

Voice of Shakthi Thursday 03 August 2000

Although [Sri Lanka](#) is home to many cultures, it's majority community has always been Sinhala Buddhists. Ever since we gained independence from Britain and right upto the present day, it is the Sinhala Buddhist community which has held, and continues to hold, the reins of power in Sri Lanka. Whether they came from the UNP or SLFP or other alliances, this has been the reality despite quite substantial minority [party](#) representation in recent times.

Today, that Sinhala Buddhist [leadership](#) has come in for severe criticism by the latest group which has come forward to save our motherland, the ultra-nationalist Sihala Urumaya party.

Conceived by groups such as Veera Vidhana and the National Movement Against Terrorism, which advocate a military solution to the ethnic conflict, its views are freely propagated these days over the Sinhala media in [Melbourne](#). Regular commentaries by bold, fearless Sihala Urumaya leaders such as Champika Ranawake and S L Gunasekera assail our ears on a regular basis.

Their constant refrain has been the plight the Sinhala Buddhists in Sri Lanka has been plunged into by the Sinhala Buddhist leadership of the country over the past fifty years or so. In their hunger for power, these leaders have sacrificed the rights of the Sinhala and Buddhist people, Sihala Urumaya says.

This leadership, according to Sihala Urumaya, has betrayed the majority community. From

D S Senanayake to Chandrika Kumaranatunge then, if we go by their argument, our motherland has been led by traitors to the Sinhala Buddhist cause.

In the Shakthi editorial today, we ask all balanced, moderate Sri Lankans to ponder these issues and reach your own conclusions.

Are we to conclude then that the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 and the 1970 Constitution which made Buddhism the state [religion](#) were all part of this betrayl of the Sinhala Buddhists leadership?.

Is it true that the minority communities in Sri Lanka have never suffered any injustice or discrimination, as Sihala Urumaya says?

The Sinhala Buddhist leadership which they criticise, according to the Sihala Urumaya, have even ensured that these minority communities enjoy more privileges than the majority community. How true is this?

Finally and ironically, the Sihala Urumaya claims that Sinhala, Tamil, Burgher, Muslim and all other communities are flocking to their cause both in Sri Lanka and in countries like Australia. Their cause, if we are to make sense of their

argument, is to help the Sinhala Buddhist people regain the rights that has been lost by the Sinhala Buddhist leadership of the past fifty years.

As they seek to propagate this narrow, one-eyed, nationalistic view, are we permitted to ask, do these people expect us to take them seriously or, are they completely off the planet?