

Sri Lanka: Ranil-Karu duo are no safe bets to dispel the gloom

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Government is in crisis. But the bourgeois opposition is in a worse crisis. Every other day we are told that a joint opposition will be formed. But the agreement so far is confined to those who are already in the UNP camp. Mano is already a UNP MP while Mangala is virtually a UNP member. They say they have agreed on the removal of the presidency. But can the Tamil speaking people - the Tamils and Muslims, agree to that without a proper devolution of power. As it is the presidential election is a vital tool the minorities have to pressure any bourgeois leadership towards a political resolution of the problem of the Tamil speaking people; for, it is an islandwide election, where the victor has to get a 50 % of the national vote. If all Muslims and Tamils come together and demand that they will support only a candidate with a proper devolution package, then that will ignite a fire in the presidential election campaign. We understand that, they are discussing to come together to exert pressure in favour of this issue. Even the parties in the plantation sector have, not given a final word on this matter. On the other hand, they are angry that even the Rs.405 that was promised is not a reality yet.

Plantation companies are wailing that this kind of salary increase could ruin their business. It only proves what we have said already; that the plantation establishment is completely out of date. Modern arrangements have to be evolved, which is both efficient and ecologically sound. No system that renders labour to be undernourished and miserable, can survive in the modern world. The reality is that even the Rs.405 salary increase is paltry; no family can survive on that basis.

But the bourgeois opposition is unable to raise this important issue as they are tied to plantation aristocracy. There is no credible move to get the plantation based parties into the alliance. However, they are eager to woo the JVP, in spite of the fact that the latter has not shed its chauvinist stand on devolution. The JVP makes noises about the Vanni misery but it remains a chauvinist anti Tamil liberation party! The JVP is eager to get rid of both the presidential elections and proportional representation to establish Sinhala hegemony through parliament, which will then be the real centre of power.

Complete support

As it is, the bourgeois opposition led by Ranil/ Karu leadership fully supports the genocidal war conducted by the regime. They joined the victory celebrations and sent letters thanking military leaders. On the other hand, they are supporting the pro global capitalist economic policy of the government. In fact, they are sorry that the regime is not aware of the other loan schemes available; such as for poverty alleviation. If the Ranil/ Karu leadership agrees with the government, on the policy of war and on the bondage to global capital, then what are they crying for? They shout about corruption but many of those who are accused of corruption, Karu, Milinda, Bogollagama, etc are fine gentlemen brought up in the bosom of the UNP. Following Karu they can come back any time; so what is the issue? In any case the global capitalist set up is a failed system more in trouble than any failed state! In fact the World Bank President said in Istanbul, that one of the legacies of the crisis maybe a change in global power relations, saying the latest forecasts show, that China and India are helping to pull the global economy out of recession. He noted though, that other

developing countries are also drivers of growth, and that a multipolar economy, less reliant on US consumer demand, will be a more stable economy.

So India and China, with large public sectors and strong parties claiming to be communist, playing major roles, are the saviours of the system. In that context, it is amusing to see that the opposition led by Ranil/ Karu trying to tell the people that they are better equipped than Mahinda to approach the global capital. There is no point having an opposition which has the same policy on war, devolution and the economy.

P.S.

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