

Vol. 41 No. (196)
March / April 2019

Social

Registered as a News Paper
in the Sri Lanka Press Council

ISSN 1391 - 0612

JUSTICE

if delayed then denied

Civility

Roots and Routes



Editorial:

Social Justice campaigns for civility even in the face of the most challenging times, brought about by the events such as the Easter Sunday atrocities in Sri Lanka.

Paul Weller:

Colonialism and imperialism finally had their 'blowback effects', with fragmented, embattled and embittered fabric of what is left of the now deeply (dis) 'United' Kingdom.

Upul Kumarapperuma:

This single act of political irresponsibility is what the public abhors most annoyingly and is silly to say that 'I did not know'.

Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi:

No single perspective, ideology, political or religious would be sufficient to resolve and transform complex human situations.

Andi Schubert:

Electing more educated politicians does not address the problems arising from an exclusive and elitist political system that cannot deal with the extremist agenda of ethnic or religious nature.

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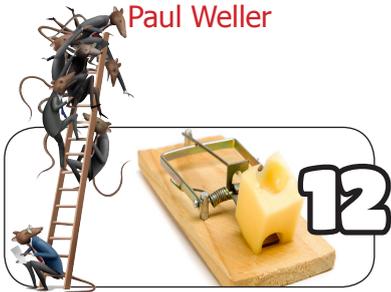
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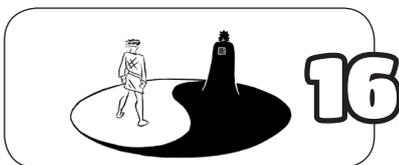
Brexit: A Colonial Boomerang in a Populist World

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Publisher says...

“ WE MUST INFECT CIVILITY EVERYWHERE, IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE”

Rev. Fr. Rohan Silva OMI

No matter what the hot button issue is, civility comes down to how we communicate and how we listen, how we ultimately interact with one another and live in a civil way in society. Sri Lanka is at crossroads once again with a gross violation of the ‘post-war-peacetime’ on 21 April 2019 and the mayhem it inflicted is being felt right through the island – civility dissected.

Hence we need to identify a number of qualities that accompany civility:

Politeness could be identified as the first step towards civility in general understanding and it stands like the ‘grease for the wheels’ of interpersonal relationships. In our practice of politeness, many personal interactions are enhanced much smoother, preventing the unpalatable conflict and dissension that could derail such regular relations. When someone practices politeness as a norm or one’s form of ethical conduct, we then could identify such as ‘wholesome’ or ‘graceful’ behavior.

The ability to disagree without disrespect is what creates a common ground and as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening to one’s past preconceptions, prejudices and enthusing others to do the same, in itself is a learning process of civility. It moves us to seek solutions to the problems and their ‘roots’ together and allows everyone’s voice to be heard in order to devise new ‘routes’ of civility.

However, we are living in challenging times across the globe from Christchurch to Kashmir and now in Colombo where the concept of ‘us and them’ has created an unbridgeable precipice and transformed it into a hard core antagonism that is pervasive and invasive in almost every discussion, whether it is religion, politics, social issues, or sports. It is fashionable to denigrate and even demonize everyone with whom we disagree. We see this rhetoric politicized on news clips, newspaper headlines, and dominating the social media, infecting the very core of civility. We also witness everyday the shocking display of utter disregard to fellow human beings, undermine their dignity; respect and the safety of the ‘other’ is devalued sometimes intentionally and the sense of common good is made secondary and even completely dismissed. While the roots of civility have proven with far-reaching



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Social Justice

Tri annual Journal published by
The Centre for Society and Religion
Vol. 41 No. (196)
March / April 2019

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The views expressed in the volume,
Social Justice by its panel of
contributors need not necessarily be
interpreted as a reflection
of its editorial policy

Editorial...

Civility at Stake

“

The Easter bombings have opened up the need for such civic engagement, which will now be made even more difficult as the security discourse takes over the discourse of democracy and dialogue

”

This volume of Social Justice comes to you as Sri Lanka comes to terms with another wave of suicide strikes after 10 years of its 30-year-old civil war and the attacks occurred as this edition was being prepared for print. Even as the general public and the surviving victims try hard to understand the shocking tragedy, we saw the politicians of the country rushing to evade responsibility and to turn the devastation into a political game. Meanwhile, on the ground, community groups from affected areas struggled to prevent any retaliatory attacks on Muslims, efforts that have been largely successful. They have set a lasting example of civility to our society otherwise riddled with violence. Civility, or the way we enable the political space by keeping it open to all and democratic, has become a central concern more than ever before. We are clearly at a key juncture in our history: how we choose to deal with this tragedy will determine the trajectory of both war and peace in the years to come. We originally borrowed the term “Civility” from the French philosopher Etienne Balibar. He sets civility as the antidote to “cruelty,” or the structures through which we subject vast swathes of populations into “disposable people” and systematically subject them to poverty, fear, death, etc., that then prevents them from being full human members of society. Terrorism is a key mechanism through which systematic cruelty is practiced. Against it, and in the face of it, we must find the courage to assert the value of plurality, democracy, and dialogue against all odds.

Looking Inside

The ‘constitutional coup’ on 26th October, 2018, that occurred in Sri Lanka was an attack on democracy that underscored the issue of citizenship and belonging. Although the abolition of the executive presidency in Sri Lanka was the key promise on the electoral platform with which the current president assumed power, not only has he failed to carry out his promise, but was also seen as grossly violating his executive powers during the 52 day fiasco. The incident, which brought the country to the brink of a serious political crisis, led to a renewed interest in the scope and nature of democracy in contexts where power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, more so now with the Easter Sunday carnage. This volume of Social Justice raises the question of citizenship, exploring its many modalities through the concept of civility and examines two practical examples of how civic life is at constant threat when autocratic rulers or nationalist populism chooses to ignore the importance of the founding principle of politics. Theatrical terror attacks of the nature we have just witnessed by internationally organized groups targeted the altars of civility and citizenry, threatening all roots of democracy and justice.

Learning from Outside

The French philosopher Etienne Balibar has employed the term “civility” to refer to a politics that keeps contemporary violence at bay. For Balibar, the term’s multiple historical nuances – dating back to the renaissance adaption of the Latin term *Civilitas* to suggest the Greek *Politeas* – carries within it various references and points of origin: from civil society to citizenship, from civilization to the proper

behavior towards one another. We adopt the term here, not only to raise the question of what politics means at this specific political juncture in Sri Lanka - where the most fundamental contract between the people and their rulers, the constitution, has been violated - but also what civility means in the broader context of violent deprivation across the world. Especially when Sri Lanka is fear-struck with the deaths of innocent people and the incomparable loss of life, political theorists and social activists are alike asking what it means to be a global citizen in the world today



The responses to the carnage on Easter Day from the government is one of ‘passing the buck’ which also indicates a level of incivility as well as non-accountability on the part of the state apparatus and those who run the political machine.



and how to make sense when unjustifiable violence is carried out against the innocent. What are the local, national, transnational, and global implications of redefining civility as a politico-ethical project constructed through a series of historical manipulations of power and how best governments and other agencies ‘keep violence at bay’? We feel that this conversation is central to the way our conception of politics, particularly democratic politics is framed and enacted today. New

readings are warranted to make sense of violence and the lethal suicide strikes. In this regard, Balibar conceptualizes civility as “a politics of politics or politics in the second degree, which aims at creating, recreating, and conserving the set of conditions within which politics as a collective participation in public affairs is possible or is not made absolutely impossible” (Balibar 15 Outline). Balibar’s conception of civility leads us to ask what democratic practices enable real political participation in contemporary neoliberal contexts. The ‘constitutional coup’ in Sri Lanka was, then, a key opportunity to examine how democratic participation in governance could be reframed and reconsidered from a citizen’s point of view. If civility can be construed as a second order of politics, or politics of politics, then we must examine how such undemocratic moments are symptomatic of the lack of an institutional space where the needs and demands of all citizens can be represented. But the recent attacks have shocked and destabilized even the vestiges of democratic institutions in the country. All political and civil activists are awe-struck when violence is so close to home in events like the Easter Sunday carnage that swept away the ‘peacetime’ precincts of Sri Lanka. For Balibar, the systemic violence that subjects human beings to unbearable cruelty is a means of excluding people from the right to politics. These mindlessly manipulative attacks bring to the fore the precise opposite of civility: cruelty and incivility.

Sri Lanka's Shortcomings

Ten years after the end of the civil war of Sri Lanka, political solution to ensuring that ethno-religious minorities the right to democratic participation in

governance was yet to be worked out. The socio-economic problems that led to two youth insurrections in the Southern part of the country are even further aggravated by decades of neoliberal reform. Over the four decades of neoliberalization in Sri Lanka, a sizeable population of the country has been largely excluded from structures of governance in the country punctuated only by occasional electoral victories. The ‘constitutional coup’ was an exaggerated show of power, that highlighted how little rulers regard, not only public opinion, but the fundamental contract between citizens and the state. Even more frightening, perhaps, was the easy acceptance on the part of many citizens and civil institutions such as the media, state organs, and even educational institutions of such a violation. It seemed as if public life could continue—life would go on—despite such a breach of public trust. It was symptomatic of the way the public in general was alienated from the state’s mechanism of power distribution. The instability created by such democratic failures as well as security lapses emerging from the well-known tussle between the president and the prime minister following the Easter attacks have all made the country vulnerable to terrorism as well as to the narcotic led underworld. The responses to the carnage on Easter Day from the government is one of ‘passing the buck’ which also indicates a level of incivility as well as non-accountability on the part of the state apparatus and those who run the political machine.

On the other hand, and more encouragingly, the 52 day coup was, at least for political activists, a time for intense debate on the forms of civil and political participation that would change the concentration of power in a

political class that has, by now, learned to callously disregard such civil structures and contracts that enables society at all. The Easter Sunday bombings have opened up the need for such civic engagement, which will now be made even more difficult as the security discourse takes over the discourse of democracy and dialogue. They need to examine how the foreclosure of the public



Especially when Sri Lanka is fear-struck with the deaths of innocent people and the incomparable loss of life, political theorists and social activists are alike asking what it means to be a global citizen in the world today and how to make sense when unjustifiable violence is carried out against the innocent.



sphere should be addressed by citizens and transformed, at least transitionally, the political apathy of the Sri Lankan society even in the midst of such callous attacks on Easter Sunday. The historical constellations that structure both the apathy towards politics and the exclusion of citizens from the process of political participation

must be examined closely, and thoroughly. The civil groups must be encouraged to take charge of how they wish to apply civility in their neighbourhood, to enhance the dynamics of civic and democratic participation in society.

The postcolonial critique of the discourse on civilization, especially the civilizing aspect of it, sheds a sinister light on any association between civility as contemporary political praxis and the idea of “progress” in its more Euro-centric sense. Always attentive to the ways in which dominating discourses masquerade as patronizing gestures to “help improve,” we should consider the local, national roots of democratic citizenship that can be invoked to trace new paths to civility. The local historical engagement with the idea of civility is couched, not only by non-Western conceptions of civility tied to South Asian cultures, but also by colonial ideas and practices of creating political criteria that determine access to political participation.

Our Contributors say...

Paul Weller in his article, *Brexit: A Colonial Boomerang in a Populist World*, examines the realities of Brexit, a real test of British politics since the World War II, and its local and global implications from the point of view of civility. He explains Brexit phenomenon as a process that made it possible through a ‘yes’ vote with a narrow victory in the 2016 referendum to exit the EU, even though Britain had been one of its prime architects at the end of WWII – a political response to incivility then. He passionately defines that our ‘Kairos’ as one of “political courage and practical wisdom.” Given the decades long mantra of ‘There Is No Alternative’, the

pervasive slogan of neoliberalism, Weller’s refreshing reminder that the world would have to courageously battle its many dictators and autocrats across the globe to bring hope for a fragile future that many comprehend - civility in action.

Upul Kumarapperuma’s article *The Political Rat-race and Civility*, focuses on the events of October, 2019 to argue that Sri Lankan politicians should be more mindful of the way ad-hoc and self-interested politics are affecting the country’s civil life, and proposes that a new discourse on civility is necessary in this political context. Paying close attention to the historical event of 52 day regime, he argues that politics has become a rat-race. What he names as the ‘political rat-race’ is making Sri Lankans even less responsible and accountable than the beasts when it comes to power-brokering – civility in jeopardy. His direct refernces to the recent 21/4 attacks indicates that incivility and violence must be dealt as a prioirty over any other agenda of the state apparatus.

Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi, our magazine’s editor-in-chief in his article, *Civility Seeking Nobility of Character* examines the myriad meanings and implications of the term civility, that can situate the concept in political and practical means. He refers to how civility can be conceived as a historically salient idea for better political cultures and nuanced political readings about the politico-national crises at hand. His direct references to the Easter Sunday carnage in Sri Lanka indicates the extent of incivility of a deviant ideology in a terror mindset which cannot be allowed to take over the life of this country.

Andi Schubert’s article,

Education and Civic Recognition: Examining Two Historical Debates in Ceylon engages with how education came to be associated with the process of political participation. He argues that initially, education was seen as a criteria that determined inclusion (or rather real inclusion) in a religious community. The colonial



Social Justice campaigns for civility even in the face of the most challenging times, brought about by events such as the Easter Sunday atrocities in Sri Lanka.



administrators’ concern with “true” proselytization led to the establishment of colonial, Westernized, and Christian educational models in Ceylon. Subsequently, however, this same criteria came to be seen as a qualification for inclusion in the earthly polity - governance mechanism as well - when legislative representational politics became central to the local elite.

The ‘architects’ of the poem, *Re-routing Civility* (on the last page) to this volume wish to be anonymous and they take us through the experience of the

Easter Sunday atrocities and make you revisit human cruelty and incivility inflicted upon a people and on the vibrant South Asian Capital, Colombo. They passionately appeal to the readers to still sustain hope for civility that is being profoundly challenged.

This edition of *Social Justice* is our attempt to examine new paths to understand the political crises and challenges of our time, drawing from historical, contemporary, and theoretical examples of how civility can be imagined productively within our political cultures, more so necessary when violence on the innocent is close to home. Social Justice campaigns for civility even in the face of the most challenging times, brought about by events such as the Easter Sunday atrocities in Sri Lanka.

References: Balibar, Etienne. “Outlines of a Topography of Cruelty: Citizenship and Civility in the Era of Global Violence.” *Constellations*. 8:1. (2001): 15-29.

From Editor’s Desk: Some of the articles in this volume were already written prior to the 21/4 attacks, and obviously they do not make reference to the actual atrocities, while others both directly and indirectly refer to them with their own perspective.



WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY ON THE PREVIOUS VOLUME

SOCIAL JUSTICE - NOV / DEC 2018

NAVIGATION

“ Human Rights and Social Justice are under siege across the world. Congratulations to you Shanthi and your editorial team for bringing out such a scholarly issue of the magazine that analyses important global issues of the past and present power-plays and puts forward a clear vision that is timely and shared by thoughtful and conscientious people whose minds are free from boxes and borders”.

Dr. NaziaKhanum OBE DL, Chair, United Nations Association-Luton. Originally from Dhaka, Bangladesh, a scholar and a woman activist, lives in Luton, Bedfordshire, United Kingdom.



“It has a very impressive layout and I am happy that it deals with so many different dimensions of the impact of China on Sri Lanka and on its global ambitions. The topics discussed would prove to be a very valuable resource for those interested in the recent developments in Asia”.

Dr. Wesley Ariyaratnam is a professor Emeritus, Drew University, New Jersey, former Deputy General Secretary and Director, Dialogue with people of other faiths Unit, World

Council of Churches (WCC), lives in Geneva, Switzerland.



“Social injustice perpetuates the inequalities that provoked the violence in the first place. And new regimes are sorely tested in their commitments to human rights and democratic politics by how they respond to protests against social injustice. For all these reasons a popular magazine that isolates and prioritises social justice in Sri Lanka and elsewhere is to be welcomed. The magazine is easy to read, with an appealing layout and with informative and thoughtful contributions, which are long enough to give serious attention but short enough to sustain people’s interests – Congratulations”.

Dr. John D. Brewer, is a professor of Post Conflict Studies, Queen’s University, Belfast. Visited Sri Lanka in its post war period to help groups towards reconciliation, contributed to this magazine previously and currently lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland.



“I was fascinated to read the recent edition

of *Social Justice* here where I live in Pakistan, a country that, like Sri Lanka, experiences similar (dis) connections and (dis) locations. This journal is a much-needed voice in South Asia because it fosters the acceptance of social responsibility for what is happening in our part of the world. One of the qualities of *Social Justice* is that the language is not peppered with jargon and statistical detail but is accessible to the ordinary person. I would be interested to read articles focusing on other South Asian countries as well”.

Dr. Herman Roborgh, Head of the School of Religion & Philosophy, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan.





Brexit: A Colonial Boomerang in a Populist World

Paul Weller

“

I want to argue that there are important connections between what is happening in the biggest social and political crisis of my lifetime in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK), and matters with which friends and colleagues in the Two Thirds World have long experience of dealing with even after the colonial project.

”

Immediate Context

I am writing from a corner of the world where what is happening may or may not seem to people in other parts of the world to be of any particular importance

compared with the global challenges of poverty, war, proxy wars and violence especially what happened on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka, climate change; or indeed, to be linked in any significant way with their own historical or

contemporary national or political contexts. However, I want to argue that there are important connections between what is happening in the biggest social and political crisis of my lifetime in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

Ireland (UK), and matters with which friends and colleagues in the Two Thirds World have long experience of dealing with, as the UK Government, Parliament and people wrestle with one other over the implications arising from the narrow June 2016 UK Referendum result of 51.89%-48.11% (of those voting) in favour of leaving the European Union (EU), now known as “Brexit”.

Events surrounding Brexit are so fast moving that, within a week from the submission of this article, the UK could be outside the EU without a legal framework for withdrawal. Equally, faced with such a scenario, the UK Parliament may accept the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Statement on future relations negotiated between the UK Government and the EU. But also, the UK may ask the EU for a long extension of the period of notice (known as Article 50) that a member state must give when intending to leave the EU, and during which either a General Election might take place, or another Referendum.

Historical and Analytical Roots

What is at the “root” of the social and political turmoil surrounding Brexit? And how does this relate to the “roots” of other conflicts in the wider Europe, and also to broader global conflicts, issues and structures? During the 2016 EU Referendum debates, the theme of “take back control” was deployed as a powerfully seductive slogan suggestive of apparently simple problems and solutions. First, it sought to provide an explanation for the sense among the socially and economically “left behind”, that since the financial crash of 2017-18, they had been the victims of powerful global forces. Second, it was deployed in relation to the migration to the UK of relatively large numbers of people, particularly from the new (2004) EU accession states of Poland and

Romania, which had resulted in rapid and extensive changes to aspects of a previously more familiar social and cultural fabric.

Seen in terms of domestic politics, “Brexit” came about through a Referendum called by the former Conservative Party Prime Minister, David Cameron trying (unsuccessfully) to try and outflank the growing electoral threat of the anti-EU United Kingdom Independence Party. But a central argument of this paper is that a more serious understanding of the “roots” of the crisis of “Brexit” requires an analytical engagement with the cross-currents that swirl between the global imperial and colonial inheritance of an Empire that, by 1920 (even after the loss of the former colonies in what became the independent United States of America) covered 24% of the world’s landmass, and some of the key trends and issues arising from the highly varied, ambiguous, but also irresistible contemporary forces of globalisation resulting from what the British historian Arnold Toynbee called “the annihilation of distance”.

‘Brexit’ has shaken up political configurations and complacency about what English politicians for too long have tended to refer to in an unconsciously culturally and politically assimilationist way as “the nation” when, as a matter of both historical fact and contemporary reality, the present UK state is a specific configuration of nations within a single state that was created as part of an overall “internal” trajectory of a colonial and imperial enterprise that was then rolled out into the wider world by the “Great Britain” that was created (following the 1284 conquest and annexation of Wales by the English Crown) from the 1706-7 union of the previously separate Kingdoms of England and Scotland, and then the later (1800) union of “Great Britain” and “Ireland” into what eventually

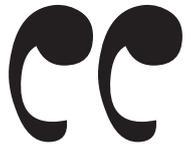
became the “Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland” at the heart of the British Empire. But if this analysis is accepted, then it is not surprising that issues relating both to Scotland and to Northern Ireland have been playing a very big role in the present Brexit crisis.

Scottish Factor

In Scotland, 62% of those voting voted to remain in the EU and only 38% to leave although, ironically, in the 2014 Scottish independence Referendum, it had been argued by the UK Government that leaving the UK would put Scotland’s EU membership at risk. Prior to the EU Referendum, the First Minister of Scotland had argued that Referendum results should only be implemented if there were majorities in all four countries of the UK. In Northern Ireland, 55.8% of those voting voted to remain and 44.2% to leave. In the island of Ireland as a whole, ongoing conflicts go back to an English Crown and (later) Parliament, and still later British and imperial state, that never fully conquered Irish resistance despite brutal military subjugation; a process of “internal” colonisation; an external “settlement” into Ireland; and, finally, the impact of Government economic policies in the wake of a potato blight and that issued into the Great Famine of 1845-1849, during which around a million people died and a further million emigrated.

Irish Context

Irish resistance and growing Irish aspirations for independence eventually led to the partition of the island of Ireland between the 1922 foundation of the Irish Free State (now the fully independent Republic of Ireland) and the province of Northern Ireland which has remained a part of what, in 1927, was renamed as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. That partition initially resulted in a civil war in



There is also the paradigmatic example of Donald Trump and “Trumpism” in the USA, with its projects to exclude travellers from a range of countries having predominantly Muslim populations, and by the building of a wall to deter migrants and asylum-seekers from Central and Latin America



the South while, later, in the North, and following the violent suppression of the Civil Rights movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s, an ensuing “low intensity” state of war embroiled Northern Ireland, the rest of the UK and the Republic of Ireland in around three decades during which around 3,500 people were killed (of whom 52% were civilians; 32% members of the British security forces; and 16% members of paramilitary groups). This continued until the 1998 Good Friday or (more formally) Belfast Agreement which ushered in an important, albeit fragile, triumph of civility over civil conflict, in which the militarised infrastructures on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic were dismantled, and the free movement of trade and of people between the Republic and Northern Ireland was facilitated in the context of shared membership of the Single Market of the EU, to which both the UK and the Republic of Ireland belonged.

From Roots to 'Re-routing' ?

Such common belonging within the supranational structure of the EU having brought about a relativisation of the previous

national tensions and conflicts in these islands, any exit of the UK from the EU is likely to reactivate and further inflame those tensions and conflicts. And a critically important thing emerging from the Brexit crisis is that the current forms of the inter relationships between the component parts of the UK are no longer fit for purpose. Thus, if the UK is to continue at all - whether on its own outside the EU; in some form of association with the EU; or even if ultimately still within the EU, then a reconfiguration of the current UK state into new kinds of interconnections that are more properly reflective of these nations' and islands' shared (if sometimes conflictual) histories, identities, cultures and economies is needed.

Civility Challenged

In the meantime, the wider Europe has been the context for a project of increasing economic, monetary, legal, political and social integration within the EU. But concurrently, and especially during the substantial flows, in 2014-16, of refugees and migrants from Syria and Africa trying to reach Europe, this same Europe saw a growth in political movements that have sought to prevent and/or roll back what has become the

continent's increasing ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism. In this context, the Mediterranean sea has, tragically, become a graveyard for many seeking to reach Europe, with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimating 2,275 deaths in 2018, which is 1 death for every 51 arrivals. Thus although the EU has been a unique social, economic and peace project within an otherwise often destructive European history, it is a far from perfect political formation.

Not only have new asylum seekers and refugees often been dealt with in ways contrary to its articulated values, but within many EU countries, existing minorities have come under increasing pressure from (what are predominantly right wing) national populist movements that are attempting to exclude “others” on religio-national grounds. Such movements have recently begun to move into state power - as with Victor Orbán's Fidesz party that has been in power in Hungary for nearly a decade; and the Law and Justice Party in Poland, which came to power in 2015, and has recently ordered all new passports to include the words “God, Honour, Motherland”. And, in the upcoming European

Parliament elections, Orbán and others are seeking to form a new coalition of forces in defence of what they see as “Christian civilisation” and against what they see as an invasion of alien values, cultures, and people - most particularly in relation to Islam and Muslims.

Beyond Europe, there has been the recent Presidential election of Jair Messias Bolsonaro of Brazil. There is also the paradigmatic example of Donald Trump and “Trumpism” in the USA, with its projects to exclude ‘travellers’ from a range of countries having predominantly Muslim populations, and by the building of a wall to deter migrants and asylum-seekers from Central and Latin America. From within the majority Muslim world there has been the transmutation of the long standing populist rule of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s Justice and Development party (AKP) in Turkey into an increasingly authoritarian form of rule in which thousands of ordinary religious believers, civil servants, and journalists have been imprisoned and/or condemned to a kind of “social cleansing” and, which, with justification, might be seen as an ongoing coup against civil society.

Practical Wisdom and Political Courage

Thus in the UK; the EU; and the wider world beyond, our “time” is no longer an ordinary one, but rather that we are living in what can be called a “kairos” – meaning, as in the original New Testament Greek language – a time of decision that is pregnant with both dangers and opportunities. In this “kairos” time, for Christians and other people of faith, as well as for all those of goodwill, we might ask where are the religious and/or political leaders (the Martin Luther Kings, or the Mahatma Gandhis) who have the intellectual clarity; the political incisiveness; and the practical wisdom to rise to the

challenges of identifying the roots of such a “kairos”, without prematurely being seduced into calls for “peace, peace, where there is no peace”, and who might help



What is at the “root” of the social and political turmoil surrounding Brexit? And how does this relate to the “roots” of other conflicts in the wider Europe, and also to broader global conflicts, issues and structures

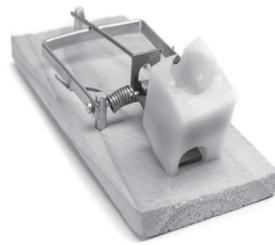
us to chart some possible ways forward? Whatever else, the UK’s Referendum on membership of the EU has shaken up a culture of

political complacency and from that the question comes into focus of whether in and through the current deep fractures revealed in UK, the EU and global body politic, a recognition of the impossibility of political “business as usual” could yet be combined with the emergence of a new vision, courage and practical wisdom in which this “kairos” could yet become an opportunity to seize the possibility of creating something better than what has so far been?

Mutual Help in our Fragile World

As the historic and continuing significance and effects of the phenomena of colonialism and imperialism finally boomeranged into the fragmented, embattled and embittered fabric of what is left of the now deeply (dis) “United” Kingdom, it is likely that those of us who live and work there will need to call in aid against our temptation to despair, the analytical, spiritual and practical resources that sisters and brothers from the ‘Two Thirds world’ who have developed over several centuries of understanding the destructive phenomena of colonialism and imperialism, and of identifying some possible ways to overcome them which might thereby yet be able to help Brits in our own search for justice and peace within the common fragile and interdependent world in which we all live. ■

Political Rat Race and Civility



Upul Kumarapperuma



With the atrocities of the Jihadist suicide strikers a new wave of incivility has crept into the political landscape of Sri Lanka. They found the weakest moment, Achilles' heel to strike. Some analysts are of the view that the power vacuum which lingered within the government has its roots in the incidents of October 2018 .



Sir Richard Attenborough in his wild life documentary once revealed that the elderly Wildebeests take the lead in crossing crocodile contaminated Mara river and sacrifice their lives during the annual great migration across Tanzania to Kenya with the intention to save their young population for reproduction. It is a known fact that there are certain traditions maintained in the animal kingdom in order to secure their existence and they strictly maintain those rules with their little brains but with their sharp instincts to protect themselves

and the future propagation of the kind.

When one thinks about the recent political decisions and developments in the country and the behavior of the so-called political leaders, it is obvious that we are well behind the unwritten and unspoken rules of the animal kingdom in terms of civility. The current political discrepancy between the president and the prime minister was more prominent in the way each one of them responded to the Easter Sunday's mindless massacre of

civilians.

A Wave for Change

In the year 2015, the majority of the Sri Lankans desired a political change. This political change soon became a mirage as the power struggle between the head of state and the head of the government was clearer and there were many good reasons for this belief. A political change was necessitated by the feeling of the people that the country gradually moved towards a dictatorship, authoritarian rule and

dissent was silenced by uncouth means and these led to the change of the political leadership of the country. Even though the people were politically brave and courageous to make that historic change they had envisaged, however the newly appointed rulers and the ousted rulers seem to have bypassed the aspired will of the people. The responses of most politicians in the aftermath of the Easter massacre was a good indication of a visionless leadership struggling to answer the nation.

The newly appointed president in 2015 did not want to rule the country as an apolitical leader instead also embraced the leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and he preferred more loyalty to the party than to the promises he made during the critical campaign. He opted to secure his power base within his party. The other key partner of the coalition government (good governance regime), the United National Party (UNP) was accused that some of its political stalwarts directly and indirectly were involved in the now infamous Central Bank scam. With this controversy and political turmoil, the opposition took the maximum advantage of the situation and to destabilize their rival parties and then the country as a whole. Civility of politics indeed became the first victim of this vandalization of democratic institutions already decaying within the polity. With the atrocities of the Jihadist suicide strikers a new wave of incivility has crept into the political landscape of Sri Lanka. The power vacuum that lingered within the government has its roots in the incidents of October 2018.

52 day Chaos

Regrettably the ill-advised political move by the president which is now known as a 52 day political coup took place on 26th of October 2018 created spasms of shock waves within the country, creating an epicenter of political instability and economic uncertainty. There was a huge criticism directed to the

country as a result of the aforesaid callously unthoughtful political move without any mature assessment on the international and regional implications and how it could affect the already apathetic citizenry. The unhealthy signals of a self-isolating move was untenable, especially when the country was in the deep end with



It is more proven that the Easter Sunday suicide attacks were due to the lack of alertness and attention by certain security agencies, a shared blame that is directed to the political leadership for its own lethargy and the political estrangement between the president and the prime minister.

financial scam of the central bank and the burden of excessive loan schemes on the public. The donor agencies did raise their serious doubt of an economic come back with an authoritarian power of the executive and the self-evident undermining of

the legislature. With the verdict of the Supreme Court, the presidents' act was made to be unconstitutional, and it was the very first decision of such nature in the judicial history of Sri Lanka. At least it was proven that the judiciary could and capable of taking the undemocratic moves both by the executive or by the legislature to a careful scrutiny. It was proven beyond reasonable doubt that the democratic institutions were working within the Sri Lankan polity and that the people should continue to stand in the name of civility even if the politicians are not able to comply. The Supreme Court decision, especially when it was declared against the political decision of Executive President of the country, the next step should have been either the president should have resigned or should have been impeached for violating the constitution. Neither happened. This meant that the executive presidency still remains a powerful institution with certain draconian conduct tied to it, and yet capable of challenging the very sovereignty of the people. It seems that the very constitution has paths that could lead to incivility. There are certain privileges that the president enjoys by the Constitution, immunity of the office of the president from being sued while in power is one of the major privileges therein. The intention of this provision is not to tender absolute power and a free hand to the President and to execute decisions that violates peoples sovereignty. President is contracted and mandated by the people to lead the country as the head of State in the belief that the President of the country would not act against the Constitution or its people. Unfortunately, every president since 1978 have acted with enormous power and their inexperienced advisors have led the country and its fragile democratic institutions further into jeopardy causing political incivility. What shocks the public is that with all the powers vested in a government of this nature, yet it failed to avert the murder of civilians with all the information they have had for weeks. This single act of

political irresponsibility is what the public abhors most annoyingly and silly to say that ‘ I did not know’.

With the appointment of the new government on the 26th October 2018, the President has prorogued the parliament initially for three weeks and with the pressure of the political parties he back tracked the period twice by two Gazette notifications and finally dissolved the parliament. With series of such unprecedented political anomalies, the President, the entire Parliament except the members of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the members who joined the newly established Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) exerted an enormous pressure on the Speaker to reconvene the Parliament. With the stay order issued by the Court of Appeal against the decision of dissolving the Parliament, the Speaker; Karu Jayasuriya reconvened the Parliament amidst protests of the aforesaid two parties. However, the unruly parliament sittings had become purely unparliamentary in nature and it showed the clear path of incivility and lack of accountability while the country leading up to an economic limbo. Lessons were many for the public, the careful reading of events provided them a clear signal to the citizens of this country that what kind of political leadership that could represent them in the legislature. They could view that primacy of civility is a basic ingredient to good governance, and such is still recoverable after all the betrayals since 2015 regime change. Peoples franchise came to the limelight as a path to teach politicians civility and right governance. Such was felt more poignantly since the Easter Sunday by the people. Most affected parties displayed civility at their own level and failed the perpetrators of the objectives of reactive mayham and told the politicians to be honest.

Good Governance Civility

When one considers entirety of the actions and inactions that was on display since 26th of October to the date of Supreme Court judgment, it

is clear that even though there has been a move to revert to the 2015 January politics of good governance, yet such seemed unsustainable. A vast cross section of the society no longer believes that the current regime is able to hold to the 2015 January mandate, more so since the 21/4 attacks. The undoing of several democratic moves initiated after the 2015 so called ‘change wave’, *Maithri Palanaya*, ‘era of good governance’ seem to have been folded as a failed project.

As noted above the opposition led by Mahinda Rajapakshe has also contributed to the current instability but the ruling party lacked the political will and imagination to counter such campaigns. Rajapaksha and his team have launched a massive psychological pressure to intimidate the government servants who have



This single act of political irresponsibility is what the public abhors most annoyingly and silly to say that ‘ I did not know’



been involved in development projects of the present government. An example is that the Rajapaksha camp warned the government bank officers who are responsible for granting of loans, a scheme which was introduced by the incumbent Finance Ministry. The most influential part of their ‘Psych-opp’ is the message that has gone viral, that they would topple the government at any moment. This message seems to have created a political apathy and a social uncertainty, the fact that

the current regime is incapable to delivery which is partially proven and that the Rajapaksha regime is capable of restoring the country, thus the officers were not willing to take initiative due to fear of Rajapaksha regime – could be named as a path to incivility but the fodder is being provided by the current regime as well as other pressure groups and Mahinda populism is yet at its height. His unchallenged popularity across the country still arguably remains the most formidable political force since the 1956 SWRD era of the common man (*Podu Jana Yugaya*). However, he too has come under certain criticism since the attacks of Easter Sunday. He too cannot pass the responsibility alone to the government.

‘Rajapaksheism’ and Civility

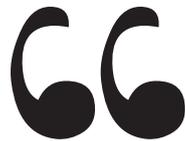
The most difficult situation that the government has to face during its weak tenure has been the “Rajapaksheism” which has gone to keep a political momentum with the bhikkhus and Sinhala Buddhist masses. Religion is still revamped as a political force in the country. There are several key preachers who have been full time involved in preaching “Rajapaksheism” across the country. The main slogans with which they have sustained their political momentum has been the ‘war victory’, the development projects of Rajapaksha regime and the beautification of Colombo city and several other towns. With this positive campaign the same political gurus have managed to convince people more on the weak foreign policy of the government, its divergent and contradictory views on the national issue, slow phase of development projects, and more crucially the political tug-of-war between the head of state and the head of the government. Their incivility to one another has provided sufficient inroads of power gains by the opposition. Weak governance is a reason for a powerful opposition by any criteria of political science. It is more proven that the Easter Sunday suicide attacks were due to the lack

of alertness and attention by certain security agencies, a shared blame that is directed to the political leadership for its own lethargy and the political estrangement between the president and the prime minister.

The ‘Rajapaksheism’ smartly keeps the momentum showing their impactful presence both in their own events of political significance as well as the events of the government with strategic moves to disable the government machinery. President’s continuous noncompliance since the end of 52 day upheaval with his own government substantially derailed the current government’s programmes and schemes and to drag its feet in development projects. The government has become helpless on certain occasions where Rajapaksha loyalties have grabbed the honour of several development projects in the name of Mahinda Rajapaksha. The very recent example is the Matara-Beliatta Railway line, even after holding a State function with all opposition key leaders of the area, Mahinda Rajapaksha held yet another ‘road show’ on the next day with national publicity. What received more national publicity was the second celebration. The opposition takes the lead with the undisputable leadership of Rajapaksha in these events as they speak to the voter base across the country. These political moves indicate where power could move among the masses. Similar incident happened also when the leader of opposition convened a meeting of the ‘war generals’ and other retired officers of the former intelligence community including the former defense secretary to his private residence in Colombo for what he called ‘to prepare a report to be presented to the government’ on the 21/4 attacks. These indicate the extra parliamentary power that Rajapaksha yields with the people and his strategic moves despite his ill-advised move to accept the premiership in October last year which certainly was a political blow from which he is yet to recover fully.

Mr. Cleans and Civility

It is a known fact that the current government attempts to address the needs of the country but with little



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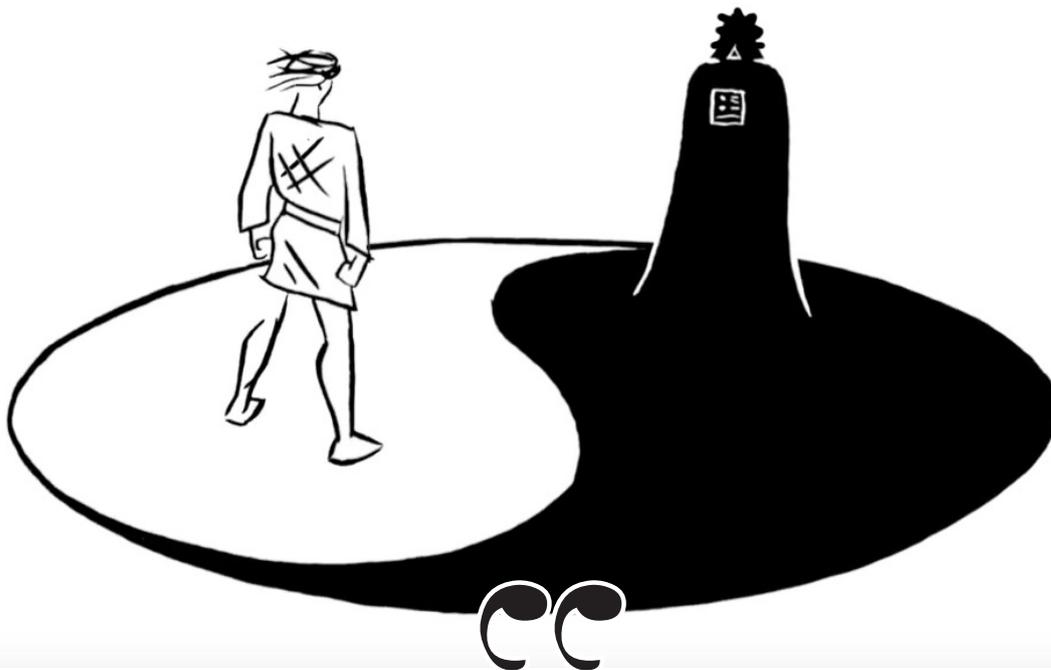
success as the Rajapakshas have successfully managed to send a message of a ‘come back’ loud and clear to their loyal supporters. Mr. Cleans were clearer to people when the government was in utter shock as the Easter Sunday events unfolded. The political leadership and their close law enforcement heads were passing the responsibility for the serious breach of security predicament – civility at its lowest among the elected representatives. The government lacks this strategy as they are also bent on the next election and more

crucially the UNP national leadership and in fact they currently suffer from this internal battle for a ‘clean man’. The reason for the aggression, terror and all other hazardous behaviors of both groups do not lead to civility of politics and governance. More so now with the severe atrocities committed by the IS inspired terror cells in Sri Lanka. Political reforms in the past and the reforms in the future, it seems would not help civility of political conduct unless security is given paramount priority. People have undergone and experienced several bitter incidents, currently the suicide terror strikes after 10 years of ‘peacetime’ indicates how instability has crept into their daily lives today apart from country’s history of post-election rioting, ethnic suspicion, political rivalries are also other stark moments of incivility that have been a canker in the body polity of Sri Lanka. Democracy and its soft operations have been deeply challenged by incivility and unruly conduct by the political parties themselves. Reforms are necessary but more importantly civility is what is urgently required for a sane political future for Sri Lanka. As a people they can boast themselves as one of the top literate countries in South Asia or in the world, yet if they cannot function as a democracy with some qualities of civility, then that literacy might be empty and futile. Civility is fundamental to governance and security is key to protect such governance and those who rule and the ruled are both subject to civility of personal conduct and corporate functioning. Destabilizing mechanism such as the recent suicide strikes and their inspired ideologies must be defeated and such should not invoke serious political rivalries in society as such could result in with perpetual political enemies in the neighborhood and bitterly polarized political camps throbbing with incivility, irrational and avenging tendencies. This is what could be avoided with reasonableness and sensibility for a political practice of civility for a shared future especially in a plurality and more importantly in the post Easter Sunday carnage 2019 in Sri Lanka.



Civility Seeking Nobility of Character

Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi



This magazine catches your eyes at a time when the island-nation, Sri Lanka is under attack after 10 years of arguably a peace time. Innocent have been victimized for no specific objective in mind. The aims of liberation or freedom fight for a separate land and rule, to reclaim a heritage or patrimony are conspicuously absent in the current terror group's profile and claims. Then the next question arises as for the reason for these atrocities in Sri Lanka.

Public appeals to the power houses of Colombo to take stock of their neglect of political and social responsibility that they have been contracted by the people to deliver – a demand on the political leadership for civility of conduct - failed civility by the recent political neglect with security compromised.

The reason for the violent deaths have not been answered. Incivility to humanity reaches its height on Easter Sunday carnage 2019 since the end of war in 2009, is a bitter lesson that those in government for this laxity in security concerns. Secondly, the public too seemed to have abandon its usual keen tab on its reputed vigilance used to maintain during the war period. They were the best informants to the security agencies. Civility is challenged so disproportionately and we have to search for new answers

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It feels safe to argue that civility is generally the best policy on conversations and dialogue for relationship enhancement, public good, policy development, and governance indeed.

and reflect how we wish to live and work in this country of ours in the future.

Learn Civility

The traditional dictionary definition of civility rests simply on politeness and courtesy. Civility is generally interpreted very broadly, covering the interactions and relationships of all individuals, groups, and organizations in society, including the governments and the business community. Civility also alludes in my reading of the Buddhist notion of *sīlakkhandha* (all that belongs to moral practices) - right speech (*sammavaca*), right action (*sammakammanta*) and right livelihood (*sammaajiva*)¹ which leads to *Samadhana* (harmony or coordination, not necessarily civility with its modern interpretation, but suggests an ethical direction for wholesome living). What is being defined and explains here is a working proposition for the real and authentic nuances of the concept of civility to be developed by the practitioners themselves, be Buddhist or otherwise because the implications are universal.

Civility therefore is a conduct that an individual or a community practices by which they indicate that social, political, ethnic issues if cannot be resolved definitively, yet they can be transformed as mutual opportunities for the conflicting parties to look for the next positive step. The option for alternatives remains alive right through the process while short term gains are harvested reciprocally for the benefit of those involved.

The French philosopher Etienne

Balibar² has employed the term ‘civility’ to refer to politics that keeps violent extremism and contemporary manifestation of violence at bay. For Balibar, the term’s multiple historical nuances – dating back to the renaissance (14th to 17th century, middle ages to modernity) adaption of the Latin term *Civilitas* to suggest

This is incivility incubated against one’s own, a victimization within its own rank and pile, this means that suicide strikers themselves are victims of a vicious and a deviant ideology that only propel hatred and vengeance. Strikers in dying have killed the innocent and committed one of the most heinous acts against humanity. It proves no martyrdom, neither altruism but sheer premediated murder, theatrically operated.

the Greek *Politeia* – carries within it various references and points of origin: from civil society to citizenship, from civilization to the right behavior (civility) towards one another.

A specific form of governance is fundamental to civility. What is being debated in the post 52 Day government³ of this island-nation as a polity is capable of restoring political civility with the current political limbo, now exacerbated by the Easter day crimes. It’s not enough whether we have a new constitution or we reform it substantially, because priorities have shifted. Whether 20th amendment would pave the way for a nation that might regain the loss soul of civility.

Aristotle classified constitutions on two grounds: how many citizens had a voice in making the laws; and whether they did so considering the good of all citizens, or only their own. He considers further that monarchy, aristocracy and politeias are three virtuous forms of government. While monarchy is the rule by one, and aristocracy by the few, politeia is rule by the many - which Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) reiterated that democracy as: “government of the people, by the people, for the people”⁴

Say No to Incivility

What *Social Justice* means by CIVILITY in this volume is the right attitude and behavior that promote practice of democracy, adopting those institutions that enhance a view of life and a way of life for decency and honest dealings from governance to trade, respect for rule law, education, health, professionalism for the general wellbeing of all. New routes must be devised while they root themselves in the good practice of civility and struggle also to counter incivility.

In short, no matter where a citizen turns they will encounter respect and

be treated fairly by fellow citizens, groups, organizations, businesses, and at all levels of government. These institutions and their opinion makers, social planners, city designers should always strive to provide the time, space and energy for civility. As a general proposition, it feels safe to argue that civility is generally the best policy on conversations and dialogue for relationship enhancement, public good, policy development and governance indeed.

However, it must also be noted that there is always an exception to every rule. Part of civility is accepting that you won't always be treated as civilly as you would like and not always have the time, space, and energy to act as civilly as you would like. It may seem like a contradiction but its human beings with all their limitations strive to achieve this nobility of objective. The short falls could be many but authentic effort would surprise both the practitioner and those individuals involved in the project.

Civility sounds like ideological, aspirational, archaic or even looks a cliché in itself, but when society faces incivility (like the selfie video footage that shocked the world with the massacre of people in the two masjids in Christchurch, New Zealand, March 2019 and the suicide strikes on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka in April 2019) then one sees the value, exactly what the critical theorist Balibar expounds as a possibility of 'keeping violent extremism at bay' which appears to be the most challenging undertaking of the day. The extent and the level of the network of the narcotic industry that has made Sri Lanka the South Asian hub of the industry is almost unresolvable. It may be asymmetrical, embodied by unrepentant local operatives and their oversees counterparts, however civility demands that the country adopts not necessarily an equally violent rhetoric of capital punishment

as provision for justice, but other deterrents and a strict execution of rule of law could provide civility not as a reaction but being proactive to incivility. It is a sociological



If one was sharp and aptly read the political dynamics and power for about two days since Easter Sunday was not resting anywhere, then it shifted to the Catholic leadership, yet moved once again to the law enforcement agencies.

fact that when the governance of country is in decay with corruption, fraud and shameful public behavior of the certain political leadership, then the rise of the ugly phase of the underworld operatives and their network become the obvious synergy for power balancing. Easter Sunday carnage did shift this power into different directions. If one was sharp and aptly read well the political dynamics and the power for about two days since Easter Sunday was not resting anywhere, then it shifted

to the Catholic leadership, yet moved back once again to the law enforcement agencies. Interesting dynamics in such a crisis is what the sociologists observe and make notes on human and institutional behavior.

The proposition to invoke special courts might be viable but not a precedence to bring back gallows. Those who see civility as a means of smothering their concerns for common good are also in their turn seem to be embracing incivility which does not make sense. Civility helps daily life function. It has the noble capacity to turn down the temperature in a fractious era where balkanization has become a natural occurrence.

Lessons for Civility

Sri Lanka cannot afford to be further balkanized and hence no single community should be isolated for the reason that some members of that community have engaged in murder and brought shame on their revered religion as well. What happened on Easter Sunday 2019 was murder and is indignantly unacceptable. People have deplored the deviant interpretation of a historical religion practiced by millions. This country is a heritage of all those who live in it despite of what all its citizens have gone through including the mindless carnage executed by a group with an ideology transported from ideologues who prefer to live in comfort rather than a quick trip to heaven. This is incivility incubated against one's own, a victimization within its own rank and pile, this means that suicide strikers themselves are victims of a vicious ideology that only propels hatred and vengeance. Strikers in dying have killed the innocent and committed one of the most heinous acts against humanity. It proves no martyrdom, neither altruism but sheer premediated murder, theatrically operated. It is true like any society Sri Lanka too has its own sons and

daughters who are good, bad and the ugly too. They are across all communities, this is not a time to label any single community, cannot afford to take a 'holier than thou' position. That itself is a mild form of incivility. While Sri Lanka as a nation stand in solidarity with those who have lost their loved ones, no matter how that emptiness can be compensated with all the words I write here. This is not a blame time but a time to find answers for the neglect and laxity on the security fronts of this country. This is basic civility to seek lost wisdom even though at a great cost. Public appeals to the power houses of Colombo to take stock of their neglect of political and social responsibility that they have been contracted by the people to deliver – a demand on the political leadership to civility of conduct.

Civility even if sounds mere conceptual but must be transformed into practice, executed and informed by citizens to fellow citizens, fully engaging with the civic life of a nation, society or a community. Politicians who have contracted⁵ with the people at an election, are bound by a paramount duty that they would not betray the trust placed on them and safeguard the sovereignty of the people. Democratic pursuit is a goal of civility as it is the only paradigm or the institution that has been proven viable for civility. It must be cultivated as a practice and being cultured and educated on behalf of the greater good and for the common good, conduct of rule of law, respect for difference, diversity and dissent, acceptance of that dignity of difference. No single perspective, ideology, political or religious would be sufficient to resolve and transform complex human situations. This means that IS inspired ideology too cannot provide even temporary solutions to the very people who opted to murder because they only knew to kill and lacked intelligence to ask why the preacher was not willing to die for the cause – civility compromised. Obsessive burden of history is a down fall of



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civility. History is only a harbour to revisit and not a solid ground to pitch one's tent. Civility seeks nobility in each other despite differences. Civility attempts to work with issues that are uncomfortable, but envisages a fundamental ethico-social change at each level that would help form community. Easter Sunday atrocities and murder made people to suspect each other, perpetuating perfect seeds of incivility. Civility is about resilience and hope for a shared future, an option so evident and

workable despite the current fear psychosis, political disarray, religious dismay, social disruption and ethno-cultural dissension. But hope against hope brings civility as a positive value to be pursued. ■

Endnotes

1 This is regarded as the first division of the *Majjhimapatipada* (middle path, the Noble Eightfold path)

2 (1942-), more known as a Marxist philosopher, foremost student of Louis Althusser, a controversial figure, a Marxist theorist himself. Althusser's seminar on Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* in 1965 resulted in the book, *Reading Capital* co-authored by Althusser and his students. Balibar's chapter in his guru's text was on *The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism* in which he discusses 'civility' and its political implications. Complete translation was published in 2016. See. Wikipedia (sv) *Balibar, E. and Althusser, L.*, for extensive discussion (sighted on 28 Feb 2019).

3 It's a political scenario in Sri Lanka where the incumbent president sacked his own Prime minister and appointed the former president as the new PM cum a new cabinet. However, with a supreme court decision the government was returned to the previous PM. The period of this 'limbo' was 52 days.

4 See. His Gettysburg Address (19 November 1863).

5 Read, (sv) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and John Rawls for their comprehensive work on the theory of Social Contract, See. Wikipedia (sighted on 02 March 2019).

Education and Civic Recognition: Examining Two Historical Debates in Ceylon

Andi Schubert



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Early British educators and administrators placed a great deal of emphasis on education as a key criterion for recognition, membership and participation in a religious form of citizenship in a polity that did not exist spatially on earth nor was not temporally bounded to the span of human life, by instating colonial education as a means of true proselytization.

The role of education in democratic governance received significant attention during the events following President Maithripala Sirisena's decision to sack his Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, and swear in the former President, the then parliamentarian and now the leader of the opposition, Mahinda Rajapaksa on the 26th of October, 2018. As chaos, violence, and mischief unfolded in the Parliament, many public voices highlighted

the need for civil behaviour in the nation's Legislature. Some even went so far as to suggest that an educational bar for Parliamentarians was necessary to guard against the excesses that were witnessed during this period. At the heart of these conversations was the belief that education would provide a far more suitable criterion to determine the basis on which a civic representative should be recognized as a valuable member of a more democratic,

less violent, and more equitable polity. This particular emphasis on education foregrounds civility's traditional concern with determining criteria for recognition as a member and participant in a polity. Yet, it also leads one to question the premise that education necessarily leads to civility, and whether education itself should be seen as an instrument that has the potential to bar the kind of inclusive politics suggested by this term. In this article, I examine two

junctions in Sri Lankan history, to explore how the discourse on education as a mechanism of exclusion in the polity came to be constructed, and how, historically, this too has been an instrument of exclusion. I examine the debates around introducing colonial education as an important part of proselytization at the beginning of the 19th Century and the introduction of the legislative seat for an educated member of the local elite at the beginning of the early 20th century. I argue that premising civility upon this criterion is not a benign move, and that, historically in Sri Lanka, they have created further hierarchies in a society that was already driven by various dominating structures that excluded a large number of people from the right to be represented politically.

Civility, which stems from the Latin term *civicus* from *civis* meaning citizen, was quite an important term in shaping notions of citizenship and participation in the Roman state. Scholars have pointed out that for the Romans the criteria of citizenship was determined just as important as determining who was and was not a citizen (Nicolet, P., 1980, p. 52). Considerations of wealth and status, the system of political organization and one's military function were the major factors that shaped enumeration in the various ranks of Roman citizenship (*ibid.*, pp. 52-53). My interest in this essay is to explore how education was mobilized as a classificatory criterion for recognition and by extension, participation in two very different notions of citizenship and belonging

that were foregrounded at two junctions in the history of Ceylon.

Early British educators and administrators placed a great deal of emphasis on education as a key criterion for recognition, membership and participation in a religious form of citizenship in a polity that did not exist spatially on earth nor was not temporally bounded to the span of human life, by instating colonial education as a means of proselytization. In contrast, my attempt here is to demonstrate that by the turn of the 20th Century, education became a significant part of claims for a more secular form of citizenship, one that was spatially bounded to the space of the island and temporally framed as a political aspiration for the near future. Therefore, I attempt to examine how ideas about education were key to shaping recognition and operationalizing the membership at two key points in Sri Lanka's colonial history – first as the British were consolidating control over the island and second, as a local elite began to articulate their demands for inclusion in colonial governance. An examination of the routes through which colonial education took root in the country, I believe would help us recognize that the development of classificatory criteria for membership in a polity at any given juncture is complicated and rarely an innocent and value-free exercise.

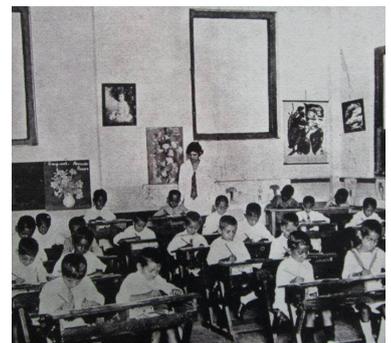
Education, Conversion, and the Church

Education was foregrounded by 19th

Century British colonial authorities, educationists and missionaries in Ceylon as a way of ensuring membership in a Christian polity that was to be located beyond the space of the island and outside the chronological time of present. For nearly 35 years after the capture of the Kandyan Kingdom by the British in 1815, churches from various denominations – Anglican, Methodist, American missions etc. – took on and were expected to take on the task of education for the island-colony. Their interests in education stemmed from a deep sense of suspicion of the successes of the Portuguese and the Dutch efforts to proselytize the areas under their control. This sense of suspicion foregrounded anxieties about membership in a Christian cosmopolis that existed outside time and beyond the spatial confines of the colony. Furthermore, these concerns took particular shape in the form of education that was offered as well as the debates over the direction of education on the island-mission-field until around 1850 when controversies over Church control over education led the British colonial authorities to take control over the vernacular education on the island-mission.

The British had spent the first half of the 19th Century capturing and consolidating the control over the entire island. In addition, missionaries and missionary societies had a much freer run of the colony. Perhaps because they were not viewed with the same kind of suspicion as they were in British India,¹ the church and missionary societies emerged more easily as a

For nearly 35 years after the capture of the Kandyan Kingdom by the British in 1815, churches from various denominations – Anglican, Methodist, American missions etc. – took on and were expected to take on the task of education for the Island.





a closer examination of the role of education in these debates highlights how concerns about membership in a polity is often contested, value-laden, and significantly shaped by the ideological justifications advanced to maintain particular forms of access and membership in a polity.

crucial and central aspect of colonial governance in Ceylon. This was informed heavily by the anxieties and doubts about the sincerity and genuineness of the converts to Christianity as visible in James Emerson Tennent's often-overlooked *Christianity in Ceylon* which discusses the persistence of 'idolatry' among those who claimed to have been baptised into the Christian faith (1850, pp. 88-89). These concerns highlight the importance of recognition and membership in a Christian cosmopolis to the early British colonial authorities in Ceylon. This cosmopolis was framed in a way that it did not bind temporally to the human life span but rather lay focus on a distinctly Christian temporal arc of salvation.

A concern with education as a more assured mechanism for ensuring recognition and membership in this religious/ political community was emphasized from the earliest days of British rule on the colony. For example, Fredrick North, the first Governor of Ceylon, was often applauded for his contribution to revitalize a shaky Christian education system 'inherited' from the Dutch

in the hope that it would lead to mass conversions (Ruberu, 1969, p. 361).² In fact, the subsequent hamstringing of North's schemes for proselytization through education caught the eye of a number of missionary societies in the Metropolis who eventually succeeded in persuading the colonial authorities in London to invest significantly in Christian education for Ceylon (ibid). For these administrators and missionaries, education was firmly perceived both in Ceylon and in London as a beach-head for Christian evangelism of the colony and by extension a mechanism for establishing access to a Christian cosmopolis in the future.³

Education in general, and vernacular education in particular, came to be viewed as a more internalized and therefore more secure alternative grounds towards ensuring membership in this religious/ political community. This perspective on vernacular education is markedly present in the memoirs of the first Bishop of the Church of England (Anglican Church)⁴ who saw education as "the lever, wherewith the natives must be raised"

(Memorials of James Chapman, First Bishop of Colombo, 1892, p. 30) in the hope that it would 'break' down the dense mass of heathenism around and on every side of us" (Memorials of James Chapman, First Bishop of Colombo, 1892, pp. 27-28). In other words, the interest shown by these early British educationists and administrators in promoting education foreground the expectation that a 'good' Christian education would form a far more secure foundation for membership in the religious polity they were pursuing.

It is evident that Christian education was important to these early British educationists and administrators in so far as it foregrounded membership in a polity that was not spatially bounded to the island and one which was temporally located beyond the human life-span. Furthermore, these educationists and administrators had recognized that baptism alone would not be a sufficient footing to ensure an entry into this polity and as a result, they had emphasized Christian education as a more formidable form to ensure an entry into this particular polity. Therefore, up to the mid-19th Century. Debates over education

1. For example, the American Mission Society which set up many of the churches and educational institutions in the North of the island arrived after being turned away from South India by British colonial authorities there.

2. Governor North and his fellow administrators were building on the Dutch school system which was linked to the Churches in the areas under their control.

3. This is not to gainsay the ways in which religion was central to the colonial project of exploitation and capital extraction. As others have pointed out, religion provided an ideological justification for far more material pursuits for the economic project.

4. It is also worth noting that there continued to be a gap between expressed desire and actual implementation. One of the major criticisms of vernacular education controlled by the Churches was that it had not spread beyond the Capital. Even in the Bishop's memoirs it is clear that his interest is more in sustaining the church than ensuring access to education for all segments of Ceylonese society. However, the point made here is that the intention itself is significant and should not be ignored even though it may not have been implemented in a significant way.

were also significantly shaped by questions of access, recognition, and participation in a religious polity.

Education, Citizenship, and the State

If education was highlighted by 19th Century colonial authorities, educationists and missionaries as a criterion for ensuring membership in a Christian polity, an early 20th Century local elite foregrounded education as a criterion for entry into a polity that was more proximately confined to the space and time of the island-colony. The Crewe-McCallum reforms were arguably the first major overhaul of colonial governance on the colony since 1833. An experiment with local involvement in colonial governance through a system of community-based representation was implemented as a result of the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms of 1833. However, it was only in the first decade of the 20th Century that there was a significant shift in the composition of the Legislative Assembly (LA) and by extension in the structure of colonial governance on the island. The scheme of communal representation was retained but a new scheme based on limited franchise for members of the local population was introduced. One of the allocated seats was to be based on the qualifications of education (to a certain level) and wealth were tasked to represent the Educated Ceylonese in the country.

The introduction of this seat was a result of agitation on the part of the local elite who had been educated

along Western lines and were now claiming for more immediate and meaningful involvement in the governance of the colony. Education, particularly education along Western lines, was emphasized as a key plank in the demands for reforms of the structure of colonial governance. The memorialists who were asking for these reforms argued that the conditions in the island-colony in 1833 had radically changed by the turn of the century. Unsurprisingly, the first major example of the radical changes they provided were the provision for the spread of education in the colony. Furthermore, they argued that the time was ripe for the introduction of a limited form of democratic governance in the colony on the grounds that there was already a fairly significant number of educated members of the local population. In other words, the claims made by these local elite were embedded in a far more spatially bounded and temporally proximate polity than that was envisaged by the early British educators and administrators. In addition, education was highlighted as being central to these claims for membership, recognition, and participation by the local elite.

This claim for representation appears to set off a chain of recriminations and debates among colonial authorities. Sir Henry McCallum, the Governor at the time, responds to these demands by making the argument that education in Europe had alienated the memorialists from their countrymen and strongly advised against the formal recognition of this group

as having a share in governance. However, as a concession to their demands, he suggested to the colonial authorities in London the option of the Governor nominating a member to represent their interests in the Legislative Council (LC). McCallum's suggestion was taken up by the colonial Secretary, the Earle of Crewe, in his final decision about the direction and shape of reforms for the colony. Crewe recognized the value of the claims made by both the memorialists and the Governor and arrived at a neat compromise between both positions - he decided to establish a separate seat to represent the interests of the memorialists and that the representative to this seat would be selected through election. The debate among the British colonial authorities at the time also highlights how education was recognized as a crucial aspect for determining recognition, participation and representation in a future that is very much limited to the space of the island and temporally, near at hand. In other words, whereas education along Christian lines had been introduced by many British administrators and educationists to encourage conversion to Christianity, a few decades later education along Western lines was being used by the colonial authorities to both justify the expansion and simultaneously limit the form of governance practiced in Ceylon.

The demand for the imbrication of education in democratic governance by the local elite may appear to be progressive and egalitarian at first glance. If you look a little bit more closely however, it is possible to see

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For the local elite at the turn of the 20th Century, education was critical to their hopes for their entry into a future that was far closer at hand and more strictly bounded to the confines of the State





how the privileging of education was actually intended to serve quite regressive and exclusivist ends. Even from the earliest demands for reform, education was seen to be the preserve of a few men who would speak on behalf of their apparently less fortunate countrymen (representing women was of course clearly out of the picture). In addition, it was also made abundantly clear that governance and democracy was not a privilege that should be shared with a larger proportion of the population. In a rather testy exchange during his submission to the Commission appointed to determine the qualifications of an elector under the category of Educated Ceylonese, H.J.C. Pereira argues against widening the category of Educated Ceylonese to cover any person who conducted their business affairs in English. He explains his position by saying “you would hardly call that a Westernized mind. He might be very Oriental, except for his knowledge of English” (The Legislative Council Constitution Commission, 1910,

p.31). Pereira’s testimony goes further than the submission made by the Jaffna Association to highlight that what was at stake was not merely a question of education or capacity to interact or communicate. In fact, by driving the Commission towards the question of the Westernized vs the Oriental mind, Pereira’s comments uncannily resonate with the concerns of the early British educationists and administrators over the genuineness of conversion. For Pereira, as well as his colleagues at the time, the emphasis on education was a mechanism for maintaining privilege, access, and position within particular social hierarchies. In other words, education was highlighted as one of the most significant entry criteria for recognition, representation, and participation in the secular polity that these local elite had in mind for the future of the island.

My examination of a few of the intricacies of the contestations over education at the turn of the 20th Century highlight the divergence between utopian articulations

and expedient practicalities. Education along Western lines was foregrounded as the ostensible justification for demands for more egalitarian and inclusive governance of the colony. However, a closer reading of these demands suggests that practically, education was a useful tool in the consolidation of economic, social, and political hierarchies structured by division of class and caste. Therefore, education emerges as a key justification to bolster the claims made by a local elite to ensure the protection of their privilege and access. In doing so, Western education at this juncture functions as a vehicle for determining membership in a polity that is spatially bounded to the island and temporally on the near horizon for this local elite.

Conclusion: Traces and Reminders

I want to end this discussion by highlighting how significantly the contestations over education shifted from the mid-19th Century to the first



For the local elite that these interventions eventually produced however, education was a means to expand their own role in the governance of the Colony.

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The mobilization of education in Sri Lanka's recent history reminds us that education once played and, in some ways, may still continue to play a particularly important role in identifying and classifying those who count as citizens and subjects



decade of the 20th Century. For many of the early British educationists and administrators, education was justified in order to enable them to expand the role of the Church within the colony. For the local elite, these interventions eventually produced however, education as a means to expand their own role in the governance of the colony. In addition, education provided both groups a language through which to justify their priorities and considerations for the ordering of social relationships and hierarchies. In spite of these similarities in means, their spatial and temporal imaginations differ in significant ways. For the early educationists and administrators, the pursuit of this utopia appears to be framed in terms of a shared religion in a distant future, one beyond the human life span. Education therefore was important as a means of ensuring entry into this future polity that was not spatially linked to the space of the island. Whereas for the local elite at the turn of the 20th Century, education was critical to their hopes for their entry into a future that was far closer at hand and more strictly bounded to the confines of the State. Therefore, a closer examination of the role of education in these debates highlights how concerns about membership in a polity is often contested, value-laden, and significantly shaped by the ideological justifications advanced to maintain particular forms of access and membership in a polity. Furthermore, this access and membership though couched in terms of civility and citizenship, may often be a plea for the perpetuation or maintenance of structures of exploitation and extraction.

The mobilization of education in Sri Lanka's recent history reminds us that education once played and, in some ways, may still continue to play a particularly important role in identifying and classifying those who count as citizens and subjects. Most people assume that recognition and participation in a democracy is open to all members of a society. However, as this paper has attempted to demonstrate, such assumptions often do not take into account the role that criteria such as education can play and have played in shaping understandings of political inclusion and civic participation. In fact, this essay attempts to argue that the use of education as a criterion for determining recognition and participation in a polity is fraught with numerous tensions and shortcomings. This is why we must be cautious in assuming that education is the best solution to address the violence and excess that we witnessed during the political and Constitutional crisis of October 2018. We should keep in mind that simply electing more educated politicians does not address the problems arising from an exclusive and elitist political system. Instead, we must begin our advocacy on the basis of the criteria that centers a democratic practice on meritocracy that seeks to expand and not limit, to include rather than exclude, and to welcome rather than cast out. This seems to me to be a far more secure and long-term basis for building a more democratic, peaceful and inclusive society for all Sri Lankans.

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Publisher says... **WE MUST INFECT...**

results in governance, scholarship and human development in certain societies yet in some other cases the fruits of civility appear to be conspicuously absent in public life. Civility appears to be in deep slumber or willfully made to wither away, remain dormant as if 'root-less' and 'route-less' in many areas of life, giving rise to incivility. The suicide strikes of 21/4 in Sri Lanka mark the latest carnage caused by human cruelty of such proportion where citizens are struggling with unanswered questions.

The challenge remains for decision makers of society and those social, religious institutions, law makers, researchers, scholars as to 'what are we going to do about it'? We must recognize as noted earlier the 'pervasive and invasive' culture of incivility, courage to name and shame such pockets of incivility in the name of public good is paramount. The recent examples of the nabbing of the well-structured narcotic industry in the suburbs of Colombo and what the ring leadership of the suicide attacks on the churches and hotels indicate incivility that had primed and intruded into the ordinary civil life of people regardless of beliefs, ethnic backgrounds or behavior. All are worthy of self-respect indeed, demand to civility is a crucial and a challenging moral commitment at the cutting edge response of public effort to fight the dehumanizing forms of conduct by any social, political, cultural or religious groups that would ill-treat or discriminate against the most vulnerable in society.

Civility is a fruit of right

democratic and other presences of social and cultural institutions and their ability to promote and cultivate an ethos of interdependency to inform with checks and balances both the public of their civic duty towards society and the contracted institutions of their social responsibility towards the public good. Incivility is inevitable for the self-righteous and the know-it-all as such defines only the motifs of cumulative single narrative and perhaps uncritical aspirations than seeking 'routes' for a shared future. These social tendencies seem to thrive but bound to fail as the 'roots' of such are based on greed and self-aggrandizement. Their 'route' remains "I am Ok, you are not Ok" and there is little to be gained by listening to the 'foolishness' of others. But civility flourishes when one is motivated to listen and learn from that which is even challenging the very worldview that one has held on for years. Civility flourishes when one can say, "I may not always agree with you, but I know that I need you".

Civility accepts and respects 'diversity'. Our differences - political, religious, or otherwise are considered not as ingredients for conflict, but rather opportunities for mutual growth where the dignity of difference becomes even a normative discipline for community relations. Civility is not an isolated act, but a habit of the 'heart' and a 'soul-force' opposing the 'brute-force' that could enhance community relations. Showing respect for dissent and disagreement then becomes a practice in public life

and personal conduct. In other words, like all virtues, civility must be learned, cultivated, formed and adopted as a behavior pattern in public life and personal demeanor. Such happens best in community engagement, particularly in 'diverse' community contexts, which is to say, communities in which a range of political and cultural perspectives can be found, so that one's capacity for civility is mobilized and tested on a regular basis.

We must infect civility everywhere, in all walks of life, public and private. We believe that the culture of incivility can be transformed by combining the voices of people who believe that civility is a 'doable project' and, that differences in ideology are not insurmountable, that dialogue trumps discord, and that treating adversaries as enemies is not an acceptable way to conduct affairs at any level of society. This is how we as a nation can defeat violent extremism and outdo ideologization of belief and religion itself.

Civility is the first critical step towards increasing participation in civic life, disarming enmity, and growing effective, collaborative relationships. It is in such a context men and women could look for 'roots' and attempt new 'routes' to resolve long-drawn problems and almost calcified issues of communities, more so now since the 21/4 tragic events as they unfold we are compelled to recognize and accommodate the needs and aspirations of every citizen while we reject such mindless violence as against civility and decency. ■

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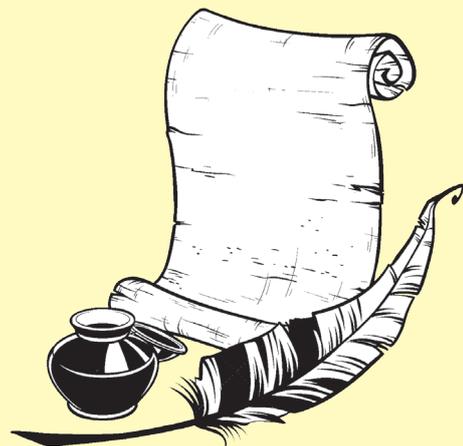
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Re-routing Civility

They said war was over, its peace time, Alas!
Coordinated attacks
Once again suicide strikers dared to strike civilian targets
And still, there are places, that
Have their own inimitable vulnerabilities.
The Pacific Ocean having no memory,
Paris, making you fall madly in love,
New York, marking a new beginning, perhaps a clean slate,
Vegas and her slot machines,

And you have to ask yourself - in these jungles
Of civilians - where does Colombo stand with
Roots and routes ahead
With Easter Sunday Carnage, after the
Week of Lord's passion

Look at this changing city, Colombo now in dismay
Reminding us of the Sicilian mafia clans, a hub of narcotics
And the reigns of the once Godfathers,
All back from UAE, now in cells here
Blinded to humanity, walking killer machines,
Annihilated grace for Lanka.
Now Galle Face, Kochchikade,
Katuwapitiya and Zion Church
Mourning and wailing families Brown and White
Lost theirs in shrines and hotels
Terror strikers seeking another shrine in heaven
Abhorred by their own flock with indignation

Mindless cruelty, deviant ideology to murder,
Aimless cause but hatred through and through
Polluted by terror, inspired, governed by evil, for evil
Incivility dogma, lost everything they held as religious
Shaming a tradition of mercy and compassion,
God and Prophet

To reject and perish,
And still civility, the will to hope
Is preserved here in pockets,
Stubborn in faith for righteousness, living small
Hope bigger than any skyscraper in Colombo,
Civility must prevail
To jeopardize incivility and cruelty to each other

Colombo what if I say, that we should
Be proud of this city
Hub of Colonial times is still the Capital,
Sunday Attacks ripped it after ten years void of bombs
Incivility crept again not ethnic route but a
deviant religious route
Worse implications on the whole and all of society,
Against basic morals – incivility at its heights
What routes people look for?

Capitals they target, terror they theatrically perform
In Paris, people kiss just because they can,
And in Viennese coffee houses, people chat,
While sipping a home-made brew,
In Prague they gulp Budweiser,
While here in the heart of Colombo,

Everyone seems to hammock smiles
Since Easter Sunday, dysfunctionality haunts the city

Colombo is a crowded Mecca.
It too is a commoner's Rome.
It is a holy Varanasi.
We just have to look at our
Long histories; how most of us
Except for the Caucasian Burghers, came
From somewhere in India:
Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Karnataka and Bengal
Come to mind here.
Where we are going, is down a funnel
We call a melting point.
Aren't we all drawn now by a terror outfit?
Must defeat, rise again Phoenix like,
Terror has no place in Colombo, nor any part of Lanka
Terror they defeated then,
Now inspired from elsewhere, must end its recycling.

Land of gods, gods are many; yet incivility plagued
Contradiction in practice, cannot do what it says
Betrayed the Book, the sacred and the holy,
Incivility infested inside out, cruelty to the 'other'

Colonial lampraise will be sold once again
Rice and Curry on the streets
Kites with Children on the Galle Face
While children eat mangoes,
Only to use the mango seed,
In a game of Hopscotch, jumping
On one foot, knowing that their
Life, will one day be, not in
Just one city, but many, East and West, North and South
Churches, Mosques, Temples without locks
Sunday worship, Jumma and Pirith sung again

Many identities to amalgamate,
And still rooted to a genealogy tree,

Path they made, oath to terror, allegiance to violence
Made them cowards to murder the innocent
God-ful desire made God-less self-betrayal
And faithful destroyed, damage permanent
Violent martyrdom made hundreds of martyrs
On a Sunday their Lord rose from dead
They rise among those left behind
A faith alive and kicking with their Lord of Life

Rewind 2000 years ago back,
A dead man walked out of a tomb;
He too was wrapped in an eggshell white robe,
A lesson in paramount faith.
The thumb size faith of Thomas
Stood worlds apart to that of pint-sized
Zacchaeus, the tax collector and his Sycamore
Small people who were murdered, but
A faith taller than a coconut tree,
Fatter than a Baobab trunk;
As sacred as a Bo, fig and cedar.



- Anonymous -