

There are several interesting issues emerging from this analysis which require further probing. One explanation for this change in pattern in the 1993 PC elections is to see it only as a very specific phenomenon with no long term consequences, to see it as merely an arithmetical problem: since the UNP has got less from Area 1 in this election, it has to increase its share in Area 2. This views the UNP as a party with a continuing and wide national base and the result of PC 1993 as a short term aberration.

The second possibility is that this shift of the electoral base towards Area 2 has a link with the tendencies of the total electorate as discussed above. In other words, the UNP is moving with the relevant changes in the distribution of the electorate; this view would mean that the UNP still remains as a party with a national base but able to adapt itself to the changing distribution of the electorate.

A more popular speculation attaches a greater significance to this shift. It argues that there has been a significant change in the character of the UNP base; from a party that had a great appeal in the urban sector, it is changing into a party with a rural base. However this speculation is probably based on the notion that the UNP has lost its so called "urban - intellectual - middle class" leadership with the formation of DUNF and the defections of some leaders who are from this social background and that the electorate or some part of it has responded likewise. However the UNP was never a party that had an appeal only in the urban areas. It was and remains the largest right wing party able to articulate links with very different social classes in order to rule and to move forward the process of capitalist development. Personality and faction struggles within the ruling group do not affect these structural relationships with the electorate so easily.

LETTERS

I

Venerable Editors,

Hope someone took on Mr. Wijemanne. [*Pravada*, December 1992] I share his heretical views on Sinhala nationalism, but he inflated secessionist successes by lumping secessionist movements with anti-colonial struggles. Even the Turkish Cypriot Republic, after so many years, is recognized only by its creator/patron if I am not mistaken.

Expatriate
England.

II

Dear Sir,

While the expression of heretical news [Letter, Adrian Wijemanne *Pravada*, December 1992] is welcome, such views based on fantasy rather than the interpretation of historical fact will in no way help us to understand the problem of ethno-nationalism presently wracking Sri Lanka.

A.W. identifies widely differing countries located in continents or sub-continents or as is lands in oceans wide apart as having being established by guerilla warfare - "Israel, Indonesia, Zaire, Kenya, Algeria, Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Afghanistan, and Eritrea." Bangladesh and the Turkish Cypriot Republic were helped on by powerful neighbours. He seems to have overlooked the fact that China greatly helped Vietnam as did the Soviet Union, though not a neighbour. Indeed, the role of the big powers in promoting guerilla wars for ideological or other reasons is not even alluded to.

Surprisingly, Pakistan is not included, perhaps because the driving force was not ethno-culturalism, but religion. But Israel is included even though Israel was created as a theocratic state, just as Pakistan. No mention is made of the fact that the state of Israel was created by U.N. resolution, supported both by the USA and the USSR. To say that Afghanistan was created by guerilla warfare is a travesty of the truth.



Ethno nationalism is said to have first succeeded when "after 300 years of guerilla warfare, it broke the British state in two in 1922, making its first triumphant 20th century entry into the world seen." The obvious reference is to the creation of the Irish Free State, but without Northern Ireland which to this day continues to form part of great Britain. Ireland was an independent entity until conquered by the British in the 20th century. The Irish Republican Army uses terrorism to force the British to leave North Ireland and thereby achieve the re-unification of Ireland.

The island of Sri Lanka, like Ireland has been a separate political entity from the beginning of its history, except when some of the northern parts were conquered from time to time by invaders from South India. And each time the Sinhala people fought back to regain their independence but without any help from a powerful neighbour.

A.W. also equates terrorism with its hideous practice of killing innocent civilians, men, women and children, for no other reason than their ethnic identity with guerilla warfare. It is not at all evident from a reading of world history that guerilla warfare or terrorism succeeds in the end - whether the time span is 300 years or 3000 years. Indeed there are numerous countries with ethnic minorities having federal or unitary forms of government that have retained their territorial integrity over centuries.

The union of England, Wales and Scotland is one example. Or does A.W. expect the Scots to finally break away through terrorism? There are also many countries in which religious minorities live in amity with the majority. It is revealing that the ignorance of A.W. makes him identify the Sudan, Philippines, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and India as countries in which guerilla warfare inspired by ethno-nationalism is yet to succeed. In Sudan and many other countries of Africa the demand for separation is made on the basis of tribal and clan identity and not necessarily language. In the Philippines, the demand for separation is by the Muslim rebels of Mindanao who wish to separate from the Catholic dominated Island of Luzon. In Sri Lanka the Government is resisting an attempt to break up the country by terrorism whereas in Ireland the IRA is using terrorism to reunite Ireland. In India the demand of the Sikhs is based on religion as is the case of Kashmir. In Tamil Nadu it is based on language.

A.W. concludes his letter as follows. "The problem to be solved lies not in the North-East of the island. It lies in the Sinhala psyche and in Sinhala ignorance of the realities of the situation." Indeed, the problem lies in the psyche and ignorance of A.W. who seems to think that his ability to read and write English gives him the right to falsify history. Such arrogance calls for an apposite riposte - the oft quoted words of E M Forster "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

M. de Silva
Australia.

III

Dear Editors,

Your timely articles on gangsterism and the death of Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali 'triggered' some thoughts that I thought worth penning.

Whoever is responsible for these 'political-deaths', has set off a cult of agitated mourning that seems to grip the whole nation for weeks. The media revel in airing gruesome photographs of the blood splattered victim and most often that of a slain 'killer'. This is accompanied by those of a 'fair widow of upper-class lineage', obviously exploited to the maximum, by the political party immediately concerned, to serve their ends.

This has been so, from as far back as the assassination of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, to that of Upali Wijewardena, Vijaya Kumaratunga and Denzil Kobbekaduwa. Is the nation being duped by a cult of death and mourning?

Devi Daniel
Colombo - 3.