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THE P.A.: HOW LONG MORE?

Mervyn de Silva

W.B. Yeats is back in fashion. Neither leader-writer nor speech-maker neglects to quote: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold". Naturally columnists cannot forget the great Irish poet either — not when the I. R. A. is still thwarting Prime Minister John Major in his resolute bid to stop "the longest war" — of its kind, that is.

It is the Tamil question, not the Irish, nor the violence in northern Ireland which attracts Yeatsian intervention. It was the massacre in Mullaitivu and the obvious questions it raised that prompted commentators to reach once again for their W. B. Yeats. But "the centre" they had in mind was not the Sri Lankan capital and administrative centre but the regime, the eight party "Peoples Alliance" (P.A.) of President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Mrs. Kumaratunga rushed back to Colombo, cutting short a well-deserved holiday in Egypt with her family. But she was off again to South Korea, a state visit. If "security" is the explanation for these frequent trips overseas, no fair-minded Sri Lankan would fail to understand her anxieties when her main enemy, the same enemy that overran the heavily fortified Mullaitivu base, is the No.1 suspect in two assassinations — the former Prime Minister of India, (Nehru's grandson) and the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. R. Premadasa. Suicide-bombers, young men and women, represent the deadliest weapon in the armoury of the most formidable terrorist organisation-cum-liberation movement in the world.

MULLAITIVU BATTLE

But Mullaitivu represented something else altogether. Of the 1,407 in the camp, over 1,300 were soldiers and policemen. Officially, 1,395 were reported "missing in action". Well over 1,000 have been killed in the L.T.T.E. raid. Apart from casualties, it is the "huge quantity of weapons" and "the nature of the arms, the firepower" of the weapons seized by the guerrillas which make Mullaitivu a disaster and a stunning blow to the P.A. As Opposition MP Dr. Jayalath Jayawardena pointed out in Parliament, the L.T.T.E.'s Paris-based spokesman, Lawrence Thilakar (Europe is his parish) had boasted about the firepower of the new weapons in the "Tiger" armoury. Two 122 milimetre artillery guns, two

120 m.m. heavy mortars, 15 81 mm heavy mortars, 15 machine guns, 108 light machine guns, 654 T-56, automatic rifles and 29 40 mm grenade launchers.

TIGER TACTICS

Quantity at some point can make a qualitative change. From a formidable, highly motivated and disciplined terrorist group, the L.T.T.E in the late 80's was turned into a first-rate guerrilla organisation by its founder, Velupillai Prabhakaran. Those Sri Lankans who have followed his career and studied the man, realised that he was a gifted militarist. Learning from both Tamil military history and the classics, Clausewitz to Mao and Che Guervara, Prabhakaran has built up a small regular army..... but without the weaponry in the hands of its enemy, the Sri Lanka armed forces. He is now attending to that problem and closing the gap.

This is a political-military struggle. Perhaps to satisfy the Tamil diaspora and respectable middle-class Tamil fundraisers, L.T.T.E. went through the motions of "peace talks", found the first plausible excuse to scuttle "the negotiations" initiated by the P.A. soon after Chandrika Kumaratunga "the peace candidate" and Prime Minister was installed Executive President. When the L.T.T.E. gave up the ceremony of jaw-jaw and returned to war-war, the "peace candidate" could not afford any longer to alienate the Sinhala-Buddhist constituency. So back to war-war. The first casualty was Prof. Pieris, Minister of Constitutional Affairs and Deputy Finance Minister. His thesis was clear enough — devolution, the peace package approved by the S.L.F.P.'s moderate partners and its Tamil supporters. Anxious not to alienate the minorities, the U.N.P. will go along. It did not work like that in practice. What was offered was not enough even for the moderate T.U.L.F., but "too much" to the Sinhala hardliners in the U.N.P. and P.A. President Chandrika played safe by "dropping" the offer of provincial autonomy, and getting into khaki herself.

DEFENCE VOTE

The entire Pieris game-plan collapsed as the army called the shots, and the defence budget soared high enough for

the IMF-World Bank to get seriously worried.

But war-war meant a major setback on the parliamentary front. In the numbers game, the T.U.L.F and the E.P.D.P. give the P.A. more than a dozen votes, to survive. How long will it take these parties to decide enough's enough? Meanwhile President Chandrika and the S.L.F.P. are having trouble with the E.P.D.P. of Douglas Devananda and the D.U.N.F. of Mrs. Srimani Athulathmudali. Both could bring the P.A. down. And with prices soaring, the trade unions, led by the leftwing partners of the P.A. are on a collision course with the Kumaratunga Presidency.

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The Fate of Minorities

Neelan Tiruchelvam

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being debated in the General Assembly, it was pointed out that the Organisation should not remain indifferent "to the fate of minorities". The Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities could not effectively advance these concerns.

However in recent years there have been significant international and regional developments with regard to the protection of minorities. The General Assembly in 1992 adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. At the Helsinki Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on 10th July 1992, the participating states decided to establish a High Commissioner of National Minorities, as an 'instrument of conflict prevention' at the earliest possible stage. In 1995 the Council of Europe rectified the lack of powers directly concerned with minority protection in European human rights legislation, by adopting a Framework Convention on National Minorities in 1995. The Framework Convention has been described as a unique piece of human rights legislation which lays down principles on the protection of minorities, but leaves it to the state parties to chose the ways and means in which to implement them. These developments, which were partly fuelled by the impending disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the revival of ethno-nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, point to the increasing importance that is being accorded to minority protection questions in the international and regional human agendas.

Establishment of the Working Group

The Norwegian member of the UN Sub Commission played an important role in the establishment of the UN Working Group on Minorities. Norway had played a similar role in the

establishment of the UN Working Group on Indigenous population and Asbjorn Eide as its first Chairman had played a significant contribution to its success. Eide was also engaged in 3 years of study and consultation with Sub Commission members and outside experts on the implementation of the UN Declaration. He submitted a set of recommendation at the Sub Commission's 1993 meeting which addressed ways and means of facilitating the peaceful and constructive resolution of disputes involving minorities.

One of these recommendations related to the establishment of a Working Group. He argued "The Commission on Human Rights should consider establishing a Working Group on minority issues, which should provide access to representatives of both governments and minorities. The mandate of the group might be to examine the situation in different parts of the world and to develop more specific guidelines for the implementation of the 1992 Declaration on Minorities. The Commission and its Working Group should thereby be made the focal point for all UN activities undertaken within respective mandates. By providing a voice for the groups concerned, it would serve to facilitate communication between minorities and governments and to develop methods for conflict resolution or direction of the conflict into peaceful channels.

As a consequence of these recommendations, the Commission on Human Rights in 1994 decided to establish a new UN Working Group on Minorities. The composition of the Working Group was to include 5 members of the Sub Commission drawn from each region. Its mandate was to —

- b) examine solutions to problems involving minorities, including the promotion of mutual understanding between and among minorities and governments;
 - c) recommend further measures, as appropriate for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic religious and linguistic minorities.
- The role of the Working Group**
- The first meeting of the Working Group took place in Geneva on the 28th August 1995. In his opening statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights Jose Ayala-Lasso called upon the Working Group to suggest "concrete, constructive and peaceful solutions to minority situations". He further argued that close cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Working Group was required for effective protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Several members of the Working Group also emphasise the importance of focussing not only on concrete minority situations and problems but also on possible solutions and the framing of constructive proposals. They argued that the Working Group should therefore endeavour to engage government and minorities in a constructive dialogue.
- At least one observer argued in favour of a step by step approach in the realisation of the mandate of the Working Group. These steps were identified as (a) the consideration of national legislation (b) practical measures in building confidence and (c) the promotion of relevant rights included in the declaration. He argued that the emphasis should be on studying the experience of different states in promoting understanding and tolerance and accommodation of minorities. At least one member of the Working Group felt that there was a need to go beyond approaches which were based on mere tolerance and acceptance. The issues
- a) review the promotion and practical realization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities;

of minority protection must be assessed within a broader framework of a multi-cultural society and in strengthening the values and institutions which promote cultural diversity. In this regard, working group should focus (a) on the analysis of national legislation, (b) the role of education at the international, national and community levels in maintaining culture, language and other characteristics of minorities, (c) the relationship between the media and the issues of minority protection. The Nordic countries seem to have argued that the Working Group should more sharply focus on the norms and standards embodied in the UN Declaration and be a monitoring mechanism for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

The Chairman-Rapporteur concluded that the role of the Working Group should be viewed in the context of Article 7 of the Declaration, which stated "States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights set forth in the present Declaration". He pointed out that the Working Group should serve as a forum for dialogue and mutual understanding based on the factual information submitted in a concrete and specific manner. The actual experiences of minorities should provide ideas and proposals for constructive group accommodation. It was further important that the Working Group should not seek to overlap with the work of other UN institutions and organisations which are empowered to address the problems of groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers.

The Working Methods of the Group

A threshold question which was addressed at the first meeting of the Working Group related to participation. Should participation be limited to non-governmental organisations with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or should it be opened to all non-governmental organisations. The Working Group on Indigenous Population had adopted the practice of open participation which had considerably enhanced the effectiveness of the Group. As Douglas Sanders pointed out "For the first time indigenous people had specific access to the United Nations. They had their own

international forum". NGOs were also able to exercise influence on the actual content of the agenda of the Working Group on indigenous populations. Their participation also enabled aggrieved groups to address the United Nations directly, and to provide direct testimony on their experiences. It was accordingly argued that opening participation to all non-governmental organisations would encourage the exchange of information particularly in respect of the situations of ethnic minorities of the local level. Members of the Working Group were therefore easily convinced of the importance of achieving the widest possible participation in the Working Group meetings.

Second category of participation which was emphasised was that by scholars and professional researchers who were familiar with the problems of ethnicity and could therefore provide insights into minority situations and the resolution of minority problems. The Chairman-Rapporteur therefore summarised that participation at the Working Group meetings would include four categories of observers — "first by government observers who could provide the Working Group with information on steps taken to promote the principles of the Declaration as one function of the Group was to share experiences on such matters; second, by United Nations and regional bodies and agencies which could provide the Working Group with information on their activities in the field; third, by international and national non-governmental organizations which dealt with minority issues as part of their mandate; and finally, by scholars and professional researchers attached to academic institutions who carried out research in the field of minorities and group accommodation and who could provide the Working Group with scientific insight into the issues it was exploring".

It was also pointed out that observers should be encouraged to submit written communications on the problems involving minorities and their possible resolution. The International Labour Organisation and UNESCO agreed to share information compiled by their respective organisations on issues relating to minorities. The Chairman-Rapporteur also pointed to the impor-

tance of taking note of information contained in the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, the Commission of Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission and the Commission. Wherever special studies of specific minority situations were required, the Working Group agreed that it could commission studies by the United Nations Research Institutions for Social Development or by the United Nations University.

The Promotion and Practical Realization of the UN Declaration

The main task of the UN Working Group was to promote the implementation of the UN Declaration. In doing so, it could also take into account specific obligations undertaken by states from time to time including the League of Nations and those undertaken in more recent years. These would include several bilateral treaties adopted by several states in Europe within the context of the Stability Pact adopted at a meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Paris in March 1995. Article 8 of the UN Declaration states that "Nothing in the present Declaration shall prevent the fulfillment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties".

The first step in promoting the practical realisation of the UN Declaration would be to review the constitutions and legislations of nation states with a view to examining the extent to which there is effective protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic minorities. During the first session of the Working Group held in 1995, the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stated that the Constitution and other laws guaranteed national minorities "all rights derived from international norms and standards". Similarly Slovakia represented that it had ratified the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and "incorporated its norms into national legislation". Second, government and non-governmental organisations should be encouraged to periodically submit reports on the situation of national or ethnic minorities

within their country, their geographical distribution, numerical size, history and the measures and policies that have been implemented, designed, preserved and safeguard their identity, characteristics and rights. Austria made reference to the "Federal Government General Report on the Situation of Ethnic Groups in Austria" which sought to describe the concrete situation of ethnic groups and the measures towards their protection. Third, the Working Group could commission a study on special measures including the affirmative action programmes designed to protect historically disadvantaged and marginalised national or ethnic minorities. Such a study would enable the Working Group to identify situations in which such special measures would be appropriate and the legitimate limits of affirmative action programmes. In this regard, Article 8.3 of the Declaration states "Measures taken by the States to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights set forth in the present Declaration shall not prima facie be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

Fourth, the Working Group could commission academics and experts to undertake studies which would elucidate the basic concepts and ideas which are embodied in the UN Declaration. Such studies should include concepts such as the right to existence, the right to identity (including culture, religion and language), the right to education, the right to participation, the right to association, the right to cross-border contacts with other members of their group, the relationship between individual rights and those rights which can only be exercised in community with others. Such studies would enable the Working Group to issue comments on specific articles in the Declaration, and in the preparation of a manual which explains the provisions of this Declaration. One observer urged the Working Group to pursue a more ambitious standards setting project and to consider the elaboration of a draft convention on the rights of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. No member of the Working Group or Observer has commented on this idea.

Waiting — 27 Voyage Out

An uncle, Colombo's Chief Postmaster
Said, may be the War is over
But stray mines still lurk in seas you have to cross
To often still we have report, of all mails lost
Ships don't keep to convoys now
Mine sweepers miss a mine or two
Safe seas we cannot talk about
But in your eyes, I see no fear or doubt.

So the 'Arundel Castle' sailed,
On to Bombay, big city spite its cows
And clopping horse traps, street corner flowers.
Colombo seemed so suburban and bare
As you tried a konde maale in your hair
And mingled with Mother India's multitude.

Your boat was P & O once more
After six years of troopship duty
A last contingent from Singapore
The wistful Punjabi major led off the ship at Bombay
He had kept you people (already tired of the liner's English fare)
Gratefully fed on rice & curried dhal
The first of many casual farewells
On this journey where paths hardly ever
Cross again.

Sirens toot you from Asia's last outpost
On to Aden, the Red Seas heat, mails at Suez,
Port Said, and the Mediterranean, then Biscay
Turning your stomachs inside out.

Sufficiently recovered at Southampton
To be snapped in saree, shivering without overcoats
Shaking hands with the lady from Colonial Office
Who put all safe on the train to Newport
At Newport again, Colonial Office and Press
(Talk of Ceylon's Independence being much in the news)
Then handed over to the College Head,
Whisked off to Usk where the holly hadn't yet borne flowers
To betray approaching Winter, whether mild or fierce.

U. Karunatilake

CHANAKA: Farewell to a Liberal

Anura Bandaranaike, M.P.

We have gathered here this evening to bid our final farewell to our friend Dr. Chanaka Amaratunga. It is an occasion of bewilderment and sadness. It is an occasion of sadness because we have lost a dear and faithful friend; a great liberal democrat; a fiercely independent politician and an absolute gentleman to his fingertips.

It is also an occasion of bewilderment because no one present here this Sunday evening would have imagined a week ago, that we will gather here this evening to say farewell to Chanaka.

His was a life filled with success and achievement, disappointment and betrayal. And, he treated all those imposters just the same. Rudyard Kipling would have been proud of Chanaka Amaratunga!

Academic success at St. Thomas' College, Oxford University, and at the London School of Economics came easily to Chanaka. Whilst in the United Kingdom he distinguished himself as a scholar of repute and a debator par excellence.

On his return to Sri Lanka, Chanaka plunged into the world of politics, forming his own Liberal Party, with its own vision for the future. For a idealistic young man returning from Oxford, to a country where the two party system was firmly entrenched, it was no easy task to cull another Party; another vision. But, Chanaka undertook this daunting task with a missionary zeal. He fought for what he believed was right, irrespective of what others might think of him.

The success of a political party does not solely rest with the number of members they have or the number of times they have won an election. It also rests with the principles they stand for and how sincerely and articulately they are placed before the people.

When Chanaka spoke or wrote he did so with passion, clarity conviction and zeal. He may have been at most times alone; a voice in the wilderness,

but that made Chanaka more coherent and more determined.

I have personally witnessed before the Presidential Elections of 1988, when we were trying to put together a coalition of different forces, where Chanaka was at his best: arguing, cajoling, persuading. But Chanaka being Chanaka, rarely gave in and finally when out shouted and outvoted he accepted the verdict of the majority with grace. That was the democrat that was Chanaka Amaratunga. He firmly and sincerely believed in the very essence of democracy, the freedom of choice. He did not pay mere lip service unlike some politicians; he practiced the very essence of democracy to the letter.

Chanaka was the quintessential Liberal in its truest form. He argued relentlessly for the rights of the minorities, the oppressed and the voiceless. He espoused their causes with dignity and conviction. None would have found a more sincere man to espouse their cause.

As I said at the beginning of this speech, Chanaka's life was also filled with disappointment and betrayal. Both in 1988 and 1994, Chanaka was assured a seat in Parliament and on both occasions he was betrayed. Though he threw himself into these campaigns with enthusiasm and vigour, addressing rallies in all parts of the country, the fruits of his hard work was reaped by others. The disappointment for Chanaka was even more bitter because betrayal was laced with personal treachery. The remarkable thing was that he never harboured a grudge nor said a harsh word about them; he laughed it away with irony and this makes him stand tall and proud amongst those politicians who made use of him and finally let him down! For if Chanaka had indeed entered Parliament, he would have contributed substantially and added colour and style to that august assembly.

Chanaka like most others, enjoyed the best that life offered. Book, the theatre, the cinema, food and wine. It was a pleasure to spend an evening with him.

The conversation ranged from Bosnia to Burundi, to the Dalai Lama and Miss world, to the devolution package and the latest Andrew Lloyd Webber musical playing in London's West end! His breath of vision was unique and for this alone we shall miss him.

Personally for me, Chanaka's death leaves a void not easily filled. He was a close friend. I sought his advice on sensitive political issues before I made up my mind and his advice was always balanced and sincere. He may have had serious disagreements with the political stands taken by the Party I represent; yet, he gave me his unstinted support and cooperation, which was purely personal.

The cherubic and portly Chanaka has left us never to return. We shall miss him and miss him greatly. His untimely demise has left us poorer. When the world lay before him, this nation has lost an outstanding son.

Kahlil Gibran, the great Lebanese poet and philosopher, whom Chanaka quoted often wrote in his monumental work *The Prophet*:

"Yet I cannot tarry longer,
The Sea that calls all things unto her
calls me & I must embark,
For to stay, though the hours burn in
the night, is to freeze and crystallize
and be bound in a mould,
Fain would I take with me and all that
is here. But how shall I?
A voice cannot carry the tongue and
the lips that gave it wings.
Alone must it seek the ether,
And, alone and without his nest shall
the eagle fly across the sun"

And, Chanaka has flown across the sun alone, leaving us with sad memories, of a life lived to the full.

I offer my heartfelt condolences to his mother whose entire life was devoted to the well being of her only child and the courage and fortitude with which she has taken her son's death is indeed, admirable. Our hearts go out to her in her hour of grief.

Reclaiming Sri Lanka's Social Democracy

Laksiri Jayasuriya

Introduction

It is a great privilege and honour to be invited to present the sixth J.E. Jayasuriya Memorial Lecture. This address and its theme is intended as a tribute to an outstanding scholar and gentleman, and on a personal note, as an expression of my gratitude and thanks to JE (as he was known to all of us), and also Delicia (not just his wife but accomplice and ally in his many endeavours) for the warmth of their friendship and collegiality.

It is now nearly 40 years since my wife and I came to know JE and Delicia as new comers to the beautiful campus of Peradeniya as it then was. I vividly recall, as a young academic in Peradeniya in 1956, the vibrant social and intellectual life and remember with affectionate nostalgia, many friends, colleagues and students of years gone by. Peradeniya has indeed many pleasant memories and, of all these, I rate highly my good fortune in being closely associated with two outstanding academic colleagues, both persons of high personal and intellectual integrity, driven by the pursuit of scholarly excellence in their respective fields of expertise, and above all deeply imbued with a sense of moral and social purpose. I publicly acknowledge that one of these was none other than JE.

The theme of my lecture: 'The Challenge of the Welfare State in Reclaiming Social Democracy in Sri Lanka', I believe, reflects JE's deep and abiding commitment as a liberal intellectual to the pursuit of social goals — those of equality and justice. As a dedicated scholar, his was not an ivory towered disinterested search for the truth. His credo may be admirably summed up in the words of Norm Chomsky that 'it is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies' (1967). Let me recall these sentiments, in JE's own words:¹

¹ See the Preface to his excellent review and critique of Sri Lankan education in Jayasuriya (1969).

It is necessary to point out that two commitments underlie my approach to education and the assessments I make. I am deeply committed to the ideal of a system of education that guarantees genuine equality of opportunity to all children irrespective of their ethnic origin, social and economic class, and religious and other affiliations. I am also deeply committed to the defence of the freedom of learning and thinking from the forces that seemed determined to destroy this freedom by the exercise of an excessive control over the community of school and university teacher.

I echo and emphatically endorse these sentiments and commend them to all academics and intellectuals to act fearlessly in the pursuit of their moral convictions.

Let me turn to my theme. In understanding the trials and tribulations of contemporary Sri Lanka the years, 1931, 1956 and 1977 stand out as epochal historical landmarks. Equally, I believe, 1994 too will rank as an eventful year, ushering a new sense of destiny and direction as Sri Lanka enters the next millennium. As it is widely recognised, Sri Lanka has an unenviable record as a pioneer Third World social democracy, firmly established in liberal democratic institutions such as the rule of law, a dynamic civil society, and electoral politics, possessing a high degree of political participation, and most importantly, securely entrenched in a welfare state committed to equity and justice. Regrettably, all these have been severely fractured or dismantled in the recent immediate past, and it is in this context that I believe the reclaiming of the lost traditions, principles and values of the Sri Lankan social democratic state to which this government is direct heir, must rate highly on the political agenda of the new coalition government. Let me hasten to add that this mandate must necessarily incorporate a solution to the damaging ethnic conflict and violence which has

ravaged the country over the years, but more intensely since 1983.

Admittedly, the political agenda of all parties seem hopelessly confused and overwhelmed by the gravity of the ethnic conflict. In the process, it has, I believe, been driven to piecemeal, fragmented and discordant public policies — economic and social policy. These pragmatic and populist responses are characteristic of a dull and arid political culture. Regrettably, the intellectual community too, barring some notable exceptions, appears to be afflicted by the same malaise. It is in this context that we need to re-think and re-state the values and fundamental principles of social democracy — those of *freedom, equality and justice* — which have been seriously damaged in the recent past. We need to reinstate and articulate these values and principles in a manner relevant and meaningful to the present circumstances of Sri Lanka — viz. a plural society undergoing rapid economic change in a period of globalisation.

In brief, the burden of my argument rests on a two-fold assumption: first and foremost is that reclaiming social democracy is fundamental for the future well being of the nation, its political social and economic development in the foreseeable future; and, secondly that the distinctive feature of Sri Lankan social democracy, indeed, its most outstanding achievement has been the Sri Lankan welfare state as it existed at its peak in the 1960s. This has all but collapsed along with social democracy in Sri Lanka. Hence, the crisis of the welfare state is synonymous with the crisis of social democracy in Sri Lanka; or stated differently, the dismantling of the welfare state has also witnessed the rejection of social democracy.

The decline of social democracy applies equally to developed and develo-

The author is Emeritus Professor University of Western Australia.

ping countries, in that the 'social contract' of the post war period is being renegotiated on terms that increasingly depart from the social democratic notion of welfare. In the case of Sri Lanka, what we observe is that the orthodoxy of the Keynesian welfare state — a legacy of British liberal political thought — nurtured in the unusual environment of a non industrialised, partially modernised economy of a developing country — has been rejected by the neo-liberal regimes of the post 1977 period committed to unadulterated forms of laissez faire capitalism, an economic individualism, a social philosophy of greed, and a market economy hostile to the principles of a welfare state. In the language of Galbraith, the public policies of this period were characterised by private affluence and public squalor. Against this background, a central feature of my argument is that a priority consideration should be given to the justification of the welfare state. This requires a restatement of its value base, its rationale and policies. This must be viewed not just as a defence of the welfare state but as a response to its philosophical rejection by neo-liberal conservative governments.

The challenge of the welfare state, as a basis for reclaiming social democratic ideals lies, as I shall argue, in its ability to refashion the welfare state in a manner that it will be able to accommodate the economic imperatives and political realities of an open market economy committed to rapid economic growth. In short, to use the political rhetoric (i.e., structural adjustment with a human face) of the current Centre Left coalition government in wanting to humanise capitalism, we need to recognise that social policies cannot be formulated without reference to economic policies for the simple reason that social policies are dependent on the economy for their implementation. Hence, a primary consideration must be the functional integration of economic and social policies.

In developing the broad lines of this argument, I shall first endeavour to briefly identify the political fate of the social democratic state in Sri Lanka in recent times as one which involves not just the 'dismantling of democracy' (Tham-

biah 1992) but, in particular the dismantling of the welfare state. The latter more than the former has been central to the demise of social democracy. Following this, the main focus of the presentation revolves around an exposition of a policy rationale in the light of the criticisms of welfarism by conservative critics of the Sri Lankan welfare state. In reconstructing the welfare state, it is argued that one has to also take into account the present political and economic realities. This exposition bears on the proverbial 'means-end' debate about welfare by identifying a policy rationale as well as a policy strategy able to realistically confront the needs of welfare in the foreseeable future. It will be argued that the practice of what has come to be known as 'market socialism' based on a radical concept of citizenship and societal corporatism, hopefully provides a defensible rationale for the Sri Lankan welfare state and social democracy in the late 1990s. The combination of market socialism, a radical citizenship which incorporates communitarian ideas, and societal corporatism not only enshrines the essence of a revitalised social democratic state as a welfare state but also as the added attraction of responding to key issues of Sri Lankan democratic politics, viz. the need to incorporate diversity and pluralism within the social democratic state. In brief, this conceptualisation in terms of citizenship theory and market socialism enables us to restructure the welfare state by providing a democratic foundation which incorporates diversity. But, reconstruction of the welfare state cannot be completed until we start building a new political community that recognises the diversity of interests in various communities.

Contextualising Welfare and Social Democracy

It is now commonplace that Sri Lanka has an outstanding record of achievement as a post colonial society moulded in the liberal democratic tradition of Western democracies. The democratic polity, its institutions and practices that have evolved over six decades of the exercise of universal suffrage has gained wide acceptance and forms part of the political culture of a highly literate and politicised community. Although the vic-

issitudes in the evolution of this fascinating experiment in liberal democratic politics in a post colonial society have been well documented and dissected by political and social theorists, the record of the recent past, especially of the last four decades remains relatively unexplored or examined only superficially. Over the last two decades, these accounts have understandably been heavily focused in understanding the sub-plot of Sri Lankan politics, namely, minority politics. The escalation of ethnic politics into violence has transformed this sub-plot on to the centre stage of not just Sri Lankan politics but all aspects of Sri Lankan developments — political, social and economic. This has, unfortunately distorted a balanced and proper appreciation of the achievements and shortcomings of the Sri Lankan experiment in democracy, and in particular, its outstanding record in social development as a unique example of a welfare state in the Third World.

What is perhaps most regrettable about this literature is that it is heavily biased towards one theoretical paradigm, namely, a culturalist explanations of ethnic politics. These are deeply immersed in a brand of anthropological theorising, stemming from one particular tradition of American cultural anthropology, which focuses on an idealist interpretation of culture (Jayasuriya 1992). Within this research framework, the topics of religion and selected aspects of 'Sinhala nationalism' have been given undue prominence. Given the limitations and controversy surrounding this mode of cultural theorising, and also in the absence of a critical examination of the logic of this discourse and its evidence, it is most regrettable that this mode of discourse has become the orthodoxy of Sri Lankan social theorising. Interestingly, these shortcomings are beginning to be appreciated by scholars. Spencer (1995), in a judicious carefully worded review of two recent publications on Sri Lankan culture and ethnicity, characteristic of this orthodoxy, politely admonishes the writers for having singularly failed to pay heed to 'the social and political context of the arguments' advanced by them in portraying the tragedy of 'unhappiness' in Sri Lanka. It is not my intention to enter into this emerging debate except to use this

occasion to urge Sri Lankan researchers to adopt alternative perspectives in looking at Sri Lankan politics and its political and social development. More appropriate explanations for the ongoing ethnic conflict are more likely to be found in the logic of political institutions than in any ideological conception of culture.

In tracing the evolution of Sri Lankan social democracy, with its commitment to the achievement of freedom, equality and justice, it is important to note that over and above the influence of the liberal tradition of politics, coming from the British colonial past, the single most important force which has sustained and maintained social democracy in Sri Lanka has been the Sri Lankan labour movement (Jayawardena 1973) and concurrently the impact of the associated left political parties. The social democratic tradition of politics, unlike the orthodox liberal democratic form of government is committed not only to the protection of individual liberties and freedoms (civil and political rights) but more importantly to the pursuit of equality of opportunity and distributive justice as regards resources allocation. In short it is the commitment to the pursuit of equality and justice as a collective responsibility which confers a valid interventionist role for the state in fashioning public policy, even to the extent of imposing on individual freedoms for the sake of the public good. These principles of social democracy were fully articulated in public policy terms primarily by the Left coalition governments of the post 1956 era which were responsible for the consolidation of the now defunct or fractured Sri Lankan welfare state.

Unfortunately, the social policy record and performance of social democratic governments of the post 1956 period, particularly the social and economic consequences of welfarism have been poorly researched. Whenever examined, social policy has been viewed merely as an adjunct of economic policy, and never in its own right. This is likely to change largely because the regime change of 1977, which saw the emergence of a neo-liberal conservative government, introduced dramatic changes in all aspects of the political, economic and social life of the country, including the dismantling of the welfare state. These changes served to bring about the

disjunction between economic and social policy which heralded the demise of the Sri Lankan welfare state as it has evolved in the 1960s and 1970s. More specifically, the social policy changes introduced in the post-1977 era create an unbridgeable chasm between the post-1956 and 1977 era, and throws into sharp relief the nature and significance of social policy. Indeed, the critical turning point in the post-1956 regimes has been the role of social policy which has had a profound impact in shaping social structures.

We therefore need to contextualise the 1994 regime change and its implications for a liberal democratic government committed to the principles of social democracy (Jayasuriya 1995). A determining influence on the substantive issues affecting welfare concern the severe political crisis inherited by the present government. The escalating of ethnic conflict leading to conditions of a civil war and the dismantling of democracy which began in the early 1970s was intensified, particularly after 1983. This led to serious violations of the rule of law, the exercise of arbitrary executive authority, the politicisation of the judiciary and bureaucracy, and above all, the curtailment of the civil society imposed by sections of the political elite who vigorously pursued authoritarian policies. All these infringed on basic civil and political rights.

One of the justifications offered by the neo-liberals of the post 1977 era for the infringements of the rule of law, suspension of civil liberties and citizens' rights as well as the denigration of democratic process such as press freedom, and rights of assembly and protest, was that constitutional and legal restraints were necessary and inevitable. To quote Hayek (1979):

when an external enemy threatens, when rebellion or lawless violence has broken out, or a national catastrophe requires quick action by whatever means can be secured, powers of compulsory organisation which nobody normally possesses must be granted to somebody (1979, 124).

Whatever be the neo-liberals (usually depicted as champions of liberty) defe-

nance of 'regimes of exception' — either as a defence of authoritarianism or of dictatorship — based on a doctrine of a just war or for reasons of state, as Loveman rightly points out, they tend to 'make the unthinkable not only thinkable but doable and to result in tyranny' (1993, 404). There is no doubt that the post 1977 governments, as 'regimes of exception' in Loveman's sense, established a constitutional foundation for an oppressive anti democratic regime and helped to secure what Giddens has aptly called 'the unhappy neo-liberal marriage of market principles and authoritarianism (1995, 32).

The restoration of the democratic processes of the state requires not just the return to the rule of law, and the removal of oppressive and discriminating legislation and emergency provisions, but also the reconstruction of Sri Lanka's battered 'civil society'. Above all, it requires the grant of adequate representation of the minorities in the democratic state with equal rights and the fullest degree of participation in determining the destiny of the nation. The envisaged model of constitutional reforms, guaranteeing devolved power to constitutionally defined 'regions', territorially demarcated as areas of ethnic concentration, is as I have suggested elsewhere (see CDN 14/08/95) a first step in the right direction. We need to recognise the multiple allegiances that citizens may hold in a political community. Constitutional reform must recognise these multiple sources of loyalty.

This, among other considerations, needs to be entrenched in a reaffirmation of the values and principles of social democracy based on a conception of citizenship rights, which explicitly recognises the 'politics of difference' (Taylor 1992). We need a radical view of citizenship which acknowledges that 'when a society is socially differentiated, then citizenship must be equally so' (Philips 1992). This task will be facilitated, by re-conceptualising social democracy within a radical view of citizenship theory which is capable of incorporating issues of diversity and pluralism as well as welfare. In other words, citizenship theory has significance for questions of minority politics and welfare politics.

The Two Lears

Regi Siriwardena

In the 1960s Peter Brook directed a famous production of *King Lear* on both stage and screen. I never had an opportunity to see the stage version, but I did see the film. What was pervasive in Peter Brook's production was a sense of the meaninglessness of the human condition and the ferocity of the destructive impulses of human beings. There was a lot of controversy at the time about whether Brook had been, as they say, 'true to Shakespeare'. In one scene, Gloucester is blinded before the audience. But in what had become the standard text of the play, two of the servants, even though they assist in the blinding, are, when left alone, full of compassion for the old man. At the end of the scene they want to put eggwhite on his bleeding eyesockets and have him escorted to Dover. Peter Brook cut out that conversation between the servants, and for this he was roundly rebuked by some critics who said he had changed Shakespeare's humane view of people to suit his own pessimism.

This gave me one of the starting-points for my play *The Blinding*, performed in Colombo in April and June 1995. There the director Ajith also wants to cut the conversation between the servants after the blinding of Gloucester — but not for Peter Brook's philosophical reasons. Ajith rejects what he calls the 'moral consolation' that Shakespeare offers because he thinks it contrary to the actual behaviour of people during the Sri Lankan violence of 1988-89. He says: 'I want to rub the noses of the audience in the blood and the guilt, and not let them get away with a little soothing eggwhite'. But he is talking not in the sixties but in 1995. So on stage there's a scholar, Premila, who to begin with defends Ajith's right to do whatever he wants with the text. But near the end of the argument she discloses, to Ajith's surprise and delight, that Shakespeare had probably made the same cut himself in a later, revised version of the play.

(This paper is based on a talk given to the English Association of Sri Lanka.)

My talk today is really a kind of postscript to that part of *The Blinding*. I shall try to answer the following questions. Is it likely that Shakespeare revised *King Lear* after its first performances? If he did, in what ways did he change the play? And further, what can we learn from the case of *King Lear* about Shakespeare's methods of work as a playwright?

But before I can answer these questions, I must first offer you some facts. As in the case of his other plays, we have no manuscript of *King Lear* in Shakespeare's hand. All we have are the earliest printed editions. There are two of them. One is a separate book of this play, published while Shakespeare was living — that is, in 1608. This is known as the First Quarto. The other is the text of *King Lear* found in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, known as the First Folio. This was brought out by his fellow-actors seven years after his death — that is, in 1623. I must explain that Quarto and Folio are just printers' terms for different page-sizes; a Folio page has a standard sheet of printing paper folded once, and a Quarto folded twice. Every later edition of *King Lear* derives in one way or another from these two earliest printed texts.

The Quarto text and the Folio text of *King Lear* differ vastly from each other. The Folio cuts out nearly 300 lines that are in the Quarto, but it also adds about a hundred that are not found in the earlier edition. In addition, some speeches are assigned to different characters as between Quarto and Folio, and there are hundreds of variations in individual words.

How do we explain these differences? Until 1986 all editors of Shakespeare assumed that there was a single original manuscript of *King Lear* written by Shakespeare — now lost, of course. The cuts in the Folio were explained as mutilations made in the theatre, to save time in performance. But then, how reconcile this with the fact that the Folio

added a hundred lines not found in the Quarto? Editors answered this by conjecturing that those hundred lines had been there in Shakespeare's manuscript but had been dropped out of the Quarto by mistake. There were various theories constructed to try to explain how such an error could have occurred, but I don't intend to spend time on them. What's more important is to realise that behind the practice of editors, there were certain assumptions about the ways in which Shakespeare's plays were transmitted from manuscript to theatre to printing-house.

In particular, two assumptions. First, that behind the printed texts there was one and only one authentic manuscript in the author's hand. It was the task of the editor to reconstruct as far as possible the text of this manuscript. In the case of *King Lear* it was believed that this could be done by conflating the two original editions — in effect, adding from the Quarto the lines cut from the Folio and making choices between other variants.

The second assumption made by editors was that once the supposed authentic manuscript left Shakespeare's hand, any changes it underwent could only have been a process of corruption. Its virginal purity was thought of as violated by the rough hands of actors and theatre-managers, cutting, interpolating and altering, and of semi-literate compositors in the printing-house misreading the manuscript they were working from.

Editors were right about Elizabethan printers, but their picture of the fate of Shakespeare's plays in the playhouse came from nothing more solid than the scholar's prejudice against the popular theatre. To illustrate this, I shall read you a passage from G.K. Hunter, a distinguished scholar, editing *King Lear* for the New Penguin Shakespeare. About the cuts in the First Folio, Hunter says

These cuts have an extraordinary

persistence in the stage tradition, and one must presume that they preserve the theatrical fabric to the satisfaction of the stage, however abhorrent they are to literary connoisseurs.²

To contrast the play as it existed 'to the satisfaction of the stage' with the play as perceived by 'literary connoisseurs' is surely entirely wrong for Shakespeare. Shakespeare didn't write for literary connoisseurs. All the evidence we have suggests that he took no interest even in the publication of his plays because he was content to communicate with his audience through the medium for which the plays were created — the theatre. It's the academic and critical industry that has turned Shakespeare into a book, a set of printed texts for study in the classroom and for the weaving of critical webs round them. Shakespeare would have found this metamorphosis of his work bizarre. He was a complete man of the theatre who began life as an actor and continued to be one, while becoming the most popular playwright of the most successful theatre company of his time. He was a shareholder of that company and made a lot of money out of it. Like Charles Dickens, Charlie Chaplin or Louis Armstrong, Shakespeare was a popular entertainer who was also a great artist, and like them, he is a permanent reminder that the two roles aren't at all incompatible.

As anybody familiar with theatre knows, plays often undergo changes in rehearsal or after first performance. If the scholars rejected this possibility in the case of Shakespeare, it was because they must have felt that it detracted from Shakespeare's genius if one suggested that he couldn't get it right first time. But if we see Shakespeare not as the lonely genius but as a man working in the collaborative art of the theatre, there's nothing improbable in the image of him trying out his creations in rehearsal or performance and modifying them, when necessary. Whether a particular change was initiated by Shakespeare himself or by an actor is irrelevant. What matters is that all such changes would have emerged from the theatre as part of a collective process of production in which Shakespeare participated.

These are the fundamental ideas behind the textual revolution launched in 1986 by the Oxford Shakespeare — that is, the *Complete Works*, edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor³. The formidable-looking volume sitting on this table is the Oxford Shakespeare, in the form in which it was published in 1986 — large, heavy and expensive. It has since been reprinted also in a three-volume paperback, which is cheaper and more manageable.

In contrast with all earlier editors of Shakespeare, the Oxford editors took the view that their business was to get as close as possible to the texts as *performed* in the theatre of his time. This obliged them to take seriously the possibility of post-composition or post-production revision. The Oxford editors found that in all, there were six plays which have come down in two original printed versions differing substantially from each other. In all these cases, they concluded, one version came from an author's manuscript and the other has behind it a playhouse transcript representing the play in performance. The Oxford editors regarded the latter as closer to the Shakespeare of the theatre. But most striking of all was their treatment of *King Lear*. Here the Quarto and Folio versions differ so widely that Wells and Taylor took them to be two distinct versions written and performed at different times. Accordingly, the Oxford Shakespeare prints not one but two separate texts of the play. While challenging the editorial orthodoxy that there was one and one only Shakespearean text of *King Lear*, the Oxford editors have in the same breath democratised the discussion of this question. Earlier the textual problems of the play could be discussed only by scholars who not only had the necessary expertise but also had access to facsimiles of the Quarto and the Folio, which were not only expensive but also difficult for the ordinary person to read because of the misprints in the original editions, the old spelling and other such obstacles as the long s's which look like f's. Now we have in the Oxford Shakespeare the two texts, with the misprints corrected and the spelling modernised, so that any of us, if we are interested, can read them and make up our own minds.

If it can be shown that Folio *Lear* — with cuts, additions, substitutions and all — is a better play than Quarto *Lear*, then the case for saying that it is the product of a revision that Shakespeare carried out, or in which he participated, is greatly strengthened. But I am now in the same position as Premila in *The Blinding*, who says of the two versions of *King Lear*: 'There are lots of differences between them. I can't talk about all of them now'. There is in fact a 500-page book titled *The Division of the Kingdoms*, written by a group of scholars about these differences,⁴ as well as several other learned papers published elsewhere. I can't even try therefore to cover this ground in the time I have. What I have decided to do is to concentrate on two scenes and to demonstrate from them how Shakespeare worked as a reviser. The two scenes are, in what was until 1986 the standard text, numbered Act IV Scene 3 and Act IV Scene 7. In the first of these scenes Kent and a Gentleman discuss the condition of Lear and Cordelia's emotional state before their reunion. In the second of these scenes that reunion itself and Lear's restoration from his madness are enacted.

The first thing to say about the differences between the two versions in respect of these scenes is that the Folio drops entirely the first of them — that is, the conversation between Kent and the Gentleman. For earlier editors, this was an unauthorised out in the theatre that had to be compensated for by restoring it from the Quarto. If we accept, like Wells and Taylor, the hypothesis that Shakespeare revised the play for later performances, then we can try to think of reasons why Shakespeare dropped it while rethinking the play. I suggest that he may have found this scene both superfluous and inferior.

In that scene, as I have already indicated, Kent and the Gentleman talk about Lear's shame and guilt about his earlier rejection of Cordelia, and her continuing love and devotion to him. But in the later of the two scenes that I am discussing, these feelings of Lear and Cordelia are enacted on the stage by father and daughter themselves, in action and dialogue. Isn't it likely that

Shakespeare, on returning to the scene as a reviser, felt that the earlier scene — a scene of reporting and not of dramatic enactment — was unnecessary and should be eliminated?

But it's not only because of the less dramatic quality of Act IV Scene 3 that it may have been dropped in revision. I would argue that the quality of its writing is inferior to the general level of the poetry in *King Lear*. Take, for instance, the passage in which Kent talks about Lear's recollection of the wrongs he had done Cordelia:

these things sting

His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Guilt as stinging and shame as burning — these are well-worn and unremarkable images. Very different is the effect of the lines given to Lear in the reunion scene:

I am bound

Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

This too is derived from a traditional image of the purgatorial fire, both punishing and purifying, but renewed in poetic power in its dramatic context.

In the scene between Kent and the Gentleman let's look also at the latter's account of the way in which Cordelia received the news of Lear's sufferings:

..... patience and sorrow strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears
Were like a better way; those happy smiles
That played on her ripe lip seemed not to know
What guests were in her eyes, which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropped.

The imagery here is pretty, decorative and full of artifice, especially in the pearls and diamonds at the end. So the scene as a whole falls short, both in dramatic and in poetic power, of the best things in the play; and Shakespeare probably decided on these grounds to drop the entire scene in revision.

Let's consider now what he did to

the reunion of Lear and Cordelia (Act IV Scene 7 in the hitherto standard texts) in reshaping it the second time round. Several years ago I discussed this scene in an essay, 'The Pure Water of Poetry', that has been reprinted in *Navasilu 11 and 12*. I should like to begin by reading what I said then, at a time when I hadn't studied the hypothesis of revision:

'When Lear emerges from the dark night of the spirit, woken from his restoring sleep by music, Cordelia at first addresses him with ceremonial reverence as King and father:

How does my royal lord? How fares
Your Majesty?

For Lear, however, the hierarchies of power and even of age no longer have meaning: later in the scene he appalls Cordelia by kneeling to her. He has died and been reborn ('You do me wrong to take me out of the grave'), and his first utterances are like those of a child groping to make sense of an unfamiliar world..... The blank verse is halting and broken, as if language itself has to be reconstituted; yet it follows in those very tentative rhythms the movements of the seeking and exploring consciousness. And the movement is in the opposite direction from that of the mad speeches: here the language marks the striving towards purgation of hatred and pride and towards a humbling self-knowledge.

Never before Shakespeare written on such a scale and with such intensity poetry so austere in its simplicity and yet so masterly in its emotional truth:

LEAR: Pray do not mock me.
I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;
And to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful, for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me,
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

CORDELIA

And so I am, I am.

As Lear had abrogated the passions, so Shakespeare, in his own act of renunciation, has cast off complexity, verbal richness, metaphor, all the common appurtenances of poetry. All that remains is the pure, transparent, pellucid water of the bares, most elemental wellsprings of human utterance." And so I am, I am, I am — what could be seemingly more commonplace than Cordelia's line? But it is part of its strength that she speaks to him in the tones of a mother soothing a troubled child, so that the parent-child relationship is reversed. And its very simplicity, its avoidance of all emotional ostentation, is the mark of the purity of Cordelia's love. Bearing as it does all the selfless generosity of her nature, and with the whole weight of the play, which has been moving towards this moment, behind it, the line is in fact one of the peaks of Shakespearean poetry is that it is language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. If so, then surely Cordelia's line is great poetry.'

In revising the scene Shakespeare did very little to its words, which in their perfection indeed demanded few changes. He did cut the concluding prose dialogue between Kent and the Gentleman, which is merely informative, so that in the Folio the scene ends on Lear's closing lines:

Pray you now, forget
And forgive. I am old and foolish.

With this cut Shakespeare ended the scene on an emotional highpoint, avoiding the drop in intensity which the original conclusion involved.

But the main changes that Shakespeare seems to have made to this scene in revision concern its staging. To match the powerful simplicity of the language, he apparently decided to give the stage action an equally expressive simplicity.

Modern editions of *Lear* have in Act IV Scene 7⁵ some such stage direction as this: 'Enter Lear in a chair carried by servants.' This direction derives from the Folio, and therefore presumably belongs to the revision. There is no corresponding direction in the Quarto. What has therefore been conjectured is that when Shakespeare wrote his first version of the play, what he envisaged

was that Lear should be revealed (or, to use the technical language of the Elizabethan stage) 'discovered', asleep in bed by the drawing apart of curtains. The change in the Folio to him being brought on stage in a chair is more effective because the chair reminds us of his throne, from which he started the tragedy in the first scene by his division of the kingdom. In the Quarto, and in modern conflated texts, the Doctor says to Cordelia, 'Please you draw near' — that is, to Lear in bed. This goes out in the Folio because when Lear is brought in in a chair, it could be set down where Cordelia was.

In Quarto version of this scene we have on stage, besides Lear and Cordelia, Kent, a Doctor and a Gentleman. The Doctor manages the awakening of Lear from his restorative sleep with the command 'Louder the music there!' Music is, of course, often in Shakespeare a symbol of restored harmony; it is used in this way in the stage action in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. No doubt Shakespeare provided for a similar use of music for Lear's awakening in the first productions of the play. But in revision he seems to have abandoned this for a simpler effect. In the Folio version the Doctor disappears, so that attention is wholly concentrated on Cordelia as the agent of Lear's recovery. And there is no music, so that there is nothing to distract the audience from the words in their unadorned, austere strength. It's very likely, too, that Shakespeare revised *King Lear* after he had written *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, so that when he came back to *Lear*, he didn't want to repeat a theatrical effect he had already used in the other plays.

An interesting point arises here with regard to Peter Brook's production of the play, to which I have already referred. In this production the Doctor and the music were both excluded in the reunion scene, and as already mentioned, the conversation between the two servants at the end of Act IV scene 3 was cut. All these cuts correspond to excisions in the Folio, but it's unlikely that Brook

made them on textual grounds, since in the sixties there was no school of textual scholars arguing that the Folio incorporated Shakespeare's last known revision of the play. However, it's possible that Brook looked at the Folio text and took ideas from it for his production. Of course, Brook introduced innovations of his own: in the scene of the blinding of Gloucester, he had the servants at the end of the scene moving the furniture, indifferent to the plight of the blinded man. But this, seen by some critics in the 'sixties, basing themselves on the conflated text, as a violation of Shakespeare, can now be claimed as a creative development of the scene in the Folio version. This raises the general question of what text a director should use in producing *King Lear* on the stage. When the play passes into the hands of a director today, it becomes part of a new creative act, and the director's freedom of interpretation — in fact, of re-creation — can't be circumscribed by any text. But there remains the question of what text he should *start from*. Why begin with the conflated text, which, as now seems likely, is nothing more than a construct by generations of scholars suffering from a misapprehension?⁶ Brook's example shows that a director may find the Folio text theatrically more fruitful, which isn't surprising since it was probably evolved in the theatre under Shakespeare's own direction⁷, though Brook was unaware of this.

I have been able only to demonstrate from a small part of the play that Quarto and Folio *Lears* must be treated as two distinct versions. There are many other differences between them that I have no time to discuss — for instance, the fact that the Folio diminishes the roles of Albany and Kent and enhances that of Edgar; that it cuts a number of moralising speeches; and that, in general, the Folio version is darker in tone. But I want to end with some comments on the impact of the new Oxford Shakespeare text on the present and future image of Shakespeare's methods of work as a playwright. I must make it clear at this point that it's not only in respect of *King Lear* that the Oxford Shakespeare gives us a text very diffe-

rent from that to which we have been accustomed. As I mentioned earlier, there are six plays of Shakespeare for which we have two original printed texts which differ substantially from each other. In all these cases, one text seems to derive from an author's manuscript, and in the other there is the presence of a playhouse transcript. What editors before 1986 did with each of these plays was to conflate the two versions. It is arguable that in doing so, they produced a text that never existed in Shakespeare's time, either in manuscript or in stage production. In all such cases the Oxford editors give us texts that can be taken to approximate as closely as possible to the text as acted in its latest stage of revision⁸. They carry through this principle even if it means relegating to an appendix some famous lines, as, for instance, one soliloquy of Hamlet.

At this point I wish to anticipate a question that may occur to some listeners. In the first collected edition, the First Folio, there are 36 plays. To these we have to add two plays that are partly by Shakespeare — *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* — making 38 in all. So you may feel like objecting, 'You say Shakespeare probably revised six plays after he finished their original manuscripts. Six out of 38 — that isn't a large proportion. So revision couldn't have been so frequent or so important in his work as a playwright'. But such an argument wouldn't be sound. To decide whether or not a play was revised after first composition was completed, we need to have two original printed texts that we can compare with each other. But this condition is satisfied only with 8 of the plays; for the other twenty we have only one text. In the case of these twenty Shakespeare may have revised none, or some, or all of them — there's no way of telling. So the real proportion is that among the 18 plays where we can judge, Shakespeare seems to have revised six of them. And among these six, there are three where the revisions were very extensive, and these are among Shakespeare's acknowledged masterpieces — *Lear*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*. So the process of revision appears to have played a more signifi-

cant role in the making of his art than the simple arithmetic would indicate.

When the Oxford Shakespeare appeared nine years ago, orthodox scholars were shocked by the novelty of its conclusions and the unfamiliarity of several features of its text. But in these nine years, there has been a noticeable shift in favour of its argument that Shakespeare did revise some of his plays. To some extent, I believe, that shift was due to the essential soundness of the case made out by the Oxford editors. However, there are probably also other factors that have helped. In the intellectual climate of post-modernist literary theory and literary criticism, people like to think of a text as not being fixed or finally defined. Of course, the process of what Gary Taylor called 'reinventing Shakespeare' in his witty and penetrating book of that name has gone on ever since his time. We know that the plays have been subject to continual transformations and re-interpretation by editors, critics, directors and actors. But now there is evidence that even in Shakespeare's own time and in his own hands the plays existed in a process of flux. As Gary Taylor writes:

What happened when Shakespeare finished *King Lear*? According to the traditional story, he never revised his work, and so after he had written the last page of *King Lear* he closed the book & and that was that. But fewer and fewer critics believe in closure. Shakespeare may at some point have closed the book, but he could reopen it again whenever he wanted. There is no Last Judgment anymore.⁹

There is, however, another fact that has helped in the ascendancy of the theory of Shakespearean revision, and that is the financial power and academic prestige of the Oxford University Press through whose imprints the new image of Shakespeare is being disseminated. Certainly, if Wells and Taylor had edited their Shakespeare for a less prestigious publisher, their innovations would have had much less impact. And the texts of the Oxford Shakespeare are now

being distributed also through cheap paperbacks — a book to a play — in the World's Classics series. It seems safe to say that these editions are already strong rivals throughout the English-speaking world to the New Penguin Shakespeare, hitherto the most popular versions used in schools and universities. As Gary Taylor himself admits:

Like IBM and the Berliner Ensemble and the RSC, OUP can afford to experiment, because its risky innovations are subsidized by its safe market leaders. The Oxford editors, too, can afford to experiment, because they know that the global power and prestige of OUP will be mobilized in support of their experiment. Their shocking edition is empowered by, and in turn empowers, the multinational business interests of Oxford University Press.¹⁰

Another sign that Wells and Taylor have begun to change academic thinking about Shakespeare's play is that the fresh series of the Arden Shakespeare is going to fall in line with their view. You may know that in the first half of this century there was the original Arden Shakespeare; then, beginning in the 'fifties, there was the New Arden Shakespeare. Now we are to have a re-editing of the series under the title Arden 3. The general editor, Jonathan Bate, has announced that he strongly endorses the view that some of Shakespeare's Plays existed in more than one version, and that Arden 3 will take account of this fact. So I am inclined to think that by the first decade of the 21st century the hypothesis of Shakespearean revision will be well established in scholarly favour, and that editions of Shakespeare prepared on this basis will become generally acceptable. As often, the heresies of one time will probably become the orthodoxies of another.

Notes

1. I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare and other scholars who have

promoted the textual revolution in Shakespeare for many of the leading ideas in this paper.

2. G.K. Hunter (ed), *Shakespeare: King Lear* (1972: Penguin Books), pp.45-46.
3. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), *William Shakespeare, The Complete Works* (1986: Oxford University Press).
4. Gary Taylor and Michael Warren (eds.), *The Division of the Kingdoms* (1983: Oxford University Press).
5. Act IV Scene 6 in the Oxford Shakespeare's editing of the Folio text.
6. The misapprehension, as indicated in the earlier argument, is that the integrity of a Shakespeare's play, once it left his hands, would have been violated in the theatre by actors doing what they liked with it without reference to him.
7. The Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre didn't have a recognised institution of a theatre director, but somebody would have had to instruct the actors and decide on matters of stage business, etc. In the case of Shakespeare's play, who would have been better suited to do this than the playwright-actor-member of the company who, it is plausible to suppose, would normally, until his retirement to Stratford, have been there on the spot?
8. The six plays are *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Richard II*, *King Henry IV* and *Troilus and Cressida*. It's only in the first three, however, that the revisions are so substantial as to make a difference to the general structure of the play, and in *King Lear* they are so extensive and so far-reaching as to justify the Oxford editors in speaking of two distinct versions.
9. Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1991: Vintage), p. 361.
10. Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare* (1991: Vintage), p. 321.



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Implications of The Federal Option

Hartmut Elsenhans

Problems of the distribution of legislative powers in a federal system

All federations have as one of their primordial tasks to defend the security of the body politic against encroachments from the outside. In the necessary distribution of legislative powers, foreign policy and military affairs belong to the federation. This basic link through which the state preserves order and security implies that civil rights, penal laws, the organisation of the legal structure and similar matters have to be dealt with at the federal level. Wherever due to historical circumstances there exist also state human rights bills, they have to be in conformity with the federal legislations which overarch it. There is no uniform citizenship if citizens of different states enjoy different rights to any noticeable degree. The exception to be mentioned here are statutes relating only to the very private domain of personal law and, here as already shown in the Indian example, not on the basis of territorial division of the citizens.

As well, federations are normally associated with the attempt to pool economic resources in order to complement the market with the capacity to influence it on the own territory against vagaries or undesired results of the world market. Foreign economic policy and the currency are normally attributions of the federal level. Foreign economic policy especially with its instruments of controlling foreign trade and transborder capital flows allows to differentiate conditions of profitability of investment and employment in the domestic and to influence the pattern of specialisation, the level of employment and the rate of long-term growth. The size of a market over which such influence can be exercised is essential for the results of such a differentiation of domestic conditions of production with respect to levels of profitability of various activities which

would result from the world market because of the following basic condition of technical progress: Technical innovation consists of investing resources in development which once the innovation is made exploitable are easily reproducible. It is costly to develop a motor or a machine, but when it is discovered and made fit for use, it is easy to build a second, third or nth one. The larger the market the more important the possibilities to spread the costs of an innovation on the number of replications, i.e. products, and therefore to cheapen technical progress. In industries with cost depression, and most innovative industries are characterised by achieving stable unit costs only at rather high levels of production, the size of the market is important especially if it is made possible to compensate initially high costs of innovation by a protected national market which allows to sell abroad at prices higher than marginal costs but lower than average costs. German pharmaceuticals are cheaper abroad than at home with the result that levels of output are high and unit costs low from which home consumers benefit also, despite the prices charged to them being higher than those abroad.

The promotion of productivity and economic diversification through a large home market which allows to enjoy economies of scale and intensification of competition between local producers which otherwise would have each a monopoly on a territorially separate market requires not only sheltering from the world market but also abolition of all internal barriers to free competition. As the resulting growth will be invariably spread over the territory in an uneven manner, consumers will accept such an integrated market for products only, if freedom of establishment for all citizens all over the country is guaranteed, as most federations have experienced vast migratory movements. The rules which organise the market are therefore

invariably federal and if there are state legislations as in the United States, federal rules have to complement it as was the case with the labour laws, the laws of contracts etc., in brief: The organisation of equality of business before the market in analogy to the equality of people before the law are domain of federal legislation. But not all economic regulations will be uniform over the territory of a federation. Migration is not the only way to deal with uneven regional development. In all nations there are regional policies which try to balance regional backwardness in order to make economic opportunities for all citizens in the whole territory of the federation at least comparable. Constitutions even mention the obligation for the federal government to provide for compensatory mechanisms. Such rules can be federal in principle, especially where limits to subsidies and promotional activities are concerned. The principle of subsidiarity implies, however, that the legal frameworks for positive action may be federal, but the detailistic propositions and rules may be a responsibility of the state, especially as such rules imply the use of tax payers' money so that the lowest unit near those who are intended to benefit should be responsible for the efficiency of such operations. There are therefore areas where federal and state legislations coexist. A division of tasks can be achieved by listings of items reserved to one or the other level, but it is equally possible to reserve for the federation the establishment of frameworks within which the state level is allowed to take concrete action and to have an area of indetermined competences.

The balance between state and federation is actually shifted in Western states in favour of the federations because, within the area of simultaneous competences, more and more the federation extends its regulative power by passing from general rules to more detailed prescriptions. This is

the reason for the actual rejection of (Washington) big government in parts of the United States public opinion, but such developments occur also in other federations especially with the actual ebb of statist tendencies in the West. Areas of legislation which are reserved to the state such as education in Germany contribute to reinforce the states in all other areas as they provide the political elites in the state institutions with a genuine field where they can secure allegiance from their body politic. The tendency to guarantee uniformity of basic conditions over territory of the federation will make itself felt here nevertheless. Although education is a state matter in Germany, no German state government has endeavoured to depart in a fundamental way from the structure of the education system and the requirements for exams especially the ones relevant for graduation in the labour market or for access to higher education, and this despite very serious divergencies in educational matters between major political forces subsequent to the students' unrest in the late 1960s.

Enlarged autonomy in administration

The principle of maintaining uniform rules within a federation in order to have equal rights of citizens and equal opportunities of labour and capital can have important repercussions for the pattern of application of rules. Two systems for the execution of law can be distinguished. At a first glance it may seem to be logical that each level executes the laws it has statuted. This will lead to a multiplicity of administrations and offices active within the same area of concern. The other model consists in having purely federal areas of legislation executed by federal administrations. All other areas would then be left to state administrations which then simultaneously execute state and federal laws. This system is in vigour in Germany. It has led to a close cooperation between both levels and the divestment of the federation from administration in a variety of activities where the federation was entitled to create it. A large variety of settings for maintaining the chain of command is possible.

In the great majority of cases, the

federal level adds to its laws rules for their administrative execution which are binding on state administrations. Control its exercised by the courts to which the potential beneficiaries can appeal. With respect to the execution of laws concerning the peaceful use of atomic energy, the federation has found it sometimes necessary to send mandatory instructions to state administrations in states with anti-nuclear governments.

In the very sensitive domain of financial laws, the constitution in Germany provides for state collection also of federal taxes. Here, the federation has reserved its agreement on the organisation of respective administrative bodies and the nomination of top office holders, but conflicts are not reported.

Federal means of transport such as trunk railways or trunk roads (motorways) are an important element for the creation of a national market and equal opportunities for economic activities over the whole territory. In Germany, the federation has, however, delegated this task to state administrations over which it can exercise a detailed control on levels of spending and projects to be executed.

The cooperation between the federation and the states takes therefore a multiplicity of forms largely influenced by pragmatism considerations and historical circumstances under which a particular arrangement has been organised. This leads even to an area where both levels decide not to establish formal rules of partitioning responsibilities but to establish joint authorities which execute agreed upon programs. These are not very different from joint ventures between business organisations where sometimes equal and sometimes less equal and partners pool resources.

Participation of the states in the federal decision making process: The control of the purse

Systems of cooperative federalism can survive only if the different levels respect each other's financial strength. When each level is free to raise taxes it assumes to require, constitutional conflict can be expected where some territorial representatives at the federal level may well take the federation's

view in case that they expect their regions to benefit from the increased revenues at the federation's level. The richer regions which become net contributors will become alienated, a result that probably nobody really strives for.

Fiscal problems require state participation in order to increase the commitment of the richer states in the endeavour if the federation pursues extensive economic and social programs. The less the federation attempts to use its budget for redistribution, the less the necessity to cooperate with states and vice-versa. A more welfarist state will therefore have a higher degree of cooperation between the different levels in financial matters than a more free-market oriented one.

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Can Small Producers Survive

Mallika Wanigasundara

The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) promises lower prices and wider choices of goods for consumers, but will the small and medium-sized producers be able to survive the competition?

The South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA), which is expected to transform itself into the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by year 2000 or 2005, gives Sri Lankan small and medium-scale industrialists the jitters.

A certain level of preferential trade under SAPTA was agreed upon in December 1995 by the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

During a second round of talks by SAARC in Colombo in March 1996, tariffs between the seven countries were lowered on 226 items. This meant that trade was liberalised on these items, but it is estimated that some 5,000-6,000 customs lines, relating to at least 35,000 items, remain.

Under SAFTA, all tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers such as restrictions through import licences, quotas, etc will be eliminated.

Small and medium-scale industrialists have nightmarish visions of an avalanche of Indian goods swamping the local market and wiping them out. Low-priced Indian tiles, buckets and saucepans, batteries and light engineering spares, electrical accessories, rubber and leather goods, and a million other items manufactured with India's highly developed technology could enter Sri Lanka freely.

As it is, under Sri Lanka's present economic climate, the small and medium industrialists are facing many reverses. The community is strapped for cash, has few reserves, is dragged down by high interest rates and unable to pay back

bank loans, and faces dwindling markets in some instances.

In addition, the whole industrial base is suffering severely because of the daily power cuts — scaled down to five and half hours a day from the earlier eight hours. Fuel costs for the running of generators are much higher than electricity, but industrialists are soldiering on to keep the creditor away from the door.

The trend is on the same lines as ASEAN, the European Union, the American and Pacific agreements. The name of the game is efficiency. Industrialists are being told that they have to buckle down to produce goods which are of a globally acceptable standard, cost effective and at competitive prices.

This seems a tall order for the small man hedged in by many constraints, although the Sri Lankan industrialist has been successfully competing in the international market in a variety of items and also in the home market against imports under Sri Lanka's open economy and liberalised trading system. Sri Lanka exports light engineering and electrical items, boats, household goods, a variety of food items, rubber and leather goods, ceramics, garments, and packeted tea.

The trend in freer trade is on, and seems inescapable. The question is: how free or liberalised should it be for Sri Lanka's small man, struggling, inexperienced and still unable to put his act together?

The message from government authorities is clear: SAFTA is not a threat; it is a challenge. Manufacturers and producers will have to prepare themselves for it. Some will go under; others will benefit enormously. Spokesmen for the government of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, which in a complete about-face since the 1994 election has embraced the free market ideology and the private enterprise system advocated

by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, urge the advantages of free regional trade.

Economists take the view that preferential trade agreements, though they have their uses, tend to be outdated and loose. They believe that tighter, more unified trading agreements are necessary to expand trade between countries in the region and to meet the demands of modern competitive markets successfully.

Dr Gamini Fernando, Chairman of the Peoples Bank of Sri Lanka, which has funded thousands of small and medium-scale industrialists and put them on their feet a couple of decades ago, says: 'The region has a population of 1.2 billion people and the market potential is massive. There is a Rs 100 crore market out there and Sri Lanka has to bite into it'.

The Peoples Bank cannot afford to ignore the fate of these industrialists whom they have funded with small loans of Rs 5,000-10,000 (US\$ 100-200) to begin with. Some industrialists have since then developed and taken loans running into several hundred thousand rupees. Some loans have been rescheduled and the Bank is at the same time trying to inform, educate and guide its clientele towards the SAFTA process.

There is of course enormous potential for trade between SAARC countries and this is not being exploited. Only around 3% of total trade of these countries is between SAARC nations.

Kingsley Wickremaratne, Minister of Trade and a prime advocate of SAFTA, says: 'We can make sizeable profits in this massive market without even being noticed. Even 0.005% of that market would be good enough for a small country like Sri Lanka'.

Indika Gunawardene, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, says:

The writer is a former journalist with the Observer and Daily News in Colombo, is a freelance writer on developmental and environmental issues. She has won the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)'s Global 500 award.

The Soviet bloc industries collapsed because they could not compete in the global market. Even Vietnam has joined ASEAN and has agreed to abide by its policies'. This is surprising coming from the son of one of Sri Lanka's best known Marxists, the late Philip Gunawardene, and himself a reputed leftist.

For consumers SAFTA would be a bonanza — lower prices and wider choices of goods. They will no longer accept substandard goods in captive markets and governments are no longer prepared to shore up inefficient, loss-making industries.

Many food items from India such as potatoes would cost one fourth the price or less if they are let into the country. But then what would be the fate of the Sri Lanka farmer? The Ministers of Agriculture and Trade find themselves locked in an argument about the import of potatoes from India. In Sri Lanka they cost anything between Rs 30-60 a kilo. In India they are Rs 3-6 a kilo.

Consumers do not usually pay high prices out of patriotism; it is a question of price and preference, says Minister Wickremaratne. 'Which would you prefer — the Indian potato or ours which is so costly?' The same applies to sarees from India, he says.

Chandra Kannangara, an entrepreneur from Lakpa, says: 'Let's face it. SAFTA is here to stay. Let's not fight it. Let's make inroads into less known markets instead of the more sophisticated ones'. He has seen Lakpa rubber slippers and Sri Lankan tyres selling in Madras. The Lakpa rubber slipper weighs 400 grams while the Indian one weighs 565 grams. 'Which would the consumer prefer?' he asks.

But the fear of dumping is real. There is an arrangement under SAPTA which enables countries which find that imports are threatening their local industries, to appeal to the SAFTA authorities for adjustments. How effective such a process would be in the face of time lags and prevarications over negotiations is not difficult to envisage and the prospect seems pessimistic.

Besides, India for instance has its own way of dealing with these matters. India did agree to a duty reduction on the import of cloves, but then she has a system of import licences to restrict imports. This has been brought to the notice of the SAPTA secretariat.

Manufacturers are all the time asking for protection, says the Governor of the Central Bank, A S Jayawardene. 'We protected matches for 70 years and what did we get for it. One manufacturer of substandard pencils complained to us about competition from a superior Chinese pencil, and asked for greater protection'.

'We asked him', says the Governor. 'If we cannot even produce a good quality pencil, how can we survive and in fact we lowered the import duty further. He now produces a high quality pencil and even exports it'.

But across the board, what the small and medium-scale industrialists are asking for is not protection but assistance

— incentives, lower interest rates (which now range around 20%), duty concessions on the import of raw materials, lower up-front costs, technological know-how and market information.

The official message is: adjust and buckle down and we will help you. But producers feel they have to stabilise themselves at home and get their act together before they can think in terms of battling in a regional market.

Small and medium-scale industrialists particularly feel very frustrated and uncertain about the future: beyond the Indian Ocean there is indeed a gold mine, but do they have the capability to mine it?

— Third World Network Features.

LETTER

Images of America Through Expatriate Sri Lankan Eyes

I was pleasantly surprised to find *Images of Sri Lanka through American Eyes*, being subjected to a critical analysis two decades after its first publication to mark the American Bicentennial — and by a citizen of both the New and Old Worlds, in the latter of which Jeanne Thwaites was born. (*Lanka Guardian* 01 July and 15 July). When the book appeared it was enthusiastically received, reviewed by discerning eyes, and went into three printings in seven years. Those who both read and reviewed it perceived the collection in the letter and spirit of its compilation as a collection of travellers' tales spanning two centuries. In my Introduction I had made a clean breast of the genesis, aim, scope and purpose of the anthology. What began as a modest complimentary souvenir grew into a 442 page volume with 22 plates and a specially commissioned cover painting by Stanley Kirinde. In the limited time at my disposal to meet printing schedules and to save the affable Ambassador the embarrassment of mounting costs, I cut down the number of chapters from fifty to thirty six.

In 1993 Jeanne Thwaites discovered its author when she returned to Sri

Lanka on a Fulbright grant and in the course of both personal and written inquiries, I was happy to fill her in further on the mode and contexts of how I had approached this congenial task for a special occasion. I thought I had made it abundantly clear that I was in no wise attempting a Franz Funon — Aime Cesaire — Albert Memmi Ariel — Caliban interpretation of either the psychology of the colonized or, that of a master-race mission. That is a whole separate ball game to which I have made frequent reference in more relevant writings. I was merely offering a delectable choice of aperitifs, hors d'oeuvres, hamburgers, "patties and sandwiches" and a few choice slices of love cake for which Ms Thwaites confesses to a more than ordinate passion. The quantum leap in 160 years from Newell's saving souls in Ceylon to Merton's finding salvation at Gal Vihare is quite a spread, and, perhaps, goes to the heart of the matter.

As for Edward Kennedy (Duke) Ellington, my wife and I heard him with profound respect and attention in the enormous Gymnasium in Peradeniya in 1963, and had the good fortune to be living in New York when he died

in 1974. The funeral service we attended in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine was one of the more memorable events in a crowded sabbatical year. In fact it was the stimuli of that time which prompted the 1976 book at the invitation of an American Ambassador — a scholar and humanist, whom I had the pleasure of meeting again in my home in September last year.

I want to keep this contribution brief and will end with two appropriate quotations — on adulatory, the other hyperbolically Shavian. When the book was re-printed in 1983 I was allowed

to add a brief Postscript to my Introduction. The demand for a third printing, within seven years, of this idiosyncratic tribute to the peripatetic American who sported his traveller's heart on his sleeve for two hundred years proves the point of this evocative exercise. Long before the ubiquitous travel agency and the seductive package tour there was the passionate pilgrim who chose his intellectual itinerary and framed his perceptions relying on his own sensibility and imagination. The success of this book is a testimony to the enduring charm and quality of his observations". And in the year I was born all of 75 years ago, H.L.

Mencken (who needs no introduction) in his essay *On being an American* had this to say : "The United States is essentially a commonwealth of third rate men — that distinction is easy here because the general level of culture, of information, of taste and judgement, of ordinary competence, is so low ... Third-rate men, of course, exist in all countries, but it is only here that they are in full control of the state and with it all of the national standards."

H. A. I. Goonetilleke

BOOKS

Exploring Confrontation: Sri Lanka, Politics, Culture and History

By Michael Roberts, Chur, Switzerland; Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994. xxvi, 377 p. ISBN 3-7186-5506-3.

Reviewed by Chandra R. de Silva,
(Professor of History, Department of History,
Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN 47809,
USA.)

This volume consists of a collection of essays. About half the book consists of articles and chapters which have never been published before and many of the others have been amended or updated. While the subjects of the essays range in scope from Sinhala history and culture to the current ethnic conflict, they are strung together by several themes which pervade the collection. First, there is Robert's consistent attack on what he terms the 'instrumentalist' interpretation of history (p. 42) and in this book, he assembles a wide range of evidence through which he seeks to introduce the 'emotive' element into the reconstruction of history. In a fascinating early chapter he deftly uses photographs to document how the Marxist political leadership gradually gravitated towards ceremonial attendance at Buddhist temples and, perhaps correctly,

he cautions us against interpreting this as a purely political move. Secondly, Roberts returns to his theory of the 'Asokan Persona' in Sinhala culture, specifically in four specific essays in the collection, but also in scattered references throughout the volume. His argument here is not merely that Sinhala society and culture has been hierarchic traditionally, but that there are peculiarly Sri Lankan elements in this hierarchy and that respect for hierarchy and authority continues to prevail in the minds of contemporary Sri Lankan leaders as well as in their followers. This is perhaps the most complete and elaborate defence of Robert's theory of the 'Asokan Persona'. The book is also a auto-commentary on Michael Roberts himself, of his conversion from being a positivist historian to a self-reflective anthropologist, and of his own perception of having been a marginal person in Sinhala society. He sometimes writes in a confessional mode and some of his old friends and acquaintances will find that casual references they have made to the author have been deftly woven into the Roberts' interpretation

of the Sri Lankan reality. The book as a whole, however, also contains some of Michael Robert's best work. For instance Chapter Seven (p. 149-181) which is a reworking of his essay on 'Noise as Cultural Struggle' explores how the different ways in which British and Buddhists viewed *shabdha* (noise) impacted on the events which led to the riots of 1915. A reprint of his 1978 essay on 'Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: Barriers to Accommodation' testifies to his perspicacity. While his use of the word 'progrom' to describe what are generally termed ethnic riots in Sri Lanka is certain to arouse controversy, his essay on 1983 reflects his deepening aversion to the violence which has spread in the country of his birth. This is a volume which embodies the research and mature reflections of one of the premier historian-anthropologists of Sri Lanka. It will amply reward the discerning reader.

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