

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the 141st Birth Anniversary Celebration of C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) organised by Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and Swatantra Foundation.

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the 141st Birth Anniversary Celebration of C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) organised by Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and Swatantra Foundation at TAG-PS Dakshinamurthi Auditorium, P.S Higher Secondary School Campus, Mylapore, Chennai today (08.12.2019).

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me great pleasure to be here today on the occasion of Shri. C.Rajagopalachari's 141st birth anniversary celebrations being jointly organised by Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and Swatantra Foundation. It is not only a matter of immense joy and happiness to be recounting to you the greatness of the Shri. C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji). It is also my duty to do that and I consider that to be a great privilege.

Shri. C. Rajagopalachari, popularly known as Rajaji or C.R., was born in the year 1878 at Thorapalli in Krishnagiri District. He became a Lawyer and later joined the freedom movement. Eventually he left his profession to involve himself fully in the freedom movement.

Initially he was attracted by the ideas of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Thilak. Later he realized the potential of Gandhi ji's Satyagraha movement and was the first to join the movement. In 1915 Rajaji met Gandhiji at Salem. Before that Rajaji had distributed pamphlets of Gandhiji's struggle in South Africa. Thus Rajaji became very close to Gandhiji even before Gandhiji came in to limelight of Indian freedom struggle. He was described by Gandhiji as the "Keeper of my conscience".

Rajaji strongly opposed un-touchability that was prevailing at that point of time. Throughout his life he advocated upliftment of Dalits. Rajaji was instrumental in enacting the law to allow people of all castes to enter Hindu temples. He was also a pioneer in legislating the Farmers' Debt Relief Act.

Rajaji participated in the agitations against the Rowlatt Act, Vaikom Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience Movement. In 1930, he was imprisoned when he led the Vederanyam Salt Satyagraha in response to the Dandi March. He was an accomplished writer, and is also credited with composition of the song Kurai Onrum Illai.

Rajaji served as the Premier of Madras Presidency from 1937 to 1939. He became Governor of Bengal during the 1947 – 1948 riots period and was appreciated for his wise decisions during the turbulent period.

Rajagopalachari issued the Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act 1939, under which restrictions were removed on Dalits and Shanars entering Hindu temples. Arulmigu Meenakshi Amman temple at Madurai was opened to the Dalits and Shanars. In March 1938 he introduced the Agricultural Debt Relief Act, to ease the burden of farmers. He also introduced prohibition, in 1937, along with a sales tax to compensate for the loss of government revenue that resulted from the ban on alcohol. Under his tenure, Madras considered as the best administered province by political historians.

Rajaji was instrumental in initiating negotiations between Gandhi and Jinnah. In 1944, he proposed a solution to the Indian Constitutional tangle. In the same year, he proposed an “absolute majority” threshold of 55 per cent when deciding whether a district should become part of India or Pakistan, triggering a huge controversy among nationalists.

From 1946 to 1947, Shri. Rajagopalachari served as the Minister for Industry, Supply, Education and Finance in the Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru.

He became Governor General of India, a post held by the British rulers. He was the only Indian Governor General of Independent India as the same was abolished to create the Post of President after India became a Democratic Republic in January 1950.

He also served as a Minister without Portfolio and then Minister for Home in the Union Government in Delhi. Later in 1952 he became the Chief Minister of Madras and served until 1954. In 1959 he founded the political organisation ‘Swatantra Party’ which became the principal opposition party at that point of time. He opposed socialist policies and supported free market regulated economy. Eventually India adopted this much needed concept in 1991.

Rajaji was one of the three first recipients of Bharat Ratna in the year 1954.

In the year 1962, Rajaji representing a delegation of Gandhi Peace Foundation visited USA to meet the then United States President John F. Kennedy to impress him upon the need to abolish research and creation of Nuclear Weapons, John F. Kennedy originally gave 15 minutes' time for the meeting but eventually listened to Rajaji for more than 75 minutes. He described the presentation of Rajaji as, I quote ***"This meeting had the most civilizing influence on me. Seldom have I heard a case presented with such precision, clarity and elegance of language."*** It is pertinent here to mention that Rajaji was the only person, not in any power or position to have been given the Red Carpet welcome by the United States Government in 1962.

Rajaji wrote many articles against Nuclear Weapons and a compilation of such articles was released as a book titled "Mankind Protests". Carrying forward his work on nuclear disarmament, Rajaji communicated with the leader of Soviet Union Mikita Khrushchev. In 1955, he had met Mr. Khrushchev in Chennai (then Madras) and had talked about nuclear arms race. In 1957, he wrote a letter to the Soviet leader reminding him of their meeting and also of ending Cold War and Nuclear arms race. It must be noted that the Russian Supremo shared Rajaji's concerns and agreed to act on those.

He also met the Pope and requested him to issue a release in favor of abolishing nuclear weapons. The pope willingly did that.

Rajaji was a multifaceted personality – Freedom Fighter, Great Administrator, Statesman, writer and above all a sharp Intellectual having the ability to forecast Events of the Future.

Rajaji also contributed on the literature side. His writings on Ramayana and Mahabharatha are the testimony to his contributions for posterity.

Rajaji has written regular articles on almost all the issues in Swarajya Magazine for almost 20 years. Rajaji lived out a very simple life until his death, and he died on 25th December 1972, at the ripe age of 94.

Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari is also well remembered for his literary contributions, some of which are considered modern-day classics. He frequently wrote articles for Kalki and his own journal Swarajya, of which Philip Spratt was editor. Richard Casey, Governor of Bengal from 1944 to 1946, regarded Rajagopalachari as

the wisest man in India. Today, his private papers are part of the Archives at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library at Teen Murti House, Delhi

I wish to congratulate the Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and Swatantra Foundation for having organised this function in honour of Shri. C. Rajagopalachari. I join them in paying my respects to the great souls and I am sure that functions such as this will help to transform the dreams of Shri. C. Rajagopalachari into reality for the present and future generations.

I am thankful to the Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and Swatantra Foundation for having given me the opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering on such an important occasion as the birth anniversary celebrations of C. Rajagopalachari. I am sure that the movements to celebrate the memory of the C. Rajagopalachari will only get stronger as years roll by.

On this occasion, Thiru. T.S. Krishnamurthy, Former Chief Election Commissioner, President, Swatantra Foundation Board of Management, Thiru. G. Subramanian, President, Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs, Thiru. S. Ramasubramanian, Founder & Managing Trustee, Swatantra Foundation, Honorary Secretary, Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs, Thiru. K.V.S. Gopalakrishnan, I.P.S (Retd.,) Trustee, Rajaji Centre for Public Affairs and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai – 22

Sd/-

Date : 08.12.2019

Addl. Director (PR)