

People's Protest

against price increase & tax burden

The JVP has taken steps to organize a massive people's agitation against the government against the failure to control the skyrocketing prices of consumer goods that torment ordinary folk and for imposing high taxes on people in order to settle the wasteful spending of the government.

The country is confronted with a massive financial crisis due to the increase in export expenditure and the breakdown of the import income as the production economy has not been duly developed and also due to the increase in interest expenditure. Meanwhile the rupee is rapidly depreciating. As a result the prices of goods are

going up in a new round and the prices of fuel, gas, bus and train fares have already gone up. The working masses are further oppressed as the rise in the cost of living is fast outstripping their incomes. Meanwhile, the farmer community, which does not receive a just price for their produce and the fisher folk who are inconvenienced due to the

increase in fuel prices are going through very trying times.

While the economy of the country is moving towards crisis day by day Ranil – Maithri 'joint' administration that has no economic vision and has no proper programme is seeking momentary solutions merely to get over the issue. Meanwhile, former Rajapaksa regime that

has no alternative economic vision merely reiterates anti-government slogans and has shown before the media as well as before the people that they have no solutions for the crisis in the neo-liberal economic system.

Under these circumstances, the JVP has decided to organize a series of 'people's protests' in order to oppose the economic molestation that torments masses and also to convince them of the importance of guiding the country along an alternative economic programme that will encourage

production and justly distribute the gains of such an economy.

The first of this 'people's protests' would be held in Colombo on the 23rd of this month with the participation of a large crowd said the General Secretary of the JVP Comrade Tilvin Silva. He pointed out that this moment, in which the impotency of capitalist administrations has been completely exposed, is the best time for masses in the country to rally with an alternative programme.

Intellects Rally to Protect and Develop Country Seminar held at Kalutara on 22nd September 2018



A Rational Land, a Just Society and a Liberated Human Being!

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'20' & the referendum

The 20th amendment presented by the JVP to Parliament as a private member's motion was entered in the 'order paper of Parliament' on the 5th November 2018. It is a decisive juncture in the process to get the '20' adopted. Also, it is a victory achieved by the JVP. However, the few opportunists who considered '20' an obstacle for their petty designs despaired. For, '20' getting entered in the 'order paper of Parliament' was a political defeat for them and getting '20' adopted would jeopardize their power gambling. This is why several of them filed petitions in the Supreme Court against the '20'. By now the decision of the Supreme Court has been delivered to the Speaker. The Court's decision is in addition to a 2/3rd majority in Parliament the amendment should be approved by voters in a referendum.

It is evident that when a matter that is connected with the sovereignty of the people is amended it should be approved by a referendum. When presenting the '20' the JVP was aware that it had to be passed in a referendum and was prepared for it. The Court decision was not an unexpected one. As such, facing a referendum is not a demanding issue.

The few who created bogymen against '20' saying it would divide the country and would be advantageous to Ranil have now been made politically destitute. The voice they raised against '20' at the beginning has now been reduced to a murmur.

The executive presidential system is the only opportunity for those who are with Mahinda Rajapaksa at present. However, they want to make some other person the president instead of Mahinda in a bid to receive privileges from this other person. They consider losing this opportunity a destruction of their future. They create bogymen to conceal their knavish intention. However, the society does not have any sympathy for their predicament.

'20' is important in the sense that it would strengthen the capitalist democracy in this country. Anyone who cherishes would not oppose it. On the other hand, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Mahinda Rajapaksa and the incumbent President Maithripala Sirisena have in all their presidential election campaigns promised that the executive presidential system would be abolished. Those who reiterated the promise admired it and appeared on behalf of it are now saying '20' would divide the country and opposing it is indeed utterly outrageous. Some of them have not even read or studied the '20'. That is their political bankruptcy.

However, those who opposed the '20' have laid a foundation for a new political argument regarding how the '20' could be adopted. They did it by petitioning the Supreme Court praying for a referendum.

Why did they go to Court? The judiciary has no power to stop '20'. The maximum it could do is to recommend a referendum to get people's preference directly in addition to the 2/3rd majority in Parliament. Having a dialogue in the society and getting it adopted with direct people's wish is important for an amendment like the '20'. The plea of those who went to Court was not to give Parliament the right of adopting the '20'. As such, now what they should do according to their argument is not to allow Parliament to decide whether to adopt the '20' or not but to let the people do so.

Members of parliament need not stop the opportunity the people have to take a decision regarding the '20'. Let people take the final decision on the '20'.

If Parliament should not be given the right to approve the '20', it should not be given the right to take the final decision regarding it either. It should be given to the people. Those who went to Court regarding the '20' and others should now not obstruct the '20' in Parliament but should allow the people to decide. We hope those who went to Court would act according to the argument they brought forward.

Finally, it should be said that all those hoodlums who oppose the 20th amendment that is essential for democracy would be thrown to the garbage heap the day the people in this country accept that adopting the 20th amendment is their own responsibility.

JVP expresses condolences on the demise of President of Vietnam

Comrade Tran Dai Quang, President of Vietnam passed away on 21st September at age 61 after a prolonged and serious illness. Comrade Quang hailed from a small farming community 115 km south of Hanoi, rising through party ranks to become a Politburo member. Before his April 2016 appointment as president, Comrade Quang had been the minister of public security and was elected president in April 2016 by the National Assembly of Vietnam.

JVP sent a message of condolence to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the demise of Comrade Tran Dai Quang, President of Vietnam.

It states:
The General Secretary,
Communist Party of Vietnam
Dear Comrades,
The message of condolence on the demise of Comrade Tran Dai Quang, President of Vietnam
Let me, on behalf of the
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front – JVP), express deepest condolences to the Communist Party of Vietnam and the People in Vietnam over the demise of Comrade Tran Dai Quang, the

President of Vietnam.

We consider Comrade Quang as an outstanding Party and state leader of Vietnam who had made great contributions to the development, renovation and opening-up of Vietnam. He had won well-deserved respect not only from his compatriots but has gained high international prestige. He accomplished a great deal in strengthening the country's security and defending interests of Vietnam on the global state

We are confident that the influence of Comrade Quang and under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam the government and people of Vietnam will transform their grief into strength and constantly record new achievements in the cause of socialist construction.

We yet again extend our sympathies to the late president's family and friends, as well as the government and the people of Vietnam.

Comradely greetings,
Tilvin Silva
General Secretary,
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.
22.09.2018

Make Rs. 1281 the minimum wage for estate workers - NTUC

The National Trade Union Center (NTUC) demands that the minimum daily wage of an estate worker should be increased to Rs. 1281 as it is the minimum daily wage of a state employee states the President of NTUC Wasantha Samarasinghe.

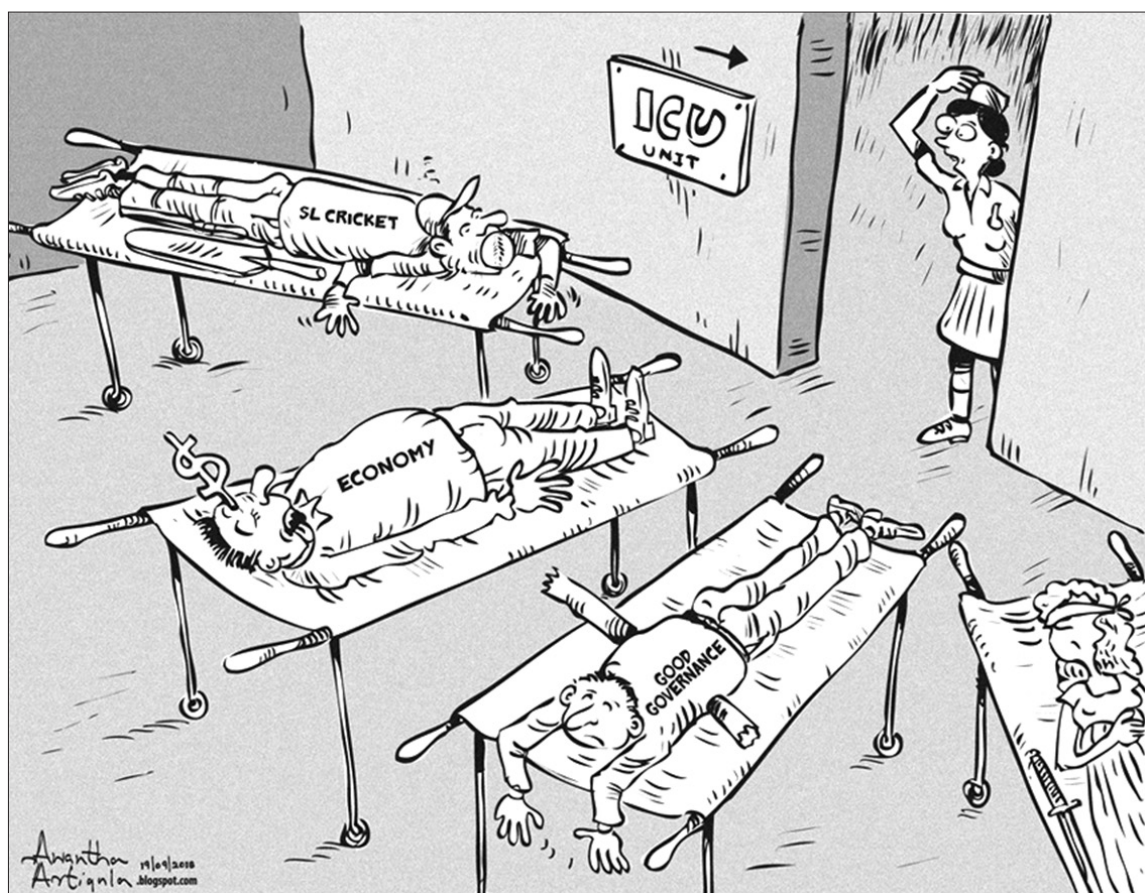
Mr Samarasinghe said the daily wage of an estate worker at present is between Rs. 400 to 500 and added that the wage paid for estate workers is quite inadequate as the cost of living index for the month of August has risen to Rs. 5649.

He said NTUC demands the government to increase the daily wage of estate workers to Rs. 1281 or give them a suitable monthly salary.

Mr Samarasinghe said the employees of the state sector, as well as the private sector, are severely affected due to the increase in the cost of living index and attention should be drawn towards increasing their salaries.

The President of NTUC said the government should reconsider its decision to do away with the pension right of state employees that was implemented from January 2016 and added the NTUC has planned to launch a massive protest movement to get the pension rights of the state employees back.

Collapse of capitalism in Sri Lanka & political buffoonery



At present capitalist society in Sri Lanka has totally disintegrated and the economy in the country has been pushed to the bottom of the precipice. Politics is not far behind. It too has deteriorated. The society and social values have collapsed. All public services are corrupt while public discipline has waned. The road discipline has gone to dogs and the result is at least 8 people are killed in road accidents every day. The trade and ethics in production have dwindled. People mix poison to food. The religious institutions too have deteriorated. What do they show? Capitalism in Sri Lanka cannot move forward a single inch. The best example that displays the deterioration of capitalism is the buffoonery and antics that occur in politics at present.

Generally, people love antics. For they bring smiles and merriment. This is why in the cinema industry in countries such as Sri Lanka and India, in addition to the main actors, there are comedians and actors whose role is to make people laugh. However, the main actor

was never a comedian. Also, in ancient palaces, there have been court jesters. Their main job was to make the king happy. 'Andare' was such a character. The king never swapped his place with Andare. However, the politics in Sri Lanka today is quite different.

Today, the king plays the role of Andare or the comedian has taken the main actors role. This happens when the king does not know what kingship is; when the main actor is not a character actor. This is what has happened to state administration in Sri Lanka. The state administrators, former rulers as well as certain senior officials have come down to the level of jesters and supply the masses with their dry jokes. Jokes are fun. However, when a state leader starts displaying antics and tries to play the role of a jester, it would be homicidal, not hilarious.

The state administration that was dominated by Sri Lanka's capitalist elite for some time took a new direction with the open economy in 1978. As a result, the rich, the thugs, gamblers and political bluffers entered capitalist politics. It was during Mahinda Rajapaksa

regime that the political culture gradually changed to a marauding affair, rulers were made deadly jesters and the voter a compatible partner. It occurred parallel to the degeneration of capitalism. Now, everything has turned topsy-turvy. State leaders and certain officials have been 'modified' into suppliers of jokes for the media.

It seems that the executive presidential system and the proportionate electoral system created by Jayewardene's constitution in 1978 have been responsible for this state. Despite political parties of the ruling class get defeated in the proportional election system, those who were in the upper echelons continue to carry on their political agendas. They could be with the government or with the opposition.

However, they continue to occupy Parliamentary seats. This prevents the country from getting new experiences from alternative forces. A group of people who has money and is privileged dwell in the upper echelons of capitalist political parties. This intensifies the

weird collapse.

On the other hand, the nature of the mass media in Sri Lanka too has contributed to this state of affairs. The mass media in Sri Lanka in the recent times began a media art that popularized idiotic statements uttered by stupid politicians instead of reporting substance that is useful for the people. Politicians who gleefully accepted the 'baton' supplied the media with their dry jokes so that they could display their faces on TV. This media practice made the politician a court jester. Today, the IGP too has become a victim of this trend.

The best example of this trend exists in our Parliament. The first one or two hours of Parliamentary sessions are being telecast live. This is ideal as people could see and get to know what their representatives do in Parliament on behalf of them. However, capitalist parties in parliament and members of their fractions whose political awareness is negligible; who are uneducated, hollow and stupid used this live telecast for their ignominious performances. They create scenes in Parliament so that they could get their faces displayed on TV but would avoid participating in any important discussions or debates. This is the level of politics in Sri Lanka has fallen to.

The deterioration that has surfaced in the capitalist politics as a reflection of the deterioration in the economic and social sectors has spread to the higher echelons of politics in the country. The President of the country, instead of comprehending the issues confronted by the people and the country and taking measures to solve such issues, has come down to the level of a supplier of anecdotes to the media.

Despite being the leader of the state and the cabinet, he, as he himself admits, becomes aware of things that happen in the country only 'after reading

newspapers". He discusses issues and takes decisions not at the cabinet but at public meetings in front of cameras of the electronic media. Recently, he had said the cashew nuts served on board SriLankan Airlines is not edible. If it was so, he, instead of uttering it in public so that the whole world could hear, could have got down the relevant officials and given orders to correct the issue. The manner he handled the issue indicates the low level the capitalist politicians and those around them have fallen to.

On the other hand, while the whole SriLankan Airlines is confronted with a grave crisis, talking about cashew nuts it serves is queer indeed. This is the level the capitalist politicians in Sri Lanka have fallen to.

The Prime Minister too acts in the same manner. He seems to enjoy clowning on stage and in parliament. Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa beats them all. He has become the biggest supplier of jokes to the media in Sri Lanka at present. He makes suicidal statements in Sri Lanka against handing over Mattala Airport to India while declaring to media in India that he is not against giving the Airport to India. Also, on 5th September, he entertained the whole country holding a strange type of campaign and continues his clowning stint. Once when Parliamentarian Dallas Allahapperuma was just behind him he told the media that Mr Allahapperuma got sick after drinking 'milk' distributed at the campaign and went back home. An incident that displayed his furious nature was when he called Uditha Lokubandara, his Coordinating Secretary, "a foolish devil" and asked him to go to a side.

The IGP is the latest to join the trio. He too likes to clown about in front of the media. He applies oil on the heads of WPCs, castigates

Red Power: A dialogue has recommenced in the political arena with the entering of the 20th amendment to Parliamentary agenda as a private member's proposal presented in your name. Could you tell us about the progress of this dialogue so far and its next step?

Comrade Vijitha Herath: We have already handed over the draft of the 20th amendment to Parliament. After the Speaker referred it to the Attorney General it was issued as a gazette notification on 6th July 2018 with Attorney General's recommendations. Subsequently, we requested the Speaker to enter it to the 'order paper of Parliament' and name a suitable date. It was entered to the order paper of 5th of last month. This is how we presented it officially to parliament after a notice about it had been given. Now, the 20th amendment has been presented to parliament. Next step is to refer it to the relevant subject minister. There is no particular minister in charge of constitutional matters. As such, the Speaker has referred it to the Prime Minister. He has a maximum period of six months to announce government's stand on the '20'. The future action about it depends on the stand of the government. A case had been filed against it in the Supreme Court. The hearing of this case has been concluded. However, the judgment has not been given yet. The Speaker would receive it soon.

It is good if it is passed with a 2.3rd majority in Parliament and goes before the people. At a referendum, people will get an opportunity to use their votes against the dictatorial executive presidential system. If the '20' is passed only

in parliament and if no referendum is held to approve it by the people someone could abolish '20' and bring back executive presidency once the composition in the Parliament changes. The '18' was brought after abolishing the '17' and '19' was brought to replace '18'. '20' is brought as a more progressive measure. If it is passed only with the 2.3rd majority in Parliament someone could abolish '20' and bring '21'. That's why we consider that holding a referendum is more suitable. We are prepared for a referendum. Politically, '20' would be stable only if it is passed in a referendum. That's why it should be taken before the people.

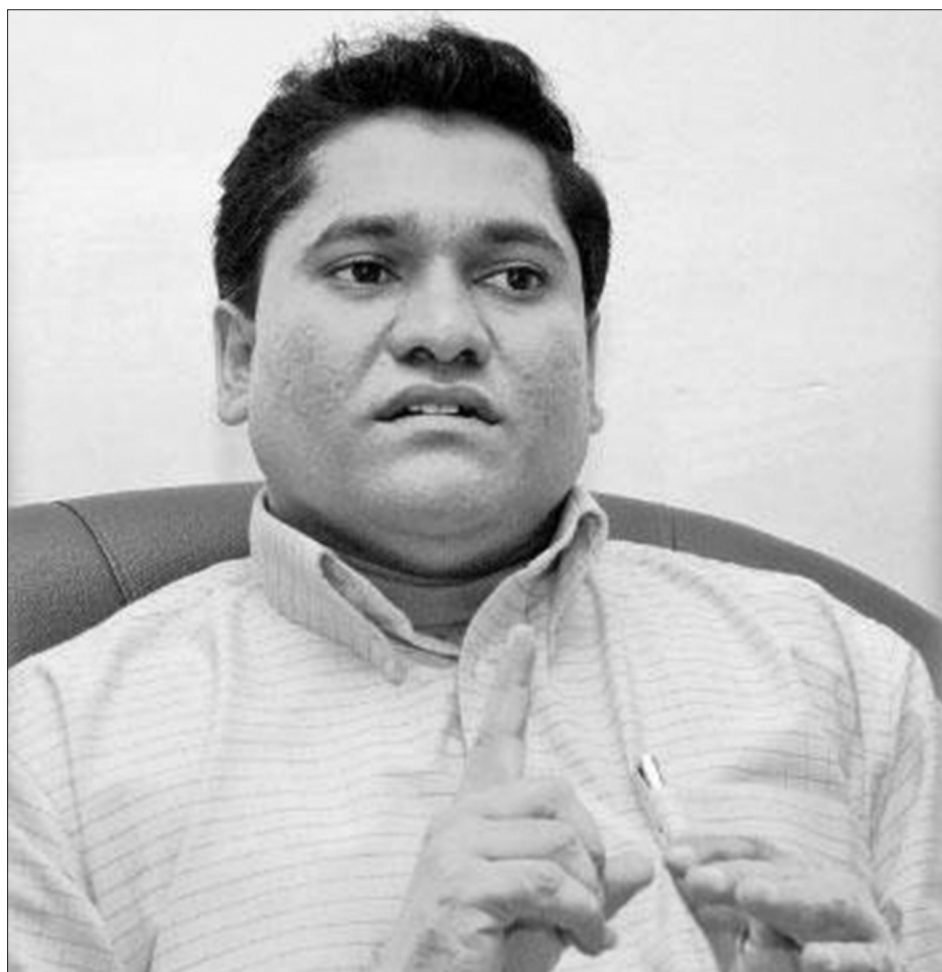
Red Power: Those who declared that JR's 1978 constitution was a 'dictatorial frenzy' are now attempt to continue with the executive presidential system. Why is that?

Comrade Vijitha Herath: In 1995 Ms Chandrika Bandaranayaka promised to abolish the executive presidential system. Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa promised to do it on two or three occasions. Mr Maithripala Sirisena, as the common candidate, promised to abolish it. However, none of them fulfilled their promises. People voted for them to abolish it. From J.R. Jayawardene onwards, under all presidents, the executive presidential system denied democracy to the people; the economy was destroyed. It is the powers of the executive presidency that made Sri Lanka a mobile cemetery. This is why the executive powers of the President should be abolished on behalf of democracy in the country.

Meanwhile, there are a few politically hard up characters in Parliament who would never win a seat in parliament if they

Let's topple the treacherous government & bring to power an alternative programme

Information Secretary of the JVP
Comrade Vijitha Herath



contest without hanging on to another political party. As they do not have a boss of their own they need a chief to be lead. Without that, they don't have an existence. These political refugees want to hang on the executive presidential system. The majority in parliament does not agree with them.

Red Power: The economic crisis in the country has surfaced With the rapid depreciation of the rupee. How would this situation affect the

masses who are already burdened with increased prices of essential goods and exorbitant taxes of the government?

Comrade Vijitha Herath: The government increased taxes and prices of goods. Fuel prices are increased monthly and with that prices of goods go up in a new round. Already, bus and train fares have been increased. With the increase in fuel prices, the whole cost of living goes up. People have been made to undergo severe suffering.

On top of that, a colossal debt mountain has been forced on them. When the rupee depreciates the debt mountain rises higher and higher. The interest that has to be paid will double and treble. This administration that burdens the masses with taxes and increased prices of essential goods is being despised by the masses. People feel that they have fallen from the pan to hearth. The investors the government bragged about did not arrive nor did the economy of the

country improve. The rupee has tumbled and our import expenditure has increased. The import expenditure is US\$ 20,000 million now. However, the export income is US\$ 10,000 million only. This means we spend twice the amount of our earnings to import goods. We import everything from onions, dhal, sugar, chillies, fuel, milk powder, toys, vehicles etc. We also import clothes, shoes, stationery and machinery. Even the eraser is imported. When the rupee tumbles the expenditure to import these goods goes up. The rulers do not have an answer to the issues. Ranil asks Mahinda for answers and vice versa. Both don't have answers. This means both the UNP and the SLFP have no answers for these issues.

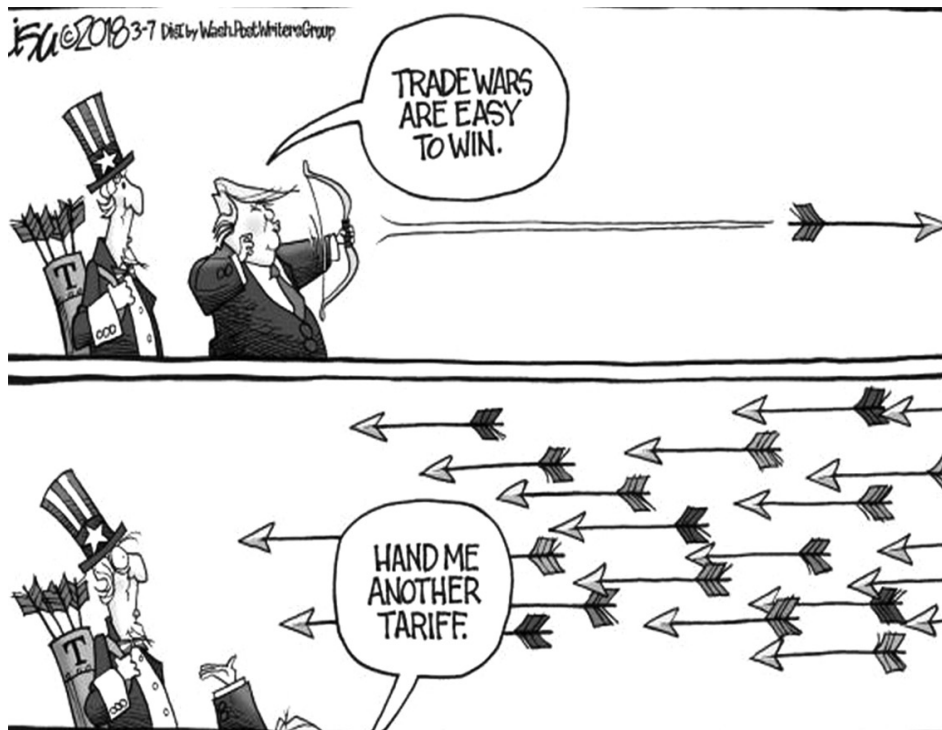
Answers to these issues cannot be sought without increasing production in the country and raising the incomes of the masses. As such, we have to follow an import-export policy that suits the country. The exchange control laws and regulations in the country were amended like opening sluice gates. What we are experiencing now are the consequences of these idiotic moves. People have been further tormented due to the tumbling of the rupee. The government too has deteriorated with the devaluation of the rupee.

Red Power: The Rajapaksa faction of the opposition carried out agitations demanding a change of government. However, the outcome was only a complaint about milk packets. In such a situation what is the preparedness of the JVP to rally the genuine forces that oppose the government?

Comrade Vijitha Herath: There is a genuine

US sanctions boomerang

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The US has imposed levies on 200-billion dollars of Chinese goods while China in a tit-for-tat move imposed new tariffs on 60 billion of US goods to China. China calls the new levies not as tariffs but 'trade sanctions'. China states Trumps approach to world trade shows a US trend on unilateralism. According to China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang, "multilateralism should be upheld and the basic principle of free trade should be maintained."

US has also imposed trade sanctions on Mexico, Canada, European Union. It has also imposed tariffs on Venezuela, Russia, Iran, North Korea etc. Each year, the USA finds a new country or group of countries to target with sanctions. Each year the USA adds about 1,000 individuals to its ever longer sanctions list. Now, US sanctions are coming to a turning point.

US sanctions have also hit hard at strategic EU companies and financial institutions and "negatively affect EU global strategic interests in energy from the Persian Gulf, US sanctions in effect attack the liberty, security and sovereignty of its biggest group of friends, the EU."

According to political analysts, US Sanctions

have reached a turning point that would lead to de-Dollarization and collusion against the U.S.

When the US and EU economies are taken together they constitute half the economy in the world. Until now the US sanctions were imposed on the other half of the global economy. However, this has changed now. US has imposed duties on the EU products which lead European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to say duties imposed by the US on the EU go against "all logic and history". Certain duties imposed by the US, especially the sanctions imposed on Iran and Russia, indirectly affects the EU.

Meanwhile, the 25% tariff imposed on steel and 10% on aluminium imported into the US has affected countries such as EU, Canada, Mexico and other close US allies such as India. In retaliation, India has raised taxes on 29 products imported from the US- including some agricultural goods, steel and iron products. South Korea, Argentina, Australia and Brazil too have agreed to put limits on the volume of metals they can ship to the US. Canada has announced retaliatory tariffs on C\$16.6bn (£9.5bn) worth of US exports.

The reason for the US to impose various

sanctions and tariffs is that Trump believes that if you have a trade deficit - if you import more than you export- you are losing out. He is especially irked by the hefty deficits in US trade with China and Mexico and has stated that he will not let any country "take advantage of us on trade any more". The US trade deficit has increased in recent years, running at about US\$50 billion a month.

At the moment US economy is a little less than a quarter of the world's GDP. However, according to IMF in 2023, it will fall to only about one-fifth of the world economy. Then 4/5th of the global economy would be represented by China, EU, India, Russia and other countries. These countries colluding against the US sanctions would not be avoidable. This would be a highly disadvantageous position for the US.

There would be a situation where US banks would be avoided. Payment transfer streams will develop to avoid US banks which would hurt the global position of the USA's major "growth industry". It will be a chance and a good excuse for the EU, China, Japan, India and other countries to promote their banks in the international system at the expense of US banks. Everybody

outside the USA will be reluctant to let their money be touched by US financial institutions, or let their money touch US shores. This will be very hard for the USA as the US financial industry has become really the only big growth industry which drives upwards the USA economy.

The US credit card systems will be blocked and cards from China & EU, India and other countries will take bigger shares of this profitable and fast-growing world market instead. Russia was the first country on this trend, kicking out all US credit card companies, and inviting in the Chinese credit card system. Countries also may start taking up loans from China or the EU instead from the US as these loans would be without the risk of future sanctions unlike loans from the US.

There is a trend of shifting dollar to other currencies in international transactions. This trend will diminish dollars in the international trade. Trillions of international dollars from trade may come back to the USA that would bring about inflation and economic crisis. Already, the world's giant crude oil producers such as Russia, Iran, Venezuela etc. have begun avoiding the dollar and making transactions with their currencies. Gold is according to unconfirmed reports being speedily bought up by governments, not only by Russia and China but even Turkey, recently also hit by US sanctions.

The 'trade war' started by the US will unite the EU, China, India, the rest of the world against US interests. With aggressive, unilateral trade-war, started by the US, all the rest of the world will now have even more motives to coordinate their counter-strategies to the US sanctions regime.

Russia responses

Russia, in response to the downing of its aircraft by Israel and killing 15 Army officers, has decided to make available a modern S-300 air defense system to the Syrian armed forces. Despite making available such a defense system to Syria had been held off delivering due to a request by Israel, Russia has now decided to transfer the air defense system to the Syrian armed forces within two weeks. They are long-range surface-to-air missile systems produced to defend against aircraft and cruise missiles that have a firing range of about 250 km. Russia also will also take action to block navigation and satellite systems, as well as communications of warplanes operating in the eastern Mediterranean. Russian defense officials described manoeuvres by Israeli fighter jets during the incident as "hostile" and said it had a right to retaliate. The response measures were taken by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's moves could restrict Israel's ability to mount air raids inside Syria on what it considers the greatest threat to its security from the Syria conflict: the build-up of Iranian forces or Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters.

Chinese door for Nepal

China and Nepal have reached agreements on immigration and diplomacy that would allow Nepal to use harbours in China for its trade and other affairs. This ends the landlocked Himalayan nation's dependence on India for trading routes.

Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli signed the historic trade and transit treaty when he visited China in March 2016 following the months-long border blockade imposed by India in 2015.

However, the issue Nepal is confronted with is the concerns regarding the long distances Nepal-bound cargo trucks have to cover from the Chinese ports, with the nearest one located 2,600km away. In comparison, Haldia port near the eastern Indian city of Kolkata, which Nepal uses for most of its imports, is located 800km south of Kathmandu.

As a solution to the issue, China has come forward to assist construction of a road network from Nepal to Chinese ports and there is a proposal to build a China-Nepali Railway project.

Nepal has already signed up to China's Belt and Road Initiative, hoping to attract much-needed investment through China's ambitious infrastructure project spread over Asia, Africa and Europe and hope to develop its infrastructure along the border with China.

The Maldives get new leadership

Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the candidate representing the common opposition in the Maldives won the presidential election held on 23rd September. He polled 1,34,616 votes (58%) while outgoing President Abdul Yameen could poll only 96,132 votes (41.7%). 89.2% of the registered voters had cast their votes.

Fifty-six-year-old Solih is a co-founder of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and was a leading figure in the Maldivian political reform movement between 2003 and 2008 that had resulted in the country adopting a modern constitution and a multi-party democratic system. Solih was also a member of the special majlis that drafted the constitution of the country and introduced the country to concepts like separation of powers and fundamental human rights. He is expected to be sworn in on 17th November.

India, China and the US intervene in the political struggle in the Maldives due to its strategic location in the Indian Ocean. With the outcome of the election, the Indian Foreign Ministry demanded the Maldives' Election Commissioner announce the final results immediately. China has already got involved in a large number of infrastructure projects in the Maldives and according to political analysts, China has already trapped the Maldives in a debt trap. Meanwhile, the US warned the Maldives before the election that it would impose sanction on the Maldives if a just election was not held.

Nevertheless, the elected new leadership too would be entangled in the regional power struggle.

“The rupee has depreciated from Rs. 132 to Rs 170.

Within one year the rupee has tumbled by 25%. People have witnessed the fall. The devaluation of the rupee is a good signal for the people to rally for a new economic policy. The depreciation of the rupee shows only one side of the breakdown of the economy of the country and the prevailing situation is such that the exchange rate of the dollar would go up to Rs.200,” says the Leader of the JVP Comrade Anura Dissanayaka.

Comrade Dissanayaka made these observations at a press conference held on 25th September at the head office of the JVP.

Speaking at the press conference the Leader of the JVP said, “Today the rupee is depreciating rapidly. Today it has exceeded Rs. 170 for a dollar. Economists warn that a dollar would cost Rs.200 or more at the end of this year. The government has no knowledge to solve this crisis. Recently, the Minister of Finance had said despite the rupee getting depreciated there is no economic crisis in the country. The Minister should have told the country how the depreciation of the rupee is not a crisis. The depreciation of the rupee shows the crisis of one area of the economy. The breakdown of the rupee increases the prices of all consumer goods including that of fuel and gas. The result is an economic crisis that severely torments masses. If the Minister of Finance says otherwise, it shows his knowledge of economics. The government attempts to build an argument that the rupee gets depreciated due to the strengthening of the dollar. It is only a half-truth. The dollar has strengthened to a certain extent in the world market. However, our rupee has fallen not only against the dollar. The value of the rupee against the euro has fallen by more than 7.3% this year. It has fallen by 9.6% compared to Japan’s yen, 2% compared to the Australian dollar, 8% compared to Bangladesh taka, 7% compared to the British pound, 4% compared to Chinese yen and 4% compared to Singapore dollar. As such, the argument that the rupee has depreciated

due to the strengthening of the dollar is not correct. The wrong economic policy followed by our rulers too has contributed to the breakdown of the rupee.

Another minister had said whatever others say the depreciation of the rupee was good saying our export income would increase. Such arguments would not find solutions to the economic crisis. If we bought a litre of diesel for one dollar which was Rs.130 in 2015, it would cost Rs. 170 now as we have to pay Rs.170 or more for a dollar now. This is a situation that has arisen due to the depreciation of the rupee and not because the price of fuel has gone up in the world market. The breakdown of the rupee has caused an unfavourable pressure on the economy of the country. It is in such a situation that certain ministers say depreciation of the rupee is favourable to the country. The government doesn’t have any solution for this situation. Former President who ruled the country for ten years and who was also the Minister of Finance responding to a question at a media discussion regarding depreciation of the rupee says he would solve the issue if he comes back to power. He speaks like he has Alladin’s magic lamp. The failure of the economic policies followed by those who have ruled the country for the last 70 years has been the cause for the present economic crisis. The former regime, as well as the present regime, should be held responsible for the present crisis. Today, the whole nation has to pay due to the wrong policies followed.

Today, the world is tied up to the market. This cannot be rejected. Exporting and importing goods is a reality in the world today. The world is also tied up with technology and transportation. It is also tied up with culture. Hence, no one could have an economy that would reject the world market. As such, we need not drift away from the world market. We should mediate in it as a combatant. The main monetary unit of the world market is the dollar. As such, having the rupee related to the dollar is decisive. We need the dollar to import goods. We get dollars when we sell our goods. There are several

The collapse of the rupee is a good signal for people to rally for a new economic policy



reasons for the depreciation of the rupee when compared with the dollar. Our country needs US\$20 billion to import goods. However, we receive only US\$10 billion by selling our goods. Our trade deficit for a year is 100%. This is where our rulers have brought the country. We have to pay US\$4 billion annually for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 to settle our debts. As such, US\$ 24 billion is needed to pay for the loan and import goods for this year. However, we get only US\$10 by selling our goods, US\$ 7 from foreign employees and US\$ 1.5 billion from tourism. This means we have US\$ 18.5 billion with us but the need is for US\$ 24 billion. There is a reduction in the supply of dollars but the demand for it has increased. This is why the dollar has gone up in price. This is simple economics. This is the main reason for the price of the dollar to go up.

In 1977 our country had

a trade surplus. Today, it is recorded as a 100% deficit. The reason for this is abandoning of our dollar earning sources. The port is the main centre that earns dollars. Former President Chandrika Kumaratunga sold a jetty to P&O company. President Rajapaksa sold the South Colombo jetty, the most important jetty in Colombo harbour, to a Chinese company. Today, 64% of container handling in Colombo harbour is carried out by the Chinese company. As a result, the amount of dollars the country gets diminished. The foreign company takes away 64% of the dollars the country should get from container handling in Colombo harbour. Another fountain of dollars is the bunkering services. This was carried out by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation. The bunkering service in Colombo Port was transformed in 2001 into a company called ‘Marine

Services’. Ranil Wickremesinghe sold it to John Keels Company. We could have earned a lot of dollars by supplying fuel to ships. The country lost this opportunity. The Supreme Court decided that the selling of this service was wrong and it should be taken back by the Corporation. However, Mahinda Rajapaksa regime, ignoring this decision, sold it to McLaren and later to IOC. Today IOC takes away the dollars they earn from our country. The bunkering service at Trincomalee Harbour too is carried out by IOC. The dollars they earn there too is taken away to India. One of the flourishing enterprises was Sri Lanka Telecom. First, it was sold to Japan. Now it has been handed over to Malaysia. The profits from Telecom is transferred to dollars and taken away to Malaysia. Today, 1/3rd profits from the fuel market are earned by IOC. This

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opposition to the government by the people due to the increasing cost of living and against the tax burden. However, what Rajapaksa clique did was to turn this genuine opposition by the people to a comedy, a melodrama. This move ridiculed the genuine opposition to the government. However, due to the burning issues of the youths who suffer from unemployment and masses that are miserable due to landlessness and economic issues do genuinely oppose the government. As such, we have begun awareness programmes and have commenced the 'Ten Thousand Meetings' programme held throughout the country under the theme "People's Administration to Develop & Protect Country". We also struggle to win the rights of the people. Our trade unions have already begun the struggle to demand a pay increase in relation to the increasing cost of living. We organize masses that oppose the policy that torments masses followed by the government.

We have organized a massive agitation against the government in Colombo on the 23rd. We have already started campaigning people at village and district levels for the agitation. We would continue the campaign to form a broad people's front that would topple the treacherous administration and form a people's rule that would carry out an alternative programme.

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company uses Corporation's stores in Kolonnawa. The pipeline belonging to the Corporation is used by IOC to bring fuel from ship to stores. Fuel is sold in petrol shed that belonged to the Corporation. However, the profit from 1/3rd of the fuel market in our country is transferred to dollars and taken away to India. The rulers in our country closed down avenues that earned dollars and also sold the institutions that could earn dollars for us.

On the other hand, our country has become a state that imports goods that could be produced in the country. We import 91.5% of sugar, 80% of chillies, 82% of onions, 100% of paper required for the country and all sorts of clothes the country needs. The industrial sector in the country has been broken down. The textile, sugar, paper factories the country had have been closed down. Ours has been made a country that largely depends on imports. Even the Wesak lantern and the kite is imported from China. As such, we have to spend a large number of dollars for imports.

In 1977 we owned 5% of the world trade. If the world trade was US\$ 200 we received one dollar. Today Sri Lanka's share in the world market is 0.045%. this means for us to get one dollar there

should be a trading of US\$ 2000. In the 40 years since 1977, our share in the world market has dwindled by 10 times. Our rulers did not have a vision. By the 70th decade, we had the tea – rubber-coconut economy. We should have changed according to the demand of the world market. The rulers should have had such a vision. Our whole export market shrank. Our rupee is dwindling as a result of the wrong economic policy the rulers have followed. The rulers who have ruled our country should be responsible for this situation.

We have to adopt long term and short term strategies to prevent the rupee from depreciating. As a short-term measure, the government should mediate to stabilize the rupee. It should be done as the depreciation of the rupee would indirectly aggravate the crisis. Foreign employees are having second thoughts about sending the money they earn to this country. They are waiting for the dollar to go further up to get more benefits. The exporters too delay the dollars they get for their exports expecting the dollar to go up further. When the rupee is unstable those who have dollars with them do not use them. As such, even the amount of dollars that are due to the country get blocked.

As a result, the dollar goes up in another round. This bizarre cycle ends up in a crisis. Hence, the dollar should be brought to a certain stability within a short time. The breakdown cannot be arrested without this stability. It also needs a long-term plan. It is necessary to find ways of settling the trade deficit. We have to think how we could earn a share of the world market. However, these rulers do not have such long-term plans.

97% of biscuits consumed in our country are made in this country. However, the government is preparing to hand over the biscuit market to foreigners. Already, foreign biscuits have been stocked in supermarkets. There is a law that the ownership of companies that render services to ships should not be owned by foreigners. However, the Minister of Finance had proposed in the last budget to remove this 40% law. This means the country would lose the dollars earned from rendering services to ships. The government, instead of long-term plans, is thinking of earning some money 'for the time being'. The rulers are in an illusion that such acts would strengthen the economy. Thinking that the economy would go forward without production but only with circulation is a myth. As such, a long-term plan is necessary to develop production and limit imports and to earn a due

share in the world market.

However, it is evident that these rulers do not have such a plan. The media discussion of the former President and the statements by the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister indicate that they have not comprehended the present economic crisis and they don't have solutions for such crises. The only solution they know is to take more and more loans. They are getting a loan from the USA and certain state banks have been advised to get loans in dollars. Getting dollars for loans would be an answer for the moment but it would create a massive crisis in the long run. The people in the country have to pay the price for the failure of the rulers to have a correct economic policy.

A new economic policy is essential against the present incorrect economic policy followed by the present rulers. The depreciation of the rupee and the economic crisis shows the people the failure of the economic policy followed by the rulers. The rupee has depreciated from Rs. 132 to Rs 170. Within one year the rupee has tumbled by 25%. People have witnessed the fall. The devaluation of the rupee is a good signal for the people to rally for a new economic policy."

The Member of the Central Committee of the JVP and the Member of the Uva Provincial Council Comrade Samantha Vidyaratna was also present.

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people as well as attempt to assault them in front of the cameras. As such, the whole country has become a clowning arena.

However, this is not a state that could be cast away with a smile. These individuals banter with the future of a Nation. They have no vision, nor an intention to salvage the rupee that is tumbling down daily or the economy that is sinking to a deep abyss day by day. Casting away the main issues of the country but bantering about has become the trend of the period. Despite people are amused by the antics, their jokes could be the harbinger of the doom that could befall the country.

There is a saying "the abode suits the devil" in our usage. Also, Joseph de Maistre states "Every nation gets the government it deserves!" As such, capitalist leaders that suit the voters and a set of supporters who are like blind devotees that suits such leaders have been created in the country. There are several officials who match both these groups. When the situation is such – when the top of capitalism is rotten it is not fruitful to speak about the rest. For, these are scenes that show the end of capitalism in Sri Lanka.

What needs to be done now? Let's keep aside being

audiences to political jokes. People who could comprehend the good and the bad and with a broad knowledge of social issues still exist. They are entrusted with a massive responsibility.

It is to rally with progressive forces, end the political buffoonery and hand over the country to a responsible, dedicated leadership with a vision that could guide the country towards peace, prosperity and righteousness. Such an opportunity has now surfaced. It is the responsibility of all to defeat the political buffoonery before they end up in a tragedy and to rally to create a people's administration that upholds people's interests.

No more talk about common candidates

Hereafter there won't be any 'common' candidates. The JVP will work as an alternative centre with a programme that is people friendly and particular to the JVP says the Member of the Central Committee Comrade Lal Kantha.

Speaking at Monaragala under the 'Ten Thousand Meetings' programme of the JVP being held throughout the country under the theme "People's Administration to Develop & Protect Country" Comrade Lal Kantha said, "The JVP would not assist any individual or a group to come to power but would strive to bring victory for a people's programme that could bring peace, unity and prosperity to the people and the country."



Unemployed Graduates Agitates



Awareness Programme on '20'

Comrade Anura Dissanayake meets CPIM

Leader of the JVP had discussion with leaders of Communist Party of India (Marxist) during his visit to India to address a special seminar in New Delhi.



Announcing People's Protest against the government that increases prices & taxes.



Summit of the National Intellectuals Organization at Rathnapura

