

The Great November Revolution

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Dinesh Weerakkody narrates his personal experience of being part of the process that changed the entire political landscape of the country in January 2015 in his fifth publication – The Great November Revolution.

The first copy of the book was presented to President Maithripala Sirisena. Copies were also presented to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, Dr Rajitha Senaratne – Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, John Amaratunga – Minister of Tourism and Christian Affairs, Ravi Karunanayake – Minister of Finance, Patali Champika Ranawake – Minister of Megapolis and Western Development, Dr Harsha De Silva – Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chathura Senaratne, MP and Dr Kapila Ranasinghe.

John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism and Christian Affairs welcomed the gathering. He introduced the book and the author, “the November Revolution was a silent revolution. Not a drop of blood was shed. Dinesh Weerakkody, the author of this

book is no stranger to us. This is not the first book he has written. He has written several books and articles in newspapers and magazines.”

Dr Harsha De Silva, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs talking about the latter part of 2014 stated, “I have known Dinesh for a very long time. And, I know that during that period he was very much involved as a honest and trusted intermediary.” He further elaborated, “We campaigned on change. The campaign was amazing. We travelled to so many places in the Island. My best memories are of Bandarawela... We kept fine-tuning and more people kept coming.”

All campaigning, strategic planning and political manoeuvring resulted in the November Revolution ending in the early hours of January 9”. Dr De Silva recalls, “I went into the Leader’s office at Marcus Fernando Mawatha. Dinesh and some others were there. We had won. MS had prevailed over MR. People are expecting so much from us now. We have a long way to go.”

Ven Athuruliye Rathana Thero one of the main characters that spearheaded the campaign of change said that generally history is written by people and is not the reality. “Reality is very different. But I know that Dinesh’s book is a true record of what happened,” the Ven Thero said.

“We Are Never Going To Go Back To The Past. We Will Be Journeying On A New Path. There Is No Sense Talking About The Past.”

The Thero stressed on the importance of the fact that people can make a difference. “We are little people. We may not go down in history. But I believe we did something right... It is the next steps that we take that will decide everything. If our next step is wrong then all that we did before will be useless. If the next step is right, there will be no limit to what is written about us in the annals of history. Our November revolution was a giant step; there’s no denying that.” stated the Thero.

“Dinesh Weerakkody was important to us as an intermediate in our relationship with the Prime Minister, which was an immense task and I believe that this book is a very important piece of work,” said Ven Rathana Thero in conclusion.

Dr Rajitha Senaratne, who was one of the most vocal and a key figure in the November Revolution, played a pivotal role from the beginning. He shared his thoughts at the event, “we cannot detail what occurred in a few simple words. The occurrence was a timely one. We initiated change in the midst of grave fear. At that point in time, all those involved had no indication of their future and had no wish to find out what the future had in store. It is because we didn’t care to think of our future when we decided to get involved.”

“The late Ven Sobitha Thero did a mammoth task in driving the process of change forward... There were many forces working towards this with the JVP on one side, Rathana Thero on the other and then there was the Pivithuru Hetak Movement.” The Minister further elaborated, “this was entirely a covert operation until we made the announcement of the common candidate in November. Even in my own family it was only my son Chathura and I who knew what was happening and we discussed matters when there was no one around”

“We All Recognised The Need To Take On Challenges Selectively, And With A Clear Understanding Of What Must Be Done.”

“There is time for this to become history. However, we must all make sure that we take care when writing about these events. We must support these leaders and unite no matter our differences and ensure the end of a fearful age and provide the opportunity to open a long chapter of continued peaceful success for the country. This is our only responsibility and goal.”

“Dinesh was part of every aspect that occurred during the final phase of the election campaign and he is an extremely good writer. And I believe this book will assist us in our journey,” said Dr Senaratne.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe speaking on this occasion said, “The Great November Revolution written by Dinesh Weerakkody is about the election of President Maithripala Sirisena.”

“When we started this process mid last year and we were talking to people,

information was shared on a need to know basis only. Secondly, all activities were compartmentalised and coordinated. We were successful at that time,” elaborated the Prime Minister of the strategies undertaken to bring about change.

However, the Prime Minister explained as to what it meant to be in power, “we came into power to fulfill the expectations of the people. We are in government and stay in power for that requirement only. Now our challenge is whether we are fulfilling this requirement or not. We have to always remember how we are going to do that and work. Getting power is easy. Even though it took us a long time, however I will still say that getting power is easy. Protecting that power, working accordingly and fulfilling the aspirations of the people is more difficult.”

“We are never going to go back to the past. We will be journeying on a new path. There is no sense talking about the past. I remember, in 1956 the past was left behind. Then, 1977 there too the past was kept aside. In 2015 with the change in January that past is over. We have to now see how we are going to face this new future,” asserted Prime Minister Wickremesinghe of the need to focus on what needs to be done.

“Dinesh Weerakkody, while we were in the Opposition, joined with us, did a lot of work and was dedicated to bringing the various parties together,” said the Prime Minister.

Speaking at the event President Maithripala Sirisena said, “I am grateful to all those who gave their commitment and assistance, support, the political parties and their leaders, who made great sacrifices, and everyone who supported them, which ensured the success of the November Revolution. We all recognized the need to take on challenges selectively, and with a clear understanding of what must be done.”

The President further elaborated on the significance of the events that unfolded and the need to go forward, “I believe that you and I and all of the people who did their duty on that day, on behalf of the people of this country, will now understand the present need and be committed to doing what is necessary for the future.”

“I invite all of you, in particular taking into account what is written in the publication, as I believe that it is important for our future, and thank Mr Dinesh Weerakkody for his commitment towards completing this task,” the President stated in conclusion.







