

Abolish the Executive Presidency!. Withdraw the Anti-Terrorism Act! It is Anti-God!. Anti-People!. Anti-Dhamma !

Saturday 13 May 2023, by [Christian Workers Fellowship](#) (Date first published: 1 May 2023).

When the former President Mahinda Rajapaksa brought the 18th Amendment to further Strengthen his hold on executive power, the Christian Workers Fellowship, declared that , the 'executive presidential system is anti-God'. and anti-People. When the current President Mr. Ranil Wickramasinghe is suppressing the voice of the people by bringing the Anti-Terrorism Act to (ATA) to strengthen his executive power, the Christian Workers Fellowship once again declares that the 'executive presidential system is anti-God', and that it is anti-People. The executive presidential system is anti-God, anti-People, it is also anti-Dhamma. We have no doubt about that. Our Declaration is based on the theological and political core values that the Christian Workers Fellowship ' has raised since the past. CWF publications such as 'Lanka Samaj Peraliya', 'Kithunu Obai Vruthiya Samitiyai', 'Lak Kitunu Sasunata Magak' and What is the CWF for ?' bear witness.

Neoliberalism

Today there is a conversation about how to handle the economy of our country. All the print and electronic media are using all their strategies to inculcate the neoliberal economic approach in the citizen's mind set .At the same time, some were engaged in an attempt to ideologically socialize the view that the socialist economic system as outdated and no longer valid. Most of the current owners of media organizations have become rich with the help of the neoliberal system. Some strong figures of left-wing movements, even persons who gained respect and positions because of left-wing movements, have been caught in this trap.

Through the neo-liberal economic system, the neo-colonialist "wealth Demon" (Mammon) has been portrayed as the "angel of mercy". This attitude and system has been mercilessly implanted in poor countries. This attitude of pseudo mercy and affection inculcated for many decades, has dragged our country into a situation where we cannot even find another way to get rid of the mountain of debt. other than to take refuge in the IMF the portrayed as the "Father of Mercy".

The solutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) , which have been implemented 16 times, are a myth that Sri Lanka is trapped in. it is a fact that steps taken in recent time being the recent devaluation of the Sri Lankan rupee, the sharp increase in interest rates, the elimination of fuel subsidies, the severe cutting of public expenditure, etc., were done on IMF directions. The 17th IMF Agreement was ratified in March 2023. However, the IMF agreement is sure to signal more pain for Sri Lanka's poor and marginalized communities with a string of tough conditions. The best example of this is that due to lack of money, the Minister of Education Susil Premajayantha said in Parliament recently that in other provinces other than the Western Province, the Ministry has stopped providing lunch to students.

Now is the right time to reconsider Sri Lanka's undisciplined fiscal & economic policies. The consumerist system of relying on imported goods is outdated. Ordinary people must achieve self-sufficiency in obtaining the goods and services they need to survive. We should direct our investments towards that goal. These principles are much more advanced than the failed solution of the International Monetary Fund which ensures that Sri Lanka should continue as a vassal of the global economic structure. Of course Some may consider it a step back.

Accordingly, the approach to the liberalization of trade and financial accounts to encourage foreign direct investment and privatization, and many other reforms that have been proposed should be re-examined.

More dangerous is the distortion of the superstructure built on the neoliberal economic base. In that, a very selfish and perverted person is born. Art and religion are also so attached to it , that it is difficult to free them from its grip. The CWF understood this situation, getting experience from the past economic disasters, we have been constantly engaged in a dialogue about the validity of the socialist economic structure against neo- liberalism. We agree that this is the only way for a just society. It also coincides with every religious teaching. We the people are the only ones who can override the danger of neo-liberalism and prevent all kinds of destruction & crimes created by it . Therefore, this May Day, we request all citizens to line up to attain our goal.

Anti-Terrorism Act

As a result of neo-liberalism and the looting by neo-colonialists with a new face, there are many 'struggles' that have arisen as a result of the crises that have been created in the countries where neo-liberalism has come into effect. We saw such a struggle during the last 2022 Labor Day celebration. It was called the "struggle of love" and it attracted the attention of the world. The CWF members who came from all parts of the country to attended our Workers Service , participated voluntarily and were inspired to give their support in their respective areas by sharing that experience with other people in their villages. Such struggles have been seen in various forms over the last two decades not only in the developing countries of the world but also in the developed countries. The struggle was so powerful that in some countries the rulers were killed, and in other places the ruler was expelled, as in Sri Lanka.

No matter how much the media tried to hide it, inflation is rising in Western developed countries, the unemployment rate is rising and the living standards of the poor are depreciating badly. In the face of these conditions, struggles will arise in those countries as well. One of their solutions for that is to take as much resources as possible from countries like ours, and thereby make their countries prosperous. In the past this was done by direct colonial plunder. Today, this is happening as neo - colonialism showing a new face.

While getting relief from IMF may seem like a solution to the current problem, it will not be the solution to the real problems of the crisis. It should be understood that the crisis seen today is not just due to the lack of dollars or corrupt governance, but is the result of the crisis of the world capitalist system itself. Due to this, various struggles will arise not only in Sri Lanka but all over the world. People in the Countries that see this realistically will enter into the struggle for a change in the system. The CWF is of the view that the solution to this crisis is socialism.

The experience of the last struggle is different. We, as parties to the struggle, pointed out on the last Labor Day that the end result is more likely to be a stronger capitalist state than a 'system change'. It has happened . Rulers learn lessons from struggle as well as we do. If such a situation arises again, they find strategies to deal with it. As a result, the "Anti-Terrorism Act" can be taken as an example. It is more dangerous because discuss it it could be debated in the parliament and passed and if passed by a majority of votes it the parliament it would become a law.

The proposed ATA has a lot of vague definitions. Words such as protests, trade union actions and acts of terrorism can be interpreted in a variety of ways as needed by the rulers. Those definitions can easily turn a dissenter into a terrorist. Among the strong powers given to the executive by the Anti-Terrorism Act are the ability to decide and execute punishments without judicial approval, to detain individuals for a period of 12 months and to ban organizations. The proposed Anti-Terrorism Act also gives the President the power to make laws by passing the Legislature, thus diluting the role of the Legislature. In a context where there is an outcry to abolish the executive presidential system and strengthen the judiciary, the rulers who have lost the power of the people are coming up with such proposals to strengthen the executive to be control the people.

Earlier, when our governments brought such bills, the international pressure exerted was different. Unlike then, today only diluted responses and statements are made internationally. Although the very powerful professional unions have prepared and warned to launch trade union action protesting against the increase in taxes and draconian legislation such as this bill and other factors, some of the professionals who might have participated in them now seem to be reluctant because they were afraid of the bill even before it was introduced.

In order to stop the implementation of this anti-terrorist act, we feel that the intervention and influence of international working progressive movements should be obtained, rather than depending on the support of international states. Let's work towards attaining that goal.

National Crisis

As the socioeconomic crisis looms large, a problem that we urgently need to address being the ethnic problem takes a back seat. This issue has been left out of the conversation to the extent that it is sometimes suspected that this is done on purpose. It is isolated.. But we always consider the 'national problem' as one of the main issues in our agenda.

2,261 days have passed since the fasting started by the mothers, wives and relatives of those who disappeared due to the war, asking them to hand over their missing loved ones to them again, or else to tell them what happened to them. We, who have been with them since the day it started, regretfully say that it is unacceptable that the elite politicians of the north who were with them in the beginning, as well as those of Diaspora, have completely forgotten them.

Another painful experience we have is the condition of LTTE members who have become disabled by the war. They fought for the liberation of a nation. They had a battle to win. It is the dream of a land of its own freed from the domination of the majority. That dream was not like the personal dreams of many young people. At a young age, they joined the common struggle of not trying to attain their individual dreams. But today, they have become strangers who do not get any attention from the government or the political parties that stand for the Tamil people or the Diaspora. Before 2009, they were loved and respected by their fellow people, but today they have lost it, and in some cases, they are insulted and even ridiculed.

For both of these groups, we should go beyond just providing relief and helping people to make their dreams a reality. This can be done by influencing them to get the desired dream politically. Our proposal for that is the federal system of power sharing. Meanwhile, in a meeting with economists, the President said that the national problem cannot be separated in the journey towards economic development, and a path to solve it together is needed. At least the 13th Amendment should be enforced in full. CWF will intervene without hesitation.

Malaiyaha Makkal

We should be ashamed of when talk about the Malaiyaha Makkal (Tamil workers from the mountains) who were brought to Sri Lanka two hundred years ago. They were the main labor force in the tea and rubber plantations , which were our main foreign exchange earners until the 1970s. It was these slave laborers who brought the dollars & the resources our aristocracy enjoyed. The delicious tea that Sri Lanka brought to the world & the best rubber was produced by the sweat of their blood. We who have forgotten the Justice fairness they should have received , should at least now take steps to enable them win their rights and protect their dignity.

We regard it as our duty and responsibility and gratitude to intervene unconditionally in their struggle to become a people with all the privileges that every other section of the population has received. We will join the struggle without hesitation with any group or movement that intervenes to achieve this goal.

Education

The Education Act brought in 1939 and the education reforms introduced in 1945 are a special turning point in the education sector in Sri Lanka. The Minister of Education was Mr. C.W.W Kannanagara. In 1940, Kannangara appointed a committee to look for deficiencies in the education sector and recommend reforms. This draft findings of this Committee was released on May 30, 1944 and was presented to the State Council on August 24, 1945. Accordingly, there was a major change in Sri Lankan education. This is how the free education started and though the entire credit goes to Mr. Kannangara. But the real stakeholders were the 23 members of the above the 23-member committee that represented all races and religions. For example, K. Velupillai a Scholar who served as the secretary of this committee.

There are three main points among these proposals.

- Abolition of all fees from primary education to university education.
- Making the language of education one's mother tongue.
- Giving opportunities to the English language in national education.

Thus, the privilege of getting education through English medium, which was given to a certain privileged class or those with special opportunities, was also given to distant villages through Madhya Maha Vidyalayas. (Central Colleges)Even so, J. E. Jayasuriya an Educationist had said: "According to theory it seems that everyone gets a good education due to free education , but that is not the case. A small section gets a good education and the majority does not". This kind of situation has been seen since the beginning of free education, and instead of systematically avoiding them and entering into a good direction, the opposite has happened.

The present President brought the "Education White Paper" during his tenure as Minister of Education and the massive destruction he was going to do to education was withdrawn due to public protests. But every government that came to power worked to implement it in different ways. A large number of young people in the north were deprived of university education due to the law of granting university entrance based on races and region as standardization, and this was also the one of the main reasons for the youth of the north to take up arms.

The attention of the Government paid towards the crisis in Education which aggravated to due to Covid 19 and the bad economy is totally inadequate . They do not address the problems faced by the Children in Education nor do do they propose a Plan to help the entire generation of students who had to the above ordeal. The Government's lack of attention is manifested by the fact that it has only allocated Rs. 232 Billion for Education while allocating Rs. 539 Billion for defense. Today, the trend of most of young people is not to go to university has increased. As soon as they sit for the Ordinary

Level Exam , there is a tendency to even avoid sitting for the Advanced Level Exam and instead they try to go to foreign Countries for higher Education or find other sources of education that will ensure their opportunity of getting better jobs.

Workers Mass

The workers Mass that we participated today and the Holy Communion that we received in which a broad Social concept is embedded and is a token of the pre tasting of the victory that will be received as a result of the Christian calling to build the Kingdome of God. In Christianity it is very clear that the Society , Religion and politics ate joined together in such a way that it cannot be separated. The Agricultural and Industrial Produce that is depicted in the Bread and wine should not be for the profit of a few , but remind us to create a society that will bring the use of such produce the common good of all. Ths also gives us the faith in establishing a Social system where there is no room for a class of exploiters. A person who knows the true meaning of Holy Communion cannot stay without being involved in thr struggle to liberate humanity. We have to emphasize the fact that God became the Lord of the world much before he became the Lord of the Church. We should realize that Gord is more concerned about the world than granting special privileges to the people who call themselves "People of God".

Today's Gospel brings us to the main questions that Jesus will ask in the final judgment. That is about sharing food and drink, clothing and. But there is a deeper challenge here that Jesus (apparently) does not raise. If we ask today why people don't have food?. Why don't people have water ? Why don't people have medicine?. Why don't people have clothes? Why are people unjustly imprisoned? Answer will be that you are a terrorist. Therefore, the entire working people will have to be aware of this fact in working to achieve our goals in the future.

CWF strongly believes that there is no other alternative but the socialist economic system to create a socially equal (Sama Samaja) state, and CWF is built with the objectives of building such a society. We have declared that it is the only option that is compatible with the concept of the Kingdom of God, and with the Dharmarajya, which is proclaimed by other religions as well , including Buddhism.

Let's win the rights of the working people!

Let's strengthen the struggle of oppressed people including Maliayah Makkal!.

Christian Workers Fellowship

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