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## TRENDS

### Quicker, costlier passports, visas

The passport office and allied departments are to be restructured and modernised to issue quicker passports and visas. But these documents will also cost more. An additional revenue of 100 million rupees annually is expected after these changes.

### More English in the interior

Rural schools in areas classified by the Education Department as "difficult" (a polite term for "backward") are to be posted with 850 recently passed out teachers of English. Fifty thousand sat the examination for English teachers, only 850 qualified.

### The professor stands firm

Professor Carlo Fonseka will not reconsider his decision to quit. The professor resigned in disgust when students of the Kelaniya University's Medical Faculty, of which he is the dean, broke their pledge to him that they would not rag freshers.

"I find it impossible to teach with any degree of enthusiasm students who have deceived me and outwitted me", the professor, who has refused to withdraw his resignation, said.

### Port worker foils attempt

An alert port worker foiled a contractor's attempt to smuggle large quantity of urea aboard a vessel with fertilizer bound for the North. Urea is used by the LTTE in the manufacture of landmines, and is on the list of banned items. The security forces are on the hunt for a businessman in this connection.

## BRIEFLY...

### "Terrorist" statement: Thondaman cautious

CWC Boss and Rural Industries Minister S. Thondaman has reacted cautiously to President D.B. Wijetunga's statement that Sri Lanka had no ethnic problem but only a terrorist problem. In recent public statements the President has repeatedly said that terrorism must be wiped out, and that there was no "Tamil problem". Mr Thondaman, a member of the Government, has been talking loud and clear in recent times as a spokesman for the Tamil people. His reaction to the President's apparent hard line has been cautious.

In a recent newspaper interview the Tamil leader said: "It is the experience of history that statements are made by persons in positions and these statements cannot be interpreted in isolation. One has naturally to consider such sta-

tements in the context of general national policy. Persons in positions in any part of the world are constrained to make statements for many a reason, for example to boost the morale of a people".

### No objection now

After the PLO-Israel peace accord the PLO ambassador in Colombo, Mr Ibrahim Mohammed said that the people of Palestine do not have any objection to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Israel. Sri Lanka as a free country had the right to do whatever it thought was best in its own interests, the ambassador said.

### Elite NGOs shun ministry

Environment Minister Wimal Wickremasinghe told a meeting of NGOs called by the Central Environmental Authority that elite "English speaking" NGOs shunned his ministry and never called on him. NGOs functioning in the villages were closer to the ministry, he said.

"Our task should be the solving of environmental problems and not conflict with the NGOs", the minister said.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### President Premadasa

What a puny defense Chanaka Amaratunga makes in his eulogy to Premadasa, to show that the late President of Sri Lanka was a humanist, who believed in liberal principles (LG, Sept. 1).

Even if one accepts the answer 'No' on its face value, for charges such as, "depriving his opponents of their civic rights", "manipulating the Constitution for his partisan convenience", "meaningfully obstruct criticism", "extending the life of Parliament by a referendum", "pandering to racism and communalism", and "causing members of parliament from ethnic minorities to be driven from Parliament", one cannot exonerate Premadasa from these charges, because he was a willing participant at the powerful No. 2 position for eleven years (1977-88). Amaratunga should realise that aiding and abetting a crime is also a punishable offence.

I wish to note only one example of Premadasa's tactics in the parliament. When there was a no-confidence motion against the then leader of the opposition, A. Amirthalingam, and verbal mud-slingers like Cyril Mathew and others were spewing venom on the TULF leader, what did Premadasa do? Did he uphold the highest traditions of the august assembly? To protect his position, Premadasa "sailed with the wave". If memory serves, me right only Shelton Ranaraja, the then deputy minister of

Justice, took a stand against the nasty remarks of his fellow party members and showed courage by voting against that ridiculous motion. Was this the humanist politician who believed in liberal principles?

Sachi Sri Kantha

Osaka BioScience Institute,  
Osaka, Japan

### Human Rights

I read the article by Dr Muzzafar on "HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE — WESTERN DOMINATION" published in LANKA GUARDIAN July 1993.

The Gulf crisis crept up in the 90's. In late fifties our Urdu poet Majid Lahori, a Editor of Weekly NAMAHDAN, wrote:

"USA KA 'U' HAI BAKI SUB NO HI NO" which means In "UNO" "U" represent USA and rest is No — No & No.

Ayatullah Khomeini the spiritual leader and one of the two great revolutionaries of this century called USA "SATAN".

The only way to combat and control this satan is unity of purpose among poor countries, specially SAARC, ASEAN, NAM.

Mohammad Haroon Ahmed

Karachi

## LANKA

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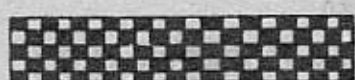
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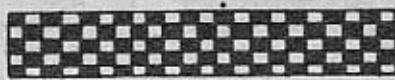
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# THE END OF JAW - JAW — and now ?

Mervyn de Silva

"History repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce" said Marx.

Marx was wrong. It could be the other way about. That at least is the verdict of modern Sri Lankan history. In mid-1956, the Federal party led by Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam re-asserted publicly that "an autonomous Tamil linguistic state within a federal union of Ceylon" was the only safe guarantee of "the cultural freedom and identity of the Tamil-speaking people." At another rally the FP demand was the "widest autonomous and residuary powers consistent with the unity and external security of Ceylon".

On 6th July 1993, Mr. K. Sirinivasan MP for Jaffna, the northern capital, addressed an "urgent appeal" to members of the multi-party Parliamentary Select Committee. It said:

"Given its utmost importance to the political aspirations of the people of the North and East, and recognising the unfounded fear in the minds of the people of the South, and taking into account the day-to-day suffering of the people of the North-and-East, and to stop any innocent people getting killed, I have tabled a proposal on the basis of FEDERALISM as an inevitable alternative to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 29th 1987".

Mr. Sirinivasan is not only the MP for Jaffna but a member of the multi-party Parliamentary Select Committee chaired by an Opposition (SLFP) MP, Mr. Mangala Moonesingha. The Committee itself was a landmark in the island's political history. It was based on a motion moved by a member of the major opposition party, the SLFP of former Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandaranaike and seconded by Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne a stalwart of the SLFP, who was Speaker in the SLFP dominated parliament of the 1970s.

For these reasons, the multi-party Select Committee held out the hope of a negotiated settlement of "the national question" founded on an all-party or national consensus.

The terms of reference of the Select Committee were broad enough as well as sufficiently pointed to encourage such hopes.

"That this Parliament is of opinion that a Select Committee be appointed —

(A) to arrive at a political solution to the question involving the devolution of power to the northern and eastern provinces

(B) to prevent

- (i) the disintegration of the nation;
- (ii) the killings of innocent civilians, members of the armed forces and the youths fighting for a cause

(iii) the increased militarisation of the culture of violence in our country, and

(C) to achieve peace and political stability and utilise the reduced defence expenditure for rapid economic growth and national development."

While moving the Motion, Mr. Moonesinghe proposed an amendment to delete the word "national" which appeared between the words "the" and "question" in the notice in paragraph (a). The House agreed. 45 MP's representing all parties were named by the Speaker Mr. M.H. Mohammed. It is the biggest committee in parliamentary history.

These were the main issues that emerged from the submissions, proposals and evidence:

- (1) whether the temporarily merged North and East (a provision of the JR-Gandhi pact) should continue to be one unit, with special arrangements made to safeguard Muslim interests.
- (2) whether North and East should be made independent units of devolution.
- (3) whether North-and-East merger should continue except for the Sinhala populated, which could be annexed to neighbouring (Sinhala populated) provinces and
- (4) whether the unit of devolution should be the district (or, implied, Province)
- (5) Whether provincial councils should be abolished except in the North and East

## Undated letters

The mystery of the "undated letters" has been solved.

There was no mystery!

According to President JR, UNP MP's were "ready to sign at any time". Or so they had told Prime Minister Premadasa. And these MP's "on their own gave undated letters of resignation to the Secretary-General of Parliament."

When Mr. Lakshman Jayakody checked this recently (25/9) with the S.G., Mr. Nihal Seneviratne, replied the next day. His letter said "I did not receive any undated letters of resignation from any MP during the tenure of the 8th Parliament."



What were the chief areas of "misunderstanding and mistrust". The report identifies the following — colonisation of lands, law and order, delays in implementing laws pertaining to devolution.

In the ethnic discourse "internal colonialism" is a familiar concept. "Merger" highlights another basic idea — 'traditional homeland'. Whose homeland? On what is the claim based? History, of course. But history is always on the move. So to which page of the "history book" does one turn. (The answer is most cases, is to "that page or chapter" which reinforces your case). "Law and Order" was also a vexed question. Of course. It concerns "security", personal security and group or collective security. The source of the anxiety is ethnic character and professional discipline. If the law-and-order personnel — the police and the armed services — are drawn exclusively from one community (a party to the conflict) then the highest standards of professional discipline and neutrality, cannot be presumed. To the Tamils (or any minority in situations of high tension) the "neutral" instrument of a presumably "neutral" State is never impartial. The allegiances represented by uniform are rarely as strong as the primordial loyalties of race.

The IGP told the Committee that under the 13th amendment a National and Provincial police could be established.

A majority of the Committee accepted a proposal of Mr. Sirinivasan that each province, North and East, be treated as "distinct units" of devolution.

Unlike majority of the Muslims in other provinces, the Muslims of the east, speak Tamil. The representations made by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress of Mr. Ashraff MP, made it clear that he emphasised the need to safeguard the interests of the Muslims. Traditionally, the Muslim community certainly the Muslims of the east, were the least politicised community.

But the 'war' in the east, the fiercest battleground, changed all that. In the case of the Muslims, it is perhaps the international rather than the domestic which has resulted in a heightened self-awareness. I refer of course to the Islamic resurgence and the very special attention paid to the besieged eastern province Muslims by the Arab and Islamic diplomatic missions in Colombo.

Finally, Mr. K. Sirinivasan M.P. has written to President Wijetunge to permit a multi-party parliamentary delegation to visit Jaffna to negotiate a ceasefire with the secessionist Tamil 'tigers'.

However the statements of the President and the Opposition leader together with the military build-up in the East suggest that this is not the political climate that is best suited to such an initiative.

## Sirima's Tougher Line

'What you can do, I can do better' is obviously what Mrs. Bandaranaike had in mind when she said "we would not give an inch of land to the Eelamists. There will be no solution to the North-East question until Prabhakaran is arrested. Nobody, including the government, wants to end the North-east war. She warned that if the problem was not solved soon the Sinhala race would be a minority". A Sinhala paper report, included another toughly worded rejection of any deal on separatism and the clear reiteration of "deal". We cannot concede an inch, of our

motherland. Nor shall we permit anybody else to do so. Even India failed to capture Prabhakaran. Neither this government or any other wants to end the war". Any final solution is only possible said the Opposition leader only if the SLFP is given the opportunity.

Thus, Mrs.B. has met President DB ("there is no ethnic problem only a terrorist menace") Wijetunge's challenge in the traditional UNP-SLFP contest for Sinhalese sentiment and vote.

## Urgent appeal

I hereby thank you all with appreciation for your continued support to my proposal tabled in front of you.

I have discussed in detail at home and abroad with most of the concerned people about the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka — politically and economically any political solution to the national crisis should be aimed at the complete elimination of any form of national oppression on any community in Sri Lanka.

If the Tamils should to give up their fight for their right of secession the Sinhala leaders accept a package of measures that will ensure the protection of the political, economical and national rights of Tamil people; and that they are willing to allow and facilitate the full implementation of those measures and to accept the reality that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual plural society consisting of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims and recognising that they have well defined history and each ethnic group has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity, and also recognising that the Northern and the Eastern Provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples, who have at all times hitherto lived together in the territory with other ethnic groups.

When such political wisdom is demonstrated in practice by Sinhala political leaders then the Tamil people themselves may choose not to exercise their right of secession.

Given to the utmost importance to the political aspiration of the people of North and East and recognising the unfounded fear in the minds of the people of South, taking the day to day suffering of the people of North and East and to stop any further innocent people getting killed, I have tabled a proposal on the basis of 'FEDERALISM' as an inevitable alternative to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 29th July 1987.

I plead the Select Committee to accept my proposal on its absolute composite and strengthen if necessary so that it will not only meet the aspiration of the people of North and East but of all the oppressed people of Sri Lanka.

Let us first federate Sri Lanka to blossom into a United Federal Republic of Sri Lanka which will play a vital historic role in the economic and political stability of the South Asian Region and its commitment to world peace.

K. Sirinivasan MP  
JAFFNA

# The Middle East Peace Process

John Gooneratne

(A BCIS Seminar paper)

One can identify the following central issues in what came to be called the Question of Palestine, and the Middle East issue, and the efforts to solve them through what is referred to as the Middle East Peace process.

## (a) Recognition of Israel:

Though a member of the U.N., many states, especially the Arab States and its political allies refused either to recognise or to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. The preference on the part of the Arab states for an international conference under UN auspices to solve the Middle East issue was meant in part to avoid having to recognise Israel at a bilateral level. There are still some Arab States that would not even use the name Israel, preferring to refer to it as "the Zionist Entity". A refusal of one side to admit the equality of the other was frequently a major obstacle to negotiations.

## (b) Recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO):

Parallel to the refusal of Arab countries to recognise the existence of Israel, in turn Israel and the U.S. refused to recognise or deal with the PLO though it was widely recognised as the representative of the Palestinian people. Most of the time, the Israel Government characterised the PLO as a terrorist organisation.

The problems of legitimacy and recognition of the PLO were not with the Israeli side alone. The Palestinians, scattered and living in different Arab countries, had to depend on the hospitality of the host countries. It was often hospitality with strings attached. The strings were in the form of having to support or being manipulated by the host Arab country in the different inter-Arab disputes that took place. The PLO also had to depend on the generosity of the richer Arab countries for financial aid. Preserving Palestinian interests, and at the same time pleasing a host

of diverse Arab ambitions was a most difficult exercise for the PLO leadership.

Recognition of each by the other was held as the critical test of the intentions of each party, and its seriousness in making peace. On the part of Israel, along with recognition went the demand that negotiations be on a bilateral level, whatever the overall auspices be.

## (c) Super-Power rivalry and the Cold War:

The super-power rivalry between the US and USSR which set in soon after the end of World War II, coloured the way several regional conflicts were seen. Countries in conflict helped accentuate this distortion by trying to get the help of one super power or the other on to their side. Apart from the strategic location of different Arab countries, the fact that this region contained the larger part of the petroleum resources of the world, helped transfix the Middle East problem and its solution securely to the fluctuating fortunes of the super-power rivalry in the Cold War.

As a corollary to this, the progress in the Middle East peace process also depended on the changes in the regional balance of forces taking place under the umbrella of super-power rivalry. The balance of forces in the area comprised not only elements of military strength but also that of the strategic resource of petroleum.

## (d) Different Political Calendars Affecting a Solution to the Middle East Issue:

Having a close effect on efforts to solve the Palestine question and the Middle East issue were the different political calendars of the countries involved, and changing crises that figured on their list of priorities. Elections in the US brought in different administrations that saw the need to solve the problems of the Middle East in different scales of priority. Also events as they occurred like the fall of the Shah of Iran, the taking of American diplo-

mat hostage in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war, and most recently the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, tended to take centre stage, pushing aside other regional problems. Elections in Israel brought in different Governments that either saw merit in holding on to the occupied territories and toughing it out, or others that saw merit in negotiating land for peace. In the Arab countries changes in Government sometimes were accompanied by changes in policy, either emphasising Arab nationalism or concentrating on more immediate national interests. Calibrating all these forces or influences in the search for peace was not an easy exercise.

One can discern three phases in the progression of the peace process to date. The first phase could be taken as the period upto the October 1973 war and the Camp David Accords that followed it in September 1978, and culminating in a Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty on 27th March 1979. A second phase could be taken as the period from 1980 upto the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990; and the third phase could be taken as the period following end of the Gulf War, which also saw a little prior to it, the end of the Cold War following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

## PEACE PROCESS ... UPTO THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS

After a prolonged period of demoralising defeats in the Arab confrontation with Israel, the military successes scored by Egypt in the October 1973 war, however short-lived they may have been, gave a certain confidence to the Egyptian leadership. The war also showed that Israel was not immune to attack from Arab armies, in spite of the buffer areas they had captured in the June 1967 war. In addition to the military jolt given to Israel in the October 1973 war, the Arab side was also able to show an unusual amount of joint action, especially in the use of the oil weapon. There was also a change in the regional balance of power when Egypt sought a rapprochement with the United States.

(Continued on page 8)

*A senior Foreign Service officer, the writer was Sri Lanka Ambassador in Baghdad, during the GULF WAR.*



# Armed Conflict at the End of the Cold War

Peter Wallensteen and Karin Axell

(Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University)

*Predictions for the post-Cold War era have varied from visions of a world in which war had become obsolete to one racked by ethnic and nationalist violence. This article reports data on three levels of armed conflict for the period 1989-92 and makes a first analysis of them. So far, neither the most pessimistic nor the most optimistic predictions are borne out. The number of armed conflicts has increased somewhat, but this is mainly due to an increase in minor armed conflicts, particularly from 1991 to 1992. Wars (involving more than 1000 deaths in a single year) and intermediate conflicts show little change over time. Analyzed by region Europe increasingly has become an arena for armed conflict while in Central and South America the number of armed conflicts was reduced during the four-year period. In Africa and Asia there was little change and in North America no armed conflict at all during this period. The ending of the Cold War has permitted conflicts to reemerge which had been suppressed rather than resolved. At the same time, the end of superpower rivalry has improved the conditions for containing and resolving conflicts and preventing their escalation. To date these two forces have kept each other in check.*

## 1. Introduction

The four years from 1989 to 1992 have seen momentous change in the global system. At the beginning of 1989 the world was still divided into two blocs aligned to the two dominant superpowers. True, there had been a few years of detente in bloc relations, and some movement towards conflict resolution could be noted, e.g. in the Afghanistan, Iran-Iraq and Namibia conflicts. However, the basic structure of the global system remained intact, and armed conflicts as well as the search for solutions often involved the blocs. By the end of 1992 this situation had changed fundamentally. The Soviet Union had — in a remarkably peaceful way — been dissolved, to be replaced by fifteen countries all facing the arduous task of state-

-building.<sup>1</sup> The Warsaw Pact had been disbanded and Germany reunited. Soviet/Russian troops were in the process of withdrawing from Eastern and Central Europe, and US troops were leaving Western Europe. A seemingly stable world order constructed around two military poles was replaced by fragmentation. The USA appeared as the sole global actor, but the US leadership was uncertain as to its own future role. Bipolarity seemed on its way out, but was not immediately replaced by unipolarity or multipolarity. If anything, there was nonpolarity. Conflict patterns had changed: On the decision-making agenda were, for instance, conflicts in Somalia, in former Yugoslavia and in Cambodia, where the former superpowers no longer had a simple map for reading the situation.

Was the world now a more secure place, as the threat of nuclear war had subsided? Would war become obsolete (Mueller, 1989)? Or was the world a more insecure place, as the threat of ethnic and nationalist violence had risen (Mearsheimer, 1990)? Without being able to lay such questions fully to rest, this article presents data on armed conflicts in 1989-92, and suggests some possible answers.

- **Armed Conflicts** are contested incompatibilities which concern government and/or territory where the use of armed force by two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths<sup>2</sup>.

- **Armed Conflicts** is the most inclusive concept used here. To qualify, a conflict must have resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths during the year.

We have defined several subsets of armed conflicts<sup>4</sup> on the basis of the level of activity:

- **Minor Armed Conflicts** have resulted in less than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict.

- **Intermediate Conflicts** have involved more than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict and at least

25 deaths but not 1000 during the particular year. These are protracted conflicts; some are still on an intensive level today, while others may have peaked earlier, but remain unsolved and continue to be active.

- **Wars** have resulted in more than 1000 battle-related deaths during one particular year.

- **Major Armed Conflicts** are all armed conflicts with more than 1000 deaths during the course of the conflict; i.e. *Intermediate Conflicts* + Wars.

## 2. Armed Conflicts and Level of Activity

A total of 82 armed conflicts were recorded for the four years. The conflicts were fought in 60 locations, involving at least 64 governments. More than one third of all UN member governments were directly involved in at least one armed conflict in this period. Over 150 opposition organizations were engaged militarily. In fact, the real figure is even higher, since some are recorded as collectivities. In many cases (e.g. in Afghanistan and Kashmir) it is very difficult to distinguish organizations from each other; in other cases (e.g. in Palestine, Guatemala and El Salvador) umbrella organizations appear as actors.

Of the 82 armed conflicts, 35 were recorded as wars, resulting in at least 1000 battle-related deaths in a single year. Although our data are insufficient to estimate the total number of deaths due to armed conflicts in this period, it was undoubtedly more than 70 000 in 1992 alone; for the whole period the number of deaths is likely to run to six digits. What is reported here is by any gauge a very high number of conflicts and actors, involving considerable areas and a significant proportion of world population. We cannot but conclude that the world has found itself at a high level of armed action throughout these four years.

Table shows the armed conflicts 1989-92 by year and level of activity. The most marked shift is for minor armed conflicts,



i.e. armed conflicts which have resulted in less than 1000 battle-related deaths during the course of the conflict: In 1992 they showed a clear increase. Intermediate armed conflicts — i.e. the more protracted ones — are gradually but slowly decreasing in number. New conflicts of this type have emerged, notably Croatia, classified as a war in 1991, but at a low level of activity during 1992. The number of wars — armed conflicts resulting in more than 1000 battle-related deaths in a single year — has increased slightly, but not as dramatically as might be expected from media coverage. The number of major armed conflicts, the sum of the two highest levels of activity, remains virtually unchanged during this period.

The time-span is short, but significant, and there are several possible interpretations. The sharp increase in low-intensity conflicts in 1992 may point in an important direction for the future. Several of these conflicts, such as the ones in Georgia, Moldova, Burundi and Niger, are likely to intensify or to become protracted. Nevertheless, the number of wars has been kept at a lower level — suggesting that the international community has at least some capacity to contain conflicts. The number of protracted conflicts testifies, however, to the inability to find lasting solutions to well-known conflicts.

Table. Number of Armed Conflicts by Level of Activity and Year

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Minor Armed Conflicts	13	16	15	22
Intermediate Armed Conflicts	14	13	13	12
War	19	19	20	20
All Armed Conflicts	46	48	48	54

### 3. Regional Patterns

The regional distribution of the armed conflicts. We note a clear increase of armed conflicts in Europe, a region with virtually no overt military conflicts during the Cold War. In 1989 there were two conflicts, one new and very brief (Romania) and one very old and protracted (Northern Ireland). Since then new conflicts have been added continuously. Most other regions show little change, although there is a tendency in Africa for some protracted conflicts to end. Only Central/South America has a consistent pattern of declining numbers. There were no armed conflicts in North America during this period.

The number of opposition organizations (mostly non-governmental organizations) militarily active in the conflicts basically follows the annual number of conflicts. There is, however, no great increase in 1992 over the previous three years corresponding to the increase in conflicts. Some conflicts with a considerable number of actors had by then been terminated (e.g. Lebanon) or brought to a lower level (Liberia). A large number of new conflicts had, at least initially, relatively few actors.

### 4. Armed Conflict and Incompatibilities

The conflicts have been classified as to whether they concern government or territory. This distinction is applied whether the conflicts are fought between or within states. In fact, very few of the armed conflicts were 'classic' inter-state conflicts. Only the conflicts Iraq-Kuwait, India-Pakistan, Mauritania-Senegal and USA-Panama pitted two internationally and mutually recognized states against each other. In these cases the three first concerned territory and the fourth one government<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the bulk of global conflict concerns what is legally described as internal issues, rather than international ones. In the following we disregard this distinction due to the low number of inter-state conflicts.

For the full period, 40 of the 82 armed conflicts — i.e. 49% — concerned government. For the individual years, the percentage were 54, 44, 54, 46. Thus, incompatibilities over government and territory are represented in fairly equal numbers throughout the period. There is an interesting regional pattern, however: The shares of territorial issues were particularly high in 1992 for Europe (88%) and Asia (74%), lower for Africa (36%) and the Middle East (43%) and completely absent in America. Throughout the period, Asia provided the location for close to half the ongoing territorial armed conflicts. All of the intra-state territorial conflicts concerned demands for autonomy or even independence for particular regions. Asia has had several protracted conflicts of this nature, notably in India, Myanmar (Burma) and Indonesia. In Africa, contrary to popular belief, such disputes have not been common, although ethnic identity is often an important factor in African politics. The actual break-up of states has been rare,

however, and the most recent example of such a process — the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia — is often seen as a special case of decolonization.

### 5. Beyond the Cold War

This overview has presented some data on Armed Conflicts in an interesting four-year period. The number of armed conflicts in general increased — particularly during 1992, and particularly for minor armed conflicts. Major armed conflicts remained frequent, but stable. The most marked shift is that Europe once again has become an arena for armed conflict. In other words, the new era is different from the Cold War period, but it is not dramatically more violent. Nuclear disarmament agreements are in place and some are being implemented. Although nuclear proliferation was feared, there is yet no evidence that it is actually occurring. There is, in other words, little room for nostalgia about the Cold War period which contained many armed conflicts frequently fuelled by the Cold War rivalries. It is too early to make a final judgement, however. The only clearly post-Cold War year, 1992, augurs badly for the future with a sharp rise in minor armed conflicts. At the same time, however, the number of wars did not increase. In general, the data suggest that nuclear bipolarity and nuclear non-polarity are both compatible with a high level of armed conflict.

The most important post-Cold War shift affects Europe. Cold War polarization probably kept a number of conflicts latent and frozen, particularly in Europe. In other regions the Cold War was, in fact, quite 'hot'. Thus, the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet empire saw the re-emergence of conflicts which had been suppressed, rather than resolved.

This increase in number of armed conflicts in Europe has not been accompanied by similar increases elsewhere, however. This may suggest a pattern of delinking developments in Europe from those of other regions. In Central and South America, the number of armed conflicts has decreased. In this region successful processes of conflict resolution have taken place, notably in Nicaragua and El Salvador, creating fragile but still less violent conditions. In Africa, solutions have been found, notably in Western Sahara — but not without setbacks, as in Angola. The Third World cases may be

closely linked historically to the ending of the Cold War. The SUA and the USSR ceased to be actively interested in pursuing certain Third World conflicts, and turned instead to processes of conflict resolution or disengagement. In some cases, arms supplies were ended, which played a role in the downfall of regimes previously supported by the superpowers, in Ethiopia — but it may also have resulted in the loss of control over some actors, as with UNITA in Angola. Seemingly intractable conflicts, like the one in Lebanon, have ended.

The basic stability in number of major armed conflicts in other words, was the result of two forces operating in different directions. On the one hand there were those pursuing a military end to existing incompatibilities, leading to new conflicts and, thus, resulting in increasing numbers. On the other hand there were those solving on-going conflicts through negotiations and peace accords, thus bringing down the overall numbers. The ending of the Cold War had an effect on both these sides of the equation, keeping stable the overall number of armed conflict.

#### NOTES

1. Other colonial empires have also been dissolved in comparatively peaceful ways, notably the British and French empires in Asia and Africa, in contrast to the experience with the Czarist Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. Such comparisons depend, however, on the dating of the process of dissolution. The Afghanistan war initiated in 1978/79 may well be regarded eventually as the violent beginning of the end of the Soviet Union.
2. For definition and operationalization see Heldt, 1992 and Lindgren, 1991. The lower threshold of 25 deaths was introduced to increase the reliability of the coding.
3. For the theoretical basis for emphasising incompatibility see Wallensteen, 1981, 1988.
4. The use of the term *Armed Conflicts* departs somewhat from earlier practice in the Uppsala project. In previous reports (Heldt, 1992; Lindgren, 1991; Wallensteen, 1989), conflicts with less than 25 battle-related deaths were also included. Major armed conflicts as used as in several chapters in the *SIPRI Yearbook* (Heldt et al., 1992, 1993; Lindgren et al., 1989, 1990, 1991; Wilson & Wallensteen, 1988) theoretically includes conflicts with less than 25 annual battle-related deaths. In fact, this change in the definition of major armed conflict has negligible empirical significance for this period. Changes in relations to previously

reported data on armed conflicts are mainly due to the elimination of some of the smaller conflicts, and in some cases they are due to new information.

5. All these conflicts have a longer, largely colonial

history, dating to the Ottoman, British, French and US imperial days. This legacy affected issues of borders and governance. By 1989, however, all parties had legally recognized each other.

## The Middle East . . .

(Continued from page 5)

Confirming this change of direction of its policies, in March 1976 Egypt abrogated the Friendship Treaty it had with the Soviet Union.

The decisive change was Egypt's decision to deal direct with Israel, shedding its long-held policy of not having bilateral contacts with Israel. On 9th November 1977, President Sadat made the momentous announcement of his readiness to visit Jerusalem. Perhaps it was the very boldness of the announcement that elicited a positive response from Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who was considered a hardliner. President Sadat visited Jerusalem on 19th November 1977. Prime Minister Begin reciprocated with a visit to Ismailia on 25th December 1977. The outcome of the Ismailia Summit was a decision to institute bilateral talks on political and military questions affecting a settlement.

When the discussions and negotiations between Egypt and Israel got bogged down in predictable difficulties, US President Jimmy Carter who had been in touch with the two leaders, took the unexpected step of inviting President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to meet him, in an attempt to break the deadlock, at Camp David at the beginning of September 1978.

Following the negotiations at Camp David with the active mediation of President Carter Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat signed two documents which together provided a framework for peace in the Middle East. One of these dealt with the bilateral problems between Egypt and Israel, which the two leaders undertook to resolve by concluding a Peace Treaty providing for an Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and the establishment of normal relations between the two countries. Though it took a little longer than the three month period the Camp David Accords envisaged, a Peace Treaty was signed between Egypt and Israel on 26th March 1979.

The second document dealt with the

question of the future of the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian side of the Middle East question. No progress could be made in this area of the future of Palestine. In the Arab world the agreements were regarded as proof that President Sadat had abandoned the Palestinian cause and his Arab allies in order to satisfy purely Egyptian interests. Further, critics of the Accord argued that it was futile for Egypt to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians when the Palestinians had not been consulted.

Camp David Accord highlighted the following factors that led to its successful outcome. The first was the necessity of direct contact and dialogue with Israel. Secondly, it also showed the advantage that the United States held in being able to mediate an agreement, being the only super power that was able to conduct negotiations with both Israel and Egypt.

Though no progress was possible on the Palestinian part of the Camp David Accord, the Palestinian cause received prominence and support from Arab countries that were opposed to the Accord. An Arab Summit that was held in Algeria in November 1973 decided to accept the PLO as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people". In September 1974 the U.N. General Assembly decided to put on the UN Agenda for the first time "the Palestinian Question". In November 1974 the Chairman of the PLO Yasir Arafat addressed the UNGA. The PLO standing in the international arena was further enhanced when in November 1985 the UN General Assembly adopted three resolutions concerning Palestine. The first established a 20-nation Committee to work out plans for the implementation of the Palestinian right "to self-determination and national independence"; the second invited the PLO to take part in all future UN debates on the Middle East; and the third denounced Zionism as "a form of racism and racial discrimination".

*Next: The Empty Years*



# Cambodia : Polls, Human Rights and NGO's

Jeevan Thiagarajah

(Coordinator, Cambodian H.R. Task Force)

On October 23rd, 1991, four Cambodian parties signed an Agreement in Paris on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodian conflict, the aim of which is to, to restore and maintain peace in Cambodia and to promote and ensure the exercise of the right of self-determination of the Cambodian people through free and fair elections. The Paris Agreement formally ended the international and domestic armed conflict which had affected the country since 1979.

As set out by the mandate flowing from the Paris Accord, UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia) conducted an election from 23rd to 28th May, 1993 to elect members for a constituent Assembly. Elections were held in all 21 provinces of Cambodia. From 23rd to 25th of May, 1,400 large, medium and small fixed polling stations were operated in addition to 200 mobile teams in remote areas pursuant to which the FUNEINPEC party won 1,824,188 votes or 45.47 per cent of the votes to CPP's, 1,533,471 votes or 38.23 per cent. The BLBP party won 152,764 votes or 3.81 per cent of votes cast. The number of seats won in the constituent Assembly was 58 for FUNEINPEC, 51 for CPP, 10 for BLBP and 1 for MOLINAKA.

## General Assessment

In assessing changes in the human rights situation since UNTAC's arrival one year ago, it is difficult often to distinguish between the impact of UNTAC's human rights activities *per se*, on the one hand, and the impact of the peace process itself, including the mere presence of a large international peacekeeping operation. The cessation of major armed hostilities, with few exceptions, following the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements, alone constitutes the single most important improvement in human rights. The absence of war has permitted greater economic activity and has allowed a much larger portion of the population to live free of forced conscription, generalized violence and displacement.

There exists very visibly much broader economic and social freedom throughout the country. The lifting of many restraints on private enterprise have allowed an improvement in the economic well being of at least some segments of society, mainly in urban areas. The unprecedented growth of contacts with foreigners and the huge increase in the availability of new information and ideas, in the form of foreign publications and teaching, have

worked to undermine to some degree the social controls which previously existed. Active popular patronage and participation in religious activities have re-emerged after long suppression. Alternative political parties and human rights organizations have opened offices across SOC administered areas and have collectively gained hundreds of thousands of members.

Cambodian political and civil society has hesitatingly and tenuously begun a process of re-establishment, many aspects of which are even now perhaps irreversible while others may still be contingent upon the degree of international attention and protection present during this transitional period.

Juxtaposed to this liberalization, however, there remains a number of very serious human rights concerns which bring into question the viability of a full democratic process. The single most important challenge facing the long term protection of human rights is the highly militarized state of Cambodian society and the related absence of any rule of law or civil accountability... Energetic attempts to promote human rights in the absence of legitimate state authority and judicial structures run the serious risk of promoting, or being seen to promote, anarchy.

Ethnic hatred, principally against persons of Vietnamese descent, whether immigrants or born in Cambodia, has resulted in mounting civilian casualties. The potential for violent unrest from this explosive issue is clearly present, with serious repercussions for both the electoral process and for regional stability. Growing and violent racism could easily undermine all other progress in the area of human rights and requires the closest attention and condemnation by the international community. Although the PDK are directly responsible for recent violent attacks against ethnic Vietnamese communities, other Cambodian parties as well have encouraged ethnic hatred, in part for political gain.

While Cambodian political society has begun to re-emerge, mainly in the form of various contending political parties, over the past year, severe political repression still holds that political society largely in check. Surveillance, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and detention as well as some instances of torture and summary and arbitrary executions continue in areas controlled by all four Cambodian parties. These repressive practices by Cambo-

dian security forces and party officials reflect an absence of any rule of law and call into question the long term viability of democratic institutions in Cambodia.

Together with social and economic liberalization has come a variety of social and economic ills which effect the fundamental rights of Cambodian citizens. Rising income disparities, particularly between urban and rural populations is readily apparent. The breakdown of already minimal social services in the wake of declining state revenues has meant that many vulnerable groups in society, in particular, are not having their basic needs met. There is as well as a rise in related social problems such as child labour and urban crime. The lack of support for basic economic and social rights is a major destabilizing force, which also undermines political efforts towards democratic government.

Buddhism has historically been an important source of social authority in Cambodia and the basis for many ethical supportive of respect for human rights. Though the Buddhist order of monks or *Sangha* have made significant steps forward in reasserting their traditional role in Cambodian society, restrictions on religious freedom remain. All factions continue to intervene in the religious activities of individual and to exercise undue influence over the *Sangha* through attempts at political indoctrination and the appointment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Finally, as a result of UNTAC's inability to access areas controlled by the PDK, no human rights activities for people in those areas have been possible. Given the history of PDK policies and its current non-cooperation with the peace process, it must be assumed that no political freedom is tolerated and that fundamental violations of basic human rights continues unchecked for the approximately ten percent of the population living in that zone. The increased mass killing of Cambodians of Vietnamese descent by NADK units has raised again the question of a possible return to the "Policies and practices of the past" in Cambodia, and is a major destabilizing factor as well as a grave human rights violation.

## Accessions to International Human Rights Instruments

The signing of seven major international human rights instruments by the Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC) has given the UNTAC Human Rights Component a useful starting point and an overall legal framework for its activities. The

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importance of accession to these instruments also lies in the fact that they come at a time of potentially radical political changes, where they may critically assist in the setting up of a new constitutional political system and Cambodia's reintegration into the world community.

UNTAC has presented the SNC with seven international human rights instruments. Members of the SNC signed the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 20 April 1992. On September 20, 1992 the SNC acceded to the following five international human rights instruments: The Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol.

#### **Cambodian Human Rights Groups ADHOC**

##### **1. Background**

ADHOC was established in July 1992 and now has a membership of 24,000 of whom 100 are classified as "active members", i.e., those who carry out recruiting, conduct training and other activities, and staff offices. Its head office is in Phnom Penh, and it has active branches in 18 other provinces. To date, the association has concentrated on training members to be human rights educators, and on publishing a magazine and other educational materials.

##### **2. Areas of Work**

ADHOC has been conducting internal discussions to clarify its future goals, and is now poised to launch into an extended range of activities. These include:

- **Election Monitoring:** 70 ADHOC members have participated in the Taskforce training and will act as monitors during the pre-election period and poll week. Using the knowledge gained from this training, ADHOC is in the process of organizing a course for its provincial officers so that they too can act as monitors in their regions. ADHOC aims to mobilize 1400 monitors throughout Cambodia for the one week voting period, and plans to make public reports on its assessment of the election process and results.
- **Civic Education:** ADHOC is continuing its human rights education program in both Phnom Penh and the provinces. During the pre-election period, these classes have been adapted to include information on the electoral law and voting procedures. To date, ADHOC has conducted approximately 60 courses in 16 provinces with over 3000 participants. ADHOC is confident of its abilities to continue to do this educative work effectively, if it can muster the financial resources for its program. It has applied for assistance to the UNTAC Trust Fund.
- **Constitutional Work:** ADHOC intends to participate in the process of drafting a new Constitution. It has begun to clarify its views by participating in a workshop with Raoul Jenner (a member of the UNTAC Constitutional Advisory Group) on a draft Bill of Rights and by attending a workshop on the independence of the judiciary. The ADHOC representatives agree that the Constitution should embody and address popular aspirations; but note that, in a situation where there is no civic society and where there has been

20 years of isolation, it is difficult to generate meaningful discussion among ordinary people about their economic, political and social desires or needs. They suggest that international NGOs may be able to assist with the development of innovative strategies to assist in discovering and articulating people's aspirations for their future. They noted that one of ADHOC's long-term plan is to establish a research centre.

**Legal Reform System:** ADHOC plans to monitor and evaluate the performance of the government and opposition parties in the post-election period. It noted its particular interest in ensuring the legitimization of customary law in the new legal system. Some ADHOC members are also being trained as defenders in the courses currently being run by the Human Rights Component.

**Other Areas of Work:** The ADHOC representatives spoke of the need for human rights associations to develop initiatives which improve the lives of ordinary people in a concrete way. This necessity derives not only from the imperative of implementing human rights rather than just talking about them; but also from the associations need to build up their credibility and support base. For its part, ADHOC has been chosen two fields for this concrete work:

- educational rights, to improve access to schooling; and
- consumer rights, to protect the most vulnerable from deception and fraud.

*Next: General Concerns*

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# Ruralisation of the UNP: populism or authoritarianism?

Mick Moore

## Introduction

The results of the 1993 Provincial Council elections attracted attention in part because the UNP (in alliance with the CWC) did relatively well in the more rural districts. The extent of this association is actually very striking. As is evident from columns (b) and (i) of Table 1, there was, on a district basis, a marked positive association between the proportion of the vote obtained by the UNP/CWC and the proportion of the employed population working in agriculture. This association is statistically very significant (see below). Discussion of the significance of this shift in the UNP's electoral base may be muddied by the fact that, as always, the UNP also did extremely well in Colombo, taking all seats within the Municipal boundaries. The UNP maintained its 'traditional' Colombo base, but, outside Colombo, became associated with rurality, agriculture, and physical remoteness from Colombo.

Two main explanations were put forward at the time. One is the increasing voting strength of the Indian Tamil population because of re-enfranchisement, and the closeness of the alliance of the CWC with the UNP. This is undoubtedly valid, although there remains a question about why the estate population remained so loyal to the CWC (see below). The CWC vote is significant only in Nuwara Eliya and Badulla districts. Yet the 'ruralisation' of the UNP has also occurred elsewhere. The second and more popular explanation is the populism, and alleged popularity in rural areas, of the late President Premadasa, who was assassinated a few days before the polls. There is a great deal of plausibility in that argument. Janasaviya, Gam Udawa, the Mobile Presidential Secretariat, the 300 garment factory programme — as well as Premadasa's increasingly open attacks on the urban, upper class and *Goigama*, political, administrative, social and business establishment — are all cited in support.

One minor worry about the 'Premadasa-populist' interpretation of the ruralisation of the UNP is that there is little evidence that Premadasa was indeed popular in the rural areas. There is however a more tangible objection: the ruralisation of the UNP vote is not a recent phenomenon, but a long term process that has been underway at least since 1982, when the UNP leader and President was J.R. Jaya-

wardene, an urban 'patrician'. I argue here, on the basis of statistical evidence on voting patterns since 1970, that this ruralisation is probably little affected by personal factors such as the style of the political leadership, but actually reflects the increasing institutionalisation of the UNP as the ruling party controlling the state apparatus. Voters in the more rural districts have become reliably UNP/CWC supporters not because of enthusiasm for the party, but because they are vulnerable to pressures from the local party cadres to go to the polls, and to vote as instructed. Conversely, the opposition parties have greater capacity to resist the UNP/CWC machine in the less agricultural rural districts, where there are alternative bases for political organisation, a tradition of 'left' voting, easier access to Colombo and, in general, a greater capacity to resist the ruling party/state machine.

Before presenting the statistical results, I need to explain what statistics I have used, and how.

## The data base

Sri Lanka has held a wide variety of elections over the past two decades: for Parliament, the Presidency, Provincial Councils, and local government bodies; and a Referendum in 1982 to extend the life of the existing Parliament. Indeed, it is an indicator of the shrinking democratic component of the polity that regular parliamentary elections have been replaced by a variety of alternative contests whose timing and sequencing is decided by the political leadership to maximise their own chances of success. Some elections have been marked by considerable intimidation. The 1988 Provincial Council elections were boycotted by the SLFP. Some elections have not been held in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, parts of which remain under the control of the LTTE, and parts subject to continual armed conflict and massive population displacement. Other than the UNP, different parties and alliances have entered different contests. How can one find sufficient stability to undertake meaningful statistical analysis of the results in the face of all these problems? my procedure has been as follows:

1) I have narrowed the boundaries of the polity I have studied to exclude the Northern and Eastern Provinces. All the data

below relate to the other seven ('mainstream') provinces (comprising seventeen districts), which accounted for 87% of the 1981 population. There is a justification for this procedure beyond simple necessity. I have effectively excluded the areas dominated by Sri Lanka Tamils. Here, a separate pattern of party competition has prevailed since the inception of the party system. In the seven mainstream provinces, the various ethnic minorities have mainly been incorporated into the Sinhalese-dominated two-bloc pattern of the UNP versus the SLFP and allies. By contrast, although the UNP has been a significant electoral actor in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, especially the latter Province and especially in earlier years, the dominant axis of political competition there has been between distinct Tamil parties. The pattern of political competition in the mainstream provinces has in fact been little affected by the removal of the two mainly Tamil provinces from the electoral arena in recent years. It follows that the data used here relate to a population that is predominantly Sinhalese — in 1981, 84% Sinhalese, 6% Indian Tamil, 5% Sri Lanka Moor, 4% Sri Lanka Tamil, and 1% 'other'.

2) I have analysed the data only for those elections which were (a) contested both by the UNP and the SLFP and, more importantly, where the voting itself was reasonably free and fair. I have not included the April 1988 Provincial Council elections, which were not contested by the SLFP and were adversely affected by the JVP's attempts to enforce a boycott of the polls. More importantly, I have excluded the Presidential election of December 1988 and the Parliamentary elections of February 1989, because of the impossibility of sorting out the effects on voting of the JVP and the other kinds of violence and intimidation which took place under the cover of the JVP.

Data for six national elections are included in this analysis: the 1970 and 1977 Parliamentary elections; the first Presidential elections, held in October 1982, after the adoption of a new constitution and an Executive Presidency in 1978; the Referendum held in December 1982 to validate the President's decision to extend the life of the 1977 Parliament by a further six years; local government elections of May 1991, after the JVP had been decimated

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and relative peace had returned to the mainstream provinces; and the Provincial Council elections of May 1993. Some observers may question whether the Referendum should be in this list. There was no doubt, by previous standards, a great deal of intimidation by the regime.<sup>1</sup> Levels of voter participation also dipped considerably compared to the Presidential elections held a few weeks previously (see Table 4). I stick to the view, formed by analysing the results at the time,<sup>2</sup> that this intimidation did not substantially affect the districtwise pattern of results, although it certainly helped produce the overall result that the UNP government wanted. The main reason to include the results of the 1982 Referendum in the analysis is that, as will become clear below, the intimidation employed by the regime brought about a sudden shift to a new pattern of electoral support for the ruling UNP which has since been consolidated.

While the six elections included in the analysis were different in form, they in all cases involved a clear contest between the UNP on the one side and the SLFP and other mainly-Sinhalese parties on the other, and were contested in all arenas within the seven mainstream provinces.<sup>3</sup>

3) While the UNP has become the dominant party in Sri Lanka in terms of size, organisation and electoral success, it has never contested any election without some kind of alliance or understanding with one or more smaller parties. Since this relationship has sometimes been close and sustained, questions arise about defining the boundaries of the UNP for statistical purposes. I have made three decisions:

(a) The analysis has not been extended back further than 1970. This is largely because, at the 1965 general elections, the UNP had an electoral understanding with the Sri Lanka Freedom Socialist Party (SLFSP). This was formed the personal and caste network of C.P. de Silva after he defected from the SLFP government and brought it down in December 1964. The SLFSP was a sufficiently strong electoral force in a small number of districts in 1965 to muddy the waters about the boundaries of the UNP.

(b) The MEP, was also allied to the UNP in 1965 and 1970. I have not included its tiny voting strength — less than 1% of votes cast — in the figures for the UNP in 1970 on the grounds that this was a personal/family vote for Phillip Gunawardena and his successors.

(c) Most importantly, I have included the CWC in the UNP throughout the period covered here. The CWC did not contest the 1970 general elections. It contested and won one seat in 1977, in *de facto* but

undeclared alliance with the UNP. Its leader entered the government and has been a Minister ever since. The CWC has supported the UNP strongly and has since been in close electoral alliance.<sup>4</sup> In return, an increasing number of Indian Tamils have been awarded citizenship and thus voting rights. The CWC has become a significant electoral force in the two very rural districts: Nuwara Eliya and Badulla.<sup>5</sup> Its inclusion within the boundaries of the UNP is important to the conclusions of this paper in ways that will be explained below.

To summarise, the statistics below incorporate the following procedures and definitions:

(i) The term 'UNP vote' refers to the combined UNP and the CWC vote.

(ii) Unless otherwise stated, all data refer only to the seven mainstream Provinces, excluding the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

(iii) Totals of votes refer to valid votes only.

(iv) The 1970 and 1977 voting statistics have been adjusted to allow for the existence of a few multi-member electorates in which individual voters could cast two or three votes.

(To be continued)

## The Scholars Tale

### Part V

*Count down computed on Programme  
Our Hero claimed he conceived no Pogrom  
This horror, he said later, was spontaneous  
Though his computer Virus proved contagious*

*Futhermore the framework mythology  
Illicitly distilled from History  
Had gone down as potent potions  
Inebriating the Elite with Aryan notions*

*This glamorous ethnic aura  
Extended into a religious diaspora  
On a geographically slanted version  
Of a Maha Pari Nibbana Sermon*

*So our Hero's programme locked in  
To a Timeless Universal Doctrine  
On the primitive mythological interface  
Of an allegedly Chosen Race*

*The programme carefully picked up  
The ex.Colonial elites mixed up  
Misgivings on Universal franchise  
And free Education for the plain guys*

*The computer analysed the contradiction  
Between the Don Carayas and the Kandyan Kingdom  
Between the Shop-keepers National Revival  
And Northern serfdoms survival*

*Background noise from the Microchips  
Signalled Cholan invasion and intrigue  
Memory-stored for feeding the Facists  
With their Indian Expansionist Thesis*

*His Equation thus primed with its load  
Of all variables in their triggered mode  
Race and Religion researched into Night  
Lit slow, twisted, fuses to dynamite  
While Hi-Tech fingerprinted genes  
Estranged even Siamese twins*

*But his Virus' most virulent mutation  
Brought the prodding hallucination  
That the Aryan monopoly of Power  
Was challenged, impotent, and sour.*

(Contd...)

U. Karunatilake



# The July 1980 strike

Arden

Within the first two years of the U.N.P. government, inflation had made heavy inroads into the living standards of the fixed-income earners, mainly public servants. The Joint Trade Union Action Committee called a convention of public service trade union delegates, which was held in Colombo on 8 and 9 March 1980. Nearly 4000 attended. It was decided to ask the government for a wage increase of Rs. 300 a month (less than 20 U.S.\$ at the rate then prevailing). This demand was communicated to the government but no reply was received; the government offered no dialogue. The J.T.U.A.C. decided to call a day of protest on 5 June with a half-day strike.

The president called a gathering of the U.N.P. trade union, the Jatika Sevaka Sangamaya (J.S.S.) and said that the J.T.U.A.C. was planning to disrupt a popularly elected government and invited the J.S.S. to observe 5 June as a day of cooperation with the government by staging a counter-protest. This was a foolish and provocative decision which openly invited confrontation and violence and, in fact, ended tragically with the death of a trade unionist, D. Somapala.

A month passed. Then on 5 July 12 railway workers at the Ratmalana workshop were interdicted in connection with some incidents that were alleged to have taken place on 5 June. There was not any similar action taken at any other government office or workplace where workers had struck. The railway unions attempted a dialogue with the management but without result; the management refused to discuss the interdictions. On 7 July the workers at the workshop struck work demanding the reinstatement of the interdicted workers and a wage increase of Rs. 300 per month. On 11 July the J.T.U.A.C. met and decided to call a general strike. On 14 July it informed the president that its member unions would go on strike on 18 July.

Neither the president nor the Labour Minister, even at this late stage, offered

to discuss the issues with the J.T.U.A.C. The government's response was to introduce, on 16 July, emergency regulations under the Public Security Ordinance declaring practically all services, both public and private, as "essential services" and that all strikers in such services would be considered to have vacated their posts.

On 18 July the strike began. A meeting the J.T.U.A.C. had called for that day at Hyde Park was banned by the government; instead, the president held a public meeting on that day and announced that all strikers had lost their jobs and would not be permitted to return to work. This resulted in more unions walking out.

## The strike was crushed

The government announced that 40,000 workers had lost their jobs. (Trade union sources claimed the figure was between 80 and 100 thousand). Some of the strikers were eventually taken back. In typical Jayewardene style each minister was permitted to make his own rules for the re-employment of sacked workers in his own ministry, thus ensuring that different ministers adopted different criteria. Thousands remained sacked. This disastrous strike resulted in a large number of workers who lost their jobs committing suicide.

The way a simple demand for a wage increase, to meet hardships caused by inflation, was allowed to escalate to these proportions without the least effort by the government to talk to the unions is difficult to understand unless it was a showdown deliberately engineered by government with the intention of inflicting a crushing retaliation that would inhibit trade union activity for years to come; certainly that was the way it worked out.

It was the colonial government that gave statutory recognition to the right of workers to form trade unions, and provided for their registration. A registered trade union had the right to call a strike and workers who responded to such a call were within their legal right. (The Trade Union Ordinance of 1935).

The Civil Rights Movement pointed out that even during the war, when under the Defence Regulations, the colonial government banned strikes and lockouts in essential services, the order of the governor provided tribunals for the settlement of disputes. (Order made by the governor on 19 March 1942).

The Industrial Disputes Act of 1951 provided machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes but section 49 of that Act expressly excluded workmen employed in the service of government and so the conciliation machinery of the Industrial Disputes Act is not available to government workers.

In 1979 the U.N.P. government of Jayewardene passed the Essential Public Services Act under which the president was empowered to declare any service rendered by government departments, public corporations and local bodies "essential services". A whole variety of punishments was provided for offences under the act including imprisonment up to 5 years, confiscation of property and, in the case of an offender who belonged to any profession, cancellation of his registration to practise that profession. No provision was made for any alternative remedy which the public service worker could seek instead of a strike.

During the 1972 bank clerks' strike Finance Minister N.M. Perera sacked 2,644 clerks employed in state banks; President Jayewardene's response to the 1980 strike was equally ruthless but on a much larger scale, involving the dismissal of (according to the government's own figures) 40,000 workers.

Jayewardene likes to call himself a trade union leader; but he approves of trade union activity only when he is in the opposition; when he is in the government he abhors it. When the 7,000-strong Public Services Nurses Union went on strike on 17 March 1986 he refused to meet the spokesman of the union, Muruttettuwa Ananda Thero, a Buddhist monk. Jayewardene claimed that a Buddhist monk had

no business to be heading a nurses' union because it was a violation of what the Buddha preached about "the relationship that should exist between the Maha Sangha and women". He proscribed the union. (The Weekend 23 March 1986). President Jayewardene is a Buddhist; Sri Lanka is a secular state.

At the Electricity Board's celebrations held on 5 April, the president said: "People are striking and demanding higher salaries in the South while in the North and the East soldiers are dying for the country's sake. People in the South did not seem to realise this is not a time of peace in the country". (Sunday Observer 6 April 1986). This would have gone down big with Lankans who are an emotional people had not the Weekend, a paper not controlled by the government, on the same day, carried the following:

"A brand new fleet of luxury Mercedes Benz limousines will be acquired by the government for use by politicians and visiting V.I.P.'s. At least five are on order and one for use by a very important politician has just been landed and cleared. This 4.2 litre model, regarded as one of the most luxurious, costs around five million rupees and has 60 extra factory-fitted accessories which are considered optional. It has also air-conditioning, power steering, power shutters, electrically adjusted rear seats, and curtaining on windows.

Another four Benz 200s have been ordered. One will go to a politico and the other three to the V.I.P. car pool. Last year the government ordered 16 Mercedes Benz cars; five of them were 380s, eight 280s and the others 300s. Among the cars ordered is a fully bullet-proof Benz 500 which is custom-built, but has been sent to England for special modifications.

The car weighing more than 4.5 tons will, however, not carry the agents' guarantee due to the special modifications.

Another prominent politician who acquired a luxury Benz last week complained that his cassette player malfunctioned; the agent used D.H.L. courier service to fly down a factory fitted Becker radio and cassette set within three days, as a replacement, at a cost of Rs. 40,000".

(To be Continued)

# Cricket Chauvinism

D. A. de Silva

(Former Sri Lankan Ambassador Algie de Silva takes his gloves off)

The August issue of the "Cricketer" magazine carried the bad news. Australia had called off Sri Lanka's planned tour because they preferred to entertain the South Africans later this year. The West Indies have cancelled two of their three planned Tests in November so that they can participate in a six-nation tournament in India. Like some victim of a breach of promise suit, Sri Lanka is to be paid £24000 as compensation by Australia. The West Indies, presumably, think we should be satisfied with the one night stand.

Sport follows the money these days and cricket is no exception. Although Sri Lankans are the most knowledgeable and enthusiastic of cricket fans our market is too small to offer the rewards which come from bigger crowds and richer sponsorship. Nor, most importantly, do we have the large immigrant communities which India, Pakistan and the West Indies have in England and which guarantee a full house most of the time. As a result, we suffer for reasons unconnected with the quality of our cricketers' performance.

If that were all, we can only grin and bear it. But too often we are the targets of unwarranted slight or criticism; and that is unacceptable. Forget for a moment the brouha-ha over the umpiring in the recently concluded series with India. The Indians are chronic complainers and their protestations have the same credibility as their 'holier than thou' foreign policy positions. However I was saddened by the news that the South Africans had asked for neutral umpires and a video of the bowling actions of our two spinners, Muralitharan and Warnaweera.

I was a great fan of South African cricket before it was banned from the international scene. Long before the emergence of Mike Procter and the Pollock brothers, men like Dudley Nourse, Jock Cameron and Hugh Tayfield would compete for places in my world elevens. South African cricketers, I would reason, were sportsmen in the sense that their rugby players were not — which explained why there were so many Boers (and, by definition, white supremacists) in their rugby sides and so few in their cricket elevens.

Now South Africa, alas, joins all the other cricketing nations in the black list of those who have sought to denigrate Sri Lankan cricket. That list is long and gro-

wing and among them are individuals who are living legends in their own countries. Take Imran Khan, for instance. He was one of the early qualifiers. Cricketers are free to criticise our umpires and we have heard plenty of that in recent times. But they are not free to go to such extremes, as Imran did in his autobiography, and say: "I hate to play in Sri Lanka". One would think Pakistani umpires are paragons of virtue. My memory goes back to the drawn out draws between India and Pakistan in the 'fifties and the critical role which umpiring played in those deathless encounters. In more recent times, of course, there has been the redoubtable Shakoor Rana.

To get back to Imran. The only way I could get back at him was to wish him the best of bad luck thereafter. That wasn't always easy when one happened to be present while Imran was playing. I was at Lord's in 1989 when he appeared in the game to commemorate MMC's Bi-centennial. It could have been his last appearance at Lord's and I refrained from praying that he go for a duck. To be honest, I did want to be entertained by his stroke making too. So I compromised as Neville Cardus did when the old enemy in the shape of some brilliant Australian batsman arrived at the crease. "Dear Lord", Cardus would pray, "let him get 50 but no more, please". As it happened, Imran scored some 80 odd runs so I got my stroke play but the satisfaction too of seeing him dismissed short of a century. Alas, he gave me no further cause for pleasure and it was with decidedly mixed feelings that I reacted to his leading Pakistan to victory in the World Cup of 1991.

Another icon to make my black list was the great Australian cricketer and commentator — Richie Benaud. His was an error of omission — and a very grave one indeed. One of the bravest centuries ever made on a first Test appearance at Lord's was Sidath Wettimuny's 190 in 1984. Hardly had he arrived at the crease with Amal Silva to open Sri Lanka's innings when a crowd of (shall we say sub-continental) demonstrators invaded the field. They were duly expelled but took up residence on the street and proceeded to taunt our batsmen with cries of "Come on, Botham, bowl them out". The experience would have unsettled the most experienced of Test batsmen — but not our heroes.

(To be Continued)



# Keeping the Puritan at Bay

Chanaka Amaratunga

*The Puritan hated bear-baiting not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.*

Lord Macaulay

I think it is more than a figment of my imagination that in recent times we have witnessed an increase of the attitude that it is in the interest of us all that we should be prevented from seeing, or knowing or doing several things which are 'decidedly unwholesome'. The decision as to what is unwholesome, as to what we must be denied and the authority to enforce such denial is, of course, in the estimation of those who feel so, best left to them. As to the numerical strength of these persons deeply concerned with the public virtue, I cannot vouch safe an answer. But I have no hesitation in saying that such considerations do not trouble them. Morality is, after all a matter of superior judgement. The way to heaven is not by the adherence to an opinion poll! These persons, who I shall describe as moralists, investing in that word all the subtleties of which it is capable, are quite content that if need be, the few shall to only prescribe but also enforce, on the many, the sort of life which they are fit to live.

Lest it be misunderstood that what concerns me here is the enforcement of popular morality by means of the notion of majority rule, let me make a disclaimer at once.

My objection to the moralists is not on the basis that their standards of what is fitting for a human being to do are not widely accepted. On the contrary there must be some occasions on which such standards are indeed widely accepted. My assertion that it is of little consequence whether the attributes of a particular life style are popular or unpopular. My objection to the moralists is based on the principle that as long as the liberty of anyone is not being interfered with, a

person should be at liberty to do what that person wishes to do.

It seems to me that two highly unwholesome characteristics animate the moralists. One is that they feel that that which they consider to be wrong, should not be permitted to anyone else. This, in my view, thoroughly misguided, zeal comes proclaimed, and all the faith has been declared, and all the edicts of all the Gods have been invoked, we must unless we have abandoned all human reason recognize that we believe something to be right because we believe that something to be right. We may believe that it is right because the Buddha or Jesus Christ or Moses or the Prophet Mohammed, or Zoroaster or Confucius or the Grand Panjandram said so, but it becomes right for us because we believe that what said is right. The ultimate is that of human subjectivity.

Why then this compulsive desire to force other people to be good in accordance with our own lights? Are we blind to the most obvious fact that human history has displayed before us, that disagreement on values, on what constitutes, the good, the desirable, the pleasurable life, is essential to the human condition. How silly, how absurd, how arrogant to demand that a man be killed because he thinks to be a fraud a man I think is holy, because he thinks is good a political system that I think is wicked?

The second is the puritan notion that dislikes pleasure, which leads the moralist to demand that that which he finds distasteful should not give pleasure to anyone else. The dislike of pleasure, the determination to indulge in harsh, pious righteousness is in my view, a sure fire way of reaching hell if such a place there exists. For the basis of true morality is liberality of spirit, generosity, kindness, tolerance, not narrow lack of human sympathy.

From a combination of these, in my view, deplorable characteristics come some of the notions which would be amazingly comical if their consequences on human beings and on societies were not so adverse. Politicians want to ban books which contain philosophies which they do not share, clergymen (and I use the term to denote a man of the cloth of any religion) want to stifle any ideas that are not promoted by their own faith, parents want to deny to their children a lifestyle which has no appeal for them. Is there not in this attitude something very immature, something very sick, something too of the ostrich that buried its head in the sand?

Must we reduce human intelligence to the notion that all knowledge which we do not have is not worth having, that all customs which are not ours must be rooted out, that no idea of the good can exist if it is not ours? The logical outcome of this madness, yes madness, for there is no other word to describe such overwhelming abandonment of reason, is the assembly of us all, rigid and conformist to declaim:-

*As I am a socialist, no one shall be a conservative*

*As I am teetotal, no one shall drink*

*As I am vegetarian, meat shall be banished from the earth*

*As I love girls, no one shall love boys*

*As I believe, no one shall doubt*

*As I doubt, no one shall believe.*

The common response of the moralists is to accuse those who oppose their strictures of the greatest possible depravity. Everyone who opposes the banning of alcohol is for them a drunkard, everyone opposed to the banning of particular forms of food a hopeless glutton, all who oppose the banning of Das Kapital are villainous Marxists, all who oppose the banning of Meinkampf, vicious Nazis, those who oppose the ban of sexual publications depraved perveyers of pornography. The

truth however, is far different. Every civilized human being should oppose such restrictions, not because he loves that which the moralists seek to outlaw but because he upholds the right of every individual to live his/her own life.

The moralists commit another tragic error in their anxiety to ban that which they disapprove of. They believe that if in public it is pretended that a thing does not exist, it shall surely cease to be. Perhaps an ostrich can tell them a thing or two. The crusades to ban kissing, sex and violence as well as political views which are not approved of, from our own electronic media, are based upon such pathetic delusions, the result of which is the presentation of a highly false view of human life. The arts and the media must, if they are to retain value, reflect the real state of human life. By not showing people kissing on the screen, will people stop kissing in Sri Lanka? Because violence is banned on the screen and revolution from the newspapers will there be an end to violence and the abandonment of revolution by those dedicated to it? The playing of such games, the denial of the truth, the attempt to confine human life to a prissy little mould, will rob us of last shred of vitality and hope.

By this I do not mean that we must always portray a particular type of life, that the screens must contain nothing but kissing and sex and violence. What I am saying is that no one has yet succeeding in ennobling human life by pretending that human beings are anything other than what they are, diverse creatures seeking their own different forms of fulfilment and happiness.

If human beings quite obviously and often honourably and understandably, disagree about the ends of life and of the means by which they ought to be accomplished there seems to me to be no reasonable course save the maximisation of tolerance.

It is by the exercise of the highest degree of tolerance and the conferment of the widest possible degree of freedom

that is compatible with the maintenance of the liberty of all, that Sri Lanka and indeed the wider world can find peace and progress.

It is easy to declare ourselves to be in favour of tolerance. Very few would have the temerity openly to acknowledge that they are intolerant. It is less easy to practise it. For the acid test of tolerance is satisfied not when one extends tolerance to that to which one is indifferent but to that which one strongly dislikes. Many would oppose the ban of all newspapers critical of the political establishment. But how many Buddhists would oppose a ban on *Bhavatharanaya*? How many Christians would oppose the ban on Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ*? How many Muslims would oppose the ban on *The Satanic Verses*? How many opponents of the political censorship of literature would oppose the ban on pornography? The true exercise of tolerance involves upholding every liberty, the exercise of which does not harm other human beings. Such restrictions on the exercise of liberty must be those adopted exclusively for the protection of the rights of others or for the protection of minors who are unready to take full responsibility for their choices.

There are many who seek refuge in inaccurate and conservative interpretations of religion and morality who would disagree with this. But their arguments are founded upon sand. In his *Discourse to the Kalamas*, the Buddha asserted that each individual must arrive at his/her own moral code by individual reason not by the authority of clergy, scripture, tradition, coercion or any other means. Two thousand years before the publication of *On Liberty*, the Buddha made as radical and as uncompromising a declaration of individualism and free enquiry as any subsequent liberal work.

The Roman Catholic Saint and Martyr, Sir Thomas More, expressed similar sentiments. He asserted in the era of religious intolerance, the intimate relationship between faith and conscience, which the coercive power of the state should not interfere with, when he declared

at his trial for high treason in 1535:

*I have no window to look into another man's conscience. Therefore I condemn on one.*

Broadness, light, fresh air and the sense of freedom, of those of liberal spirit, not the cramped, cribbed, confined and claustrophobic atmosphere of the vociferous Puritans in our midst, is what we need.

When the moralist's strident tones are about to overwhelm you, remember that enforced virtue is the greatest of vices.

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# A Tale of Two Tigers (2)

Izeth Hussain

I come now to the question preoccupying the public mind ten years after 1983. Where do we go from here?

There is apparently a broad national consensus in favour of a negotiated settlement and against attempting a military solution. Accordingly the Government's strategy is to see that the LTTE's support base among the Tamils gets more and more eroded as a consequence of increasing economic hardship in the North-East, which will hopefully lead to the taming of the Tiger making a negotiated settlement possible. At present there seems to be no sensible alternative to that strategy, considering the impasse to which we have been brought by post-1977 UNP folly.

However the consensus is being increasingly challenged by the demand that the economy and the country be placed on a war footing. The demand seems to have behind it illusions about a possible military solution. Such illusions have firstly to be got out of the way in answering the question, Where do we go from here?

Our soldiers can certainly take Jaffna, probably with heavy combatant and civilian casualties. The problem is what happens thereafter. Guerilla warfare can be expected to continue, and here we have to take into our reckoning the fact that the LTTE is internationally recognized as the best guerilla fighting force in the world today, and further we have to remember the discomfiture of the super-powers in facing guerilla warfare in Vietnam and Afghanistan as well as the IPKF experience in taking Jaffna and eventually losing over a thousand men. The problem is that a guerilla war has to be won by taking the minds and hearts of the people, not by taking territory. We can take Jaffna and find that our difficulties are compounded.

The experience elsewhere in the world of trying military solutions for ethnic conflicts has not been encouraging. For many years the Kurd rebellion was fuelled

by Iranian support. In 1975 the Shah of Iran withdrew that support in terms of a quid pro quo arrangement with Iraq, and the Kurd rebellion quickly collapsed. It looked like a successful military solution to an ethnic rebellion. But it revived, and still continues as a serious problem. If not for the fact that the Kurds constitute a problem in several countries, including Turkey the NATO ally of the US, we can be sure that in the aftermath of the Gulf War the Americans would have set up a separate Kurdistan state. It is not the wisest policy to allow an ethnic conflict to go on indefinitely.

The case of Nigeria's Biafran rebellion in the latter half of the sixties is also instructive. In a brief period of two to three years over a million were killed, and the rebellion was ended by the blocking of food supplies and the ensuing famine. Since then the Ibos of Biafra have lived contentedly with their fellow Nigerians, which might look like a military solution to an ethnic conflict. What actually happened was that the Muslims of the North as well as other Nigerian ethnic groups showed a sensible accomodativeness towards each other after the war was over, having learnt a lesson from their ethnic folly. The lesson is well remembered, as shown by the fact that recently General Babaginda aborted democratic elections out of fear that the folly of the politicians will again lead to ethnic problems.

The hankering after a military solution, spite of an apparently firm national consensus against it, is quite understandable because it is exasperating to find after ten years of conflict that we are nowhere near a negotiated settlement, and also because of occasional humiliations like Weli Oya. It is an irrational hankering all the same. We can take Jaffna, and even assuming that we militarily defeat the LTTE, we may still find that the ethnic problem cannot be ended without a negotiated settlement. The phases of the Kurd rebellion over the decades, with periods in which it seemed to be practically over, should be particularly instructive for us.

I want now argue that the problem of reaching a negotiated settlement has proved intractable so far mainly because we have ignored what should be an obvious premise that the solution to a problem should address the problem, or it will not be solved. We have over-simplified the problem as a whole by recognizing only the problems caused by the intransigence and undependability of the LTTE, and the supposedly excessive claims to federalism and a North-East merger made by the other Tamil parties. We have been ignoring the root problem from which those other problems derive, which is the undependability of the State. We have to ask whether the post-1977 UNP State can be expected to respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements.

The record of the State in reneging on commitments has been dismal. That record includes going back on the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact and the Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayagam understanding. It is arguable that both those Sinhalese leaders were honourable men who meant well, and certainly wanted to implement those agreements but could not because of popular opposition.

It is an argument that does not apply to what happened after 1977. There was no popular opposition to the District Development Councils, which could have gone a long way to appease the Tamil demand for devolution. But the Jaffna DDC polls of 1981 were blatantly rigged, and the operation of the DDC's was thereafter made a farce. After the IPKF came here in 1987, the Indian side complained that the Peace Accords were not being implemented. On the occasion when a Special Envoy was sent to Colombo, the Indian complaint was that the Sri Lankan side had gone back on an agreed position by the time he returned to Delhi. The Provincial Councils could have been used to show that further devolution is unnecessary, if only they had been made to function properly. Instead they have been made farcical as shown by Chandrika Kumaranatunge's complaint that as Chief

Minister she is no more than a glorified Chief Clerk.

In the preceding para I have referred only to matters directly relevant to the ethnic problem. Equally relevant to the problem of the undependability of the State is the pathological drive shown by the post-1977 UNP against standards of public morality, meaning not just the age-old hypocrisies of governments but actual attacks on public morality, as shown by the immediate promotion of police officers convicted by the Supreme Court of human rights violations, and the famous case of the convicted rapist who was pardoned and then made an all-Island Justice of the Peace. Evidently he could have said with Shakespeare's Othello, "I have done the State some service and they know'e." Under the present Government the Udu-gampola affair has provoked a spate of outraged letters and editorials in the non-Government press. In this context of blatant disdain for the most elementary standards of public morality, it is questionable whether many Sinhalese have confidence that the Government will stand by its commitments. Can we really expect the Tamils to show confidence that the State will abide by the terms of a negotiated settlement?

It is certainly arguable that the LTTE has proved so intractable a problem up to now because of the undependability of the State. It may be that the LTTE itself has not been serious about a negotiated settlement because it really wants nothing short of Eelam. However its support base can be eroded because of the economic costs of its strategy to the Tamils in the North-East, and it can be progressively isolated as shown by the fact that practically every other Tamil party has turned against it. In other words, it is theoretically possible to force the LTTE into a situation where it has to accept something short of Eelam.

Why has that not been possible so far? It is obvious that the LTTE continues to have substantial support among the Tamils. Otherwise it cannot possibly function as the redoubtable guerilla force that it is. Very probably the support is largely negative support, meaning that many Tamils cannot see an alternative to the LTTE because they believe that should it be completely destroyed the Tamils can expect to get little or nothing from the State. The LTTE can certainly argue that

all the very terrible sufferings inflicted by the rebellion on the Tamils as well as others will go for naught if it lays down arms and negotiates a settlement while none can be sure that the State will abide by its terms. It can be argued therefore that the State's undependability stands in the way of the total erosion of support for the LTTE.

The insistence of the other Tamil parties on federalism and a North-East merger can also be explained in terms of the undependability of the State. We can ask why a minority should want anything more than fair and equal treatment when the majority itself wants no more than that. Why the Tamil insistence on devolution and a homeland when fair and equal treatment can be given without any such special arrangements? The Sinhalese belief is that the Tamils want such arrangements as stepping-stones towards Eelam. A more plausible answer is that the Tamils want special arrangements to secure fair and equal treatment in the future as well, not just at present.

The term "federalism" can be defined in different ways. What is practically important behind the Tamil demand for federalism is that the Government at the centre should not be able to dismiss the Provincial governments just as it likes, and nullify devolution. Under India's quasi-federalism system state governments have been dismissed willy-nilly, too often without regard for democratic norms. The post-1977 UNP State has been far more over-bearing, unprincipled, and undemocratic than the one in India, and the Tamils obviously fear that any system of devolution less than federalism will be made farcical in practice. Hence what looks like an unreasonable demand for federalism by all the Tamil parties except for Mr Thondaman's CWC. The unanimous insistence on a North-East merger seems to have for its rationale a desire for sufficient living-space to which the Tamils in the South can gravitate should the State go back on a negotiated settlement. The root-problem behind the intransigence of the LTTE and what might look like excessive demands from the other Tamil parties is the undependability of the State.

I have argued in this article that the ethnic problem in its present militant form is not the result of the alleged communalism of the Sinhalese people but of State or UNP terrorism, behind which is the

problem of a mad hierarchical drive in the State compounded by the anti-democracy of the post-1977 UNP. I have argued further that the root-problem preventing a negotiated settlement is the undependability of the State, which makes it questionable whether it will respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements. In terms of those arguments, the ethnic problem has to be seen in terms of the peculiar character of the post-1997 UNP State. To solve the ethnic problem, therefore, we have to solve the problem of the State.

In looking for a way out of the present imbroglio, we must give central importance to one fact and try to make it decisive. It is the fact that in the ten years after 1983 the Sinhalese people have interacted peacefully with Tamils in the South in spite of the most extreme provocations. In my view that fact goes a long way to invalidate the claim to Eelam. For what is really important in establishing the claim to separate statehood is not the debatable historical ground for it but the question of whether the two communities can live together or not. The Sinhalese people have given their answer. However, while the fact of peaceful interaction goes a long way to invalidate the claim to Eelam, it does not go the whole way because there is still the problem of the State. The Sinhalese and the Tamils may be able to live together, but the Tamils may not be able to live with the State.

It might seem to some Sri Lankans that the way out of the present imbroglio would be to negotiate a settlement under international auspices, including guarantees for its observance by the UN, SAARC, or the Commonwealth. They may be willing to offer themselves as mediators, but it is very doubtful that they will accept the role of guarantors as that will require an undertaking that they will intervene to force the State or the LTTE to observe the terms of the settlement. Furthermore, in agreeing to any such thing we will be agreeing in advance to a serious compromise of our sovereignty. Yet another point is that such agreements could misfire badly for the reason that should the State be seen to be going back on commitments other countries may come to feel that they should recognize Eelam.

There is no alternative to our dealing with the problem of the State if we are to get to grips with the ethnic problem. In terms of my definition of the ethnic pro-



blem as the problem of the State and not of the people, the conclusion can be drawn that the people's will must prevail over the State if the ethnic problem is to be solved. We have to assert the supremacy of the civil society over the State. In other words we must restore a fully functioning democracy, meaning not just that there are free and fair elections but also that the people have democratic rights enabling them to control, or at least influence, the State in between elections.

However, democracy may not by itself make the State solve the ethnic problem. The difficulty is that the power of the modern State, which we must remember has in its hands the means of legitimate violence against the people, can be very dreadful. We may have a fully functioning democracy and yet fail to control or influence the State to any significant extent. Democracy is the best conceivable answer to the age-old problem of tyranny. It is not a nostrum for all the ills of mankind. Democracy may help, but we have to go beyond it if we are to really promote a solution of the ethnic problem.

I believe that the crucial desideratum is public morality. As I have argued the essential problem is the undependability of the State, which can make the Tamils question whether there is any point in reaching a negotiated settlement when they know that the State can with impunity go back on it. What is required is a thorough-going ethnical cleansing of the UNP, and respect for standards of public morality to the extent that it becomes inconceivable that there will ever again be another Udugampola affair. It is only in that situation that we can expect to reach a meaningful negotiated settlement, backed by trust and confidence on all sides that it will be properly implemented.

The ethnic problem in its present militant form is the consequence of the collapse of public morality under the post-1977 UNP State, and it will never be solved without a restoration of that morality. As I have shown, the problem took on a militant form after the post-1977 pogroms, the expression of State or UNP terrorism. There was a terrifying collapse of public morality behind those pogroms of the period between 1977 and 1983. That collapse had to lead to the disintegration of the State, because no society can hold

together without standards of public morality. Anyone looking at the literature on moral theory will find that that point is not argued in full because it is taken as self-evident.

I will provide only a quotation from Bertrand Russell who was always a hard-headed rationalist in his philosophical writings. In his book *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* published in 1954 he pointed out that ethical beliefs throughout recorded history, have had two very different sources, one political and the other personal. He went on to write, "Without civic morality communities perish; without personal morality their survival has no value." Russell would not have been in the least surprised that Sri Lanka has been in a state of disintegration for several years, the writ of the State not extending beyond Vavuniya. And he would have hooted with laughter at the idea of our trying to put the pieces together again without trying to restore elementary standards of public morality.

The public must demand a thorough ethical cleansing of the UNP. It is a mass Party backed by millions of the ordinary decent folk of Sri Lanka, and it has at its highest echelons some politicians of fine human quality who mean well by this country. They probably understand the importance of purging the 1977 UNP from the body politic of Sri Lanka and restoring the Party of the Senanayakes and Kotalawela. However the degeneracy of our political life since 1977 has been so great that their task as regenerators will be uphill. The public must therefore back them in a programme of ethical cleansing. The alternative might be the final disintegration of Sri Lanka under the aegis of the post-1977 UNP State.

The solution of the problem posed by the State in relation to the ethnic problem requires both democracy and the restoration of public morality. In addition, it will help very greatly if the functions of the State are limited as much as possible. Peaceful Sinhala-Tamil interaction outside the State suggests that the greater the area of that interaction the greater the prospects for ethnic harmony. We should therefore move in the direction of what is called "limited Government", towards an ideal situation in which the functions of the Government are limited to the maintena-

nance of law and order and the building of roads and public lavatories.

It may be that what is really important for the health, wealth, and happiness of humankind is not the form of government but the degree of government. All Sri Lankans who have actually experienced the horror of the post-1977 UNP State, and who are still in their right senses, will agree. The principle of "limited government" is relevant for ethnic problems, because the experience of several South East Asian and other countries shows very clearly that the less the extent of Government the greater the prospects for ethnic harmony. I will not expand on that point as this article is already too long. I leave it to the interested reader to consult the books of the black American economist Thomas Sowell which are available in the American Library in Colombo.

The paradigm shift proposed in this article does not include a blue-print for a solution. One can think of several possible solutions, with or without devolution and with or without merger, that are thoroughly equitable for all our communities. There will be no point in them as long as there is no confidence that the State will respect the sanctity and inviolability of agreements.

The paradigm shift proposed here is based on the principle that to solve a problem we must address the problem, not something else. The core-problem is the undependability of the State, not just what many Sinhalese see as the intransigence and excessive demands of the Tamil parties. Therefore the pre-condition for a solution is the correction of the State through democracy, the restoration of standards of public morality, and I believe "limited Government".

Very probably the historians of the future will write of our ethnic conflict as a tale of two tigers. We have been preoccupied with the tiger which has been on the rampage in the North and East, with occasional forays into the South in the form of bomb-blasts and assassinations. We have failed to recognize the tiger within the gates, the State. For a solution to the ethnic problem we certainly have to defang the tiger in the North-East. We also have to defang the State.

# An encounter with Lalith

S. Velupillai

In April 1987 the BBC predicted a major offensive by the Sri Lankan forces against the LTTE in the North within a month. The All India Radio, which most people in the North-East relied on for routine news, maintained a mysterious silence on the imminent attack. Early May 1987 the SLBC, in an uncharacteristic performance, quoted the Minister of National Security, the late Lalith Athulathmudali, as saying that the results of a scheduled strategic move by the forces would be known in two weeks.

No wonder, "Operation Liberation" commenced on May 26, ended on May 31, and resulted in over 1,000 deaths and 2,000 arrests in Vadamadachy on its liberation from the LTTE. On the last day of the offensive I was arrested from one of the 16 temples specified as havens by the forces in a notice dropped from the air across Vadamadachy. We, the captives, were chained and shipped to a makeshift detention camp in Galle, though our destination, according to our papers, was to be the notorious Boosa Detention Camp. Later, we came to know that Boosa was already full.

We were confined to a warehouse turned into a detention camp, adjacent to the port of Galle, about 200 metres long, and 20 metres wide. There were 6 latrines, outside the camp. At a time 6 detainees would be led out at gun point to spend 6 minutes in the latrines. Most of us had no option other than defecating and urinating into a gutter deep inside the camp. The gutter overflowed. We wallowed in our own faeces and urine that flowed from the gutter, under our feet, towards the centre of the camp which teemed with worms and flies, vomit and spittle. There were no baths. None of us

had bathed or changed for days. Both the camp and the inmates stank.

The camp was packed to capacity. The detainees were split into over 50 groups, with 50 in each, each headed by one of its members. I headed group 52. A barbed-wire fence divided the head and the body of the camp.

On or about June 5, 1987, in the afternoon, the group leaders were lined up at the head of the camp. Almost from nowhere Minister Athulathmudali stormed into the area secured for the camp authorities, clad in white, with a beam on his face, flanked by his aides. He moved about with a great pace, and exchanged pleasantries with the officials. He resembled a busy man obliged to attend, but impatient to leave, the funeral of a distant relative. On the spur of the moment, however, I made up my mind to draw his attention to our sanitary requirements: latrines, baths and clothing.

I tried my best to read his mind. Was he in a good mood? Would he entertain my request? Was he satisfied with the results of "Operation Liberation" he had alluded to earlier in May 1987? Did he claim or deserve credit for the success of the offensive? I was not sure. I was so captivated by the image he presented and the impression he evoked. He made an abrupt approach to me. I was overwhelmed by a disarming ministerial grip at my hand. I stood spellbound, speechless, in his grip. He lifted up my ugly hand as though he would feel my pulse. While I stood stupefied he quipped promptly and candidly "Your wrist-watch looks much better than mine". He held out his hand for me to look at his own

wrist-watch, and stormed out of the camp before I could compose myself to make a response or my request. He came, he saw, he left.

Taking my mind back to the circumstances which put me in close proximity with Athulathmudali in Galle Detention Camp 6 years ago, I now regard my lightening encounter with him as an enlightening experience. He had caught me in a zoom, no doubt, prompted by my own attempt to gauge his thoughts. He had felt my pulse while I struggled to read his mind. His grip at my hand conveyed to me that he was aware of the squalid state of the camp. He appeared to sympathise with the inmates whose detention was a direct result of "Operation Liberation".

Why did he make an abrupt approach to me? To carry out a pre-emptive strike. Why did he compare the wrist-watches? To draw a red-herring. What did he imply by his remark that my wrist-watch was better than his? Look, you are better off. Be content with what you already have. As for the deterioration of your status, blame yourself.

That appears to be the message he conveyed to my simmering mind. Perhaps he was addressing his critics from the North. Athulathmudali's symbolism seems to sum up the views of the people in the rest of Sri Lanka on the issue of the North-East. My one and only encounter with the late Lalith Athulathmudali confirmed my conviction that no community has ever voluntarily preferred winning the heart to winning the war. That applies to my community too.




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