

## Voice of Shakthi Thursday 20 July 2000

It is no exaggeration to say that the Sinhala and Tamil communities in [Melbourne](#) are estranged today. The reason for this is the mutual distrust and hostility created by the ethnic problem in [Sri Lanka](#). It is no secret that Sinhala and Tamil extremist organizations have actively contributed to this rift. On the one hand, we have the Tamil organizations goading the Tamils into accepting Prabhakaran as their supreme leader while on the other hand we have the Sinhala organizations trying to create anti-Tamil sentiments behind a facade of anti-terrorism. However, until now, there was a major difference between Tamil and Sinhala extremists. This was the absence of intense intimidation within the Sinhala community to toe the line of their self-styled community leaders. The reason for this was the lack of a strong, attractive slogan to rally people around and the existence of pockets of organized resistance.

We believe that this situation may change in the coming months. Moves are afoot to establish branches of fascist Sinhala organizations in Melbourne. These organizations are armed with attractive slogans that appeal to the emotions and moods rather than the intellect. The war they claim can be won if fought properly, and if the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka and abroad cultivate a war mentality. The dangerous thing however, is that these warmongers are willing to create that war mentality by themselves. How do they do this? Through intimidation of [course](#)! They have already started doing this in Sri Lanka. Various professional and educational establishments in Sri Lanka have already experienced their intimidatory tactics which amounts to harassing in various ways people who do not agree with them, branding them traitors and making their social and private lives miserable until they comply. Many have already succumbed and many more will. Such is the power of fascism.

The Sinhala community in Melbourne, too, we fear, is about to experience the effects of these tactics. With the establishment of the new organizations we will experience a rise in attempts by chauvinistic elements to intimidate Sinhala people into active participation in their activities or into tacit compliance. No community activity will be possible without their approval and community life will revolve around activities organized by them. This is already happening in the Sinhala community. Every community event now has to divert at least a part of its profits to the war effort whether you like it or not. If not they will be branded traitors and community life will be made a nightmare for them. This is not much difference from what is happening in the Tamil community now. Everything in that community revolves around promoting the LTTE. No refusal is countenanced. No hesitation tolerated.

We appeal to our listeners to ask themselves whether we should allow this to happen. Opposing the LTTE's extremism does not mean adopting it [wholesale](#) and supporting organisations, which are the mirror image of the LTTE. Like the pro-LTTE groups, the Sinhala extremists too have the freedom to air their views. But please don't let them take away the right to air yours.

