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THE STRUGGLE
FOR TROTSKYISM
IN CEYLON

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The cover photograph shows Madame Bandaranaike's coalition government including members of the Pabloite L.S.S.P.

Introduction

THE RECENT BLOODBATH against rural and unemployed youth in Ceylon, backed up by all the major imperialist and Stalinist powers, requires that once again we turn to the question of Ceylon and its significance in the development of the Fourth International. This bloodbath was directed by a government not only including the Stalinists but a party which for years was a part of the Fourth International, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP-Ceylon Equality Party).

What this means is that revisionism can and must lead now to direct material actions in the interests of imperialism and against the working class. It is not a matter of wrong theory, but that the turn against Marxist theory leads to direct treachery, to the actual murder of the working class.

It is also true that through the struggle against revisionism, if this struggle is seen as part of the actual penetration of the class, a revolutionary movement can be built today on a mass scale capable of coming to power. What appeared to many in an earlier period as a struggle over ideas among a handful of people today takes on the greatest historic importance.

The Marxist movement is the memory of the class. It is the repository of all its history. Only through a conscious turn to this history can a new revolutionary generation be educated today to meet these new tasks. Understanding this, the Third Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International, held in April, 1966, proposed that a history of the Fourth International be written.

We see this series of articles as a contribution to this history. It only scratches the surface of a history of the LSSP itself, not to mention that of the Fourth International as a whole. However, the importance of the material involved requires that we proceed to publish what we do know of the history of the LSSP. This way its essential lessons can be brought into the movement now and at the same time we can hope to encourage further work on this question.

It is our position that the LSSP's betrayal of the Ceylonese working class is rooted in its narrow national and anti-theoretical outlook and in the failure

of Pabloism to struggle against this outlook. In fact revisionism within the Fourth International was in the forefront of encouraging the opportunism of the LSSP. Pablo and Ernest Mandel in particular, were personally and deeply involved in each opportunist step of the LSSP. The Socialist Workers Party, by failing to take up the struggle against Pabloism after 1954 and actually reunifying with it in 1963, is as deeply implicated.

The bitter lesson of Ceylon is that a mass revolutionary party can only be built on the basis of internationalism and the struggle for the Marxist method against revisionism. Those who turn away from this struggle, who seek to go around revisionism through work within their own working class rather than confronting it directly and internationally, must in the end stand with their own bourgeoisie against the working class.

1 Origins of Trotskyism

CEYLON HAD LONG been dominated by imperialist interests in Europe prior to the creation of that island's labor movement. A brief span of Portugese control at the turn of the seventeenth century was followed by Dutch domination for almost 200 years, with the British empire seizing the island in 1795.

These imperialist powers developed an economy based heavily on tea and rubber plantations, with large numbers of Tamil Indian immigrant workers being brought in to work these plantations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today, 75% of the population speaks Sinhalese, 20% Tamil, and the remainder are scatterings of Europeans, Burghers (Dutch), Malays and other minorities.

With the development of plantation labor, driving many Sinhalese peasants off their land and into the urban centers, came the creation of an urban working class, laboring in the warehouses, tea and rubber packing houses, transport services and the Colombo harbor.

Prior to the formation of the LSSP in 1935 the labor

movement in Ceylon had been dominated by reformist organizations, through the Ceylon Labour Union (formed in 1923) and the Ceylon Labour Party (formed in 1929). Both of these organizations were led by A.E. Goonesinghe, and degenerated in the early 1930s into a one-man show around him. These were social democratic organizations which never developed beyond trade union and reformist consciousness.

THE PRE-WAR PERIOD

In the 1931-35 period, a group of young intellectuals, with their roots in Ceylon's native plantation aristocracy, returned from Britain and America. They had been trained mainly at the London School of Economics, and were heavily influenced by the arch-reformist perspectives of the Fabian Society, whose leaders, such as Harold Laski, controlled and taught at that school.

One of this group, Philip Goonewardene, went to the United States, where he received his political training at the University of Wisconsin from such Stalinists as Scott Nearing.

And though they all returned home speaking of revolution against British imperialism, a reformist outlook had already been deeply imbedded within them.

But what made impossible the development of the LSSP into a Marxist party was not the particular weaknesses of its founders, but the lack of any sort of theoretical development—a development that would have enabled the party to root out these weaknesses.

This group of intellectuals, including Dr. N.M. Perera, Vernon Gunasekera, Philip and Robert Gunawardena, Leslie Goonewardene, Dr. S.A. Wickremasinghe and Colvin R. DeSilva began to influence the direction of the labor movement by organizing trade unions, youth leagues, and carrying out anti-imperialist propaganda under the cover of helping Ceylonese veterans of the British army.

Their outstanding success of this period was a victorious strike at the Wellawatte Mills in 1932.

From the forces gathered in these struggles, the LSSP was formed on December 18, 1935. Beginning with some 20 members, it expanded to 80 within a year, and to some 800 by 1939.

The opportunist actions of many of the LSSP leaders in the subsequent years by itself is not the reason for investigating the development of that party—but using the cover of being a Marxist party, a Trotskyist party, it was able to attract to its ranks hundreds and thousands of revolutionary workers. We study the development and degeneration of the LSSP because

of the role it played in leading, and then misleading, several generations of the Ceylonese working class.

The revisionists presently grouped around the United Secretariat played a crucial role in this degeneration. Despite Mandel's contention that the LSSP was "born Trotskyist," it never was and never became such. As these articles will later develop, it several times showed the promise of developing in this direction, especially in 1939-40, 1942 and 1953. But each time it was held back from such a development both by its leaders in Ceylon and their political godfathers in Europe, Michel Pablo, Pierre Frank and Ernest Mandel.

With all of its weaknesses, the LSSP was able to make some very important moves forward in the 1930s. Within two years of its founding conference, it had established a strong base among the island's motor transport workers, and had begun important work among the plantation workers, largely Tamil Indian immigrant workers, by 1939.

A mass rally in Colombo against imperialism on April 1, 1937 drew 35,000 workers to hear speakers from the LSSP and the Congress Socialist Party of India.

Within the next two months, the LSSP took on the entire colonial government's apparatus—and won, in the "Bracegirdle Affair."

Mark Bracegirdle was an English tea planter's apprentice, who was fired for supporting the efforts of Tamil Indian plantation workers to organize a union. He joined the LSSP in 1936 and went to work at setting up union organizations on the estates.

This was too much for the British planters, and they got the island's governor to issue a deportation order, under an obscure Order in Council of 1896. The order was timed so as to make impossible the testing of its legality in the courts.

Rather than accept this order, Bracegirdle was sent into hiding, while the LSSP mobilized mass support for him. This support forced most of the native capitalist members of the State Council into temporary opposition to the British authorities. This campaign reached its height with a mass rally on the Galle Face Green, Colombo, where 50,000 heard LSSP leaders and sympathetic State Council members attack the Governor and his Chief Secretary. They showed their contempt for the colonial administration by bringing Bracegirdle out of hiding to address the rally.

Arrested two days later at LSSP headquarters, Bracegirdle and the LSSP had built up the mass support necessary to force the courts to overrule

the Order in Council.

Despite these successes, there were a number of important weaknesses showing up in the LSSP's earliest days, weaknesses which were subsequently never rooted out by any sort of political and theoretical struggle against them.

The party's first program derived much more from Fabian Society influence than anything else. There was barely a word mentioned about the struggle for national independence:

"The first manifesto of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party declared that its aims were the achievement of complete national independence, the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the abolition of inequalities arising from differences of race, caste, creed or sex." (1)

How this was to be achieved, and the development of the working class consciousness and organization necessary to achieve this—all of this was left extremely vague, leaving room for all sorts of illusions in parliamentary and protest politics.

The first program of the LSSP was reformist, because it in no way was based on the perspective of the working class taking power to achieve these aims. Mandel's denial notwithstanding, the LSSP leadership never understood the theory of permanent revolution at any time in that party's history.

In 1936 the LSSP contested four seats in the elections of the State Council, successfully electing Dr. N.M. Perera and Philip Gunawardena.

But instead of using the council chamber to put forth a revolutionary program, the LSSP councilors spent four years promoting each and every reformist scheme in their program, as well as a few which were not.

Within a year of their election, Sinhalese chauvinist elements started a big racist agitation against the Tamil Indian and Ceylon Indian minorities.

And the representatives of the party that Mandel characterizes as "born Trotskyist?" They capitulated completely to the racist pressure. Writing the official LSSP history some 23 years later, Leslie Goonewardene unashamedly stated that "another Samasamajist motion (in the State Council-MR) 'not to grant any recruiting licenses under any circumstances whatsoever' aimed at a **ban on Indian immigration** was debated and defeated in September 1937 on the specious plea that there was a shortage of labour in the plantations." (2) (my emphasis - MR)

Arguing for this motion, Perera said:

"I would emphasize that it is our bounden duty

to find work for indigenous (meaning Sinhala-speaking Ceylonese - MR) labour whenever possible. We know very well that there is unemployment and underemployment in Ceylon. Our duty is to provide employment for those people before we agree to labour being brought into Ceylon from outside it." (3)

One major effect of this racist campaign, aided by A.E. Goonesinghe in a desperate attempt to rule or ruin in the labor movement was the collapse in many locations of all forms of trade union organization, not the least of these being the LSSP's Wellawatte Mill Workers Union.

In the light of its treatment of racism, the LSSP's leadership had a hardly surprising record on religion. Buddhism is the religion of the bulk of the Sinhalese masses, and the Buddhist priests in Ceylon are among the greatest promoters of Sinhalese chauvinism.

Far from leading any sort of fight against religious prejudices and the divisive effects these prejudices have on the struggles of the working class, Perera and many others in the LSSP were practicing Buddhists who worshipped regularly at the temples.

Mandel openly admits the main theoretical weaknesses of the LSSP:

"The party never had a theoretical organ in the Sinhalese or Tamil languages; it never translated the bulk of Trotsky's writings or even the bulk of the resolutions and decisions of the congresses and other leading bodies of the Fourth International into these languages. But most of the rank and file and virtually the entire proletariat understand no other languages..." (4)

These are the words of one of those most responsible for the political guidance of the LSSP from 1950 through 1964.

Mandel further reveals that the bulk of what pamphlets and books the LSSP leaders did write (and these were mostly for the English-speaking intellectuals) were paraphrases of the writings of Lenin and Trotsky, or replications, again in English, of their writings.

Mandel goes on to praise as "excellent" (5) such worthless books as K. Tilak's **Rise and Fall of the Comintern** (Spark Syndicate, Bombay, 1947). This book is nothing but a crude polemic against the Stalinists, consisting of large numbers of quotes from Lenin and Trotsky, with very little original analysis.

The author of that book is better known as Leslie Goonewardene, LSSP General Secretary.

If anywhere in its long and tortuous history the LSSP showed its lack of theoretical development, it was in

the 1938-41 period, during the struggle against the Stalinist elements in the party.

The leaders of the party that Mandel deems "born Trotskyists" never tried to consciously bring out the differences between the various elements within it, until these differences threatened to blow the organization into fragments.

It was only late in 1938, with the publication of Trotsky's **Revolution Betrayed** in English that the majority of the LSSP leaders began to be disturbed by the massacre of the Old Bolsheviks by Stalin, the Moscow Trials and all the distortions of the gains of the October Revolution.

But by this time, a Stalinist faction in the LSSP had crystallized around Wickremasinghe, Bracegirdle, M.G. Mendis and Pieter Keuneman. This group was rapidly moving to turn the LSSP into an instrument of Stalinist foreign policy, to make the LSSP like all the Communist Parties of the world.

This move was bitterly resisted by a majority of the leadership, who by now had been in collaboration with the American Socialist Workers Party, as well as with the English Trotskyist movement. Only new visa restrictions had prevented LSSP representative Selina Perera from entering Mexico to visit Trotsky in 1939.

But the entire fight against the Stalinist faction in the LSSP was never carried out in a theoretical or political manner. The political level of this fight on the part of the Trotskyist faction in the LSSP leadership never went beyond criticism of current Stalinist policy, as expressed by the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, and the opportunist actions of the European and Indian Stalinist parties in relation to this.

For instance, LSSP leader Leslie Goonewardene could write:

"Let us suppose for a moment that the present war was a war with France, England and the Soviet Union on one side and Germany on the other. What would be the duty of British workers, of colonial people like ourselves. To support the war because Russia is on the side of Britain, or to oppose the war and make our Revolution.

"It is true, opposing such a war and making a revolution would appear to be to the military disadvantage of the Soviet Union. But such disadvantage, if any, would be temporary. . .

"The best way that the British working class could contribute to the ultimate defence of the Soviet Union would be to make their own revolution and establish a Workers' Government.

“On the other hand the British imperialism would be in such a war not to help the Soviet Union, but for their own Imperialist purposes. To support the war therefore would be an act of treachery to the British working classes. But on the instructions of the 3rd International, it was precisely this act of treachery that the Communist Parties of England and France were preparing for. Expecting to be on the same side as England and France in the coming war, the Soviet Government, through the 3rd International instructed the Communist Parties of England and France to support the war.

“That there was such preparation for betrayal is proved by the French Communist Party voting for conscription and supporting the war for several weeks and by the British Communist Party supporting the war for over a month.” (6)

While such criticisms of present Soviet foreign policy could correctly be made, the LSSP leadership never saw it as their responsibility to take this fight against Stalinism into the ranks of the party, to translate and distribute the relevant documents and pamphlets in Tamil and Sinhalese.

The struggle instead remained confined in large part to the English speaking leadership. Goonewardene and DeSilva never saw it as being important to insist that every member of the party be brought into this struggle, a struggle to probe Stalinism to its theoretical roots, going back to the 1924 struggle around Stalin's "Socialism in One Country" theory, and its consequences for the working class and the colonial peoples.

Such a struggle would have enabled the LSSP to reduce the Stalinists in Ceylon to an insignificant minority and hinder their growth for a long time to come. But this is precisely what was not done.

The majority of the LSSP leadership now moved quickly to deal with these most important political questions through organizational maneuvers.

In December, 1939, the Party's executive passed a resolution of no confidence in the Third International. It was the Stalinist minority on the executive which demanded, and never got, a party conference to discuss the issue.

Had the LSSP leadership been a Marxist leadership, they would have called such a conference to further isolate the Stalinists. This they were not prepared to do. The LSSP executive expelled its Stalinist members early in 1940 and removed their sympathizers from all posts.

By such maneuvers, the Stalinists in the LSSP had

gotten off rather lightly as no fight had been taken up to expose the meaning of Stalinism to the working class. Within several months, the Stalinists had formed a front group, the United Socialist Party (reconstituted as the Communist Party of Ceylon in 1943) and the Ceylon Trade Union Federation.

THE WAR PERIOD

As a result of their stand on the war and their organizing of the plantation workers, the British moved against the LSSP, and by the middle of June, 1940, the main leaders of the LSSP, including Perera, Goonwardena and DeSilva, were detained, their press sealed, and regulations put into effect making legal political work nearly impossible.

Work continued illegally and semi-legally, with two papers published legally until banned in November, 1941. Goonewardene, then in hiding, supervised this work and convened a party conference in April, 1941.

At this conference, paper members were dropped and a program and rules based on those of the Fourth International adopted.

It was in this program for the first time that the understanding was reached that revolution in Ceylon was an integral part of the Indian revolution. They began to give the struggle for national independence serious consideration.

The LSSP leaders now merged with several groups of Indian Trotskyists to form the Bolshevick Leninist Party of India (BLPI), affiliated with the Fourth International.

It was over this subordination of the movement in Ceylon and India to international discipline that a whole group of the BLPI, including a majority of the organization in Ceylon, split away and reconstituted the LSSP. This was led by N.M. Perera and Philip Goonawardene, who had escaped from jail in April of 1942. After this escape the LSSP and BLPI were both outlawed.

With the outbreak of war between Germany and the Soviet Union in June of 1941, the fortunes of the Stalinists in Ceylon turned completely. With full British protection, they were able to establish the Ceylon Trade Union Federation as the dominant labor organization in the tea and rubber packing houses. With the illegalization of LSSP-dominated plantation workers unions, the bourgeois nationalists of the Ceylon Indian Congress were able to set up reformist unions on the plantations.

During the war, the BLPI leaders spent most of their time in India, although a number of their leaders were

arrested and deported to Ceylon in 1943.

The leadership of the BLPI was maintained by Colvin R. DeSilva, and Vivienne Goonewardene and Selina Perera who evaded arrest all the way through the war.

In India the BLPI leaders were active in the mass movement against the war and for national independence, beginning with the "Quit India" movement in 1942, treacherously sabotaged by the Indian Stalinists, and culminating in the Indian Navy Mutiny of 1946.

In Ceylon, the remaining BLPI leaders and the LSSP were active in organizing illegal struggles in the factories and shops, with the LSSP leading an island-wide general strike of hospital workers in 1944.

The LSSP had also won control of the Government Workers Trade Union Federation.

As contrasted with the BLPI, the LSSP during the war maintained a limitation of the struggle against British imperialism to the island of Ceylon. The BLPI however, was working to base itself on a perspective for revolution throughout the Indian subcontinent. It was only after the end of the war that it began a head-long retreat from this perspective.

During the First World War, Lenin had returned to a study of Hegel's *Science of Logic* and other of his works, and in the course of this study, had made a development of Marxist theory and philosophy, a development which proved crucial to the taking of power in Russia in 1917.

During the Second World War, however, the LSSP and BLPI leaders in the main ignored the philosophical questions. Those who did not took up the study of the works of—Buddha!

S.N.B. Wijeyekoon, who if not an LSSP member, was an extremely close sympathizer, wrote a book in 1943 which tried to blur the contradictions between Buddhism and Marxism.

Writing under the pen-name of "Leuke", he informed his readers, among other things that:

"Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism are two of the very few systems of philosophy which do not assume the existence of God. . ."

And that:

"Both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism consider man to be the sole architect of His Own Destiny...independent of divine assistance." (7)

One will search in vain for any attempt by the LSSP and BLPI leaders to take up this challenge to Marxism, a challenge which turned Marxism into a dogma, a religion, and not the living, developing body of theory based on the historical experiences of the working class that it is.

And how could it have been otherwise, with many of these "Marxist" leaders worshipping regularly at the temples.

This was the first of many attempts to accommodate themselves to the reactionary Buddhist priests on the island, the same priests, who, from the 1950s onward, were the greatest promoters of Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism and racism.

In light of this being the internal situation in the LSSP and BLPI, the most amazing thing is that they made what forward developments that they did in the next ten years.

POSTWAR PERIOD

The end of the war brought the legalization of the LSSP and BLPI, and, as part of the developments on the Indian subcontinent, brought out the question of national independence. The newly elected Labour government in Britain quickly showed that it had not the least intention of granting independence to a single acre of the British empire without a most bitter struggle on the part of the colonial peoples.

What was the role of the BLPI and LSSP in this struggle? We get very contradictory accounts from the revisionists.

First Ernest Mandel:

"The small group of Trotskyist intellectuals suddenly found themselves at the head of the largest working class organization in the country. They correctly applied the theory of permanent revolution under the conditions prevailing in Ceylon and audaciously took the lead in struggling for national independence against British imperialism. They rapidly acquired great influence among the masses, becoming leaders of the popular opposition, first against the imperialist regime and then the regime of the 'national' bourgeoisie, a position they held for twenty-five years." (8)

Then Leslie Goonwardene:

"No mass struggle for independence had taken place." (9)

What had actually happened is that the movement for national independence took place in the framework of a wage offensive of the Ceylonese working class in the 1946-47 period, culminating in a general strike in October, 1946.

The results of this strike compelled the employers and the colonial government to make wage concessions and promise more.

Their refusal to go through with these promises triggered a second general strike in May-June 1947. Police repression broke this strike, and the result-

ing ebb in the working class movement allowed the British to turn direct control over to its clients, the much compromised Ceylonese capitalists, organized in the United National Party under the leadership of D.S. Senanayake.

Four years after the defeat of the 1947 general strike, Colvin R. DeSilva would write that: "The trade union movement, in Colombo especially, which was then shattered to pieces, awaits revival and reorganization." (10)

The 1947 elections for the first Ceylonese Parliament were easily won by the UNP, with the BLPI getting 7 seats, the LSSP 10 and the Communist and Labour Parties one each.

Goonasinghe's Labour Party promptly joined the government, with its leader becoming Chief Government Whip and later Minister of State for Ceylonization, the racist program to drive all Tamils out of government employment.

And during the so-called "independence" celebrations in 1948, the CP and BLPI held a united front meeting of over 50,000 to demand real independence, while Perera's LSSP held that—there really was something to celebrate. (11)

Mandel, however, attributes this to Perera's "systematic opportunist inclinations." (12) But even in 1948, it was clear that Perera and Philip Gunawardena were opportunists of the first order, and did not just "incline" that way occasionally.

SPLIT AND FUSION

Left to their own devices, the LSSP and BLPI might have remained for some time what they were in 1948: left-centrist parties.

But at that point the then-leadership of the Fourth International, dominated by a developing revisionist trend including Michel Pablo, Pierre Frank and Ernest Mandel, took steps that began the destruction of the BLPI and LSSP as organizations capable of developing into revolutionary parties.

The first step in this process occurred in 1948 when Pablo and Mandel intervened to split the BLPI into separate Indian and Ceylonese organizations. The new group on the island was renamed the Bolshevik Samasamaja Party. Underlying this was the acceptance by Pablo and Co., of the imperialist partition of India in 1947. Today this is underscored when leading British Pabloite Tariq Ali devotes a whole book to the need for a "socialist Pakistan."

Yet Mandel today accuses the then-leaders of the BLPI in Ceylon of "abandoning" the Indian section of the

movement. (13)

This split fits in rather well with the theoretical level of the Goonewardene-DeSilva leadership of the BSP, whose lack of perspectives for the Indian sub-continent had been growing more pronounced. Their own ideas of revolution began more and more to resemble a theory of "socialism on one island."

A much more serious departure from Marxism occurred in 1950, when Pablo and Mandel sanctioned an unprincipled merger between the BSP and the LSSP.

If anything was shown from this merger, it was that neither DeSilva, Goonewardene, Mandel nor Pablo had any understanding whatsoever of the 1942 split.

The last clash in public of the LSSP and BSP was in a by-election in 1949. DeSilva later wrote that there was no need for this conflict, because it "was between two Trotskyist parties which had no fundamental reason for separate existence at all." (14) (emphasis in original)

Since Perera's and Gunawardena's hostility to the discipline and program of the international movement was not "fundamental," the merger was the first order of business.

This merger was preceded in May, 1950 by another by-election contested by a joint BSP-LSSP candidate, W.A. DeSilva, in which they defeated the UNP with all of its resources.

But this candidate with whom they defeated the UNP was no socialist at all, but until right before the election had been Director of Education in the UNP government. His sole qualification was to have been Colvin R. DeSilva's brother.

The 1950 merger was carried off in a spirit of mutual backscratching with no criticisms or discussion of the previous eight years. And the real purpose of the new LSSP was to make major gains, if not win the upcoming 1952 general elections. DeSilva stated that the purpose was to ensure "not just one more seat in Parliament immediately, but the ultimate triumph of the Left as a whole over the Right as a whole. (Or, as you put it, to ensure not merely 20 but 50 seats in the next Parliament.)" (15)

And to resist the growing attacks on the labor movement by the capitalist class, the LSSP leadership had adopted an essentially Popular Front approach. Speaking to Bengali students in India in 1948, DeSilva called for "a UNITED FRONT OF THE LEFT PARTIES as the first step towards the mobilization of the masses." (16) (emphasis in original)

This call for a united front of left-wing parties all classes, the United Left Front (DeSilva uses that

term later in the same speech) in 1948 was refurbished by Pablo and Mandel in 1963-64 with disastrous results.

RISE OF BANDARANAIKE

But the Ceylonese capitalists considered the 1950 merger, with all of its weaknesses, to be a serious threat to their continued rule. And therefore an alternative capitalist party was necessary, to divert the attention of the masses when the UNP had fully discredited and exposed itself.

Such a party was created in 1951, the Sri Lanka (Revered Ceylon) Freedom Party (SLFP) led by a former UNP minister, the racist demagogue S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The SLFP was a continuation of that man's original group, the Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinists of the Sinhala Maha Sabha. Bandaranaike was shortly to receive covert support from a group of ex-members and supporters of the LSSP, around Philip Gunawardena who had split away shortly before the 1950 merger.

Shortly after the election of the UNP government in 1947, the Senanayake cabinet rushed through Parliament several acts of a blatantly racist nature which banned further Indian immigration to Ceylon, provided for deportation of Indians, removed most Tamil Indian plantation workers from the election rolls and deprived them of citizenship, and provided for the purging of Indian workers from government service (so-called "Ceylonization" program).

These acts disfranchized virtually all supporters of the Ceylon Indian Congress. But these racist measures could have never been pushed through—had not the Tamil Congress, a communal party in the North and East provinces, based on the Ceylon Tamils, collaborated in this and held several ministries in the government. The official LSSP history barely touches on the crisis this touched off in the Tamil-speaking areas, for the LSSP made little effort to intervene in it, and correspondingly little gains. A split in the Tamil Congress ensued, with a new group, the Federal Party, rapidly becoming the main vehicle for Tamil-speaking voters.

Following the 1950 merger, the LSSP was defeated in a number of by-elections. These setbacks had their basis in a temporary economic boom created by the Korean War, and the resulting demand for Ceylonese tea and rubber. The temporary high prices for these commodities had allowed the UNP government to reduce the price of a measure of rice to 25 cents, and at the same time increase the price it paid the peasants for their rice harvest.

Following the death of the Prime Minister in 1952, he was succeeded in office by his son, Dudley Senanayake, who immediately set a general election for May of that year.

The existing weaknesses of the LSSP, which the 1950 merger had done nothing to overcome, now began to come out in the open.

The first question facing the party was the class nature of Bandaranaike's SLFP. Instead of characterizing this as a capitalist party using "socialist" phrases to drum up support, Goonawardene writes that: "As early as November 1951 the LSSP had written to the SLFP asking for a meeting to discuss the elimination of contests in the General Election which was even at that time considered a distinct possibility. No reply was at the time received to this letter. However, with the dissolution of Parliament, representatives of the two parties met for the above-mentioned purpose. It was not found possible to avoid a number of clashes, and the discussions were, generally speaking, unsuccessful. But it was decided to issue a statement pointing out the quite large number of seats in which clashes had been avoided." (17)

No election agreement was reached with the United Front, an unprincipled alliance between the Communist Party of Ceylon and Philip Gunawardena's group which had been demanding a Popular Front "democratic government."

But if the LSSP could reach no electoral agreement with the Stalinists and their allies due to programmatic differences, then why did Mandel and Pablo sanction the no-clash agreements with an openly capitalist party, the SLFP, by their silence?

With all of its unprincipled maneuvers, the LSSP did not enter the 1952 elections with any sort of perspective relating this work to the working class taking power: "The Party contested the elections with a 14-point anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist program under the slogan of a Samasamaja Government. This slogan, however, did not have anything but a propaganda value, since only 40 seats were contested out of a total of 95." (18)

Think about that. The leader of a supposedly revolutionary party in a predominantly peasant, semi-colonial country, announced that his party can contest 45% of the seats in a parliamentary election—but this only has a propaganda value!

Despite every maneuver, the LSSP gained only nine seats, and held approximately the same number of votes received by the BLPI and LSSP candidates together in 1947. The UNP was returned to power with a minority

of votes, but an absolute majority of parliamentary seats.

Besides the economic boom in its favor, the UNP had other ways of winning elections. One was the outright buying of votes. Its finance committee chairman, Sir John Kotelawala, blatantly admitted that "If we got money it was to win the elections"!

Within the UNP were some of the most corrupt politicians it was possible to find on the globe. UNP leaders and ministers went up and down the island threatening social service cuts in those districts where UNP candidates were not returned. They used the government machinery to keep known anti-UNP voters off the election rolls, and pressured village headmen to support government candidates. The UNP got full backing from the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, which threatened and intimidated its communicants into voting for UNP candidates and against those of the left.

On the surface it appeared that the UNP was riding high and would continue to do so. The LSSP based its analysis of the period on such surface impressions, which to Goonewardene meant a move to the right by the masses. What they failed completely to understand is that building up beneath this surface was a qualitatively new situation, which would virtually shatter the UNP in its development, and bring the LSSP into one of its greatest tests, as well as into its third major crisis.

2 The Great Hartal

THE TERMINATION OF the Korean War in the middle of 1953 and the resulting slackening demand for Ceylonese tea, rubber and other commodities brought an end to the relative prosperity the island had been enjoying, and compelled the United National Party government of Dudley Senanayake to make new attacks on the living standards of the masses.

To begin with, the price of sugar was raised and the rice ration was cut. This the Lanka Sama Samaja Party leaders answered with a protest campaign, gathering 50,000 signatures on petitions to the UNP government.

This sort of impotent protest only emboldened the

government, which in the middle of 1953 increased postal rates and rail fares, cut out free school lunches, and finally, increased at one stroke the price of a measure of rice from 25 to 70 cents. The UNP, having just won the 1952 elections with part of their program being the maintenance of rice at 25 cents a measure, had now aroused mass resentment to its rule.

THE GREAT HARTAL

Finally prodded into action, the LSSP organized mass meetings against the cutbacks up and down the island, and large numbers of union branches, as well as local government bodies, began passing resolutions demanding the restoration of the rice subsidy.

When these measures failed to evoke any response on the part of the UNP government, the LSSP leadership decided on a course of direct action. Stepping up its agitation against the cutbacks, the LSSP issued a call for a one day hartal, a general strike to force the government to repeal its anti-working class measures. The mass support for this call forced the Communist Party, as well as Philip Gunawardena's group of renegades from the LSSP and the Tamil nationalist Federal Party to support it. The leaders of the plantation workers unions, most of whose members had been deprived of citizenship and the vote by the UNP government treacherously refused to support this move.

August 12, 1953 was set as the date for the hartal.

Despite every attempt at intimidation of the workers by the government, the Roman Catholic church and the press, the hartal was a far greater success than its organizers had ever anticipated.

For one day, the mass hatred of the UNP came forward and the economic life of most of the island was paralyzed, with strikes in the workshops and factories, transport disorganized, and in the rural areas large numbers of poor peasants disrupted telegraphic communications and set up road blocks. In the Southern and Western provinces, under LSSP leadership, the authority of the government temporarily ceased to exist, with trains being stopped, railway tracks torn up, and huge boulders rolled on the roads.

Panicking, the UNP government called out the police with shoot to kill orders. Nine demonstrators were killed and hundreds more wounded and arrested. For several weeks, the CP and LSSP had their press sealed and many of their leaders detained.

The great hartal had completely shattered the myth of UNP invincibility. As the LSSP annual conference report of 1954 stated:

"The clash further reached in whole regions the level of actual rebellion...the masses were able to

come out of this unprecedented direct action struggle with a sense of victory won and of a government rendered temporarily impotent."

This was underscored when, within weeks of the hartal, Prime Minister Senanayake resigned, and was replaced by Sir John Kotelawala, the UNP financial officer who had just the year before openly admitted UNP use of large sums of money to bribe electors and buy votes in the 1952 elections.

The hartal revealed just how dangerous and desperate the situation in Ceylon was becoming to this island's native ruling class and British imperialism. So if imperialism could not continue to dominate the island through the UNP, Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party would have to do the job.

At the same time that the strengths of the LSSP were shown during the hartal, so were its weaknesses. The hartal was never conceived as going beyond the one day stoppage, as the beginning of a movement to topple capitalism and imperialism on the island and throughout the Indian subcontinent.

THE 1953 INTERNATIONAL SPLIT

At this point, just as the LSSP showed some promise of development, a major split occurred in the Fourth International, with major repercussions in Ceylon. By the end of 1953, the effects of this international split had deprived the Ceylonese party of a third of its membership.

The roots of the international split lay in the abandonment of the entire method of Marxism by the leadership of the Fourth International in the 1946-53 period, and its replacement by the most blatant impressionism and empiricism.

In going over to ruling-class methods of thought, Pablo "discovered," among other things that:

1. Stalinism and Social Democracy could no longer betray the working class, but under "mass pressure," they could be turned into instruments of revolutionary action.

2. A third world war was imminent, between the imperialist powers and the workers' states, which would result in "centuries of deformed workers states."

3. There was no longer any unified world struggle of the working class, for the globe had now been broken up into three "sectors," the industrially advanced countries, the workers' states, and the "Third World," the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The "epi-center" of world revolution would shift between these three sectors, and by 1951, it had moved to the colonial sector.

4. In this colonial sector, revolutionary parties were no longer necessary; middle-class nationalist formations, again under "mass pressure," could do the job of achieving socialism.

5. The task of the Trotskyist movement in these circumstances was for a policy of "unique entry" into the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties in the advanced countries, and into the middle-class nationalist formations in the colonial countries, thus helping to increase the pressure on the opportunist leaders of these organizations, which would somehow force them into a revolutionary direction.

Mandel objects:

"The theory of 'centuries of degenerated workers states' was never adopted by any official body of the Fourth International, nor written into any adopted resolution or document." (19)

But if the leading officer of the Fourth International publicly espouses such theories and the leading bodies and cadres of the International do not repudiate them? Not a word from Mandel and his followers.

Pablo's theories for the world Trotskyist movement meant the liquidation of the movement. Due to Pablo's wholesale disorientation of the movement, hundreds and thousands of cadres left the movement in the 1950s.

If liquidation was necessary, then Pablo took upon himself the role of chief liquidator.

In 1951, when his own national section, in France, decisively repudiated his theories, Pablo, aided by Mandel, Frank and Sal Santen, all members of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International, placed the French section under control of a parity commission, and then expelled the majority of the section.

If there was any mistake made by the British and American sections of the movement at that time, it was in not recognizing this expulsion for what it was and opposing it. But there were reasons why they at first did not oppose it.

The British section, organized in the Labour Party around the journal **Socialist Outlook**, had just gone through two bitter factional fights. The first, some six years in duration against the opportunist leadership of the movement, had ended when Jock Haston led the opportunist section right out of the movement and into the right wing of the Labour Party.

The second had occurred in 1950, when a middle class section, led by Tony Cliff, adopted a "state capitalist" position in relation to the workers' states and refused to defend Korea and China against the imperialist attacks of the Korean War. They too left the movement.

In the United States, the Socialist Workers Party had retreated from giving leadership to the international movement ever since the death of Trotsky. It was under their influence that Pablo and Mandel assumed the leadership of the International, and they were reluctant to break up the fragile alliance they had with them.

The SWP leadership moved into action very quickly in 1951 and 1952 when they saw Lablo crystallizing a liquidationist faction in their own organization, led by Bert Cochran and George Clarke. This faction centered around a section of conservative trade unionists who were looking for a way out of the movement under the pressure of the Cold War witchhunt.

The treachery of the Cochran-Clarke grouping was revealed in November, 1953, when they and their supporters boycotted the 25th anniversary celebrations of the SWP. For this they were first suspended and then expelled. The SWP lost 18% of its membership in the process.

Finally, after having many warnings of the nature of the Pablo tendency, the SWP leadership struck back, issuing the "Open Letter" to all Trotskyist organizations at the end of November, 1953, a declaration of war on Pablo and Pabloism. Pablo was exposed as representing an adaption to the pressures of Stalinism and the SWP called for a permanent break with his group.

Pablo responded by bureaucratically splitting the International, by suspending all sections who endorsed the open letter. The suspended sections, with SWP support, formed the International Committee of the Fourth International, and represented the continuity of the movement, while Pablo's International Secretariat moved further and further towards centrism and reformism.

But the SWP failed to go beyond the "Open Letter" and probe the origins of Pablo's revisionism in his abandonment of Marxist method and philosophy. Within ten years they were back in the same boat.

In Ceylon at this time, Pablo had organized a faction inside the LSSP led by William Silva, Henry Peiris and T.B. Subasinghe. They led a third of the membership out of the party in October, 1953, walking out of the annual party conference.

The SWP leadership at that time had a very good idea of what was behind this split:

"The group of Stalinist splitters in the LSSP were dragged along by the August movement (the hartal-MR). But they walked out of the national conference of the LSSP last month. They took with them a demoralized faction of disoriented pro-Stalinist elements. The splitters were given inspiration by the group of ex-

Trotskyists led by Pablo in Paris. They covered themselves with quotations from Pablo and Clarke (another former Trotskyist), and refused to vote for a conference motion criticizing the Kremlin from a revolutionary socialist standpoint.” (20)

Mandel is completely silent in his writings on Ceylon about this split, because he was lined up with Silva, Peiris and Subasinghe.

The deserters from the Ceylonese section moved fast and far, with some joining Philip Gunawardena's group, some joining Ceylonese Stalinism, and the bulk of them going over to Bandaranaike, with Subasinghe winding up as SLFP general secretary.

To carry through his split from the Fourth International, Pablo proceeded to use whatever provocations he found necessary. The SWP leaders in 1953 knew exactly what Pablo was doing:

“In England the agents of Pablo publicly attacked the Trotskyists in the mass movement and combine with Stalinist fellow travelers against them.”(21)

Now the crucial question became, where would the LSSP stand? With Pablo or the International Committee?

This was answered very quickly. Early in 1954, the LSSP Central Committee met in Colombo and unanimously rejected Pablo's "Rise and Decline of Stalinism" resolution.

The Party's delegation to Pablo's rump Fourth World Congress in June, 1954, was headed by Goonewardene and DeSilva. But instead of opposing the entire resolution, Mandel explains that:

“During the discussions of the theses on the 'Rise and Decline of Stalinism,' the LSSP delegation suddenly came up with an amendment to change the demand for freedom for all working class parties, under the proletarian dictatorship after the conquest of power, to freedom for all parties. In arguing for this astonishing amendment, they contended that due to the exceptional conditions in Ceylon, the masses there would not understand any other position. They added that in their opinion 'the masses cannot be wrong.'” (22)

Mandel and Pablo at this congress then worked out a compromise. The LSSP delegates, contrary to the mandate of their central committee, would vote for Pablo's resolution, covering up for his actions in Europe, while the International Secretariat would remain blind to the LSSP's growing opportunism in Ceylon.

So the LSSP would support Pablo against all demands for discussion of the outstanding issues of the 1953 split demanded by the International Committee, while Pablo would cover up for the LSSP by praising them to the skies as the "only mass Trotskyist organization in

the world.”

THE PERIOD OF RESPONSIVE COOPERATION

In the 1954 local elections, the LSSP, based on the strength of the hartal movement, elected a large number of municipal councillors, taking control of seven villages, three urban districts and the city of Colombo, with N.M. Perera becoming mayor. But as in the 1930s these positions were never used except to implement more Fabian reform schemes.

Yet there was still a chance of revolutionary development. New sections of the workers looked on the LSSP as a revolutionary movement, as was indicated by the revival of the party's All-Ceylon Estate Workers Union, and by the big victory won by the party's Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) in the mercantile workers general strike of March, 1956. There was a big growth of the LSSP's youth leagues, penetrating many rural areas never before reached by the Trotskyist movement.

Time was definitely running out for the United National Party government.

With new general elections impending, the question of the class nature of Bandaranaike's SLFP became critical. This is where the revisionism of Pablo and Mandel began to play an extremely despicable role.

If, as they had previously indicated, middle class nationalist formations could, under mass pressure, carry out certain revolutionary changes, then what need was there for a revolutionary workers party in any of the colonial and semi-colonial countries?

From such a revision of Marxism, it became impossible for the LSSP leaders to build a revolutionary party in Ceylon. Instead, they built a large centrist party which has today turned into an openly reformist and counterrevolutionary party.

Throughout the 1950s, the LSSP leaders vacillated in their evaluation of the SLFP, at times designating it as "centrist," at other times as "capitalist." Such vacillations had the effect of disorienting the party's ranks, and negating what little study of Marxism much of the members had made.

The political situation was being prepared for sharp changes in 1955-56. This was first indicated in January, 1955, when Philip Gunawardena's group took a major step towards leaving the labor movement entirely by adopting the racist demand of "Sinhala Only" (a move to destroy the Tamil language on the island and replace it with Sinhalese). Very shortly the UNP and SLFP had adopted this demand.

Kotelawala decided to put the "Sinhala Only" demand to a quick test, and set new elections for April,

1956, with the UNP running solely on this demand.

Bandaranaike engineered an alliance between the SLFP, Philip Gunawardena's group and a number of Sinhalese communal organizations backed by the reactionary Buddhist priests. This alliance became the Mahamana Eksath Peramuna (MEP-Peoples United Front).

The LSSP's attitude showed how quickly, under Pablo's and Mandle's guidance, they had drifted towards Stalinist popular front perspectives. They said that the UNP government was moving towards fascism, and called for the return of an MEP government, formed with the assistance of the LSSP. (23)

The LSSP didn't even propose a workers and peasants government. Instead:

"Realizing that the principal task facing the country in the forthcoming elections was the defeat of the United National Party, the party quite early took the initiative in calling for talks with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and in September 1955 a No-Contest Pact was signed between the LSSP and SLFP. In accordance with the situation prevailing in the country a majority of seats was assigned to the SLFP. (24)

The pact was continued with the formation of the MEP. "After this, the No-Contest Pact with the LSSP was partially broken by MEP candidates not belonging to the SLFP contesting the LSSP in several seats assigned to the party. The party, however, conscious that the task was to defeat the UNP, did not aggravate the situation by any attempt at reprisals." (25)

After waging a racist campaign against the Tamil minority, the MEP became the government, and with a substantial majority, much to the surprise of the LSSP.

"The Opposition was numerically and operationally impotent. The size of its bloc of 38 seats was deceptive, as a large section of it had pledged itself to cooperation with the Government. Originally, both the CP and the LSSP had aspired to positions in the cabinet, as they had not expected the MEP to be returned with a majority. When this ambition was frustrated, they decided to support the Government. (26)

Only over questions of race and language did the LSSP initially oppose the MEP government. As the largest opposition party, with 14 seats, Perera became leader of the Opposition. The LSSP's attitude towards the government was now defined as one of "responsive cooperation."

This was brought out in a very revealing but little known speech in Ceylon's House of Representatives on July 15, 1964. The speaker was Edmund Samarakody, a leader of the LSSP's left wing, and until very

recently one of Mandel's closest collaborators. After the first coalition between the LSSP and SLFP was achieved in 1964, he went into its origins, starting in 1956:

"In 1956 when Mr. Bandaranaike formed a government with the MEP, the LSSP was in the Opposition. But the confusion within the party came out very sharply because the party attitude to the Government was defined as 'responsive co-operation.' The following year the Hon. Member for Kottawa and I wanted the party to accept the position that this attitude was wrong. I do not want to go into details, but that year—1957—was the crucial year." (27)

The 1956-57 period were indeed crucial years for the LSSP.

A few other instances of the capitulation of the LSSP leaders to ruling class pressures in the 1956 elections should be remembered.

Sinhalese (but not Tamil) journals of the party gave prominence to speeches of Sinhala Only racists that appeared favorable to the LSSP. A Buddhist priest supporting the MEP was an honored guest at an LSSP election rally in which he called for support to the LSSP candidate at Kotte as part of the perspective of defeating the UNP. His statement was front-page news in the party's Sinhalese weekly. (28)

Not only was the LSSP in a no-contest pact with the MEP, but its youth leagues in several districts distributed pro-MEP pamphlets where there was no clash. In several districts where the MEP was contesting the UNP, Perera made speeches favoring the former.

It was further declared that:

"Even if the UNP were defeated by some means or other in this election, it will not be possible to form a Sama Samaja Government. The MEP will however form a government which will be beneficial to the common man. Since the LSSP does not completely agree with all the policies of the SLFP which is the chief element in the MEP, it is necessary to return at least 19-12 LSSP members to Parliament." (29) (my emphasis—MR)

Illusions as to the LSSP's role in relationship to an MEP government were consciously spread by the leadership, Perera stated that:

"The one man who will benefit from this election is Mr. Bandaranaike, but he will not be able to form a Government and maintain it unless we help him. With the SLFP, the LSSP will form a real democratic government. It is only the LSSP that can control Mr. Bandaranaike." (30)

By 1956, under the leadership of Pablo, Frank, Mandel, and Santen, the LSSP had come to adopt the perspectives of a "democratic government" espoused by Peiris, Silva, and Subasinghe as the basis for their 1953 split.

With this sort of perspective, one of Mandel's "genuine Trotskyists" could contest the Pandura seat with the slogan:

"Vote for Mr. Leslie Goonewardene (LSSP) to enable Mr. Bandaranaike to form a Government." (31)

Under these very shabby circumstances, it is not at all surprising that Mandel and the other United Secretariat leaders, in their various outpourings on the later betrayals of the LSSP, have little to say about the 1956 elections, and absolutely nothing on the meanings of the 1950 merger or the 1952 elections.

At this time, the American Socialist Workers Party was undergoing a very pronounced move towards blurring the issues in the 1953 split, a move towards an unprincipled unification with Pablo's group. This was evidenced in the 1956-58 period when they took upon themselves to become exclusive U.S. distributors for LSSP pamphlets and books.

The policy of responsive cooperation had another effect—on the working class. Sections of them reasoned that if the MEP government deserved the support of the LSSP on many issues, then why even vote for the LSSP. The local government elections of 1956 showed this clearly, with the party losing most of its 1954 gains.

Despite the "progressive" color the LSSP leaders painted the Bandaranaike government, it was a capitalist government that could solve none of the real problems facing the working class and the rural poor. Widespread strikes resulted, ebbing only during the 1956 language riots and the 1958 emergency, in which the atmosphere of a pogrom was whipped up against the Tamil-speaking minorities.

Finally, in May of 1957, the LSSP was forced to terminate its collaboration with the government. (32)

THE ELECTIONS OF 1960

A big crisis now shook the government, especially after a one-day general strike led by the LSSP and the plantation workers' unions on March 3, 1959 against the new and sweeping Public Security Act.

During this crisis, Bandaranaike moved quickly to the right and Philip Gunawardena and his supporters were summarily booted out of the cabinet and the government.

Sections of the capitalist class became increasingly dissatisfied with Bandaranaike, and on September 25,

1959 he was assassinated. A caretaker government headed by former LSSP leader W. Dahanayake, now a Sinhalese racist prepared elections for March, 1960.

Contesting 100 seats out of 151, a no-clash agreement with the SLFP and CP was reached in a number of important constituencies.

The CP started on the road pioneered by Philip Gunawardena—they now espoused "Sinhala Only." But the LSSP made not one dent into the CP's Tamil supporters, many of whom went over to communal politics.

The LSSP made "defeat the UNP" again its main campaign item.

To their surprise, the UNP wound up with 50 seats, the SLFP with 46, and the LSSP with—ten. This is where the mass disillusionment with "responsive cooperation" had led.

Unable to control a majority of the seats, the new Senanayake government was promptly defeated and forced to call new elections.

And once again:

"...The LSSP, realizing the needs of the situation, entered into a No-Contest and mutual support pact with the SLFP and the CP, and, as in 1956 laid the basis firmly and truly for the defeat of the UNP in the General Election of July 1960." (33)

It was one thing for the workers and peasants to have illusions in the role and class nature of the SLFP—but the LSSP, with its no-contest pact and its election literature, did what it could to promote those illusions:

"The results of the March election had shown that the masses by and large had chosen the SLFP as their main weapon to defeat the UNP. The results also demonstrated that very large sections of the masses, especially in rural areas, considered the SLFP too, to be a leftist party capable of radical anti-capitalist measures. For them this had to be tested out in experience. Accordingly, under the electoral agreement, while the SLFP contested 98 seats, the LSSP contested only 21, thus paving the way for the formation of the SLFP Government after the defeat of the UNP." (34)

The central leadership of the party was now caving in to Perera, who had announced prior to the no-contest pact that he expected the SLFP to form a government with LSSP backing. (35) After the pact was signed De Silva said that both the CP and LSSP would help the SLFP into office. (36)

The confusion fostered by De Silva and Goonewardene about the class nature of the SLFP was coming out. In the second 1960 elections only the UNP was designated a party of the capitalist class and of imperialism. (37)

Most surprised again about the election results were the leaders of the LSSP. They returned only 12 members, while their maneuvers with the liberals around Mrs. Bandaranaike had given the SLFP an absolute majority, 75 out of 145 elected seats, to be followed up by Mrs. Bandaranaike choosing the six appointed members.

Once their surprise had subsided, the LSSP leaders began a policy of so-called critical support to the government, voting for the speech from the throne and on the appropriations bill.

Was the Sri Lanka Freedom Party a working class or a capitalist party? By the end of 1960, Leslie Goonewardene still supported the former position. He said that the LSSP was neither government nor opposition, but instead:

“...Adopts a position of general support of the Government., holding itself free to criticize the Government as well as vote against it where it disagrees. This support it will continue to give so long as the Government in line with its socialist professions, sub-serves the needs of the mass movement for socialism.” (38)

The left wing of the party, led by Samarakkody and Bala Tampoe, opposed the direction it was heading into. At the party conference in May, 1960 a resolution of Perera's was pushed through favoring a coalition government. Despite this, the right wing around Perera retained only a minority on the Central Committee.

Four years later, Samarakkody elaborated on Perera's perspectives:

“Then came 1960. After the March elections in that year the disease that had grown over the years manifested itself in a big way. When you are weak in body the illness comes out. What happened then? The party leader—today the Minister of Finance—stated boldly and categorically what he has stated today. He wanted a Coalition government. I have got with me a document which he circulated in the party. It is a very important document. In this he outlines his case for a Coalition government quite frankly. He started by saying:

“‘Ceylon is unique in the history of the revolutionary movement...’

“He stated that there was no question of a revolution in this country. He said: ‘The Ceylonese workers, except for a small minority of militant and class conscious elements are overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois...’

“He states that an extra-Parliamentary struggle is ruled out and that the only alternative is to link up with the SFLP (sic). He says:

“Concretely the party will have to take the following steps. First of all enter into a no-contest pact to fight the forthcoming elections. In the campaign itself declare our readiness to support the formation of an SLFP Government. This must not be hedged about with the conditions otherwise we will weaken the forces ready to rally round an alternative government.

“Secondly, steps must be taken to bring about a programmatic agreement with the SLFP with a view to forming a joint government. The pre-election resistance through fear of the disadvantages of a Marxist-SLFP alliance will no longer obtain after the election. We will not get most of what we stand for, but a broad progressive program should be possible, e.g....”

“This is what he wanted; that is all he wanted.

“...(a) nationalization of life insurance, but not all, (b) control of banks, but not nationalization, (c) government import of all essential commodities, but not all imports and exports, (d) a ceiling on incomes, etc.”

“The hon. Members for Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia, Pandura and Second Colombo South (De Silva, Gooneratne and Bernard Soysa-MR) what did they do? They denounced this position as being all wrong. Yes, they said that, but their actions today are different.”(39)

But having helped the SLFP to attain an absolute majority in Parliament, that party, now headed by Bandaranaike's widow, had no use for the coalition proposed by Perera. But the groveling by the LSSP leadership before liberals like Bandaranaike was not yet finished:

“What did the LSSP do? We sent a letter asking for permission to attend meetings of the Government Parliamentary Group. There was a motion sponsored by the hon. Member for Gampaha, but the SLFP said: ‘No, we do not want you.’ Why? The need had not yet arisen. They are not fools, the SLFP are not fools.” (40)

But though rejected on this request, the party leaders voted for the speech from the Throne in 1960. Mandel now virulently objects to our charge that Pablo's International Secretariat endorsed this line with reservations. He goes on to quote extensively from a resolution adopted at Pablo's Sixth World Congress in December 1960 opposing this vote explicitly and appealing to the LSSP for a “radical change in its political course.” (41)

But the most this resolution did was to state Pablo's and Mandel's opposition to the vote on the Throne Speech and the July, 1960 No-Contest Pact. There was no opposition, however, to the LSSP conference proposal for a coalition government. Note is made of the

fact that this is just a slap on the wrist, with the International Secretariat having no power to discipline its largest affiliate.

What happened at Pablo's Sixth World Congress is significant. The published report of the Australian delegate sheds some light on it.

Continued was the division of the world into the advanced, colonial and workers states sectors. The perspective for the workers states was for continued mass pressure on the Stalinist bureaucracy. Commenting on the claimed superiority of the workers states' economies over those of the capitalist powers, the Australian delegate notes that the Economic Perspective document, presented by Mandel:

"Sees no real possibility of the superiority in the rate of growth being reversed; rather, because of the pressure of the masses on the bureaucracy for efficiency and greater equality, together with the crisis of capitalism, it will become even more superior than that of capitalism." (42)

But the major document discussed at that Congress was Livio Maitan's on "The Colonial Revolution." It should be stressed that the sole emphasis of both the document and the report was on the fact that the Colonial Revolution is the real center of the World Revolution, is providing the motive force for the whole development throughout the capitalist world and within the workers states." (43)

While Mandel and Maitan had conveniently moved the center of the world revolution to the colonial and semi-colonial countries, a general strike had broken out in Belgium!

Mandel gave some reporting to the Congress on the reasons for the strike in his home country. But his and other Congress documents were prepared oblivious to the situation developing in Belgium. These documents never got beyond the level of surface impressions.

Following the Congress, Mandel returned home to provide a "left" cover to Belgian syndicalist leader Andre Renard, who helped the union bureaucracy betray the strike movement in January, 1961.

This Congress laid the basis for an unprincipled reunification between the International Secretariat and those parties supporting the SWP in the International Committee of the Fourth International. The Congress congratulated the SWP for the way in which they had carried out their election campaign in 1960.

The SWP was quick to take the hint, with the publication of their international resolution, "The Struggle for World Socialism." (44) Basic agreement with Pablo's group was expressed on several major

points: that the balance of forces had changed in favor of socialism beginning with the victory of the Chinese Revolution, the validity of the three-sector theory, and agreement on Cuba under Castro being a workers state.

The SWP cannot claim that it did not know what was going on. At the time the LSSP MPs voted for the speech from the throne, they wrote in the *Militant* of October 3, 1960 the following:

"The support accorded the Bandaranaike party by the Ceylonese Trotskyists, and their entry into an electoral alliance with it, constituted a complete reversal of previous policy."

Spelling out that previous policy, and how the LSSP got 10% of the total vote in the March 1960 elections, the SWP went on to say:

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

The SWP leaders quoted a statement of Goonewardene on LSSP policy towards the new government, and condemned it as a continuation of earlier support given to the SLFP.

But what was significant here is that the LSSP is referred to as the "Ceylonese Trotskyists"—they are seen as revolutionaries who have made an error in judgement, and not as revisionists who are consistently carrying out the policies developed by Pablo and Mandel.

So instead of demanding that the International Secretariat take disciplinary action against the LSSP leaders for their actions, the SWP stepped up the moves to reunify with them.

One other action of the LSSP leadership in 1960 occurred which met with little disapproval from Mandel and Pablo. This was their retreat on the citizenship question affecting the Tamil Indian plantation workers. The LSSP amended its program stating that the issue was a matter for negotiation between the governments of India and Ceylon.

If there had been any positive features which showed the possibilities for the LSSP developing into a revolutionary party, it had been the party's growth on the plantations in the 1950s. Although the bulk of the plantation workers remained in the reformist organi-

zations led by Aziz and Thondaman, the young organizers of the party's Lanka Estate Workers Union had gained ground steadily, until their union enrolled 80,000 members in 1960.

The retreat of the party on the citizenship issue threw this union into a severe crisis, and it virtually collapsed, barring any further growth in the countryside.

Having not even made the least study of the agrarian question outside of the plantations, the party was in no position to make any inroads among the poor peasants, Sinhalese or Tamil.

What comes out from all this is that the only reason any criticisms of LSSP policy were made by the International Secretariat was because it was becoming a source of acute embarrassment to them.

The condemnation of their parliamentary policy did not seem to be embarrassing the LSSP leaders initially:

“What happened then? The LSSP started its critical support; the critical part of it became less and the support part became more and more. But that could not be done, because the mass situation changed. As a result of the rising prices, the first Budget and the second Budget, the masses were moving away. Though it was impossible to give support openly, yet the support part was there very much.” (45)

THE STRIKE MOVEMENT

But things were now getting very hot. A series of strikes racked the island in 1961-62, all of which were essentially political strikes against the government. A dock strike in Colombo in 1961 was called off when Mrs. Bandaranaike declared a state of emergency. A three month strike in 1962 of the bank clerks shook the government and inspired the most vicious attacks from Bandaranaike.

The LSSP's Political Bureau reported to the party's central committee on the strike wave on March 31, 1962:

“Broadly speaking, the principal gains of the strikes can be said to be the following:

- 1. They have increased the consciousness of the working class in the strength that is created by its unity.**
- 2. They have destroyed many of the illusions the working class had in the SLFP government.**
- 3. They have demonstrated to a wide layer of conscious workers that struggles on a trade union level cannot take them much further, and that the political struggles which involve the question of the political**

regime itself, have become necessary.”

But they were looking both ways, as Samarakkody explains:

“Then the working class struggles took place. Strikes started, and when strikes take place leaders have to go there. (All but one Political Bureau member of the LSSP was a union leader—MR). That was an embarrassing situation. The position became much more embarrassing as time went on because the mass situation was going in favor of the working class movement. Whenever there was an escape situation they rushed into it.” (46)

Now an attempt for an army coup against the government was uncovered and barely avoided. Yet Mandel now admits that his “mass Trotskyist party” had illusions about its support in the lower echelons of the same army. (47)

That same year, 1962, saw war break out between India and the People’s Republic of China. Instead of calling for the defeat of the Indian government, the LSSP leaders issued an appeal to submit the dispute (over Indian-Chinese borders) to an international court of arbitration.

If this was bad enough, the actions of Pablo’s followers in India itself were even worse. There Pablo’s group, the Revolutionary Communist Party, split over the issue, with the internationalists being jailed by the Nehru government and the chauvinists, led by Sitaram B. Kolpe, backing the Nehru government. Kolpe is still a major leader of the Indian Pabloites.

Then came the Cuban missile showdown, with the American SWP, now on its way back to Pablo, endorsing Khrushchev’s actions with Cannon’s utterly pragmatic “What else could he have done under the given circumstances?”

In Ceylon, the strike wave continued unabated, with the island now entering into a state of extreme class tension.

But, as Samarakkody mentioned, all of the center and right wing LSSP leaders, were looking for an “escape situation.”

This is where matters stood at the end of 1962, with a crisis developing in Ceylon that the LSSP leadership was in no way prepared for.

Mandel correctly sees that the real political leadership of the LSSP on the island at this time consisted of Goonewardene, DeSilva, Bernard Soysa, and Doric DeSouza, all of whom he classifies as “genuinely Trotskyist.”

But Mandel and Pablo were an integral part of that leadership, providing it with the most sophisticated

covers for the criticisms being made of its opportunism by the International Committee.

All of these gentlemen had indeed led the LSSP. They led it towards becoming a corrupt Social-Democratic party along the lines of such parties in Britain, Belgium and West Germany.

The revisionists around Mandel, Pablo, Goonewardene and DeSilva must take the responsibility for their actions. They politically prepared the LSSP for taking the final plunge into the cesspool of coalition politics.

With such revisionists in its leadership, as a party with the possibility of moving in a revolutionary direction, the LSSP now moved into its death agonies.

3 Coalition Politics

CEYLON IN 1963 was marked by a continuation of the strike wave begun two years earlier. Beginning in January the Ceylon Transport Board (nationalized transport) was struck by unions under Lanka Sama Samaja Party and Communist Party leadership. This strike paralyzed all main road transport services.

The reaction of the liberal capitalist Sri Lanka Freedom Party government of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was to call in the army to drive the buses and scab on the drivers.

If anything was indicated by the strike wave it was that time was running out for the SLFP and the capitalist class in Ceylon. At no point in this period was the rightwing United National Party of Dudley Senanayake prepared to form a government. Nor could a coalition between the UNP or the SLFP, the dominant Sinhalese capitalist parties, with either of the Tamil capitalist parties, the Federal Party and the Tamil Congress have taken place without seriously affecting the relationships between the UNP and SLFP leaders and the extreme Sinhalese racist elements within their own ranks.

A coalition between the SLFP and the UNP was at that time also out of the question, as it would have exposed completely the fraudulent nature of Mrs. Bandaranaike's "smash the UNP" demagoguery during

elections.

Also out of the question was a coalition between the SLFP and Philip Gunawardena's MEP (Mahajand Eksath Peramuna - Peoples United Front). The right wing of the SLFP refused to work with Gunawardena; a coalition with him at the time would have meant the breakaway of a sizable section of the SLFP, when every vote for the government in Parliament was needed.

THE MOVE TOWARDS COALITION

So Mrs. Bandaranaike had only two choices left; either a move towards open dictatorship, placing greater and greater reliance on the army and police, **OR** —a coalition government with the major parties of the working class, the CP and especially the supposedly-Trotskyist LSSP. After much vacillating, she opted for this method as the best possible alternative.

The CP had always been willing to form a coalition government—in 1947 they had offered a coalition which included themselves—and the UNP!

The right wing of the LSSP, led by N.M. Perera and Anil Moonesinghe, also held a coalition perspective. The centrist section of the party, including the party's main political leaders, Dr. Colvin R. DeSilva and Leslie Goonewardene, were rapidly moving in this direction.

Only the left wing minority of the party, led by Edmund Samarakkody and Bala Tampoe, opposed the move towards coalition and projected a perspective of extra-parliamentary struggle.

If there was ever any chance for the course of the LSSP being turned around, it was now. And it is here that the revisionists led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel played their most despicable role, paving the way for a SLFP - LSSP coalition. The American Socialist Workers Party was also implicated in this, for their leadership knew what was going on, even while they were stampeding back to a reunification with Pablo.

It was now, in 1963, that several decisive events took place that were to destroy forever the possibility of the LSSP developing into a revolutionary party. Pablo, Mandel and the SWP were connected with all of these events.

These events were preceded by Pablo's final moves towards theoretical liquidation of the Trotskyist movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. In the middle of 1962, writing a review of Franz Fanon's **Wretched of the Earth**, Pablo expressed agree-

ment with Fanon on the place of the working class in the colonial countries:

“The analysis which Fanon makes of the role of the urban proletariat can appear exaggerated to a European Marxist; however with qualifications it ‘fits’ well enough those countries with a weak industrial development.”

Fanon had categorized the colonial working class as a privileged, protected and “bourgeois” stratum of the population. And with the workers out of the way, Pablo then informed his readers that:

“Thus the outbreak of the revolution in a number of countries of colonial and semi-colonial structure can be visualized by the union of a Jacobin leadership sui generis (unique leadership - MR), like the July 26 Movement or the Algerian leadership or the Angolan revolutionaries, with the masses impatient enough to be disposed to the direct armed action of the revolutionary peasantry.”

Pablo’s latest discovery was that the peasantry, not the working class, were the revolutionary class in the colonial countries, to be led to power by a “unique Jacobin leadership” of middle class intellectuals.

And further it is asserted that:

“What is new for Revolutionary Marxism in relation to this experience is this: that we pass from the appreciation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry and the necessity of the workers and peasants alliance to the understanding of the possibility of beginning and carrying through for a whole period, the Revolution in a number of colonial and semi-colonial countries by the armed struggle of the revolutionary peasantry.” (48)

By now Pablo and Mandel had become obsessed with the idea of a revolution in the backward countries without the building of a revolutionary party to lead it. The role of Trotskyists in these countries was reduced to joining up with the middle class “unique Jacobin leadership.” Pablo, along with his supporters such as Luftullah Solomon, promptly found posts for themselves in the new Ben Bella government in Algeria.

In addition, Pablo held down another job—that of ambassador to Algeria from the government of Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus. This was Pablo’s reward for liquidation of the Cypriot Trotskyist movement into the Stalinist organizations on that island.

As far as the LSSP leadership, they saw this “Jacobin” leadership in Ceylon taking form in the SLFP, and to be consistent, shouldn’t their role be to join in and speed up the process? If there was no need for a revolutionary party in Ceylon to achieve socialism, then the LSSP leaders of the right and center wings

saw no course other than to join with these middle class nationalist (and capitalist) forces that could do the trick.

THE UNITED LEFT FRONT

Now came the decisive events of 1963.

In June, the Socialist Workers Party, although legally banned from direct affiliations internationally, gave its support to an unprincipled reunification between a small minority of the International Committee of the Fourth international and Pablo's International Secretariat, to form the United Secretariat.

Most dangerous to the situation in Ceylon were the perspectives the so-called "reunification" congress adopted. For the colonial countries, the revisionists reasoned, revolutionary parties were not essential because of the weaknesses of imperialism:

"The weakness of the enemy in the backward countries has opened the possibility of coming to power even with a blunted instrument." (49)

SWP leader James Cannon was later to give enthusiastic endorsement to this idea.

So much for the need for a revolutionary party in Ceylon. As for blunted instruments on the island, quite a few were around: the CP, the MEP, and maybe even the SLFP. What Pablo and Mandel's perspectives for the colonial countries did was to accelerate the degeneration of the LSSP, to turn it into a "blunted instrument."

This congress supported the LSSP leadership of Perera, DeSilva, and Goonewardene, who it praised as having:

"correctly raised the question of a United Left Front, both to arrest the movement to the right, and to help these masses to move towards an alternative left."

The United Left Front showed the complete lack of understanding by all of the LSSP and United Secretariat revisionists in regards to the question of a united front.

To begin with, a united front is an agreement between mass working class unions and parties for living standards of the working class. It does not refer to any sort of joint actions between small propaganda groupings or to unity with non-working class organizations.

Revolutionary Marxists raise the demand for a united front of the working class organizations at specific times to both prepare the class to resist the attacks of the capitalist class and to expose the reformist and Stalinist leaders of the workers in the process.

At no time is the united front meant to be the way in which the working class will seize power.

All of this was conveniently junked in Ceylon. What was now put together was a front along the line spelled out by DeSilva in 1948, and now revived with the blessings of Pablo and Mandel, a front of the "left" parties of the working class and of the middle class. What should have been clear by now was the class nature of the third element of the United Left Front, Philip Gunawardena's MEP. Maintaining a dwindling base among the Sinhalese workers in Colombo and a few other centers, the MEP's degeneration from working class politics had proceeded rapidly since its adoption of the racist demand of Sinhala Only in 1955. With only the vestiges of a working class program remaining, Gunawardena's party had degenerated into a middle-class party with support among a politically backward and racist section of Sinhalese workers. Gunawardena's real program by this time had become that of a raving racist and religious bigot, with his main demand being that the Tamil people be driven out of Ceylon.

With this man, however, the Stalinist and LSSP leaders were quite willing to coalesce.

To precede the formal creation of the United Left Front, the LSSP, CP and MEP held a united May Day rally in Colombo in 1963. At this massive rally of over 100,000 workers, praised uncritically by the SWP and the United Secretariat, it was conveniently forgotten to touch on the speech of Philip Gunawardena. With a slip of the tongue, he referred to the Tamil people as a "race" and then apologized and corrected himself to say "nation." To have referred to them as a "race" would have meant the most blatant exposure of his party's racism, and a denial of the right of self-determination to the Tamil minority on the island. But his real position was exposed when his supporters chanted back "not nation, race." No criticism of this was made by the CP or LSSP speakers, who sat silent on the platform as this was going on.

Further, it was at the insistence of Philip Gunawardena that the leaders of the Tamil Indian plantation workers unions were not invited to address the rally. This point is the only area of criticism that Mandel makes of this rally, not the fact that the LSSP showed itself willing to openly unite with racist elements.

The whole business of the United Left Front had marked a sharp change in the official policy of the LSSP leadership. On July 7, 1963, their Central Committee had adopted a perspective of a United Front with the working class organizations and parties aimed at

mobilizing the working class against the SLFP government and all forces of capitalist reaction.

Three days later, 3,000 textile workers at the Wellawatte Mills, under L.S.S.P. leadership, struck work and moved into a head-on confrontation with the Bandaranaike wage freeze. And once again the LSSP leaders sought an "escape situation."

In less than a month, the party had the United Left Front thrust upon it by its leaders. The August 4 Central Committee meeting, which adopted the United Left Front perspective, rejected (14 for, 23 against, 2 abstentions) a resolution by the left wing introduced by Bala Tampoe:

"The Central Committee rejects the document for a United Left Front which the negotiating committee consisting of Comrades Leslie Goonewardene, N.M. Perera and Colvin R. DeSilva have accepted in consultation with the MEP and the CP.

"The CC further censures the negotiating committee for its acceptance of this document since it is materially different in regard to aim and programmatic content even from that which the CC adopted by a majority vote on 7.7.63."

If anyone should have been in a united front of the working class, it should have been the Tamil Indian plantation workers unions, the Democratic Workers Congress and the Ceylon Workers Congress. But again the LSSP leaders acceded to Gunawardena and excluded them.

The United Left Front was signed, sealed and delivered on August 12, 1963. And so the tenth anniversary of the great hartal became the preparation for the greatest of betrayals. Despite all of the attempts of the United Secretariat to make this into a great victory for the working class, the agreement did stipulate, among other things, that:

1. The reactionary Soulbury constitution was only to be modified, not abrogated.
2. No challenge to Ceylonese capitalist ownership in industry, commerce and the plantations.
3. Tamil was not to be made an official language. Nor was any action to be taken against the racist citizenship laws, making most plantation workers stateless.
4. No action to be taken to smash the army and police forces of the capitalist state and the creation of a workers militia.

This whole United Left Front business was really a parliamentary perspective for power. All of Mandel's criticisms of the United Left Front find ways of skirting around this.

The crucial thing was not that the United Left Front included the MEP, excluded the DWC and CWC, or that the LSSP leaders refrained from criticizing the opportunist policies of the CP and MEP. What was crucial was the entrance of the LSSP into the United Left Front, whereby it exchanged its political independence for the most rotten compromise with middle-class and Stalinist allies.

It was through the cover of the United Left Front that a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike was prepared. How could one expect otherwise, with the LSSP's other two partners in the Front already committed to a coalition?

Although the plantation workers' unions had been excluded from the United Left Front, they did come together with the other trade unions and labor federations on September 29 in Colombo, where 800 delegates representing one and one half million workers formed the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations (JCTUO) around a 21 point program of demands on wages, hours, sick leave, housing and rent allowances, holidays, pensions, etc.

Also included were demands for an end to language discrimination in jobs and equal wages for women.

To fight for these demands and carry them through would mean the end of the Bandaranaike government and of capitalism on the island.

It is here that the United Left Front leaders came forward to divert this struggle into safe, parliamentary channels.

What the decisive question now became was, who in the LSSP was the United Secretariat supporting? The right wing around Perera, the centrists around Goonewardene, DeSilva, Soysa and DeSouza or the left wing led by Tampoe and Samarakkody? We find that Pablo, Mandel and Co. try to blur this over more than anything.

Pierre Frank tells us on the one hand that the United Secretariat:

"In opposition to the proposal for a coalition with a bourgeois party, advocated the positive slogan of a workers and peasants government, and did this in the concrete instance by suggesting that as against a coalition with the SLFP, the Trotskyists should advance the formula of a government of the United Left Front." (50)

Expounding further, he states that:

"It happens to be a matter of public record that the Fourth International opposed any coalition whatsoever with the SLFP and supported the left-wing tendency...." and again that **"the left wing has been conducting its struggle for the past year in consulta-**

tion with the United Secretariat.” (51)

The real feelings of the LSSP’s left wing on the United Left Front were spelled out by Edmund Samarakkody:

“Then came the other fraud perpetrated on this country and the working class movement with due respect to my Friend the hon. Member for Kottawa (Leslie Goonewardene—MR). They said ‘We have now to replace the SLFP Government: the left forces must get together and form a united front to overthrow the SLFP Government and the capitalist forces of reaction.’ They started with that talk and the hon. Member for Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia (Colvin R. DeSilva—MR) came to the polit-bureau of the party, of which I was a member. His position was that the united front we should form should include the LSSP, the Communist Party, the MEP, the CWC, the DWC and the working-class organizations in order to overthrow this Government and the forces of capitalist reaction. That was the picture he painted to our party.

“Having painted that picture, when it came to the question of forming the United Left Front the CWC, the DWC and the working class organizations were omitted. The aims of the United Left Front have been very clearly stated in the agreement. Vested interests in this country were alarmed that the left forces were getting ready to overthrow them and the Government, and even the Government got alarmed at it.

“This is the aim of the United Left Front. I am reading from the agreement. You will find the hon. Member for Avissawella, the hon. Member for Akuressa, the hon. Member for Yatiyantota (Gunawardena, Wickremasinghe and Perera—MR) who is now the Minister of Finance, all on the front page. According to this document one of the aims of the United Left Front is as follows:

“In accordance with the needs of this situation and in response to this mass urge, the Ceylon Communist Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna have agreed to form a United Left Front in order to mobilize and lead all anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and socialist forces in Ceylon in the fight to establish a government that will give effect to the following general programme.”

There was to be no fight against the SLFP Government and against the capitalist class.

“Shortly after that I prepared a small document, ‘Whither the LSSP—the implications of the United Left Front.’ This document is known to hon. Members who have now crossed over. We warned the party as best we could that the aim behind this move was a final coalition with the SLFP Government.” (52)

In order to understand the real relationship between the United Secretariat and the various wings of the LSSP one must turn to the question of the Reunification of 1963 and its aftermath. At the same time this will expose the relationship of the SWP as well to the greatest betrayal of Trotskyism which was about to transpire.

The reunification between the SWP supported rump group from the International Committee and the Pabloite International Secretariat, which took place in the summer of 1963, was of fundamental importance for the fate of the LSSP. On the one hand the reunification sealed the doom of the LSSP as any kind of revolutionary formation and on the other hand its entry into a coalition government was the clearest reflection of the meaning of the reunification.

Above all it must be understood that the reunification took place on the basis of a general agreement NOT to discuss the Ceylon question. This agreement was part of a whole approach which said that the history of the Fourth International, particularly the history of the struggle against revisionism, could not be discussed. Reunification would take place on agreement on current "reality"—particularly the "Marxist" character of Castro and Cuba. Nothing, of course, could have suited the opportunists of the LSSP better.

If there is any doubt on this then the situation was made crystal clear in a factional struggle then being waged between a majority around Mandel and Maitan and a minority headed by Michel Pablo. Pablo's main position was one of open support to the Kremlin against the Chinese on the ground that the Kremlin represented "destalinization." In addition he favored a more open guerilla course in Latin America. But to cover it all up he and his supporters began to pick at Mandel's support for the LSSP. By so doing he let the cat out of the bag.

Pablo supporter Anderson put forward a motion at the December 22, 1963 meeting of the United Secretariat stating in part:

"The Minority tendency members of the United Secretariat consider the actions, letters and documents of the Majority of the United Secretariat on the ULF in Ceylon as contrary in essence to the Open Letter of the 7th World Congress of the 4th International to the LSSP. We therefore:

"1. Censure the non-publication, internally or externally, of the letter of the 7th World Congress, and demand its immediate publication internally and in the next publication of the FI, QI and CI,

"2. Protest the alterations made by the Bureau of the United Secretariat in the letter approved by the 7th World Congress, which softens its criticisms of

“3. Protest at the scandalous support given to the ULF in the Resolution sent on the occasion of the establishment of the ULF, which is contrary to the line of the 7th World Congress, and also particularly protest at its publication in the last QI before the publication of the letter of the Congress,

“4. Demand the rapid publication of a dossier of all documents on the ULF, as agreed unanimously at the September meeting of the Un. Sec. and which has so far not been published.” (53)

The United Secretariat wrote a lengthy answer turning down each proposal of Anderson's. First it made clear that its approach to the LSSP flows from its whole approach to reunification, and thus of course the complete implication of the SWP in the entire situation:

“As for the more or less political charges involved in the motion submitted by Comrade Anderson, a glaring omission should be noted. He cites the Seventh World Congress but leaves out the following Reunification Congress in which he nonetheless participated and approved.

“The Reunification Congress placed with the united new leadership the responsibility of doing everything in its power to cement the ties re-established after a long split and to work for fresh cohesion and stability in the world Trotskyist movement. This required a certain organizational relaxation for a period and a serious effort to ameliorate internal disputes in the various sections and in the components of the united movement—especially disputes inherited from the past—in order to help every area in the common problem of making a fresh start. All this was explained and agreed upon unanimously by the delegates who participated in the Reunification Congress.” (54)

So there was to be no discussion of “disputes inherited from the past” like Pabloism in general and more specifically the LSSP's long history of opportunism which was at this very moment preparing it to be the first party, calling itself Trotskyist, to enter a bourgeois government. On this basis the United Secretariat made clear its real relationship with Perera, DeSilva and others in the leadership of the LSSP.

“The United Secretariat ‘in essence,’ as Comrade Anderson puts it, has not modified in the least its criticisms of the LSSP made by the Seventh World Congress. What it has done is to place confidence in the capacity of the leadership of the LSSP to prove responsive to these criticisms.” (55)

So much for all of Mandel's talk about its unswerving support for the left wing in the LSSP. Within just a

few months of the actual entry into the government, Mandel and Co. were placing their confidence in Perera and friends! But, of course, it states that the United Secretariat's members:

"...Tend to sympathize politically with the left wing of the LSSP." (56)

Confidence is given to the right wing leadership and sympathy is given, more accurately tended to be given, to the left wing. The document then proceeds to differentiate itself from the left wing on the question of the United Left Front. Its position is:

"In and of itself the formation of the United Left Front cannot be condemned; under certain conditions it could prove to be the opening of new developments fraught with revolutionary possibilities." (57)

In the back of its mind was its interpretation of Cuba and Algeria. Then it notes that the left wing had:

"...Taken the view that the majority of the leadership are engaging in reality in an unprincipled electoral bloc. The majority, however, dispute this." (58)

Where did the United Secretariat stand on this? Did they side with those they "tend" to sympathize with?

"...The United Secretariat feels that it would be wrong for it as a body representing the movement as a whole to brush aside the declaration of the majority of the LSSP leadership and refuse to grant them the time needed to prove in action the sincerity of their stand in relation to the United Left Front and the good faith of their assurances." (59)

They granted to Perera the time necessary to prepare his entry into the Bandaranaike government! Finally it urges that no serious struggle take place within the LSSP in order to preserve unity at all costs with the Perera opportunists. It attacks Anderson's proposals stating:

"It would mean first of all to deliberately heat up the atmosphere in the LSSP by injecting the sharpest kind of factionalism; secondly to exacerbate matters still further by transferring the dispute to the public arena. A divisive policy of this kind would put in jeopardy, if not destroy, fraternal relations between the United Secretariat and the leadership of the LSSP." (60)

Such was the real stand of Mandel and Hansen on the eve of the greatest betrayal of Trotskyism in history. Such is the relationship between this betrayal and the reunification of 1963.

It was the increased sharpness of the class struggle that sped up the move of the LSSP right and center

leaders and quickly brought things to a head.

This struggle came out the sharpest in two events. Beginning in November, 1963, and continuing into January, 1964, 13,000 harbor workers in Colombo, led by Bala Tampoe's Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) took strike action to break the wage freeze of the Bandaranaike government. After 66 days the government intervened saying "return to work or else" and insisting that no more concessions would be made. But the CMU leadership held on, decided not to collaborate with Bandaranaike, and by January 12, had won a decisive political and economic victory.

So shaken was the government by the union's victory that Mrs. Bandaranaike shut down Parliament.

The crisis was being reflected in another war, inside the Ceylon Communist Party, an organization which had held solid during even the most desperate crises of world Stalinism, during the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian and Polish revolutions in 1956. The LSSP had not made one gain from the CP during this crisis—the LSSP leaders saw this as some sort of a virtue.

But now the crisis of Stalinism was reflected in the disputes between the bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China, and this forced a quick polarization in the ranks and leadership of the Ceylonese Stalinists. A minority of that party's central committee, led by N. Sanmugathan and Premalal Kumarasiri, both important trade union leaders, supported the Chinese on all the disputed issues. The majority of pro-Moscow Stalinists, led by Wickremasinghe and Keuneman then cut short what little discussion was possible in a Stalinist party, expelling Sanmugathan and suspending Kumarasiri on October 27, 1963. They removed many of their supporters from all responsible posts several weeks earlier in that month. In a blatantly racist move, only the Tamil supporters of the Chinese positions were at first purged.

The ousted pro-Chinese Stalinists quickly reorganized their own "Communist Party of Ceylon" and convened a special congress. In a public appeal to the members of the pro-Moscow party, signed by 118 pro-Chinese members, including leaders of trade unions, factory branches, youth and women's organizations, district committees etc., they charged the Wickremasinghe-Keuneman regime, among other things, with:

"6. Opposition to and refusal to lead workers' struggle, particularly the betrayal of the CTB strike of January-February 1963 and the present reluctance to organise a national struggle around the 21 demands approved by the All-Island Congress of Trade Unions.

"7. Exclusive reliance on the parliamentary method as the means of winning power peacefully for the working class and a refusal to prepare the working class and gather all revolutionary forces for a possibility of the non-peaceful transition to socialism.

"8. Failure to organize the peasantry.

"9. Failure to provide Party members and the working class with Marxist education; failure to translate sufficient number of Marxist classics into Sinhalese.

"10. Failure to produce a daily working-class newspaper.

"11. Attempting to disrupt mass organizations and fronts under the leadership of the Party.

"12. Resorting to communal propaganda to discredit and isolate comrades fighting for revolutionary principles." (61)

If anything, however, was revealed by the split inside the Ceylonese Stalinist movement, it was just how the United Secretariat had disoriented the LSSP, especially its left wing. Every faction of the LSSP was paralyzed by the CP's crisis, was unable to intervene for one moment in it.

For instance, left wing LSSP central committee member Sydney Wanasinghe, writing about the split to the American Socialist Workers Party, now firmly in the Pabloite fold, treats the situation as a commentator writing from afar:

"The Ceylon Communist Party, which did not register even the slightest impact of events like the Hungarian Revolution, Poznan and the Twentieth Congress, has cracked wide open in the current crisis facing the international communist movement." (62)

Why not even the "slightest impact" from the events in 1956 is never touched upon. Wanasinghe cites the charges quoted above against the pro-Moscow Stalinist leadership without comment, and then smugly goes on to tell his readers that:

"The bankruptcy of the leadership is seen from their helpless attitude of allowing things to pass by without intervening. They cannot afford to intervene because that will only strengthen the tide against them." (63)

Wanasinghe might as well have been talking about the leadership of the LSSP, who were guilty of many of the same charges.

So the leaders of the LSSP and the United Secretariat must take some of the responsibility for the development on the island of a virulent pro-Chinese Stalinist and anti-Trotskyist movement. Reviewing a biography of the pro-Moscow leader Pieter Keuneman several years later, a writer for the English journal of the pro-Chinese CP stated that:

“Another significant omission is the lack of any reference to the great fight put up by the Communist Party, from its inception, to the counter-revolutionary philosophy of Trotskyism. This is one of the few good things done by the Party. The Communist Party was born with the name of Stalin on its lips as it was founded by men who had been expelled from the LSSP which had embraced Trotskyism.” (64)

It is significant that Mandel had almost nothing to say about the split in the Ceylon Communist Party.

Now, with the split in the CP, the victory of the CMU over the government, the shutting down of Parliament, the crisis in Ceylon was reaching a fever pitch.

And along came the United Secretariat leaders, still pushing the United Left Front, to further disorient the left wing of the LSSP they so lyingly claimed to support.

They took further steps to obscure the class nature of the middle-class nationalist governments in the semi-colonial countries. In February, 1964, the Ben Bella regime in Algeria was awarded the title of “Workers and Peasants Government” by the United Secretariat.

But if a workers and peasants government could be formed in Algeria without any representatives of independent workers and peasants organizations, and moreover on the basis of the suppression of the Algerian Communist Party and the tying of the unions to the state apparatus, then what could one say against Mrs. Bandaranaike?

The answer to that question was becoming pretty obvious.

THE LEFT WING

At the same time that the LSSP left wing was trying to carry on a principled political struggle against the opportunists around Perera and Moonesinghe, they were not without their own weaknesses, weaknesses which definitely hindered them in this struggle.

To begin with, the left wing in the party had basic agreement with the centrists and right wing as to the extremely parochial nature they conceived of a socialist revolution in Ceylon as having. Revolution in Ceylon was seen as apart from the effect it would have throughout the Indian subcontinent. Samarakkody put out a two-part article on just this subject. (65)

But the greatest weakness of the LSSP’s left wing was its failure to understand where the United Secretariat was leading it. It was the Secretariat’s repeated endorsement of the United Left Front, despite occasional criticisms, that did the most to disorient

the left wing. Samarakkody and other left-wing leaders knew this Front was a fraud and would pave the way for a coalition government. But their inability to see in the revisionism of Pablo and Mandel the source of this disorientation was what made the left wing incapable of decisively defeating the right wing in the party.

Mandel and Frank today are doing everything in their power to obscure how the United Left Front paved the way for a coalition government. While actually supporting the greatest promoters of this Front, Goonewardene and DeSilva, they now pretend to be the backers of the left wing. Long after their own creation blew up in their faces, they are still trying to deny their responsibility.

Now the trade unions, through the JCTUO, organized a massive rally in Colombo on March 21, 1964, in support of the 21 demands. Over 40,000 workers from all over the island massed on the Galle Face to hear leaders of all of their unions and parties, including Aziz and Thondamam of the plantation workers unions, call for a fight to the finish around the 21 demands.

For the first time in the island's history, the plantation workers and the working class in the cities and towns were united in action. Had the LSSP been a revolutionary party, they would have begun the organization of an insurrection to seize power.

PREPARATION FOR ENTRY

But by now, the United Secretariat's perspective of a United Left Front government had done its dirty work. Late in the evening of March 21, N.M. Perera, who had presided at the JCTUO rally, slipped through the servant's entrance to Temple Trees, the Prime Minister's official residence, to begin negotiations for a coalition government.

By the end of the month, the secret was out in the open, with the United Left Front leaders publicly agreeing to cooperate with the government and discuss the possibility of a coalition government. (66)

On March 16 further action had been taken in this direction, when the annual LSSP youth conference purged all left wing supporters from leadership positions. (67)

But Perera was still in trouble. Only a small minority of the LSSP's Political Bureau initially favored the idea of coalition, with the right wingers realizing that they would have to make partial concessions to the centrists around Goonewardene and DeSilva to get their support, as these centrists had originally held a negative view of the whole coalition idea. (68)

So Perera took his fight into the Central Committee, where 14 members had signed a left wing statement

opposing coalition. With three members absent and one abstaining, coalition was rejected, 22-19. (69)

Perera then succeeded in organizing a second Central Committee meeting, where, by making concessions to Goonewardene and DeSilva (agreeing to make additional demands on the SLFP Government as the price of coalition), got their support and the Central Committee passed a coalition resolution with only twelve votes against. The Central Committee then summoned a special party conference to ratify this decision and elect a Central Committee more adaptable to Mrs. Bandaranaike. (70)

The handwriting was now on the wall for the United Secretariat. The leadership of the LSSP had unconditionally capitulated to Mrs. Bandaranaike.

If anyone understood this the best, it was Mrs. Bandaranaike. Speaking to the SLFP executive committee on May 10, she said:

“After July 1960, after I was made President of the party on the invitation of Mr. C.P. De Silva and other well wishers, the SLFP was able to form a Government winning 75 seats in alliance with the Left parties, except the MEP. What is the real significance of this?—We who got 46 in March got 75 in July because we got the support of the left. This must be admitted honestly. If by any chance we got less than 75 seats those parties who supported us in the election would have had a place in forming the Government.

“However, after forming the Government we had to face certain questions. The leftists who worked with us began a series of strikes because they did not get a place in the government. In the North, while there were communal issues flaring up, there were various other issues cropping up on the language question, too.

“Though it is true that we faced this bravely, in the light of my experience, I must remind you of something. However much progressive work we do, we cannot expect any results unless we get the co-operation of the working class. This could be understood if the working of the Port and of other nationalised undertakings are considered. We cannot go backwards. We must go forward. Disruptions, especially strikes and go-slows must be eliminated and the development of the country must proceed.

“Some people have various ideas on these subjects. Some feel that these troubles can be eliminated by the establishment of a dictatorship. Others say that workers should be made to work at the point of gun and bayonet. Still others maintain that a national Government should be formed to solve this problem. I have considered these ideas separately and in the context of world

events.

“My conclusion is that none of these solutions will help to get us where we want to go. Therefore, what we should do is to travel on the path defined by our leader in accordance with our conscience. It is only by travelling this path whilst considering the changes that have taken place in our country that we can achieve our purpose.

“Therefore, gentlemen, I decided to initiate talks with the leaders of the working class, particularly Mr. Philip Gunawardena and Dr. N.M. Perera. Though both of them expressed their opinion, I must say that I did not agree with all they said. I then had further discussions on outstanding issues.

“Can we form a coalition government? If so, how could this be done? These are the questions we considered. Afterwards they informed me that they could form a Government on the basis of a common programme like the 1956 agreement binding on the constituent parties of the MEP. They were of the opinion that it was a government like this which could work for the common weal.”

Truly, one of the most thoughtful and revealing statements of a ruling class in its deepest crisis.

ROLE OF UNITED SECRETARIAT

So where did this leave the leaders of the United Secretariat, who were belatedly recognizing the direction in which their own creation was stampeding?

They had no intention of allowing their strongest affiliate to join in to what every political observer could recognize was a liberal capitalist government. But the actions they were to take did nothing to prevent this from happening.

No one could say they hadn't been warned. The Socialist Labour League, British section of the Fourth International, and a leading member of the International Committee, had recognized the direction the LSSP was headed in since the late 1950s.

They publicly, on many occasions, warned the International Secretariat and the LSSP of its course, especially from the time the LSSP parliamentary fraction voted for the speech from the throne in 1960.

As the SWP reunified with the Pabloites in 1963, the SLL sent the SWP national committee a letter warning them what they were getting into. After a brief discussion and criticism of the LSSP's capitulation to Philip Gunawardena at the 1963 May Day meeting, they added:

“It is now freely admitted in the LSSP that the leaders are prepared to make real and large con-

cessions on the question of parity of status for Tamil and Singhalese. This is the logic of the capitulation which has led them to support the capitalist government of Mrs. Bandaranaike. You should have told your membership that N.M. Perera, Anil Moonesinghe and other leaders of the LSSP are practising **Buddhists who worship regularly at the temples.**" (73)

So what did the United Secretariat do? First they sent the LSSP leaders a letter on April 23, 1964 opposing Perera's coalition proposal and stating that:

"Any form of coalition with such a party, as long as it remains the dominant majority within such a coalition, can only lead to the immobilization of the left in advance and its becoming itself a target for the growing resentment of the masses." (72)

But this meant that a coalition with the SLFP with that party in a minority was not ruled out. But would the class nature of the government be any different? We do not have to look too far to find out. Today in the Federal Republic of Germany, the government is a coalition of the reformist Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Willy Brandt and the Liberal capitalist Free Democratic Party (FPD), with the SPD holding the dominant number of posts in the government. But what we have here is not a working class government with a few liberals thrown in for window dressing, but a working class party, collaborating with a liberal party in administering a capitalist government. The United Secretariat saw nothing wrong with such a situation in Ceylon if the LSSP would dominate the coalition.

They further warned the LSSP:

"Not to undertake a step which would be utter betrayal and counterposing to the idea of coalition with a bourgeois party the correct perspective of a united front government of all working class parties based on a socialist program. The Plenum of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International (the centrist fraud that Mandel tries to pass off as the Fourth International—MR) held in May, 1964 unanimously endorsed this stand." (73)

Therefore, the United Secretariat was continuing to foist the policy of a United Left Front government on the LSSP. And very significantly, among those voting "unanimously" on Mandel's Executive Committee for this resolution were—Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin DeSilva.

So instead of taking disciplinary action against the right wing and suspending or expelling their key leaders on the spot for such treachery as proposing a coalition government, the United Secretar-

iat gave Perera's new-found allies, DeSilva and Goonewardene, several weeks precious time. They used this time to further disorient their party, having unanimous United Secretariat support to back them up on the United Left Front perspective that the left wing of the LSSP characterized as a "fraud" and the first step towards a coalition government.

LSSP SPECIAL CONFERENCE

Time was running out for the United Secretariat as the LSSP special conference approached. So in desperation, they stuck Pierre Frank on a plane for Colombo, with instructions to speak against the coalition at the conference.

This he did. But the crucial thing is, what did he speak for? Let us remember what he said a bit earlier in this article, that the United Secretariat:

"—both before and during the conference—in opposition to the proposal for a coalition with a bourgeois party, advocated the positive slogan of a workers and peasants government, and did this in the concrete instance by suggesting that as against a coalition with the SLFP, the Trotskyists should advance the formula of a government of a United Left Front." (76)

Perera could not have asked for more.

If the situation inside the LSSP was ever to be revealed, it was from the three resolutions submitted to the special conference. The resolution of Perera's, openly calling for a coalition government, picked up Goonewardene's old formula of the SLFP as a "centre" party:

"Admittedly the leadership had feudal connections, but from the policy that was followed since July, 1960 it is clear that the main pressure on the government has been from the lower middle class and to some extent even from the working class. In fact the SLFP has shed some of the more reactionary elements that existed from 1956 to 1960, and being a center party, it has vacillated, sometimes moving to the right, and sometimes moving to the left. But the overall drive has been a steady movement leftwards."

This document also had some revealing words on the United Left Front and what it led to:

"The ULF was formed after prolonged negotiations in the midst of misgivings and opposition from some sections of the party. The tremendous enthusiasm with which the ULF was received, helped to dissipate doubts about the value and usefulness of the ULF as an organization to fight the menace of reaction. The ULF began to be projected as the only alternative

force capable of forming a government opposed to the UNP.”

Where did the SLFP fit into this? This capitalist party was not to be characterized as such or as one of the forces of reaction, but instead:

“Members of the SLFP both inside and outside parliament began to consider the ULF as the coming force to stem the tide of reaction.”

So the perspective had been to get the SLFP into the United Left Front all along.

The resolution of the left wing, which Pierre Frank lovingly claims to have supported, significantly omitted any mention of a United Left Front government.

If Frank and Mandel got their biggest shock of the conference, it was not from Perera but from the resolution of the centrists around Goonewardene and DeSilva, on whom the revisionists had staked their last hopes. They took the United Left Front perspective to its consistent conclusion, and called for a coalition between the SLFP and the United Left Front!

Then the vote was taken. The minority position was put first, receiving 159 votes, about one quarter of the total. Determined not to be a party to a vote for the coalition proposals of either Perera or Goonewardene, the left wing walked out.

The centrist resolution received 75 votes, with Perera's getting 507. And some 50 of the votes for the centrist resolution also went to Perera.

Finally, some four years too late, the United Secretariat on June 22nd voted to expel Perera, Moonesinghe, and Cholmondely Goonewardene who had accepted ministries in Mrs. Bandaranaike's government and suspended the other 504 who had voted for Perera's resolution.

But they still kept their foot in the door, refusing at that time to expel the group around Goonewardene and DeSilva, which remained in the LSSP when it entered the coalition.

The minority, reorganized as the LSSP (Revolutionary), was recognized as the new affiliate of the United Secretariat.

This overwhelming conference vote for the resolution of Perera showed exactly where the United Secretariat's perspectives led. As one leader of the Fourth International wrote shortly after the fatal June 7 conference:

“However, Dr. N.M. Perera now on the way to becoming Finance Minister, had no difficulty in leading a party which by now had become so thoroughly confused, corrupted and betrayed by the United Secretariat in Paris as well as its rotten leadership such as Goonewardene and DeSilva that it went the whole

hog and gave him a massive majority.” (76)

4 Bloody Results of Revisionism

Almost fifteen years of the opportunism of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Ceylon Equality Party) had finally come to a head on June 7, 1964, when a special party conference had overwhelmingly voted to join the capitalist government of Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka (Revered Ceylon) Freedom Party. The revisionists of the United Secretariat were forced to break all ties with their largest affiliate.

The bulk of the Ceylonese workers, however, maintained all sorts of illusions in the LSSP-SLFP government, illusions fostered by the many years of misleadership by LSSP leaders especially N.M. Perera, Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. DeSilva. The United Secretariat of Pablo and Mandel had covered up for these people until it was too late to do anything about their betrayals—now this same United Secretariat tries to place the blame on anyone and everyone but themselves.

To cover up for their betrayal, the LSSP leaders claimed that the SLFP was not a party of capitalism or of reaction, and that moreover, the coalition spelled the death of capitalism and imperialism on the island.

They were aided in these explanations by the capitalist press of Ceylon, which lost no time trying to prove that Mrs. Bandaranaike's government was the victim of “Marxist” infiltration tactics.

At this point, Mr. C.P. DeSilva, right wing minister in the coalition government, dissented, saying that the LSSP had unconditionally capitulated to Mrs. Bandaranaike. History was to prove DeSilva right—if any proof was really needed.

LESSONS OF THE SECOND COALITION

It was by utilizing the illusions of the working class in the coalition government that the LSSP leaders, with assistance from those of the pro-Moscow Communist Party, were able to allow Mrs. Bandaranaike to inflict important setbacks on the working class and its trade unions.

This was most graphically illustrated with the way the

LSSP and CP dismembered the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations. The JCTUO had been formed nine months before the coalition, around a program of 21 demands with which were united, for the first time in history, all 14 of the major unions and labor federations on the island, both in the urban areas and on the plantations.

The first action of the LSSP coalition ministers was to withdraw five federations under their domination from the JCTUO, leaving nine organizations, and taking away the majority of those based in the cities. Before the coalition, the LSSP had controlled unions encompassing some 70% of urban trade unionists on the island.

Then the pro-Moscow CP came forward in late October, 1964 to further disrupt the JCTUO. CP leader Pieter Keuneman led a walkout of three federations from the Committee when it rejected his proposal to tie the JCTUO to the coalition bandwagon.

This was followed when the main plantation workers union, the Ceylon Workers Congress led by Thondaman, announced that they favored submitting the 21 demands to the government but not to the estate owners, because the Estate Employers Federation was absolutely opposed to these demands. What both Thondaman and the employers whose agent he was and is conveniently forgot to mention was that the plantation workers had had no wage increase since 1949!

During the course of negotiations with the plantation owners, it came to light that LSSP leader N.M. Perera, now the Minister of Finance, had made a trip to London in 1960, during which he purchased a 1,000 acre tea estate. Yet this had been the man along with Goonewardene and Colvin R. DeSilva that the United Secretariat had promoted as representatives of the "only mass Trotskyist party in the world" virtually down to the moment they had entered the coalition.

But despite all the efforts of the reformist and Stalinist misleaders, the class struggle reasserted itself repeatedly. This was brought out most sharply in the Velona Mills strike, a five month struggle begun in July, 1964, over the recognition of the Lanka Weaving Mills Workers Union. This was led by members of the LSSP (Revolutionary), the new section of the United Secretariat.

Here is the real face of the LSSP traitors in the government showed itself. They did not hesitate for one moment to support the use of the repressive forces of the capitalist state against their political opponents. The bulk of the strikers, young women between fifteen and eighteen years of age, were repeatedly assaulted by armed thugs and baton-charged by the police, with silence emanating from the LSSP leaders.

Mass support for the strike rapidly developed, with twelve unions under the leadership of members of the LSSP (R), the pro-Chinese CP and even the SLFP demanding that the LSSP-dominated Ceylon Federation of Labour work to nationalize the mill. The reformists replied that this was out of the question. Therefore, when Colvin R. DeSilva tried to address the strikers, he was, for the first time in his life, jeered and shouted down by a working class audience.

Then came the coalition's most despicable action of all, their most blatant attempt to win over the extreme Sinhalese Buddhist racists. Mrs. Bandaranaike moved to find a "final solution" to the "Indian question" along lines that couldn't have made Hitler more proud. On October 29, 1964, she signed a pact with Indian Prime Minister Shastri concerning the stateless Tamil Indian plantation workers. Some 525,000 of these workers were to be **deported** to India over a fifteen year period, with another 150,000 to follow. Those who remained would be given Ceylonese citizenship, but placed on a separate electoral roll, a racist measure seen elsewhere only in South Africa. Some 30 years before in the colonial State Council, Perera and Philip Gunawardena had strenuously opposed Indian immigration—now this policy came home with a vengeance.

But it is a credit to the strength of the Ceylon labor movement that little of this deportation has been put into effect.

What was the real attitude of the United Secretariat on the citizenship status of the Indian Tamils? Mandel quotes a letter to the LSSP from the Secretariat of July 1, 1963, which says the following:

"Concerning point 14(b) we think that in order to avoid any ambiguity, it must be made clear that the option of deciding the citizenship rights of persons of Indian origin should not be left ultimately to the goodwill of the government of India, but to the people directly concerned, although we recognize that there is nothing wrong in the principle of negotiations between India and Ceylon on the subject." (78)

What sort of "Marxism" is this where capitalist governments are granted the right to negotiate in "principle" or otherwise over the fate of a stateless national minority?

Throughout the short life of the second coalition (the first between a capitalist party and a workers party in Ceylon had lasted from 1956 to 1958), the ten points put forward by Perera as condition for joining the government were never given serious consideration. But of the four points added by Mrs. Bandaranaike?

Two of these were definite. Buddhism became the official state religion, and photos of Perera and his

lieutenants praying to Lord Buddha began to fill the daily press—although some of them had been engaged in these same prayers for over twenty years—it was now just a bit more blatant.

In addition, not only was a coalition set up, but a no-contest pact, with the right to allocate seats granted solely to Mrs. Bandaranaike. The reformist LSSP leaders had moved quickly from permanent revolution to permanent coalition.

But despite the coalition's success at alienating and antagonizing large sections of the working class, it failed completely in its attempts to ingratiate itself with the capitalist class and the reactionary Buddhist priests.

Nor was the coalition very successful at winning financial backing from British imperialism. A visit by Perera to London to seek aid was turned down. This was a vote of no-confidence in the ability of the coalition to discipline the working class.

Then the coalition made a move which brought about its downfall. They decided to nationalize Lake House, the major chain of right wing daily newspapers. Both left and right wing elements attacked the move, each for its own reasons. The United National Party and the Buddhist priests claimed, falsely, that this was an attempt to set up a workers dictatorship. The left wing parties and unions correctly pointed out that the coalition was trying to suppress every means of independent political expression.

Resignations of government MPs began and Parliament was again prorogued, the second time in 1964. When it reconvened on December 3rd, the right wing of the SLFP, led by C.P. DeSilva, Minister of Lands, crossed the floor to join the opposition. The vote on the press nationalization bill was a defeat for the government, 74-73. The second coalition was dead, and new elections were called.

One point about the entire period of this short-lived coalition should be noted. Although Mandel and Pablo had broken all relations with the LSSP right wing around Perera and Moonesinghe the moment they had entered the coalition, they had not done so with the centrists led by Goonewardene and Colvin R. DeSilva. Although these elements had remained in the same party as Perera, these two gentlemen also retained the somewhat dubious distinction of maintaining their membership on the Pabloite International Executive Committee. Mandel and Pablo were keeping their foot in the door.

It was only after the defeat of the coalition that Mandel and Pablo announced that:

“A motion from the LSSP (Revolutionary Section) expelling Colvin R. DeSilva and Leslie Gunawardena (sic) on charges of following the betrayers in Ceylon was

placed before the International Executive Committee for consideration and the body declared that in view of the action of the LSSP (Revolutionary Section), which was uncontested by either Colvin R. DeSilva or Leslie Gunawardena (sic), the two are no longer within the ranks of the Fourth International and are consequently no longer members of the International Executive Committee." (79)

At this time, the International Committee of the Fourth International said that for the LSSP (R), now led by the old left wing leaders of the LSSP, to break the grip of the reformists, nationalists and Stalinists over the working class and build a real mass revolutionary party on the island, it was necessary to understand the connections between the coalition and the politics of the United Secretariat—and to break decisively, once and for all, with the United Secretariat and function as an affiliate of the International Committee.

But with little exception, the LSSP (R) leaders believed that it was still possible to both build a revolutionary party in Ceylon and maintain their connections with the United Secretariat. This was even after the United Secretariat revisionists had totally disoriented and paralyzed the fight of the left wing against the opportunists in the LSSP through the medium of the United Left Front.

This was the assumption of Karalasingham, Tampoe, Samarakkody and Maryl Fernando, the principal political leaders of the LSSP (R). History was to shortly prove them dead wrong.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE RENEGADES

The second coalition having fallen and the struggle for the 21 demands sabotaged beyond recognition, the LSSP leaders continued their collaboration with Mrs. Bandaranaike. For this is the logical outcome of revisionism in all of its forms—collaboration with the capitalist class, especially its liberal sections, whether or not this takes the particular form of a coalition government.

With the support of the pro-Moscow CP, the LSSP and SLFP signed a new no-contest pact to fight the upcoming elections. These elections were set for March 22, 1965, and the SLFP-CP-LSSP led coalition quickly showed how they intended to fight it, by the use of racism so vile that even the UNP seldom dared to engage in.

They started their campaign at a big mass rally to hustle votes for the coalition on December 9, 1964, making special mention of the supposed benefits to be brought by the Shastri-Bandaranaike pact.

They then moved towards whipping up Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism. The coalitionist moves of the LSSP and CP had had one advantage. It had brought them additional

financial backing, so much so that they could begin the publication of daily newspapers, the "Janamathaya" of the LSSP and the "Attha" of the pro-Moscow CP. Through their pages, as well as those of the LSSP weekly "Janasathiya" were published some of the most vile racist and communal filth to ever fill the columns of supposedly working-class newspapers.

This campaign went on both before and after the elections.

They accused the UNP of plotting with the Federal Party (a Tamil communal party) to make Tamil an official language. The LSSP now went all the way with "Sinhala Only." And among the "crimes" of the UNP it was alleged that this party, which had once victimized Tamil civil servants, would now give them their jobs back.

It was further alleged that the only Sinhalese Buddhists who supported the UNP were those who did not have a clear understanding of Buddhist philosophy, as did, say, N.M. Perera.

With a few changes of names, the coalitionists were shouting the same racist slogans as their predecessors of the MEP did in 1956.

Even the Catholic Church felt the wrath of the coalitionists. The CP and LSSP press charged the UNP with committing such crimes as nominating Catholics for municipal office in Colombo and for membership in the Senate. This, which the LSSP and CP themselves had done years before from among their members who had come from Catholic backgrounds, was something the coalition made sure they never did again. From then on, only those with a "clear understanding of Buddhist philosophy" were nominated by the CP and LSSP.

The LSSP (R) had learned little from their struggle as the left wing of the LSSP. They brought with them many of the weaknesses of the old party.

To begin with, the LSSP (R) leaders never viewed themselves as part of an international movement, taking its international responsibilities to be primary. It was this view of itself in 1953 and 1954 that had allowed the LSSP leaders, while disagreeing with much of what Pablo said, to continue to remain in the same organization, so long as he left them to do what they pleased on the island. It was this same lack of international perspectives that led Lora of the Bolivian POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) to break with Pablo at the same time, and devote his party entirely to Bolivia. This has now led to the military staging a come-back in that country.

In Ceylon this was immediately seen when Mandel and Frank entrusted the publication of their English journal "Fourth International" to the LSSP (R), a journal in existence almost ten years. It promptly was

shut down.

It was this refusal to start with the struggle for internationalism, for Marxist method and theory, that was the real beginning of the end of the LSSP (R). Whole sections of that party found out that the United Secretariat was not the least bit concerned in building a revolutionary movement on the island, but in basking in the glory of the LSSP (R)'s leadership of the Mercantile Union, much as they had held up the old LSSP to ward off criticisms from the International Committee.

As a result, the defections soon began. Osmund Jayaratne, who was Mandel's full-time troubleshooter in Ceylon, now chose the possibility of a warm parliamentary seat to revolutionary struggle, and rejoined the LSSP.

Both the coalition and the LSSP (R) went down to defeat in the elections. The coalition wound up with 55 seats, and the UNP-led forces with 66. With the aid of the Federal Party, a new government was formed. The LSSP (R) was overwhelmingly defeated in the four seats it contested, being crushed by LSSP and Federal Party candidates.

The LSSP (R) leaders were waking up to the fact that it was no easy matter to break the working class from its traditional leadership, no matter how treacherous such leaders were. All of the major LSSP (R) leaders, each in his own way, ran away from the struggle to build the new leadership in the class.

Now the UNP government of Dudley Senanayake showed its true face. In December, 1965, the police baton-charged demonstrating students. Then they introduced the Special Provisions Act providing for a limited use of Tamil—this was intended to help whip up Sinhalese racism and further divide the working class, and make future government attacks easier.

The LSSP, CP and Mrs. Bandaranaike then went so far as to call an anti-Tamil strike on January 8, 1966 against the Special Provisions Act. The UNP government secured the mass firings of thousands of militant workers misled by the coalitionists who had answered the strike call.

The LSSP leaders were being consistent. They had turned May Day, 1965 into a pogrom against Tamil workers in Colombo. A few months later it was reported that:

"Reliable party sources said that the N.M. Perera-Anil Moonesinghe faction of the LSSP is lobbying heavily for a break with the Fourth International...

"The N.M. Perera-Anil Moonesinghe faction, according to reliable Left sources, scored a major victory against the Leslie Goonewardene-Colvin R. DeSilva faction when they sabotaged plans for holding Trotsky

memorial meetings on August 20." (80)

Yet the Special Provisions Act around which the coalitionists had whipped up the racism brought out more clearly than ever another fact—the completely capitalist nature of the Federal Party. The act established Tamil as an official language only in the Northern and Eastern provinces, where Tamil was the overwhelming native tongue. It retained a subordinate status to Sinhalese in the island as a whole. Yet this was the logical outcome of the politics of the Federal Party and the workers and peasants it misled—to seek concessions within the framework of capitalism. This was what led the Federal Party from its inception to make deals with either the UNP and SLFP. But through the LSSP (R) leaders could correctly point all of this out, they followed it up with little practical work to develop a revolutionary party among either the working class or the minorities.

As for building a revolutionary party in Ceylon and throughout the Indian subcontinent, the LSSP (R) leaders got no help whatsoever from the United Secretariat. The Secretariat's affiliates held a world congress in Rome in 1965 in which the Ceylon disaster was discussed in—ninety minutes!

COMMUNIST LEAGUE

This period in Ceylon following the defeat of the coalition should have enabled the LSSP (R) to build up a substantial movement and win over a section of those workers misled into the coalition by the Stalinist and revisionist leaders. But because the LSSP (R) was also among the misled, misled by the Politics of the United Secretariat, it instead went from one disaster to another.

After Jayaratne, the next group of defectors were those around V. Karalasingham. His faction, in complete opposition to Bolshevik discipline, had been allowed to publish a public journal, "Sakti," which was completely outside party discipline. This faction early in 1966 decided to return to the LSSP.

Karalasingham produced a pamphlet, *Senile Leftism*, to justify his retreat to the LSSP. Karalasingham blames Samarakkody and the LSSP (R) for the downfall of the coalition. But throughout his sophisticated justification for the coalition runs a thread of the politics of the United Secretariat. For had they not for years argued that revolutionaries should enter mass Stalinist and reformist parties to help "mass pressure" turn these organizations into revolutionary parties? Karalasingham was being consistent. We shall see more of his later evolution shortly.

The final step taken by the LSSP (R) to build a revolutionary party and a united front of working class

organizations to resist the government's new attacks (the UNP had used the January 8th strike to invoke a state of emergency) was the creation in 1966 of the United Committee of Ceylon Trade Unions. Besides Tampoe's Mercantile Union, it included the Bank Employees, and on the plantations, the Democratic Workers Congress and the Ceylon Estates Staffs' Union.

It was under the leadership of this united front that the bank workers and the bulk of the plantation workers came out on strike, forcing the pro-coalition plantation unions to go along to achieve one of the first wage increases on the plantations since 1949.

But the LSSP (R) leaders frittered away these opportunities presented by the building of this United Committee. Moreover, it was an indication that their opposition to the government was to remain confined to a trade union, syndicalist level.

The real turning point was reached when the world economy took a turn into deeper crisis in 1967, with the devaluation of the British pound. This was followed by the devaluation of Ceylon's rupee by 20 percent.

This meant a vicious slash in the living standards of the working class on the island, and the LSSP and pro-Moscow and pro-Chinese CP-led unions were forced to strike against the devaluation. Yet Tampoe refused to call his union out in support of the others, using the excuse that the leadership of the other unions was inadequate and would lead to defeat.

The LSSP (R) was getting ready to split wide open.

A section of the party led by Samarakkody and Kulatilake broke away shortly after realizing that the United Secretariat had no intention of building a revolutionary party on the island or anywhere else. They sharply criticized the role of the Secretariat in its resolution on the six day war between the Arab states and Israel in 1967. This resolution had not called for the military defeat of Israel and had shown no perspective for building mass revolutionary parties in the Middle East. For a few months the United Secretariat tried to reunite the groups and considered both its affiliates, and then finally threw their lot in with Tampoe.

Another group had been developing around the **Young Socialist** journal since 1964, led by Wilfred Pereira, who had seen the role of the Pabloites in preparing the coalition very early. This group had tried to turn the **Young Socialist** journal towards a new development of Marxism and towards the International Committee. But the editor, Sydney Wanasinghe, preferred to keep the journal a literary affair, to print long essays on various features of the Ceylonese bourgeois constitution, etc.

After four years of political struggle this group broke

both with Wanasinghe and the LSSP (R), to found the Revolutionary Communist League, affiliated with the International Committee, in June, 1968.

Because of the development these comrades had made in their course of struggle with the revisionist elements they were shortly after the split to lay the basis for a youth movement, the Revolutionary Communist Youth, and expand from the publication of one Sinhalese paper, *Virodahya*, to five papers, in English, Sinhalese and Tamil.

Now the working class began to move into struggle not seen since before the second coalition, with 300,000 coming out for wage increases in November, 1968. This was followed early the next year by a big strike of government clerical service workers, during which the UNP government declared another state of emergency. Later in 1969, workers in the nationalized industries struck and their leaders proposed a general strike to back them, but retreated and called it off two days before it was supposed to begin. Tampoe's CMU followed in the retreat.

While this was going on, another movement was taking shape, primarily among the middle class youth, the JVP (Janatha Vikmuthi Peramuna-Peoples Liberation Front). Its main leader was Rohan Wijweera, a former member of the pro-Moscow CP. It built a big base among university students and unemployed university graduates, of whom there were several tens of thousands. They built this base on a completely reactionary basis. This movement was restricted to the Sinhalese speaking, for the leadership characterized India as the biggest imperialist power in relation to Ceylon. They maintained a completely hostile attitude towards trade unions, and a racist attitude towards the Indian estate workers.

Yet Tampoe introduced Wijweera to his union's annual conference as a true Marxist-Leninist!

But despite all the efforts of the leaders to behead it, the militancy of the working class and rural poor reached new heights as 1970 approached, and with it, the end of the UNP's constitutional term of office. This government found itself unable to pass its anti-union bill, the wages council bill or to drastically cut social services. And so Senanayake set new elections for May 27, 1970.

He had some reasons to be confident. Two of the top leaders of the LSSP, Jack Kotelawala and P.B. Wijesundera crossed the floor in Parliament to join the UNP. Now the election campaign began in earnest.

Lined up with the UNP were Philip Gunawardena's MEP, the Federal Party, the Tamil Congress and several other right wing parties. All of them, though allied with the Tamil Congress and Federal Party, engaged in an

orgy of Sinhalese racism.

The coalitionists led by the SLFP, LSSP and pro-Moscow CP, even outdid the UNP and its partners in the racism. Their program was even more reactionary than it had been in 1956 or 1964, promising only the nationalization of foreign banks. They were backed up by both the pro-Peking CP and the JVP.

Then the results began to come in, with the UNP receiving its worst defeat since 1956, and the SLFP-CP-LSSP coalition taking over two-thirds of the seats in Parliament. Over two-thirds of the sitting UNP Ministers lost their seats. The SLFP got 90 seats, the LSSP 19 and the pro-Moscow CP got 6.

All of the revisionists were now coming home to roost in the SLFP nest. Karalasingham showed where Pablo's theories of mass pressure on the opportunist working class leaders and middle class nationalists led—he accepted a directorship in the state mortgage bank under the coalition.

Wanasinghe, the editor and publisher of the *Young Socialist* journal quickly followed suit. Discussing the possibility of an army coup late in 1970, he stated that: "In 1970, however, with the massive peoples' victory of May 27th, organized widespread subversion in army-police circles does not appear to be an immediate possibility." (81)

This time the CP got a place in the government, with Keuneman becoming Minister of Housing. Perera got back his old job as Finance Minister, and who was to join him in accepting ministries but Mandel's "genuine Trotskyists" Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. DeSilva.

Now the capitalist class through the coalition government stepped up its drive to clamp down on the working class, with police shootings of striking estate workers and baton-charging again the striking estate workers. One Ceylonese supporter of the International Committee, writing late in 1970, characterized the situation as follows:

"Behind the facade of the coalition rhetoric, the most reactionary sections of the ruling class are preparing for a brutal offensive against the working class and its traditional leadership." (82)

Tampoe got ready at this time, not for this offensive, but for an unprincipled alliance of the JVP. His reasoning reveals the total isolation of the LSSP (R) from the youth:

"The LSSP (R) had no clear idea of what the JVP was, but when they held their meeting on August 10, it was quite clear that it was entirely a genuine mass movement of Sinhala youth. There were about 10,000 people at that first meeting...."

Seeing numbers and not principle as the crucial thing,

Tampoe noted that:

“Our party has established very friendly political relations with the leadership of the movement, even though to begin with they undoubtedly had what we would describe as a Stalinist orientation, and to some extent, since their movement is comprised entirely of Sinhala youth, they also had to some degree a racialist orientation.” (83)

Shortly after Tampoe had made these statements, the coalition had launched a bloodbath against the JVP, with Tampoe, his party and his union making only verbal protests. During this recently concluded bloodbath, Mrs. Bandaranaike gave her coalition partners the go-ahead to use the army and police to get rid of their left wing opponents.

For a brief period of time, leaders of the Revolutionary Communist League were detained, and their press remains banned. Leaders of the pro-Chinese CP are still detained, and their supporters who led the Revolutionary Plantation Workers Union have “disappeared.”

Hundreds of members of the pro-Moscow CP and LSSP have been arrested as it was thought that they were a source of potential opposition. V. Nanayakkara, an LSSP youth leader and member of Parliament remains in custody.

One final point. We must consider the whole blood-soaked history of the coalition periods in Ceylon's history to represent the greatest betrayal of the revisionists led by Mandel and the United Secretariat.

There have, of course, been other such betrayals: Algeria, Belgium and a number of other countries. But only in Ceylon has a mass party calling itself Trotskyist and developed under the leadership of Mandel, Frank and Pablo, been directly responsible for such betrayals.

It has been the greatest betrayal of the working class that the revisionists of the United Secretariat have gotten away with—so far. If they are not stopped the same sort of situation can develop in Europe, America and South America, with even more disastrous results.

The most urgent requirement today to prevent this is the building of mass sections of the Fourth International in all countries. This can be done only through a conscious struggle to expose and isolate the centrist charlatans such as Mandel who masquerade as Trotskyists.

There are over 20,000 dead in Ceylon today as a result of the revisionism which developed in the Trotskyist movement after the second world war. The Fourth International can go forward only through the struggle against this revisionism of Pablo and Mandel. This is the real lesson of Ceylon.

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