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Statement of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka on the Results of the Presidential Election

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, meeting on October 3rd, 2024, examined the election results and reviewed the political developments and emerging trends.

Although no candidate secured the required 50% of the total valid votes, Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the National People's Power (NPP) alliance managed to garner the majority of preferential votes. This marks a significant victory for Dissanayake, as he was able to defeat both the incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Leader of the Opposition, Sajith Premadasa.

One of the most striking aspects of this presidential election is the disintegration of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), founded by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, and the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), founded by Mahinda Rajapaksa as a substitute for the SLFP. Both parties, which once governed the country, have splintered into 10 factions. The SLPP, which secured 57% of the total valid votes under Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the 2019 Presidential Election, managed to secure only 2.5% under Namal Rajapaksa, Mahinda Rajapaksa's son. This highlights the people's disillusionment and frustration caused by the economic crisis.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned and fled the country, handing over the administration to his political rival, Ranil Wickremesinghe, a veteran leader who had failed to secure his parliamentary seat. SLPP voters viewed this move as a complete betrayal, disguised as 'statesmanship'. Despite the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), as part of the previous alliance, warning Gotabaya of the looming crisis both before and after his election, he ignored these concerns and even removed ministers from the Cabinet for raising the issue.

In the two years of Ranil Wickremesinghe's presidency, the focus was almost exclusively on debt restructuring, with little attention given to economic management and growth. Wickremesinghe seemed more focused on preparing for upcoming political battles than addressing the economic crisis. As a result, the political tide shifted in favor of the NPP, presenting it as a viable alternative to the status quo.



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During the election campaign, all three major candidates—Ranil, Sajith, and Anura—focused only on addressing corruption and the possibility of recovery through negotiations with the IMF. This narrative contributed to the erosion of the SLPP's voter base and objectively led to the NPP's victory.

However, the fundamental causes of the crisis were largely absent from the election campaign discussions. The new administration now faces a range of challenges, both domestic and global. The decline of the rupee and the dollar was driven by monetary and fiscal policies pursued by successive administrations. Since 2008, these administrations borrowed from international financial markets at higher interest rates and shorter repayment periods, causing foreign debt to soar. The CPSL and other left-wing parties had long called for a departure from this neoliberal economic strategy, but all three candidates ignored the ongoing impact of the global economic recession and the geopolitical, geoeconomic, and strategic challenges facing the country.

The CPSL's attempt to unite leftist and moderate forces to form a center-left alliance as a viable alternative was unsuccessful.

It is now absolutely necessary for the new administration to seek cooperation from the BRICS bloc, as this is the only way to strengthen Sri Lanka's self-determination, self-reliance, and sovereignty in the face of the geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geo-strategic challenges. Sri Lanka must align with the Global South instead of continuing to rely on the Global North, which is in decline.

After the experience with the Executive Presidency and the neoliberal economic strategy, the people now seek a quality legislature that ensures good governance. The CPSL urges all political parties to prioritize forming a strong and competent legislature. The CPSL stands ready to extend critical and responsive support and cooperate with the new administration in all its progressive initiatives.

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