Chapter V

Crystallisation of Tamil nationality in Sri Lanka

The purpose of writing this chapter is to give details of developments which have led to the crystallization of Tamil nationality in Sri Lanka particularly after transfer of power there. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with various acts of omission and commission on the part of majority Sinhalese ruling elites and reactions of different Tamil political parties and militant groups regarding the genuine and perceived sense of grievances, persecution, deprivation and repression. The second part is exclusively devoted to the activities of militant organisations particularly the LTTE, terrorism and state terrorism, sufferings of the people, intensification of war between the LTTE and Sri Lankan armed forces and for a brief period between the LTTE and IPKF (1987-1990), and the emergence of LTTE as the most important organisation virtually controlling the entire Tamil land of North-East in Sri Lanka. Developments of these types have also resulted in the crystallization of Tamil nationality of India.
Sri Lanka faces the most dangerous ethnic crisis with conflict between the Tamil minority and the Sinhala majority. The two ethnic communities are sitting on the top of a volcano which can erupt any moment.

The Sinhalisation policy which was adopted after independence by Sinhala ruling elites crystallised the Tamil nationality. The rise of the DK in Tamil Nadu and its version of anti-Brahmin, populist nationalism has an important effect on Sri Lankan Tamil consciousness in the 1950s and 1960s. Tamil pride in culture and language had been an important part of Tamil identity. Even as early as the 1950s, C. Suntheralingam spoke in terms of a Dravida Saiva Siddhanta consciousness as part of the Sri Lankan Tamil identity. However, his writings were on the fringe of the movement and were, therefore not reflected in the consciousness of other Tamil political leaders, especially S.J.V. Chelvanayakam who was a Christian with little affinity for this type of political consciousness.

In the 1970s when the demand for a separate state for Tamils was made in Sri Lanka,
there was much writing which pointed to a sense of pride in Tamil history; but again, Tamil political discussion and discourse, whether among moderate Tamils or in the publications of Tamil militant groups, centred around Tamil grievances based on linguistic, economic, cultural and territorial rights and their sense of oppression. It was this discourse that gave birth to the concept of a Tamil linguistic region.

The riots of 1983, however, had a major qualitative impact not only in terms of the increasing radicalization of the Tamils, but also in the type of language and discourse used to present the Tamil cause. Certain Tamil nationalist myths which had been politically latent began to be openly expressed; there was a deliberate and conscious attempt to create a Dravida, Saiva Siddhanta political identity. The main thrust of this campaign appears to come, not so much from Madras or Jaffna, where every day issues of survival point to a difficult type of political situation, but from the expatriate community, which has begun to write extensively on Tamil history and ideology. Their writings were circulated widely and have an important effect on Tamil consciousness,
Tamil myths as expoused by some Tamil expatriate scholars appear to have the following elements. Firstly, Tamils of Sri Lanka are the heirs to an old and ancient civilization which had its roots in Mohenjodaro and Harrappa Civilizations which had been destroyed by less developed Aryans from West Asia. Secondly, Tamils are the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka and the Sinhalese were actually Tamils who came later to the island and became Sinhalese after adopting Buddhism as their religion. Thirdly, the Tamil language spoken in Sri Lanka is in its purest form: it is Tamil as spoken during the Sangam renaissance of the 9th century. Fourthly, Saiva Siddhanta is the religion of the Tamil people and has a special homeland in Sri Lanka because of the teaching of Arumuga Navalar.

There are many aspects to the creation of this Dravida, Saiva Siddhanta identity, which are rather disturbing. In the first place, the sources used to argue the Tamil case, especially with regard to ancient times, are the very same sources that have been to be historically unreliable by critical Sinhalese scholars. Generally most Tamil scholars accept the Mahavamsa only as a source of legends. One

of the argument put forward to prove that the Sinhalese are of Tamil descent is a quotation from the Mahavamsa that prince Vijaya, after rejecting Kuveni made a Tamil princess from Madurai and his courtiers also married Tamil women.

It is therefore asserted that from the beginning the Sinhalese were a mixed race. The fact that most ethnic groups as they exist today are mixed races is perhaps correct, but using the Mahavamsa as a historical source, whether by Tamils or Sinhalese, poses major problems of interpreting historical reality. In some cases, Tamil writers have used the Ramayana and Mahabharata as sources to show an early Tamil presence in Sri Lanka. The Mahabharata and Ramayana, the two great Indian epics written in Sanskrit before the sixth century B.C. mention the Naga Kingdoms and their conquest by Ravana, the Tamil Yaksha king of Sri Lanka.

The Sinhalese have always claimed that they were the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka, with the Tamil presence always being that of invader. The

2. Ibid. 29

Sinhalese chronicles, the Mahavamsa and the Dipavamsa, are used as evidence of the claim to priority. Tamil scholar Poonnambalam has to say to combat this myth of origin. According to tradition, the Tamils of India and Sri Lanka, are lineal descendants of the Naga and Yaksha people. Nagadipa in the North of Sri Lanka was an actual Kingdom known to historians and the people who occupied it were all part of an immigrant tribe from South India. The conclusions that could validly be drawn from the new historical data clearly establish that the ancestors of the present day Tamils were the original occupiers of the island long before 543 B.C. which the Pali chronicles date as the earliest human habitations of Sri Lanka.

However, the assertion of the rights of one ethnic group results in the need to deligitimize the other. Sinhala nationalists, using the Mahavamsa, delegitimize Tamil claims by portraying them as foreigners and invaders. The Tamil response to this allegation is to assert that there is no such thing as a Sinhalese. While the Tamils are 'the lineal descendants of the original inhabitants of the island' the Sinhalese lack pedigree, no matter what the racial

5. Ibid, p.20.
origin, little remains of the original stock, except belief in it: Finally, the king who accepted Buddhism for Sri Lanka is described as Devampriya Thoesan, a Tamil Hindu king of Lanka.

It is perhaps time that both Tamils and Sinhalese accept the findings of Senake Bandaranayake who have clearly pointed to the fact that Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims in Sri Lanka, are a racially mixed groups. Waves of migration and internal migration have obliterated any claims to racial exclusivity. Sinhala and Tamil may be product of ethnic and religious consciousness.

The religious revival among the Tamils in Sri Lanka was largely due to the pioneering efforts of Arumuga Navalar. He could be compared to Dayananda Saraswathi who founded the Arya Samaj in North India. What Dayananda did for the Vedic religion in the North, Navalar accomplished for the Saiva-Agamic faith in South India and Sri Lanka. He was hailed as the father of modern Tamil prose, originator of public speaking, the first non-christian to write and publish Tamil-books for schools, pioneer textual critic, an

6. Ibid.
innovator in grammar, and founder of Saiva schools. Utilising the profound knowledge he had acquired while helping Rev. Peter Percival with the Tamil translation of the Bible, Navalar counter attacked the Christian missionaries who were publishing tracts ridiculing the Hindu gods and scriptures. Navalar started publishing pungent pamphlets against the Christians and initiated a movement to win back those who had been converted to Christianity.

The activities of Navalar led to the founding of the Saiva Paripalana Sabha (Society for the Preservation of Saivism) in 1888, and the Jaffna Hindi High School in 1890 which was later renamed Hindu College.

Navalar, it may be remembered, spent several years in Madras, in lecturing and publishing. But many others C.W. Tamotaram Pillai, V Kanagasabhai, T. Kanagasundram Pillai, T. Saravanamuthu Pillai, Sabapathy Navalar and N. Kathirauel Pillai virtually spent their lives in South India holding positions in government service and publishing their works with a sense of dedication.

These schools considered themselves a part of the mainstream of Tamil culture and contributed to it as much as they received. In fact, during the time of Navalar and about three decades after his death, it was the Jaffna school that dominated the Tamil literary scene. By the down of the twentieth century, the Tamil elite, both in South India and Sri Lanka had become quite enthusiastic about their language, culture and history. The indication of this awareness was the commencement of the publication of two journals: Siddhanta Deepika, 'The Light of Truth' and the Tamilian Antiquary. The two journals cover roughly two decades—the period of the flowering of Tamil Renaissance. This period represents an awakened interest of Tamil scholars in Tamil language and literature benignly guided by the flair and persuasive enthusiasm of the European Scholars. These two journals have done yeoman service in creating in the minds of the Tamils an abiding interest in their language and literature, and infusing a spirit of social confidence with regard to their literary and cultural heritage.

This was the nature of the culture consciousness of the Tamils until the 1950. The most

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sensitive Tamil scholars and creative writers like A. Periyathambi Pillai, S. Somasundra Pulavar, N. Nallathambi Pulavar and Thuraiappa Pallii always conceived Sinhala and Tamil as two eyes or two sisters.

The British colonial rule in Sri Lanka led to increasing antagonism between the ethnic communities. The British conquered the maritime provinces in 1796 and in 1815, with the conquest of the Kandyan kingdom then ruled by the South Indian Nayakkar dynasty. The entire island was for the first time ruled as one nation. However, as they did in most colonial situations the British used a policy of divide and rule and the Tamil minority was unduly favoured.

Under the colonial bureaucracy at several levels, the Tamils felt advantage with Sinhalese. Firstly, because the plantation agency houses, banks and key areas of foreign trade were controlled by British interests. The British policy was also aimed at restricting the growth of local industry through a denial of bank credits and by tariff structures that favoured British manufactures. This helped indirectly

10. Ibid, p.38.

the Tamils, who had capital. Secondly, the export-import sector and wholesale trade were dominated by merchant capitalists from India. Thirdly, in the area of retail trade, the smaller Sinhalese traders were hard pressed. Fourthly in the area of wage employment, the Sinhala white-coloured workers and other skilled and unskilled wage workers had to compete with Indian migrants and workers of minority groups for the limited employment that was available in an disadvantages of competition in trade and employment. It was fact that money lending was a ritual monopoly of Tamil ethnic groups, and the Sinhala merchants were forced to go to them for credit. This shows that the animosity of the Sinhalese towards the Tamils had political rather than racial origins.

With the development of colonial economy in the 19th century, tension between the Sinhalese and the Tamils took a communal form. Unlike the Sinhalese bourgeoisie the Tamils had no avenues of wealth through graphite or liquor renting and only a few had large plantations. In these circumstances, the Tamils were the principal competitors with the Sinhalese for the few remaining avenues of advancement.

Communal conflict began in colonial rule with imperialist alliances that used and intensified
rivalry between Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms. But it was most uniquely fostered by the plantation economy. As always, local peasants (in this case the Sinhalese) who had any lands of their own to maintain themselves refused to work under the brutally exploitative conditions of the plantations. The British then turned to outsiders, importing mainly scheduled caste, debtbound labourers from Tamil Nadu. Conditions were so bad that for a long period nearly one fourth of such migrants labourers died within a few years, yet the Sinhalese peasants bitterly blamed the loss of their lands on the labourers as well as the planters, seeing them as part of a single alien economic system.

Ultimately, the petty bourgeoisie that developed under colonial rule fostered a cultural revivalism that substituted for genuine mass-based national culture. Among the Tamils this took the form of a Brahmanic Saivic Hindu revivalism, and among the Sinhalese of emphasising their Buddhist anti-Tamil identity. This became so extreme that the first volume of the "Freedom of Lanka" history series, published in 1946, dealt with "The Struggle Against the Tamils" and focussed on the highly emotive and symbolic struggle of Duttagamini a 5th century Sinhala King who defeated a supposed Tamil conqueror in a battle that has become a near-mythic symbol of the cultural oppositions in
Thus the whole colonial period left the island with a heritage of economic and cultural disunity rather than forge any common national, anti-imperialist spirit.

The Donoughmore constitution which was in vogue in 1931, with the universal suffrage in the Island, brought various conflicts in to the open and to a head. Donoughmore constitution had many controversial provisions like unitary form of government and representation in the legislative council based on territories. Both provisions were opposed by the Tamil minority community, because according to Tamils, under these provisions, the island would be ruled by the majority community—the Sinhalese and all Tamils would become second class citizens. They therefore, demanded communal representation in the legislative council and federal system of government to secure and protect minority interests. But these demands were not accepted by the colonial government. In view of the circumstances the Donoughmore Commission observed


"communal representation was devised with a view to assisting the development of democratic institutions in countries of different races and religions and in hope of eliminating the clash of these various interest during election. It was expected to provide, peacefully, an effective legislative assembly which would give a fair representation to the different elements in the population and would also tend to promote unity. Unfortunately, the representatives of the various communities do not trust one another and communal representations had not helped to develop a unity bond or link.

The elections of 1931 were boycotted by the Sri Lankan Tamils as a protest against the abolition of communal representations. Afterwards in 1944 'balanced representations' was demanded by the Tamils. Its main purpose was to prevent any one community securing a dominant position in the legislature. According to the Sinhalese, it was communal representation under another name.

There was little anti-imperialist mass movement in Sri Lanka. In contrast to the Indian National Congress in India, the Ceylonese bourgeoisie

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organised no mass-based political party and independence was granted from above with little agitation. As a result the Ceylon workers and peasants, whether Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindu, or Tamil speaking Muslim, had almost no experience of common struggle against oppression. Yet unlike the neighbouring subcontinent of India or even Burma, independence in Sri Lanka was not accompanied by internecine struggle and arm conflict. This was largely due to a political compromise among both Sinhalese and Tamil leaders. The compromise was based on certain implicit promises; the concept of a secular state in which all religious groups enjoyed equal rights, and the gradual replacement of English as the official language by Sinhalese and Tamils. Equal opportunities for both communities would thus be provided. Moreover, section 29(2) of the 1948 (Independence) Constitution laid down that no disability or advantage should be conferred on person of any community or religion which was not conferred on person of other community or religion. Finally there was a retreat from the equal electorates formula which had prevailed from 1931-47. From 1947

twenty five of the seats in Parliament were distributed according to area. The formula was intended to benefit the minority groups who lived in more sparsely populated areas. Thus, for instance the Northern and Eastern Provinces, largely peopled by Tamils and Moors received eight seats out of the twenty five distributed for the area, thus giving some weight in representation to the minority communities living there. Provisions were also made in the constitution for the representation of unrepresented interest in parliament by the nomination of six additional members.

The first government of UNP after the independence maintained the colonial parity of Tamil and Sinhala as official language, but its Sinhala chauvinism was shown when it accentuated the mass disenfranchisement of the 'Indian Tamil' plantation labourer in the 1948 constitution. This was done by the simple expedient of placing the burden of proof of citizenship by descent or registration on all those with Tamil names in the central Ceylon area, and few of the illiterate plantation labourers, even those who had lived in the island for decades, could provide such proof.

This betrayal forms the implicit politi-
cal promise with two snags. Firstly, the political compromise was a considerable deviation from the idea of prevalent among the Sinhalese that Sri Lanka was essentially the land of the Sinhalese and of Buddhism. The efforts of the leadership of the day to promote a Ceylonese nationalism as against Sinhalese and Tamil nationalism did not succeed. The settlement thus did not have grass-root support among the Sinhalese. Secondly, the Sinhalese leadership refused to include the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka in the political compromise. The Indian group included some Moors and other from the parts of India who had come to Sri Lanka as traders and money-lenders. There were also number of Tamil urban labourers. Most of them, however, were workers on the plantations. Senanayake and the party he founded, the UNP, determinedly regarded the majority of the Indians as mere temporary residents. This was partly because Senanayake understood the fears of the Kandyan Sinhalese who feared to become a minority in parts of the high lands. He was also alienated by the Indian Tamil leader's opposition, first to the Independence-constitution, and then to his party in the general elections of 1947. Thus by a series of laws in 1948-49, the majority of the Indian were removed from the electoral register.

The reaction to the comprador orientation of UNP policy came in 1956. The 2500th anniversary of the death of Buddha which served as a focus for rising religious-national emotions of the Sinhalese. A new class was coming to the fore, based on the rural elite of landlords, rich peasants, school teachers, monks, ayurvedic physicians— an aspiring bourgeoisie, rural based but without the ties to the plantation economy of the westernised elite, ready to use state capitalist policies to aid its economic advance, and a combination of 'socialist' rhetoric and Sinhala chauvinism to solidify its social support. Upto that time the Sinhalese elite accepted that both Sinhalese and Tamil would jointly replace English as the official language. Later the fear was raised that Tamil, as the official language spoken in a large part of South India, would eventually swamp the less developed Sinhala language. The campaign was started for the establishment of Sinhala alone as the official language. The Sinhala only movement was connected with a Buddhist revival. The Sinhala Buddhist activists looked round for a leader and in 1955 found one in SWRD Bandaranaike, a former UNP minister (himself a member of the elite who converted to Buddhism and took

up native dress to identify with the new class) who had formed the populist SLFP in 1951. The party expressed in its very name the new religious identification of the island that had been known as Ceylon. And the slogan expressed the antagonism of educated and semi-educated young Sinhalese who felt that the continuing role of English and Tamil was leaving them at a disadvantage in education and employment. The campaign gathered momentum, and by early 1956 even the governing UNP felt it politics to espouse the cause and announced somewhat belatedly its conversion to the new policy. The Sri Lankan Tamils too resorted to Tamil nationalism as a response to Sinhalese nationalism.

Those who had advocated co-operation with the Sinhalese found their position drastically undermined in 1956, and in the elections of that year, the more uncompromising Tamil Federal Party leaders swept the polls in the Tamil dominated north and east. The Sinhalese nationalists, who gained a majority in parliament under SWRD Bandaranaike, promptly passed the 'Official Language Act,' which declared that the Sinhala Language shall be the only official language of Sri Lanka. Politically this was a shrewd move since 80 per cent of the population is Sinhalese. The Tamils
feared that they would be shut out of the state employment and the professions and that their language and culture would gradually be strangled.

The Official Language Act of 1956 creating Sinhala as the only official language made the tension between Sinhalese and Tamils increasingly acute. The leading Tamil political organisation, the Federal Party announced in December 1956 that it would launch a stayagraha from August 1957 in support of its four main demands. First, the introduction of a federal constitution, with full autonomy for the Tamil speaking areas; second, full rights of citizenship for all Tamil speaking residents of Indian descent; third, the repeal of the official language Act and the granting of equality with Sinhalese; fourth, ending of the colonisation of Tamil areas by Sinhalese speaking people.

The situation worsened in 1957 when the government made it obligatory for every new motor vehicle to bear Sinhalese number plate. In 1958 communal violence broke out. The Tamil temples were burnt, houses were raided, and since the country was technologically underdeveloped, the most medieval

tortures were used by Sinhalese thugs and hooligans.

The language question was perhaps the pivotal factor in the Tamil's loss of faith in Sinhalese leaders. However, Bandaranaike made an attempt in the language issue in 1957 through an agreement known as 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact'. It provided for the recognition of Tamil as the language of national minority and the language of the administration in Northern and Eastern provinces. But the agreement met with criticism among the Sinhalese and Bandaranaike was forced to repudiate it in 1958. In 1961 under the languages of the Court Act, English was replaced by the Sinhala as Court language. In 1972, the new Republican Constitution introduced by the coalition government led by Sirimavo Bandaranaike denied the right for the use of Tamil even in Tamil areas.

Since, the Language Act, the Tamil language has lost status in Sri Lanka. The Act struck at the heart of Sri Lankan Tamil identity. However, the Tamils had expressed pride in their Tamil language in no uncertain terms as "Tamil is one of the oldest languages of the world" and it flowered both in South India and Sri Lanka. It is a language that has given
the world the distilled wisdom of the Kural.

Though denial of language right is an aspect of political oppression, yet in asserting these rights one must be aware of the pitfalls of linguistic nationalism. Recent works by such writers as Benedict Anderson point to the fact that linguistic nationalism is often the most virulent form of nationalism. He comes to the conclusion that it is the ideology of the elites educated in the vernacular harbouring tremendous resentment against races and classes which have prevented their upward social mobility. This class is radical with regard to imperialism and international capitalism, but conservative with regard to its own nationalism and ethnic pride. He points to the fact that this ideology is particularly powerful because the vernacular speaking elites usually control the communication system in any given society.

The fact that the Tamil language had been discriminated against since independence has been one of the most important rallying points of the Tamil movement. The demand for recognition of a Tamil linguistic region is a product of this consciousness.

Given the fact that Tamil grievances gathered momentum


in Sri Lanka after the passage of the Sinhala Only Act, it is not surprising that the Tamil language should be focal point of Tamil identity. In addition, it is the Tamil language as spoken in Sri Lanka which provides an identity to the Sri Lankan Tamil distinctive from his or her Tamil Nadu counterpart.

Furthermore, the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic communities are generally confined to geographically compact areas and each is associated with a particular region. Community consciousness is quite high in those areas which are dominated by a particular ethnic group. The demographical alienation of Tamils can be substantiated by historical fact. The claims of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalists over territory have acquired increasing prominence during the recent past which has given rise to the concept of a 'Tamil Homeland'. There is a contradiction between writers regarding Tamil homeland. G.H. Pieris tries to through doubts on the homeland concept. He claims that as the area was generally very sparsely populated, it can, therefore, not with mere numbers which would show a majority for the Tamils, who were concentrated along the coast, but that it has to look at the spatial distribution of Sinhalese and Tamils in the area. He then claims that the Sinhalese had given up many old (purana) villages in the course of the decline of the
Rajarata and the invasion of the Tamils, and that therefore low population figures for the Sinhalese cannot establish a homeland claim for the Tamils, i.e. the Sinhalese had been driven out by Tamil invaders and had therefore right to 'go back'. Many Sinhalese even became 'Tamilized' by living amongst Tamils.

Pieris treats the concept of traditional homeland as a geographical concept rather than a political one and in doing so construct an elaborate argument on who lived where and when. He attempts to tear down Tamil claims to traditional homeland not with the critical scientific intention of scoffing at all political enterprises which mystically connect land with people but with the seeming purpose of legitimizing the profoundly Sinhala myth that Sri Lanka is a nationstate, a land which historically belongs to the Sinhalese, even though some parts have been Tamilized.

But in this historical norm K.M. De Silva seems to think otherwise: Indeed one had to look further back into the past to find a period when

Sinhalese rulers had control over the whole island to the second half of the 11th century and the first half of the 12th. But even this has been in effect an interlude of indigenous rule sandwiched between two phases of South Indian domination. In fact he argues that British rule was a turning point with regard to the effective administration of a centralized state.

The failure to distinguish between the actuality of settlement and the imperative of ideology also poses problems for the understanding of the concept of traditional homeland. In this haste to treat traditional homeland as geographical concept G.H.Pieris does not attempt to come to terms with the concept of traditional homeland as it is actually used in anthropological literature with attempts to describe the lifestyle of tribal groups.

In political science the term, traditional homeland has become a part of the arsenal of liberal democratic discourse and is used in situations where a territorial ethnic minority which does not control state power asserts its rights against the state.


23. Ibid.
especially when the state attempts to dilute the political power of the ethnic group or to alter its social and economic lifestyle. It is in this context that the Tamil claim to traditional homeland can be best understood.

During the past decades the Sri Lankan Tamils have taken every opportunity to claim a 'Tamil homeland' to remedy their ethnic grievances. The concept of homeland got aggravated with the issue of land settlement. All Governments since the 1930s have tried to ease population pressure in the south-west by developing irrigation projects to settle colonists in the sparsely populated northern plains. Since most colonist were Sinhalese, the Tamils tended to view such schemes as devices to convert Tamil-majority areas to Sinhalese-majority areas. The Tamils claimed that the people of the area should have preferential treatment in land settlement. The Sinhalese opposed this proposal, viewing it as an attempt to secure large tracts of sparsely populated land solely for the purpose of settling Tamils. The increasing settlement of the frontier regions led to heightened tension in the area, and ethnic antipathy appears to have been greater in such areas than in Tamil Jaffna or the

24. Ibid. p.33.
The settlement policy suited various Sinhalese petty bourgeois chauvinists of the UNP, the MEP and the SLFP which wanted to enlarge their electoral base. In addition State Corporations since the mid-1960s have extended organised farms, in which the majority of employees are Sinhalese, into predominantly Tamil areas. For instance the Kantalai Sugar Factory, and the Cadju Corporation, both having a large Sinhalese labour force, are situated in Tamil areas. What was worse, the armed forces in the Tamil areas have been manned by Sinhalese personnel. None of the massive irrigation schemes financed by the World Bank has chanelled water to predominantly Tamil areas.

It may be convenient to caricature political problems associated with state-aided colonization schemes as a primordial struggle over ancestral property. To do so, however, is to miss the point. Tamil's claim against land settlement policies have resulted from their fears and destruction of their political power and economic security. Their claims


are against the post-Donoughmore Sinhala dominated State which held out the promise of a Sri Lanka nation.

Another issue which has created bitterness between the Sinhala and the Tamil is the policy followed by Mrs. Bandaranaike Government with regard to admission of students in the universities. The intake of Tamil student which stood at 40 per cent in 1970 has drastically dropped. It came down to 16.3 per cent in 1974 and around 12 per cent in 1983.

The SFLP Government in 1970 introduced a new policy for admission for equitable distribution of educational opportunities, so that Sinhala students and students coming from backward districts were given preference over those students who came from Jaffna and Colombo. Though there were no apparent ethnic discrimination, yet the net result was that the Tamil students became victims. Meritorious students from advanced areas mostly Tamils were not admitted.

In 1971, the government having reviewed the exceptional performance of Tamil students in Science subjects, took the position that it was difficult to

compare standards between the Sinhalese medium and the Tamil medium students and introduced another policy of weightage in 1972. According to this, special marking procedures were adopted subject wise and media-wise. It was decided to set arbitrary cut off points to regulate the quota of admissions from each ethnic groups. In fact this meant that Tamil students had to obtain higher marks to enter the science faculties. As a result of these two policies the number of Tamil students had a steep fall.

The UNP government replaced this with quota system. According to this system, 30 per cent of the seats were to be filled by merit on the whole island basis, 55 per cent of the seats were to be allotted to the 24 administrative district in proportion to the ratio of the population of the district. This would be also on merit on district basis or district wise. 15 per cent seats were reserved for the 13 educationally backward districts.

But the final result of all these schemes was to progressively restrict the admission of Sri Lankan Tamil students to the desirable medical and

engineering faculties. The degradation in the percentage of Tamil students can be judged from the table-1.

Table- 1

Distribution of University Entrants by Ethnic groups and Faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculties</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sinhala %</th>
<th>Tamils %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering,</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The percentage of Tamil students admitted to medicine fell from 48.9 per cent of the total in 1969 to 27.8 per cent in 1977, and 22.1 per cent in 1983. The percentage of Engineering fell from 48.3 per cent in 1969 to 19.1 percent in 1977, and then rise slightly to 28.1 in 1983. And the percentage of Tamil students in agriculture fell from 47.4 per cent in 1969 to 23.5 per cent in 1977 and 18.4 in 1983.
This continuous decrease in the percentage of Tamil students in professional education left the Tamil youth frustrated and disgruntled, and they were attracted to the Tamil militant movement.

The discrimination against Tamils in language and educations has resulted into a large scale of unemployment among Tamils. Tamils had an edge over Sinhala in Government jobs before independence and even after that. But after the 'Only Sinhala Act' the recruitment policy of the Sri Lankan Government has been such that the Tamils have lost their dominant position in several fields. The fluent knowledge of Sinhala language was made compulsory for employment. The Tamils have been relegated to a position that, they hold 1/5 of the government jobs in some department, and in some even less than this.

The Sinhalese hold a near monopoly over employment opportunities in both public and corporate sectors. The decreasing level of recruitment of Tamils to the public sector in 1970-80 years provides evidence of discrimination against Tamils.
### Table -2

Distribution of Public Sector Employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sinhala</th>
<th>Tamils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineer.</td>
<td>1971-77</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>1971-77</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>1970-77</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector.</td>
<td>1978-81</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Workers.</td>
<td>1970-77</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1978-81</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teachers.</td>
<td>1977-79</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police.</td>
<td>Class of</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source** Based on Census of Public and Corporate Sector Employment, 1980 in Sri Lanka.

In the other corporate sectors situation is the same as in the public sector. The ratio of Tamil employment is much lower than the ratio of their population. The Table-3 given a clear picture of ethnic distribution in the corporate Sector.
### Table-3
Ethnic Distribution in the Corporate Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Sinhala No.</th>
<th>Sinhala Percentage</th>
<th>Tamil No.</th>
<th>Tamil Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Profession Technical related works.</td>
<td>8155</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>2304</td>
<td>21.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Administrative and Management.</td>
<td>4539</td>
<td>83.31</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>12.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clerical Job.</td>
<td>62526</td>
<td>86.55</td>
<td>7175</td>
<td>9.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sales Workers.</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>87.28</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>8.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Service Workers</td>
<td>11602</td>
<td>87.60</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>8.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agriculture Animal Husbandry, Forestry, Fisheries etc.</td>
<td>4541</td>
<td>60.88</td>
<td>2671</td>
<td>35.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Production and Related Work including Transport equipment operation.</td>
<td>101884</td>
<td>88.00</td>
<td>9687</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Workers not classified by the occupation</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>69.72</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>26.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195955</td>
<td>85.70</td>
<td>24373</td>
<td>10.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Census of Public and Corporate Sector Employment, 1980 in Sri Lanka
This decreasing level in employment led to considerable frustration and disappointment among Tamil youth, who pressed Tamil leaders to declare for a separate state. The situation of Tamils in security forces is even worse. There are very few Tamils in police force and there is negligible numbers of Tamils in the armed forces of the country. Tamil organisations in the country say, 'the acid test of nationality is the readiness with which a person can enter the armed services of a country', and go further to say that by this important yardstick the Tamils are aliens and their only hope is a separate state.

In the field of economy the Tamils have been the biggest losers, a UN study is often quoted as saying that while the Sinhala economy had grown since independence by 25 per cent, the Tamil economy has declined by 25 per cent.

The Jayewardene's scheme to adopt the free-enterprise model has given encouragement to the Sinhala capitalists and landlords at the cost of the Tamils. Further the Government's policy to allow the internal market to be flooded by foreign competitors

29 "Roots of Tamil Question", op.cit. p.32.
has ruined particularly whatever was left of the Tamil businessmen.

In Jaffna district over 10 per cent of the population are dependent upon fishing. This group has been economically the single hardest-hit sector of the population. Under the terms of the prohibited zone introduced in late 1984 it was required to leave the shoreline and more inland, thereby obondoning their livelihood. However, some 15000 families were issued with government food stamps, at Rs.40 per person per month. But these were clearly inadequate to meet even basic necessities. Since 1985 the prohibited zone has been relaxed and fishing can take place upto three miles offshore. This limitation on distance still severely restricted both the volume of catch and its value, for many of the larger fish are to be found only in deeper waters.

In addition to production losses there has been considerable damage to fishing boats and equipment. The Gurunagar Fishermen's Association reported about 100 boats destroyed by security forces in 1985, the figure for the whole peninsula may be much higher. Boats are taken both by militant organisations and by security forces. Despite the relaxation of restrictions fishermen are subject to continued
harassment by security forces, with some craft stopped, portion of catch taken and crew members assaulted.

In agriculture, the Jaffna peninsula is a dryland region with no river and poor drainage. Nevertheless it has a sophisticated dryland agriculture with most land irrigated by kerosene or diesel pumps, and most ploughing operations performed mechanically, with either tractors or power tillers. Drought cattle are very few. Shortage of fuel have therefore, had a severe effect upon cultivation of principal crops. As a result of which real income in the agriculture sector have been seriously reduced.

It is difficult to find useful aggregate information on industrial production in individual district of Sri Lanka, and Jaffna is not exception. It is in any case not one of the country's significant industrial area. The cement plant at Kankesanthurai, which in 1982 produced 39 per cent of the country's output was reduced to its ten per cent capacity. A large Sigma Pump manufacturing plant has closed, and its premises was occupied by the security forces.

There have been many closures of small engineering concerns, including workshops and garages, due to a combination of high costs (especially of fuel), shortage of skilled labour (many technicians and engineers have joined the migration abroad) and low demand. Construction is virtually at a halt in the housing sector, since houses are usually the first target for security forces.

Finally health services were under strain due to a combination of restricted supplies, difficult operating conditions and increased demand. At Jaffna General Hospital, for instance, there were recurrent shortages of drugs, and of other supplies such as food supplements, intravenous solutions and especially oxygen. Oxygen came daily from Colombo by Train, and each of the frequent cancellations of the service meant cancellation of operations. Although some exemptions were in theory permitted for medical purposes. But the confusion over the interpretation of these exemptions resulted in shootings by the security forces.

By 1972, discrimination had come in full circle. The United Front government of 1972 in

31. Ibid.
proclaiming its total independence from the British engaged in framing of a new constitution, called the Republican Constitution, which liberated itself from the British monarchy. In doing so however, it introduced provisions proclaiming itself as a Buddhist theocratic state where Buddhism was allowed special status in the constitution.

The transformation of the State into the hegemonic control of the Sinhalese took its most obvious form in the recruitment in the armed forces. During the first phase after independence (1948-56) the armed forces were offered by persons from an upper middle class westernized social background. The soldiers basically came from urban plebeian social strata. This social difference was reflected in the internal organizational hierarchy of the armed forces where soldiering men obeyed their officers. The ideology that pervaded the army was pro-state and status quo, but nevertheless it was a secular one. The soldiers were mainly Sinhalese, but there was a fair representation from the non-Sinhalese ethnic groups in the officer stratum. It was basically an apolitical army.

The important political change in 1956, which brought into power the SLFP led by SWRD Bandaranaike, himself an oxonian, toppled the colonial elite from dominance and promoted to the political leadership, a much more heterogeneous bloc of vested interests. Bandaranaike introduced some important changes after the takeover of the British bases in Trincomalee and Katunayaka. Taking over of these large basis necessarily implied a limited expansion of the Navy and Airforce to service them. Bandaranaike created some new regiments. This is of importance not merely as a numerical expansion of the army, but as the beginning of the colonial yet secular armed forces acquiring a strong Sinhala- Buddhist orientation. The new regiments were expected to break from the colonial traditions and acquire a nationalist orientation. But this nationalist orientation within a context of Sinhala dominance could not but acquire a chauvinistic tinge. One of the prominent new regiments, the 'Sinha' (Lion) symbolized the emerging of a new army. As the new official language was Sinhala, steps were taken to do the army work in Sinhala. Instead of the 'Left, Right', in march past, the Sinhalese term 'Vam Dak' were was; similarly western band music was replaced with Sinhalese folk music, the drums of which were adopted to martial tunes. Tamil officers were
overlooked in promotions.

All these changes generated in the armed forces resulted in almost no recruitment of Tamils into the armed forces from 1970. More, significantly, however, what was also emerging in this transformation of the state was the personalisation of politics, arbitrary rule, and the frequent use of emergency power. 'Mrs. Bandaranaike, for instance, provided leading position in the government and the administration to members of her family. She also increasingly resorted to arbitrary rule. During her tenure, country was ruled by extensive emergency powers and gradually, the state was converted into a vehicle for the deployment of patronage. The state, composed of patron-client networks then became vehicle for Sinhalese chauvinism and an instrument of repression against minority people.

It is within this context, that the coming to power of the UNP in 1977 needs to be analysed. The party won a massive electoral victory, a four fifths majority, with a promise, contained in the manifesto, to finally resolve the problems of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Jayawardene, had discussions with

Amirthalingam, the leader of the Federal Party, and Thondaman, the leader of the plantation Tamils, and had agreed to call an All-Party Conference to discuss and settle outstanding issues facing the Tamil community.

The overwhelming majority of UNP enabled the government to amend the constitution, abolish the majoritarian Westminster Constitution for a Presidential Executive system based on proportional representation. It was argued that new 'Gaulist' system would ensure the stability of government, and ensure a greater representation. The introduction of the constitution was a mixture of cynicism and far-sightedness. Cynical in that it attempted to de-stabilize the opposition by ensuring that no single party would claim a two-third majority, and it was meant to prevent the left from exercising a strong influence in government. There is no doubt that strong secular tendencies represented by mercantile interests were interested in coming to terms with the Tamil national question. It was clear to them that they required peace and stability to pursue their economic policies. According to their perceptions, political stability was the only precondition for attracting foreign investment, increasing the rate of tourist arrivals. The presidential executive system would
enable the president to pursue these goals without the influence of parochial interests.

But from the onset, President Jayewardene had the ambition of placating Sinhala Buddhist interest, and showed the Sinhala masses that he was the leader of the Sinhala people. To do so, he evoked the symbolism of the 'Dharmastra President' who was righteous and who was concerned with protecting the Sassana.

In the defense of the open economy and in the pursuit of political stability, the president evolved a system of repressive policies, which were intended to deal with different types of oppositional forces. It is in the methods used to deal with political opposition that the government encouraged a series of measures to promote lawlessness. The measures of intimidation were frequently used against different parts of the political opposition. It is in the general pursuit of authoritarianism and the encouragement of lawlessness, that we see the seeds to the crystallisation of Tamil nationality.

As stated earlier, when Sri Lanka became an independent country it was felt that the country was on the way to attaining political stability
and the major ethnic groups would get integrated into the nation. D.S. Senanaike, the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was not only the leader of the majority Sinhalese Community, he had also the tacit support of the minority groups. Tamil congress, the main political party of Tamils joined Senanaike government. But after the Senanaike government enacted the citizenship Act in 1948, the political scenario had undergone a fundamental transformation. The disenfranchisement of the Indian Tamils as a result of the Act had three important consequences. In the first place it upset part of the political compromise by which ethnic harmony had been built in Sri Lanka. Seats in parliament were also distributed on the basis of one seat per 75,000 people, the exclusion of the Indian Tamils from the electoral process resulted in no decrease in the number of seats allotted to the plantation areas. What happened was that the seats went to the Sinhalese who lived in the areas. It increased the Sinhalese representation in parliament after 1952 to about 80 per cent of the total membership. Secondly, part of the Tamil Leadership broke

away as a result of this legislation. The minister of commerce, a member of Tamil congress resigned from the cabinet and formed Federal Party (FP) under the leadership of SJV Chelvanayakam. The Federal Party provided an organisation for the more uncompromising Tamil. Thirdly, the Indian Tamil felt that most of the Sri Lankan Tamil leaders had failed. For them the key demand of SriLankan Tamil leaders for autonomous rule for Tamils in the north and the east has little relevance.

The Federal Party was a small and totally insignificant group at the split from Tamil congress in 1949. But with the language agitation of 1956 it had become the main Tamil party not only in Jaffna, but also in the east, people in Batticaloa turned to the F.P. as their party and slowly their animosity against the Jaffna men decreased. The enactment of the language Act in 1956, increased the influence of the FP in Tamil areas. Jaffna was assured the basis of the FP which had effectively eclipsed the Tamil Congress, but the East for all its support was a somewhat uncertain proposition and had to be consistently wooed.

From the start, the FP talked of the Tamil people. In its various conventions, the first
topic to be raised and given priority was always that of Tamil nationality. In its first convention in 1951, it was proclaimed that "Tamils were totally a separate nation from Sinhalese." Chelvanayakam had said in 1949 in the F.P's founding manifesto: "From many indications it becomes clear, that the opinion of the Tamil speaking people in Batticaloa, and the opinion of our brothers in Trincomalee in this matter... In short, they are conscious of being a nation of their own." With improved political strength, the FP launched political agitations like strike and styagraha for securing equal rights for the Tamils. In the general election of 1956 the FP became the sole-representative of the Tamils and won ten seats.

Almost by the increase in violence, the But Bandarnaike was forced to repudiate it in 1958. The official Language Act was implemented in 1961, and public servants recruited after 1956 were required to become proficient in Sinhala to retain their posts.

Thus the FP turned to the United Nation Party (UNP), which promised to introduce regulations for the use of

35. Gopal Krishan, _op.cit_, p.64.


37. C.A. Perumal and R. Thandavan, _op.cit_, pp.6-7
Tamil and to establish district councils in return for support in the election of 1965. After the UNP victory of 1965, the first of the two pledges was redeemed despite strong opposition, not only from the Sri Lanka Federal Party (SLFP) but also from the Trotskyist Lanka Samasmaj Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP), that had supported Tamil as one of the two official languages even as late as 1964. The agreement however eventually, had to abandon its plan to establish district councils.

The other Tamil Political Party the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), started in 1940 (as Ceylon Indian Congress) with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru and in the inspired presence of Sathyamoorthy, has over the years developed as the most representative organisation of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Until the 1970 Tamil politics at national level was rights oriented, a reaction against measures taken by government motivated by Sinhala nationalist ideology. Tamil political discourse in Sri Lanka in 1950s and 1960s was characterized by a sense of grievance and political oppression. The rhetoric and language of Tamil politics was 'development' i.e.

grievances with regard to education, employment and land, in addition it was democratic ie. against laws that appeared to discriminate against the Tamils.

In the 1970s the three major developments, the adoption of the quota system in colleges which favoured the Sinhala students, the land settlement implementation and the Republican Constitution of 1972 have changed the Tamil politics. Under the Republican Constitutions of 1972, the government introduced a bill in the legislature stating that all "laws shall be enacted in Sinhala. There shall be Tamil translation of every law so enacted". the government further decided to incorporate the provision that 'Buddhism shall have the foremost place'.

These events have made clear to the Tamils that they could not get justice from the Sinhala rulers, all four Tamil parties- FP, TC,CWC and TPF formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) in 1972 with the objective of striving for a better deal for the Tamil community within the existing state

39. Radhika Coomaraswamy, "op.cit., p.27
40. Gopal Krishan, op.cit., p.66.
This discrimination in employment, education and language created a sense of frustration among the Tamil youth, who were then driven to guerrilla activities against the State. They demanded separation. Consequently in May, 1976 the TUF met in Vaddukodai and adopted the goal of a separate, free, secular, sovereign, socialist state called 'Tamil Eelam'. It reconstituted itself into the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). It was the first step towards the possible disintegration of the Island on the ethnic lines. It in a way received popular support in the 1977 general elections when TULF secured all the 14 seats in the North.

But it is the tragedy of Tamil politics in Sri Lanka that the educated elites, who provide leadership to Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils, have not found it possible to take a common stand on crucial issues. Except for a brief interlude in the early 1970s when the Tamil parties came together in a united

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42 Gopal Krishan, *op. cit.* p. 69.
front to oppose mainly the Republican Constitution of 1972, the two main political streams (TULF & CWC) have taken parallel and occasionally even contradictory courses. The CWC activists pointed out the dishonorable role played by section of Sri Lankan Tamils under G.G. Ponnambalam, when they were hand in glove with the government in disenfranchising the Indian plantation workers in 1948. They complained with a certain amount of justification, that the demand for Eelam and the violent activities of the Tamil Tigers have made their position extremely vulnerable. However, disassociation from Eelam demand has not saved them from several attacks by Sinhalese thugs in 1977, 1981 and 1983.

In the new political climate after the landslide victory of UNP in 1977 and the promulgation of a new Constitution in 1978, the CWC decided to reverse its opposition stance and joined hand with the UNP government. It was an act of deliberate choice, because in the political calculation of Thondaman, Jayawardene was more sympathetic to the cause of the Tamils than Sirimavo Bandaranaike and he would provide honourable solutions to the manifold problems facing the community. In Independent Sri Lanka, for the first time, a representative of the Indian Tamils was included in the government when Thondaman joined the
cabinet as Minister for Rural Industrial Development. Jayawardene government made certain positive gestures like removing the distinction between citizens by registration and citizen by descent. An Amendment was introduced to the local Bodies Election Ordinance as a result of which the plantation labourers for the first time in independent Sri Lanka were entitled to participate in election to District Councils and Local bodies.

The critics of the CWC, especially from Jaffna, accuse Thondaman of betraying the Tamil cause. They feel that Thondaman had become a gullible victim of the policy of divide and rule of Jayawardene. The criticism is unfounded and is not based on a proper appreciation of the political realities of Sri Lanka. Though a member of cabinet Thondaman had not surrendered his individuality and on several occasions, both in public and private criticised the discriminatory policies of the government against Sri Lankan Tamils. When the Sri Lankan Parliament, in an unusual and unprecedented procedure passed a vote of no confidence against the leader of opposition A. Amirtalingam in July 1981, Thondaman dissociated himself from the

UNP his speech was the only voice sanity in an otherwise poisoned atmosphere. The CWC opposed to the demand for Eelam, but Thondaman repeatedly pointed out that the TULF had been driven to this extreme demand because of the many acts of discrimination perpetrated by successive Sinhalese dominated governments in Colombo.

The Lankan Tamils have moved to the other extreme and voted overwhelmingly in support of the TULF in the general election of 1977. The TULF an alliance of the parliamentary political parties in the North, having concluded that the Tamil national question cannot be resolved within the framework of a unitary state and advanced a demand for a separate state called Eelam.

The reality, though harsh in Sri Lanka was that ever since Jayewardene swept into power with a landslide majority for his party (UNP) and its poll partners in 1977, he only tried to paper over the deep and the widening economic social political fissures within the plural society. He with his characteristic supine fashion and high caste hubris (arrogance) of Sinhalas tried to administer the 'emerald isle' even as sharp polarisation and materialised and then culminated in the genocidal killing of Tamils. There
was the complete collapse of law and order and the armed forces were leading the hot heads and arsonists in the killing, burning, looting and destroying of all vestiges of life and property of Tamils. This orgy of violence and lawlessness, press censorship, total blanket ban on political activities, imposition of curfew, forcible closure of newspapers in Jaffna area, flagrant misuse of the draconian measure of Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), the state of emergency and imposition of virtual martial law in north and east districts of Sri Lanka, all demonstrated the abysmal failure of the President. The TULF resisted these developments and demanded, the total pull-out of the army units from the Tamil majority areas in north and east immediately, the state of emergency to be annulled, cancellation of day and night curfew and scrapping immediately the black act the Sri Lanka Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) which was the most sweeping and most heinous of all such acts.

The inability of the TULF to advance towards the goal of 'Eelam' as peaceful means led to the birth of a movement among some sections of Tamil youth who decided that the only way to attain 'Eelam'

was through a militant armed struggle. These sections were mainly confined to hard core, young, determined, educated and politically conscious elements among the Tamils, especially in the northern and eastern districts of Sri Lanka. The TULF after it becoming the principal opposition party in Sri Lankan parliament preferred the negotiation to the gun and guerrilla tactics. It was clearly against all secessionist politics and secessionist demand. It had resulted into split in TULF. The younger, more impulsive and more determined political cadre of the TULF went on to form their own Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELF).

Though the TULF campaigned in 1977 on a separatist platform, it has since than de-emphasised the slogan and has sought to come to terms with the government. The collapse of these dialogues was due to more Sinhala intransigence and unwillingness to part with concessions than with Tamil obduracy. The TULF realised that it would jeopardise its future if it persisted with the Eelam demand, which did not seem realistic in terms of political and historical conditions of the island. On the other hand the government tried to outlaw TULF effectively in an

45. Ibid p.8.
indirect manner by a constitutional amendment. The constitutional amendment was aimed at enacting the most comprehensive set of sanctions possible against all types of activities aimed at the establishment of a separate state. Thus all those supporting the cause of partition had to lose political, economic and all other civic rights and was forbidden to hold public office, practice any profession or join any movement or organisation. Additionally all parliament members had to take an oath affirming that they will not directly or indirectly, in or outside Sri Lanka, support promote, finance, encourage or advocate the establishment of a separate state within the territory of the Republic of Sri Lanka. All government servants were also required to take the oath. The legislation pushed TULF to a corner because it posed a hard choice before it. If it ceased to preach separatism it would accuse of having surrendered to Sinhala chauvinism expressed through legislation. If it did not, that is, if it continued to remain a separatist body, it would commit political suicide. This made TULF to consider the second alternative, namely, of continuing to remain a political party of Tamils engaged in a agitation for securing to the Tamil minority a

complete equality with the Sinhala majority. From the long term view, this seems to be the only political option before TULF especially when more that half to three quarter million helpless Tamils, driven out of their hearths and homes looked to it for leadership.

The TULF had been acting as the umbrella political organisation of the Tamils and managed to maintain a profile of sober moderation. It was the only genuine party of the Tamils and certainly more responsible and nationalist in its orientation. Its leadership preferred the negotiating table to the gun and guerrilla tactics, but even so, the persistence of Sinhala Chauvinism left no alternative for it but to strengthened the demand for Tamils Eelam.

The main Tamil political party, the TULF was rendered ineffective after enactment of the sixth Amendment to the constitution in August 1983. Thus the Tamils also lost their voice within the normal democratic political process. The civil administration in the entire Northern Province collapsed and the separatist guerrillas established their own defective administration and judiciary.

As a result of the implementation of the Indo-Srilanka Accord, a new political situation has emerged in the Tamil politics in Sri Lanka. The EPRLF,
a guerrilla group, yesterday had come to an understanding with the IPKF and emerged as main Tamil political force (The TULF, which represented Tamil constituencies in parliament until 1983 was no longer a politically viable force). In the election for a single provincial council the Northern and Eastern provinces, the EPRLF was the only Tamil political party to field candidates. In the Northern province, a coalition of EPRLF and ENDLF won all seats uncontested.

II

Increasing frustration among the Tamils especially the youth, and a sense of alienation with the majority community, led to the formation of an underground terrorist group known as the 'Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam' (LTTE) led by Velupillai Prabhakaran. It has emerged as the most formidable faction among the other militant groups, such as Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) which had its leaders Kuttimani Jegan and Thangathurai (They were killed at Welikade jail). People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) led by Uma Maheswarac, Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) led by Pathmanabha, Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) led by Balakumar, and
a maoist-oriented small group National Liberation Front of Tamil Eelam (NLFT).

The Tamil youth movements, as they operated in the North and East of Sri Lanka have a two fold thrust. One is the military thrust, which is aimed at the state forces, military and police and other the political thrust that deals with organizing people at the mass level and keeping them with themselves. It is at this level that the differences between the various groups emerged. The military and political thrust interact. Whatever organisation was better organised in the former has an edge over the others in the latter. Thus the best organised of all the militant Tamil groups- The LTTE, has emerged as the most important organisation.

It is at the political level one can see the social characteristics of the Tamils militancy. In terms of political ideology all the groups start from the point that they are Tamils, that is, they declare that Tamils in Sri Lanka must have a political unit of their own to maintain their identity. Beyond that, the Tamil polity thus established should be an equal and just one, free from the traditional forms of social

expressions.

The Sri Lankan government while not entirely closing the possibility of a negotiated political settlement with the Tamil minority, opted for a military solution. The consequence of the pursuit of a military option and increasing militarization had been the restriction and repression of democratic opinion; the indiscriminate use of the arbitrary powers vested in the security forces and other agencies; a serious erosion of personal liberty and security and other inroads into civil society. Yet another consequence has been the creation of a climate of opinion characterized by chauvinism, intolerance and irrationality, in which any anti-chauvinist expression of opinion is liable to reprisal.

The Jayawardene regime confronted with increasing militancy of the Tamil youth instead of examining the root causes of the question and evolving a political solution, stepped up armed repression of the militant youth as well as the Northern people as a whole. As the police failed to contain the situation, the regime sent its armed forces to the north. A state of emergency was declared on July 11, 1979 in the Jaffna district and at Katunayake and Ratmalona airports. This was directed against the Tamil separatist

'Liberation Tigers' who had murdered 14 policemen and had destroyed Air Ceylon's only airliner at Katunayake airport on September 7, 1978. The army of the regime entrusted with the task was essentially a Sinhalese army. Many of its members were infested with the virus of racism. In the north, almost exclusively a Tamil area, this army turned into a virtual army of occupation. The response of the civilian population was one of absolute non-cooperation. Within this context the militant youth groups who had established organic linkages with the masses were able to operate with others. They attacked police stations, army units, government establishments and politician of the North, who had allied themselves with the UNP. The army was confronted with an effective but vanishing enemy, who melted into the masses after armed action. Being incapable of taking effective counter-action or capturing a sizeable section of the militants, the army turned to the innocent civilian population. The army thus, became the instrument of a series of gruesome atrocities against the Northern people.

Following the racial violence of 1981, a series of informal consultations were held between the government and the main Tamil political party TULF. Meanwhile for the whole of 1982 there had been five recorded incidents of terrorist attacks on security
posts and personnel resulted in a total of five deaths of security forces. In the first six months of 1983, there were five attacks on security posts and personnel resulted in four deaths. In addition, the terrorists killed three UNP politicians of the North.

An unmistakable sign of the growing ethnic tension and especially of the feelings of some sections of the Sinhalese community was the eruption of ethnic violence in May 1983 at the University of Peradeniya, which in the past, had a record of maintaining ethnic harmony even when ethnic violence engulfed rest of the country. In June racial violence broke out in Trincomalee but was brought under control.

The incidents leading to the death of thirteen soldiers in Jaffna peninsula on July 23 took place with this context. One of the armed groups attacked on army patrol killing these soldiers, all of whom were Sinhalese, and then melted back into the people. The army, furious but powerless to punish the


elements responsible went on the rampage killing over twenty civilians in Jaffana.

Riots broke out in the immediate aftermath of a government organised funeral in Colombo for these thirteen soldiers. A section of the predominantly funeral processionists broke into gangs and went on the rampage in the city of Colombo, which later spread to other towns, engulfing almost the entire country in an orgy of riots. The most intense period of rioting lasted from July 24 to 31 during which mass murder, assault, arson and looting occurred on a scale unprecedented in Sri Lanka. In July riots, Sinhalese killed an estimated 600 Tamils in six days and burned hundreds of Tamil houses, business and factories in Colombo and elsewhere.

The notable feature of July 1983 riots was that with a few exceptions, the victims were all Tamils and the mobs consisted largely of Sinhalese. The most disconcerting aspect of the July events was the failure of the security forces, and particularly the Army, to enforce the curfew in some areas to prevent mob violence. Indeed some members of the security forces either turned a blind eye to mob

violence or, in certain instances, even directly helped the mob. This situation not only reflected a temporary breakdown in the usual chain of governmental command, but more fundamentally a serious blow to the principle that all citizens in a civilized democratic society are entitled to equal protection and security under the law.

The anti Tamil riots of 1977, 1979, 1981 and the holocaust of July 1983 have alienated the Tamil masses from the regime. It undoubtedly widened the gulf between the communities and heightened the Tamil sense of grievance and victimization. The overwhelming majority of the Tamil people in the north and East perceived armed militants as liberation fighters.

After 1983 riots a Tamil underground guerrilla or Terrorist movement stepped up in its attacks on policemen, politicians and military personnel. By 1984 the guerrilla underground movement was composed of a number of rival groups. Their combined strength has been estimated at somewhere from 500 to 6,000 or more. Among the major groups operating in 1984 were the LTTE and an offshoot PLOTE.

Another group, the EPRLF gained international attention by kidnapping American couple in May 1984 and released them unharmed later.

The rising tide of violence was evident in the first major incident of terrorism, when seven bombs were exploded one morning in late October in Colombo. One bomb exploded when a group of Tamil militants went to the Chunnakam police station and killed 19 policemen. In a separate bombing at least six members of the security forces were killed. A day following the speech of the minister of National Security Atulathmudali to parliament on November 29, 1984 an incident reportedly occurred that presented a new and vicious stage in the communal conflict. Northern terrorists massacred 72 Sinhalese, men women, and children settlers in two small farming communities in the northern districts of Mullaitivu.

A new element was added to the Island's ethnic problem in 1985, when clashes between Tamils and Muslims erupted on April 22 at Kattankudi. More than 50 people died and 700 homes were burnt in the two weeks of Muslim-Tamil fighting.

54 Ibid p.262.

In May, there was a lethal attack on the population of the ancient city of Anuradhapura, a center of Buddhist pilgrimage, in an area populated primarily by Sinhalese. Some 150 persons died in this attack. The attack promoted reprisal which resulted in the deaths of dozens of Tamil civilians. On May 20, Tamil separatists blew up a key bridge Manampitiya and reportedly killed two policemen.

By 1985, however, some signs began to appear of a division between the Tamils living in the north and the east, who apparently sought regional autonomy if not an independent state, and those residing in the remainder of the island who appeared to wish guarantees of fundamental rights to protect their lives, property, and career opportunities in the Sinhalese majority areas.

The battle between the separatist guerillas and the security forces tended to shift from the north to the east during 1985. The area around the east coast port city of Tricomalee became the scene of a major military confrontation late in the year despite the continued formal existence of a ceasefire.

The year 1986 marked the slaughter among the Tamil Eelam fighters. It had altered almost every aspect of armed conflict between the ethnic Tamil guerrillas and the Sinhalese dominated government. The LTTE, which had tasted some success, launched a warlike offensive against the TELO in April and May. The LTTE murderously attacked the headquarters of TELO at Kalliyankadu in the Jaffna district to put the entire Jaffna peninsula under their control, killing over 150 TELO men including the top brass Sabaratnam. A large number of TELO members who prostrated themselves in surrender, were allegedly shot dead by the LTTE guerrillas, or burnt alive after being doused with petrol. Disfigurement of picture of a dead LTTE leader displayed at a street corner and the kidnapping of two LTTE members as also the murder of one of its senior commanders by TELO men were the reasons for the armed confrontation. The rift between the LTTE and the PLOT snowballed into an armed conflict in the first week of November 1986. The Jaffna peninsula was reportedly rocked by fighting between the LTTE and PLOT following the latter’s refusal to surrender. The LTTE had banned the PLOT and some other Eelam groups.

and trade union organisations in the Jaffna peninsula.

In clashes between LTTE and EPRLF in December about 50 persons belonging to the EPRLF had been killed and over 800 captured by the LTTE.

However, this was not the first time that the LTTE had isolated itself from the other Eelam fighters. The militarily stronger LTTE had unsparingly set out to liquidate all other groups in the hope of establishing a sort of one party dictatorship in Eelam. The first victim of the LTTE's terrorism was the TULF, the moderate Eelam outfit. Three former members of Sri Lankan parliament and venerable leader of the TULF, V. Dharmalingam, M. Alala Sundram and T. Rasalingam, were kidnapped and murdered by LTTE men in September 1985. They were among the few senior TULF activists who had stayed on the island after the July 1983 genocide in the wake of which most of their other colleagues fled to India for refuge.

After the clashes between LTTE and other guerrilla groups the LTTE gained complete control over the entire northern Jaffna Peninsula and also other parts of the Eastern province. The LTTE became the

dominant separatist power and the smaller separatist groups were forced to adjust their policies and strategies to that of the LTTE.

The intra-group differences did not prevent the Tamil separatists from continuing their war against the Sri Lankan government. In the opening months of 1986, more than 90 unarmed Eastern province Sinhalese civilians including children were killed by Tamil militants. Two bomb attacks confronted the government with the reality of the ongoing struggle for Tamil Eelam. On May 3, the Tamil separatists blew up an Air Lanka Lockheed 1011 Tristar jetliner at Colombo's Katunayake international airport, killing 16 people, 13 of them being foreigners. Later on five more passengers died. The aircraft had just landed after a flight from London via Zurich and Dubai, on route to Male. Many of the 128 passengers were bound for a vacation on the Maldives islands beaches. When 101 passengers for the Maldives were boarding and reboarding the Lockheed Tristar, an explosion tore through the aircraft, severing the rear section of the fuselage. Two other planes that were being loaded on the tarmac, an Air Lanka B-147 and an Indian Airline

B-737 bound for Madras escaped damage. Four days later, another powerful bomb exploded in Colombo’s Central Telecommunications Office, instantly killing 11 people and seriously injuring more than 120. A section of the rambling colonial era building was totally destroyed, and bystanders gawked at the jumble of beams and twisted material. The bombing of the Air Lanka Lockheed Tristar gave an international dimension to the terrorist campaign for the first time.

On November 1, 1986, Tamil Militants belonging to the EPRLF opened fire against a crowd that had been demonstrating against the arms toting militant’s abusive and coercive activities and in the incident a boy was killed. The same day members of another Sri Lankan Tamil militant group PLOTE were involved in a shootout incident.

The year 1987 began with the LTTE in a position of strength. Firmly in control of the Jaffna Peninsula, the Tigers had government forces effectively bottled up in their camps and were implementing a civilian administration. The LTTE’s bluntly campaign to exterminate rival groups, coupled with its stated goal of establishing a one party state in Tamil Eelam.

60. Ibid May 8, 1986.
further eroded public support. The civilians found themselves caught between the pincer of the government offensive and the cowardice of Tiger tactics that included the use of civilian hostages as firescreens.

A huge bomb went off in a Colombo bus station late in April killing more than 100 people. The Colombo government decided to launch a major offensive against LTTE strongholds in late May called 'Operation Liberation' to free the Jaffna peninsula from the militant’s control. The massive onslaught on the peninsula began on May 26 with the participation of about 4,000 troops, including hundreds of commandos. While the soldiers moved into the coast towns of Vadamarachi, another effort was underway to break the LTTE’s defense at Elephant Pass with the objective of taking over the Thenmarachi area. The soldier used Tamil civilians as human shields to ward off the sniper fire from the Tigers as they advanced. Thus the LTTE’s resistance was impaired and several strategic towns like Point Pedro and Velvettiturai fell to the army. Following the capture of Vadamarachi, the army made a sustained effort to capture Thenmarachi, but the LTTE thwarted the bid.

Tamil militants inflamed the situation by slaughtering 29 Buddhist monks on the way to a
ordination ceremony, a more than redoubled the army outcry. It was estimated that besides militants more
than 1000 civilians died in Vadamarachi.

Despite the LTTE's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire in June, limited fighting broke out between the Tigers and the Sinhala soldiers. On July 2, many soldiers were killed when they tried to surround the LTTE's base at Uddupiddy in Vadamarachi. Another clash at Munthinrikulam in Mullaitivu district on June 30 claimed the lives of 21 soldiers. But the LTTE suffered a serious loss when the army encircled its camp at Mudur in Tricomalee and shot dead 12 Tigers, including Major Gajendran.

On July 28, a large-scale killing, arson and looting of the police force occurred. A nationwide curfew was imposed. Following immediately the Indo-Srilankan Accord, an untoward incident occurred. A


Tamil soldier identified as Vjitha Rohana Vijayamuni, gripped his rifle and brought it down on Rajiv Gandhi.

After the Accord, the Tamil militants, especially the LTTE and its close ally EROS had handed over some of their weapons to IPKF despite reservation. But the tension and uncertainties had cropped up on the political side and there were some incidents that caused concern. The problem related to clashes between the LTTE on the one side and the groups opposed to it on the other namely, PLOT, TELO, EPRLF. As the IPKF waited for the weapons, the LTTE attacked the eastern province militant groups, PLOTE and EPRLF, as leaders of the two groups were on their way to a 'peace conference' with the LTTE. A round of attacks and counterattacks followed, leaving more than 150 dead.

In the preceding fortnight, despite the presence of IPKF and the return of peace in the Tamil areas after the Accord, violent clashes between the Tamil militant groups had seriously complicated the situation posing a threat to peace itself. Clashes had

also erupted between the Tamils and Muslims in Amparai district.

LTTE demonstrated its opposition to the Accord. Thileepan, head of the propaganda wing of the LTTE began his fast unto death on September 15 in front of the historic Nallur Murugan temple in Jaffna town. He died after 12 days of continuous fasting. Thileepan’s death and the LTTE drive against the other militant group posed a difficult task to IPKF. LTTE used civilians, including women and children to cover its movement and prevented the IPKF’s advance. During its thrust towards Jaffna, the IPKF came across very sophisticated weapons, including electronically operated mines. In a short span of two months IPKF lost 12 officers, nine junior commissioned officers and 132 men belonging to other ranks. There were 23 wounded officers, 44 JCOs and 471 jawans.

This heavy causality of IPKF resulted in a quick build-up of confrontation between the IPKF and the LTTE. On October 5, Seventeen Tigers were apprehended in a boat just off the Jaffna coast. 12 out of the 17 LTTE men arrested by the security forces took cyanide capsules and died. The LTTE retaliated by


killing about 200 Sinhalese civilians in the East.

One of the bloodiest battle was fought between the LTTE and the IPKF in October at Virumpirai. More than 110 Tigers parished in the two day fighting and Virumpirai finally passed under the control of IPKF on October 16.

Although the IPKF regained control of much of the area formerly held by the militants, their main objective capturing the ever-elusive LTTE leader, Prabhakaran remained unfulfilled. The Tigers, meanwhile, melted into the population and slipped out of Jaffna and killed 800 people. Thus in the year 1987 militancy in Sri Lanka besides more than 7,000 deaths displaced half a million people.

In 1988 the LTTE under tremendous pressure from the IPKF in Jaffna peninsula, shifted its operations to Batticaloa district in the East. The district, with the second largest Tamil population in Srilanka. The village of Kattankudy in Batticaloa had been the scene of violent clashes between LTTE men and the Muslim homeguards called themselves 'Jahad'. About 40 houses and shops of Muslims in the village were

71. **Ibid**


burnt down. The LTTE also stormed the prison in Batticaloa town on January 19 and released 55 prisoners. On January 27, a gun battle broke out in the town between the LTTE and IPKF when the militants ambushed an IPKF patrol near the railway station, killing two soldiers. A 36 hour curfew was imposed in the city. A 24-hour curfew had been imposed on January 23 in Mannar in the North after the Government Agent, M.M. Maqbul, was gunned down by the Tigers.

The LTTE launched a three phased non-cooperation movement in the districts of the North and East from January 1, 1988. The LTTE gave a call to halt the civil administration to highlight to the outside world the indomitability of the struggle against the Indo-Srilankan oppression, with a warning that any one defying the request will be considered a traitor. Attendance was thin in government offices, banks and schools during the first few days in Jaffna peninsula, but normalcy returned after the intervention of IPKF.

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74. T.S. Subramanian, 'Worries on the ground,' *Frontline* February 6-9, 1988 p.23.
The LTTE again pressed for a non-cooperation and civil disobedience campaign began from Pongal festival on January 15 in the north and east. While Government officials and students attended offices and schools in the Jaffna, which was under the control of IPKF, the campaign was largely successful in Mannar and Mullativu districts in the North and Batticaloa in the East. The Tigers then launched a 24-hour hartal on January 26 to protest against what they called India's support to Colombo to suppress Tamil's aspirations.

Meanwhile the IPKF continued its search operations for the LTTE's arms and ammunitions in the Jaffna peninsula and also in the East. It destroyed several LTTE boats off the coast of Batticaloa. In significant seizures, the IPKF recovered about 20,000 rounds of ammunition, 564 grenades and 210 bombs in the North on January 11. Marine commandos of the IPKF launched a raid in Kayts Island off Jaffna and captured 29 LTTE men and a large quantity of arms. On January 26 and 27, at least 35 persons including 14 IPKF personnel and 16 militants were killed as the LTTE launched a series of attacks on the IPKF in the North and East. It had by then become clear that the earlier two-track policy of talking to the LTTE through Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in Madras
and applying military pressure through an IPKF was not bringing results quickly enough and that it was necessary to search for new options. The option which emerged was to hold the Provincial Council elections.

Despite unprecedented obstacles that took the form of violence and fear, elections to the provincial councils were held throughout the island. Election was held in the Northern and Eastern provinces, on November 19. LTTE opposed the holding of the elections and boycotted it. The main political party of Tamil, the TULF also did not participate in the election, but in order not to alienate India, it supported the holdings of elections and urged the Tamils to participate. The TULF felt that it would be suicidal to take part in the elections.

India was anxious that all the Tamil groups stand for elections, and High Commission officials persuaded them to set their fears aside and field candidates. They finally decided to stand and the High Commission worked out a compromise under which "the EPRLF would stand uncontested in Jaffna and Mannar districts in the North, while the TELO and the

79. Ibid.

ENDLF would jointly contest in the districts of Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Killinoch. In the east, the EPRLF was the only Tamil group who contested the elections. Although the ENDLF and TELO members were on the EPRLF List.

The EPRLF had the full support of the IPKF. Its cadres were armed as a part of a pre-election strategy to neutralise the LTTE militarily, and they launched a series of attacks on LTTE cadres and sympathisers. In Batticaloa, the EPRLF tracked down and shot the LTTE's political chief for the area, Fancis, and several other militants. The EPRLF became active against the LTTE in Jaffna, LTTE men and supporters were gunned down. The LTTE harrassed the administration by attacking and bombing. The LTTE fighters clustered in the jungles around Killinochi, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. Although the Tigers were believed to be short of ammunition, but they were still reasonably well armed, and had the capacity to harass the administration. The LTTE continued its struggle mostly by lashing out at Sinhalese settlers in the border areas.


In 1989 the battle ground was the Nayaru lagoon in the jungles of Mullaitivu districts in northern Sri Lanka. From March 2, there was a clear signal from the IPKF to the LTTE that it is determined to pursue the Tigers into their hideouts. The clashes had mostly centred around the jungles closer to the villages of Alampil, Nettikaikulam, Pudukkudiyiruppu, Kumulamunai and Andankulam. The LTTE had concentrated itself in the thick forest near Nettikaikulam. Its hideouts had concrete bunkers, tents with snaketrenches around and diesel generators powering tubelights. It had carefully closed Nettikaikulam as its main base because the place is close to the eastern shore and can be used to receive a supply of arms and ammunitions. The regiment of the cadres included training with different kind of weapons and unarmed combat. Food and water were often rationed. Mosquitoes were a great nuisance in the forest but it was difficult to tie mosquito nets. Some of the militants had been affected by malaria.

As the LTTE remained mostly in the bunkers, the situation in the North Eastern Province of Srilanka was by and large normal, people were

83. "In their lair", Frontline, April 1-14, 1989 p.107.
doing their daily work, the shops were open and the educational institutions were functioning. But the incidents in May at Sammanturaim, Akkaraiputtu and Kalmunai in the East where some Muslims were killed, changed once again the somewhat peaceful environment. The first incident took place on May 4 at Sammanturai when a Muslim group fired at a rival Muslim group travelling in a van. On May 8, a Tamil Militant group, the PLOT, abducted Majid, a prominent Muslim leader, and received a ransom for releasing him.

The PLOT laid down a tractor on May 15 and killed two Muslims. On May 17, the PLOT again killed two Muslims at Sammandurai, which led to the burning of some Tamils houses. On May 19, the Sri Lankan Police killed a member of the ENDLF. Two policemen were later apprehended by IPKF. Some huts of Muslims were burnt at Nainakadu, South of Sammanturai, on May 20. The next day, a Muslim family was killed. The TELO killed a Muslim on May 22 and the LTTE another the next day. On the same day the PLOT killed five Muslims at

85. Ibid May 9, 1989.
86. Ibid May 16, 1989.
Ukkaraipattu. A total of 16 Muslims and one Tamil lost their lives in the East in May.

There was, however, one major conscription drive in mid-1989, when schoolboys were rounded up by the EPRLF, the ENDLF and the TELO, and taken away for military training to form the Tamil National Army (TNA) with the blessing of IPKF. This move was taken to counter LTTE.

During June 1989 there developed a new political turn in Sri Lanka when the Sri Lankan President successfully negotiated with LTTE for cessation of hostilities and to negotiate with the government over other differences. The LTTE found this opportunity suitable to demand the withdrawal of IPKF from Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan government also demanded withdrawal of IPKF. As a result the IPKF suspended its almost two-year long operations against the LTTE. The LTTE also announced that it would not attack the IPFK unless it was attacked. In other words a cognial atmosphere was built for the withdrawal of the IPKF.

In the March 1990, more than two years after it unrested control of Jaffna town from the LTTE, the IPKF moved out quietly and unceremoniously, in stark contrast to the way it arrived. After the

89. Ibid May 23, 1989.
IPKF had withdrawn, the Sri Lankan army was quick to occupy as much of the Eastern provinces as possible and the LTTE was back in control of the town it had been forced out of after the loss of hundred of Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil lives in bitter fighting.

From the beginning of 1990 until June, a defunct ceasefire existed between the Sri Lankan army and the Tigers. But in June, the LTTE started on a rampage killings of Muslims and Sinhalese in the east, presumably to drive them away from the Eastern Province.

On June 11, 300 heavily-armed Tigers walked into the Batticaloa police station, seized the weapons and asked the 280 policemen to clear out. Within hours, the Tigers had surrounded nearly all the police stations in the Tamil and Muslim areas of Baticaloa and Amparai districts and forced the policemen to surrender. The police stations at Evavur, Valachennai and Kamandhikuddi put up a fight but others gave in without much resistance. But by the end of the day, the Tigers had taken some 600 policemen captive and killed at least 200 of them. At Kalmunai, the same morning, they ambushed a Sri Lankan army's vehicle and killed 11 soldiers. And as evening fell they had surrounded and begun to attack the army camps
in Batticaloa districts. The Tigers pounded army camps at Kiran, Kalwanchikuddi and Kalmunai with mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, while the army used helicopter gunships, Sia Marchetti light aircraft and artillery to hit back. With the army penned in its camps and under orders merely to defend itself, the Tigers had the upper hand in the initial days of fighting. The fighting took a toll of civilians as well. Twelve school-girls were killed in Kalmunai when a shell hit their hostel. The LTTE stopped the Batticaloa Colombo night train at Poonani and abducted 24 Sinhalese.

The Sri Lankan government responded to the killing by renewing the war against the LTTE. The Srilankan counter offensive to recapture territories in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mannar district began on June 15. By the end of the day, the army had taken control of Trincomalee town, killed six LTTE men and captured armed and ammunitions. The army managed to clear Pottuvil in Amparai district, killed a local leader David. It also rescued a large number of Sinhalese, abducted at Poonani. By next day, the counter offensive was got into its side and met with success in clearing the Batticaloa- Amparia axis, though

Batticaloa town remained with the Tigers.

In Tammanna Elamaka, the LTTE cadres shot dead 19 Sinhala villagers inside their houses which were set on fire later on July 25, 1990. On the same day the terrorists hacked to death 9 Sinhala villagers who were cutting firewood. On July 30 the Tamil terrorists abducted 14 Muslims nationals and brutally killed them with automatic weapons, knives and sharp implements. On August 3 at Kathankudy, some terrorists dressed in Muslim clothes opened fire at Muslims who were praying in Meera Jumma Mosque and Hussaina Mosque. Approximately 93 Muslims were dead and about 70 were wounded. On August 6, terrorists killed 33 farmers at AMP area and 17 Muslim farmers at Mullayankadu. On August 7 the militants hacked to death 30 Sinhala civilians and injured 4 others at Bandaraduwa. Few groups of LTTE armed with 'Kattis' and swords attacked Muslims on August 11, 1990. In

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95. Ibid August 7, 1990
96. Ibid August 8, 1990.
their rampage they killed 115 men, 27 women and 31 children.

The Vellamundeli fishing village was under the terrorists attack in September where 21 Sinhala fishermen were put to death. On October 1, nine civilians were attacked and killed on Perumalthalwa. Nine civilian Muslims who were collecting firewood in jungle near Arugambe were murdered on October 11. Ten 'chena' cultivators at Kakabe village were attacked on October 23 by the terrorists.

The LTTE declared a ceasefire from December 31, 1990. Colombo was both puzzled over and suspicious of the Tigers sudden desire for peace, and the initial reaction in the Army and in the government was to reject it. But despite the general scepticism, the government accepted it under the pressure from various corner to respond positively to the Tigers truce. The 'ceasefire week' was marred by a number of minor clashes. The Army accused the Tigers of repeatedly attacking its camp at Elephant Pass and of numerous other violations. By January 10, the day,

98. Ibid October 2, 1990.
100. Ibid October 24, 1990.
ceasefire was to expire, the military had a list of 34 violations by the LTTE.

Terror struck Bogamayaya on January 21, 1991. Approximately 25 were killed and 9 were wounded. A bomb exploded at the fist market at Akkaraipputtu on March 24, 1991 which killed 5 civilians and injured 32 others. On April 3, two boats loaded with terrorist surrounded two more boats at Kevuliya. They opened fire 6 vallams and 4 other vallams were set on fire. One vallam was abducted and another managed to escape. The charred bodies of 8 fishermen were recovered and 30 drowning fishermen were also rescued. Total of 21 were injured and 11 were killed.

Two major events of terrorism occurred during 1991 were the assassination of Ranjan Wijeratne, Sri Lanka's Minister of State for Defence and of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India. The first occurred in Sri Lanka in March, when Ranjan Wijeratne was assassinated. In the early

102. The Hindu
103. Ibid
104. Ibid
morning of March 2, as Wijeratne's car passed the junction of Havelock Road and Keppetipola Road, a deafening explosion ripped and the Mercedes Benz was tossed into the air and exploded into flames. The land Rovers overturned and a passing bus caught fire. Pieces of human flesh were strewn several hundred meters away. The explosion, which could be heard over a good part of the city, dug a huge crater in the ground, demolished a snack bar, wrecked at least six houses, and damaged 50 to 100 houses in a one kilometre radius.

Wijeratne, his driver and the body guard died on the spot. Among others killed were five STF commandos, and at least 13 civilians. Over 100 people were injured. The blast was caused by explosives weighing between 60 to 100 Kg. packed into a vehicle.

The other event was the assassination of the former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. He was assassinated by a belt bomb woman. 'Dhanu' alias 'Gayatri' on May 21 at Sriperumbudur near Madras. Dhanu was a 'Tamil' Militant.

106. Ibid
The question is why should LTTE go away with Rajiv Gandhi when he was not in power. The LTTE knew the risk of losing Tamil Nadu as the base for their operations if they assassinated any outstanding leader in India. That Rajiv Gandhi was in a position to help them, and indeed, that India had in the past given them a great deal of help in no way seemed to have stopped them from taking revenge on Gandhi for having fought them from 1987 to 1990 when IPKF in Sri Lanka tried to impose a peace on all of the combatants. The LTTE refused to disarmed and refused to accept a peace, short of complete independence, imposed upon them. Hence, revenge was a motive that must have had great appeal.

In Sri Lanka after eight days of fierce battle in July to control the strategically located Elephant Pass army camp in northern Jaffna over 50 LTTE militants were killed. And in a series of decisive military victories the Sri Lankan Army broke the seize the LTTE had thrown around its (Army's) camp in the Elephant Pass, the armed forces had not only smashed three big camps of the militants in the

jungles of Mullaitivu district in September but also captured five other camps in Amparai district in the East in the first week of October. Later they beat back the LTTE when it stormed an army detachment camp close to Mullaitivu town.

Then the security forces went on to capture the islets of Mandaitivu, Kayts and Karainagar off the Jaffna peninsula. A couple of days later, in a morale-shattering blow to the LTTE, the Army wrested the 'Dutch built' Jaffna Fort from the LTTE which it had earlier described as 'the symbol of several centuries of enslavement of the Tamils'. These reversals have not only exposed the weakness of the LTTE in positional, conventional warfare but signaled that the Tiger's fighting capabilities were at a low ebb. The aura of invincibility the LTTE had built around itself has been removed. In between these offensives, the LTTE switched back to its hit and run attacks, blowing up an armoured personnel carrier in Trincomalee, ambushing army patrols twice in Amparai and blowing up a naval vessel of the Kayts island killing scores of soldiers.


111. Ibid

112. Ibid
In 1992 the Sri Lankan army conducted several successful operations against the LTTE, causing it to suffer severe setbacks both in terms of manpower and territorial loss. By the year all other Tamil guerrilla movements was either destroyed by the LTTE or are fighting against it alongside government forces. The LTTE was extremely concerned about the army's advance into Jaffna and the heavy loss of LTTE cadre.

The armed forces also faced problems during the year. The LTTE launched several attacks on army camps during the year and inflicted heavy casualties. In January, more than 70 soldiers were killed, and in July almost 90 were killed in Trincomalee and Batticaloa and in an attack on an army camp in Annuradapuram. Altogether 400 soldiers were killed during the year. The most damaging LTTE attack was the ambush on Kayts Island off the Jaffna Peninsula in August in which Northern commander Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Jaffna commander Brigadier Wijaya Wimalarathne, and Navy commodore Mohan Jayamaha were among the military officers killed.

The LTTE strengthened its offensive capabilities during 1992 by obtaining weapons and ammunition from abroad, producing some locally and captured some from the armed forces. The guerrillas are alleged to have acquired SAM or Stinger Missiles from Afghanistan and they are building a navy called the Sea Tigers for which they have manufactured a rudimentary ‘submarine’ using local raw materials. The LTTE also has established antitank units.

By the year 1992, rivalries within the LTTE have intensified. As a guerrilla organization, the power structure is primarily personal and centres around its leader, Prabhakaran; any dissent is put down quickly and decisively. In July fighting broke out between the factions of Prabhakaran and deputy leader Mahattaya in which 39 people died. On another occasion, Prabhakaran killed 18 of his closest aides for praising Mahattaya. In other incidents, a bomb exploded inside on LTTE camp in Jaffna and LTTE death squads killed over 20 Tamils in retaliation. Two close friends of Prabhakaran were killed by a hand grenade and the guerrillas, in a fury, killed over 40 Tamils and tortured some 300 civilians who lived on

114. Ibid
the road where the incident took place in an effort to get information.

The gruesome massacring of innocent civilians living in the border areas or inside the LTTE's declared homeland shocked the country several times during the year, and life in these villages has become difficult to say nothing insecure. While the people live in their own houses during the day, they all gather into a common building such as a temple or school that was guarded by the armed forces during the night. On a few occasions these premises were attacked by the LTTE as warnings to others to vacate the Tamil homeland. The LTTE has succeeded in scaring away a large number of people from North and East, and over 100,000 people who fled these areas now live in refugee camps elsewhere in the country. Muslims in the East became the target of several LTTE attacks during the year. In polonnaruwa over 100 muslims were killed in one attack in October. Civil administration has completely collapsed in the Jaffna and democracy has disappeared as the LTTE's hold was almost complete. Any criticism of the guerrillas was ruthlessly suppressed and over 1,000 people were killed by the LTTE in 1992.

115. Ibid p.159

116. Ibid
The LTTE began the year 1993 with a major defeat, but ended on a high note. In January the Indian Navy intercepted a ship heading for the Mullativu coast loaded with weapons, communication equipments, and fuel. The confrontation ended with the deaths of all LTTE personnel on board, including Sathasivam Krishnakumar (Kittu) who was returning to Sri Lanka after coordinating for the last six years the LTTE's international operations from various European locations. This event further exacerbated internal divisions within the LTTE. The second-in-command Mahattaya, along with another senior leader, Yogi, and a number of their associates were arrested and interrogated by the LTTE on charges of giving information to the Indian government, seeking a settlement with the Sri Lankan government, and disloyalty to the leader. While reliable information on LTTE detainees is heard to come by, it was widely rumored that Mahattaya had been executed along with some other and that Yogi had been conditionally set free.

The year was marked by dramatic developments in Sri Lanka in the political and military spheres. President Ranasinghe Premadasa

was blown 'to bits' by suicide bomber in the midst of a May day parade, just eight days after one of his principle opponents, Lalit Athulathmidali, was shot dead while addressing an election meeting.

On May day, the President Premadasa was busy directing his ruling united National party's procession at the Armour Street junction, some distance away from the Sugadasa stadium from where it had started. And even as he moved across the road (which was blocked to traffic) to take another look at the procession the assassin struck. He rode a bicycle in the feeder procession that confluenced with the main rally at the busy junction. Upon the bicycle being stopped by the security personnel, the murderous explosion occurred killing the President and 24 others, including the entire entourage of body guards and 118 personal assistants.

The Sri Lankan armed forces experienced its greatest defeat at the hands of the LTTE when the Pooneryn base was overrun in November. Over 500 casualties were incurred and the LTTE captured vehicles, boats, and sophisticated weapons. The LTTE had mounted a series of similar operations against government

118. The Hindu May 2, 1993.
basis before, but the Pooneryn attack took the Tiger's success to a qualitatively higher level. Following on the heels of a military futile operation against the LTTE's Kilai boat launching site in the Jaffna lagoon that resulted in 114 casualties, the Poonaryn disaster demonstrated the lack of strategic planning and the complete disarray in the armed forces command structure. In the latest incidents the UNP presidential candidate Gamini Dissanake was allegedly killed by a suicide LTTE bomber on October 24, 1994 along with hundreds of others, when he was addressing an election meeting.

Thus the Tamil militants not only spread terror among the people but also control administration in Jaffna indirectly. The guerrillas maintain torture chambers in their camps, mainly to punish their opponents in Jaffna and they have established their own police to strengthen their hold over Jaffna society, which has become quite passive as a prisoner of the LTTE. There were reports that the LTTE has collected Rs.10,000 from each family in Jaffna and extorted large sums from those who are migrating. It frequently expropriates the property of its critics and taxes Jaffna people both directly and indirectly.

119. Gamini Keerawala, op.cit.p.173
to finance its war. It is estimated that the war costs the LTTE Rs. 80 million a month.

The LTTE is also directly influencing education in Jaffna. It has insisted that schools should be opened on the weekend to teach LTTE policy, history, and reasons for its struggle, and every classroom should display a map of Eelam. It has introduced a textbook that greatly distorts the history of the island, legitimizing a Tamil Eelam. Moreover the LTTE has introduced its own General Certificate Examination / ordinary Level (School diploma) and demanded that only those who pass this examination will be recruited into LTTE administrative posts. Further it demanded that every family should send its young men to the LTTE war. Conscription has increased over the year and the recruits have become younger. There were reports of children in LTTE ranks earning the nickname "baby brigade".

In brief for all practical purposes it is LTTE, which is ruling the entire north-east Tamil area of Sri Lanka and other militant organisations and the Moderate political parties and groups today have become completely irrelevant.

121. Ibid
The Tamil militant groups are essentially petty bourgeois in nature and committed to the liberation of Eelam through armed struggle. These groups are Single-man Based Military Model Groups having adventurist Strategy.

These groups are formed around personalities and not ideology. The LTTE, PLOT and TELO are centred around V. Prabhakaran, Uma Moheswaran and Sri Sabaratnam (killed by LTTE) respectively. The result of this individual centralism is the encounter on personality conflicts within and between groups. Often these conflicts are resolved through

122. "Militant on militants", Link, December 28, 1986, pp. 5-6. Whereas, I agree with the viewpoint expressed by the magazine my supervisor does not agree with this type of portrayal either of the ideology of the militants or their class character, because a petty bourgeois group by its very nature is opportunistic, whereas these boys have faced not only the all-out onslaught of the Sinhala dominated armed forces, but have also spent sleepless nights, and at times without food and water in thick jungles inhabited by all sorts of wild animals. They have paid heavy price in terms of human lives and have sacrificed bright careers with all bourgeois facilities and comforts. The LTTE in particular has engaged not only the Sri Lanka arm forces but also with the IPKF in many bloody battles some of which were won by the LTTE. The LTTE also has a blueprint for the separate homeland (Eelam). Lastly in the opinion of my teacher the LTTE as on today has a very strong support base among the Tamil population particularly the youth who are not merely spectators but actual participants in the struggle for liberation. However, he agrees that LTTE recently has become fascist in nature because, it does not tolerate any type of dissent.
the use of arms. Their thoughts, actions, organizational structure and problems are basically militaristic and adventurist in nature. The tendency on the part of these groups to resolve their differences through the use of arms, often lead to the demoralization and alienation of the people from the freedom fighters.

Although these groups are committed to armed struggle, their strategy is based solely on hit-and-run adventurist tactics. But these forms of adventurist struggles are explained and justified as forms of mass-based armed struggles. However, due to the long years of suffering of the people under State terrorism and brutalities unleashed on them by Sri Lankan armed forces and inexperience with armed struggle, the people tend to accept the path and methods adopted by these groups. This is incorrectly interpreted or deliberately distorted by these groups as a manifestation of the consent of the people.

In reality, these strategies and tactics based on adventurism have converted the people into an audience of the liberation struggle and not participants. The massive reprisal against the people by the armed forces arising out of the hit-and-run tactics employed by the groups has not created a
greater awareness and understanding among the people of the limitation of adventurism and the need for mass-based armed struggle.

LTTE, PLOT and TELO have never bothered to engage in politically organizing and ideologically politicizing the people. LTTE believes in provoking the enemy into retaliation against the people on the assumption that it would lead to spontaneous mass resistance. Because of the false claims of ideology, which have no bearing with reality, TELO and PLOT are now facing internal contradictions and raptures within its fold. Although LTTE is facing the same difficulties, it has been able to prevent splits at gunpoint in the name of military discipline.

These groups completely lack class analysis and class perspective which is also reflected in the absence of any meaningful and viable political and working programmes. Except for the military method of hit-and-run tactics, they do not have any vision of how to achieve liberation and what the liberation Eelam should be like. The manner in which these groups resolve their internal differences, not through democratic process but by the force of arms have given rise to Fascism.
Tamil militants Support base in India.

The Tamil militants have their support base in India particularly in Tamil Nadu. But this support should not be confused with the Support for Tamils in general. As far as the support for Tamil militants is concerned it differed both qualitatively and quantitatively from that of Tamil's in general. Support for Tamils in Sri Lanka in general is based on the profound sympathy for the suffering Tamil brethren who happened to live in a neighboring country.

The Tamil militants relied on support and refuge in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, where millions of Tamil speaking people share a language and cultural tradition in common with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. The Tamil militant groups were widely known in South India. They had political offices in Tamil Nadu. They operated different training camps in South India. DMK and AIADMK the two major regional political parties in Tamil Nadu gave full support to militant groups. The Tamil Nadu government resorted to the inadvertent move of promoting the LTTE. The State government in 1987 allegedly handed over three crore rupees to the LTTE as part to its aid package of Rs.4 crore for the Sri Lanka Tamils. The militant leaders
worked from India, because they felt India as safe place for them.

But the Sri Lankan Tamil militant's activities in South India, which were said to have included drug trafficking, assassinations, robberies and bombings, contributed to growing disenchantment with their cause among the Tamils in India. The LTTE's bloody campaign to exterminate rival groups, coupled with its stated goal of establishing a 'one party state' the proposed Tamil Eelam, has eroded public support.

The Tamil Nadu state government in India may give support to the LTTE as indeed it did during DMK regime in 1990, but the Tamil population of the state is not so supportive of the Tigers as it once was. The people supported the cause of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, but the Tigers are another matter. Not only have the Tigers turned on other Tamil militant groups in Sri Lanka, and in the process killed thousands of young Tamil boys who were dedicated to the cause of Tamil Eelam, but they carried their terror over to India, killing Sri Lankan Tamil refugees on the streets of Madras. In addition it was the LTTE

that fought against the Indian army and killed more than a thousand of its soldiers when all the Indian army wanted to do in Sri Lanka was to protect Tamils from the Sri Lankan army.

It was also understood that the stability and peace of India, particularly of Tamil Nadu would be threatened if the militants were allowed a free hand in acquiring weapons. It would appear that the authorities also came to know of certain Eelam guerrilla groups who were training anti-national forces in India. These distressing developments forced the authorities to take radical steps against the Eelam guerrilla. In 'Operation Tiger' in 1986, the authorities seized a large quantity of arms and ammunitions and toughened their resolve to stay the violent and brutal behaviour of infiltrators in the Eelam groups. Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran categorically stated that he was not extending any favoured treatment to the LTTE.

With the disappearance of Cold War, geopolitics and India's tilt towards the West, India no longer finds it necessary to use the LTTE as a check on Sri Lanka foreign policy. Thus India has

made a concerted effort to discredit the LTTE and curb its activities in India.

While the hostility in Southern India toward the Tigers was on the increase, the hostility since the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has multiplied to the point that most South Indian Tamils, who were the staunch supporter of LTTE probably are prepared to see the LTTE destroyed. The Tamil Nadu AIADMK state government headed by Jayalalitha, demanded that the organization be banned from India or she would withdraw her support for the coalition central government, which in any case was unhappy over growing LTTE activities in Tamil Nadu. In May 1992 India banned the LTTE and the home minister, accusing it of fueling secessionism in Tamil Nadu said that "we are of the view that the larger objective of LTTE goes beyond establishment of Tamil Eelam in the North-Eastern parts of Sri Lanka and poses a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country." The ban which was to expire in May 1994 has been extended further. The LTTE no longer has bases in India. Still, large amounts of money and supplies as well as other forms of support have always come to the Tigers from their supporters in Tamil Nadu.

Inspite of various developments mentioned above, particularly assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, there is a sizeable section of the population of Tamil Nadu particularly the youth who regard the LTTE as the saviours of their Tamil brethren in Sri Lanka. Prabhakaran has virtually become a hero and a liberator for the Tamil population of the North-East of Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan government, it seems to me, has no option but to grant complete autonomy, if not a homeland to the Tamils. The ongoing peace talks between the LTTE and Sri Lankan government which have been temporarily suspended because of assassination of the presidential candidate Gemini Desanaike are not going to yield any fruitful results till the demand for autonomy is not accepted. The government of India may not like it because of its apprehensions of a similar demand which is likely to be articulated in Tamil Nadu once Eelam is created in Sri Lanka.