

RedPower

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THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT (JVP) - SRI LANKA

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CURRENT AFFAIRS

Hands off People's funds!

The National People's Power (NPP) states that the rulers, who stole the wealth of the treasury, on the one hand, also stole the wealth that was due to the treasury, on the other, then destroyed them and created a state of bankruptcy where the country is unable to pay its debts. It emphasizes that the rulers are now preparing to loot the people's funds, the Employees' Provident Fund and the Employees' Trust Fund, which should not be allowed at any rate.

Comrade Anura Dissanayake, the leader of the NPP, expressed these views while addressing the vast crowd after a protest with the theme of 'stop the looting of funds without delay' held in front of the Fort Railway Station on the 31st.

Comrade Anura Dissanayake said, "Ranil Wickramasinghe is afraid of the people. It has been a year since he became President.

However, apart from official meetings, he has not been able to address the country's citizens as the President. He has not been able to call farmers or working people using his official power. The industrialists of our country, the local entrepreneurs, have been destroyed. Today, this country is in the hands of a rogue political gang and a racketeering business

class. All industries manufacturing biscuits, shoes, clothes and tires have collapsed.

He said the Chief Auditor of Sri Lanka had revealed that since 2015, the governments had taken project loans amounting to Rs. 8 trillion to develop the country's infrastructure. However, according to financial statements, the country's assets are only worth Rs. 2 trillion, leaving Rs. 6 trillion unaccounted for. It's suspected that this missing money can be found at Medamulana walawwa and Ravi Karunanayaka's house, who happens to be Ranil's closest friend. The public believed 75% of the loans were used for development projects, while the remaining 25% was stolen. However, the opposite

has happened, where 25% went towards infrastructure, and 75% has evaporated.

They are trying to destroy democracy, bring prohibitive laws, and stop people with censorship laws. People die without medicine in hospitals. 68% of people do not have a healthy diet. Children cannot be given proper food, and the pain of hunger cannot be stopped by censorship. There is no fair price for the harvest for the farmers. Prohibitions cannot prevent the pain and protest of the farmers. They made the country unhappy for a long time. They made the people miserable. The people's pain intensifies daily, and the reasonable protest arising from that misery cannot be stopped with

prohibitions and warrants. We are sure they will rally with the NPP to oust these rulers.

The citizens of this country have to pay for the crimes committed by the likes of Ranil Wickramasinghe and Mahinda Rajapaksa to our economy. The citizens are unable to pay the increased electricity bill. The water bill has been raised from August. The prices of all essential goods have been increased, but the salary has been cut. Jobs are gone. Factories are closed. The whole country is destroyed. We tell Ranil Wickramasinghe, "Please get off without dragging the country to the bottom of destruction". The NPP is ready to take over this country and, together with the people of this country, shall build this country."



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

Gimmicks & Reality

Capitalist rulers in Sri Lanka have used appointing commissions, committees and all party conferences to push serious issues alarming to them under the carpet or hoodwink the people as these rulers have no solutions to real issues of the people and the country or put the responsibility for such issues on others.

The latest gimmick of an all-party conference called by the appointed President Ranil Wickremesinghe held on July 26th, stating its purpose was to achieve a 'national consensus' to solve the national problem, ended without reaching any agreement as usual. The discussion was not an 'all-party' discussion because the National People's Power, which represented the Parliament and was the political force with people's power in the country, did not participate. The National People's Power's decision not to participate in Ranil's all-party rally was confirmed to be correct because the meeting ended without any practical discussion or decision.

The rulers of this country never had any real desire to solve Sri Lanka's national problem. The 13th Amendment was made by Jayawardene, who was unable to avoid it due to Indian influence. As such, it was not an honest attempt to solve the problem. That is why the 'solutions' of the 13th Amendment have not become a real solution so far. They have not even thought of a solution based on giving rights to all people on the basis of equality. They do not hesitate to violate the law of the country, desecrate democracy, even ignore the judiciary and postpone elections in a bid to hang on to power and deny people their rights.

Our society has faced devastating consequences due to the collective failure of successive governments to promote peace and reconciliation for seventy-five years after the independence. As a result, all nationalities were forced to experience the repercussions in addition to the outcome arising from the thirty years of civil war. Can we expect Ranil, who had headed several governments, to ease the consequences of communalism and religious extremism and build national unity with his 'all party conferences'?

They never took proper steps to resolve the evil effects on society, even after the end of the war. Although the Lessons to Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) was established, the former and the present governments have yet to mediate to fulfil its recommendations.

Considering all aspects of the present situation, our proposals are presented, recognizing the identities of all nationalities to create a Sri Lankan nation built on the values of coexistence and reconciliation.

We propose governance that builds the Sri Lankan nation by creating mutual understanding and trust between all nationalities and religious groups, by assuring their protection and rights, maintaining coexistence and reconciliation by accepting the identities of all ethnicities while deviating from all forms of racist, caste-based and religious extremist ideologies.

We propose to continue the Provincial Council System systematically and efficiently until a sustainable solution is implemented within a new constitution based on the principles of equality and democracy by developing power in relation to politics and administration. It would discourage the idea of division and separation.

Coming back to Ranil's so-called all-party conference, before reaching a national agreement, it is imperative that there is an agreement between the parties of the government and that the country is told what that agreement is. Without doing so, any other discussion is a fraud, is running away from the issue and will be nothing but a political gimmick.

A wave of protests in Kenya



Teargas and live ammunition were used against protestors in many cities in Kenya during protests against tax increases and rising living costs. Opposition leader Raila Odinga called his supporters to the streets where there have been clashes

with armed police in Nairobi and the western city of Kisumu. Nearly 30 people have died in the last few weeks of violence, and hundreds of wounded were reported. President William Ruto came into office last year promising to

uplift the poor in Kenya. Kenya's economy is still in the recovery stage after the Pandemic, and a rise in the cost of living has hit it. Kenya is considered one of Africa's most stable and prosperous economies in the last decade.

Protests outside supermarkets in New Zealand

Action Station organized a protest campaign against incredible profits in supermarkets despite the cost-of-living crisis of the last three years in New Zealand. Actions were taking place in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Hauraki. In Auckland, protesters were standing outside the New World Metro on Queen Street holding banners, while people in Christchurch were playing music and handing out fliers encouraging people to sign a petition to increase taxes on corporate profit. The

protestors are demanding to increase the corporate tax rate or introduce an excess profits tax to address the issue of runaway profits head-on and increase revenue to reinvest into collective good. Protestors are concerned about solid public services and resilient infrastructure that can withstand climate damage and protect from future crises. Demonstrators demand more investments in the public sector, such as hospitals, schools and transport systems, to meet their full potential.

South African workers protest against soaring living costs



Hundreds of members of the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU), the country's largest labour union, gathered at its head office in the commercial capital Johannesburg to demand interest rate cuts, electricity reforms, and job additions. The union organised workers

across South Africa's nine provinces and major urban centres, such as Cape Town, Durban, Kimberly, Mafikeng and Rustenburg, to form a nationwide common front. These protests were started amid President Cyril Ramaphosa's salary increase for all public office holders,

including judges and parliamentarians. Africa's most industrialised nation implements its post-COVID-19 economic recovery strategy. It is harassed by continuous electricity blackouts, high unemployment and interest rates, and growing social unrest due to soaring living costs.

Retreating devil does so after smashing the pot

There is a saying with our people that says, "The devil that retreats leaves after breaking the pots". Looking at the current government's performance, it appears that the Ranil-Rajapaksa regime, which is about to end, is preparing to 'break the pot'.

Ranil's uncle J. R. Jayawardene introduced the so-called open or neo-liberal economy to Sri Lanka. That was in 1978. However, so far, they have not been able to fully implement it in Sri Lanka. That is because of the influence of the working people of this country and the left and progressive forces.

Now, Ranil, appointed by Mahinda Rajapaksa to the Presidency, vacated when Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled from the Presidency, and the country has started playing the final innings of neo-liberalism. It is because of the financial crisis caused by their rule in the past and taking refuge in the IMF. Ranil Wickramasinghe is now implementing the concept of "total withdrawal of the government from the economy". That is by arranging to sell the last few state institutions, such as electricity, petroleum and telecom, which are essential to the country and the country's security.

On the other hand, free health care and free education are allowed to die little by little to release them from the government's responsibility and gradually give them to the private sector. That is why it is said that 'when the devil retreats, it does so after smashing the pots'.

They know that neither Ranil Wickramasinghe nor Rajapaksa can take power in this country again. Local government elections are being postponed continuously because they know defeat is inevitable. Nevertheless, even if the defeat is postponed, this ruling party cannot eliminate it.

They have to face the presidential election next year. There is no doubt that the presidential election will change the history of this country. Knowing its defeat, the ruling clique is now carrying out its final performances.

Knowing that they will not get the support of the people again, they now behave, forgetting the people. No one from the president to the MPs of the government is accountable to the country's people. It is because the people are no longer relevant to them.

The president is now accountable not to the people but to imperialist institutions, to the IMF. Unable to bear the tax to be paid when earning, the educated and the professionals started leaving the country after their demand to reduce the taxes was not heeded. The damage it causes to the economy of this country



in the fields of education, health, construction etc., is severe. Even when the educated and the professionals leave the country, Ranil keeps his tax the same because fulfilling the conditions of the IMF is more important to him and his clique than retaining the educated and the professionals.

Also, Ranil is taking decisions affecting the people, such as deductions from Samrudhi benefits, EPF, and ETF, in the name of domestic debt restructuring. All these moves damage the funds and reduce the benefits given to the people. However, he acts as if he is not accountable to the people but to the IMF.

Preparing to bring new laws to change the existing labour laws in favour of multinational companies shows that Ranil is ready to 'retreat after breaking the pots'. The new Prevention of Terrorism Act is a similar effort.

While Ranil works like this, his cabinet of ministers works as if they want to avoid being second to him.

Several patients in several hospitals have died due to the inferior types of drugs imported for government hospitals in recent days. Everyone knows they are 'getting' chunks of commission when importing inferior drugs. If the ministers steal from the patients' medicines, it means there is no limit to their thieving. However, when it was alleged that patients die due to inferior medicines, the health minister said in Parliament that patients die in hospitals, which is why there are undertakers in front of hospitals. It shows that the ministers are not accountable to the people.

After a bus fell into the river in the Manampitiya area in Polonnaruwa district, where 12 people lost their lives, Minister Bandula Gunawardene said there was no money to repair the bridge. It is fair indeed when one wonders that they are now angry with the people and taking revenge on them.

The efforts made by the people and the clergy to protect the 'padu kurundu' tree during the construction of the central highway

Also, Ranil is taking decisions affecting the people, such as deductions from Samrudhi benefits, EPF, and ETF, in the name of domestic debt restructuring. All these moves damage the funds and reduce the benefits given to the people. However, he acts as if he is not accountable to the people but to the IMF.

ended with the authorities secretly uprooting and burying the tree. Now, it has to be excavated according to a court order. All this says that the ruling clique is now behaving arbitrarily without accountability. Anyone considering getting people to vote for them again would not do it. However, now, they seem to have given up any hope of returning to power.

A few weeks ago, what happened when Puttalam District Member of Parliament Ali Sabri tried to bring gold and mobile phones illegally and was caught by the airport authorities? He was sentenced

to a minimum fine (Rs. 7.5 million) and released. He came to Parliament the next day, and he had no shame about the illegal act. The government has not taken any action regarding him so far.

By now, all government institutions in Sri Lanka have become anarchic. They are not directed towards a goal. Everyone in the government is looking for money and 'enjoying' life in the way they can according to the power they muster. There are also several officials who act in accordance.

Stopping the import of flour and giving the monopoly of wheat flour to the two multinational companies of Sri Lanka, Prima and Serendib and allowing them to earn colossal profits is such a move.

All this suggests that the rulers are now bent on enjoying their short time in power instead of returning to power and are not accountable to the people and the country. This is how a ruling clique behaves when frustrated. They are afraid. They are angry. They are worried. They are alarmed at the thought of having to give up power. They make various attempts to weaken the people's forces by slandering, insulting and lying. Embedded in all of them is the sign of their defeat.

It is the responsibility of the people to understand this situation and recognize their true enemies and true friends and work with understanding, trust and attention to mark the end of this evil ruling gang.

Memoirs about Jaffna

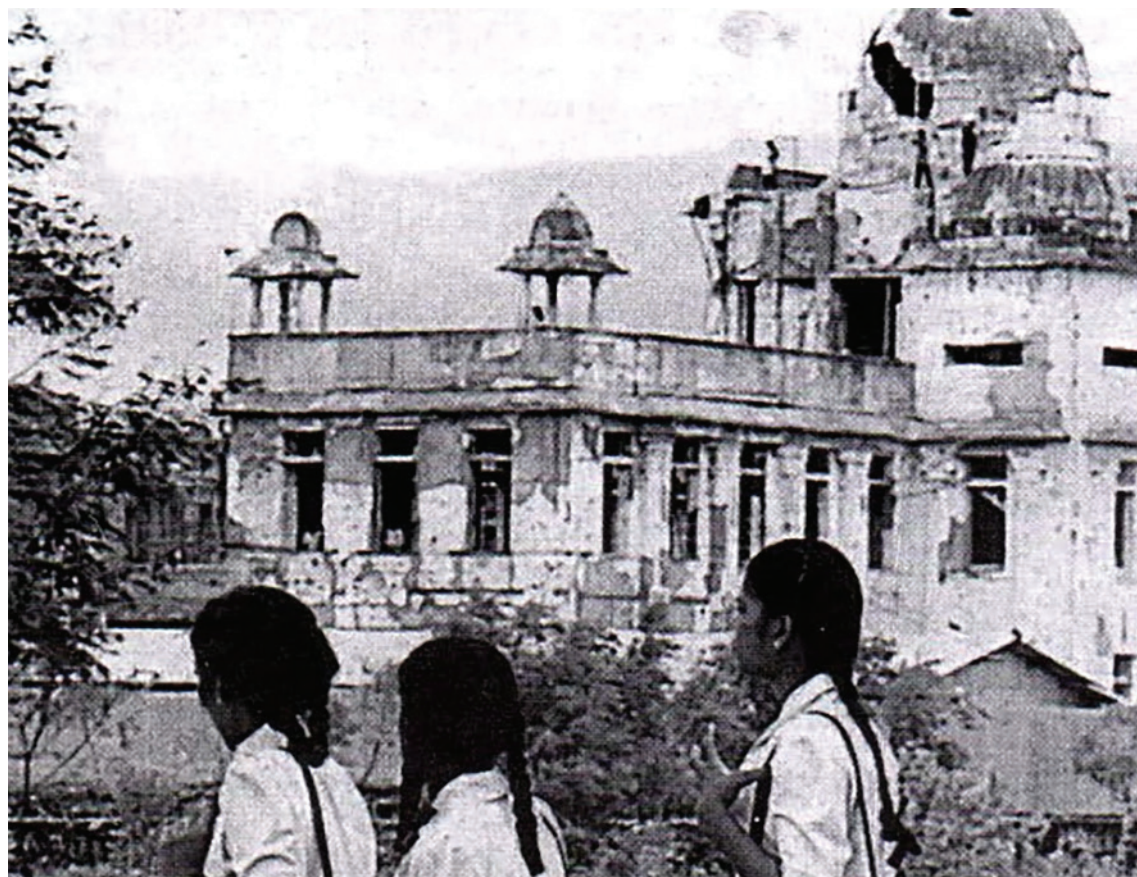
[Reminiscence of a past era: Mr D.W. Sirimanna, a government official, transferred to Jaffna at a time of unrest. Which later developed into a civil war. The writer expresses the calm and friendly atmosphere that existed in the North of our country before

politicians started meddling with people's lives and plundering the Motherland. Part one of the article appeared in our July edition. We publish here the final part of it.]

Contd. From last month's issue of 'Red Power'

Once Mr Lionel Fernando was transferred, the situation in Jaffna became worse and worse from day to day. The Sinhalese business establishments were harassed, and sometimes they were plundered. Some Sinhalese abandoned Jaffna and went back to their villages in the South. As we were afraid for our lives, we too wanted to follow what some Sinhalese business people did. However, when we went to the Municipal Commissioner, Mr Sivagnanam, to get leave, he said we could stay in his official residence, and he would provide the necessary protection. I explained things to him and got a week's leave, promising I would return. My leave was approved, and I and all others left Jaffna by Yal Devi train on the same night. We were brought to the Railway Station in a jeep belonging to a Tamil official, a friend who lived in a house in front of our lodging house. Our eyes were filled with tears when we left Mr Sivagnanam and entered the train. He asked us to come back to Jaffna. The following day we reached Colombo, met the relevant Ministry Secretaries, informed the current situation in Jaffna and requested to be transferred to Sinhalese areas. Later, I met the Asst. Secretary to the Department of Local Government Services, Mrs Arangala and explained to her the situation in Jaffna. Considering my distress, she transferred me to Moratuwa Municipality with immediate effect. However, the other officials did not get transfers, and once their leave was over, they had to return to Jaffna. I reported for duty at Moratuwa Municipality the very next day.

On 10th September, when I was getting ready for my



wedding ceremony, I received a letter transferring me to Kurunegala Municipality with immediate effect. The person I was to get married to worked at District Hospital, Deniyaya. I met the Director of Local Government Services, got the transfer differed for two weeks, completed my wedding affairs and reported for duty at Kurunegala Municipality on 24th September. I got to stay in a house where Mr V. Ranasinghe, an administrative official in Kurunegala area and several other government officials stayed. Later, Mr Ranasinghe served as the Government Agent, Kurunegala.

District Development Election

Meanwhile, the District Development Councils Election was scheduled to be held on 4th June. On the 2nd June night, the Kurunegala Municipal Councilor suddenly came to

the house where I was staying and informed me that I should report to the AG's office before 7.00 a.m. on the 3rd to go to election duty of the District Development Councils election in Jaffna. A senior minister of the government had held a meeting with chiefs of government institutes and informed that officials from Kurunegala should be taken to election duties in Jaffna. I agreed after clarifying matters.

The following morning I reported at the AG's office, and the people who were there were taken to the Kurunegala Railway Station and we were asked to get into a train that was stopped there. Mr Somapala Jayweera, an administrative officer with me in the lodging house, was also there. Additional GA Mr Dissanayake was in charge of the officials. When the train reached Jaffna, it was past 7.00 p.m. All of us were taken to Jaffna Hindu College by bus. On our way,

we saw shops burning. When we saw this, we got terrified. When we were about to lodge in Hindu College, Ministers and MPs of the government came, assembled all of us and gave us instructions about how the election should be conducted.

Finally, Minister Gamini Dissanayake said the appointment letters will be given the following day. We would be provided with security and vehicles, and the election duties should commence at 7.00 a.m., and it should be stopped at 10.00 a.m. Those who were left in the queue to vote should be dispersed, deploying the police. The ballot papers that were left should be marked and put into the ballot boxes. When someone asked which symbol should be marked, the name of an animal was mentioned. Several who were their cheered. With this statement, many officials were uncomfortable. We also knew there were others with us who

were not government officials. Once others left the place, I told my friend who was with me that I, who came to serve the people in Jaffna in 1979 as an official, could not consciously plunder their right to vote. We both decided to avoid the vile move tactfully.

On Monday at about 5.00 a.m., the politicians who came to Hindu College started distributing appointment letters, and the move was utterly chaotic. Amid this confusion, both of us wriggled out of the College, walked throughout the city, and saw the situation there. The Tamil people were walking throughout the city, observing the burnt-out shops and devastated statues. Later, the two of us went to the Jaffna Municipal Council. As it was closed down, we went towards the Jaffna Library and saw it burning, emitting black smoke. I could still visualize thousands of people at the Library premises, watching with tears the burning of their intelligence. This sight shocked me. I thought my eyes had sinned to see the library I visited umpteen times to read newspapers being burned down. Is not the Sri Lankan society compensating today due to such destructive acts? In later newspapers, it was published that a Reverend Father who had been involved in making the Jaffna Library a reality died of a heart attack when he heard about the destruction of the library.

The two of us walked through the streets of Jaffna till that evening and saw many occurrences. We went back to Hindu College that night, listened to others describe how the election was conducted and slept. The following day we went to the railway station and left for Kurunegala in a train that was kept ready for those who were brought from Kurunegala. A small clique of people travelling in the train plundered shops owned by Tamil people near the stations the train stopped. As another group opposed the act, we also joined them. However, as the situation worsened and it developed into a free-for-all, the two of us alighted the train at Anuradhapura and spent the night there. When we returned to our lodging place at Kurunegala, it was past 12 noon.

(Please note that I have written this on experiences I gained during my official duties.)
D W. Sirimanne

[We publish here an interview carried out by 'LEFT' magazine with Prof C.P. Chandrasekhar as it has a timely significance at the current time. Prof C.P. Chandrasekhar, a Senior Research Fellow, was attached to the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, served as Visiting Senior Lecturer, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Executive Editor of Deccan Herald Group of Publications Bangalore, Consultant to the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices, Ministry of Industry, Govt. of India, and Research Associate at the Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum.]

Question: Sri Lanka declared its bankruptcy on the 22nd of April, 2022. Nevertheless, SL had sent the letter of intent to the IMF even before this. There was a big emphasis from one set of economists, business circles, bankers and media that there were no options for Sri Lanka other than seeking the IMF bailout. Some argued that since the "IMF is the lender of last resort", there is no harm in seeking its help.

As per your analysis of the Sri Lankan economic crises, specifically debt crises, what were the alternative paths Sri Lanka could have stepped in without jumping to IMF?

Answer: It was not surprising that Sri Lanka was in talks with the IMF before the crisis actually broke. The elites wanted a solution dictated by the IMF. Given the huge resort to external commercial borrowing by the Rajapaksa regime, the damage inflicted by the pandemic on Sri Lanka's foreign exchange receipts, and the speculation induced rise in energy and food prices following the Ukraine war, it was clear that Sri Lanka would not be able to meet its external debt commitments. The default only signalled that the inevitable had happened.

What needs to be noted is that this dependence on external debt, while carried to excess by unscrupulous politicians, was to an extent unavoidable given Sri Lanka's long history of relying on balance of payments support from the IMF, in return for which it implemented policies that included liberalization of trade and removal of controls on inflows of foreign financial capital. That is, while the Rajapaksas worsened the balance of payments situation, IMF-inspired policies made the situation bad in the first place.

Given this historical role of the IMF, going back to the IMF to resolve the debt crisis

was counterproductive. It was clear to both bilateral creditors as well as private creditors and holders of sovereign bonds that Sri Lanka was not in a position to meet its debt service commitments, and that they (the creditors) would have to accept a "hair cut" or a reduction in the value of their credit assets through multiple means: some debt write off, some extension in maturity periods and some reduction in interest rates on remaining debt. Bilateral creditors were already engaged in such adjustments, and without their willingness to do so, the IMF's programme would not have taken off. Private creditors had already earned immense amounts from Sri Lanka, since the terms of debt were structured to yield many multiples of the original loans. On the other hand, the secondary market for Sri Lankan foreign currency bonds, where the latter were being sold at a discount of a few cents for every dollar of debt, indicated that foreign creditors were in the know of the current value of debt. If the Sri Lankan government had held out and negotiated a haircut, these creditors would have been more than willing to settle for less. And such settlement could have been reached without accepting in return for a small amount of IMF support a programme that is heaping and will continue to heap many miseries on Sri Lanka's poor and middle classes, who had little role in precipitating a crisis.

Question: Regarding IMF, the household word is "Debt Trap". What is the difference between "Burden of Debt" and "Being trapped in Debt"?

How are IMF programmes designed to push countries into these perpetual debt traps?

Answer: Debt is a burden because it has to be serviced, and foreign currency debt

IMF serves interests of global capital

Prof C.P. Chandrasekhar

is even more of a burden since hard-earned and scarce foreign exchange will have to be diverted to pay off that debt. A debt trap is a situation where so much debt has been accumulated, with borrowing partly driven by the need to service past debt, that there is no way, even after much sacrifice, to reduce that debt to sustainable levels. Rather, to stay afloat, debt-trapped countries will have to keep enhancing the volume of outstanding debt, till crisis strikes.

The IMF cannot prevent such crises in the future, and can at best offer band-aid dolutions. IMF programmes, which bring in a small amount of foreign exchange to temporarily ease the balance of payments problem, require governments to liberalize trade, leading inevitably to rising trade and current account deficits. This requires greater reliance on foreign capital, including foreign debt. Since IMF-inspired policies also liberalize capital inflows, or increase the ease with which foreign capital can be accessed, they encourage governments to ignore external deficits, since they can be financed with foreign borrowing in the short run, though that increases the debt burden. This continues under IMF tutelage till debt once again becomes unsustainable.

Question: The IMF loan agreement of Sri Lanka 2023 March,

Would it overcome the economic crises of Sri Lanka?

Would it be possible to solve the Debt burden of Sri Lanka, as it declared?

Some stipulated targets in the IMF programme look illusory (for example - expectations of FDIs) and self-contradictory (e.g. 300% energy price hikes and economic growth!). Are the main economic and debt restructuring targets

mentioned in the IMF programme realistic?

Answer: As mentioned, resolving Sri Lanka's debt crisis requires going through a minimum of two steps. First, it is necessary to reduce the volume of outstanding debt through a process of restructuring. There is no guarantee that foreign private creditors would easily accept a settlement in which they lose some of their super profits, just because the IMF has given Sri Lanka the promise of a clean chit if it adopts recommended policies and meets suggested targets. Those policies may prove difficult to implement and some targets that call for deep austerity among a population that is already economically devastated would remain unrealized. The growth and macroeconomic (especially budgetary) targets are not just in conflict, but completely unrealistic.

Second, it is necessary to reduce dependence on debt, by reducing balance of payments deficits. While this may partially happen because of the post-pandemic and post-crisis recovery in foreign exchange receipts in areas like tourism, for example, a significant reduction in the import bill is needed. The best way to ensure this is by reducing non-essential imports by the elites and the super-rich. But since these sections are not responsive to price increases, restraining their consumption requires physical controls on luxury imports of all kinds. But with its obsession with trade liberalization, that is not what the IMF would have. Rather it implicitly (and on occasion explicitly) seeks to curb necessary imports, reducing demand for such imports (including essentials like food and energy) by imposing austerity on and contracting income of the broad masses. That contraction is to be ensured through many routes: reduced government



expenditure (including on social security and welfare), sharply increased energy prices, devaluation of the Sri Lankan rupee that renders essential imports more expensive, and most recently, a squeeze on the earnings of pensioners, by restructuring domestic debt owed to them by the government to create "fiscal space". The impact of this on the already immiserised poor and middle classes cannot but be devastating. But, it is unlikely that this will help correct the balance of payments vulnerability, as the rich continue to demand and consume imported luxuries of various kinds, and even converting their wealth into hard currency to be held abroad.

Question: What will be the IMF programme's economic and social consequences if implemented fully?

Answer: I referred to the economic consequences earlier, with worsening conditions of life for the poor and middle classes and those in the informal sector. On the other hand, the cost that would be borne by foreign lenders and the rich is likely to be buffered considerably, since there is no effort to impose additional taxes on the incomes of the rich and on their wealth, to generate the revenues that will allow the state to support those being affected adversely by

austerity.

It is the social consequences of this that can be frightening. As the "aragalaya" protests revealed, there is much anger among the people of Sri Lanka against the elites that can break into spontaneous struggles. There has been a respite in those struggles partly because of repression and partly because the people had been persuaded that the solution to Sri Lanka's problems was an adjustment programme designed and overseen by the IMF, which will bring creditors to the table and reduce the debt burden. Those promises will not be kept and anger would be fuelled again, that can lead to social disruption. The direction politics will take in those circumstances is unclear. It may force a shift to a more progressive and egalitarian programme pursued by a new government with social sanction from the people. But experience elsewhere indicates that it can also lead to a turn to the right, with nationalist, revanchist and communal ideologies dividing society and pitting sections against each other. That will add to the economic crises, heaping misery on most people.

Question: When we study the recent history of IMF loans to many other countries, we experience a lot of

Let Palestine live!

We publish here an interview on the Palestine issue. 'Red Power' had with Comrade Bimal Rathnayake, the National Organizer of the JVP and Co-Chairman of Sri Lanka Committee for Solidarity with Palestine.



Q: Can you explain what is meant by the problem of the Palestinian people that many people talk about?

The problem of the Palestinian people dates back to the end of the first World War, when the league of nations placed Palestine under the administration of Britain as a mandatory state under the mandate system adopted by the league. The mandate was intended as a "transitional period" until Palestine reached the stage of full independence. However, the historical development of the mandate did not lead to the emergence of Palestine as an independent state, and the Jews were granted

than 3 years) and Dead Lands (those that did not cultivate, did not work and did not belong to anyone) was subjected to severe punishment and legal accountability, which gave greater control to the Jews over the Palestinian Territories.

Several disturbances and clashes broke out in various regions of Palestine, aggravated by the increase in Jewish migrations and the arrival of more than 100 settlements, in addition to the entry of Zionist institutions into the institutions of the British Mandate and the increase in the arming of Zionist gangs, which the Palestinians considered an unfair situation for

operation witnessed in the twentieth century, where these gangs forcibly displaced about nine hundred and fifty thousand Palestinians and Jews were replaced in their place.

In 1967, Israel occupied the rest of the areas of historical Palestine, the "West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem", in addition to the Sinai and the Syrian Golan, and refused to implement UN resolutions on the right of Return of Palestinian refugees and withdraw from those occupied territories.

Israel is working to impose a fait accompli in the West Bank and Jerusalem by building settlements, increasing the number of settlers in the West Bank, demolishing Palestinian homes, arresting and killing Palestinians, in addition to imposing a tight blockade on the Gaza Strip since 2006, where it launched several wars on the Strip that caused thousands of deaths of civilians, children and women.

Q: There are many proposals approved by world organizations, including the United Nations, to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli issue. Why are they not being implemented, especially these days?

Since its occupation of the Palestinian territories, "Israel", based on American and Western support for it, has refused to implement the relevant UN and international resolutions on the Palestinian issue, in addition to the policy of imposing a fait accompli, while the Palestinian people continue to demand their legitimate rights, foremost of which is the return of refugees and the establishment of their independent state in accordance with international laws.

The UN General Assembly resolutions on Palestine adopted since 1948 called for the right of Return of Palestinian refugees to their homes, recognized Palestinians' right to sovereignty over their lands, granted the Palestine Liberation Organization observer status in the General Assembly, specified that Zionism is a form of racism and discrimination, opposed Israeli practices affecting Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, granted Palestine the status of a non-member observer state at the United Nations, allowed non-member observer states to place the flag at the UN headquarters in New

York. The United States opposed or abstained from voting. in favour of the Resolution. , 2017: The Resolution 10/19 in 2017 concerning the status of Jerusalem was adopted during the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly; 128 countries voted in favour, 9 opposed it, 35 abstained, and 21 countries were absent. The United States voted against the Resolution.

There were also many Security Council resolutions

condemning Israeli settlements stating they violated international humanitarian laws and the Israeli measures were aimed at changing the demographic composition and status of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. They also called for respect for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire leading to a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Fourteen countries adopted the Resolution, and the United States abstained from voting.

A resolution in 2002 demanded an end to the violence since the outbreak of the Second Intifada. "Affirming the vision of a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and defined borders... the Resolution demanded the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including terrorism, incitement, provocation and destruction, and also called on the Israeli and Palestinian parties and their leadership to cooperate in order to implement the tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell Report and maintain the goal of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

Another resolution 2002 demanded an end to the boycott occupation of the headquarters of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. The Resolution also sounded the alarm on the reoccupation of Palestinian cities, the imposition of restrictions on the free movement of citizens and goods and the need to respect the Fourth Geneva Charter of 1949.

These resolutions too were either opposed or abstained by the USA

Q: In the last year or so, we can see that the Israeli attacks against Palestine have significantly increased. Recently, when the Jenin refugee camp was attacked,

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[The policy for an independent Palestine was endorsed by JVP's first party manifesto in 1975; subsequently, the Central Committee of the party unanimously approved it during its first congress in 1978. The party's foreign policy included the recognition of an independent Palestine and an independent Israel. The British imperialists had influence over the Palestinian issue. Since the beginning, the JVP has opposed all imperialist activities. Hence, the JVP supported this real issue of Palestinian people. Palestine is currently recognized by 138 of the 193 United Nations (UN) member states, including the Vatican. One hundred fifty international organizations, including the United Nations, have officially recognized Palestine as an independent state.

Furthermore, this is more special than the struggles for independent states worldwide. While many countries are fighting for a new state, the Palestinians are fighting for their land, where they have lived for thousands of years. The JVP also stands for the sovereignty of the Palestinian people and an independent Palestine as well as an independent Israel. This firm and correct policy on the globally known Palestinian Question will give a better perception to the whole world, specifically governments that are dedicatedly supporting independent Palestine. It will strengthen the diplomatic capabilities of a JVP lead government.]



a state on the Palestinian Territories.

Since the British government made a promise five years before it was given the mandate from the League of Nations to the Zionist Organization on the establishment of a national homeland for Jews in Palestine, known as the 'Balfour promises' in 1917 paved the way for the establishment of "Israel", where Britain facilitated Jewish immigration operations throughout the mandate, in addition to expelling residents, demolishing villages and houses and committing massacres until the official declaration of the establishment of Israel in 1948.

In October 1920, the British government issued decrees limiting the transfer of land and the possession of 'dissolved' lands (those whose owner died or did not cultivate for more

landowners.

The United Nations proposed the division of Palestine into two states, one Palestinian and the other Jewish, with the internationalization of Jerusalem. However, the Jews took advantage of British support and Zionist armed gangs launched attacks against Palestinian cities and villages, and in 1948 declared the establishment of the state of Israel after controlling 78% of the area of historical Palestine (27,000 square kilometers). That period of time was known as the Nakba.

During the Nakba, gangs occupied 774 Palestinian villages and cities, 531 of them were utterly destroyed. Their cultural and historical landmarks were obliterated, and the rest were subjected to the occupation entity and its laws. The Nakba is the largest ethnic cleansing

Let Palestine...

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over eleven people were killed. Can you tell us the number of damages caused to Palestine by the attacks carried out against Palestine in the last few months and the damages caused to Israel due to the counterattacks?

The Israeli occupation forces have increased the pace of invading Palestinian cities in conjunction with increased attacks by settler groups on Palestinian villages and towns protected from the occupation forces, closing bypass roads between Palestinian cities and attacking agricultural land and Palestinian property.

This increase in the frequency of attacks and incursions comes under the shadow of an Israeli government described as the most extreme in the history of the occupation, which adopts a strategy of ethnic cleansing to end the Palestinian presence and evict the West Bank from its inhabitants through working through the official body represented in the government and the army, and the unofficial side represented in the settlers geographically linked and continuous, to eliminate any opportunity to implement the principle of the two-state solution, the resolutions of international legitimacy and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

There are other plans aimed at ethnic cleansing, increasing the number of settlers in the West Bank, harassing Palestinians while committing massacres against them, increasing incursions into Palestinian cities, increasing the frequency of murder and violence, and eliminating any attempt to find a political solution.

It reflects the plans and programme of the occupation government, the statements of the leaders of the occupation government during the recent period, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who called last June to work to uproot the idea of establishing a Palestinian state and cut off the aspirations of Palestinians to establish an independent state

for them, in addition to calling on the radical Israeli minister of national security Itamar Ben-Gvir, to “unleash the establishment of more illegal outposts in the West Bank, and launch a large-scale military operation during which thousands of Palestinians will be eliminated and their homes destroyed if necessary.

During the recent aggression on Hawara and Asira tribal villages south of Nablus in February 2023, the Palestinian official authorities documented 300 attacks in one night, which resulted in the injury of 100 Palestinians, while the total attacks carried out by about 300 settlers on the town of Termsaya on June 21, 2023, resulted in the martyrdom of a Palestinian youth and the injury of 12 others by Israeli bullets, while dozens were injured, while settlers burned 30 houses and more than 60 vehicles.

During the first half of 2023, the occupation forces and settlers killed 186 citizens, including 37 children, 11 women, and 7 elderly people, a number that exceeds the total number of victims for the entire year 2022 and is almost double the number who died in the whole of 2021, while the number of wounded reached 3806. As a matter of fact, Jenin Governorate recorded the largest number of victims during the first half of 2023, where 51 were killed, followed by Nablus Governorate, with 44 murdered by the IDF.

The number of detainees in the occupation prisons reached 3058, including children, women and released prisoners, and the number of shooting operations carried out by the occupation soldiers and settlers 1388.

During the first half of 2023, Jerusalem also witnessed an increase in violations of the Israeli occupation and extremist settlers of the Holy Mosque, as the intensity and frequency of incursions increased during the monitored period, bringing the total number of Jewish extremists who stormed Al-Aqsa Mosque to 27,120 extremist settlers.

However, it is typical for any nation that is being oppressed to oppose and retaliate against the oppressor or occupier. In this regard, 26 Israelis, most of them soldiers, were killed, while more than 243 others were injured.

Q: Which countries and organizations currently support creating an independent Palestinian state?

In 1947, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 181 that called for the partition of the Land of Palestine into two independent states, Palestine and Israel. However, in 1948, Israel unilaterally claimed its independence and established its own territory over 78 per cent of the Mandate Palestine, and only 22% was left to Palestinians – West Bank and Gaza Strip. This remaining land was later occupied by Israel in 1967. In November 1974, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 3236 that recognized the right of Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. Concerning the support of the international community for the independence of Palestine, since 2012, 139 countries in the United Nations have shown their support. The pressure for Israel to stop all illegal actions in the land of Palestine has grown substantially. In fact, in 2023, for the first time in history, the United Nations commemorated the 75th anniversary of the mass displacement of Palestinian people from their land, known as Nakba Day. Today, the support from international organizations for Palestine is growing bigger and stronger. For instance, on August 2022, over 150 international organizations showed their support and solidarity with Palestinians and demanded that the international community condemn Israeli brutality and grave human rights violations, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

IMF serves...

From Page 05



failed stories, such as Argentina, Greece, Lebanon, Ghana, etc. Even though any institution can make wrong decisions, we see the

IMF's track record is filled with many failed stories - failed in the sense of borrowing country. In this context, what are the DNAs in IMF cells that always kill the Patient?

Answer: The DNA, if you want to call it that, is that as the voting structure and the policy template of the IMF makes clear, it is an institution that serves the interest of global capital, especially global financial capital, with backing from the US and its allies. It therefore is primarily geared to protecting those interests, rather than to delivering sustained and sustainable development in low and middle income countries, that can reduce unacceptable levels of international inequality.

Question: Here in Sri Lanka, some argue that IMF loans to India in 1991 and IMF loans to South Korea in 1998 as success stories. You are one of the few economists who have thoroughly studied the Asian Economic crises. Even you and Prof Jayati Ghosh had authored a book on Asian Financial Crises - 'Crisis as Conquest: Learning from East Asia'. Also, 'Neoliberal Economic reforms in India' and 'The market that failed: neoliberal economic reforms in India'.

Would you please share your findings and conclusions of IMF Deals of India and South Korea and the impacts of neo-liberal reforms in India?

Answer: The IMF's role in South Korea in 1997 or India in 1991 were definitely not instances of success. The adjustment strategy imposed on South Korea facilitated the penetration of foreign capital, especially foreign finance, into a country whose capitalists were challenging western dominance of global markets. Post-adjustment South Korea lost the dynamism that characterized it in the decades of the 1970s to the 1990s. In India's case, the promise that IMF style “reforms” would make India a global manufacturing hub and export success has been belied. It has also led to huge increases in inequality in the country. If these countries are among the better performers in the world today, it is not because of but despite the IMF adjustment programmes.

Question: As we exposed the huge failures of IMF programmes, it is always an unalienable responsibility of the anti-imperialist Left to provide a viable, scientific, of course, people-friendly LEFT Alternative

Economic programme which can substitute IMF imposed programmes. Would you propose some key proposals which can be included in a LEFT alternative programme and implemented by a Left government with a People's Mandate?

Answer: This is not the space to do that, since a cursory listing would not do justice to the immense work that has gone into designing alternative economic programmes by the Left. Suffice it to say that there is enough on the table for a progressive government to take up and implement, depending on national circumstances. It is not that there is no alternative. The problem everywhere is the absence of the environment and a state that has the ability to implement an appropriate programme, that improves well-being, protects the environment and strengthens democracy.

Question: The final question we would like to know from you about the future of the global economy with this phase of toxic financialization and many more like Sovereign debt crises, banking collapses, monopoly control over all most all human needs wants, and desires, unemployment, economic refugees, mass migration of professionals from developing countries, corruption etc etc.

Are we heading to a fully blown crisis bigger than 2008?

Will de-dollarization or a new global currency be a solution for at least a decade or two, as some are optimistic?

Answer: As the recent banking crises in the US and Europe illustrated, financial fragility of a kind that can precipitate a major crisis still pervades in the so-called ‘advanced nations’. If they managed to stave off a depression in 2008 and have not succumbed to another severe crisis as yet, it is because of massive intervention by governments and central banks in these countries. Those interventions have broken all rules of the capitalist game and of a ‘rules based international order’—rules prescribed to developing countries and to new economic powers like China. Big capital and global finance have been offered mid-boggling support through transfers from the State, even when minor relief efforts for the world's poor is dubbed as populist and wrong. But a breakdown of rules implies that capitalism can no longer be governed in mutually agreed ways that can ensure stability. Another crisis is inevitable. But, as I said earlier, there is no guarantee that the crisis would lead to progressive and sustainable alternatives. That depends on the people and how they mobilize themselves.



Asian committee meeting of World Peace Council in Nepal



Comrade Dr Harini Amarasinghe meets Sri Lankans in Auckland, New Zealand



To Court against plunder of EPFI



Providing strength to farmers' struggle



Struggle to win an election taken before the law!

People's lives have become a joke to this government

Samanmalee Gunasinghe
Secretary, Women for Rights



The tragedy that has befallen our country's health system cannot be recorded only in the news that we hear every day. We need to pay special attention to the tragedy behind the incidents and the reasons behind it. The social,

economic and political environment in which we live in, the majority of our country does not eat three meals a day and has to spend money on food and education.

It is not only the lack of medicine in our country, it is also a situation where it is not possible to import medicine, and the health system has collapsed to the point of a bigger crisis. When allocating money from the budget in 2022, we said that instead of increasing the country's defense expenditure, allocate more money for education and health. But the rulers did not care about it.

As a result, various organizations, scholars and experts

in the field of health pointed out that the poverty of the people will increase and if the public health sector collapses, people will be extremely helpless. The government reserved more money for the protection of the elites. They increased the insurance of ministers and MPs. Essential medicines, a number of, C.T. and MR scan machines are inoperative. Authorities have not taken any step to repair them, buy new ones, or provide hospitals with the necessary facilities, and due to non-intervention the health system has collapsed.

We emphatically say that all the women of the country should take the lead to oust the government that has lost the value of people's lives and has no sensitivity towards the people.

Let's not divide! Let's fly together!



Socialist Youth Union had organized a programme under the theme 'Let's not divide! Let's fly together!' to commemorate the 'Black July' on the 23rd of July, exactly four decades since the barbaric act of the UNP regime of JR Jayawardene.

The programme was to remember the precious lives of Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher nationalities lost because of the brutal and appalling onslaught.

The events were organized to make society aware of the brutality of communalism and show that the masses should take responsibility to prevent such a situation from happening again. However, the Ranil-Rajapakse regime that depends on splitting up

communities, movements and political parties, did not favour the unity of the people and deployed its suppressive machinery

to attack the peaceful participants with water cannon, tear gas and batons.



JVP unions at WFTU programmes

The conference on "The Importance of Social Security Systems and World Experiences" organized by Sri Lankan progressive and left-wing trade unions affiliated to the World

Federation of Trade Unions, representing the working people of 133 countries around the world, was held at the Sevamukta Sangam Hall, Colombo Fort on the 30th of July. The

conference was attended by trade union activists and the International Labour Organization (ILO) also received a special participation.

General Secretary of the Inter Company

Employees' Union, Comrade Attorney at law Janaka Adhikari, will be a member of the President's Council of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

