

LESLIE GOONEWARDENE



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

TROTSKYISM

AND

STALINISM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Colvin R. de Silva

25^c

LESLIE GOONEWARDENE



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

TROTSKYISM

A N D

STALINISM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Colvin R. de Silva

25^c

Leslie Goonewardene

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TROTSKYISM & STALINISM

SEVEN ARTICLES FROM " SAMASAMAJIST "

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY COLVIN R. de SILVA

I. Subordination to Soviet Foreign Policy	
1. Our Experience in Ceylon	Page 1
2. The Role of the CPs of the World	„ 4
II. Why Do They Mislead?	„ 7
III. Democracy And Dictatorship	„ 10
IV. Defence of the Soviet Union	„ 13
V. Truth And Untruth	„ 15
VI. The Crisis of Stalinism	„ 18

A Lanka Samasamaja Publication

MARCH 1954.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

—:—
The following Lanka Samasamaja Publications will interest those who wish to continue studying the topics dealt with in this series by Leslie Goonewardene:

ON THE ROLE OF THE CPs OF THE WORLD :

Leon Trotsky's "The Revolution In Spain" and
"World Unemployment"

ON THE DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION :

Leon Trotsky's "Class Nature of the Soviet State" and the
Manifesto of The IIIrd World Congress of the Fourth International.

ON THE USE OF UNTRUTH AS A WEAPON :

Leon Trotsky's "I Stake My Life!" and Adolf Joffe's
"Last Words".

Price: 15 Cents In Stamps Each.

75 Cents In Stamps For All Six Pamphlets.

Write To :

MANAGER, PUBLICATIONS,

49, Drieberg's Avenue,

Colombo 10.

INTRODUCTION

TWO events in Ceylon politics have made this book topical. These are the break-down last July of the negotiations for a united front between the Lanka Samasamaja Party and the Ceylon Communist Party and the break-away of a whole wing of the LSSP last October.

The first event turned on "the right of criticism". The CP refused to come to a united front with the LSSP even on agreed **domestic** issues unless the LSSP surrendered its right to criticise, when necessary, the Soviet, Chinese, and East European governments and the Communist Parties abroad. The second event turned allegedly on the "united front question". In fact, however, as the public soon recognised, the break-away wing of the LSSP had abandoned every Trotskyist position and gone over lock stock and barrel to Stalinism. Their capitulation took the form of entry into the Stalinist Front mis-called the Communist-Samasamaja Front.

These events roused serious general interest in the differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism. People began to inquire what these differences were and why they were ir-reconcilable. The author of this book answers these question authoritatively as the Secretary of the LSSP. He also answers these questions succinctly and simply, as every reader of "Samasamajist", the LSSP weekly paper in which this book first appeared in the form of a series of articles, well knows.

This book happens also to be very timely. It comes out in the setting of a new and further right turn in the Ceylon CP's political line.

A turn to the right by a working class party signifies a turn away from the class struggle towards class collaboration; a turn away from struggle against the capitalist class towards collaboration with the capitalist class. The new turn of the CP carries this collaboration with the capitalist class right up to the total abandonment of every political aim and task of the Ceylon working class in struggle against the UNP-led forces of re-action.

To begin with, the CP is turning away from the anti-UNP struggle. In place of the Anti-UNP Front of old, its members now stand instructed to work for an Anti-Fascist Front. This enables anti-**Kotelawala** talk, without anti-UNP action. Indeed,

it enables *immediate collaboration with every section of the UNP except the Kotelawala section.*

The CP is also putting away in a cupboard its People's Democratic Government slogan. It now puts forward the slogan of an Anti-Imperialist Democratic Government; also described in a secret circular of the Party as "a broad anti-imperialist government".

The broad Anti-Imperialist Government is to arise from the Anti-Fascist Front. The circular expressly states that this Government can be built "*without the leadership of the working class.*" The way is thus opened for a Front and a Government in which the *capitalist* class is in fact the leading force.

The programme formulated for the Anti-Fascist Front and the Anti-Imperialist Government in this circular from the top CP Centre makes the above point more clear. The programme certainly talks of recovering our military, naval and air bases from the British and of getting out of the British Commonwealth. It also talks about developing industries in Ceylon and of assisting Ceylon's agriculture. It adds a reference to the right of Left political parties and of trade unions to function freely. But it does not comprise a single measure against capital; not even against foreign capital. It contains not a single nationalisation measure; not even the nationalisation of the bus companies or even the nationalisation of any foreign imperialist property. The tenderness of the CP's new line to every form of capital in Ceylon and to every section of the owners of capital is thus manifest. The programme is a fake anti-imperialist programme which, because it is really **pro-capitalist**, becomes no more than a not-very-radical capitalist programme of democratic reform.

On this road of more complete collaboration with the capitalist class the CP jettisons every pretence of seeking a united front with the LSSP. The circular frankly declares that the CP "*will not henceforth call for a united front with the LSSP or summon the LSSP to united front talks.*" Indeed, the circular actually declares that the LSSP is not a Left party at all!

The purpose of this last declaration is to enable a "Left" cover to be given to a Right turn. The CP announces that it is arranging for a Left United Front Conference; but it is to be a "Left" front and conference *without the principal Left party in Ceylon; namely, the LSSP!* What is more, the circular expressly says that this "Left" United Front will be formed on the very programme of Mr. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom

Party! In other words, it is the SLFP that provides the shape and content of this new "Leftism". It need surprise nobody that there is no room in it for the only party in Ceylon which bases itself consistently and completely on the development of the class struggle; namely, the LSSP.

This is not the place to deal with the full import for Ceylon politics of the CP's new and further right turn. That is the subject of a series of articles by the author of this Introduction, appearing in "Samasamajist" currently under the title "Ceylon CP Turns Further Right" and due to appear in due course in book form. It is necessary, however, to point out here and at once that this turn too does not derive in any manner from the needs of Ceylon politics. It derives, instead and as usual, from the current foreign policy needs of the Soviet bureaucratic Government.

Current Soviet foreign policy aims at the "neutralisation" of the South-East Asian ruling capitalists in the so-called Cold War and in the hot war to come. Their aim in places like India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and, despite present controversies, Pakistan is to bring into being *capitalist* governments which will be neutral in this war. This therefore is the task which has been set for the CP in Ceylon; and this therefore is the task at which the CP, and with it the entire Stalinist Front which it controls, will work in the same whole-hearted belief in its "correctness" and practicability as their Soviet bureaucratic masters.

The task of the LSSP in this situation will be to expose the CP and its allies in the Stalinist Front for what they now clearly are; namely, servitors of capitalism in Ceylon and, therefore, also objective allies of the UNP against the LSSP and the LSSP-led anti-capitalist masses. It will also be the task of the LSSP now to shoulder alone what should have been the task of the entire Left; namely, to organise the masses in struggle against the UNP to RE-PLACE THE CAPITALIST UNP GOVERNMENT WITH AN ANTI-CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT.

The LSSP will not, of course, shrink from that task, any more than it shrank from the task of struggling all alone in Ceylon against the Second Imperialist World War. To the masses who follow the LSSP and to those who tomorrow will surely turn to it for leadership, it will certainly be a serious way of preparing for the great struggles to come to read and study Comrade Leslie Goonewardene's book. It will illumine for them not merely the differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism;

it will also be a step in their Marxist education. They will discover from this book that the differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism are really not differences in the interpretation of Marxism at all. On the contrary, they are differences between Marxism and a counterfeit which seeks to pass in Marxism's name.

Trotskyism is only Stalinism's name for the authentic Marxism of this revolutionary epoch. Trotskyism is authentic Marxism; Stalinism, a counterfeit.

Colvin R. de Silva

Colombo.

9. 3. 54

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TROTSKYISM AND STALINISM

I. Subordination To Soviet Foreign Policy

1. OUR EXPERIENCE IN CEYLON

SINCE the split away of a group of people from the Lanka Samasamaja Party to the Stalinist Front, a new interest has been created among the public on the question of what are the political differences between the Lanka Samasamaja Party and the Ceylon Communist Party. It is hoped that this series of articles, which attempts to present the principal differences between Trotskyism and Stalinism in a simple manner, will help to clarify this question.

The first and most important difference is that while the policy of the Trotskyists is shaped and determined by the needs of the mass struggle, the policy of the Stalinists is determined by quite another consideration, namely, the temporary—and often changing—needs of the foreign policy of the Soviet Government. In other words, while the Trotskyists at each stage will seek to adopt that policy which will help to develop the movement towards its goal of the abolition of capitalism and imperialism, the Stalinists on the other hand, seek at each stage to adopt that policy which will help the Soviet Government in its foreign policy, regardless of the effects of such a course of action on the mass movement.

The truth of the above assertion is borne out by the entire history of the Communist Parties of the world during the past quarter century or so. But to illustrate the point, it is best to commence with our own experience in Ceylon, since here we shall be dealing with facts of which most people are aware.

The Ceylon Communist Party does not have a long history having had its origin in the expulsion of the Stalinists from the LSSP in early 1940. But its history has been long enough to illustrate that it has functioned, not as an instrument of the masses in their struggle for emancipation, but as an instrument of the Soviet Government in its efforts to seek a 'modus vivendi' with imperialism.

From 1940 to 1941, the Ceylon Stalinists, along with the LSSP, continued to oppose the war and brand it as imperialist. This was in the period when the Soviet Union had its Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler's Germany, and this policy naturally conformed with the foreign policy needs of the Soviet Government.

However, after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in mid-1941, a sudden about-turn in policy was made. Not merely the war of the Soviet Union against Germany, but the entire war now became a "People's War" of the forces of democracy against fascism. Even the war of British Imperialism against Japanese imperialism (which, incidentally, was not at war with the Soviet Union) over the question of colonies, became a "progressive war" deserving of our support. The workers were asked not to strike but to work harder. The LSSP'ers, who were imprisoned or were functioning underground, were branded as traitors and Japanese spies. This policy served the needs, not of the mass struggle, but of Soviet foreign policy.

The war ended in 1945, but not the good relations of the Soviet Government with its western imperialist allies. The 'honeymoon' period of cooperation extended also into the first post-war years. Consequently, when a new political party, the UNP, made its appearance in Ceylon, the Ceylon Communist Party could not see this party from the standpoint of the Ceylonese masses and their interests. It had to view this political formation through the rose-tinted spectacles of the Kremlin. For were not the leaders of the UNP the agents of the British imperialists with whom Stalin had such good relations? Consequently, while the LSSP was able to characterize the UNP as the party of the Ceylonese capitalist class and to warn the masses from the beginning of its true character, the Communist Party had to take the position that it was not a party really, but a sort of 'front' in which, moreover, were to be found progressives. At its Conference in February 1947 the Communist Party went so far as to take a decision that, in the then approaching general elections, UNP candidates should be supported against LSSP candidates!

True, the mass wave against the capitalist UNP prevented the CP from successfully carrying out this policy. For example, they were compelled to withdraw their support to the candidate whom they had put up against Comrade N. M. Perera in Ruanwella (the C. P. candidate nevertheless contested as an "Independent"). But the point is that this compromisist policy in relation to the UNP had its roots not in Ceylon politics but in the diplomatic needs of Moscow.

Let us now take the case of CP policy from 1948-50. The General Strike of 1947, unlike that of 1946, had ended in defeat. Thousands of workers were victimised, and the trade union movement reached a very low ebb. In such a situation the task clearly was patiently and laboriously to build anew the shattered organisations of the workers in preparation for the next wave of struggles. This is what the LSSP did. But not the Communist Party. For them, the changed needs of Soviet foreign policy and not the needs of the working class movement, were the determining factor.

1948 saw the end of the period of collaboration between the Soviet Government on the one side and the Western imperialists on the other. Conflict now became the order of the day. Accordingly, the policy of the CP underwent the usual change. Its aim now became that of creating as much trouble as possible for the imperialists and their agents in order to bring pressure to bear on the imperialists to come to a reasonable compromise with Stalin. From 1948 to 1950, the CP, totally disregarding the situation existing in Ceylon, preached that revolution was round the corner, and attempted to push the workers into suicidal struggle which would only have destroyed the strength they had left. Fortunately, few listened to them.

It is not out of place here to draw attention to a novel argument put forward by a new set of apologists for Stalinism who have grown up in our midst. All this is true, they say, but all this is past. In future it will be different. No compromise is possible between the Soviet Union and the imperialists. War is inevitable. Consequently the very foreign policy needs of the Soviet Government are driving the Communist Party on to the road of struggle.

Unfortunately, in this argument there is more wishful thinking than logic. No durable compromise is possible between the two military blocs, it is true. And war is looming on the horizon. But precisely for this reason the foreign policy needs of the Soviet Government demand neutral governments in countries like India, Burma and Ceylon. Accordingly, it is a **neutral capitalist government** that is steadily clarifying itself as the aim of the Communist Party in Ceylon. The aim of the LSSP, on the other hand, is the replacement of the capitalist UNP Government by an **anti-capitalist government**.

This first difference between Stalinism and Trotskyism which we have mentioned, is thus a fundamental one. That this is so, is moreover borne out by our own experience in Ceylon. That is why every healthy element in the LSSP has rejected the road of joining the Stalinist Front, accepting the "leadership of the Soviet Union," and subordinating our struggle to the needs of Soviet foreign policy.

2. THE ROLE OF THE C. P.'s OF THE WORLD

OUR last article demonstrated that the C. P. of Ceylon has acted, not as an instrument of the masses in their struggle for emancipation, but as an instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet Government. This has been a feature of Communist Parties generally, and has led to many betrayals and defeats of the workers' movement. It is not possible in the space of a short article to do more than briefly recount the principal 'turns' which have invariably followed changes in Soviet foreign policy.

In 1933 Hitler came to power in Germany and soon became the principal threat to the Soviet Union. Accordingly, Soviet foreign policy was concentrated on securing a "Peace Alliance" with the democratic imperialisms of Britain, France and America, against Hitler. The unfortunate thing, however, was that the Communist Parties of the world were used, not in order to lead the masses in their countries to victory over capitalism, but as instruments to help secure this pact.

Following the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, the Communist Parties all took a rightist turn. Struggle for the "Peace Alliance" with the Soviet Union became the guiding line of all these parties. And in order to secure the support of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie for this pact, the class struggle was given up and the class collaborationist line of "Popular Front" was adopted. The struggle against capitalism was given up in favour of the policy of maintaining bourgeois democracy against the danger of Fascism.

This policy led to many setbacks for the movement, the most disastrous of which was in Spain. Here, a Fascist uprising led by General Franco against the Popular Front Government in 1936, was thwarted, not by the Government forces (who were on the side of the Fascists), but by the masses. The workers organised their own militia, took over the factories and even the functions of the Government, while the peasants seized the land. The struggle against the Fascists had clearly developed into a social revolution. It was only as a mass struggle for social emancipation that the fight against Fascism could now achieve victory.

This did not, however, suit the plans of the Stalinists, whose object of a "Peace Alliance", they felt, would be endangered by a social revolution in Spain. Concerned above all with "winning over" the bourgeoisie of Britain and France, they set out to confine the struggle in Spain to one of preserving bourgeois democracy. Using the question of arms from Russia as a weapon of blackmail, along with the Socialist and Anarchist leaders they

disarmed the workers, returned the land, which the peasants had seized, back to the landlords, imprisoned and shot revolutionary workers who opposed this policy, and acted as the hangmen of the Spanish revolution. Waged as a purely military struggle for the purpose of re-imposing the old bourgeois democracy, the fight against Franco was doomed to defeat. In 1938 the struggle was over, and the brave people of Spain continue to this day to writhe in the dust under the jack-boot of Franco.

In August 1939, with the conclusion of the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact, Soviet Foreign Policy was reversed. Accordingly, the policies of the Communist Parties too underwent the corresponding about-turn. The war against Hitler, for which the Communist Parties of the "democracies" had been preparing the people for four years, commenced, but without the Soviet Union on the side of the "peace-loving democracies". Consequently, the war became an imperialist war, which should be opposed.

When Hitler turned round and attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the Soviet Union found herself on the same side as Britain and France, the Communist Parties, ever the obedient instruments of Soviet foreign policy, changed their policies again overnight, and supported the war as a "People's War." The class struggle in the "democratic" countries was given up, all struggles (including the great Indian struggle for independence of August 1942) were sabotaged, and the Communist International (founded by Lenin to lead the world revolution) disbanded in 1943 as a gesture of good faith to Churchill and Roosevelt.

After the war, the cooperation between the Government of the Soviet Union and the western imperialist powers continued for some years. Accordingly, the policy of class collaboration of the Communist Parties also continued. These parties rendered every assistance to the imperialists to stem the post-war revolutionary upsurge in Europe and to stabilise the tottering capitalist order. In France they even accepted portfolios in the bourgeois Government which was engaged in conducting military operations against the heroic freedom fighters in Viet Nam, as well as voted war credits.

In 1948 Soviet foreign policy changed from one of cooperation to one of growing conflict with the western imperialist powers. The policies of the C. P.'s again underwent the usual change. For a couple of years an adventurist policy of strikes and sabotage was pursued with the aim of browbeating the imperialists into coming to an agreement with the Soviet Government. Even here, it was not a question of developing the mass movement towards a victorious seizure of power, but a continuation of the policy of pressure politics.

This line has since undergone modification and has settled down into one of concentrating on a broad-based campaign for peace, with the aim of weaning away sections of the bourgeoisie from alliance with American imperialism. The Communist Parties are not concerned with developing the mass movement towards a victorious seizure of power. (In Jugoslavia and China, the notable exceptions, the Communist Parties led the masses to victory only because they departed from the instructions laid down for them by the Kremlin).

In France, the Communist Party has the following of an actual majority of the French workers. Vast general strikes take place periodically. But the political situation remains static. In Italy, 40 per cent of the people are behind the Communist Party, but power is not the aim of that party. About three years ago, Togliatti, the C. P. leader, publicly told the capitalist premier Gasperi that his party was prepared to support the Government if only it would leave the Atlantic Pact!

The Trotskyists consider that this policy of subordination of the movement to the needs of Soviet foreign policy weakens the movement, leads it in many countries to crushing defeats, helps capitalism to stabilise itself, and postpones the day of the final downfall of world capitalism. Therefore they consider that such a policy is also not in the real interests of the Soviet Union itself, whose fate depends ultimately on the fate of world capitalism.

II. Why Do They Mislead?

WE have demonstrated, firstly, that the Communist Parties of the world subordinate the needs of the mass struggle to the foreign policy needs of the Soviet Government, and secondly, that this policy leads to gross betrayals of the mass movement. The principal responsibility for this lies, of course, with the leaders of the Soviet Union who, up to 1943 through the Communist International and subsequently through other means, have provided this treacherous leadership to the Communist Parties of the world.

At this point we would do well to answer a question that arises in the minds of many honest individuals. If the Soviet Union is a country in which the workers have been victorious and which has abolished capitalism, they ask, how does it happen that the leaders of this country are giving a wrong leadership to the workers of the world ?

The confusion gets cleared up only when we realise that many changes have taken place in the Soviet Union since the days when Lenin and Trotsky led the Russian Revolution, that a serious bureaucratic degeneration set in during the intervening period, and that the leadership of the Soviet Union today is completely different in character and aims from the leadership that existed at the time of the revolution in 1917.

The years following the victory of the Russian Revolution were years of untold difficulty and hardship for the Russian masses. These were years of civil war, imperialist intervention, famine and economic boycott by the capitalist world. Above all, there was the failure of the revolution to spread and gain a foothold beyond the frontiers of Russia. In this situation, an ebb in the enthusiasm of the masses was inevitable. And when one takes into account also that Russia was a backward country in which the majority were illiterate peasants, it is not difficult to understand the gradual rise to power of a bureaucratic caste occupying the positions previously held by the masses.

This bureaucratic degeneration permeated the Communist Party, the trade unions and all branches of the state apparatus. It led to the destruction of all democracy and the installation of a totalitarian political regime with many exceedingly hideous features.

We are thus faced with a peculiar two-fold development in post-revolutionary Russia. While on the one hand the abolition of capitalism through the nationalisation of enterprises and planned economy have led to an economic development that is unpa-

ralled in history, on the other hand the rise of a bureaucratic caste to power has led to an appalling degeneration in the realm of politics.

This bureaucracy has long since forgotten that the very state they rule is the accomplishment of the revolutionary efforts of the masses. With little faith in the revolutionary capacity of the masses in their own country and even less in that of the masses in other lands, this bureaucracy is conservative by nature and is only concerned with maintaining the *status quo* which protects their power and privileges. To this end they are ready cynically to sacrifice the interests of the workers throughout the world. This is the reason why the leaders of the Soviet Union provide a leadership to the workers of the world which is in the interests not of the world's workers but only of the current foreign policy of the Soviet Government.

But there is still one more matter that needs clarification. Granting that the backwardness of the country and prolonged isolation in the midst of a hostile capitalist world have led to degeneration and the adoption of narrow nationalist perspectives by the leaders of the Soviet Union, the question still remains, why do the Communist Parties of the world accept the treacherous leadership of the Soviet leaders? Admittedly, in these Communist Parties are to be found numbers of sincere men and women who are guided by the best of motives. Why, then, do these people acquiesce in these policies which subordinate and often sabotage the struggles in their countries in the interests of Soviet foreign policy?

It is not an answer merely to say they receive financial assistance from Moscow. The real and fundamental reason is that **these people are not revolutionists** who have faith in the capacity of the masses to achieve victory by their own efforts. Although this may not apply to the rank and file workers of Communist Parties, especially where such parties are mass parties, it is nevertheless quite true of the conscious Stalinists in all Communist Parties and especially of the leaders.

Just as the Soviet bureaucracy place their faith not in the masses but in the military strength of the Soviet Union and its capacity to manoeuvre between the imperialists, so also their followers abroad, cast in the mould of their masters, pin their hopes of victory not on the revolutionary potentialities of the masses in their own countries but on the might of the Soviet Union (and now also of China).

That is why, to the Stalinist, the subordination of the struggle in his own country and even its conscious sabotage, in the interests of obtaining even the smallest temporary advantage to the Soviet Government in the execution of its foreign policy, is not a betrayal at all but really a furtherance of the movement!

The Stalinist, as distinct from the Trotskyist, sees the mass movement in his own country not as the real instrument which will one day bring about the emancipation of the masses but only as an appendage of that real instrument, which, in his eyes, takes the shape of a Red Army from abroad.

There have been two examples in recent history where objective circumstances have triumphed over subordination to Stalin. The Yugoslav CP, disobeying the instructions of Stalin under the pressure of the masses, went on to seize power and abolish capitalism. A break with the Kremlin followed this "independence". Then the CP of China, after over twenty years of bitter experience of the Stalinist policy of subordination to Chiang Kai Shek's Kuomintang, took the road of all-out struggle against Chiang in spite of Stalin's admonitions -- and won. Stalin did not dare to repeat his Yugoslav policy. In both these cases, the break with Stalinism in practice was not followed by any real break with the non-revolutionary ideas of Stalinism, unfortunately. If either Yugoslavia or China had been an advanced country with a culturally developed proletariat, we dare to predict that the story would have been different.

The important thing, however, is that in both the above cases victory was achieved through a break from the non-revolutionary line of Moscow. They therefore serve to underline the fact that the CP's of the world continue to place their faith not in the masses in their own countries but in "saviours" from abroad. Does one have faith in the masses and their revolutionary capacity to achieve? This, at bottom, is what distinguishes the revolutionist from the Stalinist and all other brands of opportunists.

III. Democracy And Dictatorship

Another difference between the Trotskyists and Stalinists relates to the type of political system they stand for. While the Trotskyists stand for a democratic political system, the Stalinists stand for an autocracy or dictatorship.

We are aware that Stalinists would indignantly deny this accusation. However, such denials cannot be accepted so long as the Stalinists continue uncritically to defend the existing political system in the Soviet Union, which is anti-democratic and totalitarian. In fact they went so far as to refuse a united front with the LSSP because the LSSP would not give up its right to criticise the anti-democratic features of the political system in the Soviet Union. It is difficult to believe that people who are so vehement in their defence of totalitarianism abroad can be honest about their professions of democracy at home.

It is not difficult to prove that there is not even the semblance of democracy in the political system that exists in the Soviet Union. It is sufficient to point out that in the Soviet elections, **only one candidate** is permitted to stand for each constituency! No one is permitted to offer himself for election as a rival to the officially sponsored candidate. In other words, a Soviet election is not a democratic election at all, but a gigantic hoax in which the voters go and vote for a representative who has already been chosen before. It is a bitter thing to recall that the other country in which there existed this farcical system of one candidate for one constituency was—Fascist Germany!

It is no argument to say that the voter need not vote for the official candidate — that he can instead vote against him, that is, in effect, spoil his vote. The basis of a democratic election is the ability to choose between rival policies and rival candidates. And here there is **no choice**. And besides, it is too much to expect that the ordinary man will be prepared to register his opposition to the regime in this manner and risk the consequences!

This brings us to another point, namely that Soviet elections are obviously held in an atmosphere of compulsion. The very high percentage of votes polled (sometimes as high as 99%) is used by the Stalinists as an argument to illustrate the great support existing for the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. That great support exists for this party we would not deny. But however great that support might be, it is too much to expect that, even in a workers' state, ordinary human beings would be so enthusiastic as to poll as high as 99%, especially **for a candidate who they know is going to win** in any case. The conclusion

is inescapable that it is the fear of incurring the displeasure of the authorities that sends such a large percentage of voters to the polls.

The Soviet system of elections described above is a very glaring example of departure from democratic principles and practice. But the real point is that one cannot speak of a democratic political system so long as parties other than the ruling party are banned. The one party system that exists in the Soviet Union is a cardinal tenet of Stalinist theory and practice. Trotskyists hold the view that this is a denial of democracy and that other Soviet parties should be given the right to function freely, to do their propaganda, to contest elections, and to come to power if they are able to convince a majority of the voters of the correctness of their policy.

Trotskyists consider that a political system in which parties other than the ruling party are banned is a system that carries very great dangers with it. Not the least of these dangers is that the ruling party, even though it may have been a model revolutionary party, runs great risks of degeneration if the corrective of public criticism is not present. This public criticism can come in any real way only if there is the freedom for a rival political party to make its attacks and put forward its alternative policies. The example of the Soviet Union provides a living proof of the dangers of the one party system of government.

In an effort to justify the one party system of government, the argument is often trotted out by Stalinists that since the interests of the working class are one, there is need only for a single working class party. The interests of the working class taken as a whole are one. And it may well be that at a given moment there is only one party which reflects those interests. But who is to decide which party that is? We believe that the workers must decide that question. However, under the Stalinist dispensation, that question is already decided for them by the banning of all other parties.

The fact that capitalism is abolished does not mean that everyone will agree on what is the best way to proceed with socialist reconstruction. Differences, indeed very serious differences, are possible on this question. Differences which cannot be resolved within a single party must lead inevitably to the formation of separate parties. To deny this right is to deny the masses the right to choose between alternative policies, that is, to deny them democracy.

It is not out of place to draw attention to two matters which are closely connected with the anti-democratic tradition of Stalinism. Firstly, there is the denial of independence to the states of Eastern Europe. Instead of developing free and equal

relations with these states, the Soviet Government has proceeded to dominate them. The break with Yugoslavia took place precisely on this question. Trotskyists hold the view that it is only on the basis of a respect for each other's national independence that healthy relations can be built up between workers' states.

Secondly, the anti-democratic tradition of Stalinism permeates also the Communist Party organisation. Far from being a democratic organisation within which differing viewpoints can be freely voiced and canvassed for, opposition generally receives short shrift in a Communist Party. Anyone who dares to differ from the line dictated by the current foreign policy of Moscow is promptly purged. The tradition of Trotskyism is quite different. Every opportunity is provided for the expression and propagation within the party of divergent views. The final decision is taken democratically after full discussion by the membership. For instance, the pro-Stalinist faction in the LSSP, before they split, were given every opportunity to propagate their viewpoint in the party. This could happen only in a democratic party.

Trotskyists consider the anti-democratic practices of Stalinism a betrayal of the high ideals of Socialism. They believe that the new society which replaces capitalist society should be superior to capitalism not only economically, but in all other respects as well. When they expose bourgeois democracy as a fake democracy, they do so because their aim is to replace this fake democracy with a real and much fuller democracy. This they call workers' (or socialist) democracy.

IV. Defence Of The Soviet Union

Our last article made it clear that Trotskyists strongly disapprove of the totalitarian political system that exists in the Soviet Union and that they consider that in its place there should be a democratic political system which they call proletarian or socialist democracy. On the other hand, Trotskyists fully support the economic system existing in the Soviet Union, namely, nationalisation of enterprises and planned economy.

In other words, while supporting the economic system in the Soviet Union, they oppose the political system. And, since economics is more basic than politics, they consider the Soviet Union to be a workers' state in spite of its political degeneration. Consequently, they stand for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against all capitalist foes.

This position of support of the Soviet Union while opposing its system of government is confusing to some people. This confusion is created largely by Stalinist critics who declare that those who support the Soviet Union should also support its system of government. But this line of reasoning is entirely false. It identifies the Soviet Union with its Government. And it assumes that a workers' state can have only one form of government, namely, that which exists in the USSR. But this is not so.

A glimpse at the capitalist world will help us to clarify this question. On the foundation of the capitalist state, we see, it is quite possible to have different political systems. For example, we had the political system known as fascism in Germany, and we have the political system known as parliamentary democracy in Britain. Both these states are capitalist states. Similarly, it is not difficult to conceive that, on the foundation of the workers' state, different political systems are possible. The political system existing in the workers' state of the Soviet Union is a bureaucratic dictatorship. Trotskyists hold the view that this should be replaced by the political system known as workers' or socialist democracy.

However, this task of the overthrow of the dictatorship in the Soviet Union is one that has to be accomplished by the workers themselves. It is not a task that can be entrusted to the capitalists or imperialists. However much these people may prate about democracy, their only aim in any struggle against the Soviet Union is to destroy the nationalised and planned economic system and to replace it with capitalism. Consequently the Trotskyists do not make common cause with the capitalists against the Soviet bureaucracy. On the contrary, in order to

preserve the progressive economic system in the Soviet Union, they are prepared to make common cause with the Stalinist bureaucrats themselves against the capitalists and imperialists.

The Trotskyist position of defense of the Soviet Union, while opposing its political regime, is thus quite plain and straightforward. The confusion is a confusion created by the Stalinists, who wish to identify the Soviet Union with its leadership. By branding any attack on this leadership as an attack on the Soviet Union itself, their purpose is to muzzle any criticism of that leadership. This is not, of course, surprising. For this is the only way in which the Stalinist bureaucratic leadership can indeed be defended. On its deeds, no defense is possible!

The Trotskyists, however, refuse to be blackmailed into white-washing a totalitarian political regime or supporting a treacherous leadership. They insist on adhering to their policy of defense of the Soviet Union while opposing its political regime and leadership. By such a policy, the Trotskyists are not betraying the Soviet Union, as the Stalinists declare. Nor are they betraying democracy, as the capitalists try to make out. On the contrary, their way is the only way of defending both.

V. Truth And Untruth

Another difference between Trotskyists and Stalinists relates to the use of untruth as a weapon. While the Trotskyists strive to adhere to the truth even on those occasions when disadvantages (though temporary) appear to result from this, the Stalinists on the other hand do not hesitate to resort to untruth when it serves their narrow party interests. Nay more, they systematically make untruth a weapon in their struggle.

This may seem to be rather a sweeping statement to the average person who has not made a study of the methods of Stalinism. However, it is nothing more or less than the truth, as can easily be demonstrated from numerous examples both national and international.

For our first illustration, let us go to the fountainhead of this unworthy Stalinist tradition of untruth, namely, the Stalinist political regime in the Soviet Union. Here we encounter the perfection of this method of untruth in a most finished form. Everyone is acquainted with the party purges and trials which accompany these purges that have been taking place in the Soviet Union since 1936. The trials along with the fantastic confessions that accompany them constitute a terrible indictment of the methods that the Stalinist rulers employ to get rid of their political opponents.

It is today clear beyond the slightest doubt to any thinking person that these trials are not genuine trials at all but mock trials staged for propaganda purposes, in which the issue is never in doubt, and in which the accused, like marionettes, play their apportioned parts; and that the confessions are not genuine confessions at all, but false confessions obtained from the unfortunate accused under duress. This was, of course, always clear to Trotskyists. They might have been prepared to believe that a Zinoviev or Kamenev had plotted to assassinate Stalin in the mistaken belief that this would have remedied matters (though even this would have been difficult to believe of such veteran Marxists). But no Trotskyist could believe that people like Zinoviev and Kamenev who had spent the major portion of their lives in struggle to overthrow capitalism would, in the few years that they had left, plot with imperialists to re-introduce capitalism in the Soviet Union! But this is what was "confessed" to in the Moscow Trials.

But the fake nature of these "confessions" is today clear not only to Trotskyists but to the world at large. The official admission by the Soviet Government after Stalin's death that the confessions of the 15 doctors were false and had been obtai-

ned by improper and illegal means, has blown sky-high the entire Stalinist edifice of mock trials and false confessions. It is a tacit admission that all the previous "confessions" obtained in the Soviet Union, as well as more recently in the "trials" in the Eastern European countries, were but a hideous concoction of lies and deceit.

This revolting practice of accusing political opponents of being imperialist spies has been faithfully copied by the Communist Parties of the world. In Ceylon itself, dissidents within the Communist Party are expelled, not for their real political differences but on the fantastic charge that they are spies of some imperialist power. Apparently, the purpose is to discredit such dissidents and thus to weaken the force of their political arguments.

Trotskyists too sometimes need to expel people their from party. But instead of indulging in false slanders they state the true political reasons for the expulsion. They believe that those who have justice on their side do not need to fear the fullest and freest clarification of the political issues involved.

It is not only in organisational matters, however, that the Stalinists use the weapon of untruth. They use it also on political questions, as numerous examples demonstrate. For instance, the real reason why the Stalinists changed their opposition to the last imperialist war to one of support was the fact that the Soviet Union in mid-1941 found itself in the same military camp as the Allied imperialists. In this situation they probably quite honestly (though in our opinion quite wrongly) considered it necessary to sacrifice the mass struggle in the Allied imperialist countries for the sake of an indirect military advantage to the Soviet Union. But instead of frankly and honestly telling this to the masses, they practised the deception of telling them that the aims of the imperialist war had changed and that the war as a whole had become a People's War.

Then again in 1943, Stalin dissolved the Third (Communist) International, clearly as a gesture of good faith to his imperialist allies, Churchill and Roosevelt. But the reason given to his followers was the false and flimsy one that world conditions had changed and that Communist Parties had now the necessary experience to act independently of a centralised leadership.

It is not surprising that this cynical attitude to truth of the Soviet leaders is emulated by their followers abroad. That is the real reason why the Stalinist papers in Ceylon frequently show such a scant regard for truth in their news articles.

The Trotskyists, on the other hand, strive to carry on their movement with the weapon of truth. Untruth is a means that is repulsive to them. This does not mean, of course, that there are no occasions when it becomes necessary to deceive the class enemy. The writer of these articles, for instance, would not have been able to elude the imperialist police for five and a half years in wartime if he had disclosed his real name to the authorities! But the Trotskyists do not lie to the masses or deceive them. Following the advice given by Lenin, they tell them the truth, even if the truth may not always be palatable and may lead to temporary discouragement. For, they believe, that in the long run this is the best way of building a strong movement of the masses which will one day be strong enough to take over the reins of government and run it!

Falsehood and deceit — the Trotskyists are quite content to leave these to the capitalists. They need them! The system which the capitalists defend is one in which a small minority exploits and oppresses the large majority, and can only be preserved by **hiding the truth**. On the other hand, for the workers, who are striving to overthrow this system, **truth is the greatest weapon** in their armoury. Let those who lay claims to lead them do nothing to blunt this weapon!

VI. The Crisis Of Stalinism

The Soviet Union, with its nationalised and planned economy, is a tremendous conquest for the world workers' movement. Its very existence constitutes a weakening of world imperialism and thus a great asset to the workers' movement for socialism. On the other hand, however, its degenerate political regime repels many people and drives them away from the movement for socialism. "Is this the pattern of the future Socialism?" they ask in despair. All that the Stalinists can do, of course, is to whitewash the regime as best as they can, generally by dismissing all accusations as false capitalist propaganda. Needless to say, the performance is not very convincing.

The Trotskyists, on the other hand, frankly admit the degeneracy of the political regime, but point out that this is a temporary phenomenon due to a set of peculiar historical circumstances. They declare their confidence that the Soviet workers will one day set matters right by overthrowing their bureaucratic rulers, taking over the leadership of the state and introducing socialist democracy.

For many long years this vision of a political revolution against the bureaucracy has been largely in the nature of a prophecy, with little or no tangible evidence in real life to confirm it. Consequently the capitalists on the one hand were able gleefully to maintain their gloomy prediction that the socialist revolution would mean the destruction of all civil and political liberties. On the other hand, the Stalinists were able to point to the absence of any signs of working class protests in the Soviet Union as proof of the absence of anything to protest about.

Today, however, the situation has been transformed. For, mighty events have taken place to demonstrate that the Trotskyist prophesy of a political revolution is no idle dream but valid prognosis firmly embedded in reality. The changes in the Soviet Union following Stalin's sudden death provided the first striking confirmation of the correctness of the Trotskyist position.

Immediately after Stalin's death, the new rulers proceeded with almost indecent haste to announce a series of concessions and promises to the Soviet masses. These included a lowering of prices, an amnesty (not including political prisoners), the release of the doctors, a promise of reform of the Penal Code, and a discouragement of the cult of the 'leader'. It is clear that the new leaders, conscious of the depth of public resentment against

the oppressive regime, and fearful of what action the masses might resort to in the situation created by Stalin's death, were desirous of creating the feeling among the masses that a new and more liberal post-Stalin era had dawned. In other words, these concessions and promises are an indication of the existence of a pressure from the Soviet masses of unsuspected force.

How did this situation arise? There is no doubt that Stalin's death played an important part. But there is also no doubt that the basis for these developments had been laid in advance. The Soviet Union is no longer a backward country. Industrial development has produced a worker of a much higher cultural level than in the past. This worker, conscious and confident of his own capabilities, is no longer prepared to make way for the bureaucrat in the same way as in the past.

The fact that the Soviet Union is no longer an isolated workers' state, surrounded on all sides by a hostile capitalist world, has also made a difference. In the past, the bureaucratic rulers had been able to point to the capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union and the ever present dangers on its very frontiers as justification for the tightening and strengthening of the repressive state machine. Today, with the bulwark represented by the Eastern European countries, the spread of the revolution to China, and the rise of the mass upsurge in the capitalist world, this argument is no longer available to the bureaucracy. The awakening Soviet worker is beginning to see the repressive political regime as the protector, not of the workers' state against the imperialists, but of the bureaucracy against the workers!

Will the ruling bureaucracy, under the growing pressure of the workers, be compelled to retreat step by step and grant socialist democracy without a major struggle? Are the post-Stalin concessions an indication of such a development? The Trotskyists think not. In the first place, it is noteworthy that the amnesty did not include **political** prisoners and that the promise of reform of the repressive Penal Code was never carried out. In other words, the concessions were an effort, not to change the regime, but to maintain it. Further, the historic events in Eastern Germany provide us with a glimpse of the form that the destruction of the bureaucratic dictatorship is likely to take in the Soviet *bloc* of countries in Europe.

On June 17th, 1953, the general strike of one and a half million industrial workers in Eastern Germany against the Stalinist Government was so powerful that even the armed East German police could not cope with it. The situation was eventually brought under control only by calling out the huge Soviet occupation army in East Germany. The demands and slogans put forward during this great working class upsurge showed clearly that while the movement was directed against the bure-

bureaucratic East German Government, it was also opposed to the capitalist Government of Western Germany. The first open revolt against the bureaucratic dictatorship, the upsurge of the East German workers heralds the maturing political revolution in the Soviet Union and the Soviet dominated, bureaucratically ruled states of Eastern Europe.

In an earlier article we referred to the crisis of Stalinism in connection with Jugoslavia and China. We pointed out that in these countries the revolution went forward only by breaking in practice with the political programme of Stalinism. And in the case of Jugoslavia the process led to an open break with the Kremlin. The East German events and the changes in post-Stalin Russia demonstrate that the crisis of Stalinism has reached the Soviet *bloc* of countries, including the Soviet Union itself. Every advance of the workers in capitalist countries will further deepen this crisis and bring nearer the day of the final overthrow of the bureaucratic dictatorship.

The Trotskyist position stands vindicated. The Stalinists stand exposed as defenders of bureaucratic tyranny **against** the workers. And the capitalists who predict that the victory of the socialist revolution in the capitalist world will lead to a new tyranny are being proved to be false prophets. Not only will this not happen, but that victory will coincide with the victory of the workers in the Soviet *bloc* of countries against their bureaucratic despots.

*Cover: Photograph Taken At The May Day Rally, Galle Face
Green, Colombo, in 1949.*

A LANKA SAMASAMAJA PUBLICATION

MARCH 1954.

49, Drieberg's Avenue,
Colombo 10
Ceylon.

"Star" Press No. 49, Drieberg's Avenue, Maradana.