



Colvin R. de Silva

**LEFT  
DISUNITY**

— A REPLY TO A CRITIC —



Colvin R. de Silva

**LEFT  
DISUNITY**

— A REPLY TO A CRITIC —

25, Pendennis Avenue,  
Colombo, 3.  
25-5-50

MY DEAR MR. F ———,

Your letters of the 17th. and 19th. were both awaiting my return to Colombo from the Ambalangoda-Balapitiya bye-election struggle. I don't know whether you realize what a tremendous struggle it really was, especially as we met, parried, countered and defeated the entire national power of the U.N.P. with our solely local resources. To those who take their political estimates from Press head-lines the results not only will come as a revelation but also should serve to lay the bogey of U.N.P. invincibility so sedulously cultivated by the capitalist press and so readily absorbed by too many folk on the periphery of our movement. I can assure you that we have not been engaged or pre-occupied with "squabbles" with other Left Parties as the Press would have people believe, but with the slow and none too easily discernible task of reviving the mass movement and organising, or rather, re-organising it. We have never allowed ourselves to be diverted from that task at any time,—and that is why it has been on us in particular that the capitalist press has kept its guns turned these two and a half years; mis-representing us, lying about us, and suppressing all real news of our actual activities. Ambalangoda-Balapitiya is the proof of this.

However, the task I have set myself in this letter is not to give you assurances but to deal in detail with the criticisms you have communicated. As an old friend of ours, it is but right that you should have been frank even to the point of brutality; in my reply I shall be direct even at the risk of seeming sharpness—for I do not think you yourself would wish it otherwise.

The occasion for your letters is obviously the Colombo Central experience—an experience which has apparently embittered even a tried friend like you. But I would urge you to consider that experience in its true proportions and in the proper light.

The essence of your complaint on this score is that Dr. S. A. Wickremesinghe could have and would have won the Colombo

Central bye-election if Abu-Bakr hadn't been in the field. I agree; but I also go further: it was clear to me during the campaign that any single candidate of the Left, backed by all the Left Parties could have defeated the U.N.P candidate. The question which arises, therefore, is why this particular internecine struggle between two Left candidates was staged at Colombo Central, i.e. who has to bear the responsibility ?

The answer is to be found in actual facts and not in psychological speculation. When the L.S.S.P announced its intention to run Abu Bakr, it wrote to both the C.P. and the B.S.P for a conference to discuss an electoral agreement. The C.P. reply was a contemptuous rejection of the very invitation itself, accompanied by a denunciation of the Samasamajists as non-Leftists (they claim they are the only Leftists in Ceylon)—a letter which they took the greatest care to publish in the capitalist press.

This provocative act may not have been so very exacerbating in itself if it was not followed some weeks later with their announcement of Dr. Wickremasinghe's candidature. The L.S.S.P. and B.S.P. having in the meantime taken the road of unification, this announcement of the C.P. coupled with its rejection of any discussion for an electoral agreement in respect of Central Colombo faced us Samasamajists with the question: what to do? Your answer, judging from the point you make in your letters that Abu Bakr had no chance and that you yourself would have voted for Dr. Wickremasinghe if you were living in Central Colombo would seem to suggest that you think Abu Bakr should have been withdrawn. It was certainly a course of action available to us. But I shall satisfy you that such a course would have been wrong precisely from the point of view of ensuring not just one more seat in Parliament immediately, but the ultimate triumph of the Left as a whole over the Right as a whole. (Or, as you put it, to ensure not merely 20 but 50 seats in the next Parliament).

The first point to note is that this was a bye-election. Its outcome could not therefore affect the balance of forces in Parliament where the Government majority is too big for that. Secondly, a withdrawal by us had to be in the interests of the unification of the anti-UNP struggle. This requires (as I shall show in detail later) a united front of the Left parties—something which

has to be struggled for and achieved. United Fronts are achieved not by capitulation to those who refuse them but by struggle with and against them. A struggle for the united front means basically the adoption of processes of action which will serve to fix upon the mass mind generally and the adherents of the Left parties particularly not only the need for a united front but also the responsibility of a given Left Party's policies for the failure to achieve it. (I wish to stress "processes of action" as opposed to mere lecturing to the masses. The masses learn in action and not from lectures in the press or from pulpit and platform.) The task therefore was to decide what was the correct form of struggle for the united front in the given situation.

Now, from this point of view, the principal factor in the situation was and is that the C.P. refusal to discuss an electoral arrangement with us and to run Dr. Wickremasinghe against Abu Bakr was not simply an aberration which was correctible but the organic expression of a settled course of policy. The C.P. actually holds that its *first* task today is to destroy Trotskyism! It is *against* an united front with us. It claims a monopoly of Leftism.

This is the fact which has to be brought home to every adherent and sympathiser of the Left particularly and to the masses generally if the masses are to achieve *their* yearning for united action of the Left forces in the country. And this could not be achieved by withdrawing from the by-election but only by fighting it. For thus, and thus only, could the minds of the thinking and leading elements (it is they who ultimately form the mass mind) be caused to be directed to the question: why has the united front which we all desire not been achieved? (N.B. It has had that very effect on you—and more: it has moved you to act in the matter at least to the extent of up-braiding us, though undeservedly, as you will realize when you have completed reading this letter.) And thus and thus only, moreover, could the honest members and followers of the C.P. itself be brought to consider the true meaning of the policy of their leaders—and to compel a revision thereof, if that be possible, or to look to alternatives, should revision prove impossible of effecting.

Such a fight was, of course, bound to be expensive. For our part, we did not welcome it but went through with it as a bitter

necessity. How could we, who stand for the united front precisely because the internecine differences of the Left weaken the masses and their movement, welcome such a fight?

The C.P. on the other hand, gave almost the appearance of welcoming the fight - and after all it is they who had created the situation and precipitated the quarrel. They, no doubt, counted on victory with even us to fight against—calculating on the fact that ours was not exactly a strong candidate any more than the U. N. P.'s, that Dr. Wickremasinghe is an acknowledged national leader within the Left movement with resources, moreover, which were not confined to his Party, that Dr. Wickremasinghe was the only Sinhalese candidate in a predominantly Sinhalese electorate which had been trained by Mr. A. E. Goonesinghe in the grossest Sinhalese communalism, whereas his three opponents were all Muslims (we actually found the Stalinists doing a whispering campaign calling on the Sinhalese to Vote for the "e ka ma Sinhalaya") that nearly every important hotel and boutique-keeper in the area was from the Southern Province whence Dr. Wickremasingha himself hails, etc. etc. These were their calculations. But these failed, and let me admit, failed because they had deliberately drawn us into a simultaneous fight against them.

Such are the facts. And in the face of them would you continue to blame our policy for the Colombo Central situation, or will you now blame theirs? You say in one of your letters that had you been living in Colombo Central, the six votes of your household would have gone to Dr. Wickremasingha. How profound a mistake you would have made! For, had you done so, while no doubt you would have been acting in the belief that you were voting in the interests of an immediate Left victory, you would actually have been voting in support of a policy of disrupting the Left and therefore the over-all national defeat of the Left in the long run and at the next General Election. Incidentally, you would also have been voting for an alleged Communism that was also dealing covertly in communalism. And had a sufficient number of the Left-minded folk in Colombo Central thought and acted as you say you would have thought and acted—and thus ensured the victory of the C. P. candidate, it would truly have encouraged the C.P. to continue with its line of Left disunity and disruption. What a service to the Left that would have been!

No, my dear Mr. F———! Far from the position you take being correct, the position of the 2,500 voters who cast their lot with our candidate was both more far-seeing and more profoundly correct. They understood that the road to Left unity lay through a thorough struggle against the disruptors within the Left movement at the same time as they conducted the struggle against the U. N. P. —and not in abandoning either struggle. And I have already got a little evidence to show that Colombo Central has had a definite effect within the Stalinist ranks and on their line of a fight against us Trotskyists at all times and at all costs to the Left as a whole. This evidence comes from the Ambalangoda - Balapitiya bye-election.

As you no doubt know, one of the candidates in this bye-election was my brother, Mr. W. A. de Silva, till recently the Director of Education under this very Government. You will remember the terrific barrage of slander the capitalist press directed against our Party in regard to the decision to support him locally. The point relevant to the present discussion about this slanderous attack is that the C. P. itself; through its press and adherents, joined with the capitalist press in the same attack. I may say that Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe actually visited my brother after his candidature was announced and threatened him with the three-headed donkey line etc., because he took it for granted that my brother (who, by the way, is no Leftist at all) must necessarily be linked with the B. S. P. (which he is not.) The C.P.'ers in the constituency actually came out at the beginning of the election campaign for Sumanasena, a self-styled "Independent Socialist" who was nothing but a U. N. P. stooge set up and financed by U. N. P. sources to stir up out-worn caste feuds in the area. We had reason to believe further, that they planned later to intervene actively for Sumanasena in the campaign with all their national resources if and when Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe won in Colombo Central, thus to carry the fight against us into a B. S. P. dominated area. Colombo Central i.e. the 2,500 who stood with us in Colombo Central, gave a check to these plans, and let me say, further, that before the end of our election campaign the local C. P. found themselves forced to line up with us in support of Mr. W. A. de Silva (the only anti-administration candidate) even while their national press had denounced us for

the same thing. Colombo Central has thus not been quite the blow against unity which you apprehend.

I have gone at such length into the Colombo Central fight because I wish to make clear whose the responsibility for it is. In this respect, I wish to stress, I am not concerned with personalities but policies. It is the policy of the C. P. in refusing to regard us as Leftists and in refusing to have anything to do with us even by way of discussion, in short, in deliberately posing before us the alternative of capitulation or struggle, which was responsible and not any failure by us to understand or respond to the mass thirst for Left unity. On the contrary, our fight was conducted in the perspective of achieving the united front and not of its abandonment; and I will illustrate that from another matter also to which you refer:

You refer to Gampaha, I shall deal with Gampaha too just as with Colombo Central, because it illustrates my argument from another angle viz., that unity is to be achieved only through struggle with the disruptors and not by capitulating to them. Gampaha was as grossly infuriating an interneine struggle as Colombo Central. Indeed it was, politically speaking, even more meaningless, because it was between two *Trotskyist* parties which had no fundamental reason for separate existence at all. But history rendered the Gampaha events necessary precisely in order to achieve the unity now built between the two parties, the L. S. S. P. and the B. S. P.

What precipitated Gampaha was the complete lack of even any working agreement between the parties for consultation regarding elections, etc. Each Party put forward a candidate and efforts to arrange a Conference to decide on the most suitable candidate of the two, and to withdraw the other, proved fruitless because of the utterly sectarian attitudes held by those who opposed L. S. S. P. - B. S. P. unity at all costs.

Had there been a capitulation before these attitudes, and the avoidance of a contest "at all costs," then these very sectarian attitudes would have triumphed, while the divisions between the L. S. S. P. and the B. S. P. would have gone deeper still.

Now the consequences of sectarianism were fully suffered in the utter humiliation and bitterness of the Gampaha election



struggle. While the Trotskyist Parties cut each others' throats, and the masses looked on in disgust and helpless confusion, the U. N. P. reaped the full profits, and administered a smashing defeat to both Parties.

But these very miserable experiences were needed to expose the injury done to the Trotskyist movement by sectarian attitudes. Every healthy Trotskyist comrade learned the lessons of Gampaha, and out of the bitter defeat and humiliation sprang the burning desire for Trotskyist unity, which is now on the eve of complete achievement.

What followed after Gampaha you perhaps know, although the capitalist press has once again sought to cover up the truth. Once again the B. S. P. renewed its offer for united action leading to the unification of the two Parties. The majority of the L. S. S. P. also called for unity and struggled for it against the sectarians who opposed it. At the L. S. S. P. Conference of January 1950, the policy of unity was carried in the L. S. S. P., and a new process of unification was set going on the basis of equality of status, comradeship in arms, and the identity of the programmes of the L. S. S. P. and B. S. P. The sectarian elements were isolated and finally defeated. Many who had earlier supported them through misunderstanding turned after Gampaha into strong adherents of unity, and their will was strengthened by the actual experience of the two Parties working together after January. And today at the time of writing, the first joint conference of the two Parties, which will be also the founding conference of the new united party, is due in a week. Everybody is coming in except a small group round Philip Gunawardena which has withdrawn itself by deliberate choice and decision to cling to their sectarianism in isolation.\*

At this point I want to say something which is pertinent to certain remarks in your letters. I note that, in respect of the disunity within the Left movement, you simply lump everybody and everything together in an allegation of equal and joint res-

---

\* It is significant that the sole support for Philip Gunawardena's megalomaniac line has come from that great guardian of revolution the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd.! Is further proof necessary of whose class interests are served by the dis-ruptionist policy of this splinter-clique ?

possibility. This is not only contrary to fact but also a disastrous avoidance of the duty to analyse a situation with a view to ascribing responsibility for it correctly as the first step towards resolving the situation.

Thus, you lump together Horana, Kadugannawa, Gampaha and Colombo Central. But Horana, Kadugannawa and (as I have shown) Colombo Central were and are due to Stalinist policy while Gampaha was due (as I have shown) to sectarianism, within the Trotskyist movement before the unification. Why then address your criticism of Left disunity to myself and Dr. N. M. Perera, who are not responsible, instead of to Messrs Philip Gunawardena and Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, who are?

Again you speak of *four* parties. But this is not only factually inaccurate (for even if you treat the Philip Gunawardena group as a Party there will still be only three) but, which is far worse, to close your eyes to the true process that is taking place. This true process is not, as the capitalist press seeks to assert, that Sama-

samasamajism is splitting again but precisely the opposite, viz: that Samasamajism, split for three years, is uniting again. To blame us for the prevailing dis-unity just when we are re-uniting is surely ironic! You should send your protest to other addresses.

The trouble, of course, is elsewhere. You expose its very root when you say: "To us all Leftists have the same programme and they are the same to us." But is this so?

I will start by saying that the differences between the L.S.S.P. and B.S.P were not at all of such a deep-going character as would admit of permanence. The split originated on questions of organisation and discipline and not of programme and policy. It is idle now to apportion responsibility. Suffice it that it has been healed.

This leaves us with the difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism - a difference which you seek to dismiss with a reference to vegetables and pigeons. But even in the realm of vegetables it is necessary to distinguish between cabbages and Brussels sprouts just as in the realm of pigeons, it is necessary to distinguish between clay-pigeons and stool-pigeons. Otherwise you can find yourself in a serious mess at decisive moments.

It is more so with this question of Trotskyism and Stalinism in politics generally and within the Left movement particularly. I shall demonstrate this conclusively although you imagine this has only to do with "finer shades of meaning". If indeed that were all, you should ask yourself why they shoot Trotskyists on the spot beyond the Iron Curtain and denounce everyone who differs from the currently ordained doctrine of Stalin as a Trotskyist; why the Cominform journal (which, by the way, I am one of the few people in Ceylon to get and read regularly) spends so much space denouncing Trotskyism and why, while the Stalinists announce the final up-rooting of Trotskyism every evening, it keeps springing up again every morning. Anyone who asks himself these questions will surely find that shallow psychological theories about particular "Left" leaders in Ceylon won't explain this phenomenon (which is not peculiar to Ceylon but world-wide.) On the contrary, it requires profound sociological analysis.

You are correct when you find that the difference roots itself in the attitude to the Soviet Union, but it is a gross error, flowing from

the uncritical acceptance of vulgar Stalinist propaganda, to define this difference as one between friendship and hostility to the Soviet Union. For, there are no better and more consistent friends of the Soviet Union, i. e. defenders of the social gains of the October Revolution, than us Trotskyists. We defend them against, all, including (as I shall show) the Stalinist usurpers of the Soviet state-power.

Let us ask ourselves first: what is the Soviet Union? You say: "To us, the voters, Russia is only a socialist state. That is all we want to know. We are not concerned with Stalin's views or Tito's views."

But this is a remarkable attitude. Here is the world press, including the press of the U.S.S.R, its satellites and its foreign adherents, full of the differences between Stalin and Tito—and you regard them as irrelevant to the people of Ceylon. And yet, the Chancelleries of the world follow what Stalin thinks and does with breathless attention because it can be decisive in the determination of world developments, even as Stalin's men follow what Tito thinks and does with the greatest care because they think that it has an important bearing on the decisions they themselves have to make.

Ah! but, you say: "We have a programme we approve of, and we want the leaders to show to the masses how to work out that programme." And by the 'leaders' you mean the leaders of all the Left Parties; for you also say: "To us all the Leftists have the same programme, and they are the same to us. It is true that our Left Party is divided into three sections—may be four perhaps hereafter. They come from the same root. Originally that was the Ceylon Communist Party (Samasamaja Pakshaya) that is, the Party opposed to the capitalists. Today there are only two parties in the world: capitalists and those opposed to them, communists. It does not matter by what names they are known. The programme is the same. The parties only two."

In view of the above, I shall take you up on the local questions first before going on with the question of the Soviet Union on which I started—but before I finish I shall also demonstrate the close connection of the "finer shades of difference" on the latter with the wider gulfs of difference on the former.

You say: "To us all the Leftists have the same programme... and we want the Leaders to show the masses how to work out that programme." I answer: if only the programmes were the same, there would never have been this world-wide difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism. • But let us see locally. Let us take a few prominent facts of the history of the Trotskyists and the Stalinists in Ceylon in the last ten years.

You will agree that war is a crucial test of the validity and significance of any shades of difference, be they of the finer variety or not. And what happened in relation to the last war? Those Trotskyists whom the Government could not or did not lug into jail (we never "went" to jail, for there is no virtue in jail-going: that is a Gandhian outlook alien to Marxism) went into the underground to fight the imperialists. The Stalinists, on the other hand, went into the Ceylon National Congress to collaborate with the imperialists!

Was this perhaps because the Trotskyists were heroes and the Stalinists cowards? How shallow and how meaningless would be such an explanation. As shallow as the suggestion of the Stalinist slanderers today that our policy is decided by the fear of jailgoing next time. We are not in the field with them for a boasting competition. No: the reason lay elsewhere: precisely in those allegedly finer shades of difference. The Trotskyists characterized the war as an imperialist war which the masses of Ceylon as a colonial country had to *oppose*, while the Stalinists declared it to be a "Peoples' War" which the people of Ceylon had to *support*! Would you call that a "fine" shade of difference? For our part we call it the difference between serving the Left movement and betraying it.

Now, how can anybody say, still less believe that two parties which followed such diametrically opposite courses of action in relation to the basic and decisive question of war could have or do have the same programme? Isn't such a suggestion absurd? And as for calling on their "Leaders" to show the masses how to work the "common" programme instead of "abusing" each other: what would be the suggestion? That since the Stalinists would not go with us into the underground to fight the war-mongers, we should have gone with the Stalinists into the National Congress in order to

collaborate with those who had organised this tremendous slaughter? (If the suggestion that we should have withdrawn in Colombo Central is carried to its logical conclusion, that is what should have been asked of us. But, as you know, nobody suggested that to us then. And if only it is understood that Stalinist policy today is determined by the same considerations as during the war—and I shall prove that before I finish—then some of the suggestions you report in your letters would also never be made.)

Perhaps it may be said: "The war is over; peace has supervened. You are both opposed to the U.N.P. You can therefore unite now." Let us consider this line of argument.

Since when has the C.P. been opposed to the U.N.P.? Certainly not up to the beginning of 1947 when they put out a notorious election manifesto defining the task of the people of Ceylon to be *not*, let it be stressed, the overthrow of the U.N.P., but precisely the establishment of a Coalition Government of the U.N.P. (!), the Ceylon Indian Congress (!) and the Communist Party of Ceylon (!) Certainly a queer way to conduct an anti-U.N.P. struggle! Let it be said to the credit of their consistency, however, they did not even then include the Samasamajists in the coalition. Instead they announced a list of candidatures whose sole guiding principle appeared to be that of assisting the U.N.P. to defeat their Samasamajist rivals by splitting the Left vote. (Incidentally, they did the same thing in the recent British General Election in relation to the Labour Party. In the situation in Britain, their 100 candidates could only splinter the Labour vote to the benefit of the Tories.)

Can it be said that we, who put out the slogan: Smash the U.N.P. ! and they who called for a coalition with the U.N.P. had the "same" programme? And as for the Leaders uniting to show the masses how to implement the programme, since the C.P. would not change its policy were we to change ours and ask to join the Coalition ourselves? All I can say is, none of our present wailers and worriers about dis-unity asked us to do so at the time.

Perhaps it may be said that these are past mistakes and we should look to contemporary policies. I can readily meet you even there. Have people so soon forgotten the Colombo Mayoral

election in connection with which prominent Stalinists were suspended from the C. P. Central Committee because they voted against a U.N.P. - er for a Trotskyist as Deputy Mayor? The C.P. Central Committee expressly declared that their duty was to stand neutral between a Trotskyist and a U.N.P. - er! And Mr. Pieter Keuneman himself confessed his error in voting for the Trotskyist!

They must indeed be very un-seeing eyes that see an identity of programme behind such opposed courses of action. Surely what the thoughtful should perceive is the *fundamental* differences that must under-lie such utterly opposed courses of action. For that indeed is what the true position is. *There is as much difference between the Trotskyist and Stalinist programme today as there was between the Bolshevik and Menshevik programme in Russia*—and it must already be clear to you that it is the Trotskyist programme which is Bolshevik and not the Stalinist programme. (It was the Bolsheviks who fought against the imperialist war and not the Mensheviks.)

Once the above fact is grasped, it will be seen that two questions arise:—(1) What is the root of these differences? (2) Do they render unity *in any form* impossible? Let me answer these questions.

The root of the difference lies precisely in Russia. I will now turn to it. Once again, let us first get certain facts clear.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which arose out of the October Revolution of 1917, which you think it sufficient to define as a Socialist State, was defined by Lenin himself in his life-time differently. He defined it as "a workers' State with bureaucratic distortions."

Why did Lenin hang what he himself termed "this sorry label" on the young Soviet state? Because, already, before his death, a bureaucracy, which had grown up during the interventionist and civil wars had begun to usurp the state-power which the masses were intended to exercise through their Soviets. The Workers' State, isolated and confined to a backward country, was inevitably undergoing a bureaucratic (social) degeneration.

With the death of Lenin, who, in his life-time had, from his sick-bed, entrusted Trotsky with the task of organising the fight against this process of bureaucratic usurpation, and who, in his famous last Testament, had expressly pointed his finger at Stalin as the chief danger in this direction, the bureaucracy under the leadership of Stalin completed the process of usurping the state-power. The Soviets were reduced to caricatures of themselves, the trade-unions were transformed from organisations for the defence of the workers against the all-owning state (which is what Lenin fought to have them be) into state organs for the imposition of managerial decisions on the workers, and the Bolshevik Party itself, former instrument of the revolutionary workers was transformed into an instrument of the ruling bureaucracy against the masses. A hierarchical system of dictatorial rule, based on appointment from above and responsibility from below was introduced,—the exact opposite of the system of Soviet democracy where appointment proceeded by re-callable election from below and responsibility from above downwards to the Soviets. Opposition was stifled and suppressed by terror which was itself erected into a system based upon an all-pervading secret police. Soviet democracy gave place to Soviet bureaucracy functioning through a pyramid of all-powerful officials at whose apex was the all-powerful dictator over them all,—*Joseph V. Stalin.*

I trust you will agree that to call such a system "socialist" is to reduce the term to a mockery. That is what Trotsky said and what we say with him. Only, since Trotskyism is itself in issue, let me quote Lenin instead.

Lenin once wrote: Soviets *plus* electricity equals Socialism. (Soviets + electricity = Socialism.) By electricity here is meant the increase of material production to the level where general want is abolished. By Soviets here is signified proletarian democracy. In other words, Lenin indicates by this formula that the workers' state functioning on the basis of proletarian democracy and expanding production was the road to Socialism.

I want to stress that the first half of the equation contains not only electricity but also the Soviets. To point therefore only to the increase of material production in the Soviet Union with-



out noting the simultaneous abolition of Soviet democracy is to look at one half of reality and to blind one self to the other. And that is what the Stalinists wish us to do.

Marxism demands that we look at reality as a whole and in the concrete. And Marxism readily discerns the secret of the Soviet Union's material progress despite the bureaucracy. This secret lies in the abolition of private property in the principal means of production which have been taken over by the State and made ████████ to function on the basis of a centralised plan. That is to say, the freeing of industry from the fetters of private profit has enabled an un-precedented development of the country's resources.

What is the part the bureaucracy has played in this process? Essentially the part of the sergeant-major and slave-driver. It has regimented the population in the interests of production, dictatorially compelling them instead of democratically drawing them into the process. And therewith it has not forgotten to look after itself. Through a system of steeply-graduated differential payments and the like, the bureaucracy has diverted to itself a disproportionate share of the national income which would otherwise have gone to further capital development or to the raising of the general standard of life.

To protect these privileges of theirs from the Soviet masses themselves, the bureaucracy has built up the most thorough-going police state the world has ever seen. There is no personal liberty in the Soviet Union, no rule of law; the people have not even the right of movement and are simply shut out from travelling abroad. The Soviet borders are hermetically sealed both against ingress and egress. And it is estimated by competent authorities that there are about 12 million people in so-called labour camps.

Now, what you suggest is that to criticize these aspects of the bureaucratic regime is to attack the Soviet Union. But this is to confuse the issue twice over. To attack the bureaucratic usurpation of the Soviet power by Stalin and Co. is not to attack the Soviet workers' State but to defend it, i.e. to defend the Soviet

masses against the bureaucratic offensive. And secondly, to attack the bureaucratic usurpers from this point of view, i.e. from the point of view of the struggle for Socialism, is not the same as to attack the Soviet Union itself from the point of view of the struggle against Socialism, as the capitalists do. I trust that will suffice to dispose of the slanderous amalgam which seeks to link up our criticisms of the Soviet bureaucracy with the Truman-Atlee criticisms on the one hand and the Senanayaka-Kotalawala criticisms on the other. It is a typical Stalinist propaganda trick.

Let me stress, we Trotskyists defend the Soviet Union against capitalist attack. I stressed this in my very first speech in Parliament when Mr. Pieter Keuneman did not dare to do so. But we also defend the Soviet masses against the dictatorial bureaucracy, and it is a poor Marxist who does not say so on appropriate occasions.

You may, however, ask: what is the need to say these things to the Ceylon masses? How are they interested? A pertinent question!

The answer is that no-one who fails to grasp the essential situation within the Soviet Union can grasp Stalinist politics in Ceylon. Let me explain.

I have already summarized for you the Soviet bureaucracy's domestic policy. Foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. And, accordingly, the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policy too, just like its domestic policy, is directed towards the preservation of its power and privileges.

This policy, Janus-like, has to be and is two-faced, because of the peculiar social position of this bureaucracy. The Soviet bureaucracy, though it has, on the one hand, usurped the state-power from the masses who had seized it from the capitalists and feudalists in October 1917, on the other hand, was itself the product of the October Revolution and depended and depends for its privileges on the expropriation of the capitalists which was then carried out. It has therefore to defend the basic gains of the October Revolution against capitalist attack even as it diverts the main benefits flowing from these gains to itself and away from

the masses. The result is a foreign policy directed, on the one hand, against imperialist intervention, and on the other, against the Independent revolutionary up-surges of the world working class which, linking itself with the Soviet working class, would help the latter to overthrow the bureaucratic usurpers

The result of this two-faced attitude is that Soviet foreign policy, as conducted by the bureaucracy in its own interests, is mainly concerned with trading the world revolutionary movement for agreements with the imperialists in order to safe-guard its own existence. \* No Stalinist likes to be reminded today of, for instance, the Hitler-Stalin Pact which released the Second Imperialist World War and which obviously included a secret agreement for the partition of Poland. (It was on the occasion of this Pact that Molotov said to an interviewer that "Facism is a matter of taste," He regarded Hitler's "National Socialism" as simply a different variant from Stalin's National Socialism. Stalin, let it not be forgotten, is the author of the utterly un-Marxist theory of socialism in one country.) No Stalinist likes too close a scrutiny of the Kremlin's war-time agreements with Whitehall and White House whereby Stalin virtually undertook in return for Eastern European

---

\* The trading of the world revolutionary movement in the bureaucratic interest is done in two ways. The first method was represented by the Popular Front Policy. In terms of this policy the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries abandoned class struggle for class collaboration in a vain endeavour to bring into being in the major imperialist countries like Britain and America, governments which would enter into military alliances with the Soviet Union. For that purpose, even the revolutionary struggle for colonial liberation was abandoned.

The other method is best illustrated from Eastern Europe. Here, in terms of an agreement with Anglo-American imperialism, Stalin obtained a new and considerable territorial sphere of influence. In these areas he was therefore faced with the task of bringing into being a state system which not only corresponded with the state form of the U.S.S.R but also was effectively subordinated militarily and economically to the U.S.S.R itself. We have therefore had in this area a series of "controlled mass actions" by which the centres of bourgeois resistance within the state and economic apparatus of these countries were smashed. Once this was achieved we have had the new state apparatus itself used to carry through a series of "purges" aimed at destroying all resistance, from the Left this time, to Stalin's policy of the subordination of these States and their economies to the state and economy of the U.S.S.R. In these countries today Stalin is carrying through another massacre of all independent revolutionaries similar to that massacre of the Bolshevik cadre in Russia in the middle 30s with which he signaled his arrival to dictatorial power in the Soviet Union.

concessions to help the Anglo-American imperialists suppress the anticipated post-war revolutions in Western Europe. And no Stalinist likes to be reminded how they lauded Churchill and Roosevelt during the war and actually called for a Churchill-Attlee Coalition Government after the war instead of a Labour Government.

I could also tell you the tale of Stalinism's treacherous role in post-war Europe and Asia, how they betrayed the revolutions in country after country; but this would take us both too far afield. So let me instead correlate the above facts about Stalinism's policies in the international field with the facts I previously gave about Stalinism's policies in the field of Ceylon politics.

When the Stalinists during the war denounced us as Fascist agents and themselves joined Dudley Senanayake, J. R. Jayawardene and Co. (whom they today denounce as Fascists) in the Ceylon National Congress, they were doing so, completely regardless of the interests of the Ceylon masses, in line with the dictates of the Kremlin issued in correspondence with the Soviet bureaucracy's own interests in opposition to those of the colonial masses. (This policy led in India to the C. P. I. joining the imperialists against the insurgent Indian masses during the famous August rebellion.) When, after the war, they called for a Coalition Government of themselves and the U.N.P. they were only following a policy applied by Stalin as far afield as France and Italy in the interests of his collaboration with the very Anglo-American imperialists whom we Trotskyists are today alleged to serve. Do you now see why, if we are to understand and deal with the zig-zags of local Stalinist policy, we must follow the activities of the Stalins and the Titos and explain them to the people of this country? It is because the Pieter Keunemans and the S. A. Wickremasinghes and their changing policies can be understood only in those terms and not in terms of themselves or the local situation and its needs at all.

Once you thus discern the real well-springs of local C. P. policy it will not be hard to find the clue to their current policy towards us of the Samasamaja parties and movement. This clue is to be

found neither in the political needs of the local situation nor in a Marxist analysis. It has to be looked for elsewhere. And that elsewhere is outside Ceylon.

The authority whom the Ceylon Communist Party has to satisfy and obey is not the masses of Ceylon, but the Soviet bureaucracy functioning through the Cominform. The Cominform is the successor to the old Comintern which Stalin dissolved during the war in the interests of his collaboration with the very Anglo-American imperialists whom he now denounces. We, for our part, not only denounce these imperialists now but also denounced them then, warning the masses not to be deceived by Anglo-American professions of love for peace and the Soviet Union. We knew what the Stalinists are only just beginning to re-discover, that imperialism and the workers' state could not eternally co-exist and that the Anglo-American imperialists, after they had used Stalin to destroy Hitler and Co., would then turn round on Stalin and Co., to destroy the workers' state itself. What a contrast to our shallow Stalinist slanderers !

The Cominform is an instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policy no less than the Soviet diplomatic service. It is the instrument for controlling the policies of the Stalinist Parties throughout the world in the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policy. But precisely in order to disguise this fact, it founds its zig-zagging policies each time in refashioned theories which, though they are couched in Marxist jargon, are really nothing but vulgar un-Marxist apologies for current empirically-determined policies,

Let me illustrate my meaning. In the days before the war, when the Axis powers were functioning on the world scene, Stalin found himself compelled to seek an alliance with Anglo-French-American imperialism as a means of balancing the power of the Italo-German-Japanese triangle. This was, of course, an understandable policy arising from exigencies in the field of world state relations. But neither Stalin nor the Comintern was content with presenting the matter that way.

Instead, The Stalinists came out with a remarkable new "theory." They divided the world into democratic (!) imperialisms and

reactionary imperialisms and the capitalists themselves into progressive capitalists and reactionary capitalists, and defined the task of the Communist Parties to be, not the development of the class struggle towards revolution and colonial liberation, but the abandonment of the class struggle for class collaboration with a view to creating Popular Front Governments which would enter into alliance with the Soviet Union. Can you imagine a greater vulgarisation of Marxism in the service of an empirically determined foreign policy?

Now, we Trotskyists, while fully appreciating the need for alliances with even imperialist states in the field of Soviet foreign policy, resisted this nonsensical theory and the accompanying abandonment of the revolutionary class struggle. In the result we were denounced as "mad dogs" (they couldn't think of a more suitable *political* characterisation then) and within the U.S.S.R. every adherent of ours they could lay their hands on as well as the entire old Bolshevik cadre which had carried through the October Revolution and opposed Stalin's new policy were wiped out as "saboteurs" by methods which included, among others, judicial murders in the shape of gigantic frame-up trials.

I wonder whether you would have considered it proper at that time to let this shameful and terrible massacre go by uncriticised and un-noted on the ground that it would amount to "attacking a Socialist state". I doubt it. Anyhow, what we Trotskyists did was to denounce this outrage on the workers' state for what it was: only then could we have had the moral right to struggle for the true Marxist line.

Came Munich. The Popular Front line had *failed*, leaving the U.S.S.R. isolated in an imperialist world without a single ally to depend on. Such was the penalty which, not only Stalin's bureaucracy, but the entire Soviet people paid, for Stalin's class-collaborationist theories. Consequent on this failure, Stalin found himself propelled into Hitler's arms and the Soviet-German Pact which unleashed the Second Imperialist World War, was signed in Moscow. And to back the new policy, Stalin came out with a new "theory".

This theory was that British Imperialism and not German Fascism was now the aggressor and the sole obstacle in the way of peace. The "democratic" imperialism had become an "aggressor" imperialism, while a "reactionary" imperialism had become transformed into a "peace-seeking" imperialism. What a rationalisation of Hitler's policies in Hitler's service !

There followed Hitler's sudden attack on the Soviet Union. The inevitable consequence of Stalin's criminal policy of class collaboration fell upon the suffering Soviet masses whose heroism, moreover, was the primary resource on which Stalin himself had to depend to pull the country out of this catastrophe.

Meantime policy had to be changed and with it theory revised once more. Anglo-American imperialism became now "peace-loving" countries, Germany and Italy became the "fascist aggressors": the class-struggle and the colonial struggle were ordered to be abandoned in the name of a so-called People's War, and we Trotskyists, who sought to apply Lenin's classic policy of utilising the wars of the imperialists for the advancement of the revolutions of the peoples, were denounced as Hitlero-Trotskyists in Europe and Hirohito's agents in Asia. It was of course irrelevant to their characterisation that Trotskyists were in the forefront everywhere of the revolutionary struggle and suffering martyrdom in the process. If the truth is inconvenient to Stalinism, it is the truth that must suffer !

Why detail further? The wheel has turned full circle. The "peace-loving" imperialisms of Britain and America have again become the "Wall-street war-mongers" etc. which indeed they not only are, but always were. It was surely monstrous to define, for instance, British Imperialism, which was even then shooting and suppressing the rebellious Indian people, as a "peace-loving" imperialism. We never did so; and if any Stalinists now suggest that we don't know it or act on any other basis, you can tell them they lie in their teeth, forgetful both of their past and ours.

And having discovered the war-mongers' aims, how do they define our task in relation to them? As that of bringing pressure to bear on them to enter into a new agreement with the Soviet bureaucracy. Such is the essence of current Stalinist policy despite all their r-r-revolutionary chatter.

No, my friend, No! To stay quiet in the face of these monstrosities and absurdities for fear of being characterized by Mr. Pieter Keuneman or Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe as agents of Truman or Attlee would be to betray the cause we work and fight for. We have to fight Anglo-American Imperialism and we do,—by developing the revolutionary struggle of the people of Ceylon. We have to defend the U. S. S. R. and the countries clustered around it from imperialist attack,—and we do; also, among other things, by developing the revolutionary struggle in Ceylon and thus weakening the power of imperialism to launch the offensive. But precisely in order to defend the Soviet Union itself and also to develop our revolutionary struggle without allowing it to be diverted, exploited, and betrayed by the Stalinists in the interests of Soviet bureaucratic foreign policy, we must also expose the Stalinist bureaucracy and its agents and policies before the Ceylon masses. Hence what you please to call our "attacks on the Soviet Union" and her satellites which are really attacks on the Soviet bureaucracy and their agents in their betrayals and oppressions of the masses.

Let me turn now, in the frame-work of the above facts, to another aspect of contemporary Stalinist policy in Ceylon. It is their theory since about a year or more that the masses of Ceylon are simply straining on the leash, anxious and ready to launch a direct and revolutionary onslaught on the U. N. P. and its Government, an onslaught which is prevented by the restraining band of Trotskyist cowards!

Do you agree with this theory? I doubt it from the very contents of your letters; and I would add, no sane surveyor of the contemporary scene in Ceylon can reasonably hold it.

For, what is the true position? The first feature is that the mass movement has not yet fully recovered from the terrific defeat it suffered in the June 1947 General Strike. The trade union movement in Colombo especially, which was then shattered to pieces, still awaits revival and re-organisation. The readiness of people to clash directly and openly with Government has ebbed to the point where they can even be terrorised in respect of the exercise of the secret vote. Street demonstrations have disappeared



to the point of being rarities. In a word, it has been a period of political and social reaction.

Let me hasten to add that the bottom of this trough has, in my view, been already passed. There have not been wanting in the past few months signs of this fact. Occasional strikes, more militant mass rallies, sporadic demonstrations, a new in-flow into the trade unions and Youth Leagues and above all a pressure for Left unity and trade union unity, all these show a certain upward trend once more in the mass movement, a groping forward by the masses for the correct courses of action.

But to mistake these first upward strivings for immediate revolutionary readiness is as fatal as to mistake the first frail strivings of a baby in the womb for signs of maturity. Such a mistake can kill the mass movement by leading it into premature adventures just as a similar mistake by a doctor would result not in the birth of the baby but in its death.

This, however, is precisely the mistake the Stalinists are making. And the pertinent question for us in the present context is: why?

In view of the earlier contents of this letter, you will no doubt guess the answer. The answer is that the Stalinists are not at all governed in the determination of their policies here by the local situation or by the local needs. On the contrary, they are governed entirely by the current foreign policy needs of the Soviet bureaucracy.

As I have earlier explained, this demands the bringing of immediate maximum pressure on Anglo-American imperialism with a view to bringing about an agreement between the Anglo-American imperialists and the Soviet bureaucrats. Such pressure can best be exercised by launching as many insurrectionary movements as possible in the imperialist sector of the world—insurrectionary movements which are to be launched regardless of whether the mass movement in the given country is ripe for it or not.

In line with the typical habit of Stalinism, this new policy needs a new theory. The Soviet bureaucracy provided this

through the mouth of Zhdanov at a Cominform session before he died in the form of the declaration that this was the period of the break-down of capitalism requiring a sustained offensive of the masses.\* In keeping therewith, our Stalinist gentlemen have persuaded themselves into the belief that capitalism has broken down in Ceylon and the masses are simply thirsting to destroy it here and now. And when we Trotskyists point out the absurdity of this assessment and the origin of the error, they shriek 'Truman Agent' and accuse us of seeking to join the U.N.P. Government. Must we therefore give way for fear of being mis-understood; yea, even if we are mis-understood—for a time?

No, my friend, we too act on an estimate of the situation; and we will not abandon our estimate or our deliberate courses of action merely because there are slanderers to misrepresent us on all sides. We keep our ears to the masses and our faces to the foe. And, paying heed to the mass demand and the needs of the fight against the capitalist U.N.P. foe, we call for a United Front between the C.P. and ourselves.

---

\* And yet when, in the immediate post-war situation, capitalism was in ruins everywhere, and we Trotskyists were calling for revolutionary action, these gentlemen could not see the fact. At that time, they collaborated with Anglo-American imperialism to restore capitalism instead of overthrowing it, going even to the extent of entering capitalist coalitions (e.g. France) for the purpose of persuading the insurgent masses to hand back their arms to capitalist governments. Today, when Marshall Aid and the like plus their own past services to capitalism (!) have enabled the capitalist economy to recover to a degree, these gentlemen purport to see a break-up. The wish is father to the thought! But thereby these gentlemen distinguish themselves by mistaking the back-side of the revolution for the front, the receding movement for the advancing movement; and, as has been their historical habit, they insist on turning on the green light for the red and *vice-versa*, always and precisely at the wrong moment. What would you do with a traffic policeman who regularly made such a mistake? Dismiss him! The masses, as they get to know these facts in experience, will deal with these Stalinist gentlemen in the same way. In the meantime it has to be realized that what had broken down was not capitalism but Stalin's policy of collaboration with Anglo-American imperialism after the war—a collaboration that led to the betrayal and defeat of the post-war revolutionary movement. The new theory was, as usual, merely a screen for another empirically-determined change of policy. When the next change of policy comes, theory will change again.

Why do we call for a United Front and not for a united party of the Stalinists and ourselves? Let me explain.

Please note first of all that the united front tactic is not a manoeuvre against other parties but a means of developing the mass struggle in certain circumstances. It's need derives not from the narrow interests of political parties but from the wider interests of the masses in struggle. It can be a defensive tactic or an offensive tactic according to the situation, only it has always to be achieved in and for action, otherwise it is pointless. And it is a tactic that is operated through organisations on the basis of existing loyalties and not on the basis of a demand for the abandonment of these loyalties as a pre-condition to united action.

Now, when is a united front between parties the more appropriate demand as opposed to the unification of parties? When the programmes of the respective parties are fundamentally different although their contemporary courses of action more or less coincide immediately. You cannot hold fundamentally different programmes within the framework of a single party; you will then only convulse it internally and paralyse it for action.

This is the case between us and the Stalinists today. I have already shown you how profoundly our programmes differ—and it would be futile and foolish to shut our eyes to the fact. But today, they claim to be out for struggle against the U.N.P. even as we are. And this provides us with a basis for common *action* though it does not provide us with a basis for a common party.

The demand for such common or joint action on the basis of previous agreement is the essence of the United front demand. And it is readily demonstrable that this satisfies every mass need. For it will ensure the co-ordination of the mass struggle in defence against the U.N.P. offensive and its development through ever more direct forms into the mass counter-offensive against the U.N.P. It will ensure unity of action—despite programmatic and other differences. It will enable the ironing out of differences by continuous consultations and thus end these public squabbles which you rightly say disgrace the movement. And it will enable the adherents of all parties to judge of the correctness and efficiency of the policies of the respective parties and thus to find the correct road and means to their socialist objectives.

I am sure you will agree that such a policy would not only enhearten the Left voters but help to re-vivify the mass movement well, that, in fact, is our policy. Why, therefore, don't you ask Dr. Wickremesinghe (whom you say you would have voted for if you had a vote) and Mr. Pieter Keuneman and their ilk whether they stand for that policy too? If they do, then why don't they set going negotiations? If they don't, then will you, can you, simply leave it at that?

I will give the answers in advance. The Stalinists, by express declaration, have refused any united front with us. And thereby their aim and intention is to *compel the masses to choose between them and us*—a policy which anyone can see is disastrous to the anti-U.N.P. struggle.

What then is to be done in this situation? To capitulate to the Stalinists? I don't suppose anybody would suggest this. Then? To fight them? Yes; but how and to what end? In other words, how are the masses to be saved from the peril of this Stalinist-created situation within the Left movement?

I say the first task for us in the Trotskyist party is not to abandon the united front demand but to intensify the campaign for it. That is the only way to demonstrate to the masses which Party it is that is honestly and consistently working to remove it. The mass pressure on the Stalinists to go into a united front will therefore increase steadily and powerfully. And if the Stalinists don't respond, the masses will then be compelled to choose even as the Stalinists aim to compel them. Only, then, I have no doubt, the choice will be not as they wish and hope but just the other way. The masses will learn in experience that we Samasamajists alone are on the right political road in Ceylon—and they will rally to us.

And you, I am sure, will not be the last or the least of our adherents on the road to that achievement, for neither you nor any of those tired neighbours whom you refer to can afford to be abstentionists in that fight. On the contrary, to join in this fight is to their direct interest.

Yes, the U.N.P. has gathered strength the Right too has organised itself. Yes, the Fascist tendencies of the Government

have led to victimisation both in the service and outside. Yes, there is a certain amount of fear abroad which feeds on the Left's immediate weakness. But the weakness of the Left cannot be cured with tears but only in struggle. The U.N.P. cannot be defeated and overthrown without suffering and martyrdom—the suffering and martyrdom not only of "leaders" but of the obscure and the unknown, the little men (and women) in field and factory. Those who wash their hands of us will find out that they have only capitulated to the foe. It will be our task, yours and mine as well as of our comrades, to see that this doesn't happen. On with the struggle! is our battle-ory.

Yours very sincerely,

COLVIN R. DE SILVA.

P. S.

I have deliberately left certain questions you have raised for this post-script. These are your questions about Tito and Mao, and your simple division of the world into two camps.

Tito and Mao are not so irrelevant to us in Ceylon as you seem to think and they are much more pertinent in the subject of your very letters than you would appear to appreciate. Take this two-camp business, for instance.

It is customary for both the capitalist and the Stalinist propagandists to present the basic question facing the contemporary world in this form. This is because both have a vested interest in doing so. Nevertheless, both are guilty of mis-representation. For both are dexterously indentifying the two sides in the class struggle with two sides in the field of state and power relations. And both do it with a view to confusing the masses.

What is the basic issue facing the world today. It is the issue of capitalism vs. socialism. Who are the rival forces in this battle. They are the imperialists on the one side drawing together around them all reactionary strata of the world's population, and, on the other, the working class leading the vast host of the exploited. They are, in short, the two sides in the class struggle.

have led to victimisation both in the service and outside. Yes, there is a certain amount of fear abroad which feeds on the Left's immediate weakness. But the weakness of the Left cannot be cured with tears but only in struggle. The U.N.P. cannot be defeated and overthrown without suffering and martyrdom—the suffering and martyrdom not only of "leaders" but of the obscure and the unknown, the little men (and women) in field and factory. Those who wash their hands of us will find out that they have only capitulated to the foe. It will be our task, yours and mine as well as of our comrades, to see that this doesn't happen. On with the struggle! is our battle-cry.

CORRECTION:

On page 26, between paragraphs two & three, after the words "Anti U. N. P. Struggle" insert and read whole of page 28, and also page 29 up to the words. "advice in vain."

this post-script. These are your questions about Tito and Mao, and your simple division of the world into two camps.

Tito and Mao are not so irrelevant to us in Ceylon as you seem to think and they are much more pertinent in the subject of your very letters than you would appear to appreciate. Take this two-camp business, for instance.

It is customary for both the capitalist and the Stalinist propagandists to present the basic question facing the contemporary world in this form. This is because both have a vested interest in doing so. Nevertheless, both are guilty of mis-representation. For both are dexterously indentifying the two sides in the class struggle with two sides in the field of state and power relations. And both do it with a view to confusing the masses.

What is the basic issue facing the world today. It is the issue of capitalism vs. socialism. Who are the rival forces in this battle. They are the imperialists on the one side drawing together around them all reactionary strata of the world's population, and, on the other, the working class leading the vast host of the exploited. They are, in short, the two sides in the class struggle.

And it is not as if these blind Stalinists had no historical precedents from which to learn. I shall take only one example: the case of pre-Hitlerite Germany.

In the days when Hitler was still only reaching out towards power, there were in Germany two great working-class parties. These were the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Germany.

The German C.P. had, then, a tremendous following not far second to that of the German S.D.P. But the point was that the relationship of forces between them had become more or less stabilised in this sense that their respective mass followings stayed loyal to the respective parties. On the other hand, there was another relationship of forces which was in fact being upset by the rise of the Hitlerites. This was the relationship between the strength of these two parties together and of the capitalist parties on the other. This in turn reflected the vacillation of the middle class between the Right and Left in face of the growing power of the Right, and the apparent impotence of the Left to hold this advance.

This impotence derived from the failure of the two great Left Parties, the S.D.P. and C.P. to combine in action i.e. to form a United Front against the developing offensive of the Right.

What was the source of this incapacity to combine? Precisely the refusal of the C.P. of Germany to call for an United Front of the Two Parties and its insistence on a so-called United Front from below which was nothing but an effort to compel the masses who were loyal to the S.D.P. to choose between the S.D.P. and the CP. The result was that both parties were crushed by Hitler and there-with the unhappy German masses themselves.

The parallel with the situation in Ceylon today will be clear. Here are the masses as in Germany loyal to their respective parties demanding an United Front to meet the developing offensive from the Right. Here are the Trotskyists, as in Germany, demanding a United Front of the Left Parties, in accordance with this profoundly correct mass demand, and here is the C.P. denouncing the Samasamajists as U.N.P. agents, even as they denounced the Social Democrats in Germany as "twins of the Fascists", refusing this

United Front and instead trying to compel the masses to choose between them and the Samasamajists by pretending to call for a United Front of the C.P. with "progressive elements."

There is however one vital element of difference in the Ceylon situation which distinguishes it from the pre-Hitlerite situation in Germany. This is the presence in Ceylon of the powerful revolutionary movement, independent of Kremlin control, which is called the Samasamaja movement. The Party of this movement, unlike the S.D.P. of Germany, is not reformist in relation to capitalism, and, unlike the C.P. of Germany, is not sectarian in relation to reformists. On the contrary it has the correct revolutionary policy of a United Front of the Left Parties in order to develop, not only Parliamentarily but also extra-Parliamentarily, the struggle of the masses in resistance against the U.N.P. In a word the Trotskyists in Ceylon are in a position to lead the masses even in despite of the C.P. refusal to join in the United Front, whereas the tiny Trotskyists Group in Germany at that time could do no more than advise in vain.

Now, the dexterous propagandists of Stalinism in particular present this struggle as identical with the rivalries of the U.S.S.R.'s rulers and the imperialists. And the imperialists, for their part, striving to hide the real *social* issues, seek to present the struggle as one between democracy and dictatorship. And although the totalitarian rule which prevails in the U.S.S.R. and its satellite states assists the Anglo-American imperialists enormously even as the loyalty of all of us to the October Revolution assists even more profoundly the bureaucratic usurpers in the U.S.S.R. nevertheless, both sides really are only confusing reality.

It is quite true that the fate of the Soviet Union as a workers' state which can develop into Socialism is directly linked with the outcome of the world struggle for the proletarian revolution against capitalism. If capitalism can crush the proletariat, the Soviet Union is doomed. That, by the way, is why we Trotskyists make of the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist intervention and attack a fundamental plank in our programme. We are unconditional defenders of the social gains of the October Revolution.



But the defence of the Soviet Union must not be equated with the defence of the foreign policy manoeuvres of the reactionary Soviet bureaucracy—which is what the Stalinists mean by the Defence of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, the defence of the Soviet Union renders it incumbent to fight Soviet foreign policy wherever and whenever it cuts across the development of the revolution throughout the world. For the successful defence of the Soviet Union rests fundamentally and ultimately on the overthrow of capitalism and not on agreements with it. The only real defence of the Soviet Union is the successful spread of the October Revolution to other countries. And the spread of the October Revolution to other countries does not mean their simple subordination to the Soviet bureaucratic state.

This, and this precisely, however, is Stalin's policy in relation to the satellite countries. And this is where the case of Tito becomes relevant.

What is it that is at issue between Stalin and Tito? "Leadership" perhaps? That is what those who explain our local Left disunities in terms of leadership rivalries would have to put forward. But this is not the case.

The issue between Stalin and Tito fundamentally is where the Soviet bureaucracy has the right of dictation over other revolutionary states. Stalin wanted Yugoslavia as a satellite. Tito resisted. From behind the scenes the breach came into the open. Today it fills the press of the world.

I trust that once this is grasped, none will say that the Stalin-Tito conflict matters not a whit to us in Ceylon. It does. For how can any revolutionary decline to take sides in this conflict any more than in the conflict of U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

To those who see the basic social conflict in the world today solely in the form of the world power-conflict between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., the decision of this question will of course be easy. "Whoever is not on the side of the U.S.S.R." they will say "is against her and socialism. Yugoslavia is against the U.S.S.R.! Consequently we are against Yugoslavia!"

But this is an attitude only for lazy minds and ignorant. It is not an attitude for active militants in the world struggle for

socialism. For we find that, despite systematic Stalinist lies Tito is in conflict not only with Stalin but also Truman. She ploughs a different furrow from both.

How explain this situation? The answer lies once again in the nature of the ruling Soviet bureaucracy which I have already explained in my letter. The Soviet bureaucracy, usurpers of power from the masses within the Soviet Union, cannot also tolerate rivals in the Eastern European States. Their totalitarian dictatorship requires the complete subordination of the Communist Parties abroad, even though they wield state power in their own countries. The preservation of their social privileges requires the expansion of their economic base, i. e. the conversion of the new areas under their control into arenas of economic exploitation for the benefit of the U.S.S.R.'s economy. This they have done successfully in every Eastern European country except Yugoslavia. Hence their denunciation of Tito.

I hope it will now be clear why it is the duty of every consistent revolutionary, every socialist, yea, every progressive to be on the side of Yugoslavia against Stalin in this conflict. We have to defend Yugoslavia and its peoples not only against imperialism but also against the Stalinist subjugators. We defend the revolutionary independence of Yugoslavia.

What of Mao? The question here is of a different order. The Coming to power of Mao Tse Tung in China raises the question: what is the precise significance of the change?

Here we are *measuring* changes in social relations for the purpose of characterizing the Mao regime. We are not raising any question whether Mao's power has to be supported. (There can be no question about this in relation to Chiang Kai Shek, his Kuomintang and their imperialist backers. We defend the Chinese People's Republic against them.)

For the purpose of measuring the changes in social relations in China under Mao, it is not sufficient simply to say that the Chinese Communist Party has come to power. It is quite true that this Party has come to power. But the decisive question for our present purpose is, what is the social programme which is being implemented by Mao's government in the Chinese People's Republic?

The answer to this question may be startling to you, but it is also illuminating. *Mao's regime is not making any fundamental social changes either in the country-side or in the towns.* In the countryside it contents itself with land distribution in the North and rent reform in the Centre and South. In the cities it is declaredly pursuing [the capitalist development of industry, protecting the capitalists in their ownership and management of industry against the workers and the trade unions. This, the Mao Government does in accordance precisely with Mao's own theory (which constitutes a complete abandonment of everything Lenin taught and did) that the task of the C.P. and the State it controls in China is to build *capitalism* in China and not socialism, (which it postpones for some distant period subsequent to the building of capitalism.)

Such being the case, how would you characterize the Mao regime? (Mao's government, by the way, contains even old-time war-lords, among them at least one who is known to history as the Butcher of the Canton Commune of 1927). I shall give you the answer in the words of a refugee Trotskyist leader from China who managed to escape from the massacre of Trotskyists which Mao's men effected everywhere even while they spared feudal landlords and made friends with the Shanghai capitalists. Says he: the first stage of the Third Chinese Revolution is over. (The first and the second revolutions were in 1911 and 1925—27 respectively.) The next stage has to be carried through by the Chinese urban and rural masses in collision with Mao's government rather than under its leadership. The social revolution in China, far from being over, has yet fundamentally to begin. For not a single fundamental question of Chinese social relations has even begun to be solved.

C. R. DE S.