

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT : A new front of struggle

LANKA

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MARX DEATH CENTENARY

**Marxism and world-historical
change**

— *James Petras*

Fundamentals of Marxism

— *N. Sanmugathan*

Marx and the Asiatic mode

— *Hector Abhayavardhana*

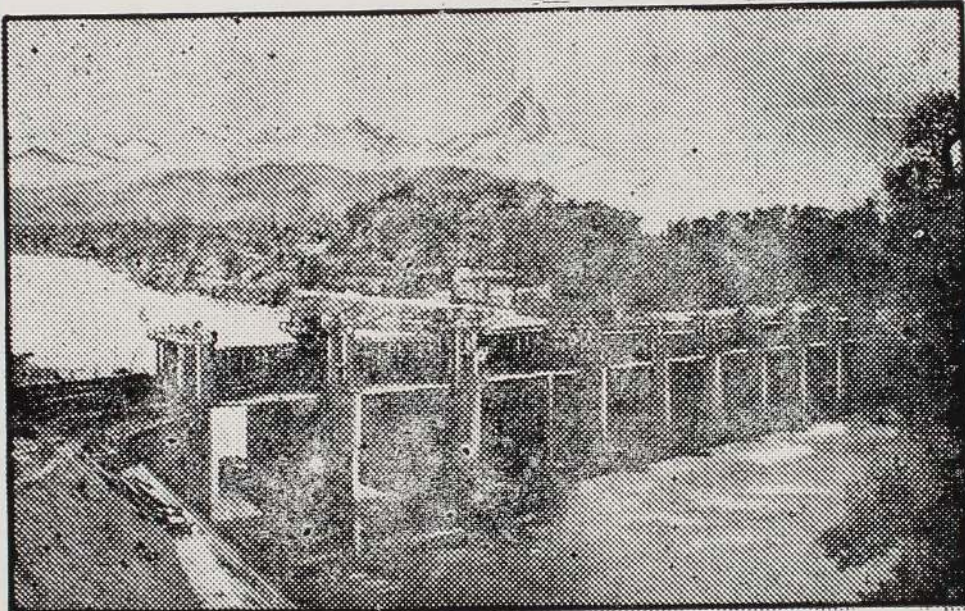
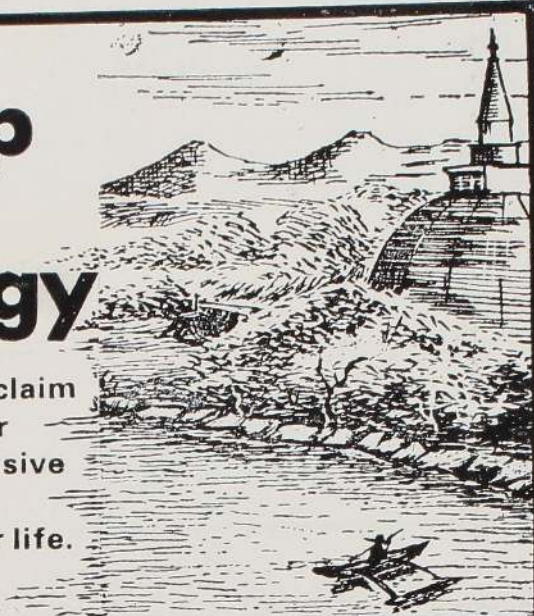
Marx as a person

— *Heinrich Gemkow*

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GROWING UP WITH GLOBALISM

"Loka Bankuwa"... Loka Velanda Pola"... When Mrs. B., F. D. B. and sometimes N. M. used these as alibis for rising prices, the U. N. P. benches in parliament burst into scornful and sceptical laughter. And how smartly the U. N. P.'s propagandists exploited those two words, converting them into political obscenities!

Now the two 'worlds', the World Bank and the World Market, have burst over the heads of the Third Worldist U. N. P. government.

"What can we do when global inflation has hit us?" sighed a helpless SLFP, especially after the post-1973 oil price hike. "What can we do?" cries the UNP leaders echoing the helpless choric cry of the poor peasants in Silone's FONTAMARA. The irony is that they were both right in a way but it is the UNP's sardonic obscenity that has got stuck in the Sri Kotha throat. The backbenchers remind parliament and the public what the U. F. and the SLFP did in their time on living costs but they lack all conviction.

For the once self-assured UNP leadership, for the once cockiiy raucous UNP backbenchers, for the UNP voters, for the UNP propagandists, and for the public at large, the 'open economy' is proving an 'open university' where their education is being made complete as they all awaken to and grow up with globalism.

TIGER'S TAIL

In a demonstrative protest against price hikes in petrol and kerosene, the UNP leaders rode to parliament in a bullock cart. Smart gimmick, nice publicity, and the final ride to power.

Oil imports do devour as much as 40% of our export income. But now OPEC, which was such a pet target of UNP propaganda that the party threatened to collect a million signatures on a Sri Lankan petition, has cut the price by as much as 5 dollars. The crash in crude prices has forced this decision.

Of course, the petition was never posted to Vienna because the UNP was already learning the politics of OPEC and the economics of Arab power, (Today, foreign remittances from expatriate workers are closing up on tea earnings).

But will the 5 dollar drop benefit the local consumer? Last month, the price was jacked up. Would it come back to base? Logically, it should.

However an interview with a government spokesman published in the ISLAND gives us the true picture. Since the CPC is losing 5 rupees on a gallon of kerosene because there is a subsidy on that product, the petrol price may not be reduced "since the government was in the process of a gradual departure from subsidies on essential commodities".

This "gradual departure" (from past policies of welfare) and the steady withdrawal of subsidies is of course standard IBRD/IMF advice. The friendly advice soon amounts to dictation once you catch the tiger's tail. So the Third World is caught between the 'Loka Velanda Pola' and the 'Loka Bankuwa'.

THE LAST LAUGH

The other 'tiger' meanwhile prowls the northern jungles freely, even daring to attack army convoys now. The official 'Daily News' thinks it may have been an even bolder plan to attack the army camp itself, which went off half-cock.

While the government's armed forces are engaged on that front, the UNP is facing opposition on many other fronts, notably the unions (the CMU called a 5 day strike) the universities (all campuses are seething with unrest) and the judiciary-cum-Bar Council.

Escalating living costs are causing labour unrest. The students accuse the UGC of "eroding" the Free Education system, the foundation of Sri Lankan welfarism, itself the economic support base of Sri Lanka's once vibrant parliamentary democracy. The Bar Council and other organisations are engaged in a debate

(Continued on page 2)

Why the Left failed

I have known Leslie Goonewardena for nearly 50 years and have the highest regard for his sincerity, self-sacrifice and devotion to the left. I was therefore pleased to see the cover page of L. G. of 1/3/83 carry a banner headline: 'Why the Left failed' — Leslie Goonewardena, and I turned the pages to read the article with interest.

Leslie (we all call him Leslie) begins by saying, "In recent times it has become fashionable to refer to the collapse of the left in politics. Sometimes more disparaging words are used". He thinks the left has only "been pushed back in a more serious manner than has happened in the entire preceding period following the conclusion of World War 2".

(Continued on page 2)

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Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The Objective of a Left party, specially the revolutionary left L. S. S. P, of which Leslie can be said to be the king-pin, is to make revolution, and if after more than 40 years it finds itself "pushed back in a more serious manner" by the U N P, which it fought all the time, I for one would not quarrel with those who call it a defeat!

Leslie wants the Left to have a relationship with the S.L.F.P. because the anti UNP masses are with the S.L.F.P. **There is no proof that the anti-UNP forces are with the S.L.F.P.** Even if the masses are dissatisfied with both the U N P and the S L F P **they have no other way of showing it at present.** Under Parliamentary Democracy (PD) nothing else can be done and the authors of P. D. (the British) specially so designed it to prevent any radical change.

The S.L.F.P. has used the Left on a number of occasions and later thrown it away like a sucked mango seed.

In my view the Left has failed because it has not yet mustered enough courage to stand on its own legs.

Dr. R. W. C. Thambiah
Jaffna.

Kailasapathy

I am herewith enclosing a short essay on the work of the late Kailasapathy. His work needs to be noticed (particularly in your journal) more than it has been in the English periodicals I have seen.

I am preparing a longer essay that probably will be published in some commemorative volume sometime.

R. S. Perinbanayagam
Professor of Sociology,
Hunter College,
City University of New York.

Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)

over what the LSSP's General Secretary has described as a 'serious and dangerous interference with the course of justice'.

Parliament has appointed a Select Committee to inquire into a complaint made by one S.C. Judge against two of his colleagues.

Students are accusing the police of harassment and strong-arm tactics, Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene, a former Deputy Minister, claims she was thrown on the ground and kicked at a Colombo police station. She had led a demonstration past the U.S. Embassy against 'the militarisation of the Indian Ocean'.

What do all these confrontations and eruptions signify? Economics is the determinant. Even as backbenchers ridicule Marx on his death centenary, the Old Man has the last laugh.

IN NEXT ISSUE

Samudran on "New Debates within Marxism."

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The Women's Movement — A new consciousness

NEWS
BACKGROUND

International Women's Day (March 8th) has been observed before in Sri Lanka, but last week's United Women's Day at the New Town Hall, Colombo, was unique in several ways. It was the first occasion when so many organisations had joined hands to celebrate the day — the Women's Liberation Movement (Sri Lanka), the Progressive Women's Front, Kantha Handa (Voice of Women), the Women's Section of the Nava Sama Samaja Party, the Hatton Women's Committee, and the Eela Penkal Vidhuthalai Munnani (Eelam Women's Liberation Front). The commemoration of Marx Death Centenary and the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act were the two main themes of this mobilization. The gathering at the New Town Hall was a cross-section of working women in different sectors of the economy and different parts of the country, and the speakers had been chosen to voice the views of these groups: FTZ workers, plantation workers, women of the North and East and peasants.

Though the day was set by the international tradition, it happened to coincide also with Budget day, following on the shocks of tax and price increases; meanwhile, at the same time, university students were meeting at Hyde Park in their protest against the violation of free education. It wasn't surprising, perhaps, that the YWCA, which was to have rented the Jubilee Hall for the women's rally, lost its nerve and forced a change of venue, or that the police refused to permit a street procession. However, a brief picketing with placards was arranged outside the hall, and there was some lusty shouting of slogans, in which **'Release Nirmala Nithyananthan!'** figured prominently. During the meeting itself there was a moment of confusion when some strong-armed young men (male chauvinists? party dogmatists?) appeared to have rushed the platform

and captured it, but it turned out that this was a planned intervention which set the stage for the playlet on women's oppression by the Open Arts Circle which followed. Song, dance and drama punctuated the speeches throughout the evening, and whatever some of these performances lacked in finish, they more than made up for in enthusiasm and spontaneity.

Altogether, the celebration confirmed the *Lanka Guardian's* recent observations about the growing consciousness and militancy of Sri Lankan women (LG, Jan. 15). Winding

up the day, one member of the Women's Action Committee (a co-ordinating body comprising the participating organizations) said that the rally had been even more successful than the organisers had hoped. Affirming both the specificity of women's issues and the impossibility of isolating their struggle from the broader movement for social liberation, she emphasised the need to find the right articulation of the class struggle and the women's struggle against patriarchy which had eluded the left movement in the past.

— R. S.

SCM on Campus unrest

The SCM, which is affiliated to the World Student Christian Federation has sent the following letter to President Jayewardene, concerning the current wave of Student protest.

THE Student Christian Movement of Sri Lanka is a Christian student body committed in terms of its Constitution to serve the needs of students in Universities and in the Collegiate classes of 'High Schools' in the country. In furtherance of our aims, we have from time to time responded to calls made to us by the wider student movement whenever there was the need to solidarise with it in our common pursuit of justice and peace.

We have been made aware of the demands made by the Students' Council of the University of Colombo to the University Grants Commission on 02.02.83 for redress of their grievances, and have considered their grievances with care and responsibility. It is our considered opinion that the representations they have made to the University authorities against —

- (i) the levy of fees for a course of lectures at undergraduate level held in the University premises, and
- (ii) the admission of officer cadets at the Kotelawela Defence Academy on a discriminatory basis to the University

are based on a very reasonable stand against (a) the subtle violation of the principle of Free Education and (b) infringement of the normal merit criteria that operate in regard to University admissions, respectively.

We regret both those moves made by the University Grants Commission and urge Your Excellency to intervene in this matter as Executive President and Minister in charge of Higher Education and redress the legitimate grievances of our fellow-students at the University of Colombo.

We wish to express our solidarity with the Students' Council of the University of Colombo in these matters.

GMOA attacks harassment, political patronage and corruption

In an era of political quandary, GMOA is the only functioning Trade Union which continues to command respect of both its members and the public. This is so because of our non-aligned policy and honesty. We work on principles rather than for individuals.

It is disheartening to note that we spend most of our time in trying to make good the damage done by the Department of Health Services, very often due to extraneous influences. Despite constant reminders by the GMOA to the Officials concerned to refrain from any misdeeds, under pressure, sometimes personal and at other times political, the hierarchy in the Department have been yielding favours to its minions and lackeys. This has been our headache and it continues to be the biggest. We have been successful in curtailing this to a minimum after we took office and sure we will be able to eradicate this completely if we get the unstinted support of all our members.

When all other Trade Unions in this country have been burried, GMOA continues to flourish amidst attempts made by politically motivated 'wolves in sheeps skin', both within the Association and without, to disrupt our unity. This is exemplified by the way we tackled the political hoodlums unleashed by the lawmakers of this country to set upon the poor doctors at Elpitiya, Anamaduwa and Ridigama.

The fact that some of our members seek political patronage for personal gain is a matter of serious concern. In so doing they plunge the Association into disrepute, paint a gloomy picture in the eyes of the public, prevent their fellow officers getting their dues and last but not least tax the patience of the Executive Committee members. Still others making hay while the

sun shines, have resorted to unorthodox, socially unacceptable and inhumane practices to make their pockets jingle in double quick time. These two categories of doctors are a disgrace to a noble profession like ours. They make the weakest link between a strong Trade Union and the general public. They dilute the strength of our Association too. They are prepared to stomach any humiliation by political hoodlums, accede to any Departmental irregularities and sometimes connive with the Health Authorities to buffer progressive GMOA movement.

We request all our members to rally round the Executive Committee without falling a prey to monetary or other baits. We must at all costs safeguard the rights we already possess and strive hard to win more of them. This can only be achieved by show of strength. The PGIM which was not going to obtain a firm foothold in the soil of post graduate education of this country, in the eyes of most of our members, has now become a reality and occupies a pretentiously prestigious position in the arena of Medical Education.

Other outstanding issues like enhanced salaries, travelling allowances, housing, etc. too need an arm twisting struggle to achieve. In other words to rise as one. The day we achieve this will be the dawn of a new era for Medical Trade Unionism.

**'HONESTY SITS BY THE CRADLE
OF ALL GREAT MEN AND ROCKS
THEM UP TO GREATNESS'**

For and on behalf of the
Executive Committee.

Dr. M. M. Janapriya

President.

Dr. W. W. S. Ratnapriya

Secretary.

GMOA details incidents

Political Interference in Hospitals and Harassment of Doctors:

The incidence of Political Interference in Hospital Administration and Harassment of Doctors by prominent politicians increased sharply during the months of October to December 1982.

Incidents relating to the harassment of doctors occurred at (1) Elpitiya, (2) Anamaduwa, (3) Ridigama, (4) Anuradhapura and (5) Mannar. Brief accounts of these incidents are given below:-

(A) — Incident at Elpitiya

Dr. S. Abeykoon, appointed as D. M. O., D. H., Elpitiya, on 11.3.82, was suddenly transferred as M. O., Karapitiya Hospital, Galle, without assigning any reasons or holding an inquiry. Dr. Abeykoon had made no application for a transfer out of Elpitiya, where he had served for only seven months.

(B) — Incident at Anamaduwa

A prominent politician is alleged to have gone to Anamaduwa Hospital at about 8.00 p. m. on 2. 9. 82, and abused the D. M. O., Dr. G. W. W. Pathirana, in unparliamentary language, in the immediate presence of the Hospital Staff, patients and the public and threatened to oust him from Anamaduwa. Dr. Pathirana was unaware of the reasons for this outburst, and he continues to work at D. H., Anamaduwa, pending inquiry. He was subsequently transferred but was brought back when GMOA represented matters.

(C) — Incidents at Ridigama

Dr. M. S. L. R. Wijetunge, D. M. O., D. H., Ridigama, was suddenly transferred to Mental Hospital Angoda, without assigning any reasons or holding an inquiry. When this matter

was discussed with the Honourable Minister of Health it transpired that Dr. Wijetunge was transferred out of Ridigama at the request of a politician.

Incident No. 5 — Assault on Dr. M. S. L. R. Wijetunge, D. M. O., on 20. 12. 82 at Ridigama :

On 20. 12. 82 the D. M. O. had gone to Ridigama Hospital to hand over his duties to the Acting M. O. The D. M. O. had requested Police protection, through S. H. S., Kurunegala, which had been provided. In spite of police protection, the D. M. O. is alleged to have been assaulted by a local party Organiser. However, the Police were powerless and the D. M. O. was assaulted, resulting in the dislocation of his shoulder, which necessitated his admission to G. H., Kurunegala, for treatment. GMOA Branch at Kurunegala staged a protest walkout on 21. 12. 82.

(D) — Incident at Anuradhapura

It is alleged that on 25. 12. 82 at about 9.00 p. m. a Clerk working for a leading politician had gone to the Anuradhapura Hospital in a drunken state and abused the Lady Medical Officer on duty at the O. P. D. in unparliamentary language and created a disturbance by smashing the telephone exchange equipment. This incident has been reported by the Anuradhapura G. M. O. A. Branch Union to the Honourable Minister of Health and the District Minister for Anuradhapura.

(E) — Incident At B. H., Mannar

On 29. 11. 82 at about 5.30 p. m. a man is alleged to have brought a child suffering from convulsions to the Mannar Hospital. Dr. E. E. Peries, Paediatrician, who was doing his ward rounds noticed the child, examined the patient and prescribed the necessary treatment. When he was continuing his ward rounds after seeing the child, he was confronted by a man who appeared to be under the influence of liquor.

He is alleged to have abused Dr. Peries in obscene language and threatened to assault him if he did not examine the child again. When Dr. Peries informed this man that his child had

already been examined and treated, he continued to abuse Dr. Peries in filthy language. Dr. Peries had no alternative but to leave the ward and make a complaint to the D. M. O. The Police were informed and the man was arrested.

Representations were made to His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, protesting against the harassment caused to Dr. Wijetunge. His Excellency in acknowledging the receipt of our representations, has indicated that the matter is receiving attention.

The following incidents were reported to H. E. the President, in this connection :-

Incident No. 1 — Closure of Clinic:

A room rented out by Dr. Wijetunge from the Manager of the M. P. C. S. of Ridigama, for his private practice, is alleged to have been closed at the instance of a politician thereby depriving Dr. Wijetunge of the use of that room for his private practice.

Incident No. 2 — Irregular Transfer :

The irregular transfer of Dr. Wijetunge to Mental Hospital, Angoda. This is an interference with the administration of Ridigama Hospital.

Incident No. 3 — Irregular Use of Hospital Premises for Political Meeting :

The supporters of a local politician are alleged to have abused the D. M. O. and his mother who was in the DMO's quarters at that time, and threatened them. This incident had been reported to the Police.

On 18. 11. 82 a team of Medical Officers from the Office of the S. H. S., Kurunegala, had proceeded to Ridigama in an official vehicle, to inspect the Hospital in response to a complaint made by the D. M. O. to the S. H. S., Kurunegala. These Medical Officers are alleged to have been intimidated and threatened. Subsequently Dr. Wijetunge, D.M.C., was interdicted.

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JVP-SLFP detente?

The JVP, which, after the Referendum, called for the creation of an anti-capitalist center comprising all left forces, has recently issued two statements on Feb 25th which reveal a shift in their position. Observers note that one of the statements, sent to all 'extra-UNP' parties, calls on all 'progressive' and 'democratic' parties to put pressure on the Govt to hold General

Elections on schedule. This could imply that the JVP considers that anti-capitalist left unity is an insufficiently broad slogan, and furthermore, that it considers the SLFP a 'democratic' and/or 'progressive' entity!

The other statement issued jointly by the JVP and Mr. Prins Gunasekera's SLVB calls for a campaign through 'constitutional means' to secure General Elections.

The JVP's critics argue that the Jayewardene Constitution, prone as it is to amendment, leaves no room within it, for any such struggle, and that the campaign while being non-violent and direct-actionist, would necessarily have to go beyond the existing constitutional framework.

In response to queries from its cadres, the JVP explains, as the old left leaders used to, that it is simply a matter of 'tactics, comrade, tactics'.

JVP-SLVB call for non-violent campaign

THE present UNP government which entered office for a set term of six years has sought to extend its term to twelve years through various illegal and undemocratic means.

When the previous SLFP-LSSP-CP coalition government under the leadership of Mrs. Bandaranaike sought to extend its term in office by another two years, the present UNP leadership condemned this as a "seven year curse". It also promised that when it formed a government the people of Sri Lanka would be free to elect their own Members of Parliament and that it would never extend its term in office. Yet today this promise has been broken.

Under the new Constitution, 196 MP's were to be elected to parliament via proportional representation. Nevertheless, under the present regime ministers and MP's are shuffled in and out of office with neither the knowledge nor the consent of the people of Sri Lanka while the MP's have been reduced to hostages, their letters of resignation in the President's pocket.

To this end, the Constitution of Sri Lanka has been amended 2-3 times per year. The fundamental law of the country has thus been amended to such an extent that it commands scant respect.

The People's Liberation Front (JVP) and the Sri Lanka Vimukthi Balawegaya call upon the UNP government to dissolve parliament on the prescribed date — namely, August 1983. To prevent the UNP

government from further eroding the fundamental democratic and human rights of the masses, the JVP and the Sri Lanka Vimukthi Balawegaya call upon the people of Sri Lanka to extend their wholehearted support through all constitutional, democratic and non-violent means to force the UNP government to dissolve parliament by the prescribed date of August 1983 and hold General Elections.

The principle aim of our campaign is to call for the dissolution of parliament in August 1983 and to restore the people's inalienable right to choose their own MP's.

We call on all progressive political parties, people's organisations workers organisations, student organisations, democratic forces and freedom loving people of Sri Lanka to join us in these efforts.

JVP's call to non-UNP parties

CAPITALISM in Sri Lanka is presently facing a formidable crisis. The only solution that the ruling UNP government can offer is to devalue the Sri Lankan rupee by approximately 20%, raise value added tax and introduce a business turnover tax, thereby placing the entire burden of the government's destructive policies on the people of Sri Lanka.

In addition to showing contempt for the fundamental human rights, the government has withdrawn all rights that the workers have thus far enjoyed.

By putting forward a Presidential candidate who was already in office, by using state power when campaigning, by appointing UNP ministers and MP's as election agents by holding a referendum instead of a General Election, by transferring some UNP ministers whose electorates voted against the UNP in the Presidential Election and referendum into new, safe seats, and by sacking or forcing other MP's to

resign without the consent of the people of Sri Lanka, the UNP regime has shown nothing but contempt for the basic democratic rights of the people of Sri Lanka.

The UNP government claims that since the Town Council elections and District Development Council elections were democratic, democracy has been restored in Sri Lanka as a whole. Yet by failing to hold elections the government has carefully disassociated the people of Sri Lanka from the political process of the country. Further instead of finding concrete political solutions to the specific problems of the Tamil people, the government has simply fanned racism and followed a policy of "divide and rule". It has also sought to draw a wedge between the workers, peasants and students.

The People's Liberation Front (JVP) thus calls on all progressive and democratic forces within the country to put pressure on the UNP

(Continued on page 24)

Marxism and world-historical transformation

James Petras

In the Third World, several issues related to the Marxist discussion of the transition to socialism have recently come to the fore. For purposes of our discussion, let us focus on four issues: (1) the possibility of incorporating capitalist cooperation over a prolonged period of time in order to avoid internal and external dislocations; (2) the notion that capitalist development creates the economic basis for socialist transformation; (3) the notion that capitalist production simplifies the tasks for production, thus obviating the need for specialists; and (4) the notion that mass organizations involved in the struggle to overthrow capitalist regimes become the basis for worker and peasant self-rulership.

Recent experience in Latin America provides us with a set of cases that throw considerable light on the effort to incorporate capitalist cooperation in the transition to socialism. In the not too distant past, in Chile (1970-1973 and in Jamaica (1972-1980) efforts were made to induce private capital to cooperate in the economic development of the country. In both cases, capital responded by fleeing the country, running down plant and equipment, and working in tandem with international capital and the imperial state in destabilizing the regime and eroding the popular base of the democratic-socialist regime. Subsequent to the downfall of the socialist regime, the capitalist forces have effectively established themselves as the sole interests shaping governmental policy.

More recently, we can observe the efforts by the Nicaraguan government to fashion a coalition of public and private capital aimed at reactivating the economy. While in the initial months the capitalist spoke of a commitment to national development, as the revolutionary process unfolded through the rapid growth of mass organizations, the bourgeoisie began to disinvest and

to run down production. The inevitable result of the failure of private investment has been the growth of the state sector — the capitalist have engaged in a self-fulfilling prophecy: creating the very conditions which they claimed to have sought to avoid. Rather than cooperate with the revolution in developing production and profits, the private sector chooses to join with imperial state induced counter-revolution to overthrow the regime, even at the loss of the enterprise.

It is clear from the above that the attempt to develop a socialist strategy that incorporates private capital results in a very unstable equilibrium. The efforts to provide guarantees of economic profits, state loans and export incentives to capital does not satisfy their demands. Rather, the fundamental issue that is posed by capital is not economic (profits and loans), but political control over the state and development of the social conflicts that alter the political balance of power in the state. In this context, capital is more likely to prefer to lose money in order to gain political power. In this context, if the left pursues a policy of sharing political power in order to obtain economic cooperation, it runs the risks of losing political control without securing any substantial increase in economic production.

The behaviour of the private sector, its overt political concern, cannot be separated from an analysis of the international political-economic context in which it operates. The presence of the U. S. imperial state provides political subsidies to cushion economic losses and alternative sites for investors to relocate their operations. Thus the willingness of the private sector to take 'risks' internally as an adversary of the regime are balanced by its knowledge of guarantees externally.

Given this international setting and the domestic behaviour of the local capitalist class, socialist transitional

JAMES F. PETRAS served as director of the project on public administration and agrarian reform in Chile and Peru at the Pennsylvania State University. His most recent book is *'Class, State and Power in the Third World'* (Zed Press). His other books are:-

- ** *'Critical Perspectives on imperialism and Social Class in the Third World'*
- ** *'U.S. and Chile: imperialism and the Overthrow of Allende'* (co-author)
- ** *'The Nationalization of Venezuelan Oil'* (co-author)
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- ** *'Latin America: Reform or Revolution'* (co-editor)

A frequent contributor to *Monthly Review* and *New Left Review*, and contributing editor, together with A. G. Frank, of the Chilean MIR Journal *'Punto Final'*, he has been professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton since 1972. Prof. Petras wrote this article exclusively for the *'Lanka Guardian'*.

strategies cannot count on capitalists cooperation without seriously jeopardizing the very process itself. Dislocation occurs from both ends of the policy spectrum, when capital is expropriated and when capital is 'incorporated'. The notion that somehow 'incorporation' of capital into a prolonged transition will avoid ruptures in the productive process fails to accord with recent historical experiences. Successful socialist transition involves the creation of the political organization (of the worker and peasants) to confront inevitable dislocations — and to sustain the

regime during the restructuring of the economy.

Marx envisioned socialism growing out of contradiction between forces and relations of production — transforming social relations and building from the productive forces generalized by capital. Recent experiences of capitalist development in Vietnam and Nicaragua suggest a different historical outcome. Productive forces were developed and class antagonisms did emerge: however, as the class struggle approached the stage of a revolutionary upheaval, the capitalist class began to transfer its capital and to destroy the productive forces. The problem of socialist transition in the Third World is not only the “underdevelopment” but, more importantly, the destruction and pillage of the productive forces. Moreover, the growth of an international division of labour, alternative trade networks and multiple overlapping production centers means that after Third World revolutions, international capitalists can disrupt the circulation as well as production of goods as part of the continuing class struggle. Thus if mines are expropriated by a revolutionary regime, the multinational corporations increase production elsewhere and closes off marketing outlets. The same strategy can affect export industries. The tourist industry is similarly vulnerable: the hotels and other local facilities are dependent on a network of tourist agents, transportation networks and exporters of specialized goods to bring in the tourists. The expropriated local facilities can become hostage of the large networks.

In the recent period in Vietnam and Nicaragua we have an example of capital, faced with political defeat, massively destroying the productive forces (lives and property) and pillaging the economy (Somoza transferring hundreds of millions, leaving behind substantial debts, etc.). Rather than see socialism growing out of the economic development of capitalism and building on the productive forces already created, recent history teaches us that capitalist development leads to an intensified class struggle in which capital destroys the productive forces, leaving the revolutionary regime with the task of rebuilding the productive forces. Without the advantages of

socializing the existing productive forces and building upward toward newer and higher standards of living — the need to rebuild means that for a given historical period the standard of living of segments of the labour force may actually be lower than that reached at the highest point under the previous regime. We can reformulate Marx's law of capitalist development to include the effects of the class struggle: under conditions of increasing conflict, capital's historic role is to destroy the productive forces. The general regression of the level of the productive forces imposes a new set of conditions on the revolutionary regime in its effort to promote the transition to socialism: it must reactivate the productive forces (incorporate unemployed labour and reconstruct physical plants and factories, farm equipment, etc.) and sustain the loyalty of those segments of the labour force with a standard of living reflecting the conditions of production prior to capital's destruction of the productive forces. The problem is, in first instance, political and ideological: those skilled workers engaged in operating productive facilities, whose social existence and social consciousness was shaped by the previous level of productive forces must become aware of the uneven (destructive) impact of the revolutionary struggle on the productive forces: the burnt out factories and the need to rebuild them are integral parts of the social reality that defines revolutionary consciousness. The latter includes the totality of social reality — the historic role of capital in destroying productive forces, the uneven impact of the class struggle on the emergence of productive forces in post-revolutionary society and the paramount needs to reconstruct the working class through the reconstruction of productive forces.

In many ways, Marx exaggerated the simplicity of the production process, underestimated the ideological hold of capital over skilled/technical workers and failed to take account of the degree to which knowledge over the whole productive process was separated from individual workers. These factors have serious political consequences in the transition period. Displacing non-revolutionary technicians causes losses in

production which, in turn, has repercussions in socio-political organizations: scarcity breeds authoritarianism. Despite the flight of some trained personnel in Nicaragua, the Sandanistas' effort to maintain production and retain non-revolutionary personnel while gradually increasing the political consciousness of the country has been generally successful — even as it is fraught with tensions between revolutionaries and technicians.

The revolutionary leadership in Nicaragua is acutely aware of the importance of maintaining the skilled labour force in the country to sustain production. The managers and technicians, however, were reared and trained under capitalism — accepting its production methods, conception of the class structure and its ideology. The revolutionary forces are vulnerable because they lack “red-experts” and thus must modify programs to accommodate necessities. Thus while social equality is a consequential concern among the leaders, they are afraid that extreme measures would cause a wholesale flight of trained personnel. Hence, the reduction of salary/wage differentials in the public sector has been very gradual.

In Vietnam and Nicaragua, organs of popular power were first and foremost manifest in the military struggle to destroy the dictatorial. During the political military stage, all mass organizations were subordinated to the immediate task of carrying through the combined guerrilla and mass struggle to its victorious conclusion. The mass organization's primary function was to support and sustain the armed struggle; the fight against dictatorial regime was at the same time the affirmation of the right to political representation. The central feature of the popular organizations in the immediate post-revolutionary period continue to be the preoccupation with military-police tasks — to defend the revolution from counter-revolution forces. Equally important, the destruction of the forces of production — and the massive unemployment which resulted — have focussed mass organizations on the task of economic reconstruction, and the tasks of production. Within the boundaries set by these

(Continued on page 10)

Hundred years after Marx

N. Sanmugathan

It is hundred years since the death of Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism and great teacher of the international proletariat. In his speech at the grave-side of Marx, his life-long friend, collaborator and comrade, Frederick Engels paid him the following high tribute: "On the 14th of March, at quarter to three in the afternoon, the **greatest living thinker** ceased to think." There can be no doubt that Marx was one of the greatest intellectuals to have been born in this world and whose thinking has profoundly affected the destinies of a great part of the world's population.

It is a herculean task to attempt to summarise in a short article the thoughts of Marx. But there is no better way to commemorate his death centenary than by making an attempt.

There are two discoveries with which Marx's name is most associated. One is the law of development of human history or the materialist conception of history. The other is the law of motion governing the capitalist mode of production or the theory of surplus value.

As Engels comments, "Two such discoveries would be enough for a lifetime. Happy the man to whom it is granted to make even one such discovery." But Marx investigated many other fields and made independent discoveries in each one of them.

Marx's philosophy is known as **dialectical materialism**. Neither materialism nor the dialectical concept was discovered by Marx. But his unique contribution was to rescue materialism from metaphysics and dialectics from idealism and to wed the two together to found the completely new philosophy of dialectical materialism.

According to Marx, society was forever changing, never static; and these changes take place on the basis of class struggles, the contradictions that exist inside society itself. Primitive communal society

gave place to slave society and then to feudalism and capitalism and now to socialism. Capitalism, and the exploitation accompanying it, is not, therefore, permanent. Socialism and then Communism is inevitable.

This is completely contrary to the metaphysical, biblical concept of "the rich man in his castle, the poor man at the gate."

In the opening words of the famous Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels state, "The History of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, Lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

It was Marx who discovered the simple fact "that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion etc; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given epoch from the foundation upon which state institutions, the legal conceptions, art and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must therefore be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case! (Engels).

According to Marx, "The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. **It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.**" Each society and man's relations of production i. e. how they organise themselves for production (either as master and servant or as equals) corresponds to a de-

finite stage of the development of their material forces of production, which change and develop, depending on the development of the productive forces.

As the productive forces developed from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow and then to metal tools and the introduction of the blacksmith's bellows and the development of handicraft industry and subsequently manufacture, then the transition to machines and largescale industry, so in relation to these developments, society also advanced from primitive communal society to slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism.

"At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production.....

Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed". (Lenin)

Such is the application of dialectical materialism to the study of history. It is known as historical materialism.

But, of course. Marx is better known for his economic doctrine, enshrined in his monumental epic, "Capital". By then, political economists had come to the conclusion that labour was the source of all wealth and value. This was known as Labour Theory of Value, according to which the value of a commodity was equivalent to the socially necessary labour power embodied in its production.

Basing himself on this proposition, Marx went on to investigate what happens when the capitalist buys the workers labour power which, under capitalism, enters the labour market, **for the first time**, as a commodity. Having nothing but his labour power, the workman could survive only by selling it.

What is the value of the workers' labour power? It is equivalent to the quantity of labour embodied in

the quantity of means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of this labour power during a day, month or year i. e. what it costs a worker to eat, dress, live and maintain a family. But what was the equivalent of the new value created by the workers' labour power when it was put to work, after being bought. Is it equal to the value of the workers' labour power i. e. his wage? A thousand times No! In fact there is no relation whatever between the value of the workers' labour power and the new value created by this labour power. The latter is infinitely more. For example, the value of the green leaf brought in by a Tea-plucker for a day is very much more than the value of that worker's labour power for a day i. e. her daily wage.

The difference between the value of labour power and the value created by labour power was described as surplus value by Marx. This is the source of all profit, the secret of capitalist exploitation. As Marx explained it, whenever a worker engaged in production, he worked part of the time for himself. Marx called this necessary labour and the value generated by that labour as necessary value which was the equivalent of his wage. For the rest of the working day, the worker worked for the capitalist who had bought his labour power. Marx called it surplus labour and the value generated by it as surplus value.

As Lenin put it, the theory of surplus value is the corner stone of Marxist economics. It is "the special law of motion governing the present day capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois society that this mode of production had produced." It is in the pursuit of more and more surplus value that capitalism grew and developed.

But immediately, one important question arises. What enables the capitalist to steal the worker's surplus value? It is the fact that the capitalist owns the means of production, the land, the factories, plantations, mines etc. That and nothing else. The capitalist did not come into this world with the means of production. How they came to acquire them — mainly through robbery and plunder — is explained by

Marx in his section on primitive capitalist accumulation.

Therefore, so long as the workers struggle for greater share of the value he creates is confined within the existing economic structure, it would reduce itself to a reformist ding-dong battle between labour and capital. It would even end by helping to perpetuate the existing system. That was why the working class, as Marx pointed out, should not be exclusively absorbed in the unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of Capital (i. e. the trade union struggle) but should, through political education of the workers through these struggles, transform the economic struggle into a political struggle for the abolition of the wages system itself i. e. fight for socialism.

Equally clearly, Marx has explained that, in this unequal fight between Capital and Labour, the capitalists have at their command a highly organised machinery of the state (mainly the armed forces) to act as their watch dog. The state is the instrument by which one class oppresses another, said Marx. Without smashing by force this state machinery i. e. without a revolution, the workers could not march to socialism. Force, Marx said, is the mid-wife of every old society pregnant with the new.

But Marx was not an empty theoretician. He was a practical revolutionary and took an active part in the revolutionary movement of the Europe of his day. In February 1848, Marx co-authored with Engels the famous Communist Manifesto at the request of the Communist League. In September 28, 1864 was formed the International Working Men's Association now famous as the First International. Marx was the heart and soul of this organisation. Under his leadership, the First International carried on intense propaganda for the dissemination of the ideas of scientific socialism all over Europe and North America. Many of his famous works, such as "Civil War in France" and "Value, Price and Profit" are really Marx's addresses to the General Council of the International.

Engels ended his peroration at the side of Marx's grave with the

words. "His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work"! That prophesy has been more than fulfilled.

Marxism. . . (Cont. from page 8)

over-riding conditions (production for reconstruction and defence against counter-revolution), the issue of popular representation is found in the defence and productive units — the militias, neighborhood committees, state farms and factories, etc. Mass participation and initiative plays an important role in mobilizing resources, implementing plans and sustaining the regime. The crucial relation here is the relationship between the state and the mass organization, the degree of autonomy that exists between the two. The egalitarian-collectivist policies pursued by the revolutionary regime based on the mass organs reflects the representative character of the political system.

A representative system, however, need not be a democratic one. The degree to which the political institutions are built on procedures and safe-guards that guarantee to the working class and peasantry legislative and executive power over the productive system defines a working class democracy. The crucial distinction between a popular representative government and a workers' and peasants' democracy is found in the issue of workers' and peasants' control: the capacity of workers and peasants to criticize and elect their leaders through their own organizations; the ability of workers to form their own parties and through legislative and executive organs to decide on the development path.

In the early phases of the revolution — in which all efforts have been concentrated on the most immediate tasks of survival legislative and executive power has tended to be concentrated at the top. The mass organizations which have incorporated hundreds of thousands into political, social and economic activity here, of necessity, developed close relations with the state. The problem is to continue the necessary collaboration between mass organization and the state and at the same time maintaining a viable and autonomous political life within the organizations that allow the producers to play an independent role in governing society.

MARX ON ASIA

Hector Abhayavardhana

"The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarians' nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i. e. to become bourgeois themselves. In one word it creates a world after its own image."

IN THESE WORDS of the "Communist Manifesto", published in pamphlet form in London in February 1848, Karl Marx and his collaborator, Friedrich Engels, set out their evaluation of the all-conquering role of the newly-arisen capitalist class of Europe. Cheap European commodities would penetrate into every corner of the globe and unify all parts of it in a single world market. At the same time all countries would be compelled to adopt the capitalist mode of production and thus become capitalist themselves.

Marx had no misconceptions about what would be the result of the extension of capitalist rule into the countries outside Europe and North America. "All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people (of India) . . .", he wrote in a newspaper article of July 1853. "The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether". He therefore contended that Britain had

a "double mission" to fulfil in India: "one destructive, the other regenerating — the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia."

There has been considerable controversy about Marx's concept of "Asiatic society". Some contend that Marx did not attach precise meaning to the term and barely used it in his later writing. Others look on it as a term which gave to social evolution a definite stage before the development of class divisions. **The evidence seems to be that Marx held to the concept to the end of his life.** But he did not regard it as some kind of inescapable stage of graduation through which the people of non-European countries had to pass. Inasmuch as all his social and economic thinking was prompted by his analysis of the society of nineteenth-century Europe, in which he lived, the "Asiatic mode of production" was no more than a geographical description of an obviously different historical product.

Marx never subscribed to a four-stage or five-stage scheme, according to which some Marxists say, all human societies had to evolve primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, communism. His study of European history and economy was with a view to tracing how capitalism evolved from feudalism that still obtained in nineteenth century Europe. It was clear that in some parts of Europe at least, slavery and a primitive communal order had preceded feudalism. In India, China, Egypt and some Islamic countries it was clear that there had been neither repetition nor anticipation of European history. Moreover Marx was not concerned with digging out the secrets of the ancient past in Asia. His preoccupation was with the society that existed in the Asian countries contemporarily with him. He pointed to the chief characteristics of these societies as being distinguishable

from those of European societies, viz. :—

1. The absence of private property in land;
2. the indestructible cohesiveness of the village community;
3. the domestic union of agricultural and industrial pursuits;
4. large-scale public works, especially irrigation projects, under central authority;
5. hypertrophy of the state as a result of its extensive social role, based on the concentration of a large part of the social surplus product in its hands;
6. limited development of towns and their subordination both to agriculture and the central authority.

It is true that Marx referred to these Asiatic societies as "barbarian" both in the "Communist Manifesto" and in his newspaper articles in the eighteen-fifties. But that does not signify that Marx regarded them as truly primitive. "It is undeniable that under the Ming dynasty China experienced — like India at the height of the Mogul period — an expansion of luxury production and private trade that brought the country to the threshold of manufacturing and commercial capitalism." (Ernest Mandel) There were even identifiable classes: peasants, public functionaries, landowners (with illegally appropriated land) urban craftsmen, merchants, bankers etc., some of them enormously rich. "What determines the specific position of these classes in the Asiatic mode of production, however, is that confronted with the hypertrophy of the state authority, they can never acquire the **social and political power** which, in other countries, gives rise first to feudalism and then to modern capitalism." (Mandel) Thus one could speak of a "ruling class" under this Asiatic mode of production only in the sense of a class that appropriated the social surplus product.

Marx's reference to the unchanging nature of the Asiatic mode of production derives from the evidence that, while primitive accumulation had taken place on an enormous scale in countries like India and China, no corresponding accumulation of capital was possible in the sense of accessibility to free labour. Society was principally confined to the production of use values and to the communal ownership of land and to subsistence production. There were towns like Dacca with 150,000 inhabitants engaged in textile production. But they were extremely few and well contained by dominant agriculture and the all-powerful state. Thus India's "social condition has remained unaltered since its remotest antiquity, until the first decennium of the 19th century" Marx said. In regard to China, he said that it was "a gratifying fact that the bales of calico of the English bourgeoisie have in eight years brought the oldest and most imperturbable empire on earth to the threshold of a social upheaval."

If this was the "destructive" side of the "mission" of the European

capitalist class in relation to the Asiatic mode of production, its "regenerating" side had as yet to make itself felt. In an earlier article than that of July 1853 which we have quoted from, Marx had declared: "England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstitution yet appearing." His expectation that "the material foundations of Western society" would be laid was qualified, in the course of the same article, with the comment that "the work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins." But, he admitted the country had been politically unified to a greater degree than under the Moguls. This would be further strengthened by the new native army, the electric telegraph a free press, the new land system based on two distinct forms of private property, a new intelligentsia and the introduction of steam power.

More important, a section of the British ruling class had realised that if the Indian economy was revived with the help of investment on irrigation and railways, that would

be of great benefit to Britain. Out of the development of the railway system would grow the application of machinery to other industries.

Thus it would appear that Marx anticipated a considerable modernisation of India on the basis of the consolidation of the state, the unification of the market and the development of communications and infrastructure. He even thought that industry, rising out of the railway system, would dissolve the system of castes, "those decisive impediments to Indian progress and Indian power." All this would take place despite the real intentions of the British rulers.

Marx's interest in India, however did not go beyond the general relationship of Asiatic society to European capitalism. His notes on Indian history began with the death of Mohammed in 632 AD and ended with the incorporation of India in the British Empire on August 2, 1858. He had little respite from his main work on "Capital" to devote to examining the colonial economy or the problem of under-development.

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MARX AS A PERSON

Prof. Heinrich Gemkow

“I have come here from the centre of Germany to express my love and gratitude to my unforgettable teacher and faithful friend. To my faithful friend! Karl Marx’ oldest friend and comrade (Friedrich Engels—H. Gemkow) has just called him the most hated man of this century. Admittedly, he was the most hated but also the most loved person—most hated by the oppressors and exploiters of the people and most loved by the oppressed and down-trodden, as far as they were aware of their situation. The oppressed and exploited people do love him because he loved them. For the person whose death we are mourning had great love as well as great hatred. His hatred had sprung from love. He was a great heart, just as he was a great mind. And everybody acquainted to him knows that”.¹

It was Wilhelm Liebknecht who spoke these words at Karl Marx’ graveside on 17 March 1883. Warm friendship, not always free of conflict though, had linked him with Marx for over 30 years, and for a long time he had been a frequent guest at his house.

Friedrich Engels had spoken briefly before Liebknecht, giving a penetratingly scientific and at the same moving account of Marx’ person that we are more than justified in counting among the classic biographic documents about Karl Marx. Liebknecht delivered his homage with all due brevity, although my opening quote is no more than an extract, yet he managed to paint a deeply impressive portrait of Marx as a teacher and friend, a scientist and revolutionary, party leader and internationalist. In the dozens of condolence letters which arrived at the house of mourning, in hundreds of obituaries and similar articles in the international workers’ press

one finds time and again passages describing the various character traits of the dead man, his militant nature—in a word, his personality—and this all the more so if the authors had known Karl Marx personally.²

It is impossible to separate a work from its creators, and it is certainly impossible to separate Marxism from Marx and vice versa. Marx’ works reveal his character. We should not forget, however, that Karl Marx—and likewise Friedrich Engels and the comrades of both—were the first socialist personalities in world history, who can and do serve as a model in present-day education and self-education, even though in their days the world was still an exclusively capitalist one.

We absolutely do not want to overrate them or turn them into bloodless idols, something of which anti-Marxist opinion-makers have been trying to accuse for many years. “The leaders of the working class are not angels, saints or heroes, but people like anyone else,”³ wrote Lenin in 1912. What makes Marx great is his humanity. Idealized heroic figures may at most arouse cool respect but certainly not the wish to emulate them. However, that is what we want to do as far as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels are concerned.

If ever a person has lived up to the saying that genius means above all diligence, then Karl Marx is a good example. He continued learning throughout his life. When he came to Berlin at the age of 18 to continue his studies, he was determined to work out a foolproof, that is, scientifically proven world outlook, and enthusiastically launched himself into an encounter with the scholarly treasures of his age.

He did not read with uncritical acquiescence, but tried to draw his own conclusions. His critical approach was not confined to the authors he read but also included

himself. He discovered repeatedly that his ideas were leading in the wrong direction and did not furnish answers to his questions. Then he would adamantly drop them and start searching anew.

He did not, as one might expect, bury himself in books. He sought communication, even dispute, with like-minded people. He joined a group of Young Hegelians known as the Berlin Doctors, and looked with them for ways and means of breaking the intellectual predominance of feudalism. Although not yet a communist, but rather a bourgeois democrat, he betrayed in his younger years one characteristic of the fighter for progress by searching out the knowledge he needed to achieve his goal.

What is impressive about the young Marx is the wide range of his interests and studies. He dealt with law and philosophy, history and literature. As a matter of course he devoted time to contemporary belles lettres, theatre and fine art. In fact, his interests were so multifarious that in the correspondence with his father he discusses whether he might have a future as a writer. His first publication was a result of these deliberations: not a legal essay or a philosophical study but two poems, the ballad *Der Spielmann* (The minstrel) and the romance *Nachtliebe* (Nocturnal love), which were both published in *Athenaum* in 1841.

Marx preserved this thirst for knowledge until his old age. His works would be unthinkable without it. Visitors and friends, occasionally even his opponents, describe in their narratives, letters and memoirs, often with admiration, sometimes even with bewilderment, the persistence displayed by the later editor-in-chief of *Die Naue Rheinische Zeitung* and author of *Capital*, who worked incessantly to widen his already immense knowledge. Paul Lafargue described Marx’ universal education

(Prof Gemkow is Assistant Director of the Institute for Marxism-Leninism with the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR)

and splendid memory in a very metaphorical way by saying that his brain resembled a warship in the harbour having its steam up: he was always at the ready to pull out into all directions of thought.⁴

The demands he made on himself, he made on his students and comrades too. Years later Wilhelm Liebknecht thought back to the London exile, remembering Marx' relentless insistence to learn and learn. "This was the categoric imperative he shouted at us often enough, which was inherent in his own doing, which indeed, became apparent by the mere sight of the this constantly and tremendously active mind."⁵

Marx' example was contagious. His students and like-minded comrades, most of whom were workers and intellectuals driven out of Germany, used each and every minute left to them after toiling for their bread to study. They were small in number, but among them were people who were to give much to the German and international workers' movement in the years which followed.

However, Marx never considered knowledge and its acquisition to be an end in itself. It was one of his principles that science should never become an egoistic pleasure. **Those who were lucky enough to devote themselves to scholarly work should be the first to place their knowledge in the service of mankind.**⁶

Marx approached every new field of knowledge and every social phenomenon from a proletarian class position. He regarded scientific objectivity at all times as a condition and element of adopting the revolutionary cause.

'Working for the world'

This last principle draws our attention to another quality of Marx' character — his deep humanism which developed with logical consistency from the bourgeois humanism of the undergraduate and young philosopher into the socialist humanism which accompanied his materialism and communism. **It is well known that the seventeen-year-old wrote an exam essay in**

which he expressed the wish to choose a "position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind..."⁷ Quite understandably this idea was still articulated in a very vague way and influenced by the prevailing spirit of enlightenment and bourgeois humanism. While many of his contemporaries clung to this position or even gave it up under the pressure of feudal reaction, the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* recognized the historic mission of the working class and all its implications, and advanced consistently along his path.

One frequently hears the question: why did Marx and Engels give up their secure future as sons of the middle class and became communists and revolutionaries? This question concerns the very essence of Marx' personal development. It points to the one feature most characteristic of Marx — the unity of knowledge and action, of theory and practice.

At 25, he formulated the demand that the future world should **"overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being."**⁸ When as a result of intensive studies and personal meetings with class-conscious workers in Paris he arrived at the realization that humanity could only solve this task through the proletariat, a class which "is forced by its immediate condition, by material necessity, by its very chains"⁹ into doing so, he did not hesitate to adopt an unambiguous position on the side of the working class, a communist stance, and he started systematically working out the theoretical foundations of communism.

This son of a middle-class family was obliged to display strong-mindedness, selflessness and revolutionary boldness, because as far as his bourgeois origin was concerned he had burned his boats. He had to renounce plans for the future and break with a number of friends, even relatives. Jenny, too, was called upon to share his determination and not shy away from any sacrifices in the struggle against exploitation and oppression. What was characteristic of Marx, and still

holds true for every genuine revolutionary, is the uncompromising decision to stand fully by what one has realized is right, to turn one's ideas into certain knowledge and thence into action.

However, as the years to follow made clear, the renunciation and break were just one side of the coin. **Throwing in their lot with the working class gained Karl and Jenny a great number of like-minded comrades, who proved their worth as reliable and faithful friends in times of poverty and danger.** Friedrich Engels was not the only one, although he was the closest and most faithful among these people, and there is no doubt that the friendship would never have blossomed had it not been for the newly acquired philosophical and political positions which they shared.

And then there was something else which was stronger than all the day-by-day austerity, something which enriched Marx' character more than he could ever have expected and helped him to mature, and that was the awareness of being in the camp of humanity, of the future and of communism — of the working people, in fact — in the conflict between justice and injustice, between freedom and oppression, progress and reaction. **Marx once called it quite simply "working for the world"**¹⁰ **and on another occasion he phrased it in a very straightforward way: "If one choose to be an ox, one could of course turn one's back on the sufferings of mankind and look after one's own skin"**¹¹

Karl Marx asked himself time and again about the sense of his life and the mission which he had chosen for himself. Although he was restrained in discussing his own feelings, this becomes evident from some passages in letters he wrote. Almost 50 years old, he admitted to young Paul Lafargue, soon to become his son-in-law, that if he had his life all over again, he would do the same as before.¹² The respected and celebrated leader of the International Working Men's Association declared at a meeting held in

Amsterdam in September 1872: "As far as I am concerned, I shall continue my effort, and shall work steadily to establish for the future this fruitful solidarity among all working people. I am not withdrawing from the International at all, and the rest of my life will be devoted, as have been my past efforts, to the triumph of the social ideas which some day — you may rest assured of it — will lead to the world-wide victory of the proletariat." ¹³

No peace with the ruling classes

A quality typical of Marx as a person was his unconditional loyalty to the working class and its party. There is no doubt that Marx might have been a famous university professor, a celebrated bourgeois writer or a highly remunerated public servant, what with his talent, with his knowledge, his energy and stylistic flair — if he had made his peace with the ruling exploiting classes, if he had betrayed his convictions and let the proletariat down.

The powers of the day were perfectly familiar with Marx genius. For two decades they tried to bribe and woo him. But it was out of the question for Marx to sell himself, even though he was persecuted by the merciless hatred of his enemies and depressed by the poverty of his family.

When Marx had been married for hardly four months, and most happily at that, he and Jenny had to leave his home country and go into exile to Paris. Only once after that, during the 1848/49 Revolution, were they able to settle in Prussia. But one year later they had to retreat once again before the reactionaries. Almost 20 years of unutterable poverty began for the family during their exile in London. Jenny gave birth to seven children. She had to bury four of them. For a long time the family of eight, which included Lenchen Demuth and sometimes her sister, had to live in two small, dark rooms in Soho, one of London's slum quarters. In these conditions Marx started the preliminary work for *Capital*. The correspondence between Marx and Engels is full of innumerable exam-

ples testifying to the sacrifices Karl Marx made for the working class, to his day-to-day heroism, which perhaps was sometimes harder than heroism on the barricades.

Marx' strong character was apparent not only in times of successful struggle and advance by the proletarian movement. The real test came during the set-backs and defeats. When the Paris Commune was drowned in a blood-bath in 1871, when hundreds upon hundreds of persecuted communards streamed into London, Marx set an example with his own response, showing how a revolutionary can stick to his colours even in this kind of situation. He would not let himself be shaken by the demagoguery, inflammatory propaganda and terror unleashed by the international counter-revolution. His voice rang out with all the more courage as he took the part of "Parisians, storming heaven" ¹⁴.

His work "The Civil War in France" is not simply an analysis of the commune: it is at the same time a passionate indictment of reaction and an ardent defence of the downtrodden, butchered proletariat. Just how correct Marx was is not losing his spirit and the optimistic belief that no terror or temporary defeat can prevent the ultimate victory of the working class is confirmed today by the reality of socialism and the existence of the world communist movement.

Fighting was his element

After paying due tribute to Marx' trail-blazing scholarly achievements, Friedrich Engels carried on at the graveside of Karl Marx to comment: "Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat... **Fighting was his element.**" ¹⁵

These were the words which Engels used to describe the basic essence of Marx' character. Marx, too, saw himself in these terms. The "Professions", which have been published very often, include Marx' favourite maxim, "Nihil humani a me alienum puto",

or "Nothing human is alien to me". Somewhat unfairly, this is quoted far more frequently than all the other answers he gave to his daughter's questions. One was about his idea of happiness, and he answered: Fighting. ¹⁶

Marx was always in the front line when it came to taking issue with the class enemy, be it in the dock of a bourgeois court, on the platform at public meetings and workers' rallies, or on paper. By his personal conduct he taught the working class a lesson which has maintained its validity up to the present day, that is, that a communist must never judge the policy of his open or convert enemies only by their words, promises and declarations, pleasant and tempting as they might sound, but above all by their deeds and actions.

Marx and Engels were both "general staff officers" ¹⁷ as well as "soldiers" of the revolution. The leading strategist of the international proletarian movement was well acquainted with the everyday duties of a party member and fulfilled them as a matter of course, as he expected his comrades to do.

One need only to read the minutes of the general council meetings of the International Working Men's Association to see that Marx would one minute be explaining complicated theoretical problems to his partners, and the next minute accept apparently simple jobs such as collecting money or political campaigning amongst British trade unionists.

While writing the famous general council address on "The Civil War in France" and defending the organization against all attacks launched by declared counter-revolutionaries as well as the well-disguised opportunists he was rushing about London to find passports for escaped communards board and food for homeless and starving refugees, and a couple of shillings for them to continue their journey. And for dozens and, as time went on, hundreds of penniless and persecuted comrades who were seeking advice, Marx' house offered shelter in spite of the poverty the family itself had to suffer. Karl and Jenny knew from their own experience how decisive proletarian solidarity was, especially in such situations. And they never forgot that great political success required

a lot of everyday routine political work.

Literature, Art, Culture

Everybody who delves into Marx' biography and work will be stunned at the extraordinary variety of his interests and the versatility of his personality. Marx regarded general and specialist knowledge as an inseparable unity and acted accordingly. Over decades while working primarily on the proletarian political economy, he not only devoted his attention to developments in other branches of science, but was himself creative in the fields of historiography, diplomatic history and mathematics. All through his life he worked on his knowledge of foreign languages. He used to say that a foreign language was a weapon in the struggle of life¹⁸ and demonstrated to his students the value of knowing foreign languages for communication between the various national departments of the international working class.

Through out his life Karl Marx dedicated an intense interest to belletristic literature, with Jenny and their three daughters following his example. **However, Marx did not regard this literature as a mere fountain of knowledge, a yardstick for his materialistic view of history, as some bourgeois Marx "experts" try to make believe; to no lesser extent he saw them as an inexhaustible source of pleasure, pleasure in the beauty of life, the creative power of humanity. Marx showed that constant encounters with literature and art are not just part of general education, but must be seen as an activity characteristic of a creative socialist personality.**

It was part of the cultural atmosphere of Marx' home that the daughters did drawing and painting, made music, took part in amateur dramatics, indulged in sports and went on long walks with their parents. **Wilhelm Liebknecht's reminiscences made famous the excursions to Hampstead Heath on Sunday.** Marx implanted his own love of nature and the beauties it offers into his children. As soon as the cramped housing conditions had improved a little Marx' daughters

started to take care of birds and hedgehogs, dogs and cats. So anyone familiar with the correspondence between Marx and Engels knows that the well-being of these pets were a frequent subject of the "Moor's" and the "General's" letters.

Marx and Engels: Socialist team-work

Marx' life work is unthinkable without Friedrich Engels' cooperation and in the same way one cannot separate the personality of the one from the other. It was an alliance of friendship that passed even the hardest tests and without which neither Marx nor Engels would have been able to achieve what they did for the liberation of the working class. Marx and Engels did not like pompous words. They hated empty talk and false emotionalism. On just one of the darkest hours of his life after the death of his beloved son Edgar in April 1855, Marx poured his heart out to his friend. He wrote that in all the terrible agony he was going through, the thought of Engels and his friendship had kept him going, along with the "hope that together they still wanted to create something reasonable in the world."²⁰

Not only did Engels ensure or at least help to ensure the material existence of the Marx family for many years, of no lesser importance was the spiritual affinity and comradeship between the two friends that proved itself almost daily. Even when they were separated for a long time, they adhered to essential methods of cooperation which nowadays we would call socialist team-work.

Their friendship helped them a lot to keep their courage even in the face of extremity and persecution. However hard life was to them, however infamously the bourgeois press slandered them, and however deeply they were disappointed by certain renegades, Marx and Engels never lost their humour and optimism. The main-spring of their humour was the belief in the future so typical of proletarian revolutionaries, the invigorating consciousness of belonging to history's victors.

For some years now bourgeois writers have been fabricating large numbers of Marx biographies, long passages of which remind us of reports by the Prussian police spies of the time. Not only do they grossly falsify Marx' theories, but they stamp him as a cold-hearted, mistrustful egoist and bogeyman par excellence who was at odds with himself and the world and, of course, with all his temporary friends. They hope that by this kind of defamation of Marx' person it might be possible to "refute" Marxism as well.

Long ago, Marx' contemporaries ridiculed this infamous and tasteless method used by the "Marx-is-dead" theorists of those days. Now, in the era of the mass media and large-scale anti-communist opinion-making campaigns organized by the monopolies, ridicule is not enough. The point is to draw on the wealth of reconstructed source material and the large number of Marx biographies written by Marxist authors, from Franz Mehring up to the present, and combine an understanding of the theoretical works left behind by these great men with an authentic study of their personality—not to serve simple historical interests, but, in the first place, to learn from them as we develop and strengthen our own personalities.

Lenin put it in the following words: "I am still 'in love' with Marx and Engels and cannot put up quietly with any sort of vituperations directed against them. They are true human beings! And one has to learn from them."²⁰

REFERENCES

1. Cf. Wilhelm Liebknecht zitiert nach: Friedrich Engels. Das Begräbnis von Karl Marx, Marx/Engels, Werke, Dietz Verlag, vol. 19. p. 338
2. Some of the condolence letters and obituaries will be published, most of them for the first time or for the first time after 100 years, in the volume of documents "Ihre Namen leben durch die Jahrhunderte fort. Kondolenz und Nekrologie zum Tode von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels", Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1983; a selection in: Heinrich Gemkow, "Vom Highgate-Friedhof zum Marx-Engels-Platz. Marx-Engels-Jubiläum im Spiegel eines Jahrhunderts", Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1983.

(Continued on page 24)

KAILASAPATHY

R. S. Perinbanayagam

(Hunter College of the City University of New York)

A life so full of achievement as Kailasapathy's was not without its critics. Once when one of his critics made a particularly petty observation I was moved to remark "He is the only genius we have in Tamil studies." My friend demurred at genius, but was willing to concede "He thinks a lot, and reads a lot", about Kailasapathy.

It was not given to him to complete a full span of life, but within the short time allotted to him, he was not only a creative thinker and writer, but had a unique capacity to inspire others to write and create too. He was able to revitalise the Tamil literary culture from the moment he became editor of the *Thinakaran*, though he was ably assisted in this task by various gifted writers and critics. However, the vision of a progressive literature produced locally by the native sons and daughters and free from the silly romanticism and sentimentalism of the Tamil writers of the popular Madras journals and a critical sensibility to nourish it was his alone. In his student days at Jaffna Hindu College and Royal College, this vision began to take shape and it was clear to him that the emergence of a strong critical tradition was essential for the vision to be given reality. He began to train himself in the critical tradition of other literary cultures besides his own and inspired others to follow suit as well. In these tasks he was much ahead of his contemporaries and perhaps even of his teachers. When the opportunity came his way to put these ideas into effect, he seized it with alacrity. It was a bold venture in the late fifties and early sixties for an editor of a leading Colombo newspaper to publish work that was decidedly leftist in orientation. But boldness and the courage of his convictions were never wanting in Kailasapathy and with this gesture he launched forth a veritable literary renaissance in Tamil writing in Sri Lanka.

It is not his administrative and cultural leadership that will be

remembered in the years to come, however, considerable though his achievements in this field were. Rather, it is his own creative work that will be considered, in many ways as pathfinding ones. His early interest in the emergence of a critical tradition in Tamil eventually lead him to write one of the first books on literary criticism. I believe he also taught a course on practical criticism for a long time in both the Peradeniya and Jaffna campuses. This work is a very erudite and sensitive one and is notable for its capacity to intermarry the Tamil traditions of critical inquiry with European ones. There is no slavish imitation of the European tradition, but nonetheless a clear understanding of the work of the great George Lucas is evident. This breadth of perspective he was to bring to the tasks of reviewing and criticism that he produced too. Many writers were assessed by him in many of his articles and books and though some were no doubt hurt by his comments, they were rendered with a full sense of responsibility. Both the particular judgements that he brought to the work as well as the general standards that he upheld are likely to have a lasting impact.

The sense of an inner discipline and a sureness of touch that one finds in Kailasapathy's work comes from a philosophical commitment that he made early in life. Historical materialism has within it a capacity to inspire unrealistic utopias and convert itself into creeds and dogmas. More significantly however it has generated a certain attitude to society and social change, to rights and obligations of society to its members, and above all a freedom from cant and hypocrisy. In many many parts of the world to-day, those who have been totally or partially touched by this philosophy of history and methods of analysis are in the forefront both of literary criticism and "culture criticism". Kailasapathy's work too derives a great deal of its strength and disciplines from a commitment to historical materialism. And it could be said that historical and literary studies in South Asia were

crying to be rescued from the army of soothsayers and hosannamongers by such a discipline and commitment.

He was committed to the modern spirit of analytical examination of texts and to the emergence of new forms in writing in Tamil, but such a commitment was not achieved at the expense of knowledge and study of the classical tradition. His familiarity with ancient Tamil texts was second to none but in analyzing them in his many writings he was once again to bring not only a very modern critical sensibility, but also to demonstrate a skill at socio-historical analysis that a normal historian could well envy. The careful attention to the contemporary meaning of the texts, the measured judgement of the available evidence and an unwillingness to accept the patriotic judgement of far too many commentators in Tamil are all evident in his work. Literature was not an epiphenomenon for Kailasapathy, not certainly to be read closely for its textual integrity and left there. Nor did he hope to "save civilization" by hurting for imagery and searching for telling metaphors. Literature was an expression of the ethos of the society in which it was created and the function of the critic was to engage in ideological exposure as well in judgement of literary quality. While many of his essays could be cited here, his **Tamil Heroic Poetry** alone would suffice. It is ostensibly a work in comparative literature. Kailasapathy analyses certain ancient Tamil works here in comparison to the European (Greek, Irish, Welsh) bardic tradition and comes to a number of noteworthy conclusions. In addition, he is able to make a significant contribution to the discovery of the socio-historical circumstances under which these ancient Tamil writings were undertaken. The intimate relationship between the kings of the Tamil land and the major and minor poets of the time, the economic and social contexts in which they functioned and the particular occasions in which poets wrote/sang their compositions are all revealed here. One is able

to obtain a complete explanation of the poems themselves as well as certain features within the poems by the sociological circumstances that he describes. The cultivated exaggerations of various kings in ancient Tamil texts, their emergence as mythic figures, it turns out, were both a prosodic convention as well as the fulfilment of a contractual responsibility between the poet as a "hired-hand" and his royal patron. One can even go a step further and wonder whether the prosodic conventions themselves could have arisen in response to the sociological situation of the poet itself.

The informed and original analyses of ancient Tamil literary culture demonstrated Kailasapathy's remarkable sociological competence. It was natural that this perspective and methodology should be used in other work too. It was indeed so used in nearly all his works, but two stand out in this regard, in my opinion. One, **Adiyum Mudiym** (Foot and Head) is a fine philosophical/sociological analysis of certain Tamil religious texts and practices. The latter is a very instructive example of his methodological sophistication. The terms in the title refer to Root (Adi) and Crown or Head (Mudi) and become a ruling metaphor for the analyses of "substructures" and "superstructures". The root metaphors, so to speak, are imaginatively related to a famous Hindu myth where Vishnu and Brahma contend to discover the ultimate root and crown of Siva and conclude that Siva is both rootless and crownless. He writes, "The story of the search for head and root, whether it is fully believed or not, functions as a symbol in our society's belief system. Various confusions and shortcomings in our art and literature are the result of a belief in the idea of search for feet and heads".

It is however in his **Valvum Valipadum** (Social life and Religion Among the Ancient Tamils) that one finds his most original and thought provoking contribution to the sociology of knowledge. In the preface to this work he wrote "I have tried to show that literary ideas as well as literary forms and techniques are outgrowths of given social forms." It is not only purely literary matters that concerned him in this work,

but the larger gamut of religio-literary documents of the early Tamils. In many ways it is an exemplary analysis and if translated into English will undoubtedly obtain a very favourable response from the international sociological community. In the first chapter he traces the origins of the conceptions of god and religion among the ancient inhabitants of southern India with the aid of historical/archeological works and Tamil religio-literary texts. This is followed by chapters that very coherently interlace historical and anthropological data with the Tamil literary texts and tries to illuminate the latter.

In all of his work, Kailasapathy tries to rescue Tamil studies from the mindless chauvinism and a historical hagiography into which far too many Tamil scholars had taken it. Not for him the comfortable self-congratulations of the DMK school of writers, or the easy essays in Dravidianist hyperbole and political partisanship; rather, in the words, he used to dedicate one of his works to his former teachers, Prof. K. Kanapathipillai, he continued in his work "the traditional culture of the East with the methodology of the West" and found his metier in it.

LETTER

Lanka's Agriculture

A rather important omission (of the word 'not') has occurred in the article written by me published under the title "Lanka's Agriculture — 2 Some disturbing matters".

On page 14, the third column top paragraph reads:

"It is apparently not realised that citrus has over 15 virus and virus-like diseases, most of which have been observed in Sri Lanka,"

It should read:

"It is apparently not realised that citrus has over 15 virus and virus-like diseases, most of which have not been observed in Sri Lanka,"

The point to be stressed is that we have to prevent the introduction of diseases we do not have in this country.

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Evaluation of agricultural systems — (PAPER III)

Jerry A. Moles and James V. Riker

... Very few cultivated people have less than (say) four hundred pounds a year, and naturally they side with the rich, because they imagine that any liberty conceded to the poor is a threat to their own liberty. Foreseeing some dismal Marxian Utopia as the alternative, the educated man prefers to keep things as they are. Possibly he does not like his fellow-rich very much, but supposes that even the vulgarest of them are less inimical to his pleasures, more his kind of people than the poor, and that he had better stand by them. It is this fear of a supposedly dangerous mob that makes nearly all intelligent people conservative in their opinions. (Orwell: 107)

All too often, comparisons of similarities and differences among particular agricultural systems are too finely drawn. Such difficulties were encountered as we searched for examples to guide this work in the comparison of two agricultural heritages. Comparativists within the modern scientific community explore only the "subjects of inquiry" acceptable in their own narrowly defined disciplines. An understanding of how all of the "parts" of an agricultural system fit together into a composite whole — of how the sinew and minds of people physically, mentally, and spiritually interact with the physical and biological entities required to bring food and fiber from the Earth — has yet to be elaborated in a manner which would direct the present inquiry (see Morrison: 633). Instead, as one searches the literature, a "Tower of Babel" is encountered in which a lengthy initiation into a particular professional priesthood of science or administration is required to understand even one of the babbling tongues.

At the same time, we do find concern that current approaches are too narrow in perspective and lack a common translatable language (Gilbert, Norman, and Winch, 1980). The proponents of 'farming systems

research" (FSR) are searching for ways to define and describe "farming systems" and we admire their concern and appreciate much of their work. We do believe, however, that their direction in the pursuit of understanding the broader aspects of agriculture has yet to be made clear. As a consequence, it is difficult to judge whether or not the efforts of the FSR advocates are misdirected.

In reading the FSR literature we find a great emphasis placed upon the development of an "approach" and with the creation of definitions for the "important" components of "farming systems." What is most disheartening about their offerings is that there is little clue as to where their particular envisionment of the "reality" of agriculture is intended to lead. With some justification, the FSR planners could defend their actions with the claim that their product is the result of an early attempt at multi-disciplinary interpretation, that it takes time to create ways in which the various professional disciplines can be made to fit together, and that with additional practical experience, FSR will contribute mightily to the solution of the world's "population and food" problems. Nevertheless, in its present stage of development, FSR seems to include every imaginable aspect of agriculture with little notion as to how one might fit all the pieces together or use the approach to solve specific agricultural difficulties.

While it is not clear what the FSR envisionments of the present and future really are, we believe that unless such envisionments are made explicit, it is impossible to judge the value of the proposed approach. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how the FSR proponents will improve upon their own methods if they do not specify where their approach leads in the future. It is for this reason that we have attempted to be

as clear as possible concerning our objectives of the right to life, sustainability, equity, and creativity.

Each envisionment of the future must include at a minimum, a set of realistic directions leading towards its realization. Perhaps it will be considered by some that this is too much to be required of a conceptualization of agriculture. Nevertheless, we believe that unless a plan for the future has incorporated plans for a set of realistic actions leading to its achievement, it is little more than a cruel hoax which promises "development" but offers little more than the maintenance of poverty.

While it may seem that we are unfairly picking upon a single group — the supporters of FSR — we see them only as representing an improved level of awareness in appreciating the complexities of agricultural systems. Nonetheless, they still express the same patterns of thought which have been representative in the "agricultural policy sciences" for a number of years. They still see production as their primary concern to the exclusion of other important factors, they see the dark clouds of over-population looming immediately over the horizon, and they hope that the production of food will outrun population growth until population control can have some effect. Some FSR proponents are aware of the damage to the Earth ecologically with the increased pressure to produce more from limited resources than ever before. Yet all share a common blindness, they have no sense of history beyond the history of their own disciplines. Few if any of these people have ever witnessed a functioning low energy agriculture which is sustainable, equitable in distribution, and controlled by the will of those who tilled the soil. The writings of many contemporary writers in food and agricultural topics suggest that they view the

world as a place of anguish, of struggle, and of lost hopes. Indeed, a visit to many Third World nations is a startling confrontation with a grim reality of the consequence of poverty, the loss of self-esteem, and autonomy. The realization of poverty on a face-to-face daily basis by Westerners is often a shocking and profound experience. As a consequence, many having such experiences and, for the best altruistic sentiments, offer their time and energies to do something about the conditions they have personally encountered. Nonetheless, despite their best motives, such people, including the FSR supporters, are a part of the problem. Their solutions are based upon their experience of solutions of agricultural production which are currently practiced in developed nations and which may be very inappropriate for Third World nations.

We wish to share with you what we have glimpsed in one way or another over a period of years, a different envisionment of current and future agriculture. As this paper has carried you to this point, we have been trying to lead your mind to the conceptual vision we have come to share. To some extent, the view of agriculture we present will be controversial because of its striking differences from present forms now in vogue. We do feel, however, that what we have to offer will not be so unusual when compared to earlier forms of cultivation or from the viewpoint of traditional Eastern wisdom. Furthermore, we suspect that what we have to say will be found to have an "innate" sensibility which surpasses the widely segmented versions of agriculture created by the "professional" disciplines.

We believe that the envisionment of agriculture to be presented here carries with it a wisdom of the past which, when incorporated in today's life, can become current practicalities and sensibilities. We are also convinced that the current methodologies of science can assist us in demonstrating that such a position is valid. We stake our future actions upon our convictions. We wish to earn your respect and trust because an understanding and appreciation of true alternatives to the current directions toward more energy-intensive agriculture seems

necessary to protect ourselves as individuals and as representatives of a species

This offering is not to be viewed as an academic exercise prepared by Western trained scientists. Rather, it is a way of viewing agriculture which will hopefully lead to the solution of some major problems. For reasons we cannot fully explain, we have arrived at some similar interpretations of food and farming in the context of the modern world. What strengthens our convictions is that we came to these realizations through curiously different routes, some of which will be described later in greater detail.

At this point in our explorations, we have agreed upon the following:

1. Agricultural systems which have endured over the centuries without a major infusion of fossil fuel energy have an inbuilt wisdom and sustainability which are protective against major shifts in political climate, gradual ecological changes and natural disasters. This is true, in part, because those controlling such systems did not become dependent upon resources which they did not control.

2. Of all the resources a nation might claim, its most valuable is that of its people and the physical and biological resources which permit adequate nutrition and reasonable security from failing to meet their basic needs. We view the people and the resources upon which they are dependent as an undivisible entity because of their mutual dependency. The continual application of fossil fuels — what was at one time seen as an inexhaustible resource — was a practice based upon an illusion now known to be faulty. The use of such energy-intensive agronomic techniques has awakened the natural regenerative processes of many agricultural systems and, at the same time, our understanding of them. Thus, we cannot depend upon Nature's own wisdom as did our ancestors.

3. We must grow to appreciate our co-evolutionary relationship with our agricultural resources. As these resources have supported us as a species to this point, now must we defend and support these resources. We must re-assess our relationship with and respect for them. In saving them and some of the human knowledge that made them useful to us over the generations, we simply save ourselves.

4. But we realize that saving our resources is not enough, at the same time we must save ourselves from each other. We must learn to live together and, in order to do so, must understand one another in new and mutually intelligible ways. Communication styles must emerge which provide unambiguous information in a

straightforward manner. Mutual understanding is a necessary first step in learning to live together on a single planet upon which time and space have lost much of their previous values.

5. In order to live together, we must learn to trust one another and this is perhaps the most difficult task. It requires that everyone speaks honestly in a manner whereby actions can be shown to be the logical consequence of speech.

6. Development does not begin or end with projects but rather continues through the centuries. Development is a process and to learn about development, we have become involved in that process. Ultimately, the process of development must become the sole definition of development and, to participate in that process, we as individuals must be that process. All of this leads to the unavoidable conclusion that we are development and that the success or failure of development rests upon every individual. This remains true irrespective of how hard we try to escape through speaking for an unknown and unknowable collective "we."

7. We believe there are as many answers to agricultural problems as there are entities called agricultures. We believe that to participate in development, one must deal with specific and defined entities. To create a stable agriculture with the help of the participants in agriculture, one cannot plan in the abstract in terms of "general laws" which "predict" or suggest particular outcomes irrespective of those persons who are to become involved. Ultimately, it is at the level of the concrete that the process of development occurs. Thus, for our own purposes we must define the entity with which we plan to deal — the island nation of Sri Lanka.

8. In order to achieve development, one must have a specific set of objectives which are obvious to the subjective consciousness of the people upon whose behalf one is working. Furthermore, one must find personal gratification in being involved in development. We are subjectively pleased with our participation as a rewarding way of life because, in giving to others, we receive many and various rewards which lead to contentment. Contentment leads to a more peaceful world as more and more persons share this state of being.

9. It is our objective that Sri Lanka have a people who enjoy their right to live through a sustainable, equitable, and a learning-creative-evolving agriculture. It is against this standard that we wish to be judged.

10. As the above various points apply to agriculture, we make the following interpretations:

- (a) agricultural peoples must be respected and treated in accordance with what they do in their creation and evolution of themselves while, at the same time, they feed all of humankind.

(b) as a consequence of (a), we must reckon with the contentment and well-being of all food producers.

(c) all of those who provide labour in the daily handling of agricultural resources must have the freedom and capacity to act, not as "slaves" in a "production system" but rather as responsible people to whom we all owe respect and gratitude. Farmers must be allowed the education, material support, and understanding which is befitting their position in life (see (a)).

11. Our goals and the evaluation criteria which must guide our actions evaluate our accomplishments must be one in the same.

To put in a nutshell what we are suggesting, persons involved in the process of development must move with the flow of the times and constantly learn from the human-in-environment condition. In the present time, changes are much too rapid to create solutions to human problems based upon "still life photographs" of the past. We instead are in search of wisdom, a wisdom drawn sharp in attempts to reach worthwhile goals while, at the same time, grown mellow in appreciation of the humanity in us all. It has to be a wisdom that has moved with time one which understands the "motions" of human affairs as well as the consequence of some earlier set of conditions. Someday we hope to present to a wider audience what we will have learned from our successes and failures. But, since we haven't gone far along this path, we have not learned much about experience in the process of development. Yet, like all others, we still have our histories which must be used to direct us toward our futures.

Instead of being academic about our task and discussing the relative merits of particular historians and their interpretations, we must search history for seemingly best solutions to the problems which concern us, those concerned with low energy and sustainable agricultures which were equitable in distributions and constantly learning-creating-evolving. We must search for rich histories of specific peoples who have exhibited the above in their approach to human life. We feel there is much about history which can be studied first-hand and must be so studied if deeper levels of human understanding are to be achieved.

(To be continued)

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A long and weary night for national scientists and technologists

S. N. de S. Seneviratne

Subsidised fertilizers and inputs to reduce the cost of cultivation and attractive guaranteed prices for agricultural commodities are fully justified in the Sri Lankan context. Of course money lenders to Sri Lanka will twist the Government's arm against incentives. Yet, the issues are clear and no one can plead ignorance. It was New Year's Eve, 1978, and Jimmy Carter, President of the United States paid a glowing tribute to his Middle East policeman: "...Iran under the great leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, your Majesty, and to your leadership, and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give you". Not long afterwards, the island of stability exploded. Six million people who stormed the streets of Teheran had a single slogan, "Down with the American Shah!" His Majesty had to flee from the respect, admiration and love of his people and seek refuge in one sanctuary after another. The Shah is dead and gone. The convulsions in Iran due to causes which generated bitterness, resentments and anger are still going on. There is a lesson for Sri Lanka too. In matters relating to the agricultural sector, whether the introduction of new crops or the pricing of fertilizers, it is prudent to be cautious in responding to the pressures from national and international forces. Unless judicious decisions are made, the consequences can be disastrous.

Examples where planners and decision makers have failed miserably to understand and anticipate the country's long term needs for agri-

cultural development are not wanting. Fertilizers and farm power are two areas where these failures have been particularly costly.

By the mid 1950's, it was evident that fertilizer responsive rice varieties and the increased use of fertilizers generally could boost agricultural production. About this time, the exciting prospect of manufacturing nitrogenous fertilizer locally by an electrolytic process using hydro power attracted attention and in 1957, the Seven Virgins Project in the Maskeliya Valley was conceived by a Norwegian Consultant, Hans Peter Pfeifer. With a 2700 feet head, the project envisaged the production of 120,000 tons of fertilizer annually in addition to the generation of hydro power. In the 1950's fertilizers were available cheap in the world market. Oil was cheap too and in due course an oil based fertilizer plant dependent on imported feedstocks was more attractive to the decision makers than a plant operated on local resources which could have been developed. So the project conceived in 1957 was aborted by 1960. We are paying dearly today for the sins of the planners and decision makers of an era that is past just as much as future generations will pay an inestimable price for the ill-conceived decisions, opportunistic choices and follies of the present time. With the escalation of the price of oil, the white elephant at Sapugaskanda, the urea factory, which has cost over Rs. 27,000 million to construct has become a financial liability, its operational cost is uneconomical, and the high price of the urea produced prohibitive. The required quantities of fertilizer necessary to reap the

full benefits of the improved rice varieties are not being applied to crops, attainable production levels are not being achieved, and the research efforts of many years have been partially negated.

There is a view that a conversion to enable the use of coal, rather than oil, to work the Sapugaskanda urea plant is possible and that such a conversion will substantially reduce operational costs. This possibility received the attention of a concerned decision maker but with his eclipse the matter may have been dropped. Again, possibilities also arose for the production of nitrogenous fertilizer by an electrolytic process with Norwegian assistance. The files, if they are to be found at all, are probably in some ministerial archive, somewhere.

One reason why the Seven Virgins Project was dropped was because the large hydro power plant was considered too big in terms of the country's needs of power! Had there been foresight, perhaps the destruction of the Dumbara Valley would not have occurred; the price of oil would not have crippled our economy. Oil now accounts for 50% of all imports. During the first half of this year, oil imports cost the country about Rs. 4000 million, a little less than the total value of the tea, rubber and coconut exported! (Meanwhile, gas turbines have been installed to ease the power shortage. Three French 20 mw gas turbines recently purchased for power generation each cost sum Rs. 275 million — and one French gas turbine costing Rs. 275 million has already malfunctioned!)

Had we appreciated the value of our endowments as our forefathers had done, had we placed greater reliance on our natural resources, we would not have been dependant today, to this extent at any rate, on imported oil or French gas turbines, the cost of which we cannot control. And we would have had the necessary nitrogenous fertilizer produced locally at a cost within reach of the farmer.

Farm power. For hundreds of years, the water buffalo has been an integral component of the village rice farming system. But with "modernisation", the tractor was given precedence over the humble buffalo. A foreign expert gave expression to his feelings when he declared that he will not be happy till the last buffalo was eliminated from Sri Lanka's paddy fields! Understandable. The foreign expert was a representative of Ford Foundation and Ford is famous for its tractors! Yet, if the foreign expert's wishes have not been fulfilled and the buffalo eliminated, this invaluable draught animal in the Sri Lankan context has received very little attention in systematic research. The villager, however, knows its worth. A simple country dweller estimated its value succinctly: The buffalo. Stuff some straw into his mouth. He will oblige with a deposit of valuable dung from the other end. He will do the job in the fields. The tractor guzzles expensive oil — it emanates poisonous fumes from its exhaust!

Such a view is an oversimplification perhaps. Yet, it is well to draw attention to this underexploited tropical animal and to sound the alarm that tractor useage has damaging and destructive effects leading to new problems. In the Wilawe, for instance, tractor ploughing has resulted in the formation of a hard pan with increased water retentivity thereby causing excessive water consumption in those areas supplied first, and shortages in tracts further away from the source. Again, tractor threshing causes considerable damage to seed paddy. Tractor threshed seed paddy is "physically inferior" to buffalo threshed seed paddy, the physical damage caused to the former resulting in reduced

germination besides other problems during pre-sowing operations.

Draught power is not the only purpose that can be provided by the buffalo. It has great potential in the Sri Lankan context and deserves much greater research attention that it has hitherto received. If prestige considerations necessitated the establishment of an "international institute" in Sri Lanka, no better candidate than the buffalo could have given such an institute its name.

Foreign domination. All this fuss about independence was in order that we might be able to take our destiny into our own hands, to free ourselves from foreign domination. Yet, there is no dearth of evidence of continuing foreign domination via foreign aided projects, foreign experts and various subtle mechanisms. This does not necessarily mean that collaboration with foreign agencies or associations with foreign personnel stand condemned wholesale. On the contrary, meaningful links can be forged which are mutually beneficial. What has to be exposed and condemned are the vulgar, dishonest, corrupt and exploitative aspects of the system. In his perceptive book on the Atlantic slave trade, "Sins of the Fathers", James Pope-Hennessy holds Europeans of many nations — English, Dutch, French Portuguese, Danish — accountable for its initiation and success. But he emphasises that this inestimable human misery would not have been inflicted in this way had it not been for the co-operation of African kings, tribal chiefs and local private traders who profited from this horrifying business. There is a parallel today, in Sri Lanka too. For it is the local chieftains — the elites, the VIP's in Ministries, Corporations and elsewhere who are exploiting the foreign aid system, with the collusion of some foreigners, to their mutual private benefit. For the chieftains, the foreign expert is a non-taxable asset who can organise trips abroad, foreign assignments and consultancies, and provide gifts and liquor. For smaller fry, he is rather like a hairy dog — they cling to his furry back — for a scholarship. Sometimes, the foreign expert is a kind of mercenary hired to assassinate locals.

What, for instance, is the justification for installing an FAO plant pathologist, pay around Rs. 60,000 per month, in the Department of Agriculture? Was it purely for this country's benefit that no less than five members of the Directorate (including one on the verge of retirement) were sent to the United States by the Soya Bean Project? (That project advertises that "Soya keeps you going" even on its vehicles!) During the period 1977 to 1982, the capital pumped into the soya bean project amounted to over nine million rupees (Rs. 9,845,900). There were huge allocations for recurrent expenditure too. Where, oh where, did all this money go?

In the University's Faculty of Agriculture too, the foreign connection is apparent. Staff members are frequently abroad — on conferences, seminars, workshops, sabbaticals, etc. Relatively junior staff members carry a large share of the teaching burden for undergraduates. Perhaps, senior staff members are needed more in the PGIA — the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (which might well be called Private Industry for Agricultural Graduates). Meanwhile, foreign lecturers are secured to meet the need for teachers. They include an assortment of types — good men and con men. A prestigious American journal, "Plant Disease", carried the following news item:

"Comings and Goings

George A. Bean. Professor of Plant Pathology, Department of Botany, University of Maryland, was in Sri Lanka, Ceylon, in January to establish a cooperative mycotoxin and plant pathology program between personnel of the universities of Sri Lanka and Maryland. The two universities will exchange faculty and graduate students in a number of research areas including agriculture. Currently no one in Sri Lanka is trained in plant pathology or mycotoxicology which are two areas of great concern to agriculturists in that country"

Plant Disease/June 1980

No trained personnel in plant pathology in Sri Lanka — none at all! Sri Lanka has just emerged

from the stone age. Such dishonesty must surely affect the character and quality of the products from Peradeniya's Faculty of Agriculture and that tall building, the PGIA (tall is not beautiful!)

Two more points and I am done.

Why does all this dishonesty, this distortion, this rottenness exist? Why are dubious ventures launched, projects implemented and priorities distorted? One reason is because there isn't a technically competent authoritative body (an Agricultural Research Council?) to assist in the decision making processes. In the absence of such a mechanism to tap well-informed personnel whose integrity is respected, ill-informed bureaucrats including some with vested interests influence the decisions — all too often to the benefit of an expanding tribe of glode-trotting directors.

Note. The very first point in President Jayewardene's National Science and Technology Policy statement enunciated on 4th December 1978 when he inaugurated our Association's 34th Annual Session promised "to involve scientists in the formulation of policy and in decision making at the highest levels." That promise has yet to be fulfilled. Elsewhere, in a paper entitled "An Agricultural Research Council — Some Notes", prepared for a workshop organised by the National Science Council of Sri Lanka in 1980, I have discussed possible ways of implementing the President's policy statement with respect to agriculture. In another paper entitled "Towards the Achievement of Self-reliance in National Scientific and Technological Capability" prepared in 1981, I have suggested some measures relating to the second point of the President's policy statement, "..... to maintain a vigorous drive towards self reliance in national scientific and technological capability."

Finally, the human component and the human drain. Foreign aid is a supplement to national commitment, not a substitute for it. A country must rely primarily on its nationals to shoulder the burdens of national development — with joy. If a country has the desired scientific and technological capability in her nationals, if their sense of

national commitment can be stimulated and their morale sustained, then there is reason for hope, for optimism. A Third World country can then qualify for that euphemistic designation "developing country" — it need not be a disintegrating one. Unless our trained nationals can be sustained in committed service in their motherland, aid is a farce, progress an illusion. Trained personnel are not expendable — for export, disposable. They are the country's priceless resource to be drawn on and utilised for national development. I know the quality of the people we have — labourers, middle level technical officers, staffers. But those of us nationals, in work places such as ours are pariahs. We have third class citizenship in our motherland — after foreigners, expatriate nationals, and the con men. Our humans in national research organisations (those not living on "perks" and rackets) are collapsing or leaving in search of opportunities to earn a living in some other country.

The President's National Science and Technology Policy of Sri Lanka was enunciated in 1978. It promised, among other things, "To provide our scientists and technologists with good working conditions, adequate remuneration, due recognition for their labours....." That promise has yet to be realised. It has been a long and weary night for national scientists and technologists. How much longer will they be denied the light of dawn?

JVP's call...

(Continued from page 6)

government to show respect for the basic democratic right of the people of Sri Lanka to freely choose their own representatives.

The JVP calls on all progressive forces which are opposed to the UNP efforts to substitute a General Election by Town Council and Development Council Elections to join in a united campaign to put pressure on the government to hold a General Election in 1983.

We would appreciate if those parties that are keen to discuss a programme for united action to indicate their interest to do so as soon as possible.

Marx As...

(Continued from page 16)

3. V. I. Lenin, The Italian Socialist Congress, in: Lenin, Collected Works, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1963, vol. 18, p. 172
4. Cf. Paul Lafargue, Personliche Erinnerungen an Karl Marx, in: Mohr und General, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1982, p. 297
5. Cf. Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Marx zum Gedachtnis, in: ibid., p. 68
6. Cf. Paul Lafargue, Personliche Erinnerungen an Karl Marx, in: ibid., p. 287
7. Karl Marx, Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession, in: Marx/Engels, Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975, vol. 1, p. 8
8. Karl Marx, Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction. In: loc. cit., vol. 3 p. 182
9. ibid., p. 186
10. Cf. Paul Lafargue, Personliche Erinnerungen an Karl Marx, in: Mohr und General, p. 287
11. Marx to S. Meyer in New York, in: Marx/Engels, Selected Correspondence, Progress Publishers Moscow, p. 185
12. Cf. Marx and Paul Lafargue, Marx/Engels Werke, vol. 31, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1965, p. 519
13. Karl Marx, The Hague Congress, in: Marx/Engels Selected Works, vol. 2, p. 294
14. Marx to L. Kugelmann in Handover in: Marx/Engels, Selected Correspondence, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 263
15. Friedrich Engels, Speech at the graveside of Karl Marx, in: Marx/Engels-Selected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1976, vol. 3, p. 163
16. Cf. Bekenntnisse: in: Mohr und General, p. 547 and 546
17. Cf. Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Friedrich Engels, in ibid., p. 398
18. Cf. Paul Lafargue, Personliche Erinnerungen an Karl Marx, in: ibid., p. 292
19. Cf. Marx/Engels Werke, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1963, vol. 28 p. 444
20. Cf. W. I. Lenin and I. F. Armand, Briefe, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1967, vol. 4, p. 376



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