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KERALA CALLS

NEW AGE

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RALLY TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY



REACTION HAS KNOWN NO peace ever since the Kerala Government was formed, by the verdict of the people and under the Indian Constitution. Time and again have they launched their onslaught. And now they have initiated what they claim to be their biggest-ever campaign. They plan a "swift and short struggle," to break the law and paralyse the administrative machinery. Their target is chaos and out of it Central intervention.

The people of Kerala will defend their popular Government with all their might. But it is not their battle alone. The fate of Indian democracy is involved. And to defend our democratic system a nation-wide soli-

darity campaign must sweep the country.

The issues involved concern not the Communists alone but all decent men and women. The principles endangered are those which are our common heritage and cherished by all patriotic and democratic Indians.

The reactionary leaders

Editorial

of the Catholic Church, of the upper-caste Nair organisation and of the opposition parties have reached the utter depths of degradation. They not only inflame communal passions and incite violence. They not only take up cudgels against a law

given assent to by the President of India. They stoop to using children in their nefarious game. They do not hesitate to try to ruin the careers of lakhs of Kerala's children.

The dark sentiments they are rousing are a challenge to Indian nationalism, secularism and democracy. They must be told by all decent people that they cannot be allowed to pollute India's political climate.

● Let honest Congressmen throughout the country ask themselves whether their own colleagues in Kerala are observing or repudiating all that the Congress claims to stand for. Let them demand from their Kerala colleagues that they de-

DEFEAT THIS COMMUNAL ONSLAUGHT

nounce the communal agitation and break with reaction. Let them not shatter the ideals and heritage of their own organisation.

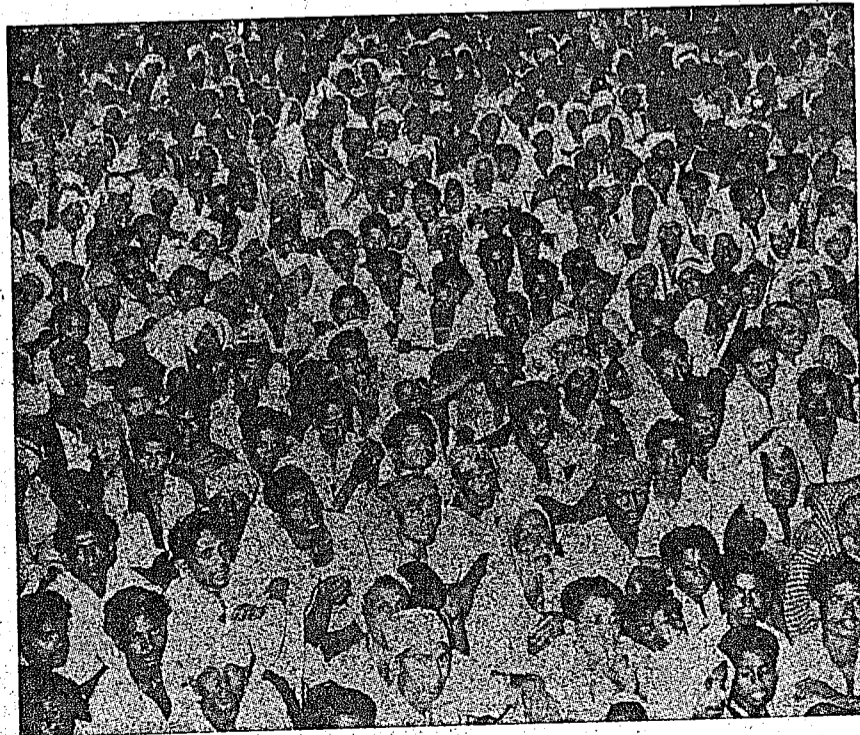
● Let serious Socialists throughout the country ask themselves whe-

ther their comrades in Kerala, who flaunt their Party banner, are bringing honour or shame to the Socialist cause, with whom are they allying and against whom are they fighting. Let them ensure that their Kerala comrades come to their senses.

● Let all Indian democrats irrespective of Party differences tell the Union Government that its elementary duty under the Indian Constitution is to actively assist the Kerala Government to maintain peace, law and order, to respect the autonomy of the State and not try to violate it.

● Let all who cherish the cause of the education of our children raise their voice, full-throated and strong.

The Communist Party of India launches its week of solidarity with the Kerala Government (June 7 to 14) to sound the warning to reaction. It goes into this campaign to rouse the conscience of all the forces of Indian democracy, to rally their invincible might.



Rally after District Party Conference at Quilon being addressed by Comrade C. Achutha Menon.
(Above) Procession before the rally.

SEE CENTRE PAGES
FOR ARTICLE BY
AJAY GHOSH

PEOPLE'S MOBILISATION GROWS AS REACTION COMES IN THE OPEN

WEEK'S REVIEW OF KERALA DEVELOPMENTS

As the campaign to launch the school closure movement reached its zenith in Kerala last week in the expectation of the reopening of schools on June 1, a new and sinister face of the movement and its diabolical aim revealed itself to the people. According to the Malayala Manorama on May 31, in a special interview with two American correspondents at his home in Changanacherry, Sri Mannath Padmanabhan said that even the withdrawal of the offending Act will not be enough to appease the sponsors of the movement. "The struggle will continue till the Government is removed."

HE was asked by the correspondents: "You say that the Government is to be removed. How is that to be achieved? What are your plans?" Mannam replied: "First the schools will be closed. With that the educational activities will be paralysed. If education is paralysed, how will the Ministers continue to sit in their chairs? They will themselves resign. If not, we have other plans, which I do not think it proper to reveal now."

Their Other Plans

There are sufficient indications however of the plans hatched by the Catholic Clergy and the Nair vested interests to topple down the lawfully installed Government of Kerala.

A pastoral letter issued by 16 Bishops of the Catholic Church in Kerala on May 7, 1959, declared, "Though we have faced many trials, never before in history have the Catholics in Kerala faced such a critical period as today."

According to the Bishops, "all Catholic parents are morally bound to send their children to Catholic schools. Even in special conditions the permission of the Catholic Bishops is necessary for sending children to other schools. In fulfilling these responsibilities vested in the parents by the grace of God, the newly constituted private schools or Government schools under the new Education Act are not at all adequate."

So in a secular democracy like ours, the Bishops call upon the faithful: "All those who have faith in God and spiritualism should vigorously face this critical situation.... Our children should not be permitted to go to other schools to contract the filthy radiation of their education."

Reports from various centres of the State indicate large-scale organisation of suicide squads and collection of arms by the Catholic Church. Roman Catholic churches and institutions have been turned into arsenals and training camps for the purpose. Regular military training is being given to chosen volunteers in the churchyards and grounds of Catholic schools and colleges at many centres like Changanacherry, Kottayam, Palai, Alleppey and Trichur.

Recently a demonstration of 300 people armed with iron rods and sticks and yellow flags was taken out in Alleppey with the Vicar of the Catholic Church, Father Andre Thekkevidan leading it. Slogans such as "We are telling you, don't come to open schools," "We shall struggle even by shedding blood,"

"Be careful Namboodiri" were chanted by the priest and repeated by his followers.

Thus the school closure movement leaders have been guilty of the most heinous crime of rousing religious fanaticism and hysteria.

Here a word about the basic attitude of Catholic Church to the question secularism and democratic education is relevant.

The Canonic Law of Roman Catholicism prohibits the education of the children of the faithful in non-Catholic Schools. Canon No. 1374 reads:

"Catholic children may not attend non-Catholic, neutral or mixed schools, that is, those which are open also to non-Catholics, and it pertains exclusively to the Ordinary (Bishop) of the place to decide, in accordance with instructions of the Holy See, under what circumstances and with what precautions against the danger of perversion, attendance at such schools may be tolerated. Neutral schools are those which exclude religion by prescinding from it.... Mixed schools are those which admit pupils of any or no religion." (Boscarea and Ellis p. 704).

Again, according to the Five Encyclicals issued by Pope Pius XI in 1929, it is said, "And first of all education belongs pre-eminently to the Church, by reason of a double title in the supernatural order, conferred exclusively upon her by God Himself; absolutely superior therefore to any other title in the natural order.... the church is independent of any sort of earthly power as well as in the origin as in exercise of her mission as educator, not merely in regard to her proper end and object, but also in regard to the means necessary to attain the end."

It was in this same encyclical that Pope Pius XI reiterated the Vatican doctrine that Catholic children may not go to non-Catholic schools, even when they receive their education separately from Catholic teachers.

Real Face Of The Church

Again on the rights of teachers also, the Catholic Church has really very 'democratic' views. "We reserve the right to dispense with the services of the staff members whose life or utterances on the Campus or off it undermines the purposes for which we exist.... In view of the very nature and fundamental purposes of Catholic education, violations of Catholic doctrine, or Catholic moral principles or of the essential proprieties of Catholic life on the campus or off the campus,

render a man unfit for service in a Catholic college." (The National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin, 1942, p. 193).

It is this obscurantist, intolerant and bigoted attitude of the Catholic Church that the Congress, PSP and other political parties and their followers claiming to be secular, democratic and even socialist are upholding, encouraging and agitating for. Can there be any more damning indictment of the opposition parties in Kerala?

It is also very strange that the Nair leader Sri Mannath Padmanabhan who claims to lead the caste Hindus to protect their religion, morality and ethics against the encroachments of Communist influence, should find himself in the camp of Roman Catholic oligarchy which claims for itself the leadership of mankind!

In this situation, what has been the attitude of the Congress?

Addressing a meeting on May 24, at the Palayam Church grounds called to rally support for the school closure agitation, Sri P. T. Chacko said that the Catholics must be prepared to sacrifice, if occasion arose, even their children, and that the final struggle against Communism is going to be started in Kerala from June 1, and in that struggle, every loss which the Catholics suffer will be written in letters of gold by historians of the future.

Chacko's Outburst

The democracy-loving non-violent Congress Party's Chacko finally burst out: "We will not get a better opportunity to strike at the Communist Government than at present. So, we should utilise this opportunity in the best way. It is not possible to remove the Communist Government through the elections or the Assembly; only through the force of arms of the youth the Communists can be removed from power."

In the heat of emotion, Sri Chacko confessed the holy truth: "Even by shedding blood this Government should be removed. Only today there is Government here over which the Catholic Church has no control." Will the central leadership of the Congress swearing by secularism, attest Chacko's good certificate to the Congress in Kerala in the service of the Catholic Church?

The Kanjirapalli Mandal Congress Committee, it is reported, has in a confidential circular letter addressed to the Congress ranks declared, "The time has come for each one of us to act." "It is our duty to unify and lead the forces coming out as a result of communal feelings," the circular stated, and called for at least 25 volunteers from each ward for the agitation.

Another instance where the Congress organisation has been taking part in the school-closure agitation is the case of the Kadapra Mandal Congress Committee which in a circular said, "The struggle for liberation

from Communists which starts on June 1 is a life and death issue for all democrats. If we do not succeed in this, democracy here is going to be buried for ever."

As these preparations for launching the holy war against Communist Government were taking place, the Kerala Government announced the postponement of the opening of schools to June 15.

Government Statement

In a comprehensive, well-argued statement entitled "The Education Act and Its Opponents," the Government made its position clear that it was not going to surrender to the demands of reaction and that its position was derived from the basic principle of the Government's responsibility and "the corresponding authority in the matter of running the educational institutions" which "has been laid down in the Constitution and is sought to be implemented through the Education Act and Rules framed thereunder."

With regard to the formation of volunteer forces by some sections the statement said, "The Government has reason to suspect that, organised for the ostensible purpose of defending schools that are closed by the managers, these volunteer forces will, in actual practice be used against schools that are kept open. In that case, the Government wants to make it clear that the police would not stand idly by, but would take firm action to protect the schools that are kept open."

In a number of other pronouncements also, Chief Minister Namboodiripad and Home Minister Achutha Menon have made it clear that the Government is not going to tolerate any gangsterism and violence on the part of the holy crusaders against Communism and that it will take all necessary steps to protect law-abiding citizens from violation of the right of education of their children.

Meanwhile, democratic opinion in the State has begun to assert itself with vigour and conviction and popular mobilisation against the school-closers is rising to unprecedented proportions.

The Kerala Karshaga Sangham (The Kerala branch of the All-India Kisan Sabha) in a stirring appeal to the peasants of Kerala has called upon them to "defeat the efforts of vested interests to overthrow the Kerala Government which has been taking a number of steps and legislative measures for the benefit of Kerala's peasantry."

The statement points out that the vested interests "want to exploit the religious susceptibilities of the people and create chaos in the State. They want to mobilise the peasantry behind them by confusing and splitting their unity in the name of religion and community."

Sri V. Gangadharan, a former Speaker of the Travancore-Cochin Assembly and a PSP-

veteran in a speech in Alleppey on May 26, drew attention to the danger facing the State due to the unscrupulous activities of the opposition and the communal reaction. "It has been a constant programme of the vested interests in Kerala" he declared, "to overthrow successive Governments in Kerala whenever they attempted to bring about agrarian reforms."

Non-Partymen Speak Up

Whenever any Government has attempted to reorganise education in Kerala, the Catholic Clergy have overthrown that Government, he said.

Sri Isa Ahmad Saït, the General Secretary of the former Travancore-Cochin Muslim League and a prominent Advocate in a statement refuted the claim of Mannam and the school-closers that the Muslims are behind their movement. "Sri Mannam's struggle is against measures of the Kerala Government like the Education Act, the Agrarian Reforms Act and reservation in Services."

He pointed out that the Education Act did not in any way affect the Muslims; on the contrary it would very much benefit them. As regards the Agrarian Reforms Bill, "I have heard many Muslim leaders declare that not only are they not opposed to the Bill, but in fact actively support it, because the measure does good to the ordinary peasantry," who include a majority of Muslims in the State.

Sri C. Kesavan, a veteran leader of the Congress for over three decades and a former Congress Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin is reported to have written a letter to the Prime Minister describing the present political situation in Kerala and protesting against the Congress line-up with rabid communal elements.

He is reported to have stated that the present Communist Government is implementing measures like educational reforms, agrarian reforms, — measures which should and could have been brought forward by the Congress and as such Congressmen have no right to say that this Government should be removed.

Huge mass rallies and meetings organised by the Communist Party are an indication of the direction in which the wind is blowing. Education Defence Committees have sprung up all over the State. The State Committee of the Communist Party has called on the people to observe a "Defence of Education" Week from May 31 to June 6, 1959.

The teachers have also gone into action. A decision recently taken by the United Front of Teachers called upon them to wear badges with the inscription 'School Closure is Treason.'

Faced with the mounting wave of protest from the democratic forces in Kerala and the rest of the country, the Kerala Congress bosses are now reported to be preparing to launch their own "struggle" before June 15.

This crude manoeuvre will fool nobody. The Congress leaders have not disassociated themselves from Mannam's crusade against the school-closers. Their plan still continues to be that of climbing on his band-wagon and helping his attempt to create chaos.

—K. P. Subramanya Menon