Programme of the proletarian socialist revolution

The proletariat in this neo-colony, where the capitalist production system dominates and a bourgeoisie subservient to imperialists is in power, faces the challenge to prepare for socialist revolutionary tasks and achieve them. In order to achieve them the Sri Lankan proletariat presents this programme.

Colonial period

1. Indo-Europeans migrated to the island called Lanka (Ceylon) at the end of the Fifth Century B.C. and introduced the iron plough and thus imposed the Asiatic mode of production. Therefore the most significant socio-economic transformation which occurred during the twenty-five centuries of known history of the island was the emergence of the capitalist socio-economic formation based on a capitalist production system.

2. In Sri Lanka the capitalist system did not emerge as in Europe. It was superimposed on the old Asiatic production system by European imperialists who grabbed political power.

3. No decisive change affected the Lankan Asiatic production system or socio-economic structure when the Portuguese discovered the sea route to the East and occupied the pre-capitalist kingdoms there with the force of their armada which became a revolutionary factor in the Indian Ocean: the Portuguese looted the resources of the Maritime Provinces for one and a half centuries.
4. During the middle of the 17th century the Dutch commercialists – the winners of the first capitalist revolution in Europe – grabbed the Maritime Provinces from the Portuguese colonialists and ruled them for one and a half centuries. Even though they planted a few seeds of capitalism such as trade and salaries etc., and resorted to exploiting the island by imposing taxes and collecting commercial crops, there was no decisive change in the local Asiatic mode of production or the Sri Lankan socio-economic structure.

5. As a step in the great counter-revolutionary process taken against the French capitalist-democratic revolution, the British imperialists acquired this strategically important colony for themselves by way of the Amiens Agreement of 1802. Later they manipulated the political crisis, created by dissension among the aristocrats who controlled the Kandyan kingdom, to successfully invade and occupy it in 1815. It was during their period of colonial exploitation, extending for more than a century and a half, that a capitalist mode of production emerged artificially under their pioneership and guidance.

6. Sri Lanka, which had broken into several small states, was for the first time since the 13th century united by the Crown of the British capitalist class. It was part of "the Empire upon which the sun never sets", the most powerful empire of the 19th and early 20th centuries, which acquired four-fifths of the whole world under its yoke.

7. The British imperialists, who turned the whole island into a single colony, had to resort to various repressive measures to protect its strategically important colony. In the process they
were compelled by historical conditions to destroy the political, economic and social power of the social class which had ruled the old Asiatic society.

After destroying by force of arms the great rebellion of 1818, ushered in by the social strata which had lost their privileges and power as a result of the 1815 Kandyyan Convention, the Colonial Government of the British imperialists took several decisive steps. These were, namely, the execution of a group of aristocrats (including Keppetipola), exile of another group of aristocrats headed by Ehelepola, exercising distrust by the imperialist bureaucracy towards the remaining lords, seizure of the power and privileges still retained by the aristocrats under the 1815 Convention through the gazette notification dated 21st November 1818, bringing the Kandyan administration directly under the British bureaucracy, and finally the confiscation of the property of certain aristocratic lords.

These measures, together with other steps taken against the strata of society which held privileges under the old social order after the incidents of 1820, 1837, and 1849, caused the downfall of the old Asiatic social structure. Governors North and Maitland had taken severe steps against low-country aristocrats after the pitiless suppression of the low-country rebellion of 1797. Thereafter, some aristocrats in up-country as well as low-country collaborated with the imperialists in order to protect their property. The local capitalist class emerged out of this group.

8. The necessary structural basis for the capitalist development of Sri Lanka was laid down by the implementation in 1832-33 of the reforms of the Colebrook-Cameron Commission. This Commission was comprised of representatives of the British liberal bourgeoisie, appointed in 1829 by the Imperial Government with a view to exploring ways and means of exploiting this strategically very important colony to the maximum. Accordingly the recommendations of this Commission opened the door for labour and social mobility without any discrimination. For the first time since the 13th century the whole country was united under an administration united in
Colombo. This process occurred here even before European nations such as Italy and Germany had achieved these targets.

The British capitalist class established a capitalist hegemony and created the bourgeois national state, then managed to impose the capitalist superstructure over the colony. In this manner the whole population, without any discrimination of caste or ethnicity, was brought under bourgeois law, while the whole island was covered by a single judiciary system and legal procedure, to be managed by a new bourgeois Supreme Court. The British capitalist class made this colony their investing ground and established a Legislative Council to ensure an opportunity for them to satisfy their class needs. English was made the official language, and the number of English schools increased.

By this time the British bourgeoisie had, by carrying through the Industrial Revolution, become the first industrial capitalist class in the world. According to the Colebrook-Cameron proposals a Royal decree was proclaimed on 12th April 1832 by which the Rajakari system of obligatory labour to the state was abolished. By this decree labour which had been tied down to the land and which obstructed the development of capitalism, was released, enabling the setting up of a labour market.

At that time hereditary servitude had not been done away with even in European countries like Russia. Furthermore, the state monopoly that was in old Asiatic system in trade and agriculture was abolished in order to make way for the development of a free market economy. Capitalist development was promoted by converting lands into a commodity. The Colebrook-Cameron reforms opened the door for competitive free capitalist enterprise, and effected essential
structural reforms conducive to capitalist development in Sri Lanka. This is how the road for the development of capitalism was built in Sri Lanka.

9. The infrastructure essential for the development of a capitalist mode of production was provided by the British colonial government. After the suppression of the 1818 uprising, the government started building roads in the up-country for military reasons. Governor Edward Barnes utilised the existing Rajakari system to build roads as early as 1820. With the expansion of the colonial estate plantations such road-building continued extensively, while railways, post and telegraph were also speedily developed with capital borne by the government. This extensive infrastructural development undertaken by the colonial government became a boon to capitalist progress in Sri Lanka.

10. The real capitalist development phase in Sri Lanka started with the introduction of coffee plantations in the first quarter of the 19th century. The essential pre-condition for this, i.e. the accumulation of primary capital, was achieved by the British imperialists during their colonial state-power. The basis for coffee plantation was prepared through various bills like the Waste Lands Ordinance and the Temple Lands Ordinance, by imposing extensive taxes and grabbing land belonging to up-country villagers. It was started as a large-scale plantation on capitalist production relations. Since coffee cultivation did not need extensive capital investment, colonial government officials could engage themselves in such ventures.

From the third decade of the 19th century, cheap labour was imported regularly from South India to work on coffee plantations. The growth of capitalist plantations in Sri Lanka was accompanied by the brutal exploitation of these labour-slaves, who were forced to live a life of sorrow and pain amidst disease and death, while thousands perished prematurely. When the slave trade collapsed in the West Indies and Guiana around 1833, Sri Lanka benefited with the coffee plantations achieving instant success. Coffee prices rose by 300 per cent, and the resultant coffee boom attracted British capital exceeding one hundred thousand pounds per
year. According to Ferguson's estimates, the entire capital invested until the fall of the coffee plantations was around eight million pounds. Although the profit made by Imperial capitalists from this estate sector has not been properly calculated, Ferguson surmises that, within the first half century alone, they made a profit of at least seventeen million, six hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds. The coffee cultivation which spread across several decades, creating a network of imperialist capitalist production, was unexpectedly affected by a virus epidemic called Hemilia vastratrics until it was completely wiped out towards the latter part of the 19th century. As a result the estate economy had to be replaced with tea plantations.

11. Since tea cultivation required large-scale investment, British monopolistic companies capable of such funding arrived in Sri Lanka. Private estate companies were replaced by the sterling companies based in London and the rupee companies based in Colombo, and estates were increasingly managed by agency houses. Soon the entire hill country became covered by the tea crop, and the capitalist production system prevailed all over the island. During this period the spread of rubber and other commercial crops also acted as a spur to this process. Just as Irish labour together with Dutch capital contributed to the capitalisation of Britain, Sri Lanka benefited from British capital and Indian labour.

12. While estate plantations and allied industries developed on the basis of the capitalist production system, traditional agriculture based on the stagnating rural Asiatic production system was neglected during the colonial era and lagged behind. A capitalist production pattern emerged while the rural Asiatic production process existed parallel to it. This is a special feature of the colonial capitalist system. It is a result of the Imperial capitalist class, which wields political power, being superimposed upon the old Asiatic socio-economic relations as an inanimate tool of history in order to fulfil their class needs.

13. It was difficult for the neglected old Asiatic self-sufficient economy to survive in the context of an ever-expanding capitalist production system, which was consolidated under the imperialist
rule of the British bourgeoisie. In view of the import-export colonial economy the capitalist market entered the interior of the country on the one hand, and this national market was directly chained to the international capitalist market on the other. This international market and the local capitalist economy exerted such direct influence on the dying rural Asiatic production system that the latter was slowly displaced by the new capitalist production relations.

14. Under the Union Jack Sri Lanka became the first capitalist nation in Asia, as was needed by the British bourgeoisie, which happened to be the strongest capitalist class and the first industrial capitalists in the world. With the emergence, after a hundred years of capitalist development, of the neo-colonial era at the end of the Second World War, the main production system in Sri Lanka turned out to be capitalist. However in the capitalist socio-economic formation, remnants of the old Asiatic production system were still evident. On the capitalist economic basis a bourgeois superstructure had also sprung up. The State Council, established in 1931, the allied capitalist institutions and organisations, together with bourgeois ideology, were some of the components of this colonial capitalist superstructure.

15. Although within a period of one hundred years of British colonialism Sri Lanka was made a bourgeois national state on the basis of a capitalist economy and superstructure with all its features, the unification of all nationalities to form a single nation was not engineered. Without creating conditions for pre-capitalist nationalities to assimilate the British imperialists, who used divide-and-rule tactics to administer their colonies, allowed national identities to remain, and as a result Sri Lanka became a multi-national state.

Neo-colonial period

16. The Second World War ended, causing serious damage to Japanese imperialism in respect of its material, political, and ideological base. This defeat put an end to the entire authority of world imperialism. The achievement of the Red Army in crushing Hitler's invading fascist armies tilted the balance of world power in favour of socialism.
The destructive defeat of the fascist states of Germany, Italy and Japan, together with the heavy damage endured by the other imperialist states, weakened imperialism on a global scale. Parallel to the destruction caused within the imperialist camp and its general impotency, the socialist revolution crossed the borders of the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic to create a group of socialist states in Eastern Europe, thus building a world socialist camp leading to the advantage, encouragement, and final victory of the subjugated peoples in the colonies. The downtrodden classes in Asian colonies were elated and invigorated by the historic victory of the socialist camp and the resultant retreat of the imperialists. They shook the foundations of colonialism and cracked the yoke of imperialism by launching great liberation struggles in search of freedom. During this period, socialist revolutions in three old colonies in Asia, namely China, Korea and Vietnam, which formed one-fourth of the world's population, liberated themselves from the yoke of colonialism. They achieved victories under the leadership of their Communist Parties and thereby inspired the Asian liberators with a new kind of spirit and vigour.

The peoples of Malaya, Burma, India, Indonesia and the Philippines took advantage of these conditions and heightened their liberation struggles against imperialism. The peoples of Malaya, Burma and India immersed themselves in liberation movements in a way they had never done, in order to explode the foundations of the tomb of imperialism, built with their own blood, tears and bones for three and a half centuries. Neo-colonialism is the strategy adopted by the imperialists to overcome the precarious situation of the dismantling of their whole colonial complex, when the general crisis of capitalism was intensified by the strengthening of the socialist camp, and anti-imperialist struggles spread all over the world.

17. Arising from the fear that these countries might join hands with the socialist camp and follow the path of socialist development trodden by countries like North Vietnam, North Korea and China, neo-colonial strategies were introduced in order to keep them shackled under bondage, and continue to exploit these countries and their peoples. North Vietnam, North Korea and
China had deviated from the capitalist path of development by eliminating the bourgeois property system together with exploitation. Workers and peasants were joining the revolutionary forces of the Communist Parties of the Third International who were at the helm of liberation struggles, leading the masses to victories over colonialism.

18. Accordingly, under the cover of independence for the dependent peoples of the colonies, the imperialists came to an agreement with the local capitalists (who were their stooges and brokers) and handed over state power to them, in order to protect their colonial property system and continue exploitation. This is how they paved the way for neo-colonialist exploitation.

19. The imperialists feared that the leadership of the freedom struggle in Sri Lanka (where they had their Eastern military headquarters) would be taken over by the working class and the petty bourgeois Left movement comprised of the Sama Samaja Party and Communist Party in Sri Lanka, and therefore transferred political power in their most stable colony to the local capitalist class who were not at all prepared to request freedom, not to mention that they had never striven for such a concept. In 1946 the Ceylon National Congress, the Sinhala Maha Sabha, and the Muslim League, which were the three major bourgeois political organisations belonging to the local capitalist class, united to form the first real bourgeois political party, the United National Party, under the leadership and guidance of D.S. Senanayake and S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who had gained the confidence of the British imperialists.

20. The local capitalist class, under the leadership of Don Steven Senanayake and Solomon West Ridgeway Bandaranaike, were installed as agents and servants of King George the Sixth to look after the needs of the British capitalist class. This was done by imposing a Constitution drafted by representatives of the British capitalist class on people without seeking their preference, on the 4th of February 1948 by the lowering of the Union Jack and raising a flag of the local bourgeoisie with the image of a lion and a sword in its right hand. From then onwards for five decades the state power of capitalist Sri Lanka was held by this bourgeoisie, with the
purpose of attending to the needs of imperialism.

21. The local capitalist class who were offered governing powers firstly ensured the existence of the colonial economic system. Exploitation by foreign imperialists was made inviolable and sacred by the United National Party. Therefore a great opportunity was given to the foreign monopolists to continue exploitation of cheap labour and national resources. Each year these foreign exploiters exported national wealth by way of profits, interests, salaries, allowances, charges, insurance, freight etc., either transparently or secretly.

22. Even during the period controlled by the local bourgeoisie, Sri Lanka continued to be “Tommy Lipton's tea estate” as in the old colonial days. The main feature of the colonial era continued to exist, namely the dependence of the Sri Lankan economy on the revenue obtained on the international market from the commercial crops of tea, rubber and coconut.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Revolutionary Sama Samaja Party formed a capitalist coalition as the People's United Front which came to power in 1956, promising in their election manifesto to nationalise the imperialist plantation sector. Although the Revolutionary Sama Samaja Party insisted on its nationalisation by paying compensation of 60 to 70 pounds per acre to 552 foreign companies which owned an area of 260,000 acres, the reactionary leadership of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party postponed this proposal for twenty years for the benefit of the imperialist exploiters.
During this twenty years foreign monopolists obtained maximum use of these estates, and neglected them so they became unproductive. On the other hand some estates were sold at exorbitant prices to local capitalists. Finally, as a direct result of the 1971 uprising of the masses against the repression of the capitalist class, 82,516,317 rupees was paid in compensation as a first step towards land reform when acquiring the remaining 125,000 acres of estates. However since 1977 these estates have been sold again to local and foreign exploiters under the open economy, and some estates are now owned by foreign companies.

23. Dancing to the tune of imperialists, the local rulers were concerned with maintaining the country as an agricultural economy which produced raw materials for monopolistic ventures of imperialists and also as a profit-making market for their products. They never took any interest in industrialisation, as they had neither financial capacity for investment nor the technical know-how for industry.

The local capitalists used their political clout to obtain funds at low interest from state monetary institutions and thereby robbed national wealth by various means, at first to purchase unproductive estates from imperialist companies and later for other commercial speculations. Capitalist governments decided their budgetary activities and general financial policies, especially prices and taxes, to suit the needs of the capitalist minority. Inflation intensified the exploitation of the labour of the masses, and consequently capital was accumulated in the hands of a few capitalists.

24. So-called socialism was born out of the limited capital capacity of the local capitalist class. What did the local capitalist class achieve by their bombastic claim to build socialism? In dragging the country along the bankrupt capitalist path of development the weak bourgeois class was unable to engage in vast capital investments, so a government sector was built in order to allow them to fatten themselves by obtaining sub-contracts and exploiting state ventures.
In other words it was to build state monopoly capitalism by over-burdening the masses with heavy taxes, utilising such monies for the benefit of the private capitalist class. This state monopoly capitalism was strengthened by heavy industry built on aid obtained from the socialist countries. By the seventh decade there arose in Sri Lanka a combination of state monopoly capitalism with local and foreign capitalism. This kind of duality was called by the local bourgeoisie a socialist economy or mixed economy.

25. State monopoly capitalism, which prevailed from the end of the 1950’s to the middle of the 1970’s in the name of socialism, was subject to the forces of backward capitalism in Sri Lanka and international political influence as well. Even imperialists were compelled to maintain the concept of a welfare state, as a result of the political atmosphere brought about at the end of the Second World War by the emergence of a socialist camp facing imperialism, and also in view of the massive welfare activities undertaken by the socialist states. The Keynesian economic model provided a theoretical basis for this trend, and the concept of a welfare state may have prompted countries to hang on to state monopolies. Furthermore, in its contradiction with the imperialist camp the socialist camp was trying to win these backward capitalist countries over to their side and in the process offered such countries economic aid. This attitude of the socialist bloc also gave reason for countries like Sri Lanka to retain state monopolies and to call this policy "socialism".

26. It was the U.N.P. government which came to power in 1977 that replaced State monopoly capitalism with an open economy. Although during its last days the United Front Government planned to introduce the open economy, they did not have an opportunity to implement it. It was the JR Jayewardene-Thondaman Government that came to power in 1977 which started to march Sri Lanka towards a free market economy.
The Jayewardene-Thondaman Government was able to take advantage of corruption, irregularities, shortage of consumer goods, queues and restrictions, along with the difficulties faced by the masses, i.e. all the ill-effects sustained from Sri Lankan capitalism within the framework of state monopoly capitalism.

27. Although the Sri Lankan economy was transformed into an open economy through the willingness of the local rulers, there was decisive pressure from imperialism which operated along the lines of the Keynesian theory and was heading towards a serious crisis at the end of the 1960s. It was impossible to adhere to the Keynesian model any longer because imperialism was facing a cyclic effect with the socialist camp and the state monopolies restricting imperialist capital. The result was a demand for opening regional markets and the creation by neo-liberalism of a new exploitation process called the New World Order. Robert McNamara, the U.S. Defence Secretary during of the Vietnam War, was the first to advocate this policy. President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who came to power in America and Britain respectively during the 1970s, gave political guidance to this economic doctrine which was publicised as Reaganism or Thatcherism. The ultimate result of this process was that the whole world has become a single colony under the guise of “globalisation”.

28. At the beginning of the 1990s the Soviet Union and the Eastern European socialistic state system collapsed, altering the balance of power in the world and creating a unipolar world dominated by U.S. imperialism. The imperialist forces took full advantage of the collapse of the socialist states and intensively activated international institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation which already functioned towards the same end. Accordingly an attempt was made by the imperialists to impose their own political and economic hegemony over the other countries of the world. When the Warsaw Pact (arranged by the Soviet Union) also collapsed, the imperialist military organisation NATO became the only military pact in the world. Thus the imperialists were able to dominate the whole world by means of diplomacy, meddling in the internal affairs and military intervention. Thereafter multinational companies were re-baptized as trans-national companies or TNCs with the purpose of gulping economies the world over.
29. The United National Party used its 5/6 majority in the parliament to create an open economy and break state monopoly capitalism; for this purpose a new constitution with an executive President was passed by parliament. A programme was undertaken to sell state-owned institutions, plantations and corporations, and allow foreign capital to engage in unlimited exploitation for which purpose various legal enactments were introduced. Firstly the Greater Colombo Economic Commission was established in order to create Free Trade Zones which were exempt from the labour regulations in force, and to offer special tax concessions. These Trade Zones started in Katunayake and Biyagama, and later extended to Koggala. Subsequently the Premadasa Government (1988-91) scrapped the Greater Colombo Economic Commission to form the Board of Investment to cover the whole of Sri Lanka.

30. In building an open economy in Sri Lanka, the Jayewardene administration (1977-1988) offered on the one hand the "Singapore Dream" to the people, and on the other hand obtained millions of dollars as "credit-aid" from foreign countries and institutions in order to broaden infrastructure facilities for the benefit of foreign capitalists. Electricity, telephones, water, highways and buildings were among those facilities. All this was done to satisfy the needs of foreign investors, not for the benefit of the people. The outcome of this policy was the accumulation of a vast amount of credit, of which the people had to bear the burden.

31. When state controls over the economy were gradually removed to build the open economy under the slogans of "privatisation" and "peoplisation" it was not done without protest. The government had to face protests from various forces such as the working class and students when state properties were sold and service sectors like education, health and transport modified to suit privatisation. In this situation the government did not hesitate to crush the protests of the people by resorting to undemocratic methods. Illegal armed gangs were used in addition to the police and armed forces. For example the government brought forth repressive legislation such as the 1979 Prevention of Terrorism Act. The July 1980 strike was outlawed by using Emergency and Essential Services regulations, while workers, students, women and intellectuals were ruthlessly attacked when there were demonstrations.
32. The General Election that was scheduled to be held in 1983 was postponed for six years, thereby the government managed to extend their 5/6 power in parliament for another six years. Thereafter, making an excuse of the July riots, the government proscribed three political parties including the J.V.P. The government continued the ban and destroyed more than 60,000 JVP members and sympathisers through ruthless suppression. All these anti-democratic measures were connected with the process of establishing an open economy in Sri Lanka.

33. The U.N.P. administration was on the one hand trying to unleash the forces of repression to crush and weaken the social forces while on the other intently contributing to the task of creating a new type of man compatible with the open economy. It was the leader of the government, Mr J.R. Jayewardene, who professed that the most important purpose of life is earning money and not learning subjects like history which do not help anybody to earn money. He took further steps to scrap history from the school curriculum. For the birth of this new man he manipulated the television channels and radio stations under his command in order to create the necessary ideological background for the triumph of individualism over collectivism.

34. Meanwhile the United Front, which had been criticising the open economy and proposing to replace it with a balanced economy, finally came to power in 1994. Then they introduced the slogan of giving a "human face to the open economy", but dragged on the same old bogey during their seven-year administration. As with the case of the U.N.P. regime there was no new economic strategy other than the open economy by selling state assets, obtaining credit and welcoming foreign investors. Consequently the state sector was weakened while from the private sector there emerged no strong local capitalist class, with the result that the economy of the country fell into the hands of foreign exploiters.

35. Sri Lanka has by now completed 25 years under the open economy. The result has been an
economic disaster, as has been the case in other countries in the world. In order to justify the open economic policy in Sri Lanka these governments had several basic arguments to the effect that they could obtain foreign investment, develop weakened state enterprises through competent management by the private sector, provide the public with better, more profitable service by means of competition, and apply foreign technical know-how to production in Sri Lanka etc. However experience with the open economic policy has disproved all these contentions.

36. Sri Lanka has faced serious failures in achieving the main target of the open economic policy, i.e. in regard to the receipt of foreign investment. The amount of direct foreign investment by Sri Lanka during the years 1994-1998 has not exceeded 105 million U.S. dollars, a negligible share of a mere 0.75 per cent of the gross national product. The true position of the so-called wizardry of private sector management in Sri Lanka was amply demonstrated by the fact that some of the state enterprises sold off earlier had to be acquired again in 1996 by the state through the Public Enterprises Reform Commission.

Now it can be seen that the privatisation of the previous state transport service and the sale of the gas company has not yielded any comfort or reduced prices to the public.

37. By this time the state component of the economy had already been greatly reduced. In the meantime the U.N.P. government formed in 2002 is planned to remove financial sectors such as banks and insurance from control of the state. Further in the monetary sphere the rupee has now been allowed to float, the value of which is to be determined by market forces. Although state monopoly capitalism had contributed to a bigger state share in the Sri Lankan industrial sector, that has now been greatly reduced. In the year 2000 the private sector owned 94 per cent of the industrial sector whereas state ownership lagged far behind at only 6 per cent. The private sector is poised to compete with the state in the monetary sphere, and when the monetary power of the state is abandoned to the private sector Sri Lanka will lose her hold on her own economy.
38. In the open economy the country is not losing only its monetary and industrial sector. Action has been initiated to change the agricultural sphere to suit the needs of the multinational companies. These steps were taken during the 1994-2001 term of the United Front Government.

Imperialist institutions led by the World Bank have expressed their desire to remove paddy cultivation from Sri Lanka so that world market based commercial crops such as tobacco, gherkin, baby corn etc. could be promoted in Sri Lanka. For this purpose several programmes were launched by the United Front Government to divert the paddy farmers from their paddy cultivation and grab the ownership of lands belonging to small-scale farmers to be vested with multinational corporations. For example, the Bill to transfer uncultivated lands to the state, the granting of Deeds to farmers so that they can sell their lands to outsiders, and so on.

The amendments to the Agrarian Services Act 1979 no. 58 through Agrarian Services Act no. 46 of 18th August 2000 and the resultant nullification of farmers’ rights, and the international water management Bill enabling the sale of all water resources are examples. Through these measures small holders will be evicted to make room for large tracts of land owned by multinational companies, and land-owning small farmers will be reduced to the status of agricultural labourers. At a glance this appears as if bourgeois democratic rights are being fulfilled, but the real intention is to entrust agricultural lands again to multinational companies. The lands which were acquired by the British in 1815 for estate plantations remained in the hands of British companies even after so-called independence in 1948 up until 1975, when they were nationalised by paying compensation to ‘whites’. Yet three years later in 1978 these lands were being sold again to foreign companies so that Sri Lankans were again losing ownership of their lands to foreigners.
39. After 54 years of neo-colonial rule as well as 25 years of open economy Sri Lanka is facing a host of problems. By now Sri Lanka has become a new-style colony. This process could be called re-colonisation since even the semblance of independence gained in 1948 is fast disappearing. During the 17th and 18th centuries, imperialism was equipped with cannons and bayonets. Present-day imperialism has succeeded in employing softer methods such as imposing conditions for loans, interference in internal affairs, economic advices, peace processes, communication revolutions etc. Under these conditions the country has been deprived of a national economy. Its culture has almost collapsed with the rise of a generation that is mentally dependent, self-centred, and highly individualist in character. While per capita debt has risen to Rs 77,500 public services such as education, health, transport, water and electricity are being ruined. It is these conditions which created the socio-economic crisis faced by oppressed classes like labourers, farmers as well as students and women.

40. The U.N.P government (2002-4), like all governments that came to power after 1977, followed the policy of “selling” and “dividing” the country. Therefore the "privatisation project" as well as the "project of dividing the country", known as the devolution of power, have become a national disaster. In particular the national problem has been moved towards a separate state. Without unifying Singhalese, Tamils and Muslims on the basis of equality and democracy, these governments have contributed to the increase of inequalities, provoking racialism and offering privileges to racialist leaders, with the result that the national problem in Sri Lanka has assumed the proportions of separatism. Foreign imperialist forces have been allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the country through the agreement signed in 2002 between the L.T.T.E. and the U.N.P. government, and the policy of appeasement by the governments of Norway and the U.S.A. in the process. The so-called peace process seems to strengthen separatism rather than weaken it, and a serious danger of the division of the country and the division of the working class along ethnic lines has emerged.

41. The division of Sri Lanka and creation of "Elam" had been part of the strategy of imperialism, although there was some change in the international scene which determined the said program, imperialism has connected the separatist process with its re-colonisation process. If Sri Lanka is divided into two weak states their aim will be easily achieved. Further, the state of "Elam" would not be an ordinary country. It would be subservient to the West, and to the catholic fundamentalist activity which serves as a political arm of imperialism. It would never be anything closely affiliated to the Hindu cultural soul of the Asian Tamils. It would be a
reactionary camp, another "Israel" in South Asia.

42. After 54 years under the control of the local capitalist class Sri Lanka, after going through state monopoly capitalism and later the open economy, now has its worst crisis which covers all social, economic and political spheres, that shows that it will be unable to tread on the old path. Furthermore, at the end of the whole period Sri Lanka has become a slave colony controlled by the imperialist forces in accordance with their agenda. Apart from the general crisis of capitalism, the special features of Sri Lankan politics consist of the domination of imperialism as well as the reactionary process which has emerged as a result of a possible partition of the country.

Present tasks of Sri Lankan socialist revolution

(a) The incomplete tasks of bourgeois democratic revolution

43. In Sri Lanka the development of capitalism took a different path to the European and other developed capitalist countries. In those countries a capitalist socio-economic formation emerged on the ashes of a feudal pre-capitalist socio-economic formation whereas in Sri Lanka it was imposed by the British capitalist class over the old Asiatic mode of production. As a result present-day capitalist society in Sri Lanka contains features of the by-gone era, and the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution have not been properly achieved. Neither imperialists, their successors in the new colonial bourgeoisie nor their petit bourgeois partners were unable to abolish these pre-capitalist socio-economic features and complete the capitalist revolutionary tasks within their rule extending over five decades. This is the story of the class struggle during the past 54 years.
44. There are two basic tasks to be achieved through a bourgeois democratic revolution. The political task is the replacement of the pre-capitalist state with a capitalist state. In the case of colonial countries the main political task is to achieve independence. The socio-economic task is the replacement of pre-capitalist property and production relations with capitalist relations. In colonial countries this means the pre-capitalist relations in land by capitalist relations, i.e. converting land into a commercial commodity and opening the path to the capitalist development of agriculture. In the case of Sri Lanka the Asiatic state has been replaced by the bourgeois state.

During the past one and a half centuries capitalist state power has stabilised itself. The political tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution have been to that extent accomplished. In 1832 the Rajakari system based on land was nullified. Land became a commercial commodity. Estate plantations were started based on capitalist production relationships.

The economy of the country was tied to the international capitalist market. A market economy became widespread all over the country. A host of minor industries based on capitalist production relations with the estate economy were introduced. Later capitalist production relations were broadened to state capitalism and local and foreign private enterprises. During the last one and a half centuries the capitalist production pattern became the strongest and most decisive production system in Sri Lanka by dominating the Asiatic production system, although remnants of the latter survived in the base as well as the superstructure. This shows that the economic tasks of the capitalist democratic revolution have been accomplished.
45. What happened in the traditional agricultural sector during the recent past? At first this sector was neglected by the foreign imperialists. It was subjected to the imperialist import-export plantation economy which was more dynamic, more extensive, and based on the capitalist production system. This traditional agricultural economy could not escape the effects of the establishment of the local market economy which became part of the international capitalist economy. At first, production of simple commodities thrived within the traditional agricultural sphere, but expansion of population and fragmentation of land due to other socio-economic reasons such as shortage of land resulted in the birth of an agricultural labouring class and a rural capitalist class exploiting their labour; thus was created a capitalist production system within the traditional agricultural sphere.

46. Today there is no peasant class in Sri Lanka in the traditional sense of the word. It is only a social strata not a social class. It is within these strata that there appears the class division of capitalist society. The peasant class of the old Asiatic society has now been dissolved. New classes inherent to the capitalist socio-economic structure have emerged. On the one hand a rural proletarian class consisting of agricultural labourers and poor peasants, and on the other hand a rural bourgeoisie consisting of rich landowning capitalists exploiting the poor have emerged. After introducing the capitalist Paddy Lands Act, colonisation schemes, distribution of lands to the middle class, distribution in 1965 of thousands of acres to capitalist companies in the name of an agricultural campaign, introduction of science and modern technology in agriculture such as mechanical implements, the mechanical plough and tractor together with the practice of using chemical manure etc., stimulated and intensified the rural capitalisation.

47. The last 25 year period of the open economy has also affected rural agricultural industry as well as the nature of the agricultural masses. The peasants are moving out of traditional paddy cultivation and are forced to engage in cultivation of commercial crops under landowners and companies owning large tracts of land. Consequently, the class division and composition of the rural social structure consists of rural proletariat, rural semi-proletariat, petty bourgeois and big landowning capitalists. The small land holders of the rural semi-proletariat are gradually declining into landless agricultural labourers.
48. In some areas the rural traditional sector still retains the old Asiatic production relationships. From 12th April 1832 the Rajakari system was abolished to pave the way for a free labour market. However the lands owned by Temporalities and Manors were not affected by the above mentioned legislative reforms. Therefore Buddhist temples, Hindu Kovils and upcountry noble aristocrats were able to maintain the use of force labour “Rajakariya” form the tenants. By Act no. 69 of 1870 these traditional Rajakari performers were salvaged and on an annual land rent was determined. Only a few Rajakari performers were relieved while others continued to adhere to the old Rajakari system. Further, there were irregularities and corruption in the management of these traditional lands, and consequently a Commission was appointed by Governor William Gregory in 1876 to investigate these allegations.

Although the Commission recommended converting these lands to be "free" of the Rajakari system, the said recommendations were not implemented. Even the Up-country Rural Commission pointed out that this discrepancy in the Rajakari system had to be eliminated.

In some of these traditional lands Rajakari performers have become wage-earning agricultural labourers. Although these historical anomalies are changing gradually, the socialist revolution will have to take over these problems of traditional farmers.

49. Even though solution of the national question, the grant of community rights to people and emancipation of women lie within the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution, the local neo-colonial capitalists has been unable to achieve them in Sri Lanka since in general it was unable in all other backward bourgeois countries. Because of the backward nature and weakness of the Sri Lankan capitalist class, these social inequalities still exist in the social, economic and psychological environment. The caste system is an example of the backwardness.
50. The responsibility of fulfilling the unfinished tasks of the Lankan bourgeois revolution falls on the shoulders of the proletariat, who are revolutionary to the core and decisive in going forward. The proletariat who take the lead in achieving the socialist revolutionary tasks are determined to replace the state power of the capitalist class with the state power of the proletariat, and in the process fulfil the unfinished tasks left over from the bourgeois democratic past.

(b) The tasks of the proletarian socialist revolution

51. Pre-socialist revolutions were not social revolutions which eliminated exploitation of man by man. Every revolution only substituted the form of exploitation. Unlike pre-socialist revolutions which did not end exploitation and kept class division and private property intact, the socialist revolution completely eliminates the class system and exploitation of classes. It puts an end to exploitation of man by man.

52. Pre-socialist revolutions only brought coexistence between the new economic relationships born inside the womb of the old society and political power. However the socialist revolution is completely different. The creation of a socialist economy from that generated by the capitalist socio-economic structure is the main task of the socialist revolution.

53. A socialist production system will not generate itself within the womb of a feudal
socio-economic formation as did capitalism. Therefore a capitalist democratic revolution is ushered by a feudal socio-economic formation, while the socialist production system is formed simultaneously with the socialist revolution.

54. The proletariat which triumphs in a socialist revolution is not faced with a limited task as in the case of the capitalist class which comes to power in a bourgeois democratic revolution. A bourgeois democratic revolution comes to an end when the capitalist class is empowered. But the proletarian revolution starts when the proletariat is given political power. The proletariat in power has to create a new economy and socialist production system while the exploitation of classes, the existence of classes, and the ownership of private property has to be eliminated.

55. This is the era of proletarian socialist revolution where the means of production is converted to social property. The production of commodities is evicted by direct social production led by the mass of class-conscious proletariat voluntarily assembled. The socialist revolution in Sri Lanka will eliminate the private ownership of property and abolish the basis of class division in society, thus putting an end to the process of exploitation of man by man, and thereby man finally liberated.

56. Proletarian socialist revolution develops through a whole historical period. During this process the contradiction between mental and physical labour, the difference between urban and rural will be eliminated. Ultimately the proletarian revolution will advance towards the communist system.
57. The new socialist society established by the proletarian revolution determines that production and distribution is done according to the principle: “from each according to his capacity to each according to the work accomplished by him”. After revolutionary progress, under the communist system that principle becomes: “from each according to his capacity to each according to his needs”.

58. A political revolution will be necessary for the transformation of the capitalist property system into a socialist common property system. The pre-condition for building socialism is the elimination of bourgeois class rule and the birth of proletarian class rule. Socialist revolutionary tasks cannot be achieved without taking, building and establishing State power into the hands of the proletariat. Therefore the prime objective of the socialism is to capture the State power. Even though, the proletariat is willing for a peaceful transition this will be decided by the capitalists who are in power.

59. Marxist-Leninists do not prepare a ready-made formula to determine the formation of revolution in the process for capturing State power. As Lenin has stated very correctly, a common formula cannot be established and should not be established except by generalizing, analyzing and making conscious decisions by learning from the experience of global proletariat.

60. In studying the socio-economic and political nature of Sri Lanka, the main thing that emerges is that the country has become a new kind of colony under so-called globalisation and the open economy, dependent on imperialist capital and political ideology, without an identity, national economy or national programme and subjected to re-colonisation. As the Sri Lankan economy is completely subservient, it is imperative that the Sri Lankan socialist revolution to be linked with the defeats of imperialism and the struggle for true national independence. Therefore the strategy of the Sri Lankan revolution is interwoven with the struggle of gaining national independence and anti-imperialist struggle. Therefore the present situation urges the unity of all anti-imperialist progressive forces. All over the world and within our country, all anti-imperialist
progressive forces must be united under the leadership of the revolutionary proletarian movement.