

# SIRIMA VO

*Honouring the world's first woman Prime Minister*



EDITED BY TISSA JAYATILAKA

THIS COMMEMORATIVE VOLUME

brings together a number of essays and memoirs written by those who worked closely with Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike as public servants, were acquainted with her, or knew of her by reputation. The essays cover a range of themes but what they share in common is their focus on Mrs. Bandaranaike the political leader and decent and caring human being. Written primarily as a memorial tribute to Mrs. Bandaranaike, these contributions also offer a commentary on and a dispassionate analysis of her life and times as a political leader of standing both nationally and internationally.

On 21 July, 1960 Sirimavo Bandaranaike assumed office as the world's first woman prime minister. Thrust into the turbulent world of Sri Lankan politics in the 1950s, Mrs. Bandaranaike's rise to national leadership was occasioned by the tragic assassination of her husband, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who was prime minister of Sri Lanka from 1956 to 1959. Her illustrious political career spanned four decades during which she served as prime minister on three occasions -- 1960-1965, 1970-1977 and 1994-2000.



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# *Preface to the Second Edition*

The first edition of *SIRIMAVO Honouring the world's first woman Prime Minister* received an excellent reception. This book was released in December 2010 at an impressive ceremony in the Bandaranaike Memorial Convention Hall in the presence of the President of the Republic Mahinda Rajapaksa, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and an invited audience of close to a thousand people.

In the following weeks, *SIRIMAVO* received high praise in three prominent reviews in the English language newspapers of Sri Lanka. Each reviewer made pointed reference to the consistently high standard of the essays in the publication. Each also appreciated the fact that this commemorative volume in honour of Prime Minister Bandaranaike has successfully and sensitively averted a customary pitfall generally found in publications of this nature, namely a tendency towards hagiography. In addition, several readers have complimented the publisher -- the Bandaranaike Museum Committee -- and the editor for their roles in ensuring that the essays in honour of the late prime minister are dispassionate and balanced. Furthermore, the fact that these essays highlight Mrs. Bandaranaike's achievements while also, with the advantage of hindsight, subjecting her less successful policy initiatives to critical scrutiny has won many a plaudit for the publication.

These responses doubtless contributed to the brisk sale of the 750 copies of the first edition. Within six months of its initial publication, all copies of the book have been sold.

In response to this continuing demand for the book, and the accolades it has won, we explored the possibility of bringing out a second edition. The S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike National Memorial Foundation of Sri Lanka has generously agreed to fund the publication of a further 700 copies of *SIRIMAVO*, and we are most grateful to the Foundation. We believe that *SIRIMAVO* will prove to be something more than merely a commemorative gesture as the publication contains a vital collection of primary documents illuminating a piece of Sri Lankan history with symbolic and concrete relevance to the global community.

*Tissa Jayatilaka*  
15 June, 2011

# *Preface to the First Edition*

The essays included in this commemorative volume were written as a tribute to Mrs. Sirimavo Ratwatte Dias Bandaranaike, the world's first woman prime minister. Like the first prime minister of independent Sri Lanka, Mrs. Bandaranaike, too, was 'unencumbered by learning'. But she possessed abundant common sense and wonderful qualities of mind and heart. Among these qualities were sincerity, tenacity and determination, as testified to by each contributor to this volume who served with her or otherwise knew her intimately. These personal character traits were also recognised by the leaders of the world she came into contact with and who held her in very high esteem.

During her first 11 years as prime minister she was also the foreign minister of Sri Lanka and her excellent contribution in the latter capacity is known to any student of diplomacy and international relations. One of her outstanding achievements, one that is less publicly well known, came during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh. This was a time when Sri Lanka had excellent relations with both of our close neighbours, something that had existed since the independence of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in or around 1948. Mrs. Bandaranaike, at the helm of government as prime minister and as defence and external affairs minister at the time of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, was placed in an unenviable position when Pakistan applied for refueling facilities in Colombo for their aircraft on their way to Dacca, presently in Bangladesh, which was then in East Pakistan. A lesser personality would have been fazed by this significant foreign policy challenge. Mrs. Bandaranaike unhesitatingly granted the refueling facilities for Pakistani aircraft on their way to East Pakistan. The governments and the people of Pakistan have remained grateful and close friends of Sri Lanka ever since. That India has remained our steadfast friend (except for a brief interlude) accepting and understanding our reaching out to Pakistan in the latter's hour of need is proof, if proof were needed, of the political dexterity and sincerity of Mrs. Bandaranaike. That she was able to keep the goodwill and trust of two friends in an extremely difficult and delicate situation surely is a diplomatic triumph of immense significance that all Sri Lankans could forever be proud of.

It is doubtless this sincerity of intent and approach of Mrs. Bandaranaike

that led various countries to receive her with the honours usually reserved only to visiting heads of state even when she was in the Opposition in the 1980s when she was undemocratically deprived of her civic rights and subjected to other indignities by a vindictive authoritarian government at home (see the speech of Lakshman Kadirgamar made in Parliament during the Condolence Proceedings for Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, 24 November 2000, included in this publication). Even in the last six years (1994–2000) when she was prime minister for the third and last time although not actively so, she was remembered and respected by one and all as an elder stateswoman of standing. In the speech referred to above, Lakshman Kadirgamar also illustrates this latter fact with examples drawn from his recollections of his visits as Sri Lanka's foreign minister to China and Egypt. Such was her solid reputation as an international figure and one is reminded here of some of the immortal lines of Tennyson's *Ulysses*:

Though much is taken, much abides; and though  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are ---  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Her approach when it came to grappling with domestic affairs was equally noteworthy. As attested to by two senior public servants who served as Secretaries to the Prime Minister, Messrs Bradman Weerakoon and Dharmasiri Pieris, 'she was conscientious, punctual and had enormous stamina'. It needs to be borne in mind that during her second spell as prime minister in 1970–1977, Mrs. Bandaranaike was not only the chief executive of the country but also the minister of defence and external affairs, the minister of planning and economic affairs and the minister of plan implementation. If this was not enough of a load to carry, she also served as head of the cabinet of ministers and of the political coalition consisting of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party she led, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka full of seasoned and shrewd campaigners of the calibre of N.M. Perera, Colvin R. de Silva, Bernard Soysa, Pieter Keuneman, Leslie Goonewardene et al. Despite the talent, experience, commitment to hard work and devotion to duty that Mrs. Bandaranaike

and her distinguished colleagues brought to bear on governance, it was not all 'sweetness and light'. Jayampathy Wickramaratne, Jayadeva Uyangoda and Swarna Jayaweera in their penetrating essays touch on missed opportunities and certain shortcomings of the Mrs. Bandaranaike-led SLFP government of 1960–1965 and of the United Front regime of 1970–1977.

Be the significance of political achievement, the failure to transcend certain limitations, the burden and joys of high office held and adorned as they may, the enduring and endearing image that remains etched in my mind is the role of Mrs. Bandaranaike as woman, wife, mother and grand-mother. In all of these varied capacities, she displayed the grace and charm of the well-bred human being. Jayantha Dhanapala recollecting an incident during an official visit of the prime minister to China that he participated in captures vividly, for me, that aspect of Mrs. Bandaranaike's multifaceted personality that I most admire and I quote:

It was late at night in the Sri Lanka delegation's office room as we gift-wrapped the parcels and pasted the appropriate labels on them [the customary gifts for people in the Chinese government]. A figure in a dressing gown with her hair in a plait slipped in to join in our collective work: Mrs. Bandaranaike, quietly working with her staff. She remained mindful of her housewifely duties and her personal touch in supervising the tying of the bows and the neatness of packaging of us clumsy - fingered men was invaluable. The Opposition Parliamentarians had derided her as a 'kussi-amma' or 'a woman of the kitchen' but here was a graceful blending of the woman and the leader joining her staff on the work floor. She was also often criticized for being 'radala' or 'aristocratic' but here she was unostentatiously unmindful of rank or status.

That was the woman and the mother who spoke at the first NAM Summit in Belgrade. That was the Prime Minister who was the most successful foreign minister of modern Sri Lanka.

*Tissa Jayatilaka*

# ESSAYS

*The Foreign Policy Of  
Sirimavo Bandaranaike*

JAYANTHA DHANAPALA

*"I am happy to attend this great assembly not only as a representative of my country but also as a woman and a mother who can understand the thoughts and feelings of the millions of women, the mothers of this world, who are deeply concerned with the preservation of the human race."*

*Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike*

The year – 1961. The venue – Belgrade. The occasion – the first Summit meeting of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries. In that setting, representatives of 25 nations came together to found the Nonaligned Movement (NAM), which rejected the Cold War division of the world into ideological blocs while demanding the democratization of global politics, and which grew into a transcontinental coalition of 118 member states and 17 observers playing an influential role in the post-Cold War period of international relations. Among the 25 founding member nations was Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), and at the head of the Sri Lankan delegation was the nation's recently elected prime minister, the first female prime minister in the world.

A little over a decade after the island emerged as an independent country, Sirimavo Bandaranaike's pioneering role and her unshakeable identification with Non-alignment set an irreversible trend in Sri Lanka's foreign policy providing the island-nation with an invaluable reservoir of international support. Her service, under a Westminster form of government from 1960-65 and again from 1970-77 in the powerful position of Prime Minister



and Minister of Defence and External Affairs, witnessed her nation's bold identification with the economic diplomacy of the developing countries of the Group of 77. It also marked the emergence of the United Nations Conference on Trade And Development (UNCTAD), of which a distinguished Sri Lanka economist, Dr. Gamani Corea, would later serve as Secretary-General, having been nominated for the position by Mrs. Bandaranaike. It also bore witness to her understanding of the geopolitical importance of good relations with both India and China, her neutrality between them in the 1962 war, and her efforts to mediate between the Asian giants. It was a testimony to her skilful use of personal diplomacy in negotiating agreements of longstanding bilateral issues between Sri Lanka and India and in securing foreign aid from China and other countries, and in general it demonstrated her unswerving and principled commitment to the national interest of her country in the conduct of foreign policy. These exceptional qualities set trends in her country's foreign policy that continued after her. Decades later, the name of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, among Sri Lanka's leaders, remains best known internationally. That is a tribute to a leader whose flair for international relations was intuitive and innate, and whose style in the conduct of foreign policy -- the *métier* in which, unlike many of her predecessors and successors, she excelled -- was intensely personal.

#### NON-ALIGNMENT

"Underlying the policy of non-alignment is the belief that independent nations, although small and militarily weak, have a positive role to play in the world today. This attitude is completely different from that of washing our hands of these matters, which was perhaps the idea behind the classical theory of neutralism. That was non-involvement -- remaining in splendid isolation. There is, Hon. Senators would agree, a world of difference between this and non-alignment."

*(Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike on Sri Lanka's Non-aligned Foreign Policy, speech given to the Senate on 23 January 1964)<sup>1</sup>*

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1 Amal Jayawardane, (ed.) *Documents on Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy 1947-1965*, Colombo, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, 2005, pp. 14-16.

Ensuring Sri Lanka's participation at the Belgrade Summit along with Tito, Nehru, Nasser, Nkrumah, Castro, Sukarno and other giants of the emerging global south was an instinctive and historic act on Premier Bandaranaike's part. Her husband, assassinated in 1959, had set his country on a new course, articulating a foreign policy distinct from the pro-Western inclinations of his predecessors -- a pro-active alternative for developing countries recently emerged from colonialism. Having observed his conduct of this robustly independent foreign policy at first hand, and accompanying him on his foreign visits, Sirimavo Bandaranaike established personal links with many of the leaders of the newly emerging countries. These connections remained one of her great strengths, as she communicated with other international leaders directly to obtain benefits for Sri Lanka and to help formulate unified Nonaligned responses to global situations.

In the early stages of her leadership, Mrs. Bandaranaike collided with Western governments as a result of her policies of nationalization of the petroleum distribution in the country and later the tea and rubber plantations. Such clashes led one of her speechwriters to introduce a toxic phrase, "the rapacious designs of the West" in a speech delivered in Peking, China, in January, 1964.<sup>2</sup> These words led to a predictable storm of controversy that took her a long time to live down, but ultimately her demonstration of scrupulous objectivity between the West and East, along with her many visits to Western countries, succeeded in dislodging the prejudices that this statement had created. Such diplomatic skill was proved beyond doubt when Mrs. Bandaranaike appealed to the international community for assistance in response to the eruption of the youth-led insurgency of 1971. Help came from a wide range of countries -- Western, socialist and Non-aligned countries including India and Pakistan.

While no non-aligned summits were held during Mrs. Bandaranaike's tenure as Leader of the Opposition from 1965-70, Sri Lanka's participation in the Nonaligned Summits of 1961 in Belgrade and 1964 in Cairo had already carved out a permanent place for her in global politics. On her re-election in 1970 she was, fortuitously, able to lead the Sri Lanka delegation to the Lusaka Summit in 1970 and to the Algiers Summit in 1973. When the venue for the next summit was under consideration, after the Lusaka summit, Mrs. Bandaranaike's strong interest in contributing to the movement that she had helped found led

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2 *ibid.*, pp.193-194.

her to put forward Sri Lanka's interest in hosting a summit. This move led to a conflict with Algeria, which had similar ambitions, having emerged proudly independent after a hard-fought struggle with France. The dispute was resolved at the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Georgetown, Guyana, when Mrs. Bandaranaike was satisfied, albeit grudgingly, by the decision that, while the 1973 Summit was awarded to Algeria, the 1976 Summit would be held in Sri Lanka.

Despite carping criticism by the opposition, the 1976 Nonaligned Summit was to be one of Sri Lanka's great triumphs in foreign policy. Detailed planning supervised personally by the Prime Minister, ensured its success. Veteran diplomat Vernon Mendis was appointed Secretary-General of the Conference, Manel Abeysekera placed in charge of the protocol arrangements, and senior career diplomats -- Arthur Basnayake, Ben Fonseka, Izzeth Hussain and others -- were given responsibility for other aspects of conference arrangements. The newly constructed Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), built by the Chinese and opened in 1973, was the venue.

It was Mrs. Bandaranaike's task, as the Chair of NAM, to present the Final Declaration of the Fifth Nonaligned Summit to the UN General Assembly in 1976, with Sri Lanka's Ambassador Shirley Amerasinghe presiding -- surely a unique concatenation of circumstance for any country. Then, elections in 1977 deprived Mrs. Bandaranaike of reaping the benefits of the chairmanship of NAM, and in a curious twist of historical irony President J.R. Jayewardene -- who remained deeply sceptical over NAM -- was destined to fulfill that role, handing it over to Cuba in 1979. However, Mrs. Bandaranaike's contribution to NAM remains indelible, her consolidation of NAM policies in Sri Lanka decisive. President Jayewardene's aberrations from Nonaligned policies -- such as the disastrous vote for the UK in the Malvinas Islands issue at the UN -- brought negative consequences for Sri Lanka.

#### RELATIONS WITH INDIA

A firm grasp of the implications of Sri Lanka's unalterable geopolitical context, together with a close relationship between the Bandaranaike and the Nehru families, going back as far as the 1930s, before India and Sri Lanka had achieved independence, was a hallmark of Mrs. Bandaranaike's India policy. She

maintained close relations with Indian prime ministers Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi, while holding firm to Sri Lanka's national interest. Thus, her bold attempt to mediate in the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and her resolution of two important bilateral disputes -- the citizenship status of almost a million persons of Indian origin who had been brought to work on the tea and rubber plantations in British colonial times, and the maritime boundary between the two countries in the Palk Strait -- strengthened Sri Lanka's most important bilateral relationship. The fact that Sri Lanka's finest diplomat, Shirley Amerasinghe, was High Commissioner in New Delhi at the time of the Sirima-Shastri Pact of 1964<sup>3</sup> ensured that, in terms of an informed analysis of Indian policies and professional advice on the policy parameters of the bilateral relationship, Mrs. Bandaranaike was well served.

The issue of the citizenship of persons of Indian origin who had been brought to the country by the British colonial authorities as indentured labour on tea and rubber plantations had been an irritant in Sri Lanka-India relations from the 1930s. Diplomatic efforts to find a solution, including the 1954 Nehru-Kotelawala Pact, had only partially succeeded, until Mrs. Bandaranaike's visit to India in 1964, when Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister. Anecdotal evidence from those present indicates that the two Prime Ministers reached agreement and entrusted officials of both sides with working out the details. The Sri Lanka side soon complained to Mrs. Bandaranaike that Indian officials -- belonging to a 'babuocracy' traditionally powerful, obdurate and ungenerous in their dealings with neighbouring countries -- were thwarting the implementation of the agreement. Mrs. Bandaranaike telephoned Prime Minister Shastri to say that she would leave New Delhi the next day unless their original agreement was readied for signature. Senior Indian officials scurried to her presence shortly thereafter with assurances that the agreement would be ready. In October 1964 the Sirima-Shastri Pact was signed, whereby 525,000 persons of Indian origin would be repatriated to India while 300,000 would be granted Sri Lankan citizenship.

Mrs. Bandaranaike re-opened the issue after her re-election in 1970, and, on the basis of her excellent personal relationship with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, she agreed on 28 June 1974 that the citizenship of the remaining 150,000 persons would be resolved by granting 75,000 of them Indian citizenship and

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3 *ibid.*, pp.256-257.

75,000 Sri Lankan citizenship. In subsequent years, the United National Party Government's domestic political considerations in Sri Lanka, influenced by the Ceylon Workers Congress, resulted in the granting of Sri Lankan citizenship to all persons of Indian origin remaining in Sri Lanka.

Another success of Mrs. Bandaranaike was the resolution of the maritime boundary between India and Sri Lanka. The status of an uninhabited island, Kachativu, in the Palk Strait had been the subject of controversy and chauvinistic statements in both countries. Extensive research by Sri Lankan officials like Foreign Secretary W.T. Jayasinghe and Legal Adviser Christopher Pinto and the political sagacity of the two women premiers led to the June 1964 agreements demarcating the maritime boundary between the two countries, Kachativu falling on Sri Lanka's side with the proviso that Indian nationals would continue to be able to visit the island to dry their fishing nets and visit the church there as they had done in the past without the requirement of visas. Another agreement in March 1976 demarcated the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal. Both agreements became vital in the context of the UN Law of the Sea negotiations and Sri Lanka's claims for resources in her territorial waters and on her seabed.

In the years after her electoral defeat in 1977, the action of the J.R. Jayewardene government in vindictively and undemocratically depriving Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights contributed to the deterioration of Indo-Sri Lanka relations. During this period, however, Mrs. Bandaranaike remained in close contact with Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

#### THE COLOMBO POWERS AND THE SINO-INDIAN WAR OF 1962

One of the first challenges to Mrs. Bandaranaike's foreign policy was the outbreak of the Sino-Indian war of 1962. She was deeply distressed, since both Asian giants were friends of Sri Lanka with close historical and cultural ties, and their hostile relationship could only be dysfunctional in terms of Asian solidarity and the emerging importance of the Global South. Officials like Glannie Peiris, familiar with the Colombo Powers Conference of 1954, which led to the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955, were on hand to assist Mrs. Bandaranaike in her mediation. The war had broken out in October 1962; on November 21, Zhou En-lai declared a unilateral ceasefire providing space

for diplomatic efforts.

The non-aligned nations remained non-aligned, on the basis that if they were to mediate they could not take sides in the dispute. Six of the non-aligned nations -- Egypt, Burma, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Ghana and Indonesia, selected on the basis that they were all acceptable to India and China -- met in Colombo on 10 December 1962. The proposals that emerged from the Colombo Conference stipulated a Chinese withdrawal of 20 km from the ceasefire line observed by China without any reciprocal withdrawal on India's behalf. Although the mediation effort was encouraged, the failure of these six nations unequivocally to condemn China is said to have deeply disappointed India. Mrs. Bandaranaike was requested by both sides to visit both countries with the proposals. India accepted the proposals in toto while China accepted them in principle as the basis to start negotiations. In the event the initiative withered on the vine.

The mediation effort, bold and unique as it was, failed to bring the warring Asian giants to the negotiating table at the time. More than four decades later the boundary issue between India and China remains unresolved, but that circumstance has not prevented the two countries from forging a flourishing bilateral relationship with a strong economic component.

Mrs. Bandaranaike regarded the mediation effort as "the highest of Ceylon's efforts in seeking to achieve its foreign policy aims". Addressing the Senate in her country on January 23, 1964, she stated:

I recall that, soon after the Colombo proposals were first formulated, the criticism was made that the proposals favoured China. So much so that the Indian press as well as the local press spared no efforts in decrying the efforts of the Colombo powers. Later on, after the Indian Government had decided to accept the Colombo Conference proposals, the press reactions were that the Colombo Conference Powers had given inconsistent interpretations in Peking and in New Delhi.

The Chinese Government expressed the view that the Colombo Conference countries had gone beyond the positions of mediators and would be functioning as arbitrators or judges if the Chinese Government were called upon to accept the

proposals *in toto* as a pre-condition for direct negotiations between India and China.<sup>4</sup>

#### RELATIONS WITH CHINA

Mrs. Bandaranaike did much to place relations with China on a steady course. Her husband's actions in opening diplomatic relations with China in 1957 provided the foundation of her own policy towards China while continuing the trade relationship that had been forged in 1952, and her objective conduct of the Colombo Powers mediation effort in the Sino-Indian war impressed Zhou En-lai, with whom she formed a close friendship. Her visits to China in 1964 and 1972 helped to consolidate bilateral relations, as well as the personal connections she developed with Chinese leaders at a time when China was relatively isolated, not regaining its seat in the UN until 1971. Drawing upon the historical and cultural links between the two countries, she encouraged exchanges. At Mrs. Bandaranaike's request, relics of the Buddha were brought to Sri Lanka for exposition.

Chinese aid to Sri Lanka began during Mrs. Bandaranaike's term of office. Very different from the aid received from other countries, aid from China was distinguished by its soft terms and its relevance to the development needs of the country. The first high-profile project was the construction of the BMICH, in which she was personally involved; the donation of this international conference hall fulfilled her long-felt desire to host a Nonaligned Summit in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Bandaranaike personally supervised the construction plans and its execution, ensuring that groups of Sri Lankans – from foreign ministry officials to students, workers and farmers – voluntarily assisted the Chinese workers in the 'shramadana' campaign. She eagerly awaited the opening ceremony of the BMICH in May 1973, hoping that Zhou Enlai would visit Sri Lanka for this purpose. Unknown to her, Zhou Enlai had unfortunately been diagnosed with the cancer to which, in 1976, he finally succumbed. In his stead China sent one of its famous ten marshalls who had led the Chinese Revolution, Hsu Hsiang-chien. This gesture, intended as a tribute to Sino-Sri Lankan relations, was well received. Since the BMICH project, successive Sri Lanka governments have

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4 *ibid.*, p.282.

had the assistance of China in building the Supreme Court Complex and, now, a Cultural Complex, apart from the Hambantota port and Norochcholai coal plant, in a burgeoning aid relationship initiated by Mrs. Bandaranaike.

One initiative that threatened to compromise cordial relations with India was the Sino-Sri Lanka maritime agreement. Signed on 25 July 1963, this purely commercial agreement was intended to promote Sri Lankan and Chinese vessels operating from their respective ports to engage in foreign trade, cargo and passenger services, but, in a strange spin, some sections of the Indian media alleged that it involved handing over the strategic natural harbour of Trincomalee to China! The opposition UNP joined in the controversy during the election campaign of 1965 but, after being elected to power, did nothing to abrogate or amend the agreement. The perception of a threat to Sri Lanka-Indian relations also disappeared. Altogether, Mrs. Bandaranaike's foreign policy success continues to benefit Sri Lanka at a time when China has emerged as a major economic power in the world.

#### THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL

One of Mrs. Bandaranaike's less successful initiatives was her proposal to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. She first mentioned the idea briefly in her speech at the NAM Summit in Lusaka in September 1970, and it was reflected in the final declaration of the Lusaka summit. On her return from Lusaka she directed her officials in the Foreign Ministry to flesh out the concept. The nuclear-weapon-free zone was the more familiar concept, but Mrs. Bandaranaike preferred the more ambitious concept of a Zone of Peace, in order to insulate the Indian Ocean from great power rivalries. The plan was a direct response to the expulsion of the people inhabiting British owned Diego Garcia and the conversion of that Indian Ocean island into a U.S. base. Eventually a resolution in the UN General Assembly's First Committee dealing with Disarmament and International Security Issues was proposed by Sri Lanka. Out of respect for Mrs. Bandaranaike the NAM countries supported the resolution, but most of the West abstained with the U.S., U.K. and France strongly opposed.

In repeating the same resolution in subsequent years an operative paragraph called for the establishment of an ad hoc Committee on the subject for more focused discussion of the proposal. Thus the General Assembly declared the



Indian Ocean a zone of peace by resolution 2832 (1971). It called upon the great powers to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean, the aim being to halt the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the region. The declaration upheld the need to preserve the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states of the Indian Ocean region and sought to resolve political, economic and social issues affecting the region under conditions of peace and security.

The ad hoc committee was created with the permanent representative of Sri Lanka appointed chairman and has continued ever since, albeit with little tangible progress. Some factions in Sri Lanka criticized the proposal as paving the way for India to be the sole naval power in the region. Despite all efforts to revitalize the committee, enthusiasm to pursue the proposal is obviously lacking. The lesson, in hindsight, was that proposals cannot be pitch-forked into the U.N. without adequate diplomatic preparation. The resolution was introduced hastily at the behest of Mrs. Bandaranaike without full consultations among the littoral states and the major powers.

#### THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Mrs. Bandaranaike's stewardship of the foreign policy of Sri Lanka coincided with the coming of age of the country's professional foreign service. In 1949, the first career diplomats had been recruited through a separate examination and interview. In Mrs. Bandaranaike's first term, a relatively large number of political appointees sent as heads of diplomatic missions was justified by the fact that the career service was still maturing. In her second term, however, she became the first Prime Minister to appoint career diplomats as heads of missions: Arthur Basnayake to Japan, Ben Fonseka to Kenya, H.O. Wijegoonewardena to Iraq, Y. Yogasunderam as permanent representative with ambassador rank to the UN in Geneva, and Rex Koelmeyer to Sweden. Vernon Mendis remained as director-general in the foreign ministry, and Mrs. Bandaranaike relied on his advice and expertise.

In order to ensure the success of the NAM Summit in Colombo, Prime Minister Bandaranaike transferred many senior career diplomats back to the country, replacing them temporarily with officials from other ministries and other political appointees. At the same time, she understood the need for a

separate career foreign service as indispensable to a successful foreign policy, in accordance with widespread international practice, and she therefore continued her policy of appointing career diplomats as heads of mission.

The basic unit of political reporting from diplomatic missions abroad was the fortnightly report, through which Sri Lankan diplomats and their staffs conveyed a confidential analysis of the political and other developments in the country of accreditation, especially as they impinged on Sri Lanka's national interest. Inevitably the quality of such reports varied, but the Prime Minister's secretary -- Bradman Weerakoon and thereafter Dharmasiri Peiris -- ensured that the better reports were sent to Mrs. Bandaranaike. She also received special dispatches from the Sri Lanka diplomatic missions and policy papers generated within the Foreign Ministry. Amazingly, they were all returned with neatly penned marginal comments signifying the Prime Minister's strong and conscientious interest in the subject, to the great professional satisfaction of her diplomats.

#### CONCLUSION

This is a personal memoir, not a scholarly essay, written by a career diplomat who worked in the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs and in the Embassy of Sri Lanka in the U.S.A. while Mrs. Bandaranaike was Prime Minister. Two personal anecdotes may therefore be permitted.

The first concerns the private visit of a group of Chinese doctors to Colombo in the 1970s. They came courtesy of the Chinese government to attend on Mrs. Ezlynn Deraniyagala, a kinswoman of the prime minister, as well as on the prime minister herself. They were accommodated in the prime minister's official residence, and because of my proficiency in the Chinese language I was asked by Mrs. Bandaranaike to take them on excursions to places of tourist interest on weekends. On every occasion we used the private car of Mr. Ralph Deraniyagala; the use of official transport was not even considered. Mrs. Bandaranaike's scruples about separating her private life from her official position and perks went further. It was once necessary to host the doctors to lunch at the Hikkaduwa rest house. On my return Mrs. Bandaranaike asked me about my expenses and, when I produced a bill, promptly gave me her own personal cheque. I continue to marvel at this exemplary conduct, unique in the behaviour of our politicians.

The second anecdote comes from Mrs. Bandaranaike's state visit to China in 1972, the most successful visit of a Sri Lankan leader to a foreign country that I have witnessed. At the end of the visit, as normal protocol required, the officials began preparing the customary gifts for people in the Chinese government associated with the visit. It was late at night in the Sri Lanka delegation's office room as we gift-wrapped the parcels and pasted the appropriate labels on them. A figure in a dressing gown with her hair let down in a plait slipped in to join in our collective work: Mrs. Bandaranaike, quietly working with her staff. She remained mindful of her housewifely duties and her personal touch in supervising the tying of the bows and the neatness of packaging of us clumsy-fingered men was invaluable. The Opposition parliamentarians had derided her as a "kussi-amma" or "a woman of the kitchen" but here was a graceful blending of the woman and the leader joining her staff on the work floor. She was also often criticized as being "radala" or "aristocratic" but here she was unostentatiously unmindful of rank or status.

That was the woman and the mother who spoke at the first NAM Summit in Belgrade. That was the Prime Minister who was the most successful foreign minister of modern Sri Lanka.

*The United Front Regime of  
1970 and the Post-Colonial  
State of Sri Lanka*

JAYADEVA UYANGODA

One of the unexplored themes in Sri Lanka's political change after independence is the process of state formation. There is a tendency among political scientists as well as constitutional jurists to treat the state in Sri Lanka as a completely-formed entity, with no acknowledgement of the fact that the nature of the state has been constantly shaped and re-shaped by a host of social and political factors such as regime agendas, dominant ideologies, social and political conflict, pressures from dominant as well as subordinate classes, and demands from global capital as well as the global state system. This paper explores Sri Lanka's process of state formation under the United Front Regime of 1970. The core argument developed in the paper is as follows: Under the SLFP, LSSP and CP coalition regime of 1970-1975, Sri Lanka's post-colonial state entered a phase of 'nationalist statism' which also marked the beginning of a process of 'illiberal statism,' a tendency which reached its full realization after 1978 under the UNP regime of J. R. Jayewardene.

THE NATURE OF SRI LANKA'S POST-COLONIAL STATE:  
SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The formation of the modern state in post-colonial societies is a process that began during colonial rule. Colonial rule, established through military conquest and maintained through a military-bureaucratic apparatus, was responsible for the introduction of political and administrative unification in many countries. This holds true for Sri Lanka as well, under British colonial rule. During the first

half of the nineteenth century the colonial state as a centralized administrative entity under a single sovereign authority was established through the dual strategy of conquest and administrative reform. The integration of the domestic economy and its incorporation into the global economy was a major aspect of this colonial state formation.

As Hamza Alavi has argued, political independence of post-colonial societies did not mark any rupture in the way in which the colonial state had been organized (Alavi: 1972). Instead, the basic change that occurred was that the colonial ruling class was replaced by a loose coalition of domestic social classes. However, the state apparatus, with its military-bureaucratic institutions and structures remained intact. In Alavi's theory of the post-colonial state, this 'state apparatus' which had emerged as 'an over-developed' entity during colonial rule continued to remain over-developed during the post-colonial phase as well. During colonial rule, a strong and centralized state apparatus was needed to suppress resistance from domestic social classes and to facilitate the routine functions of the government machinery such as tax collection, public administration, maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice. This massive military-bureaucratic structure which the colonial state relied upon and made use of to facilitate its control of civil society was not dismantled, but retained by the post-colonial rulers of the country.

Alavi's picture of an over-developed colonial state and an over-developed postcolonial state seeks to shed light on some of the key problems emerging out of colonial rule in many post-colonial societies. These are primarily related to the weak institutionalization of parliamentary democracy and the tendency for 'military-bureaucratic oligarchies' to seize state power by overthrowing civilian rule. In Alavi's theory, this tendency of the military-bureaucratic elites to seize state power is explained in terms of the concept of 'the relative autonomy of the state apparatus.' This refers to the capacity of the civil-military apparatus to exercise greater power and authority in society than under normal circumstances, and even intercede between the competing interests of the ruling classes. The structural space for this relative autonomy of the civil-military state apparatus was made possible by the presence in the post-colony of a politically weak civilian rule, which was based on a weaker ruling class alliance. Pakistan and Bangladesh in South Asia are paradigmatic examples of this problem of the post-colonial state. In both examples, the consolidation of civilian democracy has been repeatedly disrupted by military takeovers against the backdrop of

internecine factional fights among civilian political elites.

Alavi's insights into the crisis of the state in many post-colonial societies in Asia and Africa in the early phase of the transition from colonial rule, help us to understand the dynamics of post-colonial state formation in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, like India, managed the early phase of post-colonial political transition, by keeping in place the military-bureaucratic apparatus of the state established during colonial rule. Both Sri Lanka and India were able to establish civilian rule during the decade following independence through the mechanism of political parties; whereas Pakistan and Bangladesh failed to do so. In Sri Lanka, an attempt at a military take over of the state was made in 1962 and it was crushed with relatively little effort in a context where the civilian control of the state had not suffered from any significant crisis of stability, legitimacy or disunity<sup>1</sup>. However, there was a crucial difference in the experiences of Sri Lanka and India at the very beginning of the formation of the post-colonial state. India's independence from Britain and the beginning of the formation of its post-colonial state in 1947-1948, was marked by extreme violence. Civilian violence between the Hindu and Muslim communities was a sequel to what has been described as the 'partition' of British India. Violence in Sri Lanka, by contrast, began much later in the 1970s, and continued through four whole decades. Thus whilst in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the post-colonial state was born amidst violence, such was not the case in Sri Lanka. Although its birth as an independent state in 1948 was *markedly peaceful*, Sri Lanka, however, became engulfed in violence about two decades into its post-independent existence and continued to remain so engulfed until 2009.

Sri Lanka's path of post-colonial state formation had a few characteristics that found their concrete expression during the UF regime of 1970-1975. The two crucial trajectories here were (i) the consolidation of the ethnic majoritarian foundations of the state, and (ii) the illiberalization of the state. In the rest of the paper, I will map out this dual process of Sri Lanka's state formation and try to place it in the broad context of political change. One specific point needs to be stressed as a backdrop to the rest of the discussion in this paper, namely, that one of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's key political accomplishments during her premierships in the 1960 – 1965 and 1970-1977 periods, is the elevation of the secondary power bloc which her late husband had put together in the mid-1950s, to the status of parity with the primary power bloc organized within the UNP. This latter fact is hardly acknowledged even in the writings that are sympathetic

to her contribution to Sri Lankan politics. The dominant power bloc under the UNP had been led by capitalist, landed and professional elites of the Sri Lankan society -- a formidable coalition of dominant classes, which had direct links with the colonial state and colonial capitalism. By contrast, the secondary power bloc which Mrs. Bandaranaike forged was an alliance of a range of social classes that were not in a position of dominance at the time. These classes which were located outside the domain of political power included indigenous capitalists, the secondary rural elite as well as the rural peasantry, white-collar and blue-collar workers, the vernacular educated intelligentsia and Buddhist monks who were not linked to the land-holding aristocratic monasteries. In the journalistic lore of the 1950s, this secondary class coalition was described as the *Pancha Maha Balavegaya* (The Five Great Social Forces). Mrs. Bandaranaike's project of securing the status of parity for this secondary power bloc, as the political events and history of that period show, was no mean achievement. Neither was it politically easy.

#### THE STATE AND ITS ETHNIC MAJORITARIAN CHARACTER

The failure of Sri Lanka's post-colonial state to evolve itself into a modern pluralistic state is a theme many scholars have commented on.<sup>2</sup> Without repeating that well-known story, I will focus here only on a few aspects of the politics of the ethno-majoritarian transformation of the state. Quite interestingly, soon after independence, a vibrant political debate began in Sri Lanka on the nature and structural dimensions of the state. The debate revolved around the following question: what kind of state should the Sri Lankan people build for themselves in order to make the newly gained political independence meaningful? The debate became polarized along two mutually incompatible political visions which can best be described as 'constitutional monism' and 'constitutional pluralism.' The monistic vision saw the state in independent Sri Lanka as a unitary and centralized nation-state, organized on the lines of the British model of parliamentary government. The pluralistic vision, in contrast, saw the state in independent Sri Lanka as a federal polity in which the ethnic majority and minorities should share state and political power as equals. Thus while the monistic vision did not envisage any significant reform of the state as set up by the outgoing colonial rulers, the pluralistic vision presupposed a



substantial restructuring of the state, a moving away from the existing mode of constitutional unitarism. However, this pluralistic vision suffered from a huge political drawback from the very moment it was conceived. This was because the reform argument came from an ethnic minority, as a part of minority political mobilization. This fact alone had a devastating impact on the entire reform initiative. Because it was identified as the political project of an ethnic minority, the federalist reform project, despite its inherently democratic value, did not command any political legitimacy within the majority ethnic community. Thus, since the early 1950s, the terms of Sri Lanka's state reform debate came to be defined within a framework of ethnic polarization and mutual exclusivity. Eventually this polarity and exclusivity became embedded in the democratic process itself, producing what some political scientists have called the "politics of ethnic outbidding" (de Votta: 2004).<sup>3</sup> Thus, the ethnicization of the politics of electoral democracy has been a very specific process which in turn shaped the trajectories of Sri Lanka's post-colonial state in a manner that made pluralistic state reform virtually impossible for decades to come.

State formation is also an outcome of political struggles waged among social classes as well as ethnic groups. The state is often the site in which these struggles are enacted. The state is also the site where the outcomes of such struggles find their concrete, institutional expression. The shift that occurred in the mid-1950s in the class relations of Sri Lanka's post-colonial state, needs to be seen as a play of the dialectics of class and ethnicity in the domain of state power. This is with particular reference to the regime change in 1956. Interestingly, 1956 marked not only a change of government, from the UNP to the MEP coalition, but also a substantial regime change, if the concept of 'regime' is defined as the condensation of class relations and a shared ideology within a specific power bloc. An interpretation with a Marxist tilt of the sociology of political power would be useful here in mapping out the shift of class bases in the state, affected through regime change in the mid-1950s. At this time, a new bloc of intermediate social classes in Sinhalese society became ideologically mobilized and politically organized around the notion of 'making political independence meaningful and relevant' to Sinhalese vernacular society. This was, in a way, the outcome of social and political aspirations generated by the spread of democratic rights and the broadening of the social bases of political power, consequent to the impact of universal adult franchise and the Left movement. In fact the early 1950s saw class conflicts taking place at various levels. There was, for instance,

an intra-class struggle involving factions of the dominant political class, which was politically organized within the ruling UNP. A direct outcome of this intra-class conflict was that a breakaway group split from the UNP in 1952, to form the SLFP. Then there was increasing conflict between the state, private capital and labour. The left parties and the trade unions had provided leadership to these state/working class and capital/labour conflicts. Parallel to these political conflicts were the aspirations of the intermediate social classes in Sinhalese society for political power. Their struggle was also directed against the ruling UNP and the mainstream ruling elites (Wriggins:1960). Some analysts have described the regime formed by the new social coalition of this subordinate and secondary class bloc as an 'intermediate regime' (Shastri: 1983). It is a concept borrowed from the Hungarian Marxist Michael Kalecki.<sup>4</sup> The concept of an intermediate regime to a great extent encapsulates the class relations of the MEP regime of 1956 as well as the broadening of social bases of state power in post - colonial Sri Lanka. Two points warrant emphasis here: The first is that Sri Lanka during the first post-independence decade demonstrated a remarkable capacity to affect a shift in the social bases of state power without violence; the second, related to the first, is the co-existence of two competing power blocs, one primary (organized within the UNP) and the other secondary (organized within the SLFP), managing the state and sharing the class foundations of the state. This made Sri Lanka's experience of state formation, unique and different to the experiences of other south Asian countries. This point will be explored a little further, later in this essay.

An interesting feature of the secondary power bloc is that its members came from diverse social strata such as the Sinhalese capitalist class, the rural agrarian middle class, the salaried employees in the public and private sectors, the vernacular professional groups and Buddhist monks. A moot question to ask at this point is what kept this secondary power block together? The desire to gain access to state power provided the impetus for these diverse social forces to come together. In other words, there was a political project to seek state power and it needed an ideology for its propagation, legitimation and mobilization. The ideology of Sinhala nationalism provided the link between diverse social groups and their desire for state power. Interestingly, the kind of Sinhala nationalism that the MEP coalition represented differed from the mainstream nationalism of the UNP. The latter was a nationalism of the primary elite or the upper classes -in other words, a 'nationalism from above.' These classes did

not employ nationalism as a weapon for mass mobilization. Instead, for the UNP, Sinhala nationalism, with its communalist component, was necessary to shape the public policy of a liberal-democratic state. The UNP rule of 1947-1956 ethnicized the public policy process, without altering the broadly liberal democratic foundations of the Sri Lankan state. The nationalism of the MEP was a different kettle of fish altogether. It was a Sinhalese nationalism from below, characterized by a tremendous drive to possess the post-independent state. The MEP coalition regime of 1956 ethnicized the Sri Lankan state and ethnicized the public policy process but maintained the liberal democratic state. The UF government of 1970 however, took this a step further by entrenching the majoritarian ethnic state and undermining the foundations of the liberal democratic state. The total isolation and exclusion of the Tamil political elite from the domain of governance, or more correctly, state power, was a political mistake of great magnitude, as became apparent within a few years. When the UF coalition disintegrated in 1975-77, it had brought to a conclusion the first phase of post-colonial state formation in Sri Lanka.

How did the UF regime manage to accomplish this task? What is it that provided the impetus for this somewhat unusual accomplishment? A partial answer to these two questions lies in the nature of the class and ideological configuration that characterized, and brought into power, the UF coalition. In class terms, the UF was a social coalition of the secondary stratum of the Sinhalese capitalist class, the urban working class, vast sections of the rural peasantry and the intermediate social strata. This was a powerful multi-class coalition. It was indeed more powerful than the MEP coalition of 1956 or the SLFP-Left coalition of 1963. This coalition obtained a two-thirds majority in Parliament at the Parliamentary elections held in July 1970. This was the first time that any ruling party or a ruling coalition obtained a two-thirds majority in Sri Lanka's legislature. At this Parliamentary election, the UF coalition also obtained what has been described as a 'mandate from the people' to abolish the existing constitution and formulate a new one. This was an unprecedented mandate which no previous Sri Lankan government had received before. Similarly, the opportunity to change a country's constitution on the pretext of a popular mandate is no ordinary moment for any ruling party. It secures for the regime a hugely interventionist role, and a unilateral advantage, to determine the future shape of the state, state-society relations, and the distribution of state power among different social classes as well ethnic communities.

The UF regime of 1970 made full use of the opportunity given to it by the people to formulate a new constitution. Others not in the ruling coalition, while perhaps envying the pomp and ceremony involved, could not but watch with apprehension the sheer political will and grim purpose with which the constitution-making process of 1970–1972, was undertaken. The UF regime re-designated Ceylon as a ‘socialist, democratic republic’ under the new constitution. This new nomenclature gave expression to a particular ideological project, that of re-affirming and solidifying the re-constituted unitary, centralized and illiberal Sri Lankan state. The significant features of this new Sri Lankan state were: (i) the entrenchment of the unitary character of the state disregarding the Tamil minority demands for power-sharing through regional autonomy; (ii) the granting of untrammelled legislative power to a unicameral legislature which already possessed a two-thirds majority; (iii) the abolition of any institutional checks and balances pertaining to both the legislature and the cabinet of ministers; (iv) abandoning the limited judicial review of legislation that was available under the Soulbury Constitution; (v) making the judiciary subservient to the leadership of the political executive; (vi) bringing the public service under the direct control of the cabinet of ministers; and (vii) extending the life of the regime for seven years, beyond the mandated five years on the pretext of giving effect to the new constitution adopted during the regime’s second year in office.

The constitution of a country contains not only the framework for the structural and institutional organization of the state but also proclaims its dominant ideology which must of necessity be shared by the framers of the constitution. What were the key elements of the dominant political ideology to which the 1972 constitution gave expression? Firstly, it was a Sinhalese nationalist constitution. It gave expression to all the key propositions of the post-colonial Sinhalese nationalist political vision, which was evolved in opposition to western colonialism and ethnic and religious minorities. The constitution was conceived within the framework of constitutional monism, which both Sinhalese nationalists and socialists subscribed to with equal vigour; and this framework helped to establish a unitary and highly centralized state. The constitution also gave expression to what one may call the ideology of ‘populist constitutionalism.’ The idea of the ‘Republic’ had its roots in this populist constitutionalism of Sinhalese nationalists and the Left. It had two basic doctrinal elements, as reflected in the 1972 constitution. The first was the notion that people’s sovereignty should be exercised by a ‘sovereign legislature’ which

should be unicameral in its composition and whose legislative power should not be subjected to any institutional or procedural checks and balances, except the will of the leaders of the ruling party or coalition. The second was the use of the state as an instrument to achieve an ideological goal as set out by the framers of the constitution. That goal in 1972 happened to be what was understood at that time as socialism, which was to be achieved through the parliamentary path. This we can call an instrumentalist approach to constitution-making. The Republican model does treat the constitution from an instrumentalist perspective; yet it usually derives its sanctity from a commitment to a set of normative goals such as liberty, equality, justice and pluralism. In contrast, Sri Lanka's Republican Constitution of 1972 was devoid of the republican spirit in a number of vital areas. The republic was not to be a pluralistic polity; its citizens were not to enjoy justiciable fundamental rights; and its citizens were not expected to be 'active citizens' as envisaged in all republican models of the state. Citizens could be politically active primarily within the constituents parties of the ruling coalition or the 'popular' organizations linked to the ruling coalition. This was the UF regime's original contribution to republican political theory.

From where did this particular constitutional doctrine and approach emerge? It emerged from a unique constellation of two different ideological forces – Sinhalese nationalism and the Marxist Left. The nationalist and left constitutionalist ideologies had developed since the 1950s as a critique of the Soulbury Constitution which, according to both the Sinhalese nationalist and left perspectives, ensured neither independence nor sovereignty in full measure to Sri Lanka. Focusing on the retention of the constitutional links between and among the British monarchy, the British Parliament and the British higher judiciary with independent Sri Lanka's constitutional and political order, this critique asserted that such a retention was not only a denial of full independence and sovereignty to the people of Sri Lanka, but also a continuation of the old colonial links in a neo-colonial framework. The alternative developed from this critique was to make Sri Lanka a republic. Only a Republican Constitution, it was felt, could fully ensure the independence and sovereignty of the people and sever the constitutional links with the British imperial state.

It is now the occasion to bring back to this discussion the concept of 'constitutional instrumentalism' to which a brief reference has been already made. The instrumentalist approach views the constitution of a country, not as an embodiment of normative values and principles of polity, but essentially as a

means to some other political end. It is in this specific approach to constitution-making that the Sinhalese nationalists and the Sri Lankan Left – that is, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party on the one hand and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party on the other – could find a shared perspective on how the constitutional-political order of Sri Lanka could be re-organized. The Sinhalese nationalists sought in the new constitution an instrument that would enable them to use the state and its institutions to ensure majoritarian political hegemony. The Left parties sought in the new constitution, an instrument that would enable them to use the state and its institutions to build what they saw as socialism. This was a deadly combination of perspectives which entrenched monistic constitutionalism in Sri Lanka. Even now, nearly four decades after the enactment of the First Republican Constitution of 1972, Sri Lanka continues to attempt to free itself from this unfortunate legacy of constitutional monism with very little success.

#### ILLIBERALIZATION OF THE STATE

Sixty years after the establishment of Sri Lanka's post-colonial state, we are in a better position to look back and identify the trajectories of political change in terms of distinct phases of state formation. By doing so, a direct link can be made between political change and the nature of the regimes that managed the state during different time periods. The first phase can be described as one presided over by a democratic *laissez-faire* regime. This was the period of the first two UNP regimes, from 1947 to 1956. During this phase, there were no significant state reform attempts; nor were there major social or political upheavals, except working class resistance to the government's economic policies. It was during this period that the ethnic minority resistance to the state began to take shape, but it was largely within the framework of electoral politics and parliamentary bargaining. During the second phase of democratic-nationalist regimes, that includes the MEP rule of 1956-1960 and the SLFP rule of 1960-1964, the Sri Lankan state entered the path of a major shift in two domains. Firstly, the ethnic foundations of the state became institutionalized in an increasingly ethnic majoritarian framework, and secondly, the state acquired the character of high interventionism. Expanding the role of the state in the economy meant enhanced social welfarism with the nationalization of economic enterprises

owned by local as well foreign capital and policies of cultural protectionism. These measures alongside increasing regime control of education, media and public culture were key aspects of the interventionist character of the state developed during the period of 1956-1964. Then, during the UNP rule of 1965-1970, the approach towards the state was one of partial liberalization. The UNP, while maintaining the basic framework of state and welfare capitalism that had already been established under the SLFP rule, took policy steps to encourage private capital in both industry and rural agriculture. The UNP regime was also a multi-ethnic coalition, the first such coalition since 1947. The UNP, committed to private- sector led capitalist growth, accorded less emphasis than the SLFP did, to the interventionist role of the state. It is in this backdrop that this particular phase of the Sri Lankan state could be described as one of partial liberalization.

The specificity of the period, 1970-1977, was that during the United Front regime, the interventionist character of the Sri Lankan state reached a point of maturity. In a political economy sense, the state-capitalist policies were further consolidated, particularly after the 1971 insurgency. One key impact of the failed insurgency on the nature and dynamics of the Sri Lankan state was to make the state more and more interventionist in the sphere of the economy. The nationalization of the massive plantation sector and the land reform programme were the mainstays of the new phase of state capitalism which the UF regime implemented with a particularly passionate commitment. This phase of state capitalism was conceived as a necessary policy response to the 1971 insurgency. According to the analysis prevalent at the time, the insurgency was caused by an acute structural deficiency in the Sri Lankan economy. Stagnation and crisis in the rural economy meant that it could not provide adequate employment opportunities to the educated youth in rural Sinhalese society. Thus, in order to re-vitalize the rural economy and generate employment, the state had to step in, and bring the rural economy under state control. The nationalization of plantations and the land-ceiling programme; the setting up of new public corporations of enormous size, bringing into the state sector nearly one million plantation workers and their families; and the establishment of a powerful public sector bureaucracy to manage the rural economy were the essential components of post-insurgency state-capitalism under the UF regime.

The imposition of a state of emergency and its impact on the nature of the Sri Lanka state can now be introduced into this discussion. The emergency was

first introduced in March 1971, amidst reports of an impending armed rebellion against the state by the JVP. The rebellion did take place in the first week of April that year, and the threat to national security justified the continuation of the state of emergency. However, the government continued with the emergency, long after this threat was over, virtually until the end of its term in 1976. Dr. Colvin R de Silva, one of the key framers of the 1972 Constitution and a leading ideologue of the UF regime until 1975, has, in a subsequent reflection, described the emergency as facilitating “legislation by the Executive” (de Silva, 1989:337). In writing of the experiences of the UF government which ruled for six long years under a state of emergency, de Silva (whose Lanka Sama Samaja Party was an influential member of this government) draws attention to a significant understatement made by the government referring to “the possibility of the Executive totally to subordinate and bypass Parliament”. The subtle point he seeks to make here in this reflective essay, is about a distinct tendency for the Executive branch of the state to emerge as the foremost centre of state power – a process which began in the early 1970s and which has continued through the subsequent decades. Emergency rule provided the initial impetus for this process to take place.

The constitutional foundation for this particular phase of ‘re-statization of the state’ has already been discussed. A point that needs to be made in connection with that analysis is the partial erasure of the distinction between the state and the regime - a shift that began during the UF regime of 1970. Traditional democratic constitutionalism as well as political theory, make a clear distinction between the regime and the state, as articulated particularly by John Locke and Montesquieu in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The core idea that provided the conceptual basis for this state-regime separation is the recognition that the state has an inherent capacity to be repressive, arbitrary and tyrannical. The Lockean notion of trusteeship and limited government, the theory of separation of powers advocated by Montesquieu, the concept of the tyranny of the majority formulated by John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville, and the American constitutional theory of checks and balances have all stressed, with varying degrees of emphasis, the centrality of state-regime separation in democratic governance. Illiberal and authoritarian states do not make this distinction. What seems to have happened in Sri Lanka is the regime encroachment of the state. The emergency rule, which has become normal in Sri Lanka since 1971, provides the backdrop for the conditions that facilitated this transition. The



interesting development in Sri Lanka, which originated during the 1970s and continued with greater salience in the subsequent decades, is not the complete disappearance of the state-regime distinction, but the capacity of regimes to ignore that distinction in an illiberal manner. Different regimes have done it in different ways. The UF regime did it in a combination of a set of policy innovations. The first was the creation of an all powerful legislature, which was under the control of a more powerful cabinet, which in turn was headed by a still more powerful prime minister. The second was that the public service and the judiciary were brought under the control of the cabinet of ministers which ideologically had very little faith in the traditional notion of state-regime separation. The establishment of a political authority system enabled the regime, rather than the ruling party and its political cadres, to penetrate into all aspects of state administration. This was the mechanism through which the tentacles of the regime were spread all over society. The UNP regime of 1977 under President J. R. Jayewardene as well as President R. Premadasa continued this policy of regime penetration into the state through more innovative strategies of illiberal democracy. And this process seems to be moving on and on. This is more than 'institutional decay' (Moore: 1990 and 1992) that some scholars have highlighted in interpreting Sri Lanka's political change since the later 1970s. It represents a substantive change in the shape and content of Sri Lanka's state and its relations with the citizens and society.

### CONCLUSION

What do regimes do to the state? How does the state get re-shaped by the agendas and interventions of different regimes? How has Sri Lanka's post-colonial state been impacted by class dynamics, ideological agendas and policy commitments of specific regimes? These questions constitute one of the most interesting themes of interpretative political analysis. This essay makes an attempt to look at regime-state dynamics during the United Front coalition regime, headed by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The essay argues that Sri Lanka's post-colonial state can be understood better if the state is not treated as a settled entity with rigid characteristics, but as a fluid and amorphous idea that has been subjected to a process of formation through the interplay of power relations. Hence the concept of 'state formation' as employed in this

essay.

This essay argues further that there have been two major trajectories in the formation of Sri Lanka's post-colonial state during the United Front regime of 1970: (i) the consolidation of the ethnic majoritarian foundations of the state, and (ii) the beginning of the illiberal state. Both these trajectories had their antecedents in previous regimes and underwent further crystallization under subsequent regimes. In that sense, the period of the UF regime constitutes the historical link, the stage that marks the transition, between the formative and maturation phases of the majoritarian, illiberal state in Sri Lanka.

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## ESSAYS

### Endnotes

- 1 For details of the background of the 1962 coup attempts and events surrounding it, see Horowitz (1980).
- 2 There is a fairly extensive body of scholarly literature on the pluralistic state-building and nation-building process in post-independence Sri Lanka. Some key text are Wriggings (1960), Kearney (1967), Wilson (1988), Roberts (1978), Jupp (1978), Loganathan (1996), Krishna (1999), Gosh 92003) and De Votta (2004).
- 3 The notion of the politics of ethnic outbidding refers to how Sri Lanka's two main political parties, the UNP and SLFP, competed with each other to secure the backing of the majority Sinhalese electorate on electoral platforms of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, with no consideration given to its negative impact on inter-ethnic relations and pluralistic nation-building.
- 4 Michael Kalecki's thesis sought to explain the emergence of what he saw as a special type of regimes in some Third world societies in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, India and Indonesia. The specificity that Kalecki noted in these instances was that the regimes were not exclusively capitalist in their class nature, but class coalitions led by secondary layers of the capitalist class. Other members of the class coalition included the rich and middle peasantry, middle strata of the entrepreneurial classes, and upper layers of the working class. Kalecki termed them intermediate classes, because they did not belong to either end of the class structure, capitalist class or the proletariat. In ideology, they were both anti-colonial and nationalistically-oriented. A key feature these regimes of the intermediate classes was their use of the state for capitalist development through such state-capitalist strategies as import-substitution industrialization and agrarian reforms. K. N. Raj applied the theory of intermediate regimes to explain the political economy of India under Nehru. Rehman Sobhan and Musaffer Ahmad's massive work on the state and political economy of Bangladesh (1979) also makes use of the Kaleckian approach.

*Facets of Education  
in the 1960s and 1970s  
in Sri Lanka*

SWARNA JAYAWEERA

The perceptions of policy makers and other stakeholders that education was a crucial instrument to reduce or to eliminate the inequalities created by colonial education policies provided momentum to the rapid expansion of educational opportunities that reached a peak in 1960 to 1965 and to the reversal of several colonial education policies during Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's first term as Prime Minister of Ceylon. During the second term from 1970 to 1977 external and unexpected internal pressures on the economic and socio-political environment intervened to change to some extent the trajectory of education developments. Policies, and their outcomes where feasible, are discussed therefore as two phases in the education scenario.

#### TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION-1960-1965

Two strands of policies responding to the need to reduce socio-economic inequalities and to meet socio-cultural pressures determined the course of events from the mid-nineteen forties to the mid-nineteen sixties. The perceptions of policy makers of the right to education and the role of education in facilitating access to education as an agent of upward social mobility underpinned policies since the nineteen forties. Free education from primary to university education in state schools and ancillary services such as scholarships, the change in the medium of instruction to the first language--Sinhala and Tamil--in primary and secondary education by 1959, and the creation of a network of urban and rural schools increased participation rates in the 5-14 age group from 57.6% in

1946 to 75.1% in 1963 (Census Reports 1946, 1963).

The rapid expansion of general education continued apace from 1960 to 1965 with the same political commitment to democratising education, reflected in the provision of financial allocation amounting to 4.6 % of the GDP in the sixties--a figure that has not been reached subsequently--and the absence of any type of selection for hierarchical types of secondary education. Increasing access to senior secondary education with the conversions of hitherto marginalised schools to Maha Vidyalayas resulted in the increase of 'Collegiate' schools preparing for university entrance from 72 (1.2%) in 1947 to 1024 (10.7%) in 1966, and of the participation rate of the 15-19 age group from 11.2% in 1953 to 36.1% in 1963. A negative factor stemming from unplanned expansion of education, however, was the absence of provision for science education in the majority of these schools so that around 75% to 85% of students enrolled in these grades were concentrated in the arts stream. There were inevitably persistent socio-economic and regional disparities in participation and retention in education caused by poverty and uneven economic development (Jayaweera, 1969).

The second strand of policies was triggered by the socio-cultural pressures that surfaced the demand for the change in the medium of instruction and the dethronement of English as a marker of privilege, as well as the increasing criticism of the dual system of the control of education and the privileged status of denominational, and particularly Christian, schools fostered by the colonial administration. The new political forces emerging from the general election of 1956 fuelled the resentment articulated by the majority of their perceived disadvantaged status. This resulted in the implementation of Sinhala as the official language along with the 'reasonable' use of Tamil. These measures, in turn, gave rise to ethnic tensions in the social fabric of Sri Lanka.

The socio-religio-cultural pressures for equality of opportunity gathered momentum at the 1960 elections, and culminated in 1961 in legislation to take-over denominational schools and training colleges with the exception of the 15 schools that had opted out of the free education scheme and were operating as private unaided schools. Other schools were permitted to function as fee-levying private schools only if the majority of parents voted at an election to take this course of action. Resistance to Act No. 5 of 1960 chiefly by Roman Catholic schools and communities led to the enforcement of Act No. 8 of 1961 by which the ownership and administration of these schools were vested in the state.

Accordingly, 2649 schools became state institutions -- Buddhist 1181, Roman Catholic 688, Christian 446, Hindu 310 and Muslim 24 -- and 52 schools became non-fee levying private schools (Hettiarachchi, 1969). No new private schools were to be opened for the 5-14 age group, and only with approval for the 15-18 age group. It could be claimed that the reversal of colonial policies pertaining to language and religion in education and the abysmal neglect of rural secondary education was completed during these years.

The changes that took place in university education during this period led to a veritable 'explosion' of enrolment in universities. Political pressures surfacing from the demand for university education from the increasing products of the secondary schools as a consequence of the change in the medium of instruction, impelled a radical change in policy in admission to university which was a far cry from the selective processes of nearly two decades. As encapsulated in the Report of the Universities Commission (Sessional Paper XVI of 1963), the social philosophy underlying it was that 'nothing should be done to deny university education to any student who has the capacity to benefit from it', irrespective of prospects of employment.

Two new Universities had been opened in 1959--Vidyodaya and Vidyalkara Universities -- by converting two leading Pirivenas to meet the demand for university education in the Sinhala medium. The pressure, however, was on the University of Ceylon which had been the preserve of the English educated elite with only 3181 students in 1960. The university was compelled in 1960 to offer arts courses in all three media and had to admit almost half the entrants as non-residential students. The student population trebled to 10,723 in 1965/66, necessitating the organisation of a second Faculty of Arts in Colombo in 1962 with minimal facilities. Meanwhile second Faculties of Science and Medicine were opened in Peradeniya in 1962, the Faculty of Engineering was transferred to Peradeniya in 1964, and Act No. 12 of 1961 amending the University of Ceylon Ordinance permitted the conduct of external degree examinations from 1962, resulting in a threefold increase in external students by 1965.

The social composition of the university entrants changed radically from 1951 (Strauss, 1951) to 1967 (Uswattearachchi, 1974) from its professional and middle class ethos to a more egalitarian student distribution with a majority of students from the rural environment and less advantaged social classes. While the two new universities did not admit women till 1966, the percentage of women students in the University of Ceylon increased from 10.2% in 1942

to 24.4% in 1959 and 44.6% in 1966. However, as a consequence of the lack of facilities for science education at secondary level, an imbalance was created in student distribution in faculties as the percentage of arts students in the universities increased from 43.6% in 1943 and 45.5% in 1960, to 68.2% in 1965 thereby foreshadowing the high incidence of unemployment particularly among arts graduates by the end of the sixties.

Political commitment to extension of educational opportunity was also seen in the appointment of the National Education Commission in 1961, the Universities Commission in 1962 and the Technical Education Commission in 1961 to engage in a comprehensive review of the education sector. The three Commissions too reiterated the policy of extending educational opportunities.

The National Education Commission in its Interim Report ( Sessional Paper I of 1962 ) and its Final Report (Sessional Paper XVII of 1962) made several major proposals. As compulsory education regulations had not been introduced despite the provision of enabling legislation in the Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939, and the rapid increase in enrolment had been a response to social demand for education, the Commission proposed compulsory education regulations for the 5-14 age group. The Commission also recommended scholarships, school meals, free text books and exercise books for the needy, and supported the extension of education in co-educational institutions. Innovations were the zoning of schools within a specified radius for admission to schools, with preference to applicants nearest the school, to ensure equality in access to quality schools; and restructuring the schools system in two tiers as (i) Basic Schools for grades 1-8 and (ii) and four types of Maha Vidyalaya (secondary schools), offering curricula focusing on engineering/technology, agriculture, science, arts and commerce, to which access was to be available without a selective process,. All private schools and estate schools were to be taken over by the state. A National Council of Education and District Education Councils were to be established.

The White Paper of 1964 (Govt. Press, 1964) included some of these proposals such as the introduction of compulsory education regulations for Basic-Education, and others with some modifications such as the restructuring of the four types of schools changed to four streams in a single comprehensive Maha Vidyalaya, and the prohibition of only new private schools. As the government that came to power in 1965 introduced a new White Paper in 1966, the proposals of the Commission and the 1964 White Paper were never



implemented but the zoning of schools was introduced and abandoned after a few years as zoning regulations were circumvented by parents.

While the Commission was opposed to detailed syllabuses and the state monopoly of the production of text books, a process of curriculum development took place in the revision of grades 6-8 and OL science curricula in 1957-59 and 1961-63 and in the grades 6-8 mathematics curriculum in 1964-67, supported by UNESCO. The first step in the decentralisation of educational administration was taken in 1961 with the establishment of 10 Educational Regions under Assistant Directors of Education and 13 Educational Districts under Education Officers (Karunaratne, 1969).

The Universities Commission of 1962 (Sessional Paper No.XVI of 1963) drew attention to the state policy of extending university education to all those who qualified for entry. However it urged caution in changing the medium to Swabasha without adequate staff and books and in giving priority to backward areas for admission without improving facilities in these areas. It deplored also the incidence of student indiscipline and ragging and the influence of party politics. It approved the establishment of a University Grants Commission and a common admission procedure as proposed by policy makers. The suggestion was made that the university system should be restructured as an interim measure as a single university with campuses in Colombo, Peradeniya and Jaffna, and in addition setting up sections in schools in other districts such as in the south and east. In the university sector, therefore the expansion of opportunities was the main focus of policies during these years.

In the context of the relatively low priority given to technical and vocational education over decades, the Technical Education Commission of 1961 (Sessional Paper X of 1963) recommended an ambitious scheme of institutions at three levels--technologist, technician and craftsmen--to meet the demand for trained skills in different fields. These proposals envisaged a College of Technology, 12 Polytechnics, and courses and apprenticeship at craft level for Engineering and Industrial Education and Training; seven agricultural colleges and 190 Practical Farm Schools for agricultural education; commerce education courses in the Polytechnics and Junior Technical schools; vocational education and training in a multiplicity of programmes; a Job Placement and follow up scheme; and the establishment of a National Council for Technical Education and a Directorate for Technical Education. A few of the recommendations such as those for the establishment of the Directorate and the College of Technology were

implemented but agricultural education was marginalised, and it was claimed that resource constraints prevented the implementation of many proposals, so that technical and vocational education continued to receive low priority.

#### RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION – 1970 TO 1976

The introduction of changes that were perceived to respond to the pressures from the economic and political environment was the major thrust of policies during Mrs. Bandaranaike's second term. Falling commodity prices of the country's main exports resulted in a virtually stagnant economy by the 1970s compounded by a demographic explosion that continued till the early nineteen seventies. GDP growth rates declined from 4.6% between 1959 and 1968 to 2.9% between 1969 and 1975, and terms of trade deteriorated by 6.5% between 1969 and 1972 and by 15% between 1972 and 1975. The labour force, and especially the female labour force, expanded rapidly and the output of secondary schools and universities entered the labour market in the sixties while low economic growth rates reduced the absorptive capacity of the labour market. Consequently, male and female unemployment rates rose from 8.9% and 7.6% at the 1963 Census to 14.3% and 19.6% at the 1971 Census and to 13.7% and 26.8% in 1973 (Central Bank, 1975). While university graduates were less than 1% of the labour force, their unemployment rates were high--11.5% in 1971 and 16.3% in 1973—leading to a significant unemployment problem.

An expanding education system had enabled a new generation of students access to higher education opportunities not previously available to them. These mostly non-urban newly educated youth aspired to gainful employment and upward mobility, but their expectations remained unfulfilled due to a stagnant rural environment and their disadvantaged status in a social milieu yet dominated by a minority proficient in English. Fuelled by the resentment arising from unfulfilled aspirations and influenced by the prevailing volatile political situation worldwide, these marginalised youth of Ceylon revolted in April 1971.

The education reforms of the seventies were an immediate response by policymakers to this crisis of a high incidence of unemployment and youth unrest. Education was blamed for the unemployment situation caused by the reduction in the absorptive capacity of the economy that created an imbalance between the supply of and demand for labour. Policymakers tended to be influenced by

'experts' from the western world who highlighted 'dysfunctionalism' caused by the 'mismatch' between aspirations and opportunities, 'qualification escalation', 'diploma disease', and 'oversupply of the educated' (ILO,1971; Dore,1976). Ironically, all this was said about a country in which only 1.2% men and 0.9% women had G.C.E 'A' Level qualifications and 0.6% and 0.1% respectively had a university degree in 1971, using human capital theories that overlooked non-quantifiable data and non-economic factors (Schultz, 1963).

The Five Year Plan (1971-76) blamed the education system for the unemployment problem, underscoring that 'an educated population becomes a national asset only to the extent that it is able to fit into the productive occupations that the economy was capable of producing'. It proposed giving priority to developing curricula required for the changes envisaged in the education system and to the diversification of higher education by introducing applied studies relevant to development needs. The Medium Term Programme of the Ministry of Education (1973-77) gave priority to 'orienting general education to accelerating socio-economic growth and achieving better fit between education and the needs of the country.'

Accordingly, the 1972 reforms were a massively ambitious exercise to change the structure and content of general education. These reforms also attempted to integrate academic education and aspects of vocational education through the re-orientation of the curriculum. The age of primary school admission was raised to 6 years; the secondary school structure was changed from three years of junior secondary education and four years of senior secondary education to four years of secondary education with a common curriculum leading to the National Certificate of General Education (NCGE). The NCGE replaced the G.C.E. 'O' Level examination, while the Higher National Certificate of Education (HNCE) made up of two years of senior secondary education replaced the G.C.E. 'A' Level examination. The HNCE, however, was not to be the examination for admission to university. It was the intention of the reformers to de-link the HNCE from the university admissions process.

A child-centred education was introduced in the primary grades while the secondary school curriculum underwent radical change. The four-year compulsory common curriculum in Grades 6-9 was revised to include mathematics and integrated science for the first time for all students; history, geography and civics were now integrated as social studies, marginalising in particular, in the process, the role of history in the curriculum; two pre-vocational

subjects were introduced: one was the traditional gender differentiated vocational subjects of woodwork/metalwork for boys and home science/weaving for girls while the other was connected with one or two occupations in a given locality of the country linked chiefly to low-skilled jobs in the informal sector. The senior secondary curriculum had a core curriculum, and options/streams and compulsory project work that were expected to meet 'manpower' needs (Diyasena, 1983).

The pre-vocational subjects which were the centrepiece of the reforms stemmed from their association with the reforms of the Five Year Plan that gave priority to labour intensive technology, self employment and rural regeneration. They failed because the economic environment did not provide for gainful employment in most of the skills that were promoted while the programmes that were determined by local occupations were likely to reinforce socio-economic inequalities. The new government that came to power in 1977 retained the changes in the primary curriculum and in much of the common secondary curriculum, but abandoned the pre-vocational experiment, and also the project work which was a useful innovation, and reverted to the traditional technical subjects and to the grade structure that led to the revival of the G.C.E 'O' and 'A' Level examinations.

The extensive curriculum reforms included the preparation of detailed uniform curricula in the form of course guides by the Curriculum Development Centre that were envisaged to ensure minimum standards in all schools. These 'pre-packaged' courses, however, tended to reinforce the practice of rote learning and to provide no space for initiative and creativity in the teaching-learning process. The state monopoly of the writing and production of textbooks prohibited the use in schools of the imaginative and interesting textbooks by creative authors that had been used during the previous two decades. The positive developments were the increase in the percentage of students in the science stream to 40% in the GCE Ordinary Level grades and 38% in the GCE Advanced Level grades and the introduction of a commerce stream in these grades. A useful non-conventional approach adopted was the use of distance education for teacher education to extend outreach, but the inequitable distribution of teachers and disparities in the provision of school facilities continued to reflect and perpetuate socio-economic inequalities (Jayaweera 1988, 1998).

Radical changes were introduced in the higher education sphere. They were to:

- a) counter the inequality of access to higher education for the marginalised

segment of society; and (b) to align higher education with the needs of the labour market as an attempt to resolve the youth crisis arising from the 1971 insurgency. Regional imbalances in access to university courses and in particular to science courses, and the disproportionately small numbers of students who entered the universities from some districts surfaced from studies and enrolment data (Jayaweera, 1971) and became an issue of concern. In 1970 nearly half the entrants to the science-based faculties were from the Colombo South district and a quarter, were from Jaffna. No science students entered the universities from six districts--Polonnaruwa, Moneragala, Nuwara Eliya, Ampara, Kalmunai and Vavuniya. And nearly 70% of all students from across the country who gained entry to the universities were enrolled in arts courses.

The policy stance adopted, however, was not to focus on improving school facilities in disadvantaged districts but to introduce changes in selection procedures in university admissions. In 1971, lower marks were accepted from Sinhala medium students to qualify for university admission, while media-wise standardization and district quotas based on population distribution were introduced respectively from 1973 and 1976. Students in Colombo and Jaffna perceived themselves to be discriminated against on grounds of residence contrary to the principle of selection on merit. While district quotas benefited students of all ethnic groups in disadvantaged districts, they led to the frustration of students in developed districts. The alienation of Tamil students and their families arising from media-wise standardization exacerbated the traumatic ethnic conflict and led to the exodus of professionals overseas seeking higher education opportunities for their children. District quotas also widened intra-district disparities. Quotas would have proved a useful short-term mechanism if there were concomitant efforts to develop secondary schools in disadvantaged districts. Looking back at three decades of deadly ethnic conflict with its enormous human and financial cost, hindsight makes clear that a phased policy to extend equal opportunity to those in the disadvantaged districts would have proved a more beneficial and enduring approach. Meanwhile the freezing of admissions to universities to 3500 students from 1967 was continued till 1976, thereby reducing the total enrolment of students to around 12,000 during these years and the percentage of applicants gaining admission from 11.6% in 1966 to 5.9% in 1977.

The other striking feature of the university reforms focused on the total restructuring of the university system. The previous government had made

certain inroads into university autonomy by its Higher Education Act No.20 of 1966. Based largely on the criticism of this Act and in a bid to improve on it, the new United Front government introduced in Parliament a Bill on 4 April, 1971 which sought to repeal the 1966 Act and to establish a University Grants Commission (UGC) on the model of the UGC in UK and India. As a direct consequence of the youth insurgency of 5 April, 1971, however, the government withdrew this Bill and sought instead to implement Act No.1 of 1972 to establish a single university, reducing the existing four universities to mere campuses of it, creating a new campus in Jaffna while elevating the Ceylon College of Technology in Katubedde to the status of a university campus. An attempt to convert the Vidyalkankara campus to a 'women only' campus was abandoned after the proposal met with strong opposition led by women university academics. All senior appointments such as that of the vice-chancellor of the new single university, its board of governors, presidents of campuses and their deans were to be made by the minister of education thereby further eroding what little was left of university autonomy. This drastic change in policy was primarily to facilitate the proposed 'rationalisation' of academic courses in the university. The single university was short-lived as the new government that came to office in 1977 abolished it in favour of a return to independent and separate universities. The government of 1977 also established a UGC although it did not fully restore university autonomy.

The 'rationalisation' and vocationalisation of undergraduate courses in 1972 was confined to arts faculties which saw during these years the introduction of courses in response to requests from government ministries. Thus came into being Public Finance and Taxation at the Colombo campus, Estate Management and Valuation, and Development Studies at Colombo and Vidyodaya, Library Science and Education at Colombo and Vidyalkankara, and Mass Communication at Vidyalkankara. The first two courses in particular were developed to meet the needs identified by the Ministry of Planning and Employment but in 1974 the universities were informed that there were no resources to provide employment for the products of these courses. The campuses made futile efforts to find jobs for the disillusioned students, and perforce had to phase out these courses as well as the Development Studies course which appears not to have appealed to employers (Bastiampillai, 1983). Two studies conducted subsequently found that the products of these job-oriented courses experienced greater difficulties in obtaining employment than the those of the conventional arts courses who

were absorbed into the teaching force (SLUW,1980; Marga,1983).

The debacle of the job-oriented university courses underscored the futility of responding to a crisis by training students for specific non-existent jobs identified by manpower estimations instead of equipping them to adjust to a range of jobs. In the early seventies the administration had already closed down the six junior university colleges established in the late sixties as they did not meet the aspirations of the students or the demands of the labour market. Graduate unemployment was contained at intervals, not by changes in the curriculum but by special intervention programmes to absorb them into employment. The Graduate Training Scheme of 1972 placed around 5000 university graduates in public sector jobs, and unemployed graduates were appointed on a mass scale as teachers in response to political needs in 1976. The years 1970-1977, however, witnessed significant expansion in and diversification of university education. Post-graduate institutes in Agriculture, Buddhist and Pali Studies and Medicine were established, three new Undergraduate Institutes for Ayurvedic Medicine, Aesthetic Studies and Workers' Education came into being, and an External Examination Agency for the conduct of external examinations and extension courses saw the light of day.

It is surprising to note that while unsuccessful efforts were made to direct general education to meet specific employment needs, the technical-vocational education sector received low priority. The recommendations of the Technical Education Commission (1963) to establish a three tier structure were not implemented and agricultural education continued to be marginalized. The number of technical schools/polytechnics, however, was increased to ten while the College of Technology was upgraded to a university campus.

Policymakers responded to unemployment and the youth insurgency by establishing special institutions/programmes. The National Apprenticeship Act No. 49 of 1971 established the National Apprenticeship Board (NAB) to formulate and implement a scheme of apprenticeship training with links to prospective employers. The National Youth Services Council established in 1967 was reorganized to provide vocational training to Youth Club members at regional and mobile centres. In 1974, the Ministry of Education began a programme of Non-Formal Technical Units in selected schools to provide vocational training to school leavers but these programmes were under-resourced and received low priority. With the exception of the NAB, vocational training programmes were organised in isolation from the labour market and were therefore largely

ineffective in reducing unemployment while gender imbalances in enrolment disadvantaged women in regard to access to employment .

Gender equality as regards access to general education was achieved by the sixties and seventies as a consequence of the policy of universal free education in state education institutions. While women's concerns had not found a place in national plans before the seventies, the Five Year Plan (1972-76) for the first time referred to the employment needs of young men and women although it did not specify the development needs of women. The international scene culminating in the International Women's Year in 1975 and the World Conference on Women held that year in Mexico at which Mrs. Bandaranaike as the world's first woman Prime Minister gave the keynote address, increased the visibility of women in Sri Lanka.

Despite these developments, girls and women continued to be disadvantaged by the impact of gendered norms. Pre-conceived notions of gender roles influenced their concentration in arts courses in schools and the 'home science syndrome' limited their vocational options as seen in the fact that women were under-represented in non-arts courses in universities. Women formed less than 10% of the numbers enrolled in technical courses in technical education institutions, and less than 5% of apprentices in the NAB programmes in 1973. Consequently, the unemployment rates of women were at least double those of men, and women graduates were relatively more disadvantaged in so far as access to employment went. The pre-vocational courses did not reduce the gender gap, and the process of socialisation through stereotypical content in textbooks and the 'hidden' curriculum continued to reinforce gender inequalities in the family, labour market and society (Jayaweera, 1985).

## CONCLUSION

Policies implemented in 1960-65 focussed strongly on promoting equal education opportunity by extending access to secondary education and to higher education. This endogenous concept survived the vicissitudes of the seventies and prevented the emasculation of free education in subsequent decades. The negative experiences of the pre-vocational programme in schools and job-oriented courses in universities in the seventies illustrate the 'vocational fallacy' in education (Foster, 1965). It follows then that implementing education reforms without a supportive macroeconomic environment on the basis of



nebulous 'manpower' estimates and imported concepts of 'dysfunctional' education is a most futile exercise.

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*1972 In Retrospect*

JAYAMPATHY WICKRAMARATNE

One of the most striking achievements of the United Front Government headed by Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike is undoubtedly, the First Republican Constitution.

The Independence Constitution of 1947,<sup>1</sup> popularly known as the Soulbury Constitution, conferred dominion status on Ceylon. The Governor-General was appointed by the British sovereign. The Parliament of Ceylon consisted of the King/Queen, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Executive power continued to be vested in the Crown and was exercised by the Governor-General. The Cabinet of Ministers was charged with the general direction and control of the government and was collectively responsible to Parliament. The form of government was in the Westminster model, which meant that the Governor-General would act on the advice of the Prime Minister. By the oath of allegiance Senators, Members of Parliament, all holders of office, including the Prime Minister, Ministers and heads of departments, and judicial officers swore to “be faithful and bear true allegiance” to the King/Queen.<sup>2</sup>

The first move towards making Ceylon a Republic was taken by the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who, on becoming Prime Minister in 1956, informed the other Governments of the British Commonwealth of Ceylon’s intention to become a Republic within the Commonwealth. A Joint Select Committee of the two Houses of Parliament on the revision of the Constitution accepted

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1 Contained in the Ceylon (Constitution) Order in Council, 1946 based on the report of the Commission headed by Lord Soulbury, the three Ceylon (Constitution) (Amendment) Orders in Council, all of 1947, and the Ceylon (Independence) Order in Council, 1947.

2 Section 25 of the 1947 Constitution, read with section 2 of the Promissory Oaths Ordinance.

the principle of establishing a Republic within the Commonwealth. It was also agreed that the Parliamentary form of government would continue with the President being a Constitutional Head of State, the President and the Vice-President would be elected by the Legislature, fundamental rights would be recognized, appeals to the Privy Council would be abolished and a court would be established to adjudicate on constitutional matters and hear appeals from the Supreme Court.<sup>3</sup>

Although sub-section 4 of section 29<sup>4</sup> of the 1947 Constitution provided that “in the exercise of its powers under this section, Parliament may amend or repeal any of the provisions of this Order, or of any other Order of Her Majesty in Council in its application to the Island,” the question whether Parliament could replace the British sovereign who was a source of legal authority of the Constitution and a constituent part of Parliament had been raised, among others, by J.A.L. Cooray.<sup>5</sup> Statements made by the Privy Council in *Ibralebbe v The Queen*<sup>6</sup> that the reservations specified in section 29 were “fundamental” and in *Bribery Commissioner v Ranasinghe*<sup>7</sup> that section 29(2) was “unalterable under the Constitution”, although obiter, gave support to a move initiated by the Left parties towards a new “homegrown” or “autochthonous” Constitution with a complete legal break from the existing constitutional order in

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- 3 JAL Cooray, *Constitutional and Administrative Law of Sri Lanka* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn Sumathi Publishers, Colombo 1973) 52.
- 4 29. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Order, Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Island.  
(2) No such law shall –
- prohibit or restrict the free exercise of any religion; or
- (b) make persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable; or
- (c) confer on persons of any community or religion any privilege or advantage which is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions ; or
- (d) alter the constitution of any religious body except with the consent of the governing authority of that body, so, however, that in any case where a religious body is incorporated by law, no such alterations shall be made except at the request of the governing authority of that body....
- (3) Any law made in contravention of subsection (2) of this section shall, to the extent of such contraventions, be void.
- (4) In the exercise of its powers under this section, Parliament may amend or repeal any of the provisions of this Order, or of any other Order of Her Majesty in Council in its application to the Island.
- 5 JAL Cooray, *Review of the Constitution* (1957) 16-17.
- 6 *Ibralebbe v The Queen*, (1963) 65 NLR 433, 443 per Viscount Radcliffe.
- 7 (1964) 66 NLR 73, 78 per Lord Pearce.

preference to amending the Constitution. There was also a definite trend in the Commonwealth towards enacting "homegrown" Constitutions to replace those given by the United Kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

It was this trend towards and desire for an autochthonous Constitution that led the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP) to not support the call of the 1965 government of Dudley Senanayake to re-establish the Joint Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution. The SLFP, LSSP and CP which later combined to form the United Front (UF) whilst declining to serve on the Joint Select Committee proposed that a Constituent Assembly be set up to adopt and enact a new Constitution.

At the general election of May 1970, the UF, as reflected in its manifesto, sought from the electorate a mandate to permit the Members of Parliament to function simultaneously as a Constituent Assembly in order to draft, adopt and operate a new Constitution, the primary objective of which was to make the country a free, sovereign and independent republic dedicated to the realisation of a socialist democracy that will guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens.

At the above-referenced general election, 84.9 % of the voters, a significantly high percentage even for an electorate known for its enthusiastic participation in elections, exercised their franchise. The UF won 116 out of 151 seats on offer obtaining in the process 48.8 per cent of the total votes cast. With the support of the 6 Nominated Members and also of the 2 Independent Members who won their seats with the help of the UF, the latter now commanded 124 seats in the 151-member Parliament.

The Governor-General, in the course of delivering the first Throne Speech of the new Parliament, called upon the Members of Parliament to form a Constituent Assembly in keeping with the mandate asked for and given by the people at the general election. The Address of Thanks to the Throne Speech was passed without a division.

On 11 July 1970 the Prime Minister wrote to all members of the House of Representatives to invite them for a meeting to be held on 19 July 1970 to consider and adopt a resolution for constituting themselves into a Constituent Assembly. The meeting was to be held at the Navarangahala, the newly

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8 KC Wheare, *The Constitutional Structure of the Commonwealth* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1960) 89.

constructed auditorium of Royal College, Colombo and not in the chamber of the House of Representatives, signifying the intention of the UF to make a complete break from the 1947 Constitution. Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs, emphasized that what was contemplated was not an attempt to create a new superstructure on an old foundation.<sup>9</sup>

It is a matter of great significance that all political parties represented in Parliament participated in the formation of the Constituent Assembly on 19 July 1970.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, the Leader of the Opposition, joining the debate on the resolution to set up a Constituent Assembly, while pointing out that the UF had a mandate only from less than fifty percent of the people, observed nevertheless that if both sides of the legislature, the victors and the vanquished, agreed to make common cause in enacting a new basic law through a legal revolution, that new law, if accepted by the people, will become the full expression of the hopes, desires and aspirations of the present generation.

Mr. V. Dharmalingam of the FP, while questioning the need to go outside the existing Constitution, noted that:

We are making common cause with you in enacting a new Constitution not as a vanquished people but as the representatives of a people who have consistently at successive elections since 1956 given us a mandate to change the present Constitution which has been the source of all evil to the Tamil people...<sup>10</sup>

Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, leader of the Federal Party, urged the Assembly to reach common ground on controversial issues and quoted Jawaharlal Nehru in support:

We shall go to the Constituent Assembly with the fixed determination of finding a common basis for agreement on all controversial issues.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. V. Anandasangaree, speaking on behalf of the TC, stated that his party

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9 *Ceylon Daily News*, 14 July 1970.

10 *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. I, 266.

11 *ibid* 367.

did not wish to be a stumbling block but requested the Government to be fair and to adopt the new Constitution unanimously.

Signifying the acceptance of the Constituent Assembly route towards the adoption of a new Constitution by all political parties, the proposed resolution to form the Constituent Assembly was unanimously passed on 21 July 1970.

#### RETAINING THE PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Whilst the desire of the UF was to make a complete break from the Soulbury Constitution modelled on the British system, it nevertheless considered the Westminster model of Parliamentary Government to be suitable for Sri Lanka.

However, Mr. J.R. Jayewardene, the leader of the Opposition and deputy leader of the UNP, proposed the introduction of an Executive Presidency, a proposal opposed even by Mr. Dudley Senanayake, a former prime minister and the leader of the UNP. Interestingly though, Mr. Jayewardene was to have the last word. After he was elected prime minister in 1977, the UNP he led having obtained an unprecedented 5/6<sup>th</sup> majority in Parliament, Mr. Jayewardene introduced the Executive Presidency by way of the Second Amendment to the 1972 Constitution and followed it up with the Second Republican Constitution of 1978 based on an Executive Presidency sans any checks and balances as usually found in countries with a presidential form of government.

It is salutary, in the above context, to recall the words and sentiments expressed by Madam Sirima Bandaranaike during the debate on the Second Amendment to the Constitution:

The effect of this amendment is to place the President above the National State Assembly. Above the law and above the courts, thereby creating a concentration of State power in one person, whoever he might be. This has happened in other countries before, and history is full of examples of the disastrous consequences that came upon such nations that changed their Constitutions by giving one man too much power... We oppose this Bill firmly and unequivocally. It will set our country on the road to dictatorship and there will be no turning back. This Bill will mark the end of democracy in Sri Lanka, as the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake



realized when these same ideas were put to him in the United National Party.<sup>12</sup>

### THE UNITARY STATE

Although the Tamil parties expressed their support for the Constituent Assembly process, they were to be disappointed by the substance of the new Constitution.

Basic Resolution No. 2 proposed by the Government called for Sri Lanka to be a unitary state. The FP proposed an amendment that “unitary” be replaced by “federal”.

In a memorandum and the model constitution that it submitted to the Steering Committee of the Assembly, the FP proposed that the country be a federal republic consisting of five States made up as follows: (i) Southern and Western Provinces (ii) North Central and North Western Provinces (iii) Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces (iv) Northern Province and the districts of Trincomalee and Batticaloa and (v) Ampara district. The city of Colombo and suburbs were to be administered by the Centre. A list of subjects and functions reserved to the Centre, with all others going to the States, was included. Interestingly, law and order and Police were to be reserved subjects.

However, Assembly proceedings show that the Tamils were clearly for a compromise. Mr. Dharmalingam, who was a main speaker of the FP under Basic Resolution No. 2, stated that the existing Constitution had failed as it was not designed for a multi-ethnic country. He pointed out that in ethnically heterogeneous countries where unitary constitutions had been in operation, concessions to the federal principle have been made to meet the demands and aspirations of the minorities. Where there has been a refusal to concede the federal principle, there have been movements for separation. The FP distanced itself from secessionists such as C. Sunderalingam and V. Navaratnam, referring to them by name, and stated that it was not asking for a division of the country but for a division of power.<sup>13</sup>

12 *National State Assembly Debates*, 04.10.1977, Vol. 23, No. 10, 1293 - 1314.

13 The writer is reminded of the slogan “*Balaya bedamu, rata nobedamu*” (“Let us divide power, not the country”) used during the “devolution debate” of 1994-2001. Messrs. Dullas Alahapperuma and Dilan Perera used this phrase extensively to explain devolution to the people.

Mr. Dharmalingam made it clear that the FP's draft was only a basis for discussion. Stating that the party was only asking that the federal principle be accepted, he suggested that as an interim measure, the SLFP, LSSP and CP should implement what they had promised in the election manifesto, namely that they would abolish Kachcheris and replace them with elected bodies.<sup>14</sup> He stated:

If this Government thinks that it does not have a mandate to establish a federal Constitution, it can at least implement the policies of its leader, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, by decentralizing the administration, not in the manner it is being done now, but genuine decentralization, by removing the Kachcheris and in their place establishing elected bodies to administer those regions.<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Sarath Muttetuwegama of the Communist Party, who followed Mr. Dharmalingam, stated that "federal" had become a dirty word not because of the federal system of government but because of what the FP had advocated. He was clearly referring to the FP's association with the UNP in the past and the conservative policies it had followed, such as voting against nationalizations, the takeover of private schools and the Paddy Lands Bill. Seemingly oblivious to the offer that Mr. Dharmalingam had made, he asked why the FP had not used the phrase "regional autonomy." Speakers from the UF who followed Mr. Muttetuwegama made it clear that the UF was in no mood to even consider the FP's offer to settle for much less.

Consequently Basic Resolution No.2 was passed and the FP's amendment was defeated in the Steering and Subjects Committee on 27 March 1971.

Dr. Nihal Jayawickrama, who was the Secretary of the Ministry of Justice under the UF Government and who played an important role in the constitutional reform process, has stated that the first draft prepared under the direction of the Minister of Constitutional Affairs did not contain any reference to a "unitary state" in it. In Cabinet, one of the senior ministers<sup>16</sup> insisted that a new section be added to the effect that "Sri Lanka is a unitary state". The Minister of Constitutional Affairs did not consider this to be necessary, and

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14 Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. I, 429.

15 *ibid* 431.

16 Widely believed to be Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike.

argued that while the proposed Constitution would have a unitary structure, unitary constitutions could vary a great deal in form. "This impetuous, ill-considered, and superfluous embellishment has, for three decades thereafter, stultified every attempt at a peaceful resolution of the ethnic problem," Dr. Jayawickrama observed recently.<sup>17</sup>

It is significant that the FP continued to participate in the Constituent Assembly even after its amendment was rejected. Records show that its leader, Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, regularly attended the meetings of the Steering and Subjects Committee.

With the advantage of hindsight it could be said that acceptance of the FP's proposed compromise for a division of power would have proved to be a far reaching confidence building measure on which more could perhaps have been built later. Moreover such an acceptance would have ensured the continued participation of the FP in the Constituent Assembly. Even had the FP, as the UNP eventually did, voted against the adoption of the new Constitution, their participation in the entire Constitution-making process, it may be argued, would have afforded greater legitimacy to the 1972 Constitution.

#### THE PLACE OF BUDDHISM

The original proposal in the Constituent Assembly, according to Dr. Jayawickrama, called for the guarantee of freedom of thought, conscience and religion to every citizen. However, the Prime Minister requested that to this proposal be added a provision for the protection of institutions and traditional places of worship of Buddhists.

Basic Resolution No. 3 was for Buddhism to be given its "due place." But by the time the final draft was approved, the proposal had undergone further change. Article 6 of the 1972 Constitution requires that the Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism "the foremost place" and accordingly that it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights guaranteed by section 18 (1) (d), a provision in the chapter on fundamental rights that assures to all citizens the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

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17 *Sunday Island*, 15 July 2007.

To the question whether constitutionally guaranteeing a special status to Buddhism not available to other religions of the land might adversely affect the non-Buddhists, Dr. Colvin R.de Silva retrospectively responded in the following manner:

The section in respect of Buddhism is subject to section 18(1) (d) and I wish to say, I believe in a secular state. But you know when Constitutions are made by Constituent Assemblies they are not made by the Minister of Constitutional Affairs. I myself would have preferred (section 18(1) (d)). But there is nothing...And I repeat, NOTHING, in section 6 which in any manner infringes upon the rights of any religion in this country.<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Jayawickrama has been more critical. "If Buddhism had survived in the hearts and minds of the people through nearly five centuries of foreign occupation, a constitutional edict was hardly necessary to protect it now", he opined.

#### LANGUAGE PROVISIONS

Basic Resolution No.11 stated that all laws shall be enacted in Sinhala and that there shall be a Tamil translation of every law so enacted.

Basic Resolution No.12, read as follows:

- "(1) The Official Language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala as provided by the Official Language Act No. 32 of 1956.
- (2) The use of the Tamil Language shall be in accordance with the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act No. 28 of 1958."

Efforts by the FP to get the Government to improve upon Basic Resolutions Nos. 11 and 12 failed. On 28 June 1971, both Resolutions were passed, amendments proposed by the FP having been defeated. Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam informed the Constituent Assembly that they had met with

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18 Colvin R de Silva, *Safeguards for the Minorities in the 1972 Constitution* (Young Socialist, Colombo 1987) 10.

both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Constitutional Affairs and while the meetings had been cordial, the Government had refused to make any alteration to the Basic Resolutions. He stated that the FP would therefore not attend future meetings. "We have come to the painful conclusion that as our language rights are not satisfactorily provided in the proposed Constitution, no useful purpose will be served in our continuing in the deliberations of this Assembly. By taking this step, we mean no offence to anybody. We only want to safeguard the dignity of our people." There was not even a dramatic walk out. "We do not wish to stage a demonstration by walking out", he added.<sup>19</sup>

That Dr. Colvin R. de Silva who prophetically roared in 1955, "one language, two countries; two languages, one country," should go so far as to upgrade the then existing language provisions to constitutional status has baffled many political observers. In fact, according to Dr. Jayawickrama, the Prime Minister had stated that it would be unwise to re-open the language debate, and that the better course would be to let the ordinary laws on the subject operate in the form in which they were. By this time, the Privy Council<sup>20</sup> had reversed the decision of the Supreme Court in *A.G. v Kodeswaran*<sup>21</sup> that a public servant could not sue the Crown for breach of contract of employment and sent the case back for a determination on other issues including the main issue as to whether the Official Language Act violated section 29(2), as the District Court had held. Dr. de Silva did not wish the Supreme Court to re-visit the issue. "If the courts do declare this law invalid and unconstitutional, heavens alive, the chief work done from 1956 onwards will be undone. You will have to restore the egg from the omelette into which it was beaten and cooked."<sup>22</sup> He had, however, resisted a proposal made by Minister Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike that Sinhala be declared the "one" official language of Sri Lanka.

## FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

A noteworthy feature of the 1972 Constitution is the recognition of fundamental rights. Principles of State Policy contained in another Chapter were to guide

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19 *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. I, 2007.

20 *Kodeeswaran v A.G.*, 54 NLR 433.

21 53 NLR 25.

22 *Constituent Assembly Debates*, Vol. I, 2860.

the making of laws and the governance of Sri Lanka. But these Principles did not confer legal rights and were not enforceable in a court of law.

The fundamental rights guaranteed by the 1972 Constitution, however, were mainly civil and political rights: equality and equal protection, freedom from arbitrary deprivation of life, liberty and security of person, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom to enjoy and promote one's culture, freedoms of assembly, association, speech and expression, movement and residence and freedom from discrimination in appointments in the public sector. But all these rights were subject to such restrictions as the law may prescribe in the interests of national unity and integrity, national security, national economy, public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of rights and freedoms of others or giving effect to the Principles of State Policy.

Thus even the freedom from arbitrary deprivation of life and the freedom of thought, conscience and religion could be restricted. While Principles of State Policy did not confer legal rights, fundamental rights could be restricted to give effect to such Principles. In several cases, the Constitutional Court held that impugned provisions of Bills that were *prima facie* inconsistent with fundamental rights were nevertheless necessary for the purposes of giving effect to Principles of State Policy.<sup>23</sup>

Much has been said about the new Constitution not having a provision equivalent to section 29(2) of the Soulbury Constitution. While the fundamental right to equality and equal protection was a safeguard against discrimination, it was subject to wide restrictions, unlike section 29(2) which was absolute. Also, section 29(2) was in the nature of a group right. Although it was not as effective as it was expected to be, as was demonstrated by the failure to invoke it to prevent the disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of Tamils of Indian origin, numerically smaller ethnic and religious groups nevertheless felt comfortable that it existed, at least on paper. They saw its omission from the 1972 Constitution as a move towards majoritarianism, especially in the context that Sri Lanka was declared a Unitary State, Buddhism given the foremost place and Sinhala declared to be the only official language.

Section 18(3) of the 1972 Constitution provided that all existing laws shall operate notwithstanding any inconsistency with fundamental rights. This was

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23 *Sri Lanka Press Council Bill*, DCCSL Vol. I, 1; *Places and Objects of Worship Bill*, DCCSL, Vol. I, 27; *Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. (Special Provisions) Bill*, DCCSL Vol. I, 35.

in sharp contrast to the Constitution of India which provides in Article 13(1) that all laws in force before the commencement of the Constitution, in so far as they are inconsistent with fundamental rights, shall, to the extent of such inconsistency, be void. The 1972 Constitution did not provide for a special jurisdiction of a court for the enforcement of fundamental rights against the executive arm of the State. Theoretically, fundamental rights could have been enforced through writs in public law as well as through actions for damages, declaratory actions and injunctions in civil courts. It is interesting to note that there is only one known fundamental rights case under the 1972 Constitution, *Gunaratne v People's Bank*<sup>24</sup>, a declaratory action arising out of the famous Bank strike of the 1970s.

#### CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LEGISLATION

A significant feature of the 1972 Constitution was that, unlike under the Independence Constitution, a law could not be challenged for constitutionality. Post-enactment judicial review of legislation was thus taken away. Chapter X provided for pre-enactment judicial review. A Bill could be challenged in the Constitutional Court within a week of it being placed on the agenda of the National State Assembly (NSA).

A Bill which is, in the view of the Cabinet of Ministers, urgent in the national interest shall be referred to the Constitutional Court which shall communicate its advice to the Speaker as expeditiously as possible and in any case within twenty four hours of the assembling of the Court.<sup>25</sup>

An argument against post-enactment judicial review is that there should be certainty as regards the constitutionality of legislation. However, no serious problems have arisen in jurisdictions where post-enactment judicial review is permitted. To mitigate hardships that may be caused by legal provisions being struck down years later, the Indian Supreme Court has used the tool of "prospective over-ruling," limiting the retrospective effect of a declaration of invalidity in appropriate cases.<sup>26</sup> Section 172 of the South African Constitution expressly permits such limitation.

Post-enactment judicial review is an essential tool to prevent infringement

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24 [1986] 1 Sri LR 338 (SC).

25 Section 55.

26 *Golaknath v State of Punjab*, AIR 1967 SC 1643; *Baburam v C.C. Jacob* [1999] 3 SCC 3.

of constitutional provisions by legislative action. The effect of most legislative provisions are felt only when they are being enforced. Another argument in favour of post-enactment judicial review is that the people are able to get the benefit of the latest judicial interpretation of a constitutional provision. There have been many instances of obviously unconstitutional provisions going unchallenged. Provisions relating to urgent Bills have been abused by successive administrations. An urgent Bill is referred directly to the Supreme Court by the President even without Gazette notification. Such a Bill is not tabled in Parliament before such reference and even Members of Parliament would not know the contents of such a Bill.

### JUDICIARY

Under the Independence Constitution, the Chief Justice, the Judges of the Supreme Court and Commissioners of Assize were appointed by the Head of State, on the advice of the Prime Minister. The 1972 Constitution made no change in that regard.

In relation to other judicial officers, however, the provisions of the new Constitution were very unsatisfactory.

Since 1946, the appointment, transfer, dismissal and disciplinary control of judicial officers had been vested in a Judicial Service Commission consisting of the Chief Justice, a Judge of the Supreme Court and another person who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme Court.

The 1972 Constitution<sup>27</sup> provided for a 5-member Judicial Services Advisory Board (JSAB) and a 3-member Judicial Services Disciplinary Board (JSDB), both headed by the Chief Justice. A list of persons recommended for appointment as judicial officers and State officers exercising judicial functions would be forwarded by the JSAB to the Cabinet of Ministers which was the appointing authority. The Cabinet reserved for itself the right to appoint a person not recommended by the JSAB subject to the proviso that the full list of JSAB-recommended names and the reasons for non-acceptance of any so recommended were tabled in the NSA. Dismissal and disciplinary control was exercised by the JSDB which was required to forward a report to the Cabinet through the Minister of Justice and a copy transmitted to the Speaker. A

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<sup>27</sup> Sections 124 - 130.



judicial officer could also be removed for misconduct by the President on an address by the NSA. J.A.L. Cooray considered the changes affected by the 1972 Constitution to be hardly compatible with the independence of the judicial function.<sup>28</sup>

#### PUBLIC SERVICE

Under the Independence Constitution, the Permanent Secretary of each Ministry was subject to the general direction and control of the Minister in exercising supervision over the departments coming under the Ministry.<sup>29</sup> The 1972 Constitution made no change of this position, except to include institutions, such as Corporations, within the ambit of the relevant provision.<sup>30</sup>

Before 1972, the appointment, transfer, dismissal and disciplinary control of public officers were vested in a Public Service Commission appointed by the Governor General. This position was changed and the powers were taken over by the Cabinet of Ministers. Appointments were made after receiving recommendations from a State Services Advisory Board. The power of appointment could be delegated to the Minister concerned or by the Minister, in turn, to any State Officer. The power of disciplinary control and dismissal was exercised after receiving recommendation from the State Services Disciplinary Board.

The UF no doubt considered the bureaucracy to be obstructionist and wished the public service to be available to the government to accelerate socio-economic development. This is understandable. As Radhika Coomaraswamy has argued, the framers of the 1972 Constitution considered the checks and balances contained in the 1947 Constitution appearing to obstruct decision-making, perpetuating a status quo of privilege and domination.<sup>31</sup> But rather than including appropriate constitutional provisions to ensure that political decisions were carried out by the bureaucracy, the entire public service was

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28 JAL Cooray, *Constitutional and Administrative Law of Sri Lanka* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn Sumathi Publishers, Colombo 1995) 69.

29 Section 51.

30 Section 103(2).

31 R. Coomaraswamy, Sri Lanka, *The Crisis of the Anglo-American Constitutional Traditions in a Developing Society* (Vikas, New Delhi 1984) 31-32.

## ESSAYS

placed under the control of the political executive, eroding the independence that it enjoyed.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

While the break from the British Crown, retention of the Parliamentary form of Government, introduction of a fundamental rights chapter and declaration of principles of state policy were undoubtedly laudable, the 1972 Constitution also paved the way for majoritarianism and undermining of the concepts of the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution.

1972 was also a historic opportunity to accommodate the diversity and pluralism of the people of Sri Lanka in state power and resolve the language question, an opportunity that tragically was missed. If the UF had met the FP half-way, the history of this country may have been significantly different.

*Sirimavo Bandaranaike and  
the Lanka Mahila Samiti*

RAMYA CHAMALIE JIRASINGHE

As a child growing up in rural Ceylon, Sirimavo Ratwatte understood the power of local gentry to change a villager's fate. She belonged to the top rung of a rigidly structured and distinctly hierarchical society from which, at times, it had taken nothing more than an act as simple as offering shelter, a yard of cloth or a bushel of paddy out of the private wealth of a family such as hers to alter the course of someone's life. While the rural gentry wielded immense influence on the disadvantaged villagers, theirs was a symbiotic relationship. The two were inextricably bound by mutual need in the agricultural society into which Sirimavo had been born in Balangoda. She had learnt to build a rapport with villagers at an early age. "No one would be allowed to go away without a meal or even a cup of tea," Sirimavo would recollect, "but it was not the food we served that mattered. We cared about the villagers just as much as they did about us....We were all 'people of the place,' to put it idiomatically, and that made us kin."<sup>1</sup>

Later, as the wife of an ambitious and brilliant young politician and prime minister, she had found herself in Colombo in the very heartland of the national political machinery; privy to all its motivations and confabulations. Speaking of life with her husband she would say, "Mr. Bandaranaike had a way of creating excitement around him all the time and the atmosphere around him was always electric. He himself maintained a hectic pace and he lived on his nerves, but it seemed to agree with him perfectly. I had no choice but to get used to it."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Seneviratne, Maureen. *Sirimavo Bandaranaike: The World's First Woman Prime Minister*, Hansa, Colombo, 1975, p.30.

2 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p.114.

The two experiences, life in Balangoda and later in Colombo, had introduced Sirimavo to different levels of power and their influence on the world and the people around her. Yet her first experience at the periphery of power, inextricably linked to disadvantage and poverty, followed by firsthand experience at the centre of power, would need to be refined into one that used the latter for the benefit of the former if she were to play an effective role in the public sphere. It was only at the Lanka Mahila Samiti (LMS), a pioneer rural development organisation run by women, that Sirimavo had the opportunity to fuse these two significant life experiences.

Dr. Mary Rutnam had founded the LMS in 1930 as a women's movement that was "non-partisan politically and intended to ameliorate rural conditions and improve the social and economic life of the people, particularly in the rural areas."<sup>3</sup> Rutnam, a Canadian married to a Sri Lankan, had lectured at the Department of Women's Institutes in Canada and visited village organisations run by women both in Canada and in England. She had been aware of the work done by women in these countries and, significantly, in India. When the Malini Dutt Association of Calcutta began the Mahila Samitis of Bengal, Rutnam, together with Miss Cissy Cooray, Mrs. Majorie de Mel and a small group of women founded the LMS. Dr. G.P. Malalasekera had assured them that "mahila samiti" meant "women's associations" in Sanskrit. The LMS began its first village Mahila Samiti a year later in Pannipitiya with 41 members.

It is no coincidence that Rutnam's founding of the LMS came at the time when Ceylon was facing a transfer of power. The political setting, the emergence of a group of dynamic local politicians and the economic and health crises created the conditions for the beginnings of a "rudimentary welfare state"<sup>4</sup>. The Great Depression had left its mark on the country. Exports had dropped, leading to unemployment in the plantation as well as in the commercial and public sectors. The dire economic conditions resulting from a plantation sector in crisis afflicted the rural economy which was a rice-based agricultural economy, where the indigenous farmers depended on the income earned on plantations through casual labour. The loss of this income put an unbearable strain on the already disadvantaged rural poor.<sup>5</sup>

In 1934, on the heels of the Great Depression, Ceylon faced the country's

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3 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p.96.

4 De Silva, K.M. *A History of Sri Lanka*, Vijitha Yapa, Colombo, 2008, pp. 570-589.

5 *ibid.*, p. 573.

worst outbreak of Malaria. According to E.F.C. Ludowyk, by the end of 1934 almost one-and-a-half million people had been infected, and by December 1935, 254,986 had succumbed to the disease.<sup>6</sup> Malaria had been endemic to dry zones of the country, but this epidemic began primarily in Kegalle and Kurunegala, where a drought had turned wet-zone rivers into fertile mosquito larvae breeding grounds. The disease affected 19 districts of the country, areas occupied mainly by indigenous farmers. The result was a severe reduction in rice cultivation.

Hospitals and primary care facilities run by the government could not cope with the unprecedented increase of malaria patients. However, private donors and small groups of mainly centre-left social workers stepped in to care for them. Their work not only made a significant difference in the support available during the epidemic, but their success proved the importance of nongovernmental institutions' backing for government-led healthcare campaigns. This example of the positive impact of privately initiated social service work resonated in the minds of civic conscious citizens living at a time of food shortages and health epidemics. Not surprisingly, rural healthcare and food production became the cornerstones of the LMS' ideology.

"My husband enrolled me in several women's organisations soon after our marriage," said Sirimavo, "some of them affiliated to politics. He paid my subscription faithfully every year...."<sup>7</sup> Their marriage had taken place in 1940. It was a time when local politicians were passionately involved in defining a national identity using social and cultural reform as their vehicle. Educational reform, worker welfare and peasant colonisation had come to the forefront as a driving force that would set the agendas for both politicians and social organisations. Sirimavo joined the LMS in 1941 in this environment. The organisation had been active for ten years and it was a time of rapid consolidation of its work. The LMS had spread to the Sabaragamuwa Province and would enter the Uva Province in 1942. It had begun the first nursery school in the country in Kalubowila in 1941; a permanent training centre in Kaduwela for village leaders followed in 1947. The LMS was not a ladies' excuse for a dainty soirée. It had included maternal health, malaria eradication, sanitation, food production, weaving and cottage crafts as priorities in its drive for rural development. And

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6 Ludowyk, E.F.C., *The Modern History of Ceylon*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1966.

7 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 96.

LMS members worked relentlessly to achieve these goals.

Sirimavo would recall later:

There were many occasions when we would travel narrow jungle paths, riddled with leeches and serpents, wade through floods, ford rivers, climb hills and dales, find our way over almost impassable tracks, brave leopard and bear and wild elephant in their natural habitat, walk miles and miles to visit Samitis off the beaten track to keep in touch with them.<sup>8</sup>

At a time when mobile phones or four-wheel-drives had not been imagined, the members of the LMS travelled to remote areas, braving real physical threats to meet women malnourished, gaunt eyed and resentful of their solicitations. Many of the women involved in the LMS were also taking care of their own young families. Sirimavo recalled how she had lost her way back from a LMS meeting in Madiwela:

My husband would often be amused at what he called my poor road sense, but this time with my lusty infant daughter bringing the roof down, he was certainly in no mood to be merry! Later on, after the baby had been fed, comforted and put to sleep he was ready to listen to my experience and sympathise with me for having gone miles out of my way, even crossing a ferocious flooded river at Hanwella, before finding my way back to the right road.<sup>9</sup>

During the floods of 1947 and 1957, and the smallpox and typhoid epidemics of the 1950s, Sirimavo and others of the LMS travelled to villages isolated by raging waters and communities debilitated by disease, taking food, clothing and medication for them. Towards the end of the 40s the LMS had broken through the rural women's initial mistrust by its policy of training, and empowering them to carry out the rehabilitation work in their own villages.

The first cabinet of independent Ceylon recognised the organisation's achievements and the role it could play in rural development. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke manned the ministry of home affairs under which the department

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8 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 106.

9 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p.106.

of rural development functioned. In 1948 he summoned the executive committee members of the LMS to discuss the role the organisation could play in post-independent Ceylon. "I want you to wear your running shoes," said Sir Oliver to them, referring to the need to accelerate their programmes to meet the changes taking place in the country. He granted the LMS the Rs. 30,000 they requested for training field workers. In 1951 the Department increased the grant to Rs. 45,000 in its budget.<sup>10</sup>

The money, however, never made it to the treasury of the LMS. The UNP cabinet changed its policies in 1952 and withdrew the grant given by the department of rural development to the LMS and, in 1953, the grant by the department of health. Sirimavo was the treasurer of the LMS when the organization had to face this financial crisis. She "...had to spin gold out of straw since early 1953. How she does it is a marvel", said Majorie de Mel, a founder member, in the LMS Silver Jubilee Issue.

Without a doubt, Sirimavo had a formidable advisor at home. As far back as 1942 when S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike chaired an annual meeting of the LMS, he had suggested that its central board, "inaugurate a device for building up a Fund for development of the work with full press publicity". During the crisis years that followed, his wife, as treasurer of the LMS, would put this advice to use. With the support of her committee members Sirimavo explored every avenue available to collect funds for the LMS. She revived the melas (carnivals), now synonymous with the LMS; obtained funds from the Asia Foundation, the CORSO Movement of New Zealand, the Associated Country Women of the World, private organisations and individuals; and set up a public cafeteria in its headquarters in Fort. By 1959 the LMS had 1400 Samiti around the country and 150,000 members.

Sirimavo had never been new to poverty in rural Ceylon. She was all too familiar with the crippling effect of natural disasters, famine and disease on already ravaged lives. During the 1934 malaria epidemic she had accompanied her father, walking miles on narrow mountain tracks, on his visits to village homes that had been devastated by the disease. During one visit she had watched a woman dying at childbirth surrounded by a family stricken by malaria in a small hut devoid of light or air, and later, helped care for the sick at the malaria convalescent home her father had set up on their premises.

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10 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 100.



However, it was as a member of the LMS that she witnessed a level of poverty that she had not known in Balangoda. She visited villages in the North Central and Uva Provinces, isolated from the rest of the country, drought-stricken and parched, where farmers engaged in a futile battle against nature to keep body and spirit together. Working simultaneously as a committee administrator and social worker who had come into contact with farmers, Sirimavo saw, for the first time, that national policy reconciled its impact in one place: on a person who might pay for the consequences of policy decisions, sometimes with his or her life.

She had joined the LMS during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War when the Government's primary focus was military defence. At a time when the State's support to modernize agriculture was essential if the country were to cope with the acute food shortages caused by the War, it had little to spare to offer this assistance. Farmers struggled without water and new equipment. Severe food shortages caused malnutrition and disease among the already weakened rural communities. In response to this crisis, the LMS spearheaded a nationwide campaign to regenerate farming and agriculture in Ceylon. It popularized concepts such as home gardens, high-yield crops and self-sustenance farming which are, as a result, a part of our vocabulary today.

The members of the organisation dealt with not only the lack of funds, but also with the resistance from the farmers when they attempted to introduce new agricultural methods. According to Sirimavo, "We had to manage as best as we could and cope with innumerable difficulties – for example a poor water supply in intense drought conditions, lack of sufficient knowhow, and old fashioned implements..."<sup>11</sup> They worked closely with women to introduce food storage and preservation methods and began campaigning to revive traditional recipes that used locally produced ingredients such as fruit, leaves, yam, flour, herbs and flowers. At the annual meeting of the Meevitigamma Samiti in 1941, the LMS committee members were the judges at a LMS-sponsored food exhibition that included items as creative as papadam made out of breadfruit and jak seed.

By the late 1940s, agricultural revival had become one of the main focuses of the LMS. The impetus for this focus, however, was part of a much wider national movement that was sweeping across the country. D.S. Senanayake, the first prime minister in newly independent Ceylon, had made agricultural

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11 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p.98.

revival a solution to population expansion and economic stagnation, a personal mission. He gave this revival sound statutory backing by bringing in policies that initiated large-scale irrigation projects and spearheaded a massive peasant colonisation drive in the dry zone.<sup>12</sup> As the government opened up the dry zone and set up villages in the newly developed land, the need for health care, sanitation and malaria control became paramount. The LMS was one of the main social service organisations in Ceylon that supported the government and backed this agricultural expansion drive.

The government's expansion into the dry zone had a definite focus: rice cultivation. It brought in overseas technicians to help modernise rice production methods, introduced new machinery and promoted high-yield seed paddy among farmers. The LMS played a key role in popularising new equipment and ideas by the villagers through its Samitis. Sirimavo, given her familiarity with rice cultivation in Balangoda, played a definitive role in the LMS' work at this time. She managed to convince cynical and jaded paddy farmers who stubbornly refused to accept new cultivation methods by rallying the women around her and gaining their support. In Wewala, she worked with the Samiti members and experimented on the possibility of successfully farming new strains of paddy. She introduced the farmers of the area to a high-yield seed paddy from which they recovered a harvest hundred and fifty times more than before.

Years later, in the 70s, discussing her work at the LMS, Sirimavo, then the prime minister, would say, "I came to know at firsthand the agony as well as the ecstasy of the farmer."<sup>13</sup> She had, she knew, put this knowledge to very good use. By coming "to know the agony and the ecstasy of the farmer", she had gained a shrewd sense of his psyche. With this came the insight that rice cultivation was indelibly etched in the farmers' worldview as their only means of sustenance and survival. She would use this understanding as her winning card at one of the turning points in her political career.

When the ruling party, the United National Party (UNP), reduced the rice subsidy in 1966, Sirimavo was in the opposition. She had lost the first election held while she was prime minister in 1965. As the leader of the opposition from 1965-1970, Sirimavo brought together her party, The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), and several left-wing parties into a coalition called the United Front

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12 De Silva, *ibid.*, pp.577-580.

13 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 98.

(UF), and devised a political campaign that would be the downfall of the Dudley Senanayake-led UNP. The Sirimavo-led UF, drawing on its understanding of the rural psyche, highlighted the subsidy cut as a harbinger of the end of the welfare state. The UF fed the fears of the rural masses by focussing on the rice subsidy cut at the campaign rallies. The farmers, determined to protect the one concession that they understood to be their lifeblood, fought back with the only weapon they had: their votes. The UF achieved a landmark victory at the polls and Sirimavo came back to power as prime minister. Historian K.M. de Silva writes, "After his party suffered a landslide defeat in the elections of May 1970, Dudley Senanayake ruefully commented that for the second time in his political career he had paid the penalty for disturbing the most cherished of sacred cows of Sri Lanka's welfare system – the rice subsidy."<sup>14</sup>

"I would say that joining the Samiti was a landmark in my career," Sirimavo would say when she was prime minister, "it gave me a deeper insight into the life of the average villager of the remote areas..." She goes on to describe the range of different people holding public and civic posts she met because of her social work such as "MPs of areas, Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents, district headmen, doctors, engineers, school principals and teachers, farmers and their wives, businessmen and others..."

In addition to the social and political insights she had gained during her time as a member of the LMS, Sirimavo acknowledged a more private debt to the Samiti:

I owe my own beginning as a public speaker to the Samiti. At first I was overcome with shyness and I would actually find myself in a cold sweat, even stuttering and stumbling and rattling off the briefest speech in the most abrupt manner! ... There were these village women, without any formal education whatsoever but yet so cool and self-possessed, speaking naturally and fluently and confidently to the members at meetings. It made me feel ashamed. I told myself: what the village sevikas could do I must do – better – and this determination acted as a spur: soon I was able to speak freely and forcefully as a matter of course, and lost every shred of nervousness at the sight of a public platform, a microphone and

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14 De Silva, *ibid.*, p.661.

the thought of formally addressing a large gathering.<sup>15</sup>

The LMS had completed the grooming of the first woman Prime Minister. However, the debt she readily acknowledges to the LMS for helping her gain confidence at addressing public audiences had an important dimension to it. At the LMS she learnt to address a very clearly defined audience: the rural poor and among them too, mainly women, in a tone and voice that resonated with them.

Sirimavo had been one of the most active travellers in the LMS committee membership, visiting Samitis and communities in the furthest corners of the Western, North Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. According to her:

Such visits were a necessary part of our work, to see for ourselves that the women were maintaining the standards of hygienic living expected of them, cultivating their home gardens, giving a simple but balanced diet to their families and taking an active part in community self-help schemes. Sometimes we would spend days and nights under the most primitive conditions, eating a meagre meal – all this most cheerfully regarding it all as a great adventure. But however stark the poverty the villagers themselves endured, they were extremely hospitable and were ready to share their frugal repast generously with us. A meal of rice and pol sambol, boiled jak and manioc would taste as delicious as ambrosia under these circumstances!<sup>16</sup>

As Sirimavo's recollections convey, during these visits she had effortlessly displayed a graciousness of conduct and an ease of spirit when she sat with the villagers from extremely disadvantaged rural communities, sharing their simple meals and discussing their trials. This would have been easy for her given that she had learnt to mingle with the unbroken stream of villagers that came to her parent's home on the open days for meals when she was living in Balangoda. From them she had learnt to relate to the villagers and get to know their lives intimately. As Sirimavo has said:

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15 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 104.

16 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 30.

It was amazing how my mother knew each and everyone as an individual. At first we children marvelled, and wondered if we'd ever be able to emulate her ways, but soon we came to know the people in a personal manner too. My mother would never fail to inquire after an ailing member of a family, an old person's *wate* (rheumatism), a young one's *aduma* (asthma), a child away from home, a brother or sister's or son's or daughter's wedding plans, about the house one man was building or the flood or drought damage on another's field.... And soon we were familiar with everybody's affairs too and as concerned as my parents were....<sup>17</sup>

Yet when she travelled to the remote villages to meet the women working in the Samiti she went not as the daughter of a rural headman nor as the wife of a successful politician, but as an administrator and social worker. In these encounters with rural women she had developed her own way of relating to them and had learnt to empathise with the problems of the people she met. Most importantly, she had mastered the skill of responding to them in a voice that was neither condescending nor superior but in a voice that sounded honest to her listeners. She had learnt an art that has time and time again proved to be crucial for the success of a political candidate at every major election in Sri Lanka: the knack of building a rapport with the rural audience and then conveying it to them.

If fate and historical moment played significant roles in the political drama that would propel Sirimavo into the role of prime minister at the 1960 election, it is also fact that she ably assisted both. Journalist D.B.S. Jeyaraj recounts the role Srimavo played in turning around an assured defeat for the SLFP at the election campaign following her husband's death. He describes the moment that changed the course of events:

As the electoral campaign got underway, it soon became apparent that the SLFP was heading for definite defeat. Crowds dwindled and there was a visible lack of enthusiasm among the party cadres....It was at this point that the pragmatic C.P. de Silva realised the urgent necessity for someone to revitalise the party

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17 Seneviratne, *ibid.*, p. 30.

and inspire the voters. Who but the tragic widow of the departed Leader could do this? So CP and other SLFP leaders persuaded Sirima Bandaranaike to address election meetings. A reluctant Sirima hesitantly agreed. She started addressing public meetings.

This altered the situation dramatically. The widow dressed in white began talking to people directly and personally. She was not a powerful orator but had plenty of charisma. She spoke simply and eloquently about her “Swami Purushaya” (Lord Husband)....

She would often breakdown and cry. The opposition de-cried (sic) this emotional display as a calculated act aimed at garnering sympathy. She was referred to as the “Weeping Widow” by newspapers. She was mocked and ridiculed. But the tide was rapidly turning.

Huge crowds flocked to her meetings voluntarily. A significant feature was an unprecedented high turnout of women particularly in the rural areas. They sympathised with her. Tears glistened in their eyes when Sirima Bandaranaike broke down. They sobbed loudly and wept uncontrollably when she cried. Despite her lack of eloquence she moved crowds.<sup>18</sup>

The days and nights Sirimavo had spent with rural women chatting to them over cups of tea and meagre meals had finally paid off when she got on the political platform to address the crowds. She spoke to her audience with the same emotional openness the women had spoken to her on her journeys with the LMS and her listeners responded in the same vein. Sirimavo had secured her victory as the first woman prime minister.

While a remarkable combination of marriage, fate and historical moment may have been responsible for propelling her into a role of notable historical significance, her entry, survival and conduct in it were a reflection of her own acumen and political wit. Her time at the LMS had played a significant role in

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18 Jeyaraj, D.B.S. *How Mrs. Bandaranaike Became Prime Minister in 1960*, Daily Mirror, Wijeya Newspapers, Colombo, 24.7.2010.

honing these skills. It had given her the opportunity to fuse the life experiences that birth and marriage had offered her and a ground on which to develop her own sense of identity in the public sphere. Most significantly, those years at the LMS had been eventful enough to span times of crippling policy decisions, horrendous natural disasters and bleak world events. As a committee member of the LMS, Sirimavo had needed to work with her fellow members to ensure the organisation's survival during these crises: an invaluable experience that she would use in her career of 40 years as a political leader.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike had close to twenty years of experience as a member of the LMS when she resigned from the organisation. Of her last decade in the LMS, she had spent eight years as its treasurer, two as its vice president and the remainder, until her resignation, as its president. She resigned from the LMS when she took up her post as the prime minister of Sri Lanka in 1960. It was a role that came with the distinction of being the first woman in the world to hold the position.

*Remembering*  
*Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike*

LAKSHMAN KADIRGAMAR



*"I rise today to offer condolences not merely on my own behalf, but on behalf of the Ministry that I lead, and on behalf of a number of young people who did not have the privilege of knowing Mrs. Bandaranaike but who are inspired by her name and by what she did, and what she left behind. And that is the best example of what a great legacy can do for the morale of those who have the privilege of inheriting it."*

Mr. Speaker, as I rise today to offer condolences on the death of our late Prime Minister, Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike, I do so not merely on my own behalf but on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which I have the honour to lead. From independence up to 1977 the Prime Minister of the day was also the Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs. That meant, Sir, as we all know that Mrs. Bandaranaike was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in effect for a period of 11 years during her two terms as Prime Minister from 1960 to 1964 and from 1970 to 1977. In 1977 a separate Ministry of Foreign Affairs was created headed by a Minister. It is an incontestable fact, Mr. Speaker, that Mrs. Bandaranaike was by far the most distinguished and successful Minister of Foreign Affairs that this country has had. When I say that I take into account that other towering figure in our political firmament, the late Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, her husband, who, had he lived long enough, would possibly have made an even greater impact on our foreign affairs than Madam Bandaranaike did. But fate willed otherwise.

Sir, when Madam Bandaranaike came to high office suddenly, unexpectedly,

she was unencumbered by learning, if I may put it that way. But she was richly endowed with common sense and qualities of character that served her and the country in very good stead as the years unfolded. Among those qualities of character, I would say, Mr. Speaker, were tenacity and determination. In popular parlance one would say, she had grit. She was able to get to the heart of a problem very quickly and she was able to pursue the resolution of a problem to its conclusion in a determined manner. When one looks at her record, as I have often done, one sees those qualities coming through; and she had, above all I would say, a rare quality in public leader; that is, the quality of sincerity. Sincerity, Mr. Speaker, is difficult to define. But where it exists you recognize it. You see it and you respond to it. In the field of foreign affairs she revealed that quality of sincerity to which all the leaders with whom she came into contact responded. At the end of her time as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka the rest of the world acknowledged very clearly that Mrs. Bandaranaike was a leader who had that exceptional quality; if she had not had it she would not have been able to achieve the outstanding successes that she did in fact achieve, which I am now going to refer to briefly.

In her first term, new to politics, unaccustomed as she was to the problems and difficulties of high office, she addressed two difficult problems. In 1962 the Sino-Indian border dispute erupted. What that meant, as far as Sri Lanka was concerned, was that two of our oldest and most cherished friends became engaged in a potentially very serious dispute. I mentioned just a moment ago her ability to get quickly to the heart of a problem and then act decisively. She convened a meeting in Colombo of Egypt, Ghana, Cambodia, Indonesia and Burma, all leading countries at that time in the Non-Aligned Movement. These were countries closely associated with the origin of the movement, as indeed Sri Lanka under Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had been in his lifetime. These six countries met in Colombo. They considered what they should do about the Sino-Indian border dispute, and having discussed the matter on the basis that the Non-Aligned countries must take an initiative to prevent the problem from getting out of control, Mrs. Bandaranaike was commissioned by the group to go to both India and China to try to resolve the problem, or at least to try to ensure that it did not grow into a uncontrollable war. That problem, Mr. Speaker, remains to this day, it is not totally resolved. But it must be acknowledged that Mrs. Bandaranaike's initiative in that far-off time, in 1962, had contributed very substantially to ensuring that the problem subsided.

Today we see relations between India and China improving considerably. It is a matter of great satisfaction not only to Sri Lanka but to the whole of Asia, indeed to the whole world, that these two giant countries which have so much to contribute, and have in the past contributed so much, to civilization are now entering a phase in their relations in which it seems very likely that they would be able to live, to develop and to prosper in a peaceful atmosphere. While considering what is happening today in their relations, it is good to recall that our Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1962 took a bold initiative in respect of that potentially very difficult problem.

Then, Mr. Speaker, in 1964 came another of her very significant achievements, and people who have studied her career are inclined to believe that was perhaps her most outstanding achievement. That was the conclusion of the Sirima-Shastri pact between India and Sri Lanka.

The problem of the stateless persons of Indian origin had been a serious one ever since independence. In fact it was a problem that was left over to be resolved by us after the British left. It was a problem that had eluded resolution by outstanding leaders of our country like Mr. D.S. Senanayake, Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. It was a problem to which even the great Jawaharlal Nehru had been unable to find a solution.

In 1964, Mrs. Bandaranaike gave her mind to this problem. It was a difficult problem between the two countries. It was a difficult problem in terms of local politics, in regard to the status, the position, the voting rights of the Indian Tamil community. She addressed it vigorously and again with the sure instinct for getting to the heart of the problem and pursuing its resolution with tenacity and determination after negotiations, which were not easy. It was a problem in respect of which a great deal of research had been done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time in support of Mrs. Bandaranaike's initiative. Eminent foreign constitutional lawyers of that time were consulted. And, she did a very significant thing, Mr. Speaker, particularly when one considers the problems that we face today. She closely consulted Mr. Dudley Senanayake who was the Leader of the Opposition at that time. This was an early and excellent case of a bipartisan approach being adopted towards the solution of a major national problem. That again, Mr. Speaker, is something that we in this House should remember. We should recall that at that time the leaders of the two major political parties in the country were able to get together and help to resolve that very difficult problem. That could not have happened if the initiative

had not been taken by Mrs. Bandaranaike. She was the Prime Minister at that time. Mr. Dudley Senanayake was the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, it is good to recall that today. These are the things that our leaders are capable of doing and have done in the past, and are capable of doing today if they give their minds to it. So let us then remember Mrs. Bandaranaike for that achievement, not merely for solving to a large extent the problem of the stateless persons but also for having done it in the best possible manner, that is with the co-operation of the Opposition of the day.

Mr. Speaker, in her second term Madam Bandaranaike's contribution to the foreign policy of our country became an enormous achievement by any standard. People sometimes forget that another of her outstanding achievements, one that is less publicly known, came during the 1971 war between India and Pakistan which led to the creation of Bangladesh. At that time, Mr. Speaker, Sri Lanka had excellent relations with both India and Pakistan, a situation that had existed right from the commencement of the independence of all three countries- India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in or about 1948. But this war in 1971 created a considerable problem for Mrs. Bandaranaike. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that Pakistan had applied for refuelling facilities in Colombo for their aircraft on their way to Dacca, now in Bangladesh, which was then in the Eastern Province of Pakistan. How was our Prime Minister of the day to resolve a problem of that kind? It was a most daunting problem, Mr. Speaker, a problem that anybody faced with that situation would find considerable difficulty in tackling, given the context and the history of our relations with both countries. Mrs. Bandaranaike had no hesitation in permitting refuelling facilities for Pakistan's aircraft on their way to the Eastern Province of Pakistan. The governments and the people of Pakistan remain grateful for that decision and never hesitate to say so. But Mr. Speaker, reflect for a moment on the fact that ever since then, notwithstanding what she did on that occasion, Sri Lanka's relations with India have always remained warm and cordial, except for a period when our relations deteriorated due to no fault of hers. If that bold decision was not a remarkable one, I do not know what else it could be, Mr. Speaker. That we were able to keep the goodwill and trust of two friends in a very difficult situation of that kind is surely a considerable achievement, and, I say, that that was a good example, when we look at it, of Mrs. Bandaranaike's sincerity. That was the quality that comes through. When one talks about it today with the generation that knew that problem well, in Pakistan, for instance, naturally one

sees that Mrs. Bandaranaike is remembered with great affection and respect by all sections of society in Pakistan, young and old. But, remarkably, if you take India, she remained, and was considered, a very good friend of India. It was only a few days ago in the Indian Parliament that Prime Minister Vajpayee, in paying a tribute to Mrs. Bandaranaike, described her as a 'true friend of India'. I raise that achievement of her for examination by all of us as an exemplary initiative, which could not possibly have been successful if not for the fact that Mrs. Bandaranaike was trusted. She was considered a sincere person and she was considered a person who, when she made a decision, made it in the best interests of all concerned. She was able thereafter to remain friends with all concerned.

Also in that second term she had to face a very difficult problem over the island of Kachchativu. Kachchativu, Mr. Speaker, we all know, is a very small, barren island – a piece of rock, really, in the Palk Strait, but it has a certain significance: It was a problem on which feelings tended to run high and, in fact, in certain quarters today in India still runs high. The Kachchativu question involved a protracted and tough negotiation. The late Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India at that time. An agreement was reached on the future of Kachchativu. The boundary in question was extended in order to accommodate the wishes of Sri Lanka, and the problem has been removed from contention between the governments of our two countries since then. It is said, I am sure this must be correct, that the fact that the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the late Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike had been such close personal friends could well have created an ambience of trust and confidence that made it easier for them to resolve the problem than it would have been if they had not been on such friendly terms.

Also in that second term it was Mrs. Bandaranaike's initiative that led to the establishment of what is called the "Indian Ocean Peace Zone". That came about, Mr. Speaker, at the height of the Cold War when the Non-Aligned countries, and the countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, felt that the Indian Ocean was in danger of becoming an arena of conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States. Mrs. Bandaranaike, pursuing the philosophy of Non-Alignment, suggested that this peace zone be created. The United Nations mechanism for setting up this peace zone is still in existence, long after the Cold War has disappeared. There are countries, which were involved, in that early initiative which is still reluctant to let go of the relevant UN mechanism.

Then, Mr. Speaker, comes her crowning achievement in 1976, the Non-Aligned Summit was the largest international diplomatic event held in Sri Lanka. It put Sri Lanka firmly on the world map in political and diplomatic terms. A large number of leaders of the Non-Aligned countries came here. Mrs. Bandaranaike, by all accounts, presided over that occasion with great distinction, and ever since then Sri Lanka's place among the developing countries of the world has been assured.

Mr. Speaker, those achievements alone would be sufficient to ensure the place of any Foreign Minister in the history of his or her country. In Mrs. Bandaranaike's case, even when she was in the Opposition in the 1980s, she was received in various countries with the honours accorded only to a Head of State. It is well-known fact that when, for instance, she visited Iraq in that period she was received with particular respect and affection although she was not in office at that time, and that was true of her relations with many countries after she ceased to be in office. In other words, Mr. Speaker, she had made such a name for Sri Lanka during her 11 year period as Prime Minister, that to a large extent Sri Lanka had become synonymous with Mrs. Bandaranaike. Right through the 1980s when she was in the Opposition and even latterly in the last six years when she was Prime Minister although not actively so, her name remained well known and widely respected and she was treated with great affection and respect. I have two personal experiences of that, Mr. Speaker. Just two or three years ago when I was in China, walking down a street in a crowded city in Southern China, a group of young Chinese came up and spoke to me through the interpreter. They asked me from where I was. I said I was from Sri Lanka. They immediately said, "Ah! Madam Bandaranaike." This was from a generation that did not know her at all. It goes to show that her name, by then, had become, I would say, embedded in the Chinese psyche, in the memory of the people, in the folklore of China.

I had a similar experience in Egypt where, again, ordinary people in the street on being told that I was from Sri Lanka asked me questions such as, "Madam Bandaranaike, how is she getting on? How is her health?" and so on. This experience was repeated in many countries in the Arab world. The same goes for Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

It should not be forgotten, Mr. Speaker, though it does tend to be forgotten, that Madam Bandaranaike's relations with the United States of America were also very good, and that at a difficult time when the Cold War was at

freezing level. That is where I come back to my point about sincerity. To her nonalignment was an active policy and hence adherence to which required difficult decisions to be made. It is easy to be aligned because when you are aligned you merely follow what the leader says. When you are non-aligned you have to think out every issue that comes before you. And there are many examples of Madam Bandaranaike doing that; for instance, over the famous controversy over the U2 spy plane of the United States. There was a resolution in the UN General Assembly, condemning the United States. Mrs. Bandaranaike refused to support that resolution because she took the view that on that particular occasion, judging the issue on its merits, it did not deserve the condemnation of the United States of America. There were many examples like that, where she took sensible, practical decisions from day to day on matters of foreign policy, bearing in mind always this concept of non-alignment, of fairness, of justice, of trying to work out solutions on a practical and pragmatic basis.

Mr. Speaker, Madam Bandaranaike, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, was a very efficient administrator. There are people, senior diplomats, many still alive, who recall with great nostalgia her working methods. She was a person who read her files carefully. When she was Prime Minister she gave to the Foreign Ministry appointed hours for discussion and a certain schedule. A certain framework within which she would attend exclusively to foreign affairs. On those days when she was handling foreign affairs she would be methodical, well-read and decisive about matters in that field. She asked keen questions, she studied the memos. The diplomats who worked with her were full of praise for the way in which she led the Foreign Ministry. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Madam Bandaranaike had a keen sense of professionalism. It was she who decided that the career members of the Foreign Service must be given their due place. The Foreign Ministry is meant for career diplomats. They come in through a competitive examination of the highest order. They receive training, and they are the ones who are best equipped to represent the country abroad. She was a keen believer in that, and she was in fact the first Prime Minister to appoint a career diplomat as an Ambassador, as a Head of Mission. Now, respect for professionalism may seem obvious, but when one looks back at recent history one sees that that has not always been so. And that is why today, Mr. Speaker, even among the young people in the Ministry that I have the honour to lead, who never knew Mrs. Bandaranaike, her name is a legend, because it is associated with efficiency, with giving to foreign affairs due weight and seriousness and giving due respect to

Ministry and its officials. She is a model of what a Minister of Foreign Affairs ought to be. That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that I rise today to offer condolences not merely on my own behalf, but on behalf of the Ministry that I lead, and on behalf of a number of young people who did not have the privilege of knowing Mrs. Bandaranaike but who are inspired by her name and by what she did and what she left behind. And that is the best example of what a great legacy can do for the morale of those who have the privilege of inheriting it. So, for all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure, although this is a sad occasion, to say, on behalf of my Ministry and on behalf of a number of senior diplomats who would, I am sure, wish to hear me say this, who cannot say it themselves in this House, that we hold the name of Madam Bandaranaike in the highest possible honour in the realm of foreign affairs. Her contribution has been truly outstanding. It will be remembered, I think, for all time. It can be matched, may be, some day, but it can never be surpassed. In her time she had daunting problems to deal with. She not only did her best but she did in fact make by far the biggest contribution of any individual since independence towards putting Sri Lanka on the map.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, by a strange quirk of fate it so happens that you are in the Chair at this time when we offer condolences on the death of Mrs. Bandaranaike, the late Prime Minister. I would like to conclude, therefore, with my own personal condolences offered to you. I know that when one looks at rich legacy Madam Bandaranaike has bequeathed to the nation, the part that would perhaps interest you most is what she did for the foreign relations and the foreign policy of our country. Therefore, it is a particular privilege for me to be able to offer my own personal condolences to you sitting in that exalted position today to which the Hon. Members of the House unanimously elected you. It is trite, obvious may be, it may be a cliché to say this but I say it nevertheless; I am certain, as certain as I can be of anything, that Madam Bandaranaike, had she lived to see the great day when you were installed in the Speaker's Chair, would have been a proud person, not only a proud person but a very proud mother.

Thank you, Sir.

*Editors Note: This is the Speech made in Parliament by the Hon. Lakshman Kadirgamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Condolence Proceedings for the late Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike on 24 November, 2000.*



*Prime Minister*  
*Sirimawo Bandaranaike*  
*A Personal Memoir*

M.D.C. PIERIS

What was it like to work for the world's first woman prime minister whom I was privileged to serve first as assistant secretary from 1962 – 1965, and as secretary during her second term as prime minister during the period 1970 – 1977? My duties as assistant secretary was during her first term, when she chose to work from *Temple Trees*, the official residence rather than at her office at Senate Square, in Colombo Fort, later to be renamed Republic Square consequent to the promulgation of the First Republican Constitution in May 1972. During her second and longest stint as prime minister from 1970 onwards, she worked both at her office in Colombo Fort as well as at *Temple Trees*. Her official work was conducted at Republic Square while she used *Temple Trees* for her party, political and social events beginning early evening and going on even up to late dinner time. During the period 1962 – 1965 I worked mainly at the Senate Square office. But, when appointed to act for Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, the secretary, whenever he was overseas, I used to work at *Temple Trees*.

To answer the question with which I began above, I have to refer to Mrs. Bandaranaike's personality. Personalities are not static. They change and evolve. This was as true of Mrs. Bandaranaike as of anyone else. Her first administration consisted of the period in which she held no direct political office, in that she was not an elected Member of Parliament. She had given effective and charismatic leadership to her late husband's political party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) at the behest of that party's leaders and its key supporters. Upon the party's triumph at the polls, she was appointed to the second chamber, the Senate, and then made prime minister. According to those who knew her better than I at the time, she entered politics reluctantly and under much pressure from the

elders of the party that her husband had founded. Mr. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike's tragic death by assassination in September 1959 was a great shock to her, her family and indeed to the country as a whole. When the subsequent general election came around, she was still in mourning. In fact, during the entire period as prime minister during her first administration, she always wore a white sari and blouse, white being the colour of mourning in our culture. My recollection of Mrs. Bandaranaike during this period was of a person who was quiet, dignified and serious-minded. She also had a fine sense of humour which occasionally was on display. Contrary to the opinions of pundits from outside of Sri Lanka, an endemic species in our country, Mrs. Bandaranaike, new to running a government as she was, was dependent on nobody. The popular belief for some time was that her kinsman, the brilliant young minister of finance Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike ran the government. But this was far from true. The strong personality that she was, Mrs. Bandaranaike who possessed great self-confidence, could not be hustled nor intimidated. She valued the advice of bright and experienced persons, but ultimately she made the decisions. It would take time and effort to convince her. She was not a mere housewife as her political opponents lampooned her. Both before and after marriage, she was engaged in regular, volunteer social work. She held high office in the Lanka Mahila Samithi, the largest women's organization in Sri Lanka, with a considerable rural reach. It was also well known that many, including ministers and other senior politicians who came to discuss matters of party and state with Mr. Bandaranaike at his Rosmead Place residence, often had a discreet word with Mrs. Bandaranaike in the first instance before sitting down with the prime minister. Her parents were also leaders in their community and coming from such a background, she had inherited as well as acquired remarkable leadership qualities. There was also the experience she gained from living with her husband, a leading political figure in the country, Oxford-educated, erudite and intellectually formidable.

By the time she became prime minister for the second time in 1970, she had matured greatly. Her self-confidence had grown, and the death of her husband had become sufficiently distant not to affect her temperament to the extent it did in the early 1960s. In the intervening period between her two administrations, she had also stood for elections to the lower house of Parliament and easily won the seat she contested with a large majority. Her innate abilities were enhanced by the give and take of parliamentary debates, service on parliamentary committees and the overall rich experience of parliamentary life. Mr. Sam

Wijesinha, the respected and learned secretary-general of Parliament, who had a ringside view of parliamentary proceedings, once told me that the highlight of Parliament in the period between 1965 and 1970, was the visible growth in stature and maturity of Mrs. Bandaranaike then in the opposition benches; while the highlight between 1970 and 1977, was the comparable growth in stature and maturity of Mr. R. Premadasa, also in the opposition benches. He was to become prime minister and president later.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's maturity and strength were called into play on many occasions. One such signal event was the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurgency of 1971. It must be recalled that Sri Lanka at the time had not even a distant memory of an armed insurrection. Based on intelligence reports, certain preventive measures were put in place to quell a possible uprising. Despite these measures, however, the scale of the uprising and the resultant violence were unprecedented. The advantage of surprise was with the JVP. The attacks commenced in the early hours of the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1971. But prior to that, based on significant intelligence reports that an attack was imminent, the then commander of the Army, General Sepala Attygalle, made a personal appeal to Mrs. Bandaranaike to move out of her private residence at Rosmead Place to her more secure official residence at *Temple Trees*. But it was difficult to convince the prime minister of the necessity to move. She told the Army commander, "I am not leaving my home. You defend me here." I was present on this occasion since I had taken some official papers to her. So was her brother and private secretary, Dr. Mackie Ratwatte. It took considerable effort on the part of the Army commander and the two of us to persuade her to leave for *Temple Trees*. In retrospect, I am amazed by the fearlessness of her stance in a time of peril.

While directing operations from *Temple Trees* during this difficult period, she displayed the same calm authority. Meetings went on, one after another, until about midnight. She personally coordinated all important matters of state, civilian and military, including logistical issues pertaining to the functioning of ports, airports, road and passenger transport and food movements. In addition, she also oversaw matters related to the safe functioning of essential services such as electricity, water and telecommunications. My colleagues and I from the public service assisted her with ideas and helped her work out strategies to deal with any and every contingency. But the major decisions were hers; and when they were taken, there was no micro-management. There was follow-up, review and fire-fighting due to unforeseen circumstances, but there was no interference

in operational matters. Anyone who came to her with a problem walked away with a solution, thanks to the decisive nature of the prime minister. Alongside the efficient discharge of her official duties, she did not overlook her role as hostess at this trying time. Everyone who reported for duty was given food and refreshments and for most of them, this might have been the only food and drink that they would have had in a long time. Many, in fact, made do with only an occasional cup of tea for long hours.

There were other aspects to her personality which related specifically to her approach to work. She was conscientious, punctual and, as we discovered, had enormous reserves of stamina. One must bear in mind that during the period 1970 – 1977 in particular, she was not only the prime minister and chief executive of the country, but also the minister of defence and external affairs, the minister of planning and economic affairs and the minister of plan implementation. In addition, certain institutions such as the National Youth Council functioned under her. She was chairman of the Cabinet, and the political coalition consisting of the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP. In regard to her ministries, she worked with her secretaries in those ministries, Mr. W.T. Jayasinghe, defence and external affairs, Dr. H.A. de S Gunasekera, planning and Mr. V.A.J. Senararatne, plan implementation. But the prime minister's office was the central clearing house for all these operations and indeed for all government operations. Papers flowed in from all ministries and agencies, including her own ministries, because the secretary to the prime minister had greatest access to her. It was impractical even for her own ministry secretaries to see her too often. The arrangement, therefore, was that they met her only on those matters where it was considered that a personal discussion was very important. On all other matters, the secretary to the prime minister had to study all papers, reports coming directly from ambassadors and high commissioners, brief the prime minister, obtain decisions or in other instances, her signature and re-direct papers to the sending authority. Given the significant work load and the coordination of activity called for, the secretary had to spend an inordinate amount of time with the prime minister and resort to other relevant mechanisms to clear the load expeditiously.

In the interests of efficient management of time, in consultation with the prime minister, arrangements were made to get ready several lockable dispatch boxes, of which one key was held by the prime minister and the other, by her secretary. It became the practice very soon to send three to four box loads of paper to the prime minister daily, at *Temple Trees*. I usually dropped these off

myself on my way home from work, anytime between 7.00 and 9.00 p.m. My distinct recollection is that even at 9.00 p.m. or later, whenever I went to *Temple Trees*, the prime minister was still in the conference room chairing meetings. Presumably, therefore, she broke up for dinner, generally well past 10.00 p.m. I could not help but wonder when she found the time to attend to the dispatch boxes. For, by 9.00 a.m. next morning she had completed all the paper work and the boxes were duly returned to me. There were no postponements, no complaints.

The next matter I wish to advert to was her attitude to the public service and to public servants. In this she was most proper. In her office there was a clear dividing line between official duties pertaining to governance and other matters. All work relating to political, personal and social affairs were handled by the private secretary, additional private secretary and the coordinating secretary. All official matters of state were handled by the secretary and the assistant secretary who were both officers of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. The size of the establishment was quite small in relation to the bureaucratic proliferation that took place in later times. Mrs. Bandaranaike dealt with secretaries handling different subject areas separately. For instance, when we discussed official matters of state, only her secretary was present. Occasionally, some other relevant official was called in to elucidate a point or to have some responsibility entrusted to him. The secretary to the prime minister did not attend meetings of the cabinet unless called in for some specific purpose. Likewise, the secretary to the cabinet did not usually participate in discussions in the prime minister's office. These were the formal arrangements. But governments and organizations do not function on the basis of formal arrangements alone. Formal arrangements do bring about order and structure. They encourage discipline in channels of communication and procedures, so that up to a point, duplication, error and confusion are reduced. But for the machinery to function smoothly, informal contacts, personal rapport, mutual respect and friendship and trust are all necessary.

In this respect, I had excellent relations both with Mr. M.S. Alif, secretary to the cabinet and with Mr. W.T. Jayasinghe, secretary to the ministry of defence and external affairs. In Mr. Jayasinghe's case, the bond was further strengthened. by the prime minister insisting that we act for each other when either of us was away from the country. Therefore, during a seven year period, numerous were the occasions when Mr. Jayasinghe acted for me as secretary to the prime minister

in addition to his duties when I was abroad and *vice versa*. The prime minister, who was an observant and shrewd judge of character, would never have made these arrangements if she had any doubt as to the personal rapport between Mr. Jayasinghe and me. I have highlighted this point to demonstrate that whilst structure and formal arrangements are vitally necessary, yet, important appointments and decisions are not made on such bases alone. The human factor always plays a critically important role.

It would be important to indicate briefly how mutual respect, trust and rapport work in practice and their relation to the efficient and effective working of government. The cabinet secretary, the defence and external affairs secretary and I developed a practice of keeping each other informed of any relevant issues, which may be of use to the work of one or the other, as and when necessary. This proved to be very useful in our collective effort to serve the prime minister. For instance, I, who had to deal from time to time with individual ministers and their problems, did not have a perspective of ministers when they met as a collective in cabinet. Mr. Alif always used to keep me informed of developing trends in cabinet which he thought would be useful for my work. Based on this information, I remember instances where I had to adjust my thinking and decide on a different way to brief the prime minister. Likewise, I used to inform Mr. Alif of developments in the prime minister's thinking which I thought would be relevant to his duties. In the case of the defence and external affairs secretary, this interaction was even closer because both the prime minister's office and the ministry were operational offices, with one operational head, the prime minister. Therefore, the dividing line between the two establishments became at times, very thin, if not totally blurred. For instance, heads of state or government, or ambassadors or high commissioners based in Colombo sometimes addressed the prime minister in that capacity and not in the capacity of minister of external affairs. The diplomatic community did this generally on instruction from their governments. Such communications, both written and oral, were processed in the prime minister's office, even if the subject involved external affairs. Of course the external affairs ministry was brought in subsequently when follow-up action was called for. But there were occasions when a letter was so sensitive that it was not passed down but retained in the prime minister's office for action.

In all these matters, Mrs. Bandaranaike was bold and decisive. She would discuss issues and options, reflect on them, and use her judgement to respond in an expeditious manner. Her excellent memory also assisted her in dealing with

sensitive issues. She would clearly recall some matters which had transpired a few years earlier and when we double checked, we often found that her memory had served her well. This had the impact of inspiring her officials to sharpen their own memory powers.

The prime minister took care to observe the proprieties of the public service which in the 1970s, was much less politicized than it is now. The role of the senior public service at that time was principally to advise and to implement. The public servant proffered advice on the basis of his knowledge, experience and judgement. The fact that the public service as a body cannot stand completely aloof from political considerations, is emphasized in copious literature on the subject. Suffice it here to cite but one example from the vast number of good books available. In their book entitled, *Powers Behind the Prime Minister*, Denis Cavanagh and Anthony Seldon state as follows:

Civil servants and political advisers, to be effective policy-makers have to combine political sensitivity, administrative know-how and subject expertise. It is foolish to draw a rigid line between administration and politics... At the top of a department, administration is not an activity that is separate from politics nor is politics an activity separate from administration.

This is the reality of governance and the role of the public servant within it, a factor Mrs. Bandaranaike understood fully and appreciated. She would never ask her secretary or any other public servant to engage in any party political activity. To the extent politics impinged on administration it was confined to the formulation and implementation of government policies which were on the overall political agenda of the government, the political agenda at the time being statist. This was a time when the prevailing political philosophy in Britain and in much of the developing world was based on the belief that the commanding heights of the economy should be under state control. This was also the era of state corporations and statutory boards and in Britain the main industries were the nationalized ones. Hence one worked within this political framework which in our case was further strengthened by the presence of the left parties, the LSSP and the Communist Party, in cabinet.

But party politics was another matter. Here public servants had no role to play. In fact, the prime minister in distributing various papers and documents to



me would sometimes, in referring to a particular paper say, "please hand back that paper, for it deals with a political matter". The proprieties were duly observed and maintained. Government functioned on a reasonable basis of checks and balances then. Things have changed with the passage of time, though not necessarily for the better. So much so that at present we have arrived at a point where the politicians have encroached upon the territory of the public servant, whilst public servants have thought it fit to play politics. The unfortunate result has been to venerate personalities over institutions. One of the future challenges before Sri Lanka is to rebuild and strengthen institutions and moderate the excessive personal power arrogated to themselves by certain politicians.

Mrs. Bandaranaike proved to be outstanding in her role and capacity as minister of external affairs. She had a knack for foreign affairs and an abiding interest in it. She enjoyed handling the subject as anyone who worked with her in the ministry of external affairs will attest. Non-alignment was central to her vision. She saw it as the only way for developing countries to avoid getting dragged into the power struggles of big powers locked in diverse conflicts. Her foreign policy was therefore based on a careful consideration of the national interest in the context of non-alignment. She was not however, unaware of certain other international obligations. That is why she took the considerable risk of permitting a hijacked aircraft to land at Katunayake Airport for refuelling, when the prime minister of Malaysia made a fervent appeal to her. She took the view that there was an obligation to help a friendly country in dire need and that certain risks had to be taken in such a context. Whenever she travelled abroad, she was received and treated with great respect by her hosts. On the many occasions that I have travelled with her, I have been witness to this. When we travelled to Cairo in 1970 for President Nasser's funeral, for instance, the reception she received from the political figures of the Arab world was vividly indicative of the high esteem in which she was held. We could not even have our lunch without being interrupted every few minutes by prime ministers, deputy prime ministers, foreign ministers and various other important personalities wanting to greet and speak a few words with her. This situation resulted in our having to schedule evening meetings, after an early dinner, with many who wished to meet her. These meetings went on until 12.30 in the morning and, as we had to catch a flight leaving for Bombay at 5.00 a.m., we simply could not accommodate all requests. The last visitor to see her was Yasser Arafat.

I shall not write at length on foreign affairs, but I wish to end by placing

on record two experiences in relation to her conduct on foreign affairs. On our visit to the Soviet Union in November 1974 on the invitation of the Soviet government, we had two sessions of official talks with Prime Minister Kosygin and his team of advisers. The Soviet government had sent a special turbo-jet aircraft to Sri Lanka for the travel of the prime minister and her entourage to Moscow, and thereafter to Tbilis, Georgia, and return to Sri Lanka. Apart from issues relating to the general international situation, the thrust of the talks related to bilateral cooperation. The prime minister was keen to explore the possibility of obtaining Soviet aid for certain development projects. The discussions dragged on because she was trying to get the best terms possible. At one stage, Prime Minister Kosygin wagged a finger at her and said, "You are a hard lady". She smiled and replied, "If I am hard, it is for the sake of my country". The overall discussions were held in a very cordial atmosphere. This is only one interesting episode which throws some light on Mrs. Bandaranaike's character, her tenacity in particular.

The second episode which I wish to highlight occurred during the state visit to the Philippines in November 1976. President and Mrs. Marcos were caring congenial hosts. Outside of official meetings, they either simply or together spent much time with us at various functions and dinners. As is the normal practice, we used to prepare appropriate texts of speeches to be delivered by the prime minister at each formal occasion. But there was one occasion when President Marcos invited the prime minister and some of us to a small private dinner outside the official schedule. It was to be a relaxed affair in non-formal attire. The dinner itself, at some special club, was indeed a relaxed one with plenty of bonhomie and the sharing of interesting and amusing anecdotes. Suddenly, at the conclusion of the dinner, President Marcos stood up and delivered a short but interesting and witty speech. Caught unawares, the prime minister looked at me as if to say "what am I to do now?" I indicated with my eyes that she needed to speak. There was no choice. She stood up and delivered a light-hearted, humorous response with much of the humour directed at us, her officials. It was a remarkable impromptu response. When we got back to the Malacanang Palace where we were accommodated, I told the prime minister that barring formal speeches that impinge on government policy and diplomacy, I was not going to write any after-dinner speeches or speeches of an informal nature hereafter. I told her that she had proved that she could speak off the cuff quite competently and that she could well manage without our help on non-

formal events. Thereafter, with her secretary virtually on strike, she made some splendid informal addresses during the rest of her visit to the Philippines and elsewhere. A quiet confidence, determination, flexibility in non-formal settings and the ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances are in evidence here.

I trust that I have done justice in presenting to the reader, a clear portrayal of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. She was a humane, serious-minded, hard-working, dedicated and courteous person with a fine sense of humour. She was considerate at all times in her dealings with the public service and especially so to the officials who worked closely with her. She was a forthright and determined person, never ever intimidated by anyone she dealt with, no matter how formidable the personality and these qualities stood her in good stead in dealing with world leaders. Her officials could argue a point and disagree with her if the need for disagreement arose. Whenever she saw merit in a counter-argument, she either conceded the point or adjusted appropriately her thinking. She relied much on decision-making based on consensus most of the time. But, on occasion, like all leaders she could be stubborn and stick to her strong personal views. There is also the reality that political leaders do not always rely on logic alone in decision-making. Their intuition, experience and other political and personal factors guide their decision-making. This complexity of thought and outlook of political leaders is brought out trenchantly by Dr. Henry Kissinger writing about his experiences as secretary of state, during the Nixon years. In his book entitled *White House Years*, he refers to Nixon's outlook as follows:

Nixon's motives were mixed, as is always the case with political leaders. Only romantic outsiders believe that men who have prevailed in a hard struggle for power make decisions exclusively on the basis of analytical ideas.

The same goes for women too!

The literature is replete with similar observations about the nature and functions of political leadership. To advert to just one more example, I refer to Barbara Tuchman's book, *The March of Folly*, in which she comments at length on the subject. At one point she states:

Intelligent government would require that the persons entrusted with high office should formulate and execute policy according to

their best judgement, the best knowledge available and a judicious estimate of the lesser evil, but re-election is on their minds and that becomes the criteria.

Mrs. Bandaranaike was also subject to these same norms of political behaviour. But her strength was that she was prepared to argue as well as listen to an argument and many were the times when she did not permit political considerations or expediency alone to dominate her thinking. In illustration of this fact, let me cite the case of a senior and influential minister where she thought he had acted unjustly due to political considerations. When the minister told her in response that the issue concerned a UNP supporter, she angrily asked whether those who belong to the UNP were not citizens of this country. Such action on her part, involving other similar issues too, ultimately led to a serious rift with this minister. Consequently, the secretary to the prime minister and the secretary to the minister concerned had to engage in considerable damage control at the official level, to avoid a breakdown in the smooth flow of government business, until in the fullness of time the rift was healed.

There were factors in the prime minister's make-up which were quite common to all political leaders, but in effect could become weaknesses if allowed to remain unchallenged. She was at times prone to giving too much credence to the first to get to her in a disputed issue. I have found this to be the norm with most politicians holding high office. This is where a good support structure becomes quite important to ensure that the head of state is adequately prepared with advance analysis and countervailing arguments.

I thought that the prime minister was too harsh at times with her ministers, particularly in relation to their foreign travel. One could readily appreciate her concern at a time when foreign exchange was quite scarce as was the case in the 1970s. But there were occasions when even a single day's delay in the return of a minister from abroad attracted, what I considered to be, inordinate attention on the prime minister's part. Therefore I told her, "Madam, you are like the principal of a school, pursuing a bunch of errant pupils". My intention was to get her to reflect a little on this matter and my words were meant to embarrass her somewhat. But it had a wholly different effect. She was very pleased with my remark, and regarded it as a great compliment!

On the basis of my close association with Mrs. Bandaranaike and other senior political personages, I have found that the general public perception of

political leaders often tend to be distorted. My experience is that most politicians are, in the main, decent and reasonable individuals to work with. Images of politicians are a mix of several factors, an important and a decisive factor in this regard being the role of the media. An excerpt from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's memoirs, *The Path to Power*, sheds light on the latter factor:

Once a politician is given a public image by the media, it is almost impossible for him to shed it. At every important stage of his career, it steps between him and the public so that the people seem to see and hear, not the man himself, but the invented personality to which he has been reduced.

Since this is a personal memoir, I would like to end on a personal note, going public on a personal experience. Our only child was to be married in September 1997. I was at the tail end of my career in the public service, having just three months to go before retiring. Mrs. Bandaranaike was prime minister once again in the government of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, her daughter. She was now feeble and had an acute problem with one of her legs, which seriously restricted her movements. She had to use a wheelchair from time to time.

I obtained an appointment and went to see her at her Rosmead Place residence, accompanied by my son and daughter-in-law to be, in order to hand over the wedding invitation and to invite her to sign the register as a witness. When I saw her looking feeble, with the bandaged bad leg stretched out on a footstool, I told her that quite apart from signing as a witness, she should not even think of attending the wedding. Over snacks and a drink, we had a very pleasant conversation. She was interested in my son's educational career and in the job he was doing. When we got up to leave, and before I could say anything, she said, "I will come to the wedding and sign. If I cannot walk, I will come in my wheelchair". This is exactly what she did on that day in September 1997 at the Galle Face Hotel. She was wheeled in, she signed, and soon thereafter went back home. It must have taken her a great deal of time, in her condition, to dress for the occasion, in order to spend a few minutes to discharge a duty she felt she owed me.

Just this one episode would suffice, I think, to underline her personality and character and indeed the quality of person that she was.

*Sirimavo Bandaranaike*  
*Her Role In Economic Affairs*

LEELANANDA DE SILVA

## INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike (Mrs. B), was Prime Minister and Head of Government for twelve years from 1960 to 1965, and 1970 to 1977. During her first period, in addition to being the Prime Minister she was also the Minister of Defence and External Affairs. In the period between 1970 to 1977, she had the additional function of being the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs. In the latter period, Mrs. B was more actively engaged in economic issues than in the former. She was concerned primarily with the major trends in the economy and did not micro-manage departments and ministries for which she had allocated responsibilities to other cabinet ministers. There were little prime ministerial interventions in other ministries unless they were of major significance and brought up in cabinet. Many have raised the issue whether Mrs. B was a socialist as she headed left-of-centre governments. The words of the Anglo-Polish philosopher Lesjek Kolakowski, perhaps describes Mrs. Bandaranaike's position accurately. He defined socialism as "an obstinate will to erode by inches the conditions which produce avoidable suffering". That was Mrs. B's aim always. I worked with her from 1970 to 1977, and my primary role was to assist her in the management of international economic relations. What I propose to record in this essay is not a comprehensive analysis of the economic policies of the two Sirima Bandaranaike-led governments. That would require a large volume which might be written by a future economic historian. My intention here is to offer an idiosyncratic view of my experience in working with her on economic issues.

## TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE

To a contemporary observer, the economic policies that Mrs. B pursued during the 1960s and 1970s, when she was at the helm of government, would seem dated. It is hence necessary to underscore the fact that the regional and global economic scene then was vastly different from that of today. The dominant economic philosophy then prevalent, and supported by institutions like the United Nations, called for significant state engagement in socio-economic development. The state was seen as the central actor in development. State intervention in the economy was hence the norm in the developing world. It was only by the late 1970s that the latter pattern changed and changed dramatically. Thus globalization, the predominant feature of the economic scene today, did not figure in Mrs. B's era. The remittance economy which is currently of great significance in bringing foreign currency into the country was not a feature of the 1970s, fixed exchange rates being the order of the day.

When looking back at Mrs. B's performance as Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs in the context of her time, we have to take into consideration the priorities of the Parliamentary and cabinet governments that then prevailed in Sri Lanka. The economic policies of the time were formulated, not in isolation, but through a process that called for a consensus within the Cabinet and in close consultation with the Ministry of Finance. Although, on occasion, she played an assertive role in decision-making, the economic policies of her government were a collective and not individual effort. Another important consideration is the fact that the latter part of her first term and most of her second term were when she worked with a number of coalition partners with varying socio-economic views and approaches. And these political parties who were her partners did not necessarily always agree with her economic views and perceptions. Accordingly, compromises had to be made and were made. Hence the circumstances and the political ethos that prevailed in Mrs. B's time were strikingly different from and so unlike those of today's Presidential form of government. Mrs. B did not have the kind of unfettered power to formulate economic policies that she considered appropriate that the executive today has. It was a Cabinet-led and collegial form of government that Mrs. B presided over, where her Cabinet colleagues had significant authority to develop their own agendas for the ministries they headed.



In the 1970 -1977 period, in her additional capacity as Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA), Mrs. B was more in control of the agenda and discussions in Cabinet than she was in her first term. The agenda of cabinet meetings now dealt more and more with economic issues. The MPEA received every paper that was submitted to cabinet and the minister was expected to comment on them. Mrs. B authorized and entrusted to the MPEA the responsibility of examining these cabinet papers carefully and to submit to her a brief note on key issues to be discussed at cabinet meetings, usually scheduled for Wednesdays of each week. As the senior assistant secretary and director, economic affairs of the MPEA, I was given the task of preparing the latter note. The prime minister presided over the weekly meetings of the MPEA on Mondays and she used these meetings to prepare herself for the weekly cabinet meetings on the Wednesday following. These weekly meetings of the MPEA were crisp and well organized and much sober argument and debate took place within them. In all of these MPEA meetings Prof. H.A.de S Gunasekere, the permanent secretary of the ministry and Dr. Ananda Meegama, the director-general played key roles especially on advice given to the minister on domestic economic issues.

#### DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES

Committed as she was to financial and monetary stability, Mrs. B looked upon inflation with a wary eye. Most of the inflationary pressures at the time arose from external sources as a result of rising prices of imported goods and services, especially of food and oil. The early 1970s were marked by severe food and oil-related crises and Mrs. B made valiant efforts to cope with them, both in the domestic and external contexts. Declining terms of trade for Sri Lankan commodities was a major concern at the time and she anxiously pursued action to seek international consensus on the issue. By and large, she left the management of the economy to the ministry of finance and the central bank, whilst asserting her role as minister of planning and economic affairs whenever the occasion demanded that she do so. As I played a role and was witness to all of the instances when Mrs. B asserted herself as minister, I should like to highlight some of these instances.

A major act on the social and economic front during the second Sirima

Bandaranaike government was land reform. The insurgency of 1971 was interpreted by the government at the time as a call, among other things, for economic relief through land reform. The UN/ILO Mission headed by Dudley Seers that visited Sri Lanka in 1971 suggested the same prescription (and it was an intriguing coincidence that Mrs. B was notified of the violent insurgency while she was presiding over a meeting with the Seers Mission at *Temple Trees*, which had to be abandoned).

There were many unintended consequences that arose from the policy of land reform of the 1970 – 1977 government, one of which was the elimination of most of the traditional land-owning classes from the political arena of Sri Lanka. Mrs. B herself was one of the “victims” of this policy of land reform. She and her family had to hand over to the government substantial extents of land they owned. No other head of government of Sri Lanka made this kind of personal sacrifice.

A significant aspect of the takeover of tea and rubber estates under the Land Reform Act was the nationalization of the sterling companies. There were over a hundred such British-owned companies holding around 125,000 acres of land. Mrs. B was anxious that the issue of compensation to these sterling companies be settled as a matter of urgency in the interests of maintaining the cordial and friendly relations between Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. I recall in this context her meeting with Harold Wilson, then prime minister of the UK, who indicated to Mrs. B that he did not care much whether the estates were taken over or not, so long as the shareholders of these estates were paid appropriate compensation. Mrs. B wanted the MPEA to handle the compensation issue under her personal guidance. The committee appointed to handle the matter of payment of compensation was headed by Prof. H.A.de S Gunasekere and included those from several other government agencies. I was myself a member and served as secretary of this committee. I do not wish here to go into the manifold details of negotiations between the governments of Sri Lanka and the UK regarding this important matter. Suffice it to say that it was resolved amicably and to the satisfaction of both governments. Sri Lanka was called upon to pay a little over 4 million pounds over a period of four years and the price paid per acre was thus 42 pounds. This was a most advantageous settlement of a vexed issue which had, until then, impeded investment in and growth of the tea industry.

Another issue that preoccupied Mrs. B was that of the ‘brain drain’.

Middle-class professionals of Sri Lanka were leaving the country in significant numbers and restrictions placed by government to contain this phenomenon were of no avail. She appointed a cabinet committee headed by minister Maithripala Senanayake to look into the issue. The task of servicing and assisting this ministerial committee was entrusted to the MPEA. The outcome was a consensus report which recommended the implementation of a more liberal approach to the policy of restrictions placed on professionals going abroad, encouraging them to do so for briefer spells of time. Agreeing with the committee recommendation, Mrs. B pointed out that 'brain drain' was not a problem confined to Sri Lanka alone but to the whole of the developing world. She requested me to prepare a paper along these lines to be presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting scheduled to be held in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1975. The paper contained a proposal to the effect that the countries benefitting from the migration of qualified professionals should, at least partially, compensate the 'donor' countries by the provision of facilities to these latter countries to increase the number of professionals produced by them.

Mrs. B and Prof. H. A. De S Gunasekera were anxious to remodel the MPEA, originally a creation of the 1965 UNP government, to relate it to the concerns of the common man. Accordingly were created within the MPEA, a new employment division to focus on employment generation, a division for regional development, and planning offices in every Kachcheri in every district. This was the first time that planning in Sri Lanka was taken down to the regional level. The regional development division initiated many projects at the divisional level as social and economic experiments. The MPEA also created a Planning Service along the lines of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service to recruit economists to serve the ministry and its district divisional outposts. Thus the MPEA underwent a sea-change during the 1970-1977 period and all the newly introduced measures had the strong support and endorsement of Mrs. B, the minister in charge. Whilst the MPEA remained conscious of and concerned with its international responsibilities as ever, it was now more closely attuned to domestic and grass roots concerns. Mrs. B also set the MPEA sights on expansion and further development of exports. She was of the view that sufficient attention had not been paid to the promotion of Sri Lankan exports and to the development of more sophisticated products for key overseas markets. In order to facilitate these activities, she established the Export Development Board within the MPEA.

## INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

During her second term during the 1970 – 1977 period, Mrs. B embarked on an activist foreign policy, unusual in the annals of foreign policy of Sri Lanka then or since. Mrs. B wanted Sri Lanka to be a central actor in international diplomacy and she used to the maximum resources available to her through such international institutions as the Non – Aligned Movement (NAM), the Group of 77 and the Commonwealth. Sri Lanka played a key role in all of the above institutions and within the United Nations. The years 1970 – 1977 were also those in which North – South negotiations were at their peak which resulted in the call for a New International Economic Order. International trade in commodities was a central feature in these negotiations, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) emerged at this time as the most influential of UN bodies in facilitating these negotiations. Both as Chairman-in-Waiting initially and later as Chairman of NAM, Mrs. B and Sri Lanka, were in the thick of these UN activities. It is largely due to Mrs. B's and Sri Lanka's role that Dr. Gamani Corea of Sri Lanka was appointed secretary-general of UNCTAD in 1973. She did her utmost to ensure that Dr. Corea's term of office was extended beyond 1976 by speaking personally on the matter to UN secretary-general Kurt Waldheim in New York. I am aware of this fact as I was with her when she did so at a reception hosted in her honour by Mr. Waldheim.

One of Mrs. B's primary objectives in engaging in active international diplomacy was to secure economic advantages for Sri Lanka at a difficult time. She did not confine her foreign policy to international politics alone for she was keen to incorporate a strong economic dimension into Sri Lanka's foreign policy. As Mrs. B was prime minister, minister of defense and external affairs and minister of planning and economic affairs, she was ideally placed to merge these two strands of international politics and economic development in the conduct of foreign policy. She saw to it that the economic affairs division of the MPEA worked closely with the ministry of foreign affairs on international economic issues, whether it was in bilateral discussions with other countries or in negotiations within multilateral bodies such as NAM, the G-77 or the UN. This arrangement for close collaboration between the two ministries --

planning and economic affairs and foreign affairs-- was greatly facilitated by the strong support of Messrs M.D.D. Peiris, secretary to the prime minister, W.T. Jayasinghe, permanent secretary, ministry of foreign affairs, and Arthur Basnayake, the director-general in the foreign office.

The 29<sup>th</sup> annual sessions of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) --the body now known as UN ESCAP located in Bangkok-- was held in Colombo in March 1974. This was the first ever international conference to be held at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), and Mrs. B's inaugural address at it, contained two important proposals: The first of these was for the establishment of a World Fertilizer Fund to channel fertilizer aid to developing countries and the other was for the establishment of an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). At this time there was a severe crisis in fertilizer supply due to the steep rise in oil prices. She wanted her proposal for a world fertilizer fund initiated at ECAP 1974 to be followed up at the World Food Conference scheduled to be held in Rome later that year, and still later at the UN.

Mrs. B's proposal was duly followed up at the World Food Conference in Rome and it resulted in a joint Sri Lanka - New Zealand sponsored resolution in the United Nations General Assembly for the establishment of an International Fertilizer Supply Scheme (IFSS). The IFSS was subsequently established within the FAO, but it failed to gather momentum due primarily to pressures from the multinational fertilizer corporations.

Mrs. B's second proposal for the establishment of IFAD was primarily for the purposes of financing irrigation development. Sri Lanka's proposal for the setting up of IFAD was the first document submitted to the preparatory committee for the establishment of IFAD which convened in Rome, and is to be found among the records of that preparatory committee meeting. IFAD indeed was established subsequently, but not in the manner envisaged in Mrs. B's proposal. IFAD, as it came to be, was given a broader mandate of general agricultural development and not confined to irrigation development as urged in Mrs. B's proposal. However, these two proposals of Mrs. B made at the ECAFE 1974, led to a period of intense diplomacy by Sri Lanka at UN and FAO-related bodies. It was as a direct outcome of her active engagement in the broad field of agriculture in international economic relations that Mrs. B was awarded the prestigious CERES medal by the FAO.

The Fifth NAM Summit was held in Colombo in August 1976, and at it

Mrs. B was appointed as Chairman of NAM. Her instructions to the MPEA and to the officials of the ministry of foreign affairs were to introduce a strong economic dimension to the NAM deliberations. For, being as mindful of the varied economic issues hampering developing countries at the time as she was, Mrs. B was most anxious not to confine the NAM summit exclusively to the consideration of the vexed political issues of the day. Thus she saw to it that the Economic Committee of the NAM received as much importance as the Political Committee. In her inaugural address to the fifth summit, Mrs. B proposed that a Third World Commercial and Merchant Bank be established, a proposal that was to be followed up by UNCTAD. With the change of government in Sri Lanka in 1977, however, this proposal was abandoned.

Another incident to illustrate Mrs. B's interest in the economic dimension of international relations is worthy of record and I hasten to do so. This time around her desire to reflect domestic economic concerns in discussions at the NAM summit, she asked me to showcase the pioneering work in the field of pharmaceuticals initiated by Senaka Bibile, professor of pharmacology at the University of Peradeniya. Prof. Bibile's outstanding work in helping to develop and promote cost-effective drugs policies, particularly in relation to the wider use of generic drugs, had been adopted by Sri Lanka. Although such policies as pioneered by Prof. Bibile is conventional wisdom today, it was revolutionary and path-breaking in the mid-1970s. Mrs. B, who knew Prof. Bibile personally, requested me to include the professor in the Sri Lanka delegation and to utilize his professional knowledge as relevant in the work of the economic committee of which I was a member. Thanks largely to the spade work done by Prof. Bibile at Mrs. B's instigation, it was possible for the summit to adopt a key resolution on pharmaceutical policies in the third world.

Mrs. Bandaranaike made many visits overseas for bilateral discussions with her counterparts. In all these visits, she was determined to obtain economic benefits for Sri Lanka. When she visited Iraq in 1973, she persuaded her host and the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to give Sri Lanka the petroleum it desperately needed on highly favourable terms. The visit to Iraq also led her to appoint a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Cooperation with the Middle-East under the purview of the MPEA. Her visits to some of the Asian countries also yielded similar results. On visits to Japan and the Philippines she laid great stress on economic aid. No issue was insignificant for her. When she went to the Philippines, she brought up the issue of desiccated coconut with President

Marcos. Sri Lanka and the Philippines were principal exporters of desiccated coconut at this time and the world prices for this commodity were in decline. She asked for President Marcos' assistance to find a mutually satisfactory way out so that both exporter- countries might benefit from a joint strategy. On the margins of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kingston, Jamaica, Mrs. B met the then Vice-President (later President) Arap Moi. She broached with him subject of concerted action by Sri Lanka and Kenya, on tea exports and tea prices. Arising from that conversation was a proposal by Sri Lanka for the establishment of an Organization of Tea Exporting Countries, yet another proposal that was shelved after the change of government in 1977.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mrs. Bandaranaike was one of the significant political leaders of the twentieth century. Her greatest strength was her sincerity and personal charm that enabled her to make valuable connections with other political leaders she came into contact with. Although not a professional economist, she had strong economic common sense. She did not see an unbridgeable gap between politics and economics and she was ever acutely aware of the economic dimension of political management. This was as true for her in the domestic as well as international contexts. Hence her constant efforts to integrate political and economic issues in foreign policy. Through the conspicuous emphasis she laid on economic issues in the UN and NAM she endeavoured to foster greater international cooperation than might have been possible if these two world bodies were left to engage exclusively on the raging political controversies of the day. My abiding memory is of her fine sense of humour that was on display even when she was dealing with serious and complex political and economic issues. Furthermore, she was even alert to the foibles and eccentricities of the officials and diplomats she came into contact with.

*Mrs. Bandaranaike  
in Parliament*

SAM WIJESINHA



It is generally assumed that Mrs. Bandaranaike entered politics on the death of her husband, by succeeding him as Prime Minister. This was not actually the case. On the sudden death of Mr S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in September 1959, Mr. W. Dahanayake succeeded him as Prime Minister. His tenure however lasted only until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1959, for he could not get on with his colleagues and the government fell.

The subsequent General Election was held, for the very first time, on a single day. Election speeches were allowed on the radio and postal voting introduced. Flags, banners and other propaganda material were not allowed in public places and there was to be no private transportation of voters. When we see the enormous election - related expenditure today, we get the feeling that it is essential to re-introduce and re-enforce such restrictions.

The Delimitation Commission appointed in February 1959 had recommended a Parliament of 151 Members, an increase from the earlier 101. About 25 members of the Government formed in 1956 were no more in Parliament at its dissolution in 1959. Prime Minister Dahanayake had fallen out with the Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP), the principal component to office in 1956. It was Mr. C. P. de Silva who had in fact been the next senior in line to Mr. Bandaranaike in the SLFP, but he was overseas at the time of the leader's assassination and thus overlooked for succession. Now as the new President of the SLFP, he led the party in the March 1960 general election, an election at which 22 different parties entered the fray.

As the election campaign was hotting up, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike was persuaded to join it. She did so and exhorted the people to vote for the SLFP

to ensure the continuation of the political principles of her late husband.

In the new Parliament of 151 members, the United National Party (UNP) obtained the most seats, 50, but not sufficient to form a stable government. Under the leadership of Mr. C.P. de Silva, the SLFP secured 46 seats.

Mr Dudley Senanayake who led the UNP was called upon by the Governor - General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke to form a government. He did so, and went on to have the first sitting of Parliament during which the election for the post of Speaker was held. The government nominee for Speaker was defeated by a majority of 33 votes.

When the debate on the throne speech took place, it was presided over by the new speaker, the victorious nominee of the Opposition, Mr. T. B. Subasinghe. An opposition amendment to the main motion relating to the Throne Speech was carried by 86 to 61 votes, thereby defeating the main motion. The result of this defeat on amendment was the resignation of the government of Mr. Dudley Senanayake and a fresh general election was scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 1960.

Meanwhile, given the extraordinary goodwill that Mrs. Bandaranaike had generated and received, Mr. C. P. de Silva resigned and Mrs. Bandaranaike was unanimously elected President of the SLFP.

The SLFP duly won the second general election of 1961 and, though she herself had not contested, Mrs. Bandaranaike was called upon by the Governor-General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke to take oaths as Prime Minister. She did so on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1960, and thus became the first woman in the world to assume such office. As she had not stood for election to the House of Representatives, she was nominated to the Senate as the first and only Prime Minister of Sri Lanka who did not sit in the House.

Although unencumbered by high learning, Mrs. Bandaranaike possessed ample common sense and high integrity -- character traits that stood her in good stead on her elevation to the high office she now held. Additionally, Mrs. Bandaranaike was tenacious, purposeful, gritty, had an eye and ear for essentials and possessed steely determination - qualities that sustained her and served the nation well in the next near four decades despite the ordeals and reversals she suffered post-1977.

Mrs. Bandaranaike also possessed a quality somewhat rare in a political personality, sincerity, that unique quality to which leaders she came into contact with responded warmly.

As Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike made her first speech on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1961. She spoke on the Throne Speech when it came before the Senate, and she emphasized that her political journey would be on the middle path, and she would lean neither to left nor right. She dealt in her speech with questions of nationalization and education and the press and referred, too, to the concept of national service, in making clear that her government would steer forward the policies of the late prime minister, her husband. One of her singular contributions to debate was in November 1961 when she spoke on the Government intention to introduce a national system of education, which seemed then the wisest course to adopt, when there was no need to multiply divisions in this country, but rather to secure harmony and cooperation among the various people and remove from their minds any fear of their views being belittled.

Unaccustomed though she was to the problems of high politics, she understood the seriousness of the Sino-Indian border dispute that erupted in 1961, and also its relevance to Sri Lanka. Two of our most important senior and respected friends were engaged in a potentially devastating war. Her ability to get quickly to the heart of a problem and to act decisively was shown in her convening a meeting of the leading countries of the young Non-Aligned Movement. Five countries, viz. Burma, Cambodia, Egypt, Ghana and Indonesia met in Colombo under the leadership of Sri Lanka. Mrs. Bandaranaike was appointed to go to India and to China to ensure that the problem did not lead to protracted war. It has to be accepted that Mrs. Bandaranaike's initiative substantially ensured that the problem subsided and that relations between these two leaders of Asia improved considerably. Given current developments, we can reflect with pride on the action Mrs. Bandaranaike took then and how it laid down the principle of engagement and discussion to avoid protracted hostility.

At the height of the Cold War, when the countries around us felt the dangers of getting caught up in what was potentially a conflict between the USA and the USSR, it was Mrs. Bandaranaike who suggested that a Peace Zone be created in the Indian Ocean.

To Mrs. Bandaranaike, non-alignment was not an avenue of escape from the real world. It was an active policy. When you are non-aligned, you have to face every issue that comes before you on your own initiative. She took sensible, practical and wise decisions on foreign policy issues while being always mindful

of the concept of non-alignment, along with a commitment to fairness and justice, and also understanding of the need to work out solutions on a practical and pragmatic basis.

Her crowning achievement was the Non-Alignment Summit of 1976. It was the first diplomatic occasion which put Sri Lanka on the map of the political world. Almost all the leaders of the non-aligned world came here. Mrs. Bandaranaike presided over that conference with distinction. Ever since Sri Lanka has been held in high respect among the nations of the world and, even if subsequent events created difficulties for this country in terms of big power politics, Mrs. Bandaranaike is widely remembered with gratitude.

She faced many challenges during her two stints as head of government. Most notable perhaps was the attempted coup of 1962, when several senior army officers and other members of the security forces tried to take over the government. Fortunately, the plot was detected in time, and laid bare through some brilliant cross-examination of the suspects by Felix Dias Bandaranaike, a youthful kinsman of her husband who joined her first cabinet and continued a trusted ally until his untimely death in the early eighties.

Whilst the investigation of the coup was professionally done, the case against the conspirators was mishandled. Instead of proceeding with the ordinary laws, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1962 the Minister of Justice, Hon. Sam P. C. Fernando, acting under Section 440 of the Criminal Procedure Code as amended by Act No.1 of 1962, issued a direction to the Hon. Chief Justice that the trial of 24 named persons, in respect of offences punishable under Section 115 of the Penal Code as amended by Section 6.(2) of the same Act.No.1 of 1962, be held by three Judges without a Jury. In a second direction by the Minister to the Chief Justice, it was stated that in pursuance of Section 9 of Act. No.1 of 1962 he nominated three Judges of the Supreme Court to be the Judges at a Trial-at-Bar, namely:

- (1) The Hon. T. S. Fernando, C.B.E., Q.C.
- (2) The Hon. L. B. de Silva
- (3) The Hon. P. Sri Skanda Rajah

After a trial of several weeks, an Order was made by the Bench on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1962 that Act. No.1 of 1962 (Section 8) empowering the Minister

of Justice to set up a Trial-at-Bar without a jury was “intra vires”. However it was added that Section 9, which confers on the Minister the power to nominate Judges, is an interference with the judicial powers of the State vested in the Judges of the Supreme Court which had been hitherto invariably exercised by the judiciary. These powers were not to be reposed in anyone outside the judiciary and therefore Section 9 of Act No.1 of 1962 was declared “ultra vires” of the constitution.

The Judges stated further that what had been done offended that cardinal principle in the administration of justice which was restated by Lord Howard, viz “It is not merely of some importance but is of fundamental importance that justice should not only be done, but should manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done. Nothing is to be done which creates even a suspicion that there has been an improper interference with the course of justice.”

Thereafter on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 1962, Parliament enacted Criminal Law Act 31 of 1962 which was designed to meet the difficulty arising by reason of the order of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1962 made by the first Bench.

One week later the Attorney General filed a second Information under Act 31 of 1962 whereupon the Chief Justice Hon. H. H. Basnayake nominated a new Bench of Supreme Court Judges –

- (1) Hon. M. C. Sansoni, C.J. (President)
- (2) Hon. H.N.G. Fernando, S.P.J.
- (3) Hon. L. B. de Silva

The Trial proper commenced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1963. The judgement was delivered on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1965. It is reported on pages 193 to 424 of Vol.67 of the *New Law Reports*. Ultimately 11 of the accused were convicted and each of them was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment which was the minimum stipulated in the special ex-post-facto law under which the Trial-at-Bar was held.

Concluding the reading of the judgement, the President Justice Sansoni drew attention to the fact that the Act of 1962 radically altered the punishment to which the defendants were liable. It removed the discretion of the Bench and compelled them to impose a term of 10 years and also compulsory forfeiture of property. He said, “We are unable to understand this discrimination. The

proved conspiracy would have been punishable under other Sections of the Penal Code. We do not depend on the (ex-post facto) amendment.”

The 11 convicted defendants appealed to the Privy Council and five Judges heard the appeal. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1965, they delivered the judgement in which Lord Pearce stated, “If Acts as these (he referred to Act. No. 1 of 1962) were valid, the judicial power could be wholly absorbed by the legislature and taken out of the hands of the judges. It is appreciated that the Legislature had no such intention. It was beset by a grave situation and it took grave measures to deal with it. What is done once, if it be allowed, may be done again in a lesser crisis and in lesser serious circumstances and thus judicial power may be eroded. Such an erosion is contrary to the clear intention of the Constitution.” In their Lordships’ view the acts were ultra vires and invalid. The appeals were allowed and the conviction quashed.

That was the greatest trial Mrs. Bandaranaike experienced in her first Parliament. Throughout she was unruffled and calm whilst the lawyers around her took charge of the situation. On reflection, one cannot resist the temptation to say that, if the accused had been tried through the normal course without resorting to special laws only applicable to this particular trial, the facts may have had a normal result. Meanwhile the Minister of Justice had resigned in 1963 following the strictures of his Supreme Court. His successor Mr. A.B. Perera died soon afterwards and was followed by Mr. G. C. T. A. de Silva.

Ironically, Mrs. Bandaranaike had no remedy when she herself was tried and convicted and punished through retrospective legislation that laid down severe minimum punishments. In her case the interference of the government in the judiciary was more obviously malign, in that when the Appeals Court found against the proceedings of government, it promptly rushed through legislation to render the Appeals Court powerless.

Among major problems Mrs. Bandaranaike faced in her first term in office was that which occurred in 1964 during her first effort to pass the Ceylon Press Bill. She was overcome there initially by a sleight of hand that could be described as legal strictly speaking, but which was contrary to usual Parliamentary practice.

What happened was that the Bill had been passed in the Senate. When this happens, it is first presented with a message to the House of Representatives, whereupon the second reading has to be fixed on a date “not being less than five clear days after the giving of that notice (Standing Order 77)”. When this Bill was presented to the House, its Leader, Minister Michael de Z. Siriwardena,

when asked by the Speaker as to when the Second Reading was to be, replied as was usual, "Tomorrow". Meanwhile Lakshman Rajapakse MP handed over to the officiating Clerk of the House, Mr. Ralph Deraniyagala a notice that the Bill be taken up for second reading on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1965. It was signed by the MP for Puttalam also. There then followed an argument as to when this Press Bill will be taken for second reading which means for debate. After hearing arguments from both sides the Speaker Hugh Fernando suspended sittings.

On resuming, he read out his order concluding that "Under the strict interpretation of Standing Order 77, the notice given by the Hon. Minister of Labour (M. de Z. Siriwardena) is inadequate and does not amount to full sponsorship of the Bill as contemplated by Standing Order No.77. The notice that is handed over to the Clerk by the Hon Members for Puttalam and Hambantota complies with the requirements of Standing Order No.77." He therefore ruled that the bill would have to be taken up four months later.

With this success for the efforts of the Opposition to delay the Press Bill for a long period, the Government ended that fifth session of Parliament and started a sixth session of Parliament on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1964. When the vote on the Throne Speech was taken on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, the Government was defeated by one vote on an amendment proposed by Hon. W Dahanayake. Parliament was thereupon dissolved and a new election fixed for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 1965.

Meanwhile those Members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament who were out of the country on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December when the vote on the Throne Speech was taken, and others who could not be present though in the country, tried to persuade Mrs. Bandaranaike not to resign but to ask for a vote of confidence instead, on the grounds that she continued to command a majority in the House. But she refused to make such an attempt to stay on in power and instead faced the next election as a candidate for the SLFP, with the cooperation of the CP and the LSSP. This was the first time that the vote was extended to include everyone over 18.

The main reason for the defeat of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government was the fear about the Press Bill, ably whipped up by the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, which was the main group targeted by her efforts to nationalize the press. The opposition was joined by 14 members of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government to ensure her defeat. However her popularity was not substantially

affected by the events and the interpretation of them by the press. She won her own Attanagalla seat with a majority of 16,525 votes, a substantial figure in those days, and the UNP was unable to get a majority although it became the largest single party, and had to cobble together a coalition.

Sometime early in Mrs. Bandaranaike's career in the House, as Leader of the Opposition after the election of 1965, there appeared in the Order Book of Parliament a question from the Member of Parliament for Kolonne, Nanda Mathew, regarding the gift of a motor car by the Ceylon Insurance Company to Mrs. Bandaranaike when she was Prime Minister. The question was disallowed as no question can be asked involving a fellow Member of Parliament, but the then government pushed the point and instead the House agreed to a motion that a Select Committee of the House investigate and report on the alleged gift.

The Select Committee chaired by the Hon. J. R. Jayawardena with seven other MPs nominated by the Speaker held 6 meetings. As Clerk to the House I made sure that all salient evidence was available, including the minutes of meetings of the Insurance Company. The Committee thus discovered that, on a request made in April 1960 to Messrs. Rowlands Ltd. Colombo by the Secretary, Ceylon Insurance Co. Ltd., a car valued at Rs.19,935.00 was duly delivered to the President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (Mrs. Sirimavo D. Bandaranaike) and was registered in her name. However it also appeared that the decision to give the car to Mrs. Bandaranaike was taken by Mr. Justin Kotalawala, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Company, who was also a Director of Middleways Publications Ltd., a subsidiary company and the advertising agent of the Ceylon Insurance Company.

The car it seemed was for the use, not of Mrs. Bandaranaike, but of Mr. Dharmasiri Kuruppu, the Editor and Manager of the "Sinhale" newspaper, the official journal of the SLFP. After the car was given to Mr. Kuruppu, the advertising income of "Sinhale" newspapers increased and all the revenue was channelled through Middleways. Mrs. Bandaranaike herself knew of this transaction only after Mr. Dharmasiri Kuruppu came to her and boasted that he had been able to persuade Mr. Kotalawala to give him a car for the use of the Editor. She declared that, "Till then, I knew nothing about it."

It was Mr. Kotalawala who had suggested the car be registered in her name, for it transpired that he had telephoned Mrs. Bandaranaike and told her, "I do not know how long the Editor will be with you. You may sack him, or he may leave you, he can then take the car away. But if I register the car in your name,



the car will still be there with the "Sinhale".

Mrs. Bandaranaike did not agree with this proposal at once. She consulted the Minister of Justice, Mr. Sam P. C. Fernando, and on his advice she agreed to have the car registered in her name as the President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The Committee stated that it could find no evidence that the car was given to influence the head of the government in favour of the Ceylon Insurance Co. Ltd. or any other matter connected with insurance. The original questions on the Order Paper may not have given Mrs. Bandaranaike a chance to get this matter explained in this way.

Mrs. Bandaranaike led the SLFP in the 1970 elections, together with the CP and the LSSP, in terms of a formal agreement with them that had been made in 1968. The election results announced on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1970 revealed that the 3 parties that had united under this pact obtained 115 seats out of 168, while the UNP got just 17. However, the partners had got only 2,415,322 votes altogether, which meant they got a seat for every 21,000 votes polled, whereas the UNP with 1,876,756 votes had to earn over 110,000 votes per seat. This is one of the reasons that led to the UNP constitution of 1977 introducing proportional representation, a remedy that has however led to different maladies.

Back in power the new government of Mrs. Bandaranaike resumed where they had been forced to leave off in 1964 and introduced another Press Bill, through which they did successfully take over the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited or Lake House, as it is popularly known. Meanwhile a new Constitution had been promulgated in 1972 after the massive mandate received in 1970.

A novel feature in the new Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka was a Constitutional Court. Proposed legislation when in Bill form could be referred to this Court for a decision as to its legality. Once accepted, it could not be challenged in subsequent proceedings. The task of the Constitutional Court was to give its decision to the Speaker within 14 days.

In the case of the Press Bill, the Constitutional Court failed to give its decision within the 14 days as stipulated. The issue before the Speaker was whether he could allow the second reading of the Bill without a decision from the Constitutional Court on the matters referred to it. The government appeared keen to take up the matter without the opinion of the Constitutional Court. But the Speaker ruled that the further course of the Bill must await the determination that had to be duly made in terms of Section 59 of the

Constitution.

On this pronouncement by the Speaker, Dr. N. M. Perera said, "I understand from your ruling that we cannot proceed with the Second Reading of the Bill at this stage. All I am saying is I do not accept your Ruling. I intend to move that the Ruling be not accepted, that this House has no confidence in you as Speaker." At this stage Mr. J. R. Jayewardene asked, "Is that a decision of the Government or of the Minister of Finance?" Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike said, "Not of the Government!" That was the end of the matter that day.

Mrs. Bandaranaike speaking during the Budget debate in November 1995 said, "I have had something very important to refer to for sometime. This is the sixth Parliament I am in. I have a right and duty to say this. I have been shocked at the behaviour of our Members recently. This is the legislature of our country. The people send us to Parliament. They want us to solve their problems and not to fight inside, sometimes using filthy language. We forget that the people are watching us. Specially children from the galleries. When we are undisciplined in the House, can we expect the children in schools or the students in the universities to behave properly? Even the Members here are not allowed to speak, they are shouted down. That is one of the reasons I have not been coming here often. We have to maintain the dignity of this House, not come to Parliament to enjoy the perks we get. Let us all resolve to behave ourselves better."

Fifty years after Mrs. Bandaranaike first entered politics we should remember her words, and hope that she will be an inspiration to future generations too.

*The World's First Woman*  
*Prime Minister*  
*A Tribute*

BRADMAN WEERAKOON

I had an early opportunity of appreciating the many faceted character of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. It was when I worked for Mr. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike in the Prime Minister's office during his stewardship of the country as the fourth Prime Minister of independent Ceylon. This extended from the general elections of April 1956, right up to the fateful day, the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1959, when he was assassinated.

During that period I saw Mrs. Bandaranaike as the archetypal spouse of the committed and ever-busy political leader. She was, at the time, the devoted mother of her three children, running a demanding and sometimes even chaotic household with a firm hand, performing her role as hostess to a string of visiting world statesmen in a charming, graceful and completely natural manner. Even after the assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike virtually before her eyes, the grief – stricken widow, bewildered at first by the tragic turn of events, continued resolutely thereafter to do all she could to preserve his name and ideals for posterity.

During his lifetime she had developed an understanding with her husband which allowed him to indulge in his political pursuits with unhindered concern for the domestic needs of a typical well-to-do Colombo household. She played no visible role in his political activities but it was rumoured she had strong views on several current issues which she expressed around the family breakfast table with conviction. She shared his frustrations at being sidelined by the then U.N.P hierarchy and his joy at his eventual triumph in the elections of 1956. She appeared to me to be, at most times, a loyal supporter of his twin policy of socialism, which she interpreted as putting people first, coupled with a strong

sense of national pride, a loyalty to things local, and a sensitivity to the cultural heritage of the country. I was convinced from the beginning that her way of life was centered around the basic human value of honesty, the ethic of hard work, the need for discipline and unpretentious public behaviour. I had observed that she disliked adulation, had no time for flattery, and was always refined and dignified in speech. In her looks and ways she was to me the embodiment of the best of Ceylonese womanhood.

In 1960, possibly after a period of intense introspection when she balanced the challenge of the then turbulent political world, with the satisfaction which would come with the fulfillment of her late husband's unfinished business and mission, she decided albeit reluctantly to come into politics. It was a critical decision for herself, her family, her Party and the country. She came to power after a gruelling campaign in which her opponents spared no effort to weaken her resolve. She brought with her no university degree, parliamentary experience or administrative knowledge. Her opponents' cynicism at her relative inexperience, ridicule at the thought of a woman (more comfortable at the kitchen hearth than at the head of a Cabinet of Ministers) and plain undiluted slander of her character, could not make the slightest difference to her.

She faced the hostility to her on her campaign trail with a determination and courage at which even her foes could scarce forbear to cheer. The people, most notably the women, responded magnificently and Sri Lanka was to have the world's first-ever woman prime minister. Sirimavo Bandaranaike had made the global headlines and Ceylon too, for many decades to come, shared in the honour and glory. Once the breach, in what had been a bastion of male dominance was made, other women followed. But the magic of being first was ours and all of Sri Lanka exulted.

For a while the world wondered as to how this phenomenon of a woman being chosen to be prime minister, had occurred in Ceylon. Was it some peculiar provision of dynastic succession by which the wife succeeded to a vacancy caused by the death of a husband? Could such a thing only occur in an Asian country? Was it, as uncharitable opponents would say, a consequence of the enormous wave of sympathy that followed close on the tragic death of a popular leader? Was the phenomenon connected with the 'primacy of motherhood' (*matba*) - so central a part of the culture of the Indian sub-continent?

The election of a woman head of government was so unusual, that the world's newspapers weren't sure what to call her. "There will be need for a new

word. Presumably, we shall have to call her a Stateswoman," London's *Evening News* wrote stuffily on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1960. "This is the suffragette's dream come true", said another.

As she had often said, there was one overriding purpose in her coming into politics. She knew she had many sacrifices to make but her sole motivation was the completion of the visionary work her husband had begun. This is how she put it:

I am not seeking power for myself. I have come forward to help the S.L.F.P candidates so that the Party can continue the policy of my late husband.

When she realized that without her as leader, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party would never form a stable government she took over the leadership of the party and demonstrated her fighting qualities and determination.

The fact that she was a woman in addition to being the Prime Minister of a country manifested itself in several ways.

Early on in her premiership she articulated thus on her role:

I feel most strongly the home is a woman's foremost place of work and influence, and, looking after her children and husband, duties of the highest importance. But women also have their vital role in civic life, they owe a duty to their country, a duty which cannot, must not be shirked.

The other part of her femininity was her public personae, the way she presented herself as a woman prime minister to the world. This too was done in a completely natural and authentic way. For her, there was no place in it for pretense or dramatization. Take the clothes she wore, for example. Her choice of colour and accompaniments appeared always impeccable. She was never overdressed and nor was she ever overly adorned with finery and trinkets. She had no special hairdresser or adviser on dress, and her personal entourage on State visits abroad, was usually, only her younger sister, who was the perfect chaperon and assistant. The accoutrements - earrings, bracelets, necklaces and so on she wore with her gracefully draped Kandyan saree, were locally made and of the highest quality. Her preference for the local product, above any expensive foreign one, was brought out forcefully when she was abroad, especially at the many official lunches and dinners she hosted with such acceptance.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's attitude to work and official files was a matter that I found remarkable in one relatively unschooled in the ways of politics and political decision making. Yet, her judgement, based on pragmatism and sound commonsense free of ideology, was invariably correct. In the context of the times and the country's place in the world, she instinctively seemed to do the right thing, whether it was strengthening our bonds with the Soviet Union and China or settling with neighbouring India the long-drawn-out problem of statelessness of a large number of our people. I think she actually looked forward to her meetings with the world's leaders and they in turn were full of admiration for this Asian woman who was teaching all of them new ways of diplomatic behaviour.

I believed that her skill in leadership came from a family background and culture which instinctively trained a person to lead. She came from an upper-class Kandyan family with a long feudal background and had had a grooming from childhood for working with people and for people. Social service came naturally to her. It was almost a case of *noblesse oblige* as in the training of the European nobility in feudal times.

I believe that, without any doubt, history will record with admiration her distinctive contribution to the making of modern Sri Lanka. I personally carry the thought that she herself would want to be seen and judged by the extent to which she was able to move forward the vision of Mr Bandaranaike -- the Four Freedoms (freedom from Ignorance, Ill-health, Want and Fear) that he had articulated so forcefully at the dawn of our nation's independence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1948. In this context, her resolution of the 'Indian Question', her management of the 'Welfare State' in a situation of extreme external turbulence, her leadership of the non-aligned movement and furtherance of Afro-Asian solidarity, and her constitutional reforms of 1972 that ended the umbilical cord of connection to the former imperial power, must be seen as outstanding and enduring mileposts in the evolution of her husband's dream for 21<sup>st</sup> century Sri Lanka.

*An Indian Tribute*

GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI



July 2010 marked 50 years since the world beheld its first woman prime minister. I was about 14 and knew but little of Ceylon when I read the banner story 'Bandaranaike shot'. 'Will he live?' was the first question that crossed my teenage mind gripped by the description of the outrage and of the stricken prime minister rushing in from the verandah of his home, calling out "Sirima, Sirima!" That must have been the first time the world outside of the island really heard of her. India had seen her visiting with her husband. Prime Minister Nehru, ever the one to take a watchful host's interest in the families of visiting heads of government and State, must have warmed to this traditional Kandyan woman and her three children, beside the westernised prime minister of Ceylon.

Speaking in chiselled English, Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike ('SWRD') soared with his words and ideas. In contrast, she was very much on and off the ground. When reports from Colombo suggested that the sudden vacuum created by SWRD's succumbing to the attack may get to be filled by none other than the demure 44-year-old Sirimavo Bandaranaike, there was surprise. How would she manage? At that stage in her life Sirimavo was what wives of prime ministers are taken to be -- non-persons to be greeted and spoken to in thought-free courtesy and then, duty done, forgotten. But soon, a patronising appreciation replaced the earlier surprised scepticism.

The new PM was conducting herself at discussions with ease, if also with modesty; her English was plain but effective, her thinking sharp, her grasp of 'hard' issues sharper, and she was 'growing into her office' remarkably well and fast. Sirimavo discovered the prime minister in herself and invented herself in the prime minister. Where she made an early and acknowledged mark

was in her clear realisation that in governance, in diplomacy and in the many dimensions of political leadership, the surest guide is one's own instinct. To Sirimavo Bandaranaike also belongs the credit of consolidating something that had been 'started' earlier by Dudley Senanayake, namely, the principle of a next of kin succeeding a leader in political office. Outside of monarchic arrangements, a leadership vacuum being filled by a next of kin amid acclaim, and then legitimised in free and fair elections, is and will remain a Sirimavo accomplishment and a Sirimavo contribution to the dynamics of political succession in South Asia.

Few could have anticipated Sirimavo's role in the Asia of 1962 and in the non-aligned world. After China announced a ceasefire on the Sino-Indian border, a settlement of the border question could have been expected to come; it did not. Indeed, it could not, given the circumstances. Sirimavo, just over two years' old in prime ministership, invited the governments of five other non-aligned countries -- Burma, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia and the United Arab Republic -- for a discussion on the situation. A set of 'Colombo Proposals' emerged, which India accepted, establishing the PM of Ceylon on the Asian stage, with intercontinental salience.

Bilaterally, India saw Sirimavo take up with verve the question of Ceylon's 'Stateless' Tamils of Indian origin. The issue pertaining to these hard-working men and women on the island's tea and rubber plantations had defied solution for years, with Nehru saying that they "are or should be citizens of Ceylon". In 1964, discussions between Sirimavo and India's new PM Lal Bahadur Shastri led to a policy change culminating in the Sirima-Shastri Agreement. This agreement divided that population between the (smaller) number that Ceylon would accept and the (larger) number that would be repatriated to India, the fate of the balance to be decided on a later date. Who stays and who leaves was to be determined by choice -- in theory, a voluntary exercise.

But with the 'quotas' determined and the stayers' quota quickly over-subscribed, the agreement lost its voluntarism and became a *fait accompli* for the plantation workers, with the stayers feeling relieved and the leavers bewildered by the abyss of uncertainty ahead. The Sirimavo-Shastri Agreement was compounded the following decade by a Sirimavo-Indira Agreement in which the 'residuarities' were shared half-and-half between India and Sri Lanka, in another diplomatic accomplishment for Sirimavo. These two agreements, and the decisions on the islet of Kachchativu, showed the world's first woman PM

handling negotiations with her Indian counterparts (both newer than her in prime ministership) with the confidence of a 'senior' PM albeit of the 'smaller' neighbour. Size is one thing, strength another.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike lost office around the same time as Indira Gandhi did in 1977, in a democratic corrective to Emergency Rule. Sirimavo then had her civil rights taken away by President Jayewardene, seen by many as Prime Minister Morarji Desai's Lankan equivalent. But the very populace that had voted Sirimavo out, disapproved of that extreme 'punishment' and returned her to power.

Which reminds me that Sirimavo had a striking head and a strikingly broad forehead. And her face, prime ministerial or not, one could not pass by without feeling, 'What an unusual person'. Shortly after assuming duties as High Commissioner for India in September 2000, I called on her in her Rosmead Place residence, the same house SWRD had been assassinated in. She was physically weak. But the stroke she had suffered hadn't got the better of her mind. Her forehead glowed, her voice though soft, had a resonance to it. "How is Delhi?" she asked. The question could have meant many things. And then turning to the Indian High Commissioner's house in Colombo -- India House -- she said, "Large house, lovely garden." I asked her to visit. "Will be glad to do so," she said. But that was not to be.

On October 10, less than a month after my calling on her, she was gone. It was a polling day. She was returning home after casting her vote in Horagolla when she took ill and was given treatment in a small medical centre that happened to be on the way. But it was too late. I reached the house as the lifeless form was being brought in. It was significant (I told the family) that a person whose voting rights had been taken away should have ended her career as a democratically-elected leader, just after casting her vote. "With voters' ink fresh on her finger," Sunethra, her eldest-born, added poignantly. "She was no ordinary woman," said the younger daughter, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. Sirimavo's and SWRD's only son, Anura, came straight from electioneering, crushed.

Sirimavo had, barely a few hours earlier voted in the constituency he was contesting from, but from a party that was not hers. Such is democracy. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was no ordinary woman. But this wasn't just because she was the world's first woman prime minister.

*A Civil Servant  
Gives Account*

*This Excerpt From An Essay By  
Tilak E. Gooneratne  
Is Selected And Introduced  
By His Granddaughter,  
Sunila Galappatti*

I was given the task of choosing for this book an excerpt from an informal memoir that my grandfather, Tilak E. Gooneratne, wrote in his retirement, about his years working for Mrs. Bandaranaike as a senior civil servant and Ambassador. Reading the essay now, when I can no longer ask him to distil his own account, I have sought to find a passage that best conveys what I remember of his loyalty to Mrs. Bandaranaike and his belief in her leadership. I find myself choosing the episode on which he was most questioned, both in his official capacity at the time, and later looking back at its legacy. My grandfather was quick to express his support for his Prime Minister's choices, both with considered conviction and with a lawyer's drive to win the argument. In his own words:

For my part I feel I can do no better than to introduce you to Sri Lanka through the policies and the personality of our Prime Minister Mrs Sirima R D Bandaranaike who...can be said, without fear of contradiction, to be a genuine embodiment of the best womanhood of Sri Lanka and a true representative of the culture and way of life of our country.

I appreciate that you may regard what I say as the observations of a dutiful Ambassador but I do not mind if you do, as I know you will be going soon to Sri Lanka and you will find, when you get there that there is that freedom of movement, freedom of expression and lively criticism, which will enable you individually

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and collectively to check for yourself the reliability of what you hear today, provided you are careful in running through with a fine tooth comb not only what I say but also what you hear in Sri Lanka, for we are so individualistic in our country that we truly live up to the words of the Latin tag *quot homines tot sententiae*. I shall translate this for the benefit of economists who have no use for Latin: 'There are as many opinions as there are persons in Sri Lanka'.

*Taken from a transcript of a lecture to staff and postgraduate students of the Faculty of Economics of Amsterdam University, on 15 September 1976*

Sunila Galappatti

FROM *Mrs Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike, First Woman Prime Minister in the World, As I Knew Her* by Tilak E Gooneratne (c.1998)

In March 1971 an insurrection broke out in the interior of the Sinhalese districts in the country and spread rapidly to the coastal areas. The rebels were led by a young man who had been a student in Moscow and consisted largely of educated but unemployed young men and women, who were impatient with the failure of Government to improve their lot. They resorted to violence, attacking police stations, killing officers and men and stealing guns and ammunition. The rebels used Marxist slogans but found no popular support. Yet they were able to terrorise people as they killed anyone standing in their way. The Government was taken by surprise and ill equipped to deal with island wide revolt. Waves of terror swept the country. No one was safe. Law and order had broken down. The movement was called the Janatha Vimuktiya Peramuna (J.V.P). Ministers and officials were in a panic and the army was hesitant to move. A civil service colleague told me that when the army appeared to be losing its nerve, the Prime had said that she was a descendant of Mahawalatenna, the Kandyan chief who had died carrying the Kandyan flag, when he was shot by the British in the Uva rebellion. However bad the situation, she said she would fight till the rebels were defeated.

It was believed that the armed forces and the police had been infiltrated. Ministers panicked and, fearing assassinations in their homes, rushed to *Temple Trees*, the Prime Minister's official residence, for security. She instructed my civil service colleague and former Deputy Controller of Immigration and Emigration, Nissanka Wijeyeratne, to look after them. He wrote an amusing letter to me in London stating that observing these Ministers he understood better how 'aspens quiver'. The Prime Minister appealed for arms and support from abroad and we representatives were asked to give this work the highest priority. Most governments, like those of China, the UK, France, Germany, Canada, the US and the USSR responded immediately with arms and equipment, while India and Pakistan did the same and in addition sent troops to Ceylon to guard airports and sensitive areas. It was the first time that such a wide range of countries had responded to a county seeking help in a civil war. The Prime Minister ordered the rebels to surrender and, when they did not, launched an all out offensive. The insurgency was crushed but the rebels had

come virtually unchecked within 20 miles of the capital. I recalled a line from a poem in Latin by Horace, which was so apt to portray the Prime Minister in this crisis: '*Si fractus, illabatur orbis impavidum [am]ferient ruinae*'; 'if the world was to crash, its ruins would strike him [her] unappalled.'

This was the first insurrection in modern Ceylon and many had been killed or wounded. Mrs. Bandaranaike had come out unscathed in this second baptism of fire as Prime Minister, but Ceylon was destined for much worse to come. She deserves credit for the speed with which she ended the revolt whereas her successor could not cope with a similar insurgency and had to plead, when law and order broke down for several years, *inter arma leges silent*.

Living in London away from these happenings was not to understand them fully. I recalled a prediction made in 1947 by my father in law, the late Mr .Edmund Rodrigo, a senior Ceylon civil servant at the time. He told me that he was sure in about 1971 an insurrection of educated but unemployed youth would arise, as the thousands of them, products of free education, found that Government could not find them jobs. He was a very brilliant man and I was amazed he proved so prophetic.

The JVP revolt was a severe blow to the Prime Minister. Her children were abroad, and there were fears that the rebels planned to assassinate Anura in London. Even Fidel Castro warned the Prime Minister of a risk and offered to keep her son in Cuba to protect him. Ceylonese nationals in France offered similar help for their own ends, saying that London was not safe. Mrs. Bandaranaike, however, was satisfied I had secured adequate protection from the British Government for Sunethra and Anura in London. Her children's concerns were different: Sunethra, and more particularly Chandrika, were critical of the way she acted against the insurgents but Mrs. Bandaranaike maintained her sense of humour and said she would take my post if they went home and faced the music. She appreciated the help given by the British Government which I was glad to convey to them.

When the Prime Minister visited London I accompanied her to meet Harold Wilson and later Edward Heath and Sir Alex Douglas Hume. Heath thanked her for her expression of thanks for the aid given to Sri Lanka. I attended the dinner he gave in her honour. I was, however, amused by the British Government's choice of evening entertainment as we were taken to a show of 'The Merry Widow'. Perhaps someone in the Foreign Office had a mischievous sense of humour.



The insurgency attracted very wide publicity in the United Kingdom press: it was publicised as evidence that the former Colonies were unfit to rule, after gaining independence from Britain. The newspapers were full of grossly exaggerated stories of dead bodies floating down the river at Kelaniya in the Colombo District. Much of my time was spent in countering these stories. To help me in my efforts, the Prime Minister arranged to ask Dr. Colvin R De Silva, Minister of Justice, to visit London and the Commonwealth journal arranged a well publicised luncheon meeting at which he would make an address on the revolt in Ceylon. However as it happened the situation in Ceylon had further deteriorated and he had to return directly after a meeting in Italy. I asked for a postponement of the meeting but was told this was not possible as the luncheon was to commence in an hour, and that I should deputise for the Minister. When I did I found a packed audience waiting as the revolt was headline news in London and the insurgents were pictured as being involved in a heroic liberation struggle. There were many critics of the Government in the audience but I was given an undisturbed hearing. When I finished it was question time and I was given a hard time defending the Government. There was a single voice in support. It was that of Noel Gratiaen, QC, a former Supreme Court Judge and nominated MP in Ceylon, who was living in London and practising before the Privy Council. He said that he had been looking forward to hearing Colvin, a leading lawyer and friend, but having listened to me he was glad Colvin had not come. It was a most generous and spontaneous gesture. He added that this was not a time for carping criticism but to rally national and international support for the country. The Commonwealth gave full coverage to the meeting in its journal that helped me to counter the criticism. I sent the article to the Prime Minister, who wrote me a personal letter of thanks which was typical of her.

[...]

When Mrs. Bandaranaike came to London she stayed with us at the official residence. She was such a charming guest and without any airs of office, which never sat heavily upon her. She and my late wife were really drawn to each other as they were both very sincere and uncomplicated persons.

[....]

She had confided in my wife that the army chiefs had panicked during the

insurgency but she had realised there was no alternative but to fight to the bitter end though she was deeply distressed to attack the misguided youth of the country, many of whom were wounded or killed in the counter-attack.

When the insurgency was over Mrs. Bandaranaike sent me a long and warm letter penned in her own hand, which I treasure, thanking me for the trouble I had taken to get the British Government to protect Sunethra and Anura and the relief this had given her. That letter was typical of her. While she was engaged in a deadly struggle on behalf of the nation she had little time to think of her children but once it was over she took time not only to convey her thanks to me, but to express a mother's concern for her children. I also treasure a long letter written in her own hand to my late wife, expressing her feelings for the victims of the insurgency and her compassion for the misguided youth.

*Here follows the letter mentioned above, from Mrs. Bandaranaike to Mrs. Pamela-Jean Gooneratne.*

Prime Minister  
Ceylon

15-8-71

Dear Mrs Gooneratne,

I am sorry I couldn't write to you earlier to thank you for the lovely handbag and saree you had sent through Lakshmi. The delay in writing you will understand was due to pressure of work. Today being Sunday and a fairly free day for me I am taking the opportunity to attend to some of my personal correspondence, which I always prefer to do myself. Hence this letter to you.

I am happy to learn that people in Britain too (except of course those who are anti-our Government, and particularly anti-Bandaranaike, who will never like to acknowledge anything good that we do) appreciate the manner in which we handled the recent crisis. It was a situation that no previous Prime Minister of Ceylon had to face. It was an extremely delicate situation. We had to fight our own people and our youth at that. This is why we had to deal with the situation very tactfully. Some are blaming us for calling for surrenders, instead of shooting them all. How could we have done that and how many thousands are we to kill. And these are our own people. Others are blaming and even accusing us and carrying on a terrific campaign against us both here and abroad, for shooting any at all, which our Police and Armed Services had to do in self-defence and in defence of the country. If they had not done that, probably many of us would not have been alive to tell the tale. So you will realise what a situation we were placed in. We were fighting a civil war. Anyway, thank God it's over at least for the present. Now it's the mopping operations we have to do.

Of course we are left with a huge problem. Apart from repairing the damage done by these insurgents to public and private property, we have 14,000 insurgents in captivity. A few thousand of them will have to stand trial: those who were directly involved in killing and manufacturing bombs etc., and the

leaders for treason against the state. Still we will be left with about 1000 for rehabilitating. This is a big problem. It would be dangerous to release them without trying to rehabilitate them. They will go back and try their pranks again. We as a Government cannot expose the masses again to the violence and brutalities that the innocent villagers went through in April. A Government's duty is to protect the peace loving people and maintain law and order. If these bloodthirsty and irresponsible set of fellows succeeded you can imagine the type of Government this country would have had. The people had a taste of it in some areas that they – the insurgents – were in control of, for a few days in April, till we recaptured them.

I am sure even those who do not like the Bandaranaiques and hate the idea of our being at the helm of affairs would not have liked a Government headed by the type of irresponsible and bloodthirsty chaps who were even prepared to kill their parents to achieve their objectives. If the so-called liberators of the people want to change the Government they have a simple opportunity to do so through democratic means. This country has changed Governments through the ballot several times. If the people do not like the Bandaranaiques they have ample opportunity to do so at an election. I am aware that there are some even among those holding high office under our Government who pretend to be loyal to us but inwardly detest us, who say that the Bandaranaike era is over. If that is the wish of the majority of the people in this country, we shall be very happy to accept their decision. I have never asked for power. I was compelled to accept the leadership by the people, because they had no faith or trust in their leaders, some of them who had been struggling for over 30 years. If the vast mass of the people preferred an amateur like me, and a woman at that, to seasoned and so-called mature political leaders, what can I do. Anyway, it was evident from the way that people reacted during the crisis, that the vast mass of people of this country are not ready to tolerate anyone who tries to capture power by force. So my duty is by the people who stood firmly behind the Government and placed their full confidence in me. The day the masses who placed their confidence and trust in me indicate to me that they have lost faith in me or my leadership, I bow out gracefully. I am not ambitious to cling to power at any cost.

You have said that several British and Ceylonese friends indicated to you that they would be prepared to help Ceylon. Well this is the time that they come to our country's assistance. The Ceylonese who are holding very lucrative positions abroad can help Ceylon by sending a percentage of their earnings to

Ceylon. It can be deposited in their accounts here and they will earn F.E.E.Cs on it. But they will be helping us to overcome the foreign exchange situation, while helping themselves to save for the future. If you can organise it will be useful. And British friends could help by contributing in kind or cash towards the Rehabilitation scheme which is going to be a terrific drain on our economy. We need all the assistance of all Ceylon's friends now.

Have you seen Sunethra recently? I am worried about her living there without settling down to doing something. She can't continue leading that type of life for long. I believe she is trying to get a suitable job.

Trust you are all in the best of health. By the way, how is your mother? Please convey my regards to her.

With my kindest regards to you all,

Yours sincerely,

*Sirima R.D. Bandaranaike*

*Madame Sirimavo*  
*R.D. Bandaranaike*  
*Her Advocacy Of Women's Rights*  
*Nationally And Globally*

MANEL ABEYSEKERA

The significant impact of Madam Bandaranaike's advocacy of women's rights was both implicit, in her persona in which femininity, motherhood and empowerment were synthesized, and explicit, in her words and actions.

When she became the prime minister of Ceylon and hence the world's first woman head of government, she automatically became an icon for the empowerment of women, nearly a decade and a half before the United Nations invited her to be the keynote speaker at its first World Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico. Nothing daunted, she took her role and position in her stride, as if she were "to the manner born", compelling her people and the rest of her world to accept her as such.

Prior to becoming the prime minister of Ceylon she had appeared before the public only as a mere appendage, the wife of S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, initially, a minister in the government of Ceylon and later, the prime minister. However even during these years of semi-obscure, she had begun, purely as a matter of interest and choice, to interact with the wider community. She was particularly interested in the empowerment of women and, through her involvement with the Lanka Mahila Samithi, encouraged rural women to enhance their potential as wage-earners, through the development of skills.

The manner in which she coped with the sudden and tragic demise of her husband, Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike at the hands of an assassin, was proof of her mettle. Her personal grief notwithstanding, she rose to the occasion, discharging her duties both to her home and to her country, with the kind of balance and fortitude that is peculiar to women alone. Her years on the margins of power had given her self knowledge and a recognition of her

strengths – that she could think for herself, act according to her convictions and thereby contribute to the well-being of society, whilst still retaining her femininity and womanliness. Thus, without in any way compromising her position as head of state, she tempered this role with touches of the feminine – girliness, womanliness and motherliness. This holistic and practical approach made her role appealing to women from all walks of life.

Her sharp intelligence enabled her to comprehend and absorb all aspects of an issue in public life and take quick decisions and action whenever they were warranted. This ability to think and act with speed and efficiency is a quality that women acquire in their homes when called upon to soothe, comfort and feed their hungry, unwashed or crying offspring. In such a context, a woman seldom has the luxury of procrastination, so much so that I am tempted to change the old adage to read ‘time and tide wait for no woman!’ Thus I would attribute Mrs. Bandaranaike’s ability to think and act speedily, both in the public and private domains, to the training she received in her home as wife and mother.

Another way in which her feminine nature helped Mrs. Bandaranaike in public life, was in the aspect of time management. She, in addition to being premier, held three portfolios – that of defence, foreign affairs and planning. This meant that she had to juggle her time in such a manner that she could pay due and necessary attention to all matters pertaining to these several ministries. Time management is something women from all walks of life learn to do, as a matter of course, in handling the manifold and varied affairs of the home. The demands of time management become even more complex in the case of women who work outside the home and who need to balance the demands of home and workplace.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> Non- Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, held in Colombo in 1976, her decisive nature and the ability to guide and control affairs, became very apparent. She appointed a director-general to supervise and direct the officials in their individual areas of responsibility; and later, based on the reports submitted to her by each official, personally monitored and guided the decision-making of the entire organizing committee. As a result, the 5<sup>th</sup> NAM Summit, with 92 Heads of State/Government present, was one of the best-organized NAM Summits, if not the best.

Mrs. Bandaranaike held the strong conviction that women’s rights were a necessary prerequisite for overall peace and harmony. Peace and harmony, she believed were intrinsically linked, indivisible and founded on natural justice.



She stated that women should not merely strive for a niche in society but should be acknowledged as an integral part of it. The recognition of this truth could not be treated as a sequential matter waiting on other areas of development, as a woman's right to equality is a human right. She believed that the denial of equal rights to women was a blemish on the face of civilization and it was in this spirit that she aligned herself with women the world over, in their bid for equal rights and the freedom to realize their fullest potential.

Her demand for women's rights did not fail to take into account the ground realities. She was acutely aware of the complexity of socio-economic diversity and uneven development, intra-country as well as inter-country, and thus advocated adaptation and partnership as opposed to a rigid concept of equality. She realized only too well, that one solution may not be good for all, or as the World Bank phrased it, 'one shoe size may not fit all'.

I would like to illustrate her views from her Address to the UN First Conference on Women:

- The end of all effort, development and struggle is for a life of peace and harmony. Peace and harmony are indivisible and they have to be manifest at every level of social and communal life. This starts with the home which is the very basis of the fabric of society. It is from the home that peace and harmony can permeate the community and country and eventually all of the human family.
- I have also not lost sight of the fact that the central premise of our present deliberations is that poverty, unemployment, disease and ignorance can be removed through development only on the basis of equal partnership between men and women. I subscribe to this view. But I cannot accept a rigid definition of equality irrespective of the political, social, cultural and economic climate of each society.
- Complementarity of female and male can perhaps offer an alternative to the rigid concept of equality.
- We might profitably remember that it is adaptation that we

seek because adaptation is the governing principle of any organism that endures.

- I do not see this conference as the culmination of three decades of united endeavour by the human family to secure a niche in society for women, as women do not need a niche for they are an integral part of society.
- The choice of role must be the woman's.
- We cannot tell ourselves that the changes in regard to the status of women must wait till we have achieved some degree of economic stability and self-reliance. We cannot take these problems in a sequence which relegates the problem of women to a future when conditions are socially or economically favourable. The process of development in our countries is too complex for such a sequential approach to be successful.
- What we are witnessing now is a genuine and pragmatic attempt to harmonise three hitherto separate pursuits of the international community: issues of fundamental human rights, the objective of the first and second Development Decades and the Disarmament Decade.
- I am however encouraged by the thought that the rationale for this conference, as for all such exchanges, is the sharing of experiences of nations and to fashion from them the highest common denominator of universal goals.
- Theirs [women's] is but the single goal of attaining true equality with men in all spheres of life.... This goal is founded on natural justice and its denial anywhere is a blemish on the totality of human civilization.
- It is in this spirit of solidarity with the struggle of women all over the world for a recognition of their rights and their potential that I associate myself.

On her return from the conference, to which I accompanied her as chief of protocol, she asked me to give her my views on any possible follow-up action we should take for the advancement of women. This showed not only her interest in women's rights, but a facet of her personality, that is rare among most leaders. I recommended three projects for a start:

- [1] The establishment of a much-needed focal point for women in government.
- [2] A publication on the women of Sri Lanka, as there was a lack of information regarding the work that women do.
- [3] A film on the same subject highlighting the need for their equal rights.

The publication was produced by the Department of Information but the script of the film was found wanting. With regard to the focal point for women, a Cabinet Paper was drawn up to establish a Women's Bureau but it could not be implemented as Mrs. Bandaranaike had to travel abroad frequently to deal with matters pertaining to the 5<sup>th</sup> NAM Summit, scheduled to be held in Colombo the following year. It was established later, in 1978, under President J.R. Jayewardene. Further progress in this area led to the establishment of a Women's Ministry and the promulgation of a Women's Charter with a Committee on Women to implement it. It must not be forgotten, however, that these developments were but the culmination of Mrs. Bandaranaike's initiative and enterprise.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's clarion call for women's rights at the UN Conference was heard all over the world and resulted in a quick emergence of women heads of state/government in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America, and the campaign for equal rights for women continues apace seeking the political will to make it a reality at all levels and in every place. Hitherto, history was "His story", not hers, but Mrs. Bandaranaike proved otherwise.

*Mrs. Bandaranaike  
and 'The Minorities'*

A. JAVID YUSUF

When Mrs. Bandaranaike was forced into the political limelight by circumstances she was derided by her opponents as the “weeping widow”. She had little or no political experience having remained in the background while her husband the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike performed ‘a cesarian operation on the womb of time.’ Although she was a witness to the tumultuous events that led to her husband’s accession to office in 1956 there is no evidence to suggest that she played even a small part in influencing political events during his political career.

But once thrust into a leadership role, Mrs. B - as she was respectfully known -metamorphosed into an incredible leader who left her imprint on the history of her country. While she grew into a very decisive leader who was able to take strong decisions in the interest of the country, her positive role in international politics resulted in her becoming the head of the then vibrant Non aligned Movement(NAM).

Within Sri Lanka, while her supporters and sympathizers valued her leadership of the country through the Sri Lanka Freedom Party’s platform of social justice, there were many powerful forces that ridiculed her and sought to put her down in many ways. A hostile and unkind press often portrayed her and her party as a chauvinistic party of the Sinhala Buddhists and as an anti minority force.

But did her actions and that of the governments that she led actually target and discriminate against minorities? This writer argues that it was not so; and that it was a misrepresentation of facts to suggest that her policies were deliberately designed to adversely affect minorities. The more accurate reading

of Mrs. Bandaranaike's policies was that, even in the occasional situations where a negative impact was felt by the minorities, it was as a result of a well intentioned but badly thought out policy rather than a deliberate targeting of the minorities.

Mrs. Bandaranaike's style of politics and speech was plain and simple. She did not resort to ideological rhetoric nor did she rely on dogmas to take decisions. She would rely on plain thinking and uncomplicated decision making with only the peoples well-being as the yardstick to judge her policy decisions. Consequently she did make mistakes but even her strongest detractors will now agree that in such instances they were all 'good intentions gone wrong'.

As early as in the '70s Mrs. Bandaranaike clearly gave expression to the reality that Sri Lanka is a plural society. Addressing a gathering on the occasion of the setting up of a University in Jaffna she clearly enunciated this when she said: "Ours is a multi-racial and multi-religious society. We take pride in that, but sometimes we have had problems. You will remember the communal riots in 1958 and the ugly episodes that took place then."

She was also very clear as to the role that the minorities should play in the political life of the country and encouraged them to follow the example of the Sinhalese in rejecting communal parties and participating in political life through the mainstream by joining the national parties. She declared: "Today in the Sinhala areas, I am proud to say, that there is not an iota of communal feeling. The Sinhalese have no political parties based on communal lines. Those who preached the doctrine of communalism have been rejected by the Sinhala people and they have all lost their seats in parliament".

What Mrs. Bandaranaike said then remains true even today. Although today some Sinhala communal parties do enjoy representation in Parliament that is only because of the aberrations of the system of Proportional Representation taken together with the opportunity afforded to them to ride piggy back on the national parties. If and when they contest separately in an electorate based system of voting they are likely to be decisively rejected by the Sinhala electorate which has by and large always looked at the larger picture when electing their representatives.

Even the emergence of Muslim communal parties has been facilitated by the retrogressive form of Proportional Representation existing in Sri Lanka. The

Muslims have always been part of the political mainstream and have participated in the political life of the country through the national political parties. It is only in the mid eighties that communal representation took partial root among the Muslims with disastrous consequences for the Muslims. The emergence of Muslim parties has coincided with the worst period of the Muslims political history in this country clearly proving that such a phenomenon had not helped the Muslims at all.

In fact it contributed in no small measure towards undermining the good relations the Muslims had with the Tamils in the North and East as well as the Sinhalese in the rest of the country. The Muslim community's political image was further eroded by the opportunistic and unprincipled policies that the leaders of these communal parties engaged in, in sharp contrast to the Muslim politicians who were members of the National parties.

Fortunately the majority of the Muslims still support the National parties in terms of the actual votes cast although the distortions of the PR system coupled with the National parties 'seceding' certain electoral districts to candidates of these communal parties results in a disproportionate number of representatives from these Muslim communal parties being returned.

Mrs. Bandaranaike foresaw the dangers resulting from communal parties very clearly and identified such a phenomenon as a real obstruction to the resolution of the grievances of any community in a multi-racial and multi-religious society. She said: "But the danger arises when parties are wedded to sectarianism and communalism. You must realize that when you support communal parties and communal interests it automatically throws the rest of the country on the defensive. Suspicions are aroused when even genuine grievances are put forward that they are not in fact genuine and people look for other motives. This is all the result of the canker of communalism and negative thinking and unrealism. I think much more could be achieved by the Tamil Community supporting the major established political parties in this country, parties which have not been established on narrow communal considerations but on national platforms."

These words were addressed to the Tamil community but it goes without saying that they are equally relevant to the Muslim community.

While she had no hesitancy in speaking frankly to the Tamil community

she was quite proud of the fact that her government of 1970 fulfilled a promise to set up a University in Jaffna which she said would add 'further lustre to a region famous for its education, and people whose love of intellectual pursuits and learning is known throughout the length and breadth of Sri Lanka.'

She took several measures to ensure that the minorities were an integral part of the Sri Lankan nation. She followed a conscious policy of ensuring that there was Tamil and Muslim representation on the Boards and Governing bodies of every Statutory body and Government Corporation. Unfortunately in recent times this practice has fallen into disuse and most Government bodies of today lack minority representation of any kind.

She followed this policy not only from the point of view of ensuring adequate representation of minorities in all spheres of governance but also from a strong belief that the three communities working together would ensure a greater sense of national integration.

Mrs. Bandaranaike was a great believer in the efficacy of diverse communities striving together as a means of forging strong ties among themselves. To use her own words: "It is only by the communities working together, prospering together and even suffering together, that suspicions and mistrust and other narrow tendencies can be eradicated."

The greatest beneficiary of her agricultural policies was the Jaffna farmer for whom Mrs. Bandaranaike had the greatest admiration and whom she held out as an example not only to this country but also to the farmers of all countries. She described him as 'an embodiment of intelligence, hardwork, perseverance and thrift.' The warmth of feelings was mutual and when Mrs. Bandaranaike visited Jaffna after the removal of her civic rights she was given a rousing reception and welcomed with a garland of onions.

While Mrs. Bandaranaike reached out to the Tamils, she did not forget to look into the needs of the Muslim community as well. For instance her contribution to the educational upliftment of the Muslims was phenomenal. She honoured the Muslims by appointing Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud twice as Education Minister and he in turn played a big role in developing Muslim Education. The upgrading of Muslim Schools and the training of teachers played a big part in this task. The endorsement by Mrs. Bandaranaike of Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud's policy of increasing the intake of Muslim teachers to Government



schools proved to be a great impetus to the development of Muslim education.

It would not be wrong to say that the period of Mrs. B's Premiership and Dr. Mahmud's tenure as Education Minister was the golden period of Muslim education. The beneficial impact of such policies are too long to enumerate here but suffice it to say that it contributed immensely to the social and economic upliftment of the community.

One of the most critical issues that has prevented Sri Lanka from progressing during the last four decades has undoubtedly been the ethnic conflict. One of the proposals that has been put forward by a section of the Muslim community to address Muslim concerns is the creation of a non-contiguous unit comprising all the Muslim majority areas in the North and East. Despite the SLFP being wrongly labelled a pro-Sinhala party, at the Presidential Elections of 1988, Mrs. B put forward this proposal in her manifesto as a candidate of the Democratic Peoples Alliance.

The proposal was one which was ahead of its time in 1988 and it took considerable courage to include it in the manifesto after being persuaded to do so by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by M.H.M. Ashraff. This writer who was part of the SLFP delegation to the talks that led to the formation of the Alliance disagreed with this proposal on the basis that it was neither in the interests of the Muslims (as it would lead to their 'ghettoisation') nor in the national interest as it would further compartmentalize the communities when what was required was to integrate the different communities into one strong nation.

Unfortunately after pushing Mrs. B into this position, the SLMC turned its back on her at the last moment and worked against the DPA by supporting Ranasinghe Premadasa at the 1988 Presidential Election. In addition Mrs. B and the ever loyal Badiuddin Mahmud, complete with walking stick, were not allowed to campaign in the Eastern Province when her helicopter was stoned by SLMC supporters and not allowed to land in Katankuddy.

Ashraff was fond of telling her that she was like his mother and a crestfallen Mrs. B after her defeat was heard to say that she wondered whether Ashraff treated his mother in the way he had treated her.

This was another instance in the chequered history of the ethnic conflict when those who espouse a particular solution as a way of resolving the problem work to undermine that very proposal when it suits their own political agenda.

Such actions have in fact contributed to the death and destruction that has ensued during the years of conflict.

Another feature that endeared Mrs. B to the Muslims and indeed the entire Arab world was her uncompromising support for the Palestinian cause. This was not done to harvest Muslim votes but based entirely on her recognition of the inherent justice of the struggle waged by the Palestinians against the aggression of the Israelis. Her fame spread far and wide in the Arab world and Sri Lanka came to be known even among the Arab populace as "Bandaranaike-land".

Her support to the Palestinians did not remain as mere lip service but was translated into concrete action. The first decision that the United Front government led by Mrs B took after assuming office in 1970 was to send the Israeli interests section in Sri Lanka packing as pledged during the election campaign. No wonder that the Arab world recognized Sri Lanka as one of its staunchest allies and Mrs. B continued to grow in stature in the eyes of the Arabs.

The extent of her adoration by the Arab public could be gauged by an incident during one of her visits to Cairo. When she was using a lift in the hotel she was residing, her security officers got alarmed to note that the lift was going up and down without coming to a stop at the correct floor. Upon questioning the lift operator they came to realise that he was deliberately not letting the lift come to a halt so that he could be in the company of Mrs. B as long as possible.

The only downside to the principled support that Mrs. B gave the Arab and Palestinian cause was that the political capital that ensued to Sri Lanka as a result of her policies could not be turned into economic benefits for the country during her stewardship as Prime Minister. Eventually however the country reaped the benefits when thousands of Sri Lankans found employment in the Arab countries.

Yet another forgotten factor with regard to her dealings with the minorities was the fact that it was her actions that paved the way for the Plantation Tamils to elect their own representative to Parliament. Prior to that they had to be dependent on the ruling party for one of their representatives to be made an appointed MP which was a choice entirely at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

However with the signing of the Sirima-Shastri pact and the granting of

citizenship to thousands of Plantation Tamils, the community was empowered and able to elect their own Members of Parliament. Their representatives began to exercise power and influence in governance but have failed to ameliorate the living conditions of the Plantation Tamils who still eke out a miserable existence. Their political leaders have used their positions to advance themselves rather than their constituents as a result of which the desired progress has not been achieved.

Mrs. B's policies were not without flaws either. The policy of standardization of admissions to the Universities introduced in the early seventies by her government caused considerable heartburn among the Tamil youth. During colonial times schools in urban areas including Jaffna had been developed extensively while those in the village areas had been neglected. This resulted in wide disparity in the facilities available in the urban and rural areas.

The Tamil community which placed great emphasis on education made optimum use of the facilities available in the urban schools and consequently entered the Universities in large numbers. As a result the number of Tamil students who entered the University system was disproportionate to their population and in excess of those entering from among the Sinhalese.

The government introduced the principle of standardization of marks as a means of addressing what was described as a historical injustice rather than with discriminatory intent towards the Tamils. However where the government erred, and erred greatly, was by applying the principle of standardization of marks media-wise rather than district-wise.

As a result the Tamils understandably viewed this as discriminatory in effect even if it was not intended to be so. The Tamil student who had burnt the midnight oil and obtained high marks could not quite come to terms that a historical injustice had to be corrected at his expense.

What the government should have done was to introduce district-wise standardization rather than media-wise standardization and limited it to a specified number of years so that the Education authorities could use the time to upgrade the facilities in schools situated in deprived areas.

At the same time steps should have been taken to cushion students who had done well at exams so that they would not lose out as a result of standardization in whatever form. Even the left parties who were constituent parties of Mrs.

Bs government and who had a history of championing minority rights did not realize the dangers of these policies and the negative consequences that it could bring about.

In conclusion one cannot resist placing on record Mrs. Bs views about a national issue of contemporary relevance namely the Executive Presidency. In an interview she had given to Indian journalists N. Ram and Thomas Abraham she expressed unreserved opposition to the Executive Presidency and her determination to see that this system was done away with. Hers was a principled opposition based on the harmful effects it had for the country rather than an attempt to score political points.

An excerpt from the above interview shows that although she had had the opportunity to clothe herself with the untrammelled power of an Executive President she had desisted from doing so in the national interest: "My one objective was to see that this (Presidential) system should be done away with. In fact in 1972, when we were bringing in our Constitution we turned Parliament into a Constituent Assembly. J.R. Jayewardena's party was also there. He told me 'why don't you have the Presidential system'. I said 'No that's a dangerous thing. In a country like ours we don't need a system like that.'"

These are but a few snapshots of Mrs. B's efforts to address the grievances of the minorities. However her larger contribution was national as well as international where she moved with the high and the mighty but never lost the common touch.

IN PICTURES



*In pensive mood, 1960.*



*Engaged in social service with the Lanka Mahila Samiti.*



*Prime Minister and Mrs. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, 1957.*





*On assuming the leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, 1960.*



*Being sworn-in as a Senator on 5 August, 1960 after being elected Prime Minister on 21 July, 1960.*



*With the members of her first Cabinet, 1960.*



*With the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 1961.*



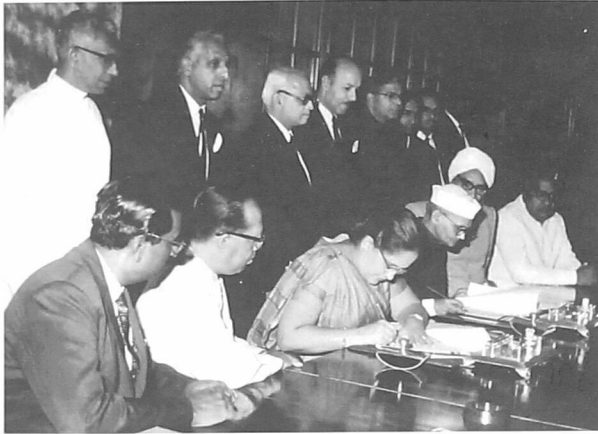
*With G.K. Galbraith, US Ambassador to India, 1963.*



*With Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Chandrika, Sunetra and Anura at 'Temple Trees'.*



*In Moscow with maestro Chitrasena and his dance ensemble, 1963.*



*Signing of the momentous Sirima-Shastri Pact, 1964.*





*With Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister of Great Britain.*



*With the last British Governor General of Ceylon, Lord Soulbury.*



*With President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India.*



*With Nikita Khrushchev, Prime Minister of the Soviet Union.*



*With Chou En Lai, Prime Minister of The People's Republic of China.*



*With Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada.*



*With President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt.*



*On her return as Prime Minister with Governor General William Gopallawa, 1970.*





*Prelude to the laying of the foundation stone for the  
Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, 1970.*



*With Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States.*



*With Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India.*



*With Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan.*



*With Marshal Tito, President of Yugoslavia.*



*Leading the way towards a new Constitution.*



*Promulgation of the First Republican Constitution, 1972.*



*In Jaffna, with Mayor Alfred Duraiappah, 1974.*





*With the leaders of the Nonaligned states, 1976.*



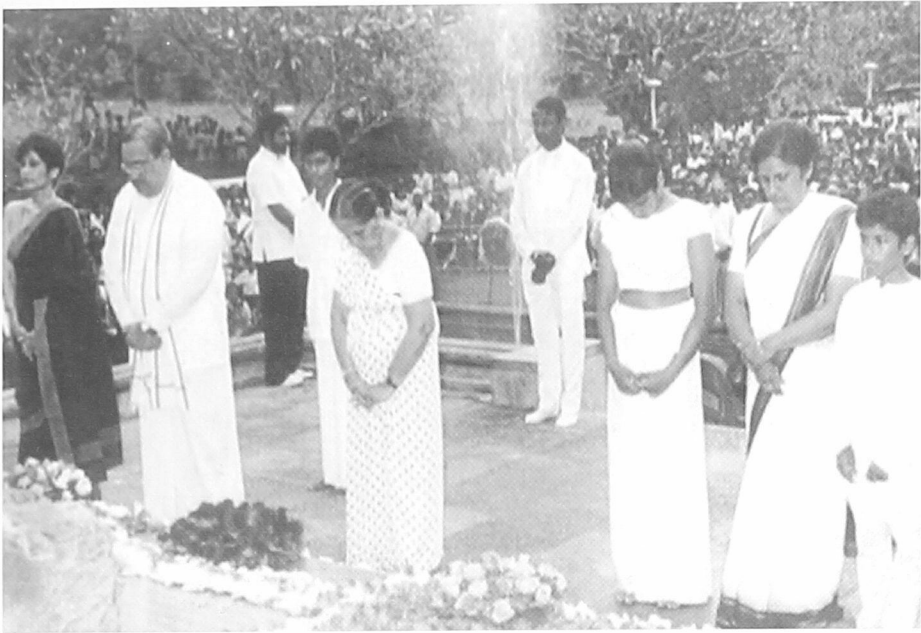
*In defiant mood with her supporters in the run-up to the undemocratic act of deprivation of her civic rights by the government of J.R. Jayewardene, 1980.*



*President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, November 1994.*



*At the felicitation ceremony for President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga by their old school, 1995.*



*Paying homage to the memory of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike together with her children and grand-children at Horagolla.*



*With Pope John Paul in 1995.*



*With Mother Teresa.*

# SPEECHES

## *Sri Lanka*

*Editors Note: Speeches: Sri Lanka and Speeches: International are digitally scanned from Hansard (Parliamentary Debates of Sri Lanka) and from certain Government and Sri Lankan publications exactly as they appear therein.*



1 September 1960  
Senate Hansard  
(1960–1961)

SENATOR THE HON. SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE (PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS) :

ගරු සභාපතිතුමනි, මේ ගරු සභාවේ මා කරන පළමුවන කථාව අපේ ආණ්ඩුවේ පළමුවන රාජාසන කථාව පිළිබඳ විවාදයේදීම කරන්නට ලැබීම ගැන මම සතුටු වෙනවා. මෙතෙක් කරන ලද රාජාසන කථා වලින් ඉතාම හොඳ කථාව අපේ රාජාසන කථාව හැටියට මහජනයා විසින් පිළිගෙන තිබීම අපේ සන්තෝෂයට කාරණයක්.

සමහරු කියනවා, අප ගමන් කරනවා ඉක්මන් මදිය කියා. තවත් සමහරු කියනවා, අප ගමන් කරනවා ඉක්මන් වැඩිය කියා. ඒ නිසා වෙනතට ඇති, සමහරවිට කොල්ලිකොටි තුමාගේ කථාවේ හැටියට, අපට " හෙමින් හෙමින් " ගමන් කරන්නට යයි කෙනෙකු කීවේ. එහෙත් මේ අයට අමතක වී තිබෙනවා, අපේ පක්ෂය මධ්‍යම ප්‍රතිපදාව උඩ ගමන් කරන පක්ෂයක් බව. අප පක්ෂය අන්ත දෙකටම නොයන, මැදි පිළිවෙතේ ගමන් කරන පක්ෂයක්.

රාජාසනයේ කථාවෙන් අප අදහස් නොකළ නොයෙක් වැරදි මත ඇති කරන්නට සමහර අන්තවාදීන් වෑයම් කිරීම කනගාටුවට කරුණක්. අප වමින් හෝ දකුණින් අන්තයකට ගමන් නොකරන බව මම නිර්ණයවම ප්‍රකාශ කරනවා.

අප මේ රාජාසන කථාවට ඇතුළත් කළේ, අපේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයේ හැටියට අප පක්ෂයේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති අනුව මේ අවුරුද්ද තුළදී කරන්නට පුළුවන් වැඩ කොටස පමණයි. හිල ගන්නට බැරි තරම් හපන්නා වාගේ, අප මේ අවුරුද්ද තුළදී කරන්නට බැරි තරම් වැඩ රාශියක් අපේ රාජාසන කථාවේ සඳහන් නොකළේ, හිස් පොරොන්දු රටට දීමට අප අදහස් නොකරන නිසයි.

මේ පාසල් ප්‍රශ්නය ගැන දැන් රටේ එක්තරා උද්ඝෝෂණයක් කරගෙන යන බව

තමුන්නාන්සේ දන්නවා ඇති. මට ප්‍රථම කටා කළ විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ නායක සෙනෙට් සභික තුමා කියා සිටියා, අප පක්ෂය අපේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයේ පාසල් රජයට ගැනීමක් ගැන කියා නැත කියා. අපේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනය දැන් මා ළඟ තිබෙනවා. එහි ඒ සම්බන්ධයෙන් කියා තිබෙන දේ මම දැන් කියවන්නට සතුටුයි.

"මේ රටට හා රටේ සංස්කෘතියට ගැලපෙන ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමයක් ඇති කිරීම අප පක්ෂය පිළිගෙන ඇති ප්‍රතිපත්තියයි...

රජයේ වියදමෙන් දෙනු ලබන අධ්‍යාපනය කෙළින්ම රජය විසින් දිය යුතුය යනු මහ උගතුන්ගේ පිළිගැනීමයි. එසේම අමෙරිකාව ආදී ඉතා දියුණු රටවල අධ්‍යාපනය දෙනු ලබන්නේත් එලෙසින්මය. අපිද ඒ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය පිළිගනිමු. දැනට දියුණු රටවල තිබෙන පිළිවෙලට අධ්‍යාපන අමාත්‍යාංශයට සම්බන්ධ කොට අධ්‍යාපන මහා මණ්ඩලයක්ද, ප්‍රාදේශීය අධ්‍යාපන මණ්ඩලද පිහිටුවා, භාෂා භේද හෝ ආගම් භේද හෝ නගර ග්‍රාම භේද හෝ නැතිව කාටත් පොදු සාධාරණ පාලන ක්‍රමයක් ඇති කිරීමද අපගේ ප්‍රතිපත්තියයි."

මීට වඩා මොකක්ද, සභාපති තුමනි, රාජාසන කටාවෙන් අප ප්‍රකාශ කර තිබෙන්නේ ? අප ඉදිරිපත් කළ ඒ ප්‍රතිපත්ති ප්‍රකාශනය රට පිළිගන්නා. මැතිවරණ කාලයේදී කළ අපේ සෑම කටාවකදීම වාගේ මේ ගැන අපි කීවා. ආධාර ලබන පාසල් සම්බන්ධයෙන් අප ඉදිරිපත් කළ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය නිසාදෝ කතෝලික බලවේගය මැතිවරණයේදී අපට විරුද්ධව එළිපිටම නොයෙකුත් ප්‍රචාර කර ගෙන ගියා. ඒ බව කවුරුත් දන්නවා. කතෝලික නායකයන්, පූජක පක්ෂයන් අපට විරුද්ධව ප්‍රකාශ කළ කරුණු කොයි හැටි වෙතත්, මේ රටේ කොයි තරම් විශාල කතෝලික පිරිසක් අපට පක්ෂව ඡන්දය දී තිබෙනවාද යන්න ගැන සලකන විට, එම ප්‍රචාරයන්ගෙන් සැලකිය යුතු ප්‍රයෝජනයක් ලැබී නැති බවයි පෙනෙන්නේ. මේ රටේ සිටින කතෝලික ඡන්ද දායකයන්ගෙන් සියයට හතළිහක් පමණ දෙනා එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයට විරුද්ධව තම ඡන්දය පාවිච්චි කර තිබෙන බව සඳහන් කරන්නට හැකි වීම ගැන මා ආඩම්බර වෙනවා. වැඩි වශයෙන් කතෝලිකයන් සිටින ආසන හැටියට ගණන් ගත හැකි වත්තල, ජාඇල, මීගොලුව, නාත්තන්තිය සහ වෙනත්ප්‍රච ආදී කොට්ඨාශවලට අප ඉදිරිපත් කළ ඡන්දාපේක්ෂකයන්ට ඡන්ද දුන දාහ, එකොළොස් දාහ ආදී වශයෙන් ලැබුණු බව මැතිවරණ ප්‍රතිඵල වලින් අපට පෙනී ගියා. එවැනි සමහර ආසන සඳහා ඉදිරිපත් කරනු ලැබූ අපේ ඇතැම් අපේක්ෂකයන් පැරදු නේ ඡන්ද සිය ගණනකින් පමණක් බවත් තමුන්නාන්සේ දන්නවා ඇති. එයින් පෙනී යන්නේ කතෝලිකයන්ගෙන් සියයට හතළිහක් පමණ දෙනා ආධාර ලබන පාඨශාලා රජයට ගැනීම ඇතුළු අපේ වැඩපිළිවෙලට එකඟවූ බවයි. එවැනි තත්ත්වයක් තිබියදීත් මේ රටේ කතෝලික පූජකවරුන්, වෙනත් අයත් දැන් රට පුරාම රැස්වීම් තබා කතෝලිකයන් නොමග යැවීමට වැයම් කිරීම ගැන අප කනගාටු වෙනවා. තමන් ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදී යයි කියමින් මහජන මතයට පිටුපා මෙසේ ක්‍රියා කිරීම සුදු සු දැයි මා අහන්න කැමතියි. කිසිවකුට අසාධාරණයක් කරන්නට අප බලාපොරොත්තු

වනනේ නැතැ.

ආධාර ලබන පාඨශාලා සම්බන්ධයෙන් ලොකු උද්ඝෝෂණයක් මහජනයා අතරේ පටන් ගෙන දැන් බොහෝ කාලයක් ගත වී තිබෙනවා. ජාතික අධ්‍යාපන ක්‍රමයක් ඇති කිරීම සම්බන්ධයෙන් මේ රජය පොරොන්දු වූ බව කවුරුත් පිළිගන්නවා ඇත කියා මා හිතනවා. ඒ නිසා ඒ පොරොන්දු ව ඉෂ්ට කිරීමට සූදානම් වීම දැන් අප පිට පැවරී ඇති යුතුකමක් හැටියට පිළිගන්නට ඕනෑ. ඒ අනුව සලකා බලන විට, පාසල් රජයට ගැනීම ගැන විරුද්ධත්වය පළ කරමින් ගෙන යන ව්‍යාපාරය භයානක එකක් හැටියට අප පිළිගත යුතුයි. ඒ අතරම අප ගත් ඒ තීරණය අනුව අපේ යුතුකම ඉෂ්ට කිරීමේ දී කොයි ආකාරයේ අය ඊට විරුද්ධව නැගී සිටියත්, ඒ කාර්යය නොපිරිහෙලා ඉටු කරන බව කිසිම බියක් නැතිව ප්‍රකාශ කරනවා.

යම් යම් කණ්ඩායම්වල මතයට නොව පොදු මහජන මතයට අනුව කටයුතු කිරීම මේ යුගයේ ලක්ෂණයක් බව පිළිගත යුතුයි. පොදු මහජන මතයට විරුද්ධව අයුතු ලෙස නැගී සිටීම අන්තරාදායක බව සලකා, මහජනයා නොමග යැවීමට වැයම් නොකරන ලෙස ඉල්ලා සිටින්නට කැමතියි. මහජනයා නොමග යැවීම ලොකු වරදක් බව කවුරුත් පිළිගන්නවා ඇති. පාඨශාලා ප්‍රශ්නය සම්බන්ධයෙන් මීට වඩා යමක් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමට මා අදහස් කරන්නේ නැතැ. මට ප්‍රථමයෙන් කථා කළ ගරු සෙනෙට් මන්ත්‍රී වරුන් කීප දෙනෙකු විසින්ම ඒ ප්‍රශ්නය සම්බන්ධව සෑහෙන කරුණු ඉදිරිපත් කරනු ලැබූ නිසා, තව දුරටත් විස්තර අවශ්‍යයි කියා මා සිතන්නේ නැතැ.

රාජ්‍යය කථාවේ සඳහන් කර ඇති තවත් ප්‍රශ්නයක් සම්බන්ධව අද රටේ ලොකු උද්ඝෝෂණයක් නැගී යනවා. ඒ ප්‍රශ්නය නම් ප්‍රවෘත්ති පත්‍ර ගැනයි. ඒ ප්‍රශ්නය සම්බන්ධයෙන් මට කලින් කථා කළ ආණ්ඩු පක්ෂයේ ගරු සෙනෙට් මන්ත්‍රී වරුන් කීප දෙනෙක්ම විස්තර සහිතව කරුණු ඉදිරිපත් කළ නිසා මා වැඩි විස්තරයක් කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ නැතැ.

මී ප්‍රභට, ජනසතු කිරීමේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය ගැන වචන කීපයක් කිය යුතුයි. වතු සහ බැංකු ජනසතු නොකිරීම ගැන ලංකා සමසමාජ පක්ෂයත්, මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණත් අපට චෝදනා කළා. දිවංගත බණ්ඩාරනායක අගමැතිතුමාගේ ප්‍රතිපත්තියට විරුද්ධව අප ගමන් කරන හැටියට පෙන්නුම් කරන්නට ඒ අය යත්න දැරුවා.

1956 දී මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනය සකස් කළ අවස්ථාවේ දී බැංකු හා වතු ජනසතු කිරීම ගැනද එහි සඳහන් කළ බව රහසක් නොවෙයි. එහෙත් ඊට පසුව ඇති වුණ අත් දැකීම් අනුව දිවංගත බණ්ඩාරනායක අගමැතිතුමා පසුව අදහස් කෙළේ, හිතමීම ජනසතු කිරීමේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය අනුව, වතු, බැංකු වැනි දේවල් එක්වරම ජනසතු කිරීම භාහිකර වන්නට පුළුවන් බවයි. එතුමා මිය යන්නට සුමානසකට කලින් එල්. සී. ඒ. හෙවත් පහතරට නිෂ්පාදක සංගමයේ උත්සවයකදී එතුමා විසින් කරන ලද කථාවකින් කොටසක් තමුන්නාන්සේගේ දැන ගැනීම සඳහා මේ අවස්ථාවේදී ඉදිරිපත් කරන්නට කැමතියි. එහි මෙසේ සඳහන්ව

තිබෙනවා:-

“Any government having a socialist outlook must consider suitable schemes of nationalisation, but nationalisation is not a mere slogan for us-some magic wand that is going to solve all the ills of the Universe. It is just a sensible idea of the control by the State for the people of the country in those services where so-called nationalisation is likely to be beneficial ..... Plantation nationalisation is a somewhat different matter. We have to consider whether our tea estates and our rubber estates are not in fact being run today more efficiently than any scheme of nationalisation could bring about.... whether it is not in the interests of the people of this country to refrain from making a change in that position until the situation, let us say, becomes much clearer. That is why our Government too has put off even the consideration of the nationalisation of plantations for at least a period of 10 years. At the conclusion of that period, we or some other government that may be in power will have to address its mind to that problem.”

ගරු ඛණ්ඩාරනායක අගමැතිතුමා මිය යන්නට සුමානසකට කලින් ප්‍රකාශය කෙළේ. එම නිසා වතු සහ බැංකු ජනසතු නොකිරීම, අපි එතුමාගේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිවලට විරුද්ධව කරන දෙයක් නොවෙයි. එතුමාගේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති අනුව එතුමා අදහස් කළ විධියටමයි, අපිත් මෙම වතු සහ බැංකු ජනසතු කිරීමේ ප්‍රශ්නය ගැන අදහස් කෙළේ. පසුගිය මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශණයේත් අපි එය සඳහන් කර ඇත්තේ ඒ අනුවයි. එම නිසා අපි අපේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති වලින් පිට ගිහින් නැති බව මෙයින් ඔප්පු වෙනවා ඇති.

අද මේ රටේ තිබෙන යම් යම් දේශපාලන පක්ෂ, මාක්ස් වාදය, ධන වාදය ආදී නොයෙකුත් දේශපාලන වාද අනුව ගමන් කරන ඒවායි. පිටරටවලින් අනුලා ගත් කිසිම දේශපාලන වාදයක් අන්ධ ලෙස අනුගමනය කිරීමට අපට වුවමනාවක් නැහැ. මහජන ඕනෑ එපාකම් අනුව, ජාතියට හිත ඇතිව, සාධාරණය ඉෂ්ට කිරීම අපේ යුතුකමයි. පෞද්ගලික හිතවාදීකම්වලින් තොරව තම යුතුකම ඉටු කරන ආණ්ඩුවක් පරාජය වන්නේ නැහැ. එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය ඒ ජාතික ප්‍රතිපත්තියෙන් පිට ගිය හිසයි, දිවංගත ඛණ්ඩාරනායක අගමැතිතුමා 1951 දී ඒ පක්ෂයෙන් අස් වූයේ. ඒ වාගේම ජාතියේ වුවමනාවන් අනුව කටයුතු කිරීමට එතුමා නැගී සිටි නිසයි, 1956 දී එතුමාට බලයට පැමිණෙන්නට පුළුවන් වුණේ. අපේ පක්ෂය හැම විටම ක්‍රියා කරන්නේ රටටත්, මහජනයාටත් වුවමනා සේවයන් ඉටු කිරීමේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිය උඩ බව මම කියන්නට කැමතියි.

අපේ රාජ්‍යය කටුවේ, මීට පෙර කිසි කෙනෙකු අදහස් නොකළ තවත් වැදගත් කරුණක් ගැන කියා තිබෙනවා. එනම්, මේ රටේ තරුණ පරම්පරාවේ අනාගතය යහපත් කිරීමේ අදහසින් ඇති කරන්නට යන ජාතික සේවා ක්‍රමය ගැනයි. අපේ තරුණ පරම්පරාවේ අනාගත යහපත සඳහා ඉතා හොඳ අදහසින් ඇති කරන්නට යන ඒ ජාතික සේවා ක්‍රමය ගැන සමහර අය විරුද්ධ වන බව අපට පෙනෙනවා. විශේෂයෙන් එයට විරුද්ධ වන්නේ එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ අයයි. සමහර විට ඒ අය එයට විරුද්ධ වන්නේ, උසස් පෙළේ තරුණයන්, දු ජීවත් පෙළේ තරුණයන්

හා උරෙහුර ගැටීම ගැන ඔවුන් අකමැති නිසා-එසේ කිරීම ඔවුන්ට මදිකමක්ය කියා සිතන නිසා-වන්නට පුළුවන්. විනයක් හා පුහුණුවක් ඇති පිරිසක් වශයෙන් අපේ තරුණ පරම්පරාව, තම තමන්ටත්, තම රටටත් සේවයක් සැලසිය හැකි පිරිසක් බවට පමුණුවාලීම අපේ ආණ්ඩුවේ බලාපොරොත්තුව බව මතක් කරන්නට කැමතියි.

දැන් ලංකාවේ ජන සම්මතවාදය මුල් බැස තිබෙන බව අප කවුරුත් පිළිගත යුතුයි. එහෙත් රාජ්‍ය සේවයේ යෙදී සිටින උසස් නිලධාරීන් කොටසක් එය නොපිළිගන්නා බවටත්, මේ ආණ්ඩුව පටන් ගන්නා ප්‍රගතිශීලී වැඩ ඒ අයගෙන් අතපසුවන බවටත්, සාමාන්‍ය හැඟීමක් මේ රටේ ජනතාව තුළ තිබෙනවා. එවැනි හැඟීමක් ඇති වන්නට ඉඩ නොදී, මහජනයාගේ කැමැත්ත අනුව ආණ්ඩුව ඇති කරන ක්‍රියා මාර්ග වලට සහයෝගය දෙන ලෙස මම ඒ ආණ්ඩුවේ සේවකයන්ගෙන් බැගැපත්ව ඉල්ලා සිටිනවා.

අවසාන වශයෙන් මා එක කරුණක් මතක් කරන්නට ඕනෑ. එනම්, මහජනයාට පොරොන්දු වී ඇති අන්දමින් අපේ සාධාරණ ප්‍රතිපත්ති ක්‍රියාවේ යෙදීමේදී පුද්ගලයන් වශයෙන් හෝ කණ්ඩායම් වශයෙන් හෝ ඊට බාධා කරන කවීරුන් හෝ වේවා, ඒ අයට විරුද්ධව තදින්ම ක්‍රියා කිරීමට අපේ ආණ්ඩුවට සිදු වන බවයි.

තලින් කියන්නට අමතක වූ තවත් කරුණක් ගැන මම සඳහන් කරන්නට කැමතියි. විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ නායක තුමාත්, එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ අනික් අයත් බොහොම ආඩම්බරයෙන් කීවා, පසුගිය ජූලි මැතිවරණයේදී ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයට ලැබුණු ඡන්ද සංඛ්‍යාවට වඩා වැඩි ඡන්ද සංඛ්‍යාවක් එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයට ලැබුණු බව. නමුත් ඒ අයට අමතක වී තිබෙනවා, අපේ පක්ෂයෙන් ඉදිරිපත් කළේ අපේක්ෂකයන් 98 දෙනෙකු පමණක් බව. නමුත් එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයෙන් මැතිවරණය සඳහා අපේක්ෂකයන් 128 දෙනෙකු ඉදිරිපත් කළ බව කවුරුත් දන්නා දෙයක්. ඒ නිසා, ඔවුන්ගේ එම කියමන එතරම් දුරට ආඩම්බර විය හැකි කියමනක් ය කියා අප පිළිගන්නේ නැහැ.

මා අවසාන වශයෙන් ඉල්ලා සිටින්නේ, අපේ ජාතියේ යහපත මුල් කරගෙන, ජාතියේ පොදු යහපත මුල් කරගෙන, මේ අවුරුද්ද තුළදී මේ ආණ්ඩුව ගෙන යන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වන වැඩ පිළිවෙල ගෙන යාමට අපට මේ රටේ සියළු ජාතීන්ගේ සහාය දෙන ලෙසයි. රාජාසන කථාවෙන් අප කියා ඇති කරුණු අප බලාපොරොත්තු වන අන්දමට මුල් අවුරුද්ද ඇතුළතදී අපට කරගෙන යාමට හැකි වුණොත්, රටට ලොකු සේවයක් මේ ආණ්ඩුවෙන් ඉටු වුණාය කියා කවුරුත් පිළිගන්නවා ඇතැයි මා විශ්වාස කරනවා. මා මීට වඩා කථා කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ නැහැ. අවසාන වශයෙන්, අපේ මේ රාජාසන කථාවෙන් ප්‍රකාශ කොට තිබෙන කරුණු අනුව අපට අපේ වැඩපිළිවෙල ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට මෙම සභාවේ සියලු දෙනාගේම සහාය දෙන හැටියටද ඉල්ලා සිටිමින් මගේ කථාව සමාප්ත කරනවා.

නියෝජිත මන්ත්‍රී  
මණ්ඩලය ස්තූති  
යෝජනාව පිළිබඳ  
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සිරිමාවෝ ආර්. ඩී.  
බණ්ඩාරනායක මිය  
(අත්තහඟල්ල)

(Mrs. Sirimavo R. D.  
Bandaranaike – Attanagalla)

6 රු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මේ ගරු සභාවේ මා කථා කරන පළමුවන අවස්ථාවයි මේ. ඊනියා ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවේ දවස් පහක් තිස්සේ පවත්වන මේ පළමුවන රාජ්‍ය කථාවට කරන ලද ස්තූති යෝජනාව පිළිබඳ විවාදයේ අවසාන මොහොතේදී විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවය වෙනුවෙන් අවසාන කථාව කරන්නට මට අවස්ථාව ලැබී තිබෙනවා. දවස් පහක් තිස්සේ මේ විවාදයට සහභාගී වූ, මට ප්‍රථමයෙන් කථා කළ, ගරු මන්ත්‍රීවරුන්, විශේෂයෙන්ම අපේ විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීවරුන්, මේ රාජ්‍ය කථාවේ තිබෙන කරුණු ගැන විස්තර වශයෙන් සඳහන් කර තිබෙනවා. ඒ නිසාත් කාල වේලාව ප්‍රමාණවත් නොවන නිසාත් මා ඒ කරුණු සම්බන්ධයෙන් වැඩි විස්තරයක් කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වෙන්නේ නැතැ.

රාජ්‍ය කථාවට කරන ලද ස්තූති යෝජනාව පිළිබඳ මේ විවාදයේදී සමහර ගරු මන්ත්‍රීන් රාජ්‍ය කථාවේ සඳහන් නොවන කාරණා ගැනත් සඳහන් කළා. මා බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ මා උත්සාහ කරන්නේ රාජ්‍ය කථාවේ සඳහන් කරුණුවලටම මගේ කථාව හැකි තරම් සීමා කරන්නයි. නමුත් මට ඒ කාරණා වලින් පිට යන්නට සිද්ධ වූනොත් තමුන්නාන්සේ මට සමාවෙනවා ඇතැයි විශ්වාස කරනවා. මක්නිසාද ? අද රටේ ගෙන යන නොයෙක් නොයෙක් ප්‍රචාරයන් නිසා, රාජ්‍ය කථාවේ සඳහන් නොවූවත් මට සමහර කරුණු ගැන කථා කරන්නට සිද්ධ වී තිබෙනවා.

තමුන්නාන්සේ දන්නවා ඇති, මා දේශපාලනයෙන් ඉවත් වී රටත් අත්හැර යනවාය කියා අපේ විරුද්ධවාදීන් මේ රටේ ප්‍රචාරයක් ගෙන යන බව. සමහරු කියනවාලු, මගේ බඩු බාහිරාදිය පවා එංගලන්තයට පිටත් කර තිබෙනවාය, රටින් පිට යන්නට මා අගමැතිතුමාගෙන් අවසර ඉල්ලා තිබෙනවාය කියා. මා එසේ අවසර ඉල්ලා තිබෙනවානම් අගමැතිතුමා දන්නවා ඇති. මේ රටෙන් පිටවෙන්න මගේ බලාපොරොත්තුවක් නැතැ. සමහරු සිතනවා ඇති, මා දේශපාලන භූමියට පා තැබූයේ බලය අල්ලාගෙන අගමැති ධුරයේ පමණක් සිටීමටය කියා. නමුත් මා



දේශපාලන භූමියට පා තැබූයේ මගේ ස්වාමි පුරුෂයාට හදිසියේ අකාල මරණයකට මුහුණ පාන්න වූ නිසා පොදු ජනතාව ලබා ගත් ජනතා ජයග්‍රහණයත් අයිතිවාසිකමක් ආරක්ෂා කර දීමේ අදහසින්, 1960 දී ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයට රටේ ජනතාව පිළිගත් නායකයකු නොසිටි නිසා ඒ පක්ෂයේ සාමාජිකයන්ගේ ඉල්ලීම උඩත්, රටේ ජනතාවගේ ඉල්ලීම උඩත්, යන කාරණා නිසා බව මේ අවස්ථාවේදී මතක් කරන්නට සතුටුයි.

ඒ අනුව දේශපාලන භූමියට පා තැබීමට මා තීරණය කළ අවස්ථාවේදී 1960 ජූලි මාසයේ මැතිවරණයෙන් ඒ තරම් ජයග්‍රහණයක් අපේ පක්ෂයට ලබාගත හැකි වේ යයි මා සිතුවේ නැහැ. ඒ මක් නිසාද කියනවා නම්, ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ අප නායකයාගේ මරණයෙන් පසුව මේ රටේ ඇති වූ තත්ත්වය ගැන මා නොකිව්වාට තමුන්තාන්සේලා දන්නවා ඇති. අපේ පක්ෂය විසින්ම අපේ නායකයා මැරුවාය කියා අපට වෝදනා කළා. ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂය කෙරෙහි කිසිම විශ්වාසයක් ඇති කර නොගැනීමට තරම් තත්ත්වයක් ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී රටේ පැවතුණා. ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී මට පක්ෂයේ නායකත්වය ගෙන 1960 ජූලි මාසයේ පැවති ඒ උග්‍ර සටනට මුහුණපාන්නට සිද්ධ වුණා. හේතුවකට මෙන්, පසුව රටේ ජනතාවගේ සහයෝගයත් විශ්වාසයත් ලබාගෙන අපට ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට පුළුවන් වුණා.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, කම්කරු ඇමතිතුමාගේ කථාවේදී මා සැමදාම බලය අල්ලාගෙන ඉන්න බලාපොරොත්තුවෙන් සිටියාය කියා ප්‍රකාශ කිරීම ගැන මා කනගාටු වෙනවා. මගේ එහෙම කිසිම බලාපොරොත්තුවක් නැහැ. මා කලින් කීවාක් මෙන් එහෙම බලාපොරොත්තුවක් ඇතුව නොවෙයි, මා දේශපාලන භූමියට පා තැබුවේ. මගේ ස්වාමිපුරුෂයා විසින් පිහිටුවන ලද පක්ෂයේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති මේ රටේ ජනතාව 1956 දී පිළිගත්ත. ඒ ප්‍රතිපත්ති නිසා මේ රටේ ජනතාවට විශාල සෙතක් ඇති වුණා. ඒවා ආරක්ෂා දීමටයයි රටේ ජනතාව විසින් කරන ලද ඉල්ලීම අනුවයි, මා දේශපාලන භූමියට පා තැබුවේ. ආණ්ඩු පක්ෂයේ සිට හෝ වේවා, විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ සිට හෝ වේවා, ඒ ප්‍රතිපත්ති ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට මා ඉදිරියටත් බලාපොරොත්තු වන බව කියන්නට කැමතියි. මගේ කිසිම බලාපොරොත්තුවක් නැහැ, ආණ්ඩු පක්ෂයේ ඇතැම් අය බලාපොරොත්තු වුනාට, මහජනයා අතරමං කර පැන යන්නට. මා ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරනවා, තුනුරුවන් සරණින් මේ ගරු සභාවේ සිට බොහෝ කාලයක් මේ රටේ ජනතාව වෙනුවෙන් ඒ අයගේ අයිතිවාසිකම් ආරක්ෂා කර දීමට සටන් කරන්නට අවස්ථාව මට ලැබේවා කියා.

පෙරේදා කථා කළ කම්කරු ඇමතිතුමා කීවා, අවුරුදු 5ක් යනකොට මා විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ නායිකාව හැටියටත් ඉන්න එකක් නැත කියා. මේ විධියේ අනාවැකි කියන්නෙ කුමකටදැයි මා දන්නේ නැහැ. එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ ඇතැම් නායකයින් අනාවැකි කියන්නට බොහොම දක්ෂ උදවිය බව අපි දන්නවා. 1956 දිවංගත අගමැතිතුමා ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටවූ කාලයේ සිටම, මේ ආණ්ඩුව තිබෙන්නේ මාස 6යි; එහෙම නැත්නම් අවුරුද්දයි; 18 මාසයයි, යනුවෙන් අනාවැකි කීවීව බව

අපි දන්නවා. ඒ වගේම 1960 දී අපේ ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටුවුවාට පසුවත් අනාවැකි කිව්වා. සමහරක් ඇත්ත වන්නට ගිය බවත් අපි දන්නවා. ඒ නිසා කම්කරු ඇමතිතුමා මොන හේතුවක් උඩ අනාවැකිය කිව්වදැයි දන්නෙ නැහැ. ඒ ඇමතිවරයාට මා කියන්නට කැමතියි, එතුමා එහෙම හිතුවත් අත්තනගල්ලේ ජන්ද දායකයින් අප කෙරෙහි තබන විශ්වාසය අනුව, මා කලින් කීවාක් මෙන් මේ ගරු සභාවේ බොහෝ කාලයක් සේවය කරන්නට මට පුළුවන් වෙයි කියා මා විශ්වාස කරනවා.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මේ ගරු සභාවේ සම්ප්‍රදාය ආරක්ෂා කර ගැනීමටත්, මේ සභාවේ ගෞරවය හා නීති රැක ගැනීමටත් තදින් ක්‍රියා කරන බව පසුගිය දවස් වලදී කථානායකතුමා විසින් කීප විටක්ම සඳහන් කළා. මා කථානායකතුමාට කියන්නට කැමතියි, මේ ගරු සභාවේ සම්ප්‍රදාය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමටත් ඒ වගේම මේ ගරු සභාවේ ගරුත්වය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමටත් අපට හැකි තරම්ත් අපේ සහයෝගය ඔබතුමාට සෑම අවස්ථාවේදීම දෙන්නට ලැහැස්ති බව.

ඒ එක්කම මේ නව ආණ්ඩුවට ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ නායිකාව වශයෙන් මා කියන්නට කැමතියි, මේ රටේ පොදු ජනතාවගේ අභිවෘද්ධිය සඳහා යම් ප්‍රගතිශීලී ව්‍යාපාර ආරම්භ කරනවා නම් ඒ සියල්ලටම සෑම අවස්ථාවේදීම අපේ සහයෝගය ලැබෙන බව. ඒ වගේම මේ රටේ සිටින සුළු පිරිසකගේ ඉල්ලීම් අනුව, මේ රටේ සිටින විදේශික කොම්පැනිකාරයන් ආදී ධනපතියන්ගේ ධනය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමටත්, ඔවුන්ගේ වෙනත් නොයෙක් අයිතිවාසිකම් තහවුරු කිරීමටත් මේ ඊනියා ජාතික ආණ්ඩුව උත්සාහ කරනවා නම්, අප ඊට විරුද්ධව මේ ගරු සභාව තුළත් මෙයින් පිටස්තරත් සෑම අවස්ථාවේදීම සටන් කරන බවත් මතක් කරන්නට කැමතියි.

යාපනයේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා (පොන්නම්බලම් මයා) අපට චෝදනා කළා, අපි නාෂා ප්‍රශ්නය විසඳන්නට යෝජනා ඉදිරිපත් කළේ නැත කියා. ඒක අපේ වැඩක් නොවෙයි. රාජාසන කථාවේ යෝජනා තිබෙනවා. රාජාසන කථාවේ තිබෙන යෝජනා තව ටිකක් විස්තර කරන්නට කියායි අප ඉල්ලා සිටියේ. තව අපට විස්තරයක් ලැබුණේ නැහැ. අගමැතිතුමාගේ කථාවේදී අපට ඒ පිළිබඳ විස්තරයක් ලැබෙයි කියා විශ්වාස කරනවා. නමුත් අපි කියන්න කැමතියි, සියලු දෙනාම සෑහීමට පත්වන පරිදි, විශේෂයෙන් සිංහල ජනතාවට සාධාරණත්වය ඉෂ්ට වන අන්දමින් භාෂා ප්‍රශ්නය විසඳන්නට ලැහැස්ති නම් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ නායිකාව හැටියට ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂය වෙනුවෙනුත්, විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ නායිකාව හැටියට විරුද්ධ පක්ෂය වෙනුවෙනුත්-මම හිතනවා, විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ අනික් මන්ත්‍රීවරුන්ගේ සභායත් ඊට ලැබේවි කියා-අපේ සහයෝගය දෙන්නට අපි සූදානම් බව.

ඒ/පී. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා.

(Mr. F. R. Dias Bandaranaike)

ශ්‍රී විසුමත් තෝරා දෙන්න.

ගරු ඩඩ්ලි සේනානායක  
(The Hon. Dudley Senanayake)  
ගිවිසුමක් නැත්නම් ?

එෆ්. ආර්. ඩයස් ඩණ්ඩාරනායක මයා.  
(Mr. F. R. Dias Bandaranaike)  
එහෙනම් ගිවිසුමක් තිබෙනවය කියන එකේ තේරුම මොකක්ද ?

සිරිමාවෝ ඩණ්ඩාරනායක මිය  
(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)

නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මෙම රාජ්‍ය කථාව ඉදිරිපත් කර ඇත්තේ ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවක රාජ්‍ය කථාවක් හැටියටයි. ඒ වාගේම ගරු අගමැතිතුමා මහනුවර ගිය අවස්ථාවේදී දළඳා මන්දිරයේ පත්තිරිප්පුවේදී කරන ලද කථාවේ සඳහන් වුණා. එතුමා විසින් පිහිටුවා තිබෙන්නේ එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ ආණ්ඩුවක් නොව ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවක්ය කියා. මෙම ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවට ඇතුළත් වී සිටින පක්ෂ දෙස බලන විට ඒවා ජාතික ප්‍රශ්න පිළිබඳව පරස්පර විරෝධී අදහස් උසුලන පක්ෂ බව අපට පැහැදිලිවම පෙනී යනව. ජාතික ප්‍රශ්න සම්බන්ධව එකිනෙකට ප්‍රතිවිරුද්ධ අදහස් දරණ, මැතිවරණයේදී කිසිම ගිවිසුමකට ඇතුළත් නොවූ, වෙන වෙනම මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශන නිකුත් කළ, වෙන වෙනම අදහස් ප්‍රකාශ කළ එකිනෙකට ප්‍රතිවිරුද්ධ පක්ෂ කීපයක් විසින් මේ හත් හවුල් ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටුවා තිබෙනවා. මැතිවරණ සමයේදී නොයෙක් නොයෙක් දේශපාලන පක්ෂ විසින් විශේෂයෙන්ම වැදගත් ප්‍රශ්න ගැන නොයෙක් නොයෙක් අදහස් ප්‍රකාශ කළා. ඒවා එකින් එක ගෙන කියවීමෙන් ගරු අගමැතිතුමාගේ කාලය ගැනීමට මම අදහස් කරන්නේ නැහැ. නමුත් විශේෂ වශයෙන් කරුණු දෙක තුනක් සඳහන් නොකරම බැහැ.

ඊට ප්‍රථමයෙන් මම කියන්න කැමතියි, මේ හත් හවුල් ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටුවන ලද්දේ මොන කොන්දේසි උඩද, මොන ප්‍රතිපත්ති උඩද කියා මහජනතාවට දැනුම් දීම ආණ්ඩුවේ යුතුකමක් බව. ඒ වාගේම එය දැන ගැනීමට මහජනතාවටද අයිතිවාසිකමක් තිබෙනව. ඒ නිසා මා විශ්වාස කරනවා, ගරු අගමැතිතුමාගේ කථාවේදී ඒ ගැන පැහැදිලි විස්තරක් අපට දැන ගන්නට ලැබේවි කියා.

දිවංගත ඩණ්ඩාරනායක මැතිතුමා 1956 දී මේ රටේ තිබුණ පක්ෂ කීපයක් සමග සාකච්ඡා කර මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණ නමින් පෙරමුණක් සාදා ප්‍රතිපත්ති මාලාවක් උඩ මැතිවරණයට මුහුණ පෑ බව තමුත්තාන්සේට මතක ඇති. ඒ වාගේම 1964 ජුනි මාසයේදී අපි සභාග ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටුවන්නට කලින් මාස එකහමාරක් පමණ තිස්සේ

සාකච්ඡා කර පොදු කරුණු 14 ක් පදනම් කරගෙන සම්මුතියකට පැමිණ අපි ඒ ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටවුව. ඒ කරුණු 14 ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිවලටවත්, ලංකා සමසමාජ පක්ෂයේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති වලටවත් විරුද්ධ කරුණු නෙවෙයි. පක්ෂ දෙකේම ප්‍රතිපත්තිවලට අනුකූල වීධියට ඒ කරුණු 14 සකස් කර එය මහජනතාවට ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමෙන් පසුවයි අපි ඒ සභාග ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටවුවේ. එහෙත් එවකට විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ සිටි නව අගමැතිතුමාත් අතික් නායකයන් අපට වෝදනා කළා මහජනතාවගේ අනුමැතියක් නැතිවයි අපි එදා සභාග රජය පිහිටවුවේ කියා. එහෙම නම් මම අගමැතිතුමාගෙන් අහන්න කැමතියි, මැතිවරණය අවසාන වනවත් සමගම මේ හත් හවුල් ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටවුවේ මහජනතාවගේ අනුමැතියක් ඇතිවද කියා. අපි සභාග ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටවුවේ, ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ තනි ආණ්ඩුවක් අවුරුදු හතරහමාරක් පවත්වාගෙන ගියාට පසුවයි. එහෙත් මෙවර හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවූ නායකයන් තමන් හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවනවාය කියා මැතිවරණ කාලයේදී මහජනතාව කිසිම සඳහනක්වත් නොකළා පමණක් නොව, දැනට හවුල් ඒ සිටින පක්ෂ එදා වෙන වෙනම මහජනයා ඉදිරිපිටට ගොස් වෙන වෙනම ප්‍රකාශන ඉදිරිපත් කර මැතිවරණ සටනෙහි යෙදුණා මිස හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වන බවක් මහජනතාව කීවේ නැහැ. අපට වෝදනා කළා, මහජනයාගේ අනුමැතියක් නැතිව හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටවුවිය කියා. කලින් කීවාක් මෙන් මා නැවතත් කියන්න කැමතියි, අප පක්ෂ දෙකේම ප්‍රතිපත්ති වලට විරුද්ධ නොවූ කරුණු 14 ක් උඩ අපි ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටවුව බව. ගරු අගමැතිතුමා ගෙන් මා දැන ගන්න කැමතියි, මොන විධියේ කොන්දේසි උඩද, මොන විධියේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති උඩද එතුමන්ලා හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටවුවේ කියා.

මේ පක්ෂ වලින් ප්‍රකාශයට පත් කරන ලද මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශන පිළිබඳව අපි ටිකක් විමසා බලමු. ඉපයාගත් පක්ෂයේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයෙන් කීවේ කුමක්ද ? ඉපයාගත් ආණ්ඩුවක් මේ රටේ පිහිටුවීමට මිස වෙන කිසි දේකට ඒ අයගේ සහයෝගය නොදෙන බවයි ඔවුන් කීවේ. අතික් පක්ෂ ඒ අයගේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශ වලින් කීවේ ඒ විධියේ ආණ්ඩු පිහිටුවීමට ඒ ඒ අය බලාපොරොත්තු වන බවයි. මේ පිළිබඳව භාෂා ප්‍රතිපත්ති උඩ ඒ තරම් විස්තර ඉදිරිපත් කළ යුතුය කියා මා සිතන්නෙ නැහැ. දොම්පෙ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමාගේ ( එ/ජී. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා) කථාවේදී, විස්තර වශයෙන් කරුණු ඉදිරිපත් වූණු නිසා. නමුත් ඉපයාගත් පක්ෂයෙන්, ද්‍රවිඩ සංගමයෙන් මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනවල තිබුණේ ඒ අය කවදාවත් සිංහල භාෂාව පමණක් රජයේ භාෂාව හැටියට පිළිගන්නෙ නැති බවයි. භාෂා දෙකටම සම තැන දිය යුතුය කියන බව, ඒ අයගේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනවලින් ජේනව.

ජාතික විමුක්ති පෙරමුණේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශන ගැන සඳහන් කරන්න මීනෑ. භාෂා ප්‍රතිපත්තිය පිළිබඳව ඒ අය දරන අදහස් මොනවාද යන්න අද රටේ කවුරුත් දන්නව. ඒ අය අන්තවාදී අදහස් දරන පිරිසක් බව කවුරුත් පිළිගෙන ඉවරයි.

එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයේ තිබුණේ කුමක්ද ? එදා මැද කොළඹ තුන් වන ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා (පී. පී. ඩී. කෙනමත් මයා) කථා කරද්දී කීව, එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයේ භාෂා ප්‍රතිපත්තිය ගැන. එම අවස්ථාවේදී ගරු අගමැතිතුමා කීව. "ඒක අපේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනය නොවෙයි" කියා. 1965 එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනය අපට සොයා ගන්න පුළුවන් වුණා. එහි තියෙන්නේ මැද කොළඹ තුන් වන ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා කී දේමයි. මා එය කියවන්න කැමතියි. ඒ මෙසේයි:

“On the Language issue we shall summon a Round Table Conference to discuss ways and means of unifying the nation within the framework of Sinhala as the official language of the State. As Sinhala is spoken by the largest number of the permanent citizens it is natural that this language should be adopted as a unifying language. Provision will be made for the use of Tamil so that no harm is caused to any permanent citizen who does not know the official language.”

මෙහි තියෙන්නේ එදා කී වචන ඊකමයි. නමුත් එදා ගරු අගමැතිතුමා කීව එය එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනය නොවෙයි කියා. පත්‍රයෙන් කී නිසා එසේ කියන්නට ඇති. මා කියෙව්වෙ එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය මගින් නිකුත් කර ඇති 1965 මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයෙනුයි.

ගරු ජේ. ආර්. ජයවර්ධන  
(The Hon. J. R. Jayewardene)  
ඕක හරි.

සිරිමාවෝ බණ්ඩාරනායක මිය  
(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)  
ඒකමයි එදා කීවෙත්

ගරු ජේ. ආර්. ජයවර්ධන  
(The Hon. J. R. Jayewardene)  
නැහැ, නැහැ. ඕක කියෙව්වනම් පිළිගන්නව.

සිරිමාවෝ බණ්ඩාරනායක මිය

(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)

මග විධියේ පරස්පර විරෝධී අදහස් තිබෙන පක්ෂ එකතු වී එකට ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටවීමේ මොන විධියේ ප්‍රතිපත්ති උඩද, මොන විධියේ කොන්දේසි උඩද කියා ගරු අගමැතිතුමාගෙන් මා නැවත වරක් ප්‍රශ්න කරන්න කැමතියි.

ආචාර්ය එන්. එම්. පෙරේරා  
(Dr. N. M. Perera)  
එතුමා කියාහි.

සිරිමාවෝ බණ්ඩාරනායක මිය  
(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)

මහජනයාට එය දැනගන්නට යුතුකමක් තියෙනව. අපටත් එය දැනගන්න අයිතියක් තියෙනව. ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදී රටක ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට ඉදිරිපත් වී සිටිනවාය කියන එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය අදම මේ ගැන මහජනයාට ප්‍රකාශයක් කරනවා ඇත කියා අපි විශ්වාස කරනව.

ඒ වාගේම අධිකාර ප්‍රතිපත්තිය පිළිබඳව මේ මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනවල තිබෙන්නේ වෙනස් වෙනස් අදහස්. ඒ ගැන ඊයේ දොම්පෙ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා ( එ/පී. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා ) විස්තර කළ නිසා මම මේ ගරු සභාවේ කාල වේලා ගැනීමට බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ නැහැ.

බුද්ධාගම ගැන-ආගම් ප්‍රතිපත්තිය ගැන-සමහර පක්ෂ, විශේෂයෙන්ම මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණත්, ජාතික විමුක්ති පෙරමුණත් මොනවද කියා තිබෙන්නේ ? 1964 අපේ රජය විසින් ඉදිරි පත් කරන ලද රාජ්‍ය සේවක කට්ටේ ස්තූති යෝජනාවට සංශෝධනයක් ඉදිරිපත් කරමින් මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණත්, ජාතික විමුක්ති පෙරමුණත් කීවේ මෙසේයි :

“Legislation should be framed that the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Heads of Departments, Staff Officers, Officers of the Armed Forces and Heads of Schools should be all Buddhists.”

අපි දැනගන්න කැමතියි, මහජන එක්සත් පෙරමුණත්, ජාතික විමුක්ති පෙරමුණත් දැන් ආගම් ප්‍රතිපත්තිය කුමක්ද කියා.

ගරු ඩී. පී. ආර්. ගුණවර්ධන  
(The Hon. D. P. R. Gunawardena)  
ප්‍රකාශනය කියවන්න.

සිරිමාවෝ බණ්ඩාරනායක මිය  
(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)

මේ විධියේ නොයෙක් පරස්පර විරෝධී අදහස් ප්‍රකාශ කර ඇති පක්ෂ එක් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවීමේ මොන ප්‍රතිපත්ති උඩද කියා මම නැවතත් අහනවා.

ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවීම ගැන 1960 අප්‍රේල් මාසයේදී ගරු අගමැතිතුමා විසින් කරන ලද ප්‍රකාශය ගැන ඊයේ දොම්පේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රී තුමා සඳහන් කළා. ඒ නිසා එය නැවත වරක් කියවීමට මම අදහස් කරන්නේ නැහැ. එහි අන්තිමට තිබෙන වචන පමණක් මම කියන්නම්. ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවක් යයි නිසැකවම කිය යුත්තේ සියලුම ප්‍රධාන පක්ෂ වලට තැනක් ලැබී ඇති ආණ්ඩුවකටයයි එහි කියා තිබෙනවා. ඒ අනුව අද පිහිටුවා තිබෙන මේ ඊකියා ජාතික ආණ්ඩුව පිහිටුවූයේ මේ රටේ තිබෙන ප්‍රධාන පක්ෂ සියල්ලම ඇතුලත් කරගෙනදැයි මම අහනවා. ගරු අගමැතිතුමා කළ ඒ ප්‍රකාශය උඩ මේ ආණ්ඩුවට . "ජාතික ආණ්ඩුව " යනුවෙන් සඳහන් කිරීම සුදු සුය කියා මා හිතන්නේ නැහැ. එම නිසා මේ ආණ්ඩුවට වෙනත් නමක් තබන හැටියට මා අගමැතිතුමාගෙන් ඉල්ලා සිටිනවා. එතුමාගේ ප්‍රකාශය උඩම මේ දැන් තිබෙන නම සුදු සු නැති බව කාටත් පෙනී යා යුතුයි.

ඊළඟට, මේ රාජ්‍යය කටාවේ සඳහන් වී තිබෙන කරුණු කීපයක් ගැන සඳහන් කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වෙනවා. මීට පෙර තිබුණු ආණ්ඩුව විසින් කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වූ වැඩ කීපයක් ගැන මේ රාජ්‍යය කටාවේ සඳහන් වී තිබෙනවා. මෙහි සඳහන් යම් යම් කාරණා පිළිබඳව කෙටුම්පත් පතන් පවා අප පිළියෙල කර තිබුණා. ඒ කරුණු ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීම සඳහා අප මේ ආණ්ඩුවට සහයෝගය දෙන බව මතක් කරන්නට කැමතියි. එහෙත් මේ රටෙහි විදේශීයයන් සතුව තිබෙන බැංකු හා ඒජන්සි හවුසස් ගැන මෙම රාජ්‍යය කටාවේ සඳහන් වී නැහැ. මේ රටින් පිට රට ඇදී යන ධනය නවත්වා ගැනීම සඳහා බැංකු ඒජන්සි හවුසස් පාලනය කිරීමට මෙයට පෙර තිබුණු ආණ්ඩුව අදහස් කළා. එසේ වුවත් මේ ආණ්ඩුවේ මේ රාජ්‍යය කටාවේ නම් ඒ ගැන කිසිවක් සඳහන් කර නැහැ. එයින් අපට පෙනී යන්නේ මේ හවුල් ආණ්ඩුව මේ රටේ සිටින විදේශීය කොමිපැති කාරයන්, විදේශීය වෙළෙඳුන් හා ස්වදේශීය වෙළෙඳුන් ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට අදහස් කර ඇති බවයි. අපේ පොදු ජනතාවට චුවමනා වන්නේ නියම සමාජවාදී ප්‍රතිපත්ති ක්‍රියාවේ යෙදවීමටයි. මේ රටේ සිටින සුළු පිරිසකගේ ධනයක්, අයිතිවාසිකමක් ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට ඉදිරිපත් වී සිටින ආණ්ඩුවක් ලෙසින් අපට මේ ආණ්ඩුව හඳුන්වන්නට පුළුවනි. එම නිසා මේ රාජ්‍යය කටාවේ සඳහන් වන කරුණු සියල්ලටම සහයෝගය දෙන්නට අපට බැහැ.

එසේ වුවද ප්‍රගතිශීලී යෝජනා ක්‍රියාවේ යෙදවීම සඳහා අපේ සහයෝගය සෑම විටම දෙන්නට කැමතියි. පොදු ජනතාවගේ අභිවෘද්ධිය සලකා ප්‍රගතිශීලී වැඩවලට අපේ සහයෝගය දෙනවා.

මේ රාජාසන කටාවේ බුද්ධිගම ගැනත් සඳහන් කර තිබෙනවා. ලංකාව නිදහස්ව සිටි අවධියේදී තිබුණ තත්ත්වයට බුද්ධිගම නැවත නගා සිටුවන බව සඳහන් කර තිබෙනවා. මෙයින් අපට පෙනී යන්නේ, මේ රටට නිදහස ලබා ගත්තේ එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය විසින් යයි නොයෙක් වර ඒ අය කියා ඇති නමුත් ඇත්තෙන්ම තවම මේ රටට නිදහස ලැබී නැති බවයි. "ලංකාව නිදහස්ව සිටි අවධියේදී තිබූ තත්ත්වයට" යනුවෙන් සඳහන් කිරීමෙන් අපට හිතා ගන්නට තියෙන්නේ ඒකයි.

කෙසේ වුවත්, 1948 දී අපට දේශපාලන නිදහස ලැබුණා යයි කියනවා. නමුත් දේශපාලන නිදහස සමගම අපට ආර්ථික හා සංස්කෘතික නිදහස නොලැබුණු බව කවුරුනුත් දන්නා කාරණයක්. නොයෙකුත් බලවේග හුඟක් දුරට කඩා බිඳ දමා 1956 දී සිට ආර්ථික නිදහසක් ලබා ගන්නට අපට පුළුවන් වුණා. ඒ වගේම ආගමට හා සංස්කෘතියට තැනක් දෙන්නට අපට පුළුවන් වුණා. එහෙත් ඒ බලවේගයන් සියල්ලක්ම කඩා දමන්නට අපට බැරි වුණු බව පිළිගන්නව.

එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයත් මේ හවුල් ආණ්ඩුවත් එය පිළිගෙන තිබෙන බව පෙනෙන්නට තිබීම ගැන මා සන්තෝෂ වෙනවා. රාජාසන කටාවේ මේ විධියට සඳහන් කර තිබෙන්නේ ඒ නිසාය කියා මා විශ්වාස කරනවා. එහෙත් ලංකාව නිදහස්ව සිටි අවධියේදී තිබූ තත්ත්වයට බෞද්ධිගම නැවත නගා සිටුවීම ගැන නම් අපට ඒ තරම් සන්තෝෂ වීමට පුළුවන් කමක් නැහැ. නැවත වරක් ඒ තත්ත්වයට නගා සිටුවීම අපට ඒ තරම් දුරට සන්තෝෂ වීමට කාරණයක් නොවෙයි, මා එසේ කියන්නේ ඇයි? මීට අවුරුදු 450 කට පෙර මේ රටේ බෞද්ධිගමට තිබුණු තත්ත්වය අද ඊට නැවතත් ලබා දෙන්නට අප උත්සාහ කරනවා නම්, මා කියන්න කැමතියි අප එය පිළිගන්නේ නැති බව. මක් නිසාද, අප බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ මීට අවුරුදු 450 කට ප්‍රථම මේ රටේ බෞද්ධිගමට තිබුණු තත්ත්වයට සමාන තත්ත්වයක් බෞද්ධිගමට දැන් ලබා දීමට නම් මා හිතනවා බෞද්ධිගම නැති කිරීමට මිස එය බෞද්ධිගම දියුණු කිරීමට කරන යෝජනාවක් නම් නොවේය කියා.

විශේෂයෙන්ම සමාජ සේවා කටයුතුවල යෙදී සිටින අනෙකුත් නොයෙක් නොයෙක් ආගම් අද ලෝකයේ තිබෙනවා. අවුරුදු 450 කට පෙර අපේ රජවරුන්ගේ කාලයේදී ලෝකයේ අනෙක් ආගම් සම්බන්ධයෙන් කෙසේ වෙතත්, බෞද්ධයන්ට ඒ විධියේ සමාජ සේවා කටයුතුවලට කාලය යෙදීමට වුවමනාවක් තිබුණේ නැහැ. එහෙත් අද තත්ත්වය එහෙම නොවෙයි. විශේෂයෙන්ම විදේශිකයන් මේ රටේ බලය අල්ලාගෙන සිටි කාලයේදී අනෙක් ආගම්වලට විශේෂ තැනක් ලැබුණා. පාඨශාලා ඇති කිරීමටත්, ඒවා වැඩි දියුණු කිරීමටත්, වෙනත් සමාජ සේවා කටයුතුවලටත් එවකට තිබුණු ආණ්ඩු වලින් ඒ අයට නොයෙක් විධියේ ආධාර ලැබුණා. එහෙත් අපේ බෞද්ධිගමට ඒ විධියේ තැනක් එළා ලැබුණේ නැහැ. ඒ නිසා ඒ ආගම් ඒ



තත්ත්වයෙන් තියෙද්දී අපේ බෞද්ධාගම පමණක් මීට අවුරුදු 450 කට පෙර තිබුණු තත්ත්වයට නැවත වරක් ගෙන ඒමට මේ ආණ්ඩුව උත්සාහ කරනව නම් ඒ ගැන අප කනගාටු වෙනව. මක්නිසාද, ඒ කාලයෙන් පස්සෙ දැන් බෞද්ධාගමට තැන ලැබී තිබෙනව. බෞද්ධයන්ටත් මේ පසුගිය කාලයදී සමාජසේවා කටයුතු ආදියත් ඇතුළුව ආගමික කටයුතු ආදියේ යෙදීමට නොයෙක් අවස්ථාවල් ලැබුණා, එතකොට අවුරුදු 450 කට පුළුම තිබුණු තත්ත්වයට බෞද්ධාගම නැවත වරක් ගෙන ඒමට උත්සාහ කරනව නම් මා හිතනව ඒක අපේ බෞද්ධාගමේ දියුණුවට ඒ තරම් ප්‍රයෝජනයක් ලැබීමට ඇති වන දෙයක් නොවේය කියා. එයින් බෞද්ධාගමට ඒ තරම් ප්‍රයෝජනයක් නොවන බව සඳහන් කරන්න කැමතියි. ඒ නිසා බෞද්ධාගම සම්බන්ධයෙන් අප ඉදිරිපත් කළ සංශෝධනය මේ ගරු සභාව පිළිගන්නව ඇත කියා මා විශ්වාස කරනව,

රාජාසන කථාවේ ඊලඟට සංස්කෘතිය ගැනත් සඳහන් කර තිබෙනව. ජාතික අභිමානයක් හා අප මුතුන් මිත්තන්ගෙන් අපට හිමි වූ උතුම් දායාදයක් ද වන ජාතික කලාවට හා සංස්කෘතියටද නව පිවනයක් ලබා දෙනු ඇතැයි එහි සඳහන් වෙනව. 1948 සිට 1956 දක්වා එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය ආණ්ඩුව ගෙන ගිය කාලයේ අපේ රටේ සංස්කෘතියටත්, බෞද්ධාගමටත් තැනක් නොලැබුණු බව රටේ ජනතාව පිළිගෙන ඉවරයි. 1956 ට පසුව සංස්කෘතික දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවක් පිහිටුවා අපේ සංස්කෘතියට නියම තැන ලබා දෙන්නට පුළුවන් වුණා. සංස්කෘතිය දියුණු කිරීමට 1956න් පසුව ඇති වූ ආණ්ඩුවෙන් සිදු වූ සේවය මේ රටේ ජනතාව දන්නව. මේ සංස්කෘතිය ගැන සඳහන් කරන විට මට එක කාරණාවක් මතක් කරන්නට සිදු වෙනව. දෙහිවල-ගල්කිස්සෙ මන්ත්‍රීතුමා (එස්. ද එස්. ජයසිංහ මයා.) භාරගොල්ලේ ඇති වූ සිද්ධියක් ගැන එදා විවාදයේදී සඳහන් කරමින් එය බොරුවක්ය කීවා. මෙය මේ ගරු සභාවේදී සඳහන් කරන්න මා බලාපොරොත්තු වුණේ නැතැ. නමුත් දෙහිවල-ගල්කිස්සෙ මන්ත්‍රීතුමා එය සඳහන් කළ නිසා ඒ පිළිබඳව මේ සභාවට ඇත්ත සිද්ධිය කියාදීම මගේ යුතුකමක්.

එදා ගරු අගමැතිතුමා මාලිගාව වැදින්න නුවර වන්දනා ගමන ගිය අවස්ථාවේ එතුමාගේ පස්සෙන් කොළ ෂර්ට් ඇඳගෙන, කොඩි දමා ගෙන කාර්වන් ආදී වාහන වලින් එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ විශාල පිරිසක් ගියා. ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී මාත් භාරගොල්ලේ සිටියා. මේ සිද්ධිය අගමැතිතුමා දන්නවාය කියා මා හිතන්නේ නැතැ. එතුමා දන්නවා නම් එසේ කරන්නට ඉඩ දේවිය කියා මා හිතන්නේ නැතැ. ඔවුන් ඒ සොහොන ලඟදී හයියෙන් හෝන් ගහගෙන - “Silence Zone” කියලා බෝඩ් එකක් ගහල තියෙනවා- හු කියාගෙන ගියා. එමෙන්ම සවස ඔවුන් සමහරෙක් ආපසු එන විටත්- අගමැතිතුමා නම් එදා ආවේ නැතැ-පැයක් යනතුරු විටින් විට අර විධියටම එතනදී හෝන් ගහගෙන හු කියාගෙන ආවා. ඔවුන් මොනවාදෝ කිය කියා හු කියාගෙන ආවා. මා ගේ ඇතුලේ සිටි නිසා මොනවා කීවාද කියා මට ඇහුණේ නැතැ. නමුත් මොනවාදෝ කියාගෙනයි ගියේ. ඒ අවස්ථාවේ ඒ කොට්ඨාශයේ කීප

දෙනෙක් මගේ ගෙදරට ඇවිත් සිටියා. ඒ අයට ඉවසීමක් නැතිව එළියට යන්නට හියා-මා හිතන්නේ ඒවාට පිලිතුරු දෙන්න වෙන්න ඇති-එහෙත් එය දිවංගත අගමැතිතුමාට කරන අගෞරවයක්ය, එසේ යන්නට එපාය කියා මා ඔවුන් නවත්වා ගත්තා.

ඊට පසුවත් රාජාසන කටාව ඉදිරිපත් කළ අවස්ථාවේ, එනම්, අප්‍රේල් 9 වැනිදාත් එවැනි දේ සිදු වුණා. නොයෙක් නොයෙක් පළාත්වලින් එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ අය ආවා වෙන්න ඇති. ඒ පැමිණි අය ආපසු යන විටත් කොළපාට කොඩි දමාගෙන කොළ කම්ප ඇඳගෙන ඒ වගේම හු කියාගෙන එතනින් ගියා. ඇත්තටම ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී මට ලොකු වේදනාවක් ඇති වුණා. අපේ සංස්කෘතිය ආරක්ෂා කරනවාය, සංස්කෘතියට තැන දෙනවාය කියා සිටින ඊතියා ජාතික රජයට මතක් කරන්න කැමතියි, දු ධුගැමුණු රජතුමා එතුමා සමග යුද්ධ කර පරාජය වූ එළාර රජුගේ සොහොන ළඟින් යන විට එතැනදී වාහන වලින් බැස ගෞරව කර යන හැටියට එතුමාගේ සහකාරයින්ට කියා තිබුණා. අපේ සංස්කෘතිය අනුව හිඟන්නාගේ සොහොනට වුණත් අප ගෞරව කරන්න ඕනෑ. ලෝකයා පිලිගත් නායකයෙකුගේ සොහොනට මේ විධියට අගෞරව කිරීම ගැන මා කනගාටු වෙනව. අපේ සංස්කෘතිය ආරක්ෂා කරන්නේ මෙහෙමද කියා මේ ඊතියා ජාතික ආණ්ඩුවෙන් මා අහන්න කැමතියි. මේ ගැන සඳහන් කරන්න මා බලාපොරොත්තු වුණේ නැහැ. එහෙත් දෙහිවල-ගල්කිස්සේ මන්ත්‍රීතුමා විසින් එය බොරුවක් යයි කියා තිබුණු නිසයි මට මෙය සඳහන් කරන්න සිදු වුණේ. සමහර විට ඒ මන්ත්‍රීතුමා ඒ වෙලාවේ එතන නොසිටියා වෙන්න පුළුවන්. එහෙමනම් ඒ ගැන කරුණු හරිහැටි නොදැන නැතෙයි කියන එක හරි නැහැ. මා එතන සිටි නිසා මගේ කනට ඇසුණු නිසයි මා කියන්නේ.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, ඉන්දියානු ප්‍රශ්නය ගැන මා එතරම් විස්තරයක් කරන්න බලාපොරොත්තු වෙන්නේ නැහැ. මන්ද ? දොම්පෙ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීවරයා ( එ/ජී. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා. ) ඒ ගැන විස්තර කළ නිසා. නමුත් ඒ ගැන කෙටි විස්තරයක් වත් මේ අවස්ථාවේදී කිරීම මගේ යුතුකමක් කියා මම කල්පනා කරනව. ඉන්දියානු ප්‍රශ්නය අවුරුදු ගණනාවක් තිස්සේම ඉතාමත් උග්‍රවේගෙන ආ ප්‍රශ්නයක්. මෙය විසඳීමට 1960 මැතිවරණ ප්‍රකාශනයෙන් අප පොරොන්දු වක් දු න්නා. අප ඒ අනුව මේ රටේ දේශපාලන පක්ෂ වල නායකයන් සමග සාකච්ඡා කර විශේෂයෙන්ම අගමැතිතුමාත් සමග සාකච්ඡා කීපයක් කර එතුමාගේ අදහස් දැනගෙන- මම අගමැතිතුමාට ආරාධනා කළා මාත් සමග ඉන්දියාවට ගොස් මේ ගැන සාකච්ඡා කර ප්‍රශ්නය විසඳීමට, නමුත් යම් යම් හේතූන් නිසා එතුමාට පැමිණෙන්න බැරිය කීවා- තමයි සාකච්ඡාව සඳහා ගියේ. එම නිසා අපේ ආණ්ඩුව විසින් ඇති කර ගත් මෙම ගිවිසුම අගමැතිතුමාගේ අදහස්වලට විරුද්ධ ගිවිසුමක් නොවන නිසා ක්‍රියාත්මක කරනවා ඇත කියා අප විශ්වාස කරනව.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මට එක් අවස්ථාවකදී සිද්ධ වුණා, දිල්ලි නගරයේ සිට එවකට විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ නායකතුමාව සිටි අගමැතිතුමාට

ටෙලිෆෝන් මගින් කථා කර යම්කිසි කරුණු කීපයක් ගැන අදහස් දැනගන්නට. එතුමාගේ අදහස් දැනගෙනයි මා එම ගිවිසුමට අත්සන් තැබුවේ. එම ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාවේ යෙදවීම සඳහා මා ලංකාවට පැමිණියාට පසු ඉන්දියානු ආණ්ඩුවේ නිලධාරීන් කීප දෙනෙකුම අපේ රටට ආවා. එසේ පැමිණ අපේ ආණ්ඩුවේ නිලධාරීන් සමග සාකච්ඡා කර මෙම ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමේ වැඩපිළිවෙළ සකස් කළා. මෙම රාජාසන කථාවෙහි තිබෙනවා, මෙම ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට තිබෙන බාධාවල් ඉවත් කර ගැනීම පිණිස නැවත වරක් ඉන්දියානු ආණ්ඩුව සමග සාකච්ඡා කරන්න යනවාය කියා. මෙම බාධාවල් මොනවාද කියා අප දැන ගන්න කැමතියි. අප දන්නා හැටියට, එම ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාවෙහි යෙදවීමට බාධාවල් ඇතැයි අප විශ්වාස කරන්නෙ නැහැ. එම නිසා අගමැතිතුමාගෙන් මම ඉල්ලා සිටිනවා, එතුමාගේ කැමැත්තත් ඇතුළු අත්සන් තැබූ එම ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට උත්සාහ ගන්නා ලෙස. එසේ ක්‍රියාවේ යෙදීමේදී අපේ මුළු සහයෝගය ඒ සඳහා දෙන්න ලැහැස්ති බව මා එතුමාට කියන්න කැමතියි.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මේ රටේ පුරවැසිභාවය දෙන ලද ඉන්දියානු ජාතිකයින් හා පුරවැසිභාවය දෙනු ලබන ඉන්දියන් කාරයන් තුන් ලක්ෂයක් පමණ දෙනාද ඇතුලත් වන සේ වෙනම ජන්ද ලැයිස්තුවක් සකස් කිරීම පිළිබඳව අප සාකච්ඡා කළා. නමුත් ඉන්දියානු ආණ්ඩුවත් සමග නොවෙයි සාකච්ඡා කළේ. එය ඉන්දියානු ආණ්ඩුවේ වැඩක් නොවෙයි. එය අපේ අයිතිවාසිකමක්. නමුත් අප අගමැතිතුමාත් සමග සාකච්ඡා කළා මේ කාරණය ගැන. අප වෙනුවෙන් අගමැතිතුමා තොණ්ඩමන් මහතා සමග ඒ ගැන සාකච්ඡා කළ බව ඊයේ දොම්පෙ මන්ත්‍රීතුමාත් එතුමාගේ කථාවේදී සඳහන් කළා. අගමැතිතුමාත් එය පිළිගත්ත. මම විශ්වාස කරනව අගමැතිතුමාගේ කීම අනුව තොණ්ඩමන් මන්ත්‍රීතුමාත් ඒ කාරණය පිළිගත්තා. නමුත් වෙනත් ක්‍රම ක්‍රියාවේ යොදවන්නටය කියා එතුමා කී බව ඩඩ්ලි සේනානායක මහත්මයා- එකල විරුද්ධ පක්ෂයේ නායකතුමා- අපට කීවා. එම නිසා මට පෙනී යන්නෙ නැහැ මෙය ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට ඇති බාධාවල් මොනවාද කියා. තොණ්ඩමන් මන්ත්‍රීතුමාගේ හිත අතුලේ තිබෙන ඔය බාධාවල් මග හැරවීමට ගියොත් තම් මම හිතන්නෙ නැහැ මේ ගිවිසුම ක්‍රියාත්මක කරන්න පුළුවන් වේවිය කියා.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, යාපනේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා (පොන්නම්බලම් මයා) අපට චෝදනාවක් කළා, මධ්‍යස්ථ ප්‍රතිපත්ති ගැන කියමින් අප ඉන්දු චීන අරගලය ඇති වූ අවස්ථාවේදී ඉන්දියාව වෙනුවෙන් ප්‍රකාශයක් නොදුන්නාය කියා. ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී අප එක රටකවත් පැත්තක් ගත්තානම් කවදාවත් අපට ඒ රටවල් දෙක අතර සමාදානයක් ඇති කිරීමට අප ගත් ක්‍රියාමාර්ගය ඉදිරිපත් කරන්නට පුළුවන්කමක් ඇතිවෙන්නෙ නැති බව මා ප්‍රකාශ කරනවා. අප මධ්‍යස්ථව සිටි නිසා තමයි තවත් මධ්‍යස්ථ රටවල් හයක නියෝජිතයන් කැඳවා සාකච්ඡා කර චීනයටත් ඉන්දියාවටත් ගොස් ඒ ආණ්ඩු දෙක සමග සාකච්ඡා කර සමාදානයක් ඇති කර ගන්නටය කියා ඉල්ලා සිටීමට පුළුවන් වුණේ. එදා අප අනුගමනය කළ ක්‍රියා

මාර්ගය යාපනේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා පිළි නොගත්තාට, දිවංගත ඉන්දියානු අගමැති නේරු තුමාත් ඉන්දියාවේ වෙනත් නායකයින් කීප දෙනෙකුත් පිළිගත් බවත්, ඔවුන් ඒ ක්‍රියාමාර්ගය ඉතාමත් ප්‍රශංසනීය බව සඳහන් කළ බවත් මා එතුමාට ප්‍රකාශ කරන්නට සතුටුයි. එපමණක් නොවෙයි, ඒ ගත් ක්‍රියාමාර්ගය සම්බන්ධයෙන් ඔවුන් අපට ණයගැතිය කියාත් ඒ නායකයන් කියා සිටියා. ඉන්දියානු ප්‍රශ්නය විසඳා ගැනීමට අපට පහසුවෙන් ගිවිසුමක් ඇති කර ගන්න පුළුවන් වුණේත් ඉන්දු චීන අරගලයේ දී අප ගත් ක්‍රියාමාර්ගය අනුවත්, ඉන්දියාවත් අපත් අතර තිබුණු මිත්‍රත්වයත් නිසා යයි මා විස්වාස කරනවා.

ඊළඟට යාපනේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා වෙළඳ නාවික ගිවිසුම ගැනත් සඳහන් කළා. මා ඒ සම්බන්ධයෙන් කතා කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වුණේ නැහැ. මේ ගිවිසුම සම්බන්ධයෙන් ගරු සභාවේ විවාදයක් ඇති වුණා. ඒ කාලයේ යාපනේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා මේ සභාවේ සිටියේ නැහැ. ඒ නිසා අපේ දොමිපේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමා ( එ/පී. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා. ) ආණ්ඩුව වෙනුවෙන් කළ කටාවෙන් අවශ්‍ය කොටස් පමණක් යාපනේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමාගේ දැන ගැනීම සඳහා කියවන්නට කැමතියි. මා මේ කියවන්නේ 1963 අගෝස්තු 30 වන දින හැන්සාඩ් වාර්තාවේ 986 වන තීරුවෙන්:

"I now propose, with your permission to deal with some of the other points. A question was asked in regard to the Maritime Treaty that has been entered into between Ceylon and the Government of China. The document itself was tabled some days ago before this house. You will find that this a purely commercial agreement dealing with commercial vessels engaged in cargo and passenger services to and from the two countries or a third country. Most favoured nation treatment is granted by the agreement to the contracting parties. This means nothing more nor less than that we would grant to China the same treatment that we grant to other nations in respect of taxes, dues and charges on vessels and other customs and quarantine formalities. In the event of war the terms of the agreement like that of any other will be subject to review depending on the circumstances then prevailing. I find that we have signed a similar agreement with the Government of the U. S. S. R. on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1962. As far as the Government of Ceylon is concerned we are prepared to sign similar agreements with any country with whom we have diplomatic relations and

who wish to conclude such an agreement. There is nothing sinister or circumspect or peculiar in these agreements. As far as we can see no one raised any objection when this Government signed that agreement with the U. S. S. R. I do not know whether it is the ideological conflicts which are creating these problems between these two Governments and whether there are sections of their counterparts in this House. As far as we are concerned, the Ceylon Government has no such problem. If any Government in the world requests such agreement, notwithstanding that we have no shipping fleet with which we can take advantage of the terms of the agreement—we hope soon to have our own fleet, and if and when we do so it will be certainly helpful to have an agreement of that sort already concluded.

[OFFICIAL REPORT, 30<sup>th</sup> August 1963; Vol. 53. c. 986.]

මෙම ගිවිසුම ගැන 1963 අගෝස්තු 30 වැනිදා, දොම්පේ මන්ත්‍රීතුමා ( එෆ්. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා. ) කළ කථාවේ කොටසක් ගැනයි මා සඳහන් කළේ. ඒ ගිවිසුම වැරදිය කියනව නම් මේ ආණ්ඩුවට කරන්නට තිබෙන්නේ ඒක ඉරා දැමීමයි.

එෆ්. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා.  
(Mr. F. R. Dias Bandaranaike)  
ඒක ඉරා දමනවද ?

ගරු මන්ත්‍රීවරයෙක්  
(An Hon. Member)  
භයමාසයක් ඉන්නට ඕනෑ.

එෆ්. ආර්. ඩයස් බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා.  
(Mr. F. R. Dias Bandaranaike)  
දැන්මම වහාම දෙන්නකො තෝරීස් එක. (බාබා කිරීමක්)

සිරිමාවෝ බණ්ඩාරනායක මයා  
(Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike)

මගේ කථාව අවසාන කරන්නට පෙර තව කරුණක් දෙකක් ගැන සඳහන් කරන්නට තිබෙනවා. මා විශ්වාස කරනවා, යටියන්තොට ගරු මන්ත්‍රිතුමාත් (ආචාර්ය එන්. එම්. පෙරේරා) ඒ ගැන සඳහන් කළාය කියා. එතුමා කථා කරද්දී මා මේ සභාවේ සිටියේ නැහැ. ඒ කාරණය නම් මාර්තු මාසයේ 23 වෙනිදා මා අගමැති ධුරයෙන් අස් නොවුණේ ඇයි කියන කාරණය. මැතිවරණ ප්‍රතිඵල ලැබුණේ මාර්තු 23 වෙනිදා සවසයි. ප්‍රතිඵල සියල්ලම ලැබුණාට පසු මා රජ ගෙදරට ගොස් අග්‍රාණ්ඩුකාරතුමාට කිව්වා, "මගේ අස්වීමේ ලියුම හෙට උදේ එවනවා. මන්ද? මගේ ඇමතිවරු තවම කොළඹට ආවේ නැහැ; මගේ යුතුකමක් තිබෙනවා ඇමතිවරුන්ට දන්නවා මගේ අස්වීම ඉදිරිපත් කරන්නට" කියා. පසුවදා එනම් 24 වැනිදා උදේ මා ඇමතිවරු කැඳවා සාකච්ඡා කළ විට සමහර ඇමතිවරුන් කියා සිටිය, එකම පක්ෂයකටත් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට අවශ්‍ය තරම් සම්පූර්ණ ආසන ගණනක් ලැබී නැති නිසා අනිත් පක්ෂවල සහයෝගය අපට ලබා ගන්නට පුළුවන් වුණොත් ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට උත්සාහ කරන්නට කියා. ඒ ඉල්ලීම නිසා මගේ අස්වීමේ ලියවිල්ල ඒ අවස්ථාවේදී යවන්නට ටිකක් ප්‍රමාද වුණා. ඒ ගැන මා අස්වී යන විට කළ ප්‍රකාශයේ විස්තර කර තිබෙනවා. මේ ගරු සභාවේ දැන ගැනීම පිණිස මා එය කියවන්නට කැමතියි. මා එදා කිව්වේ අපේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිවලට විරුද්ධ නොවන විධියේ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවක් හෝ කොන්දේසියක් හෝ උඩ ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට පුළුවන් නම් මිස අපේ ප්‍රතිපත්තිවලට විරුද්ධ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවක් හෝ කොන්දේසියක් හෝ උඩ ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට අපි සූදානම් නැති බවයි. ඒ ප්‍රකාශනයේ ඉංග්‍රීසි පිටපත දැනට මා ළඟ තිබෙනවා. ඒ මෙසේයි:

"On the night of Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, after I had received the results of the General Elections I called on His Excellency the Governor-General and indicated to him that I shall be submitting my resignation and that of my Government and that I shall do it after meeting my ministers the next morning. When the Cabinet Ministers met me on the 24<sup>th</sup> morning many of them were of the view that the possibilities of my forming a Government should be explored as no single party had gained an overall majority. I acceded to this wish of my Ministers on the definite understanding that if I was to form a Government, none of the principles and policies which I had hitherto been following was to be abandoned. I was later satisfied that it would not be possible for me to form a Government and this morning I tendered my resignation and that of my Ministers to the Governor-General."

This was on the 25<sup>th</sup> morning

අපි ඒකාධිපති ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවන්නට උත්සාහ කළා යයි අපට චෝදනාද කරනවා. ඒ පිළිබඳව මා මේ අවස්ථාවේදී විස්තර කළ යුතුයයි මා හිතන්නෙ නැහැ. මන්ද? මැද කොළඹ ගරු තුන්වෙනි මන්ත්‍රීතුමාත් (පී. පී. ඩී. කෙනමත් මයා.) යටියන්කොට ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමාත් (ආචාර්ය එන්. එම්. පෙරේරා) ඒ ගැන සඳහන් කර තිබෙනව. නමුත් මේ ගරු සභාවට මම කියන්න කැමතියි ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට ඉදිරිපත් වී සිටින අපේ පක්ෂය ඒකාධිපති ආණ්ඩුවක් පිහිටුවීමට කිසිම බලාපොරොත්තුවක් නැති බව. මගේ ඉල්ලා අස්වීමේ ලිපිය ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමට ප්‍රමාද වුණේ දවස් එකහමාරයි. ඒ ගැන මොන තරම් ප්‍රචාරයක් රටේ ගෙන ගියාද ? කිසි කෙනෙක් රටේ නීතියට ගරු කරන්නෙ නැත කියා චෝදනා කළා. පෙරේදා බොරැල්ලෙ ගරු මන්ත්‍රී තුමා (ගරු එම්. එච්. මොනොමඩ්) සිය කථාවේදී සඳහන් කළා, එදා රටේ කිසි කෙනෙක් නීතියට ගරු කෙළේ නැත කියා. අරලිය ගහ මන්දිරය අසල සිටි ජනයා ගැන සඳහන් කරමින් කිව්ව, එතැනින් යන්නට පවා එතුමා බිය වුණාය කියා. මක් නිසාද ? ඒ තරම්ම එදා නීතියට ගරු නොකරන තත්ත්වයක් මේ රටේ ඇති වී තිබුණාලු. නමුත් එතැන සිටි ජනතාව ඉතාමත් සාමකාමීව සිටි බව මට ස්ථිර වශයෙන්ම කියන්න පුළුවන්. ඒ විධියේ බොරු ප්‍රචාර එදා ගෙන ගියාක් මෙන්ම අදත් ගෙන යනව. නමුත් කවුරු කෙසේ කීවත්, මේ දක්වා ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කළ අපි ඉදිරියටත් ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කරන බව මේ අවස්ථාවේදී සඳහන් කරන්න කැමතියි.

1962 ජනවාරි මාසෙ 27 වෙනිදා ඇති වන්නට ගිය කුමන්ත්‍රණය සාර්ථක වුණා නම් ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදයට සිදු වන්නට තිබුණො කුමක්ද කියා මා නොකීවාට මේ ගරු සභාවට ඒත්තු යනවා ඇති. කුමන්ත්‍රණයට සම්බන්ධ වූ උදව්‍යට දඩුවම් කිරීම සඳහා එදා පාර්ලිමේන්තුවට පණතක් ඉදිරිපත් කළ අවස්ථාවේදී, ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කරනවායයි අද කියන සමහරු එදා ප්‍රකාශ කළ කරුණු අපට අමතක වී ගොස් නැහැ. ඒ සම්බන්ධයෙන් දී ඇති නඩු තීන්දු වෙන් අපට ඒ තත්ත්වය හොඳින් පැහැදිලි වෙනව. අපි එදා කල්පනාකාරීව ක්‍රියා නොකළා නම්, අද මේ රටේ ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදයක් නැහැ. ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ආරක්ෂා කිරීමට අපි එදා උත්සහ කළ නිසා තමයි, අද මේ ආණ්ඩු පක්ෂයේ සිටින මන්ත්‍රීවරුන්ට ප්‍රජාතන්ත්‍රවාදය ගැන ඔය තරම් කෑ ගහන්න පුළුවන් කම ලැබී තිබෙන්නෙ.

ගරු නියෝජ්‍ය කථානායකතුමනි, මීට වඩා දීර්ඝ වශයෙන් කථා කිරීමට මා බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නෙ නැහැ. අගමැතිතුමාගෙ කාලයෙන් මීට වඩා ගැනීමට මම අදහස් කරන්නෙ නැහැ. මට දී තිබෙන්නෙ පැයයි. පැයකට මගේ කථාව සීමා කරන්න මම උත්සාහ කළා. අප මෙම රාජ්‍යය කථාව පිළිබඳ ස්තූති යෝජනාවට සංශෝධන කීපයක් ඉදිරිපත් කර තිබෙනව. අපේ සමාජවාදී ප්‍රතිපත්ති අනුවයි

අපි ඒ සංශෝධන ඉදිරිපත් කර තිබෙන්නේ. මම විශ්වාස කරන්නේ නැහැ ආණ්ඩු පක්ෂයෙන් එම සංශෝධන වලට සහයෝගය දී ඒවා අනුමත කරන්න ජන්දය දේවිය කියා. කෙසේ වෙතත් ජාතික හැඟීමක් ඇති මන්ත්‍රීවරුන් සමහර දෙනෙක් සිටින නිසා මම ප්‍රාර්ථනා කරනවා ඒ මන්ත්‍රීවරුන්ගේ සහයෝගය ඒ සංශෝධන වලට ලැබේවිය කියා. මගේ කටාවට සවන් දී සිටී තමුන්නාන්සේටත් මේ ගරු සභාවටත් ස්තූති කරමින් මගේ කටාව මෙයින් අවසන් කරනවා.



ආණ්ඩුක්‍රම සම්පාදක

මණ්ඩලය

ආණ්ඩුක්‍රම ව්‍යවස්ථා

කෙටුම්පත සම්මත කිරීම

පූ. භා. 10.20

ගරු සිරිමාවෝ

බණ්ඩාරනායක

(The Hon. Sirimavo

Bandaranaike)

**ග**රු සභාපති තුමනි, අද අපේ රටේ ජනතාවට ඓතිහාසික වශයෙන් ඉතාම වැදගත් දිනයක් වනවා වගේම මගේ ජීවිතයේත් ඉතාම වැදගත් දිනයක් හැටියටත් මට අමතක නොවන දිනයක් හැටියටත් මම සලකනවා. එයට විශේෂ හේතුව නම් මාගේ ස්වාමිපුරුෂයා වූ දිවංගත එස්. ඩබ්ලිව්. ආර්. බී. බණ්ඩාරනායක අගමැතිතුමාගේ හිතේ තිබුණ ලොකු බලාපොරොත්තුවක් මුදුන් පමුණුවා ගන්නට හැකි වීමයි. මේ රට කළදා හෝ සංවෘද්ධී, ස්වාධීන, නිදහස් ජනරජයක් කිරීමයි එතුමා තුළ තිබුණ ලොකුම බලාපොරොත්තුව. ඒ අනුව 1956 දී එතුමා ජයග්‍රහණය කර මේ රටේ අගමැති වුවාට පසුව ඒ බලාපොරොත්තුව ඉෂ්ට කිරීම සඳහා නොයෙක් නොයෙක් ක්‍රියාමාර්ග ගැනීමට උත්සාහ කළා. නමුත් නොයෙකුත් බාධා සහ අවහිරකම් නිසා එතුමාගේ ඒ බලාපොරොත්තුව ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීමට පුළුවන් වුණේ නැහැ.

එතුමාගේ අකාල මරණය හේතුවනට ගෙන එතුමාට ඉටුකිරීමට බැරි වූ ඒ බලාපොරොත්තුව එතුමා ගෙන ගිය වැඩපිළිවෙළ යටතේ මේ රටට නායකත්වය දී ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීමට මට පුළුවන් වීම ගැන මම ඉතාමත් සන්තෝෂයට පත් වන අතර එතුමාගේ අකාල මරණය පිළිබඳව මාගේ සංවේගයද මේ අවස්ථාවේදී ප්‍රකාශ කරන්නට කැමතියි. අද එතුමා ජීවතුන් අතර සිටියා නම් මේ ආසනයේ වාඩි වන්නේ එතුමායි. එහෙත් අකල මරණය නිසා එතුමාට ඉටු කරන්නට බැරි වූ බලාපොරොත්තුව මගේ නායකත්වය යටතේ අද ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීමට පුළුවන් වීම නිසා එය මට සන්තෝෂ දිනයක් වාගේම එතුමාගේ අභාවය පිළිබඳව සිතන විට මගේ ඉතාමත් කනගාටුදායක දිනයක් බවත් මම මතක් කරන්න කැමතියි.

දැදිගම ගරු මන්ත්‍රිතුමා-එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ නායක ඩබ්ලිව් සේනානායක මහතා-දැන් ප්‍රකාශයක් කළා. එතුමා සඳහන් කල සමහර කරුණු වලට මම එකඟ වෙනවා. මේ රටේ අපට ප්‍රථම සිටි නායකයන් අපේ රටට ස්වාධීනත්වය-නිදහස-ලබා දීමට නොයෙක් අත්දැම්මන් සටන් කළ බව අපි පිළිගන්නවා. ඒ සටන්වලදී දැක්වූ උත්සාහයත්, එහි ප්‍රතිඵලත් නිසා තමයි 1948 දී අපට සැහෙන විදියක නිදහසක් ලැබුණේ. නමුත් බ්‍රිතාන්‍ය ආණ්ඩුවෙන් ලැබුණ ව්‍යවස්ථා මාලාවක් උඩයි අපට ඒ නිදහස ලැබුණේ. දැන් මුදල් ඇමති ආචාර්ය එන්. එම්. පෙරේරා මහතා ඒ ගැන විස්තරයක් කළා. එවකට මම මේ ගරු සභාවේ සිටියේ නැහැ. එම නිසා මට වඩා ඒ ගැන යම් විස්තරයක් ඉදිරිපත්

කිරීමට එතුමාට පුළුවන කම තිබෙනවා. ඒ අනුව එතුමා විස්තරයක් කළා. මට කිසිම සැකයක් නැහැ, එදා අපට නිදහස ලබා දීම සඳහා ජීවිත පරිත්‍යාගයෙන් සටන් කළ ඒ තායකයන්ගේ බලාපොරොත්තුව චුයේ කවදා හෝ මේ රට සංවෘද්ධී, ස්වාධීන, නිදහස් රටක් කිරීමට බව. නමුත් ඒක සිද්ධ වුණේ නැහැ.

ඒ කාර්යය ඉෂ්ට නොවී තිබෙන අවස්ථාවේදී තමයි, මේ රට ජනරජයක් කිරීම සඳහා පසුගිය මැතිවරණයේදී අපි ජනතාවගෙන් වරමක් ඉල්ලුවේ. අපි ඉල්ලූ වරම අපට ලැබුණා. මේ රටේ කිසිම ආණ්ඩුවකට ලබා ගන්න නුපුළුවන වූ ජයග්‍රහණයක් ලබාගන්නට අපට පුළුවන වුණා. ඒ බලාපොරොත්තුව ඉෂ්ට කිරීම සඳහා අපි 1970 දී පළමුවෙනි පියවර ගත්තා. නවරජයේදී ආරම්භ කර පටන් ගත් ඒ කාර්යය සම්පූර්ණයෙන් ඉෂ්ට කිරීමට අපට අවුරුදු දෙකකට කිට්ටු කාලයක් ගත වුණා. සමහරක් අපට දෝෂ කිව්වා, ප්‍රමාද කළාය කියා. දැන් අපට දෝෂ කියනවා, මහජනශාට මේ ගැන සාකච්ඡා කිරීමට කල් දෙන්නේ නැතුව හදිසිසි වුණාය කියා. හැබැයි ගිය අවුරුද්දේ අපේ මාසයේදී ඇති වූ අපේක්ෂාවන් සිද්ධීන් නිසා ඒ වැඩකටයුතු ටිකක් අතපසු වුණා. ඒ කෙසේ වෙතත් මේ රටේ ජනතාව දුන් වරම උඩ අපට ඒ කාරණය ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීමට පුළුවන වීම ගැන මේ ගරු සහායේ ආණ්ඩු පාර්ශවයේ සිටින සියළු දෙනාම සන්තෝෂයට පත් වනවාට කිසිම අනුමානයක් නැහැ.

දැඩිගම ගරු මන්ත්‍රී ඩබ්ලිව් සේනානායක මහතා සඳහන් කළ සමහර ප්‍රශ්න වලට මේ අවස්ථාවේදී පිළිතුරු දීමට මා අදහස් කරන්නේ නැහැ. එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂය වෙනුවෙන් වැඩිපුරම කතා කළ මැද කොළඹ පළමුවන ගරු මන්ත්‍රී ආර්. ප්‍රේමදාස මහතා එම ප්‍රශ්න ඉදිරිපත් කළ අවස්ථාවලදී ව්‍යවස්ථා සම්පාදන කටයුතු භාර ගරු ඇමති ආචාර්ය කොළච්චි ආර්. ද සිල්වා ඒවාට පිළිතුරු දුන්නා. එම නිසා මේ අවස්ථාවේදී ඒවාට නැවතත් පිළිතුරු දීමට කාල වේලාවක් නැහැ, පිළිතුරු දීම අවශ්‍යත් නැහැ.

නොයෙක් හේතු නිසා මෙම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රම ව්‍යවස්ථාවට පක්ෂව වන්දනා දෙන්නට බැරියයි ඩබ්ලිව් සේනානායක මහතා කියා සිටියා. එතුමා කළ ප්‍රකාශය මේ රටේ මහජනතාව පිළිගනිතොත්, මේ ව්‍යවස්ථාව වෙනස් කිරීම සඳහා ලබන මහා මැතිවරණයේදී ජනතාවගෙන් වරමක් ඉල්ලන ලෙස මා මේ අවස්ථාවේදී එතුමාට කියන්නට කැමතියි. මේ ව්‍යවස්ථාව ක්‍රියාත්මක වීමෙන් මහජන නිදහස නැති වේය යන බියක් තමුත්තාන්සේලා තුළ තිබෙනවා. මහජනතා තුළත් ඒ බිය තිබෙනවා නම් මෙය වෙනස් කිරීමට මහජනතා තමුත්තාන්සේලාව වරමක් දෙනවාට කිසිම සැකයක් නැහැ. මුදල් ඇමතිතුමා කීවාක් මෙන්, මෙය ක්රියාත්මක කරගෙන යාමේදී මෙහි යම් යම් වැරදි හා අඩුපාඩුකම් තිබෙන බව අපට පෙනී ගිය විට ඒවා නිසි පරිදි වෙනස් කිරීමට අප ශැස්තියි. එම නිසා, මේ අවශ්‍ය අවස්ථාවේදීත් මා විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ සියලු දෙනාගෙන්ම ඉල්ලා සිටින්නේ, ඒ අදහස් අතහැර දමා මෙම ව්‍යවස්ථාවට පක්ෂව වන්දනා දෙන ලෙසයි.

මෙහි සිටින සෑම පක්ෂයකම සහයෝගය අප මේ කටයුත්තේදී ලබා ගන්නා. සෑම පක්ෂයකම මන්ත්‍රීවරුන් කාරක සභාවල සාමාජිකයින් වශයෙන් පත් කර ගන්නා. විරුද්ධ පාර්ශවයේ නායකතුමා එක් කාරක සභාවක සභාපති වශයෙන් පත් කරන්නට යෙදුණා. මා සභාපති වශයෙන් කටයුතු කළ ආගම පිළිබඳ කාරක සභාවේ සාමාජිකයෙකු වශයෙන් දැඩිගම මන්ත්‍රී ඩබ්ලිව් සේනානායක මහතා පත් කර ගනු ලැබුවා. එය ඉතා වැදගත් කාරක සභාවක්. මේ ආකාරයෙන් තමුත්තාන්සේලා කාටත් මීට සහභාගී වන්නට අවස්ථාව ලැබුණා. තමුත්තාන්සේලාගේ අදහස් ප්‍රකාශ කරන්නට අවස්ථාව ලැබුණා. ආචාර්ය එන්. එම්. පෙරේරා කීවාක් මෙන්, මේ රටේ මහජනතාවටත් මේ පිළිබඳව තම අදහස් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමට අවස්ථාව ලැබුණා. ඒ නිසා මෙය, මේ රටේ ජනතාව පාහේ දැමීම සඳහා අපට ඕනෑ

ඉටිසට සකස් කර ගත් ව්‍යවස්ථාවක් නොවෙයි. මේ ව්‍යවස්ථාව ක්‍රියාත්මක වීමෙන් මහජනතාවගේ බලාපොරොත්තු ඉෂ්ට වන්නේ නැතැයි නිකවැරටියේ ගරු මන්ත්‍රී මුදියන්සේ තෙන්නකෝන් මහතා ප්‍රකාශ කළා. මැතිවරණ කාලයේදී නම් එතුමා මෙවැනි දේ කිව්වේ නැහැ.

මා දිගින් දිගට කතා කරන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ නැහැ. මේ වචන කීපය කියන්නට මා නැගී සිටියේ දැදිගම ගරු මන්ත්‍රීතුමාගේ ප්‍රකාශයට පිළිතුරු නොදී නොහැකි නිසායි. මාගේ කතාව අවසාන කරන්නට පෙර, මහජනතාවගේ බලාපොරොත්තු ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීම සඳහා වූ මේ කටයුත්තේදී අපට සහාය දුන් සියළු දෙනාටම ස්තූති කිරීම මගේ යුතුකමක්. ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම, රැ. දුවල් නොබලා, වෛශ්‍ය මහත්මිය වී වැඩ කළ ගරු ඇමති ආචාර්ය කොල්වින් ආර්. ද සිල්වාට මගේ ස්තූතිය පුද කළ යුතුව තිබෙනවා. එතුමාට සහාය දුන් සියලුම නිලධාරීන්ට හා සේවකයන්ටත් මගේ ස්තූතිය පුද කරනවා. මෙම සභාවේ මූලාසනය ගෙන ඉතාම ඉවසීමෙන් කටයුතු කරගෙන ගිය ගරු සභාපතිතුමාටත් මා ස්තූතිවන්ත වෙනවා. සභාපතිතුමාට සහාය දුන් ලේකම්වරුන් දෙපොළටත් ඒවාගේම, මේ කටයුත්තේදී අපට නොයෙක් ආකාරයෙන් සහාය දුන් සියලුම සේවක මහතුන්ටත් මගේ ස්තූතිය හිමි වෙනවා.

දිවංගත ගරු ධර්මාරාමයාගේ අගමැති තුමන් තුළ විබුණු අදහස අද මුදුන්පත් කරගෙන තිබෙනවා. එතුමා අද ජීවතුන් අතර නැතත් එතුමාගේ ඒ උදාර අදහස මුදුන්පත් කර ගැනීම පිළිබඳ කාර්යය ඉෂ්ට කර ගැනීමට මට සහාය දුන් සියලු දෙනාටමත් මගේ අවංක ආදර ස්තූතිය මේ අවස්ථාවේදී පුද කරන්නට මම කැමතියි.

මේ වැදගත් අවස්ථාවේ සඳහන් කළ යුතු තවත් වැදගත් කාරණයක් තිබෙනවා. අද දින නව රඟහලේදී පවත්වන උත්සවයට සහභාගි වන්නට ඒ ස්ථානයට පැමිණීමේ බලාපොරොත්තුවෙන් භූග දෙනෙක් සිටි බව මම හොඳින් දන්නවා. මේ ඓතිහාසික දිනයේදී ඒ ස්ථානයේ සිදුවන දේවල් බලා ගැනීමට විශාල පිරිසක් බලාපොරොත්තුවෙන් සිටිනවා. කෙනෙකුගේ ජීවිත කාලයක් තුළ මෙවැනි වැදගත් සිද්ධීන් ඇති වන්නේ සාමාන්‍යයෙන් එක් වරක් පමණයි. ඒ විධියේ අවස්ථාවකට හවුල් කාරයන් වන්නට කැමැත්තක්, බලවත් කැමැත්තක් දක්වන විශාල පිරිසක් සිටිනවා. ඒ ස්ථානයේ ඇති ඉඩකඩ ප්‍රමාණය සීමා සහිත නිසා ඒ හැම දෙනාටම එන්නට වැඩිපිලිවෙලක් සකස් කිරීමට නොහැකි වීම ගැන මම කනගාටු වෙනවා. ඇත්ත වශයෙන්ම එහි ඉඩකඩ තිබෙන්නේ 1,200 කට ආසන්න ගණනකට පමණයි. ඒ නිසා එන්නට බලාපොරොත්තු වූයු සියලු දෙනාටම ආරාධනා කරන්නට අපට බැරි වුණා.

මේ තත්ත්වය නිසා හැකිතාක් දුරට සියලුම අංශ වලින් නියෝජිතයන් ගෙන්වා ගැනීමට අපි උත්සාහ කළා. ඒ අනුව අපි පළාත් පාලන ආයතනවල සභාපතිවරුන් වෙත ආරාධනා යැව්වා. පළාත් පාලන ආයතන භයසිය ගණනක් තිබෙන නිසා ඒවායේ සභාපතිවරුන්ද භයසිය ගණනක් ඉන්නවා. ඒ අයට අපි ආරාධනා කළා. සැම ජන කොටස්වලම අයගේ සහාය ලබා ගැනීමට ඒ අයට අවස්ථාවක් දෙන්නට ඕනෑ නිසා ඒ ඒ අංශ නියෝජනය කරන නොයෙක් සමිති සමාගම් වල- වෘත්තීය සමිති වල, දේශපාලන පක්ෂවල-අයට, අපි ආරාධනා කළා. එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයටත්, ශාඛාලී පක්ෂයටත්- මෙතනට නාවත්-අපි ටිකට් පත් යැව්වා. මේ උත්සවයට පැමිණ සහභාගි වන ලෙස ආරාධනා යැව්වා. එහෙත්, කියන්නටත් කනගාටුයි, එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයටත්, ශාඛාලී පක්ෂයටත් යැවූ ආරාධනා ඒ උදවිය ප්‍රතික්ෂේප කළා පමණක් නොව ඒවා ආපසු එව්වා. මේ බව ඒ අයගේ හිතවතුන්, සාමාජිකයන් දැන ගත්තොත් කනගාටු වනවා ඇත කියා මම හිතනවා.

මම මේ කාරණය සඳහන් කළේ සමහර විට නියම තතු නොදන්නාකම නිසා ඇතැම් අය තම

පක්ෂය අයිති කළාය, තම පක්ෂයට අවස්ථාවක් නොදුන්නාය යනුවෙන් වැරදි හැඟීමක් ඇති කර ගත හැකි නිසයි. හැම දේශපාලන පක්ෂයකටම මෙයට සහභාගිවීමට අවස්ථාව දී හැම දෙනාගේම සහභාගිත්වයෙන් මෙය කරන්නට අදහස් කළ නිසයි හැම කොටසකටම ආරාධනා කළේ. එහෙත් ඒ අවස්ථාව තමන්ගේ නියෝජිතයන් විසින් ඒ උදව්‍යට නොදීම හැක අපට කරන්නට දෙයක් නැහැ.

ගරු සභාපතිතුමනි, මීට වඩා කතා කරන්නට මම බලාපොරොත්තු වන්නේ නැහැ. මා ඉදිරිපත් කළ යෝජනාව මේ ගරු සභාව අනුමත කරනු ඇතැයි මම විශ්වාස කරනවා. ඒ අතරම, අපට මෙතෙක් කළ මේ ව්‍යවස්ථාව සැදීමට සභාය දන්නා වාගේම අප දැන් පැමිණ සිටින මේ අන්තිම මොහොතේදීත් තම අදහස වෙනස් කර අපට සහාය දෙන මෙන්, මෙයට පක්ෂව පත්දිය දෙන මෙන්, එක්සත් ජාතික පක්ෂයේ නායකතුමාගෙන් අපි ඉල්ලා සිටිනවා. මෙය භාර ගැනීමෙන් පසු ක්‍රියාත්මක කරගෙන යන විට යම් අඩුපාඩුවක් දැකින්නට ලැබුණොත් අවශ්‍ය පරිදි එය සකස් කර ගැනීමට උත්සාහ කරන බවත්, අඩුපාඩු පෙන්වා දුන්නොත් අනාගතයේදී ඒවා සංශෝධනය කරන්නට ලැස්ති බවත් මතක් කරමින් මගේ වචන ස්වල්පය මම අවසන් කරනවා.

Speech Made in Parliament  
on 16 October, 1980

Mr. Speaker Sir,

This is the first occasion in the history of the Legislatures of this country on which the support of the Honourable Members of Parliament has been sought for a terrible proposal which has as its objectives, the removal from the political scene by imposition of Civic Disabilities of an individual who is the Leader of a major Political Party in this country, a Member of this Honourable House, and Prime Minister of 12 years by the vote of the people freely exercised. The right I am to be deprived of is fundamental amongst fundamental rights and basic amongst human rights. This attempt politically to destroy me is based on a recommendation of a Commission of Inquiry so-called and is motivated solely by the egocentric political ambitions of a vicious few who are the focus of power in the Government of the day. The deed that is to be done today by a power hungry minority in the ranks of the United National Party is a political assassination without precedent at home or abroad, in recent times or in the past. If I may make a prognostication on behalf of all right-thinking peoples who have to be helpless onlookers when they should have been the makers of any decision which is the subject matter of this resolution there will come a time when they, the people would be the judges and the political assassins of today would be the prisoners at the bar of electoral justice. I am to be guillotined today, but my assassins will, in time to come, which should not be too long in coming, be carried in the tumbrils driven relentlessly by the democratic political processes of a free country.

The people of this country are shocked at what is to be imposed on me today. At the same time, a series of important legal questions have been posed before the Courts of this country which we respect even though the leaders of this Government do not. Countless people in this country and in other lands have been astounded by the crime that is to be committed against the people of Sri Lanka, against my party, against myself and against every principle of right action. It is my duty, therefore, to demonstrate to this Honourable House, and through this Honourable House to the World, the true causes which have motivated the resolution before this House today and the consequences that would necessarily flow from the decision taken today.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a Member of the Legislature for full 20 years. I have been the Prime Minister for 12 of those years. If the evil intentions of those tyrannical rulers who are responsible for imposing on their own rank and file a proposal in violation of both rule and tradition, be fulfilled today, this would be the last speech I would make in this House.

The shot that killed my husband, who was Prime Minister before I held that office, was fired on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, twenty one years ago. The hand of the assassin was directed by a group of conspirators. The political blow by which a similar conspiratorial group seek to assassinate me politically, abusing governmental power, was first dealt in this House this year, also on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September.

The innocent ordinary masses of this country could not be suppressed by murdering the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The plain intention of the conspiracy was to destroy democracy in this country and substitute for it a distatorship. This was frustrated and frustrated because I who never been in politics before, entered the political life of this country. Although an attempt is made today to exile me from politics, our people will not be suppressed by this attempt. I give notice here and now, Mr. Speaker, through you, to those unprincipled rulers in this United National Party and those behind them that I will not permit the suppression of the people of this country through attempts to destroy me or by any other means.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 1959, my husband was assassinated. I was left with three fatherless children. I had no idea at that stage of taking to politics. As the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the people had also been orphaned by the murder of my husband, responsible persons in the party and numerous members of the public insisted that whatever my family responsibilities be at that tragic



moment, I must yield to a larger duty and accept the leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. It was a historic moment of the country and a decisive moment for me. My dilemma was whether to devote the entirety of my time and effort to look after my three fatherless children, or to sacrifice the personal interest of my family for the principles, for the country and for the party for which my husband gave his life. Acting according to conscience, I chose the latter, and accepted the leadership of the party, to serve within the limits of my capacity the masses of this country. It was not for love of office that I yielded to the appeals of my party.

On the results of the General Election held in July 1960, my party was returned with a majority, and I became Prime Minister. Everybody knows that during the period of Government of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party that commenced after this election, we implemented policies directed towards the common good and against the exploitation of men and resources by a privileged few. The tremendous economic power vested in a minority of foreign and local interests was broken by the transfer of the public ownership, of resources, enterprises and institutions which provided the foundation for that power. Agriculture and industry were developed, though not to the extent of resolving all the problems of this country. In accordance with our deliberate policies, this development benefitted the large masses, and not a wealthy minority. Our social and economic policies were implemented so as to eliminate as far as possible the unchecked consequences of disparities of incomes. They sought to and largely succeeded in giving people the opportunity of living with self respect. They improved the quality of life of the rural and urban poor. When the large mass of people in a poor country such as ours so benefits from the policies of a Government, there follows necessarily abridgment or elimination of social and economic privileges hitherto enjoyed without scruple by certain local and foreign interests. It should be no cause for surprise that such interests would rise to oppose and if possible to destroy a regime which would not permit exploitation of the country by them. History teaches us that when such interests are adversely affected they act to destroy parties and leaders who genuinely represent the people and also that the methods they adopt are conspiratorial and unscrupulous. I have already said that the people could not be suppressed by assassinating the Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike, in 1959. It is now well-known that in 1962, those interests that I referred to earlier mounted a treasonable conspiracy to overthrow by violent means the Government of which

I was head and to destroy both my party and myself, several persons who were party to this act of treason were tried in our Courts, convicted and sentenced. They were later acquitted in the Privy Council, but only on a question of law.

Although these convicted conspirators were acquitted on a point of law, the facts against them were proved and that proof has not been shaken. If anybody would like to know whether there were elements in the United National Party connected to this conspiracy and who those were, they need only make inquiries from the leader of the United National Party.

With the failure of the attempted Coup-d'état in 1962, the frustration of those who would destroy the duly elected Government increased and their plans did not abate. At the end of 1964, some members of the then Government Parliamentary group were got at to vote against the Government. The consequence of this was the defeat of the Government on an important Vote in the House of Representatives by a majority of just one. How this was arranged is a matter well within the knowledge of the leader of the United National Party, the present President of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Speaker, I have now to emphasize a matter of great importance. The objectives of the attempted Coup-d'état were the destruction of the democratic system of government in this country and the establishment of a dictatorship. The method adopted to achieve these objectives was the overthrow by violent means the government of which I was head. The entire country knows that despite the great odds that I faced, new to government and politics as I was, it was I who protected democracy and saved this country from a set of megalomaniacs. Many are the instances of such situations being used by the intended victims already in power to impose authoritarian rule. What I did was to do all I could do to protect the democratic system of government. This Honourable House and the country are today the beneficiaries of the course I adopted then. However I am forced to the conclusion now, that if the unprincipled leadership of the present government were in a similar situation there can be no doubt that that situation would be exploited as a cover to establish dictatorial rule, I believe that I have the right to expect that this House would not forget how in those dark days, I saved the civic rights of the entire nation, when these Honourable members decide today whether or not my civic rights should be destroyed and whether I should be expelled from this House.

In 1970 I became Prime Minister with a mandate which gave me a majority of more than two third of the members of the House of Representatives.

Although our government was elected with such a mandate from the people what happened before the government was even one year old? For the first time in the history of this country there was an armed insurrection against a democratically elected government. A group of conspirators persuaded several thousand young men and women to rise in arms against the duly constituted Government of which I was Prime Minister. This was a result of another plan which was a part of a series of conspiracies which have been a feature of opposition to the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and its Leaders whether we were in power or in the opposition. The conspiracy which led to the insurrection struck at the foundation of our society. Young people who were of an age when they would be seeking to feel independent of parents and when they would not have established themselves by marriage and by having their own children, were persuaded that, in the logic of things, they owed no loyalties to their own families. They were persuaded in their immaturity to believe that religion was a reactionary concept which should be rejected. Having thus undermined the social and cultural foundations of our young people, the conspirators persuaded them to make an attempt to overthrow the duly constituted Government by violent means, assassinating me in the process. That there has been an established pattern on the part of power-hungry elements to destroy me by conspiracy and arms is quite clear.

Mr. Speaker, I now state in this Honourable House that this Motion introduced to deprive me of civic rights today is also none other than the result of a conspiracy. I ask the Honourable Ministers of this Government and the Honourable Members of the ruling party to examine their conscience and decide whether or not this is so. Consider the manner in which allegations were made against me *ex parte*, before the special Presidential Commission. Consider the manner in which proceedings were conducted. On what date was the report printed and available? Did the Honourable Ministers sitting as a Cabinet have the opportunity to read the report, analyse it, consider the findings and recommendations as any responsible body should have had? What were the circumstances in which the report was presented to Members of the Cabinet? I wish to make one thing clear at this point. Article 81 of the Constitution, that is the Constitution adopted in 1978, requires a resolution introduced consequent to the recommendations of a Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry to have been first approved by the Cabinet Ministers. The Cabinet does not have to approve the introduction of such a resolution merely because a commission has

made a recommendation. Indeed each and every Member of the Cabinet has a grave Constitutional duty apart from his political responsibility to consider fully the report of a Commission and decide whether a resolution should be introduced. If Ministers or Honourable Members have been informed otherwise, let them read and understand Article 81. The Cabinet has politically and constitutionally to consider every word of a Report of a Commission. Has that duty been discharged? I say no.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Honourable Members of this House who vote on my civic rights today have themselves not been given the opportunity of coming to their own solemn conclusion as to whether the findings and recommendations of the Commission are acceptable. They are not allowed to decide whether they should vote to destroy me politically or whether they should act with that basic sense of justice our culture, if not their leaders, have endowed them with. Quite apart from the injustice to me, are not the coercive attitudes of the megalomaniac minority a gross injustice to the members of the United National Party themselves?

Mr. Speaker, I make no allegation of injustice or conspiracies against the large majority of U.N.P. Members of Parliament, the majority of the Members of the U.N.P. and the broad masses who have voted for the U.N.P. in the expectation of good government. I know it for a fact that most U.N.P. members of this House, several Ministers and the vast majority of U.N.P. voters, particularly those loyal to the memory of the founders, and of the true leaders of that party do not approve of the action by which a vicious minority seeks to eliminate me from the political scene and to destroy the one party which could give this country an alternative democratic government. The majority prefer to decide on this motion in accordance with the principles of justice, human rights and according to the tenets of the religion they serve. But not so the victims of megalomania. The action now proposed against me is a political crime hereto-fore not even thought of in this country that claims to be democratic. It is sponsored and forced upon the majority by a group that has as its goal the subjection of our country and our people now to tyranny and later perhaps to a reign of terror.

Mr. Speaker, the present move to destroy me politically would be welcome also to money-makers from overseas and perhaps to certain foreign governments whose aims to exploit countries such as ours are only too well known. It is reasonable to conclude that the foreign policy I adopted when I was Prime Minister and the actions I took in foreign affairs have moved certain foreign

interests to ensure that I do not head a government in this country ever again. As Chairman of the Conference of non-aligned nations I had opportunities to seek solutions to several problems the less developed countries had. When I had such an opportunity I did not hesitate to take it. I believe I was able to be of help in resolving several issues arising at international levels, acting always in accordance with the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. I initiated moves to make the Indian Ocean a Peace Zone. I took action to have the rights of this country acknowledged in respect of a Zone up to a 200 mile limit of our shores.

Mr. Speaker, the problem of persons of Indian origin living and working in our Estate Sector had been one which no Government before my time had been able to resolve. Whether I be politically dismembered by resolution in this House today or not, it is with pride that I place on record the solution to the problem of stateless persons reached by the pact entered into between the late Lal Bahadur Shastri and myself. I was able to resolve the dispute relating to Kachchativu Island by friendly discussions with Shrimathi Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India. Today Kachchativu is part of our territories.

All this I did in the service of my motherland in the interest of all mankind.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, at a time like the present, when economically and socially our country is once again being betrayed to foreign interests, my policies (or the policies I would adopt if I were return to power again) must be anathema to those who betray the national interest. Today this Government is creating once again in this country a foreign elite granting it economic concessions and genuflecting before it with social subservience, while reducing our fellow countrymen to the level of second class citizens in their homeland. Those who implement these policies, who, by betraying this country, hope to make inordinate financial gains in quick time, know very well that if I remain a force in politics, I would permit no betrayal of our people.

The entire country knows that when my party and I are returned to power again our people will regain their rightful place, and that there would be no sell-out of the national interest to so-called foreign investors or to foreign regimes or to international lending institutions. I therefore, ask the Honourable Members of the House, who sit today as Judges, to examine their conscience before they decide to inflict on me the terrible injury that would rob me of my electoral franchise. Whatever the High Command of the United National Party might say, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of this House are sitting here today as

the High Court of Parliament. A Court must act according to conscience. A Court may not be dictated to. This House is not today debating Government legislation, or a financial measure, or a proposal of Government policy. It is sitting today to decide whether or not a citizen and Member of this House, who has been a Prime Minister of this country and who has not been found guilty of any offence known to the law should or should not be disenfranchised and expelled from this House. There can be no question of a Party whip being applied in such a Parliamentary situation. Does the Hon. Prime Minister and the President believe that Judges should be forced to decide according to the dictates of complaints? Let the Hon. Prime Minister now get up and pledge that no political penalties would follow if members, acting according to their conscience, vote against this resolution. He does not allow a vote of conscience. He and the President have denied to the Honourable Members of this House their fundamental rights. What justice could the country or I expect from such a leadership? I ask Honourable Members to recognize their duty in these grave proceedings and ignore the threats held out to them; ignore the whip which is illicitly used. Let no one forget, Mr. Speaker, that if Honourable Members are to sleep tonight the sleep of the just their hands and voices must obey their conscience and naught else.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that I have not the right to protest against the findings of the Presidential Commission and against its conduct of proceedings before it. The public have been told that I agreed to this Commission and its ways. "Hansard" will prove this to be totally incorrect. I agreed to the appointment of a Commission to investigate any matter amenable to investigation, if it be headed by a Judge of Supreme Court; if the Evidence Ordinance governed the proceeding; if an appeal were provided for; and if ingredients of the offences were identified. It goes without saying that the whole purpose of asking that the Judges of the Supreme Court be appointed was to ensure the independence of such a Commission from political or other pressures from the Government. But, what, Mr. Speaker, was the result? The President appointed a Commission to report on allegations made by the President himself against me in the election campaign of 1977. The offences for which punishment was contemplated in the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry Law were not defined. Three Commissioners were appointed, two of whom were Judges of the then Supreme Court and one of whom was a District Judge. While the Commission was sitting, all Judges of the Supreme Court were sacked statutorily by Article 163 of the

Constitution. The two Judges who were lucky enough to have been selected as Commissioners were allowed to continue as Commissioners by Article 169 (15). The Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry of Law stipulated that Commissioners must be Judges of a Court not below the standing of a District Court. This amounted to assuring Commissioner Weeraratane, the Chairman, and Commissioner Sharvananda that, if they continued as Commissioners, they could regain their jobs as Judges. What clearer indication could there have been this that these Commissioners should conduct themselves in regard to me in a manner acceptable to him who appointed Judges to Superior Courts, namely the President? Does anybody seriously think that this is the kind of independence I contemplated when I considered a Judge of the Supreme Court a suitable appointee to a Commission of Inquiry?

Then, Mr. Speaker, whilst the Commission had counsels retained to assist it, the Commission permitted the State which had no status to come in, and handed over to Counsel for the State, the task of investigations, conduct of proceedings and of guiding the Commission. And who was sent by the Government to head the team of Counsel appearing on its behalf without status? One A C de Zoysa, a politician and member of the Working Committee of the UNP. This de Zoysa made an opening statement which went on for days. This address was really a foul, slanderous polemic, but it was permitted by the Commission and broadcast by the Government owned radio and published with relish in the Government-owned newspapers. The encouraging responses of the Commissioners to de Zoysa's ex-parte slander, themselves condemn the findings and recommendations now before this Honourable House. The tapes of the proceedings which are in the possession of the Government would establish my case beyond doubt. Thereafter the Commission never acted independently, as they were bound to, in investigating allegations or in allowing evidence to be led before it. De Zoysa controlled all proceedings. Most of the so-called evidence recorded by the Commission consists of leading questions, statements and allegations uttered by de Zoysa with which witnesses, most of whom were in one way or another under the Government, had merely to express agreement. One witness was a public officer on compulsory leave, whose job itself was at stake when he gave evidence. When at one stage he began a statement which would have been favourable to the absent accused party, de Zoysa warned him that he might get into "hot water". The Commissioners were more than happy to allow this kind of thing. Mr. Speaker, it is a slur on this Honourable House

to introduce a resolution of such grave consequence based on the expression of opinion of such a Commission. It is quite clear why A C de Zoysa conducted himself in this manner. He is the brother of Sydney de Zoysa, one of the conspirators convicted for participation in the attempted Coup-d'état of 1962. his other brother, Dickie de Zoysa was a suspect in the S W R D Bandaranaike Assassination Case, though not brought to trial eventually.

Mr. Speaker, let me now draw your attention to the Report itself referred to in the motion moved by the Honourable the Prime Minister, the Report which is the foundation of the proceedings now before this House. Chapter VIII of the Report contains the Recommendation of the Commission. It has just three paragraphs. The Commission reiterates findings against me set out elsewhere in the report and "Accordingly" recommends that I be penalised. Mr. Speaker, where a penalty or a recommendation to impose a penalty, does not automatically follow from a finding, any investigating body, be it a Court or a Commission of Investigation, must address its mind objectively to the question whether or not punishment should be imposed. Section 9 of the statute requires the Commission, if it comes to any findings of guilt, recommend *whether or not*, the person found guilty should be subjected to civic disability. This, as anybody with a sense of justice should know, is a decision separate from the findings, and must depend on criteria, norms and standards which should be adopted before the choice of recommendation is made. As the statute gives no criteria, it was the duty of the Commission to consider what these should be, set them out in a discussion in the report, and make it clear as to how it applied the criteria to each finding, before choosing to recommend punishment when they had the choice to recommend otherwise. It is quite clear from Chapter VIII of the Report that the Commission had acted as if it had no choice in the matter of recommendation and as if it had no judicial duty to consider the norms of punishment. The recommendation being such, this resolution should never have come before this House. The Government has still the opportunity to withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker, I must draw the attention of Honourable Members of this House to the role of the Commission in its report calculated to cause me unjustly, and if I may say so, unlawfully, grave prejudice. My political opponents, and indeed, impartial members of the public have been influenced by the Commission's discussions and findings relative to my land transactions. The Commission framed, served and gave publicity to three charges relating to



these matters. These are referred to in the report as allegations 1, 2 and 5. The Commission states thus at page 120 of the English version of its Report: "On the evidence placed before us, we find Allegations 1, 2 and 5 are established. "However, the facts do not establish misuse or abuse of power, fraudulent act or corruption contemplated in section (sic) of the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry."

I am exonerated under the law, even though the allegations as framed have, according to the Commission, been proved. If the allegations even if proved did not constitute abuse or misuse, why did the commission frame the allegations at all? Why did they discuss these allegations, discuss ex-parte evidence and why did they thus cause me so much damage in regard to matters they themselves say are outside the framework of the Special Law? This could have only been to serve the ends of my political opponents, unlawfully to tarnish my image and generally to prejudice everybody against me. This alone vitiates the entire report and recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, about the land transactions I have to say only one more thing at this time. The matters were fully discussed in the National State Assembly in a Debate on the subject. Today I place before this House just one thought. Under a Law proposed by myself when I was Prime Minister, I gave up over 3,000 acres of land. My land transactions relate to a mere 32 acres. If I, while I was in power, gave up 3,000 acres, is there no sense of proportion in these matters, that I should be hounded for alienating 32 acres in the honest belief that I was morally obliged so to do, and did so, on advice tendered to me in the normal course of business? I may have been unwise; Mr. Speaker, but I have consciously done no wrong.

Mr. Speaker, you are aware that I did not participate in the proceedings before the Commission. I made a statement objecting to the whole scope and style of inquiry. The manner in which the Commission has dealt with a submission on a matter fundamental to any system of justice would serve to prove that its report should not be acted upon. I quote from Page 109 of the Report: "The Respondent in the statement went on to state that the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry Law gave no definitions of abuse or misuse of power, corruption, fraud, etc, and that it did not place recognizable limits to acts, conduct or behaviour or prescribe norms of statutory conduct and that accordingly no clear indication is given to her as to what act, conduct or behaviour is made culpable. *These are well-known concepts which need no statutory*

*definition and recourse could be had to a standard dictionary for their meaning."*

One cannot in all honesty call this even judicial, though the words may have fallen from the lips of persons appointed as Judges and Commissioners of Inquiry. We might as well replace our Legislative Enactments with a set of standard dictionaries. If the Commission could tell us when dictionaries are standard and which are not. Better still, as the Commission thinks *concepts* are punishable, if this House is prepared to vote for this resolution, it must be prepared to substitute works of philosophers for legislation. The Honourable the Prime Minister is well advised to confirm whether the gentlemen he has named in his motion have indeed qualified as members of the legal profession prior to appointment as Judges. The Government might also seriously consider the abolition of the entire Department of the Legal Draftsman.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission has thought it fit to inquire whether I was justified in recommending to the President the continuance of a State of Emergency for a considerable time after the armed insurrection launched in April 1971. Mr. Speaker, you know, the President knows and any Court or Tribunal should know that the determination as to whether a State of Emergency exists or not is entirely and absolutely a matter for a Government, more specifically for its Head. No Court or Tribunal can, in the nature of the respective powers and functions of the Executive Government and of the Judiciary, examine the validity, wisdom or need for a State of Emergency. The decision of Head of Government cannot be questioned in anticipation, contemporaneously or in retrospect, by any tribunal. Can the President be used or prosecuted in a Court of Law or be examined before a tribunal on the validity or need for declaring an Emergency on the eve of the last strike, even if the Government did cruelly use emergency powers to dismiss more than 100,000 of its employees? I think it reprehensible you may think it wrong Mr. Speaker, but the issue can be settled only by this House or by the electorate. The people voted us out in July 1977. One of the things they may have disapproved of is the length of the State of Emergency. But that is not a matter which is amenable to investigation or adjudication by any tribunal. This is fundamental; but your Commission has gone into the matter as if it were a question of administrative discretion no different from the grant or withdrawal of an import licence. If this House accepts the views and recommendations of the Commission on this matter, the House accepts the position that the present Emergency could be challenged in a Court of Law and members of the Government punished if a judge thinks that,

in his judgement, there is no State of Emergency. The Government declared the present emergency in gross abuse of its powers. But our struggle against that abuse will be in this House, and before the electorate, in the democratic tradition the Sri Lanka Freedom Party has been proved to uphold.

Mr. Speaker, there is another gross violation of canons of fair inquiry, that I have to point out with regard to the Commission's examination of Allegations 6, 7 and 8 relating to Emergency powers. Government in determining the conditions in which and the materials on which a State of Emergency could be declared or continued, the Commission has accepted the evidence of a former Inspector-General of Police that conditions in the country were normal after the lapse of five to six months from April 1971. If this be the case, counting the State of Emergency after about October 1971 was wrong. This House is asked to disenfranchise me and expel me on this count. What was the view at the relevant time, of the then Leader of the Opposition, the present President of Sri Lanka? Although he was Leader of the Opposition, a Leader of the United National Party, he wished to join my Government, bringing with him a few others if he could, or bring if that were possible, the entire party into our Parliamentary Group. He proposed co-operation with us and was more than ready and willing to accept office. In a declaration to the newspaper, 'Riviresa' published on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1972, he stated that it was wrong to oppose my Government. He also declared that the United National Party would not come to power ever again. He defied his Leader, the late Dudley Senanayake and took him to Court when the United National Party moved to take disciplinary action against him. I have already tabled a certified copy of the relevant page of the newspaper in which Mr. Jayawardene declared his views. He was supporting me till the end of 1972. If so, how could he allege and how can his party and the present Prime Minister allege that my Government was then bad and that the continuation of Emergency after the period specified by the ex-I.G.P. was wrong? Mr. Jayawardene's anxiety to join my Cabinet as late as the later part of 1972, clearly meant that he was in agreement with the continuation of the Emergency. This contradicts the ex-I.G.P.'s evidence which was accepted by the Commission. I do not think it would be justifiable or permissible now for the United National Party to attempt to destroy me politically, unless it is at the same time, prepared to mete out similar treatment to their own leader.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few days, the President has announced that the misdeeds of even his Government in the past 3 years would be investigated and

he himself would be willing be punished if found guilty. Does he seriously tell the country that any adverse recommendations of Commission appointed by him in which he has reposed trust and confidence, which reports to him, and the recommendation of which has to be considered by the Cabinet of Ministers which he presides or would be complied with? How does he offer himself for punishment if found guilty without pledging to repeal Article 31 of the Constitution which gives him immunity from proceedings before any tribunal?

Mr. Speaker, the President and other Government Speakers have tried to justify the present proposal by comparing my case with the case of legislators who have been expelled earlier. Mr. Speaker, the President knows that there is no comparison. Every one of these persons to whom he has referred to had been found guilty, after due inquiry, of the offence of bribery. Bribery is well defined legally and no tribunal considered it a concept adequately defined outside the law. The ingredients of the offence of bribery have been defined by statute and have been further clarified by judges. The offences listed in the Special Presidential Commission Law are of a political nature. What is nepotism? Is not the appointment of a nephew of the President's to two portfolios, when there were other senior members of the U.N.P. who were better qualified, nepotism under the Special Presidential Commission Law? I say to the Government spokesman, through you, Mr. Speaker, do not mislead the people with false comparisons, and do not resurrect the wrongs of people now deceased merely to commit a political crime using the process and procedure of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize now another possible reason for this attempt on my political life. I have pledged to take back into Government employment the 100,000 or more people who were mercilessly sacked by this Government after a strike. Not merely will I take them, I will pay them compensation. Those elements in the U.N.P. who would like workers oppressed and suppressed would like to see me out of power by any means, because they know that if legitimate means only were used, my Party, and I would be returned.

Mr. Speaker, I have little more to add, especially as I have said most of what I had to say in my speech in Sinhala. If this House disenfranchise me and expel me, who have been for twenty years a legislator, I shall take my leave with malice to none and with sympathy for all who have been forced to deal with me harshly though their conscience spoke to them otherwise.

I thank you Mr. Speaker, the staff of the House and the staff of my office, for the courtesies accorded to me in the three years past.

I express my gratitude to priests of all religions, to political parties and to members of parties who have sought to be just; I thank all people here and abroad who have stood up for truth and justice. I may say farewell today, but let all be assured that I will continue the struggle of the people while being in their midst. And, I shall come back with my party to serve the country till my breath lasts.

An excerpt from  
the Parliamentary  
Hansard of 16  
November, 1995

## **The Hon. (Mrs) Sirima R.D.Bandaranaike**

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take much time of this House in dealing with the Budget in detail. I have something very important to say which I have been wanting to do for some time. I think, I am the most senior parliamentarian, the most long-standing parliamentarian in this House. This is the sixth Parliament I am sitting in. Therefore, I have a right and duty to say this. I have been wanting to say this for some time. What is it? I have been shocked at the behaviour of our Members recently. I am not talking of only the Opposition, but both sides. People are shocked at the way we behave in Parliament. This is a dignified place. This is the Legislature of the people. Therefore, you must keep the dignity of this House.

Mr. Speaker, you and all of us have to keep the dignity of this House. Why did the people send us to Parliament? They want to solve their problems and not to fight like this and blackguard each other using filthy words. We forget that the people are watching from the gallery, especially school children. Are you setting an example to them? They come and watch us. No wonder the schools and universities are in this situation today. When we are indisCIPLINED in this House, the Legislature of this country, can we expect university students and school children to behave well? Therefore, we have to learn to behave ourselves better. We abused each other with bad language, unparliamentary language. Most Members have been doing that. I am sorry to say that. Members are not allowed to speak, they are disturbed and shouted down. When a hon. Member says something unpleasant to them, they shout and disturb his speech. This is one of the reasons why I have not been coming to this House too often. I feel very sorry and disgusted the way things are happening in this House. It is deteriorating from year to year.

I am sorry, to say nearly 40 years after Independence, at the beginning I must say – I have been in this House for so long – the hon. Members spoke with dignity. Some of the speakers like Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Dr. N.M.Perera, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, my late husband – I was not in Parliament, to listen to his speeches – Mr.G.G.Ponnambalam, Mr. Sivasithamparam made very dignified and very good speeches. But today can we say that about our speakers? Therefore, we have to decide, are we going to stay in this Parliament or leave it? If we cannot behave properly we should leave. You should all go out without staying in this Parliament. You should not behave like rowdies. That is what is happening today. Some are rowdies. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am blaming hon. Members on both sides of this House, not that side or this side, because some of our Members do not behave too well. I am sorry to say that. They do not like criticism. They shout and try to drown the voice of the speaker. That is not what is expected of them. Why do the people send us to Parliament? To do something useful for the people. Not to be shouting and behaving in an irresponsible manner. We should not lose the trust of the people. If we are hoping to go back for their vote, before long, the people of this country, particularly the youth will throw us out by the scruff of our necks if we go on like this. Like the 1971 insurrection another insurrection can come. The people are disgusted with what is happening here.

සියලු දෙනාම බලාගෙන ඉන්නේ පාර්ලිමේන්තුව දිනා. මන්ත්‍රීවරුන් කටා කරන්නේ මොනවාද? කුණුකරපේ නේද? That is what they say. And before long, I am sure, there is going to be another insurrection, if we do not look sharp and if we do not set an example to the people of this country who have sent us to Parliament, this sacred place. We have to maintain the dignity of this House and the sacredness of this House. That is what we must do. Not to come to this Parliament and enjoy the perks that we get and talk nonsense in this House. Sometimes, the language we do not use in front of our children we use it here. School children come here. Are we setting an example to these school children? They are the future leaders of our country.



They might some day come to this Parliament. Therefore, we must set an example them. That should be our theme. Now, we are approaching another new year. 1996. Let us all resolve to behave ourselves better. My throat is bad. I thought I would not be able to speak today. Fortunately so far I had no problem. Therefore, I drink hot water and speak. So let us all resolve - I am telling to hon. Members on both sides of the House - that by the new year we will make this Parliament a better Parliament, a more decent one so that anybody who comes here can go back without being ashamed.

Mr. Speaker, you must be much more firmer. I do not think you are firm enough. I am sorry to say this. I am not criticizing you. But if you are firm this House will be more disciplined. You are giving in too much. The Speaker must be firm and we must all resolve not to misbehave in this way; We must set an example to the people of this country who have sent us to Parliament, voted for us and given us power to solve their problems. We should not be fighting here. Sometimes it comes to fisticuffs also, hitting each other. I remember, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, when he was the Prime Minister, of course, in a much more dignified way, crossed the floor of this House to assault one of our MPs. He said, “මොකක්ද කිව්වේ?” and came with his hand like this. But still, it was done in a more dignified way, not in the way it happens now. There were very good speakers then, like Mr. Dudley Senanayake, Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam and Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. It was worth listening to them. It was a pleasure to listen to them. Sometimes I used to come and sit in the gallery and listen to their speeches. But today can we say that of our hon. Members? Except for one or two speakers, we just talk nonsense, abuse people and use this house to attack our enemies. That is not what this House is meant for. We call the British Parliament the “Mother of Parliaments.” Do they behave like this? I happened to be in the British Parliament on the day Sir Anthony Eden resigned over the Suez crisis. I was there with my husband. Even those MPs had no seats to sit down; some of them sat on the steps; such a large number there and all of them are not accommodated in seats.

They were shouting and screaming, but they did not use bad language; they threw paper balls at each other. That is how they behaved. I am not saying that they are angels, but still, that is an example to us. We call it the Mother of Parliaments, but are we really following their example? No. I think ours is the worst Parliament in the world the way we are behaving since of late. This is of recent happening. When we were in the Opposition, I remember, Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara was put on that step and kicked by some Members of the Government side. That is how we have behaved. It is shocking. People are shocked. They ask, did we send them to Parliament for this? I have no answer. So, let us all behave ourselves or let those who can run this Parliament properly come here. Other wise, the people will catch by the scruff of our necks and throw us out. The youth of our country will do that. They are getting ready for that. There is no doubt about that. They are disgusted. They do not think that we are MPs. They think we are mad people. Therefore, let us resolve today – only one and half months more for 1996 and a new year dawns after that - to behave ourselves like decent people, talk a decent language, not abuse each other and not behave in the way we behaved in the recent past. If we do that, I think, this Parliament is something worth to be in. I do not want to speak further. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

*(Mr. Speaker)*

Thank you, Madam, for the nice advice you gave to both sides of the House and to me. I will try my very best to maintain law and order very firmly from tomorrow.

SPEECHES  
*International*

National Policy is  
Seldom Divorced  
from National  
Interest

I consider it a great honour to represent my country at this Conference which could prove to be of historic significance in the cause of world peace. I am happy to attend this great assembly not only as a representative of my country but also as a woman and a mother who can understand the thoughts and feelings of those millions of women, the mothers of this world, who are deeply concerned with the preservation of the human race. I am also happy that we have chosen to hold the Conference in this beautiful city of Belgrade not only because of the warmth and hospitality of the Yugoslav people of which there is so much evidence but also because in holding it in a European city we have demonstrated to the world that the ideals and hopes which we all share are not confined to a continent or region but reflect an awareness on the part of human beings, wherever they may be, of the urgent need for international peace and security.

We in Ceylon count ourselves fortunate that the people of our land were spared the horrors of two World Wars and that we were able to throw off the shackles of colonial power

without strife or bloodshed. But it was not until eight years after the attainment of independence, when my late husband was elected Prime Minister, that the foreign bases were taken over and a definite and positive policy of non-alignment with power blocs adopted in foreign affairs.

The experience of many countries represented around this conference table has not been so fortunate. Some countries, like Yugoslavia, have had to see their homelands made into battle-grounds ; others, like Cuba and Algeria, have had to sacrifice their sons and daughters in order to be free ; and some others, like Tunisia, are yet striving to exercise sovereign power over the bases situated within their territory.

This Conference at Belgrade has not been convened, however, for the consideration of specific problems peculiar to individual nations ; we are gathered here in the firm belief that the positive policy of non-alignment with power blocs followed by each of our several countries and that our common dedication to the cause of peace and

peaceful co-existence gives us the right to raise our voices in common decisions and declarations in a world divided into power blocs and moving rapidly towards the brink of a nuclear war.

Many of the Heads of States and Heads of Governments who addressed this Conference in plenary session have emphasized the point that our group of nations do not propose to become a third bloc or a third force. None of us can really disagree with that view, for that would be inconsistent with the very idea of non-alignment. But it is important to remember that in our anxiety to avoid becoming a third force we must not allow our spirit of unity and purpose which has been so evident at this Conference to disintegrate and fall apart. We should endeavour to maximise the influence of non-aligned thinking in world affairs. We cannot, in my view, rely on the haphazard form of consultation which we have employed in the past. We are meeting in challenging circumstances and in a critical hour in the world's history. We must adapt our procedures to meet that challenge. I would therefore suggest that some method should be devised by this Conference to enable our individual countries to ascertain the maximum area of agreement among ourselves, without the need of a formal conference of Heads of States and Heads of Governments. I am sure that this Conference does not wish to pass moral judgments on the policies of nations. We do not profess to be the guardians of international morality. Nor do we consider that our position of non-alignment makes us in any way morally superior to other nations in the international community.

We believe that the ideals which have drawn us together will continue to inspire our thinking on international problems. We must recognise, however, that national policy is seldom divorced from national interest and that it is in the nature of international politics that competitive interests should arise. It would be unreal for us to believe that such conflicts of interest can be resolved by any appeal to principle alone. It would be equally unreal, and indeed positively dangerous, to allow these conflicts to remain unresolved. It is in this spirit that I would like to express our thoughts on some of the problems which confront us.

None of the countries of the world, big or small, rich or poor, can afford to look with indifference at the increasing international tension and at the steady deterioration in mutual trust and understanding among the committed nations of the world, particularly the Big Powers. The present crisis in Berlin must be reviewed not as a separate question but as part of the larger problem of a divided Germany and against the background of the failure of the Great Powers to agree on a firm peace settlement for that country.

The tensions which have grown in various parts of the world in recent years can be traced to the clash of interest between the two power blocs. Nowhere is this clash more pronounced than over Germany. Here we have the case of two governments, each of them committed to opposing military alliances, each of them dependent upon the policies pursued by their stronger allies. Is there no way of bridging the gulf between the two German States and of reconciling the interests of the two blocs which have created this division? In my view, this

problem will not be solved if the Governments concerned continue to insist on legal arguments of a technical kind. We have our own views on the legal status of the respective German Governments. We may hold differing opinions on whether the right of the Western Powers to have their forces in what has since become West Berlin gives with it also the right of access to their respective sectors. But we do not propose to air them here. A discussion of legal aspects will not, in our view, contribute towards a solution.

**The fact remains that the German problem is one of the legacies of the last war, and the earlier this question is resolved of uniting the two sections, the better it will be for peace and understanding among nations.**

We regret to note, however, that no satisfactory solution acceptable to all the parties concerned has yet been found. Fears and prejudices, some real and others imaginary, have stood in the way of a solution. A spirit of compromise and conciliation should therefore be adopted by the parties directly concerned in order to arrive at a settlement of this question. We believe that the situation in Germany today should not be regarded as a testing-ground for courage and will in the military sense, but as a practical challenge to the politics and strength of the forces of universal progress and of total peace.

It is our view that as a first step towards creating international confidence the great powers should firmly resolve and make it known to the world that they will not resort to military engagements and will depend solely on peaceful negotiations to arrive at a solution. The great powers must

also agree to the withdrawal of all foreign armed forces from their respective sectors in Germany and to the demilitarization of Germany. The great powers must immediately get down to the task of re-opening direct East-West negotiations designed to achieve a final settlement by peaceful means. For the success of such negotiations it would be essential for the two-Germanies to participate in the discussions, since the future of Germany must be determined not in accordance with the cold war strategy to suit either of the great powers but in order to establish a unified state, insulated as far as possible from the cold war and unaligned with either of the existing power blocs. No lasting solution of the German problem can be found on the basis of unilateral abrogation of rights and obligations. Likewise a rigid attachment to positions formulated by mere legal technicalities cannot pave the way towards an abiding settlement. The great powers must recognise that whatever rights and obligations they hold must be regarded as capable of modification in the face of existing realities.

We feel that a settlement on these lines would permit the reunification of Germany on conditions acceptable not only to the German people but also to those countries who, with good reason, have cause to fear a revival of German militarism. The world has been devastated by two major wars in the first half of this century and we cannot allow a third one to destroy mankind and all that we cherish in our civilization. A satisfactory solution must be found. That solution must reconcile the conflicting interests of the various nations concerned if we are to move away from tensions and war towards a lasting and abiding peace.

Ceylon has consistently advocated the eradication of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. We share the view expressed at this Conference that colonialism is morally unjust and politically out of date. Though many of the countries of Asia and Africa have emerged as full fledged sovereign states in the past, none the less a few colonial powers today doggedly cling to their colonial positions on various pretexts, claiming peaceful motives but in practice resorting to rough and ruthless methods to retain them. The refusal of these powers to read the writing on the wall only causes human suffering and creates bitterness and hatred—a state of affairs which is not conducive to peaceful co-existence and which constitutes a threat to peace.

The United Nations General Assembly at its fifteenth session made a significant declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. That resolution called for immediate action to be taken to end the colonial issue in all dependent territories but did not specify a date line. One of the matters which this Conference may have to consider will be the desirability of translating that resolution into practical terms.

**Disarmament is a crucial question of our times. An early settlement of this question will be of paramount importance in building confidence among nations and in decreasing the dangers of war. It would also be an important milestone in the improvement of relations between nations and would mark the end of two-power blocs with all this portends**

**for the future peace and security of the world. Vast sums of money that are expended in manufacturing these weapons of destruction could usefully be spent of economic and social development in various countries of the world.**

Unfortunately, no tangible results have followed. The mutual fear and suspicion of the powers concerned have prevented even a start being made in disarmament. We accept the need for an immediate treaty for general and complete disarmament, and this should be achieved in rapid stages. Every stage or phase should be established by having an effective method of inspection and control over its operation and maintenance. In this connection I would commend to this Conference the statement on disarmament referred to in the final communique of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in March of this year. Cyprus, Ghana and India, together with Ceylon, who are represented at this Conference, were parties to this statement. We felt at that time that an effective international agreement could be concluded on the lines indicated in that statement. The Commonwealth Premiers statement on disarmament urged the reopening of disarmament negotiations at the earliest possible moment with the aim of completely eliminating all means of waging war. This document was later circulated to other members of the United Nations for their information. Unfortunately disarmament negotiations, regarding both nuclear tests and general disarmament, have come to a standstill, and what is worse, nuclear tests have been resumed by the Soviet Union.



As countries having a vested interest in peace we should make an immediate appeal to the big powers to resume negotiations with a view to the achievement of complete and general disarmament. In my view, it would help these negotiations if a certain number of the non-aligned countries are also included in the Disarmament Commission. This Conference of non-aligned states does not in any way act contrary to the aims and objectives for which the United Nations stands. On the contrary, this Conference supports and supplements the work of the United Nations. Since the founding of this organisation the membership of this body has considerably increased. Most of the new Members have come from the Asian-African group, and they generally follow the policy of non-alignment. This change in the composition of this organisation has taken away the prestige and influence wielded by the West European group, and consequently there is a threat among certain members to undermine its authority. This attempt should be checked. **The United Nations stands for the maintenance of international peace and security and it is in the interest of all concerned, particularly the small countries, to maintain and strengthen this organisation.**

We would prefer basic changes in the Charter in order to strengthen this organisation, but disagreement among the big powers makes this difficult. The failure to seat the representative of the People's Republic of China has contributed to this impasse. It is our earnest hope that wise counsels will prevail and that China will take her legitimate seat in the United Nations.

The office of the Secretary-General has in recent times come in for much

criticism, and a new proposal has been made by the Soviet Union to change the office of the Secretary-General into a triumvirate of three persons having the same power and the right of veto. An alternative suggestion has been the appointment of three deputies on a similar basis. We do not conform to either viewpoint in spite of the mistakes made by the Secretary-General over the Congo situation last year. On the contrary, we feel that the Secretary-General should retain sole executive authority for carrying out the directives of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the other bodies of the United Nations. We also feel that the office and authority of the Secretary-General should be upheld and strengthened, and one of the positive ways to achieve this would be to reorganise the Security Council in such a way as to enable it to give clear directives to the Secretary-General.

The composition of the Security Council and the other institutions of the United Nations does not adequately reflect the present membership of the United Nations. When a satisfactory solution is reached as regards the representation of the People's Republic of China we feel a reallocation of seats could be made in those bodies so that greater representation might be given to the Asian-African Group.

The existence of an economic imbalance and the problems of unequal economic development assume considerable significance in our exchange of views on the international situation. It is not coincidence that the majority of the underdeveloped nations believe in a policy of non-alignment. They are only too aware of the enormous tasks which confront them in

the economic field and the need to devote their slender resources to the fulfilment of these tasks. They also realise that the tension which exists between ideological blocs can be traced directly to the existence of economic imbalance. **As long as there exists a gulf between the developed and the underdeveloped countries the possibilities of tension are immense.** This tension is highlighted by the enormous resources which the more developed countries allocate to military expenditure. Conversely, if this tension could be reduced the resultant saving could be diverted to economic aid for the underdeveloped countries.

In most of the countries represented here there has been some acceleration in the process of development. In many cases, however, this acceleration does not keep pace with the increase in population, and even if it did it could not match the rate of growth which obtains in the more developed nations of the world. I need hardly say that what is required is that the process of equalisation should be hastened. It would of course be absurd to suggest that the developed countries should slow down or even reverse their development. The alternative would therefore lie in the acceleration of the rate of growth of the underdeveloped countries. Increasing economic and political contacts between the peoples of the world make comparisons inevitable, and in the result a note of frustration has been introduced into the revolution of rising expectations. Of course, the solution to this problem lies primarily with the under-developed countries. **We need to increase our productive capacity, widen our investment opportunities and plan our economic development. These tasks command our full attention but we**

**need the assistance of the more developed countries. That assistance has been forthcoming but if it is to reduce the economic imbalance which exists today it must be on a considerably wider scale.** Fortunately there is an increasing awareness of the urgency of this problem in the more enlightened countries, and this Conference would do well to consider what more we can do to widen the area of understanding.

Before I conclude I should like to express my firm conviction that there is no single country in the world at this moment that looks forward to the prospects of war without dismay. **I do not for one moment believe that there is a single mother in the world who could bear to contemplate the possible danger of her children being exposed to atomic radiation and slow and lingering death, if not swift annihilation. The statesmen of the great powers, who have been placed in positions of trust and authority by millions of ordinary people who do not want war, have no right to assume that they have a mandate to precipitate a nuclear war and immense destructive power either to defend a way of life or to extend a political ideology.** In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sabre-rattling was sometimes an expensive political game for the bigger countries. Today, when a major conflict could be started off by accident or hysteria, the consequences of sabre-rattling could be disastrous. We talk of peaceful co-existence, but what kind of co-existence is possible between countries which maintain a battery of intercontinental ballistic missiles aimed prominently at one another? The whole basis of peaceful co-existence depends on the premise that

inconsistent ideologies in the modern world do not require an armoury for their survival.

We do not expect, nor have we any right to expect, that in the short space of five or six days we shall succeed in solving all the world problems, but we are here in Belgrade because it is our firm conviction that the non-aligned nations have a positive contribution to make in the cause of peace. If I may attempt to assess the contribution that the non-aligned countries can make at this time, I would say that our

**endeavour should be to influence world opinion to such an extent that governments, however powerful, cannot regard warfare as an alternative to negotiation. Too much is at stake today to allow us the luxury of considerations of prestige and honour. When human life is involved all else is secondary. Let us in our deliberations make this clear in no uncertain terms.**

*Non Aligned Conference  
in Belgrade - 1961*

Address by the  
Prime Minister,  
Mrs. Sirimavo  
Bandaranaike, at  
the ILO Session in  
Geneva, June 10, 1975

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply touched by the very kind and warm words of welcome extended to me by the President and the Secretary General. I deem it a great honour to me personally, to my country, and in this International Women's Year, to all womanhood, to have been invited to address this august assembly. I deem it a great honour because this is an audience of decision makers at the highest level, representing the three vital sectors of social and economic organization—the workers who are the ultimate creators of value, the employer who are creators of opportunity for productive work and the state which is the moderator of this vast and pervasive enterprise.

I would be failing in my duty if I did not pay tribute to the dedication of an illustrious Director General, the late Dr. Wilfred Jenks, who devoted near half a century to the noble aims of this Organization, or to the impressive record of his successor, the present Director-General, of whose dedication to the ideals of this Organization we are equally conscious. On behalf of all of us I would extend our best wishes for the success of his endeavours.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman, without presuming to inform you on matters of which your knowledge and understanding are bound to be extensive, I think it would be appropriate in the first instance to survey briefly the association of Sri Lanka with the ILO and the condition of labour in my

country.

Sri Lanka was admitted to membership of this vital international organization in 1948, the year when we ceased to be a British colony. From the very inception of this happy association, Sri Lanka has been both an appreciative beneficiary of the initiatives and actions of the organization and an active partner in its endeavours. If I may cite a few examples of this partnership, Sri Lanka was Chairman of the ILO's Committee on Agricultural Labour in 1950, and has been a member of the Governing Body for periods since 1954. She has also had the opportunity of hosting several regional seminars and conferences including the First Asian Regional Conference in 1950 and the Eighth which is scheduled for September/October this year. On the side of national benefits Sri Lanka counts with deep satisfaction, ILO's assistance in several important projects including management training for co-operative officials, vocational training for workers, and a study, and Pioneer Country basis, of Matching Employment Opportunities and Expectations of Youth undertaken by a mission led by Professor Dudley Seers.

I would at this stage like to relate the aims and objectives of the long standing vigorous international organization, to the political and social climate of my country.

The preamble of the Constitution of the ILO starts with the premise that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice". The Philadelphia Declaration of 1944 which set the directions for the work of this Organization affirms that "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere" and that "all human beings, irrespective of race creed or sex, have the right to pursue, both their material well-being and their spiritual development, in conditions of freedom and dignity of economic security, and social opportunity".

These sentiments were echoed, at the dawn of Sri Lanka's independence, in a speech by my late husband, Mr. S W R D Bandaranaike, at the opening of the First Parliament of Sri Lanka He said:

Political freedom comes alive only when it is utilised to achieve other freedoms – freedom from poverty, freedom from disease, freedom from ignorance and freedom from fear.

He went on to declare that each individual should be assured of these freedoms, "which safeguard man's self-respect and secure decent, honest and fair dealing between man and man".

Mr. Bandaranaike set the tone for succeeding governments which were inspired by his ideals and which were irrevocably committed to the achievement and development of social justice, within the shortest possible time. These ideals have been the motivating forces of the present government, which committed itself to the adoption of a Republican Constitution for Sri Lanka, pledged to realize the objectives of a Socialist Democracy.

The Republican Constitution was adopted in May 1972. Chapter VI of the Constitution, embodying Fundamental Rights and Freedoms declares that ALL persons are equal before the Law and are entitled to equal protection of the Law, and —and what is of special significance of the International Women's Year —namely that no citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the public sector, shall be discriminated against on the ground of race, religion, caste or sex,

The political climate of Sri Lanka, I am proud to state, is really suitable for the flowering of the ILO's goals of social justice, freedom and dignity, and above all, equality. The creation of this climate has been possible, thanks to a long tradition of democratic institutions at the grass-roots level from very ancient times, an enlightened policy of encouraging education and literacy which has resulted today in Sri Lanka having one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and the introduction, for the first time in Asia of universal adult franchise in 1931. It has also been nurtured by willingness on the part of the national leadership, to strike out on bold new paths, seeking radical solutions to problems which appeared intractable as long as thinking remained confined to old and outmoded grooves.

Labour legislation of a highly advanced nature was possible in such a climate of widespread literacy and political awareness and has a history of over fifty years—that is, preceding independence by more than two decades. The pace of reform has been greatly accelerated since the late nineteen fifties and this has ranged right across the board from land reform and settlement to the regulation of working hours and conditions, minimum wages periodically updated to alleviate the effects of world-wide inflation, and an attempt to narrow the gap between the levels of life of the workers and the higher income groups through ceilings, placed on disposable income, as well as on the individual ownership of lands and houses. These efforts on our part have produced increasingly

satisfactory results in the marked improvement of economic well-being on an egalitarian base especially amongst the hitherto less fortunate sections of our people where statistics indicate that the highest growth rate of eight per cent. has been achieved by the poor 40 per cent of the population.

Beside the award of annual bonuses, profit sharing as a further incentive has been attempted on a limited scale and it is intended to introduce a scheme of profit incentives on a wider basis in state enterprises. I do not wish to tire the Assembly with a long recitation of our labour laws, although many more examples could be given. But suffice it to say that Sri Lanka's policies towards labour in this field have been characterised by ensuring for this vital sector of the population security of tenure, economic security through provident funds and mechanisms for the achievement and maintenance of justice and fairplay. Our labour laws attempt to achieve the standards set and the applications required by common agreement of the International Community insofar as our economic development permits of them. We must bear in mind that high standards cannot be achieved uniformly were economic development is not uniform the world over. What is often termed a lack of political will to implement standards is really the absence of an adequate economic base. Standards cannot be applied in isolation.

Trade Unionism has a long history in Sri Lanka, with many unions in the forefront of the struggle for national independence since the nineteen thirties. There are over 1,500 registered and functioning trade unions in Sri Lanka, with a total membership of over 2 ½ million, and with their own national and international affiliations. This represents a fairly high degree of labour organisation in a country with a total labour force of roughly 3.5 million.

Having traced the national background to the ideals and pursuits of the ILO, I would venture a few comments, again in the light of national and regional experience, on the ambitious agenda for this conference. Here I find three items of particular significance for our time – Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers, Organisation of Rural Workers and their Role in Economic and Social Development and Human Resources Development.

The first of these items assumes the greatest importance in view of the designation of 1975 as the International Women's Year. It is particularly satisfying that the central items for the observances for this year are equality, development and peace. These themes help to underscore the fact that the question of equality for women is linked with and is a part of the major concerns of all



people irrespective of sex. Women's equality as we see it in Sri Lanka is a part of the other significant items you have on the agenda of the 60<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference —namely, organisation of rural workers and their role in economic and social development and human resources development, and that the pressing needs of social and economic development can be met most effectively only on the active participation and integration of women along with men in this process and that women have an important contribution to make to the development of friendly relations and co-operation among nations.

I would like to acknowledge, with warm appreciation, the initiative of Her Imperial Highness Princess Ashraf Pahlavi of Iran, presenting a Declaration from Thirty-Five Heads of States and Government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on Human Rights Day, on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1974. I am also happy to have been among those associated with this Declaration. I also welcome statements made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Director of the ILO on the occasion of the International Women's Year. They all helped to emphasise that peace cannot be maintained or economic and social progress assured, without the full participation of women, alongside men, in all fields of human endeavours and speaking of endeavours, I might point out that it was only the other day that the world heard of the conquest of Mount Everest by women mountaineers.

To relate this to Sri Lanka's national context and experience, the most important aspect to be stressed is the Buddhistic tradition of the country, dating back over 2,500 years, in which women were accorded an honoured place in society, not only as mothers and wives but as one of two elements, complementing each other in one harmonious unity. It has been natural for us to think in terms of this joint participation in all facets of life and what is emphasised is harmony and not assertiveness.

This is not of course, to deny the need for promoting a greater awareness, among both men and women, through education, of all the potential for good in this partnership.

We should not also presume that women can make their fullest contribution to progress and peace, only on the basis of partnership and paid employment outside the home. A woman who finds fulfilment, even with a full and acute awareness of her potential and rights in proving the basis of a harmonious family and a source of inspiration and strength to her family and her community, should also be recognised and encouraged. The need for such a contribution

from women cannot be over-emphasised in the context of our new emphasis on the quality of life, rather than on the quantity of material goods in our possession, and of the need for emotional and spiritual stability in a world of explosive change. We should not lose sight of the lesson of the alienation and the cultural shock caused as a result of the rapidity of modern development and the consequent disruptions and disorientations engendered within the human personality. It is my view that in such a situation the woman has a major role to play in society in providing the balance and the harmony.

Therefore, women who find fulfilment in the domestic and community setting are also a vital asset in the societies of the developing world where the development of confidence and leadership and attachment to universal values at the grass-roots level is an essential pre-requisite to socio-economic development. The majority of the world's population is still rural and one of the problems of economic development today is the pressure on urban units of limited capacity, from rural areas which have failed to meet the needs of their populations.

Against this background, all social planners and leaders of thought would be well-advised to bear in mind the cultural and ethical standards of different societies, to respect these differences and facilitate full-flowering of these cultures in keeping with their individual genius. The world's culture is enriched by such diversity and endangered by attempts to apply standards relevant to one context, universally to all contexts. In an attempt to emphasise and develop the potential of the individual, we should not rush headlong to the other extreme of a tyranny of standardisation. In Sri Lanka today women have entered every professional field. The spread of education amongst them is very great. In fact they are now beginning to outnumber the men in entry into the Universities. To quote just one example, as of today, over 55 per cent of the students in our medical faculties are women. However, as I have elaborated before, we are aware of the dangers of a lop-sided development and it will be our endeavour to see that so called material progress does not result in the complete alienation of the individual from society and to emphasise that there are many more facets to the development of the human personality than the pre-occupation with acquisitive greed.

It is this approach that we bring to bear in the integration of men and women in the question of human resources development and especially the organisation of rural workers. These are related problems to all developing nations and we would share our experience in these fields.

The words of the late Dr. Wilfred Jenks in his report to the 58<sup>th</sup> conference have particular significance here. He said:

To discuss and decide on economic issues without regard to social objective is to lose all sense of purpose; to discuss and decide on social objectives without regard to economic conditions and constraints is to lose all contact with reality.

This is a very concise statement of society's dilemma today.

The human resources of a nation which include both men and women are not only its most significant asset. They are the crux and core of planned development. Of them the workers who, as I said earlier are the creators of ultimate value, are therefore not only the foundation of any social and economic organisation, but its steel frame and backbone. The development of their fullest potential and the provision of avenues for its fullest expression is undoubtedly the most important function of the planner and the administrator.

The problem of human resources in my country, and I should venture to think of most other developing countries, manifests itself in two ways. First we have the situation of our highly trained personnel like Doctors, Engineers, Scientists, and Administrators trained at considerable expense to the nation being attracted to affluent countries of the developed world. This is a "brain drain" which we could ill afford. Secondly, we have the problem of a large number of unemployed young school leavers who could be trained or retrained in skilled vocational employment depending on the manpower requirements of the country. These unemployed youth at present have a justifiable sense of grievance, in that they have been made to feel unwanted. They are nevertheless, if properly trained, excellent material to be mobilised for the economic development of our countries. An essential prerequisite for training of this nature is scientific assessment for manpower requirements of our countries. It is only thereafter that a master plan could be prepared for the training of youth to be fitted into the different skills. To my mind, training, and though the training itself could be limited to the respective countries, the eventual placement of such trained personnel need not necessarily be limited to a particular country. It seems to be an exercise better suited to be tried on a regional basis on a footing of regional co-operation. We are aware that today countries in the Middle East in particular have adequate financial resources to be invested in development. However, lack

of skilled manpower seems to be inhibiting the speedy take-off of development projects. On the other hand there are countries such as mine where, though we have the human resources, we lack the capital for investment in industry. In this context it may be possible for trained manpower resources from countries where this is available being made available to countries where their services are required. This would promote regional co-operation of a new type. I should like to commend this proposal to the ILO for serious reflection and study as a preliminary to the establishment of a Skilled Manpower Pool.

We have also a great deal of experience in Sri Lanka in rural organisation. A programme of rural youth settlement on co-operative lines, in conjunction with land-reform and alienation of state land has been in operation for some years, with notable success. We learnt through the bitter experience of an insurrection in 1971, that high hopes nurtured through education can become embittered if the process was not also accompanied by the provision of increasing opportunities for the fulfilment of these aspirations. The first priority for us was to re-educate youth, in the value and dignity of independent economic activity, in agriculture, so that urban life and urban employment would cease to be the sole criterion of success. We have also drastically restructured the entire educational system to ensure compatibility between the available avenues for productive employment and the qualifications imparted by education.

I would like to take this opportunity to refer to another dilemma. Women's rights, the creation of employment and human resources development, are all excellent ideals, but the pursuit of them in the absence of economic wherewithal, and the prospect of ultimate fulfilment would be both frustrating and self-defeating. What use would be the widespread education of women, and for that matter men, if the economy of the country cannot sustain them in fruitful toil? What avenues exist, for the creation of the requisite level of employment, in such a country, if it is dependent on a primary product market, if the markets of the developed countries are closed to its nascent industries, and if investment capital is not forthcoming inspite of the most attractive terms offered?

The problem of poverty is global. It does not respect any division of the world into East and West or North and South. It is, ironically like peace, indivisible. I said "ironically" because in today's world we have come to realise that Peace and Poverty are opposites—that poverty anywhere, as the Philadelphia Declaration affirms, constitutes a threat to prosperity everywhere. If some developing countries are whole pockets of poverty, some prosperous nations have pockets

of poverty in their own midst. Therein lies an opportunity for these prosperous nations to see at first hand the evils and the threats to Peace and tranquillity, posed by poverty.

I do not proclaim that poverty in the developing countries poses a direct threat to the more fortunate nations. But I do say that poverty and the frustration engendered by it tend to create tensions and instability in the world. Therefore, if poverty is global, so should attempts as its solution be. The ugliness of poverty can be removed only by a concerted, global effort. Any approach to its solution, to be successful, has to be on a basis of co-operation, not confrontation.

In this global struggle, the ILO has a significant role to play; and I would suggest that it has a greater responsibility than other organisations in the United Nations family, because it has a responsibility for the most vulnerable and the most numerous of the citizens of the world. Its responsibility does not end with the achievement of better wages and better working and living conditions for the toilers of the world. It has the more positive and preventive responsibility of ensuring that the misery of unemployment is not visited upon the very element of society which the civilised world considers as the justification of all organisations—I mean the common man and the people whom we euphemistically refer to as human resources. I cannot conceive of anything more inhuman and degrading to an individual than to be told that his toil is not needed, and that he is irrelevant to his society.

That precisely is the danger that increasing numbers of the world's peoples are facing. International monetary instability, recession and inflation can be even accepted as temporary evils. But if they result, over sustained periods of time, in unemployment and the irrelevance of human beings, then the commitment of the United Nations system, to the dignity and worth of the human person, becomes only empty rhetoric.

May I with all sincerity be permitted to say that the ILO has proved its visibility, flexibility and sense of purpose. It is the only attempt at international co-operation which survived the failure of the League of Nations. It is one of the oldest among existing institutions of international co-operation. It has recorded many tangible achievements and successes, where others have failed, because it has retained its relevance through dynamic adaptation. It is a tribute and as a recognition of its qualities that this Organisation was rightly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace some years ago. The World Employment Programme launched in 1970 under the auspices of this body, is an excellent example of its enduring

contact with reality and its continuing dedication to its role. The programmes of man-power training and education, and the studies it has launched on a regional basis on matching employment needs to the expectations of youth within the frame-work of the World Programme are lasting monuments to its foresights and relevance.

The socio-economic realities of the human race have come a long way since the *laissez faire* liberalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dimension of the new realities call for ever newer and bolder approaches, and one cannot but be heartened by the sensitive intelligence displayed by this vital Organisation.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This sixtieth session of the International Labour Conference is crucial, and is a potential turning point in the history of international co-operation. We are gathered here, at the mid-point of the International Women's Year and the eve of a major World Conference devoted to the role of women in human progress. This is also the mid-point of the Second Development Decade and the World Disarmament Decade, and the fifth year since the ILO launched World Employment Programme. It is therefore a most appropriate occasion for a renewed commitment from all of us to work together for the progress of Peace, Justice and Equality.

I would like to end these few remarks with a reaffirmation of Sri Lanka's faith in the International Labour Organisation, support for its ideals of justice and decency in human relations, and the readiness of my country and its people to make international co-operation a living reality. Please permit me also to wish you every success in your deliberation at this session.

Thank you.

5<sup>th</sup> Conference of  
Heads of State  
or Government  
of Non-Aligned  
Countries, Colombo  
16-19 August, 1976

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I deem it a great honour to have been given this opportunity of greeting you on behalf of the people of Sri Lanka and of extending to all of you a very warm welcome to our shores, and to this Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Nations.



The people of Sri Lanka, their Government and I, are deeply conscious of the honour you have bestowed upon us by your acceptance of our invitation to hold this Conference here. We are equally aware of the importance of this occasion. It marks fifteen years since the first of these Conferences was held in Belgrade. It is also twenty-one years since the independent nations of Africa and Asia met at Bandung to map out strategies for the consolidation of their independence and to give that independence true meaning in the lives of their peoples. For both reasons, we have spared no effort to make you feel most welcome in our midst at this important juncture. It is our hope that you will find yourself at home in our land, among a people who are one with you in your hopes and aspirations.

I have also the very pleasant duty at this stage, of extending a warm welcome to the fold of Non-Alignment, to the peoples of Angola, Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, and Seychelles who have won their independence since our Fourth Conference.

I extend a similar welcome to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Maldives, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Panama which have joined our Movement since the Algiers Summit.

The victories of the peoples of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, with whose independence struggles the Non-Aligned nations have always identified themselves, accompanied, as they have been, by the ending of Portuguese colonialism and its fascist regime, and the progressive isolation of the racists in Southern Africa, are a source of particular satisfaction to us.

It is my great privilege today, to extend a very special and warm welcome to the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam whose people have emerged united and victorious, after their relentless struggle lasting nearly half a century for freedom and re-unification. Their struggle against the military might and sophistication of one of the greatest powers, to ultimate and final victory, is a shining inspiration to all nations fighting for national liberation against foreign intervention, domination and oppression.

Just as we, the Non-Aligned Nations, have steadfastly supported the Vietnamese people and rejoice with them in their victory, we shall continue to support them in the task of rebuilding their wartorn economy. I would, at the same time, like to extend to the delegations and the peoples of Democratic Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, very warm felicitations on their own significant victories.

At the outset of our deliberations here, I would like to pay a warm and well-deserved tribute to His Excellency Houari Boumediene, President of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, and to the Government and people of that great country, for the significant contributions they have made to the success of our Movement during the last three crucial years. The Fourth Summit Conference at Algiers made historic decisions, especially in the economic sphere. His Excellency President Boumediene's dynamic initiatives during his three year stewardship of the Movement as its Chairman, have given substance and momentum to those decisions.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Governments of Cuba, Guyana, India, Kuwait, Peru, Senegal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia which have hosted many vitally important Conferences since the last Summit, and played, thereby, a significant part in giving direction and purpose to our Movement, helping to formulate practical programmes for implementation in key areas of concern to us all.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the many nations that have made generous contributions towards the success of this Conference, and my Ministers, the members of numerous Government agencies and people from all walks of life in Sri Lanka, who have contributed towards the arrangements for this Conference, and the comfort and well-being of our friends.

Some of the great leaders of our Movement who helped to blaze the trail of Non-Alignment, which today has captured the hearts and minds of more than half the world's

peoples, are sadly, no more with us. It is fitting that, as we dedicate ourselves today to the future success of our Movement, we should salute their memory. The heroism which they have inspired has become legendary, as it has proved that might is not necessarily right, and that even the greatest might can be humbled by the resolute struggle of the weak and the poor, when justice is on their side.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This is the first Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned to be held in Asia. It symbolises the growing maturity of our Movement which having begun the search for a better world order, within a post-colonial context, has grown into a universal Movement, solidly anchored on many continents. It is indeed a signal honour for Asia that this crucial Fifth Summit is being held here, marking, as it were, the determination of a resurgent Asia to play her full role in the shaping of a New World Order of Justice, Equity, Peace and Progress.

There were only twenty-five full members in our Movement when we first met at Belgrade. That number had nearly doubled by the time of the Second Conference at Cairo and trebled between Lusaka and Algiers. Today, the Movement counts eighty-five members, representing nearly two-thirds of the membership of the United Nations.

At the United Nations, this strength of the Non-Aligned Movement has been bitterly criticised as a "tyranny of the majority". We know that Non-Alignment has never been, was never intended to be, and shall never become, a tyranny. If anything, it has been the most powerful weapon against other tyrannies which the world, especially the Third World, has been familiar with over the last five centuries: the tyranny of poverty, the tyranny of hunger, malnutrition and starvation, the tyranny of disease and premature death, and the tyranny, above all, of the complete absence of the prospect of any happiness or hope. Yet we may draw satisfaction from this criticism because it is the most positive, though unwitting, acknowledgement of our solidarity and our commitment to democratic methods in our struggle against the evils of the old order.

The strength of our Movement is all the more remarkable when we recognise that the Non-Aligned are, for the most part, poor and under-developed nations, without the conventional means of exercising power and influence, such as military might, great industrial wealth or highly organised and sophisticated media of mass communication. Our strength lies in our steadfast adherence to our principles and in our unity. It constitutes a massive moral force which has to be taken into account by those who have, until recently, been accustomed to wielding unchallenged power over the destinies of nations.

There are those, of course, who are frightened by this rising tide of solidarity among peoples whom they had manipulated and exploited before, and would balk at nothing to break this unity. There are, on the other hand, some of us too, who show anxiety that the Movement might lose its cohesion and commitment to principle if it grew, too big, too fast. We are, however, not an exclusive club limited to any pre-determined size or number. In any case the exclusiveness, if there be any, of the under-privileged, will not be sufficiently attractive to draw into its fold anybody but the under-privileged. For our part we have welcomed into our midst, every nation which showed itself, in practice, capable and willing, to commit itself to the fundamentals of Non-Alignment. Our strength will increase, not decrease, with every new adherent to our principles, for, it is our firm and abiding commitment to principle that has won for our Movement even in this era of detente, the foremost position among those who stand against injustice and Oppression.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

May I now recount here the many achievements of our Movement. The struggle against colonialism, which ranked high in our priorities from the very beginning, has freed millions of peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Our persistent refusal to be drawn into the confrontations of the cold war and our sustained initiatives towards the

advancement of peace, have made a significant contribution to the easing of international tension.

The blocs themselves, and some of the military alliances, especially in Asia, are no longer as rigid as they were before, and there is a welcome measure of detente in the relations between the major Powers.

There is an increasing resistance, among the smaller nations, to polarisation around power centres, and the world is no longer divided as it used to be, in the early post-war years.

An increasing number of nations have been able, through the independence of option which our Movement has always underlined, to evolve their own forms of social and political organisation, to suit their environment and genius, without being shakled to any established ideologies.

The weak and the oppressed of yesteryear are now asserting their independence and claiming their democratic right to a say in the affairs of the human race.

In the economic sphere, the Third World nations have found a new strength to challenge old concepts of colonialist, and unequal relations, to assert their right to fair prices for their commodities and assert, as well, their sovereignty over their natural resources.

Our Movement has lent support to, and found inspiration from, the joint action of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries in demanding a more realistic price for their oil, irrespective of the sacrifices which some countries have had to make as a consequence of this support.

The Non-Aligned have generated the demand for the establishment of the New International Economic Order, and the Sixth and Seventh Special Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly have borne testimony to the solidarity of the Third World nations in their pursuit of this new Order.

The Non-Aligned have played a leading role in the setting up of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. I might be pardoned if I may express some degree of personal satisfaction that my proposal at the Algiers Summit

for the establishment of a Special Fund for Agricultural Development has now been accepted.

With regard to commodities, which is central to the economic well-being of developing nations, the Non-Aligned are in the front line in calling for the establishment of a Common Fund for Financing of Buffer Stocks.

We have taken steps towards the creation of a Council of Producer Associations as a strong countervailing power against the pressures of vested commodity interests in international trade.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I did not embark on this recounting of the achievements of our Movement merely for the sake of self-congratulation. However, it would be realistic to consider them as providing a solid base on which we can build for the future. The Non-Aligned Movement is nowhere near full accomplishment of all the tasks that it has set for itself.

International affairs have their own dynamics of change and we should adapt our thinking and our strategies to the changing situation.

With our consistent commitment to the banishment of racism from human society over the last two decades, we have so far succeeded only in isolating racist regimes. But they continue to plague us yet.

General and complete disarmament, a cause to which the Non-Aligned have been committed for the last quarter of a century, yet eludes us.

The threat of nuclear war still hangs over us.

Even the detente formalised at the European Conference on Security and Co-operation at Helsinki last year remains uncertain as subsequent developments outside Europe seem to show, and it is possible that detente between the great Powers might deteriorate into mutual accommodation and peaceful competition for spheres of influence.

Then there are the fundamental issues connected with under-development and poverty. Solutions to these, are of critical importance and urgency.

This is the background against which the Non-Aligned have to make their plans for the coming years, and I would like to touch briefly on what remains to be done in some of these crucial areas.

Racism in Southern Africa is a residue of old colonialism elaborately entrenched on the myth that some people are born superior to others on grounds of colour. With a macabre inventiveness all their own, racist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia have instituted policies directed towards the systematic erosion, not only of the democratic rights of majorities in these countries but also of the fundamental human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

With near monumental patience, African nations have so far devoted their attention to peaceful methods of convincing these racists of the folly of their policies. The Dar-es-Salaam Declaration of April 1975 marks a turning point in the history of racism in Southern Africa. The violence that has erupted in recent weeks and what it portends for peace on that continent and in the rest of the world has to be taken into any reckoning of the ultimate solution to this problem. We stand resolutely behind the peoples of Africa in this struggle, the outcome of which will determine whether humanity can progress in peace and brotherhood.

In the Middle East, Israel continues to challenge all civilized concepts of international conduct, using territories acquired through aggression and manipulating the human communities in those territories as pawns in its power game. It has persistently flouted numerous United Nations resolutions which have endorsed the inalienable national rights of the people of Palestine.

It is now almost universally recognised that the problem of Palestine is no longer a refugee problem, and that the only hope of a durable peace in that region lies in the

recognition of the national rights of the people of Palestine including their right to statehood, and in Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied since the war of 1967.

We have been firmly committed to these principles, as indeed demonstrated by the immediate step, taken by my Government, as soon as we assumed office in May 1970, of suspending diplomatic relations with Israel.

We must remain ever vigilant against Israel's attempts to defy world opinion through the exploitation of differences among ourselves. Nor can we look with indifference upon the Israeli violation of the sovereignty of Uganda at Entebbe, with its attendant loss of life and destruction of property. Whilst actions of hijacking cannot be condoned, action against hijackers and in defence of those who have been hijacked cannot justify a violation of international law and of the sovereignty of a nation in any circumstances.

Recent developments in Cyprus are also a matter of serious concern for the Non-Aligned Nations. The problem of Cyprus can, and should be solved, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and the Non-Aligned status of that country. Such a solution requires the withdrawal of foreign armed forces, the resumption of talks and perseverance in efforts to arrive at a just and equitable solution.

In East Asia, the aspiration of the people of Korea for national reunification remain unfulfilled despite the glimmer of hope presented by the North-South Joint Statement of four years ago. The whole world welcomed this determination of the Korean people to achieve their reunification through peaceful means and without outside intervention. Our Movement must continue to lend its firm support to this important quest and find favourable conditions for converting the present armistice into a permanent peace agreement, thereby accelerating the peaceful reunification of the country, and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Apart from these specific areas there are some general aspects of the international situation which need to be examined in the context of our future strategy.



Much of the success of the Non-Aligned Movement was achieved through its resolute opposition to imperialism. Old colonialism, which is only one aspect of imperialism, is now not much more than a marginal problem. But we could be faced with the problem of imperialism in the sense of domination of one country by another, through economic and other forms of control, for years to come. To the Non-Aligned who have always emphasised true independence and not merely formal sovereignty, it remains a major imperative to be watchful about these new manifestations of imperialism.

Any concept of domination or control exercised by some states over the fortunes of others is inconsistent with the democratisation of international relations which the Non-Aligned have always fought for. Attempts are sometimes made to give respectability to time worn and outmoded concepts such as "balance of power" and spheres of influence", which are insidious attacks on the principle of democratic and sovereign equality of all states, large and small.

Our goal of general and complete disarmament has so far remained unrealized. Despite a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty these weapons of mass destruction continue to be exploded underground and in the atmosphere. While professing a commitment to disarmament, and presenting arms limitation as a step towards this goal, the great Powers pile up newer and more sophisticated weapons capable of destroying the earth many times over. As they continue to clamour about the dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation, the established nuclear powers retain their monopoly of these weapons which they want other nations to renounce. The race for supremacy in destructive capability is an abuse of technology. The justification for the accumulation of these weapons is weak, unconvincing and indeed opposed to every vestige of civilised human principles. It is an abuse and an unconscionable waste of the earth's limited resources.

It is a grotesque paradox that when millions of the world's human beings are in the depths of deprivation and despair, the resources which could be constructively diverted to a civilised solution of the world's biggest problems should be channelled instead to the creation and the further sophistication, not only of weapons, but of what are now proudly called "weapons systems", for the use of powers who say they have no intention of using them! No international order which accommodates and accepts such a cruel paradox can be termed either sane or healthy, or worthy of serious support.

The cold war has receded and the great Powers seem to be withdrawing from the brink of confrontation in Europe. The detente formalised at Helsinki last year, signifies this new approach. It will remain devoid of meaning to the rest of the world if it does not extend beyond the confines of Europe to the other regions where old rivalries and new arenas for confrontation still exist. We have always welcomed the relaxation of tension as a step towards peaceful co-existence but it cannot lead to such a result if it still perpetuates rivalries, peaceful or otherwise, in other regions. The Non-Aligned therefore have a vital stake in the expansion of this detente to all the regions of the world.

In regard to international security, the great Powers and their alliances seem to be hypnotized by old perceptions of conflicting interests and, therefore persist in looking for systems of security which are still rooted in suspicion. These old nostrums, even in their new and colourful bottles, hold no attraction to the Non-Aligned who have long been convinced of the futility of the perpetuation of distrust. There can be no genuine security, either for the great Powers or for the smaller nations, as long as international issues are decided within the confining walls of rivalry.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal which I presented at Lusaka six years ago, became a United Nations Declaration the next year with the understanding and

support of most of the nations represented here to day. In presenting this proposal, we were attempting to extend the application of the basic principles of Non-Alignment beyond the borders of individual nations, to a large and definable area of the earth's surface.

The Peace Zone concept, if extended to other regions for which similar proposals have been emerging in recent years, would constitute a vital element in a system of universal collective security without military alliances. It is an irony of our time that States which are themselves advocates of concepts of security could not support this proposal.

The implementation of the Peace Zone Declaration has today assumed a new urgency. The United States is now engaged upon the expansion of military and naval facilities in Diego Garcia. There is also the intensified military and naval presence of the great Powers in the Indian Ocean, which by reason of their known rivalries in other areas, could cause apprehensions of danger to the security of the Indian Ocean region.

It is not surprising that the Indian Ocean littoral states which have a shared experience of colonial domination resulting from great Power rivalries of the past, should find in Diego Garcia and the intensified foreign military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean, a threat to their security and sovereignty. We must therefore stand together and demand the dismantling of the Diego Garcia base ; and we must also demand that the great Powers which have no littoral interests, withdraw their navies and military presences from the Indian Ocean region, for detente and international security are not concepts that can have one meaning to powerful nations and no meaning at all to the rest of humanity.

International security requires a stable international order, which must necessarily be based on norms of conduct and rules, which would command the respect and acceptance of all nations and become enshrined as principles of International Law. Recent developments in many parts of

the world show that imperialism and colonialism, though in retreat, show a new face, and depend upon new weapons, which are just as dangerous. The role of mercenaries in Angola, and of multi-national corporations in subverting lawfully constituted Governments, techniques of de-stabilization, causing apprehension in many countries and the dismaying evidence, now coming to light, of systematic bribery and corruption on a massive scale, used by trans-national agencies, to influence and interfere with the internal affairs of independent nations, are some of these new weapons, to which we have to find the answers.

Has not the time come for us to address our minds to these very serious issues with a view to formulating new norms and new codes of conduct which would be indispensable for the strengthening of our security and the ultimate protection of the sovereignty of each of us?

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The United Nations, for all its limitations, is still the indispensable instrument for the maintenance of world peace and security. We, the Non-Aligned, are fully aware of this, as many a battle in our war against injustice and inequity has been won within the United Nations system.

No doubt, we have been irked, often enough, by some of glaring short-comings of the Organisation. The United Nations has a long way yet to go to reflect the aspirations and to secure the vital interests of all the peoples of the world. While it has retained most of the formal elements of democracy, its structure is not yet truly democratic. It is yet burdened by concepts which were designed for an age when the victors against one injustice took it upon themselves to protect and police the world order, and, in so doing, perpetuated and sometimes perpetrated, other injustices. The Organization has however shown a degree of adaptability to the needs of changed and changing circumstances. We must persevere in providing the impetus and in taking the initiatives to give it greater relevance to the realities of the late twentieth century.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Over more than two decades, the Non-Aligned Nations have been engaged, along with the rest of the world, in an attempt to find agreement on a new Law of the Sea which would reflect the realities of the modern world and the needs, expectations and rights of all nations. What Law of the Sea there is at present evolved in an era when the few nations which had the naval power and the necessary resources held virtually unchallenged sway over the oceans.

It is now almost a decade since the historic proposal to declare the Sea Bed and its resources beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, the common heritage of mankind, was made at the United Nations, and six years since it became a United Nations Declaration.

This is a new era which recognizes the rights of nations and States, irrespective of their size or power, and lays growing emphasis on an equitable sharing of all the resources of this planet available to man. It is time, therefore, that the Non-Aligned and the rest of the world acted without delay for the conclusion of a Convention, effectively embodying the principle that the international Sea Bed and its resources are the common heritage of mankind.

The third Conference on the Law of the Sea is truly an acid test both of the willingness on the part of the developed world to show a little more concern and to respect the rights of the developing world, and, on the other hand, of the ability of the developing nations to rise above their conceptions of individual national interests and to work together for the common good of all mankind. It is a challenge to the leadership, imagination and vision of all nations and leaders. I sincerely believe that the world's peoples today will be adequate to this challenge.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I have traced the main achievements of the Non-Aligned Movement and tried to place them in their proper perspective against important areas in the political sphere in which it must continue to play a very vital role.

Politics, however, cannot be divorced from economics. All political action, in the last analysis, has an economic dimension, since its final justification is its contribution to the quality of life of the world's peoples. This has particular relevance to the Non-Aligned as the great majority of our peoples are yet too pre-occupied with problems of survival to have any pretensions to this "quality of life". It is therefore my conviction that, while we continue our efforts towards the establishment of a just political order, we should also pay increasing attention to the economic needs and anxieties of our peoples.

The Non-Aligned community has certainly reached the stage at which it ought to concentrate, more than ever before, on lending economic substance to its political victories. We all recognise, as leaders of our respective peoples, that all our gains in the political field will remain meaningless, if they leave the lives of our peoples untouched. Our peoples are, in sum and substance, the ultimate justification of all our efforts, and they will judge us not on the breadth and depth of our political abstractions or on the flow and power of our rhetoric, but on our concrete contributions to their day to day lives. I say this, not to deny the validity or importance of political action, but to emphasize the sterility of politics if it does not lead to economic hope and betterment, and, in the ultimate, to true economic independence.

This economic independence is, in essence, the sovereignty and control over our own resources and freedom from the dictates of foreign pressures. In this context, I would like to refer to the firm steps we took against foreign oil companies when they attempted, in the early 1960s, to hold us to ransom. The result of this action is a

thriving nationalised petroleum industry in Sri Lanka. More recently, in fact at the end of last year, we nationalised foreign owned tea estates, and assumed control of one of our most valuable and productive resources.

I am indeed aware that many countries gathered here today have taken similar steps to safeguard their national sovereignty and independence and our collective experience in this sphere would be a most useful guide to our future actions.

We have all accepted that the New International Political Order, to the extent that we have succeeded in its establishment, should be the instrument for bringing into being, the New International Economic Order which will deliver our peoples from dehumanising poverty, ignorance and starvation.

The statistics of our present Economic Order are appalling. To take a few examples :—

- (1) Over one hundred developing countries, with 50 per cent of the world's population, accounted for only 14 per cent of the global product ; in contrast, some 25 developed countries, with only 18 per cent of the world's population, accounted for 66 per cent.
- (2) In 1970, the poorest billion of the world's population had an annual per capita income of only \$ 105 as against \$ 3,100 for those in the developed world. By 1980, in ten years, they would have increased their income by a mere three dollars, whilst those in the developed world would have improved their already comfortable position, by a further \$ 900.
- (3) 74 per cent of the exports of developing countries are primary products ; 74 per cent of the exports of developed market economy countries are manufactured goods.
- (4) Ten thousand men, women and children die of starvation every day.

- (5) In the developing countries, there are more children of school going age out of school than in school.

This state of affairs is an affront to all concepts of justice and equity, and it can be allowed to continue only at great peril to human civilization and all of man's achievements.

Today we hear much of global inter-dependence. The human community has been described as a global village, underlining inter-dependence which is characteristic of all civilizations at the grass roots level. This indivisibility of the fortunes of the human race has been long recognised and, in fact, one would have thought was not a matter of dispute. It is amazing that in spite of this, nations have continued the relentless pursuit of their individual prosperity, without consideration for the welfare of others. Even within prosperous nations the weaker and more vulnerable sections of society have fallen by the wayside in this race of unashamed consumerism.

But today we have also the opportunity to meet this challenge to our collective conscience. That opportunity has been present since the Fourth Non-Aligned Summit, with the commencement of the process of breaking up the old, unequal and exploitation system of international economic relations. It is not the Non-Aligned Nations alone who have realised their potential for change. The entire Third World is now engaged in organising its political and economic strength to change old patterns of dependence and exploitation.

In this new phase of our endeavours for a system of world economic relations based on an equal partnership of nations, the most indispensable element would be greater solidarity among the Non-Aligned and other Third World Nations. We do stand united in our search for a more equitable relationship between the developed and developing countries. That search is global and its emphasis is on co-operation, not confrontation. Confrontation is a negative concept. It is not in keeping with the fundamental principle of Non-Alignment which is the pursuit of peace and the peaceful co-existence of all nations and States and the co-operation



of all human beings. But, at the same time, urgent and diligent endeavours on our part in the face of grave human problems cannot surely be confrontation just because some may choose to call it so. Co-operation on the other hand cannot work either, unless it is related to reality, and to a due recognition of the urgency, scale and importance of the problem.

In the developed world, various measures such as farm price support schemes, have been instituted to ensure remunerative prices to producers. There are regional development funds among the developed nations for the relief of depressed areas in their midst. These, clearly, are interventions in the operation of the free market. But when developing countries seek similar measures of stability in respect of their own products they are constantly reminded, by the same developed nations, of the virtues of a complete free market economy.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Non-alignment has been in the vanguard of the struggle against all forms of imperialism. Imperialism in its cruder forms is today a receding wave.

However, I feel that we have reached the end of an era. We are now at the beginning of a new era where imperialism presents new faces and new manifestations. The struggle in the main seems to shift to imperialism in its economic dimension. Over the last three years we have groped our way towards the establishment of certain principles of international economic conduct. We have had to fight every inch of the way. The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States constitutes a very significant landmark. The Sixth Special Session of the United Nations negotiated the New International Economic Order. Since then we have taken it a little further. Apart from the development of general principles, we have seen the OPEC countries mobilising their collective strength in exploiting the advantages that lay in the possession of a strategic

commodity. UNCTAD has followed up this success with its own Intergrated Programme for Commodities. We cannot rest here, however, for there is yet a very long way to go.

A feature of the last three years has been the predominant concern of the developing countries with the problem of commodities. As I stated a little while ago, 74 per cent of the exports of developing countries are primary products. Obviously, therefore, commodities are a primary and important area for action. But we should have the political vision to enlarge our frontiers of action in the fight against economic subservience and domination. We should not mistake the symptoms for the underlying cause.

The developing countries are consistently denied the true value of their output by the vagaries of the international market and the manipulations of international finance. Our terms of trade are declining. We have little influence over the world's financial and monetary systems. We are denied the benefits of new international liquidity. With every new proposal for reform, whether it be SDRs or the re-valuation of gold, the larger benefits have always accrued to the richer and not to the poorer. The developed countries have shaped the international financial system to suit their interests. Through reserve currencies they have built up a capacity to export their inflation to the developing countries.

Should we in the developing world sustain such a system? Should we not, instead, attempt to develop a system all our own?

We are now in a position, based on our solidarity and our collective political and economic strength, to build up our own financial and monetary systems. We do have economic and political power as commodity producers. We have always been denied the use of that power as a result of existing international financial arrangements.

Today, as we meet at Colombo for this Fifth Summit, we have to deal with the subtler forms of imperialism. I have already referred to the problems of subversion, de-stabilization, bribery and corruption. I would, at this stage, like to

draw attention to the serious problems of economic domination through the ever widening gap between prices of manufactures and of raw materials. The principal weapon used against us today is the strength of the currencies of the developed world, and in particular the reserve currencies. It seems to me that these reserve currencies themselves heavily depend, not only upon the strength of the developed world in economic terms, but also upon the support which we in the developing countries give them through our own acceptance of these currencies as reserve currencies.

If we really and truly want to blunt the weapons of imperialism and colonialism, we must surely fashion countervailing weapons, in the form of a currency backed by the immense economic potential of the Non-Aligned and other developing countries. The strength of that currency will grow as we proceed to form new producer associations of strategic raw materials such as oil, copper, bauxite, uranium and a host of others. If we have the solidarity and the will to succeed, there is no force strong enough to frustrate us.

I can see limitless possibilities for a countervailing currency with Third World backing. The financial centres of the world will no longer be limited to New York, London Zurich and Paris. New centres of economic power would rise in the Non-Aligned and the Third World. The developing world would be strong enough to think in terms of a merchant shipping fleet, to carry its import and export cargo. We may even be able, in time, to regulate, freight rates, insurance and banking, and thereby redress the imbalances at least to some extent.

One area of great promise, if we accept the general principle of a countervailing currency, would be the establishment of a Commercial Bank—a Bank for the Third World—The Bank of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This would not be another Non-Aligned Solidarity Fund. It will be a

genuine Commercial Bank and a truly multi-national enterprise. It will undertake all the functions of a commercial banker, including ancillary functions like merchant banking.

The Bank of the Third World is not intended to be an agency for channelling resources on concessionary terms. It should function exactly like any other commercial banking enterprise. Its special significance to the Third World is that it will enable them to enter an area of international economic activity which has so far remained the monopoly of a few multi-national private banks in the developed nations.

I visualise the establishment of branches of the Bank in every Third World country with its own system of subsidiaries to enter the more specialised areas of banking business. It could have its own research and development arm to study areas of fruitful investment among the developing countries and to nurture a new breed of entrepreneur in the public sector. The Bank could also provide a growing nucleus of trained staff in the many complex fields of international banking, promoting the development of a new skill which at the moment we do not have in most developing countries.

It is estimated that one billion people, most of them in the developing world, will be seeking employment during the next quarter of this century. Our peoples have been the unwitting victims of a competitive world order with its injustice and its ruthlessness. Nothing undermines the human spirit as much as unemployment which, in effect, renders thousands of human beings useless and irrelevant to their own societies. The proposed Bank could make a contribution in the vital field of employment generation by acting as a catalyst in generating greater trade and industry.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I would like to take this opportunity to address a brief message to the developed nations. At Non-Aligned gatherings we have often tended to concentrate our attention on our own problems. This is only natural as the strands that bind us together are our common problems and our common search for solutions to them—shared aspirations and the recognition of the value of co-operation in the realisation of those aspirations.

This does not however mean that the Non-Aligned are members of an inward looking cult, pre-occupied with themselves alone. Their concern for world peace and for the weak and the oppressed everywhere, their initiatives in the search for a new world order based on equity and justice, and their emphasis on worldwide co-operation are proof enough of their universalist outlook.

The Non-Aligned Movement does not constitute a new bloc. It is in an atmosphere of fear and distrust that the system of power blocs took root, and the distinguishing feature of Non-Alignment is its rejection of such concepts. The determination that the Non-Aligned will not become a new bloc was reiterated by practically every leader at the very First Summit in Belgrade. A Movement which was founded on a categorical rejection of the system of power blocs and confrontation cannot itself become a new bloc to confront the old blocs. Perhaps the sole reason for the existence of the Movement and its growing vitality is that it answers some compelling needs of peoples all over the world for a new outlook on life, for a new set of value based on mutual understanding and social awareness, equity and justice, in place of the old values which enthroned a ruthless and competitive individualism. If anything, Non-Alignment is a creative and constructive philosophy and the world is all the better for it.

I declare most emphatically that the Non-Aligned do not consider any nation or any people as their enemy. Their fight has always been, and always will be, against injustice, intolerance and inequity, and old concepts of empire, intervention and dominance and all theories which would attribute to any nation, however powerful it may be, exclusive authority or responsibility for peace and stability in the world. Such concepts are irrelevant as we approach the 21st century and therefore we shall continue to oppose them. Peace is a universal right and the responsibility for it, too, must be universal.

If the Non-Aligned have shown great cohesion and unity in their search for this new world order, it was not a unity forged for the purpose of confrontation, but to reach across oceans and national and ideological barriers, in a spirit of international understanding, co-operation and mutual help. It is also a unity born of dire necessity and compelling need.

Non-Alignment stands for unity in diversity and independence in inter-dependence. We invite all nations which value these goals and have committed themselves to our principles, to join this universalist and humanist venture designed to give international relations the quality of essential human dignity.

*Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

The nations represented in this Assembly are heirs to great and ancient civilisations and cultures, and beneficiaries of the teachings of all the major religions of the world, founded on peace, compassion and tolerance. As I invite you to the consideration of the many important issues on our Agenda, I am reminded of the words one of the greatest

philosophers and religious teachers of the world, the Buddha, who, in the course of his final discourse to the world said :

*“If we can meet together in concord, and rise in concord, and act upon our decisions in concord, so long may we be expected, not to decline, but to prosper.”*

I can do no better than to leave you with this thought for in many ways it sums up the philosophy of Non-Alignment itself, with its tenets of peace, justice, goodwill and co-operation. It is also a clear enunciation of the most basic principle that should govern the conduct of human relations.

At this Conference we hope to write a new chapter in human history, and I am confident that this new chapter will be one of greater promise for all of humanity.

Address to the 31<sup>st</sup> Session  
of the United Nations  
General Assembly  
30 September, 1976



Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege today to appear before this assembly, not merely as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, but as the current Chairman of the Group of Non-Aligned countries which represent more than two and a half billion of the world's population and eighty six nations. In accepting the Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned countries held at Colombo a few weeks ago, I have been conscious of the great responsibility which has thus been entrusted to me. I have however welcomed it as an opportunity for Sri Lanka to contribute what she can, to the success of a movement which is fully committed to the high ideals of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the Non-Aligned Nations to welcome with great pleasure the membership of the Republic of Seychelles in the United Nations.

Mr. President, it is not always that a Head of Government addresses this assembly, with the Permanent Representative of her country in the Chair. It is also, I think, unique for the Chairman of the group of Non-Aligned countries to present the views of the group before a President who is himself a national of a Non-Aligned country. I hope I will not be misunderstood if I consider this a happy development for the United Nations, because the Non-Aligned countries share a deep and abiding commitment to the purposes and principles of the charter of this organization.

The delegation of Sri Lanka derives justifiable satisfaction, Mr. President, from your election to this High Office. I should like to express our sincere appreciation to all the nations represented here for the honour they have bestowed on you, and through you, on Sri Lanka. I congratulate you on being the recipient of this great trust. I express our confidence that in carrying out your duties as President of this Assembly, you will maintain the very high standards set by your predecessors in that office, and amply fulfill our expectations, through your impartiality, objectivity and understanding. You have our best wishes for your success and may rely on our co-operation at all times.

Mr. Secretary-General, it is also a very pleasant task for me, on behalf of Sri Lanka and of the Non-Aligned nations, to express our appreciation of your dedication to the objectives and ideals of this organization, and your untiring efforts to bring it closer to its goal of a world at peace, based on harmony, mutual respect and trust among nations, and fruitful co-operation for the realization of a fuller life for all peoples.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Colombo Declaration and Resolutions, both political and economic, and the Action Programme for economic co-operation are already before you. We, the eighty-six nations in whose name I have the honour to present these decisions to you, look upon them as a testament of genuine international co-operation and collaboration, in place of the distrust and recrimination which have characterized international relations in past years. My remarks are therefore addressed principally to the developed nations because all talk of co-operation would be meaningless if a significant part of the world's population did not understand or appreciate the objectives and motivations of the other.

The fundamental principles of Non-Alignment can be briefly stated. They are peaceful co-existence and the true independence of states, as distinct from formal sovereignty. The principles embodied in the Bandung Declaration of twenty-one years ago, and the criteria for membership of the Movement adopted at Belgrade fifteen years ago, are based on these two fundamental concepts.

In our perception, the polarization of the world around two power centres, as was the case in the immediate post-war years and until very recently, was neither conducive to world peace and security nor beneficial even for the national or regional interests of the countries which became parties to the military alliances of that period. This view does not require any elaborate explanation

today, as the parties to the alliances have themselves come to the realization that confrontation is futile and polarization invalid.

Détente among the great Powers and between their alliance systems does not, however, meet the needs of the smaller and weaker nations as long as it perpetuates rivalry for spheres of influence, or condones manifestations of imperialism, colonialism and outside intervention in the internal affairs of States. It is even less attractive to us if it permits attempts at domination of some countries by others and lends credence to concepts of balance of power or of unequal relations between States. Such concepts strike at the sovereign equality of nations large and small, which is the centre and core of the Charter of this Organisation. Nor can this détente mean anything at all to peoples suffering for decades, even centuries, under the heel of racism, which has defied all principles of basic human rights enshrined in the Charter.

These concepts and practices are the antithesis of true independence and justice which Non-Alignment emphasizes, and the Movement's mission will not have been accomplished until these remnants of the old order are consigned to the dust-heap of history.

It is against this background of a firm rejection of the outmoded concepts of an ailing order that the Colombo Documents can be best understood. The decision of the Fifth Summit are nothing but the application of the time-tested principles of Non-aligned to the prevailing international situation and a call for remedies for the shortcomings and flaring injustices we find in it.

In the nuances of presentation, some of the terminology of the Non-Aligned charter is certainly emotive, but I do not believe that this calls for any apology. It should not be difficult for this Assembly and the world in general to understand the emotions of a man whose humanity is denied, as under the racist regimes in Southern Africa, or of a people deprived of their birthright by decisions imposed on them as in the case of the Palestinians.

I might add that the nations which have tended to resent what they consider intemperate phraseology in Non-Aligned declarations, are the very nations that themselves indulge in the strongest appeals to the human emotions in their own recent histories. The fight against injustice cannot but be emotional and it will help mutual understanding if this simple truth is remembered.

Southern Africa is one area where the circumstances fully justify resentment and impatience. The peoples of Africa have many hard-won victories against imperialism and colonialism to their credit. Yet, they have to contend today not

only with the outmoded, inhuman abhorrent practices of Apartheid and racism, but with threats to their newly won independence and their territorial integrity in the form of aggression from the same sources which now challenge their dignity and their self-respect.

Resistance movements by the oppressed black peoples in South Africa and Rhodesia have now reached the stage of national uprisings. What the Colombo Documents seek to convey, is that the river of history cannot flow backwards and that the longer the racists regimes take to realize this, the more serious would be the consequences for peace on that continent and elsewhere. The message from Colombo, as far as it concerns Southern Africa, is also directed to the nations which are continuing to collaborate with these regimes. Thereby giving them a false sense of security and a semblance of respectability to which they are not entitled.

In the particular case of Namibia, vital principles of Non-Aligned are involved. It is not only independence of a country long denied its rights by a usurpation of power, and illegal occupation, that is at stake there. The rights of people to self-determination and to the integrity of their territory are also at issue.

All initiatives towards a just solution of these problems are naturally welcome as long as they are genuinely designed to expedite the transition from obduracy to reason. At the same time, I should make it clear in this forum that if reason were to fail and the peoples of Africa were forced to resort to the ultimate solution through armed struggle, every Non-Aligned nation will stand solidly behind them.

The situation in the Middle East is also a matter of grave concern to the Non-Aligned. The validity of some of the most fundamental principles of the Movement and our commitment to those principles are on trial in the Middle East. No country, even if it has powerful patrons, can today embark on a policy of expansion and alteration of the political, demographic and cultural character of a region, or persist in a denial of the inalienable rights of a whole nation, without incurring the denunciation and condemnation of human society.

If the Non-Aligned nations have acclaimed the victories of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea in their valiant struggles against the forces of reaction and intervention, it is because their success has been a vindication of basic principles for which the Non-Aligned Movement has fought for over two decades. The call of the Non-Aligned for assistance to these countries in their

task of reconstructing their war-torn economies is, on the other hand, a plea for justice which it should not be difficult for this Assembly to understand.

In the case of Korea, it remains one of the very few countries which have continued to pay the price of territorial and national fragmentation for a World War which ended three decades ago. The aim of the Non-Aligned in regard to Korea is to create the necessary conditions for converting the present Armistice into a permanent peace agreement, in order to accelerate the self-reliant and peaceful reunification of the country and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

In Latin America, such essentials as self determination, national sovereignty and territorial integrity are under serious threat. Leaders of Non-Aligned nations in that region have focused attention on the growing menace of destabilization of Governments and national institutions in that area through techniques of deliberate and organized attacks in the established media, selective sales of arms and the exploitation of internal problems. The devices used there by transnational corporations, to perpetuate and consolidate their interests, are too well known to need description. It is surely our duty as Non-Aligned nations to support the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of Latin America and to express our solidarity with them in their pursuit of sovereign equality, true independence and peaceful co-existence with their neighbours.

I came here to the United Nations five years ago, to present a proposal to declare the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace. With the support of a large number of the Non-Aligned nations and many others, that proposal became a Declaration at the same Session and for five years this Organisation and especially the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean have endeavoured to realize the objectives of that Declaration through its early implementation.

We have made it clear on innumerable occasions that the aim of the Zone of Peace is the extension of Non-Alignment to a substantial area of the earth's surface with a view to its insulation against great Power rivalry and conflict and that, far from circumscribing the freedom of navigation of the high seas, the implementation of the Declaration would ensure the safety of international navigation. With notable exceptions, the great Powers and major maritime users have treated this worthwhile cause with indifference. Détente has been presented to the world as constructive step towards the promotion of international security through the relaxation of tensions. This has, in fact, been instituted in Europe through the Helsinki Agreements, but the Mediterranean document of the Final Act of Helsinki has yet to be

implemented. It is the view of the Non-Aligned nations that the security of Europe is inseparable from that of the rest of the world, and that genuine peace will not be achieved until this is recognized.

As long as this *détente* is limited to Europe, we have reason to question whether this could turn out to be mutual accommodation between the great Powers. If this were to happen, while it would spare their immediate regions the insecurity and instability of confrontation, it would shift the area of their rivalries and conflicts to other areas, threatening the security and the peaceful development of the nations in these regions. A universal reduction of tensions based on the active participation of all nations is the best guarantee of international peace and security.

General and complete disarmament has been a declared objective of the United Nations and of the international community for nearly three decades. Despite many initiatives taken by this organization and by nations committed to the cause of disarmament, the world has witnessed, not even the semblance of disarmament but a race for supremacy in destructive power, based on the myth that peace can be preserved only by strident and single-minded preparations for war, and the refinement and sophistication of its techniques. It is indeed a sad reflection on the moral and intellectual standards of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its values and priorities, that so much of the worlds' resources which might have been devoted to the eradication of poverty, ignorance, disease and hunger are being committed instead to the production of monstrous weapons which we are earnestly assured from time to time, are never to be used in aggression. If all these weapons, on all sides, are defensive, where are the aggressors?

The Non-Aligned nations which have consistently rejected the notion that world conflict is inevitable, have no stake in war. On the other hand, they do not accept the thesis that disarmament is the special preserve of power that possesses the paraphernalia of war. Every nation and every individual has a right to peace and, as much as peace is indivisible, so is the responsibility for its preservation. Hence the call of the Non-Alignment nations for a Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and agreement for a World Conference.

As I indicated at the beginning of my Statement, Mr. President, the Non-Aligned and the United Nations are on the same side of the struggle for a better world order. At Colombo, as at all previous meetings of the Non-Aligned, we have reaffirmed our adherence to the purposes and principles of the United

National Charter and we remain committed to the cause of strengthening its role in all aspects of international life.

A primary requirement for the strengthening of the United Nations is the universality of its membership. We cannot but express dissatisfaction and dismay at the continued denial, by the use of the veto, to nations which are qualified in every way and have won the recognition of more than two-thirds of the membership of this Organization, of the opportunity to share in its endeavours.

The veto was designed to place the primary responsibility for peace in the hands of a few nations which had the potential for waging war, at a time when more than half the present membership of this Organization was not even free. If it is to be used today, when the map of the world and the membership of this Organization have so dramatically changed, to thwart the wishes of the overwhelming majority of nations and peoples, then the time has surely come for a second look at this archaic instrument of privilege? This Organization cannot pay lip-service to democratic principles and the sovereign equality of all nations, large and small, and continue to condone concepts and practices which make a mockery of those principles.

One of the important developments at the Fifth Summit Conference at Colombo, was the decision of the Non-Aligned countries to establish their own arrangements for a News Agencies Pool. This is because of the importance we attach to giving our peoples access to news free from the attitudes, opinions and prejudices of journalists, however honest or objective they may want to be, who have been schooled and conditioned in an environment which is not only unsympathetic but unsuited to the hopes, aspirations and pre-occupations of the peoples of the developing countries.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the first fifteen years of its existence, the Non-Aligned Movement had of necessity to concern itself with immediate and pressing political issues – issues of freedom, equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Its record of achievement in the political sphere, as this Assembly knows, is substantial, although some of the evils it set out to banish still tenaciously linger on in some parts of the world. Our endeavours in the political field have therefore to

continue into the foreseeable future. However, with the Third Summit at Lusaka in 1970 and, especially, since the Fourth Summit at Algiers three years ago, economic issues have also received the increasing attention of the Movement.

It is widely recognized today that political achievement by itself would be fruitless and meaningless if it did not lead ultimately to tangible gains in the economic sphere. Theoretical freedom and equality and concepts of sovereignty would, after all, mean nothing to a man if he is only free to starve and be sovereign in his poverty.

This increasing emphasis on economic questions does not, however, mean that the Non-Aligned have accepted the view that political affairs should be left to nations which have the resources to match their political ambitions and that the developing countries should limit their initiatives to the task of their economic emancipation. The Economic Declaration, the Programme of Action for Economic Co-operation and the Economic Resolutions adopted at Colombo are, therefore, also political.

As do the political decisions of the Fifth Summit, these too derive from the same commitment of the Non-Aligned to principles of equality and sovereignty, and opposition to all forms of domination, intervention and unequal relations, in the economic sphere. However, the Non-Aligned have advanced today from the mere exhortations of the past for assistance and concessions from the developed countries to devising systems of active co-operations among themselves as a basis for co-operation with the developed nations.

A constant thread running through all the economic documents of the Colombo Summit is the emphasis on collective self-reliance. I should make it clear that this approach is not one of hostility and confrontation towards any single country or group of countries. It has been the unfortunate experience of the developing countries, however, that despite two decades of pious promises of partnership and inter-dependence, no real partnership has been possible; only that the strong have become stronger. Non-Alignment has indeed always emphasized global co-operation and this collective self-reliance too can be global given the sincerity and the will on the part of all nations to make inter-dependence a way of life in the next two decades of this century and thereafter. The realities of our time demand that genuine co-operation must begin now. The decisions of the Fifth Summit signify a determination to make that beginning, even if it be among the developing nations, as a first step.

There are indeed some areas in these documents which call for a more



substantial contribution from the developed nations to the development efforts of the Third World. These calls are made within the framework of co-operation between the developed and the developing, so that real partnership between them for balanced progress is established as early as possible. However, aid – whether it is bilateral or multilateral – is not and cannot be a permanent solution to the world's economic problems. At best, it can only be a temporary palliative, reinforcing the self-reliant efforts of poorer nations for a better future for their own peoples' thereby enhancing their ability to co-operate with other peoples and nations in equality and self-respect.

It is not my intention to plead here that the developed nations owe a living to the developing. I do plead indeed, on the other hand, that all nations, regardless of their levels of development, owe it to themselves and to future generations, not to throw away the opportunity available today, to find timely solutions for the problems of mankind and to establish, through mutual understanding and constructive co-operation, a just, and therefore enduring, pattern of international relations.

That opportunity would be lost if the developed nations were to look upon the proposals of the developing for genuine inter-dependence as the importunate clamour of the indigent who must be pacified with grudging concessions and charity. It is imperative that the world looks upon the particular and pressing problems of the least developed countries with great understanding, and treats the call for greater access to the markets of the developed world, for the products of the industries of developing countries, and fair prices for their commodities, as an indispensable corollary of true partnership. Just and equitable economic relations also require that there should be a realistic appraisal of the steep and spiralling differentials between the prices of the commodity exports of the developing countries and manufactured goods they import from the developed. It is in this context that the performance of the Fourth Session of UNCTAD in Nairobi and the current dialogue in Paris must be measured and evaluated.

Proposals for the establishment of a Council of Producers' Associations of Raw Materials, the creation of a Special Fund for the Financing of Buffer Stocks, contributions to the Special Fund on a basis of self-help, joint import procurement policies, increased trade exchanges among the developing countries, a Countervailing Currency backed by the economic potential of the developing countries, the establishment of a Bank of the Third World, the expansion of resource-based industries, the conclusion of long-term agreements on product

specialization, and the various other programmes for co-operation among the developing countries – all these are manifestations of the realization by the Non-Aligned countries that the only guarantee of equal partnership for them with the developed nations lies in their increasing dependence on their own resources and their own efforts.

All this has been endorsed at the Conference on economic co-operation amongst developing countries only recently concluded in Mexico.

In all the institutions that have either been established or are proposed for establishment, there is a common purpose. They must all ensure an increased flow of real resources to the developing countries. These countries have accumulated large external debts due mainly to world economic circumstances beyond their own control rather than to any economic mismanagement on their part. It is urgent that decisive action be taken by the developed nations to solve this problem without further delay.

The attitude of the developed countries to the question of resource transfers is a great disappointment to the developing countries. Even a simple issue like the replenishment of IDA Resources, which by now should have been automatically resolved, has become a subject for detailed and prolonged negotiation. This is a matter of grave consequence to the developing nations. The developed countries should pledge a continuing and increased flow of resources to this Agency.

To peoples who have no experience of real poverty or of the intensity of the suffering of its victims, the call of the Non-Aligned and other developing nations for a greater awareness of their problems and an acceptance of collective responsibility for their solution might sometimes sound peremptory or strident.

It is true that some of the Declarations and decisions of the Non-Aligned in the sphere of economic relations appear militant and, at times, challenging. They are in fact intended to be a challenge, not to the welfare or the prosperity of the developed nations but to the conscience and the claim of the world to commitment to justice equity. Their intent and substance emphasize international co-operation of a level which has not been envisaged before. It would be easy enough to understand their tone if it is realized that this is nearly two-thirds of humanity putting into words its fears and frustrations, not merely over recent decades but through centuries.

Before the peoples of the developed world wring their hands in exasperation at what they consider the incessant and insatiable clamour of those in the developing, I would wish that they first consider the justice of the current

economic order which has enabled them, over the last three or four centuries, to reach their present heights of achievement and affluence, at the same time condemning millions in Asia, Africa and Latin America to a life of dire poverty and hopelessness.

What is the justice of an economic order in which nearly half the labour force of the developing countries should be almost permanently unemployed, while the developing nations panic when a mere 7 per cent to 10 per cent of theirs are seasonally out of work.

Is there any moral or rational justification for the present distribution of the world's wealth which would condemn 500 million people – one eighth of the world's population – to a life of daily starvation and serious malnutrition?

Is the world so insensitive that it would accept with nonchalance the fact that nearly half that number are children whose mental and physical developments would be doomed to permanent retardation as a consequence of this poverty?

Is our collective conscience so impervious to tragedy that we would allow 10,000 men, women and children in the developing nations to die of starvation every day?

Is it possible to expect the developing nations, in all honesty, to divert their limited resources to what is extolled as development, and to objective priority, sacrificing generations to such a fate?

Is it fair to criticize developing nations which give priority to these questions of life and death, through their social welfare expenditures, for neglecting textbook prescriptions for so-called development?

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The problems to which I have drawn your attention are not the product of a vivid imagination. Nor are the solutions offered by the Non-Aligned nations an exercise in detached dialectics or arid philosophical speculation. What I have said here today is based on direct national experience and from personal involvement in the political, social and economic trials as well as the achievements of a small nation through nearly two decades.

Tea accounts for more than 50 per cent of Sri Lanka's export earnings. We have increased our production of tea, and systematically improved its quality over the years and in the 14 years since 1962. We have watched its real price, in

terms of the prices we pay for our imports, plummet by more 70 per cent. This represents a loss to Sri Lanka today of 500 million dollars per annum which, expressed in our national currency, amounts roughly to 6 billion rupees. This is almost the entire budget of my country for one whole year. How long and how far can modern human society, even parts of it, expect to prosper or even survive with such an economic system?

In the twenty-eight years since we attained independence, we have listened to expert advice and diligently applied ourselves to the diversification of our economy. We went into export oriented industries which were considered appropriate for our levels of technology and our resources. As soon as our manufactures were ready, so were barriers against them in many of the developed countries.

There is, on the other hand, a pleasant side to this picture:

When my country attained independence twenty-eight years ago, it had been a colony of three foreign powers, in turn, over more than four centuries. With independence, we inherited a society which was divided against itself between a small ruling elite and the masses who had nothing in common with their rulers except their shared nationality.

The party I represent has been in power twice before – from 1956 to 1959 and again from 1960 to 1965. During those eight years, we were able to remedy the more glaring discrepancies between a colonial society and an independent, self-respecting nation. Since we were elected to power again in 1970, with a popular mandate for fundamental change, we have been largely successful in implementing a policy of social and economic transformation under a Constitution committed to the establishment of a Socialist Democracy.

In the last six years, we devoted our attention largely to the establishment of a more just social and economic order within the country, through a more equitable sharing of the nation's wealth. With a ceiling of land ownership, we have redistributed arable land to ensure greater equity and productivity. A ceiling on ownership of houses has brought good housing within the reach of many and freed them from exploitation by landlords. I might add that both of these reforms were carried out on the basis of reasonable compensation to previous owners.

We have had notable successes in income redistribution, which have won international acclaim. In the last ten years, the share of the national income of the lowest 40 per cent of the population of the country registered an increase

from 13.7 per cent to 19.3 per cent and the share of the richest 10 per cent fell from 37 per cent to 28 per cent. This was achieved through direct taxation on the one hand and food subsidies and other benefits to the non-taxable sector on the other.

Developing countries with serious economic problems have often been blamed for their predicament on their rate of population growth. In Sri Lanka we have succeeded in reducing that rate from about 2.8 per cent in the early 1960s to 1.6 per cent in the last two years.

We have taken measures of nationalization, again with due compensation, in some areas of economic activity where over-riding national interest demanded it. I should emphasize, however, that we do not look upon nationalization as an end in itself, because in our conception of co-operation for development, there is an important role for private foreign and domestic investment.

We have had considerable success in involving the people directly in the planning and execution of development projects, through the decentralization of the national budget and the establishment of Divisional Development Councils in which the administrative officials, the elected representatives and the people themselves participate.

We have long and rewarding experience of co-operation on a nation-wide scale through Multipurpose Co-operative Societies and we have seen the flowering of rural enterprise and inventiveness through the extension of the co-operative principle to farming and to small and medium scale rural industry.

I might add, without wanting or appearing to be presumptuous, that some of our achievements in the sphere of reducing inequality and giving the people a direct say and a stake in the development process have earned recognition among many countries, and we believe that what has been proved possible on a national scale can be achieved on an international scale as well.

Our experience in Sri Lanka is relevant to other developing countries, particularly in the Non-Aligned world, only because the peasants and workers in all our countries have a shared experience of deprivation, toil and poverty from which they seek emancipation for a better life. For, solidarity among the Non-Aligned is not only the solidarity of our Heads of State or Government, but of our peoples on whose behalf all our efforts are directed.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and

Gentlemen,

I referred to our national experience for another reason. The choice of Non-Alignment as a way of international life by the 86 nations representing almost two-thirds of the membership of this Assembly has been conditioned both by their national experience and by their conception of not only what is possible but also what is indispensable for the conduct of human relations on a basis of equality, dignity and mutual respect. Our policies and programmes, however, cannot succeed in a vacuum of mutual ignorance between the developed and the developing or in an atmosphere poisoned by misunderstanding and distrust.

Non-Alignment is the deliberate choice, by a large number of nations, not to be drawn into the policies of confrontation implicit in the system of hostile military alliances of the post-war era. It was for that reason, a refusal to contribute to a division of the world into camps hardening suspicion and distrust into morbid fear, consuming conflict and, eventually, a war of mutual annihilation. To the extent that nearly two-thirds of the membership of this Assembly has opted for Non-Alignment, nearly two-thirds of the world has been insulated from the waste and futility of confrontation.

A Movement which was founded on a refusal to contribute to a system of antagonistic blocs, cannot itself become a bloc. I have said this before, but it will bear repetition as there are still some nations which look upon Non-Alignment as a new alignment, a new bloc, even a new threat. The world should not be victim to this fear and distrust of a Movement which came into being as a creative alternative to mutual suspicion, recrimination and hate.

Far from leading to the formation of a new bloc, the policy of Non-Alignment attaches primary importance to the freedom of each nation to choose its policies and to decide on its actions without the inhibition and the inflexibility of alignments. I would like to declare unequivocally that, with such an emphasis on freedom, the Non-Aligned Movement cannot and will not allow itself to become an instrument of propaganda for an ideology, system or camp. It is crucial that the world understands this, because genuine co-operation can flourish only in an atmosphere of right understanding.

Non-Alignment is not and was never intended to be, as has been mistakenly thought in some quarters, neutrality as between ideologies or systems, in the domestic policies of member nations. This is reflected in the diversity of the patterns of political, social and economic organization adopted by individual members of this Movement, each to suit its particular circumstance. The crux of

Non-Alignment is that member nations do not circumscribe their foreign policy options by alignment with any camp or become parties to military alliances and pacts within the framework of power rivalry.

Non-Alignment was designed as a bridge across the chasm of misunderstanding, suspicion, hostility and confrontation of an artificially divided world. The basis of its continuation today, and its growing appeal is its emphasis on co-operation between nations of different social, political and economic systems, regardless of their size, power or influence. On behalf of the Non-Aligned, I would like to assure the world that we remain committed to this goal of co-operation.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have attempted, in the course of my remarks, to place the decisions of the Colombo Summit in perspective by explaining the motivations, methods and objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The unity which found expression and reaffirmation at Colombo confounded many critics who had expected the Movement to flounder in disunity and even break up in disarray. Divergence of opinion is of course natural, and indeed no one in the Non-Aligned Movement expects that 86 nations should think, speak and act alike on every issue. That would neither be truthful nor in keeping with the perfect independence of thought and response which the Movement has always emphasized. But it gives me great pleasure to declare that there was complete unity and unanimity on every fundamental principle which has concerned the Movement as a whole.

This unity will continue undiminished in the years to come. After all, it cannot be for nothing that even countries which have been parties to military pacts and alliances in the past are today interested in joining the Movement. Regardless of all claims to the contrary, these countries acknowledge the strength of the Movement and its potential for productive change in the global pattern of political, social and economic relations.

We have made substantial progress in the last two decades in our united search for solution to the world's most pressing problems. We view the Fifth Summit as an important stage in our progress towards peace and justice. We have faith in our potential and our eventual success in establishing a world order

of genuine peace, equity and justice, not so much because of the material power we wield but more because of the reasonableness of our proposals.

We cannot, of course, offer eyes to those who would not see, ears to those who refuse to listen, or hearts to those who have chosen not to feel. But everywhere we see the stirrings of a new world, the beginnings of a new revolution of consciousness awareness and reason, especially among the youth. There are statesmen, and ordinary men and women in all parts of the world, developed and developing, who have the perception and the sensitivity to recognize the new challenges of our time and the new opportunities they present, and are capable of responding to them, creatively and constructively. It is the sensitive, the perceptive, the humane and the responsive who will fashion the new world and inherit it.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today a *laissez faire* approach would be irrelevant and out of date. So are concepts of well-being based on the Gross National Product. Happiness and well-being cannot solely be measured by the yardsticks to which we have to so far been accustomed. In human terms, the face of a smiling child, the look of fulfillment and purpose in the eyes of a man who has not been condemned to idleness, and the repose of a mother freed from fear and uncertainty about her family's next meal, are better indicators.

It has been fashionable to speak and write in terms of three separate worlds on this earth, a First World, a Second World and a Third World, with connotations of comparative accomplishment, as if the human family can be so parcelled out into segments, huddled behind defensive barriers, in a state of perpetual confrontation against one another.

Such a view of the world would belie the very civilization of our time when man is more aware than ever before of the unity of his destiny. It is one world which we all inherited and it is in this one world that we have to build our hopes and realize our dreams, or, if we choose wrongly, face our collective failure.

For man who has displayed so much ingenuity and brilliance in weaving an intricate fabric of technological and scientific achievement in so short a time in terms of this evolution, it should not be so difficult to respond to the call of humanity and justice. I am confident that at this thirty-first Session of the



General assembly, we shall be equal to that call and demonstrate in the coming years the courage, the will and the vision it demands.

Address by Mr Edouard  
Saouma, Director-  
General of the Food and  
Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations  
on the Occasion of the  
Presentation of the FAO  
Ceres Medal to Her  
Excellency Sirimavo  
Bandaranaike Prime  
Minister of Sri Lanka,  
Colombo, 12 May, 1977

Madam Prime Minister,  
Mr Minister,  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for me to be here in Colombo today and to have the opportunity of bestowing on you, Madam Prime Minister – as I shall do in a few minutes – a medal commemorating Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, as a token of the deep esteem in which you are held by FAO and by the international community at large.

As you are no doubt aware, Ceres, according to ancient Roman beliefs, was the goddess who not only taught mankind how to work the land, plant seeds and produce food, but who also protected the crops and kept her people from hunger and want. In recent years, FAO has produced a number of medals commemorating her, and has asked various distinguished women from different countries, who share FAO's ideal of a world which is freed from hunger and want, to represent the head of Ceres on these medals.

May I thank you for agreeing to be among their number.

May I also say that I can think of no one who, by her actions on behalf of the needy, is more worthy to represent all that is symbolized by Ceres.

We live in an age when human beings in general no longer look to goddesses to deliver them from their sufferings. They look instead to leaders who have the determination, the compassion, the dynamism and the strength to take forceful practical action to overcome their misery and help improve their lives. And this,

Madam Prime Minister, you have most notably done. To take just one example, Sri Lanka, which is still a very poor country measured in terms of gross national product, has managed to survive the merciless weather conditions of the last six years without any serious food shortage for its people. That is quite an astonishing achievement. It is in large measure due to you and to the policies that you have pursued in face of the gravest difficulties.

We in FAO are not alone in having regarded Sri Lanka for many years as a remarkable model among the poorer developing countries. Long before it became fashionable, this country decided to concentrate its development efforts on the basic needs of the impoverished majority of its people. An effective and regular food subsidy programme has banished the spectre of famine. As a result of government health services, life expectancy has risen to 68 years of age. With low-cost education facilities, the literacy rate has climbed to over 80 percent. At the same time, Sri Lanka has managed to avoid the heavy migration from rural areas to the towns which has burdened so many other developing countries, so that nearly 80 percent of the people remain where they rightly belong – on the land. And, in some ways most striking of all in this region of the world, the rate of population growth has been brought down by about one-third.

But I am not here, Madam Prime Minister, to recount to you the domestic achievements of your own country or the difficulties and problems it has faced in pursuing its own path to development. I think it is fitting, however, that I should say something about what you and Sri Lanka have achieved on the international scene, particularly with regard to the agricultural development of the developing world.

I will begin with something which is very close to – has indeed become part of – FAO. In your Keynote Address here in Colombo in March 1974 to what was still then the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, you proposed, at that crucial and threatening juncture in the world food crisis, the creation of a World Fertilizer Fund. Following the strongly sympathetic response that you received, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, meeting less than two months later, adopted a resolution proposed by Sri Lanka and New Zealand – a resolution which, in view of FAO's previous failures to obtain the necessary political backing to set up effective international arrangements for the supply of fertilizers to developing nations, has rightly been described as historic. The resolution requested the Director-General of FAO to draw up an emergency plan of operations for increasing a

fertilizer pool, and to call an emergency session of the FAO Council to approve the plan of operations and put it into effect. The emergency session of the Council met in July 1974 – less than four months, Madam Prime Minister, after your original proposal. And the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme was born.

There is no doubt, Madam Prime Minister, that your proposal was decisive in triggering off the prompt action by the international community that helped to save a perilous situation in several of the most seriously affected developing countries at that critical time.

Subsequently, at the World Food Conference, I need hardly recall that Sri Lanka agreed to merge its proposal for a World Fertilizer Fund into the wider objectives of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, of which it became a leading protagonist and in whose Preparatory Committee it now sits.

Your other great international achievement of recent years, Madam Prime Minister, was of course your Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Summit Conference here in Colombo last August. I think it would be generally agreed that Sri Lanka has made a contribution of tremendous importance to the movement of Non-Aligned Countries through the part it has played in drawing attention to the need to concentrate on economic as well as political issues. More particularly, it was on a proposal by Sri Lanka that the Conference last year produced a programme for economic co-operation among developing countries in agricultural development as well as in trade. This programme was adopted, with some additions, by a meeting of the Group of 77 in Mexico shortly afterwards. I think it is true to say that the thrust towards economic co-operation among developing countries, with agriculture as a major component, is now regarded by most developing countries as a principal means of achieving the New International Economic Order to which the under-privileged of this world rightfully aspire. Thus, again, Madam Prime Minister, a new and realistic approach to the problems that afflict the lives of millions of people has come out of Colombo, has come from your inspiration.

I will mention just one more of your constructive and statesman-like international initiatives. That is the lead you have taken in declaring the Indian Ocean a peace zone, so that the resources of this immensely rich area can be exploited in peaceful fashion to meet the genuine needs of the vast numbers of people who dwell around it. When you come to look at the Ceres medal which I shall shortly present to you, you will see that, on the reverse side to that which

bears your own likeness, we have symbolically featured the Indian Ocean and its fishing resources. In the middle stands the name "Colombo" and, beneath it, the simple legend that sums up the hopes of the entire world – "Peace and Food for All."

The contribution that Sri Lanka has made to international affairs under your leadership, Madam Prime Minister, is now very widely recognized. In FAO, the respect in which this country is held has been demonstrated by the fact that it has been elected by other member countries to serve on our Council for two successive terms.

If I have dwelt so far on what Sri Lanka has achieved and on what you, Madam Prime Minister, have helped it to achieve, this is only partly because of the nature of this ceremony at which FAO honours you. It is also because I share very much the attitude that has been adopted in this country towards what needs to be done if the impoverished quarter of mankind is to be lifted out of its misery and given the chance of a better life.

I, too, am a believer in action – forceful practical action aimed at helping those who are most in need. It is this spirit that I have been trying to infuse into FAO since I took over as Director-General at the beginning of last year. Too much time in the past has been spent in well-meaning discussions about the best way of doing things that have ended up with nothing much being done at all. And all the while the situation of millions of hungry and poverty-stricken people continue to stagnate and possibly worsen.

At the same time, like you in Sri Lanka, I believe that action should be directed towards the real priority needs of the poorest sectors of the population, which for FAO are principally to be found among people in the rural areas of developing countries. I have thus concentrated primarily on what I am convinced are the most vital priorities if there is to be any hope of a real improvement in the lives of the rural poor through greatly accelerated agricultural development.

The first of these is strongly increased investment in the agricultural production of developing countries. Everything, in a sense, depends on this. For nothing will greatly change for the rural poor unless vast new resources, both from within the developing countries themselves and from the richer nations elsewhere, are channelled into transforming the agriculture of the developing world. I have accordingly placed heavier and renewed emphasis on the investment work which FAO carries out in co-operation with the World Bank and others, and I have made abundantly clear that we will do everything in

our power to assist the new International Fund for Agricultural Development, which is shortly due to begin operations, to achieve all possible success.

Again, concentrating like you in Sri Lanka on practical efforts to help those most in need, I have assigned very high priority to increasing agricultural training at the grass-root level. There is no doubt that poorer farming families are willing to learn new methods of cultivation if they can be convinced that these are sound and will yield better results. But they also have to be taught these methods. To my mind, agricultural training – and by this, let me stress again, I mean simple practical training – is the key to the involvement of millions of human beings in rural areas in the whole struggle for agricultural development. And, without this involvement, the struggle itself cannot be won.

Belief in practical action also led me, as many of you will know, to propose the creation of a new Technical Co-operation Programme, which was approved by the FAO Council last July. For the first time, FAO now has a separate programme of its own which enables it to intervene rapidly and directly, with the minimum of formal procedures, in situations where urgent action is required, or where efforts already underway are in danger of being halted for lack of immediate short-term support, or where some new effort needs to be started without delay before others are able to come in later and carry it on. And, although the resources of the Programme are not that large, I take the trouble to approve every project myself, so that I can ensure that the money goes where it is most needed.

With all this, Madam Prime Minister, it remains sadly true that the world food situation, especially for the poor of the developing countries, is still ominous. Despite the notable increases in food production in the last two years, the long-term outlook is still fraught with danger. Although cereal stocks have been replenished, there is still no properly coordinated system of food reserves as called for by the World Food Conference. Vast numbers of already needy people are thus still at the mercy of the weather for their basic food supplies. For this reason, I am continuing to press as strongly as I can for urgent action by FAO's member countries to put the concept of minimum world food security – which they have agreed on in principle – into practical effect. I am confident, Madam Prime Minister, that, with your own experience of the last few years in helping to preserve the people of this country from the worst effects of drought, you will support this call for the action that is needed.

I said earlier that I share many of the attitudes towards development that

prevail in this country. I cannot fail to add that I also sympathize with the feelings of impatience – which I know is common to many other developing countries besides Sri Lanka – at the slow progress that has so far been made towards establishment of a New International Economic Order in order to bring about a more just and equitable balance in the sharing of the world's resources. Let us hope that is merely a temporary phase before the true dialogue really commences. For there is no doubt that, until there is a fairer deal for the poorer nations as well as for their poorer citizens, the hopes that are professed on all sides for lasting peace in the world will remain fragile and illusory. I can assure you that I will continue to see that FAO provides all the moral and practical support it can – as in our present work with UNCTAD on its Integrated Commodity Programme – for the fulfilment of the New International Economic Order, upon which so much depends.

Madam Prime Minister, I will conclude with a last reference to a very important matter, where your own action and the broad interests of FAO are closely related. Apart from anything else, you will have left your imprint on the agriculture of Sri Lanka through the land reforms you have carried out here. These have brought about not only a new measure of social justice but also changes in patterns of production which make possible a new diversification of the country's agriculture. In two years' time, as I am sure you know, FAO will be holding a World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. There is no doubt that the experience of the changes you have wrought in this country, particularly insofar as they effect small farmers, will be of the greatest interest and benefit to that extremely important Conference. Once again, it is very likely that the cause of agricultural development in the developing world will be advanced by knowledge of what has been done by you and by Sri Lanka.

It only remains, Madam Prime Minister, for me to present, on behalf of FAO, this medal of Ceres to a great leader – and a great lady.



# *Contributors*

**MANEL ABEYSEKERA** is the first Sri Lankan career lady diplomat having joined the foreign service (then known as the Sri Lankan Overseas Service) in 1958. During the course of her illustrious career, she served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Thailand and later to Germany with accreditation to Austria and Switzerland. She also served as the Chairperson of the Presidential Committee on Women and as the Chairperson of the Sri Lanka National Chapter in the Coalition for Action on South Asian Cooperation.

**LEELANANDA DE SILVA** was Senior Assistant Secretary and Director, Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs from 1970-1977. He was Secretary-General of the 29th (and last) Annual Sessions of ECAFE (now ESCAP) held in Colombo (1974), and the Secretary of the Economic Committee of the 5th Non-Aligned Summit in Colombo (1976). He also served as Executive Secretary of the Third World Forum in Geneva between 1978 and 1982. Since 1978, he has been a consultant to the UN and other multilateral bodies in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

**JAYANTHADHANAPALA** formerly of the foreign service of Sri Lanka is a former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United States. Taking early retirement from the foreign service, he joined the United Nations as Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs. He has received numerous awards and honorary doctorates for distinguished service to-date. He lives in Sri Lanka in semi-retirement at present and serves as Chairman of the UN University Council and President of the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs.

**GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI** was Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka from 2000 to 2002. Formerly of the Indian Administrative Service, he served as Secretary to the President of India (1977-2000) and as High Commissioner to South Africa (1966) and Norway (2002) besides holding other administrative and diplomatic posts. He retired recently after serving as the Governor of West Bengal (2004-

2009).

TILAK GOONERATNE (deceased) joined the Ceylon Civil Service in 1943 and held a number of senior positions in a distinguished career within it. Among these are Government Agent, Trincomalee (1951-1954) and Matara (1954-1956); Registrar-General, Marriages, Births, and Deaths (1956-1958); Director General of Broadcasting and Director of Information (1958-1960); Commissioner, Co-operative Development (1960-1963); Deputy Secretary to the Treasury (1963-1965). He served as Deputy Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat (1965-1970). He was Sri Lankan High Commissioner to the UK (1970-1975) and Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Commission of the European Communities and concurrently to Belgium (1975-1978).

TISSA JAYATILAKA is Executive Director of the United States-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission (1989-) and a Visiting University Lecturer in English at several universities in Sri Lanka and the United States since 1975. He has edited *North-South Perspectives* (1987), *Excursions and Explorations – Cultural Encounters Between Sri Lanka and The United States* (2002), and *International Relations in a Globalising World*, The Journal of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Sri Lanka (2005). He was co-editor of *Peradeniya: Memories of a University* (1997) and of *A Garland for Ashley Glimpses of a Life-Celebrating the 75th Birthday of Ashley Halpé and his 50 years of university teaching* (2008).

SWARNA JAYAWEERA is co-ordinator in the Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) in Colombo, Sri Lanka and is Emeritus Professor of Education of the University of Colombo. She has published widely in national and international journals and has served as a consultant to several international agencies.

RAMYA CHAMALIEJIRASINGHE is the author of *There's an Island in the Bone*, *Rhythm of the Sea* and *Trinity*. She was a runner-up to the U.K. Guardian Orange First Words Prize of 2009 and was shortlisted for the Gratiaen Prize for her manuscripts of poetry in 1998 and 2007. Her work has been featured in the TimesOnline UK 2009 selection of contemporary war poetry, the PEN American Centre's *Groundnut Soup*, the *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *The Poetry*

Journal, Osprey and Channels. She works at the U.S.-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission, Colombo.

**LAKSHMAN KADIRGAMAR (deceased)** Sri Lankabhimanya, President's Counsel, was a Sri Lankan diplomat, politician and lawyer. After a distinguished career as a lawyer and international humanitarian, he was appointed as foreign minister of Sri Lanka in 1994 and served in that capacity until 2001, and then again from April 2004 until death by assassination in August 2005. Kadirgamar, like several other Sri Lankans, was elected to serve as President of the Oxford Union. He was author of several scholarly articles published in international legal journals such as the *Modern Law Review*, *The South African Law Journal* and *The Conveyancer and Property Lawyer*. He held many positions in numerous international organizations including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) and South Asia Foundation (SAF). IN 1963, he was the Special Commissioner of Amnesty International to investigate Buddhist-Catholic clashes in Vietnam.

**M.D.D. PEIRIS** entered the Ceylon Civil Service (later the Sri Lanka Administrative Service) in 1961. He served in a number of senior positions of the government of Sri Lanka. He was Secretary to the Prime Minister and also served as Secretary in the Ministries of Agriculture, Food and Co-operatives, Public Administration, Provincial Councils and Home Affairs, and Education and Higher Education. In 2005, the Government of Sri Lanka conferred on him the high national honour of *Deshamanya* for distinguished national service while the University of Colombo awarded him the Degree of Doctor of Letters (*Honoris Causa*). He is a Senior Honorary Fellow of the Post-Graduate Institute of Medicine, the first ever non-medical person to receive this honour in the 34 years of that Institute's existence. A Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute of the U.K., in his semi-retirement he currently serves as Deputy Chairman of The Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka.

**JAYADEVA UYANGODA** is Professor of Political Science in the University of Colombo. He has published extensively on ethnic conflict, peace processes, social and political transformation in Sri Lanka. He is the founder and co-editor of *Polity*, a semi-academic journal on current political affairs in Sri Lanka. His current research interests are centred on democracy and state formation, local

democracy and popular politics. He is a frequent commentator on political issues to both local and international newspapers.

**BRADMAN WEERAKOON** had worked in the public service of Sri Lanka for about four decades at the time of his retirement. He has served as Official Secretary to seven of Sri Lanka's Prime Ministers and was International Affairs Adviser to two Presidents. From 1984-1989, he was Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in London, U.K., considered to be the largest non-governmental organization in family planning and population. He is a published author.

**JAYAMPATHY WICKRAMARATNE** is a legal practitioner with over three decades of experience at the Bar. He was appointed President's Counsel in 2001. He specializes in constitutional law, human rights litigation, administrative law and criminal law. He served as Consultant to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Sri Lanka. He was a member of a team that drafted the Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka Bill, 2000 and a signatory to the Majority Report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the President to service the All Party Representative Committee (APRC). HE has been a consultant in Laos for the UNDP, UNODC and SIDA on legal reform, human rights, international law, criminal justice and human trafficking.

**SAM (S.S.) WIJESINHA** was a Crown Counsel of Sri Lanka from 1948-1963. He thereafter served in the Parliament of Sri Lanka for many years and retired as the Parliamentary Secretary General in 1981. He was appointed as the first Parliamentary Commissioner (Ombudsman) in 1981 and served in this position until 1991. He has also served at various times as President of the Prison Welfare Association, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Press Complaints Commission, President of the Classical Association of Sri Lanka, Vice-President of the Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club, Manager of Ladies' College (1965-2003) and Member of the Board of Governors of St. Thomas' College (1976-1984).

**JAVED YUSUF** served on the Presidential Commission of Inquiry to investigate serious violations of human rights in Sri Lanka. He has served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and as Senior Advisor to the late Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar. He was the Founder-Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat, former Principal of Zahira College, Colombo and a member of Sri Lanka's first National Human Rights Commission.

TISSA JAYATILAKA is Executive Director of the United States-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission (1989-) and a visiting University Lecturer in English at several universities in Sri Lanka and the United States since 1975. He has edited *North-South Perspectives* (1987), *Excursions and Explorations – Cultural Encounters Between Sri Lanka and The United States* (2002), and *International Relations in a Globalising World*, The Journal of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Sri Lanka (2005). He was co-editor of *Peradeniya: Memories of a University* (1997) and of *A Garland for Ashley: Glimpses of a Life Celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Ashley Halpe and his 50 years of University Teaching* (2008).