

Sri Lanka: Country needs a pro-proletariat regime

Wednesday 10 August 2011, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 7 August 2011).

The simple answer to the victory of the TNA in the north, while Mahinda regime won in the south, is national division in the country. Victory of Mahinda in Sinhala areas shows that the Sinhala chauvinist campaign is still strong among the Sinhala village masses.

It is not so much in urban areas though. Similarly the Tamils in Tamil home land voted against the killers of Tamil liberation struggle. However, this simple overall picture does not tell us the whole truth. In the north there was no option for the Tamil people; it was either the TNA or the killer regime.

People could not forget

It is a clear picture with a clear answer. But in the south the so-called patriotic victory did not bring any gains to the Sinhala masses. Not even to the village petty bourgeoisie. Of course, one could argue that the removal of violence in the south is a gain that the people could not forget.

But there was no threat of violence for Sinhala villages except in border areas. Fear of terrorist attacks was confined to urban areas, particularly in the western province. Yet, it is in these areas that the government faced, relatively a strong opposition or sharp splits in its own ranks. Hence one cannot be satisfied by the "effect of the war" explanation, for the bad setback of the opposition in the south.

If the Tamil National Alliance, working in a very hostile surrounding under military rule, could defeat Mahinda, then why did the UNP fail to win a single council? This question has been answered by opposition leaders referring to the oppressive atmosphere created by the government and to misuse of power. But that answer, I repeat, has been nullified by the victory of the TNA in the north.

There were enough problems faced by the Sinhala masses in the south, to make them forget about war heroes and vote against the government, if proper mobilization was done. But that did not happen. In urban areas there were workers agitations, and in the pension issue clash with security forces resulted in a death of a worker, while many were hospitalized.

Though JTUA was active and gave a leadership, there was no significant political intervention from the opposition. Efforts of Jayalath were not a substitute. The Government, of course kept on harping on a political conspiracy behind the workers action. But this election results confirmed that there was no such conspiracy and if there was one then it was from the side of the government. Also we see that the election result has exposed the crisis within the UNP.

Speaking on the conflict over leadership of the party, (UNP) Badulla District MP Harin Fernando firmly stated that "it is not a crisis". According to him what Karu has said was that if the party could agree and give him the nod to go ahead as the leader, he would do that. That means, only if the party gives its blessings to him. Karu Jayasuriya has clearly mentioned that he wants Ranil Wickramasinghe also to be given the due respect, while Sajith Premadasa and new party members

work together with others, as one. His main objective is to unite the party. Is this possible? Is it just a problem of a physically handicapped person?

A federal solution

Ranil may not be an orator and a charming stage actor. But he stood for a consistent policy. He wanted a federal solution for the national problem and by that means wanted to avoid a genocidal war. On the other hand he wanted a liberal capitalist economy with workers tied to collective agreements. He did not see the importance of food production and wanted to allocate the entire western province to industrial development. Obviously the left cannot agree to the latter part of his thinking; but could give critical support to the first part. On the other hand it is not a popular policy to go among the Sinhala petty bourgeoisie.

Naturally he failed in elections, and now he wants to push Mahinda towards a federal solution while strengthening democracy. If the UNP rank and file or the young MPS do not want to follow these policies then either they can support Sinhala chauvinist pro-IMF policies of the Mahinda regime or try to convert the UNP to a social democratic party- radically reformist bourgeoisie party.

That is what Lakshilaka and others wanted; at least that is what I thought. But they have ganged up in the opposite direction. Karu is a gentleman no doubt. But he carried foreword the programme of the Sinhala chauvinists. He left the UNP to support the genocidal war against the Tamil people. Inside Mahinda's cabinet, he spent a humiliating period sans lustre and elegance. Then he crawled back to be the comrade at arms to Ranil. Now he wants to be the leader without policies, to unite every current within the party. Can one be sure?

I have no interest in the conservative party of the bourgeoisie, except in relation to the proletarian revolution. Hence I am not suggesting way out for the UNP. It is not my damn business. But I do believe that one Mahinda is more than enough for the country. We certainly do not need another of that kind, milder or not. What the country needs is a non chauvinist, anti IMF dictates, pro-oppressed, democratic leadership.

P.S.

* 7 AUGUST SUNDAY Bahu's column.