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**A TENTATIVE DRAFT**  
OF THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
**ALL - CEYLON TAMIL CONGRESS**  
TO BE PLACED FOR APPROVAL BEFORE THE INAUGURAL  
AND  
FIRST BUSINESS MEETING  
OF THE  
**ALL - CEYLON TAMIL CONGRESS**  
TO BE HELD  
**AT THE TOWN HALL**  
COLOMBO

*On Sunday the 29th October at 9.30 a.m.*

1945

CEYLON PRINTERS Ltd.  
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# CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL-CEYLON TAMIL CONGRESS

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## **Name.**

1. This organisation shall be called THE ALL-CEYLON TAMIL CONGRESS.

## **Object.**

2. The aims and objects of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress shall be :—

- (a) 1. The attainment of Swarajyum for Ceylon.
- 2. The recognition of the sovereignty of the people of Ceylon by the establishment of a free Constitution based on the enlightened principle of Democratic Equality under which no single race, community, class or such other group will be in a position to dominate over the others.
- (b) The recognition of the right of self-determination for the peoples of Ceylon.
- (c) The establishment of political equality for all sections of the population of the Island.
- (d) The recognition of the cultural autonomy of every community in the Island.
- (e) The promotion and maintenance of goodwill and co-operation with the other communities in the Island in the interests of national solidarity.
- (f) The cultivation of close and friendly relations and the promotion of political and economic collaboration with the peoples of India.
- (g) The maintenance of friendly relations and cultural contacts with the peoples of Great Britain and the other progressive countries of the world.
- (h) The recognition of the dignity and personality of man and the removal of all forms of disability and inequality.
- (i) The recognition of the unity and indivisibility of the Tamil people in Ceylon based on a common racial and cultural heritage.
- (j) 1. To preserve and develop the Tamil language and literature.
- 2. To spread Tamil culture and ideals.
- (k) 1. To promote the agricultural and industrial development of the Island based on a scientifically planned and co-ordinated economy.
- 2. To obtain a living wage for labour.
- 3. To raise the standard of living of the people.
- 4. To establish social security and equality of opportunity for the people.
- 5. To work for universal free education based on sound principles.



6. To abolish all social inequalities and social injustices.
7. To remove any disabilities which may unjustly prevent the Indians settled in Ceylon from discharging their obligations and exercising their rights as members of the body politic.

(l) Generally to promote and safeguard the cultural, economic and political interests of the Tamils for the purpose of the common weal.

### **Membership.**

3. (a) All Tamils, men and women, normally resident in Ceylon who are of and over the age of 18 years and who subscribe to the aims and objects in Article 2 shall be eligible for membership.

(b) Every application for membership shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be signed by the applicant, and shall be forwarded with the annual subscription to the Joint General Secretaries directly or to the Secretary of the District Association established in his area.

(c) All members shall be grouped according to their residence and enrolled in the District Congress Association operating in their area.

### **Subscription.**

4. Membership subscription shall be Re. 1/- per year ending 31st December of each year. The renewal subscription shall be payable in advance on or before the 31st day of January of each year. Each District Association shall be entitled to 25% of the subscription collected from its members, for its Maintenance Fund.

### **Officers.**

5. The Officers of the Congress (all of whom shall be honorary) shall consist of a President, two Joint General Secretaries and two Joint Senior Treasurers.

### **Management.**

6. (a) The All-Ceylon Tamil Congress shall be under the management and direction of a General Council designated the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress Committee, consisting of (1) the officers of the Congress, (2) representatives elected from District Associations each of which shall be entitled to return to the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress Committee one member for every 500 members on its roll, with the exception that during the first year of the Congress the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress Committee shall consist of 60 members, (exclusive of the Officers), all of whom shall be elected at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress. With a view to obtaining an even distribution of membership in the first A.C.T.C.C. a minimum of 10 members each shall be elected from every one of the following four Divisions:—Northern Province, Eastern Province, Up-country Provinces and Colombo Districts.

(b) The A. C. T. C. C. shall carry out the programme of work laid down by the Congress from session to session, and deal with all new or urgent matters which may arise during its term of office. It shall submit a report of its work at the annual session of the Congress which shall be held each year in the month of December.

(c) The A. C. T. C. C. shall have power to frame rules not inconsistent with the aims and objects of the Congress for regulating all matters connected with the Congress.



(d) The A. C. T. C. C. shall within two weeks of the annual session of the Congress elect from among its members 15 persons who, with the officers of the Congress and six other members nominated, as hereinafter provided by six Select Committees of the Congress, shall form the Working Committee of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress with the temporary proviso that in the first year, the inaugural and first business meeting of the Congress shall choose from among the members elected to the A. C. T. C. C. 15 persons to serve as members of the Congress Working Committee.

(e) It shall also be the duty of the A. C. T. C. C. to promote the social, cultural and economic activities of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress, and in furtherance of this object, it shall within two weeks of its assumption of duties, nominate the nucleus of six Select Committees of five members each (one of whom shall be the convenor) to organise each one of the following sphere of activities of the Congress :—

- a. Tamil Literature and Philosophy.
- b. Oriental Fine Arts, especially Dravidian.
- c. Finance, Statistics and Economics.
- d. Social Security, Social Justice and National Health.
- e. General Education and University problems.
- f. Agriculture, Industry and Commerce.

(f) The A. C. T. C. C. shall meet as often as required by the Congress Working Committee, or on a written request addressed to the Congress Working Committee by not less than one-fifth of the members of the A. C. T. C. C. Such request shall specify the purpose for which a meeting of the A. C. T. C. C. is desired to be convened. At such a meeting no subject or subjects other than those specified in the request, shall be brought up for consideration.

(g) The quorum of the A. C. T. C. C. shall be a minimum of 20 members or one-fifth of the total strength of the A. C. T. C. C., whichever is the less.

### Select Committee.

8. (a) Each one of the six nuclei Committees of 5 members each, nominated by the A.C.T.C.C. under Article 7(e) shall co-opt three other members into their Committees, and the six fully constituted Select Committees of 8 members each, shall thereafter proceed to elect each its own Chairman and Secretary.

(b) These six Select Committees shall generally promote the study of, and create intelligent public interest in, the subjects under their purview, by encouraging research, study circles and original publications, by holding meetings, public lectures, debates and exhibitions and by organising tours, demonstrations, rallies and conferences.

(c) Each one of the six Select Committees shall have power to nominate one of its members to serve on the Working Committee of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

(d) Each Select Committee shall send a report of the work it has done during the year, to reach the Joint General Secretaries not later than 30 days before the annual session of the Congress for incorporation in the report of the A.C.T.C.C., which has to be submitted at each session of the Congress.



**Congress Working Committee.**

9. (a) The Working Committee of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress shall consist of :

1. The officers of the Congress.
2. 15 persons elected by the A.C.T.C.C. from among its own members.
3. One member nominated by each of the six Select Committees of the Congress.

(b) The Congress Working Committee shall be the executive official authority and shall have the power to carry into effect the policy and programme laid down by the Congress and the A.C.T.C.C., and shall remain responsible thereto.

(c) The Congress Working Committee shall appoint one or more persons to examine records, papers and account books of all or any of the District Committees or Select Committees which shall furnish to such person or persons so appointed, all information and give them access to all office records.

(d) The Congress Working Committee shall have the power to :

1. Frame rules and issue instructions for the proper working of the Constitution and in all matters not otherwise provided for.
2. Appoint as occasion arises special committees for special purposes.
3. Generally help, advice, superintend, direct and control District Committees and Select Committees and define their powers.
4. Take disciplinary action against any committee or committees or its or their office-bearers and committee members for misconduct, wilful neglect of duty or default, provided that the committee or committees or its or their office-bearers and committee members shall have the right of appeal to the A.C.T.C.C., whose decision on any matter in dispute shall be final.

(e) In the case of delegates and/or of members of the A.C.T.C.C. or the office-bearers or members of the Congress Working Committee, the A.C.T.C.C. shall have the power to take necessary disciplinary measures for such misconduct, wilful neglect of duty or default.

(f) The quorum for a meeting of the Congress Working Committee shall be seven members including the officers.

**District Associations.**

10. (a) The area over which each District Congress Association shall function shall be defined and demarcated by the Working Committee of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

(b) The members of each District Congress Association shall at a meeting convened for the purpose in the month of July or August of each year and in accordance with the directions given by the Congress Working Committee (1) Elect their own Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee to carry out in their area the policy and programme of



the Congress under the direction of the Congress Working Committee; (2) Elect the representative or representatives to sit in the A. C. T. C. C. for the ensuing year under Article 6a (2) and elect their delegates to the annual sessions in the proportion of one delegate for every 25 members on the roll of their respective District Associations. The Secretary of each District Congress Association shall submit the names and addresses of the representatives and delegates elected at this meeting to the Joint General Secretaries within two weeks of the election; (3) The Treasurer of each District Congress Association shall keep a proper roll of members in the District and shall forward a full and complete list of members and their addresses to the Joint General Secretaries every three months or at any time the Congress Working Committee calls for the same. He shall also keep proper accounts of the receipts and expenditure incurred and shall send statements of same to the Joint Senior Treasurer every three months, and to the Congress Working Committee as and when called for; (4) The Committee of each District Congress Association shall annually send to the Joint General Secretaries a report of its work so as to reach them 30 days before the annual session of the Congress for being incorporated in the A.C.T.C.C. report which shall be submitted at each session.

### **Election of President.**

11. (a) Any ten representatives or delegates may jointly send the name of any member of the Congress duly qualified under Rule No. 3 whom they propose for election as President of the next annual session of the Congress so as to reach the Joint General Secretaries of the Congress on or before a date to be fixed by the Congress Working Committee.

(b) Names of all persons so proposed shall be published by the Joint General Secretaries and it will be open to any person whose name has been so proposed to withdraw his candidature by informing the Joint General Secretaries in writing within ten days of the publication of the names.

(c) After the elimination of the names of any persons who have withdrawn, the names of the remaining candidates shall be published and such names circulated to the District Congress Associations.

(d) On a date fixed by the Congress Working Committee, the representatives and delegates of each District Congress Association shall assemble at a place to be fixed by the respective District Congress Committees to record their votes by secret ballot in favour of any one of the candidates for the presidency of the Congress.

(e) The Secretaries of District Congress Committees shall report to the Congress office the number of valid votes cast in favour of each candidate.

(f) Soon after the receipt of the reports from all the District Committees, the Joint General Secretaries shall announce as President-elect the name of the candidate obtaining the largest number of votes provided that such candidate has secured not less than fifty per cent. of the votes polled.

(g) In the event of no candidate obtaining the requisite number of votes, the representatives and delegates in each district shall on a date fixed by the Joint General Secretaries elect one out of the two persons who obtained the highest number of votes in the previous polling, and the Joint General Secretaries shall on receipt of the reports from all the



District Congress Committees declare the person getting the higher number of votes as the President-elect of the Congress.

(h) In the case of an emergency such as the demise or resignation of the President-elect, the Joint General Secretaries shall forthwith fix a date for a fresh election. In case such a procedure is found impossible the A.C.T.C.C. shall elect the President at an emergency meeting, with the temporary proviso that for the first year of the Congress the President shall be elected by a vote taken at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

### **Annual Session of the Congress.**

12. The annual session of the Congress shall be convened by the A.C.T.C.C. at such place, date and time in the month of December as may be decided on by the A.C.T.C.C. Two months previous notice of the date of such session shall be given to each of the District Committees who shall notify their respective members of such session, with the temporary proviso that the date, time and venue of the first session or sessions of the Congress shall be fixed by the Congress Working Committee elected at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

### **Annual Session Procedure.**

13. The annual session of the Congress shall be conducted in two parts preferably on two consecutive days—first a business session and secondly a general session.

At the business session :

(a) The report of the A.C.T.C.C. on the work done during the previous year shall be submitted.

(b) The Joint General Secretaries and the Joint Senior Treasurers shall be elected with the proviso that the Joint General Secretaries and the Joint Senior Treasurers for the first year of the Congress shall be elected at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

(c) The names of members elected by District Associations to form the A.C.T.C.C. for the next ensuing year shall be duly notified to Congress for ratification.

(d) Any other urgent business as shall be decided on by the outgoing A.C.T.C.C.

At the general session :

(a) The Presidential address shall be delivered.

(b) Any resolutions placed before the Congress by the outgoing A.C.T.C.C. shall be considered.

(c) Any motion by any individual member or members 15 days' notice of which has been given to the Joint General Secretaries in writing and approved by at least one third of the members present at a meeting of the A.C.T.C.C., shall be brought up for consideration.

(d) Resolutions recommended for adoption by the A.C.T.C.C. elected for the next ensuing year shall be considered.

With the proviso that the whole procedure to be adopted at the first session or sessions of the Congress shall be decided upon by the Congress Working Committee elected at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.



### **Annual Session Composition.**

14. The annual session shall consist of :—
- (a) Ex-Presidents of the Congress duly qualified under Article 3.
  - (b) Members of the A.C.T.C.C. of the year immediately preceding the session.
  - (c) Members of the A.C.T.C.C. elected for the ensuing year.
  - (d) Delegates elected under Article 10(b) (2).
  - (e) All other members of the Congress and distinguished persons invited by the Congress Working Committee are privileged to attend but may not take part in the debate or discussions without the special permission of the President. They cannot under any circumstances take part in the voting.

With the proviso that the composition of the first session or sessions of the Congress shall be decided upon by the Congress Working Committee elected at the inaugural and first business meeting of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress.

### **Policy.**

15. The policy followed by the Congress shall be guided by, and be in accordance with, the aims and objects of the Congress defined in Article 2.

### **Congress Decisions.**

16. No decision of the Congress arrived at an annual or a special session shall be amended or cancelled by a subsequent session except by a majority of two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.

### **Special Session Congress.**

17. The Congress Working Committee upon its own motion or upon a requisition in writing signed by not less than 15 of its members and addressed to it, shall convene a meeting of the A.C.T.C.C. for considering a resolution for holding a special session of the Congress. Such resolution shall be effective if passed by a two-third majority of the members present. Thereupon the A.C.T.C.C. shall summon a special session of the Congress at such date, time and place as it shall determine. At such session only the special resolution and the matters for which the session was summoned shall be considered.

### **Quorum.**

18. The quorum for the annual or special session of the Congress shall be 75 including the President.

### **President.**

19. The President shall be the *ex-officio* Chairman of all meetings of the A.C.T.C.C. and the Congress Working Committee.

### **The Joint General Secretaries.**

20. The Joint General Secretaries shall be in charge of the Head Office of the Congress and shall be responsible for keeping records of all the proceedings of the annual session of the Congress and the meetings of the A.C.T.C.C. and the Congress Working Committee; and also for obtaining reports of the activities of the various District, Select and Special Committees and for placing them before the A.C.T.C.C. or the Congress Working Committee.



### **Vacancies.**

21. Whenever a vacancy among the officers or the members of the A.C.T.C.C. or Congress Working Committee occurs, the A.C.T.C.C. shall have power to fill up such vacancy by co-option. In case of a vacancy in the A.C.T.C.C. the co-option will be done in consultation with the district, the seat of which has fallen vacant. Vacancies arising in any Select Committee shall be filled by co-option on their own initiative by the members of the particular Select Committee in which the vacancy or vacancies has arisen.

### **Funds.**

22. The Joint Senior Treasurers shall receive and keep proper accounts of all moneys of the Congress. Such moneys shall be placed in one or more of the local Banks approved by the Congress Working Committee and the cheques on the said Bank or Banks shall be signed by the two Joint Senior Treasurers or one of the Senior Treasurers together with either of the General Secretaries or the President. Except recurring expenses, the Joint Seniors Treasurers shall not without the prior sanction of the Congress Working Committee expend any sum of money over Rs. 100/- nor shall they invest the funds or any part of same in any manner.

### **Trustees.**

23. The Congress may acquire, take on lease, or otherwise hold immovable and other property in the names of three or more trustees to be elected at a meeting of the A.C.T.C.C. Every such trustee so appointed shall continue to hold office until he dies, leaves the Island permanently, becomes incapable of acting, resigns or is removed from the office of trustee by a resolution of the A.C.T.C.C. In any of the said events the A.C.T.C.C. shall elect a new trustee in place of the trustee so dying, leaving the Island permanently, becoming permanently incapable of acting, resigning or being removed from office and pending such election the authority of the full body of the trustees shall be vested in the remaining trustees. The trustees shall carry out such instructions or directions pertaining to the aforesaid properties as may be issued from time to time by the A.C.T.C.C.

### **Interpretation.**

24. On any question of interpretation of the foregoing rules or those framed under Articles 7 and 8 or on any matter not provided for therein, the decision of the Congress Working Committee shall be final, subject to revision by the A.C.T.C.C.

### **Amendments to the Constitution.**

25. No amendments to the Constitution shall be made except at an annual or special session of the Congress and only if such amendments have received the support of two-thirds of the delegates present.

### **Duration of Offices.**

26. (a) Each President-elect shall assume duties and take charge of office a fortnight before the date fixed for the Congress session at which he shall preside.

(b) The Joint General Secretaries and the Joint Senior Treasurers elected at a Congress session shall assume duties and take charge of



office within a week of the termination of the Congress session at which they have been elected. The previous Joint General Secretaries and the Joint Senior Treasurers shall continue to hold office and shall be in complete charge during the Congress session and shall lay down their offices only after the termination of the Congress session, and within a week of its termination.

(c) The A.C.T.C.C. shall assume office on the second day (or at the commencement of the second part) of the Congress session (their election having been ratified on the first day (or first part) of each session). Members of the previous A.C.T.C.C. shall relinquish their duties on the termination of the first day (or first part) of the Congress session.

(d) The members of previous Select Committees shall continue to function until a fortnight after the termination of the Congress sessions, when new Select Committees formed under Article 7(e) and Article 8(a) will come into office.

With the proviso that the whole of Article 26 shall not apply during the first year of the Congress and shall come into force only from and after the first day of November, 1945.











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