

Rethinking Max Horkheimer in the Context of Post-war Jaffna

N Sivakaran^{1*}

ABSTRACT. This study is an attempt to critically examine the conditions of social life affecting the people of Jaffna in the post-war period vis-à-vis Horkheimer's views on social awareness. During the period of the 1st & 2nd World Wars, the people of Germany encountered various social, political and economic problems. The political leaders of that period did not provide much guidance to the people; instead, they aimed at securing political power for themselves. As a result, the responsibility of guiding the people fell on the intellectuals of that country. It is against this political background that some social philosophers, as a joint venture, established the Frankfurt school with a view to leading their society towards an era of enlightenment. Horkheimer was one of the major thinkers of this movement. Through his critical thinking based on reason he tried to examine and explain the deep rooted social problems of that period.

The people in Jaffna peninsula are living in a similar situation today in that instrumental reason, technological advancement and inflow of money from different parts of the world have distracted their attention from important social, political and economic problems and pushed this society into an illusory world. The People should be liberated from this situation and made to re-read the socio- political developments taking place around them with more awareness than now.

Analytical, comparative and historical research methods will be used in this study. The dates will be collected from Primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be gathered through observation and interviews with selected opinion makers in society. Secondary data will be taken from the original work of Horkheimer and books and articles on Horkheimer's philosophy by other leading thinkers.

Key words: Frankfurt School of Thought, Instrumental Reason, Rational Society, Enlightenment.

* To whom correspondence should be addressed : sivakaran18@yahoo.com

¹ Department of Philosophy, University of Jaffna