

The World after 11th September

A seminar-discussion organised by the Sanmugathan Centre for Marxist Studies was held at the Women's Educational Research Centre, Colombo on 8th September 2002. Discussion of the international situation in the wake of the attack on the US on 11th September 2001 was preceded by addresses on the subject by comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary, New Democratic Party and comrade Nihal Dias.

The Peace Effort and People's Contribution

A political seminar, 'The Peace Effort and People's Contribution', organised by the New Democratic Party, Northern Region, was held at the Office of the New Democratic Party in Jaffna on 15th September 2002. The seminar chaired by Comrade K Kathirgamanathan was addressed by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary, NDP.

Commemoration of the 1966 October Uprising

The successful mass uprising under the Marxist Leninist leadership of the Ceylon Communist Party launched against untouchability and casteism in the North of Sri Lanka in October 1966 was commemorated in Jaffna on 21st October 2002. Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party delivered the keynote address titled "Working class struggle against casteism".

Fourth National Congress of the New Democratic Party

The Fourth National Congress of the New Democratic Party was held in Jaffna on the 8th and 9th of November 2002 in the Jaffna City Hall. The presidium comprised comrades EK Soodamany, E Thambiah, SK Senthivel, S Thanikasalam and S Panneerselvam. Delegates from the North, East, the Hill Country and the South attended the Congress.

Members to leading bodies were elected by delegates to the Congress. A central committee comprising 16 members, a 7-member Politburo and a 4-member secretariat were elected, with Comrade SK Senthivel as the General Secretary, Comrade E Thambiah as National Organiser, and Comrade K Gnanakaran as Treasurer.

The Congress was shortly followed by a public meeting held in the evening of 9th November. Comrade SK Senthivel, who was re-elected General Secretary, presided over the meeting addressed by comrades K Thanikasalam, K Kathirgamanathan, S Thevarajah, S Panneerselvam, M Thiyagarajah and E Thambiah.

13th Commemorative Anniversary of Comrade KA Subramaniam

The thirteenth annual commemoration of the late comrade KA Subramaniam, founder General Secretary of the New Democratic Party, organised by the KA Subramaniam Memorial Committee, was held in the Ramakrishna Mission Hall, Colombo on 22nd December 2002.

The KA Subramaniam Memorial Lecture entitled 'Future Prospects for the Current Peace Process' was delivered by comrade Tone Marie Buberger of the Workers' Communist Party of Norway. Professor S Sivasegaram chaired the meeting.

Seminar on the Current Peace Process

A seminar on the theme 'The Current Peace Process and its Challenges' organised by the New Democratic Party was held in the Jaffna City Hall on 29th December 2002 and chaired by comrade E Thambiah, National Organiser of the New Democratic Party.

Comrade Tone Marie Buberger of the Workers' Communist Party (AKP) of Norway and comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary, NDP and S Thevarajah, Politburo Member, NDP addressed the seminar. A lively discussion with healthy exchange of views by the audience followed.

Celebrating the 44th National Day of Cuba

The 44th National Day of Cuba was celebrated on 1st January 2003 at the Ramakrishna Mission Hall, Colombo, under the auspices of the International People's Solidarity Forum. The public meeting to mark the occasion of the 44th National Day was chaired by comrade E Thambiah, Central Co-ordinator, International People's Solidarity Forum. Comrade T Janamahan of the ISPF delivered the welcome address of the meeting which was addressed by comrades Tone Marie Buberger, Workers' Communist Party of Norway, SK Senthivel, General Secretary, NDP, Dudley Kalansooriya, Democratic Left Front, Vasantha Dissanayake, Venessa Group, and P Gopinath, IPSF.

The meeting concluded with a street play by the theatre group 'Sem Malarkal', entitled 'Red messiah and the little boys' performed outside the lecture hall.

Seminar at Ragala

A seminar entitled 'The Current Peace Process and the Hill Country Tamils' was held at the Ragala Tamil Mahavidyalayam on 7th January 2003.

Comrades Tone Marie Buberger, Workers' Communist Party of Norway and S Panneerselvam and others of the NDP addressed the seminar chaired by comrade P Mariyadas.

• * * * *

Pamphlet issued in Jaffna on 15th September 2002

(Translation from Tamil)

Welcome the Talks in Thailand! Demand a Just Political Solution!! Oppose American Intervention!!!

Negotiations have commenced between the government and the LTTE. The negotiations, which have begun in a new environment, are welcomed by all those who want peace and return to normal life. Several earlier negotiations for solving the national question failed to bear fruit. In all cases, the rights and aspirations of the Tamil people have not been taken into account. Meanwhile, the chauvinistic ruling classes of Sri Lanka and the forces of Indian expansionism have emphasised their respective interests. The net result was the escalation of war.

The negotiations in Thailand have been initiated with Norwegian facilitation because of a situation where it had become impossible to solve the national question through war. The JVP, Sihala Urumaya, the People's Front, and Buddhist organisations are trying hard to disrupt the negotiations. The President is using her position to deliver threats. It is necessary for all Tamil, Sinhala, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil people who oppose war and want peace to support to the fullest the carrying forward of the talks and striving for a just solution. The people in the North-East in particular need to be alert and act responsibly.

Our New Democratic Party has carried forward various mass movements on its own and in collaboration with other organisations, in the past, to emphasise a cessation of hostilities, initiation of negotiations, and the search for a just and lasting solution. Today, the first two aims have been realised. As a result, a situation has arrived in which the people have a sigh of relief. Now, all are anxious to see what form the third issue, namely the achievement of a just political solution, would take.

The basic aspiration of the Tamil people could only be the achievement of autonomy based on the right to self-determination. For this, it is necessary to persevere in negotiations with a militant stand, since the chauvinistic ruling classes and the forces of chauvinism will not easily agree to it. Therefore, it is necessary to have an interim council and the necessary interim administrative structure to reconstruct the North East space with negotiations for fundamental rights in Thailand.

All the losses in the economic, political, social and cultural fields in the North-East should be recovered and restored to the right level through such interim administrative structures. The lives and fundamental rights of all people including the workers, peasants, fisher folk, people subject to caste oppression and women should be duly secured. These masses of people were the ones that loved this land and its resources and supported the struggle amid the horrors of war. They are the ones that sacrificed their lives and shed blood to contain chauvinistic oppression. Therefore, these people of the North East rightfully deserve

proper relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation. Further, there is a need to restore democracy and human rights among the people.

It is also important for the LTTE and the leadership of the Muslims to act with far sight to prevent the forces of chauvinism and foreign hands from wrecking Tamil-Muslim relations, in order to achieve their ends.

The peace talks in Thailand should pave the way for a lasting political solution and peace. It is necessary to ensure that they would in no way undermine the right of the Tamil people to self-determination and the struggle of the Tamil people. Thus, US pressure and interference should be opposed. The fact that the aims and the actions of the US are driven by a desire for hegemony and are not in the interest of the Tamil people or Sri Lanka should be recognised and it is important to be cautious of them.

Only the LTTE, which did not compromise in struggle, is participating in the talks in Thailand on behalf of the Tamils. This situation, where the unsteady parliamentary leadership of the Tamil people has been pushed aside, is a good thing. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that the interim administration is set up and made to function in a way that meets the aspirations of the entire Tamil people and addresses the issues faced by them. Our party emphasises that the benefits arising from it should go to the ordinary people who have been affected and suffered losses.

The New Democratic Party

06 September 2002

Press Release

Comrade S.K Senthivel, in his statement on behalf of the Politburo of the New Democratic Party, said that the agreement on the 16th of September 2002 as the date for the talks and the lifting of the ban on the LTTE by the government as promised are welcome moves and that these initial moves seem to be steps in the right direction in the journey towards peace. It is the view of the New Democratic Party that the positive decisions and actions of the government and the LTTE should be carried forward without compromise amid obstacles placed by the opposition parties. The Party also strongly denounces the direct and indirect moves by the JVP, the People's Alliance and the President to subvert the negotiations.

The statement added that it was the relentless struggle of the Tamil people that brought about a climate for negotiations and the lifting of the ban on the LTTE. Left and democratic political organisations including the New Democratic Party have continuously carried forward several campaigns and political struggles in support of the struggle of the Tamil people, and emphasising ceasefire, negotiations and a political solution. During that time, the chauvinists and the ruling classes dubbed us as "Tigers". The just nature of our struggle for the welfare of the Tamil people as well as that of the entire people of the country is demonstrated by the present decisions and actions. We ask of the two parties that they should learn from the bitter lessons and sorrowful experiences of the past moves for peace and endeavour to carry forward the negotiations in Thailand towards their correct goal. At the same time, our Party strongly opposes American efforts to transform the climate for peaceful negotiations into one for its economic and military infiltration. The Party points out that the Tamil people who have been struggling for their right to self-determination and all the people who care for the sovereignty of the country should be aware and cautious of the danger of American intervention.

S.K. Senthivel
General Secretary, New Democratic Party

Foreword to Fourth Congress Report, Nov 2002

The Central Committee of the New Democratic Party is proud to publish its report to the Fourth National Congress held in Jaffna on the 8th and 9th of November 2002, presented by the General Secretary of the Party and as adopted after a thoroughgoing discussion of the report.

The New Democratic Party has in the twenty-four years since its founding in 1978 has firmly upheld Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as its guiding principle and is determined to proceed along the path of proletarian revolutionary struggle to build socialism and through it achieve its ultimate goal of communism, comprising a classless society that unites all mankind.

The Party has always been live to the specific objective conditions obtaining in Sri Lanka that are unique to the country and has identified that the New Democratic Revolution under the leadership of the working class, with the peasantry, the petit bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie as its allies, is the immediate task of the revolution in Sri Lanka, and that the New Democratic Revolution concerns the resolution through revolutionary struggle the contradiction between imperialism and the people of Sri Lanka and that between the big bourgeoisie and forces of feudalism on the one hand and the working people of the country on the other.

Although the immediate needs for social change are seemingly bourgeois democratic, as opposed to a socialist, they can neither be fulfilled by a bourgeois democratic revolution nor the revolution led by the bourgeoisie, and hence the need for the New Democratic Revolution led by the working class, with the peasantry and other anti-imperialist forces as its allies. The working class, to carry out this revolution, should unite as a class and under its leadership unite all the forces that could be united and, as pointed out by comrade Mao Zedong, ensure that the people throughout the country are united as one to achieve victory under the leadership of the proletariat.

At present the working class of Sri Lanka remains disunited on the basis of nationality as Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils. This is as a result of bourgeois ideologies of chauvinism and narrow nationalism, which have historically helped each other to thrive, and thereby sow discord among the working class and other oppressed masses.

The left movement of Sri Lanka, which lost its way in the politics of parliamentary opportunism, has historically failed to address this reality. Among the political organisations in Sri Lanka, the issues have been correctly identified and addressed only by the Marxist Leninists, of whom the New Democratic Party is the main Marxist Leninist political force among the Tamils of the North-East and the Hill Country Tamils, comprising the most oppressed section of the Sri Lankan working class, and the only Marxist Leninist organisation functioning as a political party in the country.

The inevitable downfall of the parliamentary left and the failure to resolve the national question helped the reactionary UNP to take the country along a disastrous path since its landslide victory in 1977. The 'open' economic policy adopted since then has enabled US-led imperialism to have tighter neo-colonial control over the national economy, while the oppressed people were deliberately distracted by the national question, where national oppression of the Tamils was escalated into a war in the North-East.

The New Democratic Party has taken a principled stand in supporting the struggle of the oppressed nationalities for liberation while, with far sight, demanding a peaceful, negotiated settlement, on the basis of the right of nationalities to self-determination, for the national

question, which has developed into the main contradiction in Sri Lanka. It has, at the same time, opposed every move over the past quarter century by the UNP and the People's Alliance governments, carried out under imperialist pressure, to facilitate imperialist globalisation through privatisation, liberalisation and the open economic policy, at great cost to the national economy.

The NDP has also worked hard to build an anti-imperialist united front and had been instrumental in the founding of the New Left Front four years ago, whose formation inspired the left and democratic forces in the country and cause concern to the reactionaries and the chauvinistic JVP. The betrayal by the leader of Trotskyite NSSP under temptation by the JVP led to the collapse of the NLF, much to the glee of the reactionaries and the chauvinists. The NDP has, however, continued to unite with left and democratic forces in launching campaigns in support of the liberation struggle of the Tamils and against imperialist globalisation.

The NDP has given unqualified support for the current peace negotiations between the government and the LTTE, while warning the people of the need to be wary of imperialist designs to use the peace process to strengthen its foothold in the pretext of supporting the peace process. The NDP has also warned of and opposed attempts by mischievous elements within the country and by external forces seeking hegemony over the country to derail the peace process, and categorically pointed out that a just and lasting solution has to be based on the principle of the right to self-determination and should address the national question as a whole.

The NDP, while addressing the main contradiction, has consistently paid attention to other major forms of social oppression, including those based on class, caste and gender. It has always recognised the relationship between the principal contradiction and secondary contradictions and the importance of paying attention to the particular while not losing sight of the main, and has thus given unstinted support to every struggle for social justice.

This Report to the National Congress is an important historic document that captures the current political situation in Sri Lanka in perspective, the role played by the NDP in the struggle for social justice and transformation, the challenges facing the forces of democracy and social justice, and the tasks and responsibilities of the Marxist Leninists in general and the NDP in particular. It deals with a wide range of issues concerning, among many, class, caste and gender oppression, economy, social welfare, education, health, culture, and art and literature.

The Report was discussed exhaustively in every detail by the delegates to the Fourth Congress and is published in the present form in view of its value and importance to the left and progressive forces in the country and internationally.

Central Committee
New Democratic Party