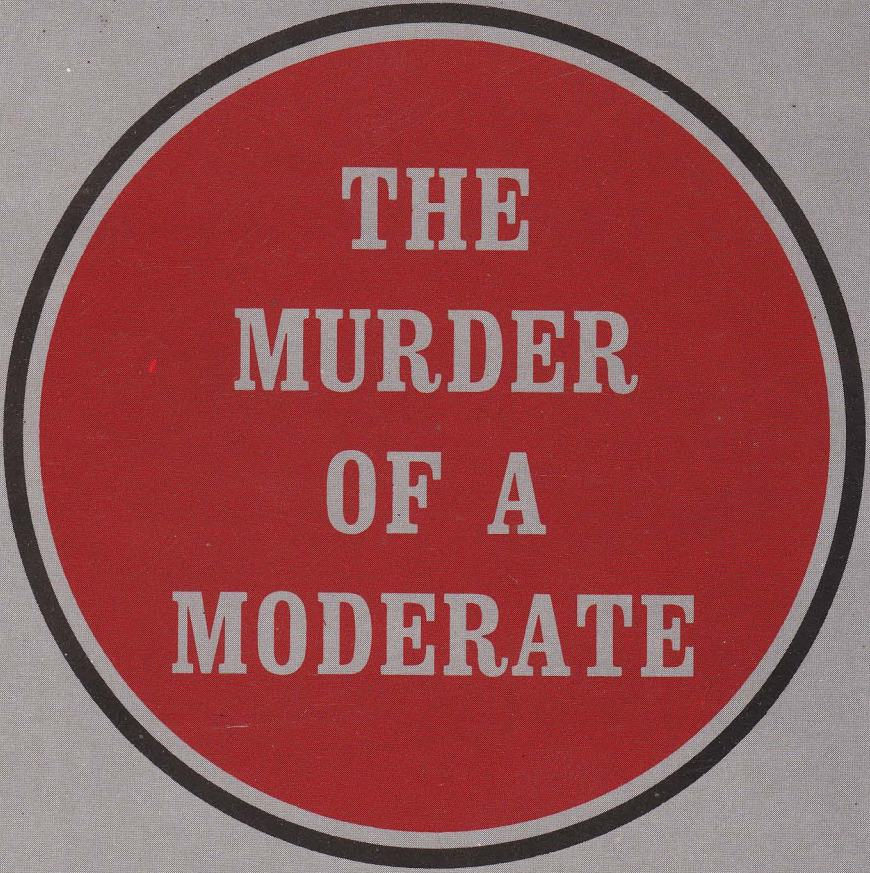




THE MURDER OF A MODERATE

Political Biography of
APPAPILLAI AMIRTHALINGAM

by

T. Sabaratnam

Why did they kill them?

TULF leader Murugesu Sivasithamparam, who miraculously survived the 13 July 1989 shooting spoke about the killing at the third commemoration meeting in Colombo.

He said: They came as our guests. They called as friends. They ate the biscuits; Mrs. Yogeswaran served them. They drank the tea she poured. They discussed Tamil unity. They got up to place their cups on the table. They put their hands into their pockets, and pulled out their revolvers and shot at us.

"It is because of the courage of the two guards and the policemen that the others who lived in that house are living today."

"Why did they kill Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran? Is it because they worked for the Tamils? Is it because they helped work out a solution to the Tamil problem? Is it because they wanted all Lankans to live in this country with dignity and honour?"

"Amirthalingam had worked hard to eliminate discrimination against the Tamils. He had also taken up the cause of the Tamils of Indian origin. He had defended the rights of the Muslims and the oppressed sections of the Sinhalese."

"Why did they kill him? They have not told the world why they killed him."

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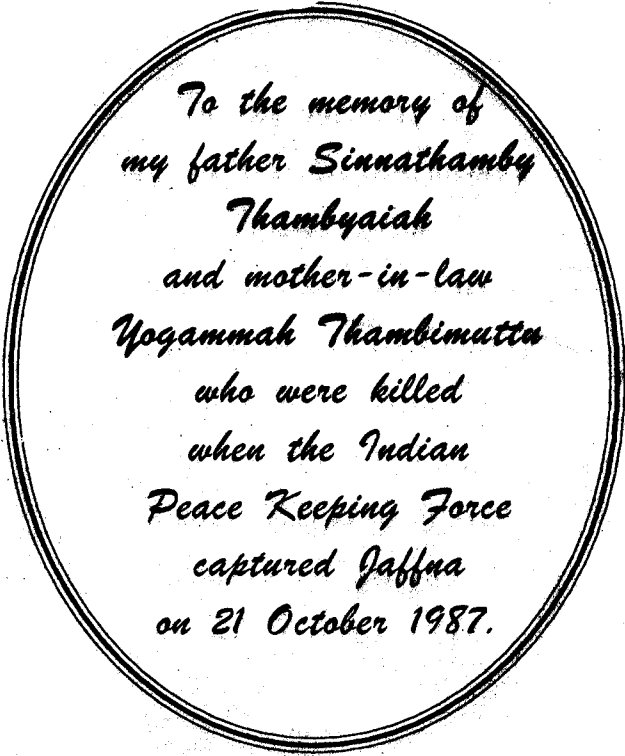
**THE MURDER
OF A
MODERATE**

Political Biography of
APPAPILLAI AMIRTHALINGAM

by

T. Sabaratnam

First Edition : August 1996
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*To the memory of
my father Sinnathamby
Thambyaiah
and mother-in-law
Yogammah Thambimutta
who were killed
when the Indian
Peace Keeping Force
captured Jaffna
on 21 October 1987.*

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Dehiwela
Sri Lanka



Amirthalingam with the Federal Party parliamentarians when he was released in 1961 after being detained for staging the Satyagraha.



Amirthalingam is being welcomed after he won the 1977 election. His wife Mangayarkarasi is with him.

PREFACE

Appapillai Amirthalingam, former leader of the moderate political party Tamil United Liberation Front, was murdered, first politically and then physically. The political slaying was by the Sinhala leadership and the physical by Tamil militants.

Both murders had a common effect - the elimination of Tamil moderates as a political factor. The Sinhala leadership executed the political killing by denying to grant the just demands of the Tamil moderates. The Tamil militants effected the physical elimination because, they felt, Tamil moderates were hindering the attainment of the goal of Eelam, a separate Tamil state.

The political slaying was effected through a series of surrenders and appeasements by the Sinhala leadership to Sinhala chauvinism and by a sustained campaign of justification of these surrenders by the portrayal of Tamil moderates as extremists. The main instances of surrenders were: refusal to give a reasonable place to the Tamil language when the Sinhala Only Act was enacted in 1956; the tearing of the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam Pact in 1958; dumping of the Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1965; abandoning of the SLFP-FP Agreement of 1969; the enactment of the constitutions of 1972 and 1978 which refused to accommodate Tamil demands; failure to make the District Councils of 1982 to work; refusal to

honour Annexure-C worked out in December 1983 with India's good offices; abandoning of the All Party Conference in December 1984; and the failure to devolve the agreed powers to the Provincial Councils under the Indo-Lanka Accord on 1987.

These surrenders and campaigns of justification gradually eroded the constituency of the Tamil moderates and helped the growth of Tamil militancy. The moderation was gradually rendered marginal; irrelevant.

I watched, from the ringside, this tragic story unfold. I joined Lake House in March 1957 and, since then, covered the Tamil beat, first for the Tamil daily *Thinkaran* and then for the English *Daily News*. I kept in close touch with all the characters - Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim - who played central roles in this drama. I had frequent sessions with most of these leaders where we discussed developments. I preserved my notes of these meetings and clippings of the events I reported.

The story I relate in this book is a narration of events I am personally aware, most of which I reported and some told to me under a ban, which journalists call "off-the-record".

I must thank Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, a prominent TULF member, for prodding me to write this book, Mrs.B.Roy Choudhury for editing it and my wife Pathmavathy for all the encouragement and assistance.

I decided to tell this story through Amirthalingam's life because his story is the story of the TULF and the story of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. His is also the story of the stifling of Tamil moderates and the tale of concern Sri Lanka's two main political parties showed in wooing Sinhala chauvinism at the expense of Tamil interests and aspirations. This concern, this rivalry, this shortsightedness caused the great hardship Sri Lanka is passing through.

A sense of realisation seems to be dawning among the Sinhala leadership of the mistakes they made in using the Tamil problem for their politics. The new leadership, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, have displayed courage in approaching the Tamil problem in a more enlightened manner. But they too are under pressure. Whether they can withstand it is to be seen.

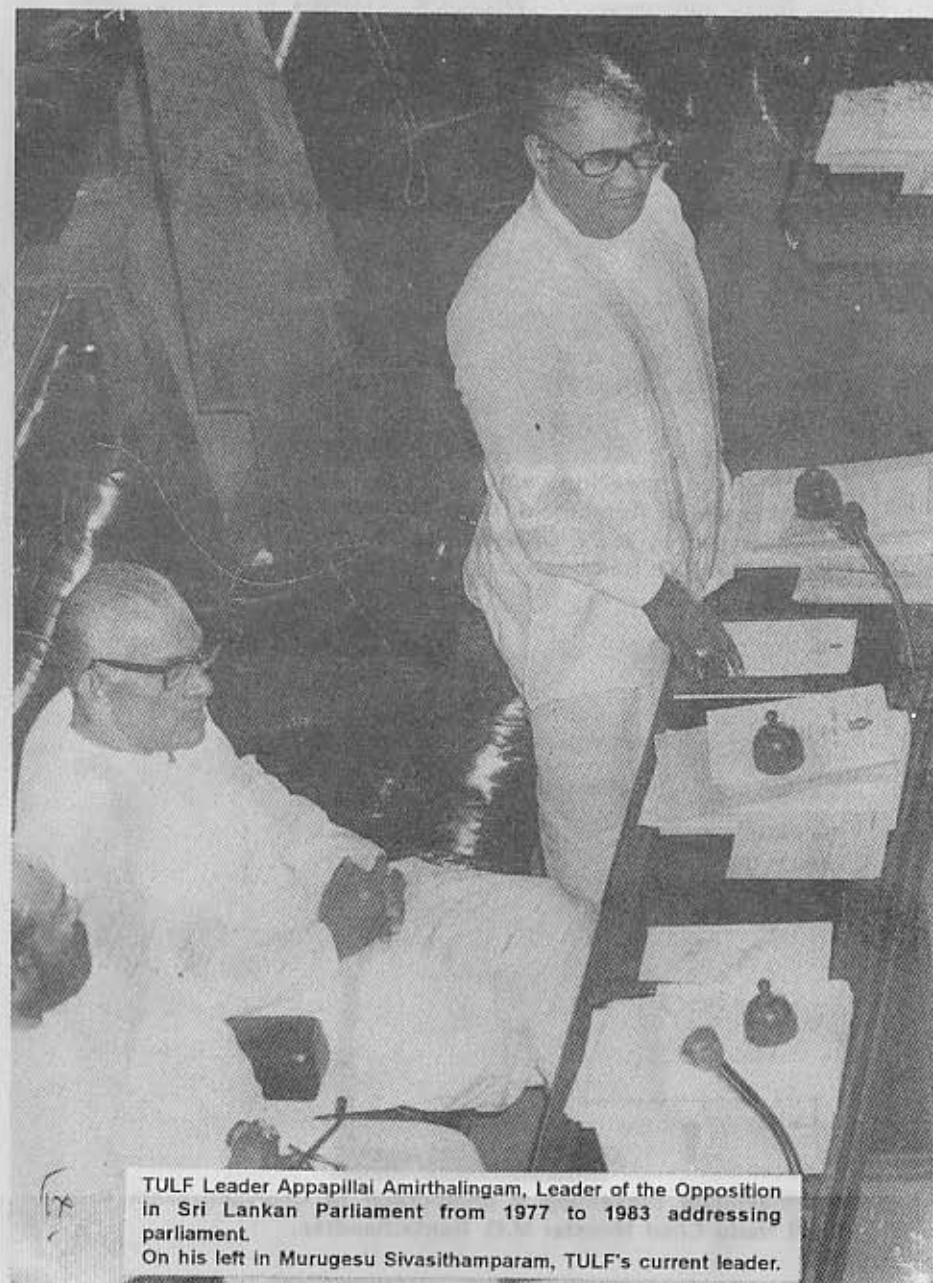
These statements may irritate my Sinhala friends. I plead with them to read this story before they condemn me. If this story helps the Sinhala people to be more accommodative, more realistic, more reasonable, this book would have achieved its objective: that of bringing peace to our motherland.

Dehiwala
1, May 1996

T. Sabaratnam

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TULF Leader Appapillai Amirthalingam, Leader of the Opposition in Sri Lankan Parliament from 1977 to 1983 addressing parliament.
On his left in Murugesu Sivasithamparam, TULF's current leader.



The historic meeting where 1957 July Bandaranaike Chelvanayakam Agreement was signed. The Federal Party delegation led by S.J.V. Chelvanayakam is on the left of Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who presided.



Amirthalingam presenting a photograph of Chelvanayakam to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.

A Short Summary

The Sinhala-Tamil conflict is essentially a dispute over the sharing of power. The dispute had its origin in the 1920s when the British colonial rulers introduced the elected representation system. The original quarrel was over the Colombo South seat which the Tamils claimed and the Sinhalese refused. This ended the trust the Tamils had in the Sinhalese, and the stalwarts who promoted Sinhala-Tamil cooperation returned to Jaffna, dejected, frustrated. The Pan-Sinhala Ministry of 1936 further fuelled Tamil fears.

This frustration led to the rise of the next phase, the "fifty-fifty", a call for an equal share between the majority Sinhalese and the minority communities, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers.

That, too, was rejected. Then arose the federal call, a scheme for an autonomous unit for the Tamils in a united Sri Lanka (then Ceylon). When the Federal Party was formed in 1948 by S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, who broke away from the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, which championed the "fifty-fifty" cause, but joined the D.S. Senanayake cabinet, the effort to weaken the Tamils through discriminatory measures had already begun. They were:

1. State-aided colonisation of Tamil areas by the Sinhalese.
2. De-citizenising of Tamils of recent Indian origin.

The first resulted in the grabbing of Tamil lands and the increased Sinhala representation in parliament by carving out Sinhala majority electorates in Tamil areas. The second reduced Tamil representation in parliament.

After the formation of the Federal Party, more discriminatory acts were added. These were:

1. The Sinhala Only Act.
2. Denial of employment to Tamils.
3. Restriction of higher educational opportunities.
4. Systematic chasing away of Tamils from Sinhala areas.
5. Violence.

The Federal Party and later the Tamil United Liberation Front resorted to peaceful campaigns to correct the situation.

1. In 1956 the Federal Party conducted a *satyagraha* campaign at Galle Face Green. They were assaulted and chased away.
2. In 1961 the Federal Party conducted a *satyagraha* campaign opposite district kachcheries. The leaders were arrested and curfew clamped.
3. In 1972, when the new constitution was proclaimed, the Federal Party organised a peaceful demonstration. The leaders who distributed pamphlets were arrested and the youth who organised the demonstration were taken into custody.

The Federal Party (later the Tamil United Liberation Front) carried on a series of negotiations with successive governments to win their lost rights.

1. In 1957 the Federal Party entered into an agreement with Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, but the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Agreement was torn away.
2. In 1965 the Federal Party entered into an agreement with Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake. The Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Agreement was not honoured.

3. In 1977 the TULF entered into an understanding with President Jayewardene when Jayewardene accepted and listed the main **grievances** of the Tamils in his election manifesto and undertook to find solutions for them. He offered to call an All Party Conference but failed to do so.
4. In 1982 the TULF accepted the District Development Council system which gave limited autonomy to the districts. The government frustrated that effort by refusing to give the finances and powers.
5. In 1983 December President Jayewardene, with the assistance of the Indian envoy G. Parthasarathi, worked out an arrangement which was called Annexure C. He later refused to acknowledge it.
6. In 1984, after a year-long effort to find a solution through the All Party Conference, Jayewardene dismissed the APC and put an end to the search for a solution.
7. In 1987 the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed. It had not been implemented in full.

In addition, violence was repeatedly let loose on the Tamils.

1. In 1956 *satyagrahis* at Galle Face Green were attacked. Tamils in the Ampara district were chased away.
2. In 1958 there were countrywide riots against the Tamils. Most of the Tamils who had shops in Sinhala areas were driven away.
3. In 1977, soon after the elections, the Tamils were attacked.
4. In 1981 Tamils in the hill country were attacked.

5. In 1983 Tamils were attacked, killed and their property pillaged and burnt.

This, in brief, is the story that led to the fall of the moderates and the rise of the militants. And Amirthalingam was one of the prominent victims of this tragedy.

Chapter 1

The Set-up

It was 10 a.m. on 13 July 1989 when the phone rang in the top floor of 342/2 Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo. Yogeswaran was quick to lift the receiver. He had been awaiting the call and was relieved when Aloysius confirmed that Visu, alias Rasiah Aravindarajah, one-time Vavuniya leader of the political wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), would be attending the 6 p.m. meeting with Tamil United Front (TULF) leaders Sivasithamparam and Amirthalingam, the president and secretary general. Peter Aloysius Leon was Visu's assistant.

Yogeswaran and the two LTTE men had had held four meetings since February to find ways to forge unity among the different Tamil militant groups.

Yogeswaran and his wife Sarojini shared the upper flat with Sivasithamparam. A 6-member security squad, drawn from the National Auxiliary Force and the Mahaweli Security Service occupied a room overlooking the balcony. Amirthalingam, his wife Mangayakarasi, and his colleague and politbureau member Somasundaram Senathirajah, also known as Mavai, occupied the ground floor.

At 4 p.m. Yogeswaran went down to inform Tambyrajah Kandasamy, head of security, about the visitors.

"Do not search for weapons," he told Kandasamy.

The latter protested, saying, "You cannot trust these fellows, Sir."

"They're our guests," Yogeswaran reminded him. "They'll feel insulted if we search them and would stop coming."

His visitors were late. It was 6.40 p.m. when a yellow cab halted outside the steel gates. Satiyamoorthy, the officer on guard duty, demanded identification.

"We are from the LTTE," was the reply and a national identity card handed over.

"They're from the LTTE," Satiyamoorthy announced after he had scrutinized the card.

Kandasamy peered down from the balcony and ordered, "Send them up."

Yogeswaran met Visu and Aloysius as they were coming up the steps. Sivakumar, alias Arivu, the third member of the group, remained at the foot of the stairs. Yogeswaran welcomed his visitors warmly, and placing his hand over Visu's shoulder, ushered them into his living room. He sent a note to Amirthalingam through Raju, his servant, informing him of the arrival of the LTTE men.

Amirthalingam was dressed to attend a dinner engagement at the Hotel Taj Samudra being hosted by Indian High Commissioner. When he and Sivasithamparam, who was there, rose to leave, Mangayakarasi restrained him, saying, "Ravi's call will come through any minute now. Wait for a few minutes." Ravi, a doctor, was their second son and lived in London.

"I'll be back soon," Amirthalingam replied. "In case his call comes before I return, call for me."

Visu and Aloysius stood up when Amirthalingam entered. He patted Visu on the back, smiled at Aloysius, and sat down in the vacant chair between them. Sivasithamparam joined them a little later.

Yogeswaran introduced the visitors. The LTTE men said they were pleased to meet the TULF leaders. Amirthalingam told them of the admiration and respect he

THE SET-UP

always had for heroism, dedication and discipline of the LTTE.

"But," he added, "I prefer they adhere to accepted democratic traditions."

"May be we are ... old-fashioned," chipped in Sivasithamparam, "but the world is old-fashioned and we have to carry the world with us."

Everyone laughed and seemed relaxed. Then the conversation turned to the problem of forging unity among Tamil groups. Amirthalingam explained that the lack of unity was hurting the Tamil cause, that internecine fighting was eroding world sympathy. Unity, he said, was essential to consolidate the gains the Tamils had won so far. Conflict among the Tamil groups was giving the government an opportunity to delay the devolution process. He assured Visu that the LTTE would be accorded a pre-eminent position in any united arrangement and told him to convey his sentiments to the LTTE leadership and persuade them to come to an arrangement with other Tamil groups.

Visu responded favourably. He promised to place Amirthalingam's views before the LTTE leaders. The three TULF men felt encouraged.

Yogeswaran's wife Sarojini, came with refreshments. She had met both visitors during their earlier visits. When asked what they would prefer to drink, the LTTE men and Amirthalingam wanted tea, and Sivasithamparam and Yogeswaran, both heart patients, declined. Yogeswaran went into the kitchen to help his wife and then rejoined the group.

Visu and Aloysius finished their drinks and got up to place their tumblers on the table. Then, in a coordinated fashion, they pulled out their revolvers, spun around and fired at the three TULF men. Amirthalingam was hit on the head, Yogeswaran on his chest and stomach, and Sivasithamparam in his right shoulder.

The sound of gun shots shook the building. Kandasamy ran into the room and found Visu and Aloysius backing out, firing continuously. He took six shots at them with his .38 calibre service revolver. Nissanka, another guard who had been keeping a watch on the LTTE men, fired from the balcony. Both security men followed the fleeing assailants down the stairs, shooting as they went.

Nissanka ran out of ammunition and informed Kandasamy, who raced back to his room, clutched a repeater shot gun and several rounds of ammunition and joined the other guards. Both assailants had, by then, been shot. One fell by the side of the door and the other by the staircase. Sivakumar, the third, was pinned down by Satiyamoorthy but managed to wriggle out. He was shot down as he fled towards the gate.

Kandasamy ran back to the living room. He found Amirthalingam fallen across the cane chair in which he had been seated. He was at the edge of the chair, as though he had made an attempt to get up, but had failed. Yogeswaran was on the floor, bleeding from his chest. Sivasithamparam was leaning against the wall, blood gushing from his shoulder.

Kandasamy shouted to Nissanka, "Jump over the wall into the next compound and run to the Borella police." He next told Sarojini to ring the police.

She had been pouring out tea when she heard the gun shots and had run into the living room to find her husband on the floor, bleeding profusely from his chest. She lifted his head and cried, "What happened?"

"He tried to say something," she later said, but words did not come out of his mouth."

She also saw Amirthalingam slumped across the chair and Sivasithamparam leaning against the wall. There was blood all around.

She phoned the police but was unable to reach the ambulance service number as the line was engaged.

Mangayakarasi and Mavai had also heard the shots and had rushed towards the front entrance. Mavai saw the gun battle between the assailants and the security men, turned and ran up by the rear staircase. He found three of his colleagues wounded and bleeding. He rang the police but, like Sarojini, failed to get through to the ambulance service.

Satiyamoorthy signalled a shell-shocked Mangayakarasi to get inside. She retreated and went up the rear stairs. She found Sivasithamparam leaning against the wall, bleeding, her husband in the chair, his head tilted backwards. She lifted his head to place a pillow and found blood dribbling from his mouth.

"It was then that I saw the three holes in his head oozing blood," she told the magistrate later.

She looked up at Sivasithamparam. His look told her everything. She held her husband's head till the police arrived.

The police arrived within ten minutes of the incident. Some ran up the stairs to the living room while others cordoned off the building. They also put up road blocks and cordoned off the entire Borella area. Vehicles were also checked.

Colombo Judicial Medical Officer Dr. M.S.L.Salgado performed the autopsy on Amirthalingam and declared that death had resulted due to injuries to the head and chest. Deputy Medical Officer Dr.L.B.L.de Alwis conducted the autopsy on Yogeswaran and declared that his death was the result of five bullet injuries to the heart and liver.

The police took two pistols and a revolver from the dead assailants. They also raided a hideout at Narehenpita in Colombo and took vital documents into custody. They told the

magistrate that as per the information they had been able to gather, the assassins had taken an early meal and had planned to leave Colombo for an unknown destination soon after the shooting.

Amirthalingam's killing emitted shock waves around Colombo and the country that night. The Indian High Commissioner Lekhan Lal Mehrotra was awaiting Amirthalingam's arrival at Hotel Taj Samudra where he was hosting a dinner in honour of B.G.Deshmukh, special envoy of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who had flown into Colombo for talks with President Premadasa about the withdrawal of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) stationed in Sri Lanka since August 1987.

Most of the invitees were seated when Finance Ministry Secretary B. Paskaralingam walked up to Mehrotra and whispered, "Amirthalingam has been shot."

Mehrotra was aghast. "When did it happen?"

"A few minutes ago."

"By whom?" asked Ranjan Wijeratne, Minister of State for Defence, who was seated next to Deshmukh.

"There's some confusion," Paskaralingam replied. "The police say the assassins have been shot. One of them resembles Yogi."

Wijeratne looked concerned and rose to phone Defence Secretary General Sepala Attygalle. He soon returned, visibly relieved, and announced, "No, it's not Yogi."

Wijeratne had reason to be concerned about Yogi who, along with LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham, was engaged in talks with the government. They had been put up at the Galadari Meridian Hotel. Any involvement of Yogi in the shooting of the TULF leaders would have adversely affected the talks to which the government attached great importance.

I received a phone call from the *Sunday Observer* editor Leslie Dehanayake around 8 p.m.

"Saba! Have you heard that Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran have been shot dead?"

The news was like a bolt from the blue. I was non-plussed and silent for a few moments. Then recovering, I asked, "When did it happen?"

"About half an hour ago," he replied, and added, "Siva, too, has been shot. His condition is serious and he has been rushed to the Accident Ward."

Dahanayake wanted me to follow the story. I dialled 697319. Someone lifted the receiver. When I mentioned my name, he sobbed.

The slaying produced an immediate reaction of revulsion and condemnation among Sri Lankan and Indian leaders. Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa was the first to react. He announced the murder of the two politicians at a religious ceremony at Ampara, and called upon the gathering to observe a 2-minute silence. He also wished Sivasithamparam a speedy recovery.

He called the killings reprehensible and brutal. Later, while inaugurating the Presidential Mobile Service, he described Amirthalingam as a dedicated servant of the people who had tried to function within the framework of democracy.

"I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to this great leader," he said. "Killing cannot solve problems, whether private or political. That is why we advocate non-violence, to show the futility of violence and to direct our efforts at achieving peace in the country."

Opposition leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike called a meeting of the representatives of the United Socialist Alliance (USA), a grouping of three leftist parties, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), the Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary

Liberation Front (EPRLF), and her own party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), at her office in the parliament building and got them to issue a joint statement of condemnation. She spoke highly of Amirthalingam. She said, "It's a pity that Amirthalingam had been killed at a time he had emerged a real national leader ... All these years he had been a fiery Tamil leader, concerned only about the rights of the Tamil people. Since February he had become a mellowed and mature Sri Lankan leader, with the interest of the nation as his prime concern. Since of late I had developed a very good working relationship with him."

The joint statement that she, Atauda Seneviratne of the USA, Dinesh Gunawardene of the MEP, and K. Yogasangari of the EPRLF, issued, read, "While unanimously condemning the cowardly and brutal attack by a group of assassins on Messrs Amirthalingam, Yogeswaran and Sivasithamparam on the night of July 13, the opposition views with profound shock and sorrow the untimely passing away of Messrs Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran following the murderous attack.

"We urge there be a full and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the attack and strongly deplore the attempt on the part of a section of the state-controlled media to adversely affect the conduct of a proper investigation by making premature statements of a purely presumptive nature.

"It is noted particularly in recent years that the TULF leader had publicly opposed attempts by certain Tamil groups to espouse violence as a means of political and social change. He had spoken often of the imperative need for various communities who live in our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation to resolve their internal problems peacefully through mutual dialogue and live together as a united people.

"At this time of national crisis the death of a leader of his stature is a loss to the country."

The USA, which subscribed to the joint opposition statement, also issued a separate one. It said, "The attack is

unmistakably an attack on the effort supported by the TULF towards achieving complete ethnic peace in Sri Lanka."

The three parties that constituted the USA also issued individual statements. The Communist Party statement said, "The assassination of these TULF leaders is no doubt a blow aimed against the forces which stand for the peaceful solution to the ethnic issue within a united Sri Lanka."

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party statement said, "(The assassinations) are more to be deplored because the TULF has been in the recent months engaged in a strong effort directed towards the achievement of ethnic peace in Sri Lanka."

The Sri Lanka Mahajana Party statement said, "Mr. Amirthalingam, who was once a Leader of the Opposition in parliament, is a senior politician of our country who fought both inside and outside parliament for democracy and human rights."

The two organisations representing the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka - the Ceylon Workers Congress and the Democratic Workers Congress - also condemned the killings. The CWC leader S. Thondaman, a cabinet minister since 1978, said in his statement, "Both of them had been gunned down mercilessly in cold blood by persons who had been received as guests for political discussions. Such assassinations and killings cannot solve the problems of the Tamils or the country."

DWC leader Abdul Aziz's statement said, "Whoever murdered Mr. Amirthalingam and Mr. Yogeswaran and injured Mr. Sivasithamparam of the TULF have committed a dastardly crime, not only against the Tamil community and their just cause, but have also dealt a blow to the spirit of moderation in our politics and in our country.

"Mr. Amirthalingam took up the cause of the just treatment of Tamils long years ago and suffered imprison-

ment. He also had the distinction of being the first minority person to be the leader of the opposition of the country.

"His commitment and his sense of sacrifice, in pursuance of his principles, was so devoted and great that he gave up not only the leadership of the opposition in parliament but also his own and his colleague's seat in parliament. He did this in order to keep erect his cause and his principles.

"His greatness lay in the fact that he conducted his struggle with non-violence and preached the principles of peace and negotiation, rather than resorting to arms and weapons for securing his political objectives."

Even the smaller political parties issued statements condemning the killings.

"We condemn these monstrous crimes," said the statement of the Liberal Party, "against enlightened Sri Lankan politicians who fought for justice, freedom and dignity for the Tamil people at a time when genuine efforts are being made to bring about ethnic harmony, ... is a serious blow to all who are endeavouring to bring about peace."

The Eksath Lanka Janatha Pakshaya, in its statement, said, "The death of the two politicians was a loss to the Tamil speaking people at a time when genuine efforts are being made to bring about ethnic harmony. That was also a serious blow to all who were endeavouring to bring about peace."

North-East Province Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal, in his condolence message, said, "During the lifetime of Mr. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam, Mr. Amirthalingam was his chief lieutenant. Following Mr. Chelvanayakam's demise in 1988, Mr. Amirthalingam became the undisputed leader of the Tamil speaking people. He dominated the Tamil political scene till 1983. In fact he was the hero of the Tamil youth."

The Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation saluted the slain leaders for their selfless service to the Tamil people and prayed for the speedy recovery of Sivasithamparam.

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Kanwar Natwar Singh issued a statement on behalf of the Indian government. "We condemn this dastardly act in the strongest possible terms," the statement said, and added that Amirthalingam had been working tirelessly for the betterment of the Tamil people.

On his return to Colombo from Ampara, President Premadasa issued a separate statement condemning the killings and announced that he had directed the Inspector General of Police to take personal charge of the inquiries.

There was a great deal of confusion about the political identity of the killers. Some said that Visu, who headed the LTTE political wing in Vavuniya after the disappearance of Dinesh, had left the movement. Others said that Visu was still with the LTTE. The LTTE London head-office, however, issued a statement denying any involvement. It condemned the murders and charged that forces inimical to the then-LTTE-government talks had committed them to discredit the LTTE.

"The LTTE learnt with deep distress the tragic demise of the TULF leaders Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran. We suspect that diabolical forces are at work to discredit the organisation and to disrupt the current peace talks between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka."

The LTTE denial failed to remove the doubts of the people about its involvement.

The great importance that the government attached to the current peace talks was reflected in the manner the government-controlled newspaper, *Daily News*, treated the story on 14 July. It said, "The authorities were checking on the possibility that an attempt was being made to falsely father the killings on the LTTE, high ranking officials said.

"The TULF leaders were killed in Mr. Amirthalingam's Baudhaloka Mawatha home around 7.30 p.m. They had been

expecting, what a senior policeman called, a 'purported LTTE delegation' to call on them.

The *Daily News* story was strongly condemned by the joint opposition of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the United Socialist Alliance (USA) and the Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Left Front (EPRLF). They charged that an attempt was being made to influence the investigations.

At the weekly press briefings, the press kept probing Minister of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, about the progress in the police investigations.

In August 1989, Wijeratne brought Inspector General of Police Ernest Perera to meet the press. Perera said a person named William W. Mariyadasan of Anderson Flats, Narahenpita, had been arrested and that he had made a confession. He and Nadarajah Sathyananandan of Kashapa Road, Narahenpita, had identified the assassins when the inquest into their deaths were held on 21 July 1989. No relatives had come forward to identify or claim the bodies of the killers.

The IGP's replies failed to satisfy the press. At the October 1989 press briefing, *Indian Express* correspondent, Rita Sebastian, said that in the Tiger camps in Batticaloa she had seen photographs of the three assassins prominently displayed among LTTE heroes. She asked whether that amounted to the LTTE accepting responsibility for the killings. Wijeratne dodged the question saying that he would seek verification from Yogi of the information he had just been given. Yogi was in Colombo for talks with the government.

On 15 March 1990, the *Lanka Guardian* published the interview its editor Mervin de Silva had with LTTE deputy leader Gopalaswamy Mahendrarajah alias Mahattaya.

"If you stand for the multi-party system, why did your men kill Amirthalingam and other TULF leaders?" de Silva had asked.

Mahattaya's reply was: "They were not killed because they held views different from that of the LTTE but because they were acting as the agents of India, in short, traitors, collaborators. In that background, the LTTE kills those who betray the cause ... In a national struggle, the battle is everywhere, the traitor anywhere."

Mahattaya's interview was raised at the briefing of the 22 March 1990. Reporters read out Mahattaya's reply, as reproduced in the *Lanka Guardian*, and asked Minister Wijeratne for his comments.

Wijeratne replied, "I am unable to comment about it. I go by the evidence, by Mariyadasan's confession."

Reporter: "You had promised to ask Yogi about LTTE's involvement"

"I did not talk with Yogi after I made that promise," the minister replied.

Reporter: Yogi attended the All Party Conference in which you participated."

"I saw Yogi at the All Party Conference. I told him that I wanted to speak to him. But Yogi left before I could talk to him."

The press did not allow the matter to rest and reopened it again at the 5 April meeting. They again asked for his reaction to Mahattaya's interview as published in the *Lanka Guardian*.

"I do not go by press reports. I go by evidence. The evidence shows much more than meets the eyes," he said, and announced that Mariyadasan would be indicted in the courts soon. When pressed further, Wijeratne said that if Mahattaya had in fact made that statement to the *Lanka Guardian* then he would get the Criminal Investigation Department to question Mahattaya about it. He, however, added that Mariyadasan had in his confession said that the LTTE was not involved.

Mariyadasan was indicted in the Panadura High Court. The police produced the confession they obtained from him under the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The court accepted the confession as proper evidence and convicted Mariyadasan for 7 years rigorous imprisonment. But the Appeal Court held the confession inadmissible and discharged him on 9 February 1995. It held that the confession was in fact not given by Mariyadasan.

When the news of the shooting of the TULF leaders reached Trincomalee on the night of 13 July, Lt. General A.S.Kalkat, Commander of the IPKF, was in his office with Varatharaja Perumal, Chief Minister of the North-East Province. The hard-working Indian general pulled deep at his pipe and said, "Exploit." And Varatharaja Perumal's Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front exploited the situation to the full.

Chapter 2

Sharing of Power

I put down the receiver and slumped into the nearest chair, shell-shocked. Amirthalingam murdered? Tricked into death? I could not believe it. I closed my eyes.

A wave of embarrassment swept me as I recalled my first encounter with Amirthalingam; how we, my friends and I, members of the Ariyali Development Society, had heckled Amirthalingam at a public meeting in early 1950.

The occasion was one of the monthly meetings organised by K. Kugathasan, founder of the above society, to which he invited speakers from different political parties. Amirthalingam was invited to speak on "Why Federalism?"

By way of introduction, Kugathasan said, "Our guest speaker, Amirthalingam, was born on 26 August 1927 at Pannagam. I must mention two of his achievements: he was the first to enter the university from Victoria College and he is at present the leader of the Law College debating team. I must also mention here that Amirthalingam is a Marxist who has strayed in to federal camp. Before I invite him to display his debating skills, I would like to make one comment. Though he is a Marxist, he has been converted to federalism by Mr. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam. I wish Amirthalingam does not adopt Mr. Chelvanayakam's capitalist political thinking."

As Amirthalingam rose to speak, a section of the audience let out a shrill hoot. This did not seem to bother the young speaker. He waited and when the hooting subsided, he began, "Comrades," but he was not allowed to proceed further. Another prolonged hooting followed. Again he waited and when it died down, he started, "Comrades of the human kind and friends of its predecessors."

A thunderous applause from the audience greeted his words but was greeted by derisive laughter from our end. All eyes turned towards us. Flustered, we fell silent.

"My friend Kugathasan said that I am a Marxist," Amirthalingam continued, "and wished that I continue to be a Marxist. To him and to you I say, I am a Marxist and will die a Marxist."

This time we joined in applauding. He had won us over.

Referring to the day's topic, he said, "I can answer the question you have posed me 'Why Federalism?' in just one sentence. Federalism is the known system of government that provides for the sharing of power by the various racial, linguistic and religious groups that live in a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious society."

He looked around at the audience and then his eyes seemed to rest on us, the hecklers at the back.

"I want to ask you a question," he said. "Won't the unitary system of government permit such a sharing of power?"

He himself answered in the negative and again asked, "Why do I say that? I say that because of our past experience."

To reinforce his statement, he narrated three episodes from Ceylonese political history.

The first centred around the Ponnambalam brothers, Ramanathan and Arunachalam, grandsons of the first occupant of the Tamil seat in the Legislative Council of Ceylon, Gate Mudaliyar Arumuganathapillai Coomaraswamy. The Council had been established in 1833 to assist the Governor, through whom the British monarch ruled the island since it was annexed to the British Empire in 1798. It was made up of nine officials (British) and six unofficials - 3 Europeans,

one Sinhalese, one Tamil and one Burgher. In 1889 a Kandyan and a Moor increased the strength of unofficials to eight and correspondingly the number of officials was raised to eleven.

Ramanathan, born on 16 April 1851, studied law in Colombo and was called to the bar. He was nominated to the Tamil seat by Governor Sir James Longden, which he resigned to take up the post of Solicitor General. He retired in 1905.

In 1910, Ordinance No. 13 introduced the elective principle for four elected seats - two Europeans, one Burgher and one educated Ceylonese. This caused quite a stir and raised a ray of hope among the nationalists.

Ramanathan, after retirement, had been dividing his time between religious and educational work, and also in his house in Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu. In mid-May, as soon as the Ordinance had been introduced, he began to receive letters from his friends and well-wishers beseeching him to contest the Educated Ceylonese seat. Finally, when Hector A. Jayawardene, an eminent advocate, came down to Kodaikanal to persuade him, Ramanathan consented. His nomination papers were signed by leading Tamils and Sinhalese. The opposing candidate was Dr. Mark Fernando, a leading Sinhalese, of the Karawa caste.

In this election," Amirthalingam explained, "the agricultural caste of the Sinhalese, the Govigama, and the Tamils, the Vellala, joined hands to fend the challenge from the Karawa caste, a fact Ramanathan realised years later."

Ramanathan won by a wide majority and thus became the first elected Ceylonese member of the Legislative Council. A devout Hindu and nationalist, he identified himself with Buddhist revivalism and Sinhala nationalism and campaigned for Buddhism and the Sinhala language. He even travelled to England to campaign for the Sinhala cause, and on return, was drawn in a chariot from Colombo harbour to his home in Ward

Place by Sinhalese leaders. The latter showed their gratitude by re-electing him again in 1916.

Amirthalingam then went on to explain how this 'Sinhala-Tamil togetherness', which began as a caste collaboration, flourished for some years, promoted by common interests: the campaign for the greater Ceylonisation of the public services and the demand for more power for the Executive and Legislative Councils. Also, there was widespread discontent with the official majority and the extensive powers of the Governor.

To agitate for these specific demands, four different political organisations sprung up: the Ceylon National Association, which had initially been founded by Ramanathan in 1890 and was now revived in 1916, the Ceylon Reform League in 1917, the Jaffna Association and the Chilaw Association.

Arunachalam, Ramanathan's younger brother, entered politics at about this time. Educated at Cambridge, he was the first Ceylonese to enter the Ceylon Civil Service. On 2 April 1917, he was invited to deliver a lecture on "Our Political Needs". He argued that Ceylonese leaders should work for the self-rule of the country. He concluded with the historic words, "We ask to be in our country what other self-respecting are in theirs - self-governing, strong, respected at home and abroad, and we ask for the grant at once of a definite measure of progressive advance towards that goal. Ceylon is no pauper begging for alms. she is claiming her heritage."

To achieve this goal of progressive advance to self-rule, Arunachalam felt that the four associations must merge. At his initiative, a public conference on constitutional reforms was convened by the Ceylon Reform League and the Ceylon National Association on 15 December 1917, and a second one was held on 13 December 1918, where Arunachalam moved a resolution calling for the formation of a single organisation

for the purpose of coordinating public opinion. He, however, encountered difficulties. Whilst the Ceylon Reform League had made territorial representation a fundamental of its demands, the Jaffna Association demanded the retention of the communal representation as the safeguard for the minorities. Arunachalam arranged a meeting between A. Sabapathy, president, Jaffna Association, James Peiris, president, Ceylon National Association, and E.J. Samarawickreme, president, Ceylon Reform League; it, however, failed to produce any agreement.

Later, Peiris and Samarawickreme wrote the following letter to Arunachalam:

Ceylon Reform League,
12, De Soysa Buildings,
Slave Island,
Colombo.
7th December 1918

Dear Sir Arunachalam,

With reference to the suggestion of Mr Sabapathy that the words "on the basis of a territorial electorate" be omitted from the Resolution No. 4, we shall be obliged if you will point out to him that their omission will seriously affect our case for the reform as a whole. We beg to remind him of all that the promoters of the Reform Movement have said of the baneful effect of the present system of racial representation.

We have made the territorial electorate a fundamental part of our demands. The omission of the words especially after the publication of the draft resolutions will be construed a surrender of an important principle.

It must be borne in mind that the resolutions contain only the essential principles which we desire to assert. They do not constitute the complete scheme, and while we desire to avoid the introduction of details into the resolutions, we are anxious to do all that could be done to secure as large a representation as possible to the Tamils, when exceptional provisions consistent with the principles referred to come to be considered.

As presidents of the Ceylon National Association and the Ceylon Reform League, we pledge ourselves to accept any scheme which the Jaffna Association may put forward as long as it is not inconsistent with the various principles contained in the resolutions. We feel sure that nothing obviously unreasonable will be insisted on by the Jaffna Association. We are prepared to pledge ourselves to actively support a provision for the reservation of a seat to the Tamils in the Western Province so long as the electorate remains territorial.

We suggest that the resolution should be accepted by the Jaffna Association without any alteration and that they should leave it to us to negotiate with the Indians, Europeans and Burghers on the subject of special representation for them.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd.) James Peiris

President, Ceylon National Association

(Sgd.) E.J. Samarawickreme

President, Ceylon Reform League

Amirthalingam also read the text of the letter Arunachalam wrote to Sabapathy.

Ponkar,

Horton Place.

Colombo

7th December 1918

Hon. Mr. A. Sabapathy

Jaffna.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your conversation with me on Thursday afternoon, I enclose a letter from Messrs. James Peiris and R.J. Samarawickreme, Presidents of the Ceylon National Association and the Ceylon Reform League respectively, giving assurances which would satisfy your Association as the bona fide desire of the Sinhalese leaders to do all that can be done to secure as large a representation as possible to the Tamils, consistent to the principles of the resolutions adopted by the Committee with the concurrence of delegates from Provincial Associations.

The assurance means that you have three seats for the Northern Province and two for the Eastern Province (or more if you can get it), and that there will be one seat reserved for a Tamil Member in the Western Province on the basis of the Territorial Electorate, in addition to the chances of Tamils in other Provinces and in the Colombo Municipality. No doubt also, the Government will nominate a Tamil to represent the

Indian Tamils. Our Sinhalese friends are also willing to support the claim for a Mohammedan Member in the **Western Province** on the same footing, should the Mohammedans make **such a claim**. The conference is deliberately restricted to essential principles only, there being a conflict of opinion among the Sinhalese themselves on matters of details. Such details should be hereafter submitted to the government by the various interested parties.

I trust that nothing will now stand in the way of a large number of delegates from Jaffna (including yourself and Sir A. Kanagasabai) from attending the conference and making common cause with the rest of the island. I understand that the Governor is coming to Jaffna on the 15th. You and Sir A. Kanagasabai could return by the evening train on the 14th or perhaps on the 13th by which time we hope to pass at least half the resolutions.

Yours very truly

(Sgd.) P. Arunachalam

On the assurance that the Sinhala leadership would back a Tamil candidate for the Western Province seat, members of the Jaffna Association attended the inaugural meeting of the common organisation which had been named Ceylon National Congress in line with the Indian National Congress on 11 December 1919. Arunachalam was hailed the father of the new organisation and elected its first president. *The Ceylon Daily News*, the successor to *The Ceylonese*, which Ramanathan had founded and later sold to D.R. Wijewardene, wrote: "(The Congress) marks the first great advance in the growth of the democratic institutions in Ceylon. The Congress takes up the position of the only accredited mouthpiece of all classes. Those who have worked to bring it into existence have reason to be proud of its achievement."

The Ceylon National Congress achieved its first success within two years of its foundation, Amirthalingam recounted. In 1921 the Legislative Council was reconstituted to comprise 37 members - 14 officials and 23 unofficials, of whom 11 were to be elected territorially, 8 by special interest constituencies and 4 nominated.

One of the territorial seats was the city of Colombo, and Arunachalam, on the basis of the assurances the Sinhala leaders had given the Jaffna Association, asked for that seat. The Congress turned down the request and nominated Peiris. Arunachalam reminded Peiris of the pledge he himself had given. Peiris replied that the pledge was given by him as the president of the Ceylon National Association and that he was not bound by it as the president of the Ceylon National Congress. H.C. Pereira argued, "It may be that for political reasons, individual members with perfectly honest intentions, with the idea of maintaining unity, have entered into certain compromises and bargains with individuals of the North; the Congress knows nothing of all this."

Arunachalam was intensely distressed over this betrayal. He told the *Times of Ceylon* on 14 December 1921 that only those who had been in the inner councils of the reform movement could know the difficulty with which all communities were brought together on a common platform; the ceaseless toil and tact that were needed to remove ancient prejudices and jealousies, to harmonise dissensions and to create the indispensable basis for mutual trust and cooperation.

"This was rudely shattered by the conduct of a clique who had got hold of the Congress machine ... The clique imposed its will on a weak president of the Congress, Mr. James Peiris, and his colleague Mr. E.J. Samarawickreme and compelled them to repudiate solemn pledges given by them in writing in regard to the seat in the City of Colombo. A blow was dealt to the trust of the Tamils in the Congress and its

leaders and spread to every other minority ... Mr. Peiris and his friends reduced the Congress from a National Congress to one representing mainly a section of the Sinhalese and destroyed the feelings of mutual confidence and cooperation between the various communities ..."

Amirthalingam said that Arunachalam resigned from the Ceylon National Congress and formed the Ceylon Tamil League. In his inaugural address to the Tamil League, Arunachalam said, "The League was brought into existence by a political necessity. But politics is not the *raison d'être* of its existence. Its aim is much higher. The Committee and those responsible for the League consider that our aims should be to keep alive and propagate those ideals throughout Ceylon and promote the union and solidarity of what we have been proud to call **Tamil Eelam**."

Amirthalingam explained that the clique Arunachalam had referred was that of the Senanayake brothers - F.R. and D.S.- who had even campaigned that Sinhala electorates should elect real Sinhalese.

Arunachalam and Ramanathan did not contest the 1921 election to the reformed Legislative Council. James Peiris won the Colombo Town seat which Arunachalam had wanted reserved for the Tamils. In the Northern Province, A. Canangaratnam won the southern division, T.H. Sabaratnam, the eastern division, and S. Rajaratnam, the central division. Ramanathan was nominated to the Tamil seat.

Amirthalingam then reminded the audience that Canangaratnam was also from Ariyalai.

The Ceylon National Congress was not satisfied with the reformed Legislative Council. It attacked the new arrangement on two grounds: the veto power of the Governor and the retention of the communal representation. E.W. Perera moved a resolution in the Legislative Council protesting against the extension of the communal principle. He called it the return

to tribalism. In his reply, Ramanathan recalled the events that led to the formation of the Ceylon National Congress and its break-up, and said, "I have something to say against the handful of would-be leaders, who, because they have been gifted with considerable facility of expression and courage of conviction are preaching a kind of democracy which, though suited to the homogeneous conditions of western countries, is by no means suited to the very different conditions of Ceylon. The democracy proper to Ceylon is the government of Ceylon by officials selected by the King and by representatives elected by the different communities who justly desire to protect efficiently their respective interests. **The democracy of Ceylon should not allow one community to enslave the remaining five communities.** My honourable friend, the member for 'B' Division of the Western Province (James Peiris) keeps harping that the vast majority of the people of Ceylon are Sinhalese, they must have an overwhelming voice in the government of the country. Is this glorification of the Sinhalese community to the detriment and degradation of the other five communities humane or just?" he asked. (The five communities Ramanathan referred to in his speech were: Tamils, Muslims, Indians, Burghers and Europeans.)

Ramanathan continued, "Then, Sir, a man - I may say he is my brother Arunachalam - conceived the idea of forming a National Congress for Ceylon.

The work was started in 1917, I believe, but what happened in the end of about three years afterwards? Sir Arunachalam was obliged to sever connections with the Ceylon National Congress. He resigned the presidentship; many other members also seceded, because a handful of men had seized the machinery of the Ceylon National Congress and were working it for racial or personal aggrandizement. Sir Arunachalam publicly avowed that he retired from the Congress because it was not worked for the benefit of all the

communities of Ceylon and because a handful of its members were fighting for their own ends ... **This amazing discovery came upon us with a shock.**"

Ramanathan then explained why they asked for communal representation. He said, "And if my honourable friend asks why it is that we want a communal representation, our answer unhesitatingly is: 'Because of your own conduct'. Had they played fair, had they continued to be just, had they been appreciative of all the interests of all different communities so that they could **live together** in amity and friendship in this glorious land, we **would still** have advocated territorial representation."

The second episode Amirthalingam related was about C.E.Corea, a strong supporter of the Ceylon National Congress. Corea rejected the offer of the presidentship of the Congress in 1924. In his letter of refusal, Corea stated, "I have reason to deplore the attitude of the Congress to the minorities. They have wrongly confused their national aspirations with communalism."

The Legislative Council was further expanded in 1924 and more power conferred on it. The number of unofficial members was raised to 37 and a provision was also made for the council to elect a vice president, the Governor being the president. Elections were held in 1925, and since the communal representation had been dispensed with, Ramanathan elected to contest the northern division of the Northern Province. He won with a huge majority. Waithylingam Duraiswamy won the western division, D.S.Rajaratnam, the central, T.M.Sabaratnam, the eastern, and A.Canagaratnam, the southern division of the Northern Province. James Peiris was elected the vice-chairman.

Amirthalingam said that just before the 1925 election, another important development took place. The Kandyan wing left the Ceylon National Congress and formed the Kandyan

National Assembly. It started a campaign of self-government for the Kandyan areas.

"It is a strange fact of history," Amirthalingam said, "that while the Tamil leadership was trying to share power with the majority Sinhalese by an arrangement that would increase their numbers in the legislative body, the Kandyans realised that the effective means of sharing power with the dominant Low Country Sinhalese is through a constitutional arrangement that would ensure the Kandyans their due share.

"The Tamil leadership had slavishly accepted the British unitary model and was only thinking of ways and means of adjusting it to increase its share of seats in the legislature as the means of sharing power whereas the Kandyan leadership had looked into other systems of government, into federal models, as a devise of sharing power," Amirthalingam said.

He then explained how this slavish adherence to the British model led the Tamil leadership into ridiculous situations. The worst of them was the opposition to the adult suffrage and to infamous fifty-fifty.

The Donoughmore Commission was appointed in August 1927 to report on the working of the 1924 constitution, the difficulties which would have arisen in administering it and to recommend on the amendments that should be made. The Commission was in Ceylon from 18 November 1927 to 18 January 1928, and produced its report on 26 June 1928.

The Tamil leadership argued for the retention of the system of communal representation, saying that territorial representation would result in the concentration of power in the Sinhala community. Witness after witness complained to the Commission that the Sinhala leadership could not be trusted as it was interested in accumulating all the power.

The Commission took the minority fears into consideration only to reject the demand for self-government. On page

31 of their report they stated, "Not only is the population not homogeneous, but the divergent elements of which it is composed distrust and suspect each other. It is almost time to say that the conception of patriotism in Ceylon is as much racial as national and the best interests of the country are synonymous with the welfare of a particular section of the people. If the claim for full responsible government be subjected to examination from this standpoint, it will be found that its advocates are always to be numbered among those who form the larger communities and who, if freed from external control, would be able to impose their will on all who dissented from them. Those, on the other hand, who form the minority communities, though united in no other respect, are solid in their opposition to the proposal ..."

The Commission made use of the fears of the minorities to recommend a system which retained the actual power in the hands of the Governor and his three officers while satisfying the Sinhalese with territorial representation and universal suffrage. The principal features of the Donoughmore Constitution were the replacement of the Executive and Legislative Councils by the State Council elected by adult suffrage and three Officers of State: the Chief Secretary in charge of public services, external affairs and defense; the Financial Secretary in charge of the budget, accounting and financial affairs; and the Legal Secretary in control of civil law and order, justice and the drafting of legislation.

The Donoughmore Commission provided safeguards for the minorities by retaining considerable powers with the Governor and his three officials, by the system of committees which it thought would prevent the majority community from grabbing the entire power for itself, by giving weightage through the system of nomination and through the creation of an independent public service commission.

The Commission provided for a State Council of 61 members, 50 to be elected on the territorial basis, 8 to be

nominated to represent the unrepresented interests and 3 Officers of State.

There were two debates in the Legislative Council on the Donoughmore Commission proposal. The first was on 5 October 1928, three months after the report was published. E.W.Perera moved a motion saying that the Government by Committees was not suited to Ceylon and it was adopted by an overwhelming majority. D.S.Senanayake, who spoke in support of Perera's motion expressed his opposition over the granting of voting rights to the seven lakhs of Indian immigrant labour.

Governor Sir Herbert Stanley suggested a compromise that British subjects domiciled in Ceylon be granted voting rights which was accepted by the Secretary of State for Colonies. With the amendment, Chief Secretary Sir Benard Bourdillon moved a motion on 5 December 1929, that the Donoughmore Commission recommendations be brought into operation. Ramanathan opposed the motion on two grounds: that it introduced universal suffrage and that it had done away with communal representation.

For his opposition to the introduction of the universal suffrage, Ramanathan gave the following reason: "... for the simple reason that ignorance must not be put on the same level with knowledge and that the ignorant, excitable man is an awful danger to the country, but the man with knowledge is a good asset to it."

Except E.W.Perera, who maintained his earlier position that the Committee System was not suited to Ceylon, C.W.W.Kannangara and all other Sinhala members voted for the motion. All Tamil members except the Batticoloa member E.R.Tambimuttu, Muslim members and the Indian Tamil members voted against. Nineteen voted for the motion and seventeen against.

The Legislative Council was dissolved on 17 April 1931, and election for the State Council held in June the same

year. The Council consisted of 50 territorially elected representatives, eight nominated members and three officials. Nine of the 50 constituencies returned uncontested candidates; elections were not held in the four electorates in the Jaffna peninsula due to a boycott by the Jaffna Tamils. The election was spread over a week beginning 13 June. The State Council was constituted on 7 July 1931, when it divided itself into seven committees. Each of the seven committees elected its head and the seven heads formed the Board of Ministers.

The first Board of Ministers comprised Messrs D.S.Senanayake (Agriculture), D.B.Jayatilleke (Home Affairs), Peri Sundaram (Labour), C.W.W.Kannangara (Education), T.B.Panabokke (Health), Butwantudawe (Local Administration), and H.M.Macan Markar (Communications).

"It seemed as though the system had worked as there were one Tamil and one Muslim in the seven-member Board of Ministers," Amirthalingam remarked. The Jaffna Tamils gave up their boycott in 1934 and the four seats were filled by election in July. The new members were: G.G.Ponnambalam (Point Pedro), A.Mahadeva (Jaffna), W.Duriaswamy (Kayts) and S.Natesan (KKS). The first State Council was dissolved on 7 December 1935, and the election for the second State Council was held on January 1936. Seven seats were uncontested. The State Council met on 17 March and elected W.Duriaswamy the speaker by a majority of two votes. Then the members were divided into seven committees and the committees elected their chairmen. Senanayake and Jayatilleke and their supporters had contrived to get a majority in each of the committees.

The Board of Ministers consisted of Jayatilleke (Home Affairs), D.S.Senanayake (Agriculture), Kannangara (Education), W.A.de Silva (Health), G.C.S.Corea (Labour), S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike, (Local Administration), J.L.Kotalawela (Communications).

"That ministry was called the pan-Sinhala Ministry. What the Tamils feared had happened. The Sinhalese leadership had managed to grab the entirety of political power for themselves. The Sinhalese leadership had managed to put the Tamils 'in their place', as D.S.Senanayake had earlier threatened," Amirthalingam said.

The Soulbury Commission condemned that manoeuvre in 1944. The Commission said that it was ill-advised and that it had resulted in further arousing the suspicions and resentment of the minorities. G.G.Ponnambalam, who first entered the State Council in 1934 from the Point Pedro constituency and won it again in 1936, capitalized on this suspicion and grievance and devised the infamous Fifty-Fifty formula to prevent that happening in the future. Ponnambalam, a skilful criminal lawyer, a debater without equal in the State Council and a flamboyant and charismatic personality, took up the communal representation cause from where Ramanathan and the Jaffna Association left.

The Jaffna Association, at a meeting on 2 January 1918, had resolved that they should demand a representative system which maintained the proportion between the Tamil and Sinhala representatives, which in effect meant fifty-fifty. Ponnambalam modified that cry to equal representation to the Sinhalese and all minorities. At the commencement of his campaign, Ponnambalam received considerable support from the Muslims, the Indian Tamils and the local British, specifically from the British-owned Times of Ceylon. But rifts surfaced in a short time. In the Muslim camp, T.B.Jayah, a Malay, gave unqualified support but the Ceylon Moors Association led by Razik Fareed, and the All Ceylon Muslim League headed by Sir Mohamed Macan Markar, opposed the fifty-fifty formula. Among the Indian Tamils, K.Natesa Iyer, backed Ponnambalam to the hilt. He used his influence with the Tamil daily, the *Virakesari*, to espouse his cause. But the section led by Abdul Aziz which was more socialistic in its

approach demurred and later openly opposed the fifty-fifty formula. The British-nominated members of the State Council, Messrs C.G.C.Kerr, M. J.Cary, H. E.Newnham, J.W.Oldfield and C. J. Black, were sympathetic to Ponnambalam's cause. In June 1937, when the pan-Sinhala Board of Ministers was pressing for constitutional reforms, a secret conference of all minority communities agreed on the formulation of Ponnambalam's demand for fifty-fifty representation. A memorandum was sent to Governor Sir Andrew Caldecott, signed by most of the members of the minority communities, including Arunachalam Mahadeva, the member for Jaffna, who later campaigned vehemently against the fifty-fifty formula. But rifts soon developed in the ranks of the Ceylon Tamils also.

Tambimuttu, the member for Batticaloa and the sole Tamil who voted for the acceptance of the Donoughmore Constitution, charted an independent course.

V.Nalliah, the member for Trincomalee and Batticaloa North, a staunch opponent of the British rule, stood for cooperation with the Sinhalese to rid the country of the British. Mahadeva turned out to be the biggest thorn. In 1942, Mahadeva was elected the head of the Committee for Home Affairs after Sir Baron Jayatilleke resigned his ministership to take up the post of Ceylon Government's Representative in New Delhi. His election as Minister of Home Affairs took the wind out of Ponnambalam's campaign of balanced representation. In addition,

Mahadeva became the sheet-anchor for the campaign against the demand fifty-fifty. The British government, especially Lord Soulbury who headed the Commission that came to Ceylon in December 1944 to discuss and examine proposals for constitutional reform and to advise the British government on the measures necessary, was convinced by Mahadeva's election and the anti-fifty-fifty campaign that the Sinhalese leadership was prepared to share power with the minorities.

To present the Tamil viewpoint before the Soulbury Commission, Ponnambalam founded the All Ceylon Tamil Congress in 1944. In his historic evidence before the Commission, Ponnambalam argued that in a self-governing Ceylon run by a majority elected on a territorial basis, the Sinhalese would be in a position to deny the rights of the minorities, and the only way minority interests could be protected was through communal electorates that would assure a balanced representation in the legislature. He advocated that in order to attain the position of balanced representation the country should be divided into 100 territorial constituencies for a legislature of 100 members and that these constituencies should be demarcated in such a way that the Sinhalese elect 50 members, the Ceylon and Indian Tamils elect 25 and the other minorities the balance 25. The Sinhalese, naturally opposed the scheme as they formed 70 per cent of the population.

Ponnambalam was pushed to make this ridiculous demand because of his lack of foresight and initiative. He accepted slavishly the British model of government and tried to work out a scheme for the protection of the rights of the Tamils within that model. He was not prepared to look out for other constitutional arrangements of power sharing effectively implemented in the USA, USSR, Canada, Switzerland and many other countries," Amirthalingam said.

Amirthalingam then read the relevant portion of the Soulbury Commission report which rejected Ponnambalam's fifty-fifty demand. The Commission said: "We are not inclined to agree that the system of representation recommended by the All Ceylon Tamil Congress contains the germs of development and we do not regard it as a natural evolution from the constitution of 1921 and 1924. On the contrary, we would describe a system which purported to re-impose communal representation in the rigid form contemplated as static rather than dynamic and we should not expect to find in it

seeds of healthy and progressive advance towards parliamentary self-government."

The Soulbury Commission report was submitted on 11 July 1945 and a White Paper on it was issued on 30 October 1945. Ponnambalam went to England to campaign against the report and met the Colonial Secretary and many members of Parliament. But the Board of Ministers decided to accept it, and D.S.Senanayake moved a motion in the State Council on 8 November 1945.

The motion read: "The House expresses disappointment that His Majesty's Government has deferred the admission of Ceylon to a full Dominion status, but in view of the assurance contained in the White Paper of 31 October, 1945, that His Majesty's Government will cooperate with the people of Ceylon so that such status may be attained by this country in a comparatively short time, this House resolves that the constitution offered in the said White Paper be accepted during the interim period."

The motion was debated for two days and was passed, with 51 voting for and 3 against. The three who voted against were: W.Dahanayake, Natesa Iyer and I.X.Pereira. Thus Ponnambalam's mission ended in failure as all Ceylon Tamil representatives had voted for the acceptance of the new constitution.

Amirthalingam commented, "It is tragic on the part of the Tamil leadership not to have realised the unworkability of the fifty-fifty demand. It was more tragic that they failed to back the Kandyan demand for federalism and their demand for three administrative units - the Kandyan zone comprising of the 5 Kandyan provinces, the Tamil zone comprising the north and east, and the Low Country Sinhala zone comprising the western and southern provinces."

Amirthalingam then related his third story, the story of the stripping of Indian Tamils of their citizenship and voting rights.

(The citizenship issue formed an important part of Amirthalingam's political platform because it was the reason behind the formation of the Federal Party.)

Amirthalingam said, "The deprivation of the citizenship rights of Indian Tamil brethren is another strategy of the Sinhala leadership to weaken the Tamils of Ceylon. D.S.Senanayake, the much acclaimed father of the nation, is at the bottom of this."

D.S.Senanayake had consistently opposed granting of voting rights to seven lakh Indian immigrant labourers brought to Ceylon by the British from the beginning of the nineteenth century to work first in the coffee plantations and later in the tea and rubber plantations. He had stated his opposition as early as 1926, when he said at the second reading of the Bill relating to Indian labour that they were robbing bread and land from the indigenous people. He argued that they should not be regarded as permanent settlers though they had long-standing connection with Ceylon. They had retained Indian domicile and the Indian government had continued to have an interest in them. He advocated the adoption of special steps to bring a halt to the influx of the Indian labour. Senanayake went to the extent of opposing universal suffrage recommended by the Donoughmore Commission. During the debate in the State Council he said:

"I can say that there is not a single recommendation put forward by the Donoughmore Commission that is received with greater alarm than the recommendation for the extension of the franchise to those not domiciled in Ceylon. The Indian government did not want to disassociate themselves from their people who came out here. They wanted to protect them as Indians. The point I want to make is this. The Indian immigrants continue to be citizens of India and receive protection from the Indian government. It is too much for these immigrants to ask the right to influence the local

government when they are receiving special privileges as citizens of another country."

But he accepted the compromise which granted vote to the Indian plantation workers who had Ceylon domicile of origin or were able to prove that they had permanently settled in Ceylon. Under this compromise 225,000 got their voting rights.

He argued that if all adults were given voting rights, most of the Kandyan electorates would return Indian Tamils and thus deprive the Sinhalese of those areas of representation. The British yielded and adopted the test of domicile as a compromise. The Indian Tamils wanted safeguards written into the constitution. The Donoughmore Commission did this by reserving 17 classes of bills to the Governor the most important being, "Any bill whereby persons of any particular community or religion are liable to any disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are also not subjected or made liable or are granted advantages not extended to persons of other communities or religions."

The Soulbury Commission too provided a similar safety to the minorities in its recommendations. Among those were bills relating to immigrants and the right of re-entry, the franchise and "any Bill, any of the provisions of which have evoked serious opposition by any racial or religious community and which, in the opinion of the Governor General is likely to involve oppression or serious injustice to any such community."

In moving the motion of acceptance of the White Paper embodying the Soulbury Commission recommendations in the State Council on 8 November 1945, D.S.Senanayake spoke of the safeguards given to the minorities, "No reasonable person can now doubt the honesty of our intentions. We devised a scheme with heavy weightage to the minorities; we deliberately protected them against discriminatory legislation;

we vested important powers in the Governor General because we thought that the minorities would regard him as impartial; we decided upon an independent Public Services Commission and quoted by them as devised to protect the minorities."

The first member among the Tamils to participate in the debate, V. Nalliah, the Member for Trincomalee-Batticaloa, said, "I am prepared to place my trust on the head of the Board of Ministers (D.S.Senanayake) ... As I am not prepared to create more discord, I am not going to differ from the majority of the Sinhalese."

S. Natesan, Member for Kankesanthurai, said since the Commission had given its verdict and the majority community had given an assurance of fairplay, Tamils would trust the Sinhala leadership and go along with them.

A. Mahadeva, Member of Jaffna and the Minister of Home Affairs, said he was prepared to trust the Sinhala leaders and accept the Soulbury Commission recommendations.

The government enacted an order in 1946 which provided that every British subject resident in Ceylon for six months or who was otherwise qualified could vote and hold office. It was on that basis that the 1947 general election was held under the Soulbury Constitution which was drafted by the then-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, Sir Ivor Jennings, and sent to the British government as the Minister's Draft. Section 29 in the Soulbury Commission was, in fact, taken over in toto from the Draft. It stated:

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this order, Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Island.
- (2) No such law shall:
 - (a) prohibit or restrict the free exercise of any religion; or

- (b) make persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable; or
- (c) confer on persons of any community or religion any privilege or advantage which is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions; or
- (d) alter the constitution of any religious body except with the consent of the governing authority of that body;

Provided that, in any case where a religious body is incorporated by law, no such alteration shall be made except at the request of the governing authority of that body.

- (3) Any law made in contravention of subsection(2) of this section shall, to the extent of such contravention, be void.
- (4) In its exercise of its powers under this section, Parliament may amend or repeal any of the provisions of this Order or any other Order of His Majesty in Council in its application to the Island. Provided that no Bill for the amendment or repeal of any of the provisions of this Order shall be presented for the Royal Assent unless it has endorsed on it a certificate under the hand of the Speaker that the number of votes cast in favour thereof in the House of Representatives amounted to not less than two-thirds of the whole number of members of the House (including those not present).

In the 1947 general election for Ceylon's first parliament, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress contested nine of the total 89 constituencies which were to return 95 representatives. Eight of them vied for the seats in the Northern Province and the others in the Eastern Province. The Tamil Congress

swept the Jaffna peninsula where it won six seats and one in the Eastern Province. Two independents won the Vavuniya and Mannar seats. All United National Party (UNP) Tamil candidates who voted for the Soulbury Constitution were defeated.

Ponnambalam, in a cable to the Secretary of State for Colonies, said that the election result showed that the Tamil people had rejected the Soulbury Constitution. D.S.Senanayake outsmarted Ponnambalam by making the two Tamil independents from the north - C.Suntharalingam and C. Sittambalam - his ministers. He, thus, effectively countered Ponnambalam's fifty-fifty demand.

The election also dealt a severe shock to the UNP leadership of the south. The new party (UNP), which D.S.Senanayake had formed in 1946 by bringing together the Ceylon National Congress and the Sinhala Maha Sabha of S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike, could muster only 42 seats.

The seats won by other parties were:

Lanka Sama Samaja Party	- 10
Tamil Congress	- 7
Ceylon Indian Congress	- 6
(which represented Indian labour)	
Bolshevik Leninist Party	- 5
Communist Party	- 3
Labour Party	- 1
Independents	- 21

The poor UNP results put Senanayake into quandary. He had to rope in two independents and depend on the six nominated members. The Soulbury Constitution allocated six nominated seats to provide representation for minority sections not represented in Parliament.

The election proved to Senanayake the power of the Indian Tamil vote. six Indian Tamil members were elected to parliament and the Indian Tamils were instrumental in getting some of the **leftists elected**. He realised that the future of the UNP was bleak if the Indian Tamils were permitted to vote in the elections. Shrewd as he was, he raised the communist bogey saying that if Indians were allowed to enjoy the voting right Ceylon would become a communist country.

The period of the State Council also saw the birth and growth of anti-Indianism. This was aided by two sets of circumstances. The first was what was termed the 'Chetty crisis'. The Nattukottai Chettiars had migrated to Ceylon since 1820s and had carried on banking business till the British banks were set up in the 1840s. Thereafter, the Chettiar community changed its role to that of middlemen, They borrowed from the banks and lent to planters and businessmen at slightly higher interest. This went on till 1925 when one of the firms collapsed and the banks immediately stopped lending them-money.

To get over the sudden scarcity of cash, Chettiar firms demanded repayment of their loans from their Ceylonese clients. The Ceylonese themselves were in financial straits owing to the global economic depression and defaulted non-payment. During 1930-36 the Chettiars put the promissory notes in suit and foreclosed their mortgages. This resulted in intense anti-Chettiar campaign.

The second was the emergence of the Sinhala middle class which clamoured for the Ceylonisation of all sectors of the economy. There was an outcry against arrack and toddy tavern renters mainly from the Baratha community from Tamil Nadu. Then, there was an agitation to send back the Malayalee harbour workers, government servants and even sanitary worker. There was also a boycott against Indian retail shops and Jaffna cigars.

In 1935 D.S.Senanayake was instrumental for the enactment of the Land Development Ordinance which provided for the alienation of crown land to 'Ceylonese' landless peasants and the middle class. "Ceylonese" was defined as a person domiciled in Ceylon and possessing a Ceylon domicile of origin.

A.E.Goonasinghe, who started the Labour Party and the trade union movement, entered the Second State Council on a communal platform. He persuaded the State Council to pass a resolution calling for the deportation of 15,000 Indians despite strong opposition from Tamil members. The next was the decision of the State Council in 1939 to deport all Indians appointed to government service after 1 April 1939, and to discontinue all Indians with less than ten years of service. This resolution was moved by D. S. Senanayake .

These acts perturbed the Indian residents in Ceylon and the Indian government. A two-member delegation comprising of Vytilingam and Pereira was sent to Mahatma Gandhi to brief him on the plight of the Indian Tamils in Ceylon. Gandhiji sent Jawaharlal Nehru as his special emissary to talk to the Ceylon government and to Ceylonese leaders. Nehru arrived in Colombo on 18 July 1939. He met the leader of the State Council, D.S.Senanayake, and some ministers. Senanayake told Nehru that many educated Ceylonese were unemployed and they would revolt if foreigners were allowed to rob them of their jobs. Nehru's efforts at persuasion failed.

Nehru met the Indian organizations, separately and jointly, and advised them to unite into a single organisation if they were to preserve their rights and privileges. He also presided at the joint meeting where the Ceylon Indian Congress was born.

Goonasinghe, who had captured the secretaryship of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, founded by Bandaranaike in 1937, stepped up his campaign against the Indians. At his instance,

the government served notice to discontinue the services of 800 Indians in Colombo. The government issued a circular instructing the heads of government departments not to recruit Indians. The Galle Urban Council passed a resolution calling on the government not to employ Indians.

The Indian National Congress reacted by passing a resolution criticising Ceylon's bid to deport Indians. The Ceylon Indian Congress followed suit. The Indian government also retaliated by imposing a ban on labour emigration to Ceylon. This put an end to the free movement of Indian labour between the two countries. Indians were told to decide between India and Ceylon and a vast majority chose Ceylon. This left over six lakhs of Indians on Ceylon's lap. They ceased to be migrant labourers and became permanent settlers.

This unexpected development upset the D.S. Senanayake administration.

A delegation led by D.S. Senanayake went to Delhi in 1940 to take up the matter. Bandaranaike was a member of the delegation. The Ceylon Indian Congress too sent a team to present its viewpoint.

At the discussion, D.S. Senanayake took the position that all Indian Tamils in Ceylon were Indian nationals and should be taken back by India. The Indian government declined to accept that position. It held that many Indians had settled in Ceylon for many years and had a right to continue to live there. Bandaranaike argued that Ceylon could not afford to have more than two lakh Indians and the balance should be taken back by India. Indian officials declined to accept that plea too. Peri Sunderam of the Ceylon Indian Congress argued that Indians with long residence had qualified to become Ceylon citizens and the choice should be left to them.

The D.S. Senanayake administration continued to enact laws discriminating against Indian Tamils. The Fisheries

Ordinance of 1940 stipulated that non-Ceylonese should obtain license to fish in Ceylon's territorial waters. It enacted the Omnibus Ordinance in 1942 giving preference to the Ceylonese in running omnibus services.

The British granted independence to Ceylon in 1948 after obtaining a specific assurance that the interests of the Indian Tamils would be safeguarded. But one of the first acts done by D.S. Senanayake was to disfranchise the Indian Tamil population by enacting the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948. He made use of a lacuna in the Soulbury Constitution which left the question of Ceylon citizenship undefined. The Citizenship Act placed special restrictions aimed at excluding Indian Tamils.

The relevant sections of the Citizenship Act read:

4. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Part, a person born on Ceylon before the appointed date (which was fixed as 15 November 1948) shall have the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent, if (a) his father was born in Ceylon, or (b) his paternal grandfather and paternal great grandfather were born in Ceylon.
- (2) ... a person born outside Ceylon before the appointed date shall have the status of citizen of Ceylon, if (a) his father and paternal grandfather were born in Ceylon, or (b) his paternal grandfather and paternal great grandfather were born in Ceylon.
5. (1) ... a person born in Ceylon on or after the appointed date shall have the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent, if at the time of his birth his father is a citizen of Ceylon.

Citizenship by descent was conferred automatically on the Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils and Muslims, but not on Indian Tamils or Indian Muslims. D.S. Senanayake, who presented

the bill in parliament, said every country had the right to determine the persons who would be its citizens. He argued that the Indian immigrants brought to Ceylon by the British colonial rulers had no abiding interest in the country and regarded themselves as temporary residents. They had also deprived the real sons and daughters of the soil, the Kandyan Sinhalese, of their land and jobs.

Members of the Ceylon Indian Congress, the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Bolshevik Leninist Party voted against the bill. The leftists accused Senanayake of weakening the Tamils. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam, the Tamil Congress MP for Kankesanthurai, in his speech prophesied, "Today, justice is being denied to the Indian Tamils. Some day, in the future, when language becomes the issue, the same fate would befall the Ceylon Tamils. Let us unitedly fight this injustice."

Tamil Congress leader Ponnambalam, in his speech, called Senanayake a racist. He said that the day was a black day for Ceylon.

The entire Tamil community in Ceylon, Indian and Ceylonese, were indignant about this mass disfranchisement. India, too, was annoyed and angry. The Indian government issued a statement criticising the bill. Nehru, India's first prime minister, condemned the legislation.

D.S.Senanayake made a shrewd move to mute the local and Indian dissent. He sent emissaries to Ponnambalam with the promise of two ministerial portfolios and a parliamentary secretaryship as the prize for joining his government. One cabinet portfolio was to be given immediately and the other four months later when Sir Oliver Goonetilleke left the cabinet to take up the High Commissionership in Britain. That caused a split in the party. Ponnambalam and his followers were for acceptance. They argued that the acceptance of ministership would afford the Tamil Congress an opportunity to develop the Tamil areas. Chelvanayakam argued that their joining the

government would give legitimacy to the Sinhala rule and bring to an end the Tamil campaign for weightage in representation.

Naganathan was then the secretary of the party. He summoned an emergency meeting of the General Council of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress in June 1948 to consider the offer of the UNP High Command. The meeting unanimously decided: "Only if an honourable adjustment on our twin political demands, namely, weightage in the representation for the minorities and a liberal modification of the citizenship acts (to do justice to the Hill Country Tamils) were accepted by the Senanayake government should the Tamil Congress Parliamentary Group be permitted to form a coalition government with the UNP."

At that meeting, Chelvanayakam argued that the Soulbury Commission had, in fact, granted weightage to the majority Sinhala community instead of to the minorities. Joining the cabinet, in that context, would amount to accepting the Soulbury Commission report, which the Tamil Congress had opposed and had obtained a mandate in the 1947 general election to oppose.

Ponnambalam was invited by Sir Oliver Goonetilleke for a meeting with Senanayake. Ponnambalam told Sir Oliver that he was bound by the General Council resolution.

"There won't be any difficulty in making the adjustments you want," Sir Oliver said. "Join us. Then with your additional strength in our party I can muster enough support to make the adjustments you require in regard to the two fundamental issues you raised."

Ponnambalam swallowed Oliver Goonetilleke's assurance. He asked and got the Ministry of Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries. Ponnambalam, K.Kanagaratnam, T.Ramalingam and V.Kumaraswamy crossed over to the government. Chelvanayakam, Vanniyasingham and

V.Sivapalan refused to join. Naganathan, a senator, also joined Chelvanayakam's group.

For a number of months the two groups, both calling themselves the Tamil Congress, existed side by side. one was called the "Ponnambalam wing" of the Tamil Congress and the other the "Chelvanayakam wing" of the same party. Each expelled adherents of the other, both held committee meetings and public meetings, and issued statements to the press.

The first such committee meeting of the Chelvanayakam wing was held at Chelvanayakam's home in the second week of January 1949 where it was decided to hold public meetings and educate the Tamil people about the federal system of government which had worked well in other countries with plural societies in providing safeguards to minority communities. Chelvanayakam explained that such a set up was best suited to Ceylon where Tamils, the major minority community, occupied a distinct territory.

At that meeting was a young law student. His name was Appapillai Amirthalingam. He suggested that the inaugural public meeting be held at the Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Kovil premises. This was accepted with acclamation. He said the historic temple which occupied a special place in the heart of Hindus was the best place to launch the campaign for federalism.

The inaugural public meeting was held on 13 February 1949. A special pooja was performed and the chief priest blessed Chelvanayakam and invited him to preside. Naganathan, the first speaker, told the gathering that all efforts of the Tamil leadership to win weighted representation to the Tamil community in parliament had failed. The Tamil leadership had fought for weighted representation because, within the unitary British model, that was the only way Tamils could share power with the Sinhala people. Since all attempts

to work out some arrangement for the sharing of power had failed, they should look for some other constitutional model.

Vanniyasingham explained the new model they had decided to place before the Tamil people and said, "After careful thought we have decided to advocate the federal model as the one best suitable to the multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious Ceylon. ... It is a well tested constitutional arrangement. It has worked well in many countries like the United States, Canada, the USSR, Switzerland, Australia and in India."

Amirthalingam spoke in behalf of the youth. He spoke of the past glory of the Tamils, of the richness of the Tamil language. He also spoke of the right of the Tamil people to preserve their rich heritage. He argued that federalism was the only political system that would permit them to live with dignity.

A prolonged applause followed Amirthalingam's speech. Chelvanayakam congratulated him for his oratory and for the flow of words. From that meeting onwards, Amirthalingam emerged a crowd-puller.

The Chelvanayakam group met every Thursday in Colombo for study and planning. Naganathan sloganized: Thursday nights are federal nights. It also organised several public meetings. The split in the Tamil Congress was completed in August 1949 with the introduction of the Indian and Pakistani (Residents) Citizenship Bill in parliament. This bill laid down the procedure and requirements the disfranchised Indian Tamils should satisfy to gain Ceylon citizenship. Qualifications specified were: seven years of continuous residence from 1 January 1939 for married persons and ten years of continuous residence from 1 January 1936 for unmarried persons.

Whilst introducing the bill in parliament D.S.Senanayake had said that the new legislation was intended to enable Tamil immigrants to gain Ceylon citizenship. Ponnambalam, taking

his cue from that, said that the Tamil Congress would vote with the government as the bill provided for the regainment of the lost civic rights. Chelvanayakam took the opposite view. He said the bill was an inhuman piece of legislation which placed obstacles on the way rather than facilitating the regaining of citizenship. Five years of residence was the generally accepted requirement for citizenship in most countries. The government not only stipulated a longer period but also had asked for documents difficult to obtain. Most of the immigrants had shifted residence from estate to estate and as such it was difficult to prove continued residence, he argued.

The "Ponnambalam wing" voted with the government while the "Chelvanayakam wing" voted against. The Ceylon Indian Congress and the leftist parties also voted against the bill. Ponnambalam expelled the Chelvanayakam group from the Tamil Congress and the Chelvanayakam group in turn expelled the Ponnambalam group.

Chelvanayakam was unhappy with this mud-slinging match. He felt that the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, the organization hastily brought together just before the visit of the Soulbury Commission, was not enough to meet the needs of the changing scene. He persuaded his followers that a new party was needed to preach their new message: federalism.

The new party named Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (The Federal Party of Ceylon) was inaugurated at 9.30 am on 18 December 1949 at the Government Clerical Servants' Union Hall, Maradana. Naganathan, one of the conveners, welcomed the supporters and proposed that Chelvanayakam take the chair. Vanniasingham, the other convener, seconded and the proposal was unanimously adopted.

Tracing the history of Ceylon from ancient times, Chelvanayakam said that the two nationalities - the Sinhalese and the Tamils - had lived in separate territories till the advent of the Portuguese. But now the people in power were talking only about the Sinhala nation as if it was the only one in

Ceylon. And though during certain periods of history Sinhalese kings had ruled Tamil areas and Tamil kings the Sinhala areas, that did not derogate from the Sinhalese or Tamils their sovereignty. However, most of the time Tamil areas were completely independent of Sinhalese rule and were fully independent till the British brought the entire country under a unified single administration in 1833.

"The Britishers and the local reformists failed to realise the basic fact that Ceylon is not a homogenous state. It is a country inhabited by two separate nations - the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The British model of unitary system, imposed by the colonial rulers, is totally unsuited. It is to the credit of the Tamil leaders that they realised the inherent dangers of the unitary system. But they only concentrated in reducing the extent of the danger by advocating communal representation and balanced representation. But they failed to pay attention to the removal of the danger. The remedy they were able to foresee was getting a better representation for the Tamils and other minorities. They failed to work out an alternate constitutional structure," Chelvanayakam said.

He then traced the political history of Ceylon since 1833 and showed how the Tamil share in the government had been progressively reduced. He said, "We were first denied our share in the government. Next our electoral strength was reduced by the denial of citizenship to our Indian Tamil brethren. Then they started reducing our territory by state-aided Colonization. The federal structure will get the Tamils their legitimate share in the government and put an end to the Sinhala attempt to grab our territory."

In conclusion, Chelvanayakam said, "The Upcountry Tamils have been made political outcasts. They have been made destitute. Winning back their citizenship rights would be the cornerstone policy of the party we have formed today."

Naganathan moved the resolution for the formation of the new party. The resolution read, "This gathering of active workers in the cause of freedom for the Tamil-speaking people

in Ceylon, here met in conference at the GCSU Hall, Maradana, on the 18th December 1949, deeply conscious of the inferiority in status to which the Tamil-speaking people in Ceylon are being increasingly reduced under the present unitary system of government - which system of government is irrational and totally unsuited to a multi-linguistic country - and fully alive to the implications of the dangers inherent in the legislative and administrative policy of the government, which policy is manifestly detrimental to the future existence of the Tamil-speaking people in the island as free and self-respecting citizens and clearly realising that the only fair and democratic solution to these fundamental problems (consistent with the Island's unity) is the establishment of an Autonomous State for the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon within the structure of a Federal Union of Ceylon, hereby resolve to constitute itself as the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi and become the framework of the National Organisation of the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon, pledged to strive increasingly for the attainment of their goal of self-government based on the principle of self-determination for the Tamil speaking nation of the island."

A motion calling for the adoption of a draft interim constitution was also passed. The policy objectives contained in the constitution were:

- (a) The recognition of the right of every Tamil-speaking individual who has made Ceylon his home to full citizenship rights;
- (b) The regeneration and unification of the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon by the removal of all forms of social inequalities and injustices, in particular that of untouchability which exists among a section of the people;
- (c) The realisation of a socialist economy with equality of opportunity for education and employment without regard to caste, creed, race or sex;

- (d) The promotion and maintenance of goodwill and friendship with the Sinhalese people in the interests of Federal unity and progress.

Chelvanayakam was elected the president and Naganathan, the general secretary of the party.

About this time, D.S. Senanayake's government dealt another blow to the Indian Tamil community. An amendment to the election law passed by parliament restricted voting rights to citizens only.

The Ceylon Indian Congress, annoyed and angered by this, decided on a boycott of the implementation of the Indian and Pakistani (Residents') Citizenship Act. On their advice, over 90 per cent of the Indian Tamils decided not to apply for citizenship.

The Federal Party decided to join hands with the Indian Tamil and other Marxist parties that supported them and campaigned for the restoration of their citizenship rights. That brought the Federal Party and the Ceylon Indian Congress, the organisation of the Indian Tamils, closer.

The Federal Party nominated Amirthalingam to attend the 1952 Hatton session of the Ceylon Indian Congress. He again participated in the 1954 session where he delivered an impassioned appeal for Tamil unity. He warned that the Sinhala leadership was all out to weaken the Tamil community.

"They have robbed your citizenship and they are robbing our lands. They have reduced our numbers and they are reducing our territory. We cannot permit this. Resist we must. Resist we will," he said, amidst thunderous applause.

Chapter 3

STATE AIDED COLONISATION

My mind began a journey down memory lane and the political scenes of the past floated across the screen of my mind and seemed to take on a vivid hue. My experiences as a journalist stood me in good stead as I was able to recall the various incidents and provocations that had led and were still leading to the tragedies unfolding and, I instinctively knew, as I am sure even the most hardened politician of the time knew, that more such incidents would follow unless there was a change of heart and of present policies. As I now realise even as I read through my notes, how true my instincts had been. Chelvanayakam's prophetic words rang in my ears. He had warned Bandaranaike in 1957, "In another ten years Tamils will not seek autonomy. They will demand a separate state."

In 1961, just before the Federal Party Satyagraha campaign, I wrote a feature for the *Sunday Thinakaran* on the topic: "The Most Pressing Problem of the Tamils". For that feature, I interviewed ten political leaders including Chelvanayakam and Amirthalingam. All of them had been uniform in their opinion: the ending of state-aided colonisation of Tamil areas was the most pressing problem of the Tamil people.

"To the Tamils," said Amirthalingam, "state-sponsored colonisation of Tamil areas is a more pressing problem than even the language issue. Our claim for regional autonomy will have no basis if we lose our land. If we allow the colonisation to continue, we will become a minority in our own homeland."

Amirthalingam also made a distinction between voluntary settlement and state-organised colonisation. "Individual Sinhala people are free to buy land in whatever area they prefer and settle down on their own. That had happened from ancient times and Tamils had never objected. They had even encourage that," he said. "The Sinhalese of Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa had lived for generations and were part of the local population. What was objectionable was the state-organised colonisation intended to alter the population pattern of traditional Tamil areas."

State-aided colonisation of the dry zone was advocated first by the British governor Sir Hugh Clifford in a paper read at the Second Agricultural Conference of March 1927 on "Some reflections on the Ceylon Land Question". In it he had commented, "It (land) is a matter of enormous importance to all communities throughout Ceylon." He also said that all communities were very sensitive and emotional about it.

Sir Hugh's proposal to settle landless persons of the wet zone on the vast unexploited stretches of the dry zone was referred to the Land Commission appointed in 1927 by the Legislative Council which had recommended the economic development of land in sparsely populated areas of the dry zone, specially in the North Central Province, the Eastern Province and parts of the northern and Uva provinces. The Commission also recommended the removal of restrictions on the lease of large extent of land in sparsely populated districts in the dry zone such as Mannar, Mallaitivu, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Kurunegala.

The Executive Committee of Agriculture in a report recommended the starting of colonisation schemes for the peasants and land alienation to the middle class. In 1933, Minister of Agriculture D.S.Senanayake presented the Land Development Ordinance which provided for systematic devel-

opment of Crown Lands by Ceylonese and established a suitable tenure for its alienation. It enumerated the three purposes for which Crown Land would be granted - village purposes, government purposes and alienation. Alienation was to be of two types - direct grant and temporary grant on Land Development Ordinance permits. The temporary grant was to be converted to permanent grant on proof of use of land.

To create an awareness on the need to get back to agriculture, which was then neglected, D.S. Senanayake defined his policy in his book entitled *Agriculture and Patriotism*, a collection of newspaper articles, "It will always be one of the most primary and imperative duty to guard the land from encroachment by individuals and group of individuals; and further, to the best of its ability, to see that it is alienated in the manner most nicely calculated to promote the prosperity of the Island and the highest interest of its inhabitants."

The earliest colonisation was at Minneriya where Sinhalese peasants were settled. Then, Tamils were settled in Kilinochchi, in the northern province and the Sinhalese were settled in Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura. The attempts seemed fair and no one protested.

With the Gal Oya project, taken up in 1949, everything changed. The government renamed the Tamil village of Paddipalai Aru to Gal Oya. This raised the ire of the Tamils. The Federal Party, which had just been formed, took up the issue. It launched a massive stir against the re-naming and stepped up its campaign when the government moved in Sinhala colonists. Amirthalingam was in the forefront of the propaganda campaign. He visited each one of the Tamil and Muslim villages in the Kalmuni and Sammanthurai electorates and organised Federal branches. He explained to the people the dangers of Sinhala colonisation and how it was going to

affect the Tamils and the Muslims. The Sinhalese had formed only 4.5 per cent in 1948 in the Kalmunai district. From 1950 the percentage of the Sinhalese began to climb rapidly. In 1990, their percentage was 38 percent, thus making them the largest community in the Kalmunai district later renamed Digamadulla.

The Federal Party staged its first demonstration in January 1950, barely a month after its formation, when Lord Soulbury, the first Governor General of Ceylon, paid an official visit to Jaffna. It issued a leaflet titled "Boycott the visit of the enemy of the Tamil people", and called upon the Tamil people not to receive him. It claimed that the unitary constitution, recommended by the Soulbury Commission, was the root cause for the discriminatory policies the Senanayake government was following.

The Federal Party organised a public meeting at the Jaffna Town Hall for 22 January for which deposit money was paid and permission obtained from the municipal authorities. But on the day of the meeting they found padlocks hanging from the Town Hall doors and armed police placed on guard. Not to be outdone, the Federalists held their meeting at a nearby garage and denounced the government's citizenship and colonisation policies. Amirthalingam was one of the speakers.

The recommendation of a change in the design of the national flag in March 1950 added another grievance to the Tamils. The committee, appointed by Senanayake, recommended the adoption of the Sinhala flag as the national flag, with the addition of two stripes of green and yellow to represent the Muslims and Tamils. Tamils felt slighted. The Federal Party took up their cause.

The Federal Party's national convention was held in Trincomalee on 12, 13, 14 and 15 April, 1951. Chelvanayakam,

in his presidential address, spoke on the four grievances of the Tamils - denial of adequate share of power, citizenship, colonisation and the national flag - and advocated the establishment of an autonomous region for the Tamil areas within a federal Ceylon as the only viable solution.

Chelvanayakam said, "Some safeguards are essential for the continued existence of a minority race in a multi-racial state. The first is its numerical strength. The second is its territory. Both these pre-requisites are being attacked by the UNP government. Its disfranchisement of seven lakh Indian Tamils had reduced the voting strength of the Tamils by almost half. It is now robbing the Tamils of their territory."

He said that the first batch of 300 settlers in Gal Oya were Sinhalese. Of the 25,000 persons selected for settlement, only 7000 were to be from the Eastern Province. The Ministry of Agriculture had hinted that even that number would have to be reduced. Chelvanayakam predicted that at the rate things were moving, Kalmunai district would be converted into a Sinhala district and Muslims, who formed the majority, would be reduced to a minority.

He said, "Today it's Gal Oya. Tomorrow it will be Kantalai, then Padaviya, Vavuniya, Mannar and so on. Gal Oya is the beginning of a process which will reduce the Tamils and Muslims to minority communities in the areas they live."

The convention passed seven resolutions - on the Tamil speaking people's unchallengeable title to nationhood, on the irrational character of the Soulbury Constitution, on citizenship, on the danger that awaits the Tamil language, on colonisation, the national flag, and on the determination to establish a Tamil linguistic state.

Amirthalingam made his mark at this national convention. He was allocated the task of exposing Ponnambalam's

political activities. In an hour-long speech at the public meeting that followed the convention, Amirthalingam asked Ponnambalam, "Churchill is said to have pledged not to preside over the dissolution of the British empire. I ask Ponnambalam: Why are you cooperating with the government that is systematically destroying the Tamil-speaking people? Are you presiding over the destruction of the Tamil race?"

Amirthalingam was made responsible for organising the boycott of Prime Minister D.S.Senanayake's visit to Jaffna at the end of 1951. He organised an effective campaign, had large wall posters printed which he plastered all over Jaffna. The boycott, however, failed. Ponnambalam was able to organise a big crowd to receive the prime minister.

D.S.Senanayake died on 21 March 1952 when he fell off his horse. It was his custom to take a pre-breakfast ride on Galle Face Green in Colombo with Ponnambalam and Sir Richard Aluwihare, the Inspector General of Police. When Senanayake's horse suddenly broke into a gallop from a canter, he fell off the saddle and somersaulted twice before he alighted on his side. He was taken to a nursing home where he died after remaining unconscious for thirty-two hours.

His son Dudley Senanayake formed the government when he was called on to do so by Governor General Lord Soulbury. It is said that Lord Soulbury had acted on an understanding he had reached with D.S.Senanayake who had wanted his son to follow him. This angered John Kotalawela, the senior member of the cabinet, who was believed to have authored the then-famous "Premier Stakes". The other senior member, Bandaranaike, had resigned in 1951 and formed the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Bandaranaike had accused D.S.Senanayake of pushing him out to make way for his nephew Sir John. But as circumstances proved, D.S.Senanayake had actually planned the way for his son Dudley.

Dudley called a general election, saying he wanted the sanction of the people to carry on in power and cashed in richly on the fund of sympathy his father's sudden death had created. The Federal Party fielded seven candidates against the seven who contested for the Tamil Congress. Amirthalingam vied for Vaddukoddai and was pitted against the powerful sitting candidate K.Kanagaratnam. Only two FP members won the election, C.Vanniyasingham in Kopay and N.E.Rajavarothayam in Trincomalee. Chelvanayakam was defeated by S.Natesan, who staged a comeback. Ponnambalam won in Jaffna, but with reduced majority. Two Independents, whom the FP supported, won the Batticoloa and Kalkuda seats. Both these MPs - Kadirkamar and Sivagnanam - joined the UNP, Kadirkamar the very next day after the election.

Unlike the 1947 election, the 1952 election generated communalism in the south. Dudley had to tackle Bandaranaike's SLFP which enjoyed extremist Sinhala support and the leftists who controlled the organised working class. Inaugurating the UNP election campaign at the sacred Buddhist centre Kelaniya, Dudley thundered, "The Sama Samajists and the Communists are embracing the Indians as comrades ... I want to remind you that the Indian government threatened to give no rice supplies to Ceylon if the land of Knavesmere estate was not given to 400 Indian workers." The Indian High Commission in Colombo denied this allegation. The communal virus released during this election infected the body politic of Ceylon.

The 1952 election demonstrated the impact of the citizenship laws on Tamil representation. The Ceylon Indian Congress, which had won six seats in 1947, won none this time. The strength of the leftists, too, had dwindled. The Sinhala representation in the 1952 parliament, percentage-wise, rose to 82 against 75 in 1947.

The loss of representation awakened the Indian Tamils, who decided to launch a *satyagraha* movement to regain their lost rights. The *satyagraha* was launched on 28 April 1952. A procession of 41 volunteers, led by S.Thondaman and Abdul Aziz, marched from the Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC) head office at 213 Main Street, Pettah, towards the prime minister's office in the Senate Building at Fort. The procession was stopped at York Street, the leaders taken in a police van and dropped off at Wellawatte. The *satyagraha* continued for 140 days and was withdrawn when the government failed to give in.

The decision to withdraw the *satyagraha* was taken at the Hatton sessions of the CIC, which also decided to reverse its earlier boycott decision and asked the Indian Tamils to apply for citizenship. About 850,000 persons sent in their application in the next three months.

Dudley continued his father's colonisation policy. He started the Padaviya and Kantalai schemes where he settled Sinhala farmers. Federal Party MPs Vanniasingham and Rajavarothayam strongly criticised these schemes and charged the UNP government of trying to reduce the Tamils into a minority in their traditional homelands. The FP also passed a special resolution demanding the government to end this policy at its second national convention held in January 1953 in Jaffna.

This convention also saw the formation of the Federal Party Youth Front. The moving force behind it was T.Arunachalam of Kokuvil. The Front was inaugurated by Chelvanayakam on Thai Pongal day (14 January 1953). Amirthalingam was unanimously elected its president. The Youth Front staged a drama depicting the story of the last Tamil king, Sangilian, who ruled from Nallur.

The prosperity that Ceylon had enjoyed since the Second World War ended in 1952 with the termination of the Korean war. The country's external assets had dwindled drastically and the rubber market had slumped. Dudley sent Trade Minister R.G.Senanayake to China who managed to clinch a Rice-Rubber Pact with China. But that too failed to stem the tide. The Central Bank Governor, John Dexter, reported to the cabinet in early 1953 the precarious state of the foreign exchange position and recommended the removal of the rice subsidy as a corrective measure. Finance Minister J.R.Jayewardene supported Dexter's recommendation and the government decided to raise the price of rice from 25 cents to 70 cents a measure.

There was uproar in parliament. The left political parties decided to call a *hartal*. The Federal Party supported the call. Amirthalingam was put in charge of organising the *hartal* in Tamil areas. It was a tremendous success. This acted as a morale booster to the Federal Party which had been discouraged by its 1952 election performance. The *hartal*, which began on 12 August 1953, was observed for three days. A parliamentary official who had been sent by Dudley to report on the crowd was accidentally shot and killed by the police. When this was reported, Dudley fainted and was carried out of parliament. Once the protests subsided, Dudley resigned, taking responsibility for the happenings. Sir John Kotalawela was sworn in as prime minister and his short reign saw the beginnings of another emotional dispute - language.

Chapter 4

The Language Issue

I vividly recall the unusual drama with which Sir John Kotalawela's tenure of office commenced. He had not forgiven Ponnambalam for supporting Dudley's candidature after D.S.Senanayake's sudden death. He now had the power to punish him and he decided to hand it out with a damaging dose of humiliation. He reappointed Ponnambalam as Minister of Industries, Industrial Research and Fisheries, the office he had held since 1948, and then promptly sacked him within a few days. This deeply eroded Ponnambalam's standing within the Tamil community. What Sir John had failed to recognise was that many such actions of his helped to weaken the pro-government group and destroy the Tamil section which supported the UNP. Sir John thus played into the hands of the Federal Party.

The second mistake was when Finance Minister Jayewardene proposed the vote of thanks in Sinhala and English, and not in Tamil, after Queen Elizabeth addressed a joint session of parliament when she visited Ceylon in 1954. The Tamils felt slighted and hurt.

The third was his stringent action against Indian Tamils. He placed greater restrictions on residence permit holders, made the granting of citizenship to the spouse of a citizen a discretionary power, and also made a provision for the cancellation of citizenship to those who committed crimes, political or otherwise. He threatened to amend the Immigration and Emigration Act to control illicit immigration and to throw the burden of proof on the accused. Indiscriminate arrests and detention of Indians on the pretext that they were illicit immigrants annoyed India.

Indian High Commissioner C.C.Desai arranged a meeting between Sir John and Nehru in January 1954 to sort out these irritants. Opposition leader Bandaranaike accompanied Sir John to New Delhi. Nehru also invited members of the Ceylon Indian Congress to brief him. Thondaman, Aziz and Somasundaram were part of the CIC delegation. The two delegations, after three days of talks, signed an agreement on 18 January.

The agreement, referred to as the Nehru-Kotalawela Agreement, which, unfortunately, was never implemented by Ceylon, had two parts. The first was on illicit immigration which India promised to take steps to stop. Ceylon, on its part, was to prepare and update a register of all adult residents of Indian origin. If a person's name was not in the register, he or she would be regarded an illicit immigrant unless there was proof to the contrary. India agreed to Ceylon amending the Immigration and Emigration Act to enable the passing of the onus of proof to the accused.

The second was on citizenship. Ceylon undertook to dispose of citizenship applications within two years. Agreement was also reached on placing registered citizens on a separate electoral roll, who would be given the right to elect four MPs. The question of residence permit holders was also sorted out. They and persons with Indian citizenship would be permitted to work in Ceylon till the age of 55.

Whilst the Ceylon Indian Congress welcomed the agreement and Thondaman expressed the hope that Ceylonese authorities would implement the agreement fairly, the Federal Party expressed opposition, saying that all Tamils of Indian origin should be made citizens of Ceylon.

Sir John showed no keenness in solving the country's economic problems. His main interest was in building up his public image. He earned wide popularity when he reduced the price of rice from 70 cents to 45 cents a measure. He exploited

Queen Elizabeth's visit to his own benefit, clashed with Nehru at the Bandung Conference and manipulated the press to portray him as a "weeraya". The Lake House newspapers, which supported him, called him "Bandung Weeraya".

Queen Elizabeth's visit earned him tremendous popularity among the Sinhalese people, though it earned him the opposition of a section of the Tamil people annoyed over Jayewardene's failure to propose the vote of thanks also in Tamil. The Federal Party took up that issue when Sir John visited Jaffna in late 1954. It announced a boycott.

Government officials and UNP supporters had organised a grand reception and Sir John was driven in a gaily decorated car to the civic reception at the Jaffna Municipal compound. He was elated and even went to the extent of embracing a government agent to show his appreciation. However, as he turned to the public with clasped hands to acknowledge their ovation, Amirthalingam, who was in the crowd, sprang up, pulled out a black flag from his shirt pocket and shouted, "Mr. Prime Minister, go back, Mr. Prime Minister, go back". Over fifty youths began to chant the slogan. Sir John was taken aback. The police sprang into action and attacked the crowd. Amirthalingam was hit on the shoulder. That was his first taste of police assault. It was also Jaffna's first black flag demonstration.

The black flag demonstration had not only shaken Sir John but had also shaken Jaffna's UNP supporters. They pressurised Sir John to clearly declare UNP's language policy. Extremist voices were beginning to be heard in the SLFP and UNP camps about enthroning Sinhala. Tamils had begun to fear a fatal shift from the then-accepted policy of parity for Sinhala and Tamil.

The State Council had accepted the position of parity on 29 May 1944 when it adopted a resolution proposed by

J.R. Jayewardene to announce Sinhala as the official language of Ceylon. Education Minister Kannangara had moved an amendment to declare both Sinhala and Tamil as official languages. Jayewardene accepted the amendment which was adopted by 29 votes to 8.

The amended resolution read:

"That, with the object of making Sinhalese and Tamil the official languages of Ceylon within a reasonable number of years, this Council is of the opinion:

- (a) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made the media of instruction in all schools;
- (b) That Sinhalese and Tamil should be made compulsory subjects in all public examinations;
- (c) That Legislation should be introduced to permit the business of the State Council to be conducted in Sinhalese and Tamil;
- (d) That a Commission be appointed to choose for translation and translate important books of other languages into Sinhalese and Tamil;
- (e) That a Commission should be appointed to report on all steps that need to be taken to effect the transition from English into Sinhalese and Tamil.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Minister of Local Government, supporting the amendment, said, ... I do not see that there would be any harm at all in recognising the Tamil language also as an official language. It is necessary to bring about this unity, that confidence among the various communities which we are all trying to achieve within reasonable limits. Therefore, I have no personal objection to both these languages being considered official languages; nor do I see any particular harm or danger or real difficulty arising from it."

No action, however, was taken on the resolution. On 23 July 1951, Bandaranaike again raised the matter in parliament. He accused the government of dilly-dallying with the language issue and urged it to come out with a definite language policy. He was preparing, one can say on hindsight, the ground for his future political onslaught and conditioning the public for his exit from the UNP government.

It was in this environment that UNP Tamils pressurised Sir John for an assurance that he would follow the policy of parity between the Sinhala and Tamil languages. A direct request for a policy definition came from Handy Perinpanayagam, a former principal of the Kokuvil Hindu College, at the reception accorded to Sir John by the residents of Kokuvil, when he said, "A lot of misgiving is now prevailing among the people about the language policy of the UNP. We appeal to you, Sir, to make your policy clear." Sir John assured the Tamil public that UNP's policy of parity of status for Sinhala and Tamil languages continued. He went further and said that arrangements would be soon made to afford constitutional recognition for both languages.

That statement upset the hornet's nest. Bandaranaike led the Sinhala protest. Sinhala organisations like the Tri Sinhala Peramuna, Basha Peramuna, the Bhikku Mandalaya raised their ugly heads. Sinhala chauvinists in the UNP, too, exerted pressure on Sir John to retract his statement. He succumbed. He issued a denial to the Kokuvil statement. But that did not settle the issue. Language extremism grew. The direct victims were the leftists. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) organised a public meeting at the Colombo Town Hall to campaign for language parity. It was broken up by Sinhala extremists and LSSP leaders beaten up.

The LSSP was not easily subdued. Its leader, Dr. N.M. Perera, moved a motion in parliament in 1955 calling for an immediate amendment to the Constitution: "... to provide for the Sinhalese and Tamil languages to be State Languages

of Ceylon with parity of status throughout the island." The UNP and the SLFP did not support the motion. Sir John avoided the real issue by saying that communalism should not be allowed to raise its head. But Bandaranaike made use of the debate to wriggle out of his earlier position on parity by saying that when they spoke on the language question in the State Council in 1944, they "... did not bring their minds to bear on the question of Sinhalese versus Tamil" as their "... minds were really fixed at the time on the question of English versus Swabasha."

From then onwards language became a political weapon for the UNP and the SLFP. It was a question of one trying to outdo the other in capturing the massive Sinhala Buddhist vote bank. In 1955 the Kotalawela government came out with a new policy for the medium of instruction and of administration as a means of winning Sinhala support. The two points of the policy were:

- (a) Every child born of Sinhalese parents must be taught in Sinhalese, every child born of Tamil parents must be taught in Tamil, every Burgher child in English and every Muslim child in English, Sinhalese or Tamil; and
- (b) From 1958 onwards, examinations for recruitment to the Public Services, like the Clerical Service, will be in Sinhalese or Tamil, and from 1962 onwards, no recruitment can take place in English.

The SLFP countered this by raising the slogan 'Sinhala Only in 24 hours'. It made the 'Sinhala Only' issue its main election plank. The connotation of the concept 'Sinhala Only' slowly shrank to denote the 'Sinhala educated sector'. It became the rallying point of all Sinhalese who were not English-educated. This included the Bhikkus, the Sinhala teachers and the ayurvedic physicians and who, in time, emerged into prominence. Bandaranaike, with his national costume, became the symbol of this revival.

The SLFP adopted 'Sinhala Only' as its policy at its annual session held in December 1955. Bandaranaike, who moved the resolution, added a proviso. He said that if his party was elected in the forthcoming general election, he would enact legislation to make Sinhala the official language. He would also make provision for the reasonable use of Tamil, which would be given equal status in parliament. Laws would also be enacted in both languages. Tamil would be the language of administration and of courts in the northern and eastern provinces. Education would be in Sinhala and Tamil, with parents free to choose the medium of instruction of their children.

The UNP adopted the 'Sinhala Only' policy at its Kelaniya session in February 1956. That inflicted a rude shock to the Tamil members. Natesan warned that the unity of Ceylon would be in peril if such a policy was adopted. He broke down at the end of his speech and announced, as he walked away, that he was resigning from the party. Other Tamil members followed suit. That almost ended the era of Tamil participation in national political parties.

The Federal Party emerged the symbol of Tamil reaction to Sinhala nationalism. Both sections of the country - Sinhala and Tamil - started to move in parallel tracks of national revivalism. Both began breaking away from the shackles of colonialism, foisted on them through the English language and the English-educated elite. Both wanted to give pride of place to their respective languages, to their religion, their culture, their racial identity. The failure of the Sinhala leadership to recognise and accommodate Tamil nationalism was the cause of the trauma the country experienced and continues to experience to this day.

The 'Sinhala Only' resolutions by the SLFP and the UNP hurt and disillusioned the Tamils. A feeling of being let down swept through the Tamil mind. Tamils were disenchanted with the leadership which preached cooperation with

the Sinhalese. The Federal Party cashed in on that disenchantment by organising a *hartal* in the northern and eastern provinces on 20 February 1956, against the 'Sinhala Only' policy of the UNP and the SLFP. It was a great success. The Tamil community discarded the Ponnambalam camp and moved into that of the Federal Party.

An attempt was made at this time to form a united front of all Tamil political parties. The Federal Party appointed a 5-member committee, headed by Chelvanayakam, to conduct the negotiations.

Sir John called for a surprise general election in April 1956, even though his government had time till May 1957. He had misjudged the mood of the Sinhala people. He thought that the adoption of the 'Sinhala Only' cry by the UNP was sufficient to win him the election. He was so confident of his victory that he told his ministers that they would celebrate Buddha Jayanthi - the event to mark the 2500th anniversary of the Enlightenment of Lord Buddha - after his return to power.

Bandaranaike, under the banner of the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP), confronted him with a united front of nationalist and leftist parties. Whilst the MEP and UNP contested on the 'Sinhala Only' policy, the MEP promised the reasonable use of Tamil; not so the UNP. The LSSP and CP were for parity.

The Federal Party fielded 14 candidates in all electorates in the northern and eastern provinces: Amirthalingam contested the Vaddukoddai seat, Chelvanayakam vied for Kankesanthurai, and S. Rajadurai contested Batticaloa. The bulk of the campaign fell on Amirthalingam and Rajadurai. Both were powerful orators.

In his campaign for a federal set-up within the unity and integrity of Ceylon, Amirthalingam told a meeting, held on 30 March 1956, "Experience in the multi-lingual and multi-racial

countries of the world had shown that only a federal form of government could solve the vexed problem of the official language while safeguarding the integrity and unity of the country. In Ceylon, a federal arrangement will safeguard the interests of all people, especially those whose mother tongue is not Sinhalese and whose religion is not Buddhism."

The Federal Party won ten seats, including that of Amirthalingam's. The MEP swept the polls, winning 51 of the 95 elected seats; the UNP was reduced to only 8 seats. On the victory of the MEP, Amirthalingam commented, "The victory of the MEP in the south of Ceylon has one significance to the Tamil people. The Sinhalese are not prepared to tolerate the leaders who say one thing to the Tamils and another to the Sinhalese." This comment was a reference to the then-widespread story that Sir John had told Tamils that he would look after their interest after the elections.

Bandaranaike formed his cabinet on 12 April. There was not a single Tamil in his ministry. Amirthalingam commented at a public meeting, held at the Vadekamparai Marriaman Kovil premises at Tholpuram, "The first time after the achievement of independence in this country a government had come to power with one hundred per cent Sinhalese personnel. The presence of Kadugannawa MP A.C.S. Marikkar, who is more Sinhalese than the Sinhalese themselves, is not going to alter the pan-Sinhala character of the present government."

In the throne speech, Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke announced that his government's priority would be the enactment of the 'Sinhala Only' law. Bandaranaike, in a meeting with the Attorney General and the Legal Draftsman in the first week of May, gave guidelines for the Language Bill. He said that whilst he would honour the people's mandate by making 'Sinhala Only' the official language, he had to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people of the north and the east by making provisions for the reasonable use

of Tamil in those two provinces. He wanted to allow parliament to decide on a period within which the transition from English to Sinhala be effected and wanted the Bill to contain a clause which gave every citizen the right to communicate with the government in his mother tongue, in any part of the island.

When this news leaked, Prof.F.R. Jayasuriya commenced a fast to death at the parliament premises, demanding that Sinhala be made the only official language and that no concession be given to Tamil. Bandaranaike gave in and ordered that the bill be prepared accordingly.

Clause 2 of the Bill, which was introduced by Bandaranaike himself in parliament on 5 June 1956, read: "The Sinhala Language shall be the one official language of Ceylon." A transitory provision read: "Provided that the Minister considers it impracticable to commence the use of only the Sinhala language for any official purpose immediately on the coming into force of this Act, the language or languages hitherto used for that purpose may be continued to be used until the necessary change is effected as early as possible before the expiry of the thirty-first of December 1960, and, if such change cannot be effected by administrative order, regulations may be made under this Act to effect such change."

The Federal Party Working Committee met in Jaffna to consider steps it should take to signify its opposition to the Language Act, and unanimously decided to perform *satyagraha* at the steps of the parliament building. Chelvanayakam wrote to Bandaranaike on 4 June, intimating him of the decision. "Members of Parliament belonging to our Party (the Federal Party) will lead a batch of about 200 '*satyagrahis*' to sit on the steps of the western entrance to the House of Representatives, and there they will remain fasting the whole day."

Bandaranaike issued a severe warning, saying "...repressive measures will be taken in the case of any attempt

to resist the decision of the government." Chelvanayakam's reply was that repressive measures would only whet the appetite of the Tamils for freedom.

On 4 June, contingents of volunteers were brought by train from Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and housed in the Bambalapitya Vinayagar temple premises. Volunteers from Colombo joined them the next morning. They were briefed by V.Navaratnam, who later became the MP for Kayts and broke away to form his own party which advocated separation. The volunteers assembled at Galle Face Green on the morning of 5 June.

The *satyagrahis* were received by about 100 Tamils. The former formed a double file, sung devotional songs, held aloft placards and commenced their walk towards the parliament building. Chelvanayakam and Vanniasingham walked in front, followed by other MPs. A crowd of about 500 Sinhala extremists, who had been waiting, pounced on them, tore up the placards and used the poles to beat them up. The *satyagrahis* were pushed, kicked, trampled and spat on, and their clothes torn. Vanniasingham lost his national vest and was dragged some distance by his feet; Suntharalingam was assaulted; Amirthalingam was struck on his head and sustained a bleeding injury. Ponnambalam was spared because the men of one of his clients formed a human chain around him, preventing anyone from touching him. Naganathan, a well-built medical practitioner, abandoned his *ahimsa* when five men attacked him, and used his fists and feet to drive them away.

I joined Lake House as a journalist eight months after this incident, but got first-hand account from A.L.M.Kiyas, one of the senior journalists who had covered parliament that day, and from Sellapah Nadarajah who covered the *satyagraha* at Galle Face Green. Vanniasingham told me a year later that what had pained him most was the presence in the crowd of two of his parliamentary colleagues -K.M.P.Rajaratna and

Nimal Karunatilke - who, he said, had pointed out the FP leaders to the Sinhalese attackers.

The police arrived on the scene and drove the mob towards the Galle Face Centre Road. The *satyagrahis* regrouped and marched towards parliament. The crowd hooted at them and pelted stones. When the police did not allow the *satyagrahis* beyond the northern end of the Galle Face Green, they down sat there but had to abandon their *satyagraha* when torrential showers came down.

About 18 volunteers were injured, including Amirthalingam and Navaratnam. Eight were treated at the Out-Patient Department of the Colombo General Hospital. Amirthalingam was taken into the parliament chamber by Suntharalingam. He was greeted by Bandaranaike with the comment, "Honourable wounds of war."

Violence spread to some parts of Colombo and to Gal Oya. In Colombo there were isolated incidents of attacks on pedestrians, but in Gal Oya it was an organised attack. Tamil officers were attacked, some were killed, the houses of Tamil settlers were burnt down and their goods looted. A group went on to attack the historic Tamil village of Thuraineelavanai. The village youth defended their village and used shot guns to chase them away. A police jeep that went there was chased away. That was the first instance of armed resistance by the Tamil youth and the Gal Oya riot was the first of a series of anti-Tamil riots. The government clamped down Emergency to prevent the spread of violence. This was the first of a series of violence let loose against the Tamils and resulted in over 150 deaths and heavy loss of property. Tamils were chased away from most parts of the Gal Oya settlement.

The parliament passed the Sinhala Only Act in the early hours of 15 June by a vote of 56 to 29. The Federal Party and the leftists put up a stiff verbal fight. LSSP stalwart Dr. Colvin R. de Silva made a prophetic warning: "Two

languages will help build a single nation and a single language two nations." Chelvanayakam appealed to the Sinhalese people not to force the Tamil people to demand a separate state. Amirthalingam said, "Tamil youths would never accept the Sinhala language."

An MP countered, "We will force it down your throat."

Amirthalingam shot back, "I will spit it back on your face."

The MP was dumbfounded.

The Federal Party took the opposition to the Tamil people. It organised the 'Thirumalai Yatra' (March to Trincomalee) to coincide with its fourth national convention. Chelvanayakam wrote to Bandaranaike, informing him of the party's decision. Bandaranaike threatened to ban it; Chelvanayakam said he was prepared to defy it. Bandaranaike relented and gave permission for the march.

The march started from four points. The processions from Kayts and Point Pedro merged at Jaffna and marched together. The procession from Thirukovil marched through Batticaloa to Trincomalee. The procession from Mannar wended its way through Vavuniya. The march lasted ten days and the convention three days, 17-19 April. In his presidential address, Vanniasingham warned the MEP government of the dire consequences the country would face due to its short-sighted policy. He appealed to the Tamil people to stop studying Sinhala and demonstrate their opposition to the imposition of the Sinhala language. He also said that the future of the Tamil people lay in agriculture and not in government service.

The convention decided to place a 4-point demand before the government and give it one year to take the necessary steps for its implementation. If it failed to respond, direct action would be launched. The four demands were:

1. The establishment of an autonomous Tamil state or states on a linguistic basis within a federal union of Ceylon.
2. The restoration of the Tamil language to its rightful place, enjoying absolute parity of status with Sinhalese as an official language of this country.
3. The restoration of the citizenship and franchise rights to the Tamil workers in the plantation districts by the repeal of the present citizenship laws; and
4. The immediate cessation of all policies of colonising the traditionally Tamil-speaking areas with Sinhalese people.

The paragraph which served an ultimatum to the government read, "The convention also laid down that unless the Prime Minister and the Government of Ceylon took necessary steps to constitute a Federal Union of Ceylon by the 20th day of August 1957, the party would launch direct action by non-violent means for the achievement of the above objectives."

The government's reaction was provocative. On 1 January 1957, it ordered the registration letter of motor vehicles number plate be changed to the Sinhala letter 'Sri' instead 'CEY', then in use. Tamils reacted angrily. They considered that an imposition of Sinhala on Tamils.

The anti-Sri campaign was the result of an impulsive action by Amirthalingam. He was in Jaffna when a fleet of Ceylon Transport Board buses with the Sinhala 'Sri' lettering reached Jaffna bus stand. He went with a group of youths and tarred the Sinhala letters. He did it on his own, without the approval of the Working Committee; the Working Committee later adopted this as its mode of demonstrating opposition.

The Federal Party launched its anti-Sri campaign on 19 January 1957 in Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Federal Party and Tamil Congress leader went on

a motorcade with their vehicle number plates carrying Tamil letterings. The Tamil Congress participated only on the first day, but the Federal Party continued the "Anti-Sri Campaign". Though the leaders and volunteers went about with Tamil-lettered number plates, the police did not take any action. This prompted the FP to expand the campaign. Volunteers were posted at important junctions, who stopped passing vehicles and changed the number plate letterings into Tamil. Still the police was told not to take any action.

Amirthalingam played an important part in the anti-Sri campaign. He issued an appeal to the Tamil people to continue the protest against the imposition of the Sinhala language through the number plates. When Bandaranaike spoke on the need to strengthen world democracy, Amirthalingam quipped, "If Bandaranaike had faith in democracy, he would have enthusiastically discussed the language problem with the Tamil-speaking people and considered their claims carefully before trying to strengthen world democracy." When Ponnambalam pulled out of the anti-Sri campaign and criticised the FP for continuing it, Amirthalingam commented, "G.G.Ponnambalam only recites the hymn of hate against the federalists."

The Federal Party decided to stage a *hartal* on 4 February, the independence day. It issued an appeal to the Tamil people to observe that day as a day of mourning. They were told to close shops and fly black flags. On the morning of the fourth of February, all cities in the north and east wore a deserted look. Shops did not open; black flags fluttered on private buildings and across streets. Around nine o'clock, armed police went round the bazaars ordering the shops to open. The Women Front of the Federal Party, led by Komathy Vanniasingham, went round the shops appealing to the owners to close them again. They performed *satyagraha* opposite the shops that refused to close. At the end of the day Amirthalingam issued a press statement calling the *hartal* a complete success.

"We have unmistakably demonstrated to the government the depth of the feeling of the Tamil people. It's now up to the government to initiate action to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people," he said.

The hartal, which was otherwise peaceful, was marred when a Federal Party volunteer, Natarajan, was gunned down by an unknown Sinhala man as he climbed the Trincomalee clock tower to hoist a black flag. That was the first communal killing in Trincomalee.

The anti-Sri campaign and the *hartal* produced a counter-reaction in Sinhala areas. A tar-brush campaign was launched. Tamil letterings on street names and name boards were tarred. There were even instances of violence. The Federal Party and the Tamils answered with a boycott of Sinhala ministers who visited the north and east. The first victim was Deputy Minister of Labour, M.P. de Zoysa. He had travelled by night mail to Jaffna to attend the annual conference of the Minority Tamil Mahasabha. When he emerged from the Jaffna station, he found his path blocked by *satyagrahis*, led by Amirthalingam. De Zoysa had to return to Colombo by the afternoon Yal Devi express.

The same evening when Amirthalingam was at the Federal Party headquarters in Jaffna, the driver of Parthirana's car wanted to meet him. When told that Amirthalingam was not there, the man told C. Ponnambalam, a former mayor of Jaffna, who was present at the FP headquarters, that he wanted to stab Amirthalingam. Pathirana, was a prominent Sinhala businessman who had settled in Jaffna.

"Why do you want to stab Amirthalingam?" Ponnambalam had asked.

"Look at my cheek, Sir," the man said as he showed his plastered cheek. "Two youths assaulted me for taking Pathirana's car to drive the minister to the Town Hall. Those youth had been instigated by Amirthalingam."

Amirthalingam told the police when they arrived at the FP office, "After informing me of what the driver had told Mr. Ponnambalam, the two youth searched the driver in my presence. He had a clasp knife in his pocket." That was the first attempt on Amirthalingam's life.

Other ministers who visited Tamil areas also faced angry receptions. Ministers Dahanayake and Marrikar received a stormy reception at Batticaloa. Finance Minister Stanley de Soysa was greeted by black flag-waving FP volunteers when he visited Mannar.

Sensing the militant mood of the Tamils and realising the danger the escalation of the Tamil-Sinhala conflict would pose the country, Bandaranaike adopted conciliatory measures. On 25 April, he introduced a bill in parliament for the reasonable use of Tamil and offered to appoint a Parliamentary Select Committee to consider amendments to the Constitution, including the demand for federalism.

Common friends met FP leaders in early May and arranged meetings with the government on a possible settlement. Education Minister Badi-ud-din Mahmood and a leading lawyer S. Navaratnarajah played a key role in bringing both parties together. The first meeting was held at Bandaranaike's ancestral home in Horogolla.

Segera, who covered the entire talks for the *Daily News*, reported how Bandaranaike went up to Chelvanayakam's car when it arrived and helped him to get out of the car. Chelvanayakam said, as he held Bandaranaike's hand, "Banda, I agreed to meet you after considerable thought. You must do something to solve this problem. If we fail to solve this problem now, after our death, it will cause great havoc to the country."

Bandaranaike thought for a while and replied, "I see your point, Chelva. I will do something to solve it."

Bandaranaike opened the meeting and told the FP not to worry about the Sinhala Only Act as it would take many years for it to be implemented. He informed them that he

himself could not read and write in Sinhala, and joked, "Don't worry. I am not going to implement it till I can read and write and you know I'm a slow learner." When Chelvanayakam pointed out the fears of the Tamil people, Bandaranaike readily accepted his position and assured him that Tamils would not be made foreigners in their own country.

Chelvanayakam said that Tamil fears could only be set at rest by a federal administration where the Tamils managed their own affairs. Navaratnam reminded the prime minister that the federal concept came into the minds of the Tamil politicians after his (Bandaranaike's) 1936 speech and article on federalism. Bandaranaike remarked that had been his opinion then, but he had to honour the mandate he got in the 1956 elections. Vanniasingham and Naganathan drew the prime minister's attention to the Choksy Report on decentralisation of administration and his own gazetted draft scheme for Regional Councils when he was minister of Local Government. They said the draft legislation lacked 'teeth'. Bandaranaike asked the FP delegation to submit a draft on Regional Councils with 'teeth'.

The FP sent a draft within two weeks. It was based on the Northern Ireland constitution which reserved the subjects of External Affairs, Defence, Currency and Stamps, Customs, Inter-Regional Transport, to the British parliament and vested the rest with the Northern Ireland government, that the northern and eastern provinces of the island be constituted into a regional council and it be voted a block grant from the central government at Colombo, to be supplemented by domestic taxation. Police would be a regional subject and the central government would have a Minister of Tamil Affairs.

Bandaranaike wanted the draft to be put down in the form of points and warned that they must not use words like 'parliament', 'cabinet', which carried the notion of a separate state. The FP sent a note as per his directions.

The third and final meeting took place on the night of 27 June 1957, at the prime minister's office in the Senate building. The entire local and foreign press was there. The talks began at 7 pm and went on till 2.30 am. Joe Segera of the *Daily News* covered it again.

After a 2-hour session, the negotiating teams came out for a meeting with the press and had tea with them. Amirthalingam said to Bandaranaike, "Sir, though we are demanding federalism, we are ready to settle for much less. some sort of autonomy."

Bandaranaike turned towards Chelvanayakam and asked, "Chelva, do you accept what Amir said?"

"He is the voice of the youth," Chelvanayakam replied. "He is prepared to compromise and accept much less. I am an old man; you must try to satisfy the youth."

"I am seriously concerned about this problem," Bandaranaike remarked. "I am prepared to find a settlement. I talked to Dudley. He's also agreeable. The difficulty is with I.R. and his group."

The men returned to the prime minister's office and the meeting resumed once again. After 2.30 am, Bandaranaike and Stanley de Soysa emerged out of the cabinet room, smiling, "My friends, I am sorry to have kept all of you awake," Bandaranaike apologised. "But it is a historic night for you, for us and for the country."

Ranji Handy, one of the reporters, impatiently asked, "Tell us the result."

Stanley de Soysa announced, "We have reached an agreement."

Bandaranaike turned to Chelvanayakam and said, "Chelva, they won't believe till they hear from you."

Chelvanayakam said us that an agreement had been worked out and that the Prime Minister would hand over copies of the agreement to the press.

Bandaranaike wanted to know whether they had the time to publish the full text in that day's newspapers. Reporters informed him that they had made special arrangements to print the agreement.

They asked Naganathan whether he was satisfied with the outcome. "I'm pleased," he said. Vanniasingham, Rajavorothiam and Amirthalingam also expressed happiness.

All newspapers carried the agreement in full. The *Thinakaran* and the *Daily News* headlined it as a historic agreement to solve the Sinhala-Tamil issue.

The agreement, which later came to be referred to as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957 (see Appendix 1 for full text), comprised of two parts.

Part A was a summary of the record of the discussions. It recorded the prime minister's position that it was not possible for him to accede to FP's demand for federalism and regional autonomy and to abrogate the Sinhala Only Act. The FP stated that it was not possible for it to abandon or surrender any of its objectives. Within these fixed positions, the two sides looked for some workable adjustments. They agreed to look into the government's draft Regional Councils Bill and make provision under it to meet some of FP's concerns. Regarding language it was agreed to recognise Tamil as the language of the national minorities and that the administration of the north and east be carried in Tamil. Bandaranaike agreed to look into the question of citizenship. In view of these, the FP announced the withdrawal of its proposed *satyagraha* campaign.

Part B was the agreement reached on Regional Councils. The northern province was to be formed into one region and the eastern province into two or more regions. Amalgamation of two or more regions be permitted even beyond provincial limits. The provincial councillors were to be elected by the people and the government would devolve

powers to these councils. The powers to be devolved were also worked out. Colonisation was one such power. The Central Government would provide finance by way of block grants.

One evening, in the second week of July, my senior, Sellapa Nadarajah, took me to parliament for an interview with Chelvanayakam. While we were interviewing him in the lobby, D.B. Monnekulama and Bandaranaike came in. Seeing Chelvanayakam, Monnekulama asked, "Are you happy with the talks, Sir?"

Chelvanayakam replied, "Mr. Bandaranaike and I are creating history so that our people could live together in peace and friendship. It will be a tragedy if we fail. In another ten years Tamils will not seek autonomy. They will demand a separate state."

Bandaranaike intervened and said, "I agree with you, Chelva. But I have some difficulty with your demand for a single region for the Tamils."

Chelvanayakam warned, "Banda, today you oppose regionalism. If you fail to concede it, one day you will have to fight separation."

The Youth Front of the Federal Party rose up in arms against the pact. They called it a surrender. Amirthalingam controlled them. Speaking at a reception accorded to him at the Trincomalee Hindu College on 31 August 1957, he said, "When the pact was signed, some of us rose up in arms, but the soothing advice of our leader, Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, cooled us down. We are waiting for the implementation of the pact. If the pact is not implemented in accordance with the spirit of the agreement, we would not lose any time to revive our struggle and to fight for the birthright of the Tamils."

The reception was given on the eve of Amirthalingam's departure to London to attend the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference. That was his first trip abroad. Speaking after his trip, he told a public meeting at Saraswathy Vidyalayam,

Araly, "My trip has been altogether a useful one to the Tamil-speaking people. I was able to let the world know that there is a Tamil-speaking race in Ceylon striving to get its political rights. When the conference was over a number of delegates crowded around me and made enquiries about the conditions in Ceylon."

Deputy Minister M.P.de Zoysa charged in parliament that Amirthalingam was an extremist who was trying to send the Sinhala people out of Jaffna. Amirthalingam answered that charge in parliament and outside. In parliament he said, "We have no grouse against the Sinhalese. We are only contending the communalist forces let loose by the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna." He added, "The Federal Party never said the Sinhala people should never live in Tamil areas. What the party opposed was the planned and systematic colonisation of the traditional Tamil areas with Sinhalese."

Things took a bad turn during the closing months of 1957. The UNP, which had been licking the wounds of the 1956 election defeat, seized the B-C pact as a weapon for its re-emergence. J.R.Jayewardene, who had emerged as the most important leader of the UNP, organised a protest march to the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy in March 1958. He said it was a pilgrimage to pray for the welfare of Ceylon, which he accused Bandaranaike of selling to the Tamils. He raised the slogan that the B-C pact was a document of sale. He said the setting up of regional councils with the power to merge amounted to the creation of a separate state for the Tamils. He whipped up Sinhala frenzy. He got the UNP to print a pamphlet titled 'First Step' which claimed that one-third of Ceylon was being gifted to the Tamils.

Dudley Senanayake, who quit politics after the *hartal* of 1952, was by then nursing the hope of returning to politics. He also seized this opportunity to make his re-entry. He issued a hard-hitting statement: "I am prepared to sacrifice my life to prevent the implementation of the Bandaranaike-

Chelvanayakam agreement which is a racial division of Ceylon under the guise of the regional council system and it is an act of treachery on the part of Prime Minister Bandaranaike."

The Kandy March commenced in Colombo, with Dudley Senanayake and Jayewardene at the head of a lengthy procession. SLFP supporters pelted stones, slippers and bricks at the procession as it passed Grandpass junction in Colombo. When it reached Kelaniya bridge, the attacks intensified. The processionists retaliated. When the procession reached Imbulgoda, in the Gampaha electorate, the MP of the area, S.D.Bandaranaike, and a few of his supporters lay across the road, blocking the path. The processionists abandoned their march and spent the night in the house of a UNP supporter. Stones were pelted at them that night. The UNP leaders left for Kandy the next morning in cars and announced to the country from the precincts of the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth) that they would oppose the formation of regional councils to the end.

The Tamil Congress and the UNP Tamils started a concerted campaign against the B-C pact. Their slogan was that the Federal Party had accepted the Sinhala Only concept and had abandoned its policy of federalism. "They promised you the mountain and got you a mouse", they sloganised. That put the Federal Party on the defensive. FP president Vanniasingham, in his presidential speech at the Batticaloa Convention of 28 August 1957, defended the pact, saying, "I do not say that the Tamil language had got the status that it should get. But, by the fact that Tamil would be used in the north and the east for all administrative purposes and by the fact that the pact would end Sinhala colonisation in Tamil areas we can say the agreement will help us to lay the foundation for a future Tamil state." This statement was used by Jayewardene to whip up Sinhala suspicion.

For six months Bandaranaike failed to take action to implement the pact. This began to worry the FP leaders. They were gradually losing credibility among the Tamil public. In January 1958, a FP delegation met Bandaranaike and urged him to implement the agreement. He explained his difficulties and asked for time.

"Chelva, you understand the difficulties I am facing," Bandaranaike said.

"Banda, you must also realise the pressures I'm facing," Chelvanayakam replied.

Bandaranaike not only failed to implement the agreement, he also did two things that hurt FP's standing among the Tamils. The first was the takeover of the British naval base in Trincomalee. The Federal Party welcomed it but insisted that the interests of the Tamils employed in the naval base should be protected. Bandaranaike agreed and told Lands Minister C.P.de Silva to set apart 400 allotments in the Padaviya Colonisation scheme for the 400 Tamil families that had lost employment due to the takeover of the naval base. The Sinhalese settlers objected to Tamils being settled amongst them. Led by a monk, a gang of Sinhalese squatters came one night and occupied the eleven huts that had been put up to settle the Tamil families. They cleared the land allocated to the Tamils and occupied it. The government did not take any action. The squatters formed an Action Committee to safeguard their interests.

The Padaviya Scheme was one of the colonisation schemes started by the Bandaranaike government and implemented on a war-footing. Padaviya was the Sinhala name for the traditional Tamil village Padavivielkulam, an irrigable area in the Trincomalee district. It was planned and executed in secret but was made public by a Tamil irrigation engineer into whose hands a copy of a secret directive had fallen. The officer sent the document to Vavuniya MP C.Suntharalingam, who tabled it in parliament. The document read:

No. LC/P.10
The Kachcheri,
Anuradhapura,
19th June 1957

DIE, ND, Vavuniya

Padaviya Scheme - Transport of Colonists

About 700 colonists selected from the labourers engaged in the development works with satisfactory service of 500 days in the Irrigation Department, Survey, Land Development Department, Agricultural Corps and the Anti-Malarial Campaign will be settled in the Padaviya Scheme in the middle of July next.

2. A further batch of 434 colonists from the Colombo district will arrive with baggage and their families in about August next. All of them will arrive at the Vavuniya Railway Station and will have to be transported by lorry to the scheme over a distance of about 60 miles. I shall be glad if you will please release the lorries at your disposal for this purpose.
3. The date and time when the lorries will be required will be intimated to you by telegram in due course.
4. I shall be glad if you will please advise me early the number of lorries you will be able to release for the purpose.

Sgd.-----

for AGA.

The District Irrigation Engineer, Vavuniya, sent the following letter to Suntharalingam:

Dear Sir,

Copy of the letter sent to DIE Vavuniya is forwarded for your information. I have to mention that the above 1134 colonists and their families are Sinhalese and members of the Volunteer Force working under Mr. S.D. Bandaranaike and Philip. Not a single Tamil is among those who are selected as colonists. The application forms for the selection of labourers were sent to schemes where Sinhalese are in plenty. Many schemes where Tamils are in plenty are not sent forms, thereby Tamil labourers could not apply, e.g. the Kilinochichi Scheme was not sent any forms but they say forms have been sent. I.E. Kilinochichi has wired for forms."

Suntharalingam wrote a strong letter to Lands Minister C.P. de Silva on 22 June 1957, pointing out the legal procedure that should be followed in land alienation. Section 20 of the Land Development Ordinance laid down that a Land Kachcheri should be held by the Government Agent of the area where the land is situated. But the Government Agent, Trincomalee, under whose area Padaviya is situated, was not allowed to hold the land kachcheri. C.P. de Silva got Padaviya annexed to the North Western Province and got the government agents of NCP and Colombo to hold the land kachcheries.

Suntharalingam in his letter charged, "I charge you - You deliberately and maliciously violated the express provisions of the law. By defying the procedure set out by the Land Development Ordinance, you have prevented the Government Agent, Trincomalee, from proceeding under the law. You have made a valuable part of the Trincomalee district a part of the N.C.P. You have asked your Permanent Secretary, your Director of Irrigation, heads of your Lands and Land Development Departments and the Government Agents, other than the Government Agent concerned who is vested with the

necessary power under the law, to dispose of the land in a sly, sneaky and slimy manner."

The result was the decision of the Ministry of Public Administration to speed up the pace of the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act. This caused resentment among Tamil public servants.

While delaying the implementation of the B-C Pact, the government also showed its weakness by appeasing the men who blocked rail traffic by lying across the railway track at Ganemulla. The incident occurred on 25 February 1958, when railway security personnel were arresting ticketless travellers. Ministers were rushed from Colombo to speak to the men blocking rail traffic and, on their demand, the arrested men were released. That sent the wrong signal to the people. They were made to believe that they could take the law into their own hands.

The Ganemulla incident was an indication of the lawless environment that was surfacing in the country which Bandaranaike was powerless to contain. This brought out his main weakness: giving in to pressures. And his enemies exploited this weakness.

That is what happened to the B-C Pact too. He felt it to be a fair and honourable one and the best arrangement to resolve the racial problem. He said so at the Kelaniya session of the SLFP held on 1-2 March 1958, "In the discussions the leaders of the Federal Party had with me, an honourable solution was reached."

But when the UNP and his opponents in the SLFP organised an opposition to the pact, he succumbed to it. The intelligence services informed Bandaranaike that 200 monks had planned to march to Rosemead Place at 9 am on 9 April. All that Bandaranaike did was to order that his gates be closed and the road to his residence be barricaded with barbed wire. Undeterred, the monks sat on the road outside the barbed wire barricade and refused to budge. Some SLFP supporters threw

stones at them but the monks stood their ground. Health Minister Wimala Wijewardene went out and told the monks that a favourable reply would come, and instigated them to continue their protest.

The ministers who had gathered at the Bandaranaike home mounted pressure on him to appease the monks. Ultimately, at 4.15 pm he gave in. He walked up to the monks and worshipped them.

"I'll accede to your wishes, Sirs," he said. "I'll abrogate the pact."

"Give that in writing," one of the monks demanded.

"No," said another. "You bring the pact and tear it before us."

Bandaranaike walked back to his room and returned with the pact document. He tore it into pieces and threw them towards the monks. The Bhikkus chanted prayers and the crowd shouted, "Sadhu, Sadhu".

Bandaranaike sent word to Chelvanayakam and Naganathan to meet him the next morning. They found him distressed and distraught. He met them in his night clothes. He was in tears. He told Chelvanayakam that inter-racial clashes could not be avoided. Naganathan told me later that he felt pity for Bandaranaike. "Banda is a good fellow," he said. "He understands things. But that old man (D.S. Senanayake) had pushed him amongst wolves and he is unable to get out."

The unilateral abrogation of the pact by Bandaranaike produced strong reaction among the Tamils. The FP announced its plan to launch a *satyagraha* movement and fixed the National Convention for 23 May at Vavuniya. But the government created a situation for immediate agitation.

Sinhala "Sri" buses were again sent to Jaffna on 19 April, the day after the abrogation of the pact. On hearing this, a group of youth, led by Amirthalingam, Senator Nalliah and

a youth leader, Sritharan, went to the Jaffna bus stand and removed a Sinhala Sri number plate and affixed a Tamil Sri number plate. All three of them were arrested and produced before the Jaffna Magistrate Court. The case was fixed for 15 October 1958. Jaffna magistrate B.G.S. David sentenced them to pay a fine of Rs.25 each and, in default, two weeks simple imprisonment. Amirthalingam gave the court clerk a letter asking him not to accept any money paid on his behalf, and he was sent to jail. Nalliah and Sritharan also refused to pay the fine and were jailed. On his release, Amirthalingam was taken in procession to the Muniappar Kovil where a special pooja was held.

Between his arrest on 19 April and his trial on 15 October, many events of national significance had taken place. The first was the formation of the Youth Volunteer Corps by the Federal Party. The youth were trained in physical drill and self-defence and were detailed to give a guard of honour and maintain discipline and the services during the Vavuniya Convention. On the opening day of the convention, Amirthalingam, the founder of the Youth Volunteer Corps, party president Rajavarothayam and Senator Nalliah inspected the guard of honour. As they came down the rostrum, disturbing news began to filter in.

The first was about an attack on the Batticaloa train at Polonnaruwa. The Federal Party, which wanted to make the Vavuniya Convention a special event, had organised transport for its delegates from the north and the east. This information had reached the Action Committee of Padavia, an organisation formed to prevent Tamils being settled in Padaviya. The Action committee decided to prevent FP delegates from attending the Vavuniya Convention. It organised a mob of 800 Sinhala settlers to invade the Polonnaruwa railway station and attack the Batticaloa train.

As darkness enveloped Polonnaruwa, the station master saw an unruly mob gathering outside the station and over-

heard them discussing their action plan. He alerted the station master of Welikanda and advised him to unload all Tamil passengers, which the latter did. When the Batticaloa train reached Polonnaruwa around midnight of 22 May, the unruly mob stormed the train, smashed up its windows and searched every compartment for Tamil passengers. They found one, covering under his seat, pleading with them to be left alone as he was not a Tamil. The mob assaulted him mercilessly till he fainted. The station master rescued the man and sent him to the Polonnaruwa hospital. The next day, Tamils in Polonnaruwa and the nearby villages were attacked.

Two days later, on 25 May, a rumour swept the entire North Central Province that a Tamil army was marching to destroy Polonnaruwa. That caused the riots to spread. At Hingurakgoda, sugarcane plantations owned by Tamils were set ablaze. Tamils fled to the police station, the Sinhala mob threatened to attack it. The police opened fire in which three Sinhalese were killed.

At that time I lived in Colombo. I witnessed the incidents that took place in the capital city. I saw hordes of thugs being ferried from Avissawela, the constituency of Philip Gunawardene, the Minister of Agriculture. Thugs also came from Moratuwa, Panadura and other suburban towns. They joined those from Colombo and burnt cars, torched hotels and eating houses, looted shops and some houses owned by Tamils. Rioting also spread to government offices. Tamil officers were assaulted by their own junior staff. Tamil commuters were pulled out of buses and trains and man-handled. The worst incident took place at Panadura. A Hindu priest was dragged out of the Panadura Ganesh Temple, doused with petrol taken from the adjoining petrol station and torched alive. It wounded Hindu pride and sentiment. It was the incident that influenced LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, then a young boy, to take to violence.

Things took a turn for the worse the next day. Riots spread to the hill country. This made many prominent citizens pressurise Bandaranaike to make an appeal for calm. Bandaranaike addressed the nation over the radio on 26 May. His speech inflamed the Sinhalese instead of calming them. His reference to the murder of D.A. Senaviratne, former Mayor of Nuwara Eliya, did more damage. In his address Bandaranaike said, "An unfortunate situation has arisen resulting in communal tension. Certain incidents in the Batticaloa district where some people lost their lives, including Mr. D.A. Senaviratne, a former Mayor of Nuwara Eliya, have resulted in various acts of violence and lawlessness in other areas, for example, in Polonnaruwa, Dambulla, Galewela, Kuliyaipitiya, and even in Colombo."

Bandaranaike, thus, made the shooting of Senaviratne the official cause for the uprising, although the communal riots started with the storming of the Batticaloa mail-train on 22 May, a day before the killing of Senaviratne.

Chelvanayakam made this sequence clear in parliament two weeks later when he spoke on the riots. He established that the murder of Senaviratne was the result of a private feud.

At 7.15 am. on 27 May, a deputation of a group of distinguished citizens, led by R.E. Jayatilleke and belonging to Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities, met Bandaranaike at Rosmead Place and asked him to declare a state of emergency. The delegation gave an account of the incidents and concluded that the situation was very tense.

"You are exaggerating," Bandaranaike exploded. "The situation is not that bad."

That morning Thondaman also contacted Bandaranaike on the phone and urged him to declare a state of emergency. The disturbances were spreading to the hills, he informed.

"Is it getting that bad?" Bandaranaike wanted to know.

Thondaman rang Governor General Sir Oliver Gunatilleke and told him that Bandaranaike was vacillating despite the fact that the situation was deteriorating.

"I've already spoken to Banda," Sir Oliver said, and added, "Banda is worried about handing power to the armed forces."

However, that afternoon a state of emergency was finally declared. But the mayhem continued. Thugs who had thronged Pettah continued looting and burning. By 4.30 pm. the navy was ordered to clear the area. Sir Oliver had taken charge of the operation as the Commander-in-Chief of the security forces. His order was to shoot at sight, shoot to kill. Sten guns mowed down the looters. There was shooting in Pettah, Kurunegala, Vavuniya, Madawachchiya, Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura. The government clamped down censorship; editors of newspapers were banned from reporting any of the incidents.

I had just then taken to serious reporting after having served for 15 months with the Tamil *Thinakaran*. Most of my reports were censored. I preserved most of them. Three of them are of relevance to this story.

The first report was an interview with Amirthalingam. It reads:

The Federal Party Youth Front leader A. Amirthalingam issued an appeal yesterday to the Tamil youth to protect Sinhala brethren living among them and warned the government that unless it takes steps to end rioting, it would be difficult for the Federal Party to contain the Tamil youth.

He told the *Thinakaran* that Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike should take the entire blame for the rioting in the country, and said his failure to honour the pledge given to them to implement the B-C Pact within six months was the prime cause for the violence.

"He gave enough time for the dead UNP to resurrect itself and gave a free hand to the extremists within his party to whip up Sinhala communalism," Mr. Amirthalingam said.

He also took Mr. Bandaranaike to task for selectively arranging the sequence of events to suit the government and added that the slaying of former Nuwara Eliya Mayor Senaviratne was a murder committed by his enemies.

The rest of the story dealt with the incidents and the sufferings of the Tamil people.

The censor passed the first part of the opening paragraph and scored out the rest of the story with a red pencil.

The second report was on the condition in the refugee camps. I visited the refugee camps in most parts of Colombo and wrote an article on the mood of the refugees. The story dealt with the experiences of the refugees and about the lack of facilities in the refugee camps. It read:

There was a general feeling of anger and annoyance among the Tamil refugees in the 12 refugee camps spread over Colombo city and most of them said the riots had sowed the seed of separation.

Mr. V. Kandaiah, a trader from Pettah, summed up the predicament of many of Colombo Tamils: "I lost my shop. I lost my house. I lost everything. That does not matter. My family had lived in Colombo for three generations. We have developed a sense of belonging to Colombo. Now, I have been rudely told that I don't belong to Colombo. That is what I cannot understand, apprehend."

Mr. Kandaiah added, "Now I must look for my roots, that I have been told that I belong to Jaffna and nowhere else."

For Mr. V. Shanmugalingam, a government servant, it was more a case of injured pride than physical or property loss. His Sinhalese neighbour had hidden him and his wife in

the toilet and the two children under a bed for two nights and a day and then sent them to the refugee camp.

"I am forever indebted to my Sinhala friend and his family for protecting us. That was a personal obligation. But why was I made to hide in his toilet? I will never forget or forgive the race that did that to me," he said.

Most of the refugees were anxious to go back to their homes in Jaffna or Batticaloa. They said they were told that ships were being arranged to take them to the northern port of Kankesanthurai.

The third story was a report of the government parliamentary group meeting held on 3 June. It was prepared by a pool of reporters from the *Sunday Observer*, *Silumina* and *Sunday Thinakaran*. I was one of them. It read:

Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike yesterday (3 June 1988) told the government parliamentary group that all forces that were against law and order had been brought under control and appealed to the MPs to help the government to maintain peace.

The meeting was held in the committee room of parliament. Prime Minister Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike related to the MPs the sequence of events that led to the riots and to the declaration of the state of emergency, and concluded, "Gentlemen, I have since then got complete control of the situation. All the forces which are against law and order, under the misguided conception that they could overthrow this government, combined in the events during the last two weeks. The government did not hesitate to act. We have succeeded in checking law-breakers and hooligans."

This statement was greeted with thunderous applause.

The Prime Minister then announced the banning of the Federal Party. That again was greeted with applause.

There was a clamour by many MPs, headed by Mr. S.D. Bandaranayake, MP for Gampaha, that the leaders of the

Federal Party should be arrested. Mr. Bandananayake said, "If the government is banning the Federal Party, why did not the government then take the next proper step and arrest the FP leaders? Why haven't Messrs Chelvanayakam and company been arrested? They should be behind bars instead of being free to do as they like. It is the Federalists who have planned this in a well-organised way. The government is weak and had brought itself into disrepute by not taking the proper action in arresting these leaders."

Prime Minister Bandaranaike's reply was, "It is not only the Federal Party which is responsible for the activities against the government. There are other forces that have worked against the government."

S.D. Bandaranayake asked, "Who are they? Name them. We have a right to know."

"These are matter I cannot place before this group."

Pani Illangakoon, MP from Weligama, insisted, "I also want to know why the Federal leaders have not been arrested. All over the country they are saying that the government is weak. If we cannot govern, then let us get out. The Tamils have worked against us, they have plotted to overthrow this government with outside assistance. They will destroy us eventually. Before that happens, I ask that the Tamils be settled once and for all. I ask that they be told that Sinhala Only has come to stay and that they must submit. This government has been too tolerant of these Tamils. The Sinhalese are the laughing stock of the country as a result of the government's weak stand against the Tamils."

To these allegations, the Prime Minister's reply was, "Certainly the Federalists and other forces have planned to overthrow the Central Government, set up a separate administration in the north and the east. But I have thwarted that. Their attempts have been quelled. My military forces are now in the north and the east. There is military rule in these two provinces, each with a military governor. Yes, I say they are

military governors. With my army I will see that there is no repeated attempt to set up a different administration in those provinces."

Several MPs said, "All over they are saying that you have acceded to the Federal request for a federal state by sending the Tamils back to the north and east. The whole country is under the impression that before long they will exist as a separate Tamil federal state."

"I will never allow that," Prime Minister Bandaranaike replied emphatically. "I will never allow the division of this country. What has happened is that women and children who were living under very unsatisfactory and inconvenient conditions, have been sent, at their own risk, back to the north. That is all. There is no intention, whatsoever, that the government is helping, by this manner, the creation of a federal or separate state."

Sagara Palansuriya, MP for Horana, said, "The Tamils are gaining strength in all parts of the country wherever they are. Is the government going to stand this nonsense? The Sinhalese are in danger of being liquidated by them."

Lakshman Rajapakse, MP for Hambantota, added, "Destroy them."

"Who said that?" was the Prime Minister's angry query. "Are you seriously thinking that the Tamils should be destroyed? The government has no such intention. I am surprised that there is such talk from the MP for Hambantota, who is wedded to a Tamil, for better or for worse - isn't that so, Lakshman?"

On 4 June Chelvanayakam related in parliament the harrowing sights he had witnessed during the riots. Parliament adjourned at 10 pm. and, when Federal Party MPs returned home, they were placed under house arrest. Chelvanayakam, Naganathan and Kandaiah were kept incommunicado in their homes. Navaratnam, Rajavarothiam, Vanniasingham, Amirthalingam and Rajadurai were detained at the second floor of the Galle Face Hotel, overlooking the swimming pool.

Federal supporters were also arrested in Jaffna and Batticaloa. The Federal Party was banned and its Tamil weekly *Suthanthiran* sealed. The government also banned the Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna and placed its leader, K.M.P.Rajaratna, under house arrest.

Despite the riots, the Federal Party's Vavuniya Convention was concluded successfully after the passage of the resolution which authorised the resumption of the *satyagraha* campaign not later than 20 August 1958. The lengthy resolution, which traced the events since the passage of the Trincomalee resolution of 1956, concluded that:

"The experience of the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon has therefore compelled them, to come to the conclusion that negotiations with the government or continued participation in the proceedings or membership of the Parliamentary Select Committee for the revision of the Constitution can serve no useful purpose and that the Tamil-speaking people are left with no alternative but to launch a non-violent struggle for their liberation as stipulated in the Trincomalee resolution.

"Therefore, the Tamil-speaking people here assembled in the National Convention at Vavuniya on May 25, 1958, resolves to enter a non-violent campaign of civil disobedience for the achievement of freedom, self-respect and security for the Tamil-speaking people for all times.

"This convention hereby appoints an Action Council consisting of Messrs S.J.V.Chelvanayakam, C.Vanniasingham, A.Amirthalingam, C.Rajadurai and the president (N.R.Rajavarothayam) with plenary powers to direct and conduct the campaign and also with power to appoint successors to any one or more of the members wherever necessary.

"This convention directs that the campaign be commenced not later than August 20, 1958."

This resolution was proposed by Vanniasingham and seconded by Naganathan.

The riots and the subsequent house arrest of FP leaders made it impossible to implement the resolution.

The riots left a profound scar on Bandaranaike's mind. A sense of guilt gripped him. He told his close associates that he had erred in tearing the B-C Pact which he considered the best solution to the Tamil problem. He reacted by trying to make some amends and by distancing himself from the Sinhala extremist groups. By way of making amends, he moved the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Bill in the third week of July, which provided for reasonable use of Tamil, and fixed the debate for 5 August.

Tension mounted in the Tamil areas following large-scale movement of Tamil refugees from the Sinhala areas. A few incidents of violence occurred against the Sinhalese in Jaffna and in the eastern province. Chelvanayakam deprecated it. In a statement issued while under detention, he threatened to resign if Tamils resorted to violence - even under provocation. "Tamil people should be calm and peaceful in the present difficult times," his statement said.

When opposition leader Dr. N.M. Perera raised objection to the debating of the Tamil Language Bill in the absence of the Federal Party members, the Prime Minister offered to bring them to parliament under armed escort. When that was conveyed to Chelvanayakam, he said that he would take a decision after consulting other members of his party. All FP MPs were taken under armed escort to Chelvanayakam's house. They decided not to participate in the debate, saying that it would be derogative to Tamil pride to be taken under armed escort. The left parties boycotted the debate because the Federal Party had kept away, and the UNP, because it opposed the bill.

On 4 September, when I went to office, I was informed that Federal Party leaders were to be released. Along with the reporters of the *Daily News* and *Dinmin* and a photographer, I rushed to Stanmore Crescent where they had been transferred from Galle Face Hotel. When we reached, Navaratnam was standing at the door. He was surprised to see us. I told him that I had come with good news.

"What is it?" he asked.

"All of you are being released today," I answered.

"I wonder whether my wife will like it," he quipped. That playfulness is what won Navaratnam friends even among his opponents.

Other MPs were seated around the dining table. They had had a late breakfast and were engaged in a conversation. Amirthalingam, Rajadurai, Nalliah, Vanniasingham and Rajavarothayam were there.

Navaratnam shouted from the door, "Our press friends are here with good tidings. They say we are to be released."

"Is it true?" Amirthalingam asked.

We told them that the release order was on its way.

I asked Amirthalingam whom he missed most during the three-month long detention.

"My leader Chelvanayakam," he replied.

The Federal MPs said they were looked after well. They had no complaints about the food. Their cook was a 'jolly good fellow'. A former policeman, sent by the Employment Exchange which supplied government departments with employees, he was cheerful, concerned and talkative. His culinary accomplishments were not high but he made up that deficiency by his cheerfulness, FP MPs said.

He was bribed with cigarettes to do the cooking. Amirthalingam added, "We had a better cook in Navaratnam."

Actually Vanniasingham and Amirthalingam, the non-smokers, were made to collect their weekly ration of cigarettes for him.

The last three months of 1958 and the early part of 1959 were marked by the anti-government strikes organised by the LSSP and the Communist parties and by the LSSP-SLFP clashes. The two left parties organised a series of strikes which held the government and the country to ransom. In November 1958, they moved a no-confidence motion on the government and asked the FP and the UNP to support it. The FP backed the motion which censured the government for its failure to end the state of emergency and restore normal democratic rights and civil liberties.

The Federal Party moved a motion which censured the government: (a) for not tackling the causes that led to the lawlessness and disturbances and resulted in a state of emergency being declared, and (b) for failure to take appropriate steps to prevent the recurrence of the situation that led to the declaration of a state of emergency. The motion was defeated.

The government removed the ban on the Federal Party and the Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna on 27 October. The Working Committee of the Federal Party met in Colombo on 2 November and passed a resolution calling upon the government to pay compensation to the 1958 riot victims. A sub-committee was appointed to take action in this matter. Vanniasingham, Amirthalingam, Kandiah, Navaratnam and S.Nadarajah were elected members.

Public attention shifted from the language issue when the LSSP-SLFP clash intensified. LSSP was led by Philip Gunawardene and this party joined the SLFP in 1958 to form the MEP. Philip, who was appointed Agriculture Minister, pressed on with the nationalisation of ports, transport and enacted the Paddy Lands Act which hurt the conservative land-owning class. The rightist section of the SLFP, led by

C.P.de Silva and Wimala Wijewardene, resented Philip's dominance of the cabinet and forced Bandaranaike to remove Philip and his party member William Silva from the cabinet.

The removal of Philip helped to consolidate the power of Kelaniya Vihara chief priest Ven. Buddharakitta in the government party. But Bandaranaike reacted differently. He began to act more independently. This annoyed the Kelaniya priest who masterminded the murder of Bandaranaike on 26 September. The Federal Party also suffered an irreparable loss nine days earlier. Vanniasingham died on 17 September.

A comic interlude followed the death of Bandaranaike. Dahanayake was made the Prime Minister and when SLFPers revolted, he sacked every one of them. He then formed a new party. He fixed the general election for March 1960.

The election was held under the new delimitation which raised the number of constituencies from 101 to 151. The Federal Party fielded 19 candidates and supported two independents in Ninthavur and Pottuvil. It won 15 seats, polling a total of 176,492 votes. The FP, the third largest party, held the balance in parliament.

Governor General Sir Oliver summoned Dudley Senanayake as the leader of the party which got the highest number of seats and asked him to form the government. That very evening, Sir John Kotalawela telephoned Naganathan and asked him to persuade the Federal Party to support the UNP. Naganathan replied that he would place the matter before the MPs who were due in Colombo on the afternoon of the 21st. On that day, he found delegations waiting to meet him at the airport, one from the UNP and the other from the SLFP. The UNP delegation, sent by Sir John, was there to take Chelvanayakam to Sir Edward Jayatilleke's home.

The SLFP messenger was D.Ramanujam, Ceylon Worker's Congress' (Ceylon Indian Congress changed its name to Ceylon Worker's Congress in 1954) former parlia-

mentarian. Badi-ud-din Mahmood, who was designated by the SLFP to negotiate with the FP, had contacted Thondaman, who despatched Ramanujam to bring Chelvanayakam to his office.

Ramanujam garlanded Chelvanayakam as he stepped out of the aircraft at Ratmalana. He told Chelvanayakam that he was garlanding him on behalf of the plantation workers, for whom the Federal Party leader harboured a soft corner, and informed that Thondaman wanted to meet him urgently.

"Why does he want to meet me?" Chelvanayakam queried.

"He is waiting for you. He will tell you why," Ramanujam replied and led Chelvanayakam to his car.

Chelvanayakam was taken to the CWC office. Thondaman came down to greet him. As they climbed the creaky wooden steps, Thondaman told Chelvanayakam that he had a surprise visitor.

The visitor was Badi-ud-din Mahmood. Badi-ud-din told Chelvanayakam that he had come to seek his support for the SLFP, that C.P.de Silva was prepared to revive the B-C Pact and give more power to the regional councils. The UNP could not give more, Badi-ud-din argued and urged Chelvanayakam to accept the offer. Chelvanayakam promised to consider the request.

After he returned home, several delegations met him and urged him to support the UNP. One of the delegations comprised Sir Edward Jayatilleke and Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva. They wanted Chelvanayakam and Naganathan to meet Dudley Senanayake at Sir Edward's home. The meeting took place at 8.30 pm. Naganathan asked Dudley whether it was correct that he had assured the Governor General of FP's support. Dudley denied it. He said the Governor General had advised him, after appointing him Prime Minister, to discuss the matter with the Federal Party.

Then Dudley asked Chelvanayakam to support him and pledged that his government would do nothing prejudicial to the interests of the Tamil people. Chelvanayakam replied that was what was expected of any democratic government and added that his party would consider supporting Senanayake if he was prepared to undo the injustices perpetuated on the Tamil community during the previous ten years. Chelvanayakam repeated that point a little later and said his party would support him provided the UNP would concede at least a few of its demands. Neither Senanayake nor Sir Lalitha Rajapakse, who was present, cared to inquire at that time what their demands were before they left.

On 23 March, Felix Dias Bandaranaike met Chelvanayakam at the latter's chamber. Felix was a frequent visitor to Chelvanayakam's home. Felix's father Justice Dias was an intimate friend of Chelvanayakam. Felix assured Chelvanayakam that the SLFP would follow the policies of Bandaranaike. This, he said, would specifically include the implementation of the B-C Pact in its entirety. Time and again he gave that assurance and told him that when SLFP formed the government his assurance would be reflected in the Throne Speech.

Sir John arranged a second meeting between Dudley and Chelvanayakam on 26 March. Dudley asked Chelvanayakam what the FP demands were. Chelvanayakam orally stated the four demands:

1. The regional councils should be set up in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
2. That Tamil should be recognised as an official language in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and that facilities be given for the use of Tamil in other parts.
3. That there should be changes in the Citizenship Act.
4. That one of the six appointed members should

represent plantation workers who did not enjoy voting rights.

Chelvanayakam told Dudley he was compromising on two of the party's important demands: parity of status for the Tamil language, and four appointed membership be reserved for the plantation Tamils.

Dudley asked Chelvanayakam to send him the demands in writing, which Chelvanayakam did that very day.

The next day Dudley sent for Chelvanayakam and asked whether the Federal Party could support the UNP nominee for speakership. Chelvanayakam told him that they had already promised support to the SLFP candidate.

That evening Dudley again sent for Chelvanayakam to discuss the FP demands. Dudley said he was unable to concede to the four demands as the UNP had pledged in its election manifesto the Sinhala Only policy and had undertaken to oppose the division of the country. Chelvanayakam then told Dudley that there was no use of any Tamil living in Jaffna, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts, the areas inhabited by 90 per cent Tamils if Sinhalese only was implemented. Dudley did not reply.

Chelvanayakam then told Dudley that the normal behaviour of the majority community in any multi-lingual, multi-racial country was not to colonise minority areas and convert those areas for the advantage of the majority community, but in Ceylon the opposite seemed to be more the norm. Dudley again did not reply, but said that the demands of the Federal Party were opposed to the UNP policy.

Even after that UNP supporters kept up their pressure on the FP to support the UNP, saying the Dudley was a good man. Chelvanayakam told them that Dudley's father D.S. had also been a good man and it was during his regime a section of Tamils was deprived of citizenship and planned colonisation of Tamil areas started. A community that had been betrayed

by such a good man was not prepared to trust his son any more.

The ceremonial opening of parliament took place on 19 April and the Throne Speech was debated for three days beginning 20 April. Chelvanayakam spoke on the final day. He bitterly attacked the UNP, and Jayewardene, in particular. He charged that Jayewardene, who had organised the Kandy march, was misleading the Sinhala people by telling them that federalism meant separation. He concluded, "The real enemy of the Tamil-speaking people is not the SLFP but the UNP. It was the UNP bhikkus who pressurised Mr. Bandaranaike to tear up the Pact."

Dudley Senanayake's government was defeated in voting. Dudley summoned an emergency cabinet meeting that night. The ministers considered the next step. Dudley advocated the dissolution of parliament and the holding of a general election. A few ministers argued that they should allow the SLFP to form a government with FP support and then start a campaign against it. The government would crash within months and the UNP could romp back with a bigger majority. Dudley rejected that argument and said he would recommend dissolution of parliament to the Governor General. He conveyed his decision to Sir Oliver.

The next day, 21 April, Sir Oliver summoned the leaders of the opposition parties separately. He informed them of his intention to explore the possibility of forming an alternate government. On his way to Queen's House, Chelvanayakam dropped in at Felix's home at Kolupitiya. C.P. de Silva, Senator A.P. Jayasuriya and a few other SLFP leaders were there. Chelvanayakam said he had dropped in to inquire whether Felix stood by his earlier assurances that the SLFP would implement the B-C Pact in toto.

He turned to C.P. de Silva and Jayasuriya and asked, "Now that both of you are here, I want to find out whether you would honour Felix's undertaking."

Both men assured Chelvanayakam that they would stand by Felix's assurance.

Chelvanayakam then said, "On the basis of this assurance I would give the Governor General my word that my party would support the government headed by C.P.de Silva."

Chelvanayakam asked C.P.de Silva, "How am I to be sure that the assurances would be honoured?"

C.P.de Silva replied, "I drive a hard bargain and when I've made it, I keep it."

Satisfied, Chelvanayakam drove to Queen's House. There Sir Oliver informed Chelvanayakam that Dudley had recommended dissolution of parliament, but before taking a decision on Dudley's recommendation he wanted to satisfy himself that no alternative government could be formed. If the opposition parties satisfied him that an alternate government could be formed, he was constitutionally bound to offer the opposition a chance. He then said he was of the opinion that no opposition government could be formed without the assistance of the Federal Party.

Then Sir Oliver asked Chelvanayakam the crucial question, "Will you support the government for a minimum period of two years?"

"My party has come to an understanding with the SLFP", was Chelvanayakam reply. "Thus we will support the government not merely for two years but till the end of the term of this Parliament."

Within an hour of this interview, the Governor General signed the proclamation dissolving parliament and fixing the general election for July. Sir Oliver said that he did not feel assured of a stable government as the Federal Party's support to the SLFP was conditional.

The opposition parties felt outraged. They felt that Sir Oliver had deceived them. Felix, in particular, was furious.

He vowed that when he came to power he would teach Sir Oliver a lesson.

The opposition parties lodged a joint protest to the Governor General. The protest letter was signed by the SLFP, FP, LSSP, CP and other minor parties. It read:

"We are unanimous in expressing our regret that His Excellency has thought fit to dissolve the present Parliament a little over a month after the last general election. In view of the fact that all the opposition parties barring the MEP had intimated to His Excellency quite clearly that an alternative government could be formed by the SLFP and that there was a reasonable possibility of it continuing, the dissolution of Parliament cannot be treated as being in the best interests of the country which has already suffered by the absence of an effective government for many months."

Dudley's campaign for the July 1960 election was blatantly communal. He charged the SLFP of having a secret agreement with the FP. The SLFP was forced to deny this. Felix begged Chelvanayakam to help him combat Dudley's accusation. That drove Chelvanayakam into a tight corner. He had also to manage his party's campaign in the north and the east. There the Tamil Congress and UNP supporters, specially the Colombo-based trading community, unleashed a virulent campaign charging the FP for not intelligently using the opportunity that it got in March.

Amirthalingam, whose task was to reply to these accusations, told an election meeting at Udupiddi, "It's wrong to say that we were not prepared to support the UNP. We were prepared to support the UNP. But its leader Mr. Dudley Senanayake refused to accede to any of our demands. This showed his lack of sympathy to the Tamil people. Dudley was not interested in meeting any of the just demands of the Tamil people. He was only interested in stabilising his government."

Chelvanayakam obliged the SLFP with a statement which sketched the events that occurred since the 1960 March election to the dissolution of parliament. The relevant portion

of the statement read: "The position taken by the SLFP was that they would not enter into any agreement with us and that they were not asking for our support on the basis of any agreement. Their position was that if they were called upon to form a government, they would first make a policy statement, covering among other issues in which the Federal Party was interested in, and it would then be open to our party to support the government or vote against it according to our view of that policy statement whether the same was acceptable to us or not. In these circumstances, the Federal Party was prepared to support the SLFP to form a government."

The Lake House papers, which were campaigning for Dudley, were directed by Editorial Managing Director Esmond Wickremasinghe to interview Chelvanayakam on the SLFP-FP agreement. The reporters were told to ask the following questions:

1. Did the Federal Party put forward its 4-point demand to the SLFP or did it not?
2. If it did not do so, why?
3. Is it true that the SLFP did not agree to any of the demands of the Federal Party? If so, why did the Federal Party offer to support an alternative government formed by the SLFP as stated in the joint opposition letter of protest to the Governor General following the dissolution of parliament?
4. Did not the Federal Party draw a distinction between the UNP and the SLFP?

I was one of the three reporters sent to ask Chelvanayakam these questions. I was from *Thinakaran*, and the others from *Daily News* and *Dinamina*. Chelvanayakam's reply was, "We did not put the 4-point demand to the SLFP because the SLFP was not in the government. If the SLFP was in the government and the UNP in the opposition, we would have put the demand to the SLFP and not to the UNP."

"We decided to back the SLFP to form the government because the SLFP said it would make a policy statement in

the Throne Speech covering the issues in which we are interested and if we were not satisfied, we had the option to vote them out.

"We did not draw any distinction between the UNP and the SLFP. The distinction we drew was between the government which had the power to implement a promise and an opposition which did not have that power. And when we presented our demands, the UNP government rejected it in toto. So from our point of view there is no point in letting that government continue in office."

"Except that we all voted on the same side, we formed no alliance with any other party in the opposition as the basis of our voting together. If and when the SLFP formed a government, it would then have been the occasion for us to press our demands on them."

When Wickremasinghe saw this reply, he said, "Chelva is really a clever lawyer." He asked the papers to print the questions and answers in full.

The UNP's "Selling the Sinhalese to the Federal Party" propaganda failed to net votes because the SLFP had brought in Bandaranaike's widow, Srimavo Bandaranaike, who cashed on the fund of sympathy the people had for her. The women rallied round her. Added to that was the fact that all anti-UNP forces shared seats among themselves and contested as a common front.

The SLFP swept the polls, winning 75 seats against UNP's 30. The Federal Party, which contested in 22 constituencies, won in 16 and bagged 218,753 votes. The score of the other parties was: LSSP - 12, CP - 4, MEP - 3, JVP - 2, LPP - 2, TC - 1 and Independents - 6. Amirthalingam again won the Vaddukoddai seat with a comfortable majority.

Srimavo Bandaranaike was sworn in as the Prime Minister - the world's first woman prime minister and took her seat in the Senate. She relied heavily on her nephew Felix, whose main concern was Sinhala opinion. He showed keenness in distancing the government from the Federal Party.

Chapter 5

Employment

The talks were doomed to fail from the start. The government apologised to the Sinhalese for its dialogue with the Federal Party. Felix told the *Daily News*, which broke the story of the meeting, that the government wanted merely to listen to the representations of the FP, not discuss any specific measures. Mrs. Bandaranaike, in another statement, stated that the meeting was the result of a memorandum addressed to her by Federal MPs asking for an interview to discuss matters relating to the implementation of Sinhala as the official language from 1 January 1961.

The first meeting was on 8 November 1960 at Temple Trees. The Federal Party delegation included Chelvanayakam, Rajavarothayam, Naganathan, V.A.Kandaiah, Rasamanikkam, Amirthalingam, Mashoor Moulana and V. Navaratnam. On the government side, Mrs. Bandaranaike was assisted by Felix, Sam P.C.Fernando, T.B.Ilangaratne, C.P.de Silva, Badi-ud-din Mahmud, P.B.G.Kalugalle and Dr.S Ratwatte.

Felix, the government spokesman, said the government would not be able to do anything on the memorandum which contained proposals for the settlement of the language problem. In the first section the party had urged the government to establish regional councils and to implement the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act. The memorandum had also asked the government to recognise Tamil as the language of the minority community and to administer the northern and eastern provinces in Tamil. It had also requested that the government make arrangements for Tamils in the other seven provinces to conduct their affairs in the Tamil language.

The 2-hour discussion centered mainly on the problems of Tamil government servants. Amirthalingam, who argued

their case, pointed out that the Sinhala Only had created two categories of government servants - those who had joined before the language act and those after. The first category, who could be called old entrants, had joined the service when English was the language of administration. They should be allowed to continue in that language or retire with full benefits. Compelling them to work in Sinhala or retiring them prematurely without giving them adequate compensation would be illegal and inhuman. They should not be denied their normal increments and promotions.

Amirthalingam said the Federal Party did not dispute the government's right to compel new entrants to work in Sinhala, but the requirement of the knowledge of Sinhala should not be made use of to deny employment opportunities for Tamils. Those who served in Tamil areas, such as teachers, village headmen and minor employees, should be exempted from the Sinhala language requirement. Also, a longer period of time should be given to even those who needed to qualify in Sinhala. "Be human, be considerate, be generous," Amirthalingam stressed.

The second meeting on 23 November at Temple Trees lasted two hours. Whilst the composition of the Federal Party delegation remained the same, there were some changes on the government side. C.P.de Silva, Badi-ud-din Mahmood, Kalugalle and D. Ratwatte did not attend. Instead, two new junior ministers - T.B.Tennakoon and Mahanama Samaraweera - took part. Since no progress was made or hard decisions taken, both sides agreed to continue the talks.

Soon after this, Justice Minister Sam P.C.Fernando presented the Language of the Courts Bill in parliament. The Federal Party felt let down and opposed the bill. Chelvanayakam said in a statement, "There is no provision at all for Tamil even for courts in hundred percent Tamil areas to conduct their affairs in Tamil."

Lawyers in the north and east boycotted courts on the day the bill was presented in parliament. The government decided to carry on with the debate despite Tamil opposition. Felix contended that the government was elected on the mandate of implementing the Sinhala Only policy of Bandaranaike.

The Working Committee of the Federal Party met on 4 December at the Batticaloa Town Hall and decided to suspend discussions with the government until the Language of the Courts Bill was amended to provide for the use of Tamil as well. The resolution said, "No useful purpose will be served by any further discussion."

The government reacted with the announcement that it would implement the Sinhala Act fully and the entire administration of the country would be in Sinhala from 1 January 1961. The Federal Party held an emergency meeting of the Working Committee in Jaffna on 18 December where it was decided to call upon all Tamil-speaking people of the northern and eastern provinces, irrespective of party affiliations, to observe complete *hartal* on 2 January, which was the first working day under the switch-over to Sinhala.

Chelvanayakam issued a statement which read, "This is another fraud perpetrated on the Tamil-speaking people by the present government. At the time of passing of the Sinhala Only Act, the late Prime Minister as well as the Minister of Finance gave the assurance that the implementation of the Act would be effected in a manner so as not to cause any hardship or any difficulty to those public servants who were recruited through a medium other than Sinhala. Those assurances were given both in and out of parliament. The delegation from our party which met the Prime Minister and some of the ministers recently pointed out those assurances and urged the government to honour them. But this government has, on its own admission, gone back on the assurances given by the late Prime minister."

Eight days later, on 26 December, the Working Committee reaffirmed the *hartal* call. At that meeting A. Sittambalam of Vavuniya moved a resolution calling upon the Federal Party to launch a fight for a separate state for the Tamils instead of continuing its struggle for federalism. A number of the 37 members present spoke in favour of the resolution. Amirthalingam spearheaded the opposition. He argued that though the Sinhala people had rebuffed their call for federalism, they should continue to try their best to convince and convert them to the federal concept before deciding to break away. "It's too premature. Time has not come to think in terms of separation," he said. Chelvanayakam succeeded in persuading Sittambalam to withdraw his motion.

The concept of a separate state of Eelam had been introduced by Suntharalingam early that year. He formed a political party called the Eela Thamilar Ottumai Munnani (Eela Tamils United Front) and contested the March and July elections. Amirthalingam campaigned against it.

On 30 December Chelvanayakam, in a statement, exhorted the Tamil-speaking people to be non-violent on the day of the *hartal*. When the government sent armed forces to the north and east on 1 January 1961, Chelvanayakam, issued the following statement, "It is regretted that the government has sent armed forces to the north and the east. We can only hope that those forces will not run riot."

The Language of the Courts Bill was taken up for debate in parliament on 30 December. Standing orders were suspended to enable parliament to debate the bill to a finish on that day itself. The bill was debated through the night and passed at 8 am on 31 December. The amendments moved by the Federal Party to make Tamil the language of courts in the northern and eastern provinces were defeated.

Later that day Chelvanayakam issued a statement: "The Tamil-speaking people are left with no alternative but to offer resistance. We realise that the government's policy of repres-

sion means immense suffering for us, the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon. But whatever the sacrifices may be, the way is clear for us, and that is to resist wholeheartedly and engage in a struggle in full force and be hundred percent non-violent."

While preparations for the *hartal* on 2 January were on, the Action Committee of the Federal Party, which had been non-active since the B-C Pact, was activated. It decided on a plan to launch a *satyagraha* campaign before 20 February, and also recommended the summoning of the Seventh National Convention on 21 January in Jaffna to decide on the campaign. The Youth Front, which had been very active, requested the Working Committee for permission to hold its first convention along with the national convention. Amirthalingam, the Youth Front leader, gave notice of a motion which called upon the Federal Party to launch its civil disobedience movement without delay.

The *hartal* was total and peaceful. This was a source of great encouragement to the Federal leaders. The Action Committee decided to cash in on the enthusiasm that the *hartal* had generated. It met on 8 January and announced the first phase of its direct action campaign, consisting of three components. The first was to picket all government offices in the northern and eastern provinces where Sinhala was used as the language of administration. The second was to carry out a campaign of non-cooperation against officials instrumental or engaged in implementing unjust moves. The third component was to take suitable steps to prevent the teaching of Sinhala in Tamil medium schools.

The seventh National Convention was held in Jaffna on 21 January. Padiruppu MP S.M.Rasamanikkam, who was elected president of the party, reported to the convention the failure of the Federal Party's effort to come to an understanding with Mrs. Bandaranaike's government. He said, "We have had two meetings with the ministerial committee headed by

the Prime Minister. While the talks were on the government enacted law to make Sinhala the language of courts throughout the country. It also decided to implement the Sinhala Only Act countrywide from January 1, this year. The promise of Mr. Bandaranaike to frame regulations under the Reasonable Use of Tamil Act was also not kept. These dishonest actions of the government are intended to reduce the Tamils to second class citizens."

Rajamanikkam went on, "The situation has become intolerable. No Tamil with self-respect can tolerate this any further. What are we to do? Many national and language groups placed in similar circumstances had resorted to armed revolt. That had become the done thing. I can hear of murmurs of such thought in our midst also. I want to make one thing clear. Armed revolt does not provide a solution to anything. It only complicates matters. Violence begets violence. Violence harms the user more than those against whom it is used. This is the Gandhian era. Our leader Chelvanayakam's path is the Gandhian path. Our's is the Chelvanayakam path. I appeal to every Tamil to take part in this noble endeavour."

The convention adopted four resolutions - on untouchability, on economic development, on citizenship and on the current political situation. The resolution on economic development, moved by Amirthalingam, called upon the people to lead a life of simplicity, to engage themselves in agricultural production, to start self-employment schemes and to invest within the Tamil areas. The resolution on citizenship called upon the SLFP government to repeal the reactionary and discriminatory citizenship laws and replace them with legislation based on principles of citizenship accepted by all civilised and progressive nations.

Amirthalingam was behind the resolution on the eradication of untouchability. He was the secretary of the Fundamental Rights Democratic Front which campaigned for social

equality. He specially campaigned for the opening of eating houses and temples to Harijans. Speaking at the convention Amirthalingam said, "We have succeeded in getting most of the temples and eating houses opened to Harijans. That alone is not sufficient to solve the caste problem. What is needed is a change of heart on the part of the so-called high caste people."

A lengthy political resolution was moved by Chelvanayakam and seconded by Naganathan. It recounted the history of the talks which the Federal Party had with Sinhala leaders, beginning from Bandaranaike to Mrs. Bandaranaike, and concluded, "This convention, taking into consideration the history of repeated betrayals and the utter futility of the method of negotiation and parliamentary action in the present governmental set-up, resolves that the only course open to the Tamil-speaking people to protect their national honour and win back their freedom is to resort to non-violent direct action, and ratifies the course of action set out in the directive of the Party's Action Committee."

Speaking on the political resolution, Amirthalingam made an impassioned plea for paying better attention to the colonisation problem. He said, "The language problem is not the only problem for the Tamils. The problem of colonisation is as important, if not more important. Already areas which were for a long time Tamil areas, like Gal Oya, Mannampitiya, Padaviya and many villages in the Trincomalee and Kaluminai districts have been turned into Sinhala majority areas. The Tamils are daily losing territory to the Sinhalese. The state-aided colonisation of Tamil areas by the Sinhalese has deprived the Tamils of the areas traditionally owned by them."

At the Jaffna convention a mild stir was caused when a delegate raised the matter of Naganathan's daughter Lakshmi studying Sinhala. "You ask other people's children not to study the Sinhala language but allow your daughter to study it!" a delegate told Naganathan. The latter walked up to the

delegate and punched him on the chin. Amirthalingam ran to the scene, pulled Naganathan away and pacified the delegate.

I reported that incident in the *Thinkaran*. The day after the story appeared, when I went to parliament to report the proceedings, I met with Amirthalingam during tea-break at the parliament restaurant. He was with Navaratnam and Dharmalingam. Naganathan was with some ministers. When he saw me he came up to me and caught me by the neck. "What did you write in the paper?" he asked and raised his hands. Amirthalingam and Navaratnam caught him and dragged him away. Naganathan returned a little later and apologised and offered me a cup of tea.

The convention authorised the Action Committee to launch the civil disobedience campaign on 20 February. The committee met on 29 January in Jaffna and decided to build up the support and tempo of the people in stages. The first step was for groups of volunteers, led by leaders, to visit government offices in the northern and eastern provinces and appeal to the government servants not to study or work in Sinhala.

On the morning of 30 January a group of volunteers gathered at the Jaffna office of the Federal Party. They split themselves into several small groups. The group led by Chelvanayakam marched to the Jaffna Kachcheri and the one led by Amirthalingam walked to the courts and other government offices in Jaffna town. Similar processions left the respective Federal Party offices in the various electorates in the northern and eastern provinces.

All of them distributed a handbill captioned: "Appeal to every public servant". It read:

Dear brother,

We have no grievance against you personally. But if you are one engaged in implementing the Sinhala Only policy

in the Tamil-speaking areas, we make this appeal to you. What Sinhala is to the Sinhala-speaking people, Tamil should be to the Tamil-speaking people.

An unjust and undemocratic government has refused a unanimous request of the Tamil-speaking people to establish Tamil as the language of administration in the northern and eastern provinces. Instead, the government is forcing Sinhala down our throats.

The Tamil-speaking people have no alternative but to resist this wicked policy of the government. We are engaged in a life and death struggle for our birthright.

Hence this appeal to you:

1. Please do not do any work in your office in Sinhala.
2. Please do not attend to any Sinhala official communication.
3. Please do not sign or use a frank in Sinhala.

Sgd.S.J.V.Chelvanayakam

on behalf of the Working Committee
of the Federal Party

The police did not interfere and the day passed off peacefully. At the end of the day Chelvanayakam informed the press that the response from the government servants had been encouraging. He said that he had also met some who taught Sinhala; they had agreed to discontinue the classes.

Justice Minister Sam P.C.Fernando addressed the nation that evening over the radio. He promised, "If there are any difficulties, I am ready to discuss them and make adjustments to remove those inconveniences and annoyances." He said that he was also prepared to give instructions that Tamil translations be sent to Sinhala letters. He added, "If

there are any hardship caused in any particular place, we are prepared to adjust matters. This would be done without injury to the Official Language Act." He also appealed to the Tamil-speaking people not to be misled by the Federal Party mischief makers.

Chelvanayakam replied to the above through the press. He said, "Our party has arrived at the decision after we gave a full trial to the methods of negotiation. It produced no results from the government side. Even our letters were not acknowledged. The minister's statement comes nowhere near the mark. He does not understand our position or he is underestimating our intelligence. We will, as true *satyagrahis*, always keep the door of negotiations open. But we cannot abandon the fundamental rights of our people."

From the second day FP leaders visited the villages in their electorates and enrolled volunteers. They held public meetings in every village in the north and east. They also visited schools and told them to discontinue Sinhala classes. At a meeting in Jaffna College in his electorate Vaddukoddai, Amirthalingam told the students, "We are studying Sinhala voluntarily. What we oppose is it being forced down our throats. That is what a government MP told me in parliament that they are doing. And I told him that if they try to force it down our throats, we will spit it out." There was thunderous applause and the students carried him round the grounds thrice.

Independence Day, 4 February, was observed as a day of mourning throughout the northern and eastern provinces. A huge procession was taken out in Jaffna that day. Thousands of youth who marched from Urumpirai to Jaffna, a distance of eight kilometres, carried a coffin which carried several copies of the Sinhala Only Act, Language of Courts Act and the Ceylon Constitution. The coffin was set on fire after funeral rites were performed by Kayts MP V.A.Kandaiah.

The Action Committee met on 19 February and put finishing touches to the Direct Action plan due to begin the next morning. Chelvanayakam issued a lengthy statement explaining the campaign. The first portion explained that the campaign they were launching was new to Ceylon. To be successful, it had to be used in support of a just cause and should reflect the desire and aspirations of the people. The people who volunteer to participate in the *satyagraha* should be disciplined and of strong moral character.

The majority community was acting dictatorially. It explained this with a simple illustration. "To give a simple illustration," it said, "the majority in parliament should not pass a law that all persons belonging to a minority group should have one of their arms amputated." Chelvanayakam then likened the Sinhala Only to amputating an arm.

After tracing the history of the language conflict, the statement said that the government decision to impose Sinhala on the Tamil people was unjust and wicked. It concluded, "The whole of the Tamil-speaking nation revolts against these measures; then the question is what must we do now? Should we stand by and witness the destruction of our race? Or should we act? In similar circumstances Gandhi and the Indian National Congress resorted to action which was against the laws of the country but was characterised as moral and patriotic conduct.

"Our party has decided likewise. We are prepared to face the consequences of our action, which consequences may be very serious.

"We have no misgiving about the strength and capacity of the government to resort to repressive measures and oppress our people. One thing is certain. Our campaign cannot result in failure unless we or our actions are disowned by our people.

"The measure of success depends on the extent to which our people get trained to resist the unjust measures of a government that rules them without their consent."

On 20 February Federal Party volunteers went on a procession and sat opposite the gates of the Jaffna kachcheri at 7.30 a.m. Chelvanayakam, Amirthalingam, Kandaiah, Navaratnam and other leaders sat on the front row. Behind them were the ladies. Mangayarkarasi, Amirthalingam's young wife, sang religious songs which the *satyagrahis* repeated after her.

(Mangayarkarasi's singing talent was the one which had attracted Amirthalingam. She was the daughter of Vallipuram, a rich general merchant of Bandarawela. Amirthalingam had been impressed by her singing when he had gone to Ramanathan's College, Chulipuram, to deliver a special lecture. She was one of the students and had sung a song praising the Tamil language. They were married in 1960.)

At 7.45 a.m., the Superintendent of Police, Jaffna, Arndt, arrived in a jeep and tried to enter the Government Agent's residence, the entrance of which was blocked by the volunteers. He was furious. He shouted at Assistant Superintendent Mahendran, "Drag these buggers by their hind legs." The policemen hesitated. Arndt was infuriated even further. He bawled out orders repeatedly. The steel-helmeted policemen finally sprang into action and dragged the volunteers away. One of them was V.A. Kandaiah MP. When the volunteers were dragged away, others came and sat in their places.

At 9 a.m. the police was again ordered to clear the volunteers. They were rolled, kicked and dragged away again. A huge crowd had gathered by that time and joined the *satyagrahis*. The police failed to clear them all. Arndt then changed his orders. He told the police to clear a passage for the kachcheri staff to enter. The volunteers held their positions

despite police action. At 10.15 a.m. M.Sri Kantha the Government Agent, who was at the Residency, attempted to drive out in a jeep to attend the opening of the Supreme Court session at the Jaffna Town Hall. The police who attempted to clear a passage for him was stoned. More members of the public joined the *satyagrahis* and the place was turned into a sea of heads. The police fired a round of tear gas and the public was forced to disperse. But the FP leaders and volunteers continued their blockade of the kachcheri. At noon the *satyagraha* was called off for that day.

Many volunteers were injured due to police action. Among them were five leaders - V.Dharmalingam, Amirthalingam, V.A.Kandaiah, K.Thirunavukkatasu and Dr.Naganathan. Amirthalingam and Naganathan were injured when they were baton charged. The baton used to hit Naganathan broke; he grabbed the broken portion and kept it as a memento. The other three suffered bruises when they were dragged by the police. Fifty-two *satyagrahis* were also injured. They were treated at the Jaffna hospital. Four policemen had been hit by stones.

At the end of the day Chelvanayakam issued a statement to the press. It said: "February 20, 1961, is a great day for the Tamil-speaking people of Ceylon. This was the day we resorted to direct action to win our freedom." The statement also criticised the police action.

The next day, the second day of Direct Action, the police put up barricades on all roads leading to the Jaffna kachcheri and stopped the procession of *satyagrahis*. The latter sat opposite the barricade, blocking the road. But some innovative youth took the *satyagrahis* in twos and threes through unguarded lanes and unto the kachcheri. When the kachcheri gates opened at 9 a.m., there were over five hundred *satyagrahis* sitting opposite the gates.

The third day was women's day and Mangayarkarasi collected over five hundred ladies to sit and pray opposite the

kachcheri gates. They sat and sang religious songs, mainly Hindu and Christian. A few Islamic divine songs were also sung by Muslim women.

On the fourth day I was in Jaffna. That was on a private visit but I made use of it to cover the *Satyagraha* for the Lake House group of newspapers. Jaffna wore a festive appearance. People seemed thrilled. They were all involved. I was at my home in Ariyalai when a group of youth came and asked my mother for permission to pluck young coconuts to be given to the *satyagrahis*.

"Pluck any amount," she said, and asked what arrangements had been made for their meals.

"We're collecting parcels," one youth replied.

"I'll give two or three parcels daily," she volunteered.

"It must be a vegetarian meal," she was informed.

"Thanthai is particular about the purity of the *satyagrahis*. He has told them that it is a religious mission."

Chelvanayakam was referred to as 'Thanthai' the Tamil word for father.

My aunt, who lived in the next 'valavu' (garden), called the youths, in Tamil with a Sinhala accent, to pluck whatever they wanted from her garden also. She was a Kandyan Sinhalese, married to my uncle, a printing press proprietor. She was a Federal Party supporter, her husband a UNP admirer.

On that day the government parliamentary group had its usual meeting in Colombo. Several MPs expressed concern about the situation in Jaffna. Finance Minister Felix Bandaranaike, who also held the parliamentary secretaryship of the Ministry of Defence and External Affairs, assured the group that the situation in Jaffna was well under control and

that the government was confident of maintaining law and order in all the provinces, including the north and east.

A *hartal* was conducted on 27 February in the Batticaloa district to condemn the police action in Jaffna. The next day thousands of volunteers, led by MPs Rasamanikkam and Rajadurai, blocked the gates of the Batticaloa kachcheri. The *satyagraha* was extended to Mannar, Vavuniya and Trincomalee on March. At Trincomalee the police baton-charged the *satyagrahis*. Ten were admitted to the Trincomalee hospital with injuries. Mutur MP Ehambaram was one of them. He had received blows on his head and chest. He did not recover from his injuries and died eighteen days later.

By the end of February opposition parties mounted pressure on the government to find a solution to the Tamil problem. UNP leader Jayewardene told the press, "From all reports, the situation is not good." LSSP leader Dr. M. M. Perera said, "If the present situation is allowed to go on, it will have national consequences." Ceylon Workers' Congress leader S. Thondaman, then an appointed MP, went to Jaffna with SLFP MP S. D. Bandaranayake. He was moved by the extent of the involvement of the *satyagrahis*.

In a statement Thondaman said, "I came here to see the *satyagraha* myself. I am struck by your discipline. I am struck by your determination. Discipline and determination are the two essentials for any movement to succeed. I am sure you will succeed in your struggle."

He and S. D. Bandaranayake held talks with FP leaders. On his return to Colombo Thondaman had a meeting with the Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike and gave an account of what he and S. D. Bandaranayake had witnessed. Mrs. Bandaranaike directed him to talk with Felix. But Felix was unsympathetic. He told Thondaman that the government was not in a position to yield.

"Think of the Sinhala reaction if we give in," he told Thondaman.

Thondaman warned, "You must also think of the Tamil reaction. If you ignore Tamil feelings, it will harden. Remember, you cannot ignore the feelings of a community for long."

Felix retorted that the government's immediate concern was the Sinhala reaction. And that the government listened to hard-liners like K. M. P. Rajaratna. The Sinhala hardliners had wanted the government to deploy army units to Jaffna to restore law and order. The government deployed, on 1 March, army and navy detachments to Jaffna to assist the police.

But the previous day, 30 April, MP for Galle, W. Dehanayake moved a motion in parliament for the early adjournment of the House to enable it to discuss the Jaffna situation. He charged that the entire administration had collapsed in the north and east, and predicted dire consequences if the government failed to take immediate action to find a solution.

Felix spoke on behalf of the government. He said that the Federal Party, under the cover of non-violence, was trying to bring the administration to a standstill. "Could any government sit back and tolerate a situation like this? A government must decide to govern or give up its position," he declared.

A Gazette Extraordinary, signed by the Governor General, was issued that night, notifying that troops would be used to maintain essential services. An army unit of 500 men was moved to Batticaloa and Ampara. Navy units were sent by the night mail to Jaffna. A navy unit was also airlifted to Palaly. That was the first airlift of security personnel in Ceylon's history.

At dawn, on 1 March, navy units were positioned at 36 points in Jaffna municipality. Jaffna reacted with a *hartal* and

all work came to a standstill. At 7.30 a.m. as on previous days, *satyagrahis* gathered at the FP head office. Two hundred men and women, led by V.Dharmalingam, marched in a procession towards Jaffna kachcheri. When they reached the navy checkpoint, they were stopped.

Amirthalingam was late that day. As his car was entering Jaffna Municipal limits, it was stopped. Amirthalingam asked them for a reason. The naval officer replied, "Jaffna is a prohibited city."

"What do you mean by that?" Amirthalingam asked.

The officer said that he did not know what it meant but was told that and ordered not to allow anyone in. Amirthalingam said he was on his way to his party office; the officer relented and allowed him to pass.

Naganathan and V.A.Kandaiah were also stopped at another point. They were also told that Jaffna was a 'prohibited city' and that navy units had been instructed to prevent *satyagrahis* from going to the kachcheri. They were not permitted to enter Jaffna.

Satyagrahis broke through the naval cordon using unpatrolled bylanes and private compounds and reached the kachcheri. When the kachcheri gates opened at 9 a.m., there were over three hundred people, including a hundred women, blocking it. Students from nearby schools and colleges abandoned their classes and marched towards the kachcheri. That was the first boycott of classes by Jaffna students. The Jaffna Municipal Council met that evening and passed a resolution urging the government to withdraw the security forces.

In Colombo about thirty government MPs asked for a special meeting of the Government Parliamentary Group which was held the next day, 2 March. It adopted the following resolution: "That in view of the fact that the enemies of the government are attempting to weaken the administration

through the *satyagraha* movement of the Federal Party in the north, the government to take immediate steps to stop the *satyagraha* movement and to prepare a permanent scheme to obtain peace and security in the country."

On the same day the government sent Anuradhapura Government Agent Nissanka Wijeratne to Jaffna as the Jaffna GA had gone on medical leave. Sri Kantha had gone out of the country on long leave. Acting Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, N.Q.Dias, visited Jaffna along with Wijeratne and the Deputy Inspector General of Police of the northern range C.P.Wambeek and held a conference at the Jaffna kachcheri. They had some difficulty in gaining entrance; Wijeratne was carried over the *satyagrahis* by the police. At the conference it was decided to ask the government servants to report for work.

Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike told the Senate that evening that army and navy units had to be sent to assist the police as the police force had been found insufficient.

The deployment of the security forces provoked the FP to broaden the *satyagraha* movement. *Satyagrahis* started obstructing bus services; postal office employees walked out; almost all government offices closed. A massive crowd collected at the kachcheri and decided to continue the *satyagraha* throughout the night. At 6 p.m. navy units were called in by the police to clear the crowd. Tear gas was fired and the *satyagrahis* were forced to disperse.

Wijeratne was not happy with the situation. To defuse the tension he ordered the navy to withdraw to the barracks except from four main junctions. At 8 a.m. on 3 March, the navy units left after handing over the security responsibilities to the police. But around midnight on 5 March the police baton charged a crowd, injuring five persons. They barricaded the kachcheri and the army, which had been brought in by this time, moved in with three Bren gun carriers into the cordoned area.

Three hours before this Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike made a broadcast to the nation. In that she indicated her willingness to consider the hardships caused to the Tamil people by the government's language policy. But she linked it to the calling off the *satyagraha* campaign by the Federal Party. The Federal Party rejected it saying what they wanted was the granting of their rights and not relief. It also decided to continue the *satyagraha* and announced that it was not interested in talks.

Mrs. Bandaranaike left for London to attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference on the night of 5 March. C.P.de Silva, who was sworn in as Acting Prime Minister on 6 March, said he was prepared to hold talks with the representatives of the Tamils who wanted to discuss the problems affecting the Tamil community. But, he insisted, the initiative would have to come from the Tamils themselves. That same morning the army moved in strength into Old Park, the residency of the Jaffna Government Agent. Old Park wore the appearance of a military camp with military vehicles and personnel all over the place.

The cabinet had a 4-hour meeting on 8 March and reviewed the situation in the north and east. It decided not to make alternate arrangements to issue food stuff and for other services performed by the kachcheries. The Federal Party charged the government of trying to starve the people by refusing to issue rationed rice. The government relented and on 15 March made alternate arrangements to deliver ration rice to the cooperative stores directly from its stores.

The cabinet again considered the situation in the north and east on 11 March and decided not to use force. It thought of tiring out the people. But this did not work. I went back to Jaffna around mid-March and found the entire Jaffna peninsula in a festive mood. All approach roads to the kachcheri were decorated and thatched huts put up to serve

satyagrahis with refreshments. The sense of involvement that I observed during my visit in February had grown and widened.

On her return from London, Mrs. Bandaranaike addressed the nation over the radio on 25 March. She said, "I appeal to the leaders of the *satyagraha* movement to call off the campaign without delay. I repeat the assurances given by me that my government is ready and willing to listen to the grievances and make adjustments wherever necessary after due consideration ... Other matters which have come to my knowledge have given room for grave concern as to whether certain political organisations in the north and east are not in fact endeavouring to paralyse the administration in these places with a view to establishing a separate state by deliberately misleading the Tamil-speaking people into believing that this government has deprived them of their language and their heritage."

Chelvanayakam rejected Mrs. Bandaranaike's appeal to call off the *satyagraha*. He said, "The Prime Minister's appeal amounts to asking us to call off the *satyagraha* unconditionally. She is not willing to grant or discuss our demands on the language. She is only prepared to discuss hardships, if any, caused by the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act. It is thus clear there is no meeting point mentioned."

Sinhala extremists stepped up a campaign in the Sinhala areas to pressurise the government to act more firmly. The Kandyan Youth League demanded on 31 March that the Federal Party be banned. On 1 April the Prime Minister conferred with the ministers about the situation. Additional Defence Secretary N.Q.Dias, a hardliner, Army Commander Major General Winston Wijekoon, Attorney General Douglas Jansz and Acting Legal Draftsman Percy de Silva were present. They considered the legal implications of imposing a state of emergency in the northern and eastern provinces.

It was generally agreed that certain provisions of the Public Security Act may have to be enforced to keep essential services going in the two provinces.

The Prime Minister was up early morning on 2 April. Along with Felix, she reviewed the police and army reports about the situation. She then attended a cabinet meeting, after which she called on the Governor General and conferred with him till late into the night.

On 3 April Tamil Congress MP for Udupiddy M.Sivasithamparam attended the Action Committee meeting as a special invitee. He was invited in response to the agitation that the conduct of the *satyagraha* be widened to include all Tamil political parties. The Action Committee decided on that day to extend the agitation to picketing of railways.

The cabinet met again on 4 April to review the situation. There were two strands of opinion in the cabinet throughout. The hardliners were led by Felix. They wanted the declaration of Emergency and the deployment of the army to break up the *satyagraha*. The other group was led by C.P.de Silva and Sam P.C.Fernando was authorised to make contacts with the Federal Party.

Sam P.C.Fernando rang his friend M.Tiruchelvam, former Solicitor General. Tiruchelvam persuaded Chelvanayakam to give negotiations a try. On 5 April Chelvanayakam and Amirthalingam flew to Ratmalana from Palaly by the afternoon flight, arriving at 3 p.m. FP president Rasamanikkam was in Colombo. Naganathan, who was in Batticoloa, returned by car. They met Sam P.C.Fernando at 7.30 p.m. at Tiruchelvam's Rosmead Place home. At that 4-hour meeting Chelvanayakam told the minister the immediate cause for the *satyagraha* was the government's decision to implement the Sinhala Only law in the north and east, and placed before him a memorandum containing four demands. He emphasized that until those demands were met *satyagraha* would not be called off or suspended.

The four demands were:

1. The Tamil language be the language of the northern and eastern provinces for all administrative purposes.
2. The Tamil language be the language of the courts in those areas.
3. The position of Tamil public servants in relation to the implementation of the Official Language Act be settled.
4. The right of the Tamil-speaking persons outside the northern and eastern provinces be clarified.

Amirthalingam and Rasamanikkam returned to Jaffna the next morning (6 April) and Chelvanayakam and Naganathan in the evening. Sam P.C.Fernando placed the 4 demands of the Federal Party to the cabinet in the morning of 6 April, and after a 3-hour consideration, the cabinet decided to reject it. In a statement to the House Representatives on 7 April, Leader of the House C.P.de Silva said that the government was unable to concede to the demands as they conflicted with the provisions of the Official Language Act and the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act.

Almost about the same time that evening, a massive rally was held at Nallur in Jaffna where Tamil youth castigated the FP leaders for talking to the government. Speaker after speaker told the cheering crowd that Mother Tamil was more dear to them than their own mother, and they were ready to throw out the leaders who try to betray Mother Tamil.

At a public meeting held on 11 April Chelvanayakam reported the failure of the 5 August talks and announced the second phase of the *satyagraha*. I attended that massive meeting, the biggest up to that time, as I was back in Jaffna for my wedding which was fixed for 10 April. Chelvanayakam said, "I am sorry to report to you the failure of the talks we

had with the government on April 5. We went down to the rock bottom and asked the government to grant the minimum rights necessary for the Tamil people to live with dignity. We only asked them to agree to allow us administer the Tamil areas in the Tamil language. I told Mr. Sam P.C. Fernando to place himself in my position and asked him what he would feel if he was told Tamil would have no place. He could not answer. Now that our minimum demands have been rejected, we have no alternative but to launch the second stage of the *satyagraha* - civil disobedience."

Chelvanayakam then explained that by disobeying the laws of the government they want to demonstrate to the government and the world their opposition to the government's policy of Sinhalization. He said that the first law they intended to break was the Postal Ordinance which makes the conduct of the postal service the monopoly of the government. The second would be the Land Development Ordinance, the law that Sinhala governments were misusing to colonise Tamil areas with Sinhala people.

I was at my Ariyalai home at 2 p.m. on Friday, 14 April, the Sinhala and Tamil New Year Day. A cycle bell rang. My nephew informed me that my neighbour I.S. Shanmuganathan wanted to meet me. He gave me an envelope stamped with the Tamil Arasu Stamp. The envelope contained a wedding greeting card. It had been sent by Amirthalingam through Shanmuganathan who was one of the many volunteers who worked as postal delivery peons that day. I preserved that envelope and card which, however, was burnt when my home at Dehiwala was torched in July 1983.

The 'Tamil Arasu Postal Service' was inaugurated at the auspicious moment of 12.03 p.m. on 14 April at the temporary post office, set up at the gate of the Jaffna kachcheri, by selling the first stamp to V.A. Kandaiah, the MP for Kayts. Kandaiah addressed the stamped envelope to

District Superintendent of Postal Services, Jaffna, placed a copy of the leaflet announcing the new postal service in it, and handed it over to the party president Rasamanikkam who delivered it to the officer at the Jaffna Post Office. The second stamped envelope was sold to M. Sivasithamparam, who addressed it to the Government Agent, Jaffna. He walked to the Residency and was told that the GA was not in. Other officers refused to accept it and he left the letter with the security guards. Naganathan delivered a letter to the Superintendent of Police. The other MPs, too, delivered letters to top government officers.

Chelvanayakam sold the entire stock of 5000 ten cent stamps, 2500 stamped envelopes priced 15 cents each and 1500 postcards priced 5 cents each by 4 p.m. There was a long queue and the demand was so heavy that Chelvanayakam had to restrict the sale to one each.

On the second day, 15 April, the Tamil Arasu Post Office received a fresh supply of stamps. Chelvanayakam, after starting the sale in the temporary post office, moved to another part of the kachcheri premises and inaugurated the Tamil Arasu Land Kachcheri. There he announced that he was prepared to receive applications for land grants and lease in accordance with the Land Development Ordinance. He said that the government was not holding land kachcheries in the Tamil areas but was saying that the Tamils were not applying. The Tamil Arasu Land Kachcheri would show that the Tamils were willing to apply and thus expose the government's discriminatory policies. Hundreds of applications poured in.

The government was disturbed over the civil disobedience. Felix, the Junior Minister for Defence, had a meeting on 14 April with military chiefs. He also met Justice Minister Sam P.C. Fernando. It was decided to send additional troops to Jaffna. A special train left Colombo for Jaffna on the morning of 15 April with 15 officers and 300 hundred soldiers. It ran non-stop and reached Jaffna at 3.30 p.m.

Additional troops were also rushed by road. Troop strength was also increased in Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke was in Nuwara Eliya on holiday. Mrs Bandaranaike telephoned him on the morning of the 16 April and asked him to return to Colombo. Sir Oliver met Mrs Bandaranaike in the evening shortly after his return. She also had a series of meetings with ministers and other politicians. When she retired to bed, it was 1 a.m., 17 April, her 45th birthday. She was up early that morning. Felix was there with police and army intelligence reports. The chiefs of the army, police, navy and air force and Mr. N.Q.Dias were also there. She met them and a decision was taken to declare a state of Emergency and to arrest Federal Party leaders.

The cabinet met at 10 a.m. at Temple Trees. The meeting was a short one. Mrs Bandaranaike asked Felix to announce the measures they intended to take to control the situation. Felix informed the cabinet the a state of Emergency would be declared and the administration handed to the security forces. The Federal Party would also be banned and its leaders arrested. There was unanimous approval.

An islandwide emergency was clamped that midnight. An extraordinary gazette, issued that night, contained the Governor General's proclamation. It read:

"Whereas I am of the opinion that, by reason of the existence of a state of emergency in Ceylon, it is expedient so to do in the interests of public security, the preservation of public order and the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community.

"Know Ye that I, Oliver Earnest Goonatilleke, Governor General, do by the order of the powers vested in me by Section 2 of the Public Security Ordinance No. 25 of 1947,

as amended by Act No. 22 of 1949, that the Provision of Part 2 of the Ordinance shall come into operation throughout Ceylon on the seventeenth day of April, One thousand nine hundred and sixty one.

Given in Colombo on the seventeenth day of April in the year One thousand nine hundred and sixty one.

By His Excellency's Command

N.W.Atukorala

Secretary to the Governor General

In another order, signed by the Governor General and made applicable to the whole of Ceylon, fuel and electricity supply and distribution, passenger transport, water supply, postal, telephone, telegraph, broadcasting and all government services were declared essential services.

A gazette extraordinary, signed by the Prime Minister, proscribed the Federal Party and the Janatha Vimakthi Peramuna, banned processions in Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, imposed a curfew for 48 hours beginning at midnight, 17 April, within the limits of Jaffna Municipality, Trincomalee and Batticaloa Urban Councils and Vavuniya and Mannar Town Councils, prohibited the operation of radio services; prohibited public meetings, and imposed censorship.

The five districts in the north and east were placed under the administration of the following military coordinating officers: Lt. Col. A.R.Udugama, Jaffna, Lt.Col. L.N.Wickremasooriya, Trincomalee, Lt. Col.P.D.Ramanayake, Batticaloa, Major T.S.B.Sally, Mannar and Major C.P.Fernando, Vavuniya.

Army Commander Major General Wijekoon flew to Jaffna on the evening of 17 April and took personal command of the army units deployed there. The proclamation of the

emergency was announced over the radio at 9 p.m. that evening. Mrs. Bandaranaike addressing the nation, said, "Most of the emergency regulations will apply only to those areas which are affected by the anti-government movement."

She appealed to the people of other areas to remain calm and to get about their business in the normal way. She said that the Federal Party's demands were unreasonable. She added, "Since last week the Federal Party has opened, what they call, a postal service and formed a police force. They have also decided to establish land kachcheries to allot crown lands to their supporters. It will thus be clear that the Federal Party leaders had challenged the lawfully established government of the country with a view to establish a separate state."

Shortly after midnight, armed forces moved to the five kachcheries that were blocked by the *satyagrahis*. By early morning the military cleared the roads and entrances to all public offices which were picketed by the *satyagrahis*. Police also arrested all Federal Party MPs, senators and Working Committee members. Other leading Federal Party supporters were also arrested. By the evening of 18 April, 68 persons had been nabbed. Amirthalingam and his wife Mangayarkarasi were among them. FP leaders were brought to Colombo and detained at the Panagoda Army Camp. The next evening, Felix informed parliament about the declaration of the state of emergency and the arrest of the MPs. Curfew was lifted on the midnight of 19 April and public servants were asked to report for work on 20 April. They were threatened with vacation of post if they failed to report for work. Kachcheries and government offices opened on 20 April and functioned normally.

Tamil youth showed their opposition to the armed forces in some places. They pelted stones at them. On 19 April the army opened fire at Valvettiturai and Point Pedro at the

stone throwers. At Valvettiturai three of the latter were injured. At Point Pedro one person was killed and two others slightly wounded. These were the first instances of army-Tamil youth clashes. On 21 April at about 7.30 p.m. an army patrol met with fairly heavy stone throwing in Kaithady near Jaffna, and in Chankanai at about 11.30 p.m. In Mirusuvil, a post box was set ablaze and at Kankesanthurai and Point Pedro, road blocks were put up. In Trincomalee district, there were stone throwing incidents at Uppuveli and Sambaltivu. On 23 April two Ceylon Transport Board buses were damaged, one at Anaikoddai in Jaffna and the other at Sambaltivu in Trincomalee. In Chavakachcheri an army patrol was fired upon and two soldiers injured. They were admitted to the Jaffna hospital. That was the first incident when Tamil youth used guns. The government ordered all persons possessing guns in the northern and eastern provinces to surrender them.

Two more incidents of firing at army personnel took place on 27 April. The first was at Urumpirai. A night army patrol was fired at injuring the driver and a soldier. The second was at Batticoloa, near Eravur at a police patrol in which a constable was slightly wounded. The situation quietened down after 28 April.

By this time there were strike threats by the bank clerks and plantation trade unions. Mrs. Bandaranaike addressed the nation on radio about this threat on 25 April. She said, "You may recall that the Federal Party, on the pretext of the language issue, challenged the authority of the government and declared its intentions to establish a separate state." She then linked the strike threat to FP's actions. The parliament was prorogued by the end of April.

The ceremonial opening of the new sessions of parliament took place on 13 July. Debate on the Vote of Thanks opened on 25 July. Jayewardene, UNP parliamentary group

whip, asked whether the FP and JVP members under detention would be allowed to attend parliament.

C.P.de Silva, Leader of the House replied, "Those members are on leave. They must apply to the proper authority if they wish to be present in the House."

Jayewardene: "Who is the authority?"

C.P.de Silva: "The Prime Minister."

Jayewardene: "She is not in the House."

Dudley Senanayake, Leader of the Opposition, "Does the Prime Minister control the affairs of the House?"

C.P.de Silva: "They must apply to the Speaker. I do not know whether he has received the application."

Dudley Senanayake: "I intend to raise this on a matter of privilege - whether under defence regulations members could be prevented from attending the House. It is a breach of privilege."

But the privilege motion was never moved and Federal Party MPs were kept in detention at the Panagoda Army Camp till 4 October. CID officers called at the detention camp at noon that day and informed the detained MPs that the Prime Minister had ordered their release. The freed MPs packed their bags and went to the dining hall for lunch, after which they went to the verandah and lustily sang the Federal Party anthem. Naganathan started the singing and Mangayarkarasi took over. They left the camp at 2.30 p.m. after a 170 day stay.

I met them at Chelvanayakam's home around 4 p.m.

Chelvanayakam brimmed with the same determination as before. "We'll continue the struggle," he said.

Amirthalingam agreed. He said, "We're free men now. We'll continue our work from where we left."

"I'm fighting fit. The detention gave me time to do my daily exercises," said Naganathan.

"I read a lot of books," Navaratnam said. Rajadurai had also read widely. His grouse was that he did not get enough Tamil books.

To Mangayarkarasi it had been a thrilling experience. She had been allowed to stay with her husband. "Since our marriage this is the first time we spent most of our time together," she said.

"For them it was a second honeymoon," Naganathan quipped.

"But the separation from my son was terrible," Mangayarkarasi said.

Her eldest son Ravi was only a year old and he used to cling to her whenever he was taken to the camp to see his parents. "Parting from him was really terrible," she said.

The next day the Federal leaders took the Yal Devi express to Jaffna. Naganathan waved the Federal Party flag as the train pulled out of Colombo Fort station. They were given a tumultuous welcome in Jaffna. The youth had erected a temporary stage outside the station. They carried the MPs on their shoulders to the stage. Amirthalingam was their hero. Girls conducted Mangayarkarasi to the rostrum. She was profusely garlanded by them. At the meeting Chelvanayakam pledged to carry the struggle forward.

But that was not so easy. The lost momentum had to be regained. The government tried to block it by stepping up its pressure on the Federal Party. On 23 October, nineteen days after their release, Chief Inspector of Jaffna Police

R.C.de Niese filed a plaint in the Magistrate Court of Jaffna charging Naganathan, Amirthalingam, V.A.Kandaiah, Dharmalingam and Proctor S.Nadarajah with having obstructed Police Superintendent C.R.Arndt and Government Agent Sri Kantha on 20 March 1961 from entering and leaving the Jaffna Kachcheri. They were also charged with unlawful assembly and wrongful restraint. The magistrate allowed summons returnable on 21 November.

On 21 November Jaffna Magistrate Arasue Walton read out the charges to the accused. He then called out each accused by name and asked them what their plea was. The accused remained silent. The magistrate repeated his enquiry. The accused continued to remain silent. The trial was fixed for 30 January 1962.

Meanwhile, on 26 November 1961, Amirthalingam was stopped by Sub-Inspector of Police de Silva and was taken to the Jaffna police station where the Tamil number of his car was removed. Amirthalingam was told to appear in court when summoned. He was summoned to appear before the Jaffna Magistrate on 2 February 1962. Amirthalingam pleaded not guilty to the charge of obscuring the identification plate of his car. He was charged as owner and driver of car number EN 4950. The case was fixed for 7 March, which was postponed first for 9 May and then for 10 July. On that day, too, the police moved for a postponement on the ground that they had not obtained a proper certified copy of the registration from the Registrar of Motor Vehicle. M. Sivasithamparam, who appeared for Amirthalingam, objected, saying that the police had not got that vital document for many months. Additional Magistrate V.M.Coomaraswamy told the police that they should have got the certified copy before filing the plaint and fixed the trial for that evening. At the trial, Sivasithamparam cross-examined Sub-Inspector de Silva and

Police Serjeant Bodhisena on the point whether the Tamil lettering prevented them from determining the identify of the vehicle. Bodhisena said he was able to identify the vehicle as bearing the number EN 4950. The magistrate acquitted Amirthalingam on that point.

The case against the five leaders did not have an easy ending. They were served notice on 24 January 1962 to appear before Colombo Acting Chief Magistrate N.A.de S.Wijesekera on 29 January. They asked Acting Chief Magistrate Wijesekera, through their lawyer M. Tiruchelvam Q.C., why they had been served notice to appear in Colombo. The magistrate said that the case had been transferred on a fiat signed by the Attorney General. The case was postponed to 12 March.

The FP leaders filed an application for the re-transfer of the case to Jaffna before the Supreme Court on 8 February. That application came up before Justice Weerasooriya on 7 June. During the hearing, Tiruchelvam, who appeared for the FP leaders, raised two issues. The first was about the Attorney General's fiat. He said the issue of the fiat for the transfer of the case was illegal and unjustified. No circumstance existed for a departure from the fundamental principle that the accused person should be tried in the court within the jurisdiction of which the offence was committed. Deputy Solicitor General A.V.Alles countered by saying that the laws do not provide for the petitioners to make their application for re-transfer.

The second issue was more fundamental. It was about the validity of certain provisions of the Public Security Ordinance which, Tiruchelvam argued, were ultra vires the constitution. Justice Weerasooriya said that the issues relating to the Public Security Ordinance would affect the entire emergency and referred the matter to a fuller bench of three judges. That resulted in undue dragging of the case

Meanwhile, the youth were becoming restive. They told the leadership that almost six months had passed since their release from detention and no action had been taken. The Youth Front organised a public meeting in Jaffna on 17 April 1962, the first anniversary of the declaration of emergency. Chelvanayakam told the massive crowd that Tamils were left with no alternative but to continue their struggle. He said, "In the context of things, what are we going to do next? Our course is definite. We are left with no alternative but to carry on our struggle without at anytime abandoning it till our goal is reached. Our language should also be the official language and our territory must be preserved for our culture, our heritage. The *satyagraha* campaign was only one phase of our struggle. The next phase will be announced soon."

The Federal Party re-started the agitation on 5 June 1962, the sixth anniversary of the introduction of the Sinhala Only Bill in parliament and of the Galle Face *satyagraha*. The day was observed as a day of mourning. The Youth Front held a separate meeting on that day and passed a resolution calling upon the party high command to launch a struggle. Amirthalingam, in his presidential speech, said that the success of the hartal was the answer to Mrs. Bandaranaike and Felix Dias Bandaranaike who were boasting that their strong action had finished off the Federal Party agitation.

The Federal Party moved four amendments to the Throne Speech on July 1962. In addition to the usual amendments on federal set-up, citizenship and Tamil language, the party moved a separate amendment on employment discrimination.

And at the eighth national convention held in Mannar on 31 August, education and employment received the main focus.

Chapter 6

Education

Led by MPs, bicycle processions, a new feature of the Mannar convention, were taken out from each electorate in the northern and eastern provinces. Though most of the MPs rode in cars in front, Navaratnam and Amirthalingam, with Mangayarkarasi on the pillion, chose to ride bicycles themselves. I arranged an exclusive picture of Amirthalingam and Mangayarkarasi for *Thinakaran*, taken by Kathiravelu, Lake House Picture correspondent in Jaffna.

Receptions were accorded to the processionists on their way. At the reception in Chavakachcheri, Amirthalingam said, "There would come a time when the Sinhalese and the Tamils would live in peace and unity enjoying equal rights. And that happy era will dawn only when our Sinhalese elder brothers realise the benefits of a federal constitutional arrangement."

At the Mannar Convention, Rasamanikkam was re-elected the president of the party for a second term. Stressing on the problems of employment and education in his presidential speech, he said that the government was harassing Tamil government servants not only by compelling them to study and work in the Sinhala language, but was also discriminating against them in fresh recruitments.

He said, "When the government announced its decision to implement the Sinhala Only in full, we asked the government officials to resist by refusing to study the Sinhala language. Many of the Tamil government servants heeded our call. The government is now engaged in trying to deceive them by saying 18,000 Tamil government servants sat for the recent Sinhala proficiency test. Our information is that only 3000

public servants sat this examination. This is a clear case of deception."

He went on to say, "The government is also following a policy of punishing the officials who refuse to sit the Sinhala test. Contrary to their contractual obligations, the government has denied salary increments and promotions to those who refused to sit the Sinhala examination. The government is promoting juniors over Tamil officers and is trying to belittle and disgrace them. Now, it is threatening to sack the Tamil government servants who refuse to work in the Sinhala language."

Rasamanikkam also countered the government propaganda that Tamils were dominating the medical, engineering, accounting, legal and technical professions. In the armed services, the police, and the labour grades over 90 percent were Sinhalese. "It is through these sectors that massive numbers can be employed. By denying these avenues, the government is discriminating against the Tamils," he said.

He also warned the government not to start the process of shutting the openings now available to the Tamils in the educated professions. He said that he saw such an attempt being made through the takeover of schools; Tamil and Muslim teachers were being told that they would be denied increments and promotions if they failed to study Sinhala. Orders had been issued to close down Tamil streams in the pretext of streamlining schools, he added. (Schools were taken over in late 1961.)

"I see a move to strangle the educational facilities the Tamils now enjoy. The Education Ministry has started neglecting the Tamil medium schools. There was also an attempt to take away from Jaffna schools science equipment, Rasamanikkam charged.

The main focus of the resolutions adopted at the end of the sessions on 2 September was on employment and educa-

tion. On employment, the resolution pointed out that the government's decision to stop increments, deny promotions and terminate the services of Tamil government servants and teachers if they failed to qualify in Sinhala was a gross violation of its contractual obligations.

It added that the government's proposal to deny work to the children of the Tamil plantation workers would endanger the very existence of the Indian Tamil community.

On education, the resolution stated, "The total denial of equal opportunity for education and employment to the Tamil speaking people and religious minorities by blatant and unscrupulous discrimination as, for instance,

1. The closure of a number of Tamil medium schools and the Tamil streams in mixed schools;
2. The proposals contained in the report of the National Commission on Education with regard to admission to the grant of Scholarship and medium of instruction in estate schools would cause great harm."

The Mannar Convention authorised the Working Committee to organise the party within a period of three months into an effective instrument for resuming the struggle not later than 17.4.1963, and set 17 April as the date for the resumption of the *satyagraha* campaign.

On 5 January 1963, when Education Minister Badi-uddin Mahmud and Trade Minister T.B. Ilangaratne, who was to open a Cooperative Wholesale Establishment Store in Point Pedro, visited Jaffna, the Federal Party decided to stage a black flag demonstration at Point Pedro. The group, led by Point Pedro MP Thurairatnam, included Amirthalingam, Kandaiah, Dharmalingam and Navaratnam. As the minister's motorcade approached the store, a huge crowd waved black flags, chanting, "Go back. We don't want you." Once the minister was safely inside the store, Superintendent of Police T. Van Sandan and his police force began to assault the

crowd. Kandaiah was admitted to the Jaffna hospital with a broken tooth, his spectacles broken and his shawl and slippers lost in the melee. Amirthalingam was also severely beaten up.

After Ilangaratne's visit to Jaffna, a Treasury Circular was issued enforcing Sinhala Only and compulsory retirement at 55 years, with strict orders that extensions should not be granted after 31 December 1963. This circular, in effect, denied the opportunity given to Tamil government servants by an earlier circular whereby they could obtain extension if they had acquired a working knowledge of Sinhala. The Federal Party reacted angrily by asking Tamil government servants not to sit for Sinhala proficiency tests.

As 17 April, the date set by the Mannar Convention for the resumption of the *satyagraha* campaign, approached, the government stepped up its propaganda campaign against the Federal Party. It was spearheaded by Ilangaratne. "I'll not allow the Federal Party to dance its tune and mislead the people," he said.

Chelvanayakam issued a reply to this on 29 March. In the first part of the statement he recounted details of the understanding the FP had with the SLFP which had led the latter to overthrow the UNP government in April 1960, the subsequent dishonouring of the understanding by the SLFP, the circumstances which led to the 1961 April *satyagraha*, and the declaration of the state of emergency. He then sketched the efforts the SLFP government had made to thrust Sinhala language on the Tamil speaking people and, he said, faced with such a situation the FP had no option but to continue the struggle.

"Faced with such a situation," Chelvanayakam stated, "the Tamil Arasu Kadchi, which admittedly represents the Northern and Eastern Provinces and which claims that it is not merely a political party, but is a liberation movement, has one of three courses open to it. The first is to surrender, the

second is to rise in armed revolt and the third is to adopt the Gandhian technique of *Satyagraha* and civil disobedience.

"The first one of abject surrender will be a disgrace to our people and will be aiding and abetting the political crime of genocide. The second one of rising in revolt is both impracticable and immoral. We are thus left with the third, namely the Gandhian technique. What do our critics want us to do? Do they want us to give up the struggle for the vindication of our unalienable rights?

"The Parliamentary means of objection have failed merely because the Party was outnumbered by a communal majority. Therefore, the Party wants to resort to extra-Parliamentary measures which are not immoral. By adopting this method, the Party subjects itself and its supporters to undergo suffering without hurting its opponents. The Party Members and its supporters know very well that they would be subjected to arrest, detention and/or jail. Further, the military will be turned on them to do everything unlawful and immoral as physical assault, looting, plundering and rape."

"If anybody thinks that the Party or its Leaders or followers enjoy being treated in this manner, they are wholly mistaken. If an alternative was possible, they would gladly avoid pain of mind and body and loss of property. The Party resorts to this weapon because it feels that they must undergo all the suffering for the saving of their race as an entity in this country."

Chelvanayakam concluded his statement: "People do not stop and ask themselves the question as to whether a minority linguistic group is entitled to certain language rights in the country, and whether the Tamil speaking people of this land have been properly treated by the Government as regards their language rights. If the answer to the question is that the Tamil speaking people's language rights have not been granted to them, what course of action is open to these people?"

As the date for the *satyagraha* neared, Federal Party leaders sent out feelers to the government to determine whether it was prepared for talks.

It was not. Instead, the prime minister met four non-FP MPs and discussed with them the hardships the Tamils faced due to the implementation of the Sinhala language.

The Federal Party answered by launching the Tamil Language Week on 8 April, when volunteers went in batches to the government offices in the north and east and requested Tamil officers to work only in Tamil. At the end of the week, which Chelvanayakam claimed a great success, he announced the postponement of the *satyagraha* campaign.

The reason was revealed two days later by Amirthalingam at a public meeting in Vavuniya. He said, "We did suspend our proposed direct action campaign in 1959 in order to give the then-government time to destroy itself which it did before the year was out. If we had launched the direct action as was decided at Mannar, it would have given the government an opportunity to rally its backbenchers with the cry of 'Tamil menace'. Even now a revolt is brewing inside the governing party. Our postponement is to allow the revolt to grow."

No such thing happened. The dissension within the government ranks was stilled by a 3-month long prorogation of parliament, beginning 8 May. The opposition parties - UNP, LSSP, CP, FP and MEP - condemned the prorogation.

In its Throne Speech in July, the government announced that it would take effective steps to implement the Sinhala Only Act fully from 1 January 1964. This provoked the Federal Party Working Committee to adopt a resolution to oppose its implementation with new vigour. The anti-Sinhala movement, revived on 1 October 1963, was to encourage Tamil officers not to study or work in Sinhala, and to encourage the Tamil speaking people to transact their business with the government only in Tamil.

Groups of volunteers waited outside government and post offices to persuade the public to fill their forms and write their applications and other communications in Tamil. Those unable to do so were offered help. Federal leaders also walked to every village recruiting volunteers for the proposed *satyagraha*.

The government reacted with anger. It ordered the transfer of Tamils qualified to work in Sinhala to the north and east. It announced that any shortage of staff would be filled with Sinhala officers. The Education Ministry announced that it would send 2000 Sinhala teachers to the schools in the northern and eastern provinces, and also announced its intention to discontinue the services of Tamil officers who failed to qualify in the Sinhala language.

The Federal Party organised a massive picketing campaign for January 1964. Huge processions were taken out to Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. At the public meeting held at Jaffna esplanade Chelvanayakam declared, "There is not one office in Jaffna today where business is done in Sinhala. That does not indicate any change of heart by the government. The government is only waiting for the present opposition to die down for it to start implementing its language policy in all its rigours."

Federal Party activists collected statistics about the number of officers and children who had studied Sinhala in the Tamil areas. In the Jaffna peninsula there were 400. The activists started *satyagraha* in front of their houses.

The Working Committee met at Vavuniya and decided to launch a non-violent direct action not later than 17 February. It listed six reasons for its decision. These were: (1) Refusal of the government to administer the north and east in Tamil; (2) Failure of the government to take action against the section of the Sinhala public servants who were trying to drive away Tamil government servants by resorting to hoo-

liganism and thuggery; (3) Failure to take action against the section of the Sinhala subordinates who refuse to obey the orders of Tamil superiors; (4) The compulsion used on Tamil speaking government servants to get them to work in Sinhala and to sign documents which they do not understand; (5) Widespread terrorism by the police and service personnel; and (6) Closing down of Tamil schools and Tamil streams.

The concluding paragraph of the resolution read: "The Committee is therefore of the opinion that the situation has become almost intolerable and unless arrested in time, the enslavement of the Tamil speaking people will be complete and annihilation would be irresistible."

The situation in the south by now had become explosive. The LSSP and the CP had formed a common front called the United Left Front (ULF), and the trade unions under their control had presented 21 demands which included substantial salary increase. There was also internal dissension within the government. The latter decided to quieten the Tamil front while it dealt with the leftists. The government requested Justice Minister G.C.T.A.de Silva to invite the Federal Party for talks. He said the Federal Party would have to create an atmosphere conducive for an amicable settlement to be worked out. The Federal Party responded positively and on 14 February Chelvanayakam announced the postponement of the *satyagraha* campaign. He said, "In view of certain happenings we have decided to postpone the *satyagraha*."

Justice Minister de Silva met Chelvanayakam and Rasamanikkam at his Colombo residence. He informed them that the talks were of a preliminary nature and wanted the Party to give him its proposals. Chelvanayakam told him that the immediate problem that needed solution was the drafting of regulations under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act and the establishment of district or regional councils. Justice Minister de Silva asked Chelvanayakam to give him

a draft of the Tamil Language regulations. "Let's deal with one problem at a time," he said. Chelvanayakam agreed and sent his draft within the next two days.

When there was no response from the government for more than a week, the Youth Wing told the leadership that the Federal Party was being taken for a ride. Under pressure, the Working Committee told Naganathan to meet the Justice Minister and find out the government's response. Naganathan conveyed the apprehensions of the youth wing and told him, "We must be forgiven if we are a bit sceptical about proposals and talks. Despite our scepticism, we would like to create an atmosphere to bring about a change of heart in the government and among the Sinhala people." He was told to be a little patient. "Let things cool down," de Silva said to him.

During this period, the SLFP started secret discussions with the LSSP to bring it into the government and thus break the United Left Front which was posing it a direct threat. When the Federal Party got to know about this, its Working Committee issued a statement on 29 March voicing its misgivings. The statement read: "This Committee is constrained to view with suspicion the intentions of this government as much as there is administrative discrimination, victimisation, and harassment of Tamil speaking people and public servants despite assurances. The Working Committee, therefore, declares categorically that the Federal Party cannot be party to any negotiations for settlement of the language problem unless there be such a demonstration of goodwill and sincerity on the part of the government."

Naganathan met Justice Minister de Silva on 9 April and asked for the government's reaction to the Federal Party's draft regulations on Tamil Language usage. de Silva told Naganathan to wait till the conclusion of the talks with the LSSP. LSSP leader Dr.N.M.Perera met Chelvanayakam in the first week of May and asked him for his reactions to the

LSSP joining the government. Chelvanayakam said he was happy. "Your influence may help to temper SLFP extremism," he told Dr. Perera. Chelvanayakam was then asked whether the Federal Party would support the government. "We cannot support the government until full language rights are granted," Chelvanayakam replied.

"Will you help the UNP to defeat the government?" Perera asked pointedly.

"We will not if you act reasonably," Chelvanayakam assured him.

Chelvanayakam said that the Federal Party would be satisfied if the LSSP would influence the government to grant the four demands which he listed: the right to communicate with the government in Tamil, the administration in the north and east is conducted in Tamil, the establishment of district councils, and the right to sit public service examination in the language of instruction. Dr. Perera agreed to push the government to grant the demands.

Within days of the meeting the Ministerial Sub Committee on Language decided that all cheques sent to the north and east should be written in Sinhala, and in the middle of May the government announced its decision to appoint 2000 Sinhala teachers to the schools in the north and east.

The Youth Wing had become very active by this time and urged the party for direct action. The FP Working Committee met on 1 June and decided to revive it. A resolution passed by the Youth Wing in the first week of June calling upon Federal Party MPs to resign their seats after the vote on the Throne Speech, was moved in the Working Committee on 4 June by Rajadurai and seconded by Navaratnam. It was adopted unanimously.

But other developments altered the course of events. The LSSP joined the government on 11 June 1964 and three

of its leaders were appointed ministers. Dr. N.M. Perera became Finance Minister, Cholmondeley Goonewardene, Minister of Public Works and Anil Moonesinghe, Minister of Communications. Mrs. Bandaranaike swiftly neutralised the threat from the trade unions by their inclusion into the government.

On the day the LSSP joined the government Education Minister P.B.G. Kalugalle sent a reply to Chelvanayakam's query about the appointment of 2000 Sinhala teachers to the schools in the north and east. I met Chelvanayakam at his Kollupitiya home that day to get his reaction to LSSP joining the government.

"We are now not interested in the parliament. So I am sorry I am unable to comment," Chelvanayakam said.

"Are you referring to the Working Committee resolution that all MPs should resign from the parliament?" I asked.

"That's right," he replied.

"What made you take that decision?" I asked.

Chelvanayakam got up from his seat to search for a file. He returned with Kalugalle's letter and told me to read it. The letter said that the decision to send Sinhala teachers to Tamil area schools was taken because Tamils had sought facilities to study Sinhala.

"How can you expect justice from people like this?" Chelvanayakam asked. "They buy over a handful of Tamils and make use of them for their own purpose. Every society has its black legs. We have ours and they have theirs. Have they forgotten that?"

The Throne Speech of 2 June contained references to Tamil Language regulations and district councils. Chelvanayakam issued a guarded statement on the Throne Speech. It stated, "At first glance the Throne Speech touched

on the two points which concern us very much - language problem and district councils. These were points which were contained in the Throne Speech of July 1960. But nothing came out of it. Hence we wish to wait to see what actions are to follow before we are able to comment. In particular, we have got to wait for the actual regulations that are being framed under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act and what the content of the Bill for establishing District Councils is going to be."

During the Vote of Thanks to the Governor General for delivering the Throne Speech N.M.Perera and Pieter Keunaman had a meeting with Chelvanayakam, Naganathan and Amirthalingam in the Committee Room in parliament. They urged the FP leaders not to resign from parliament. Chelvanayakam told them of Kalugalle's letter and said despatching of 2000 Sinhala teachers to the north and the east amounted to linguistic, cultural and racial invasion of the Tamil territory. "We consider it an army of occupation," the Federal Party leader said with emotion. N.M.Perera assured Chelvanayakam that they would use their influence to put an end to such pin pricks.

To get the Working Committee to put off the resignation decision was no easy task. Chelvanayakam knew that even he was bound to run into rough water. He told Amirthalingam that he would have to manage the situation. Amirthalingam, knowing the feeling of the youth, adopted a deviationary strategy. At the Working Committee meeting on 22 July he got Proctor Nadarajah to move a resolution calling on the Working Committee to refer the resolution on resignation to the ninth annual convention fixed on 21 August at Trincomalee. Amirthalingam seconded it and reported the approach made by N.M.Perera and Keunaman. He argued that the deferment would give the Party time to gauge more accurately the attitude of the new coalition government to the problems of the Tamil speaking people. In an emotional speech Rajadurai

said, "We have been deceived enough. Do you want to be deceived again? I tell you, here and now, the LSSP too is going to let us down." Navaratnam went even further. He said, "We must realise that no ruling party can afford to antagonise the Sinhala chauvinists."

Rajadurai's motion was put to vote first. Only 13 voted for and 36 against whilst Nadarajah's motion got 34 voting for and 11 against.

This battle was continued at the Trincomalee convention. By that time the group that opposed the decision on resignation had gathered strength. M.Tiruchelvam handed over his resignation from the Federal Party to Chelvanayakam and had gone public with a statement to the press criticising the decision. He wanted time given to the coalition government to make a try. "Now, with the coalition government," he said, "there is a possibility of finding a reasonable solution to the language problem through peaceful negotiation."

The Subjects Committee took up the matter on the first day itself, 22 August. The resolution was rejected by 24 votes. To pacify the hardcore, a 5-member sub-committee, comprising Amirthalingam, V.Navaratnam, V.N.Navaratnam, K.Jayakoddy and M.E.H.Mohammed Ali, was set up.

Amirthalingam was elected the new General Secretary. He told the convention, "The Subjects Committee has decided to launch very soon the civil disobedience campaign to win the rights of the Tamil speaking people. I will set the party machinery ready for the struggle, and it is with this determination that I am accepting the office of General Secretary of the Federal Party. This is a critical period in the history of the Tamil speaking people and if we don't achieve our freedom and rights now, it may not be possible for the Tamil people to live in self respect. Our struggle should start very soon."

Even the entry of the LSSP into the government failed to stop SLFP ministers from harming Tamil interests. Amirthalingam gave vent to his frustration at a public meeting held on 18 October at Thavady in the Jaffna peninsula. He said, "When the coalition government was formed a number of Tamil speaking people in this country expected the condition of the long suffering Tamil speaking people would be ameliorated. But four months of the SLFP-LSSP coalition has falsified such hopes. The decision to retire compulsorily new entrant public servants for non-proficiency in Sinhala was taken after the coalition was formed. The implementation of Sinhala is going unabated while the promise to frame regulations for the use of Tamil has fallen into the limbo of forgotten things."

While the Federal Party was concentrating on language and the problems of Tamil government servants, Mrs. Bandaranaike flew to New Delhi on 24 October for a meeting with the new Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. Shastri, a gentle-mannered political, was very accommodative and tried his best to please Mrs. Bandaranaike, whom he called the 'Prime Minister of our little neighbour'. Mrs. Bandaranaike told him that India, the big brother, should help the small Ceylon to solve the Indian Tamil problem. She referred to an earlier statement of Dudley Senanayake where he had said that Ceylon could absorb only 300,000 Indian Tamils, and asked Shastri to take back the balance 675,000. Shastri agreed to take back 525,000 and said that the fate of the balance 150,000 persons could be settled later.

On 30 October New Delhi issued a 10-clause statement under the heading: "Text of third India-Ceylon Agreement on status and future of persons of Indian origin in Ceylon".

It stated that the declared objective of the agreement was to make all persons of Indian origin in Ceylon, who were not citizens of either country, to gain Indian or Ceylon

citizenship. It put the total of persons who needed to be made citizens at 975,000. Ceylon had agreed to take 300,000 persons and India 525,000. The status and future of the balance 150,000 would be settled later. India agreed to take back its quota within a period of 15 years and Ceylon undertook to grant citizenship to its quota in proportion to the number repatriated to India. The persons to be repatriated should continue to enjoy normal facilities and be allowed to take their assets with them.

Thondaman and the Ceylon Workers Congress were angry and called the agreement a 'horse deal'. Thondaman said India had no right to negotiate the fate of Ceylon Indians without consulting their representatives. He accused Mrs. Bandaranaike of conducting negotiations behind his back.

The Federal Party was equally annoyed. It issued a statement condemning the agreement and charged that the agreement was another attempt to reduce the strength of Tamils in Ceylon. "Are we now trading in human beings?" Amirthalingam asked.

Mrs. Bandaranaike made a triumphant return. She was hailed the leader who had made India agree to take back more than half the number of Indian Tamils resident in Ceylon, a feat which all previous prime ministers had failed to achieve. But that enthusiasm did not last long. Her government ran into rough waters soon after her return. The government's decision to take over the Lake House group of newspapers created a rift in the SLFP.

The Lake House had been a traditional supporter of the UNP. D.R. Wijewardene, the founder-owner of the group, was a close associate of the Senanayakes. Lake House had campaigned for them in every election. It campaigned against Bandaranaike in 1956. After his victory, it continued its onslaught against his government. It led the opposition to Mrs. Bandaranaike's government and stepped up that campaign

when the LSSP joined her government. Mrs. Bandaranaike was very uncomfortable with Lake House.

She was furious over a cartoon the daily *Observer* published about the talks of the SLFP had with LSSP in July 1960,, depicting a pregnant Mrs. Bandaranaike in bed with Dr.N.M.Perera. It created a furore in the country and within Lake House itself. A group of journalists, led by M.A.de Silva, Editor, *Dinamina* and Regi Siriwardene, the a leader writer for the *Daily News*, protested saying that it had offended basic morality, if not journalistic ethics. And though *Thinkaran* regularly published Colette's cartoons, it dropped that particular cartoon because it felt that it was indecent and that it would offend female readers.

That cartoon was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Mrs. Bandaranaike was encouraged by Felix and N.M.Perera to take over Lake House and sell its shares to the public thus breaking the Wijewardene family monopoly. The first draft of the bill for the takeover was prepared in the last week of August.

The Federal Party opposed the takeover. In a statement issued in the first week of October it said the Party was the biggest sufferer at the hands of the Lake House since it had always been anti-Tamil and had always been in the forefront in supporting every attempt to deny Tamils their language and other basic rights. "But," the statement said, "muffling of the press is not the solution."

The Lake House mounted a vigorous campaign against press takeover. Public meetings were organised countrywide. A procession of *bhikkus* was organised in Colombo. Statements condemning the takeover was obtained from the *mahanayaka theras* of the three chapters and published. Efforts were also made to build up dissension within the SLFP.

The government presented the Press Bill in parliament on 26 November. M.P.de Z. Siriwardene, a junior minister, proposed the bill as the minister concerned was not present. Puttalam MP Nina Marikkar raised an objection on the ground that the bill should have been proposed by a cabinet minister. The Speaker agreed and the bill lapsed.

The government promptly prorogued parliament and summoned it on 1 December. The opposition moved an amendment to the Throne Speech which was to be put to vote on 3 December.

Rumours began to circulate about C.P.de Silva crossing over to the opposition with a group of MPs. On 3 December Federal Party MPs, -Dharmalingam, Thuraiatnam, V.N.Navaratnam and Amirthalingam -were urgently invited for a meeting in the Prime Minister's room. Badiuddin requested them to help the government defeat the revolt. He, Cholmondeley and Colvin R.de Silva promised to grant all their demands if they helped the government. Amirthalingam said that their request would be conveyed to party leader Chelvanayakam.

The Parliamentary Group of the Party met that evening to consider the government's request. While the left elements, headed by Dharmalingam, were for bailing out the government, the majority was against it.

Just before voting time, 13 MPs crossed over to the opposition along with C.P.de Silva who said, "It is my painful duty to do so in all responsibility, that from what I have known, what I have heard and what I have seen in the inner councils of the coalition government of Mrs. Bandaranaike, our nation is now being inexorably pushed towards unadulterated totalitarianism."

Mrs Bandaranaike called the crossover "a stab in the back".

The government was defeated by one vote - 73 to opposition's 74. Nominated MP Thondaman abstained. FP voted with the opposition.

Mrs. Bandaranaike addressed the nation that night and said that C.P.de Silva had stabbed her in the back and that she would advise the Governor General on the future course of action. Naganathan issued a statement asking her to resign immediately. He stated, "Once the Prime Minister had lost the confidence of the House and does not within a reasonably short time hand in her resignation, the Governor General should, in the exercise of his prerogative, demand her resignation forthwith." He also said that the Prime Minister had the right to advise the Governor General on dissolving the parliament but the Governor General had the right to reject it.

Colvin.R.de Silva made a last effort before Mrs. Bandaranaike met the Governor General on 7 December. He assured Amirthalingam that the government would grant all demands of the Federal Party. "A senior minister will give you that assurance," he said. However, he was told that the Party was not prepared to trust the SLFP.

Mrs. Bandaranaike dissolved parliament and held elections on 22 March 1965. The Federal Party contested all the seats in the northern and eastern provinces. Its election cry was not the winning back of lost rights, as earlier. It was for the preservation of the identity of the Tamil race and its survival. The election manifesto, among other things, read: "If we are to preserve our identity and survive, we must preserve our language, our land, our religion, our culture and our heritage. The one and only way is to regain for us the right to be rulers of ourselves in our own home. The only way to regain our rights to decide for ourselves our own destinies, without jeopardising the unity of Ceylon, is the federal form of government. The object ... is to work for the liberation of the Tamil-speaking people by the creation of a federal union

of Ceylon, with a Tamil state and a Muslim state in our area as the federating units."

The election failed to produce a stable majority for any party. The UNP won 66 seats as against 56 by the coalition - SLFP-41, LSSP-10, CP-5. The seats won by the other parties were -FP-14, TC-3, SLFSP-2, and others 3. Amirthalingam won the Vaddukoddai seat with a 11,139 vote majority, up from 8158 in July 1960.

The failure of the UNP to win an absolute majority made Lake House editorial director Esmond Wickremasinghe active. He advised Dudley Senanayake to form a national government by taking in the FP, TC, MEP and Dahanayake. On 23 March he telephoned Naganathan and conveyed Dudley's desire to meet Chelvanayakam to discuss the formation of a national government.

Federal Party leaders flew to Colombo the next day.

Before this meeting, however, a great deal of behind the scenes negotiations between Wickremasinghe and Chelvanayakam had taken place, negotiations that had been kept top secret. Chelvanayakam had bluntly told Wickremasinghe that the Sinhala leadership had repeatedly let him down. When Wickremasinghe assured him that would not happen again, Chelvanayakam said, "I must satisfy myself that you are serious in arriving at a settlement."

It was after obtaining a firm assurance that Chelvanayakam raised four issues. The first was the language issue. He wanted arrangements made to ensure the language rights of the Tamil speaking people, that the language of administration and of record in the northern and eastern provinces would be Tamil. Wickremasinghe accepted.

The second issue, the Language of the Courts. It required the UNP to accept an amendment enabling legal proceedings to be conducted and recorded in Tamil in the northern and eastern provinces. Wickremasinghe agreed.

The third was the establishment of district councils with power over subjects to be mutually agreed upon between the two leaders. Wickremasinghe explained that the fears and suspicions of the Sinhalese people should be taken into account. Chelvanayakam agreed that those fears could be removed if the central government was empowered to give directions to the District Councils on matters of national interest.

On the question of colonisation Chelvanayakam pointed out that all governments since D.S. Senanayake had misused the Land Development Ordinance to convert Tamil areas into Sinhala colonies by settling Sinhala people in them, citing Gal Oya and Seruwila as examples. It was agreed that the questions of colonisation and Tamil public servants be referred to Dudley at the Colombo meeting.

At the meeting in Colombo, Chelvanayakam, Naganathan, Rasamanikkam, Tiruchelvam and V. Navaratnam represented the Federal Party, whilst Dudley was assisted by Jayewardene, Sugathadasa and Esmond Wickremasinghe. Since most of the main items had been settled, the talks revolved around Sinhala colonisation. Dudley refused to yield. "Then where are my people to go for land?" he asked. It was decided to deal with the problem of Tamil government servants administratively.

It was past midnight when Dr. Peiris, after attending a phone call, announced that Mrs. Bandaranaike was on her way to Queen's House to meet the Governor General to inform him that she had the support of the Federal Party. The Federal Party group was taken aback. Dudley wanted to know whether there was any truth in Mrs. Bandaranaike's claim. Chelvanayakam denied any support to the SLFP. Wickremasinghe pledged that the UNP would not indulge in any Sinhala colonisation in the east. He dictated an agreement to that effect to Navaratnam, who typed the document in duplicate which was duly signed and dated by Dudley and Chelvanayakam. Each kept a copy. (Annex II)

As the two men shook hands, Chelvanayakam said, "I trust you."

To this Dudley replied, "I have been in politics for thirty years. I have never gone back on my promise."

Chelvanayakam then dictated a letter addressed to the Governor General. In it he said that the Federal Party had decided to support the UNP to form the government. The letter was rushed to Queen's House post-haste. Wickremasinghe rang *Daily News* editorial and dictated next morning's lead story about the formation of a national government headed by Dudley Senanayake with the support of the Federal Party.

Dudley offered two cabinet posts to the Federal Party which Chelvanayakam declined saying that every FP candidate had given an undertaking not to accept cabinet portfolios till the goal of federalism was achieved. "We do not want to break that undertaking given to the people," Chelvanayakam said firmly. Dudley countered it saying that without FP's representation the government would not be national. Chelvanayakam promised to place that request before the FP Parliamentary Group in the morning.

A joint letter to be presented to the Governor General was drafted and signed by both men.

Around 7 a.m. Dr. N.M. Perera and Anil Moonesinghe made one last effort to get FP support. They called at Chelvanayakam's home and promised to implement the B-C Pact in toto if the Federal Party agreed to support Mrs. Bandaranaike. Chelvanayakam told them that a similar promise, given in 1960, had not been honoured; he was in no position to change his mind.

Dudley handed over the joint letter to the Governor General at 9 a.m. The letter read:

"The results of the General Election show the country has endorsed our action in defeating the coalition government

in parliament on December 3. We represent an overall majority in the House of Representatives. We will support a National Government under the leadership of Mr. Dudley Senanayake, the Leader of the United National Party, who has pledged to protect and preserve democratic freedom and to rescue the country from the economic and other difficulties that now face us."

The joint letter was signed by Dudley, Chelvanayakam, C.P.de Silva, G.G.Ponnambalam and Philip Gunewardene.

The Federal Party Parliamentary Group met at Chelvanayakam's residence and decided to accept one cabinet post for the purpose of implementing the agreement. It nominated Tiruchelvam. The Party asked for the Home Ministry because it was the one that would be responsible for the implementation of the agreement. Since that had already been offered to Dahanayake, Dudley offered the Local Government Ministry instead.

The Party asked that Thondaman be nominated to represent the plantation Tamils. Dudley readily agreed.

The coalition parties immediately went on the offensive with what came to be known as the 'Thosai-vadai' line. In a joint May Day procession, the SLFP, LSSP and CP supporters shouted slogans, "Dudlyge bade masala vadai", which meant "Dudley's stomach contains masala vadai", an item of Tamil food.

Amirthalingam answered the coalition speakers on 21 April in parliament. He said, "You now speak sneeringly of the thosai and vadai but just a few days ago you called them tasty foods. Now that the fair Tamil damsel is married to some other person you say she is smelling of gingelly oil and call her all kinds of names."

He then related how the SLFP had wooed the Federal Party on three occasions: in March 1960 when Felix had repeatedly pleaded for the Party support. The second was in

April 1960 when they got FP's signature to the joint opposition letter protesting the dissolution of parliament, and the third was during the Press Bill debate.

"You come begging when you need our help and forget us when you don't need us. Not only that. You don't even acknowledge when we write to you."

When Felix denied this, Amirthalingam was quick to point out, "It happened when we wrote to you on 29 November 1960 reminding you of the 1960 agreement."

The Federal Party came in for severe criticism from Tamils for joining the UNP-led National Government. The left groups said the Party had revealed its true capitalistic colours.

Amirthalingam defended the Party decision at a public meeting at the Upper Bazar, Plunduloya, saying that they had to join the UNP to save the country from dictatorship. "The Minister of State J.R.Jayewardene had accepted the fact that if the Federal Party had not assisted the UNP in forming a National Government, a dictatorial form of government would have been ruling the nation by this time and would have reduced all of us into slaves. We joined the National Government on the basis of democracy. We love democratic rule and believe in democracy."

But things did not go smoothly for the Party in the national government. Education Minister I.M.R.A.Iriyagolle continued his anti-Tamil activities. The teaching of Tamil in many Tamil schools outside the north and east was terminated. The Federal Party took up the matter with Dudley and though this brought about temporary relief, the overall policy continued.

The government kept its promise and asked Tiruchelvam to prepare regulations necessary to implement the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act of 1958. By making use of the provision that Tamil could be used for "prescribed

administrative purposes" in the northern and eastern provinces, he deftly transformed Tamil into the official language in these provinces. He argued that every instance of administrative purpose could be brought under "prescribed administrative purposes". Thus by extension, Tamil became the language of administration along with the official language Sinhala.

The regulations framed by Tiruchelvam were presented to parliament on 8 January 1966. The coalition parties organised a demonstration to protest against the adoption of these regulations, saying that the regulations provided for a wider use of Tamil than contemplated by Bandaranaike.

The demonstration upset and unnerved the Prime Minister. Jayewardene advised the police be brought in to disperse the demonstrators, forcefully if necessary.

The police had barricaded all roads leading to the parliament as a precautionary move. When the demonstrators refused to disperse, they were baton-charged, and when they became unruly, the police opened fire, killing Ratnasara, a Buddhist *bhikku*.

The regulations, passed with so much effort, were implemented half-heartedly, many were not adhered to. Government departments continued to send letters to Tamils in Sinhala; name boards continued to be displayed in Sinhala. The Gazette and most of the annual reports continued the tradition of being printed in three languages - English, Sinhala, Tamil.

The Youth Wing was unhappy at the tardy implementation of the agreement the UNP had reached with the Party. It was specially incensed with the provision in the White Paper on Education which gave parents the right to choose their children's medium of instruction, saying that it was a ruse to impose Sinhala on the Tamils. Chelvanayakam told a youth

seminar at Vannarponnai on 5 May 1966 that the Party would oppose the provision. "The Federal Party might break away if any attempt is made to interfere with the democratic right of the Tamil speaking people. I once again promise my young friends that we will not hesitate to quit the government if any injustice is done to our community."

This speech created a sense of uneasiness among government parliamentarians. They pressurised the Federal Party to issue a denial. Chelvanayakam refused.

As a show of its continued support, the Federal Party invited Dudley Senanayake as the chief guest to its tenth National Convention at Kalmunai. He thus became the only prime minister to be invited to a Federal Party convention.

In his address he stated, "As long as I am the prime minister, I wish to assure the Tamils that the Tamil language and heritage will never suffer. You will agree with me that in a multi-racial country like Ceylon, preservation of the culture and the language of the different groups is an essential part of democracy. If we want to enjoy the fruits of freedom, this racial harmony must be permanent."

Encouraged by these sentiments, the Party appointed a 5-member team, comprising of Chelvanayakam, Naganathan, Tiruchelvam, Rasamanikkam and Amirthalingam, to discuss the question of District Councils with the government. The team was in for a shock. At the meeting when Chelvanayakam pressed for the enactment of the District Councils Bill, Dudley said, "I thought that after some months you will not insist on your demands."

Chelvanayakam replied, "We were elected on a mandate and that was to obtain for the Tamil people their rights. How can we forget that pledge after some months?"

A reluctant Prime Minister agreed to announce the government's intention to establish District Councils in its Throne Speech on 8 July.

The Party Youth Front reacted harshly to this promise. Rajadurai, the deputy leader of the Front, in a statement said, "We are tired of these promises. What we want is action. A year has passed since this government was formed and nothing has been done to establish District Councils." His statement was a virtual no-confidence vote on FP leadership. That hard line won him the presidency of the Youth Front. On 24 July he was elected to that post, held by Amirthalingam since its formation.

At a conference organised by the Youth Front at Kankesanthurai on 23 August, Minister of State J.R. Jayewardene, the Chief Guest, said, "Since the formation of the National Government an unfortunate chapter in the relationship between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has ended. The Federal Party is the saviour of democracy because they not only supported the progressive democratic front in the effort to defeat the dictatorial coalition government that was in power but also stood shoulder to shoulder with us in forming the national government despite appeals by Mrs. Bandaranaike and her followers to support them."

The Federal Party's negotiating team met the Prime Minister on 10 September and pressed him to establish district councils at early date. Jayewardene suggested that the Party prepare a draft for consideration by the cabinet.

Tiruchelvam drafted a bill which provided for the formation of a council comprising the elected and the nominated MPs of the area, mayors and chairmen of the local bodies and three other councillors nominated by the minister in charge of Local Government. It would have an Executive Committee of not more than seven elected by the Council. The powers of the Executive Council were to be limited to the formulation of programs of development, conduct of the administration of the Council and the implementation of the powers and duties delegated to it by the Council. The powers

of the Council itself would be limited. It could formulate and recommend to the central government development schemes relating to the Council, raise loans with the approval of the Minister of Finance, and perform the functions and responsibilities provided for in the schedule of the Bill. These related to agriculture, food, animal husbandry, industries, fisheries, rural development works, housing, regional planning, education of specified types, cultural affairs, ayurveda, social welfare and health services.

To allay Sinhala fears, Tiruchelvam provided central ministers with powers to direct and control the Councils. The Minister for Local Government was given the power to issue general and special directions from time to time to the Council which would be binding. The Government Agent of each district to the Councils would be chief executive officer. The Councils were to be given the power to levy taxes with parliament's approval, and raise loans with the approval of the Minister of Finance. The Councils would have no power of amalgamation.

The Federal Party General Council met on 29 September at the Jaffna Town Hall to consider the draft. It was a stormy meeting. Delegates from the Youth Front called the proposed councils 'glorified municipal councils'; Iriyagolle's White Paper, giving a parent the right to choose the medium of instruction, and his decision to send Sinhala teachers to Muslim schools came in for severe criticism. The Front insisted that the FP leadership demand the recall of the Sinhala teachers. Rajadurai, who led the youth assault, asked, "All these years you opposed the sending of Sinhala teachers. Now why do you accept it? Is it because you have got the taste of power?" There was a verbal clash when Amirthalingam demanded that Rajadurai withdraw that insinuating remark.

A 4-member delegation, comprising Chelvanayakam, Tiruchelvam, Amirthalingam and Rasamanikkam, met the

Prime Minister on 9 October. Chelvanayakam told the Prime Minister that though they did not object to the sending of Sinhala teachers to Muslim schools, they resented the spirit in which it was being done. After prolonged consideration, a compromise was worked out: the Education Ministry would consult the MP of the area before sending Sinhala teachers, and when the education department did send Sinhala teachers to Muslim schools, it would transfer Tamil students of those schools to nearby Tamil schools. The Prime Minister also agreed to reconsider the question of instruction and the District Councils Bill at the earliest.

I was one of the reporters present at Woodlands when the FP delegation emerged from Dudley's study where the meeting had been held. Dudley was in high spirits. When we asked him for the outcome, he pulled Amirthalingam to the fore and said, "Ask him."

Amirthalingam said, "As regards the medium of instruction, the Federal Party took up the position that the medium of instruction of the Tamil children should be the mother tongue. The Prime Minister has agreed that the White Paper on Education would be considered by the Cabinet."

By this time the opposition parties had intensified their campaign against the National Government and the Prime Minister in particular. They adopted a two-pronged strategy, one was the circulation of the story that due to differences between the Federal Party and the UNP, the government was tottering, and the second was the propaganda accusing Dudley of selling the country to the Federal Party. The aim of the second was to make it difficult for him to accede to the demands of the Federal Party, specially on District Councils. The opposition accused him of dividing the country through the District Councils.

Dudley, reacting to the above, issued a statement on 17 October, "My opponents, in recent times, have been conduct-

ing a propaganda campaign that I have entered into an agreement with the Federalists. All I have done is that I have formed a government with the help of the Federalists. This National Government, which has been formed with the help and cooperation of people belonging to all races and religions in this country, is one which has no intention of dividing the country. The objective of this government is to secure complete economic independence for the country which had been delayed for nine years."

That statement achieved the result the opposition strategists had wanted; it angered the militant section of the Federal Party. At a conference held on 23 October, the Kilinochchi branch of the party passed a resolution calling upon the Party to quit the government. K.P. Ratnam, Kilinochchi MP, and V. Navaratnam, Kayts MP, spoke in support of the resolution. Most of the youth members criticised the leadership for placing faith in the Dudley Senanayake government.

At the instance of the extremist group, Amirthalingam, General Secretary of the party, summoned a General Council meeting on 27 October. Chelvanayakam, who had had a meeting with the Prime Minister the previous day, said that the District Council Bill "...is being withheld temporarily", due to virulent opposition campaign. There was harsh criticism from Amirthalingam on government's decision to send Sinhala teachers to Muslim schools. "A crisis on this issue is looming. We have already appraised the Prime Minister of the situation," he said.

Chelvanayakam listened patiently to the criticisms voiced by the youth and then moved a motion seeking authority to continue in the government. "I have promised to support the Prime Minister unconditionally and assured him that I will never let him down," he said.

He further added, "The Prime Minister has given me the assurance that the educational reform too would be sus-

pendent. These measures are a part of the give and take policy between the government and the Federal Party."

The motion was passed by 47 votes to 11.

The first signs of friction between the party and the government surfaced the following month, November 1966. At a public meeting at Mannar, Tiruchelvam said that he stood for federalism. The *Daily News* carried his speech under the heading: 'Tiru says Federalism the best form of government.' The matter was raised at the Government Parliamentary Group meeting on 23 November. The Prime Minister reprimanded Tiruchelvam, saying that being a member of the cabinet his statement might be construed to reflect government policy, that he should be bound by collective responsibility of the cabinet and thus should refrain from making such statements.

Tiruchelvam, hurt at being reprimanded at the Group meeting, wrote to Chelvanayakam, indicating that he would have resigned but as he had been nominated to represent the Federal Party, he would await the party's decision. However, the matter was cleared up when Chelvanayakam, along with Tiruchelvam and Amirthalingam, met the Prime Minister.

The same month saw another clash. It was between UNP MP for Kalkudah K.W.Devanayagam and Amirthalingam. Devanayagam had welcomed the appointment of Sinhala teachers to Tamil schools in his electorate. Amirthalingam called him 'a freak of a Tamil' and this annoyed Devanayagam. They openly clashed in parliament.

There were further irritants in the first three months of 1967. The first was the Indo-Ceylon Agreement (Implementation) Bill, introduced in Parliament in February 1967. The Federal Party demanded three amendments: banning of compulsory repatriation; persons repatriated compulsorily be given the legal right of appeal; and registered citizens be placed in a separate register. The Prime Minister gave an

assurance that no one would be compulsorily repatriated. That did not satisfy V.Navaratnam, who abstained from the voting in the Lower House, and Senator M.Manickam, who resigned from the Party.

The second irritant was the Registration of Persons Bill. The government wanted to issue National Identity Cards only to citizens of over 18 years of age. The Federal Party and the Ceylon Workers Congress wanted identity cards issued to every person over 18 years resident in Ceylon; the government accepted this. V. Navaratnam, not satisfied, wanted the Bill to be dropped altogether. He spoke against it when it was debated in the Lower House. He charged that the Federal Party had sold the rights of the Tamils to the Prime Minister.

LSSP stalwart Dr. Colvin R.de Silva capitalised on Navaratnam's accusation to attack the Federal Party. He repeated the charge that the Federal Party had sold Tamil rights to the Prime Minister and that it was supporting the UNP because of class interest. This provoked Amirthalingam to deliver one his best speeches in Parliament. He first dealt with Dr. de Silva's argument that the Party had begun to splinter. He said, "I felt hurt when Dr. de Silva ridiculed the Federal Party over the decision of the MP for Kayts to defy the party whip. He said the Federal Party has begun to splinter. I thought he would sympathise with the Federal Party for he himself had experienced several splits. I remember him as the leader of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India. That party splintered. Then, I remember him joining the Bolshevik Sama Samaja Party. That too did not last long. Then he joined the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. That too splintered. It was only last week I heard him abusing his erstwhile colleagues Edmund Samarakoddy and Merryl Fernando."

Referring to Dr. de Silva's remark that the Party had sold Tamil rights to the Prime Minister, he said, "This is a reversal of the argument the coalition is spreading country-wide. This is the reversal of Dudley-ge-badey Masala Vadai

line of coalition propaganda. This is the reversal of the propaganda that Dudley had sold the rights of the Sinhala people to the Federal Party. I dare you to tell the people of the South that the Federal Party had sold the rights of the Tamil people to Dudley Senanayake."

Next he dealt with Dr. de Silva's observation on class interest. He said, "In March 1960 and March 1965 the LSSP wanted to get the support of the Federal Party. Did not the Federal Party represent the capitalist class then? May be, then, Dr. de Silva belonged to the richer class? Now, he is a poor working-class man. The whole country knows about it. What is the class of Mrs. Bandaranaike? Is she also a poor working-class representative like Dr. de Silva?"

He went on, "I was an admirer of Dr. de Silva at one time. I am still an admirer of his mastery of the English language and his legal acumen. I still remember the time I junior Dr. de Silva at the Jaffna Assizes. On that occasion he hypnotised a whole jury and they acquitted a man I knew well had committed a murder. But that was a Colvin in another capacity."

The Federal Party Working Committee, at a meeting the next day in Colombo, decided to expel V. Navaratnam. The youth reacted to this and got all Youth League branches to pass resolutions asking the party to quit the government. A resolution was submitted to General Secretary Amirthalingam.

He summoned the General Council which told him to handle the youth.

He argued to the Youth Front that it was not advisable to quit the government at that time as requested by it as the Prime Minister and the ministers were willing to introduce the District Councils Bill but had to delay it due to the opposition's hue and cry.

But the Federal leaders were in for a severe shock. This was in the middle of May. Hema Basnayake, a former Chief

Justice, wrote to Dudley asking for a copy of the draft District Councils Bill. It was given wide publicity in all newspapers. Dudley summoned a press conference to clarify the position. He issued the following statement: "Mr. Hema Basnayake wrote to me some days ago asking for the draft of the District Councils Bill. I think he will be surprised, and you will be surprised too, to learn that there is not even a draft. All that had happened was that there were some discussions between myself and certain of my ministers and members of the Federal Party on some proposals put up by Mr. Tiruchelvam."

Under questioning he said that even if District Councils were set up, they would be under the direction and control of the central government and they would not be allowed to replace the kachcheries. Dudley asked the reporters, "Do you think that I will ever permit the division of the country?"

I rang Tiruchelvam for his reactions. His reply was, "I am a member of the government. I decline to comment." I next rang Chelvanayakam. He said, "The government is going through an economic and political crisis. I appeal to the Tamil people to be patient." Amirthalingam appealed to the youth not to get disturbed. Off the record, he told me, "Even this man is going to let us down."

In October the government decided to nationalise the Trincomalee port. This caused resentment among the Tamils who viewed it as an attempt to give more employment to the Sinhalese in Trincomalee harbour. Chelvanayakam, Amirthalingam and Naganathan met the Prime Minister on 28 October to register their protest. Chelvanayakam told him that a specific assurance had been given by the Minister of Nationalised Services, V.A. Sugathadasa, that Trincomalee port would be nationalised only after adequate safeguards for the employment of Tamils had been made. The Prime Minister reacted coldly to this and said that the decision about nationalisation had been made and it was too late reverse it.

An angry Naganathan accused the government of going back on its promises.

A Federal Party delegation met the Prime Minister again on 7 November. Chelvanayakam warned him that a section of his party, disillusioned by the government, were threatening to break away, that disillusionment of Tamil youth would be harmful to the country in the long run. Government's inaction in four areas were discussed at length for three hours.

The first was the Trincomalee port issue. The government agreed to guarantee the security of employment to Tamils employed in the port. The second was the non-implementation of the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act. The Prime Minister agreed to take immediate steps to implement it. Third was the Land Army. The government had decided a few months earlier to recruit a Land Army of educated unemployed youth and use it to improve agriculture. It had decided to allocate state land and provide loan facilities to enable them to develop it. The youth, recruited on the recommendation of UNP MPs, did not include any from Tamil areas. This had created resentment among Tamil youth. The Prime Minister agreed to recruit Tamil youths in consultation with FP MPs.

The delegation again met the Prime Minister on 9 November to consider the District Councils Bill. He gave an assurance that the Bill would be introduced in Parliament in January 1968.

However, the Working Committee of the Youth Front was sceptical of the Prime Minister's assurance when it met in Jaffna on 13 November. It unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the Party to quit the government if it failed to present the District Councils Bill to Parliament before 30 January.

The motion also listed a series of failures of the government. Among them were: non-implementation of the

Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act; failure to recruit Tamils to the Land Army; failure to set up a Tamil University; and failure to remove the army from the Koneswaram temple.

The last two were long-standing grievances of the Tamil people. The demand for a Tamil University had been made since 1958. Academics and Tamil intellectuals had organised a body called the Tamil University Movement for this purpose. The movement had collected money and also bought a piece of land in Trincomalee. I had been sent to cover the foundation laying ceremony for *Thinakaran*. It was a colourful and popular event. The movement also started a school at Alexandra Road, Colombo, as a nucleus. The Federal Party took up that cause and pressed successive governments to establish a university for Tamils. The All Ceylon Tamil Congress started a different campaign. It wanted a Hindu University to be established in Jaffna. The SLFP and the UNP were not keen on either of the proposals.

Tamils had been demanding the removal of the army, in occupation since 1961, of the Dutch Fort Fredrick housing the historic Hindu temple Tirukoneswaram, in Trincomalee, saying that it desecrated the temple and that it was a hindrance to the free movement of worshippers. After Buddhist shrines of Anuradhapura and Kandy were declared sacred cities, Hindus demanded that Tirukoneswaram be also declared a sacred area. But successive governments showed no interest.

Amirthalingam, as General Secretary, placed the Youth Front's resolution before the General Council on 15 November. The resolution was moved by V. Navaratnam and seconded by Rajadurai and S.M. Manikkarajah, MP Trincomalee. Chelvanayakam moved an amendment, seconded by Amirthalingam. The amending motion called upon the Prime Minister to implement, by 30 January 1968, the agreement made between him and the Federal Party in March 1965. The amending resolution was passed unanimously.

The General Council also decided to meet on 31 January 1968 to discuss the steps that should be taken if the agreement was not implemented. Dudley was disturbed with that motion. He telephoned Chelvanayakam and called him over for a meeting, at which he requested Chelvanayakam to be patient.

"I am prepared to be patient," said Chelvanayakam, "but the youth are not. They say that you may let us down. I am able to carry them with me because of the respect they have for me. If they begin to feel that I am being deceived, then I shall look a fool in their eyes. After that they will not respect me. If the Sinhala leadership fail to help me to keep my influence among the Tamil youth they will be the ultimate losers."

Dudley got the message. "I understand it," he said and fell into a long silence. Then he said, "If you lose control of the Tamil youth it will be the Sinhalese who will suffer."

Chelvanayakam agreed to give Dudley more time. He got Amirthalingam to pacify the youth. Amirthalingam met the youth in small groups and explained to them the need to give the Prime Minister more time. When the General Council met on 31 January, Amirthalingam made a lengthy speech reviewing the situation and proposed they meet again on 12 March to take stock of the situation. Rajadurai and Navaratnam protested. Amirthalingam was accused of trying to shut out a discussion. Rajadurai called Amirthalingam a 'cardboard Hitler'. A few youth held a black flag demonstration against the FP leadership outside the meeting place.

A by-election was held in Kalmunai two weeks later. M.C.Ahamed, a SLFP candidate, won against the FP. Government MPs made use of that defeat to demand a postponement of the presentation of the District Councils Bill. But Dudley decided to proceed with the Bill. He placed it before the leaders of the parties that constituted the National Government. The Bill was discussed right through February and

March and on 22 April it was sent to the cabinet. The cabinet took another three weeks to complete examining it clause by clause and then placed it before a joint meeting of the UNP Working Committee and the Parliamentary Group. On 21 May the Prime Minister informed the meeting that each member would be given an opportunity to voice his or her criticism. "Such criticism will be met before the government proceeded to enact the Bill."

The following morning a Federal Party delegation met the Prime Minister to press him to present the Bill before parliament before the prorogation. He told them that he was not in a position to do so and offered to resign. "...that will not serve our purpose," Chelvanayakam told him. Dudley said that he would present a White Paper on District Councils to parliament for debate.

Despite severe pressure from opposition parties, the Prime Minister introduced the White Paper on 7 June immediately after question time. The opposition, led by Mrs. Bandaranaike, staged a walk-out, except for R.G.Senanayake of SLFP. The coalition parties held a public meeting at Hyde Park at which several copies of the White Paper were burnt, whilst the Maha Sangha held another meeting at the Town Hall.

The Federal Party Working Committee, after a meeting, conveyed their displeasure on the White Paper to the Prime Minister on 30 June. "That was a frank meeting," Chelvanayakam told reporters later. "I told Dudley the difficulties we were facing. I told him of the youth revolt that was brewing. I told him that if I were a youth I would have felt the same way ... I told him that the Tamil youth were justified in being disillusioned. 'We were let down by Bandaranaike. We were let down by Mrs. Bandaranaike. Now, we are being let down by you.'" He said that Dudley felt distressed, had said that he understood the feelings of the

Tamil youth. He, too, faced growing opposition to the District Councils Bill. There were rumblings within the UNP itself. Chelvanayakam said he understood Dudley's predicament.

As requested by Chelvanayakam, we treated the above as an off the record information and did not publish it. However, the rest of the information he gave us was used. The Prime Minister had agreed to two requests: the first was the decision to give an extension to Tamil public servants who had made an honest attempt to study the official language. That saved many from being discontinued from service. The second was the Prime Minister's promise on a Tamil University.

The Throne Speech of 18 July contained the following reference to the District Councils: "A White Paper on the establishment of District Councils under the direction and control of the Central Government was presented in Parliament. The views expressed during the discussion will be given careful consideration before presenting legislation."

At the Federal Party's Parliamentary Group and Working Committee meeting next morning the leadership was urged to quit the government. Chelvanayakam argued against this, saying that the opposition was not really opposed to the District Councils, that they were using the issue to topple the government. "The cannon fire they have been levelling at the proposed District Councils Bill is merely a means to an end: that of bringing the government down. Are we going to help the opposition to achieve the end they aspire?" he asked. It was decided that the leadership hold further talks with the Prime Minister.

The Motion of Vote of Thanks was debated beginning 10 August. Amirthalingam was elected to speak on behalf of the Party. On 12 August, he ended his speech with the words, "We will continue to give support to the government and the Prime Minister."

The Prime Minister assured the House that the discussion on the White Paper would be continued and the views of the MPs and the people would be taken into consideration when the District Councils Bill was presented.

I met Amirthalingam outside the Chamber. He was distressed. He confided that he had completely lost faith in Dudley but had had to pledge him support in public. "See my plight," he said. "I know the this fellow (Dudley) would let us down. But I cannot say so until he actually lets us down."

The Party's decision to continue to support the government angered the youth. At an emergency session in Jaffna, the Youth Front decided to place before the party's next annual convention the question of a separate state for Tamils. It also passed a resolution for the launching of a peaceful *satyagraha* to pressure the government to implement the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act. It also decided to ask Tiruchelvam to quit the cabinet, and called for the resignations of Rajadurai and Amirthalingam as president as general secretary respectively of the Youth Front.

Tiruchelvam did quit, but on an entirely different issue. A group of prominent Hindus sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister to declare the Koneswaran temple in Trincomalee a sacred site, in line with Anuradhapura Maha Bodhi and Kataragama. The Prime Minister told Tiruchelvam to take 'necessary action'. Tiruchelvam appointed a 3-member committee to study the matter and report to him. The appointment of the Committee was gazetted on 27 August under the heading: "Declaration of Fort Frederick of Trincomalee a Sacred Area".

Two days later Ven. Mangalle Dharmakirti Sri Dambagasare Sri Sumedhankara Nayaka Thera wrote to the Prime Minister protesting against the appointment of the committee. The latter immediately asked Tiruchelvam to suspend it. Tiruchelvam was furious. He dictated a letter to

Chelvanayakam, giving details of the incident and concluded that he could no longer function as cabinet minister if the Prime Minister was going to take action without even consulting him on subjects that came within the purview of his ministry.

Relationship between the Prime Minister and Tiruchelvam soured further when, on R.G. Senanayake's query in Parliament whether Fort Frederick was going to be declared a sacred area, the Prime Minister shrugged off the rumours, saying that he had ordered the suspension of the committee of inquiry, set up by Tiruchelvam, as it had been appointed without his knowledge.

When an angry Tiruchelvam, along with Chelvanayakam and Amirthalingam confronted the Prime Minister on 13 September, heated words were exchanged between the two. The Prime Minister was quick to point out that Tiruchelvam should not have appointed a committee of inquiry without first informing him. Tiruchelvam reminded him that the whole idea was his, the Prime Minister's, saying, "You wanted me to take action and I took it." The Prime Minister insisted, "I am the Prime Minister and I should have been told of the action that was being taken," and added that Fort Frederick had been vested on the army and, as defence minister, he was in charge of it. "You have intruded into my area and not I."

The Federal Party General Council met the next morning and unanimously decided to authorise Tiruchelvam to quit the cabinet. He resigned on 16 September.

Later that evening Tiruchelvam had a surprise visitor. V.A. Sugathadasa, Minister of National Services, came over to his home in Rosmead Place to persuade the FP leadership to continue its support to the government.

The following week the Federal Party crossed over to the opposition amidst applause from the coalition parties. Though it functioned as an independent group outside the

opposition whip, it continued to support the government and voted against the opposition 'No Confidence' motion against Iriyagolle. This was because, as Chelvanayakam told a public meeting in Jaffna on 21 October, that the Party's agreement with the UNP would hold good as the UNP was under an obligation to meet its commitment to the Tamils. Amirthalingam also reasoned at a public meeting at Arali on 12 February 1969, "We continue to support the government with the intention of obtaining redress to our grievances. Although our demands had not been granted, there had been peace in the country during the National Government... But," he stressed, "we need to continue our fight and we will obtain through direct action what we cannot obtain through negotiations."

But the Federal party could not get anything through negotiations. The youth intensified their demand for total withdrawal of support to the National Government. Eventually they had their way when, at the Eleventh Annual Convention held at Uduvil from April 7-9, the party accepted their demand.

Chelvanayakam admitted, at the convention, the failure of their policy of giving parliamentary support to the major Sinhala parties to form governments in the hope of getting redress to Tamil grievances. He said, "Since 1960 we experimented a new strategy of cooperation with the major Sinhala political parties. First we supported the SLFP in March 1960 to defeat the UNP because the SLFP came to an agreement with us. But the SLFP failed to honour that agreement. Then, in 1965, we entered into an agreement with the UNP, which promised to do some things for the Tamils. Now, they, too, have let us down."

Rasamanikkam, in his presidential speech, voiced the general feeling of disenchantment that had grown among the Tamil people. He said, "Using the recent victory of the Dravida Munnetra Kalazhan in Tamil Nadu, attempts are being made to stoke the communal fires among the Sinhalesé

people. Action has been taken to reduce the import of Tamil films, efforts have been made to stifle the cultural development of the Tamils and many similar acts are being resorted to to destroy the Tamil nation. These things continue, whatever the party that is in power. We have witnessed this since independence. We have learnt by experience that you cannot avoid that happening. For, whatever the party is in power is there due to the support given by the Sinhala people. They will always be sensitive to the Sinhala opinion. The only salvation left to the Tamil people is through a change in the constitution. We must get for ourselves a constitution that allows us to govern our areas. The time is now ripe for us to launch our struggle for a federal constitution."

The Convention adopted three resolutions.

"Resolution No. 1: This 11th National Convention of the Federal Party examined its relations with the present government of Ceylon under the leadership of Mr. Dudley Senanayake in the light of:

1. the solemn promise given to establish district councils in Ceylon, and the assurance to establish a university at Trincomalee which have not been fulfilled;
2. the gross discrimination practiced by the government in regard to the establishment of industries, failure to provide proper means of communication in the Tamil speaking areas, specially in the eastern province;
3. the total neglect and disregard of the cultural and educational needs of the Tamil speaking people and the deliberate attempt to sever the cultural links between the Tamil speaking people of Ceylon and South India;
4. the inordinate delay by the government to put into effect the Tamil language regulations;

5. the discriminatory implementation of Treasury Circulars 700 and 702, against the spirit of assurances given, thereby causing hardship and frustration to a large section of Tamil speaking public servants.

Feel that they cannot serve the interests of the Tamil speaking people by continuing to support the government any longer and directs the Parliamentary Group of the Federal Party to function as an independent opposition party in parliament.

Resolution 2: The Convention now calls upon the Tamil speaking people of Ceylon to organise and discipline themselves to support whatever measures the party may take to regain the lost rights of our people.

Resolution 3: Having been a member of the present unitary form of government for four years, the Federal Party realised that all political problems facing the Tamil speaking people could be solved only through a federal government. The eleventh Convention of the Federal Party affirms its fundamental policy and declares that the Tamil speaking people could not achieve their independence, self-respect and equality unless there is a federal form of government.

A resolution on the separate state for the Tamils was mooted by the youth, but the Federal Party High Command persuaded them not to move it. The resolution to quit the National Government was adopted.

Chelvanayakam was questioned extensively by the press who demanded to know why the youth call for separation had been rejected when the Sinhala leaders had labeled them separatists. His answer was, "We did not reject it. We only told them, 'Give us some more time. We will try and persuade the Sinhala leaders to call us by the correct name - federalists - and also make them realise that federalism is an instrument

of unity and not separation.' They have agreed to give us that time."

"What if you fail in your attempt to persuade the Sinhala leaders?"

"If we old people fail then the youth will triumph. Then the Sinhala leaders who are wilfully misleading the Sinhala people will be answerable. Even if the leaders do not suffer, the Sinhalese people will have to pay a heavy price for electing such leaders."

Soon after the Convention, the Colombo press started a mud-slinging campaign against the Federal Party. One paper accused the Party of being an agent of the DMK in Tamil Nadu and pointed to the participation of Sivagnana Kiramaniyar, a fiery Tamil orator, and the hanging up of a portrait of C.N. Annadurai, the founder of the DMK, and a former chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

Amirthalingam was questioned by the *Times of Ceylon*. He said that Sivagnana Kiramaniyar had been invited as a Tamil scholar, not as a politician. "Sections of the local press had reported about the portrait of Annadurai but had conveniently ignored that the pictures of Buddha and Jesus Christ were also hung. This is the sort of press we have to contend with. Tamil baiting had become an occupation of some of the press men."

He added, "It's nonsense to talk of the Federalists being unpatriotic or irresponsible enough to sacrifice the country for selfish ends. The press and mischievous elements in the community are responsible for the misunderstanding regarding our aims and objectives. The Federal Party is as concerned about the future of the country as it is about the future of Ceylon Tamils, and we would rather accept the status of second class citizens than seek an alliance with any group or party outside the country."

Two weeks after the Federal Party left the National Government, Education Minister Iriyagolle, a Federal Party baiter, created the environment for the party's return to agitational politics. Early in 1969 a group of Harijans who had adopted Buddhism formed a society called Buddha Dravida Sangam. It established three schools for new converts at Atchuvely, Karaveddy and Alvai, run by voluntary teachers. Soon after the Federal Party left the government, the Sangam's president A.R. David requested Iriyagolle to take over the schools. He acceded, saying that the schools would be run as Sinhala Buddhist schools.

This raised the ire of the Tamil people. The Federal and Tamil Congress parties joined hands to oppose the move. The Tamil people were not opposed to the take-over of the schools by the government, Chelvanayakam said, but were opposed to their conversion into Sinhala Buddhist schools.

"What is at stake now is the very question of the future of the Tamil people," Chelvanayakam said. "Can the Tamil people continue to remain in this country as Tamil speaking people? Are they going to be converted into Sinhala speaking people?"

The FP General Council met on 9 May and decided to: counter Iriyagolle's move; launch a Tamil Movement on 5 June, the anniversary of the Sinhala Only Act; and continue the movement till the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act was implemented.

When Iriyagolle announced that he would visit Jaffna on 1 June to participate in the takeover function of the school, FP's Youth Front took up the challenge and began to recruit volunteers to participate in a *satyagraha* movement. The government reacted by alerting the police and posting police guards opposite the three schools.

A FP delegation comprising of Chelvanayakam, Naganathan, Amirthalingam, Thurairatnam, Kathirvelupillai

and Tiruchelvam met the Prime Minister on 20 May and convinced him that the only way to diffuse the situation was for the government to announce that it would not change the medium of instruction of the three schools to Sinhala. An announcement to that effect was made on 23 May.

Amirthalingam issued a statement welcoming the government's announcement. "The party welcomes the decision of the government to reverse the earlier order of the Education Ministry to convert the three Tamil schools started for Tamil children into Sinhala medium schools."

But Iriyagolle was not prepared to accept defeat. He had the signatures of parents collected and placed the list before the Prime Minister, urging him to revoke his earlier decision. The Prime Minister refused.

The Youth Front, meanwhile, organised a protest march. The police disallowed it. The Youth Front announced its decision to defy the ban. The navy was brought in to strengthen the police force. This brought, for the first time, the Tamil youth and law enforcers into direct conflict.

Chapter 7

Constitution

The government announced a general election for 27 May 1970.

In its election manifesto the United Front, comprising the SLFP, LSSP and the CP, promised to the "... establishment of a Constituent Assembly to declare Ceylon a free, sovereign and independent republic". Other promises, which affected Tamils, were the implementation of the Official Language Act; the introduction of the official language in the courts of law; according Buddhism its rightful place as the religion of the majority, and full implementation of the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964.

The United Front also campaigned mainly on the rice issue, cost of living and continuing the process of nationalisation begun by Bandaranaike in 1956. Rice had been Ceylon's chief campaign issue since independence. In 1966 the Dudley Senanayake government had halved the weekly subsidised rice ration from two measures due to a shortfall in internal production. The United Front promised to restore the two measures. It did not concentrate on constitutional change during its campaign.

It was the Federal Party which made constitutional change its prime campaign. In its election manifesto, released on 4 April 1970, it stated that the experience of the Tamil speaking people since independence had made clear the need for a federal set-up.

The manifesto stated, "It is the present constitution of Ceylon that paved the way for the Tamil speaking people to be pushed down to the level of second class citizens and thereby destroy their individuality and identity irrespective of

whether their representatives were with the government group or the opposition in parliament.

"The Tamil speaking people of Ceylon also believe that the Federal-type of Constitution that would enable them to look after their own affairs alone would safeguard them from total extinction. Only under such a constitution could the Tamil speaking people of this country live in dignity and with our birthright to independence as equals with our Sinhalese brethren."

The manifesto also recounted the political experiment of cooperation with the national Sinhala parties and pledged its resolve to struggle to achieve its federal goal. It stated, "As a prelude to a federal constitution we sought regional autonomy. What we sought to achieve through the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact and the District Councils was a decentralisation of power to provide for regional autonomy. However, nothing short of federal constitution could be an adequate remedy to the political ills of the Tamil speaking people. We pledge hereby that we will carry on our struggle for freedom and lead our people towards the goal, whatever misery or misfortune may befall us."

The manifesto also categorically expressed its opposition to separation. "It is our firm conviction that division of the country in any form would be beneficial neither to the country nor to the Tamil speaking people. Hence, we appeal to the Tamil speaking people not to lend their support to any political movement that advocated the bifurcation of our country."

This was despite Suntharalingam's claim that over 80 percent of the federalists were for Eelam, a separate homeland for Tamils. Suntharalingam campaigned for a separate state of Eelam since 1958, when he moved a motion in parliament for the creation of a Tamil State. On that platform, he contested in the elections of March 1960 July 1960 and 1965

and lost. In the 1970 election, also, Suntharalingam contested on the Eelam demand. Ponnambalam was for unity with the Sinhala people under the leadership of the UNP and on the basis of the existing unitary constitution.

The task of meeting the arguments of Suntharalingam and Ponnambalam was left to Amirthalingam during the arduous 1970 election campaign. At a public meeting held on 13 April at Nallur, whilst supporting the candidature of Naganathan, he said "Yes I admit Mr. Ponnambalam's contention that he and his group had been treated well by the Sinhala leadership. It was because Ponnambalam did not object to any of the damage that was done to the Tamil community. When a robber enters your house and you immediately hand over the keys of the wardrobe to him, he is not going to harm you. He will ask you with utmost courtesy to sit on the chair and run away with all your valuables. That's what the Sinhalese rulers did to Mr. Ponnambalam. We of the Federal Party offered resistance and got assaulted. To us safeguarding the rights and liberties of the Tamil people is the holy task; not getting royal treatment."

On Suntharalingam's Eelam demand he said, "Because the robber has entered your house you don't fence the house all round and separate yourself from your neighbours. You must defend your rights and live in peace with the neighbours."

In the general election the United Front won 106 of the 151 elected seats. With six nominated members it had a comfortable two-third majority. Of the 106 seats, the SLFP got 91, LSSP 19 and CP 6. The UNP won only 17 seats, FP 13, TC 3 and the balance were independents. Suntharalingam and his candidates who contested on the separatist demand lost heavily.

Amirthalingam lost the Vaddukoddai seat to A.Thiyagarajah, a former principal of Karainagar Hindu College and a Tamil Congress candidate, who won by a

slender 725 votes. His candidature introduced a new factor. The people of Karainagar, a powerful trading community, backed Thiyagarajah irrespective of political affiliations to elect their own man. And thus Amirthalingam was kept out from parliament after being its member for 14 years.

Mrs Bandaranaike formed her government on 29 May and LSSP deputy leader Dr. Colvin R. de Silva was appointed Minister of Constitutional Affairs with specific directive to draft, enact and implement a new constitution for Ceylon. Speaking on the debate on the Vote of Thanks for the Throne Speech, Colvin promised to take steps to draft a new constitution before the end of July, saying, "Steps would be taken to draft a new constitution which would make the Ceylonese a really free, independent and sovereign people."

Soon after this speech, Colvin had a meeting with M. Tiruchelvam and told him that various concessions would be given to the Tamil community through the new constitution. Tiruchelvam passed on this information to Chelvanayakam, who summoned a meeting of the Federal Party Working Committee on 11 July 1970 at Vavuniya to consider Colvin's message. At the meeting Amirthalingam warned that the government's real intention was to do away with Section 29 which provided some sort of protection to the Tamil people. Others, however, took the stand that the government had promised many positive features in the constitution. Besides, the people had accepted the United Front manifesto though the issue of drafting a new constitution had not been specifically canvassed. The committee decided to convene a meeting of prominent Tamil people to take a decision about participating in the drafting of the constitution.

A meeting was accordingly held at the Saiva Mangayar College hall in mid-July. Representatives of Tamil political parties and prominent Tamil lawyers and elders attended. After 3 hours of deliberations, the meeting advised the Federal Party Parliamentary Group to participate in the meeting of the constituent assembly and present the Tamil demand for a

federal constitution. The meeting also appointed V. Dharmalingam, MP for Udivil, as convenor of a committee to draft a model federal constitution to be presented for the consideration of the Constituent Assembly.

Members of the House of Representatives met on 19 July at Navarangala. Amidst great fanfare Mrs. Bandaranaike moved the historic resolution calling for the setting up of a constituent assembly to draft, enact and operate a new constitution. She said, "I should not anticipate the constitution. I should only say that our new constitution must be such as helps to strengthen the oneness of our nation. Though there are among us different racial groups such Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors, Burghers and others, and many religious communities such as Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Muslims, we are and must act as one nation."

Opposition Leader Jayewardene seconded the motion.

S. Kathiravelupillai, MP for Kopay, spoke on behalf of the Federal Party. He supported the setting up of the constituent assembly but expressed disapproval of the manner in which it was sought to be set up. He assured the cooperation of the Tamil speaking people and added, "While the Tamil speaking people will cooperate in setting up the constituent assembly, they wished that the fundamental rights be set down in the constitution in such a manner that the courts had power to adjudicate. The Federal Party categorically opposed the division of the country but wanted the constituent assembly to accept the federal form."

V. Anandasangari, MP for Kilinochchi, welcomed the setting up of the constituent assembly on behalf of the Tamil Congress and assured the government of its support to establish a socialist state. He said Section 29 of the constitution, though entrenched, had failed to provide protection to Tamils.

After three days of debate members of parliament, assembled at Navarangala, unanimously decided to constitute

themselves into a constituent assembly. At the next meeting, Colvin invited each party to nominate representatives to the Steering and Subjects Committee which would consider the basic resolutions that would form the structure of the constitution.

Soon after this, militant Tamil youths indulged in their first act of violence. They placed a bomb in the official car of Junior Minister of Cultural Affairs, Somaweera Chandrasiri, a rabid anti-Tamil. He was inside the Urumbirai Tamil Junior School when the bomb exploded. It wrecked the car, no one was injured.

The Constitutional Committee of the Federal Party drafted a model constitution and presented it to the Working Committee on 24 September. The final revised draft was presented to the Steering and Subjects Committee of the Constituent Assembly for consideration.

The draft constitution contained a 'Memorandum', an introductory section which stated that Ceylon had been the home of the Sinhalese and Tamils from times immemorial, that it was futile to enter into any argument as to who came first. The Muslims, Malays and Burghers, who had also been in Ceylon for centuries, were also entitled to be considered indigenous people and to equal rights with the Sinhalese and Tamils. When the Portuguese invaded Ceylon in the early sixteenth century, a separate Tamil Kingdom was ruling the north and the east, and Sinhalese kingdoms ruled the rest of the country. It was the British who joined the territories of the Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms for administrative convenience. But this had not destroyed Tamil sovereignty. When the British left Ceylon in 1948, the *status quo ante* should have been restored. Tamils had the right to demand the restoration of their sovereignty.

The Memorandum added that though the Tamils had this right, they resolved to remain united with the Sinhalese on a basis of absolute equality. Such equality could only be

assured in a federal union of Ceylon. The mandate given by the Sinhala people to the United Front should be considered along with the mandate given by the Tamil people to the Federal Party. The Tamil people rejected the Soulbury Constitution which had imposed the unitary structure of administration in every election since 1947, and had consistently demanded autonomy for their territories under a Federal Union of Ceylon as an alternative to the full restoration of their sovereignty as existed before the foreign conquests. The federal arrangement was nothing new. It had been adopted both by democracies and by socialist states as one which fulfilled the aspirations of the people.

The Memorandum concluded with the appeal, "The Memorandum and the Draft Constitution annexed hereto are submitted in the genuine desire to establish unity and to effect the integration of various nationalities inhabiting this country while at the same time preserving the cultural and linguistic identity of each group. Any attempt to assimilate and thereby destroy the separate existence of the Minorities will lead to the division of the country. We appeal particularly to the socialists in parliament to set aside all narrow prejudices and preconceptions, to eschew suspicion and distrust and set about the task of formulating a constitution in the spirit of true socialism."

The draft model constitution contained seven sections of 60 articles. The Preamble stressed two points: the granting of equal rights to all racial, linguistic and religious groups in all spheres of economic, social, political and cultural life of society, and the furthering of unity and strengthening of the nation.

Section 1 dealt with the political structure, according to which Ceylon would be administered by a central government and five states, with Colombo as the capital, administered by the central government. The five states would be made up of: (1) the State consisting of the economically

advanced western and southern provinces; (2) the State consisting of the rice and coconut growing north-central and north-western provinces which were the key territories of ancient Rajarata; (3) the State consisting of the tea and rubber growing Uva, Sabaragamuwa and Central Provinces which formed the bulk of the Kandyan Kingdom; (4) the State consisting of the northern province and Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts, the predominant Tamil areas; (5) the State consisting the South-eastern Amaparai district where Muslims formed the majority.

The State Assemblies would have the power to make law, to raise taxes and loans for the states. Members to these assemblies would be elected by the people of each state. They would then be divided to form committees, each headed by a chairman elected by them. The chairmen would form the board of ministers. The model constitution defined the subjects that were to be handled by the central government, leaving the balance to the states. Subjects allocated to the central government were: international relations, defence, law and order, police, citizenship, immigration and emigration, customs, postal and telecommunication services, ports, sea, air and rail transport, electricity, inter-state roads and irrigation, weights and measures, determination of the national policy in education, health, cooperation etc.

The model constitution made special efforts to allay Sinhala fears of the Tamil unit going its own way. The power to dissolve any state assembly that failed to fulfill its duties and functions under the law would be given to the central government. The law-making power of the states was restricted, with the central government holding the power to give directions to the states. Loan-raising power would be restricted to local loans only.

Section 2 provided for the granting of citizenship to all persons of Indian origin who did not apply to return to India under the 1964 Indo-Ceylon Agreement.

Section 3 provided for fundamental rights with the right to seek legal remedy against infringement.

Section 4 proposed that Sinhala and Tamil be declared national languages. Language of court was to be Tamil in the northern and eastern provinces and Sinhala in the other seven provinces. Every citizen would have the right to communicate and be heard in his mother tongue.

Section 5 stated that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.

Section 6 was on economic objectives.

Section 7 was on international affairs.

The Steering and Subjects Committee met regularly from 4 January 1971. There was no dispute on Basic Resolution No. 1 which stated that Sri Lanka would be a free, independent, socialist republic. The Federal Party readily accepted the change of name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka. In Tamil and Sinhalese, Ceylon had been known as Lanka from antiquity. In Tamil, Ilankai had been the name used because of the requirements of Tamil grammar which prohibits the use of 'la' as prefix and 'ka' as suffix. But there was a clash between the Federal Party and the government in the second basic resolution which read, 'The Republic of Sri Lanka shall be a unitary state'.

Moving an amendment on 16 March, Dharmalingam said Sri Lanka should be a 'non-sectarian federal republic' as communal harmony was a prerequisite for national development, and this could be achieved only by a federal form of government. He added, "If the government had no mandate to establish a federal constitution, let it at least seriously consider the decentralisation of the administration." He also pointed out that Bandaranaike was the first statesman to advocate a federal form of government in Ceylon as early as 1929.

The resolution, without the amendment, was passed on 27 March. Federal Party members did not participate in the proceedings.

The Federal Party moved an amendment to the Basic Resolution on Fundamental Rights which stated that the right to be educated in one's mother tongue should be enshrined in the constitution. The amendment was rejected. Federal Party members were also not happy with the restrictions placed on fundamental rights by making it subject to national interest.

On 15 June the Party's General Council met in Jaffna to take stock of the working of the Constituent Assembly. The question of participation of its members of parliament in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly was discussed. The youth demanded that the party should quit. Chelvanayakam advocated caution. The General Council decided to postpone taking any decision till 21 June and await the response of the Constituent Assembly to its motion on language rights.

All its proposed amendments on language rights were defeated. But it was the Eleventh Basic Resolution which broke the Federal Party's back. The resolution stated, "All laws shall be enacted in Sinhala while there will be a Tamil translation of every law so enacted". K.P.Ratnam proposed the following amendment, "Sinhala and Tamil should be: (a) the languages in which laws shall be enacted; (b) the Official Languages of Sri Lanka; (c) the languages of the courts; and (d) the languages in which all laws be published."

K. Jayakoddy, the Federal Party's MP for Udupiddy, proposed a compromise, "We are willing to give up parity if you will write into the constitution the provisions of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact." At a later stage he even went further. He said, "Let there be Sinhala and Tamil as the languages of administration in the north and east."

Ratnam's proposed amendment was defeated after four days of debate, with 87 members voting against and the

Party's 13 MPs voting for. Soon after this, Chelvanayakam announced the Federal Party's decision to quit the Constituent Assembly.

He said, "It is sought to embody the language laws of the country into the proposed constitution. At a time like this no one can deny the reasonableness of our demand that the language rights of the Tamil speaking people should be defined in the constitution. The position of the Sinhala language in the administration and the courts is to be firmly enshrined into the constitution under the Basic Resolution under discussion today. But the position of the Tamil language is left for decision by future National Assemblies. At the time the Constituent Assembly was convened by the Prime Minister, though there were differences of opinion with regard to the usefulness of our participation in the Constituent Assembly, we decided to accept the invitation of the Prime Minister in the spirit in which it was made.

"We moved several amendments," Chelvanayakam continued, "regarding the nature of the constitution, citizenship rights and other fundamental rights. All these amendments have been rejected. I sought an interview with the Prime Minister with a view to arriving at a compromise solution of the problem which had to be settled not by a majority of votes but by mutual adjustment and agreement. Our interviews and discussions with the Hon. Prime Minister, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs and others do not appear to have produced the desired results. We are always willing to compromise for the sake of an agreed settlement of the vexed question. We indicated to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Constitutional Affairs the minimum rights we wanted to be embodied in the constitution. But although our discussions with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Constitutional Affairs were very cordial and our views apparently received serious consideration, yet they were not prepared to make any alteration to the Basic Resolution as they stand.

"In the circumstances we have come to the painful conclusion that as our language rights are not satisfactorily provided for in the proposed constitution, no useful purpose will be served by our continuing in the deliberations of this Assembly. By taking this step we mean no offence to anybody. We only want to safeguard the dignity of our people."

F.X.Martyn, Federal Party's MP for Jaffna, defied the boycott decision saying that the United Front should be given a chance to implement its socialist policies. He also charged that the leadership was giving into pressures from the militant youth. Chelvanayakam wrote to Martyn asking him to show cause why he should not be dismissed from the party. In his reply Martyn said that the Prime Minister had given an assurance that laws would be enacted in the National State Assembly to give Tamil language its rightful place. He also said that he was not alone in holding the view that it was better for Tamil representatives to continue in the Constituent Assembly.

In his second letter, Chelvanayakam dealt with all the above points. On Mrs. Bandaranaike's assurance, he said, "Once bitten twice shy. I have two documents signed one by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the then-prime minister of the country, and the other by Mr. Dudley Senanayake, who became Prime Minister, on the signing of the document containing promises to us, both of which were dishonoured. In 1960, the SLFP made a number of verbal promises and got our support to defeat the government. But when they came to power, the SLFP forgot about all promises. This has been fully told by me in the House in a debate early in 1962. In the face of this record I could not very well ask the Tamil people to accept the word of the Sinhalese people in preference to a position in the constitution itself for the Tamil language. They make promises but when it comes to the carrying out those promises the leaders would say, 'What are we to do, the people are against it'."

On Martyn's comment that there were others who felt like him, Chelvanayakam said, "It is true that some members argued against our withdrawal from the Constituent Assembly, but that is as it ought to be. When the matter was resolved, all of them fell in line with the decision. They all did it in the interests of the people."

Martyn was expelled from the Federal Party in the last week of July 1971.

The Federal Party's decision to quit the Assembly was treated by the Youth Front as its victory. Though the more militant members of the Front started talking of a confrontational path, stressing that the path of cooperation had failed, they were still talking of a non-violent, extra-parliamentary agitational approach. But the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan by the Mukthi Bahini, a guerrilla organisation, with Indian assistance in November 1971, made a tremendous impact on the militant youth. Many youth leaders, including Mavai Senathirajah, Kavignar Kasi Anandan, Kovai Mahesan and others, started talking about a Bangladesh-style operation. Many of them who were active, like Velupillai Prabhakaran, Uma Maheswaran, Chetty Thanabalasingham, Kuttimai, started singing the praises of the Mukthi Bahini fighters.

The Federal Party congratulated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her Bangladesh victory. It also issued a statement welcoming the Indian role and held a seven-party rally on 12 January 1972 in Kankesanthurai, under the presidentship of Chelvanayakam, to celebrate the Indian victory. Addressing the meeting, Amirthalingam declared that it was time for the Federal Party to give up its stand of federalism and demand a separate state like Bangladesh. He called upon the Tamil people to unite to gain such a demand and to struggle for it even with foreign assistance as had been done by the people of Bangladesh.

He said, "Time had now come for the Tamils of this country to wage a clear-cut struggle for a totally separate state and for which they should not hesitate to gain foreign assistance. Independence cannot be bought from a shop. It had to be won through a hard struggle, if necessary, a bloody struggle. There are no short cuts. The Federal Party in its *satyagraha* and civil disobedience campaigns had not called for foreign assistance. But the present struggle is for a separate state and, therefore, needed foreign assistance."

The government and the Colombo press were perturbed over this speech. The *Sun*, in its editorial of 15 January 1972, wrote, "The General Secretary of the Federal Party, Mr. A. Amirthalingam, addressing a party rally at Kankesanthurai on Monday is reported to have said that it was time the party decided to abandon its stand for federalism and instead demand a separate state like Bangladesh. We might still hope that this is Mr. Amirthalingam's personal opinion and does not cover the collective view of the party. However, when the general secretary of a political party, which is represented in parliament as a minority group, says something, one cannot discard it merely as a vote-catching statement. It is a warning of dangerous potential, coming in the wake of the attitude that India took to East Pakistan. A secessionist observation from the Federal Party calls for full cognition."

But the government failed to realise the importance of Amirthalingam's statement. It failed to comprehend that Amirthalingam was voicing the growing militant thinking of the Tamil youth. Instead of trying to nip the secessionist cry by being more accommodative, it instructed the Jaffna police to make inquiries. The police recorded statements from several persons who had attended the meeting. The government also unleashed a campaign against Amirthalingam. It accused him of being unpatriotic but stopped short of calling him a traitor.

Amirthalingam was under heavy pressure from the militant youth who accused him of being too soft and of toeing the conservative path of cooperation and negotiation. He was also under attack by Rajadurai and his supporters who were keen in blocking Amirthalingam being elected president.

It was in this environment that the Federal Party held a special convention in Jaffna on 30 January 1972 to consider the draft constitution which had been prepared on the basis of the basic resolutions adopted by the Steering and Subjects Committee of the Constituent Assembly. The youth argued that the conduct of Sinhala leaders had shown that they would never willingly give Tamils their rights and as such it would be futile to ask for a federal constitution. They called the draft constitution a Charter of Slavery and urged the convention to reject it.

The Special Convention passed a resolution rejecting the draft constitution, giving ten reasons for its decision.

1. The draft constitution, whilst purporting to fulfil the mandate given by the Sinhalese people in the general election of 1970, had failed to take into consideration the mandate given by the Tamil people in five successive elections since 1956.

2. Removal of Section 29 of the Soulbury constitution.

3. Entrenching the Sinhala Only Act in the constitution.

4. Failure to mention in the constitution the regulations made under the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act thereby making the regulations inoperative.

5. Making Sinhala the language of the court in the entire country and failure to give Tamil a place even in the northern and eastern provinces.

6. Buddhism had been given a special place.

7. Failure to find a solution to the stateless problem.

8. Fundamental Rights chapter incomplete and defective.

9. Fundamental Rights chapter did not speak about the abolition of the caste system.

10. The fundamental human right of transacting business with the government in one's mother tongue was not given to the Tamils.

The resolution concluded by requesting all members representing Tamil areas to desist from voting for the constitution and by calling the draft constitution a document that reduced the Tamil community into slavery. It further stated, "All the reasonable demands of the Tamils have been rejected and hence the Tamil race has been driven to the path of separation by the government. At this juncture, the Convention demands the following:

(a) The status accorded to the Sinhala language be accorded to Tamil legally;

(b) This country should be declared a secular state

(c) Whoever considers this country to be his or her home be given citizenship rights;

(d) The Tamils be allowed to rule themselves in their traditional homelands in this country. In order to secure these, the Tamil people should be prepared for any form of sacrifice. The Tamils in the South have lost their employment and educational opportunities, owing to the acts of the government and hence Tamils should lose no time in transferring their possessions to the north and east, thereby ensuring a comfortable and secure life for themselves and their people. This is a strong request by our Convention."

Public meetings and rallies were organised by the youth in every electorate. The theme of most of the speeches started shifting from federalism to separatism.

While the Tamil mood was hardening on the question of separation, the old rivalry between Amirthalingam and Rajadurai surfaced again over the Federal Party presidentship. When Amirthalingam filed in his nomination papers for the post on Chelvanayakam's advice, Rajadurai immediately announced his candidature. Amirthalingam tendered in his resignation saying, "We are at the most important point in the history of the Tamil race. It is regrettable that at a time when unity has to be forged amongst the Tamils, certain elements within the party are trying to bring about a cleavage. In 1961 and 1969 when my name was proposed for general secretaryship, there were moves to contest this post, which were, however, thwarted by the intervention of Mr. Chelvanayakam. As a result of such manoeuvres, an impression has been created that I am greedy for high offices. I am not. In the interest of the party I have endured these insinuations. I assure all that in the same way as I served the party from the inception up to 1964 as an ordinary member, I shall continue to serve the party to the best of my ability."

The Working Committee decided on April 8 to accept his resignation from the post of general secretary and elected S. Kathiravelupillai, MP for Kopay. Later, in July, Amirthalingam was unanimously elected the president of the Federal Party.

During this period three important developments took place. The first was in the third week of February 1972 an attempt was made to externalise the Tamil-Sinhala dispute. Chelvanayakam and Amirthalingam visited Tamil Nadu to canvas the support of Tamil Nadu leaders for the cause of Ceylon Tamils. They met Tamil Nadu Governor K.K. Shah, Chief Minister Karunanidhi, Education Minister R. Nedunchelian, Dravida Kalazham leader Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, Thamilar Kalazham leader M.P. Sivagnanam, former chief minister M. Bakthavachalam, Muslim League leader Kayithe Millath, Congress leader K. Kamaraj and

others. Tamil Nadu leaders assured them of their moral support and promised to brief Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi about the Ceylon Tamil problem.

Leaders of all Tamil Nadu political parties pledged their support. At a civic reception accorded to Chelvanayakam, Mayor Kamadchi Jayaraman, in her welcome speech said that fifty million Tamils of Tamil Nadu were with the Ceylon Tamils in their struggle. At another reception by the World Tamil Youth Federation, its president, Dr. R. Janarthanan, declared the moral support of the people of Tamil Nadu to the struggle of the Ceylon Tamils.

Chelvanayakam said in reply that the Tamil speaking people of Ceylon might shortly have to agitate for a separate state for themselves. It would be a non-violent struggle, he assured them. "By giving lands to the Sinhalese in the north and north-eastern regions, the Ceylon government is trying to reduce the Tamils to a minority in their own territory. Tamils are not being recruited to the police and the army in proportion to their number."

On his return to Ceylon, Chelvanayakam reported to the Working Committee about the sympathy in Tamil Nadu for the Ceylon Tamil cause and about the suggestion of Tamil Nadu leaders that the matter be taken up with New Delhi. He informed the committee that he intended to do so during his next visit.

The second was the formation of the Tamil United Front, an idea mooted on 7 February 1971 when leaders of the Federal Party invited members of other Tamil parties to a meeting. All parties had participated. There was a general consensus that a united front should be created to make a common demand for Tamil rights. The Federal Party was asked to convene a meeting for that purpose.

Chelvanayakam convened that meeting on 14 May 1972 at the Trincomalee Town Hall. Invitations were sent to individual Tamil leaders and prominent Tamils. Chelvanayakam, who presided, said that the government had rejected the demands of the Tamil representatives in parliament and had drafted a purely one-sided constitution. Tamils should shed party differences and jointly oppose it. The meeting decided to form a joint organisation named Tamil United Front (TUF). Chelvanayakam was elected president, Gnaneshamoorthy and Kasi Anandan joint secretaries, and Kathirvelupillai, T. Thirunavukkarasu and A. Kumaraguru joint treasurers. A committee representing all Tamil parties and organisations was also elected.

The third was the promulgation of the republican constitution on 22 May 1972. Fifteen of the 19 Tamil MPs boycotted the Republic Day ceremonies. Tamils in the north and east observed the day as a day of mourning. Students boycotted schools, traders pulled down their shutters, government officers kept out of official ceremonies, and buses and vehicles kept off the roads. Tamil leaders held a protest meeting at Vannarponnai Navalur Archiraman as the government had prohibited rallies and public meetings and made a bonfire of copies of the new constitution.

In his presidential speech Chelvanayakam explained the rationale behind their decision not to participate in the constitution-making process and showed how the new constitution effectively pushed Tamils to second class status.

On their decision to keep out of the Constituent Assembly Chelvanayakam said, "Historically, the Sinhalese and the Tamils lived as two separate nations inhabiting two areas. There were short periods when Sinhalese kings ruled over the Tamils and their homeland. There are also periods when Tamils dominated vast extent of Sinhala areas. But essentially both races lived as two distinct nations. The Portuguese and the Dutch respected their separate existence and administered

the two areas separately. It was the British who created a single administration for entire Ceylon. This was done without the consent of the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Under the British the Tamils had always asked for equal share of power as a price for remaining united. They rejected the Soulbury constitution which imposed the unitary constitutional structure on them in seven elections since 1947. The decision to boycott the Constituent Assembly is to continue that opposition and to show the Sinhala people that we are not going to be a party to the new constitution."

He then explained how the new constitution would harm the Tamil people. He said Article 2 of Chapter 1 which declared that the Republic of Sri Lanka is a unitary state had completely rejected the federal demand, the only hope the Tamils had to live with dignity and equality.

"The new constitution not only rejected the demand for federalism, it also denied the minority religions and the minority languages their place. Article 6 of Chapter 2 accorded to Buddhism a pre-eminent place. The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place, the constitution says. Then, Article 7 of Chapter 3 accords a constitutional status to the Sinhala language. It says 'The official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala as provided by the Official Language Act Number 33 of 1956.' It also says in Article 8 that the use of Tamil shall be in accordance with the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act Number 28 of 1958, and adds that the regulations made under that act in 1968 shall not be deemed a provision of the constitution. The 1958 Act was only an enabling act, and the regulation passed by Dudley Senanayake government was the means to implement it. The new constitution had swiftly struck out the regulations. And by Article 11, the new constitution had made Sinhala the language of the court throughout Sri Lanka. The only concession granted to the Tamils is the right of interpretation and translation in the original courts, Labour Tribunals and Quazi Courts in the northern and eastern provinces," Chelvanayakam said.

He also explained that the new constitution had failed to correct the historic injustice of denying the Tamils their fair share of proportionate representation in the House of Representatives. He said the denial of proportionate representation to the Tamils was brought about by two strategies. Under the Soulbury constitution, electorates were delimited on the basis of population and area: (i) an electorate was given to every one thousand square miles; (ii) and one electorate for every 75,000 persons. This arrangement appeared fair when Indian Tamils enjoyed citizenship rights. In 1948 Indian Tamils had been disfranchised. But even after that the electorates were delimited on the basis of population, thus making use of the voteless numbers of the Indian Tamil people to raise the number of the Sinhala representatives.

Chelvanayakam used statistics to illustrate his point. He said, "... the basis of ethnic proportion the Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils together should get 22 places in a 95-member House of Representatives. The Sinhalese were entitled to 66. In the 1947 election Tamils had obtained 20 places and the Sinhalese 68. In the 1952 and 1956 elections the Sinhalese got 75 and Tamils 13. This was the result of the disfranchisement of the Indian Tamils. In 1960, after a fresh delimitation, the number of seats was raised to 151. Then the Sinhalese should have got 106 seats and Tamils 35. But in July 1960 the Sinhalese got 121 seats and Tamils 18. Again in 1965 the Sinhalese share was 122 and Tamils 17, and in 1970 the Sinhalese got 123 seats and Tamils 19. The 1972 constitution perpetuated this injustice."

The opposition to the new constitution did not end here. The youth organised village-level meetings and demonstrations, burnt the national flag and the new constitution. To the Tamil youth of the northern and eastern provinces organising this type of protests had become natural to them, having been raised in an environment of continuous conflict with the government. Since 1956, boycott of schools, picketing of

government offices, hoisting of black flags and performing *satyagraha* had become a way of life for them. They saw newer grievances added. They saw the failure of the Federal Party's attempts to get redress through democratic means. It was but a natural sequence that the most emotional of them gravitated towards secession. Since early 1970, a few in the Federal Party Youth Front had started speaking about establishing a separate state through armed revolution.

These village-level demonstrations were a cause of considerable anxiety for the government. It ordered the arrest of the youth leaders. Over 70 were arrested. Among them were Mavai Senathirajah, Kasi Anandan, E.S. Subramaniam and Ananda Vinayakam.

The TULF held a mammoth rally at Batticaloa on 5 June. Chelvanayakam, who presided, exhorted every Tamil to participate in the agitation. Amirthalingam said that the new constitution had denied the Tamils their language, political and religious rights and had reduced them to second class citizens. A resolution to oppose the new constitution was also passed. The government reacted by clamping down a ban on all demonstrations and public meetings.

Meanwhile there was a clash between the youth and parliamentarians over the question of taking oath as members of parliament and participating in parliamentary proceedings. The old guard preferred to attend parliament but the youth opposed it vehemently. The clash came to a head on 25 June 1962 when the TUF Action Committee met in Jaffna to decide the matter. Members of the Action Committee and parliamentarians of the Federal and Tamil Congress assembled at the Tamil Congress head office for the meeting. Hundreds of youth invaded the venue and demanded that the parliamentarians continue their boycott of the National State Assembly, the name given to parliament by the new constitution. The Action Committee adjourned the meeting and retired to 'Mahavalavu', the residence of Kathiravelupillai at Kopay.

The meeting adopted six resolutions, the preamble of which stated, "The Tamil United Front was inaugurated on 14.5.72 in Trincomalee of historical importance at a time when Tamils faced grave danger to their freedom, self respect and fundamental rights by the reactionary constitution framed in a dictatorial manner. This United Front had been formed of the Ceylon Federal Party, All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Ceylon Workers Congress, Eelath Tamilar Ottumai Munnani, All Ceylon Tamil Conference, representatives of several linguistic trade unions, students' movements and non-party leaders.

"The Constituent Assembly was composed of representatives of electorates carved according to a delimitation system which denied opportunities to ten lakh Tamil estate workers of electing their own representatives, but who were ingeniously taken into account in giving weightage to electorates returning Sinhalese members on party basis. It was the House of Representatives thus elected that converted itself into the Constituent Assembly. This Assembly cannot, therefore, be considered as truly representative of the people.

"The Assembly had not adequate representation of the 35 lakhs of the Tamil speaking people. The government did not have even a single Tamil elected by the people. The unanimous demands made through representative organisations on behalf of the Tamils were entirely rejected. In fact, it has not been possible for the people of this country to participate in the framing of this constitution. Those in the government have failed totally to follow the healthy traditional practice of accommodating one another and thus finding unity."

The first of the six resolutions called upon the government to amend the constitution to accommodate the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people within a period of three months ending September 1972, failing which it would launch a non-violent struggle to win back the rights of the Tamil

people. It listed six minimum demands, the fulfillment of which would satisfy the Tamil people. These were:

1. The Tamil language should be given the same status in the constitution as the Sinhala language.
2. There should be constitutional guarantee of full citizenship rights to all Tamil speaking persons who have made Sri Lanka their home.
3. There should be no different categories of citizens and discrimination between them and also no power to the State to deprive a citizen of citizenship.
4. The State should be secular while equal protection is afforded to all religions.
5. The constitution should provide for valid fundamental rights guaranteeing the equality of persons and cultural groups.
6. The decentralisation of government machinery.

The other resolutions authorised the MPs to attend parliament; called for the lifting of the ban on demonstrations and meetings; urged the Tamil people to prepare themselves for a non-violent struggle; called for the release of the arrested youth, and appointed committees to enroll volunteers.

Chelvanayakam wrote to the Prime Minister, as president of the TUF, informing her of the group's resolutions. The TUF MPs took oath on 4 July when the National Parliament opened and participated in its proceedings. Chelvanayakam did not get an acknowledgement to his letter and sent a reminder. The Prime Minister's office acknowledged the receipt of the two letters, but no action was taken on the resolutions.

The government, instead, launched a campaign to show the world that a sizeable section of Tamils had accepted the constitution. This annoyed the youth, who blamed TUF

parliamentarians, saying that the attendance of parliament had lent legitimacy to the 1972 constitution. They argued that the 1972 constitution had shut the door for democratic solution of the Tamil problem and the only alternative available to them was separation. They also urged that separation could only be achieved through armed revolt. They pressed the Tamil MPs to quit parliament and launch a liberation struggle.

To pacify the youth and to combat government propaganda, Chelvanayakam resigned his Kankesanthurai seat on 30 September and challenged the government to hold a by-election to test Tamil opinion. The government postponed the by-election, using the Emergency. It was held only in 1975. Thus the government played into the hands of the militant youth and weakened the moderates.

Chapter 8

Standardisation

While the constitution-making process was on, the United Front government added another grievance by introducing mediawise standardisation for university admission. Till 1971, university admission was purely on merit, with high mark scorers getting the available places. From 1942, when the University of Ceylon was founded, to 1957 Sinhalese and Tamils studied in the English medium and sat for a common university entrance examination. But from 1957, with the introduction of Sinhala and Tamil as the medium of instruction, this practice underwent a change. Though both communities sat the same examination, they sat in their respective languages. The question paper was set in English and translated into Sinhala and Tamil. Answer scripts were marked by the Sinhalese for the Sinhalese and by the Tamils for the Tamils. The marks of the Sinhalese and the Tamil students were compiled into a single list and arranged in a descending order. Available university places were filled from the top.

Tamil students from Jaffna benefitted from this scheme as Jaffna had some good schools, with well-equipped science laboratories, and produces high scorers. They entered in large numbers for all science courses. This bred discontent among the Sinhalese who resented Tamil dominance, specially in the professional courses. In late 1960, an agitation sprouted among the Sinhalese, who asked for some weightage, putting forth two reasons. They said Jaffna students enjoyed a built-in advantage from the educational infrastructure the British had built for them. They also charged that Tamil university lecturers favoured Jaffna students in science practical examinations.

In 1970 they added a third. They alleged that Tamil examiners were over-marking the answer scripts thus giving Tamil students an unfair advantage. Tamil university staff challenged this and demanded an inquiry. A committee was appointed comprising Sinhala and Tamil university dons, which concluded that large-scale over-marking was not possible as detailed marking schemes were provided to Sinhala and Tamil examiners, and a strict check kept on marking. The committee reported to the government that there was no truth in the allegation.

Despite this report, the government introduced in 1971 a scheme of mediawise standardisation, stating that it would eliminate all discrepancies in marking. Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike said the new scheme would correct the historical imbalance in university intake. A press release from the Education Ministry explained the working of the scheme - "two separate lists containing the marks of the Sinhala and Tamil medium students would be prepared and standardised against each other. The standardised marks would be compiled into a single list which would be used for selecting university students". This scheme, in effect, was a device to reduce all marks to a common scale so that in the end the number qualifying from each language medium would be proportionate to the number sitting the examination in that medium. This helped to neutralise the superior performance of the Tamil medium students in science subjects.

The Sinhalese historian K.M.de Silva described the actual working of the scheme in 1971 thus, "The actual qualifying marks for admission for the medical faculties was 250 (out of 400) for Tamil students, whereas it was only 229 for the Sinhalese. Worse still, this same pattern of lower qualifying marks applied even when Sinhalese and Tamil students sat for the examination in English. In short, students for examination in the same language, but belonging to two ethnic groups, had two different qualifying marks."

Jaffna students, who had become politically assertive by 1971, were incensed by this scheme. They brought pressure on the Federal Party to oppose standardisation. Amirthalingam, the champion of the causes of the youth, took up the matter in the Federal Party General Council meeting on 12 January 1971. He said that the standardisation scheme had angered the youth and urged the parliamentary group to raise the matter in parliament. However, many in the General Council had failed to realise the seriousness of the standardisation problem. They considered it as one of the many educational problems the Tamil community was facing. They passed a resolution dealing with four of the major educational issues: standardisation, closure of a Tamil Teacher Training College, hardships faced by Tamil schools outside the northern and eastern provinces, and failure to recruit Tamil teachers. That part of the resolution which dealt with standardisation berated the government for adopting "... a blatantly discriminatory policy against the Tamil students in the matter of admission to the universities under the guise of standardisation."

The General Council also appointed a committee of eleven leaders to meet the Education Minister and the Prime Minister about matters concerning education. The committee comprised Chelvanayakam, Sellathambu, Ratnam, Neminathan, Rasamanikkam, Rajadurai, Alagakone, Amirthalingam, Nadarajah and Tiruvchelvam.

The committee asked for an appointment with the Prime Minister but was told to meet the Education Minister Badi-ud-din Mahmood instead. The minister agreed to make adjustments in other matters but declined to yield on standardisation, saying that it was the government's policy, he was only implementing a cabinet directive and had no power to alter it. Amirthalingam made use of the opportunity to raise the question of the demand for a Tamil university. Mahmood deftly evaded that matter with a joke, "If I concede to your demand, Ponnambalam will scold me."

The minister had made use of the dispute the Federal Party had with the All Ceylon Tamil Congress. The former was campaigning for a Tamil University in Trincomalee, whilst the latter for a Hindu University in Jaffna. Ponnambalam was demanding a Hindu University, saying that Sinhala Buddhists had Vidhyalankara and Vidyodhaya universities for Buddhist studies and Hindus needed one. Prime Ministers Dudley Senanayake and Sirima Bandaranaike, who were both averse to setting up a Tamil University in Trincomalee, made use of this dispute to scuttle the Tamil University Movement.

Students got restless over this damaging dispute and of the inability of the Federal Party to press government to alter its standardisation policy. A few students met in the Jaffna Public Library auditorium to take stock of the situation. Among them were Sivakumaran, Ponnuthurai Sathiyaseelan, Ariyaratnam and Muthukumaraswamy. Sathiyaseelan, an unemployed graduate and founder-president of the Unemployed Graduate Union, said, "We never had any faith in the Tamil Congress. It is too conservative and insensitive to new ideas. The Federal Party, too, is getting fossilised and is losing its grip on the problems of the youth, specially students. We need a new organisation to voice our grievances." They decided to form the Thamil Manavar Peravai (Thamil Student Movement). Its membership was restricted to GCE Advanced Level students.

The Tamil Student Movement conducted seminars for its members in many parts of the Jaffna peninsula. It also organised protest days and student rallies. Speakers at these rallies castigated the Federal Party leadership of being indifferent to student problems and of being interested only in the problems of teachers. Speakers also suggested that students of lower classes and recent school leavers should be involved in their protests and rallies. That found ready response and the Tamil Student Movement was soon transformed onto Thamil Ilaygnar Peravai (Tamil Youth Movement).

The Tamil Youth Movement became more aggressive as the impact of standardisation began to be felt. They saw the gradual sliding down of the percentage of Tamil student admissions. In 1964 the Sri Lankan Tamils held 37.2 percent of the places in science and engineering courses, 40.5 percent in medicine and dentistry, and 41.9 percent in agriculture and veterinary science courses in the University of Ceylon. The trend continued till 1971 when Tamils made up 35.3 percent of all admissions to the science-based courses in the university, obtaining 40.8 percent in engineering, and 40.9 percent in medicine. From 1971 onwards, a steady decline occurred in the percentage of Tamils admitted to science-based courses and the swift rise in the Sinhalese percentage. In 1972 Tamils secured 33.6 percent and the Sinhalese 63 percent; in 1973 Tamils 29.5 percent and the Sinhalese 67.4 percent; in 1974 Tamils 20.9 percent and the Sinhalese 75.4 percent, and in 1975 Tamils secured 19 percent and the Sinhalese 78 percent.

The decline became marked from 1974 when the district quota system was introduced to satisfy two interest groups, the Kandyans and the Muslims. Both groups had failed to benefit from the mediawise standardisation as Kandyans were lumped into the Sinhala group and the Muslims with the Tamils. They showed that they had actually suffered from standardisation. The district quota system, on the other hand, which allocated university places in proportion to the total population resident in each district benefitted both these groups. Kandyans got a bigger quota because the educationally underprivileged Indian Tamils were also counted in determining the quota. The Muslims of Mannar, Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee benefitted while those who lived in the south only helped to swell the Sinhala quota. Thus, in 1975, the Sinhalese got 78 percent of the places, 5 percent more than their share.

The decline in university intake was high in the Jaffna peninsula. With only a fourth of the country's total Tamil

population of 2.6 million the Jaffna peninsula had earlier obtained more than a third of the university places. In 1974 Jaffna's share shrunk to a small 7 percent.

This big reduction in the intake of Jaffna students was also caused by the abolition of practical examinations for science subjects in 1972. In a statement announcing the abolition of the practical examination, the Education Ministry said that the practicals had conferred an unfair advantage on students from leading schools with well-equipped science laboratories. The cancellation would help provide equality of opportunity for all students, especially from rural areas.

But that failed to convince Jaffna students, who perceived mediawise standardisation and the abolition of the practical examinations as acts of discrimination specially directed against them. A Sinhalese historian, Chandra Richard de Silva, acknowledged this in an article published in 1977. He wrote, "While the ministry defended this scheme as one that would ensure equality of opportunity to those in the rural areas, it was interpreted by the Tamils of Jaffna as an attempt to deprive them of their lead in the scientific and technological education by unfair weightage."

S.J. Tambiah commented, "For the Sri Lankan Tamils application of equal and even-handed criteria of merit and performance at entrance examinations was vital; indeed, it constituted a lifeline for them. The admission policies were therefore a crucial test of their equal rights as citizens of Sri Lanka."

At the meetings organised by the Tamil Youth Movement Sathiyaseelan kept repeating this, "The scheme of standardisation signals the doom of the whole of the Tamil community. It has deprived thousands of Tamil youth with GCE Advanced Level qualification of education or employment." He also stated, "Standardisation had wiped out the last resort of the Tamils, that is, professional employment."

The actions of successive governments since independence had affected the Tamils in many ways, especially in regard to their language, politics, employment in non-professional grades. But they had left education virtually untouched. A study by the Federal Party-controlled Arasanga Eluthu Vinaignar Sangam (Government Clerical Services Organisation) established this. The percentage of Tamils in the Government Clerical Service had declined from 50 percent in 1948 to 30 percent in 1965. Also, their share in the Government Accountant Service had shrunk from 30 percent to 20 percent in the same period. But it was not so in the professional fields. Two separate studies by Abeysekera and S.W.R.de A.Samarasinghe showed that the Tamil share in the professional field had swelled or remained static. In the medical field the Tamil percentage rose from 38.1 percent in 1965 to 41.1 in 1963. In accountancy the Tamil share had remained unchanged at 60 percent during the same period.

The standardisation slammed the only door the Tamils had for employment and higher education. With a very high 44.4 percent unemployment prevailing in the country at that time for the GEC AL-educated, the opportunity for Tamils with similar qualification was practically nil. The 'chit system' that prevailed then, where letters of recommendations from government MPs were required to get jobs, both in the state and private sectors, effectively blocked Tamil youth getting employment. As Schwars Waltre wrote in 1975, the mediawise standardisation thus bred in Tamil youth the feeling that they were being 'sneezed out of higher education' and were being blocked from getting into the prestigious professions. V.Nithiyanandan and Newton Gunasinghe, who studied the emergence of Tamil nationalism, concluded that the restriction of university admissions was the immediate cause for Tamil militancy.

As Tambiah pointed out, the restriction of higher educational opportunities aroused in the Tamil youth a deeper

despair and created the psychological environment for the adoption of violence as a means of obtaining redress.

A few youth, active in the Federal Party Youth Front and the Tamil Youth Movement, concluded that the democratic path trod by the Tamil political leadership had failed to bring redress to Tamil grievances as the Sinhala leadership was only interested in consolidating the power of the Sinhala community. They reasoned that the only way out for the Tamill people was armed struggle as demonstrated by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Bangladeshi leader Mijibur Abdur Rahman. They felt that the Tamil youth would respond to the call of arms just as the youth of the Sinhala south had done during the 1971 insurrection.

Velupillai Prabhakaran, Chetti Thanabalasingham and Pathmanathan were the prime movers behind the formation of the Tamil militant group, which they named Tamil New Tigers so that it could get the acronym TNT, a deadly explosive. They wanted to call themselves Tigers because the Tiger was the emblem of the Chola kings who were responsible for Tamil resurgence. Sri Lankan Tamils had migrated mainly from the areas ruled by Cholas and many of them came with the Chola armies which conquered and ruled northern and north central portions of Sri Lanka in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. To the Tamil, the Tiger symbolised patriotic resurgence. The Tiger emblem is for them what the Lion is for the Sinhalese. To the Tamil youth, the Tiger also symbolises the group's mode of struggle - guerilla warfare.

The TNT's first act of violence was committed on 4 June 1972, on the thirteenth day after the promulgation of the new constitution. Seelan, Chetty, Sabaratnam and Selvarajah stopped a taxi at Kopay, bundled the driver, Ulagnanthan, into the boot and drove to the house of V. Kunarakulasingham, chairman of the Nallur Village Council and a supporter of the SLFP, and shot him, injuring him. They then escaped in the

taxi, shot dead Ulagnanthan and set his taxi alight, his body inside. Three days later, the men travelled to Colombo and shot at A.Thiyagarajah, MP for Vaddukoddai, a government supporter. Bullets went astray and Thiyagarajah miraculously escaped unhurt. These two incidents and the bomb attack which Prabhakaran, then 18 years of age, led on 17 September at the carnival held at the Duraiappah Stadium, Jaffna, where no one was injured, were the militant group's reaction to the declaration of Emergency by the government on 16 May, banning of the protest demonstration the youth had planned for 22 May, the day the new constitution took effect, and the arrest of Tamil youth.

In 1973, the political climate in the country underwent a marked change. From the beginning of the year there was agitation over the government's attempt to take over the Lake House Group, the country's largest newspaper publisher. The UNP headed the agitation towards which the Ceylon Workers Congress, a constituent of the TUF, had begun to lean. The government tried to soothe the feelings of the Tamils by enacting the Language of the Courts Act on 23 March 1973. This law provided for the use of Tamil in the law courts in the northern and eastern provinces. But the Tamils were not happy about it. They wanted this right to be enshrined in the constitution. The government was not prepared to do so.

It was in this environment that the Action Committee of the TUF met on 17 May 1973 at the Federal Party headquarters in Jaffna. It was a historic meeting that lasted eight hours. At that meeting Suntharalingam, president of the Eela Thamilar Ottumai Munnani, said that the efforts the Tamils had made to live as equal partners with the Sinhalese had failed. "Our Sinhala brethren are not prepared to share power with us. They are not prepared to treat us as equals. In such a situation, the only way available to the Tamils is to establish a separate state for themselves," he said.

He proposed that the TUF take preliminary steps to establish a separate state for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. He suggested that Tamil MPs constitute themselves into a Constituent Assembly, and the formation of a committee to draw up a draft constitution which should then be placed before the Constituent Assembly. The Federal Party and the Tamil Congress were not prepared to go that far. They only accepted the suggestion to appoint a Committee to report on the future course of action.

The resolution adopted by the Action Committee read: "Whereas the government has completely rejected and disregarded the 6-point demand for the amendment of the constitution so as to incorporate the minimum rights of the Tamil nation and thereby preserve the unity of the country presented by the TUF which is the only organisation representing the preponderant majority of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, on June 25, 1972.

"And whereas the leader of the TUF Mr. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam resigned his membership of the National State Assembly on October 2, 1972, in order democratically to establish that the Tamil people have rejected the Constitution and also to give an opportunity to the government to put to test their claim that a considerable section of the Tamil people have accepted their constitution and whereas the government by not holding the by-election for a period of over seven months is striking the death knell of parliamentary democracy in the country.

"And whereas further inroads have been made into the rights of the Tamil people during the last one year of the constitution by (i) the unprecedented attack on the religious freedom by the teaching of Buddhism to Hindu and Christian children in certain state schools and the establishment of Buddhist temples with government assistance in places like Kankesanthurai and the claim recently made by certain

Buddhists to ancient and venerated Saiva shrines like Thirukoneswaram; (ii) the underlining of the inferior status of the Tamil language by allowing the position of Tamil in the administration and in the courts in the northern and eastern provinces to be dependent on the tender mercies of an individual minister and the language rights of the Tamil people in the rest of the country being completely disregarded; the right to work of the up-country Tamil workers rendered stateless by iniquitous citizenship laws, being jeopardised as a result of the discriminative policy of the acquisition by the government; (iv) the denial of equal opportunities in higher education to Tamil students by the implementation of the iniquitous scheme of standardisation on the basis of the language media and thereby endangering the well-being of future generations of Tamils; (v) the policy of changing the medium of instruction of Tamil children to Sinhala thereby paving the way for the total destruction of the Tamil Nation as demonstrated by the government's action in making Sinhala the medium of instruction in Standard one in certain schools like Puttur Pansaseela Vidyalaya; (vi) the very existence and the future of the Tamil Nation in this country being endangered by the discriminatory actions of the government against the Tamil people and the Tamil territories in the spheres of education, employment and economic development.

"The Action Committee of the TUF is of the view that the only way to preserve the integrity and identity of the Tamil Nation and to rescue it from the path of destruction and to build a future for the Tamil Nation in the country is the establishment of self-rule of the Eelam Tamil Nation in their traditional homeland. Considering the very great importance and the vital nature of this view the Action Committee resolves to set up a high-powered committee of seven to take all further action in this connection."

The 7-member committee was headed by Chelvanayakam and comprised Suntharalingam, M. Sivasithamparam,

Amirthalingam, M.S.Sellamy, M.Manikam and Thangathurai. It was asked to submit a full report on how the TUF should set about drafting the constitution for a separate state.

The youth were not happy with the resolution. They accused the Tamil leadership of trying to stick to their parliamentary seats, that their main concern was their own powers and privileges and that the leadership had become immune to the aspirations and sentiments of the youth. The Thamil Ilaigai Peravai stepped up its pressure on the FP leadership. In Colombo a group, led by Eelavethan and Uma Maheswaran, secretary of the Colombo branch of the Ilaigai Peravai, pressurised the leaders to adopt a radical approach.

Amirthalingam, Rajadurai, V.N.Navaratnam and other younger leaders of the Federal Party realised the mood of the youth and advocated a change in the policy of the Federal Party. Amirthalingam, who was elected president of the Federal Party on 25 July, in a message assured the youth that their sentiments would be taken into account in the future activities of the party.

This undertaking was honoured at the annual convention of the FP held on 9 September 1973 at Mallakam in the Jaffna peninsula. Amirthalingam proposed a resolution to change the objective of the FP from federalism to separation. He said, "Once it had become clear that we cannot establish our rights with the consent of the Sinhalese people, the only way open to the Tamil nation is to establish self-rule in their traditional homelands in the exercise of the inalienable right of every nation to self-determination."

He said the republican constitution which was ostensibly framed to liberate Sri Lanka from the shackles of imperialism had, in fact, further tightened the chains of slavery of the Tamils. He added, "Without deviating in the slightest degree from the path of non-violence, we will break

selected laws and court arrest in our thousands. What we need today is the spirit of revolution. The non-violent revolution is the only way in which an unarmed people can resist the armed might of the government."

The resolution proposed by Amirthalingam was seconded by Rajadurai. The resolution read:

"The 12th convention of the Federal Party assembled at Mallakam fully approved to action taken by the party as a constituent member of the Tamil United Front at Trincomalee in 1972 in order to foster unity in the Tamil Nation.

"And whereas the TUF put forward a resolution for the amendment of the Constitution in such a way as to include the language rights of the Tamil speaking people, the full citizenship rights of all the Tamil speaking persons, the equality of religions, the abolition of caste system and the decentralisation of power in order to ensure a genuine People's Government.

"And whereas the government has generally ignored and totally disregarded the opportunity given to it to take steps to amend the constitution within a period of three months at the end of which the TUF decided to launch a non-violent direct action in order to win the freedom and rights of the Tamil Nation.

"And whereas the government had failed to hold the KKS by-election and whereas it had been amply demonstrated that it is not possible to establish the right of the Tamil Nation with the consent and cooperation of the majority nation and as such the TUF has resolved that the only way open to the Tamil Nation is to establish its right of self-rule in their traditional homeland and has submitted a resolution for the consideration of the Constituent members of the TUF.

"As such the National Convention resolves that the Tamils are in every way fully equipped to be regarded as a separate nation and to live as a separate nation and that the

only path for them to follow is the establishment of their right to self-rule in their traditional homeland based on the internationally accepted principle of the right of self-determination of every nation."

The resolution was greeted with applause and the youth chorused, "Eelam is our Motherland", and "Eelam is our Desire", the slogans adopted later by Tamil militant organisations. They shouldered Amirthalingam around the convention grounds.

In his concluding speech on 11 September, Amirthalingam made a special appeal to the Tamil youth, stressing that the future of the Tamil Nation was in their hands. If they were apathetic and failed to realise their responsibility, the future of the Tamil community would be bleak.

"To our youth, at the moment, we can only offer blood, sweat and tears. The possibility that you may face a baton charge by the police and attacks by the army and incarceration without trial cannot entirely be ruled out. You have to tread the perilous path of freedom, devoid of caste and religious differences," he said.

The Mallakam Convention had also approved the TUF Action Committee's decision to launch a civil disobedience campaign beginning 2 October 1973. They decided to break the stamp laws by posting letters affixing used fifteen cent stamps. Members were told to collect 10,000 used fifteen cent stamps for this purpose. But the youth were not satisfied. Some even ridiculed the move, charging that the TUF was not showing enough interest on the question of the release of the arrested youth. They started a relay fast at Jaffna Muniappar Temple on 12 September. It lasted fifty days.

On 2 October the TUF organised fasts in all places of religious worship in the northern and eastern provinces.

Members also posted letters affixing used stamps. The government ignored it and the campaign ended without any noticeable impact.

But the TUF claimed success. Amirthalingam, TUF secretary general, told the *Daily News* that the 2 October campaign had prepared the people for the second phase of the civil disobedience campaign when they would defy the laws against encroachment. He said, "There are large extent of uncultivated land in the north and east and there are many laws that stand in the way of cultivating these lands. These laws impeded food production and the TUF intended to violate them."

The country was facing a food crisis at that time. The government had cut rice ration and increased food prices. Sirima Bandaranaike had issued an appeal to the people to raise food production. Amirthalingam immediately announced FP's support and made a public appeal to the Tamil people to support the government's food production drive. He also announced the TUF's decision to mobilise the people for this. The Prime Minister wrote to Chelvanayakam thanking him for TUF's cooperation to the government's food drive. In the letter she mentioned that she was unable to hold the by-election in Kankesanthurai as the police had reported that the situation in the northern province was not conducive.

The tone of the letter reflected the Prime Minister's anxiety to draw the TUF away from the UNP which had decided to make full use of the rice ration cut and raise in food prices to embarrass the government. Her strategy worked, for the TUF decided to keep out of the UNP organised 'Day of Mourning'. Amirthalingam also told a public meeting at Kayts on 10 October that the TUF was prepared for talks with the government. He also warned that if the Tamil problems were not solved locally, foreign intervention may follow.

He told the Press Trust of India the following day that the TUF was anxious to avoid a confrontation and was prepared for talks provided the government was equally willing. He said, "The TUF is anxious to find a solution within a united Sri Lanka. If there is intransigence among the majority community on the Tamil right to self rule, then it had to be achieved even at the expense of the unity of the country."

Though the TUF sent signals to the government for talks, it kept its options open by sending its representative to speak at the joint opposition rally on 11 October. The joint rally was organised by the UNP as a prelude to the 'Day of Mourning' and other demonstrations fixed for 19 October. The government, anxious to break opposition unity, announced the commencement of informal talks on 8 October. At the talks the TUF delegation, led by Chelvanayakam, restricted its demands to four main questions - the Language of Courts Act be made a provision of the Constitution; the Tamil Language Act be included as a schedule in the Constitution; regional autonomy for the North and East as contemplated by the B-C Pact; and state-aided colonisation in the north and east be stopped. The talks collapsed as the government was prepared only to grant the TUF demand on the language of the courts. It refused to make concessions on the demands relating to regional administration, constitutional status for Tamil, and colonisation.

The TUF decided on 2 December 1973 to launch the second phase of the civil disobedience campaign and set up a committee of five leaders to decide on the nature of the campaign. It comprised Amirthalingam, M. Sivasithamparam, V.N. Navaratnam, S. Thondaman and X.M. Sellathambu. The committee decided to take up the question of the release of the Tamil youth and passed a resolution requesting the state to release them before 31 December or bring them before the court. If that was not carried out, the committee decided to launch a civil disobedience campaign.

Explaining the decision, Amirthalingam told *Daily News* that forty-two Tamil youth were under detention. If they were not released or brought before the court, the TUF would launch a campaign to openly violate certain emergency regulations thereby compelling the government to arrest hundreds of volunteers and their leaders.

He also issued a statement in which he charged the police of not following normal procedures. He said that the Attorney General had informed Jaffna police that though no charges could be framed against some of the youth, the police continued to keep them in custody, saying that they had not completed investigation. He expressed surprise that they had taken more than one and a half years without any result. He said V. Dharmalingam MP had told parliament of the incidents of assault by the police on the arrested youth. He specially mentioned the case of Kasi Anandan who had been arrested in Batticaloa in June 1972.

The government responded by releasing Kasi Anandan and a few others. By 29 December they had released all but twenty-five. Justice Minister Felix Dias Bandaranaike wrote to Chelvanayakam assuring him that the rest of the detainees would be released or brought to court before long. The TUF responded by postponing the civil disobedience campaign. Kasi Anandan was given a series of receptions in Jaffna. Amirthalingam attended them and spoke of him as a model Tamil youth.

On 10 January 1974, an incident that tremendously hurt Tamil feelings, took place. It was the final day of the Fourth International Tamil Research Conference. The people of Jaffna, always proud of their language and culture, had strained all their resources to put up a grand show. The whole of Jaffna town was decorated and given a carnival look. In the evening of 19 January, when the concluding session was on, police launched an attack and fired into the air when the crowd started to run. One of the bullets hit a live electric wire,

which snapped. The wire fell on the fleeing crowd and nine persons were electrocuted. This brought the conference to an abrupt end.

The youth were wild with anger. They blamed the government as engineering the police attack. Their anger was directed against the then-Posts and Telecommunications Minister C. Kumarasuriyar because he had opposed the holding of the conference in Jaffna. Kumarasuriyar had charged that it was a TUF show and was of an anti-government nature. I was in the organising committee and became a victim of Kumarasuriyar's wrath. He complained to the Lake House management, which the government had taken over in July 1973, that I was a TUF supporter and was giving it undue publicity in the Tamil daily *Thinakaran* in which I worked. He also told the Prime Minister that the research conference was a TUF publicity stunt. I was forced to resign from the organising committee.

A series of protests against the police action were organised by the youth, one being at the Munniappar Kovil, close to the scene of electrocution, on 4 February, Sri Lanka's independence day. Black flags were hoisted on all buildings, public and private. Students boycotted schools the previous day as 4 February was a public holiday.

The Citizens Committee of Jaffna, a non-governmental organisation, arranged for an impartial inquiry into the police attack. Messrs O.L.de Krester and V. Manikavasagar, respected retired Supreme Court judges, and former bishop Rt. Rev Sabapathy Kulendran were invited to conduct the inquiry. Two views were presented to them. Government supporters said the police action was provoked by the youth when they threw stones at the police, whilst the organisers of the conference stated that the attack was unprovoked. The committee's report presented in March 1974 blamed the police for the attack.

The TUF General Council, which met on 24 April 1974, passed a resolution directing its MPs to move a resolution in parliament to consider the O.L.de Krester report. The motion was introduced as an adjournment motion; the government defended the police and later promoted the inspector who had led the attack.

During this period the Prime Minister won two significant victories in the diplomatic field which helped her to stabilise her standing in the country. The first was the agreement she reached with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the problem of persons of recent Indian origin. In the 1964 agreement she had entered with Lal Bahadur Shastri, India offered to take back 525,000 persons, Colombo 300,000, leaving the fate of a balance of 150,000 stateless to be determined later. On 29 January, she and Indira Gandhi agreed to share that number equally. Amirthalingam, in his capacity as the secretary general of the TUF, issued a statement welcoming the agreement. He said the agreement had brought to an end the 'indignity of statelessness'. But he warned, "We, in Sri Lanka, have the habit of entering into agreements. We lack the habit of implementing them in the same spirit."

The second was the Kachchativu agreement which was signed between India and Sri Lanka. It brought to an end the dispute over a barren island above the Jaffna peninsula. India gave that islet to Sri Lanka in exchange for the rich fishing ground Pearl Bank. The TUF welcomed that agreement too.

By 1974, the UNP had recovered from the crushing electoral defeat it had suffered in 1970 under the leadership of Jayewardene, who assumed leadership after Dudley Senanayake died on 13 April 1973. Jayewardene organised the opposition to the Lake House takeover bill in July 1973 and the campaign for the boycott of Lake House papers when it had been taken over by the state. On 22 May 1974, he

organised a *satyagraha* campaign at Prime Minister's electorate Attanagala. He said it was to press the government to hold election in July 1975, at the end of the five-year term for which it was elected. The government announced that it would go on for five years from 22 May 1972, when the Republican Constitution came into operation.

Jayewardene was tipped off of the SLFP plan to disrupt the *satyagraha* on 21 May, that all roads leading to Attanagala would be blocked and vehicles carrying UNP supporters attacked. Jayewardene and his close supporters moved into Attanagala the previous evening. The Ceylon Workers Congress leader S.Thondaman, one of the three leaders of the TUF, joined them before dawn on 22 May. This brought the CWC and the TUF closer to the UNP.

Meanwhile, the situation in the north was also heating up. The militant group, Tamil New Tigers, made their first attempt to rob the Kopay branch of the state-owned People's Bank on 4 June 1974. The policemen on guard gave chase and Sivakumaran, the leader, swallowed the cyanide capsule he was wearing. The Tigers wore and wear cyanide capsules so that when in danger of capture they can commit suicide, thus denying the police or security forces of information about their organisation. Sivakumaran was the first to die that way.

Sivakumaran's suicide created an emotional environment in Jaffna. Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam went to the Jaffna hospital mortuary to pay their respects to the dead youth leader. They also attended the massive funeral procession in which Sivakumaran's body was carried from Jaffna hospital to Urumpirai, his birthplace. Amirthalingam, usually a very emotional and sensitive person, delivered a stirring funeral oration. He said, "Thamby (younger brother) Sivakumaran had made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the Tamil people. His is a heroic act. Though I differ with him in the violent method he advocated and practiced to

achieve the objective of getting for the Tamil people their birthright, I bow my head to him for his commitment and dedication."

The government viewed Amirthalingam's participation in the funeral and his oration with disfavour. The police was actually angry with Sivakumaran and Amirthalingam. Some of the intelligence reports sent by Jaffna police, which I had the opportunity to peruse a few years later, reveal the intensity of that anger. The reports stated that Sivakumaran had thrown a bomb at Jaffna ASP S.K. Chandrasekera earlier and charged Amirthalingam as 'the man behind the murderers'. A report dated 15 July 1974 contained this paragraph:

"Mr. Amirthalingam, President of the Federal Party, is an extremist. He is always associating with the murderous group, Tamil New Tigers. He is the brain behind their activities. We are watching him. We are collecting evidence against him. We have a record of his speech at Sivakumaran's funeral. In that he called that criminal a hero."

But the government had decided to go soft on the TUF and Amirthalingam due to the growing agitation in the south. The government did not want the Tamils to align themselves with the UNP. In fact, the government made some moves to get round the TUF and the Tamils. The first such move was made on 6 October 1974 when the Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike decided to travel to Jaffna to open the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka. The campus was opened at the Parameswara College founded by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. Supporters of the SLFP, LSSP and the Communist Party held a reception in honour of the Prime Minister. Militant youths decided to boycott and organised a black flag demonstration. The TUF fell in line with this plan.

This annoyed the government and it denied Amirthalingam the exit permit he wanted to visit India on 17 December. When TUF parliamentarians raised this matter in

parliament, Deputy Foreign Minister Lakshman Jayakody said the permit was refused for reasons of public security and national interest. He added that Amirthalingam had ostensibly visited India earlier for health reasons but had not sought medical opinion. Instead, he had conducted a political campaign.

The refusal of exit permit to Amirthalingam was only a deviation from the government's general line of being soft to the TUF. It held the long postponed by-election at Kankesanthurai electorate on 6 February 1975. The Communist Party, a constituent of the government coalition, nominated V. Ponnambalam as the joint government candidate. Chelvanayakam won a massive victory.

In his victory speech Chelvanayakam said, "Throughout the ages the Sinhalese and the Tamils in this country lived as distinct sovereign people till they were brought under foreign domination. We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure our political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon. It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to a position of a subject people. I wish to announce to my people and the country that I consider the verdict at the election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free. On behalf of the Tamil United Front I give you my solemn assurance that we will carry out this mandate."

The youth raised a victory cry at this, 'Tamil Eelam and nothing less'. Some even pricked their index finger with a pin and put a spot of blood on Chelvanayakam's forehead, indicating their preparedness for any sacrifice.

From then on Chelvanayakam kept repeating the Eelam theme in all his speeches. Addressing a meeting at Kokuvil

in May 1975, in which Mawai Senathiraja presided, he said, "Nations much smaller than the size and population claimed by the Tamils of Sri Lanka are governing and functioning as separate, independent states. As such, why should the Tamils of Sri Lanka not agitate for a separate state whereby we can govern ourselves."

On 2 October 1975 he told a public meeting at Kollankaladu, Tellipallai, at which Amirthalingam presided, "For the last several years we tried our best peacefully with our Sinhalese brothers in this country with a view to get our legitimate rights. We held numerous talks with the Sinhalese leaders and signed several pacts. But when all our efforts proved futile we decided to say 'Goodbye' to them and set up a separate state for the Tamils."

While the moderate politicians were losing their faith in democratic negotiations and inching towards the acceptance of the concept of a separate state, the militant youth were busy organising themselves. Prabhakaran and his colleagues were able to muster about thirty youth. One was Uma Maheswaran, a lean, tall employee of the Survey Department. He had been an active member of the Colombo branch of the TUF.

The group collected a few old and out-dated weapons and had started training camps in Vavuniya and Mannar. They decided in May 1975 to change the name of the organisation to Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and, on 27 July, barely two months after the adoption of the new name, the Tigers gunned down Alfred Duraiappah, MP for Jaffna. He was shot as he emerged from Ponnalai Krishnan Kovil after prayers. It was the first well-planned and well-executed killing by the Tigers. Prabhakaran led the attackers.

In the south, UNP's agitation was gaining momentum. On 22 May 1975, the third anniversary of the Republican Constitution, Jayewardene resigned his Colombo south seat in parliament and challenged government to conduct a by-

election to test its popular support. W. Dahanayake, MP for Galle, proposed that all opposition MPs should resign to register their joint opposition to the government's decision to hold the general election at the end of six years from the date of the adoption of the new constitution. The TUF rejected the proposal saying that it had rejected the entire constitution. The by-election was held on 18 July in which Thondaman campaigned openly for Jayewardene, the TUF doing it behind the scenes. Jayewardene won by a majority of 25,801 votes.

Soon after this, the rot in the government coalition began to show. There had been infighting between the coalition partners - SLFP, LSSP and the CP - for quite some time. The LSSP's ardour for nationalisation had been dampened by Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike and his group. LSSP leader Dr. N.M. Perera, who held the portfolio of Finance Minister, gave vent to his party's disillusionment in his speech at the hartal commemoration meeting held at the New Town Hall, Colombo. He said that the LSSP would quit the government if the foreign-owned company estates were not nationalised in a proper way. He said the LSSP had accepted portfolios in the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike not for personal glory but to further socialist policies and develop the country. If anybody tried to thwart their attempts to march towards socialism, they would leave the government, he said.

The group led by Felix pressurised Mrs. Bandaranaike to call for an explanation from Dr. N.M. Perera. Though Dr. Perera apologised, Mrs. Bandaranaike got the Governor General William Gopallawa to dismiss the LSSP leader on 14 August 1975. The Communist Party stayed on with the government but left it in frustration in February 1977, three months before the July 1977 general election.

While the government was plagued with this crisis, a still more serious development took place in the north. The Tamil United Front held its annual convention on 14 May

1976 at Pannakam, Vaddukoddai, the birthplace of Amirthalingam, and adopted the historic Vaddukoddai Resolution which called for a separate state.

The resolution, moved by Chelvanayakam and seconded by Sivasithamparam of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, read, "We are hereby committed to the restoration of the Free, sovereign, secular state of a Tamil Eelam based on the right of self-determination inherent in every nation. This has become inevitable to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka."

Amirthalingam delivered a moving speech, supporting the resolution. He traced the history of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, their past glory, the various efforts the Tamil people had made to live as equals in cooperation with the Sinhalese and how the Sinhala leadership succumbed to the pressures of the Buddhist monks and Sinhala chauvinists. The final blow was dealt by the 1972 constitution, he said and added, "Even after that we tried our best to live with the Sinhala people. We even asked for the mere inclusion of the Tamil Language Regulations of 1966 in the constitution. Not only was that refused but a special provision was made excluding the Tamil Language regulations from being considered part of the constitution. Even after that the TUF put forward a 6-point demand for inclusion in the constitution. That was treated with contempt and callously ignored."

With the passing of the Vaddukoddai Resolution the Tamil United Front changed its name to Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

A week after the Vaddukoddai Convention, on 21 May 1976 Amirthalingam was arrested by the Jaffna police along with four of his colleagues, V.N.Navaratnam, K.P.Ratnam, K. Thurairatnam and M. Sivasithamparam for distributing leaflets advising the public not to attend republic day celebrations the following day. Amirthalingam was taken from Jaffna

police station to his home in Pannalai that evening. Meanwhile his house was searched. Amirthalingam related the incident in parliament in 1977 thus, "My house was surrounded by the navy and police personnel who came in six trucks. It was a full-fledged invasion. The entire house was searched and every paper in my library was examined."

Sivasithamparam was released the following day and the other four were flown to Colombo and taken to the Criminal Investigation Department headquarters at Paget Road. They were kept incommunicado for ten days.

Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike justified their arrest in a statement she made at the public meeting at Dambulla Mahavidyalaya on 23 May. She said, "The Federal Party has been campaigning for quite a long time for a separate state and on that pretext they had been attempting to create disharmony in the country. I had to take the stern action to protect the republican constitution and maintain peace and harmony in the country."

The government decided to indict the four TULF leaders in the High Court of Colombo and to try them at Bar instead of by jury. For that purpose, the government gazetted an amendment to the Emergency Regulation 59 which provided for the Chief Justice to nominate three High Court Judges to constitute a Trial at Bar to hear the case. Justice Minister Felix R.de Bandaranaike justified the government's decision declaring that the case was of a political nature and should be decided by mature judges and not by civilian jurors. But the fact was that the government was trying to avoid being decided by a Tamil speaking jury.

Attorney General Siva Pasupathy filed indictments under the Emergency (Prevention of Subversion) Regulation charging the four leaders with distributing seditious literature. They appeared on 18 June, as summoned, and had a record 61 lawyers, led by Queen's Counsel G.G.Ponnambalam,

appearing for them before High Court Judges J.F.A. Soza, Ananda G. de Silva and Siva Sellaiah. Ponnambalam informed the court that the accused would take up the position that the court had no jurisdiction to try them, but were prepared to accept the indictment against them out of courtesy to the court. The court clerk then read out the charges and served the indictments on them. The accused men accepted them.

The court clerk then asked Amirthalingam, the first accused, whether he would plead guilty or not guilty. Ponnambalam told the court that in view of certain submissions to be made the accused was not prepared to plead the indictment. The Attorney General submitted that the accused would have to plead guilty or not guilty or say that he was not pleading. Ponnambalam submitted that the accused need not do so as he would be challenging the very emergency regulation under which the court was constituted as well as the validity of the constitution of Sri Lanka. He then moved that Amirthalingam be permitted to say in one sentence why he was not pleading to the indictment. The court allowed it.

Amirthalingam, who was in the dock along with the other three, stood up and said, "This court is constituted under a constitution which is not valid. I am not pleading guilty or not guilty to the charges."

Ponnambalam then moved for bail for the accused stating that the four were not ordinary people and wanted the court to release them on personal bail. The prosecution said that under the emergency regulations the Attorney General's consent was required for the granting of bail which he had already given. The court released the accused and fixed the trial for 12 July.

On that day, Ponnambalam raised two preliminary objections. The first was about the validity of the emergency

regulations under which the court was constituted and charges filed. The second was about the validity of the 1972 republican constitution.

Ponnambalam argued the first objection with the assistance of V.A. Pullenayagam. He submitted that emergency was declared on 15 May 1972 by the Governor General, empowered to do so, seven days before the new Republican Constitution was promulgated. He had proclaimed it when he had formed the opinion that such a situation did exist. The power to decide whether a state of emergency did exist or not was solely his.

That situation had been altered by the 1972 constitution, argued Ponnambalam. Under the 1972 constitution, the power to decide whether a state of emergency existed or not was given to the prime minister. The prime minister decided and advised the president about the proclamation. The prime minister's advice was an all-important requirement for the proclamation to be valid. Since the proclamation was made under the earlier constitution by the Governor General where prime minister's advice was not essential, a fresh proclamation should have been made under the new constitution. Since that was not made, there was no valid proclamation of the state of emergency. Then all regulations made under that emergency were ineffective and had no power of law. He said that from this it flowed that the court hearing the case was not properly constituted and the indictments filed under the emergency regulations too were not legal.

The second objection was argued by Tiruchelvam Q.C. He said that the Soulbury constitution only provided for amendments and not wholesale replacement of the constitution. Hence the 1972 constitution was not valid.

But the United Front government had claimed that it derived its power to change the constitution from the people. It showed the mandate it obtained from the people in its

support. Thiruchelvam pointed out that the mandate was doubtful because changing the constitution had not been made a major election campaign issue of the United Front. Even conceding that the United Front had obtained the mandate from the people, it had failed to get the consent from the Tamil people who constituted a separate nationality. The Tamil people had voted for the Federal Party in the 1970 general election, Thiruchelvam argued.

The court delivered its judgment on 19 September 1976. The 67-page judgment was read by presiding Judge Soza. The court upheld the first objection and ruled that as the state of emergency was not properly declared, the regulations enacted under it had no sanction or validity in law. Hence it ruled that the court created to hear the indictment was not properly constituted. It discharged the four accused. On the second objection the court ruled that it had no jurisdiction to decide on the constitutionality of the republican constitution.

The government was disturbed by the judgment. A top-level conference was held at the Justice Ministry to consider the implication of the judgment. Police and the service chiefs said that all cases filed under the emergency regulations would 'go for a six'. But the Attorney General soothed their fears saying that he was filing an appeal in the Supreme Court.

He filed the appeal on 15 September. He filed two applications, one asking the court to set aside the order of the High Court, the second asking the Supreme Court to direct the High Court to proceed with the trial. The applications were heard by a 5-bench headed by Chief Justice Victor Tennekoon and Justices G.T.Samerawickreme, V.T.Thamotheram, Noel Tittawella and W.D.Gunasekera.

The Attorney General told the court of the far-reaching consequences that would flow if the declaration of the state of emergency was held invalid. He said there had been cases

where persons had been convicted. There were also cases pending. There was a murder trial where the defence had asked for postponement till the Supreme Court decided on the validity of the emergency regulations.

The Supreme Court held that the emergency regulations were validly made as there been a valid declaration of emergency. It also directed the High Court at Bar to proceed with the trial.

The Attorney General informed the Court that he had decided not to proceed with the indictment against the accused. He would convey an appropriate communication to the High Court when that court reassembled. The High Court assembled on 10 February 1977 and discharged Amirthalingam and the three other TULF leaders.

The *Sun* newspaper, which commented on the discharge, said: "This is a political decision and carefully thought out decision too. Political circles are buzzing that by dropping of the charges against the TULF leaders the government was making the first move towards the dialogue with the Tamils."

While the long drawn Trial-at-Bar was on, Tamil militants stepped up their activities. The LTTE, led by Prabhakaran, and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), started by Thangathuri and Kuttimani in 1973, were the two prominent groups at that time. They robbed the People's Bank Puttur branch of Rs. 6.6 lakhs in March 1976 and the Puloli Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society later that year. On 14 January 1977 they killed Police Constable Karunanithi at his home at Maviddapuram. He was playing an important role in the investigation of the murder of Alfred Duraipappah. Two police constables with the same name, Shanmuganathan, were shot dead at Inuvil on 18 May 1977.

The police, the Sinhala press and politicians held Amirthalingam responsible for the youth revolt. This resulted

in an assault on Amirthalingam and some TULF supporters by police reservists on 23 August 1976 opposite the Jaffna police station. The incident took place when they went to lodge a complaint to the superintendent of police for being refused admission to the Jaffna Fort to see Kilinochchi MP Anandasangari, held in custody there for distributing leaflets on 21 May in the Kilinochchi court calling for a boycott of republic day celebrations.

With the general elections round the corner, the attack on Amirthalingam and the Trial-at-Bar did not prevent SLFP intermediaries from making attempts to win over the TULF. They succeeded in persuading Mrs. Bandaranaike to call a meeting of Tamil and Muslim Members of Parliament at the BMICH on 21 February 1977. At the meeting Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, who did most of the talking on behalf of the government, took an uncompromising stand. He said the government would not entertain the idea of a separate state but was only prepared to consider legitimate grievances. Chelvanayakam, in return, said that the TULF would not compromise its stand of a separate state and all that the TULF was prepared to accept was an interim arrangement to find redress to the grievances of the Tamil and Muslim people.

The major part of that 3-hour meeting was devoted to the identification of the following Tamil grievances: language, standardisation, employment, colonisation, and education. The government issued a communique which read: "A review was made of the various questions and problems confronting the Tamil speaking people. The discussion took place in a cordial, friendly and informal atmosphere. It was decided to meet again to continue the dialogue.

The youth and hardliners in the TULF were dissatisfied with the outcome of the meeting. They had, in fact, opposed TULF MPs participating in the meeting. Chelvanayakam had the hard task of persuading them about the usefulness of

attending it. He argued that Tamils should show an attitude of give and take and encourage the moderates among the Sinhalese if an end to the protracted impasse was to be found.

The youth were still not happy. They said that the SLFP was not genuine in its approach. It was only trying to win the support of the Tamils at the next election scheduled for July. The Youth League passed a resolution calling upon the TULF leadership not to negotiate with any party on any matters outside the Vaddukoddai Resolution.

But the TULF leadership ignored that and attended the second meeting on 16 March where they spelled out some of the key issues in which they wanted accommodation. These included: a decentralised administration, the use of the Tamil language, university admissions, problems of the Tamils in the estates and those faced by Tamil public servants. Mrs. Bandaranaike was very accommodative during the discussions. She said the government was committed to the policy of decentralisation. It had set up a Territorial Civil Engineering Organisation, introduced a decentralised budget, and set up a system of political authorities. She indicated a readiness to enshrine the Reasonable Use of Tamil language law and the regulations framed under it in the constitution and a willingness to modify the standardisation scheme. She also expressed a wish to solve the Tamil problem during her tenure of office.

The TULF delegation was not happy. It felt that the SLFP was not prepared to compromise on any substantial issue. This led to a hardening of the Tamil stand. It also led to a heightening of youth pressure.

This was clearly reflected in Chelvanayakam's presidential address at the TULF convention held at Hindu College, Trincomalee, a few weeks before his death in April 1977. He said, "An irrevocable decision with regard to the future of the Tamil Nation in this country had been taken at the first

convention of the TULF held in May 1976. My advice to the Sinhalese leaders is to allow us to go our way. Let us avoid bitterness and agree to part peacefully. This will pave the way for greater cooperation between the two nations on a footing of equality. The Tamils are left with no alternative. Bitterness is growing in the younger generation. Without allowing it to grow and lead to the inevitable confrontation leading to foreign intervention, a method of peacefully working out this entanglement is necessary. We are confident that the truth will ultimately triumph and we will win in the war of endurance."

Chelvanayakam died on 5 April 1977 after a brief illness. His death was a great loss to the Tamil nation and to Amirthalingam personally. In his funeral oration at the cremation opposite Duraippah Stadium in Jaffna, Amirthalingam gave vent to his sense of personal loss when he said, "For me our leader's demise is a personal loss. I have been his follower for over three decades. For me he is more than a philosopher and a guide. For me he is a guru, a sanyasi. There are many instances when I differed from him. There were instances when I opposed his advice. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was one such instance. I was not happy about it. I expressed my views openly at the Working Committee. But he gave his reasons and we fell in line with him. Later we found out through experience that his decision was wise. His death is a great blow to me personally."

After Chelvanayakam's death, Amirthalingam was the natural choice for the post of president of the TULF. He held the post of the president of the Federal Party and this enabled him to succeed Chelvanayakam as the leader of the TULF. His immediate task was to prepare the TULF for the election.

Amirthalingam was disappointed with the attitude the SLFP had exhibited during the talks his party had with the government in February and March. He sensed that the UNP would win power in the July election and therefore an understanding with that party would be beneficial. K.

Thurairatnam, MP for Point Pedro, was made use of to float the idea through a press interview. Amirthalingam followed it up with a statement at a public meeting at Kayts. The UNP took the hint. It was first picked up by A.C.S.Hameed. On his request that party leader Jayewardene should initiate talks with the TULF, the UNP Working Committee unanimously resolved on 7 April to empower Jayewardene to do so. Thondaman, another president of the TULF and a close ally of Jayewardene, arranged the meeting in his flat opposite the Royal College. Representing the UNP were Jayewardene, M.D. Banda and Esmond Wickremesinghe, whilst the TULF team comprised its theoretician S. Kathiravelupillai, Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam.

Thondaman urged the necessity of unity among the opposition groups, especially the UNP and the TULF, if they were to defeat the SLFP. Both sides agreed.

Kathiravelupillai said, "We are not here to make demands. This is not the time to make demands. Democracy is in peril. We are prepared to support you in your effort to save democracy."

Jayewardene was pleased. He thanked Kathiravelupillai and asked the TULF leaders what demands would they like granted if the UNP was elected to power. It was agreed that instead of bargaining it would be better if the UNP undertook to redress Tamil grievances. Jayewardene readily agreed.

The grievances identified were: use of Tamil language; halting the Sinhala colonisation of the Tamil areas; employment; mediawise standardisation; and citizenship to the stateless.

Details of this secret meeting were provided to me by Thondaman, Amirthalingam and Kathiravelupillai. They were also made public by Thondaman in 1983, in his speech in parliament. He also tabled the text of the letter he had written to Jayewardene about this meeting.

Jayewardene honoured his pledge to the TULF leaders by including a special section under the heading, 'Problems of the Tamil speaking people' in the UNP election manifesto. It read, "The United National Party accepts the position that there are numerous problems confronting the Tamil speaking people. The lack of solution to these problems has made the Tamil speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate state. In the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the party feels such problems should be solved without loss of time. The party, when it comes to power, will take all steps to remedy their grievances in such fields as:

1. Education
2. Colonisation
3. Use of the Tamil Language
4. Employment in the public and semi-public corporations

"We will summon an All Party Conference as stated earlier and implement its decisions."

The SLFP, in its election manifesto, promised: "We shall establish a National Consultative Committee consisting of every ethnic group in the country to advise the government on ethnic, linguistic, economic, social, cultural and other questions of a national nature or on matters relating to minority groups wherever such questions or matters require resolution by the government."

The TULF released its election manifesto at a public meeting which followed a massive rally in Jaffna on 1 June 1977. Amirthalingam, who presided, said that the general election should be made use of to obtain a mandate from the

people for the creation of a separate, sovereign state of Tamil Eelam.

The election manifesto called for the creation of a separate state called Tamil Eelam for Tamils. It said that when the Portuguese had conquered the maritime areas of Sri Lanka in the early sixteenth century, the Tamils were living as a separate nation. The Sinhalese, too, were living as a separate nation under different kingdoms. It was the British who brought the entire country under a central administration in 1833 for administrative convenience. When they left in 1948, the Tamil nation should have regained its sovereignty.

The manifesto also asked for a mandate for the elected representatives to constitute themselves into a National Assembly of Tamil Eelam for the purpose of drafting and implementing a constitution. The relevant paragraph read: "Tamil speaking representatives who get elected through the vote will also form themselves into the National Assembly of Tamil Eelam which will draft a constitution for a state of Eelam to establish the independence of Tamil Eelam by bringing the constitution into operation either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle."

The manifesto also spelled out the main features of the proposed constitution. It would be federal in structure. It would propose a secular state with no religion having precedence over another. All religions would be treated equally. Muslims would be granted a separate unit having equal power. The economy would be socialist and caste abolished altogether. Non-Tamil citizens would enjoy equal rights with other citizens.

At the massive public meeting held in Jaffna on 19 July 1977 to wind up the TULF election campaign, Amirthalingam declared, "Ours is no longer a national problem. Ours is a

dispute between two nationalities ... The election of day after tomorrow (21 July) is no ordinary election. It is a plebiscite. It is a plebiscite to determine whether the Tamil people want to continue to live with the Sinhalese or they want to separate."

The UNP in the south and the TULF in the north and east won massive victories at the general election. The UNP won an unprecedented four-fifths of the seats in the 165-member parliament. It gathered 138, the TULF 17, SLFP 8, the Ceylon Workers Congress 1 and another 1 went to an independent. For Amirthalingam, who had moved into Kakesanthurai, Chelvanayakam's seat, the election gave a vast majority. He polled 31,155 votes to his opponent Sriharan's 5,322.

In his victory speech after Jaffna Election Returning Officer W.A.L. Wijepala announced the result, Amirthalingam said the landslide victory of TULF candidates showed the determination of the Tamil speaking people to live as a free and sovereign people. He pledged amidst thundering applause that TULF members were prepared to make every sacrifice to win the Tamils their lost rights.

He also said that by voting overwhelmingly for the TULF the Tamil people had given the party the mandate it had asked for to struggle for a separate state. "From now onwards there is no looking back," he vowed. "We will march forward to achieve our goal of Eelam."

The TULF had won all the seats in the northern province and three more in the eastern province.

For Amirthalingam it was a long journey from his 12 years of anti-Eelam campaign to the present position. He had been given by the Federal Party the role of leading the

campaign against the Eelam demand, started by Suntharalingam in 1960. He had spoken against Eelam even in January 1972. But, as historian K.M. de Silva says, a momentous shift in the political aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils took place between May 1972 and the end of 1976. The demands prior to this period were for structural changes and constitutional reforms which allowed Tamils to share power with the majority Sinhala community. But during this period Tamils shifted their position to an assertion of the right to self-determination on the basis of a Tamil state called Eelam.

K.M.de Silva, in his contribution to the book *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-ethnic Societies - Sri Lanka 1880-1985*, has summarised the factors that caused this transformation: the role of educated unemployed; standardisation; the transformation of the security forces and the police from being a small but efficient and impartial peace-keeping force, they were in the ethnic disturbances of the mid-1950s and early 1960s, into ethnic soldiers and policemen and the linkage between the politics of the Jaffna peninsula and the politics of Tamil Nadu.

The 1972 constitution which denied any place in it to the Tamil language and accorded a special place for Buddhism tilled the ground for the growth of Tamil extremism and killed all hopes of the moderates. The TULF was the prime victim of the circumstances. Chelvanayakam had confided to me on his return from Jaffna after the Pannakam convention which adopted the Vaddukoddai Resolution that the TULF had to travel along with the tide for it not to be swept aside. He had said, "Sinhala chauvinism has killed Tamil moderates." But even after the Vaddukoddai Resolution, the TULF tried to charter the course of moderation and had to pay the supreme penalty - opposition from Tamil militants and the Sinhalese. Amirthalingam had to face most of the music.

Chapter 9

Safety and Security

By the evening of 21 July the trend had become clear. The UNP was set for a clean sweep of the entire south. Of the 120 seats announced, the UNP bagged 114. But the Governor General William Gopallawa did not summon UNP leader Jayewardene to form a government nor had defeated Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike tendered in her resignation. Various rumours were afloat. Some said that she was trying to stay in power with the help of the military. Tension was building up.

Mrs Bandaranaike ultimately called on the Governor General on 22 July to tender in her resignation. Jayewardene took over on 23 July. Violence broke out the moment he was sworn in. UNP supporters unleashed a reign of terror on SLFP supporters. Curfew was clamped in Kandy, Kegalle, Gampaha and in the Kurunegalle districts. Gangs of UNP supporters went round in government vehicles assaulting their opponents, setting fire to their houses and destroying property. They ignored the curfew, and the policemen, who had no orders to fire, looked the other way. Tamils were not harmed but this spate of violence introduced an environment of insecurity in the country.

The TULF did not show any concern, perhaps because Tamils were not affected by the violence or may be because it did not want to say anything that would hurt the new prime minister on whom it had placed implicit faith. The TULF parliamentary group met at the Vavuniya Town Hall on 30 July to elect its leader who would automatically become the Leader of the Opposition. Amirthalingam suggested Thondaman's name for the post, who, however, declined saying that he preferred to function as the CWC representative. Sivasithamparam proposed Amirthalingam's name. It

was seconded by P. Ganeshalingam, Paddiruppu MP. Sivasithamparam was elected the vice president of the parliamentary group.

The decision of the TULF parliamentary group to accept the post of the Leader of the Opposition earned the wrath of the youth. The Youth Front issued a statement to the press criticising the decision, saying that the TULF had gone back on the mandate given to it. It urged TULF MPs to form themselves into a National Assembly of Tamil Eelam to draft, adopt and implement a constitution for the new state. Kathiravelupillai issued a statement the next day saying the TULF would use parliament as a forum to canvas for a separate state.

The TULF parliamentary group met at the CWC office at Green Path on 3 August and decided to participate at the ceremonial opening of parliament the next day. It also decided to soften the demand for a separate state and give the new prime minister a chance to express his views on the urgent problems of the Tamil speaking people.

The TULF attended parliament on 4 August. Amirthalingam occupied the seat of the Leader of the Opposition. He seconded the name of Anandatissa de Alwis for the post of Speaker, proposed by Leader of the House, R. Premadasa. Welcoming the Speaker, Amirthalingam said the TULF would fulfil its obligation in terms of the conventions of the House and would cooperate with the Chair. He informed the Speaker that TULF MPs would conduct their business in Tamil.

That afternoon I went to Amirthalingam's office on the second floor of the parliament to congratulate him on his speech. He showed me some clippings of the interview he had given to Reuters. In his interview he had explained the thinking behind TULF's decision to accept the post of Leader of the Opposition. He said the post gave Tamils an opportu-

nity to carry their demands to the four corners of the world. The post entitled him access to important persons and institutions the world over.

The TULF participated in the ceremonial opening later that day, breaking the 20-year boycott, a boycott that the TULF and its predecessor the Federal Party had been adhering to since 1957 following the enactment of the Sinhala Only Act. The TULF was pleased when it found 'Problems of the Tamil Speaking People', which had been in the UNP manifesto, reproduced practically verbatim in the Government Policy Statement. Amirthalingam issued a statement highlighting this fact on 7 August, but as a sop to the revolting youth, said, "Ruling parties may come and ruling parties may go but the basic policy of the TULF will remain the same."

But in the next few days the patient effort that Amirthalingam was taking to build an amicable relationship with the government collapsed. It occurred over a small incident. The Rotary Club of Jaffna had organised a carnival at St. Patrick's College to raise funds to build a cancer hospital in Jaffna. On 12 August some plain-clothes police constables were refused entry to the carnival premises without tickets. They then purchased tickets and, after a few drinks at the bar, assaulted the ticket collectors. Dr. Phillip, one of the organisers, informed police officers about the incident and requested them not to allow police constables to the carnival. The next day, however, policemen from other police stations went to the carnival, totally drunk, and clashed with the public. They, too, were not in uniform. They were chased away.

The police retaliated on 14 August. They stopped cyclists, assaulted them and made them carry their cycles. At this, a young cyclist shot at a policeman, injuring him. The next morning policemen got out of their stations and attacked passersby. V. Yogeswaran, Jaffna MP, complained to the

police headquarters in Colombo, but the attacks continued. In the early hours of the morning of 16 August, policemen, again not in uniform, went on a rampage. They set shops ablaze and then left in an awaiting police truck. Tension escalated further the next morning. Policemen from the Jaffna police station set fire to the Jaffna market. A portion of the market and adjoining shops were gutted. Two persons were shot dead.

On hearing of the shooting, Amirthalingam went to the Jaffna market to make inquiries. "When I went to the troubled areas," he told parliament on 19 August on an adjournment debate, "... police aimed their guns at me. I am lucky to be here today. The men were in uniform but wore no numbers. When I asked them why they shot innocent persons the policemen abused in filth and assaulted me." He declined to utter the words of abuse hurled at him in Sinhala.

He said he was assaulted when he disclosed his identity to the Assistant Police Superintendent who had been at the market when the incident took place. A constable standing behind him had attacked him with the butt of his gun. "Can you rule a country with such a police force?" he asked. "We are at the receiving end of the police."

The prime minister ordered the police out and the army deployed in its place. He also set up a commission of inquiry. Thereafter the trouble in Jaffna subsided. Four were killed and 30 admitted to hospitals during these incidents.

However, attacks against Tamils spread to other parts of the country. Sinhala students from the Jaffna campus, brought in special buses to Anuradhapura, told the people there that they had been attacked by the Jaffna public. Such stories sparked off retaliatory attacks on the Tamils and their property. These attacks spread to Kurunegalla, Matale, Polonnaruwa, Panadura and Kandy. Curfew was clamped down in these areas. Within the next few days the disturbances spread to other areas, including Colombo.

On the night of 19 August a huge crowd assembled at the Dehiwala junction, a suburb of Colombo, close to my home. They shouted anti-Tamil slogans and started torching Tamil shops. My family and I took refuge in the house of my neighbour George Leitch. The next morning we took refuge in the house of a relative at Bambalapitiya.

The 35-hour islandwide curfew was clamped at 5 p.m. on 30 August. The army and navy were deployed to quell the riots. The curfew was reduced to night curfew from 22 August and lifted nine days later. Tamils expressed their lack of confidence in the police. There were accusations of police instigation.

According to the state-controlled *Daily News* of 29 August, 112 Tamils had been killed, 25,000 rendered homeless and property estimated at Rs.1000 million damaged or looted. It said that 4000 persons had been arrested and 2500 remanded in the country's 13 prisons. Other sources put the death toll, houses destroyed and the damage to property much higher.

During the debate on the Government Policy Statement a few days later, the TULF moved an amendment, regretting the failure of the government to mention the mandate the TULF had obtained to set up a separate state of Tamil Eelam. This amendment provoked a heated debate and many UNP MPs charged Amirthalingam of making inflammatory speeches. Gamini Dissanayaka, Minister of the Mahaweli Development, blamed him and the TULF for provoking the Sinhalese with their provocative speeches.

The riots and the attacks on TULF leaders won for the militants more supporters. In September, the Colombo Bureau of Investigation (CBI), an intelligence outfit of the government, reported that the number of hardcore militants had swelled to 50 and active supporters to 200. Public sympathy, specially that of the youth, gradually veered towards the

militants, who launched a fierce campaign against the TULF leadership, particularly Amirthalingam. They accused the leadership of not abiding by the mandate given to them. They said Amirthalingam had betrayed the Tamils for the sake of the post of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Sinhalese did not realise the tremendous pressure Amirthalingam faced from the Tamil youth because of his decision to work within the parliamentary structure. They were annoyed when the TULF decided to boycott the functions in which ministers participated and also when the TULF decided not to participate in the deliberations of the Select Committee on the Revision of the Constitution.

In a statement in parliament on 5 October 1977, Amirthalingam explained the reasoning behind the boycott decision. He said that the Tamil people did not worry whether Jayewardene ruled them as prime minister or president. For the Tamil people, these forms of government had no meaning. "When our house is on fire can we worry about the colour and texture of the curtain, whether it is blue or green?" he asked.

Though the TULF kept out of the constitution-making process, it maintained a working and close relationship with the government. It participated in several conferences the government called to attend to the problems of the Tamil people affected by the riots.

The government readily agreed to many of the requests of the TULF regarding the problems of Tamil government servants affected by the riots. It also responded by providing Amirthalingam as Leader of the Opposition, with full security, an official car and an official residence, facilities not hitherto enjoyed by previous holders of the post.

These facilities annoyed the youth. Militants put up posters in Jaffna criticising the TULF for cooperating with

the government. They tried to portray this as a betrayal of the mandate. Amirthalingam replied in a statement to the *Daily News* on 7 November 1977. He said TULF MPs were only trying to solve the problems confronting Tamils through negotiations with the government. "There was nothing wrong in attending conferences and discussions intended to solve the problems facing the Tamil people" he said. "The TULF is not having confrontation with the government at the moment."

TULF MPs attended the Jaffna District Agricultural Committee meeting held at the Jaffna Kachcheri on 18 December 1977, for which it decided to waive the earlier ban on attending functions in which ministers participated. When this decision became known, posters condemning the decision were plastered on the walls of Jaffna. Police arrested four for pasting them on the kachcheri wall.

I went with Trade Minister Lalith Athulathmaudale to cover his Jaffna visit. At the kachcheri meeting, Amirthalingam said, "It is the duty of the Tamil community to extend its support to Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene and enable him to solve the many problems that the community faces. The Prime Minister has assured us that he will solve them in a just and fair manner. He should be given a fair chance. Goodwill is a vital commodity today. This is being extended to the government in full measure. I hope the government will translate its promise into action "

In parliament, too, the TULF adopted a constructive role. Amirthalingam explained the TULF's role in parliament on 21 December 1977. Replying to the remark of Ananda Dassanayake, SLFP MP for Kotmale, that the TULF was a "cooperative opposition", Amirthalingam said the opposition need not oppose everything. "An opposition's role is not to oppose everything," he said. "They had to criticise whatever they thought was wrong, support whatever they thought was right and give their suggestion on the manner in which the administration should be carried on."

On 26 December, he told the *Daily News* that the TULF was keeping the doors open for a dialogue with the government. "This is not a new stand," he said. "The TULF election manifesto itself had declared its support to a peaceful solution to the problems."

Jayewardene responded to the TULF overtures by declaring in January 1978 that he would take steps to solve the problems of the Tamils, whatever the consequences. This resulted in the TULF further softening its stand towards the government. It did not organise the usual black flag demonstration on 4 February 1978, the thirtieth anniversary of the independence day, because Jayewardene, on whom the TULF placed great trust, took his oath as the Executive President.

At a meeting at Vaddukoddai, Amirthalingam said he was aware of the discontent among the youth, but the TULF firmly believed in the political honesty and sagacity of President Jayewardene. It was their duty to create the climate necessary for the president to solve their problems. He said, "The Tamil youth of the country should trust their leadership and not rush to hasty conclusions regarding decisions made from time to time by the party in the light of the political situation prevalent at that time."

On 22 April 1978, the TULF went a step further to show its eagerness to settle the Tamil problem peacefully when it decided to serve in all the standing committees of parliament. But three factors soon soured relations between the TULF and the government.

The first was the heightened activity of the militants. The TELO, founded in 1973, had suffered a set-back in 1977 because its leaders, Kuttimani and Thangathurai, had been arrested in Madras by the DMK government, headed by M. Karunanidhi. They were handed over to the Sri Lankan government who wanted to try them for the killing of police constable Sivaneshan.

The LTTE had become very active by this time. It had set up training camps in Vavuniya and Mannar and had begun to attract young cadres. On 7 April, it counter-ambushed the 4-man police party led by Inspector Bastiampillai and captured their weapons. This daring feat organised by 'Lieutenant' Chelvanayakam alias Sellakili won national and international publicity for the LTTE.

A few days later, TULF MP for Pottuvil, who had crossed over to the government, was shot at, but escaped unhurt, as he was coming out of his Kollupitiya home in Colombo. He said two Tamil boys had shot at him, one lean and tall and the other short and plump.

The lean boy was Uma Maheswaran and the plump one was Velupillai Prabhakaran, the son of a Land Officer from the northern coastal town of Valvettithurai. They were then learning to use the revolver. They had aimed at Kanagaratnam's head but hit his shoulder instead. The victim died of his injuries a month later.

On 2 May UNP MP Weerawanni Samaraweera raised the incident of the attempted shooting of Kanagaratnam in parliament and tried to impute that Amirthalingam was somehow connected, saying that the attempt to shoot Kanagaratnam was made a few weeks after Amirthalingam had called him a traitor when he had crossed over to the UNP. Amirthalingam raised a point of order and the Speaker ordered Weerawanni to withdraw his statement. But the latter challenged Amirthalingam to condemn the murder.

Amirthalingam said Weerawanni had created parliamentary history by calling an opposition MP to make a statement. At this, government MPs started shouting at Amirthalingam. He calmly told them that they could not intimidate him or his party by any amount of shouting. He added, however, that he and his party were concerned about the shooting and condemned it.

On 13 May, the CID published photographs of four Tamil youth as "most wanted men" and offered one lakh rupees as reward for each. Uma Maheswaran was one of them, wanted for the murder of four CID officers, including Inspector Bastiampillai, and for the shooting of Kanagaratnam.

The Tigers responded with two more murders in May: that of Inspector Pathmanathan and Inspector Kumar. This forced the government to introduce a bill in late May to proscribe the LTTE and similar organisations and provided an occasion for UNP extremists to unleash another attack on Amirthalingam. During a debate, Industries Minister Cyril Mathew, a TULF-baiter, charged that Mangayarkarasi, Amirthalingam's wife, had said during the 1977 election campaign that they would swim in the blood of the Sinhala people. Amirthalingam denied it immediately and said his party was founded on the principle of *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

Mathew started his anti-TULF campaign soon after the UNP came to power. In his first speech in parliament he accused the TULF of destroying Buddhist places of worship in the northern and eastern provinces where, he said, there were over 250 historical Buddhist sites. Amirthalingam protested to Jayewardene, "How can we support the government when we are attacked by a government minister?"

Jayewardene smiled and replied, "Don't worry about him. There is some dissatisfaction among Sinhala extremists about our close relationship with your party. Mathew's role is to keep them satisfied."

Amirthalingam later related this incident to me, remarking, "See how this fox is working."

Jayewardene was doing just that. He allowed his MPs to launch an attack on Amirthalingam, and then, on 10 June, invited the TULF for talks where he floated the talk of appointing District Ministers with the hint that the TULF would also be offered some posts.

That meeting and the hint of the offer of District Ministerships had their repercussions at the Avarangal Convention of the TULF, held from 29 July. The TULF Youth Front brought two resolutions at the General Council. The first asked the TULF MPs to constitute themselves into a Tamil Eelam National Council and to undertake the task of drafting a Tamil Eelam constitution. Senior parliamentarians skillfully warded off that threat by moving and adopting an amendment which said that the Council be set up at the proper time when the necessity arose. The second called upon TULF parliamentarians to bring a vote of no-confidence on the government. The resolution was defeated.

During the discussions a majority of youth delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which TULF leaders conducted the freedom struggle. The leadership was accused of soft-peddling the whole issue. The youth demanded to know whether they would be accepting District Ministerships. Sivasithamparam said the question of accepting or not did not arise as the government had not spelt out the function of the District Ministers.

On 30 July, over 300 youth marched from Avarangal to the convention ground defying the police ban on processions. They shouted slogans urging the leaders to establish a separate state immediately. They then marched to the stage where the leaders were seated and shouted, "Do or let us do." Amirthalingam appealed to them to be disciplined, but to no avail. One youth climbed on to the stage and tried to snatch the microphone. Volunteers in charge of maintaining discipline took him away. But others kept on chanting "We don't want a carnival here", "Our leaders are our traitors", "Resign your seats in parliament". It took nearly an hour to persuade them to leave the convention grounds.

The convention elected Sivasithamparam president of the TULF and Amirthalingam the secretary general. Amirthalingam had held the post of president since Chelvanayakam's death, first jointly with Thondaman and Sivasithamparam, and after the party constitution was amended, as sole president.

With the stepping up of their pressure on the TULF, the militants also increased the frequency of their strikes against the government. In July alone four daring robberies were committed. In one, the robbery of the People's Bank, Nallur branch, they gunned down two police guards, Constables Kingsley Perera and Satchithanathan. They also killed police informants A. Emanuel of Chankanai, Thaadi Thangarajah of Kondavil, A. Krisnagopal of Valvettithurai, T. Poopalasingham of Chunnakam and A. Sivarajah of Thondamannar.

They also pressed the TULF Working Committee, which met on 28 August to decide on the boycott of parliament on 7-8 September when it was ceremoniously opened and called upon the MPs not to participate in any official function connected with the opening. Amirthalingam warned them to act with a sense of responsibility and told them not to do anything that would create communal tension.

Despite the TULF decision not to demonstrate on 7 September, there were black flags. A bomb was thrown at a bus in Batticaloa and another exploded in a second bus. A bus was set ablaze in Kayts. Kasi Anandan, a poet and orator, was arrested in Batticaloa.

Youth opposition, kept TULF MPs away from the ceremonial opening of parliament and the oath taking. They took their oaths on 21 September, pledging to uphold the constitution.

On 5 October, President Jayewardene announced the names of the first batch of District Ministers but said the post

of the District Minister of Jaffna was reserved for the TULF, and added that if the TULF wanted, its District Ministers could continue in the opposition. Amirthalingam was in London at the time and the Working Committee decided to await his return. He was in Jamaica to attend a meeting of Commonwealth Parliamentarians where he presented, in the words of Athulathumudali, the case of the Tamils, "in a dignified manner without embarrassing the Sri Lankan delegation or the Sri Lankan government". On his way back, Amirthalingam stopped over in London to meet his eldest son.

After his return, the TULF decided not to accept the district ministerships because it had asked Jayewardene for five but was offered only three.

It was during this time that Thondaman was appointed a minister. He was sworn in on 6 September 1978, and since then has played an important role in Sri Lankan politics. Amirthalingam was one of the first to congratulate Thondaman on his appointment. He had, until his death, a very close relationship with Thondaman.

Youth pressure against the TULF kept mounting. The Tamil Youth Front decided to go it alone and asked its office-holders to resign from the TULF. Forty of them, including the president, Santhathiyar, resigned en masse. Amirthalingam's efforts to make them change their mind failed and the Working Committee decided to take over the Youth Front.

There were two other problems which Amirthalingam had to face. The first was the one created by C. Rajadurai, Batticaloa MP.

Rivalry between Amirthalingam and Rajadurai had been long-standing. Rajadurai believed that Amirthalingam had been behind the decision to nominate Kasi Anandan to contest the Batticaloa double-member Constituency in the 1977 election. Rajadurai perceived it as an attempt to weaken

him and started distancing himself from the TULF. After the election, he stopped attending Working Committee meetings. He also started attending public receptions held for government ministers. He was asked to explain his behaviour, but there was no response. He joined the government on 23 March 1979.

The second was the charge by Industries Minister Cyril Mathew that Tamil medium students had been given more marks in the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level Examination. Sivasithamparam denied the allegation in parliament on 11 December 1978, and said, "We can take anything but the charge of dishonesty. Let us once and for all nail the cannard that Tamil examiners were dishonest and the Tamil students have been favoured with high marks." He added that students who toiled for eighteen to nineteen hours a day felt hurt and humiliated.

Mathew held a press conference where he produced two biology answer scripts and alleged that two marks had been given in excess for the question on the life-cycle of a mosquito than the allotted marks. He said, "Marks had been awarded to Tamil students in a manner that was unworthy of civilised people. Tamil examiners had been dishonest and as a result a large number of Sinhala students had been deprived of the opportunity of getting into the university. It is a conspiracy practiced since 1968," he said.

This charge and the resultant district quota system for university admission, introduced the following year, hurt Tamil teachers and students. They became disillusioned with the UNP government. The goodwill that the government had earned by abolishing the mediawise standardisation was lost. The district quota system allotted 30 percent of the university seats on merit, 55 percent on the basis of the population of each district, and the balance 15 percent to backward districts. This system did help educationally backward Tamil districts

like Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Trincomalee and Ampara but affected Jaffna.

A few weeks prior to Mathew's outburst, Amirthalingam was on a visit to Britain, the United States, Canada, West Germany and France. He met local Tamils there. He addressed many of their associations.

Amirthalingam's speeches were published in Sri Lanka and caused tension. Sporadic incidents of assault and attacks were unleashed on Tamils living in Sinhala areas. Some shops in Panadura were burnt. Amirthalingam charged that the violence against the Tamils seemed to be a continuing phenomena.

Violence against Tamils continued in the north and the south. On 5 December some policemen went, in civils, to an arrack tavern and later to a boutique in Jaffna, attacked some persons and took away money and goods. That same day, an army personnel went to a boutique near the Palaly Airport and tried to take some cigarettes. When the owner resisted, he went off and returned with others, armed with guns, smashed the shop and attacked the people there. From 14 December onwards, attacks were made on people returning from the movie theatres. On the night of 18 December, police attacked shops and houses in Valvettithurai and looted them.

Amirthalingam raised these incidents in parliament and asked for an inquiry. Mathew interrupted and said that the TULF, a communal group, was protecting a terrorist group.

Amirthalingam drew the attention of the Speaker and said, "The Minister has made an allegation that the members of the TULF are protectors of murderers and terrorists. I am raising this point of order and you should protect us and ask him to withdraw that."

The Speaker replied that the minister had not referred to any member of the TULF, and thus had nothing to withdraw.

Mathew raised the point that all murders, robberies and other crimes must be stopped. If policemen could not go about their work without being shot at, action should be taken. Terrorism could be stopped only with terrorism, there was terrorism and it was a part of the TULF movement, he stated.

Amirthalingam protested and denied the allegation. He insisted that Mathew withdraw the accusation.

Gamini Dissanayake joined in and said: The Minister had the right to express his opinion on a political party. You have the right to deny it.

But Amirthalingam was adamant and threatened to walk out.

On failure of response from the Speaker, all TULF MPs walked out amidst heckling.

By the beginning of 1979, the relationship between the TULF and the government had soured. It became bitter in March when Amirthalingam visited India with his wife. On 16 March, the Dravida Munnetta Kalazham accorded them a public reception at Perambur. Amirthalingam told the meeting that a separate state was the only solution to the problems of the Tamil speaking people. The police and the army had killed people and destroyed property worth millions of rupees. Mangayarkarasi related incidents of rape of Tamil women in the August 1977 riots, and who even now were afraid of walking on the streets.

Amirthalingam addressed the Madras Reporters' Club on 21 March. Answering a question, he said, "There is no violent youth movement in Sri Lanka as alleged. The Liberation Tigers was a bogey and monster which was sought to be whipped up." At Madurai he said, "The Tamils of Sri Lanka hoped to achieve ... a separate, sovereign and independent state in ten years' time." Asked if they would resort to armed rebellion to achieve this, he said, "We would take all steps to achieve our demands through peaceful means."

Amirthalingam went to New Delhi in the last week of March and held discussions with Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Deputy Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. It was Amirthalingam's second meeting with Desai. The first was in 1978 when Desai visited Sri Lanka. At both meetings Desai took the position that the Tamil problem was an internal matter.

Amirthalingam also met with Indira Gandhi. He told her of the unsympathetic attitude of Desai. Mrs. Gandhi told him to beware of Jayewardene and said, "Desai and Jayewardene are two old foxes." She had taken a dislike of Jayewardene and had not forgiven him for the 'cow and calf' campaign the UNP had conducted during the 1977 general election. By 'cow', UNP speakers had meant Indira Gandhi and by 'calf', her youngest son Sanjay.

Mangayarkarasi's speech was reported in Sri Lanka press. Prime Minister Premadasa raised the matter in parliament on 23 March and told Sivasithamparam to get in touch with Amirthalingam to verify the facts from him. Amirthalingam explained that she had only recounted the incidents of August 1977. Commenting on Amirthalingam's speeches in Madras columnist Migara wrote in the *Week End* of 25 March: "Mr. Amirthalingam is a likable person. He can move crowds. Equally he is moved by crowds ... Some say he plays on is people's emotions because he is an emotional personality himself." Amirthalingam had often told me that he was an emotional person.

In parliament, Mathew also raised Amirthalingam's speeches in India, specially the answer he had given at the Madras Reporters' Club where he had denied the existence of a violent youth movement. Mathew charged that Amirthalingam was trying to cover up the terrorist activities of the LTTE. The cabinet also discussed Amirthalingam's speeches in

which, many ministers said, he had overstepped the boundaries of conventional opposition leaders in parliamentary democracies.

Amirthalingam issued a statement explaining his speeches in India and said the TULF was elected on a specific mandate of Eelam and he had only maintained that position in his speeches. He added, "But, if the government put forward an alternative solution, we would be prepared to consider such a solution." I asked Athulathmudali whether the government would come out with an alternate solution. He said, "The only alternative is a unitary state, which we have."

Government supporters and the press then unleashed a hate campaign against Amirthalingam. G.M.Premachandra, Mawathugama MP, called upon the government to ban all separatist organizations. The Tri Nikaya Sangha Sabha asked the government to take action against Tamil leaders who made inflammatory speeches abroad, thereby bringing both the government and the Sinhalese into disrepute.

The government filled the vacancy for the District Minister for Jaffna by appointing T.B.Wijekoon. It appointed Vaithilingan Duraisamy as Secretary to the District Minister, a former diplomat who had contested the TULF in the 1977 by-election. On 21 May the government brought before parliament a bill to proscribe the LTTE and similar organizations.

Buddhist organizations then started a campaign against the TULF and Amirthalingam. The Sinhala Mahajana Peramuna passed a series of resolutions condemning Amirthalingam. The Eksath Bauddha Mandalaya also passed resolutions against the demand for a separate state. Mahanayake of the Asgiruya Chapter, Ven. Palipana Siri Chandananada and the Anunayaka of the Malwatta Chapter, Ven. Rambukwella Siri Sobitha Thera attended the Eksath Bauddha Mandalaya meeting. The editorial of the state-controlled

Daily News stated, "The TULF must chuck it up." Its opening paragraph read, "The separatist Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) must cry halt to its demand for a separate state of Tamil Eelam. It must also abjure violence - which includes terrorist activities, killing of law enforcement officers, bank robberies and acts of intimidation."

A campaign was also conducted through the Sansoni Commission hearing. The Presidential Commission was appointed to inquire into the incidents of August 1977. Former Chief Justice M.C. Sansoni was appointed later that year to head the Commission. The Commission held its public sittings in Colombo, Jaffna, Vavuniya and other places. The police, which was accused of being responsible for most of the incidents into which the Commission was inquiring into, led the evidence. It tried its best to portray Amirthalingam as a rabble raiser. His speeches of 1972 were placed before the Commission. The speech in which he had said that a time would come when Tamils may have to make use of the friendly relations with international liberation movements was made use of. He was also charged of having said, "Let us rise against the Sinhalese government. We shall definitely achieve a Tamil state of our own." Mangayarkarasi was also tarnished. In one meeting, the police alleged, she had said the Tamils would make slippers out of the skins of the Sinhala people. In another, the police claimed, she had said she could sleep only after the Sinhala people were driven away from Tamil areas. All these allegations were denied as fabrications of the police.

Amirthalingam gave evidence before the Commission on 30 April 1979 and told it that the TULF believed in *ahimsa* and had adopted peaceful *satyagraha* as its weapon of struggle. It had never advocated violence, that the police allegations that he had instigated violence were not true. Amirthalingam told me that the Commissioner had expressed his acceptance of his explanations. He was shocked and

saddened when in its report, published as Sessional Paper No. 7 of 1980, it passed strictures on him. He told me, "Tamil youth had some faith in the judiciary. This report will shatter that also." He viewed the report as causing more harm to the country than himself.

The government released selected portions of the report, locally and internationally. It came out with a doctored version in a booklet entitled *Not an indictment - Fact*. The object of the report was to show Amirthalingam as the man behind the LTTE and other militant movements. It quoted the section in which the Commissioner held that Amirthalingam was consorting with youth who said and showed that they would resort to violence. The report used three facts to support its conclusion: that Amirthalingam associated with youth leaders who took to violence, the speech in which he had told the youth that they could assist when he told them to, and the fact that the TULF manifesto of 1977 did not mention non-violence. The booklet also highlighted the Commission's recommendation that the TULF should abandon the Eelam demand.

But the booklet omitted the recommendation which called upon the government to discuss with the TULF the areas of conflict it identified: education, employment and colonisation. It also omitted the strictures the Commission had passed on the police: those who were present at the places where the incidents had taken place and though armed, had merely played the role of passive onlookers; lack of coordination between the senior police officers and their subordinates, and political interference.

There were other acts of violence by militants which inflamed the feelings of the Sinhala people. On 22 May 1978, National Heroes Day, militants blew up the AVERO aircraft of Air Lanka which flew from Palaly airport to Ratmalana. In November that year they killed a Tamil technician who had

headed the CID in investigating the AVERO blast. In April 1979 militants killed another police constable, and in May they robbed the Thunukai Multi-purpose Cooperative Store of Rs. 20,000.

The fact that expatriate Tamils were able to get the Massachusetts House of Representatives, the governing body of one of the states in the United States, to adopt a resolution urging the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to use their influence and power of their offices to rectify the gross injustices on the Tamils of Sri Lanka, annoyed the government and the Sinhala people.

The government responded to the growing anti-Tamil feeling among the Sinhalese and the demand for a ban on the Eelam demand and the proscription of the TULF. Jayewardene informed the Parliamentary Group on 3 July that legislation to combat and wipe out terrorism would be introduced in parliament.

In an attempt to pacify the Sinhalese, the Jayewardene government introduced a bill in parliament to annex certain parts of the Vavuniya district to the Sinhala district of Anuradhapura. The TULF opposed it and decided to boycott parliament. Radical youth pressed the TULF to extend their boycott to the parliamentary committees.

The government reacted by getting two of its MPs - Sunil Ranjan Jayakody of Pogahawela and G.M. Premachandra of Mawathugama - to give notice to two motions calling upon the government to ban the TULF. Jayakody's motion demanded that those advocating Eelam be treated as traitors and punished. Premachandra's motion called for a special legislation to proscribe the organizations that indulged in violence and the political parties that demanded Eelam.

The LTTE responded by killing police inspector Gurusamy and two police informants in Jaffna. This led to

the gazettement of stringent regulations under the Public Security Act, then in operation. The regulations made all attempts to alter the unitary character of the country by unlawful means a capital offence, with the additional punishment of forfeiture of property. The death penalty was also extended to destruction of movable or immovable property, sabotage, arson, looting, trespassing prohibited areas and participation in an unlawful assembly. Severe penalties were also prescribed for those who advocated or propagated the idea of a separate state.

Jayewardene appointed Brigadier Weeratunga as the military commander of the northern province with a mandate to get rid of terrorism by the end of 1979. The mandate read: "It will be your duty to eliminate in accordance with the laws of the land the menace of terrorism in all its forms from the island, and more specifically from the Jaffna district. I will place at your disposal all resources of the state. I earnestly request all law-abiding citizens to give their cooperation to you. This task has to be performed by you and completed before the 31 of December 1979."

By this time tension had mounted in the country and sentiments were on the boil. The government realised the need to cool down tempers on both sides of the ethnic divide. Premadasa approached Amirthalingam to see whether he would consent to issue a joint appeal. "I am equally concerned about the developing danger of a riot," Amirthalingam told Premadasa.

They issued a joint statement which read: "We wish to appeal to our people to maintain calm and poise and to refrain from being influenced by rumours and the activities of mischief mongers. We call upon all members of parliament and all political, religious and social service organizations committed to the maintenance of law and order and goodwill among the people to use their influence to counter rumours

in the various villages and electorates as well as to protect the property and lives of innocent victims.

"We pledge that we will take on ourselves the responsibility for maintaining communal harmony and providing protection to all citizens who might be the target of communal activities as well as anti-social elements who seek to exploit any situation to their selfish advantage.

"We like to emphasise that problems affecting our people can be solved in a peaceful and amicable manner and we appeal to all sections of the people not to be influenced in any way to resort to violence under cover of political agitation.

"We as civilised people have the capacity to solve our common problems peacefully and to show the rest of the world that issues can be resolved in keeping with the traditions of our great religions."

Amirthalingam sent an urgent directive to TULF parliamentarians to take immediate action to protect all Sinhala people living in the northern and eastern provinces. He also instructed party branches to help Sinhala residents to carry on their vocation without being intimidated by unruly and unsocial elements who tried to exploit any situation for their own ends.

The prevailing tension in the country and the need to prevent a riot provided an occasion for the government and the TULF to get closer again. Jayewardene wrote to the TULF and the SLFP on 19 July, the very day the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Law was taken up for debate in parliament, inviting their views on setting up a Presidential Commission to consider the grievances of the Tamils. The SLFP ignored the letter but the TULF conveyed its willingness to participate. Jayewardene reciprocated by dropping the government's plan to annex three AGA divisions in the Vavuniya electorate to the Anuradhapura district and

agreed to rescind the bill to demarcate the boundaries of the Vavuniya district. He also appointed a Parliamentary Select Committee, headed by Minister Athulathmudali, to investigate the killings of youth in Jaffna. The TULF, in turn, ended its boycott of parliament.

The Presidential Commission on District Councils was appointed on 8 July 1979. It was headed by Retired Chief Justice Victor Tannakoon and comprised Dr. A.J. Wilson, Dr. J.A.L. Coorey, Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam and Mr. A.C.M. Ameer.

The government enacted the drastic Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Law on 29 July 1979. The 31-clause law made it a capital offense, with forfeiture of property, for causing death, kidnapping, abducting or committing serious attack on parliamentarians, members of local authorities, members of the armed and police services, and members of the judiciary. Intimidating a person or witness, robbery and damaging of government property, importing, collecting and manufacture of fire-arms, possession of explosives and fire-arms without lawful authority, causing or trying to cause violence were made offenses carrying an imprisonment of a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 20 years, with forfeiture of property.

The TULF did not attend parliament, but issued a statement opposing it. The SLFP opposed the bill in parliament.

The government allowed the emergency to lapse on 27 December, thereby showing its appreciation to the cooperation shown by the TULF. This again led to youth revolt. Mavai Senathirajah, who was arrested in 1978 and released with the lapse of the emergency, led the revolt. The Tamil Youth Front passed a resolution at a meeting on 29 April 1980 threatening to sever ties with the TULF and convert itself into a liberation movement if the TULF failed to activate itself by 31 May. Mavai announced that he had resigned from the

TULF because of its inaction. The *Suthanthiran* group also revolted. The *Suthanthiran* issue of 21 April 1980 led with a story calling the TULF to launch a liberation struggle. The TULF retaliated by expelling the group, led by Kovai Mahesan, the editor.

The clash came into the open at the May Day rally the TULF held in Jaffna. Youth Front members shouted slogans criticising the leadership, Amirthalingam in particular, with, "When are you setting up the Constituent Assembly you promised?" , "Give up your posts and become freedom fighters". Sivasithamparam, who presided at the public meeting that followed the rally, chided the youth, "Can you achieve anything by getting rid of Amirthalingam?"

The District Development Councils Bill was tabled in parliament on 8 August 1980 by Prime Minister Premadasa. The General Council of the TULF overwhelmingly decided to support it. Amirthalingam called it a 'historic piece of legislation' as it involved decentralisation of administration and led to the direct involvement of the people in the development process. But the meeting of the General Council was far from peaceful. There was strong criticism of the bill and Amirthalingam, the main target of attack. He made an hour-long impassioned speech defending the bill. He said the district council system was a general scheme of decentralisation of administration of the country. Whether the TULF accepted it or not, it would be implemented. If the TULF accepted it and helped in its implementation, it would help the economic development of the Tamil districts. If it decided to oppose it, the neglect of the Tamil speaking areas would continue.

While this 10-hour meeting was in progress in the Vavuniya Town Hall where a group of the extremists were involved in verbal clashes, some of their colleagues staged a *satyagraha* outside the hall. They carried placards which read: "Reject the Bill which detracts us from our goal". When

Amirthalingam emerged from the hall shortly after 9 p.m. the *satyagrahis* shouted derisively, "Amirthalingam Jayawewa". Radical students of the Jaffna University took out an effigy of Amirthalingam, draped in the TULF flag, and set it on fire in the campus grounds.

Premadasa moved a motion in parliament on 16 October 1980 to deprive Mrs. Bandaranaike of her civic rights for 7 years. The TULF opposed it. Amirthalingam appealed to the government to drop such a vindictive action. He called the move to deprive a former prime minister of her civic rights a travesty of democracy.

TULF MPs attended the District Coordination Committee meeting at Jaffna Kachcheri in February 1981. Amirthalingam pledged TULF's cooperation to the government's development effort. The TULF also contested the District Development Council elections on 4 June 1981.

Militant youth were annoyed with these actions of the TULF. On 16 March 1981, three of them attacked the jeep of S.Dharmalingam, Manipay MP, while he, Amirthalingam and Rajalingam were at dinner in Valvettithurai. In another incident Rajalingam's jeep, parked at Arasady Road, Jaffna, was damaged. K. Thurairatnam, Point Pedro MP, was attacked while returning to Jaffna from a meeting in Murungan, Mannar. A. Thiyagarajah, former Vaddukoddai MP who headed the UNP list in Jaffna, was shot dead on 26 May, a week before the election.

Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam issued a joint statement condemning the shooting as meaningless violence which only aggravated the hardship and problems of the Tamil people. "The method of democracy is the ballot and not the bullet," they said and appealed to all sections of youth to eschew violence.

But the incidents continued. A group of youth flung a molotov cocktail at the house of the Tamil Congress candidate

Pon Sritharan. It went off harmlessly. However, the incident at a public meeting at Nachimarkovil in Jaffna on the night of 31 March sparked a massive police and army attack in Jaffna. It was a propaganda meeting in support of the TULF, presided by the mayor. As the meeting was in progress, some militants shot the three constables on guard duty. Two died, the third suffered injuries.

Half an hour after the shooting, a posse policemen drove to the meeting site. They torched the temple, adjoining houses and two cars, commandeered a bus, drove to the Jaffna bazar and set fire to a row of shops on hospital street, after which they went to the home of Yogeswaran, set his jeep and his friend's car on fire. Yogeswaran and his wife scaled the rear wall and escaped. The rampaging policemen then went to the TULF headquarters and torched it, set fire to the Jaffna Public Library, which housed 95,000 volumes, some of them rare books and manuscripts. Mr. David, a famed etymologist, collapsed the next morning on hearing the news. A provincial newspaper office was also set on fire.

The violence continued from 1-3 June. It also spread to other parts of Jaffna. Shops and houses opposite Chunnakam and KKS police stations were burnt down. An army unit raided Sivasithamparam's office in Nallur and one person was killed in the indiscriminate firing.

Curfew was clamped on 3 June night in Jaffna. At 2.45 a.m., on 4 June, about 100 policemen went to Amirthalingam's home at Pannkam and informed him that they had orders from the Competent Authority to arrest him. He was taken to the army camp where he was told that he was arrested for disrupting the democratic process. The decision to arrest him was taken by Ministers Cyril Mathew and Gamini Dissanayake, then in Jaffna to help the UNP candidates in the 4 June District Development Council election. They had forced Brigadier Weeratunga to order the arrest. Just after dawn

President Jayewardene telephoned Amirthalingam and informed him that the arrest had been a mistake and that he had ordered his release.

The TULF won a massive victory at the 4 June election. It obtained 263,369 votes against the 23,302 polled by the UNP and the 21,682 polled by the Tamil Congress. It captured all the ten seats in the Jaffna District Development Council. Former Senator Subramaniyam Nadarasa was elected chairman of the council.

The cabinet decided on 8 July to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the Jaffna incidents of 31 May and 1 June, incidents which were to lead to a clash between the government and the TULF. Amirthalingam travelled to the USA, Britain and India after the Jaffna incidents and said the incidents had shown that the Tamils were not secure in their own home-towns. He described in detail the police and army atrocities. This angered the both the government and the Sinhala people.

When the TULF gave notice of a vote of no-confidence against the government, the government retaliated by giving a notice to a vote of no-confidence against the Leader of the Opposition, Amirthalingam, the first such no-confidence motion in the world. It was signed by 36 UNP MPs. The government decided to give precedence to it, over-ruling the opposition parties' objection that the custom was to afford priority to the opposition motion.

The motion against Amirthalingam was debated on 23 July 1981. It was moved by Dr. Neville Fernando, MP for Panadura. Amirthalingam was greeted with a torrid round of government interruptions when he tried to make a personal explanation. He was called a liar, a traitor and a supporter of the Tigers. Fernando objected to Amirthalingam making a personal explanation on the ground that he could do so only with the indulgence of the House. When Speaker M.A. Bakeet

Markar disallowed Amirthalingam making a personal explanation, TULF MPs walked out. SLFP deputy leader Maithripala Senanayake asked the Speaker to rule the motion out of order when he submitted on a point of order that the vote of no-confidence did not fall within the scope and ambit of the powers of parliament, that the Leader of the Opposition held his office by convention and enjoyed the confidence of the members of the opposition, that the motion was out of order since it could not bring any result, and by discussing a futile motion the parliament would stultify itself. This the Speaker declined to do, saying that the objections were raised too late. The SLFP and Communist Party MPs then walked out, amidst loud uproar from the government benches. This prompted Communist Party MP Sarath Muttettuwegama to question whether the Speaker or government MPs were running the parliament.

With the entire opposition absent, government MPs had a field day. Their main charge was that Amirthalingam, who was mouthing Gandhian piety in parliament, was showing a different face in the north and east, and abroad, that he was instigating the youth while in the north and east, and slinging mud on the government and the Sinhala people while abroad. Some MPs said that he should be hanged publicly in Galle Face Green in Colombo for his traitorous activities.

Thondaman was the only MP to rise to the defence of Amirthalingam. He said the Sinhala people should understand the difficult role Amirthalingam was playing, that frustration had set in among the Tamil people because Sinhala leaders had failed to honour their pledges and had let down Tamil moderates. He warned the MPs of the danger of destroying Amirthalingam politically as it would strengthen the militants. Despite this, the no-confidence motion, the only one in the world against a Leader of the Opposition, was adopted without dissent.

On 24 July Yaspala Herath, Anuradhapura East MP, informed parliament that Nallur MP Sivasithamparam had operated a bank account into which Rs. 400 million of the Tiger funds, sent from the UK, USA, Norway and Denmark, had been credited. Amirthalingam raised the matter in parliament on 4 August as a matter of breach of privilege and demanded that Herath withdraw the allegation. Herath refused. Insults were hurled from the government benches at Amirthalingam. TULF MPs walked out of parliament in protest.

It was in this atmosphere of confrontation that Jayewardene approached Prof. Jayaratnam Wilson to talk to the TULF about cooperating with the government. Amirthalingam complained to Wilson that Jayewardene showed interest in the Tamil problem only when he (Wilson) was in Sri Lanka and forgot about it when he was away. Wilson conveyed this to Jayewardene and suggested that a high level committee composed of Jayewardene, his ministers and TULF leaders be set up and meet time to time to deal with Tamil problems as they arose and seek peaceful means of resolving issues instead of raising them in parliament. This was accepted by both sides.

But before any action could be taken, two incidents took place. The first was an attack by the Tigers on the Annaikoddai police station. At about 10 p.m. on 27 August a group of Tigers hijacked a van a few kilometers from Jaffna town and went to the Annaikoddai police station, situated about 9 kilometers away. Two of the militants knocked at the door. When constable Nazeer opened a window, he was shot. Constables Jayaratna, Guruswamy and Bandulasena rushed to the scene and were also shot at. The Tigers vanished with guns and ammunition stored at the station. The injured constables were taken to the hospital where Jayaratna died.

The second incident was a major one, the result of the first. The killing of Jayaratna caused tension in the hill

country which later erupted into violence. Indian Tamils living in Ratnapura, Balangoda and Kahawatte were attacked, their shops and houses burnt down. Gangs of Sinhala thugs roamed the estates burning, pillaging, looting and killing Tamils. Police and army units were moved in to restore order. President Jayewardene toured the affected areas two weeks later to assess the damage. He was moved by the misery the riots had brought on the poor estate labour force. He said he was ashamed to call himself a Sinhalese after what some Sinhala people had done to the poor people. He was annoyed and distressed.

On his return, he telephoned Wilson, who had gone to his university in Canada, and informed him of his decision to appoint the High Level Committee they had discussed, even if the entire cabinet opposed it, because he believed it could end the feuding between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. He told Wilson to return and help start the process.

Amirthalingam met Jayewardene at the President's House. Ministers Athulathmudali, Thondaman, Nissanka Wijeratne, Ranil Wickremesinghe and M.H.Mohamed were present. Wilson participated as a go-between and advisor.

An official statement was issued on 31 August after three rounds of talks. It read: The leaders of the United National Party and the Tamil United Liberation Front who met under the chairmanship of His Excellency the President discussed the unfortunate loss to life and damage to property in various parts of the country during the last few months and agreed in order to end racial tension to restore peace and harmony:

- (i) to constitute a high level committee under the chairmanship of His Excellency the President. The committee will in addition comprise the Prime Minister, Ministers and the Leaders of the TULF. The Committee will discuss all questions in dispute with a view of their peaceful resolution.

- (ii) persuade all political parties to cooperate and contribute to end all forms of violence throughout the country.
- (iii) in addition to other measures lend their efforts towards the proper and satisfactory working of the District Development Councils.

(Sgd. J.R.Jayewardene, President of Sri Lanka
31.8.1981.

After the fourth round of talks on 13 September Amirthalingam told the press, "The TULF was prepared to go half way." It was pleased because a committee was appointed to look into its four demands: action to be taken against the police officers responsible for incidents in Jaffna; payment of compensation to the sufferers; increase in the number of Tamil policemen in the north and the east; and the appointment of Home Guards to prevent the recurrence of violence. The TULF responded by calling off its 3-month boycott of parliament.

In late October militants attacked army vehicles on two different occasions and killed a total of three soldiers. The army reacted by burning houses and assaulting the people who lived close to the scene of the incidents. Jayewardene summoned Amirthalingam on 27 October to discuss these incidents. Service commanders present at the meeting assured TULF leaders that strict instructions had been given that no innocent people should be harmed or their property damaged in any way. The TULF leaders in return assured Jayewardene that neither the TULF nor the Tamil people condoned these criminal attacks on officers engaged in the discharge of lawful duty.

After the meeting, Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam issued a joint statement, "There is absolutely no excuse for these murders ... we are positive these acts of violence will

not help advance the cause of the Tamil people in any way. On the contrary, they will only help destroy the sympathy for the sufferings of the Tamil people."

The government and the TULF agreed to hold monthly meetings. Minister, Anandatissa de Alwis organised a series of "Meetings of Moderates" where groups of moderates of all communities were brought together to discuss questions of peace, harmony, law and order. The purpose of these meetings, de Alwis explained, was to bring people together and create opinion against violence, terrorism, racial and religious conflicts.

It was this new atmosphere that Krishna Vaikunthavasan, president of the London-based Tamil Coordinating Committee, wanted to shatter with his unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). In a simple ceremony he declared on 14 January 1982, Thai Pongal Day, the independence of Tamil Eelam and proclaimed the formation of a provisional government outside the country.

The TULF reacted immediately. "We are fully convinced," Amirthalingam said in a statement, "that this is ill-advised and it will not advance the Tamil cause a wee bit."

He also appealed to militants in his May Day speech in Jaffna to lay down their arms and support the party's moderate leadership. He said, "A band of youth with four or five revolvers do not make an independence movement." Though the youth seemed to think that the TULF's negotiations would not yield any results, he believed in peaceful negotiations to violence.

This speech and the attendance of TULF members of the ceremonial opening of the new parliamentary complex at Sri Jayawardhenapura irked the militants. Their advice not to participate was disregarded. The members not only attended the opening ceremony but Amirthalingam also gave a speech. It was a classic one. He started with the remark that a

parliament assembling in a new building was a unique occasion. He traced the history of the Tamils, how successive governments had let them down after entering into pious agreements, how the Tamil homeland was being gradually grabbed by state-organised Sinhala colonisation, how they were being pushed to a second class status, how they had been made insecure in their homeland and how this had led the youth to revolt.

I telephoned him that evening to congratulate him on his splendid speech. Amirthalingam said many people from different parts of the country had telephoned to congratulate him. "They said that I had done the right thing in making use of the opportunity to tell the country and the world the problems and frustrations of the Tamil people. They said the youth were wrong in advising me to boycott the ceremony. We are using the parliament as a platform for our propaganda. These youth don't seem to understand that."

I warned him to be careful about his personal safety. He said, "I have one soul. I have given it to the Tamil community. Therefore, I am not bothered about my safety."

On 17 May, Amirthalingam was mobbed in Jaffna by hundreds of demonstrating students shouting slogans denouncing the TULF and him in particular. This was after the police had dispersed a 2000-strong procession taken out by students to protest the arrest of fellow students. Some students called Amirthalingam a traitor. He, along with other TULF leaders, also received threatening letters. The government offered Amirthalingam special police protection. He declined the offer and accepted only the normal security provided to the Leader of the Opposition.

On 19 May, two days later, Prabhakaran and Uma Maheswaran were involved in a shoot-out at Pondi Bazar in Madras. Prabhakaran and Sivakumar were coming out of a

cafe when they spotted Uma Maheswaran and Jotheeswaran alighting from a motor cycle. Prabhakaran pulled out his revolver and fired at them. Jotheeswaran was hit on the shoulder but Maheswaran escaped unscathed. Prabhakaran and Sivakumar tried to escape but were overpowered by the traffic police and arrested. Prabhakaran gave his name as Karikalan, the name of a legendary king in Tamil history, and Maheswaran, as Muhunthan. They were produced before a magistrate and granted bail. Both jumped bail and the case was not pursued further.

Prabhakaran and Uma Maheswaran, both in the LTTE when it was formed in 1975, had held the posts of general secretary and president till they fell out due to personal and ideological rivalries. Uma Maheswaran flouted the code of conduct when he got married. He was also a Marxist. He left the LTTE in 1980 and founded the rival group, People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). This organization became popular with the Marxist-oriented youth. In early 1982, when the armed forces and police stepped up their attack, both fled to India.

At that time the LTTE leadership comprised of Prabhakaran, Charles Antony alias Seelan and Chelvanayakam alias Sellakili. Police intelligence records of that period state that the LTTE had 30 members, cadres mostly trained in India, and an armoury of 4 machine guns, 12 rifles, 21 repeater shot-guns and 2 revolvers.

By 1982, the number of militant groups had grown to five. The LTTE was the first, the TELO second, the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), founded by E. Ratnasapapathy in London, the third, the PLOTE the fourth, and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), founded by K. Pathmanabha, the fifth. The EPRLF was the result of a split in the EROS in 1981. There were also a few smaller groups like the Tamil National Army led by Panagoda Maheswaran, an engineering student. He got

the affix Panagoda after his dramatic escape from the high security Panagoda army camp.

The news of the Pandy Bazar shoot-out upset Amirthalingam. He was pained. He mentioned the incident in his speech at the conclusion of the *satyagraha* held in Jaffna Muniappar Kovil on 31 May, the first anniversary of the burning down of the Jaffna Public Library. He said the shoot-out was tragic because it showed that youth had turned against youth and Tamils against Tamils. He deplored violence and said that by adopting violent methods the Tamils were destroying not only themselves but also their culture. He reverted to the same topic a few days later at Batticoloa when he said that a peaceful solution to the Tamil problem could only be obtained through a dialogue between the president and the TULF leadership.

The militants ignored his advice and continued to exert pressure on both the TULF and the security forces. On 8 February 1982 they shot at the army in Pungudutivu. On 2 July they killed four policemen at Nelliya junction. The TULF issued a statement condemning both incidents. It read: "The TULF has never since its founding condoned any form of violence in whatever form and expresses its deep sympathies to the families of the victims."

Mathew welcomed the TULF statement. He told a meeting at Kakesnathurai, "This is what I have been asking them to do for a long time. Till recently they have encouraged terrorism. If they did not dissociate themselves from terrorism they risked being dealt like terrorists."

On 5 July Amirthalingam attended the World Tamil Convention held at the suburban New York town of Nanuet in the United States. There he opposed the resolution calling for the setting up of an interim provisional government of Eelam and defended the TULF's decision to participate in the District Development Councils and in the monthly meetings

with the government. He told the hostile audience, which included Vaikunthavasan, that it was easy for people abroad to recline in their easy chairs and pontificate. "We realise the great responsibilities we face. We cannot be irresponsible in what we do. Please place yourselves in our position before throwing stones at us. We are human. We may make mistakes. Even Mahatma Gandhi admitted that he did make mistakes. If, at any stage, I feel I have lost the confidence of the Tamil people, I will step down and hand over the reins of office to whosoever has the confidence of the Tamils."

He explained the practical difficulties of establishing the state of Eelam. "If we are reasonably sure - or at least 50 percent sure - that we can achieve our objective, we can certainly take that risk." He said he was responsible for the lives of the Tamil people living in Sri Lanka. What good is liberation, he asked, if there are no people to enjoy that liberation? He added that Bangladesh liberation, which was cited by many as an example, had caused the death of three million people, the total number of Tamils living in Sri Lanka.

At one point he was asked by Vaikunthavasan, "Why don't you tell President Jayewardene to go to hell?"

Amirthalingam retorted, "If I did, it is not Mr. Jayewardene who will go to hell. It will be the Tamil people who will end up there."

He then explained why he was carrying on a dialogue with Jayewardene. It was not because of love for him but because of the love he had for the Tamil people. The meetings helped to sort out some of the problems confronting the Tamil people. He decided to cooperate so that he could run the District Development Councils, because it was such institutions which provided the nucleus for autonomy. DDCs could provide the initial step for the Tamils to run their own affairs.

He won the day. He persuaded the World Tamil Convention to shelve the resolution calling for the setting up

of an interim provisional government of Eelam. Instead, the convention decided to establish a New York-based Tamil Eelam Liberation Council to advance the cause of a separate homeland for Sri Lanka Tamils.

On his return, Amirthalingam called a press conference at his official residence to announce the results of the Nanuet convention. He also said that the monthly meetings between the government and the TULF had ended. He was asked whether the decision was made due to the forthcoming presidential elections.

Amirthalingam replied in the negative, saying that as there was no pending matter that needed discussion, hence the decision.

After the press conference, Amirthalingam called me in. He said that Jayewardene wanted to distance himself from the TULF for fear of losing the support of the Buddhist clergy. He understood Jayewardene's concerns. "After all, he has to win the elections," he said, and added, "We too wont lose much as not much was achieved through these meetings. It's a case of eating their sandwiches and drinking their tea."

The 11-month-long talks produced very little. They did help the TULF obtain relief to Tamil government servants affected by the riots of 1977 and 1981; they did help the TULF to get Tamil policemen transferred to the north and east, and stop attempts to alter the boundaries of Vavuniya district, but it failed to get finances to the DDCs and get the constitutional provisions relating to the Tamil language implemented.

The talks did help the TULF to study Jayewardene at close hand, the 'old fox', as Mrs. Gandhi had called him. Amirthalingam related the following incident to me: At one of the monthly meetings the TULF had taken up the question of the non implementation of the constitutional provisions

relating to the Tamil language. Jayewardene had admitted that implementation had been slow and tardy. He said a vigorous minister would help with the implementation. "Will you loan Soosaithasan? I will make him the Minister for the Implementation of Tamil Language." Amirthalingam said he had rejected the suggestion outright. He had said, "Sir, it is like asking me to loan you my wife for a period of time." He later told me that the old man had tried a fast one on him. Jayewardene wanted to show the world that he had the support of the TULF, which, he knew, would place it in confrontation with the militants.

Amirthalingam also told me that was exactly what Jayewardene had been trying to do by the 11-month-long talks. He was using the talks to cut the ground under the militants. But his reluctance to give anything substantial to the TULF had the opposite effect - that of strengthening the militants.

Amirthalingam said that Jayewardene had indicated to him that he needed TULF support to win Tamil votes for his 1982 October presidential election. But he did not want to say so in public for fear of losing Sinhala extremist support. By this double-dealing, Jayewardene put the TULF in a difficult situation. The TULF got out of the fix by deciding to boycott the election. Amirthalingam, in a statement, said the Tamils had not accepted the 1978 constitution and as such the only course available to them was to boycott the election. The All Ceylon Tamil Congress candidate, Kumar Ponnambalam, accused the TULF of trying to help Jayewardene by telling the Tamils not to vote for him.

Jayewardene won the election. He obtained majority of the Tamil votes in the seven Sinhala provinces. The SLFP candidate, Hector Kobbekadduwa, won a bigger slice of the

Tamil votes in the northern province. By this, northern Tamils signified their protest against army and police excesses and the government's liberal import policy which had affected farm prices.

Soon after the presidential election, relations between the government and the TULF soured again. Two events contributed to this. The first was the decision of the TULF to oppose Jayewardene's intention to hold a referendum to extend the life of the 1977 parliament. Jayewardene wanted to retain his massive majority in parliament through this procedural short-cut. He argued that what mattered was people's consent and he would obtain it through a referendum which sought their approval for the existing MPs to continue in parliament for another six years. The TULF strongly opposed this. The TULF parliamentary group decided on 4 November that its members should resign at the end of the term of the then-parliament. All MPs handed over their letters of resignation to Amirthalingam but decided not to join the common opposition campaign.

The second matter that fouled relations was the TULF decision to nominate Yogachandran Selvaraj alias Kuttimani to fill the vacancy created by the death of S. Thirunavukkarasu, Vaddukoddai MP. The Commissioner of Elections accepted the nomination and informed parliament about it. Amirthalingam explained their decision: "Kuttimani was chosen to focus the attention of the people on the question of trying Tamil youths under the Prevention of Terrorism Law which admits confessions obtained by the police as evidence."

Kuttimani, a founder-leader of the TELO, was charged in the High Court of Colombo for the murder of police constable Sivanesan at Valvettithurai in 1979 and was convicted on 13 August 1982, a few weeks before nomination. He appealed against the conviction. Since the Election Commissioner had accepted the TULF nomination, Kuttimani filed

an application before the Appeal Court praying that the court direct the Commissioner of Prisons to take him to parliament so that he could take his oaths as an MP. The Solicitor General, who appeared for the Prisons Commissioner, raised a preliminary objection and submitted that the court had no jurisdiction to issue the order requested by Kuttimani. The Appeal Court upheld the objection.

There was also an uproar in the country and Sinhala newspapers carried on a protest campaign. Parliamentary procedure demanded that a new MP should take his oaths of allegiance to the constitution within three months from the date of election or nomination. Since he could not do so, Kuttimani sent his letter of resignation on 24 January, a day before the 3-month period ended. Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, son of former Minister M. Tiruchelvam, was nominated to fill the Vaddukoddai seat and he took his oaths on 8 March 1983.

The TULF then ran into trouble with the militants on the question of contesting the local government elections announced for 18 May. The Tigers issued a leaflet in the first week of May calling for a boycott of the elections. The leaflet said some political parties, meaning the TULF, were using the 'Eelam Liberation' concept as a vote-catching slogan to gain office. It called such political parties 'evil elements'.

The TULF Working Committee met on 11 May at its Nallur office to consider this threat. It decided to contest, whatever the consequences. As the members were leaving the meeting, they were urged by a group of youth to withdraw. The TULF issued a statement defending its decision, urging people to think of the situation that would be created if it withdrew from the contest, specially in the eastern province where the UNP was contesting every council.

Militants stepped up their pressure. They disturbed election meetings. One such meeting was the one addressed by Amirthalingam at Oddumadam in Jaffna. They pushed his

car out of the meeting ground soon after he walked on to the dias and drove off with it. The crowd fled in confusion. The militants also broke up the poll meeting held on 11 May at Ainthumadachanthi in Jaffna.

The Tigers also attacked UNP candidates who had filed nominations for all the local bodies in the north and the east. On 29 April K.V. Ratnasingham, the UNP candidate for Point Pedro Urban Council, was killed. That same night S.J. Muttaiah, the UNP candidate for Chavakachcheri, and the bodyguard of another UNP candidate, V. Rajaratnam, were killed. This induced the UNP and the Tamil Congress candidates to withdraw. But election law prevented their names being removed from the ballot papers and so technically they continued to be candidates.

When the militants found that the TULF was adamant about contesting the election, they approached individual candidates and pressed them to withdraw. In the Jaffna Municipal Council, 35 of the candidates, including the mayoral and deputy mayoral candidates, withdrew.

On election day the Tigers exploded grenades in Jaffna, Chavakachcheri, Point Pedro and Valvettiturai. Around 4.15 p.m. a Tiger group, led by Seelan, launched an attack at the Sivapragasa Maha Vidyalayam in Jaffna. Corporal Jayawardene, guarding the front entrance, was shot dead. A soldier and two policemen were injured. The Tigers took away Jayawardene's T-56 rifle. Soldiers belonging to the Raja Rata Rifles went on a rampage, torching shops and houses in the vicinity of the scene of the incident.

Polling was very poor in the entire district. The percentage of voters who kept away were: Jaffna 86%; Chavakachcheri 85%; Point Pedro 99% and Valvettiturai 98%.

The government announced that the inaugural meeting of the 11 municipal councils and 36 urban councils, for which elections were held, would be held on 16 June. The Tigers

ordered the councils in the north not to meet on that day. Only the Point Pedro urban council defied that order.

Amirthalingam assessed the reason for the defeat of the TULF. He told me, "We were reduced to a position that we could not reply to the Tiger charge that the District Development Councils have failed. We had nothing concrete to show the people other than the empty shell of the Development Councils."

The TULF had been telling Jayewardene during the eleven months of talks to make the DDCs effective. Amirthalingam had pleaded with him to give the DDCs adequate finances. "Let it simmer," was the only reply Jayewardene gave. He also prevented the Jaffna Development Council from generating its own funds. The DDC's proposal to tax a rupee for every bag of cement produced by the Kankesanthurai Cement Factory and the proposal to run a passenger shipping between Kankesanthurai and Tutukorin in India were vetoed by Jayewardene.

The inability of the DDCs to do anything effectively helped the militants to win the sympathy and cooperation of the people of Jaffna. The daring attacks they launched against the police and the military gave them an aura of heroism. In October 1982 they killed Corporals Hewavasam and Tissera at Kankesanthurai.

A few days later, they attacked the Chavakchcheri police station. Just before dawn on 27 October a group of militants, led by Seelan, hijacked a van and approached the Chavakachcheri police station situated on the road to Kandy. They sealed off the road, approached the front entrance and opened fire on the sentry, injuring him. Under cover of sub-machine gun fire, they stormed the armoury and decamped with a huge quantity of arms and ammunition. Seelan was injured and was given shelter by Jaffna University lecturer M. Nithiananthan and his wife, who were later arrested and sent to the Batticoloa jail.

The Tigers got bolder and more daring and that made them heroes in the eyes of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and worldwide. They attacked the Elephant Pass Army Camp on 23 March 1983, killed a soldier at Palaly in May, attacked the Gurunagar Army Camp later that month, killing a soldier, and killed two air-force men in Vavuniya on 7 June.

The Vavuniya killing sparked riots in Kurunegala and Trincomalee. I was on my way with the then-Fisheries Minister Festus Perera to Trincomalee when our vehicle was stopped by Sinhala youth at Kurunegala. The driver drove straight on and they gave way. In Trincomalee M. Selvarajah, trustee, Koneswaran temple in Trincomalee, met the minister and told him that Sinhala fishermen had burnt the boats of Tamil fishermen.

In the first three weeks of July the Tigers burnt buses in Trincomalee, stole rock blasting equipment from the Kankesanthurai Cement Factory, torched the Yal Devi express train at Kondavil, damaged the Chettikulam railway station and burnt three sub-post offices in Vaddukoddai.

Sensing the swelling tension Jayewardene took some initiatives to cool tempers. He recalled Wilson from Canada to persuade Amirthalingam to attend the High Level Committee meetings which he had promised to revive. Amirthalingam wanted Jayewardene to implement all that they had agreed to earlier before their next meeting. In a 2-page letter, he listed 10 items which had been agreed on but not implemented.

The matters, as mentioned in the letter, were:

1. District Development Councils. Nothing done to make them effective, as agreed.
2. Posting a majority of Tamil speaking policemen in Tamil areas. Carried out in Jaffna district but not done in any of the other Tamil districts, as promised. Most of the troubles we had in Trincomalee

and Vavuniya in June and July could have been avoided if this was implemented.

3. Recruitment of more Tamils into the police and forces so as to make these services function in a non-partisan way in times of ethnic tensions. This promise has not been fulfilled by the government.
4. Compensation for victims of police violence in May-June 1981 had been only partially paid. It had not been paid to victims in Chunakkam and Kankesanthurai as agreed at the Inter-Party Commission. Only two million out of the ten million rupees awarded by the Lionel Fernando Commission to the burnt Jaffna Public Library had been paid from the President's Fund.
5. Though prosecutions were initiated against some of the policemen responsible for the killing and arson in Chunakkam and Kankesanthurai in May-June 1981, none of them were arrested and produced at the Mallakam Magistrate's court, and now the cases have been transferred to Colombo where the victims dare not appear and testify.
6. Home guards were not established though names were sent up and cleared by the police.
7. Agreements reached about the Punnaikudah housing scheme and the Keviliyamadu village in the Batticaloa district have not been implemented up to date. I wrote a letter to Your Excellency regarding these two matters last month.
8. The government has not removed the illegally erected Buddha statue at Vavuniya junction though Your Excellency gave the order to remove it at the very first meeting of the Inter-Party Committee in August 1981. If the government is so absolutely

powerless in removing an irritant to the Tamil people illegally erected by certain Sinhala public servants, can the Tamil people expect justice where Sinhala chauvinism dictates otherwise?

9. The promise made by the government with regard to employment of the Tamils in the public sector were not kept. The circulars issued and countermanded by the Secretary to the Ministry of Plan Implementation regarding employment in the Tamil district are too sordid to discuss at length.
10. The agreement to limit the Executive Committees in Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu to three members so as not to make the majority community in these DDCs minority in the Executive Committees and the subsequent appointment of a UNP minority community member in the Executive Committee in Vavuniya is a good example of the way the government promises are kept."

The General Council of the TULF met on 9 July and decided to hold its third convention from 21 July. V.N.Navaratnam, Chavakachcheri MP, announced that he would resign his seat on 21 July, at the end of the six-year term. And he did so.

Jaffna DDC chairman Nadarasa also announced his desire to resign on 15 July. "What is the use of being the chairman of a council which has no powers and finances?" he asked. His resignation upset Jayewardene.

I met Nadarasa at the Sri Lankan Foundation Institute on 21 July after the Punitham Tiruchelvam memorial lecture by Prof. Gananath Obeyesekere on "Pathini Cult". Nadarasa told me that Jayewardene had indicated a desire to strengthen the DDCs. He commented, "This man will talk nicely but won't do anything. He is indecisive, wavering and is keen only in buying time."

Jayewardene was reluctant to give anything to the Tamils on his own for fear that he be branded a Sinhala traitor, Nadarasa said. "That is not his failing only. It is a general failing of the Sinhala leadership. They fear if they give anything substantial to the Tamils, others would undercut them politically."

Nadarasa's comment was mainly targeted at the All-Party meet

Jayewardene had held the previous day, 20 July, a conference he had named "All Party Conference on Terrorism". Eight parties were invited: UNP, SLFP, LSSP, TULF, Communist Party, Ceylon Workers Congress, NSSP and Tamil Congress. Only the UNP and the CWC attended. The TULF said it would attend only if the SLFP did so because unless the UNP and the SLFP agreed on a solution, it would not work. The All Party Conference decided to meet again on an enlarged agenda.

The TULF MPs did not attend parliament on 22 July, saying that their term of office had lapsed. They attended the Mannar Convention instead. And, then, on 23 July, the holocaust occurred. The Mannar Convention resolved that the TULF should not talk to the government in future because Tamils had been let down every time.

As the TULF hardened its stand, India, too, began to take interest in Sri Lankan affairs.

A week before the 23 July riots broke out Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi told Additional Foreign Secretary K. Shankar Bajpai to summon the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi, Bernard Tilakaratna, and convey India's concern about the Emergency regulations promulgated a few days earlier which gave the police and the security forces power to cremate or bury dead bodies without the usual post-mortem examination or judicial inquest. Bajpai met with Tilakaratna that very afternoon and conveyed the message.

Tilakaratna reacted and said, "My God, Mr. Bajpai! This is interference." Then, as an afterthought, he asked, "Is this the view of the Tamil Nadu state government or of the centre?" Bajpai assured him that it was the concern of the Indian government at the highest level.

The Emergency regulation was actually proclaimed on 3 July to free the armed forces from having to spend time at the judicial inquiries. There was severe criticism in the Indian press. Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed invited Indian High Commissioner S.J.J. Chhatwal to his ministry and explained why the regulations had been invoked. Chhatwal was not convinced. He sent a report to New Delhi denouncing the regulations.

Tilakaratna telexed Bajpai's warning to Colombo with the comment, "This statement came to me as a surprise." Jayewardene was annoyed with India's concern. He got a government backbencher to raise the matter in parliament and got Hameed to give the following reply: "We respect the cardinal principle of the Non-Aligned Movement of non-interference in any country's internal affairs. We hope our good neighbour to adhere to this." He also got Hameed to summon the Acting Indian High Commissioner R.N. Abhyankar to the Foreign Office to convey the Sri Lankan government's displeasure at India's stand, saying that it amounted to interfering in Sri Lanka's internal affairs. He warned that it would damage the good relations between the two countries.

But Jayewardene's relations with Mrs. Gandhi and Sri Lanka's relations with India were in a bad shape already. The personal relations had been damaged in 1977. The President's "cow and calf" slogan had hurt Mrs. Gandhi immensely. His efforts to mend fences in 1979 failed to win her over. He sent a special peace mission to Mrs. Gandhi with instructions to bring to her notice the traditional friendship between the Jayewardenes and Nehrus. Mrs. Gandhi laughed it off.

Jayewardene's pro-US stand, the Voice of America agreement, the decision to lease the tank farm in Trincomalee to a Singapore-based consortium of companies and depriving Mrs. Bandaranaike of civic rights annoyed her.

Jayewardene, too, disliked her. He showed it whenever he got a chance. In 1981, Mrs. Gandhi and Jayewardene were accommodated in the same hotel when in London to attend the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana. Mrs. Gandhi sent her son Rajiv to visit Jayewardene. The President told Rajiv, "You can conquer us but you cannot conquer our spirit."

One week after India expressed her concern about the emergency regulations, she got directly involved in Sri Lankan affairs. That was brought about by the 23 July riots, the last and the most serious of a series of seven eruptions since independence, triggered by the killing of 13 soldiers by the Tigers in Tinnaveli, Jaffna.

On the night of 23 July Sellakili, who had vowed to avenge the death of Seelan killed at Meesalai by the army on 15 July, lay in ambush on the Jaffna-Palaly road with 25 Tigers. They had buried a land mine in a hole dug by the telephone department and waited on both sides of the road.

"Four Brave Four", a convoy of a jeep and a truck, carrying an officer and 14 soldiers was on a patrolling trip at that time. The soldiers, belonging to the Company of the First Battalion of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry, had gone from their base at Mathagal to Gurunagar. On the return journey, the convoy visited the Jaffna market, Naga Vihara, Nallur, Kopay and then to Urumpirai. It contacted Gurunagar from Urumpirai and reported that everything was normal. It then proceeded to Kondavil and Kokuvil and was on its way through Kalviyankadu to Jaffna. The land mine exploded as the jeep went over the telephone hole at Tinnaveli. All six soldiers in the jeep were blown up. The truck screeched to a halt. The men inside jumped out but were mowed down by

gun fire. Corporal J.R.A.U. Perera escaped with injuries and ran with a bleeding leg to the Kondavil bus depot from where he telephoned Palaly.

Gurunagar was alarmed at losing radio contact with the convoy and informed Brigadier Balthasar, the northern commander. He sent out a search party which reported the death of 13 soldiers and an officer.

I was at my home in Dehiwala when News Editor N.R.J. Aaron telephoned and told me of the killing. I went to Lake House and it was there that I realised the heightening tension. The army wanted a military funeral. The president acceded to their request and it decided to airlift the bodies of the dead soldiers and have the funeral at Kanatte cemetery in Colombo. When the story spread that the bodies were to be brought to Kanatte, a massive crowd thronged the cemetery. Soldiers ran riot in Jaffna and went on a shooting spree. Reports said the 39 persons had been slaughtered.

The government panicked. It got the police to announce through their loud hailers that the bodies would be taken to the respective villages of the dead soldiers and the crowd was told to disperse. However, the crowd had become restive and stormed towards the junction and set Tamils shops ablaze. Riots spread that night. From the *Daily News* office I could see smoke rising and flames leaping skywards. I rang home. Things were quiet there.

I returned home along Galle road and did not see anything untoward. At 5 a.m. on 24 July I received a call from Narahenpitiya, informing me that thugs were roaming the area, pillaging and plundering. I took my two teenage sons and rushed to a relative's house in Castle Lane, Bambalapitiya, close to the Hindu temple which normally is converted into a refugee camp during such times. Two hours later organised gangs armed with crowbars and other implements went around the city breaking open Tamil shops and houses. Gangs with cans of petrol followed them, setting shops and houses ablaze.

That whole morning rioters poured into Colombo in buses, lorries, trains and government vehicles. They carried electoral registers to help them locate Tamil homes. One such group went to Dehiwala. They asked neighbours to direct them to my house. When the neighbours told them that there were no Tamil houses in the area, they were accused of attempting to protect Tamils, and were shown the electoral register. My name was underlined in red. The rioters marched to my house, broke open the front door, pulled out books from my study and set them alight. The study had contained a good collection of Sri Lankan and Indian History books and, I was told, it burnt for three long days.

I telephoned my neighbours from Castle Lane around noon. They said the house was on fire. Around the same time houses of R. Sivagurunathan, P. Balasingham, K. Nadarajah, K. Sivapiragasam, Mrs. Ponmani Kulasingham and others who held influential positions in the field of journalism were torched. The belief among the Tamils at that time was the Jathika Seva Sangamaya, the trade union wing of the ruling UNP, headed by Mathew, had provided their names and addresses to the gangs.

Around the same time, a gang of thugs entered the Castle Lane from the sea coast and attacked the last house. I telephoned four ministers but was told that they were with the president. They were actually urging him to speak to the nation. He was brooding, visibly upset. "Things are going out of control," he told his ministers. Thondaman and other leading Tamils pressed him to impose curfew.

Curfew was clamped down at 2 p.m. on Monday, 25 July, in Colombo. It came into operation in the other districts of the Western Province at 6 p.m. Rioting spread to the provinces the next day. Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Trincomalee were the worst affected. The navy went berserk in Trincomalee and razed the market-place to the ground.

The next day several hundred prisoners at Welikada prison, broke open the cells and killed 35 Tamil detainees, including Kuttimani and Thangathurai, who had been arrested at Manalkadu in Jaffna in 1979 and were convicted after a prolonged trial. On 27 July they killed 17 more. Two days later, on 29 July, hell broke loose in Colombo. There was firing by the police in Pettah, a busy trading area, to force some Tamils, who had bolted themselves inside a room, to come out. Mischievous elements spread the rumour that the Tigers had come to Colombo. Panic spread and the Sinhalese thugs ran away after attacking Tamils and setting them alight in public roads, some alive.

The government admitted a death toll of 350, 18,000 houses and Tamil shops and industries had been torched and about 100,000 persons rendered homeless. Tamil sources put the figures much higher.

Neelan Tiruchelvam summed up the holocaust in an interview to *India Today*: "It was a calculated attempt to destroy the economic and intellectual base of the Tamil community ... It was an attack on Tamil professionals and entrepreneurs."

Amirthalingam added, in an interview to the *Indian Express*, "A sense of insecurity had been instilled into the Tamil mind."

Chapter 10

The Political Murder

There was considerable tension when the cabinet met on 27 July 1983. Ministers blamed the TULF and Amirthalingam for the riots, calling him a traitor, a provocateur. Mathew was most vocal. He said that Amirthalingam should be arrested and urged that the TULF be banned.

Jayewardene announced that he intended to bring an amendment to the constitution to proscribe any party which advocated the division of the country. Those found guilty of violating the provisions would be liable for imprisonment and confiscation of property. This would take the steam out of Sinhalese anger, he said.

Hameed and Thondaman opposed such action. The former said it would result in the TULF hardening its attitude further. He argued that for any solution to the Tamil problem the government should be in a position to talk with the moderates in the TULF. "If you proscribe the TULF and force its MPs to quit parliament then you will have no one to talk to. You will have to talk to intermediaries," Hameed warned. He said banning the TULF would give India a role. Thondaman also warned that proscribing the TULF would completely estrange the Tamils.

But no one paid any attention. Their main concern was to pacify the Sinhala people. Jayewardene told Athulathmudali, Cabinet Secretary G.V.P. Samarasinghe and Legal Draftsman P.A.K. Rodrigo to draft the constitutional amendment. They prepared one which made it a constitutional requirement for every Sri Lankan to swear allegiance to the unitary constitution. This draft was adopted by the cabinet with minor changes.

On Gamini Dissanayake's request Ven. Elle Gunwanse, the firebrand monk behind the Bauddha Peramuna, met

Jayewardene that afternoon. The monk advised that the President should go on air to speak to the Sinhala people and assuage their feelings, that he should ban the TULF and step up the military campaign against the Tigers.

Jayewardene acted accordingly. In a 4-minute 50-second speech to the nation that evening he solemnly promised to safeguard the rights and privileges of the majority community - the Sinhalese. He announced that those preaching division of the country would be deprived of their civic rights and would not be allowed to practice their profession or join any organisation in Sri Lanka. He declared that parties advocating division of the country would be proscribed, and concluded with the vow that all attempts to divide the country would be thwarted. The entire speech was intended to appease the Sinhala people. There was not a single word to console the Tamils, victims of the violence.

The constitutional amendment, listed as the Sixth Amendment, was taken up in parliament as an urgent bill on 4 August. Prime Minister R. Premadasa moved the bill. The bill decreed that no person, political party or organisation shall directly or indirectly, in or outside Sri Lanka, support, espouse or advocate the establishment of a separate state within the territory of Sri Lanka. It prescribed that persons who violated the law would be punished with imprisonment not exceeding 7 years and forfeiture of property and proscription for political parties or organisations. The bill also prescribed the requirement that all elected representatives, officials and professionals should take the oath disavowing separatism.

The parliament debated the bill for 13 hours, after suspending standing orders, adopting it at 4 a.m. on 5 August. It was not a debate but an attack by Sinhala MPs on the TULF and Amirthalingam, who was called a traitor, a provocateur. Members of parliament one after another condemned him for misleading and instigating the Tamil youth to fight the

Sinhalese. They charged him with the crime of planting the poisonous Eelam idea in the minds of the Tamil people.

Mathew was a little more generous that night. He said TULF leaders had surrendered to the terrorists, the Tamil militants. "They have done so out of fear," he charged. He portrayed the rioting as a spontaneous reaction of the Sinhala masses to the killing of the 13 soldiers.

Thondaman was the only minister who spoke against the amending legislation. He defended Amirthalingam and the TULF. He spoke of their various attempts to work out a solution and the failure of the Sinhala leadership to respond. In a statement issued through the Ceylon Workers Congress, Thondaman attacked the theory of spontaneous reaction. "In our thinking," the statement said, "it was the work of well-organised groups, who had gone on a rampage, rioting, looting and setting fire to houses and business establishments."

Prime Minister Premadasa delivered a lengthy speech. The *Daily News* headlined the speech: "End of the road for the TULF-PM". That headline was prophetic. The TULF, which had kept out of the debate, did not return to parliament for the next five years. When it did return in February 1989, it had lost its clout. It came through a common list which lumped with it the two militant groups that accepted Indian patronage.

Hameed's prophesy that the new legislation would give India the role of broker between the TULF and the government became a reality even before the Sixth Amendment was enacted. On 26 July, the Indian Lower House of Parliament or Lok Sabha, denounced Colombo. Some asked Mrs. Gandhi to take stern action to stop the killing of Tamils. Cabinet Secretary P.C. Alexander conveyed the contents of their speeches to her. They discussed ways and means of pacifying the MPs. Mrs. Gandhi asked Chhatwal, who was in Delhi, to rush back to Colombo. She had consultations with Foreign

Minister Narasimha Rao the following day, canceled her trip to Madras and decided to talk to Jayewardene.

Mrs. Gandhi held a telephonic conversation with Jayewardene on Thursday. The Sri Lankan Presidential Secretariat released the following content of their conversation:

Mrs. Gandhi: I am sorry and also concerned over the reports I have received here of the rumours of the murder of the Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka. Questions are now being asked in the Lok Sabha which is even now in session

Jayewardene: I am also equally concerned. I am taking all possible measures to contain rioting and its consequences.

Mrs. Gandhi: I have no doubts about that. I wish I could help by providing food and other essentials.

Jayewardene: Thank you very much for this kind offer. I will let you know if it is necessary.

Mrs. Gandhi: Would you mind if my Foreign Minister Sri Narashima Rao travels over to Sri Lanka today and could you have discussions with him?

Jayewardene: I would welcome your Foreign Minister.

Rao flew into Colombo with Bajpai that evening. He was met at the airport by Hameed. Mrs. Gandhi announced Rao's mission to Colombo to the Lok Sabha that evening itself.

Rao met President Jayewardene at his Ward Place house on Friday over breakfast. Bajpai and Hameed were also present. Rao told Jayewardene of India's concern for the lives and property of Indians in Sri Lanka. In fact, he said, the Indian Overseas Bank and 17 factories owned by Indian businessmen were burnt during the first two days of riots. He also said that sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu had been

enraged. Jayewardene explained the steps taken to contain the situation.

Rao requested permission to visit the refugee camps. This was turned down because it amounted to interference, but permission was granted for Rao to fly by helicopter to Kandy to meet the Deputy High Commissioner.

Rao returned to Colombo that afternoon and held a round of talks with Hameed. Rao related to him the sights he had encountered that morning of Tamils being killed and burnt. He returned to Delhi that evening.

After Rao's return, Indira Gandhi made a statement in the Lok Sabha saying that India stood for the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and would take all steps to help it with humanitarian aid. She followed it up by sending medicines and dry rations. Ships were also made available to transport refugees from Colombo to Jaffna. Over 10,000 refugees took advantage of this facility. Government figures placed the total number of refugees in Colombo at 52,000 and in other places at 12,000. In Colombo alone there were 14 refugee camps.

The reaction in Tamil Nadu was intense. Dr. S. Janarthanam, head of the World Tamil Movement, resigned his post of Chief Whip of the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam Legislative Assembly Group. Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam leader M. Karunanidhi resigned his post as the Leader of the Opposition. The Indian government was asked to intervene militarily. Indira Gandhi appealed to the people of Tamil Nadu to show restraint.

On Monday, 1 August, the Conference of Ministers of the newly-formed South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was inaugurated at Delhi by Mrs. Gandhi. Hameed attended it. Indira Gandhi met him that evening. She expressed her concern over the happenings in Sri Lanka. Hameed told her that there were talks that India would invade Sri Lanka. She assured him that it would not happen.

President Jayewardene had specifically told Hameed to question Indira Gandhi about this because Major General Nalin Seneviratne, a former Army Commander, who was at the Indian Imperial Defence Academy in New Delhi, had been told by a senior officer of the Indian Army of an Indian plan to invade Sri Lanka. He, in turn, had passed on that information to Colombo.

Indian newspapers later published reports of such a plan - that invasion was planned if Jayewardene declined to agree to Rao's visit; that India planned to air drop paratroopers and capture the airports; that the Southern Command of the Indian Army stationed at Secunderabad was given the task of preparing the invasion plan and that all senior officers in New Delhi had been placed on alert.

Tension was mounting in Tamil Nadu and the DMK capitalised on the situation. Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran was accused of being ineffective and of not evincing interest. Hints were bandied of his Malayalee origin and of his birth in Kandy, Sri Lanka. MGR, an ally of Indira's Congress party, reacted by exerting pressure on Delhi to find a solution to the Tamil problem. As a result, Indira Gandhi made a second telephone call to Jayewardene on 5 August. She told him of the need to find a solution to the Tamil problem. He assured her that a solution would be found at the All Party Conference which could not meet on 27 July due to the riots, and said that he would send his younger brother, H.W. Jayewardene, as his special envoy, to talk to her.

H.W. Jayewardene, a constitutional lawyer with wide legal practice, flew to New Delhi on 11 August and had two rounds of talks with Mrs. Gandhi the next day. He told her of the president's anxiety to improve on the DDC and of the All Party Conference he had summoned. Mrs. Gandhi informed him that Tamil Nadu politicians, especially Karunanidhi, were creating problems for her. She was of the

view that the DDC and its improvement would not meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. She indicated her belief that the Sixth Amendment would deprive the Tamils of their representation in parliament. She suggested that the government initiate talks with the TULF to settle the outstanding problems. H.W. Jayewardene said the government had taken a stand not to talk with the TULF till it gave up its separatist stand. Mrs. Gandhi then offered India's good offices to help resolve the Tamil problem. She offered to talk to the Tamil leaders. H.W. Jayewardene agreed but said that he needed to consult the president. Hameed's warning that the Sixth Amendment would give India the role of an intermediary seemed justified.

Mrs. Gandhi announced that very evening, "I expressed the view that the proposals of the Sri Lankan President at the Round Table Conference may not meet the aspirations of the Tamil speaking community. The Sri Lankan special envoy H.W. Jayewardene said that the Sri Lankan government was willing to consider any other proposals which would give the Tamil minority their due share in the affairs of the country within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

"I gave my view that discussion between the government and the Tamil community on this broader basis would be useful and that a solution has to be sought at the conference table."

Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and other TULF leaders had by this time taken refuge in India. They were in Mannar when the riots broke out. The Mannar Convention had been held on 23-24 July. On Saturday, 23 July, delegates had met and reviewed the situation. They had decided not to attend the 27 July meeting of the All Party Conference with an expanded agenda which would include some of the issues the TULF had raised earlier: finances to the DDCs; setting up of Home Guards; implementation of the Tamil language provi-

sions in the constitution; and colonisation. They adopted the stand that the TULF should attend only if the SLFP and other opposition parties did so. But the situation in the country changed completely after the night of 24 July. On 25 July TULF leaders could not return to Colombo.

While they were waiting in Vavuniya, the residences of Chelvanayakam, Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam were attacked. Chelvanayakam's youngest son Chandrakasan lived at Alfred House Gardens, Kollupitiya, and was rescued from the mob by his Sinhalese friends. Mahaweli Minister Gamini Dissanayake was one of the group. Sivasithamparam's home at Canal Row was completely burnt down. His wife and children escaped by jumping over the rear parapet wall into the house of the Sinhala neighbour. Amirthalingam lived in the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, adjoining the parliamentarian's hostel, Sravasti. Part of the house was burnt down.

Amirthalingam and other TULF leaders continued to stay in Vavuniya and decided on 6 August not to take their oaths under the Sixth Amendment. They returned to Colombo on 10 August by which time the situation was under control. Amirthalingam sent a telegram on 11 August to United Nations Secretary General requesting him to form an international peace-keeping force to be sent to Sri Lanka. He, Sivasithamparam and R. Sampanthan, MP for Trincomalee, left for India on 13 August. They met Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran and DMK leader M. Karunanidhi. Amirthalingam told MGR that they wanted to stay in Madras as it was not safe to return to Colombo. MGR put them up in the state guest house and offered full support. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and R. Sampanthan - referred to as the TULF trio - met Mrs. Gandhi on 14 August.

Amirthalingam considered that meeting an important event in his life. He told me that they had talked for over an hour and that Mrs. Gandhi was forthright in her views. She

had told the trio that India could not and would not support a separate state in Sri Lanka. The Tamils should opt for something lesser, she said, for an autonomous region for themselves within a united Sri Lanka, something like that of a state government in India. Amirthalingam understood India's constraints and readily agreed for a solution she had envisaged. It would be difficult to get anything from the Sinhala leadership, he told her, because they lacked political will and preferred to play politics with the Tamil problem; the Tamils were prepared to accept as little as the DDCs but the conservative Buddhist clergy, which all Sinhala Buddhist leaders feared, would not accept even that. The separatist Eelam call was born out of that frustrating experience, he had explained, and added, "If Your Excellency is prepared to persuade Jayewardene to agree for an autonomous state for the Tamils, we would welcome it."

Mrs. Gandhi was impressed, pleased. She invited Amirthalingam as a special guest for India's Independence Day celebrations the next day, 15 August. He was accommodated on the dias at the historic Red Fort. Jayewardene was annoyed at the special treatment accorded to Amirthalingam, and the strongly worded statement made by Mrs. Gandhi about the riots. She had called it genocide.

Mrs. Gandhi made her third telephone call to Jayewardene on 17 August. Jayewardene was in the midst of an interview to Indian journalists, Colombo-based correspondents, and some visiting journalists. After speaking to her, he returned and said, "Mrs. Gandhi is sending Parthasarathi as her special envoy to meet me and start negotiations to find a solution to the racial problem." Then he asked, "Who is Parthasarathi?" He learnt that he was special advisor to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs and a member of the family that owned the *Hindu* newspaper of Madras.

Jayewardene reported to the cabinet on 24 August of Mrs. Gandhi's offer to send Parthasarathi. Gamini Jayasuriya,

Gamini Dissanayake and R. Premadasa opposed Indian mediation. Jayasuriya said, "If we accept India's good offices we won't be able to walk the streets." Jayewardene replied, "Mrs. Bandaranaike is saying India should mediate. She says the government should talk to the terrorists and she says Parthasarathi should be invited to Colombo and yet she is allowed to walk on the streets without any problem."

The President had already invited Parthasarathi to visit Colombo.

Gopalaswamy Parthasarathi, 73, arrived in Colombo on 25 August. Jayewardene told him that he was prepared to implement fully the DDC scheme so that the people of each district could enjoy a measure of autonomy. He said budgetary and constitutional problems had delayed full implementation of the DDC scheme. Parthasarathi said that the DDCs would not meet the aspirations of the Tamil people who wanted a homeland for themselves.

He also met Hameed, Thondaman, Mrs. Bandaranaike, Pieter Keuneman, and other opposition leaders to get their viewpoints on the Tamil problem. On his return to Madras he met the TULF trio, MGR and Karunanidhi.

On 5 September Amirthalingam told Mrs. Gandhi that they would not be satisfied with the DDCs. Later that evening he told the press that the TULF was prepared to negotiate with the Sri Lankan government through Indian mediation. The TULF had, he said, decided to vary the Mannar Convention decision not to talk with Colombo. "The situation has changed since then. The mission of Mr. G. Parthasarathi has positively created a movement towards finding a solution to the Tamil problem."

Twenty days later, a daring jail-break by Tamil militants sent shock waves to Colombo. Following the Welikada killing of Tamil prisoners, the government had transferred some of the Tamil prisoners, including Panagoda Maheswaran,

arrested early that year, S.A. David, founder of the Gandgiyam Movement and owner of the farm in Vavuniya where the LTTE and later the PLOTE had their arms training, Nithyananthan and his wife, arrested for giving medical aid to Sellakili when he was injured in the Chavakachcheri police station attack, and Fr. Singarayar, to the Batticoloa Prison.

The jail-break plan was masterminded by Maheswaran and David. The latter had smuggled out a layout of the prison. They grabbed and gagged Anton and Gnappagasam, two jail guards, when they came in with tea for the prisoners at 7.45 p.m. They locked up the eight guards and the jailor, opened the prison gates and told all the prisoners to run away. They then escaped in vehicles to speed boats awaiting to take them to Tamil Nadu. Fr. Singarayar declined to join them. His argument was that he would be presumed guilty if he escaped. He preferred to face trial and prove his innocence.

This daring jail-break annoyed the government and demoralised the Sinhala people. Colombo's annoyance, as usual, turned towards Amirthalingam when news of his successful campaigns in the USA, UK and other European states reached the country. In those countries Amirthalingam met parliamentarians and opinion-makers and canvassed their support for the Tamil cause. Colombo newspapers published angry comments from Sinhalese politicians and wrote bitter editorials. A chance arrest of the 19 year-old university student Valluvan Rajalingam gave the government propaganda machinery the needed grist.

Valluvan was returning from Madras after accompanying his sister Mallarvalli, engaged to marry Amirthalingam's second son Bahirathan. Soldiers at a military check point at Talaimannar pier found four letters on him and arrested him. They took him to army camps at Talaimannar, Kalladdy and Palaly and finally to the CID headquarters in Colombo.

Valluvan was made to appear on the Rupavahini, the Sri Lankan T.V. network, and asked to read the letters. He

told the interviewer that one of the letters, sent by Kandeepan, Amirthalingam's eldest son, was addressed to Mavai Senathirajah, the leader of the Youth Front. Valluvan read the letter and its English translation. The letter said the TULF was trying to form a Tamil Eelam National Army to train 50 to 100 youth to fight the Sri Lankan army when the time was ripe. It added the TULF had bought two plots of land in Tamil Nadu, through an Indian national, to set up training camps. The plots were purchased with funds collected in London. It said Amirthalingam had met Veluppillai Prabhakaran and that he was looking after the Libyan connection. The letter also contained an admission that the TULF was behind the killing of UNP organiser V. Pulendran.

Amirthalingam immediately denied the letter and stated it was a fabrication. The TULF had no links with the Tigers or any other militant organisation, he told the BBC. The TULF politbureau met in Madras on 17 October and released a statement rejecting the allegations of TULF links with militant movements or that it was responsible for the killing of Pulendran. "We wish also to point out that our political party is committed to the policy of non-violence ... We totally reject any effort to directly or indirectly implicate the party in any incidents of violence or with any violent movement or organisation," the statement stated.

At a special press conference arranged by the Information Department the next day, the government released the text of the three remaining letters. One of them, written by Bahirathan to R. Jayarajah, a former private secretary to Soosaithasan, stated that the extent of the land bought to set up training camps was thirteen acres. The third letter, written to Premkumar, said the recruits from Mannar and Vavuniya were being trained in 'air rifle'. It stated, "It will be victory for us if the Libyan matter comes right."

On 17 October Sivasithamparam and Sampanthan flew to Delhi from Madras. Amirthalingam joined them the next

day, arriving from London. They appraised Mrs. Gandhi and Rao of a sinister move to settle Sinhala people on the right bank of Maduru Oya in the Batticaloa district. They urged her to take steps to resume talks with Colombo.

Mrs. Gandhi briefed the press of these matters and added that a dangerous situation was developing in Sri Lanka as TULF MPs were about to lose their seats. She felt that the Colombo was deliberately dragging its feet and delaying negotiations. She was sending Parthasarathi to Colombo to restart talks.

Home Minister K.W.Devanayagam was upset by the Maduru Oya colonisation even more than the TULF. He called a press conference in September and stated that a massive invasion had been launched, and if the President failed to stop it, he had, as the MP for the area, no option but to resign.

This upset Jayewardene and he summoned Devanayagam. Armed with some photographs and a copy of the letter that Batticaloa Government Agent M. Anthonimuttu had sent to the Ministry of Mahaweli Development on 4 September in which Anthonimuttu had stated that Dimbulagala priest Ven. Seelalankara Thera had illegally settled 700 Sinhala families within the Kalkuddah electorate and had refused to move them out, Devanayagam met the President. Jayewardene summoned the chairman of the Mahaweli Authority N.G.P. Panditharatne and asked him to get the encroachers out. Panditharatne declined saying that Dimbulagala priest had taken the people there. This angered Jayewardene. He said, "If Dimbulagala priest is going to run the Mahaweli Authority, I will appoint the priest the chairman and you can go home."

Jayewardene asked District Minister Paul S. Perera to fly over the area and report the situation to him. Perera did so. I telephoned Paul Perera later that day. He told me he saw a mass of huts and there could well be over 20,000 colonists whereas the Mahaweli Authority had told the President that

only 2000 people had been moved in. Jayewardene ordered the squatters out.

In 1988 when I met Amirthalingam at Hotel Empress, he showed me a book and said, "The truth had come out at last." The book was titled: **For a Sovereign State**, written by Malinga H. Gunaratna. It narrated "how few of us conceived and implemented a plan and a course of action" which resulted in 40,000 Sinhala people invading the Maduru Oya.

Maduru Oya was one of three settlements where a group of Sinhala officials of the Mahaweli Ministry planned to sever the contiguity of the Tamil areas. It would cut Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts; Yan Oya would cut Trincomalee and Mullaitivu districts, and Malwattu Oya would rob a portion of land from the Mannar district. These three Sinhala settlements were intended to alter the ethnic composition of Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Mannar districts.

Gunaratna wrote that the operation to send Sinhala colonists to Maduru Oya started on 1 September when Dimbulagala priest gathered hundreds of Sinhalese and transported them in a fleet of lorries. Devanayagam said most of the lorries belonged to the Mahaweli Authority and Mahaweli contractors. By 15 September, Anthonimuttu had reported that the numbers had swelled to 40,000. Devanayagam held another press conference and announced that the situation was worsening and the Tamils of the Batticaloa district were getting impatient. "If a Sinhala-Tamil clash is to be avoided, the squatters should be sent away," he said.

The President was worried. He could not permit another riot. He summoned a series of high-level conferences with his officials. In the first week of October he told Panditharatne to evict the encroachers from Maduru Oya. By this time their numbers had swelled as Buddhist priests had sent in landless peasants from different parts of the country. Finding that things were not moving, the President ordered the arrest of

the prime movers of the settlement plan. He also appointed Paul Perera as the Acting District Minister of Polannarywa and told him to dismantle the settlements. Perera told me later that he was ready to use force to carry out his assignment.

Dimbulagala monk hurried to Colombo to get the President reverse his order. He failed. He visited all newspaper offices in Colombo and charged that Perera was indulging in an anti-national exercise and jeopardising the welfare of the nation.

Devanayagam reacted to the priest's behaviour. He called a press conference and said that each one of the squatters should be thrown out. To the allegation that plantation Tamils had been encouraged to occupy land earmarked for settlements, he said families rendered refugees during the 1977 and 1981 riots had been settled there with government approval.

Perera did his job meticulously. He used the police and the army to evict the squatters. But that did not end the scheme to colonise other Tamil areas. It continued in Ampara, Trincomalee and Mannar. Their strategy of disrupting the contiguity of the Tamil areas went on uninterrupted. The Yan Oya basin settlements, specially the Weli Oya settlement, continued with vigour during 1984-87, and thereafter from 1990 onwards. Weli Oya earlier called Manal Aru, was intended to sever Trincomalee from Mullaitivu.

While the Maduru Oya problem was drawing the attention of the country, Thondaman went to India on 10 October. He met MGR and Karunanidhi in Madras. In New Delhi he had a series of meetings with Parthasarathi. He also met Mrs. Gandhi and Rao, and the TULF leaders. Amirthalingam told him to look after the interests of the Sri Lankan Tamils in parliament. On his return to Colombo on 22 October Thondaman told the press, "I have now become the sole representative of the Tamils."

He called a press conference on 24 October. He announced, "Amirthalingam has told me that he is prepared to accept a viable alternative. The President must offer an alternative to Eelam."

The TULF leaders lost their seats in the Lankan parliament on 20 October, the last day of the 3-month period allowed to take their oaths under the Sixth Amendment.

On Jayewardene's invitation, Parthasarathi came to Colombo on 7 November to resume discussions. He held a series of talks with Jayewardene, Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali. The government offered to strengthen the DDC law. Parthasarathi repeated that it would not satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people as their demand was for a homeland. After much bargaining, the government agreed to accept the merger of two or more DDCs within a province provided the council's members and a referendum in the district concerned voted for such a merger. The government wanted the Tamils to reciprocate by disavowing separation and by recognising Trincomalee port a central function.

The Presidential Secretariat issued a statement on 10 November embodying these proposals. The President expressed hope that the implementation of the proposals would lead in a reduction of violent activities. Parthasarathi issued a separate statement indicating his preference to regional councils. His statement read: "These (talks) essentially centred on the creation of regional councils with appropriate powers within the framework of a united Sri Lanka."

Premadasa had been avoiding Parthasarathi. On the last day Jayewardene hosted a dinner for which Premadasa was not only invited but was made to sit at Parthasarathi's table.

Mrs. Gandhi invited Amirthalingam to prepare herself for talks with Jayewardene. This annoyed Colombo. Jayewardene unleashed a campaign against him. The papers

charged that Mrs. Gandhi was according him the importance given to a head of state, an oblique reference to the special guest treatment meted out to him at the Independence Day celebrations.

Parthasarathi met the TULF leaders on 17 and 18 November. They reiterated that they would not give in to two basic demands - merger and a Tamil-speaking police force for the north and east. Parthasarathi also had talks with Thondaman who was in New Delhi at his invitation.

Jayewardene flew to New Delhi by Air Lanka on 21 November along with his brother H.W. Jayewardene to attend the Commonwealth Summit. Hameed had preceded a few days earlier. Jayewardene was accommodated at the President's Suite at Ashoka Hotel, the hotel where other heads of state had also been put up. Parthasarathi met Jayewardene in his suite with the TULF response to the Colombo proposals. They had stated, he said, that they were prepared to accept Trincomalee Port under central control but wanted the limits of the port area defined, that they were opposed to the referendum proposal and had insisted that the DDCs should be allowed to merge even outside provincial boundaries. Also, the TULF insisted on a Tamil police force but was prepared to allow the people of Ampara decide their future.

Jayewardene agreed to do away with the referendum but insisted that the merger would be within a province. He could not accept the merger of the northern and eastern provinces and he opposed the setting up of a separate Tamil speaking police force but indicated his willingness to devolve a certain amount of law enforcing authority to the TULF.

Parthasarathi conveyed Colombo's position to the TULF. Amirthalingam refused to yield on the two basic demands concerning merger and a separate police force. The talks were about to collapse and Amirthalingam threatened to fly back to Madras but Parthasarathi persuaded him to stay back.

Jayewardene met Mrs. Gandhi before the summit. She told him that India supported the democratically elected government of Sri Lanka and was against the division of the country. She wanted him to find a political settlement for the Tamil problem within the country's united framework. She appraised him of India's concern: the influx of refugees and the strong feelings of the people of Tamil Nadu. Jayewardene, in turn, told her of his problems and of the fear of the Sinhala people that Tamils would dominate the country.

On 24 November Jayewardene annoyed Mrs. Gandhi with his speech at the Commonwealth Political Committee discussions. He said, "If I have the strength and life I will not let my people be subject to anybody. Fifteen million people will die if an atom bomb is exploded in Sri Lanka; fifteen million people can die if they are invaded by someone else and decide never to give in."

This was a reference to the earlier rumour that India intended to invade Sri Lanka. She alluded to his speech when she met Tamil expatriates in New York in December. She made contemptuous references to Jayewardene and said she would have ordered the invasion of Sri Lanka but had reservations because of the defenselessness of the Indian plantation workers, alluding to the statement made by Gamini Dissanayake that India would need one hour to capture Sri Lanka but the Sinhalese needed only fifteen minutes to kill all the Tamils.

Jayewardene went to Goa with other heads of states for the retreat after the formal inauguration of the summit. Parthasarathi also went with them and met Jayewardene separately. Jayewardene agreed to place and recommend some of the issues on which agreement was reached before the All Party Conference. He agreed to stay back in New Delhi for a meeting with Mrs. Gandhi.

The Commonwealth Summit concluded on 29 November, and on 30 November Parthasarathi urged Jayewardene to invite the TULF for the All Party Conference, that even Mrs. Bandaranaike had said it should be invited for dialogue without preconditions. Jayewardene agreed to put the issue to the APC. He met Mrs. Gandhi later. He informed her that the cabinet had decided against talking to the TULF, but she persuaded him to invite its members to the Conference.

Hameed prepared the draft communique that was issued in Colombo on Jayewardene's return. On Parthasarathi's advice, Hameed removed the paragraphs which related to the assurance the TULF had given indicating it was prepared to give up its call for a separate state if a solution to the problem was worked out. Parthasarathi felt that their inclusion would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the TULF to attend the All Parties Conference. (APC)

Amirthalingam and his colleagues met Mrs. Gandhi after Jayewardene left for Colombo. Though he was persuaded by Mrs. Gandhi to attend the conference, Amirthalingam had difficulty convincing the radicals in the TULF. He told them that India's mediatory role had altered the situation, and that the Sinhala leadership may not dishonour such agreements. He also argued that they should be prepared to accept and work out any reasonable alternative to a separate state.

Sivasithamparam captured the changed environment with an apt analogy. He told the *Conference on Solidarity with Tamils in Sri Lanka* on 3 December at the Taj Hotel, New Delhi, "We tried doctors in Sri Lanka but they could not find a cure. The patient has now come to India and the Indian doctors have prescribed the medicine of attending the APC talks." Amirthalingam addressed the meeting and said, "Parthasarathi was sent as an emissary. He went and asked for five villages and then five houses and asked for war only when they were refused." His allusion was to what Lord

Krishna (also known as Parthasarathi) had preached in the Indian epic Mahabharata.

Thondaman also had a meeting with Mrs. Gandhi and returned to Colombo a few days after Jayewardene. He called a press conference and said there was only one area - the question of merger - which he felt could be resolved. He described the New Delhi meeting as fruitful.

On his return Jayewardene started the negotiating process. He invited, separately, political parties and some Buddhist organisations for consultations. Those invited were: Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Communist Party, Mahajana Eksath Party, Tamil Congress, Democratic Workers Congress and the Ceylon Workers Congress. He asked them two questions: whether they agreed to his inviting the TULF to the All Party Conference and the nature of the package they would accept for a solution.

Amirthalingam was also active. He tried to create a psychological environment conducive for talks by issuing statements to the press expressing hopes that the APC would help find a solution. He also convinced radicals in his party and consulted the militant groups based in Madras, including the PLOTE, LTTE and TELO. He also met MGR, Karunanidhi and leaders of other parties in Tamil Nadu and briefed them of the Parthasarathi proposals and their implications. He wanted to carry the SLFP and other opposition parties along with him in this.

Opposition parties, including the SLFP, convinced Jayewardene that the TULF would have to be invited to lend creditability to the APC, but he ran into opposition within his own party and with the Buddhist clergy.

Jayewardene invited all recognised political parties, other than the JVP and NSSP which were then under proscription, to a meeting on 21 December. The meeting was asked

to decide on the dates and venue of subsequent meetings, parties to be invited, agenda and any other matter. Mrs. Bandaranaike, who led the SLFP delegation, said, "We have always said the TULF should be invited." After a 90-minute discussion, it was decided to invite the TULF and to hold the next meeting on 10 January 1984.

The government informally conveyed the decision to invite the TULF to Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam. Amirthalingam expressed great satisfaction at the decision. Jayewardene handed over the formal invitation to Indian High Commissioner Chhatwal on 28 December, who, in turn, flew to Madras that same night and handed it over to Amirthalingam. He also held a brief meeting with Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam. Later he left for New Delhi.

Two documents were also delivered to Amirthalingam with the invitation. They were marked Annexure A and Annexure B. Annexure A contained five published documents. Annexure B contained the following 14-point peace plan for consideration by the APC:

1. That the demand for a separate state be abandoned.
2. That mergers of the DDCs within a province be made possible if that is the desire of the Councils and is endorsed by the people of district at a referendum. This principle will be applicable to the whole country.
3. Those areas where regional councils are set up to establish the convention that the leader of the party commanding the majority of the council will be formally appointed chief minister of the region by the President. The chief minister will work with an executive committee constituted by him (the chief minister).

4. The President and Parliament will continue to have overall responsibility for all subjects not transferred to the region and, in general, all matters relating to the maintenance of the sovereignty, integrity, unity, security, progress and development of the Republic as a whole.
5. The councils will have power to levy taxes, a cess or a fee and to raise loans as well as to receive grants and allocations from the central government.
6. The administration for the Port of Trincomalee will remain a central government function.
7. A High Court will function in each region while the Supreme Court will exercise separate and constitutional jurisdiction.
8. The list of subjects to be allocated to the regional councils will be worked out in detail. The councils will be empowered to exercise executive power in the fields allocated to them.
9. Those serving in a region or seconded to it will constitute a regional service of public officials.
10. A Regional Public Service Commission will be set up for recruitment and disciplinary matters.
11. The Public Service of Sri Lanka and the armed services will reflect the country's ethnic composition. Within the region the police service which will be responsible for internal security will reflect the ethnic composition of the region.
12. A national policy on land settlement will be worked out.
13. The constitutional provisions and the other laws on the official language (Sinhala) and the national languages (Sinhala and Tamil) will be accepted and

implemented. This will also apply to the laws dealing with the national flag and national anthem.

14. There will be united opposition to the use of violence and terrorism to attain political objectives.

The newspapers headlined proposals contained in Annexure B as peace proposals and government proposals. The Presidential Secretariat issued a statement stating that the 14-point proposals would form the subjects for discussion and denied that they were government proposals. Meanwhile, the TULF was upset. Amirthalingam phoned Parthasarathi on 30 December and said the President had gone back on his undertakings, that the placing as the first item the abandoning of the call for a separate state was mischievous. He said that the TULF would give up the Eelam demand only if a viable alternative was found. He objected to the second point which had brought back the referendum question. Other matters too had been diluted, he said. Parthasarathi invited the TULF leaders to New Delhi.

Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam flew down that very day and met Parthasarathi, Narashima Rao and Mrs. Gandhi. The Indian Prime Minister phoned Jayewardene and suggested that Parthasarathi visit Colombo to sort things out. After discussions with his cabinet, he rang back and said that his government favoured Parthasarathi's visit.

Parthasarathi arrived on 3 January and met the President that evening. He conveyed the TULF objections and told him that if the Tamils were to give up their separatist demand, the government would have to create conditions of safety and security for the Tamil people. He said the safety of the Tamils in the north and east could only be guaranteed by creating an autonomous administration in the amalgamated North-East Province. He added that the government would also have to ensure the safety and security of Tamils living outside the two provinces. Jayewardene relented and circulated the agreement

reached between him and Parthasarathi as Annexure C, which came to be known as Parthasarathi-Jayewardene proposal. But Jayewardene was reluctant to own it saying that he had not signed it. He declined to place it before the APC as a government document. Thondaman placed it as his document.

Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam, Sampanthan and Thangadurai also arrived in Colombo on 3 January amid tight security and were driven under armed escort to Hotel Taprobane at Fort. They had a meeting with Parthasarathi that night who advised them to participate in the 10 January talks and to raise all matters they wanted discussed.

The SLFP Central Committee, at a 2-hour meeting that evening, decided to seek clarifications from Jayewardene. Its aim was not to reveal its hand before the UNP and felt that the President was trying to trick them to do that very thing. Anura Bandaranaike told me, "By disowning the formula he worked out with Mr. Parthasarathi the President is not only trying to trick Mr. Parthasarathi but also the country. How can we take up a position unless we know the government's position? Already he is saying he agreed to invite the TULF because Mrs. Bandaranaike wanted him to do so. Later he will say he agreed for a merger because the SLFP wanted him to. How can we trust a man who lacked courage to take a definite stand?"

When I conveyed Anura's comments to Amirthalingam and asked for his reaction, he said, "It is this UNP-SLFP contest to gain from the Tamil problem that caused frustration among Tamils and made them to think about a separate state. Unless these two parties take a common stand and decide to solve the Tamil problem by being reasonable you cannot avoid the division of the country. They are doing politics with the Tamil problem. As long as they do that they are damaging the Sinhala race and the country."

Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Yogeswaran went to Jaffna on 8 January and were greeted by posters demanding them not to attend the APC. When they visited the Jaffna Campus, students hooted at them. They also found that four female and five male undergraduates had undertaken a fast. However, on their return to Colombo the TULF Politbureau decided to attend the APC.

The SLFP and MEP boycotted the 10 January meeting of the APC. The reason for keeping away, they said, was the failure of the government to submit its proposals. The APC was inaugurated at 10 a.m. at the BIMCH. Amirthalingam later told me that Jayewardene welcomed him with a broad smile. Prime Minister Premadasa read a statement on the preparation of the agenda. The President, in his address, summarised the three objectives of the conference: "Firstly, the ensuring of the sovereignty and independence of the country; secondly, the continuation of the unitary state and its integrity, and thirdly, to work jointly to eliminate all forms of violence."

The first few days were devoted to allow each party to make statements on the problems under discussion. Amirthalingam's lengthy address stressed two points: the Tamils were a separate nation, historically, culturally, linguistically and territorially and that they wanted to live with the Sinhala nation as partners but were denied their share.

To offset the impact of the SLFP boycott, the President invited religious and other groups to participate in the APC. The Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha, which considered itself the guardian of Buddhism and the Sinhala race, was one of them. It comprised Maha Nayaka Theros of the Asgiriya and Malwatta Chapters, and Maha Theros Ven. Dr. Walpola Rahula, Ven. Dr. Bellanwila, Ven. Dr. Henpitagedra Gnanawansa and Ven. Mapalagama.

At the APC meeting on 20 March Jayewardene announced that a consensus had been reached on the need for devolution and proposed that two committees be formed: one on devolution and the other on grievances. A shocked Amirthalingam objected, saying that the TULF was not aware of any consensus in the matter. Jayewardene's reply was that he had taken the decision and "My decision is the consensus." Amirthalingam demanded that his protest be noted.

The committee on devolution was headed by Premadasa. Its responsibility was to work out in detail the structure, powers and functions of the unit of devolution.

The committee on grievances was headed by Devanayagam. Its responsibility was to consider steps that needed to be implemented in the spheres of education, employment and language rights.

The plenary was adjourned for 9 May, allowing time for the committees to prepare their reports.

The TULF and India were not happy with the manner the APC was being conducted. The TULF protested at the seven-week postponement and charged that the government was using the APC to buy time to strengthen its military. India was annoyed with the campaign Colombo unleashed against Parthasarathi and the TULF, and with the efforts it was making to obtain outside help.

The fact that Jayewardene was keen in beefing up the military was widely known. Athulathmudali had been appointed Minister of National Security in April and told to expand and modernise the army and the intelligence services. Athulathmudali ordered a crack down against the militants. The Sri Lankan army had been, since independence, maintained mainly for ceremonial purposes. It had first been called into service in 1958 to help the police quell communal riots. It had accredited itself well. But there had been a few

instances of excesses, the worst being the shooting of Padavia colonists on their way to attack Vavuniya. The colonists were shot, bodies piled into open lorries and taken through the streets of Anuradhapura as a warning to rioters.

The Sri Lankan army was used in a major way to crush the 1971 JVP insurrection. There had been several cases of excesses during that operation too. Foreign journalists in Sri Lanka at that time reported various violent incidents. A.C. Alles, in his book *Insurgency 1971*, quotes from Halliday's *The Ceylonese Insurrection* (page 201), "Wijeweera, in a statement from prison in 1972, said that 15,000 revolutionaries had been killed, but twice that number of innocent people had also died. Other estimates range from the official figure of 12,000 to as high as 50,000. What is clear is that the armed forces launched an indiscriminate attack on the peasant population as a whole." The Kataragama beauty queen Premawathie Manamperi's torture and killing by Lieutenant Wijesuriya is well known.

Since the late 'seventies the army and the police became more communal. They regarded Tamil militancy as a challenge to the Sinhala race. They reacted to each attack by collectively punishing the Tamil people living close to the site of the attack. The Tamils believed that the unprofessional behaviour of the army and the police enjoyed the blessings of the top political leadership because not only was no action taken to punish wrong-doers, some of them were even protected and promoted. In a letter Amirthalingam wrote to Jayewardene just before the 1983 riots, he said that though prosecutions were initiated against some of the policemen involved in the killing and arson in Chunnakam and Kankesanthurai in May-June 1981, none of them were arrested and produced at the Mallakam court. The government transferred the case to Colombo to help the policemen involved.

When Athulathmudali took charge of the army in 1984, its strength was 11,000 regulars and between 2,000 to 4,000 volunteers. He launched a recruitment drive and by 1987 increased its strength to 50,000. By the beginning of 1992 the total strength of the security forces was 80,000.

While expanding the army and gearing it for a military onslaught on the militants, the government also sought military and intelligence help from foreign sources. This search for friends started soon after the 1983 July riots. H.W. Jayewardene was sent on a mission to countries in Asia and Australia to create world opinion against the TULF Eelam demand and India. He visited the capitals of Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand. He succeeded in getting the leaders of these countries condemn Eelam demand but it was only in China that he was able to get an indirect criticism of India. The statement issued by Beijing included this sentence: "The big must not bully the small."

The President sent Hameed to the United States for military help. The United States refused to get involved directly. Instead, it asked Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia to give help. It also informed India of the visit of top level official Veron Walters to Colombo to meet Jayewardene.

In October Jayewardene decided to seek assistance from Israel and authorised his son Ravi to take on the task. In November a secret meeting between Defence Secretary G.V.P. Samarasinghe and the Israelis was arranged in Europe. Later that month they met again in Washington where an agreement was signed by which Israel would loan a few Shin Biet intelligence officers and Colombo would permit the opening of an Israeli Interests Section in the American Embassy.

In January 1984 the President informed the cabinet of the agreement. The two Muslim ministers, M.H. Mohamed and

Hameed opposed it vehemently whilst Athulathmudali and Anandatissa de Alwis supported it saying their priority was to defeat the Tamil militants. The Israeli Interest Section was opened in May 1984. Israeli officers were taken to Panagoda Army cantonment to train Lankan officers on intelligence gathering and bomb disposal techniques.

India took serious note of these developments and Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao told Lok Sabha that India had reason to believe that foreign military assistance, other than from India, had been sought. Colombo was angry with this statement. It launched an anti-India campaign, accusing it of playing big brother and ridiculed its claim of regional power. "Sri Lanka, a free and sovereign nation, has the right to seek assistance from whichever quarter it deems fit," Jayewardene told a public meeting in January 1984. Premadasa announced in parliament on 22 March, "We will stand any challenge. We won't let India bully us. I make this statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka."

Colombo manoeuvrings and its anti-TULF propaganda upset the Tamil leaders. They decided not to participate in the working of the committees. This decision was conveyed to the APC on 9 May when it met in plenary. Amirthalingam and Kumar Ponnambalam read separate statements explaining their decision. They said that they were under heavy pressure from the militants to withdraw from the APC altogether. The government too, they said, was adopting an unaccommodative position. The Prime Minister's statement in parliament that the government would not agree for anything more the District Development Councils, and its lack of courage to place Annexure C as its document showed, they argued, that not much could be achieved through the APC. But Parthasarathi prevailed upon the TULF to continue to attend the plenary.

India's concern was expressed in a statement by Mrs. Gandhi urging Colombo to return to the negotiating table. A

few days later, on 14 May, armed Tamil militants launched a massive attack on the Buddhist holy city of Anuradhapura, drove up to the Sacred Bo Tree in a hijacked bus and sprayed pilgrims with bullets, killing 72 and injuring many more. They then drove to Welpattu jungle, mowed down the forest guards with machine gunfire and escaped. That shocked Jayewardene and outraged the Sinhala people. It also made them realise their helplessness.

The LTTE revealed in a statement issued in 1988 that the Anuradhapura massacre was planned and executed under the guidance of the Indian external intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Colombo had accused RAW after the 1986 massacre. The fact that it trained Tamil militant groups is now well documented. The decision to train Tamil militant groups was taken by Mrs. Gandhi based on the report Narasimha Rao had submitted after his return from Colombo during the July riots. Rao's report stressed the necessity of making use of the Tamil militants to weaken Colombo. Training had started sometime in September 1983, two months after the 1983 July riots. As Balasingham, political advisor to the LTTE, told *Frontline* magazine in 1986, the objective of the Indian policy was to get Jayewardene to start talks with Sri Lankan Tamils making use of India's good offices.

Mrs. Gandhi gave RAW the responsibility of training the Tamil groups. The job of bringing the Tamil militant groups to India was given to a young Tamil leader who had emigrated to India. He had close contact with the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), formed by Kuttimani and Thangathurai. After their capture, Sri Sabaratnam headed the organisation. RAW selected the TELO because it was not committed to any political philosophy like the other groups, its members had no political ambitions, and it was the most trusted of the lot. It was willing to do whatever India wanted it to do. Training the first batch of 350 TELO cadres started

in late September 1983, in a secret destination outside New Delhi. A vast training camp was set up in 1984 on a 200-acre plot in Salem hills in Tamil Nadu. TELO became one of the favourites of India and of Mrs. Gandhi.

The Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), headed by Velupillai Balakumar, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), headed by Uma Maheswaran, and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), headed by S. Pathmanaba, vied with each other to get Indian training. RAW took these groups separately to Uttar Pradesh and trained at different locations around Dehra Dun, near Delhi airport and at Ramakrishnapuram in the heart of New Delhi itself. Initially, training was given to 200 cadres from EROS, 100 from EPRLF and 70 from PLOTE.

Prabhakaran learnt of this training program only in early 1984 and became suspicious about India's and RAW's intentions. There are two versions on how Prabhakaran and RAW came into contact with each other. According to P. Nedumaran, he learnt about the training program and was instrumental in getting RAW and Prabhakaran together. But according to the version put out by the LTTE, it was RAW which approached Prabhakaran. The LTTE cadres were trained at Bangalore cantonment. The LTTE then organised several training camps in Tamil Nadu on its own.

Nedumaran told *Frontline* that Amirthalingam had not been informed of the training program for militants until he, Nedumaran, told him about it. Amirthalingam confirmed to me that he had not been aware of the training program.

Amirthalingam was disturbed by the Anuradhapura massacre. He told me on 1 June after the APC meeting, "This man (Jayewardene) is not showing any keenness in solving this problem even after the death of so many civilians." Earlier on that day at the APC, he had raised the need for an early political solution and had asked the President whether he was

thinking of a military solution after the recruitment of Israeli anti-subversion agents. Jayewardene had not answered, only smiled.

On 14 June 1984 Jayewardene went on a state visit to five countries - China, Japan, South Korea, the United States and Britain. He was enthused by the talks he had with US President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. These talks paved the way for an increased influx of Israeli officers and retired British SAS men. They also paved the way for deals with US arms suppliers and supplies of South African arms and personnel carriers.

He visited New Delhi on his way back. Athulathmudali and the TULF leaders were also in the Indian capital for consultations. Mrs. Gandhi asked Jayewardene why regional councils could not be granted. The Lankan President replied, "I cannot carry the people with me on that. We, as a party, will lose the entire base if we give this." He also said that terrorism by Tamil militants was making the Sinhala people adopt a harder stand.

Jayewardene also evaded answering Parthasarathi's query about establishing provincial councils. Instead, he tried to confuse the issue by raising the question of establishing a second chamber. But Amirthalingam opposed the proposal saying it was retrograde.

A few days after the Jayewardene-Indira meeting, the TULF decided to stage a one-day fast at Veeramakaliamman temple in Jaffna. Militant youth called it a farce and said only force would work. "All your policy of cooperation has failed. Only force will yield results," they said in a leaflet advising the public not to join the fast. They exploded bombs before dawn to scare people away. When Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam came to the temple at 7 a.m. there were only a handful of volunteers; the numbers swelled to about 200 by late morning. By noon over a hundred youth joined them and

started to ask questions. "Do you want the Tamil people to be deceived by the Sinhala politicians again?" they asked. Sivasithamparam tried to answer but was not allowed to speak. The youth said they wanted to hear the answer from the people. They then tried to distribute food parcels. Some took the parcels to Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam but were prevented from force-feeding the leaders. Only eighteen persons were seen fasting around noon.

Jayewardene and Athulathmudali revelled at the fate of the TULF. Both launched a campaign to discredit the TULF saying that it had lost its mandate to represent the Tamil people. Athulathmudali argued that there was no point in talking to the TULF leaders as they represented only themselves.

Colombo let loose another round of vigorous anti-TULF and anti-India campaigns. The charge against the TULF was that it was the moving force behind Tamil militants. India was charged with training and supporting militant groups.

The TULF had offended the government on two fronts: refusal to accept the DDCs, and the speeches Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam had delivered at the 2-day session on "Violations of Human Rights in Sri Lanka", held in Madras on 23 and 24 April. Both men had related the series of incidents where the Sri Lankan army had burnt and pillaged Tamil houses and shops in retaliation to attacks by the militants. Amirthalingam had also appealed to the Tamil militant groups to get together and wage a common battle.

Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran also wanted the Tamil militants to sink their differences and fight together to achieve their goal. He said the Indian central government and Tamil Nadu state government did have limitations in extending support to Sri Lankan Tamils, but at the same time they would not be passive spectators to the killings in Sri Lanka.

A few days later, on 2 August, the Meenambakkam bomb blast occurred. A passenger, calling himself Kathiresan, had checked in two brief cases with the tag CMB, denoting Colombo. These were weighed and moved for loading into the Air Lanka Boeing 737 aircraft. As no passenger claimed them, they were kept out. A massive blast occurred at 10.52 p.m. killing six men and twenty-four women. Eighteen of the women were Sri Lankans returning home from the Gulf States.

The bomb was timed to go off at Colombo International Airport where planes bound for London and Paris were to take off around that time. The operation was planned and executed by Panagoda Maheswaran, then in Tamil Nadu after the Batticoloa jail break. Colombo made full use of the incident to point accusing fingers at India, the TULF and the militants groups.

The APC met in plenary on 17 August. Premadasa, who headed the committee on devolution, presented his committee's report and said the committee had left the question of the unit of devolution open. He left the plenary to decide whether the unit of devolution should be the district council or the provincial council.

The unit of devolution was considered when the APC met in plenary on 3 September. Amirthalingam rejected both the district and provincial councils and pressed for a regional council comprising the northern and eastern provinces. He said the TULF would try to sell the solution to the Tamil people if they were given a regional council. "If the Regional Council request is denied, the TULF has no option but to carry on its struggle for the liberation of the Tamil people, for the preservation of the integrity of the traditional homeland and for justice and human rights by all non-violent means." Kumar Pannambalam and Thondaman backed the regional council demand.

Jayewardene adjourned the plenary to 15-16 November when, he said, draft legislation to implement the recommendations of the two committees would be ready. The drafts were not ready and the plenary was postponed for 14 December. During this period he held a series of consultations with political parties and groups, and asked legal experts to prepare the draft legislation.

Mrs. Gandhi's assassination in December removed the pressure on Colombo. In fact, official sources expressed a sense of relief. Her death came as a great shock to the Tamils, specially the TULF. Amirthalingam sent a telegram to her son Rajiv Gandhi in which he said, "The Sri Lankan people have lost their mother." In a press statement he said that the Tamil people, who were in a state of uncertainty, were now full of anxiety regarding their future. He told me, "The old man will now try to wriggle out of all his commitments."

And that is exactly what happened. On 14 December Jayewardene presented the draft legislation to the plenary of the APC and adjourned the meeting for 21 December. The draft provided for a 5-tier administrative framework for the districts and provinces. The basic unit would be the Gramodhaya Manhalayas, a body chosen from the voluntary societies in the villages. The next would be the Pradesheeya Sabhas, elected bodies, one for each of the 250 Assistant Government Agent divisions. Above them would be the District Councils, also elected, one for each of the 25 districts. These would be similar to the District Development Councils, then in existence. The draft bill provided for the creation of Inter-district Authorities, to be named Provincial Councils. Provision was also made for District Ministers and Provincial Ministers. On the national level, the draft bill proposed the creation of a second chamber named the Council of States. Thus this went one step beyond the District Development scheme.

Athulathmudali, the conference spokesman, announced the details of the draft to the media and said the people would be consulted before its adoption. Premadasa took it to the people the next day in his address to the UNP annual convention. He demanded that the people be consulted in a referendum and asked them to consider whether the new arrangement posed a threat to the unitary character of the constitution.

Jayewardene answered Premadasa's question. He said as the new arrangement did not give federal powers to the districts or regions, it did not pose a threat to the unitary character of the constitution. He also recommended its adoption as the TULF had agreed to drop its Eelam demand. This slight change in his attitude could be contributed to the fact that the on-going military operations were eating into the country's earnings and donor countries were pressing for a political solution.

Jayewardene followed up his defence of the draft arrangement by launching a campaign to gain the support of the UNP MPs. He met them in three batches. Meanwhile Buddhist monks started a campaign against the proposals. Ven. Madihe Pannaseeha Nayakka Thero convened a meeting at Naga Vihara in Sri Jayewardhenapura, Kotte, and told Buddhist priests that the proposed arrangement posed a threat to the country, the Sinhala race and Buddhism. He appealed to them to start a *satyagraha* to oppose the provincial council system. An anti-Jayewardene group within the UNP also organised itself to oppose the draft proposal.

The TULF politbureau met in Colombo to consider the draft. Sivasithamparam and the extremist group in the party said the proposals failed to meet the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people and wanted them rejected. Amirthalingam, though unhappy with the proposals, threw his weight behind the moderates and argued that Tamils should give the proposals a chance.

The plenary met on 21 December. Jayewardene pulled a surprise by inviting the delegates to send their views in writing to him and requested the Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha to examine the proposals carefully. He said the government was prepared to go before the people by way of a referendum or an election. He hoped all the work would bring peace, unity and stability to the country.

The TULF was unhappy. Amirthalingam wanted to make a statement but was not given a chance. The TULF politbureau met that night and castigated him and other moderates for placing their faith in Jayewardene. Amirthalingam was told to issue a statement the next day voicing the party's rejection of Jayewardene's move. In a 2-page statement Amirthalingam pointed out that in his very first statement to the APC in January he had stated clearly that the TULF mandate at the 1977 election was for a separate state. The party had agreed to accept the formation of an autonomous Tamil linguistic region comprising the northern and eastern provinces and had undertaken to recommend such an alternative to the Tamil people because it had accepted the good offices of India.

The statement concluded, "A careful study of the provisions of the draft bills placed before the conference will convince anyone that they fall far short of the regional autonomy indicated above. When we accepted the scheme of District Development Councils in 1980, it was clearly understood that it was not meant to be an alternative to our demand for a separate state."

SLFP leader Sirima Bandaranaike and TULF baiter Minister Cyril Mathew seized the TULF statement to whip up opposition to the draft bills. Mrs. Bandaranaike, in a 5-page statement issued a few hours after Amirthalingam's, said, "The people of this country will be well advised to reject the draft legislation clearly and categorically."

Mathew released a letter addressed, "Reverend Sirs, honourable ministers, honourable members and dear friends", in which he said he was "unable to advice anybody to agree to the proposed legislation". He appealed to the government to drop it entirely.

Buddhist priests too started to exert pressure. Jayewardene felt pressurised enough to drop the proposals. He was told that if he continued with the proposals Sinhala Buddhists would brand him a traitor, Athulathmudali told me later.

Jayewardene placed the matter before the cabinet on 19 December, and on 26 December the cabinet decided to discontinue the APC. A communique to that effect was issued that evening. It read: "Some of the proposals which represented the views of the majority of the delegations of the All Party Conference were placed before the Cabinet of Ministers on Wednesday December 19, 1984 for discussions. They were discussed again on December 26. In the meantime the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) which until December 21, was discussing the details of the system of government and decentralisation of authority outlined in the proposals with the government delegation had publicly proclaimed that no useful purpose could be served by discussing them further. The cabinet has therefore decided that no useful purpose could be achieved in discussing or arriving at a decision on these proposals. The cabinet requested His Excellency the President to continue his efforts to find a political solution while taking all measures to eradicate terrorism."

Athulathmudali called a press conference to explain the cabinet decision. He informed the press that the TULF had breached faith in releasing its statement to the press. A political solution, he said, would remain the government's goal, but terrorism would have to be put down with a sterner hand. Later I asked Athulathmudali whether the abandonment

of the talks would not weaken the hands of the moderates within the TULF. He said that he personally thought so but "the people at the top do not seem to think that way"

The TULF was shocked at the government's decision to drop the APC proposals. Amirthalingam issued a statement expressing his surprise at the development and stated that the government's move was in fact a reiteration of the known position that any alternative the TULF would recommend to the Tamil people would have to embody the basic demands of the Tamil people. "We therefore feel surprised that the government should express disappointment at the contents of a statement which stated that the proposals in the present form did not satisfy our demands for regional autonomy," the statement concluded.

I met Amirthalingam to obtain the statement for the *Daily News*. I found him sad, downcast. He said the Sinhala leadership had let them down badly. They had lost face with the Tamil people, he said, and added, "The President and his advisors think that they had destroyed us and that they can destroy the 'boys' by military action. He is making a big mistake. India and the Tamils living outside Sri Lanka will never allow the 'boys' to be defeated. The Sinhala people will have to ultimately pay for this short-sighted, selfish policy of Jayewardene".

He felt sad, he said, that all the work of Parthasarathi and the APC had been reduced to naught. He saw no future for a negotiated settlement and said he would return to India to report to Rajiv Gandhi, who had succeeded his slain mother as prime minister. Jayewardene tried to mollify the outraged Tamil and Indian opinion by dismissing Mathew, whom he charged for violating cabinet collective responsibility by campaigning against the APC proposals. Mathew told a press conference that the President had dropped him from the cabinet on the request of Parthasarathi. Chhatwal in Colombo and the Indian Foreign Ministry in New Delhi denied the allegation.

The militants reacted the way Jayewardene had anticipated. They announced that their stand that talks with the Sinhala leadership were futile had been vindicated, and said the role of the moderate political leadership was over. The only path left to the Tamils to achieve their just rights lay with the gun. And as if to prove that, they stepped up their attacks on the police and security forces.

The year-long APC exercise cannot be dismissed as totally worthless. It did produce an important result by helping to end the problem of statelessness of persons of Indian origin. This problem had been created by the UNP government in 1948 when it de-citizenised the people of Indian origin. In the two pacts of 1964 and 1974, India and Sri Lanka had agreed to share an estimated 950,000 Indian Tamils of recent origin - 600,000 would go to India, 375,000 would remain in Sri Lanka. But in actual fact only 504,000 applied to return to India leaving a shortfall of 94,000. The dispute was as to who should take them. India insisted that it was bound to take back only the 504,000 who had applied for Indian citizenship; those who wanted to become Indian citizens. The Ceylon Workers Congress wanted Sri Lanka to absorb them and bring to an end the ignominy of statelessness.

Jayewardene knew that the SLFP would oppose the granting of citizenship to the stateless. However, without the support from the Maha Sangha, SLFP's opposition would lack clout. Jayewardene won over the Sangha by playing on their concern about the Indian threat. He told them that India could interfere only if Indians, nationals and the stateless, remained in Sri Lanka. If the stateless were made Sri Lankan citizens and Indian nationals sent away, India would have no pretext to interfere in support of the Tamils. The Mahanayakas swallowed the argument. They submitted a resolution signifying their approval to the granting of citizenship to the stateless.

The resolution read, "We should not have a category of persons who call themselves Indians. This can easily be achieved by sending back those who have to be sent back to India, as stated in the Sirima-Shastri Pact, and by giving citizenship to the rest. Even though the numbers may be a little more, the Supreme Sangha Council declares that the Council is not opposed to their being given citizenship in order to arrive at a solution to this problem."

The priests announced their decision to the media. They did not want to give India any pretext or cause to interfere in Lankan affairs, they said. If despite the granting of citizenship to the stateless India meddled in Lankan affairs, India would stand exposed to the world.

Amirthalingam was in constant touch with Parthasarathi since Sri Lanka dropped the draft proposals. Parthasarathi wanted him to fly to New Delhi for a meeting with Rajiv Gandhi. The TULF leaders met Parthasarathi on 13 January 1985 and Rajiv Gandhi the following day. In the evening Amirthalingam told newsmen that he had asked the Indian government to take steps to prevent further loss of innocent Tamil lives in Sri Lanka. Colombo was unhappy about the Rajiv-Amirthalingam meeting. That unhappiness was conveyed to India. Anandatisssa de Alwis, the cabinet spokesman of the Sri Lankan government, told reporters in Colombo on 16 January, "The government is unhappy that those who seek to separate and partition Sri Lanka and who had rejected the proposals worked out after one and a half years of deliberations are having access to foreign governments. We have brought it to the notice of the Indian government."

Two days later, Rajiv Gandhi summoned Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi, Bernard Tilakaratna, and expressed his wish to help Sri Lanka resolve its ethnic conflict. He suggested a summit with Jayewardene. The Sri Lankan President was not keen but sent Athulathmudali as his

special envoy on 11 February. Athulathmudali agreed with Rajiv Gandhi that a fresh attempt at a settlement was needed, but advised that Parthasarathi be kept out of the negotiating process as the Sinhala people felt he was emotionally involved with the TULF. Rajiv Gandhi readily agreed and said the new Foreign Secretary, Romesh Bhandari, would replace him.

Bhandari visited Colombo in April and had talks with Jayewardene and Athulathmudali at the end of which Jayewardene announced a 5-point package. It involved the proclamation of a general amnesty to all militants who laid down their arms, the release of prisoners jailed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the confinement of troops to the barracks, relaxation of emergency regulations and the relaxation of fishing restrictions in Mannar and Mullaitivu.

Bhandari was satisfied. On his return he announced that there was a marked change in the anti-India atmosphere that had prevailed in Colombo. He had assured Jayewardene that India would supplement Sri Lanka's efforts.

Tamil militants felt that India had shifted its stand on the Tamil issue. Balakumar, leader of EROS, commented, "We are not happy with the Indian position. Bhandari had not understood the problem." One of the three Tamil ministers in the Jayewardene government, who had had an hour-long discussion with Bhandari, told me later, "That fellow did not understand anything. He had fallen to J.R.'s nice words."

Bhandari was keen to show Colombo India's goodwill. A few days after his Colombo trip, the Indian Coast Guard intercepted a speedboat heading for Sri Lanka carrying machine guns, 9 mm rifles and grenades. Two members of the crew in battle uniform were arrested. They were members of the EPRLF. A week later the Madras Port custom officers seized a container with 1400 automatic rifles, 300 sten guns, a large quantity of ammunition and Japanese communication equipment. The arms and ammunition were of Chinese origin

and were intended for PLOTE. The militant groups were upset by this new trend. They blamed Bhandari, but what they did not know at this point of time was the role played by two Sri Lankans: Bernard Tilakaratna at New Delhi and Tissa Jayakody in Madras. Tilakaratna had used his time in New Delhi to develop close contacts with many decision makers, politicians and the press. He made use of his press contacts to conduct a campaign against New Delhi's support to the Tamil struggle. He also had regular meetings with political leaders and tried to win them over to the Sri Lankan cause.

Tissa Jayakody's contact was more subtle. His brief was to establish contact with Tamil Nadu politicians, Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups and to 'win' over key Indian intelligence officials. The decision to infiltrate the 'enemy fold' was taken at the weekly Security Council meeting, two weeks after the 14 May Anuradhapura massacre. The suggestion had come from Athulathmudali and was keenly endorsed by Jayewardene. The choice fell on Tissa Jayakody, a career diplomat with liberal views and many Tamil friends. But there was a problem in that, at that time, he was the country's ambassador to West Germany, a fairly senior post. The Madras post, on the other hand, was that of a Deputy High Commissioner.

Jayakody was urgently summoned to Colombo. He accepted the assignment and functioned directly under Jayewardene. He cultivated friends in the DMK and the AIDMK. He struck up close friendships with Nanjil Manoharan but failed to get close to Karunanidhi. He was able to arrange meetings between Tilakaratna and MGR. The first such meeting was in early 1985 when MGR recounted to the Lankan diplomats his memories of childhood in Kandy and professed his abiding love and admiration for Sri Lanka. He told them that if Colombo could do something to solve the Tamil issue, he would openly help. Jayakody sent a handwritten note of that meeting, as he usually did, to Jayewardene, but nothing came out of it.

Jayakody also established contacts with Balakumar and Ratnasabapathy of EROS, Varatharajaperumal of EPRLF, Uma Maheswaran and Shirly Candappa of PLOTE. He failed to make contact with the LTTE and TELO. At the time he went to Madras PLOTE enjoyed a bigger following among the Tamils in Sri Lanka and was better organised and better equipped. Colombo's desire at that time was to weaken it and to erode the influence India had over it. Both objectives Colombo achieved through a series of 'secret' talks with Mark Fernando at Frankfurt airport, and with Athulathmudali in a German village near the Swiss border. Details of both these meetings were leaked to the press by Colombo, and had the desired effect of making India suspicious of PLOTE. But it also had an undesired result. RAW, which had been reluctant to train the LTTE, went all out to support it. As one of the Indian trainers later boasted, India created one of the best guerrilla groups in the world.

Jayakody was not happy with the leaks and with the policy of weakening PLOTE. He, in later life, regretted the gradual elimination of the PLOTE from the Tamil militant scene. But he kept his contacts with the PLOTE and the EPRLF till his death.

Jayakody's greatest success was in infiltrating into the South Wing of RAW. The prime 'catch' was Unni Krishnan, RAW's Madras chief.

Militant groups were not aware of all this in April 1985. They blamed Bhandari for the shift in New Delhi's stand. They felt that they, the militants, had to bring a halt to this shift through MGR, and the best way to do it was to strengthen his bargaining position with New Delhi by responding to his call for Tamil militant unity which MGR had echoed in April 1984. Padmanabha and Balakumar were the main forces behind the unity effort and they succeeded in bringing four of the five main groups - LTTE, EPRLF, TELO

and EROS - together. Prabhakaran was adamant that Uma Maheswaran's PLOTE should not be brought in. The new grouping was named Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF).

Amirthalingam was also worried about India's policy shift but was firm in his stand that India should directly involve itself in finding a solution to the Tamil problem. In May 1985 when talk about fresh negotiations cropped up, Amirthalingam laid down three conditions for future negotiations:

1. All Militant groups should be represented in any negotiation.
2. The negotiations should be between India and Sri Lanka.
3. India should underwrite any settlement.

These conditions signified a qualitative shift in the position of the TULF and the Tamils - a direct result of Jayewardene's persist effort to weaken the TULF. TULF leaders stuck to this new stand in their meeting with Rajiv Gandhi in May 1985. In this meeting, which preceded the Rajiv-Jayewardene meeting of 1-3 June, Amirthalingam impressed on Rajiv Gandhi and Bhandari that no settlement could be worked out without the direct involvement of the militant groups. Rajiv was in total agreement and pressed Jayewardene to talk to the militants.

The Rajiv-Jayewardene meeting produced an agreement in which both leaders for the first time laid the basis for a settlement. They agreed on the need to take immediate steps to defuse the situation and to create a proper climate for negotiations, to arrive at a solution acceptable to all parties but within the framework of unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. The agreement, in effect, accepted a role for the militants while ruling out their separatist demand.

On 4 June, after seeing Jayewardene off, Rajiv Gandhi told the world press of New Delhi's two important decisions: "India is determined not to allow its territory to be used as a channel for arms to Tamil guerrillas who are fighting for a separate state in Sri Lanka" and "The Tamils of Sri Lanka should not expect to have a separate state. They cannot also expect to have federalism. All they can hope to have is an arrangement similar to that available in India."

Jayewardene told the press on his return to Colombo that the unit of devolution would be the district councils. This provoked Amirthalingam to issue this statement in Madras: "We welcome the joint statement that immediate steps should be taken to create a proper climate for progress towards a political settlement acceptable to all concerned. We hope India will play a more positive role towards the achievement of a solution acceptable to all. We are perturbed by what President Jayewardene said on his return at the airport; that the district councils will be the unit of devolution. His special envoy, Mr. H.W. Jayewardene QC, said the same thing to Mrs. Indira Gandhi in August 1983 to which she replied that it did not go far enough to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people."

The New Delhi agreement paved the way for the Thimpu talks, the first round of which started on 10 July. Bhandari was responsible for organising that historic meet. He worked out a 4-phase peace formula tagged to a definite time frame. Phase one was to begin on 18 June, with a ceasefire intended to create the climate for negotiations. The other three phases dealt with secret contacts between Colombo and the Tamil groups, followed by secret talks leading to open talks. He fixed a period of three months from 18 June to achieve a political solution. Ceasefire was declared on 18 June and the secret contacts resulted in the open talks in Thimpu.

Amirthalingam advocated that Tamil groups should present a common stand at Thimpu. He met PLOTE leaders and wanted to meet those of ENLF. The ENLF, specially

Prabhakaran, was not happy with Bhandari's role and the importance New Delhi was giving the TULF. New Delhi was in fact giving the TULF the pride of place and Chhatwal, the then-High Commissioner in Colombo, told me, "We have to talk to the TULF because its leaders are the ones who have the capacity to negotiate. Militant leaders are good fighters but they, naturally, are not aware of the legal intricacies of political and constitutional negotiation."

On 29 June the ENLF issued a statement saying that the TULF "must abdicate its assumed role as the legitimate representatives of the Tamil people". Colombo gleefully gave publicity to this statement. The thinking in Colombo was that it would be easier to negotiate with the militants than with the TULF hard-nuts.

Colombo sent a 10-member team of constitutional experts to Thimpu, led by H.W.Jayewardene. Thirteen delegates participated on the Tamil side - two from each of the five militant groups and three from the TULF, Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Sampanthan. The talks were held in the banquet hall amid tight security. H.W.Jayewardene made the opening statement. He said the Sri Lankan government had made its proposals and placed the draft District and Provincial Councils Bill and the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution for discussion. He made it clear that any arrangement for devolution had to be within the unitary constitution. He asked the TULF and the militants to place their proposals on the problems of language, education and employment.

Amirthalingam was the first to respond. He said the problems of language, education and employment had been dealt with in great detail at the All Party Conference. It was now time to concentrate on devolution, the units of devolution and on their subjects and powers. He wanted the government to improve on the proposals as the Tamils had rejected the earlier ones because they were considered insufficient. The

Tamils would respond if the government suggested tangible improvements.

The militant groups placed a 4-point charter which they wanted the government to recognise. The charter asked that the government recognise: (a) Tamils as a distinct nationality; (b) the integrity of the Tamil homeland; (c) the right of self-determination; (d) the fundamental right of all Tamils to look upon Sri Lanka as their home.

H.W.Jayewardene rejected all four demands. He started with the fourth demand - full citizenship for all Tamils living in Sri Lanka. He said agreement had been reached in the APC with the leadership of the Indian Tamils, the Ceylon Workers Congress, to grant citizenship to the 94,000 persons who were stateless. And as the militants did not represent the Indian Tamils, they had no right to speak for them. Then he rejected the other three demands saying that granting them would, in effect, mean granting Eelam. The Sinhala people were opposed to the concept of a Tamil homeland and to the linking of the north and east.

He then presented the proposals that had emerged at the APC talks and argued that that was the farthest the government was in a position to concede. The militants rejected them as they failed to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people. Initially the militants had been reluctant to participate and had come under pressure from New Delhi. Now they threatened to walk out as Colombo was not willing to give anything worthwhile to the Tamils. Bhandari decided to end the first round of talks and meet again on 12 August.

India was satisfied with the first round because it had brought together, for the first time, the militants and the Colombo government into direct contact. India had also, for the first time, changed its role from a honest broker to a direct participant. H.W.Jayewardene reported to the cabinet on his return that the fact that the militants had agreed to meet again

was a positive factor. The first meeting had, for the first time, given a direct role to the militant groups and thus diluted the role of the moderates and the TULF. The TULF became one among the six and that too because New Delhi insisted on TULF participation. The ENLF delegation, which met Indian officers in New Delhi before the Thimpu talks, had in fact objected to the TULF and PLOTE participating in the talks. It said that the TULF had lost both its mandate and relevance. The mandate the TULF obtained from the Tamil people was for the establishment of a separate state of Eelam. The TULF had failed to establish a constituent assembly to draw up a constitution for Eelam. The PLOTE was not active, the ENLF argued. But India had overruled both objections saying that the TULF was the elected representatives of the people and the PLOTE enjoyed wide following among the Tamil people.

Two days after the commencement of the Thimpu talks Colombo announced that an attempt had been made to assassinate President Jayewardene and said that the attempt was aimed at destabilising the Thimpu talks. Two EROS men were arrested. India did not pay any attention to Colombo's propaganda as its intelligence agents had reported that the assassination story was fabricated.

The fate of the second round was sealed from the very start. On the morning of 12 August, just before the official opening, Bhandari met the militants and urged them to be more accommodative, to climb down from generalisations and get into specifics. "What the bloody hell are we to do with these generalisations?" he asked. Nadesan Satyendra, a leading lawyer who led the TELO delegation, took exception to the words "bloody hell". He said the use of those unparliamentary words indicated India's utter unconcern and disregard for Sri Lankan Tamils. Bhandari was quick to explain that he had not meant any insult, but Satyendra insisted that those words did indicate India's attitude and accused Bhandari of acting like a master ordering servants

what to do and what not to do. Amirthalingam was enraged. He told Satyendra to stop the harangue and persuaded the other delegates to pass a vote of apology. He said Sri Lankan Tamils were indebted to Bhandari for his efforts to work out a solution to the Tamil problem.

At the conference things took a dramatic downward spin from the very start. H.W. Jayewardene took a stiff stand and linked the implementation of any agreement with the laying down of arms by the militants. He also challenged the right of the TULF to be present and argued that it was the ENLF that represented the Tamil people. Bhandari brushed aside the TULF issue and remarked that the linkage between implementation and laying down of arms was a new factor. While the conference was struggling to find a way out of this new situation, the militants learnt of the massacre of 200 Tamil civilians by the army near Vavuniya. They read out a statement condemning the Lankan government for not honouring the ceasefire and walked out of the conference. The TULF also joined in the walk-out. Soon after this came news of another massacre of Tamil civilians in Trincomalee. At this, the militants announced that they too were calling off the ceasefire.

Rajiv Gandhi was disappointed with this turn of events. He invited H.W. Jayewardene to New Delhi for talks with Indian officials. After lengthy discussions both sides finalised a 'Working Paper' to be used as the basis for further talks. New Delhi took pains to get H.W. Jayewardene to sign each page of the document in view of Colombo's earlier denial of the authorship of Annexure C, which had not been thus signed. Bhandari signed on behalf of the Indian government.

The Working Paper, which was officially known as the 'Draft Framework of Terms of Accord and Understanding' of 30 August 1985, was an advance over Annexure C in that it accepted the province as the unit of devolution. It also

provided for a limited increase in the powers to be devolved to the provinces. The Working Paper also provided a safeguard for the Tamils by accepting that a committee of Tamil speaking MPs be set up under the constitution and without whose consent legislation affecting Tamils could not become law.

The Working Paper did not provide for the merger of the north and east. The powers were to be devolved to the provincial councils by parliament by simple majority. Though law and order were among the subjects to be devolved, police officers would come under the national police service. The power to determine national policies and the power to provide guidelines were retained with the centre. The question of land and settlements were not clearly defined. There were also many areas left undefined like the relationship between the governor and the chief minister, the courts and its structure, etc.

Rajiv Gandhi invited the Tamil groups for talks. Only the TULF and the PLOTE responded. Prabhakaran and Sri Sabaratnam went underground. The TULF delegation, headed by Amirthalingam, told Rajiv Gandhi that the 'Working Paper' had many gaps that needed to be filled. He was assured that this could be achieved by further talks.

The ENLF condemned the TULF's acceptance of Rajiv Gandhi's invitation. Two days later two TULF MPs residing in Jaffna, Murugesu Alalasundaram and Visvanathan Dharmalingam were taken out of their homes on the night of 2 September by militants and killed. Their bullet riddled bodies were found the next morning, Alalasundaram's in a thicket near his house and Dharmalingam's in a farm in Kokuvil. The TULF leadership got the message and kept a low profile thereafter.

Jayewardene attended the Heads of States Conference in the Bahamas in October. Before leaving he told the *Times of India* that Sri Lanka would not go beyond the provincial

councils and if the formula worked in the 'Working Paper' was accepted by the Tamils, he would hold the provincial council elections immediately and hand over power to the provincial administration.

On Jayewardene's return Colombo launched an anti-TULF campaign saying that it had not responded to the Working Paper. Rajiv Gandhi also announced that Jayewardene had promised, at a meeting of the two in the Bahamas, to improve on the Working Paper.

The TULF presented its proposals to Bhandari in the first week of December 1985. The preamble stated that though the Tamil people had given it a mandate in 1977 to establish a separate state of Tamil Eelam, the TULF had indicated a willingness to consider an alternative. The Sri Lankan government had failed to place any meaningful proposals that merited consideration. Yet, it had decided to submit a set of proposals to help India's efforts to work out a satisfactory solution to the Tamil problem.

The 32-page document proposed a federal set-up for Sri Lanka. Part 1 said Sri Lanka would be a Union of States and the predominantly Tamil speaking northern and eastern provinces would constitute a Tamil Linguistic State. Annexure 1, which explained the basis for the demand of a unified north and east, was headlined 'The integrity of the Tamil Homeland', thus satisfying the separate homeland demand of the militants. The territory of a State, once established, would not be altered without its consent.

The document said the legislative power of the Union would vest in a Parliament and its membership would reflect the ethnic proportion of the Union. Special provision was to be made to ensure the representation of Muslims and Indian Tamils. The legislative power of the parliament was to be limited to matters enumerated in List One. Matters affecting any nationality would be passed only with the approval of the

majority of the members of that nationality, another demand by the militants.

Part Three of the document provided that all who were resident in Sri Lanka, except foreign citizens, on 1st November 1981, would become citizens. This was to satisfy the citizenship demand by the militants. The section on official languages provided for making Tamil also an official language, another of the demands of the militants.

The rest dealt with the structure of government in the States, the powers to be devolved to them, and the relationship between the States and the Union. The document did not deal with the position of the Trincomalee port which the government wanted under central control and the powers the President would have over the Union. It did not make clear whether or not it wanted the Executive Presidency to continue.

On behalf of the Indian government J.N.Dixit who had succeeded Chhatwal as India's High Commissioner in Colombo, handed over the TULF proposals to Jayewardene. He returned to New Delhi that same evening to report on the 6-day visit of Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq that had ended the previous day. At a banquet hosted on his behalf, Jayewardene had spoken of Pakistan as a true friend of Sri Lanka and hinted that India was trying big brother tactics. Zia had assured Pakistan's assistance and said, "We will give all the assistance your government's needs to tackle the problems of terrorism it faces."

Rajiv Gandhi told the press in New Delhi in December that India opposed any military solution to the Tamil problem and hoped Colombo would respond favourably to the TULF's proposals and create a congenial atmosphere for talks. He expressed concern at Colombo's military build-up and the increasing incidents of violence which were posing a problem.

He advised against escalation of violence in the island.

The TULF gave the Indian government a fresh note on the linkage of the northern and eastern provinces, which Dixit handed over to Jayewardene on 31 December. Jayewardene was opposed to merger. Dixit told him that the militants had indicated that they would not yield on the question of merger, but had agreed to Colombo talking to the TULF first.

The Sri Lankan government took its time to prepare a response, and in the meantime went ahead with its military onslaught. On 1 January 1986, it declared the area within 1000 metres from army camps 'security zones'. Strengthening of the army, men and equipment became an ongoing process. Bernard Tilakaratna, handed over Sri Lanka's response to the TULF's proposals to Bhandari. It was a 57-page document, dated 30 January 1986. It was a point by point rejection of all the major points in the TULF proposal. It rejected the federal set-up and insisted that the unitary character of the constitution should not be disturbed, it rejected merger and the concept of a Tamil homeland.

Bhandari flew to Madras and met M.G.Ramachandran and the TULF leaders separately and gave them copies of Colombo's response. Rajiv Gandhi, who visited Tamil Nadu the following week, asked Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Sampanthan to join him at Trichy. They later accompanied him to New Delhi. At New Delhi the Indian Prime Minister made public his dissatisfaction with Colombo's response. Bhandari interjected, "There are yawning gaps."

Colombo, then, sent a revised response about the granting to the northern and eastern provinces the powers which the Indian constitution had granted to union territories. Hameed handed over a second set of proposals. The TULF rejected the Union Territory model as falling short of the kind

of devolution the Tamil people wanted. This was in the second week of April.

Jayewardene reacted harshly and threatened to "unleash the troops if the government proposals were rejected". On India's advice, Jayewardene decided to call a meeting of all recognised political parties, including the TULF, on 23 June to consider a solution to the ethnic problem. The TULF declined the invitation for which it gave three reasons: the political party meeting was an exercise to evolve a Sinhala consensus in which the TULF had no role; the TULF had not received any worthwhile government proposals; and the exclusion of the militants from the meeting.

Colombo sent an improved set of proposals. The TULF decided to consult the militants. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Sampanthan had talks with Prabhakaran and his colleagues for over two hours. They later met the PLOTE, TELO, EPRLF and EROS together. "We exchanged ideas," Amirthalingam said later. The TULF was called to New Delhi on 5 July and told to attend the Political Parties Conference. MGR met the militant groups and persuaded them to agree.

Chidambaram was sent to Colombo to persuade Jayewardene to agree to the merger of the northern and eastern provinces. Jayewardene agreed to improve the devolution package and to consider making "suitable institutional arrangements for the Provincial Councils, especially in the northern province and the eastern province to consult with each other and act in co-ordination on matters of mutual interest and concern."

The Political Parties Conference took place from 13-23 July. The government did not raise the matter of merger but placed a package of proposals on devolution consisting of 27 subjects, including defence, internal security, foreign affairs, aviation, airport, foreign trade, posts, telegraph and telecommunications, ports, harbour, inter-provincial irrigation, trade

and commerce, broadcasting and television.

A provincial police, headed by a Deputy Inspector General of Police, would be established and would have the power to recruit personnel below the rank of inspector. The package provided for the establishment of a National Land Commission, inter-provincial irrigation schemes would be the responsibility of the central government, and a scheme for the sharing of the allotments would be made available under the Maduru Oya scheme.

The SLFP and MEP boycotted the conference, reducing it to a meeting between the government and the TULF. Seven rounds of detailed talks, lasting about a total of fifteen hours, were held. A 3-paragraph statement was issued at the end of the talks. Though no finality had been reached on several matters, the discussions had been useful. Dixit had played an active role.

I did an exclusive interview with Amirthalingam on 18 July, which was carried as the lead story in next morning's *Daily News*. The questions were on the objections the militants had raised about the TULF talking to the Sri Lankan government and on merger. On the first point Amirthalingam said that MGR was keeping the militants informed of the progress of the talks. The TULF would not stand in the way of a solution to the ethnic problem, he said.

On merger, Amirthalingam said that no Tamil would accept a solution without it. He said the term 'merger' had acquired sensitivity. Tamils wanted it, the Sinhalese opposed it. "I am of the opinion that we should stop using that six-letter word," he said smiling, and added, "I prefer the phrase 'a single linguistic unit'." I asked him to define the phrase. He replied, "You put it this way: A single linguistic unit is the one which consists of the northern province and those areas in the eastern province where the Tamil speaking people are in a majority." He was quick to add a condition, "The

contiguity of the Tamil areas should be ensured."

Noting the shift in position I questioned him further. The following is from the tape recording.

Question" Does this mean the detaching the Sinhala areas from the eastern province?

Amirthalingam: Yes.

Question: What are the areas you will agree to be detached?

Amirthalingam: Generally speaking, the Ampara and Seruwella electorates. But there are certain Tamil speaking areas within those electorates. They should be attached to the Tamil linguistic unit.

Question: That may involve going down to the villages.

Amirthalingam: That is what I also want to propose. The Sinhala villages contiguous to the Sinhala provinces should be attached to those provinces. In doing so the contiguity of the Tamil areas should not be 'disturbed'.

Question: Won't the militant groups oppose your idea of attaching the Sinhala villages in the eastern province to the Sinhala provinces?

Amirthalingam: They may. But if both sides stick to their positions, no solution can be worked out.

I wrote the story and gave it to Manik de Silva, the editor. His comment was, "Amir is going to be in trouble."

The trouble did come but not from the militants but from within the TULF itself.

The next morning Sampanthan telephoned me and wanted to know why I had written that story. I told him it was reproduced from a tape and offered to send it over to him. Sampanthan said, "Even if Amir had said it you should not

have written it. He is going to get into trouble with the militants." The report, in fact, did annoy the militants who argued against the detachment of any portion of the eastern province which they called a part of their homeland.

The second round of talks, which began on 15 August, was devoted to the examination of the draft bills on constitutional amendment and devolution which had been prepared by the legal experts of the government during the recess. This round of talks concentrated on fine tuning the devolution package and on the question of the unit of devolution. Amirthalingam told me on 17 August, "I presented my case for a linguistic unit to President Jayewardene and he has responded in a way. We have asked for his response in writing so that it can be studied and discussed in detail." That same day Dixit told me, "Differences of opinion, however, remain on some substantial issues - basically on the question of merger, that is, the linkage between the north and the east based on either ethnic or linguistic cohesiveness."

Two days later, on 19 August, the LTTE changed its stance. Prabhakaran told the *Press Trust of India* that the militants had launched a 'major offensive' for evolving a joint strategy to oppose the TULF. V. Balakumar, another militant, speaking on behalf of the five major militant groups, told the French News Agency *AFP* that the five groups had reached a 'broad consensus' to oppose the talks that the TULF was having with the Lankan government. On 21 August, an LTTE spokesman told the Madras newspaper *Hindu*, "The days of traditional politicians in the north has ended for good." He added that the TULF leaders who had run away from the people could return to their homeland but they should keep a low profile.

Amirthalingam, in an answer to Balakumar's statement, said that the TULF leaders had not left the country just for pleasure but to mobilise international support for the Tamil

struggle. He pointed to India's support to their cause, the result of their persistent campaign. The TULF leaders had no plan to return to Jaffna immediately as their mission was not complete, he said, and added, "I am prepared to give way to the Tamil youth to administer the provincial council."

The second round of talks saw the drafting of a detailed memoranda dealing with law and order, land and land settlement and education. The subjects of finance and administration were discussed in detail but no final agreement was reached. The talks concluded the third week of September on the note that residual matters would be discussed later. Colombo prepared a working paper on the basis of these agreed proposals and submitted them to New Delhi, stating in the covering letter, "... apart from subjects not finalised, these proposals constitute a package which would form a reasonable basis of settlement, fair to all sections of the people of Sri Lanka."

But Jayewardene had clouded the issue of merger with a proposal to set up a boundary commission to redraw the boundaries of the provinces. New Delhi circulated copies of Colombo's working paper to the TULF and the militant groups. The latter rejected it, saying the new proposal was a ruse to deny the Tamils their demands. They would toughen their stand against such negotiations, they warned.

The TULF studied the new proposals and had discussions with Indian constitutional experts on devolution of financial powers, powers of the governor and devolved subjects. The Indian team comprised Tamil Nadu Food Minister, S. Ramachandran Additional Foreign Secretary Kuldeep Sahadev, and Home Ministry's Legal Consultant S. Balakrishnan.

Dixit met the militant groups and impressed on them to proceed with the negotiations. He told them that India was against the creation of a separate state and that some sort of

settlement within a united Sri Lanka had to be worked out. The militants voiced their lack of hope of any settlement but said that they would not hinder India's attempts at seeking one.

That same day, in Colombo, Jayewardene announced that he was willing to consider suggestions to improve his proposals but added that if the militants rejected his package, he would use "all necessary means" to restore law and order.

Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene met in Bangalore on 17-18 November during the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit. Jayewardene proposed that the eastern province be divided into three regions - Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim - and three separate councils be established and suggested that the councils so established be based in Trincomalee for the Sinhalese, Batticaloa for the Tamils and Ampara for the Muslims. Rajiv Gandhi summoned Prabhakaran to Bangalore for consultations.

Prabhakaran, along with Balasingham and Lawrence Thilakar, flew down to Bangalore in an air force plane. Rajiv Gandhi informed them of Jayewardene's proposal to split the eastern province into three. Prabhakaran rejected the proposal and told him that Tamils would not accept anything less than a merged north and east. Later, when Prabhakaran met MGR, Jayewardene and Rajiv met in an adjoining room but Jayewardene failed to make use of that golden opportunity to meet Prabhakaran.

Thilakar told the press after the meeting, "We see north and east as a whole indivisible unit. So we could not accept the proposal."

Indian officials informed Prabhakaran that Colombo was not willing to give more, that Jayewardene was threatening to use his army to crush the LTTE if it failed to accept his offer, and that Sri Lanka was arming its troops with sophisticated weapons which the LTTE would find difficult

to withstand. They explained that an army onslaught on Jaffna would result in heavy casualties. Also that India would be helpless because the Americans might move in their ships to counter Indian moves.

Prabhakaran was not overawed by that implied threat. He told the Indian officials that Jayewardene should agree for a merged north and east province if he wanted them to consider participation in the negotiations. "This is not a precondition," Thilakar explained, "This is the fundamental position of the Tamils." There was no meeting ground and the Tiger leaders were flown back to Madras.

Rajiv Gandhi was unhappy with this turn of events. So was M.G.Ramachandran.

The day after Prabhakaran's return, the Tamil Nadu police, on orders from New Delhi, swooped down on Sri Lankan militants in the state, disarmed them, seized their communication equipment and marched them to the police stations. Their names and addresses were noted and their finger prints taken. Even Prabhakaran was not spared. "They finger-printed me like a common criminal," he fumed. He told the Madras press that he felt slighted and that the Sri Lankan Tamils whose cause he was espousing had been insulted.

Prabhakaran was angry with the Indian Prime Minister and disenchanted with MGR. In a later interview he told a Tamil daily *Thinakaran*, published in Madras, that MGR had told him to decide whether or not he wanted a negotiated settlement. If he decided against it, he would not get India's support. Prabhakaran decided against a negotiated settlement and stealthily started shifting the LTTE headquarters to Vanni, leaving only a skeletal outfit in Madras.

India further wounded Prabhakaran's feelings by ordering the extradition of Balasingam and Chandrakasan, S.J.V.Chelvanayakam's youngest son, who had migrated to Madras after the 1983 riots. Balasingam, a British citizen,

was ordered to return to Britain. Chandrakasan elected to go to Britain instead of returning to Colombo.

Colombo welcomed the expulsions while Tamil Nadu exploded in protest. New Delhi caved in and hastily withdrew the expulsion orders. Balasingam and Chandrakasan returned to a hero's welcome to Madras.

Amirthalingam was a spectator to all this as he had been sidelined by New Delhi after the mid-year negotiations in Colombo. However, in December, Amirthalingam and the TULF were again brought back centre stage. That was with the third visit of Minister of State P. Chidambaram, along with Natwar Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs. In April and July the former had come alone. This time Chidambaram was sent following the situation created by the Bangalore meeting where Rajiv Gandhi had convinced Jayewardene that no settlement was possible without settling the question of merger. Chidambaram's mission was to work out some sort of a linkage between the north and the east. Colombo wanted to weaken his hand with an anti-Chidambaram propaganda blitz. A photograph showing Chidambaram leading an anti-Sri Lanka protest by the Madras bar after the 1983 July riots was dug out and printed in all Lankan newspapers. The *Sun* raised the question whether a person who had led an anti-Sri Lanka protest could serve as an 'honest broker'. Rajiv Gandhi undermined Colombo's propaganda by sending Natwar Singh, a North Indian, along with Chidambaram.

I was at Hotel Lanka Oberoi when the Indian ministers arrived and I was the only Sri Lankan present when they met the press. When I introduced myself, Chidambaram said, 'Please tell your readers that I am here as an Indian and not as a Tamil.'

Natwar interjected, "We consider ourselves Indians first."

I could only smile. President Jayewardene also smiled when Chidambaram raised the propaganda against him. Jayewardene quipped in, "You know the things the *Hindu* and other Indian papers write about me."

After two days of talks agreement was reached on the following:

1. The present territory comprising the eastern province minus the Amparai Electoral District may constitute the new eastern province;
2. A Provincial Council will be established for the new eastern province;
3. The institutional linkages between the northern province and the eastern province, discussed earlier, will be further refined in order to make it more acceptable to the parties concerned;
4. The Sri Lanka government will be willing to consider a proposal for a second stage of constitutional development providing for the northern province and the new eastern province coming together subject to modalities being agreed upon for ascertaining the wishes of the people comprised in the northern province and the eastern province;
5. The Sri Lanka government is willing to consider the creation of an office of vice-president to be appointed by the president for a specified term.

As agreement was reached on 19 December, the proposals came to be known as December 19 proposals. It was an advance since Jayewardene, for the first time, accepted the concept of merging the northern and eastern provinces after ascertaining the wishes of the people of the two provinces separately.

The LTTE was the first to reject it, saying that Amparai formed an integral part of the Tamil homeland. The TULF

followed suit and Amirthalingam had to sign the TULF statement, though Chidambaram proposals duly reiterated his own thinking. He had to yield to the wishes of the militant groups and to the extremist wing of his own party.

Jayewardene made use of these rejections to wriggle out of the December 19 proposals. And the LTTE played into his hands. LTTE's Jaffna commander Sathasivam Krishnakumar alias Kittu announced in Jaffna that the LTTE would take over the administration of Jaffna on 14 January 1987, the Thai Pongal Day. Colombo seized this opportunity to launch an economic blockade of the Jaffna peninsula on 1 January, stating it was pre-empting LTTE's unilateral declaration of independence.

Rajiv Gandhi was unhappy at Jayewardene's attempt to abandon the December 19 proposals and to opt for a military solution. He was also annoyed with Colombo's attempt to deal directly with the LTTE. Actually, the attempt to deal directly with the LTTE had been made a few days prior to Chidambaram's visit. Athulathmudali, National Security Minister, had sent a feeler to Kittu through Capt. Kotawala about exchanging two military men in the custody of the Tigers for two from the LTTE cadres in government custody. The LTTE responded favourably and gave the names of the two persons it wanted in exchange.

The exchange took place on 17 December. Athulathmudali was at the Ratmalana airport to receive the two soldiers. William de Alwis, a senior reporter of the *Daily News* who covered the exchange, asked Athulathmudali about the two Tigers given in exchange. "They are two ordinary cadres, chaps who cannot even stand straight," Athulathmudali replied. After the exchange it came to light that one of the Tigers sent to Jaffna by an air force plane was Karuna, LTTE's Batticaloa commander, a man who had carried out many a daunting attack on the military.

Rajiv Gandhi sent a strongly worded letter to Jayewardene, condemning the food and fuel blockade, and announced his decision to withdraw India's good offices. He said India's good offices would continue only if Colombo withdrew the fuel embargo and got back to the December 19 proposals.

Jayewardene replied equally curtly. He declined to call off the embargo and pointed out that he, Rajiv Gandhi, was using troops to quell violence in the Punjab. Jayewardene also set out to build up public opinion in support of his tough stand. He briefed Opposition Leader Mrs. Bandaranaike of India's threatening stand and used his parliamentary group to criticise India and to build up an anti-India tempo among the Sinhala masses.

Amirthalingam was disturbed by this. He wrote to Rajiv Gandhi urging him to provide food and fuel to the suffering Tamils of Sri Lanka on humanitarian grounds. "Such an action would ensure physical protection and survival of the Tamil people in the northern and eastern provinces pending a final solution."

It was in this tense environment that Prabhakaran returned to Jaffna. He returned to avoid being pressurised by New Delhi and Madras to accept the December 19 proposals. He also wanted to supervise the war himself. Before setting out for Jaffna, Prabhakaran told *India Today* that New Delhi was trying to sacrifice the Sri Lankan Tamil struggle to achieve India's foreign policy objectives.

LTTE's pressure on the TULF continued in 1987 also. TULF's Batticoloa leader Sinnathamby Sambanthamoorthy was kidnapped on 22 January and LTTE turned a deaf ear to the party's appeal for his release. Amirthalingam was sentenced to death later that month. On 20 March Kittu told local and foreign correspondents in Jaffna that the TULF would never again be allowed to enter politics. Amirthalingam

responded with the statement that the Tamil people had the right to decide their representatives.

On 7 April he appealed for unity among militant groups. He said in New Delhi, "We have called for the militant's unity and understanding with the TULF so that we could present a united stand to Colombo."

With the return of Prabhakaran, the LTTE intensified its attacks on the military. In February the Kankesanthurai army camp was attacked, eighteen soldiers killed and their weapons captured. At Pulmuddai, in the eastern Province another eighteen soldiers were killed by a land mine explosion. The army reacted and attacked Tamil civilians. In March the LTTE attacked Sinhalese settlements in Aranthalawa and Serunewa. The security forces, too, stepped up their attacks on Tamil civilians.

Tension mounted in the country. On 14 March Rajiv Gandhi sent Dinesh Singh, a Minister of State, to persuade Jayewardene to restart the political process. He was also told to make an assessment of Jayewardene's attitude towards India and Indian mediation. He met Jayewardene for two days and then flew to Islamabad where Rajiv was on a state visit. President Jayewardene was a difficult man, Dinesh Singh told him, ... more pressure would be needed to bring him round.

On 16 March, the day Dinesh Singh flew to Islamabad, the Ceylon Workers Congress had its convention in Kandy. In his presidential speech Thondaman urged the government to return to the political process and to declare its willingness to find a political solution by declaring a unilateral ceasefire during the Tamil and Sinhala new year in April. The ceasefire held for six days but on the seventh day, 17 April, Tigers stopped three buses proceeding to Trincomalee Habarana at about 3.30 p.m., separated the Sinhalese and shot them, a total of 127 men, women and children. The government reacted angrily and called off the ceasefire. It accused the LTTE of

massacring civilians but the LTTE retorted that the government, making use of the ceasefire, was strengthening the army, and thereby cheating all. The fact that 26 men killed were military men supported their point. The military claimed that the men were returning to their stations after spending the new year with their families.

Two days later the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), an ally of the LTTE, exploded a massive bomb at the Central Bus Stand in Pettah, Colombo, at 4.54 p.m., the rush hour, killing 107 people and injuring 288. Curfew was clamped immediately in Colombo and Gampaha districts to pre-empt rioting. Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam issued separate statements condemning the Habarana slaying and the Pettah bomb blast, calling them indiscriminate and senseless acts of violence. They also appealed to India to intervene and bring about a peaceful solution to the ethnic conflict. India expressed its deep concern about the escalation of violence and asked Sri Lanka to revert to the peace process. Rajiv Gandhi, in a separate statement, regretted that Colombo had abandoned the path of negotiated settlement and appealed to the international community to urge Colombo to end its military attacks on innocent Tamil civilians.

Jayewardene rejected Rajiv's appeal for restraint and asked him to restrain the LTTE instead and bring it back to the negotiating table. He said he wanted to do what Rajiv was doing in the Punjab - using force to eliminate terrorism. Jayewardene, always concerned about Sinhalese opinion of him, was worried about the loss of face of his government among the Sinhala people. He ordered the army to wrest control of Jaffna so that he could win back Sinhala public opinion and support.

Troops moved to Palaly, Thondamannar and the Elephant Pass camps in the Jaffna peninsula from the first week

of May. There was talk of a major army onslaught. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Sampanthan flew to New Delhi on 18 May to impress on Rajiv Gandhi that India should take some positive action to stop the army onslaught. They also met many ministers, opposition party leaders and foreign ministry officials to brief them of the impending army operation.

The *Hindu* reported on 24 May that Jayewardene had ordered the three service chiefs to 'restore law and order and extend the government control to specific areas'. Rajiv responded with a single sentence message, "Military solution will not work." Jayewardene did not heed the warning. He told a British correspondent, "India can only express grave concern."

On 26 May, at 6 a.m., an indefinite curfew was clamped in the Jaffna peninsula and a two-pronged attack launched. Sea-borne commandos landed near Valvettithurai and encircled it, the birth place of Prabhakaran. Another air-borne battalion moved from Palaly, through Thondamannar towards Valvettithurai. Over 8000 troops were put into action, headed by Brigadier Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Col. Wijaya Wimalaratna. Their aim was to capture Prabhakaran who, the intelligence said, was hiding in a well-fortified bunker in his home town. Valvettithurai was blasted from sea and air and captured on the second day of Operation Liberation. But Prabhakaran escaped.

India condemned the operation in a message sent to Colombo: "The Government of India strongly condemns the massive assault by the Sri Lanka security forces against the entire civilian population of Jaffna." Jayewardene replied at the ceremonial opening of the head office of the Bank of Ceylon in Colombo, "We have decided to fight and the fight will go on until they win or we win."

That evening, 27 May, Dixit called on Jayewardene at his Ward Place residence to convey a message. He handed over the envelope on which he had noted the main points of Rajiv's message. The envelope, now in the Jayewardene archives, read:

1. Deeply disappointed and distressed.
2. Thousands of civilians killed since 1983, has aroused tremendous indignation.
3. Your latest offensive in Jaffna peninsula has altered the entire basis of our understanding.
4. We cannot accept genocide.
5. Please do not force us to review our policies.

Dixit said India was deeply concerned about civilian killings. Jayewardene replied that he too was concerned but the Tigers had killed more Tamils than the military. He added that he was only adopting the measures Rajiv was adopting in the Punjab.

Jayewardene allowed the military operation to proceed. The army marched with air cover and captured the town of Point Pedro on 30 May without much resistance, though land-mines and booby-traps slowed down its progress. Twenty-four soldiers died and 140 injured in the operation.

Jayewardene was happy and the Sinhala people were thrilled. However, before they could enjoy the victory, the situation changed. Amirthalingam charged Colombo of carpet-bombing and MGR rushed to New Delhi to urge Rajiv to end the military operation. The Political Affairs Committee of the Indian cabinet met to plan counter action. The Intelligence Services and the Foreign Ministry reasoned that the LTTE should not be permitted to be defeated as that would deny New Delhi the leverage it had enjoyed.

On 1 June New Delhi announced its intention of sending food to beleaguered Jaffna by sea. Dixit met Foreign Minister Hameed to seek Sri Lanka's concurrence on humanitarian grounds. Hameed said that any Indian humanitarian aid should be through the Government of Sri Lanka, not direct. But when India announced that it wanted to send food to Jaffna direct, the Sri Lankan cabinet met in emergency to consider the new development.

It issued a statement saying that it "is an infringement of our sovereignty to bypass the government". Despite this, the Indian Political Affairs Committee authorised the sending of food in ships direct to Jaffna. Colombo launched a vigorous diplomatic campaign, saying that it lacked the military power to resist India's attempts to send food ships. India, in turn, called Indian and Delhi-based foreign correspondents to accompany the food aid mission to Jaffna.

On 3 June, a hastily-gathered flotilla of 19 fishing boats carrying 35 tons of assorted food items set sail to Jaffna. They were escorted by the Indian Petroleum Corporation vessel Vikram, with Indian and foreign mediamen aboard. But when they reached the Indo-Sri Lanka boundary, they agreed, after two hours of negotiations to turn back. Colombo heaved a sigh of relief. They did not know at that time of India's alternative plan to air drop food. About 25 tons of food grains, vegetables and other provisions were loaded into five Soviet-built AN-32 transport planes. Thirty-five Indian and foreign mediamen were also put on board. Two Mirage 2000 fighter planes fitted with rockets and other lethal weapons were also got ready, to give cover to the transport planes in case of attack.

At 2 p.m. the Sri Lankan High Commissioner Bernard Tilakaratna was summoned to the Indian Foreign Ministry and informed of India's intention to airdrop food parcels over Jaffna. Tilakaratna was shocked. "My Lord! That means you are going to violate our air space!" Natwar Singh said, "Yes.

That amounts to that." And added, "Any resistance would be met by force." Tilakaratna contacted Hameed on Singh's phone and was told to tell Natwar Singh that dropping food would amount to violating the sovereignty of Sri Lanka and that Colombo would take up the matter at the appropriate forum.

Precisely at 3.55 p.m. the transport planes took off from Bangalore. They were over Jaffna at 4.55 p.m., huge parachutes dropped the food parcels from 1500 feet. The operation was over in twenty minutes and the planes returned to their bases in Bangalore. The people of Jaffna hailed Indians as their saviors.

There was a mixed reaction of anger and shock in Colombo. Jayewardene was shocked, Athulathmudali angry. The Sri Lankan press reacted with anger, the UNP organised anti-India demonstrations and the masses were instigated to demonstrate opposite India House, the official residence of the Indian High Commissioner. Jayewardene promoted an anti-India campaign. A calculated effort was made to create anti-India hysteria among the people. The opposition, specially the JVP, made use of it to oppose Jayewardene when he signed the Indo-Sri Lanka accord two months later.

Sri Lanka informed the UN Security Council of the violation of the Lankan air space by India but did not press for a debate. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal condemned the airdrop, Bhutan and the Maldives expressed concern. China said big nations should not bully the small.

Jayewardene sent Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe to Pakistan and China, and Athulathmudali to Britain and the United States to canvass support. Both returned with the advice that Sri Lanka should settle the Tamil demand with the help of India.

India announced that it wanted to continue food aid to the Jaffna peninsula. The Foreign Ministry reluctantly gave its permission.

Two shattering events occurred soon after. The first was the Black Tiger attack on the Nelliyaddy Central College where Sri Lankan forces had set up a military camp. The Tigers rammed the building with an explosive-packed lorry, killing over 50 soldiers. This dealt a blow to the morale of the forces. The lorry was driven by Miller, the first Balck Tiger to conduct a suicide attack.

Around the same time, intelligence reports indicated that India was training about 25 Tigers in the firing of surface to air missiles (SAM 7s). The Air Force told Jayewardene that it would not be able to fly food supplies to Palaly and other military camps if the LTTE acquired SAM 7s. Then came MGR's announcement of a donation of Indian Rs. 50 million to the Tigers. To top it all Dixit told Athulathmudali that India would never allow the capture of Jaffna.

All this upset Jayewardene. He also felt let down by Pakistan and China, his true friends. He toyed with the idea of boycotting the SAARC Foreign Ministers Meeting on 17 June at New Delhi but was persuaded against it by the Chinese and Pakistanis. Hameed attended the meeting where he made an oblique reference to India's violation of Sri Lanka's air space in his speech when he said that SAARC should not be a "deaf, dumb and blind institution". He could not make a direct reference as SAARC's rules forbade reference to bilateral disputes.

It was at this time that Maheweli Minister received a letter from N. Ram, associate editor of the Madras-based *Hindu*, containing proposals based on the December 19 formula with the offer of Indian mediation. Ram was a cricket enthusiast and the minister the then-president of the Sri Lankan Cricket Control Board. Jayewardene clutched at the straw and authorised Dissanayake to negotiate on his behalf. Dixit was sent to negotiate on behalf of India. But the talks were soon dead-locked as Dixit insisted on the merger of the northern and eastern provinces.

Rajiv Gandhi sent word that he was prepared to help break the dead-lock provided Jayewardene agreed to a temporary merger of the two provinces. He also indicated his willingness to persuade the Sri Lankan Tamils to accept the settlement. The LTTE would be forced to comply, he said.

Jayewardene set two conditions. One, he wanted the temporary merger to have a time limit with a referendum held to determine whether the people wished the eastern province at the end of it to remain merged. Two, he wanted the agreement to be between India and Sri Lanka not with any of the Tamil groups.

Rajiv accepted both conditions. In return he asked for the inclusion in the agreement of the letters they had exchanged on India's foreign policy concerns. Jayewardene readily agreed. "If I had refused to sign," he said in a lecture at the Law College, Colombo, in 1990, "some of you might not be here today. India would have bombed Katunayake and landed its troops in Colombo. I saved the country from such a disaster."

Dissanayake and Dixit were given the task of drafting the agreement. India, in the meantime, increased its military pressure. Indian naval ships were kept just outside Sri Lankan waters, its Air Force kept on alert, and a platoon of Black Cats, a highly trained commando group, was sent to India House, to act if the need arose. It was rumoured that plans were also ready to attack and capture Sri Lankan airports and the main military camp at Panagoda.

On 15 July Jayewardene informed the cabinet of the proposals and stated that India had guaranteed the surrender of arms by the militants. In return Sri Lanka would ensure that Indian interests would not be harmed. Dissanayake, Hameed, Nissanka Wijeyaratne and Ronnie de Mel spoke in support whilst Gamini Jayasuriya, Athulathmudali, Ranil Wickremesinghe, Ranjit Attapattu, E.L.B. Hurulle and

M.H. Mohamed opposed it. Wickremesinghe suggested that the final decision be deferred until the return of Prime Minister Premadasa, who was abroad at the time.

On 22 July Dissanayake announced at the annual general meeting of the Energy Managers Association of Sri Lanka, "An agreement to end the ethnic conflict is being worked out and I am glad to announce that there will be peace in this country in another ten days."

I was present at that meeting and went up to Dissanayake when he concluded his speech. "We are giving the final touches to the draft. Dixit will fly to Delhi. An Indian Air Force plane is waiting to take him." Daily News broke the story the next morning.

On 27 July Jayewardene told the cabinet that he had decided to sign the new proposals. Those opposed to it could leave the party. Whilst most decided to go along with the president, Premadasa read a 3-page statement expressing his opposition and called for a national referendum. Jayasuriya and Wickremesinghe supported him, Athulathmudali expressed some reservations. The cabinet resolved by consensus to authorise Jayewardene to sign the accord.

Rajiv Gandhi summoned Prabhakaran to New Delhi where he was flown from Jaffna by Indian High Commission official Haldeep Puri in an Air Force plane. Balasingham joined him at Madras. Meanwhile Dixit flew to Madras where he joined Indian Foreign Secretary K.P.S. Menon. They briefed MGR and Panruddi Ramachandran. MGR gave his full support to the signing of the agreement but later expressed his unhappiness that LTTE had not been made a party to it.

Indian Foreign Ministry officials had a meeting with Prabhakaran on 27 July and Rajiv met him for 90 minutes the following day. Prabhakaran disclosed his misgivings about the accord and said he was not prepared to trust the Sinhala

leadership in general and Jayewardene in particular, that Tamils had been repeatedly deceived and that the Sinhalese did not want to share power with the Tamils. He said that the Tamils had taken up arms as the last resort and if they laid down their arms; "They (the Sinhalese) will make the Tamils their slaves."

Prabhakaran was not convinced when Rajiv said he would guarantee to protect the Tamils, assure the security and safety of the LTTE cadres after they surrendered their arms and offered the Tigers a predominant position in the interim administration that would be formed in the merged North and East Province following the accord. Prabhakaran also declined his offer of the services of the Black Cats to personal protection. A disappointed Rajiv flew to Colombo the next day promising Prabhakaran to meet him on his return.

Jayewardene also ran into trouble in Colombo. The SLFP organised a massive protest demonstration into which the JVP also sneaked in. The JVP agitators torched over 200 buses and attacked government buildings. Both parties capitalised on the anti-India hysteria created by Jayewardene and his party. A 48-hour curfew was clamped down at 6 p.m.

Rajiv flew to Colombo on 29 July and helicoptered to Galle Face Green from where he drove in his bullet-proof car, airlifted from New Delhi, to the President's House. Indian Black Cats guarded Galle Face Green and Indian naval ships moved closer to the coast to keep guard. The accord was signed that morning which, Rajiv claimed, was "unique" and "unprecedented in the history of the world at least in this century."

All morning massive crowds, determined to prevent the signing of the accord, collected on the three roads leading to Colombo. They were stopped at Dehiwala Bridge, Nugegoda, and Kelani Bridge.

To help handle the tense situation, Rajiv, on Jayewardene's request, ordered Indian Air Force planes to bring Sri Lankan soldiers from the north to Colombo. Reuter correspondent Dalton de Silva got wind of this and filed a flash on the morning of 30 June saying that Indian troops were on their way to Palaly.

Jayewardene summoned de Silva. When he got to the President's House, de Silva saw Rajiv and Jayewardene coming down to inspect the guard of honour and also witnessed a naval cadet as he tried to hit Rajiv on the head with his rifle butt. Rajiv ducked and the blow fell on his shoulder.

Jayewardene met de Silva half an hour after the incident. Dissanayake was also present. Jayewardene said, "I saw your story. It's incomplete. The Indian planes are, at this moment, flying their soldiers to Palaly. The same planes are bringing our soldiers to Colombo. The Indians are doing this on my invitation."

The Indian soldiers did not have the reception they had anticipated in Jaffna. The Jaffna public, agitated about the fate of Prabhakaran in New Delhi, blocked the roads and pulled and pushed the Indian army jeeps as they tried to drive in a convoy to Jaffna town. They were allowed to proceed only after an assurance about the safety Prabhakaran.

The Jaffna public had reasons to get agitated. In New Delhi Prabhakaran was held incommunicado, Black Cats guarded his room, visitors were not allowed, he was not permitted to go out or receive telephone calls. But he did manage to get a call to DMK MP K. Gopalaswamy, "We have been betrayed by the government of India and by Rajiv Gandhi. I have been stabbed in the back", Prabhakaran told him.

When Rajiv met him on his return, Prabhakaran repeated his fears: the security of the Tamil people after the

arms surrender, of the future of the LTTE cadres and of his own personal safety. Rajiv told him to move with the times and assured him of his personal safety and of the security of the Tamils in the new administrative arrangement. He also promised Indian Rs. 500 million to the LTTE to help maintain its cadres till they found employment in the police and army. Prabhakaran was still unconvinced.

Rajiv conveyed Prabhakaran's acceptance of the accord to Jayewardene on 2 August. His message read:

1. In light of offers conveyed through Dixit on 1 August about interim administrative arrangements in the North-Eastern Province to be created, and offer concerning employment of Tamil separatist cadres after the surrender of their arms, Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE, has:
 - (a) agreed to participate in the implementation of the agreement;
 - (b) agreed to the surrender of arms; and
 - (c) Prabhakaran would like to be in Jaffna personally to organise surrender of arms.
2. In the interest of conciliation and peaceful implementation of the accord, Prabhakaran will be air-dropped at Jaffna by the evening of today, 2nd of August. Prabhakaran has agreed to the following schedule for the surrender of arms, etc. as given by Government of India.

August 2 evening: Arrive in Jaffna.

August 3: Indian army to fan out into all parts of the Jaffna peninsula, including Jaffna city.

August 3 noon: LTTE to formally inform Indian commander that arms would be surrendered on August 4 before evening, 6 pm.

August 4&5: Surrender of arms by LTTE. Events to be witnessed by press and TV.

August 5 President Jayewardene may kindly announce the decision, in principle, to set up an interim administration in the North-Eastern Province before the Provincial Council elections. Details to be worked out in consultation with the Government of India.

3. I would like to assure you that if Prabhakaran goes back on his word in any manner or fails to organise surrender of arms, the Indian army will move to disarm LTTE by force.
4. In light of the above time limit for the surrender of arms will have to be extended from 15.30 hours of August 3 to the evening of August 5: another 48 hours extension is envisaged. Ceasefire will be maintained by the Indian forces.

5. I request that no publicity should be given to these arrangements till the late afternoon of 3rd August.

Prabhakaran was air-dropped on 2 August. He went to the LTTE office opposite the Jaffna University and met the politbureau members. Most of them were unhappy with the accord. They opposed the surrender of arms on the grounds that it would reduce the Tamils to a state of helplessness. "What guarantee is there the Tamils will not be cheated again?" was the main objection raised by them. Prabhakaran said that he too had raised that question but had been assured by Rajiv Gandhi that India would undertake the responsibility of safeguarding the Tamils and the LTTE cadres. He persuaded the members to fall in line with the accord, using the argument that Tamils should not offend Rajiv or India.

That was the theme of his address that evening to the massive crowd that thronged at the Suthumalai Amman Temple. "Today there has taken place a tremendous turn in

our liberation struggle," he said, and added, "This has come suddenly, in a way that has stunned us, and as it were beyond our power to influence events. Whether the consequences of this will be favourable to us, we shall have to wait and see."

He said he was summoned to New Delhi by Rajiv Gandhi and shown the agreement. "There were several complications and several question marks in it. The doubts arose for us whether, as a result of this agreement, a permanent solution would be available to the problems of our people. Accordingly, we made emphatically clear to the Indian government that we are unable to accept this agreement. But the Indian government stood unbudging, and whether we accepted it or not it was determined to put the agreement into effect."

Prabhakaran explained that India was adamant in signing the accord due to its foreign policy and security concerns. However, at the same time it decided to determine the political future and fate of the Tamils. That was why he had firmly objected to it, he said.

He also detailed the reasons for his objection: the condition that compelled the surrender of arms and his distrust of the Colombo government. On surrender, he said, "The agreement directly affects our political goals and objectives. It affects the form and shape of our struggle. It also puts a stop to our armed struggle. If the mode of our struggle, brought to this stage over a 15-year period through shedding blood, through making sacrifices, through striking achievements, and through offering great many lives, is to be dissolved or disbanded within a few days, it is naturally something we are unable to digest. This agreement disarms us suddenly, without giving us time, without getting the consent of our fighters, without working out a guarantee for our people's safety and protection. Therefore we refused to surrender arms."

Prabhakaran said he had told Rajiv Gandhi of this. "I pointed out," he said, "to the Indian Prime Minister the fact

that I did not repose the slightest faith in the Sinhala racist government and did not believe that they were going to fulfil the implementation of this agreement."

Rajiv had given him certain assurances, and it was because of his faith in him that he had agreed to the surrender of arms. By taking their weapons from them the responsibility of protecting the Tamils would pass on to the Indian government.

"I wish very firmly to emphasise here that by virtue of our handing over of our weapons the Indian government should assume full responsibility for the life and security of every one of the Eelam Tamils," Prabhakaran said.

The surrender of arms by militant groups was one of the main items of the peace accord. It laid down a time frame of 72 hours for the arms surrender and was the responsibility of the Indian government.

The implementation of the rest of the accord was the responsibility of the Sri Lanka government. These included the withdrawal of the army to the barracks, granting amnesty to all Tamil militants in custody, establishing an interim administration for the northern and eastern provinces, announcing the temporary merger of these two provinces, constituting the north-east provincial council and devolving power to it, and holding election.

Prabhakaran wanted the arms surrender to be a small affair but India wanted to make a big show of it and a high profile publicity was arranged, with reporters and television crews flown in from New Delhi, Madras and Colombo. The function was simple but symbolic. Dulip Yogi placed his personal revolver on a table and Defence Secretary General Sepale Attigala placed his hand on it to signify acceptance. He then handed Yogi a letter which contained the Presidential pardon. The LTTE also surrendered two lorry loads of weapons, which, according to journalists who covered the event, was described as unusable

India was happy but not Colombo. It was suspicious of Prabhakaran. Athulathmudali confided in me, 'Mark my words. Prabhakaran is going to deceive India.' But Dixit thought otherwise. He told me, "Given the historical context it is natural for Prabhakaran and Colombo to distrust each other. Prabhakaran's reluctance is understandable considering the series of deceptions the Tamil leadership had experienced."

Amirthalingam and the TULF were again sidelined during this entire exercise. Amirthalingam was merely informed of the signing of the peace accord. He was not even shown the text. But he was enthusiastic about it as it meant that the sufferings of the Tamil people would end. He was particularly happy with the direct role India had assumed. He issued a statement welcoming the pact and promised to play a constructive role.

But things took a different turn.. The Tiger cadres started hiding weapons. In a report submitted to the Indian government Major General Harikant Singh said that the LTTE was burying weapons after greasing them and wrapping with polythene. News reports from Jaffna carried in Colombo papers spoke of the sudden demand in Jaffna for grease and polythene. Major General Singh announced on 10 August that the Tigers should hand over the estimated 2200 weapons in their possession within the next few days, "Otherwise we will be looking for weapons," he said. On 24 August about 70 percent of the weapons had been handed over with promises that the balance would be surrendered soon. On Singh's persuasion, on 24 August Jayewardene released the majority of Tamil prisoners taken in under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Dixit also activated the political negotiations. The first round of talks began in Colombo on 19 August to settle the residual matters pertaining to the role and powers of the governor, law and order, etc. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam

and Sampanthan were brought back into the mainstream. Prabhakaran was displeased. At this Dixit said, "They (TULF leaders) had done the talking earlier. They know what more is to be obtained. They are seasoned constitutional lawyers. Prabhakaran and his people know only to talk in general terms. Besides, they are fighters, not lawyers."

The second round was in September in New Delhi when the setting up of an interim administration for the North-East Provincial Council was discussed. The LTTE had also been invited.

Clashes had broken out between the LTTE and other groups about this time. The LTTE suspected that the TELO and EPRLF were being favoured by the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force). Prabhakaran told the *Hindu* on 15 August that the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement was concluded in haste, having in mind only India's interest. He also said, "There is no question of the LTTE going along with these arrangements and giving up its arms without adequate protection for our people and fighters." The EPRLF and TELO refused to surrender their arms, complaining that they were being attacked by the LTTE. They sought IPKF protection; some of their cadres were kept inside the IPKF camps. But this protection was misused by some. They would go out, attack the Tigers and return to the IPKF camps. The LTTE protested and accused the IPKF of favouring its rivals.

On 3 September some unknown persons fired at the IPKF at Mankulam. A week later LTTE supporters demonstrated outside the ten IPKF camps in the northern province and shouted such slogans as, "Have you come to help us or anger us?" That same day in Kokuvil the PLOTE killed a leading member of the LTTE. Four days later the LTTE killed 42 members of the PLOTE and the EPRLF. India condemned the killings and warned that it would be forced to take strong action. But the clashes continued. On 24 September the LTTE

and EPRLF clashed in the Batticaloa district in which 42 EPRLF men were killed.

While these internecine clashes were going on Colombo sent Joint Operations Command chief Lt. General Cyril Ranatunga to the Indian capital to pressurise New Delhi to complete the collection of arms from the Tigers. In an interview with P. Suriyanaraya on 7 September Prabhakaran made known his growing disenchantment with India. He charged Rajiv Gandhi of trying to impose colonial regime on Sri Lankan Tamils and said that the agreement only helped India gain a foothold in Sri Lanka in furtherance of her geopolitical ambitions. Tamils would pressurise India to withdraw the IPKF through political protests, he said, and accused her of not paying enough attention to the resumption of Sinhala colonisation by the Sri Lankan government and to the reopening of the police stations.

To articulate the grievances of the Tigers and to force the government to meet five demands of the LTTE, Amirthalingam Thileepan, the 23-year old chief of its political wing, went on an indefinite fast opposite the Nallur Kanthaswamy temple. The five demands were: release of all political prisoners and those held under anti-terrorist laws; ending of Sinhala colonisation; disarming of home-guards and other Sinhala dominated para-military forces; closure of army camps and of police stations in Tamil areas, and the setting up of the interim administrative council.

On 23 September, the ninth day of the fast, Thileepan's conditions began to deteriorate. An agitated Dixit flew to Palaly the next day and had a 2-hour meeting with Prabhakaran with Balasingham as the interpreter. He appealed to Prabhakaran to persuade Thileepan to abandon his fast but was informed that Thileepan would do only when the five demands had been conceded. Dixit promised to talk to Jayewardene.

Dixit and Prabhakaran reached an agreement about the setting up of the interim administrative council. The LTTE was to have seven members in the 11-member council, with the balance four distributed among the TULF (one), the Sinhalese (one) and the Muslims (two). The council would be in place till democratic elections were held in the merged north and east. For their part the LTTE would abide by the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

Dixit met Jayewardene and secured his consent for the agreement he had reached with the LTTE. Jayewardene agreed to nominate a LTTE nominee as the Chief Administrator and asked Dixit to obtain three names from Prabhakaran to enable him to select one. The procedure of the president selecting one of the three nominees was the accepted practice in Colombo. Prabhakaran nominated V.K. Sivagnanam, former Jaffna Municipal Commissioner, S. Pathmanathan, an Assistant Government Agent, and R. Sivagnanasundaram, a retired government official. Jayewardene selected Sivagnanam and nominated Tissa Jayakoddy, who had retired as the Sinhala representative. Prabhakaran objected to the picking up of Sivagnanam as the Chief Administrator and wanted Pathmanathan who was from the eastern province. Dixit flew to Palaly again and tried to persuade Prabhakaran to accept Jayewardene's choice. At the 6-hour meeting he told Prabhakaran, "How can I ask him to do that?" In other issues he offered to intercede. Thileepan's death on 26 September created a charged atmosphere. Some youth ran riot, stoned and burnt some state buses. The situation took a turn for the worse in Jaffna after Dixit left for New Delhi on 30 September for consultations.

On 3 October the Sri Lankan navy intercepted and captured a motor-boat approaching Point Pedro and found it manned by heavily armed Tigers. All of them were top LTTE leaders, including Kumarappah and Pulendran, both regional commanders. They were handed over to army and kept under guard in a hangar at the Palaly Air Base. Athulathmudali

ordered that they be flown to Colombo for investigation.. The Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Colombo protested, saying that the men had not committed any offence but Athulathmudali accused them of gun- running. He also said that Pulendran was wanted for the massacre of 129 bus passengers in April at Kittulutuwe in the Polonnaruwa district. Athulathmudali said that amnesty applied only to crimes committed within the northern and eastern provinces and the April massacre fell outside that category.

The IPKF mounted a guard round the hangar to physically prevent the Tigers being flown to Colombo. Dixit was told to return to Colombo to salvage the deteriorating situation. But it could not be done. All 17 Tigers swallowed the cyanide capsules they carried and 12 of them died, including Kumarappah and Pulendran. Tigers went on a rampage. They killed the eight Sri Lankan policemen they held prisoners, shot the Sinhala officers in the Kankesanthurai cement factory, killed three Sinhala technical officers attached to the Palaly Television Relaying Station and attacked Sinhala villages in the Trincomalee district.

There were loud protests among the Sinhala people. They accused the IPKF of inaction and urged that Lankan troops be deployed to deal with the Tigers. Jayewardene informed Rajiv Gandhi of this. They agreed to issue a joint order to the Indian and Lankan forces to shoot at sight any person resorting to violence in the north and east. The order was issued on 7 October.

India also issued a statement which said: "The Government of India strongly condemns these wanton acts of killing of innocent men, women and children. We are determined to implement the provisions of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and will use all the force at our command to preserve peace and communal harmony." Rajiv Gandhi told parliament, "In these circumstances the IPKF were given instructions to

apprehend anyone carrying arms or involved in the massacre of civilians."

Prabhakaran reacted by calling off the ceasefire. The LTTE ambushed an IPKF jeep carrying five para-commandos. The IPKF launched simultaneous attacks on Tiger camps in Vavuniya, Mannar and Kilinochchi.

On 8 October Indian Defence Minister K.C.Pant and Indian Army Chief General Sundarji met Jayewardene in Colombo. They decided on a crackdown on the LTTE. At a press conference Pant announced, "The Government of India had taken a decision to act firmly against all violent elements which are obstructing the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement."

The announcement marked an about-turn of events in Tamil history. The IPKF, which had gone to the north and the east to help the Tamils, now started a hunt of the biggest of the Tamil militant groups. Amirthalingam felt hurt, psychologically and physically. His optimism ebbed for he felt that all that had been gained had been frittered away. On 9 October he told me over the phone, "Now only God can save the Tamils." He said lack of foresight and the inability to comprehend political and historical processes had resulted in the decision to fight the IPKF. "They had just played into the hands of Jayewardene," he said. And that was exactly what Jayewardene was claiming as his greatest achievement, and continues to do so even today. "I made the Indians who came to protect the Tamils fight them," he says.

The next day, 10 October, the TULF issued a statement signed by Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam expressing shock and grief at the LTTE attacks on Sinhala civilians and the IPKF and calling upon the Tamils to support the peace process.

But peace was not to be. Events moved at whirlwind speed. The Tamil Nadu police raided the LTTE office in

Madras and the following day the IPKF launched 'Operation Pawan' (Whirlwind) to dislodge the LTTE from Jaffna. Jayewardene canceled the amnesty, outlawed the LTTE and announced a reward of one million rupees for the capture of Prabhakaran.

The IPKF brought paratroops and other trained battalions and marched along Palaly, Kankesanthurai and the Kandy road to Jaffna and captured it four days later.

I covered the daily evening briefings at the Indian High Commission in Colombo and was also in touch with Amirthalingam. The TULF leader, a very sensitive person, cried when I called him on 17 October. "What can I do to prevent this disaster?" he asked, and then added, "I am thinking of issuing an appeal to the Indian government and the LTTE." In a statement issued that evening, he appealed to the Indian Prime Minister to view the situation sympathetically. He asked the LTTE to give up its battle with the IPKF as, "The LTTE should not forget that the interests of the Tamil people are paramount."

Amirthalingam and Sivasithamparam issued a joint statement again on 24 November urging the LTTE to hand over their remaining weapons and fall in line with the Indo-Lanka Accord. The LTTE did not respond, the IPKF steadily tightened its grip over the north and east. The LTTE resorted to guerrilla hit and run warfare and was successful in carrying the Tamils with it. Most of the Indian generals with whom I spoke had a lurking respect for LTTE's military organisation and techniques but were at a loss to understand its failure to capture power through interim administration and the subsequent proposed election. "They could have built on that," they all said. Lt. General Sardesh Pande said so in Jaffna and later wrote in his book, *Assignment Jaffna*, "I have a high regard for the LTTE for its discipline, dedication, motivation and

technical expertise; but found little justification for its senseless, mulish, destructive insistence in continuing the military means in the search of an honourable solution to the Tamil problem of Sri Lanka."

New Delhi was also perplexed and thus adopted a dual approach of weakening the LTTE militarily while talking to it through the RAW with Kittu who was then in Madras. India also pressurised Colombo to start the political process by establishing the Provincial Councils and devolving power to them. The Sri Lankan government presented the Provincial Councils Bill and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution to parliament in late November. Amirthalingam wrote to Rajiv Gandhi that the powers to be devolved to the Provincial Councils fell far short of what he had promised the Tamils. He referred to the promise Rajiv Gandhi had given that the Provincial Councils would be given powers enjoyed by the Indian states. He also pointed out the areas where powers specified in the accord had been diluted.

Amirthalingam wrote, "The devolution of executive and legislative powers is not comparable to what is in the Indian Union. The powers over land are totally inadequate to meet Tamil aspirations." He also pointed out that the emergency powers given to the President far exceeded those given to the Indian Central Government. Rajiv Gandhi told Amirthalingam that Jayewardene had given him firm assurance that all defects would be remedied. But Amirthalingam told a symposium held in Madras on 12 January, "Apart from our bitter experience of Jayewardene's firm assurances, not even the Government of India is in a position to say when these assurances will be given effect to and when the shortcomings will be remedied. If somebody says it will be done after the elections you may as well forget about it."

On 13 January 1988, Prabhakaran wrote to Rajiv Gandhi asking him to call off the military offensive and to initiate peace negotiations, to prevail upon Sri Lanka to grant amnesty and to release the LTTE members in Sri Lanka and IPKF custody, and "As previously agreed in the minutes of the agreement between the Government of India and the Tigers, we pledge to surrender our arms as soon as an interim administration is formed with the majority role for our organisation. As we have repeatedly assured you, we will cooperate with the Government of India in the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord if Tamil interests are promoted and Tamil people are protected."

Prabhakaran's letter helped India to upgrade the talks with Kittu and soften its position that the LTTE should surrender all of its arms and publicly accept the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. The talks with Kittu failed in July and he was arrested by the Tamil Nadu police. When he started a fast in protest, he and other militant cadres were flown to Jaffna and released.

In March Dixit announced that the situation was conducive to reactivate the political process in the north and the east and suggested that the Provincial Council election be held. On 29 June he briefed the TULF leaders in Colombo that the Indian Government's view and assessment was that an election could be held and thus India had suggested that the election be held as soon as possible.

I interviewed Amirthalingam after the meeting. He said, "He did not ask us to contest. It is up to us whether to contest or not. That we will decide in consultation with our members."

On 31 July Colombo announced the holding of the Provincial council election and announced a temporary merger of the northern and eastern provinces on 10 September. Five

days later the IPKF announced a 10-day ceasefire and invited Tamil parties and groups to contest the election. Amirthalingam decided not to contest. He released a statement which was read by Yogeswaran: "Although the Government of India declared a ceasefire for 10 days to enable the LTTE to come into the mainstream of political life the TULF expresses its disappointment at the failure of the LTTE to respond to this gesture of the Indian Government. This failure had created a situation in which it is difficult for non-violent, unarmed political parties like the TULF to field candidates for the forthcoming election. The TULF, however, is conscious that the Tamil speaking people are fully supportive of the efforts by the Government of India to institutionalise the achievements of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord."

Filing of nomination began on 2 October but not a single paper was filed until 6 October. The LTTE announced that it would boycott the election and ordered others also to do the same. But the EPRLF, the ENDLF and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress decided to field candidates. Dixit arranged for the EPRLF to contest the Jaffna and Mannar districts and the ENDLF Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. Since no other parties contested in the northern province, 36 candidates from the EPRLF and ENDLF were elected uncontested. In the eastern district the EPRLF, SLMC and UNP filed nominations in Trincomalee, Ampara and Batticaloa kachcheries. The UNP nominations were rejected in Trincomalee. Election held on 19 November turned out to be a contest between Tamils and Muslims. Tamils decided to vote in large numbers to prevent the Muslims sweeping the elections. The Sinhalese were kept out. There were reports of large-scale impersonation. Of the 576 polling stations in the eastern province only 324 functioned. Some were manned by just one official as many officers failed to turn up fearing LTTE reprisals. Of the

534,306 voters only 399,066 voted. The SLMC won 17 of the 35 seats in the eastern province, the UNP 1, EPRLF 12 and ENDLF 5. In the entire North and East the EPRLF won 41 seats, ENDLF 12, UNP 1 and the SLMC 17.

Dispute between the EPRLF and the central government in Colombo started soon after the election on the issue of Trincomalee being the capital of the North-Eastern Province. Colombo opposed the idea because of Sinhala claim for the natural port town and also feared that it would reverse the process of colonisation begun in 1948 and lead to more Tamils and Muslims settling there. The Tamils had seen successive Sinhalese governments carry out a planned colonisation in the Trincomalee district. In 1948, when Sri Lanka attained independence Sinhalese formed 5 percent of the population in the Trincomalee district. The first attempt to colonise it was made that year when Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake started the Padaviya Scheme and 1320 Sinhalese were settled in Parvathy Kiramam, an ancient Tamil village, and changed its name to Padaviya. The following year another 1112 Sinhalese were sent in, and in 1950 Allai, another Tamil farming village was converted into a Sinhala settlement with 744 Sinhalese being settled in. From then onwards the process continued unabated.

The 1953 census reflected the effect of these Sinhala settlements. The Sinhala population rose to 18 percent and that of the Tamils and Muslims declined to 43 and 34 percent. The colonisation programme expanded after 1953. In 1957 the Tamil village of Muthalikulam was converted to Marawewa and 612 Sinhalese settled in, in 1960 the Sinhala village of Abeyapura was created close to Trincomalee town, the following year the fishing village of Sirimapura was established in Uppuveli, where one hundred and thirty-three fishing families were settled in, and in 1962 a Buddhist vihara was

built near the Tamil village of Thiriyaya and 72 Sinhala families were settled in.

The Sinhala villages Mihunthapura and Jayanthipura were established in 1963 where 121 Sinhala families were settled, in 1964 a Buddhist vihara and a school were built in China Bay around which a Sinhalese settlement grew, in 1966 about 30 Sinhala families were settled in Palan Pedda Aru, in 1968 the Tamil village of Periyakulam was renamed Namalwatte where 92 Sinhala families were settled in, in 1971 a new Sinhala village named Dehiwatte was founded in Kiliveddi where 92 families were settled in. All these settlements boosted the Sinhala percentage in the Trincomalee district to 31 in 1971 whilst the Tamil share dipped to 37 percent and that of the Muslims to 29 percent.

Many new colonisation schemes were founded in the seventies and the 1981 census saw the Sinhala percentage climb to 34 percent, just 2 percent below that of the Tamils, whilst that of the Muslims slid down to 28 percent. In actual numbers, in 1981, there were 93,510 Tamils, 86,341 Sinhalese and 74,403 Muslims.

The eighties saw further colonisation though the riots of 1983 halted the pace as a result of which there was a slight decline in the Sinhalese population ratio.

The EPRLF, however, won the battle for the site of the capital. Trincomalee was chosen and Varatharaja Perumal formed a ministry of two Tamils, one Sinhalese and one Muslim.

The Presidential election was held on 21 December 1988. The TULF supported the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) candidate Ossie Abeygoonsekera. In a statement Amirthalingam said, "Among the three presidential candi-

dates, the candidate who has tried to promote peace between the Sinhalese and the Tamil speaking people, on the basis of justice and equality, is Mr. Ossie Abeygoonesekera. He inherited the political mantle of the martyred leader Mr. Vijaya Kumaranatunge, who initiated the move for a rapprochement between the two people.

"It is the duty of the Tamil speaking people to help reactivate the democratic processes and to exercise their franchise in a principled manner. The TULF therefore appeals to the Tamil speaking people to vote for Mr. Abeygoonesekera and strengthen the genuine forces for peace, equality and justice to the Tamil speaking people."

Ranasinghe Premadasa won the election. Amirthalingam was happy that many Tamils had defied the LTTE boycott call and voted in the election. "This is an encouraging symptom," he said. It was this that made him and the TULF decide to contest the Parliamentary election President Premadasa announced on 25 December soon after his victory.

Dixit worked out an agreement among the TULF, EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO that all contest under the TULF. Amirthalingam contested Batticaloa. He explained, "In fact, one reason why I yielded to pressure from my supporters to contest Batticaloa was that the sword of Damocles of Referendum which is hanging over the head of the merged north-east province has to be removed by a determined effort on the part of the Tamil people in the next parliament. I feel confident that my victory will be an indication of the determination of the Tamil people to preserve the amity and integrity of the homeland of the north-eastern province."

The TULF, in its election manifesto, stated that the IPKF should not be withdrawn until full autonomy was given to the north-eastern province and a Tamil-dominated security

force set up there. It said, "The IPKF is an imperative to the Tamils until law and order is established and the machinery started functioning in the province." But it made clear that it was opposed to an indefinite stay of the Indian army. In an election speech Amirthalingam said, "They (IPKF) should remain to give Tamils security and protection until we get everything in order."

He reacted sharply when the LTTE called for the boycott of the general election of 15 February 1989. The boycott campaign was sinister, he said, and added that in order to win the trust and confidence of the people the TULF would not deviate from democratic politics despite threats by the LTTE. He called upon the LTTE to denounce violence and enter the democratic mainstream.

Amirthalingam was defeated. The EROS, which contested with LTTE's blessings, and the EPRLF got most of the votes in the TULF's bastion, the Jaffna peninsula. But Amirthalingam was nominated to parliament for the national seat that the 4-party combine of TULF, EPRLF, ENDLF and TELO had garnered. His name was proposed by the ENDLF and supported by the TELO, as both parties believed that Amirthalingam's parliamentary experience and skill should be used for the benefit of the Tamil people.

He returned to parliament after a self-exile of 5 years and 7 months and performed brilliantly. He welcomed all initiatives to find a solution to the ethnic problem and welcomed the government-LTTE talks which commenced in May 1989. He told parliament on 4 July, "We welcome the move in starting negotiation with the LTTE but let us not by such a process drive back into the jungles those who have already been persuaded to enter the democratic process. The negotiation should be widened and more people should be

invited. India too should be asked to join the discussion. No one should attempt to make political capital of the existing situation."

Amirthalingam's main grouse with the Sinhala community was that it was playing politics with the Tamil problem. He took all opportunities to talk to the UNP and the SLFP to persuade them to approach the Tamil problem in a non-political manner. He repeatedly told me that no solution would emerge until the UNP and the SLFP got together to work out a solution.

Amirthalingam had met with Sirima Bandaranaike a week before his assassination and had urged her to cooperate with the government to find a solution to the Tamil problem. He had argued that the talks with the LTTE should be made full use of in the interest of the country. She related this when EPRLF MP Dharmasangari called on her to discuss Amirthalingam's funeral arrangements. "Amirthalingam had matured into a national leader. It's unfortunate he had been killed at this time," Mrs. Bandaranaike had told Dharmasangari.

N. Ram, editor of *Frontline*, who had known Amirthalingam intimately for about a decade, told the Amirthalingam Memorial Lecture on 31 August 1992 that Amirthalingam felt rejuvenated after his return to parliament and had started to play an active role. Amirthalingam never enjoyed his exile in Tamil Nadu, Ram said, and a tinge of sadness and desperation had crept into him after Jayewardene abruptly ended the All Party Conference in December 1984.

Kendal Hopman, who had interviewed Amirthalingam on 15 January 1989 soon after his return to Colombo, recorded the change in him: "Amirthalingam is no longer the firebrand he once was. Much of the fire seems to have been replaced by caution. He thinks more slowly and longer than he once used to."

Chapter 11

Not the End

The Last Journey of Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran began on the morning of 15 July 1989 from their Baudhaloka Mawatha residence. The caskets, wrapped in the TULF flag, was carried shoulder-high by Tamil youth with whom the two were closely associated, the Tamil youth whose aspirations they understood and represented.

The bodies were flown to Trincomalee from Ratmalana airport in an airforce plane made available by the government. Northern-Eastern Governor Nalin Seneviratne, Chief Minister Annamalai Varatharaja Perumal and his 4-member cabinet were at the Trincomalee airport to receive the caskets. On arrival, the caskets were taken in a flower-decked hearse to the Trincomalee Town Hall where they were kept to enable the public to pay their last respects. Hundreds of people waited in long queues to pay their homage and later lined the funeral procession route. Indian soldiers, who provided security, had a hard time managing the crowd.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who was in Amparai, flew to Trincomalee to pay respect to his former parliamentary colleagues.

The Sri Lankan airforce mounted a guard of honour as the caskets were taken to Batticaloa the same evening where they were kept in the Town Hall. The Indian security forces relaxed the curfew to permit the public pay their respects, people who came in thousands throughout the night. An Indian army official said, "I have not seen such a sight in my life. People came from all sides. They were all in a highly emotional state. Women cried aloud, men sobbed silently. It was a sea of grief, emotion."

The caskets were flown to Jaffna the next morning. They were greeted by weeping supporters. A Lake House reporter, who covered the funeral at the Jaffna esplanade, wrote, "Jaffna was a sea of people when the bodies were taken there for cremation at dusk. The cremation took place amidst emotional scenes never witnessed in the northern city."

Senior members of the Sri Lankan and the Indian governments and of the political parties of Tamil Nadu were represented. Sri Lanka was represented by Mahaweli Minister Gamini Dissanayake and the Indian government by Minister of State for External Affairs Narwar Singh and Indian High Commissioner Lal Mehrotra. Tamil Nadu Congress(I) was represented by its general secretary Mrs. D. Yosodha, All India Anna Dravida Kazhalagam by deputy general secretary Rahavanandan, and Indian Union Muslim League (Sameed Group) by Khaja Mohideen.

The EPRLF, which had organised the funeral, was there in strength. It declared a 3-day mourning, beginning 14 July. It also arranged for Jaffna city to be befittingly decorated. Varatharaja Perumal delivered a moving funeral oration. He recalled how Amirthalingam had sacrificed his personal comfort and well-being for the sake of the Tamil speaking people, had travelled every nook and corner of the northern and eastern provinces, carrying in a small suitcase his clothes, a shaving set, toothpaste and tooth-brush.

The EPRLF also moved a vote of condolence in the North-East provincial council. In parliament, too, a vote of condolence was moved. On both occasions Amirthalingam's many rare qualities were recalled and appreciated. One MP recalled Amirthalingam's speech in parliament on 22 February 1980 when he had said, "Although I have not touched a cigarette in my life, the price increase of a cigarette by 4 cents will certainly be a burden on the people who smoke."

Natwar Singh, in his oration, made particular reference to the efforts Amirthalingam had made to unite Tamil militant groups. He said, "The two leaders worked tirelessly to forge Tamil unity. The Tamil unity had become imperative now." Amirthalingam had toiled for the unity of Tamil militant groups since 1984. He had had several meetings with militant leaders, had pleaded with them to get together. His heart bled when they fought among themselves, killed each other. He had made use of every chance he got to meet them and each time he had begged them to come together.

Natwar Singh's oration was a moving one. The representative of the Sri Lankan government, Gamini Dissanayake, also delivered a moving oration, but included some timely advice. He opened by saying, "I have come to Jaffna to pay my last respects to two of my parliamentary colleagues and friends. Both Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran had addressed vast crowds on this very esplanade where I am speaking. Today they are silent. Their silence, however, is louder than all the words they could have spoken."

He continued, "There is a lesson we can learn from their deaths - that violence gets us nowhere, that we must eschew violence and take the path of peace and non-violence. Mr. Amirthalingam took over the leadership of the TULF at a very difficult time, a time when the spirit of democracy was slowly being eroded and violent politics was emerging as a factor. He was compelled to struggle with this contradiction.

"We may have our differences about Mr. Amirthalingam's handling of the situation, but no one can challenge his sincerity and honesty of purpose. The divisive politics which has been the bane of Sri Lanka during the past years brought about a situation after 1983 when the Tamil leadership chose to opt out of the Sri Lanka political system and asked the government of India to be their intermediary.

"After many discussions and negotiations, the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 paved the way for devolution of power and national integration within the unitary constitution of Sri Lanka. For a time there was peace in the north and the east. But again violence broke out. The Indian Peace Keeping Force is in Sri Lanka now. They have to go away. This must be done through negotiation and goodwill.

"I wish to say here that all Tamil people should strive to live in peace, harmony and unity to serve the democratic process of Sri Lanka and preserve their own culture and tradition. Mr. Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran represented this process. The Tamil people must ensure that this process continues. We must avoid the mistakes of the past, we must avoid populist politics and integrate our nation's sovereignty on human and democratic value system."

Three years later, proposing the vote of thanks to N. Ram, who delivered the Amirthalingam Memorial Lecture on *Why not federalism in Sri Lanka?* on 31 August 1992, at the BMICH, Sivasithamparam said that Amirthalingam did all that was possible to serve the democratic process. "We did all that was possible. We cooperated with the Sinhala political parties and worked with them in the government even after the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact was torn. In 1972, when the new constitution was drafted, we asked for only six things - reasonable use of Tamil and such small things. Our letter was not even acknowledged. In 1984, when the All Party Conference met, we were asked to state our grievances. That was the type of treatment our attempts to find out a democratic solution, received. We stomach all those things and worked with the APC because we wanted to find a democratic solution. One day when the plenary met President Jayewardene shocked us with the announcement that consensus had been reached and two committees would be appointed to go into the grievances and devolution of power. We protested. We told him that we ask something and you

are saying something else and how can there be consensus. President Jayewardene replied that in cabinet meetings the consensus is what the Prime Minister decides. We tried everything possible but at every turn we were betrayed."

Amirthalingam himself, in his speech two months before his killing, traced the history of the systematic discrediting of the Tamil moderates. "After 1983," he said "at the All Party Conference we redefined our stand in the light of the stand of the Government of India. We stated although we were elected on a mandate to work for an independent state, if the Government of Sri Lanka offered a satisfactory alternative which will satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people and remove the long-standing grievances, we would place the solution before the people and get their approval. That offer was spurned down."

Dissanayake knew all this. He was an important minister at that time. He was also responsible for some of the mistakes he spoke about. He was, perhaps, moved by the emotion of the thousands of people who had gathered at the Jaffna esplanade. He said, "Thousands of sons of our soil are here today. We all bow our heads to two outstanding human beings. You, the people of Jaffna, whom they represented nationally and in parliament must now share a part of the sorrow with the bereaved widows and children."

In the ultimate analysis, it was Amirthalingam's unshakeable faith in the democratic process, in the path of negotiated settlement that led to his betrayal and assassination. As A.J. Wilson later said in his book *Break Up of Sri Lanka*, "If there had been some concession by the Sinhala people that would have given a legitimacy to the Tamil leadership which had faith in a negotiated solution, if the Sinhala leadership had reacted to the non-violent protest, the violent phase could have been averted." And Amirthalingam would have been with us today!

But, as they say in Hinduism, his 'physical body' is not with us any more. That was set alight by his son Ravi, the boy for whose telephone call he had waited before he went upstairs to meet the killers. But the killers could destroy only his 'physical body'. They could not and cannot destroy his soul, his sacrifices, his message. As Dissanayake said, in concluding his emotional oration, "The names of Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran will be engraved not so much in stone but in the hearts of men."

And three years after his death, the Sinhala public openly began to discuss federalism as a possible solution to the ethnic problem. Bandaranaike's daughter, Chandrika, has placed before the nation a solution, which had adopted federalism without the use of that word. Sri Lanka is on the verge of becoming a union of regions, a phrase Amirthalingam coined.

Amirthalingam's death was not the end. It is only a beginning, the beginning in achieving his federalist goal.

Annexure - I

Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957

Part A

Representatives of the Federal Party had a series of discussions with the Prime Minister in an effort to resolve the differences of opinion that had been growing and creating tension.

At an early stage of these conversations it became evident that it was not possible for the Prime Minister to accede to some of the demands of the Federal Party.

The Prime Minister stated that, from the point of view of the Government, he was not in a position to discuss the setting up of a Federal Constitution, or regional autonomy or take any step that would abrogate the Official Language Act.

The question then arose whether it was possible to explore the possibility of an adjustment without the Federal Party abandoning or surrendering any of its fundamental principles or objectives.

At this stage the Prime Minister suggested an examination of the government's Dratt Regional Council Bill to see whether provision could be made under it to meet, reasonably, some of the matters in this regard which the Federal Party had in view.

The agreements so reached are embodied in a separate document.

Regarding the language issue, the Federal Party reiterated its stand for parity but in view of the position of the Prime Minister in this matter they came to an agreement by way of adjustment. They pointed out that it was important for them there should be a recognition of Tamil as a national language and that the administration of the Northern and the Eastern Provinces should be done in Tamil.

The Prime Minister stated that as mentioned by him earlier it was not possible for him to take any steps that would abrogate the Official Language Act.

After discussion it was agreed that the proposed legislation should contain recognition of Tamil as the language of the national minority of Ceylon and that the four points mentioned by the Prime Minister should include provision that, without infringing on the position of the Official Language as such, the language of administration of the Northern and Eastern Provinces be Tamil, and that any necessary provision be made for the non-Tamil speaking minorities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces,

Regarding the question of Ceylon citizenship for the people of Indian descent and the revision of the Citizenship Act, the representatives of the Federal Party put forward their views to the Prime Minister and pressed for an early settlement.

The Prime Minister indicated that the problem could receive early consideration.

In view of these conclusions the Federal Party stated that they were withdrawing their proposed satyagraha.

Part B

1. Regional areas to be defined in the bill itself by embodying them in a Schedule thereto.
2. That the northern Province is to form a regional area whilst the Eastern Province is to be divided into two or more regional areas.
3. Provision is to be made in the Bill to enable two or more regions to amalgamate even beyond provincial limit; and for one region to divide itself subject to ratification by Parliament. Further provision is to be made in the Bill for two or more regions to collaborate for specific purposes of common interests.

4. Provision is to be made for direct election of regional councillors. Provision is to be made for a delimitation commission or commissions for carving out electorates. The question of MPs representing districts falling within regional areas to be eligible to function as chairman is to be considered. The question of Government Agents being regional commissioners is to be considered. The question of supervisory functions over larger towns, strategic towns and municipalities is to be looked into.
5. Parliament is to delegate powers and to specify them in the Act. It was agreed that regional councils should have powers over specified subjects including agriculture, cooperatives, lands and land developments, colonization, education, health, industries, fisheries, housing, social services, electricity, water schemes and roads.
Requisite definition of powers will be made in the Bill.
6. It was agreed that in the matter of colonisation schemes the powers of the regional councils shall include the power to select allottees to whom lands within their area of authority shall be alienated and also power to select personnel to be employed for work on such schemes. The position regarding the area at present administered by the Gal Oya Board in this matter requires consideration.
7. The powers in regard to the regional council vested in the Minister of Local Government in the draft bill to be revised with a view to vesting control in Parliament wherever necessary.
8. The Central Government will provide block grants to the regional councils. The principles on which the grants will be computed will be gone into. The regional councils shall have powers of taxation and borrowing.

Annexure - II**Dudley Senanayake-Chelvanayakam Pact of 1965**

Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Mr. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam met on the 24-3-1965 and discussed matters relating to some problems over which the Tamil-speaking people were concerned, and Mr. Senanayake agreed that action on the following lines would be taken by him to ensure a stable government:

- (1) Action will be taken early under the Tamil Language Special Provisions Act to make provision of the Tamil Language of Administration and of Record in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Mr. Senanayake explained that it was the policy of his party that a Tamil-speaking person should be entitled to transact business in Tamil throughout the island.

- (2) Mr. Senanayake stated that it was the policy of his party to amend the Language of Courts Act to provide for legal proceedings in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to be conducted and recorded in Tamil.
- (3) Action will be taken to establish District Councils in Ceylon vested with powers over subjects to be mutually agreed upon between the two leaders. It was agreed, however, that the government should have power under the law to give directions to such councils under the national interest.
- (4) The Land Development Ordinance will be amended to provide that citizens of Ceylon be entitled to the allotment of land under the Ordinance.

Mr. Senanayake further agreed that in the granting of land under colonization schemes the following priorities be observed in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

- (a) Land in the Northern and Eastern provinces should in the first instance be granted to landless persons in the district.
- (b) Secondly, to Tamil-speaking persons resident in the northern and eastern provinces.
- (c) Thirdly, to other citizens in Ceylon, preference being given to Tamil citizens in the rest of the Island.

Sgd. Dudley Senanayake

24-3-65

Sgd. S.J.V.Chelvanayakam

24-3-65

Annexure -III

Text of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka, Colombo,

29, July 1987

The Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. J.R. Jayewardene having met at Colombo on 29 July 1987.

Attaching utmost importance to nurturing, intensifying and strengthening the traditional friendship of India and Sri Lanka and acknowledging the imperative need of resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, and the consequent violence, and for the safety, well-being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities in Sri Lanka.

1. Having this day entered into the following Agreement to fulfil this objective.
 - 1.1 desiring to preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka;
 - 1.2 acknowledging that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and a multi-lingual plural society consisting, inter alia, of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors), and Burghers;
 - 1.3 recognising that each ethnic group has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity which has to be carefully nurtured;
 - 1.4 also recognising that the Northern and the Eastern Provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples, who have

at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups;

- 1.4 conscious of the necessity of strengthening the forces contributing to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and preserving its character as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious plural society, in which all citizens can live in equality, safety and harmony, and prosper and fulfil their aspirations;
2. **Resolve that:**
 - 2.1 Since the Government of Sri Lanka proposes to permit adjoining Provinces to join to form one administrative unit and also by a Referendum to separate as may be permitted to the Northern and Eastern Provinces as outlined below:
 - 2.2 During the period, which shall be considered an interim period (i.e.) from the date of the elections to the Provincial Council, as specified in para 2.8 to the date of the Referendum as specified in para 2.3, the Northern and Eastern Provinces as now constituted, will form one administrative unit, having one elected Provincial Council. Such a unit will have one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers.
 - 2.3 There will be a Referendum on or before 31 December 1988 to enable the people of the Eastern Province to decide whether:
 - (A) The Eastern Province should remain linked with the Northern Province as one administrative unit, and continue to be governed together with the Northern Province as specified in para 2.2, or

- (B) The Eastern Province should constitute a separate administrative unit having its own distinct Provincial Council with a separate Governor, Chief Minister and Board of Ministers.

The President may, at his discretion, decide to postpone such a Referendum.

- 2.4 All persons who have been displaced due to ethnic violence, or other reasons, will have right to vote in such a Referendum. Necessary conditions to enable them to return to areas from where they were displaced will be created.
- 2.5 The Referendum, when held, will be monitored by a committee headed by the Chief Justice, a member appointed by the President, nominated by the Government of Sri Lanka, and a member appointed by the President, nominated by the representatives of the Tamil speaking people of the Eastern Province.
- 2.6 A simple majority will be sufficient to determine the result of the Referendum.
- 2.7 Meeting and other forms of propaganda, permissible within the laws of the country, will be allowed before the Referendum.
- 2.8 Elections to Provincial Councils will be held within the next three months, in any event before 31 December 1987. Indian observers will be invited for elections to the Provincial Council of the North and East.
- 2.9 The emergency will be lifted in the Eastern and Northern Provinces by 15 August 1987. A cessation of hostilities will come into effect all over the Island within 48 hours of the signing of this

Agreement. All arms presently held by militant groups will be surrendered in accordance with an agreed procedure to authorities to be designated by the Government of Sri Lanka. Consequent to the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms by militant groups, the army and other security personnel will be confined to barracks in camps as on 25 May 1987. The process of surrendering of arms and confining the security personnel moving back to barracks shall be completed within 72 hours of cessation of hostilities coming into-effect.

- 2.10 The Government of Sri Lanka will utilise for the purpose of law enforcement and maintenance of security in the Northern and Eastern Provinces the same organisations and mechanisms of Government as are used in the rest of the country.
- 2.11 The President of Sri Lanka will grant a general amnesty to political and other prisoners now held in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other emergency laws, and to combatants, as well as to those persons accused, charged and/or convicted under these laws. The Government of Sri Lanka will make special efforts to rehabilitate militant youth with a view to bringing them back to the mainstream of national life. India will cooperate in the process.
- 2.12 The Government of Sri Lanka will accept and abide by the above provisions and expect all others to do likewise.
- 2.13 If the framework for the resolutions is accepted, the Government of Sri Lanka will implement the relevant proposals forthwith.

- 2.14 The Government of India will underwrite and guarantee the resolutions, and cooperate in the implementation of these proposals.
- 2.15 These proposals are conditional to an acceptance of proposals negotiated from 4.5.1986 to 19.12.1986. Residual matters not finalised during the above negotiations shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within a period of six weeks of signing this Agreement. These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India co-operating directly with the Government of Sri Lanka in their implementation.
- 2.16 These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India taking the following actions if any militant group operating in Sri Lanka does not accept this framework of proposals for a settlement, namely:
- (A) India will take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka.
 - (B) The Indian Navy/Coast Guard will cooperate with the Sri Lanka Navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka.
 - (C) In the event that the Government of Sri Lanka requests the Government of India to afford military assistance to implement these proposals the Government of India will cooperate by giving to the Government of Sri Lanka such military assistance as and when requested.

- (D) The Government of India will expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of Indian citizens to India who are resident there concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu.
 - (E) The Governments of India and Sri Lanka will cooperate in ensuring the physical security and safety of all communities inhabiting the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
- 2.17 The Government of Sri Lanka shall ensure free, full and fair participation of voters from all communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in electoral processes envisaged in this Agreement. The Government of India will extend full cooperation to the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.
- 2.18 The official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala, Tamil and English will also be official languages.
3. This Agreement and the annexure thereto shall come into force upon signature.

In witness whereof we have set our hands and seals hereunto. Done in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on this the twentieth day of July of the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven, in duplicate, both texts being equally authentic.

Rajiv Gandhi

Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Junius Richard Jayewardene

President of the Democratic Socialist

Republic of Sri Lanka

ANNEXURE TO THE AGREEMENT

1. His Excellency the Prime Minister of India and His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka agree that the Referendum mentioned in paragraph 2 and its subparagraphs of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Election Commission of India to be invited by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka.
2. Similarly, both Heads of Government agree that the elections to the Provincial Council mentioned in paragraph 2.8 of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Government of India to be invited by the President of Sri Lanka.
3. His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka agrees that the Home Guards would be disbanded and all paramilitary personnel will be withdrawn from the Eastern and Northern Provinces with a view to creating conditions conducive to fair elections to the Council.

The President, in his discretion, shall absorb such paramilitary forces, which came into being due to ethnic violence into the regular security forces of Sri Lanka.
4. The Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka agree that the Tamil militants shall surrender their arms to authorities agreed upon to be designated by the President of Sri Lanka. The surrender shall take place in the presence of one senior representative each of the Sri Lanka Red Cross and the Indian Red Cross.
5. The Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka agree that a joint Indo-Sri Lankan observer group consisting of qualified representatives of the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka would monitor the cessation of hostilities from 31 July 1987.

6. The Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka also agree that in terms of paragraph 2.14 and paragraph 2.16(C) of the Agreement, an Indian Peace Keeping contingent may be invited by the President of Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if so required.

Prime Minister of India

New Delhi

29 July 1987

Excellency,

Conscious of the friendship between our two countries stretching over two millennia and more, and recognising the importance of nurturing this traditional friendship, it is imperative that both Sri Lanka and India reaffirm the decision not to allow our respective territories to be used for activities prejudicial to each other's unity, territorial integrity and security.

In this spirit, you had, during the course of our discussions, agreed to meet some of India's concerns as follows:

- (i) Your Excellency and myself will reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.
- (ii) Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests.

- (iii) The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.
- (iv) Sri Lanka's agreement with foreign broadcasting organisations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purposes.

In the same spirit, India will:

- (i) Deport all Sri Lankan citizens who are found to be engaging in terrorist activities or advocating separatism or secessionism.
- (ii) Provide training facilities and military supplies for Sri Lankan security forces.

India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a joint consultative mechanism to continuously review matters of common concern in the light of the objectives stated in para 1 and specifically to monitor the implementation of other matters contained in this letter.

Kindly confirm, Excellency, that the above correctly sets out the agreement reached between us. Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(Rajiv Gandhi)

His Excellency

Mr.J.R.Jayewardene

President of the Democratic

Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Colombo

This is to confirm that the above correctly sets out the understanding reached between us. Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

(J.R.Jayewardene)

President

Foreign Affairs Record, July 1987,.

A Note to Researchers

Most of the material used in this book is from personal knowledge of this writer (T. Sabaratnam) who covered politics, specially Tamil politics, for the newspapers he worked for since 1957. He was with the Tamil daily *Thinakaran* till 1977 and thereafter with the *Daily News*, both printed by the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., popularly known as Lake House.

Lake House has valuable clipping files. Researchers are advised to make use of the files on A.Amirthalingam, S.J.V.Chelvanayakam, the Federal Party (later Tamil United Liberation Front), All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Terrorism, Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Agreement etc. Lake House also has a file of negatives of the photographs of major events, a veritable storehouse.

Hansard, the record of the proceedings of the parliament, is also a valuable resource base.

Most of the documents preserved by the Federal Party and the TULF have been destroyed but, fortunately, a copy of the Silver Jubilee issue of the TULF is available with Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, a document which contains a collection of the presidential addresses delivered at the annual conventions and the resolutions adopted in them.

There is also a series of books and publications, arranged topic-wise, that will be of assistance.

The Origin of the Conflict

M.Vythilingam: The Life of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Vol. 11, Chunnakam, 1977. The concluding chapters of the book gives a detailed account of the circumstances and events that led to the failure of the policy of cooperation Ramanathan and his brother Arunachalam followed since the latter part of the 19th century. Both felt betrayed by the Sinhala leadership and retreated to Jaffna to form separate organisations for the Tamils.

K.M.de Silva : The Ceylon National Congress in Disarray 1920-21: Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam leaves the Congress, Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, new series, Vol. ii No. 2 (July-September); also details the frustrations of Ramanathan and Arunachalam which resulted in the loss of faith of the Tamils in the Sinhalese.

Sir Charles Jeffries: OEG : A Biography of Sir Earnest Goonetilleke (London 1969); Ceylon - The Path of Independence, London 1962.

H.A.J.hulugalle: Don Stephen Senanayake, M.D. Gunasena and Co. Ltd., Colombo; Biography of D.R.Wijewardene, Lake House Investments Ltd. Both books provide details of the denial of any share of power in the State Council during the Pan Sinhala Ministry period and the emergence of the 'Fifty-Fifty' cry, a call for power sharing.

The Soulbury Commission Report : This report also gives an account of the 'Fifty-Fifty' demand and its rejection.

Jane Russel : Communalism under the Donoughmore Constitution, 1931-47, Colombo 1992, gives a detailed account of the period of the Pan Sinhala Ministry.

Dispute over Land

Till the formation of the Federal Party, the Tamils thought of a single Sri Lankan (then Ceylon) nation and asked for their due share in it. But with the launching of state-aided colonisation of the Tamil areas with Sinhalese in the early 1940s and the disfranchisement of the Tamils of recent Indian origin, the Tamils realised that they were being weakened electorally. This was first realised by S.J.V.Chelvanayakam and Vanniyasingham. They felt that their first priority was to stop this weakening process. Chelvanayakam made use of the pithy Tamil saying 'Wall must be preserved to draw on it' to lead a campaign against Sinhala colonisation.

Not many books are available on Sinhala colonisation and its effect on Tamil representation in parliament and other consequences. Similarly, disfranchisement of the Indian Tamils and its effect on Tamil representation have not been analysed in detail. For material on these issues recourse has to be made to Hansard and to the Federal Party's Silver Jubilee Souvenir, published in Jaffna in 1974.

Some details can be gathered from:

A. Jeyaratnam Wilson: The Break Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict, C. Hurst and Company, London Orient Longmans Ltd.

T. Sabaratnam: Out of Bondage, the Thondaman Story, Sri Lanka-India Cultural Centre, Colombo.

An insight into the Sinhala motive for colonisation can be had from:

Malinga H. Gunaratna: For a Sovereign State, Savodaya Book Publishing Service, 41 Lumbini Avenue, Ratmalana.

The impact of the disfranchisement of the people of recent Indian origin has also not been researched.

Dispute over Language

The enactment of the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 by the SLFP government of S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike made the simmering Sinhala-Tamil conflict more visible. The language conflict has been studied by many researchers and well documented. The following books are recommended:

R.N.Kearney: Communalism and Language in Politics of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1973.

A.J.WILSON: Politics of Sri Lanka 1947-1979, London, 1979.

B.H.Farmer: Ceylon: A Divided Nation, London, Oxford University Press, 1963.

W.Howard Wriggins: Dilemmas of a New Nation, Princetown University press, 1960.

Charles Abeysekera(ed): Facts of Ethnicity in Sri Lanka, Social Sciences Student's Association, Colombo 5.

Conflicts over university admissions, employment etc. are the result of the language conflict. These areas, however, have not been sufficiently researched.

Violence in Sri Lanka

The frustration the Tamil leadership that stood for a United Sri Lanka suffered resulted in the birth of the movement for regional autonomy and the repeated violence unleashed on the Tamil community gave birth to the separatist movement. The slow transformation from the demand for federalism to separation had been studied but a deeper study is needed, specially of the emergence of counter-violence among the Tamil youths.

The following books will be of assistance:

Tarzue Vittachi: Emergency '58: the story of the Ceylon Riots.

Prof. Virginia Leary: Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka in July-August 1981 - Report prepared on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists.

T.D.S.A.Dissanayake: The Agony of Sri Lanka.

L. Piyadasa: Sri Lanka: The Holocaust and After, London, 1984.

Colombo Study Circle: Sri Lanka: Reign of terror in Jaffna, Colombo, Kumaran Press, 1981.

C, Suriyakumaran: The Anguish of '83, K.V.G.de Silva (Colombo) Ltd., April, 1990.

Somasundaram Vanniyasingham: Sri Lanka: The Conflict Within, Lancer International, New Delhi.

Gananath Obeysekera: Political Violence and Future of Democracy in Sri Lanka, International Asian Forum.

Rohan Gunaratne: War and Peace in Sri Lanka.

S.J.Tambiah: Sri Lanka: Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy, I.B.Tauris and Co. Ltd. Publishers, London.

Paul Sieghat: Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors - Report of a mission to Sri Lanka in January on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists and its British Section, Justice, Dorchester: Henry Leng Ltd., The Dorset Street, March, 1984.

Indian Intervention

A series of books are being published on the Indian intervention. The most important of these are:

V.P.Vaidik: Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka: India's Option, National, New Delhi, 1974.

Ravi Kant Dubey: Indo-Sri Lanka Relations with special reference to the Tamil problem, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi.

Rajesh Kadian: India's Sri Lanka Fiasco, Vision Books.

Major Shankar Bhaduri and Major General Afsir Karim: The Sri Lanka Crisis, Lancer International, New Delhi.

Mohan Ram: Sri Lanka: The Fractured Island, Penguin Books (India) Ltd., New Delhi.

P.S.Suriyanarayana: The Peace Trap: An Indo-Sri Lankan Political Crisis, Affiliated East-West Press, New Delhi, 1988

Rohan Gururatna - The Indian Intervention

Some other useful books

K.M.de Silva and Howard Wriggins: J.R.Jayewardene of Sri Lanka: A political Biography, Vol. 1 and Vol.2 London, Antony Blond, 1988.

J.R.Jayewardene: Men and Memories, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.

Bradman Weerakoon: Premadasa of Sri Lanka, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.

Urmila Phadnis: Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka, New Delhi, Manohar, 1976.

Michael Roberts: Collective Identities, Nationalism and Protests in Modern Sri Lanka, Colombo, Marga Institute, 1979.

Chandra Richard De Silva: The Sinhalese-Tamil Rift in Sri Lanka, The Tamils, the Constitution of the Second Republic of Sri Lanka, 1978.

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THE AUTHOR

Thambyiah Sabaratnam is Deputy Editor of Sri Lanka's prestigious "Daily News." During his long career at Lake House, the biggest newspaper publisher in the country, Sabaratnam has written extensively for general audiences on a variety of ethnic issues, and was in constant contact with the major players in that damaging drama. He is the author of "Out of Bondage", a work which relates the story of Tamils of recent Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

The crowd-puller

Appapillai Amirthalingam is Jaffna man's favourite orator. He has the capacity of drawing crowds whenever he speaks. Amirthalingam is such a crowd-puller that even the militant Jaffna youth pause to listen to him.

Few politicians speak from their heart and Amirthalingam is one of them. He is no soap-box orator who makes easy promises about the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Amirthalingam is a pauper. He has sacrificed a lucrative practice at the Bar to do full-time politics and a firm supporter in the uncertain profession of politics with his wife Mangayarkarasi.

Amirthalingam was one of the earliest converts to Federalism. He embraced it as an undergraduate. After Chelvanayakam had delivered a talk on Federalism to the members of the University Tamil Society Amirthalingam fired some questions and following Chelvanayakam's clarifications adopted Federalism.

Observer of 7 August 1977.

The Indian Ocean isle of Sri Lanka was famous since antiquity for its spices, scenic beauty and smiling people. In the last two decades it had earned notoriety for its cruel ethnic war.

It is an armed conflict between the majority Sinhalese who constitute 74 percent of the island's 18 million people and the Tamils who form 18 percent. The Muslims, mainly Tamil speaking and constitute 7 percent of the population, though not directly involved, had been sucked into the discord.

The dispute originated over sharing of political power, which the Sinhalese gradually consolidated for themselves by weakening the Tamils by diminishing their representation in the seats of power and by reducing their territory. Their share in state employment and their opportunities for higher education too were dipped.

The Tamils first agitated for a proportionate share of power, then for an autonomous federal unit to manage their affairs and finally resorted to armed revolution to win for themselves a separate state called Tamil Eelam.

This book tells the story of Appapillia Amirthalingam, who led the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front during the critical phase of the ethnic conflict, the struggles he led and the manner in which his hand and that of the moderates was weakened.