

Sri Lanka: 85 Years of LSSP

Wednesday 3 February 2021, by [WIJETHILAKA Niel](#) (Date first published: 26 December 2020).

This December marks the 80th anniversary of the formation of the LSSP, Sri Lanka's oldest left party. 85 years is a long period of time in relation to human life. As a revolutionary political organization, it was an even longer period. The first 30 years of the LSSP were a period of unrelenting courage to build socialism in our country, as well as a period of conflict, chaos and divisions. The whole period that followed was a period of betrayal, in which they abandoned their old program and devoted themselves to the betterment of the capitalist system. Even today it is not over. But the LSSP as a force has been completely negated. But modern young revolutionaries desperately need to learn to some extent about its positive and negative experiences.

All political parties and organizations that existed until then were largely conservative parties that sought to gain limited independence from imperialist bourgeois rule and simply represented the interests of the educated and property classes of the social elites. In addition, although some organizations were national revivalist movements against imperialist rule, they were not organizations that the masses to seize political power. For the first time, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was formed to represent the interests of the oppressed masses in society, to organize them and to fight for complete independence from imperialist rule. The reason for the formation of such a party in Sri Lanka with a more leftist leaning, especially among the Sinhala and Tamil educated youth in Europe, inspired by the Russian Revolution and the Indian liberation struggle, as well as the national liberation struggles in the colonial world. Looking at the nature of the founding members of this party, many of them did not represent the working people and came from English educated Sinhala and Tamil middle class family backgrounds. In that sense, it is not wrong to describe the Lanka Sama Samaja Party as a united front of various forces from the very beginning, including revolutionary, left reformists and anti-imperialist nationalists.

The founding effects of the LSSP were by no means aimed at bringing about a socialist revolution and were largely a political movement aimed at the democratic rights of the people against the pro-imperialist and pro-imperialist ruling classes and the welfare of the broader oppressed. . In fact, before the formation of the LSSP, this force functioned as a leftist force that provided relief to the bourgeoisie in the absence of a solution to the malaria epidemic that was raging in our country at the time and causing severe devastation to the rural and oppressed masses. In that sense, it is unfortunate that the people of our country, who are suffering from a severe corona epidemic today, do not have such a business.

From its inception the Lanka Sama Samaja Party organized the oppressed rural peasantry. They also organized the urban working class and the plantation working class not only for economic demands but also for political struggle. The LSSP's revolutionary stance against the imperialist war is glorious. During the war, the struggle based on slogans such as turning the imperialist war into a civil war was great. The LSSP, which produced the militants, including Comrade Govindan of the Mul Oya estate, who gave his life for the plantation workers' movement, waged many struggles for the rights of the plantation workers. Also, the socialists in Ceylon are proud of their courageous stand against Sinhala racism up to 1958, especially on the national issues of the Tamil people. Many

of the welfare benefits enjoyed by the people today would never have been possible without the LSSP. The Great Hartal, especially in 1953, was its culmination. Nine social activists were shot dead by police. As a result of that struggle, the UNP regime collapsed in 1956 and the inability of the LSSP to seize power should be reconsidered.

Due to the aforementioned nature of the LSSP, sections of the left and pro-working class later turned to Bolshevik and Trotekzi, leading the way in the October Revolution, which was a very positive trend in the movement. Almost all other sections succumbed to political opportunism and turned either to nationalism, to the national bourgeois parties formed after the war, or to the Stalinist communist parties, which proposed class collaboration. Those who later took a Trotskyist stance also succumbed to the prevailing conditions and went into class compromise, leading to the destruction of the leftist movement in this country. Its culmination was the formation of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in 1964 in a coalition government with Sirimavo Bandaranaike and holding ministerial posts in that government. Since then, the independence of the LSSP has waned and it has clearly become part of the bourgeoisie. Instead of social revolutionary interests, social reforms formulated their agenda.

Today, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party is left with only its name Board. No one alive is associated with the militant history of the Sama Samaja. Almost all of the leaders known today as the Sama Samaja had political experience after the 70s coalition politics. What has happened to them today is that they have unconditionally supported bourgeois forces like Mahinda Rajapaksa and taken positions. They have no social purpose beyond you. As such, Sama Samaja is merely an archeological narrative with no history, no present and no future.

Niel Wijethilaka

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and or French. You will receive one email every Monday containing links to all articles published in the last 7 days.

P.S.

Wame Handa

<http://english.wamehanda.org/2020/12/26/80-years-of-lssp/>