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QUATERLY THEORETICAL ORGAN OF N.D.P, SRI LANKA

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WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The general election for the bourgeois parliament in Sri Lanka is now over. Both the major parties and certain other smaller parties, besides election promises and propaganda, have spent lavish sums in crores of rupees, used thuggery and bullying and all manner of irregular activities to win their seats in Parliament.

The People's Alliance (PA) has failed to secure the two-thirds majority that it sought, and has returned to power with a reduced majority in alliance with two new partners besides its former partners. Elections to the positions of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and chairs to various committees have been conducted in a manner symbolic of class and chauvinistic identity between the ruling party and the United National Party (UNP).

Further, all the former leaders of the PA have been side lined. A few former leftists who have lost all honour and political identity have been placed in their ministerial chairs as yes-men. At the same time, the so-called Tamil and Muslim representatives from the North-East and the Hill Country have come forward to prop up the regime for the price of a few crumbs of nominal cabinet portfolios. Dinesh Gunawardena, the leader of the MEP, reputed for the chauvinistic venom that he has been spitting, has joined them in the Cabinet. Today the advocates of Sinhala chauvinism dominate the PA.

At the same time, the UNP has retained its strength in parliament and reinforced its position as the representative of the chauvinistic elite. Despite the UNP's securing Tamil and Muslim votes in large numbers, it has demonstrated again and again its unwillingness to abandon its chauvinistic stance. But a section of the Tamils with slavish attitudes have yet to change their attitude: the winning of a seat by the UNP in the Jaffna District demonstrates this.

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which muddied itself in chauvinism in the hope of securing a few more seats in Parliament, managed to secure ten seats with the help of its leftist camouflage. It can with confidence be expected to continue with its 'red' chauvinism inside Parliament. The increase in parliamentary representation will only help to undo their leftist mask.

In all, a close look at the eleventh Parliament will show that the hands of the forces of chauvinism are much stronger. As far as the Tamil and Muslim representatives are concerned, with a few exceptions, they are likely to surrender to chauvinism and raise their hand in Parliament in return for petty favours.

In the meantime, liberalisation and privatisation will continue to be implemented under the venomous imperialist scheme of globalisation. Neither the UNP nor the Tamil and Muslim political parties are likely to oppose it. The JVP will oppose it only in name, as it does not oppose the war. Also, since the war is only the other side of the coin of privatisation, its opposition to privatisation cannot be meaningful. It is a source of satisfaction to this government that there is not one individual to speak against chauvinism, the war, privatisation and liberalisation in this Parliament from the stand point of the oppressed classes. The defeat of Vasudeva Nanayakkara, who in the last Parliament was an honest voice from the left, is a great loss for the forces of the working class and the oppressed Tamil people.

In the above context arises the question of what is to be done. Electoral success and failure do not decide everything.

The need has now arisen to learn from the experiences of this general election and carry forward unswerving mass struggles against chauvinism, war and privatisation and in support of the working mass in their basic demands.

We need to build up mass movements to struggle against the conspiracy to transform the country into a wholesale neo-colony while deflecting the attention of the masses towards the war. All sincere left and democratic forces of the country need to recognise this need and come out in struggle on the streets. The time has arrived for such struggles. It is now necessary to look beyond parliament and prepare for mass struggles. That is what is to be done!

**Editorial Board,
New Democracy**

With regard to the question of [world] war, there are but two possibilities: one is that the war will give rise to revolution and the other is that revolution will prevent the war.

Mao Zedong
1968

To overthrow political power, it is always necessary to first of all create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as the counter-revolutionary class.

Mao Zedong
Talk at the 10th Plenary Session of the
8th Party Central Committee, 1962

Politics cannot but have precedence over economics. To argue differently means forgetting the ABC of Marxism.

V.I. Lenin

CELEBRATING TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

(A slightly abridged version of the statement issued on 03 July 2000 by the Central Committee of the New Democratic Party)

Our New Democratic Party (NDP) completes its twenty-second year on 03 July 2000. The Central Committee of the Party remembers this occasion with revolutionary sentiments. It also notes that on this occasion it finds a situation in which the entire people of this country face severe problems and crises. The ferocity of the war, the economic crisis, political repression and socio-cultural degeneration have intensified and are suffocating the country and its people. It is hence important at this juncture to clarify and reiterate the position of our party on current issues of major significance.

The National Question and the War

The country has been placed on a war footing since 3rd May. Emergency regulations have been made more severe. The media is subject to censorship. Employees have been compelled to contribute two days' wages towards the war. Direct and indirect taxes are being levied in the name of war. Modern weapons and aircraft are imported hastily and rushed to the war front. Diplomatic relations has been restored with Israel, which has been asked to provide support and advise in conducting the war. All these actions are a consequence of the fall of the major military camp at Elephant Pass to the LTTE. This situation has

led to further intensification of the war in the North-East. In particular, the 500,000 people who live in the Jaffna peninsula have been isolated from the outside world and have no means of communication with others. Their plight today is such that they depend entirely on the government and its armed forces for their food, medicine, transport and other essential needs and their very survival. At the same time, the government has declared that its war is one to defend the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence against terrorism and secession. It declares that it will protect the country by defeating terror and the LTTE by war.

But the reality behind the statements about terrorism and secession is that the national question has grown to colossal proportions. The national question that concerns the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people has been systematically aggravated during every decade of the past century. The initial hostility towards the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people has since assumed the form of bitter hatred towards them on the basis of race, religion, region and class. Such chauvinistic attitudes were inherent in the demands of nearly a century ago for political rights and reforms from the colonial masters.

Schemes with chauvinistic malice were carried forward during the period following the so-called independence. Planned colonisation was carried out in what were traditionally Tamil areas by the settlement of Sinhalese there. Depriving the Hill Country Tamils of their citizenship, the Official Language Act of 1956, the introduction of 'standardisation' for admission to university, the denial of access to government employment on a proportional basis, discrimination in matter of religion and culture, marginalisation in the constitutions of 1972 and 1978, planned anti-Tamil violence in 1958, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983, periodic violation of democratic and human rights and excesses by the armed forces lie at the root of the national problem.

While as a result of the above the Tamil people have been greatly alienated from the mainstream of national life, the

democratic movements of the people for their just rights have been suppressed using state violence. Under circumstances when every opportunity for a just and negotiated settlement of the national question was refuted and rejected, the contradiction between the communities became a hostile contradiction. The comprador and national bourgeois governments that alternately came to power played a leading role in encouraging this. Although the Tamil elite upper classes appeared to be in conflict with these upper class forces of Sinhala chauvinism, they continued to preserve their class loyalty and bonds. It should also be noted that the forces of imperialism, in their own interests of continuing their domination, co-operated with the ruling chauvinistic classes to transform the contradiction between the communities into a hostile contradiction.

The armed struggle of the Tamil youth started to develop in 1977 in the wake of conditions under which the national question was transformed into a hostile contradiction and assumed the form of chauvinistic military oppression. Following the terrible anti-Tamil violence of 1983, which was carried out with the support of the state, Tamil youth movements became armed movements. These movements, each with membership of less than a few tens at the time, had the characteristics of extreme nationalism as their basis. Although one or two of the organisations made utterances about Marxism, their practice was one of exercising armed domination over the masses and showed an incapability to appreciate the nature of social contradictions in their essence. The birth, development and decay of these organisations are ample evidence of the fact that any movement that adopts narrow nationalism as its nationalist policy cannot progress along the lines of class struggle chartered by Marxism-Leninism.

All of these organisations failed to unite to put forward a common programme for the national question and to be clear about whom they oppose and with whom they may unite. While opposing and rejecting each other, they sought Indian support

with no idea of the intentions of the Indian expansionist forces. The Indian state, through its support, training and guidance for these movements, made use of them to serve its goal of its regional hegemony. India's role was significant in making these movements weaken themselves by attacking each other. The Tamil nationalist movements are good examples to illustrate the limitations of nationalism and the extent to which narrow nationalist arrogance can lead the people along wrong lines.

Meanwhile, the LTTE has continued to exercise its rejection and destruction of rival movements, denial of democracy, establishment of the leadership of a single organisation, and erring in determining who its friends were and who its enemies were. But through the development of its military might and fighting skills, it has transformed itself into a strong force that can hold its own. Its line remains one of Tamil nationalism and a separate homeland for the Tamil nationality. Whether this is feasible in the current global political context is highly questionable. On the other hand, the position of our Party is that it is feasible and compatible with the objective reality of the country to establish within an undivided Sri Lanka a genuinely autonomous region in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, which comprise the traditional homeland of the Tamils. While the LTTE represents an erroneous line and opposition to democracy, it cannot be denied that it represents the aspirations of the oppressed Tamil nationality, since the main form of oppression it is subject to is chauvinistic oppression.

Over 75,000 people have been killed as a result of the war during the past two decades. Many thousands have been crippled. Several hundred thousands have been made into refugees at home and abroad. Property, homes and factories worth several hundred millions of rupees have been destroyed. The destructive approach continues to be pursued and each destructive act bears the stamp of chauvinistic oppression.

Under these conditions, the wholehearted desire of the people of the country is that the war should be brought to an

end. The economy and normal life of the country are in tatters. The consequences of war have created serious problems among the Sinhalese. The Sinhalese who die at the battlefield are the children of ordinary people. In the name of a patriotic war, Sinhalese youth are being forced to become cannon fodder. The upper class chauvinist elite, whose children enjoy a life of comfort, insist that the war should go on. It is only this elite and the foreign arms dealers that need the war. The ruling upper class chauvinist elite are, in the name of war, surrendering the country to foreign forces and ruining the land and its people.

The US is attempting to take advantage of the war in Sri Lanka to establish its total dominance over the country. This has persuaded India to shed its indifference of the past decade and to intervene in the national question once again. Although the US has brought Sri Lanka increasingly under its influence in the past few years, it is not willing to antagonise India under the present circumstances, because to the US the large Indian market is more valuable than Sri Lanka. While it appears that the US has chosen to remain aloof and allow room for India to intervene in Sri Lanka, it has succeeded in enabling Israel to resume relations with Sri Lanka.

The recent visit by the Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs is evidence of Indian interference and pressure in Sri Lanka. What does India's re-entry mean? Will India be an honest mediator in settling the problem? Or will it be acting in a way to take advantage of the crisis to further its interests in the region? Thus, our Party strongly opposes and rejects the use of the national question to suit the likes and dislikes of the imperialist and regional super powers and to serve their interests.

Meanwhile, the Indian national parties and the Dravidian parties of Tamilnadu are approaching the Sri Lanka national question to suit their own interests. Some of the left parties, instead of viewing the problem in terms of the Marxist position on national oppression, choose to take a superficial view of the matter and express opinions in terms of the majority and the

minority and, in a way, that suits Indian national interests. We wish to emphasise at this juncture that the position of our Party is that it is the solemn duty of Marxist-Leninists to oppose oppression from any quarter and in any form.

The [now abandoned] programme for solving the national question agreed upon by the government and the United National Party (UNP) fails to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. Besides, it seeks to worsen the contradictions between the Tamil and Muslim people, and the proposed referendum is likely to be a contributory factor. At the same time, the absence of any reference to the Hill Country Tamils in the programme only strengthens the hands of chauvinism.

Our Party has continued to emphasise that a just and acceptable solution for the war in the North-East that has been imposed on the Tamil people and the national question that underlies it should be on the basis of the right to self-determination.

- The political solution should include the setting up of an autonomous region comprising the traditional homelands of the Tamil people in the merged North-East region where the Tamil people have total and constitutionally guaranteed authority to administer their own affairs.
- Internal autonomous structures with adequate authority should be set up within such an autonomous region for the Muslim people who, with their distinct religious and cultural identity, have traditionally coexisted with the Tamil people. The emergence of Tamil and Muslim narrow nationalism from any quarters should be stopped, and the Tamil and Muslim people should show utmost vigilance in this matter. It is only thus they could avoid falling into the traps laid by the forces of chauvinism.
- Autonomous structures should be set up in the Hill Country according to the intensity and distribution of the Hill

Country Tamils, who are also an important section of the population affected by the national question, so that the national question is resolved by safeguarding their distinct identity.

It is essential to draw up an extensive programme for the solution of the national question that includes the above three basic features. The position of our Party is that such a programme could be arrived at through negotiations with the LTTE, who are the leading force in the current struggle, and other Tamil and Muslim parties. We also believe that it would be the basis for bringing the war to an end. Instead, to seek a half-baked solution or to set up of an interim council and have a referendum in the East as part of that solution will amount to a mere distraction from the reality. It will only be another act of deception and pretence, which will only cause the war to continue for long.

The Economy

Under the six-year rule by the People's Alliance (PA) the economy of the country has worsened. The PA government has unreservedly carried forward the policy of liberalisation, privatisation and open market economy from where the UNP left. The dire consequences of these policies are today subjecting the country and the people to severe hardship in the form of a grave economic crisis. The recent unjustified increase in the price of domestic fuel is one more indication of the control that foreign companies have over the economic life of the country. Another instance concerns the stubborn position of the twenty-two companies that dominate the plantation sector in refusing a wage increase for the plantation workers and in the end conceding a pittance as wage increase. The fact that, in both instances, neither the Government nor the President was able to question or exercise control over the conduct of the companies goes to show the extent of power that multi-nationals are able to exercise within the country. It is under these

circumstances that the Government is trying hard to privatise the remaining state sector of the economy. This move signals the danger of taking the country towards total economic ruin.

When liberalisation, privatisation and open market economy were introduced, it was claimed that they would bring industrial development, a fall in prices as a result of competition and the modernisation of the country that will transform Sri Lanka into a second Singapore. Now, two decades later, what is the situation in the country? The increase in fuel prices has led to price increases in all items including public transport and food. The prices of electricity and water have been increased. Employees are being forced to contribute two days' wages as their contribution to the war effort on top of the existing Defence Levy and the Goods and Services Tax. Amid this, the Rupee has been devalued against the US Dollar. This has resulted in a further increase in prices. Despite all this, the government has with much reluctance offered an increase in monthly wages by a mere Rs. 600. One may remember that the workers went on strike in July 1980 demanding a wage increase of Rs. 300. The cost of living has gone up several folds since, but the workers are offered an increase of only Rs. 600.

During the past two decades, liberalisation and privatisation on the one hand and war on the other have been carried forward simultaneously. They can only be seen as two sides of the same coin. The situation is that there cannot be one without the other. Liberalisation and privatisation have been implemented without popular opposition in the country by extending the war and focusing the attention of the masses on it. This has been carried out without the slightest hesitation, then by the UNP government and now by the PA government.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund express satisfaction and pleasure about the growth and stability of the Sri Lanka economy. Thus, we can guess who has benefited from our economy. An economic policy is pursued that offers the fullest opportunities and facilities to the multinational

companies and the local big capitalists. This has led to the elimination of a national economy. Agriculture has been wrecked by the liberal import policy. The standard of living of the plantation workers has visibly deteriorated and they have been offered a mere Rs. 6.00 (just under 8 US cents) increase in their basic daily wage. Poverty dominates the countryside. The people are struggling to survive.

The whole country is being dragged along a disastrous neo-colonialist direction and is being guided as directed by the US imperialists. The weapons and military training acquired in the name of the war are being used to build up technically skilled armed forces. The quality of the police is also being transformed into that of capitalist fascist states. The people need to realise against whom all of these will be used at the next stage. The 'terrorism' that is portrayed in the North-East will tomorrow be portrayed in the Hill Country and the South. The people have already experienced this in the past.

Under these conditions, democratic and human rights are just empty words, which have no real value in Sri Lanka. Today all oppressive laws are in the hands of the armed forces. The Police have the power to arrest anyone and detain at special detention centres for any length of time they want. There is an unbridgeable gap between the various interpretations of democratic and human rights in word and the oppressive laws that are being implemented in deed.

Besides, the social and cultural degradation of the country is reaching lower depths. Mercenary killings by the underworld, drug addiction, sexual violence against women, murder and suicide continue to be on the rise. These are not isolated events that came into being under particular circumstances. They are the social consequences of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. The educational policy of the country is being transformed to suit these trends. The sum total of the social and cultural degradation expresses itself through the neo-colonisation of the economy of the country.

The Elections and the People's Alliance

The Government is preparing for the General Elections at a time when the war and the economic crisis in the country are taking a turn for the worse. The view that the elections should be postponed by two years using the crisis as pretext also exists within the Government, since the situation is changing by the day in a way that is hostile to it. At the same time the opposition parties to insist on holding the elections to teach the Government a lesson and to strengthen their position.

None of the problems and crises that trouble the country will go away by the arrival of the elections. The state of darkness that has engulfed the country will not go away with the PA or the UNP coming to power. Neither party can bring about a change in the ongoing war or the national question that is at the root of the war or the neo-colonial economic set-up.

The so-called 'old left' that is participating in the government of today have degenerated totally and are only interested in relishing the fruits of power. It is a disgrace to refer to as 'old left' the individuals who go to the extent of welcoming and justifying globalisation and multinationals. Some dream that these elements would one day see the light and return to the correct path. But while their degeneration is a serious blow and a source of weakness for the left movement, honest leftists have good lessons to learn from these setbacks.

Meantime, the Janathaa Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) that chooses to describe itself as the 'new left' is only interested in establishing itself as the sole leftist force and has consistently refused to unite with the broad leftist and democratic forces on the basis of a common programme, and claims that this is its tactical approach. Further, it glibly pronounces that the national question which is the main problem facing the country will be resolved on the basis of equality after socialism is established. It is hardly surprising that the JVP, which looks forward to winning ten parliamentary seats in the next general elections, is

following in the footsteps of their Trotskyist forerunners, the LSSP, to traverse the parliamentary path and achieve socialism by forming a 'socialist government'.

Certain Sinhala chauvinist organisations have got together to found a party called the 'Sihala Urumaya' and talk about building up a pure Sinhala Buddhist country. Sinhala chauvinists have spoken in this fashion in the past too. Although they seem to enjoy considerably more support than in the past, the prospects of their developing into a major political force does not exist in the near future. But their extremist propaganda is spreading vicious chauvinist thought in the country.

A broad unity among the leftist and democratic forces in the country and a sincere common programme are necessary and essential in the present situation in the country. And that could be the real Third Force. But there seem to be no possibility of achieving it at present. The New Left Front (NLF) formed with the participation of the NDP demonstrated the possibility and prospects for such a third force. But the NLF that was founded with much expectation and hope was wrecked by the Trotskyist parochialism, opportunism and thirst for power of Dr Vickremabahu Karunaratne, the leader of the Nava Samasamaja Party (NSSP). It should be noted that the JVP too played an instrumental role in wrecking the NLF.

There is a situation of general weakness among the leftist forces in the country in putting forward a common programme that includes a correct, consistent and clear policy on the national question. The cause that underlies this weakness is the parliamentary opportunism that views issues in terms of the vote bank. It is the duty of our party to work tirelessly to get over this tendency and strive for the unity and advancement of the leftist and democratic forces. The Party has to carry forward movements of mass struggle on its own and jointly with other leftist and democratic forces to oppose the war, to oppose liberalisation and privatisation, to emphasise a political solution for the national question, to secure a better standard of

living for the working people, and to win back democratic and human rights. It should be noted that the Party has carried out such tasks in the past.

The International Situation

The US and the West are crowing that they have defeated socialism and Marxism. But until imperialism and the exploitative social system, and the inequality based on them exist, there is no way that Marxism and scientific socialism can be defeated, since only Marxism has the strength to transform society and people in a revolutionary way and the capability to give direction to that transformation. This is because it is a social science that relates to truth and reality through practice.

The US is working under the illusion that it can bring the world solely under its control. To achieve that, it is seeking to unite the imperialist capitalists based in the US, Europe and Japan and control the world through globalisation.

The attention of US hegemonism is now in the Asia Pacific region. It preaches that the presence of its forces in the region will ensure peace and stability there. It is also expressing alarm that the South Asian region is endangered by the presence of terrorism. All this is propaganda and activity that forms part of the US strategy.

In recent times, the World Bank and the IMF that carry forward globalisation in the interests of the US have been thoroughly exposed before the people of the world. Particularly remarkable are the powerful demonstrations against them in Seattle and in Washington and the condemnation by thousands upon thousands of people. It is important for us to mobilise the people of this country to link hands with the people of the world and to struggle against globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation. We can see the need for it getting increasingly closer. We shall act in unity and solidarity with the anti-imperialist movements and struggles of the people of the world. Fur-

ther, we link our hands with firmness and solidarity with all Marxist-Leninist forces that struggle to win social transformation throughout the world and to establish socialism. We share our proletarian internationalist sentiments with fraternal organisations.

The Task Before the Party

Our Party has progressed through severe problems and crises throughout the past twenty-two years. It is well known that the Party was founded following a break with the party led by Comrade N. Sanmugathan. We have been able to carry forwards our work by defining our line as a revolutionary mass line on the basis of criticism and self-criticism on issues concerning the party organisation, the national question and the use of the parliamentary system. But some of the erroneous features of the style of work of the earlier party persisted. Also, certain previously assessed international situations had changed, and this showed us the errors in our assessment and created the need for the Party to reassess them.

The programme of the Party was carried forward in three parts of the country, namely the North-East, the Hill Country and Colombo. There has been a base for the Party in the North that was won by revolutionary mass struggles against caste-based and other forms of social oppression. In the Hill Country, the Party was able to carry out political work without recourse to trade union work, and achieve a favourable situation on an experimental basis. But the impact of bourgeois trade union methods has not been eliminated in the Hill Country because of the restoration of the power of private companies there. The work of our Party concerned certain areas of activity in Colombo, which has become the centre for a variety of activities and the expansion of political work.

The work of the Party during the past two decades had to be carried out in the context of two major trends. One concerned the national liberation struggle, which had transformed

itself into an intense armed struggle in the North-East. Here, it was nationalism that was more dominant than the line of class struggle, and the struggle was carried out from a narrow nationalist point of view under the leadership of the petit bourgeoisie. These struggles, which lacked a class orientation and the methods of class struggle, were characterised by petit bourgeois heroism. The Party did not oppose these struggles to the extent that they were against national oppression. But the Party could not and did not at any stage agree with the theory or the practice of these forces of extremism. It should be noted that, as a result, the Party had to counter their anger and vehement opposition as well as face major threats. The Party nevertheless stood consistently on the side of the masses subjected to national oppression and opposed without reserve the military rule that oppressed them. Our Marxist-Leninist line persists to this day without the slightest vacillation. Our experiences in Sri Lanka are a valuable lesson that demonstrates the extent to which an armed struggle without Marxist-Leninist guidance and led by the narrow nationalism of the petit bourgeoisie can harm the Marxist-Leninist movement. There are new lessons for the Marxist-Leninists to learn from these experiences.

The second trend concerns the impact of liberalisation and privatisation on our social environment through the process of globalisation. An illusion was created in 1977 that all could become rich and wealthy through enterprise under the system of open competition under capitalism. The socio-cultural ideas that encouraged such notions too were carefully cultivated. Emigration to the Middle East for employment and to the West as economic refugees also had a severe effect on social thought. The circulation of foreign earned money generated through such migration led to confusion in class attitudes in our social environment. The growth of middle class attitudes was at the expense of working class thinking. The above two trends continue to be a challenge to the working class line of the Party. These experiences too have provided the Party with several lessons and made it necessary for it to adapt its style of work accordingly.

The Party has, however, during the past two decades carried forward mass movements and struggles amid chauvinist oppression. It has spoken out and struggled for democratic and human rights and for good living conditions for the people. It has joined hands with other left forces to carry out several struggles against the war and privatisation. The Party is also active in political art and literature in carrying out an ideological struggle based on the class struggle to put forward the mass line. The Party has also made its contribution to the development of the concept of self-determination along Marxist-Leninist lines and in keeping with the developments in the national and international situations. The Party has, despite severe financial difficulties, published and supported the publication of political and literary works, journals such as the Puthiya Puumi and Thaayakam in Tamil and the Theoretical Journal New Democracy in English, and makes every effort to sustain that activity.

It is remarkable that the members and cadres of our Party, members of mass organisations and supporters have, in the middle of crises and difficulties, persevered in their unassailable faith in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the proletarian line and internationalism to carry forward their tasks. It is also remarkable that our Party and comrades have firmly held on to a clear stand in countering with the help of Marxist-Leninist ideology all manner of novel capitalist notions put forward on behalf of globalisation and in combating the infiltration of art and literature by poisonous thoughts, particularly through the conspiratorial activities of non-government organisations (NGO).

There is much organisational work to be done to develop our Party into a stronger Marxist-Leninist party. The party structure needs to be reinforced through the method of criticism and self-criticism and the strengthening of inner party democracy. This task has to be carried out thoroughly from top to bottom and bottom to top with dedication and tireless work for the party. The Party also has to act vigilantly to develop theory to deal with the ideological and practical problems faced by

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in the modern international context. At the same time, the basic strength of the Party should be extended on a firm mass base. The existing base in the North and in the Hill Country should be reorganised and reinforced through the confrontation of current issues. Elections are only a form of activity to strengthen the mass base of the party and not something that the Party believes in wholly so as to submerge itself in parliamentary mud. It has little to do with our ultimate aims and objectives. We should clarify our reasoning on the basis of the lessons of our earlier electoral experiences in the Hill Country and Colombo.

Thus, the Party should carry further forward its own programme to continue along its fundamental line of mass revolutionary struggle and widen and strengthen its mass base. At the same time, it should unite with all sincere leftist and democratic forces with which it can unite. This in essence is our position.

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought!

Long live the New Democratic Party!

Long live proletarian internationalism!

We look not only at the present but also at the future and have full confidence in the spirit and the strength of the masses of the nation. Therefore, we resolutely told those wavering and pessimistic people:

“Yes, it is now the grasshopper versus the elephant,
But tomorrow the elephant will collapse.”

Facts have shown that the colonialist ‘elephant’ is getting out of breath while our army has grown up into a powerful tiger.

Ho Chi Minh

Political Report,
2nd National Congress of the
Viet Nam Workers’ Party, Feb. 1951

SRI LANKAN EVENTS

Passing Away of Mrs Bandaranaike

Mrs Sirima Dias Bandaranaike died on the day of the last General Election. Irrespective of the opinions that people may have of her, she has had a major impact on Sri Lankan politics. Some see in her only a Sinhala nationalist and others only an anti-imperialist. There are others who seek to falsely portray her as a socialist. She was a member of the feudal elite class who by force of circumstances came to represent the interests of the national bourgeoisie. Her role has to be seen in the context of nationalist politics of a period in which forces of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism were still strong.

The anti-imperialist mood in the country that led to the defeat of the UNP in 1956 determined the course of events in Sri Lanka for two more decades. She led the Sri Lanka Freedom Party as a party of the Sinhala national bourgeoisie. Her government defied US and British imperialism in nationalising the petroleum companies and in setting up industries in this country with the support of the Soviet Union and China. In foreign policy, her government adopted a progressive form of neutrality that stood in opposition to colonial and imperialist domination, and her contribution to the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1970's was significant.

Within the country, however, her party identified itself with Sinhala chauvinism and alienated the Tamil masses further from itself and the Sinhala masses. It was during her tenure as Prime Minister that the Federal Party launched a satyagraha campaign that was cruelly put down although without bloodshed, a new constitution was enacted in which the minorities

were denied constitutional safeguards while Buddhism was assured its place of pride, and admission to university was on the basis of criteria other than merit. The unfortunate incident on the last day of the 4th International Tamil Research Conference in Jaffna in 1974 that led to the death of nine Tamils is blamed entirely on her by some Tamil nationalists, despite the contribution of certain Tamil nationalists as well to that tragedy. But she has to take her share of blame for mishandling of the matter from the outset and failing to conduct a full inquiry into the events. It was this incident that gave the initial boost to armed militancy, which grew to tremendous proportions after the UNP, came to power in 1977.

She was instrumental in initiating the Sirima-Shastri pact according to which a large section of the Hill Country Tamils were to be repatriated to India. The agreement to repatriate those who wished to take domicile in India was reasonable, if those who did not would have been offered Sri Lankan citizenship. But the proportion to be repatriated was determined beforehand by the two governments and, as a result, the number to be repatriated exceeded those who really wanted to go. Further mishandling of the agreement by successive governments ensured that the matter of citizenship dragged on, still depriving a sizeable section of the Hill Country Tamils of their legitimate rights.

It was also during her tenure as Prime Minister that the tea estates were nationalised. Its consequence was that a large section of the plantation workers were deprived of their livelihood owing to the appointment of Sinhala chauvinists as managers in the nationalised estates and the decision to closing down some estates for redistribution of land among Sinhala villagers. This tragedy marred what could otherwise have been a progressive step.

She served her class well by politically destroying the 'old left' who were tempted by the taste of office. But the weakening of the left movement and contradictions between the SLFP

and the left also weakened the forces of democracy and patriotism to make way for the dictatorial regime of the UNP in 1977. J.R. Jayawardene's move to rob her of her civic rights in 1980 was designed to prevent her from becoming a rallying point against his plans to dismantle the national economy and to sell out to the imperialists.

She has also been held responsible for the killing of a large number of Sinhala youth in the wake of the April 1971 insurrection by the JVP. The number killed remains uncertain but is perhaps close to 10,000 or less as opposed to figures exceeding 15,000 claimed by sources hostile to the SLFP. In a sense, the bourgeois state did what it would normally do when its survival is threatened, and the JVP launched an adventurist armed uprising into which it forced itself. Many of the killings were after the uprising was brought under control and seem to be revenge killings by the armed forces. The government was rightly criticised for this by the Marxist-Leninists, but not the 'old left' partners of the SLFP. Again, the JVP leadership remains answerable for not only the unnecessary sacrifice of thousands of youth but also the consequent increase in power for the armed forces, something that the armed forces failed to achieve through their abortive coup to topple the SLFP government in 1962.

Her opposition of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987 was partly against the hidden agenda of the Indian hegemonist regime to secure strategic concessions at the expense of Sri Lanka's sovereignty, and partly by the Sinhala chauvinism of the SLFP, which found common cause with the JVP, only to be outdone by the latter, which over stretched itself and once again sacrificed even more Sinhala youth in the altar of state terror.

The economic policies of 1970 that included strict import control helped the peasantry and encouraged local industry, small industries in particular. What is significant is that despite the chauvinistic line of the government in the 1970s, the SLFP, and Mrs Bandaranaike in particular, enjoyed remarkable

popularity in the north, especially among the peasantry who benefited from the fair prices for their produce. This stood her in good stead in the North even in 1989 when she contested the presidential election, although unsuccessfully.

Overall, Mrs Bandaranaike has secured for herself a place among the more progressive heads of state in the non-aligned countries during the 1960s and 1970s. The value of her contribution in defending the national economy and preserving a degree of independence in national and international issues against imperialist domination become particularly significant in the context of the policies pursued by the UNP especially between 1977 and 1994 and loyally adhered to by the PA now. Her handling of the national question and issues relating to it place her in an unfavourable light. It may, however, be noted that in her twelve years in power there was no serious outburst of violence against the minority nationalities as in 1958 and on several occasions since 1977. Despite her class origins and the class interests that she represented, she will be remembered by the progressive and patriotic masses of this country mainly for her defence of national interests against foreign domination.

The General Election: Chauvinism Gains Ground

The election campaign was marked by a high tide of Sinhala chauvinism in the South. Although the Sinhala Urumaya, a united body comprising several Sinhala chauvinist organisations polled only a percent of the total, many of its slogans had already been taken over by the PA with the Prime Minister Ratansiri Wickramanayake making jingoistic speeches from the platform denouncing peace efforts. The JVP too has been increasingly pandering to Sinhala chauvinism in the hope of gaining greater access to the chauvinist vote bank, and the UNP was saying different things to the Tamils and the Sinhalese.

The net outcome of the elections is that the parliament is now dominated by parties that are committed to a chauvinist

agenda so that the approach will be on of settling the national question through war at tremendous cost to the country and its economy. The Sinhala Urumaya, as evident from the polling patterns, is clearly a party of the English-educated Sinhala elite. This section of the petit bourgeoisie has, beneath its facade of sophistication, always been communal in approach.

The securing of a single seat by the Sinhala Urumaya does not mean political might in parliament. But it will be used to spread more communal venom and, like the racist and fascist parties in Europe over the past two decades, the Sinhala extremists will seek to implement their agenda by infecting the bigger parties with their chauvinistic ideas, by taking advantage of their political myopia.

A Journalist Slain

The brutally shocking murder of journalist Mailvaganam Nimalarajan by an armed gang that broke into his house in Jaffna a week after the declaration of the results of the elections, using explosives and ammunition, is in a way an indictment of the status of democracy in the country and especially the Jaffna peninsula. Nimalarajan was a well-known and brave journalist and a fair reporter of events. It was no wonder that his reporting of the election malpractices was not to the liking of a few political parties. His revelations about the conduct of the elections was likely to cause further embarrassment to those deeply involved in corrupt practices in the Jaffna peninsula.

Nimalarajan's killing was condemned by nearly all political parties, and the NDP in its statement has demanded action to bring the culprits to justice. A demonstration held opposite the Colombo Fort Railway Station in Colombo on 25th October was well attended and received much public support, besides participation by political parties, mass organisations and members of the media. Protests have been held on a large scale in various parts of the country including Jaffna, Vavunia and Batticaloa.

The demand for justice and action against the criminals responsible is loud and clear. The people are anxiously awaiting the response of the government and its arm that is responsible for upholding the law.

Another Massacre of Detainees

Before the people of the country could recover from the shock of the killing of Nimalarajan, reports have been received of the killing of close to thirty LTTE suspects detained in a rehabilitation camp in Bandarawela during the last week of October. Attacks on Tamil detainees is nothing new and have been reported from various detention camps and prisons across the country over the past two decades. But this incident is particularly notorious and has surpassed the ill famed Welikada Prison massacre of 1983 in that armed gangs numbering many hundreds have been brought into the camp by those responsible for the attack.

Massive protests and hartals have been carried out in the North-East and are likely to cause embarrassment to the forces of law and order as well as the government. Attempts by the pro-government media to whitewash the matter and suppress public concern by emphasising the fact that the victims were LTTE suspects would, in the end, fail before growing public anger at the blatant breach of human values.

Our war of liberation was a people's war, a just war. It was this essential characteristic that was to determine its laws and to decide its final outcome.

Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap
People's War People's Army,
FLPH, Hanoi, 1974, p. 49

A Poem by the Late Comrade K. Pasupathy (1925 - 1965)

SONG OF THE REVOLUTION

Onward to the battle front
World revolution is on its way.
Arise, arise and to the fore.

Are we not the masters of the world?
Do we not create and guard?
We the noble ones defend this world.
We are the mighty ones born of earth.

We fear not war, fear not fight
For we are those that seek new life.
Who will dare to fight us and
Perish like moth in burning flame?

Of oppression we had enough.
Now the world belongs to us.
To burning hell shall them we drive
Those claiming that we are their slaves.

The old conditions we will change -
Where workers toil and parasites thrive.
To our last breath we'll defend
Our beloved socialism to the end.

The earth is flooded by blood so red
That blend so well with the glowing light
Of the bright red hue of the mighty sky.
A red flag flutters across the sky.

The song of revolution loud and clear
For you brave soldier who arose
Amid the forces surging high.
Arise, arise and to the fore!

October 2000

WHY IS THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONTESTING THE ELECTIONS?

[A comment by our political analyst in September 2000]

Marxist-Leninists do not believe in the parliamentary path to socialism. But Marxist-Leninists recognise that the parliament and parliamentary elections have a role to play in the revolutionary struggle. In the Sri Lankan context, there are many strong arguments against participation in the elections but there are also many in favour of a limited participation. The New Democratic Party (NDP) decided to contest the elections in the districts of Jaffna and Nuwara Eliya after considering the various aspects of the issue.

Among arguments against contesting the elections, one notes the experiences of the 'old left' as well as the opportunism of certain left parties in recent times. Also, given the climate of corruption, intimidation and rampant malpractice, the prospects of electoral success is limited even in selected constituencies. What is particularly important today is the misery suffered by the people of the North-East owing to intensification of the war since 1995 and especially in the recent months as a result of the desire of the government to give an appearance of military success following the debacle of last April and the obsession with maintaining control over the Jaffna peninsula at any cost, especially among the chauvinistic political and military leaders. The arguments in favour of contesting elections essentially concern the tactical use of the electoral process, the parliament and other bourgeois democratic institutions.

New Democracy

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A Marxist-Leninist party can under certain circumstances avoid participation in elections but choose to support a relatively progressive anti-imperialist party or a united front, in the way the Marxist-Leninists in this country have in done the past. On the contrary, it could even call for boycotting elections if by that call it can send a strong political message to the masses and their oppressors alike. But such a situation has not arisen in this country yet, and particularly since the weakening of the left movement following the treachery by the Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CP) which took the parliamentary road to socialism. Although the people have gradually lost faith in the major political parties and in their ability to solve the country's problems, they still use the parliamentary elections as a means of registering their protest. In fact, there is general belief that the seventeen years of dictatorial United National Party (UNP) rule came to an end through the electoral process, although the reality is that it was the rise in mass militancy against the repressive regime that weakened the grip of the UNP and allowed the People's Alliance (PA) to come to power.

Now the people increasingly realise that there is not much difference between the UNP and the PA when it comes to the issues that affect their lives and livelihood. But for this realisation to develop into a political force that can empower the masses to liberate themselves and to change the social system awaits much more political work. It is with this in mind that the NDP decided its position on each of the parliamentary, presidential and Provincial Council elections ever since its founding over two decades ago.

Participation in parliamentary elections by a Marxist-Leninist party does not lead to the abandoning of the revolutionary struggle when it has no illusions of capturing political power through parliamentary elections nor plans to use its strength in parliament to bargain for cabinet posts or other petty titles for its leaders. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)

and the Nava Samasamaja Party (NSSP) have displayed such weaknesses and that is not surprising since neither is Marxist-Leninist and both having opportunists for their leaders. The NDP took the initiative in founding the now defunct New Left Front (NLF), with the name board hijacked by the NSSP leader, to provide a genuine left political alternative for the people of Sri Lanka. The NLF contested the Provincial Council elections to take a political message to the masses, which it did effectively in the districts in which it fielded candidates.

After the wrecking of the NLF by its enemies, including the JVP, who took advantage of the vanity of the leader of the NSSP, the NDP reassessed the political situation carefully. Its decision to support the Left and Democratic Alliance (LDA) candidate Vasudeva Nanayakkara in the presidential election of December 1999 was based on the fact that the programme of the LDA was politically the most acceptable to the NDP and stood in sharp contrast to the chauvinistic stances of the PA and the JVP. This support was given, knowing very well that the LDA candidate stood little opportunity of securing a substantial portion of the votes cast, especially in the context of political intimidation and corruption on the part of the PA backed by the state apparatus and the UNP, and more importantly the organisational weakness of the forces of the left.

The NDP is not a member of the NDA since there is still some confusion within the NDA about several important matters including the question of self-determination for the Tamil people. There are forces within the NDA that still suffer illusions about parliamentary democracy. But the NDA is the only force among the political parties and alliances in the south with which co-operation and accommodation on the basis of stated principles is possible.

The NDP is contesting only two districts. It is contesting under the symbol of the NDA, but has its own slate of candidates

in both districts. It also has secured the assurance of the NDA leadership that in the event of its winning seats in parliament it will be permitted to act independently of control by the NDA.

The Party has twice contested Nuwara Eliya during the Provincial Council elections in the past and secured a significant number of votes although it failed to win a seat. It is contesting the Nuwara Eliya District is to carry out political work among the Hill Country Tamils and build up the Party and its broad front organisations in the hill country. The present elections are being held in a situation in which the various organisations that claimed to represent the Hill Country Tamils have been reduced to appendages of the UNP or the SLFP by their leaders for personal gain. The elections are to be used to impress upon the politically conscious sections of the people the need for a genuine left alternative, which at present can be provided only by the NDP.

The Party's decision to contest the Jaffna District was taken with a heavy heart for several reasons, of which the misery suffered by the people of the North-East owing to intensification of the war is the foremost. The situation in the Jaffna District is one where a large section of the population is either fleeing or getting ready to flee the armed conflict. The prospects of holding fair elections are bleak, with the people under the threat of violence and candidates of certain parties armed and accompanied by armed men. The climate further favours corrupt practices including the stuffing of ballot boxes with the help of those in power.

The Party knows that securing a few parliamentary seats will neither change anything in the country nor bring the war to an end. It realises the absurdity of asking a desolate people to elect MPs who cannot achieve what the people want. The purpose of contesting the elections is to revive political work among the masses, give them political direction, and encourage them

challenge the opportunism of the political mercenaries and power brokers who have collaborated with their oppressors for a decade. This is the first occasion in well over a decade in which the Party has done open political work without hindrance in the North.

It has been argued, quite correctly, that holding elections in the Jaffna District will be used for propaganda purposes by the PA government to impress upon its imperialist backers that all in well in the North and that it has restored law and order there so that the NDP by contesting the elections will lend credibility to that picture. Again, irrespective of whether the NDP contests Jaffna or not, the Tamil nationalist parties and groups are contesting there. But the difference between the NDP and the others is that the latter want to be elected so that they can help themselves by helping one or the other big party to come to power. To the NDP the elections mainly serve to reactivate its political base and politicise the masses so that they empower themselves against their oppressors rather than depend on agents who claim to bargain on their behalf.

The correctness of the decision to contest will be borne out not by the outcome of the elections, which are not likely to be fair by any standard, but by the effectiveness of the political work carried out by the Party in the two districts where it has fielded its candidates.

According to the Leninist point of view, the final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated. Therefore, it is wrong to speak lightly of the final victory of revolution in our country; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to the facts.

Mao Zedong, October 1968

THE HILL COUNTRY TAMILS AND THE QUESTION OF SELF DETERMINATION

by IMAYAVARAMBAN

[This article is based on an earlier article in Tamil in 'Muslims and Hill Country Tamils and Self Determination' published by Puthiya Poomi Publishers in 1991.]

Whether the Hill Country Tamils are a distinct nationality and who the term Hill Country Tamils refers to have been hotly debated for well over a decade. Although there is considerable disagreement on these questions, there is consensus about distinctive characteristics of the Hill Country Tamils. Some differences in views arise from misunderstanding the concepts of nation, nationality, self-determination and the right to secession and some relate to the approach to the national question in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, the position taken by different political parties and organisations affect the nature of the solution proposed for the problems faced by the Hill Country Tamils.

Some argue that the identity of the Hill Country Tamils should strictly conform to the restrictive meaning of the phrase 'Hill Country Tamils'. The phrase 'Tamils of Indian origin' has been preferred by some leaders of the Hill Country Tamils, despite the fact that this phrase has been taken advantage of by the chauvinists to label the Hill Country Tamils as aliens. This was motivated partly by political opportunism and partly to accommodate the elitist attitudes of a section of the Hill Country Tamils residing outside the Hill Country who do not want to be associated with plantation labour.

Tamil nationalists, including those who have abandoned their struggle for secession of the North-East, on the other hand, do not approve of the idea of a separate identity for the Hill Country Tamils. In fact, some of them even insist that the Muslims of Sri Lanka necessarily are part of the 'Tamil nation'. Such attitudes result from viewing the national question in Sri Lanka entirely on the basis of linguistic nationalism and failing to appreciate the unique nature of the issues confronted by the Hill Country Tamils and the Muslims. These Tamil nationalists do not recognise the fact that the demand for a separate state for the Tamils comprising the North-East region fails to address the question of national oppression of the Hill Country Tamils and the Muslims.

To argue that the Hill Country Tamils are a distinct nationality or a distinct ethnic group is not to deny various features, most importantly their language that they share with the Tamils and Muslims. Nor does it seek to isolate the different aspects of national oppression. It does not rule out the possibility of the different Tamil speaking nationalities finding a closer and common identity in course of time. But for the Tamil nationalists to deny the Hill Country Tamils their identity as a distinct national minority or a nationality is to refuse to face reality. It is also a continuation of the politics of the Federal Party (FP) and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), which claimed to speak for the entire Tamil-speaking people while dealing only with the issues concerning one section of the Tamils who lived in the North-East.

Several factors have worked against political unity between the Tamils living mainly in the North-East and the Hill Country Tamils. The historic betrayal of the Hill Country Tamils by the leadership of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) in collaborating with the United National Party (UNP) government which in 1948 deprived the Hill Country Tamils of their citizenship and their right to vote sowed distrust among the Hill Country Tamils about the Tamils of the North-East. The FP founded by

those who split from the ACTC on this issue, in course of time, concerned themselves with issues that served their electoral interests in the North-East.

In fact, the Marxist Leninists have been firmer and more consistent than any Tamil nationalist in demanding justice for the Hill Country Tamils. The revisionist Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) and the Trotskyist Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP) who chose the parliamentary path to socialism were, however, quick to abandon their earlier principled position on the national question. Directly or indirectly, they were party to the chauvinistic politics of the national bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) with whom they forged close links in order to safeguard their parliamentary seats. The Marxist-Leninists who split from the revisionist Communist Party stood firmly for the rights of national minorities. Consequently, they were the only force that offered a serious political alternative to the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and its manipulative anti working class politics in the 1960s and the 1970s.

An opportunity to link the struggles of the Tamils in the North-East and the Hill Country Tamils against national oppression arose in the early 1970s when the former were angered by various acts of discrimination, the chauvinistic features of the constitution of 1972 and acts of state oppression. Around that time, large numbers of Tamil plantation workers were refused work and expelled from the tea estates in the hill country by the Sinhala chauvinist management who took over in the estates following their nationalisation. A considerable number went to the North to earn a living only to be subject to cruel exploitation by Tamil land owners. The FP (later to become the TULF) did nothing to help the victims of chauvinism. It did not dare to antagonise influential sections of the Tamil electorate. There were, however, exceptions like the 'Gandhiam Movement', which stretched out a helping hand. But their resources were limited and they were themselves susceptible to harassment by the state machinery.

Under these circumstances, the prospects for a united leadership that could fight for the rights of the Tamil speaking people were bleak. The militant political successors to the Tamil nationalist FP/TULF inherited much of the narrow outlook of their predecessors. As a result, the Tamil national bourgeois view that the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka should stand together and speak in one voice became even more untenable. This does not mean that the three Tamil speaking groups are destined to be eternally split, but that the use of the term 'Tamil speaking people' is inadequate to plaster over the distinct features of each group, which need not be causes for hostility among the groups. There are many things in common between the three groups including a common language, shared cultural elements and historical bonds between them and they are of particular importance in the current political climate.

The solution to the Tamil national question may result in some form of regional autonomy in the traditional Tamil homelands in the North-East or under force of circumstances may even assume the form of a separate state. But it is fraudulent to say that such a solution will fully address the issues faced by the Hill Country Tamils. To ensure and to defend the welfare of the Hill Country Tamils, one needs to take into account their means of livelihood and their way of life. That is precisely why those who argue that the entire Tamil speaking population is one nationality should realise that neither regional autonomy nor a separate state in the North-East is adequate for the exercise of the right to self determination of the Hill Country Tamils. To ensure their well being and survival as a community, it is necessary to recognise and to acknowledge their distinct identity.

It is only when one forgets the source of the term 'Hill Country Tamils' that one is tempted to think that it refers only to people living in the central highlands. Prior to independence from direct British rule in 1948, it was customary to refer to the people of Indian origin settled in Sri Lanka under British colonial rule as 'Indians'. The terms Indian Tamil and Indian Moor

referred to the workers brought from South India to work in the plantations and in other sectors of the economy as well as to others who immigrated in the wake of the subsequent development of the economy. The label 'Indian' was also used to identify them as aliens and enabled the chauvinists to pass oppressive legislation to curtail their legitimate rights and for the bourgeoisie to exploit them mercilessly. The term 'Hill Country Tamils' was preferred to 'Indian Tamils' because it emphasised their right to live as equals in this country and their sense of belonging to this country. This term has been in popular use since the mid-1950s.

A sizeable section of the Tamil labour force brought to Sri Lanka from South India by the British earned their living as wage labourers in Colombo. Besides them, there were people of Malayali and Telugu origin. The Malayalis were active in a variety of fields and played a significant role in the development of the trade union movement of Sri Lanka. Workers of Telugu origin provided cheap labour for the Municipal and Urban Councils to keep the cities clean.

In the years following the independence of 1948, it was the people of Indian origin who were the prime target of Sinhala chauvinist politics. Tamil nationalist political practice shunted out the Tamils of Indian origin. This strengthened the arguments for the Tamils of Indian origin to see themselves as a distinct community. What is also significant is the fact that, unlike in the North-East, it was possible for Azeez, a Muslim, to organise a strong trade union under his leadership. But it should be noted that, at the same time, the backwardness of the plantation workers when compared with the rest of the working class enabled the wealthy descendants of a parasitic elite and traders to capture the leadership of their trade unions.

Following national independence in 1948, many people of Indian origin with Indian nationality chose to return to India. A section of the traders continued their business in various towns across the country. People of Indian origin who lost their iden-

tity as a community assumed the linguistic identity of the local community. At the same time, closely knit communities like the Colombo Chettis preserved their distinct identity although many of them have since adopted Sinhala as their first if not second language.

There are many reasons why certain sections of the people of South Indian origin adopted Sinhala as their domestic language over the past few centuries. The fact that the rigid caste system that prevailed in the North and the arrogant attitude of the upper caste elite did not encourage these people to see themselves as a part of the Tamil community, although not a major factor, is something that one cannot ignore.

The main difference between the attitude of those who adopted Sinhala as their language and that of those who saw themselves as Tamils of Indian origin concerns the role of language. Political developments since 1948 have introduced further unifying features among the latter so that, given their inability to identify themselves as a section of the Tamils of the North-East, there is room for all Tamils of Indian origin to be identified as a distinct national minority or a nationality. What seem to be important in such matters are the feelings of the social group concerned and the relationship between social groups. If any such social group seeks to identify itself as a nationality, not living in a contiguous territory is not an obstacle to being so identified.

If it is possible for the Tamils of the North-East who have their permanent homes in Colombo or elsewhere in the South to see themselves as Tamils of the North-East, there is similar justification for people with close connections with the Hill Country Tamils because of their socio-historical background to see themselves as Hill Country Tamils. It may be noted here that Black Americans and Hispanic Americans in the US with diverse origins seek common ethnic identities as Black American and Hispanic national minorities in the course of their struggle to combat racial oppression. What matters in the end

is whether a social group chooses to identify itself as a nationality or a distinct ethnic group. Choice in such matters is a consequence of social and political circumstances.

Being scattered in different parts of the country does not negate the right of a nationality to self-determination. All Sri Lankans who were forced to leave the country as a result of chauvinist oppression have the moral right to return to Sri Lanka and enjoy the right to citizenship and all other rights that go with it when the oppressive conditions have been removed. This is equally applicable to Hill Country Tamils who have been expatriated to India with the help of unjust laws and political and other pressures. Therefore, it is only just to demand that members of all nationalities and national minorities of Sri Lanka who left the country during the past half century and their descendants have the right to Sri Lankan citizenship for an indefinite period. The People's Republic of China set a good example by allowing Chinese nationals who emigrated to different parts of the world under the unbearable conditions of the past an automatic right to Chinese citizenship. This right existed for a few decades from the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. The question of those who do not desire to return is another issue, but an offer of an opportunity to return as full citizens is essential.

If the demand for the recognition of Hill Country Tamils as a nationality necessarily includes the right to self-determination, the question arises as to how that right could be exercised along with the question of what its impact might be on the struggle against national oppression and the unity of the different nationalities in Sri Lanka.

The right of a nationality to self determination is its right to determine its mode of existence. Where there are no practical restrictions on the exercise of that right, it includes and, in fact, implies the right to secession. A nationality occupying a geographically contiguous territory can exercise its right

to self determination as the right to secession. But the right to something we know is not the same as choosing it.

We know that it is not feasible for the Hill Country Tamils to demand a separate state or a federal state. Like the Muslims, they do not live predominantly in a contiguous territory. Thus, it is meaningless to interpret their right to self determination as a demand for secession. But it is both feasible and desirable to set up autonomous regions that will ensure their well being. Besides, autonomous units can be set up even in regions where they live as minorities so that their linguistic, religious and cultural rights and the right to earn a livelihood are guaranteed.

All discussion, dialogue and recommendations thus far of the national question have mainly concerned the national oppression of the Tamils. It is regrettable that, despite the Muslims openly expressing their anxieties about their existence and survival, the Tamil nationalist groups have paid scant attention to the question of their right to self-determination. To subject the problems concerning the Hill Country Tamils by making it a part of the Tamil national question in the North-East is not in the interest of the Hill Country Tamils or the Tamils of the North-East or for the peaceful resolution of the national question as a whole.

Thus, it is necessary to deal with the question of the Hill Country Tamils on the basis of the socio-political conditions that are unique to them and by considering the Hill Country Tamils as at least a distinct national minority. If the Hill Country Tamils choose to see themselves as a distinct nationality, their not living in a contiguous territory should not be a serious obstacle to the fulfilment of that wish.

There can be different motives for the demand that the Hill Country Tamils and the Muslims should be considered as part of a greater Tamil speaking people. There can equally be other motives for opposing that demand. The ways in which the three Tamil speaking communities are confronted with the

problem of national oppression differ. Thus, the nature of the struggles and the kind of solutions sought can differ in approach. It is possible in the long run for the three Tamil speaking communities to get together on the basis of a common language. While such unification is good for the unity of all nationalities of the country, it cannot be forced upon any of the three sections. To attempt to impose such an identity on the people concerned can, in the present context, produce only negative effects.

There is a strong tendency, especially among the discredited leadership of the Hill Country Tamils, to isolate them from the other Tamil speaking people. Besides this sectarian approach that weakens the struggle against national oppression, there is also a strong resurgence of another form of sectarian politics that divides the Hill Country Tamils along the lines of caste identity. Imperialist inspired efforts to substitute corrupt non-government organisation (NGO) work for revolutionary political work also encourages such divisive tendencies among the oppressed Hill Country Tamils.

Frustration with the trade union leadership and politics dominated by trade unionism in a climate of undisguised chauvinistic oppression has made a small but significant section of the Hill Country Tamil youth attracted to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Some of them fail to see the difference between the nature of the problems in the North-East and in the Hill Country and get themselves involved in isolated acts of violence without a political programme or mass support.

The emergence of a petit bourgeois elite from among the growing number of educated youth also favours ultra left as well as opportunist tendencies in the Hill Country. Thus it is all the more important for the Marxist-Leninists to pay more attention to political work in the Hill Country and to build up a strong mass movement to fight national oppression by relying on the working class.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

I like to add to the comments on the question of the similarity between the policies of the People's Alliance (PA) and its predecessor in the last issue of your journal. Is it not time that Marxists reassessed the class nature of (really the class interests represented by) the constituent parties of the PA, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in particular?

For well over four decades, the Marxist-Leninists of Sri Lanka have held that there was a characteristic difference between the United National Party (UNP) and the SLFP. Ultra leftists have on several occasions questioned this view. Even the 'old left', the Lanka Samasamaja Party (LSSP) in particular, acted in a way that helped the UNP to power in 1977, out of spite for the SLFP with which its partnership in power ceased in 1975. Much of their refusal to see the difference between the UNP and the SLFP and the UNP was subjective. The Tamil nationalist elite, which has historically taken a blinkered and sectarian view of the politics of the country, too has refused to see anything good in the SLFP when compared with the UNP. Some members of the Tamil elite are totally oblivious to the Sinhala chauvinism of the UNP, and again there have been efforts by a smaller but nevertheless significant section of Tamil elite to whitewash the Sinhala chauvinism of the SLFP.

What characterises the above approaches is a lack of objectivity arising from a desire to see the world not as it is but as what one likes it to be. Such subjective approach has had adverse consequences for the left movement as well as the Tamil and Hill Country Tamil nationalities. A Marxist, while acknowledging the distinctions between the national bourgeoisie and

the comprador bourgeoisie, also recognises the dark side of the national bourgeoisie, namely its tendency to vacillate, to compromise with the comprador bourgeoisie and imperialism in order to safeguard its short term interests, and its potential to betray everything it once upheld as national interests. Thus, what is needed is a dialectical approach to the understanding of the nature of classes and class struggle as opposed to a static and dogmatic view.

Another factor that needs to be remembered is that political parties do not possess any eternal class nature. Their class outlook could be subverted from within or without. How could one who has already witnessed the degeneration of the parliamentary leftist parties over the past decades and the conduct of parties like the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) who sport a self proclaimed 'Marxist' label hope for an eternally progressive and anti-imperialist character for the national bourgeoisie?

The political assessment of any political party cannot be on the basis of its declared objectives alone, for actions speak louder than words. It cannot be based on a section of the membership being 'progressive', for even today the British Labour Party has several genuine socialists among its membership. It cannot be on the basis of the progressive reputation of political partners a party has. In India, for example, the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have struck electoral pacts with all manner of nationalists and political rivals.

Let us examine the politics of the SLFP since its founding. Its direct origin lie in the UNP, but the UNP itself was not a coherent whole at the time of its founding and despite its capitalist nature contained conflicting interests. Given the anti-imperialist tendency of the SLFP, its formation identified the UNP more strongly with its pro-imperialist leaders and a comprador capitalist class nature. The Trotskyist LSSP chose to identify the SLFP as populist and petit bourgeois, a label that suited the

leaders of the LSSP when they became partners in power with the SLFP in 1963. There have been other Trotskyists who never differentiated among the bourgeoisie and denied the existence of a national bourgeoisie. The Communist Party, undivided until 1963, recognised the SLFP as a party of the national bourgeoisie. Their assessment was justified by role of the SLFP since its rise to parliamentary power in 1956.

The independent foreign policy pursued by the SLFP-led governments from 1956 to 1965 was evident even when it was removed from power in 1977. Its moves that defied the West in closing down foreign bases, nationalising the Colombo Port and seeking Soviet support for setting up heavy industries in the country stood in clear contrast to the policies of the UNP governments. The anti-imperialist nature of the SLFP has to be seen in the context of the Sri Lankan political economy as well as the global situation. The 1950s were associated with a wave of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles in the wake of Indian independence and more significantly the liberation of China. The momentum of this anti-imperialist thrust developed further in the 1960s and began to weaken in the late 1970s, when imperialism struck back with a vengeance. The conduct of the SLFP while in power and out of power in this period was not essentially different from that of the national bourgeois leadership in many Third World countries.

The SLFP also had a reformist agenda, again much like that of national bourgeois parties in other countries. The leftist parties like the VLSSP (later to become the MEP by adopting the name of the grand alliance led by the SLFP in 1956) like to claim credit for the Paddy Lands Act of 1957, but the reality is that the act fell far short of eliminating landlordism or achieving the goal of 'land to the tiller' because the national bourgeoisie was unwilling to destroy its source of power in the countryside. In fact, all land reform by the SLFP was sham and was motivated by its class interests if not Sinhala chauvinism. Legislation enabling unionisation of labour too was designed to help the

SLFP to form trade unions and did in fact undermined the position of the leftist parties vis-à-vis the trade union movement. None of the foregoing is said in order to deny the fact that oppressed sections of the population gained some benefits under SLFP-led governments, but only to illustrate the fact that such benefits were reformist in essence and designed to strengthen the power base of the SLFP.

Whatever the intentions of the SLFP leadership, its contributions as an anti-imperialist and reformist national bourgeois party were recognised by the masses, and, to some extent, it is this past that still retains a genuine mass base for the SLFP even today. Let us now turn to the role of the 'old left' in their endeavour to transform the class nature of the SLFP and use the SLFP in their journey to socialism.

Leftist parties have under various historical circumstances allied with national liberation organisations, national bourgeois political parties and other exploiting class organisations. But such alliances have always been conditional and limited to particular issues and historical circumstances. Wherever such alliances were without the leftist party compromising its principles, the partnership has benefited the interests of the masses. Wherever the alliance was on the terms dictated by the bourgeois party, the consequences had been disastrous for the leftist party and the oppressed masses.

Supporting a national bourgeois government against imperialism and its local representatives without participating in government as a partner strengthens a leftist party. Under some conditions, conditional participation on the basis of a well-defined common programme can have limited benefits, if the alliance is not dominated by the national bourgeoisie. Generally, such instances have been rare in history. But when a leftist party that is committed to the parliamentary path enters into such an alliance, it makes compromise after compromise until it becomes a passive junior partner of the bourgeois party

so that in the end its threats to withdraw its support to the government lack credibility.

The LSSP, once a champion of equal rights for the Sinhalese and the Tamils, gradually lost interest in the minorities and degenerated to a level where the SLFP was able to use one of its great theoreticians to draft a constitution that took away some of the rights of the minorities. The plight of the revisionist Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) was no different. The record of the LSSP and CPSL was one of treachery against the working class and the minority nationalities. Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike achieved what she wanted by inviting them to join her in government once in 1963 and again in 1970: the vulnerability of these right opportunists to the offer of portfolios weakened left unity, wrecked working class solidarity, destroyed the credibility of these left parties, and harmed the left movement as a whole. It was this failure of the so-called 'old left' that created the political space for the emergence of the JVP and enabled it to present its anti-working class and Sinhala chauvinist agenda as a revolutionary Marxist programme.

Participation of the leftist political parties in an SLFP-led government helped the government to present a progressive and even a 'socialist' image that concealed the reality of its capitalist nature. The LSSP and the CP failed to defy the government when it acted against the interests of the workers and the national minorities. The killing of innocent youth in the wake of the adventurist JVP insurrection of 1970 was condoned in silence by the LSSP and the CP. Notably, it was the Marxist-Leninists, who were also the severest critics of the JVP, who denounced these brutal acts.

Today the LSSP and the CP are advocates of the war effort. Since they have got so used to echoing the voice of the SLFP, especially when they are its junior partners in power, some members of these parties have chosen to even join the SLFP so that they could speak for the SLFP from within the SLFP. The degeneration of the 'old left' is now so complete

that one may say that the alliance of the left parties with the SLFP have not had any significant impact on the SLFP, while on the other hand the partnership has totally destroyed the credibility of the 'old left' and destroyed them as a serious political force.

The question of the class nature of the PA has to be seen in the context of the political changes that occurred in the country since 1977. The SLFP-led governments played an anti-imperialist role during 1956-1965 and again during 1970-1977 partly because of the particular local and international historical circumstances. The UNP played a vital role in serving the interests of the imperialists and was preferred by the imperialists to the SLFP. Also, the UNP through its economic programme destroyed the economic base of the national bourgeoisie and delivered a severe blow to the role of that class as a major anti-imperialist force. It was in a way inevitable that the SLFP of 1994 could not carry forward the anti-imperialist agenda of the earlier decades.

Seventeen years of dictatorial UNP rule and its international image as a gross violator of human and democratic rights had made the UNP a major liability by 1994. Thus, once it was realised that the PA led by the SLFP would continue with the same economic policies as the UNP and abide by the rules of the World Bank and the IMF, the imperialists were pleased to see the PA in power.

One may note here the recent trends in US-India relationship, which show that imperialism is glad to do business with the Hindu fanatic BJP as long as the Indian market is kept open for their goods. The reality is that the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, national or comprador is not the concern of the imperialists as long as business is as usual. The national bourgeoisie is capable of as much treachery as the comprador for its survival. The allies it chooses depend largely on whether the revolutionary or the reactionary forces prevail. This vacillation of the national bourgeois allows its party to be subverted by

pro-imperialist elements to the extent that the distinction between it and the comprador capitalist party fades into oblivion.

It is true that a large number of supporters of the SLFP are anti-imperialist in their thinking, but they are also victims of chauvinist ideology. The leadership of the SLFP never really represented the aspirations of the masses and with the weakening of the national bourgeoisie as a political and economic force it has ceased to represent the interests of that class either. It has failed to emerge out of its seventeen years in the opposition as a patriotic force capable of providing anti-imperialist answer to the problems facing the country. It has let down the social classes from whom it derived its strength by abandoning every anti-imperialist policy of its past. Thus, the re-emergence of the SLFP as an anti-imperialist force is a most unlikely event within the framework of the parliamentary political system. Therefore, to imagine that the SLFP is still a progressive force is to live in the past and, more seriously, a dangerous illusion.

The oppressed masses of this country cannot choose between the UNP and the SLFP. The opportunism of the JVP is now so transparent that one sees little difference between it and Sinhala chauvinist parties like the MEP. The sad reality is that there is no credible revolutionary leadership for the oppressed masses of this country. Such a leadership cannot fall out of the sky. It has to be built from the ground upwards with the working class and the oppressed masses as the resources. To rely on the SLFP or for that matter the JVP for such a task would be to betray the revolutionary cause.

It is time that the genuine forces of the left thought seriously in terms of a broad-based, secular, anti-chauvinist, anti-imperialist, extra-parliamentary mass political programme instead of ad hoc alliances for electoral purposes. It certainly is not an easy task. But making a social revolution had never been one.

J. Mohan

(Translated from Tamil)

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

PALESTINE: ZIONIST PEACE

Zionism has once again shown its teeth. Whatever the coalition in power in Israel, it is the Zionists who run the state with the support of US imperialism. They succeeded in weakening the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) by the late 1970s and rendered it impotent by the early-mid 1980s, thanks to the increasing reliance of the Yasser Arafat leadership on the patronage of reactionary Arab states. Peace talks were favoured by the US only after the Soviet Union began to weaken from within and the PLO lost its revolutionary bite.

It was never the desire for peace that brought the Zionists to the negotiating table but the spontaneous militancy of the Palestinian masses. The Zionists, guided along by their American patrons, use the slogan 'Land for Peace' only to hold on to as much land as possible that has been grabbed in the name of Israel. Despite the peace talks, the shared Nobel Peace Prize, and Israeli 'consent' to Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and the Gaza, the Israeli 'hawks' and 'doves' alike continue to rob as much as possible from the Palestinians. Israeli settlements in the West Bank go on as do the eviction of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and its suburbs with the blessings of the Israeli state.

The setting up of the Palestinian Council headed by the PLO in patches of the occupied territory handed over to the Palestinian authority was designed to use the PLO and the Palestinian police to suppress Palestinian militancy. The PLO lead-

ership lived up to the expectations of their Israeli masters, using terror and torture on the opponents of Arafat and Israel, so much so that angry protests came even from among the allies and partners of Arafat.

The Zionist dream to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel and place it entirely under its control has always had the blessings of the US. Planned acts of provocation by the Zionists against the Palestinians have continued, simply to create excuses for going back on what was agreed. The latest in the series involving Ariel Sharon in September 2000 opened the floodgate of suppressed anger of the Palestinian masses.

Israel has responded in characteristic fashion with acts of state terror including the bombing of residential areas. The killing of civilians by the Israeli armed forces has caused anger across the Arab World so that even the pro-US Arab states are now compelled to join in condemning Israel. But it seems that Israel has still to learn its lessons even though it is only a few months since it was unceremoniously expelled from southern Lebanon, which it occupied for nearly two decades.

Israel, despite mounting international pressure, offers to withdraw its army from Palestinian controlled territories only if the PLO would control the uprising, but without itself offering to stop its provocative actions. It still believes that it can impose its peace on the Palestinians by brute force.

Expressions of outrage by the Arab states which wouldn't dare defy the US mean nothing. The course of events in Palestine are inevitable as long as the Zionists and American concern for peace is a sham and designed to deceive the Palestinians. The lesson for the Palestinian and Arab masses is that there is no choice but to persist in armed mass struggle to liberate Palestine from Zionist control and the Arab World from US hegemony.

INDIA AND THE US: UNITED AGAINST 'TERRORISM'

Prime Minister Vajpayee of India has been accorded the warmest welcome for any Indian Prime Minister so far by the US authorities. Despite American unhappiness about India's nuclear dreams, there is a willingness to co-operate in various sectors. The Hindu chauvinist government and US imperialism have found common cause in combating 'terrorism', which to both is synonymous with 'Islamic terrorism'.

The US willingness to accommodate Indian ambitions for hegemony in South Asia came with the weakening and collapse of the Soviet Union and has become implicit approval for a variety of economic and strategic reasons. Particularly, the prospect of Russia, China and India emerging as a new power bloc is something the US imperialists don't like to see. Thus encouraging India's desire for regional hegemony suits US interests.

The Hindu chauvinists, like their Sinhala Buddhist counterparts in Sri Lanka, reserve all their patriotism and national pride only for suppressing the minority nationalities and religious groups. But they are most willing to sell the country to the worst enemy of the people, namely US imperialism.

YUGOSLAVIA: THE NEW WORLD ORDER?

Milosovic has been removed from power. The US imperialists have finally had their way in Serbia. But what does it mean for the Serb people and the Kosovars in whose name that Serbia was taken to the verge of destruction?

While there can be no illusions about US imperialist intentions in the region, one cannot exonerate the Milosovic regime for its contribution to the dismantling of Yugoslavia, the tragedy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the events that led to the

criminal bombing of Serbia by the US and its allies. Serb chauvinism was much to blame for the conflicts in what was once a federation of Yugoslavia. The imperialists capitalised on the situation created by Serb chauvinism by encouraging Croat, Macedonian and Slovenian nationalists. Serb chauvinism and oppression earned for Serbs the hostility of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. To defend Milosovic in the name of socialism is an insult to socialism. Milosovic represented Serb chauvinism more than any form of socialism, and it is no wonder he has admirers among the Sinhala chauvinists of the JVP.

The new regime in Yugoslavia is something to the liking of the imperialists, but therein lies the problem for them. Milosovic has not been replaced by any less chauvinistic forces. The new regime is likely to be as chauvinistic as Milosovic; their attitude towards Kosovar autonomy and self determination is not likely to be any softer than that of the old regime. The imperialists who encouraged secession and by their intervention caused what they called 'ethnic cleansing' of first the Kosovars and then the Serbs of Kosovo will now need to placate the very forces of secession among the Kosovars. Thus, Kosovars are likely to be the bigger losers in the short run, as the imperialist will like to prop up the new Serb regime. The implications cannot, however, be much favourable to imperialism in the longer run.

ANOTHER NOBEL FARCE

The Nobel Peace Prize for the year 2000 has been awarded to President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea for his contribution to peace in Korea. But his North Korean counterpart has been ignored. The fact remains that it was the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that always strove for the reunion of Korea and for peace. The US with its troops based in the South is the main enemy of unity

and peace in Korea. Until the overthrow of the last of a succession of US puppet regimes, the government in South Korea, under pressure from the US, was not keen on reunion. The US became agreeable to the idea of possible reunion only in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It now hopes to subdue the North by peaceful means while the state remains repressive in the South.

So, the Peace Prize once again goes to imperialist manipulation. What is also significant is that, in the recent past, genuine campaigners for peaceful resolution of conflicts had to share the prize with the oppressors like the heads of state of Zionist Israel and racist South Africa and the parochial Unionist leader of Northern Ireland. This year, the award goes only to the head of a state, which still accommodates the cause of conflict and of the division of Korea, namely the presence of US troops. That certainly is prize performance.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in a few hands, partly because of competition among capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labour encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be efficiently checked even by a democratically organised political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely funded or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population.

Albert Einstein

"Why Socialism", Article written for Monthly Review,
Vol. 1 No.1, May 1949

POEMS BY SUBADRAN (1935 - 1979)

People Power

It was the physician called the people
that made my dumb poetry speak
that made my blind poems see
my deaf poems hear
my crippled poems walk
and my cowardly poems to fight.
Friends,
send your poems too to that physician.

Here to sing

I am not here to gather fame
before I am carried in a coffin.
I am here to sing for the proletarian revolution
until I am carried in a coffin.

Human Might

Has not the one that arched the rainbow
set the arrow in place?
Come along comrade, let's climb
the watery rope descending from the sky,
place an arrow on the rainbow,
and with the might of mankind
capture the roaming sun and
place it at the feet of mankind.

Peace

O, war sharks of US imperialism,
the sprats that roam the Indian Ocean
are not hiding away in fear of your war rehearsals.
They are transforming themselves
into whales to combat your cruelty.
The peace boats of the Indian Ocean
will drown your warships, for
peace has no faith in the talk-shop of the UN
but on the battle fields for your destruction