

# IMF DEMANDS POUND OF FLESH!

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"Sri Lanka has a very high level of subsidies. Cuts in subsidies are needed for the fundamental improvement of the country. The International Monetary Fund will favour further cuts that will increase savings and thereby development in the country. It is the duty of the Government to decide on where and how to cut these subsidies." These observations were reported by the "Sun" to have been made by the Managing Director of the IMF, Dr. Johannes Witteveen, at a press conference on Wednesday morning shortly before his departure from Sri Lanka, where he had been for a few days this week.

Dr. Witteveen further revealed that the IMF had made available to Sri Lanka a Stand-by loan of 110 million U.S. dollars about Rs 600 million at the pre-Budget exchange rate, for the current year. The Budget deficit for this same year, at the pre-Budget exchange value of the Rupee, was about Rs. 4,500 million. The IMF has, therefore, provided finance to bridge less than 25 per cent of this deficit. Further, Mr. Ramond Wickremesinghe estimated, long before the introduction of the Budget, that the UNP Government's freeing of the economy from import, exchange and price controls would need a safety net of Rs. 4,500 million in foreign exchange (at pre-Budget exchange rates). The economy has been

half-freed from controls already, but the IMF has not provided even 10 per cent of the total foreign exchange needed.

Dr. Witteveen went on to say that subsidies and welfare measures still remain high in Sri Lanka and that they would have to be pruned down further if "questions of future consumption and development were to be considered without excessive price hikes". He promised further "aid" for the "Mabadi scheme" but, in reply to a question whether such aid would have the pre-condition of Sri Lanka relinquishing her welfare measures, said ominously that "ways and means of cutting subsidies would have to be worked out by the Government and he

wouldn't say it was a prerequisite of the IMF for any aid to be given" (CDN).

If all this means anything, it would indicate that the J.R. Jayawardene Government is in a real tight corner. On the one hand, it has devalued the currency drastically, it has lifted import and exchange controls equally drastically and it has prostrated itself abjectly before imperialism and foreign capital. On the other hand, the loans and handouts it has expected to compensate for these self-imposed hardships have not arrived in adequate

measure, but appear unlikely to arrive except after much more severe sacrifices. The IMF Shylock will have nothing less than his pound of flesh in the form of the total liquidation of all welfare principles in Government's formulation of its economic policies. In Witteveen's own words, "people have to be stimulated to save and to indulge in consumption alone". What gluttons the IMF takes the people of Sri Lanka to be!

Come along, President Jayawardene. Muster a little more

courage! You cannot deceive the IMF so easily — not with a mere withdrawal of rice and sugar rations. Cut the flour subsidy! Turn the hospital services entirely into money-making outfits of fee-paying doctors and send patients with their prescriptions to private drug-stores! Abolish free education and reduce the numbers of school-going children by a further 50 per cent at least. We can tell you of more ways to please the Witteveens and Maanamaras. But that is not necessary immediately. You are already on the right road!

## Our Struggle For Independence

by N. M. PERERA

From its very inception, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party has stood for independence for Ceylon. In 1948, when Mr. D. S. Senanayake rejoiced at the grant of Dominion Status for Sri Lanka, our Party had no hesitation in rejecting this constitutional status that had fallen short of Independence.

When Mr. Bandaranaike assumed office in 1956, he made good these deficiencies. Katunayake Air Port was taken over from the British Air Force and came under our control. The Trincomalee Harbour which remained under the command of Imperial Forces reverted to our administration. The agreement which Mr. D. S. Senanayake had with the British Government for the use of British forces whenever the need arose was annulled. This action of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike went a long way to complete our objective of independence, which we advocated as a Party since 1935.

From our point of view, the picture was far from complete. The people of Ceylon were still the subjects of a foreign sovereign. The Constitution that guided and determined our destinies was not our Constitution. It was an imposition from a foreign Parliament albeit with our implied acquiescence. Post-Second-

World-War independent countries, both in Asia and in Africa, had fashioned their own Constitutions and enshrined in them the sovereignty of the people from which alone the legislatures derived their power. Although Mr. Bandaranaike endeavoured to devise a new Constitution, his assassination ended these efforts, for there was no one in the SLFP to take over these tasks.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party persisted in its advocacy for a Constitution which would provide the true basis of our independence through a Constituent Assembly set up for that purpose. The opportunity came with the assumption of office in 1970 by the United Front Government. Dr. Colvin R de Silva became the first Minister for Constitutional Affairs. Notwithstanding the disruption politically and administratively of the Insurgent, the work of hammering out a new Constitution went on apace. Parliament was transformed into a Constituent

Assembly. Every opportunity was given to the people to offer their own formulations. Full and free discussions took place both in and out of Parliament and eventually a new Constitution was born on 22nd of May, 1972.

At last, we were truly free and independent. The people regained their sovereignty and the legislative assembly became the repository of power, as delegated by the people, freely granted by the exercise of their democratic right of voting. This delegation of power is renewable from time to time. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party is truly proud of this achievement.

### Second Goal

Political independence is an essential prerequisite for the economic betterment of the people. Political subjection is an impenetrable barrier to the development of the resources of a country in the interest of the people of that country. The achievement of independence gave a new impetus to our struggle for the economic regeneration of the country through socialism, which was the second goal which the Party set before itself when it was founded in December, 1935.

Socialism meant the transformation of the capitalist structure of society. Towards this end the Party directed all its efforts. (Contd. on Page 4)

### TWO PAMPHLETS

by

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# Some Dimensions of Crisis in India

While the euphoria, generated by the results of the last Lok Sabha elections, is fast evaporating, it cannot unfortunately be said that the euphoria is being replaced by an adequate appreciation of the developing reality - the reality of pervasive and deepening crisis.

The roots of the crisis lie deep in the economic basis of Indian society and its depth is most characteristically reflected in the fact that Indian planners do not know how to utilise the piled up buffer stocks of 20 million tonnes of foodgrains (the principal wage goods) and Rs. 4,000 crores of foreign exchange funds (source of acquiring necessary capital goods) - the two great desiderata of a stagnant economy with a vast reservoir of unemployed labour power. This forcefully underscores the glaring contradiction that has developed between the existing production relations and forces of production.

The political dimensions of the growing crisis are no less imposing. The traditional party of the Indian ruling classes - the Congress - is in a shambles. One section of that party, chastised by massive rejection by the people in the larger segment of the country, is seeking to repudiate the unsavoury heritage of Indira Gandhi's Bonapartist rule - but too timidly and irresolutely to make any significant impact either on the Congress ranks or on the country at large; while the other section, still clinging to

the apronstring of the rejected leader in cynical disregard of all democratic and moral values, but banking on Indira Gandhi's supposed qualities of decisive leadership, is getting increasingly squeezed into a brazen hardcore. As a result of these twin processes, the Congress is still unable to regroup itself for capitalizing the rather fast disenchantment of the people with the new ruling party. (In fact, the Congress has recently split into two irreconcilable groups and is unlikely to be able to profit from the disenchantment with the Janata Party Government for a long time to come -ED.)

Catapulted to power by a massive upsurge of the people in the northern States, the ruling Janata Party has been squandering its fund of immense initial goodwill with a rare prodigality. Internal conflicts of its leading personalities and major constituents at the Centre and States, innate conservatism of its dominant partners, the increasing gulf between its commitments and performance, and, above all, its inability to stem the tide of the deepening economic crisis - all this has within the relatively short period of about eight months exposed the Janata Party's incapacity to play the role of agent of change. People everywhere are getting increasingly restive and exercised over the question of a real alternative to the parties, old and new, of the ruling classes.

Indeed, the advanced sections of the masses in both urban and rural areas have moved even further in their consciousness. Day-to-day experience since the overthrow of the Emergency regime has brought home to them the fundamental truth that a change of personnel at the top has little significance in social life. If things are to change for the better for the people, then the entire political structure has to be remodelled, bringing to an end the existing instruments of power, dominated as they are by the exploiting classes and strata.

The gravest dimension of the growing political crisis lies, however, in the fact that, while segments of the masses have registered an immense advance in their consciousness, they are still suffering from a sense of helplessness in the absence of a national focus for convergence and consolidation.

In other words, while the parties of the ruling classes have lost or are fast losing their credibility, there are yet no parties of the toiling people bidding for that credibility for themselves.

The Socialists, never more than a broad spectrum trend, have liquidated even that half-identity of theirs having merged themselves in the Janata Party. Rearguard action by some individual elements from among the former Socialists may have some significance as the first hesitant steps towards a future reassertion of the lost identity; but it has little impact on the shaping of the immediate reality.

The CPI (Communist Party of India) can perhaps claim a

certain credit for the fact that the traumatic experience in the recent past has not severely affected either its ranks or its committed mass bases wherever and to the extent they exist. But despite the many telling points in its campaign against the Janata Party raj, it cannot emerge as a leader of popular resurgence, not only because it has not yet made an honest self-criticism about its ignoble collaborationist past, but also and mainly - because its entire understanding of the Indian reality as well as of the basic Marxist methodology still continues to be vitiated with grave errors and mistakes. Its continued uncritical glorification of the so-called Nehru heritage betrays its lack of moorings in the working class; its repeatedly voiced strident concern about shifts from the Nehru-Indira Gandhi foreign policy betrays its ignorance about the basic nature and strivings of the Indian big bourgeoisie; the far greater weightage it attaches to the so-called Lefts in the Congress (who had unreservedly supported Indira Gandhi's assault on democracy) than to the Lefts in the Janata Party (who had fought against the reactionary dictatorship and dynastic rule) reveals its continued emotional ties with the so-called 'national Bourgeoisie, with whose collaboration the CPI dreams of marching into 'national democracy'. The CPI is thus disqua-

lified for playing a major role in the near future.

All this leaves only the CPI (M) - Communist Party of India (Marxist) - in the national arena. Though our friends in that party seem to vehemently disagree with us on this point, we continue to hold that while the party is on the whole making some advance in its assessment of the Janata Party rule, the advance is much too tardy, measured against the rapidity of the socio-economic developments in the country today.

This is indeed the gravest aspect of the present crisis in India.

The CPI (M) is yet to make a deepgoing analysis of the Indian crisis - economic and political. It is yet to formulate a longterm perspective for the struggle for the working class and its allies. And, above all, it has to establish a proper relationship between its short-term actions and its longterm aim.

In other words, the Party has to bridge the hiatus that exists today between its program and its daytoday actions and perhaps re-examine a few aspects of the program itself in the light of experience since the party's inaugural congress, besides updating its tactical resolution, which had been originally drafted by the pre-split CPI in 1951, along with the subsequently discarded program.

- "The Marxist Review" (Calcutta)

## OUR STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

(Contd. from Page 1)

its energies. The first requisite in carrying out this task was the political education of the masses. This stands as one of our significant achievements. We took politics to the common man. What had been the close preserve of the few English educated hundreds became the common property of all. Speaking in Sinhala and Tamil we brought home to the workers and peasants the class analysis of society. The exposure of privilege and the exploitation of the workers by ruthless employers provided an awakening and a consciousness that few developing countries can boast of. With this education went the organization of militant Trade Unions which form today the bulwark of our democratic base.

This educative process was not easy. At every turn we encountered the naked hostility of the privileged few and the entrenched exploitative

elements. The economic power of the capitalist class had to be broken if the country was to progress. What was our heritage prior to independence? A colonial economy subserving the interests of the metropolitan investors. Our resources both of men and material remained untapped. The government that took over from the British was too much tied to the chariot wheels of the white sahibs to break the tradition of a primary-export economy. This economic stagnation offered a bleak future for the country. Various inducements dangled by the U.N.P. before the indigenous and foreign capitalists brought no response. The first breach into this stagnation came with the formation of the S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike Government. This came about in two ways. Firstly, he responded to our cry for nationalisation. He endorsed and carried through two nationalisation measures: Bus

transport and cargo handling in the Port. Secondly the bold step of banning imports, compelling the growth of substitutes in the industrial field. Both these lines of action generated the atmosphere to broaden the economic structure of the country.

### Agrarian Change

This process expanded under the subsequent regime of Mrs. Bandaranaike and the United Front Government of 1970. The highlights of this achievement came with the Land Ceiling, restricting ownership to 50 acres per family, and the sequel to this of the nationalisation of all Company estates (both foreign and local). This agricultural transformation continued to be one of the cherished features of the Party programme ever since 1935. Such a vast and radical transformation of the agricultural economy has been accompanied in other countries with untold suffering and bloodshed. It is to the credit

of the powerful propaganda that the Party advanced for over 40 years that there was a smooth transition to what is virtually the beginnings of an agrarian revolution in this country.

Admittedly, unfortunate distortions in the execution of the agrarian change-over have disfigured and denigrated the value of this major advance. The blemishes of opportunist politicians cannot impair the correctness of the policy, and the principle on which it is based. Landlordism, with all its myriad expositions of exploitation has been abolished once and for all. In the process the rural poor have gained a new independence, and emerged with a new stature casting off the remnants of subservience hitherto enveloping rural Sri Lanka.

Admittedly also while some of the nationalised ventures have displayed commendable efficiency, others have been

the victim of mismanagement by political opportunists. Nevertheless the public sector must expand if the resources of this country are to be developed. For forty years we have inculcated the lesson of socialist democracy, and this cannot be easily erased from the minds of the organized workers. A return to unbridled capitalism, with or without a free trade zone, cannot evoke the enthusiastic cooperation of the mass of workers - without which the economy can stagnate not advance.

### Self-Management

This brings us to our next achievement: the first steps in self-management. As a preliminary to self-management in preparation for it, Employees Councils were set up in all public sector industrial establishments. Advisory Committees were formed in government departments. Both these bodies were advisory. They fulfilled the dual purpose of

(Contd. on Page 4)



# THREE CONSTITUTIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

When Mr. Jayewardena seats himself on the presidential gaddi on February 4th, he will in fact be inaugurating the third Constitution of independent Ceylon.

We began "independence" formally on 4th February, 1948, with amendments to the Soulbury Constitution, which had already been inaugurated in 1947. The change-over was, in fact, not to independence but to "fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations." This has been equated to Dominion status under the British crown and certainly was developed to that in the years that followed, especially after the 1956 electoral over-turn. But when we started in 1948 Ceylon was still part of the British King's domain. The British flag remained our flag. And the pre-1948 Parliament, two chambers and all, with the same Prime Minister, Mr. D. S. Senanayake, appointed by and advising the same Governor General, Lord Soulbury, with an unchanged Cabinet, continued under the new dispensation with all the appearance of old.

But it was in fact a new dispensation; especially as compared with the State Council system of 1931. It was in 1931 we received the universal adult franchise, at age 21 for both sexes, as a gift from the British. It has proved an explosive gift in the hands of our people. It was in 1931 that we first had Ministers and a Board of Ministers with a President of that Board. The Donoughmore Constitution of 1931 represented a forward-looking process of Ceylonisation of the Government under British control and supervision. Though the form was not Parliamentary—the Ceylonese ministers were only Chairmen elected by the seven Executive Committees into which all members of the State Council were grouped—and though the division of power and functions with the controlling imperial Governor and his three white Secretaries was manifest in the system, it was nevertheless also a sharing of power with the imperialist rulers. There was some degree of devolution in the 1931 Constitution.

The devolution went further with the 1946 Constitution, which was inaugurated with the 1947 Parliament. That Constitution too was a gift from the British, which was accepted by a majority of one by a thoroughly outdated State Council which had been elected back in 1936 and kept going during the war. It too was a partnership; but a partnership on far better terms for the junior partners of 1931. The "three policemen of British imperialism"—which was Mr. E. W. Perera's vivid characterisation of the Chief Secretary, the Finance Secretary and the Legal Secretary, appointees of the Governor in the State Council, heading independent departments—stood withdrawn. But the administration of the Civil

Service and the Judicial Service stood handed over to two Commissions, namely, the Public Service Commission and the Judicial Service Commission, both independent of Parliament, though there were Ministers in charge of the administrative services and of law in Parliament and the Cabinet. Finance stood handed over. The Executive Committee system stood abolished. A substantially parliamentary system was set up and a Cabinet of Ministers took over the government of the country. The junior partners of 1931-1946 could now aspire to be an independent firm.

## Masses Initiate

Thus far, the British Government had been the initiator and direct agent of constitutional change in Sri Lanka. But, though it was not immediately seen at the time, the British power and the British Empire were on the decline on a world scale. The British could neither conquer anew nor re-conquer what was gone. They could only adapt and re-adapt themselves to the fast changing situation; such changes being now increasingly outside their control. In consequence, the aspirants to independence in Sri Lanka had more room to manoeuvre than in the past. Further, though this was not realised at the time by those in power, there was now in Sri Lanka, as in many countries of the developing world, a new and dynamic agent of change. The masses had come actively into the picture. In addition, on a Sri Lanka scale, free education had been added to the universal adult franchise. Lenin once said that in the midst of mass illiteracy there could be no politics, but only rumour. The increasingly literate masses of Ceylon in

the post-war world could come into politics and did come into politics. They were right there at the centre of parliamentary democracy, choosing, and soon changing, governments by the exercise of the mass franchise; choosing and changing governments and compelling political and social change.

In truth, the masses were feeling their way to freedom and independence; for they were aspiring to be a truly free people. And they learnt to bend their rulers to their will. The flag went. The bases were taken back. The Queen of Britain became the Queen of Ceylon. The Queen's representative was Ceylonised. The language of administration was Ceylonised. The first nationalisations were forced on the first government of social change which the masses brought to power, namely, the Bandaranaike government of 1956; and all governments had to learn to ride the mass current and the waves of mass feeling, trimming their sails to whichever way the winds of welofarism blew. The voyages became ever more difficult—and expensive—for governments which could hardly weather the storm from elect-

by  
**Colvin R. de Silva**

ion to election, leave aside surviving their first general election test. After 1952, the masses changed governments with the regularity of a pendulum in a clock.

It was in this context that the United Front of the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP was brought to power by the masses in May 1970, as an engine of political and social change. There was subsequently added to the developing situation the entirely new element of the 1971 rural youth insurrection; as well as the consequent Emergency—a system of parallel rule through the police and the military which had become so prolonged already that it had almost become part of "normality".

## Constituent Assembly

The United Front came to power on a longstanding undertaking to set up a Constituent Assembly through which the People of Sri Lanka would, in the assertion of their freedom, sovereignty and independence, frame for themselves a constitution which would declare Sri Lanka a free, sovereign and independent Republic pledged to the objectives of socialist democracy. This promise it fulfilled. On 22nd May, 1972, the Constitution was accepted by the Constituent Assembly and the

Republic was inaugurated. The first Prime Minister of the Republic appointed by the Constitution, took office and appointed the first President. The President summoned the single-chamber National State Assembly, the new and supreme instrument through which the newly sovereign people would exercise their sovereignty. The NSA consisted of all members of the CA who also were appointed by the Constitution. The Senate had been earlier abolished by Parliament. A Cabinet of Ministers to govern the country was formed. The NSA met and elected as Speaker the Chairman of the CA. All high officials, including the judges, affirmed or swore loyalty to the Constitution. Sri Lanka, reborn, set foot firmly on the road of full-fledged national independence in the form of a Republic pledged to progressive advancement towards a socialist democracy.

Politics—and not legal technicalities or constitutional models or perfectionist abstractions—determine constitutions: politics, political relations and political needs. A constitution does not so much create new political and social relations as open the way to the development of new political and social relations by registering and consolidating institutionally the stage of development that political and social relations have already reached. To express the point differently: a constitution, though it is a political document, is not a political or social programme—although it may, of course, incorporate a political and social programme as our Constitution does in the chapters on "Principles of State Policy" and on "Fundamental Rights and Freedoms." These embody the ideals of political and social progress rather than contemporary actualities; save that the actualities themselves may embody more or less considerable elements of progress.

## Sovereign People

In this background, let us look at the institutions of our Constitution, all of which in fact add up to political democracy; more precisely, bourgeois political democracy. The basis, of course, the electoral system through which the sovereign People function as the determiners of our destinies. The continuity and freedom of its functioning is, of course, also basic. Built on that base is the NSA; the supreme instrument of state power. The NSA is itself the legislature. Rooted in the NSA is the Executive, the basic institution of which is the Cabinet of Ministers. The administration is in the hands of the Cabinet. The Public Service Commission and Judicial Service

Commission have been jettisoned. The Courts are the creation of the NSA. The Cabinet is collectively responsible and answerable to the NSA and the President, who is the Head of State, is appointed by the Prime Minister and acts on the PM's advice.

In a country committed to the transformation of itself into a socialist democracy through the processes of parliamentary democracy, in an under-developed country where the democratic developmental process needed to be given top priority if democracy itself was to survive, the concentration of power in the NSA was necessary, along with room for devolution to organisations of the People such as People's Committees and Employees' Councils, if the Government was to give effective leadership to and be the organiser of the process of economic development, cultural regeneration and social transformation. It could not be a system of checks and balances such as the orthodox and the traditionalists demanded. The U.F. Government's experience in its first two years of the obstructionist role which a second chamber, in this case the Senate, could and did play, was a telling illustration. So also was the fact that the courts could not and did not for some fifteen years determine the validity or invalidity of the Official Language Act of 1956, popularly known as the Sinhala Only Act. The judgment of the Colombo District Court invalidating the ACT was still in the course of undecided appeal, tossed to and fro between the Supreme Court and the Privy Council, when the 1972 Constitution resolved the question unequivocally. On the administrative side, the problem of carrying through radical social change with a traditionally conservative, often unsympathetic and sometimes deeply hostile bureaucracy had already arisen for radically inclined governments in the period from 1956. The transmitting mechanism of government policy could not in the new context, be left to the Constitutionally independent bureaucracy of the Soulbury arrangements. That is why the Senate was abolished even before the 1972 Constitution. That is why the validity of laws was taken out of the hands of the courts, which could act in review only after the event. It was a compensating factor that the Constitutional Court was invented and incorporated into the legislative process itself, so that inconsistency with the Constitution would be identified and overcome before the enactment instead of being left to be a frustrating factor

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## Notes & Comments

# ISOLATED PRESIDENT!

It is not a happy thing to have to say to a President who assumes office in a country with unprecedented powers, and therefore with unprecedented opportunity to advance the interests of its people, that he commences his career with the propagation of a blatant falsehood. Yet we have to say this without mincing our words to Mr. J. R. Jayawardene who be-

comes President of Sri Lanka in an entirely new style on 4th February.

It cannot be without his knowledge that the entire machinery of Government and the stooge newspapers have begun to proclaim him "the First Elected President of Sri Lanka." Mr. Jayawardene ought to know that this is completely untrue. The people

of Sri Lanka never elected him to the office of President. It may be said that he was elected Prime Minister. It was Mr. Jayawardene himself, as leader of the UNP in the National State Assembly, who decided that he should elevate his person to the Presidency. It is only after Mr. Jayawardene, when the people are called upon to make their choice through the ballot-box, that we shall have our first elected President.

In point of fact, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene transfers himself from the Prime Ministership to the Presidency at a time when his acceptability to the people has slumped beyond measure. Barely six months have elapsed since he and his party were elected to the National State Assembly by a majority that is likely to remain a record for all time.

Six months is a very short time for any Government to build or unbuild an image of itself among the people. But if it took seven years for Mr. J. R. Jayawardene to fasten his leadership on the UNP and elevate it to a position of over-riding control over the governmental machinery, it did not take him six months to drive the many millions who had flocked to his standard of revolt against the former Government, into total disillusion about his authenticity as a leader of the masses and into total distrust of his own solemn promises.

It is an isolated man—a man who, having floated to power on a powerful mass tide of resentment of a Government in office, is today stranded on the heights of power since the tide

has flowed back with a suddenness that has completely baffled him—who walks into the Presidential palace on 4th February. As though in anticipation of his likely isolation, he has cunningly wrenched vast powers away from the NSA and concentrated them in the hands of the President, i.e. in himself. But equipping oneself with arms may bring a comforting sense of security, but it worsens, not remedies, the condition of isolation itself.

What is more, this isolated man has embarked on a course of alliance with alien forces of exploitation and oppression and of confrontation with the people of this country. He becomes increasingly dependent on the former and unintelligible to the latter.

It is far from fortunate for Mr. President!

## THREE CONSTITUTION OF INDEPENDENCE

(Contd. from Page 3)

after the enactment of a law. And that is why the Public Service Commission and the Judicial Service Commission system were abolished.

The pity of it was that the national situation had not, at the time of constitution-making developed to the point where the equality of the vote and the equality of citizens could be even substantially established. The grossly unequal constituency system of the pre-1972 period, with its bias favouring backwardness and its distortion of the mass political process, was taken over as it stood. The rights of the minorities, though made the subject of considerable advance, was certainly not brought to a level of equality that enabled the integration of our multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-caste People into a single whole. The unitary state was not built on a unified society.

### Jayawardene Constitution

And now we have the Jayawardene Constitution: still partly in process of incubation at the time of writing, but already enacted into law in its essentials. The enacted part will be brought into operation on February 4th, namely the 30th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence. The rest of the "amendments", which look like embodying further root and branch changes, seem more likely to follow February 4th than to precede that date.

The Jayawardene Constitution takes our country almost altogether away from and out of the parliamentary system which our People have become so accustomed to and which they have used so effectively since 1947. It subjects our country to a new style Presidential system whose prototype

will have to be sought, not in the USA or France, but in Africa.

The Jayawardene Constitution takes the Executive power out of the hands of the NSA and into the hands of a President who, unlike the Prime Minister and Cabinet of the 1972 system, functions entirely outside Parliament. The President has no responsibility or answerability to Parliament—except perhaps by proxy through the devalued Prime Minister and other Ministers in Parliament. In fact, the ultimate power over Parliament remains with him and not vice versa, because he wields the power of dissolving the NSA and precipitating general elections. The NSA will see him only when he exercises his specially enacted right to address it when he wishes. The real function of the NSA in the new set-up is to give the Presidential system a democratic facade.

The Jayawardene Constitution shifts the effective institutional centre of power-concentration in our state and governmental set-up from the NSA to the President. It is said that provision will be made for the President to be elected by the People from after six years hence; but even the mode of election is not yet known. If it is to be anything like the method newly adopted, also by "amendment" of the Local Government laws, for the "election" of Mayors and local body chairmen, then the People's say will be little and the Party's say will be everything. However, we must wait and see.

Today's reality is that Mr. Jayawardene has been appointed to be the first new-style President by a Constitution-amending law enacted by a NSA in which the UNP wields monopoly power. In effect the UNP, acting in the name of the people by reason of its overwhelming general elections victory, has appointed him President of Sri Lanka.

### Near-Absolute Powers

The UNP-monopolised NSA has, by the same law, given him powers so near-absolute

as makes no difference. He also is made "a supreme instrument of state power"—the characterisation reserved solely for the NSA in the 1972 Constitution. The Executive Power will now be in his hands; including the power to declare and run an Emergency. The Cabinet of Ministers, with a Prime Minister to boot, will still be there; but that will be a devalued institution in a devalued NSA. The President will have his own staff and advisers. He will be the Head of State, the Head of the Government and will preside at Cabinet meetings—the whole Cabinet including the Prime Minister, whose new situation belies his title, will be of his choice and appointment. He will thus be also the initiator of all legislation, although it is the PM and the Ministers who will have to defend it in the NSA and steer it through. Remember that our courts too are of the NSA's creation and that our judges are appointed by the President. It is indeed a remarkable concentration of power in one man—a concentration that is free of the controls of the 1972 Constitution.

In truth, therefore, the new-style President is not an instrument of state power coeval with the NSA. On the contrary, the President becomes the supreme instrument of state power, pushing the NSA down to a much diminished second place. The Presidency has been steeply up-valued. The NSA has been precipitously devalued.

Mr. Jayawardene has been frank about the reasons for the change. He wants an Executive which, for the six year period given to the President, is insulated or at least cushioned not only from popular pressures but also from the day-to-day pressures of the NSA and of the governing party. Constitutions are not made "in heaven". They are made by the rulers and are determined by politics, political relations and political needs. Even so is it with the UNP and Mr. Jayawardene. The leading forces of the capi-

talist class they represent, having opposed the introduction of the universal adult franchise in 1931, have ever since sought, by one constitutional or legal device and another, to confine and counter the power of the masses exercised through the universal adult franchise and through parliamentary democracy. It was these forces that brought in the Public Security Act and shaped and developed the Emergency system of rule running parallel and superior to the normal system of parliamentary rule. Now, having reached and passed the point of tolerance of parliamentary democracy, they are seizing the first opportunity of undermining parliamentary democracy by replacing it with a system of near-absolutism, clothed in some of the familiar habiliments of parliamentary democracy.

The up-valued president's triple constitutional position—all key positions—embrace a

triumph power such as devalues democracy itself. The new style Presidency will be more withdrawn and apart from the People than the premiership it is replacing and substantially subsuming. The President will stand insulated from the People's pressures. He cannot really be challenged from within Parliament. He will have to be challenged, if at all, from outside. The forces confronting him can, of course, include the ranks of the NSA.

### Blow at Masses

The third constitution under independence is a blow at the political power which the masses of Sri Lanka have built up since 1931. Old fights around democratic issues will now have to be fought out all over again. The future is frankly grim. But, as always, the masses will in the end prevail over constitutions, and not the other way round. That is a lesson of history.

## Our Struggle For Independence

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giving the benefit of the long experience of workers to those in charge of the management, and in turn the workers learnt the intricacies of and the problems connected with management. Regular meetings, with free and frank discussion at these meetings, created a new and healthy atmosphere for the smooth functioning of all establishments where the experiment was carried out with full-blooded intensity and genuineness.

The experiment must be taken in conjunction with the move to bring the people directly into the arena of governing: the institution of People's Committees throughout the country, again with a dual purpose. On the one hand these Committees gave the people an opportunity to be vigilant over the activities of government and semi-government officers, and of the anti-social elements like black-marketeers, contractors etc.

On the other hand they became involved in the process of government. They become conscious of the legislation that

emanates from the government, the aims and objectives of these measures and their repercussions on the people. They provided also a sounding-board for the efficacy or inadequacy of governmental measures.

### Stage by Stage

Over the years, we have with singleness of purpose moved towards socialism. Stage by stage we have come nearer to the achievement of our objective. It has been a long and arduous road that we traversed. It was a hard struggle that would have dismayed the stoutest heart. Our struggles are not yet over. We are convinced, however, that the next stage is ours to lead. It may be quicker in arriving than many assume. We shall begin where we left off, for the achievements of forty years have been solid and substantial. The next stage will carry us across the threshold into socialism. The steady transformation of society will then commence bringing enduring peace, harmony and prosperity to the people of Sri Lanka.