

PSC 4189 Politics of Protest and Resistance

Introduction

Politics in any society is not only about governance, but also about resistance and struggles for power. Resistance can take many forms – revolution, rebellion, protest actions and social mobilization for direct action. This course seeks to explore some of these themes theoretically and in relation to the experience of Sri Lanka.

The course is divided into two parts. In Part I, the focus is on the conceptual paradigms of the politics of resistance. In Part II, the discussion is on the aspects of the politics of resistance in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

This course seeks to:

- i. Introduce students to the different conceptual traditions as well as practices in the politics of resistance,
- ii. Enable students to understand recent Sri Lankan politics from the perspectives of protest and resistance.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will have learned that

- i. Resistance as a political practice has diverse traditions and forms,
- ii. Politics of resistance has changed in both form and content over the past two centuries, and
- iii. Resistance and protest are important trends in contemporary Sri Lankan politics.

Course Outline

Part I

1. Conceptualizing the Politics of Resistance - Traditional Paradigms: Working class and revolutionary resistance in the Marxist theory, the anarchist tradition in Europe, anti-colonial nationalism, peasant rebellions.
2. Conceptualizing the Politics of resistance - New Forms and Practices: women's movement, social movements, ethno-nationalist politics, and identity politics.
3. Resistance and Violence: Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*.
4. Non-violent Resistance: Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Part II

5. Left and Trade union Movements as Modes of Resistance to Capitalism in Sri Lanka.
6. The emergence and spread of the New Left in Sri Lanka in the 1960s.
7. Politics of Nationalist Resistance in Sinhalese and Tamil Societies: The JVP and the Tamil militant movements.
8. Potential and limits of social movements in the politics of resistance: movements for women's rights, human rights, environmental rights and peace.

Assessment

Classroom Test	15%
Take -home Assignment	15%
Attendance and Class Participation	10%
End of Semester Examination	60%

Recommended Readings

Amerasinghe, Ranjith, 2000, *Revolutionary Idealism and Parliamentary Politics: a Study of Trotskyism in Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Social Scientists' Association.

Guha, Ranajit, 1983, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Fanon, Frantz, 1963, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: The Grove Press.

Gurr, Ted, 1970, *Why Men Revolt*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hettige, S. T. (ed.), 1996, *Unrest or Revolt: Some Aspects of Youth Unrest in Sri Lanka*, Colombo: Goethe Institute.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

Moore, Mick, 1993, "Thoroughly Modern Revolutionaries: The JVP in Sri Lanka," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, July, pp. 593-642.

Wignaraja, Ponna (ed.), 1993, *New Social Movements in the South*, London: Zed Press.