

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY 14 CHARLES LANE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

Towards a History of the Fourth International, Part 6

Revolutionary Marxism vs. Class Collaboration in Sri Lanka

August 1975 \$.60

Contents

Introductory Note, by Fred Feldman	2
1. The LSSP and Class Collaboration: Lessons of a Popular Front Betrayal, by Caroline Lund	3
2. From Wavering to Capitulation: People's Frontism in Ceylon, by Ernest Germain	7
3. The Wearing Out of a Revolutionary Leadership, by Pierre Frank	20
4. Letter from the United Secretariat Supporting LSSP(R) Emergency Conference	23

Introductory Note

The articles in this Education for Socialists bulletin analyze one of the setbacks suffered by the world Trotskyist movement. In 1964, a majority of the leaders of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), once the largest section of the Fourth International, decided to participate in a bourgeois coalition government headed by Mrs. S.I. Bandaranaike of the capitalist Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

The founders of the LSSP began in the 1930s as sincere revolutionists, devoted to Trotskyism and to the struggle against imperialist domination of their country. Their uncompromising leadership of mass struggles won them a substantial working class following. But over the years, the fighting spirit and political consciousness of many of the leaders—Leslie Goonewardene, Colvin R. de Silva, N.M. Perera, and others—flagged. They developed theories of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" to justify an increasingly opportunist course that culminated in their outright betrayal of the working class in 1964.

A substantial minority of the party resisted this degeneration and broke decisively with the majority of the LSSP leadership when it decided to join Bandaranaike's government. This wing was led by Bala Tampoe, president of the Ceylon Mercantile Union, and Edmund Samarakoddy, a member of parliament.

The Fourth International supported this revolutionary opposition and unhesitatingly expelled Perera and his cohorts from the world Trotskyist movement, reaffirming the revolutionary Marxist opposition to all varieties of class collaborationism. The Trotskyists led by Tampoe and Samarakoddy formed the LSSP (Revolutionary) which was recognized as the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International. (The LSSP [R] has recently changed its name to the Revolutionary Socialist League.)

A few years after the formation of the LSSP (R), a factional dispute broke out between Tampoe and Samarakoddy. Samarakoddy became so embittered that he split from the LSSP (R) and began spreading Stalinist-type slanders against Tampoe, charging among other things that he was a "CIA agent." These fabrications were avidly spread by sectarian opponents of the Trotskyist movement, particularly by Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League (now renamed the Workers Revolutionary Party) in Britain.

(These slanders are effectively demolished in "Healyites

Slander Bala Tampoe," an October 29, 1972, statement by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International [reprinted in the Education for Socialists bulletin, *Marxism vs. Ultraleftism: The Record of Healy's Break with Trotskyism*] and in "Ceylon and the Healy School of Falsification," by Jaya Vithana, which appeared in the March 19, 1973, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, a revolutionary Marxist international newsweekly, and was printed in pamphlet form by the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International.)

The record of Healy's supporters in Ceylon sheds an ironic light on this slander campaign. They supported Bandaranaike's popular front in the 1970 elections while Tampoe and the LSSP (R) stood alone in revolutionary opposition to this class-collaborationist front.

In March 1971 Bandaranaike declared a state of emergency and the coalition government launched a brutal assault against radicalized youth. A special target were youth thought to be friendly to the Jamatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP—People's Liberation Front), a leftist youth organization that supported Bandaranaike in the 1970 elections but went into opposition when the government failed to carry out its radical campaign promise. Hundreds of youths were murdered, and more than 15,000 were put in concentration camps on trumped-up charges of plotting to overthrow the government. Among those imprisoned in the wholesale repression were several young members of the LSSP (R). All strikes were banned. The former revolutionists who had joined Bandaranaike's coalition government in 1964 played leading parts in this repression.

While the Ceylonese Healyites uttered hardly an audible word of protest, the LSSP (R) and the Ceylonese Mercantile Union, under Tampoe's leadership, have been in the forefront of struggles in defense of democratic rights. LSSP (R) leaders led strikes in defiance of the ban. Tampoe has further provoked the ire of the popular-front government by his energetic efforts to expose the frame-ups as defense attorney for many of the imprisoned youths.

"The LSSP and Class Collaboration: Lessons of a Popular Front Betrayal," by Caroline Lund, is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the June 4, 1971, issue of the revolutionary socialist weekly newspaper, *The Militant*.

"The Wearing Out of a Revolutionary Leadership," by Pierre Frank and the letter of the United Secretariat to the emergency conference of the LSSP (R) in 1964 are reprinted from the July 17, 1964, issue of *World Outlook*, predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*. "From Wavering to Capitulation," by Ernest Germain, is reprinted from the Fall 1964 issue of *International Socialist Review*.

In addition to the material published in this bulletin, Germain replied to Healy's falsified version of the split with the reformist LSSP leaders in Chapter 5 of his pamphlet *Marxism vs. Ultraleftism*. This pamphlet has been reprinted in the Education for Socialist bulletin, *Marxism vs. Ultraleftism: The Record of Healy's Break with Trotskyism*. It is available from the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party for \$2.50.

* * *

Another source of perceptive evaluations of the evolution of the LSSP leadership is the writings of Peng Shu-tse, the veteran leader of the Chinese Trotskyist movement. An open letter from Peng to Leslie Goonewardene, then Secretary of the LSSP, in December 1957 severely criticized the failure of LSSP leaders to protest the imprisonment of Trotskyists by the Mao regime during a visit to China. This item will appear in a later Education for Socialists bulletin in the *Towards a History of the Fourth International* series.

In "The Man on the Flying Trapeze: An Open Letter to Gerry Healy," published in the Fall 1964 issue of

International Socialist Review, Peng succinctly summarized the causes of the LSSP's degeneration:

"(1) Objectively: the functioning of a bourgeois parliament, after British imperialism granted political independence, created illusions in parliamentarism and the possibility of democratic reforms among petty-bourgeois political circles.

"(2) Subjectively: most of the top leaders of the LSSP came from the middle class, some even from bourgeois families. They were revolutionists in the beginning and played a big role in building the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon against the domination by British imperialism. After political independence was won and a bourgeois democratic system developed, certain leaders of petty-bourgeois or bourgeois background won seats in parliament and stayed there for many years. They gradually became imbued with parliamentary illusions. This was pre-eminently reflected by the Perera tendency.

"(3) If the Fourth International had not split, or had reunification been realized earlier, the reformist and parliamentary tendency among the leaders could possibly have been corrected under the united influence of the International. At least the strength of this tendency could have been considerably reduced. Unfortunately the split in the International was prolonged for almost ten years (from the end of 1953 to June 1963). You [Gerry Healy] are perfectly aware that you bear a big responsibility for prolonging this split. The reformist tendency was thus able to develop more freely. It finally exploded at the special conference of the LSSP."

—Fred Feldman
January 1975

1. The LSSP and Class Collaboration: Lessons of a Popular Front Betrayal

By Caroline Lund

reprinted from the June 4, 1971, issue of the *Militant*

The first working-class party in Ceylon, and for some time the only working-class party, was the Lanka Sama Samaja Party, which was formed in the late 1930s by some young Ceylonese intellectuals who had studied at universities in Britain. The formation of the LSSP occurred around the time of the Moscow frame-up trials, at the height of the struggle that took place within the Soviet Union between the bureaucratic rulers led by Stalin—who favored "socialism in one country"—and the forces led by Leon Trotsky, which supported an international revolutionary perspective. The founders of the LSSP sided with the Trotskyist tendency.

During World War II, the LSSP was in the leadership of the struggle for independence of Ceylon from Britain, and LSSP leaders were imprisoned for their role. Some escaped to India and continued to work underground, helping to found the revolutionary-social-

ist movement there. After the war, the LSSP won mass support because of its part in the fight for national independence.

A small grouping of pro-Stalinists was expelled from the LSSP during the war because they opposed the fight for independence. The Stalinists took the position that the struggle for independence from Britain might jeopardize the alliance between Britain and the Soviet Union in the war, and so they wanted to sacrifice the anti-imperialist struggle in Ceylon. The LSSP, to the contrary, saw that a revolutionary struggle for independence in Ceylon would be of much greater help to the international struggle for socialism than subordinating the needs of the Ceylonese masses to the diplomatic interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Stalinists, led by Pieter Keuneman, then formed the Communist Party of Ceylon in 1943.

The LSSP became the largest working-class party in Ceylon because of its reputation as the leadership of the popular mass opposition first to the British imperialist regime and then to the postwar regime of the "national" Ceylonese capitalist class, represented by the UNP (United National Party, the party representing those capitalists most closely tied to the British imperialists). Following the end of World War II, the LSSP was recognized as the Ceylon Section of the Fourth International, the international Trotskyist organization.

Tamil people

One of the reasons for the popularity of the LSSP was its position concerning the rights of the Tamil people in Ceylon. Some 22 percent of Ceylon's 12,600,000 people speak the Tamil language, having originated in Southern India. About half this number migrated to Ceylon many gen-

erations ago; most of the rest were brought from India in the nineteenth century to work on British tea plantations. Most of the Tamil-speaking people are of the Hindu religion. They form the bulk of the plantation workers, which is the main sector of the Ceylonese working class.

Under British rule, the Tamil and Sinhalese peoples were artificially brought together under one government, and divisions between them have been used by the ruling class in Ceylon to enforce its rule. An anti-Indian movement started in the early 1930s. In the 1950s, there were language riots and open violence and pogroms against the Tamils.

From its founding, the LSSP staunchly defended the rights of the oppressed Tamil minority against the chauvinism of the Buddhist majority, which speaks Sinhalese. In 1936, the LSSP was the first party to demand that the government and the courts use both Sinhalese and Tamil, rather than English, as official languages.

In the 1950s, a new party was formed in Ceylon, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. It originated in a split from the conservative capitalist party, the UNP, and was led by W. R. D. Bandaranaike, then the husband of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the present prime minister. The SLFP was based on the masses of peasants and merchants in the countryside and the new Sinhalese intelligentsia which had arisen, as opposed to the more established representatives of the ruling class, which had been educated in England.

Wavering to capitulation

The formation of this liberal capitalist party, and the support it received from the peasantry in the countryside, disoriented the LSSP. When the SLFP was formed, the LSSP correctly labeled it a capitalist party, a party based on preserving the capitalist system in Ceylon. But as the SLFP increased its influence, winning the elections and forming a government in 1956, the LSSP began to waver and adapt to the ideas of the SLFP. In 1956, the LSSP voted to give "responsive cooperation" to the SLFP government.

In 1960, Prime Minister W. R. D. Bandaranaike was murdered as part of an attempted army coup. In the elections that followed in July 1960, the SLFP won the elections again, led by Sirimavo Bandaranaike. In these

elections, the LSSP joined a tripartisan electoral bloc with the SLFP and the CP. The new SLFP government did not, however, include representatives from either of the two working-class parties.

The Oct. 3, 1960, issue of *The Militant* carried the following appraisal of the evolution of the LSSP:

"The support accorded the Bandaranaike party by the Ceylonese Trotskyists, and their entry into an electoral alliance with it, constituted a complete reversal of previous policy. In the national elections last March, the LSSP, the most influential working-class party in Ceylon, campaigned against the SLFP and all other parties on a program of revolutionary socialism under the slogan of "Elect a Sama Samaja Government." This line of independent working-class political action received an impressive 10 percent of the popular vote. . . .

"The LSSP had consistently condemned the policy of backing one group of rival capitalist politicians like the SLFP against another, explaining that such a policy deceives the masses. It counterposed to collaboration with capitalist parties or governments the objective of putting an anticapitalist workers and peasants government in power. Yet in July, it reversed its electoral policy of March.

"This new political course not only overturned the past position of the LSSP but is at variance with the traditional socialist principles of the Trotskyist movement, which has opposed collaboration with capitalist parties as injurious to working-class interests. It follows the pattern of 'Popular Front' combinations in many countries whereby working-class parties have been lined up, with disastrous results, behind a section of the capitalist rulers.

"After the elections, the secretary of the LSSP, Leslie Goonewardene, issued a statement, published in the Aug. 4 *Ceylon News*, which read in part:

"The LSSP will cooperate with the SLFP government as an independent party in every activity which carries the country forward along progressive lines. The LSSP will assist the SLFP government to defeat and overcome any and every saboteur effort of Big Capital and the foreign imperialists. The LSSP will particularly assist the SLFP government in every anticapi-

talist step it takes. The LSSP will resist to the utmost any effort from any quarter to throw the masses back in their struggle to go forward to a socialist society.

"In accordance with the above, the LSSP Parliamentary Group will not join the Opposition but will function as an independent group in Parliament."

"It appears from this statement, which contained no criticism of the capitalist SLFP or warning to the people against the consequences of its actions, that the LSSP leadership is continuing its false policy of political support to the SLFP.

"The LSSP has correctly maintained in the past that abandonment of independent working-class politics and trailing behind capitalist politicians can only bear evil fruits. Further developments of the class struggle within the settings of the ascending revolution in Asia must also soon make this manifest in the present situation in Ceylon."

A split had taken place in the international Trotskyist movement in 1954, which lasted until 1963. Therefore, at the time of these developments in Ceylon, the world Trotskyist movement consisted of two factions—with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, together with other forces, supporting the International Committee of the Fourth International, and most European sections organized as the International Secretariat of the Fourth International. Both factions of the Fourth International condemned the moves made by the LSSP in 1960 toward support to a capitalist government.

In December of 1960, a congress of the forces supporting the International Secretariat of the Fourth International adopted a resolution that read in part: "The Fourth International does not exclude support for the adoption of progressive measures, even by a national bourgeois or petty-bourgeois government in a colonial or semicolonial country. But the social nature, composition and general program of the Bandaranaike government does not justify the support which was accorded to it."

The LSSP's adaptation to this capitalist party and its betrayal of revolutionary-socialist principles reached a qualitative turning point at an LSSP conference June 6-7, 1964, when a

majority of the LSSP voted to accept the offer of the SLFP to form a joint government.

Present at this conference was Pierre Frank, a founding member of the Fourth International and formerly a secretary of Leon Trotsky. Frank was sent to represent the United Secretariat of the now reunified Fourth International, and he tried to convince the conference to repudiate the proposal by LSSP leader N.M. Perera to join the procapitalist coalition government.

LSSP(R)

A motion submitted by the Left Wing tendency of the LSSP, proposing no support whatsoever to the SLFP government, received 159 votes, which represented 25 percent of the party. After losing the vote, the Left Wing walked out of the conference and proceeded to form a new organization, the LSSP (Revolutionary).

Although the LSSP had been the largest, most influential section of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement did not hesitate to expel this section when it betrayed the struggle for socialism by participating in a capitalist government. The LSSP(R) was recognized as the new Ceylonese section of the Fourth International.

From 1964 to the present time, the LSSP(R) has been a firm opponent of both the UNP, which ruled Ceylon from 1965-70, and the SLFP coalition governments, which held power for four months in 1964 and then came to power again in the May 1970 elections. It has been the only party to pose a clear socialist alternative for Ceylon.

A statement released by the LSSP(R) after leaving the June 1964 conference said: "The decision of the reformist majority of the LSSP to enter into a coalition with the capitalist SLFP government and thereby to become an instrument of the capitalist class in Ceylon, constitutes a complete violation of the basic principles of Trotskyism on which the revolutionary program of the party is based."

Just how far the LSSP leadership had departed from socialist principles can be seen by looking at the conditions the LSSP agreed to accept in order to join the 1964 coalition. These conditions, laid down by the SLFP, were 1) a "rightful" place for Buddhism; 2) acceptance of Sinhala as

the only official language; 3) recognition of the 1948 anti-Tamil citizenship laws; and 4) veto power by the SLFP over all electoral candidates selected by any of the coalition partners.

The LSSP's acceptance of these conditions illustrated their abject capitulation to the SLFP, a party which was built upon demagogic, communalistic attacks on the Tamil people. In 1958, the SLFP had even incited pogroms against the Tamils.

The 1948 Citizenship Acts stripped nearly one million Tamils of their Ceylonese citizenship, making them stateless persons, unable to vote and excluded from free education, unemployment benefits, poor relief and other social services.

In 1964, under the first LSSP-SLFP government, the Sirima-Shastri Pact was concluded with India. This pact ordered the forcible deportation of some 525,000 Tamils back to India so that their jobs could be given to Sinhalese.

The LSSP(R) pointed out that it was an acute government crisis due to the growing threat of strikes and working-class political action that prompted Bandaranaike to approach the leftist parties to join her coalition government in 1964. In 1963, the Ceylon trade unions had taken steps toward united action, adopting a common platform of 21 demands. This gave rise to a formation called the United Left Front, which included only working-class parties—the LSSP, the CP and another group called the MEP (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna).

The SLFP's offer to the working-class parties to join a coalition government had the desired effect of splitting up the anticapitalist forces and bringing sections of the left into the government to help take responsibility for the crisis of capitalism in Ceylon. In addition to the split in the LSSP over the question of the coalition government, the United Left Front split, and the Communist Party split, giving rise to a pro-Peking Communist Party.

The real power in the coalition government remained firmly in the hands of the SLFP; the former cabinet of 12 SLFP members was simply widened to 15 to include the new LSSP ministers.

The purpose of the coalition government quickly became clear: to enable the government to more efficiently carry out anti-working-class poli-

cies to try to stave off the economic crisis of the country. Bandaranaike announced that: "Disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows, must be eliminated and the development of the country must proceed." One of the first acts of the government in 1964 was to lock out 3,000 workers in the nationalized transport industry.

The coalition government was in power for only four months before the UNP was elected in the March 22, 1965 elections. During this period, the LSSP was co-responsible for enforcing a wage-freeze policy, encouraging racism against the Tamils, opposing working-class demands, high prices, growing unemployment, and very poor housing conditions. At the same time, many concessions were made to the right, such as special aid to capitalists and tax reductions for tea estates and rich homeowners.

Leaders of the LSSP(R) pointed out that the UNP victory in the March 1965 elections proved that the capitalist forces had been strengthened, not weakened, during the nine years (1956-64) the SLFP was in power. While mouthing phrases against reactionaries, the SLFP had taken every possible step to prop up the capitalist economy and class rule.

Under the UNP regime, the crisis of capitalism in Ceylon continued to deepen. In 1969, a wave of big strikes culminated in a state of emergency being declared by the government on Sept. 16.

In October and November, there were simultaneous eruptions and student strikes at three of Ceylon's four universities. The students demanded that Sinhalese and Tamil be spoken in classrooms rather than English, improvement of facilities, the right to hold political meetings, and a solution to the unemployment problem. When the government tried to make the students sign loyalty oaths as a condition of reopening the universities, the students refused.

May 1970 elections

By the time of the May elections in 1970, the candidates of both the SLFP and the UNP were promising socialism in order to try to convince the workers once again to support them. The SLFP claimed to be for "socialist democracy," while the UNP said it was for "democratic socialism"! The UNP explained that their "democratic so-

cialism" meant that "private ownership and management" must be "sensitive to its responsibilities for the welfare of the community." The SLFP leaders promised nationalization of the banks and the newspaper printing plants, recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam, expulsion of the Peace Corps, and other anti-imperialist measures.

Almost all left-wing parties except the LSSP(R) threw their support behind the SLFP coalition government. The LSSP joined the coalition, as did the CP for the first time. The small Maoist Communist Party, although rebuffed from joining the coalition, supported the capitalist SLFP candidates.

The JVP, now engaged in the current struggle, also supported the coalition, and the votes of the thousands of unemployed youth they influenced probably were a significant factor in bringing the coalition to power.

The SLFP-LSSP-CP coalition won by a landslide vote, and the election results were greeted by mass demonstrations and massive physical attacks on buildings representing pro-imperialist institutions.

Again, the developments after the coalition came to power showed clearly why the capitalist class wanted to bring the working-class parties into the government. Only three months after the May elections, Bandaranaike attacked some members of parliament for calling for nationalization of foreign-owned estates and newspapers. She accused them of "embarrassing the government." The Sept. 19 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* quoted N.M. Perera, minister of finance and member of the LSSP, as saying that he felt it was "not advisable" to nationalize the tea estates. He spoke of how the "gruelling track to socialism" takes a long time, and said, "I do not like the private sector. But

if in the process of making money the private sector will help to build houses the people want, I am prepared to go with them."

Unemployment had grown to 800,000 out of the population of less than 13 million. The government, however, presented no proposals for dealing with this problem.

Rather, the coalition proposed an "austerity program," asking the trade unions for voluntary no-strike pledges and imposing wage restraints and higher taxes on the workers. At the same time it gave a five-year tax holiday to certain industries it wanted to encourage.

Several months after the elections the JVP began to turn against the coalition government, demanding that it fulfill its campaign promises and that it institute measures leading toward a planned, socialist economy. The "socialist" LSSP, CP and SLFP leaders denounced the JVP youth as "CIA agents" and had them arrested for putting up posters, holding political meetings, and engaging in other political activities.

On Aug. 25, 1970, 63 youths were arrested simply for participating in a political meeting in a private home. The Sept. 3 *Ceylon News* reported the "evidence" against them: "In their possession were found maps, communist literature and books by Fidel Castro and Mao Tsetung in addition to a handbook on guerrilla warfare." More than 400 youths were arrested in March 1971 shortly before the fighting began, reported the May 9 *Washington Post*.

This crackdown on some of the most vocal opponents of the coalition government led up to the current attempt by the coalition to completely crush the JVP as well as any opposition activity by trade unions or other political organizations. The *Christian Science Monitor* wrote April 15:

"Students of seesaw politics of Ceylon, who foresaw as long ago as four or five months the declaration of an emergency and the crackdown of the extreme left, view the current crisis as a *calculated effort* by Mrs. Bandaranaike and the nationalist partisans in her coalition government to show the world as well as her own Trotskyite [sic] allies that her government will not be dragged or pushed any further leftward than her democratic socialist image demands." (Emphasis added.)

Bandaranaike used an incident at the American embassy March 6 as a pretext for declaring the state of emergency, supposedly to stop an imminent conspiratorial attack on the government. But before this incident, on Feb. 27, the JVP held a mass rally of well over 10,000 in Colombo, at which JVP leaders explained that "the JVP is no underground movement and does not propose to stage coups." In fact, there was no armed resistance to the government repression until April 5—almost three weeks after the state of emergency was declared and after many JVP leaders were already in jail.

The brutal repression to which the coalition government has resorted provides bloody confirmation of the impasse in which the capitalist rulers of Ceylon find themselves. The problems facing the country cannot be solved short of revolutionary-socialist measures; hence the need to destroy those forces seeking such a solution. The role of the so-called socialist or communist parties—like the LSSP and the CP—who have supported the present capitalist coalition government has been to whitewash the capitalist system, to deceive the working people and peasants of Ceylon about the road to socialism, and to prepare the way for and now to lead the counterrevolution.

2. From Wavering to Capitulation: People's Frontism in Ceylon

By Ernest Germain

reprinted from the Fall 1964 issue of *International Socialist Review*

THE DECISION of the majority at the June 6-7 special conference of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* to join the liberal bourgeois government of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in Ceylon was a heavy defeat for the Fourth International. The fact that the world-wide Trotskyist organization decided unanimously to sever relations with the majority of one of its most important sections, because of this betrayal of the basic interests of the Ceylonese workers and poor peasants and of the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism, shows that the international Trotskyist movement as a whole remains faithful to the cause to which it is dedicated — the cause of world revolution.

The fact that a considerable minority of the LSSP, its Revolutionary Section, led by Comrades Edmund Samarakkody, a member of parliament, Bala Tampoe, one of Ceylon's principal trade-union leaders, and Meryl Fernando, another member of parliament—a minority that includes 14 members of the Central Committee of the LSSP and one quarter of the membership—likewise refused to condone the betrayal and remained faithful to the banner of the Fourth International, indicates that the defeat suffered by Trotskyism in Ceylon is only a temporary one. With the help of the world Trotskyist movement, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) will

prove its capacity to regain a leading position for Trotskyism among the workers and poor peasants of Ceylon.

Nevertheless, the defeat is a fact; and it would be unworthy of a revolutionist to deny it or to try to soften it by taking a lenient attitude. It is necessary instead to explain the origin of this setback affecting a whole sector of the revolutionary movement in Ceylon and to draw the appropriate lessons.

Particular Character of the LSSP

It was never a secret to any member of the world Trotskyist movement, informed about the special problems of the Fourth International, that the section in Ceylon, the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party*, was an organization to which the term "Trotskyist" had to be applied with a series of specific reservations. The *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* was, in fact, the first working-class party to be organized in Ceylon and was for some time the only such party in the country. It was founded and led by a group of brilliant young intellectuals who had studied at British universities, had been attracted by communism, repelled by the Moscow frame-up trials and the ultra-opportunist policies of Stalinism in the late thirties, and who had therefore evolved in the general direction of Trotskyism. However, the question of affiliating to the world Trotskyist movement only arose after the outbreak of World War II and after breaking with the pro-Stalinist wing of the old LSSP led by Pieter Keuneman, who favored collaborating with British imperialism during the war and who later founded the Communist Party of Ceylon.

As a result of this first political differentiation, the small group of

Trotskyist intellectuals suddenly found themselves at the head of the largest working-class organization in the country. They correctly applied the theory of the permanent revolution under the conditions prevailing in Ceylon and audaciously took the lead in struggling for national independence against British imperialism. They rapidly acquired great influence among the masses, becoming leaders of the popular opposition first against the imperialist regime and then the regime of the "national" bourgeoisie, a position they held for twenty-five years.

However, the party they led could not really be called "Bolshevik." Nor was it a mass party comparable to the mass parties of the working class in Europe or other parts of Asia. Characteristically, while the LSSP could poll several hundred thousand votes, its active membership never went above a thousand. It was a party that combined left-socialist trade-union cadres, revolutionary workers who had gained class consciousness but not a specifically revolutionary-Marxist education, and a few hundred genuine revolutionary-Marxist cadres. The overwhelming majority of the latter category are today members of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section). The majority of the two other categories followed N. M. Perera and his friends on the road of coalition with a bourgeois government.

Many political and organizational traits testified to the hybrid character of the LSSP. The party never had a theoretical organ in the Sinhalese or Tamil languages; it never translated the bulk of Trotsky's writings or even the bulk of the resolutions and decisions of the congresses and other leading bodies of the Fourth International into these languages. But most of the rank and file and

Ernest Germain is a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The present article was written in response to a request by the editors of the International Socialist Review, that he write an exposition of the Ceylonese events for publication in this magazine.

virtually the entire proletariat understand no other languages, although English is common currency among the upper strata of the population, particularly the intellectuals. Participation in the political life of the world Trotskyist movement, above all its internal political life, remained limited therefore to a minority of revolutionary leaders.

On the programmatic level, the party was born Trotskyist, and developed in sharp struggle with the Stalinist, later Khrushchevist, Communist Party of Ceylon. The struggle became embodied in two rival organizations of the Ceylon working class—the LSSP and the CP. No Social Democratic party existed in Ceylon. The party program, of course, correctly characterized the shortcomings and betrayals of the international Social Democracy and reformism in general; but it is important to note that unlike the differentiation from Stalinism, the differentiation from reformism existed only on the ideological and literary level, accessible only to a minority of party members. The differentiation was not experienced by the party membership in a flesh-and-blood way through actual struggle with a rival organization. In fact, while being formally a Trotskyist party, the LSSP functioned in several areas comparably to a left Social Democratic party in a relatively “prosperous” semicolonial country; i.e., it was the main electoral vehicle of the poor masses, it provided the main leadership of the trade unions.

Party membership was essentially formal, hinging only on the payment of dues. Party conferences were membership conferences, in which oratorical feats of the party leaders rather than sober discussion of principles and experiences carried the day. The Fourth International stubbornly sought to bring the LSSP around to the basic principle of democratic centralism, beginning with party conferences based on delegates democratically elected by the branches. After years of resistance, the principle was finally accepted—only to be transformed into a mockery at the crucial June 6-7, 1964, conference where the demand to enter a bourgeois government was put over. This conference was called as a “delegated conference,” in which delegates were elected on the basis of . . . one delegate per member!

Recruiting to the party was con-

ducted haphazardly, unsystematically, and, worst of all, was not concentrated among working-class and poor peasant youth. Some of the party's trade-union leaders complained bitterly about the neglect in organizing study classes that could draw hundreds of young militant workers into the ranks. Such neglect permitted the opportunist right wing of the party to inflate the membership at the decisive moment with new recruits lacking socialist education and class consciousness, many of them of petty-bourgeois origin.

The Party Leadership

The party leadership itself was not homogeneous. It was composed in reality of two wings, one led by N. M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena which displayed petty-bourgeois nationalist inclinations and was opportunist from the start, the other, genuinely Trotskyist, led by a group of comrades around Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Bernard Soysa, Edmund Samarakkody, Doric de Souza and Bala Tampoe. Relations between these two wings were uneasy from the beginning. A split occurred in the forties in which a majority of the membership, under the leadership of Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera, broke away from the Fourth International for a time, and the genuine Trotskyists formed the Bolshevik-Leninist party headed by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene.

The opportunist character of the majority grouping was displayed when its members of parliament refused to vote against the status of “independence” in 1947 that left key positions to British imperialism. The split was healed in June 1950 but only partially. N. M. Perera and the majority of those who had split unified with the Bolshevik-Leninist party. For some time Philip Gunawardena kept the so-called “old” LSSP going, receiving reinforcements from a new split in the LSSP in 1953. Finally, in 1956, he entered the first Bandaranaike government, dissolving the “old” LSSP into the MEP (*Mahajana Eksath Peramuna*—People's United Front).

These ruptures, despite partial recoveries, left deep scars in the ranks of the leadership of the LSSP. Sensitivity resulting from the old wounds was all the keener in view of the fact that although the main forces had been brought together, the pos-

sibility of a fresh cleavage remained. While the group around Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene became undisputed political leaders of the party, N. M. Perera became an even more popular figure among the trade unions and masses.

The problem of overcoming the old divisions and of blocking anything that could precipitate a new split with N. M. Perera became an obsession among the key political leaders. The policy was correct in itself since the unification had taken place on a principled basis and since the party's activities as a whole were proceeding in accordance with the general program of Trotskyism. The fatal flaw was that these key political leaders did not occupy themselves with full time party work—they remained part-time leaders. (For many years it was a standing grievance among party activists that Colvin R. de Silva, the party's most able theoretician and one of the most powerful orators in all Asia, who could have rapidly built a mass following much larger than N. M. Perera's, continued his career as Ceylon's leading lawyer instead of turning full attention to party building.) The flaw led eventually to political wavering in face of Perera's systematic opportunist inclinations.

The dialectical interrelationship between the two tendencies went even deeper. N. M. Perera, himself, and the trade-union cadres generally under his leadership, were in the beginning filled with respect and admiration for the political brilliance and revolutionary daring of the Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene group. The structuring of the LSSP leadership on this healthy basis—Perera's opportunist inclinations notwithstanding—showed itself best during the August 1953 *hartal* (general strike). The LSSP leadership appeared as a really revolutionary team at the head of insurgent masses, fighting in the streets simultaneously for immediate material gains for the impoverished masses and for the socialist overthrow of the capitalist regime.

But when some of the leaders of the genuinely Trotskyist wing of the LSSP did not change their daily lives to accord with their revolutionary convictions; when they failed to devote themselves whole-heartedly to party building; when they began wavering on basic political questions; the N. M. Perera group, after

some years of watching this, lost confidence in the old party leadership. They decided to "go into politics" on their own, and to develop their own line, with the disastrous results registered at the June 6-7 conference.

The defeat suffered by Trotskyism in Ceylon is therefore essentially the story of how and why the Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene group lost leadership of the party

The Myth of Ceylonese "Exceptionalism"

THIS TRAGIC collapse of a group of genuine revolutionists, who displayed great heroism in the past, great daring and genuine revolutionary devotion,¹ was not, however, the "inevitable" result of adverse circumstances. The development of the basic contradiction in the nature of the LSSP was inevitable since it corresponded to the hybrid origin of the organization. But it was not inevitable that Perera's tendency should become as strong as it did, finally gaining a majority. The contradiction could have been overcome with a quite different outcome had the leadership carried out its clear duties. We have already noted the basic organizational weaknesses evident among some of the best representatives of the group (Leslie Goonewardene being an exception, however, in this respect) which centered around limiting themselves to literary and ideological leadership, leaving the actual chores of day-to-day party building to "activists" who tended to gather around N. M. Perera, the most popular mass figure of the party. But this fatal weakness on the organizational level was complemented by the appearance of parallel errors on the ideological plane.

Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene were brilliant Marxist thinkers who have written some of the best revolutionary pamphlets in Southeast Asia. They undoubtedly assimilated the whole body of basic Trotskyist concepts. But in the political arena in Ceylon, while trying creatively to apply the method of revolutionary Marxism to the specific conditions of their country and its

through their own weaknesses and inner contradictions, an outcome that was strikingly pointed up when the resolution presented by Leslie Goonewardene, General Secretary of the party for more than ten years, received only ten percent of the vote at the June 6-7 conference, and when the tendency led by these comrades wound up with only a handful of followers.

mass movements, they committed a progressive series of mistakes that can be summarized in the formula of "Ceylonese exceptionalism." They never set out to develop this theory in a systematic, organic way. Instead they fell into it pragmatically during the fifties, at first imperceptibly, without being aware of what was happening, until they fell victim to the logic of these false ideas and were drawn irresistibly towards conclusions which they would have condemned with biting scorn only a few years earlier.

The first indication of this theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" was at the Fourth World Congress in 1954, when, during the discussions of the theses on the "Rise and Decline of Stalinism," the LSSP delegation suddenly came up with an amendment to change the demand for *freedom for all working-class parties*, under the proletarian dictatorship after the conquest of power, to freedom for all parties. In arguing for this astonishing amendment, they contended that due to the exceptional conditions in Ceylon, the masses there would not understand any other position. They added that in their opinion, "the masses cannot be wrong." They seemed to have temporarily forgotten one of the ABC's of Marxism — that the masses can often be wrong. (The masses were wrong when they cheered the departure of the armies for the front in Europe fifty years ago; they were equally wrong when they acclaimed the SLFP-LSSP coalition government in Ceylon a few weeks ago.) To reason like the Ceylonese comrades at the Fourth World Congress was to fall into *tail-endism*, a dangerous tendency, and

one which these comrades were to display to an increasing extent as time went on.

Needless to say, the amendment offered by the Ceylonese delegation found no support among the delegates at the Fourth World Congress, and they dropped the matter, since they were not eager to defend this position at the Congress.

A second manifestation of the theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" appeared during the preparations for the 1956 general elections, a manifestation that was to reappear in each subsequent election. This was the view that under the "exceptional circumstances" prevailing in Ceylon, a revolutionary party could win power through the ballot. It was, of course, entirely permissible *in principle* for a revolutionary party with mass influence to participate in the elections under the slogan: "For an LSSP socialist government." (It is quite another question whether the slogan was *tactically* correct; i.e., whether its correspondence to the long-range objective need also fit in with the subjective reflection of the situation in the minds of the masses. Looking back, one can question whether the Ceylonese masses have ever viewed a LSSP government as a realistic alternative to the bourgeois government. The problem of a transitional form, a Workers and Peasants Government, arises here.) It was wrong to suggest to the masses that power could actually be conquered, capitalism actually overthrown, solely by electoral means. It was just as bad, if not worse, for the LSSP leadership to become victim of its own propaganda and to begin thinking in terms of the "parliamentary road to socialism."

Participation in Parliament

Here again it was argued that the masses in Ceylon don't conceive of any other way to win power under the circumstances. The argument, however, not only left out the possibility of educating the masses; it was not entirely correct factually. The Ceylonese masses displayed great willingness to conduct extra-parliamentary struggles during the 1953 *hartal*. They displayed similar willingness again after the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike and the subsequent Emergency in 1960. And during the rise of working-class struggles from 1962 on, their attention again became focused essen-

¹ During the war, imprisoned for their revolutionary opposition to imperialism, some of the LSSP leaders escaped, fled to India and built a Trotskyist organization there, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India [BLPI]. One of them, Anthony Pillai, became a widely known trade-union leader as national chairman of the trade-union federation Hind Mazdoor Sabha. It must be said, however, that acting more and more as a left reformist, Anthony Pillai's development foreshadowed the opportunist degeneration of part of the central leadership of the LSSP.

tially on the *extra-parliamentary* scene. In truth, the relationship between the parliamentary illusions of the masses and the parliamentary illusions and outlook of the LSSP leadership, which had started as a case of tail-endism, now saw the revolutionary party dragging the masses back to the scene of parliament at a time when experience was centering their attention more and more on direct action!²

A third manifestation of "Ceylonese exceptionalism," inherent in a certain sense in the previous one of "the parliamentary road to socialism," occurred during the 1960 crisis precipitated by the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike. The view was advanced that not only could power be won through the ballot box and parliamentary means, but the revolution itself could be completely "peaceful," without any need whatsoever for defensive military preparations in the struggle for power. This theory was founded on the premise that the bourgeois army and constabulary in Ceylon were so weak that they would be unable to intervene actively in the class struggle. It was further pointed out that the "left parties" enjoyed considerable sympathy among the armed forces, the LSSP among the lower echelons, and the MEP of Philip Gunawardena among the noncommissioned officers.

However, life itself brutally refuted this theory of "Ceylonese exceptionalism"; in fact, an army conspiracy proved to be behind the murder of Prime Minister Bandaranaike in 1960! Preparations for an army coup were discovered and blocked only at the last moment in 1962. Again in the spring of 1964 rumors about a projected army coup became

widespread in Ceylon (even playing a role in paving the way inside the LSSP for a coalition with the SLFP!) Despite this refutation of their assumptions, the LSSP leadership never drew any lessons from what had happened and never corrected the tendency toward tail-endism or the hope that Ceylon would prove to be an "exception."

It may seem strange, at first sight, that experienced leaders and brilliant Marxists like Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, who had torn to shreds the reformist illusions of the Stalinists about "people's fronts," about a "new democracy" (in France and Italy 1944-47), about the parliamentary road to socialism, who had no less effectively criticized the miserable performance of the postwar Labour government in pretending to introduce socialism "piecemeal" in Great Britain without touching the bourgeois state machine and the bourgeois army, solely basing itself on a majority in parliament — it may seem strange that such comrades, very well versed in Lenin's *State and Revolution*, who had given lec-

The "National Bourgeoisie," the Peasantry, and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution

GR AVE as they were, these three instances of "Ceylonese exceptionalism" were relatively "mild" in their consequences compared to the fourth one. This concerned the problem of the relationship between the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class, and the reciprocal relationship of the three classes in Ceylonese politics in general and Ceylonese *revolutionary* politics in particular.

It is well known that the peasantry plays a key role in all mass revolutions in backward, colonial or semi-

tures on this very subject, year after year, in their own party, could suddenly accept these tedious old illusions of "classical" reformism which had been so many times dispelled by historical experience. This is why it is correct to label their deviation from Marxism a case of "Ceylonese exceptionalism."

The position they adopted was not at all a rejection of the Leninist theory of the state, of the necessity to destroy the old bourgeois state machine, to base the workers state on proletarian democracy as opposed to bourgeois democracy, not upon "parliament" but on self-governing committees of the toiling masses. No, they continued to swear by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. They made the sharpest possible critical analysis of people's frontism and the policies of the postwar Labour government. They continued to swear by *State and Revolution* and the "permanent revolution" . . . adding only that "exceptional" circumstances in their own country happened to make Ceylon an "exception" to the general rule.

colonial countries. Since it constitutes the bulk of the population, no popular revolution is possible in these countries without an uprising of the peasantry. So long as the peasantry is not in motion, the working-class minority cannot make a bid for power without the gravest risk of being isolated and crushed.

This is a basic tenet of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, and the Stalinists (as well as Khrushchevists and Maoists) either speak out of ignorance or deliberately lie, of course, when they declare that Trotsky was "guilty of underestimating the role of the peasantry" in revolutions in backward countries. Suffice it to quote the following passage of his key book *The Permanent Revolution*:

"Not only the agrarian, but also the national question assigns to the peasantry — the overwhelming majority of the population in backward countries — an exceptional place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed." (pp. 152-53)

While the theory of the permanent

² As late as August 23, 1963, the LSSP Political Bureau published the following estimate of the situation and the temper of the mass movement in Ceylon:

"In the period facing us, there are two broad possibilities of development. In the first place, there is the question of the direct struggle of the masses leading to the capture of power. The mass struggles of today are still economic in aim. But we are living in a period of sharp changes, which included an attempted coup by reactionary forces. Although the repetition of such an attempt from the same quarters is unlikely, it is not excluded that attempts of such a nature may be made from other quarters . . .

"The other possibility is the question of the ULF [United Left Front] coming to power in a parliamentary election. This is a possibility that depends on the state of the mass movement at the time of such an election . . . If indeed such an effort is successful and a ULF government is formed, the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses will be enormously facilitated. The LSSP which does not believe that the socialist transformation of society can be accomplished except by the masses themselves, will in such a situation, both by its actions from within the ULF government and outside, set about the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses."

Instead of which, ten months later, the LSSP joined a bourgeois coalition government with the express goal of limiting and preventing "industrial strife!" It is hard to find a quicker and more cynical shift than the one between the August 23, 1963, resolution and the coalition policy of the present LSSP leadership!

revolution recognizes the key role of the peasantry in any popular revolution in a backward country, it also calls attention to the fact that historical experience has shown that the peasantry is *unable to build independent political parties of its own*. It can act either under the leadership of the liberal national bourgeoisie or under the leadership of the proletariat. And since the liberal national bourgeoisie is unable to play a revolutionary role in the epoch of imperialism, it therefore follows that a proletarian party must succeed in winning the political allegiance of the peasantry and carry the revolution through to victory by establishing a workers' state; i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the peasantry will remain under the political leadership of the national bourgeoisie, in which case there will be no victory (or no revolution at all under certain circumstances). "No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries," writes Trotsky,

"the realization of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political leadership of the proletarian vanguard, organized in the Communist Party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution."³ (p. 153.)

Let it be noted in passing that after the experience of the October Revolution, Lenin fully accepted this basic postulate of the theory of the permanent revolution, stating again and again that the peasantry either fought under the leadership of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie—a third road, involving an "independent" peasant party, he explicitly ex-

cluded.⁴ All historical experience has completely confirmed the correctness of this theory.

Need for Agrarian Program

Now it is nearly incredible, but nonetheless true, that comrades who had been fighting for nearly thirty years in defense of the correctness of this theory of the permanent revolution on a world scale and especially in their own country; who had paraphrased the above-mentioned quotations in hundreds of lectures, speeches, articles and pamphlets as well as several books,⁵ failed to recognize the very things they had been talking and writing about when they ran up against them face to face in their own country! For the basic, fatal departure from revolutionary Marxism into which the LSSP leadership fell after 1960 hinged precisely upon a *correct analysis of the class nature of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and government*, which were based mainly on the Ceylonese peasantry.

The LSSP, it is worth observing, has always analyzed the situation in the Ceylonese countryside in too sketchy a way, paying insufficient attention to the specific problems of the village poor; the slogans and agrarian program of the LSSP thus proving insufficient to meet the needs of these poor villagers. Outside the plantations — which are run by the rural proletariat and for which the LSSP correctly raised the slogan of *nationalization*⁶ — it is true that the majority of the agricultural producers of Ceylon are small independent peasants whose standard of living is higher than that of the abjectly poor, average village dwellers of say India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam or China prior to the victory of the revolution.

But it is also true that there is heavy unemployment and underemployment in the Ceylon village, that

the latest census disclosed that one-fourth of the village families own no land whatsoever, another one-fourth, less than half an acre; that since independence, the average indebtedness of village families has more than tripled and that more than sixty percent of the village families are saddled with debt. Such conditions have long made urgently necessary a detailed analysis of the agrarian problem in Ceylon and the drafting of a *comprehensive program of transitional demands for the peasantry* which the party could actively advance not only during election campaigns but also in normal day-to-day work. We are sure that the LSSP(RS) will make up for the long-standing deficiencies and failures of the past in this field.

The LSSP leadership took an essentially pragmatic, electoralist approach to the peasantry. As a result, they were badly surprised by the triumph of the SLFP in 1956, and even more by the relative stabilization of the SLFP in 1960. What had happened, however, was a quite common "electoral" evolution in a relatively stable semicolonial country. The traditional party of the bourgeoisie and rural rich, the UNP (United National Party), had become utterly discredited in the eyes of the toiling masses through its bungling of the rice-subsidy issue (which led to the *hartal* of 1953), its general corruptness and conservatism, its ties with British imperialism, etc., etc.

The masses wanted a radical change. But the LSSP, although pre-eminent among the working class, had not organized a systematic drive to win the peasant masses to its own program for a revolution in the countryside. In short, it lacked the necessary program for a thoroughgoing agrarian reform. Consequently, the "national" bourgeoisie could carry out a traditional maneuver. It divided its own forces into "conservative" and "liberal" wings, and the latter entered the elections on an opposition platform of essentially *political* reforms (progressive substitution of the poorer, Sinhalese-speaking petty bourgeoisie in key posts in local and national government administration), thereby winning overwhelming support among the rural petty bourgeoisie and peasantry.

No trained Marxist, however, could doubt that the SLFP was essentially a *bourgeois* party; i.e., the party of the "liberal" wing of the "national"

³ It is worth underlining here that Trotsky explicitly states that the first tasks of the permanent revolution to be solved are, naturally, those of the democratic revolution. Otherwise, a revolution in a backward country wouldn't be a permanent, that is, a continuously advancing revolution, but an instantaneous one. This is a reminder to all those sectarians who criticize actual revolutions for not beginning with what they can only end; i.e., the complete destruction of the bourgeois state and bourgeois property. This and the preceding quotation are from the 1962 edition of *The Permanent Revolution* printed by Plough Press Ltd.

⁴ See, for instance, Lenin's speech at the third Pan-Russian Trade Union Congress on April 7, 1920.

⁵ See, among other things in K. Tilak's excellent book: *Rise & Fall of the Comintern*, the chapter on the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the chapter on the Spanish Revolution, etc.

⁶ It should be added that prior to the Cuban Revolution, the LSSP was the only party with mass influence in a semicolonial or colonial country consistently to fight for nationalization instead of distribution of plantation land among landless peasants.

bourgeoisie. It was bourgeois not only in origin (the founder, W.R.D. Bandaranaike, had been one of the main leaders of the UNP for many years) and program, but especially in actual political practice: bourgeois property and bourgeois "law and order" were upheld under the SLFP government exactly as under the UNP government. Which of the two regimes was most corrupt is hardly worth arguing.

And if this appeared self-evident to any Marxist, it should have been a thousand times more evident to any *revolutionary* Marxist; i.e., to any Trotskyist, who, having thoroughly assimilated the theory of the permanent revolution, knew that of course an "independent" party of the peasantry has never appeared anywhere; that no exceptions are known, not even in Ceylon; and that even a party whose membership is composed ninety-nine percent of peasants will act objectively in society under the leadership of the remaining one percent of the upper strata middle-class and bourgeois members as a *party of the liberal national bourgeoisie* unless by some magic it has been transformed into a working-class party. To our knowledge, even N. M. Perera would hesitate to call the SLFP a proletarian party . . .

From Wavering to Capitulation

DOESN'T the danger exist that a revolutionary party can become "isolated" if it remains hostile to a liberal-bourgeois "new deal" which is at the same time violently opposed by conservative reaction? Isn't there even the danger of a military coup? Of course the "danger" exists. The Bolsheviks, not unexpectedly, found themselves "isolated" during the first days after April 1917 when, under Lenin's pressure, they came out vigorously in opposition to the "Provisional Government." This was also the reason why Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front government in France in June 1936, not to speak of the Trotskyist opposition to the Popular Front government in Spain, which was under open military fire from the fascists, was, at least in the beginning, neither easy nor "popular." Nevertheless opposition of this kind is the very essence of Leninism, of Bolshevism, of revolutionary Marxism.

Of course, this does not imply that a revolutionary working-class party will use *the same methods and same*

language against a liberal-bourgeois government supported by the majority of the people, and a conservative, reactionary or fascist regime, hated and despised by the people. It does not even imply the impossibility of offering such a regime a *united front* against the aggression of reaction or imperialism (such as the Bolsheviks offered Kerensky against Kornilov, and as it would be correct in Ceylon to offer the SLFP against a military coup or against "reprisals" undertaken by U. S. imperialism in defense of the oil trusts).

But the conditions for such a *united front* are well known: strict independence in the party's policies and organization; firmness in marching *separately* while striking together; stubborn efforts to warn and educate the masses on the absolute ineffectiveness and inadequacy of the policy of the liberal-bourgeois SLFP to stop reaction; continuous propaganda against imperialism, against capitalism and in favor of genuinely socialist solutions.

Above all, under no conditions to share the least responsibility for the bankrupt liberal-bourgeois regime (whose very bankruptcy is the *greatest feeder of reaction!*); under no condition *any* coalition with the "left wing" of the bourgeoisie; under no condition *any* relinquishment of constant propaganda — and, whenever possible and necessary, agitation — in favor of a Workers and Peasants Government, which, under the concrete conditions of Ceylon, could only be a government of the working-class parties with a socialist program.

The dynamics of such an initially "unpopular" stand are well known. Relatively soon, the honeymoon atmosphere of general rejoicing at the supposed "victory of the left" is dissipated, inasmuch as experience soon shows the masses that little has changed in the economic and social situation they face. They begin to realize that something much more radical is required. The initial "popularity" of the government changes into something quite different. And if the revolutionary opposition has handled itself correctly, has followed a correct policy, its own popularity

then grows day by day, since it offers an *alternative governmental solution*, with an alternative program, to the bankrupt "liberal" regime.

The Ceylon experience is no exception to this. Prior to the 1960 general elections, the LSSP leadership constantly stressed the growing unpopularity of the SLFP government, which had been so popular in 1956. In the same way, the LSSP leadership stressed very strongly in 1962-63 that the SLFP government had become utterly bankrupt. The July 7, 1963, document drafted by the LSSP majority for submission to the CP and MEP for formation of the United Left Front, begins with the following sentence: "The first task of the Front is to mobilise the masses in their own organisations and behind the Front in a campaign of struggle centering around the following demands *against the bankrupt SLFP and capitalist reaction.*" (Emphasis added.)

Formal Coalition

It is hardly believable that less than one year after having drafted that sentence — a year which showed steady *decline* in the popularity and voting strength of the SLFP — the same comrades of the majority of the LSSP, backed, by and large, by Colvin R. de Silva and Leslie Goonewardene, reached the conclusion that having won growing successes for several months by extra-parliamentary means against a bankrupt bourgeois government, it now became necessary . . . to join the bankrupt party in parliament and the government!!!!

The traditional firm Trotskyist positions of the "old guard" inside the LSSP leadership were for the first time put in question immediately after the elections of 1956. Looking at the peasantry essentially from an electoral angle, part of the LSSP leadership became unduly impressed with the landslide victory given the SLFP as an alternative to the UNP. A group of former Trotskyists under Philip Gunawardena capitulated completely to the liberal bourgeoisie and joined the coalition government. (They stood for some reforms in favor of the small peasantry — the

⁷ As late as March 21, 1964, Colvin R. de Silva was reported as saying at a giant rally of the United Left Front on Galle Face Green in Colombo "that one thing was clear from the events of the recent past . . . that the Government was bankrupt financially, politically and in all other respects." Yet only some weeks later he supported the position that all working-class parties should . . . join the bankrupt government. He did that instead of calling upon the toiling masses to replace the bankrupt government with a genuine socialist government of the ULF based upon a genuinely socialist program.

paddy land act — but at the same time became the spearhead of petty-bourgeois reactionary chauvinism directed against the Tamil minority. This split the Ceylonese proletariat — the bulk of the plantation workers, the main sector of the proletariat, being of Tamil, or Indian, origin.) The LSSP itself showed signs of wavering, advancing the proposal of “responsive co-operation” with the liberal-bourgeois Bandaranaike government. However, when the race riots started, when the chauvinism of the enraged petty-bourgeois elements supporting W. R. D. Bandaranaike threatened the unity of the proletariat and the country, and when the right wing of the SLFP mounted sufficient pressure to have Philip Gunawardena thrown out of the government, the LSSP sharply radicalized its stand and courageously fought the SLFP Emergency. This was the positive side of its “tail-endism.” Each time the workers went into action, the LSSP leadership took a new turn towards the left.

The traditional Trotskyist position against collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie was again questioned in 1960. After the unexpected electoral victory of Mrs. Bandaranaike, the LSSP decided to vote for the Throne Speech and the Budget; i.e., to give parliamentary support to a capitalist government. A proposal made by N. M. Perera to enter into a coalition with the SLFP was rejected by only a narrow majority. A big step had been taken from wavering towards betrayal. However, once again the Ceylonese working class saved the LSSP leadership temporarily from ignominy. After a short glow of hope about the possibilities of Mrs. Bandaranaike's government, the workers started on the road of growing economic struggles. This led eventually, for the first time in the history of the Ceylonese labor movement, to the establishment of a Joint Committee of Trade Unions — under LSSP leadership — which the plantation workers also joined and which represented nearly one million organized workers. In the course of this experience, the LSSP leadership was pushed towards the road of essentially extra-parliamentary struggle, implying a struggle for power,⁸ and towards the United Left Front of working-class parties conceived as offering an *alternative government*. (The LSSP Political Bureau resolution of August 23, 1963, declares that

“the mobilisation of the masses for struggle is necessary if a government of the United Left Front is to become a reality.”) This represented a sharp turn to the left compared with the attitude of 1960-61.

However, under the surface of these declarations, the party leadership had undergone the fundamental change noted above. The Perera group had cut itself loose from “political control” by the Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene tendency and had started to “play politics” on its own. Such politics could only be of

The Attempt to Find Some “Precedents”

FOR THOSE who had struggled a lifetime against Stalinist people's frontism it was not so easy to discard overnight what had been their guiding concepts and to replace them with what they had formerly rejected as stupefying poison. The nagging voice of conscience had to be stilled. Rationalizations were needed for what was indeed only a new, pitiful edition, of an old and familiar course — common, ordinary capitulation. (Comrade Karalasingham has drawn an excellent parallel between Lenin's indictment of governmental class collaboration in Russia and the latest example of Ceylonese Menshevism. See his article, “Analysis of the SLFP-LSSP Coalition,” in *World Outlook*, Vol. 2, No. 26, June 26, 1964.) The rationalizations involve two concepts: (1) “Precedents” of “coalitions” that have led to “victorious socialist revolutions” in Eastern Europe, Cuba and Algeria; (2) the “accepted program” of the SLFP-LSSP government.

Did “coalition” governments appear in most of the Eastern European countries after World War II? Yes, they did. Did these “coalition” governments lead to the overthrow of capitalism? Yes, they did. But what was the real nature of these “coalitions?” The *actual power of the state*

an extremely opportunist, reformist type. In the spring of 1964, recklessly overthrowing the very United Left Front for which he had fought so strongly nine months before, N. M. Perera abruptly opened secret negotiations with the SLFP concerning the setting up of a coalition government. The road from wavering to capitulation was completed when the majority of the LSSP, which in 1960 had still drawn back from spelling out the meaning of the fascination of the SLFP, this time followed Perera to the bitter end . . .

(“the state is, in the last analysis, a body of armed men”) no longer rested in the hands of the local capitalist class or foreign imperialism. It was *in the hands of the Soviet army* and its local CP agents (in the case of Czechoslovakia, the working class, partially armed and under tight control of the Communist Party, was brought in, too). In Yugoslavia, real state power was already in the hands of the Yugoslav CP and the Communist army which had just brought a long civil war to victorious conclusion, completing a genuine, albeit a bureaucratically distorted, social revolution.

In other words, the cases in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1948 were *just the opposite* of the “classical” coalitions between representatives of working-class parties with the bourgeoisie. In the “classical” cases, the representatives of working-class parties in coalition cabinets are the *prisoners of capitalism*, because capitalism controls the economy and the state. In the East European “coalition” cabinets, the representatives of what remained of the bourgeoisie were the *prisoners of the Soviet bureaucracy*, because it was this bureaucracy, its army and its local agents, who controlled the economy and state power. The proof of the pudding being in the eating,

⁸ See the resolution of the LSSP Conference of July 20-22, 1962, which states:

“The struggles to come will not be waged only against this or that measure of the SLFP government, but against the whole policy of the SLFP government, especially in the field of wages and taxation. It will be a struggle which, even if it appears in the beginning as having the aim of forcing the SLFP government to give up various measures, will in its development rapidly reach the point where the need to replace the SLFP government itself by a government which corresponds to the demands of the masses will be felt. In other words, the struggle will tend from the beginning to pose the problem of power.

“In preparing the masses for direct struggle, the Party cannot advance slogans which envisage a solution of the government problem mainly through the parliamentary process and on the parliamentary level. Any slogan of that kind would dampen the initiative of the masses and tend to divert the masses themselves from the perspective of direct action.” (Quatrième Internationale, No. 17, December, 1962, p. 63. Emphasis added.) [In the absence of the original text, this has been retranslated from the French.]

the real nature of these governments is generally shown by what occurs to the unhappy prisoners in the coalition. When they have played out their usefulness to the genuinely dominant social force, any illusions they may have about being in "power" are ended by a simple kick in the pants. They often find that the bars of their gilded cage in the coalition have suddenly changed to bars in a very real prison. That was the fate of the Scheidemanns and Herman Müllers in Germany, the Léon Blums in France, Thorez and some of his co-ministers in the Fourth French Republic. It was the fate of the bourgeois ministers after 1948 in Eastern Europe.

Were coalition governments formed at the beginning of the Cuban and Algerian revolutions? Yes, coalition governments were formed. Did they prevent the overthrow of capitalism? In the case of Cuba, certainly not. In the case of Algeria, the social outcome has not yet been decided, but in any case the temporary coalition between Ben Bella and Ferhat Abbas did not prevent the *revolution* from advancing along the road to overthrowing the bourgeois state.

Beyond Coalitions

Why didn't the coalition block the victory of the revolution in Cuba? Because it was *broken* at the decisive moment. When the Cuban *revolution* reached the point where it was imperative to nationalize the big estates and to break the stranglehold of foreign imperialist and *native* capital on agriculture, *all* the representatives of the "national" bourgeoisie left the government or were given a kick in the seat of the pants. They went over to the camp of the counter-revolution, thereby again confirming another of the basic postulates of the theory of the permanent revolution; i.e., that the fundamental tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in backward countries, in the epoch of imperialism cannot be carried out under the leadership of the "national" bourgeoisie, or even be tolerated by them, but requires a *proletarian* revolution and the establishment of a workers state as a necessary precondition. And, as Trotsky pointed out many times, a radical agrarian reform is precisely the fundamental task of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

In other words, a coalition government is not an absolute obstacle to

the overthrow of capitalism either when it is a *sham* coalition (when the bourgeois ministers are captives because they have already lost all real power in the economy and state to their class enemy) or when it is a passing phase that is *transcended by the development of the revolution*.

Isn't it clear that under these conditions, references to such "precedents" to excuse the coalition in Ceylon lack the slightest justification? Ceylon is not occupied by the Soviet army. The Ceylonese bourgeoisie have not been deprived of power by "military-bureaucratic" means. Mrs. Bandaranaike is no languishing "captive" of Messrs. Perera, Moonesinghe and Cholmondeley Goonewardene. Economic and state power remain fully intact in the hands of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie, not to mention the strong grip of British imperialism. There is not the remotest analogy with the cases of Eastern Europe in 1945-48.

As for the other analogy, no one as yet, unfortunately, is able to point to revolutionary events in Ceylon in any way comparable to those of Cuba or even Algeria. No spontaneous occupation of factories and estates by workers and poor peasants has occurred. We are not faced with a panic-stricken attempt of the liberal bourgeoisie to hang on, if even to the coat-tails of a revolutionary government, in the wake of a powerful mass uprising. We are not faced with a team of LSSP leaders resolved to push forward a seething revolution at all costs until it reaches a complete break with imperialism and expropriates the propertied classes even if a government coalition must be swept into the dust pan. On the contrary, the reality is that a liberal bourgeois government has just tricked the leading party of the working class into a coalition in order to *prevent* an upsurge of the mass movement, in order to *stifle* mass action, in order to *stop* the threat of potential revolution. And far from showing willingness to break up any coalition that stands in the way, the majority of the LSSP leadership revealed shameful eagerness to join such a coalition under conditions set by the bourgeois masters. All references to the Cuban and Algerian revolutions are therefore as much out of place as the references to Eastern Europe. What we have is a classical case of class collaboration in a coalition government in order

to "fool, divide and weaken the workers," as Lenin so aptly put it.

Again the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The real nature of the passing "coalitions" in Eastern Europe and in Cuba was revealed by their very transitory character and by the socio-economic results which afterwards became evident: expropriation of the bourgeoisie; a break with imperialism; destruction of the bourgeois state and the bourgeois army and police; slow emergence of a state apparatus of qualitatively different character. If it should turn out, to everyone's surprise, that a comparable process occurs in the immediate future in Ceylon, we shall of course humbly admit that we were wrong and that this coalition, after all, was only a passing phase in the rise of the Ceylonese revolution. But we observe that no one in the LSSP leadership, absolutely no one, has dared to hurl this challenge against those who accuse them of betrayal.

On the contrary, in a guilty way they promise only a few miserable reforms (workers *advisory* committees in state industry, such as Winston Churchill introduced in British plants nearly twenty-five years ago!) which do not threaten capitalist property and the bourgeois state in the least way. When the genuine revolution breaks out in Ceylon, it will most certainly *not* be in consequence of any inspiration from this government, but the result of a mass uprising *against* this government or the reactionary regime for which it is paving the way.

Who Is Responsible for the Revisionism?

WHEREAS the LSSP leadership in their rationalizations use the "analogy" to Eastern Europe, to Cuba and Algeria to excuse capitulating to the liberal bourgeoisie, some sectarian critics of the Fourth International use the same arguments — a most telling parallel! — to condemn the stand taken by the world Trotskyist movement in relation to Eastern Europe, Cuba and Algeria. The saddest case is that of Healy, who, taking as his main foundation a deliberate lie,⁹ sees in the betrayal of the LSSP leadership the "logical" outcome of our alleged "revisionism" on an international scale. If you hold that a "petty-bourgeois nationalist" like Fidel Castro can make a revolution and set up a workers state, Healy argues, then you are logically driven into taking the position that it can also be done through a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike. The method of arguing by analogy, whether used by opportunists in Ceylon or ultra-lefts in Britain, degrades Marxist dialectics to scholasticism and pure sophistry.

Healy's position, however, lacks even logical self-consistency. Having delivered his "crushing attack" against the "revisionists," he at once becomes subject to a still more crushing attack from Messrs. Schachtman, Tony Cliff and Co., who quite justifiably demand more thoroughness from him and equally justifiably accuse him of being the biggest "revisionist" of all; for doesn't Healy admit that in Eastern Europe workers states appeared not only *without revolutionary parties but also without revolutions!* Isn't Healy logically responsible, therefore, for Perera's betrayal? Once you admit, as Healy does, that capitalism can be overthrown without a revolutionary party, without a revolution, and after a coalition with the native bourgeoisie, as he teaches was the case in

Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania and East Germany, how then can you consistently draw the line on the possibility of capitalism being overthrown in Ceylon without a revolution, simply through a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike?

A whole queue of sophists thirsting for revenge now forms. Messrs. Schachtman, Tony Cliff and Co., themselves come under crushing attack from Bordiga and other ultra-leftists: "You are not 'in principle' opposed to the United Front, are you? Then, Healy, Schachtman, Cliff and *tutti quanti*, you are responsible not only for Perera's betrayal, but also for the betrayals of the French and Spanish people's fronts and all the opportunism of the Communist parties for the last thirty years." All these betrayals, they contend, were the logical consequence of the basic revisionism that occurred at the Third Congress of the Communist International, where it was decided that so-called 'united fronts' with opportunist working-class parties was a permissible tactic. We happen to know, they argue, that Lenin himself said in the First and Second Congresses of the Communist International, that these opportunist parties of the working class are in reality bourgeois parties objectively, in fact the best and main props of the bourgeois state and bourgeois private property under conditions of working-class upsurge. Therefore, any 'united front' with such parties is shameful revisionism and betrayal. Once you condone such betrayals, they triumphantly conclude, the logical consequence is the ultimate betrayal of you yourself joining in a coalition government with these or other bourgeois parties.

To make a long story short, Bordiga himself is not without sin. His "revisionism" comes under crushing attack from the anarchists. They point

out that the ultimate source of all the crimes and betrayals committed by all the opportunists in the labor movement is the original sin of "accepting the idea of the state." Once you agree to the argument that the workers must conquer state power, you find that the next step is acceptance of the view that a majority must be won. To win a majority you must take into consideration the views of opportunist elements among the masses. Once you start kowtowing in this way, it is an easy step first to negotiate with and then to ally yourself with political parties that represent these conservative elements. You thereby become hopelessly revisionist. When you accepted the idea of conquering state power you were already on the road to a coalition with the bourgeoisie. It was really the idea of conquering state power that was responsible for Perera's capitulation. Thus to simon-pure anarchists, Perera, Cannon, Healy, Schachtman, Cliff and Bordiga are just one reactionary revisionist mass . . .

Basis of Social Revolution

Is it so difficult to unravel this sophistry? A social revolution signifies the replacement of one mode of production by another, of the economic, social and political power of one class by that of another. In the mainstream of history this can be done only if the revolutionary class is led by a revolutionary party. Under wholly abnormal circumstances, however — especially if it has been previously weakened to the extreme by war and uprisings — a ruling class can also be dislodged without such a party. This is not a new phenomenon; it is as old as the Paris Commune; and it was acknowledged and faithfully noted by Leon Trotsky in the very *Transitional Program* which Healy brandishes the way a Protestant cleric brandishes Holy

⁹ In The Newsletter of July 4, 1964, Healy, General Secretary of the Socialist Labour League (Great Britain) states that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International supported the "center" position of Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva, demanding a coalition between the United Left Front and the bourgeois SLFP. The truth is that the position of the "center" group was consistently opposed by the United Secretariat which counterposed the slogan of a government of working-class parties to any thought of coalition with a bourgeois party. Again, Healy states in The Newsletter of July 11, 1964, that the United Secretariat "advocated support for the centrist wing of Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin de Silva . . . right up until the vote was taken at the LSSP conference of June 7." This is an outright falsification. From the moment it learned of Perera's secret negotiations, the United Secretariat urged that the firmest stand be taken on the Trotskyist positions; i.e., opposition to any coalition with the bourgeois SLFP. This included any ULF coalition with the SLFP along the lines advocated by Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva. The documents, which have been scheduled for publication, will show how gross Healy's attempt is to saddle the United Secretariat of the Fourth International with the position taken by the "center" grouping.

Scripture, carefully avoiding citing the passages that don't suit his sectarian politics.¹⁰

What should revolutionary Marxists do? Deny the truth? Defend the fantastic idea that the Cuban bourgeoisie is today politically in power (when its state apparatus has been completely destroyed, when its army has been totally crushed, when the Cuban state, equalling "men in arms" is the armed proletariat and poor peasantry)? Maintain that the mode of production in Cuba is still capitalist (when not only industry, transport, banking and wholesale trade are one hundred percent nationalized but even agriculture is seventy percent socialized; i.e., when the socialization of the means of production is in fact *more advanced than it was in Soviet Russia ten years after the October Revolution*)? Should such realities be denied out of fear of succumbing to temptation, the real "moving spirit" of sectarianism, as Trotsky correctly declared? Consider the completely hallucinatory character of Healy's position: He argues that *without a revolution* workers states were created in Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, nay, even in East Germany where the working class was completely crushed and exercised no form of "power" for even a single moment. He cites the nationalization of the means of production as the acid test, proving that workers states were established. But he argues that in Cuba where nationalization of the

means of production occurred *in the process of and as a consequence of a genuine revolution*, the deepest and most popular seen since 1917, deeper and more popular than the Spanish Revolution, bringing into united action up to seventy percent of the population, establishing committees with two million members in a population of seven million, with workers wielding actual power for years now in many areas, forms and plants, that all this *does not* mean a workers state but only a variety of . . . bourgeois power!

We do not care to share any such hallucinations. In our opinion, Marxism begins with a scrupulous critical analysis of reality and its own relation to it, and never sacrifices truth for the sake of any formula which would thereby be converted into a scholastic dogma. From the Marxist point of view there is no escaping the admission that under certain exceptional circumstances capitalism *can* be overthrown without prior formation of a revolutionary Marxist party — even without prior formation of soviets. While admitting something that has been confirmed by life itself, it is necessary to determine the exact reasons which made it possible, thereby reinforcing the theoretical conclusion that it can happen only under *exceptional* circumstances, is not a general rule, and most certainly does not apply to imperialist countries where the bourgeoisie is still very powerful, economically as well as socially.¹¹ Such an analysis,

far from being "revisionist," strengthens and enriches revolutionary theory, for in order to transform reality, Marxists must start by understanding and accepting it. Merely repeating formulas in parrot-like fashion dooms a grouping to the fate of a politically bankrupt sect that can *never* win leadership of the masses and *never* make a revolution.

Does this mean, then, that because history has provided examples of a capitalist class being overthrown without the previous existence of a revolutionary Marxist party that some kind of *opportunist* policy; i.e., a coalition with liberal bourgeois parties, can lead to a revolution? Certainly not. Experience is enormously rich in demonstrating that such a policy, far from speeding a revolution, only betrays the hopes of the working class and helps a tottering capitalist class to remain in power. To argue that "revisionism" in the case of Cuba — meaning admitting the facts — "logically leads" to Perera's policies reveals complete incapacity to see the difference between a case where the bourgeoisie has *lost* power and a case where its power has been *saved*. What the Popular Front accomplished for the French bourgeoisie, or what Perera is trying to accomplish for the Ceylonese bourgeoisie today, is completely clear to all the political forces directly involved in these operations. On the other hand, no amount of sophistry from Healy will convince the Cuban bourgeoisie, in emigration in Miami or huddling together in the miserable *gusano* circles of La Habana, that they are really still in power today under Fidel Castro the way the *Comité des Forges* still remained in power under the Popular Front government of Léon Blum in 1936 and 1937.¹²

¹⁰ "However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere at some time becomes a reality, and the 'workers' and farmers' government' in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat." (Transitional Program, p. 37, Pioneer Publishers, 1946.)

¹¹ This is done in detail in the document "The Dynamics of World Revolution," adopted at the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International. (Reprinted in the International Socialist Review, Fall 1963.)

¹² The "petty-bourgeois nationalist" label that Healy pins on the government of Fidel Castro involves a fundamental revision of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution: (1) The petty bourgeoisie is suddenly granted the capacity to build an independent movement; otherwise Healy would have to call Fidel Castro's movement either a bourgeois movement or a petty-bourgeois working-class movement (of the left socialist or semi-Stalinist variety). (2) This imagined "independent petty-bourgeois movement" (or, still worse, a bourgeois party!) is suddenly granted the capacity to solve the basic demand of the bourgeois-democratic revolution: a radical agrarian reform — seventy percent of all the arable land is socialized today in Cuba and there are no more unemployed or landless peasants. Thus, reasoning from Healy's assumption, the social and economic problem that provides the main motive power driving the revolution forward in "permanent" fashion no longer exists in Cuba; Castro solved it. (Rather than revising the theory of the permanent revolution reality compels us to deny Healy's contention that a capitalist state still exists in Cuba.) (3) If Healy is right, then it is clear that the leadership of the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer a necessary precondition for solving the agrarian question and bringing the agrarian revolution to successful conclusion. If Healy is right we would be obligated to admit that Trotsky turned out to be dead wrong on a key postulate of the theory of the permanent revolution. Healy can't have it both ways!

ONLY a sector of the leading cadre of the LSSP became really integrated into the Fourth International. The international movement had no way of influencing the rank-and-file members of the party except through this cadre. But it must be said, in all fairness, that this cadre was much more politically advanced and much closer to the general program and current political line of the Fourth International than the average member of the LSSP. From the start, therefore; i.e., from the reconstitution of an International Center at the close of World War II and from the first formal relations with

LSSP (R.S.) and the Fourth International

(The following statement by Edmund Samarakkody, a member of the Ceylonese parliament and one of the leaders of the Revolutionary section of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party*, was issued June 7.)

The decision of the reformist majority of the LSSP to enter into a coalition with the capitalist SLFP (*Sri Lanka Freedom Party*) government and thereby to become an instrument of the capitalist class in Ceylon, constitutes a complete violation of the basic principles of Trotskyism on which the revolutionary program of the party is based.

This degeneration is the logical outcome of the parliamentary reformist line which the majority of the leadership of the party has followed for several years and the substitution of parliamentary and reformist struggle in place of class struggle and revolutionary perspectives, and the systematic recruitment of nonrevolutionary elements into the party on that basis.

The revolutionaries of the LSSP have, in this situation, decided to organize themselves on the basis of the party program. They therefore withdrew from the conference and will hereafter function as a separate organization under the name of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section)*.

In order to carry forward the revolutionary struggle for power, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) calls upon all the adherents and supporters of the LSSP in the country to rally round the revolutionary banner which it refuses to surrender to the SLFP Government and the capitalist class.

(Signed) **Edmund Samarakkody, Secretary,
Provisional Committee of the LSSP
(Revolutionary Section)**

Note: The Provisional Committee of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) addressed a communication to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International requesting recognition of the LSSP (RS) as the "Ceylon Unit" of the Fourth International.

A letter from the United Secretariat under date of July 10, 1964 — which crossed the Provisional Committee communication in the mail — addressed to the Emergency Conference of the LSSP (RS), scheduled for July 18-19, stated that the US had voted: "To recognize this Emergency Conference as officially constituting the continuing body of the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon and to empower it to speak for and conduct any matters pertaining to the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon."

The Emergency Conference voted to accept the "recognition granted, and will hereafter function as the Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International." The vote on this motion by the delegates was 54 "for," 9 "against," and 8 "neutral."

arguments of the International into careful consideration, adjusting or changing deviations in political line in response to suggestions or criticisms from the International.

It should be added that this attitude was not only correct in principle; it corresponded in the current situation to the feelings of the leaders of the left tendency that fortunately arose spontaneously in the LSSP and which sought the closest consultation and contact with the International. Several times in the past year, when pressure from other sources rose for "vigorous" intervention, the comrades of the left tendency warned against any "factional" moves in the internal struggle in the LSSP on their behalf. In this situation any violation of the principle involved would have had immediate practical consequences that could only damage their work. These comrades thereby demonstrated how well they understand the principle of democratic centralism as bequeathed to our movement by Leon Trotsky. They fought against the opportunist trend, organizing a tendency the better to defend the traditional Trotskyist positions; yet they helped the United Secretariat, which shared their basic views, to maintain normal, comradely relations with the elected leadership of the party.

The influence which the International Center sought to wield among the leaders of the LSSP falls into two periods sharply divided by the 1960 experience.

Before 1960, the international leadership was concerned about erroneous attitudes on various questions, but it limited its communications to the Political Bureau and Central Committee, occasionally to party conferences. It was critical over the lack of

integration of the LSSP leadership into the International, its failure to make financial contributions in proportion to organizational strength, its failure to maintain close relations with the Indian section (which was abruptly "abandoned" by the Ceylonese comrades in the late forties), its lack of a Leninist-type organizational structure, its lack of systematic recruitment especially among the plantation workers, the lack of party educational work, etc., etc. On some points, such criticisms led to favorable results. Membership conferences were formally given up. The work among the Tamil population became more energetic, a Tamil newspaper was published, a Tamil-speaking plantation workers union was organ-

the Ceylonese section, the international leadership had no choice, even if some other recourse seemed more advisable, but to try to bring the LSSP progressively closer to the norms of a real Leninist-type organization through comradely collaboration with the LSSP leadership. What was involved essentially was patient education.

The problem was not a matter of correct or incorrect tactics. The same line was consistently followed from 1945 to 1964 — nearly ten years of this period being in close consultation with Healy and with his complete approval. The line involved a basic organizational principle — how to facilitate the selection of national and international leaders in the Fourth International. We do not believe that hard-handed intervention from an international center can substitute for the patient selection, in a democratic way, of a mature revolutionary leadership in each country.

The International can and must

help to clarify political issues; but it is duty bound to refrain from setting up artificially, from the outside, any tendencies or factions, or from engaging in organizational reprisals against national leaderships in which it has misgivings or holds reservations because of their political tendencies. To act otherwise does not lead to political clarification; on the contrary, it inevitably leads to organizational grievances becoming substituted for political discussion, and thus, in the long run, hinders and delays the process of creating an independent-minded revolutionary leadership. This responsible attitude — really a *norm* — is all the more necessary where language obstacles and distance make it impossible to conduct a direct dialogue with the majority of the membership and where the leading cadre displays loyalty to the international organization, attending congresses, distributing communications as they are received, and taking the opinions and

LSSP (R.S.) and the Fourth International

(The following statement by Edmund Samarakkody, a member of the Ceylonese parliament and one of the leaders of the Revolutionary section of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party*, was issued June 7.)

The decision of the reformist majority of the LSSP to enter into a coalition with the capitalist SLFP (*Sri Lanka Freedom Party*) government and thereby to become an instrument of the capitalist class in Ceylon, constitutes a complete violation of the basic principles of Trotskyism on which the revolutionary program of the party is based.

This degeneration is the logical outcome of the parliamentary reformist line which the majority of the leadership of the party has followed for several years and the substitution of parliamentary and reformist struggle in place of class struggle and revolutionary perspectives, and the systematic recruitment of nonrevolutionary elements into the party on that basis.

The revolutionaries of the LSSP have, in this situation, decided to organize themselves on the basis of the party program. They therefore withdrew from the conference and will hereafter function as a separate organization under the name of the *Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section)*.

In order to carry forward the revolutionary struggle for power, the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) calls upon all the adherents and supporters of the LSSP in the country to rally round the revolutionary banner which it refuses to surrender to the SLFP Government and the capitalist class.

(Signed) **Edmund Samarakkody, Secretary,
Provisional Committee of the LSSP
(Revolutionary Section)**

Note: The Provisional Committee of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) addressed a communication to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International requesting recognition of the LSSP (RS) as the "Ceylon Unit" of the Fourth International.

A letter from the United Secretariat under date of July 10, 1964 — which crossed the Provisional Committee communication in the mail — addressed to the Emergency Conference of the LSSP (RS), scheduled for July 18-19, stated that the US had voted: "To recognize this Emergency Conference as officially constituting the continuing body of the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon and to empower it to speak for and conduct any matters pertaining to the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon."

The Emergency Conference voted to accept the "recognition granted, and will hereafter function as the Ceylon Unit of the Fourth International." The vote on this motion by the delegates was 54 "for," 9 "against," and 8 "neutral."

arguments of the International into careful consideration, adjusting or changing deviations in political line in response to suggestions or criticisms from the International.

It should be added that this attitude was not only correct in principle; it corresponded in the current situation to the feelings of the leaders of the left tendency that fortunately arose spontaneously in the LSSP and which sought the closest consultation and contact with the International. Several times in the past year, when pressure from other sources rose for "vigorous" intervention, the comrades of the left tendency warned against any "factional" moves in the internal struggle in the LSSP on their behalf. In this situation any violation of the principle involved would have had immediate practical consequences that could only damage their work. These comrades thereby demonstrated how well they understand the principle of democratic centralism as bequeathed to our movement by Leon Trotsky. They fought against the opportunist trend, organizing a tendency the better to defend the traditional Trotskyist positions; yet they helped the United Secretariat, which shared their basic views, to maintain normal, comradely relations with the elected leadership of the party.

The influence which the International Center sought to wield among the leaders of the LSSP falls into two periods sharply divided by the 1960 experience.

Before 1960, the international leadership was concerned about erroneous attitudes on various questions, but it limited its communications to the Political Bureau and Central Committee, occasionally to party conferences. It was critical over the lack of

integration of the LSSP leadership into the International, its failure to make financial contributions in proportion to organizational strength, its failure to maintain close relations with the Indian section (which was abruptly "abandoned" by the Ceylonese comrades in the late forties), its lack of a Leninist-type organizational structure, its lack of systematic recruitment especially among the plantation workers, the lack of party educational work, etc., etc. On some points, such criticisms led to favorable results. Membership conferences were formally given up. The work among the Tamil population became more energetic, a Tamil newspaper was published, a Tamil-speaking plantation workers union was organ-

the Ceylonese section, the international leadership had no choice, even if some other recourse seemed more advisable, but to try to bring the LSSP progressively closer to the norms of a real Leninist-type organization through comradely collaboration with the LSSP leadership. What was involved essentially was patient education.

The problem was not a matter of correct or incorrect tactics. The same line was consistently followed from 1945 to 1964 — nearly ten years of this period being in close consultation with Healy and with his complete approval. The line involved a basic organizational principle — how to facilitate the selection of national and international leaders in the Fourth International. We do not believe that hard-handed intervention from an international center can substitute for the patient selection, in a democratic way, of a mature revolutionary leadership in each country.

The International can and must

help to clarify political issues; but it is duty bound to refrain from setting up artificially, from the outside, any tendencies or factions, or from engaging in organizational reprisals against national leaderships in which it has misgivings or holds reservations because of their political tendencies. To act otherwise does not lead to political clarification; on the contrary, it inevitably leads to organizational grievances becoming substituted for political discussion, and thus, in the long run, hinders and delays the process of creating an independent-minded revolutionary leadership. This responsible attitude — really a *norm* — is all the more necessary where language obstacles and distance make it impossible to conduct a direct dialogue with the majority of the membership and where the leading cadre displays loyalty to the international organization, attending congresses, distributing communications as they are received, and taking the opinions and

ized with promising results. The Youth Leagues became a mass organization, including tens of thousands of members, sympathetic to the LSSP. An attempt, later abandoned, was made to have the party study the agrarian problem. Several attempts (which failed) were made to have the main party leaders give up activities that blocked them from full-time participation in party work.

On many occasions the International had reason to be proud of the LSSP and its leadership, as for example in the 1953 *hartal*, in the race riots of 1958 and in the 1961 strike wave. In instances like the race riots it upheld the banner of internationalism in the most stubborn way, holding tough against the petty-bourgeois chauvinistic pressure mounting on all sides until it reached *pogrom* level, yet never giving up its fight for equality of status between Sinhalese and Tamil, always defending the political rights of the oppressed minority, even at the cost of "popularity." It is sad to have to say that such a fine record was marred in 1963 when the party lead-

ership began to give up what it had maintained under the severest hardship, for opportunistic reasons conceding on the language question to the CP and MEP leaderships during the 1963 United Left Front negotiations.

The decision of the LSSP after the 1960 elections to support Mrs. Bandaranaike's government meant the abrupt end of this stage of relations between the leaderships of the LSSP and the Fourth International. It was clear that the problem was no longer occasional tail-endism or a threat of opportunism which could be corrected by fraternal discussion and comradely collaboration. More vigorous measures were required to bring the LSSP, or at least part of it, back to revolutionary Marxism.

That is why the LSSP decision to support the Bandaranaike government in 1960 met with a sharp public censure from the International leadership. And when the majority of the LSSP did not correct this grave mistake after a public warning from the Fourth International, the Sixth

World Congress, meeting at the end of 1960, again publicly criticized and attacked the Ceylonese section for its opportunistic behavior, a measure without precedent in the history of the International in relation to an organization that had not split away. At the same time *The Militant*, the American weekly expressing the viewpoint of the Socialist Workers Party, completely independently of the Sixth World Congress, also found it necessary to publicly condemn the opportunistic support which the LSSP leadership was offering to a bourgeois government.¹³

This pressure from the world Trotskyist movement was not without results. The LSSP leadership began a retreat. In 1961 it no longer voted for the budget. The upsurge of working-class militancy favored this development. Satisfaction could be registered over the left turn of the LSSP leadership. And for the first time since the birth of the Ceylonese section, it could be recorded that the organization now had a permanent representative in the international leadership (a representative who happened to be a leading member of the left tendency).

When the Seventh World Congress assembled, preparing the ground for the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International that followed, the delegates, among whom was Edmund Samarakkody today secretary of the LSSP(RS), were faced with a new turn of the LSSP leadership, one that began in March 1963, the turn towards a united front of all working-class organizations in Ceylon. On the trade-union field, the turn at once yielded the most promising results, which we already noted above. On the political level, the turn was expressed in a drive towards a United Left Front of working-class parties.

This was undoubtedly a step forward compared with support to the SLFP government. It had the merit of presenting a *working-class alternative to a bourgeois government*. This the World Congress correctly saluted as a fundamentally correct orientation. At the same time, the Congress drew attention, both publicly and through a special letter to the LSSP, to four key issues involved in the turn which the Congress thought had not been properly met by the LSSP leadership: (1) Insufficiently critical analysis of the 1960 mistake;¹⁴ (2) lack of clarity about the extra-parliamentary nature and potentialities of the United Left Front in contrast to its parliamentary fea-

¹³ In September 1960 the International Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a public statement, published in issue No. 11 of the magazine *Fourth International*, saying among other things: "The IS has not failed to express to the LSSP its disagreement in regard to both its recent electoral policy and its policy towards the SLFP after the March and July elections. The IS particularly believes that the no-contest agreement, extended up to a mutual-support agreement, involves the danger of creating illusions about the nature of the SLFP among the great masses, and that an attitude of support to a government such as that of Mrs. Bandaranaike should only be critical and hence limited to the progressive measures actually proposed and adopted.

"In the specific case of the Speech from the Throne, the IS thinks that the very moderate character of the government programme and its attitude against nationalisation of the plantations — a fundamental question for a country like Ceylon — is such as to involve a negative vote by the LSSP MPs.

"A discussion on the Ceylonese situation and the policy to adopt has been opened in view of the next conference of the LSSP and of the World Congress of the International." (pp. 53-54)

At the Sixth World Congress itself, the following resolution was adopted and printed in issue No. 12 of the magazine *Fourth International*:

"The Sixth World Congress, having discussed the situation in Ceylon, states that it disapproves the political line adopted by the LSSP following the election defeat of March 1960.

"The Congress condemns more especially the vote of parliamentary support expressed on the occasion of the Speech from the Throne, and the adoption of the budget by the party's MPs.

"The Fourth International does not exclude support for the adoption of progressive measures, even by a national bourgeois or petty-bourgeois government in a colonial or semi-colonial country. But the social nature, composition and general programme of the Bandaranaike government does not justify the support which was accorded to it.

"The World Congress appeals to the LSSP for a radical change in its political course in the direction indicated by the document of the leadership of the International.

"The Congress is confident that the next National Conference of the LSSP, in whose political preparation the whole International must participate, will know how to adopt all the political and organisational decisions necessary to overcome the crisis which was revealed following the results of the March 1960 election campaign." (p. 50)

This resolution shows what a shameful lie was printed by Healy's Newsletter in the July 4 1964, issue: "The Pabloite International Secretariat endorsed [!], with reservation, the main line of the LSSP in the 1960 elections . . . Thus it supplied them with further cover for their capitulation to the SLFP."

Readers and friends of The Newsletter should ponder why the group that edits this paper feels compelled to use systematic lies and distortions of the truth as political ammunition whereas Trotsky said that the revolution, the biggest truth of our times, doesn't need lies . . .

¹⁴ See *Quatrième Internationale*, No. 19, July 1963, p. 49.

tures; (3) lack of any kind of public criticism by the LSSP of the opportunist policies of the CP and MEP, contrary to the Leninist concept of the united front; (4) failure to involve the Tamil plantation workers and their organizations in the United Left Front. (This point blew up into a real scandal through failure to invite them to the platform in the May 1, 1963, demonstration, and the Congress strongly criticized the LSSP leadership over this.)

The LSSP leadership, now faced with an officially constituted Left Tendency in the party, again partially responded to the pressure of the International¹. It took some steps on the question of interesting the Tamil workers in the draft program for the United Left Front, only to partially back down under pressure from the CP and MEP. The ULF started to call big mass demonstrations, which were attended by tens of thousands of workers and peasants, clearly testifying to the popular re-

sponse to formation of the ULF and the objective possibility of launching an all-out campaign in favor of bringing to power a ULF government on a socialist program. Strike struggles of the working class grew sharper and sharper. The program of twenty-one points was adopted by all the trade unions. A mammoth demonstration of 40,000 people supported it on March 21, 1964.

It was at this point that N. M. Perera, in complete opposition to the party's program and its conference decisions, treacherously embarked on secret negotiations with Mrs. Bandaranaike for the purpose of entering a coalition government. Mrs. Bandaranaike herself very clearly and frankly expressed why she wanted such a government:

"However much progressive work we do, we cannot expect any result unless we get the co-operation of the working class. This could be understood if the working of the Port and of other nationalised un-

dertakings are considered. We cannot go backwards. We must go forward. Disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows must be eliminated, and the development of the country must proceed.

"Some people have various ideas on these subjects. Some feel that these troubles can be eliminated by the establishment of a dictatorship. Others say that workers should be made to work at the point of gun and bayonet . . . My conclusion is that none of these solutions will help to get us where we want to go . . . Therefore, gentlemen, I decided to initiate talks with the leaders of the working class, particularly Mr. Philip Gunawardena and Dr. N. M. Perera . . ." (May 10, 1964, speech. Emphasis added.)

As soon as the United Secretariat of the Fourth International was informed about this step, it sent a letter to the LSSP Central Committee, warning it not to undertake a step which would be utter betrayal and counterposing to the idea of coalition with a bourgeois party the correct perspective of a united front government of all working-class parties based on a socialist program.¹⁵ The Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International, held in May 1964, unanimously endorsed this stand. At the same time it was decided to send a representative of the Fourth International to attend the LSSP special conference and fight against the coalition proposal, making it clear to everybody, inside and outside the party in Ceylon, that the Fourth International would have nothing to

¹⁵ This letter, dated April 23, 1964, called attention to the "inability of the ruling SLFP to continue much longer in office, expressed in its rapidly dwindling parliamentary majority, its sudden prorogation of parliament and its 'behind the scenes' maneuvers to negotiate a fresh lease of life through an alliance with the parties of the left."

The letter continued:

"As far as the SLFP is concerned, two factors appear to motivate its present course of action: (1) lack of confidence in its ability to continue in office for the rest of its constitutional term; (2) a deep-seated fear of an upsurge in the working-class movement and the real possibility of the emergence of a government of the left. Clearly, it is this latter possibility which drives it today to seek a modus vivendi with the left and attempt a re-alignment of forces through a coalition with the United Left Front.

"Its calculations are fairly obvious. It hopes to gain strength by an infusion from the left. It hopes to disorient the masses by taking on left coloration. It hopes to weaken the threat from the left by splitting the left organizations (since acceptance of a coalition would obviously not be unanimous and would most likely open the most bitter factional struggles). It hopes to associate prominent left figures with its rule and thereby utterly discredit them for the following phase when this one comes to its inevitable end and social forces have reached unendurable tension and polarization.

"Its primary immediate aim is to stem the tide of rising mass unrest, contain the parties of the left within its own control and commit them to 'progressive' formulae within the framework of the capitalist structure. It is clear that the 'concessions' proposed by the Prime Minister and reported to the Central Committee meeting remain mere sops insofar as they leave intact the structure of capitalism and in no way touch the essential productive bases of the economy.

"It is necessary to declare at this stage, quite categorically, that we oppose our party entering any coalition government wherein decisive control is held by a party that has proved time and again its reluctance to move against the capitalist order, and furthermore has demonstrated in action its essentially antiworking-class character. We do not believe that the character of the SLFP is determined by the declarations of one or another of its individual leaders. Its character has been revealed by its whole history during its years in power. In this sense we see no reason for changing our characterization of it as a party essentially functioning within the framework of capitalism and utilized by certain layers of the bourgeoisie as a possible bulwark against the growing forces of the working class. Any form of coalition with such a party, as long as it remains the dominant majority within such a coalition, can only lead to the immobilization of the left in advance and its becoming itself a target for the growing resentment of the masses."

¹⁶ Comrade Pierre Frank's stay in Ceylon during and after the LSSP conference greatly helped the cause of the Fourth International. Besides his speech at the conference, he conferred with many leaders and members of the LSSP. The press was quite interested in what he had to say as it was known that he represented the main stream of the world Trotskyist movement and that his opinions carried weight. His statements were extensively reported in the Ceylon press and he was thus able to make clear to the whole general public that the Fourth International rejected Perera's coalition politics and had nothing to do with his moves and negotiations

do with the betrayal if Perera should succeed in carrying it out.¹⁶

Thanks to the collaboration between the International and the courageous action of the Left Tendency of the LSSP, the banner of Trotskyism remains unstained in Ceylon — the Fourth International is not identified with the disastrous opportunist course of Messrs. Perera, Moonesinghe and Cholmondeley Goonewardene. The bulk of the Trotskyist-educated cadre has been saved for the Ceylonese revolution. When the inevitable clash between the Ceylonese working class and the capitalist government occurs, many working-class members of the LSSP who mistakenly followed N. M. Perera will turn to the LSSP(RS). Fresh layers of militant workers will come to the organization that knew how to stand firm against the opportunist wing. Given a correct

orientation, a resolute break with all the opportunist and sectarian habits of the old LSSP, and an energetic turn towards mass work and mass education among the workers and poor peasants, the LSSP(RS) can and will build an alternative revolutionary leadership for the Ceylonese toiling masses.

What lessons should be drawn from this experience? Opportunism remains a constant danger for any revolutionary organization once it gains mass influence, especially if it faces conditions in which the revolution is deferred. There is no other final guarantee against this danger than the thorough education of the cadre through study and action in revolutionary Marxism. The party members must root themselves in the working class and absorb the program of the Fourth International until it becomes second nature, lodged in their very bones, without any illusions about "exceptionalism" of any kind.

The opportunist deviations of the Perera group are so spectacular and so criminal that they are easily perceived. But this should not cause us to overlook an opposite kind of error that can prove just as harmful from the viewpoint of building revolutionary mass parties and preparing for revolutionary action on a big scale. This is the error of sectarianism and ultra-leftism which often appears as an offset to opportunism. This error is much less spectacular and those who fall into it are seldom faced with problems of conscience, consequently it can often prove to be more in-

sidious in causing a revolutionary cadre to miss a big possible breakthrough towards mass influence.

Opportunism generally represents a caving in to the direct pressure of a hostile class environment. In underdeveloped countries, tail-endism in relation to the masses paves the way for opportunist adaptation to bourgeois parties momentarily wielding wide mass influence. The social nature of such opportunism is very clear: adaptation to the petty bourgeoisie, which in turn is following the leadership of the liberal national bourgeoisie.

The roots of such opportunism are "national," not "international." The petty bourgeoisie — to speak of the liberal bourgeoisie in this connection is ridiculous — cannot directly influence the Fourth International with its particular kind of pressure. Its pressure is exerted on national sections that happen to be living in a given environment where this is possible. To battle that pressure, the Fourth International has the resource of sections that are free from the pressure, or more capable of resisting it, plus a team of leaders who tend, out of long experience, testing and selection, to reflect the interests of the movement as a whole. But to bring these resources to bear in an effective way in a given situation precisely when they can do the most

good requires a certain material weight.

We know, as materialists, that politics are decided in the last resort not by ideas but by social forces. Even the strongest ideas do not triumph if there is not enough material strength behind those ideas. The most powerful counterweight to opportunist deviations in national sections of the world Trotskyist movement is a strong International, with strong cohesive forces, with enough material resources to make possible effective and benign political aid in fields and areas where it is most required,¹⁷ with enough weight and prestige to make any centrifugal tendency stop short and think twice before taking any decisive step in the way of breaching the political line determined by the world Trotskyist movement at its congresses.

The split in the world Trotskyist movement in 1953 undoubtedly weakened the deterrents to the growth of opportunism in the LSSP. The 1963 reunification came too late to be able to reverse the trend. Let all those who sought to block that unification, who managed to hinder it and defer it for some years, or who refused to participate in it when it finally came about, ponder the lesson of Ceylon. They bear much of the responsibility for the loss of part of a revolutionary cadre in that country.

¹⁷ On five occasions the Fourth International sent leading members of the Center to Ceylon in order to participate in discussions involving the leaders and rank and file of the Ceylonese section. Three of these trips were made after the 1960 crisis. It is evident, however, that this was not enough. A stronger International would have been able to send some of its leaders for a prolonged stay in Ceylon to help in the necessary fundamental educational work.

3. The Wearing Out of a Revolutionary Leadership

By Pierre Frank

reprinted from the July 17, 1964, issue of *World Outlook*

(Pierre Frank, a founding member of the Fourth International, is a former secretary of Leon Trotsky. He attended the Special Conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party which was held in Colombo, Ceylon, on June 6 and 7, 1964. As the official representative of the Fourth International at that gathering, he supported the struggle of the left wing against a proposal by N.M. Perera, or any variation of it, to support a bourgeois coalition government. The following article was reprinted from *World Outlook*, the predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*. Related articles appeared in the June 19 and June 26, 1964, issues of *World Outlook*.)

The vote at the Special Conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party June 7, authorizing Perera and his friends to enter a bourgeois government, was a blow against the

Fourth International and the Ceylonese masses. It was the end result, as we shall see, of the wearing out of a revolutionary leadership.

The Origin of the LSSP

The LSSP always occupied a unique place in the Fourth International. Its origin was completely different from that of all the other sections of our movement. In brief, our movement everywhere else was born in more or less profound struggles within an established labor movement. In Ceylon, the labor movement itself was created toward the end of the thirties by a team of young revolutionaries educated in the English universities, who, attracted toward Communism just as the great struggle of the Left Opposition against Stalinism reached its height, decided in favor of the theory of the permanent revolution.

It is necessary to add that they came to national

orientation, a resolute break with all the opportunist and sectarian habits of the old LSSP, and an energetic turn towards mass work and mass education among the workers and poor peasants, the LSSP(RS) can and will build an alternative revolutionary leadership for the Ceylonese toiling masses.

What lessons should be drawn from this experience? Opportunism remains a constant danger for any revolutionary organization once it gains mass influence, especially if it faces conditions in which the revolution is deferred. There is no other final guarantee against this danger than the thorough education of the cadre through study and action in revolutionary Marxism. The party members must root themselves in the working class and absorb the program of the Fourth International until it becomes second nature, lodged in their very bones, without any illusions about "exceptionalism" of any kind.

The opportunist deviations of the Perera group are so spectacular and so criminal that they are easily perceived. But this should not cause us to overlook an opposite kind of error that can prove just as harmful from the viewpoint of building revolutionary mass parties and preparing for revolutionary action on a big scale. This is the error of sectarianism and ultra-leftism which often appears as an offset to opportunism. This error is much less spectacular and those who fall into it are seldom faced with problems of conscience, consequently it can often prove to be more in-

sidious in causing a revolutionary cadre to miss a big possible breakthrough towards mass influence.

Opportunism generally represents a caving in to the direct pressure of a hostile class environment. In underdeveloped countries, tail-endism in relation to the masses paves the way for opportunist adaptation to bourgeois parties momentarily wielding wide mass influence. The social nature of such opportunism is very clear: adaptation to the petty bourgeoisie, which in turn is following the leadership of the liberal national bourgeoisie.

The roots of such opportunism are "national," not "international." The petty bourgeoisie — to speak of the liberal bourgeoisie in this connection is ridiculous — cannot directly influence the Fourth International with its particular kind of pressure. Its pressure is exerted on national sections that happen to be living in a given environment where this is possible. To battle that pressure, the Fourth International has the resource of sections that are free from the pressure, or more capable of resisting it, plus a team of leaders who tend, out of long experience, testing and selection, to reflect the interests of the movement as a whole. But to bring these resources to bear in an effective way in a given situation precisely when they can do the most

good requires a certain material weight.

We know, as materialists, that politics are decided in the last resort not by ideas but by social forces. Even the strongest ideas do not triumph if there is not enough material strength behind those ideas. The most powerful counterweight to opportunist deviations in national sections of the world Trotskyist movement is a strong International, with strong cohesive forces, with enough material resources to make possible effective and benign political aid in fields and areas where it is most required,¹⁷ with enough weight and prestige to make any centrifugal tendency stop short and think twice before taking any decisive step in the way of breaching the political line determined by the world Trotskyist movement at its congresses.

The split in the world Trotskyist movement in 1953 undoubtedly weakened the deterrents to the growth of opportunism in the LSSP. The 1963 reunification came too late to be able to reverse the trend. Let all those who sought to block that unification, who managed to hinder it and defer it for some years, or who refused to participate in it when it finally came about, ponder the lesson of Ceylon. They bear much of the responsibility for the loss of part of a revolutionary cadre in that country.

¹⁷ On five occasions the Fourth International sent leading members of the Center to Ceylon in order to participate in discussions involving the leaders and rank and file of the Ceylonese section. Three of these trips were made after the 1960 crisis. It is evident, however, that this was not enough. A stronger International would have been able to send some of its leaders for a prolonged stay in Ceylon to help in the necessary fundamental educational work.

3. The Wearing Out of a Revolutionary Leadership

By Pierre Frank

reprinted from the July 17, 1964, issue of *World Outlook*

(Pierre Frank, a founding member of the Fourth International, is a former secretary of Leon Trotsky. He attended the Special Conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party which was held in Colombo, Ceylon, on June 6 and 7, 1964. As the official representative of the Fourth International at that gathering, he supported the struggle of the left wing against a proposal by N.M. Perera, or any variation of it, to support a bourgeois coalition government. The following article was reprinted from *World Outlook*, the predecessor of *Intercontinental Press*. Related articles appeared in the June 19 and June 26, 1964, issues of *World Outlook*.)

The vote at the Special Conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party June 7, authorizing Perera and his friends to enter a bourgeois government, was a blow against the

Fourth International and the Ceylonese masses. It was the end result, as we shall see, of the wearing out of a revolutionary leadership.

The Origin of the LSSP

The LSSP always occupied a unique place in the Fourth International. Its origin was completely different from that of all the other sections of our movement. In brief, our movement everywhere else was born in more or less profound struggles within an established labor movement. In Ceylon, the labor movement itself was created toward the end of the thirties by a team of young revolutionaries educated in the English universities, who, attracted toward Communism just as the great struggle of the Left Opposition against Stalinism reached its height, decided in favor of the theory of the permanent revolution.

It is necessary to add that they came to national

prominence in a period when the Ceylonese bourgeoisie did not itself attempt to mount the least struggle against British imperialism, not even by way of imitating their Indian neighbors.

During the war, the leadership of the LSSP expelled the Stalinists, who wanted to collaborate with imperialism. The Trotskyists were persecuted, arrested. Some of them escaped to India and continued their struggle in the underground. Thus, following the war, they returned to their own country with great prestige and at the head of the labor movement.

Like every political formation, the LSSP underwent many internal struggles. Petty-bourgeois currents were eliminated, while the majority of the leadership likewise held in check the well-known opportunist tendencies of N.M. Perera, who gained his authority through systematic trade-union work.

The real leadership of the LSSP, composed of a group of figures that included Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardene, Bernard Soysa, Doric de Souza, and Edmund Samarakoddy, was of high intellectual capacity and great militancy. It was recognized throughout Ceylon as constituting the genuine leading team. This team has now broken up, the majority having gone to pieces politically. This is the real tragedy which the LSSP has just experienced. What were the causes of this event? How did it come about?

It is necessary to say that alongside most excellent qualities, this leadership had weaknesses, the consequences of which have now become fully apparent.

In the first place, on the level of political education there was a big gap between these men, who followed the activities of the international Trotskyist movement, and most of the party rank and file, who knew no English and lacked adequate material in their own language for a political education. This leadership followed the life of the International, but was not sufficiently immersed in it nor inclined to bring the party as a whole into it.

This weakness was well-known among the leaders of the Trotskyist movement on an international scale. Whatever other issues temporarily divided them from time to time, there was common concern about this problem. The general organizational and financial weakness of the Fourth International made it impossible to bring more vigorous measures to bear such as sending Trotskyists of top capacity for sustained work in Ceylon to help bring up the political level of the party. The split in 1953 did not help, as was recognized by both the International Secretariat and the International Committee; and the reunification undertaken last year was not granted sufficient time to bring new united efforts to bear in a strong healthy way in this situation.

The second weakness of the majority of the LSSP leadership was that the parliamentary successes following the war developed parliamentarian tendencies which were not combatted vigorously from the beginning and the ultimate consequences of which were not visualized. Even the intensive activities of the party centered on struggles for the conquest of seats in parliament.

A third weakness was, so to speak, the exclusively "labor" character of the party during its first years. Through their activities, the leaders of the LSSP had won the confidence of the majority of the Ceylonese workers (workers of Colombo, transport workers, white-collar brackets, etc.). But for a long time they have not tackled

the most important part of the proletariat of Ceylon, the plantation workers, consisting of Indians "imported" originally by the British and who today have no citizenship—neither Ceylonese nor Indian. The LSSP at one time registered good gains in this field, controlling a strong trade-union organization of those workers. But, with this exception, they scarcely penetrated the rural masses who constitute the majority of the population.

Ceylon, it might be mentioned, does not have a poor peasantry like India or so many other underdeveloped countries. However low the standard of living is among these masses, they do not suffer from famine, from despair. The situation is quite variegated and to our knowledge no serious study has been made of it. In any case, the LSSP never developed a program for these masses. (The Communist Party of Ceylon is in the same boat.)

In Ceylon, as in India, British imperialism granted independence following the second world war. Power passed into the hands of the UNP [United National Party], the party representing the thin layer of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie directly linked through their plantations, their export trade, with British imperialism. The first elections gave the LSSP the leading place among the opposition formations. From this followed not only parliamentary illusions but also the idea that with the wearing out and the bankruptcy of the UNP its hour would come.

But during the fifties another formation developed, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party [SLFP]. To the surprise of the leaders of the LSSP, this new party won an election victory in 1956 that brought it to power. At the time, the leaders of the LSSP characterized the SLFP as a bourgeois party based on wider layers than the UNP, but they thought that this party would also be rapidly worn out in power and that the LSSP would then move forward.

This perspective was demolished by the outcome of the elections of March 1960. The majority of the leading team of the LSSP lost their bearings and began to vacillate. At the same time Perera, with his reformist concepts, began to press forward more and more. At the time he proposed a coalition government with the SLFP. This was rejected, but the parliamentary group of the LSSP did cast a vote of confidence in the government. The Fourth International publicly disavowed this vote.¹

With the evolution of the Bandaranaike government towards the right, the LSSP resumed its opposition, without, however, undertaking any serious self-criticism of its previous stand. It raised the slogan for a genuine socialist government. Then, together with the Ceylonese Communist Party and the MEP [Mahajana Eksath Peramuna—People's United Front], a petty-bourgeois formation, it constituted what was called the United Left Front [ULF]. This was a political combination with an insufficient program, which did not bring in the trade-union formations involving the citizenless Indian workers, and this combination did not conduct itself as a candidate for power, in opposition to the SLFP government, although the broad Ceylonese masses gave the ULF a warm welcome precisely in anticipation of this perspective.

Finally, about three months ago, Perera secretly opened personal negotiations with the prime minister. While the left wing of the LSSP, organized about a year ago, firmly opposed any suggestion of a coalition, the majority of the leadership favored a coalition, not with the LSSP alone, but with all the formations of the ULF.

To justify this position, they argued that the SLFP was a petty-bourgeois formation, although it had already governed the country within the framework of capitalism for eight years; and they made a false analogy with the examples of Cuba and Algeria. But they did not want the LSSP to carry out the operation alone. As in the case of Perera, what was involved here was a gross error characteristic of all reformists. To reach the petty-bourgeois masses, the rural masses of Ceylon in this instance, they hoped—instead of winning them through a fighting program—to gain them through a combination with a bourgeois party that does not represent these masses but exploits them, playing on their reactionary sentiments, especially against the minorities of the country, in order to maintain the capitalist regime.

The Conference of the LSSP

Perera became all the more audacious in the LSSP as the vacillating, indecisive attitude of the majority of the leaders caused them to lose ground in a party which they had stopped educating for some time. The party conference, hastily called it is true, provided a striking illustration of this.

Three resolutions were offered. After a two-day debate, it was decided to present the Samarakoddy-Tampoe motion first because it was opposed in principle to any coalition. It received 159 votes, about 25 percent of the party.

Then, in second place, the de Silva-Goonewardene motion was presented; that is, the motion of the men who had actually led the organization for more than twenty-five years. It was presented by Goonewardene as in “the nature of an amendment” to Perera’s motion. It got 75 votes, some 10 percent of the party.

This was not all. Perera’s resolution received 65 percent; but among the 75 votes for the de Silva-Goonewardene motion, about two-thirds voted for the Perera resolution. Thus, the men who had played such an eminent role in the past, who had won so much prestige, found themselves, after a quarter of a century of leading the party, with around 25 votes, less than 4 percent.

During the debate, while the other two tendencies displayed confidence in their positions—the Perera group in their reformism, the Samarakoddy-Tampoe faction in their program of revolution—the centrist tendency could only express their own uncertainties, their demoralization. Forgetting what they had written with regard to the permanent revolution, they did not see that a bourgeoisie which failed to struggle for national independence would do everything possible to maintain its social domination. They no longer saw the SLFP as a bourgeois party.

The most tragic aspect of this crack-up was that it occurred in the face of the most brilliant opportunity yet provided the leadership of the LSSP. The governmental crisis in Ceylon is one of the signs that the colonial revolution that has rocked the world all the way from China, across Africa to Cuba, is ripening in this island. The very necessity felt by the bourgeoisie to seek a coalition with the leaders of the labor movement is an indication of how close these same leaders stand to the possibility of establishing a workers and peasants government in Ceylon. The tragedy consists in their failure to see this and their readiness to give way to the demand that the opening for which they had prepared for a quarter of a century should be converted into the small change of posts in a bourgeois government.

Ceylonese Trotskyists Continue the Struggle

With this conference, a team of revolutionary leaders came to an end. Perera won the vote for his reformism and the majority of the old leaders decided to follow in tow. The banner of the socialist revolution in Ceylon passed into the hands of the comrades of the left wing, who left the conference following the tally and at once proclaimed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section).

This organization, which constitutes the continuing body of the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International, begins in a difficult situation, inasmuch as illusions in the politics of Perera exist among the masses. The overall conditions, however, are not unfavorable. First of all, the split was made in the full light of day over a decisive political issue and all of Ceylon was aware of it. The leadership of the organization contains figures known to the whole country: Edmund Samarakoddy, one of the earliest leaders of the LSSP, as well as another member of parliament, Meryl Fernando; Bala Tampoe, one of the main leaders of the trade-union movement in Ceylon; and other well-known leaders such as Karalasinghe and O. Jayaratne. The organization includes many trade-union cadres plus the biggest part of the young militants, including the students.

After solving its immediate organizational problems, the young party will face important political tasks. The situation in Ceylon was marked not only by the split in the LSSP, but also by splits in two other formations of the United Left Front. The Ceylonese Communist Party split into a rightist, pro-Khrushchev organization which supports the coalition government and a pro-Chinese organization that is opposed to it. The MEP also split over the issue of supporting or opposing the coalition government.

We greet the new formation which is continuing the best revolutionary traditions of the old LSSP. The entire world Trotskyist movement is with it in its task of reconstructing a new revolutionary leadership capable of assuring the victory of socialism in Ceylon.²

July 7, 1964

Footnotes

1. See *Quatrieme Internationale*, special number on the Sixth World Congress (1961).

2. The crisis in the LSSP was taken by Healy, leader of the Socialist Labour League of Great Britain, as an occasion for an attack against the reunified Fourth International, which he has not ceased to campaign against since he refused to participate in the Reunification Congress held in 1963.

First of all, we will take up a small lie. The June 20 *Newsletter* asserts that Healy “requested admission” to the conference, “but when it was discussed at the conference presidium, Pierre Frank . . . joined hands with the coalition renegades and urged that Healy’s application be rejected.” The rejection of Healy’s request was made by the entire Presidium, which included left-wing representation. On this point, all the tendencies, for once, were unanimous and my opinion was not asked.

A second point: Healy does not reveal that he demanded

that the revolutionary tendency, after leaving the conference, should break not only with Perera, de Silva, etc., but also . . . with the Fourth International. This happened to be the real aim of Healy's trip to Colombo, where he hoped to fish in troubled waters. He does not mention this, because he met with a rebuff.

We not come to another lie, which has all the appearance of being calculated. According to him, the representative of the Fourth International, who took the floor at the conference of the LSSP to voice the opinion of the world Trotskyist movement, supported the de Silva-Goonewardene resolution advocating a coalition of the whole United Left Front with the SLFP. It happens to be a matter of public record that the Fourth International opposed any coalition whatsoever with the SLFP and supported the left-wing tendency which is now functioning as the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International.

The reasons for Healy's departure from the standards of truthful reporting are clear enough. This is not an instance of *The Newsletter's* habitual carelessness with facts. In Colombo Healy announced his support for the left wing of the LSSP. But the left wing has been conducting its struggle for the past year in consultation with the United Secretariat of the Fourth International where it has had direct representation. Healy has been denouncing the United Secretariat as guilty of all kinds of "betrayals." Thus if he were logical, he would have to admit either that he had decided to participate in a "betrayal" perpetrated by the United Secretariat, or admit that he had been mistaken about its politics, at least in the case of Ceylon. In face of this dilemma, proletarian morality lost out to political expediency. Healy chose to amalgamate the position of the United Secretariat with the very proposals which in fact it was battling against! Thus he was free to display himself before the readers of *The Newsletter* as the champion of the left wing of the LSSP against . . . the United Secretariat!

However deliberate the lie may be, it happens to cast a most revealing light on the nature of Healy's politics. The Fourth International—both before and during the conference—in opposition to the proposal for a coalition with a bourgeois party, advocated the positive slogan of a workers and peasants government, and did this in the concrete instance by suggesting that as against a coalition with the SLFP, the Trotskyists should advance the formula of a government of the United Left Front.

For Healy such a slogan is identical to a coalition with the bourgeoisie, hence constitutes betrayal. This is not one of Healy's passing aberrations; it is part of his general concept, a manifestation of his failure to understand the

Transitional Program of the Fourth International and his failure to properly appreciate the colonial revolution. He thus excludes governmental transitional slogans and any possibility of a transitional government coming into existence.

Even without a detailed examination of his policies in England, it is easy to gather, simply from reading his newspaper, that to him the Tories and the Labour Party amount to one and the same. He never comes out in favor of going through the experience of a Labour government.

In the field of the colonial revolution, basing himself on the premise that in the absence of a revolutionary Marxist party, there can be no successful revolution, he denies the triumphs registered by the theory of the permanent revolution in Algeria and Cuba. He likens Castro to . . . Batista, Chiang Kai-shek, and Ataturk. In Zanzibar, he reduces the revolution to a comic opera, and so on.

Healy's politics is very simple. You cannot open any issue of his newspaper without finding the very latest on how someone has betrayed something somewhere. *The Newsletter* deals in "sellouts" the way some papers deal in sex. It appears to keep standing headlines in which it is necessary only to replace the names of those who have sold out each week. Castro, we are told, has betrayed the Cuban masses; it is necessary to construct a revolutionary leadership. Ben Bella has betrayed the Algerian masses; it is necessary to construct a revolutionary leadership. The Socialist Workers Party has betrayed the American masses; it is necessary to construct a revolutionary leadership. The United Secretariat has betrayed Trotskyism; it is necessary to "reorganize" the Fourth International. On this political level, where—outside of Healy—the whole world is committing betrayals, there is no need for profound analysis, no need even for cerebral effort. Each side in the two camps—Healy and the rest of the world—follows its predestined course. In any case, for such politics, there is no need to belong to an international organization, to take part in its congresses; it is sufficient to turn on the phonograph and place the needle in the groove.

Healy has really invented nothing novel. He simply represents today's version of the insular British sectarianism which Engels and Marx's daughter fought in the nineties and which Lenin scored in the twenties in *The Infantile Disease*.

A final word: in Colombo Healy sought to debate me on numerous questions, including Marxist "philosophy." The Ceylonese workers movement, obviously, ought not to be denied the opportunity to witness the capacities of such a genius in action.

4. Letter from the United Secretariat Supporting LSSP(R) Emergency Conference

reprinted from the July 17, 1964, issue of *World Outlook*

(The United Secretariat of the Fourth International sent the following letter to the Emergency Conference of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party [Revolutionary Section], scheduled to be held in Colombo July 18-19.)

Dear Comrades,

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in behalf of the world Trotskyist movement, expresses

warmest fraternal greetings to your gathering. Your firm stand in support of the basic principles of revolutionary socialism in face of the blow struck by N.M. Perera and the figures associated with him has been hailed by Trotskyists everywhere. Your principled actions have clearly demonstrated that you represent the revolutionary socialist future of the workers and peasants of Ceylon.

In connection with your struggle, the United Secretariat

of the Fourth International has passed the following motions in addition to the ones contained in its declaration made public June 22:

(1) To approve the decision that was made to hold a conference at the "Workmen's Resort" in Colombo on June 7.

(2) To approve the decision of those present at this conference to "hereafter function as the LSSP(RS) on the basis of the programme of the LSSP which had been abandoned" by the group headed by N.M. Perera.

(3) To approve the election by this conference of a Provisional Committee.

(4) To approve the scheduling of an Emergency Conference of the LSSP(RS) for the purpose of electing the permanent bodies of the party and carrying out other tasks proper to such a conference.

(5) To recognize this Emergency Conference as officially constituting the continuing body of the Trotskyist movement in Ceylon and to empower it to speak for and conduct any matters pertaining to the section of the Fourth International in Ceylon.

(6) To approve the continued publication by the LSSP(RS) of the Sinhalese language weekly *Sama Samajaya* in accordance with the positions adopted by the Reunification Congress.

(7) To appeal once again to all those who voted for Perera's proposal to enter a bourgeois coalition government, or who have not yet broken with him because of fear of a "split," to rally to the LSSP(RS) which is the only organization in Ceylon that stands on the program on which the Ceylonese Trotskyist movement was founded.

* * *

We should like to make the following brief observations to your Emergency Conference, reserving other points and more extensive remarks for subsequent elaboration:

There is no doubt that the capitulation of N.M. Perera and his group constitutes a serious setback for the Ceylonese vanguard. It can help relieve the political crisis facing the Ceylonese bourgeoisie. In combination with some concessions from the prime minister it can help create illusions among a sector of the population about the possibility of reforming capitalism structurally. Thus Perera's policy of supporting and entering a bourgeois coalition government can serve to give Ceylonese capitalism a longer lease on life.

However, the path of concessions and reforms will in reality prove to be a short one in Ceylon. The scope of the problems demanding solution transcends by far the resources and capacities of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie and landholders. The need to turn to revolutionary solutions will be seen more and more clearly as an imperative that can be postponed only at the risk of political and social disaster. The vanguard will presently be faced with the immense duty and opportunity of taking power in Ceylon.

In the light of this perspective, the prognosis for the Ceylonese Trotskyists is early recovery from the injuries inflicted by the Perera leadership. To assure this, however, it is necessary to draw the proper lessons from the experience, to work with redoubled energy, and to find ways toward common action with other militant currents on the basis of transitional demands. A correct transition-

al program, it must be stressed, remains of central importance for resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership in Ceylon.

In this course you can count on the solidarity and comradely support of the entire world Trotskyist movement, which is keenly interested in Ceylon and its future.

At the same time, we are sure that Trotskyists throughout the world feel that the LSSP(RS) will open a new chapter in offering help and support to the Fourth International. As you are well aware, under the previous leadership, fraternal relations were often a matter of lip service. This signified weakening the Fourth International as a world organization and bolstering the rightist tendency in the LSSP as well as fostering similar nationalist or regional tendencies elsewhere. This disregard of internationalism deepened during the years in which the world movement was split. Observance of the principle of democratic centralism suffered especially.

With the reunification of the world movement last year, a stronger force came into operation against all the centrifugal, nationalist tendencies, which in Ceylon were represented to a high degree by N.M. Perera. This new force could not but appear to the right wing as a danger to their tendency that would surely mount with the firm consolidation of a reunification based on the revolutionary-socialist principles laid down at the Reunification Congress. Undoubtedly, the prospect was an additional consideration in their decision to rush into a bourgeois coalition. In their flagrant breach of discipline, the Perera tendency found common ground with tendencies elsewhere in the world, some of them of ultraleft coloration, whose "Trotskyism" does not extend to something as serious as observance of the principles of democratic centralism.

The LSSP(RS) has already demonstrated its capacity to live up to these principles, and its example has thereby strengthened the Fourth International and helped to consolidate the reunification on the basis of the program adopted at the Reunification Congress. We count on your playing a more and more important role in this respect in the future.

You have already made an auspicious beginning in assuming responsibility for publishing *Fourth International*, the official theoretical organ of the world Trotskyist movement. With your cooperation we hope now to regularize its appearance and to make it the full success it deserves to be.

In struggling against the opportunist tendency led by N.M. Perera, the main cadres of the Ceylonese section of the Fourth International have set an example in which Trotskyists everywhere can take pride. We expect that as you move forward on the basis of what was accomplished and learned in this battle, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Revolutionary Section) will not only reconstitute itself as a mass organization based on the principles of revolutionary socialism, it will serve this time as a model in the international arena in helping to construct the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky.

Fraternally,
United Secretariat of the Fourth International
July 10, 1964