

Where were you, Mr. Thondaman?

A decade of agony in my mind and heart burst into laughter when I read a news item, in a National Tamil Daily, about a week after the grooming of the new Madam Prime Minister that Mr. Thondaman had congratulated the Madam Prime Minister on behalf of not only the Plantation Tamils but also on behalf of all Tamils in Sri Lanka. I was happy that he had not taken the onus of congratulating on behalf of the Tamils in the whole world and the other communities of this country.

At the outset, may I ask Mr. Thondaman as to what moral right, rhyme or reason he has got to speak on behalf of all Tamils, particularly those of Northern and Eastern Provinces, leave along the Sri Lankan Tamils living outside these provinces and whether he can claim to have the sole right to speak on behalf of the entire Plantation Community.

I say 'NO' to both these questions for the following reasons:-

1. When the great leader Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam found the TULF in an attempt to unite all Tamils in Sri Lanka, offering an equal place to Mr. Thondaman in the Presidium along with him and late Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam, Mr. Thondaman having accepted, at the spur of that moment, in front of a large gathering, declined in a short time, to the surprise of many, to continue in that office, giving a lame excuse, that the problems of the people he was representing was quite alien to that of other Tamils in Sri Lanka and as such he was not prepared to continue in that position. Though, I do not agree with this false and dubious view of Mr. Thondaman, I ask him now, as to what he has done since then, for the other Tamils to speak on their behalf.

2. Is this "Great" Leader aware of the immense suffering and hardship the people of the North and East are undergoing since 1983, due to the ongoing war in this part of the country and what has he done to give them even a bit of relief.

3. What was this 'Great' Leader doing:-

(a) When hundreds of people were chopped to death in the Kumudini Launch taking innocent passengers to the Island Delft from the Jetty of Kays.

(b) When nearly a hundred detainees in the custody of the law enforcing authorities, in prison, were murdered in 1983.

(c) When hundreds of workers were thrown out of employment leading to suicide by some of them after the strike in 1980.

(d) When thousands of people were rendered homeless, became refugees and living in most trying conditions.

(e) When thousands of innocent lives were lost due to indiscriminate bombarding and shelling in the North and East.

(f) When thousands of dwelling houses, business establishments and many a place of worship were burnt and destroyed along with the lives of the inhabitants.

(g) When hundreds of innocent fishermen were

done to death when they went to the sea, to earn their livelihood.

(h) When thousands of wage earners like carpenters, masons and other categories including fishermen were rendered jobless and facing starvation.

(i) When thousands of innocent people were taken into custody and reported either missing or no knowledge of them.

(j) When the people of North were denied the basic essential requirements of electricity and fuel for more than three years with a litre of kerosine oil sold as high as Rs. 300/-

(k) When people died for want of essential medicines.

(l) When the farmers were denied their requirements of fertilizer and agro-chemicals for their cultivation.

(m) When people including pregnant mothers, the old and the disabled had to go through the 'hell' in Nochchimodai, Thandikulam etc. in their movement to and from the North to the South.

(n) When incidents like what happened in Kokkaddichcholai took place.

(o) When a number of youth and school boys in the South particularly in places like Embilipitiya and Suriyakanda were snatched away from their parents and massacred.

(p) When stones were pelted at residences of Judicial Officers.

(q) When black marketeering was done in food items including essential ones rendering the common man out of reach to these items and partial starvation.

(r) When oppressive legislation like Prevention of Terrorism Act etc. was enacted to curb the democratic freedoms of the people.

(s) When Chandrasekaran, an elected representative of the people was deprived of attending the meeting of the provincial council, and subjected to various odds.

Now, Mr. Thondaman cannot deny the fact that these atrocious acts did not bother him at all, as otherwise he would have at least raised his voice for the 'glory of it' as, he did when communalism was frothen out during the time the 'famous' vote of no-confidence was brought in against the then Leader of the Opposition late Mr. Amirthalingam and since he did not spare the government with the threat of resignation in the

instant off his 'petty quarrel' with his erstwhile comrade Sellasamy.

Apart from the above, he has also played a dominant role in the North East problem in that he was seen in India every time there was a solution appeared to be nearing on the initiative of the Indian government, for all of which thank God he has been rewarded enough by way of his appointment as a Cabinet Minister and plums of various other offices to men and women around him some of whom, running in limousines, I regret to say, would not have owned even a motor cycle for their entire heredity.

Be that as it may, what is more surprising to us is Mr. Thondaman's playing hand in glove with those very same racists and also his endeavouring to promote such people who are alleged to have set on fire the Jaffna public library said to be the brain of the South — East Asia, as Kings.

In this situation one must be mad to think that the entire Tamil Community of Sri Lanka particularly those of the North and East will accept him as a National Leader or for that matter even as a Tamil Leader. Of course Mr. Thondaman, is the president of CWC — a plantation Trade Union through various manipulations and tactics the secrets of which are well known to the plantation community, from what happened to leaders like Aziz, Vellayan and others. Even as far as the plantation community is concerned Mr. Thondaman would have achieved all that he boasts as his 'achievements' in the UNP government, forty years ago, when he was the uncrowned King of the plantation community, if he had an honest desire. But, he thought otherwise, that those poor plantation workers would have joined other leftist Trade Unions led by leaders like Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and Dr. S. A. Wickramasinghe, if they got their rights like citizenship.

There is much more to Mr. Thondaman's 'credit' but let me conclude by reminding Mr. Thondaman of the old saying, one can fool (cheat) all people sometime, some people all times, but not all people at all times. As such, I request Mr. Thondaman to keep aloof from the people of the North/East and their problems.

Aggrieved Doctor from the North

Public Opinion

