

Pirapaharan 2, Chapter 7

JR Seeks Arms

By: T. Sabaratnam

(Volume 2)

Indian Factor

President Jayewardene realized on Wednesday evening, after answering Indira Gandhi's telephone call, that the riots had spawned unintended results. Firstly, it had, while weakening the Tamils, also weakened him and the Sinhala people, mainly by damaging their international image. Secondly, the riots had provided India a chance to intervene in Sri Lankan affairs.

Indira Gandhi's telephone call and Narasimha Rao's visit restricted Jayewardene's freedom and power and placed him on the defensive. Both told him effectively that his freedom of action would be subjected to India's national interest in the future. The international reaction to the riots placed him under global watch.

On his return from Kandy in the afternoon (Friday), Rao held a round of talks with Hameed. He told Hameed about the horrifying sights he had seen in the morning, the sight of Sinhala mobs killing Tamils and burning them on the roads. He also told Hameed about the information he had gathered while in Kandy about the spread of anti-Tamil attacks in the plantation areas. "I was told that government instigators are taking the disturbances from city to city," he told Hameed and added that the Indian Deputy High Commissioner received frantic calls from Nuwara Eliya while he was with him informing him about the spread of disturbances to that city.

Disturbances spread to Nuwara Eliya around noon on Friday. Till then, the city was well guarded by the police and the army. All vehicles entering the town were checked. Bus conductors were told not to take in Tamil passengers. Police had also told the Tamils to restrict their movements as a precautionary measure. Police took into preventive custody all unruly elements on the request of Renuka Herath, a Member of Parliament for Nuwara Eliya district. Police also strengthened the mobile patrol.

Mahaweli and Lands Minister Gamini Dissanayake reached Nuwara Eliya by helicopter around 10 a.m. He attended the meeting of the UNP Nuwara Eliya branch.

Dissanayake made a provocative speech in which he asked two questions: Aren't you people patriotic Sinhalese? Why are you all silent here?

Gamini Dissanayake

Dissanayake was told of the arrest of their 'strong men' and that they were powerless without them. Dissanayake promised to get them released. And they were released around noon. The 'strong men' went out with cans of petrol, iron rods, knives and clubs. Their first target was the Hindu temple and the priests who stayed there. The priests escaped, the temple did not.

A big mob had collected by then. Soldiers who were guarding the town joined them. They provided gallons of petrol. Within two hours, all the shops owned by Tamils were ablaze. Renuka Herath, who rushed to the town on hearing of the disturbance, was hooted and chased away by the mob. She left in disgust. She left the town, as Lake House Nuwara Eliya correspondent T. Rajaratnam told us a few days later, after it was turned 'a sea of flames.'



Rao told Hameed the information he had gathered from the Deputy High Commissioner and his officials and remarked, "They told me that one of your cabinet colleagues was responsible for that."

Rao also gave Hameed the details he had collected about the spread of the disturbances to Kandy, Matale, Nawalapitiya and Badulla and added that Hindu temples seemed to have been added to the list of targets. He specially pointed out the burning of the famous Muthumari Amman temple of Matale.

A small group of Tamil intellectuals met Rao Friday evening. They told him that the riot was well planned. It was aimed to destroy the economic, intellectual and entrepreneur base of the Tamil community. The group told him that the riot had instilled a sense of insecurity in the Tamil mind.

Rao left Colombo Friday night and reported to Indira Gandhi on Saturday morning (30 July). He told her that the situation in Sri Lanka had been brought under control, but the Tamil people felt insecure. He also told her that, according to his information, conditions in the refugee camps were not satisfactory. He recommended that India offer Sri Lanka help to tackle the refugee problem and send security forces to safeguard Tamils.

Arms Assistance

On Sunday (July 31) the *Weekend* and *Sunday Island* carried reports of Sri Lanka seeking arms from the US, UK, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China to protect itself from a 'foreign power.' Ratnatunga, in his column written under the pseudonym Migara, hinted that the 'foreign power' from which Sri Lanka had to protect herself was India.

Indian correspondents stationed in Colombo filed reports based on that story, adding the background that some of Jayewardene's ministers resented Indira Gandhi's telephone call and Rao's visit as unwanted interference.

New Delhi was perturbed. Its foreign policy makers felt slighted. Indira Gandhi was angry. She had been irritated for some time about Jayewardene's pro-American proclivity. She decided to make sure that Jayewardene could not ignore Indian interests. She wanted to lay down two principles: that India only has the right to help Sri Lanka to resolve her internal problem and that no other extraneous force would be allowed to get involved.

On Indira Gandhi's directive, Indian External Affairs Ministry took two actions to counter Colombo's request for arms from countries which India considered as being unfriendly to it. The first was to leak to the media the story about India's plan to take military action if Jayewardene refused to entertain Rao. The second was to warn all countries, including those from which Jayewardene's government had sought arms and aid, not to help him.

As I pointed out in the last chapter, India prepared two alternative plans to deal with Jayewardene: diplomatic and military. The diplomatic plan was to send Rao to Colombo and thus exert pressure on Jayewardene to put an end to the attack on Tamils. The military plan was to drop paratroopers, capture the airports and compel the President Jayewardene to take action to restore law and order.

Jayewardene and the cabinet were aware of the military plan. Major-General Nalin Senivaratne who was at the Indian Imperial Defense Academy got to know of the military plan and passed the information to Hameed.

Jayewardene instructed Hameed, who flew to Delhi to attend the Foreign Ministers' Conference of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), to meet Indira Gandhi, who inaugurated the conference, and ask her about the talk that India intended to invade Sri Lanka.

Hameed asked Indira Gandhi in the evening of August 1. She told Hameed about India's concern about the tragic happenings in Sri Lanka, but assured Hameed that India would not invade Sri Lanka. That assurance was immediately conveyed to Jayewardene.

Indira Gandhi decided to act on Rao's recommendation of offering Sri Lanka help to tackle the

refugee problem. She made a statement about it in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, 2 August. She said India stood for the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and India would take all steps to help with humanitarian aid.

The refugee problem buildt from Monday, the first day of the riots. In Colombo alone, 14 refugee camps sprung. By Monday night, 20,000 refugees were accommodated in them. Several others were established as the riots spread to the other parts of the country. Initially, there was considerable confusion about the running of the refugee camps and on Friday Jayewardene appointed Bradman Weerakoon, an able and experienced civil servant, as Commissioner of Essential Services, to regularize the administration and supplies to the refugee camps. He organized the transport of the refugees to their homes in the Northern and Eastern provinces. They were transported initially by ships and later by trains. By the end of the week, when the riots subsided, over 300,000 persons were uprooted and displaced.

Plantation Tamils and Tamils who were permanently settled in Colombo and in other areas in the South experienced special difficulties. Some of them were sent to the northern province if they had relatives there and others languished for many months in the refugee camps.



Tamil refugees at Colombo harbor, August 1983

The government admitted a death toll of 350, that 18,000 houses, shops and industries owned by the Tamils were destroyed and about 100,000 Tamils were made refugees. Independent estimates placed the numbers much higher. Now, the accepted number of persons killed is 2,500.

Indira Gandhi left to Rao the task of reporting to parliament on his visit to Sri Lanka and, as Foreign Affairs Minister, the job of commenting on Colombo's search for arms assistance.

Rao's statement to parliament thus formed two parts. In the first part, he reported on damages caused to Indian nationals and their property and about the safety of the staff of the Indian High Commission.

Then he said, "However, our concern has been not only about the safety of Indian nationals and their properties, but also on the sensitivity of the Indian people as whole, at reports of large-scale killings and destructions of property of people of Indian origin, some of them from the 'stateless' category, with whom we are bound by strong ties of culture and kinship. This is a human problem

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and we in India cannot remain impervious to the sufferings of large numbers of people in our immediate neighborhood, though separated by boundaries of nationality and citizenship."

He said the Sri Lankan government had sought India's help to provide ships to transport displaced persons from Colombo to Jaffna, and fuel oil and medicine to meet the immediate needs of those in the refugee camps.

India followed this up by sending medicine, clothes and dry rations. Ships were also made available to transport refugees from Colombo to Jaffna.



Tamil refugees being taken in an Indian ship to Jaffna, August 1983

In the second part of his speech, Rao dealt with the news story that Sri Lanka had appealed for arms aid from US, UK, Pakistan, China and Bangladesh. He said this new development had taken place after his return. He said that he was "not in a position to give details, but the House and the nation should know that there is substance in the report."

Rao said that some reports had stated that this arms assistance was sought because of the meddling of "a foreign power," in Sri Lankan affairs and the Colombo press had projected India as that "foreign power."

Rao told the Lok Sabha the government was "looking into all aspects of these reports and is also in touch with several governments, including those specified in the press reports, to emphasize the nature of India's concern at the existing situation in Sri Lanka and at the possible future course of developments, including foreign involvement in the region."

Rao then cautioned all powers to keep out of the turmoil in Sri Lanka. He told the international community that it should not take the view that India is interfering in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. He said Indian concern in Sri Lankan affairs is the inevitable consequence of being a neighbour of India. He added that India had to evince interest in Sri Lankan affairs as they impacted on India's 'national life and security.'

Rao informed the House, "The response of those to whom we have spoken is favorable" and added that if Sri Lanka needed India's assistance that was a matter over which "the two governments will remain in touch."

The Indian External Affairs Ministry acted fast and found that the story about Colombo asking for arms was true. Then it took steps to prevent Colombo from getting that assistance. Its widespread diplomatic network was activated. The envoys called on the foreign ministry officials of the countries to which they were accredited and delivered a letter from Rao asking them to adopt a 'hands off' policy to the Sri Lankan problem.

Rao's letter also explained the nature of India's concern in Sri Lanka's disturbance. It gave four reasons for India's concern. Firstly, attacks on Sri Lankan Tamils by the Sinhalese wounded the feelings of the Tamils in India. They were demonstrating, demanding Indian intervention, Secondly, instability in Sri Lanka would affect India's national security. Thirdly, instability in Sri Lanka would provide opportunity for extraneous involvement. Fourthly, instability in Sri Lanka would provide opportunity for foreign forces of destabilization to weaken India.

All governments approached by India responded positively. They accepted India as a regional power and refused to help Sri Lanka.

The statements of Indira Gandhi and Rao in the Lok Sabha and Rao's letter laid the basis for India's Sri Lanka policy and the Indira Doctrine. The developments in the next two weeks, which will be traced in the next chapter, helped their formulation.

Sri Lanka denied that it had asked for arms aid on Monday, August 1, the day before Indira Gandhi and Rao made their statements in the Lok Sabha. The Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi, Bernard Tilakaratna, issued a statement denying that the Sri Lankan government had called for assistance from foreign powers against India. A similar statement was also issued in Colombo.

Jayewardene instructed Hameed to return to Colombo, cutting short his stay in Delhi. Hameed left Delhi on the night of August 1. Reporters mobbed him at the Delhi Airport and asked for his comment on Colombo's denial. Hameed dodged the question with this reply:

If we seek any assistance from the international community, rest assured that we will seek it from India.

The Indian magazine *The Week*, in an exclusive interview published in its issue of 1 October 1983, asked Jayewardene about the rumour. Its reporter Patrick Michael asked:

Would you like to clarify the rumour that your country asked for help from countries other than India?

Jayewardene answered:

I have clearly answered this question several times stating that this was nothing but a canard.

None believed the denial, India in particular. And Jayewardene himself later admitted in interviews and speeches that he had, in fact, asked for help. One such instance was his interview to the *Sunday Observer* of 25 October 1987. In that interview, he said that he made that desperate call for assistance in those trying days.

Tamil Reaction

I will in the next chapter deal with the evolution of the Indira Doctrine and India's formula for the solution to the ethnic conflict; direct outcomes of the riot and Jayewardene's call for arms assistance. That was one of results of the riots. Equally important is the impact the riots made on the Tamil people; the Tamils of India and the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

I have already stated the immediate reaction of the Tamils in India to the riots. In Tamil Nadu, Tamil people poured onto the roads, throughout Tamil Nadu's length and breadth, demanding New Delhi take steps to safeguard their brethren. The outpouring of the feeling of empathy continued the whole of that week.

Then Tamil Nadu politics crept into the show of solidarity. Dravida Munnetra Kazhalagam chief M. Karunanithi, then Leader of the Opposition in the Madras Legislative Assembly, and Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhalagam leader and chief minister M. G. Ramachandran vied with each other in orchestrating their solidarity. Karunanithi announced a general strike for Monday, 1 August. Not to be outdone M. G. Ramachandran declared Monday a Day of Solidarity and called upon the people to cease work that day. Entire Tamil Nadu ground to a halt on Monday.

An all-party delegation from Tamil Nadu met Indira Gandhi on that day, 1 August, and pressed her to take action to safeguard the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The delegation told her that Jayewardene had not taken any action to protect the Tamils from the marauding Sinhala mob. It also told Gandhi that, when the attacks subsided, Jayewardene instigated the Sinhala people again through his address to the nation. It asked her to take serious note of Jayewardene's reported effort to secure arms from countries inimical to India. It said, if not for Rao's visit, the plight of the Tamils would have been worse.

The threat of Indian military action against Sri Lanka was looming large on the horizon on Monday. That was the talk at Lake House when I reported for work after a week. I must record, with a sense of appreciation, the moving scene that overwhelmed me when I entered the Daily News Editorial. The entire staff, from the Editor to the peon, rose from their seats to welcome me. "We are sorry," editor Manik de Silva told me. "We apologize for all that had happened. Don't hold this as a grudge against the Sinhala people," he added. I was moved to tears. I told him, "No, Manik. I have no grudge against the Sinhala people."

I used to tell this incident and several other similar experiences of my Tamil friends to support of my contention that the July riots was not an attack by the Sinhala people on Tamils. It was definitely not a spontaneous attack by the Sinhala people. It was engineered by government politicians and their henchmen to 'Teach the Tamils a Lesson' for daring to oppose them.

The threat of Indian military action was a major worry of the Sinhala people during the first week of August. The Indian military threat was discussed in the working committee meeting of the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU), a plantation trade union affiliated to the UNP. Gamini Dissanayake, leader of that trade union calmed their fears declaring, "If India invades this country, the Tamils will be killed and finished off in 24 hours time."

Gamini Dissanayake

The savage riots and the continued anti-Tamil belligerency of government leaders and Sinhala chauvinists left a deep scar on the souls of the Tamil people. Violently uprooted from their homes and thrust into the hastily established refugee camps Tamils felt for the first time that they were all Tamils. The Sinhala



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thugs had knocked out the regional differences, religious variations, social distinctions, and economic levels among them and flung them into refugee camps as Tamils. The veteran Tamil trade unionist K. C. Nithyananda, who served at the Saraswathi Hall Refugee Camp, commented, "The greatest contribution Jayewardene made to the Tamil freedom struggle was to make the Tamil people think and feel that they are a separate nation." He smiled after making this remark and added, "He beat us hard for not realizing that simple fact earlier."

Jayewardene's second contribution is equally important. He got the houses and property of Tamils burnt and told the Tamils, "Why are you all here? You don't belong here. You have your homeland in the north and east. You go back." Tamils were sent from the refugee camps in ships and specially guarded trains to their homeland. The special trains that started from Colombo Fort ran nonstop to Vavuniya and halted at all main stations thereafter. Tamils will be ever grateful to the Commissioner General of Essential Services for arranging the ship and train transports.

Some of my friends who travelled in those special trains told me that they heaved a sigh of relief when the train halted at Vavuniya. "We felt that we have returned to our homeland," they told me. The riots raised in the Sri Lankan Tamils the feeling that the north and east are their homelands. "It is the land to which the Sinhalese sent us. It is the land where we feel secure," a Tamil academic of the Colombo University now living in Canada told me.



Tamil refugees disembarking in Jaffna, August 1983

Historians who research the formative years of the Tamil armed struggle will have to evaluate the contribution made to it by Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Jayewardene. I consider their contribution important and immense. I was fortunate to be a reporter throughout the entirety of their regimes, Sirimavo Bandaranaike's two terms (1960-1965 and 1970 - 1977) and Jayewardene (1977- 1989).

I reported on most of the important decisions taken by Sirimavo Bandaranaike on the

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Tamil issue and the events that followed. I also had the opportunity of reporting on the reactions of the Tamil leadership to those decisions. During her first term of office, Bandaranaike decided to rigorously implement the Sinhala Only law. That led to the 1961 satyagraha, which for the first time emotionally united the Tamil people and gave them the confidence that the state can be opposed. Her crushing of the 1961 satyagraha gave courage to a small group of 20 Tamils who developed the idea of an armed struggle, which led to the formation of the failed **Puli Padai**.

I also reported her decision in 1970, during her second term, to introduce media-wise standardization which led to the formation of the Tamil Manavar Peravai. I covered all events connected to the enactment of the 1972 constitution, which deepened the feeling of estrangement among the Tamil people. Standardization and the 1972 constitution were the main decisions which gave birth to Tamil armed movements.

When Jayewardene assumed power in 1977, there were four tiny armed groups. The LTTE had only about 30 cadres and about 200 active supporters. PLOTE was also of the same strength and EPRLF and EROS were much smaller. Through his state-sponsored violence, which included the burning of the Jaffna Public Library, Jayewardene helped these armed groups grow. And through the 1983 riots he pushed into their fold thousands of able and intelligent men and women, most of them cleverer than the men in the police and the army. And, as we will see in the coming chapters, Jayewardene helped the armed groups to gain strength and respectability through his clever destruction of the Tamil moderates.

I would like to give this quote before I proceed. It is from the *The Week's* interview with Jayewardene from which I quoted earlier:

Patrick: Former prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike had stated that your government should offer a package of concessions to the island's Tamils in return for abandoning calls for a separate state.

Jayewardene" The demand for separation was "inaugurated" during the rule of Mrs. Bandaranaike. We were not aware of what was the package of concessions that she was prepared to give the TULF at that time. If steps were taken then the problem would not have aggravated to this extent.

I quoted this reply to show the type of 'clever play' in which Jayewardene indulged. He puts the blame on Mrs. Bandaranaike and tempts her to come out with the package of concessions she intended to give so that he could give those concessions and then blame Mrs. Bandaranaike for making him give them.

Jayewardene instructed the *Sunday Observer* and the Sinhala weekly, *Silumina*, to reproduce the *The Week* interview and asked their sister dailies Daily News and *Dinamina* to ask Mrs. Bandaranaike for her response. Mrs. Bandaranaike refused to be caught in Jayewardene's trap. Her reply was: "So he wants me to pull him out of the trap into which he had fallen." That was the time India was pressing Jayewardene to come up with a solution to the Tamil problem. Parthasarathi was busy during this time working out a set of proposals which led up to the famous Annexure C, which will be described in a later chapter.

The riots also had a profound effect on the Tamil community living abroad. Its effect was threefold. Firstly, it brought all the Sri Lankan Tamils together. Secondly, it created a new bond between the Sri Lankan Tamil expatriate community and the Tamils from all other countries in which Tamils resided, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji Islands, Mauritius, South Africa and even the West Indies. Thirdly, it brought a cleavage between expatriate Tamils and Sinhalese.

The letter my brother-in-law, a medical doctor, wrote me from London soon after the

riots gives an indication of the reaction of the Sri Lankan Tamils in Britain:

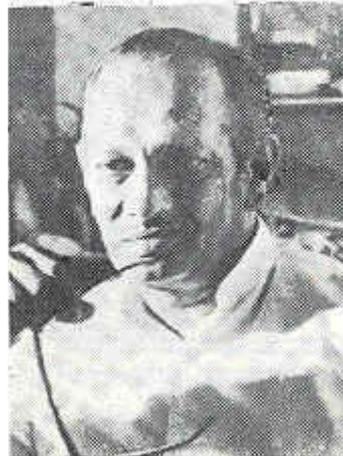
"When the news of the riots reached here, the entire Tamil community living here was thrown into a state of agitated anxiety. Everyone hurried to obtain information about the disturbances. Everyone panicked and tried to get information about their families or relatives. They were all outraged and furious. They felt that their racial dignity and pride had been bruised. The youth here are talking of revenge. Some are thinking of returning to Sri Lanka and joining the militant groups. I think Jayewardene had touched the raw nerve of the Tamil people. They are definitely going to fight him."

The Cover Up

Jayewardene was disturbed by the criticism of the attacks on Tamils by many Western countries and international human rights watchers. Indira Gandhi's telephone call on Wednesday, 27 July evening upset him more. As mentioned in the last chapter Jayewardene asked Ranil Wickremesinghe, a then cabinet minister, to summon his confidants. Gamini, Lalith, Anandatissa and Festus were summoned. During the long midnight session, they decided on two things: ask arms from friendly countries and on a cover up. I have already dealt with the request for arms.

Anandatissa de Alwis

The cover up was to put the blame on some others; on the leftists - communists, Trotskyites and Naxalites. That would silence the Western countries that had deplored Jayewardene. He was never worried about the human rights organizations. He had dubbed them all communists and communist fellow travellers. A similar strategy was later used by Pres. Chandrika Kumaratunge to dub the LTTE terrorists, a policy which silenced Western critics of government atrocities against Tamils.



The cover up necessitated a change in the explanation of the cause of the riots. The government had maintained that the riot was the result of a "spontaneous outburst of Sinhala wrath" at the killing of Sinhala soldiers at Thirunelveli. Now the story will have to be altered to "planned overthrow of the democratically elected government."

The first comment on the riots came from cabinet spokesman Anandatissa de Alwis after the weekly cabinet meeting on Wednesday, 27 July, afternoon. He told the press conference held after the cabinet meeting - it was called post cabinet briefing - that the violence was the reaction of the Sinhala people who had endured a series of murders committed by the Tamil terrorist groups.

Jayewardene in his address to the nation on Thursday, July 28, struck to the line that the violence was Sinhala reaction. He said, "...the Sinhala people have themselves reacted..."

Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa who addressed the nation on Friday, 29 July, attributed the violence to "wild rumours."

Till Friday evening, there was no talk about an organized plot to overthrow the government. On Saturday, 30 July, the change was brought about. Anandatissa de Alwis told the media that the riots was planned and implemented by three leftist parties. He identified them as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the Communist Party (CP) and the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP).

Anandatissa de Alwis announced that the plot comprised three phases. They were:

First phase: To induce violence between Sinhalese and Tamils.

Second phase: To induce violence between Sinhalese and Muslims.

Third phase: To induce violence between Buddhists and Sinhala Christians.

Radio and television announced the news of the leftist plot that day itself and the newspapers did so on 31 July. They also announced the parties' proscription for the duration of the emergency and the prescription of severe penalties, including death or life imprisonment and loss of civic rights, for those entering or having contact with the proscribed parties. They also gave details about the 3-phase plot.

The ban came into effect on 30 July and leaders of the proscribed parties were arrested the same day. All office-bearers of the JVP were arrested and detained on the notorious fourth floor. JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera went underground.

Rohana Wijeweera

On 4 August, in his address to the government parliamentary group, Jayewardene called the plot the Second Naxalite Plot. He added another phase and made it a 4-phase conspiracy. The Fourth phase was the overthrow of the Government by certain groups in the armed services.

The intrigue behind the Naxalite plot has been carefully investigated and documented by researchers.

Ratnatunga in his book **Politics of Terrorism: Sri Lankan Experience** says that information about the plot was given to Jayewardene by Deputy Inspector General of Police Ernest Perera on Thursday night.

Ernest Perera met Jayewardene in the company of Inspector General of Police Rudra Rajasingham.



According to Rajan Hoole Earnest Perera and Rajasingham left Jayewardene's residence at 9 p.m. after watching his address to the nation. Jayewardene summoned Ernest Perera at 6 a.m. on Friday and got him to dictate a statement about the plot to his private stenographer, J. A. Paulaz. Jayewardene made photocopies of the statement and gave them to the service chiefs and to Rao, who met him over breakfast.

The handing over of a copy of the statement to Rao makes the purpose of the cover up clear. The announcement of the plot on Saturday by Anandatissa de Alwis was intended to silence Western critics. Through the Naxalite Plot story Jayewardene had told the world that he was not the offender, but the offended. His government was to be overthrown. He was not certain of the loyalty of at least a section of the troops. He delayed his address the nation for four days because he was not sure of himself.

The Naxalite Plot story had another purpose also. The JVP general secretary of that time, Lionel Bopage, told investigators that Jayewardene achieved that purpose by driving Rohana Wijeweera underground. Wijeweera had challenged the 1982 Referendum result in the District Court of Colombo alleging a number of serious abuses. He had a very strong case. The action was dismissed because Wijeweera failed to answer the interrogatories served on him. The Appeal Court upheld the order of the District Court.

Investigations proved that there were no evidence to establish the Naxalite Plot theory and the leaders of the CP and NLSSP were released within two months. The ban on

their organizations were removed, but the ban on the JVP continued.

I would like to end this chapter by quoting the concluding portion from D.E.W. Gunasekera's article which I used in the last chapter. 'D.E.W.' as he is affectionately called, is the current general secretary of the Communist Party and a Member of Parliament. He says,

"We were left there (Negombo Prison) for 56 days and released honourably exonerated. Next morning, after our release, J. R. Jayewardene had the guts to telephone Pieter Keuneman and K. P. Silva and invite them for talks, seeking advice on the solution to the ethnic problem. Of course, that was J.R.

His Excellency, on that day, was so generous as to step out of the Ward Place house to greet them, for his conscience would have pricked him to confess his guilt for what he had done in banning the party and imprisoning its leaders for no reason.

That was J.R.'s style of governance. Of all the misdeeds of J. R., the blackest was the Black July, for which the nation suffers to date."

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Chapter 8. The Cover Up