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SOCIALIST

EDITORIALS ON: 29th September 1963 ; Two Communist Parties ; Class Struggle erupts ; Bye-Elections; U.L.F. Victory in Borella ; Once again the cry "Anti U. N. P. Forces Unite"; The Moscow Treaty ; The African Revolution ; Zanzibar ; Tanganyika ; Uganda and Kenya ; Malaysia

Dynamics of the Ceylon Revolution (Part I)

by Edmund Samarakkody

The Law of Value in relation to self-management and investment in the economy of the Workers' States

by Ernest Germain

Marxism in Sinhala

by the Editorial Board of Suriya Books

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1. Communist Attitude to Parliamentary Reformism
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Volume 3 Number 1

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Editorial Notes

29TH SEPTEMBER 1963

THE Twenty Ninth of September 1963 was a red-letter day for the working class and the wage-earners of Ceylon. All the organised Trade Unions in the Island met in conference and registered general agreement on twenty-one common demands for presentation to the Employers and to the Government. This was the first conference of its kind held in Ceylon. Although consultations and united action had taken place in the Trade Union Movement in the past and a large measure of organisational unity had been achieved through the Co-ordinating Committee of Trade Union Organisations it was widely accepted that the Trade Union Movement in Ceylon had still far to go for the achievement of real trade union unity. And this unity could not fall from the skies. The realities of the class struggle and the problems posed by the living movement had brought the organised working class to a realisation that a higher degree of consultation, co-ordination and unity before and during action is imperative for both the defence of the existing standards of living and for the struggle to win their urgent demands from the employers and the Government. Thus the Trade Union Conference of 29th September was the culmination of a process that was propelled by the necessities and realities of the class struggle. Workers and wage earners in the government and private sector embracing the educated and manual workers, skilled and unskilled, directly under government or in government Corporations, workers in the Mercantile Sector, in the industrial enterprises, in the

plantation sector and even in the teaching profession have despite their conflicting political affiliations and objectives succeeded in formulating common demands in the perspective of coming struggle.

The full day conference in a packed hall consisting of nearly 800 persons—all delegates of Unions and Federations—and in which there was free discussion and debate of course revealed the existence of differences and tendencies. This was as expected. And while a current of conservatism sought to intervene in the deliberations it was soon lost in the larger and more dynamic tendency that supported the struggle perspective. The very large majority of delegates who intervened in the discussions displayed a realisation that unity was imperative in the face of the coming struggle against the Capitalist class and the Sirimavo Capitalist Government and that their respective unions would be in the vanguard of the struggle. The tone of the speeches and the keenness and the enthusiasm of the delegates and the fraternal atmosphere that prevailed despite the sharpness of the debating were unmistakable indications that the organised working class is consciously moving into big class action which they expect to face sooner rather than later.

TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES

The Sino-Soviet ideological differences which were only an aspect of the crisis in the International Stalinist Movement had for a considerable time its reflections within the local Communist Party. It was no secret that despite the fact that the Moscow wing had Keuneman, Wickremasinghe and practically all other known leaders of the Party the Chinese Wing led by Shanmugathan and Premalal had considerable influence among the worker elements in the Party and had superior forces in the Trade

Unions. The official leadership of Keuneman and Wickremasinghe would have been aware that a showdown was going to be dangerous if not disastrous to the Moscow wing. Rumour has it that with full knowledge of the relationship of forces Keuneman & Co., were against taking of disciplinary action howsoever embarrassing to them was the conduct and activities of the Shanmugathasan Group. But apparently orders came from Moscow itself. It was widely known that Moscow had sent directions to all Communist Parties under its influence

to take drastic action and that speedily, against the dissidents as the only way to arrest the deterioration of the factional struggle which they had assessed as adverse to them on a global scale. And despite the process of destalinisation in the Moscow led Communist Parties, Moscow orders had to be carried out. Hence the calamitous situation for the Moscow Group and hence the existence of two communist parties.

The existence of two communist parties is a new factor in the political scene. The Peking led C.P. alleges that the other party are Revisionists—that they are Parliamentarians and Reformists who desire peaceful co-existence with Capitalism and Imperialism. They appear to postulate a struggle perspective and have readily supported and led recent working class strikes and seek actively to organise the working class and to promote trade union unity, and call for the leadership of the working class in the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles. The Keuneman-led C.P. in supporting and implementing the orthodox Moscow line base their national policies on a decision to sustain the Sirimavo Bandaranayake Government as a Government of the progressive National Bourgeois, whilst of course indulging and engaging in criticism of its policies. Functioning within the framework of supporting the National Bourgeois the Keuneman-led C.P. shies away from the class struggle. Big class action involving large sections of workers with their employers or the Government finds this Party in serious discomfort. But of course the Communist Party led by Shanmugathasan is not without contradictions in their political thinking. They seek to fight revisionism in the name of Stalin the notorious inspirer of Revisionism and the chief grave-digger of Revolution and the destroyer of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin. And in National Politics the Peking-led Party continues to emphasise the anti-Imperialist and so-called anti-feudal struggle to soft pedal the struggle against the Ceylon Capitalist Class. But despite these contradictory features of the Peking liners they are a dynamic current in the communist movement definitely to the left of the Moscow Party.

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CLASS STRUGGLE ERUPTS

The December-January C.M.U. led Port Workers Strike and the strike of Customs Union Workers registered definite gains for the Trade Union Movement whilst emphasising once again the general trends in the movement. The accumulated problems of the working class and wage earners which are inevitably aggravated by an ever rising cost of living and an open wage-freeze policy of the government is driving the organised and the more militant sections of these workers into class action on what appear to them as pressing issues. The 1500 workers of the Port Cargo Corporation (Colombo) of the C.M.U. were propelled into strike action owing to the intransigence of die-hard bureaucrats of the Corporation with the full backing of Minister Mahanama and the Cabinet. The main demand of the union was for implementation of an undertaking of the Corporation and the government to take back into the Government Service about 30 Officers seconded to the Corporation and thereby safeguard the promotion prospects and rights of other workers. The demands of the strikers of the Customs Union also were of a similar nature and could have been conceded. But the policy of riding rough shod over the wishes and rights of the workers and the determination of the Government to pursue an anti-working class policy was the overriding and fundamental factor in the situation. And in furtherance of this same policy the government had so far got away with a reactionary and strike breaking attitude of refusing to negotiate during a strike. The tactic of wearing out the resources of the strikers had succeeded in many instances. The 55 day Harbour strike (1961), 85 day Bank Strike, 17 day Bus Strike were terminated through this wearing-out process. But old tactics are of no avail in a new situation. The new situation in the working class movement was that the mood of the workers had undergone a qualitative change. The determination of workers in action to win in struggle and a confidence of achieving victory was a new situation. But failing to recognise this tendency of the workers the Government sought to isolate the Corporation Strikers from the customs strikers by arriving at a settlement with the latter by granting some

demands. Pursuing this manouvre the government failed to support its own Commissioner of Labour who had negotiated with the C.M.U. on behalf of the Government and recklessly refused to endorse the negotiated Agreement. This conduct of the Government roused the General Body of Workers of the C.M.U. who went into general strike action. For the first time in Trade Union history a general strike was called in sympathy with one section of workers on strike and not for a day but to continue till settlement was reached. The 1500 workers of the Port Cargo Corporation and 13000 employees of Export Trade and large Mercantile Houses succeeded in bringing to a virtual halt the centre of the business world in the Island—Loading and Unloading of Ships was a dead slow process and Tea and other market transactions did not take place. And naturally the Government was not prepared to tolerate a challenge of this nature by a mere 1500 workers. The expected ultimatum came and the workers were given a dead line before which to return to work. But the Government's bluff was called when the general body of strikers unanimously decided to defy the ultimatum. The Sirimavo Government climbed down—they were compelled to grant some demands of the Strikers. The strike ended in a clear victory for the strikers and the stalemate in the the class struggle situation was broken and through this strike, incidentally the C.M.U. came out as a major and dynamic force in the trade union movement.

With the sharpening of class forces as evidenced by this strike the form and shape of the anti working class and reactionary forces generally revealed itself. While Catholic Action was a known anti-working class force the reactionary role of the so-called Buddhist Force (Baudha Jatika Bala Vegaya) and other such Balavegayas came out in bold relief. Mettananda the leader of this Bloc and his acolyte and big plantation owner Ronnie de Mel came out to categorically denounce the strikers and their Union the C.M.U. Abusing the privileged position of a witness before the Press Commission, Mettananda launched a malicious and vile attack on the just struggle of the workers making irresponsible and illogical allegations that the arch enemy of the working class, Catholic Action was leading the strike. The

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mask of Mettananda and his "Force" (Balavegaya) as a purely religious (Buddhist) Revival Movement stands exposed. It is no secret that the Sinhalese Buddhist Capitalists and landowners and merchants working on the religious susceptibilities of the Buddhist masses are seeking to mobilise the oppressed sections of the people who are Sinhalese Buddhists both to strengthen their own economic power in relation to other sections of the vested interests and to actively promote communal and religious dissension within the anti-capitalist forces.

This strike also served to bring out the role of M.E.P. leader Philip Gunawardena in Left Politics in Ceylon. He has categorically stated that this strike was not justifiable and has expressed his opposition to strikes generally. About the same time he has publicly intervened to defend Mettananda the leader of the Buddhist Balavegaya. Having left the hard and difficult road of Revolution about 20 years ago this undisciplined but dynamic political figure commenced his adventure into the more attractive field of opportunism. After a period of flirtation with Stalinism he quickly saw his opportunity when Bandaranayake was being lifted up on a communal wave. Philip Gunawardena was soon the lieutenant of the new bourgeois leader Bandaranayake and very soon he was Minister of the Bandaranayake Cabinet. Since 1956 the real base of Philip has been the lesser Sinhalese Buddhist Capitalists and hence his anti-working class attitude. Ever since he has not pretended to lead the workers. His intervention in the Trade Union Movement has been to register his opposition to strikes generally. His interest in the Trade Union Movement is partly the hang over of his past and is partly linked to the opportunity to control and use sections of the working class for his own purpose.

BYE-ELECTIONS

A Bye-Election to a Parliamentary seat could be a reliable pointer to the mass moods and the political situation in the country provided there is the active participation and the intervention of the government and the Opposition forces in the Election Struggle. In that sense the Trincomalee bye-election could be omitted from any investigation as

in this case the election field was left without any competition to the Federal Party. On the other hand the Nikaweratiya Election was keenly contested between the Government (S.L.F.P.) the United National Party and the Independent former member Mudiyanse Tennekoon. This was a rural seat in the Sinhalese Buddhist Peasant area which the Government won from the U.N.P. in 1956. The U.N.P. victory in this election by a 2000 majority and the government coming third despite strenuous campaigning by the government forces led by the Prime Minister was a clear indication that the S.L.F.P. had lost the confidence of a considerable section of the Sinhalese Buddhist Peasants. However despite the U.N.P. victory the ex-M.P. Tennekoon securing a fair slice of the vote meant that a large percentage of the anti Govt. and anti-S.L.F.P. vote did not go to the U.N.P. But the increase in the U.N.P. vote bringing them victory in the election cannot be dismissed by the convenient explanation of a division of the anti-U.N.P. vote. If the increase in the U.N.P. vote is a fact wherein lies the explanation? While the U.N.P. with its new look may have been a contributory factor it was its role of opposition to the Sirimavo Government that has taken a section of the anti-government vote to this Party.

U.L.F. VICTORY IN BORELLA

The Borella Bye-Election would have provided a clear picture of the political situation if the Government campaigned for and supported its nominee. For unexpressed reasons the Government abandoned its candidate and as a result the election fight was one between the U.N.P. and those against the U.N.P. led by the United Left Front.

Borella brought the U.L.F. its first election victory. But a glimpse of future problems showed itself in this election. The L.S.S.P. Municipal Councillor and the ex-member of Parliament Vivienne Gunawardena was clearly the best choice for the U.L.F. The M.E.P. leader Philip Gunawardena's attempt to push his nominee Ronnie de Mel a prominent member of the reactionary Sinhala Buddhist Organisation (Buddha Jatika Bala Vegaya) could not be seriously pursued. More light is thrown on Philip's move in that this proposal of a candidate from the Buddhist

Front came in the setting of his attacks on Trade Union Leader and L.S.S.P. member Bala Tampoe and the strike of the C.M.U. and his categorical statement that a Socialist Revolution in Ceylon was only a dream. The defeat of the U.N.P. has brought hope to the Left minded masses that it is possible to ward off the danger from the Right.

ONCE AGAIN THE CRY "ANTI U.N.P. FORCES UNITE".

Both the U.N.P. victory at Nikaweratiya and the U.L.F. Victory at Borella have brought out into the open a political current that was lying dormant and concealed in the political scene in Ceylon since 1960. More correctly the cry "Anti - U.N.P. forces Unite" developed as a current and took form and shape a few years before the 1956 victory of Bandaranayake. The no-contest Pact of the L.S.S.P. with the S.L.F.P. of Bandaranayake immediately prior to 1956 and the formation of the M.E.P. were part of the process of forging the so-called Anti-U.N.P. Front. Himself a Liberal Bourgeois and a representative of the lesser capitalists (the Compradores and potential entrepreneurs) he saw his chance in the mounting wave of the forces against the Capitalist U.N.P. Government. The 1953 Hartal was proof that these forces could move in the anti-capitalist direction. If the L.S.S.P. succeeded in harnessing these anti-U.N.P. forces Capitalism in Ceylon would have been in danger. The way out for capitalism was for the bourgeoisie to throw the U.N.P. to the wolves and save capitalism through another bourgeois formation with a left coloration—hence the necessity for the anti-U.N.P. Front. The logical working out of this ideological process was the formation of the M.E.P. led by Bandaranayake. But the implementation of the so-called anti-U.N.P. policies of the two Bandaranayake Governments have been exposed as bourgeois despite remnants of left coloration—thus a deception has been practised on the working class, the rural masses and the exploited sections who embraced these two bourgeois governments of the Bandaranayakes in the belief that they were anti-capitalist Governments. Each time the masses supported this new bourgeois power they were naturally tied more firmly than

ever to the juggernaut of Capitalism. However when disillusionment in the S.L.F.P. arising out of its failure through its Capitalist policies drives the masses to oppose the bourgeois S.L.F.P. Government, once more the cry "Save us from the U.N.P. and Anti-U.N.P. Forces Unite" is raised as the only way out to turn these masses away from the anti-capitalist road. But the lesson to be drawn from the experience and expensive experimentation of the Left Movement since 1956 is the urgency of forging the unity of the anti-capitalist forces under the leadership of the working class to fight the combined forces of Capitalism—the U.N.P., S.L.F.P., F.P., Employers Federations, Chambers of Commerce, Catholic Action, Buddhist Bala-vegayas. But will history repeat itself and will another anti-U.N.P. Front be a reality to rescue Capitalism from the gathering storm of Revolution?

THE MOSCOW TREATY

Through the partial Test Ban Treaty the U.S. and U.K. Imperialisms and the Soviet bureaucracy have sought to appear as having taken a positive step to save humanity from the horrible consequences of Nuclear war. But the truth about this treaty and the implications of this treaty reveal a conspiracy of these three principal signatories against the peace loving peoples of the world at the expense of the Socialist Countries in particular. The treaty, does not seek to prohibit the use of Nuclear weapons, the manufacture of such weapons and the stockpiling of Nuclear weapons. It has only prevented atomic fallouts by the restriction of Nuclear testing to underground tests only. But this advantage has to be evaluated in the light of the fact that U.S. Imperialism is free on behalf of World reaction to maintain and augment its nuclear bases that cover the whole world and to ply its Nuclear submarines in the waters of every ocean and to fly its air-craft carrying Nuclear weapons over the globe. As the leader of world reaction U.S. Imperialism has supplied and will continue to supply Nuclear weapons to its allies and establish nuclear war-heads in allied territory. Activity in this regard by U.S. Imperialism is to save imperialism and to oppose and destroy the Socialist countries

of the world and to eliminate the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist world movement. It is true that U.S.S.R. is free to distribute its nuclear know-how and nuclear weapons to its own allies. And in a situation where a world conflict could flare up any time because of the recklessness of the imperialist war mongers the only factor that will make the Imperialists hesitate from launching into nuclear war is the equipment of Socialist states with the most up to date nuclear weapons. If the ruling bureaucrats of the Soviet Union are conscious of this need to strengthen the Socialist states to face any such eventuality they must supply these states with these weapons or give them the know-how to manufacture these weapons. The Socialist state of China (600 million people) cannot be excluded from the need for this protection. But this is precisely what the U.S. Imperialist and Soviet bureaucrats have sought to achieve. The Soviet bureaucrats had denied such knowledge to Socialist China and continue to deny them the technical know-how or nuclear weapons. Now the 3 signatories seek by this treaty to prevent Socialist China from ever achieving by her own efforts this knowledge as the banning of atmospheric and other testing can guarantee that result. Only the U.S. imperialism has perfected methods of under-ground testing. All Socialist countries other than the U.S.S.R. will be denied the knowledge of the manufacture of nuclear arms. The monopoly atomic club of U.S., U.K. and U.S.S.R. is primarily aimed to oppose the growth of Socialist China as a world power and to keep her in a state of inferiority both in relation to the U.S.S.R. and to U.S. imperialism and to ensure that the U.S.S.R. remains for all time superior to all other Socialist states. Thus, measured by its reactionary aims and by the inevitable strengthening of the forces of world reaction led by U.S. imperialism and consequent endangering of the security of the Socialist states the Moscow Treaty cannot receive the support of the peace hungry peoples of the world. It must be condemned and opposed.

AFRICAN REVOLUTION

The irreversible process of the unfolding African Revolution was high-lighted by the January events in East Africa. These events

in the four newly independent countries brought out the fact that Colonialism was a reality in most of these so called Free States. The elimination of Imperialism is a major task of the African Revolution.

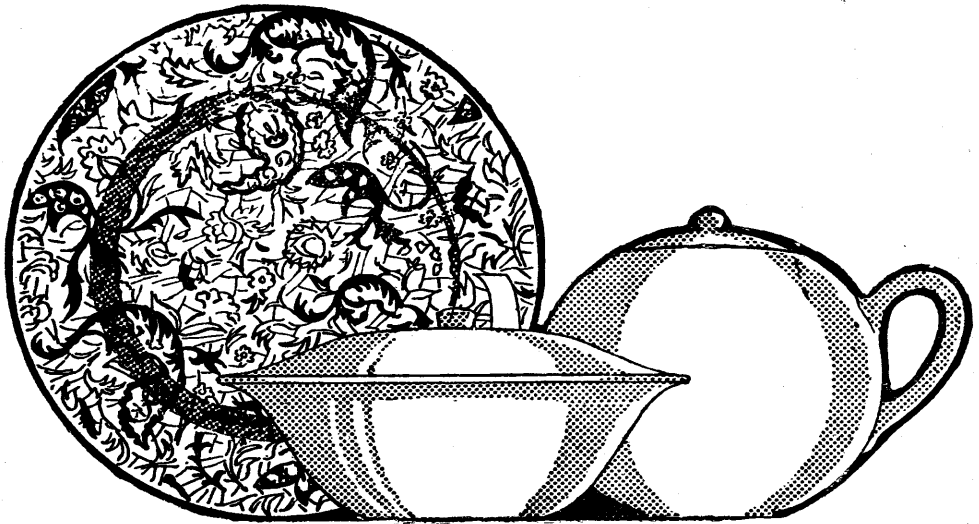
ZANZIBAR

After 73 years, British Imperialism ceased to hold protectorate rights and formally withdrew on December 10th. (1963). The land-owning aristocracy through the Zanzibar Nationalist Party assumed political power. Becoming a constitutional monarchy within the British Commonwealth this land-owning minority sought to fatten on the undernourished people of Zanzibar with the support of British Imperialism. Almost overnight the ruling clique became a virtual dictatorship out-lawing the Umma (People's Party). But the opposition they sought to eliminate was more formidable than expected. Led by a revolutionary leadership, the Umma Party was able to build its support in sectors of the peasantry, the Arab Intelligentsia and sections of the working class and petty bourgeoisie in the Towns.

Having lost all faith in the constitutional or Parliamentary road the Umma Party led by the dynamic Mohammed Babu was able to build an alliance between the powerful trade unions of the Island, the peasants and other exploited sections. The other Opposition Party was the Afro Shiranzi Party based on the African majority of the country. In the setting of the policies of these parties the opposition movement rapidly developed into Popular Revolution on the 12th of January. The remaining Imperialist links in Zanzibar have been broken. But more is likely to be achieved in this small island of 400,000 people. The The Umma (People's) Party that is playing a leading role is seeking to insist on a radical transformation of the Social Order.

TANGANYIKA, UGANDA AND KENYA

The Revolutionary intervention of the armed forces in Tanganyika and Uganda against the comprador bourgeoisie in these states have been reported as mutinies. Whilst dissatisfaction with the conditions in



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the Army was a contributory factor it is not denied that Cabinet Ministers in Tanganyika were arrested by the armed forces and British Officers were deported and the President of Tanganyika fled to the borders of Kenya. Similar happenings were recorded in Uganda. In both these states the action of the armed forces would have developed into popular revolution but for the intervention of 4000 British Troops who were rushed from the British Aircraft Carrier "Centaur".

The African scene will for some time reveal this picture and temporarily and artificially the colonial Revolution could be blocked by Imperialism and its agents. But when a higher level of consciousness and organisation reaches the African masses and when a Revolutionary Marxist leadership is forged in struggle the forces of Imperialism and Capitalism will inevitably be destroyed and consumed in the fires of the mighty African Revolution.

MALAYSIA

The march of the anti-Imperialist and anti-Capitalist forces in the countries of South East Asia has reached a stage which calls for more and more direct and joint intervention of U.S. and U.K. Imperialisms. Since British Imperialism lost influence in this region after the II World War and Dutch Imperialism was eliminated after the emergence of the independent state of Indonesia it was the United States that led the forces of reaction in this area. Through puppet states as exemplified in South Vietnam U.S. Imperialism sought to stem the menacing tide of the Colonial Revolution. But the corruption, inefficiency and the anti-national policies of these local compradores have resulted in the break-down of these administrations. Coup-d'etat follows Coup-d'etat and the danger of the spread of Revolution remains ever present. In the situation British Imperialism has come out to openly defend its own interests in this region. British investments totalling nearly £400 millions in Malayan and Borneo territories and its huge military base at Singapore have to be protected. Hence the need for a new politico-cum military set-up. A local puppet was found in the Premier of Malaya Tunku Abdul Rahaman. Hence the so called Federation of Malaysia.

But Malaysia was a pistol pointed at the heart of Indonesia which was born in anti-Imperialist struggle. However, from the outset from within and without Colonialism remained a threat to the continued existence of Indonesia. Led by leader Sukarno who is backed by the Communist Party the anti-imperialist movement appeared to grow and develop. It is Indonesias imperative need to resist Imperialism. Hence Sukarno's call for a confrontation with Malaysia. Soon tension grew in this area and a virtual state of war between Malaysia and Indonesia was recognisable and the Indonesian leader Sukarno was not without support within the so called Federation of Malaysia. And as soon as it was clear that British Imperialism backed by the S.E.A.T.O. powers appeared determined to force this politico-cum-military set up (Malaysia) on the peoples in these countries the anti-Imperialist movement in this region surged forward. Led by the Labour movement in Singapore and Malaya a militant movement of the masses leading to direct action took place. The depth and scope of the movement was evident by the arrest of over 100 Barisan Socialists and trade union leaders in Singapore in February last and they still remain incarcerated. Similar arrests took place in the Malayan Federation. Numerous other arrests and deportation of leading members of the United Peoples Party in Sarawak were also a fact. In Brunei there took place an armed revolt led by the Party Ra'ayat which won every elected seat last year and guerilla warfare broke out in Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo. And within Indonesia itself support for a real confrontation with Imperialism was evident. Anti-Imperialist meetings and demonstrations were followed by seizure of British assets by the Trade Union organisations. As recently as January (1964) the workers of British-Dutch Unilever Corporation seized the headquarters of this Company and also that of the Shell oil company at Jakarta. Sixteen rubber and tea estates in West Java were formally taken over by the plantation workers and handed over for administration to the West Java Regional Government and the West Java National Front Political Confederation.

The stage was clearly set for a new rise in the Colonial Revolution which might have broken the power of Imperialism in South East Asia. But the National Bourgeois Bonapartist regime led by Sukarno was not ready to carry further the anti-Imperialist struggle. Sukarno and the Indonesian compradores were instead seeking to utilise the anti-Imperialist movement to strike a bargain with Imperialism. Backed by the Indonesian Communist Party Sukarno was able to block temporarily the march of the Colonial Revolution. Within Indonesia the government of Sukarno has controlled the working class and the mass movement and only permitted a restricted type of guerilla warfare on the borders of Malaysia. Demonstrative seizure of British assets were organised with the support of the Communist Party only to be soon handed back to the Imperialist owners. And this show of anti-Imperialist struggle was exposed and the bluff of Sukarno and the Communist Party has been called off by the threat of U.S. intervention and the withdrawal of U.S. aid to Indonesia. The U.S. Attorney General Kennedy's mission to this area and calculated state department bulle-

tins have already produced results. Sukarno met Attorney General Kennedy in Tokyo and the so called confrontation with Malaysia is ended. The bargain has been made but details not yet known. And the anti-Imperialist struggle has been betrayed. It is idle to blame Sukarno the leader of the National Bourgeoisie for this betrayal. The crime must be laid at the door of the Indonesian Communist Party which outside the Soviet Union and China is the largest Communist Party in the world. Sukarno and his bourgeois regime has been sustained over the years by the Communist Party on false theories of a progressive national bourgeoisie. If the Communist party permitted the working class to assume the leadership in the anti imperialist struggle the world would have seen many years back a Socialist Indonesia. The anti-Imperialist struggle would have uninterruptedly grown into the anti-Capitalist struggle and a mighty Socialist Revolution would have been a reality in South East Asia. But thanks to the false policies of the Indonesian Communist Party this is still only a consummation devoutly to be wished.

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DYNAMICS OF THE CEYLON REVOLUTION (Part I)

by EDMUND SAMARAKKODY

A SOCIAL Revolution is a process involving the dialectical interaction of varied socio-economic cum political factors, a correct understanding of which would enable the working class and the exploited sections to win state power as a prelude to the further revolutionary transformation of the given society. But text-book formulas and recipes for Revolution do not exist. While the experience and the lessons of the world Revolutionary movement must form a part of the armoury of all revolutionary leaderships the world over, yet the method of action in each sector of the world revolutionary movement must be related to the given socio-economic objective and subjective factors prevailing. The Socialist Revolution of Ceylon is on the agenda of the World Revolution. The appreciation of the historical setting of this revolutionary process in Ceylon and the special and peculiar features in the objective conditions and the resulting form and shape of this dialectical movement or in other words the dynamics of the Ceylon Revolution is both relevant and indispensable for the discovery of correct strategy and tactics which alone could lead to victory.

POLITICAL STATUS OF CEYLON

Ceylon is an independent state. Political freedom for Ceylon as a National State has been a fact since 1948. But British Imperialist property and investments remain. Despite the repatriation of capital that took place regularly since 1948 British Capital continues to give form and shape to Ceylon's economy. The total acreage of Tea in Ceylon is 750,026 acres. Of this 201,905 acres or 35.42% are estates owned by Sterling Companies (i.e. Companies registered in the U.K.). Another 55,067 acres or 9.66% are owned by non-Ceylonese individuals (including British). A further category consisting of 95,716 acres or 16.79% are estates owned by Rupee Companies (i.e.

Companies registered in Ceylon). Thus the bulk of the investment in Tea consist of British investments. With regard to Rubber estates it is true that the bulk of the investments is by Ceylonese capital but the British owned estates (Sterling Companies amount to 90,559 or 13.7% of the total acreage of high yielding rubber. And out of 87,085 acres or 13.2% Rubber estates owned by Rupee Companies British capital too finds a place. Besides these investments many agency Houses (Export Import Trade) remain in the hands of the British. Incidentally the profits sent out by foreign enterprises from Ceylon amounted to Rs. 452 millions (1956-62) or above Rs. 65 million per annum. The elimination of British ownership in the Plantations and Agency Houses etc. are necessary steps in the realisation of National Freedom for Ceylon.

While the Government of Ceylon has a legal right to deal with the assets and investments of the British Imperialists by Nationalisation or expropriations such action is by no means simple. Resistance by British Imperialism is inevitable. But while it is not easy for British Imperialism to have a repeat performance of what they did in Egypt in 1953 i.e. by resort to military intervention it is possible that other effective forms of Imperialist aggression or resistance will be resorted to. In any event therefore the struggle to break the hold of British Imperialism in relation to these assets remains. The anti-imperialist struggle is a reality for Ceylon. The Ceylonese bourgeoisie are the trustees of these remaining British imperialist and foreign assets in Ceylon. The reactionary Soulbury Constitution enshrines this relationship of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie to the British Imperialists. Despite the fact that a transfer of these British assets to Ceylon will help the further Capitalist development of Ceylon the Ceylonese bourgeoisie cannot conceive

of the idea of existing in conflict with British Imperialism. The Ceylonese Bourgeoisie have in fact jointly invested capital with British Imperialists and Foreign Capitalists in both the Plantations and other enterprises. Furthermore in conditions of a developing class struggle, a belatedly arisen bourgeoisie cannot feed the anti-capitalist struggle and undermine their own class front by mouthing anti-imperialist slogans. Hence the struggle against British Imperialism to complete Ceylon's National Freedom is in no way separated from the struggle against the Ceylonese Capitalist class. On the other hand the anti-imperialist struggle is inextricably linked to the anti capitalist struggle.

IMPLICATIONS OF IMPERIALISM

For nearly a century now Ceylon's economy has been Capitalist. The production relations have been capitalist. The production of commodities for the market and the wage system has also operated fully throughout the Island. But it is noteworthy that feudalism in Ceylon was broken by the super-imposition of Capitalism, by the armed intervention of British Imperialism and not by any growing of any capitalist relations within the womb of Ceylon's feudal Society. And further this break up of feudalism took place in two stages—The Portuguese and Dutch Imperialisms helped to break into the maritime provinces during their respective dominations. In 1815 British Imperialism brought Central Ceylon (Kandyan Feudal Kingdom) under their rule and broke up finally the power of feudalism in Ceylon. The "forces" of feudalism were destroyed after the Uva rebellion of 1818, and also after the later Matale revolt of 1848. But the manner of the super-imposition of Capitalism in Ceylon over a feudal structure resulted in feudal relations being sustained for almost a century after the establishment of British Rule. But today only negligible traces of semi-feudal non-capitalist relations exist and that in the remote parts of Ceylon. The existence of ande-cultivators and share cropping in the sphere of paddy production is more a payment of land rent in kind rather than a feudal relationship. Caste distinction and caste oppression in Ceylon that continues up to date is feudal in its

origin. And although legal sanctity for this system of caste oppression had long ago disappeared yet the artificial process of the introduction of Capitalism in Ceylon and the needs of Imperialist policy helped to foster such oppressive caste distinctions.

The parochialism and the centrifugal tendencies inherent in feudal society creates also territorial divisions and separate kingdoms especially in the context of the existence of races speaking distinct languages and observing distinct customs. Pre-imperialist Ceylon was made up of two nations—the Tamils and the Sinhalese. The Kingdom of the Tamils was generally in the Northern part of Ceylon—more especially the Northern and Eastern Provinces and the rest of Ceylon was the kingdom of the Sinhalese generally. It was British Imperialism that succeeded in establishing its rule over the whole of Ceylon and as expected a unified administration of Ceylon brought about an unnatural and artificial unity of the Tamil Nation and the Sinhalese Nation. This formal unity could have led to the realisation of a Ceylonese nation on the basis of proper race relations if only the human and material resources of Ceylon were harnessed for a full development of economy. But that was not to be. On the contrary Imperialist policy required a creation and fostering of race antagonism. Hence British Imperialism was only concealing a separatism that in fact existed between a Tamil and a Sinhalese Nation.

Imperialism also created a deformity in the class structure of Ceylon. If capitalism was foreign to the objective socio-economic conditions prevailing in Ceylon the new class structure was also artificially imposed. The Capitalist class that intervened to build capitalism in Ceylon were the British Imperialists. But the class of people divorced sufficiently from property and the means of production and who had no commodities to sell but their labour power—the wage-earning class or the working class did not exist in Ceylon's Society. And despite the devastating effects of the plunder of the land by the new Rulers under the cover of law (Waste Lands Ordinances) for their new Plantation System the peasants of Ceylon could not be effectively driven to

become wage earners. It was by no means beyond the ingenuity of the British Ruler to take further steps to achieve this result. But the more convenient way out to obtain cheap labour that could be more securely and crushingly tied to the juggernaut of capitalism was to use the power that British Imperialism had over the sub-continent of India and transport and transplant the thousands of semi-starved peasants of South India into the soil of Ceylon's Society as Plantation Labourers. Through recruiting agents who were veritable slave drivers these peasants were enticed to leave the shores of India in search of the promised land in Ceylon only to find themselves transformed overnight as it were into wage slaves condemned to be inarticulate and virtual beasts of burden for nearly a hundred years in their new home in Ceylon.

Since 1825 or even earlier organised migration from South India to Ceylon took place. At the peak of the coffee prosperity about the year 1870 almost 90% of the labour force in the estates was of Indian origin. Despite the tendency since the turn of the century for more Sinhalese Labour to enter the plantations as workers yet even today 70% of estate labour in Ceylon is of recent Indian origin.

A so-called Indian question thus arose to affect the political scene since the 1930's. The Plantation Workers as a national minority appeared very early as a potential target of the Ceylon bourgeoisie and their apologists in their fight against working class movement in Ceylon. The indigenous Tamils (Northern and Eastern Provinces) did not oppose these attacks on the plantation workers. And this legacy of Imperialism—the plantation workers of Indian origin—gave the Ceylonese bourgeoisie a point of vantage from which to strike a frontal blow at the working class movement of Ceylon. This they did by the notorious Citizenship Laws (1948) by which they disfranchised and rendered stateless over 7 lakhs of Plantation workers of Indian origin. The problem of these workers of Indian origin is also a part of the problem of democratic rights already sharply posed by the reality of the oppression of the racial, religious and caste minorities.

CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN CEYLON

Capitalist development in Ceylon commenced about the year 1840. Taking place within the framework of the Imperialist set up all such development was primarily to serve Imperialist needs. To produce raw material for the manufacturing industries of Britain a Plantation system on the basis of a monoculture was the perspective of the Imperialists. At first these plantations were coffee estates but after about 1890 Tea, Rubber and Coconut took the place of Coffee. But unlike the present day entrepreneur the British Planters had no problems of investment capital. Conditions of colonialism offered them the methods of primitive accumulation which they employed mercilessly and with a vandalism characteristic of the ruthless pioneer Imperialist. They required land and wage-labour as the minimum Capital components for Capitalist Agriculture. The plunder of the land took place under cover of a law (Waste Lands Ordinances) which converted practically all uncultivated land and substantial portions of forest into Crown Land. And if the poor Ceylon peasant was yet too much rooted to the soil to become a wage labourer the semi-starved and impoverished peasants of South India were better material and were the cheapest available labour. With practically free land and labour in conditions of semi-slavery the British Planters were soon able to convert the richest sector of the uncultivable land and much valuable forest lands of Ceylon into Tea, and Rubber Plantations.

The new agricultural sector producing and processing Tea, Rubber and Coconut for the export market which was now basic to the economy was confined to the South Western and Central regions of Ceylon known as the wet zone owing to the availability of water resources. Land suitable for Tea and Rubber were also taken for these plantations. The remaining land in this Wet Zone was left under peasant occupation and ownership. Into this peasant occupied portions of the Wet Zone and into the Northern Peninsula (Jaffna) and the large and more extensive sector of Ceylon known as the Dry Zone this large scale capitalist agriculture did not penetrate. Peasant owned land in the wet zone and the

rest of the country remained separated and almost without organic links with the advanced Plantation Sector. The economic activity in the Peasant Sector was mainly the cultivation of rice in the low-lying parts and coconut, Tea, Rubber, Cocoa, Jak, Arecanuts, Breadfruit, citrus and Fruit Trees—all mostly in small allotments between 5 acres and 1 acre in extent.

If the plantation sector was basic to the economy it followed that all industrial activity, enterprises and factories were incidental to the needs and requirements of the Export Agricultural Sector. Thus in the field of manufacture directly linked to the Plantation system there was set up Tea Factories and Rubber Mills and Factories for the production of coconut oil, desiccated coconut and other products. Several Engineering and mechanical workshops were built up also to cater for the engineering and other requirements of these main agricultural industries.

It was also as late as the 1930's that a pretence at development in the Agricultural Sector other than the plantations took place on the initiative of the Ceylonese land-owners (D. S. Senanayake)—A systematic parcelling out of crown land particularly in the Dry Zone among landless peasants was held out as a favourable prospect of creating a so-called "healthy peasantry". After 1935 a programme of Irrigation Works was undertaken and followed up by the provision of minimum facilities for the cultivation of paddy in certain selected areas of the Dry Zone and both High Land and rice land were rented out to peasants in small allotments between 8 to 3 acres. Assistance to cut jungle and construct houses was given to peasants. On the average a sum of about Rs. 13,000/- was spent on each so-called "colonist". All this activity went under the name of Colonisation and Land Development.

In pursuit of this same objective the Ceylonese Land-owning Bourgeoise (under D. S. Senanayake) launched a more ambitious scheme—a River Valley project called the Gal Oya Multi-Purpose Scheme— On the principle of damming a river (Gal Oya) and by the construction of water storage tanks the plan was to provide irrigation for paddy cultivation etc. This scheme undertaken in 1949 is partly complete. During

a period of 1 1/2 decades 250,000 people are now settled in and around the Gal Oya Valley area. Originally this scheme was to cost Rs. 133 millions. But with still more work to be done this scheme has now cost over Rs. 700 millions. Much has been said about this "Development" but the resulting reality is the extension of subsistence agriculture covering nearly one million human beings and a continuous draw on the finances of the state. The idealising of what Marx called "the idiocy of rural life" cannot be a substitute for economic development of the non—plantation agricultural sector.

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY

The total neglect of industrial development and a complete silence on the subject was broken by a so-called "Industrial Commission" in 1922. The Commission recommended that the Government should undertake a number of light industries like the manufacture of glass, paper, soap, cement, charcoal, acetic acid, alcohol and other chemical products fish, oil, fish manure and tinned fish. The Imperial Government had no intentions of implementing these or any such recommendations and the question was soon forgotten.

The grant of Universal Franchise and the Constitutional Reforms of 1931 gave the Ceylonese Land Owning Class a chance of playing a more important but limited role in the affairs of the country. It was about the same year that the Pokhanawala Banking Commission made important recommendations for a State-Aided Bank and a separate Department of Industries to undertake pioneering and administrative work, render technical advice to industries and to guide the industrial policy of the Government—the establishment of model factories by the government was also recommended. And following these recommendations the Department of Commerce and Industries was set up in 1938 for the establishment and maintenance of factories, industrial centres, workshops, training schools and facilities for industrial Research. An important step was taken in 1939 in the setting up of a State-Aided Bank—the Bank of Ceylon with State and Private Capital.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE— NO RESPONSE

The frame-work of Imperialism was unfavourable for the growth of a Ceylonese entrepreneur class that could commence the development of even small scale manufacturing Industries as a step in the direction of the greater industrial development of Ceylon. But the expected had happened in Ceylon as in all Colonial countries—Imperialism had effectively and for a long period blocked the emergence of this entrepreneur class—The land owning class who prepared to shape themselves in the image of the Planter Bosses and the comprador bourgeoisie (i.e. the Ceylonese brokers, Merchants, Traders and Importers) were steeped in conservatism and had extremely narrow horizons.

It would have come as a surprise even to the Imperialist government that private enterprise failed to respond to a government offer to underwrite the entire share issue if private entrepreneurs undertook to set up a Ply-wood Factory for which the entire scheme was prepared by government. It was under those circumstances that in 1942 the government itself undertook to set up this factory as a state enterprise. And as this happened to be wartime the government was ready to give special assistance and encouragement to the Private Sector. Factories for Steel Rolling, Leather, Drugs, Ceramics, Glass, Acetic Acid, Paper and Cardboard, Coir Goods and Carpentry—were all offered with assistance to the Private Sector. But without any certainty regarding the future policies of the government in relation to industry the Ceylon bourgeoisie found it safer to gather their flesh pots from private swindling in brokerage and wartime contracts rather than undertake development work. In the situation the bourgeois (Imperialist) State undertook in a half-hearted manner these factories as State Enterprises.

Post war conditions and lack of perspectives of the government did not favour the continuation of these wartime state factories and a number of these had to be closed down. The reality of the situation was that as long as the state power was Imperialist conditions could not exist for the Ceylonese bourgeois to develop into the entrepreneur.

NEW CONDITIONS

The decade from 1947 to 1956 could have been the opportunity for the Ceylonese Entrepreneur to intervene in the economic life of the country—the new rich who had amassed wealth by war contracts, brokerage, and black marketing might have turned in the direction of manufacturing industries, if the ruling land-owning bourgeoisie were willing to create the conditions for the growth of industry. The vested interests of the land-owning bourgeoisie led by D. S. Senanayake were not ready to give an encouragement to the entrepreneur. They had to bide their time and in the meantime invested their newly found wealth in the Export-Import Trade and also in the Transport Services. A good number however resorted to the traditional investments in land—in the purchase of European owned Tea and Rubber Estates. In the result it was inevitable that industrial development was practically restricted to Government ventures—the Cement, Plywood, Leather and Foot Wear Industries. Apart from these completed enterprises there were a number of industries in the course of construction namely—vegetable oil, Paper, Ceramic, Caustic Soda, D.D.T., Chlorine, and State owned Salterns. And it was during this decade that a start was made for the development of Hydro-Power.—The Laxapana Hydro Electric Scheme was launched.

1956—1964

Among the forces that brought about the electoral defeat of the parliamentary rule of the Landowning Bourgeoisie under the Senanayake leadership (U.N.P.) were the repressed comprador elements that were reaching out for a place in the economic set up of the country. This trading and business class were also conscious of the secondary role played by them considering the possibilities that were open before them. The potential entrepreneur and the business community required their own state—just as the loin cloth of a Gandhi portraying the grinding poverty of India's millions, did not prevent him from being the representative of the Indian Bourgeoisie a Bandaranaike in the National Dress and

talking the language of Ceylon's petty bourgeoisie could become the leader of Ceylon's compradores and the new Entrepreneurs. What the Compradores and the infant "entrepreneur" bourgeoisie that had arrived belatedly on the scene was incapable of performing the Capitalist State under the two Bandaranaike Governments sought to perform. The state under the Bandaranaike Government could verily be described as an attempt to establish the transition to the Compradore cum Entrepreneur State. The acute condition of social crises arising out of economic crises called upon the state to intervene in economic development—both taking a big share in actual Capitalist development and also to control and direct the economic resources towards this development. The Capitalist State now seeks to break the conservatism of the Ceylon Bourgeoisie to save them much against their wish. The magnitude of the problems facing the bourgeoisie and the back log of development work awaiting their immediate attention and in short the depth of the crisis and the possible collapse of the bourgeois state and class rule drives the new entrepreneur state to take drastic measures often effecting adversely sections of the bourgeoisie. Hence the Nationalisations and severe taxation under the Bandaranaike Governments. In the situation the new bourgeois State led by Bandaranaike temporarily assumed a Bonapartist character—they even appeared anti-Imperialist and anti-Capitalist. Under like conditions in underdeveloped countries bourgeois rule took similar form and shape.

Sections of both local and foreign capitalists have suffered adversely under the Bandaranaike Bourgeoisie state. Far from being propelled by a desire to achieve socialism the Bandaranaike Governments have in the very interests of Bourgeois class rule struck blows at Bus Magnates, Colombo Port Companies (local and foreign), Insurance Companies (local and foreign), Foreign Oil Companies, Banks (Local and foreign) and Trading and Mercantile interests (Local and foreign). Taxing the rich to almost the limit of their capacity and harnessing their resources much against their wishes and imposing severe import restrictions and facing the wrath of the people the same Bandaranaike Government

is doing its utmost to serve the compradores and the new entrepreneurs.

RESULTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Under the two Bandaranaike Governments (S.L.F.P.) the Ceylonese Bourgeoisie have been awakened from their apathy and has belatedly come into consciousness of the need for industrial development. Gains have been registered in this regard. Under the Bandaranaike dispensations a large number of State Industrial Corporations e.g. Cement, Ceylon Ceramics, Leather Products, Paper Mills, Oils and Fats, National Textiles are making some progress. The following state enterprises are in the course of construction: Iron and Steel, Tyres and Tubes, Hardware, Flour Mill, Petroleum Refinery and a Fertiliser Factory will soon be launched.

In the Private Sector a large number of small light industries have been set up. These enterprises fall into two categories. (a) Enterprises with full local capital and (b) enterprises with partly local and partly foreign capital—and perhaps as expected these enterprises are not manufacturing industries proper but are mostly assembly plants. However in a number of minor consumer products imports have been replaced by the local product. (Biscuits, confectionery, sweet drinks, soap, cigarettes, Garments etc.) And recently 400 new enterprises also in light industry (also virtual assembly centres) have received Government approval.

However the gains in economic development already registered under both bourgeoisie governments, the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. must be evaluated in the light of the nature and magnitude of the economic problem that awaits solution. A glimpse of the problem reveals itself from the per-capita income which is acknowledged the best index of the state of an economic system. With a per capita income of Rs.567/- Ceylon falls clearly into the category of under developed countries. A correct picture of the economic conditions of the people is the distribution of the National Income. And in this regard a central Bank Survey has revealed that roughly 83% of the families in Ceylon received less than Rs. 150/-

per month and that somewhat over 55% of the families earned less than Rs. 75/- a month. It is also estimated through the same survey that 72.5 of the population lived in "over crowded conditions" and that over 50% of the households in Ceylon had no latrines. And despite free education nearly 25% of the children of the age group 5—14 years are not attending school. And with over 500,000 in the ranks of the unemployed and with the startling figure of 2.8 million persons out of a population of 10 millions being "surplus" to the rural economy Ceylon's economic problem is roughly the low level of national output caused partly by the low productivity of labour in domestic agriculture. The scarcity of land and capital in the rural economy is a basic factor. Nearly 72% of the population is dependant on about 1/10 of the total national product. The major cause of low output however is the absence of industrial development. In 1950, 50% of Ceylon's gross national products was obtained from Agriculture. In the same year Industry (including Cottage Industry) accounted for only 5% of the gross national product.

In the setting of a serious back log in development and with a present very low level of production and the population increase of 2.8% per year the fundamental question is the rate of development that could be achieved by and through capitalism with resources available to Ceylon's ruling class. In terms of the 10 year Plan the development rate of growth as 5.9% per year with a population increase of 2.8% per annum the actual growth rate becomes 3.1% per capita. Even this low rate of growth is still lowered by the so-called Short Term Programme which reduced the realisable planned rate of growth to 4.8% per year. This is equivalent to 2% increase in income per capita. But results are more revealing. In 1960 per capita real income rose only by 0.8% and in 1962 by 1.3%. Between 1961 and 1962 there was an actual decline by 0.2%. And over the last three years real income per capita grew at less than 1% per year. Thus if the goal is the achievement of 3.1% per capita and the achievement is less than 1% per year all attempts at development by and

through capitalism in Ceylon have registered zero.

FOREIGN CAPITAL TO THE RESCUE

Before and after 1956 all assurances and guarantees were given to Foreign Capital to come into Ceylon. In 1960 the Sirima Bāndaranaike Government reassured that foreign capital would be allowed fields for investment (other than those reserved for public sector). A categorical statement was made by the Government that repatriation of dividends and eventual repatriation of assets will be freely permitted. But as recently as August 1963 the Finance Minister (Illangaratne) complained that "the response of foreign capital has been very poor". The real picture however is startling and revealing. In the seven years 1956—62 the total foreign capital investment in Ceylon is only Rs. 28.5 million or Rs. 4.1 million per year. This amount of foreign capital invested in Ceylon per year is less than 1% of the Government's annual expenditure in this period. On the other hand the outflow of capital from Ceylon in the period 1956—62 was 166 million or about 23.7 million per annum. And with regard to grants and loans from foreign countries, Ceylon has received Rs. 381.1 millions (Grants) and Rs. 770.6 millions (Loan) or on average of Rs. 54 million by grants per year and Rs. 110 millions by loans. Thus the resulting position is that there is no foreign capital waiting to rescue capitalism in Ceylon under the present or any other capitalist set up.

To sum up, the nature, extent and results of Capitalist Development in the country reveals that Capitalism is desperately fighting for its survival in Ceylon. Under whatever form or shape further attempt to maintain Capitalism in Ceylon is fraught with the perpetuation of intolerable poverty a rapid aggravation of all human problems and in the result the intensification of the economic, political and social crises leading inevitably and sooner rather than later to the maturing of the Socialist Revolution in Ceylon.

(To be Continued)



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The Law of Value in relation to Self-management and Investment in the Economy of the Workers States

(Some remarks on the discussion in Cuba)

by ERNEST GERMAIN

THE Cuban magazine *Nuestra Industria* —*Revista Economica*, organ of the Ministry of Industry, published two polemical articles in issue No. 3 (October, 1963) of great interest, one written by Ernesto Che Guevara and the other by Comandante Alberto Mora, Minister of Foreign Trade. This polemic testifies to the vitality of the Cuban Revolution in the field of Marxist theory, too. It deals with a number of questions of the utmost importance in the construction of a socialist economy: role of the law of value in the economy during the epoch of transition; autonomy of enterprises and self-management; investments through the budget or by means of self-investment, etc. Involved in these issues is the problem of the ideal model for the economy in the epoch of transition from an underdeveloped country, a problem of absorbing interest to the Bolsheviks during the 1923-28 period and which arose again, even if on a rather low theoretical level, in Yugoslavia, Poland and even in the Soviet Union in recent years.

The Law of Value in the Economy during the Epoch of Transition

The question of the "application" of the theory of value in the planned and socialized economy of the epoch of transition has been subjected to the worst confusion, mainly because Stalin, in his last work, posed it in a both gross and simplistic way: "Does the law of value exist (sic) and does it apply in our country?... Yes, it exists there and it applies there." This is an evident truism. To the extent that exchange occurs, commodity production survives, and exchange is thereby objectively governed by the law of value. The latter cannot disappear until

commodity production withers away; that is, with the production of an abundance of goods and services.

But this does not answer the *concrete question* around which turns the fundamental discussion begun in 1924-25 between Preobrazhensky and Bukharin and which has continued to develop, with ups and downs, among Marxist economists and theoreticians up to now: *to what exact degree and in what sphere* does the law of value apply in the economy during the epoch of transition?

Stalin himself, while muddling the problem, had to admit a fact which the Khrushchevist economists are nevertheless beginning to bring into question; namely, that in the "socialist" economy, the law of labour-value cannot be the *regulator of production*, that is, cannot determine *investments*.

In developed capitalist economy, the law of value determines production through the play of the rate of profit. Capital flows toward the sectors where the rate of profit is above the average and production increases there. Capital recedes from the sectors where the rate of profit is below the average, and production decreases there (at least relatively). When the means of production are nationalized, so that there is neither a market for capital nor its free entry and withdrawal, nor even the formation of an average rate of profit with which the rate of each particular branch can be compared, clearly there is no longer a possibility for the "law of value" to be directly the "regulator of production".

If in an underdeveloped country which has carried out its socialist revolution the

“law of value” were to regulate investments, these would flow preferentially toward the sectors where profitability is the highest *in relation to prices on the world market*. But it is precisely because these prices determine a *concentration of investments in the production of raw materials* that these countries are underdeveloped. To escape from underdevelopment, to industrialize the country, means to deliberately orient investments toward the sectors that are least “profitable” for the time-being according to the law of value, but more profitable according to the criterion of the long-term economic and social development of the country as a whole. When it is said that the monopoly of foreign trade is indispensable for industrializing the underdeveloped countries this means precisely that it cannot be accomplished until these countries are able to “pull the teeth” of the law of value.

But perhaps this qualification applies only to the “law of value on the world market”? Cannot the law of value at least alter investments on the national scale, once world prices are left aside? This is wrong again. The industrialization of an underdeveloped country cannot be carried out rapidly and harmoniously except by *deliberately violating the law of value*. (1)

In an underdeveloped country, and precisely because of its underdevelopment, agriculture tends from the beginning to be more “profitable” than industry, handicrafts and small industry more “profitable” than big industry, light industry more “profitable” than heavy industry, the private sector more “profitable” than the nationalized sector. To channel investments according to the “law of value”, that is, according to the law of supply and demand of commodities produced by different branches of the economy, would imply developing monoculture for the export trade by priority; it would imply preferential construction of small shops for the local market rather than steel plants for the national market. The construction of comfortable lodgings for the petty-bourgeois or bureaucratic layers (an investment corresponding to “effective demand”) would have priority over the construction of low-cost homes for the people which clearly must be sub-

sided. In short all the economic and social evils of underdevelopment would be reproduced despite the victory of the revolution.

In reality, the decisive meaning of this victory, of the nationalization of the means of industrial production, of credit, of the transportation system and foreign trade (together with the monopoly of the latter), is precisely to create *the conditions for a process of industrialization that escapes from the logic of the law of value*. Economic, social and political priorities, *consciously and democratically chosen*, take the lead over the law of value in order to lay out the successive stages of industrialization. Priority is placed not on immediate maximum returns, but on the suppression of rural unemployment, the reduction of technological backwardness, the suppression of the foreign grip on the national economy, the guarantee of the rapid social and cultural rise of the masses of workers and poor peasants, the rapid suppression of epidemics and endemic diseases, etc., etc.

That is why the industrialization of the workers states follows a different road from that of the capitalist countries where industries are built beginning with the sectors that will most easily satisfy “effective demand”.

To violate the law of value is one thing; to *disregard* it is something else again. The economy of a workers state can disregard the law of value only at the price of *losses* to the economy which could be avoided, of *useless sacrifices* imposed on the masses, as we shall later demonstrate.

What does this mean? In the first place, that the whole economy must be carried on within the framework of a strict calculation of the real costs of production. These costs will not determine investments; these will not automatically go toward “the least costly” projects. But to know the costs means to know the exact amount of subsidies which the collectivity grants the sectors which it has decided to develop by priority. In the second place, that it is necessary to have a stable yardstick for these calculations; without stable money, no rigorous planning. In the third place,

that all sectors where economic or social priorities do not dictate any preference are to be actually guided by the "law of value", (for example, different crops aiming at the domestic market). In the fourth place, so long as the means of consumption remain commodities, and aside from the commodities and services deliberately subsidized or distributed free by the state (pharmaceutical products, school and training materials, books, etc.), the preferences of the consumers will freely operate on the market the law of supply and demand will affect prices, and the plan will adapt its projected investments to these oscillations (within the limits of what is available in finances, equipment, raw materials, etc.).

In the light of these initial remarks we can consider the importance of the two problems raised in the Guevara-Mora polemic: What is value? Are means of production commodities in the transitional epoch? Mora affirms that value is not essentially abstract human labour; that it is "a relation existing between the limited disposable resources and the growing needs of man." (p. 15). Still better: he holds that value is a "category created by man under certain conditions and for certain(!) ends." (p. 15).

It is clear that we are faced here with a *subjective deformation* of the Marxist concept of labour-value, of which Marx specified the essence to be *abstract human labour*. It is not by chance that Mora refers to the "neo-Marxist" Soviet economists (2), who have been attacked, in the USSR itself, and rightly so, as wanting to introduce surreptitiously the marginal theory of value. His conception, according to which the "law of value is the economic criterion for regulating production" in the epoch of transition (p. 17)—while he affirms that it is not the *only* regulator—necessarily involves the notion according to which "exchange of the means of production" occurs even when these are completely nationalized, that "sale of commodities" occurs even when these means of production pass from one nationalized enterprise to another, and that the "contradictions" between the state enterprises justify the assertion that a "change in ownership" occurs at the time of these exchanges (p. 19). All these affir-

mations are contrary to the reality and to Marxist theory. On all these questions, Che Guevara is entirely right against Mora.

Mora states that if in investments, one leaves aside the law of value, one must pay "the price"; in doing this, you automatically limit the social resources available to satisfy other needs. This is true, and we, likewise, underline the necessity for strict calculation of production costs in all fields. But in limiting oneself to this economic truth, the social content of the epoch of transition is done away with; that is, *in abstracting from the class struggle*, Mora leaves out a whole important side of the problem.

In fact, it is impossible to operate in the economy of the epoch of transition—any more than in any other economy containing different social classes—with aggregates like "social revenue", "social costs", "social price of investments", without at the same time posing the question, "Who is to pay this price to whom?"

The society of the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism is not homogeneous. In conducting an appropriate policy of investments, of prices, wages, foreign trade, etc., the workers state can act in such a way that the *social benefits of priority investments* (numerical reinforcement of the working class; elevation of its standard of living, skill, culture and consciousness; reinforcement of its leading role in the state and economy; accentuation of its participation in political life, etc., etc.) *are paid economically by other social classes*: the residue of the former owning classes; imperialism; the small commercial entrepreneurs and independent peasants. In an expanding economy, this economic price, paid particularly by the merchants, artisans and independent peasants can moreover be accompanied by a rise in their standard of living, on condition that this rise is less than it would have been in the framework of the "free play of the law of value" (thanks, for example, to a progressive income tax). (3)

The Law of Value and Foreign Trade

All the preceding evidently constitutes only a general framework for replying to the

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specific problems which the question of economic calculation and the orientation of investments raises in each particular workers state. Here Mora is right when he stresses (p. 18) that in a small country like Cuba, which depends strictly on foreign trade for the current functioning of its industry (spare parts and raw materials) and for the equipment of its new enterprises, the necessity for rigorous economic calculation is imposed with all the more reason than in a big, largely autarchic country like the Soviet Union.

Exports are made according to prices on the world market. So that these will not constitute a constant drain on the national economy (they must be met in any case in order to keep industry and industrialization going through imports), it is necessary that the production costs of exported goods should as a whole be below the prices obtained on the world market. It is necessary to fix the objective on progressively suppressing all exports at a loss, so that exports are not only a means of supplying the national economy but in addition an important source of accumulation, a means of defraying part of the expense of industrialization—a part of the costs of not observing the law of value on the national market!—from abroad. The tendency for current prices of sugar to rise on the world market creates, moreover, a favourable framework for the success of such a policy. The *progressive diversification of exports*, to render the Cuban economy independent of future fluctuations of current sugar prices on the world market, must point to the selection of other export products where production costs remain below the prices obtained abroad (that is, average prices on the world market).

But Mora mixes up the need to carry out all these calculations in the most strict way with the extension of the field of application of the law of value in the Cuban economy. The two phenomena are not identical; they can even be directly contradictory.

The law of value determines the exchange value of commodities according to the quantity of labour socially necessary to produce them. The concept of “socially necessary” labour is determined in turn by

the average level of the productivity of labour in a country, and by the concept of the effective demand of society—which must never be confounded with human needs or social needs from an objective point of view. In an underdeveloped country like Cuba, *all* production of many industrial branches can correspond to an “effective demand”, that is, all labour in these branches can appear as “socially necessary”, despite a very low level of productivity. The reference to the law of value, far from thereby resolving the problem of rapid improvement in the productivity of labour, of the technological transformations which these industries must undergo, can only obscure it. Because the law of value will have a tendency to *keep alive* archaic enterprises, as long as the state of scarcity exists, from the moment there ceases to be free movement of capital and free imports of commodities which could stimulate competition with these enterprises.

Far from being a field of application of the law of value, the dependence of Cuba on foreign trade thus implies the necessity of *economic calculation of comparative international costs*, which could provide a choice of economic criteria, independently of an rigid “law”. The necessity to *assure* the country’s supply of spare parts and raw materials *imposes* a certain volume of exports, even if these are carried out at a loss. The necessity to maintain and to develop the existing level of industries dependent on foreign supplies imposes searching, as quickly as possible, for profitable exports *in relation to prices on the world market*—even if this means switching investments toward branches that are already profitable *in relation to the national market* (branches that already sell their commodities at their exchange value). The possibility of exporting at a profit, of gaining supplementary resources from exports, of transforming trade into a constant source of socialist accumulation, will moreover permit just the *liberation of the economy* from the tyranny of the “law of value”, that is, will permit the development of new industries despite the fact that their production costs at the beginning will be higher than the prices of imported products, without lowering the standard of living or the rate of accumulation in the country. This is an aspect of the real dialectics of the

dependence on foreign trade and the play of the law of value that is decidedly more complex than Comrade Mora thought !

The Law of Value and Autonomy of Decision at the Enterprise Level

In the debate which has raged in some of the workers states, the problem of the area of application of the law of value is intimately linked with the problem of autonomy of decision at the enterprise level in the field of investment. The Yugoslav authors have even formulated with regard to this a veritable new dogma which requires critical analysis: "Without the right of the self-management collectives to dispose of a considerable part of the social surplus product, no genuine self-management." (4) This analysis must examine the problem from two aspects: economic efficiency (criteria for choosing one investment project rather than another), social and political efficiency (success in the struggle against the bureaucracy and bureaucratization).

The more backward a country is, the more conditions of almost universal scarcity rule not only in the means of production sector but also for much of the industrial means of consumption (at least for the great majority of the population), and *the more detrimental the practice of self investment is* the more detrimental is it to permit the self-management collectives to determine for themselves the projects for priority of productive investments.

It is evident in fact that under conditions of almost general scarcity of industrial commodities, *almost all* the investment projects can be economically profitable, no matter how gross the economic errors that are committed. Almost every profitable industrial or agricultural enterprise (providing funds for investment) is like an island in a sea of unsatisfied needs. The natural tendency of self-investment is therefore to attend to what is most pressing, both locally and in each sector.

In other words: if the self-management enterprises hold large funds for self-investment, they will have a tendency to orient their investments either toward the commodities which they lack the most (certain

equipment goods; raw materials; auxiliary products; emergency sources of energy), or toward the commodities which their workers or the inhabitants of the area lack the most. Thus criteria of local or sector interest are placed above national interests, not because the law of value is "denied" but precisely *because it is applied* ! This means, once more, to orient industrialization toward the "traditional road" which it followed in the historic framework of capitalism, in place of reorienting it according to the requirements of a nationally planned economy.

An attempt can be made to reconcile national planning requirements and allocating self-managed enterprises considerable funds for self-investment. The means chosen for this aim can be a levy-tax in behalf of national development funds and equalization funds for regional development. This is evidently a step in the right direction, but it does not at all resolve the problem.

Since an underdeveloped economy is characterised precisely by the fact that the enterprises of high productivity are still the exception and not the rule, it is sufficient to leave them a part of their net surplus product and the inequality of development between the industrialized localities and the non-industrialized localities, the inequality of development and of revenue between the archaic enterprises which enjoy only an average level of productivity and the enterprises technologically "up to date" will increase instead of *diminishing*. It is necessary moreover to insist on this fundamental idea of Marxism: any economic freedom, any "autonomy of decision" and any "spontaneity" *increases the inequality* so long as there exist side by side strong and feeble enterprises or individuals, rich and poor, favoured and unfavoured from the point of view of location, etc.. This is the reason why, it should be noted in passing, that according to Marx the mechanism of the law of value leads to its own negation, competition inevitably ends in monopoly.

The economic logic of a planned economy therefore speaks completely in favour of *productive investment by budgetary means* at least for all the big enterprises. What

must be left to the enterprises is an amortization fund sufficiently large to permit *modernization of equipment with each renewal of fixed equipment* (gross investment). But all *net* investments should be made in accordance with the plan, in the branches and places chosen according to preferential criteria selected for the society and its economy as a whole. In this respect, too, the thesis of Comrade Guevara is correct.

The problem has been obscured, above all in the USSR, through associating it with the problem of *heightening the material incentives in enterprises*. Numerous Soviet economists have criticized the stimulants still employed today in the economy of the USSR to incite the enterprises (?) to carry out the plans. This criticism is in general pertinent. It has but to repeat what the anti-Stalinist Marxists have said critically for many years. Yet it is only necessary to examine closely the arguments of these economists to see that what is involved in reality is *heightening material incentives for the bureaucracy* for whom the growth of revenues must in some way be the essential stimulus for the expansion of production in the enterprises.

This is where certain partisans of self-management, particularly in Yugoslavia, maintain that *decentralization of the decisions on investment would be a powerful guarantee against bureaucratization*. This thesis is based on a fallacy. The Yugoslavs are right in stressing that the power of the bureaucracy grows in relation to its freedom in disposing of the social surplus product. But the technicians and economists of the planning commission "dispose" of the surplus product only in the form of figures on paper; the real power of disposal is situated *at the level of the enterprise*. (5) The more that means other than consumption funds (distributed revenues and social investments) are left at the free disposal of the enterprises, *the more is precisely bureaucratization stimulated*, at least in a climate of generalised scarcity and poverty; also the greater the temptation becomes for corruption, theft, abuse of confidence, false entries—temptations that do not exist at the level of the planning commission, if only because of multiple checks. The concrete

experience of Yugoslav "decentralization" has shown, moreover, that it is an enormous source of inequality and bureaucratization at the level of the enterprises.

But doesn't the possibility of complete centralization of the means of investment at the state level create the danger of the *economic policy as a whole* favouring the bureaucracy, as was the case in Stalinist Russia? Obviously. But then the cause does not reside in the centralization itself, it lies in the *absence of workers democracy on the national political level*. (6) This means that a genuine guarantee against bureaucratization depends on workers management at the enterprise level and workers democracy at the state level. Without this combination, even the autonomy of the enterprises will eliminate none of the authoritarian, bureaucratic and (often) erroneous character of economic decisions made at the government level of the plan. With this combination, the centralization of investments—priorities being democratically established, for example through a national congress of workers councils—would not encourage bureaucratization, but on the contrary suppress one of its principle sources.

The Law of Value and Self-Management

"Heightening material incentives" in the enterprises cannot be a "stimulant" in the question of investments. But "heightening material incentives" in the self-management collectives can actually stimulate continual growth of production and productivity among the enterprises.

Certainly, under a regime of genuine socialist democracy, creative enthusiasm, the free development of all the capacities of invention and organization of the proletariat, constitute a powerful motor for the growth of production. But it would be a grave idealist and voluntarist error to suppose that in a *climate of poverty*—inevitable in an underdeveloped country immediately following the victory of the socialist revolution—this enthusiasm could last long *without a sufficient material substructure*.

The example of the Soviet Union, where the proletariat gave proof of an enthusiasm

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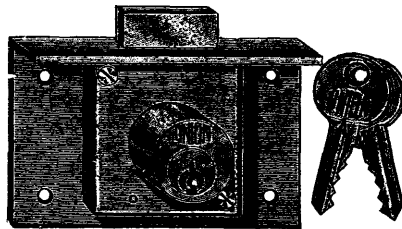
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and spirit of self-sacrifice without parallel in the first years after the October Revolution, is instructive in this respect: a long period of deprivation ended inevitably in mounting passivity of the workers, daily material concerns taking precedence over attentiveness to meetings.

It is therefore imperative to link self-management to the possibility for the workers to immediately judge the success of each effort at increasing production *by the elevation of their standard of living*. The simplest and most transparent technique is that of distributing a part of the net revenue of the enterprise among the workers in the form of one or more months of bonus wages, the amount increasing or diminishing automatically with the level of revenue. *The increasing collective material interest* of the workers in the management of the enterprises moreover is superior to piece wages, inasmuch as it does not introduce division and conflicts in the workers collectivity, inasmuch as it corresponds better to contemporary technique, which places less and less importance on individual output and more and more importance on the rational organization of labour.

Self-management (and not mere workers control) seems to be the ideal model for organising socialist enterprises. But it by no means hinders more or less unlimited competition among the enterprises, which flows from their autonomy in the domain of prices and investments. This autonomy cannot but reproduce a series of evils inherent to the capitalist regime: monopoly positions exploited in the formation of prices and revenues; efforts to defend these monopolies by "hiding" discoveries and technical improvements; waste and duplication in the field of investments; high cost of errors in decision, revealed *a posteriori* on the market (including the shutting down of enterprises); reappearance of unemployment, etc., etc. Useless and detrimental from the economic point of view, it by no means constitutes a sufficient guarantee against bureaucratization, as we have indicated above.

In this connection, the polemic of Lenin and Trotsky against the theses of the "Workers Opposition" is still completely valid. Marxism is not to be confused with

the doctrine of anarcho — syndicalism. The genuine guarantee of workers power lies on the political level; it is on the state level that it must be established; any other solution is utopian; that is, unworkable in the long run and a source for the reappearance of a powerful bureaucracy.

For all these reasons, self-management does not at all imply wider recourse to the "law of value" in relation to centralised planning. (7) The fundamental data of the problem remain the same. It is necessary to carry out strict calculations of production costs to show in the case of each commodity whether its production has been subsidized or not. But nothing calls for the conclusion that prices must be "determined by the law of value", that is, by the law of supply and demand. If such a conclusion still has some meaning with regard to the means of consumption, it is senseless for the means of production which, we repeat, are not commodities, at least in the great majority of cases. And even means of production which are still commodities—those produced by the private or co-operative sector for delivery to the state, and which the state furnishes to private enterprises or co-operatives—cannot be "sold at their value" without encouraging under certain conditions private primitive accumulation at the expense of socialist accumulation. But, if the means of production are not sold "at their value", the "value" of the means of consumption is itself profoundly modified.

Prices are, then, instruments of socialist planning and cannot be anything else in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism. If you say instrument of planning you likewise say instrument for *determining the distribution of the national revenue between consumption and investment, an instrument for determining the distribution of revenues among the different classes and layers of the nation*. To leave the determination of this distribution to the "law of value", is to leave it in the final analysis to the "laws of the market", to the "law of supply and demand", that is, to economic automatism. And economic automatism would rapidly take us back to an economy of the semi-colonial type.

But to say that prices cannot be *determined* by the law of value, does not at all

signify that they can be *independent* of the latter. Society can never distribute more values that it has created without progressively destroying its accumulated wealth and impoverishing itself increasingly in the absolute sense of the term. The total sum of prices must therefore be equal to the total sum of value of the commodities produced (granting that there has been no monetary depreciation). The distribution of certain products—in goods or vouchers—below their value (subsidies!) automatically signifies a distribution of other products above their value. Without strict calculation of production costs; without book-keeping aided by an objective criterion; without a kind of double entry system that faithfully registers, for each product, alongside the price fixed by the state the real cost and the subsidy (or the tax), there is not only no possibility for genuine scientific planning, there is above all no stimulus for the fundamental economic dynamic of the epoch of transition—the dynamic that progressively elevates one new branch of industry after another to the point of rendering it “competitive” in relation to prices on the world

market, up to the time socialism announces its next triumph when socialist industry as a whole operates with a productivity superior to that of the most advanced capitalist industry.

At that moment, the “law of value” could theoretically govern the dynamic of the workers state (or more exactly: the workers states as an international whole; because it appears excluded that this situation could be first obtained “in a single country”). But at the precise moment when it is on the point of triumphing, its reason for being disappears. The highest level of productivity attained under capitalism in all its branches cannot be surpassed without approaching such a level of abundance that commodity production withers away. In the workers state the “law of value” cannot channel investments except to the precise degree that it withers away and to the degree that along with it all the economic categories, products of a relative scarcity of material resources, likewise wither away.

December 1, 1963.

NOTES

- (1) “Planned economy in the transitional period while founded on the law of value, violates it nevertheless at every step and establishes relations among the different economic branches, and between industry and agriculture in the first place, on the basis of unequal exchange. The state budget plays the role of a lever for forced accumulation and planned distribution. This role must be increased in accordance with the latest economic progress. Credit financing dominates relations between the coercive accumulation of the budget and the fluctuations of the market, insofar as the latter enter in..... If the domestic Soviet market is ‘freed’ and the monopoly of foreign trade suppressed—exchange between the city and the countryside will become much more equal, the accumulation of the village (I refer to the capitalist accumulation of the farmer, the ‘kulak’) will follow its course, and it will soon be seen that Marx’s formulas likewise apply to agriculture. Once on this road, Russia would rapidly become a colony that would serve as the base for the industrial development of other countries.” (Leon Trotsky: “Stalin Theoretician.” Available in French in *Ecrits* 1928-40, Tome I, p. 106)
- (2) Among others Novochilov, Kantorovitch and Menchinov. This question likewise underlies the famous debate on the possible use of profit as the sole criterion in carrying out the plan. In reality these economists are the spokesmen of the economic bureaucracy, who demand *increased rights for the directors of enterprises—* particularly the right to freely dispose of a part of the “indivisible funds” (fixed equipment).
- (3) From 1924 to 1927, the Stalinist faction violently accused the Left Opposition—Preobrazhensky in particular—with wanting “to increase the prices of industrial products”. Preobrazhensky had simply proposed that industrial products could be sold “above their value” to the village, which could have been tied in perfectly with a progressive lowering of the sales price in view of the rapid growth of the productivity of labour. But when the Stalinist faction made the turn to accelerated industrialization, it increased the prices of industrial consumers goods through extremely high indirect taxes. While in 1928, the tax on turnover was not above 17.9% of the real turnover of retail trade, it rose to 78.1% in 1932, and in 1936, the nominal turnover of this trade was 107 billion rubles, of which taxes accounted for 66 billion rubles and the real turnover only 41 billion! (L. H. Hubbard: *Trade and Distribution in the Soviet Union*).
- (4) Thus Milentiji Popovic, in an article titled “Self-management and Planning”. “On the other hand, in the sector of expanded social reproduction, in perfecting the system of investment on the basis of the new relations, our results are less conclusive, although the first steps have been taken in this direction. The establishment of non-administrative relations,

of economic relations, in this sphere, reverts quite simply to the establishment of credit-interest (!) relations, and to taking them as the basis.....

"One must first of all counteract the contradiction which arises from the fact that the resources serving social reproduction are deducted exclusively through administrative measures (taxes, duties, contributions) thus leaving free the organization of labour without the latter on the other hand becoming the 'proprietor'; the organization of labour evolves, in fact, into a unique system of credit in which these resources are at one and the same time 'theirs' and 'common' (article 11).....

It is possible to avoid, on the other hand, having subjective and political considerations as the only ones to be taken into consideration at the time of the adoption of the decisions concerning investments. It goes without saying that this method cannot and must not ever be pushed to its final conclusion. But a system can be constructed in which the political decisions will bear on the general orientation of the political economy while the distribution of the means destined for investment is carried out in accordance with the credit mechanism, according to financial and material (!) criteria fixed with more or less precision. In operating in this way the process of expanded reproduction is likewise depoliticalized". This 'depoliticalization' is not absolute. It is carried out to the degree that *bureaucratism must be deprived of its base in this sphere as in the others.*" (My emphasis)—*Current Questions of Socialism*, No. 70, July-Sept. 1963, pp. 67-8.

- (5) This obviously does not apply to cases where raw materials, equipment goods and some-

times even means of consumption are centrally distributed, becoming veritable hotbeds for germinating corrupted bureaucrats.

- (6) "Only the co-ordination of these three elements, state planning, the market and Soviet democracy, can assure correct guidance of the economy of the epoch of transition and assure, not the removal of the imbalances in a few years (this is utopian), but their diminution and by that the simplification of the bases of the dictatorship of the proletariat until the time when new victories of the revolution will widen the arena of socialist planning and reconstruct its system." (Leon Trotsky: "The Soviet Economy in Danger". Available in French in Tome I of *Ecrits* 1928-1940, p. 127).
- (7) Certain Yugoslav authors take quite correct positions in this respect. See for example Dr. Radivoj Uvalic: "While the open market can be widely utilized, it cannot be the sole or even the principle regulator of the socio-economic relations of a socialist country." And again: "The importance of the planned guidance of economic development under the conditions of socialism lies first of all in the possibility that is offered of considering profitability from the point of view of the economy as a whole and not from the point of view of each particular unit of the economy..... This is the case in all branches of high concentration of capital (?), such as the production of the means of production and raw materials, which could be never developed sufficiently on the basis of the accidental play of the market, with the rate of profit as the sole stimulat., (In: *Socialist Thought and Practice*, No. 6 pp 47 and 55).

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MARXISM IN SINHALA

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD, SURIYA BOOKS

The Editorial Board of Suriya Books made this Declaration on the occasion of the recent publication in Sinhala of Leon Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours* and Lenin and Trotsky's *Parliament and Revolution*. The Editorial Board consists of Meryl Fernando, V. Karalasingham, Champa Goonetilleke, W. Andradi and Upali Cooray.

WITH this publication we launch a new venture—a venture which ought to have made its appearance much earlier in time and under different auspices—the publication in the Sinhala language of the classical works of Marxism-Leninism. And regrettably we begin on a note of criticism and self-criticism.

Although there are two parties based on the working class in Ceylon and both have a continuous existence of over two decades, the combined output by the two organisations of the classical works of Marxism does not add to even double figures. Except for a few publications in the early period, during the first flush of enthusiasm, there has been no systematic release of even the elementary works in Sinhala. Such is the sad state of affairs in the field of Sinhalese political literature that the advanced militant worker, the revolutionary intelligentsia in the socialist movement, and the serious student of Marxism literate only in the Sinhala language, are completely denied access to the rich and rewarding arsenal of Marxist thought. Indeed the dismal position today appears to be analogous to that which prevailed in classical antiquity, particularly in the Orient.

The Brahmins of ancient India did everything to keep Hindu learning a close preserve of theirs and looked with intense hostility on all who sought to encroach on what they considered was their exclusive domain. And not only the Brahmins of ancient India. The Buddhist monks of Ceylon, although not a hereditary order, too well nigh displayed the same degree of jealousy in keeping the texts of Buddhism in the Pali original, and not even the passage of

over 2000 years has induced these guardians of the scriptures to render them into the Sinhala language. But however reprehensible may be the efforts of Hindu Brahmins and Buddhist monks, their attempts to present themselves as the sole repositories of religious wisdom are quite pardonable when compared to the reluctance of English educated Marxists in Ceylon to make available among the Sinhalese educated the works of Marxism, and their tendency to restrict Marxist knowledge to an ever narrowing circle of English educated persons. Because of the limitation inherent in religion, the attempts of Hindu and Buddhist ecclesiastics may be conveniently overlooked, however sinister have been their subjective intentions. On its positive side religion is important merely “as a form of human knowledge and human unity”. But as even the most liberal and “advanced” religion reflected “man’s weakness in the face of nature and his helplessness within society”, it was not a matter of much concern or consequence whether these ideas percolated down society in the original words of the founders of the various faiths. But the Brahminical attitude to the spread of Marxist knowledge on the part of the English educated “aristocracy” is most lamentable since Marxism is the revolutionary ideology of the working class, the certain guide to mass action, the invincible method of social and historical analysis, the very embodiment of creative history.

Of course it must be said that the failure so far to render in Sinhalese the classical works of Marxism is not the result of a conscious policy of keeping important sections of our people from the socialist movement, or if already there, from acti-

vely participating in the life of that movement. Nothing less than the fancied interest of the movement is behind the calculated indifference to make available the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and the other great Marxists. Apparently to many English educated Marxists the very idea of rendering the classical works of Marxism into Sinhalese is anathema because the ideas of Marxism are far too advanced for the Sinhalese educated reader. According to them the availability of these pristine revolutionary and terribly iconoclastic writings outside a sophisticated circle is to retard the very evolution of the Sinhalese intelligentsia in the direction of the international socialist movement. However, honestly held, this view must be rejected as thoroughly reactionary. Not only is it a shameless libel on a whole people to suggest that because the medium of instruction is their mother tongue, and not English, they are incapable of assimilating the revolutionary ideas of Marxism. It is also a serious under-estimation of the tremendous attractive power of Marxism to think that in the particular context of Ceylon society alone Marxism loses the powerful appeal it exerts on the intelligentsia generally. Only men who have themselves lost faith in the ideas of Marxism can entertain so distorted a view.

What is so grotesque in the cautious approach to the Sinhalese educated intelligentsia is that there is nothing to justify the fears of the older generation of English educated Marxists, unless one makes the facile assumption that the empty drum beats of the racialists are the highest expression of the intellectual attainments of the Sinhalese intelligentsia. This assumption is plain nonsense. No doubt a large section of the Sinhala educated intelligentsia takes to communal politics and looks with disfavour on Marxism. But this is largely the result of the indifference and apathy already mentioned in consequence of which no attempt has been made to draw these elements nearer to the ideology of the working class movement. This task of drawing the Sinhalese intelligentsia to revolutionary Marxism cannot of course be done by making concessions to their petty-bourgeois thinking either by waving national flags, or debasing Marxism to suit the requirements of

their ideological backwardness, or by simply suppressing the original Marxist writings from them. On the contrary only the free dissemination of authentic Marxist literature would serve not only to clear the air of the poisonous fumes of chauvinism and opportunism but open the way for the forward march of the revolutionary intelligentsia.

Actually nowhere else in the capitalist world is the task of rallying the intelligentsia behind the working class easier than in Ceylon. This may appear paradoxical having regard to the so-called national renaissance of the last few years. But a close examination of the reality as opposed to the appearance makes this abundantly clear. Unlike in other countries, particularly advanced European countries which have accomplished the bourgeois democratic revolution, the bourgeoisie in Ceylon is unable to offer the intelligentsia even a modicum of spiritual and cultural sustenance. This spiritual and ideological poverty directly flows from the complete economic and material insignificance of the Ceylonese capitalist class. Hence what passes as its ideology is the regular invocation of the ghosts of dynasties long buried, the pursuit of the receding shadows of a civilisation far outstripped by the march of history and the pious incantation to mystic symbols and images. So long as the mass of the petty bourgeoisie was ignorant these themes provided ample scope. But with the spread of popular education in the last two decades and the emergence throughout the country of an intelligentsia trained, however inadequately, to appreciate science and technology and versed, however meagrely, in the liberal arts, the old formulae are not even a subsistence ration in the field of ideas. Thus the great contradiction—an intelligentsia based on the scientific-cultural disciplines of the 20th century but subsisting essentially on prescientific traditions, myths and legends—provides the working class with a unique opportunity of projecting its scientific world outlook before the new intelligentsia. The bold, the intellectually honest, the rebellious, the unorthodox and the *Avant Garde* among them must inevitably break from the stultifying influence of a dead heritage. When they do, it is to Marxism—*itself* a

product of modern science—that they will turn, provided of course, its rich original material is at hand in the language which the intelligentsia understands.

There can be no doubt that the revolutionary elements from this intelligentsia trained in the discipline of Marxism will play a historic role in the working class movement. They will carry out with a new devotion and inflexible determination the indispensable task earmarked for them by Lenin himself, namely, the role of declassed professional revolutionaries bringing revolutionary socialist consciousness to the working class. The new intelligentsia are pre-eminently suited for this role unlike the older generation of English educated Marxists who are inhibited at every turn by close family and social ties with the class enemy, not to mention their own comfortable enconcement within bourgeois society. Drawn from a social layer closer to the workers and peasants and having no stake in capitalist society, the new intelligentsia will bring the same dedication to revolution which distinguished Lenin and the Bolsheviks from the Social Democrats of Western Europe.

But Marxist literature in Sinhalese is intended not only to fulfil the needs of the revolutionary intelligentsia, important as this group is for the ultimate success of the revolutionary movement. The cadres of the working class must no less have access to Marxism directly and not merely through emasculate interpretations and dubious explanations.

Like in every other country, in Ceylon too, the working class is the leader of the socialist revolution. But the working class till it establishes its dictatorship is part of capitalist society. And capitalist society means above all, the ideological and intellectual domination of the broad mass of the workers by the capitalist class. The dead weight of tradition and the force of habit predispose the working class to submission and fatalism. In addition through the press, radio, schools, universities, temples, churches etc., it hires all manner of men to spread its ideas among the masses it oppresses. These ideas revolve round such abstractions as “democracy”, “coun-

try”, “religion”, “nation”, “language” etc. But they have a very concrete aim: the effacing of class consciousness among the workers, the smothering of their independent creative spirit, the promotion of superstition and ignorance in their ranks and the sowing of confusion and discord among them. In a word, doing everything to prevent the working class from uniting under its class banner with a view to challenging and overthrowing the capitalist class. And so effective is capitalist domination that in “normal” times the broad mass of the workers fall easy victims to all this palpable deceit and downright falsehood of the ruling class.

A minority of the workers, however, rise to class consciousness, i.e. a realisation that the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to that of the capitalist class, and, some among the workers who have attained class consciousness develop further to acquire a revolutionary socialist consciousness, i.e. an understanding of the need to overthrow the capitalist class and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. These are the elements who constitute the genuine leadership of the trade unions, and the leading cadres of the working class political parties. They are in short the leaders of the working class.

But leadership calls for special training and the acquisition of special skills. Have you ever heard of an Army officered by men ignorant of military science? Even the most inefficient Army trains its officers in the art of war, in the strategy and tactics of operations, in the technique of deploying men and resources, etc., in short, in military science. And so too, the leaders of the working class, the officers of the proletarian army, must be trained in the science of class war, of revolution, if they are to lead successfully the battalions of the working class against the capitalist class and its state. And the science of revolution is called Marxism-Leninism the mastery of which science alone made possible the victorious revolutions of the Soviet Union, of China, of Cuba. The mastery of this science is as imperative for the cadres of the working class as the mastery of military science is essential for the officers of the armed forces.

Every science has its literature, the so-called "books" of theory, and theory itself is generalised experience, the deduction of principles and laws from observable facts and phenomena verified in practice. Of course capitalist agents in the ranks of the working class sneer at theory, as though theory is divorced from practice and practice itself can be fruitful without a scientific theory. But no one sneers at the most painstaking study of books in the other sciences—indeed the very men who sneer at socialist theory adopt an entirely different attitude when it concerns the literature of the physical, biological or medical sciences, or even of conventional bourgeois learning. They sneer at socialist literature with a purpose so that socialist learning and understanding should remain their monopoly in order the better to betray the workers, and to keep the cadres of the working class in ignorance. But the study of the science of revolution is for the working class cadres a matter of the highest importance. To the working class the question of revolutionary power is the essence of the political problem as its future is not within capitalist society but opens only after the capitalist class is overthrown and a new state created. The problem of overthrowing capitalism is therefore something which is immediate and real. The study of the science of Marxism far from being a matter of indifference to the working class is of the utmost urgency. And this again presupposes the availability of the classical works of Marxism in the Sinhala language.

Clearly there can be no dispute even among those on the fringe of the movement as to the need for translating into Sinhalese the original writings of the great Marxists. Equally undisputed is the magnitude of the task both on account of the richness and volume of the original material as well as the problems arising from transforming the Sinhala language into an effective vehi-

cle for the conveyance of the rich and precise terms, concepts, ideas and scientific method of Marxism. Under the reactionary influence as much of the higher echelons of the Buddhist theocracy as of foreign imperialism the Sinhala language was never, through all its varied history, the medium for the expression of the humanities and the sciences. The result is that every translation in the initial period at any rate becomes an exercise of great effort and intensity. To emphasize the extent of the effort, it may be repeated that what is being undertaken is not the translation of an isolated work of one or another of the many Communist authors but the translation of all the major writings of one branch of science i.e. Marxism—Leninism. In fact in no other branch of learning has a task of this nature been undertaken. At best what is available even in other branches and, this too through official patronage, are a few *text books* and not the authoritative original writings in the various sciences and humanities. Here then is something never attempted before! In the course of our accomplishing this self imposed task the Sinhala language itself would receive a much needed standardisation, a tremendous enrichment, a new vigour and an efficient streamlining to bring it on par with the most advanced European languages. In fact there could be no more enduring contribution to Sinhalese literature and thought than this venture since the capitalist class and its so-called intellectual hangers on, the priests and professors, the political windbags and journalists, and the whole tribe of national revivalists cannot contribute one new *idea* in Sinhalese. It is to this labour of love—the translation and publication in Sinhala of the classical works of Marxism—that we summon all who can help either by work or material assistance. Their reward shall be the deep satisfaction of having rescued Marxism in Ceylon from the paralysing embrace of the old Brahmins.

From the Arsenal of Marxism

THE COMMUNIST ATTITUDE TO PARLIAMENTARY REFORMISM

*(Theses adopted at the 2nd Congress of the Communist
International, 1920)*

I

THE NEW EPOCH AND THE NEW PARLIAMENTARISM

THE attitude of the Socialist Parties towards parliamentarism was originally, at the time of the First International, one of utilising bourgeois parliaments for purposes of agitation. Participating in parliamentary activity was looked upon from the point of view of developing class-consciousness, i.e. of awakening in the proletariat class hostility toward the ruling class. Changes in this attitude were brought about not through change of doctrine, but under the influence of political development. Owing to the uninterrupted advance of the forces of production and the widening sphere of capitalist exploitation, capitalism, and together with it the parliamentary state, acquired a lasting stability.

This gave rise to the adaptability of the parliamentary tactics of the Socialist parties to "organic" legislative activity in bourgeois parliaments, and the ever-growing significance of the struggle for reforms within the capitalist system, as well as the predominating influence of the so-called "immediate demand" and the conversion of the maximum program into a figure of speech as an altogether remote "final goal". This served as a basis for the development of parliamentary careerism, corruption, and open or hidden betrayal of the fundamental interests of the working class.

The attitude of the THIRD INTERNATIONAL towards parliamentarism is determined not by a new doctrine, but by

the changed goal of parliamentarism itself. During the previous epoch parliament performed a certain progressive function as the weapon of developing capitalism, but under the present conditions of unbridled imperialism, parliament has become a tool of falsehood, deceit, violence, and enervating gossip. In face of imperialist devastation, plunder, violation, robbery and ruin, parliamentary reforms, devoid of system, of consistency and of definite plan, have lost all practical significance for the working masses.

Parliament, like the whole bourgeois society, has lost its stability. The sudden transition from the organic to the critical epoch has laid the foundation for new proletarian tactics in the field of parliamentarism. The Russian Workers' Party (Bolsheviks) had already worked out the essence of revolutionary parliamentarism in the preceding period, owing to the fact that Russia, after 1905, lost its political and social equilibrium and entered upon the period of storm and stress.

To the extent that some Socialists with an inclination for Communism point out that the moment of revolution in their respective countries has not yet arrived, and so decline to break away from the parliamentary opportunists, they reason in fact consciously or unconsciously from the consideration that the present epoch is one of relative stability for imperialist society, and they assume therefore that practical results may be achieved in the struggle for reform by a coalition with such men as Turati and

Longuet. As soon as Communism takes the field it must start out by elucidating the present epoch (the culmination of capitalism, imperialist self-negation and self-destruction, uninterrupted growth of civil war, etc.). Political relationships and political groupings may be different in different countries, but the essence of the matter is everywhere the same: we must start with the direct preparation of a proletarian uprising, politically and technically, for the destruction of the bourgeoisie and for the creation of the new proletarian state

Parliament at present can in no way serve as the arena of a struggle for reform, or for improving the lot of the working people, as it was at certain periods of the preceding epoch. The centre of gravity of political life at present has been completely and finally transferred beyond the limits of Parliament. On the other hand, owing not only to its relationship to the working masses, but also to the complicated mutual relations within the various groups of the bourgeoisie itself, the bourgeoisie is forced to have some of its policies in one way or another passed through parliament, where the various cliques haggle for power, exhibit their strong sides and betray their weak ones, get themselves unmasked, etc., etc. Therefore, it is the immediate historical task of the working class to wrest this apparatus out of the hands of the ruling class, to break and destroy it, and to create in its place a new proletarian apparatus. At the same time, however, the revolutionary general staff of the working class is vitally concerned in having its scouting parties in the parliamentary institutions of the bourgeoisie, in order to facilitate this task of destruction.

Thus the fundamental difference between the tactics of Communists entering parliament with revolutionary aims in view, and the tactics of the Socialist parliamentarians, becomes perfectly clear. The latter act on the assumption of the relative stability and the indefinite durability of the existing order; they consider it their task to achieve reforms by all means, and are concerned to make the masses appreciate every such accomplishment as the merit of the Social-Democratic parliamentarian (Turati, Longuet and Co.).

Instead of the old compromising parliamentarism, a new parliamentarism has come to life, as a weapon for the destruction of parliamentarism as a whole. But the aversion towards the traditional practices of the old parliamentarism drives some revolutionary elements into the camp of the opponents of parliamentarism on principle (I.W.W., the revolutionary Syndicalists, German Communist Labour Party).

Taking all this into consideration the Second Congress adopts the following theses :

II

COMMUNISM, THE STRUGGLE FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT, AND THE UTILISATION OF THE BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENT

1. Parliamentarism as a State system, has become a democratic form of the rule of the bourgeoisie, which at a certain stage of its development needs the fiction of national representation, that outwardly appears as an organisation of the "national will" standing outside of classes, but in reality is an instrument of oppression and suppression in the hands of the ruling capitalists.

2. Parliamentarism is a definite form of State order. Therefore, it can in no way be a form of Communist society, which recognises neither classes, nor class struggle, nor any form of State authority.

3. Parliamentarism cannot be a form of proletarian government during the transition period between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat. At the moment when the accentuated class struggle turns into civil war the proletariat must inevitably form its State organisation as a fighting organisation, which cannot contain any representatives of the former ruling classes. All fictions of the "national will" are harmful to the proletariat at that time, and the parliamentary division of authority is needless and injurious to it. The only form of proletarian dictatorship is a Republic of Soviets.

4. The bourgeois parliaments, which constitute one of the most important parts of the State machinery, cannot be won over by the proletariat any more than can the bourgeois order in general. The task of the proletariat consists in overthrowing the whole machinery of the bourgeoisie, in destroying it, and with it all the parliamentary institutions, whether they be republican or constitutional-monarchical.

5. The same applies to the local government institutions of the bourgeoisie, which theoretically, cannot be differentiated from the State organisations. In reality they are part of the same bourgeois state machinery, which must be destroyed by the revolutionary proletariat and replaced by local Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

6. Consequently, Communism repudiates parliamentarism as the form of the future; it renounces it as a form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat; it repudiates the possibility of winning over parliament; its aim is to destroy parliamentarism. Therefore, it is only possible to speak of utilising the bourgeois State organisations with the object of destroying them. The question can only and exclusively be discussed on this plane.

7. Every class struggle is a political struggle, because it is finally a struggle for power. Any strike, when it spreads throughout the whole country, is a menace to the bourgeois State, and thus acquires a political character. To strive to overthrow the bourgeoisie, and to destroy its State, signifies to carry on political warfare. To create a class apparatus—for the bridling and suppression of the resisting bourgeoisie—whatever such an apparatus may be—means the conquest of political power.

8. Consequently the question of political struggle does not end in the question of one's attitude towards the parliamentary system. It is a general condition of the class struggle of the proletariat, in so far as the struggle grows from a small and sectional one to a general struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order as a whole.

9. The fundamental method of the struggle of the proletariat against the rule of

the bourgeoisie, is first of all, the method of mass action. Such mass action is prepared and carried out by the organised masses of the proletariat, under the direction of a united, disciplined, centralised Communist Party. Civil war is war. In this war the proletariat must have its efficient political officers, its good political general staff, to conduct operations during all the stages of the fight.

10. The mass struggle means a whole system of developing demonstrations, growing ever more acute in form, and logically leading to an uprising against the capitalist order of government. In this warfare of the masses developing into a civil war the guiding party of the proletariat must, as a general rule, secure any and every legal position making them its auxiliaries in the revolutionary work, and subordinating such positions to the plans of the general campaign, that of the mass struggle.

11. One of such auxiliary supports is the floor of the bourgeois parliament. The argument that parliament is a bourgeois government institution cannot be used against participation in a political campaign. The Communist Party enters such institutions not for the purpose of organic work, but in order to destroy the whole bourgeois government machinery and parliament itself from within (for instance, the work of Liebknecht in Germany, of the Bolsheviks in the imperial Duma, in the "Democratic Conference", in the "Preparliament" of Kerensky, and lastly, in the "Constituent Assembly", and also in the "Municipal Dumas", and the activities of the Bulgarian Communists).

12. This work within parliament—which consists chiefly in making revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary platform, denouncing enemies, the ideological unification of the masses, who still look up to the parliamentary platform captivated by democratic illusions, especially in backward countries, etc.—must be fully subordinated to the objects and tasks of the mass struggle outside parliament.

Participation in the electoral campaign and the revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary tribune has a special

importance for winning over those elements of the workers who, such as, perhaps, the agricultural workers, have stood far away from the revolutionary movement and political life.

13. If the Communists have a majority in local government institutions, they must: (a) carry on a revolutionary opposition against the bourgeois central authority; (b) do all for the aid of the poor population (economical measures, establish or attempt to establish an armed workers' militia); (c) point out on every occasion the barriers which the bourgeois State power erects against really vital changes; (d) develop on this basis the most active revolutionary propaganda without fearing a conflict with the State authorities; (e) under certain conditions substitute local workers, councils for the existing municipal administration. The whole activity of the Communists in the municipal administration must therefore be part of the general work of destroying the capitalist system.

14. The electoral campaigns must be carried on not in the sense of obtaining a maximum of votes, but in that of a revolutionary mobilisation of the masses around the watchwords of the Proletarian Revolution. It must be conducted by the whole party membership, not by the leaders alone. It is necessary to make use of and be in complete touch with all manifestations of the masses (strikes, demonstrations, movements among the soldiers and sailors etc.) going on at the moment. It is necessary to summon all the mass organisations of the proletariat to active work.

15. In complying with all these conditions, as well as with those indicated in a special instruction, parliamentary work must present a direct contrast to the dirty "politics" practised by the Social-Democratic parties of all countries, who enter parliament to support that "democratic" institution or, at least, to "win it over". The Communist Party can only recommend the *revolutionary* use of the parliament as exemplified by Karl Liebknecht, Hoglund and the Bolsheviks.

16. "Anti-parliamentarism", on principle, in the sense of an absolute and cate-

gorical repudiation of participation in the elections and revolutionary parliamentary work, cannot therefore bear criticism and is a naive childish doctrine, which is founded sometimes on a healthy disgust at politicians, but does not understand the possibilities of revolutionary parliamentarism. In addition, this doctrine is frequently connected with a quite erroneous representation of the role of the party, which in this case is considered not as a fighting, centralised but as a decentralised system of feebly connected revolutionary groups.

17. On the other hand, an acknowledgement of the value of parliamentary work in no wise leads to an absolute acknowledgement in all and any circumstances of the necessity of actual elections and actual participation in parliamentary sessions. This question depends upon a series of specific conditions. Under certain circumstances it may become necessary to leave parliament. The Bolsheviks did so when they left the pre-parliament in order to break it up, to weaken it, and to set up against it the Petrograd Soviet, which was then prepared to head the uprising. They acted similarly in the Constituent Assembly in the day of its dissolution, converting the Third Congress of Soviets into the centre of political activity. In other circumstances a boycott of the elections may be necessary, and a direct violent storming of both the great bourgeois State machine and the parliamentary bourgeois clique: or a participation in the elections with a boycott of parliament itself, etc.

18. In this way, while recognising as a general rule the necessity of participating in elections to that central parliament, and to the institutions of local self government, as well as in the work of such institutions, the Communist Party must decide the question concretely, according to the specific conditions of the given moment. Boycotting the elections or parliament, or leaving parliament is permissible, chiefly when there is a possibility for an immediate transition to an armed fight for power.

19. At the same time the relative unimportance of this question must be constantly borne in mind. If the centre of gravity lies in a struggle for power outside

parliament, then naturally the question of proletarian dictatorship and a mass fight for it is immeasurably greater than the secondary one of using parliament.

20. Therefore the Communist International declares categorically that it considers any division or attempt at a division within the Communist Party united on this aim as a crime against the Labour Move-

ment. The Congress calls upon all elements that are in favour of the mass struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, under the direction of a centralised party of the revolutionary proletariat gaining influence over all the mass organisations of the working class, to strive for the complete unity of all Communist elements, notwithstanding any possible disagreement on the question of utilising bourgeois parliaments.

ON THE UNITED FRONT

The following Theses on the United Front, unquestionably one of the most important programmatic documents of revolutionary Marxism, were drafted by Leon Trotsky for the enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International which convened toward the end of February 1922.

1. The task of the Communist Party is to lead the proletarian revolution. In order to summon the proletariat for the direct conquest of power and to achieve it the Communist Party must base itself on the overwhelming majority of the working class.

So long as it does not hold this majority, the party must fight to win it.

The party can achieve this only by remaining an absolutely independent organisation with a clear program and strict internal discipline. That is the reason why the party was bound to break ideologically with the reformists and the centrists who do not strive for the proletarian revolution, who possess neither the capacity nor the desire to prepare the masses for revolution, and who by their entire conduct thwart this work.

Any members of the Communist Party who bemoan the split with the centrists in the name of "unity of forces" or "unity of front" thereby demonstrate that they do not understand the ABC of Communism and that they themselves happen to be in the Communist Party only by accident.

2. After assuring itself of the complete independence and ideological homogeneity of its ranks, the Communist Party fights for influence over the majority of the working class. This struggle can be accelerated or retarded depending upon objective cir-

cumstances and the expediency of the tactics employed.

But it is perfectly self-evident that the class life of the proletariat is not suspended during this period preparatory to the revolution. Clashes with industrialists, with the bourgeoisie, with the state power, on the initiative of one side or the other, run their due course.

In these clashes—insofar as they involve the vital interests of the entire working class, or its majority, or this or that section—the working masses sense the need of unity in action, of unity in resisting the onslaught of capitalism or unity in taking the offensive against it. Any party which mechanically counterposes itself to this need of the working class for unity in action will unfailingly be condemned in the minds of the workers.

Consequently the question of the united front is not at all, either in point of origin or substance, a question of the reciprocal relations between the Communist parliamentary fraction and that of the Socialists, or between the Central Committees of the two parties. The problem of the united front—despite the fact that a split is inevitable in this epoch between the various political organisations basing themselves on the working class—grows out of the urgent need to secure for the working class the possibility of a united front in the struggle against capitalism.

For those who do not understand this task the party is only a propaganda society and not an organisation for mass action.

3. In cases where the Communist Party still remains an organisation of a numerically insignificant minority, the question of its conduct on the mass-struggle front does not assume a decisive practical and organisational significance. In such conditions, mass actions remain under the leadership of the old organisations which by reason of their still powerful traditions continue to play the decisive role.

Similarly the problem of the united front does not arise in countries where-as in Bulgaria for example—the Communist Party is the sole leading organisation of the toiling masses.

But wherever the Communist Party already constitutes a big, organised, political force, but not the decisive magnitude; wherever the party embraces organisationally, let us say, one-fourth, one-third, or even a larger proportion of the organised proletarian vanguard, it is confronted with the question of the United front in all its acuteness.

If the party embraces one-third or one-half of the proletarian vanguard, then the remaining half or two-thirds are organised by the reformists or centrists. It is perfectly obvious, however, that **even those workers who still support the reformists and the centrists are vitally interested in maintaining the highest material standards of living and the greatest possible freedom for struggle.** We must consequently so devise our tactics as to prevent the Communist Party, which will on the morrow embrace the entire three-thirds of the working class, from turning into—and all the more so, from actually being—an organisational obstacle in the way of the current struggle of the proletariat.

Still more, the party must assume the initiative in securing unity in these current struggles. **Only in this way will the party draw closer to those two-thirds who do not as yet follow its leadership, who do not as yet trust the party because they do not understand it. Only in this way can the party win them over.**

4. If the Communist Party had not broken drastically and irrevocably with the Social Democrats, it would not have become the party of the proletarian revolution. It could not have taken the first serious steps on the road to revolution. It would forever have remained a parliamentary safety-valve attached to the bourgeois state.

Whoever does not understand this, does not know the first letter of the ABC of Communism.

If the Communist Party did not seek for organisational avenues to the end that at every given moment joint, coordinated action between the Communist and the non-Communist (including the Social Democratic) working masses were made possible it would have thereby laid bare its own incapacity to win over—on the basis of mass action—the majority of the working class. It would degenerate into a Communist propaganda society but never develop into a party for the conquest of power.

It is not enough to possess the sword, one must give it an edge; it is not enough to give the sword an edge, one must know how to wield it.

After separating the Communists from the reformists it is not enough to fuse the Communists together by means of organisational discipline; it is necessary that this organisation should learn how to guide all the collective activities of the proletariat in all spheres of its living struggle.

This is the second letter of the alphabet of Communism.

5. Does the united front extend only to the working masses or does it also include the opportunist leaders?

The very posing of this question is a product of misunderstanding.

If we were able simply to unite the working masses around our own banner or around our practical immediate slogans, and skip over reformist organisations, whether party or trade union, that would be the best thing in the world. But then the very question of the united front would not exist in its present form.

The question arises from this, that certain very important sections of the working class belong to reformist organisations or support them. Their present experience is still insufficient to enable them to break with the reformist organisations and join us. It may be precisely after engaging in those mass activities, which are on the order of the day, that a major change will take place in this connection. That is just what we are striving for. But that is not how matters stand at present. Today the organised portion of the working class is broken up into three formations.

One of them, the Communist, strives toward the social revolution and precisely because of this supports concurrently every movement, however partial, of the toilers against the exploiters and against the bourgeois state.

Another grouping, the reformist, strives toward conciliation with the bourgeoisie. But in order not to lose their influence over the workers reformists are compelled, against the innermost desires of their own leaders, to support the partial movements of the exploited against the exploiters.

Finally there is a third grouping, the centrist, which constantly vacillates between the other two, and which has no independent significance.

The circumstances thus make wholly possible joint action on a whole number of vital issues between the workers united in these three respective organisations and the unorganised masses adhering to them.

The Communists, as has been said, must not oppose such actions but on the contrary must also assume the initiative for them, precisely for the reason that the greater is the mass drawn into the movement, the higher its self-confidence rises, all the more self-confident will that mass movement be and all the more resolutely will it be capable of marching forward, however modest may be the initial slogans of struggle. And this means that the growth of the mass aspects of the movement tends to radicalise it, and creates much more favourable conditions for the slogans, methods of struggle, and, in general, the leading role of the Communist Party.

The reformists dread the revolutionary potential of the mass movement; their beloved arena is the parliamentary tribune, the trade union bureaus, the arbitration boards, the ministerial ante-chambers.

On the contrary, we are, apart from all other considerations, interested in dragging the reformists from their asylums and placing them alongside ourselves before the eyes of the struggling masses. With a correct tactic we stand only to gain from this. A Communist who doubts or fears this resembles a swimmer who has approved the theses on the best method of swimming but dares not plunge into the water.

6. Unity of front consequently presupposes our readiness, within certain limits and on specific issues, to correlate in practice our actions with those of reformist organisations, to the extent to which the latter still express today the will of important sections of the embattled proletariat.

But after all didn't we split with them? Yes, because we disagree with them on fundamental questions of the working-class movement.

And yet we seek agreement with them? Yes, in all those cases where the masses that follow them are ready to engage in joint struggle together with the masses that follow us and when they, the reformists, are to a lesser or greater degree compelled to become an instrument of this struggle.

But won't they say that after splitting with them we still need them? Yes, their blabbermouths may say this. Here and there somebody in our own ranks may take fright at it. But as regards the broad working masses—even those who do not follow us and who do not as yet understand our goals but who do see two or three labour organisations leading a parallel existence—these masses will draw from our conduct this conclusion, that despite the split we are doing everything in our power to facilitate unity in action for the masses.

7. A policy aimed to secure the united front does not of course contain automatic guarantees that unity in action will actually be attained in all instances. On the contrary, in many cases and perhaps even the

majority of cases, organisational agreements will be only half-attained or perhaps not at all. **But it is necessary that the struggling masses should always be given the opportunity of convincing themselves that the non-achievement of unity in action was not due to our formalistic irreconcilability but to the lack of real will to struggle on the part of the reformists.**

In entering into agreements with other organisations, we naturally obligate ourselves to a certain discipline in action. But this discipline cannot be absolute in character. **In the event that the reformists begin putting brakes on the struggle to the obvious detriment of the movement and act counter to the situation and the moods of the masses, we as an independent organisation always reserve the right to lead the struggle to the end, and this without our temporary semi-allies.**

This may give rise to a new sharpening of the struggle between us and the reformists. But it will no longer involve a simple repetition of one and the same set of ideas within a shut-in circle but will signify—provided our tactic is correct—the extension of our influence over new, fresh groups of the proletariat.

8. It is possible to see in this policy a rapprochement with the reformists only from the standpoint of a journalist who believes that he rids himself of reformism

by ritualistically criticizing it without ever leaving his editorial office but who is fearful of **clashing with the reformists before the eyes of the working masses and giving the latter an opportunity to appraise the Communist and the reformist on the equal plane of the mass struggle.** Behind this seeming revolutionary fear of “rapprochement” there really lurks a political passivity which seeks to perpetuate an order of things wherein the Communists and the reformists each retain their own rigidly demarcated spheres of influence, their audiences at meetings, their own press, and all this together creates an illusion of serious political struggle.

9. We broke with the reformists and centrists in order to obtain complete freedom in criticizing perfidy, betrayal, indecision and the half-way spirit in the labour movement. For this reason **any sort of organisational agreement which restricts our freedom of criticism and agitation is unacceptable to us. We participate in a united front but do not for a single moment become dissolved in it. We function in the United front as an independent detachment. It is precisely in the course of the struggle that broad masses must learn from experience that we fight better than the others, that we see more clearly than the others, that we are more audacious and resolute. In this way, we shall bring closer the hour of the united revolutionary front under the undisputed Communist leadership.**

Book Review

The Other American by Michel Harrington
(Penguin Special—Rs. 2-35.)

This book is an up-to-date survey of poverty in the United States. The Author, who is a social worker and not a Marxist, looks unflinchingly behind the facade of the Affluent Society and exposes its hollow pretensions. The price of America's great wealth is the poverty of almost one third of its population, some 40 to 50 million people who live below the level of human dignity and decency. This "Other America" which never finds its voice in the Time Magazine consists of the coloured poor—Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans and the poor White—immigrant Italians, Poles, Irish and the poor farmers either displaced or struggling for a meagre existence in the depressed agricultural areas. Although the poverty of each of these racial groups is not quite the same there is one thing in common—their "culture" is the culture of poverty.

The author rightly deals with the poverty of the Negro as something quite distinctive in the life of America. The Negro is poor because he is black. It is also true that he is black because he is poor, says Mr. Harrington. A century of vicious racial discrimination has created conditions from which the individual Negro cannot lift himself. It is the white society which keeps the Negro in poverty and degradation and it is this very degradation which is used as proof that the Negro is naturally degraded and cannot be assisted to improve himself.

Mr. Harrington is a liberal White American who believes that a Roosevelt type of New Deal is the practical way of helping the Negro as well as the other poor. We know that this is wishful thinking. Poverty is a product of American Capitalism and this poverty as well as racial discrimination can be removed only by a decision of the American Working class and farmers to take power and establish a Socialist Society. This is the only road to a common sharing of the wealth of America for the benefit of mankind. But Harrington's book is, nevertheless, a terrific exposure of "the American way of Life" and the hypocrisy in which the apologists are steeped.

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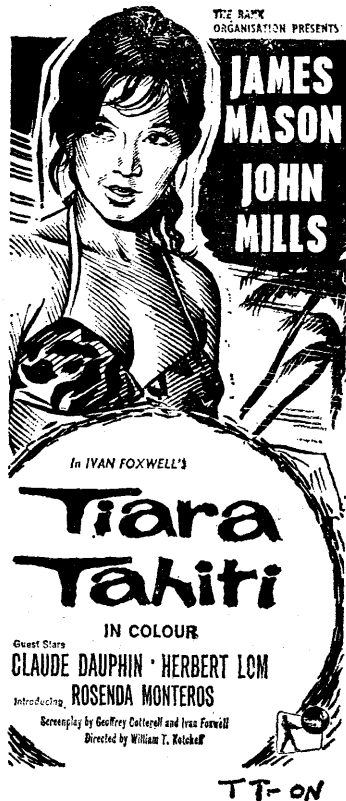
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Films



TIARA TAHITI

Tiara Tahiti features the sensual, fiery tempestuous and beautiful Rosenda Monteros as the promiscuous Chinese Tahitian in this new Rank production co-starring James Mason and John Mills. Claude Dauphin and Herbert Long are also guest stars. As the title suggests the action takes place in Tahiti, and the part Spanish part Mexican Miss Monteros plays Belle Annie the Tahitian girl with whom James Mason

gets entangled. The film is in colour and will no doubt be another addition to the ever popular South Sea Island Film lore. **Tiara Tahiti** is being screened at the *Regal Theatre*.

SUMMER HOLIDAY

Summer Holiday now being screened at the *Liberty Theatre* is a delightful British film of an experiment, involving London Transport, to organise mobile homes for travelling across Europe. The journey involves a passage through Paris and the length of France, through Eastern Europe to Athens. The audience is therefore treated to a cross section of Europe's varied and beautiful scenery. The characters are mostly young people and their carefree adventures and romance provide the kind of entertainment that is sure to be popular.

The story in short is about four young mechanics who persuade London Transport to lend them an old bus for their experiment. As a result of an accident in Paris they are joined by three attractive female singers who have a singing engagement in Athens. They are also joined by an internationally famous singing star who is running away from her mother and her too strenuous career. The young mechanics realise that the singing star's disappearance can be put to immense publicity advantage. Accordingly they plan to hamper the journey of the bus while at the same time extracting maximum coverage for the story. They have several brushes with the police of different countries, and eventually have to deal with the singing star's irate mother. All these adventures are hilariously told and needless to say the adventure ends happily for everyone. The film is in cinema-scope and technicolour.

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