

TAMIL EELAM

Destruction *of* **Hindu Temples**

SRI LANKA

Destruction of Hindu Temples in Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka

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in Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka

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FOREWORD

The very title of this book - DESTRUCTION OF HINDU TEMPLES IN TAMIL EELAM AND SRI LANKA- could raise eyebrows among readers who have only sketchy impressions of the island and its peoples. Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was called before its political name change in 1972, has been an ancient seat of Hinduism and Saivism. Buddhism was subsequently introduced into the island in the third century B.C. during the rule of Emperor Asoka in India. As a recoil against Brahminical authority, Buddhism became a popular ideology in the early centuries of the Christian era. But the latter half of the first millenium A.D. saw a strong Hindu revival and the emergence of the Bhakthi movement in India, resulting in Buddhism suffering a decline in the land of its birth.

It however, found ready acceptance among the Sinhalese who were struggling to find their own separate identity in the face of a resurgence of Tamil culture and the growing might of the Hindu Pallava and Pandyan empires in south India. In time, this gave birth to a historical myth, a make-believe that identified the Sinhalese as the chosen custodians of Buddhism, and the island as a place of special sanctity blessed by the Buddha. This interlinking of land, religion and "race" was to become an intoxicating mix in the minds of the Sinhala-Buddhists through the centuries; their unwillingness to let go this cushioning fantasy (for fear of losing their identity) is the root cause of the prevailing strife in the island to this day. That also explains their ingrained hostility against Tamils, Tamil culture, Hinduism, India, and whatever they feel could be a potential threat to their existence within that special cocoon they had created for themselves.

What sustains and nourishes Sinhala-Buddhist jingoism to this day is a Buddhist chronicle originally written in Pali-the Mahavamsa. Authored by Buddhist monks, and believed to have been written beginning in the sixth century A.D., it is upheld as the only recorded source for the reconstruction of the island's history. It is an inventive interpretation of the coming of the Sinhalese to the island, but it is also, as Sinhala historian K.M.de Silva himself accepts, a work "permeated by a strong religious bias, and encrusted with miracle and invention". (A History of Sri Lanka, Oxford University

Press 1981, p3). But what is worse, it has entrenched in the Sinhala mind anti-Tamil racist beliefs. The book dramatizes the war waged by the Sinhala Prince Gamani (Dutugemunu) against the Tamil ruler Elara (Ellalan) as a triumph of Sinhala proto-nationalism, and the eviction of a foreign invader.

To readers who know the close affinity of both religions and might wonder why Sinhala Buddhists in Sri Lanka should destroy Hindu Temples, it might come as a surprise that the Mahavamsa sanctions killing of Tamils! Says the Mahavamsa (Translated into English by Wilhelm Geiger, published by the Ceylon Government Information Department, Colombo 1950):-

“When he (Gamani) had slain all the Damilas (Tamils) he went up to the terrace of the palace..... looking back upon his glorious victory, great though it was knew no joy, remembering war wrought the destruction of million (of beings)”.

The Mahavamsa goes on to say how while Gamani was touched by remorse by the slaughter of Tamils, eight “arahants” flew through the air from India to comfort him. You have killed only one and a half human beings, they told him. “The one had come unto the (three refuges), the other had taken on himself the five (Buddhist) precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts”. The “great king took comfort” by these words, says the Mahavamsa.

Although Hindus constitute only 15.5% of the island’s population, as against the nearly 70% Buddhists, the sway of Hinduism is island-wide- from the deep south of the island which houses the pre-historic shrine of Kathirgamam (Kataragama) dedicated to Lord Skanda or Lord Muruga and the entire breadth and width of the north eastern Tamil homeland. Hinduism, as an eclectic religion comprising many different metaphysical systems, and all embracing in outlook, has an appeal to the Sinhala Buddhists themselves, which Buddhism more a philosophy than a religion does not offer. In fact, Buddhism in Sri Lanka at the popular level, embraces the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses. That is the paradox and that is the inexplicable tragedy behind the attacks on Hindu temples and Hindu worship.

S.Sivanayagam
28.6.1998

Destruction of Hindu Temples in Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka

Culture plays a crucial role in the life of a community. A community or a race is identified and revered by its flourishing culture. History shows that an oppressor, as a means of maintaining a superior position, aims to erase the identity of the oppressed and this means destroying first the oppressed people's culture. It is for this reason that the liberation struggle of an oppressed people assumes the form of cultural resistance.

In Tamil Eelam the culture and civilisation of the Tamils, which has a long, rich and valuable history is undergoing destruction on an unprecedented scale. Whilst on the one side, the Tamil national liberation struggle, embodying the role of preserving Tamil culture, strives towards defending and protecting Tamil identity and life, on the other, the Sri Lankan government, by inflicting atrocities and using its dominant chauvinism, has taken the path of causing maximum destruction to the Tamil people's culture. It has been a universally accepted principle that people living in a democratic land should be treated as equals, irrespective of language, ethnic or religious differences. But in Sri Lanka democracy itself is being crushed by the tyranny of the majority - the Sinhala Buddhist representatives - in Parliament. The well planned repression of the culture and the civilisation of the Tamils has fortunately, due to the vigorous resistance of the Tamil people, not been successful.

Tamil Eelam was once strewn with thousands of temples, churches, mosques, libraries, schools and statues of eminent persons and historical monuments. They were symbols of cultural richness; a national heritage revered with pride. Today many of them have been razed to the ground and others are in a dilapidated condition. All of this is due to an imperfect realisation of democracy, the tyranny of the majority. In other words, a tyranny of Buddhist fundamentalism.

To the Hindus, religion forms part and parcel of the daily activities of their life; it is part of their way of life. Living with nature, they respect and worship it. In this context temples not only stand as places of worship but are also an embodiment of cultural life; they are their cultural centres. Music, dance, drama, education, medicine and many other essential aspects of life evolve around the temples.

All five renowned Hindu shrines that existed long before the advent of Buddhism in Ceylon, - Thirukketheeswaram, Thirukkoneswaram, Naguleswaram, Munneswaram, and Thondeswaram - are now under the control of Sinhala Buddhist oppressors. The first three temples are under the direct control of the occupying armed forces of the Sri Lankan state which are made up entirely of Sinhala Buddhists except for a handful of Christians and Muslims. Thirukketheeswaram in the Mannar district and Thirukkoneswaram in the Trincomalee district once attracted devotees from India. Saints Thirugnanasampantha Moorthy (7th century A.D.) and Sunthara moorthy (9th Century A.D.) have sung hymns in praise of these temples. But today Thirukketheeswaram is in ruins. The historic temple was desecrated and the jewellery, brass utensils, oil lamps and many other valuables that were used in the temple have been plundered by the state armed forces. The Sri Lanka Army forced out residents living in the neighbourhood. Priests and devotees were not allowed into the temple vicinity, and from August 1990 soldiers in their thousands have occupied the temple and its surroundings. According to a letter from the Secretary of the Thirukketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society the **"most heinous and unforgivable part of the vandalism is the disfigurement and the gouging of the Third Eye of the icon Somaskanda (Lord Siva)"**. A letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Society, read that **"Not a single civilian is found within a radius of about three miles from the temple" ... "It is crystal clear that it was the army which caused all the destruction and wanton damage to the buildings around the temple" ... "In short,**

everything the Temple Restoration Society did from 1948 onwards, at great cost and with the help of Hindu devotees from various countries, has been undone by the Army". He goes on further to say "While we were at the ruined temple site we observed that even the debris of most of the demolished buildings like Kurukulam had disappeared. There we were very reliably informed that the building materials like stones, bricks and valuable sawn timber etc. had all been removed from the site and used for the construction of a buffer-like wall, similar to a rampart, north of Manthai junction, stretching towards Adampan. This was perhaps to prevent the guerrillas from advancing towards the encampment and also to attack them from behind the wall. Having destroyed the temple buildings with a vengeance the army seems to have had second thoughts and put to good use the building materials found in the debris by putting up the wall."

This destruction is reminiscent of similar destructions of Hindu temples by the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century. In "A Short History of Hinduism in Ceylon" the author C. S. Navaratnam writes: "The Sixteenth Century was a turning point in the history of Hinduism in Ceylon. They (the Portuguese) had begun to establish themselves in the country districts, and little by little the popular temples were razed to the ground. With the fall of the Jaffna Kingdom in 1620 all traces of Hinduism were exterminated in the Tamil districts which came under their rule."

Thirukkoneswaram known as Southern Kailasam is another ancient Hindu temple that the Portuguese had blasted into the sea. Ruins of the temple are still lying on the seabed. During British rule, devotees were permitted to worship at the Swami Malai (Fort). In 1953 the structure for a new temple was laid and it was completed in April 1963. But the Hindu devotees are in constant fear that the state army occupying the fort, within which the temple is found, will either destroy it or harass them as they walk to the temple. In 1969 a Tamil Hindu minister requested the government in which he served to declare the temple premises a sacred zone. This was at a time when the government was declaring several Buddhist temple precincts to be sacred zones. But the government refused to accede to his request and the poor minister had no option but to resign from his ministerial post. Thereafter this temple too was vandalised several times.

In the early part of 1993 the temple was partly destroyed by the Sinhala Buddhists. The front door of the temple was burnt and statues and other

temple utensils were damaged. The premises of the High Priest too was damaged. Many army camps were put up around the temple area and devotees were not permitted to enter the Fort. Later, after great persuasion by the North East Provincial Council officers, the former President of Sri Lanka, Mr Premadasa, allowed access to the temple for the Priest, the holder of the temple keys, a cleaner and three or four devotees only. This access was allowed once a day and again the army at the temple premises had to agree to it. No praying rituals (poojas) were held, only lamps were lit by the priest. The other devotees had to stand miles away from the temple and they would worship facing the Swami Malai (Fort).

In May 1996 the state army restricted the number of devotees entering the temple during the festival period to between thirty five and fifty people only, and then shut the entrance gate of the Fort on the others. When the Chairman of the Town Council protested over the army's action, he was badly beaten up.

The intensity of Buddhist fundamentalism was visible in another incident which we must not fail to mention. The statue of the Hindu God Pillaiyar (Ganesh), worshipped not only by Hindus, but also sometimes by Buddhists was removed from the temple by a Sinhala Buddhist and thrown into the sea. The vicious person later scribbled on the wall of the temple: "**God Ganesh has gone for a bath**". It is this kind of barbarism and intolerance which exist in a country claiming to have been visited by Buddha who preached compassion, tolerance and love.

Unlike the above two temples, Naguleswaram temple at Keerimalai in Jaffna was subjected to a different kind of treatment. The state army left this temple to the care of the state air force which dropped, not flowers from the sky, but deadly bombs. On 16th October 1990 about 4 pm three bombs were dropped. The first one fell on the front of the temple destroying two temple chariots and other buildings, the second one fell on the southern courtyard of the temple destroying the premises of the priest, and the third one fell on the northern courtyard destroying the Thurka Thevi temple and other buildings.

The Air Force was not satisfied with the extent of this damage. They came again after two days, on 18th October 1990, about 2.30 pm, and dropped

two more bombs on the very same temple. It was a special day and nearly a thousand devotees were in the temple area at that time. They all fled in panic in different directions trying to save their lives. Many got injured in the stampede. The temple and its magnificent kopuram, the halls, the library that possessed valuable palm leaf manuscripts, books, and many other statues were damaged by the bombings. All these took place in spite of the unmistakable temple identification flags which were flying on all four corners of the temple, as instructed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Naguleswaram is not the only temple destroyed by the bombing carried out by the State Air forces. The Thurga Thevi temple at Thellipalai Jaffna, a centre of great veneration, was also bombed in May 1992 resulting in deaths and destruction.

There are countless numbers of temples that were set on fire, damaged or destroyed due to bombing and shelling by the Sri Lankan government forces during the last twenty five years. A glimpse of some evidence of this destruction is given in appendix I. Since 1977 the number of Hindu temples damaged, desecrated or destroyed by the bombing, shelling, arson and other weapons could be in the region of two thousand. A more accurate figure could not be taken because of the escalating war. But the Department of Hindu Affairs was able to gather some information on the number of temples damaged between 1983 and December 1990 and the estimated cost of their repair. According to the Department's report 1,479 temples had been damaged in eight districts of the North East Province, but they too were cautious concerning the accuracy of this figure.

The destruction of temples is only one aspect of the Sri Lankan Government's grand plan to annihilate the Tamil people's culture. There are many other methods, such as arrest of Hindu priests, removing their sacred thread, beating them up, or humiliating them by keeping them incarcerated as Tiger suspects; firing shells on the devotees gathering at the temple on festival days so that no festival can be conducted; arresting and detaining devotees on their way to temples especially during festival seasons; desecrating the temples and prayer hall of Ramakrishna Mission by the police entering with their boots on; not appointing teachers who could teach Hinduism in the schools while at the same time appointing teachers of other denominations to teach

religious studies other than Hinduism to Hindu students; appointing Sinhala Buddhist teachers in the places of Tamil Hindu teachers thus forcing students to follow their studies in Sinhala medium and to study Buddhism; indiscriminate bombing and strafing from naval gun boats; artillery shelling on the Deepavali festival day and other festive days; 'discovering' ruins of Buddhist temples in the Tamil homeland by Sinhala Buddhist Ministers and Buddhist archaeologists working for the Sri Lankan Government's Archaeological Department; forcibly removing Tamil residents in their thousands to refugee camps and settling Sinhala Buddhists in their place offering armed protection and new amenities including new Buddhist temples and Buddhist monks; erecting Buddha statues in prominent places in the Tamil homeland; creating Sinhala Buddhist settlements in the lands belonging to Hindu temples; converting Hindus as Buddhists by enticing them with the offer of economic advantages; implementing permanent birth control methods among Hindus living in plantation areas; destroying schools, libraries and community centres; killing experts in herbal medicine, art and culture, in particular folk drama and art.

At this juncture the inevitable questions arise: why does a large number of people following a religion which preaches love, compassion and tolerance, act in complete contrast to these Buddhist principles? How do they become imbued with such deep seated racism? Why did members of the Buddhist Sanga, including the prelates of Asgiriya and Malwatta actively involve themselves in fostering and promoting Buddhist fundamentalism? Why do Buddhist monks join the armed forces to kill Tamils, and why does the Maha Sanga donate money to the government's war fund? How have they arrived at a situation where members of the administration, from the President to the ordinary security guard and the members of the armed forces prostrate themselves before the Buddhist political monks and imbibe their chauvinism?

Here one thing in particular must be made clear, that there is no religious conflict between the Hindus and the Buddhists. Sinhala Buddhists are making fiery attempts through the World Fellowship of Buddhists to portray the national liberation struggle of the Tamils as mere religious conflict, so that it would appear as the actions of a bunch of fanatics. Their aim is to sap the strength and power of the struggle and thus destroy it. Their other aim is to use this false portrayal to seek the help of Buddhists all over the world,

pretending that Buddhists and Buddhism are being persecuted by Hindu Tamils. It is a trap laid for people engaged in the liberation struggle.

In the past Buddhist fundamentalists and members of the Maha Sanga were successful in scuttling attempts to solve the national question. In 1957 S W R D Bandaranaike, the then Prime Minister and leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, negotiated an agreement with S J V Chelvanayakam, the leader of the Federal Party. In 1965 Dudley Senanayake, the Prime Minister and leader of the United National Party, entered into an agreement with S J V Chelvanayakam. Subsequently, in 1984, when J R Jayawardane of the United National Party was in power as President of the country he convened an all party conference to find a solution. Again, in 1987 the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement was entered into between President J R Jayawardane and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. All these attempts failed to bear fruit as the Sinhala Buddhist political leaders succumbed to the Maha Sangha and the political force of monks such as Baddegama Wimalawansa, Madihe Pannaseeha, Buddharahita Thero, Palipane Chandrananda Maduluwawe Sobitha Thero and numerous others. The extremism of this coercion by the monks, who were intent on scuttling all attempts to solve the national question, is best illustrated by Somarama Thero who shot dead the Prime Minister S W R D Bandaranaike in September 1959 when the latter came out of his home to meet the monk and his group.

The prevailing unfortunate situation in Sri Lanka is the result of merging the concepts of country, Sinhala race and Buddhism, the cumulative effect of which has emerged as Sinhala Buddhist fundamentalism. It was Mahanama, the author of the Mahavamsa, a Buddhist chronicle, who set the stage for this painful drama. Actors carrying myths, fantasies, superstitions and fables from the Mahavamsa, particularly the Duttugamunu episode, gave birth to a "superior race", to "sons of the soil" and to "dhammadipa the home of the true doctrine" theories. The actors at each period in history varied in their form but the substance remained the same. These myths and superstitions were put forward as historical facts and whilst propagating militant role of Buddhism they pronounced that "only a Buddhist had the legitimate right to rule" and rulers were not allowed to deviate an inch in following this.

In the 1930s Aryan racial superiority propagated by the Nazis in Germany, echoed in Ceylon through Don David Hewavitharane who changed his name to Anagarika Dharmapala. Others like Munidasa Kumarathunga (writer),

Piyadasa Sirisena(editor: Sinhala Jathiya), A. E. Goonesinghe (trade union leader and publisher of Viraya), followed the footsteps of Anagarika Dharmapala. The origin of Sinhalese people was traced to the Aryan race and they were elevated to "master race" overnight by these "historians". People other than Sinhala Buddhists were called as "infidels of degraded race" and "unbelievers and men of evil life". Sinhala Buddhists were called upon to unite under one flag and to wage a holy war under a leader equal to that of Hitler's calibre, against the non Buddhists. **"The Sinhalese are a unique race in as much as they can boast that they have no slave blood in them and never were conquered either by pagan Tamils or European vandals...the Sinhalese stand as the representatives of Aryan civilisation,"** Anagarika Dharmapala said. The racist policies of Hitler and Mussolini were well received and emulated by the local leaders during this time. **"We are one blood and one nation. We are a chosen people. The Buddha said that his religion would last for 5000 years. That means that we as the custodians of that religion shall last as long"**. These words were uttered in 1939 by D S Senanayake who later became the first Prime Minister of Ceylon after independence. The present President Chandrika Bandaranayake's recent launch of the programme **"We are Sri Lankan; One people One nation"** at Anuradhapura is the modern day equivalent of D S Senanayake's Mein Kampf. The racist thoughts of Sinhala Buddhist leaders, past and present, are countless but a glimpse is given in appendix II.

Did Buddha ever come to Ceylon is another question which no one dares to raise now. Professor Paranavitana, an ardent Sinhala Buddhist, absent mindedly said in one meeting that there was no justification for the belief that the Buddha did visit the island of Ceylon. This caused a huge outburst and a torrent of abuse was heaped on Paranavitana. Though Buddha's visit to Ceylon is described in Mahavamsa, Dipavamsa, and Vamsatthappakasini, each account varies in certain respects. However all three allege that the Yakkhas, the original inhabitants of the island, were harassed and tormented by Buddha who forced them to flee. According to Vamsatthappakasini "Buddha used his supernatural powers to harass the Yakkhas with eleven different types of afflictions. Torrential rains and hurricanes descended on them. They were pelted with showers of stones, weapons, burning embers, hot ashes and mud. Cold and humid winds, storms, and darkness torment and terrify them". Buddha was said to have been "victorious over enemies", and in another story as "jina" or "Conqueror". To quote from Mahavamsa "Lanka was known to the Conqueror as a place where his doctrine should

shine in glory and from Lanka filled with Yakkhas, the Yakkhas must (first) be driven forth," so that Lanka would be a "fit dwelling place for men".

Pujavaliya, a prose work of the 13th Century, says "This island belongs to the Buddha himself, it is like a treasury filled with the Three Gems. Therefore the residence of wrong believers in this island will never be permanent, just as the residence of the Yakkhas of old was not permanent". Here non Buddhists are referred to as wrong believers. The actions attributed to Buddha are now taken as a precedent to justify the continuing myth of racial superiority from Duttagamunu to Chandrika Bandaranaike. Out of the thirty seven chapters in the Mahavamsa the author Mahanama has devoted eleven chapters to the life of Duttagamunu whose racism and militarism are enthusiastically followed by successive Sri Lankan governments up to and including Chandrika Bandaranaike's regime.

In his war against Ellaalan, Duttagamunu's killings of Tamils is portrayed as no more unpious an act than the actions of Buddha as he terrified the Yakkhas and forced them to flee from the island. "Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee O Lord of men. The one had come unto the refuge the other had taken on himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, no more to be esteemed than beasts". This is how the exploits of Duttagamunu were recounted to him by eight men of Bikkuhood - arahants - after his victory over the Tamils which entailed the "killing of thirty Tamil Kings" and the "destruction of millions". It is no surprise therefore that the present day equivalent explanations of the killings of Tamils are put forward by modern "historians", as "erasing out Tamil terrorists".

It is also disturbing to note how Duttagamunu's mother, Vihara Mahadevi, who accompanied her son with five hundred monks in the war against Tamils, was filled with a Hitler-like blood thirstiness. According to the Mahavamsa, when pregnant with Gamunu she would long to "eat the honey that remained when she had given twelve thousand Bhikkus to eat of it, and then she longed to drink (the water) that had served to cleanse the sword with which the head of the first warrior among King Elara's (Ellalan) warriors had been struck off, (and she longed to drink it) standing on this very head..."

Here we must understand the connection between this description of

Duttagamunu's mother and the pinning of a Vihara Mahadevi badge to the uniforms of young Sinhala women of the Sri Lankan army women's corps as recently as a year ago, when they completed their training under the rule of President Chandrika Bandaranaike. Over the years Prime Ministers and Presidents have participated in such occasions, implanting the same blood thirsty racism into the war mission of the newly qualifying cadets. Chandrika Bandaranaike's call upon the armed forces to save the country, publicly praising them, promoting them to the highest positions of office, glorifying war and allowing Buddhist monks on to the battle field to bless the army for their victory, are all part of her "military solution" to the Tamil national liberation struggle.

An advertisement appearing in August 1996 in a leading Sinhala newspaper "Lanka Deepa" called upon the "Brave sons of Duttagamunu's lineage to join the navy". The imagery used confirms the racist nature of the actions of the present government. No wonder the continuity of racism in Sri Lanka and its nightmarish growth into fascism, have become a horrifying spectre on the world stage.

The victory ceremonies that took place in Jaffna and Colombo after the capture of the vacated Jaffna peninsula in December 1995 by the Sri Lankan army were made to remind the "conquests" of Mahavamsa fame. Chandrika Bandaranaike, who is both the President of Sri Lanka and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Anurudha Ratwatte, the Deputy Defence Minister, and the Commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Forces, all became reincarnations of Duttagamunu, Sapumal Kumara and their retinue. They were praised for bringing Lanka "under one parasol of State" and "making Lanka fit for humankind" by destroying Tamil 'terrorists'. The war and the killings of Tamils were rationalised and celebrated by them whilst evoking the past legends and myths. "Not for the joy of sovereignty but for the religion do I wage this battle" Duttagamunu has declared during his war. The present regime too declared and glorified their war in similar fashion.

Duttagamunu, the old conqueror, marched with "Buddha's relic in his spear", proclaiming violence in the name of piety. Whereas the new avatars paraded with the latest weapons supplied by the USA, China and Israel, and their Buddhist lion flag, proclaiming "war for peace". In a pompous ceremony held in Colombo, the "exalted one", President Chandrika, was presented a scroll on a platter that proclaimed the capture of Yappa patna

(Jaffna) reminiscent of the conquests of the past, by General Ratwatte. The President and the Generals of today were of course masked themselves with symbols of acceptability, with white lotuses and doves, using kind, compassionate words to present an attractive humane face to the outside world. Like the eight arahants who told Duttagamunu that he had killed only one and a half human beings, the sons and daughters of Goebbels employed by the media today, say that all who are killed in the North and East provinces of Sri Lanka are not Tamil civilians, but terrorists, murderers, and megalomaniacs. A selected few sons were sent abroad by President Chandrika to propagate her "Dhamma". It was not the branches of the Bo tree that they took with them, but instead lessons of deceit, lies and disinformation learnt from international masters.

Since 'independence' in 1948 the sons and daughters of the 'master race' who graduated from the school of Buddhist fundamentalism have successfully institutionalised racism through the Citizenship Act, Parliamentary Elections (amendment) Act, the Srimala - Sastri pact, the Sinhala Only Act, the new Republican constitutions, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Regulations etc. Realising that "only a Buddhist had the legitimate right to rule", Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike (President Chandrika's father) abandoned Christianity and became a Buddhist when he entered politics. He formed the first communal organisation called the Sinhala Maha Saba (Sinhala Great Council) in 1937, four years after the death of Anagarika Dharmapala. Since then he became the political heir to Anagarika Dharmapala's Buddhist fundamentalism. He came to power with the slogan "Sinhala Only" and the support of the United Monks Front. His wife, Srimavo (the present Prime Minister of Sri Lanka) carried forward the same fundamentalist principles while also declaring that "Tamil people in Sri Lanka have always been among the most privileged minorities in the world"... "You speak of oppression of the Tamils. That is your propaganda. There could have been administrative mistakes; errors of judgement; but oppression or deliberate discrimination never". She and her government promulgated the first Republican Constitution in 1972, in which Buddhism was elevated to "foremost place" and it has become the government's duty to "protect and foster" same. Other religions were relegated to a lesser constitutional position. By this act she became the first person to destroy the secular nature of the state by means of constitution. Further, constitutional status was given by her to Sinhala as the country's only official language by this new constitution. In 1961, during the non-

violent struggle of the Tamils (Satyagraha) Srimavo declared state of emergency and sent the state army to the Tamil homeland and in justifying it she declared, **“At times like these we must lay aside political and religious differences. This is the hour of everybody to unite against the enemies of the nation and of the people”**. Here non-violent Tamils were referred to as enemies of the nation and people. This worst rhetoric of nationalism was the result of her close association with two Sinhala Buddhist fanatical organisations called Campaign for the Protection of Motherland and the Sinhala Bala Mandalaya.

Junius Richard Jayawardane, former President of Sri Lanka, preached "Dharmishta Society" and Buddhist values, but practised fascism. His inclination for “one nation one people” and viewing Tamil national liberation struggle as “terrorism” was aired publicly in his opening address to the Parliament in February 1984, when he said “The borders of Sri Lanka are Point Pedro and Devinuvara in the north and south; Batticaloa and Colombo in the east and west..... We have to combat “terrorism and defeat it with all the resources at our command. We may have to equip ourselves to do so at the expense of development and social and economic welfare plans. **Let us then unitedly decide to do so and as one nation and one people bend ourselves to this task”**. In an interview with the correspondent of London Daily Telegraph (11-7-84) he reflected his fascist stand by saying “I have tried to be effective for sometime but cannot. I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people now. Now we cannot think of them. Not about lives or of their opinion about us. Nothing will happen in our favour until the terrorists are wiped out. Just that. You cannot cure an appendix patient until you remove the appendix. The more you put pressure in the north the happier the Sinhala people will be here. Really, if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy”. Walpola Rahula, a Buddhist Monk and a University Vice Chancellor, justified violence to 'save Buddhism'. There were many others. L H Mettananda, F R Jayasuriya, K M P Rajaratna, Cyril Matthew, Iriyagolla, Gamini Dissanayake, Lalith Athulath Mudali are but a few. The new "Conqueror" Chandrika Bandaranaike, by following the crude racism of her parents, descended quickly to a level of fascism that would delight modern day neo Nazis.

At first Buddha asked the Yakkhas, the aborigines of Ceylon, only for a place to sit, but finally he drove them from their homeland. Vijaya, the supposed founder of Sinhala race, invaded the island of Ceylon with his

followers and married Kuveni, a native Yakkhini princess. He conquered the island and its people with her help. When he achieved full control and power, he did not proclaim her as his queen but chased her and their two children away and banished them. Chandrika Bandaranaike, following the footsteps of Buddha and Vijaya and other Sinhala Buddhist political leaders who reneged on the agreements and pacts with the Tamil politicians since 1920s, asked the Tamils to cast their vote to her "for peace and not war" and after they did, she removed her mask and terrorised them from their homeland with her programme of "war for peace" to create “one people one nation”. The original inhabitants, the Yakkhas and the Nagas, were dehumanised and demonised by the Buddhists, and the Veddas (another indigenous people of the island) have now been stripped of their language, culture and way of life and forced to assimilate with the Sinhalese. Tamils living in the plantation areas are facing a similar fate. In the case of the Tamils living in Tamil Eelam, where assimilation was not possible, Chandrika Bandaranaike chose destruction by war. **Does she know how many thousands of bombs her forces have dropped on Tamils so far? Does she know the extent of death and destruction caused from shelling by her forces?**

We were told that King Asoka had a troubled conscience after his mass killings. Similarly it was suggested that Duttagamunu too had a troubled conscience after he killed millions of Tamils. But we have yet to see a President, Prime Minister or General in Sri Lanka with a troubled conscience. This is the terrible consequence of the reality of a deeply ingrained Buddhist fundamentalism that has been revived and rejuvenated time and time again.

APPENDIX I

Hindu Religious Priest Organisation of North East Province

Regd. No. HA / 4/JA / 169

Vanni,
10.02.1998

The Director General,
Office of the UNESCO,
Paris,
France.

Dear Sir,

- 1) WILFUL AND MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF HINDU PLACES OF WORSHIP.
- 2) HINDU PRIESTS ARE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES IN ARMY CONTROLLED AREAS

Since the departure of British rulers from Sri Lanka on February 04 1998, Hindu Places of worship are targeted for destruction in this country. Successive Governments controlled by the Sinhala Buddhist majority have proclaimed Bhuddhism as the State Religion. Buddhist chauvinism has become an article of faith in this county. The National flag bears a single Bo tree leaf in each corner signifying the preponderance of Buddhism. The 1972 constitution that superseded it have made Buddhism the sole state religion in this country.

As a result the Tamil minority who are mainly Hindu continues to endure severe social discrimination and suffer disproportionately from many violations. The Tamils living in their North-East Homeland profess both the Hindu and Christian faith. The places of worship belonging to these two religions are being destroyed by the Sinhala - Buddhist armed forces. The religious freedom of the Tamil people is severely restricted.

The international community is unaware of the nefarious policy of the Sri Lankan Government. We consider it necessary to bring to light the various wilful and malicious acts of the state calculated to desecrate and destroy the religious freedom of the Tamil people. We re-iterate that the Hindu religion is targeted for destruction.

Since the beginning of the ethnic conflict 14 long years ago approximately 60,000 Tamils' lives -men, women and children-had been lost at the hands

of the Sinhala military. The Tamils are under attack by air, land and sea. The above number includes Hindu priests and their families. Christian priests too had been killed by the Sinhala military. Fleeing people who had sought refuge in churches were killed when the warplanes dropped heavy bombs on the church buildings.

During times of military offensive in Tamil areas Hindu shrines had been targeted for destruction. Valuables found in the temple had been robbed by the froces. Valuable historical records and religious artifacts are reduced to ashes. Before the start of a military offensive it is customary for the Defense Ministry to issue a statement advising the civilians to stay in temples churches and schools. But invariably these are the very places which are generally bombed and shelled by the Sinhala military. Many of the above buildings are now in ruins due to aerial bombing and artillery fire.

We state that more than 1,800 Hindu Temples of the North - East and the properties belonging thereto, had thus far been destroyed and rendered unfit for worship since the beginning of the conflict.

Indiscrimate arrests of Hindu priests in the areas under military control and their disappearance thereafter, have reduced the number of Hindu priests now involvd in religious pursuits. In fact the Hindu priesthood is now an endangered species.

Some Hindu temples are now in the use of the military as sentries, checkpoints and even as army camps. Charity homes for the poor managed by the Hindus are similarly desecrated. Valuable brassware used for cooking purposes had been appropriated for the use of the military.

Most of the Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures both printed and in manuscript found in the temples are now in ashes. Our heritage is irretrievably lost. Valuble temple chariots and wooden statues are also burnt down. Stone and metal figures had been smashed to bits.

We can go on reciting a long litany of crimes committed against our houses of religion. We rest content with annexing hereto an annexure setting in detail particulars of some of the most important Hindu shrines destroyed by the Sinhala Buddhist military.

We request the UN and its various agencies to :

- a) Cry halt to the denial of religious freedom in Sri Lanka.
- b) Bring pressure on the Sri Lanka Government to stop the destruction of Hindu shrines and properties
- c) Guarantee the life and safety of the Hindu Priesthood officiating in the Hindu temples and shrines.

Thanking you Sir,
We remain,

Signed..... Signed.....
President Secretary

Annexure

In 1996, when the Nanthavil Amman temple at Kondavil, was subjected to aerial bombardment four devotees were killed on the spot. The temple also was badly damaged.

JAFFNA DISTRICT ISLAND AREA.

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Nainathivu	Nagapoosani Amman Temple damaged -02 'Chithira cars', 'Chapparam' 01 Manjam (worth many lakhs of rupees) Chief priest also attacked by the army.
2. Kayts	Sivan Temple.
3. Karainagar	Buvaswari Amman Temple.
4. Karainagar	Eelaththu Sithamparam Temple.
5. Mandaitivu	Thiruvankaaddu Sithy Vinayagar Temple
6. Pungudutivu	Maariamman Temple
7. Naranthanai	Thanthontrieaswarar Temple.

JAFFNA DISTRICT VADAMARADCHY

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Valvettiturai	a) Muthumari Amman Temple b) Sivan Temple
2. Puloly	Pasupathy Sivan Temple
3. Nagarkovil	Kottuvasal Amman Temple
4. Vallipuram	Vallipuram Aalvar Temple
5. Selva Sannathy	Murugan Temple
6. Atchuvely	Pillaiyar Temple

And in all about 140 temples were damaged.

Further in 1994 the car of the temple known as 'Chithirath Ther' was set fire to.

In 1995, when the Maviddapuram Kandasamy Temple was subjected to bombardment, the temple priest lost one of his legs in that attack.

JAFFNA DISTRICT THENMARADCHCHI

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Puloppalai	Murugan Temple
2. Vettalaikerni	Vinayagar Temple
3. Iyakachchi	Murugan Temple

And sixty other temples were damaged.

MANNAR DISTRICT

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Thiruketheeswaram	Sivan Temple
2. Mannar	Murugan Temple
3. Thalaimannar	Vinayagar Temple

About 20 temples in all were damaged in the district.

VAVUNIYA

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Omanthai	Vinayagar Temple
2. Omanthai	Kannaki Amman Temple
3. Nedunkerni	Murugan Temple

Twenty temples in all in this district were affected.

The particulars of the destructions and damages caused to temples and temple properties in the North-East Province by aerial bombardments as well as, mortar shellings are appended below.

JAFFNA DISTRICT VALIGAMAM

NO. PLACE	TEMPLE
1. Keerimalai	Nakuleswaram Temple
2. Thellippalai	Durga Amman Temple
3. Maviddapuram	Kandaswamy Temple
4. Mathakal	Murugamoorthy Temple
5. Ponnalai	Varadharajah Temple
6. Alaveddy	Kumpilavalai Vinayagar Temple
7. Sandilippai	Irradayarpuran Vairavar Temple

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
8.	Avarangal	Sivan Temple
9.	Punnalaikadduvan	Ayakkadaval Vinayagar Temple
10.	Nallur	Kandaswamy Temple
11.	Chunnakam	Kathiramalai Sivan Temple
12.	Manippay	Maruthady Vinayagar Temple
13.	Navally	Murugan Temple
14.	Jaffna Fort	Muniappar Temple
15.	Columbuthurai	Murugan Temple
16.	Villundy	Kandaswamy Temple

And more than 800 temples in all damaged in the Valikamam area.

In addition in 1989, during the 'Mahotshava' ceremony of the Suthumalai Amman temple, the assistant priest of the temple was killed on the spot by aerial bombardment.

In 1992, a priest of the Maviddapuram Kandasamy temple lost his limbs due to bombing.

MULLAITIVU DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Vattappalai	Vattappalai Amman Temple Car (Ther) burnt (1990)
2.	Ottysuttan	Ottysuttan Thanthontreaswaran Temple bombarded (1991)
3.	Thanneeroottu	Thanneeroottu Pillaiyar Temple Car (Ther) destroyed by bombardment of the temple.
4.	Karaichchikudiyiruppu	Karaichchikudiyiruppu Pillaiyar Temple

In all eighty temples were damaged.

KILINCHCHI DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Kilinochchi	Kilinochchi Kandasamy Temple
2.	Iranamadu	Iranamadu Kanagambikai Amman Temple
3.	Paranthan	Kumarapuram Murugan Temple
4.	Pallangkany	Pallangkany Pillaiyar Temple
5.	Vattakachchi	Vattakachchi Pillaiyar Temple

6.	Uruthirapuram	Uruthirapuram Sivan Temple
7.	Pulliapokkanai	Pulliapokkanai Nagathambiran Temple
8.	Ponnakari	Poonakari Kottai Muniappar Temple
9.	Poorikadawai	Porrikadawai Amman Temple

TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Koneswaram	Thirukoneswaram Temple
2.	Thambalakamam	Thambalakamam Sivan Temple
3.	Villuntri	Villuntri Kanadaswamy Temple

In all one hundred and twenty temples were damaged.

BATTICALOA DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Kokkatticholai	Kokkatticholai Sivan Temple
2.	Anaipanthi	Anaipanthi Vinayagar Temple
3.	Arayampathy	Arayampathy Murugan Temple
4.	Kallady	Kallady Uppodai Vinayagar Temple
5.	Porativu	Porativu Pathirakali Amman Temple
6.	Mamangam	Mamangam Pillaiyar Temple
7.	Akkaraipattu	Akkaraipattu Nageswara Temple

In all two hundred and forty temples were destroyed.

AMPARAI DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Kerativu	Kerativu Kannaki Amman Temple
2.	Mandoor	Mandoor Kandaswamy Temple

In all forty temples were damaged in this area.

KANDY DISTRICT

NO.	PLACE	TEMPLE
1.	Kandy	a) Pillaiyar Temple, 24 figures of the deities desecrated. b) Hindu Wedding Hall burnt down together with the Pillaiyar Temple building on 25.01.1998.

THIRUKETHEESWARAM TEMPLE RESTORATION SOCIETY

30th January 1995

Her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga
President of the Republic of Sri Lanka

Your Excellency,

Damage to Thiruketheeswaram Temple Mannar District, Sri Lanka

Hindus of Sri Lanka, India and rest of the world bring to your attention, with great sorrow and shock of the untold damages that have been done to the ancient and historic temple of Thiruketheeswaram by the Sri Lankan Army under the UNP regime. Not only damage has been caused to the temple fabric but also desecrating it in the most shameful way. The temple properties have all been plundered and pillaged. The priests, their assistants, other employees and residents in the vicinity of Thiruketheeswaram and Manthai village have been terrorised and forcibly driven away from their homes. The pilgrims' rests and residences of trustees have been destroyed making them totally uninhabitable. In short, it was simply a scorched earth operation which even the Nazi troops did not do, under Hitler - the Nazi Dictator! **Most heinous and unforgivable part of the vandalism is the disfigurement and the gouging the THIRD EYE of the Icon Somaskanda (Lord Siva).**

Details of this awful vandalism and destruction were brought to the notice of the then government by the trustees. Nothing was done! Your Excellency, this great temple was of ancient origin, rebuilt by the Chola Emperors in the 9th and 10th Centuries. It was destroyed by the Portuguese invaders. The restoration has to await independence and began in 1948 after independence. Hindus has spent about twenty million rupees for the first phase of the restoration work. Two more phases remain to be completed. I might add that generous assistance was given by the Government of Tamil Nadu under the late Chief Minister Hon. M.G. Ramachandran and also Hon. Karunanithi, the previous Chief Minister towards the cause. Also the Adhra Pradesh Government donated Rs. 1,00,000.00 and similarly the Pondicheri Government. The former President of Srilanka, His Excellency

J.R. Jayawardena also donated Rs. 5,00,000.00 out of the President's Fund towards the restoration work. Apart from these, Hindus of Sri Lanka and overseas had liberally contributed towards the worthy cause. Alas! The meritorious work and sacrifices of the Hindus of Sri Lanka and the world over have been virtually decimated by the action of the army under the UNP administration.

This is an ancient and most venerated temple in Sri Lanka belonging to pre-historic era. Thiruketheeswaram Temple is situated in the Mannar District and is the most sacred place of pilgrimage for the Hindus in Sri Lanka. It is revered by the Buddhists too and referred to in the Buddhists' Cronicles. Maha Sivarathri is the most important one-day annual festival. About 2 1/2 lakhs of pilgrims attend the festival. The Maha Sivarathri is a Public Holiday. The visual representation of the Formless Absolute in manifest Anthromorphic Forms in indispensible part of the temple worship. In this process the most important representation is Lord Siva the family group of SOMASKANDA ie. Siva with His Consort UMA and their Son SKANDA.

The enclosed photo depicts the figure of Somaskanda when it was in the process of being cast. It is 4 1/2 ft. in height, exquisite and most expressive in it's serenity and majestic poise. It was made in metal composed of Copper, Brass and Tin Lead with liberal quantities of Gold and Silver donated by devotees in the year 1976 at a cost of Rs. 20,00,000.00.

The third eye of the Icon was implanted in Gold, similarly the artistic heavy ornamentation around the neck and arms were too implanted in Gold. This Gold has been violently scooped out and removed by the vandals. It is the most cruel and unbearable act of vandalism that has left a deep wound in the religious feelings of the Hindu public which is difficult to heal. This admirable Icon fascinated the hearts of thousands of devotees evoking the most piety. My eyes were filled with tears when I penned the draft of this petition.

Your Excellency, Hindus and Buddhists are members of the same family of religions. Both religions have contributed for the good of humanity. Therefore, we earnestly request you that places of worship of Hindus in Sri Lanka should be fully protected in the future and be saved from similar desecration, damage and plunder.

In respect of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple, we earnestly request you to:

- 1) **Get the Army to vacate the Temple and its surroundings and to make this temple and the surroundings out of bounds for the army. To enable the priests and their assistants and other staff of the temple and residents of Thiruketheeswaram and Manathai villages to return to their homes without fear.**
- 2) **Get the destroyed/damaged buildings, madams etc rebuilt or repaired as the case may be, out of a liberal compensation package. The estimated cost by the society is around Rs. 20 million. The cost of restoration may be estimated by the Government authorities.**
- 3) **Restore the supply of electricity, telephone, water, sanitation services and ancillary amenities to the temple, madams and other buildings.**
- 4) **Arrange to pay compensation to all employees of the temple including the Brahmin priests who have not been paid their normal salaries and wages from August 1990.**
- 5) **Restore to the temple such articles that have been removed from the temple or its associated buildings by the army personnel or others and**
- 6) **Appoint a retired Supreme Court Judge to inquire into the vandalism of the Security Forces and recommend relief and remedial measures for the future.**

We shall be grateful if the Society is informed of the action that you propose to take in this regard towards soothing of the burning hearts of the Hindus.

We remain,

R. Namasivayam

Hony. Secretary of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society
Hony. Secretary and Member, Board of Trustees

Annex: Report on the present condition of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple
c. c. Hon. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister
Hon. Lakshman Jayakody, Minister of Cultural & Religious Affairs.

THIRUKETHEESWARAM TEMPLE RESTORATION SOCIETY

“Saraswathy Hall”
75 Lorenz Road
Colombo 4.

22-06-1993

Mr. V. Kailasapillai
Chairman
Board of Trustees
Thiruketheeswaram Temple
Restoration Society
Colombo 4.

Dear Sir,

Present Condition of the Thiruketheeswaram Temple

Hon. State Minister for Hindu Religious Affairs, Mr. P.P. Devaraj, the Ministry Secretary Mr. K. Thayaparan and I visited the Thiruketheeswaram Temple on 21/06/93, along with the Acting Government Agent, Mannar, Mr. Sebastian Croos, the Assistant Superintendent of Police, Mannar, the Secretary of the Temple Management Committee Mr. R.S. Pillai, and a few other members of the temple management committee. Brigadier P.A. Karunatilake of the Army camp at Thallady was good enough to make the necessary arrangements for the Hon. Minister and party to visit the temple premises. The Mannar police provided security for the party.

The present condition of the temple and its premises could be described briefly as follows:

1. The main temple structure, viewed from outside appears to be intact, but once inside, every door was found to have been forced open and articles of value ransacked. The whole place was desecrated. Even the ‘Moolasthanam’ (Sanctum Sanctorum) was found fully exposed.
2. The buildings outside the main temple buildings, including the residences of the temple priests and workers and all ‘madams’ (pilgrim’s rests) except Suntharar and Sampanthar madams which are contiguous

buildings, completely destroyed and even the building materials of the structures removed. Suntharar and Sampanthar madam structures viewed from outside appear undamaged; but inside the building the doors, windows and other parts were either missing or irreparably damaged.

3. The large building called 'Kurukulam', a teaching school for temple priests with about 10 rooms, a lecture hall and other apartments have completely vanished and even the debris has been removed.
4. The front wall of the Thiruvasaga madam appears badly damaged but the rest of the spacious building, which has a prayer hall and other living rooms has disappeared. Gowreesar madam, Sivapoosai madam, Kathirkamam Thondar Society madam, Chettiar madam, Overseer madam, Sivarathri madam and such other buildings are almost in the same condition as Thiruvasaga madam. A library building containing valuable books has been badly damaged and many books were found scattered here and there and they appear to have perished due to exposure and neglect.

Malaysian Pilgrims Rest which had eleven fully furnished rooms, a prayer hall and such other apartments with water service, electricity and modern toilet facilities remains completely ruined. All furniture and fittings, valuable doors and windows have all been removed.

Sir Kanthaiyah Vaithianathan's rest, called 'Cottage', Mr. V. Kailasapillai's pilgrims' rest, Mr. R. Namasivayam's newly built pilgrims' rest have all been demolished. In short, every building within the temple premises has either been completely destroyed or very badly damaged and the whole place appears devastated.

5. **Hon. Mavai Senathirajah**, M.P. speaking in the House on 23/08/1990 about the damage caused to the temple by the armed forces said thus:

"The security forces from the Thallady camp at Mannar went to the Thiruketheeswaram Temple in large numbers, in armoured cars on the morning of 7/08/90 and started firing at random. Then they set fire to a few houses occupied by some temple employees and to a pilgrims' rest called 'Thiruvasaga madam'. A lorry and a tractor with a trailer in which

some people came to take refuge in the temple were also set ablaze. Then they forced open the stores and other rooms inside the temple and examined the quarters of the temple priests and the houses occupied by the temple employees, various pilgrims' rests such as the Kathirkamam Pilgrims Society Madam, the Sivarathri Madam and the Malaysian Pilgrims rest. Some of the buildings had been forcibly broken into. They left around noon that day.

They came again in hundreds on the morning of the next day, ie. 8/08/1990, with three private lorries in a convoy and started firing indiscriminately. They then removed the costly electric generator of the temple, five other generators found in various pilgrims' rests, more than 100 bags of cement, all cooking utensils, cauldrons, buckets and kettles, consumer items like rice, flour, sugar etc. requisites like radios, sewing machines, water pumps and other such valuable items found in the various rests and houses of the priests and the employees and loaded them into three lorries and other vehicles and having made a clean sweep of all articles of value, including food items, they fired a few shots in the air and left".

6. **Hon. Joseph Pararajasingham M.P.** speaking in Parliament on 23/01/92 appealed to the Government to get the army to move out of the historic Thiruketheeswaram temple and its environs. Addressing the Speaker Hon. M.H. Mohamed he spoke thus:

"Sir, you would have heard about a famous and historic Hindu temple called Thiruketheeswaram, close to Mannar. This temple along with its pilgrims rests called 'madams' and such other buildings are now occupied by the army. The Secretary of this Temple restoration Society has appealed to His Excellency, the President, Hon. Ranasinghe Premadasa to get the army to move out of the temple premises.

Recently the temple authorities went to the temple with police protection and found the doors of the temple forced open, and all articles of value, including the very costly temple jewellery, all brass and other costly oil lamps and age-old valuable items donated to the temple by devotees missing. The whole place has been ransacked and desecrated.

Sir, the Thiruketheeswaram temple, dedicated to the Supreme God,

Siva is the most venerated temple of the Hindus of this country. Famous through the ages, this most ancient Hindu temple which ranked in sanctity and importance with the great temples of Chithamparam and Rameswaram in South India, now remains closed and out of bounds to all Hindus. The temple was a universal meeting place and a centre of pilgrimage to Hindus from India, Malaysia, Singapore and various other countries.

The temple and the holy waters of the Palavi tank are venerated in the sacred hymns of the two foremost Saiva saints, Thirugnanasampanthar and Suntharar, who lived in the 7th and 8th centuries respectively.

The temple, Sir, is said to have been in existence long before the advent of Vijaya and his followers to Sri Lanka in the 6th Century B.C. Dr. Paul Pieris, the erudite scholar and historian wrote thus:

“Long before the advent of Vijaya, there were in Lanka, five (5) recognised temples of Lord Siva, called ‘Easwarams’ which claimed and received the adoration of all Hindus in India. They were Thiruketheeswaram, Munneswaram, Thondeswaram, Thirukoneswaram and Naguleswaram.

Sir, Vijaya, when he brought his princess from Madurai, first worshipped at the Thiruketheeswaram temple and Upatissa, the Brahmin priest, who came with him from Madurai performed a ‘pooja’ at this temple to bless the Royal couple.

Thiruketheeswaram was also the temple where the Kalinga Prince who brought the Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka in the 4th Century A.D. took shelter for one night before proceeding beyond.

Thiruketheeswaram temple was completely destroyed by the Portuguese in the 16th Century and the very stones of the temples were used by them to build the Fort at Mannar and the Hammershield Fort at Kayts. After this destruction, the temple was out of sight for nearly four centuries and the place was overrun by dense jungle. Subsequently, in October 1872, Sri La Sri Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna appealed to the Hindu public to re-build the temple which had been a centre of Hindu religion and culture.

After the demise of Arumuga Navalar in 1879 Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and his brother Hon. P. Kumaraswamy, who were both members of the then Legislative Council, took an abiding interest in getting the temple restored. In 1893 the Hindus of both Jaffna and Colombo greatly assisted by the Naddukodai Chettiars of Jaffna and Colombo bought the land of about 40 acres surrounding the original temple site at an auction held by the then Govt. Agent of Jaffna, Sir William Twynam.

The exact spot of the destroyed temple was traced in 1894 and some restoration work was done in 1903, 1910 and 1922. Much headway however was not made until 1948, when an intensive agitation was built up to re-build the temple, along with the grant of independence to Sri Lanka. The Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society was founded in 1948 in Colombo with the prime objective of restoring the Temple to its pristine glory.

The Restoration Society, with the help of the Hindu devotees of Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and Singapore had already completed the initial phase of the temple restoration work, and the second and third phases are yet to be undertaken. The necessary granite work for the second phase is underway at the School of Architecture and Sculpture at Mahamallapuram in Tamil Nadu and The Restoration Society is waiting anxiously to re-start the restoration work of the temple once conditions settle down in this country.

Sir, we are constrained to observe that the damage caused to the Thiruketheeswaram temple now, is not very much different from what the Portuguese did to the Temple in the 16th Century. Freedom of worship has been denied to the devotees of this temple for neary two years now.

Hence we appeal to you, Sir, to do the needful to get the army to move out of the temple premises and thereby help the temple authorities to re-open the temple and arrange for the conduct of the normal poojas and other religious rites”.

7. The above appeal by Hon. Joseph Pararajasingham M.P. in Parliament and appeals by the Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society and

several other Hindu religious organisations, in particular the All-Ceylon Hindu Congress, made to the late President Ranasinghe Premadasa yet remain unanswered. The army is yet in control of the entire temple complex and the area surrounding it. Not a single civilian is found within a radius of about 3 miles from the temple now.

8. The temple priests and other workers left the temple area for good on 9/8/1990. All shops, co-op outlets, government dispensary, the school and such other establishments were also closed down by 9/8/1990. From that date onwards, the army moved into occupation of the madam and other ancillary buildings. **Today the entire temple complex area is under the full control of the army.**

When the priests and others finally vacated the area on 9/8/1990 all the buildings and other structures within the temple complex were intact and there was not even a trace of damage and caused intentionally or otherwise to anything standing thereon. The army has stayed put ever since it moved in and occupied the temple on 9/8/1990. There was also no obvious need for the army to adopt a scorched earth policy as it never retreated from the temple premises.

9. **Hence from all this it is crystal clear that it was the army which caused all the destruction and wanton damage to the buildings around the temple. They are also to be held fully responsible for the disappearances of the valuable temple jewellery, the large brass oil lamps and also for the disappearance of the furniture, fittings etc. from the various madams and other buildings.**

In short, the army has undone everything The Temple Restoration Society did from 1948 onwards at great cost with the help of Hindu devotees from various countries.

10. While we were at the ruined temple site we observed that even the debris of most of the demolished buildings like 'Kurukulam' had disappeared. There we were very reliably informed that all building materials like stones, bricks and valuable sawn timber etc. had all been removed from the site and used for the construction of a buffer-like wall, similar to a rampart, north of Manthai junction and stretching towards Adampan. perhaps to prevent the guerillas from advancing towards the encampment

temple buildings with a vengeance, they seem to have on second thoughts put to good use the building materials found in the debris to put up the the Temple buildings with a vengeance, they seem to have on second thoughts put to good use the building materials found in the debris to put up the wall.

11. We were also reliably informed that the beds, tables and other such furniture that were found in various madams particularly the costly furniture found in the Malaysian pilgrims' rest, are being put to good use in the army camps scattered in the region.

12. In view of the circumstances enumerated above, the Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society will have to appeal to the Government to help the society to:

- (i) Get all the destroyed or damaged buildings, madams etc. re-built or repaired, as the case may be.
- (ii) Restore to the temple, the 'madams' and other buildings the supply of electricity, water, sanitation services, the telephone and ancillary amenities.
- (iii) Arrange to pay compensation to all employees of the temple including the Brahmin priests, who have not been paid their normal salaries and wages from August 1990.
- (iv) Assist the society to buy the electric generators, the 130 bags of cement and such other essential articles removed from the temple and various madams by the army personnel on and after 8/8/1990.

Yours in Service,

S. Saravanamutu
Asst. Hony. Secretary,
Thiruketheeswaram Temple Restoration Society.

Case of the missing idols - vandalism or sacrilege?

Sivasiri Nahuleswara Kurukkal, is the traditional lawful custodian and Chief Priest of Nahuleswaram, who now lives in Colombo. When Weekend Express met him, he was in a depressed state of mind over the present condition of the Nahuleswaram.

The priest alleged that very valuable statues of the deities, which were left behind in the temple after the military operations, had disappeared. Revealing this in an exclusive interview with Weekend Express, the Chief Priest Nahuleswara Kurukkal, who had visited the temple recently (January 22 1997), with a delegation including the Jaffna AGA and some other government officials, with the permission of the defence ministry, said that he was shocked to see that most of the Vikkrahams (statues) and others were missing. This was corroborated by the Jaffna Additional Government Agent, T. Vythilinkam, in his report to S. Sivananthan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Ethnic Affairs and National Integration.

The Chief Priest stated further that some of the items missing are the statues (Vikkrahams) of Lord Nadesar, which is in the form of the Cosmic Dance of Lord Siva in Chithamparam, Lord Balaskanda or Balasubramaniyar, who is also known as Kataragama Deviyo, Lord Theedsadanar, Lord Chandrasegarar, Goddess Ambal, Goddess Theepaluxmy (Ambal with lamp), Sages Pathanjali and Viyakrapathar. All these items were made of an alloy of five metals by Indian artisans of Kumbakonam centuries ago. All of them have spiritual significance and are considered invaluable. In addition, these are statues of rare cultural and artistic creative work with immense archaeological value.

He further lamented that “even the statues of Navakgrahams (nine planets) and Lord Shanmugan, which are made of granite and would not have had any monetary value, had also been taken away by the vandals. The Theepaluxmy statue was the only statue of this kind in the island”. **He further found it puzzling as to how a statue of Lord Buddha has now come to be placed under the Bo-tree which stands in front of the Pillaiar (Ganesh) Temple.**

Naguleswaram Sivan Temple, an ancient temple said to be built almost 5,000 years ago, according to Kurukkal is most sacred to the Hindus of this country as much as Banaras (Kaasi) and Rameshwaram are to the Hindus of India and Buddhagaya to the Buddhists. The ceremonial rites to the departed souls are performed here as in Banaras and Rameshwaram. All these ceremonial rites commence by the seaside and end up at the Nahuleswaram Sivan Temple. The presence of the statue of Lord Siva, referred to as Kasinathar, is another reason for the rites to be performed here for the departed souls.

This issue was earlier raised in Parliament by S. Sivathasan, Member of Parliament for Jaffna on 13 November 1996 who also tabled a letter addressed to the President by Naguleswara Kurukkal. The recent visit to the site by the delegation was the first follow-up measure taken by the government in the wake of numerous complaints made by religious bodies.

Courtesy: Weekend Express 11.05.1997

Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple

Present Address
Maharajasri S.D. Shanmuganatha Kurukkal,
Palam Pillaiyar Kovil View,
Mallakam, 25th May 1996

Her Excellency The President,
Republic of Sri Lanka,
Colombo,
Thro,
The Government Agent,
Jaffna.

Your Excellency,
About Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple as on 18.05.1996
and for redress

.....I bring to your kind notice what I saw at first sight regarding the temple, its surroundings and its belongings.

- 1) The temple premises are covered with shrubs and with heavy outgrowth of bushes. It is like a forest.
- 2) The walls, pillars and all other building structures, roof, all need reconstructions. The Vasantha Mandapam Hall also needs major repairs. The damages are so severe. The eastern wing of the Nirutha Mandapam which is a granite structure also got damaged. This too needs reconstruction.
- 3) The following worshipping idols are missing:
 - a. Santhanagopalar & Hanuman
 - b. Muthucumarasamy - Gold plated
 - c. Valliamman - Gold plated
 - d. Theivanai Amman - Gold plated
 - e. Sandrasekarer

- f. Meenadchi Amman
 - g. Dhandauthapani
- (Items b, c, d, are idols gold plated with 84 sovereigns of gold)
Some of the granite stone images too had been tampered with.

4. The following articles stocked in stores are also missing:

a. All those ornamental illustrious chariot decorating new costumes, brass lamps of various patterns and sizes, iron till boxes, brasswares including pots, trays of various patterns, chaldrons and so on, utensils and wares.

b. Valuable various sized Kumbuk timbers.

Only the main chariot, another two chariots, Vaganams and chariot drawing ropes are found there. The Raja Gopuram is there, yet it also needs minor repairs and reconstruction.

5. In my house nothing is found therein. The house with the damaged roof is empty. Almyrahs, wooden boxes, iron safe in which gold, silver and copper ornaments and jewellery were kept, books of several descriptions, rare old scripts, motor car and water pump, utensils - everything there is missing.

The most valuable pure silver Flag Staff ornamental fittings with illustrious workmanship weighing about 280 kilos of silver are missing. Even the wooden box in which fittings were kept in the safe is missing. A precious treasure of the temple has disappeared. Indeed we feel very sorry towards this.

Madam President,,

This temple is a Public Charitable Religious Trust that serves the needs of the Devotees of this Island. It is also an ancient historic temple like that of Asgriya and Malwatha.

Since 1987 this temple and its surroundings faced continuous bombings and shell firings that led to severe destruction and damages to all the buildings, properties and plantations.

During November 1990, and thereafter again and again, I brought to the notice of His Excellency The President, Republic of Sri Lanka, through the Government Agent, Jaffna, and to all other ministries concerned regarding the position of the temple on October 1990 supported with an Affidavit along with the list of items remained within the temple premises as on October 20, 1990, the day we departed from Maviddapuram as refugees. I also stressed in that Affidavit the need for the protection and safeguarding of the temple and its belongings.

It would be very much useful, helpful and beneficial if you would please make arrangements to send any officials to visit the temple premises and to assess the destruction, damages, losses caused therein.

The destructions are so severe. The missing articles worth more than millions of rupees.

It would be a Charitable duty if the Government make arrangements with the Building Materials Corporation to take charge of the reconstruction and repairs of the temple buildings and to attend to all other needs so as to enable the temple to function effectively for the purposes of offering prayers and for performing the traditional religious practices and obligations.

I hope and trust the request for the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Replacements of the missing articles of the Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple will be surely favoured with for which we pray our Almighty to shower His Blessings on You and All concerned.

I remain, Your Excellency
Hoping to have helpful response,

Extracts from an appeal to the President of Sri Lanka by Maharajasri S.D. Shanmuganatha Kurukkal, High Priest of Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple, dated 25-5-1996.

Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple

.....In terms of the Supreme Court Judgement and the Scheme of Management accepted in the above said Case No. T/16608, I am vested with the custody, protection, safety and management of all the temple properties and for the proper functioning of the said Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple.

In the year 1987, before the I.P.K.F. operation began this temple premises and its vicinity were targets of attack by the Sri Lankan Army stationed at Palaly and as a result of repeated attack by the Sri Lankan Army heavy damages and losses were caused to the temple and its properties. These were promptly reported to our Government and a report in detail was also submitted in order to claim compensation for the damaged properties. Up to now no action has been taken over this.

It is very unfortunate again in 1990 on the 20th day of October, the temple premises were attacked by the Sri Lankan Air Force causing heavy and severe damages. In this context, I wish to place it on record that on this relevant period the important festival of 'Lord Skantha' namely 'The Skantha Shashdy' was in progress. Owing to this heavy and severe aerial attack and the presence of military forces in the vicinity of Maviddapuram, we were compelled to vacate immediately, leaving behind all our belongings and all those documents relating to the affairs of the said temple.

Up to this day I, as Governing Authority and High Priest of the said temple, have made several attempts to visit the temple by communicating with the Government Agent, Jaffna, Red Cross Society Authorities and also with the Minister of Hindu Religious Affairs, Colombo. I wish to place it on record that all my attempts were in vain.

I am deeply concerned in the safety and the security of the above said temple, its premises and its belongings. It may also be noted that I need not emphasise the historic and cultural importance of this temple to this country as a whole and to the Hindu community at large.

The hardship and other innumerable difficulties caused to me and to the other priests are very great and all of us undergo terrible sufferings

physically, mentally and economically.

On the 1st of November, 1990, a memorandum embodying all the details of the necessity that urged us to quit Maviddapuram and the need of the protection of the temple and its belongings was sent to the Honorable Minister of Hindu Religious Affairs through the Government Agent, Jaffna. Up to this day we are unable to find out what action has been taken to safeguard the temple and its belongings. Again another memorandum titled 'Access to Sacred Areas' was sent to His Excellency, The President of the Democratic Socialistic Republic of Sri Lanka, Colombo, through the Government Agent, Jaffna in which special mention was shown about the Maviddapuram Kanthaswamy Temple. We regret that up to now no reply has been received.

I now feel that it has become necessary for me to inform the Government of Sri Lanka and other interested authorities about the safety and protection of the temple and its properties. I annex herewith a detailed schedule indicating the various belongings of the temple as at 20th of October 1990. Even though the schedule herewith is not exhaustive this gives a clear picture of estimation of the wealth of the temple and its belongings. These should be safeguarded by the Government in the interest of this country and its citizens.

Extracts from an Affidavit dated 13-6-1992 sworn by Maharajasri S. D. Shanmuganatha Kurukkal, High Priest of Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple.

Hindu Congress Appeals

The All Ceylon Hindu Congress has appealed to the government to bring an end to the ongoing war and announce a package for the political solution of the conflict. The following are extracts from the Congress's recent statement:

We do not relish the ongoing war. We do not condone the killing of any person whether he is a Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher to whatever religion he may belong. By this ruthless war, valuable lives that could contribute to the development of this country are wantonly destroyed. The finances that could be used for economic emancipation of the masses is used to destroy them.

The information we gather from various sources, (mainly from those coming from Jaffna), express in no uncertain terms that there is very heavy loss of life among civilians. A large number suffer from injuries (substantial numbers of the latter also die in hospitals due to the non-availability or non-adequate medical care at hospitals due to inadequacy of drugs and medical personnel). There is wanton destruction of properties. Our information is that unaccountable number of dead bodies are found in hospitals even outside the mortuaries due to inadequacy of storage space. We come to gather that over three hundred have died, over two thousand have been injured and over three hundred thousand have been made homeless. All these have happened due to indiscriminate bombing and shelling. From these one is never near wrong if he concludes that this is a war perpetrated on the Tamil population by the Government.

As Hindus we are aggrieved and dismayed as the military targets for bombing and shelling have fallen on places of worship to mention a few, Selvasannathy Temple, Valvettithurai Sivan Temple, Sangaraththai Pathirakali Amman Temple and Navaly St. Peters Church.

Her Excellency Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga came to power with the vast majority of Tamils voting for her. She got a mandate from the citizens of this country to bring peace and prosperity. It is evident from the present happenings that she is not allowed to take a step forward on the mandate to restore peace by solution of the ethnic problem. On the contrary,

to our dismay, we observe that Her Excellency's Government has taken steps leading to war and destruction. The Government has chosen a military solution which will result in the decimation of Tamil population. Tamil people will not forgive the State sponsored atrocities presently perpetrated on them. As it is a pure Sinhala army, navy and air force fighting in the north is de facto Sinhala war on Tamils.

All governments of the post independence era in this country have aroused violence against the Tamils (either State inspired and or State directed) when Tamils expressed their grievances democratically, non violently against injustices perpetrated on them. The militancy against the State was forced upon the Tamil youth, Tamil youth taking up arms was a rebounding force to State terrorism. We agree with the present President when she said that "we can suppress the present LTTE by force but without acceptable political solution there could emerge another LTTE". A war of a future will be much more violent than the present unless peace is achieved now. The most essential thing for peace is immediate stoppage of this war by both sides. Her Excellency, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was thought of as a Messiah emerging to bring peace and prosperity to this land. We are sure she will not fall a victim to the dictum 'honours mutant mores'.

We reiterate that the war should cease immediately and the proposed package of political solution should be made available soon.

We appeal to Her Excellency President to put an end to this war and announce her political solution. We appeal to the LTTE to reciprocate.

We appeal to the Hon. Minister of Health and Social Services to

- (a) send adequate number of doctors to the North-East to meet this disaster situation.
- (b) send medical supplies to meet this situation.

We appeal to the Hon. Minister of Ports, Shipping, Relief and Rehabilitation to help in ending life in refugee camps early so that there could be prevention of disease that usually occurs in epidemic proportion under crowded conditions. We also appeal to him to provide early and adequate relief for those who lost their homes and belongings.

We appeal to the N.G.O. community to supplement or complement relief measures which they had been contributing lavishly at this time of need.

We appeal to the diplomatic community in this country to use their influence with the Government to put an end to this war against Tamil people.

We appeal to all Tamil Members of Parliament (on whose support this government survives) to bring pressure on the Government to stop this war and bring out the political package for peace very early. We also appeal to them to withdraw their support to this government if their demands are not conceded.

Courtesy: Tamil Times 15.10.1995

Desist from causing embarrassment to Hindu devotees- YMHA

The Young Men's Hindu Association (YMHA), Colombo has appealed to President D.B. Wijetunga to request the Police department to desist from arresting and detaining Hindu devotees especially during festivals which are to be held in the next few months.

In the next few months Hindus, irrespective of age and sex will observe Kethara Gowri Viratham, Deepavali, Skanda Sasdi, Sooranpoar, Thiruvem pavai etc.

In a memorandum to the President, the YMHA has stated that young persons going to temples for worship are detained and questioned by the roadside in front of the public causing unnecessary embarrassment to them.

The memorandum stated that in recent incident the Ven. Srilasri Gnanasambanda Paramachariya Swamigal of Jaffna Nallur Atheenam was detained by the Seeduwa Police.

On Friday (22/10/93) while the Swami and party were returning after a discourse at the Pillaiyar Temple, Negombo with two temple executives, he was detained at Seeduwa by the police and grilled. Finally our Association had to leave for Seeduwa and intervene in this matter and got him released. Normally the Swamigal visits temples with our members, but on this occasion, as two executives of Negombo temple were there, we did not accompany him.

“ Therefore, while apprehending and punishing the guilty, we appeal to your Excellency to instruct the department not to make criminals out of innocent citizens.

“ We kindly request your Excellency to grant us an interview to elucidate our case more fully” , the memoranda said.

Courtesy: Sunday Island 29.10.1993

Report on the Incident in Thurga Thevi Thevasthanam, Thellippalai ~ 31-5-1992

The Thevasthanam (the Managing Authority), of the Sri Thurga Thevi Temple wishes to notify that the Temple premises had been subjected to aerial attacks on 31 - 05- 92 between 12-15 p. m. and 12-45 p. m. causing death and destruction.

The attack consisted of:

1. A grenade throw from a helicopter on a parked Government Hospital Ambulance vehicle gifted by U. N. H. C. R.
2. Four bombings by the regular bomber aircraft and
3. One barrel bomb from an Avro aircraft

This temple runs a Children's Home consisting of sixty seven children. This home has a staff of six persons, Six elderly persons also come under its care. It has a regular temple staff residing within the temple complex.

Besides these permanent residents, the temple has been providing accommodation for 116 displaced refuge families since June, 1990. To add to these, there were persons who had come into the temple premises for safety, persons displaced by the security operations of 30th and 31 st May, 1992. In all there were about 2500 persons at the time the incident took place.

Such a vast number was gathered there because this temple has been considered a haven from these types of attacks. On S.L.R.C. and I.C.R.C. instructions, the temple had been flying on the top of the temple tower and at three other prominent places the flag internationally specified to be flown on the top of religious buildings.

The people were taken completely unaware by the bombing. Three died on

the spot and three on admission at the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna. About twenty five had been badly injured and about hundred suffered minor injuries.

These bombings have caused destruction to the

- (1) Vasantha Mandapam (the Assembly Hall inside the Temple).
- (2) The Hall situated on the south eastern side - The Thirumurai Mandapam (the Hall for chanting of Hymns) which houses the office of the President of the Board of Management, Siva Thamil Selvi Thangammah Appacuddy.

There had been also damages caused to the residences of the temple staff - those of the Chief Priest and one of his assistants.

We are right now, unable to quantify in money terms the damage caused.

The worst shock has been that this temple which has been known throughout the North and in the entire Island for its exemplary and pioneer community services had been singled out for such a devastating aerial attack This has disrupted the community life of the village and has created a great sense of dismay in the hearts of its devotees living in all parts of the country and wherever Sri Lankan Hindu Tamils have migrated.

The attack had been unprovoked and intentionally destructive.

The temple authorities have every reason to believe, that the Government itself is aware of the work of the temple, through the Red Cross Organisations and the state network.

It was the confidence that the people had in this temple, the unshakeable belief they had that such a prominent temple will never be attacked, as it had been the case for so long, that prompted the people to seek safety and shelter within the temple premises.

The destruction caused has disrupted life in the temple. We are unable to keep the children there and to continue the various community and social services the temple has been running.

A religious centre of such eminence should not be subjected to purposive

attacks.

The temple authorities are grieved over the incident. It wishes to urge that suitable action is taken to inquire how such wanton damage can be caused to unsuspecting believers.

We request the I. C. R. C to take immediate action to declare this as a "safety area" in view of its sacredness and sanctity.

We wish to appeal to the devotees to remain calm and continue to place faith in Thurga Ambal, the great upholder of Dharma and justice.

Siva Thamil Selvi
Thangammah Appacuddy
President

Hindus facing danger and destruction

Sir Paulus Peiris, the Sinhalese historian states, that long before the arrival of Vijaya, the progenitor of the Sinhalese race, in 483 BC., there were five recognised Iswarams of Lord Siva, "which claimed and received the adoration of all Indians". In fact there were seven Iswarams in the island. They were Tirukoneswaram in Trincomalee, Nakuleswaram near Jaffna, Tiruketheeswaram near Mannar, Muneeswaram near Chilaw, Chandrasekhareswaram in Devanturai at the southern end, Thantontreeswaram near Batticaloa and Thantontreeswaram in Ottysuttan near Mullaitivu. It is on account of the presence of temples to Lord Siva on all four sides and also in the middle of the island that Saint Thirumular referred to Ilankai as sivaboomi in the 4th century A.C. in Thirumandiram, an outstanding work of Hindu Philosophy. The saivite Saints, Thirugnanasambanthar and Suntharamurthi have sung several hymns in praise of the Lord at these Iswarams around the 7th century A.C. It is on this island, at Kathirgamam, that Lord Subramanya is said to have married his second consort Valli. Saint Arunagiri has sung in praise of the Lord at this shrine.

Sinhala - Buddhist Rule

After independence, power went into the hands of the Sinhala Buddhist majority. Immediately thereafter, the more chauvinistic among them, the Buddhist monks and politicians, who had self assumed the role of the protectors of Buddhism, adopted various methods to ensure that ultimately Ceylon became Sinhala Dvipa a pure Sinhalese-Buddhist Island.

A process of seeking to proselytise the Hindus was begun even before independence when the country was administered by the British with a part Sinhalese Board Ministers. But, on meeting total failure in their endeavours due to the steadfastness of the Hindus in adhering to their faith, successive post-independence Sinhala Buddhist Governments resorted to other means

firstly by racist and unjust legislations.

The first of such legislations decitizenised all Tamils living and working in the tea plantations, that is, 40% of the total Tamilian population. This was done with the intention of reducing Tamilian representation in Parliament and with the expectation that they would be repatriated to India in course of time. Thereafter a process of assimilating the Tamils into the lower rungs of the Sinhala-Buddhist polity was set in motion by making Sinhala the only Official Language overnight. Discrimination in land settlements, colonisation of the traditional Tamil Homeland with Sinhala-Buddhists, blatant discrimination in the fields of higher education and employment were also planned and put into operation.

The Constitution, the fountain of all laws, itself shows blatant discrimination by laying down that the Republic of Sri Lanka "shall give Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana". While it has been made constitutionally obligatory for the State to give the foremost place to Buddhism and protect and foster it, Hinduism has not even been mentioned in the Constitution.

Today, Sinhala is the only Official Language, and Buddhism virtually the State Religion. The National Flag reflects these chauvinistic features. It displays a lion (Sinha) menacingly holding a sword, and is adorned with four bo-leaves at the four corners all depicting the Sinhalese race and Buddhism.

At every stage the Tamils resisted the injustices by parliamentary protests and Gandhian methods, such as satyagrahas and non-violent civil disobedience campaigns, only to be repressed with military force and anti-Tamil pogroms of 1956, 1958 and 1961.

Disillusioned by the failure of all non-violent methods, the Tamils, particularly the youths who were the worst affected and most persecuted, decided to take up arms to save themselves from total annihilation. The anti-Tamil pogroms, however, continued with greater venom and intensity. There were further pogroms in 1974, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1982 and 1983, all state-sponsored.

In every one of the anti-Tamil pogroms, the Buddhist clergy had taken an active part in the killing of Tamils. In the 1958 - pogrom, in Polonnaruwa, Buddhist monks were leading the mobs against the Tamils. During the 1983-pogrom, Buddhist priests went about the streets of Colombo exhorting the mobs to kill all the Tamils, and not to spare a single. During the same pogrom, in Bandarawela, a Buddhist priest stabbed a Tamil physician and his wife to death and ripped open their stomachs.

Forms of Religious Oppression

Oppression and religious persecution of the Hindus take place not only in violent forms but in other subtle and sophisticated ways as well. Outlined below are some of the methods of religious oppression.

(1) Buddhist religious symbols, the stupa and bo-tree, are made use of to give legitimacy to Sinhalese settlements in Tamil areas. The method generally adopted is to find a bo-tree in a Tamil area, erect a Buddha idol underneath it overnight, stealthily build a vihara around or near it with an incumbent Buddhist monk, and then the process of Sinhalisation of the area begins culminating in the claim that the region was an ancient Buddhist area. Such crafty moves had taken place in Vavuniya and in the Eastern Province, creating racial tension and triggering off, violence. But the newly erected statue and vihara will remain with States protection, very often despite assurances given to the contrary by the highest authority.

(2) Sudden "discoveries" are made of such symbols or supposed symbols in archaeological excavations in sites historically known to have been that of Hindu shrines, and thereafter the process of converting the areas into Sinhala-Buddhist areas begins as aforesaid. Cyril Mathew, a former Minister and a henchman of President Jayewardene, and a rabid chauvinist was the chief architect of this scheme. He and his gang "discovered" over 100 "ancient Buddhist shrines" in the Eastern Province. The gang then demanded that there should be only Sinhala Buddhists living within the limits of the area in which the peeling of the bells of the newly erected Buddhist viharas could be heard; and by means of mob violence and state-terrorism they sought to implement this rule.

(3) The declaration of sites of Hindu shrines as archaeological reserves to

undertake excavation operations, posing a danger to the temple, apart from bringing out false claims based on misinterpretation of findings to 'prove' ancient Sinhala Buddhist settlements. The Sri Muthumariamman Temple in Kilivetty, in the Trincomalee District, is a case in point. A gazetted order for excavation in the lands belonging to this temple still hangs like the sword of Damocles over it, although the excavation process was suspended in the teeth of vehement protests by the former Member of Parliament. The inhabitants of this area have now been forcibly evicted by the armed forces.

(4) Governmental notifications being issued that certain ruins are Buddhist ruins, as in the case of the historic Samanalankulam Pillaiyar Temple in Vavuniya District which has now been converted into a Buddhist 'ruin'.

(5) Erecting imposing Buddhist statues in close proximity to ancient Hindu temples as in the case of Thirukoneswaram of Trincomalee, is yet another method adopted to ultimately wipe out Hinduism in Ceylon.

(6) Forcible take over by Buddhist monks of Hindu shrines hitherto venerated and maintained by Hindus are not unheard of. Such 'take-overs' have taken place at Sella-Kathirgamam, near the main Murugan Temple in Kathirgamam, and at the temple in the holy peak of the seven-hills of Kathirgamam.

(7) The Pilgrims' Rest at Kathirgamam, managed by the Ramakrishna Mission of Colombo with its Headquarters in Calcutta, and which gave free board and lodging to all pilgrims, irrespective of religion, was taken over by the State and handed over to Buddhist monks. The main shrines of the sacred area, once managed by the Giri Swamys of Maharashtra, had been forcibly taken over by the Buddhist monks. The till-boxes were perhaps the main attention. Earlier, the Hindu Mutts were razed to the ground in the move to declare it a sacred area.

(8) The Cultural Triangle Project funded by the UNESCO and presently undertaken in the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa Districts, is made use of for the restoration of Buddhist shrines only, to the complete exclusion of ancient Hindu Temples in those areas. Under this Project, in Anuradhapura, the Sri Kathiresan Temple, once venerated by Swamy Vivekananda himself, is to be dismantled and re-erected elsewhere.

(9) While large land endowments to Buddhist temples, old and new, are given by the State to encourage construction of new temples and for renovation and enlargement of the old, the lands belonging to Hindu temples, on the other hand, have been grabbed, under the present situation, using the security forces. The Koneswaram Temple in Thampalakamam has been denied compensation for the loss of cultivation of its paddy lands, due to water being diverted to the State Sugar plantations in Kantalai, contrary to earlier tacit agreements. The Temple depended on these land endowments made by Hindu philanthropists, for its upkeep and maintenance.

(10) Legal and administrative constraints have been placed on the construction of new Hindu temples.

(11) Since 1983, owing to the military rule imposed and state-terrorism unleashed in the Tamil Homeland, there are several restraints and impediments on the conduct of daily poojas and annual festivals in the Hindu temples. Poojas have to be conducted long after dawn and well before dusk. Special permission has to be obtained for the peeling of bells, and for annual festivals, which also have to be within prescribed times. Festivals and religious procession are very often disturbed and prematurely ended by rampage of the security forces. In the case of Thirukoneswaram in Trincomalee, the Sri Lanka Army has moved into its precincts and devotees are prohibited from entering the area.

Destruction of Hindu Temples

The oppression of the Hindus has reached its peak with the damage and desecration or destruction of their places of worship. There had only been few instances in history of Buddhist rulers converting, in a subtle manner, Hindu shrines into Buddhist temples. Further, it is recorded that only the Mahayana Buddhist ruler Mahasena (274-301 A.C.) and the Portugese rulers (1619-1656 A.C.) had adopted a policy of damaging or destroying Hindu temples. But the damage and destruction to Hindu temples caused during the nine years of Jayewardene's rule surpasses all previous account.

During the pogroms of 1977, over hundred Hindu temples and institutions were damaged and desecrated or destroyed.

During the pogroms of 1981, besides the Nachimar Amman Temple in Jaffna, Pillaiyar Temple in Amparai was set on fire and the Brahmin priest attacked.

During the pogroms of 1983, over fifty Hindu temples and institutions were damaged. In Trincomalee District alone, nineteen temples were damaged, mainly by the Sri Lanka Navy, the aim being to wipe out all traces of Hinduism from Trincomalee.

The attacks on Hindu temples and the presecution of Hindus has not ceased even after the pogrom of 1983, the holocaust of which caused serious concern among the people of India. In fact, the attacks have become more and more barbarous.

During 1984, in May, the Sri Lanka Army damaged the Pathrakali Amman Temple in Point Pedro. In July, at a Hindu temple in Mathagal, the security forces compelled the Brahmin priest, at gun point, to eat meat. In August, outside a Hindu Temple in Nedunkeni near Mullaitivu, the security forces fired upon a gathering of devotees, killing fourteen of them. During the same month, in Kaithadi, soldiers shot and killed a Hindu within the precincts of the Ganesa Temple. In September, the Navy shelled and damaged the Sella Sannithy Skanda Temple in Thondamanaru in the northern coast of the Jaffna peninsula. This shrine had been subject to attacks on two other occasions later. In October the annual festival of the Mavittapuram Kanthasamy Temple was disturbed by the Air Force by straffing from helicopters. In November, during a search operation, the Sinhalese soldiers desecrated the Moothanayinar Temple in Anaicottai, by walking into the sanctum sanctorum with shoed-feet. In December, soldiers walked into the Sakthi Temple in Umayalpuram, kilinochchi during a pooja and killed a Brahmin priest.

During 1985, in April, the Brahmin priest and trustees of the Veerakathy Vinayakar Temple in Nainativu were attacked by the Sri Lanka Navy personnel during the annual temple festival. In May, Sri Lanka soldiers gunned down the Brahmin priest and several devotees at the Ganesa Temple in Tern Murikandy.

During the infamous ceasefire period commencing mid-June, security forces of the Sri Lanka Government destroyed fifty two Tamilian villages

the Trincomalee District and several Hindu temples in these villages. During this orgy of state-terrorism, soldiers burnt bodies of Hindus killed by them inside the Krishnan Temple and Chola Vairavar Temple in Trincomalee. In November, Sinhalese soldiers entered the Sri Vamakula Vinayakar Temple in Chenaiyur, Trincomalee and broke up the idols of the deities and attacked the devotees inside. During the year, the idols of a deity in the Perumparappu Pillayar Temple in Mylity was decapitated.

During 1986, in February, Sinhalese soldiers fired at the historic Mamangeswaram Temple in Batticaloa and also beat up the Brahmin priest.

During the same month, the Sri Lanka Air Force attacked a Hindu Temple in Mathagal and the Nagabushani Amman Temple in Kondavil, both in the Jaffna peninsula. In March, commandos belonging to the Sri Lanka Police, trained in Pakistan, set fire to the historic Sri Nagabushani Amman Temple in Nainativu and the chariots belonging to the temple. Within a week of the attack on this historic temple, the most sacred shrine of the Hindus of Ceylon, Thirukoneswaram in Trincomalee, referred to as Dakshina Kailas by Hindus all over the world has been the target of the Sri Lanka forces. The statue of Sri Nagathambiran at the entrance to the temple was damaged by the Sinhalese soldiers. Indications are that during the year 1986, the Government of Sri Lanka intends to attack the historic temples within the island, with a view to wipeout the history of the Tamils in Ceylon.

Courtesy: "Plight of Hindus in Lanka", a Proteg Publication March 1986

“Discoveries” and new settlements

Methods Used

New Buddhist "archaeological" sites and ruins of Buddhist temples were "discovered" in Tamil areas in order to aid colonisation. In some archaeological sites, objects of Hindu origin discovered have been suppressed by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Along with Government colonisation, illegal colonisation has also been carried out by individual Sinhalese members of Parliament in Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Soon after the August 1983 violence, thousands of Sinhalese people were transported by vehicles belonging to the Ministry of Lands and other government departments to Batticaloa and settled illegally. Tamil schools in the colonised areas have been converted to Sinhalese schools and Hindu temples have been converted to Buddhist Temples. These acts have been carried out by government officers with the patronage of Members of Parliament and Ministers and direct support of the armed forces. Houses of Tamils in colonised areas have been demolished under the supervision of government officials. Vast areas of private land belonging to Tamils have been acquired by the government in the colonised areas for alleged tourist development in spite of vehement protests by the Tamil Members of Parliament for such areas.

The government presently uses the security forces to eject Tamil residents forcibly and settle in their place Sinhalese brought from the South who include ex-convicts. In some instances, the ejected Tamils have been transported in state vehicles to other areas forcibly and left on the roads. **For example on 24.7.83 six hundred Tamil refugees were forcibly taken by the army from Trincomalee to Nuwara Eliya and left in the town.**

Archaeology and Religion

Archaeology and religion are used by the Sri Lankan government to further colonisation. The modus operandi is for the Archaeological department to make 'discoveries' of ancient Buddhist shrines in the Tamil areas. Immediately thereafter, the area is fenced, Tamils evacuated, a Buddhist shrine built, a Bikkhu installed and an army camp established in the vicinity.

Thereafter gradually, a colony is established around this alleged ancient shrine. It is significant to note here that there are no Tamils in the Archaeological Department. Preventing Tamils being appointed to the Department, not only enables the swift and periodical archaeological findings in pre-determined areas, but also facilitates suppression of findings of Hindu or Tamil origin.

Archaeological excavations were begun near the Sammalankulam Pillaiyar Temple in Vavuniya in January 1979. Although it was agreed that the excavation would commence only in the presence of a representative of the Member of Parliament (at a Conference held on 3rd January, 1979 at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs), the Department of Archaeology did not honour the agreement. During the excavation, a statue of the Hindu Goddess Amman was found along with other Hindu findings. These findings were suppressed by the Department, a fence was erected around the temple and devotees were prevented from entering it.

Statues of the Buddha were planted on several occasions in Tamil areas with the motive of establishing a Sinhalese colony around it. Such course of action was adopted in the Jaffna town, Karaveddy model village, K K S harbour, Fort Fredrick, Muthur, Vavuniya Junction, Elephant Pass, Mankulam and Paranthan. At Vavuniya, the statue not only continues to remain despite the assurances of President Jayewardene that it will be removed, but a museum has also been built on the site. The museum being stocked with a large number of "Buddhist remains" alleged to have been unearthed in Vavuniya.

In 1981, the Minister of Industries, Cyril Mathew, brought a Buddhist Bikkhu to Kokkachankulam in Vavuniya along with several Sinhalese families. Tamil families in the area were forcibly evicted, a Buddhist shrine was constructed and a colony was established. This Buddhist Bikkhu, later on, planted some statues of the Buddha at Kachchal Samalankulam and declared that it was a Buddhist sacred area. The government went a step further and renamed Kachchal Samalankulam as Samanalawewa and annexed it to the Vavuniya Sinhala Assistant Government Agent's Division on 19.10. 84.

In December 1981, the Archaeological Department built three limestone Buddhist stupas on the archaeological site at VEDIYARASAN KOTTAI, DELFT. The

stupas had made their appearance without any sign of archaeological excavation and had been constructed at periodic intervals, in order not to arouse the suspicions of the local population.

The Vinayagar Hindu temple on the Madhu road in Mannar, built thirty years ago, was forcibly occupied by a Buddhist priest and has now been converted into a Buddhist shrine.

In the occupation of Hindu places of worship, the armed forces have been used for intimidation and eviction. Army personnel arrived at Kanchirankuda in the Thirukovil A.G.A division in Batticaloa, during December 1981 and forced the villagers who patronised the temple, to remove its roof and threatened to replace the statue of Lord Murugan. The Hindu temple at Thannimurippu, Kurunthamalai in the Mullaitivu district, was 'captured' by the army and handed over to a Buddhist Bikkhu. This temple was converted to a Buddhist shrine and is now known as 'Kurunthumaha Raja Vihare'.

Minister Cyril Mathew, who used much of his power to establish that Sri Lanka was only for Sinhala Buddhists, in speeches made in Parliament on 28.10.80 and 18.11.80 emphasized that there were several Buddhist shrines in the North and East and that these shrines were in danger of being destroyed. He continued his campaign within and outside Parliament for many years while taking active part in colonisation of the Tamil areas, and on 7th October 1983, he tabled an appeal to the UNESCO in Parliament to safeguard an alleged 276 Buddhist monuments in the North and East. As an extension of this measure the Archaeological Commissioner announced in 1984 that more than 200 Buddhist archaeological sites were to be excavated and Buddhist people settled around these sites (Silumina 1st. January 1984). At this stage the Ven. Madihe Pannaseeha Thero also demanded that Buddhist people should be settled around the sites.....

- An "ancient, Buddhist shrine" was "discovered" in the usual manner in the traditional Tamil village of Kumanai. The village was renamed Digavapi and the government declared it a sacred area. Tamils and Muslims in this area were evacuated. The Members of Parliament of the area were unable to prevent the evacuation and the Muslim Members of Parliament succeeded only in finding alternative

lands for the Muslims. Later in February 1981, the Delimitation Commission changed the name of the Ampara Electoral District to Digamadulla. The Commission, with strong pressures from the government declared that "the historical background and the archaeological values surrounding the area covered by Ampara justified the new name of Digamadulla".....

- 700 Tamil families and 20 Muslims families at Vadamunai, Mathavanai, Kallichchi and Kiran were evacuated by force and these families took refuge in the Batticaloa town. The Sinhalese people began cultivating the lands of the Tamil families which had been evacuated and the Vadamunai Pillayar Temple was converted to a Buddhist shrine.

On complaints made by K W Devanayagam, the M P for Kalkudah, President Jayewardene issued an order on 16th September 1983 that all colonists should be evacuated within 48 hours. This order was not implemented and no action was taken by President Jayewardene against those who defied the order.

Courtesy: "Colonisation and Tamil Homelands", Tamil Information Centre Publication 07.09.1985

Hindu Pilgrims Rest, Kathirkamam

Mr. R. Balasubramaniam calls:

Ponnampala Swami Aiyathurai Swami:

Affirmed, 56 years now residing at Vavuniya

I am the owner and proprietor of the Ponnampalam Madam at the old Kathirimalai junction at Kathirkamam. That madam is a pilgrims rest. The pilgrims come to the madam, have their meals and rest there. This Madam was founded by my father in the year 1922, that was the year I was born. The main purpose of the pilgrims rest was to provide shelter and other facilities to thousands of pilgrims who attend the annual festival, the Murugan's festival, at Kathirkamam. Kathirkamam is a historic temple. It was founded at the time of King Sangili. Even the King Dutagamunu was a regular worshipper at this temple, according to legend. During the annual festival in July, about fifty thousand pilgrims will be patronising my Madam. They come and reside at the madam, have their meals and go to the temple and worship. The madam was not exclusively meant to the Hindus. Followers of the various religions come to my madam. Even people from the States of America are also welcome here.

Q: Can you mention any leading men who come and patronise this Madam?

A: The Basanayake Nilame used to come and reside here. He comes here because he likes my meals. He was former M.P. for Bibile. Lord Solbury's son comes to the madam very frequently. There is a German Swami. He also comes to the madam.

Q: This madam was originally situated on the southern bank of the Manikka Ganga?

A: Originally it was situated on the southern bank of the river. When the Government declared it a sacred area, the new madam was built in front of the bus station. That is called the Kathirimalai junction. When the government declared Kathirkamam a sacred area, all the madams on the northern side were demolished. As my madam was on the southern bank of the river, I was not covered by that order. In fact, even the Minister of Land, Mr. Kobbekaduwa had personally requested the officials of the area not to remove my madam.

Q: And when they started to demolish the madams on the northern side, what happened to your madam?

A: That was also demolished. That was the last to be demolished. That was done contrary to the orders of the government. Therefore, I have to take up that matter in the Supreme Court.

That matter is in appeal before the Supreme Court. I was given a site. That is the present site. In the present site, I got a plan approved and put up a temporary structure at a cost of Rs.8,000.00. After the construction of the madam, I bought utensils, brass ware, aluminium ware to the value of Rs. 25,000.00. In one vessel alone I can cook rice for 500 to 600 people. This madam had a shop. First they set fire to the shop and later they set fire to the madam. This happened at 1 am, on the 22nd of August 1977. The shop and the madam had been completely burnt. Police came and saved a portion of the utensils. The rest, some of them were burnt and the others were looted. At the time of this incident, the manager, Kanakkupillai and the watcher's wife were present. When the shop and the madam were on fire, the people who were inside the building ran out. Then they saw two constables and the grama sevaka standing at the gate. That is all they know. They only saw two constables and the Grama Sevaka at the gate. They could not say who did it. I had cows and goats. One goat was burnt and the other animals escaped.

Q: What is your estimate of the loss of your utensils?

A: About Rs. 10,000.00 to Rs. 15,000.00

I also had Hindu literature books and other documents. All those books got burnt. Those books cannot be obtained anywhere. I estimate the damage to the madam at Rs.8,000.00 as it was a temporary structure. I estimate for the shop at Rs. 3,000.00.

I am requesting this Commission to pay me a sum of Rs. 26,000.00 so that I can re-establish the Madam.

Sri Kathiresan Temple, Maho

VISVANATHAR IYAR SUBRAMANIAM IYAR:

In August 1977, I was the Officiating priest of Sri Kathiresan Temple at Maho. I had my living quarters also by the side of the temple. At that time, my wife and daughter were living with me. My other children were in Jaffna. On 17th August my temple was attacked after we had taken shelter in the jungle. They attacked my house first. Then we ran into the jungle. We were in the jungle right through the night. The next morning I went to the police station. There I along with the other 175 refugees were sent from the Maho police station in one bus to Vavuniya. I have not gone to Maho thereafter. My son went. When we were at the police station, we heard that the temple had been damaged. I don't know whether they had put the images into the pond. All the movables of the temple had been looted. We left all our personal belongings like clothing, radio, wrist-watches, jewellery and other things when we ran into the jungle. All those things were removed by the looters. I have sustained damages to the value of Rs. 14,000.00 owing to this incident.

No questions by Mr. G.P.S. De Silva

I am a Brahmin Hindu priest. In August 1977 I was the officiating priest of the Sivan Temple at Sivapuram. Daily the poojas are performed at 8.30 in the morning. On the 29th of August 1977 at my normal pooja time, I went to the temple. I went into the inner sanctum of the temple to perform the pooja. As I was getting ready for the pooja, I heard an explosion from the northern side. I heard gun shots. So I came out to find out what was happening. At that time my wife and children and an elderly person who was helping in the temple were living in a house attached to the temple. When I came out, I saw a jeep. That jeep came near the well and halted. From the front of the jeep, army personnel got down. Two other army men ran in the direction of my house. Then the two persons who got down from the front of the jeep levelled the rifle in my direction and summoned me. Then I heard shots behind my house. I raised my hands and walked towards them.

Q: Before you came to Sivapuram temple, had you earlier served in any temple in Sinhalese areas?

A: Yes, I was at Matale, Mariamman Temple. I was also at Thambalagamam in the Trincomalee District. That was a Tamil area.

I understand Sinhala, but cannot express fluently. When I went towards them, one of them assaulted me with the butt end of the rifle on my cheek and asked me, "Who are you?". At that time I had holy thread on my shoulder. The presence of the holy thread on my shoulder would indicate that I am a Hindu priest. In spite of that they struck me with the butt end of the rifle. Then one of them said in Sinhalese "Yesterday you fired at the lorry". I could not understand him clearly. With the little Sinhala knowledge I had, I pointed the soldier to the temple and made him understand that I am a priest in this temple. Then I requested them not to assault. Fearing that they might shoot me, I fell at their feet and asked them not to shoot me. Then they said "You are telling lies". Then the other man assaulted me. Then they held me by my verty and dragged me towards my house. Again they said in Sinhala, "Tell the truth and we will leave you. Otherwise we will kill you". They leveled the rifle at my chest and said something in Sinhala. I told them, "I don't understand Sinhala properly. Can you understand Tamil?" Then they called the jeep driver and asked him to speak to me in Tamil. I told the driver in Tamil that I was the officiating priest of this temple and asked them not to shoot me. Then the driver said in Tamil, "I cannot say that. If I tell that to them, they will shoot me also". The driver did not tell them what I told him. The driver said, "you must know what happened yesterday. Therefore, if you come out with the truth, you will escape. Otherwise, they will shoot you". Then I told him that I was not aware of anything and that I did not get out of the temple. When I was talking with the driver, another jeep came. The people who came in that jeep spoke to the people who were there with me. Before that jeep came, I heard a number of shots. I heard some people groaning. I also heard some women folk screaming. That jeep went back the same way.

Q: Thereafter what happened?

A: Then within a minute of the second jeep two armed persons came and told the others, especially the man with the gun at me, that two persons had been killed.

Q: What did they say?

A: They said they must go and asked the jeep driver to come away.

Q: Then what did they do?

A: The person with the rifle kicked me and asked me to go into the house.

Q: You went into the house?

A: When I turned to go he held me by my hair and the jeep driver reversed and they asked me to get into the jeep and kicked me. I got into the jeep.

Q: Where were you in the jeep?

A: They trampled me and put me under the seat.

Q: The jeep started moving?

A: I saw four or five persons running behind the jeep. Even ahead of the jeep there were armed army personnel. The people in the jeep said something to the others. From that spot there were four army personnel in the jeep and we came to Mankulam.

Q: Were you able to raise your head in the jeep?

A: No

Q: When you raised your head what did they do?

A: When I tried to put my head up they kicked me with their boots.

Q: Did they have metal helmets?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they hit you with those?

A: Yes.

Q: At Mankulam what happened?

A: At the place where we were there was a crowd of people and the persons in the jeep threatened them.

Q: You proceeded towards Vavuniya?

A: Yes.

Q: At Vavuniya where were you taken?

A: There was an army camp near the bus stand. They pulled me out of the jeep near that camp.

Q: Were you taken to the camp?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you do in the camp?

A: They all joined together and assaulted me.

Q: Did they strip you of your clothes?

A: They put me into a room. Mr holy cord was taken, cut and spat at.

Q: Can you recognise the officer who took part in that room?

A I can identify him.

Q: Later on, from the army camp you were taken and handed to the police?

A: Yes.

Q: The same officer who assaulted you and spat on your sacred cord, was one of the officers who took you to the police station?

A: Yes.

Q: When you were handed over to the police they wrote something in the book and that officer signed it?

A: Yes.

Q: It was the officer who assaulted you who signed it?

A: Yes.

Q: If that book is produced one can find out the officer who assaulted you?

A: Yes.

Q: At the army camp you were assaulted?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you given anything to eat or drink?

A: No.

Q: At the police station you were not assaulted?

A: Yes. I was not assaulted.

Q: From the police station where were you taken?

A: I was brought back to Mankulam the next day.

Q: At Mankulam police station were you taken anywhere?

A: I was taken close to the market.

Q: At the Mankulam police station did you make a statement?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you taken to the magistrate?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you make a statement to the magistrate?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you tell all what happened?

A: Yes.

Q: From there you were sent to the Jaffna Hospital?

A: Yes.

I was transferred to Mullathivu and from there I was sent to Jaffna with fiscal escort.

Q: At the Jaffna Hospital how many days were you there?

A: For 14 days.

Q: You were able to urinate?

A: Yes.

Q: For how many days could you not urinate?

A: For four to five days.

Q: You were passing blood with the urine?

A: Yes.

Q: You had kidney trouble?

A: Yes.

Q: You still have that trouble?

A: Yes.

Q: How were you fed at the Jaffna Hospital?

A: I was fed with the aid of tubes.

Q: Was any tube put to get your urine out?

A: Yes.

Q: While you were assaulted and ill-treated, did any army officers go into your house?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they assault the old man who did work in the temple?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they take anything from the house?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they take?

A: They had taken a wristwatch worth Rs. 400.00, my purse with Rs. 400.00 and my P.O.S.B.

(Commissioner)

Q: Were you staying with your wife?

A: I was not there. It was reported to me by my wife.

Q: Did they take anything else belonging to your wife?

A: No.

Q: You were finally produced before the Mannar Magistrate and released on bail?

A: Yes.

I was in hospital and before I could go to Court, bail order had been made.

Q: Up to date no plaint or any action has been filed against anyone regarding this incident?

A: No action has been filed.

Commissioner: Have you got any documents?

Mr. Shanmugalingam: I have got the number of the 'B' Report filed at Otisutan when this witness was produced by the Mankulam police. The 'B' Report is dated 31-8-77 and bears the No. A. 141/77.

Kathiresan Kovil, Anuradhapura

Ponniah Ratnasabapathy Kurukkal:

Affirmed 57 years:

Chief Priest: Kathiresan Kovil: Anuradhapura

Q: You are the chief priest of your temple?

A: Yes.

Q: It is over 75 years old?

A: Yes.

Q: For generations the chief priest has been members of your family?

A: Yes.

Q: People who profess all religions at Anuradhapura come and worship in this temple?

A: Yes.

Q: On 17/8/77 what happened in this temple?

A: There was an almsgiving by one Mrs. Sittampalam.

Q: At about 11.30 am. people were partaking of food?

A: Yes.

Q: While they were partaking of food what happened?

A: A group of youngsters walked in and assaulted all the people taking food. They robbed them of their wrist-watches and the ladies of their gold chains. I was assaulted. I was kicked and I fell unconscious. Even my chain made of beads was also removed. They broke open the store room and removed a large number of brass vessels.

They took a large quantity of brass vessels. The statue of Amman was also stolen. I was struck on my head with a stick. I was also struck on my face and I was bleeding. I was bleeding through my nose I was unconscious. After I regained consciousness, when I heard noise emanating from my house, I went in that direction. There I noticed that they had forced open the front door and removed all my things from the house. Then from the house

with the assistance of the police I went to the temple. There I found that the statue of Amman was removed and the other statues were there. Thereafter I went to the temple after 21 days. When I opened the temple, I saw that the statues of other deities especially the statue of 'Sivakamasunthary' which was made of an alloy of five metals were missing. The 'thalis' of the 'Ammal' was also removed including valuable articles made of brass and silver, tube lights and wall clocks. I also lost twenty heads of cattle.

I estimate the damage to the temple at Rs. 50,000.00. I also estimate the personal articles that I had lost including brass wares and the damage to my house at Rs. 75,000.00 totalling Rs. 125,000.00. I have also made an entry at the Anuradhapura police station on 8/9/77 under No. 128. My statement was taken down by PC 9819. Now I cannot have any poojas in the temple without a 'kumba abisekam' that is the purification ceremony. Just for the ceremony, without spending any money for renovation, would cost about Rs. 15,000.00. Before I came to Jaffna, I was staying at the Anuradhapura camp as a refugee.

Q: As a priest you do not partake meals cooked by other persons?

A: Yes. Therefore, till I arrived in Jaffna from the Anuradhapura Kacheri, I did not take any solid food. When I was at the Anuradhapura Kacheri I heard rumours that the Naga Vihare had been burnt and the Sinhalese had been assaulted.

Kathiresan Temple, Kegalle

ANNASAMY KURUKAL THIYAGARAJAH KURUKAL,
AFFIRMED, 60 YEARS.

Officiating priest at the Kathiresan Temple at Kegalle. Now residing at Kurunagalle.

XD: by Mr. R. Balasubramaniam.

I had been the chief priest of Kathiresan temple at Kegalle for the last 29 years. This temple was rebuilt in 1968. This temple was only 1/4th of a mile from the S.P.'s office. When I heard about the communal disturbance I immediately informed the police and asked for protection. In fact protection was given to me. Three policemen were there till the 18th. They said there was nothing to fear. On the 19th morning also the policemen were there. At about 1.30 pm. on the 19th when my son and I were getting ready to have our meals, someone threw a tear gas bomb inside the temple. Immediately both of us ran and hid ourselves in the inner sanctum of the temple. We locked the door also. There was no ventilation inside. We were there till 7 pm. We were there without food and ventilation. Then the police came and rescued us. Then stones were thrown on the roof of the temple. They also broke the till box and took the money. I am assessing the damage to the temple at Rs. 20,000.00. My personal belongings were also removed. On that account, I have suffered a loss of about Rs. 15,000.00.

Mr. R. Balasubramaniam

Sir, I am calling the President of the Federation of Young Men's Hindu Association to mark the schedule and some photographs. He will give only formal evidence today. Thereafter, he will give evidence in Colombo.

Commissioner: Yes

Mailvaganam Sivanesarasa, affirmed, 54 years, Circuit Divisional Officer, Batticaloa South.

I am the President of the Federation of Young Men's Hindu Association. There are over 75 associations under this Federation. We have a total membership of about 15,000. The first association was founded in the year

1914 and the Federation was established in 1970 and we associate branches all over the world. Immediately after the disturbances, I wrote to the various branches to ascertain the extent of damages caused to the various Hindu temples. In response to my request, the various associations replied and even the others affected contacted me and informed the position. I mark as Y6 a Schedule setting out the dates of incidents, the places and the loss to the temples and also the extent of the damages suffered by the priests in regard to their personal belongings. Some of the priests have already given evidence and the others will follow. Y6 only refers to the particulars that I was able to obtain. According to this schedule, the loss to the temple alone had come to Rs. 12,76,000.00 and the losses suffered by the priests come to Rs. 4,21,700.00. I also produced an album containing the photographs showing the damages to the temples. In certain areas our volunteers had been obstructed from taking photographs of the damages. I mark the album as Y7.

Q: You will be giving some evidence in Colombo?

A: Yes

Siththivinayagar Temple, Wahagoda, Katugastota

PAPU MUTHUREDDIAR, Affirmed, 58 years,
Residing at Wahagoda Road, Katugastota.

I am now living at No. 72, Wahagoda Road, Katugastota. In August, 1977 I was residing in the same address. I am living in the village of Wahagoda for the last 40 years. I have leased out lands there. Those lands are under cultivation and I also run a dairy. I have accumulated fairly good amount of wealth and I was living on friendly terms with the villagers of the area. I also took part in the social activities of the village. I also donated money to the Buddhist temple. I have financially helped many of those villagers. People in my area used to call me as V.I.P.

I remember the 19th of August, 1977.

I live adjoining the Siththy Vinayagar Temple. A crowd came to my house, looted all my articles, damaged the rest of the items and set fire to my house. They also looted and set fire to my daughter's house, another house which I had rented out, and the house which I had given to one of my workers. I produce marked C68 the photo graph showing the damage to my house, C69A, B& C, the photographs of my daughter's house and C70 the photograph showing the damage to the house which I had rented out. The house adjoining to mine belonging to the temple, was also burnt. That house was rented out to Dr. Kanagasundaram. I produce a photograph of that house marked C71.

Q: Can you identify any of the people who attacked your house and burnt it ?

A: Yes.

Q: What are their names?

A: Cyril, Somasiri, Nihal and there were another fifty people. My house was completely burnt. My daughter's house was partly burnt by about 12 o'clock.

Q: Did you hear that somebody came back at 1.30 and set fire to the rest of the house?

A: Yes, Ranjit Wijeratne came back with three girls and set fire to the remaining portion. Thereafter, it was completely burnt.

Q: How did you know that they came to set fire to the house?

A: Jamis and Sithamparam told me. I told that to the police. The same crowd that attacked my house went to the temple.

I was hiding in the house of one Simon and they tried to pull me out and assault me. When they tried to assault me, some Sinhalese ladies tried to save me and they told those ladies that Naga Vihara had been attacked and Sinhalese girls had been cut and sent in fish boxes to Kandy. I told them that these were rumours from Jaffna and asked them not to believe them. I told them I was not from Jaffna and asked them to release me. One of my security guards informed the police about this incident. That was after my house was burnt. I was in hiding and I do not know whether the police came. I heard some gun shots and I heard the Fire Brigade had come. They had come twice. On 26-8-77 I made a complaint to the police, a copy of which I produce marked C72 and C.72 (a) is a translation of that complaint. C.72 is regarding the damage caused to me. My daughter Mrs. Thanalakshmi made a complaint to the police. As a result of these incidents I suffered a loss of Rs. 77,000.00 My daughter suffered loss and damage in a sum of Rs. 52,000.00. Another house belonging to me, which was rented to a P.H.I. was also damaged and I suffered a loss of Rs. 15,000.00 on that account. I am the caretaker of the temple and I attend to the Poojas. I know the damage to this temple. This temple was consecrated in 1947. The damage caused to this temple is about Rs. 2 lakhs of rupees. The Trustee of this temple is at Point Pedro and he is Mr. Sivarasalingam. I am now taking care of the temple. I have not made a complaint regarding the damage to the police. Another person made the complaint regarding that. I do not know when that complaint was made. I have some photographs. I have lost all my clothes and Mr. Marikkar gave me some clothes to wear. We were at the refugee camp and when we were there some people came and gave us clothes. I produce marked C.73 (1) to 3 C.73 (8) photographs showing the damage caused to the temple. C.73 (2) is the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temple without the statues there. C.73(1) shows the entrance to the temple. There was a statue made of granite stone and that statue is not there in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The statue that was in the Sanctum Sanctorum was removed.

from its original place and smashed up and the photograph C.73 (3) shows the broken statue. The broken pieces of this statue were collected from the floor of the temple and are now kept in the temple for worship. It is the metal statue that was missing. C.73 shows the altar of the temple. The altar is without the Sacred Bull (Nandi). The Altar that was removed from its original place was collected by me as the caretaker of the temple and it is now kept in the temple. I produce marked C.73 (5) the photograph showing that. I produce marked C.73 (6) the Dome of the Sanctum Sanctorum without the pinnacle which was over the dome. C.73 (7) shows the damage to the roof which the crowd attempted to set fire to. The entire roof did not catch fire. I produce marked C.73 (8) the photograph showing the bell tower of the temple without the bell. The bell was not taken away by the crowd at that time. I saw the bell after I came from my house. Now the bell is missing. It had been removed subsequently. The villagers continue to carry away whatever things that remain in the temple even now. They carry away the rafters etc. The temple is now used as a common thoroughfare. They walk through it. The temple has been completely damaged and abandoned. To my knowledge no action has been taken in this connection by the police. Some people have been arrested and bailed out and nothing has happened thereafter.

Nothing has been done with regard to the damage to my house. I had 40 cows and they were let loose.

Mr. Rudra Moorthy: I respectfully move that the Commission inspect the scene of the temple.

Commissioner: Nothing could be done by me inspecting the scene. The only thing to do is to bring the wrong-doers to book. I took some Lawyers to the scene of the temple and showed them the damage done to this temple. Some Govt. authorities visited this temple. I heard that Mr. Dias Abeysinghe and Mr. L. O. Perera Attorneys-at Law had visited this temple. Some officials of the C.W.C. also had visited the temple. I took them round. There were five or six youngsters who came and threatened the lawyers. They had asked the lawyers what they were doing there in the temple. They had been threatened with death. Those youngsters had said, "If these people were killed at that time, they would not come here". Some of them had been armed.

Mr. Rudra Moorthy:

Even now it is not safe for anybody to go and no action is taken by the Police.

Senior State Counsel:

May we visit this place and see what had happened actually. It may have some salutary effects.

Commissioner:

Are you making inquiries whether action was taken or not.

Senior State Counsel:

I wish if this Commission visits this place. Our visit may indicate that some action is being taken.

Commissioner:

First we will find out whether any action has been taken. The Police is there to prosecute the offenders.

Mr. Devasagayam:

From what the crowd themselves shouted my instructions are that the Buddhist Priest of the Temple close-by had actively encouraged those people to take such action.

Senior State Council:

If there is evidence that the Priest had done so the Police will have to take action against him also.

Mr. Gnanasekaram:

The M.P for the area is present. I inquired from him and he says that what the witness says is true.

Commissioner:

What is the reason for action not being taken.

Senior State Council:

These people have to get back. People cannot abandon their homes for the sake of others.

Q: What is the name of that young man who threatened to attack you and the lawyers of the C.W.C. who visited the scene in December 1977?

A: Martin.

Commissioner:

Who were the lawyers who went?

Mr. Rudra Moorthy:

Myself and Mr. Kanagarajah who has given evidence before this Commission.

Mr. Peri Sundaram:

They thought that the destruction of a Temple means destruction of a community who attended that temple.

Q: You are to some extent familiar with the Hindu and Buddhist traditions?

A: Yes.

Q: You know what the Sinhalese people call Ganadeiya and the Tamils call Pilleyar is the same Deity worshipped by the Buddhist too?

A: Yes.

Many people came to this temple for vows and most of them were Buddhists. The majority of worshippers who came to this temple were Buddhists. I have seen in most of the temples of Buddhists the Deity of Ganadeiyo.

TO MR. DEVASAGAYAM:

I know the Buddhist temple that is close by to the Kovil that was destroyed. I do not know the name of the Priest there. Lot of Buddhists come to this Hindu Temple to worship and to make vows. I have heard that Buddhist Priest was taken into custody immediately after this incident. I do not know why he was taken into custody.

Q: Do you know whether the people who attacked the Temple had anything to do with this Buddhist Priest?

A: I do not know.

The Buddhist Temple is Handapane Kumbure Viharaya.

Q: Do you have any reason to suspect the priest of that Pansala of having anything to do with the destruction of this Temple?

A: I do not know.

TO MR. RUDRA MOORTHY:

I am also living there. Some Sinhalese friends of mine protected me. They

are very much worried about what happened to me.

TO MR. TENNAKOON:

Q: Before these incidents of August, 1977 there were no differences between the two communities?

A: Yes.

Q: Have you known this Buddhist Priest well?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know his name?

A: I do not know

Q: You do not know personally why he was arrested?

A: No

TO OTHER COUNCIL: NIL

MR. DEVASAGAYAM: I do not know whether your Honour would be pleased to visit this scene.

MR. PERI SUNDARAM: There are other scenes of destruction we would like your Honour to visit, if time permits. I am endeavouring to lead evidence of witnesses to cover some of the outlying areas of Kandy. I will be calling two.

**MR. TENNAKOON
SENIOR STATE COUNCIL:**

May I have Your Honour's kind permission to call Mr. Krishnadasan as a witness before I resume the evidence of the previous witness.

COMMISSIONER:

I do not think Mr. Krishnadasan would take long.

Pilgrims Rest, Matara

Mr. Tennakoon, Senior s. c., calls

N. Krishnadasan, affirmed, 76 years, retired Commissioner of Assize, residing at No, 361/1, R.A. De Mel Mawatha, Colombo 3

COMMISSIONER: Have you brought your copy of the memorandum.

WITNESS: Yes

MR. TENNAKOON: I have the original with me. After his evidence I can mark this memorandum.

I have been for quite a long time holding high judicial office in this country till I retired as a Commissioner of Assize. I take a keen interest in religious activities and social work. In 1946 I was the President of the Matara Tamil Association.

Q: You collected funds for the construction of a Pilgrims' Rest and a Hindu Temple at Matara? :

A: For a Pilgrims' Rest only.

Q: A land in extent 3 roods and 20 perches was purchased by you from the monies collected?

A: Yes.

Q: A Madam and a Temple for the use of the pilgrims going to Kataragama were put up ?

A: Not a temple. Only a Madam was put up at the first instance. Very much later a temple was constructed.

Q: The Madam and the Temple were subsequently declared a trust property ?

A: Soon after that it was declared a trust property.

Immediately after the construction of the Madam it was declared and held

by trust in favour of Kataragama pilgrims without any reference to race or caste. I raised monies only from Hindus.

Q: This place was used, I think more by Sinhalese and other pilgrims?

A: Hindus and others. Majority Hindus.

Q: You recall one of the darkest periods in this country when you experienced communal riots in August 1977. What happened to this place during that period?

A. On the 20th of August at about 11 o'clock in the morning soon after the arrival of the morning train when the offering of the pooja was just completed a crowd of people had gone in and damaged the building, the temple and removed all the doors and windows. They broke even the water tank. Everything was demolished. This is a place where we had fed thousands of people at one time. There were big cauldrons for cooking rice and other curries. All those articles had been removed. There were six or seven rooms where officers used to stay. All their articles have been removed. I have taken some photographs of the building after the damage.

Q: Even the coconut trees on the land were cut down?

A: Yes.

They were cut down and put on the building. The young coconut trees were just cut down. The Temple was put up 10 years later. The temple had a carved door. They had put some explosives and had broken and burnt that door. The pillars were broken. After doing all these a Buddhist statue had been put in front of the Temple. A Buddhist flag had also been hoisted. As regards the Buddhist Statue being installed and the flag being hoisted what I say is hearsay. I did not see. I saw the place where the statue was. I also got the information that the statue which was installed in this temple had been taken away and thrown. Again I am saying hearsay. They say so. I do not vouch for it. They say that the statue was thrown into the cemetery and later recovered by the Police. At the moment it is lying in the compound of the Police Station along with the other articles that were recovered from people who had stolen them. I went there about ten days after this incident and I saw for myself the damage done. The doors of the building were not there. The gate was not there. There were only corrugated sheets and the timber on the roof were hanging. There is an Association and for the last three years

they were feeding the pilgrims. I asked them to put up a wall to prevent further loss of property. Now they have put up a wall 6 feet high with a big gate some 5 feet high. The whole place is now enclosed by a wall. This place had been almost completely devastated. I have taken some photographs after the damage. The officers of the Association took those photographs. I will produce them so that Your Honour will have a clear idea of the damage caused. I produce marked A.137 my memorandum to this Commission dated 11-1-1978. I produce marked A.137A the photograph showing the damage to the wall abutting the road. There is another photograph which shows the damage to the Temple which I produce marked A.137B. This photograph shows that the entire concrete hood had come down. There is another photograph showing that coconut trees had been cut down, which I produce marked A.137C. I produce marked A.137D the photograph showing the broken belfry. I produce marked A.137E the photograph showing the wall enclosing the Temple. The photograph showing the damage to the hall accommodating the pilgrims is produced marked A.137F. That is the tiled unit. The other photograph which I produce marked A.137G shows the corrugated section of the building. I produce marked A.137H showing the damage to the side rooms. All the doors and windows of this section had been removed. There is another photograph which shows the temple without the roof. I produce that photograph marked A.137J. I produce another photograph showing the damage to doors and windows marked A.137K. There is another photograph showing the masonry building of the Madam which served as the kitchen, which I produce marked A.137L.

Yoga Ashram, Kathirkamam

Swami Jothimayananda

Karupiah Kidnar, Affirmed.

37 years, Yoga Ashram, Kathirkamam

I am the Swami in charge of the 'Yoga-Ashram, Kathirkamam.

Q: What are your activities at the Ashram?

A: Since 1962 I was at Kataragama. In 1965 I started a spiritual Centre where I teach yogastanam, meditation and natural treatment. Many Ceylonese, Indians and foreigners come to the Ashramam to have a course.

Q: Can you tell this Commission what happened on 23-8-77 to this Ashram

A: On the 17th and 18th the Kataragama Buddhist people got excited because there was a rumour that the Sinhalese people in Jaffna were being assaulted. The Sinhalese people got angry and burnt 15 houses and attacked the Tamil people.

I came to know about it but I thought the people would not attack me. I thought so because I had done some service to a lot of Sinhalese people and their children. I got on well with the Sinhalese people. My neighbours were also helpful to me and I thought they would not assault me. On 23-8-77 a gang came with guns, bombs, clubs, swords etc. They were Over 50 in number. My neighbours told me that the gang was coming with arms and asked me to run away. I did not believe it. I heard the shouts about 4 or 5 yards away. I got afraid and I asked the five others who were also with me in the Ashram to run away into the jungle to save their lives. After some time I asked my labourers to stay and look after the temple. I told them that I would go to the police with my wife. On the road I saw a jeep. I stopped it, explained to them what was going on. They did not bother. I asked them to take me and my wife to the refugee camp. The police were in the jeep. A few refugees were at a Madam close by. The police agreed to take me and my wife to the refugee camp. From about a few days prior people were coming into the camp.

Q: What happened to the building ?

A: I do not know.

The next day the I.P came to me and informed me that the madam was

தமிழ்த தேசிய ஆவணச் சுவடிகள்

bombed and destroyed completely. He took me there. It was a tragedy. It was still burning. I saw all the books turned to ashes. 3000 books worth Rs. 20,000.00 had been burnt. They had destroyed all the doors and windows. They had used dynamite on the building. We had a tractor and it had a driver. He is a Sinhalese person and he had closed the Ashram. He had been asked where I and my wife were and he had said we had gone out. They had assaulted him on the head and I spent Rs. 500.00 on him. The building was worth one lakh of rupees and it was situated on a six acre land. The land was planted with fruit trees and other cultivation. They had damaged all the trees with swords.

Q: What have you done with the land and building?

A: I found that I could not live at Kataragama. The building and land were sold for Rs. 26,000.00. They were worth very much more. I sold the tractor for Rs. 10,000.00. It was worth Rs. 20,000.00. I sold the damaged water pump for Rs. 600.00 I have abandoned preaching in Kataragama. I have deposited some money at Kalkudai and I want to start an Ashram there. I feel it would be better if I could get back to my previous Ashram. I do not have any other income. I have taken permanent residence at Kalkudai.

Anti-Tamil, anti-Hindu offensive in Mullaithivu

Kurunthan Malai, a quiet peaceful spot in Tamil-populated Mullaithivu with ruins of both Hindu and Buddhist places of worship, will soon house an exclusive Buddhist vihare and temple and a Sinhala settlement, according to plans drawn up by officials working under the Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs. Army personnel, an ex-Director of a Public Corporation under the Ministry who was also a leading member of the UNP Trade Union—the Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya—several Ceramics Corporation vehicles, and employees of the government Tile factory of Oddichuddan 20 miles away—have all been enlisted in the implementation of this project.

Hindu statues found in the site have been taken away in Army vehicles, according to the local villagers, as far back as November last year. Kurunthan Malai situated in the Nagancholai Forest Reserve has long been held in veneration by the Vanni Tamils as the dwelling place of the guardian deity, Kurundoor Aiyanar. The building of a Buddhist Vihare at the site began several months ago, and some employees of the Tile factory have been engaged in this, with orders apparently to do it unobtrusively without attracting public attention to the building activity.

Following this, some local inhabitants had put up a hut and installed a "Choolam" (trident) on the spot, but Army personnel from the Mullaithivu camp had demolished the hut, thrown away the "Choolam", chased away some of the Tamil families in the area and had taken away some of the youths in the area for questioning. Since then, a new road has been built through the Nagancholai Forest Reserve, to facilitate accessibility to this site from Oddichuddan. Three major consequences flow from this move, quite apparently initiated by the Ministry of Industries:

(1) Archaeological sites are being damaged irrevocably, preventing any genuine archaeological research on them in the future; (2) Tamils who have lived in the area for generations are being displaced by new Sinhala colonists; (3) Hindu religious sites are being furtively desecrated thus preventing identification of such sites in the future.

But what seems to be the most vicious attempt—an attempt which might well succeed in the present political circumstances—is a grand strategy to destroy the CONTIGUITY OF TAMIL POPULATIONS of the Mullaithivu, Vavuniya and the Trincomalee districts.

The Padaviya Sinhala colonies are expanding east-wards in an attempt to connect up with the Kokkilai Lagoon area. It is believed that with the pressures from the Mullaithivu Army camp on the northeast, the Tile factory of the Ministry of Industries at Oddichuddan on the North-west—two powerful repositories of State power—a spillover from the Padaviya settlements is bound to occur, as it has been in other instances in the past. When that happens, the Tamils in three districts will be effectively cut off from each other, thereby not only losing a slice of their traditional homeland but weakened to a position where they cannot withstand further incursions in times to come....

Courtesy: Saturday Review 20.03.1982

Thugs attack Jaffna undergrads at Sri Pada (Sivan Oli Patha Malai)

Undergraduates and lecturers from the University of Jaffna were assaulted physically and pelted with stones at Sri Pada (Adam's Peak) recently. The party consisted mostly of Hindu Students who were climbing Sri Pada as part of an educational tour of the island. "It was a nightmarish experience" some members of the group told the SATURDAY REVIEW.

Shouting in Sinhala "Pare Demalo", "Jaffna Kotiyas (Tigers)" "What business have you in Sri Pada?" some unidentified men in sarongs began to pelt stones and hit them with sticks. A young Assistant Lecturer lost his wrist-watch by trying to ward off a blow. Fortunately no one was seriously injured.

Recounting the ordeal, some students in the first group said they had set out on 23rd March from Jaffna on an educational tour of the island; they were due to return on 28th March. They had planned to climb Sri Pada, revered by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike.

As scheduled, they arrived at Nallathanni, close to the foot of Sri Pada, on the 24th night. Even as the driver tried to park the bus he was brusquely shooed away by a policeman attached to the Nallathanni police post. He told the driver the parking spot was some distance away. The policeman was vociferously supported by some suspicious-looking characters who were hanging around. They seemed to be drunk.

Despite the ominous beginning, the students—about 25 girls and 15 boys—and lecturers decided to climb Sri Pada.

The time was about 10.30p.m. They split up into groups of ten and began the ascent. Just then some of the shady characters whom they had encountered earlier, along with some other hooligans had deliberately and roughly brushed past the girls. The students chose to ignore the provocation.

The hoodlums went ahead and squatted at a point where the path forks, one

branch leading to a Buddhist shrine. Two groups of students only a few yards separated one group from the other—passed the fork, without the hooligans making any move.

But as the last group led by a young assistant lecturer came up to this point, a few minutes later, the hooligans began the attack.

Hearing the commotion and the cries of alarm, the other two groups came rushing down - only to receive the same treatment.

In the pandemonium, which lasted about ten minutes, the girls and boys ran helter-skelter. Some appealed to the Buddhist monk in the nearby shrine for protection. "I don't want to get involved in all this" was the reply they received. Meanwhile the hooligans had vanished.

Once the situation had quietened, the lecturers and students decided that the safest thing was to get away from Sri Pada as quickly as possible as they feared the hooligans might come back with reinforcements....

Courtesy: Saturday Review 03.04.1982

Buddhists Object to Hindu Pilgrim

Regional Development and Hindu Affairs Minister Chelliah Rajathurai has come up against an unexpected obstacle—almost on the eve of the World Hindu Conference he has convened (21—25 April).

Minister Rajathurai planned to build a Hindu Pilgrims Rest at Kathirkamam to make up for the previous regime's takeover of the Ramakrishna Mission **Madam** there, under cover of declaring Kathirkamam a "Sacred City".

Rs. 5 million was set apart to put up this new building; the building contract too has been signed..

The foundation stone laying ceremony was scheduled for 9th April, after the Ministry's Asst. Director of Hindu Affairs, S. Thangavelu, inspected the building site and made all arrangements for the ceremony.

But just a few days before the deadline, Moneragala District Minister R. M. Abeykoon—who oversees Kathirkamam—asked the Regional Development Ministry to postpone the ceremony indefinitely. The reason? Kathirkamam residents, the D.M. made out, are opposed to the Minister's plan to build a Hindu Pilgrims' Rest at Kathirkamam. The Kathirkamam residents referred to are all Sinhalese Buddhists.

So that was that. Minister Rajathurai had to content himself with laying the foundation stone for the Sri Karumariamman Temple at Maligawatte in Colombo—the day before the abandoned Kathirkamam programme.

The Minister did not let the Kathirkamam set-back cramp his rhetoric at Maligawatte. Pointing out that the new Hindu Temple will stand next to an already existing Buddhist Vihare, Rajathurai said this is a symbol of the peaceful co-existence of the two religions and tangible proof of the harmonious relations between them, dating from ancient times.

Courtesy: Saturday Review 17.04.1982

Pages 57-84 - Courtesy: The plight of Hindu Society in Sri Lanka
- T.R.R.O. publication April 1982

Some of the Temples damaged/destroyed in Trincomalee

1. The front side of the Sivan Kovil at Thirugnanasampanthar Road, Trincomalee was badly damaged by the Sinhalese in 1983. The chariot (Ther) and the building where it was kept were destroyed by setting fire. Many valuable items belonging to the temple were looted. The estimate of the damage is in the region of Rs.15,00,000.00.

2. Sri Katpakap Pillaiyar Temple at 105 Thirugnanasampanthar Road, Trincomalee, the adjoining shops and Madap Palli were destroyed by the Sinhalese in 1987. Again in June 1990, temple, madam and other properties were damaged. The Sinhalese have been unlawfully settled in the lands belonging to this temple.

3. Mariamman Temple at Thirugnanasampanthar Road, Trincomalee was damaged in 1983, 1987 and 1990. Many valuable items of the temple were looted by the Sinhalese. The estimate of the damage is about Rs.800,000.00.

4. Krishnan Temple at Madaththady Railway Station Road, Trincomalee was damaged by the Sinhalese in 1983, 1987 and 1990. Statues were smashed and destroyed and valuable items were looted by them. The whole place was desecrated.

5. Keniyadip Pillaiyar Temple at Ehamparam Road, Trincomalee was badly damaged in 1983, 1987 and 1990. All articles of value were removed. Temple premises were ransacked and desecrated.

6. Thoduvai Pillaiyar Temple at Ehamparam Road, 3rd post, Trincomalee was badly damaged in 1983, 1987 and 1990 by the Sinhalese. Valuable articles were removed by them. The temple was desecrated.

7. Veerakaththip Pillaiyar Temple at Madaththady Junction, Trincomalee has not been renovated and has been left to ruin for the past few years. Devotees are saddened by the deteriorating condition of this temple which is situated at the centre of the town.

Thirukkoneswaram

On 10th March 1986, the precincts of the ancient Thirukkoneswaram Temple situated on the hillock called the "Swami Rock" in Trincomalee, was ravaged by unknown vandals. Seven of the Deities installed in separate structures in the outer sanctum of the Temple had been "uprooted" from their sacred positions and laid aside, some of them damaged in the process. Sanctified gold and silver plates placed under the seats of these Deities at the time of their holy enshrinement, had been dug out and stolen. It appears that the lonely watcher who was at the Temple premises and who encountered these miscreants, was manhandled. He however, managed to escape from them and ran downhill to make a complaint to the Police Officers who reside about 500 yards away from the Temple premises. An Army patrol came up to the Temple some time after and their 'search operation' for the robbers did not prove success.

It is significant to note that the only entrance to this glorious Temple of Shiva lies through the main gate of the old Portugese Fort called the Fort Frederick situated at the front portion of the hillock which is now declared as an Army Area and controlled by the Sri Lanka Army. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that according to history, the Portugese who destroyed the original Temple of Thirukkoneswaram, in 1624 AD, built this Fort Frederick with the building materials they collected from this destroyed Temple. This main gate is well guarded by the Army round the clock and entry through this gate inside is well nigh impossible without sufficient proof of identity and purpose. The borders right round the hillock, more than three quarter of which projects into the sea, is too, well guarded by sentries at close points and also from watch towers built at vantage positions up the hill, through out day and night. In the circumstances, it remains a mystery as to who could have been so clever and courageous enough to break through or sneak through such a well guarded barricade and escape too, unnoticed after committing this mischief. The only occupants of the Fort are the Sri Lanka Armed Forces, the Sri Lanka Police and some Government servants who occupy some of the buildings left behind by the British rulers, as living quarters.

Since the outbreak of ethnic violence in the Tamil areas, the movements of the ordinary citizens and even the worshippers of the Temple is very

restricted inside the Fort. The priests of the Temple and the Temple servants who lived in the Temple quarters had recently vacated their residences due to a feeling of insecurity and are now residing in the Town. The daily performance of the six poojas commencing from early morning and ending late in the night had to be abandoned. The priests and the servants who now reside outside, go to the Temple in the morning, perform one or two poojas and get out of the Fort before noon. The attendance of worshippers is practically nil even on the holy days of Mondays and Fridays. Such is the state of affairs prevailing in this premier Temple of Thirukkoneswaram which is synonymous with the place Thirukkonamalai later anglized by the British rulers as Trincomalee. It is in this situation that the above mentioned vandalism and robbery had taken place, and as a result, even the meagre offerings made to the Lord had grinded to a halt.

Another notable factor is that the annual festival of this ancient Temple was due to commence on the 25th of March, 1986 with the traditional flag hoisting ceremony and now one could safely guess that the motive of this vandalism would have also been to obstruct the annual festival being conducted and if so, this dubious object had been achieved. For, no ceremony or festival could be commenced when such desecrations had taken place in a Hindu Temple without performing remedial rituals in the first instance which are elaborate and expensive in character.....

S. Sivapathasundaram Trincomalee

Courtesy: Saturday Review of 24.05.1986

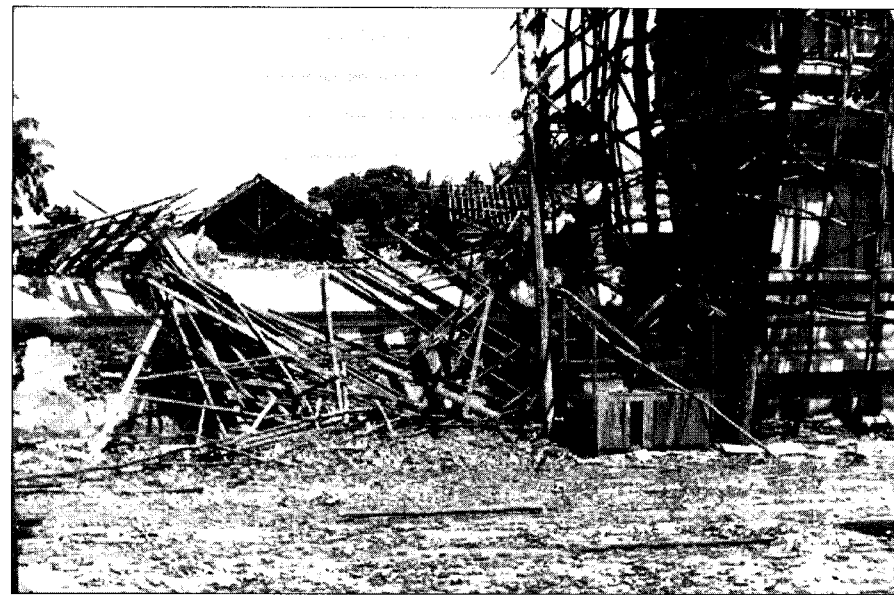
**PARTICULARS OF DAMAGES CAUSED TO HINDU TEMPLES
IN THE NORTH - EAST PROVINCE
(up to December 1990)**

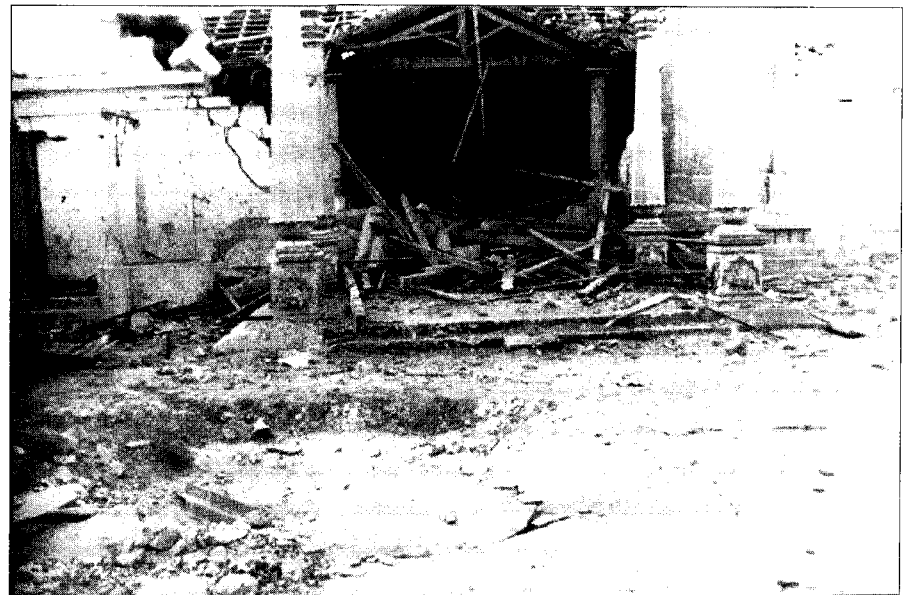
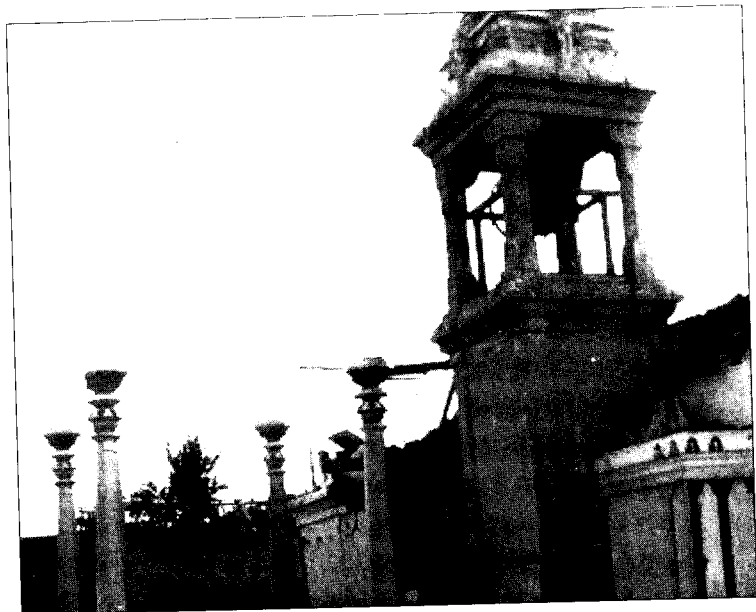
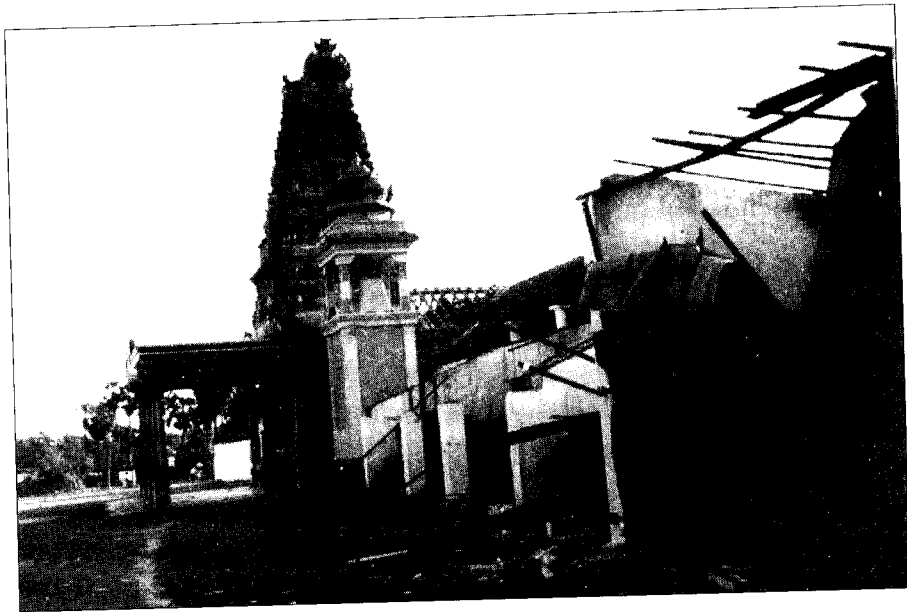
SUMMARY

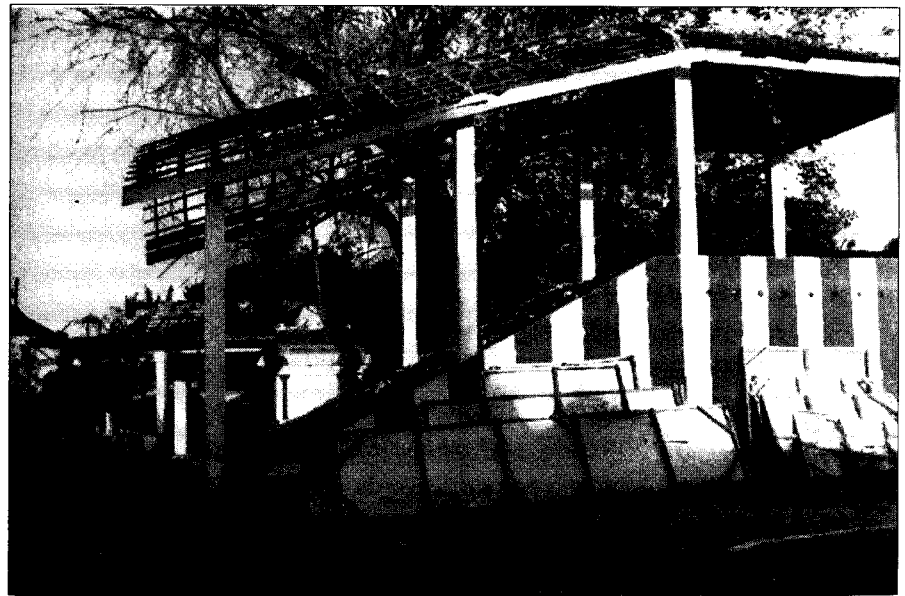
District	No. of temples registered with the Department	No. of Temples damaged	Total estimated cost for repairs/renovation
AMPARAI	118	147	30,648,100.00
BATTICALOA	463	283	26,660,739.00
TRINCOMALEE	101	199	33,470,500.00
VAVUNIYA	155	136	15,706,000.00
MANNAR	61	37	6,969,000.00
MULLAITHIVU	57	131	39,744,000.00
KILINOCHCHI	25	33	2,100,000.00
JAFFNA	627	513	127,792,953.00
	1607	1479	283,091,292.00

Courtesy: Report issued by the office of the Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs 4.10.1993

**Some of the temples damaged by the Sri Lankan
State Armed Forces**









APPENDIX II
Glimpses of Buddhist Fundamentalism

An Anti-Buddhistic Invasion

In the year 237 B.C. the Tamil invader, Elala, usurped the Sinhalese throne. But for several years anterior to that event there had been a suspension of religious activities in the northern part of the island. The Tamils, fiercely antagonistic to Buddhism, committed acts of vandalism in the sacred city of Anuradhapura, and—for a time— there was none to deter them. At this crisis there arose a wonderful Prince, whose father was then reigning in Southern Ceylon. He was in his previous birth a young Bhikku (Buddhist monk), who, when dying, was solicited by the queen to be re-born in her womb. Particulars of this phenomenal birth are given in the Mahavansa, Chapter 22. This young prince, Gamini Abhaya, after he had reached maturity, made war upon the usurper, Elala. After a series of pitched battles, the Sinhalese prince defeated Elala in single combat and slew him on the battlefield. Then began the building of magnificent temples, dagobas (monuments), by the conqueror, who, reducing Lanka (Ceylon) under one rule, became king. From the world renowned ruins of these dagobas at Anuradhapura an idea of their original splendour may be obtained.

The war that Gamini Abhaya waged with Elala was so a religious character and he made it known by a solemn proclamation that "this enterprise of mine is not for the purpose of acquiring the pomp and advantages of royalty. This undertaking has always had for its object the re-establishment of the religion of the supreme Buddha. By the truth of this declaration may the arms and equipments of my army in the hour of battle flash, as if emitting the rays of the sun" (Mahavansa, chap. 25). It is said that one day when, after his victorious conquest the king was reflecting with dismay on the recollection of innumerable lives sacrificed in the attainment of his end, eight holy saints (termed Arahats) came to him miraculously and administered spiritual comfort. And the king said, "Lords what peace of mind can there be left to me, when I have been the means of destroying great armies?" And the saints answered "Supreme of men, Form the commission of that act there will be no impediment in the road to salvation. Herein no more than two human beings have been sacrificed; the rest are heretics and sinners, who are on a par with wild beasts. And as thou wilt cause the religion of Buddha to shine forth in great splendour, on that account, O ruler of men, subdue thy mental affliction!" (Mahavansa, chap, 25). Thus was the king consoled, It was always a custom with the Sinhalese kings when engaged in wars to take with

them the "sons of Buddha" evidently to show that the wars were conducted in a spirit of religion. To these rules nothing appeared more supreme than this religion, which was called the "religion of the conqueror", and was thus completely identified with the racial individuality of the people.....

1. We Sinhalese should remember that our ancestors came from Lada, a territory between Bengal and Kalinga about 2,400 years ago, and that they settled down in that part of the land now known as Anuradhapura.....
2. When the ancestors of the present holders of our beloved island were running naked in the forest of Britain with their bodies painted, and later on when their ancestors had gone under the imperial rule of Rome, and some of them were being sold as slaves in the market place of Rome, our ancestors were already enjoying the fruits of the glorious and peaceful civilisation whose seeds were sown by the scions of the Sakya house 540 B.C.....
3. Tamils, Cochins, Hambankarayas are employed in large numbers to the prejudice of the people of the island - sons of the soil, who contribute the largest share.....
4. About two years ago the Buddhists of Gampola carried a procession from the temple to a certain place, and on the way the Muhammedans objected to the procession passing by their temple or mosque with music; without music the Buddhist procession was incomplete. The police prohibited the procession to pass the place. The Buddhists had to turn back. The Muhammedans were not allowed to become permanent residents in Ceylon in the Dutch period. They were allowed to permanently reside after the island went under British rule.....
5. Buddhism was the religion of the state in Ceylon like the Church of England in the British Isles.....
6. The Muhammedans, an alien people, who in the early part of the nineteenth century were common traders, by Shylockian methods became prosperous like the Jews. The Sinhalese, sons of the soil, whose ancestors from 2358 years had shed rivers of blood to keep the country

free from alien invaders, who had constructed gigantic tanks to irrigate millions of acres, who had built the most artistic temples which have today become the admiration of the antiquarian and scholar, today they are in the eyes of the British only vagabonds.....

7. The alien South Indian Muhammedan comes to Ceylon, sees the neglected illiterate villager, without any experience in trade, without any knowledge of any kind of technical industry and isolated from the whole of Asia on account of his language, religion and race, and the result is the Muhammedan thrives and the son of the soil goes to the wall.....
8. But behind all this present neglect and land alienation law the Sinhalese villager can never forget his religion. It is in his blood. He has ancient traditions going back to several thousands of years, and he has his history in the Maha Vansa, Dipa Vansa, Bodhi Vansa, Thupa Vansa, Datha Vansa, Satharmalankara, & c., and he deplores his wretched lot.....
9. What the German is to the Britisher that the Muhammedan is to the Sinhalese. He is an alien to the Sinhalese by religion, race and language. He traces his origin to Arabia, whilst the Sinhalese traces his origin to India and to Aryan sources.....
10. To the Sinhalese, without Buddhism death is preferable. The British officials may shoot, hang, quarter, imprison or to do anything to the Sinhalese, but there will always be bad blood between the Moors and the Sinhalese. The peaceful Sinhalese have at last shown that they can no longer bear the insults of the alien. The whole nation in one day have risen against the Moor people.....
11. The British officials are not experienced and are rather haughty. It is good to make them, when they arrive, to study the Maha Vansa, the history of the island. Two and a half millions of people of the Aryan origin with a most noble religion, with noble traditions should not be treated as upstarts.
12. Brahmanism is only for the three twice-born castes. The Brahmins were proud of their mantras. The Brahmin rishis were great in their selfishness. They had spiritual power even to frighten the gods; they cursed the later when they were angry. It said that the rishis Durbhasa

and Bhriugu cursed both Vishnu and Shiva. The rishi Gautama cursed Indra. The Brahmin rishis organised the caste system vesting all power in the Brahmins. They organised animal sacrifices. They drank wine, ate beef and took women from the other three castes. It was their privilege.

They made laws prohibiting the three castes from taking Brahmin women. They laid down the rule that the issue of a Brahmin women by a non-Brahmin husband is to be recognised as a Chandala.....

13. The Bhikkhu Sangha became a universal brotherhood, and the refuge of the high and the low. All Asia heard the law of compassion, the religion of wisdom was preached to all, and the Dhamma of Karuna and Pragna was accepted by men and Gods. **Jehovah, Allah, Vishnu, Shiva, Kali, Durga, Jesus were names not yet heard in the civilised world. The European races with the exception of Romans and Greeks were then in a state of Barbaric paganism. The ancestors of the British were then living naked in the forest. The Nordic races were still savages.....**

14. The destructive hordes of Islam had then not been born. Buddhism was then flourishing in Gandahar, Afghanistan, Kabul Valley and Turkistan. Two centuries later a new factor came into existence in India which helped to destroy the individuality of the Buddha Dharma. Kumarila began to preach his new doctrine which weakened the power of the Bhikkhus. His successor was the Malabar Brahmin Sankara. Driven out from his native land, young Sankara came to Jubbulpore and was admitted to a monastery where he learnt Buddhism. Having studied the Upanishads, he gave a new interpretation to the latter. He poured new wine to old bottles.....

15. Islam, Brahmanical ritualism and Christianity are the three forces that are at work today in India. Brahmins through sheer selfishness ejected the Noble Aryan Dharma from its native soil and India fell. Brahmanism is only for the high caste. Islam and Christianity are both destructive.....

16. Brahmanism, Christianity and Islam lack the spirit of compassion. The basis of Buddha's Dharma are Ahimsa, Karuna and Pragna. These are the ethics needed.....

17. We call on every Sinhalese Buddhist who loves his religion to contribute whatever he or she can to this fund. The Britishers are giving us opium, ganja, whisky and other alcoholic poisons and are introducing every kind of abominal vice that is helping to undermine the vitality of our people. We, on our part, should with a loving heart, give the Britishers the ennobling and purifying faith of our Tathagato.

18 The Sinhalese people are between the deep sea and the devil. They have either to accept Christianity or become Moslems.

19 Buddhism was not the only religion that suffered persecution at the hands of the Muhammedans. The whole of Zoroastrian literature was swept off and the whole religion effaced out of existence in Persia. The destruction of the magnificent collection of books in the Alexandrian library; the extirpation of Christians in Alexandria, Asia minor and Turkey all-these fiendish acts were committed by the fanatics of Islam, who loved to dwell in darkness and ignorance, and who have made

“The sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom”

Courtesy: Return to Righteousness - Anagarika Dharmapala

- “.....A gang of goondas rushed into the Hindu temple and attempted to set fire to it. In their frenzy, they were clumsy and failed to get the fire going. But they had a more interesting idea. They pulled an officiating priest out of the kovil and burnt him to a cinder....”

- Emergency'58: Tarzie

Vittachi

- We believe that politics today embraces all fields of human activity directed towards the public weal. No one will dispute that the work for the promotion of the religion is the duty of the bhikkhu. It is clear that the welfare of the religion depends on the welfare of the people who profess that religion. History bears evidence to the fact that whenever the Sinhala nation - which was essentially a Buddhist nation - was prosperous, Buddhism also flourished. We, therefore, declare that it is nothing but fitting for bhikkhus to identify themselves with activities conducive to the welfare of our people - whether these activities be labelled politics or not - as long as they do not constitute an impediment to the religious life of a bhikkhu.

We cannot forget that from the earliest days the Sinhala monks, while leading the lives of bhikkhus, were in the forefront of movements for the progress of their nation, their country, and their religion.

Even today bhikkhus by being engaged actively in education, rural reconstruction, anti-crime campaigns, relief work, temperance work, social work and such other activities, are taking part in politics, whether they are aware of it or not. We do not believe that it is wrong for bhikkhus to participate in these activities.

In ancient days, according to the records of history, the welfare of the nation and the welfare of the religion were regarded as synonymous terms by the laity as well as by the Sangha. The divorce of religion from the nation was an idea introduced onto the minds of the Sinhalese by invaders from the West, who belonged to an alien faith. It was a convenient instrument of astute policy to enable them to keep the people in subjugation in order to rule the country as they pleased.

It was in their own interests, and not for the welfare of the people, that these foreign invaders attempted to create a gulf between the bhikkhus and the laity - a policy which they implemented with diplomatic cunning. We should not follow their example, and should not attempt to withdraw bhikkhus from society. Such conduct would assuredly be deplorable act of injustice, committed against our nation, our country, and our religion.....

Courtesy: - Monks and Politics: Ven. Walpola Rahula Thero (1946)

- The entire Sinhalese race was united under the banner of the young Gamani. This was the beginning of nationalism among the Sinhalese. It was a new race with healthy young blood, organised under the new order of Buddhism. A kind of religio-nationalism, which almost amounted to fanaticism, roused the whole Sinhalese people. A non-Buddhist was not regarded as a human being. Evidently, all Sinhalese without exception were Buddhists.

- History of Buddhism in Ceylon (1956) Ven. Walpola Rahula Thero

- The bhikkhus should be present in every polling booth. They should explain to the people how to use the vote correctly A Government that will work for the country, religion and its culture should be elected. The end of the Sasana will not be very long if we remain in silence We appeal to bhikkhus to visit every Buddhist home and to direct them on the right path. You may have to confront many difficulties. But be ready to sacrifice your life to restore a Buddhist Ceylon.

- Rodaya (Wheel) of 25.02.1956

- On the 20th November, 1942, these words of Gemunu were re-echoed in Ceylon when the then Leader of the State Council, the Hon'ble D.S. Senanayake, replying to a debate on the Indian immigration problem, declared:-"We have to live in this country and we have no other country to go to. However hospitable we may be, we cannot accommodate the four hundred million Indian people here. Ours is a small country. What we want is an opportunity to live here and maintain a decent standard of living".

- Revolt in the Temple(1953): Wijayawardana

- "We must realize that the Sinhalese are the rightful sons of this fair country, and that we must organise ourselves into a determined body and even risk our lives in doing it service..... The minorities choose to believe that we are not trustworthy. That is because we, Sinhalese, have been so tolerant and so just. We, Sinhalese, must become conscious of our birthright."

- D.S. Senanayake, 31.07.1937

- The Sinhalese Empire, stretching from the Maldiv Islands to the Shan States in the 12th century, was the outcome of Sinhalese reaction to unprovoked foreign aggression and wanton insult to the Sinhalese name.
Revolt in the Temple (1953) Wijayawardana

On Indo-Ceylon (implementation bill)

Maha Nayaka of Malwatta Chapter expressed his apprehensions in an interview with a correspondent of Sun. **“Mark my words”, said the Maha Nayaka, “ten years from now we will have a Tamil kingdom over the territory of the Kandyans.....This legislation is a crime against the Sinhala people. My present sorrow is that the helpless Kandyans are for the second time being sold over the country”.**

“Our own people helped the British in whipping out the Sinhala kingdom, you might ask yourself who is doing what against whom in helping the Indians now to dominate our country.”

Sun 06.06.1967

- The main task of the new Balavegaya or the movement was to start Budhha Sasana Samithis throughout the Island, beginning from Ratnapura. The declared motive of the Buddha Sasana Samithis launched in 1952, was to bring about a Buddhist renaissance all over the country by the Buddha Jayanthi year in 1956. Though the declared motive was that, there was an undeclared or ulterior motive behind, which was known only to Gnanaseeha Thera and Dias. That hidden motive was to establish a true Sinhala Buddhist government in Sri Lanka in the Buddha Jayanthi year, or the 2500th year after the passing away of the Budhha, which was 1956 according to the Christian era. All the Buddhists, both lay and clergy, gave their fullest support to the Buddha Sasana Samithi movement.

While the movement was growing by leaps and bounds, one fine day, Gnanaseeha Thera received a message from his long-time friend S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike, requesting the monk to meet him as early as possible.

When Gnanaseeha Thera met Bandaranaike, who was the Leader of the Opposition, at his Rosmead Place residence, the latter said that when he went round the country a few weeks before, he was surprised to learn that a movement called Buddha Sasana Samithi started by Gnanaseeha Thera and N.Q. Dias gathering momentum.

After a long chat Bandaranaike said: “Hamuduruwane, I don’t have anyone to help me now. Nobody comes to see me because they all fear Kotelawala. Only Duncan Alwis comes once a day and attends to my correspondence. I am an isolated man. But, my only request to you is to not to forget me”. Gnanaseeha Thera who felt so sorry for Bandaranaike, got up and went near him. “Don’t have any fear. Be prepared to be the next Prime Minister of this country”, he told Bandaranaike and left the place.....

After the victory, when Bandaranaike and the Ministers visited Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, Gnanaseeha Thera warned them in the following manner: “You know why we went all out to defeat the previous government. Mr. Prime Minister, don’t forget the fact that we will punish you too in the same way if you also follow the same path”.

“The Unsung Forces of the ‘56 Victory”.
Courtesy: Sunday Times 25.09.1994

- **Get this straight and quote me. Sri Lanka is a Buddhist Sinhala country. Let no one make a mistake. Seventy percent of the country consists of Buddhists and Sinhala people. Also make this clear that Sri Lanka is the only Buddhist Sinhala country in the world. If we don't live here, are the LTTE and some of the Tamil Parties asking us to jump into the sea? I got angry with Mr. Premadasa because he chose to call Sri Lanka a multi-national and multi-religious state. No. It is a Buddhist State but we show no discrimination to other races or religion.....**

More than 2,000 members of the Sangha including the prelates of Asgiriya and Malwatte, had a meeting at which I too spoke. We cannot support the devolution package. It seeks to merge the North and East. Otherwise the Tamils will not accept it.

- Ven. Walpola Rahula Thero
Courtesy: Sunday Times 05.05.1996

'You are assembled here today, not only to get a piece of land for you to live on, but for more lofty purpose. This country is going through her worst period in history. We are being threatened from all sides by the separatists. What the separatists want is land. A contiguous block of land which they propose to call Eelam. You are going to break that contiguity.....

'Remember your eternal hero, King Dutagemunu. We are going on a holy mission. Now let us go on our journey.'

Ven. Dimbulgala Thero

Monk urges baby boom

A leading Buddhist monk in the southern province called on parents to have more children since many soldiers were dying in the war-torn northern and eastern provinces of the country.

The monk, Aluwatte Seratha Thero speaking at the annual prize giving of President's Maha Vidyalaya in Kataragama said, "Many soldiers are dying and the population is decreasing. Therefore, I call on all those present here to produce babies. The strength of China is based on its population, and if Chinese scream at the top of their voices, the whole world will shake," the monk said.

He added that the birth-rate of the Sinhalese has plunged during the last decade.

"A country's strength and development lies in the population and if Sinhalese people's birth-rate decreases, how will monks be born, and if monks are not born, who will protect the Buddha Sasana ministry?" the monk asked the audience.

Courtesy: Sunday Leader 19.01.1997

The link between the Sinhala race and Buddhism is so close and inseparable that it had led to the maxim, "There is no Buddhism without the Sinhalese and no Sinhalese without Buddhism." This is an undeniable fact. The literature of the Sinhalese is Buddhist literature. The history of the Sinhalese is the history of Buddhism. The language of the Sinhalese is enriched by the doctrine of the Buddha. The era of the Sinhalese is the Buddha Era. The culture of the Sinhalese is Buddhist culture. The flag of the Sinhalese is the Sinhala Buddhist flag.".....

"With the establishment of Buddhism, the Sinhala culture and civilization took on a new orientation. The life of the Sinhalese began to be guided by Buddhism. Their very creation, every work, was full of the influences of Buddhism. Villages and temples, homes and palaces, all were refined by the spirit of the Buddhist teachings. From the north to the south and from the west to the east, the entire length and breadth of the Tri- Sinhala kingdom had only one culture; that was the Sinhala Buddhist culture..... Yet from a few years ago, there has been an organised movement of anti-Sinhala, anti-Buddhist barbarians to destroy our invaluable archeological ruins and Buddhist shrines.".....

"We all know that in every civilised society the civilisation has grown by basing itself on the cultural values and the religious ideology of the majority population of those countries.....Sri Lanka is known as Sinhale. It is a Buddhist country. Nobody can deny this fact. No rulers can forget this fact. If they do I do not think such a ruler will last for more than twenty four hours."

"Even though Prime Minister Bandaranayake, and former Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake were so intimidated by the Tamil parties that they were prepared to grant them a Tamil state, under the pretext of setting up district councils or regional councils, the Sinhalese forces that rose up in protest were so strong that one was forced to tear up the agreement, while the other had to rescind the legislation.".....

"The final step will be that all the Tamil speaking people living in Sri Lanka will unite with the Tamil speaking people of Madras and subjugate the Sinhala people."

Cyril Mathew
A Sinhala Buddhist Cabinet Minister

Who attacked you? Sinhalese. Who protected you? Sinhalese. It is we who can attack and protect you.

They are bringing an army from India. It will take fourteen hours to come from India. In fourteen minutes the blood of every Tamil in the country can be sacrificed to the land, by us.

It is not written on anyone's forehead that he is an Indian Tamil or a Jaffna Tamil, a Batticaloa Tamil or up country Tamil, Hindu Tamil or Christian Tamil. All are Tamils.

We have decided to colonise four districts including Mannar with Sinhalese people by destroying forests. A majority of Sinhalese will be settled there. If you like you also can migrate there.

Gamini Dissanayake
A Sinhala Buddhist Cabinet Minister

What should we do to this so called leader of the Tamils? If I were given power, I would tie him to the nearest concrete post in this building and horsewhip him till I raise him to wits. Thereafter let anybody do anything he likes- throw him to the Beira lake or to the sea, because he will be so mutilated that I do not think there will be life in him.

D.M.Chandrapala
A Sinhala Buddhist Member of Parliament

There was a punishment during the time of the Sinhalese kings, namely two arecanut posts are erected, the two posts are then drawn towards each other with a rope, then tie each of the feet of the offender to each post and then cut the rope which will result in the tearing apart of the body. These people (Tamils) should also be punished in the same way....The people of this country want and the government is prepared to inflict these punishments on these people.

G.V.Punchinilame
A Sinhala Buddhist Member of Parliament



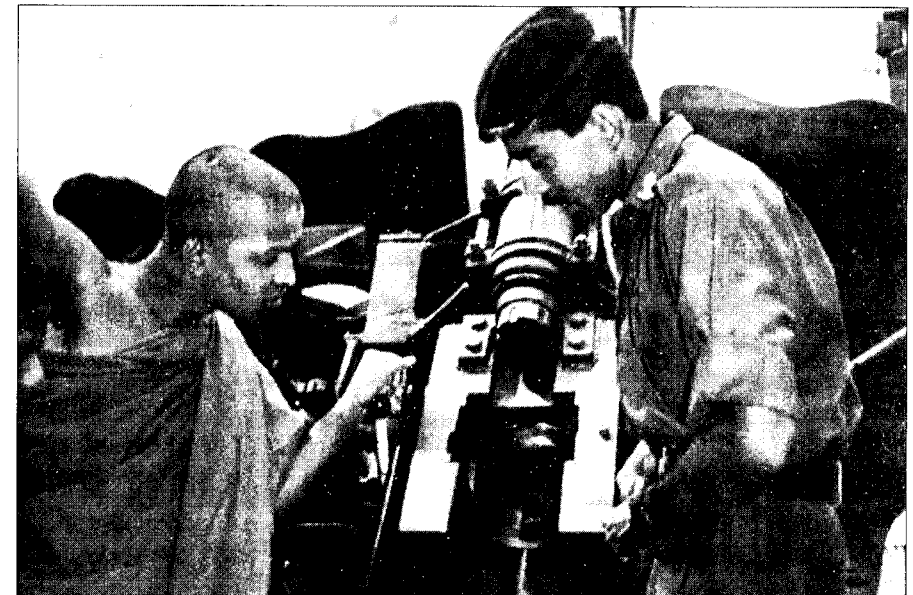
Buddhist monks completing application form to join the State Army



Buddhist monks in a political protest meeting
Photo: courtesy - Sunday Leader 10.3.96



Buddhist monks at the war front - Jaffna Peninsula - blessing a State Soldier



A Buddhist monk interested in an artillery gun
Photo: courtesy - Sunday Times 15.2.98



Lt. Gen. Rohan Daluwatte, Army Commander, blessed by Buddhist monks

A note from the Author

When I delved into this work I found that collecting information on the destruction of Hindu Temples was not an easy task. I spent months in search of information, yet I was not as successful as I wished to be. Many Hindu religious bodies did not have the relevant information. Some had little but were reluctant to divulge them because they were in fear of their safety from the government. I could not even find anyone who knew the names of the temples, the photos of which appear in this book. I hope I could bring out another edition fulfilling these shortcomings soon.

In my works towards this book Ms. U. Poongkothai and Mr S. Sriskandarajah helped me immensely. I am grateful for their invaluable advice and assistance.

My special appreciation goes to Mr S. Sivanayagam, a most talented and well respected writer, editor and journalist of our time. He was kind enough to write a foreword to this book within a short time and I am greatly indebted to him.

There are several materials culled from various sources, included in the appendices. I am grateful to the authors and publishers of these materials.

Mr A. T. S. Ratnasingham of the Federation of Saiva (Hindu) Temples U.K stands apart from the rest of the Hindu community by his selfless nature. He deserves praise and respect of everyone who has care and interest in the Hindu religion and Temples. The readers of this book should know that without his magnanimous help this publication would not have seen the light of day. I am very grateful to him.

Finally my profuse thanks goes to Mr M. M. Das of Sami Print who worked tirelessly to bring out this book within a short period. Words cannot express my gratitude for him.

M. Neiminathan

Thirukketheeswaram

Not only damage has been caused to the temple fabric but also desecrating it in the most shameful way. The temple properties have all been plundered and pillaged. The priests, their assistants, other employees and residents in the vicinity of Thiruketheeswaram and Manthai village have been terrorised and forcibly driven away from their homes. The pilgrims' rests and residences of trustees have been destroyed making them totally uninhabitable. In short, it was simply a scorched earth operation..... **Most heinous and unforgivable part of the vandalism is the disfigurement and the gouging the THIRD EYE of the Icon Somaskanda (Lord Siva).....**

The main temple structure, viewed from outside appears to be intact, but once inside, every door was found to have been forced open and articles of value ransacked. The whole place was desecrated. Even the 'Moolasthanam' (Sanctum Sanctorum) was found fully exposed.

The buildings outside the main temple buildings, including the residences of the temple priests and workers and all 'madams' (pilgrim's rests) except Suntharar and Sampanthar madams which are contiguous buildings, completely destroyed and even the building materials of the structures removed. Suntharar and Sampanthar madam structures viewed from outside appear undamaged; but inside the building the doors, windows and other parts were either missing or irreparably damaged.

The large building called 'Kurukulam', a teaching school for temple priests with about 10 rooms, a lecture hall and other apartments have completely vanished and even the debris has been removed.