [*cf. Trye, 1992*].

A second issue for the World Bank referred to the difficulty of formally taking political conditionality on board as part of its own *'work.'* Given the fact that the main bilaterals were vigorously foregrounding the issue and asserting its incorporation within the aid regime at both discourse and activity levels, the World Bank had to decide whether and on what terms to embrace it - or risk losing its leading role. Besides the fact that there was considerable skepticism about political conditionality within the World Bank, embracing it would also lead to a derogation of the purely technicist basis on which the institution's claims to intellectual/policy leadership were based. Besides this, there were some doubts about the legality of embracing it.[5] On the other hand, a simple contracting out from political conditionality was also difficult, since it would level to the World Bank's exclusion

from an important area of policy and decision-making. Moreover, assuming that political conditionality would also require coordination and therefore a coordinative body, it threatened an undesirable pluralization of 'governance' within the aid regime itself.

The World Bank's response to these quandaries has been surprisingly ingenious and by mid 1992, apparently successful. However, the favourability to it of the outcome is also owned to the wish of the G7 countries to retain as much individual flexibility as possible in the application of political conditionality, and hence to soft pedal on the issue of its coordination.

In 1991-92, as it had previously done in the case of poverty and the environment, the World Bank set out to albeit its lead institution status as the issue through promoting 'analytical work'. The first result of this has been a 60-page booklet on *Governance and Development* written by Sarwar Lateef, Geoff Lamb and others [*World Bank: 1992*]. The essence of this booklet is an effort to (re)define governance in terms of development policy management and as separate from politics. The problem of 'governance' is said to involve four distinct issues: poor public service management, lack of accountability, the absence of a 'legal framework for development' and problems of information availability or transparency. Of these, the second and third are treated at greatest length.

The burden of the discussion of both accountability and legal frameworks is that it is possible to have a technical 'solution' to these governance problems independent of the form of political representation. Accountability is argued to have a purely administrative dimension involving the nature of the powers and practices of agents acting as proxies for the public and applying to the domain of governmental 'inputs' (not defined) as opposed to distributional 'outputs'. Hence, it can be guarantied by asserting a strong accountancy and auditing culture on the one hand and decentralizing decision-making as much as possible to points at which revenues are collected on the other. In other words accountability is equated with the assertion and generalization of the pre-eminence of financial rectitude. This repeats a formulation which appeared at the birth of the new aid regime to the effect that Finance Ministries "represent the general interest in the bureaucratic struggle for resources" [*World Bank 1981: 33*]. This time however, there are also gestural references to the importance of a pluralization of development actors (local government and NGOs) for accountability.

The discussion of legal frameworks and governance develops a parallel argument. Drawing on the distinctions between institutional and substantive (rights) aspects of law, it is asserted that the concept Rule of Law properly applies to the former only. That is, to be present, what is required is simply for a set of rules to be known in advance, for these to be enforced and for independent judiciary-controlled bodies and procedures for rule amendment to be in place. On the basis of these arguments the World Bank role in promoting governance is defined as strengthening accounting in the public service and the availability of 'choice and participation options'; legal sector reviews; and improving transparency with regard to budgets, procurement and environmental assessments [*World Bank 1992:48-50*].

The object of this intellectual exercise has been to assert not only World Bank leadership on issues of 'economic governance' but to ensure that this is de-linked from political conditionality and <u>not</u> subject to any specific forms of conditionality of its own: "There is no need for additional criteria to reflect concerns with governance: merely the effective and consistent approach of existing (ones) based on a greater awareness of the implication of issues of governance for development performance" [*ibid:55*].

The obvious danger (to the World Bank) of such an approach must be that it leaves the political conditionality field wide open to other competitors. Hence, it has been accompanied by two other operations both designed to retain an arm's length control over its operation. Firstly, the World Bank has let it be known that even though it cannot itself play any part in designing or coordinating political conditionality, it can still act as a channel for communicating decisions on it. Moreover, part of the communication of such decisions will involve the World Bank indicating that the continuity of its own assistance cannot be divorced from the continuity of other donors. In other words, although it can have nothing to do with political conditionality, or its coordination, the World Bank will nonetheless chair Consultative Group meetings where it is discussed, tell recipients what decisions in it have been reached and link the continuation of its own aid to donor's concerns about it!

The Bank should not act as the agent of lending countries at...(Consultative Group meetings at which political conditionality is discussed. However)... as chair (of them) it is normal for the Bank to inform the country of leaders' widely-held concerns, particularly where these would affect Bank-assisted programmes... When dialogue fails, the Bank's own lending role to the country is likely to be affected [*ibid*].

It is precisely this tortuously-justified role which the Bank indeed played at the recent Consultative Group meeting on Malawi, when a decision to suspend new aid pledges was linked to human rights reforms.

World Bank and NGOs

As a result of developments in the aid regime, the significance of NGOs to the World Bank is now multifold and of considerable importance. This importance is ideological, financial and practical. The new aid regime's discourse has tended to idealize NGOs as a counterpart to its treatment of the state and has systematically emphasized their state-substitive capacities and their cultural affinity with African communities and (in an especially exaggerated way) their capacity to pluralize the institutional environment. Finally, NGOs now collectively represent the major donors (and recipients) not completely incorporated into the system of cross-conditionality, practically, NGOs are of greater direct consequence because of the World Bank's new profiles on poverty and environmental, and to lesser extent governance. This growing and increasingly varied significance has given rise to certain tensions, most of which relate to keeping NGOs in their traditional place—which as Fowler [1988] has argued, is on the lowest rung of the ladder of disbursing project aid.

Because of the World Bank's legal dedications to lending only to governments, direct contacts with NGOs were few prior to the late 1980s. A survey of World Bank projects approved between 1973 and 1988 found that only between five and six percent involved NGOs in any way. The commonest form of involvement was in the administration of agricultural development schemes (particularly for credit) [*Salmen and Eaves 1991: 109, 128].* An international NGO-World Bank committee was formed in 1982 to meet annually for discussion of operational collaborations and in order to strengthen direct contacts. This committee which was (and remains) open to development NGOs only, was itself not attached with great importance by either side until the second half of the decade.

The present era of World Bank-NGO relations opened in 1987-88, with the launching of SDA. This coincided with the issuing of World Bank Operational Manual Statement 5.30 *[1988]* on how the institution's employees should 'make use' of NGOs in project work and with the setting up of a World Bank advisory office, data bases and internal training programmes or seminars *[Beckmann, 1991].* A series of country studies of NGOs was also launched, as well as a general study by Michael Cerena [1988].

Besides repeating the standard aid regime discourse on pluralistic etc., significance of NGOs, Cernea's study advanced within the World Bank the argument that NGOs were an appropriate vehicle for projects with poverty implications not only because of their historical experience of this area but also because they presented workable solutions to recurrent cost issues. This was because they typically worked on the basis of cost recovery principles of one kind (cash) or another (in-kind) *[ibid: 31; cf. also Baldwin 1990].* On the other hand, they were also acknowledged to generally have very low aid-absorptive capacities, at least in their current form. However, as indicated above, NGOs have become subsequently promoted as vehicles for 'Social Action Programmes' within World Bank projects.

In 1989, as it was positioning itself for a 'green' intervention, the World Bank initiated an opening toward environmental NGOs, local and international. Critical pressure from the latter concerning the environmental and social impact of some of its major infrastructural and forestry-related projects had been an ever-present factor since the early 1980s and had been instrumental in embarrassing the World Bank before the US Congress, but had until this time been stonewalled. Cernea's suggestion *[1988:32-5]* that collaboration and consultation with them might both serve to channel green opposition to the organization into manageable channels and actually improve the operational functioning of certain projects was now taken up in two further related directives. The Environmental assessment Directive already described and Operational Directive 14.70 on incorporation of NGOs into the project cycle. The latter, it was stated, could in future be not merely as means of organizing local communities to use project facilities (although this was still important) but also as sources of information on potential beneficials, consultants in project preparation and partners in monitoring project performance.

Part and parcel of the opening up to NGOs on the environmental front - which has consequently generated more intensive activity than the poverty one - was a recognition of the dangers of poor relations with NGOs *[Salmen and Eaves 1991: 113].* Consequently, the World Bank transferred responsibility for dealing with NGOs to its External Relations Department (EXTIE) and began a pro-active policy of seeking NGO views and suggestions on its policy documents, including *World Development Reports* from 1990. In line with a further attempt to raise the World Bank's green profile in the run up to Rio, EXTIE launched a 'Bank-wide learning process on popular participation' and seems to have been instrumental in the 1991 revision of environmental impact assessments (see above)

In the light of these changes, since 1988 Bank-NGO relations have become both more extensive and intensive. According to Beckmann *[1991:137-8]* between 1988 and 91 NGOs were involved in 27.6 percent of all new approved projects. At the level of formal international relations meanwhile, interactions grew somewhat complex.

Perhaps because of the highly ideological interpretation of the politics of NGOs found within aid regime discourse, the World Bank registered surprise that dialogue on the World Bank-NGO committee revealed NGO's 'lack of sensitivity to macro-economic problems and to the need for an enabling economic environment' [*Salmen and Eaves 1991: 128*]. While some NGOs were extremely happy that dialogue was taking place at all, and even expressed the opinion that the World Bank's new positions on poverty and the environment had been a result of it *[E.Fernandez of Solidarios in "NGO-Bank Line"],* others grew increasingly skeptical - especially after their critical comments on (e.g.) World Development Report 1990 were simply ignored. Essentially the World Bank appears to see the purpose of dialogue as educating the NGOs and a channel for the latter to feed new ideas and 'innovating practices' into the existing aid regime, while at least some NGOs see it as a way of reforming or perhaps opening up splits in the World Bank. For the latter, dialogue has increased expectations and led, amongst other things, for demands for NGO direct representation on aid regime decision-making bodies (albeit lower level ones like the GEF 'Participants Group').

That the two sides are speaking different languages is most evident on the issue of 'popular participation' in development projects, a matter that has been before the World Bank-NGO Committee since 1990. For the World Bank this is essentially a precondition of successful cost-sharing and a means to help projects work better, it is not possible or even desirable in all projects and should be administratively led [*World Bank 1992:27*]. For the NGOs it is about empowerment.

By 1992 dialogue on the World Bank-NGO committee appeared to have stalled, although, as indicated, the rate of recruitment of indigenous NGOs into specific projects is probably still increasing. Events like the recruitment to EXIT of able NGO activists like John Clark appear to indicate a continuing interest on the World Bank's part in continuing with a 'cooling-out' strategy at this level. But in the wake of the World Bank's Rio triumph and its successful derailing of the poverty issue, it seems likely that the latter will be no longer upgraded at the same rate as in the recent past.

Conclusion

The World Bank entered the 1980s in a position of considerable weakness and doubts about its future. While the next 12 years have seen few positive results of its subsequent development initiatives, its political manoeuvres have been highly successful. By 1992 it had come to occupy an undisputed leading role within an aid regime which— with the exception of some sniping from international NGOs—had become increasingly homogeneous in outlook and escape-proof in design. This discrepancy is partly the result of an impressive display of managerial skill by the World Bank's leadership, who displayed a strong sensitivity to changes in international opinion and an ability to regularly recruitable subalterns—many, but not all of them, poachers turned gamekeepers.

By 1992 some common trends in the World Bank's tactics had become clarified. The organization recognised that its best chance of survival was expansion and subsequently worked to a game plan which involved launching takeover bids for expert status with regard to current issues, manufacturing a consensus around its interpretation of them, blaming others for its own earlier mistakes in the area, proposing market solutions with mitigatory or compensatory elements, using plans for mitigation/compensation as a basis for attracting new funding and using the outcome to promote cross-conditionality and through it strengthen its own hegemony. While the World Bank has been the gainer in this process, the issues themselves have suffered theoretical and practical trivialisation.

Of course, while the nature of the World Bank's own strategies have been influential in this process, the latter have been developed against a set of structural conditions which were basically and increasingly favorable. While the donors have become increasingly united, the opponents of orthodox aid policies—whose position was often ambivalent even at the outset—have become generally fragmented and isolated. Problems besetting the new social movements in the northern countries were reflected in this process. Lacking any common social base or material interest and depending for their support on a basically favorable economic situation, unity between and even within the different forces which the World Bank confronted was always problematical. As the renewed international recession of the early 1990s deepened, interest in the advanced countries in poverty, the environment and human rights abroad declined and the influence of those promoting an alternative aid agendas waned further. Meanwhile, within the donor community itself, the same external trends have both reduced the capacity for critical debts with the World Bank and led to a closing of ranks behind a defence of aid in general, regardless of its content. The one partly uncaptured element in this scenario comprises the international NGOs, who as yet, however, show few signs of agreement on what they should be demanding from and of the aid regime, and what bargaining counters are at their disposal in doing so.

Notes

2. For a fuller historical treatment of this issue, see Gibbon *[1992 a];* for an examination of its relation for the World Bank to the question of population, see Gibbon *[1992 b].*

3. Only 50 percent of the pledges made to the fund were honored by 1991 and no production projects were under way *[Franch 1992:161].*

4. One member of the U.S.delegation to Rio made a public statement at the summit to the effect that "environmental protection has replaced communism as the great threat to capitalism" *[Financial Times, June 11, 1992].*

5. The World Bank sought legal advice on the question; for their counsel's opinion, see Shihata [1991].

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Refugees

While floods ravaged and droughts destroyed
Famine raged and worlds collapsed
While we feasted in cushioned comfort and
Drank out of the horn of plenty,
They flocked in droves, driven into temples
Seeking sanctuary in sacred ground
Trailing in straggling lines of hunger and need
For their share of a better world.

While leaders met and split the world
Choosing which arms to use in war
We shook out our morning papers and
Tuned into the world at large,
They fled across frontiers, fleeing to security
From bombed out homes now splintered in rubble
To makeshift tents in refugee camps
To die dreaming of a better life.

While we rejoiced in feasts in foreign lands
Lit festive lamps and blessed our young
They huddled in the dark of curfewed blackouts
In underground shelters in war torn cities
Uncertain of today's nightfall, and tomorrow's sunrise

And we all carry scars of terror and violence
Striving for a better world?

Lakmali Gunawardena
1991, USA.

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