
	Communist Party of Sri Lanka International Information Bulletin	 <small>ДЛЯ ПОПРАВИТЕЛЕЙ НАПЕЧАТАТЬ НЕЛЬЗЯ</small>
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22nd National Congress

22nd National Congress of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka was held from 25th to 27th February 2022 in Colombo.



General Secretary Presenting the Draft Politic Report



Section of the Delegates

Political Report drafted by the Central Committee, Organizational Report and Self-Criticism Report presented to the Congress were unanimously adopted.

A new Central Committee of 51 members was elected.

Shortly after the Congress the new Central Committee met and elected the following office bearers.



Dr. G. Weerasinghe – Re-elected as the General Secretary of CPSL

- Chairman : Comrade DEW Gunsekara
- General Secretary : Comrade Dr. G. Weerasinghe
- Deputy General Secretary : Comrade S. Sudasinghe

- Deputy Chairman : Comrade Weerasumana Weerasinghe (Member of Parliament)
 - A Politbureau of 16 + 6 alternative members was elected.
 - Comrade Wilfred Jayasinghe was elected as the secretary for International Relations.
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Critical political Situation in Sri Lanka

Unprecedented complicated economic, political, and social crisis erupted in Sri Lanka. This is a result of the neoliberal policies continuously followed by the governments ruled the country for last 44 years.

Sri Lanka Economic Crisis

An unprecedented economic crisis erupted in Sri Lanka as from March 2022. Soon it led a political crisis by May 2022 when Government led by the Executive President Gotabaya Rajapaksa with a two-third majority in Parliament collapsed on May 12th. The former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, who was defeated at the last polls and returned to Parliament through the national list (Nominated list), was called upon to form a government.

It was most surprising that the leader of the most conservative party with one single seat in Parliament of 225 members was made Prime Minister.

Ranil Wickremasinghe had hitherto held the post of Prime Minister under the Presidencies of President D.B. Wijetunga (1993-1994), Chandrika Bandaranaike (2001 – 2003) and then again with President Maithripala Sirisena (2015-2019) - all short-lived administrations.

The origin of the economic crisis can be traced as far back as 1978 when under President J.R. Jayewardene sought to adopt a neo-liberal economic strategy, following Reagan – Thatcher – co-fathers of neo-liberalism.

Though the administrations changed in between 1978 – 2022 the economic strategy continued to operate with minor deviations.

The economic crisis reached the critical peak level when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was suddenly left with neither Dollars (Foreign Exchange) nor Rupees (domestic currencies) to run the administration.

Though this critical stage of the crisis was reached dramatically, it was a continuing process over a period time with macro – economic imbalances.

The factors that led to this eruption of the crisis can be summarized as follows:

- Imports exceeding Exports almost doubled by 2020
- Exports stagnant with no value added products – Agricultural or Industrial

- Government Revenue fell from 24% of the GDP in 1978, to 6% of by 2019.
- Govt. expenditure far exceeded the Govt. Revenue resulting in deficits throughout.
- Deficits were met by Domestic and Foreign Borrowings
- The External Debt reached US \$ 52 Billion by 2020. -50% of which were borrowings through International Sovereign Bonds as from 2007.
- Foreign Exchange Reserve that stood at \$ 7.5 billion dropped sharply to \$ 1 billion by April 2022 and reached rock bottom of 500 million by March / April 2022.

Government was compelled to resort to printing of Rupee Currencies for domestic expenditures.

As regards the dearth of Dollars, the Government was compelled to negotiate for swaps from India, Bangladesh and China.

The yearly repayment of foreign debts installments fluctuated between \$ 2- 5 billion. Thus the Dollar Crisis

Sri Lanka was compelled to declare itself as a defaulting nation having failed to repay borrowings.

The Govt. is placed with no alternative but to seek IMF intervention in order to salvage the economy.

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka took a principled position on the fundamental economic strategy of neo-liberalism and continued to warn of declining foreign exchange reserves and also the sharp decline of government revenue both in Parliament and outside.

Comrades Sarath Mutteuwegama and DEW Gunasekara have been taking a principled position in Parliament on the neo-liberal economic strategy warning the government of impending economic crisis which became a reality in March 2022.

On the floor of the Parliament in Budget Debates, the Communist Party members of Parliament repeatedly warned of the decline in government revenue and also fall in foreign Exchange reserves.

At the peak of COVID -19 when the country was totally lock-down, the Communist Party at a high level discussion drew the personnel attention of President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa the inevitable economic crisis. He totally turned a deaf ear.

When the country reached the stage of a political crisis in April 2022 the Communist Party together with other sister political parties in Parliament presented an 11 point short term minimum Programme together with immediate measures of reliefs to the people. It called for an interim government in order to bring about national unity and also minimum political consensus to alleviate the sufferings of the people. He however went so far as to bring back to power much defeated and disgraced leader of the United National Party –the most pro- imperialist conservative Party - as Prime Minister. He totally ignored our continued call for an all Party Government.

Obviously, President resorted to this tactic in order to satisfy the pro-imperialists and big-Business Lobby as a measure needed to confront the economic crisis.

The Left and Radical Parties continued to compel the government to seek the assistance of fraternal countries like India, Russia, China, Japan, Iran Bangladesh, and Indonesia etc.

Mass Protests

It was both interesting curious to witness the sudden appearance of a protest at the Galle Face Green opposite the President's Office as from April 9th, 2022. The protestors were at the beginning were from the younger generation of the educated urban middle class. Initially in 2021 the protests were from the farmers who strongly resisted Presidents Gotabhaya Rajapaksa's sudden, unilateral decision to ban imports of fertilizer. This caused anger amongst the peasants. These protests were with food shortages, price hikes of rice, caused by millers and wholesalers.

The shortage of fuel, gas, kerosene oil, fertilizer created panic, anger amongst the housewives' uninterrupted long queues throughout the country was the immediate cause of massive protests at all levels of the people.

The political crisis was followed by a social crisis when over 70% of the population who belonged to the informal economy was hit by this crisis.

Finally it took the turn of a natural crisis – with economic, political, social and cultural crises combined.

May 9, 2022 was a decisive day on where pro-government goons led an attack on the protestors in the Galle Face Green, retaliated by the supporters and their supporters.

The siege of Temple Trees, the official residence of Prime Minister, wide speed attacks on the politicians belongs of their houses and business places.

The crisis climaxed with the sacking of the cabinet, appointed of new Prime Minister as from May 12th 2022.

The newly appointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe though in power for two months has hitherto failed to take any possible, positive measures either to combat the crisis or alleviate the sufferings of the people.

July 9th 2022 was the D –Day when the protestors who entered the city of Colombo and entered the President's House.

President was compelled to step down. President, Prime Minister and the whole Cabinet had to resign.

The sudden development as from March 2022 climaxing with the collapse of the Government and the Presidency have aroused the suspicion of the people, whether these development falls into the category of "Colour Revolution" engaged by external forces.

However, the fact remains that there were objective conditions created by the short-ended SLPP Govt. (2019- 2022) un-presciently so popular at the beginning in 2019.

The subjective factors that could be attributed to the eruption of the crisis can be summarized as follows:

- President GotabhayaRajapaksa though hailing from a political family was not at all a political animal. Totally insensitive
- In shading of the crisis
- Presence of five members of the same family caused the cabinet ineffective, irresponsible, and unresponsive.
- Absence of inner-party democracy
- Totally ineffective Cabinet with undesirable elements
- Lack of vision, strategy and policies
- Lack of governance
- Politicizing of the Public service
- Declining of the Political Culture
- Corruption
- Absence of collective Decisions and collective responsibilities

The political situation took a dramatic turn when the leader of the United National Party Ranil Wickremasinghe, then Prime Minister was appointed as acting President before President GotabhayaRajapakse left the country having stepped down from office.



New President Ranil Wickremasinghe

Privatization move in the energy sector.

The CPSL with sister political parties and trade unions carried out a strong campaign against the moves to privatize energy sector. It was proposed to hand-over a 40% stakes of a power plant (named YGADANAVI), contract of supplying Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to that power plant and establishing a floating facility in the nearby sea to an American Company (New Fortress Energy). It seems that the attempts are continuing to expand the privatization drive throughout the power and energy sector in agreement with IMF



Struggle against the effort to privatize Colombo Port Eastern Container Terminal (ECT)

There was an attempt to privatize Eastern Container Terminal of Colombo Port. Thousands of workers of Colombo Port as well as other sectors carried out a strong campaign and the move was defeated. The CPSL played an active role in defeating the said attempt.



Protesting in front of Labour Ministry

There were few struggles on issues in the education sector in the period covered by current issue of International Bulletin

1. Protest against the Kotalawala Defense University Act.

An act was introduced to create a parallel education system inclusive of school education, vocational training and University education passed on Kotalawala Defense University which is a military higher education institute. The Act envisage a fee levying system of education institutes.

The CPSL took a firm stand against the said move with similar - minded forces. The Government agreed not to move forward with the proposed proposals.



2. Struggle of the school teachers and Principals

The School Teachers and Principals staged a protest campaign demanding the Government to rectify the salary anomaly existing for the last 24 years. Ultimately solution was reached .The CPSL played an active role in the struggle of the teachers and principals.





May Day 2022

May Day 2022 was celebrated by the Communist Party and its affiliated Trade Unions with the Parties of the Socialist Alliance (Lanka SamaSamaja Party and Democratic Left Front in Colombo. Last two years May Day celebrations could not held due to COVID -19 Pandemic.



Trade Union Leaders



Party leaders in parade

Section



Section of the crowd



Demonstration



Party and Trade Union leaders



General Secretary of CPSL addressing the Meeting

65years of Sri Lanka – China Diplomatic Relations were celebrated.

Communist Party of Sri Lanka organized celebrations to mark the 65th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relations between Sri Lanka and China. This occasion was attended by leaders of the Government and political Parties. Large number of Chinese friends and well-wishers gather to celebrate this event. It was coincided with the 70th Anniversary of Sri Lanka – China Rubber and Rice Agreement.



A section of participants



Sri Lankan Friends



Mahinda Rajapaksa addressed the gathering General Secretary CPSL addressed the occasion

Crisis of Sri Lanka and formation of a new political force

11 left and progressive Political Parties representing in Parliament formed into united group in order to work together on the issues that confronted the nation today with the objectives of developing it into an alliance for the future political activities. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka in an active partner of this alliance. These Parties collectively drafted and submitted a set of proposals as a policy statement titled “the Whole country to correct path” to draw the attention of the Government, all the political parties and general public. The launch of these proposals was held with a large gathering of Political Party leaders, Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, professionals, artistes, intellectuals and religious leaders on 2 March 2022.

All the speakers expressed their displeasure of the current Government policies. The following day - 3rd March 2022 President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa removed two Ministers (Ministers of Industry and Power and Energy) organizing this meeting.



Section of participants



General Secretary of CPSL addressed the gathering



Party leaders
