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GAMES THAT THEY PLAY

The LTTE bombing of the air base of the Sri Lankan Air Force at Katunayake and the international airport should have impressed upon the two major political parties the importance of ending the war and finding a just and lasting solution to the national question. But the occasion has been used by the PA government and the UNP opposition to blame each other for the disaster rather than seek ways of solving the most pressing problems facing the country, namely the war and the national question.

Nothing seems more important to the PA government than clinging on to power, and the UNP is interested only in securing power. The PA and the UNP have tried their hand, openly and behind the scenes, at forming opportunist alliances to achieve their respective goals. The UNP saw its opportunity when efforts by the PA leadership to control the Muslim Congress misfired and led to the loss of its parliamentary majority. The UNP used this opportunity to force a vote of no confidence on the government and the hasty response of President Kumaratunge was to prorogue parliament and announce a referendum on something for which the government already had a mandate. This enabled the UNP to pose once again as a cham-

pion of democracy in the country, despite its record of 17 years of uninterrupted misrule.

The events of the July and August have exposed the bankruptcy of the UNP and the PA, as well as that of the Tamil and Muslim nationalist parties, and the chauvinist JVP and Sihala Urumaya. The Trotskyite left leaders outside the PA too exposed their shaky ideological foundations by aligning themselves with one or the other faction of the chauvinistic bourgeois parties. The decision of certain Tamil parties to side with the UNP despite its reluctance to commit itself to end the war and find a just solution to the national question appears to be linked with the Indian establishment now leaning towards the UNP.

While the battle for power between the UNP and the PA was raging, there have continued to be moves to form a 'national government' comprising the most reactionary sections of the UNP and the PA. This move, so far unsuccessful but consistent with the class nature of the two parties, also had the blessings of an imperialist power. However, given the scale of corruption and political opportunism, the prospects of a stable alliance, let alone government, are poor.

What has in effect been found bankrupt is the parliamentary political system. The forces of the genuine left need to grasp this day and hour to mobilise the masses to find a political alternative that can lead this country out of its crisis that is directly linked to the war, the unresolved national question and imperialist and regional hegemonic domination of the economy of the country.

"War is the continuation of politics by other" (i.e., violent) "means". This famous aphorism was uttered by one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war, Clausewitz. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views concerning the significance of every given war. It was precisely from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded different wars.

V.I. Lenin

Socialism and War, July-August 1915

SRI LANKAN EVENTS

A Referendum Postponed

Amid the aggravation of the political crisis within the government, in the wake of the opposition move to propose a vote of no confidence on the government, the President of the Republic announced in July that the parliament was prorogued and that a referendum would be held to determine whether the country needed a new constitution. Initially, it seemed an effective ploy to throw the opposition into confusion, but with differences emerging from within the ranks of the government, let alone allies like the CWC who feared that the new constitution would diminish their bargaining power, the government decided to postpone the referendum to October and it is unlikely that the referendum will ever be held.

The postponement has made it plain that the proposed new constitution, whose basis is still a mystery, and the referendum had nothing to do with the national question or issues of democracy, but manipulations to prolong the life of the government. The UNP smelt blood and started to gun for the government and the JVP, which initially sided with UNP in its opposition to the 'anti-democratic actions' of the PA government, was quick to realise that the immediate downfall of the PA would not benefit them.

The JVP offered conditional support to the PA, one of the important conditions being the abandoning the referendum for a new constitution which besides 'leading to the division of the

country' would in fact reduce their representation in parliament through the replacement of proportional representation by the 'first past the post' system that existed before 1977.

The postponement of the referendum has exposed the bankruptcy of not only the PA but also that of the UNP, the JVP and the various Tamil and Muslim parliamentary political parties. In fact, it has exposed the impotence of the parliamentary political system in dealing with the most pressing problems that face the country.

Stranger and Stranger Bedfellows

The current political crisis has once again demonstrated the value of amnesia to parliamentary politics. Suddenly saving 'democracy' had become the most important issue to every political party. The UNP wants to save democracy from the PA and the PA from the UNP. The JVP initially wanted to save democracy from the PA and later decided to save it from the UNP. The EPDP, with its consistent policy of supporting the party in power, seems stranded in its alliance with the PA. The other three Tamil political parties of the North-East with seats in parliament chose to save democracy from the PA in the hope that the UNP leadership will help their political survival by committing itself to finding a solution to the national question. The unwillingness of the UNP has left the three Tamil parties in the lurch, and they are now struggling to explain their stand to the Tamil masses. Moves by the President to undermine the position of Rauf Hakeem as leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress backfired, pushing the larger section of the SLMC towards the UNP, but succeeded, however, in destroying the credibility of the SLMC as the main political party of the Muslims. Much of this is not surprising, given the quality and nature of nationalist politics in Sri Lanka.

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, one of the founders of the NSSP but out of it for some years, found himself in the uncomfortable position

of forming alliances with not only the JVP and other notorious Sinhala chauvinists to defend 'democracy' but also being seen in the company of the UNP leadership on public platforms. His attempts to distance himself from the UNP have not been given the publicity that he would like. The co-founder of the NSSP and present owner of the name board of the NSSP, Dr V.B. Karunaratne, who usurped name of the New Left Front, surprised everybody with his announcement of support for the referendum. His flirtation with the JVP and the UNP only two years ago and the publicity that he received in the pro-UNP media are now ancient history. Now he has formed an alliance with the revisionist CPSL and the degenerated Trotskyite NSSP, which had well and truly lost their political identity within the PA, to save himself from political oblivion. Prescriptions by the good doctor are now different, as he has suddenly discovered the positive qualities of President Chandrika Kumaratunge that escaped him until a couple of months ago.

However, the ultimate alliance is still in the making. There is pressure from the biggest imperialist power on the UNP and the PA to get together and form a right-wing national government to save democracy from the masses, in order that the imperialists could implement their plans for peaceful globalisation. The JVP and the Sinhala Urumaya were taken aback by this turn of events as it takes the wind out of their sails. Despite the immediate setbacks to the formation of this grand alliance, it is still on the agenda of forces within both parties.

Whatever happens, the months to come will witness many a shotgun political wedding and many more unhappy marriages.

Bombing the Peace Process

The only thing that the PA government bombed out successfully was the Norwegian peace efforts. Their generosity in trying to give the 'terrorists' the credit for this achievement was not ap-

preciated by the LTTE who preferred to play a more effective diplomatic game while not relaxing their armed struggle.

Government provocation against the LTTE since May this year could not have been without anticipation of a strong LTTE reaction, which the government could use to prove to the world that the LTTE was not for peace. The government appears to have miscalculated and the bombing of the air base by the LTTE has not only totally surprised the armed forces, but also achieved far more politically for the LTTE than all their earlier armed attacks in the South put together.

The local business community has come out far more strongly than ever before in support of a peaceful settlement of the national question and has expressed little faith in the main political parties. Much of this is as a response to the economic implications of increased insurance tariffs and failing confidence on the part of foreign investors. This turn of events is also a catalyst for the moves to form a 'national government'.

However, without the will of the major political parties to solve the national question and to take urgent steps to end the war, the war will drag on and the economy will deteriorate further with much of the burden borne by the working people.

Among the peasantry, the ruling clique, with the aid of the bourgeois press, the clergy etc., also succeeded in rousing chauvinist sentiments. But, as the soldiers return from the field of slaughter, sentiment in the rural districts will undoubtedly turn against the tsarist monarchy.... The only class in Russia that they did not succeed in infecting with chauvinism is the proletariat. Only the most ignorant strata of the workers were involved in the few excesses that occurred at the beginning of the war.

V.I. Lenin

Socialism and War, July-August 1915

THE CRISIS OF TODAY IS THE CRISIS OF THE RULING CLASS

Address by Comrade S.K. Senthivel at the 23rd Anniversary Celebration Rally of the New Democratic Party

The crisis faced by the country cannot be resolved by prolonging the life of the People's Alliance government or by returning the United National Party to power. The masses of the country must free themselves of the habit of bringing to power one or the other of the two chauvinist political parties in turn. There can be no salvation for this country or its people as long as the appropriate alternative thinking and practice remain undeveloped. Both the UNP and the PA stand for chauvinism, and the interests of the wealthy upper classes. Neither party has put forward policies or plans that serve the interests of the masses of this country. They have only adopted policies and practices that are hostile to the working people and the nationalities. The notion of Sinhala Buddhism did not serve the interests of the ordinary Sinhalese but only the needs and the welfare of the feudal and capitalist upper classes. This satisfied the chauvinists. These elements gave their fullest co-operation to the rulers embracing the forces of foreign imperialism and to the plunder of the national resources by the imperialists.

The crisis of today, which only concerns the question of retention of power by one section or regaining lost power by another, fails to address critical issues confronting the country such as the war, the national question or the economic crisis.

The campaigns by either chauvinistic party, thus, do not offer any real changes as far as the ordinary masses are concerned. It is fraudulent to claim that all the problems and woes of the masses will be resolved if the UNP is restored to power. Those eyeing power and seeking positions are continuing to make such claims for selfish reasons. What is really needed to be put forward is a mass political programme evolved with a long term perspective, rejects the two chauvinist parties, and is based on an honest and courageous policy capable of finding a way for the liberation the working masses and the nationalities. The New Democratic Party has repeatedly emphasised this.

The left movement that has been weakened by acts of treachery and confused ideology needs the transfusion of fresh blood. The NDP is doing this in the North-East and in the Hill Country. Over the past 23 years we have upheld a stand in defence of the interests of the masses in the context of a variety of challenges and acts of repression by the state machinery and certain armed Tamil militant groups. We are firm in our determination to proceed along the path shown by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Liberation is what is important to the working masses and the nationalities. The NDP will continue in its struggle to win it through its programmes.

The feudal and capitalist classes of the country are the main cause of the national problem, the war and the acute economic crisis faced by the country. The forces of foreign imperialism are, in the meantime, on the side of the ruling classes so that interests of imperialism may be defended and advanced further. On the question of the war, neither the US nor India likes the prospect of a negotiated solution. They pay lip service to peace and political solution, but act against peace and political solution. The basic reasons for this are their economic interests and respective desires for imperialist and regional hegemony.

The US, in order to facilitate its infiltration into India through the process of globalisation, has given in to India on the question

of Sri Lanka. In the meantime, India has struck a deal with hard-line Sinhala chauvinists. The Sihala Urumaya, Veera Vidhaana and the National Movement Against Terrorism do not utter a word about Indian hegemony. Equally significantly, the JVP, which for three decades has been vociferous about Indian expansionism, is preserving a strange silence on the subject. What could be the mystery behind these phenomena?

India's grand plan for domination over Sri Lanka has several aspects. It is acting with its hegemonic objective in the domains of economics, politics and military activities. It is also making inroads through its cultural programme and a Hindutva agenda. The NDP has from time to time warned against these matters and the impending dangers.

Comrades! During the latter part of the last century, imperialism arrogantly campaigned that its plans for globalisation were on track and that Marxism and socialism have been entirely defeated. It continues to do so even today. But reaction to globalisation has started to manifest itself. In particular, questions are being raised about the causes for the grave economic crises in the Third World. Privatisation and liberalisation are already showing signs of crisis in the offing.

Today, in Europe and in America, demonstrations against globalisation are on the rise. Participation by hundreds of thousands of people in these demonstrations goes to show the extent of mass revulsion and anger against imperialist schemes. This is something favourable to Marxist Leninist parties and organisations. This will help to inject new hope and enthusiasm into the masses. A new situation has arrived in which Marxism Leninism will be on the rise. Let us grasp it firmly and, with a clear view of the international situation, work to strengthen our activities.

Over the past 23 years the party has, amid various pressures, challenges, acts of repression and threats, carried forward

its political and organisational work. At the national level, political oppression was instigated by the state. At the same time, it had also been necessary to face threats and acts of vengeance from the armed movements that emerged in the course of the struggle for the liberation of the Tamil nationality. As a result, many comrades suffered serious losses and had to make major sacrifices. Besides, this was also when Marxism Leninism faced a temporary setback internationally.

Even under these conditions, our Party was neither disheartened nor on the retreat. The Party acted to transform weaknesses into strength and, based on its own experiences, determinedly asserted its political, organisational and ideological stand.

Steps have been taken to rectify the deficiencies and mistakes of the past through criticism and self-criticism and implemented politically as well as organisationally. It cannot be claimed that this task has been completed. There is much more to be said and to be done. It is against this background that the Fourth National Congress of the Party is to be held in October 2001. Many important decisions wait to be taken and programmes to be determined.

At this moment, we remember with affection our departed comrades who had since 1964 worked under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. We also offer our revolutionary salutation to the comrades who have since the founding of the Party, dedicated their existence and their lives to the Party and the people. Let us on this 23rd anniversary of the Party declare our revolutionary resolve to carry forward, with even greater consciousness, their faith and their expectations.

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought!

May the New Democratic Party grow in strength!

Revolutionary greetings!

CASTE, CLASS AND POLITICS

A Marxist Perspective by Vehujan

Our social structure is uneven and characterised by a wide variety of contradictions. The various contradictions along with the modes of oppression associated with them continue to be preserved at the levels at which they operate.

In such a social milieu, caste, class and politics draw our particular attention, and anyone concerned with social justice has to take a close look at them. While each of these has its unique features and social function as their basis, they have preserved a close inter-relationship with each other. Thus, it is important today to comment on some important aspects of their inter-relationship.

The caste system, which is unique to the Indian sub-continent and not known in any society elsewhere in the world, has established itself in the sub-continent and lasted over two millennia. Untouchability has continued to be inseparable from the caste system. This system, which is present as a potent force in every state of India, functions in varied forms and to varying degrees in South Asia.

The caste system, which was founded on brahminist ideology, had its origins in the *varna* system of the early Indo-Aryan society and drew on social differences based on profession. Each profession was defined as a caste, based on the nature of the work carried out. In addition, the castes were placed in some hierarchi-

cal order with the elite castes at the top, with the 'lower' castes further down and the 'untouchables' at the bottom. The castes at the bottom levels of this hierarchy are now commonly referred to as 'dalits'.

The caste system became very rigid under feudalism, and the ideology of casteism was propagated, by means of the different natures of the professions, religious and cultural restrictions, intra-communal marital ties, and the moral codes and literature that justified and defended these practices. Each individual was identified by one's birth and made to bear permanently the stamp of the caste into which one was born. To this day, each individual is identified by this caste label.

Casteism, the offspring of *Hindutva*, is safeguarded by the principles and practices of Hinduism. Neither Buddhism, which emerged in India as a response to Brahminism, nor Islam that found its way into India over eight centuries ago nor the versions of Christianity that accompanied the European colonists could defeat casteism. Neither the Mogul rulers nor the British colonial masters could overthrow the caste system. All these rulers safeguarded their interests and those of their class and prolonged their rule by collaboration and compromise with the forces of feudalism that defended the caste system. As a result, these rulers could take a few measures of a superficial nature in relation to the caste system, but not do anything that could have a serious impact. There is clear evidence for this in India as well as Sri Lanka.

Caste identity, which encompasses profession, social distinction, social status, untouchability and intra-communal marriages, is determined by one's birth. But class identity is something that emerged as a result of the appearance of class society, following the establishment of the system of private property and the exploitation of the labour of man by man. Class distinction, which appeared near the end of a classless society, has transformed itself through slave, feudal and capitalist societies. Marxism, which clari-

fied the concepts of class and class struggle in the basis of historical materialism, clearly portrayed and defined the roles of the propertied capitalist class and the working class that was dominated and subjected to wage slavery by the capitalist class. Marxism demonstrated that class and class struggle are the social determinants that guided historical development. Thus, Marxism has played a major historical role in identifying and establishing classes in society in terms of the mode of production, private property and state power.

It is necessary here to examine whether class and caste are the same. It follows from the above that they are not, and there has always been an inherent and close connection between class and caste. They have coexisted side by side, and class society has been used for the continuation of casteism and casteism for that of class society.

Those who were at the apex of the caste hierarchy were also the wealthy and the owners of land and property. They also wielded state power. The so-called upper castes, initially through the ownership of land and subsequently through the capitalist mode of production, continued to be the upper classes. Meanwhile, those at the lowest levels of the caste-based social order owned neither land nor any other property. They remained as the toiling classes who only sowed, ploughed and harvested the crops for the benefit of the landowners. Thus, they were at the lowest levels of the caste as well as the class hierarchy. The members of the intermediate levels of the caste structure too were providers of labour.

It cannot be claimed that class and caste structures merged during the colonial era or even after. In the half century following the so-called independence of India and Sri Lanka, the caste system has not been weakened to match the extent of development of capitalist production.

For example, even the handful of the members of the 'depressed castes' who have gained wealth and social position through access to education, the professions and ownership of property

are unable to transcend their caste by virtue of their elevation to a higher social class. What this shows is that, while one's social class is mutable, the caste system is able to remain intact.

Certain aspects of the caste system such as untouchability, discrimination and neglect based on caste have been largely eliminated through continuous struggle. However, the basic ideology of casteism and its mode of operation have not been eliminated by the development of class society. Even today, the system of caste-based intra-communal marriages is followed in the arrangement of marriages. Even the matrimonial advertisements that appear in the newspapers lucidly reflect this reality.

Politics and political parties do not function to the exclusion of individual likes and dislikes, and they definitely represent classes and class interests. All political parties, without exception, uphold the interests of one social class or another. Even the political parties that speak in terms of race, language, caste and region do not in essence transcend class. In this context, it is important to recognise the role of caste and class in the politics of the past century, comprising comparable periods before and after the so-called independence.

Sri Lanka did not experience an independence struggle of the kind seen in India against the white imperialist colonial masters. Although the masses had strong feelings against foreign domination, no one who sought independence advanced a form of struggle appropriate to it, except for the left movement that worked towards a mass movement in opposition to foreign domination in the 1930s.

The members of the Sri Lankan elite who abjectly pleaded with the British colonialists for political reforms belonged to the upper castes and classes among the Sinhalese and the Tamils. It should be noted that this very elite was also the social group that occupied high positions in the administration and served as the representatives of the local colonial administration.

The caste system has continued to exist among the Sinhalese, Tamils and Hill Country Tamils of Sri Lanka. The practice of untouchability does not exist among the Sinhalese. That does not mean, however, that there is in no caste system among the Sinhalese, and in fact there is a system of caste hierarchy, owing to which discrimination and partiality are practiced in various fields of activity. Outside the limits of cosmopolitan Colombo, the caste system finds strong expression in southern Lanka. From the highest levels of the Buddhist clerical orders to the lowliest rural temple, casteism is practiced to different degrees. Even today, it is possible to recognise one's caste from one's name or the way the surname is spelt in English.

The impact and practice of caste among Tamils is stronger among the Tamils, and the Jaffna peninsula occupies a prominent place in this matter. Casteism and untouchability were powerful forces there until after a mass struggle was launched in the mid-1960's under the leadership of the Communist Party (the Marxist Leninists). The revolutionary mass struggles dealt heavy blows to casteism and put an end to untouchability. Here again, the elite comprised high-caste, upper class Tamils.

Caste exists among the Hill Country Tamils. However, the fact that they were displaced from their homes, the nature of their work, and residential facilities militated against the practice of untouchability. There is nevertheless indirect caste-based discrimination in matters of religious rituals, temple festivals and worship. Of the Hill Country Tamils around 80% are of 'low caste' origin. It is significant that those who have elevated their class status as traders and merchants seem to be from the higher caste groups such as *vellaalar* and *mukkulaththor* (*maravar*). Thus, here too, the members of the higher castes constitute the upper classes and are dominant both politically and economically.

Members of this socially advanced upper caste, upper class elite among the Sinhalese, Tamils and Hill Country Tamils have

continued to be the dominant forces that also provided a leading role in politics. This can be seen in every aspect of the politics of the past century.

The Sinhala *Govigama* and Tamil *Vellaala* landowners enjoyed the friendship and trust of the colonial masters. They continued to lead the society even after there was significant capitalist development in the country. It was to the feudal-capitalist Sinhala elite that power was transferred by the colonialists at the time of independence from direct colonial rule. It was in view of caste and class considerations that the Tamil *Vellaala* elite, which lacked vision about the long-term future of their nationality, acceded to this transfer of power.

Over the past fifty years, two leading political parties have alternately held the reins of state power. The leaders of these parties have essentially been the heirs to feudal families, the guardians of capitalism and loyalists of imperialism. While, on the one hand, they preserved the caste system, they accommodated a section of the 'lower castes' in view of the 'vote banks' that these caste groups represented. Those who joined hands with the feudal elite, although 'low' by caste, were considerably advanced as a social class. Despite their social advancement as a class, the path for high positions in the political hierarchy has always been determined by caste. It has been an unwritten rule that only members of the feudal-capitalist elite class could occupy the highest office. The single exception to the rule was the late President R. Premadasa, who could endure for a considerable period in mainstream politics. It is worth noting that the elite classes see the period of his presidency as a blemish in the political history of Sri Lanka.

Tamil politics has always been dominated by the upper caste, upper class elite. In the half century following independence from direct colonial rule, the upper caste, upper class elite maintained its leadership through the Tamil Congress, the Federal Party (FP) and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). Although consider-

ations of the vote bank persuaded the FP and the TULF to pay lip service to the elimination of the caste system, their politics remained essentially upper caste elitist.

The emergence of armed Tamil youth movements did nothing to effect a fundamental change in this situation. They had to confront a situation in which each armed Tamil movement bore a caste label. At the same time, none of these movements was able to take a political stand that transcended caste and class considerations. Contradictions based on caste and class led to conflicts from time to time within all these movements. The consequent frustration forced many of the youth to drop out of the movements.

Marxist-Leninist political parties and genuine left parties have maintained a clear view and far-sighted policies about casteism and their day-to-day activities have been consistent with their position. As a result, these parties have not faced problems relating to casteism. They carry out their political work among the people of the depressed caste subject to caste oppression and the working class subject to class oppression and exploitation. Marxists Leninists have always had a clear idea of the nature of the ruling upper caste elite classes.

It was on the basis of their consciousness of class struggle that the Marxist Leninists could carry forward and succeed in their struggles against the ferocity of untouchability in the north of the country, where casteism was deeply rooted. In these struggles, the people who were at the lowest levels of the class structure and subject to caste oppression were the spearhead of mass struggle. A section of the so-called upper classes that was subject to class oppression joined hands with them and contributed to the success of the struggles.

Our Marxist-Leninist party has a wealth of experience in approaching the issues of casteism and untouchability in Sri Lanka based on class struggle, in carrying forward mass struggles against

caste oppression, and in winning social justice for the masses subject to caste oppression. The Party secured for itself a broad mass base through this experience. There could have been deficiencies on the question of handling this mass base in relation to the tactical use of parliamentary politics. Nevertheless, the blows delivered to the many centuries old caste system by the masses and the end to untouchability are matters of historical importance.

Imperialism and its lackeys are active in many ways in the current climate of globalisation to negate class struggle and its guiding force, namely Marxism. They pay particular attention to isolating alienating the questions of the struggle against caste oppression, feminism, and environmental issues from the broad base of class struggle. Efforts to give form to *dalitism* as an ideology ended up as caste based politics. The so-called *dalit* politics did not succeed in Sri Lanka, but in India, many of the *dalit* political organisations became involved in parliamentary politics and degenerated into caste-based parties and cliques.

Systematic and serious efforts are being made to use the so-called postmodernist approach, which is devoid of substance and has an anti-Marxist purpose, to divert the attention of the youth from the politics of class struggle. Forces of imperialism are even more active in using non-governmental organisations to alienate the masses from politics.

Marxist Leninists have great responsibilities before them today. They need to carry forward a clear ideological and political understanding of caste, class and politics and carry out practical political work among the masses. They need to view this as their historical duty and the challenge before them in the struggle of the oppressed masses against the local ruling classes and their imperialist masters.

[Translated from Tamil]

ANOTHER ACT OF NAKED INDIAN EXPANSIONISM

by Deepan

The ruling classes of India seem to be gleeful that the natural harbour of Trincomalee has fallen into their hands under the guise of investment and development. Despite the strategic importance of the harbour from the point of view of national security and economic development, it has been given over to India. The cherished dream of the Indian ruling class is now close to realisation with its exercise of total control over the harbour and the city of Trincomalee.

The US imperialists had, directly and indirectly through countries such as Israel and Singapore, tried to secure control over the Trincomalee harbour during JR Jayawardene's tenure as President, but failed in the face of stern opposition by the Indian ruling class. The Indian ruling class was resentful of the attempts by the Jayawardene regime to let-lease oil tanks in the harbour. Bids by British companies too were blocked by India, which has finally succeeded in securing control over Trincomalee under its own version of globalisation.

At the time of signing the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord of 1987, India ensured that it was granted priority in the control of the Trincomalee harbour. The relevant clauses of the Peace Accord signed on 29th July 1987 are as follows:

- 2 (ii) Trincomalee or any other port in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country prejudicial to India's interests.

- (iii) The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.

It is now understood that India has entered into a joint project with the government of Sri Lanka, whereby India will keep control over the harbour and the city of Trincomalee.

The Sri Lankan Tamil nationalist political parties and militant organisations had always ruled out the possibility of Indian desire for control over Sri Lanka and plans for possession of the Trincomalee harbour. Some post-modernists theorists went to the extent of rejecting the strategic importance of natural harbours such as Trincomalee in the 'post-modern' era. However, the Indian government diligently pursued its ambition of securing control over Trincomalee. This ambition is clear from an advertisement that appeared in the Sunday Times of 24th June 2001, which referred to three major projects that have been planned. (See Box).

Under imperialist globalisation, the affairs of a nation will be subject to outside interference and the third of the proposed projects, which also implies the development of a highway linking Trincomalee with India, cannot be dismissed lightly. During the whole of the 1980's, India took advantage of the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka to strengthen its leverage over the affairs of Sri Lanka. In the wake of the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord in 1987, India sent an army of occupation in the name of 'Indian Peace Keeping Forces' with which it sought to secure control over the strategically important Trincomalee harbour. The Indian scheme did not, however, materialise for reasons that were entirely outside its control, and Premadasa, who became the President of Sri Lanka in 1989, demanded the withdrawal of Indian troops in the face of mass resentment on the part of the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim masses of the country. However, that did not mean that India would abandon its desire for control over the Trincomalee harbour.

India succeeded in achieving its ulterior motive of gaining control over the Trincomalee harbour by means of the so-called investment and development project. Thus India did not only prevent other powers from gaining control over the harbour but also secured full control for itself, as evident from the third of the above projects.

Although at the outset it seemed that the intention was to control the Trincomalee harbour, the proposed terrestrial access by the proposed 26-mile bridge across Palk Strait will link Sri Lanka physically to India. India doubtless will be the main beneficiary, with India able to expand its market and dominate trade in Sri Lanka. India has already secured for itself the role as the dominant trading partner of Sri Lanka by virtue of the Free Trade Agreement that was signed two years ago, so that the proposed bridge and the highway will shift the balance further in India's favour.

No patriotic Sri Lankan can be happy about the said 'Three vast Indo-Lanka infrastructure development, agro-industrial and industrial projects' since it implies the surrender of a strategically important part of the country. The US imperialists are not showing concern about the said projects as these projects are to be developed and implemented through their multinational companies. Thus, the Indian plan for hegemony over Sri Lanka has the blessings of the US imperialists.

These projects infringe on the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and amount to a blatant attack by Indian hegemonists on the sovereignty of the country. This, in the long term, will be the denial of the right to self-determination of the entire people of Sri Lanka.

Significantly, the third project is to be implemented in a territory that has been the traditional homeland of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, but it is certainly not designed to ensure the liberation and independence of the Tamil people.

The deafening silence of the JVP, the Sihala Urumaya and the Sangha could only be interpreted as a sign of their proximity to the Indian ruling classes. Equally, the so-called Tamil parties which seem to be working according to an Indian agenda are not keen to say or do anything that may displease India on this, or for that matter any, issue.

The forces of Tamil nationalism such as the LTTE, and the genuine left and democratic forces cannot observe silence over this matter for long. It is time that they spoke out and made clear their stand on the issues involved. It is their duty to awaken the people of the country to the potential dangers of allowing the hegemonic and expansionist projects launched by India and the US to go ahead unchallenged.

India is cynically exploiting its apparent sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamils to use the Tamil parties to serve its purpose while at the same time currying favour with the Sinhala political parties through its anti-LTTE posture. The cunning conduct of the Indian ruling classes has so far been effective in carrying forward its hidden agenda against the unsuspecting Sri Lankan masses.

In this context, the genuine democratic, leftist and revolutionary forces and patriotic Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim intellectuals cannot allow themselves to be distracted by India's lines of 'sympathy' for Tamil consumption and opposition to the LTTE for Sinhalese consumption. They should be bold enough to understand and expose India's hidden agenda, which is not in the interest of Sri Lanka or any of its ethnic communities. Failure to awaken the masses and mobilise them against Indian hegemony and expansion will amount to an act of treachery that will serve the interests of the Indian ruling classes, much to the detriment of the people of Sri Lanka.

THREE VAST INDO-LANKA INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, AGRO-INDUSTRIAL & INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

A Fortune Global 500 bank closes in June 2001 arranging USD 50 million for a privately owned American company to begin developing and the projects :

1. 432-hectare IT & Biotech Industries Park in Kandy.
2. Juice-concentrate manufacture from pineapples grown in 19,474 acres in the Bibile area.
3. New city and full-scale International port in Trincomalee.

The third project included a 26-mile bridge over Palk Strait to move containers with Indian goods via expanded/ improved existing highways to the port for outbound shipments to the world at large and moving containers containing raw materials from the port to India in the opposite direction. A vast free-trade zone at the new city is also planned.

Businessmen from Sri Lanka, India and elsewhere interested to join a meeting at High Commission of a South Asian country this week may

Call 078 607400, 077 340113 or 074 721713

It is clear that faced with bitter and heavy defeats, the enemy is reacting wildly. The more they fail, the more stubborn and hysterical the US imperialists become. But this is only the deathbed struggle of the enemy at the end of his tether. Our fight in the new stage will be definitely fiercer and more complicated. Our people and armed forces still have to surmount new difficulties on the road to total victory.

Mme Nguyen Thi Dinh

Deputy Commander of the PLAF, South Viet Nam

10 Years of the PLAF, Giai Phong Publishing House, South Viet Nam, 1971

THE NDP SHOULD ASSIST COMMUNISTS AMONG THE SINHALESE

[Excerpts from the fraternal greetings from the Diyesa Organisation presented by Comrade Vasantha Dissanayake at the 23rd Anniversary Celebration of the NDP held at Hatton on July 15th 2001]

Sinhala chauvinism is not the heritage of the ordinary Sinhala masses comprising the workers, peasants and other oppressed people. Chauvinistic hostility towards the minority nationalities has been established and institutionalised by the capitalist, chauvinist and opportunist political forces of the country. This was further helped by the practical difficulties in building a genuine revolutionary working class movement among the majority Sinhala nationality. This has made it more difficult to find a democratic solution to what is known as the ethnic or national problem of Sri Lanka.

The establishment and institutionalisation of oppressive Sinhala chauvinism has contributed to, and in fact actively encouraged, the development of narrow Tamil nationalism. Chauvinism and narrow nationalism have historically nourished each other and have contributed immensely to suspicion, disunity and animosity among the oppressed masses of the different nationalities. This is the bitter reality of the situation of the oppressed classes that the proletarian movement of Sri Lanka has to address. To change this, the edifices of Sinhala chauvinism and narrow nationalism have to be reduced to rubble.

It is not an easy task. But the New Democratic Party is the most significant Marxist Leninist force working among the Tamils of the North-East and the Hill Country Tamils, comprising mainly plantation workers. It has the ability and the duty to play a bigger role by expanding its political work among the Tamils and the Hill Country Tamils. The Marxist Leninists among the Sinhalese in the south who are struggling against Sinhala chauvinism, which enjoys the blessings of the imperialists and the regional hegemonic power need the support of the NDP. Their assistance especially in ideological and organisational matters and their leadership in mass struggles and campaigns among the Tamils and the Hill Country Tamils could pave the way for the development of a genuine proletarian movement in the South and towards the proletarian revolution.

In every successful revolution, communists among the oppressing nationality have supported and strengthened the communist movements among the oppressed nationalities. The reverse may be the case in Sri Lanka, and the NDP may need to assume a major responsibility in building up the communist movement among the Sinhalese majority.

While the Tamil people are advancing in their struggle against national oppression to win their national aspirations, the Sinhalese people are relatively backward in mobilising themselves to struggle against the ruling classes, imperialism and all other oppressors. Sinhala chauvinism and Tamil petty nationalism have pushed back the working class movement among the Tamils in the North-East and among the Sinhalese in the rest of the country. The narrowing down of the struggle of the Tamil people to the confines of petty nationalism has proved to be a major obstacle faced by the forces opposed to Sinhala chauvinism.

It is well known that Marxist Leninists have given leadership to the oppressed classes as well as to the oppressed nation-

alities. Unfortunately, such forces are very weak among the Sinhalese both in number and in the quality of leadership, and they are at present in a state of stagnation. One should reckon that the Sinhala chauvinist campaign is virulent and that serves as the justification for the national struggle of the Tamils.

It should be noted that the campaign of the Sinhala nationalists is so strong and well entrenched that pleading the case for the struggle of the Tamils is an uphill task. An opinion has been created that Tamils have already for themselves Tamilnaadu in India and the Sri Lankan Tamil struggle for a separate state, if successful, will lead to a global Tamil empire and as a result the Sinhalese will be left without a country or a state.

This psychology of fear can only be overcome by establishing a powerful revolutionary movement among the oppressed nationalities. We believe that the chances for this are greatest among the Hill Country Tamils, predominantly comprising plantation workers, who are not much influenced by nationalism or bourgeois ideology. In addition, for geographical reasons, their self-determination cannot be based on the right to secession as in the case of the Tamils of the North-East. Building up a revolutionary working class movement among the Hill Country Tamils will inspire the workers, peasants and other oppressed sections of the Sinhalese masses.

We eagerly hope that the above tasks will be shouldered by the NDP as it already has a base among the Hill Country Tamils. This will favour the building up of a broad-based countrywide revolutionary movement that transcends the barriers of ethnicity and nationality.

The Marxist Leninists among the Sinhalese, while defending their movement and campaigning against chauvinist oppression of the minority nationalists, also need to actively take on the chauvinists in order to liberate the oppressed Sinhalese

masses. However, this is not something that they can carry out alone and in isolation. They need the support of and assistance of revolutionary communists among Tamils. Genuine Marxist Leninists like the NDP comrades who work among the Tamils to combat chauvinism on the one hand and to oppose narrow nationalism on the other can certainly build confidence among their Sinhalese counterparts. This, in the short run, will help to build a revolutionary organisation and, in the long run, to develop a countrywide revolutionary movement.

Our Revolutionary Greetings to the NDP!

Long live the unity, friendship and solidarity among the nationalities!

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget, unless we become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out of this society, and there can be none, except by means of class struggle.

V.I. Lenin

The War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution,
September 1916

All our cadres, whatever their rank, are servants of the people, and whatever we do is to serve the people. How then can we be reluctant to discard any of our bad traits?

Mao Zedong

The Tasks for 1945, December 1944

No one in a leading position is competent to give general guidance to all the units unless he derives concrete experience from particular individuals and events in particular subordinate units. This method must be promoted everywhere so that the leading cadres at all levels learn to apply it.

Mao Zedong

Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership, June 1943

ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF MIGHT

(On the undermining of the status of the national languages)

by Deshabakthan

1. The Dominance of English

Today, English is recognised either as the official language or as the main link language in many countries. Besides, the emergence of the US as the main world power following the decline of the British Empire has reinforced the position of English as the most influential commercial language of the world. The position of French as the main rival to English in its bid to be the 'world language' has been further weakened following the collapse of French colonial rule in the wake of the events following World War II. English is replacing French as the language of administration, commerce and education in several former French colonies.

The growing dominance of English in many fields of human activity, including science, technology, commerce, law, politics, news and entertainment is a fact. To that extent, English is unquestionably the main link language of the world.

The dominance of English and its advantageous position in exchanging information in various fields of human activity have led some to claim that it is the only language for the advancement of the individual and society. As a result, there is a tendency to deny the importance of the mother tongue and attempts are afoot to subvert the teaching of the mother tongue and the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

In support of this evil scheme, a belief is spread that languages other than English, especially Asian languages, are inadequate to meet the needs of modernity.

The myth that is being propagated about English today is in many ways similar to that which was propagated during the colonial era. The social acceptance and status enjoyed today in South Asia by those educated in English is merely a neo-colonial version of what existed under colonial rule. Today, English has become the language of the neo-colonial masters and their local agents in much the same way that it was the language of the colonial masters and their running dogs. To recognise this reality, one only needs to look at the socio-political importance that has been restored to English during the past quarter century.

2. The Second Coming of English in the Former Colonies

There was a time and a situation in which anti-colonialism manifested itself as hostility towards the English language. The keenness of the national bourgeoisie to replace English by the native languages, both as the medium of educational instruction and as the languages of administration, resulted from their hostility towards a comprador bourgeois class that wielded power through the medium of English and towards an English-educated middle class that served the comprador bourgeoisie. However, the narrow nationalistic outlook of the national bourgeoisie also meant that the suppression of the various aspects of social identity of fraternal nationalities was a necessary condition for the development of their language.

The economic crisis in the country that resulted from impotence of the national bourgeois leadership forced an increasing proportion of the persons qualified in various fields of science and technology to seek employment in foreign countries. In

addition, in the countries that they sought employment, English was either the main administrative language or the language preferred by those who controlled employment. Hence, those who thought in terms of employment abroad either because they were uncertain about employment at home or because they sought better remuneration than possible at home tended to emphasise the importance of a knowledge of English, if not the use of English as the medium of instruction, at least for higher education.

The reliance of the economy of a country on the export of highly trained and skilled personnel only indicates the extent to which the economic infrastructure of the country has been ruined. The inability of a country to use its technologists properly only means that the country has ceased to develop its industry. There can be several explanations for this, but a most important reason is that the economies of Third World countries have generally been wrecked in a systematic way by imperialism.

3. Benefits of Education in the Mother Tongue

Education in the mother tongue has played a decisive role in nearly every country that has achieved rapid social, scientific and technological advancement. In fact, there has been no substitute for the mother tongue in providing basic education for the masses.

To view language as just a tool for the communication of ideas is a mechanical view of language. Language is associated with social and cultural identity. More importantly, language is closely interwoven with the development of thought and traditional thinking in any society. Language has also played a major role in the development of individual thought and one's interaction with society and understanding of the world.

Substitution of the mother tongue with another language denies the benefits of the social value of language. Among the

people who have been forcibly deprived of their language are forcibly displaced people like the Africans taken to the Americas and the West Indies as slaves and Asians taken away from their homes to toil in the plantations of Fiji, Madagascar and the West Indies. In the Americas, Australia and a sizeable section of Africa, the native people have been deliberately denied the right to develop their language if not the right to use it.

The suppression of linguistic rights of oppressed nationalities has also been practised in Europe by the major powers and among the practitioners of this policy are the US imperialists who have legalised the denial of the linguistic rights of the speakers of Spanish in the US. In contemporary history, Turkey's refusal to recognise Kurdish as the language of the oppressed Kurdish nationality in Turkey is particularly notorious. No oppressed ethnic group has really recovered from the losses that it suffered from the denial of linguistic rights.

Although English or French has replaced the mother tongue in many Third World countries, the benefits of 'modern education' in English or French have not been adequate to offset the losses resulting from the loss of use of the mother tongue.

Tradition plays a valuable role in the development of a society, and the mother tongue plays a crucial role in the proper appreciation of the various valuable aspects of tradition. Thus, there has been no substitute for the mother tongue, not only in the emotional and intellectual development of the student, but also in the development of the student as a socially responsible individual.

4. Education in the Mother Tongue in Sri Lanka

The importance of education in the mother tongue was recognised well before the independence of the country from colonial rule in 1948. The service rendered by Dr Green in the teaching of western medicine in Tamil in the north of the coun-

try is worth remembering at this time. Various efforts had been undertaken to provide scientific and technical education in Sinhala and Tamil by several concerned scholars early in the twentieth century against a colonial context in which schools that provided education in the mother tongue was treated as inferior to those providing education through English. Thus, even the schools run by Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim institutions as rivals to Protestant and Catholic schools gave pride of place to education in the English medium. This was, among other reasons, due to the emergent non-Christian elite being driven by its desire to prevent the Christian missionaries from using education as a means for religious conversion and thus undermine their social prominence.

Strong contradictions emerged in the decades preceding independence between linguistic nationalism and elitist compromise with English. The more progressive sections of the political leadership including the leftists and the national bourgeoisie, who saw the uplift of the masses as essential to the anti-colonial struggle, also recognised the value of education in the mother tongue. Thus, the demand for free education and for education in the mother tongue emerged alongside the demand for an end to colonial rule. It was because of the extension of free education to institutions of higher education and the availability of secondary education in the mother tongue that a new generation of intellectuals emerged from various parts of the country in the decades following independence.

It should be remembered that children from rural areas had the opportunity to enter university only after the establishment of Government Central Colleges and the full implementation of the policy of providing school education in the mother tongue. Many of the students whose knowledge of English was sparse at the time of entering university were able to compete successfully with their English educated urban counterparts, even with English as the medium of instruction in the universities. Higher

education in their mother tongue in the humanities and natural sciences was available by the mid-1960's and those who qualified in the mother tongue were found to be as good as those who studied in the English medium, despite disadvantages arising from the limited availability of textbooks in the mother tongue.

In fact, the policy of education in the mother tongue was implemented in far greater earnest than in India. There were, nevertheless, several problems in its successful implementation and these related to the objective reality of the limitations of the national bourgeois leadership and the subjective desire of a powerful section of the English-educated elite to preserve the status of English as the language of social power.

5. The Undermining of Education in the Mother Tongue

Education in the mother tongue, which made tremendous gains because of the strong feeling of national identity, was also the victim of the limitations of narrow nationalism. Interest in education in the English medium was revived among the educated sections of the Tamil-speaking minority nationalities when they realised that even a knowledge of Sinhala and ability to work in Sinhala would not secure employment in the state sector and that being a member of a minority nationality was a handicap. A sizeable section of the Tamil-speaking professionals started to think in terms of employment abroad for fear of discrimination within the country. They feared that scientific and technological education in Tamil would deny them opportunities for employment. Their fears were understandable, but subsequent events showed that education in the English medium was no guarantee of employment at home, and this drove large numbers of them abroad in search of employment.

The interest shown by the Sinhala nationalists in developing Sinhala into a modern language that would serve the interests of the masses and national development stated to wane by the 1970's. A small section of the elite sought and, to some extent, found ways of providing education for their children in the English medium. Some sent their children abroad for higher education. But the Sinhala nationalist elite which adopted a Sinhala chauvinist agenda and sought to lord it over the national minorities was ill-equipped to provide the mother tongue with the ability to providing higher education, technological education and professional training and to strengthen its social role by making it play an integral role in national development.

The initial enthusiasm of the Sinhala nationalists resulted in the compilation of glossaries for science and technology not only in Sinhala but also in Tamil during the decade or so following the ascent to power by the SLFP-led national bourgeois government in 1956. However, efforts to translate textbooks in English went nowhere near fulfilling expectations.

The lack of people with sufficient expertise in the fields concerned, who were also competent translators, was a part of the problem, but a bigger reason was that the proportion of scientifically and technically trained persons with a keen interest in education in the mother tongue was small and on the decline in the 1970's. Thus, what was a state of stagnation in the 1970's became a process of decline following the ascent to power of the pro-imperialist UNP in 1977.

6. The Decline of Education

One important factor that hindered the development of education in the mother tongue was the decay that set into the educational system. Under colonial rule, the main aim of education was government employment. Following independence, the

growth in the number of secondary school leavers and university graduates was much greater than the increase in white-collar employment opportunities. As a result competition became stiff for university admission to obtain science degrees and even stiffer for fields such as medicine and engineering. However, the government was unable to provide science teaching of good quality in all parts of the country or in a sufficiently large number of schools.

The People's Front government, following the introduction in 1971 of the discriminatory policy of media-wise 'standardisation' of the marks secured at the GCE (AL) examination for the purpose of university admission, made a further mess of school education by downgrading the importance of practical classes in science. This made it possible for students of science to enter university based on a written examination alone. The steps taken by the government to avoid investing sufficient money to set up science laboratories in secondary schools which lacked these facilities led to the virtual abandoning of laboratory classes even in schools with laboratory facilities. Over the recent years, more and more of the students admitted to the university faculties of science, engineering, agriculture, medicine etc. have not used or seen an item of laboratory equipment until they entered university.

An even bigger menace to school education was the system of private tuition that started on a small scale in the 1970's. Private tutorials have existed in this country for decades and provided tuition for students who had no access to formal education or training to sit examinations conducted by professional bodies and foreign institutions. The increase in competition for university admission for courses in medicine and engineering made many parents send their children for additional coaching for the examination. With worsening neglect of state schools by the government and lack of investment, the private tutorials have become an alternative to secondary school, over the past

decade or so. Changes introduced in the educational system without the necessary resources to back them have led to only to further confusion.

With all educational material produced and distributed under state supervision and control, education has been reduced to training to get through examinations with good grades. There are fewer and fewer books in use in schools to stimulate the interest of the children to gather social and scientific knowledge. Besides, the habit of reading books is hardly encouraged in the schools. The present status of education in the country confirms that the educational system does not want the students to learn anything more than what is necessary to pass the examinations.

7. The Revival of Private Education

The contradictions that developed between the management of Christian missionary schools and the national bourgeois government led to the state taking control of most of the state-assisted religious denominational schools in 1960. The schools were given the option of being run privately, but only a small fraction of them chose that option. This allowed the government to implement its policy of education in the mother tongue and a national educational policy without much hindrance.

Even the privately run schools conformed to the government policy on education. However, the new rich class and the old comprador elite that were restored to power in 1977 were keen to assert their social dominance. It was to serve the interests of these classes that the government headed by JR Jayawardena made gradual, but important, changes in the field of education. The setting up of a private medical college was one such move. This move also appeared to be an attempt to test the waters before the government launched its scheme to

privatise higher education as a whole. In the end, the private medical college proved to be both politically and educationally a disaster.

There have always been private international (English-medium) schools to serve the foreign diplomatic community based in Colombo. The establishment of international schools to educate native children in English was entirely in the interest of affluent parents who wanted to send their children abroad for higher education. These schools were allowed to operate under the Companies Act. This move was followed by moves to set up private universities, initially as institutions that functioned in collaboration with foreign universities with a variety of arrangements including those that allowed the students to receive most of the education locally and the rest abroad. This trend in private education is thriving as a private business.

School education for the masses and standards in the universities are being systematically downgraded. It is expected that this will enable a new elite, comprising intellectuals, experts and administrators with a background of English education and personal wealth, to secure for itself the highest positions in the administration of the country.

8. The Sermon of the Brown Sahibs

The change of government in 1977 gave new inspiration for all those who wanted to restore English to the throne it occupied during colonial rule. The patriotism and the love for language proclaimed by a capitalist class, which while promoting Sinhala chauvinism and Sinhala-Buddhist domination flirts with the imperialists, can only be pretence. Thus, Sinhala-Buddhism is only a smoke screen to conceal the surrender of national interests to imperialism.

Even before English was once again declared an official language around 1990, in the pretext of solving the language problem by making Sinhala, Tamil and English the official languages, it had become the *de facto* official language. While Sinhala was used to control the masses locally, English was used on an increased scale in dealing with matters of importance. Tamil was only a token official language.

Imperialist cultural infiltration intensified after the ascent to power by the comprador bourgeoisie. This was helped very much by the arrival of the television. Casinos, nightclubs, brothels and drug abuse aggravated the cultural decay that had already set in. Tourism was encouraged in the name of increasing foreign exchange earnings and the arrival in large numbers of tourists with no interest in the country or its people and only a taste for material pleasure at low cost worsened matters. These social changes led to the emergence of a lumpen, parasitic class, which needed a minimum working knowledge of English for its survival at the mercy of the foreigners.

Certain service sectors of the urban economy that contributed negligibly to real production relied predominantly on English. Such sectors increasingly dominated the economy as the government systematically undermined the national industrial production and allowed foreigners to dominate the national economy. Under these circumstances, it was easy to create the illusion that there was no future for anyone without the knowledge of English. This has been done in a most aggressive fashion by the 'born again' advocates of English.

With the seventeen-year UNP rule and that of the PA, which succeeded it in 1994, willingly submitting to the diktat of the imperialists, the demand for English education surged to the point that commercially motivated English tutorials mushroomed at a rate that matched that of the private tutorials for GCE (AL) in earlier years.

The policies of privatisation and economic liberalisation will certainly help to marginalize those without knowledge of English, but the children who learnt English in government schools and private tutorials stand no chance against the products of the international schools with many of them having an English-speaking domestic background and opportunities for education abroad.

The illusion that education in English is the path to salvation is now being promoted by the government and it may be a few years before the youth become disillusioned.

9. Burial of Bandaranaike Policies

It is true that SWRD Bandaranaike played an important role in the politics of Sinhala chauvinism. At the same time, his policies of anti-imperialism, national interests, national cultural revival and education in the mother tongue benefited both the Sinhala and Tamil communities. His policies were carried forward by his wife Sirima Bandaranaike who became the leader of the SLFP following the assassination of SWRD Bandaranaike. Today the government headed by their daughter, who is also the leader of the very SLFP that was founded by SWRD Bandaranaike and defended by Sirima Bandaranaike, has abandoned every progressive policy of the Bandaranaiques that identified them as progressives, patriots, and anti-imperialists.

Foundation has been laid today to make English the *de facto* language of absolute authority in Sri Lanka. Steps are being taken not to teach English as the second or third language to schoolchildren, but to make it the medium of instruction. But what is the objective reality?

The position of the government is that education in the English medium will be provided as a matter of individual choice. This

will in effect mean that only a small section of the children who attend the more privileged schools will be taught properly in the English medium. Another section will receive sub-standard instruction in English, while the vast majority will be educated in the mother tongue in the more backward schools. Opportunities for higher education and secure employment will be the privilege of the well to do, English-educated elite.

What will be the difference between this and the situation that was obtaining under colonialism? When the foreign colonial rulers directly dominated the affairs of the country, love for language was a mighty weapon in the struggle for liberation. Today, the chauvinists who have blunted that weapon are posing off as patriots. Imperialism, with the help of this new gang of traitors, is able to continue its neo-colonial plunder without having to battle for it. This is the biggest betrayal of this country by the Sinhala chauvinists.

10. Marxist Leninists and Education in the Mother Tongue

Marxist Leninists have never had any doubts about the need for education in the mother tongue. They recognise its significance beyond its value as the most suitable language for educational purposes.

Education in the mother tongue is important in reinforcing the cultural identity and the multi-faceted development of a community. Education in the mother tongue is a mighty resource in the development of the ideology and struggle for national liberation and anti-imperialism. More importantly, the emergence of a younger generation with self-respect and self-confidence is essential to the development of a society. Therefore, the Marxist Leninists are campaigning against today's moves to undermine education in the mother tongue, with even greater vigour

than they showed in their campaign for education in the mother tongue in the past.

The policy of education in the mother tongue is not a narrow-minded policy of teaching only the mother tongue. Marxist Leninists know that the learning any number of languages can do no harm. But they refuse to surrender blindly to Anglomania on the question of the choice of languages. The need of students to learn English is acknowledged to the extent that it is of benefit to advance the knowledge of students in particular fields of study. At the same time, training in the other languages spoken in the country will enhance good relationship between the nationalities. Training in the languages of the Third World, and South Asian languages in particular, will also be of value.

In short, the policy of education in the mother tongue is not one of hostility towards other languages. It is, in fact, a policy designed for social progress through the most comprehensive use of a language. Since Marxism Leninism is an ideology that gives primacy to the masses, there is no ambiguity in its educational policy, and Marxist Leninists have been far more consistent than any nationalist on the question of education in the mother tongue.

11. Closure

The policy of education in the mother tongue cannot be confined to the limited purposes of school education, technical education or higher studies. It concerns the advancement of thought of the entire society. Thus it cannot be something that relies only on government policy, since under the bourgeois socio-political order, governments do not represent the interests of the masses.

Thus it is important that, besides opposing every act of betrayal of education in the mother tongue and urging the government

to give the fullest support for education in the mother tongue, everything possible is done at the mass level to encourage the communication of socially useful information on the natural sciences, technology and social sciences, among all sections and age groups of society. Spreading of useful knowledge will in turn encourage rational thinking and scientific approach among the masses. The thirst for knowledge among the people, once induced, cannot be quenched easily, and it will propel society forwards like a powerful engine.

If we take an active interest to advance the habit of reading among the young, to develop clarity of thought in matters of social practice and, most importantly, to cultivate the habit of questioning everything, we will, before long, witness a mighty social movement that will effectively combat the setbacks suffered by education in the mother tongue today.

[Translation of an article in Tamil in *Puthiya Poomi*, June 2001]

Without preparedness, superiority is not real superiority and there can be no initiative either. Having grasped this point, a force, which is inferior but prepared, can often defeat a superior enemy by surprise attack.

Mao Zedong

On Protracted War, May 1938

The country's wealth equally shared,
the gross national product shared among all.
Nicaragua with no National Guard.

I see the new day!

An earth without terror. No tyrant dynasty. Sing
grackle, sing out your bugle call

Ernesto Cardinal

from his poem *Canto Nacional*
dedicated to the Sandinista National Liberation Front, Nicaragua, 1972

GLOBALISATION AND MARXISTS

by Imayavaramban

What have we learnt from all manner of explanations and interpretations of 'globalisation'? Globalisation is another name for the imperialism of today. When capitalism developed into monopoly capitalism, it had to cross its national borders to exploit the labour and natural resources of other countries and become dependent on this exploitation for its survival. The term imperialism was used to describe this stage of capitalism.

While this transformation enabled capitalism to escape the crisis that developed within its national boundaries, it led to rivalry between powerful capitalist states for the domination of the world. This competition caused two major world wars in the early half of the last century. At the same time, these wars led to the weakening of the capitalist domination of the world. Towards the tail end of the First World War, the Tsarist Empire of Russia fell and the first socialist republic of the world was established. At the end of the Second World War in 1945, European colonial rule in various parts of Asia started to fall apart in rapid succession. This momentum had an impact on colonial Africa and inspired struggles for independence there, and in the Middle East induced the collapse of several sheikhdoms. By the time South Vietnam was liberated from the US aggressors, almost no direct colonial rule remained. However, this did not mean the end of imperialism, which abandoned its earlier colonial form only to assume a newer form, which we refer to as neo-colonialism.

Under neo-colonialism, the imperialists did not exercise direct rule over their former colonies and semi-colonies. Instead, they continue their exploitation and plunder by tightening their grip on the economic development of these countries. This change in the form of imperialist domination following the Second World War favoured the advance of the hegemony of the US, which was by then the strongest military and economic power in the world. The European powers, which used their colonial rule to prevent infiltration by US capital, were unable to stop it under the neo-colonial order. Thus, US capital gradually found its way into every former British and French colony.

The military and economic might of the US tempts nearly every dictatorial regime of the Third World to rely on US patronage for its survival, especially since the public mood started to be hostile to these regimes, which could not last without outside support. Up to 1975, against the background of the collapse of one colonial regime after another, there was a powerful anti-imperialist upsurge on a global scale. The imperialist powers, although unable to stem the anti-imperialist tide by direct intervention or control directly the Third World, had already prepared to reinforce neo-colonial control.

Many of us remember that bodies such as the Organisation of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) were a challenge to total imperialist domination and control of the world economy. However, the imperialists, especially the US, well aware of the contradictions between the OPEC countries, planned their strategy accordingly. Large quantities of oil were purchased during the period of the OPEC-inspired crude oil price hike. When the economically weaker members of the OPEC became dependent on the oil income and committed themselves to ambitious development projects on the strength of their potential oil income, the rug was pulled from under the feet by the US, which released vast quantities of oil into the world market and caused a tumble in the price of crude oil. Following this, the US was

able to control both the price and the production of oil with the help of its allies like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the OPEC. Besides, the imperialists also secured total control over the price of every natural resource and agricultural product on which the economies of the Third World depended. The anti-imperialism of Third World organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) lost their edge as a result of the weakness of the economies of the member states and the lack of will of the national bourgeoisie who exercised state power in the vast majority of these countries.

To make matters worse, the erroneous political line put forward by Nikita Khrushchov in the Soviet Union since the revisionists took power, following the death of JV Stalin, developed into a policy of collaboration with the US imperialists on the one hand and competition on the other for global domination. As a result, the anti-imperialist movement was weakened internationally.

The US and the Soviet Union, in the course of their competition for global domination, encouraged civil war and wars between countries in several countries of the Third World. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was an important event that weakened the progressive forces in many Third World countries. The parliamentary leftists who argued that the interests of the oppressed nations of the world can only be protected by the Soviet Union becoming a superpower that matched the US in military might chose to ignore the concepts of anti-imperialist struggle, mass line and people's war. The economic problems of the Soviet Union were aggravated by the arms race against the US. Further, the hegemonic approach of the revisionist rulers of the Soviet Union led not only to mass hostility in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe towards the Soviet Union but also to hostility towards their own governments which the masses saw as stooges of a hegemonic power. The consequences of this were seen in 1989 and after.

It was only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union that phrases like 'global village' were propagated with vigour to prettify the imperialist schemes for global domination. Many more euphemisms have been coined to describe a variety of imperialist schemes to wreck the economies of the third world. For instance, 'restructuring' means isolation of an economic sector of a country from any form of state protection. 'Economic reform' means the state abandoning any form of control it may have had over commercial and industrial ventures so that foreign companies may buy them, and 'liberalisation' refers to unhindered exploitation and plunder of the country by foreign investors. The term 'open economy' is used to describe the condition under which a country made itself a captive market for dumping the industrial surplus of the big capitalist countries. If, through these practices, the entire Third World would come under US domination, that would be the integration of the Third World into the 'global village' that the US has in mind.

To further facilitate this, various schemes are being implemented to divide the people wherever there is a strong anti-imperialist upsurge and to topple governments that do not go along with the policies of the US. Where necessary, cruel acts of war are committed against countries, as for example in the recent cases of Iraq and Yugoslavia, in the name of humanitarianism.

The governments and the people of the Third World are subject to political, economic and military pressure from imperialism in every possible way. Given the impotent national bourgeois leadership of the Third World, the stagnation in the anti-imperialist struggles on a global scale, a weakened left movement, the fall of the European socialist regimes led by the revisionists, the break-up of the Soviet Union and capitalist infiltration of China, the short-term victory of neo-colonialism seemed stable and lasting.

The continued development of imperialism reduced competition in every industrial sector and led to domination by one or two multi-national companies (MNCs). As an inevitable consequence of this development, policies such as economic liberalisation and privatisation were thrust upon the countries of the Third World so that the monopolists could exercise direct control over production and consumption.

Countries of the Third World already faced an economic crisis and a burden of debt because of imperialist control of the world economy, and many of the rulers were not in a position to reject the conditions imposed on them by the World Bank and the IMF concerning the management of their economy. This led to further weakening of the economy and the political system. Regardless of these problems, the neo-colonialists concentrated on their plunder.

In addition, imperialism ensured that the power of no government exceeded imperialist authority by creating circumstances under which the state abandoned its responsibility for social welfare so that non-government organisations (NGOs) took it over. There has been a proliferation of NGOs since 1980, which intensified in the 1990's.

The NGOs did not only relieve the government of its responsibility towards the welfare of the masses but also worked towards alienating the people from politics. Many intellectuals and social workers, including several former leftists and progressives, with no thought whatsoever of the sources of funding for the NGOs, have been attracted by their generous funding and high wages, only to be trapped in this illusive web to become political degenerates. As a result, an important section of the intellectuals who could play a very important role in the anti-imperialist struggle has lost direction and now serves the imperialist cause. We can hear their voice loud among those who proclaim the inevitability of globalisation.

Of the schools of thought that were not confused or deflected by the disintegration of the Soviet Union or the changes that are taking place in China, the most important is Marxism Leninism. While the revisionists and other 'leftists' contemplated compromise with imperialism, true Marxists were firm in their policy and clear in their conviction that globalisation is only another name for contemporary imperialism. They were also clear that the goal of globalisation was total imperialist control of the world and unlimited control of the global economy by the MNCs and that the cause of globalisation is being advanced mainly in the interest of US imperialism.

Besides, they firmly asserted that there was no 'good aspect' of globalisation and that what were seen as good aspects were only technological and scientific achievements which have been structured to serve the interests of the imperialists rather than the interests of the people of the world. Most importantly, they knew that nothing was inevitable about the process of globalisation and that it could be overcome, but only through mass struggle.

It took hardly six years for the anti-imperialist forces that were disheartened by the collapse of the Soviet Union to recover, following the onset of economic crises in the imperialist countries. The crises in the imperialist countries spilt over into the East Asian economies, once hailed as the great capitalist success stories of Asia. Another important consequence of the economic crisis was the overthrow of the pro-imperialist dictator Suharto of Indonesia.

The anti-imperialists of Europe and America were enthused by this turn of events and their activities gradually gathered momentum. Events organised by every major organisation set up by the imperialist powers to establish their absolute dominance and control over the world met with strong mass opposition. The past two years witnessed mass protests ranging from that

in Seattle against the meeting of the World Trade Organisation to that in Geneva against the meeting of the G8 countries. Each one of them is evidence to the growing opposition in Europe and the US to the 'New World Order' and the programme of globalisation headed by US imperialism. The importance of this surge of protest is great.

These victories have been secured under conditions where all the major news media and sources of information are under the control of capitalist monopolies and where the forces opposed to imperialism are not organised as a strong political force. They indicate the emergence of new political crises within the major capitalist countries. In fact, capitalism has subjected every aspect of human existence to crises. US imperialism has sought to undermine every step in defence of mankind by forces that care for humanity. This trend continues to this day. Hence, there is no doubt that the opposition to imperialism will also grow.

It is nevertheless important to note that, without a well-planned and co-ordinated political action and political programme, efforts by the imperialists to deflect the anti-imperialist movement and throw it into confusion may succeed. Thus, the responsibility of Marxist Leninists is foremost in correctly understanding and interpreting world affairs at the national as well as the international level and employing forms of struggle to suit the objective reality and consistent with the line of mass political action.

The challenge before Marxist Leninists is that they need to demonstrate once again that a Marxist could simultaneously be a patriot as well as an internationalist and lead in the struggle to build a new world. Every Marxist Leninist should bear in mind that the future of humanity depends on how they handle it.

[Translated from the Tamil original in Puthiya Poomi, 2001 September.]

THE NDP DIARY

Recent Activities

© The Northern Regional Committee of the New Democratic party, which successfully celebrated the last May Day on an elaborate scale, also conducted a series of seminars and meetings in various parts of the peninsula. Comrade S.K. Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP, addressed a monthly seminar conducted in Jaffna by the Social Science Study Circle on "Globalisation and Marxism", a meeting in Pandaththarippu on "Marxism and the living conditions of the people", and a meeting in the Putthur People's Hall on "The Party's style of work among the masses".

A public political seminar held in the City Hall, Jaffna to mark the 23rd anniversary of the founding of the Party was chaired by Party Secretary for the Northern Region, Comrade K. Kathirgamanathan. Comrade K. Thanigasalam, member of the Party Politburo and Editor of the literary magazine 'Thaayagam' delivered the opening address entitled "The birth and the development of the Party and the challenges and problems faced by it". The thematic lecture "The national question: present status and future prospects" was delivered by Comrade S.K. Senthivel, and the lecture was followed by a lively and fruitful discussion.

© The NDP issued a statement expressing its strong condemnation of the rape of a young Hill Country Tamil mother of three by three policemen at a police checkpoint. It drew

attention to the fact that this disgraceful deed was a continuation of criminal acts against women, including murder and rape, by the armed forces in the North-East. The Party also gave its fullest support for the hartal, the shutdown of shops, and demonstrations held in various parts of the Hill Country, the North-East and Colombo in protest against the crimes against Tamil women by the police and the armed forces, and participated in the protest activities. Members of the party participated in the demonstrations in Hatton and Talawakelle, in the Hill Country, and in the hartal in Jaffna, Batticaloa and Vavunia, in the North-East.

© Many members of the Party, led by Comrade S.K. Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP and Comrade E. Thambiah, National Organiser of the NDP, participated in the massive demonstration opposite the Colombo Fort Railway Station, on invitation from the Tamil political parties, and raised protest slogans against acts of rape and murder by the armed forces and the police. A large number of Sinhalese belonging to other left parties and mass organisations also participated in the demonstration. This demonstration echoed in the capital as the united voice of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim masses.

© The 23rd anniversary of the Party was celebrated at the Town Hall, Hatton in July. Comrade E. Thambiah, National Organiser of the NDP presided over the session and Comrade S.K. Senthivel, General Secretary delivered the Anniversary Address. Comrade S. Thevarajah, Member of the Politburo, Comrades J. Satkurunathan and S. Panneerselvam, Members of the Central Committee, and Comrades P. Chandrakumar and M. Nagarajan of the Central Regional Committee also addressed the meeting. Messages of greeting from fraternal parties and organisations were read at the meeting and Comrade Vasantha Dissanayake delivered an address of greeting on behalf of the Diyasa Study Circle.

© A well attended public political seminar entitled “the Current Political Crisis and the Proposed Referendum”, organised by the NDP, was held in the Ceylon Muslim League Building in Pettah, Colombo on 21.7.2001. The seminar, chaired by Comrade E. Thambiah, was addressed by Comrades S.K. Senthivel and S. Thevarajah in detail on the subject of the seminar. Comrade Senthivel, General secretary of the NDP, announced and explained the position of the Party Central Committee on the proposed referendum. The addresses were followed by a general discussion, in which views were expressed overwhelmingly in support of the position of the Party on the issue.

© Leaflets in Sinhala and Tamil calling for the boycott of the proposed referendum on the new constitution, originally scheduled to be on 21st August and subsequently postponed, were distributed in the North-East, the Hill Country and Colombo. The leaflet contained an explanation of the Party’s decision to call for a boycott. It was asserted there that neither the PA government nor the UNP opposition have clarified its position on the grave problems faced by the country, namely the national question, the war and the economic crisis that is burdening the masses. Thus, no purpose will be served by the participation of the working masses or the oppressed nationalities. Hence the Party urged the people that, rather than say ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to the question whether the country needs a new constitution, they should reject the whole exercise by boycotting it.

Capitalism is a leech with one sucker on the proletariat in the metropolitan country and another on the proletariat in the colonies. If the animal is to be killed, both suckers must be cut off at once. If only one is cut off the other will continue to suck the blood of the proletariat: the animal will live on and the cut-off sucker will grow again.

Ho Chi Minh

Selected Works, Vol. I., FLPH, Hanoi 1961, p. 130

NDP PRESS RELEASES

13th June 2001

The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the indefinite closure of the University of Jaffna in order to suppress the student unrest and opposition to undemocratic actions relating to the arrest of the university undergraduate Krishnasamy Thivviyan by the armed forces and his continued detention. The above incident was a consequence of the strong protests by the university students in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Batticaloa in recent months. The New Democratic Party strongly urges that steps should be undertaken for the immediate release of the student, Thivviyan and to reopen the University of Jaffna.

In the statement issued on behalf of the New Democratic Party, the General Secretary of the Party, Comrade S.K. Senthivel further stated that the student under detention had been a former secretary of the University Students Union and counted among those who served the people and the students in times of crisis. Students like him have already been targeted by the armed forces. Thus, the question has arisen whether a programme of victimising students has commenced. Therefore, the New Democratic Party urges that school students and university undergraduates should not be subject to frustration and pain and that acts of repression against them should be put to an end.

September 2001

New Democracy

27th June 2001

In a statement issued on behalf of the New Democratic Party, the General Secretary of the Party, Comrade S.K. Senthivel said that Tamil women have been reduced to a plight that they can neither remain in their homes nor walk along the streets of this country. Those who had been appointed to safeguard law and order have been responsible for the cruel acts of rape against Tamil women. The misdeeds of Mannar, Negombo, Bambalapitiya and Maradana in recent months go to prove this. At Maradana, a Hill Country Tamil woman was raped by three policemen at a police checking post. This has subjected to fear and shock the young women of the hill country who work for low wages in the capital and its suburbs in workplaces including garment factories. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the continuing sexual torture of Tamil women and demands urgent steps to put an end to them.

The statement added that the armed forces are committing acts of sexual crime against Tamil women while the country is being ruled by a mother who is also in command of the armed forces. They are committing these shameful offences with the help of the powers given to them under the State of Emergency and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Thus, only the withdrawal of these laws and the introduction of strict new laws against rape can give even a limited protection for Tamil women.

22nd July 2001

The Central Committee of the New Democratic Party issued the following statement based on its decisions on the question of the forthcoming referendum.

The current political crisis under the bourgeois parliamentary system is not one that concerns the working people who com-

prise the vast majority of the population of the country or one concerning the salvation of the oppressed nationalities. It is entirely a contest for power between forces of the chauvinistic ruling classes. The ruling People's Alliance is trying every trick in the book to maintain itself in power. All the vestiges of parliamentary democracy have been abandoned and presidential authority is being used to take autocratic decisions. The concepts of 'democracy' and 'freedom' proclaimed thus far by the forces of the ruling classes have been reduced to mockery. The ruling classes have bared their true nature by this. This crisis is not the creation of one individual. It is the result of the inability of the feudal-capitalist elite to solve the problems of the country. The important issues of the national question and the war and the severe economic burdens on the people have been sidelined today. The failure to solve these problems is the basis of the political crisis. The United National Party opposition is merely trying to use this opportunity to come to power. It has no solution for the national question and the war and the economic problems.

The oppressed working people cannot take either side in the contest for power between the two chauvinistic, pro-imperialist ruling class forces. The Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils should consider their past experiences and act thoughtfully, with far-sight and calm. It is on this basis that the New Democratic Party calls upon the people to not participate in the forthcoming referendum and reject it by boycotting it.

The statement further added that there is nothing unusual about the forces of the ruling classes claiming that they will change the political system and cheating the masses whenever they face a political crisis. This is the result of the bourgeois parliamentary system proving itself incapable of solving the problems faced by the country and the people. In 1978, JR Jayawardene, in order to establish his chauvinistic upper class, pro-imperialist regime, created a one-person, one-party auto-

cratic regime in the name of the presidency with executive powers. He used his four-fifths majority in parliament to achieve it.

Today, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, having lost her parliamentary majority, proposes to hold a referendum to determine whether the country needs a new constitution. She has already rejected the opportunities that came her way for negotiating a political solution for the national question by submitting to those driven by chauvinist militarism, and chose to carry forward the war and retreated from the peace efforts. Similarly, she accepted the guidance of the World Bank and the IMF to mortgage the economy of the country to globalisation and worsened the condition of living of the people. The present mess is the consequence of the President and the government being encircled by the resultant problems and crises.

The UNP, with its notorious record of a seventeen years long rule of darkness, is seeking to use this opportunity to return to power. It is concealing its chauvinistic and pro-imperialist ruling class stand to talk of democracy and freedom. But it has no alternative plan or policy for resolving the national question or the economic crisis. Not only the Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, but also the Sinhalese cannot place their trust in the sweet words of the UNP, whose sole aim to return to power.

Therefore, it is meaningless for the people to participate in the forthcoming referendum. The masses should not continue to be sacrificed in the altar of this contest for power. The New Democratic Party requests that the people refuse to be a party to the ruling class contest for power by rejecting the referendum and boycotting it.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

OBSTRUCTING PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

From the beginning, it was clear that the sole purpose for which the British imperialists and their Unionist allies in Northern Ireland entered into the Good Friday agreement with the Sinn Fein was the disarmament of the IRA. Nothing else has concerned the Unionists since the IRA resumed armed struggle some three decades ago. It was only after the British imperialists realised that they could not limit 'IRA terrorism' to Northern Ireland and that IRA would target the real oppressors of the Irish people at their doorstep that the British government considered any form of negotiation, despite brave declarations about not negotiating with the terrorists.

For peace to return to Northern Ireland, all 'terrorists' need to be disarmed, and that includes not only the loyalist militias but also the army and the police controlled by the British imperialists and the Unionists. To disarm the IRA without ensuring the safety of the Catholic population and rectifying the social injustices committed against it is to pave the way for the old order. The Sinn Fein has taken a fair and principled stand on the matter and has proven itself to be far more sincere about peace than its British and Unionist counterparts.

The Sinn Fein has to be judged on the basis of its deeds rather than on the basis of suspicions of its opponents in the British and Unionist establishments. The Unionists have once

again stubbornly refused to acknowledge the IRA's expression of goodwill in agreeing to a programme of disarmament and are threatening to wreck the Good Friday agreement. This will only prolong the agony of the Irish people in Northern Ireland, and that is perhaps what these forces of oppression and reaction want.

NEGOTIATING PEACE WITH TANKS AND BULLDOZERS

The election of Ariel Sharon as the prime minister of Israel was ominous enough. Events since his election have dragged Israel and Israeli occupied Palestine into a whirlpool of violence. Israeli reaction to every act of defiance by the Palestinians has led, in turn, to the escalation of violence. Sharon's refusal to negotiate with the PLO, predictably, has strengthened the hands of the more militant Palestinian liberation movements.

Sharon has not learnt anything from the consequences of his murderous acts of aggression in Lebanon more than two decades ago. Nor has the reactionary Zionist establishment learnt anything from its failure to subdue the *intifada* of the Palestinians. Israeli arrogance will continue as long as the US backs its aggressive policy on Palestine. With most of the Arab leaders reluctant to antagonise the US imperialists, the struggle for liberation will be an arduous, but necessary, task for the forces of Palestinian revolt.

Zionists are, as ever, slow to learn that, as their tanks and bulldozers destroy whole villages and their assassins kill Palestinians and their leaders, the oppressed masses become increasingly persevering in their struggle.

REVERSE METAMORPHOSIS, FROM BUTTERFLY TO CATERPILLAR

The Albanian minority nationality of the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia were armed and trained by the US and its European allies in their attempts to oust Milosovic. Once that task was achieved, the Albanians had become the problem for the NATO and the US. The surge in Albanian nationalism in neighbouring Macedonia was imminent at the time of meddling by the US and NATO in Yugoslavia over that past few years. Arming and training Albanians was one thing, but to ask them to confine their targets to those defined by the US and the NATO was another. What the US and NATO have achieved is the destabilisation of Macedonia. The truce that the NATO has negotiated between the Albanian rebels and the Macedonian state is fragile, especially since the Macedonian public are deeply suspicious of the NATO and the US in the light of recent experience.

NEPAL: AFTER THE MASSACRE

The killing of the Royal family of Nepal by the crown prince shocked the world. But it has also brought to the fore the deep divisions within Nepali society and the resentment that the Nepali people bear towards the Indian ruling classes. The Maoist Communist Party has strengthened its position both politically and militarily in the wake of the recent events and is now able to negotiate with the Nepali government from a position of strength. The course of the armed struggle will depend on the path that the rulers of Nepal choose to take. Without a programme to further curtail the powers of the monarchy, to end Indian expansionist domination over Nepal, and to give a fairer deal for the oppressed masses by way of land reform and social justice, there can be no peace in Nepal.

SEEING EYE TO EYE

The US imperialists have always found excuses for keeping away from events where racism is denounced. The conference in Durban South Africa, commencing at the end of August, was no exception. Important among its objections is identifying Zionism with racism. The Indian government too shares this view with the US imperialists.

The Indian government is also opposed to treating caste-based oppression and untouchability on par with racist oppression. In fact, far more cruel things have been done and for much longer in the name of the caste system. As an institutionalised form of discrimination and oppression, casteism has a worse record than Zionism and racism. Thus, Indian elitist empathy with Zionism is hardly surprising.

Our people's and armed forces' victories in the past ten years have eloquently proved that nowadays, in the middle of revolutionary strategic offensive of the world revolutionary movement, a country like ours with no vast territory, no big population, an economy still undeveloped, but united millions as one with a correct line, a solid will and high determination and a spirit of daring to fight and knowing how to fight, has full capability to defeat the expeditionary army of the US imperialists, the ring-leader of the aggressive imperialists.

Mme Nguyen Thi Dinh

Deputy Commander of the PLAF, South Viet Nam
10 Years of the PLAF, Giai Phong Publishing House, South Viet Nam, 1971

A CLEAR VISION

Siva. Rajendran

This is the *raaga* of the morning seeking the dawn
Within it is much to be born
This is an army of heroes marching to victory
Wisdom its guiding force

A new force has set out
To turn the sky red and make earth prosper
A people's army is on its way
To wage war to make things new

Comrades arise and come forth
Let us banish this darkness forever
Ours is the path of equality
A new path in our history

The people's army rises like the hills
To bring great changes to the hill country
The worker's army swells like the streams
To put an end to this life of slavery

This army links hands as a true friend
With workers toiling without their rights
This peoples army is determined
To make the toilers own this world

Let the new army leap forward
Along the righteous path of the red flag
The peoples army is on the march
To create a new Lanka
To establish equality

04.05.1991

OUR PEOPLE

Alfredo Cordal

Chilean Poet in exile in London, born, 25 January 1945

Our People who are in jail,
well known be your cause.
Your dream come
your freedom be done
on earth as it is in the stars,
give us our daily bread
as the future you are longing for,
and forgive our freedom
as we also bear in mind
that you have preferred the prison to life in exile.
And lead us not into despair,
but deliver us from evil
that may divide us and stop our continuous struggle.

[Translated by the author.]

Source: *Anthology of Latin American Poets in London*,
Latin American Writers Group, London, 1988]

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