

ලංකා වෙළඳ, කාර්මික සහ පොදු කම්කරු සංගමය (සීඑම්ඒ)
இலங்கை வர்த்தக, கைத்தொழில் பொதுத் தொழிலாளர் சங்கம் (சீஎம்யூ)
THE CEYLON MERCANTILE, INDUSTRIAL AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION (CMU)



THE CEYLON MERCANTILE, INDUSTRIAL AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION (CMU)

The CMU is a mass organization of workers in Sri Lanka. It was founded in 1927 as a trade union of clerical and other non-manual categories of workers, in what were known as mercantile establishments of British companies, and so was named the **Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU)**. It was registered under that name, under the Trade Union Ordinance of 1935, which was enacted to provide for the "registration and control" of trade Unions, while Ceylon was still a British Crown Colony.

In November 1947, the CMU Broke away from the control of its founder President, A.E. Goonesingha, who had been elected to Ceylon's first Parliament and had been appointed as a Minister in the Cabinet of D.S. Senanayake, the first Prime Minister of Ceylon, September 1947.

The CMU thereafter adopted a new Constitution on a British trade union model, in December 1947, and its first General Secretary (Bala Tampoe) was appointed under that constitution in February 1948. Ceylon itself was granted "Independent within the British Commonwealth of Nations" by the British Parliament, in that same month. The Union has developed since then into an **independent** mass organization of workers in Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka), with about twenty thousand members at present, in 125 commercial, engineering and industrial establishments.

From 1948 to 1964, the CMU developed as a Union of non-manual workers. It expanded thereafter to become **a general union of manual and non-manual workers**, including dock workers and seafarers, but not workers in the plantations. A large proportion of its members is employed in companies belonging to the Employers' Federation of Ceylon. Most of them are covered by Collective Agreements. They include both manual and non-manual workers in several transnational companies.

From 1971, the CMU has established links with the **international trade union movement**, in which it plays an active role, through affiliations with six International Trade Secretariats, the **IUF, ITF, ICEM, ITGLWF, IFBWW and UNI**. These international trade union organizations cover most sectors of the globalised capitalist economy.

The CMU has played and continues to play an important role in the trade union movement, not only regard to matters affecting its own members, but in regard to **socio-economic and political issues affecting the working people generally**, or the whole country. It has also been in the forefront of **mass actions in defense of human and democratic rights**, especially during prolonged period of "Emergency" rule, as at present.

BALA TAMPOE
General Secretary

1st February 2008