

Liars and Their Lies

This is an edited version of a Revolutionary Workers Party pamphlet written by the veteran Sri Lankan Trotskyist Edmund Samarakkody (1912-92). Subtitled 'A Reply to the Revolutionary Communist League', it first appeared in 1987. Although we do not necessarily agree with all the positions advanced, *Liars and Their Lies* effectively answers the Healyite school of slander and falsification and its Sri Lankan representative, the RCL.

Since the series of splits in the International Committee in 1985-86, the RCL has operated under the new management of David North's Workers League. This has not, however, dulled its appetite for virulent and dishonest attacks on its political rivals (see article in this issue of Workers News).

Although the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency had some differences with comrade Samarakkody, we respected his long and principled struggle. He represented the best section of the old LSSP, and strove to draw the lessons of its debacle. In contrast, the RCL's history has been characterised by strident ultra-leftism interspersed with bouts of opportunism, and a series of U-turns on the Tamil national question. As such, it remains an obstacle to the construction of a genuine revolutionary party.

SINCE THE expulsion of Gerry Healy from the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in October 1985, the 'International Committee' (IC) has also split. While the WRP (Slaughter) refused to recognise the IC, two other IC groups – the Greek and the Spanish sections – went along with Gerry Healy.

The Revolutionary Communist League (RCL) of Sri Lanka, the David North-led Workers League of the United States and two other groups are continuing as the IC.

In polemicising with the Slaughtered WRP in connection with a 'Trotskyist conference' the latter has called, the RCL has launched an attack on the WRP for having relations with the Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP) of Sri Lanka and comrade Edmund Samarakkody, who, according to RCL leader Keerthi Balasuriya¹, is an opportunist.

Incidentally, the WRP's call for an open world conference of organisations claiming to be Trotskyist was initiated in Italy in December 1986 at a meeting of several groups, among which were the WRP (Slaughter), GOR (Italy), WRP (Sri Lanka) and GOCQI (Varga).

It was in an 'open letter' from the RCL to the WRP dated February 10, 1987, and published in the magazine *Fourth International* (June 1987), that the author, Keerthi Balasuriya, devoted several of his concluding paragraphs to launching an attack on comrade Edmund Samarakkody and the RWP.

However, soon after, due to important differences with the methodology and centrist aims of the WRP and its allies, the GOR and the RWP have been intervening among honest revolutionaries who have shown interest in a conference, to block the manoeuvres of the organising committee which wants to use this conference for the fraudulent proclamation of another 'reorganised' Fourth International.

We think it is necessary, for those genuinely interested in rebuilding the Fourth International, that the truth or untruth of Balasuriya's attack on comrade Edmund Samarakkody should be fully brought out. We shall deal with this attack point by point. We shall in this reply also bring into the light of day the record of the RCL and its antecedents in regard to the 'struggle' for Trotskyism in Sri Lanka.

The RCL: sectarianism and opportunism

On the issue of the defence campaign for the release of Viran Peiris and Brutan Perera of the RCL, Balasuriya writes:

'...we came to know that you have approached Edmund Samarakkody of the so-called Revolutionary Workers Party to "strengthen" our defence campaign.

We, in fact, received a letter from him, a few days before comrade Brutan Perera was released on bail, which shamelessly admitted that he knew nothing about the arrests of our comrades until he got the information from you...'

It is simply a shameless and crude fabrication of Balasuriya's when he says that comrade Edmund in his letter to the RCL 'admitted that he knew nothing about the arrests of our comrades' until he got this information from the WRP. Here is the true copy of the whole of the relevant letter from comrade Edmund to the RCL:

Dear Comrades,

We received a letter from the Workers Revolutionary Party, England, informing us of an international campaign for the release of Viran Peiris and Brutan Perera, both members of your league, and for the dropping of all charges against all your members against whom charges are still pending. We have informed them that we are in full support of such a campaign. We are, however, not certain whether these two members of the RCL are still being held or whether they are released on bail.

Please let us know whether these two members are still on remand. We are ready to support your efforts for the release of your members in the event they remain on remand. In regard to the cases still pending against the others, we are willing to do whatever possible for fighting the cases against them. Please let us know as early as possible these particulars and also in what form you would like us to support your efforts on their behalf.

Yours fraternally
Edmund Samarakkody for
Political Committee, RWP

Will Balasuriya show where in this letter comrade Edmund 'admitted that he knew nothing about the arrests' of Brutan Perera and others from the RCL until he got the information from the WRP? We do not think it is necessary to pursue further this malicious slander and fabrication.

It is, however, relevant to state that it is a fact that Balasuriya and the RCL had informed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), the Communist Party (CP) and other larger organisations about the arrest of their members, but had deliberately left out the smaller left organisations. And it is only too well known among those who have followed the politics of the Healyite 'International Committee' outfit, which exploded in October 1985 with the expulsion of Gerry Healy, that it has shown to advantage that sectarianism and opportunism are often two sides of the same coin. We shall come back to this question later in this document.

And on this same question of the defence of political prisoners, the RCL displayed its opposition to united action when it failed even to register its presence in the meetings and activities of the Committee for the Release of

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Political Prisoners (CROP), which had the backing and support of a large number of left organisations and trade unions.

CROP carried out an agitational campaign for the release of political prisoners, both Tamil and Sinhalese, who were languishing in jail for several years under Jayawardene's capitalist regime. While the RWP, like many other left organisations, was a member of CROP and participated in its agitational campaigns, the RCL was conspicuous by its absence.

Continuing on the same theme of the RWP and the question of the defence campaign of the two members of the RCL, Balasuriya writes:

'...In our opinion, it is futile to blame Samarakkody for this state of affairs. In his Revolutionary Workers Party, all the revolutionaries, all the workers and the party itself are embodied in the one and only person of Edmund Samarakkody.'

The truth about the RWP is that it is a small organisation seeking to build itself as a revolutionary Trotskyist party. It is undoubtedly our urgent need to build ourselves into a larger group, with the perspective of becoming a mass party. But we have well understood that this is a difficult task in the context of, among other matters, the collapse of the left brought about by the betrayal of the revolutionary movement, largely through the class-collaborationist popular front politics of the LSSP and CP reformists, but also by disorientation through the politics of centrists who put forward a caricature of Trotskyism, among whom Healyites and ex-Healyites like the RCL have played a prominent role.

Concretely, in regard to the recruitment of new members to our group, we follow the Leninist-Trotskyist organisational principle that new members must, above all, have an understanding of the revolutionary politics of our group, in addition to participating in the activities of the party and the class struggle. The RWP is totally opposed to short cuts to enlarging our membership. We categorically reject the un-Marxist, petty-bourgeois and bourgeois methods of recruitment pursued to date by Balasuriya and the RCL. [...] On this non-Marxist basis of recruitment of new members, which has continued for several years, the RCL could well be able to show a large membership. However, whatever organisation Balasuriya has built on this non-Marxist organisational principle can be nothing but a caricature of a Leninist-Trotskyist organisation. [...]

The left opposition in the LSSP

Referring to the betrayal by the LSSP leaders when they decided to go into a popular front with the bourgeois SLFP, Balasuriya writes:

'Having subscribed to all the theories of the Pabloites, particularly to their assumption that in the backward countries the working class could come to power even with "blunt instruments" – ie, without Trotskyist parties – Samarakkody was politically responsible for the growth of opportunism in the LSSP...'

We will leave, for the moment, how the RCL, after it became a unit of the so-called IC led by Gerry Healy in 1968, fought Pabloite revisionism and 'built' the Fourth International; we will leave, for the moment, how the RCL, together with its mentors, the Workers League of the United States led by David North, is building the 'world party of revolution' after the expulsion of Healy and the explosion of the IC set-up.

It is, of course, a fact that all leading members of the LSSP must bear re-

sponsibility for the debacle of 1964, when the majority of the leadership decided to enter a popular front with the SLFP. It is a fact that the leading members of the LSSP(R), including comrade Edmund, have unambiguously accepted their responsibility, together with the rest of the leaders of the LSSP, for the betrayal and collapse of the LSSP in June 1964. But it is also a fact that there was a minority (14 members of the central committee) opposed to the popular front, and that the opposition led by this minority was able to muster nearly one-third of the 1964 Special Conference membership to vote against the popular front, and that over 125 members of the opposition split over this issue and regrouped as the LSSP(R). The June 1964 opposition to the popular front did not fall from the skies. [...]

The struggle against the opportunism of the LSSP in relation to the Bandaranaike-MEP government first manifested itself one year after the setting up of this government, within the CC of the LSSP in 1957. The small left opposition in the then CC consisted of comrades Dharmasena, Robert Gunawardene, Chandra Gunasekera and Edmund Samarakkody. This group opposed the political line of 'responsive co-operation' to the Bandaranaike government, and, undertaking a self-criticism, stated that jointly the full leadership of the party in 1956 failed to define the class character of the Bandaranaike government; that characterising the government as Bonapartist, leaving out the reality that it was bourgeois Bonapartism, was a serious mistake, to say the least; that the policy of 'responsive co-operation' towards the Bandaranaike government was wrong, and that the only correct policy was one of irreconcilable opposition to this capitalist government.



Edmund Samarakkody

The amendment put forward by the small left opposition group of four in the CC to the political resolution of the CC majority was a very important step in the struggle against the opportunism which reared itself in the LSSP with the formation of the first Bandaranaike government.

It was the continuity of the left opposition of 1957, albeit with insufficient organisation, which manifested itself in the 14-strong CC opposition – which included among others Meryl Fernando, Edmund Samarakkody, Bala Tampoe and D.S. Mallawarachchi – which in 1963 categorically opposed the opportunist and coalitionist United Left Front (the front of the LSSP, the CP Stalinists and the Sinhala-chauvinist MEP led by Philip Gunawardena) and the perspective of a so-called Left Front government in parliament.

It was the same left opposition of 14 CC members which led the struggle against the call for a popular front government with the SLFP by N.M. Perera in 1964. The popular

frontists won the Special Conference, but the left opposition [...] walked out of the conference proclaiming that the LSSP leadership had betrayed the party, and that thereafter the red revolutionary banner and programme belonged to the left opposition. That same night, the breakaway left opposition organised the LSSP(R).

The struggle of the left opposition against opportunism and popular frontism from 1957 to 1964 and the regroupment of revolutionaries in the LSSP(R) was a watershed in the struggle for Trotskyism in Sri Lanka, and helped genuine Trotskyists in Sri Lanka and other countries in the task of rebuilding the Fourth International. This struggle [...] is a part of our heritage which we do not, and cannot, denounce. [...] This is precisely how Lenin treated the early revolutionary movement led by the Narodniks. But for Balasuriya what is most important is to strike out the part played by comrade Edmund Samarakkody and many others in the struggle for Trotskyism in Sri Lanka. For Balasuriya, Trotskyism in Sri Lanka began in 1968 with the formation of the RCL!

Before Balasuriya, we had the Vasudevas and Wickremabahu saying that Trotskyism in Sri Lanka began when they were expelled from the LSSP and launched the NSSP in 1975. Balasuriya and his ilk thus reject Lenin; they throw the baby out with the bathwater. That is the measure of their understanding of drawing up an honest balance sheet of the LSSP experience.

The International Committee and the LSSP(R)

In relation to the period 1964-68, Balasuriya says:

'...he [Samarakkody] together with Bala Tampoe defended the centrist line of the United Secretariat against all opposition and thus completely shattered the organisation which opposed the betrayal of 1964, the LSSP(R).'

Yes, the task of the leadership of the LSSP(R) was to develop the struggle against centrism, within both the LSSP(R) and the United Secretariat, under the banner of 'Root out Pabloism and return to Trotskyism'. But the roadblock to carrying forward this struggle has to be understood. This was rooted in the anti-Bolshevik tendencies within the LSSP(R). There were from the outset four tendencies in the LSSP(R): (i) the revolutionary tendency, led by among others Meryl Fernando, Mallawarachchi and Edmund Samarakkody; (ii) the Karalasingham-led popular frontist tendency, whose aim was to take the party back into the reformist LSSP; (iii) the syndicalist tendency, led by Bala Tampoe; (iv) the Healy tendency, whose leading members were Wilfred Perera, R.S. Baghavan, Prins Rajasooriya and Sydney Wanasinghe, and whose only aim was to disrupt the LSSP(R), after Healy had failed to take the LSSP(R) into the fold of his SLL/IC set-up.⁵

The Healy tendency – the progenitor of the RCL – was a secret group in the LSSP. Apart from functioning as distributors of Healy's literature within the LSSP, this group did not associate itself with any intervention to break the centrist policies of the LSSP and the United Secretariat.

The conduct of the Wilfred Perera/Baghavan-led Healy group in the LSSP(R) was from the outset unprincipled and disruptive, and for this purpose it formed unprincipled blocs with other right-wing opposition groups and elements.

It is a fact that a section of the Healy group actively participated in the organisation of Karalasingham's popular front faction, the *Sakthi* group, which in its factional paper publicly called for support for a SLFP-LSSP popular front government. Later, when Tampoe's syndicalist group came into opposition to the Meryl Fernando-Edmund

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Samarakkody-Mallawarachchi group, Healy's group blocked with Tampoe. In the 1968 LSSP(R) conference, it supported the right-syndicalist line that Tampoe put forward through the counter-resolution of his group. [...] The breakaway of Healy's group from the Tampoe-led LSSP(R) only a few days after it had assisted Tampoe in defeating the Edmund-Meryl-Mallawarachchi group was ample proof of the unprincipled policies Healy's group pursued in the LSSP(R).

Balasuriya charges comrade Edmund and Meryl Fernando with blocking with the UNP to vote against the popular front government in December 1964 on the occasion of the Throne Speech. The truth [...] is that they did not bloc with the UNP. It was the decision of the LSSP(R) CC that they should vote against the Throne Speech of the popular front government. It is true that the LSSP(R) members voted for the resolution of a rightist MP, that the UNP members also voted for the same resolution, and that this led to the defeat of the popular front government. The RWP, when it regrouped after the 1968 split in the LSSP(R), accepted that it had been a tactical mistake for our members to have voted for the resolution of the rightist independent MP; it was not wrong to have voted against the government, which was in line with the terms of the LSSP(R) CC decision, but it was the tactic of voting for the resolution of a known rightist which had been wrong.

However, what Balasuriya cannot explain is the failure of the Healy group, while it was still in the LSSP(R), to register its opposition to this vote in parliament. The Healy group remained in the LSSP(R) for four years after this vote, but had no word of criticism in this regard.

But what were the 'revolutionary politics' of the RCL after it organised itself independently in 1968 and became a unit of Healy's IC? It is a fact that Balasuriya's RCL publicly called for, and supported, the SLFP-CP popular frontists when they were campaigning during the 1970 elections for a popular front government. And, what is more, this happened when the RCL had the great Gerry Healy and his IC to guide Balasuriya and his league! Some time later, the RCL admitted that it had made a mistake. And what a mistake!

The Tamil national question

The RCL not only refused to recognise the rights of Tamils to a separate state, but even referred to this demand in denunciatory terms as 'ridiculous' and 'madness'. Furthermore, the RCL trotted out the argument of the Sinhala chauvinists that a separate Tamil state would open the door to the imperialists – that a separate Tamil state would become an imperialist colony. It also opposed this demand of the Tamils as utopian. Thus, the RCL rejected Leninism and capitulated to petty-bourgeois Sinhala chauvinism. In our 1977 document, 'The Tamil Minority Question and the Revolutionary Workers Party', we exposed this rejection of Leninism on the national question by the RCL.

However, in regard to their anti-Leninist line on the demand of the Tamils for the right of self-determination – ie, the right to a separate state – Balasuriya blames Gerry Healy and the WRP leadership. This is what he writes in the same 'open letter':

'Thanks to this callous attitude of Healy, Banda and Slaughter towards the programme of Trotskyism, the RCL throughout the period 1972-79 – the years in which it returned to its old position – was working without the most important programmatic weapon in the struggle against the dominant bourgeois ideology!!!'

Can Balasuriya escape responsibility for the RCL following a non-Leninist policy for a period of seven years (1972-79) on what was and still remains the most burning issue in Sri Lanka – the Tamil national question? We do not think he can be exonerated by his trick of throwing the blame onto Healy and the other leaders of the WRP's IC set-up, especially since he claims to be a

Trotskyist leader. Such a leader must have an independent understanding of Leninism [...] and will not capitulate to misleaders masquerading as Trotskyists.

However, when the struggle for Tamil liberation made considerable progress and became widely known throughout the world, Balasuriya and his RCL opportunistically changed line, and decided to support the demand for a separate Tamil state.

Balasuriya himself supports our explanation for this change of line. However, according to Balasuriya, it is the Healys and the Bandas, and not the RCL, who opportunistically made this change. We shall deal later with this alibi. For the moment, we shall let Balasuriya speak:

'In 1979, when the Tamil national liberation struggle achieved international prominence and made its political impact in London, Healy and Banda, without even bothering to analyse their politically false policy towards the Tamil struggle, suddenly began a flirtation.'

But the real truth is that Balasuriya, the RCL, and their mentors, Healy and Banda, jointly performed this opportunist somersault, and called for support for the demand for Tamil Eelam only when the Tamil struggle gained world-wide recognition.

But this change of line on the Tamil issue did not mean [...] the adoption of the correct Leninist line on the national question. This is what Balasuriya writes in the same document:

'But these orthodox sounding phrases were only a cover for Healy and Banda's total rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class, particularly relating to the unfinished tasks of the democratic revolution. Thus, in real life, the WRP leadership was now turning to substitute the Tamil national liberation struggle for the proletarian revolution and the successful building of a Trotskyist party in Sri Lanka and India.'

But this is precisely the policy which Balasuriya was following in Sri Lanka after the armed struggle for Tamil Eelam began in an organised way (December 1983-January 1984). [...] Balasuriya writes in the same document:

'What is raised by the struggle is the abolition of the bourgeois state, which deteriorates to be a uniraacial state and to create conditions for national equality.'

But this is simply nonsense. All the Tamil militant groups in the armed struggle were fighting for a separate Tamil state. While some of them made reference to socialism, none of these groups fought for 'the abolition of the bourgeois state'. [...] What is relevant in this regard is that national liberation movements are bourgeois movements led by the bourgeoisie or petty-bourgeoisie. And that is why it became necessary for the leaders of the Marxist movement to deal specifically with these movements, and to define and elaborate proletarian class policy. And it is now settled policy that revolutionary Marxists are categorically opposed to national oppression, and support these bourgeois national liberation struggles despite the fact that these movements are led by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois elements.

Balasuriya and the RCL are only displaying ignorance if they do not understand that revolutionary Marxists support national liberation movements irrespective of the class character of the leaderships of these struggles. Also, they do not seem to be aware or to accept that revolutionary Marxists give only military support [...] and not political support to such liberation struggles because they cannot agree with the politics of these leaderships.

But having somersaulted on the Tamil national question to support the demand for a separate Tamil state, Balasuriya and the RCL proceeded to give political support to the petty-bourgeois leaderships of the Tamil liberation struggle – that is, they simply tailed behind the various militant groups.

In order to justify its political support for the Tamil guerrilla groups, the RCL not only falsely stated that these groups aimed to abolish the bourgeois state, but also that the struggle for Tamil

Eelam was 'to create conditions for national equality'. This is also nonsense. It is because the Tamils could not get equality with the Sinhala people within a unitary state that they took the decision to struggle for a separate Tamil state.

However, giving political support to Tamil guerrilla struggles came easily to the RCL. From the mid-1960s, the Healy-led SLL/WRP/IC, having become incapable of understanding and fighting Pabloism, took the same road as Pabloite revisionism; but they went much faster along this road than the Pabloites of the United Secretariat.

Beginning with the 1970s, Healy developed his absurd 'theory' to justify retracing [the steps of] Pabloite revisionism: that with the break-down of the post-war international financial arrangements (the Bretton Woods system) the period of class compromise internationally had ended, opening up a period of irreversible revolutionary upsurge; that building Trotskyist parties with small forces had proved too slow and difficult; that in this 'new reality' even non-working class forces could represent the revolutionary camp.

Hence the turn of the Healy leadership to the petty-bourgeoisie and the middle class, and the beginning of Healy-IC relations with the Arab bourgeoisie (Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Gaddafi's Libya). It is thus that the WRP/IC leadership abandoned the theory of permanent revolution. [...]

Thus, if the Healys and Bandas of the WRP/IC were guilty of substituting the Tamil liberation struggle led by petty-bourgeois guerrillas for the socialist revolution in Sri Lanka, it was part of a joint policy of abandoning the leadership role of the working class and the theory of permanent revolution for alliances with the Arab bourgeois regimes, which became for these 'Trotskyists' the instruments for carrying out the socialist revolution!

India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

We shall now see how Balasuriya gave leadership to the RCL after he separated from his mis-leaders Healy, Slaughter and Banda.

In early June 1987, the Indian government intervened during Jayawardene's military offensive against the Tamil militants by air-dropping food rations to Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka without the permission of the Jayawardene government, and by violating Sri Lankan airspace. This particular action by Gandhi helped temporarily to stop Jayawardene's military operation.

As expected, Sinhala chauvinists within and outside the government, bourgeois political parties, as well as some left parties and reactionary Sinhala chauvinist Bhikkhus, took the opportunity to rouse anti-Indian sentiment on this issue. Those claiming to be revolutionary Marxists cannot oppose the intervention of the Indian bourgeoisie when it acts in the interests of Tamil militants engaged in their liberation struggle. However, fake Marxists, like the leaders of the LSSP and CP capitulated to Sinhala chauvinism. They rushed to register their protest at, or disapproval of, the Indian action. And in this context, Balasuriya and the leaders of the RCL manifested their capitulation to Sinhala chauvinism when they denounced the Indian air-dropping of food rations as a reactionary intervention on the part of India, and went so far as to characterise India as an imperialist country. One of the slogans in their paper *Kamkaru Mawatha* (June 5, 1987) was 'Do not allow imperialist troops here'. Anti-Indian chauvinism could not have had an uglier manifestation [...]

Balasuriya made a similar blunder when the Indian government in 1971 sent the Indian army to East Pakistan at the request of Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League leaders of the East Pakistan (Bangladesh) liberation struggle. It was the right of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders of this national liberation struggle to get military assistance from India to defeat the forces of the dictatorial Pakistani re-

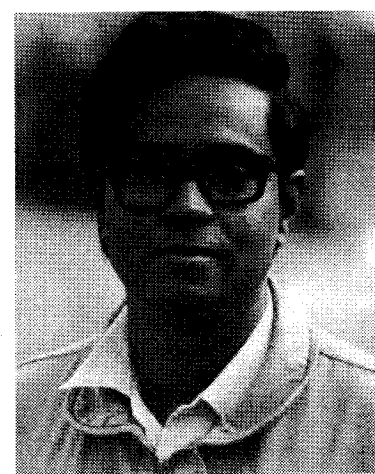
gime of Yahya Khan. Balasuriya was opposed to the entry of the Indian armed forces on the side of the liberation forces, on the grounds that the motivation of the Indian regime was to subjugate the East Pakistan mass movement in the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie and imperialism, and to defeat and disarm the left-wing petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces of the Mukthi Bahini.

It is Balasuriya's boast that he fought the wrong policies of Healy and Banda, and that the entry of the Indian army into East Pakistan was one such issue. But let us see the Healy-Banda line on this issue. In the statement of the IC we find the following paragraph:

'The ICFI supports completely the right of the East Bengali people to solicit the support of capitalist and workers' states in their struggle to eliminate Pakistani oppression.'

Whatever false positions the Healy-Banda clique took in the past, they stumbled on the correct Marxist position in this case as against Balasuriya, who failed to understand that the motivation of Indira Gandhi in sending the Indian army into East Pakistan was not the issue. The issue was whether or not the entry of the Indian army helped the East Pakistan liberation forces to defeat the forces of the military dictator Yahya Khan and win national liberation.

That is precisely what happened, and



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why the RWP was not opposed to the entry of the Indian army into East Pakistan. The RWP warned the forces of the left-wing Mukthi Bahini guerrillas to resist being disarmed by the Indian army, and to do everything in their power to remain in the liberation struggle, and to prevent the Indian forces from taking the leadership. It was, however, the crime of the Mujibur Rahman-led Awami leaders that they gave over the leadership of the struggle to the Indian forces. [...]

The struggle for democratic rights

In late May 1987, Jayawardene suddenly announced his decision to hold local government elections to municipal, urban and village councils, and also gazetted the holding of parliamentary elections to the 16 seats in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, which had become vacant as a result of the sacking of the Tamil members of parliament by his infamous sixth amendment to the constitution. This was simply a trick by Jayawardene to give his dictatorial-fascist regime the coloration of a parliamentary democracy.

Correctly, the SLFP, the CP, the MEP, the SLMP and the NSSP decided to boycott Jayawardene's fraudulent elections. However, they linked their decision to the demand for the dissolution of parliament and the holding of a general election.

Jayawardene's fraudulent imposition of his notoriously undemocratic constitution, by which he set up a presidential dictatorship; his fraudulent presidential election; his equally fraudulent referendum, by which he extended the life of parliament; his numerous dictatorial and reactionary acts through parliament – all this robbery of the democratic rights of the people was the context in which the decision to hold local elections was announced.

For those claiming to be revolutionary Marxists, the only correct course of

action was the boycott of this Jayawardene election fraud, and to do everything possible to mobilise the masses against the fascistic Jayawardene government. [...]

However, it was not altogether a surprise that the LSSP opposed this boycott and decided to field candidates in the elections. The LSSP has for a long time now been in an unwritten and unholy alliance with Jayawardene's hated UNP government. But the LSSP was not alone among the left parties in opposing the boycott. [...] The fake Trotskyists of the RCL have called for opposition to the boycott and for participation in these elections, on the grounds that the SLFP and the other bourgeois or rightist petty-bourgeois parties are themselves anti-democratic, especially in relation to the Tamil people (they call for the continuation of repression against the people in the Northern and Eastern Provinces), and that this bourgeois opposition and its allied petty-bourgeois groups has no solution to the crisis of the capitalist order other than bourgeois dictatorship.

[...] Concretely, in Sri Lanka today, when over the last decade Jayawardene's fascistic regime has usurped a wide range of democratic rights and liberties, it is to be expected that the bourgeois SLFP and right-wing petty-bourgeois parties such as the MEP will not only participate in agitational campaigns against the government on these democratic issues, but will seek to become leaders in such campaigns.

Whether agitational campaigns calling for the boycott of fake elections or demanding a general election will lead to mass struggle is another question. But it is clearly the task of genuine revolutionaries not only to support such agitation, but to do everything possible to develop mass struggle on these issues. And without mass struggle no proletarian revolution is possible. [...]

Healyism without Healy

[...] The RWP, as an organisation which is engaged in the task of building a revolutionary Trotskyist party, will certainly examine its past, and is ready to learn from its own experiences. That indeed is the road forward for all genuine Trotskyists.

However, the present policies of the RCL are a continuation of the policies of the Healy/Banda-led SLL/WRP/IC outfit, which, step by step, went down the ladder of political degeneration in a way hitherto unprecedented in any organisation claiming to be Trotskyist, and which led to an explosion and splintering into numerous degenerated parts. [...] If Keerthi Balasuriya and the RCL still seek to lend credibility to their claim to be Trotskyists, they must first begin by drawing up an honest balance sheet of their joint experiences with Gerry Healy, and accept responsibility with Healy for their sordid past in the name of building the Fourth International. It is only on such a basis that a regeneration is possible for the RCL and its mentor, the North-led Workers League of the United States. But indulging in lies and slander against the RWP will never lead to regeneration. The truth is that the RCL broke with Healy, but not with Healyism.

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NOTES

1. Three in fact – BSA (Germany), SLL (Australia) and ICP (Britain).
2. Keerthi Balasuriya (1948-87), a leading member of the RCL from its founding conference in 1968 until his death.
3. A reference to the ill-fated 'Open Conference' project of the WRP's Preparatory Committee, which never took place.
4. [...] indicates where cuts have been made in the text of the original RWP pamphlet.
5. This version of the factional line-up within the LSSP(R) was strongly disputed by Prins Rajasooriya. See interview in *Workers News* No.27, Oct-Nov 1990.
6. *Fourth International*, Vol.7, No.3, Spring 1972.