

Is the war over..? The answer is no. Quarter of a century ago I wrote a book titled "India, We Tamils and Sri Lanka". In this book I pointed out that the "We Tamils" movement (Nan Thamizar) is wedded to fight for a Tamil Government somewhere in the world because they have no chance what so ever in creating a government in Tamilnadu. With this movement started the Tamil Diasphora throughout the world. The members of this movement infiltrated into all political parties in Tamilnadu except the two Communist Parties and the Muslim League.

The diasphora became very strong after the shameful July 1983 riots. If not for the tremendous moral and financial support of the diasphora the LTTE couldn't have waged the war against conventional Sri Lanka Army for even 30 weeks. But with the consistence support of the diasphora Prabhakaran was able to fight for 30 years.

The diasphora is not dead. It is very active and now their target is to launch propaganda in order to isolate Sri Lanka in International Community.

I have reliable information that this propaganda battle will be launched on 2nd of October (Ironically the birthday of Mahathma Gandhi) from Germany with support of some politicians and intellectuals. I wish to publish some extracts from my book because I feel they are relevant today.

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Soon after the skeleton of these proposals were known to the extremists who supported Mr. Bandaranaike in the hustings they lost no time in organising retaliation. Professor F.R. Jayasuriya, a fanatic Sinhala don of the university, decided to take up a fast unto death inside the parliament building against any act which went beyond making Sinhala the only official language of the country.

Premier Bandaranaike was advised by his saner friends to go ahead with the proposed comprehensive legislation. They pointed out that t that moment he enjoyed the respect and support of a vast majority of the people and that he was too "tall" to



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the Sinhala parliamentarians of the Sama Samaja and Communists Parties not to vote against the bill. A "Satyagraha" organised by the Tamils at the Galle Face Green opposite the Parliament was broken up by unruly elements and many innocent men were thrown into the shallow waters of the lake by the side of the parliament building. The majestic statue opposite the Parliament of Ponnambalam Ramanathan, the Tamil statesman who was elected by the vast Sinhala majority as the member of the "Educated Ceylonese" to the Legislative Council in 1911, the man who honoured this obligation to his voters by fighting against persecution of Sinhala people by the

as past pupils did not know each other nor could they communicate with each other. Learning of the English language deteriorated.



Dr Colvin R de Silva

Mr Bandaranaike's government made several attempts to come to some understanding with the minority leaders. However, in 1958 one of the cabinet ministers, who ironically had finished his higher education in Jaffna, decided to introduce a new series in registering motor vehicles. He decided to do away with hitherto used English letters in the number plates and introduce the Sinhala letter "Sri" preceded by the numeral 1 (and subsequently 2,3,etc) for all vehicles registered after a gazetted date. The Tamils in the north retaliated strongly for the first time. They started fixing the Tamil letter "Sri" in number plates of their vehicles, i.e. vehicles bought in the north. This was a golden opportunity for the Sinhala extremists to unleash their suppressed antagonism. They started with barrel of tar erasing of Tamil name boards of mercantile and public institutions (By this time most public institution had their signs in Sinhala, Tamil and English). When the first step was taken there was no stopping. When the Colombo Tamils refused to be provoked by the defacing of the name boards the fanatics started arson, looting and even murder and rape. Even with the emergency powers the government had enormous difficulty to curb the violence both in the south and in the north.

(for an authoritative account refer to : Vittachi, Tarzie, Emergency 58, London : Andre Deutsch, 1958)

Several Sinhala extremists leaders and Tamil leaders including Members of Parliament were kept under house arrest.

After suppressing the riots Mr Bandaranaike moved a bill named "The Tamil Language (special provisions) bill" in Parliament. The Tamil parliamentarians of the Federal Party refused the Prime Minister's offer to bring them to Parliament house under escort to participate

in the debate and to be taken back with escorts to their residences where they were under house arrest. The plea made by the entire Opposition including the Left and the United National Party to withdraw the detention orders and to allow the Tamil members to participate in the debate was not accepted by the governing party. The result was another calamity. The entire Opposition refused to discuss the bill without the presence of Tamil representatives. One junior minister and one senior MP of the government party resigned to vote against the bill which they felt was giving too much to the Tamils. Only these two members and a lady member of an extremist group who was elected to the House on the unseating of her husband in an election petition voted against the bill. (Her husband too was under house arrest at that time)

The Tamil language special provisions bill was passed with an over-

whelming majority. Though it was passed in the Parliament the majority of Sinhala and Tamil people were not in a mood even to study its implications. The whole atmosphere in the country was indifferent.

However the reality was that no serious action was taken to implement either the Sinhala only act or the Tamil language special provisions act for a long time.

So much of blood and fire did not benefit the new generation, either Sinhala or Tamil. On the other hand it contributed a lot to the deterioration of education and ethnic harmony, leading to the other fields, first among them was the national economy.

To be continued



By S Piyasena

former Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India

British Raj, stood motionless and helpless while fanatic cruelty was polluting the fresh air blowing from the deep blue sea.

After debating day and night for several days the bill was passed in all its readings at 5.45 p.m. on the 5th of June

1956 barely seven weeks after the new government was sworn in.

Thus dawned the era of racial segregation. It gradually replaced the hitherto prominent class struggle structure in the political arena. Segregation was felt in every sphere of life. It was compulsory for the children to be educated only in their mother tongue. Exceptions were made only for Burghers (Eurasians). Muslims and children of mixed parentage. In prestigious Colombo public schools like Ananda and Royal that had produced some of the most talented men in all fields had to segregate their pupils keeping with the compulsory language stream. The Sinhala and Tamil children enter the kinder-garten in the school in which their fathers were proud



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be intimidated by any "pigmy". Mr. Bandaranayaik who was always labelled by left politicians as a unsteady and hesitating politician confirmed those allegation and at one of the most crucial moments in the nation's history (certainly the most crucial after independence) surrendered to the Sinhala language extremists. One clause bill was presented to the house to make "Sinhala language the only official language of Ceylon". The preamble of the bill was longer than the bill itself. The bill had to be debated in the House with all public galleries closed to ensure undisturbed proceedings. Outside the parliament building the situation was tense. The Sinhala extremists were trying to intimidate

Bharatanatyam and Dancing Concerts

Bharatanatyam is a classic dance form originating in Tamil Nadu, a state in Southern India and is also the National Dance of India. This dance form denotes various 19th and 20th century reconstructions of Cathir, the art of temple dancers. Cathir in turn, is derived from ancient dance forms.

Bharatanatyam is usually accompanied by the classical Carnatic music. Today Bharatha dance Gurs have taken this great responsibility of preserving and spreading this ancient tradition to the younger generation. But I was devastated when I saw some young dancers performed a "so called Bharatha dance" on a dance concert on the 6th of September which did not depict any fundamental elements of Bharatha natyum.

Bharata natyam is evenly divided between three elements Nritta, Nritya and Natya. and none of the elements were seen in those dancers basic Tattaduvus and Mettaduvu s were performed by the students showing a very incapable person behind them and who should thinks twice before teaching a student Bharatha Natum again with out destroying

the value of it as its one of the most pure Indian traditions .

Anyone can learn a few steps of any dance form, and choreograph a dance, but when it comes to a person who calls her self a bharatha natyam teacher should never mislead and destroy the vales of such a pure tradition by teaching the students such a low quality dance. It takes hard long years to master the art of Bharatha natyam and with out knowing the fundamental value the teacher should never bring students on stage. Dancer items witness on this concert were no where near bharatha natyum except for the costumes and jewellery.

I should firmly say that as a highly qualified bharatha dancer Guru who spent most of my life learning this pure tradition and spreading it among many students in Melbourne I did not see a capable, bharatha dancer or a teacher behind those students and that person who is responsible for bringing those students on stage should be ashamed for doing so as she is directing her students to a completely wrong direction.

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