

Proposed

Provincial Councils

(Statement of the

NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY)

By Dr. Vickramabahu Karunaratne

I N T R O D U C T I O N

We issued this statement on the Government proposals in June 1986. But the basic ideas contained in this document are those we have put forward since 1975.

We have dealt in detail the National Question in our publications titled 'Tribe Nation and Internationalism' and 'Who can solve the National Question'

I wish to thank comrades who helped with this publication.

15.07.86.

- Vickramabahu -

C O N T E N T

- Statement of the NSSP on the proposals.
- Press Statements issued by the NSSP related to the PPC.

STATEMENT OF THE

NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY

ON THE PROPOSALS - PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Concessions to Tamils?

The government of J.R.Jayawardhene proposes to create Provincial Councils, presumably as a political concession to the Tamil speaking people.

Our Party has always defended concessions granted to the Tamil speaking people. We have defended steps taken to abandon racist standardisation at the University Entrance Examination, granting of District Development Councils, granting of citizenship rights to the Kandyan Tamils etc,. While we stood in defence of these concessions against Sinhala chauvinist-fascist elements, within and outside of the government, we clearly explained the real nature of these steps. They were nothing but bogus concessions put forward by a government attempting to consolidate a Constitutional Bonapartism. Thus explaining the actual reactionary nature of the government programme, we incessantly campaigned for the removal of the government. So we fought the government while defending the concessions.

JR's Democracy

Here again, while defending any political concessions included in the present proposals, we have to explain the real nature of this attempt. Firstly, we do not believe that these proposals are acceptable to the Tamil speaking people. Coming from a government which carried on a ruthless suppression of the Tamil speaking people, verging on a genocide, these will be seen by many Tamils as "too little too late". In any case we shall oppose any attempt to force a settlement on the Tamil people. Secondly, JR has no real socio-political support to implement even these meagre proposals. The racist fascist gangs whom he so jealously cultivated during the last

period will rebel against him, upsetting his political establishment. Thirdly, he can not mobilise the only socio-political force which can defend him against such rebellion; the working class and the left movement. He is too conservative and reactionary to allow such freedom to the workers and the left movement. He knows very well workers who come into streets to face racist-fascist trouble makers, will turn against him in the next moment, inspite of the leaders who would want to compromise with him.

This is why the man who threatened physical attacks on racist-fascists at Dematagoda, next day justified the suppression of the JVP and attacked the Marxists and the Left for attempting to destroy democracy. It is so ridiculous to hear JR, who proscribed our Party, the CP and continues the ban on the JVP without putting forward an iota of evidence against us on the alleged involvement in the racial riot of '83; banned demonstration, agitations etc.; terminated thousands of workers for strike action while actually promoting racist-fascist thugs, speaking of democracy.

The Development of the Tamil Liberation Movement

The unprecedented growth of the Tamil liberation movement and the general national awakening of the Tamil speaking people is a result of the reactionary policies of this government. Its open economic policy was particularly harmful to agriculture and small industries in the Tamil areas. There was no new development programme to compensate for it. On the other hand every protest of the Tamil speaking people was suppressed with brutal communal oppression. While cosmetic reforms were dished out to the upper class Colombo based Tamils, other Tamil strata were subjected to inhuman oppression. Burning of the library, communal violence, brutal killings, PTA, are all part of this dark history. Not satisfied with all these oppressive acts, JR has proceeded to involve outside forces directly, by bringing in imperialist military personnel. Connections with Israel militarists angered

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particularly the Muslims. The natural reaction to this is the growth of the Tamil liberation guerilla war. If some of the Tamil youths have restored to terror tactics affecting civilians, then the entire blame of that should be in the hands of the government which pushed them into such desperate acts. Even the recent alleged attacks on Sinhala villages were preceded by a bloody cleaning operation in the Jaffna peninsula where a large number of Tamil civilians were killed.

Attack on Civilians - advantage to Reactionaries

The Tamil liberation struggle has made a major contribution in destabilizing JR's regime and attracted attention of the left moving masses in the Sinhala areas. However we do not agree that separation will bring liberation to the Tamil people. Nor could we see this benefiting the Tamil liberation movement by the use of terror tactics in work places and villages affecting working masses. Of course people have the right to take up arms to defend themselves against brutal fascist oppression. However, terror affecting lives of the ordinary masses will only push them into the hands of the reactionaries. The use of such terror with a perspective of separatism means, most probably the continuation of a barbaric and oppressive war with both nations falling into imperialist bourgeois enslavement. On the other hand, it should be made clear that the present development of the Tamil liberation struggle could have been avoided if the left movement did not make the mistake of joining the governments led by the fascist bourgeoisie SLFP. This was the end result of the influence of Sinhala chauvinism on the left movement. It confused the the workers and the left moving masses and brought the left movement into disrepute among the Tamil people.

Workers in the North with the Left

In spite of being let down by the left leaders, The Jaffna workers movement struggled for a democratic and socialist way out for the Tamil masses.

Even recently Northern region Trade Union Committee of 15 Trade Unions put forward the following demands;

1. To withdraw completely all armed forces from the Northern and Eastern provinces.
2. To bring to an end the Emergency and army rule in these provinces.
3. To give compensation for those who have been killed, and their families, injured or affected by the actions of the armed forces.
4. Withdraw the PTA and similar oppressive laws and release all those who are arrested and kept in preventive custody or in prison, by the armed forces.
5. To provide a political settlement acceptable to the Tamil speaking people in the North and East on the basis of right of self-determination.

The NSSP stood by these demands and took steps to introduce these within the working class movement in the south. However, JR and the government disregarded such demands and continued with its brutal oppression of the Tamil masses.

The Crisis of Bonarpartism & UNP Polices

The economic policy of the UNP which is based on foreign loans and handouts has created the classic socio-economic crisis found in many such third world countries. The inflationary construction and commercial boom riddled with corruption, destroyed the local agriculture and manufacture while disorienting the productive forces. The parallel growth of communal violence nurtured by the government, provoking the Tamil liberation guerilla war has enhanced the burden on the economy. The IMF is insisting on austerity measures with privatisation of the economy. On top of this, commodity prices have come down in the world market creating a serious balance of payment problem. Imperilaist friends of the government

are deserting them while insisting on repayments and the continuation of the open economic policy.

Which Way Forward

Within this context the emergence of the Mahajana Party with the formation of the Left Unity, combined with the restlessness in the mass movement posed the possibility of a left alternative to the government. With almost complete breakdown of the society, Mahajana Party and the Left movement in general should have put forward a socialist programme and called for mass agitation against the government. Such a course of action would have attracted the workers and rural poor of all communities around the left movement, away from bourgeois Parties. In particular it could have pushed the SLFP into crisis putting chauvinist-fascist elements into diarray. This was our way out for the left movement. The Mahajana Party and the other left parties while rejecting our proposals have come forward to get a solution implemented through the rotten regime of JR.

This has given the SLFP a temporary opening to carry on a vicious racist campaign and confuse the anti-government masses. However the left movement can expose the reactionary SLFP politics and win the masses to a socialist way out if they really move against the government appealing both to the Sinhala and Tamil masses. In fact this is the only way to wrench a General Election where left will be victorious.

The Working Class defend the rights of the Tamil Nation

Inspite of lack of firm decision on the part of the leadership, remobilization of the working class against the government, pushing racist-fascist elements into confusion, can be seen in the developments after the 1983 holocaust. Inclusion of the condemnation of the military action of the government in the North and East and the general political oppression, in the resolution accepted by 6000 delegates on the 25th of March in Colombo at the Workers Convention; sending of a delegation by the left parties to meet and discuss with Tamil liberation leaders; succesful meeting of the SLMP at Maharagama on the 18th of June, the next day announce-

ment of the proposals for Provincial Councils by the Cabinet etc., show clearly that the left movement, the working class is stretching its hands in defence of the rights of Tamil speaking people while preparing to settle accounts with the regime of JR.

It is a sheer irony of history that JR who insisted that leftists are responsible for the 1983 holocaust is seeking to lean on the left to implement almost the very proposals that he opposed with rabble rousing street actions when he rejected the B.C. pact in 1958. In the 1958 the B.C. pact could have been at least a temporary solution. But today after a bitter and ruthless war, his proposals will not find much response any where. In addition JR's regime is both economically and politically too bankrupt to implement anything. He is coming out with these proposals as he is forced against the wall. He is pressed on one hand by the growth of the Tamil liberation struggle and the workers mass movement, on the other hand by the adverse international opinion.

How can National Unity be achieved ?

Devolution of political power will be a road to unity only if unity is preserved on the basis of socio-economics. Within capitalism this means the unity of the capitalist class around a common national market. But this is precisely what JR can not achieve. Within this corrupt, degenerated capitalist economy, the bourgeoisie is divided on petty communal ambitions. Hence, even if he implements a programme of devolution it will bring no peace and unity. The only way out is the socialist solution. Except through a revolutionary change in the entire system there is no real way out.

Unity based on complete democratic understanding between the two nations is possible. The NSSP has put forward that a unity can be preserved on the basis of the following principles.

1. Equality of all citizens (all racial, religious and communal discrimination should stop. Full citizenship should be granted to all permanent citizens.)

2. Autonomy of regions (distinct set of people have the right to govern themselves.)
3. Right of self-determination. (acceptance of the right of every nation to decide on its own destiny. Unity should be entirely on a voluntary basis.)

On this basis we have put forward the following programme since 1975.

- I. The right of self-determination to be included in the Constitution in order to make it absolutely clear that unity is based on voluntary decision of both parties. This will express very clearly the in-alienate right of Sri Lankan Tamils to a homeland in this country. Also, it means that no one dominates and that there is unenforced, uncoaxed and ungrudging unity.
- II. Equality and end of discrimination in citizenship, availability of job opportunities, in education, land allocation etc., and particularly in the national armed forces. Granting of citizenship to all Kandyans Tamils.
- III. Autonomy for the Tamil speaking region in the North and East with powers over regional security or police functions, colonisation, education etc. Home-guards or defence militias for minority groups in any area.
- IV. Right to use the Tamil language in dealing with the central Government.
- V. Channeling of a fair share of the national income to develop Tamil areas.

This programme can be implemented only by a revolutionary left Government based on workers, peasants and soldiers councils with devolution of power and democracy at the highest level. This situation would invariably split the Tamil nation too (just like the

Sinhala nation) along class lines defeating the Tamil bourgeois leadership.

Once the unity between Tamil and inhala workers and peasants is setablished through the unity of Left Parties based in the Sinhala and Tamil areas, a strong political basis will be laid for a united Sri Lanka. Confidence in the class unity will over-ride national sentiments, while the implementation of the above programme will consolidate the unity without damaging the national identity of any community within Sri Lanka. Under such a e regime there will be no terrorising of civilians. People will be free to live any where they wish. In particular this is the only solution which will look after the rights of the Muslims and the Sinhsele in the North and East. Devolution of power to the level of work place and village is the sure answer to dispel fears of all groups.

Furthermore, the open economic policy will be eliminated by nationalizing all large scale capitalist property and implementing a centralised planned economy. Thus, devolution of political power will be accompanied by the integration of the economic power. This will pull all communities together to participate in a common economic development. Thus, the main source of separatism, the chauvinist bourgeois economic interest will be eliminated.

JR seeks solution for Rajiv

JR's belated attempt at devolution of power will only acclerate the disintegration of the present system. It will totally expose the limitations of the capitalist system. On the other hand it introduces the concept of devolution of power, autonomy and the rights of minoirty nations. Thus this will give us an enormous opportunity to prepare the over throw of the present system while introducing to the masses the democratic way out for the nationla question.

These proposals, and more, JR's attempt to implement them will expose the real intentions of Rajiv and the Indian bourgeoisie leaders. Rajiv who is following open economic policies under the thumb of IMF/WB is

faced with unprecedented social unrest in India. In pressing JR for a political solution he is rather trying to solve his own problems in India. He knows that Tamil national problem could begin the disintegration of the Indian union. One thing is quite clear, Rajiv and the Indian bourgeoisie will not send the Indian army to save the Tamil workers and peasants from oppression. But they will definitely help JR to suppress a revolutionary take over by workers and peasants, whether in the North or in the South. Even at present Indian leaders are trying to keep the Tamil liberation movement within their bourgeoisie interests. Now that JR's proposals are explicit the Indian bourgeoisie has to come out with its own position. Are they prepared to go beyond JR for autonomy and the right of self-determination. Are they for real devolution of power. If so why do not they begin at home. Thus it will give us a good opportunity to expose the Indian rulers and take the agitation into the Indian soil.

We appeal to the left forces both among the Tamils and Sinhalese to;

I. Defend the proposals against the Sinhala chauvinists

This will give us the opportunity to defeat any fascist adventures, while introducing the concepts of Autonomy, Devolution and the Right of Self-determination to the mass movement.

II. Expose the bankruptcy of JR's attempt.

On this basis we can mobilise the masses among all communities to overthrow the corrupt decomposing regime of JR. The proposed day of protest can be used to launch such a mass agitation.

III. Defeat the attempt by Rajiv and the Indian bourgeoisie to force a solution.

This will give us the opportunity to dispel the illusions among the Tamil masses about the good intentions of the Indian capitalists, while appealing to the Indian masses.

24th June 1986

Dr. Vickramabahu Karunaratne
General Secretary
NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY.

PRESS STATEMENTS

NSSP RESPONSE to THE PPC
issued on 25.06.86

Provincial Councils proposal should not be a ruse to disarm the Tamil People

Proposal to establish Provincial Councils has been put forward as a concession to the Tamil speaking people. In doing so JR has admitted the failure of his military operation, the strength of the left and the Tamil Liberation Movement. To the extent there is recognition of autonomy and the right of Tamil speaking people these proposals are a victory to the Left and the Tamil Liberation Movement and we are duty bound to defend such gains.

Some of the Left leaders sought assurance from JR that he would not retreat on these proposals and that he would arrive at a ceasefire with the Tamil Liberation fighters. How could the Tamils accept the sincerity of these proposals? What guarantee is there that JR will not use Sinhala chauvinist military might to over-ride the Provincial powers and make a mockery of the whole operation? This is why the NSSP warns the SLMP and the Left leaders not to be a party to any ruse to disarm the Tamil Liberation Fighters.

On the other hand, the racist-fascist lobby is already using its pressure effectively. JR has allowed the Government MP's to freely decide on how they vote. Divisions within the Cabinet are already apparent. This is why the NSSP does not believe that this attempt will be a success and lead to peace and stability.

However these proposals give us the opportunity to unite the Left and Liberation Forces in the North and the South and to move against racist-fascist reactionary forces. Defending these proposals from racist-fascist elements, we can mobilise the masses both in the North and South around a left alternative which could overthrow this decomposing regime and establish a Revolutionary Left Government in the coming period.

NSSP GIVE REASONS FOR NON-PARTICIPATION
AT THE COMMITTEE STAGE

Issued on 16.07.86

Committee stage discussions of the
Political Parties' Conference

On 15th July morning at the Plenary sessions of the Political Parties' Conference JR announces that we are immediately going into the Committee stage discussions on the Government proposals. We requested to postpone such discussions till his negotiations with TULF leaders are over. Clearly even the liberal democratic Tamil leaders are seeking fundamental alterations in the proposals, and are backed by the Indian government. Under such circumstances putting finishing touches to the present proposals have very little meaning. The present frame work of the proposals which does not recognise even the homeland of Sri Lankan Tamils nor the necessity of a non-sectarian central State can never be an adequate basis for even a temporary settlement for the Tamil National Question.

JR said that no structural changes of these proposals could be allowed and the discussions with the TULF are continued on this basis. He insisted that the Committee Stage should begin. We indicated that our presence at the Committee Stage will be basically as observers. Since we are prepared to defend concessions granted even in these proposals, we wish to associate ourselves with the proposals at every stage. However, this does not mean in any way accepting the framework of the proposals as an adequate basis for a settlement. In particular we do not accept "the Provincial Councils System, within the present 9 Provincial boundaries and without a joinder of any two Provinces", as an adequate framework for a settlement. We made our positions very clear.

However JR in his statement of July 15th 1986, very clearly says "they have all, except the All Ceylon Tamil Congress accept the Provincial Councils System, within the present 9 Provincial boundaries and without a joinder of any two Provinces". This is surely a formula for putting all

participants into a straitjacket of accepting the framework suggested by the Government. In fact the real situation was, we accepted to consider improvements of "the Provincial Councils System within the present Provincial boundaries and without a joinder of any two province." and entered the Committee Stage discussions, as any deliberation on structural changes were ruled out by the Government.

However his 15th July statement rules out, any one with a fundamental difference with regards to the Provincial Councils structure, participating in the Committee Stage discussions. This is why we were compelled to drop out from these Committees on the 16th eventhough we participated in them on the 15th. Nevertheless we shall continue to associate with and defend, the concessions in the proposals while pursuing our struggle to make fundamental alterations in the framework.

NSSP TALKS WITH TULF

issued on 23.07.86

NSSP - TULF Talks

NSSP delegation met with the TULF leaders on the 23rd evening.

The NSSP delegation explained that the Party believes that there are two fundamental issues to be resolved even for a temporary settlement. Firstly, the formation of a region or a province including the entire area as considered to be the Tamil homeland, This may be achieved by enlarging the Northern Province by including necessary sections of the Eastern Province. Secondly, the creation of a non-chauvinist national armed force by the addition of a Tamil regiment. This is necessary in addition to transferring Law and Oder matters under normal conditions, to the Provincial Government. TULF leaders argued argued that if these two concessions are won, then there is room for a negotiated settlement. We requested to make a united effort to win these concessions.

NSSP delegation explained that while accepting the terrible oppressive conditions which drive Tamil youth some times to attack Sinhala villages, these acts are an obstacle to winning the sympathy of the Sinhala masses for the Tamil liberation struggle. Both parties argued that continuous murder of tamil civilians and the attempt to create armed Sinhala colonies by the Government is the main reason which drives the Tamil youth to resort to such desperate actions.

Tulf leaders agreed that if a break through could be made then it will be a great moment for the socialist movement in this country and a socialist future for both Sinhalese and Tamils will be assured.

Sgd. General Secretary

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Committee for Workers Unity
states "working class, the
only force capable of defending
these proposals." by a letter to JR

issued on 26.06.86

Defend Provincial Councils
by mobilising workers

We are sure that your Excellency is fully aware that the only reliable force that will defend the democratic concessions included in the Provincial Councils proposals is the working class. It is the only force which will stand against racist-fascist rabble rousing.

In this context may I point out that the remaining batch of strikers of 1980 (around 5000), if taken back will greatly strengthen the anti-racist mood in the work places and clearly help to mobilise the working class in defence of these proposals.

Sgd. President

Committee for
Workers Unity

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