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What is Communism ?

BY

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AT a time when the terms "Communism" and "Boishevism" are being freely bandied about to divert attention from the misdeeds of a bankrupt leadership by drawing a literally "red" herring across the trail of genuine criticism, I must thank the Editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* for affording me the opportunity of placing the Communist or Socialist point of view before the public. At the same time—Communism being a complete and unified philosophy of social life,—I trust that it will be fully realised that an adequate exposition, with all its attendant qualifications, of so vast a subject is impossible in the short space of a single article.*

Means of Production

Historical analysis proves that society is not a stable entity but a developing or evolving organism subject to the process of growth and decay. A particular set of relationships characterizes any particular society and distinguishes it from those that precede or succeed it. Thus the characteristic relationships of primitive society are different from those of feudalism and they in turn from those of capitalism.

Sir Henry Maine defines the change from feudal society to capitalist society as the progress from status to contract as the basis of social relations. This is the legal aspect. But as Law is only the definition of already established social relations it is more important to grasp the economic change that underlies this process.

The basic factor is the ownership of the means of production. The maintenance of life is based on production. Consequently the question of the ownership of the means of production is of vital importance to society. The characteristic feature of feudal production is the ownership of the means of production by the producer and the appropriation by him of the product.

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With the growth of scientific knowledge and the development of machine technique, individual possession of the tools of production by the producer became increasingly impossible. The producer has been divorced from the ownership of the means of production. Socialised modes of production came into being, but, as before, the owner of the means of production continued to appropriate the resultant product.

Thus we arrive at that characteristic feature of capitalist economy—individual ownership and appropriation of the product of a socialised productive process. This contradiction itself affords the clue to the direction of social change in modern society.

Basic Objective

From a social point of view the resolution of this contradiction is the basic objective of Communism.

The defence of capitalism has always been based not on its moral desirability but on its achievement in expanding production. The moment that justification is absent its entire position is undermined.

That production has expanded under capitalism is true. But it is today equally true that the capitalist structure has itself come to be the most serious drawback to the expansion of production. What is more, it is amply demonstrable that the inherent contradictions of capitalism have themselves developed *pari-passu* to such a point as to make it impossible even to maintain the level of production already attained. The League of Nations' Economic Survey has shown that world production has slipped back in 1933 from the 1929 level to the 1913 level while population has increased during the same period.

Motive of Capitalistic Production

The reason for this is to be found in the fundamental motive on which capitalism is based. The motive of capitalist production is private profit and not public use. From this derives the notorious paradox of poverty amidst plenty. Thus we have, on one hand, such modern phenomena as the destruction of Canadian wheat while Chinese across the Pacific are dying of starvation; of cotton being ploughed in by order of government in U. S. A.; of fish being thrown back into the sea and millions of oranges being

dumped in the deep in England while the unemployed cried for food; of live-stock and coffee being incinerated in U. S. A. and Brazil, etc. etc...These are examples amongst innumerable which could be quoted, of things which have been actually produced being destroyed in a hunger-stricken and unemployment-ridden world.

On the other hand we have the deliberate restriction of production in the interests of private profit. Thus we have the well-known world-restriction schemes like the rubber, tin, and tea restriction schemes. There are many such others, official and unofficial, on a smaller scale. Simultaneously 30 million are known to be unemployed in the industrialized capitalist countries alone, for the rest of the world no statistics are available. For instance American production today is only at 40 per cent capacity while there are over 10 million unemployed in the country.

Thus capitalist society has outlived its usefulness. The capitalist shell which was useful at one stage of expansion of production has now become a fetter.

Unemployment

A second evil deriving from private ownership of the means of production is unemployment. This is but another way of saying that large numbers of the true productive agents, i. e., the workers, are denied access to the means of production, or, if you wish it, of taking part in the productive process. The reason can be shortly stated. In capitalism, labour power has become a commodity bought and sold in the open market. Therefore, the owners of the means of production would only employ workers if profit would result to themselves. A maximum of output with a minimum of labour becomes the objective. Thus, labour-saving devices are made the agents of private profit and public misery, i. e., unemployment.

Further, the search for profit creates a drive towards Imperialism and War. Large scale capitalist production requires assured markets. Capitalist groups working behind the veil of Nationalism compete for the monopoly of markets the world over. Thus arises the search for colonies which under modern capitalist conditions afford the only assured markets. Within these Imperial

boundaries the controlling capitalist organizations establish monopolies by way of tariff preferences, quotas and such like restrictions.

Imperialism A War-Process

This is the process known as Imperialism which itself is, clearly a war-process howsoever it may be disguised. This in turn contains the seeds of a wider tragedy. Expanding Imperialisms, ever in search of wider monopolistic markets, inevitably clash. Thus the local tragedies of colonial wars merge into the world tragedy of modern Imperialist war.

So much for capitalism. It is clear on the above analysis that the main contradiction of capitalist society is itself the cause of the manifold evils that afflict the world today. If this contradiction can be resolved, the resultant evils, so clearly traceable to it, would disappear. This is what communism sets out to achieve.

The problem is solved if the product of socialized industry is socially appropriated. The essential means to this is *social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange*. Thus the problem of unemployment is solved because the producer has free access to the means of production; the problem of overproduction ceases to exist because production will be conditioned only by actual human need and not by the desire for profit; the expansion of production will directly redound to the benefit of all instead of to the profit of a few and the misery of the many. The achievements of science will from now on contribute to the real happiness of mankind by affording that comfort, leisure and freedom to develop its culture which to date has been the preserve of a few. Imperialism and imperialist war will disappear with the causes that gave them birth. Mankind will advance to a higher stage of development instead of receding again into that confused and primitive tribalism from which it once emerged. Mankind will move from pre-history to history.

The Class-War

Above all, that class-war which is the curse of modern capitalist society will then inevitably disappear. The economic basis of capitalist society, which has already been illustrated, has very definite social repercussions. Capitalist society has been of

necessity divided into two classes which *ultimately* cut across all divisions of caste, colour and creed. Those are the classes termed, on a strict analysis, the bourgeoisie or capitalists and the proletariat or working class, i. e., the owners of the means of production and the possessors of labour power. These classes have essentially antagonistic interests, for the wages of the one come from the profits of the other or, rather vice versa. And this will last till the abolition of capitalism. It is this conflict which so demonstrably exists and which the capitalist system has created, that communists are accused of forging anew on the anvils of Moscow. It is not the least monstrous paradox of today that those who seek the abolition of the evil are supposed themselves to create the evil.

New Set of Principles

It is clear that the achievement of Communism thus in itself constitutes a revolution inasmuch as it implies the substitution of a Society based on one set of principles by a Society based on a different set of principles. It is setting an inverted pyramid on its base or setting human idealism, which has hitherto stood on its head, on its feet.

How this revolution is to be accomplished is a pure question of method. At a time when Constitutions are being changed overnight Communists or Socialists cannot confine themselves to any particular method. They can only say two things. On the one hand methods must be determined by circumstances. On the other, history teaches us that no class has abdicated from power voluntarily. Force has been the midwife of every old society pregnant with the new. All that can be said is that historically the ruling class in every decaying society has clung to its waning power till forcibly flung off by the remorseless pressure of historically engendered forces.

Communism is thus both a method of thought which dictates a mode of action and a practical ideal towards which that action is directed. By its study of the historical process and its application of the lessons derived therefrom it seeks to help society in its own movement towards that goal of social and economic equality which is the essential basis for the progress of mankind.

Lanka Samasamaja Party

2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

18th December 1937

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

DR. COLVIN R. DE SILVA.

Comrades,

Barely two years have elapsed since the Lanka Samasamaja Party was inaugurated. During the short period we have not only grown rapidly in power and influence we have acknowledgedly developed into the only organised and disciplined political force in Ceylon. Accordingly, I am proud to be honoured for the third successive occasion with the responsibility of being your President.

It is indeed a responsibility to be your leader. The day is long past when politics were the dilettante's pastime. Modern politics demands sustained thought and unceasing vigilance. Especially is this so with those who hold such a creed as ours. The object we have placed before us is nothing short of the creation of a new society based on principles completely antithetic to those which underlie the social structure in which we live. Those principles are neither peculiar to us or new, but constitute the creed of a powerful international movement. Such being the case it behoves us to look to wider horizons than those of our little Island and constantly to place our little local destinies in the setting of world events and tendencies.

These be stirring times in which we live. None will deny that it is a period that is unusually fateful with the future. In the years that lie immediately ahead there will inevitably be decided the vital political issue that will decide the character and climate of human existence for centuries to come. That issue is the issue between decaying Capitalism and rising Socialism.

I say decaying Capitalism advisedly. The system termed Capitalism that has dominated the world unchallenged for such a length of time is today visibly in decay. There may be those to whom this statement comes as a surprise. Has there not been

in recent years it will be asked, a recovery of the system which proves its unsuspected resilience? That is indeed so. The world has admittedly climbed out of the trough of depression to the crest of a deceptive boomlet. There has been even a partial resurgence of economic hope. Yet sober analysis will lay bare the deception. There has been an increase in production but—unemployment continues. There has been a rise in prices—but engineered by restriction schemes both voluntary and compulsory. There has been business recovery—but largely dependant on unproductive armament expenditure. On such an unstable basis has been staged the so-called recovery of Capitalism. Who can doubt that when the next depression comes—and it is perilously near at hand already—it will surpass even the last in its devastation and consequent misery.

So that our analysis remains as true as ever, Capitalism has not only reached the limits of its development, but already, so to speak, turned in upon itself. This system so admirably designed to expand the productive capacity of the world has by reason of its inherent contradictions and dependance on the profit motive proved utterly incapable of utilising that capacity actually to produce in a manner to satisfy the needs of the masses. That is the paradox of 'poverty amidst plenty', more correctly stated as 'poverty amidst potential plenty.'

Within this decaying organism, nevertheless, are the very seeds of future growth. It is Capitalism itself that has created the basis of the Socialist world to be; and within Capitalism it self has grown that class which will be the instrument of destruction of the system that gave it birth as also the agent of the creation of the new and more rational society that will at last enable mankind to rise to its full stature. I refer of course to the working class that has already captured for itself one-sixth of the habitable globe and will surely capture for itself the rest. It will not therefore surprise you that I contrapose decaying Capitalism with rising Socialism.

Yet, let us not deceive ourselves with illusions of inevitability. There is nothing inevitable in the historical process except there be the organised will of human beings to mould it to their aims. There can of course be no Capitalism, that will not tend to dis-

ruption whatever the reformists may say ; but if that disruption is to end in Socialism instead of black reaction there must be convinced Socialists who will courageously work to ensure it. That is the responsibility which history casts on us—and the post-war period has underlined the lesson with the fateful failure of the German and Chinese revolutions.

Conscious thus of our destiny let us face the current situation realistically. We who are Socialists know the path the world should tread. But not till we have spread that knowledge far and wide will that path be taken by humanity. Besides the replacement of decaying Capitalism with a more reasonable and humane system is necessarily a slow process. In the meantime vast masses of humanity undergo the needless suffering that inexorably accompanies the decay of a system which most of them do not even understand.

It is not therefore strange that this is an age of confusion and frustration. Indeed, the helpless state of the contemporary world beggars description. Outside the confines of the U. S. S. R., life has become to most an Odyssey of meaningless suffering. The dominant contemporary emotion is that of despair, as is demonstrated by the rise in the suicide rate throughout the world. Amidst it all, declining Capitalism has assumed the monstrous shape of Fascism.

Let there be no mistake about the true nature of this contemporary phenomenon. Fascism does not represent the emergency of a new and antithetical system to replace the old. Fascism is Capitalism with the gloves off—and even the gloves were dirty enough. Capitalism in expansion developed in its monopolistic phase into imperialism ; now in its decadence it assumes the form of Fascism. Fascism is Capitalism that employs naked instead of masked force. The characteristic figure of developing Capitalism is the policeman even as the true representative of Imperialism is the soldier—the proper symbol of Fascism is the thug. For Fascism is Capitalism consciously and unscrupulously organised to perpetuate itself and the dominancy of its principles. The mere affixing of a new label does not invalidate the analysis.

It follows that it is as true as ever that the only system that is antithetical to Capitalism, whether in its Fascist or bourgeois democratic form, is Socialism. It is as well to remind ourselves of that fact at a time when many a red herring is sought to be drawn across the trail of truth in the name of Social Justice and other undefined but actively propagated obscurities. The issue is not between Capitalism and Fascism or Democracy and Dictatorship; the issue is between Capitalism and Socialism. In that framework completely fall the lesser rivalries and conflicts that litter the world of political controversy.

Such being the basic alignment of world forces, let us assess the concrete situation. Only a fool would deny that Fascism is today in full flood. Large portions of Europe and Asia are already ground under the Fascist heel. Much of the remainder is tending similarly as threatened Capitalism becomes increasingly conscious of itself. And accompanying the spread of Fascism has grown the spectre of War.

The second Imperialist World War already looms over the world with an imminence that overshadows all else. Mankind is desperately in search of peace; yet such is the remorseless destiny of Imperialism that this very search is being harnessed to create the psychology that war demands. Such are the paradoxes that the contradictions of Capitalism generate.

Why is war imminent in a world that thirsts for peace? The answer does not lie in the insatiable ambition of evanescent dictators. It lies rather in the inevitable trends of World forces. Capitalism in its insensate search for markets partitioned the world into rival Imperialisms. Today, with the rape of Abyssinia by Italy, the process of partition is complete. But the pressure for expansion within each Imperialism is beyond the possibility of restraint. Capitalism, whether in its Imperialist or any other form, must expand or burst. It is immaterial to Capitalists that the system must anyhow come to grief. It is sufficient for Capitalism to postpone the inevitable day.

But the drive to expansion in a fully partitioned world leads direct to Imperialist World war. There being no other direction in which to expand, Imperialism must clash against Imperialism in mortal combat to repartition the world. The process has already begun.

During the world War the weakest link in the Capitalist chain, Russia, gave way beneath the strain. Today the weakest contemporary Capitalism, China, is falling a prey to predatory Imperialist adventure. That is the explanation of the Chinese situation. It is not that Japanese Imperialism is unnaturally rapacious, it is that Japanese imperialism has no other more convenient direction in which to expand. Her trade drive, based on the intensive exploitation of a terrorised population, broke on the rocks of prohibitions, quotas and trade restrictions. Peaceful economic penetration proving impossible, she is forced to capture new monopolist markets by sheer physical force. And it is characteristic of Capitalist hypocrisy that every other Imperialism in the world, whom Japan is only brazenly imitating, should hold up its hands in horror at its aggressively apt pupil.

Japan is only flagrantly illustrating that the ultimate sanction of Imperialism is force. Yet, to those who will look honestly, no such illustration is necessary. Blood flows freely today in Palestine even as it does in China. The difference is the difference between an imperialism on the defensive and Imperialism on the offensive. Japan bombs the Chinese to get what she would keep; Britain bombs the Arabs to keep what she has got. Both do it in the name of peace—and, what is more, in the name of God. There is a curious parallel between General Matsua's declaration that God brought the Japanese to Shanghai and our new Governor's dictum that the British Empire is the product of a divine plan. One thing is clear anyhow; both gentlemen unconsciously accept that God is on the side of the big battalions. In the light of this philosophy, it is not strange that every country in the world is arming to the limit of its capacity.

The British Empire too has entered the armament race. The burden of that expenditure must ultimately fall on us too. As subjects of the British Empire we would therefore do well to arrive at some estimate of the position of the British Empire in the present world situation.

The British Empire is the oldest and still the most powerful Empire in the world. But her relative position has grown weaker. Her far-flung system of communications is threatened at point after vital point by the newer and younger Imperialisms

whose rise to power has increasingly occupied the attention of the post-war world. Even as she is threatened from without she is also beginning to disintegrate from within. The rising tide of the colonial movement for freedom has had many an overt expression in various parts of the Empire within the last few years. Thus preoccupied with herself, the British Empire has not been able to play that decisive part in world politics to which the past has accustomed us.

Indeed, throughout the world the British Empire is on the defensive. Her role in every crisis is very much that of the lawyer—the continued adjustment of recurring differences while always conserving the interests of one's own client. Master of the richest portions of the habitable globe, she has little to gain by war and all to lose. She is what is termed popularly a sated Imperialism, though in fact there is no point of satiety for any Imperialism. Accordingly Peace has become her interest—and she serves the cause of her interest as always with apostolic fervour. Mr. Anthony Eden trots from conference to conference in immaculate clothes and with immaculate words. But in the light of Britain's new armament programme the world is increasingly aware that the voice that breathes through Eden has the tone of conscious might.

Clearly, the peace that Britain seeks is not moral but legalistic. She conceives of peace not as the outcome of a system that enthrones economic and political justice, but as itself a system embodying a balanced relationship between respective systems of organised force. The wolf is to lie down with the lamb; all Imperialisms weak or powerful (and Britain is the most powerful of them all) are to live at peace with each other; but within each Imperialism the wolf is to continue, as always, to devour the lamb. It is within such a conception of Peace alone that the speeches of Mr. Eden and the bombing expeditions in Palestine and on the North West Frontier can be permanently reconciled.

It is of such an attitude that has been born the monstrous farce termed non-intervention. Non-intervention is a typically British product that is being vended in the international market with characteristic British salesmanship. We had partial non-intervention in Abyssinia and complete non-intervention in the

Saar; we have so-called non-intervention in Spain and as yet, watchful non-intervention in China. In every case British influence has been the decisive factor. That influence has always operated on the basis of self-interest. Non-intervention is the policy so long as British interests are not too directly threatened. There is a magical change when it is otherwise, as was proved in the case of piracy in the Mediterranean.

In any event, we who are Socialists cannot be deceived. So long as the U. S. S. R. exists an assault on the Socialist citadel must ever present itself as necessary to her Capitalist neighbours. Threatened from within and without they may ally themselves for the final holocaust the ultimate outcome of which none can precisely prophesy. Will the international working class movement go under and the world recede into the darkness of desolation? Or will it conquer and so lay the basis of the only system in which peace is inherent? For only in the Socialist world can peace be possible.

There are not lacking signs that the answer will be favourable. It is true that the working class movement has suffered severe set backs in many countries. It is crushed in Germany and almost so in many other countries. But there are signs of a resurgence in Italy and of possible dominance in the France of the Popular Front. Republican Spain continues to resist, and Chinese resistance has shown unexpected quality. Admittedly the invader is in Nanking; but China cannot be mopped up like a puddle and there is a significant absence of news from North China where the erstwhile Chinese Red armies are operating. In India the rising mass movement has placed Congress in office, and although Congress in office, not being a disciplined Socialist organisation, is already showing signs of barren Constitutionalism, nevertheless, the workers and peasants movement, impatient of hesitant leadership, is beginning to develop on new and bolder lines. Egypt has won formal independence and so also the Phillipines. There is revolt in Morocco and rebellion in Palestine. The oppressed masses within the various Imperialisms are showing signs of increased consciousness. Above all the U. S. S. R. goes from victory to victory in production.

The place of the U. S. S. R. in world politics is beyond ordinary importance. It is to her that the international working class

movement ultimately looks for the concrete exemplification of the hope that animates it. Every rise in the standard of living in the U. S. S. R., every victory under her successive five year plans, every little growth in her relative strength, infuses into the oppressed of the world fresh courage to continue the desperate struggle in which they are engaged. For on her every action depends the nearing of the day when a Socialist world, released from the threat of war and want, can bend its energies unhampered to the task of finally making man the master of circumstance.

When we turn nearer home to this our little island, it will be seen that this preliminary survey of the world situation is essential to a proper understanding of events in Ceylon itself. Every world trend also manifests itself here in keeping with local circumstances. The growth of the International Socialist Movement reflects itself in the rise of the Lanka Samasamaja Party, even as the increasing self consciousness of Capitalism is reflected locally in the many manifestations of increasing cooperation amongst our local Capitalists. The basically Fascist trend of British Imperialism is locally exemplified by the steadily increasing Police interference in strikes. The Bracegirdle affair indicated, through the "Times" newspaper, the source from which Fascism in Ceylon will find its main strength, namely European Planterdom; even as the upsurge of mass protest during the same incident and in the Dowbiggin demonstrations showed that there are vast reserves of strength to be tapped for the cause of freedom in our toiling masses.

Frightened by the growth of popular feeling our local Capitalists and land owners with the remnants of decaying Feudalism are turning steadily to their natural allies, the Imperialists. The nature and constitution of the Town Hall Meeting against Tax increases, coupled with the rising volume of protests through the capitalist "Daily News" against Social Service expenditure, particularly for education, affords support for this contention. If proof be necessary, the Memorandum to the Secretary of State that has resulted from the Town Hall Meeting provides it. Anyone who reads intelligently even the carefully worded extracts that have been published will see that the Memorandum is directed not so much against Taxation as against the Universal Franchise. The pressure of the masses on the State Council is beginning to

produce results which are already proving distasteful to the ruling classes of Ceylon. The answer sought to be given by Cinnamon Gardens is not concession but repression.

How has this situation come about? Despite the rotund phrases of pampered propagandists, every fact points to the depths of rural and urban misery. No doubt, there has been a partial return of prosperity with the improvement in tea, rubber and coconut prices. But the benefits have not been so widespread or so sufficient as genuinely to relieve the weight of poverty on the mass of our population. Unemployment is still widespread and under employment general. The rise in world prices has depressed the standard of living of urban workers, for wages have lagged behind prices. That is the explanation of the rising wave of spontaneous strikes in Colombo and outside. At the same time the extent of rural misery is being steadily reflected in the growing volume of protest and complaint from every part of the country that reaches the correspondence columns of our vernacular newspaper the "Samasamajaya." Even the plantation labourers are getting conscious, and planterdom is preparing with repression against the anticipated day of fate.

In this situation the ruling classes of Ceylon are organising themselves. The white lords are seeking, as in India, for brown allies, and find them readily in our landowning and feudal elements. Negotiations are going on behind the scenes between the Britishers and certain of our land-owning leaders; and that fact has to be read together with the recent proposal in the European Association to found a so-called Moderate Party. The basis for common organisation is being provided by the attack on the universal franchise.

The growing volume of mass protest has alarmed our ruling classes, and the responsiveness of even the present State Council to organised mass pressure has scared them. The instrument by which that pressure can be regularly and legally exercised, even if repressive legislation comes, is the universal franchise. You may forbid the right of public meeting and protest, but so long as the universal franchise remains there is always the possibility of expressing protest by the type of representatives sent to Council. Besides, so long as the Council is answerable to a popular electorate, repressive legislation would not be easy, while recourse for

that purpose to the Governor's special powers would too readily brand repressive legislation for the thing it is. Imperialism in Ceylon still requires a liberal *facade* and also at least to preserve appearances.

Therefore, the initial attack has to be directed against the universal franchise. Its abolition would clear the way to repressive legislation designed to throttle the growing mass movement and to remove its leadership. Hence the defence of the universal franchise has become a pressing necessity, and it will be our duty in the coming year to teach our people the danger with which they are faced.

There is, however, more in it than that. The universal franchise is not an end itself, but a means to an end. Though Socialism can alone fulfil the needs of the masses, as things are, it is only through the universal franchise that the masses can for the present wring any concessions whatsoever from their oppressors. The Capitalist and land-owning, and feudal classes know this well, and hence the beginnings of organisation among them. The important question is what the masses are to do in the face of this growing threat.

The answer is both simple and obvious. The masses are not Socialist, but they are liberty loving and demand an improvement in their condition. That fact should afford the basis for action. Clearly a United Front of all anti-Imperialist elements was and is the need of the day, and I do not doubt the masses realise it. The difficulty lies elsewhere. Moved by a realization of the need during the last year we made an honest and sustained effort to work a United Front with the so-called Labour Party. The effort has failed as it was sabotaged by the acknowledged leader of this so-called Party.

On this matter the utmost frankness is necessary. We have never over-estimated the Labour Party, nor on the other hand under-estimated it. To begin with, we know that its trumpets of self-advertisement only hide the lack of any real organisation. A Labour Party that needs to have recourse to gubernatorial patronage is really confessing to bankruptcy of influence. Its ideas of organisation are so primitive as to be confined to the recruitment of handy allies in the State Council who

rapidly fall away at any little crisis. It is not enough to administer an oath, it is necessary to choose the right material to whom the oath is to be administered. It is not, therefore, strange that the Labour Party has reverted to its original and perennial membership of one in the State Council.

So much for its organisation. What of its influence? That, we should not under-estimate. The Labour Party, or rather its perpetual leader lives on past achievements. The day was when it was the spear head of the working class attack. To those days we shall always pay tribute. But from leadership it has steadily turned to sabotage. From being the leader of working class action it has become the agent of employer control. No other reason can be given for the constant insistence of the employers in every labour trouble that they will recognise none other as the representative of the labourers save Mr. Goonesinhe. And it speaks much for the natural loyalty of workers that despite act after act of sabotage they have till lately clung to the party that once was truly theirs.

But the time has arrived when the true function of the Labour Party has come to be realised. The Hunupitiya strike showed it in its true colours. That strike was soon converted from an economic to a political battle. The leadership of the strike was provided by our Party; our opponent was perhaps the strongest local unit of British business. The occasion was therefore consciously utilised to try to smash the Party. The Government allied itself by permitting the railway to be used on a special agreement to convey scabs. The Minister for Labour delayed to use the conciliation machinery provided by law. The Colombo Commercial Company refused to negotiate, and the Labour Party directly encouraged black-legging. The result was that the strike was smashed, but the Party emerged intact.

There can be no Labour organisation worthy of the name that can encourage strike-breaking for any reason whatsoever. The day that was first done openly in the name of political principles, the Labour Party was doomed. I state it thus for this reason. Four years ago too the Labour Party indulged in strike-breaking at the Wellawatte Mill Strike. On that occasion it did so in the name of racialism, and the workers of Colombo were thereby deceived as to the true significance of this phenomenon of a Labour Leader

who included strike breaking as a weapon in his political armoury. Besides, that strike succeeded. It needed the Hunupitiya Strike, which ended in disaster for this very reason, namely organised black-legging, to open the eyes of the workers of Colombo in particular—by the way the Labour Party has never been a political force out-side Colombo. Above all, for the first time there was a working class Party with sufficient theoretical equipment patiently to explain to the workers the true meaning of the situation. Our arguments were met with abuse: but that was not merely because our opponents regularly mistake abuse for argument but also because in this case they had no argument at all. The results are now becoming apparent. The realisation is becoming general that the Labour Party has finally lost its claim to leadership of the workers, and working class leadership has now finally and irrevocably passed into our hands.

It is not therefore to be concluded that we have abandoned the United Front tactic. Rather we are compelled to adapt it to the new position and apply it in a different manner. There is no Labour Party in fact to work with—it has become nothing but an electoral organisation for the backing of Mr. Goonesinghe's candidature in Central Colombo. We have to turn elsewhere and seek a new orientation. For that purpose the situation must be re-examined.

The basis for the new application of the United Front tactic is to be found in the fact that the anti-Imperialist movement is gathering force. Capitalism in Ceylon, though highly developed, is really very peculiar in form. It is not so much an indigenous as a foreign growth from European exploitation of the resources of this country. Cheek by jowl with it survives our ancient feudal structure whose survival is dependent purely on the support it gets from British Imperialism. The latter finds it too convenient an instrument to be swept away. Accordingly, within Ceylon feeling is directed more against feudal survivals than capitalist oppression as is shown by the tremendous feeling against the Headmen System. Against capitalism as such there is not so much feeling, for capitalist exploitation is really concentrated on the plantations. There, it is immigrant labour that is largely employed. That labour is not yet sufficiently conscious to become, what it ultimately must become, the main centre of the attack on Capitalism in

Ceylon. The real point on which feeling is widespread, cutting across all racial divisions, is Imperialism. The call for Freedom is genuine and deep, and is increasingly finding expression as was shewn in the Dowbiggin demonstrations, the Kamala Devi tour and the Bracegirdle episode. It is with that subject that the Party, will have to be increasingly occupied.

If that analysis be true the United Front tactic needs re-direction. 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 in such a movement, but the point is that the movement will not have a purely working class content. Ceylon is peculiar in that it has a completely cowardly bourgeoisie that never has and never will at any stage provide national leadership against Imperialism. The result has been the unique fact that the leadership in the anti-Imperialist movement has fallen entirely upon the van-guard of the working class organised as the Lanka Samasamaja Party—and that within an year of its emergence. This throws upon us a responsibility that necessitates a change of emphasis in the immediate tactics of struggle.

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 constantly tends to supersede the purely economic. This is also our concrete experience in Ceylon. Therefore the Party, while building the organs of working class economic action and providing their leadership, is at present compelled, in the particular context of Ceylon experience, to admit the unavoidably dominant importance of political struggle. Indeed it has been the experience of the Party that, in the absence of other anti-Imperialist organisations, both the peasants and other scattered petit bourgeois elements are coming into or rallying around it. As such, the united front we need has to be sought not so much as between different organisations of the working class as generally with anti-Imperialist elements.

Such a policy needs delicate handling, and success is dependant not only on soundness of leadership but also on mobility of organisation. If the Lanka Samasamaja Party is to be the effective instrument of working class policy while working a united front against Imperialism with non-working class elements, it must educate and strengthen itself. For the Lanka Samasamaja Party must ever keep in mind that the overthrow of Imperialism is only a stage, though a necessary stage, in the battle for achievement of working class power as the essential pre-requisite for building the Socialist Society.

In this context I should like to address a few words on the organisational resolutions that will be placed before you today. They are designed to make the L. S. S. P. a closely organised fighting unit that will be the spear-head of the working class attack. Haphazard growth is dangerous; mere mass membership is attractive but does not generate power. What the Party must do is to draw in all conscious elements while holding its influence over the masses generally. Such a policy will need careful avoidance of the Scylla of sectionalism and the Charybdis of ideological adulteration. On its success however depends absolutely our growth in influence and power.

The importance of this point can be seen from another angle. Our opponents are powerful even when unorganised. They are now beginning to organise themselves and to mobilise the multitudinous resources at their command. We are being cold-blanketed in the Press when we are not deliberately misrepresented. No opportunity to weaken us is let pass, and should that not suffice the day is inevitable when open repression will be resorted to for the purpose of smashing us. Against that not very distant day we must organise and prepare if the working class is not to be left broken and destitute of leadership. The lesson of Germany must be learnt if here too the tale is not to be repeated. We must inter-penstrate the masses without losing our Socialist basis; we must permeate the anti-Imperialist movement without losing our organisational identity. If we do so successfully we may be beaten but never broken.

Such is the great task that lies immediately ahead of us. Yet this change of emphasis in policy must not obscure the nature

of the work to be done. Although much of our energy will be devoted to the anti-Imperialist movement, the continued task of working class organisation and day to day struggle must be sustained. We may point to anti-Imperialist work as the crying need of the hour, but we shall not cease to agitate for improvements in working class conditions. We shall seek a United Front, but only on a progressive basis. It shall be our business to join in every anti-Imperialist action, but we shall utilise every opportunity to spread our creed. Thus with the growing anti-Imperialist movement will grow simultaneously the Socialist movement for whose capture of power it is our duty unceasingly to work.

Accordingly, I would like to stress the block of resolutions in today's agenda that embody the immediate demands of the toiling masses. They have been deliberately formulated by your Executive to provide the concrete basis for agitation and propaganda in the year to come. It would be our duty to explain them to the masses in their proper setting so that they are seen as a stage along the road and not as the end of the road itself. Through such work shall we spread our influence in the country and also find those new recruits of whom there can never be too many for the Party to absorb in useful work.

Comrades, I think I have spoken long enough. You will have noted that I have devoted myself almost entirely to an analysis of the current political and economic situation. I have done so deliberately as I feel it is more important to provide you with the theoretical basis of future action than with an account of the past. That is not because the past has no victories worthy of being recounted. The Dowbiggin demonstrations which we organised first proved the possibilities of mass pressure. The Kamala Devi tour was an achievement of which no other organisation in Ceylon is capable. The Bracegirdle drama, which must go down to history, was of our instrumentation. Our influence is wide and our strength unplumbed. Our paper is a power in the land, and our propaganda the object of fear in our opponents. All that is true. But all that is unimportant save as it affords courage for the future. We have had our successes and defeats, and we shall have our share of both in the years to come. What matters is this alone that conscious of the responsibility of our acknowledged mission, we shall go into the long fight that will give to mankind through Socialism the first proper opportunity of realising, developing and utilising to the full those powers and potentialities whose application and use will prove that the real history of mankind has only just begun. If we are to be the makers of the future let us rise to the full stature of our responsibility and destiny.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DELIVERED BY

DR. COLVIN R. DE SILVA.

Comrades !

Our Party is entering on the fourth year of its existence. For the fourth time you have placed on me the responsibility of being your President. I undertake the duty with the knowledge that the year ahead is likely to be critical in our development.

It is deliberately that I stress this point at the very outset of my address. It is not that I under-estimate the work that the Party has done and the ground that it has covered. That our growth has been rapid the Report already in your hands amply establishes: that our influence is wide is common knowledge: and that our activity is continuous you are yourselves aware. But those are the very facts that give so much importance to the year ahead. The more rapid the growth, the sooner are the limits of easy expansion reached: the wider our influence, the more far-reaching are the consequences of mistakes: and the more continuous our activity, the more sensitive and adaptable must we be to changing circumstances.

Though the ultimate success of a political Party is dependent on the historical rightness of its fundamental principles and policy, its current power and influence is dependent on continuous integration of its strategy and tactics to changing circumstances and the variations of day to day struggle. Our fundamental policy, based on class needs, remains constant; but the manner of our application of the policy is necessarily dependent on the changing relationship of class forces. Such a process involves the constant issuing of fresh directives; but the proper practical carrying out of such directives is only possible in a Party with a well-knit and efficient organisation which, besides, possesses cadres of a high political level. Every factor in the current political situation, as also the present stage and state of Party development, underlines the urgency of training such cadres and achieving such organisation.

What is the current political situation? In the international arena, despite cross-currents and confusions, the fundamental world-wide issue between Capitalism and Socialism is being posed with increasing definiteness. The basic affinity of Imperialism and Fascism, which are but variants of Capitalism, is being increasingly demonstrated. The series of events that culminated in the Munich Pact for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia is from this point of view, beyond ordinary significance. The Munich Pact itself is not so much the fruition of a policy as the foundation for a realignment of political forces. Imperialism and Fascism are on the way to reconciliation, at least temporarily though uneasily, on the basis of internal and external alignment against the common foe the international working class. Thence has flowed the sudden, but complete, diplomatic isolation of the U. S. S. R., and the final break-down of the Popular Front in France.

These are facts of decisive importance. The disappearance of the last bourgeois democratic state in Central and South Eastern Europe and the dominance of Nazi Germany in those regions though important is not decisive. Capitalism in decay was bound to slough off the bourgeois democratic skin of the days of its expansion; so the disappearance of bourgeois democracy from the world was and is a mere matter of time. Similarly industrial Germany is an economic 'complexus' whose inherent expansive power could never have been confined and prevented from overflowing its existent political boundaries—that too had to come. What is decisive is that "sated" Imperialism has decided to buy off hungry and aggressive Fascism at the expense of the lesser states and the U. S. S. R. The change from Eden to Chamberlain, as indeed the change from Blum to Daladier, signifies a conscious policy of suspending, as far as possible, inter Capitalist rivalry for the co-operation of Imperialism and Fascism in an assault on the international working class in general and the U. S. S. R. in particular.

I do not, of course, suggest that Capitalist rivalry is, will be, or can be thereby ended. It is of the very nature of Capitalism that its rival groups can never permanently combine even against a common foe. The basic Anglo-American inter-Imperialist rivalry remains as acute as before despite the verbiage about Anglo-American friendship; and the American-Japanese

antagonism has developed to a new stage where the inevitability of a clash has become palpable. The point I am seeking to stress however is the existence, in particular in Britain, of a conscious effort towards such combination and the consequences that flow from it.

The principal consequence is a recession of working class power in the contemporary world. The basically Fascist trend of the British National Government is increasingly coming to the surface; the recent successful challenge by Daladier to the power of the Confederation du Travail proves not only the break-down of the Popular Front but also the renewed upsurge of Fascist forces in France; and the new trends in the U. S. A. point in the same direction. When you collate with these facts the prostration of working class organisation within the openly Fascist countries and the diplomatic isolation of the U. S. S. R., the picture of gloom is complete.

Nevertheless the international picture is not entirely cheerless. The heroic resistance of the Spanish Republicans and the courageous struggle of the Chinese people are proof of the continued potency of progressive forces throughout the world. Above all, the new circumstances have resulted in a falling away of the U. S. S. R. from capitalist alliances in favour of a renewed and increased reliance on the international working class movement. Though temporarily defeated therefore, we are not broken or crushed.

This re-emphasis of the importance of the international working class movement comes at an appropriate juncture. A new depression envelopes the world, the full effects of which are only masked by the armaments boom. The second Imperialist world war already looms large on the international horizon and the already decaying economics of the Capitalist world are strained beyond precedent by the efforts involved in an armament race. The burden of it all, as always under Capitalism, falls on the working class generally in the industrial countries and on the colonial peoples in particular,

There can be no doubt whatsoever that, with the steady decay of Capitalism and the heightened demands of re-armament, colonial exploitation has been deepened and intensified. The

power of finance capital in the colonies has been reinforced by the permanent welding into the Imperialistic structure of tariffs and quotas. Moreover, Imperial defence directly seeks colonial contributions either as such or in the masked shape of so-called civilian improvements in patently military areas.

Hand in hand with intensified exploitation go measures for the suppression of all manifestations of consequent resentment. The tendency towards suppressing in the colonies even such modicum of civil liberties as existed is universal. What is more the tendency has reacted on the Imperialist countries themselves, resulting in a steady restriction on one pretext or another of civil liberties even within their confines. Imperialism in difficulties is steadily approximating to Fascism.

Even so is it with the British Empire. The British Empire is breaking up before our very eyes. The rising tide of colonial revolt has reached the stage of armed resistance in Palestine—and successful armed resistance at that. The centrifugal tendencies of the big Dominions, which are developing into independent Capitalist organisms, are beginning to assert themselves with greater frequency. The competitive position of British Capitalism has deteriorated, and the pressure on British Imperialism from within and without is so great that it has had to eschew fresh adventures and concentrate on preserving the status quo.

That is the explanation of the malignant role of Britain in the international sphere. Britain did not act as the broker to German Fascism out of philanthropy: she did so as usual in the hope of profit—that profit was the provision of a further breathing space during which it is hoped to reweld Imperial interests and intensify Imperial rearmament. It is in that sense that "peace" has become a British "interest." It is from that which flowed and flows the monstrous farce of "non-intervention" in Spain and the preservation of "peace at any cost" in the cases of Austria and Czechoslovakia.

With the deterioration of Britain's competitive position in the world market has come a clarification of the true nature of British Imperialism. The benevolent role of self acclaimed "civiliser" has rapidly given place to the true function of pitiless exploiter. The colonial reaction has been the stiffening of

resistance. The struggle for colonial freedom has upsurged afresh and the Arabs of Palestine have taught to Imperialism and the world a lesson that perhaps needed reminder. The true significance of the Palestine revolt is not the display of naked force by British Imperialism but the capitulation of British Imperialism to determined armed resistance. Amidst the repeated declarations that the Arab revolt has been crushed, let it not be forgotten that the object of the revolt has been accomplished—the plan for the partition of Palestine is dead beyond resurrection.

The living power of the colonial movement is thus demonstrated in Palestine. Similarly the compelling urge for colonial freedom is being signalled afresh and in different circumstances in India. British-India has known revolt; it is a refreshing sign that the States peoples are also now on the move. The feudal Princes of India are anachronisms; they are also pillars of British rule. It is in the States that reaction in alliance with Imperialism sits most openly enthroned. The repercussions of the struggle of the States peoples are therefore bound to be more wide-spread than can accurately be gauged. At the least, the movement will revitalise a Congress in whom office has tended to induce torpor.

Such is the relationship of world forces and the condition of the British Empire of which our country is no unimportant unit. Strategically our position in the Imperial scheme is vital, for Trincomalee is clearly the true pivot of Imperial defence in the East. It is in the setting of these wider facts therefore that we should assess the political situation in Ceylon.

In setting out to do so, I am constrained to remark that every political trend in the past year has been in keeping with the anticipations made in my last Conference address. I then pointed out that the rising Mass movement was scaring the white Imperialists and their brown lackeys into making common cause against the toiling masses, and prophesied that the coming year would see the laying of the foundation for the counter attack on that movement. My prophecy has, I fear, been only too completely fulfilled.

The development of every major question that engaged the attention of our country during the last year has brought sharply to the surface the direct class issue and served to expose the true

alignment of political forces. The growth of the mass movement has rapidly induced in the bourgeoisie an overt class consciousness. Its instinctive fear of the masses is beginning to get a rationalised political basis that elevates it to the position of a conscious philosophy. Unable in conditions of Capitalist decline and intensified colonial exploitation to make minor concessions with which to purchase the quiescence of the masses, our land owning bourgeoisie turns to its natural allies to suppress its class enemy. Those allies are the relics of out-worn Ceylonese feudalism and the local representatives of British Imperialism.

It is noteworthy that the economic and political interests of these three sections are by no means identical. On the one hand it was only by smashing feudal power that British Imperialism first consolidated its position in Ceylon: by the deliberate replacement of a degenerate aristocracy with an upstart brown officialdom. On the other, the basic economic and political interest of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie is the substitution in Ceylon of brown capitalist exploitation for white.

It is this basic divergence of interests that make them uneasy bed fellows. But at one point nevertheless their interests completely coincide. The upstart officialdom has developed aristocratic pretensions which the attack on the headmen system vitally endangers. The brown bourgeoisie dreads an agrarian upheaval which threatens their position as big land-owners and parasitic business men. White Imperialism fears a mass movement for independence which alone can hope to overthrow its entrenched power. In other words, for widely different reasons they find that their interests coincide at one point. And at that point stands the baleful figure of the Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake.

The role of Mr. D. S. Senanayake in the contemporary political scene is deserving of careful characterisation and definition. Who is this man who embodies in himself the combination of three otherwise divergent tendencies? What is his policy and whither does he seek to lead, or rather manoeuvre the peoples of this island? On the answers to these questions largely hinges the correct shaping of our political strategy and tactics in the year ahead.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake is the present head of a land-owning family of great wealth and many ramifications who rose to prominence in the Martial Law period and later climbed to power on the shoulders of his late patriotic brother Mr. F. R. Senanayake. Since the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution, although only Minister of Agriculture he has steadily gravitated to the centre of the political stage. Today he is the acknowledged leader of the land-owning bourgeoisie of Ceylon. Sir Baron Jayatilaka may be the formal leader of the present ministerial puppet show; but the hand that holds the strings is that of Mr. D. S. Senanayake. Sir Baron remains not because he is leader but because he provides that essential liberal facade behind which reactionary manoeuvres can most successfully be engineered. Alone among the popular leaders of the older school Mr. Senanayake has a fully developed class consciousness. That veneer of vague liberalism which characterised the reformist leaders who created the Ceylon National Congress, Mr. Senanayake has never had. Lacking the culture and scholarly refinement of Sir Baron, yet possessed of a primitive energy and abundant drive that reflect themselves even in the blundering construction of his unedited speeches, he has clarity of immediate objective accompanied by a complete disregard of the methods employed in achievement. The methods employed in the Dedigama electorate at the last General Election afford the most flagrant, though not the only example of that fact. It is no wonder that he has become the dark symbol of bourgeois reaction.

Indeed Mr. D. S. Senanayake has introduced into national politics the spirit and methods of the successful village mudalali. There is the same shrewdness in perceiving self interest, the same capacity for tortuous manoeuvres, the same short sighted clarity of vision with the same incapacity to look beyond the immediate need, and indeed the same religiosity that conceals astuteness. It is not without significance that Mr. Senanayake heads an organisation for the administration of the Ramannya Nikaya. All great bourgeois politicians have known how to use the church!

Such are the attainments of the new leader that has displaced Sir Baron, in every sense except the formal, from the centre of our political stage. Around the central sun constellate many a lesser planet, all held together by the gravitation of blood

relationship and marital ties. The Senanayake group is essentially a family group that has painted itself with a national colouring.

The politics of this group is inherently simple—its sole object is the preservation of its class dominance at any cost. The rising mass movement in the last three years, wrested many a concession from the ruling classes. A still politically undifferentiated Council passed progressive measures, temporarily oblivious of class interest. But the Bracegirdle issue sharply posed the problem of anti-imperialist struggle and the development of mass forces. In one year the country was rapidly educated politically and in the process our bourgeoisie developed class consciousness to a high degree.

The mass movement in Ceylon is agrarian in constitution and anti-imperialist and anti-feudal in character. A landless and down-trodden peasantry has turned against its oppressors as exemplified in the headmen system, and its nationalist tendency has been given a consciously anti-imperialist direction by Sama Samajist propaganda. Thus it was that despite all the manoeuvres of the Senanayake group that on the one hand the anti-headmen bill was driven through Council and on the other the masses originally forced the hands of council in the Bracegirdle episode.

But the fruits of these hard won victories are already being snatched away. Mass pressure, especially when unorganised, is spasmodic in character, while class interest is perennial. What the bourgeoisie and Imperialism could not prevent at the height of the mass movement, Mr. Senanayake with the Imperialists is taking away by adroit parliamentary and political manoeuvre.

This fact is well proved by the history of every one of the important issues that engaged the attention of the country in the past year. An Order in Council robbed us completely of the fruits of the Bracegirdle judgment; the masses rose once again in indignant protest; every thing was ripe for a new political crisis: when along came Mr. Senanayake with a talk of constitutional reform that side-tracked the whole issue and forever fixed the Governor's powers on the country. Mr. Senanayake then showed clearly that he was the new guardian of Imperialist interests.

Then came the question of constitutional reform itself. In a dyarchical constitution such as ours no reform can be characterised

as progressive that does not entrench upon the Governor's powers. But the Senanayake reform move is not that—though they formally attack the Governor's powers they actually seek only a readjustment of the constitution, a setting right of the balance of power within the country itself and not as between ourselves and Imperialism. That is the significance of the attack on the committee system. The true gravamen of the charge is that the committee system makes the Council singularly responsive to public opinion and mass pressure. That does not suit either the bourgeoisie or the Imperialist book. So, the committee system will go, and a cabinet system will be introduced that will to some extent neutralise the present influence of the universal franchise. The definite class character of the move is obvious and apparent.

Even more so is this the case with the Headmen issue. Everyone knows the Council decision regarding the Headmen System, in particular to abolish the so-called Chief Headmen; and everyone is now familiar with the heroic efforts of Mr. D. S. Senanayake to thwart that decision. The Vidane Aratchies and Udayars have been given a new lease of life on specious pleas and by sheer manoeuvring; it is even being sought to save the Mohandirams. It would be wise to remember in this connection the remark of Mr. D. S. Senanayake that when the House is wrong he claims the power to put it right—which is only another way of saying that he claims the right to flout the considered decisions of the State Council where his august self differs from the Assembly. I cannot help feeling that the real intention is to make the Headmen System—and of course, the Police—the basis of the coming counter attack on the mass movement.

If the Headmen issue exposed the Senanayake manoeuvre of a bourgeois—feudal alliance, the Cattle Shooting and Immigrant Labour issues disclosed the bourgeoisie and the Imperialists in close embrace. The legalised shooting of stray cattle on European estates has not only seriously affected village economy but also generated deep resentment. Yet the proposal to restrict the right of shooting stray cattle only to properly fenced estates begot a ready alliance between brown and white planters to protect their pockets at the expense of justice. The Minister for Agriculture has indeed a finished technique—he knows to protect the interests of the big landowners while preserving an elaborate pretence of helping the peasantry.

The immigration issue was even more revealing. The restriction of immigration at a time of widespread unemployment can surely be no matter for controversy; nevertheless we had the spectacle of our bourgeoisie rushing to protect the interests of planterdom on a mere assurance regarding the employment of local labour unaccompanied by any collective guarantee for its observance.

It is indeed remarkable how this group is tender and sensitive to every European interest. Every military or naval demand receives from the same quarters ready support. Is it in recognition of political reliability that even the water service at Trincomalee has been taken from the control of Mr. Bandaranaike and handed over to Mr. D. S. Senanayake!

However that may be, the fundamentally pro-imperialist role of Mr. D. S. Senanayake was never more completely demonstrated than in the Jayatilaka—Banks affair. Our tactics in that matter succeeded completely in that the personal aspect of the matter soon came to be overshadowed by the real question—the struggle between a popularly elected State Council and the permanent bureaucracy. Sir Baron himself faced the issue reluctantly and fought it only hesitantly—after all a mere change in circumstance cannot alter the habits of a life-time. This former shock-absorber of Imperialism could not well start suddenly at this date to administer shocks himself. It is therefore no matter for real surprise that when the critical moment for the final denouement came and the anti-imperialist struggle became a living issue, the bourgeoisie recoiled from the prospective consequences of their own acts. They made heroic speeches; they passed a milk and water resolution; and they scuttled in alarm at the first sign of political risk.

There can be no doubt that the present course of events must be ascribed to Mr. D. S. Senanayake. The amendment to Comrade Philip Gunawardena's motion was of his engineering; the present hesitancy of Sir Baron is clearly of his influencing; the virulent newspaper campaign against those who would force a crisis is of his inspiring; and the debacle on ministerial resignations is undoubtedly of his creation.

In this matter we have had a clear view of Senanayake tactics. None made more radical and demagogic speeches in Council on this issue; yet none acted more reactionarily in the matter. That is the technique—militant public speeches to cover surrender behind the scenes.

The next step in the plan is already becoming clear. The familiar trick used on the Order in Council issue is being resuscitated. The talk of reforms is again vociferously raised. The Wijeywardena paper, in keeping with policy, will join in the pro-imperialist chorus. The slogan will be, "no action on this issue that will imperil the reforms." Thus will cowardly inaction be invested with the appearance of political wisdom.

The reason for this attitude is, of course, not far to seek. Our bourgeoisie have no stomach for the anti-imperialist struggle. They cannot face the rising mass movement for national liberation and economic emancipation even in alliance with the feudal elements; only the strong arm of Imperialism can sustain them for certain. Hence do they rise to the Imperialist bait but recently dangled before them by Major Oldfield in a public speech at the Grand Oriental Hotel. Referring to the debate on the Bracegirdle Commission's report and the Lanka Samasamaja Party's position that they definitely wanted to sever the Imperial tie, he said:—

"We know where we are and you know now what you have got to face and it is up to the European community and those others whom Sir Thomas Villiers referred to, the permanent population of this country *landowners who have got more to lose than some of us*. It is up to you to see what can be done to counteract that insidious propaganda which we know is going on from the headquarters of that Party."

I do not wish to lay undue stress on the fact that the gallant Major seems to think that only the landowners constitute the permanent population of this country. The quarter or more of our peasantry that is landless, the industrial proletariat of our towns, they, of course, do not form part of the permanent population—they have of course no other stake in the country but their unhappy lives. Such little confusions of thought must be forgiven

the gallant Major when he wanders in the unaccustomed realms of political rhetoric. Particularly must he be forgiven when he, consciously or unconsciously, lays bare the truth, namely, that the Imperialists and the bourgeoisie in Ceylon are in need of close alliance to face and fight the uprising masses.

That is the true menace with which we are faced. The Lanka Samasamaja Party, as the fighting unit of the advanced mass elements must warn the toiling masses and prepare them for the counter-attack that is developing on the basis of this alliance. In particular should they be made to understand the true nature of that demagogic appeal to romantic racialism which is seeking to divert them from the anti-imperialist struggle to the barren realms of parochial sectarianism. I refer to the newly coined propaganda of that hybrid organisation which masquerades as a political party under the name of the Sinhala Maha Sabha.

This body represents the alliance of the degenerate aristocracy of the uplands with the upstart aristocracy of the low. Flitting about inside it indeed are certain political indeterminates and social pretenders: but the fundamental basis of the Sinhala Maha Sabha is as I have stated. One of its members, Captian Nugawela, even admitted more or less the same thing in a public debate. This body makes a veritable specialty of the technique of radical speeches masking reactionary politics. The Maha Sabha lion always roars a challenge to Imperialism while fitting its tail firmly between its legs in preparation for beating a retreat. Indeed the Maha Sabha lion looks an exaggerated mongrel. If proof be needed of this contention, witness the behaviour of the Sinhala Maha Sabha during the recent ministerial and Council crisis over the Banks—Jayatilaka issue.

There can be no doubt that this is a dangerously reactionary body. The nature of its appeal is obvious from the fact that it finds its best response in the politically backward Kandyan Provinces and the more caste-ridden areas of the low-country. In other circumstances it would have represented the local variant of brown Fascism; but as things are, it is doomed to defeat through lack of leadership, a steadily narrowing social base, and the natural operation of historic forces. In any event it embodies only another form of bourgeoisie reaction

Thus we return to our original point. The mass movement for national liberation and economic emancipation which has developed under our leadership is faced with a counter-attack. The opposing forces have combined with a view to smashing the movement and are organising all their resources to that end. What then are the political tasks that face us?

Clearly the first task is to prepare the masses with fore-knowledge. This necessitates the intensification and deepening of our propaganda, the widening of the circulation of our newspaper, and the publication of a steady stream of political literature. The quality of the mass movement must be improved. Our propaganda should cease being merely agitational, and aim at being also educative. The masses must not only be roused; they must also be taught.

Simultaneously their militant spirit must be sustained and deepened. This can only be done by the proper integration to politics of their day to day struggles. Immediate mass needs must not only be made the occasion for struggle but also the opportunity for explaining the political basis of action. The fight against the headmen system must be renewed and sustained; the anti-imperialist movement must be given ever greater consciousness; agrarian discontent must be given political direction.

All this needs effective organisation of the masses. But such a process can only be undertaken by an efficient and organised party; which factor leads me to our main task in the coming year -- the perfecting of Party organisation.

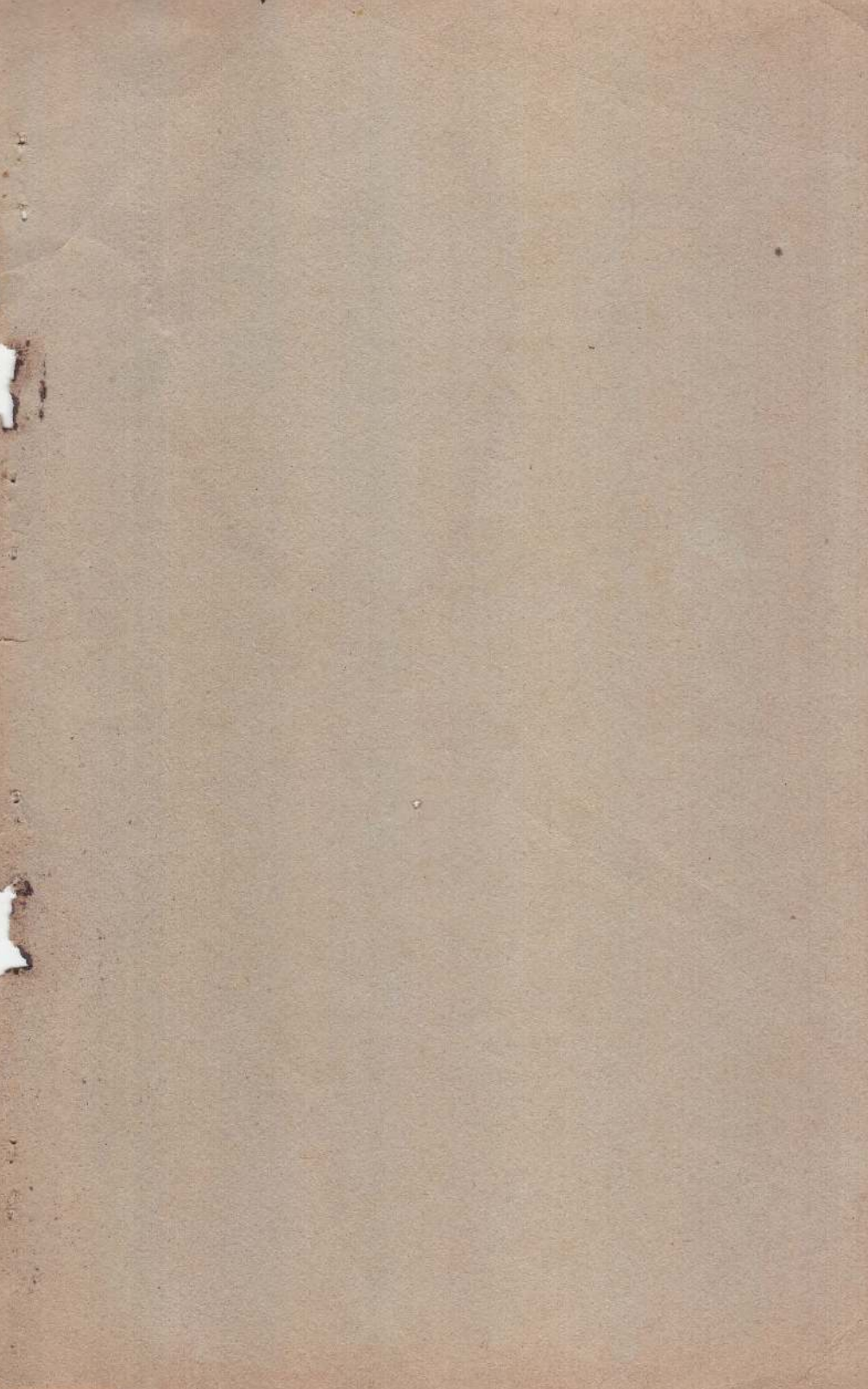
The Lanka Sama Samaja Party is the political instrument of the toiling masses, whose organised van-guard it constitutes. As such its duty is two-fold. On the one hand it must educate the masses and lead them. On the other it must perfect itself as an instrument of political action.

The latter need becomes urgent as the counter-attack develops. An ill organised Party is easily smashed; and a broken Party reacts to the disorganisation of the mass movement it represents. Only a thoroughly organised, strongly centralised Party with extensive and well trained cadres can face repression without being broken.

I must therefore repeat what I stressed before. Party organisation is still loose despite the new steps taken last year. The Party has a head, but still lacks body, so to speak. Branches are not only too few, but are also not sufficiently active. There is not enough political activity in relation to local needs. There are no properly organised study classes to train cadres. There is not a close enough linking of branches with the centre. Not until there is a Samasamajist nucleus in every village in Ceylon, and a Samasamaja Party branch for every group of villages, can it be said that the Party is extensive enough: and not until every such branch has its own trained leadership can we say that our organisation is intensive enough. To that end should we work always in the knowledge that time is short and repression is imminent.

In this connection I wish to make a special appeal to the youth of this country. All over the world youth is playing an unprecedented part in the work of national regeneration. It cannot be otherwise in Ceylon. Our youth is surely as patriotic, freedom-loving, and self-sacrificing as any in the world. That being so I call on them confidently to join the ranks of the only Party that fights for the freedom of our people from Imperialist exploitation and Capitalist oppression, to work in it and to organise it against the day when their vision of hope will be converted into reality.

Comrades, I have done. I have endeavoured in this address to define our immediate tasks on the basis of a sober estimate of current reality. I have not sought in any manner to under-rate the difficulties that beset us; as Marxists our duty is to deal with living realities, not wishful abstractions. We have a long way to go before we achieve our goal; we shall have to face many defeats before the final victory. That will not deter us. We shall march onwards confident of the future. For ours is the greatest cause the world has known—the struggle for the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of economic circumstance.



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