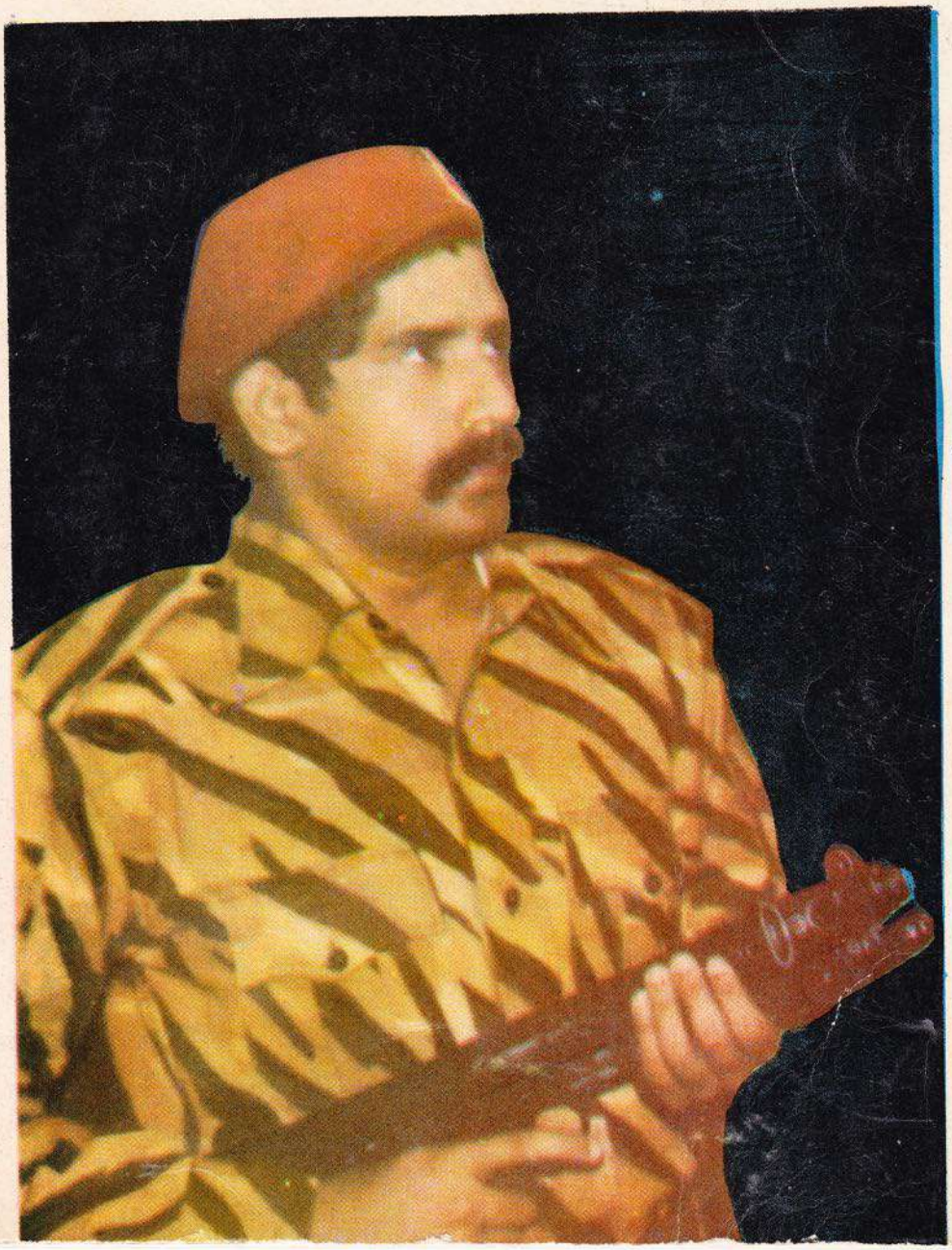
LIBERATION TIGERS
AND
TAMIL EELAM FREEDOM STRUGGLE



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This political work is dedicated to Lieutenant Lucas Charles Antony (alias Aseer, Seelan), one of the leading military commanders of the Liberation Tigers, who attained martydom on the 15th July 1983 in a combat with the Sinhala military forces. Lieutenant Aseer was a heroic fighter, a brilliant tactician and had commanded several successful guerrilla raids. He hails from Trincomalee. His commitment and dedication to the cause of Tamil Eelam freedom struggle will ever remain in the heart of our people. His photograph in combat uniform illustrates the cover of this book.

LIBERATION TIGERS
AND
TAMIL EELAM FREEDOM STRUGGLE

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POLITICAL COMMITTEE

LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

National Liberation struggles are being fought on several fronts of the world today. Oppressed peoples and nations are waging a determined struggle against imperialism, against neo-colonialism, against zionism, against racism and many other forms of oppression. Each of these revolutionary struggles has its own historical specificity, its own concrete conjunctural situations, which determine the strategy and tactics of each of these liberation struggles. Within the specificity and particularity of these struggles lies the universal historical principle of the socialist revolutionary doctrine—that it is the oppressed masses who are the potential revolutionary force, the historical force and that it is the oppressed who create history and change the world. Within the context of this historical law of social development and transformation, the Marxist-Leninist theoretical and political framework recognises that the national liberation struggle of any oppressed nation is progressive in essence and has revolutionary potential if it is articulated in the sphere of democratic struggle and proletarian revolution. The right of nations to self-determination, in Lenin's formulation, is a realistic, revolutionary theory which upholds the universal socialist principle of the fundamental right of a nation to secede and form a state of its own, a principle aimed to protect a small nation from the oppression generating from the national chauvinism of a big nation, a principle designed to preserve a nation's cultural and ethnic identity, a principle if adhered to truly and fairly, can only create the necessary conditions for proletarian internationalism.

The Tamil national question in Sri Lanka is being fought on the basis of that nation's right to self-determination. For the last thirty-five years the nation of **Tamil Eelam** has been subjected to severe oppression. It took the form of a violent oppression perpetrated against a small nation by the national chauvinism of a big nation, the Sinhala nation, the ruling elites of which pursued a disastrous policy aimed at destroying the ethnic identity of the Tamil speaking people and threatened their very survival. For nearly a quarter of a century Tamil parliamentary political parties launched non-violent campaigns of Satyagraha seeking the restoration of basic human rights. Yet the civilized political demands of the Tamils were met with a savage form of military repression, the promises given to them never fulfilled, and the agreements and pacts became dead letters. The national friction between the two nations finally emerged as a major contradiction leading to the demand for secession by the oppressed.

To the world community, the Sri Lankan ruling class portrays the country as a tranquil island, cherishing the Buddhist ideals of peace and Dharma and adhering to a harmless political doctrine of non-alignment. Paradoxically behind this political facade lies the factual reality, the reality of national oppression, of the blatant violation of basic human rights, of racial crimes, of police and military violence, of attempted genocide.

Master-minding the worst form of capitalist exploitative machinery under the slogans of democracy and socialism, the Sinhala ruling class since independence had always reinforced their political power with an abominable ideology of national chauvinism and religious fanaticism. By utilizing such ideological apparatus and by actually practising a calculated policy of genocidal oppression the ruling bourgeoisie has been able to maintain its domination over the proletariat of the oppressor nation and prevented the class unity between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Yet on the other hand, Sinhala chauvinism and its violent manifestations have helped the polarisation of the heterogenous masses of the oppressed Tamil nation, with different class elements and castes towards a determined revolutionary struggle for political independence.

The struggle for national freedom having failed in its democratic popular agitations, having exhausted its moral power to mobilise the masses for peaceful campaigns, gave rise to the emergence of armed resistance movement in Tamil Eelam in the early seventies. Armed resistance as a mode of popular struggle arose when our people were presented with no alternative other than to resort to revolutionary resistance to defend themselves against a savage form of state terrorism. The armed struggle, therefore is the historical product of intolerable national oppression; it is an extension, continuation and advancement of the political struggle of our oppressed people. Our liberation movement which spearheads the revolutionary armed struggle in Tamil Eelam is the vanguard of the national struggle. The armed struggle of our liberation movement is sustained and supported by wildersections of the Tamil masses, since our revolutionary political project expresses the profound aspirations of our people to gain political independence from the autocratic dom nation and repression of the Sri Lankan state. To achieve the revolutionary tasks of national emancipation and socialist revolution, our project aims at the extension and transformation of our protracted guerrilla warfare into a people's war of national liberation.

This political document attempts to introduce the national liberation struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam to the progressive world. It also documents the historical genesis of our revolutionary liberation organisation; it briefly specifies our theoretical perspective, political programme of action and military strategies. The first part of this work sketches a brief history of our nation and outlines the multiple dimensions of the racist oppression aimed at the structural destruction of our national foundations. The second part of the document details the non-violent political struggles of the Tamil bourgeois parliamentary party and the emergence of revolutionary armed resistance. The final part discusses the question of self-determination and the politico-military objectives of our movement. By providing the historical background and analysing the concrete conditions of our unique situation, we argue that our armed revolutionary struggle for national independence is progressive, revolutionary and solidly based on the revolutionary political praxis of Marxism and Leninism.

PART ONE

MULTIPLE OPPRESSION WITH GENOCIDAL INTENT

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

TWO NATIONS IN ONE ISLAND

The island, formally called Ceylon, is the traditional homeland of two nations-Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka, two distinct social formations with distinct cultures and languages having their own unique historical past. The history of the Tamils in the island dates back to pre-historic times. When the ancestors of the Sinhala people arrived in the Island with their legendary Prince Vijaya from Northern India in the 6th century B. C., Dravidians (Tamils) were living in the island. Though the question of original settlement is obscured by legends and mythologies, modern scholars hold that Tamils were indisputably the earliest settlers. The Sinhalese historical chronicles, 'Mahawamsa' and 'Culawamsa' record the turbulent historical past of the island from the 6th century B.C., the history of great wars between Tamil and Sinhalese kings, of invasions from South Indian Tamil empires, of struggles for supremacy between Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms. The island was ruled by the Tamil kings at times and then by the Sinhalese kings and the intermittent wars forced the Sinhalese kings to move their capital southwards. From the 13th century onwards until the advent of foreign colonialism the Tamils lived as a stable national entity in their own kingdom ruled by their own kings, within a specified territory of their traditional homelands embracing the Northern and Eastern provinces.

Marco Polo once described Sri Lanka as the island paradise of the earth. The British used to call it the 'pearl of the Indian ocean'. Separated from the Southern coast of India only by a twenty-two mile stretch of water, the island has an area of 25.332 square miles. For centuries before the colonial penetration, the island had a traditional self-sustaining economy with a reputation of being the granary of the East. The mode of production in the pre-colonial epoch is feudal in character with dying elements of the Asiatic mode. Structured within the feudal mode, the economic organisation of the Tamil nation had a unique set of relations of production characterised by caste stratification with its hierarchy of functions. The extensive hydraulic systems, with its network of tanks and canals for which the mediaeval Ceylon was famous, had fallen out of use and was decaying and disappearing under the thick jungles in the North as well as in the North central provinces. The Sinhalese feudal aristocracy, by this time, had moved to the central high lands and established Kandy as the capital.

When the Portuguese first landed on the island in the beginning of the 16th century, they found two ancient kingdoms, Tamils in the north and eastern provinces and the Sinhalese in the south, two distinct social systems with different cultures, constituting themselves as separate nations of people ruled by their own kings with independent state structures. The Portuguese entered into treaties, and then fought battles, and finally, in the battle of 1619 they conquered the Tamil kingdom and hanged the Tamil king SANKILI KUMARAN. Yet the Portuguese, and the Dutch who came after them, governed the Tamil nation as a separate kingdom without violating the terroritorial integrity until the British, in 1833 brought a unified state structure amalgamating the two nations irrespective of ethnic differences laying the foundation for the present national conflict.

PLANTATION ECONOMY AND THE TAMIL WORKERS

The effects of Portuguese and Dutch colonial rule on the island's pre-capitalist economic formation is minimal when compared to the profound effects of British imperialist domination. The most significant historical event of the British imperial rule was the imposition of an exploitative plantation economy.

It was in 1815 with the conquest of the Kandyian kingdom by the British, the pain ful history of the Tamil plantation workers begins. It is during this time that British imperialism decided to introduce the colonial plantation economy in the island. Coffee plantations were set up in the early 1820's, a crop which flourished in high altitudes. Speculators and entrepreneurs from England rushed to the newly conquered mountain areas and expropriated vast tracts of land, by deceit, from the Kandyian peasantry. The Kandyian peasants refused to abandon their traditional subsistent holdings to become wage-earners on these new capitalist estates. The pressure exerted by the colonial state to draw the labour power from the indigenous Sinhalese peasantry did not work. The British imperialist masters were thus compelled to draw on its limitless reserve army of labour from India. A massive army of cheap labourers were conscripted from soutl ern India, who, partly by their own poverty and partly by coercion moved into this promised land to be condemned to an appalling form of slave labour. A notorious system of labour contract was established which allowed hundreds of thousands of Tamil labourers to migrate to the plantation estates. In 1840's and 1850's a million people were imported. The original workers were recruited from Tamil Nadu districts of Tinnevely, Madurai and Tanjore and were from the poor, oppressed castes. This army of recruited workers were forced to walk hundreds of miles from their villages to Rameswaram and again from Mannar to the central hill-lands of Ceylon through impenetrable jungles. Thousands of this immiserated masses perished on their long hazardous journey, a journey chartered with disease, death and despair. Those who survived the journey were weak and exhausted and thousands of them died in the night-marish unhealthy conditions of the early plantations.

The coffee plantation economy collapsed in the 1870's when a leaf disease ravaged the plantations. But the economic system survived intact by the introduction of a successor crop-tea. Tea was introduced in the 1880's on a wider scale. The tea plantation economy expanded with British entrepreneurial investments, export markets and consolidated com-

panies transforming the structure of production and effectively changing the economic foundation of the old feudal mode creating a basis for the development of the capitalist mode of production. Though the plantation economy effectively changed the process of production the Tamil labourers-men, women and children-were permanently condemned to slave under the white masters and the indigenous capitalists. The British planters who brought the Indian Tamil labourers into Sri Lanka deliberately segregated them inside the plantations in what is known as the 'line rooms'. Such a notorious policy of segregation condemned the Tamils permanently into these miserable ghettos, isolated them from the rest of the population and prevented th n from buying their own lands, build their own houses, and to lead a free social existence. Thus, British imperialism built up the Tamil plantation proletariat within the heartland of the Kandyian Sinhalese, and manipulated the Tamil/Sinhala antagonism to divide and rule and to defeat the class struggle. Reduced to a condition of slavery by colonialism, the Tamil plantation workers toiled in utter misery; their sweat and blood sustained the worst form of exploitative economy that fed the imperialist vampires with the surplus value and enriched the Sinhalese land - owning classes.

BRITISH COLONIALISM AND THE INDIGENOUS TAMILS

The impact of the British imperial domination on the indigenous Tamil speaking people of the Northern and Eastern provinces, had far reaching effects. On the political level, British imperialism imposed a unified administration with centralised institutions, establishing a singular state structure which ended the separate existence of the Tamil statehood. This forceful annexation and amalgamation of two separate kingdoms, of two nations of people, disregarding their past historical existence, their socio-cultural distinctions, and their ethnic differences was the root cause of the present Tamil—Sinhala antagonism.

The Tamil social formation was constituted by a unique socio—economic organisation, in which feudal elements and caste system were tightly interwoven to form the foundation of this complex society. The notorious system of caste stratification bestows, by right of birth, power, privilege and status to the high caste Tamils, the minority of whom (landowners and business elites) owned the means of production and exploited the rest. The most exploited and oppressed sections are the so—called depressed castes who eke out a banal existence under this system of slavery Privileged by caste, provided with better educational facilities created by foreign missionaries a section of the high caste Tamils adopted the English educational system. A new class of English educated professionals and white collar workers emerged and became a part of the bureaucratic structure of the civil service. The English imperialist masters encouraged the Tamils and provided them with an adequate share in the state administration under a notorious strategy of balance of power, of divide and rule, that later sparked the fires of Sinhala national chauvinism.

The Tamil dominance in the state administrative structure, as well as in the plantation economic sector, the privileges enjoyed by the English educated elites, the spread of Christianity, are factors that propelled the emergence of Sinhala nationalism. In the early stages, nationalist tendencies took the form of Buddhist revival which gradually assumed a

powerful political dominance. Under the slogan of Buddhist religious renaissance, a national chauvinistic ideology emerged with strong sediments of Tamil antagonism. The religious leadership attacked both the Tamils and European colonialists and spoke of the greatness of the Sinhalese Aryan race. To quote a typical example.

> "Ethnologically, the Sinhalese are a unique race, inasmuch as they can boast that they have no slave blood in them, and were never conquered by either the pagan Tamils or European vandals who for three centuries devastated the land, destroyed ancient temples.....and nearly annihilated the historic race. This bright, beautiful island was made into a paradise by the Aryan Sinhalese before its destruction was brought about by the barbaric vandals....." (Anagarika Dharmapala, History of an Ancient Civilization)

The Sinhala national chauvinism that emerged from the Buddhist religious resurgence viewed the Tamil dominance in the State apparatus and in the plantation economy as a threat to 'national development' and such national antagonism articulated on the ideological level began to take concrete forms of social, political and economic oppression soon after the national independence in 1948, when the State power was transferred to the Sinhala national bourgeoisie.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL OPPRESSION

Having firmly entrenched the national bourgeoisie in a global neo-colonial structure, the British granted' independence' to the people of Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam with the British queen as their sovereign head. Motivated by their class interests, the national bourgeoisie collaborated with the British, accepted their constitution and assumed power. Soon after the so-called national independence the national bourgeoisie began to show its reactionary character. Conflicts arose between the Tamil and Sinhala bourgeoisie over the share to political power. The Sinhala nationalists dominated the scene and gained control over the state machinery.

Soon after the transfer of political power, Sinhala national chauvinism reigned supreme and unleashed a vicious and violent form of oppression against the Tamils. This oppression has a continuous history of thirty five years since 'independence' and has been practised by successive Sri Lankan Governments. The oppression has a genocidal intent involving a calculated plan aiming at the gradual and systematic destruction of the essential foundations of the Tamil national community. This oppression therefore assumed a multi-dimensional thrust, attacking simultaneously on different levels of the conditions of existence of the Tamil speaking nation; on language, on education, on culture, on religious and political institutions, on traditional lands, and on the economy that jeopardised the very existence of the Tamils and made unitary life intolerable and impossible. As a part of this genocidal programme formed the state organised racial holocausts, which constantly plague the island, resulting in mass extermination of Tamils and massive destruction of Tamil property.

A MILLION TAMIL WORKERS DISENFRANCHISED

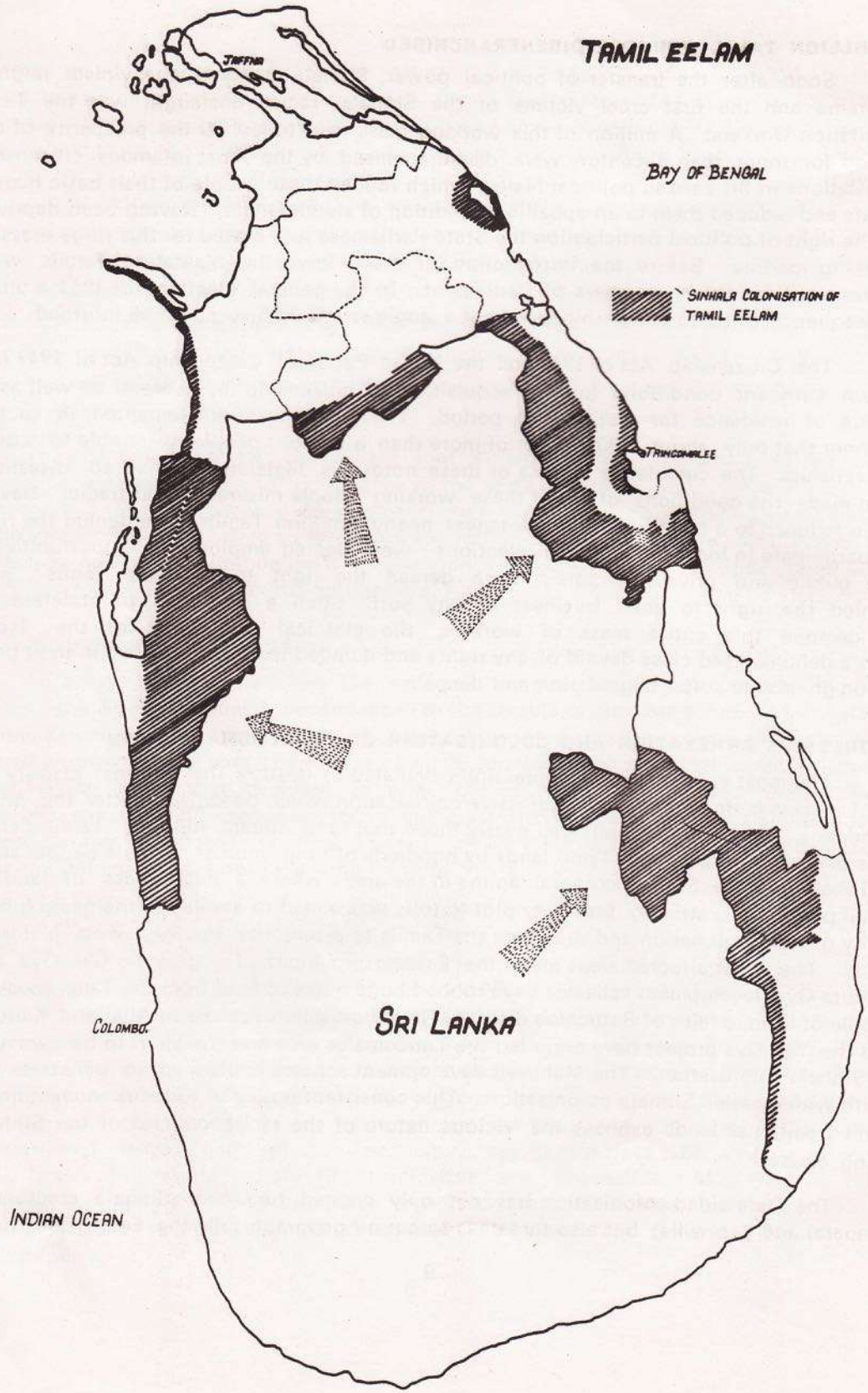
Soon after the transfer of political power, Sinhala national chauvinism reigned supreme and the first cruel victims of the Sinhala racist onslaught was the Tamil plantation workers. A million of this working mass who toiled for the prosperity of the island for more than a century were disenfranchised by the most infamous citizenship legislations in Sri Lankan political history which robbed these people of their basic human rights and reduced them to an appalling condition of statelessness. Having been deprived of the right of political participation the State Parliament was closed for this huge mass of working people. Before the introduction of these laws the plantation Tamils were represented by seven members of Parliament. In the general elections of 1952 a direct consequence of these citizenship laws, not a single representative could be returned.

The Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Indian Pakistani Citizenship Act of 1949 laid down stringent conditions for the acquisition of citizenship by descent as well as by virtue of residence for a stipulated period. These Acts were implemented in such a manner that only about 1,30,000 out of more than a million people were able to acquire citizenship. The cumulative effects of these notorious legislations were so disastrous that made the conditions of life of these working people miserable and tragic. Having been reduced to a condition of statelessness nearly a million Tamils were denied the right to participate in local and national elections ; were denied employment opportunities in the public and private sectors ; were denied the right to purchase lands ; were denied the right to enter business of any sort. Such a condition of statelessness condemned this entire mass of workers, the classical proletariat of the island into a dehumanised class devoid of any rights and dumped them perpetually, in their plantation ghettos to suffer degradation and despair.

AGGRESSIVE ANNEXATION AND COLONISATION OF TRADITIONAL LANDS

The most vicious form of oppression calculated to destroy the national identity of the Tamils was the State aided aggressive colonisation which began soon after the 'independence, and has now swallowed nearly three thousand square miles of Tamil Eelam. This planned occupation of Tamil lands by hundreds of thousands of Sinhala people aided and abetted by the Sinhala colonial regime in the areas where a huge mass of landless Tamil peasantry is striving for a tiny plot to toil, was aimed to annihilate the geographical entity of the Tamil nation and to reduce the Tamils to a minority in their own historical lands. The worst affected areas are in the Eastern province. The gigantic Gal Oya and Madura Oya development schemes have robbed huge bulks of land from the Tamil speaking people of Islamic faith of Batticaloa district. The colonisation scheme in Allai and Kantalai and the Yan Oya project have engulfed the Trincomalee area and threatens to be swamped by Sinhala colonisation. The Mahaveli development scheme is planned to penetrate the North with massive Sinhala colonisation. This consistent policy of forceful annexation of Tamil traditional lands exposes the vicious nature of the racist policies of the Sinhala ruling classes.

The State aided colonisation has not only created two new Sinhala electorates (Amparai and Seruwilla) but also threatens to cut off geographically the Eastern province


TAMIL EELAM
JAFFNA
BAY OF BENGAL
SINHALA COLONISATION OF TAMIL EELAM
TRINCOMALEE
COLOMBO
SRI LANKA
INDIAN OCEAN

from the North. In addition to this, the constant racial violence that erupts in some sensitive colonised areas have resulted in heavy loss of Tamil life and property. In June-July (1983) racial holocaust, the Sinhalese colonists with the aid of the armed forces, launched calculated attacks on the Tamil people of Trincomalee to confiscate their property and to drive them away from their traditional homelands. The statistics given below shows the effects on the populational balances affected from this aggressive colonisation in the Trincomalee district.

TRINCOMALEE

	Sinhalese	*Tamils*
1921	3%	93.3%
1946	20.6%	75%
1971	28.8%	70.2%
1981	33.6%	66.4%

In 1948, there were only 10,000 Sinhalese in the Eastern Province which has swelled by 1977 over one hundred thousand people. In Amparai district the percentage of the Sinhalese population was 4.5% in 1946 but increased to 37.7% recently.

THE ASSAULT ON LANGUAGE AND THE AXE ON EMPLOYMENT

The national oppression of the Sinhala racist regimes soon penetrated into the sphere of language, education and employment. The chauvinist 'Sinhala Only' movement spearheaded by Mr. Bandaranayake brought him to political power in 1956. His first Act in Parliament put an end to the official equal status enjoyed by the Tamil language and made Sinhala as the only official language of the country. The 'Sinhala Only Act' demanded the proficiency of Sinhala in the civil service. The Tamil public servants deprived of the rights of increments and promotions were forced to learn the language or leave employment. Employment opportunities in the public service were practically closed to Tamils. Racial discrimination against the Tamils in employment soon extended to other services and sectors. The racist discrimination against Tamils in employment by the present fascist regime can be studied from the statistics given below.

THOSE IN SERVICE

Department	*Total*	*Sinhalese*	*Tamils*	*% of Tamils*
POLICE	17,000	16,050	940	5%
ARMY	10,000	9,780	220	2.2%
NAVY	2,170	2,024	146	6.7%

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Post 1977-80	*Total Appointments*	*Sinhalese*	*Tamils*	*% of Tamils who constitute 25.2 % of the Population*
Teachers	25,081	22,399	2,632	10.7%
Sri Lanka Administrative Service	144	144	...	...
Translators	5	5	...	...
Postmasters				
Signallers	46	44	2	4.5%
Government Service Clerks	3,326	3,127	199	5.9%
Typists	414	376	38	9.2%
Stenographers	198	135	63	31.8%
Book-Keepers	183	172	11	6.1%
Railway Department Officers	195	181	14	7.2%
Railway Clerks	214	209	5	2.3%
Railway Guards	83	82	1	1.2%
Servants in the Govt. Secretariat at Tirumalai	20	16	4	15.0%
Pharmacists and Radiographers	480	473	7	1.4%
Persons selected by the Government for employment opportunities abroad in 1977-80	2643	2417	226	8.5%
Employees of the Prima Flour Mill permitted by the Ministry of Planning and Implementation	451	379	72	19.2%

THE ARREST ON EDUCATION

Education was the sphere the Sinhala chauvinism struck deeply to deprive a vast population of Tamil youth access to higher education and employment. A notorious discriminatory selective device called 'standardisation' was introduced in 1970 which demanded higher merits of marks from the Tamil students for university admissions whereas the Sinhalese students were admitted with lower grades. This discriminatory device dramatically reduced the number of admissions of Tamil students and seriously undermined their prospects of higher studies. The ratio of Aggregate 'A' level marks demanded for admission for the Tamil and Sinhalese students were as follows.

	Tamil students	*Sinhala students*
Medicine	250	229
Engineering	250	227
Physical Sciences	204	183
Biological Sciences	184	175

The present regime withdrew the scheme of standardisation temporarily in 1978 but has re-introduced a new discriminatory formula (admitting 30% on merit, 55% on district basis and 15% from backward areas). This new scheme turns out to be far more discriminatory than the earlier one denying thousands of deserving Tamil students the right of higher education, The table below shows the percentage of Tamil students affected by the practice of racist schemes of discriminatory education since the year 1970.

Subject Medium of Instruction	1969	1970	1972	1973	1974	1977	1978	1979	1981
Medical									
Sinhala Language	50%	57%	58.6%	62%	72.7%	72%	57.5%	67.4%	80.7%
Tamil Language	50%	43%	41.4%	32%	27.3%	28%	42.5%	32.6%	19.3%
Engineering									
Sinhala Language	51.7%	56%	66.7%	75.4%	81.5%	81%	64%	61.8%	69.8%
Tamil Language	48.3%	44%	33.3%	26.6%	18.5%	19%	36%	33.2%	30.2%

Angered by the imposition of an alien language, frustrated without the possibility of higher education, plunged into the despair of unemployed existence, the Tamil youth grew militant with an iron determination to fight back the national oppression.

ECONOMIC STRANGULATION OF THE TAMIL NATION

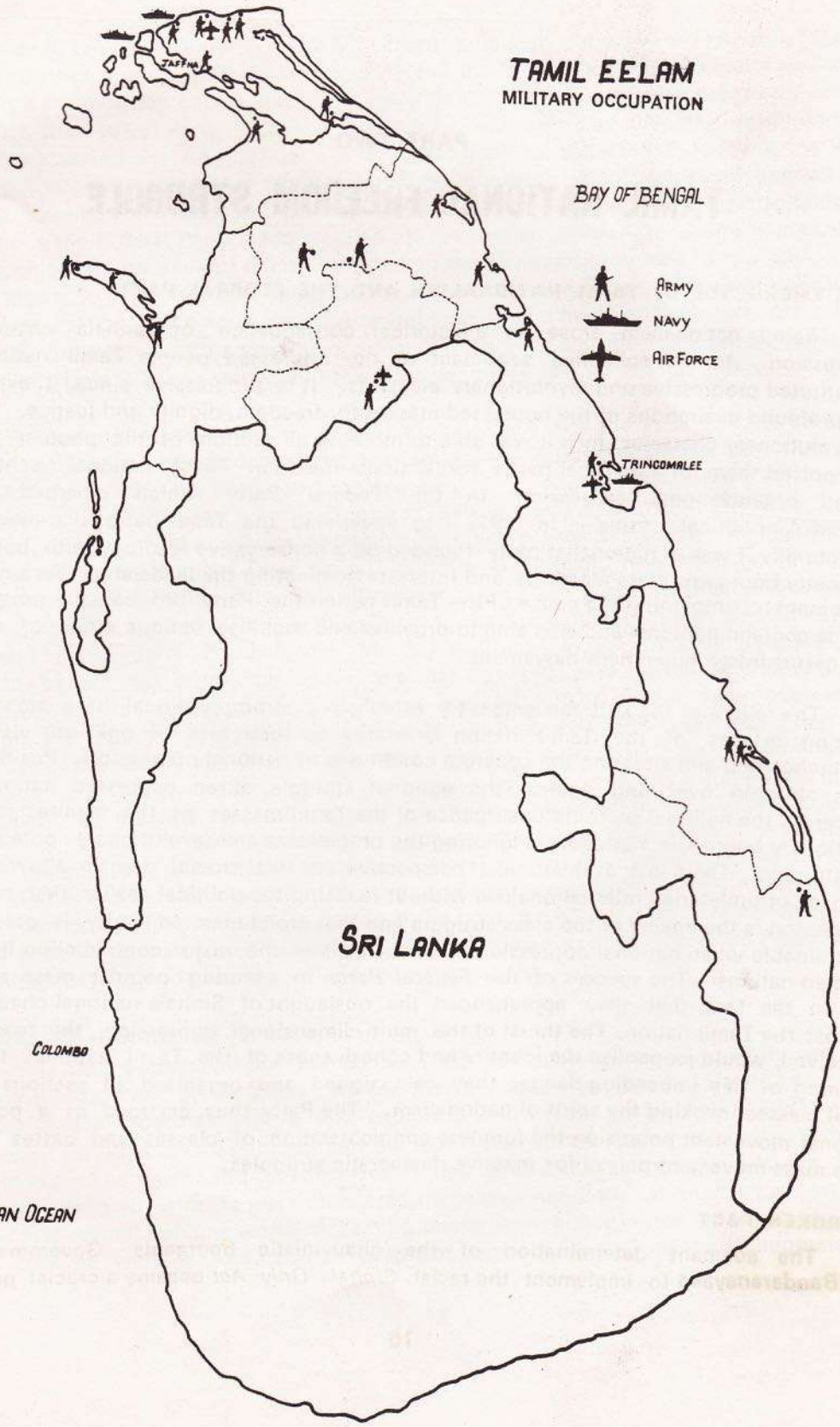
National oppression showed its intensity in the economic strangulation of the Tamil Eelam nation. Apart from a few state-owned factories built soon after 'independence',

Tamil areas were totally isolated from all the national development projects for nearly thirty-five years. While the Sinhala nation flourished with massive development projects, the Tamil nation was alienated as an unwanted colony, isolated into the wilderness of economic deprivation. The most tragic fact is that while the Tamil nation gradually deteriorated into economic backwardness wasting its potential productive labour the Tamil capitalists, encouraged and aided by the Sinhala ruling class, invested in the South; a brutal fact illustrates the class collaboration and class interests of the Tamil bourgeoisie.

RACIAL RIOTS AND MASS KILLINGS OF TAMILS

The racial riots that constantly plague the Island should not be viewed as spontaneous outbursts of inter-communal hatred between the two communities. All major conflagrations that erupted violently against the Tamil people were inspired and masterminded by the Sinhala ruling regimes as a part of a genocidal programme. Violent anti-Tamil racial riots exploded in the island in 1956, 1958, 1961, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981 and most recently in July this year. In these racial holocausts thousands of Tamils, including women and children were mercilessly massacred in the most gruesome manner, millions worth of Tamil property destroyed and hundreds of thousands made refugees. The State and the armed forces colluded with hooligans and vandals in their sadistic orgy of arson, rape and mass murders.

The cumulative effect of this multi-dimensional oppression threatened the very survival of the Tamils. It aggravated the national conflict and made co-existence between the two nations intolerable. It has shattered all hopes of a peaceful negotiated resolution of the Tamil national question. It has stiffened the Tamil militancy in their demand for secession.


TAMIL EELAM
MILITARY OCCUPATION
BAY OF BENGAL
ARMY
NAVY
AIR FORCE
TRINCOMALEE
SRI LANKA
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INDIAN OCEAN

PART TWO

TAMIL NATIONAL FREEDOM STRUGGLE

THE EMERGENCE OF TAMIL NATIONALISM AND THE FEDERAL PARTY

Tamil nationalism arose as a historical consequence of Sinhala chauvinistic oppression. As the collective sentiment of the oppressed people Tamil nationalism constituted progressive and revolutionary elements. It is progressive since it expressed the profound aspirations of the oppressed masses for freedom, dignity and justice. It has a revolutionary character since it was able to mobilise all sections of the popular masses and poised them for a political battle for national freedom. Tamil national sentiments found organisational expression in the Federal Party which emerged as a powerful political force in 1956 to spearhead the Tamil national movement. Structurally it was a nationalist party founded on a conservative ideology with bourgeois and petty bourgeois class elements and interests dominating the leadership. As a national movement championing the cause of the Tamil nation the Party did contain progressive and democratic contents and was able to organise and mobilise various strata of classes and castes into a huge mass movement.

The failure of the Left movement to establish a strong political base among the working masses of the Tamil nation was due to their lack of political vision in comprehending and situating the concrete conditions of national oppression. Positing the class struggle over and against the national struggle of an oppressed nation, they conceived the national patriotic upsurgence of the Tamil masses as the manifestation of reactionary bourgeois nationalism ignoring the progressive and revolutionary potential of the struggle. Their lack of theoretical perspective in this crucial domain allowed them to speak of proletarian internationalism without realising the political reality that national oppression is the enemy of the class struggle and that proletarian solidarity is practically unattainable when national oppression presents itself as the major contradiction between the two nations. The success of the *Federal Party* in securing popular mass support lies in the fact that they apprehended the onslaught of Sinhala national chauvinism against the Tamil nation. The thrust of the multi-dimensional oppression, the leadership perceived, would jeopardise the identity and cohesiveness of the Tamil national totality. Warning of this impending danger they campaigned and organised all sections of the Tamil masses invoking the spirit of nationalism. The Party thus emerged as a powerful national movement polarising the formless conglomeration of classes and castes into a huge mass movement poised for massive democratic struggles.

A BROKEN PACT

The adamant determination of the chauvinistic bourgeois Government of Mr. Bandaranayake to implement the racist *Sinhala Only Act* became a crucial political

challenge to the Federal Party which decided to launch satyagraha campaign (passive, peaceful, sit-in protest of Gandhian non-violent method) as a form of popular resistance. It was on the morning of 5th June 1956 when Parliament assembled to debate the Sinhala Only Act, the Federal Party Parliamentarians, party members and sympathisers in hundreds, performed satyagraha on the Galle Face green just opposite the Parliament building. Within hours the satyagrahis were mobbed by thousands of hooligans and vandals who stoned, assaulted the peaceful pickets. When the situation became uncontrollable and dangerous the Federal Party leaders called off the protest. The rioters, who harassed the satyagrahis went on a blood thirsty rampage in the city assaulting the Tamils and looting Tamil property. The riot soon spread to several parts of the island with violent incidents of murder, looting, arson and rape. At Amparai more than a hundred Tamils were massacred to death. Irrespective of the spreading communal violence and the Tamil protest campaign the Sinhala Only Bill was passed and the Tamil language lost its official status.

Following the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act the Federal Party organised mass agitational campaigns demanding a federal form of autonomy for the Tamil nation. In the elections of 1956 the Party won an overwhelming victory obtaining a clear mandate from the Tamil people for a Federal form of self government. The Party also made a decision to intensify the satyagraha campaign to achieve its demands. The demand for political autonomy for the Tamil nation, along with the rising wave of Tamil nationalism alarmed the Sinhala ruling elite. Mr. Bandaranayake, in a desperateattempt to arrest the growing conflict, agreed to give concessions to the Tamils. A pact was signed between him and the Federal Party leader Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayagam which provided some elements of political autonomy under *Regional Councils* with a promise to stop Sinhala colonisation of Tamil areas. The pact sparked off suspicion and resentment among the Sinhalese racialist elements and the man who exploited this explosive situation at that time was none other than the present fascist dictator, J. R. Jayawardane, who, with the support of the Buddhist monks, organised a massive protest march to Kandy demanding the abrogration of the pact. This Sinhala chauvinistic upsurgence inspired some Ministers of Mr. Bandaranayake's Cabinet to organise a protest of their own against the pact. Led by these Ministers a long procession of Bhikkus and their racist sympathisers marched to the Prime Ministers residence carrying a copy of the pact in a coffin. The communal drama finally ended with the ceremonial burning of the coffin in front of Rosemead Place where Mr.Bandaranayake made a solemn pledge to abrogate the pact.

THE RACIST HORROR OF 1958

This great betrayal by the Sinhala national bourgeoisie blew up all hopes of a national harmony and the relations between the two nations became hostile. The national friction gradually became intense and exploded into violent racial riots in 1958. This communal fury that ravaged throughout the island stained the pages of Ceylon's history with blood. The horror and savagery perpetrated against the innocent Tamils are indescribable. Several hundreds were butchered to death, hundreds of thousands lost their homes and several millions worth of Tamil property were either looted or burnt to ashes; Tamil children were hacked to death, pregnant women were raped and slaughtered ; a

Hindu priest was burnt alive. Several mutilated bodies were found in a well at Maha-Oya. At Kalutara, a Tamil family while attempting to hide in a well had petrol poured on them and when they begged for mercy they were set on fire. As the cries of agony arose when they were roasted alive in a huge ball of fire, the racist spectators were enthralled by sadistic ecstacy. While the whole island was being consumed by the flames of racial horror, Mr. Bandaranayake watched this tragic holocaust with amusement and refused to declare a State of Emergency until the Tamils, as he was reported to have said, 'get a taste of it.' After twenty four hours of calculated delay, a State of Emergency was declared. When the situation was brought under control there were ten thousand Tamil refugees most of them civil servants, professionals and businessmen who had to be shipped to the Northern and Eastern provinces, the historical motherland of the Tamils.

THE SATYAGRAHA CAMPAIGN

The 1958 racial holocaust cut a deep wedge in the relations between the Tamil and Sinhala nations. Tamil national sentiments ran high and erupted into massive agitational campaigns on the Tamil political arena. It was in the early part of 1961 that the Federal Party decided to launch direct action in the form of satyagraha in front of Government offices in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The objective was to disrupt and disorganise the Government's administrative structure in Tamil Eelam thereby exerting pressure on the Government to accept the Tamil demand for Federal autonomy.

The satyagraha campaign of 1961 was a monumental event in the history of the Tamil national struggle. The campaign unfolded into a huge upsurgence of the popular Tamil masses to register a *national protest* against the oppressive policies of the Sinhala ruling elites. This Civil Disobedience Campaign, which was inaugurated on the 20th February 1961 and lasted nearly three months, brought hundreds of thousands of Tamil speaking masses into the streets to express their defiance and dissent to the oppressive state apparatus. Within a couple of weeks the whole Government administrative machinery was paralysed and the Tamil nation was practically cut off from any authority of the central Government. This unprecedented historical event symbolised national solidarity; it symbolised the collective will and determination of the whole nation to assert its national identity and independence.

The campaign started as a massive picketing in front of the Government's main administrative office, Kachcheri, in Jaffna, the Northern capital and soon spread to Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticoloa and other towns. All sections of the Tamil speaking people, irrespective of religion and caste, enthusiastically participated in this peaceful popular protest. *Thousands of Tamil plantation workers from the South converged into the North and East to express their militant solidarity.* This massive national uprising encouraged the Federal Party leadership to open a postal service on the 14th April 1961 and Tamil national stamps were issued in thousands as an act of defiance against the State authority.

Alarmed by the rising tide of Tamil nationalism and the extra-ordinary success of the Civil Disobedience Campaign, the State oppressive machinery reacted swiftly mobilising

A section of woman volunteers performing satyagraha in front of Jaffna secretariat building

A section of the massive peaceful pickets marching in protest against Sinhala oppression during the satyagraha campaign

School children on protest march during satyagraha campaign

the military into action. Large contingents of armed forces were dispatched to Tamil areas with 'special instructions' under Emergency powers. In the early hours of 18th April 1961, troops suddenly swooped on the satyagrahies in Jaffna and brutally attacked them with rifle butts and batons fracturing their skulls and limbs. This barbarous military violence unleashed against the non-violent agitators resulted in hundreds of them sustaining serious injuries. Under the guise of Emergency and curfew military terrorism was let loose all over Tamil Eelam suppressing the agitation with brutal violence. The nationalist leaders were arrested, the Party offices ransacked and the situation, in the Government's view 'was brought under control'. *Thus, the violence of the oppressor silenced the non-violence of the oppressed; the armed might of Sinhala chauvinism crushed the 'ahimsha' of Tamils. This historical event marked the beginning of a political experience that was crucial to the Tamil national struggle, an experience that taught the Tamils that the moral power of non-violence could not consume the military power of a violent oppressor whose racial hatred transcends all ethical norms of humanness and civilized behaviour. To the oppressor this event encouraged the view that military terrorism is the only answer to the Tamil demand and that the non-violent foundation of the Tamil political agitation is a weak and impotent structure against the barrel of the gun.*

ANOTHER BROKEN PACT

In 1965 the Sinhala national bourgeois Party, the United National Party (U.N.P.) assumed political power. The Federal Party decided to collaborate with this so-called 'national Government' with the expectation of wrenching some concessions for the Tamils. This collaborationist strategy, the Tamil leadership vainly hoped, would bring a negotiated settlement to the Tamil question. The U.N.P. Government, in a treacherous move to placate the Tamil nationalists appointed a senior Federal Party member to its Cabinet and in the following year promulgated regulations defining certain uses of the Tamil language in the transaction of Government business. A secret pact was also made between Mr. Chelvanayagam, the Federal Party leader and the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake making provisions for the establishment of *District Councils*.

Neither the regulations for the use of Tamil language, nor the promise of decentralisation of political power to regional bodies were implemented. The communal politics of the Sinhala bourgeoisie never allowed for a mechanism of negotiated settlement. It is an established historical pattern that when one Party in power attempts a negotiated settlement to the Tamil question, the Party in Opposition invokes anti-Tamil sentiments to undermine the move, thereby scoring a political victory over the opponent as the heroes and guardians of Sinhala 'patriotism'. Caught up in this invariable political practice the U.N.P. Government abrogated the pact when confronted with the pressure of Sinhala opposition. Thus, the collaborationist strategy of the Federal Party, suffered the inevitable fate of betrayal and in humiliation, the Party withdrew its support to the Government in 1968.

The Tamil political history from 1970 to 1977 contains most outstanding events and unprecedented shifts. This historical epoch was characterised by heightened national

oppression and increased youth rebellion against State domination, a conflict that intensified national contradiction leading to the crystallization of secessionist tendencies. Insofar as the Sinhala nation was concerned, this period consisted of events of great political betrayals and class collaborations, events of violent revolts and brutal reprisals. For both the oppressed Tamil nation and the suppressed Sinhala masses, this historical epoch, marked by the reign of an infamous regime, taught the most painful lessons of political oppression. The Tamil nation faced institutionalised oppression and the decades of failures, frustration and exhaustion of struggles for regional autonomy led the nationalist leadership to move rapidly towards the inevitable choice of political independence. The working class movement as a whole suffered a tragic set back by the chauvinism of the ruling bourgeoisie and by the betrayal of the Left leadership.

An alliance between the national bourgeois Party of Mrs. Bandaranayake's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (S.L.F.P.) and the traditional old Left the Trotskyite L. S. S. P. and the Communist Party - brought to political power in 1970 what is mistakenly called the 'Popular Front' Government. As soon as the new Government assumed power, it was confronted with a Sinhala youth insurrection. In an absurd and adventurous attempt to wrench power from the State, the newly formed Marxist militant organisation, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) rose in rebellion in the South. Thoroughly disorganised in the structure of its leadership and in the rank and file, ignoring the objective and subjective conditions of a revolutionary situation, the movement mobilised unemployed militant youth and sections of landless peasantry for a popular rebellion. Having established no political bases within the urban proletariat nor within the Tamil plantation proletariat, the real vanguard of a socialist revolution, having antagonised the Tamil nation as a whole by malicious communal propaganda, the movement in its infantile disorder embarked on a politico-military adventure the cost of which in human life was colossal. This sudden uprising that took the form of widespread armed rebellion was met with the most barbaric military suppression in Sri Lankan history. To bring the situation under control more than *ten thousand Sinhalese youths were mercilessly slaughtered* and another fifteen thousand imprisoned. This violent catastrophe wiped out a whole generation of radical Sinhala youth who sincerely believed that a revolutionary insurrection would redeem them from the misery and despair of unemployed existence. The rivers of blood that ran from these butchered innocents stained every inch of the Sinhala nation, the acclaimed holy land of compassionate Buddhism. The shame of history befell on those who master-minded this mass murder, on those ruling bourgeoisie who plotted to wipe out thousands of their own children to stabilise their political power and glory. Thus, this huge blood bath was the major offer of 'socialist humanism' pledged by the New 'Left' Front. In its Hitlerian determination to wipe out by brutal force any further revolutionary upsurgence emanating from the oppressed sections, the ruling elite enacted Emergency Laws and other repressive legislations and strengthened its grip on the State apparatus.

THE REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION

Having suppressed the militant Sinhala youth, the new regime turned its oppressive apparatus towards the Tamils in an attempt to legalise and institutionalise national

oppression. The most important measure in this respect was the adoption of a new Republican Constitution which reaffirmed the position that Sinhala was the sole official language and conferred a special status on Buddhism. The new constitution not only removed the fundamental rights, privileges and safeguards accorded to 'national minorities' in the previous Constitution but also made Mr. Bandaranayake's racist pieces of legislation on language and religion as the supreme laws of the land.

Chapter 3, Article 7 of the new Constitution stated : "The official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala as provided by the Official Language Act, No. 33 of 1956". The primacy of Buddhism was accorded in the following words : "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Section 18(1) (d).'

The Constituent Assembly categorically rejected all amendments and resolutions proposed on behalf of the Tamil speaking people. A comprehensive Federal scheme proposed by the Federal Party was turned down even without discussion. All efforts to secure a place in the new Constitution for the use of Tamil language ended in fiasco. Sinhala national chauvinism reigned supreme in the deliberations of the Assembly which resulted in most of the Tamil members of Parliament walking out in utter frustration and hoplessness. This infamous Constitution which was passed on the 22nd May 1972 brought an end to Tamil participation in the sharing of State power and created a condition of political alienation of a nation of people. Thus, the chauvinism of the Sinhala national bourgeoisie triggered off the causal mechanism precipitating the dynamics of a revolutionary rupture between two nations.

ON THE PATH TO SECESSION

The principal determinant factor that propelled the dynamics of national friction leading to the inevitable choice of political independence was none other than national oppression. The new Constitution that alienated and expelled the Tamil nation from the structure of a unitary State climaxed this national contradiction.

It must be noted that for a period of nearly three decades all bourgeois Governments which represented the Sinhala nation, the U.N P. the S.L.F.P. the United Front of the S.L.F.P., L.S.S.P. and C.P. have consistently and deliberately denied the very basic human rights of the Tamil speaking people. Practically almost all Sinhala political movements including the Marxist parties (For years Trotskyite L.S.S.P. and the Communist Party championed for the rights of the Tamils and maintained a commitment to parity of status to Tamil language but succumbed to political opportunism in the early 60's and shifted their position by supporting Sinhala Only/Buddhism Only chauvinism) turned a deaf-ear to the Tamil question. This unholy alliance of all major Sinhala political parties and their arrogant determination to stifle the most crucial and urgent issues facing the Tamil nation made the Tamils realise the utter futility of pursuing any form of rational political dialogue with Sinhala leaders. The consolidation of political forces of the Sinhala nation for a confrontation rather than co-existence with the Tamil nation forced the Tamil speaking masses to the inevitable position of deciding their own political destiny. These objective

factors led to the polarisation and consolidation of Tamil political forces into a united national movement to struggle for a common cause—the independence of the Tamil nation. The major event in this direction took place at an all party conference held at Trincomalee on the 14th May 1972 in which tha Federal Party, the Tamil Congress and the Ceylon Workers Congress of Mr. Thondaman converged together to form the Tamil United Front. This unprecedented move demonstrated the unitary cohesion and determination of the Tamil speaking people to fight to preserve their national identity and political liberty.

THE MILITANCY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH

The most crucial factor that propelled the Tamil United Front to move rapidly towards the secessionist path was the increasing impatience, militancy and rebelliousness of the revolutionary Tamil youth. Disillusioned with the political strategy of non-violence which the bourgeois nationalist leadership advocated for the last thirty years and produced no political fruits, the Tamil youth demanded drastic and radical action for a swift resolution to the Tamil national question. Caught up in a revolutionary situation generated by the contradiction of national oppression and constantly victimised by police brutality, the youth were forced to abandon the Gandhian doctrine of 'ahimsa' (non-violence) which they realised was irreconcilable with revolutionary political practice and inapplicable in the concrete conditions in which they were situated. The political violence of the youth which began to explode on the Tamil political scene in the early seventies and took organised forms of revolutionary resistance in the later stages became a frightening political reality to both the peace-loving conservative Tamil leadership and to the oppressive Sinhala regimes.

The determinant element that hardened the Tamil youth to militancy, defiance and violence was that they were the immediate targets and victims of the racist policies of successive Sinhala governments. The educated youth were confronted with appalling levels of unemployment which offered them nothing other than a bleak future of perpetual despair. The Government's discriminatory programme of standardisation and the racist Sinhala Only policy practically closed the doors to higher education and employment.

Plunged into the despair of unemployed existence, frustrated without the possibility of higher education, angered by the imposition of an alien language, the Tamil youth realised that the redemption to their plight lay in revolutionary politics, a politics that should pave the way for a radical and fundamental transformation of their miserable conditions of existence. The only alternative left to the Tamils under the conditions of mounting national oppression, the youth rightly perceived, was none other than a revolutionary armed struggle for the total independence of their nation. Therefore, the radical Tamil youth, while making impassioned demands pressuring the old generation of the Tamil United Front leadership to advocate secession, resorted to revolutionary political violence to express their militant stand.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The political violence of the youth in the early seventies should be conceived both as a militant protest to the savage forms of State domination as well as a revolutionary

expression and continuation of the national struggle of the Tamils. This youth violence opened up a new dimension in Tamil politics ushering a new revolutionary epoch in the historical struggle of a nation of people for political independence.

In documenting the historical origin of youth violence in Tamil politics we should give credit to an organisation that moulded the most militant political activists and created the conditions for the emergence of revolutionary political practice. This organisation was the *Tamil Student Federation* which produced the most determined and dedicated youths whose singleminded devotedness to the cause of national freedom became an inspiration to others. The most outstanding freedom fighter who emerged from this tradition and became a martyr was the youth named *SIVAKUMARAN*. The earnestness, courage and determination of this young Tamil revolutionary in defying and challenging the authority of the Sinhalese State, particularly the repressive police apparatus, became a great legend. The revolutionary violence by which he kindled the flame of freedom became an inextinguishable fire that began to spread all over Tamil Eelam.

Political violence flared up in the form of bombings, shootings, robberies and attacks on Government property. A Sinhalese Minister's car was bombed during his visit to the North. As assassination attempt was made on Mr. R. Thiyagarajah, a Tamil Parliamentarian who betrayed the Tamil cause by supporting the Rupublican Constitution. An ardent Government supporter Mr. Kumarakulasingham, former Chairman of the Nallur Village Council was shot dead. Violent incidents erupted throughout Tamil Eelam on the day the new Constitution was passed. Buses were burned, Government buildings were bombed and the Sinhala national flags were burned.

Confronted with widespread violence which expressed none other than revolutionary resentment and rebellion against oppression, the State machinery reacted with repression and terror delegating excessive powers to the police. Empowered by law and encouraged by the ruling elite, the police practised excessive violence indiscriminately against the innocent people and primarily against the Tamil youth. The police tyranny manifested in the horrors of torture, imprisonment (without trials) and murders. The most abominable act of police brutality occurred on the night of the last day (10th January 1974) of the Fourth International Conference of Tamil Research held in Jaffna. It was during this great cultural event, when nearly a hundred thousand Tamil people were spellbound by the eloquent speech of the great Tamil scholar from Southern India Professor Naina Mohamed, the grim tragedy struck. Hundreds of Sinhala policemen armed to the teeth launched a well planned, lightening attack on the spectators with tear gas bombs, batons, and rifle butts which exploded into a giganatic commotion and stampede resulting in the tragic loss of eight lives and hundreds-including women and children-sustaining severe injuries. This event cut a deep wound in the heart of the Tamil nation ; it profoundly humiliated the national pride of the Tamil speaking people. The event betrayed the vicious character of the State police, which in the eyes of Tamils became a terrorist instrument of State oppression.

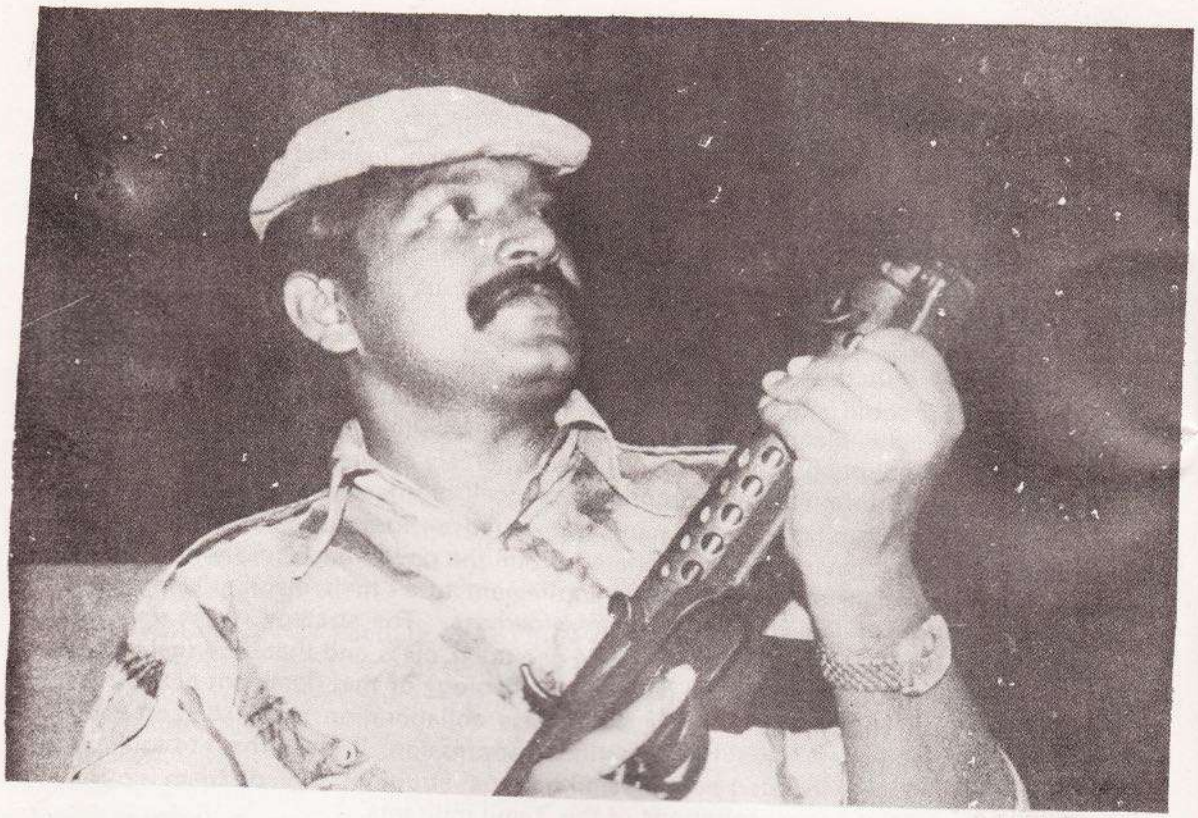
THE BIRTH OF THE TIGER MOVEMENT

The revolutionary ardour of the Tamil youth, which manifested in the form of indiscriminate outbursts of political violence in the early seventies, sought concrete political expression in an organisational structure built on a revolutionary political theory and practice. Neither the Tamil United Front nor the Left movement offered any concrete political venue to the revolutionary potential of the rebellious youth.

The political structure of the *Tamil United Front*, founded on a conservative bourgeois ideology could not provide the basis for the articulation of revolutionary politics. It became very clear to the Tamil masses and particularly to the revolutionary youth that the Tamil nationalist leaders, though they fiercely championed the cause of the Tamils, have failed to formulate any concrete practical programme of political action to liberate the oppressed Tamil nation. Having exhausted all forms of popular struggle for the last three decades, having been alienated from the power structure of the Sinhala State, the Tamil politicians still clinged onto Parliament to air their disgruntlement which went unheard, unheeded like vain cries in the wilderness. The strategy of the traditional Left parties was to collaborate with the Sinhala capitalist class and therefore their theoretical perspective was subsumed by the hegemonic ideology of that dominant class, which was none other than chauvinism. This sucidal class collaboration made the Left leaders to turn a blind eye to the stark realities of national oppression; it made them to ignore the revolutionary conditions generated by the Tamil national struggle; it made them incapable of mobilising the revolutionary aspirations of the Tamil militants.

Confronted with this political vacuum and caught up in a revolutionary situation created by the concrete conditions of intolerable national oppression the Tamil revolutionary youth sought desperately to create a revolutionary political organisation to advance the task of national liberation. It was in this specific political conjuncture *the Tiger Movement took its historical birth in 1972.* The movement was formed by its present leader and military commander *VELUPILLAI PRABAKARAN.* At the time of its inauguration the movement called itself *'The Tamil New Tigers'* and later on 5th May 1976 the organisation renamed itself as the *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.* From its inception the Tiger movement took into its ranks the most resolute, the most dedicated the most zealous young revolutionaries.

Structured as an urban geurrilla force, desciplined with an iron will to fight for the cause of national freedom, the Tigers emerged as the armed resistance movement of the oppressed Tamil masses. As a revolutionary liberation movement it provided a concrete organisational base to the insurrectionary spirit of the rebellious youth and soon established itself as the armed vanguard of the national struggle. *The Tiger's commitment to armed struggle as the form of popular mass struggle was undertaken after a careful and cautious appraisal of the objective conditions of the national struggle, with the fullest comprehension of the concrete situation in which the masses of people were presented with no other alternative other than to resort to revolutionary resistance to advance their national cause*



V. Prabakaran, leader and military commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Prabakaran, the leader of the Tiger Movement, is an ardent young revolutionary, born on the 26th November 1954, in the coastal town of Valvettiturai a place famous for its militancy against Sinhala State repression. He was drawn into revolutionary politics when he was sixteen, and earned the name 'Thamby' amongst the co-revolutionaries as he was very young. Prabakaran represented the aspirations of the rebellious Tamil youth who, having become disenchanted with the failures of non-violent political campaigns, resolved to fight back the barbarous form of state violence perpetrated on their people. Prabakaran soon organised a politico-military structure which found an organisational expression to the revolutionary ardour of these militant youth. Showing an extra-ordinary talent in planning military strategy and tactics and executing them to the amazement of the enemy, Prabakaran soon became a symbol of Tamil resistance and the Tiger Movement he founded became the revolutionary movement to spearhead the Tamil national liberation struggle.

Ideologically bound to the revolutionary theory and practice of Marxism and Leninism, our movement firmly believes that its commitment to armed struggle is not an alternative to mass movement. The revolutionary armed resistance must be sustained and supported by the mobilised masses. The invincible power of the organised masses, we

believe, must be activated as the force of popular resistance. Adopting Lenin's teaching that armed struggle 'must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism', our movement has chartered its political programme integrating the national struggle with class struggle defining our ultimate objective as national liberation and socialist revolution. With the conviction that armed struggle is the highest expression of political practice and must be channelled into a process of socialist revolution, the Tiger movement, from its earliest stages, engaged in developing and building political and military bases among the popular masses.

A MANDATE FOR SECESSION

The emergence of the Tiger Movement marked a new historical epoch in the nature and structure of the Tamil national struggle extending the dimension of the agitation to popular armed resistance. While our Movement was engaged in organising and developing its politico-military structure, great events of extra-ordinary political significance began to unfold in the Tamil political domain. It was the time when national oppression assumed such severity and harshness that made joint existence between the two nations intolerable and impossible. It was at the peak of this national oppression, when secession became the inevitable political destiny of the Tamil nation, the *Tamil United Front* called for a national convention in May 1976 at Vaddukoddai where a historical resolution was unanimously adopted calling for complete political independence of the Tamil nation. It was at this conference the *Tamil United Front* changed it name to *Tamil United Liberation Front*. The convention outrightly condemned the Republican Constitution of 1972, which "has made the Tamils a slave nation ruled by the new colonial masters the Sinhalese who are using the power they usurped to deprive the Tamil nation of its territory, language, citizenship, economic life, opportunities of employment and education thereby destroying all the attributes of nationhood of the Tamil people". *The convention resolved that "restoration and reconstitution of the free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM based on the right to self-determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in this country".*

The General Elections of July 1977 became a crucial testing ground for the secessionist cause of the Tamil United Liberation Front. The T.U.L.F. asked for a clear mandate from the people to wage a national struggle for secession and accordingly the Front explicitly stated in the Manifesto:

> **"Hence the Tamil United Liberation Front seeks in the general election the mandate of the Tamil Nation to establish an independent sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam that includes all the geographically continuous areas that have been the traditional homelands of the Tamil speaking people in this country".**

The Manifesto further stated :

> "The Tamil Nation must take the decision to establish its sovereignty in its homeland on the basis of its right to self-determination. The only

way to announce this decision to the Sinhalese Government and to the world is to vote for the Tamil United Liberation Front''.

The Manifesto finally pledged :

"The Tamil speaking representatives who get elected through these votes, while being members of the National State Assembly of Ceylon, will also form themselves into the 'NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TAMIL EELAM' which will draft a constitution for the State of Tamil Eelam and to establish the independence of the Tamil Eelam by bringing that constitution into operation either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle''.

In reference to the Tamil question the verdict at the elections was very crucial. It was fought precisely on a decision to secede. In a political sense, it assumed the character of a plebiscite, a public expression of a nation's will. The Tamil speaking people voted overwhelmingly in favour of secession, or rather, *the people of Tamil Eelam exercised, through a democratic political practice, their right to self-determination, their right to secede and form an independent State of their own. Thus, the Tamil question assumed a new dimension. It is no longer a question to be resolved by District Councils or by Federal system, nor by negotiations and pacts. It is no longer a question to bargain for concessions. It has become a question of national self-determination, a question of an inalienable right of a nation of people to decide their own political destiny. The Tamil nation did proclaim its determination to be an independent sovereign State, and this national will was articulated through a popular democratic practice. This was the specific mandate given to the T.U.L.F. leadership, an authentic irreversible mandate stamped with the popular will, a mandate to establish an independent sovereign socialist State of Tamil Eelam.*

THE REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE

The General Elections of 1977 resulted in a massive victory for the extreme right-wing United National Party (U.N.P.) with nearly 85% of the seats in Parliament. The traditional Left Parties were completely wiped out without a single seat, and the Tamil United Liberation Front, for the first time in Ceylon's political history, became the leading opposition Party in Parliament. The stage was set for a confrontation; the Tamils demanding secession and separate existence as a sovereign State and the Sinhala racist ruling Party seeking absolute State power to dominate and subjugate the will of the Tamil nation to live free. The intensity of this contradiction took its manifest form soon after the elections into a racial holocaust unprecedented in its violence towards the Tamils.

In this island wide racial conflagration hundreds of Tamils were mercilessly massacred and millions worth of Tamil property was destroyed and thousands of them made refugees. The State police and the armed forces openly colluded with the hooligans in their gruesome acts of arson, looting, rape and mass murder. Instead of containing the racist violence that was ravaging the whole island, the Government leaders made inflammatory statements with racist connotations that added fuel to the fire. It was the Tamil

plantation workers who bore the brunt of this racial onslaught. 77,000 of them became refugees and sought asylum in the Tamil areas of the North and East.

The racial horror had a profound impact on Tamil political thinking. While it hardened the militancy of the revolutionary youth, it exposed the political impotency of the Tamil bourgeois leadership, who, having failed to fulfill its pledges to the people, sought a collaborationist strategy to placate the Sinhale leaders. Jayawardane in his Machiavellian shrewdness soon realised that T.U.L.F. leaders were not serious in their secessionist demand but sought alternative to deceive the Tamil masses. The real threat of secession, the Government thought, arose from the militant Tamil youths who are unappeasable, irreconcilable and committed to the core to the goal of an independent socialist Tamil Eelam. The new regime, therefore, utilised all means to crush the revolutionary youth, the very ground from where the cry for political freedom emanated. The Government thus embarked on a ruthless policy of repression, delegating extra-powers to the police and military to clamp down on the Tamil youth. Caught up in a revolutionary situation and constantly victimised by the Police the young Tamil revolutionaries were forced to resist the State repression. The dialectic of repression and resistance began to unfold into a deadly national struggle ushering the armed people's war that opened a new dimension in the freedom movement of the Eelam Tamils.

TIGER MOVEMENT COMES TO LIMELIGHT

On the 7th April 1978, a police raiding party headed by the notorious torturer Inspector Bastiampillai suddenly surrounded a Tiger training camp deep into the northern jungle and held the guerrillas at gun point. One of our commando leaders, Lieutenant Chelvanayagam (alias Aman) tactfully swooped on a police officer, snatched his SMG and gunned down the police party. Inspector Bastiampillai (CID), Sub-Inspector Perambalam, Police Constable Balasingham and Police driver Siriwardana were all killed. Our geurrilla unit sustained no casualities. The incidents alarmed the Government but created euphoria among the Tamils since it signified the first major incident of armed resistance against the repressive state apparatus.

On the 25th April 1978, the Tiger movement for the first time officially claimed responsibility for the annihilation of the raiding party and the earlier killings of Police officers and Tamil traitors. Thus, the Tiger Movement came to limelight anuouncing itself to the world as the revolutionary resistant movement of the Tamils committed to the goal of national liberation of Tamil Eelam through armed struggle. The Sinhala Government reacted swiftly by enacting a law proscribing the Tiger movement. The Government also poured into Tamil areas large contingents of armed units for the 'Tiger hunt' and brought the Tamil nation under total military occupation.

Having intensified the military repression in Tamil Eelam, Jayawardane introduced a new constitution on the 7th September 1978, which bestowed upon him absolute dictatorial executive powers and gave Sinhala language and Buddhist religion extra-ordinary status, and relegated a second-class status to the Tamil language. While the Tamil Parliamentary Party failed in its duty to register any mass protest, the Tiger movement brought the matter to the attention of the international community by blowing up an AVRO Air-

The only aircraft owned by the national airline Air Ceylon was bombed and destroyed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on September 7, 1978, the day when the Sri Lankan regime introduced its new racist constitution.

craft, the only passenger plane owned by the national airline (Air Ceylon). The incident was a humiliation to the Government but boosted the morale of the Tamil freedom movement. The Tigers stepped up the campaign by raiding a Government bank (Tinnevely People's Bank) on the 5th December 1978 appropriating 1.68 million rupees of state money. In this daring daylight raid two police officers were shot dead and another seriously wounded. Our guerrilla fighters escaped without any casualty, taking away the weapons from the enemy.

To stamp out the growing armed resistance the Government took draconian measures. On the 20th July 1979 Jayawardane's racist regime enacted the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which contained the most infamous provisions that contravened the very principles of the Rule of Law and violated the norms of human justice. This notorious law denied trial by jury, enabled the detention of people for a period of eighteen months and allowed confessions extracted under torture as admissable in evidence. Having enacted the law the Government declared a State of Emergency in Jaffna, the northern Tamil capital and dispatched more military units to Tamil areas under the command of Brigadier Weeratunga with special instructions to wipe out 'terrorism' within six months. Empowered by law and encouraged by the State, the fascist Brigadier unleashed military terror unprecedented in its violence. Hundreds of innocent youths were arrested and subjected to barbarous torture and several of them were shot dead and their dead bodies were dumped on the road side. Their oppressive measures caused massive outcry all over the world and the Terrorism Act brought universal condemnation by the world human rights movements particularly by the International Commission of Jurists and Amnesty International.

TIGERS STEP UP GUERRILLA CAMPAIGN

The political events that unfolded since 1981 involved massive genocidal onslaughts on the life and property of the Tamil community and increased guerrilla campaigns of our liberation movement.

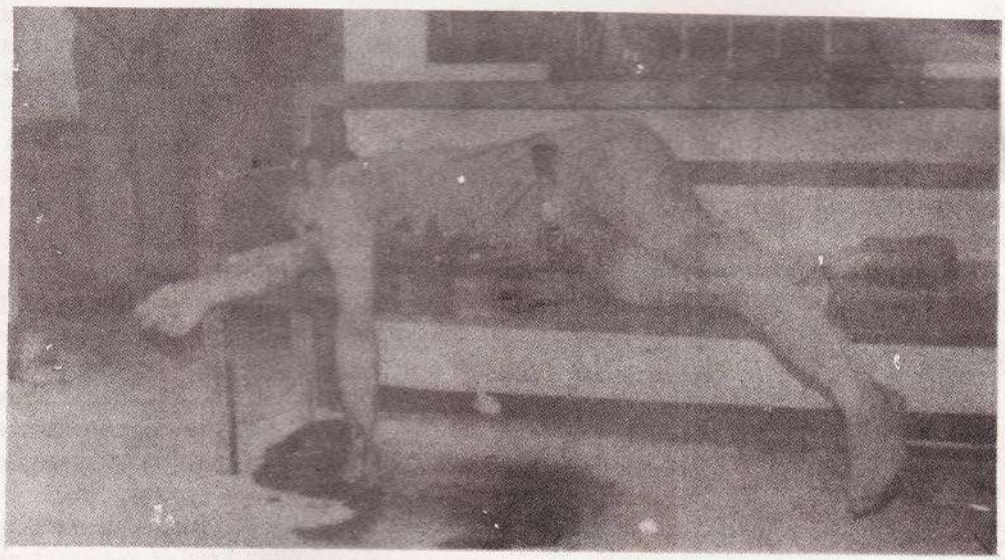
On the midnight of 31st May 1981, the Sinhala police went on a wild rampage burning down the city of Jaffna. This state terrorism exploded into a mad frenzy of arson, looting and murder. Hundreds of shops were burnt to ashes, the Jaffna market square was set on flames. A Tamil newspaper office and Jaffna M.P.'s house were gutted. The most abominable act of cultural genocide was the burning down of the famous Jaffna public library destroying more than 90,000 volumes of invaluable literary and historical works an act that outraged the conscience of the world Tamils. The whole episode was master-minded by two Cabinet Ministers (Cyril Mathew and Gamini Dissanayake) of Jayawardane's regime who were in Jaffna during the riots and were supervising the orgy of police violence.

An island wide racial conflagration flared up again just three months after the burning of Jaffna, a racial onslaught on the Tamils organised by leading members of the Government, assisted by the armed forces, and executed by gangs of Sinhala thugs and hooligans. And again our people became the cruel victims of Sinhala racist barbarity; victims of insane sadistic orgy, victims of arson, looting, rape and murder. Hundreds of our people, including women and children were slaughtered, thousands of them made homeless and millions worth of Tamil property destroyed. The repetitive pattern of this organised violence that brought colossal damage in terms of life and property to our people signified the genocidal intent underlying this horrid phenomenon. The objective of the chauvinistic ruling class is nothing other than to inflict maximum injury to the Tamils to terrorise, subjugate and destroy the aspirations of our people for political independence. Yet more and more the oppression intensified the determination of our people became more and more hardened with an iron will to resist the forces of repression. As the consequence of heightened repression the resistance of the freedom fighters increased with such a vehemence that it caused thedestabilisation of the Sinhala state and disrupted the civil administrative system in Tamil Eelam.

On the 2nd July 1982 the Tiger guerrillas launched a lightening attack on a police patrolling party at Nelliady, Jaffna, killing four police officers on the spot. Three police personnel were seriously injured.

A police officer lying dead following the Tiger guerrilla ambush of a police party at Nelliaddy, Jaffna.

Another major incident of guerrilla attack that shook the Sinhala police system was the successful raid on the well-guarded Chavakachcheri Police station. On the early morning of 27th October 1982 a Tiger guerrilla unit commanded by Lieutenant Lucas Charles Antony (alias Aseer) launched a well planned sudden attack on the Police station, killing three police officers and injuring several others. The rest of the police personnel fled in terror. From the Police armoury we raided thirty-three pieces of weaponary-nineteen repeater guns, nine 303 rifles, two sub-machine guns, two shot guns and one revolver. Two of our guerrilla members sustained minor injuries. This successful guerrilla raid forced the Government to close down almost all the Police stations in the North and the Police administrative system became paralysed.



A police constable killed during a Tiger guerrilla raid on Chavakachcheri police station.

On the 18th February 1983 our freedom fighters shot and killed Police Inspector Wijewardane and his jeep driver Rajapaksa of Point Pedro Police station. Inspector Wijewardane is notorious for Police repression in that area.

On the 4th March 1983 at Umaiyalpuram, Paranthan, our guerrilla fighters ambushed an army convoy and in the gun battle that ensued several army personnel were seriously injured and the rest fled in fear. In that ambush two armoured cars were damaged.

On the 2nd April 1983 the Tigers blasted the Jaffna Secretariat building by bombs, just a few hours before a Government organised 'security conference' to discuss ways and means to crush the Tiger movement. The blast caused extensive damage to the building and destroyed all State documents. Several Government jeeps were set on fire.

On the 29th April 1983, the Liberation Tigers assassinated three prominent supporters of the ruling United National Party on the same day, as a warning to all Tamil traitors who

supported the racist Government. Two of them were U.N.P. candidates for the local elections (E. V. Ratnasingham of Point Pedro and S. S. Muthiah of Chavakachcheri) and the other, S. S. Rajaratnam, a long time U.N.P. supporter, and the body-guard of U.N.P.'s Jaffna organiser K. Ganeshalingam. As a direct consequence of this action all the Tamil U.N.P. candidates withdrew from the elections and several Tamils resigned from the ruling party.

TIGERS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS

Responding to a mass campaign launched by our movement the majority of the Tamil people living predominately in the northern province staged a mass boycott of local elections on the 18th May 1983.

Such a mass boycott of elections, unprecedented in the political history of the Tamils, constitutes a great political and propaganda victory for the Tiger Movement. The T.U.L.F. which defied the Tiger appeal, suffered an insulting humiliation and irreparably damaged its political image, when 90% of the voters in the North rejected the Party's appeal to vote. The boycott was called by the Tigers, who, for the first time, launched an effective popular campaign appealing to the people to shun the local government elections as a mark of disapproval and rejection of the racist State system that has imposed a reign of terror and repression against the Tamils. V. Prabakaran chairman and the military commander of the Tiger Movement in a statement widely circulated among the people called upon the Tamils to 'reject the civil administrative machinery of the Sri Lankan state terrorists and join the popular armed struggle directed towards national emancipation'. He also accused the reactionary bourgeois political Party, the Tamils United Liberation Front, as functioning as agents of the Sinhala racist regime and utilise the slogan of 'national freedom' to win the elections.

On the day of elections (18th May '83) just before the voting started, time-bombs planted by our movement exploded at five polling booths in the Tamil city of Jaffna causing panic and havoc among the armed forces. On the same day, an hour before the polling ended Liberation Tiger guerrillas opened fire with machine guns on the army and police units guarding a polling booth at Nallur, Jaffna, killing an army corporal and seriously wounding a soldier and two policemen. As a consequence of guerrilla attacks, the Government imposed a state of national emergency.

REASONS FOR THE RECENT HOLOCAUST

The causality that underlies the recent holocaust is manifold. It is absurd to assume that our guerrilla ambush on the midnight of 23rd July 1983 that killed fourteen Sinhala soldiers and seriously wounded several others precipitated the calamity. Riots had already exploded at Trincomalee weeks before the guerrilla ambush. Aided by the military, masses of Sinhala hooligans went on a wild rampage at Trincomalee massacring innocent Tamil people and burning down their houses. Under the cover of Emergency and Curfew the military openly colluded with the Sinhala vandals in an orgy of arson, looting and murders.

An all out genocidal assault on the Tamils living in Colombo has been pre-planned by Sinhala fascist groups led by leading members of the ruling party. The recent outburst, unprecedented in its destructive horror, is therefore certainly an open manifestation of a genocidal programme hatched by the fascist leadership as the Hitlerian 'final solution' to the Tamil national question.

There are two basic reasons for the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie to let loose a genocidal repression on Tamils. Firstly, to divert the mass attention from a deepening economic crisis brought about by a dependent neo-colonial economy which has reduced the Sri Lankan Government as a perpetual beggar to western imperialist aid-giving agencies. The popular resentment that has been accumulating from massive inflation and mass unemployment as a consequence of a disastrous economic policy has been constantly diverted and channelled as anti-Tamil hysteria. Secondly, the massacre of Tamils on a genocidal scale the Sinhala fascist ruling class always conceived as the only solution to the national question. Mass killings and massive destruction of property, these fascists wrongly assumed, may humble the Tamils and wipe out the Tamil national freedom struggle.

PART THREE

THEORETICAL AND POLITICO-MILITARY OBJECTIVES

OUR THEORETICAL GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The first two parts document the specific historical conjunctures and their determinant effects in generating the demand for secession. The principal determinant factor that propelled the dynamics of national friction leading to this inevitable choice of political independence was none other than national oppression. Therefore, in the study of the Tamil Eelam national question, oppression, that is, the oppression of a big nation against a small nation perpetrated within the power structure of a unitary state becomes the crucial element for a theoretical analysis as well as for a political strategy.

Positing the problem within the theoretical discourse of Marxism, we hold that Lenin's theoretical elucidations and political strategies offer an adequate basis for a precise formulation of this question. Lenin's exposition of the concept of self-determination, that deals primarily with a nation's right to secession and statehood is adopted here as a theoretical guide to provide a concrete presentation of the Tamil national question.

Our reliance on Lenin's formulations is determined by the fact that neither Marx or Engels nor any other theoretician offers a systematic theory with a concrete political strategy for proletarian praxis in relation to the national question. Indisputably Lenin's works still stand as a theoretical and political paradigm on this domain engaging the problems in manifold aspects. Situating the question within the theoretical framework of historical materialism, providing a historico-economic analysis, Lenin advances a correct proletarian perspective on the national question inter-relating the national struggle with proletarian class struggle. His analysis exposes the limitations and bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy and the dangers of extreme bourgeois nationalism. Lenin firmly held that the non-recognition or rejection of the problems of national minorities will deeply affect the working-class movement and obstruct the proletarian struggle for socialist revolution.

While taking Lenin's discourse as our guide, we are not blind to the fact that every national struggle must be situated within the context of its own concrete historical conditions. The liberation struggle of the Tamil Eelam nation demanding political independence, the historical conjunctures of which we have already outlined, arose primarily from the contradictions of national oppression and therefore must be confined to the theoretical specifications and political implications of that nation's right to secession. Within this context many questions are posed. Whether the oppressed Tamil nation has the right to secede; whether the right of that nation to self-determination contravenes the socialist principle of proletarian internationalism; under what political and economic

conditions of oppression will a nation opt for secession; whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nations; whether the struggle for political independence has the revolutionary potentiality to promote proletarian revolution and socialist transformation of the oppressed Tamil social formation; what kind of political strategy can best serve the class interests of the proletariat of the oppressed as well as the oppressor nations, a strategy which has to be adopted by the Marxist revolutionaries of the oppressor nation who are caught between a progressive struggle of an oppressed nation and a reactionary bourgeois nationalism of the oppressor nation. These problems are raised and hotly debated within the context of the Tamil national question. The debates and arguments, enmeshed with vague generalisations and loose conceptualisations, have created so much confusion and controversy that a clarity and a correct perspective on this issue has become absolutely essential.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SECESSION

The Tamil nation is a historically constituted social formation possessing all the basic elements that are usually assembled to define a concrete characterisation of a nation. Yet a definition as to what constitutes a nation is theoretically unnecessary since we can precisely formulate our issue within the Leninist conceptual framework of the self - determination of nations.

The concept of self - determination needs a precise and clear definition. Such a clarification is vital to our national question, since some of the so-called Leninists in Sri Lanka are confused on this basic concept. The most ridiculous misrepresentation and misconceptualisation of this concept arise from a position in which the right of the Tamil nation to self-determination is given recognition while opposing secession. Attempting to show a radical face as revolutionaries these political opportunists are proclaiming that the Tamil speaking people as an oppressed nation has the right to self-determination; but they do not have the right to secession. It is precisely on this position one finds a calculated distortion of a clearly defined concept. Lenin's texts on the national question constantly reiterate the definition that the self-determination of nations is nothing but secession and the formation of an independent state. To quote a couple of examples:

> "Consequently, if we want to grasp the meaning of self-determination of nations, not by juggling with legal definitions, or 'inventing' abstract definitions, but by examining the historico-economic conditions of the national movements, we must inevitably reach the conclusion that the self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies and the formation of an independent national state".
>
> (Lenin: 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination)

Again in the same theoretical essay Lenin writes:

> "Self-determination of nations in the Marxist programme cannot, from a historio-economic point of view, have any other meaning than

political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state".

Thus, Lenin offers a precise definition. The right of nations to self-determination in his formulation means the right of an oppressed nation to secede from the oppressor nation and form an independent national state. Therefore, those who pretend to recognise the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to self-determination and argue such a right does not embody the freedom to secede, are neither Marxists or Leninists but chauvinists parading under socialist slogans. To characterise these pseudo-socialists in Lenin's own words:

> "A socialist in any of the oppressor nations who does not recognise and does not struggle for the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination (i.e for the right to secession) is in reality a chauvinist, not a socialist".

The freedom of an oppressed nation to secede, in Lenin's theoretical analysis, is advanced, on one level, as a universal socialist principle of workers democracy, a corner stone of what Lenin calls 'consistent democracy'. On a different level the struggle of an oppressed nation to secession is seen as a revolutionary ground for mass action, a ground for a proletarian onslaught on the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the political genius of Lenin situates this struggle of the oppressed nations within the realms of socialist democracy and proletarian revolution. It is precisely within these two spheres we wish to situate the Tamil national question to elucidate the progressive and revolutionary character of this independence struggle.

INALIENABLE RIGHT OF A NATION

In championing the right of secession and articulating the principle of self-determination in the national democratic programme, Lenin sparked off a violent theoretical controversy among his co-revolutionaries. Whether such a right will lead to disintegration and fragmentation of smaller states, whether the freedom to secede contradicts the Marxian principle of proletarian internationalism, were questions raised against his thesis on the national question. These questions and Lenin's consistent defence of this position are important to us because it is precisely these questions that are hurled against the Tamil demand for secession.

The freedom of secession should not be confused with the reactionary bourgeois category of 'separatism' which is sometimes utilised to undermine the genuine democratic struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. The freedom of secession articulated within the concept of self-determination exclusively implies an inalienable right of a nation of people to agitate for political independence from the oppressor nation. This complete freedom to agitate for secession is a right, which can be exercised under conditions of intolerable oppression. Therefore, the recognition of this right to secession, Lenin repeatedly argued, is vital to prevent national friction arising out of a big nation's chauvinism, a right that upholds the complete equality of nations, a right, if violated will lead to national hostility

and the fragmentation of nations. It is here, Lenin advances the dialectical principle that, in order to ensure unity there must be freedom to separate. He even argued that freedom to divorce will not cause the disintegration of the family. Therefore, Lenin rigorously held that he was not advocating a doctrine of separatism but advancing a highest principle of a socialist democracy in which absolute freedom should be accorded to a nation of people to secede under conditions of oppression. To quote him in this context;

> "Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession.....This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression".
>
> (Lenin: 'The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination.)

PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Marxist political praxis certainly advances proletarian internationalism, but at the same time, gives fullest recognition to the revolutionary character and the historical legitimacy of the national movements. The principle of nationality, or rather, the phenomenon of nationalism itself, in Marxist discourse is characterised as a historically inevitable political phenomenon in bourgeois society. For Marx, nationalism is historically prior to proletarian internationalism. Proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist social formations, Marx foresaw, will generate the progressive forces of internationalism towards the gradual structuration and consolidation of a world socialist society. Lenin, who saw the historical unfolding of the great socialist revolution, became an ardent champion of proletarian internationaliam, since he rightly believed that only the revolutionary power of a united international proletariat can challenge the structure of dominance of world capitalism. Therefore, we find in Lenin's texts a constant emphasis on the necessity of the solidarity of the working classes of all nations to mobilise to fight against the hegemony of international capital. Yet, on the other hand, we find Lenin as a fierce champion of the oppressed; he fought vigorously against all forms of oppression. He correctly perceived that national oppression is the enemy of the class struggle and without the emancipation of the oppressed, proletarian solidarity of the oppressed and the oppressor nations is unattainable. That is why, Lenin firmly held that proletarian internationalism demands that the proletariat of the oppressor nation should grant the right to self-determination (i.e. the right to secession) to the oppressed nation.

> "The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words, neither confidence nor

class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations....."

(Lenin: 'The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination.)

The right of nations to self-determination does not contravene the socialist principle of proletarian internationalism. On the contrary, as Lenin has shown, the recognition of this right is a fundamental necessity to advance internationalism. It will amount to chauvinism and political opportunism to preach the noble ideals of internationalism to a nation of people caught up in a liberation struggle against the oppression of the bigger dominant nation.

INTOLERABLE OPPRESSION AND INEVITABLE SECESSION

We are now approaching the most crucial stage of our discussion on the Tamil Eelam national question. That is, under what political and economic conditions of oppression a nation will opt for secession, and whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for national independence will serve the Interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and oppressor nations. An elucidation of these issues is vital for a theoretical comprehension and for a political strategy for proletarian revolutionaries in Sri Lanka who are confronted with a national struggle of an oppressed nation which has chosen the path of secession.

The determinant factors behind the Tamil's decision to secede and form a state of their own, as we have pointed out earlier, are the historical conditions of intolerable national oppression. The cumulative effects of this multi-dimensional oppression made joint existence unbearable. The contradictions that emanated from national friction made a political rupture inevitable. Thrown into the painful dilemma of political isolation and economic deprivation and threatened with an annihilation of their ethnic identity, the Tamil speaking people of Eelam nation, had no other alternative but to opt for secession. Under intensified conditions of national oppression, a decision to secede and fight for political independence, is not only a correct action but also a revolutionary move which will serve the interests of the class struggle.

Lenin says:

"From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big state. They will therefore, resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder any and all economic intercourse. In that case, the interests of capitalist development and of the freedom of the class struggle will be best served by secession."

(Lenin: The Right of Nations to Self-Determination)

Within the Leninist perspective we can safely hold that the decision of the oppressed Tamil nation to secede from the oppressor nation was necessary and historically inevitable

because of the extreme conditions of oppression, the nature and form of which we have outlined in the early parts of this document. The question that can be posed now is, whether the Tamil struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of the oppressed and oppressor nations.

THE ROLE OF THE PROGRESSIVES OF THE OPPRESSOR NATION

Marx, who supported the Irish national movement, called upon the English working classes to fight for the liberation of Ireland, which he considered as an oppressed colony under England. He firmly held that the liberation of Ireland was a necessity and an essential condition for the emancipation of the English working classes. He asserted that no nation can be free while it practises oppression against another country.

The writings of Marx and Lenin on the national question announces a very important political truth, that national oppression would inevitably hold back and divide the working classes of the oppressor nation. It is through oppression and through the hegemony of a national chauvinistic ideology that the ruling bourgeoisie exerts dominance and power over the working masses of the oppressor nation. Marx wrote:

> "It is (Britain's oppression of Ireland) the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation. It is the secret of which the capitalist class maintains its power".
>
> (Marx's Letter to Meyer and Vogt, April 9th 1870)

Lenin took Marx as his guide on the national question when he wrote :

> "Our model will always be Marx, who, after living in Britain for decades and becoming half-English, demanded freedom and national independence for Ireland in the interests of the socialist movement of the British workers".
>
> (Lenin: 'On the National Pride of the Great Russians')

We advocate that the progressives and revolutionaries of the oppressor nation (in this case, the Sinhala nation) who uphold the proletarian praxis of Marxism and Leninism should follow the strategy advanced by these great revolutionary teachers and give an unconditional, unrelented support to the freedom struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. Such a political strategy can only serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nation, since the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie has been reinforcing a chauvinistic ideological hegemony and has been actually practising a vicious form of national oppression with the motive of dividing and weakening the working class movement of Sri Lanka. To break this bourgeois ideological hegemony and to unite the proletariat of the oppressor nation, the revolutionary Marxists in the South should advance an ideological battle supporting most resolutely the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to secession. Such a strategy requires a profound political education of the masses on the democratic rights of the oppressed nation. As Lenin said, 'the

masses must be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionery manner'—the right of nations to self-determination. Such an ideological struggle on the part of the Sinhala progressives is essential to raise the level of political consciousness of the Sinhala proletariat to understand and accept the legitimacy of the Tamil cause. It is precisely this lack of political consciousness that draws Sinhala masses into anti-Tamil racial violence and prevents the development of a proletarian class consciousness.

Proletarian revolutionaries committed to the task of socialist revolution should seek and understand the revolutionary potential of mass movements. The national liberation struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation has such revolutionary potential, the failure on the part of the Sinhalese progressives to chart a political programme with the fullest comprehension of the objective and subjective conditions of that struggle, will be a great set back to the class struggle of the Sinhala nation. The most important political truth to be grasped in this historical situation is that only the national emancipation of the oppressed Tamil nation will enable the working masses of the oppressor nation to free themselves from the shackles of bourgeois chauvinism and mobilise them against the State power. The liberated socialist Tamil Eelam would be a revolutionary ally of the oppressed Sinhala masses to fight and destroy the bourgeois state apparatus.

NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The theoretical perspective of historical materialism necessitates the investigation of any national movement in relation to the historical development of world capitalism. The nationalism of the European nation states arose with the collapse of feudalism and the transition to capitalism, with the unification of markets and the revolutionary development of productive forces leading to the birth of a new bourgeois class. The ascendency of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois nationalism led to the oppression and exploitation of other nations. Advanced stage of capitalist development gave rise to monopoly capitalism which took the global form of imperialism. The imperialist penetration and its form of oppression produced determinant effects on the mode of production of the peripheral formations. Separating the direct producers from their means of production, creating a mass of free labourers, these effects generated the dynamics of the capitalist mode in the penetrated societies. The development of the productive forces in the capitalist mode led to the organisation of the proletariat as a revolutionary class force.

The imperialist penetration, not only generated the mechanisms of the capitalist development but also shifted the national struggles to the peripheral social formations. In this context the nature of nationalism, the national struggle and the class relations in the national movements of the Third World countries must be viewed in relation to the transformations in the expanding capitalist economy, its global effects, its structural relations with developing peripheral capitalism. The world hegemony and the development of the revolutionary proletarian classes within the space of imperialist dominance, have changed the structure and character of the contemporary national struggles of the Third World. The so-called progressive national bourgeoisie has lost its revolutionary character to advance the national struggle as a democratic social force. The histori-

cal conjuncture of global capitalism has eliminated all progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie, its historical role in the national revolution has shifted to the revolutionary proletariat. Such structural transformation in the class elements has necessitated a revolutionary socialist strategy inter-relating the class struggle with national liberation struggle under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, a strategy to advance the class struggle along with the national liberation struggle both against the indigenous bourgeoisie and international capitalism. *The political objective of our movement is to advance the national struggle along with the class struggle, or rather, our fundamental objective is national emancipation and socialist transition of our social formation.*

THE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY

The politico-military strategy of our liberation movement is devised in accordance with the specific concrete conditions of our oppressed nation. We are committed, since the inception of our movement, to an armed revolutionary struggle to achieve our ultimate objective, i.e the establishment of an independent sovereign socialist State of Tamil Eelam. Our strategy aims at the organisation and politicisation of the broad masses of Tamil Eelam towards a popular war of national liberation and socialist revolution. Our total strategy therefore integrates both the national struggle and class struggle, inter-links both nationalism and socialism into a revolutionary project aimed at liberating our people both from national oppression and from the exploitation of man by man. This strategy aims to fuse the progressive patriotic feelings of the broad masses with proletarian class consciousness to accelerate the process of national emancipation and socialist transition of our social formation.

The military objective of our national movement is not simply confined to a confrontation with the armed forces of the oppressive regime, nor is our commitment to revolutionary resistance an alternative to mass movement. Our revolutionary organisation holds the view that armed resistance, to be a genuine mode of popular struggle, must be sustained and supported by the wider sections of broad masses.

Since the banning of our movement we have been functioning as a revolutionary under-ground, with political and military cells all over Tamil Eelam. We have chosen urban guerrilla warfare as the effective mode of armed struggle after a careful and cautious appraisal of the specific conditions of our national situation. Our guerrilla units live with the people, sustained by the people, like the fish in the sea. Our military units are always based in Tamil Eelam and continue to struggle heroically as the armed vanguard of our oppressed people. Our freedom fighters are armed political militants, political agents with a mission of liberating our people from all modes of oppression and exploitation. Our guerrilla fighters are conscious of the revolutionary dictum that politics guides the gun. By the consistent hard work of our political cadres our movement has recruited into its ranks, peasants, workers, students and revolutionary intellectuals and we are fast growing into a mass national movement.

Since the recent genocidal onslaught vast sections of the popular masses have been rallying behind our liberation organisation since we constitute the most powerful, well organised fighting force in Tamil Eelam. Because of growing popular support our

politico-military strategy is now projected in transforming our protracted guerrilla warfare into a people's war of national liberation. The process involves massive expansion of our guerrilla units into a people's army of liberation, a process in which vast sections of our people will be drawn into a mass armed struggle.

The effect of our prolonged and very intensifying armed resistance on the morale of the Sinhala soldiers and on the racist state system as a whole is devastating. Unable to contain an effective guerrilla warfare sustained by the entire Tamil people the morale of the Sinhala army has been shattered. There has been a heavy erosion of discipline among the Sinhala soldiers, and there were cases of mass desertions. The Sinhala soldiers are young, inexperienced, paid servants of the State, who live in an alien territory, unwanted and abjectly hated by the people; who live in constant terror of an unseen enemy who will strike at any moment, at any place; who feel no moral or spiritual value in sacrificing life for a war of hatred master-minded by the ruling elite of his nation. We are confident that the time is not far away when we will be able to drive this frightened shaky mercenary army from our motherland.

The effect of our armed struggle on the state system and the economic structure is disastrous. The civil administration of the Sinhala state in Tamil Eelam has been paralysed; political institutions have become defunct; the state system as a whole is destabilised; a state of anarchy is fast developing in the Sinhala nation, and a crisis is brewing up in the Government itself. The island's economy is in shambles, primarily due to the cost of sustaining a prolonged guerrilla war and owing to the chaos of perpetual racial violence. The July 1983 racial upheaval has effectively destroyed the entire economic infra-structure of the capital. The fires of hatred unleashed against our people by the Sinhala ruling class have gutted to ashes the very foundations of the island's economy. Sri Lanka has now become a sick man of south Asia, weak, fragile, yet seething with hatred the venom of which will bring the final disaster.

OUR APPEAL TO THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD

On several fronts of the world today a revolutionary war is being fought, a war between two historically antagonistic forces, the oppressed and the oppressor. Our liberation struggle as an oppressed nation is an integral part of this international war, a war of the revolutionaries against the reactionary forces of oppression, the forces of imperialism, neo-colonialism, zionism and racism. Though each liberation struggle has its own historical specificity and its unique conditions, in their essence they articulate a universal historical aspiration of humankind to free from all systems of oppression and exploitation. In this context, Tamil Eelam national struggle is similar in content to that of the Palestinian, Namibian or South African people's struggle, or any struggle of the oppressed people based on their right to self-determination.

In conclusion, we appeal to all progressive forces and revolutionary movements of the world to recognise our people's right to self-determination and give unrelented support and solidarity to the armed revolutionary struggle of our liberation movement.

We the Liberation Tigers, wish to express our support and solidarity to all revolutionary liberation struggles of the oppressed masses of the world.

Lieutenant Chelvanayagam (alias Aman, Chellakili, Chandran) (Left) and V. Prabakaran, Leader and military commander (right).

Target practising by a Tiger guerrilla fighter and a Tiger commando assault unit on parade.

POLITICAL AND THEORETICAL WORKS RELEASED BY THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM

1. Towards Socialist Tamil Eelam (Tamil), Nov. 1979
2. Tamil Nation under the Grip of Racism (Tamil), Jan. 1980
3. State Terrorism and Armed Revolution (Tamil), April 1983
4. Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle (English), Aug. 1983

NEW PUBLICATIONS TO BE RELEASED SOON

5. Tamil version of 'Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle'
6. Role of Women in the National Liberation Struggles
7. Tamil Eelam State as the Permanent Solution to the Plantation Tamils
8. Socialism and People's War of Liberation