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THE
MANIFESTO
OF THE
SAMAJAWADI MAHAJANA
PERAMUNA

GENERAL ELECTION

1960

Samajawadi Mahajana Peramuna

INTRODUCTION

There is no individual who can live in happiness in isolation from society and there is no society that is capable of providing the common weal by sacrificing the happiness of the individual. Such a society can exist, if at all, in theory only. Society which may consist of a few or of many individuals can be contented and prosperous if, and only if, the relationship between such society and each individual is benign and rightly co-operative. This relationship should be moulded according to a proper concept of individual Freedom that seeks to do justice to hopes and aspirations. It should be readily patent to anybody making a balanced appraisal of world conditions that this relationship could never be brought forth either by a capitalist regime, which permits unreservedly the exploitation at will of one individual by another, or by a Marxist dictatorship, the inherent policy of which is to fashion society by brute Force.

Both these methods, i.e., the capitalist and marxist by forces intrinsic in them place the system above the man. In the conflict of these systems, where one is striving to attain supremacy over the other, the human element is completely forgotten, the fundamental political principle of happiness for mankind is submerged, and the world shifts from confusion to confusion worse confounded. The inevitable sequel is the constant fear of scarcity, war, violence and disaster.

In Ceylon, this situation is, at the moment taking a critical turn. Due solely to the struggle between the systems, Capitalist and Marxist, leaving aside the general questions, not even a single one of the important basic problems of the people has been solved up to date, in our twelve years of independence. Whichever of the two systems gains ascendancy in the future, no one forming a critical judgement could say that our country or people could ever prosper, in such a situation.

This in main was the cause for the birth of the Samajawadi Mahajana Peramuna in 1957.

FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS. Several factors are essentially contributory to the wellbeing and welfare, nay the very existence of man in physical and civilised form. The five chief ones amongst them are food, shelter, clothing, good health and religion. As food to the body so is religion to the spirit. He who lacks in one or the other can never be really happy. Both are equally essential.

Closely associated with these requirements are the requirements of education and employment. In satisfying these needs it is not our policy to rigidly adhere to a particular method, for the whole world in all its aspects is in a state of flux, ever changing, and our methods adopted to derive certain results have to undergo corresponding changes. We are however not unaware of the existence of unchangable fundamental political principles essential for good government.

OUR PLEDGE. We shall solve the food problem in four years. The soil of our country is quite fertile and water necessary is available in perennial streams.

Technological knowledge, technical skill, manpower and machinery are available. In this set up a government which cannot produce at least the basic requirements in food within the four years we stipulate, should resign from office irrespective of its right to stay on for further twelve months. We shall evolve methods acceptable to the people, of solving the other fundamental questions, too, within a reasonable limit of time. A large number of other problems are so much part and parcel of the basic problems that they will be automatically solved in the process of dealing with the basic problems.

SAMAJAWADI MAHAJANA PERAMUNA

MANIFESTO

Apart from restoring a sense of security, decency, discipline, and dignity in the life and conduct of affairs in the country after years of confusion and waste, the major heads of our programme of work if we are returned to power are as follows :-

1. FOOD. We will take every possible step to make the country self-sufficient in food in terms of a four - year plan we envisage.

2. AGRICULTURE.

We shall (a) open up the vast spaces of uncultivated land.

(b) improve and intensify the existing cultivations.

(c) reduce our dependence on the three major crops of tea rubber and coconut by encouraging the cultivation of other cash crops.

3. PADDY LANDS ACT AND ACREAGE TAX. We will so revise the Paddy Lands Act as to increase the production of paddy by co-operation between owner and cultivator without any ultimate threat of the State taking over the land for cultivation.

The arbitrary acreage tax of Rs. 6/- per acre will be reduced and adjusted to conform to the yield per acre.

4. LANDLESSNESS. Under our plan of Agriculture steps will be taken to provide the landless with at least the bare minimum of a plot of land and a house to live in.

5. KANDYAN PEASANTRY. One of the urgent matters that we will attend to on being returned to power will be the removal of the poverty and backwardness of the Kandyen peasantry. As far as possible we will create villages for their settlement both among the valleys and estates of the Kandyen provinces. Any balance left over after the creation of these villages will be absorbed into our scheme for the general development of agriculture in the land.

6. IRRIGATION, FLOODS AND DROUGHTS. We will handle these subjects as really facets of the single problem of water. We shall make our best effort to use every drop of rain that falls on this land.

7. INDUSTRY. This subject will be handled in the following manner:-

- (i) Important industries to be undertaken by the State with participation of any private capital as can be encouraged to be forth coming.
- (ii) Cottage industries to be organised on a regional basis by the participation of both State and peasant capital.
- (iii) Other industries to be left to private enterprise; but if no private enterprise is forthcoming in necessary spheres, State to undertake them in the same manner as in the case of important industries.

8. NATIONALISATION. Although we do not agree that State ownership alone leads to greater efficiency or to a more equitable distribution of wealth we will not hesitate to adopt this method of organisation in suitable spheres.

The pattern of the existing nationalised services will be so revised as to make them efficient and profitable.

9. COMMERCE AND TRADE.

We shall (a) gradually control the import of all necessities which can be economically produced locally.

(b) restrict the import of luxuries; this restriction, however, will be relaxed in stages as the country progresses.

(c) comprehensive Ceylonisation,

10. FOREIGN INVESTMENT. We welcome foreign investment in the island subject to our laws of taxation and exchange control.

We shall however lay down the fields in which foreign investment will not be permitted where they must be reserved for investment by local enterprise, public or private.

11. TAXATION. The present system of taxation in Ceylon is definitely unsuited to an underdeveloped country like ours. We will therefore remodel the system of direct taxation in the country so as not to discourage the potential investor.

12. NATIONAL PLANNING AND THE CENTRAL BANK. The Central Bank will be made to play a dynamic role in the development of the nation. National Planning too will be made the responsibility of the Central Bank.

13. COST OF LIVING. We realise that it is our special responsibility to bring down the cost of living. The organisation of production and distribution contemplated under our programme will be such that the cost of living will definitely be brought down.

14. EMPLOYMENT. The organisation of agriculture, industry etc, under our programme will be such that it will provide full and productive employment for our people.

15. LABOUR. Relations between employer and employee will be placed on a human footing that will achieve maximum co-operation and will also be profitable to both parties. Trade union rights will not be curtailed

16. HOUSING. We will formulate a satisfactory scheme for housing the houseless and those who live in insanitary or uninhabitable houses according to a definite plan.

17. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE AND AYURVEDA. Our first aim is to prevent the incidence of disease. On the curative side, the functioning of the Health Service would be so ordered as to make its benefits more conveniently and usefully available to the people.

It should also be mentioned here that our policy is to promote the development of both systems of medicine, Western and Ayurveda

18. SOCIAL INSURANCE AND FACILITIES FOR CHEAP CREDIT. We will establish a scheme of Social Insurance backed by a Social Insurance Fund to help the people in contingencies like unemployment, floods, droughts, crop failures- etc,

Along with the system of Social Insurance we will also inaugurate a system of Credit Institutions to help the peasant, the small holder and the small trader.

19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT. Under the guidance of the Central Government, Local Bodies will be called upon to play an integrated and enlightened part in the fields of Police Service, Health, Housing, Social Insurance and Education.

20. EDUCATION. We will give the country a truly national educational system which will develop the skills necessary for a nation that has to develop fast. We do not object to the existence of assisted school so long as they conform to the basic educational principles laid down by the State.

21. LANGUAGE. Sinhalese will be the official language of the country. Every possible provision will however be made for the use of Tamil in keeping with the reasonable aspirations of the Tamil speaking people. English will be made compulsory in the Post Primary Section.

22. INDIAN PROBLEM. This is one of the first major problems we propose to solve if we are returned to power- If after sending away all the Indians we can by voluntary repatriation by providing incentives, there is still a balance, they will be so handled as not to cast the burden of their existence on the Kandyan people alone.

Further, in the case of these balance Indians, they will not be given any electoral rights until at least 15 years have elapsed after they have learnt the language of the area and become our own nationals.

23. FOREIGN POLICY. We will be strictly neutral in our foreign relations.

24. COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS. We will take steps to make Ceylon a Republic within the Commonwealth.

25. LAW AND JUSTICE.

- (i) We will take immediate steps to codify the laws of the land
- (ii) The Attorney General's Department will be so strengthened so that poor litigants will not, because of poverty, be deprived of proper legal advice.

26. REPRESSIVE LEGISLATION. We will remove from our midst the so-called Public Security Ordinance.

27. THE 1958 EMERGENCY. Immediately we are returned to power, we will appoint a Commission of Inquiry to investigate and report on the following matters:-

- (1) The causes that led to the declaration of a state of Emergency in Ceylon in May 1958.
- (2) The causes that brought about the disturbances between the Sinhalese and the Tamils.
- (3) The killings and tortures perpetrated by the Government with the help of the Army and the Police
- (4) The question of compensating the thousands of people who fell victim to various types of harrassment for one or more of the above causes,
- (5) The story of Police and Military atrocities in places like Gandara, Beruwala, Padaviya, Polonnaruwa, etc.

28. TRANSPORT The Bus Service and the Railway will be integrated into a single service under one controlling body

29. RELIGION. We will treat every religion with equal fairness. Where it is felt that any religious organisation should be cleansed, we will provide such organization and the public with all the proper assistance we are asked towards that end.

30. ART AND CULTURE. We will devise suitable machinery to foster the art and culture of the land. To this end we will also enlist the co-operation of our education system.

31. BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION. Within our period of office we will make a determined effort to stamp out bribery and corruption by such steps as streamlining the administration, educating the social conscience, and with the correct example at the top.

32. PUBLIC SERVICE. The set up of the Public Service will be so transformed as to suit the needs of a modern administration for development and welfare of the country.

We will grant full political rights to all public servants except, to the defence and police forces.

The manner of exercise of these political rights however will be defined appropriately by discussion with the public servants themselves.