

The terrorist war

We must honour and congratulate the new President of Sri Lanka, President Wijetunga for his well thought out and guarded statement "that this country is not fighting an ethnic war but a terrorist war."

It is true that the vast majority of Sinhalese and Tamil people do work and live together. Tamil people have bought land in the Western Province, and have rented out houses and flats to live-in. They send their children to local schools over here. The English educated Tamil people send their children to private and overseas schools. The fortunate elite of the Tamil people send their children abroad either with money engendered here, or, with the money sent, or deposited in their names by friends or relatives abroad.

The continuation of the ethnic conflict is perpetrated by vested interests. The Eelam movement generates vast sums of money, from abroad in hard currency — for the buying of military hardware. It is also involved in the worldwide trafficking of

drugs.

Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran the present leader of the LTTE was not the initiator. The first to be involved was his predecessor the late Mr. Uma Mahewaran, who had his training abroad.

Not all expatriates are forced to give money to the movement, contrary to common belief and thinking. Some do voluntarily give. We know it.

The conflict in the North and East now, (apart from the forces), is between the LTTE and all other Eelam groups, who fear domination by the former. There are stark and valid reasons for this fear. Most of the anti-LTTE groups have Christian cadres, in their party movement.

Why I say this is, because the Tamil Christian groups and others abroad have

portrayed, — "that if is a fight between Christian Tamils and Sinhala Buddhist", for propaganda purposes. The Government and the Sinhala Buddhists were portrayed as chauvinists and blood thirsty. This is wrong. And the impression created had no validity.

Whilst abroad, I had to contradict this untruth. And also to oppose the notion created by the Eelam groups that the Sri Lankan government was racist and had plans to eliminate the Tamil race.

I have seen this ethnic cleansing. It is not done by the Sinhala Buddhists but by the Tamil Eelamists, who have killed Muslims at

prayer, Muslim and Sinhala villagers in the North and East including some young priests of the Buddhist faith.

Why didn't the Christian churches voice their horror?

I must concede that the majority of members in the Christian churches do not subscribe to the continuation of the conflict. But there are diehard Tamil Eelamists and pro-Eelam Sinhala individuals who at the moment hold positions in the hierarchy — viz: the governing bodies, (Executive) Standing committees or councils of the respective churches. They have had some influence on the government and on its thinking in the past.

In fact, the Eelamist lobby was so sure that the North and the East will be amalgamated that they were hoping to declare Eelam. Even a priest was to be appointed as the first Bishop of Eelam.

As a Christian, I challenge the Christian churches to come out openly and state, whether they believe in a Unitary State where we are all brothers. Or, in an Eelam Homeland Or ILAM? This challenge is to the present Chairman/Chairperson of the NCC The National Christian Council. What is your personal position? Come out and declare it. No declarations from the Secretary on your behalf.

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