

ADDRESS AT THE 27TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

by

Comrade SK Senthivel
General Secretary of the NDP

Comrades and Friends!

I wish to express on behalf of the Party Central Committee its joy in seeing you in such large numbers at the 27th Anniversary celebration of the Party and its revolutionary greetings to you. Death has taken away from us three comrades who were with us during the last anniversary. We recall with lofty revolutionary sentiments the memories of Comrade S Navaratnam, Member of the Central Committee, Comrade P Chandrakumar, Member of the Hill Country Regional Committee, and Comrade S Sithamparam, senior member of the Party from the Northern Region.

Comrades and Friends!

Twenty-seven years ago, along with a few comrades, we founded the New Democratic Party as a Marxist Leninist party in the name of the Sri Lanka Communist Party (Left). We started our political journey with the revolutionary determination that, in both ideology and practice, we will function organisationally as a Marxist Leninist party. The founder General Secretary Comrade KA Subramaniam guided us to the decision that we will be guided in our journey by the light shed by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Guidance by Comrade KA Subramaniam with a wealth of experience and understanding in the communist movement of the country played an important role in propelling the Party forward. Modern revisionism and parliamentary opportunism and, later, extremism had already caused serious decay and degeneration in the left movement. As a result, it was not possible for a revolutionary Marxist Leninist movement to grow strong. These effects still persist in the South.

It is amid such weakness that we came forward with great confidence to propel forward our party as a Marxist Leninist party. That confidence has not weakened to this day. It will not weaken in the future either. Comrades and friends have worked at various levels with dedication, facing all manner of opposition, danger to life, challenges and difficulties, to transform the Party to its present position of strength and to advance it further. They have carried forward the historic task before them with a proletarian outlook. It is through the firm and broad-based collective work of such comrades and friends that we are completing our 27th year and are rising as the single Marxist Leninist Party in the communist-left terrain of the country. We will abide by the policies drawn up by the Fourth Congress of the Party and make the Party stronger and develop it into one that carries forward revolutionary struggles. We note with joy the encouragement and support given by this anniversary celebration to achieve that.

Comrades and Friends!

I seek your permission to place before you some aspects of the current political situation in the country. The whole country is in a serious state of crisis. On one side economic problems are causing hardship to the entire people. As a result there is steady rise in social and cultural decay. As we have been pointing out from the outset, the economic crisis and social decay are a cruel consequence of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. The ruling capitalist class of feudal descent are solely responsible for this situation. During the past quarter of a century, this class has followed programmes along the guidelines of bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, the Asian Development Bank and the

World Trade Organisation and thereby ruined and shattered the national economy. The two ruling class parties of the country have outdone each other in this respect.

As a result of their erroneous economic policy, prices of essential commodities of the ordinary people, comprising items such as rice, sugar and flour, have increased by the day; and the price of fuel raised every month facilitates the rise in commodity prices. Particularly since the Petroleum Corporation was privatised and handed over to the Indian Oil Company the prices have been steadily on the rise. The real reasons for the rise in fuel prices are kept concealed. While prices soar as a result of liberalisation and privatisation, the increases in wages are inadequate to meet the rise in cost of living. As a result, the vast majority of the workers, peasants, and state and private sector employees are badly affected. The rural peasantry are being pushed below the poverty line.

The government, while refusing to pay heed to these matters, is keen to implement its privatisation programme that continues to ruin the country. It is actively pursuing the Upper Kotmale Project in the hill country, the Nuraicholai Thermal Power Project in Puttalam, and privatisation of the Ceylon Electricity Board and the remaining shares of the Petroleum Corporation. The World Bank has advocated early privatisation of the education and health sectors. The resources of the country and the labour of the people are being robbed by multinational corporations, with the support and cooperation of the governments of the ruling classes.

Although the JVP with its bogus left camouflage had been a part of the government for over a year, it could not block the policy and practice of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. Even its exit from the government is not in protest of the failure to solve the problems of the workers and peasants but in opposition to the setting up of the Joint Mechanism to provide relief for the victims of the tsunami in the North-East. Notably, it was during the time when the JVP was in control at the Ministry of Agriculture that three peasants from the Polonnaruwa District committed suicide as a result of their inability to sell their paddy harvest and settle their loans.

The UNP government privatised the plantation sector and transferred it to 22 companies. Trade unions and political parties of the hill country supported the privatisation, claiming that it will lead to a brighter future for the plantation workers. What is the plight of the plantation sector in the hill country? In the same way, the so-called development of the south is also a means of deceiving the Sinhalese. Viewing from a class basis, one will see that the contradiction between the Capitalist and imperialist forces on the one hand and the vast majority comprising the workers, peasants and intellectuals is growing further. At the same time, the solution to the national question, which continues to be the main contradiction, is yet to be realised. The three and a half years of the memorandum of understanding and ceasefire have passed as a period of procrastination and deception. Even the Joint Mechanism for tsunami relief is facing stiff resistance from the JVP and the Jathika Hela Urumaya chauvinists. However, the chauvinistic ruling classes who transformed the national question into a war and the forces of imperialism that gave it their guidance and full support have secured their respective outcomes and benefits. Besides, in order that they may continue to enjoy the benefits, the forces of imperialism are making use of the ruling classes on one side and the LTTE on the other. Currently, a situation has arisen, in which escape from the net cast by them seems impossible.

There is, nevertheless, the need to expose these conspiracies to the people and for Tamil people to mobilise the Muslims and Hill Country Tamils in the just struggle for self-determination. It is necessary to create a situation in which the toiling ordinary Sinhalese people accept it.

It is against this background that the UNP campaigns for the Presidential Election to be held this year and claims that all problems will be resolved if Ranil Wickramasinghe becomes President. Have the constitution and the executive presidential system introduced by JR Jayawardane and the UNP in 1978 solved any of the problems of the country during the past 27 years? Did they bring economic, political and socio-cultural development and progress to the people?

So, it is necessary to create a climate in which the entire people struggle to reject this constitution and the executive presidential system and replace it with a new constitution that would bring welfare, equality, democracy, development and wholesome growth to all the people and the different

nationalities. The New Democratic Party proposes and emphasises that a broad-based mass revolutionary struggle needs to be launched to achieve it.

The people should not allow the continuation of the game of musical chairs for the executive presidency. The game of switching the group of individuals forming the parliamentary ruling party too cannot lead to any real change. The genuine left and democratic forces should come forward to mobilise the people along the path of mass struggle, bypassing the process of changing people in this pattern. New political forces need to enter the arena and mobilise for it.

The new forces should ignore the old leadership that took the parliamentary path to become opportunists and abandon Marxism Leninism and revolutionary ideals, and progress along the path of struggle by identifying the objective situation in the country. The New Democratic Party places emphasises on this in its anniversary celebration.

Comrades and friends!

It is necessary to make certain observations about the international situation. The American Imperialists and their allies, who arrogantly claim that they have succeeded in their efforts to eradicate socialism and Marxism from the world, have launched their programme of new tactics and schemes. American imperialism seeks to achieve political, military and economic hegemony over the whole world through globalisation. It is prolonging the Palestinian problem without a solution in order to keep the oil wealth of the Middle East under its control. The invasion of Iraq two years ago and earlier attacks have exposed the true forms of America and Britain, its principal ally. They seek to set up a puppet regime in Iraq in the same way that they have in Afghanistan, where their aggression continues. But in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the American and British allied forces are taking a severe beating each day.

America uses the concepts such as “Islamic terrorism” “global terror”, “eradication of the Al Qaida movement” and “destruction of weapons of mass destruction” to justify its aggression, and carries out its wars for global hegemony. It makes a list of countries that stand in its way to global hegemony, and makes false charges and carries out malicious propaganda against them. Iran, North Korea and Cuba are among prime targets of its campaign.

But a new situation is developing fast, in which the people of the world begin to understand the true intentions of America and other capitalist countries and struggle against them. Revolutionary movements are being reorganised on the basis of Marxism Leninism and we see that, from the revolution in Nepal to the mass uprisings in South America, the struggles of the people of the world are growing in confidence.

At the same time, our country faces a situation in which it awaits falling into the clutches of India’s regional hegemony. The strategy of the Indian policy makers is to infiltrate the Sri Lankan economy and intensify its pressure on the country so that it could keep it within its grips. The Indo-Sri Lanka Trade Agreement was created for this purpose, and India is the sole beneficiary of the agreement. Following that, the Indo-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement is to be signed soon.

There has been open Indo-American rivalry in the economic, political and military fields of Sri Lanka. Interference and intervention by America, the European Union, India and Japan have been motivated by the intention to dominate. The Sri Lankan ruling class is now reduced to a position where it is unable to implement any major political decision without taking it to Washington and New Delhi for approval. In the same way, no economic plan can be implemented without the knowledge or in defiance of the World Bank, the IMF and the Asian Development Bank.

Therefore, we need to carry out a people’s struggle against the imperialist globalisation by America and its imperialist allies. Similarly, there could be no tolerance towards India’s regional hegemony. The Party emphasises that the only way for us is to carry forward a broad-based anti-imperialist struggles against imperialism, on behalf of the country and the people. The position of the Party is that there cannot be an alternative to this approach.

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