

# Protesting the Revisionist Leadership of The Ceylon Communist Party

WITH 14 of its 35 members not present, the Central Committee of the Ceylon Communist Party on October 27 passed a resolution to expel Sanmugathasan, Member of its Political Bureau; two full and two Alternate Members voted against the resolution. Two days earlier, the Party's Central Committee suspended another Member of the Political Bureau, Kumarasiri, from Party membership. This unwarranted action followed in the wake of the return of the Party's Chairman S.A. Wickremasinghe from his Moscow visit in mid-August.

Manipulated by some leaders of the Ceylon Communist Party, its Central Committee on September 26 issued a statement entitled "On Questions of the International Communist Movement." Parroting the tone of the C.P.S.U. leaders, the statement attacked the correct stand of the Communist Party of China and also libelled the Albanian Party of Labour.

The leaders of the Party then levelled charges against Sanmugathasan and prohibited him from publishing pamphlets and distributing "Chinese propaganda material." In early October, they dismissed Kumarasiri from his post as editor-in-chief of the weekly *Mawbima*, a Sinhalese organ of the Party, as well as H.M.P. Mohiden, editor-in-chief of the weekly *Deshabimani*, a Tamil organ of the Party.

## Sanmugathasan's Protest

Sanmugathasan issued a statement on October 28 protesting against the Party leaders' action to expel him. "This is unfortunate," he said, "in the sense that it is going to affect the unity of the communist and working-class movement and give encouragement to the reactionaries at a time when the maximum unity of the movement is demanded, both in the political and trade union fields. But, in another sense, this break was inevitable. We could not have gone on for long carrying the dead weight of revisionism inside our Party."

Sanmugathasan pointed out that the majority of the Party's Central Committee were not interested in winning power for the working class except keeping the parliamentary seats of a few of its leaders safe and warm. "The communist movement in this country," he declared, "needs a new and more dynamic and genuinely working-class leadership which can recapture the old revolutionary spirit and take the entire Left movement forward."

In the statement he listed the immediate tasks for his comrades and himself as follows:

"First, translate and publish immediately as many Marxist classics as possible into Sinhalese;

"Second, bring out *Kamkaruwa* and *Tholilali* as good working-class weeklies, with the perspective of turning

them into the first working-class dailies within a year;

"Third, start a Marxist theoretical journal in Sinhalese and Tamil;

"Fourth, build the unity of the trade union movement and achieve a united trade union centre as soon as possible;

"Fifth, organize the peasantry and build up a worker-peasant alliance."

## Kumarasiri's Reply

Kumarasiri published a letter in the *Daily News* of Ceylon on October 26 in reply to the Party's Central Committee's decision to suspend his Party membership. He pointed out that the Party leaders have grossly violated the Party Constitution, democratic centralism and the long-cherished traditions of the Party, and have flagrantly departed from and opposed the agreed conclusions of the international communist movement and dragged the Party into the mire of revisionism.

In his letter Kumarasiri pointed out that the charges the Party's Central Committee levelled against him "are absolutely false." He was even denied the right to put his case before the Central Committee when he was dismissed from the post of editor-in-chief of the weekly *Mawbima* and suspended "forthwith" from his Party membership.

## Widespread Opposition

The anti-China statement of the leaders of the Ceylon Communist Party and the punitive actions against Sanmugathasan and Kumarasiri met with widespread opposition from many Party organizations, rank-and-file membership and popular organizations.

Ten members of the Party's Central Committee issued a statement on October 27 (for full text, see p.9) refuting the Party leaders' anti-China statement.

More than half the number of the Party's district committees protested against the high-handed action of the Party leaders. Cadres of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation and many trade unions affiliated with the C.T.U.F. passed resolutions against the expulsion from the Party of Sanmugathasan, who is General Secretary of the C.T.U.F.

On November 6, the Central Committee of the Federation of the Communist and Progressive Youth League of Ceylon passed resolutions condemning the Party's Central Committee's decision to expel Sanmugathasan and suspended Kumarasiri's membership, and called on members of the youth federation to fight the revisionists resolutely.