



## WHY DOES SUMANTHIRAN PUT THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE?



Mr. M.A. Sumanthiran, MP has given an interview to Meera Srinivasan of The Hindu (published September 19, 2020) on the prospects of a political solution to the Tamil National question. He says:

“The political solution, which is a historic demand of the Tamil people did not materialize by way of a new constitution that was promised... though we made great progress.”

Mr. Sumanthiran does not spell out what the great progress they made was. It has by now been proved beyond all doubt that the whole exercise of constitution-making

undertaken by the so-called Good Governance regime (the Sirisena-Wickramasinge National Government) was a great farce. The “great progress” Mr. Sumanthiran speaks of was of course made only in hoodwinking the Tamil people and the international community.

From the Tamil people’s point of view nothing worthwhile was achieved. Mr. Sumanthiran and the opposition leader ‘Rajapaksas must honour their past commitments to India and the world’ Sampanthar Ayya gave themselves readily to be taken for a ride by the Sinhala supremacists, and were going to town with the unfounded promise of a federal solution very soon, very very soon, despite the fact that the Maithiri-Ranil duo were always categorical that they would never accept a federal solution. Sumanthiran, the lawyer, should have known only too well that the Sri Lankan Constitution with its inbuilt safeguards for a unitary Sinhala state

would never give itself to any federal metamorphosis. The only motive behind this farcical drama of going for a new constitution was to hold at bay the international push for accountability and justice for the international offences of crimes against humanity and war crimes which could well be taken forward to bring home the crime of genocide.

Mr. Sumanthiran should honestly own up the grave mistake of the TNA in pursu-

### ‘Rajapaksas must honour their past commitments to India and the world’



Meera Srinivasan

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SHARE ARTICLE



M.A. Sumanthiran

**TNA spokesman says the alliance must pursue its objective of a dignified solution to the Tamil national question and provide better economic lives to people .**

*Sri Lanka's Tamil National Alliance (TNA), that chiefly represented the Tamils living in the north and east in the post-war decade, suffered a huge setback in the August general elections, losing six seats in Parliament. With the Alliance's presence in the legislature having weakened and the Rajapaksas back in power at the Centre, that too with a thumping two-thirds, what are the prospects for TNA's long-standing demand for a political solution? Alliance spokesman and Jaffna MP M.A. Sumanthiran weighs in...*

**The TNA has suffered a huge setback in the August parliamentary elections, and has ceded ground to both, hard-line Tamil nationalists and allies of the Rajapaksa government. What are the Alliance's reflections?**

It is a very serious setback. We have been reduced from 16 to 10 seats in parliament. This is not very different to the local authority election results of February 2018.

One of the primary reasons is that we supported the [Sirisena-Wickremesinghe] government in office from 2015 to 2019. The expectations of the people were very high then. They hoped that all their problems will be fully resolved during that period. Although there was substantial progress in most matters, all the issues [pending since the war ended] were not fully resolved. I think there was a lot of disappointment over that fact.

Even the political solution, which is a historic demand of the Tamil people, did not materialise by way of a new constitution that was promised. We made great progress on that front too, but finally the question is whether it was achieved or not. When it was not achieved, it was counted as a failure. In regard to the release of military-held lands, there were considerable gains. But overall, since the expectations were not met, we also suffered an anti-incumbency sentiment, although we sat in opposition right through that time.



ing the mirage of a federal constitution and offer self-criticism for leaving the search for justice in the lurch.

The successive UN Human Rights Council Resolutions in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and the three UN Reports,

namely the UN General Secretary's Three-member Expert Panel's Report of 2011, the UN internal Audit Report of 2012 by Charles Petri, and, the most important of all, the OISL Report of 2015 brought forth a situation where Sri Lanka had to co-sponsor Resolution 30/1 at the UNHRC, which required Sri Lanka to constitute a Special Tribunal with international participation including from the Commonwealth in the form of judges, prosecutors, investigators and lawyers, and take other such measures towards accountability, justice and reconciliation.

This progress at the international arena was due to the struggle for justice waged by the Tamil people of the Homeland despite all threats, by the Tamil Diaspora and by the people of Tamilnadu. Also due to the political and diplomatic moves ingeniously made by the TGTE and other Diaspora organizations. Sumanthiran and his leader can claim little credit for these struggles and moves. When the time came for Sri Lanka to give an account of what it had done for honoring its commitments as per 30/1, it was Sampanthar Ayya who on his own accord demanded that two years extension be given to Sri Lanka. In short Sumanthiran and his leader did practically nothing to bring internal or international pressure to bear upon Sri Lanka to meet the ends of justice.

Even now Sumanthiran is not willing to build pressure on Sri Lanka for justice.

He extols Sri Lankan democracy not being aware that it is ethnocracy in the name of democracy, a lion in sheep's skin.

“... I think people must realize that in a democratic space like what we have now, with a preponderant majority of the country being Sinhalese and Buddhists, for a solution to emerge, we must win over at least a sizeable section of the majority community. The other is, even as a political party, we need to get involved in providing better economic lives for our people.”

So, Mr. Sumanthiran has made it amply clear why he and his boss keep a stoic silence on matters of justice, why they are reluctant to speak about genocide and war crimes and crimes against humanity, why they are not enthusiastic about the persistent struggles of the Tamil people for justice for the forcibly disappeared, for the release of the Prisoners of War, for withdrawal of the occupation army from the Tamil Homeland, and against the several forms of structural genocide. He spells out two reasons: First, we must wait for winning over at least a sizable section of the Sinhala masses. Next, we need to get involved in providing better economic lives for our people. The implication is this: if we seek justice for Tamil genocide and war crimes we will not be able to win over a sizeable section of the Sinhala majority community for a political solution. Secondly, if we insist on justice we may not be able to achieve better economic lives for our people.

Sumanthiran, please believe, is waiting to win over a sizable section of the Sinhala community before going for a political solution for the Tamil people. Sumanthiran is

waiting to win over a sizable section of the Sinhala people, and we must, in our turn, wait for Sumanthiran to achieve that magic size which would help him find a solution to their liking. Wish he had quantified that size, like 25 percent or 30 percent and also the time outlook for achieving the same. If he reckons one day that he has achieved 25 percent then he could say we must wait for a sizable section of the remaining 75 percent. And he can thus go on endlessly.

Sumanthiran as a politician has a solemn duty to improve the economic lives of the Tamil people and he has to appease the Sinhala rulers for that. He cannot be supposed to speak about their heinous crimes which would be rubbing them on the wrong side thereby endangering the economic improvement of the people. The same dichotomy of justice versus economic development as the Sinhala supremacists and their apologists pose before the Tamil people.

Sumanthiran goes on:

“The justice question is linked to the political solution. Questions of justice and accountability arose because of the ethnic conflict. Whenever we asked for our legitimate political rights we suffered violence and the struggle ended up in a full-scale war. Sometimes it is better to solve the root cause of the problems first and then look at the justice issues that had come up in the interim....”

It is in fact the other way round: the political solution is linked to the justice question. If by justice Sumanthiran means transitional justice, the transition to reconciliation demands justice. There can be no reconciliation, no peace without justice. Mr. Sumanthiran seems to be a careful chooser of words. He says we suffered violence, a

convenient way of avoiding any reference to genocide or war crimes. He speaks of a full-scale war, a convenient way of avoiding any reference to genocidal war, to mass atrocities or massacre. What is the root cause of the problem? National oppression against the Tamil people! How does Sumanthiran propose to solve this problem? Freedom, Assertion of the Right to Self-Determination, Referendum? Nothing of the sort! He has forgotten the triple tenets of Homeland, Nationhood and Self-determination.

Sumanthiran, please believe, is going to look at issues of justice only after solving the root cause of the problem. How he is going to solve it is a riddle wrapped in mystery. Where did he learn this art of seeking to solve the political problem before looking at issues of justice?

“This is something we learnt in South Africa - to secure the future before looking at the past. I think that is the more sensible way of addressing these issues.”

No, Mr. Sumanthiran, you are misrepresenting South African history to justify your appeasement of the Sinhala chauvinist forces. Many justice measures were taken by the South African apartheid regime even before there was a meaningful dialogue for a political solution. Symbolic of these measures was Nelson Mandela's release from a long incarceration of 27 years. And also the release of other political prisoners, the lifting of the ban on many democratic organizations, et cetera were also measures of justice which preceded the political talks. The efforts at a political solution succeeded only when the then South African President De Klerk accepted the one-man-one-vote demand of the ANC. After liberation the new democratic regime led by Mandela set up a Truth and Reconciliation mechanism to address the lingering justice issues.

How can Sumanthiran compare Sri Lanka with South Africa in this respect? Sri Lanka has not agreed to release any prisoner of war even 11 long years after the conclusion of the war, of course in spite of Sumanthiran's efforts. Sri Lanka has not agreed in principle to dismantle the Sinhala supremacist state structure, as the erstwhile white South African regime had done in the case of its apartheid state structure. There is no inkling of remorse on the part of the Sinhala rulers for crimes committed against the Tamil people. Speaking of the Truth and Justice mechanism of South Africa is a pet theme with the Sinhala criminal rulers who hope to have it as an escape route from facing justice. Sumanthiran is only assisting them along the same route.

By way of a political solution Sumanthiran does not have much to offer. He only reminds the Rajapakshes of their commitment to India to implement fully the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment. He needs to be reminded that Sampanthar Ayya was one of the three Tamil leaders who wrote to Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India pointing out the shortcomings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. To beg for the same 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment as a political solution after the lapse of 33 years and beseeching India for the same is a mockery of the great fighting people of Tamil Eelam.

The basic problem with Mr. Sumanthiran is his justification of the idea of reconciliation without justice. It is like putting the cart before the horse. This is flying in the face of the great lessons of history whose gist is: THERE CANNOT BE RECONCILIATION WITHOUT JUSTICE. Sumanthiran and Co are bound to fail in this game of skirting justice by offering some dubious political solution. The cart never pulls the horse.



**Thileepan:**

## **The Reckoning That Non-Violence Didn't Stand A Chance**

**Usha S. Sris-kanda-rajah**

The 26th of September 1987 will remain collectively etched in the minds of Eelam Tamils as the day of reckoning for them when they realized, agonisingly, that non-violence didn't stand a chance in their quest to liberate their homeland: It had already been established that non-violence had no chance 26 years before that on the 17th of April 1961 and ever since that day, when a peaceful civil- disobedience campaign, organised to protest a highly discriminatory law enacted against Eelam Tamils, was crushed, using excessive force in a vicious display of abuse of power.

The 26th of September 1987, was the day, Thileepan, the political head of the LTTE for the Jaffna district breathed his last, making the ultimate sacrifice for what he believed was a cause far bigger than his life. Thileepan had undertaken a fast-unto-death, calling on India to fulfill its pledge based on a "gentleman's agreement" towards "setting up an interim government" on an understanding reached earlier, between the



leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Velupillai Pirapaharan and the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. The promise was given verbally, on trust, on the latter's prompting, that took place at the Prime Minister residence, one that he promised to keep. It was given on the understanding LTTE would cooperate with the [Indo-Sri Lanka Accord](#) and would lay down its arms.



The story of Thileepan is inspiring as well as heart-rending, gut-wrenching as well soul-stirring - it's the story of a Tamil Freedom Fighter, who died a martyr, not by fighting as an armed combatant but by embracing non-violence - all for the noble cause of the freedom of Tamil Eelam - it's about a young man who fought a courageous fight to move if not spur both the Indian and Sri Lankan governments into action. A story that stands as a grim re-



minder and a clear illustration that non-violence didn't stand a chance in seeking basic demands for Tamils - those demands that were tied to their legitimate rights and aspirations.

Thileepan had made five demands and died without his demands being met.

Thileepan laid down his weapon, embraced non-violence and began his fast on 15, September, 1987, denying himself food and water, waiting in vain for some reassurance from Indian officials, namely J. N Dixit Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and died on 26, September, 1987. Neither did Mr. Dixit visit Thileepan nor were any assurances given on the "interim government" that was promised.

Thileepan's Five Demands were:

1. All Tamils detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be released.
2. The colonisation of Sinhalese in Tamil areas under the guise of rehabilitation should be stopped.

3. All such rehabilitation should be stopped until an interim government is formed.
4. The Sri Lankan government should stop opening new Police stations and camps in the NorthEastern province.
5. The Sri Lankan Army and Police should withdraw from schools in Tamil villages and the weapons given by the Sri Lankan government to 'home guards' should be withdrawn under the supervision of the Indian army.

The conversation between Rajiv Gandhi and the LTTE leader on the subject of an "interim government" is well documented in the book: 'War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers' by Anton Balasingam, who was himself witness to what transpired:

Promising to speak to President "Jayewardane to persuade him not to hold a referendum" on the proposed merger of the North and East, which was a sticking point in the Accord for the LTTE leader, for he didn't like the fact that the merger was subjected to a referendum, Rajiv Gandhi told the LTTE leader, "You must trust the Government of India, we are genuinely committed to promote the interests of your people."

The "defect and flaws" in the Accord, in particular its failure to sufficiently define the powers and functions devolved to the Provincial Councils (a set of proposals negotiated between 4, May 1986 and 19, December 1986 between the governments of Sri Lanka and India and the TULF leaders were recommended as the basis for the settlement - which the LTTE leader had already intimated he would not accept) was a bone of contention for the LTTE leader. Rajiv Gandhi admitting to the flaws and the time required

to establish the Provincial Council, proceeded to reassure the LTTE leader he is prepared to, “enter into a secret agreement regarding the formation of an interim government in the Tamil region” until such time the Provincial Council is formed:

I quote:

“We are aware of the fact that your organisation as well as your people do not trust President Jayewardane. Personally I don’t trust him either. Yet we have extracted major concessions from and formulated this Accord by exerting heavy pressure. There may be defects in the Provincial Councils Scheme. Nevertheless we can negotiate and improve upon it, enhancing the powers of regional autonomy. You should realise that it will be impossible to implement the provincial scheme immediately. It will take a long time. During that period we can set up an interim government in the NorthEast, in which your organisation can play a predominant role. I am prepared to enter into a secret agreement with you regarding the formation of an interim government in the Tamil region,” he said

End Quote.

Thileepan felt betrayed the “interim government” which was to function under LTTE control promised by Rajiv Gandhi was not materialising even after LTTE laid down its arms. In his “We Love India” speech on the 4th of August, the LTTE Leader spoke to the Tamil people over the concerns he had with the Indo-SriLanka Accord. Nevertheless he said, “The Indian Prime Minister has given me certain pledges. He has offered to guarantee the security of our people. I trust his sincerity. I have faith in his assurances. We trust that the government of India will not allow the Sinhalese racist state to resume genocidal violence against our people. It is because of this trust that we have decided to lay down our weapons to the Indian Peace keeping Force.” The LTTE

leader's "We Love India" speech extracts of which is given below needs to be read to appreciate his concerns, the extent to which the LTTE leader placed his trust in India and was ready to lay down arms and give non-violence a chance :

I quote:

"My beloved and esteemed people of Tamil Eelam...Having convinced me that the Indian Prime Minister desired to meet me, I was taken to Delhi in a hurry. The Agreement was shown to us when we reached Delhi. There was a lot of flaws and defects in the Agreement. We doubt whether the Agreement will bring a permanent settlement to the problems of our people. Therefore we explained to the government of India that we cannot accept this Agreement. But the Indian government was firmly determined to implement the Agreement whether we opposed it or not. ..We are not surprised over the position of the Indian government. The Agreement is not primarily concerned about the Tamil question. It is essentially a bi-lateral agreement concerned with Indo-Srilanka relations. There are obligations in the Agreement that bind Sri Lanka to Indian geo-strategic influence. It prevents the penetration into Sri Lanka external subversive forces inimical to Indian interests. It is for this reason that India showed extraordinary interest in the Agreement. At the same time this Agreement contains elements that determine the political destiny of Eelam Tamils. That is why we are strongly opposed to the Agreement, since it was concluded without taking into consideration our views and the opinions of our people. But our protests are meaningless when a mighty super power is determined to decide the political destiny of our people, it is beyond our ability do anything. The Agreement directly affects the political projects of our liberation organisation. It affects the mode of our struggle. It attempts to put an end to our armed struggle. The mode of our heroic struggle, fought for the last 15 years and built on the blood and sacrifice

of our fighters is to be dismantled in a few days time. This we cannot digest. This agreement suddenly disarms us without providing adequate time. Without getting the consent of our fighters. Without offering guarantees for the safety and security of our people. Therefore we refused to lay down arms. ..It was in these circumstances the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi invited me for discussions. I told him frankly about problems. I confided to the Indian Prime Minister that I do not repose the slightest trust in the Sinhala racist state, nor do I believe that the Sinhalese will implement the agreement. I spoke to him of the issue of security of our people and the guarantees for their safety. The Indian Prime Minister has given me certain pledges. He has offered to guarantee the security of our people. I trust his sincerity. I have faith in his assurances. We trust that the government of India will not allow the Sinhalese racist state to resume genocidal violence against our people. It is because of this trust that we have decided to lay down our weapons to the Indian Peace keeping Force... The weapons we took up and deployed for your safety and protection, for your liberation, for your emancipation we now entrust to the Indian government. From the very moment we hand over our weapons, we hand over the responsibility of protecting our people to India. In receiving our weapons from us, the only means of protection for the Eelam Tamils, the Indian government takes over from us the tremendous responsibility of protecting our people...The handing over of arms signifies the handing over the transfer of this responsibility. Were we not to hand over our weapons, we would be placed in a perilous situation of clashing with the Indian army. We do not want that. We love India. We love the people of India. We are not prepared to deploy our arms against Indian soldiers.. ”

End Quote.

Anton Balasingam describes in his book 'War and Peace' LTTE's disappointment in Delhi's failure to "setup the promised interim administrative authority" despite them having laid down their arms as a "gesture of cooperation" and handed over the "tremendous responsibility" of protecting the Tamil people to India.

Not only that, what happened after the Accord was signed on 29th July 1987, was entirely unexpected and did most certainly infuriate and frustrate the LTTE leadership.

It saddened Thileepan and affected him so deeply that he vowed to fast-unto-death unless India fulfilled its pledges:

"There were no initiatives from the government of India. In the mean time the Sri Lanka government opened up new police stations in the NorthEast consolidating the state's law and order machinery in the Tamil homeland. The Sinhala colonisation schemes intensified with the backing of the government. The funds assured by the Indian Prime Minister for the administration of the LTTE structures were discontinued after one month's instalment. The issue that deeply disturbed the LTTE leadership was the arrival in Tamil Eelam from India of a large number of armed cadres from the EPRLF, PLOTE and TELO. They were freshly trained and armed by RAW. While clandestine boat landings of EPRLF and PLOTE members took place on the East coast at night TELO cadres occupied some coastal villages in Mannar. The penetration of these armed groups hostile to the LTTE posed a serious threat to the security of the Tamil Tigers. There were attacks in which the LTTE suffered casualties. The IPKF refused to take action when the matter was brought to their attention. As time passed in a political vacuum Pirapaharan became agitated and frustrated.

Thileepan a popular political leader in Jaffna and a person well acquainted with the pledges given by the Indian Prime Minister in the form of a gentleman's agreement undertook a fast-unto-death to mobilise public protest against India's failure to fulfill its assurances."

As Thileepan lay dying, the LTTE leader knew he had to persuade Mr. Dixit to visit him and give Thileepan the guarantees he was asking. But Mr. Dixit believed there was a conspiracy against him and the government of India and Thileepan's fast was designed to provoke "anti-Indian sentiments". Although the LTTE leader and he (Anton Balasingam) tried to allay his fears, Mr. Dixit wasn't convinced, as was revealed in his book: 'Assignment Colombo', Anton Balasingam writes. Had Mr. Dixit actually visited Thileepan he could have saved Thileepan's life and, "Indo-LTTE relations would not have been strained," he further opines:

"When Pirapaharan and I met Mr. Dixit at the IPKF headquarters at Palaly, Thileepan was on the threshold of death. We pleaded with the Indian envoy to visit the young fighter and assure him that India would fulfill the pledges given to the LTTE and request him to break his fast. Dixit rejected our genuine plea fearing there was conspiracy behind our invitation. On this issue he writes: 'IPKF and our intelligence sources had informed me that the plan was to take me to Thileepan at the Nallur Kandasamy Temple, subject me to a massive anti-Agreement and anti-Indian demonstration and then reject my request with a lot of publicity about the Indian High Commissioner's efforts being spurned. It was clear in my mind I would not subject the government of India to



such a humiliation' There was no plan to humiliate Mr. Dixit or the government of India. It was simply a figment of his imagination. If the Indian diplomat has visited Thileepan and assured him that Delhi would fulfill the pledges the tragedy of his death would have been avoided and Indo-LTTE relations would not have been strained."

The irony of all ironies here is that 'non-violence', or 'Ahimsa' the weapon used by India to liberate itself from a colonial power had neither any impact, nor value, nor did it make a difference, let alone prick the conscience of men for whom it should have meant something - unlike a woman from a neighbouring country, Sri Lanka for whom it understandably failed to impress for it may have not meant anything.

### **The Satyagraha Movement**

The early reckoning that non-violence wouldn't work became clear when a civil-disobedience campaign in 1961 led by the leader of the Federal Party, organised to protest against the move to making "Sinhala the de facto official and administrative language of the country" (including the adoption of a motion making Sinhala the language of the House of Parliament), was met with violence by the newly elected government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike. These actions amounted to a vicious abuse of power, involving the exercise of emergency rule, that shut the door on any negotiations with the Tamil leadership in the most undemocratic and autocratic manner. S Sivananyagam in his book 'Sri Lanka - Witness to History' writes:

On January 1, 1961 Sinhala became the sole official language of the country under the terms of the Official Language Act. On January 22, the Federal Party at its convention called on the population of the North and East to picket government offices, refusing to

cooperate with officials conducting business and to resist the teaching of Sinhala in schools in the two provinces.. On February 20 began the 2nd phase of the non-violent agitation, which was soon to encompass the entire population the north and east, including Muslims... “By April 24, Chelvanayagam and 58 others, including 14 MPs were under arrest ..although Mr. Sivasithamparam was spared. ..”Jaffna came under virtual army occupation. Communication links with the rest of the island (and with the rest of the outside world) were cut off. Postal, Telegraphic, Telephonic and train and bus services were suspended. With Military trucks and jeeps plying constantly and at high speed, towns and streets were deserted. Undisciplined, trigger-happy soldiers shot dead and injured persons outside curfew hours on the pretence of enforcing the curfew. Shops were robbed of soft drinks cigarettes and eatables. Meek requests for payment was met with amused taunts, “get the money from Chelvanayagam. Soldiers made fun of passing cyclists, harassed and humiliated pedestrians and in some instances attempted to molest women even within their homes at the point of a gun. During curfew hours residents were ordered to put off the lights...Despite the upsurge of Tamil national feeling represented the high-watermark of Tamil unity and collective passive resistance it was to end in failure...”

It took Thileepan’s death for Mr. Dixit to persuade Jayawardane to “institute an Interim Administrative Authority” and there was agreement on powers, functions and composition; but there was serious disagreement on the choice of Chief Administrator. However the, “arrests of two senior LTTE commanders Pulendiran and Kumarappa and fifteen high ranking cadres by the Sri Lankan Navy and their mass suicide in custody at the Palaly Air-Base was a tragedy of immense consequences.” Although Mr. Dixit at first was confi-

dent he could secure the release of the LTTE commanders and cadres he failed because, “Mr. Athulathmuthali, Sri Lanka’s Minister of National Security was firm in his demand that the LTTE cadres should be taken to Colombo for interrogation,” and the IPKF also refused to intervene, despite the, “arrests being a violation of the Accord as all cadres were given a general amnesty after the LTTE had laid down its arms,” Anton Balasingam writes.

According to Anton Balasingam this was, “the straw that broke the camel’s back in terms of the tense relations between India and the Tigers.”

Writing this article has affected me emotionally, as most of my articles do. It led me to re-read three books that I consider essential reading to understand the Tamil Freedom Struggle. Under my article I have included selected extracts to whet people’s appetite and recommend they read them. I am also pleased to inform everyone that a film on Thileepan directed by Anand Murthy @AanMur: ‘The Life and Death of a Martyr’ is in the making, hope you would support it.

I like to conclude by quoting from Adele Balasingam’s ‘Will to Freedom’ on Thileepan’s final journey:

I quote:

“Small candle lit shrines housing Thileepan’s picture was set up in front of every house in the village (Valvettiturai) as they were throughout the Peninsula. Plaited dry coconut leaves, the traditional Tamil decoration indicating mourning strung from post to post, fringed roadsides; funeral music blared from the loudspeakers of temples and schools. Thileepan’s ravaged body was dressed in full military uniform draped in the insignia of

the LTTE. The garland bedecked funeral cortege had moved slowly from village to village through out the Peninsula to pay their profound respect to this legendry martyr. The sombre beat of the military drums heralded the movement of the cortege from its resting place through the village to its next destination. As Thileepan's open cortege crept through the main village road for the last time I stood silently with the crowd to pay my final salute to a young man whose fast and sacrifice had surpassed that of the Guru of Satyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi himself. Thileepan transcended Gandhi in his act of self denial by refusing not only food but fluids also."

End Quote.

Thileepan's last words:

"I am confident our people will one day achieve their freedom. It gives me great satisfaction and contentment that I am fulfilling a national responsibility to the nation"

-Thileepan-

1960-1987

In your light we shall travel...I promise

உரிமைத்தமிழ்த்தேசம் படிக்க கீழே சொடுக்கவும்

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eVX4N0Q9Zqyb63kmQ1KnZX2qxuCICvoS/view?usp=sharing>

**Extracts:****The Will to Freedom by Adele Balasingam**

Thileepan's non-violent struggle was unique and extra-ordinary for its commitment. Although an armed guerrilla fighter, he chose the spiritual mode of "Ahimsa" as enunciated by the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi to impress upon India the plight and predicament of the people of Tamil

Eelam. The level to which the Tamil people, or more specifically the LTTE cadres are prepared to go for their freedom, mirrors not only a deep passion for their liberation, but indicated the phenomenal degree of op-



pression they had been subjected to. ..It's only those who experience intolerable oppression of such a magnitude, of being threatened with extinction that are capable of supreme forms of sacrifice as we have seen from Thileepan's episode.."

Thileepan who has travelled to Delhi as a part of Mr. Pirapaharan's delegation before the signing of the accord was informed of the content of the dialogue that had taken place between the Indian Prime Minister and the LTTE leader. With the knowledge that there was an unwritten agreement between Rajiv Gandhi and Pirapaharan that had not been implemented, he felt that his people and the struggle had been betrayed and decided on a fast-unto- death, demanding the fulfillment of the pledges. When news of Thileepan' fast-unto-death and deteriorating political situation between the LTTE and the IPKF reached us we decided to leave India for Jaffna..

Subsequently our first priority after our arrival in the peninsula was to visit Thileepan,

encamped at the historic Nallur Kandaswamy, the cultural and spiritual centre of the Jaffna Tamils.. Thileepan's decision to single handedly take on the credibility of the Indian state, not incongruous with his history of resistance to state oppression as a cadre in the LTTE. He had faced battle on several occasions in defence of Jaffna during Kittu's time and had suffered serious abdominal wounds in the process. He was well known for his astute understanding of the political mindset of his people and emerged a radical political leader. The senior LTTE women cadres often speak of his staunch advocacy of inducting women into the national struggle and is remembered as one of the founding fathers in the promotion of women's issues. With such a history, it comes as no surprise that he endeared himself not only to cadres but to the people of Jaffna also...

Bala met Thileepan during the pre-accord talks when he shared a hotel room with him in Delhi and grew very fond of this affable fellow. It was an extremely painful and emotional experience for Bala to meet him again Jaffna in totally adverse conditions, with Thileepan's life slowly ebbing away...

As we entered the premises of the Nallur Kandasamy Temple, we were confronted by a sea of people, seated on the white sands under the blazing sun. The air was thick with collective emotion and solemnity. This fading young man on the platform, obviously embodied the political sentiments and aspirations of his people. But it was more than that also. Thileepan's fast had touched the spirit of the Tamil Nation and mobilized the popular masses in unprecedented solidarity. One could sense how this extraordinary sacrifice of a fragile young man had suddenly assumed a formidable force as the collective strength of his people. Thileepan's fast was a supreme act of transcendence of individuality for a collective cause. Literally it was an act of self - crucifixion, a noble act by

which this brave young man condemned himself so that others could live in freedom and dignity.

With deep humility, Bala and I mounted the platform to speak to the reposed Thileepan, already several days without food or water and with a dry cracked mouth, Thileepan could only whisper. Bala leaned closer to the weakened Thileepan and exchanged words with him. Naturally enough Thileepan inquired of the political developments. We left soon afterwards never to see him alive again.

As Thileepan's fast moved on in days, he was no longer able to address the public from the podium and spent much of his time lying quietly as his condition steadily deteriorated. As Thileepan grew visibly weaker in front of his people's eyes, their anger and resentment towards India and the IPKF grew stronger. The sight of this popular young man being allowed to die in such an agonising manner, generated disbelief at the depth of callousness of the Indian government and the Indian Peace Keeping Force..

All that was required to save Thileepan's waning life was for the Indian High Commissioner Mr. Dixit to humble himself and meet and reassure Thileepan that the Indian government would fulfill its pledges to the Tamils. In fact Delhi ignored Thileepan's fast as an isolated idiosyncrasy of an individual, and later became seriously concerned when the episode gathered momentum and turned into a national uprising with anti-Indian sentiments. Delhi's concern's compelled Mr. Dixit to pay a visit Jaffna to study the situation..on the 22nd of September, Mr. Dixit arrived at the Palaly airport where Mr. Pirapaharan and Bala met him. Bala told me later that Mr. Dixit was rude and resentful and condemned Thileepan's fasting campaign as a provocative act by the LTE aimed at instigating the Tamil masses against Indian government.

Mr. Pirapaharan showed remarkable patience and pleaded with the Indian diplomat to



pay a visit to Nallur and talk to the dying young man to give up the fast by assuring him that India would give up the fast by assuring that India would fulfill its pledges... Displaying his typical arrogance and intransigence, Mr. Dixit rejected the LTTE leader's plea arguing that it was not within the mandate of his visit. Had Mr. Dixit correctly read the situation and genuinely cared for the sentiments of the Tamil people at this very crucial time, it's highly probable the entire episode of India's direct intervention in the ethnic conflict would have taken a different turn...But Thileepan's willingness to sacrifice his life in such a way touched the spirit of the people and his unnecessary tragic death on 26 September planted deeply the seeds of disenchantment with the IPKF. Events to follow only reinforced their shattered confidence in the IPKF and Delhi...

Small candle lit shrines housing Thileepan's picture was set up in front of every house in the village (Valvettiturai) as they were throughout the Peninsula. Plaited dry coconut leaves, the traditional Tamil decoration indicating mourning strung from post to post, fringed roadsides; funeral music blared from the loudspeakers of temples and schools. Thileepan's ravaged body was dressed in full military uniform draped in the insignia of the LTTE. The garland bedecked funeral cortege had moved slowly from village to village though out the Peninsula to pay their profound respect to this legendry martyr. The sombre beat of the military drums heralded the movement of the cortege from its resting place through the village to its next destination. As Thileepan's open cortege crept through the main village road for the last time I stood silently with the crowd to pay my final salute to a young man whose fast and sacrifice had surpassed that of the Guru of Satyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi himself. Thileepan transcended Gandhi in his act of self denial by refusing not only food but fluids also.

**'War and Peace - Armed Struggle and Peace Efforts of Liberation Tigers' by Anton Balasingam**

On July 23 two Indian military helicopters landed on the grounds of Suthumalai Amman Temple near Jaffna, picked up the LTTE delegation comprising of Pirapaharan, Yogaratnam Yogi and Thileepan and flew to Meenambakam Airport. In the mean time the Tamil Nadu Police informed me of their arrival and I was taken to the airport to meet them... We boarded an Indian Air Force plane and arrived in the Indian capital a few hours later. From the airport we were taken to Ashoka Hotel and held incommunicado... The RAW officer informed us we were placed under safe custody and we could not leave the Hotel or allow anybody in. Pirapaharan confided to me: "Bala anna I am trapped again. Mr. Dixit visited us at the hotel. He was grim and serious. Sitting on the Sofa he pulled out his pipe, lit it and puffed out the smoke a couple of times. Seated in front of him we watched him attentively, anticipating clarifications. "A bi-lateral agreement has been reached between the government and Sri Lanka. The Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi will visit Colombo soon to sign the agreement. The agreement offers a fair and reasonable solution to the Tamil ethnic question. You should accept this agreement," Mr. Dixit declared. He took a copy of the agreement out of his pocket and handed it to me. Please translate the document to Mr. Pirapaharan ..I'll be back in two hours; I hope you will be ready with a positive response.. "

I translated the document and explained the implications of the proposals. We found the proposals limited and inadequate. While emphasizing a pluralist structure of Sri Lanka society, the agreement recognises the distinct 'cultural and linguistic ' identity of the various ethnic groups thereby rejecting the conceptualisation of nation and nationality. While Sri Lanka ensuring Sri Lanka's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity ' the agreement

recommends a solution within the unitary constitution. The only positive element in the proposals was the recognition of the northern and eastern provinces as areas of historical habitation of the Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples..’ The cardinal feature of the Agreement of the merger of the northern and Eastern Provinces into a single administrative unit. But the merger itself was interim to be subjected to a referendum to allow the ethnic communities in the east to decide over a permanent link with the north. The Agreement allows for the formation of a temporary north east provincial council with governor, chief minister and board of ministers. The powers and functions of the provincial council was not specified. Rather a set of proposals negotiated between 4May 1986 and 19, December 1986 between the governments of Sri Lanka and India and the TULF leaders were recommended as the basis for the settlement. Residual matter not finalised during these above negotiations shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within a period of 6 weeks of signing the agreement. It should be noted that these proposals called the December 19th framework were criticised and rejected by the LTTE in the written response submitted to the government of India in January 1987. The agreement therefore fails to deal with any core issues critical to the Tamil question. The most important aspect was the issue on decommissioning. The Agreement stipulated all Tamil militant organisations should be disarmed within 72 hours of the signing of the Accord. ..Pirapaharan’s face turned red when I translated this particular clause .. within the time frame of two hours allocated to us, Pirapaharan made a firm resolute decision, He resolved not to accept the Indo-Lanka accord under any circumstance.

Two hours later, Mr. Dixit returned. He inquired as to whether we had made our decision. We told him that we could not accept the Agreement. We told him in precise terms we could not accept the Agreement. He demanded an explanation. I point out the

limitations on the proposals, arguing that they fell far short of Tamil aspirations. The framework proposed in the Agreement was totally unacceptable to the LTTE I said. Pirapaharan argued that it was unfair and unreasonable to disarm the Tamil freedom movement before reaching a permanent political solution with guaranteed security to our people. "How can India ask us to give up our arms within 72 hours? These weapons were captured from the enemy forces with enormous sacrifices over the last fifteen years of bloody armed struggle," he said raising his voice in anger. Mr. Dixit dismissed our criticism and argued the provincial framework the best the Tamils could ever hope for. He said there was no need for weapons since as a permanent ceasefire would come into being and an Indian peace keeping force would maintain peace. He pleaded with us to trust the Indian government and reconsider our decision. We stuck to our position to arguing that we could not trust Jayewardene and the Sinhala armed forces. Dixit became resentful and impatient. Whether you accept it or not this agreement will be signed. This is bilateral agreement between two countries. You will face far reaching consequences if you oppose it. "Can you tell us what sort of consequences we'll have to face," asked Yoga. You will be in our custody here in India until you accept the Accord. Even if you keep us in custody for a long time, even for years, we will never accept this Agreement and hand over our weapons, Pirapaharan replied angrily. He stared at Pirapaharan and shouted if you refuse to lay down your weapons, we would seize them by force. Your fighters are non-entities in front of the mighty Indian army. Brandishing his pipe at Pirapaharan he went on, "in the time it takes to light this pipe and finish smoking it, the Indian army will wipe out your fighters. Pirapaharan smiled cynically. You can do whatever you like but we'll never accept this Agreement under any circumstances. Dixit was enraged; his lips trembled in anger. Mr. Pirapaharan you

have cheated India four times. "That means I have saved my people 4 times. Unable to tolerate anymore the ill-tempered diplomat gottup and walked away.



## பெருந்தொற்றால் நேரிட்டுள்ள பேரவலம்!

அமரன்

" கொவைட் - 19 " எனும் உயிர்க்கொல்லி நோய் உலக நாடுகளைத் தன்னிலை இழக்கச் செய்து விட்டது. பொதுவாக மனித இனத்தை அழிவின் விளிம்பில் நிறுத்தியுள்ளது. இந்நோய்க்கான தடுப்பு மருந்து எனில், ஆய்வகத்தில் இக்கிருமி தொடர்ந்து உருமாற்றமாகி வருவதால் மருந்தை உருவாக்குவது பெரும் இடர்ப்படாகவே உள்ளது. பொருளியல் எனில் - உலகளாவிய நாடுகளில் - அடித்தட்டு மக்களின் வாழ்வைச் சூறையாடி வருகிறது.

அணுகுண்டுகள் - இரபேல் போர் விமானங்கள் - படைப் பெருக்கம் என எதற்கும் இந்நோய் இடமளிக்காது. மூன்றாம் உலக நாடுகள் / முதல் உலக நாடுகள் என எதுவும் இல்லை. இந்தியா போன்ற நாடுகளில் அரசியலாளர் / அதிகாரவர்க்கத்தினர் / ஆலை அதிபர்கள் / அமைச்சர்கள் எனப் பலரும் இந்நோய்க்குப் பலியாகி வருகின்றனர்.

கிராமப் பொருளாதாரச் சுழற்சி படுமோசமாக வீழ்ச்சியடைந்த நிலையில் - அடுத்து என்ன ? என்பதே பெரும் கேள்விக்குறியாக உள்ள நிலையில் - எல்லா நாடுகளின் தலைவர்களும் அல்லாடி நிற்கின்றனர்.

தமிழகத்தின் அரசியல் / அரசு என்பதும் மன நோயாளிகளின் கூடரமாக மாறி விட்டது. யாருக்கும் இந்நோய் வரலாம் எனும் நிலையில் - என்னதான் தடுப்பு நடவடிக்கை என்றாலும் - இந்நோய் வரவே வாய்ப்பு உள்ளது எனும் நிலையில் / எளிய மக்களின் எந்த

நோய்க்கும் - எந்த மருத்துவ மனையிலும் முறையான மருத்துவ வசதி இல்லை. குழந்தைகள் நிலையை நினைத்தால் அச்சமாகவே உள்ளது. யாரையும் சந்திக்காமல் - எதனையும். செய்யாது இருக்க இடமில்லை. தன்னளவில் வந்தால் - 40. வயதைக் கடந்தவர்கள் முன் எச்சரிக்கை எனில் - வீட்டில் இருப்பதே பாதுகாப்பானது. உணவுக்கு வழி இல்லை எனில் ஆழ்துயில் மட்டுமே வழி. இந்நோயின் மறுபக்கம் எனில் - சமூக அமைப்பு படுமோசமாகச் சீரழியவே செய்யும். குற்றச் செயல்கள் - திருட்டு / வீணான வம்புகள் / உடமை சார்ந்த சிக்கல்கள் / குடும்பச் சிதைவுகள் / கல்வி - வேலைவாய்ப்பு - பணப் பரிமாற்றம் இல்லாத நிலையில் - பாலியல் தொழில் / வன்முறைகள் என சொல்லி மாளாத அளவுக்கு சமூகம் படுமோசமாக சீரழிவில் சிக்கி விடும்.

உலகம் சற்றும் எதிர்பாராத நிலை இது. சிற்றூர் முதல் வட்டத் தலைநகர் / மாவட்டத் தலைநகர் என பல்லாயிரக்கணக்கான ஆண்கள் / பெண்கள் வேலைவாய்ப்பை மெல்லவே இழந்து நிற்கின்றனர், மென்மேலும் இழந்தும் வருகின்றனர். வெளிநாடுகளில் இருந்து சொற்ப அளவு பணத்துடன் ஊர் திரும்பியவர்கள் செய்வதறியாது நிற்கும் நிலை. கடை வீதிகளில் புதிதாக முளைக்கும் சிறு கடைகள்

எனில் - மளிகை / காய்கறிகள் தெருவிலேயே சந்தைப்படுத்தும் நிலை.

இன்னொரு சாரார் இப்படி யொரு நோய்வரும் என கனவிலும் நினைக்காத - நிலையில் / கிடைத்ததைக் கைவிட்டு விட்டதை நினைத்து மனம் துடிக்கின்றனர். பொதுவாகவே மனித வரலாறு முதன் முறையாக இப்படியொரு சிக்கலை எதிர்கொள்கிறது என்பதே முழு உண்மை. இதில் யாருக்கும் விதிவிலக்கு என்பதே இல்லை.



## ஈழம் சிவந்தது

*வீறு கவியரசர் முடியரசன்*

நாடென எமக்கொன்றில்லேம்

நற்றமிழ் மாந்தர்க்குற்ற

கேடுகள் களைவதற்குக்

கிளர்ந்தெழும் நிலையுமில்லேம்

விடுதலைப் புலிகளாகி

வெந்துயர்க் குரியாராகி

கெடுதலை எதிர்த்து நின்றீர்!

கிளர்ந்தெழும் நம்மைக் காக்க

உடலினால் உதவி செய்ய

ஒருபடை எமக்கிங்கில்லை

தொடுமனவுணர்ச்சியொன்றால்

துணைவர்களாகி நிற்போம்!



ஈகச்சுடர் திலீபனை நினைவேந்தத் தமிழர்களுக்குத் தடையா?  
பொங்கிச் சிவந்து ஒன்றுபட்டுப் போராடும் தமிழீழ தாயகம்  
(படம்: யாழ் கடையடைப்பு)





கனடிய மண்ணில் கால்களால் எழுதிய வரலாறு (நீதிக்கான நெடுநடைப்பயணக் காட்சிகள்)



## சு)மந்திர மொழிகள்

### நடேசன் திரு

போர்க்குற்ற விசாரணையை கதைத்தால் சிங்களவருக்கு கோபம் வரும்.

ஒற்றையாட்சியை எதிர்த்தால் சிங்களவருக்கு கோபம் வரும்.

அடாத்தாக விகாரைகள் கட்டுவதை எதிர்த்தால் சிங்களவருக்கு கோபம் வரும்.

அத்துமீறிய சிங்களக் குடியேற்றங்களை எதிர்த்தால் சிங்களர்களுக்கு கோபம் வரும்

இன்று...

தமிழ்க் கட்சிகள் இணைந்தால் சிங்களவருக்கு கோபம் வரும்.

# தமிழ் எம்.பி.க்கள் அனைவரும் ஒன்றிணைவதில் அவதானம் தேவை!

## சுமந்திரன் சவுகிரார்

### நெல்பிள்ளை

'தமிழ் பாராளுமன்ற உறுப்பினர்கள் அனைவரும் ஒன்றிணைந்து செயற்படுவது தொடர்பில் சற்று அவதானமாக செயற்படவேண்டி யிருக்கிறது. எங்களுடைய (தமிழ்

பாராளுமன்ற உறுப்பினர்களின்) ஒன்றிணைவை காரணமாக வைத்துக் கொண்டு சிங்கள தரப்புகள் ஒன்றிணையும் சூழல் ஏற்பட்டால் அது இந்த நாட்டில் வாழ்கின்ற



பக்கம் 04



# ஆபேஸ்

காணாமல் ஆக்கப்பட்டவர்

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மாதமிரு முறை இருமொழியேடு வடிவமைப்பு: தோழர் சமந்தா

இதழ்: 5 2020 செப்டம்பர் 29

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ஆசிரியர்: ஆறுமுகம் கோபால்

சிறப்பாசிரியர்: தோழர் தியாகு

சென்ற இடமெல்லாம் தீ மூட்டி எரித்து விட்டு  
அந்த இராமன் கூட அயோத்தி திரும்பினான்.  
திலீபனே நீயேன் திரும்பி வரவில்லை.  
வழி நிறைய எம்முற்றம் பூத்த வீரியக் கொடியை  
அழியா முதலென்றல்லவா அழகு பார்த்தோம்!  
அதை வேரோடிழுத்து வெய்யிலில் போட்டது  
இமயம் உயரமெனும் அகம்பாவம்.  
'கந்தன் கருணை' யிலிருந்துன் கால் நடந்த போது  
கோயில் வீதியே குளிர்ந்து போனது.  
கூட்டி வந்து கொலுவிருத்தினோம்.  
சாட்சியாக எல்லாவற்றையும் பார்த்தபடி  
வீற்றிருந்தாள் முத்துமாரி.  
பன்னிரண்டு நாட்களாக உள்ளொடுங்கி  
நீ உருகியபோது  
வெள்ளை மணல் வீதி விம்மியது.  
உன்னெதிரே நின்று எச்சில் விழுங்கியபோது  
குற்றவுணர்வு எம்மைக் குதறியது.  
வறண்டவுடன் நாவு அண்ணத்தில் ஒட்டியபோது  
திரண்டிருந்த சுற்றம் தேம்பியது.

-கவிஞர் புதுவை இரத்தினதுரை

