

## **26<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS**

by

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(The following is the translation of the text of the message from Comrade SK Senthivel, read out at the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the founding of the New Democratic Party, held at the Town Hall, Hatton on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2004.)

Comrades and Friends!

On the occasion of this meeting to mark the completion of 26 years since the founding of the New Democratic Party, I convey to you, on this day of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2004, revolutionary greetings and joy on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party and on my behalf.

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Party was held very successfully in Jaffna, the capital of the northern region. Today it gives us joy to hold the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Hatton, the capital city of the hill country. It is painful that I am unable to be with you on this occasion of revolutionary joy, owing to poor health resulting from a road accident. I trust that you will accept my address communicated to you in writing.

Comrades and Friends!

Significantly, the policies, positions, development and experience of the Party as they developed over a period of a quarter of a century on the basis of Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought were explained in my address at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. Many of the matters that were then pointed out seem applicable to the objective reality of today. The current situation also indicates clearly that certain issues, which were pointed out then as potentially dangerous, have taken a hazardous course of development.

The only significant change during the past one year is that the United People's freedom Alliance has come to power in place of the United National Front. This has removed the tug-of-war that existed between the parliamentary government and the executive presidency. The rest of the problems continue as before. No policy alternatives or solutions have been put forward for the severe problems faced by the country and the people. Only plans with electoral success have been put forward in a superficial fashion.

Although it is four months since the new government took office, it is struggling unsuccessfully to fulfil its election promises. In particular, we witness the pathetic situation where it is unable to control the cost of living and is imposing more and more price increases on the people. Having increased fuel prices and fares, the government is seeking to divert the attention of the people by acts of deception.

A situation wholesomely favourable to finding a solution through negotiation for the national question, which is the most pressing problem facing the country, does not exist. Although the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the former government and the LTTE and the ceasefire agreement that accompanied it still hold, they are at serious risk of rupture at any moment.

The UPFA government unable to take any firm decision on the matter of starting negotiations with the LTTE and amid its vacillation is seen to be backtracking from it. President Chandrika Kumaratunga seems intimidated by forces of chauvinism and the JVP, the principal ally of her party. Since, as a result, she seems to be showing different faces at different times, she is viewed as an unreliable person by the political forces and people who desire peace and a political solution.

The LTTE has already put forward its proposals for an interim self-governing authority (ISGA), leaving no room for question about where from the talks should take off. Any honest government that wants a solution to the national question could proceed with detailed negotiations with that as the starting point and carry forward the journey towards peace in a spirit of understanding and accommodation. But, inasmuch as the last government procrastinated on various pretexts, this government is also doing the same on other pretexts.

Meantime, the chauvinistic stand of the JVP, a partner in the UPFA government, in opposing a negotiated settlement, vacillation by the President, continuing purchase of arms by the armed forces, continuing serial killings, bomb blasts, and shooting incidents in the conflict between the LTTE and the Karuna faction are warning signals of a situation in which the MoU and the ceasefire will be discarded to make way for war.

An examination of the above will show that neither the leadership of the UNP nor that of the SLFP, each with a feudal-capitalist lineage, has learnt any worthwhile lesson from the bloody events of a quarter century of cruel war. This continuing attitude of the chauvinistic ruling classes that lacks far sight and stands in opposition to objective conditions will only drag Sri Lanka further along the path of destruction.

It is undeniable that the chauvinistic ruling class position adopted, explicitly and implicitly, by the UNP, the SLFP, the JVP and the Hela Urumaya is standing in the way to a just solution to the national question. The ordinary Sinhala working people are being distracted and deceived by their chauvinistic slogans. Until the peasants, workers and other working people who comprise the overwhelming majority of the Sinhala nationality call into question and reject the chauvinism of the dominant ruling class leadership with a feudal-capitalist lineage, there can be neither salvation nor prosperity for the country as a whole. It is essential to criticise the chauvinistic position of the JVP, donning a leftist mask. The present leadership of the JVP is one that believes that it could come to power by making itself the vanguard of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and acting the role played by the SLFP in the 1950s. The chauvinistic propaganda of the JVP and the Hela Urumaya is cunningly stirring up feelings hostile to the peace process and paving the way for the institutionalisation of chauvinistic ideology.

It is true that honest leftist, democratic and progressive forces among the Sinhalese are acting in appreciation of this objective reality. However, the JVP, with its false leftist image and support from foreign forces, is acting to prevent and disrupt the growth of such forces. It is unfortunate that people are deluded by its leftist appearance. At the same time, we could see that NGOs, operating with massive funding from foreign sources that manipulate them, have temporarily succeeded in undermining leftist, democratic and progressive forces. The errors committed by the parliamentary left and their current role stand in the way of the development of a genuine left.

US imperialism and Indian regional hegemonism have played a major part in creating and cultivating such an environment in a planned way and in collaboration with forces of local reaction. It is possible to know the truth by examining closely the complex development of the national question during the past quarter of a century and the conditions under which it was transformed into a chauvinistic war of oppression. It is important today to recognise the historic course where liberalisation and privatisation have been carried out behind the curtain of war, as part of the agenda of imperialist globalisation under the leadership of US imperialism. Having fulfilled their ulterior motives, the very same forces of imperialism are playing the anthem of peace in recognition of the fact that they need pace for their agenda of globalisation strike root in the battle-worn North East and in the Hill Country so that the whole country could be re-colonised.

It is becoming abundantly clear now that the national question of this country and the chauvinistic oppression responsible for it are only a platform and a tool for these imperialist and regional hegemonic forces to fulfil their ulterior motives, and that their interests do not concern the welfare of the oppressed Tamil nationality or of any other nationality or restoring the forfeited rights of any nationality. The recent spate of rapid response actions of the US and India in Sri Lankan affairs have brought this to light and exposed the truth. Anyone who seeks to understand this in an honest way will realise that these forces cannot be relied upon in the struggle of nationalities for self-determination.

The blatant acts of aggression and massacre carried out by the American imperialists in Afghanistan and Iraq have projected the true image of its imperialist decadence to the world. If anyone were to imagine that such an America would help a Third World Country like ours or lend support to the struggle of the Tamil people for self-determination, there cannot be greater political ignorance or folly than that.

Foreign multinational companies and other private sector companies are intent on squeezing to pulp the toiling masses of this country comprising the workers, peasants and other working people. Companies are implementing low wages, long hours, retrenchment, insecurity of employment, and denial of democratic trade union rights that had been won in the past. This is practiced across the country by companies in the plantation sector to those based in urban areas. When workers speak up for their rights police brutality is unleashed upon them. An example of this is the retrenchment of 500 workers at the Bata shoe factory and the subsequent struggle. What is noteworthy is that Mahinda Rajapaksha, who, during the earlier PA regime, proposed the “Worker’s Charter” to safeguard the rights of the workers and was compelled to abandon it under pressure from multinational companies, is now the Prime Minister. Is the JVP, masquerading as a left party, prepared to implement the same charter through the Prime Minister? The truth is that the government of today is not ready to do it.

Thus the government of today does not present a progressive face in any way. It continues to be a government that uses state power to protect the interests and needs of the wealthy group of feudal-capitalist lineage, while submitting to the commands of the World Bank and the IMF that carry forward the agenda of globalisation. It is not even a government like the United Front government of 1970-77. It seems to be an anti-people government displaying a false face which it calls a human face.

Thus the local chauvinistic ruling class and imperialism have teamed together to create battle formations aimed to bring the entire people of Sri Lanka under the yoke of neo-colonialism. To conceal this from the eyes of the workers, peasants and other working people, rather than find a solution to the national question, they carry this out through war and through peace efforts. The war and the ceasefire do not serve the interests of the people but those of the ruling classes

Comrades and Friends!

Under the circumstances, the Party has the duty to remain firm in its revolutionary stand, unite with honest left, democratic and progressive forces, and build up broad mass movements and struggles from the most basis levels. The historical duty and need has arisen now to return to where the left and democratic forces started in the 1930’s to carry forward honest activities of the communist movement, taking into account the new conditions that prevail among the people at grassroots level, and to the exclusion of parliamentary opportunism.

It should be admitted that in the current situation the forces of Marxism Leninism and the leftists are weak. But that is temporary. That should be no cause for losing heart or for disillusionment. We have in us the dialectical materialist world outlook that Marxism has taught us and the will power based on it. The Party has the unassailable faith that, as long as there remains a single Marxist Leninist, that individual will be capable of building afresh a powerful Marxist Leninist movement and initiate a mighty great mass movement.

We are committed to play an active role in carrying forward the historic duty of uniting the broad working masses and oppressed nationalities and carry forward mass struggles against the chauvinistic ruling class of feudal-capitalist lineage and the forces of imperialism and regional hegemony with which it is allied. Capitalist and imperialist ideologies and thoughts associated with them are being put into use to deflect this and to damage and destroy the faith in Marxism Leninism. They are being introduced among the people like sweet-coated poison. It is necessary to combat by word and deed these evils that are being carried forward through liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, since the agenda of globalisation is being implemented in conjunction with advances in information technology and in other fields of science and technology. Economic inducements to charm and distract the people and steps to promote consumer culture are being actively undertaken. The young generation is being easily deceived by this. Rather than seek the truth and understand reality, there is a tendency to accept things without analysis. The consequent social crises are now rampant, and manifest themselves as economic crises and social decay. That is precisely why we Marxist Leninists shall, in the current international situation riddled with crises and challenges, advance by building up the Party further, and cherishing in word and deed the revolutionary traditions of communists. We will act in a spirit of dedication and sacrifice, and link hands with all honest left, democratic and progressive forces, international communist movements and anti-imperialist forces in that journey.

On the occasion of its 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the New Democratic Party declares again with renewed courage that it will continue to act with determination and confidence in its position based on Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought.

**Long live Marxism Leninism Mao Zedong Thought!**

**Long live the New Democratic Party!**

**Let us carry forward revolutionary mass struggles!**