

SSFS-5

MP's Response to Erebus and Tungyi

Erebus' questions and observations

- The term 'republic' was borrowed from Gandhi. He used the term to denote the innermost circle in his 'grand oceanic circle' model to emphasize its suzerainty in relation to the outer circles or larger formations. We can, for the present use the term community, instead.
- In the distant future the rurban community- the term rurban connotes a resolution of the contradiction between town and country as indicated in the *Communist Manifesto*- as I conceive it, will be classless, caste less and devoid of all divisive identities. Land and other natural resources as well as other means of production will be owned by the community. Products will be divided among the members on mutually and socially accepted and flexible principles. The various formations between the local and global will be drastically reconceived -no national states and armies to defend them. A rurtban community may have a few thousand population at most. It will develop institutions formed through consensus to oversee the affairs of the

community. Every citizen will have to be part of such institutions in one way or other. The community would have acquired all the knowledge and skills to make small scale operations as efficient as large scale ones and produce all the necessary basic needs of all its members. Some details of connections between rural communities are given in the paper

- The journey from here to there-how? It is a long journey. Initial steps will be unsteady. What I have indicated is based on the decentralization experience in Kerala. People at large still have not internalized the fact that we cannot go on the BAU path for long. The days of runaway changes in ecology and economy are not very far off. Slight uneasiness has set in. The first step, as some of us here contemplate, is to build producer-trader-consumer cooperatives. Since everyone is both a producer and a consumer at the same time we hope to convert commodity production to use value production. The only way to go forward is to take the first step forward and not to stand still.
- On violence: Gandhi's concept of 'the individual ready to die for the village against the whole world' is not related to military aggression- no village will be able to do so- but against economic

and cultural aggression, which they can resist to some extent. The Walnarts, Costcos and their ilk will be totally powerless against the rurban community which can live as well without the products they sell, a total boycott.

- On exchange between rurban communities: There are, as mentioned in the paper, several levels or tiers of production. Most of the exchange takes place at same levels at mutually negotiated prices. Finance capitalism can exist only under present conditions. Share markets and stock- markets don't have any role to play there. Even today finance capitalism cannot strangle the rurban economy which produces all the food and most of other daily needs through co-operative enterprises.
- On solidarity and freedom: Of course the new community will have to be 'porous', that is transparent, plural and tolerant. Without 'association' the concept of 'freedom' is meaningless. Solidarity comes from the benefits and joy of association. Freedom does not and need not mean freedom to disrupt. In the new society 'needs' of everybody will have to be satisfied, leisure time increased and opportunities to enjoy it developed. The present state is non-porous and

rigid. Whether we can change it or not is not a theoretical question but one of practice.

- I agree more than 100 percent that neither India nor USA nor former Soviet Union or present China or for that matter any country is democratic

ON TUNG-YI KHO'S OBSERVATIONS:

- I fully share your fears. My gut feeling is that humanity will not be able to escape from a runaway climate change. The GHG content in the atmosphere is likely to exceed 550-600 ppm CO₂ equivalent. If we do not prepare ourselves from today onwards to meet this, the species may become extinct or, if lucky, degenerate into barbarism. There are ways to avoid this.
- Preserve the knowledge and skills humanity has developed so far through massive and distributed sharing- come out of the IPR straight jacket.
- Develop a new fruit and tuber based food regime instead of cereal based ones. Cereals are more sensitive to climate changes. In Kerala we are advocating Jack fruit, Bread fruit, Coconut and Cassava together with fish as food for future. The

Kerala government has already adopted jack tree as its national tree.

- Food growing timber trees have yet another function: to sequester carbon and fix it in the form of structural elements. A rough, on - the -envelope calculation shows that we can sequester all the additional CO₂ we have put into the atmosphere and fix it in the form of roofs, walls, and floors within a period of 150 to 200 years. We do not know whether this will reverse the climate changes. It is wiser to learn to live even with runaway climate changes. The species population may come down to one tenth of the present. This scenario is not for a distant future but for this century—within two or three generations (*Limits to Growth*)
- We need not feel guilty of being anthropocentric. We cannot be otherwise. Our concern about nature destruction, species extinction etc. stem from our species self-interestinterest. ‘OUR’ should mean all of us and not a few powerful ones. We are concerned about the destruction of nature, rightfully belonging to all of us in the interest of Capital. How happy all of us would have been if we could destroy mosquitoes, cockroaches, bed-bugs and many others!

