

**Address by Comrade SK Senthivel,
General Secretary of the New Democratic Party
at the 25th Anniversary Celebration of
the New Democratic Party
in Jaffna on 06 July 2003**

Comrades and friends!

Representatives of fraternal and friendly parties!

I express on behalf of the Central Committee and on my behalf our revolutionary salutations to all of you who are here to participate in the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations of the New Democratic Party

As you know, our Party has, over the past twenty-five years, continuously and firmly stood by the principles of Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought and acted with its revolutionary stand. It stood up to each problem, crisis, challenge, test and struggle that emerged during this period, because of national, class, caste and gender oppression. Our Party took firm and clear decisions on the issues, and spoke up and struggled, placing itself firmly on the side of the oppressed masses. As a result, we are able to celebrate this twenty-fifth anniversary in Jaffna with feeling and enthusiasm, amid pressure from several fronts.

It is important at this point to draw attention to the growing crises in the country in the domains of politics, economy, society and culture, and the dangers contained therein. The whole country and the workers, peasants and other toiling masses who comprise its vast majority face serious economic crises and their grave consequences. Meantime, the machinery of state oppression is being strengthened in preparation for unleashing severe political repression. None of this is accidental. They are only an expression of the economic and political line that continues to be adopted

and defended by the feudal-capitalist, chauvinistic ruling classes of the country.

If we examine the past twenty-five years, we will realise that to say that the prime reactionary and stooge of imperialism, JR Jayawardane, by coming to power in 1977, has deflected the country along a path of destruction in every conceivable way is not a superficial assessment. The country was forced to take that destructive path of destruction because of the constitution introduced by him in 1978. In the past quarter of a century, nearly 200 000 lives were destroyed in bloodbaths. Up to 100 000 people in the North-East and the South were disappeared. War has displaced nearly a million people and made them refugees, within the country or abroad.

Under the constitution introduced by Jayawardane, and effective to this day, the UNP exercised a rule of darkness for 17 years. Jayawardane, Premadasa and Wijetunga functioned as Executive Presidents of that regime. For the next seven years, the People's Alliance was in power with Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as Executive President, conducting a reign of war. She now occupies that position for a second time.

Thus, the country, its people, its economy and daily life have been wrecked and ruined in the following five ways by the constitution introduced by Jayawardane.

1. The system of executive presidency was created, that paved the way for a leaning towards personal dictatorship.
2. The country was thrown wide open to liberalisation and privatisation, and foreign multinational corporations were given full authority to exploit and plunder without restraint the human and natural resources of the country.
3. Meantime, chauvinistic military oppression was unleashed against the Tamil people, and the national contradiction was transformed into war.

4. People were denied their democratic and trade union rights through the State of Emergency, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and other anti-worker laws, and victimised in several ways. Owing to the police and military actions taken from time to time in the South and the North-East, tens of thousands were killed and were disappeared.
5. During this period, the government showed great cordiality with forces of imperialism led by the US and the regional hegemonic power, India, and sought their advice and guidance. These forces used the opportunity to fulfil their hegemonic designs.

The above five features continued to characterise both the UNP and the People's Alliance governments. It was through these features that the national question was transformed into the main contradiction while national oppression developed into a cruel war. Chauvinistic jingoism, which believed that it could cow the Tamil people through war and deny them their basic rights, failed. The militarist approach of 'peace through war' led to defeat after defeat. The war budget for the year 2000 shot up to 90 billion rupees, the economy of the country plunged to rock bottom, and the entire people bore the burden of war.

The people were disgusted and angry at the economic policies of the People's Alliance government led by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. Besides, the Sinhalese people also felt and experienced the effects of war. The UNP, led by Ranil Wickremasinghe took advantage of the situation, and had advice and guidance from the US and the West.

It is under such circumstances that the elections of 5th December 2001 enabled the United National Front led by Ranil Wickremasinghe to form the government. However, the UNF could not win a two-thirds majority in the house, and hence the government of Ranil Wickremasinghe failed in its bid to curtail the powers of the executive presidency. Thus, we have now a system of dual power with one centre of power headed by the President and the other by the Prime Minister, with political crises cropping up from day to day. But the reality that neither party is willing to dismantle the system of executive presidency is absolutely clear.

Since it was not possible to win the war and since the economy declined rapidly because of the war, liberalisation and privatisation, a season of loud calls for peace arrived as the imperialists had secured the maximum possible benefits through war. Also, 79% of the population put forward their view that they wanted peace and not war. The broad mass movements by the left and democratic forces, including our Party, among the people of southern Lanka, opposing war and in support of a political solution too had a significant impact among the masses.

At the same time, among the Tamil people, our Party was at the forefront of firmly opposing chauvinistic oppression and in supporting the just armed struggle against chauvinistic military oppression. Our Party supported the position of relentless struggle taken by only the LTTE. Nevertheless, it rejected and criticised in time all the undemocratic and anti-people activities of the LTTE, and emphasised that such activities should be renounced. In this matter, we have continued to act in accordance with Marxist Leninist ideology.

Our Party has consistently endorsed the struggle of the Tamil people as a struggle for the right to self-determination, and insisted that it should be carried forward as one that is not open to bargain by imperialist and regional hegemonic forces. Our Party has held that autonomy should be granted to the merged North-East region, within a united Sri Lanka, based on the principle of self-determination and free from interference and intervention by the central government.

Our Party has also emphasised the need to provide autonomous structures based on the principle of self-determination for the Muslims and the Hill Country Tamils in accordance with their population concentration in the various regions. It has also insisted on measures to ensure that the identity of the Burgher, Malay and Attho (Vedda) communities.

The national question of Sri Lanka does not merely concern the contradiction between the Sinhala and Tamil nationalities. It concerns the other nationalities referred to above, and has several serious aspects to it. The past 19 years of war have demonstrated the reality that the contradiction between the nationalities and chauvinism cannot be

resolved by war. And our Party has always demanded a political solution for the national question.

It was on this basis that, despite whatever ulterior motive that the UNP might have had, our Party welcomed the signing a memorandum of understanding with the LTTE, the cessation of hostilities and the initiation of peace talks, and pointed out that the government should take the correct approach towards solving the problem. The Party also drew attention to and cautioned about potential dangers.

Six sessions of talks have been held between the government and the LTTE during the past one and a half years, and there is justification for the LTTE to claim that the things that have been decided include no constructive steps or actions. The LTTE has thus temporarily withdrawn from the talks, and kept away from the Tokyo meeting of donor countries to aid Sri Lanka.

The LTTE as an organisation reflects the rights, the existence and aspirations of the oppressed Tamil nationality. Such an organisation can only put forward demands that reflect the basic aspirations of the people for whom it stands. It should neither fall into the traps of deception set up by the chauvinists, nor be dazed by the bundles of cash dangled before it by forces of foreign imperialism, nor submit to the open threats of the US and undermining by Indian regional hegemony. The US and India concur with the Sri Lankan ruling class in its ultimate motive and approach of weakening the LTTE, subjugating or destroying it, and thus make the Tamils give up their demand for self-determination. This position can only lead to tragic circumstances and endings. We have yet to see how the LTTE will face up to this danger. It is nevertheless essential to unite the Tamils and the Muslims on the correct political basis and to seek anti-imperialist allies through friendly forces among the Sinhalese. In the meantime, it is important not to shun the peace talks altogether and fall victim to the tricks of the enemies.

If Ranil Wickremasinghe and his government have genuine faith and confidence in the peace process, it is their responsibility to persuade the LTTE to return to the talks. For that, it is necessary to create and set in

motion an administrative structure for the North-East on a democratic basis, and with the participation of the LTTE. To what extent this could be achieved in the face of chauvinistic attitudes is the biggest question confronting the Ranil Wickremasinghe government.

Our Party has repeatedly emphasised that the problems of the Muslims and those of the Hill Country Tamils should be discussed frankly, and solutions found for them.

The extreme right within the People's Alliance and the JVP, playing the parliamentary game while masquerading as a left organisation, are working together to throw into chaos the negotiations that now face an obstacle. They demand that the President should use her powers to bring about a change of government or a dismissal of the government. Their move would take the country along the path to destruction rather than solve the national question, as the President, the People's Alliance and the JVP have not an alternative policy. What they seem to have instead is a cynical thirst for state power.

Under these conditions, the US, Japan and the countries of Western Europe are intensifying their efforts to bring to completion their schemes of globalisation in Sri Lanka. Their view is that they need an environment of peace to thrust their massive investments upon Sri Lanka, inclusive of the North-East, through multinational corporations. They are operating in the names of development and rehabilitation to rob the resources of the country. Through this, the country is being re-colonised, and the neo-colonial system reinforced through various imperialist multinational corporations. The aid to the tune of 4.5 billion US Dollars offered at the Tokyo conference is an open bribe offered to the UNF government for the re-colonisation the whole country. Unemployment, homelessness, serious ill health and other social ills of this country will not be cured by it. The so-called development will only be eyewash. The burden of this loan and the incurred interest will be upon on the people of the country. Already, statistics reveal that every Sri Lankan citizen is indebted to the extent of Rs 79 000 owing to borrowings for the war effort. Now, that figure faces a further rise. It is important that all the people realise that this is part of the agenda for globalisation.

When we look closely at the past twenty-five years, we can clearly see that the very foreign and local forces that served their self-interests by pulling the levers of war are now operating behind the call for peace. All of them want the LTTE, which is the militant force among the Tamils, to climb down and make wholesale concessions. However, they do not seem willing to apply the same pressure to persuade the ruling chauvinists to find a just political solution for the problems of the Tamil people.

That is why our Party emphasises that peace and normal life could be restored only through a just political solution. It cannot be disputed that the war should be ended, that peace should last, and that the people of the North-East need rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. That does not mean, however, that the Tamil people should, for that purpose, give in altogether, submit to the ulterior motives of the chauvinists and the threats of the US, and reduce themselves to the plight of accepting whatever is offered. The people of the North-East expect a wholesome political solution in return for all the loss of life and the shedding of blood thus far. It is the responsibility of Ranil Wickremasinghe to prepare the negotiating table for that purpose. The President should offer her fullest co-operation for it. Our Party appeals to the President, who claims to have been the first person to have thought of a political solution, peace and negotiations, that, if she wants to demonstrate the sincerity and credibility of her words, she should overcome chauvinist obstacles, give constructive support for the ongoing peace efforts, and come forward to find a political solution. If, on the other hand, she rejects this appeal and seeks to join hands with the JVP to quench her thirst for power, her name will be among those associated with major historical guilt.

Thus, our party emphasises on the occasion of its 25th anniversary that the only way to guarantee that the resumption of a cruel war is averted and that peace prevails is for the government and the President to be prepared to make concessions to enable the continuation of the negotiations. The Party, on this occasion, calls for a broad mass movement for a just political solution and lasting peace to be carried forward in the South, the Hill Country and the North-East.

Comrades and friends!

The next important thing that we should pay attention to concerns the agenda for imperialist globalisation. Over the past 25 years, all manner of effort has been made to introduce and establish this programme in Sri Lanka. Both the UNP and the People's Alliance have pleased the imperialist forces by making their respective contributions towards the development of privatisation and liberalisation. That situation continues.

Mammoth multinational corporations have already entered the country and established themselves and the rate of arrival of such companies is being accelerated. They include not only American and European companies but also Japanese and Indian companies. The present UNF government is welcoming them with open arms.

Through this the labour of the people of this country is being most cruelly exploited and carried away. At the same time, mineral resources such as phosphate rock and mineral sands are being robbed, and multinational corporations are gobbling up the fertile soil. In the plantation sector, the labour of plantation workers is obtained for very low wages and the super profits of increased rates of production are being expropriated by the companies. Recently, the petroleum sector has been given away to India, and monopoly over petroleum fuels is to pass to India.

India has benefited from the trade agreement already entered into with it. Out of reluctant to review the agreement it is procrastinating. Hasty discussions are afoot to make a similar agreement with the US. If the agreement with India could be likened to one with the jackal, that with the US would be one with the wolf. Not content with these, Ranil Wickremasinghe has also called for an agreement with Japan posing off as a sage with a peace mission. All such moves are to introduce the evil programmes of globalisation into the country, re-colonise it and tighten the grip of neo-colonialism.

Globalisation does not stop at mere economic and commercial interests and exploitation. It is spreading potent venom through suavely expressed ideas at political, social and cultural levels. Myths are being spread about neo-liberal democracy and individualistic self-advancement.

Consumer culture is propagated and promoted in place of production, and we witness a rapid growth in social decadence due to cultural infiltration.

To implement these and to divert attention away from genuine social concern, social liberation, and social change, money from the West is pumped into activities of non-governmental organisations. Through them, people are distracted and alienated from interest, search and organisational participation in Marxism and socialism.

Collective effort, social interest, humanitarianism, class outlook towards liberation, and wholesale transformation of society are being abandoned because of globalisation. One could see that making money and self-advancement have become the goals of life. Thus it is rare to see people with humanity and social interest and those who want to understand the Marxist outlook for social change. We could observe that the thinking of the younger generation has been poisoned to that extent. That is all the reason why the struggle against globalisation has to be carried forward at all levels.

It is such a social climate that the significance of Marxism and socialism needs to be emphasised and carried forward. The New Democratic Party reminds itself with revolutionary pride and joy that it is against such adverse conditions that it swam against the tide, stood firmly by Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought and acted according its revolutionary stand.

Comrades and friends!

Although our Party is only twenty-five years old, it is a successor to the old Communist Party. I wish to declare with revolutionary sentiment that some comrades who were members of the old party, although advanced in age, continue their association with our Party as members and supporters. I should also mention that, at this Congress, revolutionary honour has been bestowed on some of them by draping a red shawl.

In the same spirit, on the occasion of this celebration we commemorate all the comrades who mobilised along the revolutionary path of the

Communist Party from 1964, under the leadership of Comrade N Sanmugathasan, carried out party work in word and deed, with dedication, and made red tracks through revolutionary struggles.

Further, along with you, we commemorate with revolutionary sentiments on the occasion of this celebration the late Comrade KA Subramaniam, who was the leading comrade when our New Democratic Party was founded as the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left) in 1978, gave us Marxist Leninist firmness and confidence, showed the way forward for the development of the Party, and served as the founder General Secretary. In our party political life, we will always bear in mind how his life of dedication, sacrifice and determination in his ideals, which gave prominence to politics, gave all of us the motivation to work and the revolutionary determination to carry forward our work to the end.

Comrade S Thuraisingam, a comrade who was at the forefront of the activities of our Party has been killed for no known reason by forces of anarchy. He was a comrade who carried out party work, always standing firmly by the people in struggles against oppression. Armed struggles are not the same as terrorism or killing of individuals; and basic democratic and human rights cannot be the price to pay for a liberation struggle, for such a 'liberation struggle' cannot take one step towards genuine liberation but only towards anarchy and eventually fascism. On this occasion, let us commemorate with you the firm Marxist Leninist stand of our fallen Comrade Thuraisingam.

People's artists like Kugarajah and Jeyakkumar worked closely with our Party in the cultural field, and they too were slain by the forces of anarchy. Let us commemorate with you on this occasion their memory and their commitment to new culture and people's liberation.

Comrades and Friends!

We have carried forward the activities of our Party in the North-East, the Hill Country and Colombo during the past twenty-five years. In the style of work of our Party, we have persevered in struggle against oppression

based on class, nationality, caste and gender. The hands of oppression of all four of these forces are at work in our society. While national oppression is the main contradiction, class oppression remains fundamental. At the same time, caste oppression expresses itself openly in many situations, subtly in some situations, and in modernised ways in others. Meanwhile, male chauvinist ideological oppression and cultural burdens on women continue while being portrayed as natural.

Our party is determined in its opposition to all four forms of oppression and to carry forward its struggle revolutionary mass struggle by taking the road of class struggle. Our militant stand against chauvinist oppression will continue to be carried forward. Chauvinist oppression can be defeated only through broad-based struggles with class forces as its base, which transcend narrow nationalist positions. Our Party will progress along that path. At the same time it is necessary to carry forward struggles against US, the imperialist force of global hegemony, and India, the force of regional hegemony. In this, we will work in unity with all honest leftist democratic forces. We will advance in unity with all forces that abandon short-term gains and opportunist tendencies, and care with far sight for the people, the country and the nationalities. We will also advance forward along the revolutionary path by linking hands firmly with all fraternal parties of the world that stand by Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong thought to uphold proletarian internationalism. Let us make the revolutionary resolution for it on the occasion of this Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration of the Party.

Let us fight against the big bourgeoisie and the chauvinists to restore peace to Sri Lanka through ensuring equality, autonomy and unity among the nationalities on the basis of the right of nationalities to self-determination!

Let us Defeat imperialism, regional hegemony and their local agents and clients to establish the power of the working masses and all suppressed and oppressed people!

Let us unite and resist globalisation and march with resolve towards socialism!

Long live Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought!
Let the New Democratic Party Flourish!
Victory to proletarian internationalism!

(Translated from the original in Tamil)

Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterised by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

Mao Zedong

On Contradiction, August 1937

And classes *remain* and *will remain* in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. When classes disappear, the dictatorship will become unnecessary. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat they will not disappear.

Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat *every* class has undergone change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.

VI Lenin

The State, January 1929

Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists say. It is this, next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is actually more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and to such an

extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself.

Frederick Engels

The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man,

1876