Tamil Insurgency in Sri Lanka

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled 'Tamil Insurgency

in Sri Lanka' submitted by Ms. Sudha Ramachandran is in partial

fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of

Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has not been

submitted for any other degree to this University and is her

own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the

examiners for evaluation.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

Especially in the politics of the Third World, insurgencies have been particularly potent in destroying democratic processes and institutions. While the rise of an insurgent movement often encourages regimes to resort to authoritarian measures, it is equally possible that an authoritarian regime, which fails to permit popular participation, can encourage the emergence of an uprising against the regime and system.

In this regard, a study of Sri Lanka has been illustrative and challenging. Sri Lanka has often been upheld as one of the Third World "successes" in being able to sustain a peaceful and vibrant democratic system. Yet this system has been unable to accomodate its youth as well as other aspirants for power and has led to the emergence of insurgent movements among the Sinhalese and Tamils. At the same time, the rise of these insurgent movements led to the dismantling of democratic processes in the country. In the case of the Tamil insurgency, the issue of participation in the economic and political power structure became more complicated, entwined as it was in the language and ethnic politics of the electoral system.

Although many studies have been made on the ethnic conflict, few full length studies have beem made on the Tamil insurgency. My dissertation on the "Tamil Insurgency in Sri Lanka", is a modest attempt to fill this gap. The time period covered is from 1975 to the signing of the India-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. Despite the contemporary nature of this study, an attempt has been made to go into the historical aspects of the conflict, as well.

Chapter One attempts to sort out some of the conceptual confusion in the field and find the causes and course of an insurgency. Chapter Two deals with the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka: its historical context, the struggle for political and economic resources, the entrenchment of Sinhalese interests in the power structure and the subsequent marginalisation of the Tamils. The emergence of a movement among the Tamils and its transition from a moderate to insurgent movement has been traced in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, the ideology and activities of the five major insurgent groups have been compared, while the involvement of external actors in the separatist insurgency is analysed in Chapter Five. In the concluding chapter the validity of the hypotheses has been verified and certain general observations are made regarding the future of insurgency in Sri Lanka.

In the completion of this work, I am indebted to Professor Urmila Phadnis, my supervisor, for helping me weave my diffused ideas into a pattern . I am grateful to her for having let me use her vast personal collection of books and periodicals. Her penchant for perfection and eye for detail were a source of inspiration throughout the writing of this dissertation.

A word of thanks for my friends Kitu, Revathi, Selvyn, Dhunni and Dhammu who stood by me through my ups and downs, my highs and lows, which inevitably precede a work of this sort.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms Shakuntla, Mr. Chaman, Mr. Anand and Mr. Yashpal for having spent long hours deciphering my work and typing out the final script.

My acknowledgements would be incomplete without mentioning my family members who have stood by me throughout. I would like to dedicate this monograph to my parents - with affection, and in appreciation of their support and encouragement. And of course, to Rahul, Vikram and Pavan - a very special thanks for the inspiration.

Needless to say, any errors of fact or interpretation that remain, as well as all expressions of opinion are my own responsibility.

Place: New Delhi
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(SUDHA RAMACHANDRAN)

CHAPTER ONE

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Although armed struggles between the ruling and non-ruling groups within a country have existed since early times, its frequency and intensity have assumed tremendous proportions only in this century. In fact, in many countries of the Third World, groups have shown an increasing tendency to resort to militancy to alter the status quo. Insurgency has been one of the major manifestation of such armed violence.

While a rich and varied literature exists on insurgency and other forms of internal political violence, there is considerable conceptual confusion in the field. In part, this is due to lack of agreement on the definition of terms such as insurgency, internal war, revolution, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, etc. As a result, it is not uncommon to find these terms being used interchangeably.

In view of the problems it engenders for a systematic study of political violence, it is imperative that the principal concepts employed in our

analysis of insurgency be defined as precisely as possible.

Insurgency is a struggle between ruling and non-ruling groups, in which the latter use protracted irregular warfare and political techniques (organisation, propaganda, etc.), to obtain political goals. The definition excludes coups and short outbursts of violence since these are not "protracted" struggles. However, it should be kept in mind that there is no fine line dividing conflicts which are protracted and those which are not.

"Insurrection" is a term that is often used as a synonym for insurgency. Schuman applies the term "insurrection" to the "initial stages of movements of opposition to government". It is "an incipient rebellion or revolution, still localized and limited to securing modifications of governmental policy or personnel and not yet a serious threat to the state or the government in power".[1] An insurrection, then, would be smaller in scope than a rebellion or a revolution. Although "insurrection" and "insurgency" refer to an armed struggle against the state, there is a difference

1. Fredrick L. Schuman, "Insurrection", in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, (New York : The Macmillan Company and the Free Press), vol. 8, p. 116.

between the two. An "insurrection" would refer to an attempt to defeat the enemy by inflicting a sudden but sharp and intense attack, whereas an "insurgency" would refer to an attempt to defeat the enemy in a series of encounters.

An insurgency is an incipient civil war. It is civil because civilians are involved in it and a war because violence is applied by both sides. Yet an insurgency is on a smaller scale than a civil war since only a section of the population is involved in the actual fighting.

The term "internal war" used by Eckstein, refers to "attempts to change by violence, or threat of violence, a government's policies, rulers or organisation".[2] By "internal war", therefore, he means only the military aspect of the struggle. Although an insurgency is an internal war of sorts, it is not necessarily an internal war in the sense used by Eckstein. An insurgency connotes military as well as political activity; and while the military aspect may be crucial in the outcome of the conflict, "the politics of the conflict are the fundamental causes and

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2. Harry Eckstein, "Introduction : Towards the Theoretical Study of Internal War", in Harry Eckstein, ed., *Internal War : Problems and Approaches* (New York : The Free Press, 1964), p.1.

determinants".[3] Further, the term "internal war" seems to indicate that the struggle is purely indigenous, i.e. the causes, actors, ramifications etc. are limited to the geographical boundaries of the country. However, in most insurgencies, the external dimension is significant, with the insurgents as well as incumbents receiving succour from external sources. Thus "internal war" gives an incomplete picture of an insurgency.

"Guerrilla warfare" and "terrorism" are sometimes used as synonyms for insurgency, when in fact they constitute only the military techniques used by insurgents. Guerrilla Warfare is a form of irregular military operation "based on mobile tactics used by small lightly armed groups who aim to harass their opponent rather than defeat him in battle."[4] Both targets and operations are essentially military ones.

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3. Sam C. Sarkesian, "An Introduction", in Sam C. Sarkesian, ed., *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago : Precedent Publishing Inc., 1975), p.3.

4. Julian Paget, Counter-Insurgency Campaigning (New York : Walker and Company, 1967), p.15. Cited in Bard O'Neill and others, *Insurgency in the Modern World* (Colorado : Westview Press Inc., 1986), p.36.

Terrorism has been more difficult to define[5] and remains one of the most ambiguous concepts.[6] Since, for some writers, all forms of violence (irrespective of the goals) against the state is unacceptable, they use the term "terrorism" to refer to all forms of insurgent violence.[7] By treating all violence as terrorism, these

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5.   The difficulty in finding a universally acceptable definition has seriously hampered efforts to control international terrorism. This has been a major problem faced by countries in South Asia. For instance, attempts of the South Asian, Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) to control terrorism were hampered by its inability to reach a definition acceptable to its member countries. Finally at the Kathmandu Summit the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed, which provided for extradition of terrorist. For the provisions of the Convention see "SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism", in *South Asia Journal* (New Delhi), vol. 1, no.3, January - March 1988, pp. 341 - 5.

6.   The ambiguity stems from the morally pejorative connotations of the term. Nobody wishes to be labelled a terrorist but would prefer it to be used to refer to his adversary. The ambiguity is well expressed by the phrase, " one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."
     Thus while sympathisers of an insurgency may describe an insurgent as a freedom fighter, the regime and its sympathisers refer to him as a terrorist. While the regime regards rebels among its citizens as terrorists, a state which is abetting the rebels will justify its assistance to them on humanitarian grounds, as aid to victims of state persecution.

7.   David M. Kriegar, for instance, defines terrorism as "non-governmental public violence or its threat performed by an individual or small group and aimed at achieving social or political goals that may be sub-national, national or international."

     David M.Kriegar, "What Happens If? Terrorists, Revolutionaries, and Nuclear Weapons",

writers have disregarded an essential feature of terrorist violence - that it constitutes not the use of violence *per se*, but the use of violence for effect. Further, both insurgents and incumbents may use violence on a few to affect many - as a weapon to induce fear. Consequently, the state is as likely to use terrorism as a technique to achieve its goals, as the insurgents.[8]

In this study, terrorism refers to the use of disproportionate, apparently random but deliberately symbolic violence by incumbents and insurgents to achieve their avowed claims.

Although guerrilla warfare and terrorism are both

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, no.430, March 1977, pp.44-57. Cited in James M.Poland, *Understanding Terrorism : Groups, Strategies and Responses* (New Jersey : Prentice Hall Inc., 1988), p.10.

8. A comprehensive definition which takes into account the "violence for effect" aspect of terrorism as well as insurgent and incumbent terrorism is the one given by Grant Wardlaw. According to him, "Political Terrorism is the use of or threat of use of violence by an individual or a group whether acting for or in opposition to established authority when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators. Grant Wardlaw, *Political Terrorism : Theory, Tactics and Countermeasures* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.16.

techniques of insurgency, involving the use of
violence, they have their points of difference.
Guerrillas generally attack the state's infrastructure:
its transport, communications, economic units, etc.,
and usually operate in semi-developed states or in the
less urban areas of the state. Terrorists, on the other
hand, attack the political figureheads and symbols,
unarmed civilians and usually operate in an urban
setting.[9] The difference between guerrilla warfare and
terrorism does not mean that they are not employed at
the same time by an insurgent group. In fact, in most
cases, the techniques are used simultaneously and in
various proportions.

Notwithstanding the conceptual ambiguity and
confusion in the field, the study of insurgency has
attracted many to go into the dynamics of insurgency :
its causes, emergence and growth, its different
manifestations, its impact on the state etc. In this
chapter some of these issues will be looked into.

The Roots of an Insurgency

To understand how an insurgency arises, it is
necessary to know why a movement emerges and then, *why*

9.   Stephen Segaller, *Invisible Armies : Terrorism
      Into the 1990s* (London : Michael Joseph, 1986),
      pp.16-17.

it turns militant. Since the underlying causes of various insurgencies very so greatly, it is difficult to come up with a general theory of insurgency or an all comprehensive, universally applicable answer to the question - why does an insurgency arise ? The search for an answer only throws up more questions. Why do people rebel ? Why does a movement arise? Why does it turn militant in demand and action? Why is violence seen as the solution? Why do movements for greater autonomy turn separatist/secessionist ... and so on.

Some writers attribute disequilibrium in society, which arises out of modernisation, as conducive to explosive situations. According to Johnson, sustained disequilibrium, between the various sectors of society - economic, political, educational, cultural etc. - could lead to dissatisfaction with the regime. Thus, if education increases faster than economic output or if economic organisation changes more rapidly than political organisation or vice versa, many individuals may withdraw support to the regime.[10]

While Johnson draws attention to disequilibrium between different sectors, Huntington emphasises disequilibrium within the political sector. If a

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10. Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper, *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 705.

country's institutional procedures for political participation are inadequate in comparison. to the people's expectations for participation, such a situation, he says, could lead to unrest and activity against the regime. As a result of mobilisation, new groups enter the political arena. But the political structure does not "provide channels for the participation of the new groups in politics."[11] leading to civil strife. In Sri Lanka, for instance, electoral participation had made the rural, lower middle class Sinhala youth aware of political power but, the structure gave them no share in it. The frustration stemming from this, culminated in the "emerging elite," led by the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) or People's Liberation Front, attempting to seize state power in 1971.[12]

Another noteworthy contribution to the modernisation approach is Ted Gurr's analysis of relative deprivation as the basic pre-condition for

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11. Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1968), p.275. Cited in Ekkart Zimmermann, *Political Violence, Crisis and Revolutions : Theories and Research*(Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1983), p.319.

12. Urmila Phadnis, "Sri Lanka : Crises of Legitimacy and Integration", in Larry Diamond and others, eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries : Asia*, (Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), vol.3, p.174.

civil strife, of any kind. When people perceive a discrepancy between their value expectations (what they believe they are entitled to) and their value capabilities (what they are able to get and keep), i.e. when their social opportunities no longer accord with their expectations, either because expectations are rising too quickly, or welfare is falling, feelings of "relative deprivation" would make fertile ground for popular opposition to governments. This process of comparison may be over time or between groups.[13]

The theory, however provides a partial explanation only. It cannot explain why in similar socio-economic and political conditions, some groups resort to violence while others do not.[14] Relative deprivation may in fact exist and yet the situation may not turn explosive. Sometimes groups which are economically worse off do not revolt.[15]

Disagreeing that disequilibrium or relative deprivation causes civil strife, Tilly in his 'Resource, Mobilisation theory argues that if a conflict arose between the regime and its supporters on the one hand

13. For details see Zimmermann, n.11, pp.37-57.

14. Paul Wilkinson *Political Terrorism* (New York : Halstead Press, 1975), p.127.

15. Urmila Phadnis, *Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia* (New Delhi : Sage, forthcoming), p.18.

and its opponents on the other, on economic or political issues, whether or not a popular protest occurs depends on how the abilities and options available to the latter compares to that of the incumbents.[16]

As for the Marxian approach, the theory of internal colonialism is a noteworthy explanation. In most of the newly independent, ex-colonies, national boundaries were drawn by the departing colonial power without regard to the ethnolinguistic or cultural compositions of the population. Despite the formal withdrawal of the colonial power, forms of oppression which could be described as "colonial", have continued in these countries. The indigenous bourgeoisie have not recognised the rights of the minority ethnic groups and have treated them as colonies - as a source of raw material and a market for finished goods. In some countries like Pakistan, the regime was dominated by the Punjabis, while other groups like the Baluch, Pathans and Bengalis were subjugated. It was this "internal colonialism" that culminated in the seccession of East Pakistan in 1971[17].

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16. Kuper and Kuper, n.10.

17. For details, see Richard Nations, "The Economic Structure of Pakistan and Bangladesh", in Robin Blackburn, ed., *Explosion in a Subcontinent* (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1975), pp.252-92; Feroz Ahmed, "The Structural Matrix of the Struggle in Bangladesh", in Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma,

In India, industrial development of the Western
region has taken place at the expense of the East.
Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the North-Eastern states
"have come to resemble subcolonies which provide raw
materials for export and for the industrially more
favoured Indian states".[18] The neglect of these regions
has led to revolutionary and separatist insurgencies
here.

However, the "internal colonialism" model does not
explain the rise of insurgencies among groups which are
not backward in terms of socio-economic development
e.g. the Sikhs in Punjab[19] and the Tamils in Sri
Lanka.

The role of the regime and the nature of state in

eds., *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*(New
York : Monthly Review Press, 1973), pp.419-49.

18. Kathleen Gough, "Imperialism and Revolutionary
    Potential in South Asia", in Gough and Sharma,
    Ibid, p.9.

19. Punjab's economic progress in the past two decades
    has been remarkable. From 1969-1974, the primary
    sector in Punjab grew at three times the rate of
    the national average, the secondary sector at 1`.3
    times and the tertiary sector at a slightly higher
    rate than the all India average. See Nirmal Singh
    and V.D.Chopra, Socio-economic roots of the
    Present Crisis" in V.D. Chopra, R.K.Mishra and
    Nirmal Singh eds., *Agony of Punjab*(New Delhi :
    Patniot 1984), p.147.

fostering insurgencies, has been critical in the case of all insurgent movements. Centralisation of administration, especially where the centralisation threatens regional and cultural autonomy can intensify the discontent of an ethnic group and deepen the conflict. [20] Further, when demands are moderate (for greater autonomy) and means non-violent, the regime may not deal with the problem. This often leads to the exacerbation of the crisis and soon the movement may turn insurgent and separatist.

Rapid social change leads to dislocations and demands the repudiation of the old and the forging of new institutions and relationships. When a ruling class resists fundamental reforms (which means reduction if not liquidation of its power and privileges) a confrontation between the new political forces and those who wish to retain the status quo, becomes inevitable and violent.[21] In countries and colonies,

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20. In Nigeria, the outbreak of tribal conflict and civil war were immediately preceded by the Central government's decision to create a unitary state and not give due consideration to ethnic representation in the recruitment of civil service personnel. Thomas H. Greene, Comparative Revolutionary Movements (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall Inc., 1974), p.115.

21. Eqbal Ahmad, "Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency", in Norman Miller and Roderick Aya, eds., National Liberation : Revolution in the Third World (New York : The Free Press, 1971), pp.153-6.

where rulers are willing to abdicate their monopoly of power, initiate some reform and provide for greater popular participation, the change is brought about in an orderly, non-violent manner. In such situations, even if an insurgent movement were to arise, it would fail due to lack of popular support.[22] But when the regime refuses to allow popular participation, their title to authority is rejected. The regime then resorts to repression to ensure obedience or as it justifies, to maintain law and order. Government violence that appears to be arbitrary and indiscriminate tends to lower the government's legitimacy and raises the society's revolutionary potential.[23]

While each of the theories discussed above do not provide a complete explanation for the emergence of an insurgent movement, all of them point to the crucial role played by the state in fostering an insurgency. As a result of growing political awareness and participation, the aspirations of a certain class or

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22. In India, the extremist movement against the British was not supported by the masses. Since the British seemed willing to concede some power to the Indians, the freedom movement was largely moderate and was not an armed struggle. This was not the case with the liberation struggles in Vietnam and Algeria, where the French refused to allow any popular participation.

23. Eqbal Ahmad uses the term "moral isolation" to refer to this loss of legitimacy. For details, see Ahmad, n.21, pp.150-3.

ethnic group, for a share in political and economic power, increases. In the event of the refusal or failure of the regime to satisfy these aspirations, discontent spreads among the members of the group, who blame the regime or the system for their grievances. This resentment when felt collectively and then mobilised, becomes politically relevant discontent. In the event of a leadership bringing together the people for collective action, a movement emerges. If the people resort to armed struggle to alter the status quo, the movement turns insurgent.

The Phases of an Insurgent Movement

Once a social movement arises, the developmental path it takes depends on the success or failure of its tactics, the resources at its disposal, and the responses of the regime. While movements are often treated as though they always move from a moderate/legal political phase to an insurgent phase and finally to a conventional war phase, with no detours or setbacks,[24] this is not always the case. Each movement follows its own developmental path and logic and displays its own momentum.

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24. This was Mao's experience in the Chinese insurgency.

In order to redress the grievances of the people, a political group may initially use moderate means and operate within the constitutional frame work of the state. If the moderate methods fail to achieve some success, the group may resort to insurgency.

Depending on the success or failure of its armed struggle, the group may continue the insurgency, or revert to moderation, or intensify the struggle into a conventional war. If its regular forces are defeated in the conventional war, it may revert to insurgent tactics.

These phases, however are not absolutely distinct - some overlapping does occur. For instance, during the "moderate" phase, militant elements may operate, both within the moderate group and as a part of the underground. But they constitute a minority. There is an initial alliance between the moderates seeking reforms and militants seeking a far reaching change. However, gradually, there occurs a parting of ways between the moderates and insurgents, with the insurgents gaining predominance and moderates being sidelined. The insurgents become as hostile to the moderates as they are to the regime. In Punjab, the Sikh militants' special target has been the moderate Sikhs , those who seek reconciliation between Hindus

and Sikhs, and those who seek accommodation with the national ruling elite.

As support for the insurgents increases, the movement grows in strength. In addition, in some cases, an event or a development triggers off large-scale recruitment to the insurgent groups as also their proliferation.

Alongside emerge fissures and splits in the groups. The splits occur over differences in tactics and ideology or merely personal ambitions and rivalry.[25] The bitter fratricidal warfare saps the insurgency of its vitality, often reducing the capacity of the insurgents to fight the state.

The response of the state to the insurgency plays a major role in the nature of its development. If the regime concedes some of the insurgents' demands and

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25. In 1971, the Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist (CPI-ML) which had led the Naxalbari movement, split into two groups, led by Charu Mazumdar, the Chairman of the organisation, and Ashim Chatterjee, leader of a Regional Committee. Some reports attributed the split to Chatterjee's support to the Pakistan regime in the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. Others claimed that the Chatterjee faction had opposed Mazumdar's tactic of "small group assassinations of individual 'class enemies' and favoured a return to mass struggle to distribute land and crops and to fight police and para-military personnel in the countryside". See Gough, n.18, p.31.

works towards a political solution, it may be able to strengthen the moderates, and even win over some of the insurgents,[26] and thus ease the situation. But if it opts for a military solution, it could lead to a hardening of attitudes on both sides and an intensification of the struggle. However, if the regime is much stronger than the insurgents, a crackdown on them, as in the case of the Naxalities and the JVP in 1971, can break the backbone of the insurgency, at least temporarily. Whether, and for how long, the insurgents can sustain the struggle depends, of course, on the support they enjoy and the resources at their disposal.

Techniques used to Enlist Domestic and External Support

In order to offset the advantage that the regime possesses by virtue of its control over the administrative and coercive apparatus of the state, the insurgents seek material and moral support from within and outside the country.

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26. The Government of India was able to quell the Mizo insurgency through the signing of an Accord with the leader of the Mizo National Front(MNF), Laldenga. The Accord provided for constitutional guarantees for the social and religious practices of the Mizos, amnesty to the insurgents and assistance to the Mizo government in the rehabilitation of the insurgents. With Laldenga as Chief Minister, the main insurgent group, the MNF was brought overground. For details of the Mizo insurgency see Phadnis, n. 15, pp.

Mao's observation that "the richest sources of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people," has guided insurgents to win local support through armed struggle and political work. Armed struggle involves the use of guerrilla warfare and terrorism. The range and intensity of violence used varies from one movement to another and depends on the extent of the movement's popular support and regime access, the strength of its organisation, the degree of socio-economic change intended, the strength of the regime and the extent of external support to the regime or insurgents.[27]

The military component of guerrilla warfare aims at destroying the enemy's military and economic resources and at outfighting the government forces. However spectacular its military successes may be, popular support to the insurgents is an absolute necessity. Recognising this, Mao exhorted the Chinese insurgents to "learn from the masses (and) unite with the masses", since "the populace is for the revolutionaries what water is for the fish". Only with local support can the guerrillas establish a base necessary for extending military and political operations and secure asylum from the regime's counter

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27. Greene, n.20, p.75.

insurgency operations. This support they secure by living with the masses and meeting their needs through an administrative apparatus and social services.

Strategically, terrorism is an effective means of broadcasting the insurgents' grievances and immobilizing a major portion of the government forces. It is an effective instrument of social mobilization only in the initial stages, where the population is sympathetic to its goals and when the violence does not alienate its supporters.

By revealing the state's helplessness in dealing with terrorism and by provoking the regime to use massive and indiscriminate violence against the population, this method can increase support for the insurgents. In Punjab, for instance, the launching of Operation Bluestar, the anti-Sikh riots of November 1984, the indiscriminate arrest of innocent Sikh youth, the killing of non-extremists in police "encounters" etc., have increased the support for the Khalistan demand, among the Sikh population. In addition, fear of the terrorists, forces civilians to extend material, if not, moral support to their cause. This again, is evident in Punjab.

While most insurgent leaders recognize its

usefulness, they have accorded terrorism a secondary and limited role in revolutionary warfare.[28] For terrorism to have any value, it must be accompanied by grassroots organisation. An exclusive reliance on terrorism is a sure sign of the movement's weakness.

While guerrilla warfare and terrorism have their own value, it is the political component of insurgency that can either make or break the movement.[29] Political means of mobilizing support includes ideological appeals, propaganda and organisation.

Marxist insurgents find that Lenin's exigesis on imperialism is a powerful attraction in Third World countries, since it provides an all encompassing explanation of the poverty, illiteracy and oppression, characteristic of these societies. While Marxist rhetoric is directed at the educated, appeals to concrete socio-economic grievances related to bonded

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28. While Mao said that the creation of terror was necessary for a while to suppress the activities of counter revolutionaries, Che argued that it was a valuable tactic when used to kill a notorious opponent. However, terrorism, he pointed out, would bring an increase of reprisals and could lead to the killing of innocent people who may support the movement. Debray asserted that terrorism had strategic value but only if it was subordinate to the fundamental struggle.

29. Greene, n.20, p.51.

labour, agrarian reforms etc. are made to enlist mass support.[30]

Appeals to Nationalist sentiment have proved to be most effective in securing support from all classes.[31] Especially in anti-colonial and separatist insurgencies, Socialist and Nationalist appeals co-exist. When the struggle was against imperialism, a fusion of Socialism and Nationalism won success. In separatist movements, Nationalist appeals have served to unify the local population.[32]

Ideology helps the insurgents justify their use of violence. Marxist and religious insurgents justify armed struggle as essential to bring about the revolution or to carry out a "Jihad", respectively.

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30. For instance, Lenin through his slogan of "land, peace and bread", appealed to the landless peasants, war-weary soldiers and hungry workers. Ibid.

31. The Chinese revolutionaries of 1911 were divided on all issues of socio-economic and political reform. The only issue that unified them was that"China's position in the world was humiliating..." Michael Gastter, Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The Birth of Modern Chinese Radicalism (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969). Cited in Greene, n.20, p.52.

32. Separatist movements have thrown many Communist parties into a dilemma. They regard the Nationalist appeals as unwelcome breaches of working class unity. Yet the movement's separatist call is a struggle for a minority nation's right to self determination.

In order to disseminate information among the populace, about their ideology and activities, the insurgents resort to propaganda, through pamphlets, indoctrination, lectures and broadcasts.

Organisation of the group, enables insurgents to compensate for the material superiority of their opponents. In addition to the core group which is usually divided into the political and military wings, insurgents create front organisations (like youth groups, peasants and workers organisations, women's groups etc.), in order to broaden their support base.

They also establish what Bernard Fall describes as "parallel hierarchies", to compete with government administrative institutions. Parallel hierarchies operate via "penetration of the existing official administrative structures by subversive agents or creation of autonomous insurgents structures designed to take over full administrative responsibility when military-political conditions are deemed appropriate".[33]

While unity among the insurgent groups is important, its absence does not necessarily result in

33. O'Neill, n.4, p. 12.

the failure of the movement.[34] Further, unity becomes less vital if one of the groups is much stronger than the other.

While domestic support to the insurgents is vital at all stages of the insurgency, external support plays a crucial role, especially in the initial and intermediate stages.[35] External support to the regime can have tremendous impact on an insurgency as illustrated by the JVP uprising of 1971. With massive assistance from India, Pakistan, US, China etc., the regime was able to crush the insurgency.

Insurgents seek support from expatriates, other insurgent groups and sympathetic governments. From expatriates they receive moral and material help, while other insurgent groups provide training and arms. Sympathetic regimes may extend moral, political, and material support and even provide sanctuaries.

Propaganda literature brought out by the expatriates, reports of Human Rights Groups like

34. Despite the fragmented nature of the Algerian insurgent movement, liberation was achieved. This was possible, however, because of the collapse of the French will to stay on.

35. The victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949, helped the Vietminh accelerate their activities as the insurgents now gained access to arms, training and sanctuaries in China.

Amnesty International, and broadcasts serve to internationalise their cause. Further, personal relations established with arms dealers, insurgents, and foreign government officials provide vital links with external sources of support. The sources of support to the insurgents, depends among other things on the type of insurgency. A classification of the types of insurgents will now be attempted.

A Classification of Insurgencies

On the basis of their goals, insurgent movements may be broadly classified into revolutionary, reactionary, secessionist and reformist insurgencies.[36]

A revolutionary insurgency aims to overthrow the existing political regime and introduce a radically transformed, social and political order based on

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36. Bard O'Neill writes of six insurgent movements - revolutionary, reactionary, restorational, conservative, secessionist and reformist. While "the values and structures they (restorational insurgents) champion are identified with a recent political order" the values of reactionary insurgents "relate to an idealised, golden age of the distant past...". Conservative insurgents, he writes" seek to maintain the existing regime in the face of pressures on the authorities to change it." However, since such militants are not engaged in a struggle against the ruling authorities but in fact against groups opposing the regime, I feel that they cannot be described as insurgents. For O'Neill's classification see O'Neill, n.4, p.3.

Socialist principles. The Naxalite movement sought to
overthrow the existing regime and political system in
India and establish instead, a Marxist system.

Unlike a revolutionary insurgency, a reactionary
insurgency seeks to replace the existing regime with a
past political and social order, in which authoritarian
structures and religious values were predominant. The
Khalistan movement in Punjab is based on Sikh
fundamentalism. The insurgents wish to establish a
state based on Sikh religious principles.

Secessionist insurgencies are most common in
multi-ethnic societies. Secessionist insurgents wish to
.withdraw from the existing political system and
establish a new, autonomous political community. A
secessionist insurgency threatens not only the regime
and the political system but also the unity of the
country. The Tamil separatist insurgency in Sri Lanka
is an example of this category.

Reformist insurgencies seek "to obtain more
political, social and economic benefits without
necessarily rejecting the political community, regime
or authorities." They resort to armed struggle to

change discriminatory policies.[37] The Assam agitation of 1979 revolved around the presence and domination of foreigners in the state.[38]

However, the insurgencies cannot be fitted into such neat categories. Some overlapping of goals does occur. The "reactionary" Sikh insurgency is at the same time secessionist while the secessionist Tamil movement for Eelam has revolutionary goals as well. In addition, the goals of an insurgent movement or its nature may change over time. In 1971, the JVP had a predominantly radical outlook although it did display a Sinhalese-Buddhist orientation as well. In the 1980s, however, the JVP has turned predominantly Sinhalese-Buddhist in nature and outlook. However, one goal that all insurgents share is to attack the state. Consequently, all insurgencies have tremendous implications for the system and society.

Systemic Implications of an Insurgency

An insurgency being anti or extra systemic, its impact on the system is far reaching. The extent to

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37. Ibid.

38. For details on various aspects of the crisis,see Sanjib Barua, "Immigration, Ethnic Conflict, and Political Turmoil: Assam, 1979-1985", *Asian Survey* (Berkeley California), vol.26, no.11, November 1986, pp.1184 - 206.

which the state can withstand the pressures imposed by an insurgency depends on the resources available to the regime. If it is a small state i.e. a small power with limited economic and military resources, its capacity to deal with the insurgency is limited. In the circumstances, it may give way under the stress or turn to external help.

In its efforts to quell the insurgency, a regime often resorts to authoritarian measures like declaration of frequent and prolonged spells of emergency, postponement of elections etc. In addition, with the insurgents and incumbents turing to a military solution, the society becomes militarised.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the fact that the socio-economic and political imperatives that give rise to insurgencies vary from place to place and over time, all insurgent movements display discontent against the regime and political system. In most cases this resentment arises out of the failure of the system to accommodate the aspirations of certain classes or ethnic groups and their exclusion from a share in the political and economic power. Such a situation becomes all the more serious when one ethnic group is perceived as

synonymous with the state.

Initially, the demands and means of the group are moderate. But with the regime neglecting the grievances, the struggle escalates into an insurgency.

The potency of the insurgency depends much on the support it is able to garner. Especially in the case of separatist insurgencies, external support is critical. Ideology plays a crucial role in securing local support. While Nationalist and Socialist ideologies co-exist in separatist insurgencies, Nationalist appeals are more potent in securing support, for they cut across class lines and have emotive appeal, as well.

As for the regime, if the insurgency is strong and its own capacity to deal with the insurgency limited, the regime is compelled to seek external assistance. With the adversaries turning to external sources for succour, the insurgency is internationalised.

It must be noted that insurgencies, especially separatist insurgencies, are more common in the developing countries probably because of the weak nation building in these countries. Their capacity to cope with the stress of an insurgency is also limited.

In this context, the experience of Sri Lanka is revealing and instructive. Within a span of two decades, the island has witnessed two insurgencies - the uprising of the JVP in 1971 and the Tamil separatist insurgency since the mid 1970s.

The following chapters will deal with the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka - its evolution, growth, impact and achievements. Since the insurgency has its roots in the Sinhala - Tamil conflict for political and economic power, it is essential to understand the conflict first, and it is to a study of this that we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA : AN OVERVIEW

Sri Lanka,[1] has been one of the most vigorous democracies of the Third World, with free and fair elections characterised by high electoral participation. Its politics, was by and large of a moderate nature till about two decades ago. Even under the British rule, there was no mass anti-imperialist struggle. Independence came in 1948, more as a fall out of the granting of independence to India and Pakistan, than in response to any indigenous struggle.[2]

However, post-independence politics, especially since the 1970s, has been conflict ridden. The Sri Lankan state has over the years became synonymous with Sinhala-Buddhism, as also increasingly centralised. Its ethnic implications have been far reaching. In the

1. Sri Lanka was formerly known as Ceylon. It was renamed Sri Lanka in 1972. In this dissertation the island will be referred to as Sri Lanka and Ceylon, interchangebly.

2. However, there were instances of resistance. A protracted war of independence was fought in 1818-1819, a peasant rebellion in 1848 and working class agitations in 1893, 1906, 1912 and 1923. For details, see Kumari Jaywardena, "Aspects of Class and Ethnic Consciousness in Sri Lanka", *Development and Change* (London), vol. 14, no.1, January 1983, p.2.

North and East. Tamil nationalism which was earlier
expressed in moderate terms, has assumed the nature of
national liberation struggle.

The conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamil
peoples of Sri Lanka is often described as a clash of
fundamentally different nationalisms, rooted in the
long standing antagonisms of historically opposed
political communities.[3] In this chapter, however, an
attempt will be made to show that the Sinhalese-Tamil
conflict is not so much a product of antagonistic
traditions as of a competition for resources -
economic, political and cultural - among the leadership
of the two major ethnic communities, the Sinhalese and
the Tamils.

The Ethnic Groups

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and
multi-religious society. Although living in close
proximity to each other, the major ethnic groups have
remained "clearly differentiated by language, religion

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3.   See   Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in
      the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham : Duke University
      Press, 1967).

and sense of unique historical experiences"[4]

The two major ethnic groups are the Sinhalese and the Tamils who constitute 74 percent and 18.2 percent of the island's population respectively (See Table 2.1). The other groups are Moors (7.1 percent), Burghers (0.3 percent), Malays (0.3 percent) and others (0.1 percent).

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4.   Robert N. Kearney, "Ethnic Conflict and the Tamil Separatist Movement in Sri Lanka", *Asian Survey*, vol.25, no.9, September 1985, p.898.

Table 2.1

Ethnic Composition of the Population of
Sri Lanka, 1981.

	Number	Percentage
Sinhalese	10,985,666	74.0
Tamils		
Sri Lankan Tamil	1,871,535	12.6
Indian Tamils	825,233	5.6
Sri Lankan Moors	1,056,972	7.1
Malays	43,378	0.3
Burghers	38,236	0.3
Others	28,981	0.1

Source: Derived from Department of Census and Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, Sri Lanka, 1981 : Preliminary Release No. 1* (Colombo : Department of Census and Statistics, 1981).

In terms of religion, Buddhists constitute 69.3 percent, Hindus 15.5 percent, Muslims 7.6 percent, Christians 7.5 percent and others 0.1 percent (See Table 2.2.).

Table 2.2

Religious Affiliation, 1946 - 1981
(as percent of Population)

Religion	1946	1971	1981
Buddhists	64.5	67.4	69.3
Hindus	19.8	17.6	15.5
Christians	9.1	7.7	7.5
Muslims	6.6	7.1	7.6
Others	..	0.1	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : *Statistical Abstracts of Ceylon, 1973*(Colombo, 1975) and *Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka*, vol. 4, no. 1, June 1981, p.12.

The Sinhalese speak Sinhala and are predominantly Buddhist while the Tamils speak Tamil and are predominantly Hindu (See Table 2.3)

Table 2.3

Religion of Ethnic Communities , 1946
(as percent of ethnic communities)

Ethnic Community	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Christian
Sinhalese	98	-	--	8
Ceylon Tamils	3	81	--	16
Indian Tamils	2	89	--	8
Ceylon Moors	1	--	99	-

Source: Ceylon, Department of Census and Statistics,
          Census   of Ceylon,   *1946* (Colombo,   1952),
          vol.4.   Later censuses do not   provide such a
          break up.

It must be noted, however, that the major ethnic
groups   are   not   monolithic.   Intra-ethnic   group
differences and rivalries exist. The Sinhalese are
divided into the Low Country (the littoral areas) and
Kandyan Sinhalese, according to their region of
residence and date of conquest by European colonialism[5]
and political rivalry between the two sub groups has
surfaced occasionally. However, *vis-a-vis* the Tamils
the Sinhalese are more or less united.

5.   Fred Halliday, "The Ceylonese Insurrection", in
     Robin Blackburn, ed., *Explosion in a Subcontinent*
     (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1975), p.158.

Likewise, the Tamils are not a monolithic group.[6]
Although they share the bonds of a common language, the
origins, aspirations and problems of the Sri Lankan
Tamils, the Indian Tamils and the Tamil-speaking
Muslims are different.

While the Sri Lankan Tamils migrated from South
India to the island at a date disputed by historians,
but either around the same time or before the arrival
of the Sinhalese, the Indian Tamils[7] (also known as the
plantation or estate Tamils) were South Indian
labourers brought by the British from 1825 onwards, to
work on the plantations. Since the Indian Tamils live
in regions surrounded by Sinhalese-majority areas they
are aware that "their present and future are closely
intertwined with the Sinhalese population,"[8] and prefer
to align with Sinhalese parties to secure concessions
from regimes. As for the Tamil speaking Muslims, they
see themselves as a distinct ethnic category in terms

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6. For details of the social composition of the
   Tamils, see K. Sivathamby, "Some Aspects of the
   Social Composition of the Tamils of Sri Lanka", in
   Social Scientist's Association, ed., *Ethnicity and
   Social Change in Sri Lanka* (Colombo : SSA, 1984),
   pp.121-45.

7. In this dissertation the word "Tamils" refers to
   the Sri Lankan Tamils only.

8. V. Suryanarayan, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka,"
   in Urmila Phadnis, and others, eds., *Domestic
   Conflicts in South Asia*, (New Delhi : South Asian
   Publishers, 1986), vol.2, p.130.

of religion and culture, not language, and consequently, do not share the aspirations or opinions of the Sri Lankan Tamils.

The Sri Lankan Tamils are themselves further divided on the basis of religion, caste, region etc. While religion does not appear to be a great divisive force,[9] inter caste confrontation has been frequent.[10] As for regional differences, due to differing social organisations and level of economic development, the attitudes of the Tamils of the Northern Province, Eastern Province, and Colombo vary.[11] While government policies and anti-Tamil violence have gone a long way

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9. Although the Sri Lankan Tamils are predominantly Hindu, they have had Christian leaders too. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the Federal Party was a Christian. Voting patterns were not on religious lines as indicated by the victory of Alfred Durayappah, a Christian. See Satchi Ponnambalam, *Sri Lanka : The National Question and the Tamil Liberation Struggle* (London : Zed Books, 1981), p.32.

10. For details on Vellala domination and caste conflict among the Tamils see Bryan Pfaffenberger, "Fourth World Colomalism : Indigenous Minorities and Tamil Separatism in Sri "Lanka", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (Berthoud, Colorado), vol. 16, no.1, January-March 1984, pp.15-22.

11. Since the Colombo Tamils are in close contact with the Sinhalese and are well established economically in the South, they do not favour secession. Education being the main industry in the North, the government's discriminatory polices in education, evoked tremendous hostility. In the East, education being backward, the same education policies evoked less resentment. See Suryanarayan, n.8, pp.128-9.

in blunting the sharpness of these differences, they have surfaced occasionally, influencing attitudes to the Tamil movement.

The Moors or Muslims are scattered all over the island but are found mainly in the East. They speak the language of the area in which they live. While some Moors are affluent traders, the majority are engaged in petty trade and agriculture.[12]

The Burghers include those of Portuguese descent, as well as Eurasians. Although numerically small, their influence during the colonial period was significant.

In the multi-ethnic society of the island-state the Sinhalese-Tamil relationship has become increasingly conflict-ridden. The historical contexts of such a relationship require a closer scrutiny in this respect.

Sinhalese-Tamil Relations : Historical Contexts.

Some of the Sinhalese writers have drawn attention to the "historic enmity" between the Sinhalese and

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12. Special Correspondent, "Sri Lanka : Ethnic Myths and Facts", *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay), 24 September 1983, p.1660.

Tamil "races"[13] and argue that the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamil kings was racial. However, since many of these conflicts were essentially dynastic, they were political rather than racial. Nonetheless, the historical re-interpretation and following therefrom the perception and projection of majority-minority relations were such as to leave enough lee-way to underscore conflictual as well as cooperative facets of this historical interaction. Herein lay the importance of selecting symbols for identity assertion during the colonial as well as the post-colonial period by the leadership of the two communities.

The Colonial Period

Sri Lanka underwent a long experience of 450 years of colonial rule, under the Portuguese, the Dutch, and finally the British. The Portuguese and Dutch did not subjugate the entire island; thus till 1815, only the Ceylon littoral and Jaffna peninsula were exposed to European influence.

The British introduced certain changes which were to have a far reaching impact on the ethnic relations

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13. Many Sinhala scholars recount the classic story of Sinhala-Tamil conflict, namely, the Dutugemunu - Ellara conflict (161 BC), in which the Sinhalese king Dutugemunu killed the Tamil king Ellara.

in the island. The entire island was unified under a single and centralised system of administration; thus for the first time "the two indigenous ethnic communities previously separated were brought under the umbrella of Imperial rule."[14]

Then, the introduction of the plantation economy to the island, brought in its wake the import of labour from South India. This immigrant labour "added a new dimension to the Sinhalese-Tamil plurality"[15] on the island. Further, missionary activity and administrative needs for English-educated white collar workers from among the locals led to the establishment of English-medium schools, especially in the Jaffna region. Driven by economic backwardness of the region, the Tamils took to English education and entered the bureaucracy and professions in large numbers. Here lay the source of the frequently made Sinhalese allegation, that the Tamils enjoyed an unfair advantage during the British era. However, electoral innovations made by the British, favoured the Sinhalese. Universal franchise, territorial electorates and mass politics worked

14. S.J. Tambiah, *Sri Lanka : Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.65.

15. Urmila Phadnis, "Sri Lanka : Crisis of Legitimacy and Integration", in Larry Diamond and others eds., *Democracy in Developing Countries : Asia* (Boulder, Colorodo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989), vol. 3, p.145.

against the minorities.[16]

It was, however, the revivalist movements from 1880 onwards, which had the most impact on ethnic relations. While the Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim revivalist movements were one in there criticism of the Christian - British culture, they, nevertheless constituted distinct communal streams.[17]

The Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim Revivalist Movements

The Sinhala-Buddhist Revival took the form of a movement to rescue Sinhala-Buddhist culture from the "degeneration" it had suffered under the British. It criticised the decadence of the society fostered by the British and compared it to the "glorious" culture that had flourished under the Sinhalese kings. In preaching the restoration of Sinhala-Buddhist culture, the leaders of the movement "were advocating their own return to prominence in the life of the society and the state."[18] They resented the social, economic, and political privileges enjoyed by the Christians and attempted to secure a greater share in the powers and

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16. Tambiah, n.14, p.68.

17. Phadnis, n.15.

18 Tambiah, n.14, p.69.

privileges of colonial society.[19]

The resentment was articulated in the anti-Christian upsurge of the late nineteenth century, the campaign in Anuradhapura in 1903, and the temperance movement of 1904 and 1912. This anti-Christian/British feeling, however, remained at a religio-cultural level and did not mature into a full fledged nationalist movement.[20]

The ideology of the movement revolved around three elements : the Sinhalese language, the Buddhist religion and the Sinhalese "people" as an "Aryan race".[21]

An ideology based on such concepts was bound to have tremendous impact on ethnic relations. It generated among the Sinhalese a self - perception of their role as protectors of their language, religion and race, for if, according to myth, the Sinhalese were the earliest inhabitants of the island, they were the legitimate "protectors" of the island. Consequently all

19. Kumari Jayawardena, *Ethnic and Class Conflicts in Sri Lanka* (Colombo : Centre for Social Analysis, 1985), p.10.

20. Kumari Jayawardena, "Class Formation and Communalism", *Race and Class* (London), vol.26, no.1, summer 1984, p.58.

21. Tambiah, n.14, p.69. Also see, ibid., p.59.

migrants were "foreigners". While the ideology was strong enough to bring the majority of the Sinhalese within its fold, it was equally potent in excluding those speaking a language other than Sinhalese and professing a religion other than Buddhism.[22]

Like its Buddhist counterpart, the Hindu revivalist movement was directed against the proselytising activities of the Christian missionaries and sought to promote a consciousness and cultural awakening among the Tamils. In the process, the distinctiveness of the Tamil community was emphasised, having implications for majority - minority relations in the political realm.

The Muslims, too, sought to preserve their religion and culture from Christian influence and promoted a self consciousness among the community. The separate identity of the Muslims in Sri Lanka came to be asserted in the 1880s in connection with the

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22. Tambiah, ibid.

controversy over their origins and ethnicity.[23]

Thus the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim revivalist movements arose as a reaction to the dominance of the Christians. In this, they were not antagonistic to each other. Yet the movements helped strengthen the separate identities of the Sinhalese, the Tamil and the Muslims.

Competitive Co-existence of Sinhalese and Tamils

Despite the growing assertion of their separate identities, Sinhalese-Tamil relations did not assume a conflictual nature, during the colonial period. Upto 1922, the Tamils did not regard themselves as a minority but "as one of the two majority groups in the island"[24] and even worked along with the Sinhalese to put forward their political demands. In these political activities, the Tamils often took the lead. Thus, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan was the first Ceylonese to be

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23. When Ramanathan, a Tamil leader wrote that the Muslims were actually Tamils who had embraced Islam, Muslim leaders challenged his view. While accepting that some of the Muslims were descendents of Tamils from South India, they asserted that the majority however were descendent of Arab migrants to Sri Lanka. A Sivarajah, *Minority Politics in Sri Lanka : Since Independence* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Peradeniya, 1988), p.85.

24. K.M. de Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi Ethnic Societies : Sri Lanka 1880-1985* (Lonham,M.D. and London : University Press of America, 1986), p.59.

elected to the Legislative Council in 1921. His brother Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam was the President of the Ceylon Reform League in1917 and of the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in 1919. The CNC itself was a multi-communal, multi-class party consisting of Sinhalese and Tamil elite.[25] Its formation marked the highpoint in Sinhalese-Tamil cohesion.

This cohesion, however, came under strain in 1922, when several members of the CNC rejected the proposal to reserve a seat for the Tamils in the Western province.[26] The CNC split on ethnic lines leading to the formation of the Tamil Maha Sabha, marking the beginning of Sinhalese-Tamil elite rivalry.

The cohesion came under further strain when universal adult franchise was introduced. The granting of territorial representations(the Sinhalese demand) against communal electorates (the Tamil demand) was seen as a response to the "pressures of the Sinhalese majority."[27] The creation of a pan-Sinhalese Ministry in 1936, some of the Tamils felt symbolised "the best

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25. Urmila Phadnis, "Ethnic Groups in the Politics of Sri Lanka", in David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp, eds., *Political Identity in South Asia* (London : Curzon Press, 1979), p.194.

26. Kearney, n.3, pp.27-9.

27. A.J. Wilson, *Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1979* (London : Macmillan, 1979), p.40.

method of achieving political power ... through the mobilisation of communal identifications."[28]

With the increasing Ceylonisation of the bureaucracy and the technical services competition among the Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers grew.[29] While most of the posts for Ceylonese were held by the Sinhalese, the number of positions held by the Tamils and Burghers were much larger than that warranted by their numbers.[30] As many Burghers migrated abroad, the competition was reduced to that between the Sinhalese and Tamils.

Despite this competition, the situation had not as yet turned explosive since "the power cake was big enough to accomodate the elite of the minority communities ...." It was only a decade after independence that the "ethnic cleavage assumed a critical salience in the political process of Sri Lanka."[31]

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28. A.Haroon Akram-Lodhi, "Class and Chauvinism in Sri Lanka", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (Manaila), vol.17, no.2, 1987, p.169.

29. For details see de Silva, n.24, pp.84-96.

30. For instance in 1925 of the 43 Sri Lankans in the higher bureaucracy, 14 (35 percent) were Burghers, 17 (40 percent) were Sinhalese and 12 (22 percent) were Tamils. Ibid., pp.89-90.

31. Phadnis, n.15, p.146.

The Post-Independence Political Scene

Post independence politics in Sri Lanka, has been dominated by language politics and ethnic cleavages. The nature of the political system, the system of two major parties alternating in power, electoral politics etc. have deepened the rift between the Sinhalese and Tamils, changing the nature of the relationship between the two communities from a competitive to a conflictual one.

Upto 1956, Sri Lankan politics was dominated by a single party the United National Party (UNP). But the 1956 elections ushered in a "two major party system"; the UNP and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)[32] emerged as the two major parties, alternating in power.

The electoral contest has been limited primarily to these two parties. The minor parties have joined the two major parties in "pre-election alliances and/or post-electoral coalition governments." While the regional parties, like the Federal Party (FP) or Tamil Congress (TC) preferred to align with the relatively secular (UNP), the Leftist parties like the Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP) opted

32. Ibid., p.150.

for the "centrist" SLFP. The imperatives of power
sharing then, required the Leftist parties to abjure
much of their radicalism and endorse the "majoritarian
thrust" of the SLFP.[33]

Both, the UNP and the SLFP have enjoyed more or
less equal support and have had their stronghold among
the Sinhalese electorate. Therefore, pandering to
Sinhalese-Buddhist demands has been a feature of both
the parties. With both, the party in power and in
oppostion promoting Sinhalese interests, the alienation
of the Tamils increased and contributed to the rupture
between the Sinhalese and Tamils.

The Sinhala-Buddhist Revival : The Second Wave[34]

The beginnings of the conflictual relationship may
be traced to the Sinhala-Buddhist revival of the 1950s.
The revivalist atmosphere stemmed from the "minority

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33. Ibid.

34. For a lucid account of the Sinhalese Buddhist
    resurgence of the mid-1950s and the build up to
    the elections of 1956, see W.Howard Wriggins,
    Ceylon : Dilemmas of a New Nation(Princeton :
    Princeton University Press, 1960).

complex" of the Sinhalese majority[35] and their perception that positive action by the state was essential to prevent Sinhala-Buddhist culture from declining. The impetus for the revival came from the preparations for the celebration of the Buddha Jayanthi and the publication of *The Betrayal of Buddhism* - a report by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress - which blamed the political leadership for neglecting the religion.

Alongside this development in the realm of religion, was the crisis in the economy. The crisis hit the lower middle class the most. The employment situation worsened and competition for education and employment increased sharply. Consequently, the students and youth joined the Sinhala teachers, the *Ayurvedic* (indigenous medicine) physicians, and the Buddhist monks in spearheading the agitation for "Sinhala Only" as the official language. They felt that with Sinhala as the only official language their status in society and employment opportunities would

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35. Although the Tamils constitute merely 18 percent of the population, the Sinhalese who constitute 72 percent of the population perceive themselves as a minority. They see the Tamils as part of the 50 million-large Tamil community of South Asia, and feel dwarfed in comparison.

improve.[36] The movement "was not just a struggle in the abstract for principles, it was also a pragmatic struggle for material and quantifiable things in life."[37]

This discontent was harnessed by SWRD Bandarnaike, the founder of the SLFP, who recognized the strength of the Sinhala-Buddhist fervour and its potential as a vote bank. In December 1955, the SLFP officially switched over to "Sinhala Only". The UNP followed suit in February 1956.

Projecting itself as a champion of Sinhala-Buddhist concerns and aspirations in the 1956 elections, the SLFP providing the core of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) coalition was swept to power winning 51 out of 95 seats. The election results underscored the importance of catering to the interest of the Sinhalese majority. The SLFP's election

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36. Jayawardena, n.19, p.66.

37. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Sri Lanka After Independence : Nationalism, Communalism and Nation Building* (Madras : University of Madras, 1986), p.34.

manifesto[38] reflected a recognition of this and was voted to power. The 1956 elections established a precedent for later elections, where language politics played a central role in elections and with political parties trying to project their pro-Sinhala-Buddhist image.

The Sinhalisation of the State

As a result of successive regimes catering to the aspirations of the Sinhalese majority, the state emerged as a protector and promoter of Sinhalese-Buddhist interests. The imperative of electoral politics in Sri Lanka required a "bland affirmation of majoritarian principles"[39] In the post - 1956 era no political party wishing to succeed electorally in Sinhalese areas, could afford to endorse parity of status between Sinhala and Tamil as official languages. This is evident from the experience of the Left parties. In 1956, when the "Sinhala Only" bill was introduced the LSSP and the CP had stood for parity, but soon realised that such a stand had cost them

38. In its election manifesto, the MEP promised to make Sinhala the official language, to promote Ayurveda, to accept the recommendation of the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry, and to reorganise the education system in accordance with the national and cultural renaissance. See de Silva, n.24, p.178.

39. Phadnis, n.15, p.173.

heavily in Sinhalese areas. By 1964, both had joined the "Sinhala Only" bandwagon.

In addition to supporting "Sinhala Only" at the polls, the UNP and SLFP, as and when in power introduced policies to satisfy their Sinhalese-Buddhist electoral bases. Thus state control over schools[40] was introduced by the SLFP in 1960-61. The UNP in a bid to prove its bonafides on Buddhism introduced the *Poya* holiday scheme.[41] In the 1970s the SLFP (now a part of the United Front Coalition) and the UNP went a step further. Constitutional sanction for a special status to Sinhala and Buddhism was now extended. In 1956, Sinhala had been made the only official language. The 1972 constitution gave it constitutional sanction. Ceylon was renamed Sri Lanka, Buddhism was accorded the foremost place, and Sinhala was declared the official language. While Sinhala was given special constitutional status as official language, Tamil was

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40. A major section of the school system was controlled by the Roman Catholics. By nationalising the schools, Buddhists believed that their influence on the education process at the grass-root level would increase. The state takeover of schools was in response to Buddhist agitation on the issue. de Silva, n.24, p.201.

41. Under the *Poya* holiday scheme, the weekly holiday was based on the phases of the moon.

to be governed by ordinary legislation.[42] Tamils believed that "the constitution was a de jure confirmation of a de facto process of relegating them to a position of second class citizens that had gone on for the past 15 years"[43]

The 1978 Constitution, while according official language status to Sinhala recognized Sinhala and Tamil as national languages. As in the 1972 constitution, the primary status of Buddhism was recognized and the state was assigned the role of protector of the Buddhist "Sasana".

When in opposition, the SLFP and UNP "spared no efforts to cash in on the Sinhalese-Buddhist sentiments"[44] to project themselves as the champions of the majority cause and thwarted any efforts on the part of the regime to redress the greivance of the Tamils.This was most evident in the case of the Tamil demand for regional autonomy. In 1957 the Bandarnaike-Chelvanayakam Pact provided for considerable regional autonomy to the Tamil areas. However, it was abrogated under pressure from the UNP and Sinhalese Buddhist extremists. In 1966, when the UNP sought to enact the

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42. Jayawardena, n.19, p.93.

43. Arasaratnam, n.37, p.59.

44. Urmila Phadnis, *Ethnicity and Nation Building in South Asia* (New Delhi : Sage, forthcoming), p.198.

regulations of the Reasonble Use of Tamil Act (which had been passed under the SLFP regime in 1958), the SLFP, now in opposition vehemently opposed it. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the issue of regional autonomy had been opposed by the SLFP and UNP as and when they were in opposition[45] The result of this was that Tamil greivances were neglected.

Another trend in Sri Lankan politics, which has deepened the ethnic divide has been the increasing centralisation of power. The initial Tamil demand for regional autonomy was viewed by the Sinhalese as the first step towards separation, consequently any attempt on the part of the ruling party to devolve powers, met with strong opposition from the Sinhalese.

While the electoral process ensured that the political apparatus of the state would be controlled by the Sinhalese majority, the recruitment policies ensured that the bureaucracy, army and police would be Sinhalised as well. By the beginning of the 1970s there was a remarkable change in the ethnic composition of the police and armed forces. The rank and file were now

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45, Ibid, pp.198-9.

mainly Sinhalese-Buddhist.[46] This Sinhalisation of the forces together with the frequent use of such a coercive apparatus by the regimes to quell dissent was resented by the Tamils.

Thus the entrenchment of Sinhalese-Buddhist interests in the state apparatus was a continuous process, since the mid 1950s. This led to the gradual political marginalisation of the Tamils with their share in the power structure reduced to near insignificance.

State Capitalism and the Sinhalisation of the Economy (1956-1977)

Alongside the political marginalisation of the Tamils was the deterioration in their economic status. With political power in Sinhalese hands, it was used to further Sinhalese interests. Upto 1977, successive regimes pursued policies that encouraged state intervention in the economy. Since the state had become increasingly "Sinhalised", policy decisions regarding investment, resource allocation, employment etc., were primarily to promote Sinhalese interests, only.

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46. de Silva, n.24, p.270.

The state aided, primarily light industrial
sector, was concentrated in Sinhalese areas, and under
Sinhalese control.[47] Since 1948, all new industrial and
manufacturing units were established only in Sinhalese
areas.[48] In the 1970-1977 period Rs.10,908 million was
spent as capital investment in industrial ventures. The
entire amount was spent in Sinhalese areas.[49] No effort
was made to industrialise Tamil areas.

Since recruitment in the public sector and credit
worthiness in nationalised banks depended on political
patronage, Sinhala youth were at a relative advantage,
for they could develop "patron-client linkages"[50] with
local politicians. Under state patronage, therefore,
employment opportunities expanded for the Sinhalese.

The state regulated economy had an opposite effect
on the Tamils. "Patron-client linkages" with local
politicians was of no use to the Tamils of the North
and East, because their politicians were members of

47. Satchi Ponnambalam, *Dependent Capitalism in Crisis
     : The Sri Lankan Economy, 1948-1980* (London : Zed
     Press, 1981), p.161.

48. Ponnambalam, n.9, p.170.

49. Ibid, p.127.

50. Newton Gunasinghe, "The Open Economy and its
     Impact on Ethnic Relations in Sri Lanka", in
     Committee for Rational Development, ed., *Sri Lanka
     : The Ethnic Conflict - Myths, Realities and
     Perspectives*(New Delhi : Navarang, 1984), p.199.

regional parties and lacked power at the centre.[51]
Without political patronage, they found it difficult to
secure employment, credit, permits, and licenses.

Agrarian policies favoured the Low Country and
Kandyan rural households through subsidies, provision
of fertilizers, irrigation and infrastructure.[52]
However, such subsidies were not extended to the same
extent, to the Tamils and Moors of the Dry Zone.

Yet some policies, like restrictions on import of
onions and chillies did prove to be beneficial to the
Jaffna peasant. Prices of these rose so high that the
Jaffna peasant received "annual incomes comparable to
urban middle class incomes".[53]

With the increasing role of the state in the
economic realm the state came to assume the nature of

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51. Ibid.

52. Akram-Lodhi, n.28, p.176.

53. V.Nithiyanadan, "An Analysis of Economic Factors
     Behind the Origin and Development of Tamil
     Nationalism in Sri Lanka", in Charles Abeysekera
     and Newton Gunasinghe, eds., *Facets of Ethnicity
     in Sri Lanka* (Colombo : Social Scientists
     Association, 1987), p.132. For details see pp.130-
     2.

"an important prize".[54] Since state intervention in the economy was in favour of the Sinhalese and often at the expense of the Tamils, the Tamils felt increasingly marginalised.

The Open Economy (post 1977)

When the UNP returned to power in 1977, far reaching changes were introduced. The role envisaged for the state in the economy, underwent a transformation. While the UF and even the MEP assigned the state the role of "initiator of and protector of national capital", the UNP regarded it as "a mediator between domestic bourgeois interests and those of foreign capital on which they were dependent."[55]

The policies were based on freeing the economy of all controls, free flow of foreign aid and investment, and promotion of free enterprise. Consequently import controls were abolished, incentives were given to private production and economic activity, uneconomic

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54. Amita Shastri, *Politics of Constitutional Development in South Asia in the Seventies : A Case Study of Sri Lanka* (Ph.D. Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1984), p.136.

55. Ibid, p.321.

public sector units were closed down, and welfare programmes were curtailed.[56]

The sections which benefited the most were contractors, transport agents, hoteliers, real estate owners, financiers, speculators, those in export production, and external and internal trade.[57] In the open economy, permits were not required to start or continue in a trade. It was not political patronage alone but availability of credit and credit worthiness which determined whether or not one could start or expand a business.[58] In such a situation, both the Sinhalese and Tamils were at an equal advantage/disadvantage.

The New Economic Policy enabled the top entrepreneurs, Sinhala and Tamil, to enter the export markets through joint ventures with foreign capital.[59] But the middle level entrepreneurs (who were mainly Sinhalese) who had been protected by import substitution policies, under the state capitalism phase, were now hit badly by imports. The curtailment

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56. For details, see Ponnambalam, n.47, pp.144-67.

57. Shastri, n.54, pp.388-9.

58. Gunasinghe, n.50, p.200.

59. Ibid.

of welfare policies was a severe blow to the urban poor.[60]

While the liberalising of trade hit the Sinhalese middle entrepreneurs adversely, Tamil entrepreneurs did relatively well. With the growth of trade and commerce, tourism and service sectors, employment opportunities for the Tamils improved, since proficiency in Sinhala was no special advantage in these jobs.[61]

However all the "prosperity" was only in the South. None of these developments went to the North or East. "Tamil youth were still trapped in a racist educational system and denied economic mobility".[62] Tamil land which was not colonised by Sinhalese settlers was not irrigated by the Mahaweli Ganga Project. The Jaffna peasant was hit badly by free import of onions and chillies. Foreign aid utilisation was nil.[63] Whatever tourism was developed in the East was in Sinhalese hands.

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60. Ibid.

61. A. Sivanandan, "Sri Lanka : Racism and the Politics of Underdevelopment", *Race and Class*, vol.26, no.1, summer 1984, p.31.

62. Ibid.

63. Selected Documents of the Committee for Rational Development, July 1983 - March 1984 in Committee for Rational Development, ed., n.50, p.15.

The Open economy benefited the Sri Lankan Tamils living in Colombo. The Sinhalese lower and middle classes who had suffered in this period, felt that all Tamils were doing well, when in fact, this was true only of Colombo Tamils.

The net impact of the economic policies of successive regimes was felt in the economic status of the Tamils. This was especially so in the period of state capitalism. When the economy was liberalised in 1977, economic prospects for the Tamils was definitely brighter,than in the earlier period, since the regime's role in the economy was much reduced.

The Political and Economic Structure in Sri Lanka and the Emergence of Insurgencies

From the above study it is evident that the political and economic policies of successive regimes led to discontentment among the Tamils. However, it is to be noted that even the Sinhalese lower middle class youth were hostile towards the regime and political system.

In Sri Lanka, while educational opportunities expanded manifold, after independence, economic opportunities did not keep pace. This together with a

sharp increase in population exacerbated the unemployment situation. Similarly, while participation in the electoral process had increased political awareness among the lower middle class youth, the system did not give them a share in the political power structure. The discontent among this class with the regime and system culminated in the 1971 uprising, led by the JVP. The insurgents sought to overthrow the system since the existing one had little to offer them.[64]

The uprising among their Tamil counterparts may be viewed as a "delayed reaction to the same conditions" which led to the 1971 uprising.[65] Among the Tamils however, the discontent was far more severe as the imperatives of electoral politics compelled the regime to transfer a greater share of the burden of the economic crises onto the Tamils.[66]

In this context, it is pertinent to make some observations on the Indian Tamils. By all standards-per

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64. Phadnis, n.15, p.174.

65. Robert C. Oberst, "Tamil Militancy and Youth Insurgency in Sri Lanka", in Dhirendra Vajpeyi and Yogendra K. Malik, eds., *Religious and Ethnic Minority Politics in South Asia* (New Delhi : Monohar, 1989), p.188.

66. Dayan Jayatilleke, "Nationhood : Myths and Realities, *Lanka Guardian* (Colombo), vol.2, no.3, 1 June 1979.

capita income, health, literacy, living conditions etc.
-their condition is the worst among all the communities
in Sri Lanka. In addition to being "captive labour" on
the plantations, their status has been worsened by
deprivation of citizenship and rights of franchise of a
sizeable section of their population. Further in times
of Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic strife, it has been the
Indian Tamils who have been the major targets of the
anti-Tamil violence. Thus the Indian Tamils, in
comparison to the other communities in Sri Lanka,
suffer the greatest deprivation and have the least
access to the country's political and economic
resources.

Despite their deprivation, it is significant that
no uprising against the regime or system, has occurred.
It is possible that the very acute nature of the
deprivation and the fact that the Indian Tamils are
"captive labour" has reduced their capacity to protest.
Further, since they are surrounded by Sinhalese areas
they are aware of their vulnerable position. They also
realise that even if they were to support the Sri
Lankan Tamils in their uprising against the state,
their status even in Eelam will be that of second class
citizens. Consequently the Indian Tamils, despite their
deplorable status, have not risen against the state.

CONCLUSION

That the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict is a post-independence phenomenon is evident from the above analysis. Prior to this, relations were competitive rather than conflictual and consequently the contention that the recent conflict arose out of "historical enemity" between the two communities does not carry weight. The rift appeared when the competitions between the two communities, for political and economic resources became severe.

After 1948, Sri Lanka witnessed a tremendous expansion of educational opportunities health facilities, electoral participation and political awareness. This led to an increase in the expectations of the people, especially among the youth. However economic expansion and employment opportunities did not keep pace with the rise in demand for jobs. With wide spread unemployment and shortage of resources, competition became acute.

It is in this context that the role of the Sinhales-Buddhist ideology becomes pertinent for under its influence competition for economic resources assumed ethnic and conflictual dimensions. Before long,

ethnic and language politics came to play a salient role in electoral politics.

Electoral imperatives required the promotion of Sinhalese Buddhist interest even if it was at the expense of that of the Tamils. No political party wishing to survive in Sinhalese areas could ignore the necessity of catering to the aspirations of the predominantly Sinhalese electorate. In these circumstances, each political party sought to outdo the other in proving its bonafides as a protector of Sinhalese-Buddhist interests, prior to elections, in office or in opposition. In the process, Sinhalese - Buddhist interest became entrenched in the state apparatus. With political power in their hands, the Sinhalese elite moved into the economy, furthering their economic interests as well.

Confronted with a declining political and economic status, the Tamils sought a measure of autonomy to govern themselves. But this demand, like several others came to be sacrificed at the altar of Sinhalese-Buddhist chauvinism.

With little chance of acquiring a share in the political power cake, within the existing political framework, the Tamils escalated their demands from

autonomy to secession. With moderate ideas and methods proving to be inadequate, militant ideas and means gained predominance. This transition from moderation to insurgency will be analysed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - THREE

THE RISE OF INSURGENCY

With the increasing Sinhalisation of the state apparatus, the discontent among the Tamil people grew intense. The political and economic policies of successive Sri Lankan regimes and their neglect of Tamil grievances led to an escalation of Tamil demands from greater autonomy to secession, based on their right to self-determination as a nation. Earlier, moderate and parliamentary methods were harnessed. In the 1970s, however , the Tamil sense of grievance also found expression in insurgency - militant armed struggle against the centre for a separate state.

While an uneasy co-existence prevailed between the moderates and militants, in the 1970s, the 1980s saw the insurgents emerge as the dominant force, sidelining the moderates. In this chapter, the emergence of Tamil nationalism, the evolution and growth of the Tamil movement for regional autonomy, and the transition to violence and separation will be traced. The demand for separation grew out of grievances which were neglected by Sinhalese dominated regimes. In the context of the self-perception of the Tamils, that they constituted a

nation, the discontentment erupted into a separatist insurgency.

The Self-Perception of the Tamils

The Tamils insist that they are a nation with a historical tradition in Sri Lanka, which is as old as that of the Sinhalese and resent being referred to as a "migrant community."[1] From the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, an independent Tamil kingdom existed at Jaffna, which was subjugated in 1621 by the Portuguese. When the British came, the Sinhala and Tamil "nations" were yoked together under a single administration.[2] When they left in 1948, power over the island was transferred to the "Sinhala nation" and in effect reduced the Tamil people to a "subject nation".

Such a self-perception of constituting a "nation" sharpened in the post-colonial period. During the colonial period the dominant strand of the Tamil leadership perceived Sri Lanka as a plural society with "separate but equal communities living in peaceful

1. V. Suryanarayan, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," in Urmila Phadnis and others, eds., *Domestic Conflicts in South Asis*, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1986),vol. 2, p.126

2. Satchi Ponnambalam, *Sri Lanka: The National Question and the Tamil Liberation Struggle* (London: Zed Books, 1981), p.3.

equilibrium."[3] However, the cultural, political and economic policies of the Sinhalese dominated ruling regimes were such as to impinge upon the earlier dominant self-perception "of a minority operating in a pluralistic society" to that of "a separate historical polity with a traditional base and distinctive manifestations of race, religion and language".[4] The Tamil perception was strengthened by the fact that the Tamils constitute a substantial proportion of the population of the North and East and that these areas constitute contiguous districts. This soon became a demand for a separate state on the basis of their right to self-determination as a nation.

The Evolution of Tamil Nationalism

The roots of Tamil nationalism go back to the Hindu revivalist movement of the nineteenth century. Like the Buddhist revivalist movement in the South, Tamil revivalism was directed primarily against the Christian missionary activity.

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3. Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Through the Looking Glass Darkly: The Politics of Ethnicity", in Committee for Rational Development, ed., *Sri Lanka: The Ethnic Conflict - Myths, Realities and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Navarang, 1984), p.177.

4. N. Thiruchelvam, "The Making and Unmaking of Constitutions: Some Reflections on the Process", Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies (Peradeniya)(New Series), vol. 7. no.2, June-December 1977, p. 19. Cited in ibid., p. 178.

It was with the introduction of "mass politics" that the Tamils realised the importance of numbers in elections.Significantly, though for different reasons, both the Sinhalese and Tamil parties (barring the Labour party) had opposed the introduction of universal adult franchise. The Tamil leader Ponnambalan Ramanathan "emphasized the virtues of a separate identity for the Tamils, of a nationalism to be fostered in collaboration with the British and if necessary in opposition to Sinhalese nationalism".[5] A number of Tamil communal organisations arose in reaction to Sinhala organisations.[6]

Tamil nationalism gathered momentum with the formation of the Tamil Congress (TC), in 1944 and G.G. Ponnambalam's demand for "50-50 balanced representation." The TC contested 9 out of 11 Tamil constituencies in the 1947 elections, winning 7 seats and emerged as the representative of the Tamils.

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5. K.M.de Silva, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka, 1880-1985* (Lonham, M. D. and London: University Press of America, 1986), p.59.

6. According to K. Kailasapathy, Tamil communal organisations like the Tamil Mahajana Sabhai were "explicitly motivated by the fear of Sinhalese domination." K Kailasapathy, " Culture and Linguistic Consciousness of the Tamil Community", in Social Scientists Association, ed., *Ethnicity and Social Change in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: SSA, 1984), p.20.

But from a policy of opposition to the Sinhalese dominated government, in 1948, the TC shifted to "responsive cooperation" with the government and even voted in favour of the disenfranchisement and citizenship legislation of 1947-49. This acquiescence proved to be a turning point in the history of Tamil nationalism. Some members of the TC, protesting against the betrayal of the Indian Tamils by the TC, broke away from the party and formed the *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi*[7] or Federal Party(FP).

Until the emergence of the FP in 1949, Tamil nationalism "lacked coherence and cohesion despite all their talk of a linguistic, religious and cultural separateness".[8] As the grievances of the Tamils increased, the FP emerged as the unchallenged spokesman of the Tamils of the North and East,[9] a position it has retained among the moderate groups till today, though

7. The literal translation of *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* is Sri Lankan Tamil Government Party.

8. K.M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.513.

9. In all elections, after 1956, the FP won the majority of seats in Tamil areas, especially in the North. For parliamentary election results since 1947, see Robert N. Kearney, "Politics and Modernisation", in Robert N. Kearney and Tissa Fernando, eds., *Modern Sri Lanka : Society in Transition* (Syracuse, New York: Maxwell School, 1979) pp.62-3.

under a different nomenclature, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

The Grievances of the Tamils

The grievances of the Tamils were concerned with the official language issue, employment, university admission policy, economic development, regional autonomy, and colonisation schemes.

The "Sinhala Only" Policy

The Sinhala-Buddhist atmosphere of the mid-1950s and the passing of the "Sinhala Only" legislation in 1956, aroused the worst fears of the Tamils. They felt that the continued existence of the Tamil culture and identity was threatened.

The "Sinhala Only" regulation required a knowledge of Sinhala as a necessary qualification for various jobs. Tamils, as such, had to learn Sinhala or leave the job and were given three years to learn the language[10]. They therefore, feared that they would now be shut out of employment in the government services

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10. Ponnambalam, n.2, p.4.

and in the lucrative professions.[11] which was the primary source of their employment. That their fears were not unfounded was proved by the fact that over the years the fall in Tamil employment in government services was sharp. At independence, 30 percent of those in government service were Tamils; in 1975, Tamils accounted for only 6 percent[12]. Recruitment of Tamils in the armed forced too fell drastically. Of the 10,000 persons who joined the forces in 1977-1980; only 220 were Tamils[13] (See Table 3.1).

11. C.R.de Silva, "The Sinhalese - Tamil Rift in Sri Lanka", in A. J. Wilson and Dennis Dalton, eds., *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982), p.165.

12. According to estimates of the *Arasanga Eluthu Vinaignar Sangam* (a trade union of Tamil government servants), within a decade of the passing of the "Sinhala Only" legislation, the percentage of Tamils in Government Clerical Service declined from 50 percent to 30 percent and in the administrative services from 30 percent to 20 percent. By 1970, it had fallen to 5 percent. Out of the 100 persons selected for administrative services in 1973, only 4 were Tamils, 2 were Moors and the rest were Sinhalese. Of the 23,000 persons appointed to teaching posts between 1971 and 1974, only 1,867 were Tamils.Walter Schwarz, *The Tamils of Sri Lanka. Report no. 25* (London: Minority Rights Group Report, No. 25, 1875) p.13.

13. Angelito Peries, "Historical Background to the Genocide of Thamils in Sri Lanka", Unpublished Manuscript, November 1983. p.19. Cited in Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p.129.

Table 3.1[14]

TAMILS SHARE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE
JOBS FOR SELECTED YEARS [a]

Categories(%)	1956	1965	1970	1980
Administrative Services(a)	30	20	5	
Administrative and Managerial (b)				16[b]
Professional and Technical (c)	60	30	10	12[b]
Clerical Services(a)	50	30	5	
Army, Navy and Police(e)	40	20		4
Teachers				10.7
Prima Flour Mill Plants in Tamil Areas(d)				19.2
All categories (b)				12[b]

Source:

(a) W. Schwarz, *Tamils of Sri Lanka*(London: The Minority Rights Group Ltd., Report No.25, 1983), p. 13.

(b) Editorial Notes, "Notes and Documents: Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka", *Race and Class* vol. 26, no.1, *summer*. 1984, pp. 141-2.

(c) Schwarz, Tamils of Sri Lanka, and A. Sivanandan "Sri Lanka: Racism and the Politics of Underdevelopment".

(d) Angelito Peries, "Historical Background to the Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka", Unpublished Manuscript, November 1983, pp. 19-24.

(e) Ibid., and A. Sivanandan,"Sri Lanka: Racism and the Politics of Underdevelopment".

a   Information obtained by combining data from different sources because no single source provides data for the whole period, 1956-1970.

b   this figure applies merely to state sector but if this was combined with the public sector Corporations, figures are 13,14 and 11 percent respectively.

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14. Ibid., Manogaran.

The situation in the public sector was as depressing. Few public sector enterprises were established in the North and East. In the few that did exist here, the employees were mostly Sinhalese. According to one estimate, of the 189,000 persons recruited in the public sector from 1956-1970, 99 percent were Sinhalese.[15] Earlier the private sector and plantations had employed educated Tamils in large numbers. But with its nationalisation, employment in this sector too was virtually closed to the Tamils.[16]

University Admissions Policy

The bleak employment scenario was worsened by the admission policies introduced in the 1970s. To the Tamils, education is vital as a means to secure employment and "nothing arouses deeper despair among the Tamils than the feeling that they are systematically squeezed out of higher education."[17] With administrative posts in public sector closed to them, professional employment became even more crucial

15. Ponnambalam, n.2, p.175

16. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Sri Lanka After Independence: Nationalism, Communalism and Nation Building* (Madras: University of Madras, 1986), p.63.

17. Schwarz, n.12, p.12.

to the Tamils. Therefore, professional courses were a major attraction. In 1964, they held 37.2 percent of the seats in Science and Engineering, 40.5 percent in Medicine and Dentistry, and 41.9 percent in Agriculture and Veterinary Science, at the University of Sri Lanka.[18] This trend continued till 1970.[19]

In 1970, the UF regime introduced a new admission policy to universities whereby Sinhalese students were required to get lower marks than Tamils, for the same seat.[20] The result was that both percentage-wise and in absolute terms, the number of Tamils entering the universities shrank.[21] (See Table 3.2).

18. C.R. de Silva "The Politics of University Admissions: A Review of Some Aspects of the Admission Policy in Sri Lanka 1971-1978", *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences* (Colombo), vol.1, no.2, December 1978, p.86.

19. Ibid., p. 87.

20. For an account of the University admission policies in the 1970s, see Sunil Bastian, "University Admission and the National Question" in Social Scientists Association ed., n.6, pp.166-78.

21. de Silva, n.18, pp.105-6.

Table 3.2

CHANGES IN THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CANDIDATES ADMITTED TO
THE DIFFERENT RACULTIES IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES BETWEEN
1970 AND 1983[22]

	Arts	Physical Biological Architecture	Engin- eering	Medicine and Dental	Agriculture and veterinary	Law
	Sinhalese and Tamils[a] (Percentages)					
1970	89.1 (6.9)	69.7 (27.6)	51.7 (48.3)	49.2 (48.0)	39.2 (53.6)	57.7 (34.6)
1971	89.7 (7.0)	68.0 (28.6)	55.9 (40.8)	51.7 (43.0)	59.4 (34.4)	54.2 (33.4)
1972	92.7 (4.7)	67.0 (31.2)	62.4 (34.7)	53.7 (41.8)	59.6 (38.5)	85.8 (10.2)
1973	91.8 (5.9)	73.1 (23.6)	73.1 (24.4)	57.5 (38.4)	54.9 (42.2)	77.3 (18.1)
1974	86.0 (10.0)	75.1 (22.0)	78.8 (16.3)	69.9 (26.2)	80.9 (15.2)	b b
1981	82.8 (13.3)	63.5[c] (31.8)	67.2 (28.1)	72.7[d] (23.1)	--	73.0 (16.2)
1983	77.1 (16.4)	73.4[c] (23.1)	66.4 (28.1)	72.8[d] (27.1)	--	78.1 (11.5)

Source: C.R. de Silva, "The Impact of Nationalism on
Education: The Schools Take Over (1961) and the
University Admissions Crisis 1970-1975", in Michael
Roberts, ed., *Collective Identities, Nationalism, and
Protest in Modern Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Marga Institute,
194) pp. 494-495; Editorial Notes, "Notes and
Documents: Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka", *Race
and Class*, vol. 26. no.1, summer 1984 p. 146.

a   Percentage of Tamils in each category presented within
parentheses

b   The values for law and arts are combined.

c   This only applies to physical science.

d   This only applies to medicine.

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22.   Manogaran, n.13, p.125.

Thus, the percentage of Tamils in the Engineering courses fell from 48.3 percent in 1970 to 16.3 percent in 1974, while in Medicine it fell from 49.2 percent to 26.2 percent in the same period. Although the percentage of Tamils entering universities exceeded their proportion of the population, what was significant was the decline in their numbers, over the years.

The admission policies not only jeopardised the chances of Tamils entering professional employment but also left many with Advanced level education without prospects of either higher education or employment.[23] During the regime of the United National Party (UNP)

23. V.Nithiyanandan, "Analysis of Economic Factors Behind the Origin and Development of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka", in Charles Abeysekera and Newton Gunasinghe, eds., *Facets of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka* (Colombo : Social Scientists Association, 1987), p.128.

while "Standardisation" was done away with its memories lingered.[24]

Economic Backwardness

The Tamil leadership also maintained that the economic development of Tamil areas had been neglected Since independence only four state-run industries were established in Tamil areas[25]. Capital investment to improve productive capacities of already existing factories, had been made only in factories situated in Sinhalese areas.[26] Even when a project would have been

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24. The government eventually abolished the system of standardising marks for admission to universities. A comparison of the figures for 1974 and 1983 shows that while the percentage of Tamil students entering engineering courses has increased, the percentage entering medical courses continue to fall. Manogaran, n.13, p.127.

25. These were the cement factory at Kankesanthurai, the chemical factory at Paranthan, the paper factory at Valaichchenai and the mineral sands factory at Pulmoddai.

26. For details, see Manogaran, n.13, p.133.

more profitable in the North, it was the South that was preferred.[27]

Not only this, the Tamil leadership alleged that in terms of resource allocation too, Jaffna district was discriminated against. In 1976, Jaffna district was allocated Rupees 14.5 lakh for each of its 11 constituencies while the average allocation per constituency in the other districts ranged from Rupees 19.2 lakhs to Rupees 45 lakhs.[28] In the 1981 Central Budget , the capital expenditure in Jaffna district was only Rupees 260 million i.e. 2.6 percent of the national capital expenditure of Rupees 9 billion. While the per capita expenditure in Jaffna district was

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27. For instance, a Russian prospecting corporation conducted a seismic survey of Sri Lanka and recommended Jaffna and Mannar for oil exploration. The project was not undertaken in Jaffna as it would make the Tamils economically strong. See Ponnambalam, n.2, p.170.

  In the early 1960, the World Bank recommended the establishment of a large scale sugar cane plantation and factory in the Thunukkai - Ponneryn area in Jaffna district. Instead, less suited sites in the Walawe Ganga River Basin were developed. See Manogaran, n.13, p.133.

28. National State Assembly Debates (Hansard), vol. 18, no.12, 25 March 1976, cols. 1411-12, Cited in P. Sahadevan and S.C. Nayak, "Ethnic Competition and Nation Building in Sri Lanka", in M.D. Dharmdasani, ed., Sri Lanka : An Island in Crisis (Varanasi : Shalimar Publishing House, 1988), p.61.

Rupees 313, the National Per Capita Expenditure was
Rupees 656.[29]

State-Sponsored Colonisation:

In addition to policies which led to the "economic
marginalisation" of the Tamils and Tamil areas, the
Tamil leaders were highly critical of the government
pursuing policies which aimed at their "political
marginalisation". The resettlement of Sinhalese
peasants in Tamil areas, through state sponsored
colonisation schemes, it was alleged "have been
designed to transfer political control of the Tamil
districts to the Sinhalese"[30] and to break the
continuity of Tamil majority districts,[31] thereby
diluting the Tamil claim to a "homeland".

In a country with a growing population,
colonisation was a policy which entailed the harnessing
of land resources as and where available. None the
less, there is no doubt that such measures did alter

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29. Selected Documents of the Committee for Rational
    Development, July 1983 - March 1984 in Committee
    for RAtional Development ed., n.3, p.15.

30. Manogaran, n.13, p.140.

31. The Tamils have a clear majority in Jaffna,
    Mullaitivu, Mannar, Vavuniya and Batticaloa
    districts and form the largest group in
    Trincomalee. These districts are contiguous.

the ethnic composition of the districts of Amparai,
Batticaloa, Mannar, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The
Sinhalese constituted 3 percent of the population of
Trincomalee in 1921, 20.6 percent in 1946, 28.8 percent
in 1971 and 33 percent in 1981. In Amparai there was a
78 percent increase in the Sinhalese population from
1971 to 1981.[32] Colonisation and gerrymandering,
according to the Tamil leadership have enabled the
government to re-draw and alter the size of Tamil
districts to favour Sinhalese representation in the
legislature. It has increased Sinhalese political
leverage in some Sinhalese districts.[33]

The Federal Party and the Demand for Autonomy

Even when the marginalisation of the Tamils had
not assumed significant proportions in the early 1950s,
the FP had already recognised the need for a federal
set up as a remedy to protect the Tamil culture and
interests. In its first National Convention in 1949,
the FP declared as its objective:" The attainment of
freedom for Tamil - speaking people of Ceylon by the
establishment of an autonomous Tamil State on the

32. M.Y. Mohammed Siddique, "Land and Colonisation
    Problems in Amparai Districts", Cintania (Jaffna),
    vol.1, July 1983, pp.94-120. Cited in
    Suryanarayan, n.1, p.140.

33. Manogaran, n.13, p.144.

linguistic basis within the framework of a Federal Union of Ceylon."[34] Only a federal system, it maintained , would enable the Tamils to protect their rights, at least at the regional level.[35]

The FP's attempts to secure autonomy for the Tamils may be broadly divided into those while in opposition and while in coalition with the ruling UNP.

The Period of Protest, in Opposition, 1956-1965

The promugalation of "Sinhala Only " and the 1956 elections catapulted the FP into the leadership of the Tamils. In opposition the FP adopted "peaceful political dialogue, non-violent agitation, behind the scenes negotiations, pacts with Sinhalese leaders to win recognition for Tamil as official language or regional autonomy".[36] When the Bandarnaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was abrogated, the FP, in its annual convention in 1958, at Vavuniya, called for the

34. Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, *The Case for a Federal Constitution for Ceylon : Convention of the Illanaki Tamil Arasu Kadchi* (Colombo : Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, 1951), p.9.

35. Nithiyanandan, n.23, p.117.

36. Ponnambalam, n.2, p.6.

launching of direct action by non violent *satyagraha*.[37]
In response to the government's attempt to implement
"Sinhala Only", through out the island in 1961, the FP
organised a *Satyagraha* and civil disobedience campaign
in the North and East. It called on government
employees not to study Sinhala or to transact any
business in Sinhala. In February that year thousands of
Tamils blocked access to the *Kachcheris* in Batticaloa,
Jaffna, Vavuniya and Trincomalee[38] and "brought the
government activity to a virtual standstill through out
the Tamil areas".[39] In April, as a symbol of "Tamil
Self-Government", Chelvanayakam inaugurated the "Tamil
Arasu Postal Service" by issuing the FP's own postal
stamps in Jaffna district".[40] The Government came down
heavily on the Tamils: the FP was proscribed, emergency
was declared, and the army was sent to crush the
movement. Despite its own high political
manoeuvrability in the early 1960s, the FP did not
enter into a coalition with either the UNP or the Sri

37. Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham : Duke University Press, 1987), p.110.

38. Ponnambalan, n.2, p.122.

39. Kearney, n.37, p.

40. Ponnambalan, n.2, p.122.

Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), in the elections of 1960.[41]

The Period of Bargaining, in Government,1965-1968

However this changed in 1965, when the FP entered into a coalition with the ruling UNP[42]. In return for support to the regime, the UNP promised the reasonable use of Tamil, establishment of District Councils (DC), etc. M. Tiruchelvam of the FP was given the portfolio of local government.

As a part of the government, the FP's performance was mixed. While it succeeded in getting the regulations regarding the Reasonable Use of Tamil Act passed, the DC Bill was shelved and Trincomalee port was nationalised despite the FP's efforts. The issue of regional autonomy remained unresolved.

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41. The FP's unwillingness to collaborate with the UNP and SLFP probably stemmed from recent memories of the SLFP's language policy and the UNP's volteface on the issue. In the prevailing chauvinistic atmosphere, the SLFP and UNP were probably unwilling to take the risk of aligning with the FP. Urmila Phadnis, "Federal Party in Ceylon Politics : Towards Power or Wilderness?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.4, no.20, 17 May 1969, p.839.

42. Ibid., pp.839-40.

In 1968, under pressure from its youth league and with an eye on the forthcoming elections[43], the FP withdrew its support to the government and was back in the opposition benches.

Although the mainstream of the Tamil movement, upto the 1970s was moderate in its demands and tactics, there was the occasional cry for secession. The FP leaders maintained that their demand for greater autonomy did not mean separatism. Yet, their claim that "the Tamil speaking people in Ceylon constitute a nation distinct from that of the Sinhalese by every fundamental test of nationhood",[44] was of importance to later separatists demands. Further, the word "Arasu" in "Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi" is said "to connote an independent sovereign state rather than a component federal state".[45]

During the 1950s and 60s, several leaders - Sinhalese as well as Tamil-had warned that the government was pushing the Tamils to seek separation. In 1956, during the parliamentary debate on the "Sinhala Only" Bill Leslie Goonewardena said: "There is the grave danger ...if these people... feel that a

43. Ibid., p. 842.

44. Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, n.34, p.1.

45. Kearney, n.37, p.113.

grave and irreparable injustice is done to them, there is a possibility of their deciding even to break away from the rest of the country".[46] The Secretary of the FP warned in 1964, that "every year the development of events in the South leads us to the irresistable conclusion that the hopes of union are receding further and further . If the leaders of the Sinhalese people persist in this attitude, I will say when you will be advocating federalism, we will rather chose to have a division of this country..."[47]

But support for secession was weak till the 1970s. This is evident from the fact that C. Suntheralingam, who had advocated Eelam in 1958, contesting on a separatist platform was defeated in the 1960 elections. Though the FP leadership reportedly complained of abrogated pacts and broken promises on the part of successive regimes, even in its 1970 election manifesto, it appealed to the Tamils not to support "any political movement that advocated the bifurcation of our country" as it "would be neither beneficial to

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46. Hansard, 14 June 1956. Cited in Kumari Jayawardena *Ethnic and Class Conflicts in Sri Lanka* (Colombo : Centre for Social Analysis, 1985), p.70.

47. Quoted in Kearney, n.37, pp.113-14.

the country nor to the Tamil speaking people".[48]

Increasing Militancy of the Moderates, 1972-1975

However a groundswell of opinion that violence was the solution was gradually gaining momentum. Several events in the early 1970s worked as a catalyst, speeding up an inevitable process.

The sweeping victory of the United Front(UF) in the 1970 elections, deprived regional parties like the FP, of their balancing role in parliamentary politics. The FP was no more able to bargain, offering parliamentary support for concessions for the Tamils. Further, the liberation struggle in Bangladesh and the JVP insurgency in 1971 left an indelible impression on the Tamils. Although very few Tamils were involved in the JVP insurrection, some Tamil youth came in contact with JVP insurrectionists in prison and were influenced by the JVP's revolutionary ideology and tactics. The "Standardisation" of university admission hit the Tamil middle class youth badly. They soon formed the backbone of the armed struggle. Besides, the new Constitution of 1972, accorded Buddhism the

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48. For the text of the election manifesto of the FP see Ceylon Daily News, *Seventh Parliament of Ceylon, 1970* (Colombo : Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., 1970), pp.90-5.

foremost place, retained a unitary constitution and
hardly conceded the demands of the Tamils [49]. The
parting of ways came with the Tamil parties walking
out of the Constituent Assembly and forming the Tamil
United Front(TUF), in May 1972.

Events now moved with tremendous speed. SJV
Chelvanayakam resigned his Kankesanthurai seat and
challenged the government to hold a by-election.[50]
About 100 Tamil youth were arrested in 1973, for
staging a black flag demonstration when a UF minister
visited Jaffna. Another 200 were arbitrarily arrested,
the same year, for alleged involvement in extremist
activities. These youth now emerged as a political
force and pressurised the TUF to resolve upon
separation. In May 1973, the TUF Action Committee
"resolved upon a separate state of Tamil Eelam as its
goal".[51] In January 1974, the World Tamil Conference

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49. The six point demand of the TUF included grant of
    status of official language to Tamil, citizenship
    to the 'Indian Tamils', renunciation of a special
    status to Buddhism and promise of equal status to
    all religions, abolition of untouchability and
    decentralisation of power. The TUF had earlier
    warned the government that it would launch a non-
    violent direct action against the government if
    its demands were not conceded. Urmila Phadnis,
    Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia(New
    Delhi : Sage, forthcoming), p.199.

50. In the by-election in February 1975, Chelvanayakam
    won by a massive margin.

51. Manogaran, n.13, p.60.

was held in Jaffna. On the last day a public meeting was held when "the police on the pretext of an unwarranted public meeting charged into the crowd with tear gas and - baton, bringing dow the electric pylons and killing nine people in the process". [52] The Tamils saw this as yet another assault on their culture, inflicted by a "racist" state.

Alongside these developments was the emergence of an underground militant movement among the Tamil youth. In 1970, students opposed to "Standardisation" organised themselves into the Tamil Manavar Peravai or Tamil Student Federation (TSF). It soon fizzled out, when police came down heavily on its members. Soon after the Tamil Illaignar Pervai or Tamil Youth Federation (TYF) emerged but it split in 1974. Earlier, in 1972, a group called the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) was also formed. In 1975, Trotskyite expatriates in London, established the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS).

While the violent methods of the underground groups was quite different from those of the moderate TUF, there were links between the two. For one, most of the members of the underground groups were formerly

52. A. Sivanandan, "Sri Lanka : Racism and Politics of Underdevelopment", *Race and Class*, vol.26, no.1, summer 1984, p.22.

members of the youth wings of the FP/TUF. Further, it is alleged, that it was Amirthalingam (then a member of the TUF and subsequently the General Secretary of the TULF) who took the initiative in the formation of the TYF "for the purpose of assisting the TUF".[53] In addition, the TULF leadership never condemned the militancy and TULF lawyers defended militant youths in court.[54]

The Emergence of Terrorism

The period 1972-1975 was marked by sporadic violence. The violence was not in the form of a protracted struggle but terrorism.[55] A sharp increase in violence was evident in 1972. While in the 1970-1972 period, there were only three relatively minor incidents, in 1972 alone there were 22 incidents of

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53. Sinha Ranatunga, *Politics of Terrorism : The Sri Lankan Experience* (Canberra : International Fellowship for Social and Economic Development, 1988), p.206.

54. At the trial of the accused assassins of the SLFP Mayor of Jaffna, M.Sivasithamparam, President of the TULF, defended the accused. Ibid., p.208.

55. The attempts to topple the Murugandi high tension electricity tower on 21 May 1972 (a day before the promulgation of the new constitution) by the militants aimed at plunging the peninsula into darkness - symbolic of the effect that the new constitution would have on the Tamils. Such "symbolic violence" which seeks to draw the attention of a large audience to grievances, is typical of terrorism.

violence. In 1973, however there was a decline as many hardcore militants were in custody.[56] In 1970-71, extremism was confined to Jaffna and Chunnakam; by 1972 it had spread to Chankanai, Kopay, Kankesanthurai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The targets of attack were usually Tamil politicians who collaborated with Sinhalese politicians.[57] A case in point was the assassination of the SLFP mayor of Jaffna, A. Durayappah in 1975, allegedly by Vellupillai Prabhakaran [58] of the TNT.

The Demand for Eelam, 1976-1979

This period witnessed a shift to a demand for separation. On 5 May 1976 the TNT renamed itself the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). A week after, on 14 May 1976, at the Vadukoddai Convention, the TUF, adopting the name of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) resolved that the "restoration and reconstitution of a free, sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam based on the right to self-determination inherent to every nation has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of

56. Ranatunga, n.53, p.227.

57. Ibid.

58. In some works, Prabhakaran is spelt as Pirabhakaran. In this dissertation the name will be spelt as Prabhakaran, throughout.

the Tamil nation in this country".[59] Contesting the Parliamentary election of 1977, the TULF asked the Tamils for a mandate to establish a separate state. This it received by capturing 17 of the 22 seats it had contested.[60] In the North, all 14 TULF candidates won, securing 68.5 percent of the votes; 11 of them securing 78.7 percent of the votes. In the East, the TULF received a less clear mandate. It won 3 seats out of 4, from areas with Tamil majorities but with narrower margins than in the North.[61]

The Moderate and the Militants

Such a strong mandate for secession, however, put the TULF under pressure. As the major party in opposition in Parliament, the TULF was in a dilemma. On the one hand, it had secured a mandate for secession, on the other, as a part of the Parliament

59. Political Resolution Unanimously Adopted at the
   -First National Convention of the Tamil Liberation
   Front held at Pannakam (Vaddukodi Constituency) on
   14.5.1976. Presided over by S.J.V.Chelvanayakam,
   Q.C. M.P. "(Mimeographed) Cited in Robert N.
   Kearney, "Ethnic Conflict and the Tamil Separatist
   Movement in Sri Lanka", *Asian Survey*, vol.25,
   no.9, September 1985, p.905.

60. Kearney, n.9.

61. Robert N. Kearney, "Language and the Rise of Tamil
   Separatism in Sri Lanka", *Asian Survey* , vol.18,
   no.5, May 1978, p.533. Also see, W.I. Siriweera,
   "Recent Developments in Sinhala - Tamil
   Relations", *Asian Survey*, vol.20, no.9, September
   1980, p.904.

it was constrained to work within the constitutional framework. A segment of the TULF leadership was in favour of a negotiated settlement and wanted the whole issue of a separate state to be soft pedalled.[62] As the TULF continued to cling to moderate and parliamentary tactics, without any concrete achievements, the hostility of the youth mounted. The growing rift between the TULF youth and the TULF leadership was evident when a TULF Youth Front resolution to set up a National Council to draft a Constitution for Tamil Eelam, was rejected by the leadership at its 1978 convention.[63] The open rupture came in 1979, when the TULF accepted the District Development Council(DDC) proposals, despite opposition from its rank and file. The TULF's youth wing collapsed and several youth left.[64]

As for the insurgents, at this stage, all of them were called "Tigers" due to lack of sufficient information of the underground movement. They tried to acquire strength through a series of minor tactical offensives. Their targets were informers, the police

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62. Nithiyanandan, n.23, p.141.

63. Ceylon Daily News, 31 July 1978. Cited in Siriweera, ibid., p.906.

64. K.Sivathamby, "Evolution of the Tamil Question", *Lanka Guardian*, vol.6, no.20, 15 February 1984, p.21.

and Tamil politicians collaborating with the Sinhalese parties [65]. Opposition to the new Constitution was expressed through the blowing up of an Air Ceylon AVRO on the day the Constitution was promulgated. Money from bank robberies.[66] was used to build fire power.

Violence of the State and Insurgents, 1979-1983

1979-1983 were not easy years for the insurgents. The government came down heavily on them. When the Tigers ambushed a police raiding party, killing Inspector Bastiampillai and two others, the Tigers were proscribed. Emergency was declared in Jaffna district on 12 July 1979. President Jayawardena, dispatched the army under Brigadier Ranatunga "to wipe out the terrorists" in the North. On 19 July that year, the Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 48 was

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65. Among the police killed were Inspector Bastiampillai who had led an ambush against the Tigers, P.C. Gnanasambandan of the CID investigating the AVRO explosion and Inspector Guruswamy who gave evidence against the Tigers before the Sansoni Commission. Some like Poopalasingham and Sivarajah were killed for supplying the police with information on the AVRO explosion and the Nallur Bank robbery, respectively. TDSA Dissanayaka, *The Agony of Sri Lanka : An In-Depth Account of the Racial Riots of 1983* (Colombo : Swastika, 1983), pp.35-6.

66. Major robberies were those of the Peoples Bank at Puttur and Nallur, and the Multi-Purpose Co-operative Societies in Puloly and Madagal.

passed.[67] The Act permitted suspects to be held incommunicado for upto 18 months without trial; thus giving unlimited scope for torture.[68]

Under the onslaught of such draconian measures, the insurgents fled to India. There was a relative lull in their activities till 1981, since they were in India, restructuring their organisations, arranging for safe houses, procuring arms and acquiring training abroad.

While these preparations increased their fire power, factional fighting over differences on tactics and ideology and personal rivalries, weakened the

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67. For an in-depth analysis of the provisions of the PTA of 1979, see S.J. Tambiah, *Sri Lanka : Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.6.

68. An Amnesty International Report points out that the PTA of 1979 is far more draconian than similar Acts in South Africa and Britain.
    For an account of the abuse of human rights, see Amnesty International, *Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Sri Lanka, 31 January - 9 February, 1982* (London : Amnesty International Publication, 1983) ; Paul Sieghart, *Sri Lanka : A Mounting Tragedy of Errors*, Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in January 1984 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists and its British Section, Justice (Dorchester : Henry Ling Ltd., The Dorset Press, March 1984).

groups. Splits in the LTTE and EROS [69] led to the establishment of the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOT), in 1980, and the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), in 1981, respectively.

From 1981 onwards, there was a spate of bank robberies. The LTTE and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) teamed up to carry out the robberies of the Neerveli Bank and of a pawn broker at Kurumbachitty. [70] In October 1981 two servicemen were killed by the Tigers - this was the first of the attacks by the insurgents on the armed forces [71].

Prior to the DDC elections[72] in June 1981, the insurgents killed a UNP candidate and two policemen. In retaliation, off-duty Sinhalese policemen and

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69. The causes which led to the split will be dealt with in chapter IV.

70. Dissanayaka, n.65, p.38.

71. Ibid., p.39.

72. While the TULF accepted the DDC proposals and participated in the elections, the militants were opposed to it and called for a boycott of the elections. Voter turnout was low indicating the growing support for the militants.

soldiers[73] went on a rampage through Jaffna town, looting and killing, and burning the Jaffna Public Library which housed 95,000 volumes of rare books of historical and cultural significance to the Tamils.[74]

The latter part of this phase saw the decline of the TELO and PLOT. In May 1981, Kuttimani, Thangathurai and Thevan of TELO were arrested. The arrest of 12 members of PLOT and the discovery of their hideout, broke the PLOT backbone. With TELO inactive and PLOT incapacitated, the LTTE reigned supreme. The LTTE did not lose any of its senior cadre till July 1983 when Seelan, Sellakilli and Arul were killed by the armed forces.

Towards a Mass-Based Liberation Struggle, 1983-1985

The run up to the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 was marked by violence and counter-violence, charges and counter-charges by the insurgents and the regime. Events like the raiding of the Kankesanthurai Cement Factory by the LTTE and the passing of the Emergency

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73. The role of the armed forces in anti-Tamil violence shows clearly that they were becoming "ethnic soldiers" While in 1958, they protected the Tamils, in 1977 they had become indifferent. From 1981 onwards, they were at the forefront of the anti-Tamil oppression.

74. Sivanandan, n.52, p.33.

Regulation 15 A by the government only served to increase the tension. But what triggered off the riots was the ambush and killing of 13 Sinhalese soldiers, by the LTTE, on 23 July 1983.

By the afternoon of 24 July, news about the death of the 13 soldiers spread all over Colombo. That night began the systematic destruction and looting of Tamil life and property, in Colombo which spread rapidly to other cities in Sinhalese areas. Thousands of Tamils were forced to flee to the safety of Tamil areas[75]. The holocaust had tremendous repercussions on the insurgent movement.

Since thousands of Tamils had been affected by the riots, it helped make the movement more mass-based. The feeling that they were safest in Tamil areas strengthened support for the cause of the "homeland" and in the process for the "boys". Large scale recruitment to the insurgent groups took place. This not only led to an expansion of existing groups but also to their proliferation.

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75. For an account of the 1983 riots, see N. Sanmugathasan, "Sri Lanka : The Story of the Holocaust", *Race and Class*, vol.26, no.1, summer 1984, pp.63-82; Tambiah, n.67, pp.19-33.

Upto July 1983, the major groups operating were the LTTE, TELO, PLOT, EROS, EPRLF and Tamil Eelam Liberation Army (TELA). The proliferation of groups in the aftermath of the riots, resulted in about 35 groups operating, by end-1984. Among the new additions to the insurgent groups were the Tamil Eelam Army (TEA), Tamil Eelam National Army(TENA), Red Front of Tamil Eelam (RFTE), [76] etc.

There were significant changes in the nature of operations. The operations shifted from the peninsula to the East and South. In addition to attacks on lone servicemen or convoys, raids were now made on Army and Naval camps. Sinhalese civilians, especially in colonised areas were also killed.[77] With the massive procurement of arms and training, the insurgents "became better equipped and trained in the use of surface-to-air missiles and rocket propelled grenades,

76. .TELA was set up in 1982 by "Oberoi" Thevan after he broke away from TELO. After his death, Senthil became the leader. TELA operated in association with TELO, EROS and EPRLF. It claimed to attack only "anti social elements".
    The TEA was founded in September 1983 by Tambipillai Maheswaran. It came into the limelight with the Kathankudi Bank robbery and the bombing of Madras International Airport in 1984.
    TENA was formed at the end of 1983 and was reportedly led by Amirthalingam's son.
    For details of the origins and activities of a number of insurgent groups see Rahatunga, n.53, pp.248-59.

77. For instance, on 14 May 1985, 146 Sinhalese civilians were killed at Anuradhapure.

in placing land mines to blow up military vehicles, in the use of remote devices to blow up buildings,and in confronting government forces in the open".[78]

Realising the need for unity, TELO, EROS, and EPRLF came together in April 1984 to form the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF). The constituent members agreed to retain their separate identities but would co-ordinate their activities against the Sri Lankan armed forces. In April 1985, the LTTE too, joined the Front. The ENLF even participated in the Thimpu talks, under pressure from India but walked out in protest against the killing of Tamils in Vavuniya. As for the TULF, it had become a marginalised force in Tamil politics. In August 1983, it was proscribed when its members refused to renounce the separatist cause. With the exception of three, all its MPs, fled to Madras. Though it continued to participate in negotiations like the All Party Conference (APC) and the Thimpu Talks, it was evident that it was the insurgents who called the tune.

Civil War, 1986- August 1987

The unity in the ENLF did not last long - internecine rivalry broke out. In May 1986, TELO was

78. Manogaran, n.13, p.168.

wiped out by the LTTE.[79] When the EPRLF criticised the LTTE for killing Sinhalese civilians and exterminating TELO, 500 of its members were killed by the LTTE in December 1986. The LTTE emerged from this as the dominant group.

Although the regime had attempted negotiations, off and on, with the Tamil groups (several groups like the Buddhist clergy, SLFP etc. were also included in the deliberations), the negotiations broke down as both sides adopted on intransigent attitude. Despite these attempts at a political solution it was becoming obvious that the government was seeking a military solution to the crisis. After having driven out thousands of Tamils from the East, through "search and destroy" operations it launched on all out offensive, called "Operation Short Shrift", in the North. The timing was well chosen for the groups had not yet recovered from the fratricidal warfare. But the LTTE regrouped quickly and deploying arms seized from TELO, was able to defend the peninsula. With its knowledge of the swampy terrain and by destroying the strategic

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79. See Dilip Bobb and S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : Ominous Portents", *India Today* (New Delhi), 31 May 1986, p.117; Anita Pratap "Sri Lanka : When Tamils killed Tamils", *Sunday (Calcutta)*, vol.13, no.30, 1-7 June 1986, p.64.

bridge near Palay, it was able to repulse the army attack.[80]

While fighting in the North and East consisted of pitched battles between the army and insurgents, the attacks in the South were in the form of bomb explosions. The explosions at the Central Telegraph Office the bus terminal,and soft drink bottling plant in Colombo, and the cement factory in Trincomalee showed the growing sophistication of attacks. These aimed at the political and economic weakening of the regime.

✓ A noteworthy development of this period was the "liberation" of certain "zones" and the establishment of parallel administration in "liberated areas", Since 1983, Colombo had slowly lost control over Jaffna. The police and other government officials left. There was a total collapse of civilian administration.[81] The only representatives of Colombo in Jaffna were the bureaucracy headed by the Government Agent and the armed forces. While the formers writ was weak, the latter was confined to the camps most of the time.

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80. Dilip Bobb, "Sri Lanka : The Siege Within", *India Today*, 15 June 1986, pp.121-2.

81. S.H. Venkatramani, "Jaffna : Bearing the Blockade", *India Today*, 15 February 1987, p.81.

By late 1986, it was the LTTE writ that ran in the whole of Jaffna peninsula and in parts of Vavuniya, Mullaithivu and North- West Manner. [82] It collected 10 percent sales tax from wholeselers on "luxuries" like cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Gradually it was assuming control of more branches of administration.[83] When it declared its intention to register vehicles and police traffic, and set 1 January 1987 as the date for the Unilateral Declaration of independence, the government clamped down on Jaffna.

On 2 January 1987, in an attempt to wrest back control of Jaffna a fuel and economic blockade was imposed on Jaffna and simultaneously, an all out military offensive was launched. The government claimed that aerial bombing was undertaken only of militant hideouts, arms stockpiles and ordnance factories. Yet the offensive resulted in 8000 Tamil civilian deaths and in the bombing of Jaffna General Hospital.[84] Jaffna become the focal point of civil war with the government and the insurgents engaged in offencive and counter offensives.

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82. Ibid., p.80.

83. Ibid., p.83.

84. S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : The New Offensive", India Today, 15 May 1987, p.131.

The sharp increase in violence by the insurgents in April 1987 resulted in the governments launching of "Operation Liberation" in mid- May. The battle centered around the Vadamarachi area. After the capture of Velvettithurai, the troops moved towards Point Pedro.

At this point, the Indian government intervened by sending a flotilla of fishing boats with food relief and then through an air drop of food supplies, over Jaffna.

In July 1987, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord[85] was signed between the governments of India and Sri Lanka. The militants were not signatories to the accord[86]. Among other provisions, the Accord provided for a cessation of hostilities within 48 hours of its signing and a disarming of the militants within 72 hours. Although it did not concede the demand of Eelam it did provide for a merger of the Northern and

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85. For the text of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, see *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 30 July 1987.
     For its implications, see S.D. Muni, "Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement : Regional Implications", *Mainstream* (New Delhi), vol.25, no.48, 15 August 1987, pp.19-23; Ifthekharuzzaman and Mohammed Humayun Kabir, "The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement : An Assessment", *BIISS Journal* (Dhaka), vol.8, no.4, October 1987, pp.453-80; Urmila Phadnis, "Indo-Sri Lanka Accord: Tasks Ahead", *Mainstream* vol.26, no.6, 21 November 1987, pp.21-2, and p.26.

86. While some groups, like the EPRLF welcomed the accord, others like the LTTE were forced to accept it, under pressure.

Eastern provinces, subject to a referendum.

Impact of the Insurgency on the Political System

The accord did not mark the end of the Tamil insurgency but merely of one phase of the insurgency. The separatist insurgency in Sri Lanka has continued to shake the country, having far-reaching impact on the political system.

The insurgency has threatened the very existence of a united Sri Lanka, since it has sought to divide the country and establish an independent Eelam. Thus it has proved to be a major challenge to the territorial integrity of the island.

Further, the armed warfare in the Tamil areas and the military response of the regime militarised the society. The inability of the regime to control the insurgency reduced its support among the people. Its refusal to hold elections as scheduled, reduced its legitimacy. The imposition of emergency measures in Tamil areas and subsequently to the rest of th island, press censorship etc., were major assaults on democratic processes.

In the context of a weakened political system and

a politicised and strengthened military the threat from the military to the regime and system increased tremendously.

Finally, the insurgency led to the re-emergence of the JVP in a more virulent and chauvinistic form. In response to the Nationalist extremism of the LTTE in the North, the JVP emerged as the rallying point of Sinhalese extremism, in the South.87 Thus the regime has been confronted with two contending insurgencies, that of the extra-systematic Tamil insurgency and the anti-systemic JVP.

CONCLUSION

From the above study of the evolution and growth of the Tamil insurgency, it is clear that the insurgency arose in response to the discriminatory policies of successive regimes, the refusal of the regimes to redress Tamil grievances, and the failure of the moderates to secure even the minimum demands of the Tamils. While discontent had been building up since the mid-1950s, it was the events of the early 1970s which triggered off the insurgency. The Tamil youth, arose in protest against the education polices of the government

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87. Pfaffenberger, Bryan, "Sri Lanka in 1987 : Indian Intervention and Resurgence of the JVP", *Asian Survey*, vol.28, no.2, February 1988, pp.137-47.

which proved to be the spark that ignited the flame of the insurgency.

Initially the Tamil movement was moderate in demand and tactics. But when the Tamil leadership failed to secure any concessions from the regime, the Tamil demand escalated from regional autonomy to separation. Till the mid 1970s however, the tactics continued to be moderate, although the beginnings of an insurgency were evident. In this phase there was an alliance of sorts between the moderate TULF and the militant underground movement - both aimed to establish Eelam but their methods varied. However, in 1979, an open rupture took place between the moderates and insurgents. From then on, the militants' guns were trained on the moderates as well.

In the 1980s, the insurgents moved from strength to strength as they gradually overshadowed the moderates. While an increase in support and fire power strengthened the insurgent movement, rivalries and fratricidal warfare divided it, weakening it in the process. Out of this internecine fighting the LTTE emerged as the strongest group. From 1985 onwards, the insurgency assumed the dimensions of a civil war, largely under the leadership of the LTTE.

As for the nature of the violent methods that the insurgents used, terrorism predominated in the 1970s. In the 1980s, guerrilla warfare became popular.

The predominance of insurgent methods shows that there was considerable support for the use of armed struggle to establish Eelam. On this there was a convergence of ideas. The factionalised nature of the insurgent movement, however, revealed that there were differences on the details. An analysis of the major groups; their similarities and differences on various issues will be attempted in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INSURGENT GROUPS : IDEOLOGY, ORGANISATION AND GOALS

By 1985, the number of insurgent groups had increased manifold. Most of them had emerged from the main groups over differences in tactics and policies, or out of personal ambitions and rivalries.

While a few groups limited their activities to pamphleteering, others shot into prominence with an ambush or a robbery, and then faded into insignificance. However five groups managed to remain in the limelight-the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOT),[1] Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS) and Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF).

These five groups will be studied in this chapter, for they have been the most significant of all the

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1.   While the acronym for the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam should be PLOTE (as in other publications), the organisation itself uses the acronym PLOT, since its official publications refer to Tamil Eelam as one word ie. Tamileelam. In this dissertation the organisation will be referred to as PLOT.

Tamil insurgent groups operating in Sri Lanka. Further, all of them have published a large amount of propaganda literature which gives an insight into their ideology, goals and activities. They also represent varying ideological orientations- Nationalist, Marxist, and combinations of the two.

In this chapter, the origins, ideology, organisation, and tactics of the five major groups will be compared and contrasted.[2] The extent to which their attitudes and activities were influenced by their orientations will also be evaluated.

Origins [3]

The five major groups evolved out of interaction between two currents prevalent in Tamil society in the

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2.   The ideology, goals, tactics etc., of the groups refer to the pre-Accord period. Marked changes have occurred since August 1987, but a discussion of this is beyond the scope of this study.

3.   Almost all the groups claim to be the oldest since they (with the exception of EROS and EPRLF) had their origins in the youth movements of the early 1970s. TELO, for instance, claims that it was founded in 1967. LTTE however, disputes this claim. It states that the organisation which was founded in 1967 and called TELO bears no relation to the present day TELO. The name was usurped by the leaders of this organisation in 1980. These claims and counter claims are further complicated by the fact that most of the groups have split off from each other , making it difficult to discern exactly which group is the oldest.

early 1970s:

(1)   The   student   and   youth   protest   movements,
        especially   the Tamil   Youth Federation   (TYF)   and
        the Tamil Student Federation (TSF).

(2)   The   radicalised   Velvettithurai,[4]   smuggling
        community.

The   origins of the EROS and EPRLF are traceable to
interaction   between   the   youth   current   and   various
Marxist   influences.   The   TELO   evolved   out   of   the
smuggling   community of   Velvettithurai and the LTTE and
PLOT out of a combination of the two currents.[5]

In   1874, when   the TYF   split the   majority formed
the   *Viduthalai Iyakam*   (Liberation Organisation). Later

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4.   Velvettithurai,   a fishing   village in the Northern
      Province,   has been   notorious   for   its   smuggling
      community,   since   early   times.   Some   of   the
      smugglers,   like Kuttimani   and   Thangathurai,   who
      had   links with FP/TUF, started smuggling arms when
      the   militancy began.   Soon   these   arms   smugglers
      came to play a major role in the struggle.
             Nearly   all the   leaders of   the major groups -
      Prabhakaran,   Thangathurai,   Kuttimani,   Sri
      Sabaratnam,   Balakumar and   some EPRLF leaders come
      from Velvettithurai.

5.   Kumar   David, "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict : Phases
      of   History   and   Current   Conjunctures",   *Lokayan
      Bulletin* (New Delhi), vol.5, no.2, 1987, p.33.

on, for a while, they even called themselves TELO.[6] Many of the members of the old TELO later joined EROS and EPRLF.[7]

The EROS was formed as a student organisation by a group of Trotskyite expatriates[8] in London, in 1975. Its founder was E. Ratnasabapathy. In 1977 the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES), was established as a part of EROS. But the "extreme centralization and personalization of leadership that was present within EROS and in other sections of the liberation movement",[9] led to the radical sections of the EROS opting out and forming the EPRLF, in 1981. GUES became affiliated to the EPRLF.

TELO was formed by Thangathurai and Kuttimani. While Thangathurai was closely connected to the smuggling trade, Kuttimani was directly involved in it.[10]

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6. The present day TELO is different from the old TELO. Ibid. Also see n.3.

7. David, n.5.

8. Shekhar Gupta, "Sri Lanka Rebels : Ominous Presence in Tamil Nadu", *India Today* (New Delhi), 31 March 1984, p.90.

9. EPRLF, Department of Propaganda and Information, *EPRLF* (n.d.), p.2.

10. David, n.5, p.34.

The Tamil New Tigers(TNT), which later became the LTTE, was set up in 1972. It arose from the student radicalisation of the *Manavar Peravai* and was also influenced by the smuggling community of Velvettithurai, to which many of its leaders belonged. In the early years, a notorious criminal Chetti was the leader of the TNT. With Chetti imprisoned and Patrick Stanislaus (Saravan) eliminated in an internal power struggle, Velupillai Prabhakaran emerged as the leader of the TNT.[11] In 1976, the organisation was renamed the LTTE. It split into the right and left wing factions in 1979 and the majority right wing remained with Prabhakaran.[12] Personal and ideological differences arose between Prabhakaran and Uma Maheswaran, the chairman of the executive council of the LTTE, leading to Maheswaran joining the breakaway group and reorganising it into the PLOT in 1980.

Thus by the early 1980s, all the major groups had been formed. The emergence of the others was mainly due to splits in the main groups.

Ideology

All the groups have made extensive use of

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11. Ibid.

12 Ibid., p.35.

Socialist rhetoric and have spoken in terms of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary strategy. At the same time Nationalist appeals to Tamil aspirations and sentiments have also been made frequently.

The LTTE has defined its ultimate objective "as national liberation and socialist revolution."[13] Its claim for an independent Tamil Eelam has been based as much on racial, national and ancient glory as on present suppression. It has also been influenced by Lenin's justification of national struggles and separation in compelling circumstances. Elucidating the point, it has maintained that faced with "political isolation and economic deprivation and threatened with an annihilation of their ethnic identity, the Tamil speaking people of Eelam nation" were forced to opt for secession. Under such conditions of "national oppression", a decision to secede was "a revolutionary move" as it would further "the interests of class struggle".[14]

Despite the Marxist bias of the LTTE literature, its consistent anti-Sinhalese stance, along with its commitment to a *Tamil* Eelam has made it more

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13. LTTE, Political Committee, *Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle* (Madras : Makkal Acchakam, 1983), p.27.

14. Ibid., p.39.

Nationalist than Socialist in its approach[15].
Discussions with many insurgents also indicate that
initially, the LTTE was not particularly ideologically
committed, except to Tamil Eelam. In this phase, there
were few publications. It was only after the induction
of A.S.Balasingham, that a somewhat neat ideological
thrust was provided to the group, in its publications.
However, the pre-eminence to the concept of Tamil Eelam
has remained.

In comparison to the LTTE, the PLOT has shown a
Marxist orientation from the beginning. One of its
bulletins states:"When we say that our principal
objective is the emancipation of the Tamil speaking
People of Tamil Eelam, we do not mean hoisting the flag
of Independence at Trincomalee, liberation is not just
a political question. We wish to see our masses
emancipated from economic, social, cultural and
ideological domination. This emancipation cannot be
only from the repressive Sri Lankan state, but also

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15. The symbol of the LTTE, the tiger, was also the
    symbol of the Cholas. The choice of the tiger as
    the symbol was probably prompted by a nostalgia
    for the glorious days of the Cholas when Tamil
    culture flourished or as a counterpoise to the
    Sinhalese - the Lion Race. The choice of a tiger
    as its symbol reflects the LTTE's Tamil bias.

from the clutches of the Tamil bourgeoisie."[16] The struggle then has been not only against the Sinhalese bourgeoisie but also against the Tamil bourgeoisie. Further, all oppressed classes, even among the Sinhalese must be emancipated. However, despite its condemnation of the LTTE for killing Sinhalese civilians and its efforts to establish links with some Sinhalese groups, PLOT's alleged involvement in the narcotics trade and in the recent abortive coup in Maldives underscore the gap between its declaratory statements and actual practice.

As for the TELO, it has been described by one author as ideologically vacuous,[17] moving from a radical outlook in the early 1970s to a more Nationalist outlook in the 1980s.

Unlike the groups mentioned so far, EROS has had a clear-cut Marxist outlook since its inception. It has strived for an "Eelam" not a "Tamil Eelam". Though its literature has reflected Marxist leanings, it has operated in alliance with the Nationalist LTTE.

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16. PLOT, Press and Information Secretariat, *Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam* (n.d.), p.2.

17. David,n.5, p.38.

Ideologically, the EPRLF has been the most radical and has advocated a pure Marxist-Leninist programme. It has been concerned not only with political liberation but social, economic and cultural liberation as well.[18] The EPRLF struggle has not been for a people, a race, or a language but for the suppressed. Its fight on behalf of the Tamils is because they are suppressed.

While all the groups use Socialist and Nationalist appeals, the mix is in varying proportions. If the groups are represented on a Nationalist-Socialist continuum, the LTTE wold figure at one extreme as the most Nationalist while the EPRLF with its hardline Marxist approach wold lie at the other extreme. On such a continuum however is placed the all group objective of Eelam.

18. EPRLF, Department of Propaganda and Information, *The Political Program of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front* (n.d.), p.10.

The Boundaries and Nature of Independent Eelam[19]

The borders of the promised Tamil Eelam[20] are defined by the extension of the Kingdom of Jaffna and of Chola rule. In addition to the Northern and Eastern provinces, Eelam includes "long strips of the west and east coast: Chilaw and Puttalam in the West and Pottuvil. South of Batticaloa in the East."[21] Eelam, for the EROS and EPRLF, includes the Indian Tamil areas as well.[22]

As for the nature of the Eelam state, Prabhakaran has said, "It would be a socialist state of Tamil Eelam. And there would be a single political party supported by the people; I am opposed to the multiparty

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19. "Eelam", in Tamil means gold or land of gold. It was the name by which the Cholas referred to the island, when it was under their rule. Originally "Eelam" referred to the entire island. However it is used today, to refer to the Tamil dominated areas in Sri Lanka, namely the Northern and Eastern provinces. All the militant groups have adopted the name "Eelam" or "Tamil Eelam" for the promised Tamil State. See Dagmar Hellmann Rajanayagam, "The Tamil Tigers in Northern Sri Lanka : Origins, Factions, Programmes", *Internationales Asienforum*, vol.17, no.1/2 1986, p.66.

20. The militants are not very clear about the boundaries of the homeland. See S. Murari, "Militants Not Keen on Talks", *The Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), 6 July 1986.

21. Rajanayagam, n.19, p.77.

22. Murari,n.20.

democracy. It is through the one-party rule that we can develop the Eelam faster".[23] It would not be a parliamentary democracy, but "a peoples democracy, a model similar to that of Yugoslavia where people elect a single party."[24] In foreign policy, he would "definitely like to be closer to the socialist block...."[25]

For PLOT too, Tamil Eelam will be a Socialist state. The economy will be based primarily on agriculture and fisheries and immediate industrial development will be related to these two sectors. In the initial phase, limited private property will be allowed but essential services like banks will function under state control.[26]

TELO has maintained that Eelam will be a Socialist state in which free elections will be held. The party which is elected. even if it is the TULF, will wield power.

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23. Prabhu Chawla and S.H.V. Venkatramani, "Profile of a Tiger : Interview with V. Prabhakaran", *India Today*, 30 June 1986, p.134.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. "PLOT on Problems.... Tasks ... And ... Relationships", *Spark*, vol.1, October 1984, p.6.

According to the EPRLF, in Socialist Eelam, "all agricultural, commercial, industrial and financial establishments owned by the Sri Lankan government in liberated regions of Eelam and establishments of international monopoly capital", will be nationalised. However, "owners of small industries, merchandise and land" will enjoy total freedom to participate in the national economy.[27]

Unlike the other groups, the LTTE's emphasis on a one-party state indicates a somewhat intolerant attitude towards the other groups. Such an ideological orientation along with its attempts to liquidate other groups reveal a fascist thrust. It is here that the very nature of insurgent groups-the use of arms and terror to further their goals-becomes self defeating.

Strategy

Armed struggle has been the broad strategy of all the insurgent groups. The LTTE has claimed that it functions "as a revolutionary underground, with political and military cells all over Tamil Eelam." It has "chosen urban guerrilla warfare as the effective mode of armed struggle" and its "guerrilla units live

27. EPRLF, Department of Propaganda and Information, n.18, p.13.

with the people, sustained by the people, like the fish in the sea."[28] While depending on the local population for moral and material support, the LTTE has assigned them a limited role in the actual fighting. The LTTE's tactics - confuse the enemy, weaken the enemy, hit and destroy the enemy - have been taken from strategies advocated by Mao and Che Guevara.[28] Its military campaign has had "a dual character". In the Jaffna Peninsula, where its position has been very strong, "it is in battle readiness for positional warfare. Outside the peninsula the Tigers have relied more on guerrilla tactics."[30]

A hallmark of TELO attacks has been to shoot victims in the head, at close range.[31] Hit-and-run tactics, it has believed are useful initially, to demoralise the enemy. But once the enemy is demoralised, the people's liberation army must defeat

28.   LTTE, Political Committee, n.13, p.42.

29.   Rajanayagam, n.19, p.71. For details of LTTE's strategy see LTTE, Political Committee, *Diary of Combat - 1975-1984* (December 1984).

30.   "The Indian Dilemma", *Frontline* (Madras), vol.4,no.4, 21 February - 6 March 1987, p.114.

31.   T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka, *The Agony of Sri Lanka : An In-Depth Account of the Racial Riots of 1983* (Colombo : Swatika, 1983), p.39.

the enemy in a pitched battle.[32]

The PLOT has maintained that "the hit-and-run action of the LTTE is putting back the liberation struggle" as it exposes the civilian population to army reprisals.[33] and does more harm than good. It has stressed mass mobilisation through creation of grass root organisations, party branches in villages, towns and districts and strengthening of alliances with landless peasants, students, artisans, etc.[34] It has advocated an all-out fight of the masses, at a later date.[35] Since 1984, PLOT's activities have been "sporadic, individualistic and near suicidal."[36]

The strategy of the EROS has been to attack economic targets, as this will lead to the economic

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32. Chelvadurai Monogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 1987), p.75.

33. PLOT,Press and Information Secretariat, *Massacres Will Never Stop the Fight for Freedom* (Madras : Voice of Tamileelam, nd.), p.9.

34. Putiya Patai (The New Path, Monthly of the PLOT) (Madras), March 1985, pp.4-5. Cited in Rajanayagam, n.18, p.70.

35. Makkalin Vitutalaiyai Venretupom (We will obtain peoples's Liberation), PLOT news co-ordination Bureau, n.p., 1985, p.18. Cited in Rajanayagam, n.19, p.70.

36. K.P. Sunil, "The Enemy Within", *Illustrated Weekly of India* (New Delhi), 28 September-4 October 1986, p.46.

ruin of the Sri Lankan state. Simultaneously, the people should be prepared for mass struggle. Since 1983, operations of the EROS have been in "possible areas of contention" i.e., Eastern province especially Trincomalee and in he plantation areas. While sabotage and subversion of economic targets have been common in the South, EROS has resorted to guerrilla warfare in the form of ambushes, landmine blasts and raids on the military, in the East.[37]

The EPRLF has emphasised the importance of mobilising the population especially the lower classes, for a people's war. Guerrilla warfare, it has maintained is not a strategy, but only a tactic.[38] The EPRLF has advocated a programme of revolution of workers and peasants but also includes the petty-bourgeoisie. This inclusion of the petty-bourgeoisie is a shrewd move, since the petty-bourgeoisie constitute an overwhelming majority of Jaffna society.

With the exception of the LTTE, the other groups have denounced the use of hit and run tactics. While the LTTE has assigned only a supportive role in the

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37. T.S. Subramaniam, "EROS - The Dark Horse", *Frontline*, vol.3, no.13, 28 June - 11 July 1986, p.18.

38. D.B.S. Jeyraj, "How Strong Are the Boys?" *Frontline*, vol.2, no.6, 23 March - 5 April 1985, p.65.

struggle to the masses, PLOT and EPRLF have emphasised the significant role that the masses play and consequently have stressed their mobilisation.

Organisation

The LTTE has been a highly disciplined, close-knit group. It has been the only organisation that does not have separate political and military apparatuses.[38] But political and military cells have existed all over the Tamil areas. It has had a one man leadership-Prabhakaran, as its leader as well as Military Commander. While a closed inner circle of regional commanders, close family and Velvettithurai associates have been available for consultation, the final decision has been in Prakhakaran's hands.[40] The LTTE has been modelled on Fidel Castro's original guerrilla movement. It has had a tightly controlled organisation that has managed to keep its strategy and movements secret through public executions of alleged informers.[41]

PLOT has had a four-member Polit-Bureau. Its Secretary-General is K.Uma Maheswaran who has been

39. David, n.5, p.37.

40. Ibid.

41. Chawla and Venkatramani, n.23, p.132.

accused of a dictatorial approach to administration of the organisation and for building up "within the organisation a clandestine army of spies and executioners owing personal allegiance to him."[42] Military training has taken place in batches of eight and for a six month period,[43] but due to its strategy, PLOT's military wing has become inactive.

TELO has trained in batches of 25 and training was for a 6 month period.[44] Due to internal indiscipline and riff-raff membership, TELO has lacked orientation in its politics.[45]

The organisation of EROS has been "amorphous". To date, neither has a formal Congress been held nor formal political and organisational resolutions been passed.[46] EROS has had a collective leadership. The General Command, has been its supreme decision making body whose members work in the North, East and

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42. PLOT theoretician Jayapalan quoted in Sunil, n.36, p.46.

43. Sinha Ranatunga, *Politics of Terrorism : The Sri Lankan Experience* (Canberra : International Fellowship for Social and Economic Development, 1988), p.248.

44. Ibid., p.247.

45. David, n.5, p.38.

46. Ibid., p. 41.

plantation areas.[47] A three-man Control Committee consisting of Balakumar, Shankar and Nesan has co-ordinated its activities. The organisation has been excessively informal and internal democracy, if it works, does so because of tradition and comradeship rather than "established procedures and systematic ways of discussing and resolving differences."[48] EROS has consisted of several functional units like the Eelam Research Organisation, Eelam Repatriates Organisation, General Union of Youth and Students, etc.[49]

The EPRLF has attempted to organise the progressive intellectuals, petty-bourgeoisie, proletariat, peasantry, agricultural workers and plantation workers under its banner and has sought to establish links with the the Sinhalese Left. It has been structured more formally than the EROS.[50] The EPRLF has been divided into a propaganda wing called Eelam Peoples Information Centre (EPIC), a Military Wing called People's Liberation Army (PLA),[51] and mass organisations collectively called the Eelam People's

47. Subramaniam, n.37, p.19.

48. David, n.5, p.41.

49. EROS, Documentation Unit, *EROS is the Ethos of Eelavar* (Madras : EROS, 1985), p.6.

50. David,n.5, p.41.

51. EPRLF, Department of Propaganda and Information, n.9, pp.9-10.

Liberation Front (EPLF).[52]

Of all the groups, the EPRLF emerges as the most democratically structured. At the other end has been the LTTE whose organisation and functioning is around the personality of Prabhakaran. Despite his dictatorial style of functioning, Prabhakaran has managed to secure the devotion and commitment of his cadre and it is this loyalty to Prabhakaran which explains the unity, and close-knit nature of the LTTE. Further, while the LTTE has emerged as a predominantly military set up, the EPRLF has functioned as a primarily political organisation. Finally, that the LTTE is the most disciplined and least factionalised is evident from the relatively few splits that have occurred in the group,

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52. The EPLF consist of the Fishermen's Front (FF), Rural Workers and Peasants Front (RWPF), General Union of Eelam Students (GUES), Eelam Women's Liberation Front (EWLF), and Plantation Proletariate Front (PPF). For an account of EPLF and its activities, see Ibid., pp.5-8.

as compared, to that in the others.[53]

Membership and Support Base

On an average the insurgents have been "educated and mainly from non-propertied, lower-middle class background."[54] As for the numerical strength and fire power of the groups, all have been wary of revealing their exact strength and tend to exaggerate their power. According to one estimate, in 1985 these five major groups had a combined strength of 10,000 members.[55]

The LTTE has remained the strongest group, from

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53. A major split that occurred in the LTTE was in 1980, when Uma Maheswaran broke away to form PLOT. Since then, however, no major split has occurred within the group and Prabhakaran has maintained his firm grip over the organisation. In contrast TELO has displayed much dissension in its ranks. In 1982, a faction led by "Oberoi" Thevan broke away to form TELA. Again, in 1986 rivalry between TELO's leader Sabaratnam and its Regional Commander Das surfaced and led to the killing of Das by the Sabaratnam faction.

54. Newton Gunasinghe, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka : Perceptions and Solutions", in Charles Abeysekera and Newton Gunasinghe, eds., *Facets of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka*(Colombo : Social Scientists Association, 1987), p.70.

55. Jeyraj, n.38.,p.64.

the beginning. Cautious recruitment,[56] disciplined and committed membership and strong leadership have made it a well-knit group. Further, many youth were attracted by Prabhakaran's personality and joined the group in large numbers.[57] The LTTE's policy of liquidating its rivals has undermined the other groups and led to its dominance. Its membership has been mainly Karaiyar and from Velvettithurai but also includes fishermen from Mannar and the Eastern province, Christians and Muslims.[58] It has been strongly entrenched in Jaffna.[59] The local population has referred to the Tigers as "our boys" and this shows how well integrated the Tigers are with their people.[60] The people have seen them as their protectors from the Sri Lankan army. But a part of this support to the LTTE has been borne out of fear of

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56. Ranatunga, n.43., p.248. The Tigers have a six month probation period. See David Selbourne, "Sinhala Lions and Tamil Tigers", *Illustrated Weekly of India*, vol. 103, no.38, 24-30 October 1982, p.16.

57. Ranatunga, n.43, p.246.

58. Rajanayagam, n.19, p.72.

59. Manogaran, n.32, p.74.

60. Selbourne, n.56.

reprisals.[61]

PLOT members have belonged mainly to the Vellala caste. Support for PLOT has come from a larger area including the Muslim dominated areas in the East. Till 1983, it was a popular organisation - its easy and open recruitment policy contributed to its expansion. But frequent changes in policy and strategy,[62] Maheswaran's "tyrannical style", and PLOT's aligning with TULF during the Thimpu talks have led to several splits in its ranks, and to loss of support in Jaffna and Tamil Nadu.

Most of the TELO cadre are Karaiyarand Christians from Velvettithurai and Point Pedro.[63] TELO has lost a large part of its top brass in the Wellikade Jail Massacre in 1983[64] and was literally wiped out by the

61. For an account of the Jaffna people's fear of the militants, see Arun Chacko, "Jaffna : Militants and People", *Frontline*, vol.2, no.16, 10-23 August 1985, pp.15-16.

62. In 1980, Maheswaran was against guerrilla tactics and decided to launch a mass movement. Then he felt that armed struggle was essential to achieve Eelam. Some PLOT members like A.S. Balasingham, left PLOT in disgust, and joined the LTTE. See Ranatunga, n.43, p.246.

63. Ibid., p.250. Since many of TELO leaders like Sabaratnam and Rasapullai were from Velvettithurai, TELO claimed equal rights as the LTTE to the Velvettithurai area. p.248.

64. Among those killed in the massacre were Thangathurai and Kuthimani.

LTTE in 1986. Splits in the organisation have also weakened it.

EROS and EPRLF have had a predominantly Vellala membership. EROS has been the strongest group in Batticaloa but has followers all over the North and East. The EPRLF has been militarily much weaker than the LTTE and a large part of its cadre was liquidated in 1986. Its support has been mainly in the East, although all its leaders are from the North. Both, EROS and EPRLF have enjoyed some influence in the plantation areas.[65]

While the membership of the LTTE has been the largest, its support base has been more or less limited to the Northern Province. But in caste terms, its membership has been more mixed. The support base of the EPRLF has been the broadest in terms of area covered but in numerical terms has been much less than that of the LTTE. Similar has been the case with EROS and PLOT.

Relations Among the Insurgent Groups

Although the insurgents have broadly shared origins and goals, relations among them have been as hostile as that between the insurgents and the Sri

65. Jeyraj, n.38, p.64.

Lankan government. All the groups have recognised the need for unity in dealing with the Sri Lankan army. The LTTE, being the strongest, has wanted this unity only under its own leadership as the others are too weak to be accepted as equal partners.

The LTTE's relations with PLOT, TELO and EPRLF have been far from cordial. It has needed EROS for its technical knowhow and has tolerated it as its mouthpiece in the South.

The LTTE-PLOT rivalry goes back to the late 1970s when Maheswaran left the Tigers to form PLOT. The personal enmity between Prabhakaran and Maheswaran resulted in a shoot out between the two at Pondi Bazaar, Madras, in 1982.

LTTE-TELO relations in the early 1980s, were cordial. The two groups co-operated in major operations like the robberies of Neerveli Bank and of a pawn broker at Kurumbachitty. The coalition split in 1983, when Thangathurai and Kuttimani were arrested.[66] After 1983, only TELO was given training in India, initially.

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66. Rajanayagam, n.19, p.67.

The Tigers were furious at being sidelined.[67] In April-May 1986, the Tigers attacked TELO camps and wiped out its cadre.[68] Later, that year the EPRLF cadre was similarly eliminated.[69]

A major step towards unity, was the formation of the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF), in September 1983, when TELO, EPRLF, EROS, PLOT and TELA came together with a common programme of joint actions and co-operation in operations, propaganda and exchange of information.[70] In May 1984, six LTTE men were killed in Culipuram. Though the villagers confirmed that the PLOT was responsible for the killing, PLOT denied the charges and blamed the EPRLF and the Sinhalese.[71] PLOT was then expelled.[72]

In 1985, LTTE joined ENLF but PLOT stayed out.

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67. Anita Pratap, "Sri Lanka : When Tamils Killed Tamils", *Sunday*, 1-7 June 1986, vol.13, no.30, p.64.

68. For details of the LTTE-TELO fracticidal fighting, see T.S. Subramaniam, "A Terrible Bloody Feud", *Frontline*, vol.3, no.10, 17-30 May 1986, p.11.

69. The EPRLF was attacked for having criticised the Tigers' action against the TELO.

70. Rajanayagam, n.19, p.68.

71. Ibid., p.69.

72. In addition to its hostility to the LTTE, PLOT has also accused the EPRLF and TELO of being infiltrated by the CIA. See ibid., p.68 and Pratap, n.67.

Unity was however shortlived and lasted for only a year. It is clear that the major stumbling block in the way of lasting unity among the groups has been the LTTE's intolerant attitude towards the other groups.

Attitude to the Sinhalese, Muslims and Indian Tamils

While the insurgent groups are divided on most issues, they have been united in their antagonism towards the Sinhalese dominated United National Party (UNP) and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), since "neither had been interested in solving our (the) problem in any way."[73] But their attitude to the Sinhalese Left and Sinhalese people has varied.

At one extreme is the LTTE. It has conceded that the Sinhalese masses are as much in need of liberation as the Tamils. But since they are influenced by chauvinistic ideology, no alliance with the Sinhalese masses is possible. It has attacked the Sinhalese Left parties which recognize the right of Tamils to self-determination but not their right to secede. PLOT and EPRLF have favoured co-operation with the Sinhalese masses since they are also exploitated. The EPRLF has even condemned EROS for killing Sinhalese civilians as

73. "Making of a Militant Leader : N. Ram Interviews V. Prabhakaran", *The Hindu* (Madras), 5 September 1986.

this will only antagonize the Sinhalese proletariat. It has advocated close links with progressive Sinhalese parties like the Lanka Sama Samaj Party(LSSP), Communist Party (CP), and Nava Sama Samaj Party (NSSP) but not the fascist Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP). The EPRLF has links with the Vikalpa Kandayama (VK).[74] PLOT has advocated co-operation but has not specified the groups with which to co-operate. It is alleged that PLOT has links with the JVP, but this has been strongly denied by PLOT.

All the groups have been anxious to bring the Muslims and Indian Tamils into the struggle, but have done little to integrate the Indian Tamils into the struggle.[75]

Activities and Achievements

The LTTE's greatest achievements have been in the military sphere. It hit the headlines, in 1975, with the assassination of Alfred Durayappah. Other important operations include the killing of Inspectors Bastiampillai and Guruswamy, the AVRO explosion, the robberies of banks at Puttur, Thinnelveli and Neerveli,

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74. Dayan Jayatilleke, "Sinhala and Tamil Left and the Tigers", *Lanka Guardian*, vol.12, no. 2, 15 May 1989, p.14; *The Island* (Colombo), 7 December 1986.

75. Rajanayagam, n.19, p.77 and p.79.

the raid of the Chavakachcheri police station, the blasts at the Gurunagar army camp and Karainagar naval base, and the ambush of thirteen Sinhalese soldiers at Thinnelveli.[76] Another major success was the Batticaloa jail break.[77] According to reports, the LTTE had also established an ordnance factory in Jaffna capable of manufacturing 25, six inch mortar shells and 100 hand grenades per day, and a military training academy in Jaffna which turned out 80 cadets, every three months.[78]

When the Tigers called for a boycott of elections to the Muncipal and Urban Councils in 1983, there was a low voter turn-out, showing that it was they who enjoyed support[79] in the Tamil areas. Especially after 1986, the Tigers' grip over Jaffna was firm and they were able to gradually take over civil administration in the region.[80] However, the LTTE has not taken up

76. For a comprehensive account of the LTTE's military achievements from 1975 to 1983, see LTTE, Political Committee, n.29.

77. "The Great Escape : Tigers Free Nirmala", *Voice of Tigers*(Official Bulletin of the LTTE), vol.4, July 1984.

78. S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : The Militant Mood", *India Today*, 31 August 1986, p.94.

79. Robert N. Kearney, "Ethnic Conflict and the Tamil Separatist Movement in Sri Lanka", *Asian Survey*, vol. 25, no.9, September 1985, pp.810-12.

80. See Chapter III.

social issues like caste, dowry and workers problems, as these, it believes, will at present divide the movement.[81]

Major achievements of the PLOT include the raid of the Anaicottai police station in 1981[82] and the Kilinochi bank robbery. PLOT operated a clandestine broadcasting station known as Voice of Tamil Eelam (VOTE). On the social front it has worked with organisations like Gandhiyam, Tamil Refugee Relief Organisation and established model farms at Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.[83] Due to shortage of money and arms, PLOT soon became involved in the narcotics trade.

The first major operation of the TELO was the Puloly Bank robbery. In 1981, it teamed up with the LTTE to execute the Neerveli Bank robbery and in 1984, the Chavakachacheri Police Station was raided. Another success was the blasting of the Yal Devi Express, in 1985, which was carrying troops from Colombo to Jaffna. Later operations were reduced to extortions and TELO

81 David, n.5, p.37.

82. The attack of Anaicotai Police station was the first ever attack on a police station in Tamil areas, Jeyraj, n.38, pp.62-63.

83. PLOT, Press and Information Secretariat, n.16, p.6.

"became synonymous with gangsterism."[84]

The EROS has shown a tremendous capacity to strike all over the island, with its "'high-tech', 'high-yield operations'". Major achievements include the explosions at gas plants in Mattakuliya and Colombo, at the Petro Corporations Storage depot, at Hotel Lanka Oberoi in Colombo at railway and bus stations, and an ambush of the Sri Lankan Special Task Force.[85] The EROS also established co-operative model farms like the Kenneddy farm with the help of the Tamil Refugee-Rehabilitation Organisation to rehabilitate Tamil refugees from the plantations.[86]

The EPRLF was not taken seriously till it claimed responsibility for kidnapping the Allen couple.[87] The PLA carried out the Batticaloa jail break. Its front organisations have organised marches, and meetings in support of revolutionary causes and have played a major

84. David, n.5, p.38.

85. For a detailed account of EROS's achievements, see Subramaniam, n.37, pp.18-19.

86. EROS, Documentation Unit, n. 49.

87. The EPRLF claimed that the Allens, an American couple who were held hostage, were CIA agents.

role in political mobilisation of the Tamils[88]

An overview of the activities of the insurgent groups shows that in keeping with the organisational structure and ideology of the group, the LTTE and TELO's major achievements have been military successes while those of the EPRLF, PLOT and EROS have been in socio-political work and mass mobilisation.

Conclusion

The appraisal of the organisation, ideology, activities, etc., of the five major insurgent groups in Sri Lanka shows that despite the intense rivalry among the groups, they do have points of convergence on various issues.

Upto mid-1987, all five groups were committed to the establishment of a sovereign state of Eelam and advocated armed struggle to achieve it. On the necessity of establishing Eelam, they received partial support from the Tamil people but for fighting army suppression, they received substantial support. To mobilise support from the people, the insurgents used

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88. Some of the issues against which the EPRLF has protested are those related to apartheid, Zionism, etc. It has also expressed its support to the Sandinistas, Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), South-West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), etc.

ideological appeals, propaganda against the regime, etc. Their ideology showed a mix of Marxist and Nationalist thinking. Further, the membership of almost all the groups, consisted almost wholly of persons below the age of forty. While the leaders were in their mid-thirties, the cadre consisted of a sizeable number of teenagers.

But there ends the unity of purpose and action. Personality clashes at the higher echelons, differences on strategy and ideology have surfaced often underscoring the fact that on details the insurgent movement was ridden by differences.

For instance while all the groups have agreed on a mix of political work and armed warfare to achieve their goals they have differed on the relative importance to attach to these two components. Thus at one extreme lies the LTTE which has relied primarily on armed warfare and hit and run tactics; at the other extreme lies the EPRLF which has emphasised mass mobilisation.

An interesting point to note is that when a group's fortunes started to fall, it resorted to desperate, near-suicidal campaigns and anti-social activities. This is evident in the cases of the TELO

and PLOT in their involvement in the drug trade to finance their activities.

While all the groups have claimed to be Marxist and in favour of a Socialist Eelam, groups like the LTTE have displayed a strong Tamil Nationalist orientation. Further, despite "progressive" promises, in practice they have done little to eradicate the evils of untouchability and dowry, which are rampant in Tamil Society. Although they have called on the Indian Tamils to join the struggle, the groups (especially the LTTE and TELO) have maintained a distance from the low-caste Indian Tamils.

A group's ideology has to an extent circumscribed its support base. Thus the "Nationalist" LTTE's support has been strong but limited to the Tamils while the EROS, EPRLF and PLOT have enjoyed some influence in the plantation areas, among the Muslims and have had links with the Sinhalese left, as well.

Ideological proclivity, however, has not influenced relations or alliance patterns among the groups. The LTTE and TELO have been classified as "Nationalist", yet relations between them have been hostile. It has been EROS, a "Marxist" group which has

been close to LTTE, and operates almost as the LTTE'S junior partner.

The organisational structure of the group has influenced its relations with other groups as well as the nature of its activities. This is most apparent with regard to the organisational structure of the LTTE. Being a primarily military organisation, into major successes have been in combat against the Sri Lankan forces. Its fascist outlook and belief in a one party dictatorship has made it intolerant of the activities and approaches of the other groups, let alone their very existence.

External sources have played a major role in building up the insurgent groups and highlighting their cause. All the groups have had external links. This will be dealt with in the coming chapter.

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CHAPTER - FIVE

EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF THE INSURGENCY

The Tamil separatist struggle was not a conflict confined to two domestic actors only. In addition to the two principal actors - the Sri Lankan state and the Tamil insurgents were a number of external actors, complicating the situation, strengthening the adversaries, and making the struggle longer and bloodier.

Certain characteristics of the country, its location, the nature of the struggle, etc., necessitated and influenced the external involvement. As a small state, Sri Lanka is more vulnerable to pressure, more likely to give way under stress and more limited in terms of its resources and capacity to deal with a crisis. Consequently, to deal with a situation such as an insurgency, the state is forced to turn to external sources for assistance.[1]

Further, the island is located a mere twenty two

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1. Earlier in 1971, in order to crush the JVP insurrection, the Sri Lankan Government sought and received military assistance from India, Pakistan, Soviet Union, Britain, United States, and China. But for this external assistance, the ill equipped Sri Lankan regime would have found it very difficult to suppress the uprising.

miles from India. While links of a colonial past and cultural ties draw the two countries together, India's political, economic and military might draw Sri Lanka away from India. Consequently, Sri Lankan regimes have preferred to look outside the region, rather than to India alone for help to deal with domestic crises.

As regards the Eelamists, they too have varied linkages. To begin with, they have found willing allies in other liberation organisations. Besides, there being strong cross-border links between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Tamils of Tamil Nadu in India, the insurgents have also been able to establish training camps and operate from bases on Indian territory. Moreover, the existence of a large and strong Tamil expatriate community, in a number of countries like USA, UK Canada etc., has served as a source of finance and as an instrument of propaganda in other countries.

Finally, with the movement taking on the nature of an armed struggle and with the regime opting for a military solution, the need for arms by the regime and the militants has led to the establishment of links with arms suppliers.

In this chapter, the external links established by the insurgents and incumbents will be studied. While

the regime's links were with countries like the US, UK, Israel, Pakistan and China, those of the insurgents were with the Tamil expatriates, arms suppliers and liberation organisations. India's involvement is especially noteworthy since it had links with both adversaries.

India: Mediator, Militant Supporter, Participant

India's interest in the struggle stemmed from a number of factors. First, due to the geographical proximity of the island to India, it was in India's strategic interests to ensure that events in Sri Lanka did not harm India's security. To this end, it was essential for India to keep extra-regional powers out of the island.

Second, the influx of about one lakh Tamil refugees into Tamil Nadu, following the 1983 riots, had become a burden on India's resources. A speedy solution to the problem was necessary to enable the refugees to return to their homes.

Further, strong ethnic and cultural bonds between the fifty million Tamils in India and the Sri Lankan Tamils evoked an emotional upsurge in Tamil Nadu against the anti Tamil violence in Sri Lanka. Electoral

expediency in the state, necessitated the Congress (I) Party at the Centre, to take a special interest in the issue. The imperatives of federalism and electoral exigencies thus were a significant input in India's Sri Lanka Policy.

Yet there were a number of constraints on the Indian government whole-heartedly supporting the liberation struggle. For one, international opinion would not have favoured India's open backing of the militants. Further, secessionist movements in Punjab and the North-East, were threatening the unity of India. Earlier, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Dravidian movement in the then Madras state had been secessionist in nature and the "We Tamil" movement (although it never really took off) envisaged a confederation of Tamil areas. Given these circumstances, supporting a Tamil secessionist movement in the neighbourhood was not prudent.

This, then, was the dilemma confronting the Indian Government. On the one hand, pressures from Tamil Nadu and exigencies of electoral politics required a backing of the militants. On the other, a negotiated settlement which gave the Tamils as much autonomy as was enjoyed by the Indian states, was preferred. The Indian involvement in the crisis was based on building up the

militants and using them to pressurise the Sri Lankan government to come to a political settlement, which would be in India's interest.

With the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka becoming a domestic electoral issue in Tamil Nadu, the various regional parties like the ruling All India Anna Dravida Munettra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the Dravida Munettra Kazhagam (DMK), and other opposition parties vied with each other to project themselves as the champions of the Tamil cause.[2] Soon, the political leaders started patronising the militants. While the AIADMK chose the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as its protege, the DMK established close ties with the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). Several militants operated from rooms in Legislator's hostel allotted in the name of sympathetic Members of the Legislative

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2. For instance, soon after the July 1983 riots the Chief Minister (who belonged to the AIADMK) sent a telegram to the Prime Minister urging her to take up the issue in the United Nations (UN) and led a delegation to New Delhi. Not to be outdone the DMK conducted a signature campaign and collected ten million signatures for a letter to the UN, calling upon the Government of Sri Lanka to grant the Tamils there, the right to self-determination. Further the General Secretary of the DMK resigned his post as leader of the Opposition in the state, in protest against the failure of the state government to pressurise the Centre with regard to the Tamil problem.

Assembly (MLAs).[3] They enjoyed privileges which even
the average Indian citizen did not, like the carrying
of arms.[4] Enjoying state protection, they acted with
impunity and even broke Indian laws. After an operation
in Sri Lanka, the "hit squads" would escape to India.[5]
It was reported that officials were lenient with them
and even allowed some to travel on Indian passport.[6]
Gradually, Madras became the political headquarters of
the militants,[7] with the rest of Tamil Nadu becoming
their training ground.[8] In July 1986 an estimate
claimed that around 39 training camps existed in Tamil
Nadu, in which around 3,400 insurgents had been

3. Shekhar Gupta, "Sri Lankan Rebels: Ominous Presence in Tamil Nadu", *India Today*, 31 March 1984, p.88.

4. Dennis Austin and Anirudha Gupta, "Lions and Tigers : The Crisis in Sri Lanka", *Conflict Studies* (London), no.211, May 1988, p.9

5. Mervyn de Silva, "The Indian Connection", *India Today*, 15 March 1983, p.81.

6. Gupta, n.3.

7. Kumar David, "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict : Phases of History and Current Conjunctures", *Lokayan Bulletin*, vol.5, no.2, 1987, p.36.

8. In the training camps at Kumbakonam and Meenambakam, the new recruits were given elementary training in the use of arms and ideological indoctrination. After the basic training, the insurgents were divided into smaller groups and sent to camps along the coast. See Gupta, n.3.

trained.[9]

It was believed that TELO was the major beneficiary of the training programme organised by India. India built up TELO from 1983-1985 and gave it the largest share of arms, at this stage.[10] It was only later that a few members of LTTE and the Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOT) were included in the training.[11]

The Indian government repeatedly denied the existence of training camps while some of the Sri Lankan Tamil leaders were evasive about India's role.[12] But the government did atleast have control over the militants' activities. Arms shipments to the rebels which did not have the approval of India were seized. Limiting arms flows to the militants was used as a

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9. Marguerite Johnson, "Island at War : Tamil Rebels Mount a Bloody Campaign for Justice", *Lanka Guardian*, vol.9, no.5, 1 July 1986, p.7.

10. David, n.7, p.95.

11. Anita Pratap, "Sri Lanka: When Tamils Killed Tamils", *Sunday*, vol.13, no.30, 1-7 June 1986,p.64.

12. For instance M.K. Eelaventhan, General Secretary of TELF said. "The boys are not being trained here. They may be doing some on their own, but not with the help of the Indian government". A. Amirthalingam of the TULF said, "May be 30 or 40 boys come and rent a house and may be they are training some. But I know the Indian government is not training them." William Clarbone," Tamil Rebels say Sri Lankan Arms Blockade Fails", *International Herald Tribune*, 8 February 1985.

means to pressurise them. In 1986,"Operation Tiger" was launched by the Tamil Nadu Police. About 64 camps and houses rented in Tamil Nadu were raided and Soviet-made SAMs AK-47 rifles, rocket propelled guns, mortars, machine guns and ammunition worth Rupees 2 crores was seized.[13] The presence of militant camps and ammunition on Indian soil, which had hitherto been denied by India, stood exposed.[14]

In comparison with the Tamil Nadu government, the Centre was more firm with the insurgents. This was especially so after Rajiv Gandhi came to power. In March 1985, two consignments of arms and ammunition, one each for the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (ERPLF) and PLOT were seized.[15] The same year, the militants were "frog marched" to the Thimpu Talks. Soon after, three Tamil leaders, S.C. Chandrahasan, N Sateyendra and A.S. Balasingham were issued deportation

13. Anita Pratap, "Tamil Nadu - SOP for Jayawardena", *Sunday*, vol.14, no.1, 23-29 November 1986, p.47.

14. D.B.S. Jeyraj, "Jaffna : Sense of Foreboding", *Frontline*, vol.3,no.24, 29 November - 12 December 1986, p.20.

15. Patrice Claude, "No End In Sight to Sri Lanka's Civil War", *Guardian Weekly* (Manchester), 26 May 1985.

orders.[16] Within 48 hours, the opposition in Tamil Nadu came out in protest - the Centre withdrew the orders under pressure.

The Centre used its links with the militants to pressurise them and the Sri Lankan regime to negotiate. But M.G. Ramachandran's (the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister) relations with them, especially with the Tigers, was more sympathetic and open. In 1987, when the Sri Lankan government launched a military offensive against the Tamils, he donated Rupees 4 crores to the militants,[17] even while the Centre was trying to bring the adversaries back to the negotiating table.

As a mediator,[18] Delhi sought to find a political solution acceptable to the Tamils, within a framework of a united Sri Lanka. It assumed a mediatory role when Indira Gandhi's offer of good offices was accepted by

16. For details see, Olga Tellis and Anita Pratap, "The Deportation Drama", *Sunday*, 8-14 September 1985, vol.12,no.45, pp.23-6.

17. Dilip Bobb, Anita Pratap, S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : Tackling the Tiger", *India Today*, 30 June 1987, p.35.

18. Urmila Phadnis, *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia* (New Delhi: Sage, forthcoming), pp.223-4.Phadnis divides the period of India's mediation (1983-1987) into three phases. During Phase one, India persuaded the TULF to participate in the APC, Phase Two began with the breakdown of the APC and witnessed the militants negotiating with the Sri Lankan regime. In Phase three, Indian efforts led to a cessation of violence and the signing of the Accord.

Sri Lanka in August 1983.

G. Parthasarathy was appointed the Prime Minister's Special Emissary.[19] His shuttle diplomacy produced a package providing for devolution of power at the provincial level. This package referred to as Annexure C. became the basis of discussion in the All Party Conference (APC).[20] The talks, however, broke down as irreconcilable positions were taken by the Sinhalese Buddhist groups which wanted "District Councils and no more" and the TULF and Tamil Parties which wanted "Regional Councils and no less." The Annexure C was the high point of India's mediatory efforts.[21]

At Thimpu,[22] the Indian government was successful in getting the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils

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19. By appointing a Tamil as her emissary, the Indian Prime Minister scored "another bonus point with the Tamil Nadu electorate." Sinha Ranatunga, *Politics of Terrorism: The Sri Lankan Experience* (Canberra: International Fellowship for Social and Economic Development, 1988), p.125.

20. Phadnis, n.18, p.224.

21. Susan Ram, "India's Sri Lanka Peace Bid Dying", *The Deccan Herald*, 11 February 1986.

22. The Thimpu talks ended with the militants walking out in protest against the Sri Lankan government's violation of the ceasfire agreement and the "inadequate, unacceptable and three decades old" government proposals. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 18 August 1985.

back to the negotiating process and in bringing the Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan government, face to face, for the first time.[23] India's changing attitude to the militants, was evident at Thimpu. The militants complained about the "undue pressure" that they were subjected to by the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB),[24] the "bullying tactics" adopted by the Indian Foreign Secretary Bhandari,[25] and the unsympathetic attitude of the Indian government. They felt that India was looking for an "instant solution" to the crisis and had not even expressed concern over the killings at Vavuniya and Trincomalee.[26]

India continued to mediate through 1986, but by the end of that year, the sidelining of India was evident. A four member delegation of the Sri Lankan government met the LTTE at Jaffna, in December 1986. For the Jayawardena regime it eliminated the problem of negotiating with a multiplicity of groups[27] and the

23. S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : Silver Lining", *India Today*, 15 February 1986, p.99.

24. Anita Pratap, "Talking Over Genocide", *Sunday*, vol.12, no.44, 1-7 September 1985, p.33.

25. *Newstime* (Hyderabad), 25 August 1985.

26. Pratap, n.24.

27. S.H. Venkatramani, "Sri Lanka : The Sidelining of India", *India Today*, 28 February 1987, p.89.

need for India's good offices.[28] India's hold on the militants too fell, when in the aftermath of "Operation Tiger" most of the insurgents returned to Jaffna,[29] No more were the LTTE leaders available for "consultations" or arm twisting."[30] India's significance as a mediator fell even further, in early 1987, when Rajiv Gandhi in a letter threatened to withdraw India's good offices unless the military offensive was halted. Jayawardena flatly rejected India's demands.[31]

From an official role of mediator the Government of India became an "active participant" in the crisis in June 1987.[32] "Motivated by humanitarian considerations", India announced on 1 June 1987, that it was sending a flotilla of unarmed boats with relief supplies for the beleaguered people of Jaffna. The

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28.   Ranatunga, n.19, p.362.

29.   Following incidents of violence involving Tamil militants in Madras and in the light of the forthcoming SAARC summit at Bangalore, "Operation Tiger" was launched in order to disarm the insurgents. Large quantities of arms and communication equipment was seized. Recognising that India's attitude had toughened, Prabhakaran returned to Jaffna with a large part of his cadre.

30.   Venkatramani, n.27.

31.   Ranatunga, n.19, p.362-3.

32.   Bobb, Pratap, Venktramani,n.17, p.24.

"mercy convoy".[33] which was dispatched on 3 July, was however sent back by the Sri Lankan Navy.[34] The next day , "Operation Poomalai" (Garland) was launched. For twenty minutes, five AN-32 transport carriers escorted by four Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft, dropped 25 tonnes of food and medicines over the peninsula.[35] It was a signal to Colombo that if it continued its military offensive, India would not watch idly.

The airdrop had its intended effect; Colombo halted its military offensive and resumed negotiations. Within two months an agreement was reached and the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord[36] was signed by the Governments of India and Sri Lanka. In the Accord, India eschewed its militant supportive role-it would "take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka".[37] Further the Indian Navy and Coast Guard would "cooperate with the Sri Lankan

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33. Austin and Gupta, n.4, p.12.

34. For details of the relief mission by sea, see. S.V. Balu, "The Return of the Convoy", *Frontline*, vol.4, no.12, 13-26 June 1987, pp.13-15.

35. For details of the air drop of relief, see Manoj Joshi,"Mission Eagle Accomplished", *Frontline* vol.4, no.12, 13-26 June 1987,p 10,pp. 12-13.

36. For the text of the Accord, see *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 30 July 1987.

37. Ibid., Section 2.16(a)

Navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka".[38] It provided for a "cessation of hostilities ... within 48 hours" of the agreement and for the surrender of arms by the militants.[39] To assist in the implementation of the proposals, the Indian Government would give the Government of Sri Lanka "such military assistance as and when required"[40] and "provide training facilities and military supplies for Sri Lankan security forces".[41] The Accord thus gave India a political and military role, as an active participant in the crisis.

The Arms Suppliers to the Government of Sri Lanka

Confronted with India's alleged assistance to the insurgents, its own ill-equipped army[42] and the decision to find a military solution to the crisis, the Sri Lankan regime sought assistance from its allies in counter-insurgency and . intelligence gathering operations and purchased arms on a large scale.

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38.   Ibid., Section 2.16(b).

39.   Ibid., Section 2.9.

40.   Ibid., Section 2.16(c).

41.   Ibid., Annexure to the Agreement.

42.   See Table of Military Expenditure Patterns, 1965-86 in Ramu Manivannan, *Shadows of a Long War: Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: P. Kumar and R. Manivannan, 1985), p.25.

The   Covert   Suppliers: The   United   States   (US)   and
Britain

Soon   after   the   1983   riots,   the   Sri   Lankan
government   appealed to   the US,   Britain,   Pakistan   and
Bangladesh   for   military   assistance.[43]   While   the
response   from Pakistan and Bangladesh was positive, the
US   and Britain   advised it to seek a political solution
to the crisis.[44]

The   US policy   to the insurgency was determined by
two   factors;   its   strategic   interests   in   the   island and
its   greater stakes   in maintaining   good relations with
India.   The first determinant required assistance to the
regime   in its   counter-insurgency operations,   the second
required this assistance to be covert.

Consequently,   in   response   to   the   Government's
request   for military   assistance the   US provided   this
through   other   countries.   Despite   official   denials

43.   *The Times of India*,   3 August 1983.

44.   In   response to   Sri Lanka's   request for   military
     assistance,   the   US   Ambassador   advised   the
     government   to   ask   its   neighbours   for   help.
     Chaitanya   Kalbag,   "The Aftermath",   *India Today*, 15
     September 1983,p.70.

The Covert Suppliers: The United States (US) and Britain

Soon after the 1983 riots, the Sri Lankan government appealed to the US, Britain, Pakistan and Bangladesh for military assistance.[43] While the response from Pakistan and Bangladesh was positive, the US and Britain advised it to seek a political solution to the crisis.[44]

The US policy to the insurgency was determined by two factors; its strategic interests in the island and its greater stakes in maintaining good relations with India. The first determinant required assistance to the regime in its counter-insurgency operations, the second required this assistance to be covert.

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43. *The Times of India*, 3 August 1983.

44. In response to Sri Lanka's request for military assistance, the US Ambassador advised the government to ask its neighbours for help. Chaitanya Kalbag, "The Aftermath", *India Today*, 15 September 1983,p.70.

regarding its weapons supply,[45] it is believed that the arms supplied by China, Pakistan and Singapore were actually from the US. By 1984, atleast 100 gunboats and 50 helicopter gunships were supplied through Pakistan and China.[46] More important than the weapons supply, was the major role it played in drafting the Israel-Sri Lanka agreement of 1984, providing for Israeli training of Sri Lankan armed forces.[47] Since Israel did not have an embassy in Colombo, the US allowed the Israeli Interests Section to operate as part of the US Embassy.

However, economic assistance to the island was overt. While US aid went towards Sri Lanka's developmental needs, Sri Lanka's own resources went to finance its military requirements.

Throughout, the US maintained that it was in favour of a negotiated settlement. In keeping with its policy not to antagonize India, the US did not condemn the air drop of relief supplies and welcomed the

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45. The American Consul in Madras, J. Lumstead said that the US was not supplying military equipment. The Hindu, 10, 14 October 1984. Cited in Rita Manchanda, "Sri Lankan Crisis: Conflict and Intervention", *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi) vol.10, no.5, August 1986,p.579.

46. Foreign Report by Economist, 11 October 1984. Cited in Ibid.

47. Mayan Vije, *Militarization in Sri Lanka* (London : Tamil Information Centre, 1986),p.35.

signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

Britain's involvement in the crisis was similar to that of the U.S. - supply of arms through private channels. The Defense agreement of 1948, between Britain and Sri Lanka provided for "affording to each other such military assistance for security of their territories" and for "training and development of Ceylonese armed forces"[48] In 1984, Jayawardane reminded the British government that the Defense Pact was still effective[49] and appealed to Britain to aid Sri Lanka, in case it was attacked.[50]

Soon after, it was reported that former British Commandos of the Special Air Services (SAS) were training forces in Sri Lanka. The personnel were provided by the Channel Island Company of Keeny Meeny Services (KMS) to recruit and train a 900 strong commando unit called the Special Task Force (STF)[51] When India protested, Britain claimed that it had no

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48. Except for the training of a few personnel of the Sri Lankan armed forces, the Agreement had fallen into disuse,with the transfer of bases back to Sri Lanka, in 1957. Ibid., p.32.

49. *The Times of India*, 9 April 1984.

50, Manchanda. n. 45, p.580.

51. See Vije, n.47, Annexure 4, pp.63-4, for an account of the atrocities of the STF.

control over the KMS.[52] This was unlikely since the KMS does not operate abroad without the tacit approval of the British government.[53]

In the May 1986 offensive in the North and East, two British pilots were seen manning the helicopter gunships. The British High Commission said that the British Government had "nothing to do with these people".[54]

Regarding arms supply, the British Government maintained that all British made weapons which were used in Sri Lanka had been procured on a commercial basis,[55] or in the private market.[56] This denial is untenable as all export of arms (even by private companies) is subject to Government restrictions and must be licensed by the Department of Trade and Ministry of Finance.[57] Thus, the supply of arms and personnel for training of the Sri Lankan forces were made with the tacit approval of the British Government.

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52. *The Times of India*, 11 August 1984.

53. Dilip Bobb, "Indo-Sri Lanka Relations : The Colombo Chill", *India Today* 31 March 1986, p.95.

54. *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 12 May, 1986.

55. Manchanda, n.45, p. 581..

56. Vije, n.47, p.32.

57. Ibid., p.33.

But like the US, Britain's official line was that it
stood for a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

**The Major Suppliers : Israel, Pakistan, China and
Others**

Israel's involvement in the insurgency was the
most "controversial",[58] as it continued despite strong
opposition from India and local Muslims.[59] While Israel
operated as an Interest Section from the US Embassy
from May 1984 onwards,[60] contact between the two
countries was made a year earlier.[61] Till August 1984,
the regime denied any Israeli involvement, but later

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58. Manchanda, n.45, p.582.

59. The Muslim population in Sri Lanka protested
     against the resumption of relations with Israel.
     But the government had an overbearing attitude on
     the subject. When some Muslim M.Ps of the UNP
     objected, they were told by Jayawardena that they
     could leave the party if they did not support the
     decision. See Vije, n.47,p.35.

60. Four months before the official confirmation, Uma
     Maheswaran of PLOT revealed the Israeli
     involvement in training the Sri Lankan Army. The
     Indian Express (New Delhi) 30 January 1984. Cited
     in P.R. Kumaraswamy, "The Israeli Connections of
     Sri Lanka', *Strategic Analysis,* vol.11, no.11,
     February 1987, p.1342.

61. The Island, 2,3 September 1984. Cited in Vije,
     n.47, p.36.

conceded that experts from Shin Bet[62] were in Sri Lanka. However the presence of Mossad[63] was vehemently denied.[64]

There were conflicting reports on the number of Israeli officials present on the island but it is unlikely that the contingent was very large as it played a primarily advisory role.[65]

Israeli activities in Sri Lanka included among others, training of the Sri Lankan forces, guiding and commanding certain operations,[66] intelligence gathering and arms supply.[67] There was a marked change in the nature of military operations after the arrival of the

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62. The Shin Bet is a branch of the Israeli intelligence which is responsible for counter intelligence and internal security. See Kumar swamy, n.60, p.1343.

63. The Mossad is another branch of the Israeli intelligence, which is responsible for collection of foreign intelligence and conducts overt intelligence operations outside Israel. It has a reputation of being a ruthless organisation. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., p.1344.

66. S.D. Muni, "Sri Lanka : The August Outrage", *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 8 no.6, September 1984, p.501.

67. Kumaraswamy, n.60,p.1346.Among the military equipment supplied were Westwind Seascan reconnaissance air craft, Daeur-class patrol craft equipped with 22 mm guns, anti-personnel mines and an electronic survey system. *Indian Express*, 29 August 1984.

Israelis. Methods used were strikingly similar to those used in the West Bank. The promulgation of Emergency measures, creation of Surveillance Zones, Security Zones, Prohibited Zones, No-Go Zones etc.were similar to those in operation in the West Bank.[68] The President of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) Sivasithamparam said that the hand of Mossad was clearly visible in the search operation conducted by the Sri Lankan army, the demolition of houses, indiscriminate arrests, raiding of refugee camps and establishment of Sinhalese settlements.[69]

The exchange of letters related to the Accord referred to the "employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel" in Sri Lanka.[70] According to this provision the presence of Israeli personnel on the island was to be terminated.

Pakistan's response to Jayawardena's appeal for military assistance was positive and immediate.[71] It supplied a large amount of heavy and medium artillery

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68. Vije, n.47, p.37-8.

69. *The Hindu* (Madras) 30 October 1985.

70. n. 42.

72. John Kaniyalil, "The Pak-Lanka Connection", *Strategic Analysis*, vol.9, no.11, February 1986, pp.1069-75.

including pounder field guns, 30 mm medium guns, rocket propelled grenades and small arms like rifles, light machine guns and mortars. More significant than the arms supply was the training in counter insurgency and artillery given to officers, Junior Commissioned officers, Airforce and Naval pilots in Pakistan.[72] At any one time, it was estimated that upto 2000 Sri Lankan troops were being trained in Pakistan.[73] Pakistani pilots were also allegedly flying helicopter gunships over Tamil areas.[74]

According to an estimate, about 50 per cent of Sri Lanka's arms and ammunition came from China.[75] China's supply of arms to Sri Lanka was on a commercial basis but on concessional terms. From 1979-1983, Sri Lanka purchased $ 5 million worth of defence equipment from China.[76] According to Jane's Defense Weekly, an agreement for 5 Shanghai style patrol craft was concluded by end 1984.[77] It was reported that Sri Lanka

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72. Bobb, n.53.

73. Humphrey Hawksley, "Toy Soldiers Turn Military Monsters", *The Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), 23 August 1986.

74. *The Sun* (Colombo) 14 January 1986.

75. *Daily Mirror* (London), 6 July 1984.

76. K.Vikram Sinha Rao, "Militarization of Sri Lanka: A Tabular Study", *Strategic Analysis,* vol.11, no.12, March 1987,p.1457.

77. *The National Herald* (New Delhi), 30 October 1984.

also wanted training from the Chinese Air Force.[78]

China's arms supply relations with Sri Lanka was prompted more by a desire to expand its own weapons exports than by any political or military commitment.[79] The need to contain Indian influence did prompt comments that "the big should not bully the small...".[80] but otherwise, China, from 1986 onwards, seemed unwilling to jettison the improvement in Sino-Indian relations, by any major military commitment to Sri Lanka. Thus, during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 1986, the Chinese President declined Sri Lanka's request for further military assistance on the plea that such military assistance would undermine attempts to find a political solution to the problem.[81]

The other arms suppliers were South Africa, Italy, Jordon and Singapore, South African assistance was through supply of arms. and vehicles for military operations.[82] There were no reports of South African

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78. *Daily Mirror*, 6 July 1984.

79. Manchanda, n.45, p.582.

80. Zhao Ziyang quoted in Ibid.

81. IDSA, *News Review on South Asia, Indian Ocean*, vol. 19, no.5, May 1986, pp.579-80, Cited in Phadnis, n.18, p.222.

82. Vije, n.47, p.44.

personnel on the island.[83] From Italy, Sri Lanka received 6 Sia-Marchetti aircraft for strafing, 6 Cessna 337s for surveillance, patrol boats and landmines and from Singapore 21 Bell helicopters.[84]

The Liberation Organisations: Suppliers of Arms and Training

Not much is known about the source of arms of the insurgents. However, it is believed that the Soviet-backed liberation organisations, like the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Zimbabwean radicals have supplied them with Kalashnikovs,[85] While the NATO issue G-3 rifles were bought from mercenary arms dealers in Europe.[86] India, it is alleged, provided TELO with a large amount of arms, probably the Indian made SLRs.[87] Arms purchases are said to be financed by funds raised by expatriates and from the profitable

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83. Arun Chacko, "Foreign Hand in Reign of Terror", *Newstime*, 11 August 1986.

84. Bobb, n.53, p.95.

85. Gupta, n.43.

86. Ibid., p.90.

87. Ranatunga, n.19, p.248.

narcotics trade.[88]

The five major groups had at one time or the other received training from the major liberation organisations and had links with them. The first group to receive training in foreign camps was the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS).[89] Its leader E. Ratnasabapathy, a personal friend of the PLO representative in Britain, sent several members, in the late 1970s for training to Lebanon.[90] While EROS is close to the PLO, the Eelem Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) is close to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).[91] The central fighting cores of the LTTE and PLOT were trained by the PLO. Uma Maheswaran was among the first batch to be trained at Lebanon. After breaking away from the LTTE, he established links with the PFLP. While the PLOT continued to give importance to Palestinian guerrilla training, the LTTE felt that differing terrain and

88. For details of the Tamil involvement in the narcotics trade see John A. Callcott, "European Network Funding a Revolution", *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 March 1986; Anita Pratap "Sri Lankan Crisis : Exit Ideology, Enter Adventurism", *Sunday* vol.13, no. 20,23-29 March 1986, p.49.

89. T.S. Subramaniam, "EROS - The Dark Horse", *Frontline*, vol.3, no.13, 28 June - 11 July 1986, p.18.

90. Ranatunga, n.19, p.252.

91. David, n.7, p.41.

conditions made foreign training less suitable and therefore developed its own training infrastructure. However it continued to retain links with the African National Congress (ANC) and other groups.[92] The Tamil groups are believed to have links with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) but deny it.[93]

The Tamil Expatriates : Propaganda and Finance

The Sri Lankan Tamil expatriates were the most vociferous supporters of the Eelam struggle.[94] Initially they were an inchoate group but soon organised themselves and even co-ordinated the activities of Tamil organisations in different countries.

The expatriates in the U.S and Europe raised funds to finance the arms purchases of the militants. But their most significant contribution was propaganda - if not for them the struggle would never have received the wide media attention it did.[95] Through the publishing

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92. Gupta, n.3, p.80.

93. Ibid.

94. In fact two of the insurgent groups, EROS and EPRLF had their origins in the Tamil expatriate community in London.

95. K. Sivathamby, "Evolution of Tamil Question", *Lanka Guardian*, vol.6, no.21, 1 March 1984, p.12.

of slick literature, they drew attention to the grievances of the Tamils, the atrocities committed by the regime, and the struggle of the militants.

Expatriate activity was particularly vigorous in the UK, where several Eelam Organisations were established. The activities of about five of these organisations was co-ordinated by the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee. A Tamil Information Centre was established to manage the propaganda.

Successful lobbying in the Legislature of Massachussettes, U.S, led to the governor declaring 22 May as Eelam Day.[96] Although the Massachussettes Resolution was of a non-binding nature and by itself unable to influence the U.S. government, it is important that it was passed. Further, its contents are significant. It urged the state to withdraw public funds from businesses owned by organisations in Sri Lanka.[97]

The resolution highlighted the fact that expatriate propaganda was aimed not only at advertising the Tamils' grievances but also at destroying the Sri Lankan economy. In July 1983, a hunger strike was

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96. Ranatunga, n.19, p.279.

97. Ibid., p.280.

launched in Bonn. The Tamils called upon the Germans to boycott Sri Lankan tea, to halt economic aid to Sri Lanka and to stop visiting the island as tourists.[98] Similar calls were made in other countries, as well.

Thus the efforts of the expatriates went a long way in creating a favourable impression of the separatist struggle of the Tamils. In addition their propaganda was able to increase international pressure on the regime to seek a political solution.

Conclusion

The establishment of external links served to internationalise a conflict that was essentially one between a regime and a section of its citizens. Backing both the adversaries were several countries and foreign based groups

Since both sides were receiving material and moral support from their allies, it encouraged a hardening of attitudes on both sides. Both were unwilling to compromise. While the Tamil groups remained intransigent on the establishment of Eelam, the regime and the Sinhalese - Buddhist groups were not willing to concede anything beyond District Councils.

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98. Ibid., pp.280-1.

In addition, the acquiring of arms encouraged the adversaries to achieve their goals through a military struggle. On the part of the regime, its spiralling military expenditure crippled the economy. This increased expenditure on the armed forces, together with the inability of the politicians to find a solution to the crisis, increased the threat posed by the politicised military to the regime and political system. Thus the mass inflow of arms encouraged the militarisation of the society.

As a small power with limited resources to deal with the crisis the regime turned to friendly governments abroad to assist it in dealing with the 'terrorism' in the Tamil areas.

The countries from which the regime sought military assistance were the US and UK, with which it had always enjoyed close ties, Pakistan and China, with whom it shared an anti-India feeling, and the "pariah states" - Israel and South Africa. While Pakistan, Israel and South Africa were consistent in their support, China, after 1986, seemed slightly reluctant to continue its assistance. The help from the US and UK fell far short of what the regime expected although they did extend some help through indirect channels.

Failure of thee allies to provide the regime sufficient
military assistance and their advice to the regime to
"go to India", forced the regime back to the
negotiating table and to the signing of the Accord.

As for the Tamils, confronted by increasing state
suppression, they turned to the Tamil expatriates, the
liberation organisations and India. Of all, India´s
role appeared ambivalent due to its two pronged
strategy of mediation and support to the militants.
Upto 1984, India´s backing of the Tamils was perceived
to be strong. But from 1985 onwards, it became clear
that India´s involvement was to further its own
regional strategic interests and Eelam was not in its
interests. Officially, however, India claimed to be a
mediator between the Sri Lankan regime and the Tamils.

India´s mediatory efforts enabled the regime and
the insurgents to meet at the negotiating table. In
addition, it sought to secure for the Tamils as much
regional autonomy as is enjoyed by the Indian states.
Through the accord it was able to secure a reasonable
amount of devolution of power to the Tamils.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing study, an attempt was made to understand the various aspects of an insurgency : why discontent emerges in a group, how a movement arises and why it turns insurgent, how the leaders mobilise support, the significance of external involvement in a crisis, etc.

In the course of the study it was pointed out that the term "insurgency" is often used wrongly, as a synonym for terms like insurrection and terrorism. These terms, though related do not imply the same.

An insurgency implies that there is intense discontent among a section of the population who have come to believe that only an armed uprising against the state can ameliorate the situation, for under the extant regime and/or political system there can and will be no redressal of their grievances.

Since the socio-political and economic situations which give rise to political discontent vary so tremendously from area to area and over time it is difficult to attribute the emergence of an insurgency

to one single cause applicable to all situations. However, a few generalisations may be made.

It is evident that the nature of state plays a vital role in the fostering of insurgencies. With increased educational opportunities, political awareness etc., the aspirations of an ethnic group or class may increase. However, due to the very nature of the political structure and system, and slow rate of economic development, these aspirations may not be met. Since the upward mobility of the people is blocked, discontentment emerges and spreads. They turn hostile to the regime and system and seek to overthrow it.

When the participation of an ethnic group in the political and economic power structure is blocked in this manner, the situation turns even more explosive for in addition to rejecting the system, at times they seek to opt out of it and establish a separate, sovereign state.

Initially, the demands of such discontented groups may be moderate as are the techniques. But if the regime neglects the grievances, refuses to concede the group a share in the power structure, continues with its policy of discrimination and uses violent measures to repress a moderate movement, gradually the more

radical among the discontented may realise the inefficacy of working within the political-legal framework of the extant constitution. In addition they may realise the impotence of moderate means of struggle.

Consequently, they may escalate their demands to an overthrow of the regime-to a total upheaval of the system and perhaps to secession. Alongside, they may resort to violence and protracted irregular warfare, to alter the status quo. In due course, an insurgency emerges.

Insurgent movements seldom remain united. While initially the rift is between the moderates and insurgents, soon bitter rivalry among the insurgents surface. Splits in the groups result in their proliferation. Notwithstanding the divided nature of the groups, their strength grows as support for their cause increases.

Support for the insurgents, often increases because of state repression. In addition, the insurgents use political and military techniques to appeal to their people and weaken the state infrastructure. The military techniques of guerrilla warfare and terrorism while serving to defeat the

state in combat and destroy its economic infrastructure also provoke the state to come down heavily on the civilians, who in turn, become hostile to the regime and start supporting the insurgents. The political techniques of propaganda, political organisation, ideological appeals and political work among the masses brings the civilians closer to the insurgents, broadens the struggle and reduces the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the people.

Ideological appeals are used to unify the support base. In separatist insurgencies, while both, Socialist and Nationalist ideologies exist, Nationalist appeals are mare potent in winning support among the ethnic community, for it is on the basis of the people's right to self-determination as a nation that the struggle is launched.

In addition to domestic support, the insurgents also strive for arms, bases and moral support from abroad. This external support is crucial especially in the initial and intermediate stages of the insurgency, when the insurgent groups are consolidating themselves. The dependence of the regime on external support depends on its capacity to deal with the insurgency. The greater the protracted intensity of the insurgency and the more limited the capacity of

the state, the greater is the regimes dependence on external support for its counter-insurgency operations. In this context, the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka is both instructive and revealing.

While some writers have claimed that the relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils have historically been antagonistic due to their deep-rooted, conflicting nationalisms, it is evident that relations did in fact, turn conflictual only in the post-independence period. Even under the British, relations were only competitive. The scramble for political power began in the 1920s, but since the political and economic power cake was still large enough, an open rupture in relations did not occur.

However, the post-independence scenario was different. Expansion of literacy, electoral participation and political awareness led to a sharp increase in the aspirations of the people. But employment and economic development did not keep pace with the increase in aspirations and in the context of a growing population led to an explosive situation. Further, while the political system allowed the greater involvement of the lower-middle class youth in electoral politics, the political structure was such that this politically aware section of society was not

included in the power elite. This situation led to severe competition for the scarce political and economic resources.

The competition for a share in such limited resources assumed a communal significance in the Sinhalese revivalist atmosphere of the mid-1950s. The Sinhalese lower-middle class believed that affirmative action by the state on behalf of the Sinhalese majority would improve their prospects.

Realising the electoral potential of harnessing the discontent of this aggrieved class, Bandarnaike projected himself as a champion of Sinhalese interests and rode to power, in the elections of 1956, on the blatantly majoritarian slogan of "Sinhala Only". From then onwards, electoral survival in Sinhalese areas, required political parties to endorse a pro-Sinhalese Buddhist line. Consequently, whether in government or in opposition, successive regimes protected Sinhalese interests even at the expense of those of the Tamils.

In the process, the political and economic marginalisation of the Tamils increased. The influence of Tamil political parties was limited to Tamil areas and in the absence of regional autonomy, the Tamils were deprived of sufficient political power to govern

themselves. Further discriminatory polices relating to education, employment, economic development, etc., intensified the discontent and feeling of deprivation among the Tamils *vis-a-vis* not only their Sinhalese counterparts but also their own status, earlier.

Initially this discontent found expression in a moderate movement for regional autonomy. Tamil Parties, especially the Federal Party (FP), sought concessions from regimes. Their tactics were limited to non-violent agitations, civil disobedience, and pacts with regimes. But the moderate tactics were unable to secure even their minimum demands as the regimes abrogated pacts and did very littleto redress Tamil grievances. If at all, the situation worsened.

Matters turned explosive in the early 1970s, when events like the passing of the unitary constitution and policies like "standardisation" of education, made the Tamils realise the inefficacy of seeking redressal within the existing system. A section turned to violent means to alter the status quo.

This emergence of a militant faction marked the beginning of the insurgency. While initially, the moderates enjoyed greater support than the insurgents, by the end of that decade the insurgents dominated the

struggle. There was an element of co-operation between the moderates and insurgents, in the beginning, as both worked for the establishment of Eelam. But the irreconcilable differences on tactics led to a complete break.

The insurgents, themselves were, however, not united and differed on details of tactics, activities and goals, leading to splits in the groups and their proliferation. The bitter fratricidal fighting weakened their struggle.

Yet, despite this division in the insurgent ranks, the insurgents were strengthened as their domestic and external support grew. To increase their support base, they resorted to political and military techniques. While groups like the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and People's Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOT) emphasised political mobilisation of the masses to forward the struggle, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) concentrated on military techniques. Thus, the EPRLF with its democratically structured organisation, front organisations, propaganda, political indoctrination and socio-political work among the masses, mobilised political support among the people. Its Socialist ideology appealed to both, Sinhalese and Tamils and

enabled it to build a support base over a wider area. The LTTE, in contrast, developed as a predominantly military organisation. It used terrorism and guerrilla warfare to weaken the state infrastructure and discredit the regime's capacity to rule effectively in the eyes of the people. By resorting to hit-and-run tactics it exposed the Tamil civilians to army repression. This in turn, increased their support to the "boys". Its political techniques included propaganda, ideological appeals and establishment of "parallel hierarchies" in "liberated" areas. While its propaganda literature made frequent references to a Socialist Eelam, its appeal, nevertheless, was largely to the Nationalist sentiment of the Tamils. Its Nationalist orientation and calls for a Tamil Eelam limited its support to Tamil areas, where it however, enjoyed more support than the other groups.

In addition, the groups sought material and moral support from external sources as well. While expatriates helped with finance and publicity, other insurgent groups gave training and arms, while India provided arms, training as well as sanctuaries. As for the regime, having opted for a military solution and not having enough resources to carry it out, it turned to its allies for arms and training. The net effect of these external links was the internationalisation of

the conflict and the militarization of society. It led to a hardening of attitudes on both sides that the crisis would be resolved not at the negotiating table but in the battle field.

The separatist insurgency has had far reaching implications for the Sri Lankan political system. For one, the assertion of militant Tamil nationalism led to the re-emergence of the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), in an ultra rightist, Sinhalese-chauvinistic form. Thus the regime was confronted by two insurgent threats-from the anti-systemic JVP and the extra-systemic Tamil insurgents. In addition, the militarisation of the society led to a gradual destruction of democratic processes and institutions and increased the strength of the military vis-a-vis the civilian-political forces.

While the insurgency itself has shaken the country, whether or not Eelam will be established and remain viable after its establishment, depends on external intervention on its behalf. This underscores the significance of external links, especially in the case of separatist insurgencies.

As for the future of the insurgency, it seems unlikely that it will end. For one, the chances of all

the insurgent groups agreeing to lay down arms, is quite remote. Further, even if the regime were to conclude many of the Tamil demands, it is unlikely that the Sinhalese extremists will accept it. Considering this, the future scenario seems quite bleak, with little chances of a lasting solution in sight.

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