

JVP District campaigns move forward unabated!

District campaigns, carried out by the JVP targeting to direct the masses, who are exhausted due to the 68 year rotating system of politics and the bankrupt neoliberal politics of the 'yahapalana' government, towards an alternative political orientation continuous successfully. What is a distinctive character observed in the exercise is the large and impressive mass participation and specially the enthusiasm shown by the masses to have a dialogue with the JVP.

The exercise commenced from Anuradhapura District and has so far covered Matara and Kurunegala districts. By end of March it will have completed

Gampaha District and Hambanthota District will be covered during the month of May. Later it will move to other districts so that the whole island would be

covered by the end of the year.

When most of the political parties in the country go to the people only when there are

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Education in the country will never be allowed to put on its knees

Comrade Bimal Rathnayaka

A small moneyed clique and several politicians are attempting to bring education in the country to its knees said Comrade Bimal Rathnayaka, the Member of the Political Bureau of the JVP and emphasized that the JVP would never allow it to happen and would resolutely struggle for the right of the children of the country for education.

He said this at a meeting held at the head office of the JVP on the 1st.

Speaking further Comrade Bimal Rathnayaka said, "A corrupt institution that was established during Rajapaksa regime has been given a license at present. This is a wrong decision. Maithripala administration is responsible for this wrong decision. The daughter-in-law of the Minister of Health of this government too studies at SAIMT. Children and relatives of all political parties in the Parliament except the JVP and EPDP study in SAIMT. We have no personal issue with those students. What exists here is an issue regarding the education policy. Distorted reports have been compiled in Parliament on behalf of SAIMT."

The Court of Appeal has given a judgment on a case filed by a student in SAIMT to register students from SAIMT as medical professionals. Everyone knew the judgment would be advantageous to SAIMT.

For, the Ministry of Health too was partial to SAIMT. Hence, the judgment was not a surprise. It was a case where the complainant and the defendant were on the same side.

A considerable number of people in our country go for foreign employment after having their education. The government should come to an agreement with them. They should be made to be employed in the country at least for five years after their education as the people in the country pay for their education here. Also, a law should be brought so that they would have to pay a certain amount when they leave the country. Many countries have such laws. University lecturers and professors should be paid more to prevent them from leaving the country. Degree boutiques like SAIMT have been able to pay them Rs.50,000 more as the pay they get from the state is inadequate. The education in our country should be developed.

We invite students, doctors as well as the people in our country to come forward to defeat the attempt by certain quarters to legalize SAIMT."

The National Organizer of SAIMT Comrade Rangana Devapriya too was present.

Why government is mum regarding SAIMT?

Comrade Anura Dissanayaka



The President and the Prime Minister, instead of coming out with their views on SAIMT that has become a well talked about topic in the country, are following an apathetic attitude says the Leader of the JVP Comrade Anura Dissanayaka. While the whole nation including Sri Lanka Medical Council, parents' associations, trade unions, government medical officers, journalists talk against SAIMT the President and the Prime Minister have decided to remain silent complained Comrade Anura Dissanayaka.

Comrade Anura Dissanayaka made these observations at a media meeting held at the head office of the JVP on 8th March.

Speaking further Comrade Anura Dissanayaka said, "Instead of Kiriella's statements or statements by S.B. Dissanayaka who is enthusiastic as his effort has been fruitful or statements of

Rajitha who represents SAIYM, the stand of the government should be announced.

A huge opposition to SAIMT has been launched by GMOA, students' movement, trade unions and mass organizations. We, as a political party, express our genuine solidarity for this struggle. We would mediate in the struggle against SAIMT with all our strength. Today we had a discussion with the Inter University Students' Federation and Medical Faculty Students' Action Committee. We would give our strongest support for the struggle against SAIMT that has become a symbol of privatization of education until it is abolished. Also, the trade unions affiliated to our party would take measures to take trade union action to support the struggle against SAIMT. We would take measures to make the people in the country aware of the harm the government is committing to

education, medical education and the health sector in the country. We would carry out massive protest campaigns throughout this month. This 'black institute' that endangers medical education in the country and attempts to destroy free education should be abolished."

Comrade Nalinda Jayatissa, Member of the Central Committee, expressing his views said, "Minister S.B. Dissanayaka represents SAIMT. He is so partial to SAIMT it seems as he owns SAIMT. It was S.B. Dissanayaka who initialed presenting Rs.600 million of public money to SAIMT. The document S.B. Dissanayaka says in which 8 Deans of Faculties in Universities had expressed their approval to SAIMT has not been seen by anybody else. However, we have the document in which all 8 Deans of Medical Faculties express their opposition to SAIMT. S.B. Dissanayaka comes out

with falsehoods that he himself cannot prove.

As they say foreign exchange could be saved through SAIMT we asked a question in Parliament. We wanted to know how much money is saved for the country. However, SB did not have an answer to that question. SB makes various statements without any document or report with him.

One example to show that Mahinda Rajapaksa is an opportunist is his opposition to SAIMT. SAIMT was begun in 2008 under his government. SAIMT was created making false statements to BOI, Ministry of Health and Ministry of education. During Mahinda Rajapaksa's term SB, who was the Minister of Education then, said SAIMT would be given the registration even if Sri Lanka Medical Council had to be abolished. Mahinda Rajapaksa, as the head of that government, presented scholarships to students of SAIMT. He made room for a girl, who did not have required qualification for university education but who sang a song praising him, to enter SAIMT for medical education. All his statements made now regarding SAIMT are mere jokes. He is making such statements to ridicule opposition to SAIMT."

Capitalist democracy & local government elections

A dialogue has developed in the society regarding the failure to hold local government elections and its postponement. Parties supporting the government come out with various excuses and carry out moves to postpone holding it while Rajapaksa clique and election monitors demand that the election should be held by any means. We too say the election should be held immediately. However, there are several issues that should be resolved before holding the local government election.

If an election is a strong indicator of capitalist democracy holding an election, the electoral system as well as how the election is held should be democratic. However, Rajapaksa clique is making a big din not with a democratic sense but due to the greed for power and to get its second and third tier members positions that have been denied to them when local councils were dissolved. Also, holding elections adopting any method – whether it is good or bad – is important for election monitoring groups. For, funds flow to them only when elections are held. For them existence of democracy is not the only criterion.

Democracy needs democratic elections – elections held so that the voter could enjoy all the benefits of democracy. However, the process that is being unfolded at present in our ‘democratic’ country proves in practice how deceitful capitalist democracy is. This is what Lenin once said about capitalist democracy. He says, “Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the



exploited, for the poor.” (The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky). All these characteristics Lenin has stated regarding capitalist democracy could be seen in capitalist elections and their electoral systems. Capitalist rulers hold elections even before their term terminates if holding such elections is advantageous for them and elections are postponed quoting various reasons if holding an election is disadvantageous for the rulers. During JR Jayawardene regime the election that was due in 1983 was not held using a fraudulent referendum to prevent the JVP from entering Parliament. In such instances capitalists shun their own elections. On the other hand during Mahinda Rajapaksa regime, taking advantage of the end of the war, elections were held monthly to take advantage of the situation. Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa held the presidential election two

years before his second term ended expecting it would be advantageous for him though it was proved otherwise.

The present administration is carrying out delaying tactics as holding the local government election at this stage is disadvantageous for them. Despite coming out with various excuses for the people, the real reason for not holding the election is due to their fear of the election. Why is the government afraid of holding the local government election? The UNP and the SLFP, the two main political parties that form the present government, would contest the election on their own. They know that when they contest separately they would have to criticize the other which would be disadvantageous for both parties and it would be a challenge for the existence of the ‘joint’ government. This could be avoided only by postponing minor elections until a general election is

announced. Also, the UNP, which has not been able to build its grassroots level party structure, is weak. As such, they are very suspicious regarding the result of the local government election. As anti government feeling is escalating and the major portion of the wrath is against the UNP, they are scared to go for local government elections that gauge popularity of a political party.

On the other hand the President too is scared of an election. No one knows how the SLFP would contest the local government election. Rajapaksa clique may decide to go solo. Then the existing unofficial split in the SLFP becomes official. This is not favourable to Maithri faction. Also, if Maithri faction has to contest on their own the vote base for the President would be exposed that would be a challenge on presidential power. Hence, absence of minor elections midway is favourable to the President.

These are the reasons why the local government election is getting delayed.

The real danger and the crisis within the local government election is not really the postponement. It is the harm and the political crime that would be committed if the election is held under the distorted electoral

system.

Capitalist ruling cliques decide not only to hold or not to hold elections on reasons advantageous to them but they also change the electoral system in a manner that is advantageous for them. Mr. JR Jayawardene gave up then existing system to bring in proportional representation system thinking that this system would be eternally advantageous for his party. However, the same proportional system has become a crisis for the rulers and has boomeranged on them. As the left parties such as the JVP are gaining due to this system it has become necessary to immediately change the system, Democracy has to be slashed and limited. This is why a new system was passed during Rajapaksa regime.

Despite showing that issues existed in proportional representation system as a reason to compile a new

Women should be empowered for a righteous society

Comrade Samanmalee Gunasinghe
The National Organizer of Socialist Women's Union

Red Power: The International Women's Day stays as an instance commemorated by governments as well as other organizations. However, issues and challenges confronted by women in Sri Lanka remain without any solution. Why is it so?

Comrade Samanmalee Gunasinghe: You are right. For the government and many organizations it is only a day to commemorate. However, the International Women's Day was declared by the 2nd International 107 years ago as a day to commemorate the struggle carried out against making the woman a labour slave and the capitalist campaign of denying the woman her rights and as a day that empowers women to carry on the struggle. The commemoration of the International Women's Day in our country is quite the opposite of this. In many countries International Women's Day has been made a display. Most of these commemorations do not represent women's issues. They do not discuss genuine issues of women. This is the situation in our country as well. The issues of the working, sweating and suffering women continue while the government reaps the fruits of their labour. There hadn't been any government that addressed genuine issues of women and attempted to find solutions for them. This is why women's issues have escalated in our country despite many 'Women's Days' are held throughout

the island. Women's issues have escalated and have become a serious crisis. As the Socialist Women's Union we commemorate the International Day differently. We queue up our programmes to give a message, to make the women aware and empower them. Also, this year on the 4th and 5th of this month we have organized awareness programme in all districts. We'll discuss their issues and give the message that struggle is the only means to win our rights. We have also organized a programme to bring down all our members for an awareness programme on the 8th. We believe women get their rights, a dignity and get real solutions for their issues only in a just and dignified environment. It is to achieve such a state that we, as women, should empower ourselves to change the present society and create a righteous society.

Red Power: There is a continuous dialogue regarding the minimal

representation in all bodies of people's representative. Laws have been adopted that women's representation in local government councils should be 25%. Would it solve the problem?

Comrade Samanmalee Gunasinghe: In the past too a law was passed that every local government council should have a 25% women's

representation. However, there are defects in this law that has been passed. The law doesn't say whether the 25% is from the list, or from the elected members. It doesn't definitely state how the calculation is made.

However, we consider

allocating 25% for women's representation as a good move. For, 52% of the population is women. Of course, to be fair there should be 50% representation for women. However, in countries like ours, the question exists whether women would be elected to local government councils despite passing laws. For, women despise getting involved in the deteriorating politics that exist in countries like ours. There are several main reasons for this. One is they are scared. They are scared of getting involved in shooting bouts and they can't throw money for politics. They are unable to emerge only with their abilities. Also, the opportunity that passes from one generation to the next would not allow women to come forward in politics and being a woman is a drawback in our society, specially to represent a constituency. Even if she is elected the security, the support and the endorsement from the society and from her home would not be sufficient to fulfill what is expected from her by the society as a people's representative. Even when she engages in politics despite these drawbacks what is demonstrated is that she had not



USA: Trump on a bumpy way...



A month has gone by since the new President of the USA Donald Trump was sworn in on 20th January. The statements he made and his moves during this period have created a massive controversy in international politics.

His inaugural speech, unlike that of other presidents of the USA, was not a long speech and it did not bring out the distinctiveness of the USA. He lamented the poverty in rural towns in the USA. He said the Washington area had become one of the most prosperous parts of the United States while much of the country has stagnated economically. He spoke about mothers and children trapped in poverty in inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape, an education system which has left students deprived of knowledge; and the crime and gangs and drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed the country of so much unrealized potential. He said he has 'stopped the carnage' right there.

Despite some seeing Trump's speech as anti-American, millions of US citizens who were distressed due to crime, poverty, drugs see it as an address that gave them new life. Toward the end of his speech, Trump appealed for unity and solidarity. He said "A new national pride will stir our souls, lift our sights and heal our divisions." The primary message in his speech, however,

clearly was designed to appeal to the Americans who voted for him and included little to reach out to those who didn't.

He said he will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world -- but with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first. He would have meant the USA would not get involved in military conflicts with other nations. Whether it would be practical or not is another matter).

During the first week of assuming duties as the President he signed the executive order to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. He stated that the expenses for the wall should be borne by Mexico. The President of Mexico opposed the move and cancelled his meeting with Trump.

During the second week Trump called for formally withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement. Doubling down on his hard-line stances on both immigration and Islam, Trump issued executive order banning travel to the United States from seven Muslim-majority nations. This brought resistance within the US. He warned Iran.

Trump's third week begins with a retreat. U.S. District Court issued a temporary restraining order on the travel ban in response to lawsuits filed by the states of Washington and Minnesota. Those suits argue several points, including that the ban violates religious liberties

protected under the U.S. Constitution. Trump responded saying the District Court Judge who issued the order should be held responsible if any terrorist incident occurs in the USA. Later, Department of Homeland Security officials suspended "any and all actions" related to Trump's executive action and the State Department began re-accepting visas. Even when Justice Department filed a request to immediately reinstate the ban the request was denied by the Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in San Francisco.

Trump's fourth week began with a repulse. His national security advisor Michael Flynn had to resign late Monday in the wake of revelations about conversations he had with a Russian official during the transition between the Obama and Trump administrations.

Trump had conflicts with the media in his very first media discussion. He found fault with the media stating they were a "failing pile of garbage".

From the way Trump has been conducting himself after being elected it is evident that he is not going to follow what his predecessors did. It is evident that the depth of the economic and political crisis that has surfaced in the USA has created this situation. How long the established system of the USA would tolerate Trump's antics if he acts knowingly or unknowingly to topple the imperialist interests of the USA is anybody's guess.

Philippines: Peace talks at snail's pace



Philippines' new president Rodrigo Duterte has announced that military action against New People's Army should be recommenced. With the new situation that has erupted there is a risk of peace talks that had resumed between the government of Philippines and the New People's Army breaking down.

The New People's Army acts as the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. It has been engaged in an armed struggle against the state since 1969 and established its power in several areas in Philippines.

Once the new President was elected peace talks between the government of Philippines and the New People's Army resumed in Oslo in Norway last August. Since then about 5 rounds of talks have been held. The third round of talks was held in Rome in Italy. There they agreed to meet in Netherlands on 22nd February and the 4th round of talks is to be held in Norway on 2nd April.

National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the political wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines participates in the negotiations on behalf of the New People's Army.

Ecuador: Presidential fight in another round



The election to elect the President, Vice-President and the Parliament in Ecuador was held recently. More than 14 million voters were expected to cast their votes at the election.

At the election the winners need to get 40% of valid votes and a 10%-difference over the nearest rivals to win outright. As no one was able to get the required number of votes at the first round the second round will be held on 2nd April.

Lenin Moreno, of the governing left-wing Pais party, fell just short of the 40% needed to win outright on Sunday.

He will fight former banker Guillermo Lasso for the top job. There had been tension after long delays in the count.

At the time the article is written Moreno led with 39.3% with 99.5% of votes counted. Lasso had polled 28.1%.

At the vote for Parliamentary seats Rafael Correa's party has won 75 seats. However, the final results would be announced in two or three days time states National Elections Commission.

New local government electoral system doesn't represent people's wishes

Comrade Anura Dissanayaka

The new local government electoral system that has been set up arbitrarily for the need of power hungry Rajapaksas doesn't address people's wishes said the Leader of the JVP Anura Dissanayaka pointing out such a distorted electoral system doesn't exist anywhere in the world.

He made these observations at a media conference held at the head office of the JVP on the 19th February to apprise to the media the stand of the JVP on the new local government electoral system.

Speaking further Comrade Anura Dissanayaka said, "There need not be separate electoral systems for Parliament, provincial council and local government councils. Having such separate systems is an eccentricity. The distortion of this electoral system has become an obstacle to hold elections. To hold the local government election soon an amendment should be brought only for this instance making the old electoral system valid. Otherwise, it is difficult to say when the local government would be held. It is not difficult to say whether the government intends to delay holding the election. However, the government could use the technical issues to postpone the election.

The cardinal principle of having elections in our country is to elect people's representatives. If so representatives for local government councils should be elected justly that reflects the wish of the people. If the people's choice is 40% the representatives elected could be around 40%. However, according to the new electoral system the party that gets 40% votes would get 77% representatives. The defeated group that gets 60% would get only 23% seats. This is against democracy. It is a reflection of a distortion in the electoral system. As a party, we too are affected by this system. Getting elected or not on people's wish is justifiable. However, driving away a political party due to a distorted electoral system is not justifiable."

The Member of the Central Committee Attorney-at-Law Comrade Sunil Watagala also participated.

Let's engage in class politics instead of doing party politics

The time has come to carry out class politics instead of doing party politics says the General Secretary of the JVP Comrade Tilvin Silva. He said this at a meeting held at Akuressa concurrent with Matara District coordinating week being held from the 16th to the 19th of this month.

He said, "The tea leaves pluckers, rubber tappers, farmers, government employees sweat to develop the economy. When the farmer toils to produce paddy, a few mill owners get rich. A society where the gains of the people are distributed fairly should be created. It is not necessary to give the contract of exploiting people to various groups every five or six years.

We are divided and fight among ourselves. However, the rulers do not take divisions seriously. They unite to

exploit masses. Can we find out which party they belong to? Can we say what Mr. S.B. Dissanayaka's party is? This week he is in one party and next week he will be in another. As a result he is comfortably placed.

Now look at this government's cabinet of ministers. Those who were in Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa's cabinet are in this cabinet as well. They have not been defeated. Who has been defeated then?

Now, we have to select our politics not as political parties but as classes.



All downtrodden people should come together," said the General Secretary of the JVP.

Comrade Tilvin Silva took part in several meetings, gatherings and discussions with intellectuals and professionals at Akuressa and Deniyaya areas.

We'll create people's movement that could come to power in 2020

Comrade Vijitha Herath

"It is very clear that both these groups cannot administer this country. We have to create a new political movement for 2020. We, as the JVP has taken the initiative for creating such a movement. We would create the people's movement that could get power in 2020. Give us power. We would take this country on a new direction," says the Information Secretary of the JVP Comrade Vijitha Herath.

He said this participating in a meeting held during the Matara District coordinating week of the party held from the 16th to the 19th of this month.

Speaking further Comrade Vijitha Herath said, "All economic portfolios were shared in the family. The victory of the nation was made a victory for the family. The sons sold national resources and organized car races around the Temple of the Tooth to destroy our culture. As the war was won the majority of the people initially tolerated the cursed acts. However, people couldn't endure forever. As such, majority of the people in this country including members of the SLFP, UNP, the Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils took measures to defeat the despotic regime and formed a new administration.

This is the new administration that began on 8th January, 2015. When this new administration came to power were given a big bag of promises. There were big talks about politics, economics and democracy. Of course, there were small concessions. The dictatorial executive power, according to J.R. Jayawardene that was so powerful that what it couldn't only do was to change a man to a woman and vice versa, was slightly relaxed. This is the important change we achieved after 8th January, 2015. Despite there were little changes, what started happening later were not how the country was promised.

You remember that the main allegations against Rajapaksa regime were theft, fraud, corruption and waste. What the new administration said was on one hand they would punish the thieves, fraudsters and the corrupt and on the other they would completely stop thieving, frauds, corruption and waste.

People who opposed thieving, frauds, corruption and

waste believed the new administration would fulfil their promises. However, what occurred was entirely opposite to people's expectations. The administration was changed on 8th January and on 28th February the biggest Central Bank bond scam, the biggest in the history of our country, was committed.

Mr. Wickremesinghe's promise of halting corruption went in smoke. Arjun Mahendran, his best disciple was made the Governor of Central Bank and was involved in the Central Bank bond scam that incurred the country a loss of Rs. 55000 million.

The trust that was in the government broke down completely. Now thieving, fraud and corruption has spread like an infectious disease. There is waste everywhere. A building rented out by the Ministry of Agriculture paying more than Rs.20 million a month has been closed down for months without it being used. However, there is a big building for the Ministry near the parliament. Already Rs.820 million has been paid as rent. At the end of five years the ministry would have paid more than Rs. 2400 million.

Farmers throughout the island are suffering due to the drought. They were not paid a single cent as relief. However, the government wastes public money for unnecessary projects.

This administration cannot be called 'good governance' as there are thieves in this administration as well. No thieves were punished but frauds and corruption continues. Youths were promised jobs but nothing has happened.

Both these groups have administered the country and have proved they cannot do anything good for the country. The country cannot progress under them. Hence, we should create a new political movement for 2020. We, as the JVP has taken the initiative for creating such a movement. We would create the people's movement that could get power in 2020. Give us power. We would take this country on a new direction," said Comrade Vijitha Herath, the Information Secretary of the party.

Women should be empowered... >>> Page 04

done her duty properly. More than the difficulties she had been confronted with, what the society states in the end is that she was unable to do a proper job. The two main political parties give their nominations only to those who have money and come from political families or to those who could get votes with other means. Hence, we do not believe that women's representation would be increased to 25%. It is difficult to think that there would be a qualitative development in women entering the political arena or their political activities.

Red Power: The maximum foreign exchange is earned to the country by those who are employed abroad. The majority of foreign employees are women. The main labour force in the estate sector that earns the maximum income in the plantation industry is women. The largest portion produced in the garment industry which is the highest income earner in the industrial sector is earned by women. However, this does not reflect in their living standards. What have you got to say about this?

Comrade Samanmalee Gunasinghe: It is true. The majority that serves the sectors that earn the biggest income in our country are women. However, the lives they lead do not show they have contributed to the economy of the country. If you look at their lives you would see several issues that prevent them from reaping the harvest they sow. One issue is that in the economic process there are only 36% women in relation to men. As such, there are more men than women in the economic process of the country. Within this 36% there are women employed abroad, in the estate sector, garment industry and various other sectors. Due to the economic policy in our country the women who go for employment abroad are employed only as house maids. They are not professionally trained. They go for foreign employment for low salaries. Women employed in the estate sector do not get a reasonable salary. Even in the garment sector their young years are spent very miserably. They do not get a reasonable salary for their labour. As a result of not being trained they do not get a good salary as well as a satisfactory working environment. The main responsibility for such a situation is with the government. For, it is the government that is responsible for entering agreements with foreign countries and to get justifiable salaries for those engaged in garment and estate sectors. The major portion of the income due to employed women goes to foreign countries through exploitation. Despite they bringing dollars to the countries their lives are spent in dark line rooms in estates, slums or torture chambers in the Middle East. They are a lot trapped in several crises. They would not get emancipation until the present vicious system is toppled.

Red Power: How does Socialist Women's Union mediate in empowering women to struggle against the social-economic-political- cultural conditions that torment women in this country?

Comrade Samanmalee Gunasinghe: We carry out awareness campaigns in all districts through various programmes. They could be educational programmes or cultural events as well as programmes that would change their attitudes. Also, whenever women are subjected to unfair treatment or when they are confronted with injustices we join other organizations to raise our voices against such injustices and oppressions. We, as a women's organization agitate against all sorts of injustices against women and also when prices of essential goods are increased, the attempt to increase electric and water bills, the VAT that effect women as well as the society as a whole.

Also, we, as an organization that pressurizes the government to resolve all issues, are in the forefront of all the struggles carried out to win rights for the people. Hence, we, together with women representing all sectors - the estate sector, garment sector, those who are confronted with injustices and with other women's organizations engage continuously in struggles to win women's rights and make this a country suitable for everyone to live happily and peacefully.

Capitalist democracy...

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system, the real reason is the need to drive away parties such as the JVP from institutions of people's representatives and consolidate a bi-party system of capitalists in the country.

As such, the real issues that exist in the local government election that needs to be held shortly are not due to the technical errors but the political harm it would cause to the society. When delimitating wards for the local government elections Rajapaksa did so in a manner advantageous for them. Recently, a commission corrected some of the errors. Similarly errors in delimitation process could be corrected. Also, technical issues too could be solved. However, the most serious harm that exists in the essence of this system that lays the foundation for a bi-party system to drive away other parties from politics will not be solved by correcting delimitation or technical errors. This is the crisis that exists.

Now, new delimitation boundaries have been gazetted. Next the number of members for each local government council should be gazetted. This too is not an easy task. For, the number of members for each council cannot be precisely declared before the election. Even if this is solved there are other issues. A law has been passed in Parliament that women representation in local government councils should be 25%. As such the methodology of allocating the 25% women representation in local government councils should be framed and entered into the local government election act. Also, there are, in the act, several defects pointed out by the Commissioner of Elections. The election act should be amended to correct all these. This too could be

done. However, none of it would invalidate the undemocratic nature of the electoral system. It doesn't correct the error of distorting public opinion. This is the serious issue.

Hence, all those who respect democracy, believe that the wishes of all communities, groups should be justly represented in people's institutions, those who foresee that wiping out certain political forces from political arena would be an invitation for a future disaster should struggle not only to force holding the local government election but to hold it under a correct and democratic electoral system. As such, instead of the electoral system with distortions passed for local government elections only, a new, fair electoral system that could be used for all types of elections should be compiled and if it takes time the old system could be used for the local government election so that holding the election need not be delayed. The old system could be used only for this instance.

The government's undemocratic attempt to put forward technical issues to postpone elections, the attempts by political villains who make a big din demanding to hold elections using the compiled system with distortions and the so-called election monitors who think only of funds they receive when elections are held should be defeated. The government should be forced to hold the local government election immediately to genuinely consolidate democracy under a correct and justifiable electoral system. Then only democracy would be genuinely protected. Our struggle should be to achieve this.

JVP District exercise...

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elections, the JVP deciding to have a dialogue with masses regarding the intensifying political situation in the country is significant.

The exercise is carried out covering all the electorates in the selected district. The exercise consisting of meetings, discussions, meeting of old members, meetings of intellectuals and business communities, cultural events are also participated by leaders of the JVP together with district leaders.

Speaking to 'Red Power' the Information Secretary of the JVP Comrade Vijitha Herath said the programme will continue throughout the year and by the time the exercise is completed a considerable number of people from the population will have had a clear view of the objectives of the JVP and the targets of the exercise would have been achieved.

The path to defeat SAITM & protect free education

The agitation against SAITM, the private medical college at Malabe, has intensified. This is so with the judgment given advantageous to students of the private medical college. Sri Lanka Medical Council has already decided to appeal to the Supreme Court against the judgment. On the other hand students in medical faculties, doctors' associations and other groups, based on various standpoints, have intensified the opposition to SAITM.

Meanwhile, members of Rajapaksa clique, who were members of Rajapaksa regime that carried out a policy of privatizing education during their tenure, gave the opportunity to start SAITM without bothering about standards and provided a Rs.400 million loan from state banks too have unashamedly climbed the anti- SAITM stages in a bid to use SAITM opposition to come to power. It is a small clique of doctors close to Rajapaksa clique that gives it nonexistent legitimacy and helps the politically destitute group to cover up its old crimes. All forces that genuinely attempt to defeat SAITM and protect free education must shun these guileful 'protectors'.

Private medical college is not an accident or a mistake but another indicator of the educational policy of capitalist governments. The move to slash state free education and turn it towards privatization was begun during JR Jayawardene administration. It was through the 'white paper on education' that was brought in 1981. It was compiled by the then Minister of Education the present Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The vicious move was defeated, at least temporarily, after a hard struggle by the JVP as a political party and the student movement led by the JVP.

Also, the Ragama private medical school that the government attempted to establish later too had to be taken over by the government as a result of the struggle carried out by the party and the student movement. It is due to such struggles that free education has been preserved at least at this level.

After Jayawardene administration the administrations by Chandrika Kumaranatunga, Ranil's two year administration and Mahinda's administration continued with slashing of free education and privatization of education. Despite struggles launched against such privatization, the opportunities for free education continued to dwindle due to the policies of capitalist rulers. For, slashing free education has become a policy of capitalist governments. An isolated move of a government could be defeated. However, defeating the state policy of the capitalist system is not so easy. Specially, defeating their policies when capitalism and capitalist administrations exist is difficult. What could be done is to delay them or put them off. However, the policies of capitalism are being implemented gradually in a bid to send free education down the precipice. This is the truth.

What has to be done now? All forces that genuinely want to protect free education, the non-fee levying state education and aspire to broaden its opportunities should comprehend the issue deeply. The 'wicked policies' of capitalism cannot be eradicated without defeating the capitalist system. Hence, what should be done is to intensify the struggle against SAITM, rally all forces that could be rallied to build the broadest front to defeat the two capitalist cliques that created and are protecting the SAITM illegal degree boutique and the capitalist system they maintain and to create a people's administration that will protect the right for free education. There is no other way to protect free education.



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