

HINDUSTAN TIMES

3648

23 JAN 1973

Rajaji Memorial

Sir,—Mr T. T. Krishnamachari, former Union Finance Minister, has made an excellent suggestion to set up an institution to propagate Rajaji's ideals as a fitting memorial to the elder statesman. But if recent experience is any guide, one cannot be hopeful of any positive response from the Central Government to T. T. K.'s proposal. For instance, the Central Government did not issue any clear cut instructions about a holiday on the day of Rajaji's funeral (December 26). It could have simply followed whatever was done on the occasion of Dr Rajendra Prasad's death in 1963. Why did it not do so?

Rajaji was the first Indian Governor of West Bengal after independence but the Congress Session meeting in Calcutta on the day of Rajaji's death did not have the meeting postponed even by a day as a mark of respect to one who was (in the days of freedom struggle) considered one of the most prominent leaders of the Congress. In fact the Session went on even as Rajaji was consigned to flames in Madras.

Some argue that the intensely practical man that Rajaji was, he would not have approved of people stopping their work to pay him homage. So were Mr Nehru and Gandhiji. But that did not stop the Congress and Government from declaring holidays on their death. The Congress Government of West Bengal did not appear to have declared a holiday in memory of the man who brought peace

and harmony to that State in the wake of freedom, and who hailed his appointment as Governor General as a "promotion" to West Bengal in national stature.

Sad to notice that even the news reel of Films Division did nothing to reflect "either the spontaneous and magnificent nature of the homage paid to Rajaji" by lakhs and lakhs of his countrymen or the "no less significant manifestations of grief elsewhere," to use T.T.K.'s own words. It did not even show Rajaji with Gandhiji whose 'conscience-keeper' he was supposed to be nor his being sworn in as the Governor General of India.

According to T.T.K. "any memorial to Rajaji should be something that would re-vivify the image of Gandhiji, Nehru and Rajaji" and I, for one, will agree with him cent per cent on that score. But then I must make the point that memorials to Gandhiji and Mr Nehru inspired by the Central Government make it appear as if nobody by the name of Rajaji ever lived in their times. In fact one would suspect a calculated attempt on the part of the powers that be to make it appear that the impact of Rajaji's personality on the lives of Gandhiji and Mr Nehru was little or nothing. Now after Rajaji has passed away those who claim themselves to be sole inheritors of the legacy of Gandhiji and Mr Nehru should give Rajaji his legitimate place in the history of our country.—Yours etc.,

K. VEDAMURTHY

5/37, Elliamman Colony,
Teynampet,
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January 12,

- (4) It is true that the recent conflict with Pakistan saw the Government of India providing purposive leadership. At the same time it must be remembered that this Government's economic policies are not such as would enable the country to recover from the economic chaos that has resulted from the refugee influx and the war. It requires tremendous courage on the part of our rulers to keep policies based on dogma in cold storage and to apply pragmatic policies to reviving the economy. We feel that if we are returned in a large number particularly in the four States, we shall be able, through the activities of our Groups in the Assemblies, to persuade the State Governments, to undertake more realistic economic policies calculated to revive our economy.
- (5) The Constitution 24th and 25th Amendments that have been adopted have, robbed the Constitution of its very substance - viz., guaranteeing the fundamental rights of our people. Our Party is the only one standing four-square against these Amendments. It will continue to mobilise public opinion and voice its feelings within the legislatures and outside for an early repeal of these amendments. If the Party is returned in large enough numbers, then its efforts will have to be taken very seriously as those representing the views of a considerable section of the electorate.

The forthcoming Assembly elections will be hard and costly. We cannot fight unless you give us the weapons. We can produce the men; but we need money, jeeps and much other equipment and publicity material in a big way, without which ours would be a childish endeavour against the forces of totalitarian reaction backed by formidable financial and other resources of all kinds including, above all, the hatred, greed, envy and power of those in office.

We write this letter with a very small request -- your personal contribution of Rs. 251/- only towards our election fund. While joint stock companies are prohibited from contributing to political parties, there is no such bar on receiving contributions from individuals, and or partnership firms.

Please forward your contributions to us at the above address by Cheque, Demand Draft, Money Order or if you so desire we shall be happy to send our representative to collect it from you.

Yours sincerely,