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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION?

When President Kumaratunga inaugurated the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation on October 04, 2001, the deep fissures of the Southern Sri Lankan polity on the peace process had already been made visible. The Leader of the opposition UNP refused to take part in the Council, arguing that what the President should immediately do was not to seek advice of the opposition, but to proceed with the talks with the LTTE without delay. The Tamil National Alliance also boycotted the Council, accusing the President of resorting to delaying tactics. However, at her inauguration speech, President appealed to the UNP to consider their decision to stay away from the council and join the process even at a later stage. What appears quite clear is that reconciliation between the government and the opposition is a very difficult goal to achieve. National reconciliation without government-opposition reconciliation – paradoxically, that is what Sri Lanka is supposed to strive for.

The Councils' inauguration ceremony also indicated enormous difficulties that the Sinhalese Buddhist and nationalist leadership appear to encounter about the value of peace and reconciliation as a normative goal. The Buddhist prelates who spoke at the ceremony extended, as did the JVP leader, conditional support for peace. It was very clear that they were quite skeptical about a negotiated peace with the LTTE. A negotiated peace, they insisted, would be acceptable to them only if it did not endanger the rights and interests of the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community. Skepticism about peace can hardly provide much intellectual or political impetus for reconciliation. Meanwhile, the best spiritual messages for peace and reconciliation were delivered at this ceremony by minority religious leaders – Catholic, Hindu and Islamic. Yet, the religious minority voices

can hardly influence the majority's spiritual leadership about humanistic values of peace and reconciliation.

These are dilemmas of Sri Lanka's quest for peace at present. They are also dilemmas that do not seem to have easy or early resolution. Perhaps, both peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka are slow-moving processes. They cannot be imposed on society from above. Neither can they be sustained without active participation of the political elite. A divided and self-centric political elite can only further weaken an already fragile peace process in Sri Lanka. Even then, any meaningful transition towards peace in Sri Lanka is largely conditioned on the capacity of the ruling political elites to develop a unified approach to peace through negotiation and political reform.

One key positive message that emerged from the President's speech was her acceptance of the Oslo framework, earlier agreed upon by the UNP and the LTTE in December 2003, as the basis for future talks with the LTTE. She also reiterated her government's commitment to a federalist solution to the ethnic conflict. However, it needs to be noted that the LTTE's ISGA proposals have given a flexible interpretation to the Oslo formula of exploring a federalist option on the concept of internal self-determination. In the next phase of talks, a thin or minimalist interpretation of the Oslo framework by the Colombo government may not be of much help to further the peace process.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's stalemate in peace talks seems to have entered a phase of further protraction. One may notice in this phase of negotiation stalemate a tendency towards further widening the gulf between the Sinhalese and Tamil polities. Influential political and intellectual groups in the

Sinhalese society are mobilizing forces against power sharing and federalism, reviving the old fear that power sharing with the LTTE will lead to inevitable break up of the Sri Lankan state. All these attacks on a political solution are incidentally concentrated on the LTTE's ISGA proposals. In the absence of constructive dialogue between the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim political leaderships, the ISGA proposals have resulted in further widening the distance that separates the North, South and the East. **P**

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Editors

Jayadeva Uyangoda
Kumari Jayawardena

*Executive Editor and
Circulation Manager*
Rasika Chandrasekera

Editorial Assistant

Chandrika Widanapathirana

POLITY

425/15, Thimbirigasyaya Road,
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka.

Telephone: 2501339, 2504623

Fax: 2595563

E-mail: ssa@eureka.lk

website: www.ssalanka.com

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PEACE WATCH -- Jayadeva Uyangoda

Hurting Negotiation Stalemate

Sri Lanka's peace process is, to use a rhetorical understatement, in a stalemate. It is a 'hurting stalemate' of a particular kind, in a situation of no war. This perhaps is an original contribution that the Colombo government and the LTTE have jointly made to the theory of hurting stalemate developed by William Zartman, an American political scientist attached to the US Institute of Peace, Washington D.C. Zartman's celebrated theory suggested that parties to an intrastate civil war are likely to seek negotiated options when the war and violence bring them to a state of "hurting stalemate." The peculiar situation in Sri Lanka at present is that in the absence of peace negotiations, the UPFA government and the LTTE are experiencing a stalemate that hurts. They will have to find a win-win outcome in returning to the negotiation table.

Vulnerability

One specific characteristic of this mutually hurting negotiation stalemate is the state of vulnerability which both President Kumaratunga and the LTTE leadership find themselves in. President Kumaratunga's state of vulnerability in relation to the resumption of negotiations with the LTTE arises from the lack of political support for such an initiative within the coalition she leads. Her main coalition partner, the JVP, is not only opposed to Kumaratunga's flexibility to accept the LTTE's ISGA proposals as the starting point of talks. They have also launched an island-wide campaign to mobilize public opposition to such a negotiation move. Kumaratunga's own party, the SLFP, does not seem to openly back her on this issue.

Many of the SLFPers, including her Ministers and MPs, appear to be very reluctant to take up a position on negotiations that would not agree with the JVP's stand. In the absence of an initiative similar to the Sudu Nelum movement of the 1990s, the JVP is now giving ideological leadership to the SLFP and the entire Alliance. The JVP's ideology on the negotiations is one of hardline nationalist statism. It is obviously to ensure some autonomous political space in dealing with negotiations that Kumaratunga recently quit her position as the leader of the UPFA coalition. Even then, without explicit support from her own party and amidst opposition from her main coalition partner, and therefore feeling politically vulnerable, Kumaratunga is unlikely to resume talks with the LTTE, until she finds some favorable political conditions that make her own position stronger and unassailable.

Meanwhile, the state of vulnerability that the LTTE leadership is experiencing arises from the Karuna revolt in the Eastern province

and the subsequent developments. Quite apart from the military setback that the LTTE suffered after the disbanding of the military units in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts, Karuna's dissidence has challenged the LTTE politically, at three crucial levels. Firstly, it has irreversibly damaged the monolithic unity of the LTTE as a politico-military organization. Secondly, the cry of Eastern Tamil nationalism has undermined the LTTE's deeply held concept of a unified Tamil nation. Thirdly, it has also seriously undermined the Tamil nationalist claim for a territorially unified Tamil homeland. Moreover, the LTTE Vanni leadership is also quite angry that elements of Colombo government have made attempts to use the Karuna revolt to weaken the LTTE militarily. It appears that the LTTE is unlikely to return to the negotiation table until they militarily crush the Karuna dissidence, and restore their full control in the Eastern province.

Interregnum

The bottom line is that although both President Kumaratunga and the LTTE may be keen to return to the negotiation table, they are not likely to do so within the next two to three months. Both sides need a period of political consolidation before resuming talks. In this optimistic reading of the current negotiation impasse in Sri Lanka, the few months ahead is an interregnum that can be creatively used, particularly by President Kumaratunga in Colombo. What she could fruitfully do is work towards building some measure of political dialogue and consensus within her own coalition on the question of negotiations with the LTTE and the nature of the political settlement that might evolve through negotiations.

Two-Track Dialogue

Intra-coalition dialogue and consensus is becoming extremely urgent in the context of the increasingly nationalistic campaign that the JVP has launched throughout the country against a compromise with the LTTE. One of the key political problems of the UPFA is that it has not worked out a reasonably up-to-date political position on negotiations with the LTTE. Before they came into power, the SLFP and JVP leaders had discussions on this issue but they were not able to come to a common position, and agreed to disagree. After forming the government in April, they have not even reviewed their program whereas in India, the new coalition government, a few days after the election, worked out a new common minimum program. In Sri Lanka's coalition regime, there seems to be very little internal policy discussions at the leadership level. But, there is one issue on which President Kumaratunga should not avoid an internal dialogue and consensus within the coalition. It is the next phase of negotiations and the compromise that the government will seek with the LTTE.

Left to its own party agenda within the coalition, the JVP will continue to carry on its militant opposition to a compromise with the LTTE, thereby further restricting the political space for President Kumaratunga to resume negotiations. Incidentally, the JVP at present constitutes a great paradox in Sri Lankan politics. Led by young politicians with a radical self-image and tremendous energy, it represents some of the conservative and counter-reformist impulses of Sri Lankan society. This tendency of the JVP has also been strengthened by the ideological grip that a few Sinhalese nationalist academics of the type of the Indian RSS have managed to maintain over the young JVP leadership. The misplaced radicalism of the JVP is to oppose any state reform initiative, interim or long-term, although any serious advancement towards peace in Sri Lanka objectively requires a radical re-working of the nation's political structures.

Indeed, if President Kumaratunga is serious about bringing peace to Sri Lanka, she has to work on two fronts simultaneously—the LTTE and the JVP. Dialogue and constructive engagement is required for the success in both fronts. The nature and dynamics of this two-track dialogue will have to be different. The dialogue with the LTTE has a formal character and it is called negotiation. That dialogue will seek a framework in which the Sri Lankan state and a secessionist ethnic nation, with structures of a parallel state, can co-exist in one broad political unit without war and violence.

Conversion

In the other dialogue, the President's task is to convince and convert the leadership of the JVP, which represents a large mass of the Sinhalese intermediate classes, that a compromise with the Tamil nation, led by the LTTE at present, is for their long-term advantage—in the sense of development, progress and welfare of their own constituencies. Kumaratunga should also convince the JVP that they can easily improve their chances at future elections by being a partner, an agency and even a co-leader in bringing negotiated peace to Sri Lanka. As the President may tell her juniors in the coalition, no party in Sri Lanka's South today needs to retain the outdated Sinhalese nationalist baggage of the 1960s and 1970s to win elections. The electorate has advanced quite a lot in its political consciousness. This would be a perfectly ethical exercise in political conversion!

Interestingly, in this two-track dialogue, the success with the JVP is an essential pre-condition for the success in the dialogue with the LTTE. The reason is simple. It is about social bases of politics and preparing class forces for a major shift in the way political power in Sri Lanka is organized at present. No meaningful compromise with the LTTE will be possible, interim or otherwise, without re-organizing Sri Lanka's present state structure. No such initiative can be put into practice without class and political forces backing the political leadership which will undertake that historical task.

New Violence

Meanwhile, the new wave of political violence involving the LTTE and their opponents has seriously undermined the LTTE's claim to their readiness to pursue a political settlement. After the split by the Karuna faction in the Eastern province, the mainstream LTTE has been entangled in a fratricidal and bloody internal war. Assassination of political opponents who belong to both the Karuna faction and the EPDP has highlighted the argument that it is too early, if not unwise, for the government to enter into an agreement with an unreformed LTTE on the interim administration for the Northern and Eastern provinces. The reports of the continuing recruitment of children as combatants have also undermined the LTTE's claim to its envisaged role under an interim administration. The fear that an agreement in the next phase of talks between the government and the LTTE will result in the Northern and Eastern provinces being handed over to an essentially militaristic LTTE is indeed gaining increasing momentum. The LTTE leadership needs to realize that even an interim settlement without democracy and pluralism will not add much weight to their own claim to be the emancipators of the Tamil masses. Elevating themselves to the position of the administrators of a vast civilian population without undergoing a necessary democratic transition may even mark a new, profound and immensely unmanageable crisis for the LTTE.

In the next phase of negotiations, a settlement agreement, even if it is to be interim, will also have to be one that would make the LTTE the dominant administrative entity in most of the Northern and Eastern provinces. Many in the Sinhalese society might find such an outcome unacceptable. It may even give rise to a new wave Sinhalese nationalist resistance. The best way to prevent such a negative turn of events is for the political leadership of the SLFP and UNP to take collective leadership in the impending negotiation and reform processes.

In this context, the political leadership has the unavoidable responsibility not only to resume negotiations with the LTTE to discuss the details of an interim administration, but also to provide political directions and leadership to the people in Sri Lanka about the country's future political trajectories. New negotiations with the LTTE will certainly pre-suppose interim state reforms, with some far reaching consequences for the way in which political power is organized at present under the 1978 constitution. These implications are already there in the LTTE's ISGA proposals. It would be futile to expect the LTTE to modify their interim proposals to suit the limitations of the 1978 constitution. To accommodate even a somewhat revised set of LTTE proposals, there will have to be constitutional changes, or an agreement between the government and the LTTE that will ignore constitutional constraints. Both options require a basic political consensus. ■

RE-WORKING AUTONOMY OPTIONS FOR SRI LANKA

Jayadeva Uyangoda

There are new mobilizational initiatives in the Eastern province seeking to organize political pressure to de-merge the temporarily merged Northern and Eastern provinces. Organized by the JVP and called *nejenahira udawa* (Awakening in the East), this campaign is also being organized to counter the LTTE's ISGA proposals that embody the Tamil nationalist argument that the Northern and Eastern provinces, despite the ethnic diversity in the Eastern province, constitutes a single, politico-administrative entity of the Tamil-speaking peoples. Securing the collective rights of the Tamils, the ISGA proposals imply, is contingent on the "territorial unity" of the "Tamil nation". It is this proposition that is being questioned in the new mobilizations.

Raising concerns of the Sinhalese people in the Eastern province, at a time when a political settlement to the ethnic conflict is being spoken about, is not a bad thing. The government does not seem to address their concerns. Even those civil society groups who campaign for a federalist power-sharing arrangement for Sri Lanka do not take up the concerns of the Sinhalese minority living in the Eastern province. The LTTE, which seeks the administrative control of the Eastern province, has no specific plans for the non-Tamil minorities there. The JVP is taking up the cause of the Sinhalese in the Eastern province in this specific context.

However, there are serious political limitations in the way in which the question of the Sinhalese community in the Eastern province is being posed. In this reckoning, any power sharing arrangement with the Tamils will invariably result in the denial of the rights of the Muslims and Sinhalese communities in the East and therefore power sharing should be resisted. In this approach, either the unitary state system should continue so that the central government protects the Muslim and Sinhalese communities, or if there is devolution at all, the Eastern province should be de-linked from the North.

The main fault of this approach is that it does not lend itself to any new constitutional innovation. It stays within the old and outdated constitutional thinking that is deeply suspicious of any deviation from the venerable unitarist constitutionalist model. To come out of the crisis of the state, Sri Lanka urgently needs new constitutional directions. While such directions are seriously lacking, there is also a general crisis of constitutional discourse in Sri Lanka today. The crisis is manifested in the polarization of political visions in Sinhalese and Tamil polities with the Muslim polity caught in the middle. These visions are so mutually exclusive that they can hardly communicate with each other.

While the Tamil nationalist vision of the state has travelled beyond federalism, the finest minds of constitutional jurisprudence in the

Sinhalese polity are still grappling, with no success, with the elementary problem of whether federalism would become the stepping-stone to separation. Actually, whatever advances that constitutionalism in Sri Lanka has made during the past three decades -- as embodied in the PA's reform package of 1995 and the draft constitution of 2000 are there despite the opposition from most of the great constitutional-legal pundits in Sinhalese society.

Against the state of underdevelopment in constitutional jurisprudence in Sinhalese society there has now emerged a new constitutional vision for the Tamil polity in the form of the LTTE's ISGA proposals. Having remained itself within the narrow framework of constitutional unitarism, the Sinhalese nationalist discourse, in both its constitutional and political theory, has no categories to respond to the LTTE's proposals for confederal regional autonomy. Overcoming this huge gulf between two constitutional visions is indeed a new and difficult task in rebuilding Sri Lanka as a pluralist, multi-nation polity.

Conventional Federalism

Meanwhile, the federalist and confederal constitutionalism that has gained acceptance among some innovative constitutional thinkers in Sinhalese and Tamil societies also demonstrates a major limitation. It enunciates primarily the conventional federalist concept of spatial autonomy which is based on the principle of territorial federalism. In this approach, the solution to autonomy demands of an ethnic minority or nationality is to grant them autonomy in the territory where they are concentrated. This arrangement makes a national minority a regional majority. A fundamental shortcoming of this territorial autonomy model is that it does not provide for the grievances of regional minorities, except through a bill of rights.

The fear of federalism that has been expressed by Muslim and Sinhalese communities in the Eastern province is essentially one that emanates from the inability of the territorialized autonomy to assure the minorities within that unit their own rights, safety and security. Muslims in the Eastern province have been particularly apprehensive about the possibility of a peace deal between the government in Colombo and the LTTE at their expense.

But the Muslim political leaders have not been able to come out with an alternative to the eventuality of such peace deal, interim or permanent. They also need to breakaway from the conventional constitutionalist approaches to autonomy and power-sharing and envision innovative options. However, in the absence of fresh political and constitutional thinking, the Muslim political leaders,

as fragmented as they are, have been only allowing themselves, particularly of late, to be used by Sinhalese political leaders as pawns in their power struggles.

In the context of the contemporary political realities in Sri Lanka, the constitutional discourse on power sharing needs to be deepened in two areas. Firstly, in Sinhalese society, the state reform agenda should decisively shift away from the framework of outdated unitarism and de-centralization, go beyond devolution and explore federalist and confederal options for regional autonomy. If this advancement fails to take place in Sinhalese society, its constitutional thinking will continue to lag behind the constitutional thinking in Tamil society. Moreover, in the long run, secession, which all unitarists and decentralizationists dread to think about even as a distant possibility, might even become a constitutional reality.

Minorities

The second level at which the discourse on autonomy and power-sharing needs to be deepened is to address the concerns of all minorities. Sri Lanka has many minorities. Our political understanding of identity communities needs to be reinforced by the recognition that the constitution of majorities and minorities is not always as simple as the nationalists would want us to believe. In the specific way in which state power is spatially organized in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese, for example, are both a majority and a minority. They are the national majority in the island and a regional minority in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

In a similar logic, the Tamils are a national minority and at the time they are the ethnic majority in the North and East. The conventional territorial principle of federalism gives power to the national minority making them a regional majority, but silent about that segment of the national majority which becomes a regional minority, as in the case of the Sinhalese in the Eastern province.

Other than 'national' and 'regional' minorities, there are 'local majorities' and 'local minorities' as well. The Muslim community in the Eastern province is a regional minority in the North and East. At the same time, they are a local majority in some distinct areas in the Eastern province while being a local minority in all districts in the North. The Plantation Tamils represent an equally complex picture. They are a major regional minority in the Central and Uva provinces, but a local majority in the Nuwara Eliya district.

Then, there is yet another construction of minorities as 'dispersed minorities.' They are dispersed in small, yet significant, numbers in many provinces and districts. Muslims are a dispersed minority in many districts outside the Southern region of the Eastern province. The Northern, Eastern as well as plantation Tamils are also dispersed in a number of provinces.

Finally, there are 'marginal minorities'. Burghers, Malays, Telugu and Malayalam communities, as well as the Vedda people who continue to remain small minorities, sometimes concentrated in certain localities. They are marginal in a double sense. They are not recognized as politically or electorally useful minorities. Therefore, in the democratic process, they continue to suffer marginalization. Similarly, deprived of political worth, they have no access as communities to the public goods which the state dispenses. In that sense too, they are marginalized from the domain of public resource distribution. The state at best treats them as mere individual citizens.

Minority Concerns

Now, this picture of minorities in Sri Lanka can give rise to some novel ideas about power-sharing arrangements in a federal polity. Before engaging in any new constitutional imagining, let us also delineate the grievances and concerns of all these minority communities that might better inform us what kind of institutions and arrangements could be envisioned anew. For analytical ease, we may group their concerns into the following four categories. (i) Recognition as political communities, (ii) security and safety, (iii) representation, and (iv) access to institutions of governance. Translated into the language of rights, they constitute four specific domains of rights, namely, recognition rights, security rights, representational rights and governance rights.

How should we design Sri Lanka's future political institutions to constructively ensure and guarantee these rights of the minorities who occupy a wide spectrum spanning from the Sinhalese to the Veddas? It indeed requires the deepening of not only our understanding of federalism, but also the idea of federalism itself. In other words, we need to re-design the political organization of a pluralist Sri Lanka in a new framework of deep federalization.

Asymmetrical Autonomy

Concerning federalism as regional autonomy, one challenge that the government will face in negotiations with the LTTE, sooner than later, concerns the translation into constitutional principles the framework claims made by the LTTE in the ISGA proposals. In fact, the ISGA proposals have baffled conventional federalists. The conventional federalism presupposes that all autonomy units should have more or less similar degree of competencies and powers. In this thinking, Sri Lanka's North and East should not be different in its range of competencies from, say the Southern province. But, the premise on which the ISGA is based is that the federal unit of the North and East should not be equated with other units of the federal republic. It seeks a special status to accommodate Tamil nationhood within one federated state that can also incorporate the parallel state structure that the LTTE has built over the years.

This indeed calls for a framework of what has come to the constitutional discourse as asymmetrical power sharing. What it

means is that one unit of autonomy, like Quebec in Canada, would be accepted as being entitled to a higher degree of competencies and powers than the other units, on the principle of 'distinctiveness' of the people who constitute the majority in that unit. Translated into Sri Lanka's political realities, asymmetrical federalism would presuppose that the North and East in which the Tamils constitute the majority would be recognized as a distinct region in the sense that the autonomy there is designed to address the specific political aspirations of the Tamil people for self-determination within the state of Sri Lanka. In brief, the Tamil-majority North and East will have more powers than the Sinhalese-majority regions in the rest of the country.

There will invariably be objections to this model of asymmetrical autonomy on the premise that asymmetry itself will encourage secession. But actually, asymmetry is a framework that provides the secessionist community with a constitutional incentive to stay within the Sri Lankan state. It is the recognition of their 'special' or 'distinct status' that invites them back to the Sri Lankan state. The distinctiveness accords their autonomous unit more powers than the units of the majority community. That special status is also acknowledged on the premise of past discrimination and deprivations which the community has suffered. It also recognizes the bitter reality that during the war of twenty years, the process of state formation in the Tamil polity had developed in a direction of separateness that cannot be easily wished away. In this reasoning, the accommodation of separateness as well as rectifying past discrimination requires not secession, but special and legally sanctioned special status within the constitutional state.

Is devolving powers to the periphery within a federalist framework, in order to make the national minority a regional majority, adequate to address the possibilities for secession? The existing argument for devolution as well as federalism in Sri Lanka seems to say 'yes' to this question. It does not go beyond giving away powers to the periphery. The fear of federalism leading to separation is also largely linked to this giving away approach to power sharing. This approach has also led to a situation where none of the proposals for ethnic conflict management in Sri Lanka contains ideas for reforming the power structure at the centre. This position needs to be revised now. Instead, a package of state reform that combines autonomy to regions, and at the same time links regions back with the central government is necessary. A strong Second Chamber, representing the regions and with powers similar to those in other federal countries like the USA and Germany, will be a useful institution to bring the periphery back to the centre. This will also provide an effective modality to address the concern that the LTTE's ISGA proposals are weak in shared rule while they are quite strong in self-rule. We may note in passing that the dominant constitutional discourse in Sinhalese society is weak both in shared rule and self-rule aspects of autonomy.

Non-Territorial Federalism

The institution of Second Chamber can also be creatively modified in order to combine territorial federalism with non-territorial federalism. The approach of non-territorial power-sharing is gaining particular attention among political scientists and constitutional jurists as one that can address the concerns of minorities in plural societies in an innovative way. As particularly developed in Belgium during the past two to three decades, the idea of non-territorial federalism creates assemblies called 'Community Councils,' the representatives of which are elected to represent their respective ethnic communities, who are either not confined to one territorial unit, or dispersed over a number of units. Indeed, the very notion of non-territorial federalism is designed to define the concept of right to self-determination of communities from a non-territorial perspective. It seeks to empower members of an ethnic or cultural community, who subjectively profess a specific group identity and live either outside the boundaries of the so-called homeland or even dispersed without having any claim to such a homeland.

A creative application of the principle of non-territorial federalism in Sri Lanka will enable us to design institutions of representation at national, regional/provincial as well as local levels. At the national level, the composition of the Second Chamber could combine both territorial and non-territorial principles with weightage to the latter, or exclusively on the non-territorial principle, since the House of Representatives provides a representation on the basis of territoriality.

A slightly different option would be to establish separate Community Councils at the national level for the main ethnic communities with specific powers over group specific domains such as culture, language, education, religion and social welfare. It will also provide an institutional mechanism to address group rights claims of the ethnic communities. Professor Yohan Galtung has proposed a set of cultural councils, on the basis of non-territorial federalism, for Sri Lanka as an option worth exploring.

Federalism at Lower Levels

In this national level of broadening federalism, there is still the possibility of representation being confined to the main communities, by excluding smaller communities in the districts. There are two ways to prevent this possibility of exclusion. The first is setting up of regional or provincial institutions of non-territorial power sharing (Regional/Provincial Community Councils), to run parallel with the territorially designed Regional/Provincial Councils. The second option is to create mechanisms for representation for the numerically smaller minorities in the region/province who would not get representation under the existing system. This will require re-working of the composition of the councils with changes to the election laws to ensure that all minorities are fairly represented, despite their numbers or the absence of localities of their demographic concentration.

For example, the composition of the Southern Provincial Council can be defined in such a way as to ensure fair representation to Muslims in Galle, Matara and Hambantota districts as well as the plantation Tamils in Galle and Matara districts. The electoral laws governing representation there can be modified to ensure fair representation, for example, to plantation Tamils in Matara and Galle districts, who would not stand to win at an election because of their numerical weakness. An option is to treat them as a single constituency within the Southern Provincial or regional council, although they live in two separate districts. What matters here is not the numerical strength of the community, but its numerical weakness as well as the commitment to empower them through guaranteed representation. The regional minority communities in the Western, North-Eastern, Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces will immensely benefit from an institutional scheme of this nature that combines territorial and non-territorial forms of power sharing.

There can still be exclusion of still smaller minorities from the assemblies of governance. For example, Malayalam and Telugu speaking working-class cultural communities in Colombo, the

Malay community in Colombo and Gampaha districts as well as Hambantota's Malay colony, will continue to remain unrepresented at the regional or provincial councils. Their numbers may be inadequate to make a community constituency adequate for separate representation at the regional level. To ensure their representation at a suitable level of governance, we need to design new institutions and mechanisms at local and municipal levels. There too, institutional innovation can go hand in hand with reforms in the electoral laws. Guaranteed representation, even falling short of a general qualifying cut-off point, can be combined with re-working the composition of local or municipal bodies to ensure participation at local governance of the marginal minorities.

Deep federalization, as a measure of further democratization of Sri Lankan polity, requires federalization at three tiers of the state central, regional and local/municipal—combining territorial and non-territorial principles. In a sense, Sri Lanka provides an opportunity to show the way forward for other plural societies in constitutional innovation in a context of civil war transition. ■

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HOW DEVELOPMENT CAN UNDERMINE PEACE

Sunil Bastian

When the UNF government was elected in December 2001, one of the interesting debates that emerged was on why the southern electorate voted the UNF back into power. Was it because of the voters' desire for a political solution to the civil war or were the reasons basically economic?

This question assumed particular significance in view of the fact that the December 2001 elections took place in a context of a severe economic crisis that affected all social classes. The year 2001 has gone down in our history as the only year that recorded a negative economic growth. The overall economic downturn had an impact on all social classes right down to the village level. With regard to the war, there was also no end in sight. The military effort of the PA government had reached a dead end. There was in fact a military stalemate between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. The war was also making economic recovery a difficult task. Therefore it was the presence of both these factors, the economic crisis and the stalemate in the war, that led to the discussion on what really motivated the southern electorate to support the UNF in December 2001.

Now, looking at what happened to the UNF in the last elections in April 2004, it is possible to give a better answer to this question. The UNF government certainly achieved a lot in the peace process. It managed to get a CFA signed, establish the SLMM, get the ban on LTTE lifted, hold several rounds of discussions with the LTTE, mobilise international support for the peace process and have an agreement with the LTTE to find a solution within a federal framework - although it is not clear how strong this agreement is. There is a solid social base in the South against the resumption of the war despite the increased activities of Sinhala extremist groups.

However, these achievements in the peace process did not enable the UNF to win the last elections. Why? Of course there were problems with the manner in which this election was called and it also had its own share of the electoral malpractices which have become a permanent feature of Sri Lankan electoral politics. But these factors should not blind us to the fact that the southern electorate rejected a government that had achieved so much on the peace front.

The usual answer of my conflict resolution friends to this question is that although the UNF achieved a lot in the peace process, it did not do enough to communicate these achievements by taking people into their confidence, and developing a social base in the South for the peace process. Often they point to the contrasting example of how the PA behaved in a parallel situation when they launched the 'Sudu Nelum' movement.

However, this line of thinking totally ignores the economic context in which the UNF launched the peace process and the social impact of UNF economic policies on the southern electorate. In hindsight one can argue that the UNF actually did not have a strategy to create a social base for the peace process in the southern electorate. The UNF economic policies were dominated by the interests of the big capitalists and informed by the traditional trickle down growth theories. These policies alienated many who could have formed the social base for the peace process among the southern voters. Looking back at the experience of these two elections, it is even possible to argue that what the southern electorate wanted in December 2001 was an end to the war so that their living conditions could be improved.

UNF development policies and their basic assumptions

The UNF development policies were spelt out in a document titled *Regaining Sri Lanka*. As with any other policy document, there can be many discussions about this document as well, such as the discourse that dominates it, its theoretical and conceptual assumptions, the politics of producing it, how it came to be written, who participated, etc, are some relevant questions. However, what interests us here is the question whether its basic ideological assumptions and the prescriptions it provides are adequate to create a social base for peace.

The following are some of the key assumptions of this document.

- Clues to a key assumption are found in the second paragraph of the introduction. It states, "Sri Lanka began to liberalise its economy in 1977. Since then it has made considerable progress. However in recent years that progress has slowed, if not come to a virtual halt compared to many other countries." The subtext of this statement is, that the post 1977 shift in the development policies has been basically positive, but there have been some problems in recent times. The policies in this document were meant to overcome them. Then what Sri Lanka needed was more of the same from the past UNP policies of economic liberalization, but implemented more systematically and successfully.

This basic assumption runs right throughout the report. Hence it precludes a critical look at the post 1977 period to ask whether those policies had anything to do with the myriad of conflicts affecting our society.

- The other basic preoccupation of the document is the need for economic growth. The objective was to achieve a 10 per cent

growth rate. The usual examples of East Asian neighbours are brought in offering us models to follow, devoid of any discussion of the historical experiences of those societies. Basically the 'growth fetishism' that preoccupies mainstream economists dominates the report. There is no discussion on how this desired growth or the process of achieving it relates to conflicts.

The unstated assumption in the document is that the absence of economic growth is a major reason for conflicts: Generating economic growth can lead to taking care of factors that underlie conflict - an idea that has been questioned by many social scientists studying conflicts.

- The biggest flaw of the document was on the social side of its analysis. It was addressed through the notion of poverty and poverty profile. This is a usual number crunching exercise with the data from the Department of Census and Statistics, not giving us any clue about the social characteristics of the poor - leave alone who in society has been affected by the conflict.

In a report that was to be a part and parcel of a policy package prepared for taking a country through a difficult peace process suggesting fundamental reforms both at the level of state and society, one expected a much more historically rooted analysis giving a nuanced picture of how people had been affected both by twenty six years of the liberalised economy and twenty years of the civil war. But the ideological assumptions about the economic model and methodology used has prevented such a broad analysis.

- Finally, the idea was how to link these poor to the intended growth process by investing in various areas so that they could benefit from the expected growth. There we have the standard prescriptions often offered by the donor agencies.

Each of these basic assumptions of *Regaining Sri Lanka* can be questioned. The liberal capitalism of the post 1977 period has had much negative impact on southern society. Growth of inequality, dismantling of rural livelihoods, political decay, development of an extensive patronage system and political violence are some of the features that characterise this period. Although economic growth is important, it is almost naive to focus only on that in a society that has been devastated by multiple conflicts. Who are the people suffering has to be understood through a much more fine-grained analysis of society, going beyond number crunching. Finally there has to be a much more concerned intervention on behalf of the poor if they are to get out of morass that they are in.

Basically *Regaining Sri Lanka* did not give a vision of a development policy that would be an answer to the complex processes of transition that Sri Lanka has to go through in seeking peace and development. It has all the hallmarks of a document heavily influenced by technocrats, consultants, mainstream economists and the donors.

The principle thrust of the policy frame work in *Regaining Sri Lanka* was to remove the fetters that have prevented markets and private sector from developing. The idea was to generate economic growth through further liberalization, link the poor to this growth process and improve certain support services so that the poor can benefit from them. Within this highly economic discourse there was no discussion of conflicts at all. The implication was that all this process of promoting capitalist growth was going to be without struggles, conflicts, etc. Conflicts figured in a small section of the document primarily devoted to rehabilitating the North/East.

Politics of donors

A major characteristic of the UNF peace and development strategy was the extensive 'internationalisation' and the heavy involvement of donors. Securing donor funding became a principal selling point of the peace process. Hence a look into the role played by the donors in the process of formulating this development vision is important. This demonstrates an important aspect of the politics of aid agencies in this peace process.

Since the beginning of Sri Lanka's liberal capitalism in 1977, aid agencies have begun to play a significant role in this country. Usually the influence of donors is discussed only by looking at the flow of resources. However, at present the donor influence is much wider in scale.

At the level of the state, in addition to their influence through the provision of resources, the donors have an influence in the policy making process. The ability to raise funds provides legitimacy to the states of aid-receiving countries among the institutions of global governance; ultimately this has an impact on sovereignty and security of states. At the level of civil society, donors have been responsible for the sustenance and activities of many new organisations. The very emergence of these organisations has been a significant social change. Even at village level, the donor influence is visible. For example, compared to the 1970s it is impossible to carry out a village socio-economic study today without taking into account donor-supported projects. Finally, most of the ideological debates in Sri Lanka are now influenced by ideas that come through development assistance. In short, the impact of development assistance and agencies involved is so pervasive that it has to be treated as an 'internal' factor in Sri Lankan politics.

Although the donor involvement has expanded since 1977, the donors for a long time ignored the political instability and civil war that affected this country in the post 1977 period. The inauguration of the period of liberalised capitalism coincided with the Sri Lankan Tamils contesting an election on a separatist platform. Immediately after the 1977 election, the country was affected by several rounds of ethnic riots and violence. Riots in August 1977, 1981 and 'Black July' of 1983 are the key events of violence that affected the South. In the meantime, military confrontation between the Tamil militant groups and Sri Lanka Army escalated. The Southern politics also turned violent. The

attack on strikers and students in the eighties, the notorious referendum in 1982, the period of violence accompanying the Indo-Lanka Accord and the JVP violence from 1987 to almost to the end of the 1990s characterised this period. Despite this violence, instability and civil war, the Sri Lankan ruling elite managed to secure development assistance at a considerable level throughout this period. Donors, especially the big multilaterals, were not much concerned with these developments, as long as the elite pursued the economic policies begun in 1977.

However, this situation could not last for ever. A number of developments both inside and outside the country helped to introduce 'conflict sensitivity' into the discourse of donors. Internationally, the spread of internal conflicts in many parts of the world, and internally the combined affect of southern violence and LTTE/IPKF clashes in the North/East and the entry of Indian troops to Sri Lanka, opened the eyes of aid agencies to conflict and instability in the country. The governments of some of the more politically sensitive bi-lateral aid agencies began to take note of the situation in the country. Activities of a small but active group of civil society organisations from the North and the South, together with their international friends, also began to have an effect on donor thinking. Due to these factors, from somewhere around the beginning of the nineties 'conflict' became a key issue in planning the interventions of almost all aid agencies.

Despite this new-found sensitivity to conflicts, the behaviour of aid agencies during the UNF regime shows how shallow these concerns have been. This is especially true of major multilateral agencies like the World Bank, IMF and ADB. Their role basically amounted to fully supporting the agenda that emerged from the UNF, which had very little to offer in developing a base for peace in the southern electorate. A perusal of the documents that came out of these agencies demonstrates how satisfied they were with the ruling group that dominated the UNF. In fact some even went on to praise the ruling group in technical documents, a thing not often found with aid agencies.

The politics of these agencies during the UNF period simply amounted to trying to revive the economic reform agenda that they had already initiated but which had got undermined to a certain extent because of the civil war. There was very little to offer outside this agenda. Hence once the CFA created stability, these agencies actively pursued the economic reform agenda which was already set. This was the beginning and end of the conflict sensitivity.

Alienating the social base for peace in the South

The UNF while achieving much in the peace process, undermined within a short period of time the social base for peace in the South due to this approach to development. Its first priority was to facilitate capitalist growth, which meant taking measures to enhance the interests of the private sector. The ideological basis on which the UNF operated was such that it could not do anything else. After all, the growth/trickle down theory

tells us that we have to promote the growth first before doing anything else. As a result of this economic policy, the social classes that had been severely affected by the 2001 economic crisis did not get any benefits. There was no peace dividend for these people. In fact, in the South the peace dividend got equated with donor funding channelled to North/East rehabilitation.

Politically, what was detrimental for the UNF was the alienation of significant sections of the Sinhala peasantry, salaried employees of the state sector and the working class. In the formation of the post-colonial Sri Lankan state, there has been a special relationship with the Sinhala peasantry. This was reflected in almost all aspects of state policies including the political structure of the state, economic policies and ideological orientation. The centralised state that undermined the rights of minorities has been an integral element of this special relationship.

This special relationship between the state and the Sinhalese peasantry came under attack in the context of the struggle of the Sri Lankan Tamils for reforms of the centralised state as well as the impact of globalisation. Reforms under globalization had gradually made smallholder agriculture, the principal source of income of this peasantry, unviable. Consequently the peasantry has been a class reeling under the impact of recent economic changes. Even then, due to their sheer numbers the support of this class is essential for sustainable peace.

Salaried employees of the state sector form a part of what some Marxists called the intermediate class. This class expanded during the period of state-dominated capitalism. Even during the post 1977 period this class has expanded partly due to the political difficulties facing large scale retrenchment in the state sector, continuous dependence on the state sector for various aspects of services and the dominance of patronage politics of the political class that continues to use the state as a means of giving employment to their supporters.

However, in the post independent period intermediate classes have been an important element of the class block that has ruled this country. A colonial bourgeoisie that had accumulated wealth during the colonial period inherited power from the colonial masters. Their political dominance could not be maintained in the context of universal franchise and regular elections. The class that rose up through the electoral process to share power with the colonial bourgeoisie was this intermediate class. It is difficult to ignore them in the context of the significant transformation of the state which is entailed in the peace process.

Meanwhile, the organised working-class has expanded due to the impact of liberal economic policies. The expansion of various sectors of the economy under these policies has increased the absolute numbers of the working class. Therefore they too cannot be ignored politically.

Some of the policies adopted by the UNF in 2002-2003 have had a direct negative impact on the well-being of these classes. The removal of the fertiliser subsidy, the large scale retrenchment of state sector employees and reforms carried out to the Termination of Employment Act can be cited as examples of such policies.

However what was important was not the direct impact of these policies. The problem was adherence to an ideology that did not give any impression that the government cared about these vital sectors of the population, whose support was needed for the peace process. The basic idea was; "support the policies benefiting the interests of big business, it will benefit all in the long run and bring about peace and development."

These criticisms of the basic vision of the UNF should not be taken as an argument for continuation of the past policies in relation to these classes. There is no way that the Sri Lankan government can subsidise the smallholder peasantry as in the past. Even the peasant population cannot uplift itself from poverty through the maintenance of such policies. The Sri Lankan state has to be reduced in size and made more effective. The working class has to come to an agreement with the capital for the further expansion of productive forces under capitalism. But all these reforms involve a complex process of political bargaining. A document like *Regaining Sri Lanka* written by a group of consultants and technocrats supported by donors cannot even begin to fathom the historical process involved in such a transformation in the context of Sri Lankan society.

Unfortunately civil society groups preoccupied with conflict resolution, without looking at social justice issues, have also been working within this basic political framework. In fact, in the recent past such an approach has led to a certain degree of parting of the ways between those groups interested in conflict resolution and others focusing on social justice. This trend will get further strengthened if conflict resolution simply amounts to getting an agreement between the LTTE and Sri Lankan government. In such a situation conflict resolution organisations are undermining the independent agenda of civil society in favour of the agenda of the political actors either enjoying or vying for state power.

Current policies and future dangers

The behaviour of the UPFA government shows that it has understood at gut level the importance of social classes that were alienated from the state, as a result of UNF policies. Therefore, it has quickly implemented several policy measures to satisfy the interests of the peasant and intermediate classes. The reintroduction of the fertiliser subsidy, recruitment of graduates for state employment and retreat from further privatisation are such examples. But most of these policies seem to be ad hoc and full of contradictions. The need to manage an unwieldy coalition and the usual tendency of the political class to spend non-available resources has made the situation even more precarious.

Adding to these complexities on the economic front are the problems with the peace process. While it is clear that there is a group closely associated with the President who are keen to begin the negotiation process, basic lack of trust between the leadership of the UPFA regime and the LTTE, internal contradictions of the ruling regime, uncertainties in the East and the LTTE's position on the ISGA has made it difficult to resume the negotiation process.

These factors have made the task of managing the economy quite difficult. It is also not clear how the donors who were so enamoured with the UNF's neo-liberalism will react to these trends. The UNF, on its part, seem to be waiting in the wings, hoping for the presidency and the control of parliament so that it can continue to implement the policies that it began. Given the balance of political forces in the South at present, the result of such an effort could be large scale instability in the South. In such a context, the UNF could get back to its traditional authoritarian politics of the 1977 to 1989 period. Then we might be in for another bloodbath in this country devastated by so many conflicts.

The political class that has ruled this country since independence is still to arrive at a political consensus in order for the highly centralised state to be reformed so that the Tamil minority can enjoy a degree of autonomy in the North/East. They have also failed to develop a development strategy that will secure them the backing of the bulk of the southern electorate to support these reforms. Until this happens, we will continue to remain a fragmented state. If the crisis deepens, Sri Lanka is sure to be labelled as a failed state. ■

Sunil Bastian is Senior Researcher at the ICES, Colombo

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ICT 4 PEACE: TOOLS FOR TRANSCENDING DEADLOCK

Harinda Ranura Vidanage

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) for many is still a phenomenon of mere technological advancement in the path of information technology and the development of the computing power. Nevertheless ICT has become a factor which has been incorporated into approaching various social issues beginning from the pioneering notion of *ICT for development* in the area of development study.

The importance of understanding ICT in conflict analysis is two fold. Firstly, as ICT itself has become a preferred tool of many crime rings and more advanced terrorist organizations converting it to a domain of contestation. Analysts point out this new mode of warfare has become popular among groups involved on the lookout for un-conventional warfare. Terrorism has found an able ally in the form of ICT. Secondly, ICT itself has the essential tools that can facilitate peace in this unconventional conflict domain. Conflicts and peace are mutual opposites within the sphere of ICTs.

Terrorist waging secessionist, ethno-nationalistic campaigns find the ICT as one of the best modes for offensive operations. As terrorists must somehow appear to be more capable than they actually are in order to induce fear and gain respect from the government and the populace. Brian Jenkins states “all political terrorists want to give the illusion that they can fight on another level” and they use force multipliers to support that illusion (cited in White, 2002). Force multipliers allow a terrorist organization to increase its’ striking power without increasing its size (White, 2002).

Jenkins suggests they employ four force multipliers routinely to accomplish this illusion and add to their aura: technology, transnational support, media, and religion (White, 2002). The force multipliers are not weapons *per se*, rather they constitute a process of information exploitation intended to influence decision makers and shape public opinion (Armistead, 2002). Two of the force multipliers, technology and the media, facilitate the terrorists’ use of Information Operations. Bruce Hoffman contends that the merging of these two force multipliers, coined as the ‘information revolution’, has created improved opportunities for terrorists to manipulate the media and influence multiple audiences.

Thus in a conflict situation especially similar to that of the Sri Lankan context the state should realize the power of ICT. Research has proved in analyzing the power of the Tamil diasporic websites to what extent their operations succeeded in contributing to the

conflict. For the uninterrupted flow of international funding the LTTE kept up a virtual open communication link with the global forces while providing real-time updates on its ongoing campaigns against the government of Sri Lanka.

Towards the current context after the signing of the MOU between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, the outcome has been a negative peace. The government desperately seeks an exit strategy to break the deadlock that has kept out both itself and the LTTE away from peace talks. If the government had realized the importance of ICT in such a situation and in general in a situation of deadlock it could have used its potential to the maximum in forging a breakthrough.

The ICT master plan for Sri Lanka was also drawn in this context two three years back in the time of this negative peace. This grand narrative was dubbed “E Sri Lanka Policy” and boasted of a total ICT solutions package. The lengthy text spoke of development issues, gender issues and education but never can one find the word peace in any form embedded in the text. The Grand ICT master plan has read the whole Sri Lankan context incorrectly or it simply lacked the urge to get involved in this complicated peacemaking initiative of the country. Hardly any literature is about making peace in Sri Lanka using this powerful tool, with few exceptions in concept papers and writings of young researchers.

Technologies are neither the naïve production of disinterested sciences nor the deterministic forebearers of social processes. They are shaped by existing social relations, while in turn they open up opportunities for social change. ICT includes tools and processes that permit us to produce, manipulate and communicate information. By changing the way the information is controlled, ICTs allow valuable knowledge to be relocated from certain groups to others. The ICTs also have dramatic implications for the ability of various social groups to control the information flow, ultimately to change the balance of political power.

ICTs imply ‘that a world rewired to connect human beings to vast data banks and communications systems would be a progressive step, a point much famous in the international development community. ICTs underline the point that information is power but not an end in itself. It is power only to the extent that it is grounded in material reality. That it has consequences for how people act, thus how societies produce value and reproduce relations of order and change.

This is the power of ICT that should be harnessed by policymakers. The Information Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) was established last year to facilitate the E- Sri Lanka initiative of the Sri Lankan government functioning as the agency's web site statement use authoritarian terminology to identify it self as "the single apex body involved in ICT policy and direction for the nation the implementing organ of the E-Sri Lanka initiative". But sadly ICTA is yet to engage in the task of peace building using ICT or at least disseminating the ideology of such an initiative.

Information Communication Technology is at the heart of cyber interactions, it is also the key infrastructure behind the modern notions of e government, e society and e business. The above notions to a certain extent are now being introduced to the governance establishment of Sri Lanka, but little is done on the peace front.

The E-Sri Lanka initiative may sound and look nice since it is something new and the mechanism may be fired through dynamism but if one studies the configuration of the agency and its theoretical reading of the burning issues of the state, it may be out of focus. The agency structure also reveals the embedded weakness of the architecture of the whole system as it has minimal coordination with the Sri Lankan polity as a whole. The implementation of the E-Sri Lanka ICT master plan is somewhat reviewed in a UNDP report. Titled the "Regional Human Development Report, Promoting ICT for Human Development it looks at the ICT establishment in Sri Lanka.

The report makes recommendations on further usage of ICT for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The report on the onset is speaking some sense but what its parameters do not allow is to review the simple issue in Sri Lanka is that we have not achieved the peace that would act as a catalyst of development in all spheres. With all due respect to the compilers of this report we should be looking at using ICTs both on national and international level to bring about a positive framework of peace at least parallel to achieving the MDG objective.

There is a few non-profit making organizations involved in peace building efforts in conflict zones using ICT. *Infoshare* is such an organization which still is working in Sri Lanka as well. It has a unique web tool which is called a "virtual negotiation table." This enables actors or key players in a conflict to come together in a neutral virtual space and go ahead with negotiations without being physically present in one geographic location. Though the actual importance of such a device may take time to be accepted as formal practices in negotiations, it demonstrated the power of ICT to cut across barriers or factors creating deadlock in negotiation processes. ICT play a huge role in conflict situations with the emergence of transnational Diaspora movements. The significance of Diaspora Creole communities can be far reaching, and attention has focused

on media that make them possible. They are typically flexible, even opportunistic communities ranging from assimilationists to labor migrants and exiles fixed on homelands from which they are partly detached. Partly detached, they form alternative communities, partly through alternative communication. Thus, the historian Benedict Anderson showed (1991) that print capitalism fostered among the creoles of early modernity, the altered senses of community that congealed into modern nationalism. The process began on the peripheries and reached homeland centers as recoils. Transnational Diaspora web sites did contribute heavily to internal conflicts but they also did prove to be catalysts in certain peace efforts. The Diasporic websites in the Balkans did clearly play a huge role to bring back peace to the region. As the Baltic States were plunged into chaos with the disintegration of Yugoslavia as ethnic and religious clashes brought in new conflicts. The Croatian, Serbian, Albanian and Bosnian diasporic websites with their enhanced email bridge system made the peace building efforts easier as there was a consistent movement for peace on the web among people who belonged to the diverse conflict parties.

This article emphasizes very briefly the power of ICT in creating new grounds, situations and communication channels to facilitate peace building efforts in conflict domains. The Sri Lankan context is of no difference, the space for interaction within cyber space is comfortable and less intimidating. Thus what the writer proposes is not to make a total shift of the negotiating space or process of the stalled peace process of Sri Lanka. Instead use the ICT medium to gain maximum leverage for breaking deadlocks by keeping an online channel open and maintaining a rapid flow of information both ways. ICT has the potential to link up with the diasporic groups and can be installed as a conduit to the global civil society who also is a key player in the local peace effort. Thus this calls for the rethinking of the ICT policy of the state while designing mechanisms facilitating peace through the country's premier ICT agency.

Notes

- 1 Armistead, White and Bruce Hoffman have contributed immensely to study of new trends in approach to terrorism and national security. They also have identified the role of ICT in the sphere of terrorism.
- 2 Force Multiplier is a new concept which is emerging the study of terrorism and especially with the information revolution the whole approach to terrorism has changed. Thus concepts like information operations even have succeeded modern notions of information Warfare
- 3 Top officials of the ICTA claim that they have earmarked various projects under E-Sri Lanka but are still a waiting funding to launch them. Peace building according to them has been discussed but still no project outline is drawn on this dimension. The contradiction that emerges in this context is the grand narrative of the E-Sri Lanka policy and the limited capacity of operational potential of the ICTA. ■

Harinda Ranura Vidanage is Visiting Lecturer in Political Science, University of Colombo.

PURITANISM AND COLONIALISM

Jeremy Tambling

Writing that Conquers: Re-Reading Knox's An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon by Sarojini Jayawickrama (Colombo: Social Scientists' Association, 2004, pp. 350, Price Rs. 500.00)

Writing that Conquers is a new, richly textured re-reading of Robert Knox's fascinating account of 1681, *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon in the East-Indies, Together with an Account of the Detaining in Captivity the Author and divers other Englishmen now Living there, and of the Author's Miraculous Escape: Illustrated with Figures, and a Map of the Island*. This text by Robert Knox, which he offered as a spiritual autobiography, evoking especially his life in Sri Lanka between 1660 and 1679, and which is how Sarojini Jayawickrama discusses it, should be as well known to English readers as any work by the novelist Daniel Defoe, whom it influenced in both *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Captain Singleton* (1720). Dr Jayawickrama, a teacher of literature, who researched her work on Knox for a doctorate while living in Hong Kong, which was then another British colony, has taken hold of a founding text of Sri Lanka, and brought to it the kind of rigorous re-reading that has not been practised before with regards to this literature, though such intensity of writing about the colonial situation is familiar to those who know Latin American writings, or African, for instance. Anyone coming to her book will find her up to speed in terms of the critical theory of colonial discourse and postcolonialism, and able to use it. One of the gifts of the book to its readers is that it will help any who want to understand that theory, and who want to know what are its implications for reading the present.

To be familiar with and critical of Knox's text must be important for people living in Sri Lanka, because it is part of a discourse which has been formative for the country, and for its understanding of itself. But to read Knox is also vital for someone like the present reviewer, who is English, and who, while he is unable to claim much more than a tourist's knowledge of Sri Lanka, knows intimately the English settings that Knox writes of, knows how places stamp themselves on people, and realises that in reading this text, he is confronting not just a buried history, but a formative text in the construction of the ideology of Britishness. The text's cultural narrowness, self-assurance, and its fascination with the other which never translates into a readiness to let go, which never becomes loss of self in favour of acceptance of the other, are all familiar markers of that ideology. The interest in the book so often lies in what it does not quite say, or in what it avoids, or in the ways it is possible to see Knox protecting himself and his cultural position. These are strategies of survival that had something strangely heroic in them, and which paid off, in that the *Historical Relation* shows few signs of a faltering of Knox's confidence in

the values he has lived by. Writing, rather, intensified his positions: it conquered any doubts about himself he might have had.

Knox's book, in its importance for British literature, belongs with such travel writers as the fourteenth century Sir John Mandeville, who made up his stories from accounts given to him of fabulous journeyings, or with Richard Hakluyt, who first wrote in 1589, or Samuel Purchas, who wrote in 1613 and 1625. It belongs in a similar context, even, to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (written in 1611) as far as its imaginative world is concerned. Dr Jayawickrama draws on *The Tempest* in her account of Knox, and Shakespeare's text enables us to see what is important about her study. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare writes about the Caribbean, though ambiguously so, for his enchanted island is not geographically located, and his play relates to the European conquest of the Caribbean that began with Columbus in 1492. Columbus's successes in the West Indies were memorialized by the Royal Historian in Spain, Captain Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo in 1547, and by Bartolomé de las Casas, who gave the history of Spanish conquest of the West Indies up to 1520, and by Hernando Colon, Columbus's son, whose *Life of the Admiral* appeared in 1571. So quickly did the Caribbean enter European discourse, which absorbed it and mythologised the experiences of the colonizer.

Shakespeare's vision was stirred, among other things, by Montaigne's essay 'Of the Cannibals' which was written between 1578-1580: Montaigne, in a spirit entirely different from anything that Knox could produce, felt that in some ways the cannibals were more civilized than the Europeans, and the debate is continued in *The Tempest*, with the relationship between Prospero and Caliban, the 'savage and deformed slave' as the *dramatis personae* calls him. Caliban, who is perhaps not honoured with a human shape, unless that is simply the prejudice of the Europeans, and whose name is an anagram of cannibal, is the son of Sycorax, the witch: his provenance is from Algeria. Prospero keeps Caliban imprisoned on his island, and until the 1960s, this was seen as the natural order: the superior European must train, however painfully, the monster, and it was always assumed till then that Prospero's magic was preferable to that of Sycorax.

But in the 1980s, this viewpoint about *The Tempest* began to change, although, in the case of *The Tempest*, it had already been anticipated with the play *Tempest* by Aimé Césaire (1967), which, set in the Antilles, polarizes Prospero and Caliban in such a way that Prospero cannot leave the island at the end: he is dependent on the colonized for his emotional (and economic) existence. The colonial desire is for the colonized subject: a point which meshes economic dependency with psychoanalytic insight, drawn from Lacan's understanding of Hegel (understood through Alexandre Kojève,

the commentator on Hegel's discussion of the 'master / slave' relationship). But brilliant as Césaire's play is, it falls into an alternative trap: it replaces an oppressive power relation between the colonizer and the colonized with a certain sexism, a glorification of masculinity which runs the risk of being oppressive in its turn. It seems that power relations need dissolving on both the colonial and gender fronts, and that these must happen together for a full analysis of colonial power to take place, and for a postcolonial society to shake off its past. Revolution needs to be both political and sexual. Such a change of thinking was made more possible with the criticism that derives from Michel Foucault (1926-1984), which addresses issues of power in cultural relationships and in sexuality, though actually it did not consider either colonialism or feminism specifically.

Foucault's work has had many outcomes, one of which, in California, was called 'New Historicism', which, later, as it became popular, produced its own academic journal, *Representations*. New Historicism may be said to have begun with Greenblatt's book *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980), and it took two emphases in particular from Foucault: the first, that the human subject is not spontaneously brought forth, but is 'constituted' by power, and this power, invisible in the 'liberal' modern world, perhaps, though perhaps to be glimpsed in the omnipresent CCTV cameras of the modern world, works by compelling the person into giving an account of himself or herself, so much so that the history of the West, for Foucault, may be written in terms of a growing compulsion to confess, to speak autobiographically, to become introspective. Foucault traces this theme in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, those most exciting stimuli to thought of the 1970s. If the subject is constructed, then, by power, what freedom may it have? None but the power of creating its own aesthetics of existence, through 'self-fashioning', which is attempted in reaction to the eye of power. Power in the present is hidden, diffused in every social relationship; power in the early modern period - that of Shakespeare, and Knox - was on display, and maintained itself by public shows. Dr Jayawickrama spends time looking at the exercise of power in seventeenth century Kandy, and finds some uncanny resemblances to the then European model.

Greenblatt's title, *Renaissance Self-fashioning* draws on Foucault, in its attempt to show - amongst other things - how the colonized are the subjects of power, and how little room they have for styling their own aesthetics of existence. His last chapter discusses the trickery of 1525, as recorded by Peter Martyr, by which natives from the Bahamas were taken off by the Spanish to work as slaves in the gold mines of Hispaniola, on the pretence, fostered by the European's sophisticated language-use, that they were being taken to a paradisaical island in the south where they should see their dead loved ones. In other words, Greenblatt fastened on the inequalities of power exhibited in the Caribbean, and showed how power worked, not just by the gun and the sword, but by the power of discourse, with its own witchcraft and power of persuasion. Odysseus, the hero of the *Odyssey*, is called in the first line of that

epic, 'polytropic man' - the man of many turns of phrase, of many twists of language, and it is those skills of language-turns that enables Odysseus to survive and conquer throughout the Mediterranean on his ten year journey home. Odysseus is the figure of the European colonizer, as polytropic man: the insight is that of the Caribbean specialist Peter Hulme in his book *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (1986). It was language which conquered, for, to use a quotation from the Bishop of Avila in Spain to Queen Isabella of Castile, that Dr Jayawickrama draws on in her book, language is 'the perfect instrument of Empire' (7). We will return later to this statement.

New Historicism began with drawing on the unexpected anecdote, which went outside the normal historical records, to show how European power used an improvisatory mode, making up stories, in the case told by Peter Martyr, in order to secure power over the other. Later studies by Greenblatt on the subject of the Caribbean in relation to European Renaissance culture came with *Learning to Curse: Essays in Modern Culture* (1990) where the title draws on Caliban's words, 'You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse' (*The Tempest* 1.2.364-5) and included another collection of essays, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (1991). The Caribbean has had an excellent coverage, then, in terms of New Historicism, and the effect has been a shift of ways of thinking about Europe and the Americas, aided by a powerful Marxist critique which has emanated from Latin America. The same has not yet been done for what Knox calls 'the East Indies', though Dr Jayawickrama shows the way forward.

The East India Company was formed in London in 1600, in the time of Shakespeare and Elizabeth the First, in competition with the Dutch East India Company, and it persisted as a powerful force, outstripping all rivals, till it lost its monopoly in 1834. Robert Knox, as no doubt everyone in Sri Lanka, but not enough people outside will know, was the descendant of a probably Scottish family. His father, Robert Knox, had been born near Ipswich, a large port, in Suffolk, in England, and sailed with the Levant company, founded in 1592, which traded with countries in the Eastern Mediterranean. The son, Robert Knox, was born in London in 1641, as a Bible-reading Puritan member of the Church of England: the Knox family exhibited that mixture of piety and business, religion and trade, which marked out then the new Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism: to note this combination is foundational for understanding English ideology as this was formed in the seventeenth century. Knox went to sea with his father in 1655 to India, and again in 1658, this time with the East India Company, in a ship called the *Ann*, which had been built for his father. (In 1657, Oliver Cromwell had given the East India Company a new charter, which also gave it a monopoly - and laid the basis for its prosperity in India.) The *Ann* set sail on 21 January, intending to voyage to Fort St George in India, and travelling, it seems, as far as Indonesia. Arrived unintentionally in Sri Lanka, because, as happens to the ship in *The Tempest*, he was blown off course by a storm, the ship put in at Kottiar in November 1659,

with the intention of setting up a new main mast for the ship, and repairing other damages. At that point he was taken prisoner by Rajasingha II two years after the Dutch had taken the colony from the Portuguese. He regained his freedom on 18 October 1679 having spent, as he says, ruefully, in his account, more time in prison than he had lived in the world before.

Rajasingha's aim was to show him off, with other Europeans, in a menagerie: it is a strange case of the 'other', in a display of power, making the hegemonic Westerner look strange, making him the object of spectacle. (One of the characters in *The Tempest*, Trinculo, speculates on how much could be made by showing off Caliban as a spectacle in a holiday fair in Britain. 'There would a monster make a man' he thinks: 'make' means 'make the fortune of': Trinculo knows well how money may be got out of the English, who 'will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar' - *The Tempest* 2.2.27-32.) Knox spent many years living in the villages of Kandy and making a living there, until in 1673 he began to move around the country as a pedlar, and escaped from Kandy by going north through Anuradhapura, and to the Dutch fort at Aripu. He got back to Britain by this means, having been away from the country for twenty-three years. He says in the Autobiography added in 1696 to his *Historical Relation* that he has three purposes in writing: first, to show God's mercies to him; second, to tell others what had become of his father (the piety towards the patriarch is typically Protestant), and third, he said, to exercise his hand in writing, for he has not had ink or paper while in captivity in Kandy. His father, in fact, had died in Sri Lanka in 1661 of malaria. Knox, returned to England, was to make four more voyages out East in the service of the East India Company, before retiring to Wimbledon, just outside London, where he had been brought up, and where he died on June 19, 1720. After all those voyages, which indicate how he never, after all his time in captivity, lost confidence in himself - the same is not the case with Shakespeare's Prospero, who changes more in the play than any other person - he came home. He was the patriarch who died peacefully in the suburbs of London - only Knox was never a patriarch as he never married.

His *Historical Relation* was encouraged into existence by the Royal Society, which had been formed, as a new, empiricist scientific body, with much interest in things Oriental, in 1662. In 1696, he added autobiographical details about the writing of the book. After a Preface, the book is divided into four parts. The first is geographical and scientific: a description of the island of Sri Lanka in seven chapters. The second section comprises seven chapters on the character of the King, Rajasingha. The third part turns to what would in the nineteenth century be called anthropology: it has eleven chapters. These are on the inhabitants, on their ranks, on their religion, on their worship, on their houses, on their social arrangements, their recreations, their laws and language, their learning, where Knox has much to say about their practices of magic, and their funeral practices. The fourth part is narrative, and this extends to fourteen chapters. Knox tells of his going to Sri Lanka, their capture, his getting hold of an English Bible in his captivity, and he comments on other Englishmen held

prisoner. He speaks of how he fared in the rebellion that took place against Rajasingha, and he comments on how he fared generally: particularly how he resolved not to marry, not to enter into an 'unequal yoke' with 'unbelievers'. The language of sexual abstinence, justified in the name of the ultimate Superego, the words of God in the word of God, is a wonderful hint for seeing how Knox could not let go, how he could never allow himself to be made 'other' from his colonial experience. From first to last, with just a few concessions made, he kept himself superior and different, in a strongly authoritarian streak of character. The absence of the sexual - heterosexual or homosexual - is an astonishing gap in the text and points to a high degree of personal repression. What were his casual relationships with the men around him or the women, as he passed the years from twenty to forty? It is not possible to work out, nor is it easy to see in his writing that sexuality taking any displaced forms: even his religion shows no signs of ecstasy (there are no symptoms like those of St John of the Cross, of sexual union with Christ!). A language as unaware of the sexual as this is - its difference from *The Tempest* in this regard is noteworthy - could never become a language by which to understand the self. Knox could be a colonizing agent only because he did not have such understanding. Perhaps the point that he never married when he returned to England means that the sexual was never a temptation for him: but that means that there was nothing in him which could be turned round, made to feel itself inadequate in relation to the demands of the Other. Not a sexual man, nor was he polytropic man, for, despite his skill in survival, he always remained the same person, convinced of himself, a man of one idea. Perhaps he shows the idea of polytropic man to be something of a romanticizing of the colonizer.

From chapter 10 to the end, Knox narrates his escape.

Throughout, the language of Christianity sustains him: he sees in everything that happens to him the favour of God, which makes him, therefore, in his own eyes, always in the right: it is this moralizing language which prevents the reader from ever coming close to him, so self-protective is it, the language acting as a means never to interrogate his motives. So, if language is the instrument of empire, it is crucial that the hegemonic representation of Sri Lanka in the seventeenth century should have been in English - though it is worth remembering, and acknowledging, that Knox learned Sinhala during his twenty years on the island, being to that extent polytropic man, and complicating our sense of him.

If one of the strengths of Dr Jayawickrama's study is that she draws on New Historicism's writing of the Caribbean for her inspiration, another is her use of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), a founding text for post-colonial studies, putting the subject of the 'other' firmly on the map, and giving that study of the 'others' of Europe and America an enabling power by drawing on the theoretical work of Michel Foucault, as much as New Historicism profited from him. For Said, the crucial aspect of Foucault was his writing on 'discourse', which begins in Foucault, with the sharpest clarity, with his Inaugural Lecture at the Collège de France, 'The Order of Discourse' (1970). The title of Foucault's lecture implies that the

power of controlling the discourse is crucial, that the 'discourse of truth' is what prevails, and what determines what is knowledge: anyone whose insights are not framed within the terms of the dominant discourse is excluded. Using Nietzsche, Foucault emphasises the historical dominance of the 'will to truth', the demand that knowledge is focussed towards knowing the truth, and demanding that the 'truth' of a person, including his or her 'inner truth', be expressed in terms of the discourse, not in the terms that they might select. With great pertinence for Knox and his world, Foucault writes that he is especially interested in investigating the sixteenth century, 'at the time when there appears, especially in England, a science of the gaze, of observation, of the established fact, a certain natural philosophy ... this was without a doubt a new form of the will to know' (quoted, Robert Young, *Untying the Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*, London: Routledge, 1981, p. 70). It is not surprising that Knox's book contains maps, which Dr Jayawickrama reproduces, proof of extensive observation, that Knox's study is an empirical piece that assumes the superiority of the Western way of seeing, and that this empiricism which feels it can write about 'Ceylon' is inseparable from the will to know.

In Edward Said's argument, colonialism and imperialism are sustained by the coloniser's belief in the power of Western discourse to describe not only the Western self, but also the other, to bring over all the same surveying power. In an epigraph to the book, Said quotes from Marx: 'They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented'. The question is always who has the power of speaking, and who is denied the power to represent themselves: in the *Historical Relation* we see the confidence that Knox has that he can represent Sri Lanka objectively. In the same way, travel writing, a topic analysed by Mary Louis Pratt, whose work, in *Imperial Eyes: Tavel Writing and Transculturation* (1993) is drawn on by Dr Jayawickrama, always presents itself as empiricist and neutral, just seeing what is there. Yet it affirms the oddness of the regions it describes and conceals its colonial superiority: the same is massively true of such a magazine as *National Geographic*. The violence of colonial possession is supplemented by the power of Western discourse, making the language in which the subject is made to speak indeed the instrument of empire. The Orient is not just dominated, it is, even more, produced as an object for scientific study and also for romanticising, by Western discourse, which, Said argues, it needs to produce, because it wishes to be able to speak about and for an 'other'. Said's examples are taken from nineteenth century accounts of Egypt and Turkey, and not from south, or south-east Asia. Dr Jayawickrama adapts Said to her use, which is to bring to bear the work of Foucault, New Historicism and Said on Orientalism, onto such a canonical author - in Sri Lankan terms - as Knox. Noting, specifically, that Said says that Orientalism is a 'male perception of the world' (121), she re-reads Knox's way of conceptualizing the sexes, and discusses his view of women, through the language of another New Historicist, Louis Montrose, in seeing in Knox an 'oscillation between fascination and repulsion, likeness and strangeness, desire to destroy and assimilate the other' (120). The point is a reminder that Montrose

has given the cue to Dr Jayawickrama to supplement the terms of New Historicism through the writing of Freud, who becomes, then, another way in to the question of how we may read Knox's work, how account for its writing and its unconscious.

It is a matter of finding ways to read what we have been accustomed to read in a particular way before, and of undoing the profound ideological effects that earlier readings have had. Dr Jayawickrama speaks of her first encounter with Knox in high school, in an institution founded by Anglican missionaries. 'Knox was an upright Christian who had withstood with fortitude the vicissitudes of life in captivity in a "pagan" land, and had emerged with his faith in Go unimpaired and his character unblemished. His *Historical Relation* of the land and the people was considered the most reliable record of seventeenth century Ceylon' (3-4). In speaking thus of the effects of her education, Dr Jayawickrama opens up the possibility for more work to be done on the actual influence of Knox within Sri Lankan ideology. Her first chapter sets out her theoretical perspectives, deriving from New Historicism, her second discusses Knox and runs through his personal history. Her third chapter draws an analogy between the power of colonial writing and sexual violence, taking the familiar trope that the island which is to be conquered by the male colonizer is a welcoming female. The fourth and the fifth chapters are fascinating accounts of Rajasingha's forms of power and rule, and here good use is made of illustration. In these two chapters, she applies the methodologies of New Historicism to the king himself, and to the civilization that he was part of, showing how his power was exercised in a similarly public, theatrical, and even improvisatory manner as that of the English Elizabethan and Jacobean court. The insights here into the use of space, and the deployment of ceremonies of power, are fascinating. The last two chapters turn back to Knox, to his influence on Defoe, and to his 'Autobiography' within the tradition of Protestant confessional practices. A conclusion wraps things up.

To re-read Knox's text, as Dr Jayawickrama does, in the light of the theorists already mentioned, is not to mock Knox, as a person; indeed, he may be the subject of a grudging admiration. Rather, it is to see the discursive impact of his writings, and of those like him, in consolidating views about which is the dominant culture and the one to be respected, and in giving a sense of the power of the normative nature of 'English' values in the face of those of Sri Lanka in the seventeenth century. Though Knox was held in captivity, that point can be used to make his captors seem less than him in their views, and beliefs: the testimony of suffering becomes one which makes for the ideology of the moral superiority of the colonizer, and which gives a glamour to the idea of empire as linked with adventure. This was the sense that generations of schoolboys, at least, in Britain, got from reading, for instance, Defoe: if my memory serves, there was a paper called *Boy's Own*, which was widely read in my youth which fostered just that idea. The critic Martin Green, in his study *Deeds of Adventure, Dreams of Empire* (London: Routledge, 1980) writes - in a mode that owes nothing to Foucault, or Said - about the impact of such men's and boy's adventures on creating the imperialist imagination in the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Kipling being the least objectionable in giving the sense of empire as an adventure for boys (the sexlessness of the adventure should be noted). The present writer remembers being forced through R.M. Ballantyne (1825-1894) at school, and through John Buchan (1875-1940) in *Prester John*, one of the many novels about the British in Africa, like those of Rider Haggard (1856-1925) in *King Solomon's Mines*, which also had to be read, and *She* - and this school reading was taking place in London, without any irony on the part of those who prescribed it, during the time of official decolonization of Africa. (No wonder Dr Jayawickrama recalls the phrase of Ngugi wa Thion'o, 'deolonizing the mind' (4)). Green argues that Defoe's influence generated such writers as the above, and others such as Captain Marryat (1792-1848), whose impact was felt throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by a kind of osmosis. And if the argument is right, it returns us to Knox, and evidence for what Green says is found in the gender-politics that plays through the *True Relation*.

And if it is a question of re-reading, there is another point to be made from Edward Said's later work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), which shows how British writing, even in the hands of its critics on the left, such as Raymond Williams, had remained unconscious of the colonial dimension of those English novels that, unlike the novelists just mentioned, remained critical of English ideology. (Think of the fun that Dickens makes of all forms of Protestant Puritanism and business-interests.) Thus, to follow Said, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* says nothing about Sir Thomas Bertram's English country house being financed by his fortunes in the Caribbean: nor is Charlotte Brontë much more aware of the implications of Jane Eyre's money coming from Madeira, while the Caribbean and India are also brought into that novel as legitimate spheres of English interest. Dickens, too, shows himself very unconscious of the opium trade when bringing his hero back from China in *Little Dorrit*, a trade which had forced war in China, and secured the British possession of Hong Kong in 1842. Patrick Brantlinger, in his study *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (1988) - the title recalls Conrad's short story about imperialism in Africa, *Heart of Darkness* (1899) - finds no British writer who was critical of imperialism as a system in the nineteenth century. If no-one was critical of imperialism, that may not be surprising, if the official ideology of the country could trace back a heroism in the earliest English colonizers, past Defoe, right back to people like Knox. But, to the British reader now, it does suggest that it might be good to re-reading the Victorian novel in terms of repressed guilt about the colonies, guilt that could not be articulated, but which was nonetheless there.

Perhaps the most decisive change that has taken place in reading, brought on first, to a certain extent by the point that Britain is itself a postcolonial society (one third of all Londoners come from countries which were former colonies of Britain), and second as one of the concomitants of globalization, is the recognition, already discussed, of the complicity of nineteenth century writing with imperialism. So too, there has been recognition of the importance of postcolonial literatures. To bring out the significance of Knox, then, points to the importance of understanding the founding moments of that colonialism, which permitted Western societies to call themselves modern, and to dismiss others as, despite their sophistication, primitive. Dr Jayawickrama's *Writing that Conquers* puns, of course, in its title: it draws attention to the imperialist agenda in Knox, to the 'violence of the letter' that she quotes Jacques Derrida as discussing (52-53), to the dominating effects of discourse, and it similarly shows that a writing which unveils that is a way of reversing the flow of power, insofar as such writing lifts the veil of repression that has hung over the reception of the colonial text. The book succeeds in bringing out a vast amount of scholarship in its aim of making the colonial encounter of Knox and Sri Lanka paradigmatic, for getting it looked at again in a way that is self-reflective, critical of the ideology within which Knox wrote. In that sense, it offers an example for readers of cultural texts who come after, to build on what has been done here, to assume some of its findings and to move on from there.

Knox's text marks out what Sri Lanka lost from its colonial encounters, and passes on its insights into that old world as from someone who has no doubt of his right to interfere, and who would obviously do so again if he had the chance. That spirit of cultural imperialism, of course, has not changed at all in an era of global power; it has only changed its shape, and its geographical source. It is not the Puritanism of England, now, but it dates from the Puritanism that, in the same period as Knox, was taking root in New England, and elsewhere in the United States. D.H. Lawrence - always an interesting, if very problematic witness - says, aptly, about those Puritans, that they went to America not for freedom, but because they distrusted freedom, because they preferred more authoritarianism. Whatever continuities or discontinuities exist between the seventeenth century and the present American religious right, that Puritan ethic is still the source of a spirit convinced of itself and of its ability to guide, or control, or impose its own standards on the other. To engage with these issues of how Knox could convince himself and remain convinced all his life of his own cultural superiority, and to be aware of, and wary of that spirit, are some of the lessons of Dr Jayawickrama's book. ■

Professor Jeremy Tambling is with the Department of Comparative Literature, University of Hong Kong.

We publish two essays in memory of Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean poet, whose birth centenary falls this year.

HONOURING PABLO NERUDA

PABLO NERUDA became a trade union activist after joining the Communist Party of Chile in 1945, and is known as much for his political participation in the anti-fascist struggle during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and his struggle against the Gonzalez Videla dictatorship in Chile (1945-1950) while defending the rights of mine workers, as for his poetry.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936 with a military coup led by Francisco Franco against the Republican government, Neruda got involved in the heroic resistance against the fascist forces. He was dismissed from his consular post for his involvement and his poet friends became targets of fascist attacks. Rafael Alberti's house was torched and Garcia Lorca was assassinated. Neruda's outrage against the events is reflected in his collection of poems *Spain in my Heart* (1936), which also changed him as a poet.

This collection of poems was printed under extraordinary circumstances. Amidst the roar of guns, the Republican soldiers learnt to make paper and printed the poems in an old mill. They used all kinds of materials to make paper, from an enemy flag to a soldier's bloodstained tunic. Neruda describes in his *Memoirs* how the book became "the pride of these men who had worked to bring out my poetry in the face of death." Many soldiers carried copies of his book in their sacks instead of food and clothing. When the war was lost, the last copies of the book were confiscated and burnt in a bonfire as Spanish refugees reached France.

Neruda returned to Chile soon after, determined more than ever to play an active part in changing the destiny of his people. In 1945 Videla, who came to power on a democratic agenda with the support of the communists, was under pressure to find solutions to alleviate the appalling conditions in which the miners and the working class lived. These measures were not acceptable to the old feudal oligarchy and to the big American corporations such as the Chile Exploration Co., The Anconda Cooper and Anglo Chilean Nitrate, which had full control over the Chilean mining industry. The influence of these forces were so great that Videla gradually sidelined the Communists, using the argument that since war between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States was inevitable, Chile would have to support the U.S. in order to safeguard its economy. He sold mineral-rich land to foreign monopolies for a pittance, did nothing to better the economic and living conditions of the workers, and began hounding the Communists under pressure from the Americans.

The economic situation in Chile was heading towards a catastrophe. There was no money to pay salaries to government employees, the currency had been devalued and inflation was spiraling. The President, who had earlier presided over innumerable anti-fascist and anti-Francoist committees in order to woo the electorate, began to persecute

these very groups and even Spanish exiles. Nazi provocateur groups, in connivance with American military agents and Videla, became more active.

Meanwhile, the deepening economic crisis and the miserable working conditions of the miners in Lota and Coronel – the carbon mines – led to a general strike. In his *Memoirs*, Neruda describes life in the mines, in the harsh cold weather with the mining corridors stretching to 8km under the sea. It is impossible to imagine such working conditions. Videla decried the strike call, denying the prevalence of bad working and living conditions, attributing the unrest to international complots, and treating the strikers with a cruelty only known in Nazi concentration camps. He sent in the Army to crush the rebellion, declared himself dictator with full powers and unleashed unprecedented repression on the workers. Cordoning off the entire area, the Army and the Police were sent in to arrest thousands of workers and their families were persecuted and expelled from Chilean territory. Two concentration camps in the island of Santa Maria and in Pisagua (where many intellectuals and political leaders were taken) were set up, and the police were called in from Argentina to help repress the strikers.

In subsequent years, there was complete censorship of the press and radio, and individual rights were withdrawn. An atmosphere of terror and intimidation reigned. People could be imprisoned without reason or charges. The press was forced to report only the Presidential declarations containing lies and propaganda. Neruda stood by the miners and fervently campaigned against Videla's policies by writing – the most powerful tool that he could use. He wrote a piece called "I Accuse" in the Venezuelan daily *El Nacional* on November 27, 1947, denouncing Videla's actions. Soon after, Videla pushed for Neruda's expulsion from the Senate. In 1948, Neruda was forced to leave the country clandestinely and remained in exile for about two years.

When Neruda was asked to contest for the presidency in 1969, he agreed but later pushed Salvador Allende's name as the popular Unity candidate. He campaigned actively in the elections, seeing in Allende's victory a new hope for the Chilean people. Neruda was appointed ambassador to France in 1970, but returned to Chile owing to ill health in 1972. He received the Nobel Prize in 1971.

On September 11, 1973, Pinochet took over the Presidential Palace in a military coup and Allende was killed. Nine days before his death and 72 hours after the fascist coup led by Pinochet, Neruda started writing the last chapter of his *Memoirs* in which he described the coup as a criminal putsch against the people of Chile. Neruda died on September 23, 1973, heartbroken by what had happened to his friend Allende and his country. His funeral became the first massive protest meeting against the military dictatorship. ■

NERUDA--THE PEOPLE'S POET

Vibha Maurya and Vijaya Venkataraman

Remembering Pablo Neruda, on his birth centenary, for the power of his poetry, for his struggles against fascism and oppression and for the voice that he gave to the people of Chile

NEFTALI RICARDO REYES BAYSOALTO (1904-1973), known to the world as Pablo Neruda, Chilean poet and political activist, became a legend in his lifetime. Neruda's first collections of poems, *Crepusculario* (1923) and *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924), written at a very young age, won him acclaim in Chilean literary circles and form a part of popular lore in America. He is also known for his participation in the anti-fascist struggle during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), his trade union activities as a member of the Communist Party in organising mine workers against the Gonzalez Videla dictatorship and his involvement in Salvador Allende's presidential campaign in Chile. While most literary critics divide Neruda's oeuvre into love poetry political poetry, such a division is not justifiable because Neruda reached across to people's hearts and became a people's poet, as much of his love poetry and writings

Neruda's formative years as a poet coincided with a modernist movement in Latin American literature, Latin American Modernism, which created new literary forms to express the new personal societal realities in the context of political independence. While works of poets such as Ruben Dario (1867-1916), a Nicaraguan – "Azul" (1888-1890) for instance – gave Latin America a sense of telluric identity and self-confidence, they also marked a continuity in the tradition of literature as high art. Thus, these literary forms did not seek to alter the role and function of literature. It remained within the hermetic and aesthetic boundaries assigned to it, negating its social function. The avant-garde literature existed alongside modernism, and many critics and artists used these literary terms interchangeably. However, avant-garde artists were more radical in their aesthetic and political vision than the modernists. They had greater faith in the role of art and literature in society. They also considered the traditions of high art to be excessively restrictive and that is why they used radical experimental methods to challenge established aesthetic or social traditions.

Interestingly, Pablo Neruda's first two collections of poems do not seem to be influenced by these trends. Unlike the avant-garde artists, who were experimenting with form, Neruda's first concerns as a poet sprang from an extensive and vivid exploration of nature. In these poems, the adolescent Neruda is concerned with nature himself the mysteries of nature and the secrets of women's bodies. Neruda's contract with the forests of Araucania, the volcanoes, the

cold torrential and interminable rain, the wind and the sound of the waves lashing the cliffs during his childhood in Temuco in the southern part of Chile, left a deep impression on his young mind and is probably the reason for his obsessive preoccupation with nature and its elements. *Twenty Love Poems* is a collection of intense and passionate poetry about adolescent love, written in a warm, humane and personal tone. Simple, yet original, in its use of imagery, it alternates between exultation and bitterness. Despite their subjective, melancholic tone, they are a tribute to the joys of life.

Having won a literary prize at school and some popularity in literary circles, Neruda wanted to explore the world and presented himself for a diplomatic post. When asked to choose a country from a list of names that all sounded equally unfamiliar to him, he chose Rangoon. He left for Asia in 1927 and stayed there until 1932. The first two parts of the three-part series entitled *Residence on Earth*, written in these years and published in 1933 and 1935, are recognized as high points of the avant-garde movements in Latin America, along with the Peruvian Poet Cesar Vallego's *Trilce* (1922). These poems were radical and innovative in perception and forms of expression. Unlike European avant-garde movements, such as futurism, or euphoric modernism, which praised man's conquest over nature and technological achievements, Neruda internalized avant-gardism and modernism within the human consciousness.

The distinctiveness of his poetics lay in his representation of fractured and fragmented life, men/women dichotomies and the division between mind and matter. He tried to capture dislocated and broken relationships and the alienation and uncertainties of life. The poems reflect his deep disillusionment with life in Rangoon and Colombo. The distance from his homeland made him desolate and the feeling of solitude he experienced amidst two irreconcilable worlds – that of the Asian people and that of the British colonial administrators and merchants – permeated his poetry. The poems were pervaded by a sense of disgust and revulsion and display a deep resentment against the routine emptiness of life. The destiny of man in this chaotic and senseless world is portrayed in poems like "Walking Around", in which the poet is weary of existing in a world with which he cannot identify himself.

*It happens that I am tired of my feet and my nails
And my hair and my shadow.
It happens that I am tired of being a man.
Just the same it would be delicious
To scare a notary with a cut lily*

*R knock a nun stone dead with one blow of an ear.
It would be beautiful
To go through the streets with a green knife
Shouting until I died of cold.*

Neruda's disillusionment and existential angst reflected in these poems often lead critics to categorise him as a poet of solitude and loneliness. However, it is also possible to read the poems as stories of a solitary man consciously fighting his solitude. His lifelong friend and comrade V. Teitelboim said: "Solitude weighed on Neruda, that's why he traveled from the South to the North, he came out of the rains to the sunshine, in search of poetry, of the world, of love and friendship." Nevertheless, the bizarre experience in Asia did leave a mark on him. That is perhaps the only time when we see the poet in a somber and self-reflexive mood. He himself describes these poems in a letter to his friend as "... piles of poems of great monotony, almost ritualistic, and of great mystery and sorrow like in the poets of yesteryears. It is very uniform, like something beginning again and again, like something rehearsed to eternity, unsuccessfully."

Neruda's posting in Spain in 1934 brought him in contact with young Spanish poets such as Federico Garcia Lorca and Rafael Alberti, Miguel Hernandez and Manuel Altolaguirre, who were experimenting with the avant-garde, especially surrealist, forms. Neruda was asked to edit the literary magazine *Green Horse for Poetry* and brought out five issues until 1936, when the Civil War broke out in Spain. In the prologue to the first issue, published in 1935, eight months before the outbreak of the Civil War in Spain, Neruda wrote: "This is the kind of poetry we are looking for, spent as if by acid by manual labour, penetrated by sweat and smoke, smelling of urine and lilies, touched by all the diverse professions. Impure poetry, like suit, like a body, with stains of nutrition and shameful activities ..."

The political events of the 1930s in Spain, which culminated in the civil war, made these poets aware that art had to address social as well as political reality. Lorca's assassination in 1936 and the subsequent exile of most of the other poets who supported the Republican forces in the war changed the way Neruda looked at poetry. Neruda's *Third Residence* (1937) contains a poem, "Spain in my Heart", written during the Civil War. He expressed his outrage against the fascist forces in the famous poem "I'm explaining a Few Things." He wrote:

One morning the bonfires
Leapt out of the earth
devouring human beings –
and from then on fire,
gunpowder from then on,
and from then on blood
....
from every house burning metal flows
instead of flowers,
...

And you will ask: why doesn't his
Poetry
speak of dreams and leaves
and the great volcanoes of his land?
Come and see the blood on the streets.

Some of these poems were so powerful that they became a part of the people's discourse against war. Neruda's addresses changed just as his style and content. For him, poetry was no longer a private statement but an utterance that belonged to the public domain. His "poems were never intended to be merely script or signs on a printing page but were to be uttered and declaimed in order to elicit a response", says Jean Franco, a well-known critic and professor of Latin American literature in Stanford University.

In 1936, Neruda went to Paris and helped organize the Anti-Fascist Writers' Congress in Madrid in 1937. He returned to Chile soon after to find that the Nazis had supporters all over Latin America. This persuaded Neruda to find a tone in his poetry that would accompany people in their struggle for survival and justice. Neruda returned to Paris briefly, in 1939, to help in rescuing Spanish intellectuals who were seeking refuge in Chile, and his experience with the refugees from the concentration camps further deepened his commitment to this new poetic vision.

Neruda's last diplomatic assignment in Mexico in the early 1940s brought him in contact with Mexican muralists and painters. He began work on his *Canto General* (1950), envisioned as a poem of epic dimensions on the history of Latin America. Neruda confesses that his visit to the Incan ruins of Macchu Picchu in Peru had opened his eyes to yet another reality. He says: "I felt Chilean, Peruvian, American. I had found in those difficult heights, among those glorious and disperse ruins, a profession of faith to continue my song."

According to Saul Yurkievich, an Argentinean critic, two distinct poetic conceptions co-exist in *Canto general*, proceeding from two distinct world visions based on dissimilar perceptions and find two different expressions. On the one hand is the natural world expressed with a mythical, primitive, archaic vision through a metaphoric, oracular and obscure language, the other presents a historical, social progressive world in an impersonal and objective vision through clear and unequivocal language. Song XI of the famous poem "The Heights of Macchu Picchu" is an interesting amalgamation of both these elements: the first part of the poem is an ascent from the abysmal depths of the dark ages while the latter part describes the social realities of the moment.

*Through a confusion of splendour
through a night made stone let me
plunge my hand
and move to beat in me a bird held for
a thousand years,
the old and unremembered human heart!*

*I see the ancient being, the slave, the
Sleeping one,
Blanket his fields – a body, a thousand
bodies, a man, a thousand
women swept by the sable whirlwind,
charred with rain and night,
stoned with a leaden weight of
statuary:
Juan Splitstone, son of Wiracocha,
Juan Coldbelly, heir of the green star,
Juan Barefoot, grandson to the
turquoise,
rising to birth with me, as my own brother*

In other poems, the past is invoked to put into perspective the social inequalities in a post-colonial world. “They come for the Islands” (1493) describes the colonization of the island of Guanahani (Cuba). “Discoverers of Chile” and “The Magellan Heart” describe the destruction and violence unleashed by the colonizers. In the part entitled “Betrayed Sand”, he writes against dictators, especially Gonzalez Videla, oligarchies, the advocates of the dollar, exploiters, United Fruit Company, Standard Oil Company, diplomats and heavenly poets, to name just a few. In the poem “Advocates of the Dollar”, he says:

*He is adopted. They put him
On leash, He dresses like a gringo,
Sits like a gringo,
Dances like a gringo, and he rises.
He has a car, whiskey, newspaper,
He is elected judge and senator,
He is honoured, made a Minister,
And is heard by the government.
He knows who can be bribed.
He knows who is bribed,
He licks, massages, honours,
Pleases, smiles, threatens.
And thus he empties through the ports
The bleeding republics.*

After *Canto General*, Neruda became more conscious of language and was concerned with clarity of communication. The sense of the public also became more important as he had begun to read his poetry aloud at trade union meetings and political rallies. He consciously chose an aesthetics that would serve as a strategy of social action during the rise of dictatorships in Latin America. As a cultural activist and a political leader, Neruda ground himself firmly in the ideological debates of his time. He affirmed that the primary task of an artist was to explore the unknown and to create new means of seeing, thinking and acting. Thus, he sought to identify the common elements between art and the forces of historical change and to construct an aesthetics that would help these forces.

This was the period when he was actively involved with the miners’ struggles and was elected Senator in 1945 (he had joined the Communist Party of Chile in the same year and remained a militant member until his death in 1973). He campaigned passionately against Videla’s dictatorship and had to remain underground and go into exile to escape death. Between 1952 and 1957, Neruda published several collections of poetry, name *The Grapes and the Wind*, a private and anonymous *edition of Captain’s Verses*, *Elementary Odes*, *New Elementary Odes*, *The Third Book of Odes*, *Hundred Love Sonnets*, *Estravagario* and *Navigations and Returns*. In all these collections, Neruda turns to a simple style and colloquial language not only to communicate with the masses but also to sing the praises of ordinary objects. He treats the traditional form of the ode with irreverence and humour, using simple, short verses, rich in poetic images. This new form of writing was in tune with Neruda’s activism and his conception of social poetry. The odes were also meant for public readings, hence the simplicity of language and the expression of solidarity with the pain and suffering of the collective.

When Neruda was asked to make a weekly contribution of poetry for the Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*, he insisted that his poems appear in the main newspaper and not in the literary supplement. One of the first odes to be published was “Ode to the Bread”:

*In the bread
I look
Beyond the form:
I like bread, I bite it
And then
I see the wheat,
The new wheat fields,
The green form of spring,
The roots, water,
And so
Beyond the bread
I see the land,
Water, Man,
And thus I taste everything
Looking for you
In everything.*

By the time *Captain’s Verses* was published in 1962, politics had become an indispensable dimension of his poetry. *Captain’s Verses* contains love poems dedicated to his wife, Matilde Urrutia, but unlike his earlier love poems, the poet does not explore an unknown mysterious nature with an equally unknown woman. Instead, love for the woman manifests itself in a celebration of the natural elements of daily life like maize, wheat, stem, root and leaves and the beloved is his companion in arduous struggles. *Fully Empowered*, another collection published in the same year, engages with the task of a poet and writer. These poems reflect the tension between the poet and his creation and Neruda highlights, yet again, the importance of the written and the spoken word.

Neruda wrote till the last day of his life. He died on September 23, 1973. He is remembered today for the power of his poetry, for his struggles against fascism and oppression and for the voice that he gave to the people of Chile.

In his *Memoirs*, he writes:

"The human crowd has been the lesson of my life. I can come to it with the born timidity of the poet, with the fear of the timid, but once I am in its midst, I feel transfigured. I am part of the essential majority, I am one more leaf on the great human tree.

Solitude and multitude will go on being the primary obligations of the poet in our time. In solitude, the battle of the surf on the Chilean coast made my life richer. I was intrigued by and have loved passionately the battling waters and the rocks they battled against, the teeming ocean life, the impeccable formation of the 'wandering birds,' the splendour of the sea's foam.

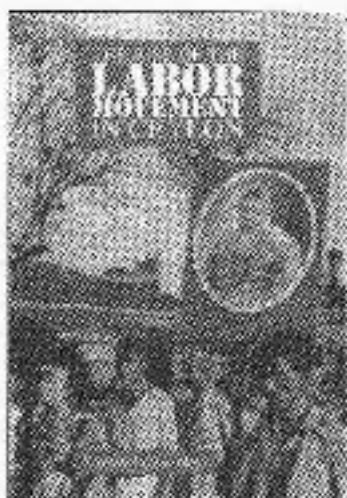
But I learned much more from the huge tide of lives, from the tenderness I saw in thousands of eyes watching me together. This message may not come to all poets, but anyone who has felt it will keep it in his heart, will work it into his poems. To have embodied hope for many men, even for one minute, is something unforgettable and profoundly touching for the poet."

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NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH AN INTERIM AUTHORITY FOR THE NORTH EAST

Godfrey Gunatilake

Defining Positions for the Resumption of Negotiations

The resumption of negotiations has been stalled as the government and the LTTE have not been able to agree on what ought to be the subject and scope of the negotiations. Both parties are agreed that an interim authority/administration should be established. The UNF government had presented their proposals for Provincial Administrative Council on 17.7.2003. The LTTE did not accept the government's proposal as a basis for negotiations. They responded with their own proposal for an Interim Self Governing Authority on 31.10.2003 and requested Norwegian facilitators (in the wording in the LTTE letter) "to arrange for a meeting at which we can discuss the proposal, in your (the facilitator's) presence with the representatives of the GOSL at a mutually convenient time and place." The UNF government made no definite response to the LTTE proposal. However the initial statements of the government spokesman indicated that the LTTE proposal went far beyond what had been proposed by the government.

The present government when it assumed office stated that it is prepared to discuss the LTTE proposals for the ISGA but that the negotiations must proceed concurrently with negotiations on the core issues related to a final political settlement. The LTTE has not accepted this proposal and has insisted that the negotiations on the ISGA must be concluded and that the ISGA must be institutionalized before negotiations on the core issues commence. The disagreements on this basic issue of the subject matter of the next stage of negotiations have stalled the peace process.

To break the deadlock the government has announced that it would formulate its own position on the interim authority and present it to the LTTE through the Norwegian facilitators. From the most recent information available the LTTE appears to have expressed concern that this would be another set of counter proposals that might signify that the government is not willing to discuss the proposals of the LTTE. The present situation therefore may result in further deferment of negotiations.

The LTTE has to be persuaded that in formulating its proposals on the interim authority government is not rejecting the LTTE's proposals but responding to them and stating the government position. This initial statement of the government's position becomes part of the negotiating process. The government can indicate that negotiations can commence on the understanding that the proposals of the LTTE for the ISGA will be taken up for discussion and that the government will provide the LTTE with its initial response to the proposals in the form of a comprehensive statement of its own position on the interim authority.

This will be in the interests of both parties as both parties begin with a clear understanding of each other's positions. The negotiations can then endeavour to bridge the differences and reach agreement on an interim authority which is mutually acceptable.

The ISGA as an extra- constitutional arrangement.

The LTTE has taken the position that the ISGA has to be negotiated outside the Sri Lankan constitution. It relies on "international precedents for establishing interim governing arrangements in war torn countries having the force of law based solely on pacts or agreements between the warring parties recognized by the international community". How will this affect the negotiations? By taking this position the LTTE attempts to achieve two objectives. The first objective is to maintain its parity of status with the Sri Lankan government. To do this the LTTE it has to state that it does not come under the Sri Lankan Constitution. Second it seeks to pre-empt the argument that might be raised by the government that any interim arrangement cannot assume and exercise powers that cannot be granted to it by the existing constitution and that the interim authority may have to be conceived within the limits imposed by the present constitution. This would have been a useful negotiating position for the government in order to underscore the intrinsically interim character of any arrangement made pending a final political settlement. It would have also facilitated the acceleration of the negotiations on the final settlement.

The government would have to respond to the LTTE position that the interim authority could be an extra-constitutional arrangement based on an agreement. The LTTE has not cited any specific international examples to support its position. Pro LTTE analysts have argued that the interim arrangements in Beauganville bear some similarity to the situation in Sri Lanka. But these have been firmly set within the "shared acceptance of the sovereignty of Papua New Guinea." Furthermore, the agreement repeatedly refers to the guarantees and the ratifications by the national constitution and the national Parliament. The LTTE probably has in mind the Israeli -Palestinian arrangement where the origins of the conflict are very different and the acceptance in principle of the existence of two states was an intrinsic part of the peace accord from the inception. Probably the more pragmatic approach would be to avoid any time-consuming discussion on the issue of extra-constitutional arrangements and the relevance of the international precedents and go directly to the nature of the substantive powers needed by the interim authority to fulfill its objectives. After the parties have broadly agreed on the powers and structure of the interim authority they could examine the constitutional implications and modalities of establishing it. The over-riding principle guiding the negotiations on the interim arrangement is that it must be compatible and consistent with the final political settlement, as agreed by both parties, should be

explored in terms of a federal structure and a united Sri Lanka. Even the issue of an extra constitutional arrangement when placed within this overall context becomes more amenable to discussion.

The preamble and the framework for negotiations

The LTTE's proposals contain a preamble. A first round of negotiations on the preamble would provide an opportunity to agree on the framework of the negotiations. Almost all peace negotiations have had such a framework. The preamble could strengthen the OSLO commitment to seeking a solution within a federal structure and a united Sri Lanka and include some of the norms and principles underscored by the donor community in their Tokyo Declaration and other statements.

The ISGA and its compatibility with a federal structure.

Does the ISGA as it stands in the LTTE formulation provide room for negotiating an interim authority which is consistent with a federal system of government and a united Sri Lanka?

It is difficult to give a firm unambiguous answer to this question. The ISGA proposal contains parts where the language as well as the structures envisaged do not specifically acknowledge the relationships that should exist between a federal unit and the central government. The answer to this question will emerge only in the process of negotiations.

Those who have argued that the LTTE's proposals for the ISGA are tantamount to a separate state with sovereign power have pointed to

- ◆ the use of language such as "plenary power for the governance in the North East";
- ◆ the independent institution such as the Human Rights Commission, the Judiciary envisaged under the ISGA; the absence of any reference to national institutions or any appellate jurisdiction by national institutions .
- ◆ the control over marine and offshore resources and the control over the natural resources;
- ◆ power to alienate and determine the use of all land in the North East.
- ◆ The fact that the only explicit reference to the role of the central government in the ISGA is in the appointment of members to the ISGA and the allocation of resources from the Consolidated Fund.
- ◆ Powers to borrow internally and externally, receive aid directly, engage in and regulate internal and external trade.
- ◆ Powers to raise revenue impose taxes and duties.
- ◆ Government expenditures in and for the North East being subject to the control of the ISGA.
- ◆ The ISGA having its own Auditor General. No mention of the Auditor general of the Central government.

The ISGA proposals constantly seek to maintain the "parity of status" between the LTTE and the GOSL. In the words of the document "The ISGA is established by an agreement between the GOSL and the LTTE

and disputes regarding interpretation will go for arbitration by a tribunal appointed by the two parties. The arbitrators shall ensure the parity of status of the LTTE and the GOSL in the determination of any dispute."

As pointed out in my recent paper on the ISGA, and the comparative analysis made by the CPA many of the powers proposed for the ISGA could be brought within the ambit of powers enjoyed by a provincial unit in a system of government as envisaged in the 1995 proposals and the 2000 draft constitution. There are however some areas such as the control of government expenditure where the central government seems to have no role, regulation of internal and external trade, absence of the appellate jurisdiction of national institutions which clearly go beyond the limits. The government would have to negotiate on that basis that both parties agree to the overriding principle governing negotiation -that the interim authority should be compatible with the final political settlement which envisages a federal system .

The character of the ISGA as defined in the ISGA proposals.

In the light of what has been discussed above, what is the character of the ISGA as defined in the proposals? Does the LTTE envisage it as a regional authority? How is it situated within the national system of government? The LTTE proposals do not deal adequately with this issue. The LTTE appears to have placed the ISGA in an indeterminate category in which the ISGA can act without control or reference to the Central government. The ISGA itself however will have government representatives but the LTTE will be in an absolute majority. This disposition of power would have been still within the autonomy of a regional unit if the proposals made clear what powers the Central government would exercise within the region in the discharge of the powers exercised by it for the entire country as in the case of the Federal Government in the federal system. The section describing the jurisdiction of the ISGA talks of plenary power and much has been made of this term by those who view the proposals as the "blue print for a separate state," but the term plenary power by itself does not mean the plenary power of a sovereign state. The term can be used for the full exercise of the power that is given to any duly constituted body. The LTTE speaks of powers "in relation to resettlement rehabilitation reconstruction and development for which purpose it demands powers to raise revenue, including imposition of taxes revenue levies and duties, law and order, and over land." When these are taken together the ISGA will enjoy the authority of a mini state. However, in a further definition of the powers that are to be exercised by the ISGA the document states that its powers will include the "all powers and functions in relation to *regional administration* exercised by the GOSL in and for the NorthEast." This could be interpreted as the limiting clause which makes the ISGA a regional unit which enjoys power as in a federal system. The language of the document is crafted in a manner which leaves room for alternative interpretations within a spectrum ranging from federal to con-federal.

The LTTE seems to be arguing that these powers can be exercised under an agreement between the government and the LTTE such as the Ceasefire Agreement, SHRN or NERF and do not need any further constitutional ratification for the duration of the ISGA. From the point of view of the government the ISGA will exercise the powers which

the government now exercises in the regional administration of the North East and which the government delegates to the ISGA under the agreement. The ISGA which has no binding constitutional guarantees will last as long as the agreement lasts, like the Ceasefire Agreement and will be presumably revocable by either party if there is a breach of the conditions to which they agree when the ISGA is established.

The LTTE's proposals are vague about several aspects of the ISGA's powers. The ISGA is not defined as full-fledged body with legislative power. In clause 14 the LTTE talks of the ISGA's "effective exercise of its legislative and executive powers" but elsewhere it defines the ISGA as an executive authority.

If the ISGA is seen primarily as an executive authority whose main functions are those of resettlement rehabilitation reconstruction and development, which it will carry out for a period of five years pending the final political settlement, then the negotiating parties could first agree on the extent and nature of powers that are needed. Such an authority must enjoy the political control and the administrative autonomy that is needed to carry out these functions effectively. In short it may need to have the executive powers of the Board of Ministers of Provincial Council. Could these powers be delegated from the centre under a special arrangement which does not require constitutional changes? These are some of the parameters within which the negotiations would have to be set.

The Interim Authority and the dual regime in the North East

How will the Interim Authority/ISGA relate to the dual regime that prevails in the government controlled and LTTE controlled areas in the North East? This will become one of the most contentious areas in the negotiations on the interim authority. The LTTE envisages an ISGA which will be in control of the entire North East. In such a regime the central government must enjoy the normal access it enjoys and be able to exercise its responsibilities as a central government in all parts of the North East including the areas which are presently under the control of the LTTE. Such a regime must also ensure, as was emphasized in the recent communique of the EU, that "good governance, pluralism, human rights and democracy ... which are the cornerstones of a settlement for an everlasting peace in Sri Lanka" prevail in all parts of the North East. The practical compromise would be to establish the ISGA with a well-defined area of authority which allows the dual regime to continue for the interim period in the contentious areas of justice, security, law and order until the final settlement is reached. These contentious matters are part of the core issues which have to be negotiated in the process of reaching the final settlement.

The Ceasefire and the Interim Authority

The issues concerning the dual regime takes us to the relationship between the Ceasefire Agreement and the Interim authority. The Ceasefire Agreement the mandate of the SLMM and its methods of operation would have to be re-examined in the context of the Interim Authority which is likely to operate for a fairly long period. The Ceasefire which is now revocable with two weeks notice should take the form of a more durable peace accord with a commitment to renounce war and violence and to seek solutions to conflicts and disagreement exclusively through peaceful negotiations. The mandate of the SLMM and the monitoring activities should cover the whole of the North East including the territory now controlled by the LTTE.

The Interim Authority, the Muslim minority and the Sinhala minority in the North East

The proposals of the LTTE provide for representation of the Muslim and Sinhala community in the ISGA but the LTTE will command an absolute majority. The UNF proposals also provided for an LTTE majority in the Interim Council. Within such a structure, the negotiating parties would have to examine how minorities have an effective voice and an equitable share in decision-making and implementation particularly in those matters which vitally affect their interests. This could be done by identifying certain areas of decision-making where decisions require the consent of the minorities.

The position of the minorities, their participation in governance and the protection of their rights may not become a central issue for the interim authority as long as the executive power of the interim authority does not extend to security, justice, law and order. These issues will then have to be negotiated when the parties deal with the core issues relating to the final political settlement. During the period the interim authority functions the issues of human rights and security relating to minorities would have to be dealt with through a revised and strengthened CFA or Peace Accord.

The Structure of the ISGA

The structure proposed by the LTTE is one in which power is highly concentrated in a strong line of command from the Chairman who is the chief executive to the District Committees and their Secretaries. The mode of appointment of members to institutions at the District level and below should be designed so as to be genuinely representative of the community and to promote community participation and empowerment. Local participation becomes particularly important for both transparency and accountability in a context in which the Interim Authority will be undertaking large scale programmes involving heavy expenditure. There is no room in the proposals that have been made by the LTTE for the activation of local government institutions. This is an important aspect which needs attention. ■

Godfrey Gunatilake is former Chairperson, Marga Institute, Colombo.

DOCUMENTS - I

On October 04, 2004, President Chandrika Kumaratunga inaugurated the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation. This Council is meant to be a consultative forum for all political parties, religious groups and civil society organizations. However the United National Party, the Tamil National Alliance and Jathika Hela Urumaya boycotted the inauguration. The following are excerpts from the text of the speech delivered by Douglas Devananda, MP and Minister, the leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party. The EPDP is a constituent party of the ruling UPFA coalition.

Readers may note that these proposals for power-sharing have been presented by the EPDP in a context of the LTTE's proposals for an interim self-government authority. Minister Devananda's proposals also offer a framework which is much wider than the constitutional proposals of President Kumaratunga's People's Alliance government formulated in 1995, 1996 and 2000.

EPDP'S PROPOSALS FOR PEACE

Douglas Devananda, MP

I had been a gun-carrying militant leader. I had fought the armed forces of the Sri Lankan state. I fought for the establishment of a sovereign independent state comprising the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. I am also one of the many Tamil militants who gave up the armed struggle for the establishment of a sovereign independent state and joined the democratic mainstream of Sri Lanka following the Indo Sri Lanka Agreement of 29th July 1987.

"I am one of the many Tamil militants, who, after the signing of the Indo Sri Lanka Agreement, were convinced that our armed struggle had proved the point that the Sri Lankan State could not continue to deny the legitimate rights of the Tamil people, and that it would henceforth be possible for the Tamil people to live as equals with the Sinhalese and the Muslims within a united Sri Lanka, if substantial devolution of powers to the Provinces could be guaranteed by the Constitution.

"What the vast majority of the Tamil people of this country are yearning for is an honourable political solution within a united Sri Lanka, based on devolution of powers to the Provinces. Having taken note of this yearning of the Tamil people, the Eelam People's Democratic Party has right along clearly spelt out its solution to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight what we consider should be the salient features of such a solution:

(i) Substantial powers to be devolved to the Provinces through a new Constitution.

(ii) The Northern and Eastern Provinces of this country to be permanently merged as a single North-East Province.

(iii) Special constitutional arrangements to be provided to safeguard the interests of the Muslims and the Sinhalese who live in substantial numbers in the North-East Province.

(iv) The North-East Province to be bestowed with asymmetric devolution of powers in view of its distinctiveness.

(v) Police powers to be fully devolved on the Provinces.

(vi) Provincial Governments to have the right to negotiate for and enter into agreements in respect of foreign loans and donor funds for development.

(vii) Sri Lanka to be a secular state.

(viii) The national flag of Sri Lanka to adequately reflect the multi-ethnic character of Sri Lanka.

(ix) The national anthem of Sri Lanka to be recognised as having equal validity in both Sinhala and Tamil.

(x) Sri Lanka is to have a non-executive President and a non-executive Vice President, both of them not belonging to the same ethnic group at any one time.

(xi) The armed forces of Sri Lanka to reflect the ethnic composition of the country.

(xii) Both the Sinhala and Tamil languages to enjoy the status of official languages of the country.

(xiii) The Parliament of Sri Lanka to consist of two Houses, the House of Representatives and the House of the Provinces, and, both Houses to reflect to ethnic composition of the country.

(xiv) Every Provincial Legislature to reflect the ethnic composition of that Province.

(xv) All citizens of Sri Lanka living abroad to be provided facilities to exercise their franchise.

(xvi) The North-East Province to be conferred the right to establish cultural and trade interest sections in Sri Lankan missions abroad.

(xvii) The Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal to reflect the ethnic composition of the country.

(xviii) The Provincial Governments to have a say in the appointment of judges to the lower courts of justice."

There is an intense debate in Sri Lanka at present about the nature of the post-civil war state. Federalism has entered the official political discourse. We reproduce below the full text of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's famous "Federalist Speech" delivered in Jaffna on July 17, 1926, which appeared in The Ceylon Morning Leader.

FEDERATION AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR POLITICAL PROBLEMS

S.W.R. Dias Bandaranaike

Under the auspices of the Students' Congress Mr. S.W.R.Dias Bandaranaike, B.A. (Oxon), Barrister-at-law, delivered a very interesting lecture on "Federation as the only Solution to our Political Problems." Dr Isaac Thambyah presided.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that it was necessary in the first place to realize the importance of the present time. A revision of the constitution was due in 1928. A satisfactory measure of self-government was therefore expected. It was therefore necessary to think very clearly and realize in its entirety the whole political question. A false step taken, a false proposal made now would be very difficult to retrieve in the future. They all wanted self-government. The question remained what was the measure of self-government they were aiming at.

There were briefly two forms of Government met within Ceylon. One form was the 'Nindagama' system of land tenure, the other was the Headmen system of provincial administration. The Nindagama system was a feudal form of Government. As long as the feudal dues were paid (they were always paid in hand) no notice was taken of anything else. In the Headmen system, the village was considered as the unit. The King had his various Disawas, Rate Mahatmayas, etc. The various provinces were divided and subdivided till one came to the Gansabawa. The Gansabawas was composed of the head of each family of all those in the village irrespective of wealth. The litigants had the right to appeal to the King himself but the Gansabawas' decision was rarely upset. All that meant that the whole land was a loose federation bound by one common oath to the King. When the British came to the island they introduced a centralized form of Government. That centralized form of government as introduced had a semblance of a free institution. Even to the present day it was nothing else but a bureaucratic form of Government.

The lecturer then referred to the course of political agitation for larger measure of reforms. It did not start till 1915 when the riots

took place. The lecturer then referred to the great part played by Sir P. Ramanathan then the Educated Ceylonese Member. Sir P. Arunachalam started the national Congress. It was he who fathered the movement for agitation for reform. When the Congress was started the articles which all the members subscribed themselves was that their aim and goal should be self Government within the Empire. Beyond the securing of a few more seats in the Legislative Council nothing else was done. Those who agitated for reform concentrated their whole energies on arguing in two directions on fallacious bases. The system was not questioned as to its suitability secondly they aimed at copying the type of Government as existing in England. The result was that the Legislative Council at present. They were Government Members who were not responsible to any body of voters. The territorial principle was acknowledged, the communal principle acquiesced and when all was said and done the assembly had no real power. The Legislative Council had a certain measure of control over the finances, but that did not amount to much. The Executive Council was divorced from the Legislative Council looked like a School Boys Debating Society. That was the net result of the agitation of the last few years. The price paid for it was the Sinhalese Tamil Split and the Low Country and Kandyan Sinhalese split. The minorities, looked with mistrust one at the other. It was wrong to think that the differences were not fundamental. There were men who thought that the difference were created by a few ambitious persons and when those persons died the differences would disappear. A hundred years ago there were no such differences. They did not appear because the Englishman sat on the heads of the Tamil, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese.

The moment they began to speak of taking the Government in their hands, then the differences that were lying dormant smouldered forth. If they considered past history they would see that the three communities, the Tamils, the Low-Country Sinhalese and the Kandyan Sinhalese had lived or over a thousand years in Ceylon and had not shown any tendency to merge. They preserved their language, their customs, their religion. He would be very rash

man who would pin his faith on the gradual disappearance of those differences.

The lecturer then proceeded to outline the difficulties that would crop up. The Legislative Council would under the anticipated reform Government, elect their Prime Minister and the various Ministers. Now there was a certain proportion of members to represent the various communities. If that proportion was maintained, in the ministry too the communities would demand a certain proportion.

A centralized form of Government assumed a homogenous whole. He knew no part of the world where a Government was carried on under such conflicting circumstances as would be experienced in Ceylon.

Those would be the troubles if a centralised form of Government was introduced into countries with large communal differences.

In a Federal Government, each federal unit had complete power over themselves. Yet they united and had one or two assemblies to discuss matters affecting the whole country. That was the form of government in the United States of America. All the self-Governing dominions, Australia, South Africa, Canada had the same system. Switzerland afforded a better example for Ceylon. It was a small country, but three races lived there. French, Germans and Italians. Yet Switzerland was a country where the federal form of Government was very successful. Each canton managed its own affairs. But questions of the foreign affairs, commerce, defence etc., matters about which differences and controversies would be at a minimum were dealt with by the Federal Assembly. In Ceylon each Province should have complete autonomy. There should be one or two assemblies to deal with the special revenue of the island. A thousand and one objections could be raised against the system but when the objections were dissipated, he was convinced that some form of federal Government would be the only solution. He had not dealt with the smaller communities. For such communities temporary arrangements could be made for special representation. Those temporary arrangements would exist till the fear existed about one community trying to overlord the other. He would suggest the same for the Colombo Tamil seat. The three main divisions in the island were the Kandyan Sinhalese, the Low country Sinhalese and the Tamils. It was difficult to find a system that would completely satisfy everyone. That was in brief the Federal System. He would be satisfied if it was recognized that the problem did exist. If there were a better form of plan, he hoped someone would think about it and place it before the people.

A lively discussion ensued. The following is a brief account of the points raised.

Mr. J.K. Chanmugam did not understand how the Federal system worked in early days of Ceylon History. He did not understand how the system outlined would be worked satisfactorily especially when feelings of a wrong type were uppermost in many minds. He

instanced the way in which Sir P. Arunachalam was treated in the endeavours to come forward for the Colombo seat and also the way in which Sir Ramanathan was treated in the election of the vice-President to the Legislative Council.

Mr. Subiah said that even in the Federal assembly differences would arise.

Mr. Julius Philips said that the Federal system would be alright in provinces where one race was overwhelmingly large. How was the Western Province to deal with?

Mr. J.H.P. Wijeyaratnam instanced the difficulty of some provinces being unable to carry on the work of administration due to lack of revenue.

Mr. C. Philips wished to know how the questions of religion and caste were to be solved. Those two questions seemed to be acute, at least in North Ceylon. If there were disputes among the three big communities who was to settle them. Judging from numbers, the Low-country Sinhalese would have an easy walkover.

Mr. R. Subramaniam said that small communities should not be neglected.

Mr. Bailie Mylvaganam said that under all these circumstances it was safe to be under the British.

Mr. Bandaranaike in reply said that the question of religion was hardly a matter to be dealt with by legislations. The question of financial inequality was serious objection, so also was the question of education. The common fund could be shared among provinces that required help. The subject was full of controversy. The last speaker had hit the nail on the head. Why not remain under the British? Why all that worry and discussion? No nation deserved the name of a nation if it did not want a measure of self-Government. It deserved to be wiped out the surface of the earth.

Dr Isaac Thambayah said that the lecture was powerfully delivered and reasonably thought out. He hoped that a great deal of interest would be created. The British Malaya was the only place he knew where Federation was in working and working well too. He suggested that their leaders of thought in Jaffna and Colombo should pay a visit to Malaya and come back and tell them what they thought of Federation. In conclusion Dr Thambayah congratulated the students' Congress for its choice of lectures. Sometime ago a gentleman spoke of the ideals of education. That night Mr. Bandaranaike had spoken of the ideals of Government. He moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The vote was carried with acclamation. — Jaffna Cor. ■

RESURGENCE OF THE RESORT TO “URGENT” BILLS

CRM warns of dangers of rushed legislation

The practice of treating Bills as “urgent in the national interest”, which has surfaced afresh in recent times, is a matter of serious concern to the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). There have, so far as we can ascertain, been no less than seven such Bills in the current Parliament¹. Not one of them is available at the Government Publications Bureau at the time of writing.

The time and opportunity given to members of the public in the normal course of events to study and petition the Supreme Court challenging Bills, is already woefully inadequate. When a Bill is endorsed as “urgent in the national interest” by decision of the Cabinet, even this limited opportunity is curtailed. Such a Bill does not have to be made publicly available by publication in the Gazette. The Bill is referred to the Supreme Court, which is required to decide on its constitutionality within twenty four hours, or within such further period not exceeding three days as the President may specify. There have been occasions when petitioners have nevertheless managed to intervene and be heard by Court, as in the notorious *Kalawana case* where an amazing attempt to interfere with the franchise was averted². But this requires a Herculean effort by the petitioner’s lawyers, who must usually rely on news reports and speculation as to the contents of the Bill.

The harm caused by resort to this practice goes well beyond the denial of opportunity for legal intervention. Members of the public

have a right to know about, study, and make representations to legislators about the laws that are to govern them, especially since their constitutionality cannot be questioned in our courts after enactment. When such laws are rushed through in this manner, not only is this right denied, but also an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust of the government is created. Faith in representative democracy is thereby undermined. It is not the position of CRM that under no circumstances should a Bill be treated as urgent, but this should be limited to the most extreme cases. Unfortunately the law does not require the Cabinet of Ministers to explain the reasons for urgency, nor is it the practice for it to do so.

There is yet another important factor. The Supreme Court determines only the question of consistency with our Constitution. But Sri Lanka is also bound by international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which we have been a party since 1980. The Human Rights Committee set up under this treaty periodically examines Sri Lanka’s reports as to our implementation of the Covenant, and now also hears individual complaints of violations under the Optional Protocol to which Sri Lanka became a party in 1998. Already four such complaints have been upheld by the Committee. There is a binding obligation on Sri Lanka to ensure that its laws and practices do not violate its international obligations, and a duty to ensure that proposed laws are properly studied with this in view. ■

Suriya Wickremasinghe
Secretary

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BOOK REVIEW

MODERNISING KANDYAN GIRLS: FROM HALMITA ISKOLE TO NATIONAL SCHOOL

Gayani Sylva

Indrani Meegama, 2003, *With a Fistful of Rice: Buddhist Women and the Making of Mahamaya Girls' College*, Colombo: Mahamaya Girls' College, p. 255.

Having been at Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, during the thirteen years of my primary and secondary education, and receiving the full dose of its history, Indrani Meegama's *With a Fistful of Rice* provided me with a new perspective and many fresh insights into the school's history.

Meegama describes the economic and social changes that took place by the end of the 19th century within colonial Sri Lanka, and discusses the breakdown of the traditional economy, the rise of the indigenous middle-class, the migration of this entrepreneur group from the Low Country to the Kandyan region, and the effects of these changes on Kandyan society. She then goes on to describe the increasing success with which Christian missionaries operated within the colonies and how they came to be the providers of an English education based on the English public school system, which "encouraged the students to emulate Christian and English ideals...." (p. 31). With the capture of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815, and the subsequent abrogation of the Kandyan Convention, Meegama traces the decline of *viharas* and *devalas* through lack of economic support, and the disruption of free education provided through the *Pirivena* schools. She describes the Buddhist revival that took place in the South and the development of a Sinhala consciousness that ran parallel. The influence of Anagarika Dharmapala and the Theosophists in general on this movement, as well as the establishment of Buddhist schools, is described at length.

The text is organized in two main parts divided between the colonial and postcolonial historical periods. Part One deals with the colonial beginnings of Mahamaya while Part Two describes the changes it underwent with the introduction of free education and later liberal economic policies.

The forming of the Kandy *Sadachara Baudha Kulangana Samithiya* was with the primary objective of the establishment a Buddhist girls' secondary school teaching in the English medium. Even though Buddhist educational institutions for boys had been functioning since the mid 19th century, the availability of Buddhist girls' education had not improved, especially in Kandy. This factor

is exemplified by Dharmapala's words spoken in 1924 when he stated "Kandy is no more a Buddhist town... Kandyan girls attending Hillwood College become either Christians or indifferent Buddhists".¹ Meegama describes the extensive efforts made by the women of the Kulagana society to collect funds towards this effort, going door-to-door in the Kandyan region as well as making personal trips to areas such as Colombo and Panadura in an attempt to involve the Southern entrepreneurs. She also points out that the Kulangana Samitiya had to compete with the already established missionary schools, which gave a training in western social accomplishments to girls, which was seen as the kind of necessary education to enable girls to move in middle-class social circles and make marriages to upwardly mobile young men of the time. As Jayawardena points out, girls' education was not concerned with the "emancipation of women," but aimed at producing "good wives and wise mothers" (1992: 14). This endeavor to map out the socio-political history within which the school was established and developed, contextualizes the changes it underwent at a greater depth.

Meegama acknowledges measures and counter-measures the founders had to take at the inception of the school project in order to gain social recognition. She places the men in a prominent role in this women-led project, where men played the role of primary advisor and sanctioner. *Bhikku Attadassi*, Cuda Ratwatte, and Bennet Soysa were among those whose authority was required in making key decisions. Also, even though the initiative towards founding of the school was Sarah Soysa's, after the death of her child, the prominent positioning of Ratwattes with Chitravo Ratwatte as the president of the Kulangana Samithiya, was a measure taken to gain recognition in the eyes of the Kandyan people. Yet another measure taken to gain recognition was the hiring of a London-University graduate, Anglo-Indian, Bertha Rodgers, of Calcutta as the principal. After an attempt at find a local principal, the management had to acknowledge the fact that a Western-educated woman was needed to gain status for the school. During this period, Jayawardena notes that beneficiaries of women's university education in the West, namely: "qualified white principals" gave "immediate 'status' to Buddhist schools". (1992: 13).

Personal histories of the school's founders and the key Principals add detail and richness to the text. For example, Meegama

establishes the influence on Sarah Soysa's early life of her family's association with the Buddhist revival movement and Anagarika Dharmapala. Similar roots are identified of the longest-standing principal of the school's history -- Soma Poojitha Goonewardene -- whose "scholastic, literary and Buddhist nationalist background ... had a marked impact on her education and subsequent career" (p. 168). Through this focus on personal histories, Meegama traces the financial contribution made to the founding of the school by Bennet Soysa, whom she firmly places in the new class of entrepreneurs "who made their fortunes by migrating as traders to Kandy and the upcountry districts" (p. 53). Jayawardena establishes the class dimension of the financial backing that was available to support education of Buddhist women by the late 19th century as that of wealthy Sinhalese who accumulated capital through the liquor trade, plantations and graphite (1992: 13). This factor is supported by the Government Agent C.R. Buller's assertion that the colonial government had established 133 taverns in Kandy after the 1848 rebellion, but that there were only four schools.

Anecdotes, humorous or otherwise, such as that of *the Haalmita isckole*, that of how the founders canvassed for the enrollment of students, and various details of hostel life provide opportune departures from the main text, making it an entertaining read. The account of Sarah Soysa's insistence on a bath before mid-day for the hostellers which resulted in the loss of a class period for some of them, recollections by Old Girls of how they looked forward to hostel meals due to the delicious meals they received, outdoor poetry recitations with Bertha Rodgers, and how they celebrated Rodgers' birthday at the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens are examples of these.

By tracing the school's stages in relation to its principals, Meegama illustrates how heavily the school's successes and failures depended on the merits of each principal. Bertha Irene Rodgers was chosen for her foreign educational qualifications and for the status she could bring to the school, despite her youth. She introduced modern methods of education by reducing regimented schedules of the classroom, and encouraged teachers to make learning a creative experience. Rodgers was able to convert the school to a modern English school with classes from primary to secondary level. Various efforts were made to improve spoken English, while Sinhala was taught from grade three onwards, unlike in other English schools. She also encouraged girls to continue in school by promoting the Senior Cambridge School Certificate in the face of opposition from the Kulangana Samithiya, as well as many other Kandyan parents. In a sense, Rodgers did not restrict herself to the task of producing suitable wives for modern young men, which

some girls' education institutions of that period were expected to follow. Soma Poojitha Goonewardene, taking over the school after a period of setbacks that even had the affect of a drop in the number of students, took early measures to restore and develop the school. She encouraged strict discipline among teachers and students and maintained the Buddhist religious background of the school, while reorienting the school to prepare "students to enter university or other professions" (p. 175). To this end, she introduced the science stream, restructured the Higher School Certificate and University entrance class in Arts subjects and hand picked young graduates of the University of Ceylon to teach these classes. Meegama describes the period under Lalitha Fernando, as well as Nita Pilapitiya during which time the school became a National School with numerous achievements in sports and aesthetics, and acquired various facilities. It is a pity that Meegama does not focus on the politicization of the school's management after it became a prominent school in the country. Politicization of the appointment of teachers and principals to the school, as well as its management, brought about many adverse effects that could have been documented.

Meegama's acknowledgment of the diversity of the founders of the school, and her emphasis on the role played by the late Sarah Soysa, a low country-woman, establishes the school's not-so-Kandyan roots. The need of financial support, social recognition and an indomitable human spirit to the success of a venture is aptly demonstrated through her description of the opening of the school. She carefully traces the transition from an institution with an emphasis on teaching English to the daughters of the Kandyan elite, to that of "imparting quality secondary education to a large number of students from different strata of society" (p. 184). Overall, Meegama makes a good effort to bring new light to the history of the establishment and progress of Mahamaya, and gives the reader a general overview of the context.

Reference

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Gayani Sylva is a researcher at the Social Scientists' Association

HAIL TO OCTAGENARIAN OSMUND JAYARATNE !

Carlo Fonseka

Professor Osmund Jayaratne is on the brink of octagenarianhood. Knowing him as I do, I have reason to believe that three passions have shaped his long, purposeful life: the love of physics, the challenge of politics and the excitement of dramatics.

Born on 2 October 1924, Ossie - as his friends fondly call him - won the prestigious Turnour Prize at Royal College, Colombo, in his time. He gained entrance to the University of Ceylon in 1942, specialized in physics, graduated with honours and went on to acquire a doctorate in the subject from Imperial College, University of London. He ended his distinguished career in academe in 1991 as a Professor of Physics in the University of Colombo.

While an undergraduate he joined the Lanka Sama Samaja Party once and for all in 1944, and matured into one of its leading theoreticians. Combining theory with praxis, in the 1950s, Ossie won three successive elections to the Colombo Municipal Council in the name of the Party.

As if reading physics and politicking were not occupation enough for an undergraduate, he was also picked by renowned Professor E.F.C. Ludowyk himself, to play important roles in about a dozen plays. The acme of his achievement in dramatics came in the late 1960s, when under the direction of Professor Ashley Halpe, he played the lead role in Swedish playwright Strindberg's famous play called 'The Father'. So impressed was one raving critic by Ossie's impassioned performance that he summarily dubbed him "the best actor in the country."

Because his life was so suffused with abstruse physics, principled politics and high quality dramatics, Osmund Jayaratne would be my first choice for the putative title of 'Sri Lanka's last Renaissance Man'

Nobody need tell those who know Ossie well that he is bilingual with a vengeance. The bad news is that Ossie cannot write anymore because he is - as we must perforce say nowadays - visually handicapped. The other day when I gently probed the degree of his visual disability, Ossie - never one to call a spade by any other name - bluntly said : "Look, I am as blind as a

bat." The good news is that he is not batty. Actually, only the truly sane like Ossie (and me) can remain indefinitely loyal to the LSSP, but that is beside the point. Though unable to put pen to paper, Ossie can still talk accurately, blithely, cogently, definitively, eloquently and fluently. In truth he is a delightful talk-show. He talked to the Social Scientists' Association about his life and times which the SSA faithfully recorded. The SSA then contracted Mr. Sirisumana Godage - surely Sri Lanka's leading publisher as of now - to publish the *Memoirs of Osmund Jayaratne*. To politically conscious English educated members of the older generation reading Ossie's memoirs is bound to be a vicarious, nostalgic, even cathartic experience. To socially sensitive members of the younger generation who read and understand English, Ossie's memoirs will provide a glimpse into the sense of inner satisfaction that comes from unselfish commitment to a visionary goal one believes in. I understand that among those warmly felicitating Professor Osmund Jayaratne on the occasion of his 80th birthday are Her Excellency the President and the Honourable Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Fittingly, Ossie's memoirs was launched by the SSA at the Dr N.M. Perera Centre, Borella on Friday the 1st of October 2004 at 5 pm. I do not know how much personal history Ossie has recounted in his Memoirs. What I do know is that he has been a public intellectual, and something of a celebrity in academe. Perhaps he has recounted his life like it really was, warts and all. With or without warts, many of his former pupils literally worship their teacher, friend and philosopher. Ossie's close friends can only gape at the devotion with which his wife Joyce (whom he married twice) looks after our amiable buddy. He can still expatiate on the nature of this thing called light which he no longer enjoys. He *listens* critically to the news on international television which he cannot watch, and perceives in his mind's eye the crisis of globalized capitalism and the need for a humane socialism. On demand he will reel off chunks of texts of the roles he played decades ago. Physics, politics and dramatics continue to fuel the life of this indomitable spirit. He is an unyielding Samson who cannot be downtrodden by the trampling march of blind matter. Thank Dialectical Materialism for Osmund Jayaratne!

Carlo Fonseka is former Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya.

A LESSON REMEMBERED

(On The Merchant of Venice)

For Nimal and Richard

Jean Arasanayagam

You write me a letter from a camp
For political detainees, a rehab camp, you tell me,
Remembering a lesson we once shared
In those days when the posters were up on the walls
The graffiti scrawled with their violent slogans
Tattooing the crumbling plaster,
When the killings took place on both sides
And the traditional funeral rites, alerted.

The College was closed, we walked home miles
I picked a water plant on the way
Still flourishes after all those years
In my garden, proliferates.
I do not destroy it.

I continue reading your letter
Was it you, Nimal, who yourself gave
English lessons to your fellow cellmates
After your arrest for your radical ideologies,
You wrote prison poems too, where are they?

Now, you remind me of my words,
"You always questioned us as to why people
Have stooped to violence."

Is it a question you now ask your students
As they sit before you with impassive faces
Uniformly clad, their hair closely shorn
Skins clean-shaven, eyes dulled
Their fiery utterance stifled,
Minds cleared of all seditious thoughts?

Secretly planning their future strategies
If they are allowed their freedom,
Allowed to live?

Yes, we read the canonical literary texts
But then, there were all your unwritten narratives.
Anil told me of his six years in jail in '71,
During that first insurgency, a young student
Indoctrinated, inducted by his teacher
In that arid zone of the island.
His eyes, I remember, thick, sable lashed
Grey green changing to azure, eyes that glittered
While he told me of being bastinadoed as he
Swing, suspended from the rough rafters
Of a ceilinged torture chamber,
What happened to Anil? He never contradicted
My interpretations of the romantic Poets, talking
Of emotions recollected in tranquility ... Whose?

Not ours anyway. Ultimately married 'respectably',
Got his academic qualifications, went to the Middle
East as an English teacher, is still alive somewhere,
A staid citizen, perhaps.

Bandara drifted in and out of my lecture
Room, a veteran of '71 too, was happy to
Show me the scars of healed bullet wounds
On his neck and shoulders,
Had so little time in-between conducting his own
Cell lectures that he had little time for preamble
On mine when we discussed Leonard Woolf's
"Village in the Jungle." Vanished soon afterwards
To those hideouts in other, remote jungles.
Is he still alive, I wonder?

Now, nearer this new age
Ananda with his delicate, perfectly shaped hands
On which blows had once rained down
Arrested for his subversive ideologies both
Social and political began his story,
"I read your poem "Political Prisoner"
Found empathy in those lines,
Remembered how we planned our prison escape
From Bogambara jail which we now see just across
The road, prisoners looking out on the world,
Clutching the bars, steel barriers keeping us apart.
Escape we did, some of us,
The others were recaptured."

Thinking of you again,
Nimal Each of us circling in unknown orbits
I go back to your letter
Do you now ask the same questions
That I asked of you from your new students
As you plead with me in turn

"Why can't we live in unison one with the
Other,
Why can't we go about our day to day
Work, in peace, unhindered?"
And your students, are they silent
Or are they silenced now that the texts
Have changed, our discoursed more complex,
More radical.

Illusion overwhelms the earth
Reality subverted, goes merely underground,
Resurfaces.
Your words, Nimal, require a reading between
The lines, a going beyond the surface meaning

Of language, into the deep, deep structure
Of our minds.

No, there will never be a clear-cut answer
To such naïve questions as we then asked
Each other, now we question-is it too late-
The complexities of our individual philosophies,
Our ideologies no longer static
We place ourselves before the firing range
Bare our naked breast to the fusillade of shots.

Why?
Because we are different?

Here, far from you
Resurrecting the lines I spoke
When I received your letter
I re-interrogate myself

Are there answers to be found in failure,
Failure imposed upon you by another or by others,
Are the minute cracks that first appeared
On the crumbling edifices of our past
Widening each day on the neglected icons
Of heroes and martyrs whom we so easily forget,
Their lives too, lost causes.

We too groped, each one of us, searching for answers
Found that Venice still exists, everywhere,
That Shylock too was a human being
A man to be pitied, shown humanity
When all others shunned him.

When I myself was a young student
I was taught that Shylock was a villain
A monster of depravity, the epitome of evil forces,
His nature unnatural.

Did life, did literature then have one sole interpretation?
And was that what we, uninitiated, unquestioningly
Followed, accepting, never countermanding,
Silent, our tongues, with injustices imposed upon
Ourselves, the hoi-poloi?
Shylock was the usurer, with base, inordinate
Appetites, money grabber, would-be-murderer,
And all those Venetians, goodly men
Victims of the Jew-wolf, Christian hater,
Skinflint, equating – to evoke our mockery-
His daughter with his ducats.
Shylock, the Jew, yes, the Jew,
Didn't he wear that invisible Star of David
Even then, somehow his blood, his cast of mien
His countenance, his race, his creed marking
Him out as different, not one of us, his fierce
Tongue, rasping, his demented maunderings
Licking the edges of history to draw blood
Generations of men, generous and loyal
Only to their own kind.
Today I look back on those years

Recall those lessons where I both learned
And shared that discovery of our own humanity
With you, Nimal and with you, Richard
And with all those within that radiant circle
Of revelatory light.

There were no morals to be drawn
Only the clear truth that we were, all of us, one,
Engaged in dialogue that took us to those Venetian
Streets, to that Rialto where we mingled
With the bartering market crowds
That surged around us, treading upon each
Other's hells on our frantic haste to cry our wares,
Emptying and filling our purses, buying and selling,
Bartering our souls that led to perdition.

Yes, with you I learned, look back now upon
Those lessons that I shared with you
The most important being that we cannot distinguish
Between the blood that runs in all our veins
Whether it be that of Jew or Christian.

Then who are we to spit upon and curse
Those whom we think are not our own kind,
Call them names, not human but beast,
Dog, cur, offspring of ravening wolf or criminal,

Step into their shoes, wipe the curses,
The insults heaped upon their brow,
Shake off the spittle that naked, stains
Those tribal cloaks, our Jewish gaberdine.

Who is it can cut that pound of flesh
And not shed blood and say
This then is Christian. This Venetian
This of the Jew
Are these thoughts then not murderous?
My pen is poised upon a sheet of paper
Still unwritten on, thoughts cross my mind
Questions, answers, interchange and interchanging
A dagger plunges into history's breast
We do not pause to think of consequences.

Belmont too is here
But not for us
Music, harmony, love
Belong to another world
But then, Jessica lives here too,
So, is there hope still
Or are our thoughts disloyal, traitorous?

We still wander freely with that motley
Crew upon the uneven cobbles of the Rialto
The coins still change hands
We listen to raucous voices bargaining
To purchase the weaponry of hatred. ■

KAMALINI WIJAYATILLAKE – CELEBRATING HER ACTIVIST SPIRIT

As another friend pointed out at the funeral, we tend not to appreciate people while they are alive. Somehow, we begrudge our thoughts of appreciation and gratitude about our nearest family and dearest friends as well as admired and respected colleagues and acquaintances, during their lifetime. It seems to take the finality of death to force us into expressing our feelings of love, loss, and grief, and to verbally appreciate the person and take stock of her life, her loved ones, her characteristics, her likes and dislikes and insecurities, her achievements, and her hopes - for which there was simply not enough time. So let us write, what we could not speak, during her lifetime.

In a society that is riven by the violence of political hates, ethnic mistrust, gender disparities, we will remember Kamalini Wijayatillake as an exceptional woman who was deeply and sincerely committed towards social change and justice, especially for women. Unlike other activists who sometimes use the media as a political tool, Kamalini believed in working on a person-to-person level – which in fact, was her great strength. For this reason, many of you did not know her – because that was the way she wanted it. But many of you would have read her articles - for instance in the Ms. column. And for those of us who did know her, she was just ‘Kamalini’ – we doubt that anyone ever addressed her as Ms. or Mrs. Wijayatillake.

Many Roles

Like many women, Kamalini chose to wear many hats. To us, she was an intimate friend and colleague, a ‘sounding board’ and a sister feminist. She was a fellow student of the MA degree in Women’s Studies at Colombo, a colleague with whom many of us collaborated with on feminist research projects, a phone-in counselor for battered women, an ‘advisor’ on gender and women’s issues (who we had only to call to be given contacts and resources), and on many occasions, an initiator of feminist action against current events that discriminated against women - such as drafting protest statements, networking and critiquing legislation with regard to women.

As her friends, we know only some facets of her life and work. There are those who knew her from her times at Visakha Vidyalaya and the Sri Lanka Law College. Others who knew her through her links to various women’s groups and community-based

organizations, displaced people, and battered women especially vis a vis her work in the rural areas of Moneragala, Hambantota, Kandy, Balangoda, Kurunegalle, and Anamaduwa to mention a few. We have known her over a span of 10-20 years – essentially as a feminist researcher and an activist.

Lawyer and Feminist Activist

As a lawyer, Kamalini saw legal literacy as a powerful tool for women’s overall empowerment, and argued consistently and compellingly for grassroots legal awareness. In the early years, she was involved with the legal literacy program of the Sri Lanka Women Lawyers Association; she was one of the founding members of Women in Need (WIN) organization (a dire need of the time) and counseled survivors of domestic violence for many years; she then worked as a programme officer at Canadian International Development Aid (CIDA) for a while; she was a long-term independent consultant on legal / gender issues and a gender trainer to many local and outreach organizations such as the Kantha Shakthi, Vehilihini Development Centre in Moneragala, the Uva Welassa Women Farmers Organization, Centre for Family Services, Women’s Development Centre Kandy, Rural Development Foundation – Puttalam, Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund, etc. traveling the length and breadth of the country on weekends, interacting with women from many fields of life, creating consciousness about gender and women’s issues, conducting legal literacy programs, and working out schemes for the overall empowerment of women. She was also able to influence the gender policies / women’s programs of a large number of NGOs and women’s organizations on a more short-term basis. For instance, she was very much involved in the formulation of the Women’s Charter of Sri Lanka and she also drafted the Guidelines for a Code of Ethics on Sexual Harassment for the Sri Lanka Employers’ Federation / ILO. During the last three years, as a member of the National Committee on Women, she was able give her inputs to such initiatives as the National Women’s Bill.

International

Kamalini was able to network extensively with women in countries like Nepal, Thailand, India, Pakistan etc. through the Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development Women’s Forum (APWLD); and she was also at the forefront of the Sri Lanka NGO

Forum, and was part of the delegation to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW) a number of times, to present the Sri Lanka Shadow Report at the sittings.

Researcher

Kamalini was known to many, more closely, through her association with the Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR), where as a board member, she initiated and researched a large number of legal and other studies spanning from her extensive work in the field of violence against women (domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment) to women's inheritance rights; from legal aid for women, to women's family rights etc. Kamalini's other written work also focuses on concerns such as peace, critical gender issues; Govt-NGO initiatives for women's rights in Sri Lanka; incest; trafficking of women; women's movements; globalization; women workers in the Middle East, engendering the national budget, post conflict reconstruction etc., and form a considerable corpus of research within Sri Lankan women's studies, and situates Kamalini as a significant feminist writer of the past two decades.

Books

Kamalini also wrote a book on a topic close to her heart - *Unraveling Herstories – A Three Generational Study* on the life experiences of mothers, daughters and granddaughters during the 20th century; tracing such issues and events as menarche, virginity, marriage, dowry, divorce, childbirth etc., and such roles and responsibilities as heading the household, providing for and decision-making within the family etc. This book is a cultural analysis of women's situation and relations within the family, and constitutes an important feminist record of contemporary history in Sri Lanka.

Last month, a selected collection of Kamalini's research studies was posthumously published under the title *Conquering the Diviya*. It encapsulates her work as an activist/researcher. For instance, the book shows how Kamalini traces the status of women vis a vis the law – with regard to the family, customary laws, women's rights and gender equity. She analyzes incisively, the gaps and lapses within the law as well as the misinterpretations that discriminate against women in its practice – frequently with reference to her experiences in the field and in life. She recounts the legal reforms and progress made – and always provides possible options and recommendations in her work. The book records Kamalini's views and vision on contemporary economic developments affecting women and women workers, as well as her conceptualizations of feminism, gender and women rights in Sri Lanka – from a local perspective. In some instances, it serves as an insightful trajectory of women's activism, and grassroots mobilization on women's issues.

Gender Trainer

Kamalini was also one of the first gender trainers in the island, creating her own resource material to suit the Sri Lankan context. Her keen intellect and incisive arguments (enhanced by creative anecdotes) were always channeled via a calm demeanor through which she was able to convince people about the discrimination faced by women and the need for gender equity / equality.

Above all, Kamalini was a sensitive, kind and gentle person: her unassuming, low-key character; her down-to-earth nature; her subtle irony and unexpected sense of humour; her tenacity of mind; combined with her absolute integrity and strength of character with which she worked, played and lived made sure that she was loved by all, and most importantly, accepted by all who had the privilege to know her. She could empathize with all of us - not barring age, race, social class, geographical location etc. She was equally at home in the thorny jungles in Mahawalattenna talking with rural women, as she was serving 'Maisoor mixture' to her friends in her house in Colombo.

At the same time, Kamalini's love of life and friends, her spirit of discovery and adventure, and her appreciation of creativity whether it be in literature, art or craft, ensured that she was erudite not only academically, but also about the little things in life - such as family histories and local places of interest. She herself, was a creator – though perhaps not always acknowledged by her – of exquisite embroidery and her own clothes, of cover designs for books and floral arrangements, in her writing, etc.

We have merely charted and compressed to an article the things that struck us of a woman who was a dear friend. To others, she was much more. To her family members, she was a much-loved wife/partner, and a beloved and progressive mother. We know that Kamalini, herself, would be (characteristically) very annoyed with us for writing about and publicizing her. But, forgive us, we need to salute you: your courage especially during the last three years of your life – undaunted by the craven disease that finally killed you; your activist and intellectual achievements of a lifetime - not only for yourself - but for many women in this country; and your spirit that was always unpretentious yet sometimes mischievous. While our grief at losing you is profound; we celebrate your life and your work, and treasure in our minds, the image of you; and in our hearts, the memories we have of you.

Courtesy of MS.

PREMALAL KUMARASIRI

MORAL ECONOMY OF A COMMUNIST

Janaka Biyanwila

I first met Premalal at the Social Scientists' Association (SSA) in the mid-1990s. He was doing some English-to-Sinhala translations of SSA publications. As soon as I met him, it was obvious that this was a person with a deep sense of commitment to social justice. His politics towards a 'good society' conveyed a particular notion of moral economy, or values of norms regarding economic activity. He was also a friend of my father from their days in the Communist Party in the 1950s. My father was expelled, while Premalal later became the General-Secretary of the Chinese wing.

I met Premalal again in 2000, but this time as someone who would help with my Ph.D. research on trade unions in Sri Lanka. He carried himself with a confidence and a charm, and with a treasure trove of stories and a brilliant sense of humour. I managed to tape a few of our conversations, in which he touched on a range of issues around social injustice, poverty, class consciousness, women, ethnicity, caste, trade unions, the labour movement, working-class parties (LSSP, CP, JVP and the NSSP), and political struggles. His stories were open and honest, and he never hesitated to highlight the mistakes and missed opportunities of workers' struggles.

For Premalal, the struggle for social justice was fundamentally grounded in democratizing institutions of daily life - families, schools, workplaces, trade unions, religious institutions, as well as political parties. He saw the struggle against British colonialism, not simply as a national struggle but also a class struggle. Organizing workers through the CP in early days had been an extremely difficult task:

"We found it difficult to organize workers in the beginning because they didn't know they had rights. We worked during a period where the workers didn't have a consciousness of their rights (wages, workday, leave, health and safety) Not only did they not have those rights, but they were also not conscious of those rights. One of our greatest contributions was making a class-conscious working-class Politically it helped us also, because class consciousness among workers helps build a revolutionary movement."

The making of a "class-conscious" trade union movement has re-emerged as an urgent task for trade unions. The dominant neo-liberal ideology, promoted by the World Bank and the IMF, along with local capitalist classes, is one of 'business unionism.' Also known as 'responsible' or 'best-practice' unionism, business unionism narrows union interests to a workplace 'group interest,' and its implied aim is to

focus on improving profitability. The neo-liberal mantra, which the workers must regularly chant, is 'productivity, competition and self-responsibility.' This attempt to erase class politics is grounded in de-politicizing and de-mobilizing unions. Unlike most union leaders, Premalal uses the language of "class consciousness" with a sense of hope towards a just moral economy. He saw workers as human beings, not just class actors, and recognized the critical role culture and knowledge play, in mobilizing the oppressed.

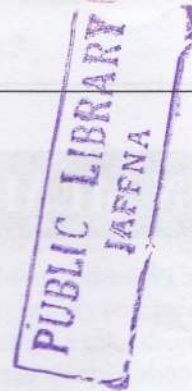
Premalal was a political educator throughout his life. He saw education in terms of encouraging a self-transformation capable of fostering social change. He was a key educator within the CP in the 1950s and 1960s, until 1971 when he was arrested for suspected links with the JVP.

"I was the main political teacher, not the political guru, but a teacher in the sense of teaching. I edited the paper; it was an instrument of education. I also edited the magazine off and on, and did classes. Every day, before I was married, I used to come home at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning after teaching in these classes. Of course we had to do this undercover, because the workers would have lost their jobs if caught. So we used to have classes in the night. The lessons were: first, human rights; second, trade union rights; third, class rights; and fourth, revolution."

His sentence ended with an ironical laugh, implying a disappointment in not achieving a revolutionary transformation of society. As a political educator, he always had a collection of stories to get his message across:

"In my teaching, I used to give examples. To explain the Marxist concept of the state machinery, as an instrument to keep the working class down, and to preserve the rule of the bourgeoisie, it has rules and laws which protect capitalist property. If you damage or steal property you go to jail. For instance, you walk along Norris Road or Main Street, and you see all these beautiful shops are there, and inside there are beautiful, multi-coloured saris, trousers, and shirts. You are on the pavement, they are inside. And you think that 'my god, if I could have that, what a wonderful person I could be. But between you and that possession, the sari, there is only a glass that is one centimetre thick. Not even that sometimes. What is there to prevent you from getting that sari, only a piece of glass. But, if you break that glass, you can be sure to be: first, in a police lock-up with two or three ribs broken; then in court; then jail. So this way, I used to explain the efficiency, and the brutality, of the capitalist state machinery and its whole dedication to the protection of capitalist property." ■

LAL JAYAWARDENA



Dr. Lal Jayawardena known to many as an eminent economist passed away on April 8 in Colombo. Those who knew him intimately cannot forget his admirable qualities as a friend or an associate or even as a boss. I was fortunate to be one who had been in all three positions. I came to know him from the time he joined the government service. I was then a research officer and Dr. Gamani Corea, Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs another world famous economist assigned me along with Dr. Uswatte Aratchi from the Central Bank to work with Lal on a three-year macro-economic framework for development planning. Ever since then Lal has been my principal mentor besides being a close friend. The association enabled me to improve my professional skills and intensify my interest in development planning.

His recommendation helped in obtaining a UN Fellowship that enabled me to complete my Ph. D thesis in Bristol University under the guidance of Pro. J.A.C. Brown, who supervised my work in econometrics earlier at the University of Cambridge (1960-1961). Dr. Lal Jayawardena was an Honorary Fellow of King's College, University of Cambridge where he graduated with a 'double-first' (1956) in the Economic Tripos and obtained his Ph. D in 1963. His backing and assistance during my career in Sri Lanka enabled me to climb the job ladder starting from the position of Deputy Director Planning to Additional Director Economic Affairs, Treasury and finally to Additional Deputy Secretary to the Treasury in 1976. He gave me the support and strength to overcome personal difficulties, especially when my wife was ill and later died in 1976.

All who had worked under him would gladly acknowledge his benevolence and readiness to help them during difficult times. He was unconcerned about a person's ethnic background and social status treating all who worked with him as teammates. He treated with respect all officers regardless of their positions. He was against all forms of discrimination that deprived a fellow citizen the opportunities to advance professionally. Lal's leadership qualities and the zeal he showed while working on domestic socio-economic and regional/international trade issues were matchless.

Dr. Lal Jayawardena was appointed as Secretary to the Treasury during the time of Dr. N.M. Perera was the Minister of Finance. In 1978 he moved to the Foreign Affairs Ministry as adviser. Between 1985 and 1993, he was the first Director of the United Nations University's World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) in Helsinki Finland. During this period the WIDER Studies in Development Economics comprised a series of 32 publications. He chaired a WIDER study group on Indo-Lanka Economic Cooperation (1993) which outlined a reciprocal preference scheme for promoting trade between the two countries. The report provided the basis for the Bilateral Free Trade Agreement signed by the heads of government of the two nations in 1998. He was a member of the WIDER Study Group (1968-1987) which produced the 'Okita Plan' for the recycling of Japan's surplus to developing countries.

He was also a member of the Advisory Group of Eminent Persons to the Brandt Commission on International Development issues (1978-1981) and Deputy of the Committee of Twenty on the Reform of the International Monetary System (1972-1974). He was one of those responsible for founding the Group of Twenty-Four.

The diplomatic positions held by Dr. Jayawardena include Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to the U.K. concurrently accredited to the Republic of Ireland (1999-2000), Ambassador to Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg and to the European Communities (1978-82). He was also the Deputy Chairman of the National Development Council headed by President Kumaratunga. He was hoping to continue working for the socio-economic advancement of Sri Lanka and was optimistic that the peace talks would lead to lasting peace. Since development and peace are two sides of the same coin, he believed both sides would reach a compromise on the main political issue.

Lal's demise is a great loss not only to his family but also to many others who had benefited in various ways through his benevolence and guidance. ■

S. Narapalasingam