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Again, in a widely distributed email, journalist Shenali Waduge mourned Gaddafi in heart-warming sadness: "Three sons of the Arab world are no more," She said "... they faced their fate because they dared to go against the West." It is funny that she included Osama Bin Laden as one of the "three sons" and honours the latter as a "leader of the Muslim World."

"The people of Libya will soon regret their unappreciation for Gaddafi's type of leadership," Shenali added. No sign of that yet. Instead we observe as we write how tens of thousands of people gather in Benghazi to rejoice on 'Liberation Day.' The jubilation in Tunisia and Egypt had been similar. In Tunisia the people are lining up as I write to vote in their first experience of democracy. One woman there commented: "At last we are having a say in what's happening in our country." That is the beauty of democracy; people have a say.

operations. They would have benefitted from bringing Gaddafi live for trial. The editor's comment raises a pertinent issue, however: It is that the butchering of Gaddafi when he surrendered was not right. He should have been brought before trial. Extrajudicial punishments are wrong in principle. Whether it be the criminal Prabhakaran or tyrant Gaddafi they have a right to trial. In abstract terms this argument is acceptable. On the other hand, one has to realize the provocation inflicted on the masses by both these fellows was so grave and intense that those who caught them butchered them.

Apparently on this same principle of due process the Sri Lanka Government has called for a UN investigation into the death of the dictator. In a joking but telling



WEEPING FOR GADDAFI

It is a strange phenomenon that government spokespersons and Diaspora bhumiputras (those who believe that Sri Lanka is for the Sinhalese; others being regularised tourists) keep wailing for the dead Gaddafi. They have been writing for some time against the Arab Spring that brought in the series of mass rebellions against oppressive dictatorships in the Middle East. They even voiced strong objections about the treatment to Obama. The attack has intensified against the elusive concept, that is the West. According to these writers of email and print articles the Satan behind all these revolts is the West; US particularly. It's all been a 'Western conspiracy.' The writing tribe do not bother to look at the facts and particularly at the sequences of events that led to the downfall of Ben Ali in Tunisia, of Mubarak of Egypt and of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. Arguing against the face of historical evidence is their specialty and it springs from an incurable myopic vision.

Let's look back: The underlying feature of all the tumultuous uprisings in the Middle East was that they erupted spontaneously from the soil, as it were. It is significant that there was no recognizable leadership or planned campaigning behind the revolts. The leadership was amorphous. Bursts of upheaval came disparately one after another and then gathered together by the force of growing morale. In the case of Tunisia and Egypt the West did not come in physically; they preferred to stand aloof and keep issuing requests to the incumbent rulers to quit. In the case of Libya NATO thought it fit to physically intervene at the latter stages when Gaddafi gathered immense resources out of his petro dollars and threatened to kill each and every rebel and destroy their families. "We will fight in every valley, in every street, in every oasis, and every town. We won't surrender again; we are not women; we will keep fighting," vowed Gaddafi on September 2011 over Syrian television. On the other hand the rebels had meagre resources but a great cause.

Mubarak had the wisdom to eventually give up. To a lesser extent Ben Ali, too, had been yielding. Not so Gaddafi, who had been unable to self-exorcise his extreme megalomania and the feeling of invincibility that had taken root within him. "I am an international leader, the dean of the Arab rulers, the king of kings of Africa and the imam of Muslims, and my international status does not allow me to descend to a lower level." - he once remarked after his microphone was cut for denouncing King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia during a meeting of the Arab League in 2009. Gaddafi was indeed so inflicted with mental disease that only violence could have removed him. "They love me," he said. "all my people ... they would die to protect me." - Insisting the people of Libya were not protesting against him, during an interview in February 2011. Thus he couldn't and wouldn't see that the masses of Libya were protesting against him.

Aided by hoards of mercenaries and his tribe loyalists Gaddafi kept on pounding and destroying the rebels without mercy.

The other important consideration is that NATO intervened after a mandate from the UN Security Council where even Russia and China, who benefited by the Gaddafi government, did not think it right to veto. Furthermore, the Arab League itself backed the NATO move. So all was clear and above board.

There is little, therefore, that can justify our mourners to attack the West. I present a few of the numerous such attacks found in email and Press in recent times:

Ceylon Daily Mirror/24.10.11:"The Western imperialists have discarded the values they possessed by killing former Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi, Jathika Nidahas Peramuna (JNP) Leader Wimal Weerawansa said today."

I wonder why our expert in fasting ignores the open violence to our values in Sri Lanka. Its recent manifestation was in the incident of gang warfare between Duminda and Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra and the murder of the latter in broad daylight. These two were alleged thugs; one was an alleged rapist and drug dealer, too, but they both were acting under protection. "Can anybody tell me why Duminda Silva is not shackled to his bed?" asked Frederica Jansz, editor of the Sunday Leader, "after all, here we have a man who by numerous eyewitness and published accounts first slapped and then shot Bharatha Lakshman Premachandra."

Diaspora mourners (who we will name 'LJ' and 'Daya') have distributed emails forwarding an anti-Western speech by an African speaking in evangelist style. Yet another has sent out a cut and paste from a Gaddafi website listing out Gaddafi's "work for the people of Libya." Having ruled for a goodly long 42 years surely Gaddafi must have done something that can be listed. The real test is on the overall balanced impact of his deeds and misdeeds on the Libyan people. The fact that Libyans rose in their millions against their ruler is the real evidence.

The Island editorial of 24/10/11 carried a more restrained lament of Gaddafi. "So, there is no reason why Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and other leaders should not be held accountable for war crimes." It is difficult to see the logic of that. Obama, Cameron, and Sarkozy did not command ground

response a UNP Parliamentarian has asked if any investigation is done over the murder of Bharatha!

Libya reinforces an all time lesson for dictators which they will never learn, namely that if you rule in violence you die in violence. One may even surround oneself with a strong moat of "constitutional" power and all the military might but the day of reckoning eventually comes. Those who live by the sword die by the sword. Gaddafi enjoyed kingly pleasures to the maximum. Although his people were battling for the next meal he enjoyed all the hedonistic pleasures that the revenue from the National Oil Company that belonged to his family had brought him. As special 'bodyguards' he had beautiful slim Ukrainian girls with great busts. He carried his Bedoin tent and a hundred and fifty men when he went overseas. He displayed his wealth lavishly and his power ruthlessly. And then he was caught hiding in a drainage pipe, like a rat. An ignominious end to a glorious egocentric personal tamasha.

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