

- c) Guarantees of equal opportunities in education and employment by the implementation of anti discriminatory legislation at state and national levels.

As long as chauvinists, as happened in the past, frustrate the reconciliation process, separatist tendencies will continue to emerge, threatening the integrity and sovereignty of the state. Sri Lanka has once again reached the crossroads that can lead the people on the path to social and political emancipation, or back again to war and misery. In order to avoid pitfalls of the past, there is need for courage, statesmanship and foresight among leaders that has been sadly lacking since independence from colonial rule.

As in other parts of the world facing similar situations, such as Palestine and Northern Ireland, it is incumbent on the government to negotiate with rebels, some whom may be even murderers, for the sake of restoring national unity. Finally, eternal vigilance is the price of a viable democracy, especially when the very survival of the state is threatened.

The nation state is a man made creation and can only be sustained so long as it fulfills the aspirations of all sections of the community. The challenge for the future is to justify Sri Lanka continuing to remain one nation state, or break up of the state as occurred in other parts of the world over the last century. ■

PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA: PIPE-DREAM OR REAL POSSIBILITY?

Rohini Hensman

As millions of troops of nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, products of a communal partition which took place 55 years ago, confront each other, a similar communal partition of Sri Lanka is being proposed as a formula for peace. It sounds crazy, but it's true. Sumanasiri Liyanage has to be commended for his honesty in canvassing openly for 'Partition as an Option' (*Pravada*, Vol.7 No.7). Others are more reticent about admitting that the LTTE leadership has not given the slightest indication that they will settle for anything less – but we will return to this point later.

What is striking is the close similarity between the two situations, although the time-sequence is different. In 1947, the communally-defined (Islamic) state of Pakistan was partitioned from a formally secular, democratic India, in which, however, Hindu nationalist elements had a place which has become much stronger over the years. In the mid-1970s, a struggle to partition a communally-defined (Tamil) state, Eelam, from a Sri Lanka whose secular, democratic status had already been undermined by Sinhala Buddhist nationalism was launched, and continues into 2002. Given these clearly irreconcilable nationalisms, what are the prospects for peace on the subcontinent?

The Kashmir Tug-Of-War

Let us begin by looking at the India-Pakistan conflict, in which Kashmir has become the symbol of mutual hostility. The Kashmiri independence struggle against Maharaja Hari Singh began long before India and Pakistan were formed, but he still retained power in the princely state in 1947, when he was given the option of acceding either to India or to Pakistan. As he dithered, Pakistan invaded, and he fled, sending India a formal letter of accession. On 1 January 1948, India lodged a complaint against Pakistan with

the UN Security Council, at the same time undertaking that once the conflict ended, Kashmiris would be able to decide whether to remain with India, accede to Pakistan, or become independent. A plebiscite to decide the status of Kashmir was part of a UN resolution on Kashmir in August 1948, accepted by both India and Pakistan. In 1949, another UN resolution called for a plebiscite. It never took place, largely because of Indian opposition. Kashmir continued to be occupied partly by India and partly by Pakistan, with the ceasefire line, referred to as the Line of Control or LoC, constantly subject to the outbreak of fighting.

The National Liberation Front, later to become the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was founded in 1965, but gained momentum only after rigged elections in 1987 convinced the people of Kashmir that they could not hope for recognition of their democratic rights under an Indian government. Its programme was 'Azadi': independence from both India and Pakistan. But 'In the name of "patriotism" and "security of the nation", the government of India has always suppressed those who have used even peaceful means to express their demands for self-determination.'¹ Kashmiris on the Indian side of the border were subjected to occupation by military forces that engaged in mass rapes, rampant torture, disappearances, extrajudicial killings and indiscriminate firing, for example on unarmed demonstrators or unfortunate bystanders.² The attitude of Indian governments to the Kashmiri people is expressed in their constant repetition of the refrain that Kashmir is a bilateral issue, to be resolved between the governments of India and Pakistan: there is not even a mention of the people of Kashmir, making it sound as if the dispute is over a piece of real estate rather than the home of millions of people. On their side, Pakistan governments pay lip-service to the democratic rights of the people of Kashmir, but their real agenda is revealed by the way in which

they sabotaged the Azadi movement, inspired by sentiments of Kashmiriat (i.e. secular Kashmiri nationalism), and instead fostered a pro-Pakistani brand of extreme Muslim militants in the latter half of the 1990s.³

Any understanding of the problem in Kashmir must begin with the acknowledgement that Indian state terrorism against Kashmiri civilians has resulted in tens of thousands of instances of torture, rape and murder. This is well known to anyone familiar with human rights reports, but may come as a shock to many ordinary Indians outside Kashmir, since the media so sedulously avoid any mention of this topic, thus helping politicians to conceal the truth from their own people. In this respect, as Chomsky pointed out in an interview with Star News reporter Sreenivasan Jain, Indian media persons are no better than their US counterparts. Secondly, it is important to distinguish between (a) terrorist groups which engage in attacks against civilians, (b) militants whose armed struggle is directed solely against military targets, and (c) those who engage in non-violent struggle for self-determination, including large numbers of women. While the Indian state treats all opposition as terrorism, it is crucial to recognise that (b) and (c) are *not* terrorists. Thirdly, any solution must recognise the democratic right of the Kashmiri people to decide their own future.

Realistically, given the circumstances, there are only two options: (1) converting the LoC into a permanent international border, with Kashmiris on each side being absorbed into Pakistan and India respectively, and (2) a separate state, independent of both India and Pakistan, democratic and therefore necessarily secular, in order to accommodate the rights of Hindus, Buddhists and other minorities as well as those of secular Muslims. The long-denied plebiscite under the auspices of the UN would need to be carried out in a free and fair manner to decide between these, with India and Pakistan undertaking not to interfere and to respect the outcome.

Conflicting Nationalisms

However, neither of these solutions would work so long as India and Pakistan persevere in their antagonism to each other. Indeed, the problem of Kashmir is only a symptom of the conflicting nationalisms which date back to the horrific violence of Partition. Millions of people butchered in the most barbaric manner, around sixteen million displaced from their homes, countless women and girls raped, mutilated and branded while countless others committed suicide to escape this fate: this was only the beginning of a hot-cold war which has continued for fifty-five years at infinite cost to both countries.

General Musharraf's crackdown on extreme Islamist elements is a promising beginning, but it is not enough: it fails to tackle the fundamental problem posed by the definition of Pakistan as an Islamic state. The claim to represent the Muslims of South Asia was vitiated from the start by the decision of millions of Muslims to remain in India, and undermined further by the war of 1971, which ended in East Pakistan breaking away to form Bangladesh.

It has resulted not only in intense persecution of minorities such as Hindus and Christians, but also in sectarian violence between Muslims. The authoritarian version of Islam sought to be followed has trampled on the rights of women and denied the rights of other sections such as workers and political dissidents.⁴ Under these circumstances, it is only by pointing to an external enemy (India) that any semblance of nationhood can be preserved. The transformation of Pakistan into a secular, democratic nation would be a precondition for peace.

On the other side, India is in name a secular nation, but the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is part of the 'Sangh Parivar', the family of organisations headed by the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), a Hindu nationalist organisation banned for a while after one of its members murdered Mahatma Gandhi. Its ideology of 'Hindutva' or 'Hindu-ness' (to be distinguished from the religion, Hinduism) identifies Hindus as a race, culture and nation; its attitude to minorities can be judged from the words of one of its founders, Golwalkar: 'To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by purging the country of the Semitic Races – the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here... a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.'⁵ This ideology is being taught to children in lakhs of schools resembling the madrasas which produced the Taliban, while any other version of history is sought to be ruled out by re-writing textbooks and a vicious campaign against secular historians.⁶ This goes along with the undermining of other human and democratic rights, especially of minorities. The Indian demand for Pakistan to extradite Dawood Ibrahim, accused of master-minding the Bombay bomb blasts of 1993 which killed over 300 civilians, conveniently glosses over the fact that Hindutva terrorists who master-minded the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the subsequent riots, which killed over a thousand civilians in Bombay alone⁷ and were halted only by the bomb blasts, are still at large today, and some occupy positions of state power. The attitude to such terrorists can be judged from the fact that Dara Singh, accused of several atrocities against Muslims and Christians - including the barbaric burning alive of leprosy doctor Graham Staines and his two young children - recently announced he was standing as a candidate in the UP elections. Freedom of expression and association are being undermined by a creeping authoritarianism, and many fear another bloodbath will result from the campaign for a Ram temple in Ayodhya.⁸ Clearly, a recommitment to secularism and democracy is required in India too.

However, even that is not enough. The failure of Nehru's and subsequent secular governments to agree to a plebiscite in Kashmir shows that secular nationalists can be as idiotic as communal ones. The problem, as Rabindranath Tagore saw way back in 1917, lies in nationalism and patriotism themselves, with their built-in exclusivism and supremacism: 'The nation with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that... the nation has thriven long upon mutilated humanity.'⁹

Tagore was writing about Europe, but his remarks apply equally to Third World nationalisms. Nowhere in the world is the arbitrariness of national boundaries more evident than in South Asia, where they cut across communities and families, dividing neighbour from neighbour, friend from friend, parent from child, husband from wife. Over ninety per cent of the population of India and Pakistan have everything to gain from peace, friendship and open borders between the two countries. Those near the border, who suffer constant violence and fear of death, would gain security and stability. Those who have colleagues, friends or relations across the border would gain easy and trouble-free access to them. For the poor, who die in their thousands from lack of food and drinking water, exposure to heat and cold, and easily preventable diseases, cessation of the criminal wastage of billions of dollars on military hardware and exercises in favour of more rational uses would be a huge gain. (It costs \$10 million *per day* – and many lives – for India and Pakistan to patrol the icy wastes of the Siachen glacier alone!¹⁰) Even the middle classes and business people have a great deal to gain from improved infrastructure and greater stability. On January 11 2002, while the spine-chilling press conference in which Army Chief Padmanabhan and press reporters talked nonchalantly about the prospects of first and second nuclear strikes was being broadcast, the Bombay Sensex plunged, and uncertainty about the possibility of war kept it low. After all, who wants to invest in a country which is about to be nuked? So the agenda of the peace movement in the two countries must include winning over the majority of the population to support for human rights, secularism and democracy, and the rejection of nationalism. Without that, peace will continue to be elusive.

Permanent War in the Name of ‘Peace’

Given the permanent war which has resulted from the communal partition of British India – not to mention the barbaric violence which accompanied the actual process – it seems perverse in the extreme to call for a repeat performance in Sri Lanka. Liyanage concedes that partition would include population transfer, which ‘may involve a lot of hardship and pain’, but this is surely a euphemism for the orgy of gang-rape and butchery which has, quite rightly, led to transfer of population being classified as a crime against humanity in the Nuremberg Principles. Nor will this be a one-time price to pay. Communal partition will strengthen Sinhala chauvinists in Sri Lanka, just as it strengthened Hindu nationalists in India – indeed, there are indications that the prospect of it is already doing so. The result will be two hostile nations facing each other across a border which, in relation to their size, is much longer than the India-Pakistan border. As Liyanage has helpfully pointed out, it is already clear that a massive part of the new state will consist of disputed territory, since he proposes that only ‘Yalpanam Province’ be handed over to it, whereas the LTTE claims the entire North-East. One can predict that the TNA constituents of the government will toe the LTTE line on this issue, since LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham, in his speech in London on 5 December 2001, promised they can expect to be ‘garlanded’ a la Rajiv Gandhi if they fail to do so, but it may be more difficult for

the UNP and SLMC to explain to their Sinhalese and Muslim followers that they must prepare to be ethnically cleansed from the East as they were from the North. If the disputed territory of Kashmir, which is a much smaller proportion of the combined area of India and Pakistan, has led to a 55-year war which has now become nuclear, we can be quite sure that this new war will last well into the 22nd century. Most inhabitants will be directly affected by the hostilities, and both nations will descend into abject poverty as a result of military expenditure. The ‘peace’-mongers deserve to be congratulated for pushing an agenda that will ensure war for the foreseeable future!

Of course, the Norwegian government has told us that the LTTE appear to be willing to give up the goal of Eelam, but with all due respect, I would prefer to hear that from the lips of the Supremo himself, in case there has been some mistake in translation, since Tamil members and supporters of the LTTE have been promised, on the contrary, that Eelam is imminent. Members of the ‘peace’ lobby, like the National Peace Council, the Centre for Policy Alternatives and its offshoot the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence, and the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality may also deny that they are in favour of partition. But what, then, is their formula for peace? The only solution which would satisfy justifiable Tamil concerns is a new constitution guaranteeing equal treatment and opportunities for all citizens, and substantial devolution of power, but apparently these NGOs opposed this package when it was proposed by the previous PA government.¹¹ In the absence of any statement to the contrary, we can only assume that they favour partition, with its guarantee of permanent war.

Self-Determination or Determination by Others?

Does opposition to partition entail opposing self-determination for Tamils? Absolutely not! On the contrary, at a time when Ariel Sharon is using the rhetoric of the so-called ‘war against terrorism’ to crush the Palestinian liberation struggle, and the Indian government uses the same rhetoric to outlaw demands for democratic rights in Kashmir, it is all the more necessary to affirm support for the right of *all* people, including the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka, to self-determination. But in order to do that, we first need to be clear what we mean by ‘self-determination’. Literally, it means the ability to determine one’s self, and therefore includes, among other things, freedom from violence and physical coercion, freedom of movement, freedom of expression and association, equal rights for all, and control over decisions affecting oneself, which implies self-government; it is, in fact, another name for human rights and democracy.

What is crucially important in cases where self-determination is used rhetorically in a struggle is to examine the *actual* aim of the struggle and the means used to achieve that goal. For example, a new initiative to fight for a secular, democratic Palestinian state by non-violent means¹² deserves all-out support from the international community. Similarly, in the present context of highly communalised societies in both India and Pakistan, non-violent

struggle for a democratic, secular Kashmir should be supported. On the other hand, an Islamic Palestine and Islamic Kashmir will rule out the possibility of self-determination for Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, non-believers and secular Muslims within their boundaries. Nor can we endorse terrorist methods – the threat or use of violence against unarmed civilians – in either of these situations.

What we need to do, then, is to examine the goal of Tamil Eelam and the means used by the LTTE to achieve it, and ask: do they contribute in any way to the self-determination of Tamils? Is Tamil Eelam a goal which is compatible with human rights and democracy?

A state which is identified with any particular ethnic or religious group cannot, by definition, be democratic, because those who belong to other groups cannot be equal in such a nation; at best they will be discriminated against, at worst they may be 'ethnically cleansed', i.e. driven out and/or exterminated. Moreover, even those who share the same religion or ethnicity as the rulers will not be free to define their own identity, but will be forced to conform to the definition imposed by their rulers. This has been the experience in all such cases: Nazi ('Aryan') Germany, White (apartheid) South Africa, Zionist (Jewish) Israel, Islamic countries like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, Sinhala Buddhist Sri Lanka and so on. There is ample evidence that Tamil Eelam is no different. Sinhalese were hounded out of areas of the North held by the LTTE, and in 1990, all Muslims were expelled. While the same degree of ethnic cleansing has not yet been achieved in the East, there have been massacres of Sinhalese and Muslims which appear to be directed at terrorising them to leave.¹³

The LTTE definition of 'Tamilness' has been imposed on Tamils with equally terrorist methods. As is usual in such cases, a dress code is imposed on civilian women, who are required to wear 'traditional dress', meaning sari and pottu.¹⁴ On the other hand, women fighters 'are predominantly low-caste Tamil women who join between the ages of 11 and 13. The presumably "expendable" low-caste Tamil women recruited for suicide bombings come from this group... One female Tiger, who identified herself as "Mariana",...said that even her sister cadres "take no prisoners." but deal with any captured or injured soldiers by killing them on the spot. Tiger treatment of security forces personnel has been independently confirmed by the International Committee of the Red Cross... The female Tigers, like their male counterparts, accept without question the harsh discipline needed to carry out the LTTE's brutal strategies, including suicide attacks. "If we're needed to explode, we'll explode," said Mariana.'¹⁵ However, this definition of Tamil womanhood has no place for women who claim the right to think and express themselves freely; such women – for example, doctor, feminist and human rights activist Rajani Thiranagama, poet Selvy (Thiagarajah Selvanity) and popular mayor of Jaffna Sarojini Yogeswaran – have to be executed.¹⁶

While Tamil men are not required to observe a dress code, the demand for complete obedience to the LTTE Supreme Leader is just as absolute, and the punishments for dissidents and rivals are torture and death. The list of those 'eliminated' in this way is too long to cite here; we can just mention that they include dozens of cadres of TELO, TULF leaders Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran, and Neelan Thiruchelvam, parliamentarian, scholar, and founder of the International Centre of Ethnic Studies and Law and Society Trust.¹⁷ The numerous instances where elected representatives of the Tamil people have been killed by the LTTE are not only a violation of the human rights of those individuals, but also of the democratic right of the Tamil people to elect their own representatives. Perhaps the most disturbing of all have been reports of forced conscription of child soldiers, many of them just eleven or twelve years old, and the youngest, reportedly, just nine.¹⁸

The inescapable conclusion is that the goal of Tamil Eelam does not mean self-determination for Tamils but the very opposite. Moreover, the totalitarian character of the LTTE regime has been very evident even after the so-called 'peace' process was initiated by the UNF government. In the East, there have been numerous reports of extortion of very large sums of money, as well as other belongings, mainly from Muslims but also from Tamils; kidnapping of adults for ransom; political killings of Tamils seen as a threat to the LTTE, including elected representatives; leaflets distributed reiterating the need for a dress code for women; above all, there have been numerous reports of accelerated conscription of child soldiers, in some cases through blackmailing their families (for example, with destruction of their homes if they refuse), in other cases through outright abduction.¹⁹ On February 5, the President expressed deep concern about UNICEF reports of forcible child conscription, and stated that the peace process could succeed only if human rights in general and children's rights in particular are safeguarded. In the light of LTTE spokesman Balasingham's denial on February 6th that forcible conscription of children is taking place, it is worth looking at some of the other reports of forcible conscription apart from those cited above.

Child Abuse and Slavery

Reports from eastern Sri Lanka say Tamil Tiger rebels there are taking advantage of the current ceasefire with the government to step up forced recruitment of teenagers for their war effort... Community leaders say that the Tamil Tigers are forcibly conscripting young boys and girls who look fit enough to fight' (BBC News Online, 1 February 2002).

'There has been much alarm about reports that Tamil Tiger rebels have been taking advantage of the lull in the fighting to come into villages in the eastern district of Batticaloa to try to take away teenagers – many of whose families had fled rebel territory in order to avoid

conscription...Meanwhile there are some reports from northern Sri Lanka of rebel cadre in Mannar district demanding both money and children for the war effort from civilians in government areas... In the North it is not clear whether these reports represent a marked increase in rebel activity. But in the East of Sri Lanka local people say the degree of harassment had shot up since the ceasefire came into effect' (BBC report by Frances Harrison). 'In the Batticaloa District, the LTTE has rounded up certain villages and has forcibly taken away a number of children for arms training... The LTTE has even taken letters of consent from parents to the effect that they would hand over their children who are now below eight years, when they reach the age for arms training' (Movement for Alternative Tamil Opinion and Democracy, 1 February 2002).

There are many more such reports, but perhaps the most chilling is this one: 'Kanthan's mother knew why the Tigers had come for her 15-year-old son, Aruna. In rebel-controlled areas of Sri Lanka, every Tamil family is required to give up a child, girl or boy, to join the fight for a Tamil homeland. She had not done so. Now the Tigers were coming to take the new recruit by force. "The Tigers pulled her hands away from my brother so roughly that they broke all her fingers. She was screaming in pain," Kanthan said. "My sister was still holding onto Aruna then the Tiger girls descended on her and started strangling her and tearing her dress until she let go." The fight went on for an hour before the Tigers disappeared into the night, taking Aruna with them. The next morning, on January 12, the villagers gathered and pieced together what had happened. In all, four teenagers, two girls and two boys, had been carried off to a jungle training camp run by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)... More than 40 families with teenagers fled the government-held Kirin district after the Tigers swept into town and carried off six children at gunpoint. Their homes were burnt as a warning to other families of their duty to contribute a child to the cause. One couple, grief-stricken at the loss of their only child, committed suicide with the same cyanide capsules used by captured Tiger fighters... Kanthan smiled wryly at the Tigers' claim that all recruits go willingly. "The other boy taken with my brother bit the Tiger's hand so hard he had to have stitches," he said. "I don't think he was going willingly."²⁰

Can anyone who has ever loved and cared for a child read that report without weeping for the terrified abducted children, the mother whose fingers had to be broken and sister who had to be strangled, the parents who committed suicide, all the families whose children were dragged away? One is reminded strongly of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, in which the slave mother, Sethe, kills her own beloved daughter because she cannot bear to think of her enslaved and abused. Slave mothers were not supposed to love their children, just as the Tamil mothers in proto-Eelam are not supposed to love theirs, and to Sethe, freedom meant the right to love. The right to love was also a basic demand of the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, risking their own lives in the search

for their disappeared children,²¹ and one can understand why: without this fundamental right, society itself would disintegrate.

Human Rights and Democracy as Conditions for Peace

So who is responsible for this situation where Tamil children, women and men are being subjected to such an outrageous denial of their human rights? First and foremost, of course, the LTTE and its supporters, whose power depends on the perpetuation of war, and who need, therefore, to conscript their army, regardless of the cost to Tamil society, knowing that they would not survive for a single day if there were peace and self-determination for Tamils. Secondly, the UNP-TNA-SLMC-CWC government, which, after having sabotaged the only chance of a political solution to the ethnic conflict by opposing devolution with equal rights, then used the slogan of 'peace' in order to get into power, with no regard for the consequences to Tamils and Muslims in the North and East. They cannot, however, evade responsibility for what is happening: both constitutionally and as a party to the UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child, the government is legally obliged to protect the rights of its citizens, which includes rescuing the children who have been abducted and preventing further criminal abductions.²² If they cannot carry out this obligation, they should resign; alternatively, if they have agreed to hand over part of the country to the LTTE, then the electorate has a right to know about this agreement.

The Norwegian government shares the blame, since the leaked draft of its ceasefire MoU reportedly allowed for human rights violations of civilians. Its previous attempt at mediation was not a spectacular success: the current havoc going on in the Middle East is in no small measure due to the failure of the Oslo Agreement to tackle the central issues of the occupation of Palestine by Israel and the right of Palestinian refugees to return. If a similar fiasco is to be avoided in Sri Lanka, they will need to ensure that the human and democratic rights of Tamils and others are adequately protected. The former PA government too has some responsibility for the situation. By failing to punish instances of corruption, thuggery and violence among its own members sufficiently severely, and failing to make an all-out attempt to push through constitutional changes which would satisfy the overwhelming majority of Tamils, they squandered much of the goodwill which had brought them to power. NGOs and civil society leaders, including religious ones, who have supported Sinhala and Tamil communal politics, are also to blame.

It is surely not coincidental that Dr Daya Somasundaram, a psychiatrist who has treated both victims and perpetrators of violence in the war, comes to approximately the same conclusion as Tagore: 'The fundamental problem of the war in Sri Lanka is of an exclusive *ethnic consciousness*... In the present world, national boundaries are fast losing their relevance and it may be more germane to consider rethinking on these basic demarcations, or,

better still, to accept the interdependence and unity of the whole world...²³

Returning, then, to the question we started out with: What are the prospects for peace in South Asia? The answer, I feel, depends on all of us: especially those of us who live in the sub-continent, but also the rest of the international community. Real peace can only be built on the affirmation of universal human and democratic rights, and there is a material basis for doing this. What, after all, is the one truly universal experience, shared by everyone who has ever lived? It is the experience of infancy: of complete vulnerability, utter helplessness, total dependence on others for our very survival. This is the experience which defines us as citizens of the world, and enables us to identify with anyone, anywhere, who is in a similar position of vulnerability, whose humanity is violated or abused. Conversely, the inbuilt exclusivism and supremacism which define nationalism and patriotism, especially in their ethnic or religious forms, develops by crushing this most fundamental facet of our humanity, and therefore results in psychological disease and spiritual death.

If we wish for peace, therefore, we must do everything in our power to find out and inform people about the crimes being committed in the name of various nationalisms, combat the mutilation of humanity brought about by all forms of national exclusivism, and actively propagate universal human rights, democracy, and friendship between peoples. Every one of us can do this in some capacity: as parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, educators and scholars, journalists and writers, members of neighbourhoods, religious communities, trade unions or women's groups, politicians or voters. Silence and passivity are not an option.

Notes

1 Gouri Chouduri, Ritu Dewan, Manimala and Sheba Chhachhi, *Women's Testimonies from Kashmir: "The Green of the Valley is Khakhi"*, Women's Initiative, 1994.

2 Reported in many human rights reports, including several by Indian groups like the report quoted from above. See also Gautam Navlakha, 'It's Never Too Late to Do the Right Thing', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 July 2001 and *Informative Missive*, the newsletter of the Public Commission on Human Rights, Jammu and Kashmir.

3 E.g. Balraj Puri, 'Time for Alternatives to Violence in Kashmir', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 May 2000; "Islam is just a façade for Pakistan", excerpts from website of Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, *Communalism Combat*, July 1999.

4 E.g. Zaffar Abbas, 'Pakistan at gunpoint', *Communalism Combat*, May 1998; K. Mumtaz and F. Shaheed, *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back?* Zed Books, 1987.

5 *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, 1939, quoted in Sitaram Yechury, 'What is Hindu Rashtra?' *Frontline*, 12 March 1993; T. Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags*, Orient Longman 1993.

6 E.g. Teesta Setalvad, 'Denying generations their history', *Communalism Combat*, December 2001.

7 *The People's Verdict*, The Indian People's Human Rights Commission, 1993.

8 'Stop the "Talibanisation" of India', and Teesta Setalvad, 'Hindutva targets the hinterland', in *Communalism Combat*, October 2001.

9 *Nationalism*, London 1917, quoted by Sajal Nag, who adds, 'nations have always been concerned about "us" against "them"... In fact a nation can be defined as an unending process of othering.' ('Nationhood and Displacement in the Indian Subcontinent', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 December 2001). I feel that nationalism and patriotism, which involve uncritical support of the state or would-be state, are very different from love of one's country. We can love our country in the same way that we love our home, neighbourhood, city, town or village: because we have grown up or lived in it for a long time, are familiar with it, and associate it with loved ones and pleasant memories. Far from setting us apart, this love can bind us to people from other countries who feel the same way for their country. Such love would make us oppose all oppressive state power, whether of our own or other nations.

10 Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, *South Asia on a Short Fuse*, Oxford University Press, 1999, page x.

11 Interview with Fr. Oswald Firth, *Sunday Leader*, 6 August 2000

12 Edward Said, 'Emerging Alternatives in Palestine', *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 10-16 January 2002.

13 University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), *Report No.5* (1990); Rohini Hensman, *Journey Without a Destination*, British Refugee Council, London and Colombo, 1993.

14 Sitralega Maunaguru, 'Gendering Tamil Nationalism: The Construction of the "Woman" in projects of Protest and Control', in Pradeep Jeganathan and Qadri Ismail (eds), *Unmaking the Nation*, Social Scientists Association, Colombo, 1995

15 'LTTE admits to atrocities and rights abuses', *Daily Mirror*, 27 April 2000, based on interviews conducted by reporters of the French magazine *Le Point* in the Batticaloa jungles.

16 UTHR(J) *Report No.9*, (1992); UTHR(J) *Special Report No.11: A Tamil Heroine Unmourned and the Sociology of Obfuscation* (1998); Neloufer de Mel, *Women and the Nation's Narrative*, Social Scientists' Association, Colombo, 2001.

17 Rajan Hoole, Daya Somasundaram, K. Sritharan and Rajani Thiraganama, *The Broken Palmyrah*, The Sri Lanka Studies Institute, Claremont (CA), 1990; UTHR(J) *Report No.9*, 1992; Tributes to Neelan, *Pravada*, Vol.6 No.5.

18 Amnesty International, *Children in South Asia: Securing their Rights*, 1998; UTHR(J) Information Bulletin No.27, *The LTTE, Child Soldiers and Serial Disasters*, October 2001; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (including international agencies like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch), *World Report 2001*, Sri Lanka section, available on "http://www.child-soldiers.org" www.child-soldiers.org

9 For example, UTHR(J) Information Bulletin No.28, *In the Name of Peace: Terror Stalks the North-East*, February 2002; 'Muslims protest Tiger extortion despite truce', *The Island, Sunday Edition*, 3 February 2002; 'UNICEF slams Tigers: Child recruitment continuing under cover of ceasefire', *The Sunday Times*, 3 February 2002; *Thinakural*, 7 February 2002; 'SLMC leader condemns harassment of Muslims', *Sunday Observer*, 17 February 2002; Faraza Farook and Tania Fernando, 'East not so optimistic,' and Iqbal Athas, 'Tigers smuggle in supplies while Navy is busy with parades,' *The Sunday Times*, 17 February, 2002, and many other reports.

20 Catherine Philip, reporting from Batticaloa, 'Children kidnapped to fight for Tamil army,' www.thetimes.co.uk 13 February, 2002.

21 Rohini Hensman, 'The Role of Women in the Resistance to Political Authoritarianism in Latin America and South Asia,' in Haleh Afshar (ed), *Women and Politics in the Third World*, Routledge, 1996.

22 See Nayana's excellent Legal Watch column in the *Sunday Island*, 10 February 2002, 'Child conscription and the appalling silence of the good,' for a lucid exposition of the legal position.

23 *Scarred Minds: The Psychological Impact of War on Sri Lankan Tamils*, Colombo, 1998, pp.308-309.

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