



TAMIL WRITERS GUILD

Editorial

CONSEQUENCES OF TAMIL DISUNITY AND THE NEED OF THE HOUR TO STAND UNITED!

In Sri Lanka, the Tamils had their own kings and kingdom for millennia before colonial powers arrived in 1505. Under colonial rule the Tamil kingdom was merged with that of the Sinhalese kingdom rendering Tamils a minority within the Sinhalese kingdom. In spite of being intelligent, hardworking and peace-loving people with a long history of culture and accomplishments, the Tamils of North East Sri Lanka became the oppressed people, fighting to throw off the shackles of decades of oppression.

In 1833, the UK Colebrooke – Cameron Reforms recognised the two states of the North and East, meaning equal status for Sinhalese and Tamils. In fact, Sinhalese and Tamils fought shoulder to shoulder with sweat, blood and tears to gain independence from the British. Some Tamil politicians even served prison sentences.

At the time of independence in 1948, Tamils could have restored their kingdom and nationhood, as Pakistan did during the Indian partition, but Tamil political parties were not united and missed this opportunity. The then leader of the Ceylon Tamil Congress party, the late Mr. GG Ponnambalam QC, visited London in 1948 to challenge the Ceylon Independence Constitution. This had been completed with unholy haste by the UK government and the Sinhalese party leader, the late Mr. D. S Senanayake, along with the help of Tamil leaders who were deceived with promises of equal status between the two united nations –Tamil and Sinhalese.

After Independence, the Ceylon Tamil Congress was led by Mr. GG Ponnambalam QC. Other Tamil leaders, Mr. SJV Chelvanayagam QC broke away to form the Federal Party, and Prof. C Suntharalingam formed the Adanka Thamilar Party which demanded a separate state of Tamil Eelam given that the Sinhalese politico had not honoured their promise of equal status for Tamils.

Even though those Tamil leaders were highly qualified academics cum politicians, they failed to steer the struggle for parity with the majority due to their different ideologies and agenda. In fact, the Tamil politicians were fighting like ferrets in a sack for their individual pursuits, none of which came to fruition. Only during the campaigns against the Sinhala Only policy of 1956, Satyagraha (sit down protest) did the different parties present a united front against the government administration in Jaffna in 1961. For this, however, they were viciously attacked.

During the Eelam wars between 1983 and 2009 the Tamils faced worst atrocities and genocide which aimed to eliminate them from their homeland. Over one million Tamils fled the country, over 800,000 were displaced and more than 200,000 died in the violence.



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The final part of the war of 2009, conducted by the Sri Lankan government and supported by some 28 countries, represented a war crime scene: over 40,000 innocent civilians died just in few months whilst the world turned a blind eye.

Again, the Sri Lankan government was able to do this by engineering divisions amongst Tamils and lying to the international community that Tamil polity and fighters were the barrier to achieving peace on the island. Over twelve years have passed since the war ended but the Sinhalese have not produced any tangible solution to problems or reparation or rehabilitation or the return of land taken. They have failed to launch any war crime inquiry nor have they attempted reconciliation with the Tamils.

They continue to engineer divisions among the Tamils and their parties as this is convenient for the Sinhalese leaders who surreptitiously use the 'divide and rule' diplomacy which they inherited from the colonial rulers. They continue to use this very successfully to date in order to keep the Tamils fighting amongst themselves for power etc. so that they can achieve their dream of inheriting the entire island for just Sinhala Buddhists.

If all Tamil party leaders and followers had buried their differences and pulled together, the freedom movement would have been a formidable force with great impetus. Divisions in any movements give their opponents opportunity to drive a coach and horses. However, history has shown that people have established nations when they put their differences away in order to win back their homeland and lost freedom.

Looking at the current situation internationally, there are several organisations like the BTF, GTF, CTC, USTAG, TGTE to name but a few, who are campaigning for the Tamil cause. Although these institutions have their own mission and vision, surely there must be a common cause that could bind them together in order to overcome the trap of disunity sown by their enemies, in particular Sri Lanka. These are to save the Tamil language, freedom and the traditional homeland that belonged to the Tamils in the northeast of Sri Lanka!

Instead, the Tamils are still without their traditional lands and rights and could be seen as living in a police state. Sri Lanka has the highest ratio of military personnel to population anywhere in the world, that is, one member of the armed forces per six Tamils. Successive Sri Lankan governments have systematically and aggressively embarked on a brutal repression of the Tamil people.

Throughout the history of the Tamils, there have been Judases and saboteurs who betrayed their race, nation, leaders and derailed the freedom movements for personal gains and pleasures, the scourge of the Tamil movements. These defections and mutinies came to a head in 2009 Eelam war with disastrous consequences.

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In 1976, a conglomerate of Tamil political parties united to form the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). They met in Vaddukodai, Jaffna and passed a resolution demanding a separate state of Tamil Eelam in the North and East in the light of Sinhalese not granting equal rights to Tamils. In the general elections which followed in 1977, TULF won the North and East by a landslide. This overwhelming majority for a separate state sent shock waves to the oppressors. As a result, anti-Tamil pogroms followed and more than 3000 Tamils were brutally killed in 1977 and 1983.

Remembering this should be compelling enough to remind Tamil organisations not to ignore the horrendous human rights violations imposed on Tamil civilian populations, their lost freedoms and land. More importantly it should draw their attention to the Sri Lankan government's continuing agenda of engineering divisions amongst Tamils.

Histories are replete with many instances of protracted wars for freedom that have eventually ousted an alien invader and oppressor. In a similar situation in South Africa, the great leader Nelson Mandela formed the African National Congress from all the African parties and brought the Apartheid system to its knees and produced the first Black President in South Africa. It is therefore obvious to conclude that by uniting our resources and concentrating on our principle aim, we can liberate our Tamil brethren and homeland from the oppressors.

With the above in mind, as we write this editorial in the absence of a viable One Tamil United International Organisation which could face the daily challenges in delivering Tamil freedom and a homeland in the North East of Sri Lanka, it is comforting to know there have been vital actions taking place to bring together the representatives of all Tamil organisations, especially political, in order to achieve Tamil Freedom! This is the least we can do for the over 200,000 people who have sacrificed their lives for freedom during the last forty years.

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TWG Editorial Board – London, UK

10 July 2021

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