



TOWARDS LIBERATION

*Selected political documents of the
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam*

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Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.***

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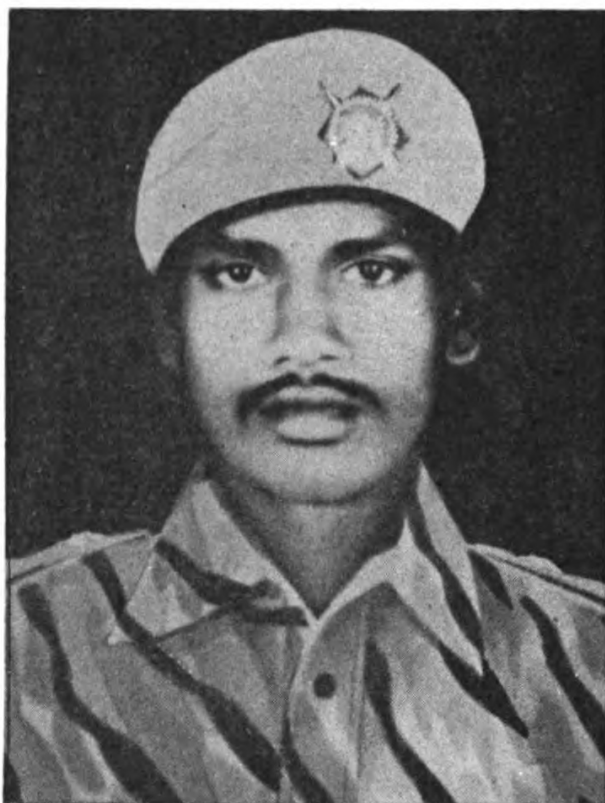
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Introduction

TOWARDS LIBERATION is a collection of selected documents, pamphlets and extracts from theoretical works released by our revolutionary organisation, the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam**. This selected work deals with different dimensions of the Tamil national independence struggle in Sri Lanka and the revolutionary armed struggle advanced by our movement to liberate our homeland from the fascist Sinhala state. It portrays the historical background of the Tamil Independence Movement, the multi-pronged state oppression against the Tamils, the birth and growth of armed resistance movement, the guerrilla mode of armed struggle advanced by the Tigers and the question of national self-determination on the basis of which the Tamils are fighting for an independent state of Tamil Eelam. This compilation of selected documents will be of great interest to all those who are concerned with the Tamil national question in Sri Lanka. Apart from providing a concrete historical analysis of the liberation struggle, this documentation elaborates the theoretical perspectives and the politico-military practice of the liberation Tigers.

Political Committee
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.



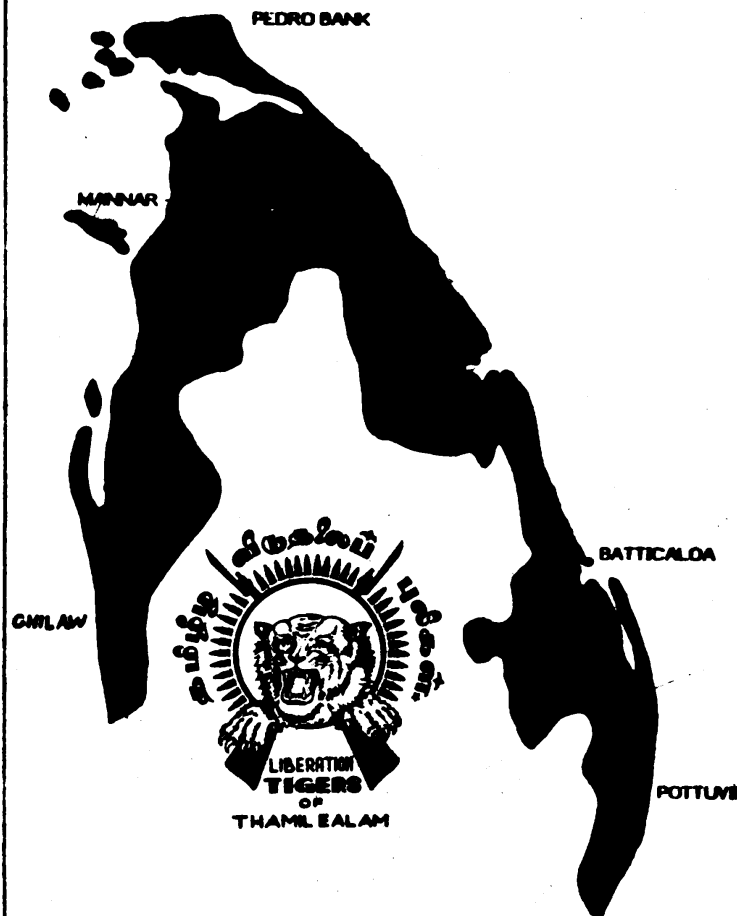
This selected work is dedicated to Lieutenant Sathianathan (alias Sankar, Suresh), the first guerilla fighter who attained martyrdom in a shoot-out with the Sinhala Commandos on 27th of October 1982. Lt. Sathianathan was a heroic fighter, a sharp marksman, has involved in several guerilla raids. He hails from Kambarmalai. His commitment and dedication to the cause of Tamil Eelam freedom struggle will ever remain in the heart of our people.

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*Eelam struggle:
A brief outline*

LIBERATION TIGERS OF THAMIL EALAM



THAMIL EALAM

THE STRUGGLE FOR TAMIL EELAM AND THE LIBERATION TIGERS

This political pamphlet attempts to sketch a brief outline of the Tamil National Independence struggle in Sri Lanka and the revolutionary armed struggle advanced for that cause by the **LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM**. As a liberation movement the Tigers constitute themselves as the authentic revolutionary vanguard of the struggling masses, who, by their deep dedication and commitment to the revolutionary tasks of national emancipation and socialist revolution have earned the name of **FREEDOM FIGHTERS** of the people. The movement emerged at the peak of national oppression as the militant expression of the determined will of our people to fight the oppressive bourgeois state machinery with armed struggle, which Lenin taught us, is the highest expression of revolutionary political practice. We wish to introduce our revolutionary organisation with its historical genesis, its militant struggles and its aims and objectives with a brief historical note on the national struggle of the masses of Tamil Eelam.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THE TAMIL NATIONAL QUESTION in Sri Lanka is the burning political issue, and the most crucial national problem confronted by the present dictatorship in that country. The Tamil nation as a whole is agitating for political independence on the basis of a universal democratic principle, on the basis of a nation's sacred right, that is, the right to self-determination, the right to secede and form an independent sovereign state. The Tamil speaking nation was forced into this inevitable political choice as a consequence of nearly thirty years of violent and brutal oppression practised by the successive chauvinistic ruling classes of the Sinhala nation. Years of peaceful struggle to gain the very basic human rights were met with vicious forms of suppression and the national friction between two nations became the major contradiction leading to the demand for secession by the oppressed.

The island, formerly called Ceylon is the traditional homeland of two nations: Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka; two distinct social formations with distinct culture and language; having their own unique historical past. The Tamils have been living in the island from pre-historic times long before the arrival of the Sinhalese people from Northern India in the 6th Century B.C. The Sinhalese historical chronicles, 'Mahawamsa' and 'Culavamsa' record the turbulent historical past of the island, of centuries of violent power struggles and wars between Tamil and Sinhalese kings for political hegemony. The island was ruled by both Tamil and Sinhalese kings. From the 13th Century onwards, until the penetration of Portuguese colonialism, Tamil Eelam lived as a stable national entity, ruled by its own kings. The Portuguese annexed the Tamil Kingdom yet ruled it as a separate national formation, as the traditional homelands of the Tamil speaking people. Dutch colonialism too, did not violate the territorial integrity of the Tamil Kingdom until British imperialism. in the 19th Century brought about a unified State structure amalgamating the two kingdoms irrespective of ethnic differences laying the foundation for the present national conflict.

NATIONAL OPPRESSION AND DEMAND FOR SECESSION

The Sinhala chauvinist oppression against the Tamil nation began to unfold in its devious forms soon after the so-called national independence in 1948 when the State power was transferred to the Sinhala national bourgeoisie. The first major assault of this notorious racist programme was directed at the Tamil plantation workers through a legislation in 1949 which disenfranchised more than a million people, reduced them to statelessness and debased them without any civic rights. This infamous act of inhumanity marked the beginning of a thirty year history of national oppression, a planned systematic oppression, that seriously undermined the very foundation of the social, political, economic and cultural life of the Tamil speaking masses. The oppression, penetrated into various spheres of the conditions of social existence of our people and threatened the very survival of our nation. The gradual annexation of the traditional Tamil lands by Sinhala colonisation aided by the state; the forceful imposition of the Sinhala lan-

guage on the Tamil speaking people; blatant discrimination and injustice practised against the Tamil youth in the sphere of education and employment; planned economic strangulation of Tamil areas — all these vicious forms of national oppression practised by all successive governments aggravated the national conflict. The worst of all, is the State inspired racial conflagrations, which unleashed its terror against the Tamil speaking masses (particularly in 1958 and 1977) with mass murder, looting, arson and rape, with abominable crimes of genocide in which the State police openly colluded with the vandals. Such racial holocaust aimed at the annihilation of our national identity made unitary existence a political and social impossibility.

At the height of national oppression, when the struggle for political independence became the inevitable alternative, the Tamil political parties converged into a single national movement with the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front in 1976. Confronted with steadily mounting national oppression, frustrated with failures of political agitations demanding basic human rights, the Tamil nationalist movement resolved to fight for political independence on the basis of the nation's right to self-determination. It was primarily a decision to secede and form an independent sovereign state over which the 1977 elections were fought and endorsed overwhelmingly by the Tamil speaking masses. Thus, it was the intolerable national oppression and the emergence of national conflict as the major contradiction that led to this inevitable political demand to secede which opened a new era in Tamil politics, a new historical epoch to launch a revolutionary struggle for national independence.

THE BIRTH OF THE TAMIL TIGERS

THE TAMIL LIBERATION TIGERS are the historical product of the Sinhala chauvinistic oppression. They were the product of a revolutionary situation generated by the contradictions of national conflict. Caught up at the peak of national oppression, constantly victimised by police brutality for political actions, the revolutionary ardour of the militant Tamil youth sought concrete political expression to register their protest. Disenchantment with the political strategy of non-

violence, confronted with the demand for revolutionary political practice, the Tiger Movement gave its historical birth in 1972 as the armed resistance movement of the people. Structured as an urban guerrilla force, disciplined with an iron will to fight for the cause of national freedom, the Tigers launched a series of attacks against the armed forces of the oppressive regime.

The Government became alarmed at the growth and strength of the Movement, angered at the success of its military operations on the Government property and personnel, and above all, horrified of its growing support among the wider sections of the Tamil masses. On April this year (1978), when the Liberation Tigers launched a tactical attack of self-defence and destroyed a party of police personnel which was in hot pursuit to track them down, the ruling bourgeois dictatorship utilised the situation to intensify its policy of national suppression. A repressive legislation was rushed through the Parliament which proscribed the Tiger Movement. At the same time, the Government dispatched large contingents of military personnel to Tamil areas to keep Tamil Eelam under constant military surveillance and domination. Even with the intensification of the military and the tight screen of surveillance the Freedom Fights continue with their armed struggle, launch occasional strikes at chosen targets and evade all possible tactics to hunt them down. Though confronted with all odds, and obstacles, the Tiger Movement grows in its strength as the armed vanguard of the mass struggle, grows as the authentic national liberation movement to advance the cause of national freedom through armed struggle.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The revolutionary political objectives of the *Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam* express the profound aspirations of the Tamil speaking masses to gain political independence from the autocratic domination and oppression of the Sinhala chauvinistic regime. As a liberation movement we are pledged to the tasks of *national emancipation* and *socialist revolution*. Our fundamental objectives are:

Total independence of Tamil Eelam. The establishment of a sovereign, socialist democratic people's government.

Abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man and the establishment of a socialist mode of production ensuring that the means of production and exchange of our country becomes the ownership of our people.

To achieve these revolutionary tasks we firmly uphold that armed revolutionary struggle is the only viable and effective path open to us to liberate our homeland. The armed revolutionary struggle advanced by our movement is the extension of the political struggle for liberation. Our guerrilla warfare, which is the mode of armed revolutionary struggle suited to our situation, will be gradually and systematically transformed into a genuine people's war of liberation. To this end, our liberation movement is working persistently to mobilise and organize the broad masses to actively participate in the national struggle.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has resolved to work in solidarity with the world national liberation movements, socialist states, international working class parties. We uphold an anti-imperialist policy and therefore, we pledge our militant solidarity with the oppressed humankind in the Third World in their struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism, zionism, racism and other forces of reaction.

[This document was released by the political committee of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in November 1978]

Open letters from LTTE



தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள் LIBERATION TIGERS OF THAMIL EALAM

20-7-1979.

A LETTER OF PROTEST TO MR. R. PREMADASA, THE PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA FROM THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF THAMIL EALAM

Dear Sir,

A very grave and explosive situation has arisen in Thamil Ealam as a consequence of your Government's determination to stifle and stamp out, by violent means, the legitimate struggle of the oppressed Thamil nation for political independence. The intensified military occupation of Thamil lands, the increased terrorism of the State police against the innocent Thamil masses, the implementation of new repressive legislations that annuls the very freedom of political agitations - all such devious methods of totalitarian tyranny signify that your Government has mounted a massive scale oppression to strangle the will of a nation of people and silence their political aspirations. In view of the fact that your Government has embarked on a policy of eliminating, by brute force, a legitimate political struggle based on a democratic principle of national self-determination and that your Government has been using the name of our revolutionary movement as a pretext to invoke such repressive measures and to inflame the fires of Sinhala chauvinism, the Liberation Tigers are compelled to counter such vicious allegations and insinuations.

The most important factor that we wish to state clearly and emphatically is that we are not a group of amateur armed adventurers roaming in the jungles with romantic political illusions, nor are we a band of terrorists or vandals who kill and destroy at random for anarchic reasons. We are neither murderers nor criminals or violent fanatics as your Government often attempts to portray us. On the contrary, we are revolutionaries committed to revolutionary political practice. We represent the most powerful extra-parliamentary liberation movement in the Thamil nation. We represent the militant expression of the collective will of our people who are determined to fight for freedom, dignity and justice. We are the armed vanguard of the struggling masses, the freedom fighters of the oppressed. We are not in any way isolated and alienated from the popular masses but immersed and integrated with the popular will, with the collective soul of our nation. Our revolutionary organisation is built through revolutionary

AN OPEN LETTER TO PREMADASA FROM LTTE

Dear Sir,

A very grave and explosive situation has arisen in Tamil Eelam as a consequence of your Government's determination to stifle and stamp out, by violent means, the legitimate struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation for political independence. The intensified military occupation of Tamil lands, the increased terrorism of the State police against the innocent Tamil masses, the implementation of new repressive legislations that annuls the very freedom of political agitations — all such devious methods of totalitarian tyranny signify that your Government has mounted a massive scale oppression to strangle the will of a nation of people and silence their political aspirations. In view of the fact that your Government has embarked on a policy of eliminating, by brute force, a legitimate political struggle based on a democratic principle of national self-determination and that your Government has been using the name of our revolutionary movement as a pretext to invoke such repressive measures and to inflame the fires of Sinhala chauvinism, the Liberation Tigers are compelled to counter such vicious allegations and insinuations.

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tion and repression is the only viable and effective means to achieve the national liberation of Tamil Eelam. Against the reactionary violence and terrorism perpetrated against our people by your Government we have the right of armed defence and decisive masses of people are behind our revolutionary struggle.

WHY WE ARE COMMITTED TO ARMED STRUGGLE

The Tamil political history of recent times will certainly indicate to you that our people have exhausted all forms of peaceful struggles, all forms of parliamentary agitations, all forms of negotiations and pacts. For nearly a quarter of a century the Tamil nationalist movement fought decisively encompassing a variety of forms of struggles from peaceful picketings to mass hartals, from mass demonstrations to general strikes—all aspects of peaceful political practice have been expressed and exhausted. The more the Tamil masses sought non-violent methods to redress their grievances, the more the Sinhala ruling classes sought violent methods of military oppression and subjugation; the more they called for national emancipation the more the military invasion, occupation and repression. It is because of the heightened condition of this savage oppression, of the exhaustion and frustration of peaceful agitations that prompted our movement to engage in revolutionary armed resistance which we hold is a continuation of the political struggle of our oppressed people. The guerrilla warfare, the form of the popular struggle we are committed to is not borne out of blind militancy or adventurism but arose out of the historical necessity, out of the concrete conditions of intolerable national oppression. Our actions and operations, as your Government attempts to paint, are not indiscriminate bursts of irrational violence or terrorism; they are acts of revolutionary violence of the oppressed against the reactionary violence of the oppressor. We are waging a heroic struggle against the oppressive instruments of the state, against those who try to hunt us down, against those who plot to wipe us out, against those who betray us and against those traitors and opportunists who betray the noble cause of our national liberation struggle.

WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS ?

The first piece of draconian legislation enacted by your Government was to proscribe the Tiger movement alleging that we are dangerous terrorists threatening the very foundation of the so-called national unity and territorial integrity. Such a legislation was, in actual fact, aimed not only to suppress the revolutionary armed struggle of the Tamils but also to consolidate an unpopular bourgeois dictatorship against the possible uprising of the oppressed Sinhala masses. The new Emergency Regulations aim to combat terrorism, but in reality it is primarily motivated to crush and destroy the Tamil national movement along with all forms of popular class struggle against the State. Such totalitarian legislations negate the very freedom of political expression and contravene the basic principles of human right and liberty.

In the deluded eyes of your Government our movement appears to be a spectre of terrorism and anarchy. In reality, who are these terrorists? We assert, and we hold that we are right in our assertion, that it is the state police and the armed forces and those who poison the minds of the innocent Sinhala masses with racial fanaticism and chauvinism are the real terrorists. There has been innumerable incidents of such acts of terrorism perpetrated against our people, incidents of mass murder, looting and arson by racist terrorists aided and abetted by the armed forces, incidents of shooting and killing of innocent Tamil people, incidents of sadistic murders and barbaric torture by the police. These violent acts certainly fall within the category of terrorism and these terrorists are none other than the instruments of state oppression and the reactionary forces of racism. It is upon these terrorist forces that your Government has bestowed extraordinary powers to ensure the peace and security of our people. Therefore, it is beyond reasonable doubt that your Government's objective is not to wipe out a non-existent terrorism but to unleash actual terrorism and violence to create panic among the Tamil masses. By such a high-handed act, the Sinhala ruling class aims to destroy the determined will of our nation to fight for political independence. But the Government has failed to comprehend the historical truth that the more a nation of people are oppressed the more they become determined to fight back

the oppression. By intensifying oppression your Government will never be able to achieve its aims of enslaving our people but will certainly open the prospective of prolonged popular armed struggle, a strategic objective to which we are already committed to.

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION PARTIALLY PARALYSED

Your Government has closed several banks and the airport in the North placing the blame on our liberation movement. A state of emergency has been declared claiming that criminal acts are on the increase in Tamil areas. The Government's motive behind such strategy is well known to our people. It is the calculated aim of your Government to place more hardship and inconvenience on our people hoping that the Tamil masses might feel the pinch and gradually turn critical of us and finally betray us. Such a devious strategy, we are certain, will never work. It simply exposes the impotency of your Government's civil administration which was been partially paralysed. The declaration of the state of Emergency bares ample testimony that your Government is totally incapable of exercising any form of civil authority in the Tamil nation other than by military occupation and repression.

Acts of violence emanating from the most oppressed and deprived sections of the masses are not typical symptoms in the North alone. They are more pervasive in Sri Lanka signifying the socio-economic crisis your Government is confronted with. This fact is amply illustrated by a statement made in Parliament recently by the Minister of Justice that between January and April of 1978 there have been 474 homicides and 214 incidents of robberies and burglaries throughout the island. Your Government has been using the Tamil revolutionary youth as scape-goats for civil unrest that is boiling throughout Tamil Eelam and Sri Lanka. The truth is that your capitalist regime is faced with a major crisis and the down-trodden classes are becoming impatient and disgruntled. The increasing criminal violence is an external manifestation of the internal frustrations of the masses. Unable to resolve the national economic crisis and the mounting social problems, your Government is adopting the reactionary strategy of

intensifying the national oppression of the Tamils and invoking the Tiger phobia. The Sinhala national bourgeoisie always descends to such dirty politics of racism and chauvinism as a desperate means to turn the tide of Sinhala mass resentment against the state, towards the Tamils. Such a strategy, we are certain, will not work in the long run since the revolutionary proletariat in Sri Lanka is becoming ideologically conscious of the dangers of chauvinism that divide and immobilise the Sinhala working class.

We are fighting for a noble cause, a right cause, the cause of national freedom of the oppressed nation — Tamil Eelam. The revolutionary process towards which we work to achieve national liberation and socialism will be long and arduous. Yet, we are certain that no force on earth, however repressive it may be, can stop us from the revolutionary struggle we are committed to.

LONG LIVE TAMIL EELAM

**Chairman
Central Committee
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam**

[This letter of protest addressed to Mr. R. Premadasa, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was handed over to him by LTTE in London when he visited UK in July 1979]

TO THE SINHALA SOLDIER

From a Liberation Tiger

You probably know that today, on the soil of Tamil Eelam, a desire for national liberation has been set aflame. It is an inevitable historic necessity that we win the freedom of our homeland. You have been an instrument of the racist state of Sri Lanka, in practising terrorism against the people of Tamil Eelam. You have also been an instrument in the manhunt, ordered by the state, on the liberation fighters of our nation.

We see you riding down the streets of Tamil Eelam, khaki clad and armed. The care of an old mother or father, or a sister, maybe, compels you to carry arms. While those in the seats of power in Sri Lanka flourish, you fall down as the victim. Very soon, you will stand, turned against your own people, your own class, ordered by this very same class in power. Those in power will use you to crush the revolt of your people.

We, motivated by an unceasing yearning for national liberation, are forced to oppose you, a puppet of the state. When we meet at the battlefield, you become the sacrificial lamb. As we walk the path of national liberation, our death will acquire dignity, meaning. But yours will become meaningless and absurd.

Even though a pawn in the hands of State terrorism, the atrocities and murders that you committed in Tamil Eelam, have left permanent scars in the hearts of the Tamil people and will never be healed. Do not die labouring for the foul campaigns of the ruling class. Do not lose your integrity and your humanity, so that those who rule us may prosper. It is only when you take up arms on the side of the oppressed Sinhala workers and peasants, against the state of Sri Lanka, that we could speak the language of friendship. When and if you do that, you will understand the pulse of our own struggle.

[Released by the LTTE in July 1982]

OPEN LETTER TO LALITH ATHULATHMUDALI from L.T.T.E.

In the guise of eradicating what you misconceive as 'terrorism' your Government has installed a military regime in Tamil Eelam and declared a war against our people. You have imposed a racist war on a people who have committed no crime other than seeking their legitimate rights based on human justice. In your pathological hatred for a people, you categorise all innocent civilians including the elderly and the children, all those who have been wantonly butchered by your racist troopers as 'terrorists'. You have declared a war against the innocents, a dirty genocidal war, the objective of which is the systematic extermination of our people. Thus, you have opted for a military solution, the Hitlerian final solution, to the Tamil national question. Yet, you have excelled the German dictator in the art of genocide and will enter into history as a perpetrator of crimes against humanity. You will carry the sin of having stained the pages of a history of a freedom struggle with blood and tears.

It is quite incomprehensible to us as to why you and your Government have failed to grasp what you call the 'spectre of terrorism'. Let us explain to you this elementary political fact. What you refer to as terrorism is nothing other than a political phenomenon of people's rebellion, a phenomenon of people's revolutionary resistance against repression. Armed resistance in Tamil Eelam arose as a historical consequence of State repression. Therefore what you misconceive as 'terrorism' is the child of state terrorism, in other words, your own creation. It is something that which cannot be destroyed by military means, since it is people's phenomenon, a phenomenon of mass resistance. Therefore, we advise you to reflect the meaning of your concept grounding them on historical realities. What you call 'terrorism' is inextricably bound up with our people's struggle for freedom and justice, our struggle for liberation. You will never comprehend our people's struggle without a clear perception of a mode of a struggle which is revolutionary in character. Your characterisation of revolutionary political forces as 'terrorists' will never resolve the Tamil problem. Your military option will bring your own disaster. You cannot find and identify us, since we are everywhere, immersed with the sea of masses, or rather, we are the people.

Our people are our mountains. No state, however powerful, has ever won a war against a people. You are going to learn this historical lesson in the most bitter manner. Every drop of blood, every drop of tear that our people shed in their day to day agonies will transform into arms against your Government. We will raise a revolutionary army of thousands of liberation fighters from the very ashes of those innocents who were murdered for no reason by your armed forces. Your very acts of savagery have raised the level of national consciousness of our people and poised them for a national liberation war. Unable to confront the liberation fighters, your timid, panicky mercenaries are turning their guns against ordinary civilian masses, a cowardice strategy that has shocked all civilized nations and brought shame to your Government. Our people are aware of your diabolical scheme. They are not cowards. They are a proud people, a civilized people. Their repressed anger will one day explode into a volcano, a volcano of revolutionary insurrection.

You cannot expect us to be idle spectators when our people are butchered and burned on the roadsides. We will never down our arms and surrender as you foolishly expect us to do. We will continue to fight you. We will strike hard more intensely than ever, with more determination. We will continue to fight until your armed forces are chased out from our homeland. We will turn Tamil Eelam as a graveyard for the Sinhala state terrorists and their foreign agents.

We wish to state categorically that we will carry forward our freedom struggle in the face of any obstacles until we reach our cherished goal, i.e. an independent socialist state of Tamil Eelam. We are committed to the goal of freedom and are prepared to die for this noble cause. We will certainly win our liberation struggle, whereas you will fail in your evil design in crushing the genuine aspirations of a nation of people. In the end you will stand convicted by the world conscience and condemned by history.

[This letter appears in the 'Voice of Tigers' the official bulletin of the LTTE. Vol. 1 No. 4.]

*LTTE's Memorandum to
Non-Aligned Summit*



A MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE
LIBERATION TIGERS TO THE SEVENTH
SUMMIT MEETING OF NON-ALIGNED
NATIONS HELD IN NEW-DELHI, INDIA
MARCH 7 - 15, 1983

TAMILS FIGHT

FOR

NATIONAL FREEDOM

STATE TERRORISM IN SRI LANKA

**THE HONOURABLE CHAIRMAN,
RESPECTED LEADERS OF THE THIRD WORLD,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES**

We wish to submit for your kind attention and urgent consideration a very grave and potentially explosive situation in Sri Lanka. It is the plight of the Tamil nation of four million people and their legitimate struggle for political independence based on the democratic principle of national self-determination. The Tamil nation was forced into this political path as a consequence of nearly thirty five years of violent and brutal oppression practised by successive Sri Lankan Governments aimed at the annihilation of the national entity of the Tamils. Decades of peaceful, non-violent, democratic political struggles to gain the very basic human rights were met with vicious forms of military suppression. The intensified military occupation of Tamil lands, the intolerable terrorism of the armed forces, the implementation of racist and repressive legislations, the mass arrest and detention of political activists — all these draconian methods were employed to stifle and subjugate the will of our people to live free, and stamp out their legitimate struggle for justice. This ever unfolding thrust of national oppression made unitary existence intolerable and finally led to the demand for secession by the oppressed Tamil people.

You are certainly aware that in the contemporary conjuncture national liberation struggles have assumed world historical significance. The right of nations to self-determination is the cardinal principle upon which many struggles for national emancipation are being fought today. It is the principle that upholds the sacred right of a nation to decide its own political destiny, a universal socialist principle that guarantees the right of a nation to political independence. The Tamil national independence struggle is fought on the very basis of our nation's right to political independence.

To the community of world nations Sri Lanka attempts to portray itself as a paradise island, cherishing the Buddhist ideals of peace and dharma, adhering to a noble political doctrine of socialist democracy and pursuing a neutral path of non-alignment. Paradoxically behind this political facade lies the factual reality, the reality of racial repression of the blatant

violation of basic human rights, of police and military brutality, of attempted genocide. Master-minding a totalitarian political system with the collusion of U.S. imperialism, the Sri Lankan ruling elite since 'independence' wielded their political power by invoking the ideology of national chauvinism and religious fanaticism and by actually practising a vicious and calculated policy of racial repression against the Tamil people. It is a tragic paradox that dictatorial regimes like Sri Lanka who stands indicted by world humanist movements for crimes against humanity could parade on a world forum with the mantle of democracy and dharma. Our objective is to expose this hypocrisy and place before you the authentic story, the story of the immense sufferings as well as the heroic struggles of our people who have no choice but to fight for dignity and freedom rather than reduced to slavery and slow death.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Tamils of the island of Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) constitute themselves as a nation of people, forming into a coherent social entity with their own history, tradition, culture, language and economic life. The nation is popularly called Tamil Eelam. Tamils have been living in the island from pre-historic times before the arrival of the Sinhalese from northern India in the 6th century B.C. The Sinhalese people who constitute the majority nation of ten million have a distinct language, culture and history of their own. Historical chronicles document that the island was ruled by both Tamil and Sinhalese Kings. From the 13th century onwards, until the penetration of foreign colonialism Tamil Eelam lived as a stable national entity with a state structure and was ruled by its own kings. The Portuguese annexed the territory in 1619 yet ruled it as a separate national entity, as the traditional home lands of the Tamils. Dutch colonialism, which followed did not violate the national and territorial autonomy, until British imperialism in 1833 brought about a unified state structure amalgamating the Tamil and Sinhala kingdoms laying the foundation for the present national conflict. Another significant event in the British imperialist rule was the creation of an exploitative plantation economy for which a mill-

ion Tamils from South India were brought as workers and settled in the island. Constituting a crucial part of the Tamil Eelam national totality, this huge mass of Tamil labourers who produce the wealth of the island yet subjected to most sinister form of racial repression.

DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL OPPRESSION

The Sinhala chauvinistic oppression against the Tamil nation began to unfold its ugly forms soon after national 'independence' in 1948 when the British handed over state power to the Sinhalese ruling elite. This oppression was not simply an expression of racial prejudice, but a well calculated genocidal plan aimed at the gradual and systematic destruction of the essential foundations of national community. The oppression, therefore assumed a multi-dimensional thrust, attacking simultaneously on the different structural levels of the national foundation, the levels of the conditions of existence of a nation, its language, education, culture, economy and territory. As part of this genocidal programme formed the state inspired communal riots, which led to the mass destruction of life and property of the Tamils.

ONE MILLION WORKERS DISENFRANCHISED

The first major onslaught of this genocidal oppression was directed against the Tamil plantation workers, who as the only organised proletariat wielded immense political power which the Sinhalese ruling class wanted to castigate. By enacting notorious citizenship laws (Citizenship Acts of 1948 and 1949) the Sri Lankan Government disenfranchised more than a million Tamil plantation workers. This repressive measure reduced these people to a condition of statelessness and dehumanised them without any basic human or civil rights.

PLANNED ANNEXATION OF TAMIL LANDS

The most vicious form of oppression calculated to destroy the national identity of the Tamils was the state aided aggressive colonisation which began soon after 'independence' and now swallowed nearly three thousand square miles of Tamil Eelam. This planned occupation of Tamil lands by hundreds

of thousands of Sinhala people aided and abetted by the state was aimed to annihilate the geographical entity of the Tamil nation.

REPRESSION ON LANGUAGE, EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Sinhala chauvinism struck deeply into the spheres of language, education and employment of the Tamils. Championing the ideology of ultra-nationalism, Mr. Bandaranayake came to political power in 1956 with the pledge to install Sinhala language and Buddhist religion as the only official language and state religion of the island. His first Act in Parliament, the Sinhala Only Act, put an end to the equality of status enjoyed by the Tamil language and made Sinhala the only state language. This infamous legislation had disastrous consequences. It forced the Tamil public servants to learn Sinhala language or leave employment. In the decades that followed all employment opportunities in the public service were practically closed to the Tamils. They were gradually rooted out from positions of power in the public sector as well as in the armed services.

Education was the crucial area in which the onslaught of racism deprived a vast population of Tamil youth from access to higher education. A notorious discriminatory selective device called "Standardisation" was introduced in 1970 which demanded higher merits of marks from Tamil students for university admissions whereas the Sinhala students were admitted with lower grades. The present regime introduced a new scheme which turned out to be far more discriminatory than the earlier one denying thousands of deserving Tamil students the right to higher education, and created a huge army of unemployed youth.

ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION

The thrust of national oppression that penetrated into the spheres of language, education and employment had far reaching consequences on the economic life of the Tamil speaking people as a whole. For more than three decades all successive Sri Lankan Governments pursued a deliberate pol-

organised violence that brought colossal damage in terms of life and property to our people signified the genocidal intent underlying this horrid phenomenon. The objective of the chauvinistic ruling class is nothing other than to inflict maximum injury to the Tamils to terrorise, subjugate and destroy the aspirations of our people for political independence. Yet more and more the oppression intensified the determination of our people became more and more hardened with an iron will to resist the forces of repression. As the consequence of heightened repression the resistance of the freedom fighters increased with such a vehemence that it caused the destabilisation of the Sinhala state and disrupted the civil administrative system in Tamil Eelam.

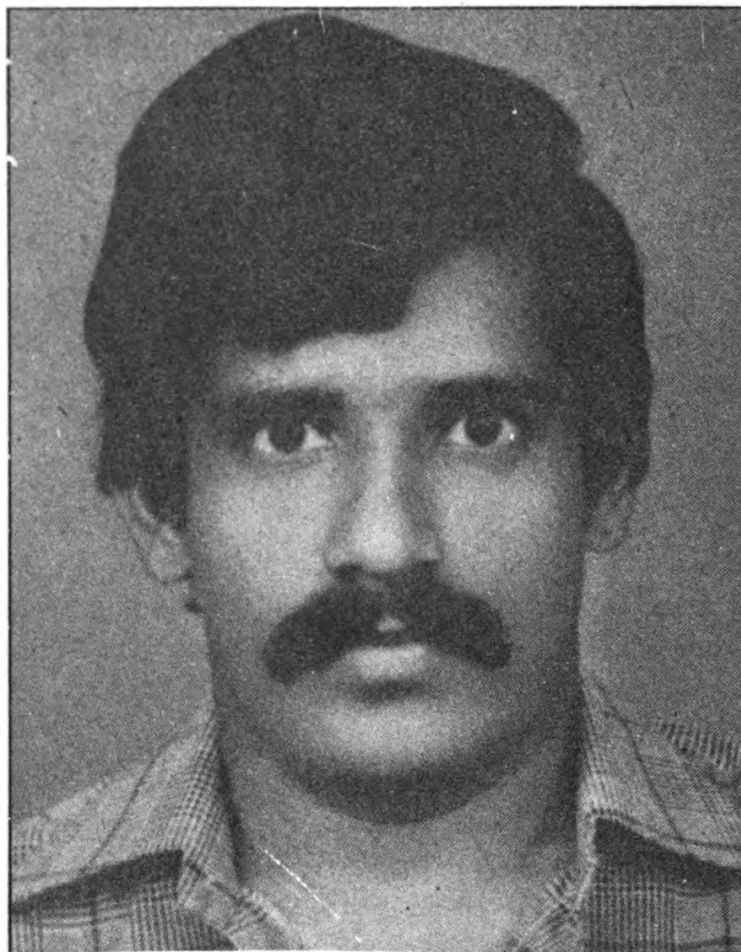
On the 2nd July 1982 the Tiger guerrillas launched a lightning attack on a police patrolling party at Nelliady, Jaffna, killing four police officers on the spot. Three police personnel were seriously injured.

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

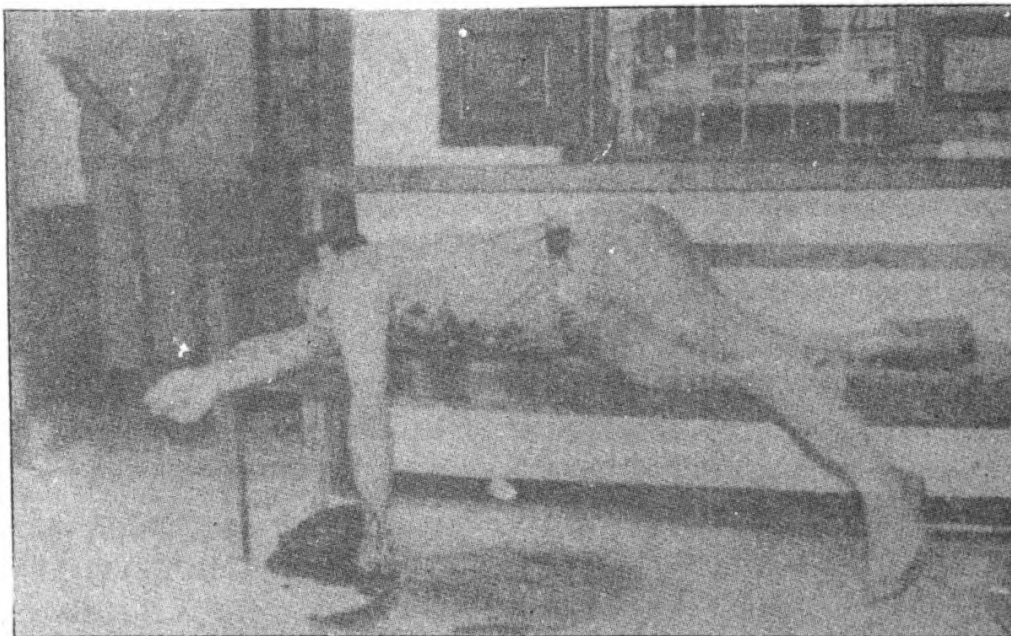
On the 18th February 1983 our freedom fighters shot and killed Police Inspector Wijewardane and his jeep driver Rajapaksa of Point Pedro Police station. Inspector Wijewardane is notorious for Police repression in that area.

On the 4th March 1983 at Umaiypuram, Paranthan, our guerrilla fighters ambushed an army convoy and in the gun battle that ensued several army personnel were seriously

Lieutenant Lucas Charles Antony (alias Aseer, Seelan)



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



injured and the rest fled in fear. In that ambush two armoured cars were damaged.

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

On the 29th April 1983, the Liberation Tigers assassinated three prominent supporters of the ruling United National Party on the same day, as a warning to all Tamil traitors who supported the racist Government. Two of them were U.N.P. candidates for the local elections (E.V. Ratnasingham of Point Pedro and S.S. Muthiah of Chavakachcheri) and the other, S.S. Rajaratnam a long time U.N.P. supporter, and the bodyguard of U.N.P.'s Jaffna organiser K. Ganeshalingam. As a direct consequence of this action all the Tamil U.N.P. candidates withdrew from the elections and several Tamils resigned from the ruling party.

TIGERS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS

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

Such a mass boycott of elections, unprecedented in the political history of the Tamils, constitutes a great political and propaganda victory for the Tiger Movement. The T.U.L.F. which defied the Tiger appeal, suffered an insulting humiliation and irreparably damaged its political image, when 90% of the voters in the North rejected the Party's appeal to vote. The boycott was called by the Tigers, who, for the first time, launched an effective popular campaign appealing to the people to shun the local government elections as a mark of disapproval and rejection of the racist State system that has imposed a reign of terror and repression against the Tamils. V. Prabakaran chairman and the military commander of the Tiger Movement in a statement widely circulated among the people called upon the Tamils to 'reject the civil administra-

tive machinery of the Sri Lankan state terrorists and joint the popular armed struggle directed towards national emancipation'. He also accused the reactionary bourgeois political Party, the Tamils United Liberation Front, as functioning as agents of the Sinhala racist regime and utilise the slogan of 'national freedom' to win the elections.

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

REASONS FOR THE RECENT HOLOCAUST

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

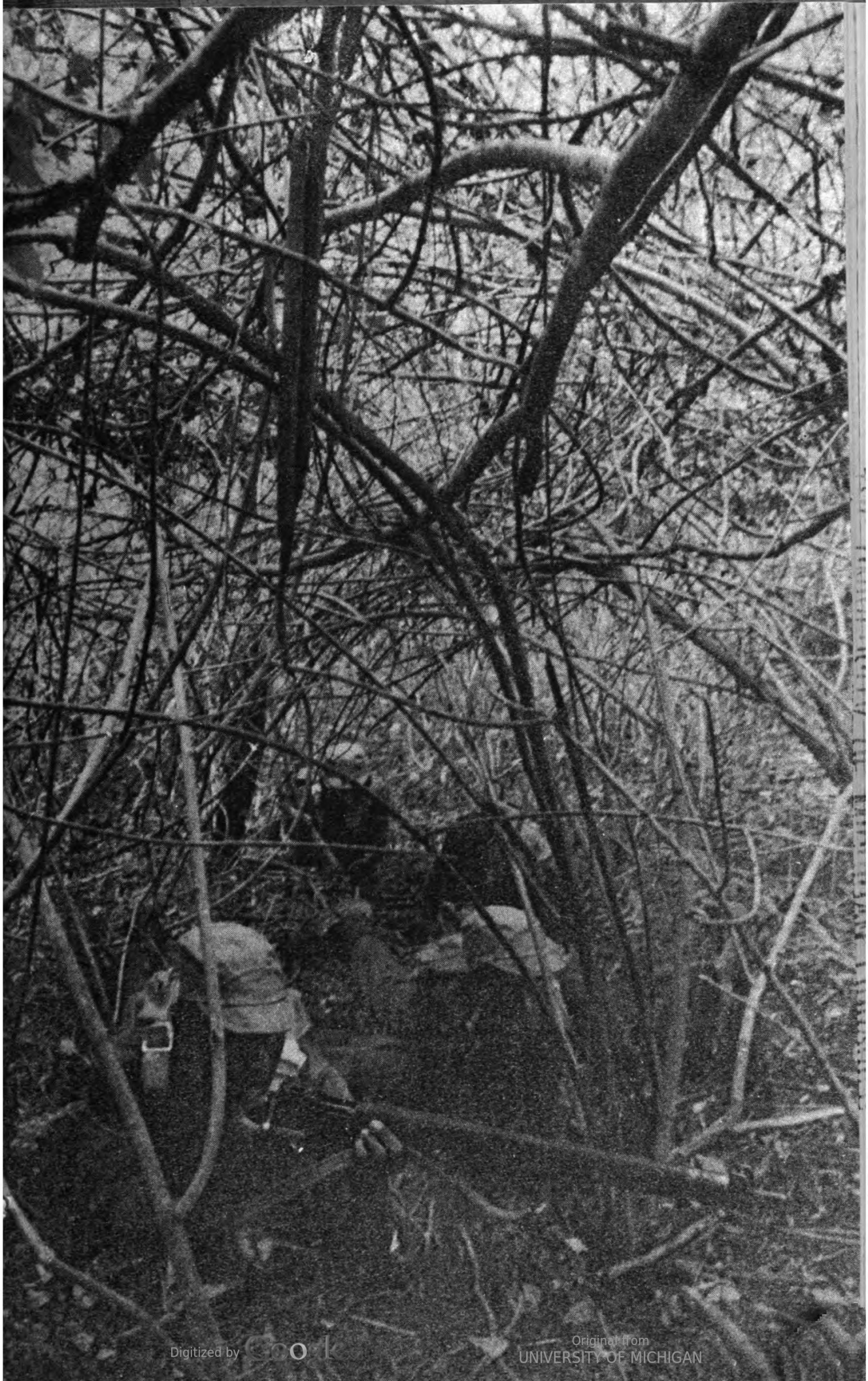
An all out genocidal assault on the Tamils living in Colombo has been pre-planned by Sinhala fascist groups led by leading members of the ruling party. The recent outburst, unprecedented in its destructive horror, is therefore certainly an open manifestation of a genocidal programme hatched by the fascist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

There are two basic reasons for the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie to let loose a genocidal repression on Tamils. Firstly, to divert the mass attention from a deepening

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

Tiger Revolutionary Army in Eelam jungles.





POLITICO- MILITARY OBJECTIVES

OUR THEORETICAL GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

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

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

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

class movement and obstruct the proletarian struggle for socialist revolution.

While taking Lenin's discourse as our guide, we are not blind to the fact that every national struggle must be situated within the context of its own concrete historical conditions. The liberation struggle of the Tamil Eelam nation demanding political independence, the historical conjunctures of which we have already outlined, arose primarily from the contradictions of national oppression and therefore must be confined to the theoretical specifications and political implications of that nation's right to secession. Within this context many questions are posed. Whether the oppressed Tamil nation has the right to secede; whether the right of that nation to self-determination contravenes the socialist principle of proletarian internationalism; under what political and economic conditions of oppression will a nation opt for secession; whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nations; whether the struggle for political independence has the revolutionary potentiality to promote proletarian revolution and socialist transformation of the oppressed Tamil social formation; what kind of political strategy can best serve the class interests of the proletariat of the oppressed as well as the oppressor nations, a strategy which has to be adopted by the Marxist revolutionaries of the oppressor nation who are caught between a progressive struggle of an oppressed nation and a reactionary bourgeois nationalism of the oppressor nation. These problems are raised and hotly debated within the context of the Tamil national question. The debates and arguments, enmeshed with vague generalisations and loose conceptualisations, have created so much confusion and controversy that a clarity and a correct perspective on this issue has become absolutely essential.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SECESSION

The Tamil nation is a historically constituted social formation possessing all the basic elements that are usually assembled to define a concrete characterisation of a nation. Yet a definition as to what constitutes a nation is theoretically unneces-

sary since we can precisely formulate our issue within the Leninist conceptual framework of the self-determination of nations.

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

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

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

Again in the same theoretical essay Lenin writes:

"Self-determination of nations in the Marxist programme cannot, from a historio-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state".

Thus, Lenin offers a precise definition. The right of nations to self-determination in his formulation means the right of an oppressed nation to secede from the oppressor nation and form an independent national state. Therefore, those who pretend to recognise

the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to self-determination and argue such a right does not embody the freedom to secede, are neither Marxists or Leninists but chauvinists parading under socialist slogans. To characterise these pseudo-socialists in Lenin's own words:

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

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

INALIENABLE RIGHT OF A NATION

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

The freedom of secession should not be confused with the reactionary bourgeois category of 'separatism' which is sometimes utilised to undermine the genuine democratic struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. The freedom of secession articulated within the concept of self-determination exclusively implies an inalienable right of a nation of people to agitate for political inde-

pendence from the oppressor nation. This complete freedom to agitate for secession is a right, which can be exercised under conditions of intolerable oppression. Therefore, the recognition of this right to secession, Lenin repeatedly argued, is vital to prevent national friction arising out of a big nation's chauvinism, a right that upholds the complete equality of nations, a right, if violated will lead to national hostility and the fragmentation of nations. It is here, Lenin advances the dialectical principle that, in order to ensure unity there must be freedom to separate. He even argued that freedom to divorce will not cause the disintegration of the family. Therefore, Lenin rigorously held that he was not advocating a doctrine of separatism but advancing a highest principle of a socialist democracy in which absolute freedom should be accorded to a nation of people to secede under conditions of oppression. To quote him in this context:

"Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession.....This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression".

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

PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Marxist political praxis certainly advances proletarian internationalism, but at the same time, gives fullest recognition to the revolutionary character and the historical legitimacy of the national movements. The principle of nationality, or rather, the phenomenon of nationalism itself, in Marxist discourse is characterised as a historically inevitable political phenomenon in bourgeois society. For Marx, nationalism is historically prior to proletarian internationalism. Proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist social formations, Marx foresaw, will generate the progressive forces of internationalism towards the gradual structuration and consolidation of a world socialist society. Lenin, who saw the historical unfolding of the great socialist revolution, became an ardent champion of proletarian internationalism, since he rightly believed that only the revolutionary power of a united international proletariat can challenge the structure of dominance

of world capitalism. Therefore, we find in Lenin's texts a constant emphasis on the necessity of the solidarity of the working classes of all nations to mobilise to fight against the hegemony of international capital. Yet, on the other hand, we find Lenin as a fierce champion of the oppressed; he fought vigorously against all forms of oppression. He correctly perceived that national oppression is the enemy of the class struggle and without the emancipation of the oppressed, proletarian solidarity of the oppressed and the oppressor nations is unattainable. That is why, Lenin firmly held that proletarian internationalism demands that the proletariat of the oppressor nation should grant the right to self-determination (i.e. the right to secession) to the oppressed nation.

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

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

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

INTOLERABLE OPPRESSION AND INEVITABLE SECESSION

We are now approaching the most crucial stage of our discussion on the Tamil Eelam national question. That is, under what political and economic conditions of oppression a nation will opt for secession, and whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for national independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of

both the oppressed and oppressor nations. An elucidation of these issues is vital for a theoretical comprehension and for a political strategy for proletarian revolutionaries in Sri Lanka who are confronted with a national struggle of an oppressed nation which has chosen the path of secession.

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

Lenin says:

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

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

Within the Leninist perspective we can safely hold that the decision of the oppressed Tamil nation to secede from the oppressor nation was necessary and historically inevitable because of the extreme conditions of oppression, the nature and form of which we have outlined in the early parts of this document. The question that can be posed now is, whether the Tamil struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of the oppressed and oppressor nations.

THE ROLE OF THE PROGRESSIVES OF THE OPPRESSOR NATION

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

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

“It is (Britain’s oppression of Ireland) the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation. It is the secret of which the capitalist class maintains its power”.

(Marx’s Letter to Meyer and Vogt, April 9th 1870)

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

“Our model will always be Marx, who, after living in Britain for decades and becoming half-English, demanded freedom and national independence for Ireland in the interests of the socialist movement of the British workers”.

(Lenin: ‘On the National Pride of the Great Russians’)

We advocate that the progressives and revolutionaries of the oppressor nation (in this case, the Sinhala nation) who uphold the proletarian praxis of Marxism and Leninism should follow the strategy advanced by these great revolutionary teachers and give an unconditional, unrelented support to the freedom struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. Such a political strategy can only serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nation, since the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie has been reinforcing a chauvinistic ideological hegemony and has been actually practising a vicious form of national oppression with

the motive of dividing and weakening the working class movement of Sri Lanka. To break this bourgeois ideological hegemony and to unite the proletariat of the oppressor nation, the revolutionary Marxists in the South should advance an ideological battle supporting most resolutely the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to secession. Such a strategy requires a profound political education of the masses on the democratic rights of the oppressed nation. As Lenin said, 'the masses must be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionary manner—the right of nations to self-determination. Such an ideological struggle on the part of the Sinhala progressives is essential to raise the level of political consciousness of the Sinhala proletariat to understand and accept the legitimacy of the Tamil cause. It is precisely this lack of political consciousness that draws Sinhala masses into anti-Tamil racial violence and prevents the development of a proletarian class consciousness.

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

NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The theoretical perspective of historical materialism necessitates the investigation of any national movement in relation to the historical development of world capitalism. The nationalism of the European nation states arose with the collapse of feudalism and the transition to capitalism, with the unification of markets and the revolutionary development of productive forces leading to the birth of a new bourgeois class. The ascendancy of the bourgeoisie

and bourgeois nationalism led to the oppression and exploitation of other nations. Advanced stage of capitalist development gave rise to monopoly capitalism which took the global form of imperialism. The imperialist penetration and its form of oppression produced determinant effects on the mode of production of the peripheral formations. Separating the direct producers from their means of production, creating a mass of free labourers, these effects generated the dynamics of the capitalist mode in the penetrated societies. The development of the productive forces in the capitalist mode led to the organisation of the proletariat as a revolutionary class force.

The imperialist penetration, not only generated the mechanisms of the capitalist development but also shifted the national struggles to the peripheral social formations. In this context the nature of nationalism, the national struggle and the class relations in the national movements of the Third World countries must be viewed in relation to the transformations in the expanding capitalist economy, its global effects, its structural relations with developing peripheral capitalism. The world hegemony and the development of the revolutionary proletarian classes within the space of imperialist dominance, have changed the structure and character of the contemporary national struggles of the Third World. The so-called progressive national bourgeoisie has lost its revolutionary character to advance the national struggle as a democratic social force. The historical conjuncture of global capitalism has eliminated all progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie, its historical role in the national revolution has shifted to the revolutionary proletariat. Such structural transformation in the class elements has necessitated a revolutionary socialist strategy inter-relating the class struggle with national liberation struggle under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, a strategy to advance the class struggle along with the national liberation struggle both against the indigenous bourgeoisie and international capitalism. *The political objective of our movement is to advance the national struggle along with the class struggle, or rather, our fundamental objective is national emancipation and socialist transition of our social formation.*

THE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY

The politico-military strategy of our liberation movement is

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

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

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

Since the recent genocidal onslaught vast sections of the popular masses have been rallying behind our liberation organisation

since we constitute the most powerful, well organised fighting force in Tamil Eelam. Because of growing popular support our politico-military strategy is now projected in transforming our protracted guerrilla warfare into a people's war of national liberation. The process involves massive expansion of our guerrilla units into a people's army of liberation, a process in which vast sections of our people will be drawn into a mass armed struggle.

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

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

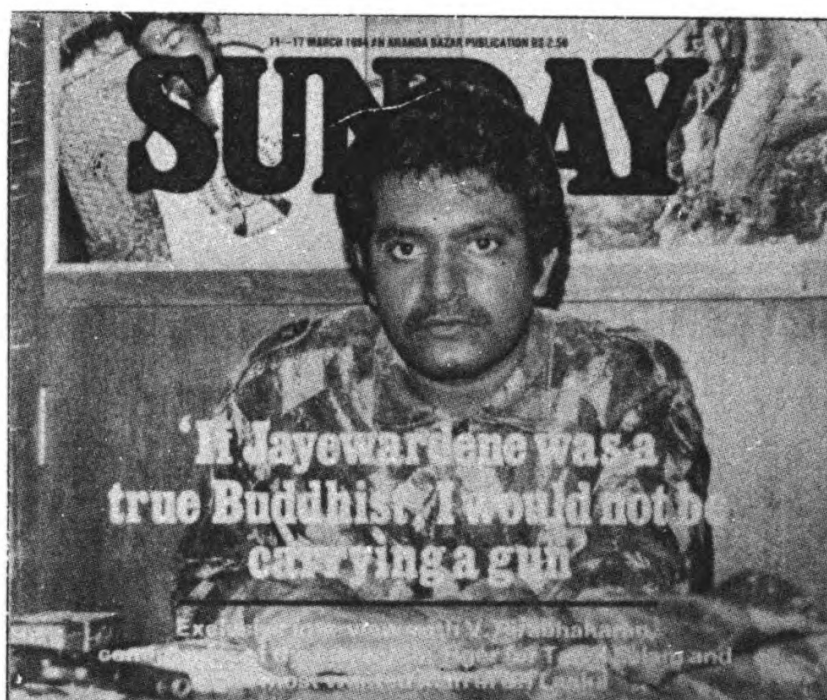
OUR APPEAL TO THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD

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

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

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

*An Interview with
Prabakaran*



AN INTERVIEW WITH PRABAKARAN

We are reproducing an exclusive interview given by V. Prabhakaran, Leader of the LTTE to Anita Pratap which appeared in the 'SUNDAY' of 11-17 March 1984.

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

A : The democratic parliamentary system, or what you refer to as the conventional political system in Sri Lanka, has always tried to impose the will of the majority on the minority. This system not only failed to solve the basic problems of our people but, in fact, aggravated our plight. For decades, the repression by the state has made the life of our people miserable. The non-violent democratic struggles of our people were met with military repression. Our just demands were totally ignored, and the oppression continued on such a scale as to threaten the very survival of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was these circumstances which led me to form our liberation movement. I felt that an armed struggle was the only alternative left to our people, not only to ensure our survival but ultimately to free ourselves from the Sinhala oppression. I have always been aware that our movement would be outlawed. It is for this reason that we organised our movement as a clandestine underground structure from its inception.

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

A : The shocking events of the 1958 racial riots had a profound impact on me when I was a schoolboy. I heard of horrifying incidents of how our people had been mercilessly and brutally put to death by Sinhala racists. Once I met widowed mother, a friend of my family, who related to me her agonising personal experience of this racial holocaust. During the riots a Sinhala mob attacked her house in Colombo. The rioters set fire to the house and murdered her husband. She and her children escaped with severe burn injuries. I was deeply shocked when I saw the scars on her body. I also heard stories of how young babies were roasted alive in boiling tar. When I heard such stories of cruelty, I felt a deep sense of sympathy and love for my people. A great

passion overwhelmed me to redeem my people from this racist system. I strongly felt that armed struggle was the only way to confront a system which employs armed might against unarmed, innocent people.

Q: At what point of time did you lose faith in the parliamentary system? What precipitated this disillusionment?

A: I entered politics at a time—in the early Seventies—when the younger generation had already lost faith in parliamentary politics. I entered politics as an armed revolutionary. What precipitated the disillusionment in parliamentary politics was the total disregard and callousness of the successive governments towards the pathetic plight of our people.

Q: How did you come to start the Liberation Tiger movement?

A: I originally formed the movement with a group of dedicated youths who sincerely believed that armed struggle was the only way to liberate our people.

Q: What was the reason for identifying yourselves as 'Tigers'?

A: I named the movement 'Liberation Tigers' since the tiger emblem had deep roots in the political history of the Tamils, symbolising Tamil patriotic resurgence. The tiger symbol also depicts the mode of our guerrilla warfare.

Q: When you decided to form the 'Liberation Tigers', what was the reaction of your family members and those close to you?

A: As soon as the Tiger movement was formed, I went underground and lost contact with my family.

Q: When did you last meet your family members? Are they reconciled to your outlawed existence?

A: I have not seen my family members for the last 11 years. I do not think they regard me as an ordinary person leading an ordinary life. They are reconciled to my existence as a guerrilla fighter.

Q: After 14 years of struggle, do you think you are any closer to achieving your goal?

A: After all these years of struggle, I feel that we are advancing towards our goal. The July '83 holocaust has united all sections of the Tamil masses. There is a massive support for the armed liberation programme of our movement. This is certainly a step towards our goal.

Q: In what way have the experiences of the past 12 years changed you as a person?

A: These years of struggle have strengthened my determination and sharpened my vision.

Q: Till now what has been your most rewarding experience?

A: It is difficult for me to identify a particular experience as rewarding. The life of a guerrilla fighter is full of experiences: experiences of sorrow, happiness, frustration; each of which brings its own rewards.

Q: The experience over the years must have changed your outlook. What are some of the dominant impressions and convictions that you gained by virtue of this experience? Moreover, your experiences would have convinced you of the inefficacy of certain principles and theories in practical situations, while at the same time bringing home the validity of yet others. Can you pinpoint some of them?

A: Twelve years of experience has convinced me beyond doubt that the armed revolutionary path we under-took was the correct one. The other liberation groups who criticised our armed strategy as 'terrorism' have now realised that armed struggle is the only way out for the emancipation of our oppressed people. Moreover the guerrilla warfare has been an effective form of struggle. Several successful guerrilla raids have convinced our people that the Sinhala forces can be defeated and freedom can be won.

Q: Who is your friend, philosopher and guide?

A: Nature is my friend, life my philosopher and history is my guide.

Q: How does it feel to be the most wanted man in Sri Lanka today?

A: An Irish leader once remarked that when the British indict a person as a 'terrorist,' it implied that he was a true Irish patriot. Similarly, when the Sri Lanka government refers to me as the most wanted man, it means that I am a true Tamil patriot. Hence I feel proud to be indicated as a wanted man.

Q: Which was the most frustrating moment of your life?

A: I cannot pinpoint such a moment in my life. But the most frustrating aspect has been the betrayal of some of my trusted friends: those who pretended to be sincere to the cause, yet turned out to be self-seeking opportunists.

Q: How did the split between you and Uma Maheshwaran come about?

A: I do not approve the formulation of the question. In fact, the issue should not be viewed as a conflict or split between me and Uma Maheshwaran. It was a problem between an individual and the Tiger movement. I am in no way responsible for the problem. It was Maheshwaran who created the issue. A leader of a revolutionary movement should commit himself totally to the discipline of the organisation. If a leader violates the basic rules and principles, then there will be chaos and the organisation will crumble. Uma Maheshwaran violated the rules of our movement and as a disciplinary action he was expelled by the central com-

mittee. Being the founder of the movement and the person who appointed Maheshwaran as the chairman, I had no other alternative but to uphold the decision of the central committee.

Q: Today one finds that there are several rival Eelam liberation groups. Invariably they work at cross-purposes. When the goal is the same, should not there be a unification process? after all, there is more to be gained by using your combined strength against the common enemy. In principle, are you opposed to the rival groups uniting?

A: I have clearly and explicitly stated that I am in favour of such unity moves. I even wrote to these groups on 5 September 1982 welcoming the idea and suggested that we are prepared to form a united front if all other liberation groups shed their differences and work out a common programme of action. But, unfortunately, these groups failed to formulate a common working programme. Instead, at every unity meeting they fought against each other and fell apart. The tragedy is that these groups have no sincere intentions to unite and there is a wide gap between their words and their deeds. I sincerely feel that these groups should set an example by forging unity among themselves rather than blaming the Tigers for their disunity. Once they unite we are prepared to join hands with them.

Q: Spokesmen of rival groups have told me that all except you are open to the idea of uniting. Is this true?

A: This is absolutely untrue. It is only a propaganda by other groups to undermine our movement.

Q: Are you alone in the struggle?

A: I am not alone. I lead a powerful national movement and a wide section of the Tamil masses support me.

Q: Do you experience moments of loneliness? And if you do, how do you combat it?

A: I have never felt lonely at any point of time. Loneliness is only a problem with those who are buried in their own individual egos. A true revolutionary transcends individuality and develops a collective, social consciousness. I live and struggle for common collective cause.

Q: Do you have any regrets about not leading a normal life?

A: There are millions who, as you put it, lead a normal, ordinary existence. But we are fighting for a cause, for a noble ideal which gives us a profound spiritual satisfaction.

Q: Are you worried over the fact that most Tamil youths face a bleak future in Sri Lanka?

A: The youths are fighting a battle for freedom. I foresee a bright future for them.

Q: Is it true that more and more Tamil youths are taking part in the liberation struggle?

A: Yes, more and more youths are joining the revolution under our leadership since they have realised that armed struggle is the only way to redeem themselves and their society.

Q: *How would you defend your movement from being called a 'separatist' one, and that you all are not freedom fighters but 'terrorists'?*

A: It is wrong to call our movement 'separatist'. We are fighting for independence based on the right to national self-determination of our people. Our struggle is for self-determination, for the restoration of our sovereignty in our homeland. We are not fighting for a division or separation of a country but rather, we are fighting to uphold the sacred right to live in freedom and dignity. In this sense, we are freedom fighters not terrorists.

Q: *Would you rather die than be caught by the Sinhalese army?*

A: I would prefer to die in honour rather than being caught alive by the enemy.

Q: *The Liberation Tiger for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) staged the 23 July 1983 ambush in which 13 Sinhalese soldiers were killed. The ambush was allegedly the reason for the Sinhalese retaliation on innocent Tamils. Did you expect such a massive retaliation?*

A: The July violence should not be assessed simply as a Sinhala retaliation for the guerrilla ambush. This view is a gross oversimplification of the event. The island has been plagued with anti-Tamil racial violence which erupts periodically over the years. There were violent racial holocausts even before the emergence of our movement. Violent riots erupted in Trincomallee a couple of weeks before the ambush. Therefore, the phenomenon of anti-Tamil racial violence cannot be traced to a single event. We are engaged in a protracted guerrilla warfare. There has been several guerrilla raids, several ambushes, and we have killed several Sinhala soldiers and policemen. The July ambush was only a part of the warfare we are engaged in. It is incorrect to assume that one particular military operation has precipitated the entire violence. The July riots, you would have certainly observed, was not only aimed at the physical extermination of our people but it was also aimed at the destruction of the economic power base of the Tamils in Colombo. Our view is that the July holocaust was a pre-planned, well orchestrated genocidal programme against the Tamils, carried out by the racist elements of the ruling party. Initially, these racist elements did attempt to put the whole blame on the Tigers. Then, suddenly they blamed the left parties for the riots. But in actual fact, it is the racist leaders of the present government who should bear the responsibility for this

tragic loss of life and property of our people.

Q: Why did you stage the July ambush? There are various versions afloat. According to some, it was an act of reprisal as four Tamil women have been raped. Based on my investigations I felt that you had to prove a point to the Sinhalese army who were jubilant over the death of your close associate, Charles Anthony, the leader of the military wing on 15 July. The point, I guess that you had to assert was that the LTTE despite the loss of one of its ablest leaders, was still strong and capable of taking on the Sinhalese army. Is this theory correct?

A: There is an element of truth in your findings about Charles Anthony and the ambush. The attack was partly a retaliation, a punishment to the Sinhala army. But still we feel that the lives of 13 soldiers cannot compensate the life of a great revolutionary and freedom fighter like Charles. The ambush was also a part of the guerrilla warfare directed against the enemy.

Q: Do you think that the round table negotiations will lead to the formulation of a permanent settlement?

A: I am of the opinion that the round table conference will not bring about a permanent settlement to the Tamil issue. Our view is based on the experience of several decades. The Sinhala leaders never made a sincere attempt to resolve the Tamil issue. The present negotiations will also meet the same fate. All the major Sinhala parties and the Buddhist organisations are opposed to granting any form of regional autonomy to the Tamils. They are even opposed to giving minor concessions. Hence nothing substantial will emerge from this conference.

Q: Do you hold the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) leaders responsible for retarding the liberation struggle? Do you view them as betrayers?

A: It is true that the opportunistic politics of the TULF is retarding the liberation struggle. They have never taken any concrete steps to further the struggle. On the contrary they give false hopes, create illusions, and try to keep our people in perpetual bondage. They entered politics only to further their selfish ends. They never had any sincere intentions to liberate our oppressed people, nor did they ever put forward any concrete programme of political action. They never expected that they would be caught in the storm of a liberation struggle. The flame of a revolution is fast spreading all over Tamil Eelam. But the TULF leaders are trying their best to smother the fire. In this sense you can term the TULF leaders as betrayers.

Q: Is it true that the TULF leaders are afraid to go to their hometown and stay there not because of the Sinhalese but

because of the Tigers?

A: They are frightened not of the Tigers, but of the fury of the people who voted them to power on the promise of an independent state for the Tamils.

Q: Do you think that India's good offices will result in anything tangible?

A: India's efforts have given a positive hope to our people. But I do not think that the Sinhala racist government will utilise India's offer to resolve the problems of the Tamils.

Q: Ideally, what should India do in such a situation to help the Tamils?

A: I think that the government of India should recognise the fair and legitimate demands of our people and accept our right to self-determination.

Q: Would you suggest military intervention?

A: We have the courage, confidence and determination to fight and win our freedom. We should fight and free ourselves. But we do need India's support and sympathy.

Q: What is your personal assessment of President Jayewardene?

A: If Jayewardene was a true Buddhist, I would not be carrying a gun.

Q: What do you think is Jayewardene's intention behind holding these negotiations? Is he buying time?

A: There are several reasons behind holding these peace negotiations. Firstly, Jayewardene wants to appease the Indians. Secondly, he wants to restore the colossal damage the riots have done to the image of the country. Thirdly, it would help him to seek financial aid from western agencies. Fourthly, the President wants to buy time to build up the Sinhala military machine.

Q: Is President Jayewardene a prisoner in the hands of the hawks in his cabinet or is he acting on his own? Is he being pressurised by the Buddhist clergy?

A: Jayewardene is acting on his own. He has supreme powers. The hawks in the cabinet and the Buddhist clergy are behind him.

Q: What is the role of the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka?

A: The Buddhist clergy has played a dominant role in shaping the political trends in Sri Lanka. They have played a crucial role in whipping up anti-Tamil feelings among the Sinhala people.

Q: Do you think that the Buddhist clergy is well on its way to establishing Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist nation?

A: Sri Lanka is already a Sinhala Buddhist nation and the Buddhist clergy has contributed a lot for this cause.

Q: Is it the result of the Buddhist clergy's chauvinism or is it the result of a natural alignment following the Catholic

clergy's association with the Tamils.

A: The Buddhist clergy's chauvinism has played a significant role in the establishment of a racist state system. Sections of the Tamil Catholic clergy sympathise with the Tamil cause, but the Sinhala Catholic clergy displays strong Sinhala national chauvinism and are opposed to the Tamil demands.

Q: Do you have ties with other liberation movements of the world? Which are the organisations who provide training and arms to the LTTE?

A: We have ties with other world liberation movements. I cannot answer the second part of your question.

Q: Which country in the world has proved to be most sympathetic to your cause?

A: I do not wish to comment on this matter.

Q: What is your ideological commitment?

A: Revolutionary socialism.

Q: Do you expect attacks on the Tamils in the future?

A: Yes, I do. The forces of racism and fascism are actively working against the Tamils in Trincomallee and Vavuniya. Tamils will never be safe until they establish an independent state of Tamil Eelam with a powerful patriotic army to protect their life and property.

Q: Is it true that Israelis are training Sinhalese army men on the techniques of anti-guerrilla warfare?

A: So far we haven't got any confirmed reports about the presence of Israeli military experts in Sri Lanka. If the reports are true I won't be surprised. Sri Lanka is turning into a base for US imperialism and its agents. Whoever the trainers are or whatever their expertise may be, the Sinhala army cannot crush the will and determination of the Tigers. We have a great moral power, a supreme sense of sacrifice, and a noble cause.

Q: What is your reaction to the alleged heavy induction of arms and ammunition from the United States to Sri Lanka?

A: Induction of US arms is not only a threat to the Tamil freedom movement but also to India's national security. America's objective, as you will certainly be aware, is not simply confined to helping the Sri Lankan army to crush the Tamil liberation struggle. Their ultimate aim is to secure a naval base at Trincomallee. Such a happening will convert the Indian Ocean into a war zone, and will increase the tension prevalent in the region.

Q: If and when Eelam is achieved, what sort of a nation do you conceive it to be?

A: Tamil Eelam will be a socialist state. By socialism I mean an egalitarian society where human freedom and individual liberties will be guaranteed, where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be abolished. It will be a

free society where our people will have maximum opportunity to develop their economy and promote their culture. Tamil Eelam will be a neutral state, committed to non-alignment and friendly to India, respecting her regional policies, particularly the policy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

Q: In your estimate, how long will it take to achieve this Eelam?

A: There cannot be a blueprint or a time limit for a freedom struggle. Everything depends on the situation in our homeland and happenings on the international scene.

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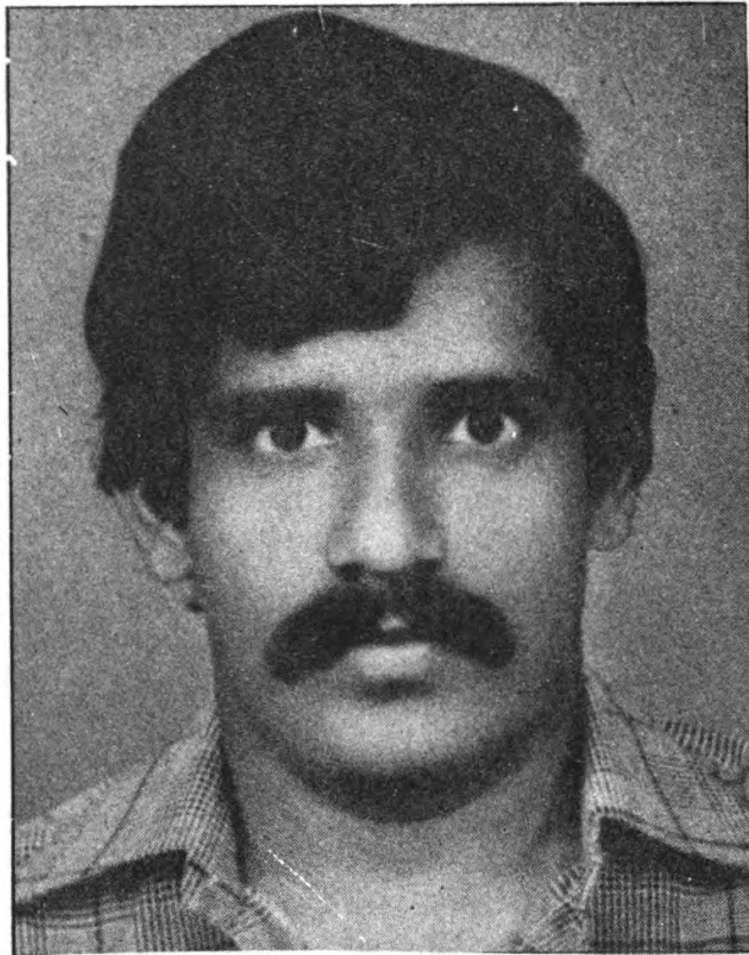
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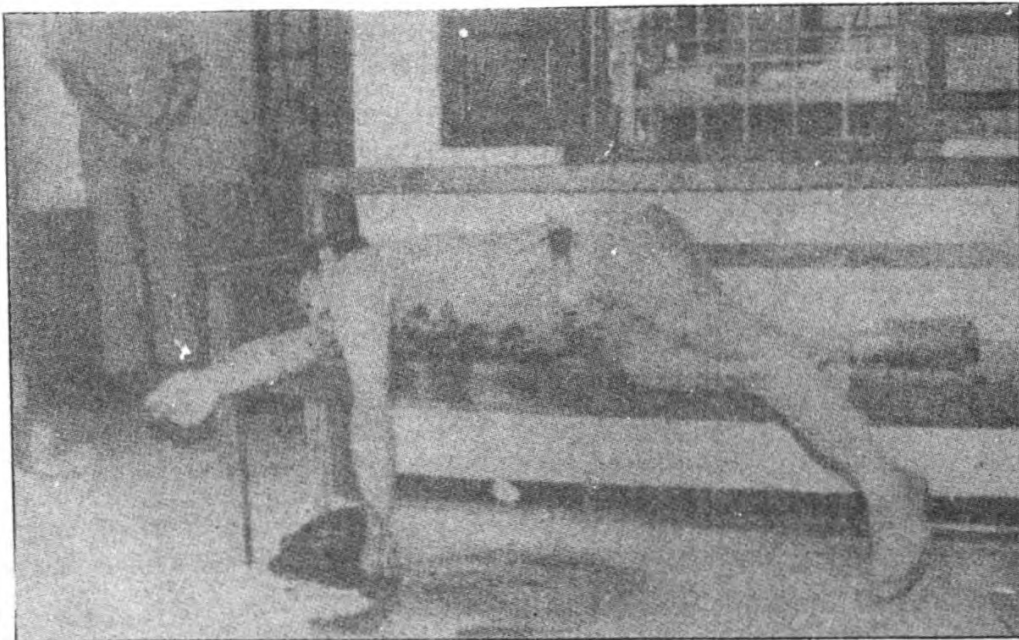
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Lieutenant Lucas Charles Antony (alias Aseer, Seelan)



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



injured and the rest fled in fear. In that ambush two armoured cars were damaged.

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

On the 29th April 1983, the Liberation Tigers assassinated three prominent supporters of the ruling United National Party on the same day, as a warning to all Tamil traitors who supported the racist Government. Two of them were U.N.P. candidates for the local elections (E.V. Ratnasingham of Point Pedro and S.S. Muthiah of Chavakachcheri) and the other, S.S. Rajaratnam a long time U.N.P. supporter, and the bodyguard of U.N.P.'s Jaffna organiser K. Ganeshalingam. As a direct consequence of this action all the Tamil U.N.P. candidates withdrew from the elections and several Tamils resigned from the ruling party.

TIGERS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SUCCEEDS

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

Such a mass boycott of elections, unprecedented in the political history of the Tamils, constitutes a great political and propaganda victory for the Tiger Movement. The T.U.L.F. which defied the Tiger appeal, suffered an insulting humiliation and irreparably damaged its political image, when 90% of the voters in the North rejected the Party's appeal to vote. The boycott was called by the Tigers, who, for the first time, launched an effective popular campaign appealing to the people to shun the local government elections as a mark of disapproval and rejection of the racist State system that has imposed a reign of terror and repression against the Tamils. V. Prabakaran chairman and the military commander of the Tiger Movement in a statement widely circulated among the people called upon the Tamils to 'reject the civil administra-

tive machinery of the Sri Lankan state terrorists and joint the popular armed struggle directed towards national emancipation'. He also accused the reactionary bourgeois political Party, the Tamils United Liberation Front, as functioning as agents of the Sinhala racist regime and utilise the slogan of 'national freedom' to win the elections.

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

REASONS FOR THE RECENT HOLOCAUST

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

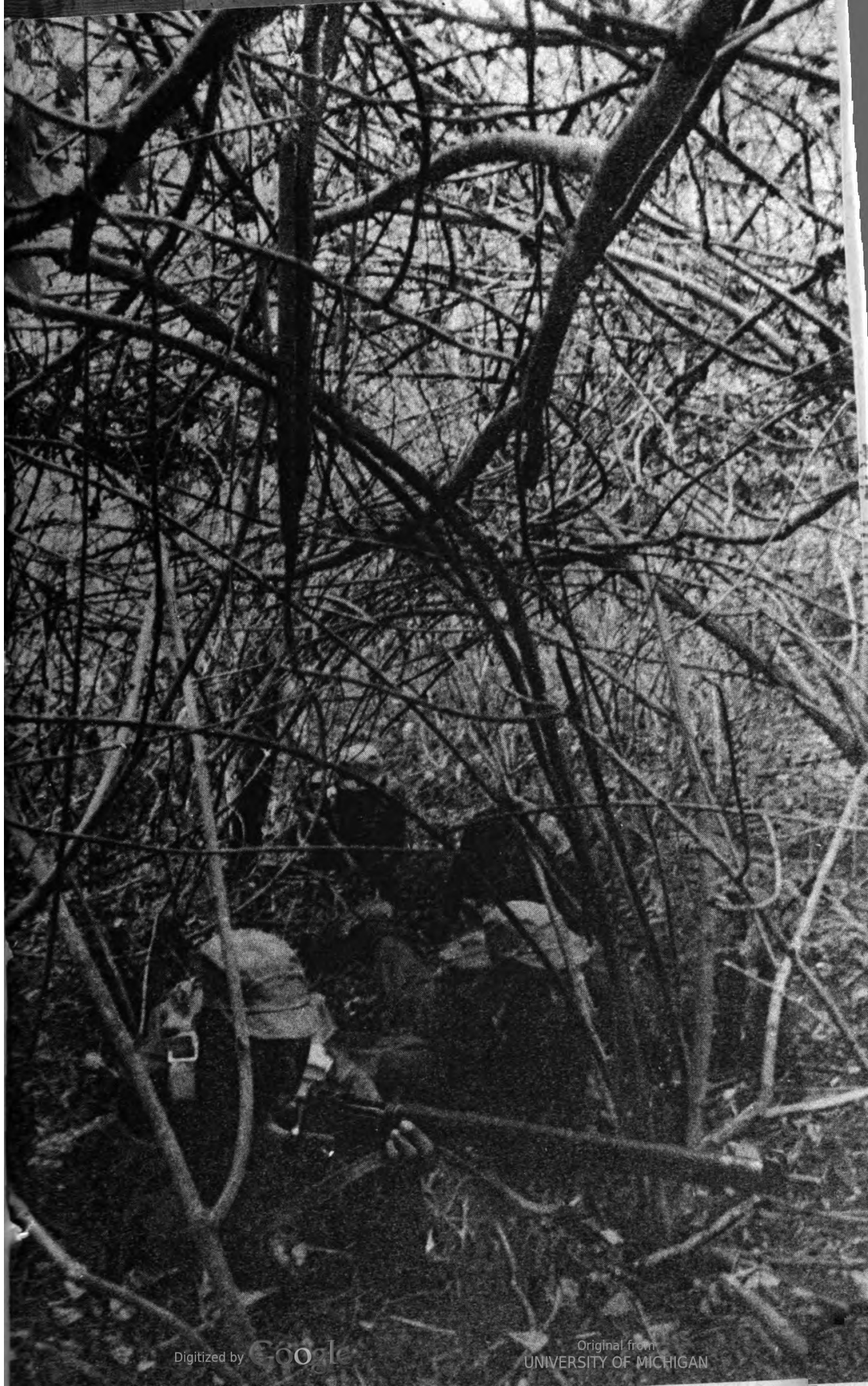
An all out genocidal assault on the Tamils living in Colombo has been pre-planned by Sinhala fascist groups led by leading members of the ruling party. The recent outburst, unprecedented in its destructive horror, is therefore certainly an open manifestation of a genocidal programme hatched by the fascist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

There are two basic reasons for the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie to let loose a genocidal repression on Tamils. Firstly, to divert the mass attention from a deepening

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

Tiger Revolutionary Army in Eelam jungles.





POLITICO- MILITARY OBJECTIVES

OUR THEORETICAL GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

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

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

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

class movement and obstruct the proletarian struggle for socialist revolution.

While taking Lenin's discourse as our guide, we are not blind to the fact that every national struggle must be situated within the context of its own concrete historical conditions. The liberation struggle of the Tamil Eelam nation demanding political independence, the historical conjunctures of which we have already outlined, arose primarily from the contradictions of national oppression and therefore must be confined to the theoretical specifications and political implications of that nation's right to secession. Within this context many questions are posed. Whether the oppressed Tamil nation has the right to secede; whether the right of that nation to self-determination contravenes the socialist principle of proletarian internationalism; under what political and economic conditions of oppression will a nation opt for secession; whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nations; whether the struggle for political independence has the revolutionary potentiality to promote proletarian revolution and socialist transformation of the oppressed Tamil social formation; what kind of political strategy can best serve the class interests of the proletariat of the oppressed as well as the oppressor nations, a strategy which has to be adopted by the Marxist revolutionaries of the oppressor nation who are caught between a progressive struggle of an oppressed nation and a reactionary bourgeois nationalism of the oppressor nation. These problems are raised and hotly debated within the context of the Tamil national question. The debates and arguments, enmeshed with vague generalisations and loose conceptualisations, have created so much confusion and controversy that a clarity and a correct perspective on this issue has become absolutely essential.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SECESSION

The Tamil nation is a historically constituted social formation possessing all the basic elements that are usually assembled to define a concrete characterisation of a nation. Yet a definition as to what constitutes a nation is theoretically unneces-

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sary since we can precisely formulate our issue within the Leninist conceptual framework of the self-determination of nations.

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

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

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

Again in the same theoretical essay Lenin writes:

"Self-determination of nations in the Marxist programme cannot, from a historio-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state".

Thus, Lenin offers a precise definition. The right of nations to self-determination in his formulation means the right of an oppressed nation to secede from the oppressor nation and form an independent national state. Therefore, those who pretend to recognise

the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to self-determination and argue such a right does not embody the freedom to secede, are neither Marxists or Leninists but chauvinists parading under socialist slogans. To characterise these pseudo-socialists in Lenin's own words:

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

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

INALIENABLE RIGHT OF A NATION

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

The freedom of secession should not be confused with the reactionary bourgeois category of 'separatism' which is sometimes utilised to undermine the genuine democratic struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. The freedom of secession articulated within the concept of self-determination exclusively implies an inalienable right of a nation of people to agitate for political inde-

pendence from the oppressor nation. This complete freedom to agitate for secession is a right, which can be exercised under conditions of intolerable oppression. Therefore, the recognition of this right to secession, Lenin repeatedly argued, is vital to prevent national friction arising out of a big nation's chauvinism, a right that upholds the complete equality of nations, a right, if violated will lead to national hostility and the fragmentation of nations. It is here, Lenin advances the dialectical principle that, in order to ensure unity there must be freedom to separate. He even argued that freedom to divorce will not cause the disintegration of the family. Therefore, Lenin rigorously held that he was not advocating a doctrine of separatism but advancing a highest principle of a socialist democracy in which absolute freedom should be accorded to a nation of people to secede under conditions of oppression. To quote him in this context:

“Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession.....This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression”.

(Lenin: ‘The socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination.’)

PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Marxist political praxis certainly advances proletarian internationalism, but at the same time, gives fullest recognition to the revolutionary character and the historical legitimacy of the national movements. The principle of nationality, or rather, the phenomenon of nationalism itself, in Marxist discourse is characterised as a historically inevitable political phenomenon in bourgeois society. For Marx, nationalism is historically prior to proletarian internationalism. Proletarian revolutions in the advanced capitalist social formations, Marx foresaw, will generate the progressive forces of internationalism towards the gradual structuration and consolidation of a world socialist society. Lenin, who saw the historical unfolding of the great socialist revolution, became an ardent champion of proletarian internationalism, since he rightly believed that only the revolutionary power of a united international proletariat can challenge the structure of dominance

of world capitalism. Therefore, we find in Lenin's texts a constant emphasis on the necessity of the solidarity of the working classes of all nations to mobilise to fight against the hegemony of international capital. Yet, on the other hand, we find Lenin as a fierce champion of the oppressed; he fought vigorously against all forms of oppression. He correctly perceived that national oppression is the enemy of the class struggle and without the emancipation of the oppressed, proletarian solidarity of the oppressed and the oppressor nations is unattainable. That is why, Lenin firmly held that proletarian internationalism demands that the proletariat of the oppressor nation should grant the right to self-determination (i.e. the right to secession) to the oppressed nation.

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

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

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

INTOLERABLE OPPRESSION AND INEVITABLE SECESSION

We are now approaching the most crucial stage of our discussion on the Tamil Eelam national question. That is, under what political and economic conditions of oppression a nation will opt for secession, and whether such a decision to secede and the struggle for national independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of

both the oppressed and oppressor nations. An elucidation of these issues is vital for a theoretical comprehension and for a political strategy for proletarian revolutionaries in Sri Lanka who are confronted with a national struggle of an oppressed nation which has chosen the path of secession.

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

Lenin says:

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

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

Within the Leninist perspective we can safely hold that the decision of the oppressed Tamil nation to secede from the oppressor nation was necessary and historically inevitable because of the extreme conditions of oppression, the nature and form of which we have outlined in the early parts of this document. The question that can be posed now is, whether the Tamil struggle for political independence will serve the interests of the class struggle of the oppressed and oppressor nations.

THE ROLE OF THE PROGRESSIVES OF THE OPPRESSOR NATION

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

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

“It is (Britain’s oppression of Ireland) the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite their organisation. It is the secret of which the capitalist class maintains its power”.

(Marx’s Letter to Meyer and Vogt, April 9th 1870)

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

“Our model will always be Marx, who, after living in Britain for decades and becoming half-English, demanded freedom and national independence for Ireland in the interests of the socialist movement of the British workers”.

(Lenin: ‘On the National Pride of the Great Russians’)

We advocate that the progressives and revolutionaries of the oppressor nation (in this case, the Sinhala nation) who uphold the proletarian praxis of Marxism and Leninism should follow the strategy advanced by these great revolutionary teachers and give an unconditional, unrelented support to the freedom struggle of the oppressed Tamil nation. Such a political strategy can only serve the interests of the class struggle of both the oppressed and the oppressor nation, since the ruling Sinhala bourgeoisie has been reinforcing a chauvinistic ideological hegemony and has been actually practising a vicious form of national oppression with

the motive of dividing and weakening the working class movement of Sri Lanka. To break this bourgeois ideological hegemony and to unite the proletariat of the oppressor nation, the revolutionary Marxists in the South should advance an ideological battle supporting most resolutely the right of the oppressed Tamil nation to secession. Such a strategy requires a profound political education of the masses on the democratic rights of the oppressed nation. As Lenin said, 'the masses must be systematically educated to champion—most resolutely, consistently, boldly and in a revolutionary manner—the right of nations to self-determination. Such an ideological struggle on the part of the Sinhala progressives is essential to raise the level of political consciousness of the Sinhala proletariat to understand and accept the legitimacy of the Tamil cause. It is precisely this lack of political consciousness that draws Sinhala masses into anti-Tamil racial violence and prevents the development of a proletarian class consciousness.

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

NATIONAL STRUGGLE AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The theoretical perspective of historical materialism necessitates the investigation of any national movement in relation to the historical development of world capitalism. The nationalism of the European nation states arose with the collapse of feudalism and the transition to capitalism, with the unification of markets and the revolutionary development of productive forces leading to the birth of a new bourgeois class. The ascendancy of the bourgeoisie

and bourgeois nationalism led to the oppression and exploitation of other nations. Advanced stage of capitalist development gave rise to monopoly capitalism which took the global form of imperialism. The imperialist penetration and its form of oppression produced determinant effects on the mode of production of the peripheral formations. Separating the direct producers from their means of production, creating a mass of free labourers, these effects generated the dynamics of the capitalist mode in the penetrated societies. The development of the productive forces in the capitalist mode led to the organisation of the proletariat as a revolutionary class force.

The imperialist penetration, not only generated the mechanisms of the capitalist development but also shifted the national struggles to the peripheral social formations. In this context the nature of nationalism, the national struggle and the class relations in the national movements of the Third World countries must be viewed in relation to the transformations in the expanding capitalist economy, its global effects, its structural relations with developing peripheral capitalism. The world hegemony and the development of the revolutionary proletarian classes within the space of imperialist dominance, have changed the structure and character of the contemporary national struggles of the Third World. The so-called progressive national bourgeoisie has lost its revolutionary character to advance the national struggle as a democratic social force. The historical conjuncture of global capitalism has eliminated all progressive elements of the national bourgeoisie, its historical role in the national revolution has shifted to the revolutionary proletariat. Such structural transformation in the class elements has necessitated a revolutionary socialist strategy inter-relating the class struggle with national liberation struggle under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat, a strategy to advance the class struggle along with the national liberation struggle both against the indigenous bourgeoisie and international capitalism. *The political objective of our movement is to advance the national struggle along with the class struggle, or rather, our fundamental objective is national emancipation and socialist transition of our social formation.*

THE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY

The politico-military strategy of our liberation movement is

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

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

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

Since the recent genocidal onslaught vast sections of the popular masses have been rallying behind our liberation organisation

since we constitute the most powerful, well organised fighting force in Tamil Eelam. Because of growing popular support our politico-military strategy is now projected in transforming our protracted guerrilla warfare into a people's war of national liberation. The process involves massive expansion of our guerrilla units into a people's army of liberation, a process in which vast sections of our people will be drawn into a mass armed struggle.

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

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

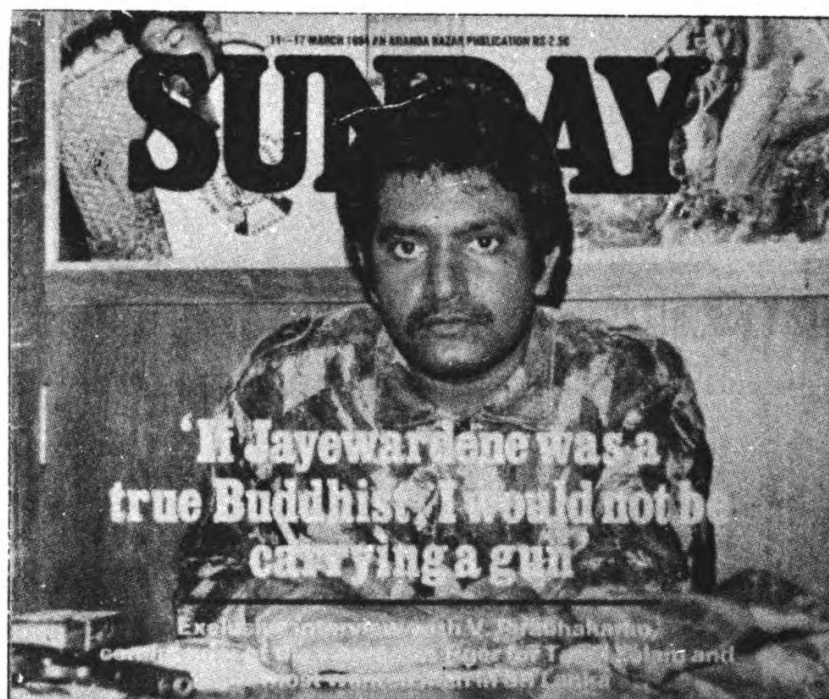
OUR APPEAL TO THE PROGRESSIVE WORLD

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

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

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

*An Interview with
Prabakaran*



AN INTERVIEW WITH PRABAKARAN

We are reproducing an exclusive interview given by V. Prabhakaran, Leader of the LTTE to Anita Pratap which appeared in the 'SUNDAY' of 11-17 March 1984.

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

A : The democratic parliamentary system, or what you refer to as the conventional political system in Sri Lanka, has always tried to impose the will of the majority on the minority. This system not only failed to solve the basic problems of our people but, in fact, aggravated our plight. For decades, the repression by the state has made the life of our people miserable. The non-violent democratic struggles of our people were met with military repression. Our just demands were totally ignored, and the oppression continued on such a scale as to threaten the very survival of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was these circumstances which led me to form our liberation movement. I felt that an armed struggle was the only alternative left to our people, not only to ensure our survival but ultimately to free ourselves from the Sinhala oppression. I have always been aware that our movement would be outlawed. It is for this reason that we organised our movement as a clandestine underground structure from its inception.

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

A : The shocking events of the 1958 racial riots had a profound impact on me when I was a schoolboy. I heard of horrifying incidents of how our people had been mercilessly and brutally put to death by Sinhala racists. Once I met widowed mother, a friend of my family, who related to me her agonising personal experience of this racial holocaust. During the riots a Sinhala mob attacked her house in Colombo. The rioters set fire to the house and murdered her husband. She and her children escaped with severe burn injuries. I was deeply shocked when I saw the scars on her body. I also heard stories of how young babies were roasted alive in boiling tar. When I heard such stories of cruelty, I felt a deep sense of sympathy and love for my people. A great

passion overwhelmed me to redeem my people from this racist system. I strongly felt that armed struggle was the only way to confront a system which employs armed might against unarmed, innocent people.

Q: At what point of time did you lose faith in the parliamentary system? What precipitated this disillusionment?

A: I entered politics at a time—in the early Seventies—when the younger generation had already lost faith in parliamentary politics. I entered politics as an armed revolutionary. What precipitated the disillusionment in parliamentary politics was the total disregard and callousness of the successive governments towards the pathetic plight of our people.

Q: How did you come to start the Liberation Tiger movement?

A: I originally formed the movement with a group of dedicated youths who sincerely believed that armed struggle was the only way to liberate our people.

Q: What was the reason for identifying yourselves as 'Tigers'?

A: I named the movement 'Liberation Tigers' since the tiger emblem had deep roots in the political history of the Tamils, symbolising Tamil patriotic resurgence. The tiger symbol also depicts the mode of our guerrilla warfare.

Q: When you decided to form the 'Liberation Tigers', what was the reaction of your family members and those close to you?

A: As soon as the Tiger movement was formed, I went underground and lost contact with my family.

Q: When did you last meet your family members? Are they reconciled to your outlawed existence?

A: I have not seen my family members for the last 11 years. I do not think they regard me as an ordinary person leading an ordinary life. They are reconciled to my existence as a guerrilla fighter.

Q: After 14 years of struggle, do you think you are any closer to achieving your goal?

A: After all these years of struggle, I feel that we are advancing towards our goal. The July '83 holocaust has united all sections of the Tamil masses. There is a massive support for the armed liberation programme of our movement. This is certainly a step towards our goal.

Q: In what way have the experiences of the past 12 years changed you as a person?

A: These years of struggle have strengthened my determination and sharpened my vision.

Q: Till now what has been your most rewarding experience?

A: It is difficult for me to identify a particular experience as rewarding. The life of a guerrilla fighter is full of experiences: experiences of sorrow, happiness, frustration; each of which brings its own rewards.

Q: The experience over the years must have changed your outlook. What are some of the dominant impressions and convictions that you gained by virtue of this experience? Moreover, your experiences would have convinced you of the inefficacy of certain principles and theories in practical situations, while at the same time bringing home the validity of yet others. Can you pinpoint some of them?

A: Twelve years of experience has convinced me beyond doubt that the armed revolutionary path we under-took was the correct one. The other liberation groups who criticised our armed strategy as 'terrorism' have now realised that armed struggle is the only way out for the emancipation of our oppressed people. Moreover the guerrilla warfare has been an effective form of struggle. Several successful guerrilla raids have convinced our people that the Sinhala forces can be defeated and freedom can be won.

Q: Who is your friend, philosopher and guide?

A: Nature is my friend, life my philosopher and history is my guide.

Q: How does it feel to be the most wanted man in Sri Lanka today?

A: An Irish leader once remarked that when the British indict a person as a 'terrorist,' it implied that he was a true Irish patriot. Similarly, when the Sri Lanka government refers to me as the most wanted man, it means that I am a true Tamil patriot. Hence I feel proud to be indicated as a wanted man.

Q: Which was the most frustrating moment of your life?

A: I cannot pinpoint such a moment in my life. But the most frustrating aspect has been the betrayal of some of my trusted friends: those who pretended to be sincere to the cause, yet turned out to be self-seeking opportunists.

Q: How did the split between you and Uma Maheshwaran come about?

A: I do not approve the formulation of the question. In fact, the issue should not be viewed as a conflict or split between me and Uma Maheshwaran. It was a problem between an individual and the Tiger movement. I am in no way responsible for the problem. It was Maheshwaran who created the issue. A leader of a revolutionary movement should commit himself totally to the discipline of the organisation. If a leader violates the basic rules and principles, then there will be chaos and the organisation will crumble. Uma Maheshwaran violated the rules of our movement and as a disciplinary action he was expelled by the central com-

mittee. Being the founder of the movement and the person who appointed Maheshwaran as the chairman, I had no other alternative but to uphold the decision of the central committee.

Q: Today one finds that there are several rival Eelam liberation groups. Invariably they work at cross-purposes. When the goal is the same, should not there be a unification process? after all, there is more to be gained by using your combined strength against the common enemy. In principle, are you opposed to the rival groups uniting?

A: I have clearly and explicitly stated that I am in favour of such unity moves. I even wrote to these groups on 5 September 1982 welcoming the idea and suggested that we are prepared to form a united front if all other liberation groups shed their differences and work out a common programme of action. But, unfortunately, these groups failed to formulate a common working programme. Instead, at every unity meeting they fought against each other and fell apart. The tragedy is that these groups have no sincere intentions to unite and there is a wide gap between their words and their deeds. I sincerely feel that these groups should set an example by forging unity among themselves rather than blaming the Tigers for their disunity. Once they unite we are prepared to join hands with them.

Q: Spokesmen of rival groups have told me that all except you are open to the idea of uniting. Is this true?

A: This is absolutely untrue. It is only a propaganda by other groups to undermine our movement.

Q: Are you alone in the struggle?

A: I am not alone. I lead a powerful national movement and a wide section of the Tamil masses support me.

Q: Do you experience moments of loneliness? And if you do, how do you combat it?

A: I have never felt lonely at any point of time. Loneliness is only a problem with those who are buried in their own individual egos. A true revolutionary transcends individuality and develops a collective, social consciousness. I live and struggle for common collective cause.

Q: Do you have any regrets about not leading a normal life?

A: There are millions who, as you put it, lead a normal, ordinary existence. But we are fighting for a cause, for a noble ideal which gives us a profound spiritual satisfaction.

Q: Are you worried over the fact that most Tamil youths face a bleak future in Sri Lanka?

A: The youths are fighting a battle for freedom. I foresee a bright future for them.

Q: Is it true that more and more Tamil youths are taking part in the liberation struggle?

A: Yes, more and more youths are joining the revolution under our leadership since they have realised that armed struggle is the only way to redeem themselves and their society.

Q: *How would you defend your movement from being called a 'separatist' one, and that you all are not freedom fighters but 'terrorists'?*

A: It is wrong to call our movement 'separatist'. We are fighting for independence based on the right to national self-determination of our people. Our struggle is for self-determination, for the restoration of our sovereignty in our homeland. We are not fighting for a division or separation of a country but rather, we are fighting to uphold the sacred right to live in freedom and dignity. In this sense, we are freedom fighters not terrorists.

Q: *Would you rather die than be caught by the Sinhalese army?*

A: I would prefer to die in honour rather than being caught alive by the enemy.

Q: *The Liberation Tiger for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) staged the 23 July 1983 ambush in which 13 Sinhalese soldiers were killed. The ambush was allegedly the reason for the Sinhalese retaliation on innocent Tamils. Did you expect such a massive retaliation?*

A: The July violence should not be assessed simply as a Sinhala retaliation for the guerrilla ambush. This view is a gross oversimplification of the event. The island has been plagued with anti-Tamil racial violence which erupts periodically over the years. There were violent racial holocausts even before the emergence of our movement. Violent riots erupted in Trincomallee a couple of weeks before the ambush. Therefore, the phenomenon of anti-Tamil racial violence cannot be traced to a single event. We are engaged in a protracted guerrilla warfare. There has been several guerrilla raids, several ambushes, and we have killed several Sinhala soldiers and policemen. The July ambush was only a part of the warfare we are engaged in. It is incorrect to assume that one particular military operation has precipitated the entire violence. The July riots, you would have certainly observed, was not only aimed at the physical extermination of our people but it was also aimed at the destruction of the economic power base of the Tamils in Colombo. Our view is that the July holocaust was a pre-planned, well orchestrated genocidal programme against the Tamils, carried out by the racist elements of the ruling party. Initially, these racist elements did attempt to put the whole blame on the Tigers. Then, suddenly they blamed the left parties for the riots. But in actual fact, it is the racist leaders of the present government who should bear the responsibility for this

tragic loss of life and property of our people.

Q: Why did you stage the July ambush? There are various versions afloat. According to some, it was an act of reprisal as four Tamil women have been raped. Based on my investigations I felt that you had to prove a point to the Sinhalese army who were jubilant over the death of your close associate, Charles Anthony, the leader of the military wing on 15 July. The point, I guess that you had to asseert was that the LTTE despite the loss of one of its ablest leaders, was still strong and capable of taking on the Sinhalese army. Is this theory correct?

A: There is an element of truth in your findings about Charles Anthony and the ambush. The attack was partly a retaliation, a punishment to the Sinhala army. But still we feel that the lives of 13 soliders cannot compensate the life of a great revolutionary and freedom fighter like Charles. The ambush was also a part of the guerrilla warfare directed against the enemy.

Q: Do you think that the round table negotiations will lead to the formulation of a permanent settlement?

A: I am of the opinion that the round table conference will not bring about a permanent settlement to the Tamil issue. Our view is based on the experience of several decades. The Sinhala leaders never made a sincere attempt to resolve the Tamil issue. The present negotiations will also meet the same fate. All the major Sinhala parties and the Buddhist organisations are opposed to granting any form of regional autonomy to the Tamils. They are even opposed to giving minor concessions. Hence nothing substantial will emerge from this conference.

Q: Do you hold the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) leaders responsible for retarding the liberation struggle? Do you view them as betrayers?

A: It is true that the opportunistic politics of the TULF is retarding the liberation struggle. They have never taken any concrete steps to further the struggle. On the contrary they give false hopes, create illusions, and try to keep our people in perpetual bondage. They entered politics only to further their selfish ends. They never had any sincere intentions to liberate our oppressed people, nor did they ever put forward any concrete programme of political action. They never expected that they would be caught in the storm of a liberation struggle. The flame of a revolution is fast spreading all over Tamil Eelam. But the TULF leaders are trying their best to smother the fire. In this sense you can term the TULF leaders as betrayers.

Q: Is it true that the TULF leaders are afraid to go to their hometown and stay there not because of the Sinhalese but

because of the Tigers?

A: They are frightened not of the Tigers, but of the fury of the people who voted them to power on the promise of an independent state for the Tamils.

Q: Do you think that India's good offices will result in anything tangible?

A: India's efforts have given a positive hope to our people. But I do not think that the Sinhala racist government will utilise India's offer to resolve the problems of the Tamils.

Q: Ideally, what should India do in such a situation to help the Tamils?

A: I think that the government of India should recognise the fair and legitimate demands of our people and accept our right to self-determination.

Q: Would you suggest military intervention?

A: We have the courage, confidence and determination to fight and win our freedom. We should fight and free ourselves. But we do need India's support and sympathy.

Q: What is your personal assessment of President Jayewardene?

A: If Jayewardene was a true Buddhist, I would not be carrying a gun.

Q: What do you think is Jayewardene's intention behind holding these negotiations? Is he buying time?

A: There are several reasons behind holding these peace negotiations. Firstly, Jayewardene wants to appease the Indians. Secondly, he wants to restore the colossal damage the riots have done to the image of the country. Thirdly, it would help him to seek financial aid from western agencies. Fourthly, the President wants to buy time to build up the Sinhala military machine.

Q: Is President Jayewardene a prisoner in the hands of the hawks in his cabinet or is he acting on his own? Is he being pressurised by the Buddhist clergy?

A: Jayewardene is acting on his own. He has supreme powers. The hawks in the cabinet and the Buddhist clergy are behind him.

Q: What is the role of the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka?

A: The Buddhist clergy has played a dominant role in shaping the political trends in Sri Lanka. They have played a crucial role in whipping up anti-Tamil feelings among the Sinhala people.

Q: Do you think that the Buddhist clergy is well on its way to establishing Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist nation?

A: Sri Lanka is already a Sinhala Buddhist nation and the Buddhist clergy has contributed a lot for this cause.

Q: Is it the result of the Buddhist clergy's chauvinism or is it the result of a natural alignment following the Catholic

clergy's association with the Tamils.

A: The Buddhist clergy's chauvinism has played a significant role in the establishment of a racist state system. Sections of the Tamil Catholic clergy sympathise with the Tamil cause, but the Sinhala Catholic clergy displays strong Sinhala national chauvinism and are opposed to the Tamil demands.

Q: Do you have ties with other liberation movements of the world? Which are the organisations who provide training and arms to the LTTE?

A: We have ties with other world liberation movements. I cannot answer the second part of your question.

Q: Which country in the world has proved to be most sympathetic to your cause?

A I do not wish to comment on this matter.

Q: What is your ideological commitment?

A: Revolutionary socialism.

Q: Do you expect attacks on the Tamils in the future?

A: Yes, I do. The forces of racism and fascism are actively working against the Tamils in Trincomallee and Vavuniya. Tamils will never be safe until they establish an independent state of Tamil Eelam with a powerful patriotic army to protect their life and property.

Q: Is it true that Israelis are training Sinhalese army men on the techniques of anti-guerrilla warfare?

A So far we haven't got any confirmed reports about the presence of Israeli military experts in Sri Lanka. If the reports are true I won't be surprised. Sri Lanka is turning into a base for US imperialism and its agents. Whoever the trainers are or whatever their expertise may be, the Sinhala army cannot crush the will and determination of the Tigers. We have a great moral power, a supreme sense of sacrifice, and a noble cause.

Q: What is your reaction to the alleged heavy induction of arms and ammunition from the United States to Sri Lanka?

A: Induction of US arms is not only a threat to the Tamil freedom movement but also to India's national security. America's objective, as you will certainly be aware, is not simply confined to helping the Sri Lankan army to crush the Tamil liberation struggle. Their ultimate aim is to secure a naval base at Trincomallee. Such a happening will convert the Indian Ocean into a war zone, and will increase the tension prevalent in the region.

Q: If and when Eelam is achieved, what sort of a nation do you conceive it to be?

A: Tamil Eelam will be a socialist state. By socialism I mean an egalitarian society where human freedom and individual liberties will be guaranteed, where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be abolished. It will be a

free society where our people will have maximum opportunity to develop their economy and promote their culture. Tamil Eelam will be a neutral state, committed to non-alignment and friendly to India, respecting her regional policies, particularly the policy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

Q: In your estimate, how long will it take to achieve this Eelam?

A: There cannot be a blueprint or a time limit for a freedom struggle. Everything depends on the situation in our homeland and happenings on the international scene.

LTTE PUBLICATIONS:

1. **Towards Socialist Tamil Eelam (Tamil) Nov. 1979.**
2. **Tamil nation under the grip of Racism (Tamil) Jan. 1980.**
3. **State terrorism and armed revolution (Tamil) April 1983.**
4. **Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam freedom struggle (English) Aug. 1983.**
5. **Women and Revolution:
The role of women in Tamil Eelam national Liberation struggle (English and Tamil) November 1983.**
6. **Socialism and Guerrilla warfare (Tamil) Jan 1984.**

"Guerrilla warfare, the form of popular struggle we are committed to, was not borne out of blind militancy or adventurism but arose out of historical necessity, out of the concrete conditions of intolerable national oppression."



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