

Sri Lanka: Pressure to implement devolution as promised

Friday 26 June 2009, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 14 June 2009).

Internationally, the presence of the old Left (Ministers Dew and Tissa with Vasu) in the government is very useful to Mahinda Rajano. In fact, in the UN Human Rights Council debate, the fact that the government document stood for devolution as a solution to the Tamil national problem helped the government immensely to get the votes of countries such as Cuba. Having won the battle in Geneva now Maha Rajano is facing the wrath of his 'neo barbaric' colleagues such as Gunadasa Amarasekara. Gune has said in a press conference that the promise to implement devolution with land and police powers should not have been included in the document placed by the government for the Geneva debate.

Geneva battle

It is incredible to see that some idiots do not realise that the government won the Geneva battle entirely because of the devolution promise and the support given by the opportunist old Left parties on the basis of that promise. If not for that devolution sentence, not only Cuba, but also India would have fallen away and Lanka would have been defeated. I wish Gune was sent instead of Dan to Geneva to look after the interest of Maha Rajano. Like the Kevattaya of the Ummaga Jatakaya, by producing an open Sinhala chauvinist document, he would have placed victory in the hands of those who stood against human rights violations.

Of course I am one of them. Notwithstanding what happened in the last few days of the war, I am a victim of human rights violation in this country. The president of the Human Rights Commission has written to Maha Rajano that my human rights were violated by the vice chancellor of the Peradeniya University and that he ignores repeated requests to correct it. Now it is more than three months but no action has been taken. So even if I ignore the killing of 20000 Tamils I am personally unhappy about the victory of Maha Rajano at the human rights battle at Geneva.

Gune is angry not only with the old Left leaders such as Dew but also with Rajitha. Rajitha was with the Left even when he was in university. He was in the joint front of the health sector trade unions. He is close to trade unions even now. In the recent past he has come out in a campaign to implement the 13th Amendment. As a minister close to trade unions he knows that workers' agitations for higher wages and other economic benefits did not come out in the recent past because they agreed to the slogan "First against the Tigers, then devolution for Tamils." As I explained before in this column, it is actually the slogan of the Indian leaders, the people who really conducted the war.

The masterminds of India knew very well that this slogan would be useful not only in Lanka but also in India. There, this was used to silence the protest of not only Karunanidhi but also of the Left alliance, particularly of the Communists. Later it was used internationally to counter the campaign against the war. But it has lost its value as a slogan in Lanka today. There is pressure now from India and other countries to implement devolution of power as promised. Furthermore, in Lanka, unless this issue is brought out there is no way to contain the rising agitation among the working class. True there is no mass agitation in any sector at the moment. But the protest of the CEB workers has been successful.

Leaders with pro devolution credentials have come back to the central leadership. This trend can be seen in other sectors as well. The attempt to mobilise pro JVP unions against any kind of devolution was not very successful. On the other hand unions with pro devolution leaders have come out to intervene in many day to day problems of workers.

P.S.

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