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NEW AGE

COMMUNIST PARTY WEEKLY

KERALA WEEK

JUNE 7 TO 14

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The Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India has called for observance of Kerala Week from June 7 to 14 to meet the challenge that has been flung in Kerala against education and democracy — a challenge that vitally concerns the people in every other State.

RIGHT-THINKING MEN AND WOMEN! EDUCATIONISTS!

Raise your powerful voice against the campaign launched by the communalists!

CONGRESSMEN!

Ponder over the dangerous course your partymen have taken in Kerala! Prevent the Congress from being an accomplice in the communal and anti-democratic campaign!

PARTY UNITS, PARTY MEMBERS, FRIENDS OF THE PARTY!

Explain to the people the present developments in Kerala and the issues at stake!

Organise solidarity actions with the people and Government of Kerala to defend the cause of education, democracy and progress!

EDUCATION IN KERALA

- Achievements The Crusaders Don't Like

KERALA has a high percentage of literacy. Forty-eight per cent of the population above four years of age is literate.

There are 11,000 educational institutions in the State and one lakh teachers. About one-fourth of the whole population is under instruction in schools.

After the advent of the Communist-led Ministry, educational reforms of far-reaching importance have been made.

Compulsory education up to 14 years, mid-day meals to children, free education up to the ninth class (old), a technical and scientific bias to the educational system, nationalisation of text-books, distribution of books through students' cooperatives, considerable reduction in the prices of text-books which were beyond the reach of a large number of parents, etc., are some of the achievements.

The old Travancore University has been converted into the Kerala University; 18 junior technical institutions, nine polytechnics, three engineering colleges and one medical college have been started.

Trade union representatives, representatives of panchayats and municipalities and teachers have been given representation in the Senate by means of statutory provisions.

Teachers have rightly come to consider the Kerala Education Act as their Magna Carta.

The educational rules, as amended by the Assembly recently, confer on students and teachers the right of organisation, the right to hold meetings inside the institutions, the right to political activities, etc.

The system of selection (preventing students from

appearing in public examinations) has been ended. This is the only State which has conceded the students' demand that detention should be abolished.

Corporal punishment of students in schools has been stopped.

The demand of the teachers for the formation of Staff Councils in all institutions has been conceded by the Kerala Government.

Of the 11,000 schools, about 7,000 are privately managed. More than half of them, 3,600, are in the Malabar area where because of the fighting traditions of a powerful teachers' movement, the school-closure agitation is not expected to make any headway.

Of the rest 3,400 private schools in the Travancore-Cochin area, about 2,200 are run by Christian managements of which about 1,500 are controlled by Catholics. Half of them are under Catholic corporate management, the rest under individuals.

The Luther Mission has about 50 schools, the London Mission Society about 100, the Salvation Army about 100, the Marthomites, Jacobites, C.M.S., etc., about 400. It has to be remembered that all Christian managements are not for closure, unlike the Catholics.

There are only 65 schools under corporate Nair Service Society management, individual Nairs have some more schools.

The Ezhava organisation, SNDP, runs about fifty schools while the Devaswam Board has 15 to 20 schools.

The rest of the private managements are individuals owing allegiance to various parties and groups.

JOINT STATEMENT

Of The Secretariats Of The National Council And Kerala Committee Of The Communist Party

The following is the text of the statement issued on May 24, 1959, by the Secretariat of the National Council of the Communist Party of India and the Secretariat of the Kerala State Committee of the Party after joint meetings in Trivandrum:

THE Kerala Private School Managers' Association, consisting mainly of the agencies under the Catholic church and Nair Service Society, has threatened to close down nearly three thousand schools under their management. They also propose not to allow the opening of Government and other privately-managed schools through picketing and similar other methods of obstruction. This has naturally created a grave situation in the State as it indeed poses some serious problems before the entire country.

Communal Campaign

The object of these moves is not merely to paralyse the entire educational system in Kerala but also to rouse communal passions and bring about conditions of lawlessness, chaos and violence. Naturally the reactionary vested interests whose ill-gotten powers and privileges are affected by the land legislation and other democratic reforms introduced by the Kerala Government have entered the scene to utilise the opportunity for launching another undemocratic and unconstitutional offensive against the Communist-led Government in Kerala.

It is most unfortunate that blinded by their nega-

tive attitude and hatred towards the Kerala Government, the local Congress, PSP, RSP and certain other political elements should have lent their support, directly and indirectly, to this campaign against education. This would appear all the more shocking when one finds that the entire campaign is built up by rousing communal hatred and passion.

One can understand the hostility of the dominant sections of private school managers against the Kerala Education Act. Their unchecked powers as well as opportunities for graft and corruption has, under this Act, been considerably curbed in the interests of teachers, students and of advancement of education in the State. What, however, is most astonishing is that these managers, having failed in their earlier attempts, should have now sought to hold Kerala's education to ransom. These people do not seem to realise that closure of private schools and their other destructive plans, if allowed to succeed, can only upset the whole system of education in the State, seriously disturb and interrupt the academic career of many thousands of boys and girls and generally strike at the interests of the guardians and teachers.

Whatever may be the grievances of private managers belonging to the Catholic church and NSS, this method of gambling with the future of students, teachers and edu-

cation, is unheard of in any civilised community. Such actions bring disgrace to the nation, put the cultural life of the people in extreme jeopardy, and go to ruin the future of our children.

It is a great tragedy that Kerala which occupies a leading position in the country for its high literacy and educational accomplishments, should have been today, so challenged by such a thoughtless and destructive assault upon its whole educational and cultural fabric. No educationist, wherever he lives, and indeed no right-thinking person can ever support such a dangerous adventure upon which these private school managers have now so openly and unashamedly embarked.

It is well known that the managers of private schools belonging to the Catholic church and NSS are violently opposed to the entire Education Act, for they would not tolerate any democratic reforms in the field of education. If they have now chosen to concentrate their fury on Section 11 of the Education Act, it is because they want thereby to rouse the communal and religious passions of the masses belonging to the Christian and Nair communities.

Yet this Section provides for drawing up a panel list of teachers eligible for appointment by the Public Service Commission with due regard to certain reservation for backward communities, as envisaged in the Constitution itself. It should be mentioned here that reservation in one form or another for up-

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ORGANISE SOLIDARITY ACTIONS WITH GOVERNMENT & PEOPLE OF KERALA!

A Question To The High Command

THE Hindu of May 24 carried the following report of an order of the Government of Madras:

"To meet the situation that might arise as a result of the closure of aided elementary schools on account of the inability of the managements to comply with the conditions prescribed in the recent Government order, the Government have issued the following order on May 11, 1959, detailing the alternative arrangements that are proposed to be made . . .

"In order to avoid unnecessary and avoidable delay in making alternative arrangements if and when the fee-levying elementary schools under private managements close down owing to the inability of the managements to run those schools on the conditions laid down in the earlier Government order dated April 11, 1959, the Government empower the District Educational Officers to send up proposals to the Special Officers of District Boards or Commissioners of Municipalities concerned for the opening of elementary schools in the locality to absorb the pupils and the teachers of the affected schools . . .

"Consequent on the decision taken by the Government that no fees should be levied in elementary schools under public management from the academic year 1959-60, the Government passed an order dated April 11, 1959, to the effect that two types of private elementary schools should be recognised, namely, fee-levying schools and non-fee-levying schools. The fee-levying schools will not be eligible for any grant-in-aid, but they would be accorded academic recognition provided they conformed to the prescribed syllabus. Non-fee-levying schools would be eligible for recognition and the usual grant-in-aid according to the rules and orders in force."

On May 26, the Hindu reporting the conference of the Tanjore District Aided Elementary School Managers, said:

"Mr. M. Rajagopala Aiyer, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in the course of his address, pointed out that the aided school managements were confronted with a Hobson's choice of whether to opt for no fee-levy and only Government grant or fee-levy and no Government grant. He said that it was impossible to run the school under either conditions . . ."

What advice will the Congress High Command give individual Congressmen in Madras State who are managers of schools—close down their schools and agitate against the Congress Government of Madras?

DESPITE NEW DELHI'S ASSERTIONS CONGRESSMEN LEAD KERALA COMMUNAL AGITATION

TRIVANDRUM, May 26

Despite assertions to the contrary, by spokesmen of the Congress High Command, it is the trusted and topmost leaders of their Kerala wing who are openly and actively leading the Christian-Nair communalists' crusade against the Communist Ministry and their school-closure agitation.

THESE leaders of the KPCC have become the spokesmen of the Catholic Bishops and Nair fanatics and the language they speak today is not the language of non-violence or tolerance, but the worst type of sabre-rattling and bellicosity. At meetings organised by the Catholic and Nair communal elements, Congress leaders give calls for forcible overthrow of the Government in the State.

Another Precedent ?

Here is one, straight from the horse's mouth. Sri P. S. George, Treasurer of the KPCC, declared: "I wish to inform you that Kerala is going to create also the precedent of overthrowing a Government without the ballot box." (Malayala Manorama, May 24)

The Congress leader made this announcement at a meeting in Ranni on May 22 organised to accord a big reception to Sri Mannath Padmanabhan, the Nair satrap of Kerala.

It is quite a common practice for Congress leaders in Kerala today to associate themselves as organisers and speakers, etc., with the meetings of the NSS and Catholic church. The Ranni meeting was only one in scores of such meetings.

Sri P. S. George who inaugurated the Ranni meeting made

some very revealing declarations.

He said: "It is with certain firm decisions that lakhs of people are gathered here this evening. We are ready today for a struggle which is totally different from the struggles of the past. The purpose of this meeting is not merely to demonstrate the protest against the Education Act or to force its withdrawal. On the other hand, it is to compel the Communist Government now ruling Kerala to resign."

He also said: "We declare that this Government must be changed. If the Ministry which has forfeited the confidence of the people does not resign, they have to be forced to resign by exercising pressure and creating difficulties. If the Communist Ministry does not voluntarily resign, we are going to create an atmosphere where they will be forced to resign against their will. I wish to inform the Government of this quite clearly."

Continuing in this strain, Sri George contended that forcing the Government out of power not through an election was only like dismissing an employee of a company for misappropriation even though he might have been taken into service after a competitive test. What right has such an employee to say that he was selected by a

test and, therefore, could not be dismissed, he asked.

Officials Threatened

The KPCC leader also gave some severe warning to Government officers in the State:

"In today's special circumstances, I wish to state something clearly to those individuals who are in the service of the Kerala Government. Communists will come, and they will go. But you must understand that you have to continue to live here. Today you may stand by the Communists, but you need not hope that when the people of this country in the near future despatch the Communists to Russia, you can also go there and live happily."

Sri Vayala Idikkula, Congress MLA, who garlanded and welcomed Sri Mannath Padmanabhan in Ranni prayed to the Almighty to give long years of life to the Nair leader and he "informed" the Communist Government that if the twenty and odd schools in Ranni are closed down, no force will be able to open those schools. Sri Idikkula is the convener of the Struggle Committee.

Among those who garlanded Sri Mannath Padmanabhan was Sri K. N. Sukumaran Nair, President of the Pazhavangadikara Mandal Congress Committee. Those who addressed the meeting included Sri T. O. Bava, Congress MLA, and Sri V. O. Abraham, another Congress leader.

At the Ranni meeting Sri Mannath Padmanabhan proclaimed that he was "not pre-

pared for any compromise other than that the Communist Government must change. First resign and then we can talk over things, that is my stand," he declared.

Of late, after the Government's decision to strongly put down violence became well known and confirmed, Sri Mannath Padmanabhan, who has been described as the commander-in-chief of the "Nair Force" ranged against the Communist Government, has been formally declaring that his movement is peaceful but at the same time calling for thousands of volunteers.

At Ranni also he did the same. He talked about non-violence and then called for "tens of thousands" of volunteers; "ready for sacrifice, even death if necessary." Two hundred volunteers from each taluk should come forward, he said. He declared that not a single new shed was going to be erected to conduct schools when they are closed. "If erected, they are not going to stand there also."

While the Nair patriarch is thus going about rallying volunteers and followers for his "liberation struggle" with the pomp of the Asuamedha Yaga and in some places (like Thodupuzha) actually taking out a horse in front of his procession guarded by uniformed men with drawn swords, the Catholic Bishops are likewise busy with their own preparations for a "holy crusade."

Last week saw the forty-first session of the Kerala Catholic Congress in Palai, the stronghold of the Catholic Church in the State. There also leaders of the Kerala Pradesh Congress came to address the gathering and canvass support for the struggle against the Education Act and the Government.

Smt Kusumam Joseph, Congress MLA, addressing the Catholic Congress, said: "This little Kerala is today passing through a grave situation. The Communist Government has imposed its dictatorship on the people. They have brought the Education Act in order to make the next generation atheists and Communists" (Deepika May 19). She declared that everyone should unite and win this struggle "against the Act which, in the name of teachers, made children Communists."

Another Congress MLA, Sri Alexander Parambithara, said: "We have assembled in a stormy atmosphere. We have our opinions unified in the resistance to the Education Act." He also declared that "it is better to close down schools rather than run them according to the Education Act."

The Archbishop of Bangalore who presided over the Congress, in a long speech exhorted the Christian community "to organise and stand united in parishes, dioceses and on a State-wide basis and thus defeat the dictatorial, repressive programmes of a totalitarian Government." He said that it was the "supreme duty" of the Catholics.

Messages were received among others from Cardinal Gracias and Dr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, the Kerala Governor.

JOINT STATEMENT — FROM FRONT PAGE

liftment of backward communities exists in every State in India and under the Central Government also. The mischievous propaganda about interference with religion under the Kerala Education Act is again meant to whip up religious and communal prejudices. The Kerala Education Act makes no interference whatever with religious freedom or other fundamental rights.

We consider it necessary to draw the attention of the whole country to the preparations and plans of the organisers of the campaign against the Education Act. Open incitement to communal hatred and violence is being indulged in by certain prominent leaders of the church and the NSS. Volunteer corps are being organised and even given training in the use of arms. Lethal weapons, as many Press reports show, are being collected. In short everything is being done to bring about large-scale chaos and violence throughout the State.

It is in this inflammatory situation that the Kerala Congress has decided to draw up its so-called charge-sheet against the Communist-led Ministry in Kerala. It is interesting to see the Kerala Congress leaders straining at this frame-up while their

friends in other States have shown a remarkable attitude of brushing aside charges against Congress Ministries made not only by the Opposition but even by their own partymen.

The real motive behind this charge-sheet business is plain enough for all to see. By this crude manoeuvre they want to heighten the tension and utilise the communal agitation for their own narrow political ends. It will be noted with deep sorrow and disappointment that the Congress High Command should have endorsed this and other unworthy tactics of the Kerala Congress. When the main political party in the country takes recourse to such unprincipled and anti-democratic manoeuvres what is threatened is the very foundations of our secular State and the future of our democratic institution.

We are confident that the patriotic and democratic people of Kerala and their Government will meet this grim challenge of communalism and reaction in the best traditions of democracy. We have no doubt in our mind that the people of Kerala will firmly adhere to the cause of education and progress, in a democratic and peaceful manner.

The issues at stake transcend party barriers and in-

deed are such as should unite all those who stand for advancement of education and elementary standards of public life. We look forward to such broad-based unity playing its rightful role in this critical situation.

The challenge that has been flung against education and democracy is one that vitally concerns the people in every other State. We would appeal to all right-thinking men and women throughout India, and educationists in particular, to raise their powerful voice against this campaign launched by communalist elements of the Christian and Nair communities. We hope Congressmen all over India will ponder over the dangerous course their partymen have taken in Kerala and prevent their organisation from being an accomplice in this communal and anti-democratic campaign.

We call upon all our Party units, Party members and the friends of the Party throughout the country to explain to the people the present developments in Kerala and the issues at stake as well as organise solidarity actions behind the people and the Government of Kerala in their endeavour to defend the cause of education, democracy and progress.