

WANTED A STATE UNIVERSITY - NOT A ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

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Date: 1953

On a previous occasion, I declared: "There is the Foreign Relations Office of the American Embassy that contributes feature articles to the local press saying that if we study in our own language with English as a compulsory second language our (then) Finance Minister's grandson will never be able to impress a World Conference as he did".

This concept no doubt reflects the attitude of the Americans towards our language policy. But it is well to remember that a nation's language policy lies entirely within the purview of its sovereignty and is universally left to its absolute discretion, unhampered by the wishes of another nation however powerful it may be.

We have reason to believe that such opposition to the language change over in our country is a means to an end. The desired object is manifest from the disclosures published in the Tamil Weekly, Eela Kesari of 25.5.1952 during the time of the last General Election, which says: "In Colombo, at a party thrown by the American Embassy to the members of the Federalist Party, in the course of discussion about the future of the Tamils, the Americans, it was alleged, had assured the Federalists that in the event of a Tamil secession, the Americans would advance to their aid". Comments are needless. Here is a classic example to show how the fissiparous tendencies existing in our country are being exploited in the interest of a foreign government. Such foreign interference in our educational policy and such foreign exploitation of our fissiparous tendencies, viewed in the world-context, threatens our very existence as a nation.

We have heard of the troops of Chiang Kai Shek who is supported by the American Government aligning themselves with the Karens who are waging war with the people of Free Burma in order to have a separate state for themselves, although they belonged to the same state as the Burmans under British rule.

Even free India has not escaped the evil effects of the undermining technique adopted by foreign missionaries. Recently, the Prime Minister of India criticised them for "politically influencing" the people of the North-East. He said: "The Missionaries did very good work and I am full of praise for them, but politically speaking they did not particularly like the change in India. Just when the changes were coming to India there was a movement supported by many foreigners to encourage the people of the North-East to form separate and independent state.

Further, Dr. Katju, Home Minister, has received complaints alleging that foreign missionaries (American Missionaries among them) were giving "monetary temptation" and other inducements to people in many places to make them converts. In the Parliament of India, charges of anti-Indian

activities were recently brought against foreign missionaries from Cochin, Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and other areas. While some of them have induced the Indians in certain districts to secede from the Indian Union, others have taken an anti-Indian view in regard to Goa and the Portuguese Government (Vide Hindu 2.9.53).

Mr. A.A.D.Luiz, Anglo-Indian representative in the Travancore-Cochin Legislative Assembly, explained the issue with reference to "a request to the Pope by some Fathers belonging to the Anglo-Indian community in co-operation with certain laymen of their community for a separate diocese and a Bishop either directly under Rome or the Patriarch of Goa". This "venture", Mr. Luiz said had also received "the encouragement of the foreign priest. Such requests at the moment stood stimulated by some of the very recent rulings from Rome" (Vide Hindu 9.9.530).

As a result, the Home Minister announced in Parliament that "it had been made clear to all foreign missionaries working in the country that if they engaged in social welfare work, medical work and education, they were welcome, but if they indulged in proselytisation, it would be undesirable. That was the basic rule governing the Indian Government's attitude."

This basic rule of free India is in consonance with Gandhi's doctrine. Says Gandhi to the missionaries: "If you come as fellow-helpers and fellow-seekers, there is a place for you here. But if you come as preachers of the 'true Gospel' to a people who are wandering in darkness, as far as I am concerned, you have no place. If I had power and could legislate, I would stop all proselytising. I would not only, not try to convert, but would not even secretly pray that anyone should embrace my faith. I have been an unfortunate witness of arrogance going in the garb of humility. Conversion and service go ill together".

The Founder of the Gandhian Brotherhood asserts: "No doubt our constitution has guaranteed freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, but this does give a carte blanche to powerful financial interests outside the limits of our territory to exploit the poverty and illiteracy of our masses through the arresting media of loud speakers, platforms and pamphlets. This kind of spiritual aggression has to be halted." Accordingly, the Home Minister recently turned down the application of a U.K. Mission to enter India for conversion work.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that "the planting of 'fifth columnists' in a foreign country and all other acts aimed at the subversion of a state's political or social order" are set out "among the criteria of aggression" in the report of the "15 member committee appointed by the last General Assembly U.N.O. to search for an answer to the question, *What is aggression?*"

It is unfortunate that this "indirect aggression" which is inseparable from conversion work has not yet received adequate attention of the Government of Free Lanka. It is unfortunate that the Government of Free Lanka has

repealed the Colonial Regime's Section 7 1 (b) of Ordinance 26 of 1947 which required that "in the case of any denominational school any grant from State funds shall be payable only in respect of pupils whose parents profess the religion of the proprietor of the school." As a result of the repeal of this Section, state funds have been paid out to Missionary bodies to seduce the youth from the religion of their fathers. Such seducing of the youth involves ridiculing the faith of their fathers and extolling the virtues of the Missionary's own, and thereafter rooting out the loyalties which the youth have to their homes and their country and planting in their place new loyalties which draw them away from their homes and their country. The net result is that the funds of the public are being used for self-annihilation.

There are Missionaries who obtain land in Buddhist Centres, settle a few Catholics in them, first put up a large Cross on a conspicuous site, then erect a church and then a school to which Buddhist children are gradually enticed by different kinds of inducements, such as places, scholarships, money etc.

The foreign influence on our education is so great that a foreign national arriving in our country to take up the principalship of a local school does not hesitate to stigmatise the language changeover as "a foolish doctrine of fanatics"; another foreign national who has just taken up a temporary appointment in our University hits the headlines by calling the change-over "a waste of man-power and time"; another foreign national who happens to be our Vice-Chancellor though absolutely ignorant of our language talks glibly of its inadequacy, while neglecting all the time the paramount duty of the university to produce new books to facilitate the change-over; yet another foreign national who happens to be the Bishop of Colombo warns us: "The shadow of the Tower of Babel" will be on us, unless, perhaps we continue to speak to one another in a foreign language, while a local Bishop vows at his Consecration not to rest "till the remaining ninety per-cent of the population who are not Christians are converted."

There are American Missionaries scattered throughout the country ostensibly to help the people but really to influence them politically. There is no doubt that they act in collaboration with American Correspondents. One day, an American Correspondent called on me and asked me whether it is not a fact that "a religion of individual contemplation and deeds like Buddhism does not lend itself to community interests and relieving poverty." I rebuked this correspondent for insulting the Buddhists of this country and advised the person to study our religion before trying to find loop-holes in it. American Missionaries are engaged in their proselytising campaign even in Eastern Province. An American Catholic Mission has got a Bishop in Trincomalee and an important centre in Batticaloa.

Apparently, Ceylon has suddenly become a sanctuary for the foreign missionaries who are not wanted in Japan, China, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and India. I understand that these foreign missionaries can get their immigrant visas to Ceylon with greater facility than to any other country, and they can even find employment in our schools. And no wonder

their patrons stoutly oppose the swabhasa medium of education. As I have already informed the public, it is understood that in one category of Missionary Schools (English) in Western Province, which is predominantly a Sinhalese-speaking area, the total number of teachers is 570 of whom 264 are not Sinhalese-speaking with the result that some of the schools have come to interpret the medium of instruction in terms of finding jobs for foreign nationals.

On the top of all this, there is now a proposal to start a Roman Catholic University in Colombo with American professors. I am afraid this will pave the way for Ceylon to be the cockpit of all Asia. What we want is another State University in Colombo, which is non-residential in character. Every university in the country should stand for national unity. If a university is run by a particular denomination, it is bound to stress the denominational differences, and induce the other denominations too to start universities of their own.

This will divide the people into water-tight compartments. At the present stage of our national existence, we want unity and harmony. Therefore any move that is likely to destroy our unity and harmony must be resisted with might and main. It is axiomatic that if our existing fissiparous tendencies are accentuated and developed, we shall soon fall a prey to a designing foreign power.

All the world knows that under British Rule, India had communal universities such as Aligarh Muslim University and Benares Hindu University, and the communal differences they engendered played a considerable part in preparing the psychological ground for the partition of India. Free India rejected communal universities and communal electorates and adopted joint universities and joint electorates. The good results of this wise policy have won the admiration of all mankind.

It is just and proper to demand that the aims of the nation should necessarily be the aims of all universities in the country. Therefore all universities in the country must embody the cultural and social unity which the nation desires. It is inconceivable that a university run by a denomination whose adherents are no more than 7% of the total population can work for the cultural and social unity of the entire nation. To think that this is feasible is to go back to the colonial regime which was rejected by us in 1948. Can you imagine that 91% of the population consisting of Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims would willingly entrust their children's education to an organisation that is "not only a church but a state within a state and a state above a state" - a hierarchy which imposes a dogma from its lofty pedestal on the ground that it is "independent of any sort of earthly power" and its rights "as educator are prior and superior to the rights of the state as educator and no government has the legal right to infringe upon this divine prerogative". Therefore a Roman Catholic university is a retrograde move.

It is, however, true that we want another university in Colombo immediately. But it should be run by the State on the same lines as the one

at Peradeniya. It should be non residential in character so as to make room for poor, deserving students who cannot afford the luxury of residential education. Further it should conform to the official language policy. By no means should the universities in the country be allowed to brush aside the official language policy which aims at fitting the youth of the land to shoulder all the responsibilities of a new democracy without reserving “the loaves and fishes” to “foreign experts” or to the “exalted circle” once pampered by a foreign bureaucracy. Those who want to reserve privilege and power to the westernised section of our society do not mind ignoring the unity of knowledge by teaching some subjects through swabhasa and others through a foreign medium; just as they do not mind breaking up social unity by wanting to have communal universities.

That the eminent British administrators of India were cognisant of this important truth is clear from a confidential interview St. Nihal Singh has had with one of them. In the 1953 September number of *Modern Review*, St Nihal Singh, writing an intimate impression of Asutosh Mookerjee, the chief architect of the leading university of India, Calcutta University, remarks that he gave a new direction to life in Bengal “by his keenness for the adoption of the mother tongue as the vehicle of education”. According to St. Nihal, the greatest tribute that was ever paid to Asutosh emanated unconsciously from that eminent educationist and empire-builder, Lord Lytton, sometime Governor of Bengal and Chancellor of Calcutta University, who confided in St. Nihal Singh that Asutosh’s scheme would shake the very foundations of pax Britannica in the East”. Now you can understand why foreign visitors and their campfollowers oppose the swabhasa medium of education.

Shall the people of Ceylon allow the enthronement of a “New Colonialism” under the mask of a benevolent gift of a foreign medium university run by American Professors which will turn out to be a veritable Horse of Troy?

Our pioneers were of the opinion that “the Ceylon University will represent and carry into effect the vital principle of education, that local needs and conditions are the first and most important element for consideration in framing an educational scheme” (P.Arunachalam). The same principle, presumably, guided the then Minister of Education who, while introducing the University Bill, stated that the London University Examinations were an alien orientation of our education; and the same principle is embodied in the University Ordinance which, under Objects and Reasons, asserts that London syllabuses are “irrelevant and inapplicable to Ceylon conditions”. And the general consensus of opinion of the Unesco Seminar was that “both on educational grounds, and in the interests of the cultural enrichment of the world, the medium of instruction, at all levels, should be the mother tongue and that it was essential that the means be found to make this possible”.