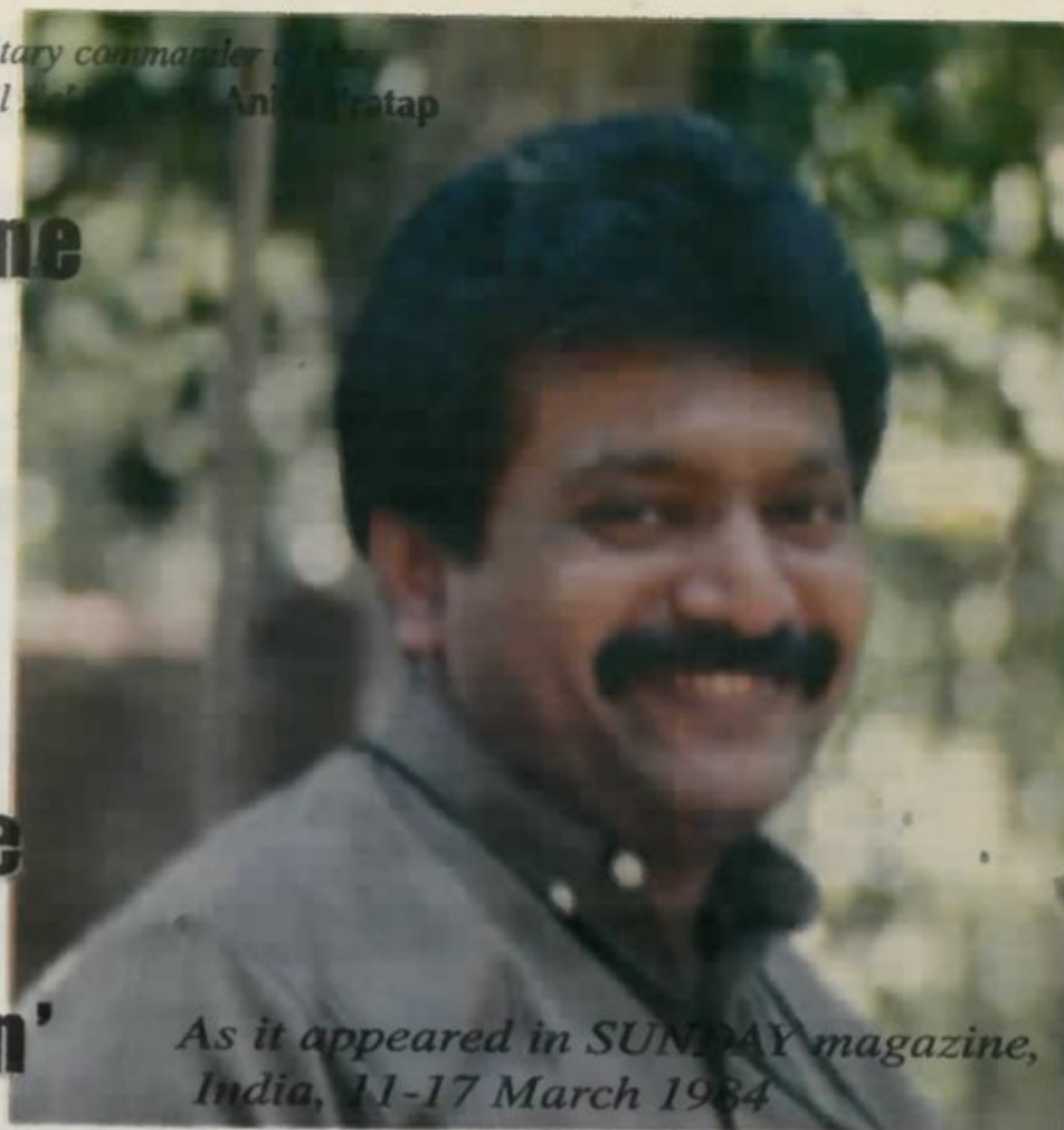


V.Pirabhakaran, military commander of the  
Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, Anuradhapuram

**'If Jayewardene  
was a true  
Buddhist,  
I would not be  
carrying a gun'**



*As it appeared in SUNDAY magazine,  
India, 11-17 March 1984*

V.Pirabhakaran [30] is the chairman, central committee and military commander of the Liberation Tiger for Tamil Eelam [LTTE], an underground organisation founded in 1972 and outlawed by the Sri Lankan government in 1978. As the most wanted man in Sri Lanka today, Pirabhakaran carries a reward of over one million Sri Lankan rupees on his head. He is gentle and kind but as one who heads the most powerful liberation movement in Sri Lanka, he is ruthless and determined in his mission to free The Tamils of his country from the oppression of the Sinhalese.

□ □ □

**Q:** What made you opt out of a conventional system and spearhead a liberation movement which you knew would be outlawed.

**A:** The democratic parliamentary system, or what you refer to as the



### **Flashback 1984 !**

conventional political system in Sri Lanka, has always tried to impose the will of the majority on the minority. This system not only failed to solve the basic problems of our people but, in fact, aggravated our plight. For decades, the repression by the state has made the life of our people miserable. The non-violent democratic

struggles of our people were met with military repression. Our just demands were totally ignored, and the oppression continued on such a scale as to threaten the very survival of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was these circumstances which led me to form our liberation movement. I felt that an armed struggle was the only alternative left to our people, not only to ensure our survival, but ultimately to free ourselves from the Sinhala oppression. I have always been aware that our movement would be outlawed. It is for this reason that we organised our movement as a clandestine underground structure from its inception.

**Q:** Could you elaborate on some of your personal experiences that compelled you to believe that an armed struggle was the only solution for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Were you, your family members and friends, directly victimised by the discriminatory policy of the Sri Lankan government?