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PAPE'S MUDDLES ON
"SUICIDE BOMBERS" IN SRI LANKA**

by

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BLUNDERS IN TIGERLAND: PAPE'S MUDDLES ON "SUICIDE BOMBERS" IN SRI LANKA

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No study of the LTTE can afford to neglect Sri Lanka's cultural, historical, and geographical backdrop. The lack of existential awareness of religious cross-fertilisation, the either/or foundations of Western reasoning and absence of local knowledge bedevil the scholarship that incorporates Sri Lanka within their global surveys of suicide attacks. Pape's Dying to Win is an example. Here, the LTTE's multi-pronged capacities are poorly evaluated. Too much significance is attributed to the coercive success of SMs in bringing the government to the negotiating table at various moments. Religious persecution has not been the main reason for the Tamil struggle. Comparative references to SMs elsewhere are occasionally interspersed in this review of the Sri Lankan scene.

Following the events of 9/11 a veritable surge of academic writings on Al Qaeda and/or "suicide terrorism" has inundated bookshelves. Those that focus on "suicide bombers" tend to encompass several countries in their global surveys. Invariably this means that non-specialists are venturing into terrain – in its widest metaphorical meanings – that is unfamiliar. This problem is exacerbated by constraints of word length that demand concise summaries with the concomitant danger of gross oversimplification.

That is not all. Such surveys are informed by the popular pressures of an American market with its demand for the spectacular. Hence the highlighting of "suicide bombers" and "suicide terrorism," terms that not only arouse attention, but also de-legitimize the activities of the organisations which are behind such activities. For the story of the Tamils of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam such a slant skews

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analysis. To focus solely on the origins of the precision weapons known as suicide bombers is to concentrate on the end-point of a process and to neglect the wider context encompassing other forms of “gift/offering of self”ⁱ or “sacrificial devotion” by personnel aligned with the LTTE, such as the fast-unto-death and the swallowing of a cyanide capsule (the *kuppi* as the Tamils call it) when captured. My concept of “sacrificial devotion” is a considered label, one that attends to the inspirations promoting the commitment of Sri Lanka Tamils. It is deployed here as counterpoint to the pejorative terms “suicide terrorism” and “suicide bombers.”

Remarkably, most global reviews of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict seem unaware of the first cyanide suicide by Ponnudurai Sivakumaran on 5 June 1974 (before the LTTE proper was in existenceⁱⁱ) when he was cornered somewhere in the Jaffna Peninsula after a botched attempt at assassinating a senior police officer.ⁱⁱⁱ His was the first case of defensive suicide for cause, that cause being *Thamilīlam*, or Eelam in contemporary usage. This was prior to the birth of the LTTE.

It was a momentous episode. The funeral, a cremation, in his home village of Urumpurai (mostly Vellalar caste and with high literacy) became an expressive moment, an outpouring of intense grief and anger, the stuff of dramatic politics. Popular action decreed the day to be a one of *hartal*, that is a strike and demonstration of protest where all shops were closed and no work was done. Massive crowds journeyed to Sivakumaran’s home village. So too did venerable Tamil leaders, many of them lawyers of note. There, within the feverish fervour aroused by untimely death, these leaders were subject to assault by slippers wielded by angry young men.^{iv} Being “slipperped” is the ultimate in insults within Asia. It is a slap that proclaims a heinous transgression. The victim is deemed to have no moral ground. He must cop his fate silently.^v



Figure 1
Sivakumāran as Kattabommān
Copy kindly provided by S. Visahan of
the Tamil Information Centre,
London. The medallion is a trademark
for “Kalaiganaani” Studio.

In the 1790s the British in the Madras Presidency had to subjugate a local chieftain named Kattabommān. A number of diverse folk tales subsequently developed among the local peoples about this chieftain-bandit. In the 20th century Kattabommān was picked up by Tamils partial to Dravidian sentiments as their version of a freedom fighter. His “heroic exploits” were seen as an example of a “true Tamil warrior.” A film was produced in 1959 with the famous Shivāji Ganeshan cast as Kattabommān. This replication of the hero not only reveals the influence of Tamilnadu politics and media among Tamil-speakers in Sri Lanka, but signals the heroic mould in which Sivakumāran was (is) cast.

The main caption encompassing this picture says: “Do or Die.”

Clarified in terms understandable to those in the West one could say that the slipping of Tamil leaders was the equivalent of leading American Congressmen being spat upon in public with impunity, thereby being branded as ‘animals’ beyond the pale. But within Tamil history this act of symbolic punishment -- there in Sivakumaran’s natal place -- is significant in heralding the immediate future.



Figure 2
THE CHANGING OF
THE GUARD.

Copy kindly provided by
S. Visahan of the Tamil
Information Centre,
London.

Sivakumaran on the left stands next to the venerable and much-admired leader of the former Federal Party, SJV Chelvanayakam (already ailing, who passed away in 1977).

The restive and violent young men were preparing, as we know with the advantage of hindsight, to oust their older, moderate parliamentary leaders. Sivakumaran had in fact set the stage for altruistic self-sacrifice. He was likened to Kattabomman, a recalcitrant chieftain who was hanged by the British in southern India in the 1790s and subsequently resurrected in modern Tamilnadu as a “freedom fighter;” while a statue was immediately erected in his honour by the people of the Jaffna Peninsula and thereafter a symbolic struggle occurred around this icon as the Sri Lankan army knocked it down repeatedly after it was rebuilt.^{vi}



Figure 3 . STATUE OF PONNUDURAI SIVAKUMĀRAN KNOCKED DOWN

from National Geographic, 1979 p. 139 photo by Raghbir Singh

There can be little doubt that Sivakumaran’s act captured the imagination of both the Tamil people and the LTTE^{vii} when the latter emerged in 1976. From 1983 onwards if not earlier, recruits to the LTTE organisation not only take an oath of allegiance committing themselves to the organisation’s *punita cutantiram* (holy aim of liberation), but also promise to bite the *kuppi* that was around their necks if they were captured^{viii}.

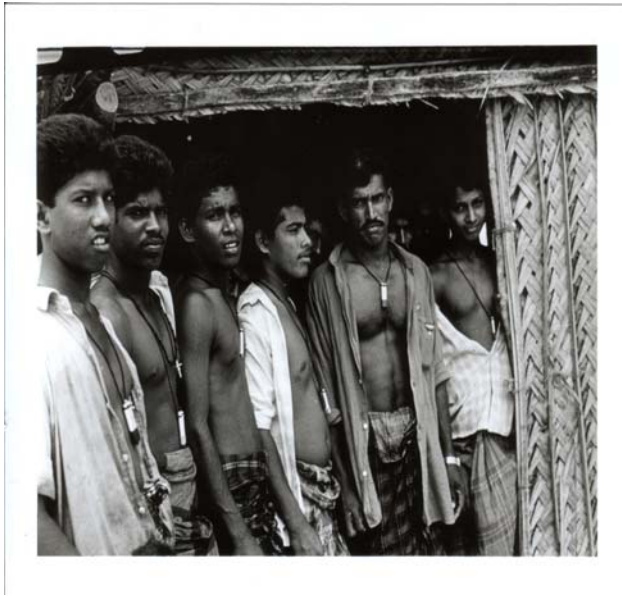


Figure 4

TIGER FIGHTERS WITH CYANIDE CAPSULES IN CAMP, c. 1989

Photo by SHYAM TEKWANI, an Indian journalist embedded within LTTE during war against IPKF.

Note that once their training is completed all LTTE fighters chant the following oath in unison:

*“Our revolutionary organisation’s **purified** aim
is for a free society to achieve Tamil Eelam*

*My life and **soul** and all this I sacrifice to our organisation’s leader,
our brother, Mr Prabhakaran*

We fully accept that for him

*we will be **very** faithful and trustworthy.*

The aim of the Tigers – Tamils’ freedom.”

Speaking to a BBC team in 1991 Adele Balasingham quietly stressed that “the cyanide capsule has come to symbolise a sense of self-sacrifice by cadres of the movement, their determination, their comitment to the cause, and ultimately, of course, their courage.” (BBC documentary on “Suicide Killers,” in their Inside Story serties, 1991).

Initially the obvious goal here, as with Sivakumaran’s act, was to protect the underground guerilla movement; but that purpose remains even after the Tigers have become an armed state with guerilla extensions. Here, we are indebted to Peter Schalk for a remarkable fact: of all the LTTE deaths up to 1992 he reckons that one third died by swallowing the *kuppi*.^{ix} The epitaph for Selvam Pakin the first fighter to deploy this method in May 1984 reads “... having enjoyed cyanide, he died heroically.”^x

It was only after some internal debate^{xi} that the LTTE hierarchy took the next logical step and extended the idea of suicide-in-defense to the concept of suicidal-attacks, humans as precision bombs. That innovation occurred

first on 5 July 1987 when Captain Miller drove a truck laden with explosives into an army camp at Nellyyadi during the latter's Vadamaradchchi (Vatamaracci) offensive.^{xii} This move may well have been inspired by the deployment of explosive-laden trucks by suicide bombers by Hezbollah and other forces in the Lebanon.^{xiii} Clearly, as with most contemporary instances of suicide missions, such a tactic is a rational course for a weaker party in a conflict, especially a military confrontation with marked asymmetry in arsenals and airpower. However, in the case of the Tamils and LTTE the foundations of devotional commitment to death-for-cause were firmly in place already. It is an error to commence one's focus from Miller's act of combat heroism,^{xiv} without attending to the established policy of defensive suicides and Sivakumaran's inspiration.

In September that same year, moreover, in a move orchestrated by the LTTE high command a senior LTTE fighter named Tilīpan mounted a fast-unto-death as a political protest against the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and its intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict. The LTTE had reluctantly accepted this intervention in July/August 1987, but was always suspicious of India's imperialist programme. This was signalled by Pirapāharan himself when, returning from India as a hero after having his arm twisted, he addressed a massive crowd at the grounds of Sudumalai Amman Kōvil.



Figure 5

TAMILS EN MASSE AT SUDUMALAI AMMAN KOVIL AWAIT PIRAPĀHARAN'S PERORATION, 4 August 198.

Courtesy of ANCL, that is Lake House.

Tilīpan's fast was their first open confrontation with the IPKF, one that was strategically located alongside the main temple in Jaffna town at Nallur -- a symbolic site par excellence, one matching Wenceslas Square where Jan Palach immolated himself on 16 January 1968 in protest against the Soviet invasion in support of their local proxies.^{xv}

Like the self-immolations carried out by Palach and those of the Buddhist monks in southern Vietnam,^{xvi} this event was high theatre, a moment of emotion-laden drama magnified. In contrast to self-immolations it also had the advantage of being a long-drawn out affair. The emotional engagement of the people of both Jaffna town and the Jaffna Peninsula as a whole (and probably beyond) developed to a fever pitch.^{xvii} When Tilipan (who was refused water by his minders even when he asked for some) died on 26 September 1987, the emotions bubbled among the Tamils of Sri Lanka and rippled along the networks making up the Tamil diaspora in numerous countries.^{xviii} The Indian occupation stood condemned. When 18 months later, in April 1989 a mother of ten, Annai Pupati (also spelt Poopathi), fasted unto death in the Eastern Province in support of the demand that the IPKF should leave the island, the last nail, more or less, had been inserted into the Indian coffin.



Figure 6

ANNAI PUPATI CUT-OUT, 19 APRIL 2004. Courtesy of TamilNet.com

Annai Pupati, a mother of ten children, fasted unto death in the Eastern Province in April 1988 as part of the LTTE agitation against the “occupaion” of their lands by the IPKF. In brief, she replicated the action of another LTTE hero or martyr (tiyaki), Lt. Col. Tileepan, who fasted unto death in September 1987in protest against the IPKF’s entry.

The popular emotions, whether anger, pride and/or defiant enthusiasm, that developed around such events among many Tamil people, both in Sri Lanka and abroad, indicate a cultural background that understood

(understands) suicidal protest to be a worthy cause. Thus, as I have argued elsewhere, one has to look at the deep history and culture of sacrificial devotion among the Tamil peoples of both India and Sri Lanka^{xix} – ranging backwards not only to medieval or early modern times, but also attending to the acts of self-immolation carried out by Chinnasami and other Tamil youth in 1964/65 in Tamilnadu protesting against the creeping hegemony, as they conceived it, of the Hindi language in federated India^{xx} as well the suicides in sympathetic grief that occurred after Mrs Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984 and when the actor-turned politician in Tamilnadu, M. G. Ramachandran, was reported to be at death's door in October 1984 and when he died subsequently on 24 December 1987.^{xxi} Moreover, any scholar attending to the incidence of suicide as well as “suicide terrorism” in southern Asia must necessarily attend to the faith in fierce deities revealed by many a Tamil person and the regular acts of surrogate sacrifice tendered by Tamil Saivite devotees seeking protection and/or boons.^{xxii} These “votive rituals are full of sacrificial symbolism.”^{xxiii} As Bastin remarks, “breaking a coconut is both a standard devotional act with strong interpretations from devotees that liken the nut to a human head, and the breaking to a sublimated form of self-sacrifice.”^{xxiv}

Central to the prolonged festivals associated with such deities as Bhadrakali and Draupadi at major regional temples as well as local ones is the “theme of renewal.”^{xxv} In brief, such participatory activities convey the idea of a deity born in violence, a cosmic force that is an embodiment of “creative destruction” and “creative sacrifice.”^{xxvi} Thus they re-enact a basic proposition in Hindu thought, and thereby in Tamil Saivism, namely that “life is born out of darkness; death itself is the creator.”^{xxvii} Within such a context the widespread characterisation of the LTTE as a “secular organisation,” their soldiers as “secular terrorists,” and their fallen as secular heroes is quite misplaced.^{xxviii} Where supra-mundane forces are intrinsic facets for *some* actors and for *some part of the local constituency*, the concept “secular” is misleading.

In brief, a focus on suicide attackers alone neglects the conditions of possibility that engender and encourage sacrificial devotion to a cause. Such a narrow focus also obscures the historical and contextual factors that encourage the people on whose behalf these acts are carried out to empathize with such practices and to assign profound worth to such unselfish commitment.^{xxix}

Sri Lanka's History in Brief

The failure to give adequate weight to cultural and historical factors in the recent story of Sri Lanka is revealed in *Dying to Win. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* by Robert Pape (2005), where this fundamental flaw is compounded still further by poor background knowledge. His work represents a whole genre of political science writings on the subject,^{xxx} but has been selected here as a particular illustration of my general critique because of the verve with which Pape has advertised his argument in media

circles. More vitally, he has found recognition in a site that is more or less a mouthpiece for the LTTE, namely *TamilNet*.^{xxxii} In a news item displayed on their website on 26 June 2005 both Mia Bloom^{xxxiii} and Pape received favourable notice with their pictures accompanying brief reportage under the caption “Dying to Kill: US Academic examines causes of suicide terror.” The punchline is at the end: “in an article covering the same topic that appeared in *New York Times* in May, Robert A. Pape, associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago, says: ‘What nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territories that the terrorists consider to be their homeland...’”

Pape, in brief, has been good propaganda value for the LTTE because he stresses what Tamils in Sri Lanka desire and what most scholars will accept: namely, that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are pursuing self-determination as a nation state and seeking specified territories within the island. But once we begin to consider the demarcation of the “Tamil homelands” and the historical justifications of their claims and grievances one enters highly contentious ground. Thus, a brief outline of Sri Lanka’s history is essential background, together with selective facets of the cultural terrain.

Sri Lanka has a long history with records that date back to the last millennium BCE. The terrain of “who came first” is now a raging battlefield for debate, both academic and popular, involving varying measures of partisanship. It is probable that the migrants of the megalithic culture who joined the mesolithic indigenes during the middle centuries of the last millennium BCE originated mostly in southern India and were mostly speakers of Tamil or Tamil Prakrit. However, Buddhism (which also was the faith of some Tamil-speakers) was introduced into Sri Lanka in the third century BCE and adopted by one of the principal chieftains. Moreover, the early inscriptions of the third to first century BCE “show that there was little variation in language and script in various parts of the island,” leading to the “conjecture that the various streams of migrants had begun to acquire the rudiments of a common culture.”^{xxxiii} Older scholarship, including the works of Geiger, deemed the language of these inscriptions to be “Proto-Sinhala” or “Sinhala-Prakrit.” I am not in a position to say whether scholars today would support this conclusion: to settle this issue one requires a specialist colloquium rather than academic ships that pass each other in the night.

Be that as it may, it is probable that the language of the last centuries BCE evolved into what became identified as Sinhala or Elu by the 4th/5th centuries CE, if not earlier.^{xxxiv} This remark is based on (a) the Indian visitor Buddhagōsha’s statement in the fifth century CE and (b) the evidence of palm-leaf manuscripts and inscriptions during the latter half of the first millennium CE. By the twelfth century this script and language eventually became consolidated into the Sinhala script and language that is known today.

Thus, there is reason to assume that the Tamil-speakers of the centuries BCE had mostly become Sinhala speakers by the fifth and sixth centuries

CE within the so-called “hydraulic civilization” commanded by Sinhalese kings centred in the northern and eastern regions, but also embracing the south eastern corner of the island. It was not till the thirteenth century that a state known as the Kingdom of *Yālpānam* (Kingdom of Jaffna), a dynastic state centred upon Tamil speakers, developed in the extreme north of the island as a result of invasions from south Indian feudatories whose Tamil-speaking descendants merged with local residents who adopted Tamil as their own.

In brief, both sets of speakers, Tamil and Sinhala, can claim to be among the original inhabitants in the last millennium BCE. However, to the extent that one privileges state power

as well as the force of numbers, as I do in relation to the first millennium CE, the claims of the Sinhalese are stronger from the fourth century CE onwards if not earlier.^{xxxv} Both the political economy and the political dispensation altered radically from the 13th century when the “hydraulic civilisation” in the north central regions around Anuradhapura declined and the Sinhala kingdoms shifted south west and became centred within the western and/or central regions of the island. The political relations between these kingdoms and the new *Yālpānam* (1300 to circa 1619) were constrained by the vast malaria ridden and sparsely populated jungles that had overwhelmed the north central parts of the island and created a buffer zone. Though there seem to have been Tamil-speakers under local chieftains along the eastern littoral, these areas fell within the suzerainty of the Kingdoms of Kottē (circa 1400-1550s), Sitāvaka (1521-80s) and Kandy (1590s-1815), each of which was known as *Sinhalē* or *Tunsinhalaya* and claimed overlordship over the island in a manner typical of the centre-oriented “galactic polities” of Asia.^{xxxvi}

The kingdoms of *Yālpānam*, Kottē and Sitāvaka fell under the sway of the Portuguese at various points between the 1550s and 1619, but that of Kandy held out and also resisted the Dutch and British who took over most of the maritime districts at different stages (1638-58 and 1795-96 respectively). It was not till the years 1815-18 that the British took over and consolidated their hold over the interior Kingdom of Kandy, a state which had territorial overlordship of the whole eastern coast.

British rule involved a considerable transformation in the political economy of the island, a revolution in the communication system, the administrative unification of the country and the emergence of new class forces of a capitalist variety. English became the administrative language and one saw the development of an elite referred to locally as “middle class” whose mode of domination included a facility in English-speak, a particular life style and the wearing of trousers by males. Both the bourgeoisie and the overlapping folk category of the ‘middle class’ included elements from all the ethnic groups, Tamils, Sinhalese, Burghers, Moors, Malays, Borahs, Sindhis, Parsees and Colombo Chetties. Most of these Tamils were families from the Jaffna Peninsula, several of whom became permanent residents in the island’s hegemonic centre, Colombo.^{xxxvii}

The British period (1795-1948) was also featured by currents of Hindu and Buddhist revitalisation in opposition to the aggressive proselytisation activities of Christian missionary organisations. The latter half of British rule also saw three strands of political ferment: Sri Lankan nationalism, Sinhala nationalism and Tamil communitarianism,^{xxxviii} with the spokesmen representing the latter two currents sometimes overlapping ambivalently with the organisations (e.g. the Ceylon National Congress) standing for all the island peoples in opposition to the colonial rulers.

Taking advantage of its small size, the British Empire's confidence in its naval power and its own manifest Westernisation (or 'Anglo-ness'), the Sri Lankan political elites extracted a devolution of power in several steps between 1918 and 1948 without the strategies of mass mobilisation that were deployed by its counterparts in British India. But the current of Sinhala linguistic nationalism was waiting in the wings. At the general elections of 1956 this ideological force thrust its way forward under the aegis of a coalition in which the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was the principal element. They secured a massive electoral victory that was largely due to the catch-cry "Sinhala Only," a blow directed at the English-speakers that at the same time rendered Tamil inferior or second class.

These forces of Sinhala linguistic nationalism secured the heights of power in 1956 in alliance with the underprivileged seeking a place in the sun. Socialist forces, embodied in the Ceylon Communist Party (CCP) and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), were part of this thrust. Several Tamils occupied important roles within the CCP and the LSSP. But the leanings of Tamil radical socialists were severely undermined subsequently in 1964 when both these parties abandoned their principled programme of parity for the two vernacular languages, Tamil and Sinhala, and joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in another electoral alliance committed to the economic and status gains deriving from the primacy of the Sinhala language in the government sector. This was a capitulation to the implications of demographic weight in the existing electoral scheme of things.

Though the Federal Party gained a toehold in government in 1965 when the United National Party returned to power in 1965, that experience of partial clout was dispiriting because of the manner in which even the limited decentralization under a proposed District Councils Bill was abandoned.^{xxxix} That was but one piece of evidence indicating how powerful, chauvinist Sinhala thinking coursed through politics. Such sentiments worked in subterranean ways as one factor behind the return of the SLFP to power in mid-1970 in association with the CCP and LSSP under an umbrella association known as the United Front (UF) headed by Sirimavo Bandaranaike.^{xl} It was this combination that initiated a new republican constitution in 1972, a set-up that discarded the meagre constitutional safeguards valued by some Tamil leaders.

These developments exposed certain debilitating, structural features within the Sri Lankan polity, namely, the deadly combination of (A) a peculiar demographic composition that was (B) distributed in space in ways which (C) tilted the democratic voting patterns in a particular direction and ensured that governments were made or unmade in the Sinhala-majority districts.

In other words the particular species of democracy prevailing in Sri Lanka encouraged and exacerbated Sinhala linguistic nationalism in its extreme chauvinistic forms and has continually made compromise difficult. The constitution of 1947 was modeled on that of Westminster and involved a system of parliamentary elections on a first-past-the-post scheme. Given the respective numerical proportions of Sinhalese, Sri Lanka Tamils, Indian Tamils and Muslims and their peculiar spatial distribution, this meant that victory at the general elections was decided in the Sinhala-majority areas. Further, a small swing in the percentage of votes generated major swings in parliamentary power. Once the Sinhala Only political platform with populist tendencies engineered a change of government in 1956, therefore, it was not in the interests of the leading parties to grant concessions to the Tamils.^{xli}

In summary, then, the chief reasons for this heightening of Tamil grievances and aspirations were (1) the ramifying economic and political implications of a programme that made Sinhala the language of administration after the populist victory at the 1956 general elections; (2) the effect and memories of a mini-pogrom against Tamils in the south western regions in May-June 1958; (3) the structural implications of the island's demographic distribution working in conjunction with (4) the further structural tilt induced by the Westminster model of government; (5) a measure of discrimination inserted into state policies in administrative recruitment as a result of statutory acts and the growing influence of administrators with Sinhala prejudices;^{xlii} (6) the SLT peoples' hostile readings (whether justified, exaggerated or imagined) of the state sponsored colonisation schemes pursued in the dry zone of Sri Lanka;^{xliii} (7) the gerrymandering of admissions to the prestigious science faculties from 1970 in ways that disadvantaged the Tamils of Jaffna;^{xliiv} (8) the manner in which a new republican constitution was set up in 1972; and (9) a localised clash in January 1974 between the police and a large crowd that had assembled for the International Conference of Tamil Studies, a confrontation which resulted in a few deaths from electrocution because a telegraph pole tumbled down at the height of a baton charge.^{xliv}

Tamil Nationalism Escalates: the Demand for Eelam

The summary above serves to highlight the period 1970-76 as a critical stage in the growing estrangement between Sinhalese and Sri Lanka Tamils (SLT). It was within this period that a few restive Tamil youth formed revolutionary underground cells in the Jaffna Peninsula. One of these, known as the Tamil New Tigers, was set up around 1972 and included young Pirapāharan as well as Periya Sothi (his cousin) and several young

men older than him, namely, Chetti Thanabalasingham, Sivarajah, Ramesh, Inbam, Kannady, Saravanam (alias Patkunarajah), Kalapathy, Kirupaharan, Pandithar and Baby Subramaniam^{xlvi}.

It was in this period too that the Federal Party transformed itself into the Tamil United Front in 1972 and then again re-shaped itself as the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in 1976. This second act of renaming was taken at the moment when the TULF adopted the Vadukoddai Resolution in May 1976 which asserted that their goal was self-determination as a state to be named Eelam. In decisive mode, then, the Tamils of yesteryear had moved from a position of sectional nationalism within the umbrella "Sri Lankan" to a position outside the latter category. Their nationalism was now explicitly secessionist. The die had been cast.

The leaders of old still had some faith in the parliamentary methods of pressure. Not so the restive and radicalised youth dwelling within the Jaffna Peninsula and northern reaches of the island, among them such lads as Ponnudurai Sivakumaran and Velupillai Pirapāharan. Their methods were to be through violent seizure of their rights, liberation through gun and bomb. At the same time others in London, generally of strong socialist or Marxist persuasion, banded together in various networks of ferment a handful established links with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and secured military training. It is now known that several of the militant youth emerged from the youth leagues attached to the FP and TULF. Indeed, Hoffman & McCormack's interviews led them to the conclusion that some of the clandestine youth cells were secret extensions of the TULF.^{xlvii} The key link was A. Amirthalingam, deputy chief of the FP, who laboured under the misapprehension that he was their controller. He learnt otherwise in 1981 when the LTTE leaders and other radical youth virulently opposed the TULF's decision to participate in the district council elections, a move that was interpreted as a compromising legitimisation of the Sri Lankan state.^{xlviii}

Though episodic the attacks on the 'occupying' security forces within the Jaffna Peninsula increased in number. The burning of the Jaffna Library by ill-disciplined policemen in June 1981 and the severe pogrom in July 1983 directed against Tamils living in the south-central regions of Sri Lanka -- involving state agents (marshaled by some senior politicians) as well as significant popular participation -- deepened the chasm between the SLT on the one hand and the Sinhala majoritarian government and peoples on the other.



Figure 7

POGROM OF 1983. Rioters at Borella Junction, 24/25 July 1983. Picture by Chandragupta Amarasinghe & kindly supplied by him.

This was one of the initiating moments of the pogrom of July 1983 which terrorised Tamils living in Colombo and other areas with a Sinhalese majority. The attacks on person and property deemed Tamil was not restricted to state functionaries but also included segments of the Sinhala populace.

Thus, the pogrom of July 1983 was yet another turning point in a process with many such spirals towards ever-sharpening conflict. After this awful event, Sinhala majoritarianism stood condemned in the international scene. Both the Indian and Tamilnadu governments proceeded to assist the militant Tamil organisations in material ways. The moderate Tamil parliamentarians were pushed to the sidelines and few could now reside in the heartland within the Jaffna Peninsula. Recruits to the militant organisations increased thousandfold. The competition for support among the underground groups of Eelamists had encouraged the spiraling of militancy from the 1970s. Now, post July 1983, the hardcore of some 27 or so fighters that had made up the LTTE up to that stage^{xlix} expanded rapidly, but did so within the highly disciplined and ascetic ways instilled by Pirapāharan and second-in-command Mahattayā, namely, Gopalaswamy Mahendraraja.¹



Figure 8

YOUNG PIRAPĀHARAN. Back cover of a notebook purchased by Michael Roberts at Kilinochchi in Nov. 2004.



Figure 9

PIRAPĀHARAN PAYS HOMAGE TO BLACK TIGERS, 5 July 2005
Courtesy of TamilNet.com

The picture on the wall is that of Miller (Vallipuram Vasanthan), who drove a truck laden with explosives into an army camp at Nellyyadi on 5 July 1987, the first LTTE suicide attack. Note the symbolism of flames and Miller's encirclement by flowers in keeping with a whole genre of "circling rituals" (ārati in Sanskritic Tamil) that are intended to remove unwanted

negatives from a person or place. Other practices during Māvīrar Nal in November indicate that the māvīrar are symbolically encircled and protected by cosmic forces marked by the jasmine flower or glory lily. This is a Tantric principle that has been incorporated within Hindu orthodoxies without necessarily being recognised as Tantric.

Carrying a cyanide capsule, as we have seen at the start of this essay, was an integral part of this discipline and a testimony to their readiness to embrace death. As a Protestant Tamil octogenerian who had lived in the Peninsula through the early 1980s told me in admiration one day in Adelaide: “the devotion that the Tigers showed was unmatched.”^{li}

Thus, as symbol the cyanide capsule gave the LTTE an edge in the struggle with other fighting groups for Tamil support. This edge was sharpened by killing ruthlessness. TELO was severely decimated by attack and hunt in April-May 1986, while the EPRLF politbureau was gunned down during one of their meetings in Chennai by an LTTE commando team on 19 June 1990. EROS and eventually PLOTE began to wither away.^{lii} By late 1987 the LTTE stood at the pinnacle of fighting resistance to the Sinhala majoritarian government. Through periodic assassinations of Tamil moderate leaders over the years^{liii} and, eventually in the 1990s, by their successful military campaigns against the IPKF from 1987-90 and the Sri Lankan state in the 1990s, they turned the new leaders of the TULF into more or less supportive lap-dogs ready to acquiesce – from circa 1999 -- in the principle that the “LTTE is the sole representative of the [SL] Tamils.”

Pape on the LTTE: A Suicide Pack Full of Errors

The analytical narrative set out above, for the most part in chronological form, serves as a foundation for the specification of serious errors in Pape’s case study of the Tamil Tigers as well as a brief discussion of the LTTE’s suicide missions within this context. Besides TamilNet’s appropriation of one of his sound bites for their global propaganda (noted above), the manner in which Pape has been used to support specific claims about the LTTE by other scholars renders such a task imperative.

Pape’s unfamiliarity with both the history of the island peoples over the past centuries as well as the geopolitical contours of the contemporary struggle in Sri Lanka is quite glaring to any insider. There is no suggestion that he is aware that today in Sri Lanka virtually 45 percent of the Sri Lankan Tamils (as distinct from Malaiyaha Tamils^{liv}) live in the regions outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces (Eelam-to-be at its minimum ambit claim)^{lv} and that a substantial number of Tamils, 251,007 persons in sum, resided in the greater metropolitan area of Colombo in 2001, making up roughly 24 percent of its total population^{lvi} -- and providing segments who serve as a fifth column within which LTTE assassins and commando teams can hide before they strike. This would be equivalent to having Japanese Americans making up one quarter of the population in and around San Francisco during World War Two.

This is compounded by the credulous manner in which Pape accepts all the claims to a “traditional homeland” presented by the LTTE and other Tamils. This homeland, Eelam-to-be, is identified by the existing boundaries of the Eastern and Northern Provinces. He is unaware that these boundaries are arbitrary lines on the map drawn up by the British in much the same fashion as so many African boundaries were delimited and that the eastern regions were part of a Sinhala kingdom till the 18th century.^{lvii} Thus, by stating that the “Tamil minority are (*sic*) concentrated in the north -- ancestral homeland since Hindus first began migrating to the island in the sixth century B. C.,” he leaves one aghast at the majesty of his historical sweep as much as the abysmal knowledge of a complex history.

Such errors may not concern specialists whose focus is directed towards the specifics of insurgency, “terrorism” and “suicide missions.” But within this arena, too, Pape misleads. Perhaps his most glaring mistake is the contention that hostility aroused by religious persecution provides a major imperative for the suicidal zeal among Tiger personnel and the widespread acceptance of such tactics among the Sri Lanka Tamil peoples.^{lviii} His initial comment is expanded thus:

Sinhalese occupation of Tamil lands created the core necessary condition for the Tamil community to support national resistance at all. However, the politics of religious difference helped to intensify the resistance and to encourage public support for suicide terrorism. ... The most prominent factor driving Tamil community support for individual self-sacrifice is fear of Buddhist extremism. Especially since the establishment of the new state constitution in 1972, prominent Tamil leaders have consistently claimed that the Sinhalese government is motivated by the goal to extend Buddhism into the Tamil regions of the island, a religious game plan that justifies treating the Tamil people harshly, which in turn justifies extreme self-sacrifice as necessary to meet the threat.^{lix}

Fear of religious persecution, not internal dynamics within Tamil society, *largely* accounts for the pervasive use of suicide terrorism in this case.^{”lx}

These comments are founded on the credulous acceptance of extreme claims by propagandists for the Tamil cause.^{lxi} True, the constitution of 1972 accords Buddhism “the foremost place” and enjoins the state to “protect and foster” Buddhism. But other clauses recognized the rights of other religions. This caveat in turn was compromised by the fact that the legislature was rendered supreme and not subject to judicial oversight on the issue of religious rights. So there were genuine concerns among constitutional experts on this issue.^{lxii}

From a socio-political viewpoint, however, the more critical domain is that of practice. For the most part, subject to some qualifications, people in Sri Lanka pursue their faiths without hindrance.^{lxiii} Religious toleration is widespread and quite profound. Official holidays recognise the main religious calendar of every single faith. The substantial Tamil populace in Colombo and elsewhere in the south freely express their Saivite faith and mount teeming, tumultuous processions in the heart of districts with a Sinhalese majority.^{lxiv}

The religious practices of the multi-ethnic areas are also characterised by a significant degree of cross-fertilisation. Formal boundaries are crossed as people with anxieties and desires seek cosmic support from powerful deities from every which way. A visit to a religious festival at such places as the Hindu-dominated complex at Munnesvaram some 30 miles from Colombo or the distant religious site at Kataragama, whose god Kataragama is regarded as Murugan by Hindus, would reveal a measure of pluralism that amazes the average Westerner.^{lxv}

This, then, is part of Pape's problem. He probably has no existential awareness of this type of world. Most Westerners, especially those in Europe, are nurtured either in contexts that are highly secular or where the divide between the Protestants and the Catholics is institutionalised and quite marked in everyday practices. Pape, moreover, is addressing this issue from an 'insular' chamber arising from 9/11 and the resulting "war on terror" organized in terms of the Muslim-Christian divide. As I see it, the conditions of his own universe of being are insidiously read unto the unfamiliar Sri Lankan context. In the process he conveniently effaces the presence of Christians on both sides of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict.

Most critically, Pape gives little weight to the powerful involvement of Catholics within the LTTE networks of support.^{lxvi} Within a context where roughly 90 percent of the Christian Tamil population is Catholic, it is significant that the census of 1981 records that Christians constituted 41%, 11.5% and 15.2% of the total population of Mannar, Jaffna and Mullaitivu Districts respectively -- thus outnumbering the Hindus (27 per cent) in Mannar.^{lxvii} Catholic clergymen have been staunch and articulate spokesmen for the LTTE cause from early days.^{lxviii} The second in command in 1983 seems to have been Seelan alias Charles Anthony till he died in action on 6 July 1983, while the regional commander for Mannar in the mid-1980s was Victor (Marcelin Fusles), also Catholic; while prominent LTTE figures of the 1980s, such as Anton Balasingham, Rahim (Canagaratnam) and Lawrence Thilakar (John Chrisostrom), were also from a Catholic background; while twenty of the 240 Black Tiger dead listed in the LTTE's *Sooriya Puthalvargal 2003 Souvenir* have been identified as Catholics by a staunch Tiger supporter.^{lxix}

The wide range of support that the LTTE has received from across the religious spectrum^{lxx} from 1983, if not earlier, can be attributed to the grievances set out in the previously within this article and what many observers characterise in summary as a recent history of Sinhala

majoritarianism.^{lxxi} For the same reasons the LTTE has support from across the class spectrum, whether you depict ‘class’ in terms of propertied and non-propertied or in terms of a folk stratification model referring to the middle class, lower middle class and working class.

Pirapāharan himself came from a family which had been among the trustees of the main temple at Velvettithurai (VVT) for generations. His father was a clerk who had risen in the administrative service and was a propertied man.^{lxxii} The Karaiyar in general and those of VVT in particular have a long seafaring tradition and one can conjecture that they took advantage of the sea lanes of the British empire, just like the Karāva of Galle, to establish business interests far and wide. VVT is also known to have excelled in the smuggling trade with India, Burma etc. Moreover, entrepreneurs in the fishing industry from VVT and the north would have had links and interests in the beach seine operations along the length of the eastern coast. The VVT Karaiyar have had special rights in the Verugal Kovil in Trincomalee town for over a century and have settled in Thirukadaloor locality in the town. The VVT Karaiyar are also said to have landlord interests in various parts of the Eastern Province.^{lxxiii} One can reasonably surmise that these networks were of critical importance in the survival and growth of the LTTE during the initial decades.

The seafaring networks of the Karaiyar caste as a whole may also have assisted the formation of a global shipping company that has been a major pillar in their logistical operations.



Figure 10

PROCESSION FOR THE WATER-CUTTING RITE, PILLAIYAR TEMPLE, VELVITTATURA, AUG. 2004

Courtesy of Tamil Net.

This festival has been recently revived. The following description was provided:

“For sea faring residents and fishermen from the town of Valvettiturai located in the northern shores of Jaffna, temples dotting the town's

landscape provide solace and protection from the dangers that accompany their trade. Boat festivals, where the elephant-faced god 'Ganapathi' is taken around the town in a boat shaped vehicle, are being celebrated with renewed cultural traditions, in the current climate of peace. In August and September Hindu temple festivals turn Jaffna into a virtual spiritual town. Mavattapuram temple located in the High Security Zone in Keerimalai, Nallur temple, Sellasannithi in Thondamannar are among the most popular temples where the festivals can last for 26 days. The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) made special provisions for devotees to attend the Car festival ("Ther") and stay overnight for the water cutting ceremony at the Mavattapuram temple, this year. In Valvettiturai, "Kappalodiya Pillaiyar" temple located near the town center, held its water cutting ceremony in the middle of August. During this festival the deity is taken to Oorani shores, a few kilometers east of town, for the water cutting ceremony, and brought back to the temple in a procession.

Every household places a table at the entrance with religious artifacts including lamps and vase filled with water. The procession moves slowly through the narrow streets stopping at every house for the priest to perform a short religious ritual.

[The] Deity's protection is sought with a visit to the Pillaiyar temple by everyone before he/she ventures out into sea."

Thus, the LTTE quickly became a transnational corporation (see elaboration below) via its links with businessmen and professionals -- from all castes, but especially Karaiyar and Civiyār^{lxxiv} -- in the vast Tamil diaspora who were alienated by what happened to their people in Sri Lanka, particularly in July 1983. In this sense the LTTE is a worldwide network of the propertied and the entrepreneurial. Given such foundations it is hardly surprising that the concept of the "proletariat" does not figure prominently in Tiger-speak. For anyone to read the LTTE as "Marxist-Leninist," as Pape does,^{lxxv} is quite preposterous and it is not surprising that Sachi Sri Kantha, an avid LTTE supporter, should chide Robert Pape for presenting such a statement.^{lxxvi}

As vitally, the LTTE has drawn its fighters from all castes, including the highest rung Vellalar, who made up perhaps half the population in the Jaffna Peninsula in the past. The exigencies of war as well as the LTTE's ideological inclinations have consolidated a transformation in caste relations in the Peninsula over the last 40 years. The ubiquitous tea boutique had been a Vellalar monopoly for ages in part because they controlled the wells that were a vital adjunct for this trade; but the penetration of other caste people into this line of business which had begun from the 1960s gathered rapid momentum in the LTTE era.^{lxxvii} Again, fighting skills must have provided a channel of mobility for all castes, especially, I suspect, the Nallava and

Pallar menial people of yesteryear. That stated, the fact remains that the LTTE leadership from 1982 has always been centred upon a Karaiyar core.^{lxxviii} Speculatively, it appears that Sageman's thesis regarding the importance of small cliques of kin and friends in the recruitment of personnel to the cause of the "global Salafi jihad" can, with necessary adjustments, be extended to the LTTE's formative years.^{lxxix} In the Tamil context, of course, to say kin is to say caste. However, some of the LTTE leaders married across caste; and the war situation seems to have encouraged marriages between fighters and ex-fighters, while fragmentary data points to individuals marrying sisters of their peers (so too among the Al-Qaida and radical Islamic personnel studied by Sageman).^{lxxx}

As significantly, the outbreak of armed conflict encouraged many of the militant Eelamist groups to recruit women as auxiliaries. As the struggle gathered momentum the exigencies of war, manpower needs and the LTTE's own ideological leanings led them to develop female units, both on land and sea.

The influence of the Australian Adele Balasingham, communist in her youth and since married to the LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham, was one voice encouraging this development from within leadership ranks.^{lxxxii} Female recruitment expanded considerably from 1990 when what is called Eelam War II commenced. Female fighters were expected to perform the same tasks as their male counterparts, though they were trained from 1990 at separate camps run by female commanders.^{lxxxii} Women have been a significant element in the Black Tiger suicide operations and the work of soldier video camerapersons known as the "Truth Tigers."^{lxxxiii} Thus, we see a process of female empowerment within the LTTE that has ramified throughout Tamil society. The woman combatant has moved into public space beyond traditional patriarchal containment.



Figure 11

FEMALE FIGHTERS, LTTE

Courtesy TamilNet, 13 March 200 from notebook in author's possession

The picture shows "two young, Catholic females, with the nom de guerre 'Dharsika' and 'Puhachudar', who have been LTTE fighters since their teens and have become part of LTTE's elite force, the Black Tigers." The two warriors anchor a documentary film made recently by a Norwegian, Beate Arnestad, one advertised within TamilNet.

The picture on the left shows Malathi, or ..., who was the first female fighter to die. She bit her cyanide capsule when wounded and about to be captured on.

But, as de Mel reveals, this is at a price: one that “denies the militant a personality and emotional expression of his/her own and [subjects him/her] to the will of the militant leadership s/he struggles on behalf of.”^{lxxxiv} An early LTTE propaganda pamphlet (1983) arguing the case for female participation even displayed a picture of a Palestinian woman with gun in one hand and baby in other. This combination of warrior woman and mother, notes de Mel, thereby reproduces restraints on female sexuality and re-introduces the figure of the fierce goddess (Sita in one famous Tamil text) working within the aegis of a greater male god, Rama.^{lxxxv}

It is the LTTE’s suicide attacks and their Black Tigers in particular that have attracted the attention of foreign scholars engaged in comparative exercises.



Figure 12

BLACK TIGERS MARCHING. Date uncertain.

This image was extracted for me by a Tamil friend from internet sources partial to the LTTE. The location is definitely on the A9 at Kilinochchi. The Black Tigers are elite commando troops and do not always function as units. It is from their ranks that the suicide attackers and assassins are selected.

Pape’s work is one such survey. He uses the LTTE as one prop for his broad, global generalisation to the effect that such tactics are successful by contending that the Tiger’s suicide attacks have exercised coercive effect in Sri Lanka by bringing the Sinhala-dominated governments to the negotiating table.^{lxxxvi} Unfortunately, this assessment has been blithely accepted in a few other surveys seeking to generate statistical comparisons of the ‘success rate’ of SMS in order to reach conclusions about their rationality.^{lxxxvii}

The different governments in Colombo have sat together with the LTTE at the table on three occasions, in late 1989/90, early 1995 and early 2002. All three moments were preceded by change of key personnel at the top in Colombo. In late 1989 the new, highly indigenist President, R. Premadasa, was intent of effecting the diplomatic withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force who were keeping the LTTE under control^{lxxxviii} at the price of reduced state sovereignty. Since this suited the LTTE, they sat down with Premadasa's team to push for Indian withdrawal; and in this transactionalist game of attempting to use each other the LTTE eventually bested Premadasa.^{lxxxix}

On both other occasions the Colombo-government's peace moves emerged in the course of electoral campaigns pitting the principal parties, the United National Party (incumbent in 1994) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (incumbent in 2001). On both occasions the LTTE favoured the oppositional candidate and on the first occasion facilitated the victory of Chandrika Kumaratunga by eliminating the other Presidential candidate, Gamini Dissanayake, on October 24 1995 through the deployment of a female suicide bomber who killed 55 others in the process. Though a suicide attack was of some import here, Kumaratunga had participated with her husband^{xc} in the peace overtures of 1987 and her politics were of a demi-socialist cum liberal kind. Her party had already adopted a manifesto advocating a peaceful solution to the ongoing struggle and was campaigning vigorously towards this end. It was this bold policy on her part (going against the populist Sinhala grain) that led to peace negotiations after her electoral triumph.^{xcii} Likewise, Ranil Wickremasinghe, as leader of the UNP, ran on a platform for peace during the parliamentary elections in late 2001 and secretly brokered a ceasefire arrangement (subsequently ratified) prior to the elections.^{xciii}

These notes provide only the bare bones of each story, but they convey what any person-on-street in Sri Lanka would have told an investigator. The summary is sufficient to indicate that each moment of seeming compromise was preceded by a complex turn of events and relationships. In sum, they also indicate how the democratic process within the southern half of the equation was so central to such developments. To attribute such outcomes to SMs is simply simpleton.

Other scholars have deciphered the fact that the SMs of the LTTE have been a minute part of their operational tactics – statistically speaking. Hopgood has intelligently worked out a way of revealing that many SMs have taken place at sea. It is for this reason that he could correctly assert that the majority of attacks “have involved military objectives in the north and east.”^{xciiii} But it is quite incorrect to go one step further and state that “there are no clear examples of civilians being directly targeted by SMs.”^{xcv}



Figure 13

LTTE MASSACRES. Carnage from an LTTE bomb on a railway carriage in Colombo. From images included in a website article by Shantha Hennayake.

In any event such computations underestimate the significance of SMs in the Sri Lankan context. Taking out a civilian Rommel has a more deleterious effect than a sinking of fast attack boat.^{xcv} Likewise the battles at sea are unseen and have little ripple effect (pun intended). In contrast, an assassination by suicide bomber in the heart of Colombo or a big strike, like the attacks on the Central Bank and World Trade Centre in Colombo, had the capacity to instill fear and create havoc within a big city.

Thus, SMs have indeed been an important facet of the LTTE operations not only as a weapon in beleaguered context, but as precision strike that decapitates key leaders at moments of import for the LTTE's political objectives. It is the timing of so many such 'decapitations' of capable leaders by the LTTE that will encourage a student of Clausewitz to purr with satisfaction. That is why they continue to use the method even after the war situation reached what has been called a "hurting stalemate" by 2001 if not earlier.^{xcvi}

For all that the general thrust of the arguments by Hopgood and Gambetta are valid. Firstly, the Black Tigers are elite warriors of the commando type and their selfless commitment is 'merely' a few degrees above the expectations attached to most LTTE fighters. This expectation extends to their leaders. Referring to what they call "terrorist organizations," scholars have essayed the global generalisation that "they rarely supply suicide bombers from their own ranks;" and that a leader has not volunteered for a martyrdom operation.^{xcvii} For the LTTE both statements are simply not valid. Kittu, Pulendran, Kumārappa and Sivarāsan are among top-rung officers who have killed themselves when required to do so. In the second place, Hopgood and Gambetta have correctly argued that for the LTTE the SMS are just one element in their arsenal and that the military achievements of the LTTE have been built on many pillars, including conventional forces. Their awareness, therefore, is in contrast to that of Pape.

At no time does Pape foreground the fact that, after the Indians left in February/March 1990, the LTTE established a de facto state dominating much of the Tamil-speaking territory within Sri Lanka. Moreover, no survey of the LTTE's success can afford to downplay the fact that it quickly became a conventional army with guerrilla extensions in certain areas. Between 1990 and 2001 the LTTE secured massive victories against the Sri Lankan state forces, notably at Pooneryn (November 1993), Mullaitivu (July 1996), Puliyankulam and Kanakarayankulam (September 1999), Elephant Pass (April 2000) and in response to the army's 'Agni Kheela' offensive in April 2001.^{xcviii} Though outgunned and outnumbered, they used to advantage the state's foolhardiness in fighting in fixed positions on numerous fronts by relying on mobility, the tactical concentration of limited resources and superior-intelligence about their opponent's dispositions.

From early days, moreover, the LTTE developed a brown-water navy of speedboats that used the long sub-continental coastlines to advantage – perhaps the only modern liberation force to develop such a capacity.



Figure 14
NAVAL UNIT.

<http://www.eelamweb.com/cgi-bin/image/imageFolio.cgi?action=view>

[&link=Tigers_Operations/Unceasing_Waves-3&image=6b.jpg&img=&tt=img](http://www.eelamweb.com/cgi-bin/image/imageFolio.cgi?action=view&link=Tigers_Operations/Unceasing_Waves-3&image=6b.jpg&img=&tt=img)

Their naval weaponry have included 30 ft “ship-killer” speedboats, 17 metre speedboats and specially designed low-profile “stealth boats” that can operate close inshore and within inland waters. Purchasing a fleet of freighters that sailed convenient “pan-ho-lib” (Panama-Honduras-Liberia) flags, they have also developed a shipping network that functions as a legitimate business, while also bringing them arms when feasible. They also have an embryonic air force that has aroused widespread a concerns in many quarters, especially after two propeller-driven planes made a spectacular, if manifestly symbolic, night raid on the government's Katunayake airbase on 26 March 2007.^{xcix}



Figure 15

LTTE AIR TIGER WING, late March 2007, Courtesy of TamilNet, 26 March 2007

These pictures were released by the LTTE immediately after the first air strike on Katunayake airbase. These propeller-driven planes hit some oil installations a few days later. The initial blurb reads thus: "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have for the first time released photos of their Air-Tigers to media with Tamileelam Air Force (TAF) first major mission. While reputed military analysts speculated on the LTTE use of air-craft limited to self-destroy missions, Tigers have surprised them by using locally designed payload carrying mechanisms, and automatic ammunition discharge circuitry, and demonstrated capability to fly night missions.

Liberation Tigers credit the formation of the Tiger air-wing (Vaarpuligal) to Colonel Shankar alias Vythialingam Sornalingam, an old boy of Hartley College, Point Pedro. He was an aeronautical engineer with Air Canada, with an Engineering Degree in Aeronautics from Hindustan Engineering College in Tamil Nadu. Shankar was the chief of the 'Air Tigers' and was responsible for developing the air wing from its infancy until his assassination in December 2001."

Organisational Capacities

As the evidence marshaled above indicates, one word sums up the LTTE's success and reach: "organisation." This has been seconded by long-term foresight, contingency planning and an aggressive proclivity towards pre-emptive strikes. Within Sri Lanka, for instance, their key personnel have been protected since the late 1980s through extensive underground facilities, while state-of-the art, underground hospitals have serviced their rehabilitation needs. From the mid-1980s, as indicated, they grew into a transnational corporation with numerous subsidiary enterprises, some criminal and clandestine, as well as affiliated front organisations. As one militant told Davis, Pirapāharan "thought like a good merchant capitalist."^c This multinational corporation has three dimensions: fundraising, arms procurement, and publicity. Gerald Peiris sums it all up: the "LTTE has

established over the years a massive empire of business and commerce with a global spread for which the Eelam war provides the motive force.”^{ci}

The organisational capacities extended to the manner in which the LTTE cemented bonds among its cadre and mobilised support among the Tamil peoples in Sri Lanka, while serving the legitimisation of their cause in a context where they had initially to compete with, and outbid, other militant Tamil forces. Inspired both by his emotional bonds with peers who died in the fight as well as instrumental goals, from the very outset Pirapāharan initiated what one can call, after Katherine Verdery’s work, “dead body politics.”^{cii} From the time when Seelan and Sellakili died in the Jaffna locality in July 1983 till July 1987, the bodies of the fallen Tigers were paraded through the streets, sometimes furtively at night, in order to whip up emotional fervour and anger.^{ciii}

This procedure was less feasible when the LTTE took on the might of the Indian army in the period October 1987-late 1989. When the Indian government decided to withdraw its forces and a ceasefire came into place, “around six hundred LTTE cadres assembled at a secret venue in the Mullaitheevu district jungles of Nithikaikulam” on 27 November 1989 – the day on which the first Tiger fighter, Shankar, a childhood friend of Pirapāharan died -- to commemorate what they call *Māvīrar Nāl* or Great Heroes Day.^{civ}



Figure 16

Emblematic LTTE Flag with Shankar.

Courtesy of <http://www.eelamweb.com>

Shankar, code name for S. Sathianathan of Kamparmalai, Vadamarachchi, was a close friend of Pirapaharan and a senior commander in the small band of revolutionary nationalists when he was severely wounded in a police raid in October 1982. Smuggled into India he died at Madurai on 27 November 1982 and his moment of death has been the central point of the LTTE’s māvīrar Nāl (Heroes’ Week) commemoration since 1989.

Around the same time, 1989-90 the LTTE initiated a momentous innovation: where their fallen had previously been provided with rites appropriate to their religious background, Christian burial or Hindu cremation as the case may be, they decided that they had a primary lien on the bodies and that all should be buried. Ancient Indian practices associated with *sannyāsin*, *sati* and heroic figures, who were buried and given

memorial stones known as *natukal*, were deployed to render this transformation acceptable to the Hindu majority in Sri Lanka.^{cv}



Figure 17
LTTE imports the
Natukal Concept from
India Courtesy of
TamilNet.com

LTTE's Vavuniya Political head Mr.S.Elilan is seen garlanding Black Tiger Lt. Col. Bork's "Nadukal" at the Eachchankulam Maveerar Thuyilum Illam. Lt. Col. Bork (Mapanapillai Arasaratnam of Arumuhathan Puthukulam Vavuniya) was killed on 23.11.1990 when he helped destroy the entrance to strategic Mankulam SLA camp. (www.TamilNet.com). This picture was displayed on 5 July 2003, the day when the LTTE formally pays homage to the Black Tiger māvērar who have died in their cause.

The term natukal (also nadukal) literally means "planted stones" and are memorial stones for heroic figures and/or victims of unjust humiliation, some of whom have committed protest suicide to mark a severe transgression. In southern India some of these deified humans have become shrines and part of the cluster of "fierce deities" dispensing benefits to supplicants seeking retribution or succour.

The LTTE's introduction of the venerated Indian concept of natukal as "hero stone" was one facet of an intricate cultural operation to bolster the switch from cremation of their Hindu dead to burial.

Thus we see the emergence of *tuyilam illam*, or resting places that are considered "holy ground" and "temples."^{cvii}



Figure 18

**TUYILAM ILLAM AT KOPAY near Jaffna Town, November 2004.
Picture by Michael Roberts**

This is one of the largest “resting places” in Tamil-majority regions in Sri Lanka. Kopay was within an area under government control in 2004. This picture displays the preparations for the big Māvīrar Nāl of 27 November 2004. All the thuyilam illam of the LTTE are kept in immaculate condition by a separate department established for such activities in the early 1990s. The Kopay site was under LTTE control from mid-1990 to late 1995 but was bulldozed by the army when the Jaffna Peninsula was captured and the LTTE withdrew its forces after initial resistance in order to conserve its resources and overstretch the government forces.

These are LTTE sites supervised meticulously by a special department set up for the purpose. Thus, from 1989 one sees a process of institutionalisation that consolidated the commemoration of the dead. This was a mode of propaganda by deed and death, to repeat, “dead body politics” in Verdery’s striking phrase. By the 2000s there were 21 major *tuyilam illam* at which commemorative rituals occurred simultaneously on 27 November each year.

That day is preceded by a week of intense activity marked by the multi-media modalities of loud music, buntings, billboards, *pandals* and decorations in the LTTE colours of red and gold; while strategically sited sheds display pictures of the fallen from the surrounding locality. Since kinsfolk travel to where their dead lie for the apical moment at twilight on the 27th November, the whole operation is a massive logistical exercise that is impeccably organised.^{cvii} At the climactic moment at 6.06 pm on the 27th November one could say that a community of suffering is engendered among the Tamil populace. The lamentation, however, is gilded by pride and a celebration of worth.

The 21 *tuyilam illam* are supplemented by permanent cenotaphs commemorating major victories or the death of a stellar *māvīrar* at diverse locations.



Figure 19

KITTU COMMEMORATED in Picturesque Mode. Picture by Michael Roberts, November 2004

Kittu, otherwise Sathasivam Krishnakumar, was a charismatic LTTE leader who committed who went down with an LTTE arms ship when it was scuttled on his command a when cornered by the Indian Navy in 1993. a statue was built at this site in the Jaffna Peninsula; but it was knocked down by army personnel when the areas was re-captured. The 'remains' of the statue lay beside this commemorative replacement when I visited the spot in November 2004.

In sum, therefore, a sacred topography has been created in the Tamil-majority regions. Furthermore, there are nine other commemorative days recognising key figures in the LTTE firmament of the dead, such as Miller, Tilipan, Annai Pupati, and Kittu, so that the pro-LTTE universe has a temporal calendar to match its spatial symbolism.

The Māvīrar Nāl commemorations are also organised in many large cities throughout by the clusters of Tamil migrants who are part of the LTTE network.



Figure 20

One of the Billboards at the Māvīrar Nāl Commemoration at Chicago in late November 2004. Courtesy of TamilNet.com via a Tamil friend



Figure 21

The Hall prepared for the Māvīrar Nāl Commemoration at Sydney in late November 2004

Courtesy of TamilNet.com via a Tamil friend.



Figure 22
KARTHIGAI IN VARIED STYLES

*The four pictures of the gloriosa superba or glory lily have been taken from an internet source. The image on top is from an LTTE pageant held in some city in Germany during the commemoration of Māvīrar Day one November in the early 21st century (kindly located for me from cyber-world presentations by pro-LTTE sources by a Tamil friend who did not supply details). The glory lily is called karthigai or kaantal in Tamil and niyangala in Sinhala. It is one of the flowers highlighted in Cankam poetry (see X. S. Thaninayagam, *Landscape and Poetry. A Study of Nature in Classical Poetry*. 2nd edn. London: Asia Publishing House.1966, pp. 30, 57, 104). Also see www.TamilNet.com, 14 April 2004, for a clarification for why this flower was chosen as the national emblem of the LTTE. An artistic form of this emblem has since been incorporated as the logo for the TV network launched by the LTTE in early 2005.*

Modern technology provided by DVDs, audio links, internet and television further consolidate the resonant images associated with the fallen brave among those who are attuned to the cause of Eelam in general and to the Tigers in particular – so that the networks of ‘LTTE Incorporated’ are metaphorically lubricated by tears and pride.

The embellishments associated with the LTTE's commemorative propaganda is permeated powerfully by its own colours, red and yellow (gold), colours that happen to be the favoured hues of Hinduism.



Figure 23

GARLANDED GRAVESTONES AT A *TUYILAM ILLAM*, I.E. “RESTING PLACE” IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT

This image too was located for me by a Tamil friend and I have no details re time and place. The red and gold (yellow) colour schemes for buntings, shades and other décor is conventional for most LTTE rites and assemblies; and carry a warm familiarity and perhaps even a Hindu Saivite religious ambience.



Figure 24

Martyr's Hall at School Site in Batticaloa, November 2004. Courtesy of TamilNet.com

There were pictures of 2500 LTTE dead depicted on the walls. The overwhelming ‘tapestry’ of lights (imitative of arati perhaps) and the equally overwhelming colour scheme of red and gold produce an ambience of Hindu religious dispensations.

This Hindu colouring is further deepened by one of the central themes in the poetry and perorations around the fallen: namely, the metaphor of the dead

as seeds or bodies whose ashes will provide the basis of new life.^{cviii} While this motif is a fundamental aspect of Hinduism, it is also imagery that can appeal to Christians.

At some point around 2000/01 the mobilisation-cum-indoctrination work of the LTTE was augmented further by cultural pageants described as *Pongu Tamil*, translated officially as “resurgent Tamil,” that were conducted on an *ad hoc* basis in various parts of Sri Lanka as well as abroad. *Pongu* (*ponku*) is a highly evocative word in Tamil and refers to a ceremonial pot of rice gruel that signifies “rising up, boiling over, swelling, emergent.”



Figure 25

Pongu Tamil Festival at Geneva, 2003. Courtesy of TamiNet.com via a Tamil friend



Figure 26

PIRAPĀHARAN FLOAT AT PONGU THAMIL PAGEANT HELD AT GENEVA.

Courtesy of TamiNet.com

At *kotai* (festivals) it signals auspiciousness and abundance of fruits.^{cix} Metaphorically it can also mean rising anger.^{cx} In this multivalent manner,

therefore, the pot symbol highlights the image of potency and thus the principle of *sakti* (energy, primordial potency) that is so central to Hinduism.^{cx1}



Figure 27

BODIES THAT FIGHT ON. Courtesy of Vaitheespara Ravindiran

This “memorial tomb” is a specific act of “veneration” for the 398 Tiger fighters who “attained martyrdom” during a 3-day operation directed by Prabhākaran himself and known as “Unceasing Waves” that “liberated the territory of Kilinochchi from the Sri Lankan military that occupied the Tamil homeland.” This cenotaph is located along the A9 road to Jaffna at Kilinochchi, administrative capital of the LTTE and was unveiled on 27 November 2004.. The inscription is in English and the words quoted above are from this representation. Note the embellishment provided by flame-like stalks of the karthigai (glory lily) cradling the fallen māvērar in the manner of a lotus base.

Set within this cultural context, therefore, it is extremely significant that *Māvīrar Nāl*, or Heroes’ Week, has also been referred to as an *elucci nāl*, that is, a “Day of Edification” or “Day of Rising.”^{cxii} *Elucci* (also written as *ezucci*) is another evocative word: it is “the nominalisation of the verbal root ‘elu’, which means rise up, get up, get up out of bed – (a word) that is reflexive, that is, to raise oneself up, to get oneself up, rather than to lift up something else (so that it mars) independence and self-sufficiency.”^{cxiii} It appears to carry a multivalent richness in Tamil-speak – for a dictionary indicates its meanings as “ascent, elevation, staring as in a procession, derivatively song sung at dawn to raise the god, king or VIP from sleep, origin, birth appearance, beginning, oaritis, inflammation of the

ear, effort, activity.”^{cxiv} When this aspect of LTTE symbolism is placed alongside the various Saivite practices around the tombstones and enlivened photographs of the dead,^{cxv} the motifs of renewal and redemption in LTTE conversation and poetry^{cxvi} as well as the imagery of ashes and seed identified earlier, one has a cluster of ideas that enable Tiger and pro-Tiger participants to envision a better life in the hereafter. I speak here of “enabling capacity” in the sense of “conditions of possibility.” The iconography of an imaginative memorial paying homage to the LTTE soldiers who died in re-capturing Kilinochchi (presently the administrative capital of their de facto state) captures this line of thought insofar as it led Vaitheespara Ravindiran to describe it as an evocation of resurrection and encouraged me to label it “Bodies That Fight On”.

Punchline Conclusions

Given such cultural ingredients and themes in the considerable work of indoctrination, propaganda and legitimisation pursued by the LTTE, the facile manner in which Robert Pape and so many other scholars present the LTTE as “secular” seems quite erroneous. It is, furthermore, a measure of Pape’s tunnel-enclosure within the fantastic world of “suicide terrorism” that he attributes the LTTE’s military and political successes overwhelmingly to one factor, suicidal attackers. This is to render a contributory weapon into a major cause, figuratively rendering a mortar into an IBM.

ⁱ This idea is embodied in a new concept coined by the LTTE, namely *uyirāyutam* (also written as *uyirāyutham*), which literally means “life as weapon” (see A. J. V. Chandrakanthan, ‘Eelam Tamil Nationalism: An Inside View’, in A. J. Wilson, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism. Its Origins and Development in the 19th and 20th centuries* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000) p.164; Peter Schalk, ‘Beyond Hindu Festivals: the Celebration of Great Heroes’ Day by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) in Europe’, in Martin Baumann *et al* (eds.) *Tempel und Tamilien in Zweiter Heimat* (Ergon Verlag, 2003, p. 395). As clarified by Chandrakanthan, this concept refers to a person who has presented his/her life as *that-kodai* or self-gift. *That-kodai*, or more correctly *tar-kodai*, seems to be a clever and innovative linking of the word *tan* (self) with *kotai* (*kodai*) meaning “gift.” On this whole issue see especially Schalk, *ibid* as well as his ‘Resistance and Martyrdom in the Process of State Formation of Tamililam’, in Joyce Pettigrew (ed.) *Martyrdom and Political Resistance* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1997) pp.61-84 and ‘The Revival of Martyr Cults among Ilavar’, *Temenos: Studies in Comparative Religion* 33 (1997) pp.151-190, available at <http://www.tamilcanadian.com/cgi-bin/php/page.php?index=307>.

ⁱⁱ The origins of the LTTE are shrouded in mystery, though it is conventionally said that the name was adopted in May 1976 and that young Prabhakaran was its principal architect (M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind. Prabhakaran* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications 2004) pp.34, 36-37. Conclusive details provided by T. Sabaratnam indicate that the LTTE was an offspring of a group called the Tamil New Tigers (led by Chetti Thanabalasingham and/or Pirapāharan) that had been formed around 1972 (see text below & footnote 00).

ⁱⁱⁱ Details from M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Sri Lanka*, (Delhi: Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd. 1994) p.29, my conversations with VIS Jayapalan; and Sabaratnam 2003 *et seq*, chap. 7: 'The Cyanide Suicide'. See Roberts 'Filial Devotion and the Tiger Cult of Suicide', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 30 (1996) pp.252-54 & 261-62 for an earlier account.

^{iv} Narayan Swamy, *Tigers* (note 3) p.29 and Roberts, *Filial Devotion* (note 3) pp.252-54.

^v Roberts, ' "I Shall Have You Slipped": The General and the Particular in an Historical Conjuncture', *Social Analysis* 17 (1985) pp.17-48.

^{vi} The flier depicting Sivakumaran with kingly headress and sword on rearing horse in the manner of Kattabomman was kindly supplied by S. Visahan of the Tamil Information Centre in London (also once a class mate of Sivakumaran's). For the statue, see picture by Raghubir Singh in the *National Geographic*, 1979, p.138. Also see Schalk, 'Historization of the Martial Ideology of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE)', *South Asia* 20/2 (1997) p.61; M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers* (note 3) p.46n4 and M. Roberts, *Filial Devotion* (note 3) p.254. Note that the statue of the old Tamil stalwart, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, was also knocked down by army personnel. Subsequently, statues of ancient, revered Tamil poets as well as Gandhi were also disfigured.

^{vii} Sivakumaran has subsequently been incorporated into the pantheon of *māvīrar*. I have in my possession a poster picture where his photograph sits beside Tilīpan, Annai Pupati, Miller, Kittu and other stars in the LTTE firmament.

^{viii} Schalk, *Resistance* (note 1) p.64, Narayan Swamy, *Elusive* (note 2) pp.109, 201-02. Also see the clarifications provided by Pirapāhran himself and Yogi in 1991 within the BBC documentary enteled "Suicide Killers" presented in their *Inside Story* series.

^{ix} Schalk, *Hindu Festivals* (note 1) p.396. No figures are presented. Note that by November 2006 the figure for LTTE dead was said to be 18,742 (Jeyaraj 2006).

^x Schalk, *Resistance* (note 1) p. 75, translation from *Māvīraarkurippettu* vol.1/10.

^{xi} Information from a former Tiger fighter. I did not seek further details in part because the moment was not opportune, but also because it seemed, for me, such a logical move with great military advantages.

^{xii} Two trucks set out on the Nellyadi mission, but one got bogged down in sand (personal communication from an ex-Tiger fighter of the mid-1980s). Miller is the nom de guerre for Vallipuram Vasanthan and was the son of a bank clerk from the vicinity of Point Pedro.

^{xiii} As contended by Hoffman and McCormick on the basis of interviews with captured LTTE personnel (Bruce Hoffman, & G. H. McCormick, 'Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27 (2004) p.459). The first Hezbollah attack was on the Iraqi embassy in Beirut (27 killed and over 100 wounded) in December 1981, but the two most dramatic affairs were the bombing of the US embassy in Beirut in April and the truck bomb of October 1983 which killed 243 American servicemen.

^{xiv} This is precisely what Robert Pape does. Indeed, in his debate with Bloom and Reuter on the issue of competitive outbidding, the date of Miller's suicide operation is treated as a critical point: "Before the Sri Lankan military began moving into the Tamil homelands of the island in 1987, the Tamil Tigers did not use suicide attacks" (*Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House, 2005, p.+++).

^{xv} Kurt W. Treptow, "The Winter of Despair: Jan Palach and the Collapse of the Prague Spring," in Treptow, *From Zalmoxis to Jan Palach. Studies in East European History*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 1992, pp. 117-36.

^{xvi} See Michael Briggs, 'Dying without Killing: Self-immolations, 1962-2002', in D. Gambetta (ed.) *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).

^{xvii} My partial understandings of this event have been enabled by descriptions from two individuals who were present, Thiru Master and Mrs Pushpa Selvanayagam, whose house is some 200 yards from the site of the fast.

^{xviii} It was Ravindiran Vaitheespara who first brought this facet to my attention through his evaluation of the intense responses among Tamils in Canada in the course of stressing the significance of Thilīpan's act in the history of the LTTE and Tamil struggle.

^{xix} Roberts, 'Saivite Symbolism, Sacrifice and Tamil Tiger Rites', *Social Analysis* 49/1 (2005) pp.67-93 and Roberts, 'Pragmatic Action and Enchanted Worlds: A Black Tiger Rite of Commemoration', *Social Analysis* 50/1 (2006) pp.73-102.

^{xx} Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue* (Princeton University Press, 1997) pp.1-2, 4, 8-11, 62, 231-32. For ancient and medieval south India, see K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), Dennis Hudson, 'Violent and Fanatical Devotion among the Nayanars: A Study in the Periya Purānam of Cekkilār', in A. Hildebeitel (ed.) *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees* (Delhi: Manohar, 1990) pp.373-405, and David D. Shulman, *Tamil Temple Myths. Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Saiva Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), Shulman, 'Bandits and Other Tragic Heroes', in Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth* (Princeton University Press, 1985) pp.340-79 and Shulman, *The Hungry God. Hindu Tales of Filicide and Devotion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

^{xxi} Roberts, *Filial Devotion* (note 3) pp.262-63.

^{xxii} For summary see M. Roberts, 'Tamil Tiger 'Martyrs': Regenerating Divine Potency', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28 (2005) pp. 500-03; but it would be more advantageous to consult the detailed texts that I have relied on, for e. g. M. Tanaka, *Patrons, Devotees and Goddesses. Ritual and Power among the Tamil Fishermen of Sri Lanka* (Kyoto: Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, 1991) and Rohan Bastin, 'Sorcerous Technologies and Religious Innovation in Sri Lanka', *Social Analysis* 46 (2002) pp.155-74 and Rohan Bastin, *The Domain of Constant Excess: Religious Pluralism at the Munnesvaram Temples, Sri Lanka* (New York: Berghahn, 2002). For South India, see D. Mines, *Fierce Gods. Inequality, Ritual and the Politics of Desire in a South Indian Village* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

^{xxiii} Tanaka, *ibid.*, pp.93-94.

^{xxiv} Bastin, *Domain* (note 22) p.68.

^{xxv} Bastin, *Domain* (note 22) pp.198-99. Also see Tanaka, (note 22) p.228.

^{xxvi} Shulman, *Temple Myths* (note 20) pp.90-91 and *Bandits* (note 20) p.343.

^{xxvii} Shulman, *Temple Myths* (note 20) pp. 45-46, 64-65.

^{xxviii} For e.g. Stephen Holmes, 'Al-Qaeda, September 11, 2001', in D. Gambetta (ed.) *Making Sense of Suicide Missions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p.147; Jon Elster, 'Motivations and Beliefs in Suicide Missions', in D. Gambetta (ed.) *Ibid*, p.253; Diego Gambetta, 'Can We Make Sense of Suicide Missions?' in *Ibid*, pp.261-63; and Schalk (note 1) p.68.

^{xxix} This is a common sense point and hardly original, though it is precisely the form of reasoning which is undervalued in Pape's analysis. Cf. "Of importance ... is a cultural frame that recognizes and values the principle of self-sacrifice in the defense of one's community" (Hoffman & McCormick (note 13) p.255).

^{xxx} On receiving the first draft of this article, Donald Horowitz remarked that Pape represents a school of thought in America which believes that culture and history are of little relevance for such contemporary studies (email note, mid 2006).

^{xxxi} Regarding TamilNet and its key editor till recently, Dhamaretnam Sivaram alias Taraki, see Mark Whitaker, 'Tamilnet.com: Some Reflections on Popular Anthropology, Nationalism, and the Internet', *Anthropological Quarterly* 77 (2004) pp.469-98; and Maya Ranganathan, 'Nurturing a Nation on the Net: The Case of Tamil Eelam', *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 8 (2002) pp.51-66. In line with Ranganathan I do not accept Whitaker's characterisation of TamilNet as neutral. It may not be run by the LTTE, but its partialities are clear and what is not said is as significant as the reportage.

^{xxxii} In contrast to Pape, Mia Bloom visited Sri Lanka and spent several months on her researches, even conducting a questionnaire session in the lands controlled directly by the LTTE (Bloom, 'In the Tiger's Belly', <http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/1015.cfm>, inserted in 2003 and Bloom, *Dying to Kill. The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2005) pp.67-68.

^{xxxiii} C. R. De Silva, *Sri Lanka. A History*, 2nd revd. edn. (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1997) p.27. C. R. de Silva's specialist skills do not embrace the ancient period, but he has shown himself to be an impeccable scholar and this must be viewed as a summary of the specialist information available at the time at which his book was drafted.

^{xxxiv} Note what K. M. de Silva, also, like me, no specialist, has to say in his early general history: “By the second century AD Sinhalese was being used for literary purposes... The Sinhalese language was also enriched by translations from Pāli ... [and] Sanskrit ... There was also a considerable Tamil influence on the vocabulary, idiom and grammatical structure of Sinhalese” (*A History of Sri Lanka*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.58).

^{xxxv} Note the implications of the literary review by a non-partisan scholar, Charles Hallisey, ‘Works and Persons in Sinhalese Literary Culture’, in S Pollock (ed.) *Literary Cultures in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) pp.695-96, 707ff & 721ff. The Sigiri graffiti of the seventh to ninth centuries are particularly significant in this regard when they are associated with (a) a key statement, a kind of brief review, in the *Dhampiyā Atuvā Gātapādaya* of the tenth century CE (after taking RALH Gunawardana’s translation -- in his booklet, *Historiography in a Time of Ethnic Conflict. Construction of the Past in Contemporary Lanka*, Colombo: Social Scientists’ Association, 1995, pp.41-42 -- rather than Dharmadasa’s version as my yardstick) and (b) Buddhaghosa’s comment about the language of the people in the fifth century CE. In brief, proto-Sinhala-becoming-Sinhala appears to have been the most widespread speech form for much of the first millennium CE. The recent book by K. Indrapala, namely, *The Evolution of an Ethnic Identity. The Tamils in Sri Lanka. circa 300 BCE to circa 1200 CE* (Sydney: South Asian Studies Centre, 2005) does not undermine this verdict, despite its convolutions.

^{xxxvi} For clarification of the details and the concept of “tributary overlordship,” see Roberts, *Sinhala Consciousness in the Kandyan Period, 1590s-1815* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa, Publications, 2004) chaps. 3, 4 & 5. For the concept “galactic polity,” see S. J. Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) chap 7 and *Buddhism Betrayed?* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992) pp. 173-76.

^{xxxvii} Regarding Colombo’s metropolitan hegemony from the 1850s to the 1970s, see Roberts *et al*, *People Inbetween* (Ratmalana: Sarvodaya Publications, 1989) chap. 6??.

^{xxxviii} Tamil political leaders operating in English in the period 1918 to 1948 generally referred to their people as a “community” – that is, there was no consistent definition of themselves as a “nation.” In contrast there were a few Sinhala ideologues who used the term “nation” in English, while the use of the Sinhala word *jātiya* in both the sense of “nation” and “race” was widespread in Sinhala journalese and pamphleteering. However, the factions espousing Sinhala and Tamil political interests, such as “communal

electorates,” were roundly castigated by the political leaders attached to the concept “Ceylonese.” They were called “communalists” – a pejorative word in the South Asian political lexicon. See Roberts, ‘Nationalisms Today and Yesterday’, in Gerald Peiris and S. W. R. de A. Samarasinghe (eds) *History and Politics. Millennial Perspectives. Essays in Honour of Kingsley de Silva* (Colombo: Law and Society Trust, 1998) pp. 3-44, and Roberts, ‘Stimulants and Ingredients in the Awakening of Latter-day Nationalism’, in Roberts (ed.) *Sri Lanka. Collective Identities Revisited* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1997) pp.267-92.

^{xxxix} A. J. Wilson, *S. J. V. Chelvanayakam and the Crisis of Sri Lanka Tamil Nationalism, 1948-1977* (London: Hurst & Company, 1994) pp.108-09.

^{xi} See Wilson, *Ibid, passim*; ‘The Tamil Federal Party in Ceylon Politics’, *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 4 (1966) pp.117-31; Wilson, *Electoral Politics in an Emergent State. The Ceylon General Elections*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) and Roberts, ‘1970 and Thereabout in Sri Lanka: The Politics of a General Election’, *South Asia* 1 (1978) pp.90-101.

^{xli} This argument is spelt out in Michael Roberts, ‘Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Sinhalese Perspectives: Barriers to Accommodation’, *Modern Asian Studies* 12 (1978) pp.353-76. But also see Wilson, *Electoral Politics* (note 40); L. Sabaratnam, *Ethnic Attachments in Sri Lanka: Social Change and Cultural Continuity* (London: Palgrave, 2001) p.197 and B. O’Duffy, ‘LTTE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Majoritarianism, Self-Determination, and Military-to-Political Transition in Sri Lanka’, in 2007) pp. 258-59.

^{xlii} Information from Neville Jayaweera (ex-CCS), my personal grapevine knowledge as well as Vijaya Samaraweera, ‘The Role of the Bureaucracy’, *Ceylon Journal of Historical & Social Studies* n.s. 4 (1974) pp. 37-40.

^{xliii} This issue is too complex to summarise in a few words. The Tamil grievances are premised on the idea that the boundaries of the Eastern Province established by the British in the nineteenth century were their ‘traditional homelands,’ when in fact their settlements in the early twentieth century were for the most part confined to the littoral stretches – the hinterlands being sparsely peopled and for the most part Sinhala except in the southern reaches of the Eastern Province where the majority were Muslim Moors. See G. H. Peiris, ‘An appraisal of the concept of a traditional homeland’, *Ethnic Studies Report* 9 (1991) pp.13-39 and ‘Irrigation, land distribution and ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka: an evaluation of criticisms with special reference to the Mahaveli programme’, *Ethnic Studies Report* 12 (1994) pp.43-88. Cf. Roberts, ‘Narrating Tamil

Nationalism: Subjectivities and Issues', *South Asia* 28 (2004) pp. 102-08 and L. Sabaratnam (note 41) pp.196, 206-07.

^{xliv} C. R. de Silva, 'The Impact of Nationalism on Education: The Schools Takeover (1961) and the University Admissions Crisis, 1970-75', in M Roberts (ed.) *Collective Identities, Nationalisms, and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1979) pp.474-99.

^{xliv} This is a bald summary. As such it is hardly comprehensive. It does not engage the degree to which Tamil politicians may have contributed to the widening gulf through extremist actions and outrageous demands. For one example of virulence, see Neville Jayaweera, "Some Memories of My Years in Jaffna, Part I," *Ceylankan*, Nov. 2006, No. 36, p. 4. This is not the place to pursue such gaps in our historical knowledge.

^{xlvi} T. Sabaratnam, Pirapāharan, chap. 6: 'Birth of the New Tigers' in <http://www.sangam.org/> and last two names from D. Sivaram (interview 26 October 2004). Chetti turned police informant in the mid-1970s and was killed by Kuttimani and Pirapāharan while visiting a liquor shop (information from Varadakumar of the TIC, London).

^{xlvii} Hoffman & McCormick, (note 13) pp.257-58. For confirmation, see T Sabaratnam *ibid.* chap. MM ++

^{xlvi} Sabaratnam, 2003 *et seq*, ol II, chap. 12-14. Chelvanayakam, or 'Thanthai Chelva' as he was reverentially known, died on 27 April 1977 and Amirthalingam became the leader of the TULF. In 1981 the LTTE had a dual leadership structure with Uma Maheswaran (of Vellalar caste) as political chief and Pirapāharan as military chief. Both opposed the TULF policy. Later the two fell out – virulently to the point of gunfights at 'Chennai coral'.

^{xliv} Personal communications from S. Sivadasan (a retired senior Tamil administrator) and K. Sivathamby during interviews in August 2005.

¹ Mahattayā (1956-1994) was also from the Karaiyar caste, but from a much poorer family than Pirapāharan, though there is a suggestion that they were cousins (Wikipedia; see below). Grapevine information indicates that his cartographical sense was a significant asset in the guerilla stage of the LTTE insurgency. In the 1990s there was a falling out between the two leaders. LTTE propaganda alleges that he became too close to RAW, the Indian version of CIA; but there is also a theory that he "was suspected of setting himself as a rival to the LTTE founder" (from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahattaya>, accessed 5 Dec. 2006).

^{li} Personal communication from S. Rajanayagam, Adelaide, 7 January 2004.

^{lii} TELO = Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation; EPRLF = Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front; PLOTE = Peoples' Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam; EROS = Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students. The two forces with some elements of Marxism were EROS and EPRLF, the latter strongest in areas where the old Ceylon Communist Party had support among Tamils and thus containing more menial caste members than other groups in the early-mid 1980s (from DBS Jeyaraj's seminar at ICES in 1986). For a list of most of the groups that existed/emerged around the 1980s and brief histories, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_militant.

^{liii} For a long list, trawl through various sources: T. S. Subramaniam, 'Chronicle of Murders,' *Frontline*, 16/17, Aug. 14-29 1999; IPCS at <http://www.ipcs.org/> and UTHR at <http://www.uthr.org>; as well as the web site put out by the Sinhala extremist group SPUR at <http://www.spur.asn.au/ltteatro.htm>.

^{liv} The Malaiyaha Tamils refer to those who are also categorized as "Indian Tamils" and "Plantation Tamils," that is, more recent migrants dating back to the nineteenth century. These migrants came mostly as plantation workers and menial labourers working especially in Colombo, but then dispersed all over the island. Concentrated especially in the Central Highland regions within the Sinhala heartland their location renders their politics more circumspect, though grapevine information suggests that they sympathize strongly with their Tamil brethren and the LTTE. In recent census it has been increasingly difficult for enumerators to differentiate between the two categories (information from Gerald Peiris).

^{lv} The approximate number of Tamils (both SLT and IT) within for the NP and EP in 2001 was 1,445,000. This should be set against the total of 1,463,000 Tamils outside these regions. This means that perhaps 45% of the Sri Lanka Tamil people live outside the NP and EP. Figures from the Census of 1981 and personal communications from Gerald Peiris (July 2006) who had access to the unpublished version of the partial 2001 census as well as previous studies by university ventures, inclusive of the University of Jaffna.

^{lvi} I took Colombo MC, Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia, Kotte, Kolonnawa and Wattala-Mabole to constitute "Greater Colombo" and excluded Moratuwa. My computations are based on figures supplied by Peiris (email, July 2006). For background information on several issues pertaining to the present situation, see G. H. Peiris, 2006 *Sri Lanka. The Challenges of the New Millennium*, Kandy: Creative Printers.

^{lvii} For critical information on this issue, see the articles by G. H. Peiris (note 43).

^{lviii} That this policy is widely accepted and even praised by many ordinary Tamil people, educated and less educated alike, is not in question (D. Hellman-Rajanayagam, 1994 *The Tamil Tigers. Armed Struggle for Identity*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994) pp. 136, 144; Roberts, *Tiger Martyrs* (fn. 22) pp.494-96; and Pape, *Dying* (note 14) pp.142, 145.

^{lix} Pape, *Dying* (note 14) p.146. Pape adheres to this position despite his insistence that the LTTE is “explicitly antireligious” (*Ibid.*, pp.16 & 149). He confronts this seeming contradiction directly by resorting to an instrumentalist interpretation: it is “all the more important to recognize how much even this secular group depends on religious notions of martyrdom to mobilize public support for suicide operations” (*Ibid.*, p.9).

^{lx} Pape, *Dying* (note 14) p.140, emphasis mine.

^{lxi} Note Pape’s footnote 44 (p.302) where he speaks of “Tamil fears of cultural transformation” and cites Pfaffenberger’s articles as the authority for this conclusion. Pape’s reading of the changes in the institutional domination of the pilgrimage site at Kataragama and his generalization from a highly specific case presented by Bryan Pfaffenberger (‘The Cultural Dimensions of Tamil Separatism’, *Asian Survey* 21 (1981) pp.1145-47 and ‘The Kataragama Pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist Interaction and Its Significance in Sri Lanka’s Polyethnic Social System’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 38 (1979) pp. 253-80) is a serious misinterpretation of the religious pluralism and complex forms of encompassment and coexistence in Asia – a typical error for the either/or reasoning that underpins Western understandings of religion.

^{lxii} Note A. J. Wilson, *Chelvanayakam* (note 39) p.123 and Gunatilleke, *Negotiations for the Resolution of the Ethnic Conflict* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 2001) p.17-18.

^{lxiii} In the last decade or so sporadic attacks have been launched on Christian churches, generally Pentecostal, but also Catholic, in the Sinhala-majority areas; and state agencies have been lethargic in their counter measures and investigations. This is partly an intra-Sinhalese issue, but is significant in revealing virulent threads of Buddhist intolerance.

^{lxiv} Personal observations as well as literature that is summarised in Roberts, *Tamil Tiger Martyrs* (note 22) pp.500-04. See R. Gombrich & G. Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed. Religious Change in Sri Lanka*

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), Tanaka, *Patrons* (note 22) and Bastin, *Domain* (note 22) for specific illustrations.

^{lxv} Bastin, *Domain* (note 12); Gananath Obeyesekere, 'The Fire-walkers of Kataragama: The Rise of *Bhakti* Religiosity in Buddhist Sri Lanka', *Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (1978) pp.457-76 and 'Popular Religions', in Tissa Fernando and R N Kearney (eds.) *Modern Sri Lanka: A Society in Transition* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, (1979) pp.201-26; R. L. Stirrat, *Power and Religiosity in a Post-colonial Setting. Sinhala Catholics in Contemporary Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and B. Pfaffenberger, *Kataragama Pilgrimage* (note 61). Through political manouevres Buddhist authorities secured symbolic primacy and institutional control at Kataragama. It appears that Pfaffenberger's description of this process led Pape to assume that the total exclusion of Hindu establishments had been effected (when, in fact, the deities of the Hindu *kovil* are the chief site of supplication for people of all faiths).

^{lxvi} Roberts, *Tamil Tiger Martyrs* (note 22) pp.494-95.

^{lxvii} There also were significant numbers of Muslims (28,885 or 27.1 percent) and a small minority of Buddhists (3.2 percent, virtually all Sinhalese) in Mannar District in 1981 (Census of Population and Housing, 1981, p. 27). These figures are no longer valid.

^{lxviii} These include Frs. Emmanuel, Kili, Bernard, and Chandrakanthan. Among the several speakers at the opening ceremony for a media-college near Kilinochchi held on 26 November 2004 was a Catholic priest. The keynote speaker was Thamil Chelvam. Sivaram and Thiru Master were among the other speakers (my observations).

^{lxix} Sri Kantha, E-mail to Robert Pape, 24 July 2004, in Sachi Sri Kantha, 'On Educating Professor Robert Pape of the University of Chicago,' www.sangam.org representing the Ilankai Tamil Sangam, namely, the Association of Tamils of Sri Lanka in USA. Here Sri Kantha has computed the identities from the names listed in LTTE's *Sooriya Puthalvargal 2003 Souvenir*. Also see fn. 75 below.

^{lxx} Note that there were a few Muslims too in the LTTE cadre in the early days of their struggle. But as the Eastern Province became a significant part of the political equations of the island, the sharp enmity between Tamil and Muslim in that province and a fear that they would serve as a fifth column seems to have moved the LTTE in October 1990 to declare Muslims in the Northern Province to be *persona non grata*. This cruel act of eviction at short notice also involved some appropriation of valued goods (S. H.

Hasbullah, *Muslim Refugees. The Forgotten People in Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict* Colombo: Unie Arts for RAAF, 2001).

^{lxxi} For instance J. Uyangoda, *Questions of Sri Lanka's Minority Rights* (Colombo: Uni Arts for ICES, 2001) and magazine articles in the quarterly issues of *Pravāda*, and subsequently its continuation as *Polity*, especially Uyangoda's article in *Polity* 3/3 (April 2006) pp.4-6. Also see Godfrey Gunatilleke (note 62) p.27.

^{lxxii} Information from K. Sivathamby and a Tamil administrator friend who was the father's boss at one point of time.

^{lxxiii} This segment is partly based on my knowledge of beach seine fishing, Tanaka (note 22), email note sent by Timmo Gaasbeek who has married locally in the EP as well as a note about the migrant landlords in B. O'Duffy (note 41) p.268.

^{lxxiv} The Civiyār were traditionally associated with palanquin bearing. Ariyalai and Kalliyankādu are among their central localities. In the 20th century they had a major interest in the pharmaceutical trade and many entered the professions, while Sittampalam was a MP and a Minister in the first cabinet under D. S. Senanayake in the 1940s/50s (information from S. Kasynathan).

^{lxxv} In his 'The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism,' *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003) p.343, Pape refers to the Tigers having "elements of Marxist Leninism." He is even more forthright in his newspaper article in the *New York Times* reproduced in full by Satchi Sri Kantha (note 75 below). The LTTE has certainly proclaimed its desire to establish a "socialist state," but that is, of course, not the same as Marxism of a Leninist kind. Indeed, Narayan Swamy emphasises that Pirapāharan has shown "near total disinterest in Marxist politics and ideology" (Tigers (note 3) p.51).

^{lxxvi} Email note from Sri Kantha to Pape, 27 June 2006: 'Dear Bob Pape, ... You have taken a little bit of poetic license in tagging the LTTE as a 'Marxist group', right? Where did you find a recent reference to the LTTE as a "Marxist group"?'

The letter from this Tamil medical doctor was impelled by considerable irritation that Pape had given an interview for publication in the *American Conservative*, 18 July 2005, where he had carefully avoided reference to data supplied previously – in mid-2004 -- by Sri Kantha: 'In 2004, for your query, I provided information that LTTE suicide cadres come from both Hindu and Christian families, right? Why did you fail to mention the 'Christian families'? Is it because, this would offend the sentiments of the

American Conservative readership?” See Sri Kantha, ‘On Educating Professor Robert Pape of the University of Chicago,’ www.sangam.org representing the Ilankai Tamil Sangam, namely, the Association of Tamils of Sri Lanka in USA.

^{lxxvii} Information from a young Tamil student who lived in the Jaffna Peninsula in the 1980s and 1990s as well as S. Kasynathan of Melbourne.

^{lxxviii} D. Hellmann-Rajanyagam, ‘The Jaffna Social System: Continuity and Change under Conditions of War’, *Internationales Asien Forum* 24 (1993) p.274 and O’Duffy (fn. 41) p.268.

^{lxxix} Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) pp.50ff, 108-12, 126-35, 139-42, 152 and ‘Islam and Al Qaeda’, Ami Pedhazur (ed.) *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism. The Globalization of Martyrdom* (New York: Routledge, 2006) pp.122-31. Also stressed by Scott Atran, ‘Genesis of Suicide Terrorism’, *Science* 299/56 (March 2003).

^{lxxx} Pirapāharan himself married an “island Vellalar” lady, while Kittu (Krishnakumar Sathasivam) married a Catholic medical student from Mirusuvil whose background was solid middle class and was increasingly drawn into its religious practices (sources: two different Tamil informants). From the context I inferred that “island Vellalar” was deemed to be lower in status in comparison with the Vellalar of the Jaffna Peninsula.

^{lxxxii} See Adele Ann [Balasingham], *Women Fighters of Liberation Tigers* (Jaffna: LTTE, 1993) and *The Will to Freedom: An Inside View of Tamil Resistance* (Mitcham: Fairmax, 2001).

^{lxxxiii} Interview with Sita (code name), an ex-fighter who lost a leg in late 1990 (in London, 3 March 2007).

^{lxxxiv} See ABC broadcast: ‘Sri Lanka. The Truth Tigers’, 15/ 5/ 2002, abstract on <http://www.abc.net.au/foreign/stories/s553001.html>. Also see ‘Gajaani: ‘The Tiger’s fighter journalist – “My dream is Tamil Eelam”,’ in <http://www.tamilnation.org/tamileelam/gajani.htm>.

^{lxxxv} Neloufer de Mel, ‘Agent or Victim? The Sri Lankan Woman Militant in the Interegnum’, in M. Roberts (ed.) *Sri Lanka. Collective Identities Revisited* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1998) p.200.

^{lxxxvi} *Ibid.*, pp.208-11. The Tamil text is the *Catakantarāvanan Katai* as interpreted by David Shulman, *Bandits*, (note 20).

^{lxxxvi} Pape, *Strategic Logic* (note 72) pp.351-52.

^{lxxxvii} See Elster (note 28) pp. 248-49 and Gambetta (note 28) pp.261-63. Moghadam, however, has questioned these figures both for the LTTE and in broader terms (Assaf Moghadam, 'Suicide Terrorism, Occupation, and the Globalization of Martyrdom: A Critique of *Dying to Win*', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (2006) pp.708-09, 713).

^{lxxxviii} The IPKF deployed substantial manpower, estimated at around 115,000 personnel in the three services, excluding policemen, by Jane's Sentinel, Security Assessment – South Asia (Coulsdon, Surrey UK, Issue Ten, 2002) pp.481-492 – figures supplied by G.H. Peiris). This is double the proportion that the Colombo-centred government is conventionally said to have in place in the north and east.

^{lxxxix} Premadasa's government even supplied arms to the LTTE. As the IPKF left, the LTTE proceeded to eliminate the other militant Tamil groups who opposed them and/or had worked within the IPKF umbrella. Having seen to these elements in the first half of 1990, circa June 1990 they simultaneously surrounded the police stations maintained by the state. Some 900 policemen then surrendered on orders from Colombo. About 650 of these men, the Muslims and Sinhalese, were then killed --- the Tamils being spared and even recruited into LTTE service. On the 1989/90 negotiations, see especially articles by Chandrakanthan and Jayetilleke in Rupesinghe, 2006, vol. 1.

^{xc} Vijaya Kumaratunga, a matinee idol turned politician, was for political compromise and visited the LTTE-held territory in 1986(?). He was assassinated on 16 February 1988 by an indigenist extreme Sinhala insurgent group – either because he posed an alternative opposition voice, or because of such overtures to the Tamils, or perhaps for both reasons. Chandrika Kumaratunga was at one with her husband on this issue.

^{xci} When the helicopter bearing the government's peace negotiators touched down in the Jaffna Peninsula in early 1995, it was greeted rapturously by the crowd assembled at that point. Moreover, Chandrika Kumaratunga became something like a pop-idol or miraculous deity among the Tamil people of the Jaffna Peninsula for a short while. Daya Somasundaram even referred to the milieu as "Chandrika mania" (personal communication). This reaction disconcerted the LTTE leadership quite noticeably (grapevine information from Tamils in the north at that time – whose names cannot be conveyed).

^{xcii} The literature on the various peace negotiations is enormous. See Gunatilleke (note 70) and the various essays in Kumar Rupesinghe (ed.) *Negotiating peace in Sri Lanka*, 2 vols. (Colombo: Foundation for Coexistence, 2005) for further details. For a good summary review of the whole conflict, see O'Duffy (note 41).

^{xciii} Stephen Hopgood, 'Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002', in D. Gambetta (ed.) *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp.67-68 & 44.

^{xciv} *Ibid*, p. 55.

^{xcv} The capable leaders who were assassinated by suicide bombers *include* President Premadasa, Gamini Dissanayake, ex-General Lucky Algama, General Parami Kulatunge and Admiral Clancy Fernando. Ranjan Wijeratne was killed by a roadside bomb, Lakshman Kadirgamar by a sniper. Tamil moderates who represented an alternative voice were also eliminated by various means: Amirthalingam & Yogeswaran in a no-escape shooting, Neelan Tiruchelvam by suicide bomber. This is just the tip of an iceberg: the web references in note 53 provide fuller lists.

^{xcvi} The phrase "hurting stalemate" is deployed by O'Duffy (note 41, p.275) but is evidently derived from elsewhere. Note, however, that the LTTE is still outmuscled in number of fighting personnel and is subject to the state's command of the air.

^{xcvii} Assaf Moghadam, 'The Roots of Suicide Terrorism: A Multi-Causal Approach', in Ami Pedhazur (ed.) *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism* (2006) pp.85-86. Also argued by Atran (note 78).

^{xcviii} I have been assisted here by personal communications from Jagath Senaratne and a Tamil friend.

^{xcix} See Shanaka Jayasekara, 'Air capabilities of global terror groups and non-formal states', *Daily Mirror*, May 2005. Also see B. Raman, 'The World's First Terrorist Air Force', *Observer Research Forum*, June 2005 (sent to me by Victor Melder). For a sober evaluation of the recent air raid, see G. H. Peiris, 'An Aerial Bombardment: Impulses and Implications', *South Asia Intelligence Review* Vol. 5, No. 38, 2 April 2007.

^c Anthony Davis, 'Tiger International. How a Secret Global Network keeps Sri Lankan Tamil Guerilla Organization Up and Killing', *Asia Week* (July 1996) p.31.

^{ci} G. H. Peiris, 'Secessionist War and Terrorism in Sri Lanka: Transnational Impulse', in KPS Gill & Ajai Sahni (eds.) *The Global Threat of Terror. Ideological, Material & Political Linkages* (Delhi: Roli Books, Bulwark Books & Institute for Conflict Management, 2002) p.115. Also O'Duffy (note 41) p. 272.

^{cii} Verdery 1999: 107-26 and Roberts 2007a.

^{ciii} Information from various Tamil friends as well as Sayilakumari Visahan nee Kanagasabapathy, sister of Radha, an LTTE commander, who died in May 1987. I have also been shown (at the home of a pro-LTTE well-wisher) a video of Victor's body being paraded in a utility van in the northern regions in late 1986.

^{civ} Jeyaraj 2006. Jeyaraj notes that this first celebration was "a restricted affair [where] the highlight was a highly emotional address delivered extemporaneously by Prabakharan to his enraptured followers."

^{cv} For elaboration of the context and implications of this change, see Roberts, *Pragmatic Action*, 2006: 84-86 and 2007c.

^{cvi} Natali 2005 and www.TamilNet.com, 27 Nov. 1998.

^{cvii} Roberts 2005: 81-82 and information conveyed by Joe Ariyaratnam, a journalist who has been residing in Jaffna during the past decade.

^{cviii} Mines 2005: 31, Shulman 1980: 45-46, 64-65, 105 and, for evidence of the ash and seed metaphor in poetry, Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2005: 124, 141.

^{cix} Mines 2005; chap. X is especially pertinent here. Note: raw substances are used in the cooking process and thus, "*ponkal* cooking is an evocative metonym for reproduction and increase in general and for [festivals] in particular," while "symbolizing the human capacity to convert death into life-sustaining growth with the help of gods and the ancestors" (Mines 2005: 151-52)].

^{cx} I am indebted to my old friend, S. V Kasynathan of Point Pedro and Melbourne, for this clarification.

^{cxii} *Sakti* can be regarded as an ecumenical idea that permeates all the major religions in southern Asia, including the Christian persuasions. Its significance in LTTE activities is elaborated upon in all my articles in different, albeit overlapping, ways: see Roberts 2005a & b, 2006, 2007a, b & c.

^{cxii} Schalk 2003: 404. He adds: “what exactly rises? One supporter told me that a (collective) *amma* ‘soul’ of the members of the movement rises. His view is not sanctioned by the LTTE, but it is not rejected either.”

^{cxiii} Email note from Rick Weiss in Auckland, 20 Feb. 2007.

^{cxiv} Information conveyed by S. V. Kasynathan (email notes, 20 Feb. 2007) using the Madras University Lexicon (1982 edn.) and adding his own elaborations. Note the semantic overlap with the concepts *pongu* and *ponkal*.

^{cxv} For the Saivite character of some familial rites, see the Catholic priest Chandrakanthan’s affirmation in 2000: 164-65. By “enlivened photographs,” I refer to framed pictures of a *māvīrar* on a wall before which a lamp may be lit on special occasions, or kept lit permanently, so that the picture takes on the character of a religious icon where the divine character is regarded as immanent within its form and brought into being by the reverence of bodily deportment and sentiment.

^{cxvi} Trawick 1997: 155, 180 and Hellmann-Rajanayagam 2005: 133, 140-41, 145.