

Theoretical Organ of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party

# New Democracy

# 42

*September 2011*

**Documents of the First Plenum of the Fifth All-Sri Lanka Congress of the NDMLP**

**The General Programme  
of the NDMLP**

**The Immediate Programme  
of the NDMLP**

**Nationalities and the Right to  
Self Determination**

**Poetry: *Nepali poem, Ahmed Faraz***

Editorial • NDP Diary • Sri Lankan Events • World Events

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

## Fallen Men

The atmosphere of gloominess and uncertainty is disappearing  
The cloud of danger and darkness is dispelling  
The hour of despair, depression and demoralization is departing  
The period of blackout and insecurity is passing  
The voice against misrule, misdeeds and massacre is raised  
The battle against terror, torture and barriers is launched  
The kingdom of Jupiter is in jeopardy  
The celestial throne is quivering  
The palace, fort and tower are toppling down  
Demigorgons are taking birth again  
Christs are rising from the graveyard  
Abhimanyus are trained in chakrabyuh in the womb  
O Fallen Men  
You are no longer subject to chance, time and fate  
You are no longer a prey to diabolic death  
You are no longer a decaying carcass  
You are no longer dying cells  
You are the seeds for the new birth  
You are a dawn for the new awakening  
You are holy water for the new life  
You are Sanjivani for the new survival  
You are the nectar for immortality  
You are Vodha-briksha for the new faith and belief  
You are Noah in the days of flood  
You are Jatayu at the time of peril  
You are Adam and Eve for the multiplication of human posterity  
You are the settler of motion in the wheel of global changes  
You are the maker of your own destiny  
You are the creator of human history

*(Continued on inside back cover)*

## ***From the Editor's Desk***

Even among those who hailed the lifting of the state of emergency by the government on 25<sup>th</sup> August, there is lingering suspicion about the intentions of the government. That it happened just weeks before the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva—where alleged human rights violations and war crimes by the Sri Lankan state were likely to up for discussion—has made some see it as a publicity stunt to generate international goodwill.

The fears of the sceptics were justified by the introduction of new regulations to keep the Prevention of Terrorism Act and High Security Zones alive. Besides, the continuation and rise in politically driven authoritarian practices outside the scope of the PTA and Public Security Ordinance mean that authoritarian rule will not abate with the lifting of the state of emergency.

The country has, since the JVP insurrection of 1971, been under a state of emergency for long stretches. Although the UNP government elected in 1977 declared that it will rule the country without resorting to emergency regulations, it imposed emergency rule in the North in 1979 and the whole country later on. More importantly, the absence of a state of emergency in any part of the country did not mean democratic government. The SLFP, the left and later the JVP were victims of state sponsored unlawful violence which took a heavy toll on democratic and trade union rights, let alone the rights of the minority nationalities. War provided the pretext for extended and excessive use of emergency powers by the state. As a result, people were intimidated to the point of fearing to exercise their right to free speech and association.

Initially, emergency regulations in Sri Lanka were based on the Public Security Ordinance of 1947, designed and ratified by the British colonial rulers to suppress and control political dissent on the eve of transfer of power to a loyal government. More dangerous powers have since been assumed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979—supposedly a temporary measure but in force to date. Thus, the lifting of the state of emergency while retaining and reinforcing existing repressive laws is pure sham.

The people suffered severe state repression under UNP rule, especially the seventeen years of darkness from 1977 to 2004. The SLFP-led regimes that followed continued with the policies of the UNP on the economic, foreign policy and other fronts, and relied as much as the UNP did on the now heavily reinforced police and military forces.

The gradual depreciation of trust in the state was reversed, at least as far as the Sinhalese were concerned, following the defeat of the LTTE, which symbolised terrorism to them. Also the People's Alliance government comprising the SLFP and its parliamentary left allies is still seen as sensitive to the aspirations of the common masses. But the violent attack in late May this year by the police on the Katunayake Free Trade Zone workers who protested against the proposed Pension Bill exposed once again the brutal nature of state power. The general assumption that the Sri Lankan state uses force only against the Tamils owing to distrust born of the civil war between the Government and the LTTE was reinforced by the state acting in ways that projected it as representative of the majority Sinhalese. Hence, the attack on Sinhalese workers in Katunayake was a shock, which it should not have been since the state has used brutal force against the Sinhalese in the South in 1971 and from the late 1980s to early 1990s.

In this context, one needs to challenge the general assumption that the defeat of the LTTE will lead to normalcy in the South and to the resolution of the national question. In reality, the end of the war has made the prospect of the resolving the national question even more remote. Prevailing conditions in the North East, especially among 'resettled war refugees', speak volumes about the attitude of the government towards the minority nationalities, especially the Tamils.

There is no sign of return to normalcy in any part of the country, and normalcy is unimaginable until the main impediments to it are removed. The dictatorial executive presidency which has acquired more power for itself since its institution in 1978, the continuing rise in man power and might of the armed forces and the police, and the survival of repressive legislation, besides obstructing return to normalcy, will only add to public resentment and protest, to which the state is bound to respond with even more repression.

The unresolved national question remains the main contradiction in the country. Keeping it unresolved helps the government to divert attention from additional burdens heaped on the people as a result of the country getting indebted to foreign powers and thereby becoming a fully fledged neo-colony. Thus imperialism and foreign hegemony have a vested interest in sustaining a repressive regime in Sri Lanka.

The task facing the left, progressive and democratic forces in the country is to unify the struggle for the restoration of democracy and a just solution for the national question with the anti-imperialist struggle.

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## ***NDMLP Statement to the Media***

*6<sup>th</sup> September 2011*

### **People talk to the Party about the Mystery Man**

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party made the following observations to the media on what they were told by the people about the 'Mystery Man' (also known as 'Grease Devil').

News circulating among the people about the 'Mystery Man' (also known as 'Grease Devil') is neither fiction nor fantasy. Nor is it imagination or illusion as some people claim. The Mystery Man with a deep black appearance and wearing a fierce looking mask enters houses at night. People have witnessed in various areas the Mystery Man running riot by attacking and frightening women in particular. They describe the incidents with fear. At the same time, people who chase after the Mystery Man are attacked and their houses damaged by the armed forces. People showed us the damage caused by the Mystery Man and their having seen the Mystery Man. They also added that they have seen the armed forces sheltering the Mystery Man.

When members of the Northern Regional Committee and I visited several villages in the regions of Valikamam, Valikamam North, Valikamam West and Vadamaratchi in the Jaffna Peninsula, to make inquiries directly from the people, they gave us details of their encounters with the Mystery Man. While we were discussing with people in the lawn of a community centre at around 8.00 p.m., we heard people from a neighbouring village screaming aloud. When we went over and inquired, they said that they saw the Mystery Man behind the house and that he escaped when the people got together and chased after him. Women, children, students and the elderly were seen to be in a state of fear and anxiety. Such state of anxiety was evident in most of the areas.

The people explained to us the sad situation in which families spend sleepless nights together for fear of the Mystery Man roaming around. People who have to go to work and students are severely affected by this. Women are scared to go to work even during daytime. With great sorrow they spoke about the restless life of fear and anxiety in the wake of the calamity in the Vanni.

Comrade Senthivel added that the villages and people affected by fear about the movements of the Mystery Man consisted entirely of toiling people like daily paid workers, peasants, fishermen and their families. It was noticeable that the appearance and threatening activities of the Mystery Man and attacks by the armed forces were mostly in villages where the people were economically and socially backward. The people were at a loss to understand the reason. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a chauvinist ruling class political agenda behind the Mystery Man episodes that started in the Hill Country, passed through the East and now rocking the North, especially the Jaffna peninsula. We have to conclude that this intimidation by the Mystery Man is one aspect of the chauvinist oppression that is intimidating and subjugating the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamils. It is its peak that we witness in the villages of the Jaffna peninsula.

Hence, it is fully just for the people to mobilise and act in self defence to protect themselves and their villages against the presence of and intimidation by the Mystery Man.

Comrade Senthivel in his statement to the media declared that the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party fully endorses the one-day hunger strike organised by Tamil political parties, civil society organisations and religious leaders demanding a complete end to the Mystery Man activities and that the Party has decided to take part in the hunger strike.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary

***NDMLP Statement to the Media***  
*2<sup>nd</sup> September 2011*

## **Annul the Death Sentences**

Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party made the following statement to the media on behalf of the Politburo of the Party regarding the impending death sentence of the three people convicted in the Rajeev Gandhi murder case.

The interim injunction issued by the High Court of Chennai against the implementation of the verdict of death sentence issued against Perarivaalan, Saanthan and Murugan is a preliminary victory for the mass campaigns by the people against the implementation of the death sentence.

While in a majority of the countries of the world implementation of the death sentence has either been suspended or altogether prohibited, in India, which is claimed to be a five-star democracy, not only should the death sentence against these three be repealed but the death sentence should altogether be removed from the law books.

Although death sentences have been passed in Sri Lanka, over the past 40 years death sentences have remained suspended. There are opportunities to appeal to the Appeal Court or to the Supreme Court to quash the death sentence or to commute the sentence. Besides, there is the practice of the President generally suspending every death sentence passed by the Supreme Court, and in general death sentences are not implemented. Attempts were made to restore the implementation of the death sentence in Sri Lanka, but were abandoned in the face of public opposition. The death sentence should not be implemented not just in India and Sri Lanka but in all countries.

It is the social structure or the actions of the state that push people into crime. But it is historical experience that crime cannot be stopped by punishment. While punishment can in the short term diminish crime slightly, it is through cultural development that crime can be gradually reduced.

Planned crimes and crimes against society should be severely punished. Just trials should be conducted and the guilty should be punished, but the expectation of the civilised world is that the death sentence, even if passed, should not be carried out. The offenders should be given an opportunity to lead a different life.

Although the Jain Commission had raised a number of questions and asked for their investigation, they have not been investigated. Only a few including Perarivaalan, Saanthan and Murugan have received severe punishment. Many more truths remain to be found about the assassination of Rajeev Gandhi. It is unjust to attempt to implement the death sentence suddenly, 21 years after the event in a way that will conceal those truths and in a vengeful manner.

The NDMLP does not approve of murder of individuals and political assassinations. They do not constitute protest action or a method of struggle. Such killings should be stopped. The position of the party is that even if the death sentence, the highest form of punishment, is passed, it should not be implemented.

When in the 1970s the death sentence was passed against ten members of the JVP, the leaders of our party actively participated in the mass campaign to repeal the sentence.

Thus the Party joins the Indian Marxist Leninists and progressive democrats and the progressive democrats of the diaspora in the mass campaign against the implementation of the death sentence of the three individuals. It demands the elimination of the death sentence.

E Thambiah  
International Organiser

### ***NDMLP Statement to the Media***

*24<sup>th</sup> August 2011*

## **The State and the Grease Devil**

The Politburo of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party made the following statement to the media on attacks on the public by a mystery man known as the 'Grease Devil'.

The attacks unleashed by a mystery man known as the 'Grease Devil' is yet another macabre form of chauvinistic oppression. It is not something accidental or emerging from low levels. It is believed to be something implemented with ulterior motives from the top levels of state power. It is only the Hill Country Tamils, and the Tamils and Muslims of the North-East who are attacked, killed and injured by this Grease Devil. People threatened and intimidated by it are unable to attend to their activities, and the education of children and employment are severely affected by it. But there seems to be no interest on the part of those wielding state power; nor are any steps taken by them against the attacks. Hence, we are inclined to believe that the attacks by the Grease Devil mystery man are taking place with the blessings of those in power. Thus the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party while strongly condemning the attacks by the Grease Devil mystery man on the people welcomes the actions by the people to mobilise themselves in self-defence. The Party also urges the government to take immediate steps to bring an end to attacks by the Grease Devil.

Attacks by the Grease Devil mystery man which originated in the Kawatte region in the Hill Country, spread to tea plantations in the Hill Country. From there, they spread to the Eastern Province, then the Vanni and now the Jaffna peninsula. While attacks by the Grease Devil are aimed at the Tamils, Muslims and the Hill Country Tamils, the fact that it is women who are specifically targeted, caused blood injuries and killed has led to much speculation and doubt among the public.

People have claimed that they have directly witnessed the police and the defence forces protecting this Grease Devil mystery man in their respective areas. It is strange that the police—who are unable to identify or arrest the Grease Devil who is attacking and intimidating the people— attack, arrest and detain people who attempt to chase and capture the Grease Devil and who mobilise to defend themselves. It is a cause for surprise and concern that, even after many such incidents, the President as well as the top echelons of defence are silent on the matter of the Grease Devil.

Hence the Party urges the President to intervene immediately to bring to an end the attacks by the Grease Devil mystery man and create a situation in which the people could live peacefully without fear.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary

### ***NDMLP Statement to the Media***

*31<sup>st</sup> July 2011*

## **Attack on the Editor of Uthayan**

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party made the following statement to the media denouncing the attack on the News Editor of Uthayan newspaper.

Around 7.30 p.m. on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011, G Kuganathan, News Editor of Uthayan daily newspaper was subjected to a planned attack by two armed ruffians. He suffered severe head injuries and is in a critical condition, undergoing treatment in the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. This is not just a beastly attack on him but also an attack on the Uthayan daily. Besides, an attack on a media person constitutes an attack on the entire media sector and the freedom of expression. The New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party strongly condemns this attack. At the same time, this attack and other similar attacks serve as an appropriate measure of the status of democracy, normal life and freedom of expression in the North.

Attacks on the Uthayan newspaper, its office and its journalists appear to be a serial saga. Recently S Kavitharan, one of its journalists, was waylaid and attacked. Following that, its News Editor has been attacked and is in critical condition. There could be various opinions about the views expressed by Uthayan. But the spirit of “Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred thoughts contend” is the democratic basis for freedom of expression. Freedom of the media is about expression of opposed views. To deny that and to indulge in violence and despotism will amount the denial of the freedom of the media and the freedom of expression to take an anti-people stand. In the current situation, we

think that a just inquiry into the attack and bringing the offenders before the law are unlikely, since the situation is one where there has been no justice for the media personnel who have been killed, attacked and made to disappear. What we could say is that it is the people's forum that should seek out the truths.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary

***NDMLP Statement to the Media***  
***18<sup>th</sup> June 2011***

## **Attack on TNA**

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following statement to the media denouncing the attack on a meeting of the Tamil National Alliance in Alaveddy by persons in civilian clothes.

The members of the armed forces are the ones who decide everything in the North. Anyone there has to abide by their wishes. Past that, democracy, freedom and normal life mean little. This was amply demonstrated by the attack by persons in civilian clothes on the local election campaign meeting of the Tamil National Alliance in Alaveddy. The New Democratic Party very strongly condemns this attack.

The position of the Party is that it does not agree in any way with the policies or activities of the Tamil National Alliance. At the same time it cannot endorse in silence the denial of democratic rights to the members of the TNA. The unruly attack and disruption of the above meeting convened lawfully with police permission by members of the armed forces in civilian clothes thoroughly exposes the military domination and anti-democratic climate in the North-East. That was why the Party has since the middle of last year been carrying out a campaign at various levels, putting forward demands for democracy and normal life, and emphasising its ten other demands. It has emphasised these issues in its May Day rally in Jaffna. Thus, at this juncture, the Party appeals to all democratic, progressive and left forces to unite under a common consensus in the North-East, transcending their interests in elections, vote gathering, seats and portfolios, to act to win democracy, freedom, normal life and a political solution.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary

***NDMLP Seminar and Public Discussion***  
***31<sup>st</sup> August 2011***

## **The National Question, Right to Self-Determination and Political Solution**

The Colombo District Committee of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011 at the Kailasapathi Auditorium of the Deshiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai, 571/15 Galle Road, Colombo-6 the first of a series of meetings to discuss the Party's proposal for the solution of the national question. The meeting commenced at 4.30 p.m. and was chaired by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary and addressed by Comrade E Thambiah, International Organiser and Comrade V Mahendran, National Organiser.

Comrade Senthivel in his address outlined the national question and its complexities and explained why the Party considered it to be the main contradiction.

Comrade Thambiah, presenting the proposal of the party to solve the national question, explained how the Party arrived at its considered position on identifying the nationalities and applying the principle of the right to self determination in a creative way to address the national question in the context of the evolution of the national question of Sri Lanka.

Comrade Mahendran explained the national question in relation to the Hill Country Tamil people and the need to struggle for the recognition of the national rights of the Hill Country Tamils and their right to land, home and livelihood, free of chauvinistic oppression and dominance.

A lively discussion followed and constructive suggestions were made about taking the proposal to the people and mobilising support.

Comrade S Thevarajah, member of the Politburo of the Party delivered the vote of thanks.

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# ***Sri Lankan Events***

## **JVP: More than Tactics and Strategy**

The split in the JVP was initially to the joy of the mainstream media, which saw in it the fall of the JVP. However, when they realised that the split risked the emergence of a genuine Sinhala left party, they turned the heat on the 'rebels'. Prominence has since been given by the mainstream media, to the Tamil name of a key leader of the rebel group who has also been accused of various unlawful acts. Also, the rebels have been accused of planning an armed uprising in the near future. The intention is clear. They want to push the rebels towards a position where they would seem to be no different from the JVP, except for differences relating to electoral tactics and strategy.

While there are many JVP youth who genuinely want to free the country of imperialist and capitalist domination, it is not easy for a genuinely left group to emerge from the womb of a populist party like the JVP without serious criticism and self criticism of its past.

## **Ritual Slaughter and Highhanded Acts**

The police do not approve of the people taking the law into their hands when dealing with criminal elements like the 'grease devils' backed by the establishment. But Public Affairs Minister Mervyn Silva seems an exception to law of the land. Soon after a Court ruling halting the annual animal sacrifice at the Sri Bhadra Kali Amman Kovil in Munneswaram was made public in mid-September, Minister Silva arrived at the temple premises in a convoy of vehicles, seized the animals that had been brought for slaughter and took them away. Minister Silva will certainly not be hauled up before any magistrate for his highhanded action.

## **Meddlesome Media**

A major TV establishment has for months dedicated a large portion of its news broadcast time to discredit the UNP leader Ranil Wickramasinghe with the aim to replace him with a person of its choice. The campaign was crudely vindictive and in bad taste. The same media organisation also launched vile attacks on leaders who sided with the UNP leader. It has transpired that that organisation is furious with the leader of the UNP for refusing to grant two of its

national list parliamentary seats to persons handpicked by the organisation. Such unethical conduct of the electronic media raises concerns for the freedom of the media in a country where free expression meets with harsh unlawful punishment while blatant breach of the code ethics for the media passes unnoticed.

## **Bullying Journalists to Kill Media Diversity**

The company publishing the Tamil daily with the largest circulation made a takeover deal with its main rival. The selling company demanded of its employees to resign and be re-employed by the buying company. Employees who refused to do so have been locked out and are in a desperate situation for lack of trade union and political backing. It is said that the need to call for resignations arose out of financial considerations, since the selling company had reportedly failed to make its EPF and ETF contributions to the government and the buyer is unwilling to accept the liability. Such is the treatment meted out to journalists by Tamil media bosses who pose as defendants of the freedom of the media.

## **Inviting Foreign Intervention**

The Tamil National Alliance keeps claiming that international pressure alone can persuade the Sri Lankan government to seek a solution to the national question. It also works overtime to demonstrate its unassailable faith in India's will to resolve the national question in Sri Lanka. Yet, for an alliance whose constituent members once demanded secession, it has shown remarkable restraint in not calling for the right to self determination during consultations on the national question with the Indian authorities in September, for fear of embarrassing its patrons. Remarkably, it was India which armed, equipped and trained several of the militant separatist groups in the 1980s.

## **Mirroring Neo-colonial Loyalties**

The Daily Mirror and its sister weekly seem seriously worried that the country is about to be taken over by China. Articles, including editorials, appear regularly that whip up fear and suspicion about China, and warn the Sri Lankan government against Chinese economic domination. Warning against Chinese domination is a good thing if it is accompanied by warnings against other more real threats. But the papers unashamedly call for the domination of Sri Lankan politics and economy by the US and the West.

## **ASIA**

### **Nepal: Escalating Crisis**

The resignation of Prime Minister Jhalnath Khanal on 14<sup>th</sup> August marked the third fall of government in three years in Nepal. Khanal's failure to establish a peace agreement, initiate the drafting of a new constitution and to integrate the 20,000 strong People's Liberation Army with the Nepal Army was not surprising, given the collusion of Nepal's meddlesome neighbour and the US with the elite classes, the reactionary forces within the army, the Nepali Congress and opportunists within the CPN-UML.

The election of the Baburam Bhattarai, one of the Senior Vice Chairmen of the UCPN (Maoist) appears to have been with the blessings of Nepal's powerful neighbour, although not wholehearted. The intention seems to be to disarm and deflate the UCPN (Maoist) as a revolutionary force. This became clear when priority was given to persuading the People's Liberation Army to hand over the keys to the arms containers with their weapons to the Special Committee. Already there is resentment among PLA cadres about the proposed terms for the integration of the PLA with the Nepal Army, which they see is not on an equal footing.

While nothing is assured about the agreement between the Seven Party Alliance and the Maoists being implemented, concessions on disarming and merging of the armies has led to strains within the Party and to the emergence of a two-line struggle between the revolutionary line identified with Senior Vice Chairman Mohan Baidya and an emergent parliamentary line identified with Prime Minister Bhattarai and UCPN-M Chairman Prachanda. The issues concern the path of the revolution as well as defending against pressure from the reactionaries the gains made by the people and their liberation forces through revolutionary struggle.

It is unlikely that the reactionary and pro-Indian Nepal Congress and the opportunist CPN-UML will ever agree to the writing of a constitution in the spirit of the agreements with the Maoists during the struggle to overthrow of the dictatorial King of Nepal or to the merging of the PLA

with the Nepal Army on an equal footing. Thus the forces of revolution are increasingly unlikely to have any choice other than between a prolonged people's struggle and surrendering to forces of foreign dominated reaction.

## **India: Small but Significant Victories**

### **Disbanding of Chhattisgarh's SPOs**

On 5<sup>th</sup> July the Supreme Court of India in its verdict struck down as 'unconstitutional' the practice of arming local tribal youth as Special Police Officers in order to fight the Maoists, ordered the Union Government to cease and desist forthwith from using any of its funds in supporting, directly or indirectly the recruitment of SPOs (recruited from the notorious Salwa Judum comprising criminal elements trained to terrorise villagers suspected of supporting the Maoists) for the purposes of engaging in any form of counter-insurgency activities against Maoist/Naxalite groups, and asked the Chattisgarh state government to immediately stop using SPOs, recall all firearms distributed to them, desist from funding the recruitment of any other vigilante groups, ensure the filing of FIRs into criminal activities committed by them, and offer protection to those who need.

The responses to the court order were significant. While human and democratic rights organizations welcomed it, the Congress-led Central Government and the BJP led state government reacted negatively. Interestingly, the section of the media that promoted the cause of Anna Hazare against 'corruption in government' was even more hostile to the verdict. However, the state government informed the Supreme Court on 21<sup>st</sup> August that it has disbanded the SPOs in compliance with the court order.

The Supreme Court judgment is a clear guidance, binding all the states in India to not using unconstitutional methods for dealing with political or armed dissent. But nothing has stopped the ruling class and the oppressive state from using unlawful means to achieving their goal of taking land away from the people in the name of fighting 'Maoist terror'.

[Sources: *thenewscollective.org*; *indianexpress.com*]

## **Corruption and Legislation**

Anna Hazare rose to political stardom with his 'one-man hunger strike campaign' against the central government's attempt to emasculate the *Jan Lokpal Bill* (a citizens' ombudsman bill), a proposed independent

anti-corruption law. It was the attention that he received from the media that mobilised the politically indifferent urban middle class that sees corruption as the only source of India's economic ills.

While even the parliamentary left felt intimidated by the Anna Hazare juggernaut, whose beneficiaries will only be the ruling classes, renowned writer and social activist Arundhati Roy exposed the forces behind the anti-corruption movement. She pointed out that Hazare was not the brains behind the NGO driven movement organized by Kiran Bedi, Arvind Kejriwal and Sisodia, all of whom are NGO bosses. She also pointed out that three of its core members are winners of the Magsaysay award endowed by Ford Foundation and Feller.

She questioned the role of NGOs funded by World Bank and Bank of Ford in mediating what public policy should be, and explained the interest of the World Bank that runs 600 anti-corruption programmes in places like Africa as arising out of a need to: (1) increase political accountability; (2) strengthen civil society participation; (3) create a competitive private sector; (4) institute restraints on power; and (5) improve public sector management.

She has clearly shown that the agenda is to not to address corporate corruption in terms of how NGO's and corporations are taking over the traditional functions of government. Significantly, the media that sponsored the hunger strikes of Hazare has been totally indifferent to the much longer hunger strike for a much nobler cause by Irom Sharmila —since 4<sup>th</sup> November 2002— protesting the killing of 10 civilians in Manipur by the Assam Rifles, and demanding the repeal of the repressive Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act which has enabled many of the cruel and high handed acts of Indian soldiers in Manipur.

*[<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/jan-lokpal-bill-is-very-regressive-arundhati-roy/179990-3.html>]*

## **The Escalating Maruti conflict**

In June this year, the management of India's largest car manufacturer, Maruti Suzuki Ltd, buckled under pressure to buy peace with workers at its Manesar unit in Haryana. They had been on strike for 13 days demanding recognition of their new but yet-to-be registered union, Maruti Suzuki Employees Union, distinct from the Maruti Udyog Kamgar Union at its Gurgaon mother plant. At the end of the 13-day strike, the company reinstated 11 workers who had been earlier sacked for indiscipline.

On 29th August, workers at the Manesar unit were told by the management that they would be let in only if they signed a 'good conduct bond'. The workers claimed that the bond will enable the

company to dismiss them for indiscipline without notice. The same morning, the management announced the dismissal of five workers and six trainees and the suspension of another 10 workers. This triggered the second strike that is still going strong (as of 27<sup>th</sup> September) and to make matters worse the management has taken further disciplinary action against 62 workers (29 dismissals and 33 suspensions). Clearly, it is the management with the backing of the state government in Haryana that has precipitated and prolonged the crisis by adamantly refusing the workers their right to a trade union of their choice. Over 1,500 workers at the Manesar plant boldly stand up to the might of the management and the Haryana Government. The intransigent attitude of the management and the arrest of the representatives of the workers by the Haryana police have led to the failure of the talks, and the dispute appears headed for a labour court. The management, in the meantime is recruiting new staff to keep production going as well as 'teach the strikers a lesson'.

A positive outcome of strike is the unprecedented public support for the strikers and the show of solidarity by workers in other plants belonging to the company. As a sign of growing class solidarity cutting across industrial sectors, textile workers in Punjab who have been on strike since 22<sup>nd</sup> September under the banner of Textile Mazdoor Union expressed support for the Maruti-Suzuki workers, condemned the illegal lockout by the company, and called for immediate acceptance of the demands by the workers. They also denounced the cane-charge by the Punjab police on protesting women health workers, extended support to their protest, and demanded an apology and action from the government for the high-headed action by the police.

[See <http://ludhianaworkersnews.wordpress.com/2011/09/24/81/>]

## **Surge of Protests in Telangana**

The Indian government is in a dilemma regarding the call for a separate state of Telangana. The people of the region have remained relatively poor and backward than coastal Andhra and the Rayalaseema region of Andhra. (Telangana comprises the former State of Hyderabad ruled by its Nizam with an iron fist and was merged on 20th February 1956 with the Telugu speaking part of the State of Madras and Yanam, a formerly French controlled region, to form the State of Andhra). Mass resentment due to neglect by successive state governments, despite priorities and special protection for Telangana pledged at the time of the merger, led to demands for the separation of Telangana as early as 1968. Telangana regionalism has grown stronger ever since. As a result, purely for electoral political gain, the BJP pledged a separate

state of Telangana in the 1990s if they came to power, and the Congress went even further in 2004 to make a separate Telangana state a part of the common minimum programme of the coalition government in order to get the backing of the Telangana separatists. But the Congress-led government failed to honour its promise and popular demand for a separate state escalated, with opportunist regional political parties seeking to cash in on the public mood.

On 9th December 2009, the Union Minister of Home Affairs announced that the government would initiate the forming a separate Telangana state. But the process was stalled under pressure and the government asked the five-member Srikrishna committee on Telangana to look into the issue. The Srikrishna report was soon exposed as a flawed and manipulative document designed to keep Andhra undivided. A series of protests followed since February this year that culminated in a General Strike starting on 13<sup>th</sup> September across the ten districts of Telangana demanding separate statehood. As of 25<sup>th</sup> September, the situation has worsened, particularly since the state government resorted to punish Telangana by selectively imposing power cuts.

It is doubtful if a separate state of Telangana will help to address the problems faced by the oppressed people. But the demand is based on genuine grievances and the failure of the governments at the state level and the centre to address the issues.

The protests have told the Indian government in no uncertain terms that it cannot forever fool the people with bogus pledges. What is most important is that the problem should be resolved in a way that regional contradictions do not develop into hostile contradictions from which only the oppressors will gain.

## **Brakes on Koodankulam Nuclear Project**

Protests by villagers and fishermen with massive popular backing for their opposition to the nuclear power plant in Koodankulam, in the Thirunelvely District of the state of Tamilnadu, forced the state government to intervene. The protests including an 11-day long hunger strike were ended following assurance by Tamilnadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha on 22<sup>nd</sup> September that the state cabinet would pass a resolution urging the Central Government to halt the project.

[Source: *economictimes.indiatimes.com*]

*(Continued on page 17)*

# **The General Programme**

of the

## **New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party**

*(The General Programme as adopted at the First Plenum of  
the Fifth All-Sri Lanka Congress of the NDMLP, held on  
23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011)*

1. Sri Lanka is a neo-colonial country. The economic, political, social and cultural system associated with neo-colonialism continues to be upheld. The ruling class with a feudal-capitalist ideology, thought and practice seems strong enough to protect that system. That class is also the comprador and big capitalist force that possesses state power. As a result, contradictions and oppression based on class, nationality, caste and gender prolong and persist. Of these, the class contradiction remains fundamental while the national contradiction remains the main contradiction. Owing to the fundamental contradiction, workers, peasants, nationalities, women, state and private sector employees, youth and students who comprise ninety percent of the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil population live as exploited and oppressed people denied of their rights. At the same time, the comprador and big capitalist forces, the wealthy, foreign imperialist multi-national companies and local investors in alliance with them remain the exploiters. The UNP and the SLFP are their ruling class representatives. US and Western imperialist forces, Indian expansionism as their imperialist partner, and the Chinese commercial investment companies are reaching out to embrace, nurture and protect these ruling class forces. Hence, it is clear that the common enemy of the people of Sri Lanka comprises comprador and big capitalism and the foreign imperialist and regional hegemonic forces in alliance with it. Their grip of power and dominance continues to be strong in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of Sri Lanka. The programme of imperialist globalisation has taken control of this situation to direct and establish its neo-colonial economic and political schemes.

Hence it is necessary to expose and identify to the public the common enemy of the country and its entire people. Through that, the entire people should be mobilised in the respective spheres of their problems to carry out strong and united mass struggles. Our aim is to establish national democracy by that means to advance towards socialism through struggles at a higher level for New Democracy.

2. Sri Lanka's national question developed as the contradiction between the oppressive comprador and big capitalist ruling class and the oppressed nationalities and remains the main contradiction in Sri Lanka. The national question and a political solution to it are being denied through military oppression. This fascist chauvinistic practice should be firmly opposed and a just political solution has to be found on the basis that Sri Lanka comprises multi-ethnic nationalities. The political solution that we urge calls for the establishment of an autonomous structure in the merged North and East comprising the traditional homeland of the Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka. Within that autonomous structure, autonomous inner structures should be established for the Muslims and for the Sinhalese who have been resident in the North-East for a long time. Likewise, autonomous structures should be established outside the North-East for the Hill Country Tamils who have been resident in the Hill Country for nearly two hundred years in order to secure and protect their residential rights and rights as a nationality. These structures should be in accordance with the geographic distribution and intensity of the Hill Country Tamil population. The need and necessity for such a solution to the national question must be explained through practice to the ordinary toiling Sinhala masses who have been misled by chauvinism. It is a major historical lesson that the Tamil people have been deceived by the policies and propaganda of political dominance by the conservative, narrow nationalist Tamil elite and have eventually met with grief, destruction and defeat. It is possible for the Tamil people to advance successfully in their new course of struggle for autonomy through creating among Tamils an environment in which the toiling Sinhala masses can be made their allies. Likewise, it is necessary for the Hill Country Tamils, in carrying out struggles for the national and working class rights that have been denied to them, to transcend narrow national and regionalist boundaries and undertake class struggle in unity with the toiling Sinhala masses. It is necessary to adopt this as alternative politics for the people in the Sri Lankan political environment of chauvinism and narrow nationalism. This General Programme emphasises it.

**3. The economy continues along the path to ruin by following the neo-colonial economic policy under the imperialist programme of globalisation. The export economy too is being weakened while production for a national economy is being abandoned. Meantime, consumer culture is being promoted and imports are liberalised to make Sri Lanka an unrestricted open market. Besides, the economy of the country is being guided by imperialist institutions like the World Bank and the IMF. The daily increases in prices and the cost of living are the result of the foregoing. As a result, not just the state and private sector employees, but the entire working population is facing severe crises in their daily lives. This General Programme urges explaining to the people the inherent causes for such economic crises and the need to confront them, and thereby building up a movement and carrying out struggles to oppose imperialist globalisation on a wide scale.**

**4. Sri Lanka still remains a country with agriculture, agricultural villages, and plantations for the production of tea and rubber for export. There are agricultural labourers, tenant cultivators, settler cultivators, small producers and plantation workers. The peasants face a variety of problems on various fronts. Peasants are being severely affected by problems relating to land, water supply, seed, fertiliser, pesticides, credit, production, marketing, the brokering system, price determination, weather uncertainty, strong winds, heavy rain and flooding. Because of the open economic policy, our peasants are seriously affected by imports of agricultural from foreign countries. Although the problem of such peasants is a countrywide issue, their problems, demands and struggles have not been taken up on a broad basis. This General Programme urges putting forward the demands of the peasantry in a way that this situation could be changed and the proposal of a firm agricultural policy forming the basis for a national economic policy.**

**5. Sri Lanka is an island state in the Indian Ocean. In this country rich in its fisheries resources, fishery workers live all along the coast of the country. There are Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim fishermen working in this industry; and, despite adequate resources to meet the food requirements of the country as well as for export, the development of fishery has remained restricted. At the same time, working fishermen lead a life of hardship. Fishing communities that suffered the loss of life, working equipment and property because of the tsunami have not fully recovered from their losses. Likewise, fisher folk who were subjected to loss of life, property, dwelling and work owing to the thirty-year war are still in a state in which they are not being rehabilitated. This General Programme urges full attention to the various problems faced on an**

ethnic basis as well as a class basis by fishermen, who are a working people.

**6.** Around six hundred thousand workers are employed in tea and rubber production in the plantations. The plantation workers remain the most exploited workers, receiving a very low wage (currently Rs. 380+30+105) through the mechanism of a collective agreement. At the same time, they continue to exist without ownership of land, home and permanent address. The Hill Country Tamil people remain a backward community in the spheres of education, health, society and culture. The life of the working people in the plantations still continues amid pain and sorrow. They remain a people who are exploited and oppressed on the basis of class and nationality. This General Programme urges their mobilisation by putting forward among them demands in the spheres of education, health, society and culture.

**7.** There are six million and five hundred thousand private sector workers and employees. There are altogether around eight million wage employees including state, state corporation, and co-operative society workers. Of them, male and female employees of multi-national companies, especially in the Katunayaka Free Trade Zone, comprise fifty thousand. They have been denied trade union rights that already exist in the country and are subject to cruel exploitation by multi-national companies. The comprador and big capitalist ruling class forces and multi-national companies together use oppression to conceal class exploitation of the workers and chauvinism to wreck class solidarity. Under these conditions, this General Programme urges carrying out class struggle through the trade union movement.

**8.** Generally in Sri Lanka and particularly in the North-East and the Hill Country, casteism exists to varying degrees, and caste contradictions and oppression continue. Although caste-based untouchability has been considerably weakened in the North as a result of the vigorous mass struggles in the 1960s, casteism still seems to pursue its characteristic pattern. Neither the Tamil nationalist struggle nor the expatriate environment has been able to be rid of it. Caste ideology, thought and practice need to be confronted alongside as well as separately from other forms of oppression and contradictions, transcending the narrow caste-based stand referred to as Dalitism. This General Programme urges paying full attention to the economic, land, educational, health, social and cultural needs of the people who are oppressed by caste and remain as backward communities in villages and small towns, giving prominence to their problems, their continued mass mobilisation, and struggling to secure for them social justice which is being denied to them.

**9.** Practices characteristic of slavery and unequal treatment of women in both our social system and social life continue as contradictions and oppression. Women comprise half the population of the country. Yet, because they are women, they are given second class treatment and suffer discrimination. The rights and feelings of women are denied by conservatism and its male chauvinist thinking and practice. Religion, tradition, culture, rituals and conventions are used to justify it. Women seem to accept without question the male chauvinistic attitude that denies democracy, freedom and equality to women. As a consequence, there are those who propagate the view that there is no oppression of women in social life. But in daily social and family life women are subjected to various forms of discrimination and oppression. It is necessary to draw the attention of women to this. The activities of NGOs in the name of feminism divert the attention of women in a variety of ways and negate the class-based stand for fundamental social change and liberation. This General Programme urges carrying out the stand of women's liberation for social change among women, especially women workers, and advance by rallying them on a broad basis.

**10.** The colonial system of education was transformed by some important measures into an educational system with national characteristics in some respects. But today, once again, an educational policy is being implemented that is in accord with the programme of globalization to suit the neo-colonial system. A situation continues in which the World Bank and the IMF dictate educational policy from primary school to university education. Private education is being encouraged, reinforced and expanded. As a result there is the danger of a gradual elimination of the system of free education that has existed to date. It is the toiling masses who face its harsh consequences. In the fields of education and higher education, students, teachers, lecturers, professors and other employees of schools and universities are being subject to a variety of problems and oppression. Hence, this General Programme urges the establishment of a planned national educational policy that has at its centre the interests of the entire working people of the country.

**11.** The youth and students of the country are a very important force. The major problem facing them is unemployment. Also, problems that persist in the sphere of education are making their future uncertain. From school leavers to university graduates, the youth face unemployment. The fundamental reason for this is the failure to follow an educational programme designed for a national economic policy. As a result, the youth frequently express discontent and protest. Contemporary history records the killing by the armed forces of youth in their hundreds of thousands during uprisings in the South and North

from time to time. During those struggles the youth became victims to the wrong policies and guidance of the leaderships that emerged before them. Their annihilation was a planned act by the local and foreign reactionary forces, which as a result made political gains. The working people lost their children. It demonstrated that struggles by the youth alone cannot win anything. They could win only by carrying out struggles that link with the demands of the workers, peasants and other toiling masses. This General Programme proposes carrying out the necessary activities among the youth in the political, social and cultural spheres.

**12.** The health sector which concerns healthy long life for the people of the country has, like other sectors, deteriorated owing to privatisation and the programme of globalization. The vast majority of the working people rely on government hospitals and free medical treatment. While good quality medical facilities for the people are on the decline, private hospitals and their business ventures are being developed. Health and medical services which should be provided on a humanitarian basis have been pushed to a condition where they are ruined by private medicine. Free medical services are being ruined by the advice given by bodies like the World Bank and the IMF, besides corruption and abuse of power in the government medical services. As a result, the country has been transformed into a thriving market for sub-standard medicinal drugs from multi-national pharmaceutical companies. This General Programme points out the need to exert pressure and put forward demands at every level to protect the health and medical sectors from such influences and develop them as services for the people.

**13.** Mass production by imperialist mega multi-national companies with a craving for profit and their plunder of natural resources is the fundamental reason for the deterioration of the environment. That has led to climate change and destruction in the form of natural disasters in all countries. The anti-people, anti-nation imperialist programme of globalisation of the multi-national companies obsessed with desire for big profits is polluting the environment and wrecking human life. This General Programme urges the building up of people's movements in our country to prevent the pollution of the environment

**14.** There are nearly 1.3 million government employees in the country. The work and services of these employees is essential to the functioning of the state machinery and government administration. Teachers alone comprise over two hundred thousand of them. Up to a hundred thousand work in the health sector and several hundred thousand in other government sectors. Their demands including demands for wage increases have been refused by the government. At

the same time, under conditions for credit laid down by the IMF, the government is attempting to reduce the number of state employees by a few hundred thousand. Hence, this General Programme emphasises that, in the current economic and political environment, the state sector workers and employees are in a situation where they need to struggle for security of employment and other demands.

**15.** Bourgeois parliamentary democracy has been for the propertied and wealthy ruling classes. The past sixty-three years of parliamentary system of government and the executive presidential system have denied to the people their basic needs and democratic rights. Likewise, human rights and trade union rights too have been crushed with contempt. Freedom of writing, speech and expression of views has been suppressed. Hence there is a need to speak up with firmness for democratic, trade union and human rights and freedom of the media. This General Programme takes this into account and places itself at the forefront of the struggle for these rights.

**16.** The current imperialist programme of globalization has penetrated all the countries of the world. Giant multi-national companies, driven by hunger for super profits are pumping in their investments along the path of plundering natural resources. War is waged against countries opposing that. Western imperialist forces led by the US are imposing their economic, political and military dominance on the countries of the world in wicked fashion. As a result, oppressed countries face noxious and detrimental tendencies in their economic, political, social and cultural spheres. Global poverty rises as a result and the basic needs of the people remain unfulfilled and the standard of living is on the decline year after year. Poverty, hunger, starvation, unemployment, and lack of development in educational and health services are rapidly worsening in Asian, African and Latin American countries. Pollution of land, water, forests and the atmosphere and climate change are linked to the programme of globalisation. This General Programme urges that we should join hands with the people of the world who resist these trends and be at the forefront to defeat imperialist globalisation and imperialist endeavours for global hegemony.

**17.** Modern information technology is a most advanced product of human capability, and should not be rejected as entirely bad. At the same time, modern information technology is used mainly for capitalist exploitation, extension of the imperialist globalisation programme and imperialist global domination. At the same time, modern information technology is unable to fulfil the basic needs of the masses. Also, the labour of information technology workers is severely exploited. Multi-national companies and private businesses, while exploiting the labour

of these workers in new ways, have created an illusion that these workers enjoy a high status in society. Information technology is serving to develop consumer culture and to extract money from the people and not to help with the life of the people. The reason is that modern information technology is under the control of imperialist giant multi-national companies. It is being used to blunt the social awareness of the people, especially the young generation, and to propel them into cultural decadence. Hence this General Programme pays full attention to taking the appropriate steps based on social awakening to be rid of the afore said ill effects and to creating and developing an environment in which the new generation will be able to devote attention to social problems.

**18.** In our social environment people are kept submerged in religion, cinema and television. While belief in God is a matter of personal choice, it is also used as a source for superstition, commerce and means of money making and as a device to deflect problems faced by the people. Cinema and television are offered entirely as commercial ventures and serve to direct the mind towards socially degrading qualities like conservatism, sexual perversion, pompousness, pretentiousness, deceit, violence and vanity. Tendencies that deny art and literature for the masses and art and literature for social change dominate today's cinema, television and other media. There exists a close bond between them and the mighty grip of multi-national companies. Hence this General Programme urges encouraging efforts to develop alternative cinema, alternative television and alternative media by using the favourable aspects of information technology and carrying out activities that will benefit the people and society in the sphere of art and literature.

**19.** Today, the US and the West are intent on consolidating and expanding their imperialist domination. Despite their severe financial crises and economic problems and rivalry and contradictions among them, they are unwilling to give up their greed for imperialist global domination. Day after day they are taking hundreds of steps in the interest of global economic, political and military domination. The UN and its agency organizations are acting in the interest of the US and the West. Meanwhile, bodies like the World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank are controlling the Asian, African and Latin American countries and keeping them under their command to implement the programme of imperialist globalisation. The armed forces of the NATO led by the US and the armed forces of the US are conducting wars in the countries of the world in order to strengthen imperialist grip and expand global domination. In the current situation, the forces of the West led by the US are the common enemy of the countries and people of the world. Hence,

ruthless opposition to them is an important aspect of our General Programme.

**20.** Expansion of Indian capital into Africa, besides having total dominance over the South Asian region and beyond, is the strategy of the policy makers of the Indian ruling classes. At the same time, the Indian ruling classes which has joined hands with the US is also its strategic partner in the region. Through that, India is expanding and tightening its dominance over the South Asian region and pressing its economic, political and military interests. The intentions of Indian policy makers regarding Sri Lanka serve as both example and experience in that respect. They have served as suitable experience to our country and people. Thus we cannot in any way underestimate the regional hegemon. This General Programme urges that, while opposing the US and Western imperialists, it is also our duty to oppose without hesitation Indian regional hegemony.

**21.** China, while acting in the name of the People's Republic of China, has gradually abandoned socialism to become a country taking the capitalist road. Its current economic growth has been through its market economic policy and acceptance of the programme of imperialist globalization. As a result, expansion of commerce has become inevitable and it has entered capitalist competition. In order to protect its interests as an economic power, China is providing aid and loans to Asian, African and Latin American countries as well as carrying out trade and investments there. It has increased its production and sale of arms which are supplied as military aid and arms sales. It is on this basis that Tamils nationalist who support the US, the West and India carry out the propaganda that there is Chinese domination over Sri Lanka. Although that is an exaggeration, there is the prospect of China's market economic competition, through developed capitalist rivalry, bringing about changes in its military and political stands in the future. There is the danger that such changes could propel China to undertake political and military interventions as an economic power protecting its interests by way of investment and expansion of trade, which could have imperialist features. This General Programme points out that these are matters that have to be viewed with patience as matters for the future.

**22.** People from this country, especially Tamils, live in countries in Europe and America and in Australia as expatriates. Their life, survival and future pose a multitude of questions and problems. At the same time, a large number of people who travel to countries in the Middle East to work hard for low wages. Of them, the life of those who serve as housemaids is one of misery. The trend of the labour of men and women

of this country being exploited at low wage levels in the Middle East continues, because there is no basis in this country for a solid national economy and development based on it. This General Programme points out that this trend has to be arrested and alternative schemes put forward to use that labour for the benefit of this country.

**23.** That Marxism, revolution and socialism have met with a setback internationally in an unfavourable matter. But we can learn from history that this is a temporary phase. Nevertheless, Marxist Leninist parties that observe the preset global conditions and the situations in their respective countries are reorganizing themselves and carrying out struggles. They seek to transform an adverse situation into a favourable situation. Marxist Leninist organizations facing various challenges in their countries are preparing to overcome them and surge forward. The contradiction between imperialism and the people of the world is sharpening rapidly. The time when the consequences manifest themselves as mass uprisings and revolutions is not far way. Although the uprisings in the Middle East did not go in the right direction, they herald the move towards the next phase. In the current situation, there is no country that could be called socialist. But that Cuba and North Korea have defended their socialist systems amid various imperialist pressures and threats is a favourable feature. At the same time we witness South American countries being at the forefront of advancing the anti-imperialist tide and anti-imperialist struggles taking place in other countries. This General Programme urges our joining such struggles.

Central Committee  
New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party  
Colombo

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# **The Immediate Programme**

of the

## **New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party**

*(The General Programme as adopted at the First Plenum of the Fifth All-Sri Lanka Congress of the NDMLP, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011)*

1. The political system that prevails in Sri Lanka protects the neo-colonial system, the comprador and big capitalist classes, the multinational companies that exploit human labour and the resources of the country, and the imperialist forces that guide them. The wealthy and propertied ruling classes of Sri Lanka and foreign imperialist forces together created and upheld it. The presidential system with executive power has strengthened its grip on power in every way to strengthen, protect and continue that system. This single individual, single party dictatorship has, under Mahinda Chinthanaya, grown to become a family dictatorship and carried out as fascism. Under it, the entire toiling masses comprising the workers, peasants, state and private sector employees, the nationalities, women, youth and students face various crises of life and misery on a daily basis. When questions and demands are raised on these issues, blatant repression is unleashed on the people. The bourgeois parliamentary political system cannot free the people from these. A parliamentary system of government of more than sixty years and the ruling class parties which came to power through that system have not solved the problems of the workers, peasants and other toiling masses comprising 90% of the country's population or the problems of the nationalities. Instead, they have nurtured the problems and made them gigantic and thereby enjoyed ruling class power, wealth and luxury. Under the conditions, the only way ahead for the people and the oppressed nationalities comprises an alternative political path for the toiling masses and the mass struggles that go with it. This

Immediate Programme of the Party urges the building up of the appropriate class political line and practices. It also emphasises that the left, democratic and progressive political parties and movements should unite based on a common programme in a way that suits the creation and carrying out of an environment appropriate to it.

2. In the current environment of the country, we see the liberal occurrence of the denial of democratic, trade union and human rights. What are commonly seen are a sense of trepidation and fear. Attacks on the media and killing of media personnel for expressing independent views serve as an adequate scale to assess democratic freedoms in Sri Lanka. The state machine of armed forces developed and trained in the name of the war has been expanded and modernised, and is positioned against the working class. As a result, the democratic, trade union and human rights thus far been won through struggle by the working class and other toiling masses are being snatched from them. Meantime, new forms of oppression are being implemented. Hence this Immediate Programme emphasises that struggles need to be carried out on a broad basis for democratic, trade union and human rights that are being seized.

3. It is correct for the solution for the national question to be based on self determination, equality and autonomy. That is to be achieved in the long term. We cannot, however, evade or oppose any just minimum solution that could tone down the national contradiction and national oppression, since such a solution is welcome if it will unite the entire working people. But that will not be an easy task, since the ruling chauvinistic forces and narrow nationalist forces of political dominance have been enjoying power and position through sowing and harvesting noxious reactionary ideas among the Sinhala and Tamil people, respectively. They have not freed themselves of their respective positions. This situation is also evident among the Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people. Because of it, the working class forces have been divided and pushed into the morass of racial, religious, linguistic and regional differences. The forces of ruling class political dominance are employing deceptive means to ensure that the people are not delivered from it. In such a situation, the alternative political line for resolving the national question and proposals for a solution need to be carried out among the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people and extended into mass struggles. This Immediate Programme emphasises that political work should be undertaken on a broad basis for that purpose. (*Proposals for the resolution of the national question have been produced as a separate document*).

**4. What is at the fore as the problem tormenting the entire working people of the country on a daily basis is the rise in prices and the increase in cost of living. Wage increases to suit these increases are being denied. Although the parliamentary 'old left', the Hill Country trade union leadership and people in democratic garb are members of the Mahinda Chinthanaya government, wage increases have not been granted. Meanwhile, demands for wage increase in the state and private sectors have been disregarded and rejected by a range of oppressive measures. It is important to enlighten the people about the economic reasons for these and about the political repression, and advance class politics as the alternative politics for the people to mobilise them for struggle. In today's context, it is important to undertake among the people affected by the problems methods of work that will mobilise them along the path of mass politics, transcending the ballot box politics for parliamentary seats. At the same time, it is important for us to stand shoulder to shoulder with them to win their demands. Our Immediate Programme pays attention to this.**

**5. The national economy of the country has been knocked down by the imperialist neo-colonialist economy. The country's agriculture and small industry have met with decline and disaster. It is three decades since liberal imports and the open market came into practice, and the people are experiencing its negative effects and harsh impact. Neither the ruling class parties, namely the UNP and the United People's Freedom Alliance, nor the upper class Tamil political parties care about it. All of them are devotees of capitalist imperialism. They have no proper plan to devise a national economic policy to suit the country's resources and human toil, since building the national economy is to fulfil the needs of the entire working masses relating to food, clothing, housing, education, employment, health and a clean environment. Self reliance, local production and standing on one's own feet are essential to build the national economy. The call for building a national economy has to be made into a people's venture. Political work has to be carried out to emphasise it. Only then can the evils of the economics of globalisation be explained to the people and the vicious imperialist neo-colonial economic policies rejected by the people.**

**6. Imperialist multi-national companies have penetrated the country during the past three decades. They have been generously offered all manner of resources including land and water and granted facilities for unhindered exploitation. Human toil of the country has been given away to them inside and beyond the Free Trade Zones. Workers and employees —men and women— are being exploited at very low wages alongside the denial of trade union rights. A struggle to rescue workers from the iron clutches of the multi-national companies is essential. Hence, the exploitation and extraction of the resources by giant multi-**

**national companies should be explained to the people and workers, employees and the people should be mobilised against them.**

**7. The people of the North-East are today a people who have returned from experiencing the cruelty of war. They are experiencing pain in many ways like loss of life, disability, destruction of property, and loss of home and employment. Their resettlement has been only in name. Infrastructural facilities for rehabilitation and restoration have so far not been duly installed. Compensation has not been paid to the people of the North-East for loss of life caused by the fighting in the thirty years of war. Houses, work and land destroyed by war need to be resurrected. The Government should speedily do what is necessary. It should be emphasised that those who ruined and destroyed the lives of these people should also compensate their losses. Hence this Immediate Programme emphasises the speedy re-establishment of the economy, employment, education, health, and other social facilities for the resettled people.**

**8. Women have been most severely affected by class exploitation, the war of national oppression and socio-cultural practices. The number of destitute widows in the North-East who lost their husbands owing to the war and have children to support is 86,000 according to a source of statistics. It cannot be said that there is no truth in it. At the same time, women are daily subjected to sexual harassment, rape and other forms of abuse, including domestic employment of girls of tender age. Besides, women throughout the country who face problems at different levels in their work places, public life and family life also suffer in the economic and political spheres. They are also affected by irrational social, cultural and religious practices. In particular, women workers in the Hill Country, who are subjected to severe exploitation of labour, have also the domestic burden to bear. The working women of the Hill Country are affected by poverty, malnutrition, lack of hygiene, and abortions among other problems. Hence, it is important to pay attention to the social aspects of the problems faced by the women and mobilise them appropriately through political, social and economic work among them. These need to be carried out with a social outlook and based on alternative politics to transcend women's programmes carried out by the NGOs with the ulterior motive of depoliticisation.**

**9. The state of emergency introduced during the three decades of war and the Prevention of Terrorism Act are still in effect. Those detained as political prisoners under these provisions have not been released although it is two years since the war ended. Details of those arrested during the final days of the war have still not been published; and no detail or information has been published about those who are missing since their surrender during the last stage of the war. Hence the state**

of emergency and the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be repealed. Several people's movements should be undertaken to urge the immediate release of detainees in prisons and elsewhere.

**10.** The Hill Country Tamil people, both as a nationality and as plantation workers, face severe economic, political and social problems. Talking on these matters has been moderated and is not on a significant scale. It is necessary that their problems based on class and nationality are spoken about seriously, made into demands, and mass struggles launched transcending trade union and electoral politics. A fair monthly wage should be paid to plantation workers who have been receiving a very low daily wage and struggling to live on that wage. The Hill Country Tamil people who have a history in this country approaching two hundred years do not own land or dwelling. Land in the plantations is distributed to the Sinhalese and private companies while it is denied to the Hill Country Tamil people. Planned chauvinist neglect continues. Hence, while making demands for wage increases, demand must also be made for the ownership of land and dwelling and for the distribution of unused land in the plantations to the plantation workers as well. Likewise, education, employment opportunities, health, transport and the use of Tamil language are among serious day-to-day problems confronting the Hill Country Tamil people. Also, the extent to which children suffer from poverty, lack of education and malnutrition is particularly high in the Hill Country. Besides, the problems faced by the elderly are sorrowful. Meanwhile, children and youth from the Hill Country are employed in other districts in houses, shops and other work places at low wage and are treated cruelly. The killing of children employed in this manner has become a common occurrence. These matters have to be taken up as specific issues to mobilise the people, especially the young generation, and to advance along the path of mass struggle. This Immediate Programme emphasises that task.

**11.** Caste hierarchy, discrimination and disregard based on untouchability persist to different degrees across the country. It can be noticed, especially in the environment in the North, that since the end of the war casteism and untouchability are reviving. Although the practice of untouchability in public places has been defeated by mass struggle, practices guided by caste based thinking persist in matters of education, employment, appointments, transfers and promotions. Although economic benefits of migration to the West are evident here and there, they mean the salvation and elevation of individuals only. The majority of the depressed communities and villages that continue to be backward still need to struggle hard to free themselves from the clutches of caste-based untouchability. At the same time there is need for planned activities for their economic and educational advancement,

land rights, health, and social and cultural awareness. The caste hierarchy is upheld in different ways not just in the North, but also in the East and the Hill Country where, although untouchability has very much diminished, caste-based thinking and practices persist. Hence, based on past experience, this Immediate Programme urges crucial importance to paying attention to work among the depressed communities in the political, social and cultural spheres.

**12.** The educational policy put forward by the ruling classes is fully in accord with the agenda of globalisation. Despite much being declared aloud about the Buddhist Dharma, education for humanitarianism, caring for the people, a positive social outlook, and the welfare of the country is not being provided; and the education provided caters to the economic, social and cultural decadence of globalisation. Education has been commercialised so that free education faces the risk of being wiped out. Private education is being expanded from primary school to university. Commercialisation of education as a way to make money is transforming education into a privilege for the rich. International schools, private universities and the admission of foreign students in significant numbers are instances of the decadence of the educational sector. Consequently, school and university students, teachers and lecturers are seen to be adversely affected and frustrated by and hostile to the present educational policy. Hence, students and teachers frequently take to the streets to make their demands. The government, in order to blunt the growing disaffection and opposition among the students, is, in the name of leadership training, now implementing a scheme of training students in military camps. Thus it is necessary to build a powerful movement against the ruining of the educational sector by the programme of globalisation and the government of the ruling classes. It is therefore necessary to carry out activities through propaganda and organisation among parents, students, teachers and the public.

**13.** The political climate in the North-East is different from that in the rest of the country. The people have not recovered from the destruction, misery and losses caused by the war. The resettled people too remain deprived. Amid this, it is the military administration that decides everything there. The armed forces interfere everywhere and with everything. Arrests, disappearances, military threats and burglaries continue. Neither an environment of democratic freedom nor normalcy has returned. It is the government and pro-government parties that are exercising power there. It is politics of concessions, politics of development, politics of promises and politics of slavishness which are in practice there. The political solution for the Tamil people is being denied through them. Under these conditions, it is only correct that sincere political forces among the Tamil people unite to evolve a

Common Programme based on a new alternative political line and advance on its basis. But the electoral politics for securing parliamentary seats through the Tamil National Alliance continues on its beaten track. Under these conditions, the progressive, democratic and left forces should come forward to embark on politics for the toiling masses among the Tamil people. A progressive Tamil nationalism should arise in place of the fossilised conservative Tamil narrow nationalism. Such forces should come forward to join hands with the genuine left, democratic and progressive forces, based on a common programme, to take the path of mass struggle to win autonomy based on the right to self determination within a united Sri Lanka. Nothing will be achieved by not paying heed to this and continuing to trust and depend on India, the US and the West. Robust efforts should be made to draw a clear line between the Sinhala toiling masses and Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and strengthen unity with the ordinary Sinhalese to win the just demands of the Tamil people.

**14.** While making use of the positive features of information technology, we need to expose the modern exploitation which uses it to viciously deprave the people to make huge profits. This information technology facilitates distraction of the younger generation so that they become disinterested in socio political matters. It is important to explain to the people the negative aspects of information technology and use its positive aspects in political activities for political transformation.

**15.** Under the current programme of imperialist globalisation, cultural decadence is carried out in a planned way. Movies, telecast programmes, computers, mobile telephones, publications in art and literature, and the print and electronic media are well used for the purpose. Self advancement, making money and selfishness are given prominence. As a result, care for the people, humanitarianism, public interest and social concern get sidelined. Social inequalities, the troubles and sorrows of the people, social and economic problems and solutions to them are thus concealed and people are persuaded to put their faith in God and fate. Bearing this in mind, work has to be carried out to rid people of their ignorance and expose to the people the imperialist mischief and advance alternative art and literature and other activities in the sphere of culture.

**16.** US imperialism and other imperialist states of the West are the enemies of the people of the world. We need to link ourselves with the anti-imperialist struggles of the countries and people of Asia, Africa and Latin America which like our country are oppressed by imperialism. The way to achieve it is to carry out anti-imperialist activities at various levels. The imperialist forces of the US and the West have penetrated into countries and people using the programme of globalisation and

through the economic, political, military and cultural spheres. This Immediate Programme emphasises that this has to be explained to the people, and anti-imperialist movements and struggles should be initiated and implemented.

**17.** Indian regional hegemony is expanding and establishing its economic, political, military and cultural domination. Indian policy makers are eager to use the national question to bring the whole of Sri Lanka under Indian control. India has been the economic beneficiary of the existing Sri Lanka-India trade agreement. In addition, India is exerting pressure on Sri Lanka to sign the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). India also seeks to profit from making Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen clash with each other. This is undertaken in conjunction with the Indian strategy of bringing the entire South Asian region under its domination and exercise control over the whole of Asia. Hence we cannot in any way accept the sacrificing of our country to Indian hegemony and its enlargement. Therefore, it is necessary to expose to the people of Sri Lanka, especially the Tamil people, the false image built up about India by the upper class forces of political domination and the true hegemonic form of India. Likewise, it is important to view with caution Chinese loans, trade interests, investment and arms sales.

**18.** Amid the economic, political and social environment of the past thirty years, many Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim people left Sri Lanka for countries in Europe, America and Australia. Of them Tamils number nearly one and a half million. They migrated because of the cruel war climate and to earn money. Although their survival and future and those of successive generations pose an array of questions, they continue to have an interest in the Sri Lankan national question. A majority of them were under the illusion that Tamil Eelam will come about. While they are in a state of frustration, there are a few who are promoting the Tamil elitist idea of the “Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam” while acting with loyalty to imperialism. Forces that encourage progressive, democratic and left thinking need to surge forward rejecting such Tamil conservative reactionary ideology, thought and practice among the Tamil diaspora. This Immediate Programme emphasises that such developments will facilitate the development of a climate for the emergence of alternative politics among the people at home.

**19.** The number of people seeking employment in the Middle East is on the increase. Their labour is exploited there at very low wage levels. They suffer not only due to very hot and very cold weather but also very hard work. Women from our country who go as housemaids are subjected to hard work, low wages and sexual maltreatment. While employment in the Middle East makes women suffer abroad, their

families suffer various forms of social decadence that seem to be worsening. This situation came about as a result of the ruining of the country's economy and growing unemployment. Our Immediate Programme takes this situation into consideration and it points out the need to take the initiative for political, economic and social awakening on several fronts.

**20.** The rapid degradation of the environment under globalisation has not spared our country. Penetration by multi-national companies has polluted the environment in many ways. Not only the Nuraicholai, Upper Kothmale, Sampur and Sethu Samudram projects but also less known projects undertaken in the name of development are polluting the environment. Radiation effects are spreading and are having adverse effects globally. Toxic emissions from explosives used in the North-East during the past thirty years continue to cause incurable and new diseases as well as having adverse effects on new born children. The country's land, water, air, forests and sea are being polluted in the name of development. This Immediate Programme urges launching of people's movements against environmental pollution.

**21.** It has been thoroughly exposed that imperialist interests are behind the activities of NGOs. The main intention of the NGOs is to work in subtle ways to negate the politics of class struggle for social change among the people. They spend vast sums of money for the purpose. These NGOs carry out tasks that will deflect oppressed working people who strive through their own efforts to advance the politics of their own class and create a situation in which they will depend on handouts from others for everything. Although immediately on the face of it they give an impression of 'help' 'lending a hand for self reliance' and 'contribution to the common good', fundamentally, they function keenly to eliminate working class politics from among the people and thereby serve the reactionary forces. This Immediate Programme urges explaining among the people the thoughts and deeds of the NGOs and the background to their splashing around large sums of money, exposing the harmful consequences, and thereby advancing alternative politics for the people as the politics of class struggle.

Central Committee  
New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party  
Colombo

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# Nationalities and the Right to Self Determination

*(Report on the nationalities of Sri Lanka and the right to self determination, and the proposal for solving the national question adopted at the First Plenum of the Fifth All-Sri Lanka Congress of the NDMLP, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011)*

The Party has continuously emphasized that, in the current situation, the solution to the national question should be based on the right to self determination, equality and autonomy within one country. The Party has continued with its struggle to establish it conceptually as well as in practice. The Party believes that this is a proletarian stand opposed to imperialism, chauvinism and narrow nationalism.

Sinhala Buddhist nationalist and chauvinistic oppressors seem to be unwilling (even fearful and angry) to hear the terms, the right to self determination, equality and autonomy, and stubbornly clinging on to Sinhala chauvinist hegemony. That is the position of the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa as well. Whether they accept it or not, certain degenerate former Tamil nationalists (who once bore arms for a separate Tamil Eelam) who accept the stubborn stand of the government and receive concessions from it in the name of development and to safeguard their survival, are keen on it and are working hard to establish it an ideology among the Tamil people.

There are Tamil nationalists who continue to insist that the right to self determination, equality and autonomy mean nothing but secession and that the only solution to the national question is a separate Tamil Eelam. They comprise the residual membership of the LTTE and sections of the Tamil diaspora that endorses that view. It is they who insist on the idea of a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam.

Unable to express its views openly, the Tamil National alliance, while declaring that they will not abandon the right to self determination, is conducting talks with the government of President Rajapaksa to secure

power sharing for the Northern and Eastern Provinces. They would talk with the government when they are told by the Indian hegemon to talk and will break the talks when told to break.

Besides these, there are forces among the Tamil and Sinhala people who reject secession but demand power sharing free from national hegemony. There are those who say that equality alone is adequate.

The stand of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party transcends these general trends.

While upholding the right to self determination, equality and autonomy, the Party rejects secessionism which nurtures chauvinism that benefits imperialism and the ruling classes of Sri Lanka as well as disrupts working class solidarity. This is a position that the Party arrived at by a thorough consideration of the contemporary situation in Sri Lanka and on the basis that the right to self determination does not amount to secession.

The Party does not reject the lawful affirmation of a minimum devolution of power, power sharing and equality to the nationalities. It does not oppose the steps taken for that purpose. When the majority nationalists, chauvinists, fundamentalists and secessionists opposed such measures and participated in activities against the measures, the Party did not indulge in activities that encouraged them, and the Party will never do so. The Party has strongly criticised such opposition. But the Party will continue to expose nominal devolution of power and power sharing designed to negate the right to self determination, equality and autonomy. As long as power sharing is a minimum political solution and would enable the winning and establishing of the right to self determination, equality and autonomy, there is no need for us to take a stand against it. But the ruling classes of Sri Lanka are not going to hand it over on a platter.

National oppression of the Tamil people was developed into a war and nearly all struggles against national oppression have been defeated, and the Tamil people and the North-East region have been brought under the military control of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism.

People displaced by war are still unable to settle in their own places. Many are living in a state of displacement. Since areas where Tamils live and their environments continue to be High Security Zones, they are unable to return and resettle in their own places. The number, names and details of those killed in the war have still not been properly published. Those who have been detained on the pretext of the war continue to be detained for several years without inquiry or trial. The number of war widows has not been officially announced. Also the true number of children orphaned by war has not been published. These

figures are expected to be several tens of thousands. Thus, there has been no rehabilitation or reconstruction offered to those affected by war in several ways.

Privately owned land in the North-East is being seized by the armed forces, multi-national companies and chauvinists. Military camps and Buddhist temples are being erected in privately owned and state owned land. These are chauvinistic hegemonic measures that are being taken with the long term view of making the North-East not the traditional homeland of the Tamils and fragmenting the distribution of Tamils in those regions.

There is neither normal life nor democratic environment in the North-East. The North-East, which is now a region where armed threats, intimidation and crimes against the people are rife, is under military control. Checking, surveillance, arrests and 'disappearing' by the police and the military continue as suppressive events.

The Tamil people and the North-East region need to be salvaged from the ruin and adverse effects of the war, the people rehabilitated and the region reconstructed. Those affected by war should be compensated. Planned military-based settlements should be removed. What go on there now are activities that constitute a kind of eyewash and the granting of mere concessions that deny a just political solution. To call for rehabilitation and reconstruction is not a substitute for the immediate main demand for a political solution to the national question which is responsible for the entire destruction.

A just solution that is acceptable to the Tamil people cannot be easily won from the chauvinism and Sinhala nationalism that are unwilling to implement in full or even itching to get rid of the Provincial Councils legislation under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment which assures a degree of devolution of power to the provinces. Chauvinism and Sinhala nationalism continued to reject the demands based on the national aspirations of the Tamil people and transformed the national oppression of the Tamil people into war. Sinhala nationalists, chauvinists and fundamentalists should take a major responsibility for the present destruction faced by the Tamil people. At the same time, the conservative Tamil nationalists who pushed the demands based on the national aspirations of the Tamil people into an irrevocable decision to struggle for secession cannot shun their responsibility.

The Party is acting in recognition of the need to amalgamate the struggle for self determination for the nationalities with the programme for the New Democratic Revolution. But, tactically, it cannot fail in its responsibility to carry out the programme for the National Democratic

Revolution with the general consensus of other forces or through a united front programme.

That is because efforts to moderate the national question have to be taken in several ways. The Tamil people who, as a nationality, have been subject to discrimination, oppression and devastation by war have the right to self determination so that they themselves can determine their political, economic, social and cultural destiny.

Owing to oppression by the ruling classes, referred to as the Sinhala leadership, a situation has been created among the Tamil people where they feel that they cannot live in unity with the Sinhala people. If the Sinhala people do not appreciate this and cooperate with the Tamil people for the latter to win their right to self determination within a united Sri Lanka, the sovereignty of the entire country could be lost as a whole owing to imperialist intervention; and a miserable situation will arise in which the nationalities will live with eternal enmity. Hence it is a historical necessity for the Sinhala people to free themselves of ruling class hegemony and act in support of the right to self determination, equality and autonomy for the nationalities. Likewise it is the responsibility of the Tamil people to act with calm in a way that demonstrates in practice that their struggle for the right to self determination is not pro-imperialist.

Since the Sri Lankan working class is not ready at present to carry out the New Democratic Revolution or to play the leading role in it, it is necessary for the working class to play an important role in carrying out the National Democratic Revolution with the general consensus of other forces or through a united front programme. Through that the working class could advance to a state in which it can lead the New Democratic Revolution as well as create a climate conducive to that revolution.

A political solution acceptable to the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamils should be included in the programme for the National Democratic Revolution, and the politics of revolutionary mass struggle should be carried out to achieve it. Since this is a united front programme with general consensus, one cannot expect to incorporate the basics of the right to self determination as they are. Thus programmes for a minimum political solution should be incorporated, subject to those limitations.

The Party, however, would not hesitate to critically support attempts made outside the scope of this programme to grant rights and concessions to the oppressed nationalities. (It should be understood that this is a stand opposing chauvinism and not rejecting the right to self determination).

Anti-imperialist, left, progressive and democratic forces as well as nationalist forces with progressive features, forces opposed to caste oppression and the oppression of women will constitute friendly groups in the National Democratic Revolution. When the forces of liberation of a nationality take a progressive stand, i.e. opposing the local forces of oppression that accept imperialism, we could unite with them. Also it is necessary to work in harmony with forces that support democracy and human rights and forces that act with or seek to act with consideration towards other nationalities, with a desire for unity and equality. Anti-imperialism, opposition to local oppressive forces, support for democratic, trade union and human rights are progressive features that would constitute preconditions for nationalist forces. To work with general consensus as a united front with forces having such progressive features is within the scope of the Marxist Leninist stand of unity and struggle.

The demands for the national aspirations of the oppressed nationalities, namely the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamils, constitute the national question of Sri Lanka. The solution to the national question should be based on assuring for the four nationalities powers to administer themselves in the spheres of political, economic, social and cultural affairs, without chauvinistic hegemony. The rights of the Burghers, Malays and the aboriginal people (Attho) should likewise be assured.

Given the reality that four nationalities and several communities live in Sri Lanka, a fundamental precondition for solving the national question is acceptance of Sri Lanka as a country of several nationalities.

On the above bases, the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party proposes an immediate programme and a long term programme for to secure solutions to the national question.

### **Immediate programme for resolving the national question**

1. The proposal for resolving the national question that has led to such great losses has to be put forward within a specified time frame through negotiations and in a manner that ensures power sharing in ways acceptable to the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people.
2. All the displaced people of the North-East should be settled in their own places of residence. Rehabilitation and reconstruction arrangements should be implemented in full for them. Schools, hospitals and public facilities that have been functioning earlier should be reactivated. A situation should be created in which civil

administration will be fully functional. Obstructions to transport and mobility of the people should be removed.

3. All land and buildings seized for High Security Zones, military camps and police stations on the pretext of 'security reasons' should be returned to their owners or their successors.
4. Adequate relief and compensation should be granted to people who suffered loss of life and property owing to the war.
5. Details of those who disappeared and arrested should be provided to their relatives. Inquiry should be conducted to find what happened to those who went missing and, if under detention, they should be released. Otherwise legal action should be taken against those responsible for their disappearance.
6. All political prisoners arrested on suspicion and held in detention should be released
7. All oppressive legislation such as the state of emergency and the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be repealed.
8. Democratic, trade union and human rights that continue to be denied, especially in the North-East, in the name of the war should be assured and the freedom of life, travel and expression should be re-established.
9. Planned chauvinist and military settlements that have taken place in the North-East and land grab schemes in the name of development should be stopped and eliminated. Steps should be taken to prevent their occurrence in the future.
10. Ethnic discrimination and neglect against Tamils living outside the North-East should be eliminated and their survival, safety and freedom should be reassured.
11. That Tamil is also an official language should be put into practice throughout the country.
12. An independent, credible and honest inquiry should be conducted to determine whether war crimes have been committed up to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009, and offenders should be punished.

### **Long-term programme for resolving the national question**

A nationality has the political, economic, social and cultural freedom to decide its destiny. The Party does not deny that this freedom includes the right to secede from the imperialism or nation or nationality which oppresses it. At the same time, the Party firmly holds that, the right to

self determination cannot be unconditional, transcending matters like anti-imperialism, opposition to an oppressive local regime and a working class stand.

It was necessary to struggle against imperialism during comrade Lenin's time and in the period of the Soviet Union. The imperialist era continues even now. Yet, new situations are visible in the environment of imperialist globalisation. The programme of imperialist globalisation obstructs the carrying out of struggles for self determination. Imperialism has infiltrated nearly all struggles for self determination. From secession in the Balkans to the secession of southern Sudan, secession has taken place through imperialist intervention. In the name of freeing themselves from local oppressors, nationalities have fallen into the clutch of imperialism. This cannot be interpreted as true national liberation or self determination. At the same time, imperialism suppresses national liberation struggles that are not on its side or do not serve its interests. It joins hands with governments to defeat them.

Based on the above, two trends can be observed in relation to national liberation struggles launched with a 'demand for secession' or secessionist struggles in the name of struggles for the liberation of nationalities. One is that secession is not possible without imperialist support or intervention. The other is that the argument of opposing secessionism is now more useful than in the past for a state that oppresses a nationality so that it could retain with ease its control over the majority nationality by using nationalism and to crush with ease the demands for the rights of an oppressed nationality. That is, it becomes easy for the oppressor state to rationalise its national hegemony over the nationally in struggle by pointing out that secession favours imperialism. Consequently, the oppressed nationalities continuously fail to secure the support of the workers, peasants and democratic forces belonging to the oppressor nation or nationality. Thus, today, secessionism often helps imperialism directly and the oppressor states indirectly. Under such conditions, Marxist Leninists need to be very judicious in their approach towards struggles based on secessionism.

The question arises as to how the right to self determination which is opposed to imperialism and hegemony could be won with their support. It is one thing to use contradictions between the oppressor state and imperialism in carrying out the struggle for the right to self determination. It is quite another matter for nationalities to capitulate to imperialism. Using imperialism can only be capitulation.

The Party has the responsibility to apply to the current situation the statement by Lenin that the right to secession should not be interpreted as dividing up countries to create tiny states. Besides, the Party does not accept the carving up of countries by using secessionist struggles

to serve the imperialist agenda. The right to secession could, as in the case of secession in the Balkans, strengthen imperialism.

The right to self determination is a bourgeois democratic demand. When it was put forward as a bourgeois democratic demand against imperialism or an oppressive state, it was the duty of Marxist Leninists to support it. Under conditions in which the right to self determination cannot be put forward as a bourgeois democratic demand or when Marxist Leninists take it upon themselves to call for the right to self determination, they have to put it forward as a New Democratic or socialist demand rather than as a secessionist, nationalist or bourgeois demand. Before the Russian revolution, the demand for the right to self determination was a powerful bourgeois demand. A similar situation did not exist at the time of the Chinese revolution. The right of nationalities to self determination was incorporated as part of the working class struggle. That is, when the right to self determination cannot be put forward as a bourgeois democratic demand, it becomes an aspect of the New Democratic Revolution or the socialist revolution. The notion of the right to self determination that the Chinese Communist Party had at the time of its founding was akin to the Soviet notion of a federal government with the right to secession. Based on the position that imperialist meddling cannot be permitted in the question of the right of nationalities to self determination, the Communist Party of China under the leadership of comrade Mao Zedong changed that position in 1930 and proposed autonomy for nationalities within a united China. That idea was further developed in the constitution which was drafted after the victory of the revolution. Thus, the Soviet Union was a federation while China was a unitary state comprising autonomies of several nationalities.

The situation in contemporary Sri Lanka is unlike that in the revolutionary period of Russia or of China. Hence the solution to the national question and the application of the right to self determination need to be according to the specific situation in Sri Lanka and the international and regional environments. Although the working class revolution in Russia was not separated into two stages, it was initially a joint revolution of the workers and peasants and later became the socialist revolution. But since China was a semi-colonial semi-feudal country the revolution there was implemented into two stages, namely the New Democratic Revolution and the socialist revolution.

Sri Lanka today is not a semi-colonial semi-feudal country but a neo-colonial country. The Party has drawn up its programme with the New Democratic Revolution as the first stage of the working class revolution in Sri Lanka. The Party has thus extended the use of the New Democratic Revolution to suit the current environment of Sri Lanka.

Likewise, the Party has a broad perspective on the application of the right to self determination. Instead of equating the right to self determination with secession, the Party takes the broad view of the application of the right to self determination, whereby the rights of the nationalities should be assured on the basis of the right to self determination, equality and autonomy within a united Sri Lanka. It views the right to self determination, which has for long been limited to countries and nations, as also a right of scattered nationalities without a contiguous territory. It is on that basis that it takes the clear stand that four nationalities, namely the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities, live in Sri Lanka and that the right to self determination of the Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities without a contiguous territory should be affirmed. It is also clear about the rights and security of the Sinhalese who live in the North-East and about the rights and security of the Tamils and Muslims living elsewhere. It is on that basis that it proposes, beyond the devolution of administration and power and power sharing, the establishment of autonomous bodies like autonomous regions, autonomous inner structures and autonomous sub-structures. Sri Lanka should be built as a confederation of nationalities with maximum autonomy based on equality and with the right to self determination.

The position of the Party is that the struggle of the nationalities of Sri Lanka for the right to self determination constitutes a part of the New Democratic Revolution led by the working class of Sri Lanka. In the New Democratic state structure, nationalities have the right to establish the fullest right to self determination based on their own wishes. There will be no capitalist class in power to deny that right. Hence, the vulnerable situation where imperialism could use the demand of nationalities for the right to self determination would not exist. The demands of the nationalities will not be bourgeois demands or bourgeois conspiracies to carve up countries. Under those conditions, it will be easy to decide on the need for the right to secession. It will be easy to decide on the prospect of the nationalities living in unity within one country, as a confederation with maximum autonomy and the right to self determination. After the Chinese revolution, the need to secede did not arise for the nationalities there. They accepted the system of autonomy. In Nicaragua, following the revolution led by the Sandinistas, a situation was created in which the nationalities were united with autonomous powers.

Although the post-revolutionary situations in China or Nicaragua need not be applicable to Sri Lanka, it is good to take a long term view of the right to self determination of the nationalities of Sri Lanka in new circumstances.

The Party, while continuously emphasising that a long term programme for finding a solution to the national question is possible only through the New Democratic Revolution, places here certain bases for the resolution of the question.

- 1. It should be affirmed in the Constitution of Sri Lanka that Sri Lanka is a country in which the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities, aboriginal (Attho), Malay and Burgher communities, speakers of several languages, believers in several faiths and people with different cultures live.**
- 2. The rights of nationalities should be affirmed in the Constitution, based on the right to self determination, equality and autonomy.**
- 3. Discrimination and repression based on race, religion, community and gender differences should be seen as constitutional offences and those who indulge in such discrimination and repression should be punished by a Constitutional Court. Those involved in violence based on race, religion, community and gender differences should be severely punished.**
- 4. A Constitutional Court should be established to resolve constitutional disputes and disputes among nationalities and communities. Judges for the Constitutional Court should be appointed in a way that they represent the nationalities and the communities on an equal basis.**
- 5. The Northern and Eastern Provinces should be re-merged and made into a single autonomous region where the Muslims are provided with an inner autonomous structure and the Sinhalese provided with sub-structures. For the rights of the Tamil nationality to be recovered from the effects of national oppression and war and to defend those rights, it is necessary that the North-East which has historically been the traditional homeland of the Tamil People remains a single autonomous region. The gap that has been created between the Tamils in the North and the Tamils in the East was created by the dominant classes living there and by the chauvinists and not by the ordinary people. For the people not to fall victim to the rivalry for power among the ruling dominant forces, besides retaining the North-East as a single autonomous region, devolution of power and administration and protective steps should be put in place in order that the gap between the people of the North and East is removed and doubts and distrust are got rid of. An autonomous inner structure should be established in the Eastern Province,**

*based on a region where Muslims live in large concentrations or by bringing together regions where they live in large concentrations. The fears and suspicions of the Muslim people could be eliminated thereby and a situation created in which the Tamil and Muslim people could live in unity. Likewise, for the Sinhalese living in the North-East to live without fear and in unity with the Tamil and Muslim people, feasible autonomous sub-structures should be set up in the North-East autonomous region for the Sinhalese living there. When established in the above manner, it will be possible to make way for the North-East autonomous region to function with freedom and for the all people there to live in unity.*

- 6. Autonomous regions, autonomous inner structures and sub-structures should be established for the Hill Country Tamils living outside the North-East in the Hill Country and in other regions. An autonomous region could be established by administratively linking a large contiguous territory with non-contiguous territories. Otherwise, autonomies, autonomous inner structures and sub-structures could be established according to the population concentration of the Hill Country Tamils.*
- 7. Autonomous inner structures and sub-structures could be established for the Muslims living outside the North-East according to their population concentration. Special arrangements should be made to ensure the rights, protection and equality of communities like the aboriginal people (Attho), Burgers and Malays.*
- 8. An autonomous structure should have at least the following powers:*
  - i. Matters like land, settlement, land distribution, marine resources and commerce within an autonomous region should be the responsibility of that autonomous region. When the Central Government undertakes settlement and development projects, it should do so in consultation with the regional autonomous structures concerned and with their participation.*
  - ii. A separate police division should be established in the autonomous region to maintain law and order within the autonomous region.*
  - iii. The autonomous structure should act as the guardian of the language and culture of the people of the autonomous region.*

- iv. Education, health and transport in the autonomous region should be in the hands of the autonomous structure.*
- v. If autonomies consider that decisions of the Central Government are detrimental to the autonomous structure, autonomous inner structure or sub-structures, such decisions need not be implemented by the autonomies within their regions until a final ruling is made by the Constitutional Court.*
- vi. Likewise, if the Central Government considers that decisions by the autonomous structure would affect it, the autonomous structures, inner structures and sub-structures may not implement such decisions until a final ruling is made by the Constitutional Court.*

A confederated united people's republic of Sri Lanka should be built with the nationalities of Sri Lanka establishing the maximum right to self determination based on their own wishes and with the right to secession.

Since unity is necessary among the nationalities to achieve these, we need to link up with the dominated and exploited workers, peasants, small producers, women, and those oppressed by caste, from among the nationalities and with their general consent carry out mass struggles in the respective spheres on a cooperative basis.

Let us strengthen the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party to become the leading force of the struggles.

Let us carry out the struggle for the New Democratic Revolution through the tactical programme of National Democratic Revolution and build a United Socialist Confederation of Nationalities of Sri Lanka and establish maximum self determination, equality and autonomy for the nationalities

Central Committee  
New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party  
Colombo

\*\*\*\*\*

To accuse those who support freedom of self-determination, i.e., freedom to secede, of encouraging separatism is as foolish and hypocritical as accusing those who advocate freedom of divorce of encouraging the destruction of family ties. Just as in bourgeois society the defenders of privilege and corruption, on which bourgeois marriage rests, oppose freedom of divorce, so, in the capitalist state, repudiation of the right to self-determination, i.e., the right of nations to secede, means nothing more than defence of the privileges of the dominant nation and police methods of administration, to the detriment of democratic methods.

(VI Lenin, *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, 1914)

The final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established. But even within the framework of capitalism it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum to undermine it at the root, to render it as harmless as possible to the proletariat. This is borne out, for example, by Switzerland and America. It requires that the country should be democratised and the nations be given the opportunity of free development.

(JV Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*, 1913)

The Communist Party of China is in full agreement with Dr. Sun's policy on nationalities as stated here. Communists must actively help the people of all the minority nationalities to fight for it, and help them, including all their leaders who have ties with the masses, to fight for their political, economic and cultural emancipation and development and to establish their own armies which will safeguard the people's interests. Their spoken and written languages, their manners and customs and their religious beliefs must be respected.

(Mao Zedong, *On Coalition Government*, 1945)

*(World Events continued)*

## **Afghanistan, Iraq & Pakistan: Puppets in Revolt**

The following is based on an article titled “Puppets in Revolt: Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and the United States” by James Petras (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25747>) on the deepening crisis in the US, which has offered the right extremists the initiative, and the difficulty the US is facing in ensuring the obedience of its Third World puppet regimes. The article explores the pattern of neo-colonial domination in the Third World, the role of puppet regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the enhanced pattern of subversion of democratic nationalist and socialist regimes by imperialism since the collapse of the USSR and capitalist developments in China. The article argues that the new imperial order in Afghanistan that began with the US-NATO invasion of 2001 and the overthrow of the Taliban regime, (which had nothing to do with 9/11) has failed militarily to subdue resistance.

Likewise, in Iraq, the US invasion and occupation of Iraq only led to the regrouping of anti-neo-colonial forces comprising Islamic, nationalist and trade union organizations and to prolonged armed and civil resistance. In the face of widespread and persistent nationalist and anti-Zionist feelings among the civilians, police and military forces, the US policy makers ended up with the total dismantling of the state.

In Pakistan imperial penetration comprised military intervention and political manipulation, linking large scale military aid, bribes and corruption to secure and maintain a puppet regime that would sanction sustained violations of Pakistani sovereignty by US warplanes, commando operations and mobilization of Pakistan’s military for US counter-insurgency operations displacing millions of ‘tribal’ people.

Contrary to US and EU propaganda, foreign meddling has been unpopular in each case, and actively and passively opposed by the vast majority. Billions in military spending did not lead to a civil service capable of governance while the neo-colonial administration was confronted by an emergent passive, popular and sporadic armed resistance. The neo-colonial rulers now rely on collaborators lacking in technical and administrative skills and with little popular support, and enticed to collaborate through access to billions of dollars pumped into the re-colonized state and easily plundered through phony ‘reconstruction’ projects.

Hamid Karzai was chosen to run Afghanistan, based on family ties with drug traffickers and compatibility with warlords and elders on imperialist payroll. In Iraq, US neo-colonial officials guided by the White House and the CIA chose Nouri al Maliki as the Prime Minister based on his zealous “hands on” engagement in torturing resistance fighters suspected of attacking US occupation forces. In Pakistan the US backed Asif Ali Zardari, a convicted felon on the run, as President, who demonstrated his loyalty by approving large scale, long term US aerial and ground operations on the Pakistan side of the Afghan border.

While these puppet regimes have covered up the imperial savaging of their respective countries by justifying US-led foreign occupation and aggression they have also been accomplices in the assassination and torture of thousands of anti-imperialist activists and fighters, they also provided a useful façade for imperialist propaganda purposes. But their effectiveness diminished fast as the imperialists intensified their slaughter of non-combatants. The initial imperialist propaganda portraying the puppets as partners in power lost credibility as it became clear that they were impotent to rectify imperial abuses.

With the growth of domestic resistance and the weakening of the will of the imperialists to prolong the war, the puppet rulers feel obliged to make token expressions of ‘independence’, while yielding to imperialist pressure all the time. That was clearly why Ali Zardari dared to criticize the US military intrusion, killing Bin Laden, Al Maliki demanded that US should honour its commitment to troop withdrawal from Iraq, and Karzai denounced US killing of civilians in night bombing raids. These puppet ‘revolts’ impress neither the neo-colonial masters nor the masses resisting them.

The result has been that revolts against the forces of aggression as well as their local puppets have intensified and increasingly daring attacks are taking place like the rocket attack launched by the Taliban on the US Embassy and NATO headquarters in Kabul on 13<sup>th</sup> September and attacks elsewhere in Kabul the same day killing nine and injuring 23 persons.

More recently, on 20<sup>th</sup> September, heavily-armed Pakistani Taliban fighters attacked a security check post in the Orakzai tribal region of Pakistan with rockets and automatic weapons, killing a soldier and injuring five more. Although the security forces repulsed the attack and claimed to have killed 18 militants, the government has failed to quell rebellion in the troubled tribal areas. On the previous day the Taliban claimed credit for a suicide attack that targeted a senior police official in Karachi, killing eight people in the attack.

The government forces are the main target of bomb attacks in Iraq. But there are also other interests operating to divide the people on ethnic and religious grounds. Iraq's fiercely anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr on 11<sup>th</sup> September called on his followers to suspend attacks against US troops to ensure they leave Iraq by the year-end deadline. But he warned that if US forces do not depart on time, military operations would resume and would be "very severe".

## **Malaysia: Killing Democracy**

The Malaysian government, as part of its anti-communist policy has attacked the PSM (Socialist Party of Malaysia), charging it of seeking to spread communism and bring back the "old communist party".

Thirty PSM activists were arrested on the 25<sup>th</sup> June while distributing leaflets during the Party's campaign "Udahlah-Bersaralah" (It is Enough, Time to Retire) from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June. They were charged under the Section 122 of Penal Code (waging war against the Monarch and trying to revive communist ideology) and remanded for 7 days. The police dropped all charges against M Saraswathy Deputy Chair, PSM, Dr Jeyakumar MP, Choo Chon Kai and M Sugumaran, members of the PSM Central Committee, A Letchumanan, Sungai Siput branch secretary, and R. Sarathbabu, national youth leader, and rearrested them under Emergency Ordinance immediately after their release. Dr Jeyakumar had recently been hospitalised for heart problems. The remaining twenty-four were charged for possession of Bersih (Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections) material and involvement in an illegal organisation. The demand by the party for the release of its leaders and dropping of false charges against its activists was supported by a sizeable section of the public and a section of the media.

The PSM challenged the charges in court and on 19<sup>th</sup> September the Deputy Public Prosecutor on behalf of the Attorney General informed the PSM that the decision on the representation made on the 29<sup>th</sup> August by the PSM lawyers was that all the thirty persons charged are to be discharged but not amounting to acquittal on both charges. The decision means that although the charges are currently dropped they can be charged on the same offence in the future.

The PSM while thanking the lawyers and the common people as well as organisations in Malaysia and all over the world who pressed for the release of the detainees and expressing satisfaction with the discharge, drew attention to Section 122 of Penal Code under which the arrests were made for waging a war against the King and pointed out that the law could be used against other activists in the future. It also drew

attention to the Emergency Ordinance under which six of its leaders were rearrested following release from remand.

It added that the PSM is a registered political party which is popular and carries out legal activities. The PSM has always acknowledged the contribution of the left to the struggle for independence, and that cannot be interpreted as an attempt to revive the MCP. The story that PSM is trying to revive communism was a major story in all the local mainstream media designed to create fear on an imaginary enemy— a tactic used commonly in the past to crack down on activists. The government's attempt to link the PSM with Communists was based on some activists wearing tee-shirts with images of communist leaders— sold openly in Malaysia and not forbidden.

The PSM also pointed out that the Malaysian government has diplomatic ties with China, Cuba and Vietnam and political relationship with their ruling communist parties, and had signed a peace agreement with the MCP in 1989 with senior communist leaders given a royal audience with the DYMM Sultan Azlan Shah. Thus, the restoration of the communist bogeyman by the UMNO–BN regime is merely to continue to cling in power by instilling fear among the people and to justify the use of the draconian Internal Security Act.

[Sources: [www.freemalaysiatoday.com](http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com); [www.themalaysianinsider.com](http://www.themalaysianinsider.com); [malaysianmirror.com](http://malaysianmirror.com); <http://parti-sosialis.org/en/node/2077>]

## Yemen: Saudi Meddling

President Ali Abdulllah *Saleh* who fled Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, in early June for treatment in Saudi Arabia following injury from a rocket attack on his compound by the rebels has enjoyed the fullest backing of his pro-US Saudi hosts to keep himself in power using a series of acts of deception including the signing of a peace deal with his opponents while preparing for a confrontation, while the US pretended to exert pressure on him to step down.

On 7<sup>th</sup> September, the ruling party of Yemen approved changes to a power transfer from Saleh to his vice president, but allowing him three months to step down formally. Although on 12<sup>th</sup> September Saleh empowered the vice president to sign the deal, security forces fired on demonstrators on the 18<sup>th</sup> and protests escalated thereafter. Meantime, clashes between pro- and anti-government sections of the army intensified and spread. Saleh, apparently 'without the knowledge of his hosts', returned to Sanaa on the 23<sup>rd</sup> amid gunfire and explosions.

While the US pretended to persuade Saleh to step down, the Saudi government kept arming forces loyal to Saleh. Fighting has escalated as a result and popular resistance to Saleh has strengthened.

Thus it seems unlikely that US and Saudi Arabia can ensure smooth and stable transfer of power from Saleh to another loyal puppet, and the next move by the US will be to plunge the country into a bloody and endless civil.

[Sources: [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com); [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com)]

## **Israel: People in Protest**

On 6<sup>th</sup> August, 250 000 Israelis marched for lower living costs in an escalating protest campaign that has catapulted the economy onto the political agenda. Weekly demonstrations, whose turnout had been steadily building, were suspended for two weeks after an attack by militants on 18<sup>th</sup> August near the Egyptian-Israeli border in which eight Israelis were killed. While some commentators suggested that the movement had lost its momentum, the tent camps that the protesters started in Tel Aviv spread to cities across the country and galvanized support for rallies in August that brought out as many as 430 000 people protesting the high cost of housing, education and food on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, fifty days since the protest started.

The protests in which Arabs and Jews marched shoulder to shoulder calling for social justice and peace have been despite Israel's projected growth of 4.8% this year at a time of economic stagnation in the West and unemployment at a moderate 5.7%. But business cartels and wage disparities have kept many citizens from feeling the benefit.

Media efforts to divert attention by highlighting Mahmoud Abbas's UN bid for Palestinian statehood failed, and the protests upstaged Binyamin Netanyahu's standoff with the Palestinian Authority. They also deflated his celebration of Israel's stability amid revolts in surrounding Arab states.

Demonstrations on such a scale in Israel are usually over issues of war and peace. Around half of respondents to a Peace Index poll conducted by two Israeli academics said wage disparities should be the government's priority— far exceeding the stalled peace talks, Israel's international image or strengthening the armed forces. It seems that Zionist chauvinism cannot fool the people for much longer.

Protest organisers announced that the tent cities would be dismantled but the movement would continue with other actions. They

firmly rejected proposals announced on 26<sup>th</sup> September by a panel appointed by the government to help bring down the cost of living as cosmetic, while Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz praised the recommendations by the panel that corporate taxes be raised to 25% in 2012 and to 26% in 2013 from 24% now, raising the top rate of income tax to 48%, increasing affordable housing, providing more childcare and nursery education, and opening markets to more imports.

The protests have, nevertheless, been criticised by sections of the left for lack of attention to discrimination suffered by Israeli-Arabs who comprise 20% of the population or to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories. That may be too much to ask for right now, but things cannot continue in the same vein for too long.

[Sources: *guardian.co.uk*; *bloomberg.com*]

## **Palestine: The UN Theatre**

Enthusiasm for the bid by the Palestinian Authority for UN granting of Palestinian statehood has made many blind to the bond that exists between the Mahmoud Abbas leadership and the US, their shared hatred towards Hamas, and fear of the new youth movements.

President Barak Obama who addressing the General Assembly an year ago on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010 said “This time we should reach for what’s best within ourselves. If we do, when we come back here next year, we can have an agreement that will lead to a new member of the United Nations— an independent, sovereign state of Palestine, living in peace with Israel” is now annoyed by the bid by the PA. The sovereign state of Palestine that he had in mind was only a means to short-change the Palestinians and let Israel keep what it has already stolen and continue to dominate the economic and political life of Palestine. His talk of Palestinian statehood through negotiations with Israel is designed to help Israel extract the maximum from the Palestinians in return for an existence at its mercy. Thus, a separate state of Palestine on terms acceptable to the US (meaning acceptable to Israel) has implications that will be unacceptable to the Palestinians who have been cheated twice by US sponsored deals with Israel.

The Palestinian application, handed to UN Secretary-General, will surface only after the US finds a face-saving way to kill it in the Security Council. SC members are being lobbied to block Palestinian statehood, without need for the US to resort to its threatened veto. The move by Abbas cannot win statehood for Palestine in the UN but it has, unintentionally, fully discredited the US as the arbiter of a Middle East peace. What kind of moral leadership could the US offer for the

resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, after the Palestinians—who have waited more than six decades for justice— have been told that there is “no shortcut” to statehood by Obama, whose country created short-cuts to statehood for Bosnia, Kosovo and South Sudan?

Abbas’ application has also exposed the toothlessness of the UN to intervene effectively. Its General Assembly, which is overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, can offer little more than a symbolic upgrading of Palestine’s status. Events at the UN are certainly informing the Palestinians that there can be no self-determination until they liberate themselves from the legacy of colonialism and the self-serving illusions of an old generation.

While the ‘defiance’ of the US by Abbas in making the UN bid has won him some badly needed support in Palestine, he cannot deliver on establishing a sovereign state alongside Israel. Thus the Palestinian Authority, the fruit of the Oslo peace process, too is bound to wither for lack of sustenance from the US and its allies.

Seeming differences among the US, UN and Europe will be of little consequence as the tired old Palestinian leadership gives way to a new young leadership which sees no role for the PA or the much discredited PLO in solving the problem. It was the Palestinian youth movement that pushed the Al Fatah and Hamas into a semblance of unity early this year. A new secular democratic political movement of mass struggle is due to emerge that will join hands with the democratic resistance in the Arab world as well as Israel as shown by recent events.

[Sources: [www.palestinechronicle.com](http://www.palestinechronicle.com); [www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca); see [http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view\\_article\\_details.php?id=17120](http://www.palestinechronicle.com/view_article_details.php?id=17120); <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=26776>]

## **Syria: Under Threat**

Sara Flounders, Co-Director, International Action Center in her article (<http://www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/syria081811/>) on the IAC website denounced Barack Obama’s demand of 18<sup>th</sup> August that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should step down as blatant imperialist interference. She cited Dmitry Rogozin, Russia’s envoy to NATO, who in an interview with Russia’s Izvestia daily on 5<sup>th</sup> August said that the NATO is planning a military campaign to overthrow the Assad regime, to help its long-reaching goal of preparing an attack on Iran.

She also drew attention to the double standards of the US, which hailed police repression in the UK, Spain and Greece and turned a blind eye to military repression in Bahrain, where dozens of protestors have

been killed and hundreds arrested and tortured, and Saudi troops invaded the island to help put down the uprising.

Syria is targeted by US imperialism for its rejection of Zionist occupation of Syria, support to the Hezbollah to end Israeli occupation of Lebanon, and its strategic alliance with Iran. The threat to Syria is connected to the desperate efforts of US imperialism to divert the unfolding mass upheaval in the Arab world away from threats to imperialist domination there. Thus the US has been secretly backing some of the Syrian opposition groups. Military intervention by the West has been delayed partly because of strong Russian opposition, which cannot forever be effective.

Michel Chossudovsky of the Centre for Research on Globalization in his comment of 19<sup>th</sup> September “NATO recruiting Jihadists to Syria” (<http://tv.globalresearch.ca/2011/09/nato-recruiting-jihadists-syria>) said: “We have information that NATO headquarters in Brussels and the Turkish High Command are in fact drawing up plans for the first military step into Syria and we also know that NATO is in fact recruiting mujahedeen and jihadists to assist them in their campaign in these various countries”. But he drew a difference between the insurgency which is largely backed by Islamists and the opposition within Syrian civil society.

Let us be clear that the al-Assad regime is neither progressive nor democratic. It is repressive and corrupt, and harsh on the Syrian left. But the aim of the insurgency is to destabilize and create a pretext for ‘responsibility to protect’ intervention by NATO. The question before the people of Syria and the region therefore is whether they should let US imperialism and its pawns impose a ‘regime change’ in Syria. The task of the genuine secular, progressive and left forces is not to protect the Assad regime but to defend the sovereignty of Syria. Thus, the struggle for democratic reforms needs to be intensified while meddling by the West and mischief by its accomplices are resisted.

## **AFRICA**

### **Egypt: Working Class Fights On**

Dr Peter Custers writing to the Daily Star, Bangladesh in July (<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=197621>) explained that the mass mobilizations in Egypt in early July were not a replay of the events that got rid of Mubarak. The protests by large

numbers at Cairo's Tahrir square against the repressive state demanded a clean-up of the police, speedier trials of former Mubarak allies, and an end to military trials of civilians. Egypt's Military Council, which cunningly put itself in charge of the transition to parliamentary democracy, has sought to appease the protesters. The Interior Minister's ploy on the eve of the mass rally of 15<sup>th</sup> July, announcing 'the biggest shake-up' in police history, meaning early retirement of a number of senior police officers failed to convince the protesters.

The difference now is the class identity of the protesters. The global media which hailed the 'Jasmine Revolution' largely ignored the fact that protests earlier in the year were preceded by a series of workers' struggles, including the highly successful ones of 2008 and the wave of strikes throughout 2010. That attitude was helped by the failure of the protesting youth to emphasise working class demands.

The Egyptian army has now shown its true face in the way it is handling the protests and the people are increasingly aware that Mubarak's exit was not the end of an era, and could only be the beginning of the end. What is significant about the current mass campaign is that the demands go beyond wage increases and the setting of a minimum wage to show greater political awareness. The struggle has produced some results: The Cabinet of Prime Minister Essam Sharaf has issued an executive order to dismiss the executive board of the pro-Mubarak Egyptian Trade Union Federation, facing a deep crisis since the fall of Mubarak. But there is a long way to go and workers' protests are continuing alongside mass protests demanding a quicker transition to democracy. The protesters are deeply suspicious of the ruling Military Council, and when a schedule for staggered parliamentary elections to begin at the end of November was announced the protesters called for a date to be set for a presidential election.

**Note:** On 29<sup>th</sup> September a newly formed dockers' union (ITF-affiliated DPW, at Sukhna-Suez city) established two months ago in Egypt won official recognition following a four-day strike by workers.

[Sources: [www.petercusters.nl](http://www.petercusters.nl), [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org)]

## Libya: Killing to Protect

The tragedy of Libya was not unforeseen since the West took an interest in Libyan protests. After the destruction imposed on Libya by months of heavy bombing by the NATO and, despite the rebels claiming control of Tripoli and major cities, resistance to the rebel government seems strong as seen from its failed assaults on Sirte and Bani Walid

and the need for NATO to bomb Sirte in late September, killing many civilians.

Venezuela's Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro Moros addressing the UN General Assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> September said that peaceful resolution of the Libyan situation was derailed by the US and NATO and pointed out that the 'Libyan Case' was brought before the Security Council based on intense propaganda by the western mass media, who lied about the alleged bombing of innocent civilians by the Libyan Air Force. [<http://globalciviliansforpeace.com/2011/09/29/venezuela-slams-us-natos-involvement-in-libya/>]. He also challenged the dishonesty practiced in relation to the no-fly zone established by Security Council resolution 1973, and asked how NATO could perform more than 20,000 missions against the Libyan people if there was a no-fly zone, most of them after the Libyan Air Force was completely annihilated.

He warned that the same imperialist pattern is being repeated regarding Syria and denounced the tendency for some powerful countries to claim for themselves the right to order legitimate and sovereign governments rulers to step down.

## **Somalia: BBC Double Speak**

The Horn of Africa is a heartbreaking example of the UN's historic failure. Between 20 000 and 29 000 children under the age of five have died in the past three months; and the emergency in Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia demands urgent action to save more than 12 million people facing death in the next two months.

The Somalia famine is not due to shortage of food but due to a global oversupply of grain staples. With deregulation of grain markets under imperialist pressure, US grain surpluses were used to systematically undermine national food cultivation. But the BBC coverage of the famine in Somalia has been mainly a fund-raising show of repeated shots of emaciated babies and dying people than useful information. The BBC has also been mischievous in its reporting the disaster in a region affected by a Western-originated and maintained 'war on terror'.

Prof. Michel Chossudovsky, in a well researched article "Somalia: the Real Causes of Famine" of 21<sup>st</sup> July 2011 has drawn attention to the fact that nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to the American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips in the years preceding the overthrow of Somalia's pro-US President Siad Barre in January, 1991. The role of the interests of four oil companies in the tragic drama of Somalia since has hardly been commented on by the global news media.

Nomadic pastoralists accounted for 50% of the population when in the 1970s resettlement programs led to the development of a sizeable sector of commercial pastoralism. Despite recurrent droughts, Somalia was self-sufficient in food until the 1970s. Livestock contributed to 80% of export earnings until 1983. The IMF-World Bank intervention in the early 1980s worsened the Somali agricultural crisis since economic reforms undermined the fragile exchange relationship comprising traditional barter and money transactions between pastoralists and small farmers. The government imposed a tight austerity program mainly to release the funds needed to service Somalia's external debt held mostly by Washington-based financial institutions. Thus, far from being a natural disaster, events in Somalia trace back directly to Western intervention carried out the world over in the name of 'structural adjustment'.

The BBC has presented conflicting stories on ban on aid entering the region controlled by al-Shabab, the 'terrorists'. For example, on 6<sup>th</sup> July it carried a story titled, "Somalia Islamists lift aid ban to help drought victims" and followed it with "Somali Islamists maintain aid ban" on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. On 20<sup>th</sup> July the BBC reported the story on sanctions put in place by Obama in April 2010 banning US aid to areas controlled by al-Shabab, later revised with the following proviso made by the deputy administrator of USAID: "What we need is assurances from the World Food Programme and from other agencies, the United Nations or other agencies, both public and in the non-governmental sector, who are willing to go into Somalia who will tell us affirmatively that they are not being taxed by al-Shabab, they are not being subjected to bribes from al-Shabab, that they can operate unfettered" under the heading "US to aid Islamist areas of famine-hit Somalia" when, in fact, no aid was sent by the US, contrary to the claims of the headline.

[Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25889>]

## **LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN**

### **Haiti: People Want UN Troops Out**

The UN, seen as an arm of US occupation, has 12 000 military and police personnel in Haiti since the US organized the overthrow of Haiti's democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide for the second time in 2004. The US —resentful of the former president Préval for accepting aid from Venezuela in 2010 following the massive earthquake earlier in the year despite protests from the US— reversed the results of Haiti's first-round presidential election in November 2010, to eliminate Préval's favoured candidate from the second round. This

was done through manipulation of the Organization of American States and through open threats to cut off post-earthquake aid to the desperately poor country if it did not accept the change of results.

While President Michel Martelly is likely to ask for a renewal of the UN mission's mandate which expires next month, resentment is growing in Haiti against UN troop presence and US meddling.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September, protesters demanding the withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops present in Haiti since 2004 clashed with the police, who fired volleys of tear gas canisters to disperse the several hundred demonstrators. Local journalists reported that two of their colleagues were beaten by riot police, and one of the injured reporters was taken to the hospital for a broken bone in his right foot. Shortly afterwards, protesters in a university near the plaza clashed with riot police. They were angered by the alleged sexual assault of an 18-year-old Haitian man by UN peacekeepers from Uruguay and still furious about the cholera outbreak in October 2010, reportedly introduced by a battalion from Nepal and killed more than 6 200 people.

[Sources: <http://www.military.com/news/article/haitian-protesters-want-un-troops-out.html>; <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2011/weisbrot210711.html>]

## EUROPE

### Growing Unrest

**GREECE.** Following fresh austerity proposals by the government in May, protests continued to escalate and hit new peaks in September following the new round of wage and pension cuts. Massive demonstrations in late September were followed by the occupation of government offices, blocking access for EU, IMF and European Central Bank officials seeking to determine whether the country qualifies for an international loan to avert default. Access was also blocked to the Finance Ministry, the General Accounting Office, the Hellenic Statistical Authority and other offices. The protests prevented the officials from gathering data for the review for Greece to receive its latest emergency loan of 8 billion Euros (\$10.8 billion), originally due in September.

**BRITAIN.** Despite reported progress over public sector pension reforms, strikes by teachers and civil servants went ahead on 30<sup>th</sup> June, closing schools and government offices and disrupting airports and ports. Public sector workers are already facing a wage freeze and more than 300 000 job losses as the government cuts spending. While the government was bracing itself for potentially the worst labour stoppage

for decades, riots —triggered by the killing in police custody of a suspect— broke out on 6<sup>th</sup> August in London and spread across England. The cause for the rapid spread of the riots, the worst in post-war history, was the insensitivity of the government to the deep resentment among the students, the unemployed and victims of planned spending cuts. Threats by the government to take a hard line against the rioters may help to make Britain a police state but not resolve its economic woes.

**SPAIN.** The 15-M protest movement, which began as a small group camping out in Madrid's Puerta del Sol on 15<sup>th</sup> May, was soon mimicked in other European cities which too witnessed soaring unemployment, particularly among younger generations. It swelled to more than six million participants and is spreading with camps now in more than 60 cities across Spain as well as Paris, Brussels, Cologne, Tel Aviv and many more. The march by *los indignados* (the indignant) belonging to the 15-M is gathering momentum as several hundred protesters walking from Madrid, Barcelona, Paris and Berlin plan to converge on Brussels on 8<sup>th</sup> October for a week of assemblies before a Europe-wide protest on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

## France: Senate Goes 'Left'

In elections held on 25<sup>th</sup> September, a broad front, comprising the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Europe Ecologie-The Greens, and left radicals, won 175 of the 348 upper chamber seats, with the Socialist Party having 127 Senators. The French right, which has traditionally dominated the Senate, has been badly shaken by the loss of several stronghold seats. This is the first time that the French political left have won an absolute majority in the Senate since the founding of the Fifth Republic 1958, following the collapse of the Fourth Republic following the Algiers crisis. Since the lower house, the National Assembly, is still controlled by President Sarkozy's Union for a Popular Movement, the left can direct Senate powers towards controlling the executive, by using commissions of inquiry.

The result largely reflects the public mood of resentment of President Sarkozy, who is beset with corruption scandals, and has brightened the prospect of a 'Socialist' President in the forthcoming presidential elections. But given the conduct of the parliamentary left across Europe, that means very little to the economic direction of France and its imperialist foreign policy.

Meanwhile, more importantly, solidarity with "los indignados" in Madrid has already inspired several dozen French youths to spend

nights camped out at the Place de la Bastille (the Paris square where a jail was torn down during the 1789 French Revolution).

## Norway: Fangs of Fascism

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011 Anders Behring Breivik gunned down 69 people on Utoeya Island, 40 km north of Oslo, 8 hours after detonating a bomb in Oslo, killing eight people. The responses of Western governments, the mainstream media and major political parties are rather subdued about the need to confront right wing extremism, the accompanying ethnic and religious intolerance, and terrorism targeting selected social and political groups. James Petras in his essay titled “Organized Political Terrorism: The Norwegian Massacre, the State, the Media and Israel” [<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25839>] shows much insight into the rise of right wing terrorism in Europe.

His article draws attention to leading English language newspapers as well as President Obama, blaming “Islamic extremists”, upon the first police reports of the killings, publishing a series of incendiary (and false) headlines and reports, labelling the event as ‘*Norway’s 9-11*’, in terms echoing the ideological motivation and justifications of Breivik, the Christian-Zionist political assassin. The US mass media and political elite changed their tune when the killer who ran out of ammunition surrendered without resistance to Norwegian police. He became “*a lone wolf assassin*” or a mentally deranged person, and his political networks, his US, European and Israeli ideological mentors, and commitments which led to his acts of terrorism were ignored.

The article also draws attention to the response of the Norwegian state, quick to dispatch 500 troops to faraway Afghanistan and provide six Air Force jets and pilots to bomb Libya, but unable to find a helicopter to rush to the site of the shootings so that the police took 90 minutes to arrive at the site a mere 40 km from Oslo. It also provides evidence to show that Breivik’s action was political in essence and embedded in a wider political network and to indicate the likelihood of conspicuous complicity of top police officials.

While the ruling Social Democrats control part of the Government, the legislative, the neo-fascists have influence in the state apparatus. With the neo-fascist “Progress Party” as the second largest political party in Norway, the threat of fascist upsurge is real in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia. Thus the left and democratic forces in Norway should take the initiative to combat right-wing and neo-fascist forces, by taking advantage of the indignation of the overwhelming majority of Norwegians who came out in the open to denounce the evil act.

# **US: Amid Crises**

## **Debt Crisis: The Role of Militarism**

On 31<sup>st</sup> July, Democratic and Republican Congressmen finally agreed on a way to avert the failure of the US government to pay its bills. The informal agreement took months of hard bargaining before approval by the House of Representatives and the Senate. President Obama signed the bill raising the ceiling on debt by 2.1 trillion US Dollars, on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, the day the US public debt was reaching the ceiling.

The deal has, undoubtedly, put the main burden of public debt relief on the working population, with Obama yielding to the Republicans to pledge no tax increases for the country's super-rich and corporations. The budgetary cuts agreed by the Congressmen to partially rebalance the government budget are heavily biased against the country's poor, with over 75% of the cuts hurting social programs such as health care.

Few analysts have taken the trouble to analyse the main causes for the massive US public debt, now standing at over 14 trillion US Dollars. In 1981, Ronald Reagan introduced tax reforms that benefitted the super rich. While social welfare programmes suffered owing to cuts in government spending, the budget deficit grew and public debt shot up from one trillion US Dollars in 1982 to 2.5 trillion in 1989, largely due to the continuously rising military budget. Deficit budgeting and rising public debt continued, with the exception of the period, 1993-2000 under Bill Clinton, when balanced budgets were achieved. Under George Bush public debt rose from 6 trillion US Dollars in 2001 to 11 trillion in 2009, mainly as a result of escalating allocations for the armed forces and wars waged by the US and tax reductions for the high income groups.

It should be noted that while the use of military spending to stimulate economic activity has been very much a Republican agenda, Democratic presidents did little to reverse the trend. During the Clinton presidency, US military spending was about half the world's total. Under Obama, there has been no meaningful reduction in military spending, and new wars have been initiated.

Economic analysts in the US have drawn attention to the possibility of cuts in military expenditure by between 30 and 50 billion US Dollars annually over ten years. But that figure is trivial when compared with the contribution of military expenditure to the debt problem of the US over the past three decades.

The rather desperate eleventh hour move by the US to deal with the debt crisis has had an adverse effect on the global markets and shares

tumbled globally. Although the crisis of the US has to be seen in conjunction with the debt problem faced by the weaker economies of Europe, the debt crisis of the US, which is one aspect of the global crisis of capitalism, has been far more seriously aggravated by US militarism than the economic experts in the US would dare to admit.

The text above has drawn on the article "Militarism and the US Debt: a Retrospective View" by Dr. Peter Custers in *Countercurrents* ([www.countercurrents.org](http://www.countercurrents.org)) published on 11th August 2011.

Also see the article titled "Escalating Military Spending and the Debt Ceiling: Lots of Posturing, No Solution" by Prof. Ismael Hossein-Zadeh (<http://globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25838>). For more information: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=25489>.

## Ten Years after 9/11

President Obama, quoting from the Bible, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the bombing of the world Trade Centre appeared to suggest that that God blesses misdeeds by US imperialism anywhere the world in the name of 'War on Terror'.

It is not the privilege of US citizens to unite against terrorism. People all over the world were together in denouncing the killing of nearly 3000 people in the 9/11 attack. But no US president has expressed the slightest regret for the killing and maiming of millions by the US using nuclear weapons on 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August 1946 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki nor for the countless victims of the terrible crimes against humanity by the US.

The US, in the name of ridding Afghanistan of Soviet troops, trained, armed and equipped al Qaida and Taliban. In the name of punishing Saddam Hussain for his adventure in Kuwait, it killed half a million soldiers and people of Iraq in the 1990s. In the decade since 9/11 the US has gone on to wage many wars against weaker nations like Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Libya and defenceless people directly or using proxies. Besides its own 'lawful' system for detention it used a number of torture camps worldwide of which little is told to the public.

Imperialism never learns from history, but people do. The double standards of US imperialism and its European allies are now clear to the people of the world. It is the hypocritical 'national bourgeois' governments of the Third World that stand in the way of the people ridding themselves of the murderous imperialists.

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*(continued from inside front cover)*

O Fallen Men

You are not feeble fevered and few

The blood of Hercules is running in your veins

The strength of Samson is regaining in your arms

The whole world is lined up behind you

The whole universe is at your feet

Listen

Listen to the clarion call of the time

March

March towards the battle of Kurekshetra

You have to release Prometheus

Who brought fire for us

You have to uphold the banner of Spartacus

Who became martyr for us

You have to rescue our countrymen

Who are suffering from miseries and misfortune

Be sure

Final victory is ours

(Satyameve Jayate )

Take oath in the name of the crucified Christs

Take oath in the name of brave martyrs

To break all chains and bondage of the past

To bring honour and glory to the present

To uproot the old order of terror and oppression

To set up a new order of law and harmony

To begin our journey with new dimension

To enrich our future with new creation

To give new shape and look to the world

To usher in a new era in human history

*First Published in Drumbeat, 1977, again in 1995 in Nepal Letters, Vol. 1*

*Source: <http://winterends.net/nepal-stories/135-nepali-maoist-poetry-series-fallen-men>*

## *Dreams do not die*

**Ahmed Faraz**

(1931-2008)

*Dreams do not die.  
Dreams are not heart, nor eyes or breath  
Which shattered, will scatter (or)  
Die with the death of the body.*

*Dreams do not die.  
But dreams are light, voice, wind,  
Which cannot be stopped by mountains  
black,  
Which do not perish in the hells of  
cruelty,  
Ensigns of light and voice and wind,  
Bow not, even in abattoirs.*

*But dreams are letters,  
But dreams are illumination,  
Dreams are Socrates,  
Dreams – Divine Victory!'*

*[Ahmed Faraz, born Syed Ahmad Shah, one of the best known Urdu poets of Pakistan, was a bold opponent of the dictatorship of Zia ul Haq]*

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Phone: 071 4302959; Fax: 011 2473757; E-mail: newdemocraticparty@hotmail.com

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