

LANKA

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WAR AND PEACE

- Behind the assassination

— Mervyn de Silva

- The peace process

— Shelton Kodikara

- LTTE : Sinhala leadership
as target

— P. Jayaram

KODIKARA : SALUTE TO A SCHOLAR

— Ray Forbes

PEACE-MAKING :

Jan Egeland

Horace Perera

BUDDHIST WOMEN :

Kumari Jayawardena

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NEWS BACKGROUND

WAR AND/OR PEACE

Mervyn de Silva

"This writer has introduced the following observation to the pre-polls debate. The UNP has ruled for 17 years, Sri Lankans vote at 18"

(LG August 1)

The generational factor and the climate for change were the two points emphasised in our commentaries in the run-up to the two critical contests — parliamentary and presidential.

Since R. Premadasa won the Presidential election in 1988 and then led the UNP at the 1989 parliamentary polls, we did not anticipate President Wijetunge's switch. Whether Mr. Wijetunge would have entered the fray if his party had fared well, at a general election, remains anybody's guess. But his unexpected move did encourage much speculation.

As it is, the UNP did not do too badly in the first contest. It did surprisingly well — 94 seats and 44% as against 105 and 49%. And then came the stunning LTTE intervention. Here was an assassination where the authors of the plot did not wish to conceal their identity. There was a message in the style and the timing of the murderous act. It was a repeat performance of the drama that the LTTE had conceived in April-May 1991 when it was announced in the Indian press that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi would be holding election rallies in Tamilnadu, starting with Madras, on 19. 5. 91. With the ruling party unable to command a majority in the Lok Sabha "there was a perceptible upswing in the popularity of Shri Rajiv Gandhi", and the strong likelihood of his Congress party assuming office in 1991.

Gandhi of course was the man who forced the LTTE leadership to accept the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord he had signed with President Jayawardene.

The LTTE leaders, Prabhakaran included, were held "hostage" more or less, locked up in a Delhi hotel, by the Indian bureaucracy and its secret service.

Supremo Prabhakaran cannot be treated that way. He is a proud man.

KISSINGERIAN ROLE

Mr. Gamini Dissanayake had played a Kissingerian role in that historic "Accord" which brought some 40,000 Indian troops as a Peace-keeping force to Sri Lanka.

Two months before the November elections, Mr. Gamini Dissanayake who had been successful in his take-over bid of Sri Kotha, the UNP hqrs, was back in Madras where he assured the Indian press, particularly the HINDU-FRONTLINE group, that he was fairly sure that he would win the Presidential election.

The LTTE which keeps a close watch on political developments in Colombo had cause for concern. *Taraki*, the well-informed *Sunday Island* columnist, quoted a passage from an LTTE journal which said that Sinhalese "chauvinist forces" were gathering in the South. Evidently these anti-Tamil forces had launched a new proselytising drive. This coming together, the journal said, "is being secretly encouraged by India. There cannot be any doubt Gamini is an Indian lackey".

A suicide-bomber, a Tamil woman, blew herself up — Gamini Dissanayake, his fellow (anti-Premadasa) impeachment plotter Mr. Premachandra and Premadasa loyalist, Mr. Mallimaraatchi, and some 50 others were the immediate casualties. (Mr. Ossie Abeygunasekera died in hospital last week).

Of course the LTTE has denied involvement. But that is routine. Also part of the routine is some comment in a pro-LTTE journal giving bio-data of the deceased which makes it clear what the victim stood for and why he deserved to die!

In 18 months, the UNP the island's most firmly established conservative party which has governed Sri Lanka longer than any of its rivals, seemed leaderless. Instinctively, the decision-makers and the pressure-groups, seized on Gamini's widow, as the last hope. Srma Dissanayake was a professional, a first rate company lawyer who had been secretary to the

multinational giant Unilevers in Colombo. Her academic record was excellent. But SRIMA was no Sirima Bandaranaike, and certainly not a Chandrika, Vijaya Kumaratunga's widow, and the daughter of two prime ministers.

It was a desperate move, a long shot, a gambler's response. It didn't work. The UNP has never seen its national percentage drop so low.

MINORITY VOTES

In her address to the nation, the newly elected President Kumaratunga said:

"Their vote is in essence, and above all else, a vote for change". She then speaks of the "diversity" of the "far-reaching" changes the voter would like to see.

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CONTENTS

Polls: Indian View	3
Shelton Kodikara	4
National Integration	5
Presidency and Delivery System	7
Norway as International	
Peacemaker (2)	11
UN and War (3)	12
Womanhood (3)	15
Communication for a	
New World (2)	16
Books	18

While Chandrika charisma is the subjective factor, the nature of the change which the electorate would like to see, is the next question. The President believes that an end to violence is what the voter desires most of all. She speaks of State terror and political violence, placing the emphasis on violence in the Sinhala south, not the "war" in the north.

Of the latter, she says: **"The ravages of war in the Northern part of our country have inflicted an enormous toll in terms of loss of life and resources"**.

In the present context, emphasis should be placed on "resources". "We spend a million dollars a day and the cost is rising". Just the other day, the new PA administration tabled 19 supplementary estimates that totalled 13 billion rupees. The largest was for Defence, 5.3 billion or over 100 million dollars. More will be spent on an increased allowance for Home Guards (Rs. 55 to Rs. 85) and on soldiers in operational areas — 10/- per day rise. It is not just 'the peace constituency' in the South that voted for the PA president but the voters in the predominantly Tamil areas. (See table) In some electorates, the UNP vote was zero — KKS, and Manipay.

TAMIL VOTE JAFFNA

Kayts	P.A.	14,701
	UNP	83
Udupiddy	P.A.	24
	UNP	2
Kankasanturai	P.A.	116
	UNP	0
Vadukodai	P.A.	539
	UNP	6
Manipay	P.A.	18
	UNP	0
Batticoloa	P.A.	59,814
	UNP	9,812
Padiruppu	P.A.	40,489
	UNP	631

This could not have happened before. It was a knee-jerk response to a virulently Sinhala "line", the last desperate bid of the top advisers to candidate Srma. So, the voters of the north and the east desire peace. But it takes two to make peace. What of the LTTE? It cannot be too pleased with the result. The President's inaugural address made it clear that like any politician her first thought is NOT to alienate the majority that voted for her. The inaugural address would have been examined carefully by the LTTE, which of course has also to be mindful of Tamil opinion trends. The LTTE would have also noted the new regime has requested Indian, rather than American, help for VVIP security.

Now that she is in office she must satisfy

the moderate Tamils but the moderate Tamil will be looking over the shoulder at the LTTE before he agrees to any terms offered by the PA. Let's not forget that the LTTE eliminated more "moderate" Tamils than Sinhalese politicians.

President Chandrika has to walk a tight rope on the Tamil insurgency (Sinhala opinion, moderate Tamils and LTTE) and on the economy (defence and social welfare, the "human face" to structural adjustment). Its a pretty tight rope. But she has courage.

The LTTE has declared a unilateral ceasefire for a week — but the Defence ministry has not confirmed it. The LTTE may want to satisfy moderate Tamils, and international opinion.

V.O.A. vs P.A. ?

The main story of the September 1993 issue of this journal was introduced on the cover as PAX AMERICANA VS. ROME. The VOA issue became a point of friction, provoking a war — of words between the US Embassy and the Catholic Church, assisted by many NGO's, particularly those concerned with environmental problems. The Kandalama hotel project had seen environmental groups backed by the Sangha, including the Nayake Thero of the main temple in the area.

And now, this is could be a ticklish diplomatic problem for the P.A. administration. The US is likely to "put diplomatic pressure" on President Kumaratunga's government, said a frontpage story in the Sunday Times. Work was suspended after the Police killed a demonstrator last September. "There were fears that Washington might link Sri Lanka's response on the VOA issue with other matters such as aid, trade, and investment. Foreign minister Herat has said — the people of this area will not be displaced nor their

fishing restricted. No hotel, no airstrip, no environmental hazards, no displacement of residents, no ban on fishing" (Daily News 23/7/93).

Aggravating the issue was an incident that took place at the US Embassy a few days ago, said the ST (13/11/94). It is alleged that some members of a delegation which went there to hand over a petition were abused by a US diplomat who met the delegation. DPL sources said that the Kumaratunge government, aware of the need for US aid, but also obliged to carry out promises given at Chilaw election meetings, to scrap the VOA project, has sought time from the US authorities to allow resumption of work..."

It'll probably be Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala's first job when he moves into our Embassy in Washington. From a press release I received just last month the Colombo project is just one in a chain — Bangkok, Sao Tome, Morocco, etc.

Another Shattering Blow

P. Jayaram

Violence is no stranger to the people of Sri Lanka. But it seems to be stalking the nation's politicians with a vengeance. Less than two years after a President met with a violent death, a suicide bomb attack at a Colombo election rally on the night of October 23 wrote yet another chapter in blood, killing opposition leader and presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake, and wiping out almost the entire leadership of the United National Party (UNP). The Chandrika Kumaratunga Government reacted by breaking off talks with Tamil rebels, but not before incurring considerable loss of face. "The magnitude of the crisis was such, we decided not to proceed to Jaffna. The whole mood had changed," said Lionel Fernando, a member of the Government delegation. Peace in Sri Lanka proved elusive yet again.

Moving quickly to cash in on the sympathy factor, the UNP's working committee fielded the slain leader's widow Srima Dissanayake as its new candidate for the November 9 presidential election, and dashed Prime Minister Kumaratunga's hopes of a cakewalk to the presidency. With the assassination filling the public with anger, and skepticism about Kumaratunga's peace initiative growing, the outcome of the presidential election seems all but certain.

The two widows pitted against each other symbolise between them the cruel fate of Sri Lanka politics. In a span of just 18 months, Dissanayake became the third top political leader to be assassinated in Colombo. President Ranasinghe Premadasa was killed by suspected LTTE suicide bombers while leading May Day rally of the UNP in 1993, less than two weeks after prominent Opposition leader and former minister Lalith Athulathmudali was shot dead at an election rally. In 1991, State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne was killed in a car-bomb explosion

believed to have been engineered by the LTTE. Says Liberal Party leader Chanaka Amaratunga: "This violence is undermining people's confidence in the democratic process and the security it offers."

Among the dead leaders, Dissanayake was the one viewed most as a friend of India for his role in the drafting of the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka accord, and the induction of Indian troops into the island. And he had no illusions about his personal safety. The military intelligence, he had said, had warned him that he topped the LTTE's hit list. Dissanayake had also complained that the Government was not providing enough vehicles for his security escort.

For Kumaratunga personally, the assassination of Dissanayake, who was her main rival in the coming presidential poll, could not have come at a worse time. Only a few days earlier, she had castigated the army high command for trying to act as a "government unto themselves" and charged them with attempting to sabotage the peace process initiated by her. In an interview with the BBC, she said that the army had "reigned supreme" for the past 11 years. "We will not permit them to do what they think is right," she said.

Now, analysts say the army would be spitting on her face if suspicions of LTTE involvement in the killing of Dissanayake are proved true. The explosion that killed him and more than 50 others was set off by a suicide bomber, a trademark LTTE tactic. There was speculation, nevertheless, that it was the bandiwork of the anti-Dissanayake faction in the UNP, headed by former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, or of the ruling People's Alliance (PA), jittery over Dissanayake's popularity.

The LTTE denied any involvement in the assassination, but nobody was surpri-

sed. "They never admit anything," says a senior leader of the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), whose leader, A. Amirthalingam, and MP, V. Yogeswaran, were killed by LTTE hit men in 1989.

But if the Tigers indeed had carried out the killing, the timing left a lot of questions unanswered. The assassination came hours before a four-member government delegation was to leave for the northern Jaffna town for the second round of peace talks with the rebels. A week earlier, the first round had ended on a highly optimistic note. What could the Tigers, then, stand to gain from such a brutal act?

"You'd be foolish to look for a rationale in what the LTTE does," says Democratic People's Liberation Front leader and MP Dharmalingam Sithadthan. Their basic aim, according to him, seems to be to weaken the Sinhala leadership. Many Sri Lankans — not just the Sinhalese in the south but Tamils and Muslims of the strife-torn north-east as well — believe the LTTE isn't serious about the peace talks. According to them, the killings are part of a long-term LTTE strategy of systematically eliminating the Sinhala leadership, so that they are ultimately granted the separate state of Eelam.

Last fortnight's killing of UNP leaders notwithstanding, analysts say the party, which has made comebacks in the past, will survive and recover. In a compromise formula thrashed out by the party leadership, Wickremesinghe, who was tipped to fill the presidential candidate's slot, would succeed Gamini Dissanayake as the opposition leader in Parliament, and take over the party's reins when President D.B. Wijetunga lays down his office after the presidential election. For, right now Dissanayake's widow is the UNP's best bet. "Srma Dissanayake is the best candidate under the circumstances," said UNP

Vice President Susil Moonesinghe rather candidly. Mrs Dissanayake, 51, a lawyer by profession, is no newcomer to politics, being a member of the Central Provincial Council.

Ironically, the November 9 election is over an office which both the UNP and PA say they want abolished. The PA had

vowed to abolish the President's office — it carries sweeping executive powers — once it came to power. After winning the parliamentary election, however, the party said it would do so within six months of Kumaratunga's winning the presidency. Gamini Dissanayake was among those who felt that if the PA won the presidential

election, it would retain the office "with all its glory". Were his death to take his party to victory. Sri Lanka would continue to have a president from the UNP, and a prime minister from the rival party. Given the violently fractious and polarised nature of Sri Lankan politics, this could only bring a fresh spell of instability.

[1.7]

Prof. Shelton Kodikara

Being an internationalist of the first grade, Shelton Kodikara's demise leaves a void which cannot be easily replaced. Not only is his loss irreparable in Sri Lanka, but it will also be felt in the South Asian Region and beyond especially in the United States of America. It is significant that his call from this world came just after he had attended an Asia Society Seminar in the USA.

My association with Shelton goes back to my spell in the Sri Lanka Overseas Service when he was Deputy High Commissioner in Madras 1975-77. His clear and penetrative analysis of Tamil Nadu politics in particular and Indian politics in general were of immense assistance to officers at the headquarters in understanding the interplay of Centre-State relations in India.

It was as Director of Studies at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies (BCIS) that I was able to cultivate a personal relationship with Shelton. This gave me an opportunity of getting to know and appreciate his fine intellect and human character which all in all made up an individual who was of a higher plane by way of mental make-up, but who could easily reach down to the level of students and the uninitiated.

As a Visiting Lecturer in Sri Lankan Foreign Policy at the BCIS for a decade, Shelton exhibited the total dedication expected of a Guru. Never did he miss out on a scheduled lecture, even though it entailed his having to motor from Peradeniya to the BMICH, except when he was hospitalised for surgery. The masterly art of making the finer and sometimes not easily discernible aspects of Foreign Policy, comprehensible to the novice, was Shelton's unique strength. With his basic textbook "*Foreign Policy or Sri Lanka: A Third World Perspective*" which he had the opportunity of revising when appointed First SAARC Professor of the Delhi University in 1991-92, Shelton steered many a BCIS Diploma Course student, through the vicissitudes of Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy since Independence.

All the qualities of a Guru of the finest tradition were possessed by Shelton. Blessed with a sense of humour, patience and a most persuasive lecture-delivery style, he was one who could infuse confidence in those who came under his direction. I recall how he calmed the fears of a group of postgraduates attending his class in Concepts in International Relations by telling them that if they were confused it was a sure sign that they were beginning to understand the subject! Although he demanded the highest academic standards from his students, he was extremely understanding of the problems and uncertainties of modern living. This endowed him with a humanism in his personal relationships. For him the Sabbath was made for man and not vice versa.

As a member of the Council of Management of the BCIS since late 1987, Shelton displayed a whole hearted commitment. Never was there a negative response to a request for the exacting task of supervising a student's Dissertation or the time-consuming edition of the publication of the Proceedings of a Seminar. It was with enthusiasm that he took on the editing of one such BCIS publication, "*Dilemmas of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations*". However much this came in the way of his other commitments, as Professor of International Relations at the University of Colombo, it had to be done, since to Shelton, Indo-Sri Lanka Relations were of vital importance, whose correct course was dear to his heart.

Shelton assumed the post of Executive Director of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) located in the BMICH in 1993. This provided him an opportunity of giving substance to many of his concepts for the growth of South Asian regionalism. His continuing dynamism was reflected in the organization of International Seminars on a regular basis on most relevant subjects ranging from "Refugees and Internal Security in South Asia" to "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics in South Asia". Shelton became even more actively involved in International Relations with the progression of years. So did Professor John Richardson at the American University, Washington DC comment. Accumulated experience made complex issues more comprehensible and spurred him on.

Shelton's demise is a pause in this process. But his life's work will continue. For Shelton has aroused in the hearts and minds of many a young Sri Lankan an aspiring for the regional and global implications of Sri Lankan politics. This was the life achievement of Shelton Kodikara, an academic whose thought and voice were consecrated to the development of Sri Lankans as Global-thinking citizens, equipped to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Bravo Shelton, for a life lived to the fullest!

Ray Forbes
Director, BCIS

Peace feelers and the peace process

Shelton U. Kodikara (Faculty of Political Science, University of Colombo)

The most hopeful sign that ethnic peace may at last dawn in Sri Lanka is that both sides, the government as well as the LTTE have been sending out peace feelers to end the corrosive war which is taking a daily toll of lives among Sinhala soldiers and civilians as well as Tamil militants and civilians. If there is any broad agreement among Sinhalese and Tamils about the ethnic conflict, it is that it must end soon. In Jaffna, it is reported that senior citizens are now coming out openly and asking the LTTE to lay down its arms and enter the peace process. When a delegation of Catholic dignitaries visited Jaffna at the end of March (1992), they came away with the strong impression that the people in the North had "a profound and authentic yearning for peace with dignity and justice", and that a political solution of the ethnic problem "which does not necessarily reject the idea of a unitary state", that is, presumably, within the parameters of a united Sri Lanka, was negotiable. This must be taken to mean that from the Tamil side "Eelam and no less" as the minimum demand has been given up for a solution "which meets the just aspirations of the Tamil people". The term "unitary" in the language of Political Science, however, is juxtaposed to "federal"; and if the message intended to be conveyed through the Catholic dignitaries implied acceptance of a unitary political structure, that is, a structure in which the central Parliament would be the supreme law-making body in the state and in which the provinces or regions enjoyed no entrenched powers beyond legislative powers devolved on them, and executive authority on issues such as land and law and order is divided between centre and periphery according to already accepted norms, then we are closer to resolving a question which has frequently come up in the ethnic debate, namely, whether federalism is not more suited to the present-day situation in Sri Lanka than the present supposedly unitary structure.

I have always regarded this question to be one which is very largely academic, because more important than the unitary/federal nomenclature is the disposition of power between centre and periphery. It can be argued that the 13th Amendment to the Constitution has already introduced elements of federalism to our political structure. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with a federalist approach to our political problems. It received a negative reaction from the Sinhalese because of

its early association with Tamil politics under Chelvanayakam. But it always suffered from the disadvantage that it amounted to a question of power-sharing between two ethnic groups with the larger one been not interested in federalism at all. Moreover, federal politics are not having the best of times these days the world over. The Soviet Union has disintegrated, so has the Yugoslavia that we knew. India is faced with several separatist movements all at once. We have come to the stage when a unit constituting a federal polity can declare its independence at any time, and Sri Lanka already has the experience of a unilateral declaration of independence of the Northeast not so long ago.

Yet another hopeful sign for ethnic peace in the foreseeable future is that we have at long last a Parliamentary Select Committee, with representatives of the major political parties entrusted with the task of devising a consensus solution to the ethnic problem. Even though the Government Party, the UNP, and the main Opposition Party, the SLFP, have not submitted proposals to the Committee, and the LTTE itself, under present circumstances cannot appear before it, there is reason to believe that the major political parties might go along with any package that might come from the Committee. The Acting Leader of the Opposition, Anura Bandaranaike, hoped that the Select Committee would work out an acceptable political package, because "this was the last chance" for a political solution, and he said that one of the objectives of the opposition parties *Pada Yatra* undertaken from Colombo to Kataragama was to focus the attention of the people on the futility of continuing the Northeast war (Daily News, 13 March 1992).

Obstacles to a Peaceful Solution

If this is, indeed, the "last chance" for a political solution of the ethnic problem, one might ask: what are the current obstacles to a peaceful solution of it? To my mind, there are several obstacles which need to be removed before one can think of a political solution at all. One is that prevailing misperceptions amongst Sinhalese as well as Tamils as regards their attitudes and intentions towards each other must be removed. The Sinhalese cannot help their majority status in the country; they must not be made to feel that they are being reduced to a minority status in parts of the country designated as traditional Tamil homelands. Without

going into the historical validity of claims of particular ethnic groups to particular areas of the country, it would be most conducive to peace to regard the whole of Sri Lanka as a territory to which every ethnic group has an equal claim, in terms of freedom of travel, freedom of residence, and freedom to carry out one's avocations without fear and favour. Terms such as "colonisation" and "decolonisation" are emotive terms which do not help in creating the proper atmosphere necessary for removing misperceptions. We must take account of present realities, not concentrate on what is perceived as wrongs perpetrated by history. Otherwise, we get embroiled in questions such as "Whose history is right?", and "How far back in history shall we go?". One of the encouraging signs in the report of the Catholic dignitaries was that they were made aware of the need for greater people-to-people contact between the ethnic communities than obtained at present. The following concrete suggestions were, in fact, made to them in this regard:

1. As the lack of communication between the North and South creates prejudices and paves the way for further alienation, a people-to-people dialogue through goodwill visits be pursued.
2. That multi-religious groups make visits to the people North in order to bring about greater understanding of one another's positions and apprehensions.
3. Create confidence-building measures, such as further easing of the shortage of food, medicines, etc. in the North with a view to bringing about the right climate for a cessation of hostilities and the negotiation of a political solution.

These conditionalities are not hard to bring about; they are easily arranged. They were, in fact, long overdue. To create a climate of opinion such as this, it is also very necessary that the Tamil people throughout the length and breadth of Sri Lanka must not have the conviction that they are continually discriminated against, that the majoritarian principle implies that they are in a permanent minority in the country politically, without any real say in the conduct of its affairs. There are institutional means by which such a feeling of discrimination can be dispelled. One is the creation of a Second Chamber; another is a reversion to the Executive Committee

system of the Donoughmore Constitution, which has already been proposed by one of Sri Lanka's eminent jurists. Other devices can be thought of. The important thing is to realise that Sinhalese, Tamils, as well as Muslims are engaged in a common political endeavour, namely to raise the living standards of all sections of the people. At a time when even Tamils are ranged against Tamils and Muslims, as well as against Sinhalese, and when India itself is taking a decidedly unfriendly stance against Sri Lankan Tamils, it becomes all the more necessary that the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka itself must begin to trust each other and learn to live with each other.

The biggest obstacle to a peaceful solution of Sri Lanka's ethnic problem is the issue of the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Devised as a transitional arrangement to be confirmed or rejected on the basis of a referendum to be held in the Eastern Province, the merger has become the biggest bone of contention between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Since the projected referendum has now been postponed six times, ground conditions in the Eastern Province not being conducive so far for its holding, and since all Tamil political groups and parties are inflexible in their stand that continuance of the merger is an essential prerequisite for a political solution, the biggest task of statesmanship now is to find a compromise which meets also with Sinhala concerns that perpetuation of the merger is tantamount to reserving two-fifths of the country and three-fifths of its coastline to Tamils (or to Tamils and Muslims), with Sinhalese marginalised in this area as a minority with, at best, "minority safeguards", according to the Thondaman proposals. Perpetuation of the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces is not likely to be an abiding political solution of the national question. Not only are the Sinhalese opposed to it, even a segment of the Muslims of the Eastern Province is opposed to merger, although Mr. Ashraff's SLMC would go along with it provided there is a Zonal Council within the Northeast Province to look after the interests of Muslims. The views of the Tamil people of the Eastern Province on the issue of the merger are not yet known. All Tamil political groups and parties, however, regard the merger as a *sine qua non* of any political solution of the Northeast problem. Quite apart from the fact that the views of the Muslims and the Sinhalese of the Eastern Province must also be ascertained before any decision about its future status is finally taken, the argument for the merger, that it demarcates a Tamil homeland, where Tamils can live in peace and security, has lost much of its force due to the increasing number of Tamils who are migrating from the North to the South,

and due to the fact that the Eastern Province has become a battleground of Tamils against Tamils as well as Muslims and Sri Lankan security forces.

Proposals of the Bhikku Delegation

In this context, the proposal of the Buddhist Bhikku delegation visiting Jaffna for talks with the LTTE merit careful consideration. The delegation has proposed that the merger be allowed to continue for a further three years but that it then be subjected to a referendum. The proposed referendum to decide the issue of the merger has now been postponed six times as stated above, and the ground conditions for it to be held do not still exist. It seems necessary that an islandwide population census be taken before such a referendum is held. The three-year interim period will enable the government to decide upon the feasibility of the further suggestion made by the Bhikku delegation that power be devolved at the level of the Pradeshiya Sabha, which would have power to negotiate foreign loans and decide on economic priorities. The Pradeshiya Sabha can be the bottom tier in a hierarchical structure which could then send delegates to the Provincial Council (top tier) through a process of indirect elections. Indirect election to Provincial Councils may prove to be the way out of the current impasse in which the holding of peaceful and free elections on a province-wide scale might be impossible due to the existence of armed groups or due to electoral violence amongst the ethnic groups themselves.

The Bhikku delegation is reported to have emphasized equal recognition for all ethnic groups in the Island and greater amity amongst them. This, again, points to the necessity for freedom of travel for all ethnic groups all over the Island. At present, Tamils have freedom of travel throughout the country, but the same cannot be said for the Sinhalese and Muslims.

Given these priorities, the Constitution can be amended in such a way that elements of federalism are conceded further without tampering with its essential unitary nature. We need only follow India's example in this respect. The 13th Amendment to the Constitution has already introduced a federal element to it as regards the division of legislative powers between the Centre and the Provinces (based largely on the Indian model). Allowing Pradeshiya Sabhas to negotiate foreign loans and decide economic priorities is adding another. The Thondaman proposals advocate the abolition of the Concurrent List of powers of the Centre and Provinces. This does not sound objectionable in principle, but much more thought and care must be given to the allocation

of subjects between the Centre and Provinces than has been done in these proposals. For example, "territorial waters" is assigned to the provincial list in the Thondaman proposals, an obvious mistake. Another is the relegation of Trincomalee as a provincial concern. This cannot be. Apart from being one of Sri Lanka's major ports, Trincomalee is also the headquarters of its navy, and it has become the subject of an international agreement with India. "Archives" can be left to the care of provinces, but there is such a thing as "National Archives" which can only be in the custody of the Centre.

We take it as a basic premise that any attempt at a resolution of Sri Lanka's national question, based on the restoration of peace and normalcy in the Island must rest on a surrender of arms by all militant groups operating throughout the country, and by a recognition by all the concerned parties that only the state and its agencies retain the monopoly of the use of force in the Island. In this context, state means central government as well as provincial government agencies now vested with control of law and order.

We are here talking about the situation which must emerge as part of a negotiated settlement of the national question of Sri Lanka. Present day realities may, however, preclude the laying down of arms by the militant groups concerned **during the process of negotiations**. These realities must be taken account of by the negotiating parties, but the negotiating teams must not come to the negotiating table with arms or with armed guards. Sri Lankan security forces must provide protection for all concerned in a carefully pre-selected location.

The question of peacekeeping will arise only if the negotiations are attended with a degree of success, which requires monitoring of the peace settlement. If the merger is to be continued for a further three-year interim period, the question of monitoring the peace assumes importance. With the increasing role that the United Nations is now taking as regards peacekeeping the world over, a UN peacekeeping force to monitor the transition to peace is one possibility. Another is a group comprised of SAARC representatives from, say, Nepal and Bangladesh.

The time seems now to be ripe to work towards at least an interim solution of Sri Lanka's national question. The Parliamentary Select Committee must grasp the opportunity which has presented itself, and try to work out a formula which finds maximum support from among the parties principally involved in the conflict which has been raging in Sri Lanka these many years.

Super-Secretaries, Effective Government et al — some random thoughts

After President Premadasa died and President Wijetunge assumed office. Mr. Wijetunge made a speech in which he stated that there would no longer be Super Secretaries.

It was a reference to the administrative structure which existed during the Premadasa Presidency. It is an undeniable fact conceded by everyone today, that despite all his shortcomings, President Premadasa maintained effective Government. What this in fact meant was that policy was quickly and effectively translated into action. President Premadasa, with years of experience and a "hands on" style of Government, knew that unless there was direction, monitoring and control of policy, the Public Service, being what it is, would take a casual approach to implementation of policy. He injected not only a sense of purpose but also a sense of urgency. An editorial writer who was one of his critics stated, following his death.

"President Premadasa's ability to conceptualise plans, define the parameters, mobilise the resources, organise the manpower, and supervise the implementation of the minutest details is a remarkable feat".

I mention all this only because with the assassination of Premadasa, effective management became a thing of the past. This is also an undeniable fact.

In the circumstances it would be relevant for us to examine what the structure was. Did President Premadasa have Super Secretaries for its own sake or was it to ensure effective Government? It would be recalled (by all those who remember the good old days of the Public Service) that the ST was indeed a Super Secretary, and the DST was Head of the Public Service. There was no question that even Ministers deferred to these Super Administrators. It was not a matter of vanity but it was for the sake of effective government that President Premadasa established his chain of command. After the matter of remaining in power Premadasa's priority was Economic Development. Political matters, (domestic political matters of course), were important for that was the bed on which he sought to

germinate and grow his economic programmes.

He controlled National development programmes through the Presidential Secretariat where he had Paskaralingam as the Trouble Shooter cum Secretary with supervisory and oversight authority over all other Development Secretaries. Paskaralingam had established a network from the Presidential Secretariat which permeated all line — Ministries. This is an old technique, one which was even adopted by De Gaulle in France and certain other successful Presidents, including Reagan, who was not only a successful PR man, but was the most successful President in recent years. His Chief of Staff at the White House was able to monitor developments in all departments of the US Government.

This would also make for executive accountability in Government, which is more than desirable, the Government should ensure that it creates an administrative structure in the Prime Minister's office, which would be able to monitor the work of the Ministries and keep track of the implementation of cabinet decisions. Since it would be the responsibility of the Prime Minister to account both in Parliament, and to the people at the time of the elections, it is imperative that the Prime Minister establishes a Control Room (it would be recalled that the late Dudley Senanayake established one in 1968) from where economic progress could be monitored to enable the Prime Minister to give proper direction and have political control.

The Government has been in office now for two months and it is unfair to pass any judgement on its performance over 60 days. For that matter, it would be unfair to pass judgment over its performance over the first 100 days because the Presidential Elections has diverted energies and attention. However now is the time to prepare for the establishment of proper management structures in order to implement the policies of this Government.

With the economy taking precedence over all else other than the Northern problem — we must give consideration to

administrative reform in this area. Much lip service is being paid to our intention to achieve NIC status by the turn of the century. However hardly any thought has gone into the matter of Institutional arrangements which should underpin any efforts towards achievement of such an objective.

Every strategy which is being formulated by the Government towards the achievement of NIC Status should include:

1. Sound Fiscal and Monetary policies;
2. Promotion of trade and the penetration of markets;
3. Promotion of investment;
4. Promotion of tourism;
5. The obtaining of technology, and
6. Maximisation of efforts towards the procurement of Aid;
7. Review of Currency and Commodity Markets;
8. Sound industrial relations policies;
9. Development of good infrastructure including modern communication facilities;
10. Development of good management material;
11. Upgrading of Standards to international levels;
12. Quality Control.

The aforementioned work could be accomplished effectively only through trained personnel. Our efforts today in these fields could best be described as pathetic.

1. Trade

We have today a network of 25-30 trade officers attached to our Missions. They are perhaps the only category of trained officers in our overseas establishments. They are today essentially doing administrative work related to trade and almost nothing in the area of product promotion, product development or marketing. They just don't have the time for it.

As for the efforts of the Export Development Board, they merely scratch the surface in relation to what they should be doing. This is very evident when one compares the efforts of countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, to name a few. The compari-

son is relevant and justified if we are to take the statements of intent regarding achieving NIC status by the turn of the century, seriously. Trade Sections of all Embassies world over are as big if not bigger than the Political Sections. Trade is the principal vehicle of Economic progress. It must be so with us too. The Ministry of Trade must be a Central Ministry or a key Ministry. The importance of Commerce and Trade to the Nations well being cannot be overemphasised. Commerce must be taught in school. We must attract the major American Business Schools to the Country. Offer them incentives to establish in Sri Lanka and grant scholarships to as many students as possible so that we build human resources capable of taking the country forward.

2. Foreign Investment

If we are to promote foreign investment into Sri Lanka (we are competing not only with developing countries, but also with developed countries in this area), we should make a serious effort by having Investment Promotion Officers stationed in target countries with adequate resources to enable them to promote investment effectively.

We must promote investment not only in Manufacturing Industry, but also the Services where possibilities are greater and far better, considering Sri Lanka's circumstances.

There has been no indepth study of the strategies followed by countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. The Government should commission a study by a team of qualified consultants, who should be required to make recommendations on the strategies we need to follow including identifying areas where investments ought to be promoted.

Embassies are today expected to promote investment without personnel or funds for this purpose, leave alone direction. It is both unrealistic and absurd beyond words to expect officers of the Department of Commerce to be involved in and responsible for investment promotion, in addition to their other functions.

The present Economic, Physical and Social infrastructure has to be improved and brought up to international standards. The investment in a highway network and a fibre optic based communication network are imperative. The reference to Social infrastructure has been made advisably. No important foreign company

could invest in a country unless their Executives and their families could live in a manner they are accustomed to — with minimum inconvenience.

3. Tourism

The promotion of Tourism is not being done in professional manner due to financial constraints. In Europe, the Tourist Board has one officer stationed in Frankfurt and another in Paris who are expected to cover the whole of Europe, but the officers work on shoe string budgets. Promotion is being done by travel agents. Air Lanka's efforts in this area are marginal. The principal complaint regarding the promotion of tourism, is that Sri Lanka is promoting the Low class — cheap tourist from Europe — particularly those who collect a little money and travel on package tours or Charter flights and spend little or no money in the country — having prepaid for the package tour — Not the better class of tourist. The Sex Tourist has also found Sri Lanka an attractive destination. If we are to attract the better class of Tourist we must discourage the Sex and Drugs Tourist by compulsory long jail terms — unless this is done we will not be able to attract the better class of Tourist.

The quality of the product we are selling also needs to be improved. It is not enough to depend on those 'wonders' that sell themselves such as Sigiriya, the beaches, the ancient cities and the game reserves...

4. Technology

In regard to the matter of obtaining relevant technology to support our manufactures, our efforts in this area are insignificant by their total absence. Most countries, including India, make a serious effort in this sector.

5. Management Training and Skill Development

The Government must attract reputed Business Schools from the West to establish in Sri Lanka. It is in our interest to give them attractive incentives, including permanent tax holidays and also land and where possible buildings. High quality executives are vital for the success of any development programme.

6. Development Assistance

In the area of Development Assistance, perhaps the Government is aware of the increasing trend towards coordination of Development Assistance by donor countries. Countries in the Aid Consortium, for instance, discuss their bilateral assistance programmes with the World Bank, the

Asian Development Bank, and the European Community. The World Bank coordinates the efforts of the aid consortium countries. There is therefore a structured approach.

On our side too there is a need for a structural approach. In Sri Lanka, relations with the European Community and being managed by the Department of Commerce because in 1975, the Agreement that was signed with the Commission, was a Commercial Co-operation Agreement. The situation has undergone a sea change today with 'Commercial Co-operation' having vanished as a concept from the EC Development Co-operation map. 'Commercial Co-operation' forms a very small part of the Economic Co-operation. The EC gives greater weightage today to Development Co-operation and Scientific Co-operation. Considering this situation, it is anachronistic for the Department of Commerce to continue to manage and implement the decisions of the EC/Sri Lanka Joint Commission. This must be done in our own interest, at a much higher level to be effective, particularly now, because we have signed a new far reaching, third generation agreement with the EC.

This brings me to the matter of the coordination of our External Economic Relations. Whilst this is done in many countries in a separate Ministry for External Economic Relations, in other countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has its own External Relations Division, which would have sub-divisions covering External Resources (foreign aid), foreign trade, scientific co-operation etc.

We had in the recent past in Sri Lanka the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Economic Affairs as an apex body. Decisions of this Committee were transmitted to various Departments and Ministries concerned for implementation. It may be in our interest to examine these arrangements which seems somewhat loose, with a view to restructuring perhaps the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enable it to function also as a Secretariat of the Cabinet Sub-Committee or to establish a separate Secretariat for the Sub-Committee or to establish a separate Ministry of External Economic Relations.

The new Government which is committed to restore Parliamentary Democracy and Cabinet Government, would no doubt go back to the British System of Government and the system we had prior to changes effected in '78.

It would be relevant to recall the reasons adduced by J.R. Jayawardena for establishing an Executive Presidency. His foremost claim was that it was necessary for effective Government.

No Economic Programme, or for that matter even a Social Development Programme, can be effectively implemented unless the government machinery is effective. For this purpose it is not only critical to have a proper chain of command, but also train personnel at all levels. The situation in Sri Lanka today in this regard is to say the least, sub-standard.

Administrative Reforms

The new Government does not appear to have done its homework whilst it was in Opposition. For there was no mention in the Manifesto of any reform of the Administration. This is a matter which must be given the highest priority if the Government is to implement effectively its policies. There are today, both in the ranks of the present Public Service and among those retired persons who have had experience in the Administration of International Organisations, which had wider constituencies to cater to. The Prime Minister may consider appointing a Commission from among them whose mandate should be to make suggestions for the establishment of a new 'development administration' taking account of the de-centralised situation consequent to the devolution of power to the Provincial Councils. Such a Commission could also explore ways and means of attracting the best talent to the Public Service, as was the case in the years before and after independence. With no offence to today's Public Service, the quality of the men at the top cannot be compared with those who held the same positions both before and immediately after independence. There were many reasons for this, one of which of course is that the quality of university education was far superior. In India today the emphasis is on university level education. They are more concerned with quality than quantity. There was a time when they churned sub-standard products, but they are aware that as is in all other fields, they must produce quality products and in this instance executives, to compete internationally.

Whilst the Government needs, on an urgent basis to do strategic planning and decide on what they would like this country to be ten years from now, the building blocks should be put in place now. Perhaps the most important building block in this exercise would be the quality of education.

Whilst any responsible Government should indulge in strategic planning, all political parties the world over, and governments are required to think in terms of immediate problems and solutions to them. The Government should address these problems by amongst other encouraging internationally reputed management schools to establish in Sri Lanka. As mentioned earlier they could be given attractive incentives, including permanent tax holidays to staff and other privileges. Such institutes, once established, could run crash courses to upgrade quality of management in all areas. Such schools

would attract Students/Executives from the Region if they be prestigious institutions.

I do not wish in this article to discuss any other issues. It is intended to provoke some urgent thinking on this vital issue on gearing-up the administration in the shortest possible time to be able to service the Government. If this is not done on an urgent basis, we would once again hear the old cry of the politicians blaming the bureaucracy for having failed to deliver the goods to the people.

G.K.

The Scholar's Tale (20)

*Where was our Hero, the Scholar
As contemporary horror vied horror
Was he re-coding his Programme
As events his Computer outran?*

*The axis for Acceleration
Already used in the Development Equation
Threw up multiple solutions
Not just on Irrigation and Power, but Possessions*

*The Caliph thus eclipsed by the Vizier
Events went wildly Fast-Breeder
With the Vizier's vision rounding the corners
The Computer cut multidimensional Capers.*

*On dams that were safely Agri-purpose
The Vizier decreed stately pump-houses
Accelerating village land lubbers seawards
To be painlessly drowned in their hundreds.
But Foreign Experts on Failure and Commission
Found their percentage better than confession.*

*Our own Professionals hooked on percentages
Were vague about Weeping Walls and Seepages
No matter, since their percentage Extraction
Only meant worker devaluation
Driving the graphics of real wage deflation
Assymetrical to the curve of inflation*

*This led to the main Innovation
Of percentages for Alleviation.
So Alleviation became Anaesthetization
Of a fooled and defrauded Nation.*

*Then came matters transcending Economics
With background noises drowning the Polemics
These were the new noises of History
Programmed on the Old Mahawamsa mystery*

*With the Cholans allegedly battering the gates
The Programme selected both Pol-Pots as Mates.*

U. Karunatilake

PARACETAMOL?

Under glamorously advertised brand names PARACETAMOL sells as a popular Pain Killer.

IS PARACETAMOL ALSO A PLAIN KILLER?

There have been world wide reports of fatal and non fatal poisoning linked to severe liver damage on repeated dosing with Paracetamol. Though the maximum recommended dose is 20mg/kilo of body weight or two 500mg tablets for a 50 kilo adult this dose is too high if repeated four hourly. To avoid serious liver damage the dosage should be limited to 10mg/kilo body weight or one 500mg tablet only every 4 hours for a 50 kilo adult.

As for Children above one year Paracetamol Paediatric Syrup has 120mg Paracetamol per 5ml teaspoon. At the safe limit of 10mg/kilo of body weight this means, for instance only half teaspoon for a six kilo child. Infants under one year, should be given Paracetamol only on a doctor's responsibility.

Your liver needs time to clear the poisonous breakdown products of Paracetamol which bind to the liver cells. If dosage is repeated above the safety limit your liver tissue is irreversibly damaged. Resulting malfunction of the liver means that poisonous compounds even from normal body processes which are usually detoxified by the liver, continue to circulate in the blood leading to serious damage at the point they are filtered out in the urine - the Kidney. Hence liver damage means ultimate Kidney-failure related perhaps to the current epidemic of Kidney failure which has become the basis of a major Industry.

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Norway as international peacemaker

Jan Egeland

It is time to develop new strategies if we are going to have any chance of reversing the trend of an ever increasing number of refugees and displaced persons.

First, we must include all displaced persons and migrants in our quest for short-term protection and long-term solutions. I have felt an increasing need to focus more attention on mass movements of people not covered by the traditional definition of refugees in the Geneva Convention. In addition to the 20 million recognized refugees to day, there are an even higher number of internally displaced people.

Second, we should use the methods we already have differently, or combine them in new and unorthodox ways. We should also realize that resettlement in faraway countries will benefit only a decreasing minority of the global refugee populations.

Third, there can be no long-term solutions without a comprehensive package of humanitarian, political and development initiatives as presently undertaken in the Middle East. The same should apply to our approach to other wars from the Balkans to Angola.

Fourth, we must ensure that international action is taken to protect vulnerable communities in repressive systems. Comprehensive strategies to safeguard the human rights of those threatened by aggression and brutality should be elaborated. "Humanitarian intervention" by use of force should be our last resort, when all other diplomatic and humanitarian options have been exhausted.

Fifth, we must have the necessary organizational and material preparedness in order to be able to provide humanitarian assistance in time. Our capacity for early warning has increased in recent years due to enhanced cooperation between networks of NGOs and the multilateral organizations. But our capacity for early intervention is inadequate. In Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken the initiative to create a Norwegian Emergency

Preparedness System (NO-REPS). In cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council, we now provide the UNHCR and other UN agencies with a large number of experienced relief workers within 48 hours, anywhere in the world. We also provide ten categories of selected airborne relief items from stand-by relief stocks in Norway and Africa in less than 24 hours. This system has proven to be great value in emergency situations when disasters strike far too quickly for any one multilateral or non-governmental organization to cope with them alone.

Sixth, we should enhance the UN's ability to make peace and prevent conflict. Today, the peace-keeping forces aim at assisting the implementation of agreements between conflicting parties by both military and civilian means. Their mandate has been extended to include organizing free and fair elections, monitoring human rights and police conduct, ensuring public order, providing humanitarian assistance and repatriating refugees.

We have proposed that the UN should more actively send fact-finding missions to areas of potential conflict.

Seventh, we must find a more powerful strategy to protect and promote democracy and good governance. Through a system of checks and balances, a participatory democratic order can ensure that no segment of society becomes omnipotent. We can prevent conflict through assisting democratic forces in poor countries to build systems governed by the rule of law. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Human Rights Institute have established a resource bank of expertise which provides personnel and funds for democracy-building projects in dozens of countries and areas threatened by authoritarian forces.

In August, a Norwegian conflict-prevention delegation visited Burundi to evaluate how we can assist the UN and local forces to help prevent Burundi from becoming a new Rwanda. Today, some ten projects have been established evolving the two main contending tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsi.

Eighth, from our corner in northwestern

Europe, we may easily overestimate the effect of emergency assistance and underestimate the importance of rehabilitation and long term development. The initial relief phase should always be followed by international cooperation and support for reconstruction. It is important to prevent refugee camps from becoming shelters in which refugees spend decades passively waiting. And it is imperative that the poverty that has caused so many refugee disasters should not be allowed to produce new ones.

Ninth, we must also reaffirm our commitment to provide protection through political asylum for those in need. The concept of "Fortress Europe" against refugees must never become a reality.

My tenth, and last suggestion is that the efforts of government the UN system, other international agencies and non-governmental organizations should be better coordinated in order to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication. Non-governmental organizations represent the greatest potential for future effective humanitarian action for those in greatest need. Their operational capacity and rapid mobilization of resources make them the best tools for immediate international disaster relief at the grass-root level. We are actively lobbying the UN and other governments to give NGO the same status in their disaster preparedness as they have in our Norwegian system.

Norwegian model

The close cooperation between voluntary organizations, academic circles and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in humanitarian action and peace work has become known as the "Norwegian model". Long before the creation of the Middle East channel, we used this model to engage in systematic efforts to achieve peace in Guatemala, then in the throes of civil war. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working in close cooperation with Norwegian Church Aid and the Lutheran World Federation, has taken steps to facilitate a peace process on two levels: firstly, peace negotiations between the government and the guerrilla movement, the URNG which began in Norway in March 1990 and have continued with the UN as mediator. No-

rway is one of the six Friends of the Peace Process designated by the two parties. In June this year the parties signed two peace agreements in Oslo: one regarding the safe repatriation of tens of thousands of refugees from Mexico and the other establishing a "Commission of Truth" regarding the more than one hundred thousand political assassinations during the reign of terror in Guatemala.

Secondly, the government and a number of church organizations have begun a process of reconciliation between the government, the army, the guerrillas and Indian and other grassroots organizations. In April we provide funding for an ecumenical meeting between the military, human rights groups and Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberta Menchu and other Indian leaders. In September, for the first time, the guerrillas met with the military, and Indian and other local NGO's in three-way negotiations in Oslo.

There have been other attempts to foster peace as well. The government of Sudan and the armed opposition movement, the SPLA, have met through various Norwegian academic gatherings. Under the auspices of the UN and EU mediator for the former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, the Serb and the Croat side of the Krajina conflict met for talks at a Norwegian mountain resort last autumn. There has been further initiatives and contacts elsewhere, which shall remain unofficial upon the request of the parties.

The nature of each conflict is unique and any attempt at mediation or conciliation will by necessity be different from

other peace talks. Hard learnt experience from the above-mentioned cases has taught us that we should be careful in trying to transplant lessons from one peace process to the direct benefit of others.

Still, there seem to be certain common denominators for modern wars and their actors.

First, there is, for the impartial observer, a surprising gap in the respective perceptions of what is, in fact, the reality. Even basic historic data or socio-economic statistics may be highly controversial, in part because information is systematically distorted or censored by at least one of the parties.

Furthermore, it is often more obvious for the observer than for the parties that peace is in their interest rather than continued conflict. In the Middle East there was a short "window of opportunity" when in 1992-93 for the first time both the Israelis and the PLO saw it in their interest to compromise for the benefit of peace. In most cases the other side is not ready if their opponents are prepared to bargain. Often, willingness to give concessions is interpreted as weakness by foes and even allies. The task of the mediator will be to convince the leaderships that short-term concessions in order to reach agreement are small compared to the long-term benefits of peace.

Finally, we tend to forget the dynamic internal interplay of political forces on each side of the conflict. Parallel to any negotiations across the conflict lines, equally difficult power struggles take place bet

ween hawks and doves at home. In the Middle East, as well as in Central America or on the Balkans reports from street meetings or fighter reunions indicate that the respective public opinions are often much more hardline against giving concessions than their remote and jet-setting negotiations.

With less than one tenth of a percent of the world's population Norwegian military, strategic or economic power will always be marginal. Still, in certain areas of international relations the small, coherent, affluent and activist nation may have comparative advantages to that of the big power or intergovernmental organization.

In promoting peace, human rights and democracy there are occasions when the small country may make a difference, because of, rather than in spite of, being a small country. We have brought together conflict parties in the Middle East, Central America, the Balkans and elsewhere. Not because we in any way can force or threaten the parties, but because the parties see it in their interest to use a trusted facilitator to test the chances for a peaceful settlement of their conflict.

Our commitment does not stop here. We have learnt that visions can be translated into reality. Whether peace negotiations organized by Norway will again be successful is an open question. Perhaps only one in ever hundred attempts will succeed. Nonetheless, it will be worth the effort. The slogan of the student revolution of 1968 may be appropriate:

Be a realist, attempt the impossible.

U.N. AND WAR (3)

Bush Fire Burnt Out

Horace Perera

These institutions have been studied in fair detail with a view to demonstrating that except for NATO, the other two had not the capacity for co-ordinating the Western response. Apart from efforts at brokering cease fire agreements, conducting peace keeping operations and providing humanitarian aid they could, at the time they accepted responsibility for solving the crisis, do little to discharge it. The leaders with whom they were dealing, particularly the Serbs, hardly showed any desire to come to the negotiating table and

when they did, they did so with hardly intention of implementing any agreements reached. The only language they understood was force and brute force at that. The one Super Power that could have shown them force, be it under Bush or Clinton, lacked the courage and the wisdom and dumped the problem on the lap of the E.C. Even after the 25th. September 1991, when the Security Council seized responsibility this Super Power failed to give the international community the effective leadership which it alone could have

given. Even when the Council finally authorized the use of force it was limited to the use of air power and restricted to specific purposes such as protecting UN personnel and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. Consequently the war for Bosnia-Herzegovina continued and the second war for Croatia had still to be fought unless it could be ended with peaceful means which is, as things stand, very unlikely. The US, by its shameful act of omission shares the guilt for the barbarities, including the "ethnic cleansing" that

have been perpetrated by all parties, particularly the Bosnian Serbs.

It must be remembered that the wars in Yugoslavia broke out in June 1991 when Bush had still a year and half left of his term of office. It is a matter for surprise that the person who gave such effective leadership in the Persian Gulf crisis and in the war that followed agreed to hand over the responsibility for "the Western response" to the E.C. The US should have known very well that this Community had not the procedures, nor the mechanisms and therefore not the capacity to discharge that responsibility effectively. There can be many reasons for Bush distancing himself and his country from the situation. To begin with there was not in the conflict in Yugoslavia the compelling combination of reasons which made the situation in the Gulf a matter of paramount importance to US national interests. It is very likely that, at that particular time, to most Americans and to Bush himself — to use Chamberlain's memorable words in regard to the Czechoslovak crisis in 1938 — the conflict in Yugoslavia was a "quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know very little". There may be other reasons too. He probably had his hands full trying to "win the peace" in the Gulf after the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait, pitted as he was against consistent efforts by Saddam Hussein to circumvent, with his usual craftiness, the undertaking he had accepted by agreeing to the conditions laid down in Security Council resolution 687 (1991). One cannot also rule out the allegations made by quite a few political commentators that Bush was already beginning to calculate his chances of re-election in 1992. This could have contributed to his enunciation of what has been called "The Bush Doctrine" that American soldiers should not be sent into a conflict in which they are not going to prevail and prevail rapidly. This consideration may have gathered weight with the extension of the war into Bosnia-Herzegovina, particularly as his opponent in the Presidential campaign was focussing attention overwhelmingly on the need to give a high priority to domestic issues facing the country. Bush had consequently to trim his campaign sails and to avoid involving the US in a war far away which, if it turned out to be a prolonged operation, could most probably have an adverse effect on his prospects of re-election. Not only did

he not have the courage and vision to intervene at a time when most commentators feel intervention would have paid dividends but he even declared as "reckless" Clinton's proposal to use air strikes against those impeding the delivery of humanitarian aid. It is difficult to disagree with William Paff's comment that the "Conqueror of Panama" and "Liberator of Kuwait", for the most contemptible reasons of partisan advantage, abdicated the leadership which the Commander-in-Chief of the solitary Super Power is expected to give the international community. NATO, recognized as the most powerful military alliance in the world, could have been used to check Serbian aggression when in July 1991 it attacked Croatia and the spill over of the conflict into Bosnia-Herzegovina could have been prevented. Non-intervention by the Western allies only encouraged Slobodan Milosevic and his henchman, Radovan Karadzic, to proceed with their war of expansion and the horrendous atrocities that have gone, and is still going with it.

Clinton's Legacy

In view of Bill Clinton's criticism, during the election trail, of Bush's Yugoslav policy, the latter would probably have had no regrets at all in leaving the "Yugoslav Problem" as a legacy to his successor. After all, Clinton during the campaign, had declared that the US should "do what it takes to stop the slaughter of civilians" and that it "could not ignore what happens to be a deliberate and systematic extermination of human beings based on their ethnic origin". Furthermore, he had accused Bush of giving short shrift to those yearning for freedom in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and for "ignoring the fact that the rise to power of Slobodan Milosevic signalled the appearance on the international stage of 'one of Europe's bloodiest Tyrants'". He also picked up some suggestions, made by international observers, such as the need to "tighten the economic blockade of Serbia", and to "seek Security Council authorization for the use of air strikes against those who attack relief and aid convoys". Furthermore he advocated the creation of an international army "whose troops would be ready to risk their lives for peace standing (presumably as 'knights in shining armour') at the borders of countries threatened by aggression, preventing mass violations against civilian populations, providing humanitarian relief and combatting terrorism. "With declarations like these he had

very little to complain about his legacy because he had claimed, rhetorically, at least that he was prepared to do what Bush had left undone. The task he had brought on himself was a formidable one. By the time of his inauguration in January 1993 some 25% of Croatia had been overrun by Serbian forces and an uneasy peace reigned in that republic in spite of a peace plan brokered by Cyrus Vance, the UN mediator, and the deployment by the Security Council of UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) for peace keeping purposes in UN Protection Areas (UNPAs). The war in Bosnia was at its fiercest with all the barbarities associated with that euphemism "ethnic cleansing". What was expected of the new President was, as far as foreign affairs was concerned, a clear statement of the goal of US policy in regard to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to the former Republic of Yugoslavia, referred to from 30 May 1992 as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in Security Council Resolution 7/1991. There were, one might say, three options. The first of these was for the US to put its weight behind the territorial and political lines imposed by force by the Bosnian Serbs. The second was to assist the Muslims to move forward militarily with a view to restore Bosnia-Herzegovina to its pre-war dimensions. The third was to broker, with the parties concerned, the partition of the republic into three, more or less ethnic, areas. Whichever options were chosen there would have to be entrenched constitutional provisions for the protection of the rights of the minorities. To implement a selected option the US would have to have a President capable and determined to give effective leadership to Europe and to the world at large. As events proved, that leadership Clinton was not able to give because of his little experience of, and less interest in foreign affairs. This was revealed by one who attended most of Clinton's foreign policy meetings. He complained that at these meetings little was done beyond the consideration of the most immediate issues, that Clinton hates to take decisions on foreign policy, and consequently there is no crisp sense of direction from the President. It is this manner of dealing with foreign policy issues that brought from the United Royal Institute of Strategic Studies in London the remark that "the US, even more than usual, does not seem to be following a steady compass".

Next: Clinton's Bosnia

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Purity, Motherhood and Sinhala Buddhist Women

Kumari Jayawardena

The concepts of female purity and of the women as the producer of heroic males acquire enormous significance in times of heightened ethnic rivalry and conflict. Popular inflammatory and demagogic appeals during such times are based on atrocity stories about women, ranging from allegations of rape, to the cutting off of breasts, abduction, forced marriage and the luring of women by males of the "other" community.

These attitudes were apparent even in earlier periods. During the 1930s, a period of economic depression and unemployment, the campaign to deport Malayali workers from Kerala (South India), who at that time formed an important section of the Colombo working class, was characterized by frequent accusations that these Malayali Hindu workers were using unfair tactics such as "Malayali black magic" and charms to entice Sinhala Buddhist women. Some racists of the time praised Hitler's policies of Aryan purity, and a letter to the editor of a trade union journal, commenting favourably on Hitler's prohibition of marriages between Aryans and Jews, wrote:

"Everyone says that unions between Sinhala women and Malayalis, whether legal or not should be prohibited. If this practice, which is certain to lead the nation to slavery and servitude, is prohibited, it will be a timely step for the cause of the Sinhala race. It is the duty of all Sinhalese to support such a demand (*Viraya*, 17 April, 1936)".

The affirmation of women as mothers of heroic males has now acquired significance in opposition to the Tamil separatist struggle. The emergence of militant Tamil youth groups demanding a separate state and committed to armed struggle to achieve it has dominated the politics of Sri Lanka for the last decade. The violence of the 1980s included the army moving against the militants, the pogrom against Tamils in July 1983, the continuing escalation of the conflict, and Indian intervention and consequently the flaring up

of Sinhala militant youth, led by the JVP, in the South. The unceasing violence in North and South made Sri Lanka a country with the highest number of violent deaths per population in the world in 1989-1990.

Gender issues have figured prominently in the carnage of these years. In the South, the 1983 pogrom and the resulting numbers of Tamil refugees led to women's organizations coming out to give shelter and help to refugees. In December 1984, over 100 women of all communities prominent in the arts, professions and politics signed a statement calling for a political settlement to the conflict, stating that there could be no military solution; this led to the formation of an organization called Women for Peace in 1985. While some women have thus been agitating for peace, the dominant tendency within the Sinhala Buddhist ethnic group has been to oppose any political solution and to support the efforts of the state to suppress the Tamil militancy by the force of arms. It makes heroes of the members of the security forces, calls for support to them and exalts the mothers of soldiers as heroic women making sacrifices for the country and the Sinhala community.

In an unsigned article (called "Macho Sons and 'Man-made' Mothers"), Serena Tannekoon made an analysis of these constructions as they were manifested in a cassette of Sinhala battle songs (Rana Gi) put out by the government in 1986 that "glorified war and violence perpetrated in the name of patriotism and motherhood by male 'military culture'". According to one song,

Defending the motherland, myson is like protecting the Mother who bore and nourished you.

As Tannekoon notes:

The cassette... makes heroes of males who have entrapped themselves in a vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence. Male military heroes, and their "supporting" cast of mothers and

admiring wives and lovers, are invoked to condone the insanity of organised male violence. A...pernicious objective of these songs is to define women as an intrinsic part of military society².

These criticisms notwithstanding, the invocation of motherhood as a sacrifice for the country proceeds apace. Newspaper stories have recently been giving prominence to tales of mothers whose sons are in the battle front. One tells of a mother with three sons in the army. She is quoted as saying, "The North and the East war had just started to rage. But I was proud of my sons and of their desire to go and fight not only for the country but also for millions of people in it". Elements of popular Buddhism are also involved in this glorification. She goes on to say: "If tragedy befalls any of my sons, I will have to take it as a karmic effect. If they have to die, it will happen whether they are here at home or fighting in the north. If they die while fighting the war I would be proud of my sons as they died for a cause" (*Sunday Times*, Colombo, 11 August, 1991).

The role of the mother, as the producer of new generations of acceptable Sinhala Buddhists, is now being transformed into the producer of warriors who fearlessly give up their lives for the cause. The maintenance of ethnic hegemony now demands sacrifices and this need is then written into the construction.

(To be continued)

Notes

2. *Lanka Guardian* 8, No. 15, 15 Jan. 1986. One song begins "The blood-milk of mothers"; and another, by a woman to her soldier lover, says

Don't write to me in pretty handwriting
Tales of innocent love, as in the past
Write to me of how you are doing
Brave and steadfast at the battlefield.

Part 3 of the Asian Female Leadership will appear in our next issue.

Communication for a New World

Cees Hamelink, Herbert Schiller, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Peter Bruck and Lisandro Nogueira

Cees Hamelink (The Netherlands)

"Thank you very much, Professor Cardoso. As you were talking, I did realize that processes in contemporary history are not necessarily irreversible. We talked about these processes in an industrial production that goes from human labor, from human dimension to mechanical production. I think you did demonstrate this morning, that a process can also go the other way. You did confront us this morning, with a new mode of academic production. Whereas, so often, our academic presentations are a mechanical reading of papers, that might as well be done by robots or computers, you brought us back this morning to the human dimension of eloquence, and I'm very grateful for that, as I'm obviously grateful for the substance of your talk."

"I know that although we are running somewhat late, since you are not only an intellectual but also a politician, you would hate to leave Guarujá without a little bit of a debate, wouldn't you?"

Herbert Schiller (U.S.A.)

"I personally would like to say that I hope the rest of our meetings come somewhere.... I can't say, to the same high level, but to the same level that approximates what we have just heard this morning."

"However, after saying that, I would like to ask, or at least to comment on the first of your points, which I think, in a sense, affects all the other points. And that is, as I understood it, you gave us a feeling that there has been a transformation, may be a revolution, in the means of production and that this permeates the rest of society. And I wonder if this is what you intended to say, because it came out as if we have an autonomous independent technology that has, somehow or other, come into existence, that has these wonderful characteristics of producing larger and larger amounts of goods and services which, with a little good luck, may be able to be distributed widely, but there are some areas of the world, because they don't have these capabilities of knowledge and information, that will be marginalized."

Now, I don't disagree with that second

point, but, to believe, at least in my judgment, that this is a new system of promotion based on the new information technologies, is some kind of an independent force which has no connection with the very fundamental structures of the society that produced them, and may I just....

I agree with your dialectic that there is openness and permeability, and that things can happen. I don't question either. I think you handled it brilliantly, but I also think we have to recognize that it is an extremely powerful structure, institutional structure in being, for which these new technologies are basically at their service and not at the service of the rest of us, although sometimes we are able to insert little messages or be able to get little streams or flows, but at the moment the relationships are very, very asymmetric, and as a result of that, this marginalization that we see is something that comes directly out of the very purposeful use of these technologies for exploitation — not for a common use. And when you are talking about a new labor force, we see in the U.S.A., our labor force has been decimated. True, we have new kinds of engineers and systems managers and all the rest of that, but our blue-collar workers no longer exist, or if they do, they are in such an attenuated state... The union movement which is very different here... So I know each case, every national specificity is different, but in the most developed societies the union movements lay down rules, and so we have enormous tasks, in terms of this system, and all I wanted to say, and hear your words on that, is do we feel this technology is an unmitigated blessing and do we recognize where it comes from and what we can do in some manner of form to possibly even ask for a redirection or may be even to question its very character altogether? Thank you."

Fernando Henrique Cardoso

Well, let's reply to you by saying that I would like to add a footnote, or better, an introduction to what I said before, since I fully agree with you. It was only for the sake of brevity that I avoided discussing the problem of the structure of power, but you are absolutely right. And since we are

now discussing in Brazil, the question of a new patents law, control of new technology, it is quite obvious that the power structure is behind all this, so you are absolutely right. I have no disagreement with you. It was my fault: for the sake of brevity, I started with the new technology without emphasizing what you did, and you are right.

Peter Bruck (Austria)

"I very much liked your theory of short-circuits and sparks. One of the things which came to my mind from the research which we are doing is that to think of the media, especially the tabloid media, as a kind of social agent which continuously creates sparks, that continuously elects people as actors, continuously solicits people to do certain things, but then also, within their contexts, contain these sparks and this kind of activity to a very limited amount of social activity and range. So if we can think this a little bit further through in terms of the activity of enticement of action on one hand, then of containment, I think we can get a little bit better towards the nation of potential activism which you alluded to."

"The other thought which I had was in terms of your opening actual sequences. When I came down on the plane, I picked up a book before I left Ottawa. It is a short issue of the Cambridge History of South America. And I read about the first Empire, and, actually, the stages leading up to the independence of Brazil. And what struck me there, actually, was how the historians narrate the independence of Brazil and the coming about of the independence of Brazil as basically a struggle over international trade, means of production, the exchange rates, the terms and trades which were going on between Portugal and Britain at that time and their colonies in the new world."

"Which leads me to make the point that actually what I'm asking myself is — it seems to me that kind of background... Whom does it actually serve to talk about the present changes which we find in terms of this new kind of international order? It is actually not a new order which is created on new flows of trade, but we

— this country has been in the historian's narration constituted in its beginnings through this kind of dynamics. It is just that we have to get through this and see what are actually the dynamics in the way in which these changes are being brought about. It is not just that it's new, that there are global dynamics. These global dynamics are constituted of the features of these nation states, and these societies, in the way they have developed. But the dynamics as such have to be named much more concretely and I think that using the language of business and the language of free trade negotiations and the language of people who see that in the board rooms, and also the leaders of the state, does not help us analytically to understand, actually, the dynamics which are taking place. Thank you.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso

"I don't know if I got your point. It is true that when you reflect about the independence, it's obvious that kind of trade interests were behind independence. It's also true that now it's not enough to think about the new world in terms of the new concepts proposed by businessmen and by international trade. I don't know exactly what your point is. What you are objecting to or asking me, so..."

Cees Hamelink (The Netherlands)

"Is there any one very specific question, Peter, that you could raise that Professor Cardoso would respond to? If not, we will ask for one or more additional interventions. We would still have time for one or two more interventions. Yes? Could you please identify yourself?"

Lisandro Nogueira (Brasil)

"When you referred to the changes that are taking place in communication, throughout the entire world, and that you comment in respect to the people that will remain, or are remaining, to one side of the process, I will ask the following: In what way do means of communication, the schools of communication, both in Brazil and in the United States, in Europe, in fact, in what way can we work so that these people do not remain to one side? How do you see the role of communication in this process? In the book entitled 'A Sociedade Informatica' (The Informatics Society) by Adam Schaff, he comments on these people who will remain to one side and he positions precisely in this mass of people, one of the great challenges of the next century. Why is it that these people, even remaining to one side, as you said

and cited Hegel, these people — they are more and more people and they pass through and they go, they are living, and they have some power including being manipulated by several groups. How do you see the role of the means of communication in this process?"

Fernando Henrique Cardoso

"Look, naturally I am familiar with the works of Adam Schaff and believe that he recognizes this fact with much precision, that, increasingly, we will have marginalized masters of the principal flow of production and consumption. Then you ask me what will be the effect of this."

"I tried not to show, but to mention the fact that in the past we always thought of this process in terms of the dominator/dominated dialectic. But always thinking that the dominator, in some way, depended on the dominated. The master is the slave of his slave. Well here, the problem that is posed by Schaff, is also — that this mass really becomes marginalized. And you ask me how it is that the schools of communication can deal with this? Here, it is not the schools of communication in themselves. It is what here in Brazil has been referred to as the accusation research. But here in Brazil it is extremely easy to show the immense number of people that are not benefited in any way by the flow of what here is referred to as modernization and that are to one side. Now, politically, what is the question, how can we play in political terms with this? The fact that they are millions is no consolation or that they are the majority of humanity, is no consolation. The dominators were always a minority. The English in India were never more than a few hundred thousand and they dominated millions. In China, also. Therefore, history is cruel. The fact that it is said that they are ever more numerous is no consolation. The problem is only to know how they transform themselves — not only into political actors, but how it is that a system is created capable of catering to the generalized demand. And here I go into several questions: 1-) From the point of view of economic growth, there is a whole new theory, as you all know, of self-sustained growth, because with the present style of growth, it is impossible to cater to the majority. To cater to the majority, this present style of economic growth would exhaust the natural resources. It would generate enormous pollution, a colossal greenhouse effect. So, certainly, at the heart of the question of contemporary

civilization is the need for another style of civilization. With the present style of civilization, these majorities will never be catered to and there will always be a feeling of fear on the part of the dominators in face of these majorities and of impotence on the part of the latter. We have to think of other styles of development. We have to think of other styles of political action and here arises the question about the means of communication and of the schools of communication.

Because what I have tried to say here, much of the passage, is that these marginalized people, when they do move, they need the flow, they need to enter into the flow of communication in order to be able to short-circuit. And here, the political action, the organizing action, or at times, even the personal action of the communicators, of the teachers and of the journalists, etc. is fundamental. But this is a question the answer to which is not academic. It is necessary to politicize and I have no means of politicizing. If I had, I would not be a senator. I can assure you that it is much more comfortable to be academic. It is very heavy to participate politically. It is very hard as a life-style. But there is no other way out. It is necessary to politicize this question, isn't it? To increase the degree of conscience as to these problems and to establish conditions for an increasing participation of this marginalized mass that will inevitably lead to another style of development, for the present is not feasible.

Cees Hamelink

"Senator Cardoso, in her famous book, 'March of Folly', the late Barbara Tackman, the famous historian, explains why politicians always do everything wrong, and she explains in a long historical account that politicians always know how to take decisions against the interests of their constituencies and against their own interests. And she says this is basically because all politicians are afflicted by a virus that she calls 'imbecilitus'. Today we've met an exception. I'm very happy that there are also politicians which are not affected by this virus, and I would only wish that political life had more intellectuals such as you and that intellectual life had more politicians such as you."

"Thank you very much. You did spark off a good inspirational tone for the rest of our academic deliberations and this effectively concludes our opening session. Thank you, Professor Cardoso."

A Review of an *Introduction to Social Theory*

Todd Davidson

Radhika Coomaraswamy and Nira Wickramasinghe, ed., *Introduction To Social Theory* [New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1994.]

An Introduction To Social Theory presents an interesting dialogue of certain aspects of western contemporary social theory and its application to social, historical, and cultural problems present in Sri Lanka. Through the presentation of contemporary problems in light of social theory, it has appeal for the scholar, incipient academic, and the concerned citizen. But as an introduction, the intended audience are those people who are not terribly familiar with social theory. All seven articles that comprise the book are worthwhile in this respect. To a novice, the vocabulary and concepts of social theory may seem alien or irrelevant. The writers here have applied these concepts to problems of the everyday in a manner which may be helpful in understanding their meaning and relevance. Further, the articles show how a critical mind can be developed through the use of concepts that comprise social theory.

Beyond the introduction of the discourse of social theory and the development of a critical mind, an introduction has the capacity to orient a student within a given discipline. Typically a survey is rather dry. Consider the mammoth texts common to introductory undergraduate courses, or the rote lectures intended to cram the world of sociology into one semester. They may offer a history of social theory, a general articulation of various schools of thought, instruction as to method, statistical data and research, and possibly a brief sketch of the importance of social theory today. This approach seems to weigh heavily upon the student. Presentations of this manner typically present the vocabulary and concepts of social theory divorced from the past and present communities that afforded them vitality and passion. Not is it terribly evident that surveys of this kind foster the critical mind. A better introduction to social theory allows the student to wander about for a time within applied social theory to find what may seem interesting. This type of approach entails a certain degree of confusion and possibly disorientation at first. But even if the concepts may not be

entirely understood, if a sense of urgency and contingency is conveyed between these concepts and contemporary problems, a student may become inspired to a certain degree. Once interest is established, the desire to understand the concepts of social theory and how they have come to be arises. What might have seemed boring may now seem relevant, stimulating, and worth further study and investigation.

It is in this capacity that an *Introduction* has a good deal of merit, especially to the Sri Lankan student. By placing the various critics, historians, and philosophers not only in relation to the contemporary problems of Sri Lanka, but also in relation to the history of social theory, the student may acquire a sense of how problems of the everyday shape social theory, and how social theory has the capacity to affect contemporary problems. In this manner, a degree of vitality is conveyed throughout the book, along with the necessary concepts and luminaries central to social theory. Given this approach, it is not conceivable that a broad base of social theory could be addressed from all sides in a positive manner, and this is certainly not the intention of an *Introduction*. It has positively presented a dialogue central to the vocabulary of the post-Marxist philosophical left in Europe and America, including Frantz Fanon's position on the post-colonial nation. The concepts and authors central to the post-Marxist philosophical left is as good a starting point as any I would propose. Their contributions to academia are pervasive, and one that must be addressed in one fashion or another. Thought it does seem important that the post-Marxist school of thought should be juxtaposed in relation to other opinions of the history, structure, and direction of social theory argued in a positive manner. But such juxtaposition may have been beyond the scope of the book, and it is only my intention here to present some ideas that are part of the social and political philosophical debate. My second point of critique concerns the relation between contemporary social theory based in Europe and America and the history and contemporary form of life in Sri Lanka.

"Post-Marxist philosophical left" is probably an unfortunate term. A better description might be those who reject the Kantian or absolutist stance, where notions

of intrinsic human dignity, intrinsic human rights, and an ahistorical and trans-cultural understanding of "the self" are of seminal importance to the maintenance of liberal societies. The post-Marxist school has a more Hegelian flavor, and proposes that human dignity, rights, and identity are derivative of a respective community. Both schools assume that philosophy provides foundation for the constitution and workings of a society. The post-Marxists reject the notion of the Enlightenment self and all the notions derived from it that have made for the liberal societies of Europe and America. Consequently, the institutions, including that of the academic disciplines and their respective scholastic works, which have arisen from and are supposedly based within the discredited philosophy of the Enlightenment should be abandoned. It would be fair to say that the philosophers and theorists positively addressed in the book, and the writers themselves, tend towards this position for various reasons and to varying degrees.

Beyond the Kantian and post-Marxist positions, there is a third position that has come to some degree of prominence in the last century, commonly associated with contemporary American pragmatism founded in the works of John Dewey. The position holds that the institutions of liberal societies should be preserved while abandoning their philosophical justification. Philosophy, and social theory, is not understood as providing foundations, nor does philosophy and social theory necessarily have seminal importance to the construction of a society. To abandon the Kantian position does not mean, or give justification for, the abandonment of the institutions and language of contemporary liberal society. Philosophy and social theory may or may not be needed, or wanted. If it is needed, it may serve to introduce various metaphors and ideas to assist the constitution of a given society. Once this is understood, or accepted, contemporary American pragmatism posits that an historical understanding of the self, and an understanding of identity based in a respective community serves the notions and institutions of liberal societies better than the notions of the Enlightenment which gave rise to them. Within an *Introduction*, the Kantian position is only referred to through critique from the post-Marxist position, and the pragmatist position is not mentioned either positively or through critique.

But this is not necessarily good or bad. An introduction is a tricky business, and it seems that the best approach to take is to begin the process of developing a student's capacity to think for herself. This is a "liberal" idea, of course, but one I will assume is desirable. Given the above explication of what a good introduction manages to do, it is hard to allow for a certain degree of ideological freedom without losing the vitality of impassioned debate. In some respects it must be considered good to bombard the student with an ideology probably foreign to the everyday perspective. The student should become jarred, in a sense, out of thinking only along the lines of what is considered "normal," "obvious," and "accepted." Yet, if an introduction is to foster critical thinking, it is important that the student does not become an immediate devotee of a respective ideology that may be presented in an introduction.

Pradeep Jeganathan's article, "The Task of Social Theory," is placed appropriately at the beginning of an *Introduction*. Jeganathan steers away from philosophical jargon and focusses on the fundamental purpose of social theory as critique, but in a casual and conversational manner. This fundamental purpose though can become disconcerting to the new student, or to anyone for that matter, if its constructive nature is not addressed. The student may come to feel that social theory is nothing but a hostile attack upon the very constitution and form of life integral to her existence and identity. Jeganathan shows how social theory as critique can be applied to a common everyday occurrence — watching a national festival on television with the family. He continues to point out what may not seem obvious to the common perspective, and how what is implicit and potentially harmful can become explicit through the method of social theory. The viewer becomes free from one way of looking at what is presented on the television. In this manner, Jeganathan has also given an example of how critique can disclose what may drive or constitute a contemporary problem of society, like the war in Sri Lanka. Once part of the implicit drive or constitution of a problem has been disclosed through critique, critique takes on a constructive role. But Jeganathan not only emphasizes the constructive role that social critique may have, but emphasizes what social theory can do after a problem has been made explicit through critique. Social theory, according to Jeganathan, must take on the role of introducing new concepts and metaphors beyond critique to fashion a community in a manner previously unthought. Jeganathan's emphasis on the "imagined," — a theme carried throughout an *Introduction* — conveys to the student the necessity of thinking for

oneself beyond various ideologies of any sort such that new solutions to old problems may come about.

This last point of Jeganathan's seems to me the most vital to an *Introduction*, if the intention is not only to introduce a student to the discourse of social theory but also to instill capacity to think for oneself. A person can be as much a slave to the common understanding of what is presented on television as they can be a slave to a certain critique of that common understanding. A critique only serves its purpose if it frees a person to think for themselves and not only in the light of a specific critique. In this manner a student may come to develop the capacity to imagine, and thus think of and design imagined communities in order that they might become real.

The other articles in an *Introduction* follow a similar, though more rigorous, pattern to that of Jeganathan's. Except for the rather intensive and scholastic works presented by Ismail and de Alwis, which are rightly placed within the middle of the book, each article begins with an appeal to what may be a relevant example to the new student, or questions which may make sense to a new student. A presentation of certain aspect of social theory is then presented in relation to the example or the questions, followed by application of social critique to the larger contemporary problems plaguing Sri Lanka today with varying degrees of complexity. Coomaraswamy's article on Foucault, "Madness, Sexuality, and Crime," seems the most appropriate in terms of outlining the philosophy of a writer central to contemporary social theory, and placing the writer in relation to other writers to which the novice can refer for further reading. Coomaraswamy does a good job of integrating the concrete examples of madness, sexuality, and crime — issues we all come across in our everyday lives — into a general discussion of the importance Foucault's writings had not only upon society as a whole, but also within the conceptual turns of the western philosophical dialogue. She applies Foucault's notion of exclusion in an interesting light to the LTTE and the JVP. To varying degrees, both groups have preached a Marxist ideology. Yet, Coomaraswamy quickly notes that what may seem "radical" ideologies of the Marxist vanguard have played themselves out upon the basis of exclusion. Their model of organization is not terribly different from the very groups which they oppose. She states "The JVP and the LTTE are a subaltern voice, but even the subaltern have their procedures of exclusion." But Coomaraswamy does not dwell on the deleterious effects of exclusion in relation to the JVP and the LTTE, which

is fortunate given the scope of an *Introduction*. We are presented with a glance of Foucault, how Foucault may be relevant, and what we could study to find out more about Foucault and his place within social theory. In this manner, Coomaraswamy has demonstrated to the new student of social theory how a critical mind can be developed, and how such a mind can lie above the fray of political ideology. "Exclusion" has been presented as an idea, and Coomaraswamy has managed to show how interesting an idea it is without drifting into an impassioned fixation upon its merit or demerit.

The other articles tarry on the line between presentation of ideas and impassioned debate from an ideological standpoint complete with dogmatic claims. Argument for various ideologies is certainly an integral part of social theory, and worthwhile as part of an introduction. But rather than presenting positive arguments from the Kantian (or absolutist), pragmatic, and post-Marxist positions of social theory, all the articles come from the perspective of and treat concepts central to the post-Marxist tradition. This may be detrimental to the new student of social theory, given that she might not have the background and skills to see outside of this ideology, or something with which to compare this ideology. Such a perspective fosters students that may not be interested in varying viewpoints — the kind of perspective that tends towards exclusion, the kind of perspective that so many of the writers in an *Introduction* are trying to avoid. Such a perspective tends to alienate people of other views, and tends to stifle the creative expansion of a particular ideology and its application to a community as a whole.

The above criticism is not meant to discount the worthiness of an *Introduction*, but is meant to suggest what is passed over in the book, which understandable considering its intended scope. Though it does seem that an *Introduction* would have prospered with the inclusion of an article or two that argued for, or positively described, the Kantian and pragmatic positions. It also seems that as an introduction intended for the Sri Lankan student, or the student interested in Sri Lanka, it might have been worthwhile to include a discussion of social theory in relation to Sri Lanka's own philosophical tradition. The Pali *Tripitika*, the Vedic texts, and the *Koran* are full of social theory in dire need of contemporary interpretation. As a westerner, it is not my place to determine where, when, and how, the concepts of social theory developed in the West should be used in Sri Lanka, any my comments here are meant only for the sake of conversation. One of the most

interesting questions that faces Sri Lanka, is how the country has, and apparently will continue, to integrate the concepts and institutions of liberal society within their own philosophical, historical, and cultural tradition. In an *Introduction*, many of the western notions are used with the intention of developing a history and identity of Sri Lanka which is distinctively Sri Lankan after the colonial period. This seems highly constructive and worthwhile. But there must also be an awareness of what I will call "conceptual colonialism." The ideas and concepts developed in contemporary western social theory are the product of a long history and depend upon a contemporary form of life and situation quite different from Sri Lanka. A concept removed from the history which made it possible and its present context is readily misunderstood or simply irrelevant. This does not mean that I am opposed to Sri Lankan's using western concepts in whatever way they see it. But I would suggest that it may be worthwhile to place these concepts in relation to the various philosophical traditions so central to the Sri Lankan form of life. Otherwise, what is distinctively Sri Lankan may become lost with the acceptance and use of the concepts developed in western social theory. American and European universities can be just as much an imperial force as the British government or a Portuguese merchant, no matter how much they would like to think or present themselves otherwise.

Most of the contemporary conceptions developed in western social theory are designed to dismember the philosophical picture of the Enlightenment, and the hold this philosophical picture has upon western society. Sri Lanka, at least in a sense, does not have this problem. There is no Enlightenment philosophy to overcome, except what has been instilled by colonial forces including that of modern day "cultural imperialism." This of course does not mean that Sri Lanka has not felt the effects of the Enlightenment, or that an understanding of the Enlightenment philosophy is not important to Sri Lanka. But it may mean that if Sri Lanka continues to accept and foster the institutions of a liberal society, Sri Lankan scholarship would do well to articulate how these notions and institutions are to be integrated with, or completely overhauled by, the philosophical and historical tradition so evident in Sri Lankan society today.

To some degree this is already being done by contemporary Sri Lankan scholarship in the works of Obeyesekere, Thombiah, and numerous other scholars presented in various journals including that of ICES. It might not have been the intention or the scope of an *Introduction* to present such esoteric and complicated

scholarship. Regardless, a discussion of Obeyesekere might have been worthwhile, as worthwhile as a discussion of Fanon or Foucault. I have only offered the above

as commentary, and maybe as suggestion of what might be included in another introduction produced by ICES, one that might complement the one reviewed here.

Sri Lanka - State of Human Rights 1993

(Published by Law & Society Trust)

Reviewed by Mala Dharmananda (Equal Opportunities Commission, Perth, Australia)

In May 1994 the Law and Society Trust published an anthology of papers which reviewed the status of human rights in Sri Lanka. The *State of Human Rights 1993* report presents an overview of the international instruments ratified by Sri Lanka, and attempts to situate the Sri Lankan man/woman/child within the framework of civil, political, economic, and social rights.

To a degree the report assesses the extent to which the requirements and obligations imposed by the ratification of international conventions and covenants are met at the local level. For instance, Patricia Hyndman, Sabina Fernando and Kanya Champion provide a comprehensive analysis of national laws that meet specified articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as identify breaches of international requirements.

The report is divided into chapters wherein the primary focus is either the status of specified instrument (for example economic and social rights) or the experience of a particular group of people such as women, children or refugees. Such an approach allows the reader to concentrate on issues of interest, as well as ensures that critiques of topical and controversial matters are included. However, within this framework, the experience of some groups may be rendered less visible. For example, although a whole chapter is devoted to the issue of women's rights, and the reader is asked to refer to the chapter on social and economic rights, analysis of violence against women is inadequate in both the specific chapter on women's rights and in the chapters on displaced people and north-east war.

As may be expected of a report which comprises articles written by a number of individuals, there are stylistic differences and repeated descriptions of international instruments such as the ICCPR.

In conclusion two questions are posed.

The first relates to who comprises the intended audience of the report. While those familiar with discourse of human rights are likely to find the report a relatively concise critique, others may find the report less accessible. For instance, explanations of the functions of the United Nations, the processes by which a country chooses to ratify an international instrument, or the mechanisms by which reports delineating the extent to which requirements of articles are met by member states are not provided. If the report is to inform the people of Sri Lanka of the status of their rights, then an introductory chapter which includes a brief explanation of the above and the broad philosophical premises of human rights would be useful.

Second, the report does not address the question of whether international instruments ratified by the Sri Lankan Government are accepted by the people of Sri Lanka. The Convention of the Rights of the Child is a salient example. The Convention was the subject of much debate in countries such as Australia, where it was perceived to infringe upon the rights of parents to smack their children for misbehavior. Similarly, to what extent is the ratification of instruments a result of lobbying on the part of grass roots groups and/or representative organizations. The identification of groups in Sri Lanka who are seeking ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and ILO Convention No III regarding occupation and employment would illustrate that access to human rights instruments is perceived to be of relevance and significance.

Notwithstanding these observations, the report provides a benchmark, whereby the status of human rights in Sri Lanka may be evaluated against international standards. Such progress may be now monitored and evaluated on an annual or bi-annual basis. The report fills an important lacuna in the discourse of human rights.



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