

Project peace "for a united Sri Lanka" 2. (1993, November 15). *The Island*.

1986, the Sri Lanka United National Association (Toronto) and the Quebec Association for a United Sri Lanka (Montreal) were the only three lobby groups who stood for a unitary, sovereign Sri Lanka, and met the Canadian Eelamists head-on at every turn of their campaign to discredit the country. We also confronted the Canadian Parliamentarians who supported the Eelam cause by making statements against Sri Lanka in the House of Commons.

The fact is, Sri Lanka's war has produced the indignant rhetoric of an ethnic conflict, a form of language mightily promoted by the Tamil separatist propaganda machine, once in Madrás, now in London, Boston, Paris and Toronto. The separatists cleverly calculated that the liberal foreign press, with its natural sympathy for the underdog and penchant for trivialization, would bite the bait. They did in Canada, and the organizations such as 'Project Peace' have been fighting a rearguard battle ever since to tell the world the facts, unalloyed by the fiction of propaganda.

When CBC phoned me on 4th August 1983 to go on the 6 o'clock National News to speak on the issue since several Tamils had already aired their grievances, I asked the reporter whether he had contacted the Sri Lanka-Canada Association of Ottawa for a spokesperson. The answer was "Yes Sir, we did, but no one was willing to be interviewed and none from the Sri Lanka High Commission wanted to either. You are the 9th person that we are calling". That afternoon, Asoka Yapa who is the present Chairperson of 'Project Peace', a Tamil moderate and I were interviewed at my house. After the evening broadcast several members from the Tamil community had phoned, threatening the moderate Tamil and had told his wife that they will get their grandchildren. She became so nervous that the Committee members of 'Project Peace', all Sinhalese, guarded their house that night. The incident was reported to the Police by 'Project Peace'.

Countering the pro-Eelam articles in the newspapers, we made it into a fine art. I used to get on the bus at 6.30 in the morning and got to work by 7.00 to start work at 8.30. I bought 'The Ottawa Citizen' and the 'Globe and Mail' and scanned for news about Sri Lanka while travelling in the bus. If there was an article or a letter that needed a reply to tell our side of the story, I would type it out and wait until the Vice-Chairperson of 'Project Peace' got to his office. I would read my reply over the phone