

Sri Lanka: NSSP turns 36 tomorrow

Monday 29 December 2014, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#)

The Nava Sama Samaja Pakshaya (New Same Society Party), the Trotskyist political party in Sri Lanka attached to the Fourth International, celebrates its 36th Anniversary on 30 December 2014. It was formed through the expulsion from the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) of the Vama Sama Samaja tendency led by Vickramabahu (Bahu), Sumanasiri Liyanage and Siritunga Jayasuriya and Vasudeva Nanayakkara (Vasu) who joined later. In 1976 when the LSSP was thrown out of the coalition large numbers joined the tendency and in December 1977 it declared itself as Nava Sama Samaja Party.

Initially the NSSP was affiliated to the Committee for a Workers' International but, never fully agreed with the analysis that it had made of Stalinism, of developments in the former colonial and semi-colonial world and the national question. It departed CWI in 1988, in a process described by some as expulsion, but by the CWI as a split. The remaining CWI members formed the United Socialist Party. Since 1991 the NSSP, led by Vickramabahu, has been the Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International. In 1994 Vasu left the party to join the coalition led by Chandrika.

There is a criticism that Bahu's approach is fatal for the workers' movement, which should have no trust in these parties in the present Presidential Election action front or in bourgeois politicians in general. They repeat the old sectarian wisdom that workers should look to an independent class policy and rely upon their own strength and power. They stress the fact that Socialism is the answer, not just for Sri Lanka or the neo-colonial world but for the whole of the globe for that matter. They have forgotten that there could not be socialism in one country, especially not in a poor country like Lanka.

Regarding the decline of the Left, some interpret this as a rejection of the ideas of socialism by the majority of the workers, peasants and left intellectuals. We strongly disagree with this. Blame for this is more on the tops of the workers' organizations who vacillate between opportunism and sectarianism, without taking an action-oriented tactical approach to guide the mass movement. Latter is the only way to face the ruling class.

Thus, the leading sections of the working class would never reconcile themselves to the attacks on socialism, which go hand in hand with the implementation of neo-liberal policies. When Presidential candidate Maithiri attacks the plunder carried out by MNCs with the connivance of the government, NSSP get the opportunity to put forward a consistent, clear alternative programme to be carried out under the power of workers, peasants and fishers.

In the last few weeks we had the opportunity to travel around the country addressing meetings organized jointly with the participation of the presidential candidate, and also conducted by Left or civil society groups. There were important discussions in group conducted meetings where the importance of mass mobilization is discussed. People are made aware of threat to the civil society and conspiracies hatched by the ruling chauvinist political leadership. This mobilization programme has been attacked mercilessly in several towns but proletarians have come out to defend the activists. In the latest incident, Hambantota Mayor Eraj Fernando who surrendered to the police over the attack on a troupe of street artistes was arrested and released on bail. Fernando of 'toy pistol' fame had been accused of being involved in the attack in Hambantota town.

A group of activists who, together with some opposition members, were to stage a street drama in which public is attracted to a broad discussion, on the role of workers peasants and fishers in the struggle for democracy were attacked. Human Rights activist Britto Fernando said that local area government politician and Mayor Eraj Fernando approached the activists when they were about to begin the street drama and threatened to kill them.

Britto Fernando said that the Mayor had then attempted to drag away one of the activists saying he will not allow them to conduct any activities against President Mahinda Rajapaksa. However, later Eraj made a counter complaint that activists attacked him and his officials when he went to observe what was happening!

Without such a programme, within the active masses, hope for a mere election victory is understood to be vulnerable. Mass participation and mass mobilization is the key to both democracy and socialism. Capitalism and imperialism threaten to drag Sri Lanka and the whole of humankind into a bottomless pit. Rosa Luxemburg's aphorism "Socialism or barbarism" formulated 100 years ago is the reality that confronts the working class and humankind today.

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*<http://www.ceylontoday.lk/51-80936-news-detail-nssp-turns-36-tomorrow.html>