

# YOUNG SOCIALIST

EDITORIALS ON: Czechoslovakia;  
Unrest in the Universities.

Pioneer Rebels among the Colombo Working Class

by KUMARI JAYAWARDENA

Socialist Democracy and Internationalism

by ILIOS JANNAKAKIS

Private Sector in Education (Part I)

by SYDNEY WANASINGHE

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Marxism (Part XI)

by R. S. BAGHAVAN

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# YOUNG SOCIALIST

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## *Editorial Notes*

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The invasion of Czechoslovakia by the joint forces of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria on the night of 20th August is an important event in the history of Stalinism. Besides being a political disaster for the Kremlin it was also a tremendous setback to the international working class movement. Needless to say it will take a long period of time to repair this damage.

Since Stalin, at the head of the bureaucracy, usurped power in the Soviet Union, soon after the death of Lenin, there occurred a number of events which thwarted the onward march of the working class, tarnished the good name of Socialism and confused, disoriented and disheartened those who championed the cause of the 1st workers' state and were striving to bring about a similar social transformation in their own countries. The steps taken to crush the Left Opposition, the infamous Moscow Trials, the pact with Hitler, summary trials and punishment without trial of those who were not amenable to the dictates of Kremlin, setting up of Police regimes in the newly liberated areas of Eastern Europe, using first the Comintern and then the Cominform as an agency for the furtherance of the interests of Russian foreign policy, maintenance of concentration camps for political prisoners in the traditional Czarist style, acts of racial discrimination against the minority communities (particularly the Jews) the suppression of the revolts in the Vorkuta prison camps, in East Germany, Poznan and Poland, Russian Military intervention to crush the uprising against the

bureaucracy in Hungary—all these did not stir the world as did the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

It caused a split in the hitherto monolithic structure of the pro-Moscow World Communist organisation. Roumania, a member of the Warsaw Pact, condemned this invasion and mobilised her forces to meet a possible intervention in her own country. Yugoslavia, China and Albania condemned the invasion and demanded the withdrawal of the foreign troops from Czechoslovakia.

China referred to the invasion as a shameless act comparable to Hitler's occupation of the Sudetenland and the U.S. invasion of Vietnam. Following the line laid down from Peking the Communist Parties and organizations owing allegiance to China the world over, denounced the Invasion. The anti-Imperialist movements in the colonial world, particularly in Africa voiced their disapproval of the course of action taken by the Warsaw Pact forces.

Within hours the French Communist Party denounced the invasion. It declared its opposition to all interference in the internal affairs of a sister party; stated that it was the responsibility of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, taking into account its international obligations, to find within itself, in the Czechoslovak working class and people, in the support of the socialist countries, and of all the brother parties the forces necessary to safeguard and advance socialism in Czechoslovakia.

Roger Garaudy, a leading French CP Intellectual in an interview which appeared in the August 28th issue of the 'Le Monde' stated that, "One can only be gratified by the firmness of the Czechoslovak negotiators, backed by the justice of their cause and the unanimous support of their people.



The only solution is unconditional withdrawal of the troops now occupying Czechoslovakia....

"This intervention threatens to kill a great hope. It was totally unjustified and unjustifiable. The pretext that there was a danger of counter-revolution does not hold water. While reactionary elements profited from the democratization to make noise, they were incapable of any but verbal violence. The Government, the Communist Party and its head, Alexander Dubcek, held the confidence and support of the vast majority of the people while stressing firmly the principles of socialism. This is proved by the fact that no element was willing to collaborate with the occupier to replace the country's duly constituted leadership....

"The exemplary resistance and cool-headedness of the Czechoslovak people united around their leaders have compelled the admiration and gratitude of Communists and all friends of socialism and liberty....

"Nothing could more benefit counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia and throughout the world than giving socialism an image so contrary to the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism.

"What is in question is reversion to Stalinism in theory and practice by leaders wanting to turn the page of the 20th congress over too quickly. As Communists we say flatly to these leaders: 'To restore the honour of your party and the real image of the International movement, resign!'

"It is the responsibility of the Communists in the Soviet Union to draw the full lessons of this event so that their party can again become worthy of the mantle of the party of Lenin. And no Communist anywhere can forget the lesson of the experience which revealed the extent of the evil....Next, to prevent a repetition of such situations, the vestiges of Stalinism must be destroyed."

This report of the interview was a little too much for the Waldeck-Rochet leadership of the French Communist Party. The political Bureau disavowed and condemned the interview.

Luigi Longo, the General Secretary on behalf of the Italian Communist Party, stated that there was substantial agreement between the French and the Italian Communist Parties regarding each other's assessment of the recent events in Czechoslovakia, that their position was based on a strong feeling of internationalism, on recognition of every party's independence and on respect for the independence of all nations.

This is the first time that these biggest Communist parties outside the socialist block of countries, took up a position against the Kremlin. Even though the French Communist Party tried to withdraw from its original position in the statements it issued subsequently, the Italian Communist

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Party went to the extent of venturing to establish closer relations with the Yugoslav Communist Party.

The American Communist Party rallied to the cause of the Kremlin. But prominent leaders like Gil Green and Dorothy Healey publicly dissociated themselves from the shameful stand taken by Gus Hall.

Radio Hanoi broadcast of August 28th praised the noble objective of the intervention. As there has been no subsequent statement from North Vietnam it is difficult to assess this earlier broadcast.

Bertrand Russell who initiated the War Crimes Tribunal stated in a letter that appeared in the London Guardian of August 26th—"Many British people must feel themselves helpless spectators of the Soviet suppression of elementary liberties in Czechoslovakia...."

"Those who temporarily interrupt their applause for the American bombardment of Vietnam to discover and assist the rights of small nations are allies that must embarrass the Czechoslovaks and play into the hands of the Soviet Union...."

"By committing themselves to every American invasion and to the division of Europe, we increase enormously the price that independent Socialists in Eastern Europe pay for proclaiming basic liberties and we know the price paid by Imre Nagy."

Jean Paul Satre, one of the central figures of the tribunal issued the following statement denouncing the invasion. "In whose interest and to what advantage can a Socialist country take such a attitude? I consider it pure aggression, such as is defined in terms of international law as a war crime."

"Fidel Castro made a lengthy statement on the position of the Cuban Government re the invasion. He was of the view that "the Czechoslovak regime was dangerously inclined toward a substantial change in the system, heading toward capitalism and inexorably toward Imperialism—that the Socialist camp has a right to prevent this in one way or another." He added that the intervention cannot be justified from a

legal point of view. Next he posed the question as to how after 20 years of Communism a group of personalities—whose names do not appear anywhere—found it necessary to appeal to other countries of the Socialist camp to send troops to prevent the triumph of counter-revolution. He adduced the bureaucratic methods in the leadership of the country, lack of contact with the masses, vulgar use of material incentives and the leadership plagued with dogmatism and bureaucracy as been responsible for this situation. Next he proceeded to attack Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia on a number of issues which showed that he was very subjective in his attitude towards these countries. The biting criticism that his speech contained deprived him of any cheers in Moscow.

In India Mrs. Indira Gandhi called for an early withdrawal of the foreign troops and expressed the hope that it would be possible to restore the legally constituted government in Prague. She expressed deep concern over the safety of the Czechoslovak leaders but emphasised that India could act only after great deliberations. Mr. Asoka Mehta who was for taking up a more forthright position, resigned from the Cabinet on this issue.

The Communist Party of Britain in its statement dated August 26th declared that it "deeply deplores the military intervention in Czechoslovakia by troops of the Warsaw Pact powers.

"The military intervention which took place had no support from any leading body in the Czechoslovak Communist Party or State and is opposed by them. No grounds have been brought forward that can justify this violation of the national sovereignty of the Czechoslovak people and Government.

"Equally deplorable is the intervention from outside the country to remove some of the leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and to prevent them from carrying out their duties, less than 3 weeks before the Party congress was due to open on September 9th. This is a gross violation of the Democratic rights of the Czechoslovak Communists."



The Ceylon Communist Party belongs to the minority in the world communist movement that supported the Soviet Intervention for a time. It issued a statement on August 25th and followed it up with a more detailed one on September 10th. It tried to play down the gravity of the action, repeated that the Warsaw Pact troops were there at the invitation of the leaders of Czechoslovakia, pointed this as a dispute of minor importance between members of the same Socialist block of countries, welcomed the agreement reached between the Czechoslovak leaders and the Warsaw Pact powers in Moscow, attacked the reactionary forces in the country for the hypocrisy and cynicism they display on this issue, bemoaned the fact that this issue has brought about a threat to the three party coalition, took pains to point out that this problem in this far off country does not infringe on the terms of the Common Programme signed between the three parties. The Communist Party was of course in a very difficult position. The conscious left wing was making use of it to expose the evils of Stalinism. The LSSP had taken up a position in support of the Action Programme of Dubcek leadership. Along with the SLFP they issued a statement condemning the invasion and demanding the withdrawal of foreign troops. The Communist Party, the other partner in the SLFP led Coalition was not a signatory to this statement. After much hesitation and clearly in order to wriggle out of an unpleasant situation, they issued a third statement, long after the event, stating that they regret the invasion and that it was an infringement of the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia.

Despite our opposition to the Stalinist Politics of Wickremasinghe, Kenueman and Company, we must concede that they have during the last 25 years succeeded in building up a seemingly monolithic organisation first with the blessings of the British Imperialists and then of sections of the capitalist class, and later on actively assisted by the Embassies of the Soviet Union and its satellites. Their failure to date to put forward a single anti-capitalist slogan is eloquent testimony to its early alliance with the capitalist class. Its organisation is so rigid that none of the rumblings we heard in the Communist Parties of other countries

particularly after the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia can be heard over here. To the last man they will repeat parrot like, what-ever is handed over to them from above right up to Kremlin. To them the extermination of the Generation of October was in order to preserve the 1st Workers' State; Poznan, East Germany, Poland and later Hungary uprisings were engineered by counter-revolutionaries organised by the Imperialists, that there is perfect socialist democracy in all these Workers' States; that secret police functioning so effectively in these countries is only reactionary propaganda; that the Warsaw pact troops were invited by the Czechoslovak leaders; that the Czechoslovak Leaders have now negotiated an agreement with the other Warsaw Pact powers and so on.

Czechoslovakia shows once more the deepening crisis of Stalinism. That the Kremlin had to resort to this unprecedentedly unpopular step shows how desperate the bureaucracy is. They could not permit the reforms in Czechoslovakia as it would endanger the position of the bureaucracy in the other countries as well. Hence this politics of desperation.

#### UNREST IN THE UNIVERSITIES

On 1st November three undergraduates of the University of Ceylon, Colombo who were conducting a fast in the University premises were arrested along with two others and remanded till the 8th. They were staging a protest against the disciplinary action taken by the authorities against students who were alleged to have been involved in an earlier dispute. In Peradeniya the students came out on a token strike demanding that the 53 new entrants, who had been asked to quit the University as they were deemed to be not qualified for admission, be allowed to continue their studies in the University. The Senate of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya which discussed this matter passed a vote of no confidence in the NCHE by 29 votes to 5. On 27th October students from all four Universities demonstrated in the streets of Colombo demanding better facilities for the student body.

These are indications of the maturing crisis in our Universities and the possibility



of a major flare up in the not too distant future. While the crisis in higher education is not unique to our country, we have other factors contributing to the escalation of the crisis which have no parallel in other countries.

We have, a University Administration imposed from above by a Minister who has no moral standing over those concerned with education, a NCHE selected on the basis of political patronage and completely divorced from the thinking of the present day youth, an academic staff living in a world of their own immersed in their own petty schemes, a system of free education which provides better opportunities for students to continue in schools than in most other developing countries, a stagnant economy which prevents the expansion of job opportunities to the tens of thousands who enter the job market every year, and so on. We have more than 27% of the population in Schools. We have more undergraduates than all our graduates so far passed out of the Universities here and abroad put together. The

crisis arising out of this situation of youth put out of schools and universities, ill equipped to earn their living will cause the explosion to come in our country to surpass that of most under-developed and developed countries we have witnessed in the recent past.

*in press*

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# Pioneer Rebels Among the Colombo Working - Class

by KUMARI JAYAWARDENA

Historians of revolutions, peasant revolts and labour movements have tended to concentrate on the leaders rather than the led. Whereas the political and labour leaders of mass movements have usually attracted all the attention, the persons who actually participated in crowd agitation, 'mob' activity or strikes have been relegated to footnotes or appendices, if they have warranted mention at all. Recently however some attention has been paid to the actual composition of crowds by George Rudé who has studied 'mob' behaviour and riots in 18th century Britain and France, and by Eric Hobsbawm who has written on groups of rural and urban 'primitive rebels' in a pre-capitalist European society.

This article directs attention to some of the individual workers who came out on strike in Colombo during the early years of the urban labour movement. The period considered is the first thirty years of the labour movement, from the first strike in Ceylon in 1893 until the general strike of 1923, which formed the period preceding the emergence of widespread urban trade unionism. During the years before the outburst of 1923 there was neither any sustained labour activity nor the growth of permanent leadership. But there were several strikes among the urban mechanics and craftsmen—including the printers, laundrymen, carters, and railway workers—culminating in a general strike in Colombo in 1923. The material for such a study is limited to police files which often gave biased reports, court proceedings against strikes, newspaper accounts of strikes which usually either ridiculed the strikers or exaggerated their 'wickedness', and reports of government Commissions (appointed after strikes) where individual workers gave evidence of their grievances. This article falls into three phases. During the first of these—the period of the first sporadic strikes ending around 1906—information about the strikers is fragmentary and is

almost entirely drawn from newspaper reports and court records. During these years no strong labour movement developed which warranted the opening of officials files on working-class agitators. This kind of evidence, which included reports from the Colonial Secretary's Office and police dossiers becomes available during the strike on the Railway in 1912 and the riots of 1915, when individual strikers and their 'ringleaders' began to be officially identified and carefully observed for the first time. The Government Commission which probed the Railway workers' grievances in 1912 also provides a fruitful source of evidence. The third phase commences with the consolidation of the urban working-class movement under A. E. Goonesinha when intensive and continuous official surveillance began. The Criminal Investigation Department started to follow the actual movements of the strike leaders, and police constables were present at every meeting, procession and demonstration, observing events and making detailed reports.

A study of the strikes which occurred between 1893 and 1923 among skilled mechanics (especially printers and railway workers) and 'independent' workers (such as carters and laundry men) reveals the existence of militant workers among the ranks who acted as leaders and spokesmen for the strikers and were usually referred to by the newspapers and police as 'ringleaders'. These 'natural' leaders were defiant of authority, whether it was of the police, government officials or the employers. They were willing to risk taking bold action even though it may have meant loss of employment, and it was this group that decided which members of the elite the strikers could appeal to for support. The 'ringleaders' among the urban workers were also literate in Sinhalese and responsive to political and semi-political agitation, such as the Buddhist revival of the late 19th



century and the temperance campaign and incipient nationalism of the early 20th century. Many workers were readers of the daily *Dinamina* and *Lakmina* and other papers such as the satirical *Kavata Kathikaya*, and the Buddhist nationalist papers, the *Sinhala Bauddhaya* associated with Anagarika Dharmapala, and the *Sinhala Jathiya* edited by Piyadasa Sirisena. These papers were important sources of public opinion among the working class. For one, there was a lot of enthusiasm generated by Dharmapala's forceful political writing against the British authorities, Christian missionaries and 'aliens'. The papers also kept people in touch with events such as the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905, the Indian nationalist movement and revolutions and rebellions in Russia, Egypt, Ireland, Turkey and China. In addition the Colombo working-class was made aware of the wave of industrial discontent in Britain and other countries through accounts of strikes and labour agitation which were regularly featured in the newspapers.

Although the Colombo proletariat only acquired a full-time trade union leader (A. E. Goonesinha) during the general strike of 1923, the vital role of a section of the elite in supporting labour agitation in the earlier years, should be kept in mind though this question is beyond the scope of the present article. Among the 'amateur' middle class labour leaders of the period were A. E. Buultjens, Dr. Lisboa Pinto, Anagarika Dharmapala, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, Hector Van Cuylenberg, Rev. G. B. Ekanayake, John Kotelawala, Martinus Perera, C. H. Z. Fernando, C. Batuwantudawe, Arthur Dias, D. C. Senanayake and other political figures, religious reformers and temperance leaders who used to advise and guide the unorganised urban workers. The lack of a full-time middle-class leadership was only one of the obstacles faced by the urban workers. During these years, the workers possessed very few rights except the right to work. Politically they were debarred from the franchise by property and educational qualifications. Socially they were separated from their British and Ceylonese employers by wide cultural barriers. Economically the workers were at a serious disadvantage as they lived on subsistence wages, ranging from 33 cents a day on the estates to Re 1.

or Rs. 1-50 a day for skilled workers in Colombo. There was no law to restrict the formation of a trade union, but the resort to strikes was a criminal offence under the Labour Ordinance of 1865 which was only repealed in 1922. During this early phase to go on strike was an act of exceptional courage. It meant that the workers were not only exposed to instant dismissal, but also sometimes to the risk of prosecution for breach of contract. Since there were no strong unions with funds, striking also meant great personal hardship.

Who were the workers who were defiant enough to come out on strike against such unfavourable odds? If one had to name the first 'hero' of the urban working class, it would be William, a machine ruler at the printing works of Cave & Company, (a leading publisher and bookseller), where the first strike in Ceylon occurred in 1893 over a dispute on delays in monthly wage payments. Even before the strike William had drawn attention to himself by going to the Manager to demand his wages and also by sending in a written request. William and five others 'ringleaders' were dismissed during the strike for instigating the trouble and William was prosecuted under the Labour Ordinance of 1865 for leaving work. Under this Ordinance estate workers, domestic servants or journeymen artificers (skilled workers), who left work without a month's notice or reasonable cause, could be punished with imprisonment or a fine or both. The law, which had been mainly used to prosecute immigrant workers who 'bolted' from estates, had never been evoked against skilled urban workers. When the lower court acquitted William declaring that he was not a 'journeyman artificer' under the Ordinance, the *Times of Ceylon* called for an appeal against 'this extraordinary ruling'. In appeal, Justice Lawrie of the Supreme Court reversed the decision; printers were declared to be journeyman artificers and William was imprisoned for a week.

The next group workers to strike were the laundrymen of Colombo who stopped work for three weeks in 1896 in protest against the Municipal licensing of their premises, which they feared would result in extortion and blackmail by minor officials. The



laundrymen had some middle-class advisers (Rev. G. B. Ekanayake and Hector Van Cuylenburg) whose counsel they rejected. Instead they organised themselves, collected funds, held numerous meetings, distributed leaflets, dissuaded potential 'blacklegs' and achieved an almost complete solidarity among Colombo laundrymen. Their 'leaders' made many declarations in favour of direct action and the Governor's laundryman was reported as saying that they were willing "to suffer anything rather than submit to the fearful cruelty and unmitigated tyranny of registration." Though the strike failed in its objective, the manner in which it was carried out was an eye-opener for the authorities and the *Times of Ceylon* expressed concern that the 'bad example' of this strike would have "serious consequences for the community ... if other humble labourers combined to strike at most inconvenient times". This strike too resulted in a criminal prosecution of a group of laundrymen for intimidation of a non-striker. The accused were some of the militant workers from Polwatte who were alleged to have assaulted a non-striker and to have thrown coloured water on his washing. One of the accused, Haramanis was fined Rs. 25. and given a month's rigorous imprisonment while the others were acquitted. The defence lawyer, Hector Van Cuylenburg, protested that the trial was a means by which the government were trying to punish the unregistered laundry workers.

There were several sporadic strikes between 1896 and 1906 of butchers, harbour boatmen, printers and other workers, but the most spectacular was the strike of five thousand carters in 1906 against a Municipal by-law prohibiting carters from sitting on the cart or yoke while driving. The Municipality alleged that the carters were careless and often fell asleep while driving, whereas the carters complained that the new law would entail walking long distances and would result in police extortion. The middle-class leader of the strike was John Kotelawala (father of Sir John) who encouraged the carters to resist. The aggressiveness of the carters was noted by many observers and several government officials speculated that this working-class upsurge was partly inspired by the Japanese

victory over Russia in 1905 and the influence of Indian nationalism and British trade unionism. A newspaper compared the vociferous 'ringleaders' to British union leaders, and referred to "the budding Keir Hardies and Will Crookes among the carters... who took upon themselves the responsibility of conducting the affair, and with a great assumption of superior knowledge were ready to advise and warn in emergencies". The carters, assisted by other urban workers, challenged the authorities, prevented 'blacklegs' from working and fought the police. It was an occasion for the carters and urban workers to let off steam and defy the police. For example, two carters rode around the Town Hall, one sitting on the cart puffing a cigar and the other 'singing an indecent song'. There were also many incidents of 'mob' activity in the streets; the Pettah was reported to be under the domination of the crowd and the Maha Mudaliyar commented that 'mobs collected and the strike was attended by incidents of a very disgraceful type'.

Up to 1912 the record of the background and personalities of the early strikers remains rather blurred and impressionistic. We know that these strikers had to be courageous and daring, that they risked their jobs, faced monetary loss, defied the 'establishment' and even went to prison. We know also that these were skilled workers, as in the case of the printers, or 'independent' workers with group loyalties like the laundry-men and carters, and therefore more vociferous and truculent than the poorer sections of the working-class. However, the first detailed information on any group of strikers was compiled after the railway strike of 1912, when grievances over fines and deductions from wages led to a stoppage of work which paralysed the entire railway system. A trade union formed after the strike known as the **Ceylon Workmens' Provident Association** had several Buddhist temperance leaders (Charles Batuwantudawe, Arthur Dias and D. C. Senanayake) as office-bearers and the most prominent 'agitators' among the railway workers as committee members. These included four fitters, Marshall Wickremasinghe, H. Valentine Fernando, W. H. Blok and D. John Perera; three carpenters, W. Juanis Fernando, P. Pedru



Perera and A. L. Pedru Appu (the latter two being head carpenters); a pattern maker, J. Solomon Perera, and an overseer, Marthelis Perera. Fortunately there is sufficient evidence available for some assessment to be made about these individual workers whose battle with the authorities began in 1912 with the Railway strike and was continued in 1915 during the Buddhist-Muslim riots. It is important to stress that in Colombo the rioting was due more to economic and political factors than to religious considerations. The sudden rise in prices at the beginning of the first World War caused discontent among the workers and in addition this was a period of a sharp increase in nationalist feeling. The riots in Colombo in 1915 were led, not as commonly believed by criminals and 'rowdies' but by urban skilled workers, and in particular by the militant workers in the railway locomotive workshops. The government panicked at this 'dangerous' turn of events and not only picketed the Railways with Punjabi troops, but also dismissed 140 railway workers and exiled 28 of them to Batticaloa. During the railway strike of 1912, the police and the railway authorities, who had become keenly aware of the potential dangers of persistent and widespread unrest on the railways, began to keep a watch on the activities of the most militant railwaymen. When the 1915 riots began and spread to Colombo the 'marked' men of the 1912 strike were singled out for punishment which included dismissal, imprisonment, exile and blacklisting. The 28 railway men who were exiled were skilled workers, some of them the best mechanics and craftsmen in the department, earning the maximum salaries for their grades. They included fifteen fitters, two overseers three boiler makers, two head carpenters two carpenters, one pattern maker and one blacksmith. Nine of the exiled workers were committee members of the Workmen's Provident Association; six had been dismissed for assaulting Indians working on the railways; the majority had been active during the 1912 strike and five of them had given evidence of the railwaymen's grievances at the Railway Commission which was appointed after the strike. Speaking of these skilled workmen, the Inspector General of Police observed that it was unsafe during such "troubulous times ....to grant bad characters and evilly

disposed persons their liberty", and supported their exile on the grounds that they would then be unable to "influence loyal Railway hands".

A study of the dossiers on these workers and the evidence given by the workers before the Railway Commission of 1912, affords an impression of the most assertive of the 'exiled' workers. The most active 'agitator' during these years was **Marshall Wickremasinghe**, known as Marshall Appuhamy, a fitter who worked on the railways from 1912 to 1915 earning Rs. 1.37 a day. He lived on the premises of the Young Men's Buddhist Association and was described by the police as a 'creator of disturbances'. Though not much is known about his background, police records show that he was the leading working-class agitator of the period. In 1912 his name headed the signatures on a petition of railway workers' grievances; he also led the 1912 strike and was an active member of the Workmen's Provident Association. When the riots broke out in May 1915, Marshall Appuhamy was arrested as a dangerous trouble maker and jailed and exiled to Batticaloa. Another activist, **John Solomon Perera**, a Christian (aged 41 with 25 years service on the Railways in 1912), was a pattern maker, a skilled job making wooden patterns for cast iron or brass casting. Like many of the skilled workers, he came from Moratuwa and belonged to a family of railway workers. His father had also been a pattern maker, his father's brother was a foreman in the carriage works and his grandfather had been a head carpenter. Perera who earned Rs. 3 a day, travelled to work daily from Moratuwa. He constantly complained to the authorities about working conditions and was a leading figure in the 1912 strike and union activity. When the government set up a Railway Commission in 1912 to inquire into the workers' grievances, Perera gave detailed evidence and boldly reiterated his grievances on questions of wages, fines, conditions of work, favouritism and the employment of cheap Indian labour. He spoke of the difficulties of the workers, "It is hard to make ends meet. There is a great difference between the cost of living now and the cost in former times. Some men's wages have been reduced and the price of the necessities of life has more than doub-



led". On the question of fines for absence from work Perera expressed the prevailing discontent, "If I am absent I am the loser. I lose Rs. 3. a day". Perera was also quite forthright about his role as spokesman for the other workers and said "I do not speak only for myself, I speak for the rest of the workmen". That Perera was a marked man from the 1912 strike onwards was evident during the sittings of the Railway Commission when H. G. Unsworth, the Locomotive Superintendent said, "The man, Solomon Perera, is the man who is making all the trouble". Another worker who attracted attention was **K. L. George Silva**, a Buddhist from Kelaniya who was described by the police as "an agitator of the worst type". In 1912 he was 28 years old and had served 14 years on the Railways. He was a fitter earning Rs. 1.25 a day and had been fined for idling and punished for assaulting Indian workers. He was a committee member of the workman's Provident Association and his manner of giving evidence before the Railway Commission had been fearless. He answered questions relating to the wages and hours of work of all classes of labour in the workshops, showing how closely in touch he was with skilled and unskilled labour; he gave a long list of the workers' grievances and referring by name to the locomotive superintendent said, "All these evils have grown worse since Mr. Unsworth was appointed". On the question of fines, he complained about the foreman and expressed the prevailing resentment over the system of fining workers for absenteeism and other offences. "Sometimes we are fined without any reason, and it is simply marked 'fine'. Whenever we go to find out the reason we are driven off. Some workmen were fined for going to the office to inquire". George Silva described the harshness of railway workers: "Provisions are very dear now. We have to come a long way to our work. We cannot go to see our parents even once a year. We have no money to go". Yet another committee member of the Provident Association who was deported was **Marthelis Perera**, an overseer with 22 year's service earning Rs. 4 a day, the maximum pay for his grade in 1912. The locomotive superintendent had praised Perera highly and described him as "the best man we have got... he is what I call our model man... a good timekeeper, and good at his work".

Some information is also available about **P. Pedru Perera**, a Christian who was 55 years and had served 36 years on the railway in 1912. He earned Rs. 3 a day as a head carpenter and often did special work such as making railway saloon cars for the Prince of Wales and Governor. Perera was a union committee member and gave evidence before the Railway Commission. He showed his discontent about not getting the maximum pay for his grade and protested about the low wages of other workers under him: "I speak for them, and I say they are not sufficiently paid. All the best work is done by the men who work under me. If they are properly paid the work will be done much more quickly and more skilfully. There are many men working under me who have one meal a day... Their work suffers through their want of nourishment". The manner in which these skilled workers were willing to publicly criticise their superiors during the Railway Commission was very striking. Pedru Perera was critical of J. H. Bird, the foreman of the saw mill, whose policy, he alleged, was to reduce rather than increase wages. "It is impossible to please him... I was fined the other day by Mr. Bird. I was taken ill and did not go to work... and was fined for absenting myself." Bird, denied that Perera had been fined for absence, but made a revealing statement about his being fined for other offences. "I have had to find fault with him two or three times. Once for disobeying my orders... I had given orders to make alterations, but this man was trying to work on the same lines as he had always done". **W. Juanis Fernando**, a carpenter, was also a committee member of the railway workers union. A Christian aged 35 with 23 years service (in 1912) he could read and write English. Fernando claimed that he did the work of a head carpenter and should have received Rs. 3-50 a day but only got the pay of an ordinary carpenter (Rs. 1-87). Of himself Fernando said, "I am a good workman. I understand carriage building very well, and I understand appliances. I order all the materials for carriages".

These skilled workers—Marshall Appuhamy, Solomon Perera, George Silva, Marthelis Perera, Pedru Perera, Juanis Fernando and twenty two other railway workers spent six months in exile in Batti-



caloa. Their plight in Batticaloa and their subsequent hardships were described by Ponnambalam Arunachalam a speech made in 1921;

In June, 1915, when the Government had worked itself into a panic and was engaged in the blind administration of Martial Law, these men were suddenly arrested without charge or inquiry, deported to a remote province among people with whose language and customs they were unfamiliar, and they were left to shift for themselves while their wives and children in Colombo were starving. At the end of that period they were brought back to Colombo and refused employment, and kept under Police supervision. In September, 1916, they were given certificates of discharge by the Government Railway. I hold in my hand a copy of one of them, in which the man is stated to have been discharged on the 24th of June, 1915. He is stated to be a "very good fitter" with service of 13 years 3 months and 12 days (in some of these cases the service is 40 years), pay Rs. 1-75 a day, "attendance: good." Cause of discharge: "services no longer required." The certificate concludes: "This workman should not be employed in Government service without reference to the Head of this Department." This is the excellent example set by Government to employers in this country.

The victimisation of these workers did not end until twelve years after the riots of 1915. As a result of constant petitioning supported by the Ceylon Workers Federation and the Ceylon Labour Union, the bar on the re-employment of ten of these workers was lifted by the government in 1925. (Several of the others had died or were unfit for work by this date). One civil servant compared the case of the exiled railway workers to that of the more influential persons detained during the riots who had subsequently been granted an amnesty. "The grounds on which they (the workers) were deported were the same grounds on which D. B. Jayatilaka, D. S. Senanayake and W. A. de Silva were imprisoned during the riots.... This is the only remaining grievance in connection with the riots and if there is no redress, the memory of the riots will be kept alive".

However, the General Manager of Railways refused to re-employ D. John Perera because he was an active supporter of the labour leader of the 'twenties—A. E. Goonesinha. The bar on the re-employment of John Perera & George Silva was only lifted in 1927. In 1937 John Perera unsuccessfully sent a petition to the Government asking that the railway workers' 6 months exile in Batticaloa and ten years bar on their employment be counted towards their pensions.

The severe penalties imposed on the militant Railway workers after the 1915 riots caused a temporary setback in working class agitation, and for five years there were no major labour disturbances in Colombo. But some of the political reformers of the time (Sir P. Arunachalam, C. H. Z. Fernando and Martinus Perera) formed a Workers Welfare League in 1919 and the Ceylon Workers Federation in 1920. A change came in 1920 when the post-war rise in the cost of living and the sudden shortage of rice led to strikes in the Railways and Harbour. During the railway strike the Ceylon Workers Federation intervened as conciliators but refused to assume leadership of the strike. As a result some militant members of the working class assumed a role of vital importance. Again the most active leader during this Railway strike was Marshall Appuhamy who had led the 1912 strike, and has been dismissed from the railway and exiled during the riots of 1915. Although Marshall Appuhamy was the 'outside' leader in 1920, a committee of railway workers was also formed which included William Singho, popularly known as 'Hamban' William, a carpenter, described by the police as "the ringleader of the railwaymen", Thomas, a boiler maker also called a "ringleader and spokesman" and Sam, whom the police alleged went forward "as spokesman among the men and aired his views on the cost of living and the general condition of the railway workmen". On 'Hamban' William's initiative this committee asked two lawyers (Clement de Jong and E. B. Weerakoon) to present the case of the strikers to the authorities. In 1920, the C.I.D. report on 'Hamban' William said "He is a gentleman who will repay watching for the future and the Maradana police may be informed". The police were not wrong in



recognising 'Hamban' William as a potential leader and by 1923 he had become the main working-class supporter of A. E. Goonesinha.

The dividing line between moderate and militant trade unionism came in September 1922 when A. E. Goonesinha, Victor Corea and a group of radicals belonging to the nationalist Young Lanka League (which had led the anti-poll tax agitation and the opposition to the Prince of Wales visit) formed the Ceylon labour Union in order to give effective leadership to the urban workers, and combat what it called the 'slave mentality' of the Ceylon Workers Federation. Five months later a general strike involving almost all the working-class of Colombo took place. According to usually conservative police estimates this spectacular event involved over 20,000 workers from the Railways, Port, Government Factory, Municipality, engineering firms, export & import companies, hotels, bakeries, textile and oil mills. As in previous strikes and unrest in Colombo in 1912, 1915, and 1920, the agitation of 1923 began at the Railway locomotive workshops on an issue of wages and fines. During the general strike A. E. Goonesinha emerged as the first full time middle-class leader of the urban proletariat. A radical in politics, A. E. Goonesinha's bold, assertive personality and his willingness to challenge the employers and the government in a determined way, made him a popular hero almost overnight; "I would rather be marched to jail than come back to work under the present circumstances" he declared when the railway workers began their strike in 1923. This was the kind of militant leadership the urban workers had been waiting for and the response was immediate; the urban workers had found their leader and he was to dominate trade union activity until the economic depression of the early 'thirties.

Who were the main working class supporters of A. E. Goonesinha? Not unexpectedly the victimised workers of the earlier strikes provided the main support. Of these the best known was Marshall Appuhamy who became the first Secretary of Goonesinha's Ceylon Labour Union. A fitter named D. John Perera known as 'Yakka John' who had been exiled in 1915 also supported A. E. Goonesinha along

with Podisingho of the Government Factory and Kandasamy of Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills. But the worker whom the police closely watched and described as Goonesinha's "right hand man" was 'Hamban' William, who had led the earlier railway strike in 1920. In a confidential report to the Colonial Secretary the Inspector-General of Police wrote;

The Railway authorities inform me that the names of those no longer required for service will be posted up, including Hamban William, Goonesinha's right hand man in the Railway Workshops. He may give trouble. I have instructed the C.I.D. to prepare a statement of his record. It amply justifies his discharge from government service. He has been convicted twice, for running a gambling place and murder by shooting a man in the back because he petitioned against him. He was let off in the Supreme Court".

'Hamban' William, though regarded even by A. E. Goonesinha himself as a 'bit of a thug', was clearly a forceful personality who made his presence felt during the general strike of 1923. He spoke at most of the meetings of strikers, organised processions and demonstrations in Colombo and was active in urging other groups of workers to strike. At the beginning of the general strike he discounted the hardships that would result and said he was prepared to eat grass in order to continue the strike, and added that not only the humblest scavenging workers but even the birds would be going on strike. William alleged that he had been offered a bribe to take the workers away from Goonesinha, but said he would rather shoot himself than betray the workers. He also announced that though he had been dismissed from the Railways, he himself would "never go and work under the whites". William on many occasions during the strike thanked Goonesinha, proclaimed his loyalty to him and urged the Colombo workers to join the Ceylon Labour Union.

It is also of interest that some of the workers involved in the 1923 labour upsurge had been abroad as soldiers during the First World War. For example the police noted that one of Goonesinha's supporters was a



seaman named Albert Silva who had not only served in the War but had also been active in a strike in Britain. The chairman of the Port Commission also commented on this in a letter to the Colonial Secretary on the 1923 strike;

The strike seems to have been entirely due to the influence of an agitator and some of the bad characters in department, some of whom were men who had been employed on various fronts during the war and had therefore assimilated advanced notions.

The period 1893-1923 also marks the beginning of mass group activity by the urban proletariat. During the Buddhist revival, Bhikku Gunananda, Colonel Olcott and Anagarika Dharmapala had used the mass meeting as a means of demonstrating popular feeling on religious issues, and at the turn of the century, the urban and rural masses were drawn into mammoth temperance meetings and demonstrations which had a distinct political content. However, the first organised meeting of workers was held during the printers strike in 1893, at which a Printers Union was formed. The crowd estimated at four to five hundred printers and other urban workers, was watched over by five police inspectors and twenty constables. Dr. Lisboa Pinto, A. E. Buultjens, Martinus Perera and H. J. C. Pereira addressed the meeting. A contemporary description of this meeting said "The idea was certainly novel, startling, and to some, it almost seemed daring, for it was the first occasion in the history of this Island that the labourers were going to stand up for their rights."

There were also numerous meetings of the working-class during the strikes of laundrymen, carters and railway workers in Colombo. At the time of the 1912 strike, there was a new spirit of assertiveness among the railway workers. One news paper spoke of the 'jaunty spirit' of the strikers and added that after a mass meeting of workers, a Sinhalese

song was sung in chorus and a 'holiday feeling' prevailed. The most important meeting held during the 1912 railway strike was at the grounds of the Mahabodhi College, where the strikers were addressed, among others, by Walisinha Harischandra and Anagarika Dharmapala. A large crowd of enthusiastic workers participated at this meeting and cheered Dharmapala when he described strikes as "unmistakeable proof of the national spirit among the Sinhalese". But it was not until the 1923 general strike that the systematic use of mass meetings, processions, demonstrations, picketing, street corner and factory meetings was widely popularised by A. E. Goonesinha and the Ceylon Labour Union.

Among the several factors which emerge from this brief survey of working-class activity during the early phase of the labour movement is the assertiveness of the skilled, better paid workers over the unskilled, lesser paid group. Second is the willingness of this working-class 'elite' to assume leadership of the organised workers and direct operations during strikes. The third factor is the defiance of authority among these 'ringleaders', which in a period before an organised labour movement inevitably resulted in victimisation and personal hardship. It is understandable that the technically superior workers would be more conscious of their grievances and therefore more articulate. But the militancy of these workers in encouraging and leading strikes, thereby challenging the police, the government and the employers in an unequal struggle without the benefit of recognised, full-time, middle class trade union leaders, affords us another example of the radical potential of urban workers even in pre-capitalist conditions. The names of William of Caves, Haramanis the laundryman and the railway workers Marshall Appuhamy, Solomon Perera, George Silva, 'Yakka John' and 'Hamban' William, and many others deserve more than a footnote in Ceylon's social and political history, for they were the pioneers of labour agitation and the trade union movement.

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The material for this article has been obtained from the Report of the Railway Commission (Sessional Paper I of 1913), from police reports at the Ceylon Government Archives, contemporary newspaper reports and *Speeches and Writings* of Sir P. Arunachalam, (London 1928)



# Socialist Democracy and Internationalism

by ILIOS JANNAKAKIS

*(This is a translation by Intercontinental Press of an article that appeared in the Czechoslovakian Magazine, Literani Listy, on 18th June 1968)*

One of the most serious consequences of the so-called period of deformations was the debasement of "proletarian internationalism among the masses to a meaningless slogan, to opportune and opportunistic propaganda. This reduction of internationalism as **action involvement** and a **moral value** to a conventional "pose" established by directives and devoid of initiative helped in large measure to produce a total stagnation of political life.

This process of the debasement of proletarian internationalism has its origins in the Stalinist policy towards the individual communist movements. An unalterable principle of this policy can be expressed this way: in serving the immediate interests of the Soviet Union, you serve the long term interests of the world proletariat.

This principle took the form of a dogma excluding any consideration of the interests of the other Communist movements. Unquestioning subordination of the world movement to a single centre (the Comintern and later the Cominform) meant that the Communist parties were sacrificed. The Communists in foreign countries were placed in a dilemma. They had to defend a policy often in contradiction to their own tactical objectives.

Total fusion of parties and states in a series of countries make it virtually impossible for Communists to take any position of their own in regard to international events. In a broader sense, the solidarity of various layers of the population with this or that development was only an expression of diplomatic relations among states, not a demonstration of any real moral or other involvement in concrete struggles of democrats in other countries.

It is one of the most tragic paradoxes in the socialist world that neither Communists nor other citizens receive accurate, objective information about what is going on in other revolutionary movements. What is worse, they get "tendentious" information totally out of line with reality. This lack

of information combined with the almost complete indifference of a people enmeshed in primitive "economism" whose indifference is magnified by a feeling of absolute helplessness with regard to changing anything in their country—all these factors nourished a narrow blind nationalism of the worst variety and made an anti-internationalist of socialist man.

Another important manifestation of this distortion of proletarian internationalism should also be stressed—mistrust. The terrible heritage of Stalinism has caused more damage to the Communist movement than all the direct attacks of the class enemy.

The fate of the foreign Communists who took refuge in the USSR before the war is still shrouded in tragic mystery. A foreign Communist was immediately doubly suspect as a foreigner and as a Communist. This is a further paradox which should be explained to the socialist public. This distrust also extends to the other socialist countries. As a result visits by "unofficial" foreign Communists, that is those not officially recommended by their respective parties, were limited as much as possible.

These obviously are some of the more superficial manifestations of the debasement of internationalism. The deeper cause of this policy of "directives" which deformed all expressions of solidarity and aid—which "rectified" whole lectures and resolutions and, most importantly, ignored the intellectuals and students (two of the most active social strata in the West)—was the great gap between the words and deeds of the Communist parties which had achieved power.

On the other hand, it cannot be forgotten that the Socialist world has helped the great postwar revolutionary movement materially and politically and is continuing to do so. Such help, however, is often given not only to real progressive movements but to openly antisocialist states and governments as well. All this is "justified" by economic or diplomatic considerations.



Such justification, however, further confuses and discredits the concept of proletarian internationalism; it deprives it of its ethic, and this is all the more true because there is often an attempt to suppress everything that does not conform strictly to the line being advanced. Sapped by its contradictions, this deformed concept of internationalism becomes a mere meaningless slogan in the minds of the masses, which often merely covers up the expedients of an immoral policy.

There are many examples of this. Let us mention only the most outrageous. Except for one good article by J. Boucka in *Plamen* (1963) and a short note in *Rude Pravo*, not a single word has ever been said about the fate of the Egyptian Communists under Nasser, about the terrible concentration camps in the desert, or about the use of torture in questioning, or about the Egyptian police being directed by Nazi war criminals. Nor was anything said about the fate of the Syrian Communists at the height of the Egyptian-Syrian union.

Reports smuggled out of the Egyptian prisons, statements exposing the arbitrary actions of the military government, and, of course, resolutions of illegal organizations received no notice in the Socialist world. Even in the case of Ben Bella and the Algerian Communists, there was not one "guideline" to arouse public opinion, not one committee went to work to determine what was going on or to appeal for justice on behalf of political prisoners.

The situation was all the more senseless because the official propaganda of the Socialist countries praised governments which the Arab Communists sharply criticized. Instead of public analysis of the complex problems of the regimes in those countries, myths were fostered. No one should be surprised that these myths had to be paid for dearly later on.

There is also the case of Vietnam. And here in this concrete case we must make a comparison with the situation in the West. If any event has aroused public opinion in the West, it has been that war. We find Vietnam everywhere, on the streetcorners, in the newspapers, in meetings. This subject stands out in all discussions. The public is provided with detailed information

on all aspects of the War. The West is involved in the War and demonstrations of solidarity there are not gestures but means of applying real pressure.

The lofty calm that reigns in the rest of Europe (the East) on this subject contrasts starkly. It must be stated that Socialist public opinion has remained outside this outspoken movement of solidarity. The organized meetings and resolutions have expressed only "guidelines" from the top and have been strikingly cool.

The same is true for Greece. There is a yawning gap between the feverish activity in the west and the indifference in the Socialist countries. Public opinion in the western countries is outraged at the coup d'état and there are stormy demonstrations of solidarity with the Greek democrats. In the other countries (of Eastern Europe) there is almost a total lack of the most elementary solidarity.

Latin America, differences in the revolutionary movement, Che Guevara, the Tricontinental Congress, and the Cuban policy are spoken of only in whispers. It was a long time before even a little reliable information about China began to appear and the situation is not much better with respect to Africa.

The lack of information, the initiative, the immediate interests of state diplomacy combined with "directives" from the party apparatus, the narrow economism that marked the mentality of the people—all these separate deformations together created an atmosphere of total resignation in which everything was run from above. This resulted in a demobilization of public opinion on national problems which in turn caused all strata of the population to lose any sense of internationalism.

Today, when the democratization of public life is giving the Czechoslovak people experience in international affairs, the demand is arising among the broadest strata of the nation—though still timidly—for support from world progressive opinion. And, at the same time, the people are becoming conscious that they cannot remain indifferent to developments affecting other countries.

*(Continued on page 107)*



# Private Sector in Education (Part I)

by SYDNEY WANASINGHE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In our educational structure are found both Government Schools and Private Schools. Of the school going children roughly 92% are found in the Government sector while about 8% only are found in the private sector. This latter figure does not include those children receiving pre-school education and those attending Private Tutories and Academies. No figures are yet available from these two types of schools.

The Private Sector itself is sub-divided into two categories. In the first are the Priverna Schools, the Estate Schools and the handful of Assisted Schools that have managed to survive. They receive financial assistance from the State while their administration is in the hands of private individuals and organisations. They also come under the supervision and control of the Department of Education. But this control is much less than that which existed in regard to the former Assisted Denominational Schools. It has been made even more ineffective as the Department of Education is unable to handle the schools that are directly under its management. Falling into the second category are the Fee Levying Private Schools, Non Fee Levying Private Schools, Nursery Schools and Tutories and Academies which do not receive any form of State assistance and are almost virtually outside any sort of Government supervision and control.

Even though the Private Sector has now been reduced to an insignificant position as far as numbers are concerned, until a few years back it formed the mainstay of our educational system. It shrank in size, stature and importance as State control in education gradually expanded. State control has had a long and chequered career. It has had its ups and downs; periods of development, stagnation and decline, and

once again development following each other in erratic fashion. If we trace its history right to the advent of the British we find that at times the State tried to divest itself of this responsibility and at other times to share it with the Private Sector. When the Private Sector found itself unable to meet the financial commitments of the responsibility it had undertaken on its own accord, the State came to its assistance. This enabled the Private Sector not only to continue its work but expand its activities as well. This acceptance of financial assistance from the State paved the way for State supervision in the first instance and control later on. Until recent times the Private Sector was mainly confined to Missionary enterprise. The interests of the various Missionary organisations in Education was the result of the desire on their part to propagate their religion. The State at the early stages entrusted the responsibility of managing its schools to the Anglican Church. The Christian Missionary Organisations had the field of education almost to themselves up to the granting of Universal suffrage in 1931. These Missions had the active support of the State in their educational efforts. This structure had within itself the seeds of its own decay. It led to rivalry amongst Missionary organisations. It resulted in the emergence and rapid development of, in the first instance, anti-Protestant and later anti-Christian feeling in the country. It gave an impetus to the indigenous nationalist movement. It caused a revival of our national culture as opposed to that fostered by the Christian Missionaries. This revival accelerated the development of the movement for political independence, and continues to dominate the political and social life of the country even to this day. Resulting from these consequences, the Private Sector caused itself to shrink to a shadow of its former image, ineffective and impotent, looking back to its "glorious" past for sustenance in the days ahead.



The various types of schools which together form the Private Sector are the outcome of acts of commission and omission on the part of the State vacillating between divided loyalties and therefore acting without a clear perspective in the field of education. A perusal of the past, in this context, is necessary for a proper understanding of the present.

## 2. FROM 1796 TO 1831

The Maritime Provinces of Ceylon were captured by the British in 1796. Up to 1798 these territories were administered by Military Officers appointed by and responsible to the British East India Company operating from Madras. With profit as the principal motive they worked towards establishing firm control over the newly acquired territory. In this process they persecuted the Dutch Missionaries who besides their Church work were also engaged in Education. Having only a very temporary interest in the Island these Military Officers did not take any interest in the maintenance of schools. This period therefore, is one of complete neglect in the field of Education.

A change occurred with the appointment of Governor North in October 1798. He took an interest in Education. He repealed the laws of religious persecution which were directed at the Dutch clergy. Being a devoted Christian he emphasised the religious value in Education. With this motive in mind he tried to reorganise the schools. As he did not have sufficient Englishmen to undertake this work he engaged the services of Dutch Clergymen to teach in schools. Captain James Cordiner of the British Army was brought down to the Island to be in charge of education. The old Parish Schools set up by the Dutch were revived. Very soon there were 170 of these Parish Schools teaching the three 'R's and Religious Knowledge in Sinhalese and Tamil. Earlier the teachers of these schools depended on the fees they obtained from the registering of marriages and births for their subsistence. This dependence was done away with, when a system of payment of salaries to teachers was inaugurated. As a result of these measures the expenditure on education rose to £5000 a year.

This increased expenditure attracted the attention of the British Government and came in for criticism. As a result the order was given in 1803 to cut down the vote on education from £5000 to £1500. In August 1803, payment of Salaries to country School Masters and Catechists in the Colombo District was terminated. Payment of salaries to teachers in Parish Schools was also stopped. In January 1804, Governor North reported to the Secretary of State for Colonies, the suppression of Government Parish Schools. Thus for the second time the British abandoned their responsibility for education; and education in the Maritime Provinces once again fell into neglect. The School Masters however continued to function as Registrars of Births and Deaths, for which function they received fees from the people.

This situation was soon brought to the notice of the British Government. Dr. Caludius Buchanan, a Missionary in Bengal, published in 1806, an account of his travels. In this account he stated that the Protestant religion was extinct in Ceylon. He disclosed that due to the closing down of schools many of the converts to Protestant Christianity had reverted to their old faiths. Wilberforce and others brought up this question in the British Parliament and demanded of the Government to take a keener interest in education. North and Cordiner who were in England at this time also joined in this agitation. Criticism was directed at the administration of Governor Maitland. In September 1808 he was asked to explain the concern prevailing in England at that time over the neglect of Christianity and Education in the Island. One of the first steps taken by Maitland after he was taken to task on this question was to appoint a Committee for superintending the Schools. This Committee was set up in October 1809. This revival of interest in education sent up the costs from 950 Rix Dollars in 1808 to 2284 Rix Dollars in 1809. <sup>1</sup>

Maitland had to leave the Island in 1811 due to ill health, and was therefore unable to go through with his plans for the revival of education in the Island. He was succeeded by Governor Brownrigg, appro-

1. Dr. T. Ranjith Ruberu, *Education in Colonial Ceylon*, p. 105



priately described as a "friend of Christianity". He was fortunate to have had clear instructions from the home Government to promote religion and education in the Island. In addition he was also fortunate to have been at the helm of affairs at a time when a number of Missionary Societies turned their attention to Ceylon. Maitland had removed the disabilities that had been imposed on Roman Catholics. Missionaries from the London Missionary Society had come to Ceylon in 1805. But Missionary activity in the field of education started in earnest only with the arrival of Baptist Missionaries in 1812. They were followed by Missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of London in 1814 and the American Mission in 1816.

In 1818 the Archdeaconry of Colombo was established under the initiative of Governor Brownrigg. The Archdeacon became the Superintendent of all Government Schools and his Senior Chaplain acted as the Principal of Schools. In this manner the Church of England was made responsible for the administration of education on behalf of the State. This privileged position enjoyed by the Anglican Church in the field of Education and the partiality shown towards it by the State was to be a source of friction later on.

Another significant feature during the tenure of office of Governor Brownrigg was the growth of Private enterprise in the field of education. These Private Schools provided education in the English medium and their rapid development shows the demand for English education that existed at that time. They were established by individuals and fees were levied for the instruction provided.

The appointment of Barnes as Governor in 1820 brought about a change in the educational policy of the Government. He was positively hostile to the American Mission and obstructed their work in the Island. He had the backing of the Home Government for this attitude. Both Governor Barnes and the home Government were of the opinion that the religious wants of Ceylon should be

supplied by the Ministers of the Established Church and not by foreign missions.<sup>2</sup> Governor Barnes strongly disliked the teaching of Christianity to non-Christians. He declared that the purpose of schools was not to convert but to promote literacy in the mother tongue. In keeping with this idea he abolished the posts of Catechists in 1820. Until then these Catechists had supervised the work of teachers. This led to a decline of State Schools and by 1830 most of them had closed down. The Missionaries complained to the Home Government against the lack of interest in education shown by the Governor. Consequently Governor Barnes was reprimanded and compelled to revoke his earlier policy.

The neglect to which the Government Parish Schools had fallen into can be seen from the stern directive given by Rev. Norman Garstin to his Catechists, which is quoted below. Rev. Garstin was confirmed as Principal in 1827. "The shameful neglect of the Government Schools, I must attribute, to the inattention of the proponents in charge of them. I therefore preremptorily require that you will be very punctual in visiting all schools within your districts quarterly at least and report to me at your return from such visits. I expect to see schools of your districts very soon improved and I warn you that I will hold you responsible for all neglect of masters in your district in future."<sup>3</sup>

### 3. THE COLEBROOKE COMMISSION —1831.

The Colebrooke Commission is a landmark in Political, Economic, Social as well as Educational Development of the Island. It marks the beginning of Constitutional Government in Ceylon. It set up a Legislative Council of 15 Members, 9 Officials and 6 Unofficials, which lasted without a basic change till 1910. The abolition of Rajakariya and Service Tenure as a result of its recommendations paved the way for the transition of our economy from feudalism. These two measures helped the rapid expansion of our plantations. The provision for the representation of the

2. Dr. T. Ranjith Ruberu, *Education in Colonial Ceylon*, p 161

3. L. J. Gratien, *Government Schools in Ceylon, 1798—1832*, p 37



newly emerging plantation interests in the Legislature made it possible for them to influence its decisions right from the beginning of the plantation era. The recommendations of the Commission on Edu-

cation held good for a period of nearly 50 years. During the period of its investigations the school structure of the Island was as follows:

Status	Year	Schools	Children	Percentage
Baptist Mission .. ..	1827	15	606	
Wesleyan Mission .. ..	1833	90	4365	
American Mission .. ..	1833	78	3095	
C.M.S. .. ..	1833	53	1810	
<b>Protestant Mission Schools</b> ..		<b>236</b>	<b>9876</b>	<b>46%</b>
Roman Catholic Schools ..	1828	63	1358	6%
Private Schools .. ..	—	640	8424	39%
Buddhist Temple Schools ..	1827	94	—	—
Government Parish Schools ..	1828	97	1914	9%

It is interesting to note that in 1831 the Private sector catered to 91% of the student population while the Government Sector had only 9%. The latter figure would have been even smaller if the students attending the Buddhist Temple Schools had been taken into account. Today, after 140 years, the position is almost exactly the reverse, The Government Sector being 92% and the Private Sector only 8%.

The Parish Schools were found only in the coastal areas. There were no Parish Schools in the Kandyan districts. The ones in the coastal areas were mainly revivals of the old Dutch Parish Schools. They were all under the Archdeacon who was stationed at Colombo. As such they were not properly supervised. Their staff had been reduced during the time of Governor Barnes, who in 1824 suppressed the posts of second Schoolmaster. The fact that the Schoolmasters had to function as Registrars of births and marriages prevented them from devoting their full time to teaching. Besides the Parish Schools the Government maintained one other school, the Seminary or the Academy, where English was taught.

Colebrooke commented as follows on the Government Schools. "The number of Government Schools nominally maintained in the Sinhalese areas is 90. There are but

4 remaining in the Malabar districts and there are none in the Kandyan provinces. The School masters are required to understand the English Language of which many are totally ignorant and they are very often extremely unfit for their situations. Nothing is taught in the schools but reading in the native languages and writing in the native characters and as the control exercised is insufficient to secure the attendance either of the masters or of the scholars, many abuses prevail and the Government Schools, in several instances exist only in name, children being assembled occasionally for inspection, many of whom have received instruction in the Schools of the Missionaries of which the Government School Masters are alleged to be jealous" <sup>4</sup>

The number of Private Schools at this time was ascertained to be 640. But they had only 8424 students on roll. This gives an average of 13 students per school. Thus most of these Private Schools were really very small schools with an attendance of 5 or 6 children in each. Only 202 students of the total of 8424 were girls. The boys accounted for 97.6% of the total in Private Schools. They were sent to these schools to receive an English Education which would later help them to find employment. Even though the Private Schools were modest establishments with a very limited number of students, they were use-

4. Dr. G. C. Mendis, *Colebrooke and Cameron Papers*, p 72



ful centres as they provided instruction in the English medium. The fact that they catered to a need is seen from the fact that they developed rapidly despite the fees they levied. The first Private School was started in 1818, but within 13 years their number had increased to 640. Teaching of English was the main attraction of these schools. The Missionary Societies were mainly interested in conversion to their respective sects. With this purpose in view they concentrated their attention on Vernacular education. As such the Private Schools had no rivals in the field of English Education.

The 63 Schools classified as Roman Catholic Schools had nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Church. They were all run by individuals and levied fees. 23 of these Schools were for Sinhalese children and 40 for Tamil Children. The Roman Catholics were the pioneers of Missionary Education in Ceylon. But the Dutch rigorously enforced a policy of persecution of Roman Catholic Missionaries, when they succeeded the Portuguese as the rulers of the Maritime Provinces. This policy motivated by political as well as religious reasons was continued in the early years of the British period. As a result the Roman Catholics ceased to count in the field of education from the middle of the 17th to about the middle of the 19th century, a period of nearly two hundred years. It was only in the third quarter of the 19th century that the Roman Catholic church was able to re-start its own system of schools, which in course of time, surpassed those of all other organisations in the country.

The Buddhist Temple Schools were run by Buddhist monks and constituted what was left of the indigenous system of schools. They numbered 94, according to the statistics that were provided for the commission. The Colebrooke Commission did not pay much attention to these schools.

The most important sector from the point of view of numbers and their influence in the country were the Protestant Mission schools. There were 236 schools in this

category and they had 9876 children on roll. The four Missionary Organisations, the Baptists, the Methodists, the American Mission and the CMS were very active in the field of education. They had the money, the personnel, the influence and the assistance from the Government to further their activities. The Government helped them in several ways, particularly in granting them land and directing them to places where they could be most useful. Apart from the opposition shown by Governor Barnes towards the American Mission, the relationship between the Government and the Missions was extremely cordial. This Missionary effort which dates back to as early as 1812 marks the beginning of the Private Sector in Education.

Having examined the school structure, the Colebrooke Commissioners recommended as follows. "It would facilitate the reform of the Government schools to place the establishment under the immediate direction of a Commission composed of the Archdeacon and Clergy of the Island, the Agents of Government in the Districts and some of the principal Civil and Judicial functionaries at the seat of Government. It would be the duty of those resident in the districts to inspect and superintend the schools in their respective divisions and to report on their efficiency and their management. The Schoolmasters should be appointed on the recommendations of the Commission and should in all instances be required to possess a competent knowledge of English to enable them to give instruction in that language." 5

The Commission also expressed satisfaction with the Missionary effort. They recommended the prohibition of the establishment of Government Schools in areas where the Christian Missions had already set up schools. This proposal of the Commission made the Christian Missions the exclusive authorities for education in certain areas. This greatly facilitated the expansion of Missionary activity in the field of education.



#### 4. THE PERIOD OF THE TWO SCHOOL COMMISSIONS (1831-69)

The Government Parish Schools were closed down in 1832 on the recommendations of the Colebrooke Commission. These schools had imparted vernacular education. The Government now entered the field of English education and set up five English Schools in Colombo, Galle, Jaffna, Kandy and Chilaw. In 1836 the Colombo Academy was founded and this institution was later renamed, Royal College. These Government Schools were handed over to the Government Chaplain and their management was entrusted to the Archdeacon in 1832. By 1839 the number of Government Schools had increased to 35.

The School Commission was set up in May 1834 to supervise these schools, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Colebrooke Commission. The Archdeacon was the President of this Commission. The Government Agent of the Western Province, The Auditor General, the Treasurer, the Members of the Anglican Clergy resident in Colombo were ex-officio members of this Commission. Sub-committees were also appointed on the same pattern in Galle, Kandy, Trincomalee and Jaffna. This Commission proved to be a failure. Of the various Missionary organisations engaged in educational work in the Island at that time, only the Anglicans were represented in this Commission. This led to jealousy and discontent amongst the other Missions who represented matters to the Secretary of State for Colonies. As a result of these representations, the Commission was re-constituted.

In 1841, the Central School Commission for the Instruction of the Population of Ceylon was set up in place of the School Commission. It was more broadbased and Comprised the following members.

1. A Clergyman of the Church of England,
2. A Presbyterian Minister,
3. A Roman Catholic Priest or Layman,
4. Four Representatives of the Christian Missions,
5. The Government Agent of the Western Province,

6. An Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council, and
7. Two others, one of whom had to be the Auditor General.

Sub-committees on the same pattern were set up in the Provinces. The Central School Commission reduced the power of the Church of England. All Missions were represented in it. It had a paid Secretary. It published reports regularly. The distribution of grants was vested in the Commission. These grants were paid only to English Schools. To be eligible for grants they had to have a minimum of 30 students. The Schools were inspected for the payment of grants. The Secretary of the Commission was appointed the Inspector of Schools and was in charge of recommending the amount of grant to be paid to each school. He had a number of Superintendents to assist him. These changes that were effected followed the pattern of those that took place in England during this time. In 1839, the distribution of the Government grant for Education in England which hitherto had been entrusted to religious bodies was handed over to a Committee of the Privy Council. This Committee tried to raise the standard of the schools by giving grants according to recommendations made by Inspectors who visited the schools. \*

There was progress in education under the Central School Commission. Its work was facilitated by the affluence which accrued from the boom in the Coffee industry during the early forties. The vote on Education increased during this period from £2,999 in 1841 to £11,415 in 1847.

But it also faced a short period of crisis. After 1845 differences began to emerge in the Commission. The Rebellion of 1848 disorganised the activities of the Commission to some extent. The Coffee crash towards the end of the forties compelled the Commission to cut down its expenditure. The Commission attempted to economise on the expenditure by reducing drastically the staff of the English Schools, raising the tuition fees in English Schools and levying a small fee in the Vernacular Schools.

6. Dr. G. C. Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British*, p. 77



The increase of fees reduced the attendance in schools. By 1851 the financial position improved and further measures to save on expenditure became unnecessary.

In the report of the Central School Commission for the year 1862 it is stated that the consideration of applications for grants occupied the greater part of its time during the year under review. In 1861 the following rules regarding the payment of grants to schools were approved by the Commission and were put into effect.

1. Make such grants impartially to all schools which imparted a sound secular education.
2. Grants to be paid only to those schools that levied fees, and that also not in excess of the amounts collected by the schools from other sources.

The circular laying down these conditions is dated 5-2-1861 and is signed by John F. Dickson, the Secretary to the Central School Commission. <sup>7</sup>

According to clause 1 of this circular the schools had to adhere to the following conditions regarding religious instruction if they were to receive grants.

1. They could devote only the 1st hour of the day to impart religious instruction. This was to enable the children of unlike denominations to come to school after religious instruction was over.

2. They could not engage in denominational activity. They could only teach the Bible.
3. Any child whose parents objected to the teaching of religion could remain out of class during that time.

There was opposition to these conditions from the Missionary organisations. This opposition came mainly from Jaffna where the Grants in Aid system was first introduced. The Government Schools in Jaffna were found to be so inefficient that they were closed down in 1842. Under these circumstances the Central School Commission advised the Missionary organisations in Jaffna to become the agents of the Government and administer such funds as could be assigned for schools in the Province. This fact, that the Missionaries had come to the assistance of the Government at the request of the latter, was pointed out by the Missionaries of the church Mission in Jaffna in a letter addressed to the Central School Commission. In this letter dated 9th September 1861 they appealed for the Continuation of the old system regarding the payment of grants. This request was refused by the Commission by letter dated 2nd October 1861, on the grounds that they cannot make any exception to the rules. <sup>8</sup> As a result of this decision the Church Missionary Society in Jaffna severed its connections with the Central School Commission and became Independent. The position of the Grant in Aid schools during this period was as follows.

	1861	1867
No: of Grant in Aid Schools	27	18
No: of students	1677	1281
Grant paid by the Government	£ 792. 1. 2	£ 830. 1. 6
Fees collected by the School	£ 699. 14. 1	£ 581. 17. 11
Subscriptions collected by the School	£ 615. 15. 3	£ 972. 18. 2
Total income of the Schools	£ 2107. 10. 6	£ 2384. 17. 7

7. Report of the Central School Commission, 1862

8. Report of the Central School Commission, 1862



These figures show that roughly one third the income of the Grants in Aid Schools came from the State. Without this assistance, maintenance of these Schools would have been a very difficult task. The figures also show that although with the defection of the schools belonging to the Church Missionary Society in Jaffna, the number of schools receiving grant and the number of children benefitting from

this scheme showed a considerable drop, the amount of grant paid by the Government and the annual income of the schools showed an increase. The shortfall in the fees collected was more than compensated for by the income from the other two sources.

The School structure during this period was as follows.

	No: of Schools			No: of Students		
	1857	1861	1862	1857	1861	1862
1. Government Schools	99	106	109	3753	5807	5518
2. Aided Schools	15	27	18	681	1677	1424
3. Orphan Schools	2	2	2	30	43	49
4. Regimental Schools	11	15	15	408	786	822
5. Free Schools	315	359	309	13428	14124	12087
6. Private Schools	873	602	784	5163	5477	5508

A change in the pattern is seen when we compare these figures with those at the time of the Colebrooke Commission. Some of the Missionary Schools which provided an English Education are now categorised as Aided Schools while those providing Vernacular Education are referred to as Free Schools. The Schools run by Private Individuals, classified as Private Schools have increased in number, but the number of students on roll in these schools has more or less remained constant. The total number of students on roll shows an increase of roughly 4000 since 1831. This increase has swelled the numbers in Government Schools and increased the percentage of students catered to by the Government Sector from 9% in 1831 to 20% in 1862.

Two decades of work of the Central School Commission showed the need for further reform. The Central School Commission was a voluntary body and this proved to be its main weakness. The combination of Government and Missionary effort in education was also considered unsatisfactory and the Legislative Council appointed a sub-committee to inquire into and report upon, "the state and prospects of education in the Island, and the amount of success which has attained the working of the present system of education." This Committee appointed in 1865 is known as the Morgan Committee.

#### 5. FROM 1869 TO 1900

In its report issued in 1867 the Morgan Committee made the following recommendations.

1. Elementary Education in Sinhalese and Tamil should be undertaken by the Government on a large scale. More Government schools should be set up, but greater encouragement should also be given to denominational bodies.
2. The rules as to religious instruction in Grants in Aid Schools should be revoked so as to leave all religious bodies free to teach religion as they pleased.
3. The School Commission should be abolished and a Department of Public Instruction under a Director of Public Instruction be established.

These recommendations favoured the rapid development of Denominational schools. With the emphasis on Vernacular Education as recommended by the Committee, the efforts of the Government were channeled in that direction and English Education was once again handed over to the Private Sector. It was considered that Primary Education should be in the Ver-



naricular, whence gradually the medium should be changed to English. In keeping with this policy the English Elementary Schools were abolished. The new Grants in Aid Scheme without a "Conscience Clause" was a great impetus to Protestant Christian Missionary Activity. They were allowed to progress at the expense of the unprivileged, i.e. the Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and the Roman Catholics. The state of education on the eve of the implementation of these recommendations of the Morgan Committee has been described as follows:

"By 1870 two Educational Systems were working side by side in Ceylon. There was a Government system of Undenominational Schools and there were the schools of the various Missions working for the most part independently of the Government. These two systems were not rivals, the Missions having few English and many Vernacular Schools and the Government more English and few Vernacular Schools. The Missions could not afford to have expensive English Schools themselves. They believed that Vernacular education answered their purpose better and they felt secure as to Government Schools as these were supervised by the School Commission in which they were well represented." <sup>9</sup>

Mr. T. S. Laurie, the first Director of Public Instruction found the Grants in Aid scheme very unsatisfactory and suggested a number of changes. These suggestions were opposed by the Missionaries. This led to their being rejected and Mr. Laurie retired after about two years. He was succeeded by Mr. Sendall who implemented some of Laurie's proposals in an amended form. Payment of Grants by results was introduced by him. A price value was fixed for every subject that was taught in the schools for the purpose of the Grant. Payment was on the basis of passes in each subject. This system continued until about 1920. But there were changes made subsequently regarding the amount paid. This system was a great impetus to Missionary effort and led to a considerable increase in Missionary activity in the field of Education. It also led to competition between the various missionary organisations and resulted in wastage. The Government, however, welcomed Missionary effort in education

as it supplemented theirs. It therefore allocated various parts of the country to various missions. In this granting of State assistance the most favoured lot were the Anglicans.

The Coffee crash occurred in 1880 and the Government was faced with an acute financial problem. At this stage an attempt was made to enlist the support of the Local Authorities to share the burden of education. Ordinance No: 33 of 1884 made provision for the Municipalities and other Local Authorities to take over Government English schools and run them as Aided schools. They were also permitted by this Ordinance to levy a rate to defray the expenses they would have to meet in this regard. The Missionary organisations did not like to have a potential rival in the field of education. They protested against the levying of a rate for educational purposes and pointed out that if a rate were to be levied the education imparted should not be secular. Only the Galle Municipality and the Puttalam Urban Council agreed to undertake the running of schools. But when the provision for an educational rate was removed under pressure from the Missionaries, the Galle Municipality backed out of the scheme. Thus the first attempt to hand over a share of the responsibility for education to Local Authorities was effectively thwarted by self seeking Missionary Organisations.

Mr. H. W. Green who was the Director of Public Instruction at this time promoted vernacular education. He suggested the equalisation of grants for English and Vernacular schools. Due to differences in the amounts paid there was a tendency for everyone to register their schools as English Schools even though they were not properly equipped to do so. He also introduced a system of bi-lingualism where some subjects were taught in the Vernacular and Reading, Writing, Grammar, Composition and in some cases Arithmetic was taught in English. The children were to express the substance of their lessons in the Vernacular as well. In 1885, twenty one Government English Schools were closed down. Only three English Schools, namely, the Colombo Academy, Railway Night School and the School of Agriculture remained

9. L. J. Gratien, English Schools in Ceylon,



in the hands of the Government. The schools that were closed down were taken over by the Missions and run as Grant in Aid Schools. In 1885 there were 25 Anglo-Vernacular Schools run by the Government. In 1889 these schools switched over to Green's system of bi-lingualism. Those that could not switch over became Vernacular Schools. By 1897 only 7 Anglo-Vernacular schools remained.

The abandonment of the English Schools by the Government, left the field of English Education open to the Missions. Earlier they were content with Vernacular Education as it served their purpose of proletianization. Further the cost of English Education was too much for them to undertake it on a large scale. Now with the development of the Grant in Aid system they were able to undertake English Education, augmenting their income with the fees they were permitted to collect. These Missions had the additional advantage of being able to get down from abroad the personnel experienced in the field of education.

Consequently in the last quarter of the 19th Century we see a rapid expansion of English Education in the Island. A number of schools were opened up in Colombo and the provincial towns by the Missions to provide English Education. These Schools which were well managed and well equipped were gradually developed on the pattern of Public Schools in England. They tried to maintain the same traditions in their school life as well as the content of their curriculum. Thus emerged the beginning of class education in Ceylon which was to play a vital role in the Social, Economic and Political development of the country in the decades to come. The following were some of the pioneers of this school system that was founded in the 19th Century.

Jaffna Central College	...	...	...	1834
St. Thomas' College, Colombo	...	...	...	1851
St. Benedict's College, Colombo	...	...	...	1865
Central College, Batticaloa	...	...	...	1870
Kandy Collegiate School	...	...	...	1872
Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai	...	...	...	1872
Wesley College, Colombo	...	...	...	1874
Richmond College, Galle	...	...	...	1877

Prince of Wales College, Moratuwa	...	...	...	1879
Kandy Girls' School	...	...	...	1879
St. Patrick's College, Jaffna	...	...	...	1881
Good Shepherd Convent, Colombo	...	...	...	1881
Museus School, Colombo	...	...	...	1894
St. Joseph's College, Colombo	...	...	...	1896

We find this impressive list of former Grant Aided Schools still dominating the Private Sector in Education. As the National Education Commission has remarked, they are, "indeed citadels of privilege albeit their protestations of freedom and democracy and are being maintained for the protection of vested interests of one sort or another" <sup>10</sup> They catered to the elite in our society and contributed towards the building up of a parasitic social class separated from the masses. These schools met the desire on the part of the people to obtain an English Education. The Government, unwilling to bear this burden, readily handed it over to the Private Sector.

The Private Sector was not without its problems. There was rivalry among the Missions in the improvement of their own Schools. In this matter "perfect competition" gave way to "cut-throat competition". Some schools reduced fees to attract students. This in turn reduced the income of the schools and led to a deterioration of their standards. This caught the attention of the Government.

Mr. H. W. Green, stated in his Administrative Report, that, "It is a false kindness to poor scholars in general in this country to give free or nearly free English Education indiscriminately as it creates an unsettled class of aspiring youths for whom there is no employment to be found in the Colony" <sup>11</sup> While the competition between schools increased the number of students catered to by them, it created another problem to the Government, that of finding employment to a increasing number of school leavers. The statement quoted above, shows, that the attempt to curtail educational facilities in order to avert the problem of literate unemployed is not a recent phenomenon. The line of thinking of the ruling class on this question seems to have been, that the less educated the unemployed are the less dangerous they would be. But ironically,

10. The Final Report of the National Education Commission, Sessional Paper XVII of 1962, p. 135.

11. The Administrative Report of the Director of Public Instruction for the year 1885, p. 77



the truth very often, is just the opposite. The competition among schools to attract more students by lowering their fees, reduced their income, and as a result these schools were compelled to cut down their expenditure. The salaries of Teachers were reduced and this affected the quality of the Staff employed. The schools also engaged in various malpractices to obtain a higher grant than they were in fact entitled to. They also engaged in various attempts to advertise their respective institutions in order to increase their numbers.

This situation also resulted in a reaction from those who professed the indigenous faiths, the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Muslims. The Sessional Paper XXXIII of 1898 makes the following references to this development. "With the Buddhist Theosophical Movement in 1886 the Buddhist Community awakened to the responsibilities to their co-religionists, that the

presence of well organised and successful proselytizing societies could no longer permit them to shut their eyes to. A society was formed to resist the inroads of the foreign faiths and by the establishment of Buddhist Schools for Buddhist children to narrow the scope and opportunities of the opponents of their religion. The apathy which for these long years contented itself with a policy of inactivity was shaken off and in ten years time, 63 Buddhist Schools have been registered under the movement of the Buddhist Theosophical Society." <sup>12</sup>

The Saiva Paripalana Sabha was formed in 1888 to promote Hindu Education. Soon the Muslim Community also followed the example set by these two groups of indigenous religious communities. As a result of the activities of these religious groups we get quite a different picture of the School structure at the turn of the Century in 1899.

### The School Structure in 1899

	Schools	Children
<b>Grant in Aid—Indigenous</b>		
Buddhist .. .. .	120	15,378
Saivite & Private .. .. .	57	6,195
Muslim .. .. .	4	403
	<hr/> 181	<hr/> 21,976
<b>Grant in Aid—Foreign Missions</b>		
Presbyterian .. .. .	2	281
American Mission .. .. .	130	9,415
Baptist .. .. .	24	2,025
Church Missionary Society .. .. .	244	14,316
Church of England .. .. .	81	8,198
Roman Catholic .. .. .	308	32,131
Methodist .. .. .	293	22,803
	<hr/> 1,082	<hr/> 89,169
<b>Government Schools</b> .. .. .	489	47,482
<b>Unaided Schools</b>		
English .. .. .	43	2,633
Vernacular .. .. .	1,844	32,208
	<hr/> 1,887	<hr/> 34,841



The indigenous religious bodies which had no educational institutions fifteen years ago had 11% of the education in their hands now. But reckoned as to their proportion in the population this percentage is quite insignificant.

The total number on roll in all the educational institutions in 1862 was 25,408. By 1899 it had increased to 199,468, an increase of 661%. This led to a remarkable improvement in the standard of literacy in the country.

"On an examination of the literacy figures.... it is seen that the Christians are the best educated community. More than half the Christian men and one third the Christian women were able to read and write.... The Buddhists too show a considerable increase in the number of literate.... of late years, thanks to Colonel Olcott, the Buddhist community has awakened from its lethargy and made great advance in the spread of instruction. There are now Buddhist schools throughout the Island under the management of the Buddhist Theosophical Society founded by him and really good work is done by them. The Mohammadans occupy the third place. Among the Hindus the presence of a large illiterate cooly population from South India has reduced the percentage of literacy, but the indigenous Hindus compare favourably with the followers of other religions." <sup>13</sup>

In 1896 a Board of Education consisting of the following was appointed to advise the Director of Public Instruction on questions connected with the working of Grant in Aid Schools. It was to consist of the following.

1. The Director of Public Instruction (*Chairman*)
2. A Clergyman of the Church of England.
3. A Clergyman of the Wesleyan Mission
4. A Roman Catholic
5. A Lay Buddhist.
6. The Head of Royal College
7. The Head of Technical College
8. The Chief Inspector of Schools, Western Province.

This Board of Education continued until very recently with changes made from time to time. It became a threat and an obstacle to the Executive Committee of Education constituted after the formation of the State Council in 1931. It lost much of its power and importance after the Ordinance No: 31 of 1939.

There was a rapid expansion of education after the formation of the Department of Public Instruction in 1867. This is seen from the following figures.

Year	Government		Aided		Unaided	
	Schools	Students	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
1871	180	10,449	314	19,416	635	8,490
1876	301	15,115	697	45,422	365	4,255
1881	398	23,626	839	61,131	645	8,874
1886	425	29,653	849	57,955	2,126	22,956
1891	436	41,746	971	74,855	2,645	37,242
1896	474	44,538	1,130	94,400	2,268	36,720
1901	No figures are available					
1906	590	73,433	1,631	162,931	1,785	31,327
1911	779	104,049	1,968	221,233	1,501	34,595

13. The Census Report of 1901, Volume 1, p. 136.



From these figures we find that the student population in Government as well as Aided schools has expanded by almost 1000% during these 40 years. The progress of the Unaided Schools on the other hand has been rather erratic. Their average attendance seems to be in the region of 15 to 20 and as such they compare very poorly with the Government and Aided schools which have an average of over 100 on roll. Their fluctuation in numbers is due to the fact that most of these schools classified as unaided were those that had been set up by Private Individuals, Missionary Organisations and other associations with the hope of getting grants in aid at a subsequent stage. Some of them blossomed forth. But the majority fell by the way side and withered away. Hence their erratic development as seen from the figures.

This expansion of the number of schools led to a considerable increase in expenditure on the part of the Government. This is seen from the following table.

Year	No. on Roll	Expenditure of the Govt.
1850	18,000	Rs. 73,000
1860	28,951	" 133,000
1870	41,490	" 206,000
1880	90,234	" 492,000
1890	146,452	" 474,000
1900	208,533	" 820,000
1910	336,374	" 2,215,000
1920	399,076	" 4,067,000
1930	578,999	" 11,754,000
1940	819,297	" 22,394,000
1950	1,366,742	" 90,162,000

A Century of progress in Education, where the number of children receiving instruction increased from 18,000 to 1,366,742 and the amount spent from Rs. 73,000 to Rs. 90,162,000. Between 1940 and 1950 the number of students on roll increased by 67% while the expenditure incurred by the Government shot up by 302%. This was due to the inflation resulting from the War and this depreciation of value of currency must be borne in mind when we consider the increase of expenditure quite out of proportion to the increase in numbers. The Expenditure of the Government accounted for in this table is for two types of schools, the Government

Schools and the Grants in Aid Schools. The Expenditure on education increased by 1000% between 1870 and 1910. The number of students in the Government and the Grant in Aid Schools also increased by about the same proportion during this period while maintaining the balance between themselves, ie. 1:2.

#### 6- THE FIRST TWO DECADES OF THE 20th CENTURY

The increase of expenditure on education naturally attracted the attention of the Government. In his address on the opening of the Legislative Council on 18th October 1900, the Governor posed the question of expenditure on education. "Education continues to progress and consequently the expenditure to increase. The vote has risen from Rs. 474,387/- in 1890 to Rs. 869,837/- in 1900, an annual average increase of about Rs. 40,000/- and yet education enthusiasts denounce the Government for parsimony. This year the proposed provision is Rs. 906,297/- which exceeds by more than Rs. 80,000/- the provision for 1900. But even this is not likely to be the limit of the demand upon us in 1901, for there is always supplementary expenditure consequent not only on the natural increase of population but on increased proficiency which enables higher grants than those provided to be earned. During the last five years there has been an average supplementary expenditure of Rs. 34,299/-.

"The Secretary of State during the last year has more than once drawn my attention to the increasing expenditure, and the question is one which must sooner or later be taken up in earnest. To check or even not to encourage the growth of education should indeed be a shortsighted policy unworthy of a civilized Government. On the other hand we cannot continue indefinitely to increase an expenditure which in less prosperous days we may be unable to continue. The solution to the problem is to be found in inducing localities to contribute to the cause of Education within their limit and I propose that at this session you should empower Municipalities, Local Boards and even Village Communities to levy a rate or cess for educational, medical and other local requirements." <sup>14</sup>

14. Address of his Excellency the Right Hon. Sir J. West Ridgeway on opening the Session of the Legislative Council, 19th October 1900. Supplement to the Ceylon Observer, p. 8.



The earlier attempt made in 1884 was to hand over to Local Authorities a share of the responsibility for English Education. But this attempt that followed the line of thinking as expressed above was in respect of both English and Vernacular Education. The Cess Committee appointed to report on the suggestion made in the Governor's speech, submitted its report in 1902.

Among other matters it recommended that half the cost of education should be met by Local Authorities, that religious instruction in Aided Schools should be prohibited after 9 a.m., that attendance at religious instruction should be voluntary, that grants to Vernacular Schools should be increased, that grants to English Schools should be reduced and that a graduated cess for educational work should be levied by the Local Authorities. For the purpose of this cess they proposed the division of the population into three categories, namely the wealthy, the fairly well to do and the poor. This scheme was extremely unrealistic and unworkable. The rich who were to bear the brunt of the cost were the least interested in supporting local effort in education. They could very well afford to send their children to schools in the city or the provincial towns. Supporting local effort would mean contributing towards educational equality, which they opposed in favour of class education. This opposition was clearly seen in the post 1939 period when educational opportunities expanded due to various factors. The Cess Committee also recommended school fees for vernacular education. Due to these reasons the recommendations of the Committee were not implemented.

In 1903 another Cess Committee was appointed to report on the first. They suggested that elementary education be handed over to the Local Authorities. Even this could not be implemented and the Wace Committee was appointed in 1905, "to inquire into and report on the educational question with a view to proposing practical steps to give effect to the suggestions contained in the report of the Committee appointed in 1901 on the general question of imposing a cess for education, medical

and local requirements. It had also been directed to report on the following points; the education of the children of Tamil Coolies employed in the Estates...." <sup>15</sup>

The Report of the Wace Committee was published in Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905. In describing the school structure it states, "Aided schools are carried on by either religious bodies or private individuals. They are inspected and examined by the Department of Public Instruction which pays them a grant on the results of an annual inspection. The funds for this purpose are voted annually to the Department of Public Instruction from Annual revenue. The Managers are responsible for the general maintenance and upkeep of buildings and for all other expenses. The rules for the registration of these schools and the payment of grants are contained in the Code for the Aided Schools. Seven Christian Missions are engaged in the management of Aided Schools, viz The American Mission, The Baptists, the Church of England, The Presbyterians, the Roman Catholics, The Society of Friends and the Wesleyans. There are a large number of Buddhist schools most of which are under the Buddhist Theosophical Society, a large number of Saivite Schools which are under Private management and a few Muhammadan Schools. Rather more than two third of the children now attending schools are educated in Aided Schools." <sup>16</sup>

Then, again, "besides the children attending Government and Aided Schools the returns for 1904 showed a total of 40,477 pupils attending Unaided schools. A few of them are receiving a satisfactory education in institutions devoted to higher instruction. Some are in schools which have applied for registration and which have not received it. But the large majority are in schools where the instruction is so poor as to be practically worthless" <sup>17</sup>

This is a telling indictment of the result of Private effort in education to go it alone. The independent intervention of the Private Sector in education thus proved to be a futile venture right from the beginning. Whatever success it achieved was with the

15. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 1.

16. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 1.

17. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 2



financial assistance and active support of the State. When the State invited them to take an interest in education, private effort was assisted by grants of land and free supplies of timber for buildings and furniture. Right along in its history, the Private Sector was unable to stand on its own feet. By 1904 the Government Sector had increased its share in education to 27%, an advance of 7% from 1862. Of the Private Sector which controlled the balance, the more formidable were the denominational schools. These Aided schools formed the mainstay of the Private Sector. They were of two kinds, those that imparted Vernacular Education and those that imparted English Education. Almost the total cost of running the Vernacular schools was met from the grant given by the Government. In the English Schools the grant received from the government amounted to from one third to half the cost of running the schools. The balance was met from the fees collected and private subscriptions. The grant was the most regular and steady source of income of these schools

"In the case of Vernacular Schools the figures furnished by the Managers show that the grant of a large group of vernacular schools approximates closely to the working expenditure of these schools when the expenditure on buildings is omitted. In the Roman Catholic Vernacular Schools of the Western and the North Western Provinces the expenses in 1904 was Rs 89,351/- and the grant given was Rs 84,387/-. In the Buddhist Schools managed by the Theosophical Society the expenses were Rs 46,697/- and the grant received Rs 43,626/-. The replies furnished by the Managers...are sufficient evidence that there is not infrequently a balance available from the grant of one school which can be utilized to make up the deficit in the grant of another" <sup>18</sup>

This shows the extent of the support these Denominational Schools received from the Government. The Grant paid to these Denominational and other schools for the year 1904 are listed below

The Manager						Expenses	Grant
						Rs. cts.	Rs. cts.
1.	Rev. S. M. Simmon	..	..	..	..	11,363 47	5,140 00
2.	Rev. W. T. Garrett	..	..	..	..	20,835 80	10,716 50
3.	Rev. J. Cooreman	..	..	..	..	14,203 00	7,791 00
4.	Rev. S. Long	..	..	..	..	1,085 00	237 00
5.	Rev. W. J. Hanan	..	..	..	..	20,449 43	13,452 00
6.	Rev. E. H. Neinburger	..	..	..	..	7,344 00	1,717 50
7.	Rev. L. Dupont (CMS)	..	..	..	..	8,558 81	5,106 50
8.	Rev. D. B. Beckmeyer (RC-Kandy)	..	..	..	..	14,780 00	4,380 00
9.	Rev. D. P. Mann (Jaffna)	..	..	..	..	900 00	737 00
10.	Rev. C. Henry (C.O.E.-Batticaloa)	..	..	..	..	3,083 50	1,331 50
11.	Rev. R. P. Butterfield (Tamil Cooly Mission)	..	..	..	..	3,986 00	2,972 50
12.	Rev. R. Tebb (Wesleyan-Colombo)	..	..	..	..	63,767 60	15,524 50
13.	Rev. E. A. Prince (Wesleyan-Galle)	..	..	..	..	55,986 82	19,751 50
14.	Rev E M Weaver (Wesleyan-Trinco)	..	..	..	..	12,454 56	5,025 00
15.	Rev J H Dickson (K K S )	..	..	..	..	14,507 50	9,969 50
16.	Rev M J Burrows	..	..	..	..	10,871 80	3,946 50
17.	Rev E Sergeant (RC-N W P & W P.)	..	..	..	..	151,780 00	121,249 00
18.	Rev. W. E. Hitchcock (American-Batticaloa)	..	..	..	..	10,233 96	9,967 50
19.	Rev. F. H. de Winton (Archdeacon)	..	..	..	..	3,193 94	887 50
20.	Rev. J. B. Poulier (RC-Anuradhapura & N.P.)	..	..	..	..	44,775 54	30,987 50
21.	Rev. W. H. Rigby (Wesleyan-Kandy)	..	..	..	..	15,262 30	3,078 00
						489,423 11	273,988 00



	The Manager		Expenses	Grant
			Rs. cts.	Rs. cts.
22.	Mr. W. T. Kanagasabai (Saivite-Jaffna)	.. ..	969 00	269 00
23.	Mr. V. Cassipillai (Aided-Jaffna)	.. ..	5,764 41	2,115 00
24.	Mr. S. K. Lawton (Private Tamil Jaffna)	.. ..	843 00	843 00
25.	Mr. J. Moonasinghe (B.T.S.)	.. ..	66,011 00	51,018 65
			<hr/> 73,587 41	<hr/> 54,245 65

These figures are in respect of English as well as Vernacular Schools. In the English Schools tuition fees were levied. The Grant given to various managers is not in a particular proportion to their expenditure. Some of them have obtained sufficient to meet the entire cost of running the schools. Mr. S. K. Lawton is one of them. Others like Rev. D. P. Mann and Rev. E. Sergent have obtained a very large share of the expenses. Yet others have been able to get very little. As the system of giving grants depended on the results of examinations, those schools that were well managed were able to earn more by way of grant than others. Those who got less continued perhaps with the hope of getting more the next year or later. Generally the pattern seems to be that about half the cost of running these schools was obtained from the Government. When totals are worked out it comes to 58% of the total.

83% of the grant went to Christian Missionary Schools run by European Missionaries. This was despite the fact that the Christian population at that time was only 9.8% of the total. This decisive advantage enjoyed by minority religious groups in the sphere of education was discussed as far back as the 1860s. When this undue advantage was made use of by the Missionaries to change the religion of those who financed the education, the situation becomes even more obnoxious. This led to competition from indigenous religions on the one hand and a demand for more and more state control of education and the enforcement of a proper conscience clause on the other. At the same time attention was also drawn to the fact that despite the rapid expansion of educational facilities there were still a large number who did not re-

ceive any schooling. The question of compulsory education was brought up in the deliberations of the Wace Committee. The reaction of the Missionary Organisations to this question and other related problems is worthy of note.

"Practically this so-called compulsory education is a campaign against the grant-in-aid schools in favour of Government Schools. Christians abundantly supplied with their own denominational schools are made to contribute for the erection of Government Schools which are nothing else but Buddhistic or otherwise." <sup>19</sup> The above statement was made by Rev. E. Sergent of the Roman Catholic Church in answer to the questionnaire sent by the Committee. It is a matter for regret that the learned Father could see only one aspect of this problem. He apparently could not, or decided not to see that 83% of the grant was used by the Christian Missions which represented only 9.8% of the population.

The Conscience clause contemplated as a corollary to the Grants in Aid system evoked the opposition of the entire Christian church. At the same time, the alternative they suggested, perhaps in despair, had a progressive side to it as well.

On 26th May 1905, Rev. W. G. Rigby (Chairman) and Rev. E. M. Weaver (Secretary) of the Wesleyan Mission in reply to the questionnaire of the Committee stated, "We are not prepared to accept a conscience clause in the Code. While we are strongly opposed to any interference with the liberty of conscience, we wish to continue to make our schools, as long as they exist, centres of Christian teaching and influence."

19. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 25.



"We agreed that compulsion will be the only solution of the educational difficulty in the colony and if the Government thinks that the time is ripe for such a change of system we should agree to its introduction. **Such a system must necessarily be secular. There shall be no teaching of any religion and religious matters should be excluded from the reading and other school books.** In such a system of education we are of opinion, as a Christian Mission we could not co-operate, and should it be introduced we should feel compelled to recommend our Home Committee, to withdraw at once. **It is our view, sine qua non, that any system of Compulsory education should be controlled and administered by the Government directly and not through the agency of Private individuals or corporations.**"<sup>20</sup>

These are the considered views expressed by the signatories on behalf of the Methodist Mission in Ceylon. Historians would be grateful for this frank statement, pregnant with sincerity. In all the Protestant Mission schools only a small fraction of the students belonged to the particular denomination that ran the school. These schools would not have existed if they were confined to their own flock. The purpose of their existence as is clearly seen from the above statement was to steal the sheep from the other flocks or more correctly bring under their tender care those that were unattended. Perhaps that was considered an act of charity. To openly declare that their existence facilitated by fees and grants subscribed by those of other faiths was for the sole purpose of maintaining centres of Christian teaching and influence and to announce that they will close up if they were not permitted to continue the same, is to say the least the height of arrogance.

The argument used in support of the Denominational system was the good influence the religious atmosphere they provided was supposed to have on the education of the children. But the Methodist Church here goes on record as being against the teaching of religion in schools, run by the State. Not only should religion not be taught but religious matters should be excluded from reading and other school books

as well. This shows the extent of sincerity of their own claim. They were aware as early as 1905 that this game could not be played for very long. They were able to visualize the situation when Christian denominational schools would become a hopeless minority as against the schools run by the State and the indigenous religious organisations. In such a situation if religion was to be taught in State Schools as well, the adherents of the indigenous religions would be placed on a equal footing with the Christian Denominations. The agitation for religious instruction in State Schools was a natural reaction from those subscribing to the indigenous religious beliefs, to the activities in the Christian Grant in Aid schools, to in their own words, "function as centres of Christian Teaching and influence." Had the Government thought, in the words of the Missionaries, "that the time was ripe to enforce compulsory education", we would in all probability have been spared this reaction on the part of the indigenous religions and would have been able to have a completely secular state system of education.

The American Mission was even more forthright in their comments. With a background of a State system of Education at home, they advocated the same over here. In his letter dated 9th June 1905, Rev. J. H. Dickson of the American Ceylon Mission stated, "I regard the whole grant in aid system an unmitigated nuisance and a great waste of good money without adequate returns. The Government is only playing at Education with his Grant in Aid system and we shall never have thorough going steady progress until the Government takes absolute charge of the Education of the children of the island. Missionary bodies did, I believe, in the earlier days serve a useful end in assisting the Government but that time has quite gone by now."<sup>21</sup>

Rev. G. G. Brown also of the same Mission expressed his views even more clearly. He wrote, "I think there would be a great gain if the Government assumes full charge of Education. I believe that any Government which calls itself progressive and up

20. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 26.

21. The Wace Committee Report, Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1905, p. 27.



to date, ought to make ample provisions for the proper education of its children and ought to do this without asking benevolent and religious organisations to assist it." 22

In the mid Twentieth Century no Government would dare to call itself reactionary. Even if it were so, as most of them are, they would take cover under a progressive garb. Hence according to the argument used by Rev. Brown there is no place for the Private Sector in Education in the present day set-up. We are only sorry that 55 years after these positions were stated, in 1960, when the State expressed its readiness to undertake full responsibility for education in this country, these Missionary organisations conveniently forgot the magnanimity displayed earlier and tried their best to retain whatever control they could over educational institutions in the country. Thereby they contributed to the creation of that ugly duckling in our educational system, ugly in every respect of the word—the Non Fee Levying Schools. Perhaps the spirit was willing, but the flesh proved to be too weak.

The Wace Committee agreed on compulsory education at least at the elementary level. But they found the lack of schools and the absence of a suitable conscience clause governing the grant aided schools, obstacles to enforcing compulsory education. One of the reasons for the appointment of the Committee was the question of financing education. The Committee proposed the utilization of a part of the Road tax through District and Divisional School Committees for Educational Work. They also suggested that Vernacular Education should remain free while fees were to be charged for English Education. They recommended that the payment of grants to English and Vernacular Schools should not be interfered with.

Compulsory Education was introduced through the Town School Ordinance No: 5 of 1906 and the Rural School Ordinance No: 8 of 1907. The Town School Ordinance was not made compulsory. As such it was very ineffective. The little measure

of success achieved by the Rural School Ordinance was due to the Road Tax in which the Rural Authorities were permitted to draw for educational purposes. This entry of the rural authorities into the field of education was a threat to the Mission Schools. Most of those who held positions of responsibility in the Local Bodies had received their education in the Denominational Schools. Hence they were not very keen on setting up schools through these Local Boards as they would be rivals to Mission Schools. Further the provisions of these two ordinances did not cover the whole Island. Those in charge of Local Boards were reluctant to arouse the displeasure of the people by enforcing compulsory education. They were also reluctant to promote Vernacular Education. Those two ordinances are important for another reason. They introduced for the first time, what may be construed as a conscience clause, of a very permissive nature, by casting upon the parents the duty of objecting to religious instruction being given to their children.

The MacLeod Committee appointed in 1911 to report on the Secondary School curriculum and provision for higher education recommended the replacement of the grant in aid system based on results, with one based on attendance with weightage given to the employment of Trained Teachers. This was accepted in 1912 and this had a salutary effect on education. It helped the employment of qualified teachers and resulted in an increase in the standard of education in the country.

*(To be continued)*

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*(Continued from page 89)*

This reawakening may mark the first step toward revival of a spirit of internationalism purged from formalism. One of the gauges of real democratization, of democratic socialism is undoubtedly the extent to which citizens form different strata of the population are involved in the events which are milestones in the development of the world we live in.



# An Introduction to the Philosophy of Marxism — XI

by R. S. BAGHAVAN

## XIII COMBINED DEVELOPMENT

Marx and Engels not only recognized the unevenness of development, they understood also its consequences.

### Consequences of Uneven Development — In Western Europe

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels wrote:

"It is evident that big industry does not reach the same level of development in all districts of a country." (517)

As a result:

"..The various stages and interests are never completely overcome, but only subordinated to the prevailing interest and trail along besides the latter for centuries afterwards." (518) (Our italics)

In his *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx pointed out:

"The bourgeoisie begins with a proletariat which is itself a relic of the proletariat of feudal times.." (519) (Our italics)

In his *Critique* he said:

"Since furthermore, bourgeois society is but a form resulting from the development of antagonistic elements, some relations belonging to earlier forms of society are frequently to be found in it but in a crippled state or as a travesty of their former self, as, for example, communal property.." (520) (Our italics).

In *Capital*, he commented on the situation in Western Europe:

"..the capitalist regime has either directly conquered the whole domain of national production, or, where economic conditions are less developed, it at least, indirectly controls those strata of society which though belonging to the antiquated

mode of production, continue to exist side by side with it in gradual decay..." (521) (Our italics)

In Volume IV he comments on the formation of English feudal Society:

"And here we come up against a peculiarity that is characteristic of a society in which one definite mode of production predominates, even though not all productive relations have been subordinated to it. In feudal society, for example (as we can best observe in England because the system of feudalism was introduced here from Normandy ready made and its form was impressed on what was in many respects a different social foundation), relations which were far removed from the nature of feudalism were given a feudal form; for example, simple money relations in which there was no trace of mutual personal service as between lord and vassal. It is for instance a fiction that the small peasant held his land in fief." (522)

### — In Germany

In *Capital* Marx writes referring to Germany:

"In all other spheres, we like all the rest of Continental Western Europe, suffer, not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside of modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated methods of production, with their inevitable train of social and political anachronisms. We suffer not only from the living but from the dead.." (Our italics) (523)

As we shall see later, Lenin applied this observation of Marx in his study of the development of capitalism in Russia.

Again, with reference to Germany, Marx wrote:



"In this country, where political poverty of the absolute monarchy still exists with a whole *appendage* of *decayed* semi-feudal orders and conditions, there exist on the other hand, partly in consequence of the industrial development and Germany's dependence on the world market, the antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the working class and the struggle arising therefrom..." (524) (Our italics)

As late as 1850 he observed:

"In a country like Germany there are still *relics* of the Middle Ages to be abolished..." (525) (Our italics).

In the same article he notes that "...communal property *lags behind* modern private property..." (Our italics)

And in 1856, Marx conceived of the possibility of the drawing together of two separate "stages" of revolution:

"The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid." (526)

20th Century, Germany still had combined features. As Thorstein Veblen observed:

"What makes the German Imperial establishment very redoubtable beyond comparison, is the very simple but also grave *combination* of factors whereby the German people have acquired the use of the modern industrial arts in the highest state of efficiency, at the same time that they have *retained* unabated the fanatical loyalty to feudal barbarian..." (527) (Our italics)

#### — In Russia

Discussing the Russian village community in 1881, Marx said that Russia, "by appropriating the positive results of this mode of production, ... is in a position to develop and transform the yet *archaic* form of its village community, instead of destroying it..."

He used the word "combination" referring to Russia's developing capitalism and the coexistence of the village community, and added:

"The archaic or primary formations of our earth consist themselves of a series of layers of different age, *superimposed* upon one another. Similarly, the archaic structures of society reveal a series of different social types corresponding to progressive epochs". (528) (Our italics)

Engels, writing to Zasulich in 1885, observed that in Russia "every stage of social development is represented, from the primitive commune to modern industry and high finance..." (529)

In 1893, he had occasion to repeat:

"In Russia we have a ground-work of a primitive character, a pre-civilization *Gen-tilgesellschaft* (tribal society based on the joint family), crumbling to ruins, it is true, but still serving as the groundwork, the material upon which the capitalistic revolution (for it is a real social revolution) acts and operates..." (530)

#### — In America

Engels who kept up a lively correspondence with his co-thinkers in the United States of America was also able to visit the country in 1888 and observe the conditions there.

In 1895, the year of his death, he noted the "*duality* of American development, which is still engaged in the primary task—clearing of tremendous virgin area—but is already compelled to enter the competition for the first place in industrial production..." (531) (Our italics)

American development did indeed telescope the "Wild West" stage with that of advanced industry. Indian wars went on till late in the 19th Century, yet Oliver Evans had built the first automatic flour mill by 1787, and by 1844 Cyrus McCormick's automatic harvester was working....

Again, in 1895, he wrote to Sorge:

"America is the *youngest*, but also the *oldest* country in the world. Over there you have old-fashioned furniture styles alongside those you have invented yourselves, cabs in Boston such as I last saw in 1838 in London, and in the mountains stage-coaches dating from the seventeenth century



alongside Pullman cars, and in the same way you keep all the intellectual old clothes discarded in Europe. Anything that is out of date over here can survive in America for one or two generations." (532)

In his American travel notes, he says that on his journey to the "New World", he found "furniture of the most antediluvian style one could imagine." "Tables, chairs and wardrobes look for the most part as if they had been inherited from bygone generations." And, he notes that in transport, "the old-fashioned model has remained inviolate...." (533)

This aspect of American life drew acid comment from Mark Twain. His description of the typical American home in his chapter "The House Beautiful" in *Life on the Mississippi*, written c. 1863, is a hilarious criticism of the archaic fashions of house-furnishing and decoration of the time.

#### — In Spain

After 800 years of struggle against Moorish domination, Spain has "when wholly emancipated, a character altogether different from that of contemporaneous Europe. Spain finding itself, at the epoch of European resurrection, with the manners of the Goths and the Vandals in the North, and with those of the Arabs in the South." (534) Marx thus describes the overlapping of characteristics that gave Spain its "national peculiarities."

He also speaks of the Spanish Absolute Monarchy bearing "a superficial resemblance" to those of Europe, and yet "rather to be ranged in a class with Asiatic forms of Government". (535)

Recognizing the need for backward countries to import advanced social forms Marx wrote:

"In order to be able to maintain its position as a state, Servia had to import its political institutions, its schools....from Western Europe..." (536)

#### — In Italy

In a letter to Turati in 1894 Engels outlined the combined development of Italian capitalist society:

"Come to power during and after the national emancipation, the bourgeoisie has neither been able nor willing to complete its victory. It has not destroyed the remnants of feudalism nor has it reorganized national production on the modern bourgeois pattern. Incapable of providing the country a share in the relative and temporary advantages of the capitalist regime it has cast upon it all the burdens, all the inconveniences of that system...."

"The working people—peasants, handicraftsmen, agricultural and industrial workers—consequently find themselves crushed on the one hand by the old abuses inherited not only from feudal times but even the days of antiquity (share-farming, latifundia in the South, where cattle supplant men); on the other hand by the most voracious fiscal laws ever invented by the bourgeois system..

"...Throughout the country the agricultural population far outweighs the urban. In the towns there are few developed industries, hence *typical* proletarians are scarce; handicraftsmen, small shopkeepers and declassed elements—a mass fluctuating between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat—compose the majority. It is the petty and middle bourgeoisie of the Middle Ages in disintegration, for the most part proletarians of the future but not yet proletarians of the present...." (537)

#### The Results of Imperialist Expansion

Even this brief survey of the comments of Marx and Engels on the development of Western European society indicates that they recognized the co-existence of historical forms or stages, ancient and modern, resulting from uneven development. This recognition becomes obvious when they considered the results of uneven development arising from the imperialism on the colonies.

During the lifetime of Marx and Engels, the old order in the colonies and semi-colonial countries crumbled away. The Indian Mutiny (1857) and the Revolt of the Chinese Taipings (1850-1869) were the last gasps and marked the passing of the old regimes and the beginning of the consolidation of the foundations of capitalist development.



Marx and Engels, who, as we have seen, never satisfied themselves with vague generalizations but went to the root of things and made concrete analyses of social formations, naturally paid attention to the developments, in Asia. Their writings, their correspondence and the commentaries on contemporary events are ample proof of this.

What would be the social and economic effect of the impact of imperialism on pre-capitalist societies?

The social regimes of the conquered countries were overthrown not by the inner mechanics of the class struggle but by the armed might of foreign troops. The powerful sources of social transformation were outside influences. Hence capitalism emerged in these countries, not as a result of social revolution but as a result of war, conquest and colonization.

In consequence there emerged combined social formations.

"A similar relationship emerges from conquest," writes Marx, "when a form of intercourse which has evolved on another soil is brought over complete to the conquered country; whereas in its home it was still encumbered with interests and relationships left over from earlier periods, here it can and must be established completely and without hindrance, if only to assure the conqueror's lasting power..." (538)

The conquerors, however, could make a clean sweep of the old social formations only to the extent that the productive life of society had been put on new foundations.

Marx says:

"In all of those conquests the method of production, be it of the conquerors, the conquered, or the one resulting from the *combination* of both, determines the nature of the new distribution that comes into play..." (539) (Our italics).

The debris of old social formations cluttered the way for a time.

Marx observed:

"It is an old and historically established maxim that obsolete social forms, nominally still in possession of all the attributes

of power and continuing to vegetate long after the basis of their existence has rotted away... that these forces once more summon all their strength before the agony of death, pass from the defensive to the offensive, challenge instead of giving way..." (540).

These lines incidentally, were written in 1855 two years before the Indian Mutiny.

#### — In India

In his writings on India, Marx had occasion to refer to primitive communal property "of which numerous examples are still to be found in India, though partly in a ruined state..." (541)

Describing the political regime in India under the British, Marx observes:

"European despotism, planted upon Asiatic despotism, by the British East India Company, forming a more monstrous *combination* than any of the divine monsters startling us in the Temple of Salsette..." (542) (Our italics)

In Persia, Marx observed in 1857, the European system of military organization has been *engrafted* upon Asiatic barbarity." (543) (Our italics).

#### — In China

It is not accidental that Marx opens his first article on China with a reference to Hegel:

"A most profound yet fantastic speculator on the principles which govern the movements of Humanity was wont to extol as one of the ruling secrets of nature what he called the law of the contact of extremes. The homely proverb that 'extremes meet' was, in his view, a grand and potent truth in every sphere of life; an axiom with which the philosopher could as little dispense as the astronomer with the laws of Kepler or the great discovery of Newton." (544).

Feudal China, in the words of Marx, had been, for centuries, "vegetating in the teeth of time." (545)

Imperialist guns and also cheap capitalist commodities (546) battered down the Chinese walls.



In the result, Marx says, "in China, the rotting semi-civilization of the oldest state in the world meets the Europeans with its own resources..." but is only "*half dissolved*." (547)

### Pre-Capitalist Societies:

Despite the fact that capitalism as the "new" stage in human history was economically superior to pre-capitalist social formations and finally established itself over the whole globe, Marx pointed out that *some* of the characteristics of the older societies has developed unevenly and were highly advanced, somewhat before their time. He says:

"On the other hand it may be said that there are highly developed but historically unripe forms of society in which the highest economic forms are to be found..." (548).

The result, again, is a combined pattern.

### LENIN ON COMBINED DEVELOPMENT

During the 1905 Revolution in Russia, Lenin wrote:

"from the democratic revolution we shall at once, according to the degree of our strength, the strength of the class conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass over to the socialist revolution. We stand for continuous revolution." (549) (Our italics. For "continuous" read "permanent".)

An accidental phrase or passing reference? Let us see.

In his 1907 Preface to his *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin says:

"Of course, an endless variety of combinations of the elements of one type or another of capitalist evolution are possible, and only hopeless pedants would attempt to solve the peculiar and complex problems that arise in this connection merely by quoting some opinion or other expressed by Marx concerning a different historical context..." (550) Our italics)

In the same work he states further that the development of capitalism in Russia "cannot but be slow, for in no single capi-

talist country has there been such an abundant survival of ancient institutions that are incompatible with capitalism, retard its development, and immeasurably worsen the condition of the producers who "suffer not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development..." (551) Lenin here ends with a quotation from Marx which we have already seen. (523)

In 1908, discussing the Agrarian Question in Russia, he says:

"The Prussian path...is characterized by the fact that mediaeval relationships in landownership are not liquidated in one stroke: they gradually adapt themselves to capitalism, and for this reason capitalism for a long time retains semi-feudal features..." (552).

In the same year, writing on the "Lessons of the Paris Commune", Lenin observed:

"It is this combination of contradictory tasks—patriotism and Socialism—which constituted the fatal error of the French Socialists..." (553)

In 1910, Lenin noted that: "In their bourgeois revolutions, various countries achieved various degrees of political and agrarian democracy, and in the most diverse combinations..." (554) (Our italics)

In the same year, in an article commemorating Leo Tolstoy, he wrote:

"...in that period of Russian history that lies between two of its turning points, between 1861 and 1905...the vestiges of serfdom, direct survivals of it, thoroughly permeated the whole of the economic (particularly rural) and the whole of the political life of the country. At the same time, it was precisely this period that witnessed the rapid growth of capitalism from below and the promotion of its development from above..." (555).

In 1914, Lenin wrote:

"If, however, in a country where the state system bears a very distinct pre-capitalist character, there is a nationally delimited region where capitalism is rapidly



developing, then the more rapidly that capitalism develops, the greater will be the antagonism between it and the *pre-capitalist* state system, and the more likely will be the separation of the more progressive region from the whole—with which it is connected not by ‘modern-capitalistic’, but by ‘Asiatic-despotic’ ties.” (556).

In his *Imperialism*, Lenin notes that in “economically most backward” Russia, “modern capitalist imperialism is *enmeshed*, so to speak, in a particularly close network of pre-capitalist relations.” (557) (Our italics).

In the same year, 1916, he wrote:

“Whoever expects a ‘pure’ social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.” (558).

The socialist revolution, he amplified “*cannot be anything else than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and, sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements.*”

In January 1917, on the 12th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, Lenin said:

“The peculiar feature of the Russian revolution is that in its social content it was a *bourgeois-democratic* revolution but in its methods of struggle it was a *proletarian* revolution.” (559).

During the Revolution of 1917, in his *Letters From Afar*, he wrote:

“The fact that the (February) revolution succeeded so quickly... is due to an unusual historical *conjuncture* where there *combined*, in a strikingly, ‘favourable’ manner, absolutely dissimilar movements, absolutely different class interests, absolutely opposed political and social tendencies”.. (560). (Our Italics).

After his arrival in Russia, in his famous “April Theses” he referred to the “dual power” situation in Russia as follows:

“This most peculiar situation, unparalleled in history, has led to the simultaneous existence and interlocking of two dictator-

ships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie... and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry....

“There is not the slightest doubt but that such a combination cannot last long..” (561)

Later in the same year, in his *Materials on the Revision of the Party Programme*, he stated:

“Imperialism, in fact, does not *and cannot transform* capitalism from top to bottom. Imperialism complicates and accentuates the contradictions of capitalism, it ‘entangles’ monopoly with free competition, but it *cannot abolish exchange*, the market, competition, crises, etc.

“Imperialism is capitalism which is withering, but not yet withered, dying but not yet dead. Not pure monopolies, but monopolies in conjunction with exchange, markets, competition, crises—such is the essential feature of imperialism in general..

“..It is, in fact, this *combination* of antagonistic principles, *viz.* competition and monopoly, that is the essence of imperialism, it is this that is making for the final crash, i.e., the socialist revolution..” (562)

In 1919, writing on the *Third International and Its Place in History*, Lenin noted that:

“Russia’s backwardness merged in a peculiar way the proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie with the peasant revolution against the landlords....” (563)

In 1922, five years after the Revolution, Lenin made a report on the situation in Russia to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, which, for concreteness in analysis, remains a model for Marxists. He said, in part:

“Thus, in 1918, I was of the opinion that, considering the economic condition the Soviet Republic was in then, state capitalism would be a step forward. This sounds very strange, and, perhaps, even absurd, for already at that time our republic was a socialist republic; at that time, every day, we hurriedly—perhaps too hurriedly—adopted various new economic measures which cannot be described otherwise than as



socialist measures. Nevertheless, I then held the view that, compared with the economic condition the Soviet Republic was in then, state capitalism would be a step forward, and I explained my idea simply by enumerating the main elements of the economic system of Russia. In my opinion these elements were the following: '(1) patriarchal, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture; (2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of the peasants who trade in grain); (3) private capitalism; (4) state capitalism and (5) socialism.' All these economic elements were present in Russia at that time. I set myself the task of explaining the relation in which these elements stood to each other, and whether one of these non-socialist elements, namely, state capitalism, should not be rated higher than, should be regarded as superior to, socialism in a republic which declares that it is a socialist republic. But it will become intelligible if you remember that we definitely did not regard the economic system of Russia as something homo-

geneous and highly developed; we were well aware of the fact that in Russia we had patriarchal agriculture, i.e., the most primitive form of agriculture side by side with the socialist form.." (564).

In 1923, in one of his last articles Lenin wrote:

"..Peculiar circumstances put Russia and Russia's development..in a situation which enabled us to achieve precisely that combination of a 'peasant war' with the working class movement suggested in 1856 by no less a 'Marxist' than Marx himself.." (565).

Lenin had in mind the letter to Engels in which Marx wrote:

"The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid." (526)

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