

## **Homage and Sympathy to Tsunami Victims**

Press Release 01.01.2005

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party released on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party the following message concerning the tsunami disaster:

The Central Committee of the New Democratic Party expresses its deepest sorrow and pays its sincere homage to the thirty thousand and more who lost the lives along the north, east, south and west coasts of Sri Lanka and to the people of other countries who lost their lives in the tsunami disaster of 26<sup>th</sup> December. Besides, the Party shares its grief and sorrow with all the people in pain and sorrow, who have been left destitute by the loss of their near and dear and their belongings.

Members and supporters of the Party and its mass organisations, in collaboration with public bodies and social organisations, are providing whatever possible help and relief work in their respective regions. The Central Committee of the Party requests them to continue with their work and to be of consolation and support to the affected people.

The vast majority of the victims are the fisher folk, craftsmen and members of the lower middle class, who, for survival, are struggling with daily life on various fronts. Their future looks bleak. What meaning compensation, relief and reconstruction will have for them seems highly questionable. Hence, all those who emphasise humanitarianism should urge the government to transcend national, religious and regional barriers to carry this responsibility for this task.

Although no one can prevent a disaster of this magnitude, a good part of it could have been averted if the government took the necessary precautions. If, immediately after the tsunami attack on the east coast, the senior government officials concerned had acted promptly with alert and adequate care, loss of life along the northern, southern and western coasts could have been averted. It cannot be concealed that there was up to two hours for such warning. The government should take full responsibility for it. An inquiry into the conduct of the officials concerned is essential. No one should be allowed exonerate himself by claiming that the disaster was simply the fury of nature.

In the same way, the US, which was aware of the tsunami and cared to warn the high command of the naval base in Diego Garcia, did not care to warn a single South Asian country. The question arises now whether, by this, the US committed an error of omission, or deliberately conducted itself in this manner. The US must answer this question.

However, there is now a need for major relief work, rehabilitation and reconstruction. In a situation in which the lack of a solution to the national crisis, along with, the economic crisis and the rivalry for political power has intimidated the people, the tsunami disaster has created additional unbearable burdens and problems. Therefore, the government has the great responsibility to act in a planned manner, uniting all sections by shunning narrow party political rivalry for power and a discriminatory approach based on national, religious, linguistic and regional differences. The Party wishes to point out that, under the circumstances, it is only if the government works together with the LTTE, other opposition parties and socially committed forces that it will be possible for the affected people to start a new life with confidence.

## **Vehement Opposition to American Troop Presence**

Press Release 10.01.2005

There is imminent danger that the American troops who were invited by the Sri Lankan government to undertake tsunami relief and rescue operations will soon turn out to be an occupying force. The stationing of American forces here should be resolutely opposed by the Tamil people who are waging a struggle for their right to self-determination and by everyone who is concerned about the sovereignty and independence of the entire country. The New Democratic Party vehemently condemns and opposes the entry of American forces here. At the same

time, there is an urgent need to build up a mass movement demanding that the American troops quit the country, states a media release issued by Mr SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Party.

The release further states: Under the cover of tsunami relief operations, the ulterior motive of the chauvinist governments and American policy makers has now been realised. The American forces which were unable to enter the country when the war was being waged, and later when peace negotiations began, have not found an opportune moment to gain a foothold here.

American forces have a history of intervening in various countries under various pretexts and later turning into an occupying force which kills people indiscriminately and without compunction. This is the usual imperialist strategy. Hence, in the present political and economic context of Southern Sri Lanka, there is a grave danger that the American forces will turn into an army of occupation.

Besides, the entry of American forces has forced India, the regional hegemon, to rethink. The cold war between India and America for hegemony vis-à-vis Sri Lanka has served to brush aside the Tamil people's struggle for the right to self-determination and to trample underfoot the sovereignty and independence of the entire land.

Hence the militant political forces both in the North and the South should act with foresight and take forward the struggle against imperialism and regional hegemony. This is the need of the hour.

## **The Death of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat**

Press Release 18.11.2004

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP released the following message of condolence on the death of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and President of the Palestinian Authority:

The death of the Chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and president of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat is a great loss to the people of Palestine struggling to recover and restore their homeland and to their liberation struggle. Compensating his loss is possible only through the uncompromising and firm policies of the Palestine liberation movements and the determination in struggle of the Palestinian people. His loss is also a loss to the cause of the liberation struggles of the oppressed people. The New Democratic Party pays its revolutionary salutes to Yasser Arafat who lived a life of struggle shouldering the goal of liberation of the Palestinian people and providing leadership to it.

The life of armed liberation struggle and leadership of Yasser Arafat has been the star of hope and symbol of the goal of liberation to the many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have been robbed of their land and living as refugees. Under these conditions, the death of Yasser Arafat has created a major void. Yasser Arafat was a militant leader not only to the Palestinian people but also to million upon million of the people of the world who are struggling against imperialism and ruling forces drunken with power. He upheld an unrelenting militant stand amid opposition and despise by US imperialism and the Zionist ruling class forces in Israel, a puppet of US imperialism. Even in the circumstances in which the Palestinians are butchered by US-Israel conspiracy and brutal aggression, the Palestinian people are certain to win their final victory. That shall be the fulfilment of the ideal for which Yasser Arafat struggled.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary, New Democratic Party

## **Condemning Violence by the Armed Forces**

Press Release 21.11.2004

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP released the following statement in connection with the shooting of two youth in Valvettithurai and attack by the army on the public in Meesalai:

The shooting to death of two youth in Valvettithurai and attack by the army on the public in Meesalai in Thenmaraadchi are attempts to disrupt the peaceful environment in the north and to create a climate of anxiety about the break-out of war. The killings under cloak of anonymity and attack by the army lead to suspicion about a possible attempt to create in the North a theatre of daily killings as current in the East. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the above incidents. The killers and the masterminds behind it, and the soldiers who carried out the attacks should be identified through proper inquiry; and legal action should be taken against them.

The fact that these planned killings and attacks were carried out in the context of the government the President dragging their feet about peace negotiations, and at a time when the LTTE is planning to commemorate its Heroes' Day has led to strong suspicions and fear among the people. Therefore, it is inevitable that the killing of two innocent youth in Valvettithurai and attack by the army on the public who were clamouring for justice in Thenmaraadchi will be seen as an attempt to create a situation similar to that existing in the east, where the forces of chauvinism and foreign forces have joined hands to act behind the scenes. Therefore the New Democratic Party strongly urges the President to come forward intervene directly in these two matters and enable due inquiry and action, and act to prevent the recurrence of such planned mischievous and cruel events.

SK Senthivel  
General Secretary, New Democratic Party

## **The 4<sup>th</sup> Hill Country Regional Congress of the New Democratic Party**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Hill Country Regional Congress of the New Democratic Party was held at the Sakthi Hall, Hatton. The Congress was chaired by Comrade S Panneerselvam. (See political statement in this issue).

The very well attended and enthusiastic Congress was also addressed by Comrades SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP, E Thambiah, National Organiser of the NDP, P Chandrakumar, of the Teachers Front of the NDP, S Sugaseenan of the Student's Front of the NDP, K Kathirgamanathan, Northern Regional Organiser of the NDP, Don Bosco, Vavuniya Organiser of the NDP, S Thevarajah, Attorney-at Law, V Mahendran, Organiser of Puthiya Malayaham, S Rajendran, Educationalist and AN Varatharaj, and several others.

The Congress was preceded by a street theatre performance by the Cem Malarkal Theatre Group at the Main Bus Stand, Hatton.

## **Remembering Comrade Navaratnam**

Meetings were held in Colombo and in Jaffna to pay tribute to the late Comrade S Navaratnam, who passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

The meeting in Jaffna was held at the Kalaimahal Community Centre, Aathisoodi Lane on 7. 11. 2004 and was chaired by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP. The meeting was also addressed by Comrades S Rajendran, Educationalist and RK Soodamani, party veteran, among others.

A memorial volume on Comrade Navaratnam was released at the meeting in Colombo held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004 at the Colombo Tamil Sangam. The meeting was chaired by Comrade E Thambiah, National Organiser of the NDP. The meeting was addressed by Comrades SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the NDP and S Thevarajah, Attorney-at Law, A Kandasamy, General Secretary, Colombo Tamil Sangam, V Thanabalasingam, Editor, Thinakkural, T Madhusoodhanan, Editor,

Akavizhi, K Nadasabapathy of the Social Science Studies Centre, who also released the memorial volume.

The memorial volume was commented on by P Gopinath of the Editorial Board of Payil Nilam and N Prashanth of the Ulakath Thamizhar Vaanoli.