

Theoretical Organ of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party

# New Democracy

# 39

**November 2010**

**Nationalism: Problems of Definition**  
*Imayavaramban*

**The Global Economy** *Mohan*

**Poetry:** *Marilyn Buck, Don Mattera,  
Karunakaran, Sarumathi*

**Also inside: Documents of the Fifth  
All Sri Lanka Congress of the NDMLP**

Editorial ● NDP Diary ● Sri Lankan Events ● World Events ● Book Review

---

**Website: [www.ndpsl.org](http://www.ndpsl.org)**

## A Story in Celebration of the Intifada

Marilyn Buck

David, son of Israel slew Goliath  
he smiled that one so small  
could defeat one so large

he took Goliath's house  
walked in his shoes  
and ate at his table

David, son of Israel became Goliath  
greedy, grasping, merciless  
he thumbed his nose at  
the ageless people  
of the olive groves and desert

remembering only that he had been small  
he forgot

the daughters and sons of Palestine  
do not forget  
that a stone is not just a stone  
lying in the rubble of their homes  
it becomes a missile  
ululating resistance  
raising a storm of liberation.

*December 1988*

*Marilyn Jean Buck (13.12.1947 – 03.8.2010), an American communist revolutionary and poet imprisoned for her participation in the 1979 prison break of Assata Shakur, the 1981 Brinks Robbery the 1983 US Senate Bombing. She received an 80 year sentence, which she served in Federal prison, from where she published numerous articles and other works. She was released on 15.7.2010, less than three weeks before she died of cancer.*

(From *Hauling Up the Morning*, The Red Sea Press, 1990)

## From the Editor's Desk

None of the actions of the government, which has been further strengthened by the outcome of the general election, suggest intent to resolve the national question. On the contrary, the rights of the people affected by war continue to be denied.

The haste with which the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was introduced in parliament and the denial of the opportunity to debate it thoroughly would shock and disappoint anyone with faith in parliamentary democracy. The drama that was being enacted in the name of multi-party democracy is now over, and the country is being rushed towards personal and family domination transcending party politics. The military victory against the LTTE has helped the government very much. Nevertheless, what made the current situation possible are the executive presidential system based on the constitution of 1978 and facilitation by the constitution of the crossing over of MPs to the government benches.

Debating as to who is the worst among the executive presidents of the country or comparing personalities will not help one to understand the political situation. The politics of the country continues without deviating from the constitution of 1978. Without the total elimination of that constitution, it will not be possible to defend even nominal democracy. Hence the important question is not who should be made president but whether the executive presidency should continue.

It is important to know whose interests are served by the movement of the country towards dictatorship. Individual, family or hereditary rule is not simply about the power and interests of an individual, family or clan. Besides that, the interests of national and foreign ruling classes come into play. Although the ruling classes care about who controls the government, when they do not have the government of their choice, they may, within limits, tolerate any government that does not hurt their hegemonic ambitions and interests. Every superpower and hegemonic force will strive to establish a regime that will serve its interests. When it cannot, it will bring pressure to bear on the regime.

ND39

01

In the current environment of imperialist globalisation, any foreign intervention in a country will be detrimental to the country and its people. Weaker countries can by uniting against superpowers and hegemonic forces protect themselves to some degree. People, to protect themselves and to be free, should unite among themselves.

Oppressive acts against people have common characteristics which support each other. Hence struggles for liberation too should support each other. Prior to that, it is necessary for the oppressed to recognise the common characteristics of their struggles and overcome illusions that stand in the way of recognising them.

It is certain that the threat of dictatorship facing the country will rely on military might as well as on unruly gangs. One dictatorship taking the place of another dictatorship will certainly continue with the oppression of its predecessor; and superpowers and hegemonic forces are not troubled by any oppression by a regime that abides by their wishes.

Thus, it is not possible to view the national question, which is the main contradiction in the country, in isolation from the crisis of democracy in the country or from imperialist globalisation. Narrow nationalism and chauvinism which uphold conservatism and pro-imperialist politics, although they appear to be hostile to each other, act to serve similar interests. People of all nationalities should understand this.

Based on that understanding, the Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, who comprise the oppressed nationalities, should bring together their struggles for national rights and self-determination as well as unite with struggles against domination and exploitation by imperialism, regional hegemony and big capitalists, which affect the entire country. Likewise, the Sinhalese should give unconditional support for all the struggles of minority nationalities for their rights so that they can join in the struggles against imperialism, regional hegemony and big capitalists. These are the challenges that face the people in the immediate future.

Hence, all democratic, progressive and left forces of the country should unite to discuss and develop a minimum programme to deal with the important problems faced by the country, including the national question, and act to build a broad-based united front to carry forward that programme. This is a historical responsibility that they cannot afford to shirk.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Nationalism and Nationhood under Neo-colonialism - 1

### Problems of Definition

by  
*Imayavaramban*

The nation state is a by-product of capitalism. The need to define a nation arose mainly out of the need for a people who constitute a socio-economic entity to independent existence. In Europe, during the development of capitalism into imperialism, countries and people subject to oppressive domination by the ruling classes of a more powerful country — in the name of national interest — demanded the right to independent statehood.

Ethnic and regional identities have existed for millennia, and countries and rulers have existed for millennia. But they did not constitute a nation until the development of capitalism. The idea of a nation and its identification with a state arose mainly to serve the needs of an emergent capitalist class. Nationalism served well the interests of capitalism, and in particular that of imperialism, by giving the bourgeois state a more respectable identity as nation state, in which even the oppressed classes could be deluded into having a stake.

A neat and comprehensive definition of the term was offered by Stalin and remains a valid and appropriate description of what constitutes the modern nation: "A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a community of culture". [JV Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*, 1913].

The definition was provided in the context of dealing with national oppression and the right of nations to self-determination in the course

of the struggle to transform imperial Russia. It was based on careful observation and a thorough understanding of what makes a nation state feasible. The essential features of a nation in Stalin's definition are still widely accepted as necessary for making a nation state feasible. Although factors like religion — and caste in South Asia — define identity as social groups and have played a major role in national movements and the emergence of national identities, they are not factors that define a nation. Definitions of ethnicity sometimes place ethnicity outside nationality, and at times on par with it. But politically the concept of nation has been more persuasive than other identities.

The term nationality is generally used to refer to any community that by and large possesses the essential features of a nation and has the potential to become a nation-state, if not already one. The need for a nationality to declare itself as a nation and proceed to establish itself as a nation-state arises only when its co-existence with other nationalities within the framework of a multi-ethnic or multi-national state is challenged.

Since the development of the concept of the nation-state has been closely tied up with the development of capitalism, following the transformation of capitalism into imperialism — with multinational capital transcending national boundaries — and given the imperialist bid for global domination through its agenda of globalisation, capitalism has very little use for nationalism at home. Nationalism in advanced capitalist countries could, in fact, run counter to capitalist interests. Thus the importance of the nation-state to capital has declined since its internationalisation. This is probably an important consideration in the rejection of nationalism by neo-liberals and advocates of imperialist globalisation.

Hobsbawm, a progressive historian, holds a negative view of nationalism, although for different considerations, and states there is no universal criteria required for a nation and that “any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a nation will be treated as such”. [EJ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 1990].

Anderson goes further to name all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact as imagined communities, and refers to nations as imagined communities — imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. He does not, however, question the political significance of nations and nationalism or their right to

exist. [B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983].

Hobsbawm has explained in his work that the formation of the state has preceded the formation of the nation in some instances as in the case of France— where in the process of the formation of the French nation several nations lost their identity and assimilated themselves to the French nation. Equally there are instances where the evolution of the nation has preceded its formation as a nation state.

Political historians, however, seem unanimous that there is nothing natural or constant about a nation or nationalism, and that a nation is more a product of history than of any human biological phenomenon. Implicit attempts to establish abstract notions such as a ‘common destiny’ as decisive in the formation of a nation (for example, Otto Bauer) have failed and historical materialist factors have been recognised as the bases for the formation of nations and their establishment as nation-states. The role of capitalism in the evolution of the nation-state too has been established beyond doubt.

The formation of nations and nation-states under colonialism, and at times in the post-colonial context, has had more to do with the interests of the occupying or dominant colonial or neo-colonial power than the needs of the society concerned. The formation of nation-states under colonialism has thus to be understood in their respective colonial contexts including rivalry between colonial powers for regional and global domination.

The capitalist system in Asia — with the exception of Imperial Japan — developed on terms imposed on the people by an occupying colonial power or an imperialist power dominating over it. That was the case in Africa and Latin America as well. The context and manner in which interference occurred varied from region to region as well as with the colonial/imperialist power. The emergence of nationalism and national movements in colonies and semi-colonies depended on how colonial/imperialist interests interacted with the prevailing social system as did the manner and degree of change from a feudal or pre-feudal to a capitalist social order depend on colonial/imperialist interaction.

What seems to be a serious omission in the discussion of the national question by many scholars in the West is the failure to recognise the role of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the creation of nations and nation states in contexts where there was none. The way in which capitalism developed in what constituted the Third World in the post-colonial era, also meant that national awareness and nationalism

assumed forms distinct from those that developed in Europe, about which theories of nationalism have dealt with in considerable depth. The development of nationalism under colonialism had less in common with the development of capitalism in the colony than with the impact of colonial/imperialist exploitation of countries and communities. Even under neo-colonialism, nationalism in all its forms has evolved in response to oppression by a local elite class (often acting in the name of an ethnic group or a nationality) or by imperialism or by the combined action of imperialism and a local elite class. Thus even feudal and semi-feudal societies have been propelled into 'nationalism' of one kind or another.

The carving up of territories between colonial powers and demarcation of territories based on colonial/imperialist economic interests meant that 'national' identities were artificially imposed on people who in the absence of colonial intervention could have developed into a single nation, as in the case of Arab people. It has also meant the intentional suppression of national identity, like what the Kurdish people were subjected to by being divided among four different countries.

Besides oppression and exploitation of people and plunder of resources by colonial and imperialist powers, various forms of slavery emerged out of colonial and imperialist intervention with implications for national identity and nationalism. National identity which has already been made complex by the forced as well as unforced migration of labour under colonial rule, has become even more complex following mass displacement under conditions of civil war and economic crisis under neo-colonialism and encouraged by the process of imperialist globalisation.

Thus, despite the bourgeois class interests that it is bound to serve, and hence the essentially reactionary nature of nationalism, it will be wrong to dismiss nationalism as imagined and historically irrelevant. Imagined or otherwise, nationalism exists and has a role to play both for the oppressor and the oppressed. It is on the basis of that objective reality that Marxist Leninists look at the nationalism. And it is on that basis that they emphasise the right of nations and nationalities to self determination, not in an abstract and crudely universal fashion but based on context and objective reality.

*(To be continued)*

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Global Economy: All the King's Horses ...

*Mohan*

**[The comment below on the failure of US and its imperialist allies to persuade the growing economies of the G-20 and APEC to help them out of the economic crisis that they are embroiled in is based on information provided in:**

***english.aljazeera.net/category/city/seoul; and  
www.granma.cu/ingles/reflections-i/15noviembre-46Reflex1.html]***

The economic crisis is far from over despite declarations that the recession has bottomed out. The G-20 meeting took place in Seoul on 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> November. Another important high level meeting in Japan—the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Economic Leaders of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum—took place on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> November. Such meetings discuss crucial international economic and financial issues, while the IMF and the World Bank, with decision-making powers in financial matters work for their master, the US.

The monetary system established at Bretton Woods at the end of World War II granted the US the exceptional privilege of making its paper money an international hard currency pegged to a gold standard mechanism fixed at \$35 per Troy ounce of gold. But the US unilaterally abandoned the ceiling for the unrestricted issuance of paper money in 1971, near the tail end of its cruel war in Vietnam. The abuse of privilege has resulted in a 40 fold drop in the value of the US Dollar,

and the economy of the US has been hobbling from crisis to crisis ever since.

The tragedy of the present economic crisis hurting the US is that the anti-crisis measures applied in the past have not helped recovery. The national debt of the US of around \$14 billion is as big as its GDP, and shows no sign of falling. Rescue packages to failing banks and near-zero interest rates have failed to push unemployment rates below 10%. Defaulting on home mortgages shows no sign of decline. But the gigantic defence budgets well exceeding those of the rest of the world—especially those devoted to the war—continue to grow. Desperation pushed the US government to announce before the G-20 meeting that the Federal Reserve would buy 600 billion US dollars.

Simmering tensions over currencies and trade gaps were aggravated by the US flooding of its sluggish economy with \$600 billion in cash, leaving the world leaders arriving in Seoul sharply divided over currency and trade policies. The US move was seen as a selfish and irresponsible move to effectively devalue the US Dollar and give US exporters an unfair price edge. Not surprisingly it became even harder for the G-20 countries to find common ground in dealing with a global economy that depends on huge US trade deficits.

Failure to reach agreement could have severe consequences such as countries trying to keep their currencies artificially low to give their exporters a competitive edge, and setting up barriers to imports—moves that could lead to a repeat of policies that aggravated the Great Depression.

US, China and Japan—the world's three largest economies—joined the rest of the 21-member APEC in embrace free trade, renounce competitive currency devaluations, and pledge to start work on a vast regional free trade area linking commerce in the region. But they failed to reach consensus on how to achieve their principal goals, including the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

The APEC declaration of 14<sup>th</sup> November pledging concrete steps toward establishing the FTAAP failed to define the steps, but praised its members' economic development and noted that APEC economies are still recovering from the three-year-old global financial crisis. It also raised environmental issues and said that members needed to address the "urgent priority" of climate change, and emphasised improving supply chains across the Pacific.

Discord over how best to ensure global recovery surfaced even before the delegates began to depart. President Hu Jintao of China noted that uncertainties remain about global recovery and that trade protectionism has noticeably risen recently. China and the US continued to differ over factors exacerbating a massive trade imbalance between the two countries. The US charges that the undervalued Yuan gives Chinese exporters unfair advantage and drives up the US trade deficit, while China criticises the US Federal Reserve's stimulus policy of creating money to buy up assets and unfreeze the US economy, which has flooded China's markets with cash and driven up inflation.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan of Japan, even as he promised to "open up Japan", warned that the removal of Japanese trade barriers would mean "pain and suffering". Japanese farmers, especially rice producers, fear that the expansion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a regional free-trade treaty favoured by the US, could provide Japanese buyers with access to cheaper agricultural products from abroad. (Japan, according to AFP news agency, has a nearly 800% tariff on rice imports and a 250% tariff on wheat imports, which would go under an expanded free-trade agreement).

Disputes between Japan and Russia and between Japan and China over islands in the Pacific too have become important for economic as well as strategic reasons. Attempts to improve Japan-Russia ties and China-Japan ties—souring since Japan detained the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that collided with Japanese patrol boats near disputed islands—did not make significant progress.

In the end, the high level meetings got nowhere towards resolving the global economic crisis or bailing out the US from the economic mess that it is in. Thus the imperialist economic crisis is bound to drag on if not worsen in the months to come.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***NDMLP Diary***

### **Comrade Maniam Remembered**

Well attended commemoration meetings were held in Colombo and in Jaffna to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> death anniversary of Comrade KA Subramaniam (better known as Comrade Maniam within the Party), Founder General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party (known as the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left) at the time of founding) and a revolutionary forerunner of the communist movement.

The meeting in Colombo, chaired by Comrade P Gopinath, was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November at the Kailasapathy Auditorium of the Deshiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai, Colombo 6. The commemoration address, titled "Amendments to the Election Laws for Local Government Bodies" was delivered by Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party. Comrade Thambiah, in his talk, reminded the audience of the exemplary life led by Comrade Maniam as a dedicated communist who firmly upheld the importance of building up a Marxist Leninist party as an organisation, uniting the people on a broad basis on the principle of the united front, and carrying out mass struggles in their appropriate domains. The body of his lecture explained how the proposed amendments will negate even existing democracy in local government in a context in which the government is hostile to any form of devolution of power.

The lecture was followed by a lively discussion and the meeting concluded with a revolutionary song sung by comrades Selvakumar and Vijayakumar.

Comrade K Kathirgamanathan who chaired the meeting in Jaffna in his opening address drew attention to the value of the comradeship and dedication to party work shown by Comrade Maniam. Comrade S Thevarajah, member of the Politburo of the Party, pointed out that the style of leadership and guidance by Comrade Maniam is not only to be admired but also to be emulated in current practice. He went on to elaborate the importance given by Comrade Maniam to mass political work and to the need to address the day-to-day problems faced by the people.

Comrades K Thanikasalam and K Panchalingam also addressed the meeting.

### **Comrade Senthivel Concludes Lecture Tour in Canada & Europe**

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party recently visited Canada, France and Denmark and delivered lectures on the current Sri Lankan political situation and the short and long term prospects for resolving the pressing issues facing the country. Among the more important of the well attended meetings in Canada were the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Tamil Resources Center, Toronto where he delivered the Comrade Sivam Memorial Lecture on 2<sup>nd</sup> October; a lecture titled "the Struggle to Eliminate Untouchability and the Uprising of October 1966" delivered on 23<sup>rd</sup> October; and a seminar on 30<sup>th</sup> October organised by the TRC, titled "the Challenges Faced by the Nationalities of Sri Lanka", in which he explained the position of the NDMLP on the national question. All lectures were followed by long and lively discussions reflecting fresh interest in the left movement and the NDMLP.

In France, Comrade Senthivel delivered a lecture titled "the Future of Sri Lanka" at a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November organised by *Asai*-the Literary Movement for Social Change; and in Denmark on 13<sup>th</sup> November he delivered the keynote address at a seminar on contemporary politics, organised by the Tamil Literary Forum, Denmark.

Besides lectures, Comrade Senthivel also participated in a number of political discussions, radio and videoed interviews where the position of the Party on the pressing problems facing the country was discussed.

### **Comrade Thambiah to Attend International Conference**

Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party has been invited by the International Committee Against Disappearances to attend the Sixth International Conference against Disappearances to be conducted under the heading "Wars, National Movements and Disappearances" from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in London.

Comrade Thambiah has accepted the invitation and will be travelling in early December to attend the conference.

\*\*\*\*\*

# *Sri Lankan Events*

## **JVP Wooing the North**

The JVP in its bid to gain foothold in the war affected North attempted to woo the people by making gifts such as stationery to children. Several weeks ago, the Inter-University Students' Federation affiliated to the JVP attempted to establish links with the students of the University of Jaffna. That attempt was thwarted unlawfully and the IUSF delegates were not allowed to enter the Jaffna campus. Recently, Sunil Handurunetti, a JVP MP seeking alliances in the North, was violently attacked and injured by a gang while at a meeting with a former Tamil MP whose affinity for the LTTE was no secret.

It is true that the JVP is only out to make opportunist alliances in the North and has so far not come up with any proposals to address the national aspirations of the Tamils or to put right the injustices suffered by the Tamils in the course of the war. The JVP whose main political platform is its call for the release of the retired General, Sarath Fonseka, has thus far failed to demand the release of Tamils detained for prolonged periods without inquiry or trial.

Yet the attack on the JVP by the state and pro-government thugs cannot be condoned. Such attacks should be seen as attacks on democracy and denounced unconditionally.

## **Media Politics**

The UNP once dominated the news media, so much so that even when it was in the opposition between 1956 and 1964 it ruled the print media, and even after the nationalisation of the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd (the Lake House) the UNP could match the government in the print media owing to the support it had from other publishers. The radio was a monopoly of the government and television was introduced around 1980. The UNP which was in power from 1977 to 1994 had almost absolute monopoly of the print and electronic media.

Its influence in the media remained strong even after its defeat in 1994, from which it has failed to recover, except for the brief spell as parliamentary government between 2001 and 2005 under an executive president from the PA. Since defeat at the presidential election in 2005, its influence in the media began to weaken, but still strong enough to challenge the government. Since the defeat of the LTTE by the government forces, media support for the UNP started to erode. Today

the UNP is virtually abandoned by nearly all the major newspapers and all but one TV channel which gives it lukewarm support.

Reasons for the switching of loyalty by some of the electronic media seem rather dubious. Intimidation of the media by people in power is a major factor, especially in the print media, but the isolation of the UNP has more to do with its political bankruptcy and fading appeal to the public.

## **No Bonus Yet**

The Tamil National Alliance, which since 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 has undergone total transformation to become a puppet of a foreign power, initially rejected the governments Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission as eyewash and indicated that it would not give evidence before it. But before long there was a change of mind and it has, despite reservations, decided to appear before the LLRC.

TNA's vacillation about the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was notorious, and it took a decision at the eleventh hour to vote against it. Only one of the TNA MPs spoke in parliament and his speech was more concerned with legal technicalities than about the implied threat to democracy or implications for the oppressed nationalities.

A more interesting change of heart was the recent decision to abstain in the vote on the budget. It is interesting that, despite the government's increase of the defence vote while there was little on offer for the victims of war, the spokespersons for the Tamils have opted to abstain, a gesture of goodwill.

But they do not seem to have been rewarded for such good and obedient conduct. India's Foreign Minister SM Krishna who visited the country in late November finalised credit and 'aid' agreements and declared open the two new Indian consulates, one in the North and one in the South, but carefully avoided meeting the TNA leaders who were awaiting him in vain in Colombo.

## **The Trouble with the Truth**

Although the Tamils of the North have little hope for anything to come out of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, a considerable number of people decided to appear before the LLRC and express their views.

While the government has reason to welcome such response of the public, since it adds credibility to the LLRC in the eyes of a seemingly hostile 'International Community', some supporters of the government appear to take a different view and are reported to have been actively dissuading people from giving evidence. The methods used by them ranged from intimidation to assault and newspaper reporters too have been targeted. The presence of personnel from foreign embassies has been a deterrent to threats in premises but not adequate to prevent bullying.

Media bosses too seem have been intimidated, unless they are seeking to curry favour with the government, and editorial staff have been severely reprimanded for reporting misconduct by anti-democratic elements.

## Minorities Left High and Dry

Hill Country Tamil MPs elected on the slate of the UNP-led United National Front did not take long to switch loyalties and join the government. The Democratic People's Front MP elected from Colombo was the first to desert the UNF. He was followed by one from the UNP itself and another representing the interests of a big capitalist organisation, which also controls a sizeable section of the electronic media, to openly embrace the government. In addition to a Muslim MP from the Kandy District deserting the UNF, the Muslim Congress, a major partner in the UNF, too has abandoned the alliance to join the government.

What is significant about the desertions is that some of the deserters were among the most vociferous critics of the government for its corruption and breach of democratic principles. The leader of the Muslim Congress was notable among the critics of the government for its denial of justice to the retired General, Sarath Fonseka. Now that he has been made Minister of Justice, we may watch with interest if justice will be done to Fonseka, and to other political detainees held behind bars without inquiry or trial.

What is most worrying is that, with the TNA also flirting with the prospect of cooperating with the government, all three minority nationalities face the risk of non-representation in Parliament.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Jon Oskar Solnes. *A Powderkeg in Paradise: Lost Opportunity for Peace in Sri Lanka*, Konark publishers, Delhi, February 2010, pp xx + 242. Indian Rupees 750.00.**

There is much to expect from a book authored by the Chief of Staff of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission on the subject of the Sri Lankan conflict. The book written in 35 chapters also includes 16 pages of colour photographs.

The book has very little to offer by way of insights into the conflict even in the sections relating to SLMM activities in which the author was an important player. The first quarter of the work could substitute for a very average chapter in a tourist guide book.

Comments on the split in the LTTE in 2004 do not even take note of the role claimed by the UNP in engineering the split. A chapter with the heading "Reign of Chandrika and Political Infighting in the South" is in fact a crude record of the antecedents of Chandrika Kumaratunga and a patchy documentation of the period 1994-2005. It is followed by a chapter on the presidential election of 2005, where the stand of the LTTE is oversimplified with no reference to possible shady deals that led to the LTTE's calling for a boycott.

Important details are missing in several chapters like, for example, the LTTE opening the sluice gates in response to a plea by the SLMM in the chapter on the confrontation over Mavilaru. A whole chapter is dedicated to the diplomatic effort for the meeting in Geneva in October 2006, but the outcome is dismissed two chapters later in half a sentence. There is no mention of the fiasco in Oslo that followed several weeks later.

The shallowness of the writer's understanding of the politics of Sri Lanka is evident in his reference to the JVP as a 'dogmatic' Marxist party. The author has, however, carefully avoided implicating the imperialist powers or the neighbouring regional power for their roles in undermining the 'peace process'. The photographs are of good quality but tell very little that is new or of use.

I beg to differ from the three eminent persons offering flattering remarks on the back of the book. In my view, the book is a weakly researched and poorly organised document whose most positive aspect is that it makes easy reading.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Mother

Karunakaran

A deity whose shadow never rested  
wandered day and night, one-eyed in the palmyra groves.

Mother you who carry water from the roadside well  
carried forever an unrelieved heavy burden  
in your belly and you mind.

Even if unloaded for a moment  
they climb on to you again and again.

You who oriented wide, tasting salted rice in a mud hut  
sleep in the open lawn and the pain of torture,  
I worship you.

Mother unperturbed in defeat  
amid inability to win anywhere  
you are invincible.

The fury of defeat or the shadow of dismay  
never stirred near you or in your direction.

Your children, the hills  
did not disintegrate into sand by penetrating hunger.  
See here  
every hill and its every peak  
with thousand eyes spilling with waterfalls.

I wipe the tears off my eyes sobbing  
'crueller than cruelty is poverty in youth'.

Let your heart gently stroke.  
New shoots sprout and thrive in your shade.

Spring filled sky flourishes with  
our pigeons our coils our flowers and our scent.

Mother, our time eternal, the wide orientation  
I worship you.

## Documents of the Fifth All Sri Lanka Congress of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party

25-26, June 2010

1. Understanding the Current Global Situation
2. The International Situation
3. The National Situation

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

*K Marx and F Engels*  
*The Manifesto of the Communist party 1848*

## Understanding the Current Global Situation

Imperialist globalization aided by high technology has led to a complex division of labour or segregation of work and heightened contradictions based on the division of labour. As a result, the international solidarity of the working class has to face many challenges. At the same time, it is harsh that worker-peasant solidarity has not been consolidated and the path has not been paved for socialist revolution in countries which had been freed from direct colonial rule, owing to the sharpening of ethnic, religious and social contradictions created within countries by colonialism in the semi-colonial, semi-feudal period. The so-called 'welfare states' that are hostile to socialism too have set up several obstacles on the path of the working class towards social transformation. Under conditions where countries are fully in the grip of neo-colonialism and socialist countries had fallen, ethnic and religious contradictions have been further heightened in order to divert attention from the crises of capitalism; and workers' solidarity has been shattered by the creation of differences based on ethnic and religious differences as well as division of labour within a field, even among workers in the same industrial sector within a country. As a result, workers' solidarity within a country is facing many challenges.

Owing to the fall of the socialist countries and the shattering of workers' solidarity, ethnic, religious and gender differences have been made into hostile contradictions by the ruling classes and planned imperialist activities. Under these conditions, questions such as whether the contradiction between labour and capital and hence that between capitalism/imperialism and socialism is still a fundamental contradiction, and whether Marxism —the revolutionary ideology of the working class to transform the world into one of the toilers and to establish equality— and the experiences of Marxist practice are still relevant and valid are being raised repeatedly by bourgeois intellectuals, imperialist media, NGOs, upholders of postmodernism created by imperialism, and nationalists endorsing the neo-colonialist order prescribed by imperialism.

The Fifth Congress of the Party has decided to exchange some views that will provide some explanations regarding the above.

Thereby, it is important to understand the current global situation on a Marxist basis.

The emergence of imperialism as the highest form of capitalism is itself a crisis of capitalism. Likewise, the imperialist programme of globalization is a crisis of imperialism. The colonialist-imperialist system of conquering countries and bringing them under direct rule, which came into being before/after the emergence of capitalism came to an almost complete end in the 1950s, and direct control over countries was given up on the basis of giving political independence to the countries. It continued to change under a system where control was exercised by several developed capitalist countries with a single imperialist power at the centre into neo-colonial imperialism. With this transformation, imperialism was able to re-emerge from its crisis in the 1970s. Its open, neo-colonial economic policy re-established itself in the 1990s with its agenda of globalization and the tactic of war against terrorism.

The total destruction in 1992 of the structure called the Soviet Union where capitalism was restored as a result of revisionist moves there since the 1960s, capitalist transformation of the socialist countries of East Europe and China's taking the capitalist road have all created a climate free of hindrance to imperialist globalization and the tactic of war against terrorism.

It is worth noting what Karl Marx and Frederic Engels had to say in the Communist Manifesto about imperialist globalization.

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones".

"The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere". (K Marx and F Engels, the Communist Manifesto).

By this, Marx and Engels only spoke of the general tendency for capitalism to globalise.

Before the emergence of imperialism as the highest form of capitalism as categorised by Lenin, capitalist globalisation was only for the purpose of seeking markets and undertaking trade. The Portuguese, the British East India Company, the Dutch East India Company and the French

East India Company operated around the globe with their merchant capital.

Such commercial capital was basic to colonialism. Through it heavy industries were established, based on railway, electricity and telegraphy-telecommunications. Its activities became ones where powerful capitalist countries exercised direct control over several countries to obtain raw materials for the industry. Workers were absorbed in large numbers to work in mines and estates established by multinational companies, in the building of highways and railways, in transport services and in export and import trade, and thereby anti-colonial thinking was blunted.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the stronger capitalist countries devoured weaker ones. Heavy industries and financial institutions were established and they dominated national and international markets. Marx and Engels studied their consequences to put forward basic laws of economics and class contradictions in capitalist society, and the need for scientific socialism to transform them. Those findings are still valid.

The capitalist rivalry that emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century developed into monopoly capitalism and caused changes in economic and political conditions which caused hindrances to working class struggles to establish socialism.

Lenin correctly assessed the development of capitalism laden with rivalry towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century into monopoly capitalism, namely the growth of global monopoly capitalism, in his "Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism", and established the importance of carrying forward the proletarian revolution to suit the new situation.

Lenin demonstrated that control and development by finance capital comprising industrial capital and bank capital was the essence of monopoly capitalism. Imperialist forces brought the entire globe under their domination as colonies and redrew the boundaries of countries to suit their purpose of exploitation.

Lenin showed that the export of capital was a salient feature of monopoly capitalism. He showed that foreign capital penetrated undeveloped countries through companies. Companies made super-profit by paying low wages to workers in undeveloped countries. Initially investment was in plantations, mining, infrastructure and raw materials. The technology that developed at the time included telegraphy-telecommunications, railway, steam ships, canals and

heavy industry. Thereby, production, administration and commerce were centred on imperialist countries. Hence workers in imperialist countries were granted some concessions. But in colonies and semi-colonies, the workers and peasants were cruelly exploited and suppressed. Thus the global capitalist system functioned with a mechanism where the workers of the world were differentiated as workers of imperialist countries and colonial workers. Workers were moved from one colony to another. There were also situations in which workers with expertise from a powerful country worked in colonies with certain concessions. Besides, workers were segregated based on ethnicity and region.

It is true that under the current globalisation there have been several changes in the character of the global economy enabled by scientific and technological revolutions.

Imperialism expanded the capitalist system as well as the system of wage slavery. Manufacturing systems involving the participation of many million workers stretched across the globe. Its only goal was to heighten capitalist exploitation, pile up profit and defend and carry forward the system of capitalist production. That is why there is rampant inequality and poverty.

Consequently, imperialism created an upper layer from among the workers by granting them concessions. Those without such concessions became the lower layer. This enabled the blunting of struggles against imperialism and the class struggle of the workers. Planned activities are going on within imperialist countries and outside to create division of labour based on upper and lower layers of workers and thereby blunt class struggle within imperialist countries.

Different developments have been evident in this part of the imperialist globalisation programme during the past two decades.

Subjecting of workers hired at low wages to direct super exploitation has escalated at speed since imperialism overcame the Soviet Union and socialist countries in East Europe. Comrade Mao Zedong rejected as 'capitalist roaders' those who proposed adopting the market mechanism to enable rapid development. But today, that very market mechanism has captured China with ease. That too has become essential support for the survival of capitalism.

Revolutions that have occurred in science, computing and information technology have led to new systems of work in the manufacturing and service sectors. Namely, automation, robotics and

computerisation have imposed limits on skilled labour. As a result, skilled workers have become alienated from the manufacturing process.

Technologies associated with modern transport and communications, Internet and software development among others enabled by scientific and technological revolutions have led to a new form of global division of labour. This is different from the division of labour in factories that Karl Marx referred to and comprises a social segregation of social labour. New technology, using old as well as new methods, has created ways of reorganising the system of production and establishing it. Using this system, multinational companies have been able to hire labour globally at low wages from less developed countries as well as to find workers at low wages within imperialist countries, and draw them into modern manufacturing systems. Consequently, imperialist super exploitation got expanded globally and without borders. That created conditions where workers were made to wander across the globe.

Besides these, large-scale migration of people from their home countries to developed countries has led to a further complex division of labour. Those displaced by economic crises, internal political repression and civil war, become workers who intervene in the employment opportunities of workers in developed countries as well as more privileged than workers in their former countries. Thus, the division of labour that was found between workers with concessions in developed or imperialist countries and workers in less developed countries came to include one comprising immigrant workers. Its being an obstacle to the unity of the working class of the world, because of globalisation, is another complex issue. The creation of such a situation can be observed inside every country. All forms of oppression including national oppression that have been carried out by the ruling classes in the face of economic crises that had developed since the colonial era as well as their continuation in new forms under the current globalisation have subjected working class unity to several challenges.

Thus, the imperialist era has not ended yet. After the efforts of the working class of the world to bring it to an end in the Soviet Union, the socialist countries of East Europe, Vietnam and China by establishing state power have been thwarted by imperialism, the imperialist era continues with a programme of globalisation. But the programme of globalisation is facing a variety of crises. Especially, the financial crises and the economic decline of US imperialism and other capitalist countries bear witness to it.

Thus the answer to the imperialist era is in Leninism. Hence the need has not become obsolete for the working class, other exploited classes, and oppressed and suppressed people to take it in their hands as a weapon, generally and specifically honed to suit contemporary changes.

Confusing interpretations are offered to claim that communications, robotics, computing and advanced technologies have diminished the significance of labour. That the ordinary people too now have the right to information and knowledge is a result of socialism. On that basis, a situation arrived where communications, information technology and advanced technologies need to be operated by ordinary people.

Neither computers nor robots generate the surplus value which is the main operating principle of production. It is the workers who provide labour who create them. Capitalist media and bourgeois intellectuals conceal the truth that neither computers nor robots earn profit and that it is unpaid human labour that generates profit.

The purpose of introducing advanced technology is to produce more using fewer workers in less time. But the use of advanced technology on a small scale increases the cost of production and reduces profit. Thus it becomes necessary to increase production on a large scale. But the products cannot be sold in the world's capitalist market. It becomes surplus production and adds to economic crises, thereby inducing the workers to take up class struggle.

As long as humanity lasts, production of goods and services will remain essential. It should be work that has to be superior and dominant there. When there are products and services to meet the needs of the people, there is no need to resort to surplus production by the profit-oriented capitalist mode of production. The socialist system can ensure need based production and services. Means of production will be independent there.

It has been proven once again that it is socialism that is the answer to the crises of imperialist economic crises. But its mechanism has to incorporate new dimensions based on experience.

Since the working class comprises the majority and the most advanced section of the people in the imperialist era, socialism has to be rebuilt globally through class hegemony to meet new conditions and needs. It is governance and revolution under working class leadership that can solve the economic crises and create a society where man does not exploit man.

The development of advanced technology and the imperialist globalisation linked with it have created a variety of complexities among the workers, peasants and all other exploited toiling people. When examined closely, it can be seen that the fundamental contradictions between labour and capital, and between capitalism and socialism still exists; and that Marxism remains the powerful weapon that can resolve it.

—  
There is still a historical duty for communists and communist party upholding Marxism to carry forward class revolution.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The International Situation

Even before the end of World War II, a new world order to establish an imperialist balance of power was arrived at under the Atlantic Treaty signed by US President Roosevelt and British Premier Churchill, where imperialist countries will continue to exploit their colonies without directly holding on them. In 1944, representatives in the financial sector from 44 countries met in Breton Woods in New Hampshire, USA to finalise the draft for setting up the International Monetary Fund. Schemes were devised to protect the financial capital market, and to offer credit and aid to countries. Accordingly, the IMF became an establishment with power to impose conditions on countries and secure pledges from them. Its control was in the hands of imperialist countries, and it became the establishment of neo-colonial world order that implemented the imperialist agenda of shaping developing countries into indirect colonies. All organisations established since, including the World Bank, and the United Nations and its agent organisations very nearly carried out the imperialist agenda. Although the survival and development of the Soviet Union, and later the socialist camp including countries such as China, accommodated the UN and the Breton Woods Agreement as the prevailing international order, struggles against the neo-colonial agenda remained strong.

Although the contradictions that developed in the socialist camp which emerged as a powerful force since the days of the Third International led to a climate favouring the successful implementation of the neo-colonial agenda, the agenda faced challenges due to the national liberation struggles and national economic initiatives of nationalist governments in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the 1960s. It is in this climate that imperialist globalisation was introduced.

The World Trade Organisation was established in 1995 to officially implement that agenda. Accordingly, the neo-colonial agenda put forward by the international organisations and imperialist countries was mostly implemented by multinational companies. In the year 2000, globalisation was accepted as the new world order in the Millennium Report of the UN. Thereby, capital became formally globalised. An imperialist information network and security network have been established as its extensions. Yet, the finance capital market is currently facing various setbacks and complications. Many financial institutions

have gone under in the US and other capitalist countries. Working class struggles against the state have seen an unprecedented increase in imperialist countries.

Problems in the Middle East are further intensifying. Countries in East Europe are being fragmented by the US and Western imperialist countries. Many countries have US imperialist military bases. US imperialism has committed military aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan, and set up puppet governments there. The ruling classes there have been transformed into puppets of imperialist forces. These are consequences of neo-colonialist attacks. There are besides other effects of neo-colonialism that one can observe. The people there are hostile to imperialism.

North Korea and Cuba, which are developing their socialist structures amid many challenges, are also carrying out programmes of anti-imperialism and resistance to globalisation. Although these measures relate to their national survival, anti-imperialism is practiced based on socialist structures. Although neo-colonial impact is less in these countries than elsewhere, they too make compromises with international neo-colonial establishments such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO as well as with imperialist forces. There has been compulsion to permit the functioning of multinational companies within those countries. Although Venezuela and Bolivia do not have socialist structures like in North Korea and Cuba, they have survived total capture by neo-colonialism owing to the practice of progressive nationalism based on anti-imperialism.

Since China, besides being a partner in imperialist globalisation, has also become capitalist and —although not belonging to the imperialist ranks— is in rivalry with imperialist countries and their allies, it is implementing a programme to establish its hegemony. Its development, although not typical of existing imperialist models, can lead it towards becoming imperialist. Vietnam has been teaming up with China to act in concord with China's programme.

Although India is subject to neo-colonial attacks, since the big bourgeoisie and the bureaucrat capitalist class are its ruling classes, it remains a partner in imperialist globalisation and a trusted partner of imperialism. While it depends on US imperialism, it is imposing imperialist interests directly on Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives and indirectly on African countries. Countries such as Brazil and South Africa remain partners in imperialist globalisation. In the Middle East, Israel remains a partner of imperialism and of military globalisation.

Besides the above countries, other Asian, African and Latin American countries, while being dominated by big bourgeoisie and the bureaucrat capitalist class, are subservient to imperialism and are clients of imperialism. They are also examples of a new class of comprador capitalists and are neo-colonies.

The imperialist system, with US imperialism dominating finance capital and boasting military might at its centre, functions with the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and other European hegemonic powers as well as Russia and Japan as its members. These countries implement neo-colonialism with a neo-liberal economic system through the programme of globalisation. When it suits them, they incite and defend parochial approaches such as religious fundamentalism, nationalism and racism.

The capitalist camp, socialist camp and non-aligned countries that existed earlier are no more. Although the alignment of countries in today's world seems blurred, they can be classified as follows:

1. *Imperialist countries, partners of their group, and the group of multinational companies;*
2. *Oppressed countries, nations and their people;*
3. *Countries with a socialist structure, socialist forces, anti-imperialist countries and forces;*
4. *Anti-imperialist forces and people of small or weak countries.*

International contradictions may be classified as:

1. *Contradictions between imperialist forces, between monopoly capitalist forces, between imperialist forces and monopoly capitalist forces;*
2. *Contradictions between imperialism and oppressed nations;*
3. *Contradictions between countries with socialist structures, socialist forces, anti-imperialist countries, and their people on the one hand and imperialist countries and forces, monopoly capitalist forces and neo-colonial establishments on the other;*
4. *Contradictions between countries with socialist structures and other countries;*
5. *Contradictions between large (powerful) countries and small (weaker) countries;*
6. *Contradictions between labour and capital.*

It can be seen that, ethnic, religious, and regional forces, and feudal forces that are the ruling and dominant classes in many countries have, for the sake of their own survival, mobilised against imperialism and globalisation. Regional alliances such as ASEAN, SAARC and G-15 have among them anti-imperialist forces. However, despite contradictions between them and countries of G-7, these alliances are not feasible anti-imperialist fronts.

Although subject to continuous neo-colonial attack, the ruling classes of neo-colonial countries do embrace imperialist agendas in order to repressively rule the local population, and to defeat struggles for democracy, right to self determination, workers' rights and for social change. War against terrorism, neo-liberal economic policy, letting in multinational companies, yielding to international organisations in order to receive aid, and allowing international and local 'voluntary organisations' are some such instances.

Under the circumstances, the ruling classes of neo-colonial powers are ineligible to talk about independence, sovereignty, unity, integrity and progressive nationalism. Likewise, the dominant forces of nationalism in oppressed countries, having accepted neo-colonialism and imperialist globalisation, are ineligible to carry forward progressive nationalism.

Although, since the Third International, a vast number of communist parties sided with socialist China in view of its stand against revisionism, the Communist Party of China failed to build up a new communist international. Although some of the other communist parties showed interest in building up a new communist international, there was no consensus. (Although Trotskyite parties talk of the 'Fourth International' it should be noted that they function as numerous disparate groups).

Those who have accepted revisionism —namely achieving social transformation/revolution by peaceful means— have no interest in internationalism. Although they have developed links with well known communist parties that had been in power, those parties have no interest in revolutionary internationalism.

Among parties that have announced themselves as "Maoist", all but a few take a parochial stand that they will have links or develop a relationship with only the parties that announce themselves as "Maoist". They have built a few regional and international organisations, but have not built strong internationalism.

If any party seeks to have links or to develop a relationship with the Party, the Party is not reluctant to accept it because it calls itself "Maoist". The Party refers to the development of Marxism as Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought and other developments, and uses them as its guides. It does not endorse the rejection of Mao's contributions by some Eurocentric Communist Parties. Some of Mao's contributions suit conditions specific to China and to undeveloped countries in general. The stand against revisionism, theses on contradictions, new-democratic revolution and people's war could be among those with universal relevance. Since this the era of imperialism and the era of Leninism, which is the answer to imperialism, and since there is a need for broad unity among communist parties, we prefer the term "Mao Zedong Thought" to the term "Maoist". The Party endorsed the concept of "Three Worlds" when it functioned under the name, Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left). Contradictions concerning the concept of "Three Worlds" constituted one of the several reasons why leading comrades of the party led by Comrade N Sanmugathasan were sidelined and the Party was founded. We look at that concept critically now. We also differed with the removal of the contradiction between imperialism and socialism from among the main contradictions by the Communist Party of China after the death of Mao Zedong. We differed with many schemes, including Deng Xiaoping's reforms, to move China towards capitalism. The freedom of a communist party to adopt policies and plans to suit the objective conditions obtaining within a country cannot be a licence for revisionism and capitalism.

We had denounced the shift of the Soviet Union towards revisionism under the leadership of Khrushchev during his time, and did not fail to point out the mistakes committed by Lin Biao's gang in China, while Mao was still alive.

The Party is now strengthening its links with the anti-imperialist movements, and democratic, left, progressive and communist parties across the world. In the context of a variety of initiatives, in the absence of one strong anti-imperialist movement, the Party desires to collaborate with a number of anti-imperialist organisations that are sincere from our standpoint. Currently the Party is officially a member of the organisation called the Joint Committee of International Anti-Imperialist Organisations and its secretariat. At home and abroad, the Party has taken part in anti-imperialist activities. Within the country, it celebrates 1<sup>st</sup> January, Cuba's National Day, as Anti-Imperialism Day.

Neither relationship nor link nor general consensus is sustainable with reactionary nationalist, feudal, and fanatically religious bodies.

In the current situation, in which several international organisations are active, if need arises or if it is possible to work with more than one such international organisation, the Party reserves the right to do so. Relationship with more than one political party within the country too is unavoidable. The Party does not belong to any international communist organisation at present. But it has links with several international communist organisations.

The Party has links and relationship with communist parties in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, the US, and the Philippines. Besides them, it has established links with communist parties of other countries as well. It seeks to further develop these relationships. As far as the Party is concerned, its desire is to develop links and relationships with communist parties of the world with which there is more agreement than disagreement. Its links with many parties are on that basis; and it seeks to develop the links into relationships. The Party believes that contradictions can be resolved in a friendly way through exchange of views based on "unity and struggle". Some notes have been published in the February 2010 issue (No. 36) of New Democracy, the quarterly journal of the Party under the heading "On Contradictions among Fraternal Parties" with the aim of reinforcing links and relationship with the communists parties of the world. The Party wishes to discuss on that basis with the communists parties of the world and seek solutions.

The Party works with an open mind to arrive at conclusions on matters that have hitherto not been scientifically resolved and are changeable under present conditions by listening to, discussing and debating various opinions and views. The Party is mindful that it is basic to Marxism to take specific decisions in specific contexts. The Party is firmly resolved to retain the opportunity for it and develop bilateral relations with other communist parties; to develop them further into multilateral relations; to build an international communist movement that will develop through region, continent and the international world; and to develop proletarian internationalism.

Marxist Leninists besides opposing capitalism and imperialism do not compromise with revisionism, opportunism, anarchism or adventurism. The Party believes that a way to build the international communist movement will emerge through the strengthening and unity of the communist parties of the South Asian region.

With imperialism setting up various organisations including NGOs internationally, regionally and locally and functioning through them; anti-imperialism needs more powerful organisations to combat them.

Likewise, there is need for communist organisations. The Party is firmly resolved to accept and carry out specific as well as general duties and responsibilities relating to it.

For a struggle or an uprising within a country to be truly —not merely in words— a part of the international revolution, for international struggles and revolutions, and national struggles and revolutions to have commonality in purpose and practice, and to achieve true international consensus, there is a need to initiate dialogue between communist parties as well as to make decisions and resolutions based on common agreement.

1. *Marxism has to be deepened and broadened, and reinforced in ways that suit the new situations, not merely as political or economic theory, but also as multi-faceted theory and practice of socio political and cultural issues of identity, and issues of environment, human existence, physical and social sciences, and culture. The relevant studies should be carried out through an international centre. Specifically, it is important that the reasons for capitalist restoration in countries such as the Soviet Union and China are correctly identified and compiled. Lenin had warned that even under socialist rule the reactionary classes will act against socialism in numerous ways. It should also be borne in mind that Mao said that class struggle should continue under socialism.*
2. *General consensus among communist parties of various countries should be achieved regionally and internationally through criticism-self criticism, discussions, debates and exchange of views*
3. *An international centre should be set up to establish international solidarity in the struggles and revolutions of communist parties. Through it, struggles of communist parties could be coordinated and strengthened.*
4. *Struggles against imperialism and imperialist globalisation, and against the capitalist ruling classes within countries should be strengthened and led to success through the international communist movement and its various networks. An international centre should be established for the purpose.*
5. *Communist parties wielding state power should emphasise and strengthen relations between the people and parties of countries than to that between the states.*

6. *A propaganda and communications network of the international communist movement should be established.*
7. *There should be solidarity with struggles against all manner of anti-human systems including imperialism, capitalism, ethnic chauvinism and religious fundamentalism.*
8. *A new communist international should be built that will incorporate the above aspects.*

**Long Live Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought!**

**Long Live Communist Internationalism!**

**Victory to the Struggles of the Workers and Toiling Masses of the World!**

**Victory to the Struggles of Oppressed Countries, Nations and People!**

**Let Bilateral and International Relations between Communist Parties Grow Stronger!**

**Down with Imperialist and Capitalist Hegemony!**

\*\*\*\*\*

## The National Situation

Our party which was founded on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1978 with the name Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left) had its First Congress in 1984. Its Second Congress was held in 1991 where it changed its name to New Democratic Party. It held its Third Congress in 1997 and the Fourth Congress in 2002. It is holding its Fifth Congress in 2010.

At the time of the Fourth Congress, peace negotiations facilitated by the Norwegian government were under way between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam—which alone was finally carrying forward armed resistance in the course of armed activities of the national liberation struggle—and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe of the United National Party, which led the United National Front alliance with a parliamentary majority. The United People's Freedom Alliance came to power in the general elections held in 2004 following dissolution of parliament by President Chandrika Kumarathunga. Peace efforts were stalled. When Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected president late in 2005, peace efforts were ended and war was resumed. The military actions of the government in the North-East against the LTTE came to an end on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 with the killing of many important leaders of the LTTE including V Pirapakran. As a result of this final military action, up to 40,000 people were killed; and over 300,000 people were detained in open air camps, with over half the number sustaining injuries. It is said that around 15,000 persons have gone missing. More than 12,000 persons had been arrested. Although many of them have been released after many months of detention, a large section of them are still detained. Although it is said that resettlement is in progress, there are still large numbers in the camps. Those who are in settled regions are like refugees. In all, the Tamils have lost whatever they had. As the Party says, although the military action is over, the national question remains the main problem of Sri Lanka. A political solution has to be found for it through negotiations.

During the so-called times of peace, during the war and after the end of the war, foreign forces have tightened their grip on Sri Lanka. Threats from the EU, the US and India have increased. Countries such as the US, India, Pakistan, China and Russia have aided the Sri Lankan state in many ways.

India trained Tamil militant groups and provided them with plans to undertake attacks in Sri Lanka in order to cause a secessionist armed

revolt in Sri Lanka, whose economy in the 1970s was relatively strong and independent compared with India. By bringing about the Sri Lanka-India Accord of 1987, India subdued Sri Lanka, which was leaning towards the West and US imperialism. Of the Tamil armed groups, the LTTE continued with its activities without submitting to India's machinations. US and European meddling in the Sri Lankan national question saw an increase in the 1990s. As a result, peace initiatives were undertaken with Norwegian facilitation. Although the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government took part in it, they did so with ulterior motives and hidden agendas.

From the outset India took various measures to undermine the peace efforts. India's chances improved when Mahinda Rajapaksa, with a feudal, Sinhala conservative basis that was hostile to peace efforts, came to power. India's intentions were to annihilate the LTTE in Sri Lanka and to implement the Provincial Council system, which was set up under the Sri Lanka-India Accord of 1987 and failed to assure even minimally the national aspirations of the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamils of Sri Lanka, as the solution to the national question. Rajapaksa, who had no desire to implement the Provincial Council system, only intended military action against the LTTE and moved closer to countries such as China, Pakistan, Vietnam and Russia, which were already providing military aid to Sri Lanka. Hence, India became a partner in Rajapaksa's military action. The role of India could be appreciated from the statement by Rajapaksa at the end of the military action that he really fought 'India's war'.

With these contributions India made a defence agreement with Sri Lanka. It also used the Free Trade Agreement signed in 1999 to exercise greater control over Sri Lanka's import trade to become the main exporter to Sri Lanka. But Sri Lanka failed to secure matching gains. There are still restrictions on the export of a large number of Sri Lankan goods to India. Besides bringing under its control oil tank farms adjoining the Trincomalee harbour, after the Accord of 1987, India has also taken control of Sri Lanka's fuel oil trade through Indian Oil Company. India is now exerting pressure on Sri Lanka to accept the CEPA agreement that will cover a wide variety of services. Through that a situation will arise in which India will dominate Sri Lanka's service sector. India has also snatched from Norway the project of exploration for oil in Mannar Island. India has undertaken the building of the harbour and the new cement factory at Kankasanturai, and the building of the railway and highways in the Northern Province. In the Eastern Province, India has undertaken to build the thermal power station in Sampur. It is seeking to bring under its control the mining of ilmenite

in Pulmoddai and Thirukkivil in the Eastern Province. Indian companies have commenced cultivation schemes in thousands of acres in the Eastern Province. Indian companies are making efforts to set up factories as joint ventures and on their own. India is controlling Sri Lanka's tea trade, and Indians hold an increased share of tea plantations in Sri Lanka.

China, likewise, has developed a close relationship with the Sri Lankan state and has secured its influence over Sri Lanka through the construction of the harbour in Hambantota, expressways and the thermal power station in Noraicholai. China's aid to Sri Lanka is many times more than that from India. The growth of China's capitalist economy and its market expansion could push it towards exercising hegemony over Sri Lanka.

Japan has established its dominance over Sri Lanka through technology transfer, motor vehicle business and the Upper Kothmale Scheme among others. The US exercises control through the sale of medicine and medical equipment among others. The US heads the table in Sri Lanka's export trade. Besides, the forces of US and European imperialism, by posing to be supportive of Tamil secessionists and calling for war crime inquiries in Sri Lanka, are diplomatically threatening the Sri Lankan state.

The UN too is pressing for war crime inquiries in Sri Lanka, and is to ~~nominate~~ nominate a commission of inquiry to study the Sri Lankan situation.

The US and European countries, by conducting themselves in ways that seem to favour the setting up of the "Trans-national Government of Tamil Eelam" by the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora elite, are bringing pressure to bear on the Sri Lankan state. The GSP+ tax concession granted by the European Commission to Sri Lanka's garment exports is to be suspended. The IMF, which granted massive loans to Sri Lanka while the war was intense, also imposed several severe conditions on Sri Lanka. It has demanded the reduction of the budget deficit by a half (making it unavoidable for Sri Lanka to increase taxes as well as the prices of goods). There is also pressure to reduce fund allocations for free education and health as well as to reduce or abolish state pension. A condition also has been imposed that Sri Lanka be fully transformed into a tourist destination.

All industries under state control have been sold to the private sector; and multinational companies dominate the food and agriculture sectors as well. The national economy that was being built in the 1950s, 60s and 70s has been fully wrecked.

The national bourgeois dominance and agenda of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (the situation in the 1950s, 60s and 70s) have been brought to an end through the agendas under the leadership of Rajapaksa. National bourgeois aspirations have been fully sidelined in the Sri Lankan state structure. Although the election manifesto of Rajapaksa known as "Mahinda Chinthanaya" referred to the development of backward villages, foreign aid and investment are drawn in to fund even minor projects.

## The Fundamental Contradiction

While remnants of feudalism are evident in political, economic and cultural affairs, the big/comprador bourgeois classes and bureaucrat capitalist classes are the ruling classes of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan state is a neo-colonial state that represents these classes. Thus the Sri Lankan state is a conservative Sinhala Buddhist, big/comprador bourgeois neo-colonial state. Workers, peasants and other toiling masses, small traders, the middle classes, women, the youth, and minority nationalities comprise those ruled by it.

The contradiction between imperialism, neo-colonialism, big/comprador capitalism and bureaucrat capitalism on the one hand and socialism on the other, or that between the imperialist, neo-colonialist, big/comprador capitalist and bureaucrat capitalist classes on the one hand and the worker and peasant classes on the other is the fundamental contradiction in Sri Lanka. Contradictions such as that between chauvinism and the minority nationalities, gender oppression of women, and caste oppression are secondary contradictions. Since the Sri Lankan state is organised as a chauvinist state that oppresses minority nationalities, the contradiction between the chauvinist state and the people of the minority nationalities has emerged as the main contradiction. This contradiction needs to be resolved or mitigated.

Sri Lanka was a colony of the Portuguese from 1505, then the Dutch from 1658, and finally the British from 1796 until 1948. The whole of Sri Lanka was brought under one rule in 1815 by the British. In 1948, the British transferred state power in Sri Lanka to the big bourgeoisie. When they transferred power, they imposed a Westminster-style parliamentary system of government based on the constitution drafted by Lord Soulbury. The constitution did not affirm equality for the minorities but granted concessions. The constitution of 1972 was in a way one that terminated ties with the British sovereign. It made Sri Lanka a republic, and gave Buddhism special status.

The constitution of 1978 introduced the system of executive presidential rule as well as facilitated the surrendering of Sri Lanka to foreign forces. Through it, personal dictatorship and administrative fascism were made into an accepted way of government. It may be said that this system of government introduced by the UNP, became well entrenched with increasingly fascist features, since 1994 under Chandrika Kumarathunga and since 2005 under Mahinda Rajapaksa. Yet, a security-centred system of fascist rule has become established through military actions, security procedures, harsh implementation of the state of emergency and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, murders, 'disappearances', and threats to normal expression of opinions under the Rajapaksa regime.

Following the military action of last year, Mahinda Rajapaksa won the presidential election held in January this year to become president for a second term. Former army commander, General Sarath Fonseka, who was his opponent in the election, has been accused of violation of army regulations and kept under detention. Contradictions between Rajapaksa and Fonseka, who worked together in the military action against the LTTE, which caused tremendous losses to the Tamil people, grew stronger just a few months after the military action came to an end. Mahinda Rajapaksa, out of concern that there could be a military coup and accepting Indian advice, held the presidential election a year before the end of his term. There is evidence that US imperialism was behind Sarath Fonseka contesting him as the candidate of the UNP and the JVP. Thus there was almost a cold war between the US and India in the presidential election. Mahinda Rajapaksa, with India's blessings, won. In the parliamentary elections held in April, the United People's Freedom Alliance of Mahinda Rajapaksa scored a landslide victory leaving it only 6 seats short of a two-thirds majority. Following this election, the political strength of the minority parties and of small political parties has been reduced in a planned manner.

Most of the responsibilities in the cabinet formed after the elections have been taken over by Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development and another brother Gothabaya Rajapaksa. A family rule has been established by this means.

It has been announced that the article of the constitution that prevents a person from serving as president for more than two terms is to be amended to allow Mahinda Rajapaksa, who totally rejects finding a political solution to the national question by devolution of power, to be president for any number of terms. It has also been announced that the system of proportional representation, which, despite its many

defects, offers small political parties and parties of the minorities a chance to secure representation, is also to be amended.

All of these are activities to establish a personal fascist dictatorial system of government.

As a result, a situation will arise in which the UNP and the SLFP, which represent comprador and bureaucrat capitalist classes, will share the parliament.

There are more than sixty political parties in Sri Lankan parliamentary politics. All of them are allied with either the UNP or the SLFP. The Tamil National Alliance that functions in the North-East and a party upholding conservative Tamil nationalism acts as India's agent. Nearly all former Tamil militant groups are allies of the government. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, which functions among the Muslims, is linked with the UNP whereas those who departed from it are with the government. All political parties functioning among Hill Country Tamils have joined the government, except the Democratic People's Front which is with the UNP. The JVP, with a petit bourgeois basis, that launched armed insurrections in 1971 and 1988 and joined Mahinda Rajapaksa to represent the Sinhala national bourgeoisie, is now functioning under the leadership in the National Democratic Front. Although it calls itself a left party, it is also a chauvinist party.

The revisionist Sri Lanka Communist Party, and the Trotskyite Lanka Samasamaja Party and the National Democratic Front are together in the government. Besides them, there are some Trotskyite parties that function outside parliament.

The circumstances demand the services of a proletarian revolutionary Marxist Leninist party and its development. The only existing Marxist-Leninist Party with the necessary revolutionary ideology for it is the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party. From the year of inception the Party, state repression has been rising rapidly. The Party has survived challenges from revisionists, Trotskyites and Tamil and Sinhala narrow nationalists to maintain its position. It needs to expand its operational base on a national scale among all nationalities.

Even the national democratic task has not been completed for the people of Sri Lanka.

Clearly, one cannot expect the ruling classes of Sri Lanka to establish national democracy. National democracy has not been established by the institutionalised systems of parliamentary and presidential rule. On the contrary, the ruling classes have institutionalised Sinhala

Buddhist dominance and embraced neo-colonialism in full by becoming clients of imperialism.

Thus, achieving the national democracy that is denied by feudalism, the neo-colonial state and clients of imperialism becomes both aspiration and duty of the entire people of Sri Lanka. The tactical national democratic programme is one that has to be carried forward by a broad united front comprising the political parties of all oppressed nationalities, left political parties, democratic political parties, anti-imperialist organisations, trade unions, peasants' organisations, organisations for art and literature and intellectuals. Under conditions where the power to make economic and political decisions in the programme goes to the people, the programme should include plans to transfer power to the people; a democracy that will affirm the independence, sovereignty and unity of Sri Lanka; human rights; affirmation of equality, autonomy and the right to self determination for the nationalities; and to build the national economy and national culture.

To fulfil the programme, a political path of mass struggle should be implemented, that will transcend the road of parliamentary politics.

The above stage is a prerequisite to the New Democratic Revolution put forward by the Party. Since Sri Lanka is not a developed capitalist country, the New Democratic Revolution becomes an essential first stage. The New Democratic Revolution is a revolution guided and led by a Marxist Leninist party with working class leadership to fulfil the preconditions that will favour the implementation of socialist structures by mobilising all nationalities, exploited classes, patriotic anti-imperialist forces, and national bourgeois and petit bourgeois forces in the workers' and peasants' united front through revolutionary struggle to defeat imperialism and big/comprador capitalism, ensure the right of nationalities to self determination based on their preferences and eliminating the remnants of feudalism. This is the way to resolve the fundamental contradiction. Through the socialist structure we will see the arrival of a classless world and arrive at the communist era where the state withers.

### The National Question as the Main Contradiction

When the British left Sri Lanka in 1948 transferring state power to the big/comprador bourgeoisie, they imposed on the people of Sri Lanka a Westminster-style parliamentary system based on the constitution drafted by Lord Soulbury and a system of government by dividing and

ruling based on it. The constitution had, in place of affirming equality between nationalities, concessions to minorities. I.e., there was provision under Article 29 of the constitution that parliament could not legislate in ways that adversely affected the minorities. Yet in 1948, the "independent parliament" deprived the Hill Country Tamils of their right to citizenship and their right to franchise; and in 1956 parliament legislated that Sinhala shall be the sole official language of Sri Lanka. Courts of law ruled that they were legitimate. The legislations were justified on the basis that a sovereign parliament can enact any law. Violence was unleashed against Tamils and Hill Country Tamils in 1958, 1977, 1983 and 1986, and against Muslims from time to time. Tamils were sidelined in educational and employment opportunities. Places for education and employment were granted not based on merit but on ethnic proportion. This suited the majority Sinhalese. Chauvinistically planned settlement of Sinhalese has been taking place in the traditional homelands of the Tamils in the North-East. Military camps too have been established. These have made the day-to-day life of Tamils insecure. The Muslims and the Hill Country Tamils are likewise subjected to national oppression.

Under these circumstances, various demands came up from the Tamil political leaderships.

1. *Initially, GG Ponnambalam, the leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress put forward a demand for equal representation on a 50-50 basis. It was rejected by the leaders of the majority nationality.*
2. *The Ilankai Tamil Arasak Katci (Federal Party) led by SJV Chelvanayakam demanded the creation of a federal system of government. Several peaceful campaigns were conducted for it. In the course of its development, an agreement made by Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranaike with SJV Chelvanayakam provided for power sharing. Following objections to that agreement by chauvinists including Buddhist priests, Bandaranaike tore up the agreement. The 1965 agreement between Dudley Senanayake and Chelvanayakam was abandoned in the face of opposition by chauvinists, revisionists and Trotskyites as well as by the leaders who later founded the JVP.*
3. *When the constitution of 1972 was drafted, the views of the Federal Party were ignored. Provision was not made for even the minimum of power sharing. Only the legal enactments under the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act that Tamil*

*shall be an administrative language in the North-east were included in the constitution. Since the leadership of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and the Federal Party were comprador bourgeois by class, they had no intention of mobilising the support of the ordinary Sinhalese workers and peasants. The Tamil leaderships upheld conservative Tamil nationalism as their response to conservative Sinhala nationalism.*

4. *As a development of the above, a demand was put forward in 1976 for a separate state of "Tamil Eelam" for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. The Tamil United Liberation Front which contested the parliamentary elections in 1977 won 18 seats and became the main parliamentary opposition party.*

In 1978, a system of executive presidency was established through the constitution of 1978, under the leadership of JR Jayawardane. This constitution too did not include power sharing or a political solution that would address the national aspirations of the Tamil people. The uprising of the Tamil youth for the rights of the Tamil people was put down by state terror and led to a war of chauvinist oppression. The Tamil youth were pushed towards armed struggle demanding a separate state. India took advantage of the situation, and provided military training to more than thirty Tamil youth organisations as well as planned their activities.

Through these activities, India persuaded President JR Jayawardane to reconcile to India, and, while imposing the Sri Lanka-India Accord of 1987, it also imposed a provincial council system on the people of Sri Lanka, as a solution to the problems of the Tamils. The Indian army which came to Sri Lanka immediately following the 1987 Accord took military action against the LTTE which refused consent to the Agreement. Until its recall in 1990, the Indian army caused serious destruction in Tamil areas.

The LTTE, which emerged as a force on its own at this stage, negotiated with President R Premadasa in 1991, who was later killed by the LTTE in 1993. Although there were negotiations with President Chandrika Kumarathunga after her election in 1994, no consensus was reached. Although Chandrika Kumarathunga, without seeking the consent of the LTTE, attempted to introduce a union of regions with greater powers than the provincial councils (but separating the Eastern Province from the Northern Province, and dividing the Eastern Province into three further parts), the move was abandoned in view of opposition from the UNP. Chandrika Kumarathunga survived with severe injuries an attempt on her life by the LTTE.

In 2001, Ranil Wickremasinghe, who secured a parliamentary majority in the general election, became prime minister. A ceasefire agreement was reached during his period as prime minister, and peace negotiations were initiated. Owing to lack of progress, the LTTE withdrew from negotiations in mid-2003. Following the tsunami of December 2004 which severely affected the North-East, an arrangement (PTOMS) was agreed upon, allowing for the rehabilitation of tsunami victims in collaboration with the LTTE. It was declared invalid in 2005 by the Supreme Court following a petition to the Supreme Court by the chauvinist JVP and Hela Urumaya. The Supreme Court also ordered the separation of the Northern and Eastern provinces which were provisionally merged under the Accord of 1987.

Besides, the stand taken by President Rajapaksa who succeeded Chandrika Kumarathunga in 2005 was that the power over police and land granted to the provincial councils under the provincial council system will not be granted. In a situation in which the LTTE has been defeated militarily, the position of the Sri Lankan government is that there will be no power sharing for the Tamils. Under the conditions, the national question which was the main contradiction still remains the main contradiction.

Since the nationalism which emerged from among the Tamils was not progressive, the conservative Tamil national leadership represented by the Tamil National Alliance has, since the military defeat of the LTTE, been acting as a true agent of India.

The origin of the TNA was the Tamil United Liberation Front which in 1976 resolved that a separate Tamil Eelam was the solution to the problems of the Tamil people. It was the erroneous conduct of the TULF that provided the basis for the armed struggle of the LTTE. The TNA in 2002 agreed to accept the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamils. Having won 22 parliamentary seats on that basis, it acted as the agent of the LTTE in parliament.

In the same way that the Tamil national leadership put forward narrow Tamil nationalism as an alternative to chauvinist nationalism, the LTTE acted to make the Tamil nationality loyal to US and Western imperialisms and Indian expansionism. Narrow nationalism and chauvinism nurtured each other to make the national question the main contradiction of the country and wreck the country and its people. As a result, the Tamil people and other minority nationalities suffered untold damage for 30 years until 2009 May. The Party did not fail to point out that, in contrast to the expectation that a separate Tamil Eelam would establish the self determination of Tamils, the demand

and the struggle for it will lead to increased imperialist intervention, cause devastation not only to the Tamils but also to Sri Lanka, and affect the independence, autonomy and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. The Party has emphasised that, to avoid such dangers, a political solution should be found within the framework of a united Sri Lanka that will establish autonomy and equality for the Tamils in a way that will affirm their right to self determination; and carried forward mass struggles for the purpose. As a result it was branded a traitor to the separatist cause by Tamil nationalists and supporters of secessionism by chauvinists. Even now, both Sinhala chauvinism and narrow Tamil nationalism are on their respective beaten tracks.

As a class the LTTE too was petit-bourgeois. It has been neither anti-imperialist nor anti-hegemonic. It too was a continuation of the conservative Tamil leadership. Since it was on the side of the Tamil people struggling for their rights, it was not possible to place it on par with the Sinhala chauvinist Sri Lankan state. Yet the Party did not fail to criticise its mistakes.

Since the military suppression of the LTTE in May 2009, the elite among the Tamil diaspora are seeking to propagate outside Sri Lanka the demand for the “secession of Tamil Eelam” under the name, “Trans-National Government of Tamil Eelam”. It should be reminded again and again that it was the very India that enabled the emergence and growth of the LTTE that suppressed it. It should also be borne in mind that it was the US that in 1998 took the lead to ban the LTTE as a terrorist organisation and played a major role in its suppression. It was again the US that amid the final stages of military activity in the Mullaitivu District gave the impression that it will send aircraft to rescue the leaders of the LTTE and eventually betrayed them.

Anyone who understands the present state of Balkan countries that have been fragmented by US intervention, recognises how really independent they are, and has learnt from it, will realise that, even if Sri Lanka is fragmented with the help of the US, it will not be the right of Tamils to self determination. (We believe that Sri Lanka will not be fragmented in that way since the US wants the whole of Sri Lanka for itself). Hence we are very cautious about the concept of “Trans-National Government of Tamil Eelam”. Therefore it will be good if the elite among the Tamil diaspora will not push the Sri Lankan Tamils more and more towards imperialism on the pretext of using the US to divide Sri Lanka in the way secession was achieved in the Balkans.

The ordinary Tamils of the diaspora should not mobilise behind the slogan of “Trans-National Government of Tamil Eelam” that is aligned

with imperialism and should understand the reality and take the correct decisions to avoid continuing to be deluded.

Thus, the best option for the ordinary Tamils of the diaspora, if they wish to participate in or support the struggle of the minority nationalities of Sri Lanka, will be to undertake campaigns that suit the particular environment of their country of residence to persuade and pressurise those concerned to find a political solution to the national question. In current circumstances, those who argue that finding a political solution other than secession will not amount to the right to self determination are not genuine supporters of the right of the Tamils to self determination. To say this is not to compromise with chauvinism, because no political solution can be won without struggling against chauvinism.

It is only under circumstances where national democracy is established in Sri Lanka and a just solution is found for the national question and the New Democratic Revolution wins that the Tamil people will be able to establish their right to self determination out of their own accord.

Sri Lanka has a population of 26 million. It is a multi-ethnic country with 73.9% Sinhalese, 12.7% Tamils, 7% Muslims and 5.5% Hill Country Tamils. It has besides communities such as Burghers, Malays and Aththo (Vedda). Since Sri Lanka has people who observe Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, it is also a multi-religious country. The position of the Party is that there are four nationalities, namely, Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, and that a political solution should be found within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, affirming their equality and autonomy based on the right to self determination.

To achieve that solution, the struggle to secure the aspirations of the nationalities that puts forward the demands of the oppressed Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities should be undertaken in a new form that rejects imperialism, hegemony, big/comprador capitalism and feudalism and enjoys the support of the Sinhalese workers and peasants.

Marxism teaches us that the national question and organizations that are directly or indirectly linked with it have capitalist characteristics. Such organizations generally tend to vacillate with an inclination to side with imperialism and big/comprador capitalist classes. Marxist Leninist parties cannot endorse the steps that US imperialism took to fragment countries in the Balkans and other such actions and divert the attention of the people from the main issues, or

function as appendages of movements that accept such actions. The unfailing duty of communists is to bear in mind the aspirations of nationalities, approach and respect their struggles from the tactical stand of a united front, and be on the side of oppressed nationalities.

Besides, the national question is directly included in the programme of a Marxist Leninist party on occasions where communists can incorporate the national liberation struggle in the struggle for national democracy under proletarian leadership and the New Democratic Revolution. In countries that have with imperialist support been broken up in the name of self-determination, there has been no qualitative change in the lives of nationalities, and demands for independent states keep coming up.

Communists should struggle to unite nationalities based on the right to self determination against the imperialist and big/comprador capitalist system that divides and rules the people. In struggles carried out by the petit bourgeois and national bourgeois classes, these forces do not take measures to democratise society by calling for land for the landless alongside anti-imperialist and anti-feudal activities. Hence it is the duty of communists to bring together such struggles.

In such struggles it is the duty of communists, while aligning with the demand for the right to self determination, to struggle against all chauvinistic positions as well as positions supportive of imperialism and the state. That has been the approach adopted by the Party in relation to the national question in Sri Lanka.

The anti-imperialist stand cannot go along with national oppression. A stand supportive of national liberation cannot be supportive of imperialism, big/comprador capitalism and feudalism.

That is to say that, the anti-imperialist, anti-globalisation, anti-colonialist struggles and struggles against big/comprador capitalism, bureaucrat capitalism and feudalism by the Sinhalese majority cannot, without endorsing the right of the Tamils to self determination, receive the support of or have as partners the Tamil people. Likewise, without supporting or joining as partners in the above struggles of the Sinhalese, the struggle of the Tamil people for their right to self determination cannot receive the support of Sinhalese people or have them as partners. Thus, the bitter struggle to resolve the fundamental contradiction could be reinforced by a situation in which the Tamils have won their democratic rights.

## **Politicising the Working Class and Resolving the Fundamental Struggle through Working Class Revolution**

Marxism is the revolutionary ideology of the working class, which is the advanced class active in the domains of developed and advanced field of production. The fundamental contradictions between capital and labour and between capitalism and socialism can only be resolved through working class revolution and the socialist structure. To bring about social transformation, the communist party, which is the vanguard force of that class should mobilise and politicise it, and carry forward the New Democratic Revolution and show the way to advance towards socialism. It is the responsibility of the proletariat and the communist party to mobilise forces of anti-imperialism and opposition to big/comprador capitalism and bureaucrat capitalism, annihilate the remnants of feudalism that preceded capitalism, achieve national democracy and national liberation, and lead the people towards socialism.

Sri Lanka has 10,578,000 workers. Of them 15.5% work in the state sector, 42.1% are in the private sector, 29.0% are self-employed and 11% are engaged in domestic work without wages.

2,476,000 are in the agricultural sector, among whom 460,000 are tea and rubber plantation workers.

The number employed abroad is estimated at 1,800,000. Of them a little above 1,000,000 are women. Of employment opportunities abroad, around 90% are in the Middle East, and the vast majority of the women are employed as domestic workers.

According to the government estimates of 2009, unemployment is at 5.8%. Male unemployment is estimated at 4.5% and female unemployment at 8.6%.

Since the institutionalisation of liberalisation and privatisation, the number of unorganised industrial sectors has increased. Even in organised sectors with unionised labour, the trade union movement has been weakened by practices in breach of industrial dispute legislation such as the dismissal at will of workers in contract employment, which make the employment of workers insecure.

The practice of dismissal of workers in private sector companies at any time has become legitimised. Besides that, opportunity to employ only for a contract period and the practice of retirement at will by the company are widely evident.

Filing petitions in the Supreme Court claiming that a particular strike action violates someone's fundamental rights in order to prevent state

sector employees from going on strike has been in practice in Sri Lanka over the past few years. Such situations exist in several countries, but constitute a breach of the three rights affirmed in the international Workers' Charter.

When private sector workers participate in strikes, cases are filed in civil courts seeking injunctions to stop the strikes.

Since the latter part of the 1990s, there is in the liberalised economic environment, in relative terms, an increasing tendency for the Department of Labour, industrial tribunals and courts inquiring into industrial disputes to mostly show greater interest towards the side of capital.

All of these have been interfering in the trade union rights of the workers. They show that, under neo-liberal economic conditions, imperialist globalisation and neo-colonial conditions, the rights that the workers once had are being taken away from them.

At the same time, ethnic contradictions among working people have increased owing to the national contradiction in the country. Because of chauvinistic oppression, working people among minority nationalities are being subjected to class oppression as well as ethnic oppression.

The working class which got organised during the colonial era and after is now organisationally weaker and in a state of disunity.

All major plantations have been handed over to 23 companies on long lease. A large share of it has been procured by Indian companies. The name of Sri Lanka which continues to rank third in global tea trade is being obliterated by Indian companies; i.e. Sri Lankan tea is now marketed internationally with Indian trademarks. Although tea and rubber constitute 60% of the export earnings from Sri Lankan produce, workers in those fields are receiving very low wages. Unlike other private sector employees, they are not awarded annual wage increases or wage adjustments according to the rise in cost of living. Although it is said to exist in the collective agreement between certain trade unions and the Sri Lanka Employers' Federation acting on behalf of the plantation companies, the agreement does not include a proper wage structure or a scheme for wage increase. Provisions under this collective agreement are not beneficial to the workers. As a result, workers need to struggle every two years to secure a wage increase. The Ceylon Workers Congress, Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (the trade union of the UNP) and the Joint Plantation Trade Union Centre (a grouping of 'left' trade unions) continue to sign the agreement. They also continue to betray the struggles for wage increase.

In the private sector and in the state sector, besides the trade unions of the ruling party and the main opposition party, trade unions with a Trotskyite stand are in a position to wield some influence. Their sectarian approach hindering unity is a negative feature. Of them several have moved to trade unionism devoid of politics.

Owing to the prevailing narrow nationalistic situation in the country and the opportunist errors of the left parties and trade unions, reactionary trade unions continue to dominate in the tea and rubber plantations where Hill Country Tamil workers constitute a majority. Of them, nearly all take a position of collaborating with the government, and hostile to the working class.

Our party needs to build the revolutionary trade union movement in all industrial sectors in all regions, on its own and in collaboration with other progressive forces. In the 1960s the revolutionary trade union movement was strong. The trade union movement should be built based on its experiences and to suit the neo-colonial context. Trade union work should be carried out by uniting workers of all nationalities where unity is possible, and with class solidarity as basis in industrial sectors where the workers are socially divided.

Besides, work should be carried out in unity, based on individual demands through existing trade unions.

The trade union movement, besides participation in the day-to-day problems of the workers, should act with the great responsibility of mobilising workers under revolutionary politics. Tasks should be carried out on various fronts through the trade union movement and politically against imperialism, imperialist globalisation, the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO and multinational companies and against the bogus development policies of imperialism, and in a way that assures food, clothing, shelter, education, health and employment to all and emphasises alternative development policies and programmes.

Many strikes have taken place in our country in many sectors. Of particular significance were strikes by workers during the hartal of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1953 protesting the increase in cost of living. As a result of the hartal, the government at the time had to hold its cabinet meeting in a ship anchored outside the Colombo Harbour. Since the Hartal was not fully politicised it did not advance towards its next stage of development. For lack of a programme and guidance of a revolutionary Marxist Leninist party, it did not lead to working class revolution.

Likewise, there have been major strikes in the plantation and state sectors. In July 1980, state and private sector employees went on strike.

The UNP government of the day brutally crushed it. Besides police, military, and legal action, the government dismissed the strikers from work. Several hundred thousand workers lost their jobs. As a result, the workers and the trade union movement were weakened. Many of the workers who lost their jobs committed suicide. Later, in 1988, during the time of the second insurrection of the JVP, a small fraction of those who were dismissed got re-employed.

The plantation workers did neither join the strike nor participate in supportive activities. Besides mistakes by the Trotskyite trade unions that called the strike, the fact that the CWC and the Sri Lanka National Union of Workers, the two leading trade unions in the plantations, were with the government was also a contributory factor.

All trade union struggles have been confined to demands for wage increase based on economism, winning concessions for workers based on reformism, and opportunism. The trade unions remain either as extensions of political parties aiming at parliamentary political power or are based on trade unionism alienated from revolutionary politics.

Although, in contrast, the Proletarian New Democratic Union functions among private sector unions with the aim of mobilising workers based on revolutionary politics, its activities have not yet expanded adequately. Likewise, efforts to initiate trade unions for teachers and other state employees are also in their initial stages.

In the past 30 years in which the national contradiction had sharpened, ethnic divisions among workers have increased owing to national oppression and military actions by the state as well as political and military actions on behalf of the Tamils. Activities opposing the war among the Sinhalese became isolated since they were branded as activities supportive of terrorism by chauvinistic forces. Sinhalese left wing trade unionists who voiced support for the right of Tamils to self determination were branded as terrorists and oppression was unleashed against them. Many had been in detention for several years under laws to prevent terrorism. Many are still in detention.

Comrades V Mahendran, R Jeyaseelan, S Mohan, S Sukesanan and S Krishnapriyan were arrested in February 2006 under emergency regulations and kept in detention. Of them Comrades V Mahendran, S Mohan and S Krishnapriyan were released in February 2009 and R Jeyaseelan was released in 2010 January, all without any charge. Comrade S Sukesanan continues to be detained without legal inquiry. Aside from them, Comrade N Pradeepan was arrested in April 2008 and is still in detention. Comrade Selvam Kathirgamanathan, the

Northern Regional Secretary of the Party had been subject to frequent inquiries by the armed forces. Even now he goes to the army camp to place his signature. In addition, some leading comrades of the Party have been subjected to threats.

Our party comrades, besides serving as a bridge between Sinhalese and Tamils, have also carried out several mass struggles among the Sinhalese. They are also working towards carrying forward revolutionary politics and building up a revolutionary party among the Sinhalese.

The state which is hostile to such unity and chauvinist forces have been obstacles to our party comrades in many ways. The reason for the arrest of our party comrades referred to above was their carrying out activities uniting Sinhala and Tamil people.

When our comrades launched a campaign opposing the Upper Kothmale Scheme, undertaken with financial aid from Japanese imperialism, they suffered planned attacks by thugs from the majority community. The struggle against that scheme was approached and defeated on a communal basis.

The struggle launched by us against the Sethu Samudram project undertaken by India was portrayed as one supporting 'Tamil terrorism'.

Thus, by holding up the war, the state has continued to crush the just struggles of the workers and reject their just demands. Concrete steps have not been taken to build working class solidarity against it.

Most left parties and trade unions functioning among the Sinhalese have Trotskyite bases and have been drawn in by NGO activities and post-modernist thinking. Revolutionary politics has suffered setbacks as a result. Also, the majoritarian hegemonic ideology widely visible in them and the residual feudal culture among workers are also reasons for the setbacks.

Owing to the mistakes of the opportunist left in the national question as well as its narrow nationalistic views, anti-left views (anti-China views like the anti-China pro-India positions taken when China was a socialist country, the views that are propagated that China is siding with the Sri Lankan state in the Sri Lankan national question, and views hostile to working class politics) have been effectively spread among Tamils by Tamil conservatives. That and casteism are, among others, important reasons why working class politics did not develop among Tamils.

The narrow nationalism that has been cultivated among Muslims and fundamentalist activities based on the Islamic faith which has a

strong influence on them can be recognised as aspects that are hostile to left politics among Muslims. A revolutionary trade union movement should be built that will unite by class workers of all nationalities. Activities of class solidarity should be carried out to build unity among the workers who are now socially divided by way of division of labour and narrow nationalism.

A revolutionary trade union movement should be built that will unite by class workers of all nationalities. Activities of class solidarity should be carried out to build unity among the workers who are now socially divided by way of division of labour and narrow nationalism.

The Party should work with the appropriate programmes to awaken the workers politically through struggles to win their immediate demands, mobilize them organisationally and develop them into the leading force of the proletarian revolution. Besides bringing the entire toiling masses into the identity of workers, their solidarity in all struggles should be affirmed to advance towards the proletarian revolution.

### **Peasants and Fisher-folk who should be united with Workers for the Revolution**

It is essential that the working class as the leading force and agricultural workers and landless agricultural labourers as the main force keep together as one in the revolution for social transformation.

Agricultural workers, landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants constitute the majority. They are severely exploited under the prevailing production relations in Sri Lanka. They are exploited by big landlords, big traders and multinational companies.

Of Sri Lanka's producers nearly 70% rely on agriculture (food, subsidiary food crops, cattle rearing etc). A British official in his report to the British Governor following the Uva Wellessa peasants' revolt of 1818 had stated that the varieties of food and fruit that grow in the south of Sri Lanka were adequate for the whole of Asia. Setting aside the accuracy of the statement, what is important is that it could be considered as evidence of how self sufficient Sri Lanka was in its food requirements at the time.

Cultivation of food crops was not encouraged during British colonial rule. The British acquired the lands of the Sri Lankan peasantry on a large scale.

In the central highlands, a wrong view still prevails among a majority of the Sinhalese peasants that they lost their land because of the plantation workers who were brought from India to set up the tea and rubber plantations and to work in them. In the central hill country, plantations were established by destroying forest land at high elevations. That did not include paddy land and land for chena cultivation. Also it was not the plantation workers but the British colonists who seized the lands of the Sinhalese peasants. Plantation workers were kept in isolation from the Sinhalese villagers. Sinhalese were not recruited for work in the plantations and they did not show interest in it. Sinhala chauvinists have in a planned way spread among the Sinhalese ideas hostile to the plantation workers (Hill Country Tamils) rather than against British colonists. As a result, a historical hostility has developed between the plantation workers and Sinhalese villagers. When the British left the country, a large part of the seized land went to Sinhalese landlords.

Following the nationalisation of the plantations, planned settlement of the majority nationality was undertaken by the state in lands in the estates and the settlements were provided with rural infrastructural facilities. As a result of such settlements, thousands of workers lost their jobs and were left high and dry. Besides, ethnic contradictions between the Sinhalese residents of the planned majoritarian settlements and the Hill Country Tamil plantation workers intensified. In the districts of Ratnapura, Kegalle, Galle and Badulla, plantation workers frequently suffered ethnically motivated attacks. Such attacks also had the backing of chauvinistic politicians. Although plantation workers still live in 'line rooms', small twin houses and in some places in recently constructed apartment blocks, their habitats have still not been brought into the rural structure. Plantation habitats have still not been brought within the purview of local authorities or provincial councils.

The leaders of the left opposed the Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Official Language Act of 1956, and trade unions of the left were then strong among plantation workers. The Trotskyites and the revisionists since joining the SLFP government in the 1960s and 70s, have on occasion rationalised the acts of national oppression by the SLFP. At times, they gave silent approval. Also, the JVP, which identified itself as leftist, in the fifth of its political classes that provided the basis for its uprising of 1971, portrayed the plantation workers as an arm of Indian expansionism and instigated feelings hostile to them. As a result the gap widened between the plantation workers, who were part industrial workers and part agricultural workers, and the Sinhalese workers and peasants.

It should be noted that, likewise, in the 1930s, hostility was cultivated among Sinhalese workers against workers of Indian origin who were mostly employed in the harbour and the railways. This hostility was institutionalised under the slogan "Indian workers out" by the trade union leader AE Gunasinghe, once called a leftist.

In the 1940s only Sinhalese peasants were settled in the agricultural schemes set up in the Eastern Province (Gal Oya and Kantalai). Likewise, in the fishery settlements in the North-East only Sinhalese were settled. As a result, the Tamil peasants and fisher-folk were disregarded and were subjected to ethnically based oppression. These settlements were designed to ensure that there will at some stage be no Tamil territory in the North-East.

Against this historical background, the gap between the Tamil peasants and Sinhalese peasants too continued to widen. The unity of the working people has been wrecked in the climate in which the national question developed into war.

Food production and fisheries in Sri Lanka have been severely affected by neo-liberal economics. In keeping with the agenda of bodies such as the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, subsidies and concessions granted to agriculture have been reduced. Cultivation of exportable fruit and vegetables have begun to replace that of food crops. Successive governments of Sri Lanka are being persuaded by bodies such as the World Bank to devise schemes to provide urban employment for the people in the villages. Accordingly, since 2003, the number of people leaving their villages for the cities has increased very much. Consequently, rural-based food and agricultural production has declined, and multinational companies have begun to dominate the agricultural sector.

There have been no mass struggles based on calls for land for the landless and home for the homeless in the history of Sri Lanka. Remarkably, there have been no peasant uprisings either. During SLFP rule from 1956 to 1960, from 1960 to 1965 and from 1970 to 1977, the national bourgeoisie in the SLFP and the leftists associated with them (Trotskyites and revisionists) undertook some reformist measures relating to workers' rights (safeguards in labour laws) and peasants' rights. A noteworthy reform was land reform. A 50 acre (20 hectare) ceiling on individual ownership of land was introduced. Based on that, land in excess of 50 acres in private possession was made state property. (In 1991, however, plantations were handed over to private companies as long term leases). Of the land thus taken over, a small portion was

distributed to the people, on the basis of half an acre or an acre per head. In some instances as much as 5 acres were granted for cultivation.

Although a land ceiling was introduced, some families continued to hold on to large tracts of land since members of a family could each stake a claim to 50 acres. Also, since private companies could own land with no ceiling on extent, it became possible to own some lands in the names of companies. Thus old landlords could continue as landlords in a different way.

Not all who acquired land for residence or cultivation were landless. Those already owning land too were given land. Rather than a peasant upsurge taking place, those who acquired land in this fashion became landlords in their own right and sought to defend the feudal system that prevailed.

The purpose of the demand for land for the landless is not the creation of a new kind of small holder. It is instead to demolish feudalism, democratise the agricultural sector, and transform the peasants and agricultural workers into revolutionary forces and make them the main force of working class revolution for social change.

Practices introduced in the name of the worldwide 'green revolution' introduced in the 1960, namely the use of chemical fertilizer, insecticides and mechanization, severely affected the agricultural sector of Sri Lanka, and led to the tightening of the neo-colonial grip.

In the 1990s, the influence of multinational companies increased in the name of the 'second green revolution'. By the latter part of the 1970s, Sri Lanka had achieved self sufficiency in paddy production. But rice is still being imported to Sri Lanka. Although modern machinery has been introduced in paddy production and rice milling, a feudal mode of production prevails. The marketing of paddy and rice is controlled by two individuals. No centralized market or distribution system has been established.

Therefore, land of extent between 5 and 10 acres should be distributed to the landless, and production and distribution should be undertaken on the basis of collective farming. The agricultural sector should be totally freed of the grip of feudalism, multinational companies and imperialism. Through it, solutions could be found for problems such as poverty, food shortage, famine, malnutrition and ill health.

A powerful peasants association should be built to enable the agricultural revolution. Besides carrying forward struggles for the rights of the peasants, broad based movements should be carried

forward to support the specific struggles of Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil peasants and thereby build broad based unity of agricultural workers and peasants.

Currently, NGOs are dealing with the problems of the peasantry. (In Sri Lanka, people's movements and welfare organizations are also registered as NGOs; and it is true that some of the organizations and some individuals working for NGOs act with social interest). Generally, NGOs operate using the concepts of 'sustainable development', development and alternative production, and not against the hold of neo-colonialism but in its favour. Many international and local NGOs function act as direct or indirect agents of imperialism. The peasantry should be freed of their hold and mobilized along the path of revolutionary mass struggle.

The problems of the fisher folk and fisheries workers should be studied specifically. Planned activities are necessary to free the fisheries sector from the grip of fishery overlords and multinational companies and for the fisher folk and fisheries workers to become partners in the revolution.

### **The Struggle against Casteism**

The struggle against untouchability carried forward (among Tamils) by revolutionary communists against casteism in the 1960s is a very important historical event. That struggle comprised mass struggles and armed activities. Untouchability was eradicated in public places as a result of it. It could be said that the Ceylon Communist Party (led by Sanmugathan) led and guided the activities of the mass movement against untouchability as well as the ideological struggles against casteism. That struggle, instead of bolstering caste identity and pleading for allocation of places based on concessions for those of depressed castes, smashed casteism and emphasised equality. There was no need in Sri Lanka to launch struggles to plead for special allocations for those of depressed castes and thereby reinforce caste identity, as is the case in India.

Although untouchability has subsided, casteist dominance exists among all nationalities. Although it is not significant in production relations, it is well rooted culturally and politically. Some narrow casteists and postmodernists isolate casteism and approach it based on the idealistic position that its political-social-cultural base is solely caste identity related.

It is necessary to persist in the struggles against casteist domination and narrow casteism since casteism is a feudal ideology that wrecks the unity of the people.

It is important to maintain a close relationship between class struggle and the struggle against casteism, rather than adopt the mechanistic position that class revolution will eradicate casteism. If we accept that the struggle in the economic substructure and that in the superstructure are to be carried forward in a coordinated way and in parallel, the struggle for a revolutionary social transformation can be carried forward through struggles against all forms of repression and oppression.

Saying that struggles such as those against national oppression, casteism and oppression of women are part of class struggle does not amount to the negation of the importance of those struggles. Likewise, those struggles cannot negate class struggle either.

Definite programmes against casteism and the remnants of untouchability need to be undertaken on several fronts.

### **Women's Liberation**

Male chauvinism is established in the family by treating women as the private property of a man. Historically women have been the first to be owned privately. We can see how private property developed through it. It was as a further development of it that the state emerged as a means of protecting private property. Hence the struggle against private property should be a one against the oppression of women, and the struggle against the oppression of women should be a one against private property. It was Marxism which explained the basis of oppression of women, and all explanations to its exclusion are idealistic.

It is appropriate to speak of women's liberation rather than of female domination against male domination. The concept of women's liberation should be established ideologically.

Women's liberation should be carried forward not merely as a problem of identity but as a part of class struggle, and specifically and in parallel on both planes. Struggles seeking the liberation of women who constitute 50% of the population should be undertaken on several fronts, and it is important that exclusive women's organisations are built and women are mobilised under the Party.

## Students and Youth

The students' organisation and youth organisation should be built strongly, since it is the students and the youth who are the largest section of society needing considerable expansion of basic needs such as education, health and employment. Many of their demands question the capitalist system. Neo-colonialist programmes are being undertaken in ways that deny their needs; and imperialist globalisation is something that decimates their personality.

Students and the youth are very much affected by these trends. Thus the contribution of students and the youth is essential to the broad based anti-imperialist movement and to the working class revolution for social transformation.

The Party should take the responsibility of organising them within and outside the party.

## Education and Social Welfare

Our educational system is being transformed to suit globalisation, and students and the people are being directed into losing their ability to think independently. In contrast to that, free education and education in the mother tongue should be affirmed on the basis of education for all and education appropriate to us. Alertness of the students is important for that purpose.

Health is being commercialised and deadly diseases are being spread in planned ways. The state is responsible for ensuring food, clothing, shelter, education, health, transport and communication. There can be no room for economising in them. We should not allow those who give us credit to determine our destiny.

## The United Front and Collaboration

Even if a single party is strong, it is necessary for it to work in unity with other organisations in carrying out the revolution and in all struggles preceding the revolution. It is necessary to work in unity at all levels, in struggles relating to the economic substructure as well as in struggles relating the superstructure. It is possible to work in unity even with organisations with which there are contradictions on individual demands by making some concessions. It is also possible to work with some organisations as a broad united front, based on a

minimum common programme. On this basis, the Party joined hands with democratic and left organisations in the national democratic movement of the late 1990s. It was also part of the New Left Front. (Both were wrecked by opportunistic forces). Even afterwards, the Party is persevering in its efforts to form united fronts. It participates in collaborative activities relating to individual demands and mass struggles. Besides participation in collaborative activities in some struggles and international issues, it also carries out collaborative campaigns.

Like contradictions such as those relating to the 'Three World Theory' and the national question, which made it necessary for us to part company with the Ceylon Communist Party led by Comrade Sanmugathsan and found a separate party, contradictions relating to united front activities too were important. Although the Ceylon Communist Party referred to above took a revolutionary stand on the struggle against revisionism, parliamentarism and trade unionism, it opposed the 'Three World Theory'. Our party, then functioning as Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left), accepted the 'Three World Theory'. Now we have put forward our self criticism on that. The party led by Sanmugathsan, while opposing the call for a separate state on the national question, adopted the stand that the Tamils were not a distinct nationality and therefore they were not eligible for the right to self determination. Our party, although it opposed the call for a separate state, recognised the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils as nationalities and took the stand that their right to self determination should be affirmed within a united Sri Lanka. The party led by Sanmugathsan showed no interest in united front activities. Not only did our party show an interest, it also participated in united activities and has been active in organising united fronts.

## Culture-Related Struggles

All cultural features have been made intellectual property and tradable commodities for consumption in an environment of imperialist globalisation. Also, the cultural features of imperialist capitalism, feudalism, caste oppression, oppression of women and other forms of reactionary hegemony are being protected and presented in new forms.

New progressive social values opposing reactionary cultural values and the environment for a working class revolution for social transformation will not emerge instantly. They have to be created through long and continuous revolutionary cultural activities. Cultural

work has to be carried out continuously before, during and after the revolution. They need to be carried out by the Party and other mass organisations. In this respect, we accept and endorse the Cultural Revolution that was carried out in socialist China.

In all matters except what have been conclusively determined scientifically, we should take a pluralistic stand that will accommodate various views and conflicts among them. The mechanistic outlook that confines the working class revolution for social transformation to purely economic bases should not be used in dealing with superstructural matters such as culture. While working in unity with humanitarian culture and the culture of resistance, cultural work should also be carried out that will elevate the social system and cultural values.

At the same time, revolutionary cultural activities should be carried out continuously against narrow nationalist, religious extremist, casteist, male chauvinist and sexist ideologies; against NGO disorders such as the NGO culture and ideology, and the tendency to uphold identity alone in the name of post-modernism, nationalism, feminism and Dalitism; against individualism devoid of social consciousness, selfishness, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, sexual perversion, consumer culture, and cultural activities that induce rivalry and jealousy.

While propagating theories and concepts aiming at socialist revolution based on Marxism Leninism with revolutionary cultural features, cultural work based on them should also be carried forward. This is our stand relating to cultural work.

Revolutionary political work and cultural work should be carried forward in parallel. Studies, discussions and debates relating to revolutionary proletarian culture should be conducted continuously.

Our comrades carry out cultural work in the cultural activities coming directly under the Party as well as in organisations such as the *Thesiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai* (National Art and Culture Association), *Puthiya Malaiyakam* (New Hill Country) and *Semmalarkal* (Red Blossoms) street theatre group, as well as through other mass organisations.

Several activities are being carried forward ideologically through *Puthiya Poomi* and New Democracy, the journals of the Party, and *Cempathaakai*, the internet journal of the Party, books published by Puthiya Poomi Publications and the websites of the Party.

What is worrying is that cultural work based on revolutionary class struggle has not been carried out organisationally among the majority

Sinhala community. Although there are cultural activities among Sinhalese and Muslims that uphold humanitarian and progressive values, there is also a sizeable amount of post-modernist and other decadent cultural activities.

### **Participation in Elections as Part of Mass Struggle**

Although the Party was founded in 1978, the stand of the party until 1993 had been to boycott all elections. Even after it was subsequently decided to contest elections, it was not decided whether to contest all elections. It was resolved that the decision to contest will be based on the specific circumstances.

The decision to contest elections was not based on the hope that social transformation or revolution could be achieved along the parliamentary road. On the other hand, we decided to contest in order to expose the system of electoral politics until the people realised that the path of electoral politics comprising the parliamentary and presidential elections cannot affirm the rights of ordinary workers and peasants or even the nationalities, and that it will not deliver power into the hands of the people.

Our intention was that if we secured one or several seats, we could use that representation to be the voice of the ordinary people as well as to struggle on their behalf in the respective assemblies.

We will not use the statement by Lenin that the reason for the communists to go to the Duma, the Russian parliament, was to get rid of the Duma as an excuse for carrying forward opportunist parliamentary politics, but in its true sense to contest elections as a form of struggle to defeat capitalism and establish socialism. We differ from revisionists and Trotskyites in this matter.

Elections and election results will not express the aspirations of the entire people. But the well entrenched electoral political system cannot be overcome by words alone. Struggles have to be launched on several fronts for the purpose. Boycotting as well as participating in elections and speaking up for the people in the event of contesting and winning should be considered as part of mass struggle.

Let us understand that the purpose of participating in elections is not to protect the capitalist system or to reform and manage it. Let us use electoral politics as one of several struggles, and not the only form of struggle, to call into question the capitalist system, expose its limitations, and defeat it; and not to divide and ruin the people.

## What is the Path for the Revolution?

The chauvinist capitalist and bureaucrat capitalist classes that rule Sri Lanka in an environment of neo-colonialism and imperialist globalisation with feudal remnants cannot find answers to the political, economic, social and cultural problems of the people of Sri Lanka. The alternative is scientific socialism. The ruling classes, the forces of imperialism and regional powers will not allow room for the revolution to achieve it to take place peacefully or for the revolution to establish itself. Our stand is that a pre-requisite for that revolution is that the peasants and other exploited and oppressed classes unite under the leadership of the working class to achieve the New Democratic Revolution.

What is the path to achieve it? It is known that it is not the parliamentary path. Our path for the revolution is the path of mass struggle. That refers to various struggles on various fronts.

Our path comprises carrying forward struggles in their respective fronts by encouraging, guiding and coordinating them and, by establishing a centre for them, transforming them into class struggle for a fundamental social transformation. The need for mass struggle and its dimensions were published in the 2007 March issue of *New Democracy* (No. 24) under the heading "Discussion Paper". It also appeared in *Puthiya Poomi*.

Since we have faith in the people, we also believe that the ruling classes cannot suppress correct mass struggles.

To carry out mass struggles is the democratic right of expressing the opposition of the people to actions by the ruling classes that are hostile to the people. People are trained through such struggles. They are thus prepared for working class revolution for social transformation. To lead it, guide it and direct it is the responsibility and duty of a Marxist Leninist party.

Comrades, these reports have been presented here for us to draw up our policies correctly. Let us discuss them democratically and with an open mind and arrive at common consensus. Let us carry forward future work in a planned way on that basis.

**Long Live the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party!**

**Long Live Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought!**

**Victory to the Revolution!**

\*\*\*\*\*

Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is not proletarian socialism but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power.

**VI Lenin**, *Report to the Second Congress of the Communist International*, July 1920

It is said that the average profit might nevertheless be regarded as quite sufficient for capitalist development under modern conditions... (I)t would be absurd to think that, in seizing colonies, subjugating peoples and engineering wars, the magnates of modern monopoly capitalism are striving to secure only the average profit. No, it is not the average profit, nor yet super-profit — which, as a rule, represents only a slight addition to the average profit — but precisely the maximum profit that is the motor of monopoly capitalism. It is precisely the necessity of securing the maximum profits that drives monopoly capitalism to such risky undertakings as the enslavement and systematic plunder of colonies and other backward countries, the conversion of a number of independent countries into dependent countries, the organization of new wars — which to the magnates of modern capitalism is the "business" best adapted to the extraction of the maximum profit — and, lastly, attempts to win world economic supremacy.

**JV Stalin**, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, November 1951

## ASIA

### Afghanistan: Indian Entrapment

India has had ties with Afghanistan from ancient times. Its current interest concerns undoing the influence of Pakistan there; and the post-9/11 US invasion was a convenient excuse to upgrade its “soft power” and regain its former strategic depth. US occupation of Afghanistan has diminished Pakistan’s once strong influence following Soviet withdrawal in 1989. This, beside the India-US strategic partnership, led to India providing monetary aid and active assistance in infra-structural development.

The rules of the current game of the US in Afghanistan would last only as long as it has a military presence there. India failed to consider the inevitable withdrawal of US from Afghanistan when it got drawn in. As strategic partner of the US, India has pledged to invest \$1.2 billion, making it the second largest provider of funds after the US, while people starve at home, and education and health are under-funded. Engineers and military personnel have been airlifted, in the face of attacks by the Taliban, to construct infrastructure such as roads, a Parliament House, power transmission lines, an electric sub-station for Kabul, the 218-km Zaranj-Delaram highway, sinking tube wells in 6 provinces, sanitation projects and medical missions, lighting 100 villages with solar power, and building a dam. India also offers scholarships to young Afghans for studies in India. Its Kabul embassy is its largest in the world and it has re-built two previous consulates and opened two anew. India’s level of commitment to “re-build” Afghanistan and maintain an enhanced diplomatic presence has predictably enraged Pakistan.

When the US withdraws its military from Afghanistan, Pakistan will endeavour to regain its former influence, and India would be forced into an awkward position owing to its considerable investment at stake.

[Based on excerpts of article dated 08.9.2010 by Major General SG Vombatkere (Ret.) in [www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100427](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20100427). The original article is available at [www.countercurrents.org](http://www.countercurrents.org). Vombatkere retired as Additional Director General Discipline & Vigilance in Army HQ, New Delhi. Now settled in Mysore, he is Adjunct Associate Professor of the University of Iowa, USA.]

If there is to be revolution, there must be a revolutionary party. Without a revolutionary party, without a party built on the Marxist Leninist revolutionary theory and in the Marxist Leninist revolutionary style, it is impossible to lead the working class and the broad masses of the people in defeating imperialism and its running dogs.

**Mao Zedong**, *Revolutionary Forces of the World Unite, Fight Against Imperialist Aggression*, November 1948

# India: Warming up to Imperialism

## Protests Greet Obama

President Barak Obama visit to India met with protests from many parts of the political scene, excluding the ruling Congress alliance and the Hindu fundamentalist BJP, both representing the elite classes. There was little enthusiasm for the visit among the people.

Muslims protested in Lucknow against the anti-Muslim line of the US; and friends and families of Bhopal victims against the failure of the US to get Dow Chemicals to fully compensate the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984 and act to clean up the area.

Issues of concern to the parliamentary left (the CPI, CPI(M) and allies) were Bhopal; US pressure on India to open up business, agriculture, education and service sectors to MNCs; US troop presence in Iraq; and the embargo against Cuba. Their MPs, however, did not boycott Obama's address to Parliament.

Marxist Leninist parties expressed wider concerns and wanted all US-India defence deals scrapped. They denounced Obama for continuing the policies of the Bush regime of invasion and occupation of countries —notably Afghanistan— and imposing its economic crisis on the world. Maoists called for an all-India *bandh* on 8<sup>th</sup> November.

Obama's visit was not to court the people but consolidate military and economic ties between a declining —but still the world's biggest— superpower and its client, aspiring to be the unchallenged power in the Indian Ocean region. The visit served that purpose well.

## US to be the Biggest Arms Supplier

The Star, a leading Canada daily, on 7<sup>th</sup> September cited the Indian branch of the Deloitte consulting firm estimating India's planned defence expenditure at \$80 billion for the next five years. Earlier this year the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said that India is now the world's second-largest weapons importer, with 7% of the market share. China, with Russia as its biggest supplier, imported more, but is likely to buy less in the coming years.

Indian arms imports rose from \$1.04 to \$2.2 billion between 2005 and 2009. Its defence budget is \$30 billion for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 marks a 70% increase in five years. Russia (the USSR before) which provided the bulk of the arms to India for half a century is likely to be pushed to second place by the US, currently India's sixth-

biggest supplier, when India starts to pay for recent and ongoing purchases including \$1.1 billion for C-130J Super Hercules transport planes, \$2.4 billion for Globemaster airlifters and \$2 billion for P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft. In late August the US signed a \$170 million deal to supply India with 24 Harpoon Block II advanced air-to-surface anti-ship missiles.

Russian and Chinese media expect President Obama to secure \$5 billion worth of arms sales during his Indian visit. The unprecedented weapons transactions could include Patriot air defence batteries and Boeing mid-air refuelling tankers. A Chinese news source added that Washington will supply India with howitzers and that the total cost of the deal may top \$10 billion. The Economic Times of India said in July that talks were underway over a deal for the US to sell to India 10 Boeing C-17 (Globemaster III) military transport aircraft, with a 164,900 pound payload for 2,400 miles and 100,300 pounds for 4,000 miles without refuelling.

In February the Wall Street Journal revealed that the Obama administration intends to massively increase arms sales to both India and Pakistan. Sales to Pakistan rose to \$3 billion a year and could nearly double in 2011.

News reports of Obama's visit to India in early November are consistent with the above observations.

[Source: Rick Rozoff, [revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2010/09/10/india-u-s-completes-global-military-structure/](http://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2010/09/10/india-u-s-completes-global-military-structure/)]

## Vedanta Bauxite Mine Rejected

Amnesty International on 23<sup>rd</sup> August hailed the rejection of the bauxite mine project in Orissa's Niyamgiri Hills by the Ministry of Environment and Forests as a landmark victory for the human rights of indigenous communities. The Dongria Kondh and other communities in Niyamgiri have been protesting for eight years, against bauxite mining plans by Sterlite Industries India, a subsidiary of the UK-based Vedanta Resources, and the Orissa Mining Corporation. The communities charged that the proposed project, to be situated on their traditional sacred lands and habitats, would result in violations of their rights as indigenous peoples to water, food, health, work and other rights to protection of their culture and identity. That was a rare but significant legal victory for the indigenous people.

[Source: [www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/indian-governments-decision-reject-vedanta-refinery-expansion-welcomed-2010-10-22](http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/indian-governments-decision-reject-vedanta-refinery-expansion-welcomed-2010-10-22)]

## Special Economic Killing Zones

The Tamilnadu government was forced to order phone accessory maker Foxconn India to shut down its plant at Sunguvarchatram, around 45 km from the state capital, following a gas leak on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Inhalation of the toxic gas led to the hospitalisation of 37 workers.

The company, part of the Taiwan-based Foxconn Technology Group, is the third largest industrial employer in Tamilnadu with around 7,000 workers, after Hyundai Motor India and Nokia India, and has poor record of workers' welfare and wages. Following the accident the company has shifted operations to its main plant located at the Special Economic Zone in Sriperumbudur.

On 31<sup>st</sup> October, Ambiga, a 22-year-old female employee, died after an accident at the Finnish mobile handset manufacturer Nokia's plant at Sriperumbudur. The death was due to callous indifference of the management, which refused to shut down operations when Ambiga was trapped in a machine. Co-workers switched off the machine in defiance of the management to pull her out and take her to a private hospital; but she succumbed to her injuries.

Nokia employs around 7,000 personnel at its Sriperumbudur facility and 70% of the work force comprises women; and the management, the police, the state government and the media have been downplaying the incident, to avoid implicating the company for criminal neglect and inadequate safety precautions.

[Sources: [www.my-tamil.com/?p=1038](http://www.my-tamil.com/?p=1038); [www.vinavu.com/2010/11/01/nokia-murders/](http://www.vinavu.com/2010/11/01/nokia-murders/); [timesofindia.indiatimes.com](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com)]

## Pakistan: Drowning in Neglect

The unprecedented flooding in Pakistan wreaked havoc during August, killing over 1600 people and making life a misery for twenty million, many of whom were rendered homeless, and implying long-term setbacks for the economy owing to the immense infrastructural damage.

The cause is still debated, and the importance of global environmental deterioration is recognised as a factor. But the slow response to the tragedy and the lack of preparedness on the part of the government are to blame for much of the suffering. Building of a massive dam in Indian occupied Kashmir is blamed by some for part of the damage while blame is also laid on indiscriminate illegal felling of trees.

What infuriated people most was the poor response to the disaster by a government which is enthusiastic about a war in which civilians are being bombed to death by the US and Pakistani air forces.

The people are very angry with the government, but without a political alternative that can stand up to US imperialist domination, the beneficiary will be the Army, which will use the unpopularity of the elected government to reassert itself in the politics of the country.

[Sources: [www.ahmedquraishi.com/2010/08/21/india-causes-fresh-pakistan-floods/](http://www.ahmedquraishi.com/2010/08/21/india-causes-fresh-pakistan-floods/); [mceer.buffalo.edu/info service/disasters/Pakistan-Floods-2010.asp](http://mceer.buffalo.edu/info service/disasters/Pakistan-Floods-2010.asp); [www.idsa.in/idsa comments/PakistanFloodsCausesandConsequences\\_mbisht\\_190810](http://www.idsa.in/idsa comments/PakistanFloodsCausesandConsequences_mbisht_190810)]

## China: Surging Workers' Struggles

Between May and July several major strikes hit foreign-owned auto parts plants in China's coastal regions. On the whole, the strike wave was a great success. Despite minimal concessions awarded to Honda Lock and Toyota Gosei, workers at all other factories won pay increases in the region of 50% or above. This strike wave was more remarkable than earlier ones for the amount of concessions extracted by the workers, the initial publicity it received in the Chinese media, and the prospects for union reform that it has made possible. Although the strikes were mainly about unfair wages, they were attempts to address the political question of union representation.

When demands to restructure factory unions fell on deaf ears, workers from Nanhai Honda went ahead with re-elections of their union chairmen on September 1st. Besides, those supporting union reform seem to have gained the upper hand in Guangdong. While, materially, this means little to rank-and-file workers, it is a testament to the threat that autonomous worker's struggles, presently limited to the auto industry, pose to the capitalist regime.

China's economic growth relies on cheap migrant labour numbering over 210 million, mostly from the countryside, where income from agriculture can barely support a family. In 2005, migrant labour was estimated at 57.5% of the industrial sector and 37% of the service sector. Being nominally resident in the countryside they are denied the social welfare benefits available to urban residents. They are thus an underclass and are often treated as such by people from the city.

The right to strike was removed from the Chinese constitution in 1982 following the emergence of right-wing trade unionism in Poland. Fear of trade unions free of state control still bothers the government. Had political demands been not within the established legal framework

the strike wave would not have received the sympathy of some sections of the Communist Party of China. The desire to prevent the emergence of a radical workers movement is a motivation behind keeping GDP growth above the eight percent per year mark, and behind the growing drive towards union reform.

A process of politicization of workers has somehow been initiated at a time when it is badly needed for the revival of socialism in China.

[Based on [insurgentnotes.com/2010/10/auto-industry-strikes-in-china/](http://insurgentnotes.com/2010/10/auto-industry-strikes-in-china/)]

## Nepal: Maoists at Crossroads

The Constitutional Assembly failed again to elect a new Prime Minister, but garnered enough support from the main and smaller parties to allow the presentation of the budget for the coming year.

The political crisis remains, with the Nepali Congress and CPN(UML) obstructing the implementation of the agreement that the Seven Party Alliance made with the CPN(Maoist) — now UCPN(Maoist) — to draft a new republican constitution among other matters relating to peace and democracy. Indian resentment of the Maoists has played a big role in bringing down the Maoist-led government and blocking the drafting of the new constitution on the agreed terms.

The Maoists and the democratic process have been betrayed. But that is not surprising. The Maoists now need to take stock of the situation and plan the next move based on mass struggle. If the Maoists did not anticipate the betrayal when they opted to give up the armed struggle for a peaceful transition, they have erred seriously; and a hard but achievable task lies ahead, both politically and militarily.

The complex task of making revolution in Nepal with a backward feudal economy has been made harder by increased meddling on behalf of the reactionaries by the India and the US. Maoists need to evolve a fresh strategy in the impasse following the failure of the path of peaceful transition. The failure has also led to strong differences in the assessment of the situation and about the road ahead. Also, prospects were poor for accommodation and compromise between the different views, and three distinct lines emerged at the last Central Committee meeting. Documents prepared by three senior leaders, Pushpakamal Dahal (Prachanda), Baburam Bhattarai and Mohan Baidya, representing the three lines, have been sent to party district and state committees for study before their presentation to the Plenum of the UCPN(Maoist) beginning on 21<sup>st</sup> November. While the line that gets a majority will be the official line, minority views will be recorded and respected.

The differences concern the current situation, the main enemy and thus the strategy to follow. With India acting like imperial power dominating every aspect of political and economic life in Nepal, Dahal and Baidya see India as the principal enemy, and Bhattarai sees “domestic feudalism” as the principal enemy. The reality is that India is the main defender of the feudal institutions of Nepal, including its fallen monarchy, which India is only too willing to restore.

The situation in Nepal has in recent years been further complicated by the growth of the politically-driven, externally-funded NGOs designed to undermine the left, with some NGOs operating as political parties. The possibility of direct military intervention by the US and India, in the name of waging war against terrorism, is a factor to consider in carrying forward the New Democratic Revolution.

While Bhattarai seeks to institutionalise the political achievements thus far and complete the peace process, Baidya calls for launching a “people’s revolt” towards the realization of the declared goal of New Democracy. Dahal seems to favour preparedness for an immediate revolt while pushing agendas for the peace process.

Any political party faces the prospect of a split when the differences between the different lines are irreconcilable. The Maoists have a good record for democratically resolving differences through dialogue. By adhering to Marxism Leninism and preserving inner-party democracy, errors can be rectified and splits averted. But there is nevertheless the risk of crossing the fine line separating opportunism from a tactical position, and that possibility is real at present.

Marxist Leninists across the world, while they respect the right of the Nepali Maoists to take their own decisions, also have the duty to draw attention to errors and potential dangers. Yet comment and criticism need to be constructive and as to strengthen revolutionary solidarity.

[Sources: [southasiarev.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/nepal-there-is-line-struggle-going-on/](http://southasiarev.wordpress.com/2010/10/22/nepal-there-is-line-struggle-going-on/); [www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/351432.political-stalemate-feature.html](http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/news/351432.political-stalemate-feature.html)]

## Myanmar: A Victory for the People

The release of Aung San Suu Kyi — the most prominent opponent of military rule in Myanmar (formerly Burma) — from her seven years long second house arrest is a great victory for the people. It should inspire them to launch greater struggles and win greater victories against dictatorship, backwardness and poverty in Myanmar.

Suu Kyi is the acknowledged leader of the National League of Democracy, the most prominent political party opposing the military rule that commenced with the coup of 1962 led by Ne Win. She spent 15 of the past 21 years under house arrest, first in 1988-1995 and then from 2003 until 13<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Her long detention is symbolic of the oppression suffered by the people of Myanmar. A fight in earnest should begin for the release of the not fewer than 2 200 political prisoners languishing in jail, serving sentences of up to 65 years.

Ne Win's assumption of power in Burma as military ruler in 1962 was followed by harsh persecution of immigrant communities not recognised as citizens of Burma and the exodus/expulsion of some 300 000 Burmese Indians. The Anglo-Burmese either fled Burma or changed their names and blended in with the Burmese society. In 1978 hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims were forced to flee Burma, and many refugees entered neighbouring Bangladesh.

Burma's economic crisis and political oppression by the government led to widespread pro-democracy demonstrations (the 8888 Uprising) throughout Burma in 1988. Security forces killed thousands of demonstrators, and a military coup followed that formed the State Law and Order Restoration Council as the ruling body. In 1989, SLORC declared martial law to suppress widespread protests. The junta announced People's Assembly elections on 31 May 1989 and changed the official name of the country to Myanmar.

In elections held in May 1990, the NLD led by Suu Kyi won 392 of the 489 seats. SLORC annulled the results and refused to step down. Than Shwe, leader of the SLORC since 1992, made cease-fire agreements with most ethnic guerrilla groups and announced plans for a new constitution to be produced by the National Convention. In 1997, the SLORC was renamed the State Peace and Development Council, and Myanmar was admitted to the ASEAN. The National Convention, with major political parties including the NLD either absent or excluded, made little progress in drafting the constitution.

The junta has, of late, been under pressure from international bodies such as the International Labour Organisation for its breach of human and fundamental rights. Mass protests have been on the rise since the protest of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2007 against fuel price hikes. That protest was put down, but revived on 18<sup>th</sup> September with a large number of Buddhist priests taking part. It lasted 8 days and was put down harshly. The protests have weakened the morale of the junta, and it is said that the lower ranks of the army are getting increasingly critical of the junta.

The release of Suu Kyi is a very significant event. Communists of Burma led the struggles against colonial rule as well as Japanese occupation and have defended the rights of minority nationalities. They and other revolutionary and progressive forces have before them the immediate task of uniting the oppressed masses and nationalities of Myanmar to restore democracy and social justice.

## The Philippines: Aquino to the Test

The Communist Party of the Philippines on 15.9.2010 denounced the 1.64 trillion Peso budget of the Aquino government for 2011 as "a counterinsurgency budget framed in accordance with the US Counterinsurgency Guide", in view of the priority given to beefing up the state security agencies and boosting the budget for the Armed Forces of the Philippines by 81%. It also accused Aquino of contempt for the plight of hundreds of thousands of victims of cruel military abuses.

The CPP journal *Ang Bayan* on 7<sup>th</sup> November editorially welcomed the move by the Aquino regime to finally form a panel including personalities known to be genuinely interested in the peace process to conduct peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The talks are expected to resume by the start of 2011. The editorial also called upon Aquino to manifest his seriousness about the talks by respecting previous agreements between the NDFP and government and doing away with steps taken by the previous regime that were detrimental to the peace talks. It also demanded justice to be meted for the abductions of NDFP personnel, immediate release of NDFP personnel in prison, and the withdrawal of arrest warrants based on trumped-up charges for NDFP negotiating panel chair Luis Jalandoni, chief political consultant Jose Ma. Sison and others designed to prevent them from freely participating in the peace talks.

The editorial pointed out that the talks can be accelerated if the Aquino regime signs the Concise Agreement to End the Civil War and Achieve Just Peace proposed by the NDFP National Council in 2005.

### **Proposed 10-point agreement**

1. *Establish a clean and honest coalition government for genuine national freedom and democracy against imperialist domination and control.*
2. *Respect the democratic rights of the toiling masses and provide for their sufficient representation in a coalition government.*

3. *Carry out national industrialization and land reform and oppose imperialist plunder and corruption in the military and bureaucracy.*
4. *Cancel foreign debt and reduce budget allocations for the military and other armed organizations of the GRP.*
5. *Uphold a patriotic, scientific and pro-people culture.*
6. *Respect the right to self-determination of the national minorities.*
7. *Investigate and prosecute government officials with cases of treason, corruption and human rights violations.*
8. *Implement a genuinely independent foreign policy.*
9. *Maintain trade and diplomatic relations with other ASEAN countries, China, South and North Korea, Japan and Russia.*
10. *Implement a ceasefire between the armed forces of the GRP and the NDFP.*

[Source: [www.philippinerevolution.net](http://www.philippinerevolution.net)]

## AFRICA

### Rwanda: Cover-up and Blackmail

On 27<sup>th</sup> August, the French daily Le Monde leaked the news that a long report by the UN High Commissioner for Human rights Navaneetham Pillai calls the “systematic, methodical and pre-meditated crimes perpetrated against the Hutu” by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in Zaire in 1996-1997 “crimes against humanity, war crimes, and even genocide crimes.” The report, not yet officially released, is circulating freely. It also exploded the UN’s 14-year silence, which along with conniving silences allowed the RPF to bask in the bogus glory of allegedly halting the genocide by Hutu extremists in 1994 and continue to impose with utter impunity tremendous suffering in Rwanda and Congo!

The report, although only leaked, with its wide international coverage could spell the end for Paul Kagame, then head of the RPF and is now president of Rwanda. In preemptive fashion the Kagame regime stepped up its threats on 31<sup>st</sup> August to withdraw thousands of its UN peacekeeper troops in Sudan if the UN published the report. Kagame is using the fact that with 3300 peacekeepers and a Rwandan general is in charge of the 21 800 strong UN forces in Darfur in western Sudan to bully the UN.

[Sources: [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21127](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21127) ; [nytimes.com/2010/09/01/world/africa/01rwanda.html?\\_r=1&th&emc=th](http://nytimes.com/2010/09/01/world/africa/01rwanda.html?_r=1&th&emc=th)]

## Swaziland: Democracy Movement

The Swaziland Democracy Campaign, formed early this year by trade unions, political parties, civil society groups and churches, called for a Global Day of Action on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010. It included a mass protest and show of defiance in Swaziland. Delegates from the international labour movement joined the action in Swaziland and delivered messages of support for the SDC to Swazi embassies worldwide.

Swaziland’s autocracy is based on a system where royally sponsored traditional leaders dispense patronage to exercise control at local level. The parliament and government are controlled by the king. The monarchy tightened its grip on the impoverished country of around a million people by collaborating with the prevalent regional powers. In the past few years, the state has intensified its crackdown on dissent.

On the Day of Action, Mario Masuku, the head of Swaziland’s banned People’s United Democratic Movement and a group of South African activists were arrested as hundreds of trade union members marched to demand democracy in Africa’s last absolute monarchy. Unions and civil society groups demanded the recall of a 1973 decree banning political parties. The response of the monarchy to the campaign for democracy has angered the youth section of the ANC in South Africa, who now challenge their government’s relationship with the monarchy.

[Sources: [links.org.au/node/1857](http://links.org.au/node/1857) ; [www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=120331](http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=120331)]

## South Africa: Growing Turbulence

Nelson Mandela was freed in February 1990 after 27 years in South African prisons by a regime that had let many revolutionary leaders, fighters and civilians die in detainment, to be hanged in police stations, or thrown out of upper-storey windows with not even a show of going through the motions of a trial. Treason was a common charge. Negotiations initiated in 1988 — against a background of mass upsurges on the rise since 1976 that made South Africa almost ungovernable by 1986 — led to the release of Mandela.

On advice by the West, the apartheid rulers sought Mandela’s help to end the crisis and smother the escalating revolutionary movement by lending credibility to a negotiated settlement with anti-apartheid organizations. They thus bought time to reorganize South Africa’s political rule in ways that essentially retained the socio-economic system that it served and the country’s role as powerhouse of Africa and guardian of imperialist interests in the region.

The road of racial rainbows and imaginary class harmony — without mass mobilisation to eliminate the existing state and the underlying system — appealed to many, especially the middle classes, among the racially oppressed. But the bitter experience of South Africa of the past 20 years is that the society is nearly as segregated as ever, but without legal apartheid. The rise of a visible black middle class has not stopped the growth of inequalities between rich and poor. Newly won political freedoms are used to persuade the ANC government to provide more service delivery and ensure a vote to retain power.

Struggles continued to erupt against the ANC's betrayal of the people but the giant tide to become citizens in a liberal democracy had a powerfully debilitating effect, as it was intended to, polarizing things in a very unfavourable way for revolution.

(The above is a synopsis of an analysis published in *Maoist Information Bulletin, Nepal*, published by UCPN(Maoist), International Bureau, Vol. 4, No. 13. Source: [southasiarev.wordpress.com/2010/09/12/](http://southasiarev.wordpress.com/2010/09/12/))

Mass protests and strikes are on the rise, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a major ally of the ruling ANC along with the revisionist South Africa Communist Party, has in response to voices of workers' protest called for measures implying protectionist trade and monetary policy, and hints of nationalization. The ANC will certainly reject them, but the question that matters is whether the increasingly militant working class of South Africa will see these demands as adequate.

[See: [revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2010/09/16/south-africa-cosatu-has-radical-plan-for-directing-economy/](http://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2010/09/16/south-africa-cosatu-has-radical-plan-for-directing-economy/)]

## LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

### Haiti: Adding Insult to Injury

Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, devastated by a Richter 7.0 earthquake in January now faces a major outbreak of cholera, which is a symptom of failed foreign policies and organizations that have left the Haitian people as poor as ever and disconnected from the mechanisms of their own development.

Following the earthquake, the more than 1.3 million people rendered homeless lived in crowded makeshift camps. Nearly an year on, they still live that way amid rubble, and highly vulnerable to waterborne diseases like cholera. Refugees International denounced UN-led humanitarian efforts as "paralyzed" and found conditions in the camps "appalling", despite the billions of dollars pledged for earthquake relief.

The George Bush administration blocked millions of dollars in loans from the Inter-American Development Bank for public water infrastructure in Haiti's central region. Before that, President Clinton forced the Haitian government into slashing tariffs on imported American rice, devastating the rice farming economy of the area.

Families are so poor they have no choice but to drink, bathe and cook with water from the muddy Artibonite River, where the cholera outbreak began. Yet UN officials said that the epidemic was unexpected, in order to excuse their failures to take preventive measures.

The international community is financing Haiti's election on 28<sup>th</sup> November, which is likely to be a sham with little turnout. Fanmi Lavalas, widely seen as the country's most popular party, is officially excluded from the ballot by the ruling government as part of a continuing campaign to suppress a mass movement of Haiti's poor majority.

[Source: [www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/11/01/2010-11-01\\_insult\\_to\\_injury\\_cholera\\_has\\_haiti\\_reeling\\_from\\_second\\_disaster\\_.html#ixzz15dtok8qq](http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2010/11/01/2010-11-01_insult_to_injury_cholera_has_haiti_reeling_from_second_disaster_.html#ixzz15dtok8qq)]

### Bolivia: Uprising in Potosi

In August 2010, roadblocks and strikes struck the Department (administrative district) of Potosi, an very important mining region, with 50% of the world's lithium, and Bolivia's poorest, with infant mortality rate at 101 per 1000 babies. The events reminded one of the days of neo-liberal governments, not long ago, and raised questions about the vision of President Morales for a transformed Bolivia.

The people's grievances were genuine, and they demanded greater government investment in the region as well as environmental security. The process for change must address these challenges positively.

The ruling MAS was the product of a process of decentralisation of a political system, the crisis that the system underwent almost simultaneously, and mass struggles. President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada was overthrown in October 2003 by a protest by workers, peasants and indigenous people united against government attempts to cheaply export the country's gas. The next upsurge, again uniting

forces around the issue of gas, brought down Gonzalo's successor in June 2005, and led to the election of Morales as president in December 2005. The traditional elites fiercely resisted change. That triggered a powerful revolutionary upsurge, in which the government of Morales, the social movements and the armed forces joined hands to crush a coup attempt by the elite in September 2008.

Ironically, while its electoral base grew to 64% in December 2009, the MAS, with rural origins, got weakened politically. Owing to the lack of trained professionals in the peasant and indigenous organisations, Morales relied on "invitees" from the existing state bureaucracy to run the government. His first cabinet came mostly from these sectors, causing concern among the founding organisations of the MAS, who felt underrepresented. Although they united to defend the government in times of intense confrontation, they also tended to retreat to more local and sectoral demands. There has, alongside, been a growth of careerism among the MAS leaders.

The government is facing challenges from a state bureaucracy which works more to undermine than advance government projects, and from social organisations with political baggage carried over from an earlier era. To face the challenges, is vital to rebuild a political instrument that can truly be a space for the exchange of debates and ideas about the future of the process, capable of generating proposals and uniting the necessary forces to implement a coherent project of change.

[Source: [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20642/](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20642/)]

## Brazil: A Result that the US Resents

Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party (PT) comfortably won the Brazilian presidential election on 31<sup>st</sup> October with 56% of the votes against 44% for her opponent José Serra of the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB). She won in the more impoverished north, while Serra won in the industrial South. The PT and its allies increased their majority in both the House of Deputies (311 out of 513 seats) and in the Senate (46 out of 81).

Religious groups and ultra-right and neo-liberal sections mobilized against her; and the US was lukewarm about the result. The Brazilian stock market reacted favourably indicating that existing economic policy was expected to continue, with the incumbent President Lula da Silva's influence prevailing under Rousseff. Rousseff is expected to continue to oppose US domination. Notably, in May, Brazil and Turkey broke new ground in the world of international diplomacy, by negotiating a nuclear fuel deal for Iran, to resolve the standoff over

Iran's nuclear program, much to the resentment of the US. even more than Lula's support for the Chávez government in Venezuela.

[Sources: [www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/.../brazil-republicans](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/.../brazil-republicans); [www.ips.org/articles/2010/nov2010/braz-no2.shtml](http://www.ips.org/articles/2010/nov2010/braz-no2.shtml)]

## Ecuador: Nice Try but...

Ecuador's police attempted a coup in September to overthrow President Raphael Correa on the pretext of the passage of a law affecting police officers' bonuses and job benefits. Rebellion erupted in the capital Quito and Guayaquil, a seaport town. Although the law did not entail pay reductions, to provoke the uprising, the masterminds of the coup convinced the police that it would. According to the coup blueprint of the CIA, defeated presidential candidate Gutierrez was to announce the removal of "dictator" Correa and the transfer of authority to a provisional government in a televised address. The plan also included the dissolution of parliament and calling for snap elections. But the conspirators were dispersed by the defenders of the legitimate president. Besides, the Indian organizations from the Pachakutik group failed to provide the support for the coup as declared by the leadership. The CIA sponsored coup collapsed, pushing Ecuador into a state of emergency.

[More in [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21310](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21310)]

## Venezuela: PSUV Wins

On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Venezuela re-elected President Hugo Chavez's party the PSUV with an impressive majority of 98 seats out of 165 in parliament against 65 seats the coalition of opposition parties (MUD). On a national level, the PSUV won in 56 out of 87 circuits, and 18 states out of 24, including the capital district, Caracas. PSUV also won 7 seats on the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) against 5 for MUD. Of the votes tallied nationally PSUV polled 5,422,040 and MUD parties 5,320,175. Some key areas were lost to opposition forces, such as in the state of Anzoategui, a solid Chavez-supporting region, besides the states of Tachira and Zulia, where the opposition had a strong base.

Western mainstream media sought to portray the result as a rejection of Chavez, by claiming that his parliamentary support was reduced, while concealing the fact the majority for him in parliament in 2005 was due to a boycott of polls by opposition parties.

[Source: [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21264](http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=21264)]

## EUROPE

### Protesting Economic Reforms

Strikes and demonstrations rocked Europe in the recent months. Symbolically, on 29<sup>th</sup> September, tens of thousands of European workers and representatives took part in a protest in Brussels, Belgium against austerity plans. The demonstration was organised by the 27 trade unions of the EU countries. Anti-austerity protests rocked Europe throughout September and October.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, the first general strike in Spain in eight years had overwhelming support from the workers and the general public. In October, France was the scene of mass protests by workers and youth, with millions rising against raising the retirement age from 60 to 62. In Greece, tens of thousands launched several protests across the country against the austerity plans of the government.

In November, London witnessed powerful protests by students against cuts in the education budget. Betrayal by the Liberal Democrats, now partners in power with the Conservatives, faced much of the fury of the students. Meantime, industrial disputes and strikes are also on the rise in state and private sector. On 24<sup>th</sup> November an estimated three million workers took part in Portugal's first general strike in 22 years, opposing austerity measures imposed by a government under market pressure to cut spending.

### Racism against the Roma

Moves by the French government to deport Roma (Gypsy) people from their respective countries and other security measures targeting them have met with mass protests with thousands of participants in France and in other European cities.

Plans by the Italian government to shut down Roma camps have come under strong international criticism. The move comes in the wake of government decrees in 2007 allowing EU citizens to be expelled after three months if they lacked the means to support themselves and in 2008 to expel EU citizens for reasons of public safety. Although the declared purpose is the integration of the Roma, the reality is that the government has done little and xenophobic sentiments are often hurdles for the Roma to find work or housing.

[Sources: [www.nytimes.com/2010/09/04/world/europe/04roma.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/04/world/europe/04roma.html);  
[www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11186592](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11186592)]

### The Field Sown by Kailas

Sarumathi

(1947-1998)

He slashed and burnt the forest and uprooted dead stumps  
and made the field fit for ploughing; but  
deserted the field of Tamil amid our sobs and tears.

Our leader who kept vigil day and night to protect our fields  
where sparrows, boar and cattle roam  
departed before dawn leaving with us the light of his lamp.

The cultivator who put an end to the poverty of Tamil!  
by ceaseless daily labour of sowing and weeding  
with review and criticism has left us bathed in tears.

The sown paddy field is there  
with potent fertiliser scattered.  
With the lantern that Kailas gave in hand  
for even a moment we shall not relax  
to let the boar and cattle tread on Tamil literature:  
we will follow his goal.

*This tribute to Professor K Kailasapathy (1933-1982)  
first appeared in Kumaran 15.1.1983*

# **The Poet Must Die**

**Don Mattera**

*(For James Matthews and Gladys Thomas after  
their poems were executed)*

**The poet must die  
Her murmuring**

**threatens their survival**

**Her breath could start the revolution;  
she must be destroyed**

**Ban her  
Send her to the Island  
Call the firing-squad  
But remember to wipe her blood  
From the wall,  
Then destroy the wall  
Crush the house  
Kill the neighbours**

**If their lies are to survive  
The poet must die**

***Donato Francisco Mattera***

*(b. 1935) is a South African poet and author.*

Published by E Thambiah of 47, 3rd Floor, CCSM Complex, Colombo 11  
Phone: 011 2435117; Fax: 011 2473757; E-mail: [newdemocraticparty@hotmail.com](mailto:newdemocraticparty@hotmail.com)

**Website: <http://ndpsl.org>**

Printed at Comprint System, HL ½ Dias Place Colombo 12  
Phone: 011 7201738