

Today's demographic reality is such that the Sinhala people, despite their majority status, cannot sustain themselves without the free cooperation of the Tamil and Muslim people. Either we go it together or we go bust. On the contrary, what leaders like Abeytissa Thero and other Sinhala right wing extremists seem to be telling the minorities are: "you join us, but remember we are in charge."

A Tamil?

A report appeared in the Island (25/10) that Revd Dr Medagoda Abeytissa of the Sunethradevi Pirivena has declared, "it is better for the country to have even a Tamil as President than to be divided." He said this addressing the media at the National Library and Documentation Centre. Yes, Revd Dr Abeytissa. What ever could be wrong about having a Tamil as President? The term, "even," in your assertion suggests that to pick a Tamil is not quite right and, maybe, only an unfortunate last resort. Why?

Hasn't anyone told you about the pivotal

BETTER HAVE EVEN A TAMIL PRESIDENT? WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT ABEYTISSA HAMUDURUWO?

role played by our Tamil and Muslim brethren in the struggle for independence from the colonial masters? Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, TB Jayah, M.C Siddi Lebbe and others who fought along with Sinhala leaders to convince the British that our island can be governed as one entity. For hundreds of years these people have been living together with us sharing, caring, and contributing toward our island. Contrary to your prejudice, isn't it a wonderful thing to have a Tamil as our President? A great and wise move that heals? Remember how Pandit Nehru went up to Ali Jinnah and beckoned the latter to be India's first Prime Minister? Nehru made this gesture when Jinnah was planning a break-away Pakistan. Is this kind of move not in your political vocabulary?

Monks of Mahinda are out as the monks of SWRD came out in 1956. Bodu Bala Senawa Commander-in-Chief did his job trying to stir anti-Muslim feeling and he is in low key now; the law-enforcers are behind him. It was real drama watching this man behave raucously. The Buddha would have identified him as part of the Maara Senawa.

Or is it that you really think our minorities are inferior specimens? In the name of Buddhism-leave alone common sense-please educate us? Buddhist teachings are unfaltering about man's equal biology and equal human rights. Have you heard of the four Brahma Viharas that the Buddha urged his followers to practice; not merely to practice, but to build into their lives? Metta (sincere friendliness) is the primary of them and Karuna (compassion) follows Metta. You don't seem to follow either. Second, your historical memory of how our country got independence obliterates the pivotal role of Tamil and Muslim leaders in that struggle.

Phobia Creation

The 'Bring Back Rajapakse Campaign,' commenced on the feet of the defeat of

Mahinda Rajapakse. The Rajapakse family and cohorts of various ranks and levels who enjoyed a decade of financial benefits from the franchising of corruption throughout the island banded together as they had to smell the impending danger. Evidently and surprisingly, government has been in no hurry to make them meet their ditta dhamma vedaneeya karma. These Rajapaksians, on the other hand, had more politically savvy than the government and they thought it best to keep the heat up. A new device of serially constructing phobias followed. Monster bogeys were created but they have all flopped with the passing of time when events belied the false charges. Came the security question first: "Our country's security is in serious danger," was the slogan. We now know it is not. Then, came the 'selling the country bogey.' That could not be sustained as people have been made to realise that no selling, really, has taken place certainly not up to the level the previous regime sold. Government managed to get the upper hand in countering the move. A rare toughness was demonstrated there. Next, came the bogey about the protection clauses for Buddhism being taken away from the proposed constitution. That, too,

minorities are: "you join us, but remember we are in charge."

Campaign isn't Penetrating

My fear is awakened as the campaign could have a visceral and gut-penetrating impact for those among the public-at-large who maybe drawn to it. The question is will the masses be drawn to it this time? Will mass emotion hijack mass common-sense? Strangely, certain middle class elements have joined the bandwagon. These are segments of the population who are typically educated. Observing the Diaspora emails I get, it is not hard to find professional persons and educated persons lining up to fan the smouldering coal; to keep the fires on. I get foul-smelling emails from

Here, "nation," of course means the Sinhala- with the manaapaya for Sinhala Buddhists. Monks of Mahinda are out as the monks of SWRD came out in 1956. Bodu Bala Senawa Commander-in-Chief did his job trying to stir anti-Muslim feeling and he is in low key now; the law-enforcers are behind him. It was real drama watching this man behave raucously. The Buddha would have identified him as part of the Maara Senawa. So were many of the younger yellow-robos he had got together. Two holy blokes were arrested for invading the safe house where Rohingya refugees were kept. What Buddhist compassion they displayed toward a most vulnerable and helpless lot of people! Well, that is the Buddhism of racism or jaathyaalaya. One man in robes was found to be a paid layperson!

these guys.

The positive signs are that the campaign isn't penetrating the broad masses like last time. It is more articulated and more organised; it employs the devices of digital media and it is active in social media; it is all these because moneyed and skilled professionals are behind the campaign, yet it is failing to spread. This is evident and this is the fault line that government must exploit. The absence of a charismatic leader is also a weak spot in their armoury. MR looks tired more than inspired and he doesn't convince. People are listening less and less to him. The daily exposures of his and his clan's misdeemeanours while in office are eroding the once mythical popular faith in the Rajapakse's. For a brief moment people asked, "how about Gota?" But the latter's future is in the balance as one needs to know whether that future will be (Athule) "inside," or "outside."

New Jaathyalaya

Be that as it may, we see before us the new version of the "nation saving campaign."

No Factual Basis

The official line adopted by these elements is that the proposed devolution

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Making Sense
Shyamon Jayasinghe

