

**FORWARD**

**CEYLON  
COMMUNIST PARTY  
25th  
ANNIVERSARY**

# 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CEYLON COMMUNIST PARTY

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*All articles except those by Pieter Keuneman, Basil Perera, Maud Keuneman and  
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S. A. Wickremasinghe

# OUR COMMUNIST PARTY



Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe M.P.

The Communist Party is a party of scientific socialism. We did not establish our Communist Party in Ceylon until we believed we had sufficient scientific understanding of the social systems in the world and the relation of forces in our own country, and until we were convinced we were sufficiently politically mature to organise a political party on Leninist lines.

At the beginning of the 20th century imperialism was still the dominant world force, dragging humanity to degradation and war.

But already the capitalist system had given birth to the economic and social force

which could liberate mankind - the working class and its great weapon Marxism, the scientific teaching which was developed in the era of imperialism by Lenin.

The Great October Revolution of 1917 breached the imperialist front and under the leadership of Lenin the people of what was to be the Soviet Union began to construct the first socialist state in the world.

The victory of that revolution evoked great enthusiasm among the working class of the capitalist countries, some of whom tried to emulate it although not at that time with success. It also opened up new perspectives for the oppressed colonial peoples to throw off the imperialist yoke.

But the real impact of the Great October Revolution and the creation, for the first time, of a socialist state, was not immediately felt in Ceylon.

In the early 20's leaders like Anagarika Dharmapala helped to create a national cultural awakening mainly among sections of the young capitalist class and the intellectuals.

In the same period workers' struggles and trade unions were beginning to develop under the leadership of A. E. Goonesinha.

### First Pioneers

But although Anagarika Dharmapala and others like him sometimes supported workers' struggles, there was no understanding of the anti-imperialist content of both the cultural awakening and the workers' struggles and how each could reinforce the other

The task of bringing this understanding of the nature of the national liberation struggle and laying the foundations for a Marxist-Leninist Party in Ceylon fell on a small group of students who had been following advanced courses in London.

They had been able to study the ideas of scientific socialism, and the experiences of the Soviet revolution; they had met with British and other Communists and liberation fighters from other parts of the British Empire.

When those students, of whom I was one, returned to Ceylon at the end of the twenties, we found that the so-called national leaders were content with the "honour" of serving British imperialism, working class organisation was being weakened by communalism - and the fact that much labour was that of immigrants who stayed here a comparatively short time - and by feudal remnants.

In India where indigenous capitalism had grown stronger the national capitalists were playing a useful role in the national liberation struggle. The working class movement too was stronger and did not (as in Ceylon) consist to a great extent of immigrants.

But our national bourgeoisie was still very weak - it was not to assert itself as an independent political force until 1951 - and our working class was weak in the towns and isolated on the imperialist-owned estates.

In those circumstances we had to propagate the ideas of socialism, develop our Marxist Leninist understanding,

## Our Communist Party

analyse scientifically the developments in our own country and find the right way forward for the national liberation struggle.

### L. S. S. P. Formed

It was not easy, but by 1931 I was able to get elected to the State Council as its first socialist Member, and from then on we carried out a number of campaigns, including that against social disabilities and the Suriya Mal campaign which especially attracted patriotic youth.

By December 1935 we were strong enough to set up the Lanka Sama Samaja Party which stood for full and complete independence, socialism and solidarity with other peoples in the anti-imperialist struggle. It united all the socialist forces in Ceylon at the time.

The world situation in the thirties was steadily growing more tense. Fascism ruled in Italy, then in Germany and took over Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia.

In the other capitalist countries the ruling class, terrified of the growing power of socialist ideas, took merciless steps against working class and democratic organisations and movements.

### United Front

Everywhere Communists fought to build a broad-based alliance to fight and destroy the common enemy, fascism, and defend every democratic right of the people in both capitalist and colonial countries.

But some sections of the Left were opposed to the idea of a broad front against fascism.

When the Soviet Union was brought into the war they characterised it as a struggle for power - and openly pro-

phesied, as the imperialists were doing - that the USSR would soon be defeated.

These sections did not believe it was possible to defend the rights of the common people under capitalism; they totally rejected the role of sections of capitalists in the struggle for national freedom and in the democratic revolution.

Some of them held to the view that no section of capitalists could ever play a progressive role right up to 1964.

Thus the LSSP was split in 1940 and by 1943 we felt able to form our Communist Party. At the same time we have always fought for real unity of the Left as the basis for a broad national united front to carry forward our freedom struggle.

The victory of the USSR and its allies at the end of the war, the setting up of 14 new socialist states, and the big upsurge and staggering successes of the national liberation movement after the war have all proved the correctness of the policy of the broad united front.

So did the national awakening after the election of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's government in 1956 and the later events which led to the LSSP, which was once opposed to all such fronts, forming a coalition with Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1964.

Of course we have made plenty of mistakes. But we have corrected them, and learned from them, and we are justly proud that our policy on the whole has been correct.

### Our Tasks

We can never forget our responsibilities as part of the

great world communist movement, the only movement able to give leadership in the struggle to wipe out imperialism, colonialism and war and build a socialist and peaceful world.

We also accept fully our responsibilities today as a partner in the anti-imperialist national front. We fully support the Common Programme, which we helped to draw up, as an important step forward along the path of non-capitalist development of our country towards the goal of socialism.

We believe this involves much struggle - to strengthen the nationalised sector of industry, for example, and destroy foreign capitalist economic influence.

It means a great increase in trade and cooperation with the USSR and other socialist countries, while not neglecting the importance of trade and cooperation - on equal terms - with the capitalist countries.

It means the most rapid development of projects like the new Mahaweli Ganga scheme, which will open up for cultivation in many different crops over 8 lakhs of acres in the North Central, Northern and Eastern Provinces.

It means involving the people actively in development of our country through new forms and especially the real democratisation of local government and administration - not phoney District Councils, which most people rightly reject.

Our Party's biggest responsibility is to help forward the victory of the United Front so that we can implement the Common Programme and begin a prosperous, non-capitalist development for the whole people of Ceylon.

## WE ARE PROUD OF OUR RECORD



Pieter Keuneman M.P.

The Ceylon Communist Party, which celebrates its 25th anniversary on 3 July 1968, is the second oldest of the contemporary political parties of Ceylon.

Indeed, of all the political parties formed prior to independence, it is only the LSSP and the CP, the two parties of the Left, that are still active in the political arena.

The birth of our Party in 1943 was the result of a fusion between many different experiences of the working class of Ceylon.

It was, in the first place, a result of the practical experiences that the workers of

Ceylon had gained from their own struggles over the previous quarter of a century.

It was also a result of the inspiration and example that they had gained from the struggles of the workers abroad, especially the Great October Socialist Revolution, the successful construction of socialism in the USSR and the great struggles of the international communist movement in the 1930's against imperialism and capitalism, fascism and war.

Other factors that contributed to the formation of the Ceylon Communist Party were, on the positive side, the growing acquaintance of the workers and radical intelligentsia with the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism and, on the negative side, their experiences of the damage done to the working class movement by Right-wing Social Democracy at the end of the 1920's and by Trotskyism at the end of the 1930's.

The workers and radical intelligentsia were only too keenly aware of how Mr. A. E. Goonesinha, in league with the Right-wing Social Democratic leaders of the British Labour Party, had betrayed the militant trade union struggles of the 1920's and left the workers disarmed and defenceless at the crucial moment when, at the end of the decade, the disastrous effects of the world-wide

crisis of capitalism began to be felt in Ceylon.

Similarly, the workers had begun to learn from their own experience how the introduction of Trotskyism at the end of the 1930's, just at the crucial moment when the Second World War and intensified imperialist oppression had begun, split the anti-imperialist and socialist movement that had begun to gather strength in this decade.

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In the past 25 years, the position that the Communist Party occupies in the national political life of Ceylon in general, and in the working class and progressive movement of our country in particular, has grown considerably.

In 1943, when we formed our Party, we were a small group with limited contacts and restricted influence and authority among the widest masses of the working class and other anti-imperialist strata of Ceylon society.

Today, when we celebrate our 25th anniversary, the position has changed greatly. Our Party is a major influence in the working class movement. It is a recognised and accepted part of Ceylon's political life, whose influence is felt in many spheres.

We are one of the three parties of the SLFP-LSSP-CP united front, which today leads the entire patriotic and progressive movement of

Ceylon. Together with the other parties of this united front we have accepted a 25-point Common Programme that, *inter alia*, envisages the establishment of a government of the SLFP, LSSP, CP and other progressive forces.

The struggle which made this change possible was not an easy one. No other political party in Ceylon has been subjected to such unremitting slander and attack as the Communist Party. We have been branded as "foreign agents", "traitors", "disruptors" and all the other classic epithets in the rich vocabulary of anti-communism. We have been forced to work illegally, to have our newspapers and other publications prohibited, to endure imprisonment and other persecutions.

And very often the slanders against our party came not only from our enemies, the imperialists, and their collaborators, but even from other sections of the working class and democratic movement who had been led astray by anti-communist propaganda or fallen victim to anti-communist prejudices.

How were the Communists able to withstand all this and to bring our Party to the position that it occupies today?

First and foremost we have shown by our deeds and actions that the Communist Party is an integral and indispensable part of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement in Ceylon.

On our 25th anniversary we can say with pride that the Communist Party has been in the front lines of every major struggle that the workers and people of Ceylon have waged against imperialist, capitalist and feudal exploitation over the past quarter-century.

Whether it be the war-time struggles against the Soulbury Constitution and for inde-

pendence, or the immediate post-war struggles which culminated in the general strike of 1947 that forced British imperialism to abandon direct colonial rule; the great Hartal of 1953 and other struggles, before and after, to defend the people's livelihood from attacks by the UNP and its American-dominated World Bank "advisers"; the South-Western Co. bus strike of 1955 that paved the way for nationalisation of the bus services, or the many strike struggles from 1956 to 1958 against the rising cost of living; the great mass actions that led to the evacuation of British naval and air bases, the nationalisation of the Anglo-American oil companies and other progressive developments; or the fight of 8 January 1966 against UNP-FP attempts to lay the basis for undermining Ceylon's political and economic integrity - in all these and other struggles, Communists have been in the forefront.

Secondly, the Communist Party has a long and consistent record of work to unite the working class and all the progressive and anti-imperialist forces.

From the very inception of our Party, we have sought to heal the split in the anti-imperialist and socialist movement out of which we were born.

Even as early as 1947, after the general elections for the First Parliament, when the UNP was not able to muster a clear majority, it was the Communists who at the "Yamuna" conference proposed the setting up of an alternative government of the anti-UNP forces. If this had been accepted, how different the history of Ceylon would have been!

Our desire for unity was concretised at the historic Fourth Congress of our Party in 1950 which set out the

specific aims of building a united national front of all anti-imperialist and patriotic sections of the people of Ceylon and of uniting the working class in order to lead the broader anti-imperialist movement.

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Although the widest sections of the progressive and socialist movement in Ceylon now accept the need for unity in their ranks, it was not always so. The Communists had to wage a long and difficult struggle for nearly two decades to win acceptance for this view.

We had to struggle against several wrong tendencies in the progressive movement which hampered unity - tendencies such as those to "go it alone" which animated some sections of the movement for some time, and the sectarian tendencies which sought to make out that the anti-imperialist struggle was solely a concern of the working class and the Left parties, or the various manifestations of anti-Communism that from time to time sought to deny our Party its rightful place in the movement.

Step by step, experiencing both success and defeat, our Party went ahead with its policy of unity. Temporary set-backs did not discourage us, nor did temporary successes make us lose our heads. We knew that the fight for unity would be a long and complicated process. But we advocated and fought for unity not, as some alleged, because we felt weak and lacked self-confidence but because we knew that unity was the only correct way forward.

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Our struggle for unity had its ups and downs and passed through several stages.

1951-55 saw the CP-VLSSP United Front and repeated but, alas, unsuccessful attempts to get the LSSP to join it.

1955 saw the break-up of the CP-VLSSP United Front and the beginning of a difficult and complicated period that lasted until 1963. During this period anti-imperialist and progressive governments were elected to power in 1956 and 1960 thanks to united electoral agreements between the progressive forces. But at the same time, in between elections, the progressive forces were in disarray, ranged on different sides and clashing with each other.

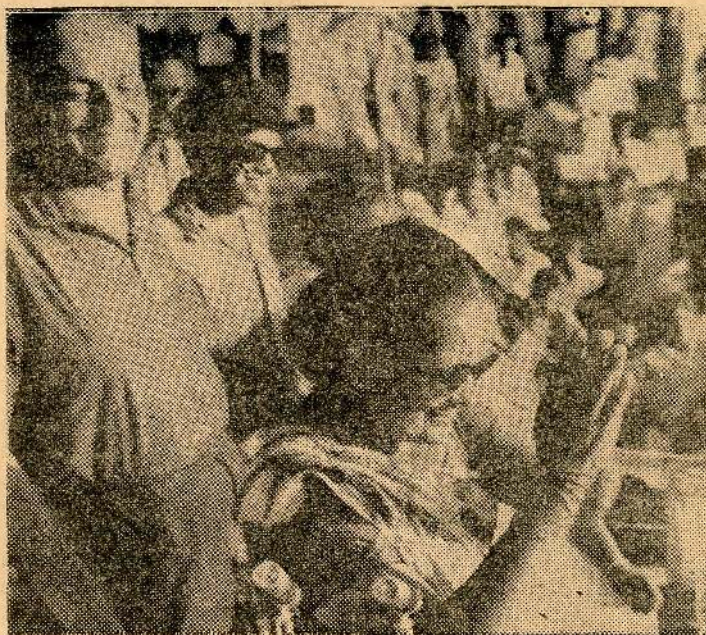
During this complicated period too our Party followed the policy of building unity. The breakthrough came in 1963 with the formation of the United Left Front, for which our Party had campaigned and which it had specifically proposed at our Central Committee meeting in August 1962.

Although the ULF lasted only until 1964, it proved to be the catalyst in the political situation that began a Leftward orientation in the SLFP itself and laid the foundations for later development such as the SLFP-LSSP Coalition Government of 1964-65, the electoral agreements of 1965 and the joint campaigns before, during and after the elections by the SLFP, LSSP and the Communist Party, culminating in the SLFP-LSSP-CP United Front Agreement and Common Programme of this year.

It is a great satisfaction to our Party that, on our 25th anniversary, the united front for which we worked since 1940 has taken shape and that the unity of the trade unions, too, has been consolidated in the formation of the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations.

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A third major contribution that the Communist Party has made to the anti-imperialist and working class movement of Ceylon is that we have helped to give it clarity



Leaders of the SLFP, LSSP and CP at the May Day Rally.

as regards its aims and objects, its strategy and tactics.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote:

“The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only:— 1) In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2) In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole”.

Our Party has always sought to follow this great teaching of the founders of scientific socialism. Although attempts have several times been made to take advantage of our Party's sincere desire to put the interests of the movement as a whole above even the immediate interests of

our Party, we have never deviated from this teaching.

At every stage of the Ceylonese revolution, our Party has sought to unite the progressive forces around common aims which correspond to the stage of the revolution and advance the interests of all progressive forces; and we have proposed forms of struggle which correspond to the level of maturity and militancy reached by the progressive movement as a whole (and not by any one or other part of it) at every given stage of the struggle.

Over the past 25 years, the examples are legion where policies and proposals first suggested by the Communist Party have come to be accepted as the common policy of the entire progressive movement.

We were able to achieve this not because we were wiser or cleverer than others but because we based ourselves on the universal and scientific truths of Marxism-Leninism and sought to use these teachings as a wea-

pon to elucidate the concrete problems of Ceylon and find a solution to these problems in the interests of the people.

Many, even in the anti-imperialist movement, did not believe us when, during the Second World War, we stressed that the defeat of fascism would mean the weakening of imperialism as a whole, an upsurge of the national liberation movement, and the spread of socialism. But this is precisely what happened.

Likewise, few agreed with or believed us when in 1948 we criticised the restricted "independence" arrangements reached between British imperialism and the Ceylon compradore bourgeoisie, when we denounced these pro-imperialist and reactionary arrangements as a "brake on and not a fulfilment of the independence struggle", and when we pointed out that the fight for real independence still demanded the liquidation of British bases in Ceylon, an independent republic, and a new Constitution fashioned by the people themselves, a clean break with the policy of subordination to British imperialist interests in foreign and defence policy, and the nationalisation of all foreign monopolies in the key sectors of the economy.

All these ideas later became the accepted policies of the entire progressive movement.

In the same way, it was the Communists who first made the progressive forces aware of new threats to Ceylon's independence from American imperialism and from West German and other forms of neo-colonialism. It was the Communists who drew pointed attention to the subversive activities of imperialist agencies like the CIA, the Peace Corps, the Voice of America and the Asia Foundation.

If the SLFP Governments of 1956 and 1960 and the

Coalition Government of 1964 had taken timely action, as the Communists demanded, to wind up these subversive imperialist organisations, the events of December 1964 might not have happened.

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Space does not permit a full account of all other policies that the Communists pioneered in this way. It is sufficient to mention that the continuous and unremitting fight of the Communists has changed many basic concepts about economic development.

Today the widest sections of the progressive movement accept that industrialisation should be the main basis and direction of national economic development. The need for agrarian reform is universally recognised. The defects, limitations and economic wastefulness of D. S. Senanayake's "sacred cow" of colonisation schemes is freely admitted. The need for multi-purpose schemes to harness our rivers, for the development of water transport, and for a host of other economic changes is conceded.

But this was not so when Dr S. A. Wickremasinghe, the late P. Kandiah and I were first advancing these ideas in Parliament and outside on behalf of our Party.

Young people today enjoy the vote at 18 years of age. But when, on behalf of our Party, I first proposed this in 1955, in the Parliamentary Select Committee to reform the electoral laws, only the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and N. M. Perera were prepared to support this proposal.

The role played by our Party in the many struggles of the workers for their vital interests is dealt with in another article. It is sufficient to say that the Communists were not only in the front lines of all the major strike struggles of the workers to improve their conditions of

work and life, but also led many of these struggles themselves, such as the great strike struggles immediately after the end of the Second World War, the strikes of 1958 that won private sector workers the Government rate of dearness allowance, etc.

Many basic rights that workers in the industrial public sector now enjoy were won by trade unions led by the Communists. The role played by the Communists in the struggles of the workers in the public sector can only be fully told when the reactionary laws, introduced by the UNP Government, which prohibit public sector workers, on pain of punishment, from open contact with the rest of the working class movement, are repealed.

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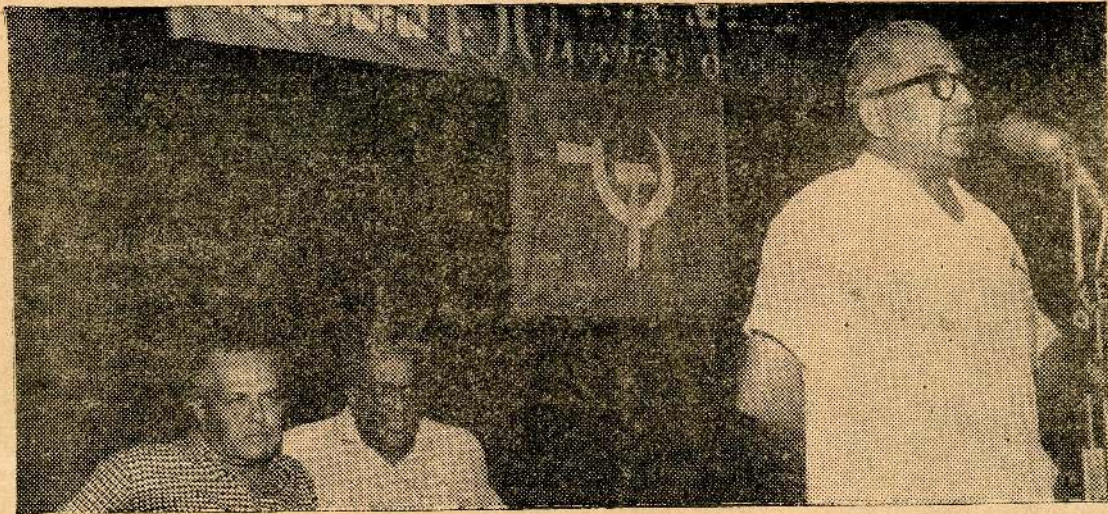
The great authority that socialism enjoys in Ceylon today is in great measure due to the unremitting work of the Communists. Our Party has translated works of the great socialist teachers and leaders like Marx, Engels and Lenin into Sinhala and made a host of other socialist literature available to the people as well. In many different ways, we have made the people of Ceylon aware of the achievements of the Soviet Union and other countries that have taken the path of socialism.

The great services rendered by the Communist Party newspapers and by daily papers like the *Aththa*, which for several years fought the entire monopoly press single-handedly, are known to all.

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Thus on our 25th anniversary, the Communist Party can claim that, although it is the only one of the recognised national parties that has not held or shared governmental power in the past quarter of a century, it has been of great service to the people of Ceylon and to the working class and





CP, LSSP and SLFP speakers at Colombo Rally to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx.

progressive movement in particular.

In the past 25 years our Party has had to work under both legal and illegal conditions to undergo hardships and official persecutions, to experience both success and defeat.

We have made mistakes but, as Lenin taught us, we have learnt to admit these mistakes publicly and to correct them. Within our Party we have had to fight against both Right-opportunist and Left-sectarian deviations at different times and have arrived at correct Marxist-Leninist policies by learning to vanquish both deviations.

Only once in our 25 years history was any serious attempt made to split our Party - when the anti-Party group led by N. Sanmugathasan and supported by the Mao Tse-tung group in the Chinese Communist Party tried to disorient and disrupt our ranks in 1963. But our Party, true to the general line of the international meetings of the world communist movement in 1957 and 1960 which was also endorsed unanimously at our 5th Party Congress, was able to rout these splitters

who are now reduced to total isolation from all progressive forces in Ceylon and are kept alive only by the patronage that they receive from the reactionaries.

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One of the important aspects of the Common Programme adopted by the SLFP-LSSP-CP united front this year is that it contains an explicit recognition that the Communist Party is a legitimate and necessary part of the progressive forces and that any progressive government that is formed in the future should include the Communists as well.

This fact was not universally recognised even in 1964 when the SLFP-LSSP Coalition Government was formed. Due mainly to the opposition from Right-wing traitors within the SLFP like C. P. de Silva and his group, which was later to stab Mrs Bandaranaike's Government in the back, the Communist Party was excluded from the agreement to form a Coalition Government. This was a basic weakness of the Coalition Government of

1964 which made it possible for foreign and domestic reactionaries to overthrow the Government within a few months, although it had enjoyed a large majority of votes in Parliament.

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On our 25th anniversary, the Central Committee of our Ceylon Communist Party thanks the members and supporters of our Party who have fought to build and strengthen our Party over the past quarter of a century. We thank the Communist Youth Leagues, the trade unions and other mass organisations, for their greetings. Our thanks also go out to parties abroad who have sent us messages of congratulations and good wishes on this happy occasion, not only for our Party, but for the whole progressive movement of Ceylon.

On this 25th anniversary, our Party vows to continue to fight for the great aims of peace, national liberation, socialism and communism and to be worthy of the trust and confidence that the people and the progressive movement have placed in us.

K. P. Silva

## THE COMMUNISTS WERE RIGHT



K. P. Silva

Over the last 25 years both local and foreign reaction have done their best to destroy our Ceylon Communist Party.

But we have been able to defeat all their attempts and have grown steadily stronger, earning the love and respect of the working people of this country.

Even more complicated and difficult than the struggle against the class enemy has been the struggle against non-proletarian and sectarian tendencies within the Left movement itself.

Here too we have scored important successes which are of great significance for the future of our struggle for full national independence and socialism.

Why is it that our Party's ranks have swelled from the tiny handful of 1943 to the thousands of today?

The Communist Party today is an authoritative national political party because its policy and leadership have been correct.

### Two Questions

The ideological struggle we have carried out in the past years has been mainly on the question of Ceylon's path to socialism, and on who is our main international ally.

There were some in the Left movement who thought that in a country like Ceylon the tasks of the anti-imperialist democratic revolution would be carried out directly by the socialist revolution of the working class.

Such an idea could weaken the whole anti-imperialist struggle and lead to isolation of the working class from the other anti-imperialist forces.

Such a theory also implies that in the struggle against imperialism no forces other than the working class can play a progressive role.

Thus those who accepted such a theory were opposed to any broad, national anti-imperialist front.

This theory had gained acceptance among some of our friends in the LSSP who advanced it as their policy in 1940.

This was contradictory to the decisions on the general line of policy of the LSSP as had been decided in 1935.

At the foundation conference of the LSSP Colvin R. de Silva said:

"There are broad strata of our population which, though neither working class nor socialist, are genuinely anti-imperialist. In that struggle they are ready to go far, and we should therefore seek increasingly to draw them into the struggle. A basis of action must be found sufficiently broad to draw them into a united front against imperialism. Of course, the working class will naturally be the principal element, but the point is that the movement will not have a purely working class content.

"In every colonial country the foremost question that confronts every oppressed section, including the working class, is the incidence of imperialism. Consequently the political movement tends to supersede the purely economic. This is also our concrete experience in Ceylon.

"The overthrow of imperialism is only a stage, though a necessary stage, in the battle for the socialist society".

This conception was in accord with the ideas of the Third International and of the Communists.

If.....

If the majority of the LSSP had not rejected its earlier views in 1940, the history of the anti-imperialist and socialist movement in Ceylon might have been very different. The question of expelling Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe and others from the LSSP would not have arisen.

And the history of the Communist Party might have been very different too.

Even before the formation of our Party Communists maintained the need to unite broad anti-imperialist sections in the fight to get political independence as a necessary stage in the struggle for socialism.

Answering critics of those times such as A. E. Goonesinha and W. Dahanayake who accused the Communists who had entered the Ceylon National Congress and worked for strengthening it of betrayal of the working class, Pieter Keuneman wrote in the **Forward**:

“Even the merest political novice knows that the main task before the nation today is to win the political freedom to decide its own destiny. Until this is accomplished there can be no question of establishing socialism in our country, just as one must own a plot of land before one can build a house upon it.

“Every person seriously concerned about freedom knows that it cannot be won without a mass freedom movement and without ending the disunity that exists within the nation. Building such a movement and ending national disunity, therefore, represents the test about one’s sincerity concerning freedom.

“We communists have never had the unpardonable arrogance to imagine that we possess a closed monopoly on patriotism. We know that other sections of the nation also desire freedom. The job before the entire nation, therefore, is to unite all these sections in a freedom movement and freedom organisation in which different classes and communities can cooperate for the common aim of freedom.”

At the time of its first anniversary on July 2nd 1944 the Communist Party stated that while its goal was socialism and communism, the immediate aim was the fulfilment of the anti-imperialist and democratic tasks of the Ceylonese revolution, the formation of a national united front to win national independence and democracy.

### After Independence

In the new situation after the gaining of political independence in 1947, new differences appeared about the stage of the Ceylonese revolution, both inside the Communist Party and in the Left movement in general.

The 1950 Congress of our Party however correctly analysed the situation, pointing out that gaining political independence as we had did not complete the anti-imperialist and democratic tasks of the Ceylon revolution.

For this, the Congress declared, it was necessary to build a broad national front of the working class, peasants, middle class and national bourgeoisie, which should be led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance.

Even though at that stage there was no immediate sign of a clear division of the local bourgeoisie, our Congress pointed out the inevitability of such a division due to the contradictions between the national bourgeoisie and the Ceylonese comprador capitalists.

This prediction was proved correct when Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike broke away from the UNP in 1951 and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was formed.

The question before the Left movement as a whole was whether the defeat of the UNP pro-imperialist government should lead to a government of the broad anti-imperialist forces or an anti-capitalist

government of an alliance of Left forces.

### Hard Struggle

Our Party had a hard struggle to convince the Left movement that the slogan of an anti-capitalist government would do serious harm to the efforts to unite the Left and national democratic forces - which was absolutely necessary to defeat the pro-imperialist UNP Government.

On the other hand we had to carry on a similar struggle to convince the national democratic forces of the need to unite with the Left to defeat the UNP Government.

The correctness of our policy was shown when the UNP was defeated in 1956 by electoral unity (although in a limited form) between the national democratic and Left forces.

The defeat of the anti-imperialist forces in March 1960 in the absence of unity and their subsequent victory in July 1960 when electoral unity was re-established again demonstrated the correctness of the policy we had consistently pursued.

Today the whole anti-imperialist movement, both its Left and democratic sections, accept that closer unity is necessary in order to rout the imperialists and their local henchmen and establish complete national independence.

This is also an acceptance by the Left movement in general that this stage of the struggle must be completed in order to go over to the socialist revolution.

### Harmful Ideas

“Socialism cannot be built in one country”; “The Soviet Union is a degenerated working class state”; “The bureaucracy which is in power in the USSR hinders the socialist revolution in other countries”; “Soviet foreign



Leaders of the SLFP, LSSP and CP at a public welcome to a delegation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to Ceylon.

policy is guided by self-interest requiring the instalment of collaborationist national or popular front governments in other countries"; "Communist Parties are not parties of proletarian revolution but are a fifth column of the Soviet bureaucracy".

All these ideas were once put forward by sections of the Left movement in Ceylon. These non-proletarian ideas were of great harm to the movements both of national liberation and socialism.

However malicious the propaganda against us was, labelling us "Soviet agents", "class collaborators", etc, we carried out an intense struggle to rid the Left movement of these ideas. History has shown the correctness of our struggle.

Today the Soviet Union has built socialism and is advancing towards communism. It has emerged as a great bulwark against the capitalist world.

The countries where socialist revolutions took place after the Second World War received great help and support from the Soviet Union, which they deeply appreciated.

In the East, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, all appreciate today the great help given by the USSR to the national liberation movement.

All know the tremendous help given by the USSR in the struggle in Vietnam, in the defence of Cuba and in other anti-imperialist struggles such as that in the Middle East.

### Proof of History

At the same time it remains of course true that while the Soviet Union carries out its international duty in giving tremendous assistance to revolutions in other countries, it never exports revolution.

Revolutions in other countries mature and are won mainly by the maturing of objective and subjective conditions within those countries, and revolutions cannot be exported.

We had to fight hard to convince the Left movement of this Marxist-Leninist truth.

The history of the East European countries which had anti-fascist people's fronts and which defeated fascism and then went over to socia-

lism has shown that the setting up of such fronts was in no way a "betrayal of the working class by the Soviet bureaucracy."

It was necessary in order to defeat the main enemy, fascism.

The history of broad anti-imperialist fronts and of national united front governments in countries like our own has proved that they are not set up at the dictate of some Soviet bureaucracy to suit its foreign policy but are made necessary by the level of the class struggle and the stage of development in our countries.

Non-proletarian views such as those quoted stem from petty bourgeois thinking and the inability to understand correctly the conception of proletarian internationalism.

This is inevitable if the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin are studied through an unsuccessful interpreter.

Concrete historical experience is an important teacher. But the struggle against non-proletarian views in the working class movement in our country has far from ended.

Maud Keuneman

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM



Maud Keuneman

PROLETARIAN internationalism has been one of the main banners of the Ceylon Communist Party since the days of its foundation. In fact it was created in the struggle for proletarian internationalism.

Many of the international positions which are now the common property of the whole progressive movement were first put forward and fought for, often against great difficulties, by the Communist Party.

These include friendship with the Soviet Union (and later the other socialist countries), with all the benefits this has brought Ceylon.

Today the socialist development of the Soviet Union and

its path to communism, its enormous role for peace and in the anti-imperialist struggle are accepted by all the progressive forces.

But the Communist Party had a long and difficult struggle, including the struggle against incorrect ideas which questioned the socialist base of the Soviet Union and the possibility of building socialism in one country.

It was also the Communist Party that first fought for and showed the need for an independent foreign policy based on peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, support for disarmament and positive moves to strengthen world peace, solidarity with and support for anti-imperialist struggles everywhere and for Afro-Asian solidarity.

It was accused of being "non-national" and Communists were branded "agents of Moscow".

But all these principles for which our Party fought became in the main and increasingly the principles on which the foreign policy of the Bandaranaike Governments was based. They are the basis of the foreign policy of the SLFP-LSSP-CP alliance as outlined in the Common Programme.



The need for close association with international democ-

atic organisations such as the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's International Democratic Federation and the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which our Party fought for is now accepted by more and more sections of the progressive movement.

The trade unions, women's organisations and youth leagues led by the SLFP and the LSSP are now affiliated, applying for affiliation or in close contact with these bodies and their conferences are still more widely attended.

The Ceylon Peace Council, founded and led by a leading Communist, the late U. Saranankara Thero, who was given a Lenin prize for his work for peace, and the Afro-Asian Solidarity Association, first suggested by the Communists, are active and useful members of the international organisations.

Through these bodies people of all walks of life and diverse political views are linked with the great world movements for peace and solidarity against imperialism.

The ideas for which the Communists fought during the Second World War have today been proved correct and won the support of the Left and progressive movement.

The Third International was dissolved before our Communist Party was formed. But Communists fought for its correct policy, for support of the Soviet Union, of the people's fight against fascism.

When the Soviet Union entered the war it was the Communists who showed that the balance of world forces was irretrievably altered and that victory over fascism would unleash enormous liberation forces in the world, for the spread of socialism, the weakening of imperialism and the rapid advance of the national liberation struggle of the colonial peoples.

Because it clearly understood the nature of world developments, the Communist Party realised the nature of our independence struggle.

They exposed the role of those who claimed that collaboration with British imperialism was the path to independence. Communists also pointed out the errors of those who argued that the revolution did not require to go through a national democratic stage but could pass directly over to socialism.

The Communists were the first to point to the danger of American imperialist policies to Ceylon, and to bring to light the neo-colonial plans of the big imperialist powers. And again experience has amply shown the correctness of their warnings.

They were the first to draw attention to the subversive activities of imperialist-sponsored agencies such as Asia Foundation, the Voice of America, the Ebert Foundation, etc.



Almost all solidarity movements in the common struggle against imperialism have been initiated by the Communist



U. Saranankara Thero

Party. All have been fought with Communists in the front ranks.

This is true from the harbour workers' ban on ships carrying arms and other materials for the Dutch imperialist war against the Indonesian national liberation struggle to today's nation-wide solidarity movement with the wonderful, dauntless people of Vietnam fighting US imperialist aggression.

The Communist Party initiated and led the movement for solidarity with the Korean people against UN aggression despite press calumny and the attacks of the UNP Government.

It spearheaded the fight outside and inside Parliament which won Consul General status for the missions here of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic.

Our Party began the movement for solidarity with the Congo which, when Patrice Lumumba was murdered, swept the whole country in a great protest movement while the Government flew all flags at half mast.

It was the same with the solidarity movement with the Algerian people during which Algerian representatives were publicly welcomed by representatives of all parties, even including the UNP and the FP.

So it has been with the movement of solidarity with Cuba; with the people of Angola and Mozambique, the new fighting liberation movement in Rhodesia, the South African people fighting apartheid.

The Communist Party has been in the van too in solidarity with the Arab liberation struggle — when the imperialists attacked in 1956, and

again last year at the time of the imperialist-backed Israeli aggression.

Our Party can be proud too of its solidarity with the negro liberation struggle in the United States; and with those courageous Americans who fight against the war in Vietnam.

It has defended, explained and supported the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries, as for example in Italy and France; and the anti-fascist struggle in Greece, in Spain and Portugal.

It has been our Party which has led the way in warning of the grave danger in Europe from the militarist ruling circles in West Germany and the rise of neo-fascism; which has exposed the West German revanchist plans and war plots and which has played the main role in making the people of this country aware of the existence of two German states, one monopolist and militarist and one peaceful and socialist.

The Communist Party's support for and campaigning for the fighting people of Vietnam goes back for very many years.

It led the nation-wide protest in the days before Dien Bien Phu when Kotelawala allowed US planes carrying French troops and arms to refuel here.

Our Party was first to call for protest and solidarity with the Vietnam people when the US began to smash up the Geneva Agreements and it has been in the forefront of every movement, demonstration and action of support for the people of Vietnam against US imperialist aggression ever since.

It was a Communist-sponsored motion which was passed unanimously by the Parliament

of Ceylon calling for an end of US aggression and the withdrawal of all US troops.

Today the fight of the Vietnam people is supported by all except the small coterie of US imperialist allies; the Prime Minister has been compelled by overwhelming public opinion to call for an end to the bombing of the North and support peace negotiations and the Government dare not expose its pro-imperialist sympathies.



The Communist Party too first warned against SEATO and Kotelawala's hopes to drag this country into that imperialist war alliance.

Last year our Party and its spokesmen were first to warn of the danger of the UNP-FP Government trying to take our country into another imperialist-sponsored organisation, ASEAN.

Time and again the Communist Party has proved to the people that its internationalist policy of anti-imperialist solidarity is the only possible one in the real interests of our country.

That is why these policies have won such wide support and why they have generally become the policies of the whole progressive movement.

That is why today the UNP-FP Government dare not openly reject the policies of friendship with the USSR and other socialist countries, of peaceful coexistence and support for all anti-imperialist struggles, but has to find underhand ways to serve the interests of its imperialist backers.



The Ceylon Communist Party's activities in the international communist movement and its relations with brother parties were at first rather restricted.

The first international conference at which our young Party was represented was the Commonwealth Parties' Conference in London in 1947, and our relations with other parties were mainly with those within the British Empire, especially India, Australia and Great Britain.

And although the UNP Government's "cadjan curtain" was not quite so impenetrable as it liked to think, our first real bilateral relations with the CPSU and the Chinese Communist Party were established at the time of the 8th National Congress of the Chinese CP in September 1956.

Since then our party has developed warm friendly relations with the fraternal Marxist Leninist parties — in the socialist countries, capitalist countries and those of developing countries and peoples still fighting for freedom from imperialism.

If abnormal relations exist today between the Ceylon Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party this is because the Chinese Communist Party impermissibly interfered in the internal affairs of our Party.

Our Party is proud of its firm adherence to proletarian internationalism; but we are a party in a small country and we hold most firmly that relations between fraternal parties must be based on our common Marxist-Leninist understanding, non-interference with each other's internal affairs and the equality and independence of each party, large or small.

On this basis we should be glad at any time to resume normal relations with the Chinese Communist Party in the same way as we maintain relations with all brother parties which respect these principles.

Our Party since 1956 has been represented at many National Congresses and other

important events in the lives of our brother parties.

Last year together with the other fraternal parties the Ceylon Communist Party rejoiced to take part in the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Great October Revolution and to carry greetings to the oldest and greatest Communist Party, the CPSU, the Party of Lenin.

For it was the Great October Revolution which first breached the world domination of imperialism, opened the way for the triumph of socialism—already for one-third of the world's peoples—and for the breathtaking sweep of success of the national liberation movement.

The road to the final eradication of imperialism and war and to building a free, socialist — and communist — world is possible, today because of the great achievement of the revolution led by the CPSU.

The Ceylon Communist Party took part in the World Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in 1957 and 1960.

Its representatives participated fully in preparing the unanimously agreed documents of those Meetings, and later they were discussed throughout our Party and unanimously endorsed at Party Congresses.

Our Party supported and took part in the Consultative Meeting in Budapest in April this year and fully supports the decision to hold another World Meeting in Moscow in November to discuss the tasks of the struggle against imperialism at the present stage and the unity of action of Communist and Workers' Parties and of all anti-imperialist forces. It is also taking part in the work of the Preparatory Commission for the coming World Meeting.

Our Party stands firmly on

the general line of the 1957 and 1960 World Meetings (and has published the documents, like other important international statements widely in Sinhala and Tamil), on proletarian internationalism and the unity of the world communist movement based on Marxism-Leninism. It has decisively and conclusively defeated attempts to disrupt unity and to take the Communists of Ceylon outside the great family of world Communist Parties.

We are proud of the esteem our principled stand has won for our Party — as was shown when our 7th National Congress was attended by leading members of the Parties of the Soviet Union, the GDR, Mongolia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Australia, France, Italy, the Sudan, Mexico, Brazil and India, and received messages from over 50 brother parties.

Today our party is richer in its understanding of proletarian internationalism.

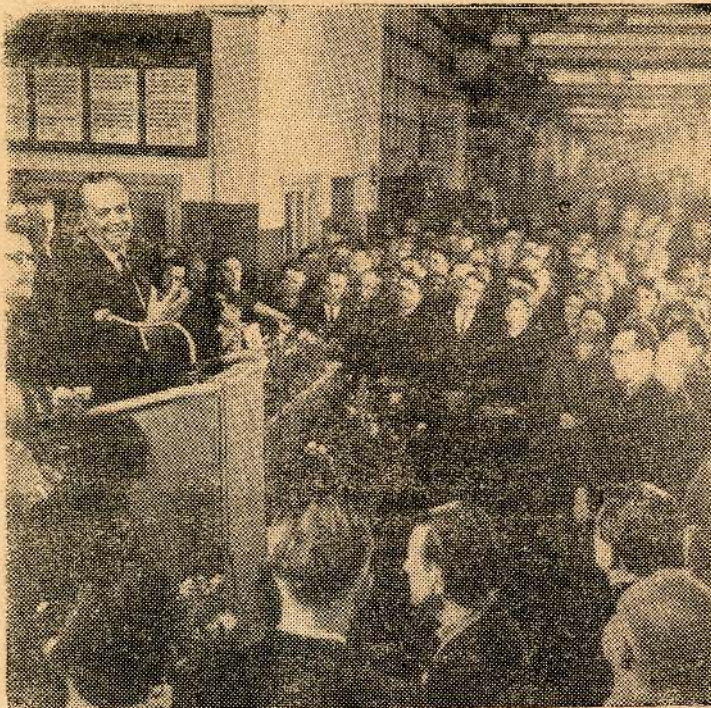
We are better able to work for the identity and solidarity of all progressive forces in Ceylon with the three great streams which are bringing about the revolutionary transformation of our epoch, the world fight for peace, the struggle against colonialism and imperialism and the fight for socialism and communism.

We are proud of the successes we have gained. But we have not been lacking in mistakes, weaknesses and failures.

Now, with a quarter of a century behind us, is the time to review the past so that we can learn from it to do still better in the future.

Our Party is proud to be a member of the great international family of Communism.

And we know that in working for its international policy we truly represent the interests of our own working class, which gave birth to our Party, and of our country.



**Pieter Keuneman, General Secretary of the Ceylon Communist Party, addresses workers in a Moscow factory during celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.**



Basil Perera

# COMMUNISTS IN PARLIAMENT



Basil Perera

The first batch of Communist MP's was elected to the first Parliament of Ceylon in 1947, four years after the formation of the Ceylon Communist Party in 1943.

Ever since then, Communist MP's have used every Parliament not only as a forum to expose social injustice and put across their policies to ever increasing sections of the people, but backed by the mass movement they have used Parliament to win many benefits for the masses.

## FIRST PARLIAMENT

One of the first exposures made by the Communists in Parliament related to the nature of the "independence" that the late Mr. D. S. Senanayake claimed to have won for the country.

Following the 1947 strike, Mr. Senanayake had realised that the limited Soulbury reforms were of little avail to hold back the working class and progressive movement and succeeded in getting the British imperialists to grant

him "fully responsible status" which he tried to palm off as the last word in independence.

Communists exposed the horse-deal that Mr. Senanayake had concluded with the imperialists, especially the secret agreements which enabled British imperialism to hold the substance of military and economic power while their local agents were given the formal legal independence to continue the old state of things under the new label of "Dominion Status".

Communist MP's demanded the removal of British military bases from Ceylon, the nationalisation of British-owned property, a peaceful and independent foreign policy and a democratic constitution framed by the people of Ceylon themselves.

These demands were taken up by the entire progressive movement and led to the extension of Ceylon's independence after the UNP Government was defeated and the late Mr. Bandaranaike was elected to power in 1956.

It was also in the first Parliament of Ceylon that Communist MP's first fought for the opening of diplomatic and trade relations with the socialist countries, the nationalisation of the bus services, the planned economic development of the island based on industrialisation and scientific agriculture, agrarian reform, the ending of corruption and for the winning of a number of demands of workers and tenants.

These too were later accepted by the whole progressive

movement and some of them were realised.

Communist motions regarding bribery led to the appointment of two Commissions which hounded out bribe-takers from the public service and the Colombo Municipal Council.

A Communist - sponsored motion for the fixing by law of the share of the ~~ande~~ cultivator became the basis for the Paddy Lands Act of 1957.

Agitation in the first Parliament by the late W. P. A. Wickremasinghe, Communist MP for Akuressa, for better rural banking and credit culminated years later in the establishment of the People's Bank.

It was also in the first Parliament of Ceylon that Communist MP's began the fight to expose the various strategies of the imperialists and neo-colonialists vis a vis Ceylon.

They were the first to expose the reactionary nature and designs of such imperialist institutions as the World Bank and the IMF, then beginning to extend their tentacles into Ceylon.

## SECOND PARLIAMENT

The Left and progressive forces were weaker in the second Parliament after the dirty general election campaign with Dudley Senanayake as Caretaker Prime Minister.

But they resumed the fight against the UNP Government with redoubled vigour.

The latter part of 1952 saw the country facing a serious economic crisis with low prices for our rubber and a world shortage of rice.

The Communists in Parliament suggested a rice-rubber deal with China as a way out of the crisis. The then UNP Trade Minister, R. G. Senanayake, ridiculed this suggestion saying he would fly a red flag over his house if Ceylon got rice from China.

But linking their campaign in Parliament to the mass movement outside, the Communists together with other Left and progressive forces launched such a wide campaign that eventually the Government was forced to send a delegation to China which concluded the rice-rubber pact first proposed by the Communists with immense benefit to the people of Ceylon.

A similar interlinking of the Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary struggle was witnessed in the historic Hartal of 1953.

The Hartal resulted from the total abolition of the rice subsidy and a number of other anti-popular measures by the Dudley Senanayake Government.

Communist MP's supported and backed-up the fight of the Party and other progressive forces outside and exposed the connection between the anti-popular measures and the attempt of the Government to get US "aid" through the World Bank which had made such measures a precondition for their "aid".

The Hartal rocked the UNP Government to its foundation. The Government panicked, killed nine persons, arrested thousands, banned meetings and sealed the Opposition press.

With all other avenues blocked, Parliament became

the only forum to justify the Hartal and expose the Government's reign of terror.

It was in such circumstances that Pieter Keuneman, on behalf of the Communist Party, made a hard-hitting speech which put the Government in the dock, denounced the terror unleashed under cover of the emergency, and proudly justified the aims, needs and methods of the Hartal.

The Hartal forced Dudley Senanayake out of politics. He was succeeded by Sir John Kotelawala who proclaimed war against the Communists and Communism.

But the Communist MP's told him to his face in Parliament that to destroy Communism he would first have to destroy the working class, and reminded him of the fate of bigger anti-communists who had embarked on this futile path.

The Communists fought Kotelawala's steady drift to more authoritarian forms of rule and his attempts to drag Ceylon into SEATO.

The spirited fight of Communist MP's also compelled the Kotelawala Government to withdraw some of its measures directed against the people.

One such notable victory was the withdrawal of the Bill to enable landlords freely to evict tenants.

After Pieter Keuneman's fighting speech in which he threatened to lead tenants to squat in the Prime Minister's office, the Bill was withdrawn, registering yet another victory for the Communist Group in Parliament.

### THIRD PARLIAMENT

The third Parliament, elected in 1956 after the defeat of the UNP at the polls, saw the Government of Mr.

Banaranaike in power on the basis of a radical, anti-imperialist programme.

In this Parliament, the Communist MP's withdrew from the official Opposition (which included the UNP) to ensure independence of action in supporting all progressive measures for which the people had voted.

Here again, the Communists were the only group to adopt this position. It was later that other Left and progressive groups adopted a similar attitude.

In the third Parliament, Communist MP's gave full support to the Bandaranaike Government in all progressive measures it adopted for the removal of the British bases, the nationalisation of the port and the bus services, the enactment of the Paddy Lands Act, etc.

Further, Communist MP's were able to get progressive reforms enacted on their own initiative. These included the vote at 18 and other electoral reforms passed in 1959, beneficial changes in the labour laws, improved legislation to safeguard tenants, etc.

On questions of national economic development Communist MP's stimulated fresh thinking and compelled many changes in Governmental policy.

Acting as a team and supplementing each other's work, Dr Wickremasinghe, Pieter Keuneman and the late P. Kandiah explained and elaborated their party's proposals in the economic field, enriched them with new examples, facts and arguments, and waged battle against the reactionary economic theories of government officials.

While supporting all progressive measures initiated by the Bandaranaike Government, the Communists fought

against the die-hards and communalists inside the Government ranks and warned against and exposed the attempts of SLFP Right-wingers to hold back social advance under the cloak of anti-Communism.

Their exposures of people like Buddharakkita, Stanley de Zoysa, Jim Munasinghe, C. P. de Silva and others were later accepted as true by the majority in the SLFP itself and proved up to the hilt by subsequent events.

After the break-up of the MEP Cabinet and the murder of Mr Bandaranaike Communist MP's used the platform of Parliament to expose the aims of foreign imperialism and local reaction and to help rally the progressive forces against them.

Pieter Keuneman's memorable speeches against the short-lived Dahanayake Government brilliantly exposed and helped to prevent attempts by the Right to consolidate their position under that Government and encouraged the honest, progressive elements inside the SLFP to repudiate the then dominant Right-wing leadership.

#### FOURTH PARLIAMENT

The fourth Parliament which assembled after the March 1960 election was a short-lived one. It lasted only 33 days.

The first debate in the Address from the Throne resulted in the defeat of Mr Dudley Senanayake's minority UNP Government when the Communist Party joined hands with the SLFP, LSSP and other Opposition groups to vote against it.

#### FIFTH PARLIAMENT

Communist MP's fought hard to help all progressive legislation brought forward by the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government in the fifth Parliament.

They played an important part speaking up for and supporting various progressive measures like the take-over of assisted denominational schools, the nationalisation of insurance business, the setting up of the People's Bank and the take-over of the import and distribution of oil.

When the foreign imperialists hit back at the Government because the latter set up the Petroleum Corporation to compete with the three foreign oil companies in the import and distribution of oil, it was the Communists who first proposed that the Government take over their entire business.

They showed that the Government need not fear a boycott from the Western countries as we could get oil supplies from the Soviet Union, Rumania and the UAR.

At this time, many ridiculed the idea saying our vehicles would all be stalled if they ran on Soviet oil! This proved quite false - and Soviet oil not only helped us to fight the

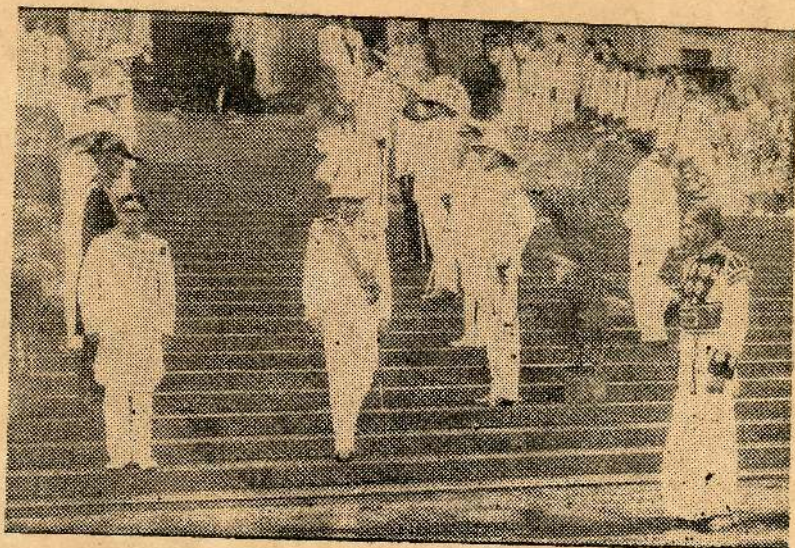
imperialists but helped the Petroleum Corporation to make handsome profits into the bargain.

While supporting all progressive legislation, Communist MP's, as in the third Parliament, opposed the attempts of the Right-wing in the SLFP to capitulate to the pressure of foreign and local vested interests.

They exposed the subversive character of the so-called Peace Corps, the Asia Foundation and other CIA-sponsored organisations in Ceylon and demanded their removal from the country.

It was unfortunate that the Government, to its later cost, did not heed these warnings.

Similarly Communist MP's repeatedly warned the Government that reactionaries in the armed forces and police would one day try to cut their throats - a warning that came true when the abortive coup d'etat was foiled in January 1962 just a few hours before it was due to be put into effect.



Former Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke leaves Parliament after the official opening ceremony.

The Communists gave all support to the Government to bring the culprits to book and demanded a thorough overhaul of the entire administrative machinery and a purge of all reactionary officials.

In the field of foreign affairs, Communist MP's urged the need to support the people of Vietnam, of Cuba, the Congo, Arab countries, etc, in their fight against the imperialists

It was a Communist-sponsored motion that Parliament passed unanimously calling for the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam and a settlement of the Vietnam question according to the terms of the 1954 Geneva Agreements

Communist agitation in Parliament helped to raise the missions here of the German Democratic Republic the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Consulate-General status.

#### SIXTH PARLIAMENT

In the present (sixth) Parliament which sees the UNP-FP Government enthroned in power thanks to the secret agreement between Messrs Dudley Senanayake and Chelvanayakam, Communist MP's have been in the forefront exposing the Government's bid to reverse the progressive foreign policy pursued by Ceylon between 1956 and 1964, to make this country once again the happy hunting ground for the neo-colonialists and to give effect to the various clauses in their secret agreement under the pretext of "national unity".

The UNP-Federal Government has been trying its level best to revert back to the pro-Western foreign policy of the pre-1956 era.

But due to the vigilance of the Communists and other Opposition groups, they have been unable to do as much as they would have wished, and

have been forced to pay lip-service to the ideas of non-alignment while trying to tail behind the Western imperialist powers.

The Government has not been able to sever connections with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries because of public pressure. But it tries to keep them at a formal level, while strengthening ties with the Western powers and handing back to their old friends like the foreign oil companies the privileges they lost during the Bandaranaike regimes.

Communist MP's have exposed the Government's hypocritical policy over Vietnam of trying to maintain a "neutral" stand between the US aggressors and their Vietnamese victims in the name of "non-alignment".

In the economic sphere they have exposed attempts of the Government to obey the dic-

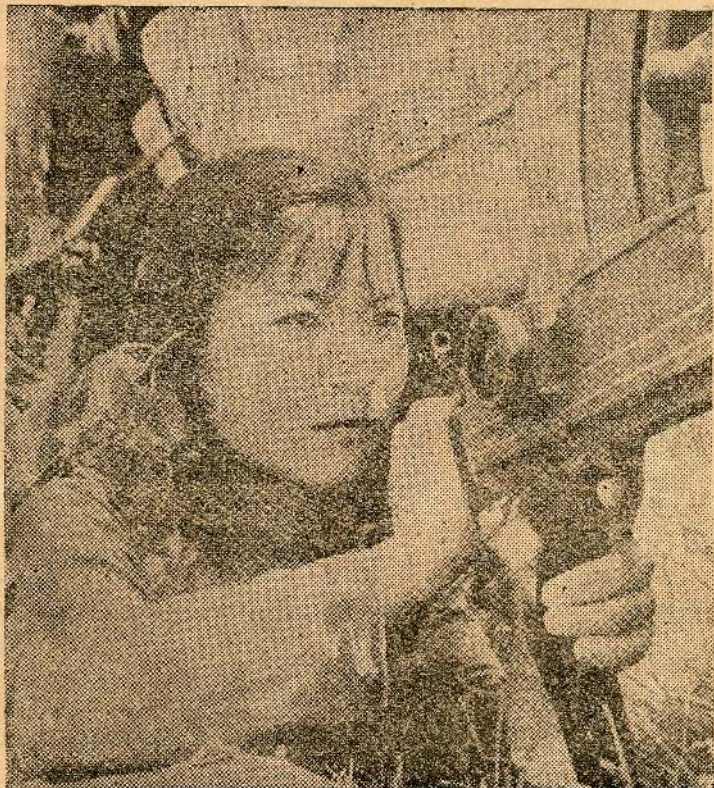
tates of the World Bank, the IMF and other imperialist agencies under the cover of "economic development"

They have shown with a wealth of facts and arguments that anti-popular measures like halving the rice ration and devaluation are direct results of dancing to the tune of these agencies in the hope of getting their so-called "aid".

They have shown how every government measure designed to appease the appetite of these imperialist interests results only in whetting their appetites and the stepping-up of their demands.

They have shown how government economic measures help and strengthen the big traders and entrepreneurs already tied up with foreign interests while the small local man suffers and the economy becomes more unbalanced.

They have exposed the preferential treatment given to



Vietnamese girl fighter

foreign imperialist firms at the expense of the economy as a whole

Communist MP's have exposed how political patronage and nepotism have turned public corporations like the CTB and Port Cargo Corporation from profitable concerns to corrupt, inefficient, unprofitable organisations.

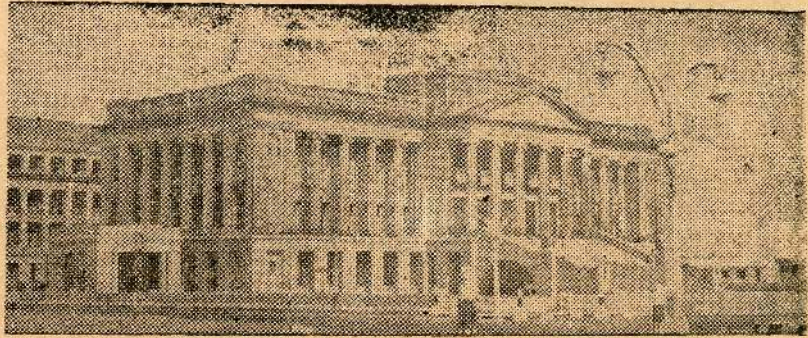
Public criticism of the CTB, in particular, and the exposures in Parliament recently forced a reluctant Government to sack the entire Board.

In January 1966 Communist MP's joined with other Opposition parties to combine agitation inside Parliament with a mass struggle outside against the Government's first attempt to implement one of the clauses of the secret Dudley-Chelvanayakam agreement.

At present they are fighting effectively to expose and defeat the Government attempt to carry out another clause in the agreement by introducing a District Councils Bill.

Ignoring with the contempt they deserve the taunts of the Rightists who talk about "communalism", Communist MP's have shown that the attempt to introduce a DC Bill is the real cause of communal strife.

They have shown that the road to national unity lies not in appeasing ultra-communalists like the Federal Party leaders, but in building the unity of the Sinhalese, Tamil and other peoples in the struggle against the reactionary policies of this Government in every sphere, and to replace it with a progressive government that can restore



House of Representatives, Colombo.

the national unity rent assunder by this conglomeration of communalists masquerading as a "National" Government.

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The Communist Party is justly proud of the record of its MP's in Parliament.

Though its representation has, up to now, been small, and the Communist Party is the only party in Parliament that has not been a member of any government up to date, Communist MP's have used to the full the opportunities to popularise the programme and policies of the Party, to fight for much-needed social change, to expose reaction and mobilise the progressive forces to fight it, and to point the way ahead.

The impact they have made in shaping national policies in a progressive direction has been considerable.

Communist MP's do not claim a monopoly of progressive measures emanating from Parliament. On the contrary, as pointed out earlier, it became possible to implement some of the policies they first advocated precisely because

these policies won common acceptance from the entire progressive movement.

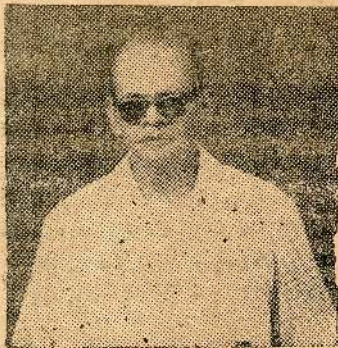
It is to the credit of the Communists that they not only initiated such policies but consistently fought to unite all progressive forces both inside and outside Parliament to fight for their implementation.

The Communist Party celebrates its 25th anniversary at a time when there is a united SLFP-LSSP-CP Opposition in Parliament, when unity based on the Common Programme has been built between these three parties for the purpose of setting up in place of the UNP-Federal Government, a progressive Government of the SLFP, LSSP and CP.

This is the surest guarantee that the days of the unlamented *Hath Howla* are numbered and that before long the people of Ceylon will resume their march along the progressive path that has been blocked to them since that dark day in March 1965 when Messrs Dudley Senanayake and Chelvanayakam emerged from their secret negotiations.

# I. R. Ariyaratnam

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE TAMIL AREAS



**I. R. Ariyaratnam**

AS in other Asian and African countries, the Communist Party in the Tamil areas of Ceylon grew out of the working class struggle, the fight to eradicate feudal remnants, and above all, the struggle for freedom from foreign imperialist domination.

The Tamil people have always had a deep love for freedom and for their ancient language and culture and resisted imperialist attempts to subvert their culture and to create a class serving imperialist interests.

In the last century the great religious leader Arumuga Navalar led the struggle to defend the Tamil language and Hindu culture from subversion by Christian missionaries.

His fight was continued by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who also courageously headed

the struggle against the repression of the Sinhalese people in the First World War.

In the twenties his brother, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, led the Ceylon National Congress struggle for constitutional reform and democratisation of the administration.

The Great October Revolution inspired the liberation movements all over Asia, and the Tamil people, who had close linguistic and cultural ties with South India, were deeply impressed by the heroic struggle of the Indian National Congress for freedom from British rule.

### **Youth Congress**

From 1927 — 1931 the Jaffna Youth Congress — a movement mainly of upper class intellectuals — publicised the Indian independence struggle calling on Ceylon to follow this example.

Inspired by Gandhian ideas, they also called for an end to untouchability and all forms of social discrimination.

This had a big effect among the Minority Tamils, who formed the Minority Tamils Mahasabha which made such questions as temple entry a live issue, although it did not yet understand how to conduct mass agitation.

The growth of the labour movement in the South, under A. E. Goonesinha, also had its

impact and a branch of the Ceylon Labour Union was formed in Jaffna led by Mr. A. P. Thambiah.

Many of its members were Minority Tamils and so the union combined the demand for better working conditions with that for the eradication of social disabilities.

But it died out when Goonesinha turned against the working class and introduced communal splits.

In 1931 the Donoughmore Constitution, including universal adult franchise, was introduced.

The Right-wing Tamil leaders who had been cooperating with the imperialists were opposed to any extension of democratic rights to the people and called for a boycott of the elections.

The Jaffna Youth Congress failed to see the reactionary motive behind this call and supported the boycott as an anti-imperialist measure.

The Youth Congress had not realistically analysed the political situation in the country; it took no interest in developments in the South and did not ally itself with the progressive movements there, looking always more to what was happening in India.

Its decision to support the election boycott alienated

possible support in the South, and with no mass base in the Tamil areas it gradually faded from the political scene.

But it did an important service in making educated Tamil youth aware of the world wide anti-imperialist struggle. Many of these youth later joined the LSSP and the CP.

### Workers' Movement

When the LSSP was formed in 1935, the remnants of the Youth Congress cooperated in organising meetings to hear N. M. Perera, S. A. Wickremasinghe, Colvin R. de Silva and other leaders.

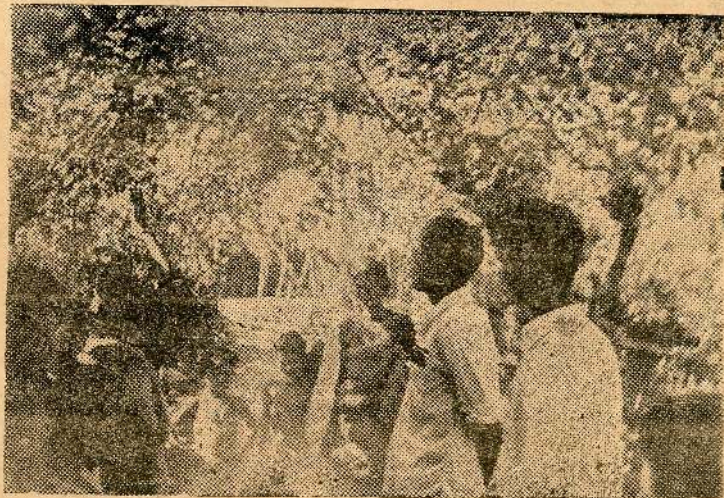
There was considerable goodwill for the Left movement whose leaders the Tamil people respected as selfless and dedicated to the cause of the common people irrespective of race or caste.

But the split in the Left movement which began in 1940 and continued for over two decades seriously hampered the whole progressive movement in the Tamil areas and made it easier for leaders like G. G. Ponnambalam and Chelvanayakam to spread communal ideas.

When the Communists were obliged to leave the LSSP and formed the United Socialist Party, the nucleus of the future Communist Party, Tamil leaders like P. Kandiah, A. Vaidialingam and K. Ramathan played an important part.

And when Communists in the South were building up afresh the trade union movement this too had its effect in the North.

The All-Ceylon Cigar Workers' Union led by the late K. Sithampalam was formed in 1942 and after a series of strikes won a minimum



The late P. Kandiah MP with Minority Tamil supporters.

wage, fixed working hours and trade union recognition.

The North Ceylon Motor Workers' Union led by the late Tharmakulasingam was also formed at this time.

The motor workers were among the most exploited. They had no basic wage, no security of employment and were treated like domestic servants.

It took them many years of struggle to win minimum wages, sick leave, overtime pay, etc.

As the workers began successfully to organise themselves, the Minority Tamils also began to reawaken. And at this stage a group of Communists led by M. C. Subramaniam began to work in the Minority Tamils Mahasabha and to build it up into a real mass organisation of the Minority Tamils.

The Minority Tamils' agitation succeeded in getting some eating houses and tea boutiques in Jaffna town opened to them.

These developments led to the setting up of the first

Communist Party branch in the Jaffna district, with the late P. Kandiah, M. C. Subramaniam, R. R. Poopalasingham, S. Rasiah and the late Ramsamy Tyer among the founder members.

### After 1947

The strike battles of 1946 and 1947 and the public servants' demands for political rights helped to create opinion against the pro-imperialist UNP in the Tamil areas. But neither the LSSP nor the CP were strong enough to win this opinion for the Left. Instead people were deceived by the demagogic and communal agitation of men like Ponnambalam and Chelvanayakam.

In the 1947 general elections the Communist Party nominated P. Kandiah as its candidate in Point Pedro. The LSSP also had some candidates. But although both were anti-imperialist parties fighting for full independence, there was no unity between them.

The Tamil people were persuaded into supporting the Tamil Congress which had opposed the Donoughmore

Constitution and was actually opposed to the granting of independence.

However, the Left participation in the elections made a certain amount of propaganda and explanation possible and there was a gradual but steady increase in Communist Party membership. An office was opened in Jaffna and a full-time worker employed.

In 1948 G. G. Ponnambalam and most of the Tamil Congress leadership did a *volte face* and lined up with the UNP under the leadership of D. S. Senanayake.

A sustained and determined campaign in the Tamil areas by the Left at this stage would have produced very favourable results.

But neither the CP nor the LSSP was strong enough to do what, together, they could have successfully carried out. The Federal Party was able to step in and take advantage of the actions of the Tamil Congress leaders.

Although 1947 onwards was a period of comparative prosperity — due to the accumulated World War II balances and the Korean War boom prices for rubber — the workers in the North had to wage several sharp struggles.

In 1950 the Jaffna conservancy labourers, organised under C.P. leadership, won recognition of their union and some wage reforms after a two-week strike.

The All Ceylon Cigar Workers' Union had several struggles to win recognition from all employers, Wages Boards and a new wage structure.

The Toddy Tappers' Union had to fight the caste Hindu move to end the tree tax system, which benefits the Minority Tamils.

#### Hartal and After

But none of this substantially weakened the position of the Right-wing. In the 1952 elections the Tamil Congress

retained its position despite its alliance with the UNP, which was also attacked by the new Federal Party, and which it said was necessary because only the UNP could form a government.

The UNP won a big majority in the rest of the country — benefitting from the economic boom, sympathy over the sudden death of D. S. Senanayake, and the disunity of the Left and progressive forces.

But the boom was over in less than a year, and the UNP discarded its election promises and removed the rice subsidy.

The reaction was country-wide and sharp, and for the first time since 1940 the LSSP and CP campaigned together. The August 1953 Hartal called by the united trade unions was also supported by the SLFP which had been formed two years earlier.

But this unity was not to last.

In August 1954, the Jaffna District Communists at their first members' conference in Valivettiturai unanimously agreed that the rights of minorities could be protected only by unity with the working class and progressive movement in the South to get rid of the UNP Government.

The UNP had been badly shaken by the Hartal. Dudley Senanayake was replaced by Sir John Kotlawala and the reactionaries set about disrupting the popular unity built in the Hartal campaign.

*This was done by utilising the existing differences between the various parties and by the old imperialist tactic of creating racial division.*

#### Language

Since Independence the common people had been



Toddy tappers at work



demanding an end to administration in a foreign language — English — and the privileged position of the English-speaking minority.

This was supported by all the progressive forces which, however, failed to put forward concrete measures to replace English by Sinhala and allow for the development and use of Tamil, the language of a substantial minority.

The reactionaries were able to utilise this failure to create division, utilising the monopoly press.

The Tamil Congress and Federal Party raised the slogan of "Parity of Status for both languages" and the UNP supported this for a while to help separate and isolate the Tamil community.

In fact, as subsequent events have shown, those who raised this slogan wanted in fact to safeguard the privileged position of English.

But the mass of the Tamil people did not realise how they were being deceived. The reactionary tactics weakened the position of the LSSP and CP in the North and prevented any real unity between the SLFP, LSSP and CP in the South.



Irrigation well  
in Jaffna peninsula

But this did not prevent the UNP defeat of 1956 and the return of Mr Bandaranaike's MEP Government.

The progressive forces also recovered lost ground and forged ahead in the North. The Communist P. Kandiah was elected for Point Pedro and became the first progressive MP elected from the North. Other Party candidates gained very gratifying votes despite the anti-Communist barrage by the TC and FP.

#### Communalism

After the election the reactionaries tried to keep the LSSP and CP divided from the MEP Government and gave maximum support to the most extreme chauvinists in both North and South.

The CP saw through this and decided to give critical support to Mr Bandaranaike's Government. In the North this made us the target of attack from the FP and TC and even from some misguided Leftists who had failed to see the class interests involved.

The Federal Party, which had become the dominant party in the North, campaigned against the Government except for a short period in 1957 when temporary agreement was reached — and even during that period it opposed progressive measures such as bus nationalisation and the Paddy Lands Act, as the Communist Party exposed.

In January 1958 a carefully arranged plan to create communal disturbances was set off. Sri number plates were issued to cars — although no order had come from the Minister — and simultaneously certain people in Jaffna started the anti-Sri campaign.

The Communist Party alone in the North warned against this conspiracy. But our warnings were unheeded.

The Federal Party, which at first held back, joined the

campaign with full blast after a few weeks.

This campaign, the counter-campaign in the South and the wide publicity given to provocations and inflammatory speeches in the monopoly press finally led to the June-July riots of 1958.

There can be little doubt that these riots were deliberately brought about by interested parties to give an excuse to dissolve Parliament and set up an emergency military government.

*This plan was not realised; and within a year the same forces saw to it that Premier Bandaranaike was put out of the way by a murderer's bullet.*

The reactionary forces banded together to win back their position in the March 1960 elections. The progressive forces were badly disunited and the SLFP had no acknowledged leader.

The Communist Party in the North stood alone against the FP and TC, defending the correctness of the Party's policy.

And although it was less than two years after the communal riots and there was no Left unity, the CP did surprisingly well, and its members and youth leaguers proved their courage, loyalty and ability for tireless work.

#### Towards Unity

Despite the hope of the Right, the March elections were inconclusive. In July, after the SLFP, LSSP and CP had reached a no-contest agreement, the SLFP won an absolute majority — a stunning blow to the reactionaries.

The Federal Party had hoped no party would have a majority so it could strike a bargain. Not able to do this in Parliament, it did so with Catholic Action for extra-Parliamentary activity.

While Catholic Action led the occupation of certain

schools taken over by the Government in the South, the Federal Party led a satyagraha to besiege Kachcheris and government offices in the North, saying it was to win a "place for the Tamil language."

The Communist Party alone bravely came forward to point out that the "place" for the Tamil language had been won since 1957, and to expose how the FP really fought for continued domination of English.

After the collapse of the FP satyagraha a conspiratorial group was set up inside the Party itself to create division and prevent working class and progressive unity.

The struggle against this disruption was more serious in the North than elsewhere, but in November 1963 the splitters were exposed and expelled at a conference of all the members in the Jaffna District.

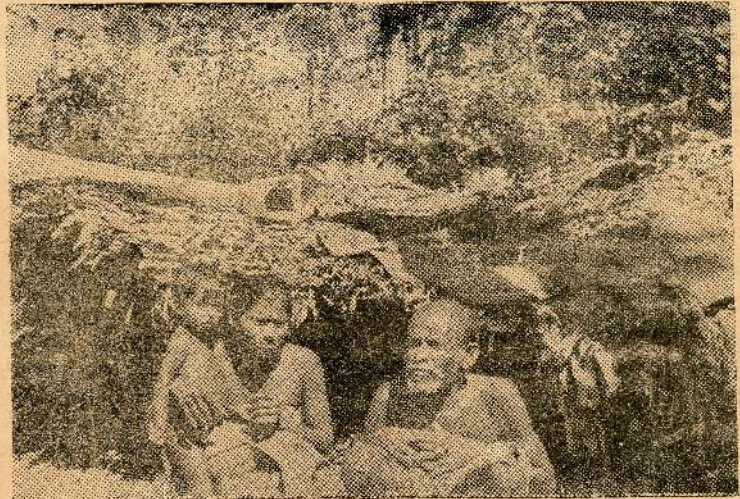
Now, strengthened by struggle, the Party in Jaffna is able to implement fully the correct policy of forging broad unity with the progressive and anti-imperialist forces.

Naturally growing progressive unity produces the reaction in the opposite camp. There was the abortive coup attempt of 1962, and in December 1964 forces ranging from the UNP and FP to "revolutionary" Edmund Samarakody, aided by Mr C. P. de Silva's Fifth Column from within the SLFP, brought about the "parliamentary coup" to bring down Mrs Bandaranaike's Government.

After a campaign of deceit and false promises, the UNP still could not win a majority, and so in March 1965 this bunch of forces with widely dissimilar policies (for public consumption at least) joined together to form the **Hath Howla**.

#### Lesson

After three years of UNP-FP rule more and more Tamil



Minority Tamil family, and the hovel in which they are forced to live.

people are coming to realise that the demand for District Councils and the FP alliance with the UNP are to protect the class interests of the upper strata.

Living conditions are becoming much worse, and the Government has deliberately cut the rice ration and devalued the rupee.

Whatever gains the common people have made in this country have always been by united struggle regardless of racial or religious differences.

The working class and other downtrodden sections of the Tamil people now understand that their future lies in common struggle with their class brothers in the South.

The United Front of Minority Tamils have been waging a bitter struggle against social disabilities for over two years. Several people have been killed and many homes destroyed. The FP and TC leaders have abandoned them; the SLFP, LSSP and CP have helped their struggle. What they have learned other sections of the Tamil people will learn too.

More and more people in the Tamil areas have come to see that the forces in this

country are divided into two groups, that of the imperialists and their stooges grouped around the UNP and its allies, and that of the common people led by the SLFP, LSSP and CP.

There is no room for a third camp, and the mass of the Tamil people will realise this sooner than the exploiters and their splitting agents in the progressive movement think.

We Communists are proud of the role our party has played in these last 25 years. We are proud of the firm unity and discipline we have maintained carrying out the correct policies decided at our Congresses.

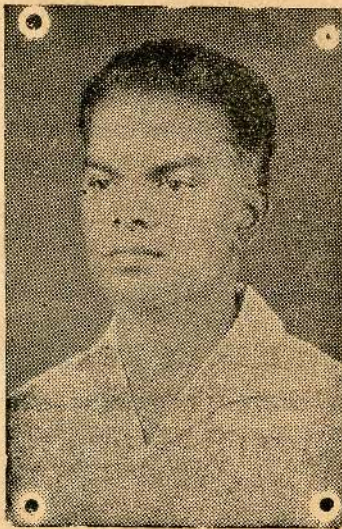
*In the period after 1956, including the time of the ideological struggle with the splitters, Communists in the Tamil areas had to overcome many obstacles. But the Party has become stronger, both numerically and ideologically, as a result.*

We are also justly proud of the fact that we are one of the detachments of the United Front of the SLFP, LSSP and CP, and know that together we shall be able to vanquish the enemy in the not distant future.

S. Nadesan

# THE COMMUNIST PARTY

## AND THE PLANTATION WORKERS



S. Nadesan

Though the Ceylon Communist Party was not formed until 1943, the ideas of communism had begun to spread much earlier, especially after the October Revolution.

The echoes of the Great October Socialist Revolution reached the plantation workers, who were Tamils of Indian origin, through the works of the great Tamil poet Bharathiar, who sang in praise of the Russian revolution.

The world economic crisis of 1929-33 brought the people of Ceylon untold suffering, especially the plantation workers who were stirred as never before by wage cuts, retrenchment and repatriation.

Natesa Iyer, who had been associated with A. E. Goone-

sinha in establishing Ceylon's first trade union, formed the All-Ceylon Indian Estate Labourer's Federation.

But only after the original LSSP was founded in 1935 did revolutionary ideas really begin to penetrate the plantations.

Communists like M. G. Mendis and K. Ramanathan were among those who played an important part in this aspect of the work of the LSSP which at that time united diverse Left forces in a single organisation.

### Bracegirdle

A great impression was made on the plantation workers by M. A. L. Bracegirdle, a young Communist from Australia who came to Ceylon in 1936 to learn planting at Relugas Estate, Matale.

Moved by the deplorable conditions and exploitation of the estate workers, Bracegirdle instead joined the anti-imperialist struggle led by the then LSSP.

He called on the estate workers to revolt against the planter Raj, and after a struggle to prevent it, was deported by the colonial government as a dangerous Communist.

The feelings of the plantation workers in the late 1930's can be gauged from the special circular issued by P N Banks, the Inspector General of Police:-

"Of late various influences have been at work which

have made estate workers politically-minded and consequently there are many labourers who feel discontented with their present conditions of life and work".

And an ASP told his police officers: "It is essential that all ranks know by heart their firing orders....."

In 1940 the famous Mooloya Estate Strike, led by the Left oriented Ceylon Estate Workers' Union, took place, in which the colonial police shot down Govindan.

Dr. Colvin R. de Silva defended the workers' interest at the Mooloya Commission of Inquiry.

But unfortunately the split in the Left ranks and the Governor's actions against the progressive leaders under the Defence Regulations weakened the organisation of the plantation workers under the red banner.

### Left Influence Grows

Meanwhile the Ceylon Indian Congress, which had been formed in 1939 began to draw the plantation workers into their trade union, the CIC Labour union.

This union grew rapidly at the expense both of Natesa Iyer's union and the Left Estate Workers' Union and the bourgeois and sectarian leadership of the CIC, with its policy of collaboration with the employers undermined the

revolutionary spirit that had been gathering momentum among the plantation workers.

But in 1945, after the end of the war, the Ceylon Plantation Workers' Union (now the United Plantation Workers' Union) was formed under the leadership of the Communist Party.

Plantation workers, inspired by the Soviet Union's great victory over fascism, began to join in great numbers. At this period great service to the plantation workers was done by M. G. Mendis.

When the 1947 general elections came round considerable sections of plantation workers came under the influence of the Communist Party and the Left.

This was a vital factor in the elections. Sir Ivor Jennings stated:

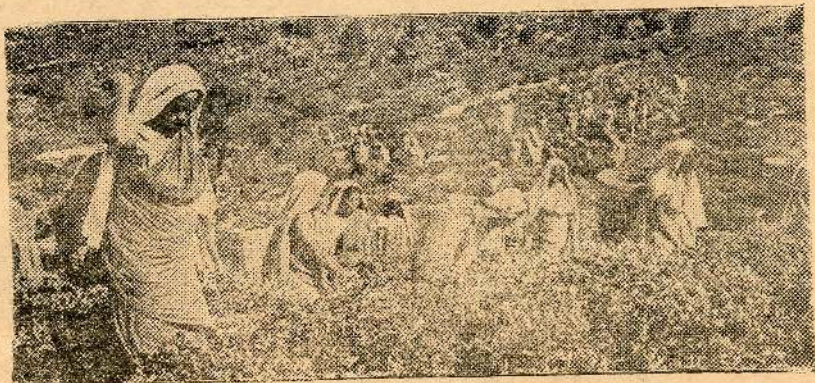
"The Indians voted so'ldily for the candidates of the CIC and where there were no such candidates in areas where the Indian vote was strong as in Sabaragamuwa they generally supported Left-wing candidates. This resulted in the boosting of the strength of the Left parties and in weakening the position of the UNP in Parliament."

### Made Stateless

The UNP could only form a minority government. Infuriated by the election results they decided, in collaboration with the European planting interests, to rob plantation workers of their franchise.

The Citizenship Act of 1948 decitizenised most of them and soon they lost their fundamental rights. This led to the further subjection and super-exploitation of the plantation workers.

It was the Communist Party and other progressive leaders who fought these vicious moves of the UNP.



Tea pluckers at work

Pieter Keuneman] exposed in Parliament how the UNP Government conferred citizenship on the Indian big capitalists while denying citizenship to the majority of plantation workers who had permanently settled on the land and made a major contribution to our economy.

But the Ceylon Workers' Congress (as the Ceylon Indian Congress had now become) did not conduct any struggle to win the rights of its members.

### Lost Opportunity

Just before the Korean War the price of rubber dropped and the Wages Board for the Rubber Growing and Manufacturing Industry was withdrawn.

This left the rubber workers at the mercy of the planters. The Plantation Workers' Union and the CWC joined together to conduct island-wide token strikes which ended in victory. The Wages Board for Rubber began to operate once again.

But instead of pressing ahead on the path of trade union unity and joint struggles against a common enemy, the CPWU, following the Communist Party's third Congress at Aturu-Eliya indulged in sectarian struggles.

Violent strikes at Gasnawa and other adventurist activi-

ties played into the hands of the employers who had been scared by the Communist Party's influence on the plantations.

The union lost badly and the estate employers imposed a ban on it which lasted for nearly a decade.

This situation was used by the CWC to build a virtual monopoly of trade union activity in the plantations.

Mr. S. Thondaman, a planter himself rose to be its leader and later affiliated the CWC to the American-dominated ICFTU.

### New Development

In 1955, however, a section of the Congress, led by a founder member, Mr. A. Aziz, broke away and formed the Democratic Workers' Congress, which the Estate Employers' Federation refused to recognise.

The Democratic Workers' Congress represented a break in the collaborationist and communal policies of Thondaman's CWC and was supported by the Communists.

In 1956, with the election of Mr S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's Government, the political situation changed radically.

Led by C. V. Vellupillai, the DWC General Secretary, and S. Nadesan, the workers at Diyagama Group, Talawa-

kelle, struck for recognition of their union.

One of the workers, Abram Singho, was shot by the police, and the resulting tense situation was resolved when Mr Bandaranaike intervened and compelled the Estate Employers' Federation to recognise the DWC.

The DWC grew rapidly in strength after this, but a rift began to develop between those who wanted it to ally itself with the progressive forces and the more conservative elements who wanted to put it back on the old lines.

This came to a head in 1959, when some 60,000 members, led by S. Nadesan and P. Devaraj, with the General Secretary, C. V. Vellupillai and S. M. Subbiah left the DWC and joined the Plantation Workers' Union.

### Integration

With this fresh influx, the CPWU became a strong fighting force and soon compelled recognition by the employers.

This began a process of integration of the plantation workers' struggles with the rest of the progressive movement, which was of great significance for the working class movement in this country.

Attempts to introduce

communal and anti-working class policies by the small group of splitters a few years later were decisively rejected. The vast majority of the Union opposed their opportunist line, expelled those trying to promote it and reconstituted it as the United Plantation Workers' Union.

P. Kumaraswamy joined the Union at this time and has rendered great service since in the several struggles of the Union.

One of the biggest battles was fought at Meezan's Kadde-Nuwara estate Matale, where union recognition had been refused. Two workers lost their lives before this struggle was won.

Thondaman and his CWC had never fought any trade union action to defend plantation workers penalised under the 1948 Citizenship Laws.

But he opposed the Sirima-Shastri Pact, which laid the basis for an equitable settlement of the problem of stateless persons of Indian origin.

On the basis of this opposition, he called on plantation workers who had gained citizenship to abandon their traditional opposition to the UNP and to vote for the UNP in the 1965 general election.

The UPWU, which was the first union to welcome the

Sirima-Shastri Pact, campaigned actively for the anti-UNP candidates.

In at least eight up-country electorates (including Haputale, Bandarawela and Rattota) and several in Sabaragamuwa, the role of the UPWU and the Communist Party was an important factor, in the victory of SLFP and other progressive candidates.

### Unity in Struggle

The plantation workers, the worst paid and treated in the country although they make the biggest contribution to its economy, have still not been granted even the Rs. 17/50 Special Living Allowance won years ago by most other workers.

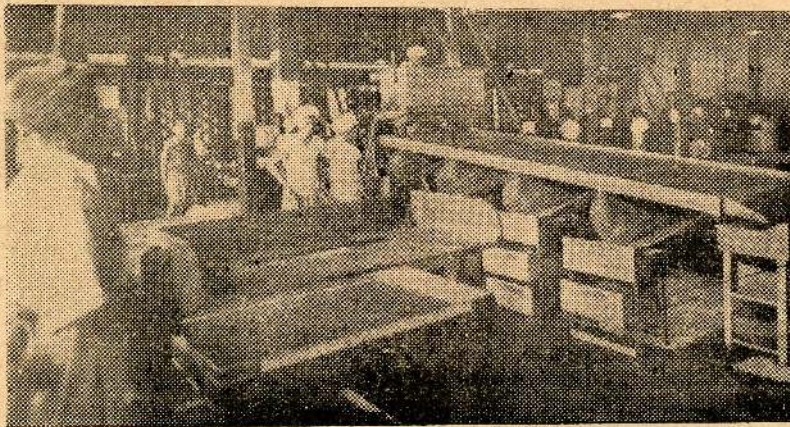
When Pieter Keuneman raised this demand in Parliament, it was not supported by the UNP-FP combination nor by CWC leader Thondaman.

Recently on the initiative of the UPWU, the plantation workers in the UPWU, the DWC, the Lanka Estate Workers' Union (LSSP) and the Sri Lanka Estate Workers' Union, struck at the same time as the rest of the workers in the private sector for the restoration of the rice cut, a devaluation allowance and the Special Living Allowance.

The strike on the plantations was sabotaged by Thondaman's CWC which supported it until the last minute and then withdrew, causing much confusion.

We have still much work to do in our plantation unions. It is a happy augury that the political agreement reached between the SLFP, LSSP and CP is also reflected in the plantation unions which work well together, as well as with the DWC.

It is only the Communist Party that has shown the way forward in unity and struggle, and the plantation workers' future lies clearly along the path shown by the Communist Party,



Inside a tea factory

# S. Wanigasekera

## THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE PEASANTS



S. Wanigasekera

Of all the political parties in Ceylon, the Communist Party was the first - in 1946 - to begin a serious attempt to organise peasant movement.

The All-Ceylon Peasants' Congress, as it then was (now it is called the Ceylon National Peasants' Front) took up many demands of the peasants, among which one of the most pressing was the demand that they should also benefit from the rice subsidy.

During the Second World War, as a means of alleviating a little the high cost of living and the growing unrest among the workers, it was decided to issue rationed rice at a subsidised price.

All people, rich or poor, were entitled to subsidised rationed rice - except the peasants who grew it.

For every bushel of paddy the cultivator produced he had to give up five rice coupons, and so he was deprived of the benefit enjoyed by the rest of the community.

Our agitation took a long time.

In 1955 we made representations to the then Minister of Finance, Mr. J. R. Jayawardena, demanding that this discrimination against the paddy cultivators should be ended.

When this produced no result, we stepped up sharply our country-wide agitation and threatened that the peasants would invade the Minister's office and sit there until their demand was granted.

Ultimately the Government agreed to grant our demand.

This was a most important victory for our peasants' movement and increased its prestige very greatly.

Our peasants' movement has also played a leading part in winning a guaranteed price scheme, not only for paddy, but for certain other items of produce as well.

Our consistent demands for cold storage facilities to prevent waste and ensure a reasonable price for seasonal produce during periods of glut have had some response, although there are as yet not nearly

enough cold storage facilities available.

\* \* \* \*

In its early days, the then Peasants' Congress pointed out in a booklet "For a Peasants' Congress" that Ceylon could become self-sufficient in rice provided irrigation facilities were available for the 1,300,000 acres of paddy land to be cultivated in both seasons.

The whole problem of irrigation in Ceylon was explained in the Communist Party booklet "The Way Ahead", by Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, which had a very big effect in official circles as well as among the peasants.

The Communist Party was the first to show how much could be achieved by restoring many of the village tanks which had been neglected by the colonialists.

It showed too that a balanced irrigation scheme which conserved water in the wet zone and enabled planned diversion to the dry zone would, with the aid of proper use of fertilizer, soon solve our problem of the need to grow more paddy.

The Communist Party, and especially Dr. Wickremasinghe also exposed the lack of proper planning and waste of the Gal Oya scheme and

called for a real national plan for use of our water resources.

\* \* \* \*

The Communist Party and the Peasants' Front have been consistently campaigning for reform and improvement in the Guaranteed Price Scheme.

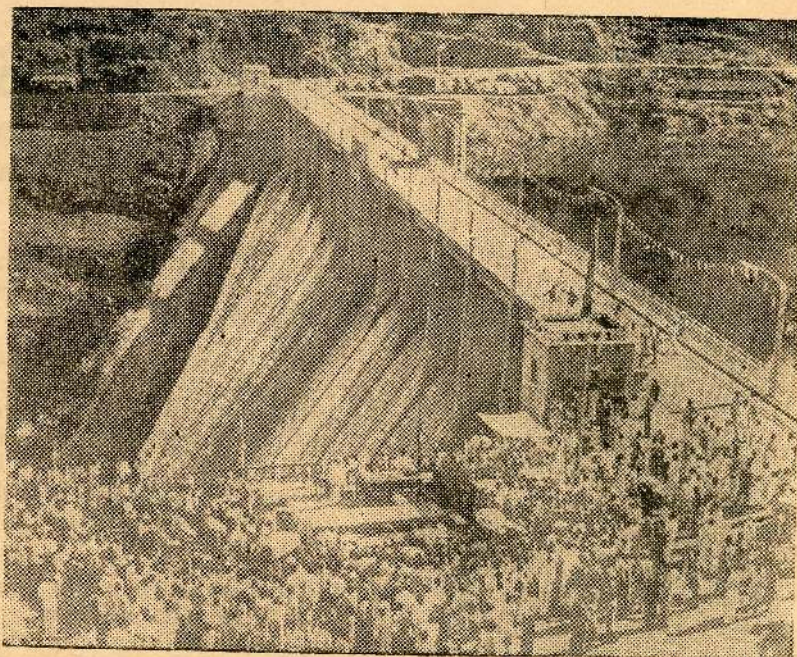
The present way of working the scheme is both cumbersome and inefficient and plays into the hands of the mudalalis who take advantage of this to buy paddy under the controlled price and keep the cultivators indebted to them, and of the private millers.

We are also demanding better prices for farmers and the elimination of the middlemen in products such as vegetables and other crops.

This includes the tobacco farmer, who gets only Rs 1/20 for 1 lb of dried tobacco while the consumer pays 8-15 cents for one cigarette. Even allowing for the Government duty of Rs 29/- per lb, this gives the manufacturer and seller an exorbitant profit.

\* \* \* \*

It was the Communist Party and the Peasants' Front which first raised the demand for immediate land reform and especially for alleviation of



Dam at Castlereagh - development without proper planning for power and irrigation.

the plight of the ande cultivator.

The Paddy Lands Act, which brought a certain measure of land reform was passed at last by Mr S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's Government.

But this Act has not in practice brought the cultivator security of tenure and the law which gives the landlord

no more than one quarter of the produce of the land is being constantly evaded.

Our Peasants' Front is growing stronger today as the poor cultivator realises that the UNP-FP Government's so-called "food drive" and special help to the farmers benefit in fact mainly the richer farmers and the private firms which are getting huge grants of land.

The consolidation of the SLFP, LSSP and CP has given the peasants confidence in the possibility to replace the UNP-FP Government by one which will take the steps needed to bring them security and the possibility to raise their standard of life.

These measures are outlined in the SLFP-LSSP-CP Common Programme which is being well received by the peasants throughout the country.



Transplanting paddy

M. G. Mendis

# THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE WORKERS



M. G. Mendis

It is 25 years since the formation of the Ceylon Communist Party, the political party of the Ceylon working class. Looking back upon these 25 years we can rejoice at the uninterrupted struggle waged on behalf of the workers and the results gained.

Those who played a part in the formation of the Communist Party had taken part earlier in anti-imperialist and other struggles and brought the benefit of their experiences in those struggles to the new Party.

Dr S. A. Wickremasinghe who was elected to the first State Council of Ceylon in 1931 as Member for Morawake was the first to conduct the struggle on behalf of the poor oppressed people in the country's supreme legislature. In particular his agitation over working class problems and grievances in the State

Council was a big headache to the imperialists and the capitalists.

I was with Dr Wickremasinghe in the fight to save the country from the malaria epidemic that raged here in 1934. Others who took part in this great campaign include some of the present leaders of the LSSP.

After we broke away from the LSSP and formed the Communist Party we got ready for the struggle to win rights for the workers as part and parcel of the fight of a working class party. As building the Party of the working class was indissolubly linked with building working class organisations, our objectives differed from those of other working class organisations.

We made it clear to the workers that they had to fight not only for their economic demands but also for human and democratic rights and to achieve their ultimate goal of setting up a workers' state.

As a result we Communist were able to gain two notable victories. The first was to launch a broad trade union movement for all working people. The second was to establish a strong Communist Party that fought not only on behalf of the working class but also for independence and socialism on behalf of the whole nation.

In the years 1930-1940 reformism and the hero-worship of leaders was very noticeable among the working class, especially the workers

in Colombo. During this period we had to wage a bitter struggle against the late Mr Goonesinha who held a prominent position in the trade union movement.

By 1940 we had broken the power of Mr Goonesinha, by 1941 we had driven him out of the Colombo harbour, his last stronghold, and by 1945 we were able to bring almost all other workers in Colombo into trade unions under our leadership. Due to the series of struggles we waged during this period and the victories gained as a result we were able to win for the workers in Colombo the right to work with self-respect as decent human beings.

In 1939 with the outbreak of the war, the workers were in a very helpless position. Only our trade unions remained to fight for their rights. We did everything we could to better the position of the workers not only in Colombo but the whole island.

We did yeoman service explaining the true nature of the war and defending the rights of the workers. We explained to the workers that they must lead the fight to smash German, Italian and Japanese fascism to save peace independence, democracy and progress, and we were able to provide a correct revolutionary leadership to the working class without their being misled by Trotskyist doctrines.

When we first came forward to build working class organisations, there were very few trade unions. The number of



V. A. Samarawickrema

# STRENGTHEN OUR PARTY



V. A. Samarawickrema

The achievements of the communist movement everywhere are due both to the correct understanding and use of Marxism-Leninism and the Leninist form of organisation of the Communist Parties.

Communist Parties are closely linked with the people. They can have no existence divorced from the working class and the mass of the people. That is why the aims of our Party correspond always to the vital interests of the people.

That is why so many of our people regard the Communist Party as their friend and teacher. In our 25 years of existence we have tried always to follow the Leninist-teaching, neither going too far ahead of the mass of the people, nor lagging behind them.

Now it is our task to strengthen our Party by continuously raising the ideo-

logical level of all our membership, by constantly improving our organisation and by bringing into our ranks the best representatives of the working class and those who are ready to work and fight under the banner of Marxism-Leninism.

Our Party and the whole united progressive movement have big tasks ahead. We must grow in size and strength for the great future which faces our Party and our country.

It is a tribute to the resolution and integrity of our Communist Party in its fight against imperialism and reaction that such wide sections of the people of our country join with us in celebrating our 25th anniversary.

No movement, no philosophy, has been the object of such attack as our communist movement and philosophy. The imperialists hate us; we are the main enemy of the capitalist world system, feudal remnants still dream of destroying us; many religious leaders concentrate all their attack on us.

But so long as we are in the forefront of the struggle of the people, we can withstand all such attacks.

Our Communist Party is a very special kind of party. It is not a party of personalities nor a vehicle for political ambitions. The Communists identify themselves with the people and fight to end all forms of social division - class, communal, caste, religion, colour.

The Communists are not content merely to analyse events. Nor do we think leadership consists merely in trotting out quotations from

books; such persons are neither Marxist-Leninists nor revolutionaries.

Lenin taught us that it is the duty of the Communists to apply concretely the ideas of Marxism-Leninism in today's conditions in order to bring about a change in society.

Our party has always striven to carry out this teaching, to analyse objectively the position in Ceylon in the light of the whole international situation and to formulate our policies accordingly in the light of the best interests of the working class and the anti-imperialist struggle, without any dogmatism.

We were not discouraged when other progressive parties did not accept our political analysis. We were confident that our policies would ultimately be accepted because they were based on objective analysis and the creative application of Marxism-Leninism.

The SLFP-LSSP-CP national united front that we have today is the result of our Party's correct policies and consistent struggle.

Eighteen years ago the only voice calling for a national front of all the anti-imperialist forces was that of the Communist Party.

Today the necessity for such a front is accepted by the whole working class and progressive movement. It is happy for us indeed that we celebrate our 25th anniversary at such a time.

officials in the Labour Department was less than a dozen.

But within a short time we were able to launch a number of struggles, gain many victories and prod the Labour Department into taking a more active part concerning the rights of the workers.

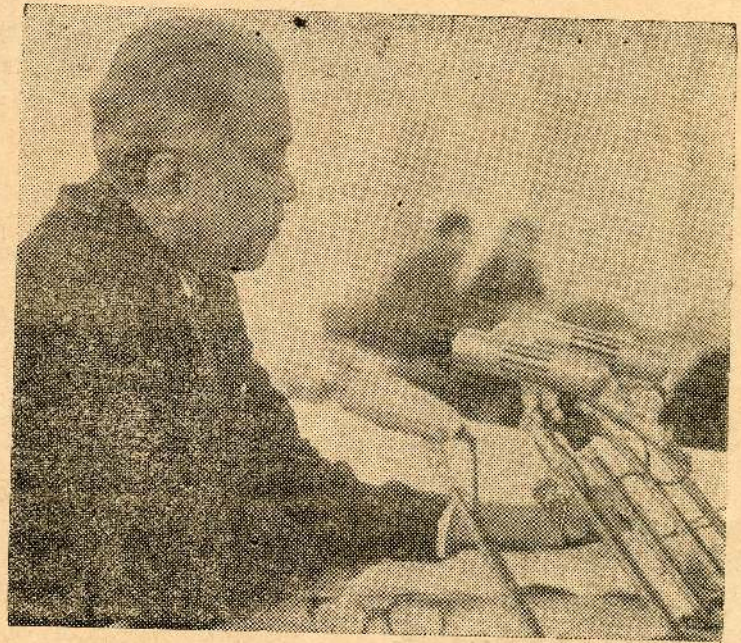


We who, according to the principles of international proletarian solidarity, raised high the slogan of "Workers of the World, Unite!" also made efforts to bring all workers of the world into one organisation.

We affiliated to the democratic world trade union centre the World Federation of Trade Unions, and also forged links with the trade union centres of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and thus brought before our workers their glorious example.

From 1941-46 we gave a true leadership to the working class to win national independence, carried a big struggle against the Soulbury Commission and opposed the national treachery of the late D. S. Senanayake.

Though the struggle of other Asian and African countries for independence gained momentum after the end of the war, the imperialists perpetrated a fraud in lieu of real independence for Ceylon. The Communist Party carried on a big campaign against this fraud and for building working class unity and through it the unity of all progressive and anti-imperialist forces.



M. G. Mendis addressing a conference of the WFTU

The progressive unity that has been achieved today, thanks to our correct slogans of that time, will gladden the hearts of all working class comrades connected with us. The Hartal of 1953 was another past result of such unity.

The historic Hartal not only resulted in the defeat of the UNP Government in 1956 and the enactment of a number of progressive measures.

It was the first united working class action for many years and opened the way for growing unity of the left and progressive forces.

Now nearly fifteen years later the Left and progressive force are united around a Common Programme to be implemented by a government of the SLFP, LSSP and CP.

Today we have reached a critical stage. Reactionaries are in power again and ruining the country.

The time has come to save the country through the awakening of the working class and the strength of progressive unity.

Reactionaries and their masked stooges today try to smash the unity of the progressive parties and the enthusiasm of the workers who are daily rallying round these parties.

The trade unions and working class connected with the Communist Party will play their part fearlessly fulfilling their tasks in the struggle to set up a SLFP-LSSP-CP Government which can lead our people along the path to a socialist Lanka.

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**Back cover shows copies of *Maubima* and Marxist publications in Sinhala**

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