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Left Voice: After Sri Lanka's election, march ahead towards people's power!

Thursday 27 August 2020, by [JAYATHILAKA Linus](#), [LANKAPELI Dharmasiri](#), [WIJETHILAKA Niel](#) (Date first published: 20 July 2020).

"By holding elections to select overlords one cannot change the status of overlords or the slaves." Frankfurtian philosopher Herbert Marcus once said.

With the introduction of the universal suffrage in 1931, people of this country voted at every election with high enthusiasm and expectation. But the system which serves no useful service to ordinary people persists. It applies equally to minorities and to the people of estate sector.

Since the independence people of this country voted out governments nine times paving the way for new governments. Therefor the people of this country including the minorities view the voting power as an inviolable fundamental right of democracy.

Is it valid today to the same extent?

It is the firm conviction of the Left Voice that the destructive capitalist system cannot be change through election. It does not mean the outright rejection of all elections for parliament or to other representative bodies for three reasons.

Firstly during in any election period it will politically mobilize the people to a certain extent.

Secondly Parliament and the other representative organs will help to strengthen and sharpen the social struggle in and outside them.

Thirdly Left Voice is aware of the importance of elections as the medium to choose their representatives and propagate their thinking to people at large on the importance of a political system which stand for a socialist society.

Left Voice acknowledge the value of participating in elections under a political party of working people with their own leadership. At the moment no such political party in Sri Lanka. Working people should build up such a party soon. During past few years we were engaged in dialogues and discussions to form such a party to fill the gap.

Our mission is to democratize the governance not only in parliament and other representative bodies but also in workshops, factories, peasantry, fishermen and educational institutions including universities, cooperative societies and grassroots level bodies. We will strive to empower the working people's representation in these institutions and social groups.

However by now a parliamentary election is declared for 5th August 2020. What should be the standpoint of working people in this election? To whom working people should vote? What are the economic and political problems working people face?

To whom should the Tamils, Muslims and working people of estate sector who have a history of oppression and condemned as minorities cast their votes in this election? We must engage in a dialogue with them on these issues.

Working people

With the advent of corona pandemic a new chapter is in making of the fate of working people. People are being thrown out of working places in thousands. Employers and the Government gradually taking back one by one the rights they enjoyed hither to.

In Sri Lanka we also are experiencing this worldwide disaster. It is becoming the common experience of all employees in the Government, semi government, banks, private sector and even those employed in services. Corona has become a blessing in disguise for the ruling class to dispose of the working people.

Peasantry

Lack of clear agricultural policy force the long suffering peasantry from the frying pan to hearth. In an environment where the peasantry is deprived of their land rights through treaties with foreigners, shortage of fertilizers, seeds, water and a market to sell their produce at fair and reasonable price when will all these miseries end and how?

Fishermen

Being robbed of their livelihood under the guise of development projects i.e Port city fishermen are undergoing hardships and deprivation unforeseen. Fish market is becoming a paradise for racketeers and manipulators. Small scale fishing is fast disappearing with fishermen who derived their livelihood from it. Time has come for fishermen to seek their own solutions to these pressing and urgent problems without depending on the Government for relief.

Residual services and small producers should develop their own capacities and skills for the problems and hardships they face.

Micro credit schemes devastating the existence of thousands if not millions of poor rural people should be abolished immediately and government should take meaningful steps to resurrect the livelihood of these people. People should design and implement their own plans to rescue innocent people from rapacious Finance companies.

National Question

A solution is needed to ensure the national identity and the political power of the people of North and East. It should emerge from their own initiative. There is no need for the Tamil capitalists and the successive governments to eradicate the scars of war and resuscitate the oppressed people. To change the social system thriving on the nationalism oppressing minorities, identity of Tamil people should be recognized. A democratic solution is imperative allowing them to decide their own future.

Plantation Sector

Workers of the plantation sector who undergo specific oppressive living conditions should be recognized as respectable citizens with equal rights. They are entitled to enjoy equal facilities of living conditions, wages, housing, health and education. They should be emancipating from the grip of so called leaders of plantation workers to have their own leadership.

Mass media

Behavior of Sri Lankan media is woeful to say the least. Most of the main stream media maintain close relationships with political leaders and their parties and are engaged in a sort of money laundering. There is no room for the oppressed in the main stream media. Recognizing the limitations of main stream media we have to use social media extensively and should concentrate on the development of our own communication system.

Rajapaksa Regime

Rajapaksa regime now in power seeking two third majority in the coming election. Left should use its energies to educate people of the danger of giving unlimited power to a government already acting authoritatively. At the same time it should be emphasized UNP of Ranil and SJB of Sajith treading the same political path have no solutions for problems faced by people. It is obvious the JVP dominant national People's Power is also a political enterprise seeking solutions through parliament.

The fundamental question raised by Left Voice is what should working people do in this parliamentary election?

In seeking answers to this question we should defeat tribalism of capitalist political parties which are depending on nationalism, racism and religious bigotry. In these environments we would like to bring the attention of working people, minorities and the working people of plantations few important points.

1. Working people, minorities and plantation workers should reject the politics that springs into action only during the election period. Gotabhaya regime wants to continue the silence created in the wake of corona pandemic. In this situation it is imperative to break the silence. People need not the politics that push back the needs of them because of the election.
2. What is the organization fighting to protect the free education and free health services? What is the organization fighting in all fronts to safeguard job security of all oppressed people and for equal rights and the power of plantation workers? It is important to select an organization with credible history of struggles during the past ten years.
3. All main political parties in the fray to capture parliamentary power are shamelessly laboring to arouse racism and religious sensitivities. Statement of Harin Fernando against the cardinal, speech allegedly made by Karuna Amman at an election rally, agitation of Bhikhus and others targeting Muslim community on Easter attack are all meant to deviate the attention of oppressed people from burning social and economic problems and also to divide the oppressed. It is the duty of the Left to support and strengthen social movements fighting against racism and religiosity.
4. Left Voice pays special attention to left political parties follow above mentioned standpoints. But we have certain political reservations about some activities of those leftist organizations. Specially we have some issues with their stand on the political settlement to the explosive ethnic question. Taking into consideration the above postures Left Voice urge the working people and other oppressed to cast their votes in this election to leftist organizations actively involved in the struggle to mobilized the people against all sort of oppression. In this context Frontline Socialist Party stands above United Socialist Party and the Sri Lanka Socialist Party which are also to be considered as partners in the struggle.

Left Voice propose with firm conviction of a truly national movement of oppressed people in future to cast your vote in August 5th election to a list of radical left candidates who rely on such a movement, in every districts.

Left Voice is a political group formed against the capitalist coalition politics to carry forward the social struggle initiated by Nava Samajists about four decades ago. This is the majority group broke away from the politics of Wikramabahu who buried the Samasamaja heritage at the feet of Ranil Wkramasinghe of UNP. They are committed to to carry forward unwaveringly the Nava Samasamaja politics. It is a leftist movement relying on the strength of working people. Left Voice, a full member of the Fourth International relies unreservedly on an international united struggle.

Don't let the face mask to be a political gag!

Let the struggle in the parliament to support the people's struggle outside!

Safeguard the equal rights of oppressed minorities and plantation workers!

Grant the self-determination and rights of autonomy to Tamil people of North and East!

Unite for the political power of working people!

Let's elect to parliament a large number of left candidates relies on people's struggle!

For Left Voice,

Linus Jayathilaka
Neil Wijethilaka
Dharmasiri Lankapeli

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