

Politik einen hohen Stellenwert eingeräumt, beschränkt er sich im Hauptteil darauf, die bekannten Linien der britischen Politik mit Bezug auf die westindischen Fürstenstaaten in großer Ausführlichkeit nachzuzeichnen. Dies bringt zwar eine Fülle neuer Information (etwa über die britische Zollpolitik gegenüber den Küstenstaaten im Gefolge der Round Table Conferences), aber doch kaum neue Erkenntnisse.

Nach wie vor sind die Fürstenstaaten, die doch ein Drittel des indischen Territoriums ausmachten, in der Forschung unterrepräsentiert. Sie machen es dem Forscher nicht leicht, schon aus praktischen Gründen. Gerade die kleineren Staaten waren nur in Ansätzen bürokratisiert, geordnete Aktenablage oft unbekannt. Auch erfolgte die Verwaltung nur in Ausnahmefällen auf Englisch, ohne Sprachkenntnisse ist ein tieferes Eindringen in die Problematik daher so gut wie unmöglich. Dennoch stellen sie ein überaus reizvolles Forschungsfeld dar. Regionalgeschichte erlaubt zwar keine Forschung, die entsprechend der klassischen Definition der Landesgeschichte „unbegrenzt auf begrenztem Raum“ ist; doch kann sie durch die räumliche Beschränkung eine größere Anzahl an Faktoren in ihrer gegenseitigen Bedingtheit untersuchen und dergestalt komplexere Zusammenhänge im Kleinen darstellen als manch großflächige Darstellung. Diese Komplexität aber kann ohne klare Fragestellung und Methodologie nicht bewältigt werden – die These: „the past should not be studied with hindsight“ (S. 284) reicht dazu nicht ganz aus.

Margrit Pernau

DAYA SOMASUNDARAM, *Scarred Minds. The Psychological Impact of War on Sri Lankan Tamils*. New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications, 1998. 353 pages, £ 29.99. ISBN 0-7619-9267-7

Over four decades ago, the African doctor and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon published *The Wretched of the Earth*, a study arising out of his experience in treating the psychological disorders of Algerian prisoners and French army personnel after suffering or administering torture. Daya Somasundaram is also a psychiatrist, who, himself an internal refugee, worked both with the victims of torture and some of those inflicting it during the ongoing civil war in the north of Sri Lanka. While Fanon's book is deeply committed and emotional, Somasundaram endeavours to remain clinically detached when discussing the psychological effect of *civil war* on a civilian population. His engagement, however, shows when he deals with the history and roots of the conflict. He was one of the co-authors of *The Broken Palmyra*, an angry account of the war in the north up to the period of IPKF (Indian Peace-Keeping Force) occupation.

The book is divided into eight chapters, the first two of which provide the historical background (contributed by M.R.R. Hoole) and an account of the war from a Tamil perspective. Two chapters explore the psychological causes and effects of war, taking up an earlier discussion of what 'low-intensity conflict' actually means for civilians affected by it. The report is written from the viewpoint of a physician and a psychiatrist who remained in Jaffna and tried to deal with the pain and wounds sustained. The eyewitness accounts of Sinhala atrocities and massacres in northern villages indeed make depressing reading. While the author does not spare the militant groups, he emphasises that their deeds pale in significance against the massive human rights violations by the Sri Lankan army. The explanations for the violence, which are consciously set in a non-Western context, are noteworthy. The author considers the Tamils generally to be of an authoritarian personality structure who project their own negative feelings onto other groups. He calls Sinhalese violence hot-blooded and soon dissipated, the Tamil actions cold-blooded and rational. Though one would hesitate to accept these rather stereotype descriptions, there seems to be a conscious attempt on the side of the Tamil fighters to cultivate a rational, detached type of violent behaviour. The distrust and suspicion of the LTTE are attributed to '... the paranoid personality so common to the Tamil man' (p. 63). The root causes of the conflict lie for Somasundaram in identity problems and conflicts of territoriality, not in the '... favourite bogey with the Western-educated social scientists' (p. 62), caste.

Given that everybody accepts that war is an unmitigated disaster for the majority of the people affected, the author asks why certain conflicts are still considered insoluble except by violence? He traces intra-species aggression, which is unique to man, to three factors: first, identity, which can be manipulated by leaders and lead to 'militant enthusiasm' when threatened and to a search for total and extreme solutions. The second factor is perception, which creates stereotypes and labels that can become rigid and lead to self-fulfilling and paranoid attitudes. The third factor is aggression, which ties in with the perceived threats to identity and territoriality. Aggression can be transferred to the other group and prevent empathy. It can be seen as a reaction to physical and psychological pain. Such violence indicates the degree of frustration and suffering and frequently becomes a cult.

The psychological effects of war can endure for several generations. This applies especially to long-lasting low-intensity conflicts. The reactions vary across time and space and can become chronic. On the other hand, there can be a superficial habituation to stress which, however, never occurs with torture. Particularly traumatic is separation with uncertainty about the fate of loved ones, which prevents healing through grieving, while adolescents tend to become aggressive and violent. Among the causes of severe trauma

the author includes becoming a refugee. The way of coping with stress is especially significant in non-Western cultural settings where Western-style psychiatric categories cannot always be applied. Powerlessness and guilt are in this setting less important than shame and loss of face, and the family group can be more significant for coping strategies than the individual. The author advises that some psychological issues are better left '... to the local priest, monk or traditional healer ...' (p. 146).

The next three chapters report case histories of victims of chronic civil war, acute war, and torture. Cumulatively, they are depressing, especially the destruction of personalities by addiction to violence and drug and alcohol abuse. During Sinhalese occupation and IPKF operations in 1987/88 rape was a widespread occurrence, whose effects were exacerbated by the social ostracism the victims face in Tamil culture. Unfortunately, the author never questions this aspect or acknowledges the necessity to actively change this particular male perception. The contradiction of the social stigma attached to rape and the fact that many men simply fled the country and left the women to face a hostile force is never addressed.

A separate chapter on the psychological effects of torture is contributed by Anna Downey who discusses the different approaches necessary with non-Western victims. She describes efforts to set up self-help and support groups by former torture victims. Since torture is never officially acknowledged as a policy it is normally impossible to rationalise it. The worst affected victims are the ones who cannot find any meaning in their experience, which corresponds to the author's description of 'innocent' torture victims, those with no ideological commitments who suffered the severest mental stress. How does one make sense, in Veena Das' words in the foreword, of 'useless suffering'? Particularly problematic is the role of doctors who are called upon to treat torture victims. Somasundaram blames the medical profession for keeping quiet in the face of human rights violations and just treating disorders symptomatically.

The last chapter looks into the management of problems under conditions of war and in an environment where the government does not care much about the health and welfare of the Tamils, though the LTTE try to provide psychological treatment and primary health care. The warning for (admittedly well-meaning) NGOs and Western aid organisations not to impose Western concepts and categories on non-Western societies cannot be too strongly endorsed.

'They talk peace, but make war' (p. 306), thus the author sums up. He sees a progressive destruction of society by a war fuelled largely by external interests. But he states quite clearly that both groups must, eventually, live together on the island (p. 118). Healing can only begin once the atroci-

ties perpetrated by the powerful are acknowledged. He advocates non-violent struggle in the mould of Gandhian civil disobedience as a start, but adds a scathing criticism of Jaffna society, which he claims is primarily driven by a self-interest carried to extremes and at the expense of self-respect. He blames the LTTE for straying from the non-violent path of Tamil culture, which is a bit disingenuous since Tamil classical literature extols the cult of violence. He calls the LTTE totalitarian, forgetting that the Tamils do not, according to his own analysis, respect anything else but totalitarianism.

The strength of the book is that it is written by a Western-trained psychiatrist deeply rooted in his own culture, which gives him unique insights and which in itself should make this book required reading for anyone interested in Sri Lanka and similar conflicts.

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WERNER M. EGLI, *Bier für die Ahnen. Erbrecht, Tausch und Ritual bei den Sunuwar Ostnepals*. Frankfurt: IKO – Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1999. 548 Seiten, 56 s/w-Abbildungen, DM 59,80. ISBN 3-88939-507-4

Der Autor legt mit seiner Studie über die Sunuwar Ostnepals eine ausführliche Untersuchung einer bislang wenig beschriebenen nepalesischen Volksgruppe vor. Sie basiert auf einer jahrelangen Feldforschung in der Region und vermittelt, neben umfangreichen Bezügen zur Sekundär- und allgemeinen anthropologischen Literatur, eine Fülle ethnographischen Materials. Das Buch gliedert sich in drei Teile: Den ersten Teil bilden eine landeskundliche Einführung, eine Abhandlung zur Regional- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ostnepals sowie eine Einführung in das untersuchte Dorf Khiji-Majgau. Der zweite Teil ist eine ausführliche Darstellung des sozialen, ökonomischen und religiösen Lebens dieses Dorfes im Jahr 1990. In diesem werden die im dritten Teil als wesentlich erachteten Elemente beschrieben. Tausch, Erbrecht und Ritual sind hier in den Zusammenhängen des Alltagslebens eingeführt, um dann funktional und mit Blick auf die Struktur der Lokalgesellschaft analysiert zu werden. Die alle drei Teile umfassende Klammer bildet das Thema „Bier“, das bereits im Einführungskapitel als Schlüssel zur Kultur der Sunuwar angekündigt wurde, und nun gegen Ende der Abhandlung mit seiner Stellung bei den benachbarten ethnischen Gruppen der Magar und Sherpa verglichen wird. Eine umfassende Bibliographie, die ethnologische und soziologische Grundlagenliteratur mit den Klassikern der Nepal-Forschungsliteratur, insbesondere derjenigen der letzten dreißig Jahre, vereint, schließt den Textteil des Buches ab. Es folgen Abbildungen in Schwarzweiß, die