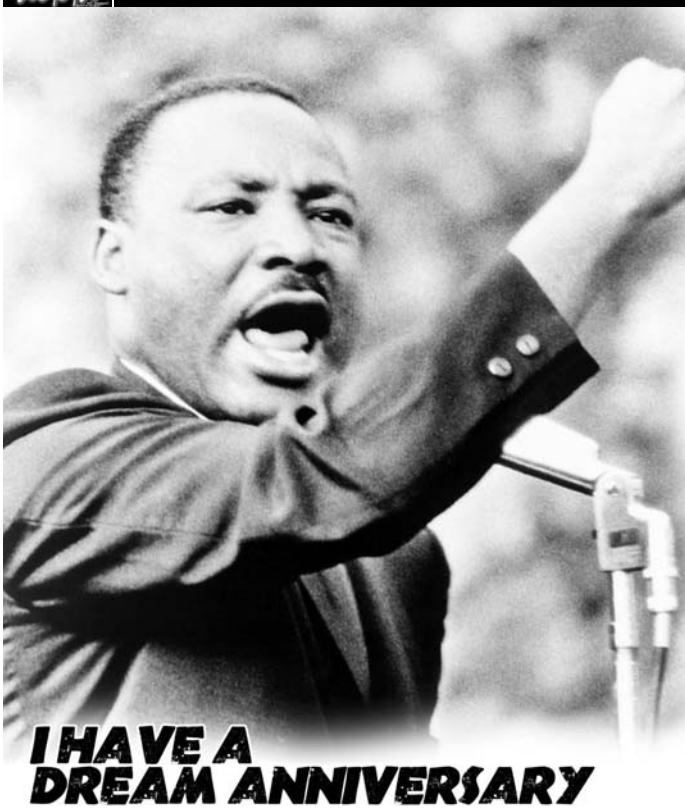

Washington celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of one of the most famous speeches in history, delivered by a non-politician, but standing much above those made by powerful politicians. Dr.Martin Luther King was a civil rights activist, who perhaps, sacrificed his life for it.

Leaving the celebration to Americans. let us look at the significance and implications this speech has for the rest of the world.

It did not take fifty years for the US to see part of that dream realized with the election of the first black President.

I am reminded of a book written by a Sri Lankan jourlist after a three month's training program in the US. He had more or less predicted that no Catholic, a Communist or a black man would ever become the President of the US. Piyal Wickramasinghe wutnessed the swearing in of he first Catholic Presodent in the person of J. F. Kennedy. Now that a black man has risen to the position, after the jurno's death, though unexpected by him, only the communist has to wait for some more time.

The US, which is the country in question must get the credit for it as it was land where the Blacks had been the ousiders bought in as slaves in nmany cases. In the case of South Africa. it had been a bigger struggle for the sons of the soil to be accepted as its respectable citizens. However, in 1994 its most celebrated son by the name of Nelson Mandela, became its first Black President elected by popular vote.

It was an encouraging and enlightening sight to see the black President addressing the crowd from the same place, in front of the Lincholn Memorial.

Nelson Mandela's rise to his position as President of the country he was born in, was a far more arduous challenge. A nation that was the owners of the land was thrown tnto a position of not only being insignificant, but of being treated as non-humans in their own land. It took them a long time and a long struggle to get recognition as a free nation. Mandela had to spend twenty seven years in jail for their freedom. He must be, in his ninety sixth year, watching with interest the recent jubilations and celebrations by people who had no personal erxperience of the 'Long Walk to Feeedom.'

There is another Black Nation often ignored even by the Human Rights Activists, taking them for granted. They have been the owners and occupiers of their tradidtionala land for over fifty thousand years. The English adventurers who landed in their midst in the late eighteenth century, invented a new theory to claim owenership of their land . The British concept of terra nulius. This misconception and injustice continued for nearly two centuries until the Ausdtralian High Cout passed its verdict on a claim made by an islander from the Thores Straits called Edward Koiki Mabo in 1993. Thefrst Austrlians were recognized as citizens of their own country only after a referendum in 1967.

On the day that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd aplologized to the Aboriginal people for forcefully taking away therir children by the Government, in 2009, all ex-PM s were there except John Howard who had been singing his thematic song about an Aboriginal Industry. It was no surprise in a way considering what his predecessor John Hewson said on the day Mabo Legislation was passed by the parliament in 1993. ' '

'Today is a sad day for Austraklia',he said.

Politics is full of surtprises.
J.R.Jayewardene of Sri Lanka, was the man behnd the brutal attack on the

Counterpoint
By The Defector

Buddhist monk named W. Rahula in 1947, at the Thorana Junction in Kelaniya, leaving him in a pool of blood on the road with his spectacles thrown on to a side, J.R. was the man who appointed that very monk as Vice Chancellor of Sri Jayewardene University in early eighties.

With all the goodc work done by the Labor party for the advancemnent of Australian Aborigines, no Black Australian was ever selected as a Labor M.P. until a Liberal M.P.appeared from W.A. in 2010. Tony Abbott may well be the man to make life better for them, inspite of his being ardent follower of John Howard,

Such is life.

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