

NDP pays homage to veteran Comrade Sithamparam

Comrade S Sithamparam, a veteran of the communist movement and long standing Party activist passed away in Kilinochchi at the age of 85. Comrade Sithamparam, was born in Kankesanthurai in 1920, and was attracted to the Communist Party as a youth when the Party was founded in the North during World War II. He remained loyal to his communist ideals and lived as a good communist until he breathed his last on 26th March 2005.

A native of Kankesanthurai, he played a leading role in developing the Party in Kankesanthurai. In a climate of caste oppression and untouchability that prevailed at the time, he developed as a class conscious militant comrade. He placed dedication and trust in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and was therefore a communist fighter in several respects.

He served as a leading member of the Mass Movement for the Elimination of Untouchability of 1966-1971, guided by the Marxist Leninist Communist Party, and opened the battle front of the famous Maviddapuram temple entry struggle by submitting to the Government Agent, the temple trustee and the Inspector of Police an appeal by the Kankesanthurai branch of the Movement, made on behalf of the people of the oppressed castes of the region.

Comrade Sithamparam was a true Marxist Leninist in word and in deed and integrated himself closely with the activities of the NDP even in his old age. He was among the six veteran communist militant comrades to be honoured at the 25th Anniversary of the NDP held in Jaffna in 2003.

Representatives of the Party Central Committee and the Northern Regional Committee paid their respect to Comrade Sithamparam at his funeral in Kilinochchi.

NDP pays homage to Comrade Chandrakumar

Comrade Perumal Chandrakumar (11.11.1969 – 18. 2. 2005), joined the Sri Lanka Democratic Youth Movement in 1992 and the NDP in 1995. He was a member of the Hill Country Regional Committee of the Party. Until his death of sudden illness, he played an active and inspiring role in the struggle of the hill country people against oppression. A teacher by profession, he taught with dedication, honesty and sincerity. He was also an effective political activist and a brilliant orator.

We give below the tribute by the NDP Central Committee.

Revolutionary tribute to the late Comrade Chandrakumar

The departure of Comrade Perumal Chandrakumar, who for the past thirteen years carried out ceaseless struggle for the liberation of the suppressed people, is a great loss to the Party, the people of the Hill Country and communist fighters throughout the world. On becoming a member of the Party within three years of joining the Sri Lanka Democratic Youth Movement, he carried forward intense struggles, and developed his personality as a communist to become a member of the Hill Country Regional Committee. He participated in the national congresses of the Party and made a solid contribution to the development of theoretical and practical work programmes for the liberation of the oppressed people of the whole country.

Comrade Chandrakumar contested the Provincial Council elections according to Party decision. He was confronted with various challenges which he courageously overcame. He severely oppose every action that was hostile to the working people and acted firmly to defeat it. He proved his mettle in the demonstration in Talawakelle town against the Bindunuweva massacre. He acted skilfully when the police sought to suppress it and was at the fore to protect the people and party leaders.

He was well aware of the negative aspects of the Upper Kotmale Project and worked in collaboration with the people's movement against the Upper Kotmale Project. He participated keenly in the signature campaign and protest demonstrations against the scheme.

He worked with dedication to set up a broad-based teachers' organisation under the leadership of the NDP and worked enthusiastically to build the New Democratic Teachers Union. He was also keen to

impress upon the teachers the position of the NDP that the problems of the teachers should be approached from a social scientific point of view, and to develop that approach. He proposed programmes to achieve that purpose at meetings in Vavunia, Jaffna, Ragala and Hatton. He critically ridiculed organisations functioning under the patronage of reactionary trade unions in the hill country.

Comrade Chandrakumar understood the negative tendencies of the life of isolation under conditions of globalisation and privatisation, in which trash from India was making people mentally ill, and he developed a character that befitted a great communist and succeeded in putting it into practice. He achieved within his life of 35 years what would have taken a long life. As he integrated himself with the lives of the oppressed people, he was also subject to the perils of poor hygiene faced by the hill country plantation workers.

Comrade Chandrakumar, who had the wide range of great qualities of a communist, only days before he fell ill, proposed a scheme for carrying forward organisational work in the Hatton-Talawakelle region and addressed a meeting, introducing the comrades that he had cultivated.

Comrade Chandrakumar whose memory is deeply etched in the hearts of Party comrades, has, through binding himself closely with the life of struggle of the people of the hill country, has won a place in the hearts of all.

Our revolutionary tribute to him will be to continue in the journey towards the goals for which he dedicated his life by transforming our sorrow into strength.

Central Committee of the New Democratic Party

18. 02. 2005

Press Communiqué of the NDP

Comrade SK Senthivel, in his communiqué to the press on 13th March 2005 in connection with recent incidents of rape and murder in the North-East, made the following observation:

It is three years since the Memorandum of Understanding and the Ceasefire Agreement came into effect. During this period, members of the armed forces have continued to commit acts of rape against women in regions under the control of the Army. In some instances, women have been raped and murdered. The incidents of rape by members of the armed forces last week in Neerveli and Thunnalai-Kalikai are a continuation of this trend. The New Democratic Party strongly condemns the two incidents. At the same time, the Party wishes to point out that the main cause for such incidents of rape is the existence of large and small military camps and check points amid residences of the people and that it is essential that they are removed.

The communiqué further added that, recently, in Mannar, a student has been forcefully subject to sexual abuse. Prior to that, in Vavuniya, a woman was raped and murdered. There have been many incidents of sexual violence in the East, which have not been reported in the press. They have now occurred in Neerveli and Thunnalai-Kalikai. The reason for such incidents to take place is the existence of large and small military camps and check points amid settlements, residences, work centres, schools and other public places. As a result, women, in particular, face the risk of rape and harassment at any time. Also, the students and the people go through their daily life in fear and panic. Besides, the existence of the armed forces amid residences seems to encourage social misconduct and cultural degeneration. Also accidents involving military vehicles lead to tension and conflict between the population and the armed forces. Hence it is essential that large and small military camps and check points should be moved out of residential areas and areas where people move about. The only way to ensure that is to find immediate means to solve the national question that has been transformed into war. It is essential that the negotiations that have been allowed to drift are resumed without delay and a political solution found thereby. The Party points out that it is only when military positions are removed from among residential areas and democracy and normal life are restored that people, especially women, can live free and without fear.

SK Senthivel

General Secretary, New Democratic Party

Seminar on the Current Political Situation

A political seminar under the heading “The Political Situation after the Tsunami and International Interference” was held at the Auditorium of the Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Building in Jaffna at 3.30 p.m. on 20th March 2005. The seminar, chaired by Comrade K Kathirgamanathan, Secretary, NDP Northern Region, was addressed by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary, New Democratic Party, Comrade K Thanigasalam, Member, Politburo of the New Democratic Party, and M Thiagarajah, a humanitarian trade union activist. The meeting was well attended and the addresses were followed by a lively discussion.

[The address by Comrade Senthivel is included in this issue.]

Convention of Activists of the People’s Campaign Against the Upper Kotmale Project

The co-ordinators of the People’s Campaign Against the Upper Kotmale Project organised a meeting of campaign activists on 10th April 2005 at the Christian Workers Fellowship Hall, Hatton. The meeting was attended by over five hundred and included the following parties and groups:

1. The New Democratic Party
2. The Nava Samasamaja Party–New Left Front
3. Democratic Left Front
4. National Union of Workers
5. Ceylon Workers’ Alliance
6. Western Province People’s Front
7. Railway Workers’ Alliance
8. The January Movement
9. The New Cultural Organisation
10. Puthiya Malaiyagam
11. Sri Lanka Democratic Youth Front

An Executive Committee of sixteen was elected, with Comrades E Thambiah as Organiser, Comrades L Seneviratne and Comrade P Prabakaran as Co-ordinators and S Shanmugarajah as Treasurer.

The Convention made the following declaration:

The Upper Kotmale Electrical Power Generation Project to be launched at the heart of the Nuwara Eliya District in the central highlands and endowed with great natural splendour is a scheme of aggression funded by aid from the Japanese government. This project will lead to disastrous consequences for the plantation workers of the Hill Country and for the Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim people of Sri Lanka.

This project will be a cause for the destruction of natural environment and human life.

This project, which is potentially disastrous in the social, cultural, political, geographical, biological and economic spheres, should definitely be defeated.

This Conference has determined that the struggle for the total abandonment of this project will be carried forward through the united struggle of the Hill Country Tamils.

It warmly invites all progressive and democratic forces to join in the People’s Campaign Against the Upper Kotmale Project to fight against this project, defeat it, and ensure victory to the people.

It invites all political parties, trade unions, voluntary organisations, youth associations, media persons, educationists, teachers and students to undertake the historic responsibility of defeating this Project which is a major threat to the existence of the Hill Country Tamils.

The Convention adopted the following resolutions to carry forward the campaign against the Upper Kotmale Project.

1. The Convention resolves to carry out a house-to-house propaganda campaign to educate the people about the disasters of the project.
2. The Convention calls upon all political parties, trade unions and other organisations to take up the protest against this project in their May Day rallies.
3. The Convention resolves to hold protest meetings against the project across the country from May 2nd to May 15th.
4. The Convention resolves to observe a Protest Day on the 15th of May, the day of demise of Martyr Sivanu Letchumanan.
5. The Convention resolves to carry out a variety of agitations in Colombo.
6. The Convention resolves to carry out pressure campaigns in Sri Lanka as well as in Japan in order to get cancelled the loan facilities offered by the Japan International Agency Bank.
7. The Convention resolved to carry out international campaigns of ceaseless agitation through the parent organisation as well as by its International Branch that has been set up in London.

Revolutionary May Day 2005 of the New Democratic Party

The New Democratic Party will mark May Day 2005 in Jaffna in the north and at Ragala Hill Country with processions and public meetings.

The May Day procession and meeting in Jaffna will emphasise the following matters:

The setting up of a joint mechanism to carry out tsunami relief in the North-East

Opposing to chauvinistic oppression

Demanding workers' rights

Demanding an end to privatisation

The May Day procession and meeting in Ragala will emphasise the following matters:

Opposition to the Upper Kotmale Project

Emphasising the rights of plantation workers

Opposing to chauvinistic oppression

Emphasising the revolutionary path for the struggle of the Hill Country Tamils

The Party warmly invites its supporters and all other progressive sections of the masses to join in the processions and the meetings.