

New Era of Co-operation

THE FINAL DECISION of the Tamil United Liberation Front to participate in the Sri Lanka Presidential Commission appointed by Mr. J. R. Jayawardene could well mark the beginning of a new era of constructive co-operation between the two vital segments of the national community. A wind of change had in fact set in quite some time ago among the leaders of the Tamil minority. Mr. A. Amirthalingam himself had proclaimed that the doors of the TULF were always open for negotiations "in keeping with the honour and self-respect of the Tamils". In a letter to the President he said that the TULF put forward the demand for what it called "the restoration of the freedom and sovereignty of the Tamil nation" not to find an easy way to victory in the hustings but because it was driven "to this irresistible conclusion by various acts of omission and commission perpetrated against the Tamil people by successive Governments since Independence". Following this somewhat softened attitude Mr. Amirthalingam joined hands with the Prime Minister for the first time in issuing a joint appeal, in the face of acute tension in Jaffna brought about by the violence let loose by the "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam", for the maintenance of communal harmony and pledging that protection would be offered to all citizens who might be the target of communal elements. This was a clear enough indication of the eagerness of the TULF leaders to go into the core of the problem and seek democratic solutions, not violent ones, for the settlement of their main grievances.

The Presidential Commission is expected, among other things, to formulate a scheme of devolution of power to the District Councils that are to be set up in the 24 districts of the country. The Government evidently believes that decentralisation will go a long way in solving some of the pressing and basic issues facing the Tamil-speaking community, such as employment, besides providing it a greater opportunity to take part in the decision-making processes. The Presidential Commission, headed by a former Chief Justice, will no doubt go into the question of evolving guidelines for a balanced regional development that can provide economic stability. In any case, it would be open, of course, to the TULF representative to take up for consideration all matters concerning the minority. The way for such a close-examination of the problems was first paved when President Jayawardene admitted in so many words that there was discrimination against Tamils in the field of employment, although he tried to explain that this became necessary because the TULF's propaganda for a separate State was so virulent that it was felt it was "dangerous" to permit the entry of such people into Government posts. Another meaningful gesture which enabled the TULF to agree to join the Commission was the decision of the Government not to go ahead with the formation of the new administrative district of Vavuniya which would have reduced the Tamils to a minority. Obviously the spirit of give and take has permeated the thinking of both sides. This augurs well for the type of national reconciliation that well-wishers of Sri Lanka have been looking forward to.

PUBLIC RELATIONS, EROS, LONDON.

ஓக்கள் செய்தி

வெளியூர் 7 8 1979

இலங்கைத் தமிழர்மீது
தாக்குதல்: மாணவர்கண்டனக் கூட்டம்

சென்னை ஆக. 6 - இலங்கைப்பில் அவசரநிலைப் பிரகடனம் செய்து தமிழர்கள் படுகொலை செய்யப்படுவதைக் கண்டித்து, இன்று மாலை மாவட்ட மத்திய நூலகக் கட்டிடத்தில் சென்னை அனைத்துக் கல்லூரி மாணவர்கள் சார்பாக கண்டனக் கூட்டம் நடைபெறுகிறது.

கூட்டத்திற்கு பல்லவன் தனவிஜயகுமார் தலைமை தாங்குகிறார். இலங்கையில் தமிழர்களுக்கு எதிராக நடைபெறும் அடக்குமுறைகளைக் கண்டித்து சென்னையில் உள்ள அனைத்துக் கல்லூரி மாணவர்களும் பேசுகிறார்கள்.

மாணவர் தி. மு. க. செயலாளர் மிசா. ஆர். கணேசன், அனைத்திந்திய மாணவர் பெருமன்றப் பொதுச் செயலாளர் ப.பா. மோகன், இந்திரா காங்கிரஸ் மாணவர் தலைவர் ராஜ்ஜந்திரன், மாநில ஜனதா மாணவர் அமைப்பாளர் மோகன், பாலசுப்பிரமணியன், அ.தி. மு. க. மாணவர் அமைப்பாளர் எம். ஜி. சேகரன், மாணவர் விடுதலை முன்னணி மாநில அமைப்பாளர் டி. ஜி. ஜெயக்குமார், காமராஜ் காங்கிரஸ் மாணவர் அமைப்பாளர் ம. வெ. ஜெகன், திராவிடர் கழக மாணவர் செயலாளர் வீரசேகரன் ஆகியோர் சிறப்புரையாற்றுகின்றனர். இவர்கள் அனைவரும் இலங்கைத் தமிழர்கள் மீதான அடக்குமுறையைக் கண்டித்து அறிக்கை ஒன்றினை வெளியிட்டுள்ளார்கள்.

அதில் குறிப்பிட்டிருப்பதாவது: - இலங்கையில் தமிழர்கள் பெரும்பான்மையாகவாரும் யாழ்ப்பாணப் பகுதியில் இலங்கை அரசு ராணுவத்தைக் கட்டவிழ்த்துவிட்டு அவசரநிலையைப் பிரகடனப்படுத்தியுள்ளது. முப்படைத் தளபதி ரணதுங்காதனது நேரடிப் பொறுப்பில் இந்த அடக்குமுறையை கண்காணித்து வருகிறார்.

ஏராளமான தமிழ் இளைஞர்கள் கைது செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளனர்.

ஞர்கள் கைது செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளனர்.

ராணுவத்தை திரும்பப்பெறு

தமிழ் இளைஞர்கள் சிலர் போலீசாரால் அழைத்துச் செல்லப்பட்டுக் கொலை செய்யப்பட்டுள்ளனர். ராணுவம்தொடர்ந்து தமிழர்கள் வரமும் பகுதியில் எந்த விசாரணையும் இல்லாமல் புகுந்து சோதனை என்னும் பெயரில் தொந்தரவு தருகிறது.

இலங்கை அரசு உடனே ராணுவத்தைத் திரும்பப்பெறவேண்டும். அவசரநிலைப் பிரகடனத்தை வாபஸ் வாங்க வேண்டும். கைது செய்யப்பட்ட எல்லாத் தமிழ் இளைஞர்களையும் விடுதலை செய்ய வேண்டும்.

மாணவர்கள் போராட்டம்

இலங்கையில் தொடர்ந்து அடக்குமுறை நிலவுமானால் தமிழ்நாட்டில் உள்ள அனைத்துக் கல்லூரிகளிலும் மாணவர்கள் போராட்டம் வெடிக்கும் என்பதை தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறோம். பாதிக்கப்பட்ட தமிழர்களுக்கு அனைத்துக் கல்லூரி மாணவர்கள் சார்பாக இரங்கலைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறோம்.

இவ்வாறு அறிக்கையில் கூறப்பட்டுள்ளது. சென்னை சட்டக்கல்லூரி மாணவர் தலைவர்களும் மற்றும் 12 கல்லூரியைச் சேர்ந்தவர்களும் பேசுகின்றனர்.

Land Settlement: Jayawardene Ready to Accept Tamils' Demand

COLOMBO, Aug. 7. President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka has declared that he is prepared to accept the demand of the minority Tamil leaders that in respect of land settlement there should not be any change in the demographic pattern of any district, except in the case of giant projects where development was totally in an uninhabited area.

"There are very few areas like that," he said in an interview to a local English weekly.

"The main thing is for them (the Tamil leaders) to trust me, and for me to trust them. The fear that the (majority) Sinhalese have is that give them (Tamils)

something, they will use it to get 'Eelam' (separate Tamil State). They (Tamil leaders) have to give up that (separatist) cry".

Mr. Jayawardene said district-level decentralisation of power would result in "grassroots participation" and lead to communal harmony. Language, education and employment are the other matters causing concern to the Tamil community. Language issue had been by and large settled and it was now only the question of implementation of the new policy. As regards educational opportunities, the system based on language and race had been abandoned by his Government.

"On employment, I want to go on a racial basis—60 per cent Sinhalese, 30 per cent Tamils and 10 per cent for other minority communities".

Mr. Jayawardene said he proposed to give a fairer deal to the smaller political parties under the newly introduced proportional representation system.

He expressed the view that the present 12.5 per cent "cut off" point was "too high".

(Under this system, political parties polling less than 12.5 per cent of the total votes will not be entitled to any representation).

Mr. Jayawardene was replying to a question whether the cut off percentage should be reduced in view of the fact that in the recent local bodies elections, the smaller political parties particularly the left ones, had a dismal performance because of the high cut off point.

"The cut-off point, I also think, is too high. It could be somewhere in the region of five to eight per cent. That is the answer. We will be considering how this (cut-off) point is to be changed", he said.

His United National Party was for "democratic socialism" and not for "socialist democracy", he declared.

Mr. Jayawardene pointed out that his Government had retained 60 per cent socialism "which it has inherited from the previous Government which had nationalised plantations, insurance, transport, ports and the like. "Well, we are preserving that. We are not doing away with that. So socialism is there as far as we inherited it. The rest we leave it to the private sector", he said.

Food Stamps for Poor & Needy in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Sept. 2. The "food stamps" scheme, which will give a subsidy of up to Rs. 200 a month to families with a total income level of Rs. 300 and below, for purchase of essential items has come into operation in Sri Lanka.

The scheme will benefit a little over half the island's 14.5 million population. It replaces the general food subsidy scheme, which had been in existence in the country since 1942.

The "food stamps" scheme is an innovation of the ruling United National Party of President Jayawardene to subsidise the poor and the needy only and withdraw the hitherto general subsidy from the relatively affluent sections of the community.

In a massive operation launched a fortnight ago, the Government had issued to about 7.5 million people Rs. 200 crores worth of food stamps, which could be used by the poorer sections of the community to buy every month any or whole of the basket of essential commodities comprising fixed amounts of rice, paddy, flour, bread, pulses, infant milk foods, condensed milk, dried fish and kerosene.

The stamps, are for all practical purposes hard cash and the unspent stamps can be deposited as

saving in the National Savings Bank.

With the introduction of the new scheme, ration cards have been withdrawn.

A Government spokesman explained that the scheme, besides stopping subsidies to the rich, tied subsidies to commodities and not to individuals. Thus those entitled to subsidies were now free to select the commodities which they most needed.

Hitherto, there had been the anomalous situation "where a farmer who earns Rs. 300 or below per month is automatically entitled to a subsidy on rice, which to him is superfluous. This absurd situation will no longer exist since, he can buy what his family wants from among the specified items."

LOADED IN FAVOUR OF CHILDREN

The new scheme will make the people qualifying for subsidies—whether rural or urban—realise the extent to which they are being subsidised by the State and cushioned against the rise in the price of commodities in the world market, as items coming under the scheme will be available only at the world market prices in the free market.

The scheme centres round any family unit getting an income of

Rs. 300 and under. They will be subsidised as follows; (a) Rs. 15 per month for a person over the age of 12 years; (b) Rs. 20 a month for a child between 8 and 12; (c) Rs. 25 for a child under eight.

Thus, the subsidising is loaded in favour of the children who need the best in food that can be given in their formative years.

Any family unit of six, considered as an average family unit, will get in terms of essential commodities, subsidy to the extent of Rs. 90 per month, whether it consists of children or not. If there are children, each child will get its additional allowance depending on its age.

Compensatory salary adjustments are being worked out together with income support for those earning just above Rs. 300 a month to give protection to middle-level income groups. A salary structure is also being worked out in phases to give wage increase to those earning up to Rs. 1,500 a month.

The Government spokesman said the money saved from withholding subsidies from the rich could be utilised for national development work, which would in turn generate new avenues of employment.—PTI.

Sri Lanka PM in Singapore

From V. T. Sambandan

SINGAPORE, Aug. 23. The Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, arrived here on Wednesday for five days on his way back home after visits to China and Hong Kong to develop economic relations between the two countries.

He was received at the airport by the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Yeo Ghim Seng, who is currently acting Vice-President of the Republic, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Rajaratnam, and the Indian High Commissioner here, Mr. B. M. Oza.

Singapore's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, is to have talks with Mr. Premadasa on Sunday before he leaves. Mr. Premadasa is to study housing development and technical institutions and have talks with the Economic Development Board.

In May Sri Lanka's Finance Minister, Mr. Ronnie de Mel, signed an agreement on avoidance of double taxation. Last month an understanding was reached on Sri Lanka offering a no appropriation guarantee to Singapore firms when the Deputy Director of Greater Colombo Economic Commission, Mr. Paul Pereira, visited Singapore.

Reports said that out of five Singapore investors who approached the Commission for investment in Sri Lanka four have received approval, including one for a joint venture to manufacture packaging material.

The Singapore Government is reported to have agreed to grant permits to 2,500 Sri Lankans to work here. Singapore Airlines is also helping Air Lanka, which, as successor to Air Ceylon, starts international flights on September 1, by seconding 40 STA executives and training pilots and engineers and leasing two Boeing 707s.

Mrs. Bandaranaike Faces Special Court

COLOMBO, Aug. 18. The Colombo District Judge on Wednesday reissued summons to the former Sri Lanka Prime Minister, Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike, to appear in court on September 17 to hear proceedings in a case filed by a former member of her Freedom Party.

The summons was also reissued to her party Secretary.

The summons issued earlier had not been served when the court met on Wednesday.

Mrs. Bandaranaike who lost her Prime Ministership in July 1977 is now fighting several court cases, including two defamation cases.

Meanwhile, the Government on Wednesday decided to appoint an additional special court to inquire into alleged misdeeds of the Mrs. Bandaranaike regime from 1970-77. The idea is to expedite the inquiry.—UNI-UPA.

"Massachusetts Misled by TULF"

COLOMBO, June 13. The resolution adopted by the Massachusetts State House of Representatives on May 10 on Sri Lanka Tamils came under fire in Parliament here on June 11.

The Minister of Education, Dr. Nissanka Wijeratne said if the people of the little State of Massachusetts did come to Sri Lanka to find Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers living in accord with each other, they would wonder how they had been misled.

Speaking in the course of a debate on a private member's motion to provide a fully equipped school in each constituency Dr. Wijeratne said that Massachusetts was a Red Indian name and a large number of aboriginals still lived there. On them the colonialists had imposed their English language.

It was to these people with little minds he said that a TULF man had gone and said that Sinhalese language had been thrust down the throat of Tamils here. In Sri Lanka the Sinhalese and the Tamils had co-existed, even in Jaffna. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. Amirthalingam) had a close relative of his who had married a Sinhalese.

Dr. Wijeratne said that lot of high feeling had been generated among these little Americans who were not aware of what Sri Lanka's life was and got agitated by the propaganda of the TULF. He said "this is the danger of federalism given to people who do not know how to govern themselves".

The Massachusetts House of Representatives had passed a resolution asking the United States President and the Congress "to protest and utilise the powers of their offices to rectify the gross injustices which have been inhumanly inflicted on the Tamils of Sri Lanka." The President of the TULF Mr. M. Sivasingharam addressed the Massachusetts House of Representatives on that day—

Protect Sinhalese: TULF Leader's Appeal

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

COLOMBO, July 24.

Following up the joint statement he issued along with the Prime Minister, Mr. R. Premadasa, the TULF leader, Mr. A. Amirthalingam has sent out an urgent appeal to Sri Lanka Tamil parliamentarians and Tamils in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to give maximum possible protection to the Sinhalese people living in those areas.

Mr. Amirthalingam has instructed the party branches to organise groups of volunteers to help the Sinhalese residents to carry on their avocation without being intimidated by unruly and anti-social elements.

The Trade Minister, Mr. Athulathumudali said in Parliament on Friday that President Jayawardene's directive to the commander of the armed forces in Jaffna was to wipe out terrorism and not the Tamil community. The directive was against people committing criminal acts and not like the directive issued by Adolf Hitler against the innocent Jewish people. "Mr. Jayawardene is a Sinhalese Buddhist leader and no Sinhalese Buddhist leader would ever let the thought pass his mind that any other community

should be exterminated" he added.

The President's directive in fact was aimed at protecting the Tamil community and for the restoration of peace in Jaffna, he said. He wanted the Deputy Leader of the SLEP, Mr. Maathripala Senanayake to withdraw his statement.

Speaking to newsmen, Mr. Athulathumudali said all the problems of the Tamil people would be solved by the Government's scheme of decentralisation of power. He expressed concern over the TULF boycotting Parliament and said that all the problems could not be solved overnight.

Speaking on the Terrorist (Temporary Provisions) Bill in Parliament on Thursday, Mr. C. Rajadurai, Minister of Regional Development and Hindu Religious Affairs drew the attention of the House to the tense situation now prevailing all over the country on account of terrorist activities in the north and said everyone in the country was now fearing whether another communal holocaust as the one that took place in 1972 would happen. Tamils all over Sri Lanka were living in tension and it was under this circumstance that the present Bill had been brought before the House.

TULF Members Attend Parliament

COLOMBO, Sept. 5.

Lifting the six-week-old boycott, the separatist Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) members attended the Sri Lanka Parliament when it resumed its session here on Tuesday after a ten-day recess.

The 16-member TULF group decided on the boycott in July when the House adopted a resolution providing for merger of some Sinhala majority areas in Anuradhapura district with the neighbouring Tamil-speaking Vavuniya district in the north of the island.

The TULF resisted this move on the ground that such a redemarcation of the boundary of the two districts would reduce the Tamils of Vavuniya into a minority.

A TULF delegation, led by its Secretary-General, Mr. A. Amirthalingam and leader of the Opposition in the Parliament, had a meeting with the President, Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, on August 30 when the latter assured them that his United National Party Government had decided to rescind the resolution and not to proceed with the redemarcation of the district.

Mr. Amirthalingam spoke in the House on a motion condoling the death of Dr. N. M. Perera, leader of the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party and a veteran of the left movement in the country.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Ransinghe Premadasa, has reported to the Parliament that "disgruntled

elements" of the Tamil minority community had mounted a "strong and co-ordinated campaign" in the United Kingdom against his Government, alleging "racial discrimination".

In a report to the House on his recent visit to Britain and six other countries, Mr. Premadasa said, "these groups are operating round the clock, getting at the press and at other influential sections of British society".

He said "if their efforts at painting a picture of racial discrimination in Sri Lanka succeed, it could have very serious consequences on our image as a democratic country in which freedom and justice are ensured to all, and could also lead to a lessening of levels of aid to the country and a loss of confidence by potential investors".

In this context, he said, there was a great need for an equally active publicity campaign through which correct news could be fed to the press and also to the British Government authorities. "The Government is fully alive to this situation and early steps would be taken to make the necessary arrangements to deal with this serious situation that had now emerged", he said.—PTL

Keuneman Loses Party Post

COLOMBO, July 30.

Sri Lanka's Moscow-oriented Communist party has elected a senior member, Mr. K. P. De Silva to the influential post of secretary-general, pushing Mr. Pieter Keuneman into the newly-created fourth post of deputy secretary-general.

Mr. Keuneman, 62, Minister of Housing and Construction in the previous Government of Mrs. S. G. Kumaranatne, had been secretary for over 30 years.

Sinhala diehards oppose concessions to Tamils

Express News Service

By K. NADARAJAH

COLOMBO, Sept. 4

A number of Buddhist monks and leading Sinhala citizens have written to the presidential commission now looking into the demands of the Tamil-speaking people that they are opposed to the grant of certain significant concessions to the Tamil minorities in Sri Lanka.

Though they form a small group they are influential and represent extremist Sinhala opinion, which President J. R. Jayawardene has set his face against.

This group has asked that special attention be paid to implement the official language policy of the Government—that Sinhala should be the language of administration—

in all districts in the island. Current moves are to make Tamil the language of administration in the North and Eastern Provinces where Tamils predominate.

They are opposed to the setting up of development councils which would "affect the unity of the country and the peaceful co-existence of the people." In other words, they are opposed to the setting up of district councils which would create "separate States" for Tamil-speaking people.

They are also against the rule that people of the area should be given land first before residents from other areas are brought in for settlement under colonisation schemes. The group claims that no special rights or privileges should be given to any particular race in that respect.

The group has stated in its memorandum to the commission that there should be no special laws relating to the sale and purchase of lands in any district and one law relating to lands should prevail throughout the country.

They have told the commission that the following should not be assigned as subjects for development councils: Combined forces (army, navy and air force), police, excise, inland revenue, customs, immigration and emigration, transport, audit, communication, banking, base hospitals, food distribution, higher education, technical colleges, power, fuel, mineral resources.

The group is headed by a respected member of the clergy, Venerable Narada Thero.

Sri Lanka Staggers Office Hours 3/5/77

COLOMBO, Aug. 2.

Private four-wheelers will not be allowed to ply on roads in Sri Lanka from 8-00 hours to 14-00 hrs. on Sundays. The six-hour ban, decided upon by the government as a fuel conservation measure, will come into operation on Aug. 12.

Persons doing certain essential duties like doctors and priests will be issued special permits.

From August 13, working hours in the island are also being altered to avoid congestion on public transport and roads. Private sector offices will open at 8-00 hrs and close at 10-30 hrs., while shops will open at 9-00 hrs and close at or beyond 18-00 hrs. Public sector offices will open at 8-45 hrs and close at 17-00 hrs. Schools will open at 7-30 hrs.—PTL

World Hindu meet in Sri Lanka

INDIAN EXPRESS

Express News Service

HYDERABAD, Sept. 2

The next world Hindu conference will be held in Sri Lanka during February-March 1980.

Announcing this here today, Sri Jayendra Saraswati, the Sankaracharya of Kauchi Kamakoti Peetam, expressed happiness over the Sri Lanka Government's creating a separate portfolio for Hindu culture. The Peetam will be represented at the Hindu conference, the Acharya said.

He appealed to Hindus to devote at least one day a week for worship for which, he said, the Peetam would supply literature free of cost. Before taking a meal, offering should be made either to the deity, or to another person present, or to any living being.

The Acharya said that people living in rural areas should not dispose of cows merely because they were not productive. Instead of selling the cows to slaughter-houses, the rural folk could sell them to the Peetam.

He demanded that the cow be treated at least on a par with the tiger as the national animal (reports UNI).

World Meet to Revive Interest in Hinduism

MADRAS, Sept. 5.

The three-day international conference on Hinduism to be held in Sri Lanka in April next would seek to create an awakening among the younger generation about Hinduism and its hoary tradition, Mr. Chelliah Rajadurai, Sri Lanka Minister for Regional Development and Hindu Religious Affairs, said here on Wednesday.

The Minister said the conference would try to recapture the spirit of the ancient works of sculptors, architects and engineers so as to bring about a cultural renaissance. It appeared, he said, that the present generator was drifting away from the cultural moorings and ethos and the conference would endeavour to highlight the values of olden days.

The Minister was speaking at a reception accorded to him by the Tamil Nadu unit of the Vishva Hindu Parishad.

His Holiness Vishvesha Theertha Swamiji of Pejavar Mutt said though Sri Lanka was wedded to Buddhism it had demonstrated its faith in secularism by creating a separate Ministry for Hindu Religious Affairs.

Messrs. A. M. Paramasivanandam, S. Vedantam, Manavalan, K. S. Srinivasachari and R. Padmanabhan spoke commending the efforts of the Sri Lanka Minister for the conference.

Mr. S. Sampathkumar, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vishva Hindu Parishad, welcomed the gathering.

Mr. A. Rangaswami, Joint Secretary, gave an account of the activities of the Parishad.

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