

50 Years of the Farce of Universal Franchise in Sri Lanka

—Ceylon Communist Party

The UNP government and its stooges are this year celebrating the 50th anniversary of the grant of Universal Franchise by British imperialism to the people of this country. Learned pundits and constitutional lawyers have been hired to preach to us the alleged benefits which our British enslavers are supposed to have granted to us through this measure. The opportunity is being used by cunning and reactionary politicians to administer a heavy dose of bourgeois parliamentary democracy on our people, who have already had a surfeit of it.

That is why that, even if it means swimming against the current, we, as Marxists-Leninists, must scientifically approach this problem and tell the people the naked truth—however unpleasant it must be for our ruling classes. In the first place, we must examine the conditions under which Universal Franchise was granted to our people. It was the Donoughmore Commission that recommended this allegedly far-reaching measure, whose consequences nobody guessed at that time. But one fact is admitted by all, and that is, that, with the exception of Mr. A.E. Goonesinghe, no other politician or political party in this country asked for Universal Franchise. It was given unasked. It was granted to us in the year 1931, to both men and women over 21 years of age, when even the women of France, a developed country of Europe, did not have a right to vote. The French women only got that right in 1945, while their Swiss counterparts got it only in 1971. Apparently, we were judged to be more competent and more qualified than the French and the Swiss.

Let us ask ourselves a simple question. Why did the British imperialists, who had conquered our country, and were exploiting it in their interests, give us Universal Franchise? Was it out of love for us? To ask that question is to answer it. The obvious answer is that they had an ulterior motive. They believed that through the exercise of Adult Franchise, they could divide the people of this country according to race, religion, caste and all other trivial sectarian issues and thus prevent and sabotage the growing unity of the anti-imperialist forces, so that the imperialist masters could continue to ride on the backs of all classes of our people. And that was precisely what happened.

It is no accident that the emergence of communal politics dates back to the Donoughmore era. During the martial law days of 1915, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had risked the dangers of torpedo-infested seas to go to London to plead the cause of his Sinhalese brethren who were imprisoned during the riots. Subsequently, in the elections to the educated Ceylonese seat in the Legislative Council, Ramanathan successfully defeated Sir Marcus Fernando and H.W.

Jayawardene.

But, as the British gave more reforms, the Sinhalese and Tamil bourgeois leaders quarrelled about how to share this power. Before the Donoughmore Council came into force, the Ponnambalam brothers had had differences of opinion with the Sinhalese leaders about a separate seat for the Tamils in the Western Province. As a result they both resigned from the Ceylon National Congress, which they had helped to form, and whose first President was Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. It cannot also be denied that it is Adult Franchise, and the necessity to cater to it, that still compels politicians to stir up communal feeling among their following, with an eye to the next elections. It is this that is largely preventing a statesman-like solution to the communal problem in our country. Parliamentary politicians think only of the parochial interests of their seats. Statesmen think of the interests of the whole country. Universal Franchise was one of the most divisive measures introduced by our colonial masters with the purpose of disuniting us. Well can the British imperialists look back on a piece of good work well done.

It is of course true that reforms of the type of Universal Franchise, like any other form of social service, has its good points. It does bring some benefit to the people. Because of the necessity to win the votes of the people, the politicians are compelled to serve at least some of the interests of their voters. That is how we can account for measures such as free education, free health services, the rice ration system, and other forms of welfare state. But, like in other reforms, they are intended to prevent a drastic and revolutionary reconstruction of society. Just as the capitalist prefers to part with a small portion of his gains in order to protect the whole, so the ruling classes try to deceive the people with a few palliatives, but without curing the illness; this, in short, is the famous argument between reform and revolution. The ills of our society are too fundamental to be cured by reforms. They stem from a system of exploitation by imperialism, feudalism, capitalism, and act only by exploitation. By hoodwinking the people by means of reform like Adult Franchise, a parliament, etc., the ruling classes seek to distract the attention of the people from the real issues, and turn their attention to issues that cannot fundamentally affect the position of the ruling classes in society.

That is why we describe bourgeois parliamentary democracy, of which Universal Franchise forms an important part, as a political attempt to conceal the economic exploitation that goes underneath. Parliamentary democracy is an adornment, a veil to cover the naked dictatorship of capitalism. It was invented by the reactionaries as a weapon to deceive and divide the people, to dampen their class con-

sciousness and their fighting spirit, by creating the illusion that it is possible to attain socialism through parliament by peaceful transition. It is an attempt to distract the people's attention from the real seats of power which are the armed forces. It is an attempt to substitute the struggle by words for the struggle by arms.

Bourgeois democracy is basically an attempt to conceal from the masses that real power in society rests in the hands of the repressive state machinery, that acts as a watchdog of the exploiters of the masses. Every worker who has been on strike knows that his employer, be he white or black, has only to lift his telephone, and, within minutes, an armed police party would be at the gates. It has come to protect not the workers, but the private property and person of the employer. But, let any worker who has been assaulted by a foreman, or whose legal wages had not been paid by the employer, telephone for the police, there would be no response. Again, countless are the number of times that workers have been locked up for incidents arising out of strikes or demonstrations. But has anyone ever heard of any employer being locked up for violation of the labour laws of the country? What does this prove? It clearly proves our contention that the police force, like other armed forces, are nothing but the watchdogs of the exploiting classes. They certainly do other jobs like directing traffic, and occasionally apprehending a thief or a murderer. But their fundamental duty is to safeguard exploitation. That is why, wherever and whenever there is a strike, the first to arrive is the police jeep.

And when they come, they come armed. They will not come empty-handed. There would be guns in their hands. Why the guns? They are the ultimate source of their power. With the guns, they can shoot and kill. Without them, they cannot exact obedience of the workers or submit them to exploitation. That is why Comrade Mao Tse-Tung said: "Every Communist must know that political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." That is the quintessence of the Marxian theory of the State. In whose hands are the guns in our country today? They are in the hands of the watchdogs of the exploiting classes. Therefore, political power is with them. Only when the guns change hands, only when the working class and its allies can snatch them from the hands of the watchdogs of exploitation, i.e., when they carry out revolution, only then will political power come to the working class, which Marx termed the dictatorship of the proletariat, only then can the working class achieve liberation and march to socialism.

It is to prevent the masses from realising this truth that all the snares of bourgeois democracy have been invented. But, even so, as Lenin pointed out: "There is not a single State, though democratic, which does not contain loopholes or limiting clauses in its constitution, guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law and so forth, in case of a disturbance of the peace, i.e., in case the exploited class disturbs its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."

He further said: "Bourgeois parliament, however democratic, and in however democratic a republic, is nothing but a machine for the suppression of millions of working people by a handful of exploiters—for the property and power of the capitalist is preserved." That is why he said: "Bourgeois democracy, nevertheless remains, and under capitalism, cannot but remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich, and a snare and a deception for the exploited, for the poor."

Lenin pointed out that: "The form of bourgeois States are extremely varied, but their essence is the same; all these States, whatever their forms, in the final analysis, are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."

That is why he said: "Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out

under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy, is substituting voting under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and leadership." Instead, he advocated that, "In order to win the population to its side, the proletariat must in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie, and seize State power."

These quotations from the great Lenin must convince any genuine revolutionary of the Marxist-Leninist position concerning bourgeois parliamentary democracy. But it is a sad fact that, in Sri Lanka, the exploiting classes have had a measure of success in deceiving the people with the fraud of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. This is due to the fact that, as a result of certain historical accidents, there have been regular changes of government through the ballot, spreading the illusion that changes of power could be brought about by the ballot. It is also due to the relative economic stability that we have enjoyed till recently. Lastly, this illusion has been helped by the betrayal of the old Left parties, who have surrendered their revolutionary principles at the altar of bourgeois parliamentary opportunism.

Let us take one example and try to study it a little more intimately. We have voted 10 times after Universal Adult Franchise was granted to the people. The people voted in 1931 for the first State Council, in 1935 for the second State Council, in 1947 for the first Parliament, in 1952 for the second Parliament, and in 1956 for the third Parliament, which brought into power Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. In 1960, as if voting once was not enough, the people voted twice. They voted again in 1965, and yet again in 1970 and 1977.

But nevertheless, this right to vote was not exercised by the entire people of this country. From 1948 onwards, the people of Indian origin, who for the most part were workers in the tea and rubber plantations (which brought in a major part of our foreign exchange), were disenfranchised. By making it a law that only citizens could vote, and by depriving these people of their citizenship, their right to vote was annulled. This was a deliberate move on the part of D.S. Senanayake, Ceylon's first Prime Minister, and perhaps the shrewdest politician that the capitalist class has produced in Ceylon. He understood what even the Left movement failed to understand: that the majority of the people of Indian origin were workers, and would therefore ultimately join the Left movement of the country against the ruling classes—as, in fact, they did during the 1947 Parliamentary elections, returning 7 members of their own and helping to return Left candidates in nearly 14 other seats.

Therefore, despite the boast of Universal Adult Franchise, a fair section of the working class of this country has not enjoyed the right to vote from 1948. What is worse, their heads were counted for the purposes of delimiting the constituencies. The result was that for a member's return for constituencies with a large concentration of such workers of Indian origin, he had only to poll a relatively small number of votes as compared to the other constituencies. One such example was Talawakelle.

Despite the boast that Universal Franchise guaranteed the equality of citizens, i.e., one vote for one person, in actual fact, the seats were so delimited that the conservative rural areas were weighted against the more progressive urban and coastal areas. For instance, it required a less number of votes to return a member in the Central Province, which usually returned either the UNP or the SLFP, then it did to return a member in the urban and coastal areas, where the Left was strong. Nevertheless, by means of this process, the people sent to the legislature many eminent men, graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, learned barristers, fiery orators, able debaters, etc. Some of them have celebrated their 20th anniversary of their entry into Parliament. We are not disputing this fact or that they made clever and good speeches, but that is not the question at issue.

The question at issue is whether the ruthless exploitation of the

working people that existed in the country when the farce of Adult Franchise and parliamentarism began in 1931, has been reduced even a little as a result of the wonderful speeches and the efforts of these eminent gentlemen, who rode to Parliament on the backs of the common man.

The honest answer has to be a plain: "No." Why is this? It is because the misery of the toiling people is due to the exploitation they suffer at the hands of the neo-colonialists, feudalists, and the big bourgeoisie; because the workers and the peasants and the rest of the toiling people are compelled to sell their labour power at very low prices to the exploiting classes. While the exploiting classes grow more and more rich as the result of amassing huge profits through the creation of surplus value from the labour power of the working people, the toiling people themselves get more and more impoverished as the result of this ruthless exploitation, which has continued unabated whichever party was in power in Parliament.

Elections have never altered this question. This is for the simple reason that exploitation by capitalists and the landlords is not protected by Parliament, but protected and safeguarded by the machinery of the State which has been built up at the great expense by the exploiting classes in order that it can act as their watchdog. That is why Marx defined the State as the instrument of the oppression of one class by another. By the machinery of State, we mean principally the armed forces, as well as the legal system, the judiciary, the jails and the highly paid bureaucracy—all of which are not subject to any election, but carry on irrespective of whichever party is in power.

There are, of course, changes in the bureaucracy that governs a country. A bureaucrat is transferred from Colombo to Matara, or from Kandy to Nuwaraeliya. Or else one bureaucrat is replaced by another. But the State machine remains intact, and is basically not influenced by changes of government. We have had several changes of government, including some in which so-called "Leftists" have participated as cabinet ministers. But has anyone heard of a son of a worker being appointed the Commander of the Army or the Navy? NO! The top posts of the machinery are reserved for men who come from classes whose interest it is to safeguard exploitation. These are the men who constitute the machinery of State, which acts as the watch-dog of exploitation.

It is to hide this fact that the farce of bourgeois parliamentary democracy was invented. But, all the same, this game cannot be played without there being two opposing sides, just as in the game of football. That is why, after the 1977 elections, J.R. Jayawardene lamented the defeat of Leftists leaders like N.M. Perera and Colvin R. De Silva. Without them being in the opposition, it would be more difficult to fool the people. The essence of bourgeois parliamentary democracy is the existence of two opposing parties, or two groups of opposing parties. One governs, and the other opposes. So important is this act of opposition that the government pays a higher salary to the leader of the opposition, so that he or she may oppose the very government that pays him or her to do so. This is also why the bourgeoisie has invented all the mumbo-jumbo associated with Parliament, which are collectively called Parliamentary Conventions, and which are held to be more sacrosanct than the law itself. The greatest upholders of these conventions and the most devout worshippers at the shrine of constitutionalism and parliamentarism are the erstwhile Left leadership.

Some of these conventions are worth investigation, and exposure. On Budget Day, during tea-time, it is customary for all party leaders to sit for tea at the Finance Minister's table; so, on this day, every year, you will see men who abuse each other outside, and in Parliament sit at the same table and drink tea. The idea that is sought to be put across is that, despite the hurling of abuses during Parliamentary debates and on public platforms, members from both sides of the House were agreed on preserving the status-quo, the

bourgeois parliamentary democratic system, which is only a synonym for capitalist exploitation. It is for the same reason that cricket matches are organised with the Prime Minister captaining one side, and the leader of the opposition, the other. After all, the Parliamentary game is very similar to cricket—a friendly game among friends, members of the same or similar class, and played according to well-accepted rules to which both sides subscribe. Here we have the quintessence of bourgeois parliamentary democracy—a sham battle between men whose fundamental interests are the same, but a squabble over trifles.

This kind of class collaboration and sham fighting has become possible because leaders of the two coalitions on either side of the House, despite verbal protestations, are defending more or less the same kind of vested interests. That is why, no single political party, whether in the government or in the opposition, showed any keenness to compel members of Parliament to declare their personal assets. It is also for the same reason that we found unity of views on both sides of the house, irrespective of their party distinctions, when it came to the question of increasing the salaries of ministers of Parliament, or of giving them pensions. Parliamentarism breeds opportunism of the worst sort. When one candidate is not offered by his party the seat he wishes to contest, he changes sides, like changing shirts, and proceeds to contest the same seat, as a representative of the party to which he was all these years opposed. Other disgusting forms of crass opportunism are the examples of men who claim to be believers in dialectical materialism, beginning their political campaigns by going on pilgrimages to Kataragama temple or by offering flowers at the foot of the statue of Lord Buddha. They want even the gods to take sides in elections. It is an attempt to cheat both man and god.

It is not necessary for us point out that elections in Sri Lanka are synonymous with large-scale corruption, mass impersonation, bribery, free flow of liquor, thuggery, appeals to communal and caste sentiment, etc., etc. Where democracy comes in, we don't know. Or again, after all these years' "training" in democracy, there are still seats which can be contested only by candidates of a particular caste or community. All these instances of crass opportunism and the exposure of the fraud of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, must at least open the minds of all honest-minded people. They must realise that all these much-publicised parliamentary struggles between parliamentary parties are all a sham, and are only intended to deceive the people and to prevent them from embarking on the revolutionary path. Many people fail to realise that the grant of bourgeois democratic rights and liberties is nothing but a trap to ensnare the revolutionaries. It is an attempt to encourage revolutionaries to carry out all their activities in the open, so that they could easily be under the surveillance of the secret police.

If we are granted the "right" to publish a newspaper, the C.I.D. is the first to read our ideas and plans. If we are given a permit to use a loudspeaker for a public meeting, the police can tape-record our speeches. If we are allowed to stage a demonstration, the police can, and in many countries do, photograph every face in the demonstration, and so on.

When the working class gets too strong, all this information is used to decapitate the revolutionary movement at one stroke, as it happened in Indonesia in 1965. In Chile, the modern revisionists and the socialists thought that they had come to power peacefully and even allowed leaders of the bourgeois armed forces into the cabinet. The latter bided their time, and, at one fell blow, destroyed the entire government and unleashed a fascist dictatorship.

Whether it is the example of Indonesia or Chile or that of Sri Lanka, the plain lesson to be drawn is that there is no peaceful, parliamentary path to socialism.

A reaction can never be defeated by victory at the elections alone. The UNP has been defeated three times in parliamentary elec-

tions, but has been able to re-emerge and be as strong as ever. When the UNP strength in parliament was reduced to 8 seats in 1956 by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, there were pundits from the LSSP who said that the last nail had been driven into the coffin of the UNP. Yet, somehow or the other, the corpse escaped from the coffin, and has ruled the country twice, since then. Again, when the United Front parties emerged victorious in the 1970 elections, with a two-thirds majority inside parliament, the same pundits again declared that the UNP could never re-emerge as a political force. But in 1977, the UNP swept to victory, with a 5/6ths majority in parliament, eliminating the Leftists completely from parliament. The alternative to the possibility of a return to power of the UNP is not in the retention of the SLFP in power or voting into power another fraudulent coalition, like the United Left Front, but the instalment of a government under the leadership of the working class through popular, mass revolutionary struggle. The alternative is people's power, with the working class at its head. But this implies rejection of the peaceful parliamentary path and an acceptance of the revolutionary way.

People remember the joy and expectation that followed the victory of the United Front parties in 1970. They obtained a 2/3rds majority inside parliament. There was nothing they could not have done. Yet they failed. Having promised a democratic government, they ruled for six out of the seven years under a state of emergency and with harsh repressive laws. Faced with an economic crisis that had engulfed the whole capitalist world, their only solution was to transfer the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the masses.

There is no doubt that they carried out certain allegedly progressive measures, like income ceiling (now abrogated), capital levy, land reform, etc. But these were not socialist measures. They were intended to strengthen capitalism. Far-seeing capitalists realised that too great a concentration of land or income in too few hands is the surest spur to revolution. They, therefore, tend to broadbase ownership of land and capital so as to diffuse the revolutionary movement. This is what the Coalition government did. Several forms of state capitalism have come into being. Considerable sections of the economy, which is now estimated at 60%, have been brought under different forms of state capitalism. Foreign-owned plantations and plantations of over 50 acres owned by local landlords have been nationalised. Business firms have been acquisitioned. There has been a proliferation of state corporations—breeding with it a new bureaucratic capitalist class.

But State power still remains firmly in the hands of the exploiting classes. So long as this remains so and the class positions remain as a whole, exploitation in new or old forms will continue. Distribution of land does not connote socialism. Napoleon divided the land after the French Revolution. MacArthur did the same in Japan after the Second World War. But it did not constitute socialism. It was confined to the framework of capitalism. The important point is: In whose hands is State power? Different sections of the ruling classes may replace each other. But exploitation and the consequent misery of the people continues. This cannot be changed by changing parties at elections.

In 1970, the United Front parties promised us socialism. But, in 1977, they not only suffered a crushing parliamentary defeat with two of the three parties suffering total extinction in parliament—neo-colonialism and capitalism are very much with us; and their very trusted servants, the UNP is back in power and is steering the country towards the worst economic mess in our history and a new enslavement to new neo-colonial masters. This smooth changeover from the United Front government to the UNP government was possible only because it was the same State power that served both governments. Without the destruction by force of this State power and the establishment of an alternate State power which Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat, no progress is possible.

That is why we must not dissipate our energies in these futile attempts to defeat reaction through elections and, instead, unite together all revolutionary forces and establish a United Front of workers, peasants, the revolutionary intellectuals and all patriotic people to overthrow by force foreign and local reaction once and for all. We must go down to the grass roots of the people and propagate the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-Tung Thought. We must be with the people, like fish in water, understand their problems, help them to organise in trade-unions, peasant unions, youth leagues, etc., to solve their day-to-day problems; lead them from small struggles to big struggles, heighten their class consciousness, and learn, in the course of these struggles, to politicalise them and to integrate open work with secret work and legal work with illegal work—but always ensuring that secret and illegal work is the fundamental aspect of our work. The important thing is that we must not deceive the people with opportunist and false solutions as those presented by the worshippers of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

Of course, when we call for the rejection of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, we will be met with abuse and recrimination and even accused of supporting reaction. These abuses are nothing new to us. But our anti-UNP bona fides can never be called into question. We opposed the UNP even when Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was inside it. Our opposition to the UNP is total and final. But, we aver that it cannot be defeated finally only through elections. We are not willing to be a party to the deception that the power of reaction can be overthrown by defeating it at the polls. We tell the people categorically that, without breaking up the neo-colonialist/feudal/big bourgeois economic framework, and without smashing by force the State machinery that protects the economic framework and makes possible its exploitation of the people, no matter whichever be the party, or the group of parties that comes into power by the fraud of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, the fundamental problems of the people cannot be solved. Revolutionaries, therefore, must understand that the smashing by force of the existing bourgeois State machinery and its replacement by the State machinery of the working class, which Marx defined as the dictatorship of the proletariat, is an essential precondition for the abolition of exploitation.

But, there are others who hide their parliamentary opportunism by pretending that they do not believe in parliamentary democracy but that they were contesting elections to make use of parliament as a platform for propagandising their views. It would be relevant to note here that, when the LSSP contested the elections to the Second State Council in 1935 and Philip Gunawardene and N.M. Perera managed to squeeze in, this was the aim that these Samasamajist twins proclaimed in loud tones. But everyone knows how they both ended up as ministers in bourgeois coalition governments.

The advocates of this argument quote copiously from Lenin, particularly from his book, *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, in support of their contention. This argument deserves a little attention because it has caused confusion among genuine revolutionaries. In dealing with this book by Lenin, one must not look at it without reference to time and space. If we did so we would be metaphysicists and not dialecticians. Let us remember that Lenin wrote this book in April, 1920 in order to be read by delegates who had assembled in Moscow for the First Congress of the Third Communist International. He wrote this at a time when only one country in the world had succeeded in establishing socialism and when parliamentary illusions were rife among most European countries. That was 60 years ago. To use a yardstick of 60 years ago and to apply it to the situation of today would be a gross caricature of Marxism. In any case, Lenin was dealing with a question of tactics—how to make the maximum use of legal methods to do propaganda for Communism in countries where the working class had not yet come to the position of accepting Soviet power as the only way out. Under any

circumstances, Lenin never advocated the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism through parliament. He only advocated that, where possible, parliaments be used as a platform by the Communists. But let us remember that, during the 60 years since he wrote this book, not one Communist MP has fulfilled the role expected of him by Lenin. Almost every one of them fell a prey to parliamentary opportunism and constitutionalism.

In Sri Lanka, no one is today seriously plugging the revisionist theory that the working class could pass on to socialism by peaceful means through parliament. The failure of the 1970 experiment and the debacle of 1977 has put a stop to that. Similarly, the miserable performance of the odd Left groups that contested the 1977 parliamentary elections—including the highly financed (from whatever sources) JVP—has equally exploded the theory of trying to use parliament as a platform. In any case, the hooliganism that goes on in parliament today and the absolute lack of any principled debate, along with the concentration of all power in the hands of the President, who does not sit in Parliament, has ceased to make parliament even a platform. Further, the new constitution which eliminates all small parties that poll less than 12-1/2% of the votes and the system of proportional representation rings the death knell of this theory. Today, the people of Sri Lanka are sick to death of this parliamentary game where alternative parties have ruled the country without basically changing the economic structure. This was demonstrated by the mass approval of the decision of the genuine anti-UNP parties in the South not to contest the Development Council elections. Today, when the class consciousness and the willingness to revolt is increasing among the people, to mis-direct them on to the path of bourgeois parliamentary democracy would be a crime.

Since Lenin wrote this famous book, a lot of water has flown under the bridge. Revolutions have taken place in over a third of the world even though, in all of them, capitalism has been restored. In the rest of the world, revolutionary situations are maturing. World imperialism is sinking into its final crisis. In our part of the world bourgeois democracy does not exist in more than two or three countries, even in name. Even the President has accepted this. Nobody can gainsay the correctness of Mao's analysis that in the world today revolution is the main trend.

Even though, in his time, Lenin advocated, for strictly limited purposes, the use of parliament as a platform, he was quick to point out its limitations. He said, "The socialists, as fighters for the liberation of the working people from exploitation, had to use bourgeois parliament as a platform, as one of their bases of propaganda, agitation and organisation, as long as our struggle is confined within the framework of the bourgeois system. But now that world history has placed on the order of the day the complete destruction of the system, the overthrow and suppression of the exploiters and the transition from capitalism to socialism, to confine oneself to bourgeois parliamentarism and to bourgeois democracy, to paint it as democracy in general, to gloss over its bourgeois character, and to forget that Universal Suffrage, as long as the capitalists retain their property, is only one of the weapons of the bourgeois State, is shamefully to betray the proletariat, desert to the side of its class enemy, the bourgeoisie, become a traitor and a renegade." Today, in Asia, there is hardly a country where bourgeois democracy thrives. In most of the countries revolutionary situations have matured. In some of the countries the working class and its allies have taken the road of armed revolution for the seizure of State power. In such a situation, are we justified in asking our people to participate in the farce of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and in extolling Universal Franchise?

A thousand times "NO."

That is why the test of a true revolutionary today is his attitude to the fraud of parliamentary democracy. Without making a clean break with parliamentarism, without rejecting it in total, it is impossible to embark upon the revolutionary path of uniting all the revolutionary forces for the overthrow of foreign and local reaction, the destruction by force of their State machinery and its replacement with the state machinery of the working class and its allies and the establishment of a government under the leadership of the working class based on the worker-peasant alliance and unity with the revolutionary intelligentsia and all patriotic people.

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