

Voice of Shakthi Thursday 13 July 2000

Last week we looked at the LTTE's response to the devolution package offered jointly by the U.N.P and the PA. We discussed how the LTTE has sought to reject the proposal with the infantile argument that it is the Tamil people's will that will determine the future of the war. This week, we hope to examine the attitude of their Sinhala counterparts, the Sinhala extremists, to the peace proposals. Predictably, the Sinhala extremists have also rejected the proposals, vowing to fight it tooth and nail at a referendum.

Frankly, we do not see a big difference between the LTTE and the Sinhala extremist organizations. Not simply because they both approach the question of peace from two extremes, but also because they both seem to be working under the assumption that they alone represent the true voice of their people. The LTTE, we know, has gone to great and very bloody lengths to assure that it is only their voice that is heard. They do this simply by means of branding anybody who does not agree with them as traitors to the Tamil cause. By this means, they have succeeded in bringing in to line many of the Tamils living in the West. In the N.E of Sri Lanka they have simply eliminated their opposition - physically. The only voice against the LTTE in these parts is the voice of the grave.

Our newly risen Sinhala patriots too, we fear, are striving to emulate the LTTE as far as seeking conformity through ostracism is concerned. People are being fed the lie that the only way to safeguard the Sinhala nation is to fight the war to the bitter end - whose end they are quite reluctant to say. True Sinhala patriots should follow their example and cultivate a war mentality, which is not receptive to logic but only to the most infantile and simplistic ways of thinking. If you don't agree with them, then you are a traitor. How fortunate are the Sinhalese that their new saviors are not armed bloodthirsty like their Tamil counterparts - at least not yet.

This infantile belief that the Sinhala nation can be saved only by cultivating a robotic mental existence is slowly creeping into our Sinhala expatriate community. Local saviors of the Sinhala nation are being promoting the likes of Champika Ranawake and S. L. Gunasekera as the result of divine intervention. They want all Sinhala expatriates to develop a Champika mania just like the supporters of the LTTE want every Tamil to worship the glorious leader Prabhakaran. Some so-called patriotic organizations are already behaving like their agents abroad, diverting the funds they collect from the Sinhala expatriates into the coffers of the right wing organizations in Sri Lanka. If you can eat hoppers for Soldiers, you can also eat a buriyani for Champika.

What Sri Lanka needs today is peace and peace cannot be realized by asking for nothing short of Eelam or by pursuing the war unto death policy. It can only be realized by putting pressure on the LTTE and the government to negotiate a solution that would respect the aspirations of the Tamils and allay the fears and insecurities of the Sinhalese. Expatriate Tamils and Sinhalese can do that only by standing up to fascists within their communities.

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