Presentation of the Book

THE CARIBBEAN ON THE EDGE

The Political Stress of Stability, Equality and Diplomacy

By Winston Dookeran

Response by Winston Dookeran

Quotes from the book - points on the edge: human justice, fixing the economy and Caribbean diplomacy.

Human Justice

The Quest for Human Justice— Pages 50-51

"At the core of political economy are the prospects of economic growth, the concentration of wealth, and the forces that generate inequality… Thomas Piketty 'we have not modified the deep structure of capital and inequality that today threaten 'to generate extreme inequalities that stir discontent and undermine democratic values'

Piketty's 'undermining democratic values and Sen's notion that 'development is freedom' mesh under the rubric of 'justice'. The fight for democracy has historically been viewed as a battle for justice, and it is freedom that permits societies to pursue the cause of justice.

What 'human justice' can do is solve, or attempt to solve, concrete problems of individual and societal life: to enact and enforce norms, to create institutions, to design processes, all with one goal in mind- to solve actual problems.

The anguish and outrage that erupted in my homeland in the aftermath of the brutal murder of Andrea Bharrat, so soon after another equally heinous murder of Ashanti Riley, two of our young women has left our society naked, shaken to the core, and exposed to 'what-ever-it takes' solutions to regain human freedom and dignity. Leaders have been left speechless, and those whose duty it is to uphold the constitutional order of the country are clearly stunned, and confused. Adhering to the norms of the justice process cannot explain the outcome of that process, and it would be a colossal abdication of public responsibility to simply move on until the next episode occurs"

Fixing the Economy

- *Building an Immune Economy* - Page 77

'As the economy enters 'loop' type cycle of demand and supply shock, old policy prescriptions for recessionary times will no longer work' - The coronavirus crisis, as explained, has induced a supply shock- reducing wages and production, which in turn fuels a demand shock and a fall in

purchasing power: resulting in a loop cycle of shock. This is coupled with an after- shock in the energy market … with future ripples to come from dramatically falling growth rates in the world economy. The size, speed, and depth of these hits have contracted the TT's economic base by an estimated 20 to 25 per cent. The task now is to get economy back on its feet- to snap back into activity- and walk a new road where there will be absorbers and buffers for immunity in the economy"

- *Towards a Universal Basic Income* – page 91

"In spite of some current actuarial concerns, the National Insurance Board is the most reliable institution promoting social security. – we have an opportunity to implement a livable basic income' for those now out of any of the catchment areas if existing support programs, focusing on the 'new vulnerable…. this can be considered social investment rather than additional public expenditure. In a philosophical sense this sort of measure is consistent with the 'right-based approach' to development – shaping a 'new normal' that gets to the core of sustainability – the cost of the program can be negotiated into the transaction from proceeds of the CLICO proposal, referred to earlier"

- *The Catalytic Role in Development* – page 85 -86

"Turning around the economy often requires a shift from the step-by step process of conventional models towards new approaches based on capturing strategic options. models of state-centric governance, as opposed to state control, have often worked in tandem with the free-market system The obstacles to the growth process lie in undue reliance on the state and its outdated controls and system Major economic costs are incurred. But market forces by themselves will not suffice to protect the public good. We must embrace a catalytic role for the state- a role that causes change……. To capture these and other opportunities, rapid economic growth must be the main driving objective of a catalytic equity instrument. If it catches on, we can learn by doing, testing new waters rather than swimming in already travelled lanes"

<u>Caribbean Diplomacy</u>

Pandemic as global political stress test – pages 203 ,92

"Capable states with good leadership who embrace reforms become stronger and more resilient, while those with weak state capacity- political and economic- will be in trouble and set for stagnation- old paradigms are looking tired – global institutions in in flux and the changing geopolitics is opening up strategic shifts in areas of diplomacy, particularly for small states".

On page 92, "Diplomatic agenda for the Caribbean could ends up in 'no man's land' Sir Ronald Sanders summed up the dilemma this way "one certainty in any new global dispensation is that, if (countries) fail to act together, they will remain in the backwater of human development. That is particularly true for CARICOM countries" Perhaps, this time offers the Caribbean a geo political opportunity to define its regional state, refrain from a sterile focus on the 'implementing deficit' in CARICOM, and capture the new architectural design fitting for the geo-politics of Caribbean history and geography".

I end by quoting the first line on Page 201, in the Epilogue “A *book rarely stands on its own- it comes from somewhere and sometimes travels unknown paths*”