

The Fourth National Congress of the New Democratic Party
8th & 9th November 2002
Jaffna

Dear comrades of the presidium!

Dear comrade delegates!

We have gathered here today for the Fourth National Congress of our New Democratic Party. The First National Congress of the Party took place in Jaffna in 1984. The second and the third were held in 1991 and 1997, respectively, in Colombo. The Fourth Congress is now taking place in Jaffna. I express my revolutionary salutations to all comrades who are participating in the Congress.

This Congress is taking place at a time when there are significant changes in trend in the national and the international situations. Changes at a national level are taking place in Third World countries, including ours. While structural changes to suit imperialist globalisation are being implemented in economic, political, social and cultural fields, a climate is developing in which mass movements in opposition to these efforts at imperialist re-colonisation are also being carried forward. There is, simultaneously, a growing trend of revival and resurgence of Marxist Leninist organisations in their respective countries.

Under these conditions, it is the need of the day for our Party, which has adopted Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as its guiding ideology and continued to function as a Marxist Leninist party in Sri Lanka, to achieve clarity and direction on national issues through this Congress.

Therefore, I believe that the Congress delegates would pay due attention to matters stated in this report on the national situation, and conduct a highly fruitful discussion concerning them. We believe that the discussion of these matters would enable the Congress to enhance the experiences and understanding gathered through the work and activities of the Party during the past four years.

Our country continues to be a backward Third World country. This country, comprising several ethnic groups who live by agriculture, plantation industry, fishery, and small industry based in the countryside, is still in the grip of the dominant feudal and capitalist classes. The feudal-capitalist ideology is still seen to dominate in all fields of economic,

political, social and cultural activity. Now, as then, the forces of imperialism that have forged close ties with these exploiting classes are working closely with them.

Thus, the national independence that was supposed to have been secured in 1948 has remained meaningless to the overwhelming majority comprising the working people and the nationalities. As in most Third World Countries, our country too seems to be at a state in which it is held in gridlock by the neo-colonial system, for it to be gobbled up by the imperialist globalisation of today. The earlier colonialism was led by the British imperialism, while the neo-colonial globalisation programme of today is carried forward under the leadership of America.

Under such a social framework, the vast majority of the people comprising workers, peasants, fisher-folk, craftsmen, state and private sector employees and other toiling people suffer an existence that is subject to economic exploitation and political oppression based on class. The forces of feudalism, capitalism and pro-imperialism remain the ruling classes, while the entire broad working masses comprising workers, peasants and other toiling people remain the ruled classes. On examining closely and thoughtfully from the point of view of class struggle, one would recognise that the contradiction between the two class groups has persisted as a hostile and fundamental contradiction.

This fundamental class contradiction has infiltrated every aspect of life in the country to lead to grave consequences. It remains the cause for all manner of day-to-day economic crises faced by the masses and problems in other sectors. That is why our party seeks to eliminate this fundamental contradiction through the method of revolutionary struggle based on Marxist Leninist class struggle. Taking the parliamentary path cannot eliminate it. It is only through the revolutionary struggle of the broad masses and clearly proletarian political leadership that the above contradiction could be brought to its end.

In that way, it would be possible to liquidate the existing old social structure and create a new, democratic system of government. It would consequently be possible to establish a socialist social structure based on scientific socialism. Our Party has the firm belief that the socialism that was conceived and advanced by the great geniuses Marx and Engels, subsequently achieved by Lenin, and implemented by other Marxist leaders

such as Stalin and Mao Zedong will be achieved by the people of every country. In keeping with that, we need to arouse the broad masses against oppression based on class, nationality, caste and gender arising from the fundamental contradiction. Our Party is carrying forward its tasks from the Marxist Leninist position and ideal in order to develop short- and long-term programmes for achieving social emancipation and a new social order through revolutionary struggle.

The contradiction between nationalities resulting from and nurtured by the fundamental contradiction during the last century has over the last quarter of a century evolved into the main contradiction to the point of overshadowing the fundamental contradiction. Our Third National Congress pointed to this with lucidity and precision. Events of the past few years have clearly demonstrated the objectivity of those observations. Our Party had already pointed out that, although chauvinistic oppression has transformed the national contradiction into the main contradiction involving armed conflict, that contradiction was unlike the fundamental contradiction. We have through continuous mass movements and struggles emphasised that the national contradiction should be resolved not through war but amicably through negotiations to find a political solution. Besides, our Party had also put forward firm principles for the resolution of the contradiction based on just and acceptable minimum requirements.

The Party pointed out that our country is multi-ethnic, with people of four major religious faiths and two major languages, and has as its four main nationalities the Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, alongside national minorities including the Burghers, Malays and the Attho (Vedda). It emphasised, therefore, that the right to self-determination of each nationality be mutually respected. Comrade Lenin, who defined the right to self-determination in its Marxist-Leninist sense as one incorporating the right to secession, also elaborated on the class forces that would put it into practice. After him, the concept of self-determination has been further developed under newer conditions by comrades Stalin, Mao Zedong and other Marxist leaders and Marxist-Leninist parties. The experiences of socialist countries showed that self-determination could be practised within a united country in a way that obviates the need for secession and establishes unity and equality among the nationalities. Our Party has consistently pointed out that the demonstration of its practicality

in the aforesaid countries is an example for our country. It also illustrated that we could find a solution that suits our country, based on their example.

Our Party explained in detail how the national question could be resolved through the establishment of full autonomy and internal autonomous structures in the traditional homelands of the nationalities and complete sharing of power based on self-determination. It rejected the dogmatic formulae of the old parliamentary left for self-determination, and developed and put forward its concept of self-determination by taking into account the way the nationalities have developed within Sri Lanka. It put forward its policy on self-determination with balance and farsightedness and published the theoretical explanation in the Tamil and English organs of the Party.

The Party also recalls at this point the fact that it has continued to put forward, with a historical outlook and on a class basis, its assessment of the circumstances under which national contradictions and chauvinist oppression have been cultivated in Sri Lanka. It has also consistently emphasised that the parliamentary path had no solution to the national question and that a solution was possible only through a determined mass struggle. Recent events continue to demonstrate that the statements and the policies put forward by the Party constitute practical reality and suit the objective situation.

Our Party, which has thus identified and classified the fundamental contradiction and the main contradiction and the modes of oppression associated with them, has, as well, a clear view of other contradictions and forms of oppression. One such issue concerns caste contradictions and caste oppression. Struggles against caste oppression have already been carried forward based on class struggle in the 1960's. The Marxist Leninist Communist Party carried forward and provided leadership for those struggles. Large sections of the masses rejected the parliamentary reformist line and joined in battle against casteism and untouchability through revolutionary mass struggles. The oppressed people, referred to as depressed castes, secured democratic rights and equality hitherto denied to them, through these struggles, which marked a historic turning point. It was through a limited form of armed struggle and other forms of struggle that the people secured and established their democratic rights. Those revolutionary mass struggles advanced by breaking through the conservative climate of the north, handed down by feudal domination. It

was the revolutionary struggles against casteism and untouchability that showed the way to the Tamil youth to project Tamil nationalism and open battlefronts for armed combat in their struggles.

Even after such struggles against caste oppression, caste contradictions and caste oppression have not altogether been eradicated from our society. They seem to be linked with other forms of social oppression. The struggle in Sri Lanka against casteism, among Tamils in particular, has the rich experiences of the victories secured under the guidance and leadership of the Marxist Leninist Communist Party. Each one of the experiences rejects the 'Dalitist' tendency that projects a caste-based position in opposition to class struggle. 'Pure Dalitism' is essentially hostile to Marxism and its development. The Dalitist ideology seeks to preserve the caste structure from a negative standpoint. Several things that have been concealed in Dalitist studies need to be brought out in the open. However, we hold that Dalitism cannot be considered an ideology that is commensurate with or can supersede Marxism. It is not possible to combat caste contradictions or caste oppression through Dalitism. The Dalitist ideology that is developed in the Indian context is practiced in a way that is hostile to class struggle and Marxism, and NGOs are taking full advantage of it. When Dalitist ideology is unable to show the way to fight the caste structure in India, how could it be effective in the entirely different context of Sri Lanka? Thus, the Party takes the position that, based on the experience of past struggles, the struggle today should be carried forward in accordance with the new developments and in conjunction with other struggles against oppression or, where need dictates, separately.

We draw our attention next to the contradictions and oppression associated with the enslavement of women. Superficially, it may seem that both males and females are involved as partners in social life. However, every aspect of social life reflects male domination and the associated oppression of the female. Only Marxism demonstrated clearly that male domination over the female evolved from the division of labour between man and woman early in the history of human society. Enslavement of the female was further reinforced under feudalism. Subjugation of women became well entrenched at the economical, political, social and cultural levels. Religion and culture became tools for suppressing women and making them second-class subjects, and the mechanism of oppression was presented as an inviolable law of daily life. The foundations of male domination remain unperturbed

in the countries of the Third World. Enslavement of the female is closely woven into the fabric of our society by invisible threads of ideology. The social class structure and male chauvinist ideology are firmly entrenched in a way that the oppressed women are unable to recognise the features of subjugation of women implemented through religious and cultural practice. Only by a close look at it could we recognise aspects of enslavement.

Women comprise more than half the population of our country. There is considerable advancement in their education. Yet, gender discrimination, neglect and sexual harassment continue to be practice against them. Class exploitation on an economic basis is enabled by the fact that they are women. Women workers, including the Hill Country plantation workers and urban factory workers, are exploited most cruelly. A recent piece of legislation to be presented in Parliament made it mandatory for women workers in factories to do sixty of overtime if required. The parliamentary democracy about which there is much boast has a very poor representation of women. Male chauvinistic attitudes and positions continue to dominate. Only the stand that oppressed women and men who see the struggle of the women as their own need to join hands will establish in society that the male called 'man' and the female called 'woman' are equal in every respect, and provide a far sighted guarantee for the liberation of women.

It is not possible to isolate the struggle against the enslavement of women from struggles against other forms of social oppression. The struggle of women for liberation from enslavement cannot be carried out against men as a whole or without their participation. Attempts in the name of women's liberation to carry forward struggles solely against male chauvinism too favour tendencies hostile to Marxism. The women of our country face serious problems. It is important that these are studied and classified systematically. We reject as baseless the charge by feminists that Marxism has not paid attention to women's liberation. The Marxist view of the world and its classification of forms of oppression on the basis of class struggle are unlikely to find favour with the feminists who seek to transcend Marxism and class struggle in their search for women's liberation within the confines of male chauvinism. Such individuals and their activities serve imperialism, by functioning in ways hostile to Marxism. In addition, by mechanically applying the Western feminist approach to the issues faced by women in this country, they confine themselves to anti male chauvinist slogans and NGO activities. They have

made it their occupation to secure large sums of money as grants from Western donors.

We should consider these matters, pay full attention to the enslavement of women and its oppressive features and carry it forward by giving it the due place in our political programme. We should learn from the historical experiences of Marxist Leninist parties and Marxists in the West and in the Third World in carrying forward movements for women's liberation in the context of today's new circumstances and advance through extracting all what we could from those experiences.

We should, at this point, turn to another important matter. It concerns the youth of this country. In the 1960's, it was estimated that young people between 16 and 35 years constituted 65% of the population. Those in parliamentary political power could not meet their expectations for education, employment opportunities and social needs. There were signs that they would develop into a revolutionary force of the country and mobilise themselves together with the workers and peasants. But that got deflected, and the first JVP insurrection of 1971 was carried forward with the wrong policies and strategies. Consequently, 25,000 youth were killed. In the insurrection of 1988-89 by the same movement, many more were killed than in the earlier insurrection. As a rough estimate, it may be said that over a hundred thousand youth of southern Sri Lanka fell victim to the ruling state machinery.

A three-quarter of the one hundred thousand people subsequently killed in the North-East in the course of the struggle and the war stretching over nineteen years were youth. What should be noted here is that over ninety percent of the youth thus decimated across the country were from the working classes.

Besides, when the country was opened up in keeping with the open economic policy after the year 1977, young people were subjected to pressure to go to the Middle East as wage slaves. As a result, the human resources and the labour power of the youth were wasted and the path was cleared for foreign countries and companies to rake in huge profits.

During the same period, our youth were also made to migrate to Europe and the American continent as refugees. Today the youth comprise just 45% of the population. At the same time, the problems faced by them are becoming enormous.

In matters of education, employment and social security, the expectations of the youth have been reduced to disappointment. We see a situation in which the youth are being cheated by false claims that there will be education based on modern technology and employment opportunities with the arrival of MNCs under the agenda of globalisation.

To prevent the youth turning against their rulers and imperialism, whose praise the rulers sing, effort is made to push the youth into socially degenerative practices such as drug abuse, addiction to entertainment based on violence and sexual perversion through the cinema and other media, getting them immersed in religious superstition through a variety of new institutions, and dragging them into the activities of NGOs. However, the impotence and deception of such moves will soon be exposed to the youth. At that stage, there will be keen consciousness and activity concerning the issues of social liberation and social change. Today's need is to plan in anticipation of it and carry the plan forward as an action programme among the youth.

The class, nationality, caste and gender contradictions referred to above are internal contradictions of Sri Lanka. At the same time, the contradiction between imperialism and the people of Sri Lanka, and imperialist domination are external interactions. The grip of western imperialist domination is something that has continued since the colonial era. Although the people of Sri Lanka have struggled against it from time to time, the struggle was not developed into a national liberation struggle. What we have witnessed is continued exercise of imperialist domination by Britain then and America now. This imperialist domination is a danger and a threat to the independence, sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka, which have, recently, been very much intensified. We could see imperialist infiltration encroaching upon the economic, political, social and cultural fields of Sri Lanka, operating subtly and wielding influence. It is a historic fact that the forces of the big bourgeoisie have warmly embraced and given their fullest support to imperialist domination. The national bourgeoisie have at times resisted it within limits and at other times given in or made compromises. However, one can see from the historical records of Sri Lanka that the forces of democracy and the left movement, including the Marxist Leninists, have relentlessly opposed imperialism.

Under these conditions, the state and the state machinery have been the defenders of the property of the capitalist and feudal elite, the needs and

interests of the affluent classes and of the forces of foreign imperialism. Whichever the government that came to power, it made it its prime duty to function as the representative of the ruling classes, defend their interests through strengthening the state and the state machinery and through that keep down the people through oppressive measures. Bourgeois parliamentary democracy is limited in scope. If people step outside its limits, the state machinery would make a full display of its violent nature. Sad memories of the thousands of lives that that have been lost in conflicts concerning class, nationality, caste and gender, as a result of bloody and cruel oppression during the half century following the so called independence of Sri Lanka, have told us many times over how fraudulent the nature of that democracy is.

Anyone who argues that the proletariat and other working people could achieve political power with their political stand intact, while this bourgeois parliamentary democracy is reinforced and its life prolonged through periodic amendments to the constitution and through reforms, has to be a political ignoramus or a political charlatan making a career out of deceiving the people. The parliament can never be of any purpose beyond its use, under given conditions, as a platform for propaganda and a forum to expose the ruling class to achieve social liberation and social change. Thus, to win and to establish genuine people's democracy through the new democratic revolution and to proceed towards and build socialism, the state and ruling class has to be completely overthrown.

Comrades!

Thus far, attention was drawn to the approach of the Party, based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, to fundamental and specific issues. There is a need for detailed explanation and specific instructions on them.

Let us now consider the position of the Party and its practical approach regarding contemporary issues. Over the past quarter of a century, the people of Sri Lanka have experienced severe crises, suppression, and the most acute class and national oppression. The past three National Congresses have discussed and debated them in the context of their respective occasions, put forward clear policies and practical approaches, and implemented the decisions. The course of events in the country has demonstrated that their conclusions were correct.

Governments have functioned in the arena of the parliamentary system under the leadership of two major political parties: the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Other political parties, according to their class and nationalistic positions, have joined hands with or given support to either party. The two major parties have represented the capitalist and feudal classes and, to this day, been led by upper caste elite families. That the Senanayake-Jayawardane-Wijewardene families lead the UNP and the Bandaranaike-Ratwattes lead the SLFP has been an unwritten rule in Sri Lanka. The fact that R. Premadasa led the UNP and the country for a few years was not because of the democratic process. It was the outcome of the political crisis of the time. That could only be treated as a political accident and an aberration.

Between 1977 and 1994, the UNP exercised a reign of darkness and extreme cruelty. During that period, Sinhalese were killed by their tens of thousands. Equally, the war initiated in the arena of national oppression, vengefully took away lives of tens of thousands of Tamils. The UNP also sold out the country to imperialist open-economic exploitation and domination. The people were severely affected by economic burdens and political repression, and pushed to a position of desperation. As a result, the People's Alliance led by the SLFP and its leader Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge came to power.

At the time, the people welcomed the PA government with great expectations. They believed that it would provide a true alternative to the seventeen-year rule of darkness of the UNP. Even some supporters of the UNP, in the absence of an option, preferred the PA to come to power. But the PA, true to its class nature, established itself as an extension of the UNP. It escalated the war and continued to welcome the open economy and privatisation. The leftists who were partners in that government were rendered impotent as they thrust themselves to the lowest levels of political degradation.

During the PA regime between 1994 and 2001, the SLFP clearly demonstrated that it had moved far from its initial national bourgeois position. The PA had fully abandoned the few progressive, anti-imperialist economic and political positions that SLFP-led governments had adhered to in the 1960s and 1970s in the interest of national welfare. Its main policy had become the conduct of the war and facilitation of imperialist globalisation. It had thereby reached a state in which it was incapable of

stopping or finding an alternative for the decay of the national economy or national interests. While UNP during its 17-year regime had privatised 42 state and public sector organisations, the PA matched it by privatising 42 organisations during its 7-year regime, under the pretext of their operating at a loss. The fact that the war budget for the year 2000 was ninety million rupees is an indication of the depth to which the economy had been plunged by the war.

The UNP has consistently been the party that represented and served the interests of comprador capital and big capital, its current successor. While chauvinism ran in the blood of the UNP, it also enjoyed the confidence and faith of imperialism. Those in the leadership of that party never showed the slightest interest the national economy or national welfare. They have been big local capitalists and traders who received their local commission. Now they seek to surpass the present situation to introduce into the country every feature of imperialist globalisation. Ministers Milinda Moragoda and GL Peiris are the champions of the cause of bringing in American domination in the name of liberal democracy, and both have shown much interest in providing a base for capital investment by MNCs.

The SLFP is now not in a position to represent the national bourgeoisie. A sizeable section of the national bourgeoisie has itself become comprador bourgeois, and its interests dominate within the SLFP. A large part of national capital has been weakened by the open economic policy and the arrival of the MNCs. The SLFP is not in a position to represent national interests or the national bourgeoisie. Nor is it in a position to represent the peasants, small industrialists and other rural sections that have supported it. It had lost the faith of the working class by its refusal to implement the Workers' Charter, in order to protect the interests of the MNCs. It has earned the dislike and opposition of the minority nationalities by fiercely carrying forward the war effort.

The PA muffled the voice of its parliamentary left component, yielded completely to imperialism, and submitted to imperialist economic interests. Imperialism took full advantage of this to implement its hidden agenda of rendering the PA unpopular among the people. This was because the UNP was always the party that enjoyed the trust of the imperialists, who from the outset have been suspicious of the SLFP, in view of the national economic, political, social and cultural positions taken by it in the past and its alliance with the parliamentary left. However, these are bygone issues,

and it is inappropriate to claim that the SLFP still represents national bourgeois interests. When it is weak, it may superficially put forward a few policies to regain power. If genuine leftists fall for that and lose their way, they would degenerate by falling into the trap of parliamentary opportunism. At the same time, it would deflect the aim of developing an alternative left and democratic programme.

It is correct to act to demonstrate the might of the people in united struggles against imperialist globalisation on specific issues affecting national interests. It is absurd, however, to go beyond that and follow the trail of the PA in the hope that it would set up a progressive anti-UNP government. It is important that the Party remains clear in this matter. The party has past experience and been farsighted in this issue.

The UNP, with its record of seventeen-year rule of darkness based on its big bourgeois and chauvinistic position and has regained parliamentary power after seven years, with the support of imperialism. This time, it was able to form the government by forging an alliance called the United National Alliance with some Muslim and Tamil political parties. Four factors helped the UNP to succeed at the elections of December 2001. The first was the bitterness of the people towards the PA regime, which carried forward the war, economically burdened them, and implemented anti-people measures. The second was the pledge by the UNP to negotiate with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to bring about peace. The third was the desire and keenness of the forces of big capital in Sri Lanka and the various MNCs to restore UNP to power. The fourth was the whole hearted effort of the forces of imperialism led by America to bring to power the UNP, in which they placed their trust and faith.

It is eleven months since the UNA government led by the UNP came to power. Just one of the pledges made to the people has been implemented, owing to pressure of circumstances. That comprises steps taken about the national question that had developed into a war. The government, which signed a memorandum of understanding with the LTTE, has effected a ceasefire, removed the economic blockade, eased transport and brought to an end the high handed activities of the armed forces. It has also carried out the first stage of the negotiations in Thailand, with third party facilitation by Norway.

Four, objective and subjective, reasons can be given for the UNA arriving at this position. One is the realisation that it is not possible to carry forward the war to victory and the recognition of the lack of human resources, military infrastructure and the necessary arms. Secondly, the nineteen-year long war had wrecked the economy and sunk it to its lowest level so that foreign investors and western countries have been hesitant and unwilling to invest or to give economic aid. Thirdly, there was growing support among the people across the country for the campaign by the left and democratic forces against war and in support of negotiations and a political settlement. Fourthly, America had achieved what it could through promoting war in Sri Lanka and a situation had arisen where further gains required a climate of peace. In addition, in the wake of the September 11th attack, America, based on its experience, did not want further development of the LTTE as a powerful military organisation.

The LTTE too faced a variety of problems in its struggle and realised that the Tamil people had been reduced to a level where they could not take much more of the cruelties of war and that dissatisfaction was setting in, and had already expressed willingness for ceasefire and negotiations. Besides, fear that they may become isolated following the September 11th attack on America also propelled the LTTE towards the negotiating table.

The agreement of the government and the LTTE to a ceasefire and their arrival at the negotiating table through Norwegian third party facilitation should be welcomed. It has provided a turning point for the nineteen-year long war. It has also led to the realisation that there can be no solution to the national question through war.

From the outset, our Party has had a clear position on the war, and has always pointed to the class basis of the national contradiction and the consequent oppression. Our assessment has been that this national contradiction does not constitute a fundamental contradiction and that it evolved into the main contradiction owing to the intense chauvinistic oppression that transformed it into a war. While the Party accepted the need for struggle in resolving this main contradiction, it emphasised the position that at some stage there should be negotiations and a just political solution.

The Party has continuously insisted on an end to the war and the establishment, through negotiations, of full autonomy for a unified North-

East comprising the traditional homeland of the Tamils. It has carried out campaigns and struggles among the people, especially among the Sinhalese, on its own and in collaboration with other left and democratic forces. While, from time to time, it has pointed out to the Tamils that secession was not a feasible solution, it also clearly stated that the principal enemy was the chauvinist ruling class.

The Party had also emphasised that negotiations should be set in place through a third party and that neither India nor America deserved to be that third party. That was a reason why the Party firmly supported Norway's volunteering to be the third party and welcomed its acceptance by the government and the LTTE. At the same time, the Party insisted that Norwegian third party facilitation should not in any way be partial or in a manner that would lend itself to exploitation by any foreign imperialist force. When Tamil parties in the north and the JVP and the Sihala Urumaya in the south rejected and opposed Norwegian facilitation in order to make India the middleman, the Party emphasised the need for the Norwegian contribution.

When the Tamil chauvinistic Federal Party and the Tamil Congress united in their call for a separate state of Tamil Eelam, Marxist Leninist forces rejected it as not feasible. It was fair to reject a demand that did not suit the geo-political realities of Sri Lanka and could be taken advantage of by imperialist forces. However, by abandoning that demand subsequently, the Tamil United Liberation Front demonstrated that the demand was a mere ploy for it to win parliamentary seats.

The Tamil youth movements that took over the demand carried out struggles to achieve that goal through armed struggle. While India exploited these movements to serve its ends, the movements could not achieve anything for the Tamil people. In the end, they abandoned their demand and, in the pretext of joining the democratic mainstream, plunged headlong into parliamentary politics to assimilate with conservative Tamil chauvinistic politics. Although a few of the organisations gave the impression that they had left leanings, their ideology was in essence Tamil nationalism. At the same time, they were found to lend support to one or both of the governments that were conducting the war. They stood with the oppressor, in the pretext of opposing the LTTE.

The LTTE established itself among the Tamil people as a body that was distinct from these organisations. Military organisation, battle strategy, modern weaponry and communication capabilities were very strong in the LTTE. Being determined in struggle and uncompromisingly firm, it advanced in the face of chauvinistic military oppression. The young men and women who dedicated themselves to the struggle against chauvinistic oppression, fought bravely. Their enthusiasm earned for the LTTE a lasting place in the minds of the Tamil people.

At the same time, the LTTE deserves strong criticism and condemnation for its monolithic approach, denial of democracy and certain high-handed actions. Their political ideology is Tamil nationalism. Despite some progressive features, they have been unable to cast aside Tamil conservatism and the political and cultural trimmings that went with it. Its leadership remains a petit bourgeois leadership.

It is nevertheless remarkable that the stand of the LTTE has been one of uncompromising struggle against chauvinistic military oppression. In a situation where the national contradiction was the main contradiction, chauvinistic military oppression confronted the Tamil people as the main enemy. Under these conditions, our Party took the position that the armed struggle coming from among the Tamil people could not be rejected for any reason. Simultaneously, it opposed strongly the wrong position taken by the Tamil movements that chose side with Indian regional hegemony. The youth movements that took to armed struggle in the pretext of fighting against national oppression assumed that they had the right to act as they wished and resorted to anti-people activities. The Party denounced, criticised and opposed these, from the standpoint of the people. Under no condition did the Party deviate from its Marxist Leninist stand and go behind these youth movements or seek unity with them. Even when strong pressures were applied and serious threats made, the Party persevered in its individuality and continued as a Marxist Leninist party worth the trust of the people. It should be noted here that, while the Party differed in both ideology and policy with Tamil nationalism, it neither took positions that stood in opposition to the struggle against chauvinistic oppression nor adopt policies that would strengthen the forces of the chauvinistic ruling class.

In that sense, our Party critically supported the relentless struggle carried out by the LTTE on behalf of the Tamil people. As a result, we were

branded as ‘Tigers’ by elements speaking on behalf of the rulers and forces hostile to the LTTE. We, nevertheless, did not fail to support what was just and what was right at any stage. Equally, we did not hesitate to oppose what was wrong and against the people. This has been our Marxist Leninist position. Our Party suffered some losses as a result, but we did not abandon our calm or far sight.

It is not wrong to consider the LTTE to be the foremost representative of the Tamil people, on whose behalf it has struggled relentlessly. The other Tamil parties had compromised with chauvinism, and sing the praise of Indian hegemony and kowtow before it. In today’s context, it is correct that the talks are between the two parties and are carried out under Norwegian third party facilitation and observation. The lifting of the ban on the LTTE was also a measure that was most appropriate to the initiation and unhindered progress of the talks.

The first stage of the current negotiations has concluded very briefly. The stages to follow should be driven towards a just solution of the problem. An interim administrative structure is essential to the reconstruction of the North-East that is in a state of ruin. Many valuable lives have been lost in the chauvinistic violence and the struggle against it. There has been a severe destruction of property and displacement of people in their hundreds of thousands. An estimated 75,000 people have lost their lives because of the cruel war. From the LTTE an estimated 17,000 fighters have sacrificed their lives to the struggle. Similarly, thousands of fighters from other organisations have sacrificed their lives. Up to around 25,000 fighters sacrificed their lives in this struggle. In all, 100,000 lives of people and fighters have been lost during the past nineteen years.

The class-related fact that the overwhelming majority of the young men and women, workers, peasants, fisher-folk and others who lost their lives in the struggle against chauvinistic oppression have been from families of socially depressed working masses should be clearly understood. Let us remember that the upper class elite and the upper-middle classes have sent abroad their offspring. Let us also remember that those who faced the various forms of oppression and suffered losses were mostly the ordinary working people. It is necessary to take into account the class-based contribution of the people to the struggle that has been carried out as a national struggle. That is why the Party sees the nineteen-year war as not

just concerning the struggle of the LTTE but also the oppression of the people.

It should be remembered that the struggle for self-determination in its full sense means a struggle not merely against chauvinism but also against imperialism. Thus, the struggle for self-determination of the Tamil people should embody uncompromising opposition to imperialism. At the same time, it is important to note that the very self-determination for the people, for which there is struggle, has embodied in it democracy, freedom and human rights for that people.

Thus, it is important that the talks and the solution achieved through them should be such that they are just, acceptable to the people and aimed at an enduring peace that would avert the breaking out of war once again. The LTTE has clearly stated its position that it is willing to accept regional autonomy on the basis of self determination in place of their earlier demand for a separate state of Tamil Eelam. However, how willing the forces of the ruling classes are to come down from their chauvinistic stand to grant such autonomy remains an unsettled question.

It is also important at this point to find solutions to the problems of the Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, which too are part of the national question. As we have already been pointing out, It is important to approach the problems of the Muslims sensibly and in a way that does not allow room for the forces of chauvinism to benefit, as in the past, by making the Tamils and the Muslims clash in their home territory. It is important to bear in mind that the North-East is homeland to the Muslims too and that their religious and cultural individuality should be respected and cherished. It is important to ensure that conservative Tamil chauvinistic tendencies do not come to the fore to ignore of the rights of the Muslims. At the same time, it is necessary to view the solution broad-mindedly so that the Muslim leadership seeking to safeguards their own class interests could not drag the Muslim population into their narrow religious line of thought and religious fundamentalism. Our Party emphasises that a just solution should also include autonomous structures for the Muslims.

Sri Lanka's Hill Country Tamils have developed into a nationality. They have transcended the state of being a community of workers of Indian origin and secured the status of a nationality. They have been subjected to class and national oppression by the ruling forces of chauvinism in this

country. The history of the refusal and rejection of their day-to-day needs relating to land, housing, education, health, employment and culture since their disenfranchisement in 1947 continues. Although citizenship and right to franchise have been won through struggles, a part of that problem remains unresolved. In the meantime, the problems of land, housing, education and employment continue as basic problems. These issues have been dealt with from a chauvinistic perspective by the ruling classes. The question of wages and employment-related issues that are connected with it are serious problems facing the Hill Country Tamil people.

Thus, our party emphasises that, today, when talks are taking place for the resolution of the national question, a solution to the national problem of the Hill Country Tamils has to be found on the basis of autonomy. As we have been pointing out before, that solution has to be found, bearing in mind the environment in which the region inhabited by the Hill Country Tamils is situated and the reality that they live amid Sinhalese. Statutory and administrative structures are essential to enable the Hill Country Tamils to enjoy their national rights with full freedom and to protect, nurture and develop their linguistic and cultural features. These are what we have been continually emphasising as autonomous structures.

It is essential that a strong autonomous structure is set up, linking the regions of the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces where Hill Country Tamils live. This is because it is in these regions that the Hill Country Tamils live in concentration. Where their population is diffuse, solutions should be sought in the form of suitable autonomous units within and outside the Hill Country.

The opposition of sections of the Tamil leadership in the Hill Country and in the North-East to taking up the problems of the Hill Country Tamils in the current negotiations on the national question is absurd. It has long been accepted that the question of the Hill Country Tamils is part of the national question. The forces that are bent on preserving their dominance and are concerned about forfeiting their political status as well as those who are involved in political bargains with the chauvinistic ruling classes insist that there should be no such discussion. Our Party, however, emphasises that under the present circumstances, the whole of the national question should be taken up for discussion.

If the national question concerning the Hill Country Tamil nationality is not resolved by using the present climate of negotiations, its resolution will extract a high price in the future. The trade union and parliamentary leadership in the Hill Country are acting only to safeguard their positions, accumulate wealth and to protect the interests of traders, senior officials and intellectuals. The Hill Country Tamils are being subjected to fraud and deceit. It is instead necessary to strengthen the political leadership of class struggle. Our Party is acting with the aim of emphasising through that leadership the national rights of the Hill Country Tamil nationality and building up mass movements and struggles for those demands.

While our Party welcomes the negotiations in Thailand, it is mindful of the favourable and unfavourable features. While an interim administration is essential, attempts to grant it and to drag on the matter of finding a political solution could have undesirable consequences. Besides, the government appears to be adopting a line of identifying itself with American interests, while appeasing India. It is not acceptable to descend to a position of accepting things because they are offered under American or Indian pressure. While there is a need for give and take, and mutual understanding, compromise leading to surrender is totally unacceptable.

Further, America is seeking to use the negotiations gain a foothold in Sri Lanka on the political and economic fronts and, specifically, the military front. The UNF government is giving its fullest co-operation to this. Plans are afoot for the Palaly military base, Trincomalee naval base, an air base in the South and the Colombo harbour. America is planning to control, not merely South Asia, but the entire Asia-Pacific region. Through that, there is threat to the independence, sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka.

Because of this, India, which seeks to keep the South Asian region under its control, is showing hostility towards the LTTE. Out of concern that American domination will be established in this region, India is venturing to contain it. It is for that reason that India is covertly seeking to subvert the talks in Thailand. Unlike before, it is unable to use the Tamil parties to establish its dominance. Hence, Indian policy makers are now involved in using forces of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism such as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and Sihala Urumaya, and Buddhist social organisations for the purpose.

We have always opposed Indian and American activities with Sri Lanka as the focus to serve their respective interests of regional and global domination. This position taken by us will be carried forward with even greater firmness. Although Sri Lanka is a small country, its location is of strategic importance. That is why India and America are competing for Sri Lanka. Our country should not fall victim to such competition. The independence, sovereignty and integrity of Sri Lanka should not be compromised in any way.

Our Party will accept neither American infiltration behind the scene of the peace negotiations nor the disruption of the negotiations to pave the way for Indian hegemony. It would emphasise struggle against each of them.

We should, further point out the importance of keeping a watchful eye over the environment of the peace talks in Thailand and future trends. It is becoming clearer by the day that America has plans to penetrate the whole of Sri Lanka. The government has already started to wave the green flag for it. Some agreements have already been signed. A defence treaty is under preparation. A great danger faces the whole country through that.

What stand the LTTE would take under such circumstances is anxiously awaited. So far, its leadership struggled from a petit-bourgeois standpoint. A petit-bourgeois stand could last only as long as there is struggle. Beyond that, it could take one of two routes. It could progress along either a progressive left-democratic path or a right-wing route of compromise with the big bourgeoisie and forces of global domination.

It is noteworthy that, when the LTTE controlled the Jaffna peninsula, Vanni and some regions of the East, it gave priority to national interests. The way was shown for self-reliant economic development through local production, conservation of land, water and forest resources, and the development of resources. These were characteristic of the national bourgeoisie.

What would happen to this under the interim administration or autonomy, achieved as solution to the national question remains uncertain. On the question of partnership for development, what will be the path for the North-East? Would it be a path in accord with globalisation? Would it be that of Singapore, if one were to go by the example of some countries? Would it be the path taken by Cuba? The future of the LTTE would depend on the choice of the correct path for the development of the North-East.

Comrades!

Thus far, we considered the position of the Party on the national contradiction, which is the main contradiction confronted by the country and the people, in a climate of war. Now let us turn to the fundamental contradiction that has subjected the whole country and its people to unrecoverable problems and unbearable burdens.

Today an illusion is being promoted that democracy, freedom and human rights exist in this country and that people could organise their lives on their bases. Parliamentary democracy, elections to parliament and electoral administration are maintained in practice to give credibility to the illusion of democracy and to conceal the underlying fundamental and real issues.

Although landowners and the owners of capitalist and imperialist wealth are a minority, it is their fundamental class interests that are safeguarded. What is carefully preserved is a system of government designed for the interests, needs, safety and endurance of the wealthy classes that enjoy wealth and comfort.

As a result, the day-to-day life of the overwhelming majority of the people suffers lack of wages to match work, poverty, shortages, crises, unemployment, landlessness and homelessness, lack of proper access to education, poor sanitation and serious illnesses, and is unable to meet the various requirements of human life. Consequently, the burdens and misery of life experienced by workers, peasants, fisher-folk, state and private sector employees, teachers, students, women and all classes of working people are increasing by the day. Over 40% of the population of the country lives below the poverty line. Sri Lanka now has the world's highest suicide rate. The main reason for it has been found to be poverty: three million educated young men and women are without employment.

The plight of the peasantry is one of total abandonment. Although the country has traditionally been agricultural, the situation continues where it still looks to foreign countries for rice, its main staple, and other foods. There are no plans to develop and defend our agriculture and the industries that support it. Programmes that existed at the most basic level have been allowed to degenerate and then abandoned. The agricultural and small industrial programmes under the Mahaweli Scheme that were opened with much fanfare are in ruin and the people settled there are suffering from poverty and deadly diseases such as malaria. Concessions and subsidies

provided for irrigation and the purchase of seed grain and fertiliser have been gradually withdrawn. Amid this hardship, 1 kg of paddy is sold for a mere Rs 13.00. Milled rice from that paddy fetches between Rs 35.00 and 40.00 in the market. The profit of middlemen and traders is two to three times the earnings of the peasant. Besides this, rice is being imported.

Subsidiary food production, which once fulfilled the needs of the country, has been wrecked by foreign imports. Peasants in the North, the South and the Hill Country who took to the cultivation of subsidiary crops to make the country self-sufficient in subsidiary food items have been pauperised. In all, production for self-sufficiency has been forced to be abandoned. For instance, the World Bank has given guidance and advice to systematically run down rice production. To prevent the country from achieving self-sufficiency in food and make it rely on foreign countries for food is a neo-colonial conspiracy. It is also part of the plan under the globalisation programme to import varieties of packeted food supplied by MNCs and make them the food of this country. The scheme to ruin local coconut production is another aspect of this programme. Through this, it is expected to eliminate the consumption of coconut-based products in this land.

Besides these, their intention is also to cause decline and disruption in the production of tea, rubber and coconut, the three plantation crops that occupy an important place in the export economy of Sri Lanka. The purpose is to sell the planted land to the MNCs to produce crops of no benefit to us, which yield large profits to the MNCs. Already thousands of acres of productive agricultural land has been sold to foreign companies and MNCs. This situation persists.

The World Bank and the IMF provide, support, guidance and advice in a planned way to the government to ring the death knell to the country's agriculture, which could be the foundation to the national economy, and to push the peasants into worse poverty.

The small and large industries that provided strength and support to the national economy through deliberate neglect since the 1980's. Because of liberalised imports, the small industries, which were unable to compete with imported foreign goods, were allowed to perish. Large industries were taken away from the hands of the state and public sector and handed over to MNCs through the process of privatisation. Hasty steps are being taken

to privatise the remaining ventures. Acts of Parliament are in waiting to privatise soon the Electricity Board, the Insurance Corporation, the postal service, the Railway, the Petroleum Corporation, the health service and education, among others. Colombo Harbour is being privatised in parts.

The working class of Sri Lanka has a tradition of struggle, in which great struggles for the basic rights of the workers had led to victory. Both the political parties that came to power succeeded in wrecking the working class movement. The so-called leftists who entered parliament became their partners in this act. They rejected the truth that democratic trade union rights are won through struggle and instead descended to the position that they are secured in the form of leftovers granted in return for support for the ruling party. In the General Strike of 1980, JR Jayawardane and the UNP wreaked revenge on the working class by throwing out thousands of workers and other state employees and unleashing oppressive measures against them. On the other hand, whenever the SLFP was in power, the parliamentary leftists took the wrong position that working class struggle is unnecessary. Through this, they blunted the fighting spirit of the working class and paved the way for the big bourgeois UNP to set up trade unions and keep a section of the workers on its side. In the hill country, the Ceylon Workers Congress and S Thondaman deflected and blunted the revolutionary fighting spirit of the hill country plantation workers by arguing that trade union struggles were unnecessary and that prayer campaigns and satyaagraha campaigns were adequate, and used the workers as manure for their parliamentary political career. Compromising trade unionists like Bala Tampoe have made it their style of trade unionism to make brave speeches and then concede and compromise. Thus, it should be said that parliamentary politics, parliamentary political parties and trade unionists have succeeded in sacrificing at the altar of capitalist interests the Sri Lankan working class and its ability to fight.

Since 1980, privatisation and the arrival of MNCs cleared the way for the exploitation and extraction of the labour at low wages and for long hours. Trade union rights have been denied in more than one hundred companies in the Free Trade Zone and elsewhere. The right to form trade unions is legally denied. This has enabled NGOs to operate welfare organisation and submit through them memoranda pleading for minor concessions. The workers, on the other hand, are bound hand and feet so that they cannot fight for their legal trade union rights. Work is parcelled out to workers in

these factories on a contract basis so that they are made to work hard, while small financial inducements are given to deceive them. Mandatory two-hour overtime per day has been legalised recently. Women, especially, are severely affected by such slave driving and exploitation. Women of rural background employed in the MNCs also suffer sexual abuse.

Today, all features of imperialist globalisation have been introduced into the country. Besides the institution of the open economic policy and privatisation, to make them endure, there is also the propagation of the political, social and cultural ideology. The government and the state apparatus are suitably structured to cherish and protect them, while it is said that a free and democratic government that defends human rights is there to administer them.

The return of the UNP is a blessing to imperialist globalisation. The talks and the environment of peace have been made possible in a way that would favour its implementation. It is nevertheless true that the environment of peace that favours globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation is also one that gives great solace to the people who have been living a life of misery under the nineteen-year war. But it is important to recognise that the intention of imperialism is to establish itself in the North-East through this and that it is in the end a threat to the struggle for self-determination. American imperialism, in particular, is out to make its way by fully exploiting the current situation. It is putting into practice plans for that in quick succession, and the government headed by the UNP is giving its fullest co-operation to it. The government led by Ranil Wickremasinghe is very enthusiastic about selling out the country in its totality to America and is making a variety of agreements to that end.

This situation has placed India, which is seeking hegemony in this region, in an awkward position. The rulers of India, while subjecting their country to American globalisation, are furious about the prospect of losing to America their desired control over South Asia. India is struggling with the dilemma of an inability to confront America directly and unwillingness to accept American dominance in South Asia. Consequently, it is exploring the possibility of salvaging something for its hegemonic interests through wrecking the peace process.

The Ranil Wickremasinghe government is seeking to placate the leaders of the Hindu fascist regime in India by regularly sending ministers to India and

through visits by the Prime Minister, so that that it does not appear to antagonise India. It has also offered the oil tank farm in Trincomalee to India and in the process of privatising the Petroleum Corporation to hand it over to India. The Indo-Sri Lanka trade agreement too is being reactivated. The proposed Raamesvaram-Talaimannaar Bridge too involves Indian hegemonic interests. Competition between India and America for Sri Lanka is, in the meantime, growing in intensity, and its echoes have serious implications for the country and its people.

The opposition parties are unable to mobilise the people against imperialist globalisation. This is because the opposition party, the PA, during its rule showed the green light to all aspects of globalisation. The parliamentary leftists who were part of that government exposed their own decadence by arguing that globalisation was inevitable and had good features. Only the leftists outside parliament continued to oppose globalisation.

It is important to talk about the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna at this point. It is over thirty years since its founding. Not only did it introduce itself as a Marxist-Leninist movement, it also carried out armed insurrections in 1971 and 1988-89, where young men and women participated. Its leadership was petit bourgeois in class outlook. The two insurrections took the lives of nearly a hundred thousand youth and led to the cruel annihilation of the entire leadership.

It was after that the new leadership of the JVP took the parliamentary road. Not surprisingly, the JVP seemed to be a fresh hope in the minds of people who wanted a political alternative to the two major political parties that have dominated the parliamentary political scene. The JVP leadership, however, gradually abandoned their Marxist slogans in favour of Sinhala chauvinist slogans. It did not hesitate to put forward as policy its formerly covert nationalistic and chauvinistic positions. As a result, it succeeded in securing a considerable number of seats in local councils and provincial councils, and winning fifteen seats in parliament.

Today the JVP has become a party with a national bourgeois leadership. Since the SLFP, which enjoyed the status of the party of the national bourgeoisie, has abandoned national interests and thus lost its credibility in that respect, the JVP is seeking to fill that space. Sinhala nationalism and opposition to secession enjoy the highest priority in its programme. Consequently, it argues that the LTTE is a terrorist organisation and insists

that, therefore, there should be no negotiations with the LTTE. It is whipping up anti-peace campaigns by putting forward the demand that there should be no climate of peace and that the war should be pursued until the LTTE is destroyed and the country saved from secession. To this end, it is willing to collaborate with the SLFP.

What is amusing is that now India uses the JVP for its regional hegemonic purposes, the JVP which took a bitterly anti-Indian position during both its armed revolts. The JVP that also acted against the Hill Country Tamils, calling them instruments of Indian expansionism, today wants India to play the middleman in the Sri Lankan national question. This has blown off their Marxist mask and washed out their red dye. Having surpassed the leaders of the old left in their political degeneration, they are now intent on making their journey towards state power as defenders of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism. It is a ridiculous charade that they retain a Muslim MP and a Tamil MP in their ranks in the same way that the two main political parties have Muslim and Tamil MPs in their ranks. The JVP stands politically naked as never before, and the people are discovering this through every word and deed of the JVP.

As for the Tamil political parties, they have always taken the line of the dominant land-owning caste-minded elite. They have always continued in politics by forging unity with the Sinhala high-caste elitist political forces. Starting from those before Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, to today's Anandasangari, Sampanthan and Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam (the grandson of GG Ponnambalam), what appears to continue is the politics of conservatism of the dominant Tamil classes. All of them wield the mighty weapon of 'Tamil consciousness' that embodies the Tamils, the Tamil language, Tamil culture and Tamil greatness to conceal their own class and caste based stands and to deceive the Tamil people.

The emergence of the national contradiction in Sri Lanka and national oppression have been negative influences that helped those who gave an impression of struggle to display of the weapon of 'Tamil consciousness'. However, their pretence was exposed after a while. Nevertheless, the Tamil conservative, caste-based political ideology of dominance cherished by them continues. The objective reality is that it also exists among the once armed militant Tamil organisations that later took to parliamentary politics. It is not possible to find any left, democratic, progressive features in these Tamil parties limited by their Tamil nationalist point of view. Not

one Tamil party has uttered a word critical of imperialist globalisation or privatisation or their grave consequences. Now as then, they have made it their political stand to serve and to please the British and American imperialists and Indian hegemony. One could thus recognise the class stand of these Tamil parties and their place in politics.

The constitutional crisis in Sri Lanka is at boil. Power is in the hands of the two sides of the ruling classes: executive powers with the President and legislative powers with Parliament. There is fierce contest between the two. The Prime Minister is trying to curtail the powers of the President and the President is seeking to dissolve parliament. The UNP, which introduced the executive presidential system, today wants to curtail presidential powers because they do not suit the UNP. At the same time, the UNP does not want to abolish altogether the executive presidential system. This is only a political chess game between two sections of the ruling classes, each seeking to maintain itself in power. There is nothing in it for the people. Besides, the ruling classes are exploiting this opportunity to effect in new ways the denial of democratic, trade union and human rights. There is a danger of the denial of democratic, trade union and human rights being put into effect on an increasing scale, in order to implement and reinforce globalisation and privatisation.

The middle classes, that hoped that the economic crisis would be eased and the cost of living reduced when the UNP comes to power, and the ordinary people who expected that their living conditions would improve are disappointed. The workers and peasants are moving towards the condition where they need to mobilise against the present conditions. Under these conditions, it is necessary to mobilise people for mass struggles rather than to mark a cross on the ballot paper. That is the task and responsibility facing honest leftists and democratic forces.

It is important for us to consider the condition of the left movement in Sri Lanka. A left movement that was once a subject of pride and trust among the working class and oppressed people is today reduced to a state of total weakness. Trotskyite sectarianism and the parliamentary right opportunism that grew out of it have cast the Samasamajists into an abyss. The parliamentary road and the political decadence associated with it have driven the Communist Party to levels lower than that of social democracy. The two aforesaid traditional left parties, by joining hands with the SLFP on three occasions, have totally degraded themselves. Today the left

movement is weak within parliament and without. It is still in a situation where it has nothing but electoral politics to cling on.

Our Party has since early 1990s emphasised the need for unity among the left parties based on a minimum programme, and acted to realise it. From the early 1990s, it joined hands with Marxist Leninist forces and carried out in unity some joint activities. Then, in the mid-1990s, the Party joined hands with some Trotskyite parties and Marxist Leninist groups to form the New Left Front. Opposition to war, a political solution based on the right to self-determination, opposition to privatisation and the path of mass struggle were the main slogans of the NLF.

The NLF brought fresh confidence to the minds of the people. The expression of that confidence manifested itself in different ways. The forces of the ruling classes on the one hand and the JVP on the other worked hard to wreck the NLF. Not surprisingly, the Trotskyite Nava Samasamaja Party (NSSP) and its leader Vickramabahu Karunaratne fell victim to that effort. Karunaratne bargained with the UNP to get himself elected as Speaker of the Provincial Council for the Western Province, and disgraced himself. Then he went behind the JVP to secure a parliamentary seat. When these attempts failed, Karunaratne thoroughly exposed his Trotskyite sectarian opportunism by wrecking the unity of the NLF. The words and looks of Vickramabahu Karunaratne could be revolutionary, but what dominate his deeds are Trotskyite sectarianism and his ego. Such tendencies run contrary to the spirit of a united front.

A quarter century of development of the national contradiction, the consequent war, the nationalist ideological initiative and the armed struggle have severely hurt the development of a Marxist Leninist party. It was, however, possible to secure to an extent the position of our Party in the North, East, the Hill Country and Colombo. Efforts to establish the Party among the Sinhalese were unsuccessful. Although our Party has recognised some Marxist Leninist groups and worked hard to develop them, these groups were unable to develop organisationally or at a mass level. While there was much opportunity to establish and develop a Marxist Leninist political organisation among the Sinhalese, the groups and individuals failed to act with confidence. They wasted their time and confused themselves further by indulging in endless analyses, debates and discussions. They were further ruined by the influence of NGOs. Today there is not even a low level organisation among the Sinhalese to advance

the Marxist Leninist movement through organisational work. NGOs are in the lead in plunging into ideological and theoretical confusion even the few efforts made by individuals. The impact of post-modernist thought is significant in this respect. Despite this, we firmly believe that Marxist Leninist ideology and a Marxist Leninist party would emerge and develop among the Sinhalese. It is essential that we relentlessly persevere in our efforts in that direction.

The number of the so-called voluntary NGOs and the extent of their activity in Sri Lanka are excessive. The ideas spread by them are vicious. They function through the rejection of social contradictions and oppression and the need to struggle, and divert the attention of the people towards superficial issues to induce the faith that reformist relief could resolve problems. The NGOs pretend to do voluntary social service, using funds provided on a massive scale from the West, with ulterior motives. Degenerate ex-leftists are most willingly employed by these NGOs, which deftly carry out their anti-Marxist propaganda through them. A few former Marxist-Leninists who joined these NGOs in the vain hope that they could use them have been bought over and reduced to mercenaries. In thought and deed, they are hostile to the Marxist Leninist movement and the Party.

The NGOs, which have been propelled to the fore in the wake of the temporary setback to Marxism and socialism, act very subtly as agents of imperialism, behind a façade of service. Some of them are hell bent on propagating post-modernist thinking. They deny the existence of class struggle, reject the prospect of total social liberation, and insist on viewing each problem in isolation from the rest. They reject the need for a proletarian party, while encouraging the causes of nationalism, Dalitism, feminism, environmentalism and pure art that transcends politics. The NGOs, which work on this basis, are enabled to operate with financial influence. In summary, post-modernism and NGOs work to negate social liberation, social change, the political leadership for such change and a Marxist Leninist party. It is our duty to expose and to combat their venomous nature and their dangerous anti-people activities.

The educational system of the country has undergone gradual changes since the old colonial educational system. The favourable aspects of educational development have been free education, education in the mother tongue up to the university, the taking over of schools by the government and reforms in educational policy. Through these, the children of urban

and rural working people secured the opportunity for education. Today there are thirteen universities across the country and there are in addition several institutions of higher education.

It is amid these that questions arise as to what the educational policy of the country is and what the basis is on which it has been built. What exists in essence is an educational system that is subject to constraints imposed by the existing social set-up. Despite some reforms, it has fundamentally remained as a system to serve the interests of the comfortably off, upper-class elite. Discrimination based on nationality, language and religion has continued under this educational system, which has also contributed to the development of the national question into a struggle and then war.

The educational system has been subjected to severe ill effects and its degeneration has become noticeable. Re-colonisation is being established through neo-colonialism. The World Bank dictates the educational policy for the country in the name of 'educational reform'. English is gaining importance at the expense of the mother tongue. Free education is yielding to education for a fee. Education to serve the national economy and the development of the country in all fields is being converted into education to serve the needs of the MNCs under the guise of globalisation. In the name of computing and information technology, the educational policy, rather than affirm itself as one to serve national development and the welfare of the people, is being designed to serve the wishes and the needs of America and the West. It is necessary to pay attention to this and carry forward among the people the movement to counter this change in educational policy.

The country faces social decay on an unprecedented scale. Murder, robbery and drug abuse are widespread. Sexual abuse and murder of women have become daily ritual. Abuse of children is common, within the family circle and outside. Planned assassination, robbery, kidnap, sexual torture, and trafficking, distribution and sale of drugs are done through underground gangs. Police reports reveal that these anti-social gangs have in their midst a majority of the 40,000 deserters from the armed forces. It is important to note that they possess weapons and have been trained to use them. There are also parliamentary politicians behind these gangs.

Some who analyse the causes for the such anti-social degeneration point their fingers at lack of religious education, lack of teaching of moral values

and failure to participate in religious observances. Many do not appreciate that the cause for anti-social degeneration is uneven social structure based on exploitation and problems such as poverty, unemployment and unjustly low wages that rise from them. The trend that is encouraged in today's social set-up is to earn money, increase profit, indulge in luxury and glorify selfishness. The effects of globalisation work in ways that favour this trend. Literature, cinema, theatre, magazines, television, newspapers, views, news and pictures are presented in ways that encourage social decay. Advances in high technology in the field of communication have been exploited to deflect the attention of people from economic, political, social and cultural issues. These are not accidental, but well planned activities of the imperialist-capitalist ruling classes.

A potential social crisis in our social set-up is the problem of emigration. Under the conditions of the national question developing into a struggle and then war, several hundred thousand left the country under the 'open door' economic policy. People have sought shelter as refugees in neighbouring India. Similarly, a large number of people, especially Tamils, settled in Europe, the Americas and Australia as refugees. They pointed to the conflict and war here to make their claims for political asylum, but only a small fraction secured the status of political refugee. The capitalist regimes that classified them as 'economic refugees' granted them the right to remain and extracted from them hard labour in jobs that were the least in demand and at low wages.

In the context of the lack of social security of this country and the high exchange-value fetched by the money earned abroad, the number of emigrants rose further. As a result, the conditions for immigrants changed. Steps have been taken to curb immigration, and those who have already entered are subjected to restrictions, pressure and deportation.

However, the plight of the more than five hundred thousand people of our country who have migrated remains uncertain. The threat of the next generation losing their ties with their motherland along with various aspects of their national, linguistic and cultural identity is serious. While socially conscious elements in countries where the immigrants live in large numbers are active in preserving their identity, their efforts, largely, cannot be said to be successful in reaching all. This is because the people from our country are divided as Sinhalese and Tamils as well as based on caste and village of origin, and are thus unable to unite among themselves. A

precondition for their becoming politically conscious is that they should forge closer ties with the Marxist and left movements in those countries.

Thus, the devising our policies should also have a clear stand concerning those who have emigrated. Members and supporters of our Party who live abroad should pay greater attention to these matters. Through that, our Party would be able to arrive at clearly defined positions.

Environmental pollution and putrefaction, resulting from the accelerating imperialist globalisation, have become dangers facing the countries of the Third World. The natural resources of our beautiful country are being destroyed under conditions of plunder by MNCs. Factories set up with scant regard for human life and the poisonous effluents from them are damaging the land, water and air, and human life. The upper Kotmale hydropower scheme and the proposed thermal power plant in Trincomalee are examples of plans for polluting the environment and damaging natural resources. Deforestation and the development of beaches for tourism too are environmental issues. The cities are already close to the peak of environmental pollution. Now globalisation is reaching out to small towns and villages, and unlimited imports have led to increased consumption of plastics. MNCs will commit any anti-human act of destruction of nature to ensure massive profits. Their activities have the fullest backing of the imperialist countries, and ‘environmentalism’ is something that is intertwined with imperialist exploitation and its politics of domination. Therefore, we need to spread education and knowledge on environmental issues so that the people will be prepared to oppose schemes that could cause environmental pollution.

Our Party already has a clear stand on the question of art and literature, and been in the lead in its implementation. The Progressive Writers Movement, which had a positive impact on art and literature in the 1950s and into the 1960s, degenerated in the 1960s into an aimless form of humanitarian art and literature to suit reformist parliamentary politics. It was reduced to a group of bards singing the praise of governments in which the leftists were partners, and became barren in content. In the meantime, People’s Art and Literature started to develop through revolutionary mass struggles, and a trend of creating literature through identifying social contradictions in terms of the class struggle emerged.

In the Sri Lankan literary arena, there has always been a struggle between the line proclaiming 'art for art's sake' and the line proclaiming 'all art is for the people's sake'. The bitter struggle on the literary front between conservatism, pedantry, traditionalism and elitism on the one hand and progressive thought, the language of the oppressed, native flavour and people's literature on the other took place in the plane of art and literature.

At the same time, a tradition of national literature was developed and established in the process of struggle against the trash of bulk literature from India. Through that, the literature of critical realism flourished in Sri Lankan Tamil writing. Critical realist literature, which was the main strand of People's Literature, established in Sri Lanka a serious literary base. It added to its wealth the new literary forms and the literary sweep that emerged alongside the revolutionary mass struggles of the 1960s. This terrain of people's literature is still holding its ground in Sri Lankan writing, and we should bear in mind that we need to shoulder the great responsibility of combating the decadent art and literature thrown up by the climate of imperialist globalisation. Quality writing in Sri Lanka has been on the side of the people in these struggles, and writers and artists have made valuable contributions.

Our Party and the Marxist-Leninist position

Comrades!

Thus far, we put forward our assessment of the national situation. Now we need to discuss the functioning of the Party and the tasks that wait to be carried through. It is important for this Fourth National Congress to pay close attention to this matter.

To look back at the continuity of the Party, we need to go into the early 1960's. The new Communist Party was founded in 1964 by rejecting the political line of the old Communist Party that supported the decision of the revisionist Soviet Communist Party to take the parliamentary path and peaceful progress to socialism and to enter into peaceful coexistence with imperialism. This party emphasised the path of upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and achieving socialism by progressing towards social transformation by uniting the peasantry and all toiling masses under the leadership of the working class through revolutionary struggles against feudal, capitalist and imperialist forces. This new Marxist

Leninist party established itself under the leadership of pioneering leaders including comrade N. Sanmugathasan and others.

Under its leadership, workers, peasants and people subject to caste oppression carried forward various mass struggles in the South, the North and in the Hill Country. The revolutionary mass struggles that were initiated and guided by that Marxist Leninist party under the revolutionary conditions that prevailed nationally and internationally, and the lessons and experiences obtained from them are most valuable. Our Marxist Leninist New Democratic Party emerged from such revolutionary tradition.

Following the revolutionary mass struggles carried forward by the Marxist Leninist Communist Party since its founding in 1964, serious contradictions emerged on issues of ideology and the political organisation of the party and led to inner party struggle. Since these issues could not be resolved satisfactorily, we established ourselves in 1978 as the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left). The name of the Party was changed to New Democratic Party at the Second National Congress of the Party held in 1991.

During the past twenty-four years, our Party, with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as its guiding ideology, has established itself as a revolutionary party through its valiant swim against the current. On the one hand, oppression and political crises that emerged from national contradictions suppressed the people and, on the other, Marxism and socialism faced a temporary setback and stagnation in the international arena. Marxist Leninist parties in all countries had to face several trials and challenges, and its impact affected the development of our Party. It should be remembered here that our Party, nevertheless, preserved its Marxist Leninist ideological position amid severe trials and developed by facing various crises.

From the time that our Party was founded, the national question had begun to sharpen and come to the fore. The chauvinistic feudal and capitalist ruling class transformed chauvinism into military oppression. At the opposite end, Tamil nationalism confronted chauvinistic military oppression through armed struggle. During the past quarter of a century, the war had been extended and democratic and human rights denied and crushed in several ways. The seventeen-year rule of the UNP (1977-1994) was a rule of darkness. The People's Alliance government (1994-2001)

that succeeded it, further intensified the war and led the country along the road to disaster. In all, the hands of national oppression were active in the North-East and the Hill Country. On another side, the country was being gobbled up through liberalisation, privatisation and activities of MNCs. In the above environment, our Party had to face several practical problems in the regions where it carried forward its political work. Chauvinistic military oppression created a situation in which the people were compelled to support the armed nationalist struggle, beyond considerations of right and wrong, and long-term view. This hindered the progress in unity based on class of workers, peasants, people subject to caste oppression, women, and other working people. Also, the increase in income generated through the emigration of several hundred thousand Tamils to western countries had a variety of effects on not only lower middle class families but also worker and peasant families, and led to changes. Because of this, there was counterproductive degeneration at the level of social thought and the arena of class politics. The thinking of the upwardly mobile middle class took a central place. However, the people and villages that were an exception to this condition remained backward socially and as a class, and experienced the worst effects of the war.

The liberalisation and privatisation that came into effect in the 1980's and the activities of imperialist globalisation to defend and carry them forward served to blunt and deflect social interest, humanitarianism, social thought, socio-political liberation, social transformation and other such matters. Propaganda was carried out that Marxism and its politics of class struggle have been enfeebled and scepticism was cultivated. Much publicity is now given to vain expectations and false confidence about the deceptive economic progress and to cultural decadence. There is a visible increase in religious beliefs and associated propaganda and the spread of superstition at the social level.

At the same time, information technology has been used to give publicity to globalisation at international and national levels and to intensify campaigns to deflect and to blunt the thinking of the people. The radio, television, newspapers, cinema, magazines and other such literary publications give prominence to imperialist globalisation and reactionary matters that support it.

Our Party, which is the only Marxist Leninist party of the Sri Lankan left, has been carrying forward its tasks amid these conditions. Our work has

been carried out in the North-East, the Hill Country and Colombo regions. This is something special too. In these regions, the Party, by strengthening its organisation, has carried forward several mass struggles and campaigns through mass organisations. All the struggles that had been undertaken by the Party on its own and in alliance with other parties and organisations have led to new political awakening among the people and the youth.

Puthiya Poomi is published regularly in Tamil each month as the political mass publication of the Party. Similarly, *New Democracy* is published as the ideological quarterly of the Party. On the cultural front, cultural and literary work is carried out on a broad basis through the *Thesiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai*; and *Thaayakam* continues to be published as its magazine. From the Hill Country, the first issue of *Puthiya Malayakam* has been released recently. Its goal is to secure for itself a firm position in the social and cultural domains of the Hill Country and to make a useful contribution at mass level.

Further, the *Thesiya Kalai Ilakkiyap Peravai*, amid severe financial pressure, has persevered in its endeavour to publish books continuously. It is exemplary that its efforts to publish books of quality and to develop a culture of good readership will see the release of its one-hundredth book next month. Similarly, the *Puthiya Poomi Publications* has continued to publish books to meet political and ideological needs. Also, a wide range of socio-political seminars and Marxist-Leninist educational programmes are being conducted through organisations such as the Centre for Social and Political Studies, the Sanmugathan Centre for Marxist Studies and the Social Sciences Study Circle.

While carrying forward the above tasks, the Party's multi-faceted programme of work needs to be further expanded through criticism and self-criticism.

Comrades!

Our Party faces a major historic duty and task in Sri Lanka. To achieve our goals and ideals, it is necessary to work hard at the political, ideological and party organisational levels. At the mass level, it remains possible to identify the bases on which broad-based tasks could be carried out with emphasis on particular issues. Among the workers, the peasantry, agricultural labour, the depressed castes and women, a variety of problems have continued to exist and to subject them to oppression.

A false impression has been created in the North-East that the strength of nationalistic ideas gathered in the course of the war and the armed struggle has rendered the politics of class struggle invalid. But a situation is now emerging where practice would demonstrate that the transformation of the uneven Tamil social structure which has continued to remain divided on the basis of caste, class and gender into an egalitarian social structure is not possible on the basis of and subject to the constraints of nationalism.

The Marxist Leninist position on this matter cannot be compromise or concession. At the same time, the principled position that we have firmly upheld on the issues of chauvinistic oppression, the national question, the right to self determination and a solution based on autonomy should continue to be upheld. The concept of self-determination should be carried through the domain of the politics of class struggle to the midst of the class forces that it should reach. The Party is on no occasion prepared to subscribe to the belief that the existing social set-up and the state apparatus, the government associated with it and the administration that have protected and managed that social set-up will grant a fair and just solution to the national question, based on self-determination. One should not confuse putting forward a demand for the solution of the problem with holding a clear long-term view of the solution.

Therefore, the Party should carry forward its work in the North-East and the Hill Country on a broad basis, in accordance with the objective realities obtaining there, and taking a stand that is consistent with class struggle and the right to self-determination on the national question which, even today, is the main contradiction in the country.

Our Party remains a challenge to the trade union and parliamentary political forces that dominate the Hill Country. Degenerated trade unionism, which is merely a career and deceit, has led to frustration and disenchantment among the workers of the Hill Country. For example, the Hill Country trade union movement appears to be so incompetent to the extent that it is not able to wage a trade union struggle against twenty-two companies to win a wage rise for the workers. At the same, the money and wealth accumulated through the trade unions, personal influence and hereditary succession of leadership have been the nutrients for the development of parliamentary opportunist politics based on Hill Country regionalism. Amid this, our Party has carried forward its political work by clarifying the issues of national and class oppression. Views of Hill

Country nationalism keep coming up here and there. At the same time, one also witnesses the rise of the ideology of globalisation and the younger generation being drawn into the endless rat race for personal advancement and emancipation. It is by paying attention to these aspects that the Party could extend its work to different regions of the Hill Country. The Party has not so far carried forward trade union work there. That does not mean that the Party rejects it. On the other hand, the Party is conscious of the need to develop a new style of trade union work appropriate to the new surroundings. The Party has already taken preliminary steps in that direction.

In the Colombo District, our work has come up to a level, and the presence of the Party head office there has enabled the Party to act promptly under a variety of conditions. A significant feature is that the Party has strengthened its links with other left and democratic parties and movements and launched mass struggles with Colombo as base. It has also been possible to express the views and the stand taken by the Party through the mass organisations of the Party. Similarly, work centred on Colombo is essential to extend activities by linking the North-East, the Hill Country and the South. On this basis, it is important to strengthen and expand the Colombo regional party organisation.

It is necessary now to clarify about the participation of the Party in parliamentary and local government elections. The decision of the Party to participate in these elections does not mean the acceptance of the parliamentary road or its opportunist politics. Our Party has been clear and confident that the problems of the overwhelming majority of working people, the nationalities and minority communities cannot be resolved under the bourgeois parliamentary system of government.

At the same time, participation in elections is to use the electoral platform to explain to the people our policies and goals. Elections serve as suitable campaign platforms to expose the impotence of the parliamentary system and the acts of deception by the dominant opportunistic political forces. The Party is firm in its position that, if through their awareness, the people would elect us to one or two seats in parliament, it would use that membership of parliament to speak on behalf of the working people.

The Party has already participated in elections in the Hill Country and Colombo and has secured the fruits of such participation. In the General

Elections of 2000 and 2001, the Party contested in the districts of Nuwara Eliya, Colombo and Jaffna. In Jaffna, in particular, the politics of conservative domination, even in the midst of a nationalist struggle, seemed to be based on class and caste. The fielding of candidates by the Party provided an opportunity to carry out a vigorous campaign against the politics of domination and against narrow nationalism. Participation in these elections was essential to protect and establish among the people the identity of the left forces and Marxism Leninism. It should be said that the participation by the Party in the Jaffna district in a situation marked by pressure and threats is an aspect of the courageous and determined style of work of the Party. Thus, the Party would continue to treat the electoral arena and related work not as the single-minded activity from a parliamentary political perspective, but as one of its multi-faceted, broad-based, mass activities. The Party wishes to reassert that there is no ambiguity about its main task of achieving social transformation through revolutionary struggle for social liberation, outside parliamentary politics.

Comrades!

Our Party works with the purpose of establishing a people's democracy by capturing state power from the ruling class, which is the force that determines the fate of the country. Therefore, it is necessary to recognise the historical development of the country and the objective situation based on the politics of class struggle. By that, we would be able to take a revolutionary stand in every one of our activities and seek the liberation of all the people who are subject to oppression. Sri Lanka is a country that has been for long subject to the rule of kings, local chieftains and the feudal elite. As a result, feudal ideology and practice struck root, established themselves and developed in the economic, political, social, cultural and other domains. The caste hierarchy and class distinctions have to this day been tightly preserved.

It is under such conditions that European colonialists, initially the Portuguese in 1505, then the Dutch and later the British, claimed this country for themselves and ruled it. They made a section of the people of our country into their servants and allies through religious conversion and the offer of education and employment in government administration. The class and caste elite, by becoming the slavish stooges of the foreign colonialists, accumulated wealth, lived in comfort and further elevated itself as an elite. While there have been several revolts and uprisings

against the foreigners, these were effectively controlled and prevented from spreading. Even in later years, there has been neither an anti-colonial independence struggle nor an armed liberation struggle in Sri Lanka. Thus, the so-called independence was not one secured through struggle. The intense anti-colonial struggles that surged in the wake of the socialist October Revolution unnerved the British Empire. As a result of the blow dealt by the Indian independence struggle, the British transferred state power to the caste and class elite that was loyal to them. It should be noted, however, that the leftists and the Communist Party who arrived in the political scenario from the 1930s carried forward campaigns and struggles for independence, in proportion to their capabilities. However, what arrived in the name of independence in 1948 was only a transfer of power. There was no benefit from it for the working people comprising the vast majority of the population or for the nationalities and minority communities. The independence did not lead to democratic salvation.

The history of the past half a century and more is one where the entire people of Sri Lanka are exploited and dominated in the name of democracy through the bourgeois parliamentary system handed down by the British.

It is under these conditions that the JVP carried out its armed rebellion in the south in 1971, sacrificed several thousand youth and other people at the altar of the repressive state machinery, and in the end met with failure. In essence, it was a petit-bourgeois extremist rebellion of the youth. Marxism and red colour were used as only a cloak, and it was not a revolutionary mass struggle with the participation of the people; and that was the basis of its failure. The defeated old path, written in blood as an erroneous path, was again to be traversed by the JVP in 1987-89 to meet with an enormous disaster. Owing to these failures, the state machinery strengthened itself and intensified its suppression of the people several fold. The Sinhala masses in the South suffered most from this uprising.

Next was the growth in military strength of the armed Tamil youth movements that rose in opposition to chauvinistic oppression in the North. We saw how these movements that sought to take advantage of India, in the end, transformed themselves into the agents of Indian regional hegemony. The LTTE was the only movement that averted this fate. Its struggle, which militarily mobilised young men and women and scored military successes, developed into a national liberation struggle with a quarter century of history. However, the LTTE was based on nationalism

alone and did not have an anti-imperialist or anti-feudal component. As a result, it has arrived at a stage where it is unable to transcend the limits imposed by nationalism. However, it is evident from the climate of the present peace process that it has still some time to decide its future course.

One cannot forecast that such liberation struggles will not emerge from among the Muslim or Hill Country Tamils. While the nationalist position seems just in the immediate context of chauvinistic oppression, imperialists have used such nationalist struggle to suit their needs to defeat class struggle and Marxism Leninism. We need to study in depth this historical experience and the reality that it represents, and learn the appropriate lessons. This is not something unique to us but an objective reality that Marxist Leninists in all Third World countries face.

The serious problems of the economic base of our country and the reality of the politics of class struggle require social liberation and social transformation. At the same time, the illusion of parliamentary politics and elections is used to conceal this fact. We need to expose this, and prepare ourselves for revolutionary struggles by uniting the forces of the working class at their appropriate levels.

Our country is still a backward agricultural country of the Third World. Eighty percent of the territory comprises a rural environment. Under the conditions of such a social structure, it is only by going through the stage of new democratic revolution that it will be possible to set up and develop a socialist structure. A precondition for achieving the stage of new democratic revolution is the unity of all left and democratic national forces on a broad basis through a national democratic programme. This national democratic programme should include economic, political, social and cultural principles on appropriate bases. It is important that the establishment of the right of nationalities to self-determination is emphasised. In essence, it is necessary that the national democratic programme overcomes the desire to traverse the beaten track of seeking to achieve parliamentary power.

A strong party organisation and a determined united front strategy under its guidance are necessary to carry forward the national democratic programme and advance to the stage of New Democratic Revolution. It is only thus that the feudal and capitalist ruling classes and their imperialist guardians could be opposed and defeated through struggle.

At the same time, the Party will strongly oppose every effort by whomever it may be to disrupt the ongoing peace talks. We should support the talks to the extent that they are carried out in a positive manner and in a climate of ceasefire and peace. This is because the talks are tied up with the aspirations of the people of the North-East who are in a state of ruin. But we should not allow ourselves to be deluded by excessive faith in the peace talks. For, it is necessary to pay keen attention to the ulterior motives and the limitations of the chauvinistic ruling classes and their imperialist masters. It is important for the Party to express caution and warn of the potential dangers associated with the adverse side to the peace process. America out of self-interest is pushing to infiltrate every field in an unprecedented fashion, while western countries and Japan are partners in this process, and the ruling chauvinistic elite is generously allowing room for this.

Therefore, it is necessary to correctly identify the matters arising from the internal conditions of the country, mobilise the people against oppression, and carry forward revolutionary mass struggles. The Party, by keeping its faith in the unlimited power of the people, should make itself capable of proceeding from small struggles to large struggles and through them to struggles at advanced stages.

Comrades!

In the national as well as the international situation, we, the Marxist Leninists, face an immense historical task and duty. Each member of the Party should come forward to undertake consciously dedicated tasks and responsibilities. As long as we have in us the clarity of thought and the sublime state of mind for effective action that Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought points to and our character of standing by the people, no reactionary force can halt our development.

We should demonstrate by word and deed, and through revolutionary activities, that our Party represents the aspirations of the working class, the toiling people and all the people who are subject to oppression. We should progress with even greater determination in the revolutionary footsteps of our Marxist Leninist forerunners.

Let us advance with our hands firmly linked with those carrying forward the struggle of the people of the world against imperialist globalisation, its serious consequences and American war mongering. In the same way, we

will unite with the Indian Marxist Leninist parties and the broad masses of India in their opposition to the Hindutva fascist ruling class of India and its regional hegemony. In the current international climate in which there is a strong revival of Marxist Leninist parties and movements, let us hold high proletarian internationalism and build up unity and solidarity.

A bright future is ahead of us. Let us enhance and carry forward with confidence the tasks of our Party based on organisation and relying on the masses.

Let Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought be victorious!

Let revolutionary struggles continue to advance!

Let the New Democratic Party grow in strength!

Our International Duties and Responsibilities

I

We still live in the era of imperialism and proletarian struggle against imperialism. Thus, our strategy is still one to overthrow imperialism and capitalism and establish socialism through dictatorship of the proletariat.

Capitalism brought several countries under its direct control and exercised domination over them and their people to expand its exploitation, and we understood this as colonialism. In the last quarter of the 19th century, capitalism, in order to free itself from its structural crisis, reorganised itself as monopoly capitalism in place of 'free' capitalism. Comrade Lenin identified imperialism as the highest form of capitalism. Imperialist monopolists vied with each other to divide the world among them. It was at the peak of this competition that the First World War started in 1914.

It could be said that imperialism either did not understand or refused to understand the reason for its economic crisis. It believed that it was supreme and indestructible. Only the Marxists, based on historical and dialectical materialism, understood correctly the cause for the crisis.

Since capitalism fundamentally concerns profit, it increased production for more profit and generated surplus production. Surplus profit, in turn, led to surplus capital. Thus, while there was no shortage of capital, investment in production failed to yield profit. As a result, capitalism sought to produce more of consumer goods than goods for essential needs. But the workers were unable to purchase them. Thus, while capitalism produced an excess of food, there was starvation, and while it produced more clothing, there were people who could not afford clothes. Nevertheless, the workers continued to be exploited mercilessly. The resultant social contradictions and the expansion of capital had to confront each other.

It was due to the general crisis of capitalism, the internal conditions obtaining in Russia and the correct understanding of the Marxist Leninists that socialism came to Russia through the proletarian revolution of 1917.

The economic vision or far sight of capitalism had failed, but capitalism was unwilling to search for the reasons or to accept the findings of the Marxists. Therefore, capitalism adopted tactical adjustments, from time to time, to prevent popular uprisings against its economic system.

Surplus production, surplus profit and surplus capital led to more problems and investments failed to yield profits. There were several crises in the forces of production and relations of production. As a result, the monopoly capitalist mechanism faced serious obstacles. In the 1930s, it faced severe crises. The exploitation of workers was intensified, oppression of the people heightened and the economy militarised. This led to the emergence of fascism and to World War II in 1939. Nazi Germany and its allies were defeated in the war, while revolution swept through several European and Asian countries to establish socialism. It can be seen that while capitalism resorted to war and fascism to recover from its crisis, the people chose socialist construction through revolution.

Capitalist imperialism surrendered direct control over colonies owing to people's thirst for freedom in countries under colonial rule, liberation struggles, and economic setbacks faced by colonialism, but continued indirect domination, and is largely, if not wholly, able to continue exploitation, through local agents of the capitalist class. We understood this as neo-colonialism.

From 1930 to 1970, fiscal policies adopted by capitalism, concessions to sections of the working class, an impression of the emergence of welfare states, and concessions to client states allowed capitalism to secure its position. These concessions, besides, were necessitated by the challenges posed by socialism.

Capitalism met with crisis again in the late 1970s, and many of the earlier concessions were terminated. Capitalist economy began to decline in the US and in Britain. To restore its control of the world, capitalism resorted to conspiracy, using the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. In stages, it also brought bodies such as the UN under its control.

Aided by capitalist concessions, a counterrevolution was implemented in the Soviet Union, and forces of capitalism, resorting to capitalist restoration through revisionist activities, captured power with imperialist support. This was shown as victory of capitalism over socialism.

While this was done to demonstrate the superiority of capitalism over socialism, the fact that socialism is the only alternative to capitalism has not been contradicted. The fall of socialism was due to revisionism and not any deficiency of socialism. Socialism cannot be built without the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the Soviet Union, the dictatorship of the

proletariat was slackened since 1953 and later there was no socialism. Thus, in 1989, neither did capitalism defeat socialism nor did capitalist economy defeat socialist economy.

Following the crises of the 1970's, and particularly after the counter-revolutions in the Soviet Union and East European countries, capitalism, in the name of globalisation of capital, intensified imperialist globalisation in the Third World. Capital was moved into these countries with privatisation and liberalisation of the economy as preconditions.

The entire Third World was subjected to liberalisation and made into a market for imperialist globalisation. Capital was exported to countries as investment by multi-national companies (MNCs). What is called globalisation is merely the current agenda of imperialism. That agenda is yet another tactic for the survival of monopoly capitalism. This globalisation is, truly, imperialist globalisation. In it, the relationship of capital to labour is not identical to what existed earlier. Monopoly capital goes to the Third World seeking cheap labour. Being unable to exert pressure on labour directly as in the past, it exerts it through capital.

The MNCs exert pressure on the governments of the Third World countries through the IMF and the World Bank to create a climate conducive to their investment. Third World Governments act under these pressures.

This does not mean that capital has eliminated the nation state. While the nation state presides over national capital, it is also an agent of global capital. Under the agenda of imperialist globalisation, nation states are forced to accept a variety of agreements that serve to protect global capital. The nation state that provided the essential needs of the people such as education and health is compelled to abandon them. The bogus national bourgeois class becomes paralysed.

Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, once built up as 'Asian Dragons' by imperialism to counter communism, totally succumbed to the crisis of 1997. They now have to seek markets for their products. Japan too faced a fall in 1990. Economic rivalry has sharpened the contradictions in Russia and European countries.

It was assured that through the globalisation of capital there would be no more crises in capitalism after the US had introduced its New Economy. It was also said that a society has been created that has knowledge and

information at its core and as its basis. It was also said that, with knowledge and information finding a central place in production, classes would cease to exist.

However, the New Economy works in much the same way as the old. It too has problems of surplus production. US production rose 2½ fold since 1980, while financial markets increased ten fold. American establishments and the government too are in debt. Personal savings are at zero level. Homelessness, unemployment and social inequality have increased. This shows that the American New Economy too is in crisis.

To extricate themselves from these crises, US and other imperialisms and developed capitalist countries are competing to establish their hegemony over the countries of the world. And, in keeping with imperialist interests, peace efforts are undertaken in some countries, while war is promoted in others. They also wage war against some countries. Owing to this, there is a possibility that crises may mature within imperialist and capitalist countries and move the situation towards war all over the world.

Taking advantage of the attack of 11th September 2001 against US imperialism, war and aggression have been initiated against countries opposed to imperialist domination. The US and other forces of imperialism are determined to unite behind the smokescreen of “war against terrorism” to defeat the forces of anti-imperialism. They seek to bring the entire world under their control and thus resolve the current crises of capitalism. They are in active pursuit of achieving their goals in the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

It cannot be said that the US started anew its war in the countries of the world only after the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked on 11th September. US imperialism has been busy with a long-term plan to bring several countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq under its control. Following the serious attack by activists identified with Islam and opposed to US imperialism, the US decided to intensify its war efforts and started a war in Afghanistan. Now it wants to extend the war to Iraq.

Imperialism has a history of directly waging war against nations and indirectly conducting wars between countries and civil wars within countries, to safeguard its existence. Equally, it undertakes bogus peace efforts to suit the needs of imperialist globalisation. It has cunningly

imposed on Palestine a peace that suited Israel, and through Zionist Israel continues its efforts to bring Arab countries under its control.

The only choice before the people of the world is to fight against the existence of imperialism filled with war and exploitation and to build socialism in place of imperialism.

There cannot be war in life that has human society at its core. Since private property and market economy encourage the tendency of man to exploit and dominate man, private property and market economy need to be transformed and the welfare of people given predominance. The resources of the world, technology and science should serve man. Only then could social justice and co-operation be built, and only socialism could do it.

The struggle between imperialism and socialism continued through the 20th century. Socialism should reassert itself in the 21st century. Otherwise, human society would face even greater disasters and setbacks due to imperialist globalisation.

II

Today, the people in western imperialist countries are out in the streets to struggle against imperialism. Starting with Seattle, the struggle against imperialism has spread worldwide. The people in western imperialist countries are involved in militant mass movements to carry forward struggles against imperialist globalisation. Not all these struggles are carried out with political change in mind or based on establishing socialism in place of imperialist globalisation.

There can be no doubt that the alternative to imperialist globalisation is socialism and proletarian internationalism. It is necessary, on that basis, for working class parties to become the leading and guiding forces of such struggles.

While Russia, France, Germany and Japan do not accept US leadership, they conduct their programmes in accord with imperialist globalisation. Other capitalist countries of Europe and the American continent too behave similarly. Britain remains a loyal ally of the US.

Of regional powers among Third World countries, India seeks to establish its regional hegemony and expansionism with the blessings of US imperialism. Equally, the US asserts some of its interests through India.

Powers like Iraq and Iran struggle against imperialist globalisation and US imperialism from a point of view based on religion. But religious fundamentalism is neither the right theory nor the right practice to secure total victory over imperialism and to establish internationalism as opposed to imperialist globalisation. One could see that religious fundamentalism is unable to reject globalisation outright and tends to go along with it. Religious fundamentalism is reactionary and obsolete. In some countries, activities based on Islamic fundamentalism are beneficial to imperialism. However, since the Indian ruling class has Hindu fundamentalist leanings, America uses it against Islamic fundamentalism. India pays particular attention to securing American support for its actions against Muslims, against Pakistan in particular, and to suppress the struggle of the Kashmiri people in the pretext of combating Islamic fundamentalism. Thus, the Indian ruling class will not be supportive of genuine anti-imperialism.

The People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China are trying to adapt to imperialist globalisation. Our Party, like others, had faith in the leadership of Hua Guofeng who succeeded Comrade Mao Zedong. But that leadership lasted only for a short period. The revisionist transformation that took place at a rapid pace in Chinese politics and in the Communist Party of China led to a rapid decline not only in the socialist construction of China but also in China's opposition to imperialism. The importance given by China to imperialist globalisation and its indifference towards the liberation movements of the world and the struggles of revolutionary communist movements, in particular its reference to the people's war of the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal as terrorism and its offer of military support to the Nepalese monarchy to crush it, compel us to adopt definite positions regarding the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the leadership of the People's Republic of China. It is clear that, not only outside China but also within China, the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China conduct their affairs in ways that harm socialist construction. Their anti-imperialism is questionable in matters that do not directly concern Chinese national interests.

Although America acts as the central force of imperialist globalisation, contradictions between other imperialist countries and the big powers are growing sharper. While such contradictions can be of tactical benefit in fighting imperialism, they cannot comprise the main strategy.

Since organisations such as the non-aligned movement and OPEC became defunct, imperialism has been able to proceed at ease with its agenda. At the same time, one can only admire and praise the governments of North Korea and Cuba for their bold revolutionary measures for socialist construction and posing a major challenge to imperialist globalisation.

Let us not forget that, under the circumstances, globalisation is confounded by complications and problems, and unable to deal with situations as anticipated. In this climate of decline, recent measures in conformity with imperialist globalisation as well as revisionist activities could take China, once active in socialist construction, towards total restoration of capitalism. Imperialism, which found a breathing space because of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, is anxiously looking forward to capitalist restoration in China, which may give it another breathing space.

Internal contradictions within countries once subjected to colonialism are also taken advantage of by imperialism. In Third World countries, especially, there are struggles resulting from national oppression arising from national contradictions and wars of oppression against such struggles. As a result, the people of the Third World need to clear several obstacles to achieve unity based on class and to carry out a united struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Forces of imperialism and, at times, regional hegemonic powers lend support to governments that carry out national oppression in their respective countries to wage wars of oppression. Imperialism plays a role in promoting armed conflict due to national oppression when conflict suits its interests and in implementing bogus peace activities when a peace process is beneficial.

Thus, practice dictates that the struggle against national oppression needs to develop into a struggle against imperialism and regional hegemonic powers. Practice has demonstrated increasingly clearly to the forces of struggle in national liberation movements that the idea of tactical manipulation of hegemonic powers and imperialism is invalid.

Clearly, the liberation struggles of nations and nationalities, the struggle for building socialism and the wide variety of struggles against globalisation target imperialism. Thus, working class parties, while advancing by upholding their programme against capitalism and imperialism, should also endeavour to link with working class parties on

an international scale to build socialism on a global scale and to build proletarian internationalism.

Similarly, it is necessary to forge militant unity with all struggles and forces opposed to imperialism and capitalism, within the country, and to function on an international basis by forming anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist fronts.

The unity of the working class against the imperialist globalisation of capitalism should be developed further. Communists need to be active in a multi-faceted way to build up the strength of the anti-imperialist working-class united front, a front of trade unions and organisations concerned with the welfare of workers, the anti-imperialist mass movement, and the party of the working class, and to develop the political unity of the working class.

Let us members of the New Democratic Party unite as communists among communists who bear such serious responsibilities. Let us, as genuine Marxist Leninists, overthrow imperialism and capitalism through revolution and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat. Let us carry forward proletarian politics without any form of compromise with the forces of capitalism. Let us join up with the struggles of workers, oppressed nations and nationalities against capital, and build proletarian internationalism.

Our Party already has links with some Marxist-Leninist parties and revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements of the world. Our Party should pay particular attention to enhancing revolutionary understanding based on those links and to deepening the relationship through mutual support and co-operation, and thus develop proletarian internationalism.

In South Asia, the concerns of the Indian and Pakistani ruling classes seem to readily give way to imperialism. Indian hegemonic regional expansionism will always be an obstacle to liberation movements and revolutionary struggles in the region. It is also hostile to the Indian masses. Without a programme to combat the Indian hegemonic and regional expansionist Hindutva, not only the liberation of the people of India but also that of the people of the whole of South Asia will be impossible. Besides, the Indian ruling class will remain a threat to the sovereignty and independence of the governments of this region. Therefore, the struggle against Indian hegemonic regional expansionism and Hindutva is not only for the people of India but for the entire people of this region.

Against this background, it is necessary for our Party to work on the basis of appropriate programmes to strengthen the ties with the anti-imperialist movements and revolutionary parties in the region, and especially the anti-imperialist movements, revolutionary parties and progressive forces of India. It is essential to strengthen existing links with revolutionary organisations, communist parties and anti-imperialist movements, and work on the basis of mutual cooperation.

To build socialism in order to create a classless communist society, we should establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is through that we could advance by rejecting the Trotskyite and revisionist positions and right opportunism. While struggling to build socialism, we should unite in struggle by supporting people's struggles against imperialism, struggles for democratic rights, and struggles for the right to self-determination of nationalities. Through this, we could advance by averting errors of left extremism.

There cannot be two opinions about socialism being the only alternative to imperialism. Although nationalists and religious movements carry out struggles against imperialism, they cannot put in place an alternative to imperialism. Even their struggles are limited in scope.

While winning over revolutionary forces from among mass movements, we should unite Marxist Leninists from among genuine revolutionary groups, and unite with the correct orientation the forces of anti-imperialism.

In carrying out these tasks, let us study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and the experiences of Marxist Leninist practice in other countries and learn the necessary and relevant lessons from them