

SRI LANKA: THE YEARS OF TERROR

**THE JVP INSURRECTION
1987-1989**

C.A. Chandraprema.

SRI LANKA: THE YEARS OF TERROR THE J.V.P. INSURRECTION 1987 - 1989

C.A. Chandraprema

To T.S. Kumaresan
From S. Uthayan Shankar
24/5/94



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Preface

This is a collection of fifty one articles which appeared in *The Island* between 5 February 1990 and 16 June 1990. Some changes have been made in the text to bring it up to date. The select bibliography provides a glimpse of my sources. Most sources of information will however have to remain anonymous. I was fortunate to have access to some of the best collections of JVP underground literature during the period of turmoil. Most of the documents listed in my select bibliography are available in various private collections. Those interested can always have access to these through the proper channels.

At the time I began to write in to *The Island*, nobody knew very much about the shadowy organisation which came so close to capturing power and which intruded so rudely into the lives of ordinary people. Hence I began by giving the names and some biographical details of the JVP leadership 1987-89. Thereafter, I expanded on the organisational structure and origins of the JVP going back to the 1960's. The idea was to chronologically record the various stages of development of the JVP organisationally and ideologically over the twenty or more years of its existence. I also included several articles on the "philosophy of the movement" in order to present to the reader an account of the JVP's ideology. My objective was to provide the reader with a very comprehensive view of the JVP from all angles. The enthusiasm with which my articles were received by the reading public was ample compensation for my efforts.

I began writing these articles in late January 1990 on the invitation of Mr. Gamini Weerakoon, Editor of *The Island*. Until he brought up the suggestion, it never occurred to me that I should write about the JVP. My friend Mr. Malinga Herman Gunaratne, author of the book *For a Sovereign State*, further encouraged me on these lines by suggesting that I should first get the names of the JVP leaders, do small biographical writeups about them and proceed to expand that way. The rest was sheer inspiration. Most of what I have put down in these articles are thoughts that have been gestating in my mind over the past five years. After I began to write, the words flowed effortlessly. The speed and volume of my own writing astounded me. I found at the end of the exercise, that I had contributed an average of ten long articles every month for five months. This worked out at one every three days. I worked at a feverish pace during those days, carefully recording for posterity and for the information of the general public, the story of the JVP.

My gratitude goes out to Mr. Malinga Herman Gunaratne, Mr. Gamini Weerakoon and Mr. James Lanerolle, Managing Director of Upali Newspapers Ltd. for having helped and encouraged me to write this story, and to Mr. Victor Walatara, Manager of the Lake House Book Shop and Mrs. N. Wickramasinghe and Mr. E.E.C. Abayasekera, Directors of Lake House Investments Ltd for accepting my series of articles for publication in the present form. A special word of thanks is due to my sources of information, especially the one's who have opted to remain anonymous for security reasons. Without their trust and co-operation, this history of the JVP insurrection 1987-1989 would not have assumed its present breadth and scope.

Introduction

History repeats itself, first as a tragedy then as a farce said Karl Marx. The events recounted in this book is in fact a repetition of history. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) organised two violent rebellions against two widely different elected governments of Sri Lanka. The first rebellion was in 1971 and the other in the years 1987-89. The earlier episode took place during the formative stages of the JVP. It was by all accounts, a premature and amateurish attempt. It was put down with ease by the United Front Coalition Government led by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. 1971 was a watershed in the history of Sri Lanka. The following were indicted in the main case before the Criminal Justice Commission, for complicity in the 1971 April insurgency. (Courtesy: A.C.Alles-Insurgency 1971).

01. Piyatilake
02. Lionel Bopage
03. James Uyangoda
04. Anura Ranjith Kurukulasuriya
05. Sunanda Deshapriya
06. Loku Athula
07. Vicor Ivan
08. Nimal Maharage
09. Somasiri Kumanayake
10. Wasantha Kanakaratne
11. Rohana Wijeweera
12. Cecil Chandra

13. Piyasiri
14. Sunil Ratnasiri
15. Wijeyapala
16. Ananda Perera
17. Osmund Silva
18. Lakshman Mahaduwa
19. Mahinda Wijesekera
20. Kelly Senanayake
21. Batapola Athula
22. Aladin Subasinghe
23. Kalu Lucky
24. Lakshman Munasinghe
25. D.A.Gunasekera
26. T.D.Silva
27. S.D.Bandaranaika
28. Dhanapala
29. Meril Jayasiri
30. Chukki Premaratne
31. Sanath (killed in action)
32. Susil Wickrema (killed in action)
33. Sarath Wijesinghe (killed in action)
34. Milton (killed in action)
35. W.T.Karunaratne
36. Premapala
37. Wimalagune
38. Viraj Fernando
39. Susil Siriwardene
40. Nayanananda Wijekulatilake

After the failure of the revolt, some of these people retired from politics altogether. Others joined the various constituent parties in the ruling United Front Coalition Government. Some are now doing well as politicians, businessmen, academics, civil servants and private sector executives. The vast majority later turned against their erstwhile leader Rohana Wijeweera. None of the accused in the main case in 1971 were with Wijeweera in 1987-89, except S.D.Bandaranaika who flirted with the JVP during these years from a safe distance. Many of them predicted that what the JVP embarked on in 1987 was an adventure doomed to failure from the start.

The 1971 revolt gave Sri Lanka a foretaste of things to come. But nothing prepared the country for the fury and desperation of the 1987-89 struggle. The JVP insurrection 1987-89 was a ferocious and unbridled bid to grab political power. But it failed. The government crackdown began in earnest after the second half of 1989. Towards the month of October 1989, there appeared on the walls in many parts of the country, an offset printed poster which bore the legend "*Wijeweera, your twenty year 'boon' period is now over. You are no longer our leader*" (signed) *sincere members of the JVP.*

The poster was naive and in a contextual sense meaningless. Sometime before the appearance of this poster, there circulated a rumour that the JVP was receiving covert aid on a long-term basis from some unidentified foreign source. This was at a time when speculation was rife as to the JVP's probable foreign backers. The rationale behind the rumour was that the JVP leadership (and more specifically Wijeweera) had been recruited way back in 1969 by some hitherto undisclosed foreign source and given a period of twenty years within which political power was to be captured. In the meantime—so the story went—this foreign source would monitor progress and offer assistance whenever necessary.

The poster was displayed in such form and numbers as to make it quite obvious that it had the backing of the establishment. Mere speculative gossip was seized upon by somebody and worked out into a poster which was ostensibly calculated to spread confusion and demoralise the rank and file of the JVP. But the idea was so naive that all it succeeded in doing at the time of its appearance was to cause amusement and embarrassment among the general public. The poster appeared to be the work of a local intelligence agency which being far removed from any actual field work, soon tended to lapse into a twilight zone of their own making where theories about conspiracies within conspiracies abound and where the daftest idea may appear to be the acme of wisdom.

Yet incredibly, this poster proved to be almost prophetic. Just two months after the first appearance of this poster, both Wijeweera and the JVP as we knew it, was no more. Many were stunned by the suddenness of it all. Indeed it did appear that grace had suddenly been withdrawn from the JVP as the posters alleged. Almost the entire politbureau was dead by the

first week of January 1990, and most of the central committee as well. One capture led to another in an unending chain leading to the recovery of weapons, explosives etc. The army and the police vied with each other in the capture of politbureau and central committee members. In the short space of two and a half months, a movement with a history of two decades was decimated; thus ending two and a half years of violent rebellion which left thousands of innocent Sri Lankans dead and billions of rupees worth of property completely destroyed.

The very mention of the JVP or DJV as they sometimes called themselves, was enough to evoke blind and unthinking fear among the general public. People unquestioningly obeyed their orders – a letter or a telephone call was sufficient to get people to close their shops, stop work, call strikes. The JVP shook the government to its foundations in a manner the Tamil insurrection in the North and East was never able to do. The business community and the bureaucracy found themselves in a quandary not knowing whom to obey – the government or the "little government" (*punchi aanduwa*) as the JVP was known at that time. It seemed that the government would collapse at any moment with senior members of the ruling elite falling over one another in their eagerness to take a "non confrontationist" attitude towards the the JVP. Yet when the confrontation between the state forces and the JVP did start, it took barely four months to finish off the job.

Probably never before in recent world history has an organisation which gave out the impression of so much power been decimated so completely in so short a period of time. Even as the first reports of the capture and death of the JVP leaders began to surface, people were reluctant to believe it. The first reaction was fear – not knowing how to respond to the news. Later as the news received confirmation, a spirit of cautious optimism prevailed. The feeling of relief was universal.

The purpose of these articles is to examine in detail the organisation and the philosophy of the men who came so close to capturing political power in Sri Lanka. What motivated so many young men and women to join the JVP? In this endeavour we are dealing with past history. The JVP as we knew it is no more. What we have now is in effect a "pre – 1969 situation". Prior to 1969, before the JVP emerged apparently from nowhere to occupy the centre stage of politics, there existed a vacuum in

society which the JVP was then able to fill. A similar vacuum now exists, with increasing unemployment, deteriorating economic conditions all round, the elite in the cities continuing to live it up while others suffer, increased aspirations caused by consumerist mass media, primarily television. Above all there exists today the glaring lack of a legitimate political party capable of winning the confidence of the more desperate and impatient section of the youth. The question now is not one of the JVP continuing to exist, but who will take its place now that the JVP is no more?

Unlike the 1971 insurgency, many details about the JVP insurrection of 1987-89 will remain forever buried. Almost its entire leadership and the majority of the rank and file are now dead. Its leaders as they were apprehended, were kept alive only so long as to extract information relating to arms caches, safe houses, and the location of other party leaders, immediately after which they inevitably died in a "confrontation" with the forces. Most of the details of the way in which they organised and maintained their clandestine network during the six years of proscription between 1983 July and December 1989 have gone up in smoke along with its leaders. This time, there were no spectacular and much advertised trials like in 1971 which helped to create an aura of romanticism around the old JVP insurgents. Today both the hero's (if any) and villains of the JVP lie in ashes scattered to the four winds. The story of the insurrection 1987-1989 will have to be laboriously built up with bits and pieces of information as and when they become available.

1. The JVP Leadership 1987 - 89

01. Rohana Wijeweera
02. Upatissa Gamanayaka
03. Piyadasa Ranasinghe
04. Saman Piyasiri Fernando
05. P.B.Wimalaratne
06. Gunaratna Wanasinghe
07. Sumith Athukorale
08. Somawansa Amarasinghe
09. H.B.Herat
10. D.M.Ananda
11. Shantha Bandara
12. Nandatilake Galappatthi
13. Lalith Wijeratne

Central Committee:

14. Gamini Wijegunasekera
15. Kandewatte
16. Amarasiri
17. Lionel Fernando
18. Ragama Some
19. Upali Jayaweera
20. Norman Manawadu
21. Ananda Idamegama
22. Ruwan
- 23. Jayatilaka

24. Palitha
25. Jude Anthony
26. Mirigama Chandare
27. P.Thangarajah
28. Gamini Jayalath
29. Beligalle Siriwardene
30. Aruna Wijesuriya
31. Gunapala Satharasinghe
32. Ariyasena
33. Piyasena Ramanayake
34. Dharmawardhana Munasinghe
35. Indraratne
36. Samaranayake
37. Algiriye Munasinghe
38. Y.M.Abeyratne
39. K.G.Jinadasa
40. Sirimal
41. Ranjitham Gunaratnam
42. Kitulagoda.

(These are brief biographical sketches. Their involvement in the JVP and their part will emerge as the story unfolds)

01. Patabendige Don Nandasiri Wijeweera - alias Rohana Wijeweera. Leader of the JVP from its inception in 1967-69. A dropout of the Medical Faculty of Lumumba University Moscow. Affiliated to the pro - Peking Ceylon Communist Party in 1965-66. A native of Madilla in Tangalle, aged 49 at the time of death in November 1989. Married to Sirimathi Chitrani Fernando the sister of Dr. Subhas Chandra Fernando of Moratuwa. Has six children.

02. Don Upatissa Gamanayake - Second in command of the JVP. Was involved in the 1971 insurrection but not at a leadership level. He emerged as a leader only after the party resumed political activity after the UNP government released the 1971 detenus in 1977. He was arrested in 1975 while trying to commit a highway robbery with a sub-machine gun stolen from a police sub inspector who was killed by the JVP in 1971. Gamanayake was married to one S.A.Karunawathi who was herself imprisoned in 1971 for involvement in the insurrection. They

have three children and were residing in a flat at a housing scheme in Narahenpita. Born in Kantale. Age around 41 at time of death.

03. Sellapperumage Saman Piyasiri Fernando - alias Cabraal. A graduate in commerce of the University of Kelaniya. Before the proscription of the party in 1983, he was in charge of organising school children in Colombo along with Sumith Athukorale who was in overall charge. Said to have taken part in the Galgamuwa People's Bank robbery in September 22 1986 and the attack on the Katunayake Air Force Base on June 7 1987. A native of Mathugama. Was around 32 years of age at the time of death.

• **04. Deva Bandarage Piyadasa** - alias Piyadasa Ranasinghe. Was formerly a school teacher at Karandeniya Maha Vidyalaya in Walasmulla. His services were discontinued after taking part in the July 1980 strike. Thereafter he took to full time party work. Between 1980 and 1983 he was in overall charge of the propaganda section of the party. Said to be one of Wijeweera's closest confidantes. A native of Kirama in the Hambantota district, he was around 42 years of age at the time of death.

05. D.D.N.Wijenayake - alias Sumith Athukorale. A very senior member of the party and a close associate of Wijeweera. He was the Ratnapura district secretary in 1971 at the time of the insurgency. Was never employed except in full-time party work. He joined the movement in 1968 as an undergraduate of the University of Peradeniya and thereafter gave his full attention to the party. Was imprisoned in 1971 and came out to join the newly reconstituted party in 1977. A native of Weeraketiya in the Hambantota District. Was married and has one child. He was killed at the age of 38 in August 1988 at Marawila by a Police party led by SP Solangaarachchi and was thus the first polit-bureau member to be killed after the rebellion began in July 1987. Interestingly, he was also the first ever member of the JVP to be arrested in 1970 by the then UNP government. He managed to evade re-arrest after the aborted insurgency and was captured only in 1972. He escaped from the Anuradhapura new Prison by digging a tunnel. But he was captured again and produced before the Criminal Justice Commission.

•

06. Gunaratne Wanasinghe - alias Gune Aiya. A senior member of the JVP. Was in charge of propaganda work after 1977. Was formerly a school teacher in 1971 when he was arrested and jailed for active involvement in the insurgency. After his release, he took to teaching once again and had even been promoted to principal of small school before he left teaching to join the newly founded "Seenuwa" paper of the JVP in early 1982. He was the Editor of this paper till its proscription in 1983 July. Within the party, he was known as the "expert" on dialectical materialism and is said to have authored some chapters in Wijeweera's 1986 book "What are the solutions to the Tamil Eelam struggle?". He appears to have been proud of his rigid materialistic outlook and looked down upon party comrades with religious or aesthetic leanings. A native of Ambepussa, he was forty years old at the time of his arrest by the police in December 1989.

07. Polwatte Ratu Baduge Wimalaratne - alias Wimalaratne Master. He was a former teacher at the Abeyapura Maha Vidyalaya in Trincomalee and was arrested in 1971 while engaged in the manufacture of hand bombs. After his release, he continued teaching at the same school. He was born in Trincomalee in May 1946.

08. H.B.Herath - A native of Medawachchiya in the North Central Province. He graduated from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura in 1980. In that year he was also the President of the Inter-University Students Federation and the leader of the Socialist Students Union of the Sri Jayawardenapura University. He was noted as a rising star even at that early stage and was co-opted into the Central Committee of the JVP in 1981. Noted as a good orator and a good organiser, he was one of Wijeweera's campaign chiefs at the Presidential Elections 1982. At the time of his capture and death, he was about 32 years of age.

09. Udaya Jagath Shantha Bandara - A native of Kandy 36 years of age. He was an undergraduate of the Science Faculty of the University of Peradeniya when he was suspended for protesting against the proposed rice ration cut in 1977. Thereafter he joined the JVP as a full time activist. He too was noted as a rising star in the party and was in the Central Committee by

1980. In that year he headed the JVP list at the Colombo Municipal Council Elections. He was captured in mid 1988 at Hambantota and was the first breakthrough the forces had into the secret organisation of the JVP. However, using his considerable powers of persuasion, he was able to convince Ravi Jayawardene then the security advisor to President Jayawardene that he should be released in order to bring the JVP to the negotiating table. But a few weeks after he was released he vanished to resume his underground work for the party. He was apprehended and killed in January 1990.

10. Dissanayake Mudiyanseelage Nandasena - alias D. M. Ananda. A native of Wariyapola 35 years of age. He graduated in Arts from the University of Peradeniya in 1980. Was a Buddhist monk when he entered the University, but gave up robes in his final year. He was also the leader of the Socialist Students Union at Peradeniya University and the secretary of the Inter-University Students Federation. Was the chief organiser of the countrywide protest against the proposed white paper on education in 1981. Until the proscription of the party, he was the President of the Socialist Students Union of the JVP. His importance increased tremendously in the years following the proscription and while being functionally the most important man in the organisation, he was in the eyes of his party comrades, No. 3 in the organisation after Wijeweera and Gamanayake.

11. Somawansa Amarasinghe - A native of Maggona 47 years of age. Formerly a technical assistant at the Department of Irrigation. In 1971, he was assigned the task of attacking the Rosemead Place house of Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike on April 5. After the release of the leaders in 1977 he was assigned to look after the finances of the party. He carried out many legal assignments on behalf of the organisation such as the registration of the party's two newspapers "Seenuwa" and "Niyamuwa" under his name. The reason could be that since he was closely related by marriage to an important member of the UNP (who is now a cabinet minister), the JVP probably thought his name would "expedite" matters. Amarasinghe was also one of the key figures in an intra-party debate on the ethnic issue which took place in mid-1983 before the proscription and went on for some months afterwards. Amarasinghe et al were of the view that the JVP

should totally reject its earlier stand on the ethnic issue which held that regional autonomy should be granted to the Tamil people by way of solution. Lionel Bopage and a considerable cross section of the party disagreed and left. Hence Amarasinghe can be identified as one of the main figures behind the JVP's rigid stand against any form of Tamil regional autonomy in the North and East.

12. Nandatilake Galappatthi - A native of Tissamaharama 45 years of age. He joined the JVP in 1971 as an undergraduate of the University of Peradeniya and was jailed during the insurrection. After being released in 1977, he completed his Sinhala honours degree at Peradeniya. Functioned as the editor of the JVP's central organ "Niyamuwa" from 1980 till the proscription. A voracious reader in Sinhala, he was one of the more sensitive individuals in the JVP leadership. But he was also very intense and totally dedicated to the party. In spite of him being a graduate, he had known no employment other than party full time work. He lived frugally on an allowance given to him by the party press and whatever earnings his wife brought home. However, except as a newspaper editor, he was not energetic in his work and generally did not have many responsibilities allocated to him in spite of being a political bureau member of the party.

13. Lalith Wijeratne - alias Aravinda alias Kapila. The least known member of the political bureau. He was promoted to the politbureau to the vacancy created by the death of Sumith Athukorale around mid 1989. A 30-year-old drop out of the Arts Faculty of the University of Peradeniya. He is said to be a native of Divulapitiya. In late December 1989, he was captured and killed by the Kandy Police.

14. P. Thangarajah - A native of Matale 36 years of age. A teacher of English at Zahira College Matale and subsequently Ajmeer Maha Vidyalaya Ukuwela. He was entrusted with the responsibility of organising Tamil Estate workers in the hill country.

15. Gamini Wijegunasekara - Native of Gampaha, 31 years of age. He graduated in mass communications from the University of Kelaniya in 1980 and was subsequently employed by the Coconut Cultivation Board, the Small Industries Depart-

ment and the Ministry of Health. Probably because of his wide experience in working at several government departments, he was placed in charge of the Trade Union Sector.

16. Mirigama Chandare - Real name: Nanayakkara. A native of Mirigama, around 40 years of age. He was arrested in 1971 as a teenager and since his release worked for the party. He married another full-time woman worker of the party. Was captured and killed by the Rapid Deployment Force in September 1989.

17. Gamini Jayalath - A native of Modara, Colombo 35 years of age. He was elected to the Colombo District Development Council in 1981 on the JVP list.

18. Ananda Idamegama - A native of Badulla, aged 29 years. A student of the Engineering Faculty of the University of Peradeniya. Was suspended by the Udalagama Commission for three years for having assaulted pro-UNP students in July 1983.

19. Samarawickrama Senanayaka Easwarage Ariyasena - A native of Beliatta, aged 45 years. Was attached to the Maradana Police Station in 1971 and was arrested for co-operating with the insurgents. Joined the party on a full-time basis after his release in 1977. He was in overall charge of attending to Wijeweera's personal security during the Presidential election campaign of 1982.

20. Gunapala Satharasinghe - A Native of An-gunukolapelessa in the Hambantota district, aged 35. He was involved in the 1971 insurgency as a schoolboy in his mid-teens. He spent some time in prison following the government crackdown in 1971. He was elected to the Hambantota District Development Council on the JVP ticket in 1981. He was taken into custody in 1984 and kept in prison for one and a half years for being a member of a proscribed political party.

21. Beligalle Siriwardena - alias "Beli Sira". A bullock cart renter by profession, 39 years of age. He was the leader of the Kataragama area in 1971. A native of Beligalle in the Hambantota district. He managed to evade arrest following the April insurgency in 1971.

22. K.G. Jinadasa - alias Thilak. A former school teacher, aged 35 years. Native of Galle.

23. Algiriye Munasinghe - A native of Akuressa, 39 years of age. Was involved in 1971 and after his release, went in for full time party work. He was at one time the Colombo military leader of the JVP. A man said to be of an extremely violent disposition, he was held in mortal fear especially by those 71 veterans who were now at logger-heads with the party. In late 1988, he was gunned down at a shop in Ratmalana.

24. Norman Manawadu - A native of Ratgama, 38 years of age.

25. S.K. Jayatilaka - A native of Matara, aged 27. Joined the party on a full-time basis soon after completing the advanced level examination.

26. Palitha Dissanayake - A native of Tissamaharama, 37 years of age. He was involved in 1971 and went to jail while still a schoolboy. A full-time worker of the party throughout the years after the release of its leaders in 1977.

27. Emmanuel Jude Anthony - alias Parinda. A native of Colombo, 35 years of age. Was employed formerly as an electronics technician at St. Anthony's Consolidated Ltd before he came into full-time party work.

28. Piyasena Ramanayake - A native of Gonadeniya, aged 38. Was involved in 1971 and jailed. After his release, he joined the teaching profession for a period before coming into full-time party work.

29. Dharmawardana Munasinghe - A native of Galle, aged 32. He was formerly employed as a lecturer at the Technical College, Galle before coming into full-time party work.

30. Y.M. Abeyratne - A native of Matale, 36 years of age. Also known as "Pol Abey".

31. Sirimal - A native of Kalutara aged 29. A teacher by profession before taking up party work.

32. Jayaweera Mudiyansele Upali Jayaweera - A native of Dambagalle in Moneragala, aged 30. A graduate in commerce of the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. The President of the Socialist Students Union, Sri Jayawardenapura University and the Secretary of the Inter-University Students Federation 1983-84.

33. Samarappulige Somasiri - alias Ragama Some. A native of Ragama, 42 years of age. He was arrested in 1971 for attacking the Ragama Police Station. He is also said to have been involved in the rescue operation of Nandana Marasinghe at the Kalawewa Railway Station in 1971. A trusted hit man of the JVP leaders. He was assigned a small house near the party press at Kohilawatte to live in. He is said to have led the first attack the JVP launched against an army detachment in Pallekelle on April 15, 1987. He had also been involved in the attack on the Katunayake Air Force Base on June 7 1987.

34. Pannala Kottal Bedda Arachchige Indraratne - A native of Weweldeniya, aged 40. Was involved in 1971 and after his release joined the party on a full-time basis. Said to have been involved in the Galgamuwa People's Bank robbery of September 23 1986.

35. Ranjitham Gunaratnam - A native of Kegalle, aged 30. Undergraduate of the Engineering Faculty, University of Peradeniya. President of the IUSF in 1985. A good orator and organiser. Valued by the JVP because of his ethnic origins. He, however, appears to have been a Tamil assimilated into Sinhala culture. He spoke Sinhala without any Tamilian accent and preferred to go under the slightly altered - "Sinhalized" name of "Ranjith Gunaratne". He was instrumental in maintaining links between the JVP and the Tamil guerrilla movements in the North and East. His brother Premakumar, though not a member of the Central Committee, was appointed as the District Secretary for Trincomalee in order to facilitate these contacts.

2. The Organisational Structure 1987-89

From its inception in 1967-69, the JVP never had the usual intra-party trappings of Party congresses and conventions where officials were elected by grassroots level representatives. The appointment of officials was from the beginning either by consensus among the leading figures in the party or by fiat. Way back in 1971, when Wijeweera was asked by the Police as to how he came to be appointed the "General Secretary" of the party, the answer was simple - it was self-appointment by consensus in view of convenience. The first time when Wijeweera was publicly named the General Secretary of the party was in January 1971 during a press conference. This was in response to a query by a reporter as to in what capacity Wijeweera was representing the organisation. According to Wijeweera's testimony, this was the first time it even occurred to them to have such a post! This informal and loose system of appointment remained in the JVP to its very end. This tendency gained in strength as Wijeweera's position in the party as its charismatic fountain head attained consolidation. Thus we find that while Wijeweera had a distinct position in the party as propaganda chief in 1971, his role is undefined in 1987-89. He in fact is the only political bureau member with no specific allocation of function - a clear indication that his position as "leader" standing well above the party functionaries was now well established.

The JVP never had a tradition of electing its leaders. Hence authority passed from top to bottom with no pretence

made of the top deriving its authority from below. The political bureau was at the apex of the power structure of the JVP. Immediately below it was the central committee - the main decision making body of the organisation. For the purpose of organisation the party was divided into three main departments. These departments were placed directly under the authority of the politbureau.

Department one - The Zonal Committees. The country was divided into five zones

(1) Western/Sabaragamuwa (2) Central (3) Rajarata (4) Uva/Eastern and (5) Southern.

Department two - The National Committees on

(1) Education (2) Finance (3) Propaganda (4) Military organisation.

Department Three - The Frontal organisations of

(1) Youth (2) Students (3) Workers (4) Bhikkus (5) Women.

Each of the zonal committees was in turn divided into district committees which were placed under the leadership of members of the central committee. Every district was divided into a number of divisions as the circumstances required. There may be two, three or four divisions in a district. Each such division, for example, division three of the Kandy district would have its divisional secretary, and a secretary each for education, finance, military organisation, propaganda, youth, students, workers, bhikkus and women. The "divisional" organisation within the district was in fact the JVP's basic functional unit at the local level. Within the party rank structure, the secretaries of the divisions were just below central committee rank. There were occasions on which one individual was called upon to fill in several positions as the following will indicate. This was necessitated either by the lack of manpower or the lack of the necessary talent.

The Zonal Leadership

(1) Western/Sabaragamuwa zone:

Political Secretary: D. M. Ananda

Military Secretary: Saman Piyasiri Fernando.

(2) Central zone:

Political Secretary: Piyadasa Ranasinghe

Military Secretary: H. B. Herat

(3) Rajarata zone:

Political cum Military Secretary: Lalith Wijeratne

- (4) Southern zone:
Political cum Military Secretary: Upatissa Gamanayake
- (5) Uva/Eastern zone:
Political Secretary: Shantha Bandara
Military Secretary: H.B.Herat.

National Committees

Education: Gunaratne Wanasinghe.
Finance: Somawansa Amarasinghe.
Military Organisation: Saman Piyasiri Fernando.
Propaganda: Upatissa Gamanayaka.

Frontal Organisations

Workers: P.B.Wimalaratne
Students: D.M.Ananda
Bhikkus: D.M.Ananda
Women: D.M.Ananda
Youth: Shantha Bandara.

The District Leadership

Colombo - D.M.Ananda.
Gampaha - Dharmawardana Munasinghe.
Kegalle - P.K.B.A.Indraratne.
Puttalam - Mahinda
Kandy - Upali Jayaweera.
Matale - Dhammika Idamegama.
Kurunegala - Ranjitham Gunaratnam.
Kalutara - Wimalaratne.
Galle - S.K.Jayatilake.
Matara - Gamini Wijegunsekera.
Hambantota - Ariyasena.
Polonnaruwa - Sumeda.
Anuradhapura - Tissa.
Trincomalee - Premakumar.
Nuwara-Eliya - Shantha Bandara.
Badulla - Amarasiri.
Moneragala - Kandewatte.

The most distinctive feature of the JVP during 1987-89 was the violence and destruction it caused. At the district level, responsibility for the violence was claimed by entities known as

"**balakaya's**". During this period, there were many poster campaigns, leaflets, threatening letters, notices calling for strikes, hartal's and cash donations under the various names of these "balakaya's". The names differed according to the district. Viz. the following:

- Galle - Kamalabandu balakaya.
- Matara - Susil Wickrama balakaya.
- Kandy - Keppetipola balakaya.
- Kurunegala - Nimal Karunatilaka balakaya.
- Kalutara - Karunaratne balakaya.
- Hambantota - Gunasena Warnapatabendi balakaya.
- Anuradhapura - Padmasara balakaya.
- Trincomalee - Wimalaratne balakaya.
- Matale - Munidasa balakaya.
- Colombo - Ranjith Parakrama balakaya.

It was a motley collection of names, some of 19th century Sinhala hero's some of 1971 leaders who died in the insurgency, and others of more recent cadres killed in sporadic actions between 1987 and 1989. The balakaya's of Galle and Matara were named after two leaders of the 1971 insurgency who died in action. The Kandy balakaya was named after the legendry hero of the 1818 rebellion of the Kandyan chiefs against the British. The balakaya's of Kurunegala, Kalutara, Hambantota, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee and Matale were named after cadres killed between 1987-89. The Colombo balakaya was incongruously named after the Colombo military leader who died in a motorcycle accident in 1988.

In a pamphlet put out in 1988 to commemorate the 17th anniversary of the 1971 uprising, the JVP praised Kamalabandu and Susil Wickrama in the following eulogistic terms:

"Beloved comrade Kamalabandu, to us you represent the symbol of heroic resistance to the enemy unto death! Because of your faith in the class struggle, you resisted them consciously, heroically until the last breath was gone from your body. Your story is reminiscent of the Shanthivadi Jathakaya...even as his limbs were bisected one by one, the Bodhisatva invoked the Shanthivadi paramitha's. As your limbs too were chopped off did you not invoke the revolutionary paramita? While smashing your fingernails, pulling out your hair with pliers, piercing your bleed-

ing fingertips with needles and gouging out your eyes they asked you not to invoke your revolutionary paramita. You did not possess a great deal of book learning about politics, yet even as they tore you apart with the machine saw, you were able to face death with an unshaken mind basing yourself only on a rudimentary personal knowledge of the theory and practice of the class struggle. Those of us who are imprisoned and tortured today will find in your memory a source of strength and inspiration..."

"Beloved Comrade Susil Wickrama, Unlike treacherous and opportunistic political chameleons like Loku Athula, you displayed by example, the true spirit of a leader of a revolutionary party. Comrade Susil, we embrace you! The heroic example you set in the April struggle as the District Secretary for Matara is still remembered with revolutionary comradeship by the youth of the South. Your example gives us the strength to stand up to the false propaganda of the capitalist class which says that the leaders of 1971 misled the rank and file of the party..."

Other than these district based balakaya's there were two more affiliated to two Frontal Organisations. The Kudahapola balakaya of the Bhikku Front was named after the reknown monk Kudahapola Unnanse who was executed by the British for having taken a leading role in the 1848 Kandyan rebellion. And the Nimal Balasuriya balakaya of the Student's Front was named after a President of the Inter- University Students Federation who died when a bomb he was carrying to assassinate a senior lecturer of the University of Colombo fell down and exploded at Wellawatte in late 1988. The entire cadre of the Kudahapola balakaya was apprehended before it could properly get off ground. Some bhikku's were trained in the use of firearms including the T-56 rifle and were deployed to provide security at certain public meetings held by elements "friendly" to the JVP. Bhikkus were noticed carrying bombs or firearms at such gatherings under their robes. This was perhaps resorted to because bhikku's were much less susceptible to be body-searched in public by the security forces. The Nimal Balasuriya balakaya was also not very successful being able to claim only the killing of the leader of the Independent Students Union K. L. Dharmasiri in August 1989.

The Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya (DJV) under which these balakaya's were supposed to function was a JVP front which existed only on paper. At no point did the DJV enjoy a separate existence. The DJV was the name used by the JVP when

engaged in twisting the arm of the general public to enforce compliance. Murders, robberies, enforced strikes, hartals and other such anti-social activities the JVP indulged in were done under the name of the DJV. According to the JVP, violence was to be used only on the sly. This cautious approach probably came as a result of the 1971 experience where the JVP found that the taking up of arms even for a just cause was not acceptable to the average Sri Lankan. In 1971 many young revolutionaries discovered that the impression people had of them was not of being saviours but "bombakaraya's". Hence the approach was changed in the late eighties. The JVP would indicate the political line and the DJV would provide the military clout. Throughout 1987-89, the JVP went out of its way to disassociate itself from the DJV which they claimed was a separate, but fraternal organisation with the same political views but with methods of which the "democratic" JVP could not approve of wholeheartedly. When arrested in November 1989, Wijeweera vehemently held that the JVP and DJV were separate while his two colleagues in the polit-bureau Upatissa Gamanayake and D.M.Ananda both freely acknowledged that the two were in fact the same.

3. The Origins of the Movement

The origins of the JVP can be traced back to the years between 1967 and 1969. Its beginnings were closely linked with the life of one of its founder members - Rohana Wijeweera. Though Wijeweera is popularly known as the supreme leader of the JVP from its beginnings, it took him some time to build up undisputed leadership within the party. In the beginning, he was only another individual among a group of young politically motivated idealists.

Among the motley crowd of young revolutionaries who got together to form the JVP in 1967-69, Wijeweera stood out as the only individual with a background of foreign travel and at least a smattering of English. He was thus able to overawe the others by exuding an aura of learning on account of his access to literature in English and his course work in Marxism while in Russia. Thus, when it came to projecting to the outside world the image of a leader, the natural choice was Wijeweera. Within the organisation, however, he was at this stage, very far from being the undisputed supremo. He emerged as the undisputed leader of the movement only after its re-organisation in 1977.

The story about how Wijeweera was recommended for a Russian scholarship by the Communist Party is well known - though in later years he vehemently denied any such patronage from the CP. Wijeweera's father was an ardent supporter of the Communist Party who was badly injured in a brawl between UNP and CP supporters at the 1952 General Elections. He was bedfid-

den afterwards on account of his injuries. Wijeweera himself worked for Aelian Nanayakkara of the CP in Devundara at the 1960 elections. By that time, he had completed his SSC examination at Dharmasoka College, Ambalangoda. In 1960, Wijeweera was sent on a scholarship to Russia to study medicine. While in Russia, he took the side of the Chinese at the Sino-Soviet split in 1962. His apostasy having come to the ears of the Russian authorities, he found that his visa was not extended after his return to Sri Lanka for a vacation in 1964.

There are many stories about why Wijeweera had to leave Russia. Some say that he went insane while in Russia and had to be treated at a psychiatric hospital. Others say that he became a virulent anti-Marxist and made his hatred of Marxism known by swaggering around the dormitories of Lumumba University brandishing a broom and pretending to shoot at pictures of Marx and Lenin. Such stories are obviously exaggerated versions of certain real events in Wijeweera's life.

Firstly, the story about him having gone insane can be traced back to the fact that he did suffer from nervous exhaustion and insomnia before he returned on vacation to Sri Lanka in 1964. His objective in coming back to Sri Lanka during the vacation was also to recuperate from his illness. Secondly, the story of having become a virulent anti-Marxist can be ascribed to his advocacy of the China line while in Russia. Up to the time of Gorbachev, it was customary in Russia to brand any deviator from the officially proclaimed line as either an anti-Marxist or a lunatic. A large number of Russian dissidents were forcibly confined to mental hospitals during the Stalinist era and the practice died hard even under the regime of his successors. As an apostate in Russia and a new returnee to Sri Lanka, Wijeweera had to face various indignities propagated no doubt by the "in circle" in the pro-Moscow Communist Party.

Whatever the corruption of Wijeweera in his later years, especially after his release from jail by J. R. Jayewardena in 1977, one must to be fair concede that he did appear to have harboured a strong streak of idealism during his days at Lumumba University. Coming from a family with strong links to the Communist Party and having himself worked for them briefly before reaching the Soviet Union and having subsequently experienced Soviet life for three years, he could not have been ignorant of the consequences of "free expression" inside Russia -

especially at that moment on so new and hot a topic as the Sino-Soviet split. Perhaps he too was motivated as many people are in their youth to uphold what appears to them to be right regardless of the consequences. His willingness to stand on principles and support the Chinese view at the height of the conflict was perhaps the single bright spark in a sordid career of deception, betrayal, greed and unspeakable barbarism.

Once back in Sri Lanka, Wijeweera drifted to the newly formed Ceylon Communist Party led by N. Shanmugathan which supported the China line. This was around late 1964. Subsequently, he became a full-time functionary receiving a monthly stipend of Rs. 150/-. But very soon he was to join an increasing band of dissidents within the party who were dissatisfied with Shan's leadership. Among them were a handful of young men destined to be the leaders of the JVP - Sanath, Piyatilaka, Karunaratne, Loku Athula, Premapala and Milton. By the end of 1966, the dissidents within the party had either been forced to resign or expelled. In recent years, some have adduced the reason for Wijeweera's dissension with Shan to be that the latter was a Tamil and that a national political party which had to operate mainly among the majority Sinhalese could not afford to have a minority Tamil as its leader.

While this conclusion could have been partly inspired by the JVP's very Sinhala-chauvinist stand after 1983, the allegation cannot be completely ruled out. With their soon to be apparent prejudice against the Indian Tamils in the plantation sector and the theory of Indian expansionism, it was obvious that the young dissidents within the pro-Peking Communist Party were distressed by the fact that they were being led by a Tamil. Perhaps their sense of realpolitik told them that there was no chance of a Tamil-led party capturing power in Sri Lanka with a very communal conscious majority Sinhalese community calling the shots.

There were times when Wijeweera openly accused Shanmugathan of communal mindedness and favouritism towards Tamils. One instance cited by him in his 400 page statement to the CID in 1971 was the misappropriation of party funds by some of Shan's Tamil cohorts. Another was the fact that at the 1965 general elections, when Shanmugathan contested the Colombo Central seat for Parliament, he appealed to the Tamils of his electorate as a Tamil. Wijeweera's accusation was that as a full time worker of the party he had been in charge of having

Shan's election posters and leaflets printed. Shan had requested large quantities of Tamil posters and leaflets, the contents of which openly stated that the Tamils in the electorate should vote for the Tamil candidate. Wijeweera interpreted this as trying to build socialism through communalism – ironically, a charge he too was to face in the last years of his life. There was no doubt that Wijeweera conspired to overthrow Shanmugathasan at this stage.

There is an interesting episode involving one of Wijeweera's closest friends - Vincent Samarasekera. Wijeweera first met Petty Officer Samarasekera at the Trincomalee naval base in 1965 having been introduced to him by naval rating Thilakaratne. Samarasekera and Thilakaratne had at that time submitted a list of names of navy personnel to Wijeweera to be enrolled as members of the CP (Peking Wing) so that at the party congress to be held later that year, Shan could be out-voted and ousted. This plan was found out and was one of the main reasons for the expulsion of Wijeweera from the party.

One notices that Wijeweera imbibed two views which were to characterise his politics for the rest of his life while still in Shan's Communist Party. One was that Sinhalese should be led towards social revolution only by the Sinhalese themselves. The other was that a closely knit and well organised clandestine movement capable of staging great public shows, exuding flamboyance and a sense of ubiquity could capture power with or without a genuine mass base among the people. In 1969-71, it was Wijeweera as the chief propagandist of the party who introduced to the newly formed JVP, the art of pasting the same poster islandwide in one night. He was thrilled by the impression of ubiquity and numerical strength this gave out. Also in 1970, after the United Front government came into power he organised several spectacular rallies in which he was, of course, the chief figure. In 1971, the sole purpose of all this flamboyance was to enlist enough support to overthrow the government by an armed uprising.

Two psychological traits which characterised Wijeweera from the beginning of his political career was firstly, suspicion with a distinct liking for dealings within a closed circle and secondly, voluntarism with a burning desire for control from the top and quick-fix solutions. It is said that sometime in 1965, when Wijeweera was in Shan's party, he had submitted a 17 or

18 page paper to the central committee of the student wing stating that the party should agitate for the closure of all "thosai kade's" and the abolition of the "galleries" in cinemas. His contention was that while the Tamil owned thosai kades provided extremely cheap meals at prices far below that of normal hotels and eating houses, the "galleries" in the cinema's provided cheap entertainment for the working class and that, thus well fed and entertained, the working class lost its revolutionary fervour and lapsed into a state of indolent complacency! But a worker who had to go to a normal hotel where the bread and curry and tea all had to be paid for separately, will soon feel how little he is paid by the capitalist, and thus be motivated to agitate for better conditions. Also the non availability of cheap forms of escapist entertainment which helped workers to temporarily forget their condition of oppression, will further enhance their revolutionary ardour. This outburst was the young Wijeweera's response to the lack of the revolutionary spirit within the Colombo working class in the mid-sixties. The reaction was to engineer from above what was lacking spontaneously from below.

Bizarre though it is, what Wijeweera was grappling with at that young stage of his life was one of the most vexatious problems in the theory of revolution. The existential basis for revolutionary motivation is one aspect of social psychology very few people have dared to venture into. It is to Wijeweera's credit that he could exercise his mind on this matter even when he was barely in his mid-twenties. It is easy to look at the macro-picture of a revolutionary situation. But to move into the intricacies of the micro-situation, the motivation at the individual level, is more difficult. The basic premises on which the psychological balance of an individual rests, differs from society to society and within the various societies, from one social group to another. The desire for change comes when it enters one's consciousness that what is deserved has not been received. At what point does one begin to feel that thosai and sambol is not enough and demand rice and curry instead? Lenin said that the working class by itself was incapable of coming up with a revolutionary theory. It had to be introduced from outside by a category of professional revolutionaries. Not content to simply stop at introducing revolutionary theory to the working class, Wijeweera wanted to cut off their avenues of escape and thus

make the working class – so to speak – the prisoners of the revolutionary process.

Young Wijeweera's ideas of banning thosai kade's and cinema galleries, though amusing when seen through less feverish eyes, is no laughing matter since it became quite apparent that the rationale behind such demands was that the revolution should be made somehow, even if it meant that the revolutionaries themselves had to create the objective conditions for revolution. This trend of thought became quite apparent in the JVP insurrection of 1987-89 when a policy of deliberately destroying the economic infrastructure of the country was systematically practiced. Transport, electricity, public utilities, postal services, irrigation works and factories were destroyed in large numbers. When questioned as to why they followed such a policy, the captured leaders of the JVP asserted that they expected the people to turn against the government as the economy deteriorated!

Back in 1965, when Wijeweera was less corrupt, perhaps at the personal and individual level, there was some justification for such a voluntaristic pattern of thinking. Revolutionaries the world over have discovered that there are many people who are simply content to continue to exist in the state they are already in rather than risk anything in trying to change the system. An ardent young idealist fresh from his readings of Marx and Lenin and legendary hero's like Che Guevara, would naturally find galling the cynical equanimity of a lot that refuses to be motivated even to fight for their birthright. How would the unwillingness to make any sacrifice or take any risk even with a view to future gain, be viewed through the eyes of a young man who has read of the selfless dedication of a Mao or Che Guevara? How does a fiery young rebel regard a society which laughs at his earnestness and mocks at his ideas of usuring in a better future for all? How does he respond to the cynically serene smile of worldly wisdom?

4. A Conspiratorial Organisation

After his expulsion from the CP (Peking Wing) in late 1966, Wijeweera and company were left high and dry with no apparent political future ahead of them and no means of livelihood. Yet they continued to remain together as much as possible and groped their way forward. Wijeweera left Colombo and remained at his home in Tangalle for a period. In 1966 there were some personnel in the armed services who were charged with attempting a coup to overthrow the government. It was alleged that Wijeweera briefly met some army personnel who were alleged to have been involved in the conspiracy in an effort to win them over to his view. The discussions were believed to have been held with Wijeweera going under the pseudonym of "Dr. Tissa". The soldiers do not appear to have been impressed by the rather doctrinaire approach advocated by Wijeweera at that time and each went his own way.

One of those who figured prominently in the trial was Sgt. Hondamuni, the other was Sgt. Amaratunga, both of them were diehard supporters of the SLFP. It is believed that it was Thilakarathne of the Navy who had introduced Wijeweera to Hondamuni. There were about twenty people in custody under suspicion of conspiring to overthrow the government including the then Commander-in-Chief of the Army Maj. Gen. Richard Udugama. There was also a well known Buddhist monk from Ratnapura, Henpitigedara Gnanaseeha. The only civilian taken in was one Hettige, a member of the pro-Russian Communist Party

and an employee of the Russian Embassy. All the accused were acquitted on the grounds of lack of evidence. After the United Front government came into power in 1970, Hondamuni was appointed as the chief security officer at the State Steel Corporation works at Oruwela.

The beginning of the process which led to the formation of the JVP can be said to be the brief flirtation Wijeweera et. al. had with the coup suspects. The possibility of overthrowing the government by the armed strength of a conspiratorial group would have first occurred to them during these discussions. Conspiracies fascinated Wijeweera and he was irresistibly drawn towards it when he knew something was brewing. He followed the "mass line" only in so far as it provided more and more recruits for a massive conspiracy. The desire for secrecy and underground organisation always remained an obsession with Wijeweera and an influential block within the JVP. Even during its "open democratic phase" in 1977-83, there was always a clandestine core within the larger body of the party. There was a politbureau which was known to the public while at the same time there was another politbureau which was not known to anyone except to the "in circle" within the party itself. It is a significant fact that all those in the secret politbureau were all party men personally loyal to Wijeweera. In 1979, "Captain" Kularatne, an army officer who supported the JVP in 1971 (and was later arrested and dismissed) resigned from the party in disgust alleging that there was an organisation within an organisation in the JVP. He wrote to the "Davasa" paper exposing for the first time, Sumith Atukorale, Piyadasa Ranasinghe and Daya Wanniarachchi as members of the secret politbureau.

Towards 1967, Wijeweera and his friends started a small chicken farm in Kirinda so as to generate an income. It was around this time that they began to formulate the famous "five classes" - a process which culminated towards the end of 1969. It was a gradual process, each new lecture being added on as was deemed necessary. The purpose behind the "five lectures" was to explain in simple language the politics of social revolution. This group of young revolutionaries felt that leftists in Sri Lanka had always expressed their views in an abstract and doctrinaire fashion, thereby alienating themselves from the people. They set out to remedy this by formulating self-contained lectures on such topics as the crisis of the capitalist system in Sri Lanka,

the history of the left movement in Sri Lanka, the history of other socialist revolutions, Indian expansionism and the path of the revolution in Sri Lanka.

Classes were conducted at the poultry farm in Kirinda, but the villagers had complained to the Grama Sevaka about the suspicious gatherings at the farm and the location had to be changed. In time, the farm itself went to pot through neglect. The first JVP educational camp was held at Karunaratne's house in Akmeemana in 1967. Thereafter the "five lectures" were disseminated throughout the country by full-time party workers. Another camp like the one at Akmeemana was held in 1969 at Tanamalwila. By this time, the five lectures had reached mature form. After the evacuation of the poultry farm at Kirinda, the JVP had started another at Tanamalwila. To get to this place, one had to go along the Wellawaya-Tanamalwila road and plunge into the jungles across the Kirindi Oya. A substantial number of goats and chicken were reared there. In 1969 about 150 young men converged on this farm to hold an educational camp. There were a fair number of university students among them. Among the leaders conducting classes were Susil Wickrama, Sanath, Piyatilake and Wijeweera. Some instruction in the use of weapons was imparted by way of diagrams and some physical training was also given to the participants. On the whole however, the camp was mainly a talking shop, with party leaders droning away for hours on end.

The camp was supposed to go on for two weeks. But it had to be suddenly terminated after about five days. One evening four men who had gone on a hunt in the jungle and lost their way had stumbled upon the camp and seen the large gathering there. Wijeweera was at that time conducting a class. When the lookout rushed up to him and reported that a group of men had seen them and gone back into the jungles, Wijeweera had got highly excited and said, "comrades, there might be a Police raid on this camp, it might even take place tonight! It would be best if you leave in small groups as soon as you can, but wait till I leave first". So saying, he had gathered up his papers and scuttled off into the gathering dusk. The others also then took off crashing through the undergrowth. This episode hit the headlines of the "Attha" paper which described the camp as a CIA plot to mislead the youth. Later, it transpired that the CP (Moscow) had infiltrated the camp with two of their members, who

were able to give an eye-witness account of the goings on to the party paper. The Tanamalwila camp was abandoned after this incident.

According to Wijeweera, the main exponent and the originator of the lecture on Indian expansionism was Sanath, a die-hard pro- Peking Communist who was expelled from the CP (Peking Wing) along with Wijeweera. He was a school teacher hailing from Ambalangoda and was later to become one of the top four in the JVP along with Wijeweera, Piyatilake and Loku Athula. The lecture on Indian expansionism, the gist of which is that India has a desire to either absorb or subjugate its neighbours in South Asia and that it was using the large Indian expatriate communities of traders and labourers in neighbouring countries as an advance fifth column, was generally very popular among the Sinhala intelligentsia during this period. Prof. Tennakoon Wimalananda was one of the main exponents of this idea at that time. Sanath, being a typical member of the Sinhala intelligentsia was naturally susceptible to ideas fashionable at the time. Besides, being a political activist whose views had been moulded on the lines of Chinese communism, the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 would have been an added incentive to strike a blow against capitalist India. Thus the class on Indian expansionism was at one and the same time an expression of the local interests of the Sinhala intelligentsia and international solidarity with Chinese communism. The Indian fifth column scare in the late sixties was one of those periodic tremours which run through societies at times. Very often, this is the result of a good publicist getting bright ideas. In Post-World war I Britian, there was a German spy scare triggered off by some spy-thriller novels which appeared at that time. Likewise, in the late sixties, there appears to have been quite a response to the Indian fifth column paranoia.

The lecture on the path of the revolution in Sri Lanka was to have a lasting impact on Sri Lanka. There were at that time, Sinhala ideologues like Martin Wickremasinghe who claimed that Sri Lanka could never have a revolution of the kind experienced by some other Asian countries, because the average Sinhala-Buddhist abhorred and eschewed violence. Yet before the ink was dry on this statement, Sri Lanka was to witness a widespread rebellion inspired and led entirely by Sinhala - Buddhist youth. Not only was this the first armed insurrection to overthrow the established order in post-independence times, it was also the

precursor of two other insurrections, the ongoing Tamil struggle in the North and East and the JVP's own second attempt in 1987-89.

When questioned as to the content of the fifth lecture which was on the path of the revolution in Sri Lanka, Wijeweera vehemently denied that he advocated the violent overthrow of the government. His explanation was that he "theoretically" showed that it was not possible to effect a peaceful transition to socialism, taking as the main example the destruction of the immensely popular communist party of Indonesia by the counter-revolution led by General Suharto in 1964. When asked how this was connected to the collection of arms which went on before the 1971 insurgency, Wijeweera stated that cadres who would have got carried away by his "purely theoretical" explanations would have collected weapons on their own free will! He also stated that the two who would know best about this clandestine collection of weapons were Sanath and Loku Athula - the chief organisers of the party. He was only the chief propagandist of the party he claimed, and pleaded ignorance of what the other two were doing. In other words, the entire blame for the events which began on April 5 1971 were to be apportioned to Sanath and Loku Athula. Wijeweera claimed that his strategy was to "awaken the masses."

Wijeweera's denial that he did not know of the party's decision to attack on April 5 1971 was totally untenable. Firstly, as one of the top leaders of the movement, he was responsible for imbuing large numbers of youth with the idea that the state should be overthrown by force. Perhaps he was not involved in deciding the intricacies of the operation. But from 1967 onwards, Wijeweera went about consciously organising young men and women with the sole idea of one day overthrowing the state by force of arms. In this regard, it is important to take note of Lionel Bopage's confession in his letter of resignation to the party in February 1984. Bopage was the last of the 1971 leaders to leave the party. While in prison between 1971 and 1977, he was one of Wijeweera's closest supporters. And he took over the function of party General Secretary in 1980. This is what he has to say about the decision to attack taken at the Sangharamaya of the Vidyodaya University on April 2, 1971.

"I have made two great mistakes in my political career. The first one was my position at the meeting held to decide on

the April struggle in 1971. We knew that this meeting was held only to foist on us a decision (to fight) taken by the Sanath - Athula group. But I cannot absolve myself of complicity in the decision taken on that fateful day on April 2 and all the consequences that arose out of it. It may be defined in two ways. Firstly, it can be called a decision by the party to ensure its survival in the face of State repression. On the other hand, it may be seen simply as a suicidal plunge. Yet I hold to the view that the decision to attack was inevitable as the next logical step in the political programme we had pursued up to that time. Nevertheless, I fully admit that this decision was ruinous and that I was wholly a party to it."

Bopage's admission that the decision taken on April 2, 1971 was the inevitable and logical conclusion of the kind of politics they had pursued up to that time is the crux of the matter. Perhaps the desire on the part of Wijeweera to disassociate himself with violence however obvious his involvement, may have been due to the shrewd assessment that violence was repugnant to the average Sri Lankan and that the general public should never be shown the sordid underside of things. At a deeper psychological level, it may have also been due to Wijeweera's self-understanding of himself as an orator and a public showman rather than a military man. In 1971, prior to his arrest he carried a tiny .22 revolver with him because he had been told that Dharmasekera an early recruit who later fell out with Wijeweera, was out to kill him. His way of carrying the gun was indicative of the military prowess of the leader of two armed insurrections of post-independence Sri Lanka. The gun was stuck in his waist and the cartridges were carried separately in his pocket! To the very end, it is doubtful whether Wijeweera knew how to operate even a small revolver. When he was arrested in November 1989, he did not have so much as a pen-knife to defend himself with.

5. The Wellawaya Attack

The events which led up to the fifth of April and the subsequent incidents have been exhaustively dealt with by Justice A.C.Alles in his well documented book – "Insurgency 1971". Hence there is no need to go into the details of the 1971 insurgency except where new information has surfaced or where it is necessary to relate certain past episodes in order to illuminate the present.

One question which has continued to intrigue students of the 1971 insurgency is the real story behind the attack on the Wellawaya Police Station at 5.00 a.m. on April 5. According to the decision taken at the Vidyodaya Sangharamaya on April 2, the attack was to be launched on police stations and army camps islandwide at 5 p.m. in the evening of April 5. How did the Wellawaya cadres come to launch the attack several hours earlier? Justice Alles surmises that it could be due to confusion arising from the fact that Sunanda Deshapriya failed to inform the leaders of Wellawaya and Moneragala of the decision taken on April 2. To add to this confusion some one named Sunil had sent a coded telegram on April 4 to their comrades in the area saying "JVP Appuhamy expired, funeral 5". Justice Alles appears to think that this telegram misled the Wellawaya cadres into thinking that they should attack at five next morning.

Information coming out now however points to a more plausible and concrete reason for the premature attack on the Wellawaya Police Station. The JVP at the time the insurgency

was launched, was far from being a united organisation. It was riven with factionalism and some of the top leaders were barely on talking terms with each other. On March 6 1971, a meeting was summoned by Wijeweera at the house of one Osmund in Wanathamulla in an attempt to iron out their differences. All factions were present but the police raided the house and those assembled had to take off before anything was decided. The effort could not be repeated because Wijeweera was subsequently arrested on March 13 and a state of emergency declared through out the country on March 16. Thus at the time the insurrection took place, there were two contending factions in the party - one led by Sanath and Loku Athula and having the support of Karunaratne, Cecil Chandra, T.D.Silva, Kumanayaka, Lakshman Mahaduwa and Batapola Athula. The other was led by Piyatilake, Uyangoda, Lionel Bopage and Sunanda Deshapriya and was loyal to Wijeweera. Thus when the leaders assembled at the Vidyodaya Sangharamaya on April 2, it was actually the coming together of two hostile factions.

In his February 1984 confession, Lionel Bopage alleges that the April 2 meeting was held only to foist on them the decision already taken by the Loku Athula-Sanath group to attack the state. But Justice Alles quoting the findings of the Criminal Justice Commission, states that the decision to attack the state was taken by the Piyatilake - Bopage faction and not by the other group. This perhaps might hold water since Wijeweera might have ordered the attack in the hope that the victorious insurgents would rescue him from the Jaffna prison where he was incarcerated after the declaration of emergency and the proscription of the JVP. Earlier on they had decided that they were going to attack the government. So it was only a case of deciding the time. Among the nine leaders who assembled at the Sangharamaya on April 2, the Wijeweera loyalists outnumbered the opposing faction two to one. Of those assembled, Piyatilake, Bopage, Uyangoda, Anura Ranjith Kurukulasuriya, Sunanda Deshapriya and Susil Wickrema were strong Wijeweera loyalists. The other faction was represented only by Loku Athula, Sanath and Karunaratne.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that those of the 1971 JVP cadres who did any fighting at all were the Loku Athula-Sanath faction. Loku Athula was captured while attempting to fight his way to the Wilpattu jungles after the insurgency failed. Sanath died while trying to fight his way to the Sinharaja

forest after holding the entire Ambalangoda area for several weeks. The Wijeweera loyalists did no fighting at all. Piyatilake was the first to get cold feet. He had been bitterly unhappy from the time the decision to attack was taken. It was Piyatilake who was entrusted with the task of rescuing Wijeweera from the Jaffna Prison and a bus was booked to take the attacking party to Jaffna on April 5. Piyatilake however, got down from the bus at Nochchiyagama saying that he would follow in another vehicle with another party from the area. Thereafter, he hid himself in the temple at Puliyankulama. Bopage and Uyangoda were supposed to attack Colombo but seeing that the premature Wellawaya attack had alerted forces in Colombo, they too fled and sought refuge in a temple at Panadura. Sunanda Deshapriya also failed to produce any results in Badulla. Was this lack of fighting spirit among the Wijeweera loyalists caused by the fact that the April 2 decision was actually not theirs? Or was it plain cowardice? Whatever the reason, one thing is clear. The single most effective blow against the 1971 insurgency was the premature attack on the Wellawaya Police Station. But for this, whatever the differences among the leadership, it would perhaps not have prevented the social forces unleashed on April 5 from gaining ultimate victory. From information emerging now, it appears that the premature attack on the Wellawaya police station was in fact no accident but a deliberate act caused by the infighting among the leaders.

By March 1971 some cadres in the Wellawaya-Moneragala region had got tired of the interminable bickering which was going on among the top leaders. They had planned to attack by the end of March and thus alert the state and prevent the grand plan for the insurgency from being implemented. These cadres felt that neither of the two factions was going to do any good for the country. While the leaders quarrelled among one another for the power stakes, lower level cadres were being subjected to repression by the Police. Sick of this, an influential section among the Wellawaya-Moneragala cadres decided to launch an independent attack on the police without waiting for orders from above, and thereafter withdraw into the Wellawaya jungles to carry on the struggle from there. At that time, this idea was being openly bandied about by these cadres. Sunanda Deshapriya and Anura Ranjith warned the leadership in Colombo that the lower level cadres were getting impatient and were threatening* to

take a unilateral decision about launching the attack. They however, failed to see that this was not caused so much by Police repression as by the erosion of confidence in the leaders. Later, Sunanda appears to have become wise to the actual state of affairs and excluded the area leaders of Wellawaya and Moneragala from the discussion held on April 3 to convey the decision to attack on April 5. He had summoned only the leaders of Passara, Badulla, Welimada, Bandarawela and Haputale. The plan of the dissidents was to scuttle the JVP plans and thereby prevent a tragedy of vast proportions from taking place. They identified the leaders more as power-hungry opportunists than as revolutionaries. They had decided to bide their time till the decision to attack was taken so that they could launch the attack some days earlier and make it impossible for the insurgency to succeed. They never expected the period between the decision to fight and the actual commencement of hostilities to be so short. The dissidents got to know the news only after Sunanda had summoned the area leaders on April 3 and told them of the plan for April 5. The dissidents were alerted to this by an informant on April 4 in the form of the coded telegram "JVP Appuhamy expired, funeral 5."

What this indicated was that the decision to attack had been scheduled for April 5. The dissidents having received only a few hours notice, had to activate their plan of scuttling the insurgency fast. Preparations were made during the night of April 4 and the attack was launched on the Wellawaya police station at dawn. The tragedy of this premature attack was that while it did scuttle the JVP's attempt to capture power by alerting the entire country, it failed to halt the process already set in motion by the JVP leadership. It was too late to call off the plan to attack. (The events which followed have been dealt with by Justice Alles in this book and hence need not be repeated here). The decision of the Wellawaya cadres however noble, was ill timed and cost a lot of lives on the JVP side. But perhaps in the long run, they were responsible for saving the lives of thousands more. Nobody could say for certain what would have happened had power fallen into the hands of the JVP. Were they capable of taking the onerous responsibility of state power? Would the taste of power have gone into their heads? This was a movement where a politbureau member, T.D.Silva had resorted to "anjanam eli" (light-reading) to see who the leader of the movement would be so as to give his daughter in marriage to

the future leader of the country! Little wonder that the Wellawaya cadres wanted to prevent the JVP from coming into power at any cost.

There were many similarities between the JVP of 1971 and of 1987-89. Some of these similarities tend to be glossed over today because of the romanticism surrounding the 1971 insurrection and the subsequent "intellectualisation" and "bourgeoisification" of a considerable number of the 1971 leaders. The prevailing spirit is, how could these decent people be in any way compared to the present day hooligans? But one major point of contact between the two insurrections is on the question of the elimination of political opponents. In 1971, long lists of "prathiya's" (counter-revolutionaries) were prepared and the order went out to kill them all after state power was captured. Ditches were to be dug alongside roads to dump the dead bodies. Had that succeeded, we would have experienced what the Kampuchians went through under Pol Pot in 1972-75. Fortunately, the JVP's bid to grab power was unsuccessful. In 1987-89, almost as if to make up for lost time, the JVP made the elimination of political opponents an integral part of the plan to capture state power instead of once again waiting till power was captured. It was fortunate that in 1971, the JVP was not quite able to carry out the mass eliminations they had projected. The lot who formed the rank and file of the JVP's attacking parties were entirely different to those of more recent times. In 1971, habitual criminals and the like were not recruited on the same scale as in the recent past. Moreover, in 1971, the method of recruitment was more doctrinaire and tended to attract those with somewhat more intelligence and youthful idealism. Thus even in the areas where the JVP was able to hold power for short periods of time, any "atrocities" they would have committed were negligible when compared to what went on between 1987 and 1989.

In 1971, the motivation for any actual violence committed would have been due more to self-righteous revolutionary fervour than to any ingrained brutality. One young insurgent (an area leader) who had committed several murders of alleged informants and political opponents, and "vigilantes" while retreating from Kegalle to Wilpattu with Loku Athula's band, wrote as follows to his elder brother (who was also in prison) after he was sentenced to death for homicide.

"The punishment received is not sufficient in view of what I have done. Have no regrets about me. We have perpetrated great injustices and crimes against society in the name of revolution. The most we can do to undo that damage is to rectify our mistakes and forge forward to attaining true liberation for our people. I hope people like yourself will take on that great responsibility".

Not all insurgents in 1971 were however capable of exercising such noble thoughts. The goings on inside the prisons were even more shameful and sordid than the infighting among the leadership which took place before the insurgency. These incidents go to show that whatever the pretensions to self-sacrifice, idealism and fairness given out by the revolutionaries, they were badly tainted with many sordid characteristics of the very system they sought to change. It illustrates as do the happenings in 1987- 89 and international experience, that the utopia where the domination and exploitation of man by man is absent and where justice is meted out to all without prejudice exists only in the imagination of poets and dreamers. Whatever is new is born inevitably with many inherited defects of the old. So it has been in the past. So it will be in the future. The behaviour of those who sought to usher in a better era for Sri Lanka even after they fell into the hands of "State repression" is an eye opener for all idealists to rethink their attitudes in the light of existing realities.

6. The Prison Camps

The experiences of those incarcerated at the temporary prison at Fort Hammenheil off the Karainagar Naval base was typical of the conditions prevailing in the prison camps at this time. Fort Hammenheil was an old Dutch gun powder dump constructed on a small islet close to Karainagar. It was ideally suited to house dangerous prisoners as the Fort encompassed the entire islet and the walls appeared to rise straight out of the water. Anybody trying to descend the walls would have to climb down directly into the sea. There was one entrance to the Fort which opened into a large compound. There were large cupola shaped compartments in the walls of the Fort which were several yards thick. These were the magazines where the Dutch stored their gun powder. Each had one window opening into the compound and a narrow entrance. It is in these that the prisoners were kept; their numbers depending on the size of the compartment. On the walls above the Fort were constructed two buildings to house the navy personnel guarding the prisoners. The inmates were brought to Fort Hammenheil in the naval gun boat "Gajabahu" ironically the very boat Wijeweera in his speech at Hyde Park on February 27 1971 hoped would be the Aurora of the Sri Lankan Revolution. The Aurora was the gun boat which ignited the fires of the Russian Revolution by shelling the Winter Palace of the Tsar where the Kerensky government was having a cabinet meeting in October 1917. The Sri Lankan

Aurora, far from shelling the establishment, was busily transporting the revolutionaries to their respective prisons.

There were in all about 150 prisoners in the Fort and the conditions in which they were kept for the first few weeks were appalling. They were forced into the compartments in much larger numbers than the space permitted. And they were not allowed to come out into the compound. The heat inside the cells was intolerable and two men had to be detailed in turns to stand near the single window and flap a sarong or shirt in an effort to get the air circulating. All prisoners had to go naked since the heat was so intense that it was impossible to remain clothed. The cells were so crowded that the prisoners had to lie sideways back to back in order to sleep. In a few days, everybody had skin rashes caused by the heat and sweat. Every morning, the prisoners in each cell were taken out for exactly fifteen minutes, within which time they had to complete their toilet. Needless to say that this was almost an impossible task. Water was also scarce since it had to be brought from the mainland. Each prisoner was issued with a bowlful every morning and he had to make do with that for his ablutions. Bathing was out of the question. Then they were herded into their cells once again and were not let out for any reason until the next morning. Anybody who wanted to urinate or defecate in the intervening period, had problems. However, a barrel was kept outside the window with a pipe attached to the iron window grating and anybody could utilise this device to relieve himself in case of need. Those who wanted to defecate had no such convenience. Many prisoners resorted to defecating into the plates they ate in which were then passed out through an opening under the door into the narrow passageway. Since many prisoners had diarrhoea owing to the bad food and water, there were always several plates of excreta outside every door.

It was in these conditions that a prisoner from Ratmalana named Lamahewa died. He had developed large boils all over his body because of the heat and this had given rise to a high fever. One morning, he was found dead. The body was wrapped in a mat and buried somewhere on the island of Delft. In the inquiry which followed this incident, the Criminal Justice Commission accepted that the prisoners had been incarcerated under inhuman conditions. The Chief Magistrate of Jaffna Mr. Colin Mendis arrived at the Fort to inspect the conditions there. In

preparation for this visit, the prisoners were hurriedly brought out and allowed to roam around in the compound below the high walls. When the Magistrate arrived, the prisoners had complained about the conditions they had to face. After he left, they flatly refused to go back into the cells telling the guards to shoot them if they like, but that they were not going to go back inside under any circumstances.

Conditions thereafter were much better at Fort Hammenheil and the prisoners roamed about freely in the large compound. Differences among the prisoners which had been suppressed because of the common suffering everybody had to face, now began to come to the fore. The divisions among the prisoners were mainly between the loyalists and the dissidents. The loyalists were those who remained uncritical of the line Wijeweera had taken since 1967 of preparing to overthrow the government by force of arms and attributed the failure of the 1971 insurgency to the "adventuristic" policies of the Sanath- Loku Athula group, as Wijeweera alleged. The dissidents comprised many elements. Some were loyal to Loku Athula. Others had simply got fed up with trying to make social revolution and wanted to leave politics altogether. There was another group, while still interested in politics, were critical of both Wijeweera and Loku Athula. Within Hammenheil, after the living conditions improved, it became fashionable to be in the loyalist camp. Some who had been heard to utter loud curses against Wijeweera for landing them in the plight they were in during the difficult period turned out to be staunch Wijeweera loyalists the moment living conditions improved. Perhaps their imprecations against Wijeweera were uttered not out of hatred but out of genuine devotion itself - the same way that Jesus Christ is said to have uttered on the cross before he died - God, God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The Wijeweera loyalists began to intimidate the dissidents. They were subject to brutal beatings and ostracisation. "Janatha Adhikaranayas" (People's Courts) were formed which passed summary sentences on dissidents and traitors. Frightened dissidents who were willing to join them were brought before these kangaroo courts and sentenced to some form of punishment before being taken back into their ranks. The kangaroo court was basically a mob. The leader shouts out the charges against the accused and the mob shouts back the recommended punishment. They were known as "Janatha Adikaranayas" because as a matter

of fact, it was the assembled "people" who heard the case and meted out punishment! Capital punishment was also practiced where necessary. The condemned were either beaten to death in a "brawl" or poisoned. Many dissidents lived in mortal fear of being poisoned and they took extra precautions in taking their food. Milder offences called for milder sentences like several hard slaps in the face. Anyhow, corporal punishment was the order of the day. One dissident who was found to have scrawled "Kavi" criticising Wijeweera on the walls of Hammenheil, was made to stand naked in the hot sun with excreta daubed all over him. The inquisitors moreover, had divided the country among themselves each being appointed as district leaders for various areas. This was a blueprint for them to commence work again after they were released. However, it later transpired that after the release of the detainees in 1977, the vast majority of the pro-Wijeweera inquisitors went their own ways and quite a few managed to join the establishment at various levels. Many of these jail-bird dictators were then branded as traitors by a younger generation of inquisitors and it is said that many had to go into hiding during 1987-89 in fear of being killed by the JVP!

Later, the Hammenheil prison was evacuated and a camp opened up at Killinochchi. Prisoners were brought here from various other detention centres to reduce congestion. Detainees from the camps in Senapura, Ridigama, Vidyodaya, Hammenheil and the Malwatte camp in Amparai were brought to Killinochchi. Here too dissidents were in a minority and were unceasingly harassed by the loyalists. One day, there was a riot and around twenty inmates had to be rushed to the Jaffna prison hospital. A rumour circulated that two injured dissidents had died. This turned out to be incorrect, but Wijeweera, who was at that time inside the Jaffna prison is said to have gleefully commented "that's what should happen, death will be the punishment for traitors whosoever they may be" Hearing this, two high spirited dissidents had climbed over the wire fence which separated Wijeweera's section of the compound from that of "ordinary prisoners" and tried to beat him up. But a jail guard who happened to be passing by had shielded Wijeweera and shouted for help. Other jail guards had then come running and rescued Wijeweera. The jail guards in the Jaffna prison had up to that time been somewhat in awe of Wijeweera. He was the most important prisoner they

had. And he was the leader of a political movement. This incident however, showed them that there were influential sections of Wijeweera's own followers who were out for his blood. The dissidents predominated in the Jaffna prison at that time. The attitude of the prison authorities towards Wijeweera then changed and the special diet he was receiving suddenly stopped. Later, when the then Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Mr. Ratnavel visited him, Wijeweera complained about the food and managed to get a special diet once again.

The "revolutionaries" of 1971 found themselves unable to act with restraint and good judgement even when they were inside the prisons of the capitalist class. In making judgements against fellow prisoners, they used methods far more summary and brutal than their enemies whom they sought to replace. what would have happened to the country had the 1971 insurrection succeeded is anybody's guess.

7. The Democratic Phase 1977-83

The release of the 1971 detainees in the latter half of 1977 by the newly elected UNP government was to have portentous results on the future of the country. The UNP's action was in fact a repetition of what the SLFP did in 1970. Wijeweera was arrested by the then UNP government on March 16, 1970 at Julgama in the Hambantota district. He had with him at that time a .22 revolver and there was evidence to show that he was the leader of an underground movement which had as its aim the overthrow of the government by force of arms. Thus Wijeweera was behind bars during the 1970 May General Elections. After Mrs. Bandaranaike came into power, one of her first acts was to order the release of Wijeweera from jail on July 9, 1970. The JVP had shared the fears expressed by the United Front of an imminent internal coup within the UNP and they used this fear as one of the main arguments in encouraging their cadres to collect weapons. In the apocalyptic style which was to become a familiar characteristic of the JVP, they proclaimed that the UNP was going to form a dictatorship. The urgency of the hour was dramatised by putting out a statement asking all democratic and peace loving people to support the UF at the May 1970 elections. The UF for its part, made good use of the anti-dictatorship hysteria of the JVP for its own political mileage. Hence the 1970 May general elections created a certain amount of fellow feeling between the JVP and the UF. Many young JVP activists worked for SLFP candidates in various parts of the country. Perhaps UF

leaders thought that since they came into power, the JVP would come out into the open and commence legitimate activities.

In this, they were as mistaken as Mr. J.R. Jayawardene was to be in 1977. All those who sought to tame and domesticate the JVP have been subject to various unpleasant surprises. In 1970 it did appear that the JVP had come out into the open. Over a dozen spectacular and well attended rallies were held at various locations in the island between August and October 1970. But these were held only with the idea of winning more and more public support for the projected take over of power. The Police, having got wise to this, began to watch the JVP closely. In October 1970 the party leaders decided to call off the public meetings because they were exposing both the leaders and the rank and file of the organisation. Also perhaps it could have been that some of the leaders did not like the prominence Wijeweera was getting as a result of these public meetings. Wijeweera, always the showman, was able to project himself to his audience quite effectively. The reputation he had in 1971 of being the main figure in the JVP he owes entirely to that series of public meetings after July 1970 in which he played the main role. This is what helped the first among equals to become number one with no equal. Even after the majority of the 1971 leaders had dropped out, the younger set of people who were attracted to the party saw nothing amiss since they had by that time got used to seeing Wijeweera as the supremo and so it remained to the end.

When Wijeweera was let loose in 1977, his first reaction was to start a series of great public displays. Lionel Bopage had opposed this vehemently claiming that there should be a dialectical relationship between propaganda and organisation. He has written as follows in his letter of resignation from the party in February 1984.

"The massive propaganda campaign suggested by Comrade Rohana at the politbureau meeting held at Comrade M. B. Ratnayake's house on November 2, 1977 was opposed vehemently by me. Yet it was implemented in accordance with majority opinion. I opposed it because there should be a dialectical relationship between propaganda and organisational activities. A propaganda campaign which takes on more than we can handle only brings ruin upon the organisational structure of the revolutionary movement."

"From this time onwards, every propaganda thrust launched by us had this negative effect. All such programmes were comparatively successful and there was an instantaneous quantitative expansion in the party. But we were unable to form this quantitative growth into a positive revolutionary change. Neither did we have a programme of action to make it so. The educational programme which would have conduced to this was also ruined. Not that I had any agreement with the educational programme or the organisational methods we used. But still the lack of some kind of educational programme caused the quantitative development to ruin the core of the party. The qualitative change which took place within the party was exactly this. I think the incurable malady which our party suffered from in the recent past was this."

Bopage wrote this with the wisdom of hindsight. In the period 1977-83, the propaganda methods of the party tended to take on a orientation towards display. Yet this strategy was perhaps inevitable since the idea at that time was to gradually build up the party to become the main opposition force to the UNP. The emphasis was thus to increase numerical strength so as outnumber the SLFP and the traditional left parties. A democratic party manifesto which promised social change through the democratic electoral process was put out in 1977 and the party commenced work. They contested the 1981 District Development Council elections and won 13 seats islandwide. What Bopage suggested with regard to party organisation was more suited to that of a revolutionary party than a Parliamentarist one. He found it difficult to reconcile himself to the radicalised Parliamentarism which characterised the JVP during this phase. To quote further from his letter of resignation,

"The showmanship which was to be seen in our propaganda work especially at May Day and election rallies brought on a deterioration within the party organisation and a parallel deterioration at the personal level. The enemy was also led to overestimate our strength by our display oriented propaganda methods. When certain sections of the party pointed this out, such objections were rejected out of hand on the grounds that we could not forge forward without such exhibitions."

"The trend towards the quantitative expansion of the party ultimately turned out into an attempt to build up electoral or-

organisations with absurd goals. Recruitment to these electoral organisations was effected by filling in forms. And the resulting figures were bandied about to the public from election platforms. It would not be incorrect to say that our whole endeavour during the past period was to build up electoral strength....Though we called ourselves a revolutionary organisation, it would be incorrect to say that what suited us best was a style of work meant to arouse emotions."

Bopage sees as a great mistake, the decision of the party to put forward Rohana Wijeweera for candidacy at the Presidential elections in 1982. Earlier that year the party had been recognised and registered as a legitimate political party by the Commissioner of Elections. By this time, Wijeweera had reached the apogee of his career as a political showman. He had a great weakness which proved to be fatal to him both politically and physically. That is to get carried away by the sight of a crowd. He had a particular genius for getting crowds aroused into a frenzy of enthusiasm. Those who remember his May Day and election rallies will recall how the crowd bursts into prolonged cheering as he arrived on stage. He had none of the characteristics that are normally associated with charisma. He was diminutive in stature and had a squeaky voice. But he was a good orator and demagogue. Another thing that should be remembered is that the JVP's style of doing things gave out the impression of numerical strength which never existed in reality. Whenever the JVP organised a meeting, all the party faithfuls, for miles around would attend. For national extravaganzas like May Day rallies, thousands of sympathisers and members would converge on Colombo to inflate the ranks. Even at election meetings, the same crowd would attend all the meetings for miles around thus giving the impression that a massive crowd had spontaneously gathered to hear Wijeweera speak! This explains the wild cheering as Wijeweera comes on stage.... it was not the general public shouting out their approbation....it was only the party faithfuls - the already converted, hailing their leader.

Thus at the Presidential election campaign in 1982, the same crowd that attended the Borella rally also attended the Nugegoda rally and the Awisawella rally and so on, causing speculation in some circles about the possibility of the JVP making substantial gains at the elections. The JVP certainly had crowds, but of a limited number and these had to be circulated

and manipulated in such manner as to give out the impression of much greater numbers. A more recent example would illustrate this effect better. At the funeral procession of Trimavithana, the medical student alleged to have been killed by a defeated UNP candidate in Ratnapura, the students and others who attended made it a point to keep walking to the back of the procession and coming back again with the crowd. Thus in the video film which was made by the security forces, the same faces kept on appearing on the screen several times during the same procession! Any bystander however, would have been misled into imagining that there was a much greater crowd than was actually present at the funeral. The JVP was always good at creating this "demonstration effect." Any political group desiring to compete with the established political parties like the UNP and the SLFP would of necessity have to adopt such methods, since it has been proved time and again in democratic politics, that voters are always loath to waste their votes on the losers as they perceive it. Even the two and a half lakhs of votes the JVP got in 1982 was due to their ability to give out the impression of having more public support than they could actually command. The democratic masses are generally never pleased with half-hearted attempts to capture their imagination and votes. The problem about the JVP was however, that in 1977-83 they tended to be more impressed by their own skillful manipulations than the masses. They were deceived by their own dubious tactics.

8. The Electoral Experiment

One major weakness Rohana Wijeweera had was to get completely carried away by the sight of a crowd. It was difficult to say once he was on stage whether he controlled the crowd or the crowd controlled him. In 1971 he made unduly provocative statements at the last rally held at Hyde Park on February 27 and was responsible in the main for bringing down state repression on himself and the JVP. He openly challenged the state by saying that the day of reckoning will be decided not by themselves but by the capitalist class. Responding to the frenzied enthusiasm of the crowd he thundered that the date of the revolution will be the one on which the state decides to attack the JVP and that hence state repression is not a bad thing but a good thing, and more on the same lines. His party comrades criticised him later for these unduly provocative outbursts but it was too late. The state had been alerted. Wijeweera was arrested two weeks later and a state of emergency declared soon afterwards.

A similar tendency to get carried away by his own rhetoric remained with him during the experiment with democracy in 1977- 83. It is of this that Lionel Bopage desparingly comments as positing absurd goals for the building of electoral organisations. The year 1982 was the peak period of the numerical growth of the JVP during the democratic phase. Wijeweera's growing confidence can be gauged from the following statements he made during the 11th anniversary commemorative meeting of the 1971

insurgency held at the Sugathadasa Stadium on April 5 1982. The overly sanguine hopes he harboured of a revolutionary take over of power in 1971 were now transferred to the electoral sphere.

"The Samasamaja Party existed in little pockets in five districts. But now the JVP is ready to contest in all twenty-four districts. Jaffna will be contested. Batticaloa too will be contested. We will contest in all twenty-four districts, the JVP exists in all twenty-four districts. Perhaps at the next elections, the JVP will be the only party contesting in all areas of the country!" (loud applause).

"Some people are now frightened! Why? Because those who are fed up with the UNP go to the JVP. Those who are fed up with the SLFP are against the UNP, so they go to the JVP. Then they say that say that the floating vote also goes to the JVP. Why? Because both parties have now been tried out by the people. so the floating vote thinks, why not give the JVP a chance to prove their worth? This time there are fifteen lakhs of new votes of the younger generation. Last time Sirima got seventeen lakhs of votes. A similar number of votes has now come into the hands of the new generation. And where is the new generation? In the JVP!" (loud applause)

"Now the United National Party has accepted that we are the main enemy. Mallimarachchi has summoned UNPers in Kollupitiya and Bambalapitiya to discuss matters and said that this time the fight was with no one else but the JVP...Mr. J. R. Jayewardene himself has accepted that the main opposition party is the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna."

After having fed the public with such expectations, the debacle at the Presidential elections in August 1982 where the JVP polled only two and a half lakhs of votes left the party in a very bad position. The JVP had of course emerged as the main force in the left. But this was no consolation for the young hopefuls who had joined the party with the expectation of an imminent victory. Now that the bubble had burst people began to leave the party in droves. As far as the organisation was concerned, this was a disaster almost as bad as the state repression in 1971. In his letter of resignation Bopage has commented on this as follows,

"Another wrong decision not dissimilar to the one I took in 1971 was made by me in 1982. This was my unstinted support for the decision to put forward comrade Rohana as a candidate

at the Presidential elections in 1982...My position was that the next logical step in our pattern of work would be to put him forward as the Presidential candidate. Because of the nature of our political activity, had we not taken the decision to contest, the consequences would not have been any different to the situation prevailing today."

"However, I admit that by agreeing to put forward comrade Rohana as a candidate, I have contributed to the sorry plight the party is in today. Just as the April 2 decision in 1971 was the natural corollary to the kind of political work we had been doing at that time, the decision to put forward comrade Rohana for the 1982 Presidential election was the natural and logical outcome of the nature of our work up to that stage."

Between 1977 and 1983 the JVP did everything possible to make its electoral projections a success. Not only was the party organised on electoral lines, its leaders also made every attempt to compete with the other politicians in the field. Wijeweera began to have himself ostentatiously chauffeured around in a shiny new Ford Laser car to capture the imagination of the masses who always tend to be impressed by such things. At the Presidential election campaign in 1982 reference was made on stage about his medical studies in the USSR and his supposed ability to speak in several European languages. Wijeweera knew very well that electioneering was basically a game where the bourgeoisie had a head start and he made every effort to catch up. His arranged marriage into an upper-middle class professional family from Moratuwa was also perhaps aimed at this. His wife, Chitrangani Fernando, had just got through her GCE AL's and still in her late teens when Wijeweera married her. References to Wijeweera's own studies in Medicine was calculated to enhance his social prestige since in Sri Lanka, the medical profession is a status symbol par excellence. In spite of all these efforts, Wijeweera was soon to discover like many other left-wing hopefuls, that it was not possible to out-bourgeoisify the bourgeoisie, they were simply too well entrenched in the game.

It should be noted that while the electoral ambitions of the party were pursued at one level, they always maintained a clandestine core of activists who were sometimes untouched by the electoral programme of the party. Despite what Bopage says about the lack of an adequate educational programme, such a thing did in fact exist. But unlike in 1971 when every recruit

was subject to indoctrination, this time such indoctrination was limited. In this, emphasis was placed on recruits from the schools and Universities. The five classes still existed. The only change in the JVP's cut and dry political lectures during the democratic phase was the exclusion of the class on Indian expansionism. The class on Indian expansionism was replaced after 1977 with a new one on "the history of the party". This had become necessary because the vast majority of the 1971 leadership had left the party and had joined forces opposed to the JVP by 1977. And their public comments on Wijeweera were far from being complimentary. The class on the history of the party was mainly a political biography of Wijeweera exonerating him from the accusations levelled against him by the 1971 leadership. The lecture on the history of the party was mainly to convince new recruits that these were false accusations made by enemies of the revolution to weaken the JVP. Hence the five classes in the 1977-83 period consisted of the following. The crisis of capitalism in Sri Lanka, the betrayals of the left movement, experiences of the international Communist movement, the history of the party and the path of the revolution in Sri Lanka.

Camps were held. There was a basic camp which lasted one week, and an advanced camp which lasted two weeks. These camps were mainly for full-timers or potential full-timers. Lectures began from 5 a.m. in the morning and went on till around midnight every day with half-hour breaks for meals. The content of the lectures were mainly an expansion of the five classes. Living conditions were made artificially rigorous at these camps. All the participants were crowded together in one room and had to sleep sideways, back to back. Bathing was not allowed and only a bowlful of water was given to each participant for the morning ablutions. Despite fears expressed in the press in those days, no weapons training was imparted at these camps. However, the fifth lecture still emphasised the fact that it was not possible to effect a peaceful transition to socialism by taking as example, the overthrow of President Allende's elected government by the military in Chile. In 1971, the favourite example was Indonesia, where an immensely powerful Communist Party was decimated in 1965 by the military in fear that the Communists might win the elections. Later, the events of 1973 in Chile provided the JVP with a text-book example to show that it was not possible to effect a peaceful transition to socialism. Hence the real hard core cadres

of the JVP in 1977-83 did not expect a peaceful transition to socialism any more than their 1971 predecessors did.

The problem that people like Bopage had was that this core of the party was being beleaguered and corrupted by the flotsam and jetsam attracted by Wijeweera's sensationalist propaganda. The events after July 1987 amply justify Bopage's fears as we will see later. Though they participated in the electoral process between 1977 and 1983, the JVP made it quite clear in their lectures that this was an "experiment" to see how far they could go on this line. Quoting Lenin, they claimed that Parliament should be utilised as a platform to agitate for socialism and they admitted their mistake in not having done so earlier in 1967-71. But yet, they continued to maintain a clandestine leadership within the party. This was they claimed, to face any exigency of the kind that other revolutionary movements the world over have had to face. The reason why the JVP conducted their educational camps under artificially rigorous conditions during this period was also to train their cadres to accept the rigorous conditions which the revolutionary party may be called upon to undergo. However, the debacle at the 1982 Presidential elections did have the effect of vastly reducing the strength and appeal of the organisation. The party then settled down to a rather nondescript existence. They had been effectively reduced to the position of a left wing fringe group.

9. Tar and Feathers for Dissidents

The JVP has been described as a vast crowded hall with two large doorways. People keep on entering through one doorway while another stream continuously leaves through the other doorway. The hall always remains full nevertheless. This image was especially true during the 1977-83 period when there were large and constant turnovers in leadership and membership. In fact throughout its twenty year history, Wijeweera himself has been the only permanent feature in the party. Many of those who had been staunch Wijeweera loyalists while in prison after 1971, went their own way after they were released. Thus, those who constituted the "temporary central committee" and the "temporary politbureau" which was formed after the release of the prisoners in 1977, had to face an unexpected depletion in their ranks. By 1979, bickering within the party had emerged and a group headed by "Captain" Kularatne resigned from the party. After the JVP's decision not to participate in or support the general strike of 1980, a large group among whom were several middle class young intellectuals who had been attracted to the JVP's "new image" after 1977, left along with H.N.Fernando and the Ceylon Teachers' Union. Another group headed by Nandana Marasinghe left the party in 1981 over differences with the party leadership. After the Presidential election fiasco in 1982, the JVP lost about half its "strength". In April 1983, two important leaders Vaas Thilakarathne and Mahinda Pathirana were removed from the party. In 1983 December, a large group among whom were Lionel

Bopage left the party because of the change of policy on the ethnic issue. Some of the people who left with Bopage were later to form the shortlived and now defunct NJVP which was essentially modelled on the JVP albeit with a liberal stand on the Tamil struggle in the North.

It was obvious by this time, that Wijeweera had consolidated himself well. Most of those who left the party went away in circumstances which caused great personal bitterness. Personality clashes were paramount and political differences did not play a significant part in the dynamics of the breakaway groups within the party. Bopage states in his letter of resignation that the party had acted "bureaucratically" in resolving internal disputes. What this means is that a "boss is always correct" attitude prevailed within the leadership. If the boss is always correct, it naturally follows that the dissidents are always wrong, and not only are they wrong, they are also the most despicable villains out to sabotage the party of the proletariat!

Thus, the expression of a dissenting view within the party always led to bad blood. All the leaders who left the party were vilified by those who stayed back. There were occasions when the vilifiers of yesterday became victims of vilification today as they themselves had to leave the party owing to internal clashes. Thus one finds that there still was a certain amount of bad blood between the ex-JVP leaders even though they are at the same time, bound together as fellow dissidents. Just as the JVP represented a sub-culture within Sri Lankan society, the increasingly large community of ex-JVPers also constituted a small sub-culture. But there was tension among those who left in 1971 and 1977 and between those who left in 1977 and 1979 and so on. The people who left earlier telling the new additions to their ranks, "I told you so!" A number of vilified and embittered dissidents had the great pleasure of seeing their worst persecutors getting the same "tar and feathers" treatment a few months later.

The JVP as we knew it, was basically Wijeweera's brain-child. After his release in 1977, he did not make the mistake he made in 1971 of sharing power with anyone under any circumstances. After 1977, he made certain that nobody who was capable of challenging his position as party supremo remained in the organisation. Nandana Marasinghe, a popular hero of the 1971 insurrection who broke jail on numerous occasions to resume political activity, was forced to leave because of Wijeweera's sub-

the policy of isolating and making life intolerable for possible challengers to his leadership. Wijeweera was a masterly and indefatigable intriguer. He revelled in conspiratorial politics. None of those around him could ever match him at this game. It is a tribute to his skill in manipulation to have been able to lead two insurrections which shook the established order to its very foundations without firing a single shot. He had a knack of getting his dirty work done by others and his orders obeyed without question.

The individual members of the JVP, like the organisation itself, were "creations" of Wijeweera. He provided them with a certain way of thinking, a distinct vocabulary and manner of expression and a method of underground activity which distinguished them from all other political groups in the island. The JVP was a sub-culture in itself and Wijeweera a cult figure. It was clear that Wijeweera was aware of his role as a cult figure. There were occasions on which he, like a great monarch was forced to undergo emotional stress on account of his position. He was forced to preside over the punishment of his loved ones, in the face of persistent demands from his following. One such instance was the removal of Vaas Thilakaratne and Mahinda Pathirana from the party in April 1983. Vaas Thilakaratne (Political Bureau) and Mahinda Pathirana (Central Committee) were Wijeweera's closest associates in the post - 1977 phase. The two were far from being popular in the party. Generally of a boorish disposition, they were both prone to alcohol and women. Some traced Wijeweera's special association with them to the probability that Wijeweera was also upto mischief with various women in collaboration with the other two. Wijeweera does appear to have had a few clandestine relationships with women during this period. A woman named Maureen from the Wennappuwa area was known to have been one such companion.

Whatever Wijeweera's involvement, one thing became clear to the party, he was turning a blind eye to what Vaas and Mahinda were doing. Numerous complaints about their behaviour came to the higher-up's but Wijeweera ignored them all. But ultimately, the pressure became so persistent that a committee comprising Lionel Bopage, Sumith Atukorale and Piyadasa Ranasinghe was appointed to look into the matter. After inquiries, the committee decided that the two should be expelled along with Pieris the district secretary for Ampara who was also found guilty of

various 'misdemeanours'. Wijeweera accepted this decision and it was he himself who explained the reasons for the expulsion of the three leaders to the party full - timers. Eye witnesses say that he carried out the explanation without demur and in such manner as to convince those present that he himself fully endorsed the committee's decision. but he is said to have later broken down and wept holding Mahinda Pathirana in a tight bear-hug when the two met for the final time after the expulsion came into effect. The sentimentality was however forgotten as the years passed and the exigencies of existence in a competitive world drove Vaas and Mahinda into the arms of those on the bad books of the JVP. In late 1986, two attempts were made on Vaas's life. Once when Vaas was about to board a bus on the Ella-Wellawaya road, he had met three old party comrades with whom he had briefly exchanged some pleasantries. Everybody then boarded the private coach and Vaas sat in a corner seat in front, behind the driver, and the others proceeded to the back. Later, when the bus halted briefly near a lonely jungle stretch, the trio had got off the bus, come round to Vaas's window and whipped out a revolver and fired at point blank range. The trigger had been pulled six times but only one cartridge had gone off. The assailants had then vanished into the thick scrub jungle. The bullet had caused only a minor injury; it had torn through Vaas's cheeks and he was able to find his own way to the Badulla hospital.

The next day, he had sent a message to Colombo and got down some members of the ex-JVP circle who though not having personal affection for Vaas, had come down as an act of solidarity with an ex-JVPer being victimised by the JVP. One of these ex-revolutionaries, while leaving the Badulla hospital, had seen 'Ragama Some'. The JVP's chief hit-man loitering in the vicinity. He had hailed 'Ragama Some' and asked him what he was doing there. And then he had asked "Some" whether he had come to finish off Vaas. 'Ragama Some' had laughed and denied it saying "How could you possibly think of such a thing?" That night however, there was a second attempt on Vaas's life when a man tried to stick a knife into him as he slept. Knowing the ways of the JVP, Vaas had stayed awake all night and when the assailant approached, he had jumped out of bed and shouted for help causing the would-be assassins to flee. It is said that Vaas was hunted down by the JVP because of his sympathy for

the NJVP – a loose and shadowy break-away group of the JVP. But Vaas's involvement in the NJVP was marginal, if at all. The reason why the JVP was out to eliminate Vaas was perhaps that he knew too much about the hidden side of Wijeweera's private life. Any allegation made by him would have been very damaging to the party since it would have exposed the cult-figure. After these incidents, Vaas was heard of no more and is believed to have died of natural causes. At least, a story to that effect was floated and a corpse which was supposed to be his was displayed at his ancestral home. Those who saw the corpse however, say that it bore no resemblance to Vaas. It may have been a ruse to put the JVP off his track. This was the ignominious fate that befell a man who was once described by a newspaper as one of the "top three" of the JVP along with Wijeweera and Gamanayake. Mahinda Pathirana was even less fortunate. He was dragged out of his house at Kotuwila in Wellampitiya and shot dead in the presence of his wife and three small children by a JVP hit-squad on the night of September 6, 1987.

10. The Proscription July 1983

During its open democratic phase in 1977-83, it was obvious that the JVP was receiving some form of external aid. One night in late 1981, Vincent Samarasekera, the official photographer of the party was woken up by Wijeweera, Lionel Bopage and another leader at home around 10.30 p.m. in the night and asked to get his equipment ready. The party then proceeded in a car with Wijeweera driving to a lonely spot at Kandawala Road Ratmalana where they were joined by another car full of officials from a certain Middle-Eastern embassy in Colombo. The time would have been around 11.30 p.m. Then they had proceeded to go through the ceremony of "cutting the first sod" for the building of a new party headquarters. Samarasekera had to take photographs. But it was so dark that he had to first light a candle so as to be able to properly focus his camera. Everybody was then served with kiribath and cake and the two groups then took off separately in their respective vehicles.

Shortly afterwards, the same year, there was a massive JVP led poster campaign and demonstration against Iran. Mahinda Pathirana and Shantha Bandara both then Central Committee members of the JVP went into the Iranian Embassy to hand over a letter to the Ambassador protesting against Iranian actions in the Iran-Iraq war, while an unruly mob shouted slogans and daubed excreta on the Embassy walls. Rumours were rife those days about the JVP's source of foreign funding. Columnists in popular English weeklies commented on the fact that Wijeweera

was a regular guest at another Middle Eastern embassy's functions. Sums were mentioned, not of course by any means fabulous considering the kind of money involved in politics in the 1980's. But it is understood that the new machines installed at the party press at Kohilawatte, some of the party vehicles, musical instruments for the "vimukthi gee" orchestra, and unspecified aid at the 1982 Presidential elections were all acquired with the help of a few timely petro-dollars.

The JVP was proscribed in July 1983 on the pretext that they instigated the anti-Tamil riots. Considering the facts, it does seem possible since by the time the riots took place, a large and influential block in the party had decided to take a hard line against the Tamil struggle in the North. And the main objective of this exercise was once again to win public support among the Sinhalese. The JVP has never been known to be swayed by such niceties as theoretical considerations when attempting to win over the masses, or benefit in some other way. The Iranian Embassy episode bears testimony to this. Perhaps when in 1983 July the thirteen soldiers were killed by the Tamil Tigers in the North, sections of the JVP would have utilised this as a way of once again "going to the people" by instigating the riots. Certainly, University students belonging to the JVP did participate in the riots. At Colombo campus, the Aquinas hostel was full of stolen goods. Some pro-JVP students had even danced in the hostel compound after consuming stolen liquor and wearing stolen sarees; and were 'bucketed' and chased away by another group of students who did not like the idea of having stolen property on the hostel premises. It is of course, very difficult to say whether these students were acting spontaneously or with specific orders from above. But the fact remains that the government was unable to come up with any convincing proof that the JVP was in any way responsible for instigating the riots. But it was proscribed nevertheless and thus begins a new phase in the history of the island. Bopage, being accustomed to the ways of thinking of the "in circle" in the JVP, warns of things to come in almost prophetic terms, in his letter of resignation in February 1984.

"The ultra - left tendency which existed among us before 1971 turned into an ultra - right tendency after 1977. Similarly, this rightist tendency can easily turn into an ultra - left tendency once again. International experience has shown that such a cyclic

process of change is common to movements such as ours. The party and mass organisations which we built up with many sacrifices after 1977 have been completely ruined after the Presidential elections in 1982 and the proscription of the party in July 1983. We have been reduced to a small minority among the people and are organisationally in a position of disarray. There is however, a possibility of hiding this reality from the people, and once again building up unrealistic estimates of our strength. Coupled to this is the possibility of a few taking to ultra - left courses of action. Knowing this, I make one final request. Such an ultra - left course of action will bring incalculable harm and destruction on the Sri Lankan Socialist revolution. Therefore, I earnestly request you to desist from such actions. We will be forgetting the lessons of 1971 if such an adventurist course of action is taken."

To undertake missions based on unrealistic estimates of their strength has always been the bane of the JVP leadership. There is an interesting episode of the 1971 insurrection which well illustrates this unfortunate tendency within the JVP. Gunaratne Wanasinghe who was the educational secretary and a political bureau member of the JVP in 1987-89 was also one of the leaders in the 1971 insurgency even though his name never came up as a central committee or politbureau member at the Criminal Justice Commission inquiry. He was arrested, tried and sentenced as an ordinary member of the JVP. A strange thing is that his name was not mentioned at any point in the inquiry. Yet he was the Chilaw-Puttalam district leader of the JVP in 1971 and was a staunch Wijeweera loyalist. The reason why his name did not come up as a leader could be that the Chilaw-Puttalam area was considered to be G.D.I.Dharmasekera's domain and the JVP was not able to appoint anyone to take over that area after Dharmasekera broke away from the JVP in late 1969.

It was only a few months prior to the April insurgency that party activists had been again sent to the area to organise. Dharmasekera was so well entrenched in the area that even the Police knew only him and his group as being JVP. Thus what happened was that after the insurrection failed, none of the actual JVP cadres in the district lost their lives. They were able to surrender to AGA's. But thirty-five of Dharmasekera's men lost their lives because they were caught napping unsuspectingly at home when the state forces swooped down.

On April 5, in accordance with the decision to attack, the cadres of the Chilaw-Puttalam area assembled at Puttaluoya in a village about seven miles away from Chilaw. There were about 150 cadres in all. But the weapons they had were woefully inadequate. There were only about five or six shot guns and one hundred tin bombs. Earlier, an area leader from the district had notified Wanasinghe when he arrived bearing the message for the launching of the attack, that it was not possible to do anything because of the lack of weapons. In a style typical of the JVP, Wanasinghe had replied that there was nothing to worry about and that "he would look after everything". He promised to bring a load of arms from Colombo in time for the April 5 attack.

Thus the cadres of Puttalam-Chilaw assembled at Puttaluoya and waited for the cache of arms to arrive from Colombo. At 8.00 p.m. in the night of April 5 Wanasinghe arrived empty handed, but with a few match boxes full of small glass tubes filled with sulphuric acid and sealed at either end with candle wax. This was to complete the fuse mechanism in the tin bombs. On seeing the glass tubes, one person who was familiar with the manufacture of bombs had pointed out that in a hot climate like Chilaw, the wax might soften and the resulting leak ignite the fuse, and that it was not advisable to use them. Wanasinghe however, had brushed aside objections and said "Comrades these have already been tested and proved to be efficient." The fuses were duly fixed and the assembled crowd was divided into two groups. One group was to attack the Chilaw Police station and the other group was to stand by for other operations. By that time, everybody had changed into the blue uniform of the revolution. The information coming from town all day had been to the effect that the Police was on full alert after the attack on the Wellawaya Police station that morning. However, the group that was to attack the Chilaw Police station set off nevertheless. The plan was to get to town by hijacking a passing vehicle. After having proceeded less than twenty five yards, they heard a loud explosion from the direction of their hideout. Rushing back, they found that a tin bomb had exploded when the sulphuric acid had leaked through the melting wax and ignited the fuse. Two comrades had died on the spot. And two others were seriously injured. When the group that had returned began to minister to the injured, Wanasinghe had come up in a fury and exclaimed "Comrades, what are you doing here? People will die in a revolution,

people will get injured in a revolution. These are not things to worry about! Get back to the work you have been assigned!"

One of the party had then argued with Wanasinghe and said that all this had happened because he had not heeded their warning about the unreliability of the fuse mechanism in the tin bomb. But Wanasinghe had preemptorily ordered him out. Then the attacking party set off again to get to Chilaw. While they were lying in ambush on both sides of the road waiting for a vehicle to come along, they saw a whole convoy of vehicles coming from the direction of Chilaw. Just as they were about to stop the convoy, a comrade heard the hissing sound of a burning fuse inside the Burmese bag full of tin bombs a colleague was carrying. There was no time to think. So he grabbed the bag and threw it into a large depression in the ground close by and dived for cover. The whole bag of bombs exploded even before it reached the ground. When the insurgents looked up again, the entire convoy had vanished. Wanasinghe then came running from the direction of their hideout to see what was happening. In the presence of Wanasinghe, a member of the attacking party ordered all the tin bombs to be thrown away as they were too dangerous to carry. Wanasinghe had protested furiously. One of those present had then cocked the gun he was carrying and pointed it menacingly at Wanasinghe. Just then, the headlights of an approaching car hit them and everybody scuttled for cover. When the vehicle had passed, Wanasinghe was missing. The others called off the attack and remained at Puttaluoya till morning. In the morning as the attacking party withdrew into the hinterland, they discovered Wanasinghe's uniform and boots on a bush near a paddy field. He had fled in fear of his life from the irate comrades. Such experiences were not uncommon in 1971 as hazards endemic to a state of unpreparedness combined with over confidence.

11. The Call to Arms

From about the beginning of 1984, the JVP had decided that an armed struggle had to be launched to capture state power. The training of cadres in the use of firearms began in 1984. There were large "national level" training camps in the jungles between Ampara and Siyambalanduwa, in Sellakataragama-Divulgama, in the Sinharaja forest bordering Hiniduma in the Galle district, at Hambegamuwa in the jungles between Tanamalwila and Ratnapura. In addition to this, there was more training at village level in the surrounding jungle. Batches of 30 or 40 were trained for three, five or seven days as the circumstances permitted. Until the beginning of 1987, no weapons were actually in use at the training camps. Only diagrams of the various guns were used. The instructors were Army deserters. Training with weapons commenced after mid-1987. The Ampara camp was abandoned due to information received that its whereabouts had come to the notice of the Security Forces. The Hambegamuwa camp was raided in the search that followed the attack on the Kahawatte police station in December 1987. The location of the other camps also had to be changed later because of detection by the Security Forces.

After the JVP had decided upon the path of armed struggle in 1984, they had been anticipating a massive crackdown by the state. Some incidents during this period was interpreted by them as harbingers of things to come. In mid-1984, Gunapala Satharasinghe, a Central Committee member of the JVP and a

member of the Hambantota District Development Council was arrested by the police at Hungama along with twenty-six others and detained for eighteen months with no charges being brought against them. In mid-1985, Sarath Wijesinghe, a student leader of Anuradhapura was killed by an Army patrol with two others while returning from a meeting. None of them had any kind of identification on them and they had taken to their heels on seeing the patrol. In December 1985, Kekanadure Dharme, the district leader of Matara was killed by the Ambalantota police while returning from a robbing mission to augment party funds. He had been caught red-handed with the goods. A publication put out in April 1988 to commemorate dead heroes of the JVP, described Kekanadure Dharme as one who indefatigably worked for the upliftment of the party after the proscription in 1983 and one who played a major role in initiating the ongoing "great patriotic struggle" in Ruhuna. This publication further alleges that Dharme had been tortured with boiling water being poured into his intestines through an s-lon pipe inserted through his anus, and that he had finally been killed by being boiled alive in a barrel of hot tar. The actual circumstances of his death had however been much less spectacular. It appears that he had been shot at when he tried to speed through a Police ambush in a vehicle full of stolen goods. The JVP publication further states that his corpse was brought to Kekanadure by the police, but that the mother of the dead man had refused to accept it and spat in the inspector's face. Had Dharme actually been boiled in hot tar as the JVP alleged, the corpse would not have been in a position to be handed over to the next of kin. To interpret such incidents as signs of an impending state repression, was designed more to spread a fear psychosis among its own membership and prepare them mentally for the JVP's own future plans of making "pre-emptive" attacks on the state. It should be noted that the JVP's attacks on the state in 1971 as well as in 1987-89 were seen by its members as being always of a "pre-emptive" nature. "They are out to get us so let's get them first". This can be seen as a way of obtaining moral justification for violence in a situation where any kind of violence causes unpopularity.

In mid - 1986, a separate military wing was set up under Saman Piyasiri Fernando. According to some members of the JVP, one incident which speeded up the processes already taking place in the JVP was an alleged BBC broadcast on January 18,

1987 which stated that over three thousand youth had been taken into custody in the Southern parts of the country. In fact no such arrests had been made at the time of this alleged broadcast. This had spread panic throughout the party ranks on the assumption that the government was preparing the groundwork for a massive crackdown. The BBC broadcast was deemed to represent the future intentions of the government. The leadership made good use of this mood among the following to put their plan into action. They began to say that the conference of Government Agents which was held in February 1987 was a further preparation by the government for the projected islandwide crackdown. Reminiscences of 1971 sent a chill through the ranks of the organisation. It was in March 1987 that the decision was taken to collect weapons from military camps. Instructions went out to stop all classes, lectures and theoretical discussions. All available cadres were to be given weapons training and each district was instructed to provide twenty-five trained men for a national level "superteam" to do the weapons collecting. The number of twenty five from each district was never realised. But the collection of arms did go on apace from around this time.

To the initiated, it was obvious that the JVP was up to something during this period. The statements issued by the JVP leaders in hiding began to get increasingly shrill, accusing the government of hatching various conspiracies to get rid of them. There was a similar spate of accusations against the government before the 1971 insurrection. This was firstly, to convince their own cadres of the necessity to take up arms. Secondly, it was to make the general public understand that it was actually the government that should take the blame for the bloodshed that was about to occur. The JVP liked the image of an anti-government agitator forced into acts of "self-defence" by a brutally repressive regime. The public had to be told that it was the government which forced them to fight back. Two press statements put out by the JVP in mid-1984 are revealing. Obviously, their intent was to gradually introduce into the minds of the people a readiness to accept the new line of armed struggle. The press releases are reproduced in full below.

Press Release

The suggested amendments to the Press Council act indicate that the UNP government is on the verge of taking away

even the few democratic freedoms that exist at present. It is quite plain that the objective of this legislation is to repress writers and journalists who expose corruption.

Throughout history, corrupt rulers have attempted to prevent their corrupt practices from coming to light. But every such attempt made to prevent corruption from being exposed has been detected by justice loving people. When the ruling class leaves no room for the people to enjoy their rights within the existing legal framework, the fact that they resort to illegal methods needs no special mention.

In this moment of peril for the Sri Lankan nation we vehemently condemn the proposed amendments and call upon all democratic, progressive and patriotic people to come forward to win back all democratic rights taken away by the UNP government.

(Signed) Upatissa Gamanayake
General Secretary
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.

Press Release

Ten months have now elapsed since the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna was proscribed under emergency regulations. With the proscription of the party, an order was issued for the arrest of myself and the General Secretary Upatissa Gamanayake. In the meantime, the country has been made subject to the needs of American imperialism and Israeli Zionism. The leaders of the 1962 anti-state conspiracy who now hold power in the government and their sons in law prepare to hatch fearful conspiracies and instigate political murder.

These elements who are dragging the country towards disaster have formulated a plan to murder me, the Chairman of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. A powerful member of the government who was also one of the chief accused in the 1962 conspiracy to overthrow the state, has summoned chiefs of the armed services and police and stated that I am a Soviet agent and that I am responsible for inciting the July 1983 disturbances in a very subtle manner. He has also further stated that because of the subtlety of the way in which I incited the 1983 July disturbances, my involvement could not be proved and that though the

order had gone out for my arrest, what should actually be done is to kill me as soon as I am arrested.

There is now a subtle plan to kill me by detailing Israeli "Mossad" trained secret agents to do the job. We have got to know the full details. Persons so detailed have stated that since the government was unable to solve the problems in the country, and the people increasingly dissatisfied, the further proscription of the JVP will only increase its popularity. But even if the proscription is lifted, people will still continue to flock round the party. Therefore, I should be murdered. After murdering me, the proscription would be lifted and the party thus rendered ineffective. The statement made by Lalith Athulathmudali tallies with all this.

• Is this the beginning of a new trend of "political killings" in the country? In a situation where conspiracies are hatched to kill opposition leaders and public funds utilised to pay agents, can one claim that there is democracy in this country? It should be emphasised that all consequences of these conspiracies will be the sole responsibility of the conspirators themselves.

There is no doubt that the danger which faces me today, will be the common lot of all those anti-UNP opposition leaders who stand up for the rights of the people. Hence I appeal to all anti-UNP political parties and organisations to come together to defeat at the outset, this new trend in "political killings".

(Signed) Rohana Wijeweera
Chairman
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna.

In another press statement put out on May 28 1984 Upatissa Gamanayake rails bitterly against the government's decision to permit the operation of an Israeli Interests Section within the American Embassy in Sri Lanka. It alleges that the idea of establishing diplomatic links had been on the cards for some time having been promoted assiduously by the clandestine Israeli-Sri Lanka Friendship society. According to the JVP, the purpose of this whole exercise was to enlist the support of Israel in the event of a "people's uprising" in Sri Lanka.

On July 17 1984, another letter was circulated to various political parties, non-governmental organisations and individuals

alleging that state repression on the JVP had been intensified. To this letter there allegedly had been attached a police circular which put down the various repressive measures to be adopted towards the JVP. (This however is not available for reproduction). It also said that state repression will be the common lot of all those opposed to the government and that they should speedily take steps to combat this imminent peril. The letter was signed by Upatissa Gamanayake.

The more apocalyptic sounding the language used by the JVP, the more certain it became that they were up to something. It was by this means that they tried to justify their underground military programme not only to the general public but to their own cadres as well. Back in 1971, they worked themselves up into a frenzy about imminent state repression in a similar way. Before the May 1970 elections, they harped on the story that there was going to be an internal coup and that the UNP was not going to relinquish power. When in fact, the elections were held and the United Front came into power, the bottom fell out of the JVP's position. They found it difficult to maintain the momentum they had gathered up to that time. Hence, they invented a fiction which in Wijeweera's words, was known as "the seven secrets". After he was arrested in 1971, he told the CID that the party had received information that the UF was out to crush it. This information was received in the form of anonymous letters addressed to Osmund de Silva's house at Wanathamulla in Borella which was at that time being used as the Colombo Headquarters of the party. As Wijeweera told the authorities, seven such mysterious epistles had been received - which was why this information was referred to as "the seven secrets". The sender had claimed to be a well wisher of the JVP who preferred to remain anonymous.

The cadres of the party were duly initiated into these "secrets" and were thus jolted upright after the general relaxation following the May 1970 elections. After the UF came into power, the JVP needed to show a good reason to continue arming themselves to their cadres. And there wasn't a better excuse than self-defence. It was this expectation of imminent state repression which became the main topic at the dozen public meetings the JVP had between August 1970 and February 1971. Wijeweera brought it up to a fever pitch at the February 27 meeting at Hyde Park. In similar fashion, it is obvious that the objective of

the barrage of press statements and letters alleging imminent state repression, issued by the JVP leaders in hiding in 1984 was to create the psychological groundwork for an armed confrontation with the government.

12. The Philosophy of the Movement

The JVP, whether for good or bad, was the only genuinely anti-systemic political grouping in post-independence Sri Lanka. Those who sought to tame and domesticate the JVP have discovered too late that the interests of the JVP were so fundamentally opposed to theirs that no reconciliation except on a very temporary basis was possible. One of the main points of divergence between the JVP and the establishment was on the question of the private ownership of the means of production. If opposition to the private ownership of the means of production can be seen as the basis of the Marxist theory of class struggle, then the JVP was very definitely Marxist. The JVP's 1977 policy declaration indicates that what they envisaged as an alternative to the status quo was a kind of fully statified and centrally controlled economy on the lines of the old Stalinist model. viz.

** A fully planned socialist economic structure shall be established, and the existing capitalist mixed economy shall be completely abolished.*

** The ownership of all natural resources and national wealth shall be vested in the state and these resources shall be explored scientifically and action taken to put them to maximum use.*

** Banks and credit institutions and all monopoly industries shall be nationalised without any payment of compensation.*

** The payment of debts and interest due to imperialist banks and institutions shall be abolished.*

- * *Foreign trade shall be carried on solely by the state.*
- * *While the local wholesale trade shall be a state monopoly, the retail trade shall be carried out on a co-operative and collective basis.*
- * *Heavy industrialisation shall be the monopoly of the state, while in the field of small industries, state industry shall be speedily developed.*
- * *Systematic steps will be taken to abolish private ownership even in the field of small industries.*
- * *Small industries with a co-operative and collective base shall be encouraged.*
- * *Essential steps will be taken immediately for collectivisation, mechanisation and modernisation in the field of agriculture.*
- * *A revolutionary land reform shall be immediately implemented and landlessness shall be abolished.*
- * *State collective farms shall be set up on state lands.*
- * *Commencement of co-operative collective farms on private lands shall be encouraged.*

One notices that the JVP's economic projections were basically fashioned after the Stalinist model where sweeping nationalisation and collectivisation was seen as the panacea for all economic ills. From its inception in the late sixties, the JVP has been very serious about the abolition of the institution of the private ownership of the means of production. Analysts have found that it is difficult to pigeon-hole the JVP into the commonly known schools of thought within the Marxist tradition. As a whole, the JVP is neither Stalinist, Trotskyist, Maoist, Che Guvarist or "New left". But it can be said to be an eclectic amalgam of all these and more. This is probably why some people credit the JVP of having been the first to explore into a variety of Marxism adapted to Sri Lankan conditions. It should be said to the credit of the JVP that they never felt themselves bound to swear allegiance to any of the prevailing schools of thought, but borrowed what was needed when necessary.

Many Marxist intellectuals have been appalled by the very idea that the JVP could be called Marxist since some of its policies were as they claimed, "anti-Marxist." But once one gets down to rationally analysing the JVP, it is quite obvious that what the JVP does represent is in fact Sri Lankan Marxism in its most anti-systemic form. What are normally seen as the JVP's un-Marxist" or "Petit-bourgeois" policies are actually quite similar

in many respects to those adopted by other Marxist movements the world over. The only problem with the JVP was that they never had the benefit of victory to prove their Marxist bona fides. If Che Guvarism can be termed as Marxism adopted to the Cuban conditions, then "Wijeweerism" is Marxism adapted to Sri Lankan conditions. All expedients tried by the JVP have been attempted sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully by movements the world over which claim to be "Marxist" and are generally accepted as such. Wijeweera always had great faith that unemployment, deteriorating standards of living and such like economic factors would always provide a fertile base for his propagandizing. He said so with great confidence to the Police after he was arrested in 1971 and repeated it at the trial before the Criminal Justice Commission. The JVP motto has always been, "Apa mara demuwada, apa nagana handa sada nomiyenu eta!" (Though we may be killed, our cry will not be silenced) Telling the Police about his own reasons for having taken to politics, he stated that even if he had been allowed to complete his medical degree in Russia, it would not have helped him since it was not recognised in Sri Lanka at that time and was completely useless as a certificate to employment. Owing to the economic depression the country was going through in the mid-sixties, the only employment he could find was as a full-time worker in Shanmugathasan's Ceylon Communist Party. Thus Wijeweera himself had to go through all the trials and tribulations of an unemployed and impoverished youth. After his visa was cancelled in 1964, he had spent some time trying to find employment, but had failed. This in part explains Wijeweera's rigid faith in the Stalinist economic model of sweeping statisation because however inefficient it may be, it succeeds in one thing - the elimination of unemployment.

The degradation of having no work and a means of livelihood is known only to those who have been in that position. It tends to leave deep psychological scars. Most probably Wijeweera's concentration on the unemployed and educated rural youth in his organisational effort was an indication of this feeling. The rural youth who have been shown fleeting glimpses of something better than what they experience at present, find it impossible to plod on in the same old way, they desire change. Gunadasa Amarasekera, in his book "Gananduru, mediya arunalu dakinemi", has stated that though the leaders of the JVP

occasionally used Marxist phraseology there is no evidence that the rank and file are in any way conversant with Marxism. One would expect it to be so, since what an unemployed youth with an empty belly wants is not book learning but a job from some source whatever. It was probably Wijeweera's great faith in the inability of the economy to fulfill the aspirations of the youth which enabled him to deal so pre-emptorily with dissidents within the movement. In his view, nobody was indispensable. For every individual who falls out, there'll be more to come in. Past events have proved him to be correct. Though there were a number of 1971 veterans in the Central Committee in 1987-89, the rank and file were fresh blood who had been recruited after 1977. In spite of all the allegations made by the 1971 leaders against • Wijeweera there was no lack of enthusiastic young men and women to join him. It was the same in later years too. On the average, the length of stay within the JVP was about three years. This is probably why Gunadasa Amarasekera has referred to it as a nest in which the educated rural youth are ideologically incubated. They soon grow out of it.

The advantage that the JVP always had was that unlike all other political groups in the country, the JVP did not draw on a privileged social strata for its leadership. Its leaders came from the same class as its rank and file. They had no independent means and the party fund was their only source of income. Hence anyone who took his anti-systemic politics seriously would instinctively gravitate towards the JVP. Pious expostulations apart, it is quite obvious to anyone that none of the ordinary left-parties would ever take the plunge in actually trying to do anything to change the system. In contrast, the JVP was willing to explore any avenue available to get into power. Little wonder that while the talkers shied away, the doers were attracted to the JVP. The JVP always exuded an impression of wanting to do things. Even in late 1988 when the JVP was involved in negotiations to form a "United Front for National Salvation" with the SLFP, MEP, ACTC, CP and DWC, their "provisional programme" was too radical for the others to accept. The JVP of course was never serious about this "United Front". But their proposals show how fundamentally they differed from other parties on economic questions. Even at this embryonic state of the negotiations they demanded that foreign trade, internal wholesale trade and heavy industries be declared state monopolies. National and international

transport was to be a state monopoly. Radical land reform was demanded. Foreign owned banks were to be nationalised without payment of compensation. Foreign loans taken by the UNP was not to be repaid.

The JVP's anti-systemic struggle was so fundamental that they would not allow niceties of "ideological form" and the accumulated dust of decades of revolutionary thinking to hamper them in their single minded project of overthrowing the established order. If available theories and customs do not fit the case at hand, then the theories and customs must go. The JVP was thus refreshingly free of the interminable hair-splitting ideological debates as in other Marxist parties. It was Marxist in the most fundamental sense only – that of being opposed to the institution of the private ownership of the means of production. In nineteenth century Europe, there were many groups that were against the institution of private property like the anarchists and peasant romanticists. The JVP however cannot in any way be called an anarchist or peasant nativistic movement. It represents Marxism in its most rigid, Stalinist sense. Even though the image of the bomb-throwing European anarchist tallies superficially with that of the JVP, there was never anything libertarian or permissive about the post revolutionary society they envisaged. On the contrary, everything pointed towards a 1930's style of Stalinist totalitarianism.

Even in their ultra-democratic policy declaration put out in 1977, were included clauses which would have laid the foundation for a totalitarian state. While it promised the retention of the multi-party system and democratic elections, there were other clauses which struck at the very roots of "bourgeois democracy" as we conceive it.

* They promised to dismiss all armed services personnel and institute a "people's militia" instead. If one observes the "people's militia's" in other countries, it would be plain that what the term denoted was only an armed wing of the ruling Communist Party. A regular Navy and Air Force would exist, but they would be fundamentally different to what existed before. They would be maintained with strong "revolutionary fervour and comradeship" and would have full trade union and political rights. Thus the Air Force and Navy too would be subsidiary organisations of the party as happens in practice in such situations.

* They also envisaged the complete abolition of the capitalist judicial system and the institution of a system of "people's courts". Even the Supreme Court was to be a "People's Supreme Court". All young people were to be given a two year part-time military training on completion of their secondary education. And every educational institution was to provide an education based on the "ideology of the proletariat". This combined with the sweeping plans for statistation in the economic sphere would have meant a totalitarian state in almost text book form.

Thus what the JVP envisaged was a totalitarian state based on the Stalinist model. For all the talk of a multi-party system, the JVP never expected to compromise in any way with political opponents. The physical annihilation of political opponents was always high on the JVP's agenda both in 1971 and 1987-89. During its open democratic phase in 1977-83, the JVP was hard put to convince the Sinhala masses of their democratic bona fides. During that period, many grassroot level activists of the JVP had problems in "going to the people". Whenever they went out to collect donations from the public, people hurriedly gave them something and fidgeted nervously until they left. Some of the older folks asked them point blank whether they were collecting money to manufacture bombs again, and chased them away. The JVP found out that a bad reputation tends to stick. What the JVP promised those who came to them was a change in the system. And they were successful in convincing people that they were the only political grouping that was seriously intending to do so. The fear that a lot of people had of them was also exactly this. To them, the JVP were the barbarians at the gate, clamouring to get in and destroy all that was considered "civilised".

One major accusation against the JVP to show that it was "non-Marxist" and petit bourgeois" is the predilection they had towards the use of organised violence for political purposes. But this has been the hall mark of all successful revolutions. Marx said that the midwife of the old, pregnant with the new, would be violence. Leon Trotsky, defending the "red-terror" against the "white terror" in revolutionary Russia, said that it "kills one and terrorises thousands". During the Russian revolution, it was Trotsky as War Commissar who actually went out and fought while Lenin sat in the Kremlin and wrote pamphlets. The reality at the ground level is very different to the wishful thinking of

the habitual pen-pusher. Lenin was always very ambiguous about the use of revolutionary violence. He could afford to be so, since his partner Trotsky was very clear cut on the issue. Ambiguous attitudes would not have won the Russian revolution in the absence of Trotsky's very "practical" methods.

Some say that the use of terrorism is "petit-bourgeois" and "un-Marxist". But the truth is that Marxism has triumphed only where terrorism was liberally used to defeat the enemy. Where Marxists came into power without the gun, they were soon eliminated by those who did have the gun as in Chile in 1973. It was Mao Tse Tung who said that "all power grows out of the barrel of a gun". Even the JVP's daftest terrorist acts were all similar to strategies adopted by various Marxist movements the world over. The "propaganda of the deed" method they adopted of winning public support by killing government officials was a strategy advocated by Che Guevara. Their "scorched earth" policy of urban guerrilla warfare of destroying public utilities, industrial establishments and the such like in the hope that the people would turn against the government was advocated in all its idiotic purity by the Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella. Even the JVP's strategy of creating a "power vacuum" at village level by systematically killing small-time state officials like Grama Sevakas and Gramodaya Mandalaya Niladharis was assiduously practiced by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam in the 1960's and early 70's when they murdered an estimated ten thousand village headmen. The JVP also tried out all these methods. But they failed to capture power. And what that failure represents is not the defeat of the "petit bourgeoisie" as some people may claim, but the end of the road for revolutionary Marxism in Sri Lanka.

13. Fears of a State Without Frontiers

The theory of Indian expansionism has always served as one of the main mobilising platforms of the JVP except during a brief interlude during the democratic phase between 1977–83. However, this was subject to various changes over the years. There were quite a few very noticeable changes in the emphases in their theory. Sometimes the object of hate and fear was the Hindu–North Indian state. At other times, it was the Tamilian nativistic movements in the South. It was quite natural that the JVP should have a confused attitude towards India. Sri Lankan affairs are inextricably caught up in the Dravidian-Aryan and North-South divide in India. The creation of the Indian nation-state under the aegis of British imperialism resulted in a situation where the most hated traditional enemies of the Sinhalese as well as their cultural and spiritual mentors were all brought together under one banner. And in the course of time, her relations with the neighbouring states were decided mainly in accordance with the common interest of the various disparate elements that comprise modern India. Thus, the South Indian Tamilians, who have long been the traditional enemies of the Sinhalese, are in a position to pressurise the North-Indian dominated Indian government to intervene on behalf of their brethren in Sri Lanka. Hence the hate-figures tend to get mixed up. The periodic changes of emphases in the JVP's theory of Indian expansionism was due

primarily to this. At times, the JVP did attempt to sort out and separate the friends from the enemies. But the exigencies of the moment overtook them and the black and white attitude prevailed.

In the formative years of the party in 1967-69, the theory of Indian expansionism was advocated by the JVP leadership which had just broken away from the pro-Peking CCP. The quarrel was with the leader Mr. Shanmugathasan and not with the China line. Hence, conspicuous elements of the China line continued to be represented in the JVP's political thinking. The Sino-Indian border war in 1962 had increased tensions between the two powers. The Chinese view was that India was a capitalist power attempting to become a superpower and a regional "big brother". India was moreover, a leading light in the non-aligned movement into which almost the entire "third world" had gravitated. China wanted to "win friends and influence people" in the third world and saw India as a main competitor for attention. This was during the period following the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960's, when China was attempting to build up a third force opposed both to the capitalist imperialism of the United States as well as the "social imperialism" of the USSR. In her attempts to remain independent of both the USA and China, India formed an alliance with the USSR. Thus, the pro-Chinese elements in Sri Lanka had declared capitalist India an enemy on the same lines as American imperialism.

This "ideological factor" helped a great deal in easing the tensions which were bound to arise in bunching together traditional enemies with cultural and spiritual mentors. Making common cause with the Chinese was a way of obtaining moral courage to turn against one's heritage. Marxist ideology and its offshoots lay claim to the entire person. It is a philosophy which brooks no half-measures. However, anti-Indianism cloaked only in pro-Chinese political views would not have won many adherents in Sri Lanka. As it were, the early JVP's anti-Indianism was a combination of pro-Chinese ideological opposition to the capitalist Indian central government on the one hand and a pandering to the traditional hate and fear of the Sinhalese against the South Indian Tamils. Two birds were thus conveniently killed with one stone. The JVP fulfilled what some of its leaders considered to be their ideological obligations on the one hand, and successfully mobilised the Sinhala masses on the other.

In putting forward an economic and political programme which went against all established practices and habits of thought, the JVP sought to mitigate the resulting exclusivism by also pandering to other habits of thought which were perhaps even better entrenched than the private property instinct and deference for hierarchy and revulsion towards violence. Through such expedients they sought to make the passage to social change easier. Thus even in 1971, when Sri Lanka was faced with no real external danger and internal affairs were in the main tranquil, the JVP placed strong emphasis on patriotism. They insisted that the revolutionary should also be a patriot. Even at that early stage, the JVP's student wing had a front organisation known as the "Deshapremi Sisyā Sangamaya". And they made good use of patriotic songs in their propaganda work. Some of the popular songs among the JVP cadres during this period were, "Ratna dipa janma bhumi" by W.D.Amaradeva and "Udangu liyan gotha bandina neela warala sarasannata ma ipadune neta me ran derane" along with "Me Sinhala apage ratai" by Nanda Malini. All these were songs which praised the patriotism of the Sinhalese over the ages and held in high esteem the ideal of laying down one's life for love of the country and nation. These were sung at their public rallies in late 1970 by a bevy of specially trained girls. In 1971, the JVP had claims of being opposed to Colonialism, to "Her Majesty's Government of Ceylon". This along with the "economic domination" of expatriate Tamils and Muslims were major points in the JVP's campaign. They understood that Sri Lankan society was basically very traditional in outlook and averse to drastic changes. By infusing their package of reforms with elements of patriotism, fear, envy and hate, they expected to make it less alien and more attractive to the general public.

They found this task made much easier by the fact that tension was running high between the Sinhalese and the large community of Indian labourers and traders in the country. The Sinhala intelligentsia expressed concern about the fact that some of the most important sections of the Sri Lankan economy, the plantations and the wholesale trade in commodities were almost entirely dominated either by Indian Tamil labour or Indian Tamil capital. They were concerned by the fact that such control should be exercised by those who have no abiding interest in the country. Popular Sinhala ideologues like Prof. Tennakoon Wimalananda regarded with apprehension the victory of the

Dravida Munnetra Kazagam (DMK) which in English would mean "Association for Dravidian Progress" – over the Congress Party in Tamil Nadu in 1967. They saw the victory of this narrowly Tamilian group over the more cosmopolitan Congress Party as bringing about a strengthening of the Indo-Tamil expansionist tendency towards Sri Lanka. The fear of the ascendancy of the DMK over the Congress Party well illustrates the instinctive bent of the Sinhalese towards North India. Prof. Wimalananda feared that increasing economic and social problems in Tamil Nadu were offering temptation to the Tamil Nadu politicians to systematically divert the attention of the public by interfering in Sri Lankan Tamil politics. He alleged that the Tamil estate workers and Tamil trading community in Colombo had direct links with the DMK.

Prof. Wimalananda further finds fault with the governments of post-independence Sri Lanka for not having effectively solved the Indian Tamil problem in the country. He takes as example ex – British colonies like Burma, Mauritius, Malaysia and Tanganyika which took immediate steps upon receiving independence to repatriate the Indian Tamil workers, traders, and money lenders who had come into their countries during British colonial times. He berates the first post-independence government of 1947 not only for having failed to follow suit, but also for having conferred "distinguished citizenship" on some Indian traders instead of chasing them out.

Another fear commonly prevalent among the Sinhala intelligentsia was that the DMK was attempting to enlist the support of the Tamils scattered all over the globe to their cause. The original aim of the DMK when it was formed in 1949 was to secede from the Indian union and form a "Dravida Nadu" with the other three South Indian states – Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The DMK however, was unable to win the support of the other Dravidian states and always remained a purely Tamilian group. But in Tamil Nadu, they continued to wax stronger and stronger until Jawaharlal Nehru brought in legislation making illegal the demand for secession in 1963. Thereafter, the DMK dropped its demand for a "Dravida Nadu". But many Sinhala intellectuals still felt that the DMK aspired to be a "state without frontiers" and that it sought to influence the Tamil communities all over the world. Prof. Wimalananda cites as proof of this the International Tamil Convention which was hosted by the

DMK in Tamil Nadu soon after coming to power in 1967. He views with apprehension the increasing attraction of even the Ceylon Tamils to the DMK. The biggest delegation for the Tamil convention in 1967 had been from Sri Lanka and a Ceylon Tamil Parliamentarian M. M. Tiruchelvam was one of the leading lights on this occasion. Also, going against the tradition of Ceylon Tamil leaders like Ponnambalam Ramanathan, and Ponnambalam Arunachalam of leaving the Indian Tamil plantation workers severely alone, G.G.Ponnambalam had included them in his agitational work referring to them as his "up-country brethren." The Sinhala intelligentsia saw this as a result of the propaganda and machinations of the DMK. They also viewed with concern the increasing availability and influence of the DMK inspired newspapers, magazines and films on Sri Lankan Tamils.

Prof. Wimalananda expresses fears that the DMK wanted to control Sri Lankan trade. He states that most local industries were in the hands of Indian Tamils and that if steps were not taken soon, they would capture the rest as well. He alleges that in days gone by, even the Dutch were afraid of the business acumen of the Tamilian traders. When Viraparakrama Narendrasinghe (the last Sinhala king) wanted to marry into a Royal family in Madurai the Dutch had opposed it vehemently because they knew that through such a marriage, the Tamilian traders would gain access to the traffic in cinnamon, cardamoms, gems, ivory and elephants of the Kandyan Kingdom. Later he says, "*when the marriage did take place in 1669, the fears of the Dutch proved to be fully justified. The entire trade of the Kandyans passed into the hands of Tamils and Velvettiturai became a haven for smugglers...*" They were able to supply the royal palace in Kandy with all the luxuries of India through VVT despite the Dutch monopoly on overseas trade. With all their Naval might, the Dutch were still no match for the resourceful Tamil smuggler. In time, the Tamil traders had almost all the chieftains of the Kandyan Kingdom in their debt.

After the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815, the Tamilian traders also fell in grace and were compelled to leave. But after 1832 when the Kandyan regions were brought into a unified colonial state structure, the Tamils began to return – this time with British patronage. They brought in Indian Tamil labourers for their plantations and the traders followed as suppliers to the estates. He accuses these traders who were often

agents of larger trading establishments in India of bleeding the country of gold reserves by paying for goods imported from Britain to India with gold obtained in their trading operations in Sri Lanka.

According to Prof. Wimalananda, the 1848 Kandyan rebellion was in the main caused by these rapacious traders. Though the colonial treasury had obtained a large amount of gold by way of payments made for land bought by British planters and the capital invested by the planters in the country, and monies sent by the British government for various projects here, it was all taken to India by the Tamilian traders in the manner explained above. Thus the British colonial regime had been placed in dire financial straits by a handful of Tamilian traders within a short period of about fifteen years. Governor Torrington was forced to impose five new taxes to replenish the treasury, thus igniting the flame of rebellion in the Kandyan areas where the added burden was felt most keenly. Prof. Wimalananda bitterly blames the various post independence governments of Sri Lanka for showing favouritism towards Tamilians in the matter of granting import and industrial licences. He quotes R.G.Senanayake to say that the new Vijithapura is not to be found in Anuradhapura, but in the Pettah!

In 1967-71 the young ideologues of the JVP sought to portray India as being a traditional enemy of Sri Lanka which has always attempted to dominate the island. Being influenced by the Chinese line, they thought that the image of capitalist India would be damaged most by portraying it as a traditional enemy of the Sinhala people. In this too they made good use of the historical accident whereby the hated South Indian Tamilians were brought together with the North Indians within the same state-structure. In their lecture on Indian expansionism, they went back into ancient history to the early conquests of the Tamilian traders Sena and Gutthika and kings like Elara to show that "India" has always had expansionist designs on the island. The ancient Tamilian invasions of the island were explained upto more recent times, when a Tamilian dynasty inherited the Kandyan throne in the eighteenth century.

They asserted that it was the misrule of an Indian Tamil despot that finally caused the Kandyans to surrender to the British in 1815. They explained in detail the consolidation of Indian merchant capital during British colonial times when the Tamilian

traders were given preferential treatment. They were appointed as the local shroffs of British banks and thus were given access to capital which the Sinhalese never had. Most credit facilities were extended by them to members of their own community, thus making their position stronger. Even the Tamil estate workers were thought of as a privileged crowd. They were provided with rudimentary housing, some elementary health care and a rice ration as part of their payment. Thus, they were able to survive on much less than they actually got as wages, and this surplus was repatriated to their next of kin in India. After independence, several leading Indian merchants were accorded "distinguished citizenship" and were allowed a free hand in their commercial operations in Colombo.

In presenting these facts, the JVP publicists made it a point to speak in such manner as to arouse the natural jealousy of the masses against foreigners who were ruling the roost and living it up as privileged citizens while the true sons of the soil languished in poverty. They also played up the fact that certain Indian (Gujerati Muslims) merchants were engaged in large scale racketeering by either bribing Sri Lankan officials or simply "running in circles" around them. They thus sought to whip up public resentment against the wily foreigners who were outwitting and playing out the sons of the soil. By indicating that even the Tamil workers were enjoying better privileges, what they sought to show was that the foreigner was living it up while the sons of the soil suffered. The JVP even accused the Tamil plantation workers of having usurped the most salubrious climatic zone in the country for themselves while the Sinhala chena cultivators sweated it out in the scrub jungles of the dry zone.

Another aspect of the JVP's theory of Indian expansionism was their emphasis on Indian "cultural aggression" on Sri Lanka. The Tamil films which were brought here in large quantities was one way in which the Tamil people in Sri Lanka were kept bound to their brethren in Tamil Nadu. The close nexus between the DMK and the Tamil Nadu film industry which often tended to portray DMK ideology in their films was also emphasised. Thus, the outreach of the DMK towards the Tamil people living in various parts of the world was greatly increased. Indian Tamils and Ceylon Tamils were both equally susceptible to this kind of propaganda since the local production of Tamil films was almost non-existent. And the Tamil people in Sri Lanka were

generally dependent on India for literature, music and movies. These films provided a "little bit of home" to the Tamil workers in the plantation districts who remained "Indian" in their thinking despite the fact that most of them would never have seen India. The JVP alleged that the Indian Tamil workers never acknowledged a local political leader whether Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim. All they hung on their walls were pictures of Indian political leaders both of the central government and the state government in Tamil Nadu. Hence in the early phase of 1967-71, the JVP was inclined to consider the Indian Tamil traders and labourers as a veritable "fifth column" for Indian expansionist designs on Sri Lanka.

The JVP also viewed with apprehension the influence of Hindi films on the Sinhala public. Just as the Tamil film industry held the local Tamils enthralled, Hindi films were always extremely popular among the Sinhalese. Perhaps nowhere in the world would the public respond so enthusiastically to films made in a language totally incomprehensible to the audience. And these films were never dubbed in Sinhala either. The actors chatter away in Hindi and the Sinhala audience sits not understanding a word of it, but sometimes crying sometimes laughing and sometimes enthusiastically shouting approval as the story unfolds. Sinhala films rarely receive the amount of audience participation a Hindi film usually evokes. Hindi film artistes were always far more popular among the Sinhalese than our own Sinhala artistes. Hindi film songs competed strongly with local pop music. Just as the Tamils looked to M.G.Ramachandran, Sivaji Ganeshan and others as hero's, the Sinhalese looked to Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachan. Kishore Kumar and Latha Mangeshkar could compete for popularity with any Sinhala vocalist and perhaps come off on top. The Sinhala mind is in fact addicted to North Indian cultural inputs. One may wonder whether this is an expression of the irresistible sub-conscious "Aryan affinity" between the Sinhalese and the North Indians. One practical reason that may be adduced is that the Hindi language is pleasant to the Sinhala ear unlike the more staccato and guttural Tamil. The Sinhala and Hindi languages derive their vocabulary from the same roots, though the Sinhala grammatical structure is Dravidian in form. Thus, Hindi pop music, though incomprehensible to the Sinhalese, would be listened to for its musical value. Moreover, the North Indians share the same cultural values and morals with the

Sinhalese. Hence, Hindi films are as popular here as they ever were in India. It was not uncommon for a Hindi film to run for months on end at urban cinema halls. Some films ran at the same cinema for over two years at a stretch. No Sinhala film has ever come close to breaking the box office records set by Hindi films in Sri Lanka.

Little wonder that the JVP viewed the "Hindi invasion" with so much apprehension. This addiction to North Indian cultural inputs goes far deeper than mere availability. Thus one found that even after the import of Hindi films was banned in the early eighties to help the local film industry, a nostalgic public looked all over for substitutes. Some Sinhala vocalists were able to make good by specialising in Hindi film songs. The vastly increased popularity of Vijaya Kumaratunga in the eighties can in a sense be ascribed to this "substitution effect". He was a surrogate for Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachan! Even the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation has maintained all along a daily programme of Hindi pop music. Some business establishments have also sponsored very popular North Indian pop music programmes in their advertising projects.

14. Indian Imperialism

During the democratic phase when the JVP tended to fall in line with the "conventional wisdom" prevalent in liberal Marxist circles in the country, the Indian Tamil labourers were somewhat restored to grace in their view even though the Indian traders, especially the Borahs were still regarded with resentment. Thus in the policy declaration of the JVP of 1977, a more benevolent attitude is taken towards plantation labour.

- * *Plantation workers of Indian origin shall have the right to choose between emigration to India or the obtaining of citizenship in Sri Lanka according to their wishes.*
- * *Plantation workers of Indian origin who have obtained citizenship in Sri Lanka shall enjoy all rights enjoyed by other citizens.*
- * *All plantation workers will be provided with decent housing with sanitation facilities instead of the present line rooms.*

Their attitude towards the Indian trading community however remained very much the same.

- * *The Indian and Pakistani Borahs and all other foreign capitalists who have been conferred "distinguished citizenship" by the capitalist government will have their citizenship cancelled.*
- * *Foreign capital in every sphere will be vested in the state without any payment of compensation.*

This somewhat benign attitude towards Indian expatriate labour persisted till around the end of 1985. From the beginning

of 1986, the JVP gradually slid back to its pre-1971 position on India and further developed it. In Rohana Wijeweera's book "Solutions to the Tamil Eelam Struggle" which was written in early 1985 but published due to various delays only in 1986, he takes a stand on India which was very close to the conventional thinking within the liberal left in the country. Between the time of writing and publication, the publicly proclaimed views of the JVP on India had undergone a drastic change and the leaflets put out by the party in 1986 were contradicting Wijeweera's book.

As we noted earlier, by the beginning of 1984, the JVP had taken a stand against the separatist struggle launched by the Tamil guerilla groups in the North and East. India was at that time quite openly helping the Tamil guerillas. The JVP saw this as a result of the pro-American foreign policy pursued by the J. R. Jayewardene government. A JVP leaflet printed on December 6 1984 blamed the lack of foresight and pro-American foreign policy of the government for the predicament the country was in. Wijeweera's book developed the theory further. He made a differentiation between the Indian central government and the Tamil Nadu state government. According to him, the American imperialists had designs of "Balkanizing" India by supporting the various separatist movements within it so as to make it easier for them to subject each small part to its control. He says that the separation of Pakistan from India and Bangladesh from Pakistan proved to be a great boon to American imperialism because both countries have now been successfully integrated into the pro-American network. In like manner, the Americans were egging on the Sikhs in Punjab and the Gurkha's in Nagaland to separate from India to become American satellite states. The DMK and its offshoots in Tamil Nadu were also seen as being hand in glove with the Americans in this massive conspiracy. The Indian central government was aware of the close link between the Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka and the DMK in India. And they knew that the Sri Lankan Tamil separatists were going to have a baneful influence on Tamil Nadu. But yet they continued to support the Tamil guerillas because they hoped thereby to tame and bring to heel the rabidly pro-American J. R. Jayewardene regime. The Americans were also seen to be wanting the separation of Sri Lanka so that they could control both parts of the island with ease. Thus the Americans were also heavily involved

with the leaders of the Tamil Eelam movement. The Indian Central government and the people of Sri Lanka had a common interest in defeating this American conspiracy to divide the two nations. In Wijeweera's own words,

"The pro-American stance of the Jayewardene government and the link it has built up with countries like Pakistan and China which are regarded as traditional enemies of India has given rise to very serious and unprecedented contradictions between India and Sri Lanka. Thus it appears that the Indians have formed a tactical alliance with the Tamil Eelam movement as a way of opposing the pro-Jayewardene regime... This manifests itself as a contradiction between India's tactical interests and strategic interests... As long as the government's pro-American and pro-Pakistan foreign policy is in existence, the Tamil Eelamist military camps in Tamil Nadu will not be removed. It is only with the removal of the pro-American and pro-Pakistani foreign policy that the Tamil Eelam camps in Tamil Nadu will be removed."

"In order to fully solve the national question in Sri Lanka, to defeat the Tamil Eelam attempt, to continue the maintenance of Sri Lanka as a multinational unitary state, it is necessary to win the support of India. However, by pursuing a regional policy detrimental to India's interests, by consorting with forces that threaten India militarily, we are certainly not going to win this support..."

"India has a government of the national bourgeoisie which gives priority to its national interest. It is a country surrounded by nations that have not only become tools of the imperialist powers, but also claim rights to its territory. And it faces threats to its territorial integrity both from within as well as without. Thus we should be able to understand her behaviour in laying aside strategic interests and making some tactical efforts to deal with the dangers it faces ..."

While taking a somewhat indulgent attitude towards the Indian Central Government and attempting to understand and come to terms with its support for the Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka, the JVP at this stage raised fears of a "Tamilian expansionism" led by the DMK and its offshoots and fostered and supported by American interests. In its entire attitude towards India at this stage, the JVP seemed to be influenced by the Soviet view, which saw India as a nation friendly towards the Communist

block and ruled by a "progressive national bourgeoisie" attempting to operate on its own without the diktat of the world capitalist powers like the USA. For this reason, the USA had evil designs upon India and was all out to smash its independence of action. The biggest advantage India had as an independently developing capitalist power was her huge internal market. The USA was thus out to undermine this by spreading and fostering ethnic and separatist tensions within the union to break up the internal market and thus make each separate unit subservient to the diktat of international capital dominated by the Americans. Thus at this stage, the issue the JVP had was with the Tamil Eelam separatists who they saw to be agents of American imperialism operating in Sri Lanka, and their allies across the Palk Straits, mainly the DMK and the AIADMK which were seen as the representatives of American interests in India. Wijeweera states that there was a community of interest between the political establishment in Tamil Nadu and the Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka.

This Soviet - style perspective however came to an end in 1986 when the Indians began to intervene in the Tamil politics of Sri Lanka more actively. The Indians were making it plain during this period that they intended influencing to their benefit the policy of the Sri Lankan government on the Tamil question. Though Wijeweera had seen this need on the part of the Indian central government as quite understandable on account of the pro-American foreign policy of Sri Lanka, all such considerations were dropped when the JVP discovered that anti-Indianism could be a massive mobilising force when combined with opposition to Indian inspired "solutions" to the Tamil question. From 1986 onwards the JVP reverted back to their old 1971 line of saying that India (which meant the Central Government) had hegemonistic designs on their neighbours and that they were using the Sri Lankan Tamil guerilla's as their tools. The fifth column scare of Indian Tamils residing in Sri Lanka was again revived and the Indian government was seen as being as imperialistic in its designs as the American government. The theory now being that it was attempting to widen its economic and territorial interests by intimidating into submission all neighbouring states.

A JVP pamphlet printed on August 15 1986 accused the Indian "monopoly capitalist class" of desiring to swallow up Sri Lanka. The Indian sponsored Provincial Councils proposals which were being discussed during this period was seen by the JVP as

a potentially good platform from which to organise the masses, who were generally opposed to any kind of regional autonomy being granted to the Tamils. With India pressing the demand for Tamilian regional autonomy in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese tended to direct some of the traditional anti-Tamil venom against the Indian Central Government as well. The JVP sought to ride this wave with some adjustment in their public proclamations. The proposed Provincial Councils bill was compared to the Kandyan Convention of March 2, 1815 whereby the British gained control of the Kandyan Kingdom. The JVP alleged that just as it was the British who dictated the conditions in 1815, this time it was the Indian monopoly capitalists and the American imperialists who were dictating terms. At this stage, the JVP tended also to bring in the American imperialists into the picture for formalities sake. But from early 1987 onwards, their traditional tirade against American imperialism was dropped and only the Indian monopoly capitalists were highlighted as the enemy. In a document put out on May 5 1987, the politbureau of the JVP defines the plans of the Indian monopoly capitalists in the following terms. Now the JVP seems almost sympathetic towards the Americans.

"The foundation of the foreign policy of the Indian monopoly capitalist class is to utilise for its own ends the small states located around the Indian sub-continent. In their composite plans is included even the annexation of these states, as in the case of Sikkim. They successfully undermined Pakistan which was the main ally of the American imperialists in the region by helping Bangladesh to secede in 1971. They successfully annexed Sikkim which was an independent Himalayan kingdom and they have launched a complex and subtle plan on the economic and political fronts to swallow up Bhutan and Nepal as well. In all this, the Indian monopoly capitalist class has very successfully utilised its agents in these countries".

The JVP had come a long way since the time it made issue against the American imperialists for hatching plots to "Balkanize" India. Now the Indian monopoly class was the bete noire of the JVP. As time went on, the JVP's attitude became more and more hostile. Such posturing was to the advantage of the JVP since this was a period when the Indian government was twisting the arm of the Sri Lankan government to win for the Tamils certain concessions which the average Sinhalese was loath to concede. The accusations which were originally directed

against the DMK and the American imperialists were transferred in time to the Indian monopoly capitalists and American imperialists. Subsequently the American imperialists were dropped and all sins blamed on the Indian monopoly capitalist class. Later, the JVP begins to speak of "Indian imperialism" in much the same way that they spoke of American imperialism earlier. A statement issued on May 6 1988 by the Central Committee of the JVP develops this theory of Indian imperialism.

"Ever since the Indian capitalist class became the ruling class, their plans, strategies, tactics, and activities were directed at making India an imperialistic superpower. Their objective was first to become a regional power and later a superpower. The underlying strand which runs through all the economic political, military and foreign policies of the Indian capitalist class was this".

"India has turned Bhutan – a 18,000 square mile country with a Buddhist population into one of its colonies ... Sikkim, a small nation of 23,000 square miles has been annexed as India's 25th state. In both these instances, the Indian capitalist class has acted in a like manner as they are doing now in Sri Lanka. In both instances, Indian troops were sent in, Indian agents in the country were well utilised, the economy was swallowed up, unequal treaties were signed to the benefit of the Indian capitalist class. Thus gradually, these countries were annexed".

"The Indian capitalist class hatched their plot of establishing dominance over Sri Lanka even before independence from British colonialism. For this purpose, they utilised the services of the Indian "racketeers" who came into the island without any hindrance during British colonial times. The hundreds and thousands of Indian Tamil labourers who came in during British times were also utilised for this purpose. The Indian capitalist class also made good use of the power hunger, selfishness, greed and disloyalty to one's country which characterised the local ruling class".

Thus the JVP's India policy had come full circle back to the pre-1971 position. The 1988 position represents the apogee of the JVP's anti-Indianism. Their anti-Indianism during this period however, had a hollow ring about it since even after they successfully launched an insurrection against the Sri Lankan government, they never attacked the Indian troops in the country—not even for the purpose of winning the approbation of the Sin-

hala public. In explaining this, a confession made by D.M. Ananda the No. 3 in the JVP shortly after his arrest is revealing. He stated that the JVP was never actually anti-Indian and that they used anti-Indianism only as an issue to mobilise the masses. This ties up with Wijeweera's conciliatory attitude towards India in his book "Solutions to the Tamil Eelam Struggle" which was highlighted earlier. The reason why the JVP never actually fought the IPKF even though they had plenty of opportunities to do so in the border areas of the North and East would also have been due to this. In public, the JVP rabble rousers insisted that the Indian Peace Keeping Force had come to Sri Lanka to help the Eelamists to create a separate state. But in private they acknowledged the fact as Wijeweera did in his book that the Indian central government was dead set against the creation of a separate state of Eelam because that would have disastrous repercussions on Indian unity. Hence the JVP's non-aggression towards the IPKF was perhaps based on the understanding that it was not wise to antagonise India who was a potential ally in the anti-Eelam struggle. Hence, they left the IPKF severely alone to pursue their war against the LTTE. Obviously the JVP was utilising the anti-Indian platform only to mobilise the political forces to get itself installed in power, after which they would have come to an understanding with India against the Eelamist guerrillas.

The presence of the IPKF on Sri Lankan soil was actually a great boon to the JVP since it gave them ample excuses and opportunities to engage in actions which embarrassed the government. The single most important event which gave them the much needed impetus to launch the armed struggle against the government which they had been preparing for from 1984 was the arrival of the IPKF in July 1987. Hence, while breathing fire and brimstone against India and the IPKF, they attacked only the Sri Lankan government. There is no evidence to show that the JVP even considered the popularity they would have won if they launched independent attacks on the IPKF the way the LTTE did. It might have been that the JVP privately thought of the IPKF as a friendly force that was holding the Eelamists at bay until they came into power!

15. Ethnic Policy

In the pre-1971 days, the JVP's stand on the Tamil question revolved around the problem of the Indian Tamil businessmen and workers in Sri Lanka. Thus their ethnic policy at that time was incorporated within the theory of Indian expansionism. In those days, the indigenous Tamils of the North and East were largely dormant and were hence ignored by the JVP both in terms of policy formulation and organisational efforts. They never made any attempts to organize the Tamil youth of the North and East. As far as the JVP was concerned, the North and East were the backwoods of the political scene. The contradictions between the Tamils and the Sinhalese had at that time not risen to today's levels and the Tamils of the North and East generally tended to lead a non-descript existence and rarely intruded into the consciousness of the Sinhala public.

The Indian Tamils in contrast, had come to the notice of the Sinhala intelligentsia and were marked out as a hate object. And with the JVP's sympathy with the China line, this tended to balloon into a monster far out of proportion with the actual dangers posed. As was pointed out earlier, it was the JVP's strategy to make use of popular objects of hate and envy to further their political cause. In this they tended to seize upon what was already available instead of trying to create new ones. While they went against the tide with regard to certain matters, on other questions they tended to ride the waves.

It took a long time for the JVP to become conscious of the need to have some sort of a policy on the Tamil question. Even after they were released from prison in 1977, they continued to ignore the Tamil question which was gradually coming to the centre stage of Sri Lankan politics. By the time of their release, the Tamil United Liberation Front had been formed and the famous Vadukkodai proclamation of May 14 1976 demanding a separate state of Eelam had been issued. The nucleus of what was to become the Tamil separatist militants had also taken form with the killing of Alfred Duraiappah, the pro-SLFP Mayor of Jaffna. But because of the negligible impact these events had in the Sinhalese areas, the JVP chose to ignore them. However, there were people like Lionel Bopage within the movement who were somewhat more alive to what was happening on the Tamil front. He wrote an essay entitled "A Marxist Analysis of the National Question" while still incarcerated in the New Magazine Prison in 1975. This was published as soon as they were released in 1977; largely as the JVP's response to the Sinhala-Tamil riots which took place in August that year.

But it is doubtful as to how many of even the JVP leadership read this pamphlet. It was never regarded as a reflection of party policy. The JVP leadership, except for a few like Bopage, generally tended to be "practical" in an almost anti-intellectual manner. They never bothered themselves with issues which had no immediate bearing on their current activity. Hence the JVP policy declaration of 1977 had only two very vague statements on the growing separatist struggle in the North and East.

* *Autocratic centralization as well as the division of the country will be opposed.*

* *The defence and maintenance of the territorial integrity of the country will be based on true egalitarianism and autonomous rule by the various minorities.*

These are statements which can be twisted either way to justify both a liberal stand on the Tamil question as well as a hardline against the militants. However, the vagueness of these statements helped them in their electioneering since it would have been political suicide to advocate a stand sympathetic to Tamil aspirations from an election platform. Lionel Bopage, who was of a more orthodox bent of mind found it hard to reconcile himself to this attitude within the party. In his letter of resignation of February 1984 he states with disgust that "*the policy pursued*

by us on the national question did not differ in any way from the stand taken by a Parliamentarist party. Our policy has been double tongued".

At the Presidential elections in 1982, Wijeweera adopted the usual electoral position of talking about the Tamil question without actually saying anything that would commit him to some position. All he did was in a very facile way to promise the public that he would solve the problem to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, without giving the slightest indication as to how he was going to do it.

It was in the period following the Presidential election in 1982 that the JVP began to take the Tamil question more seriously. This was because the JVP had found with the electoral debacle that something was radically wrong in the way they approached the public. They began to look out for new issues which gave out the promise of being good subjects for mass mobilisation. Around April-June 1983, a debate raged within the JVP about the stand they should take on the Tamil question. A lot of people felt that this was going to have a bearing on the future development of the party. Somawansa Amarasinghe was one of the hardliners who argued against the "liberal" line advocated by Bopage. Not that Bopage demanded much. In his pamphlet "A Marxist Analysis of the National Question" he opposed the separatist cry of the TULF saying that a study of the 1977 electoral results did not indicate the support of the majority of the Tamils of the North and East for separation. Besides he claimed that the majority of the Sri Lankan Tamil community resided outside the North and East. He accused the TULF of being a Tamil capitalist party trying to make political gains by whipping up Tamil separatism the same way the capitalist, UNP was whipping up Sinhala chauvinism. He denied that the Tamils had any historical rights to the Eastern province. In fact his perception of the Tamil question was very like that held by the liberal bourgeoisie in Colombo - that it was mainly a case of language, standardization and Police action. Thus he opposed discriminatory measures in the use of the Tamil language in administration and education. He opposed discrimination with regard to state employment due to reasons of language. He criticised the language - based standardization of university admissions in the early seventies. Above all he opposed the use of Police action in the handling of the rising tide of unrest in the North.

Bopage criticised the separatist cry on the grounds that anybody who agrees to each and every demand put forward by the capitalist class of an oppressed nation, would end up pandering to the needs of the capitalist class as against the proletariat. He states that with the mere gaining of a separate state, the Tamils were not going to find a solution to their national as well as economic problems. He states that the Northern and Eastern Provinces were economically not viable and that the Tamils would not be able to maintain even their present standards of living if they separated. When unable to meet their economic needs, they would only become prey to some imperialist power attempting to establish itself in the region. But Bopage acknowledged that there were many honest and enthusiastic young cadres within the Tamil national youth movements, who do in fact come from the most underprivileged sections of society. He stressed the need to make such youthful Tamils partners in the anti-capitalist struggle as a way of rescuing them from the clutches of the capitalist TULF.

Though Bopage plugged this line of fomenting links between the militant movements of the North and the JVP, it was never realised. Not because the JVP was unduly "Sinhala Chauvinist" but because the JVP at that time did not want to get into the bad books of the government by linking up with the Tamils. The only thing held sacred by the JVP was power. If at any time they thought that a link with the Tamil separatists would have helped them in their bid for political power, they would most certainly have consorted even with the most extreme of the Tamil terrorists. At that stage moreover, they were not sure about the reaction of the general public to such a linkage. Then again, most leaders of the JVP were simply not interested in the Northern militants since during the entire democratic phase of the JVP between 1977-83, the Tamil militant movements remained a peripheral phenomenon in the backwoods of the country. The most that Bopage was able to achieve during this period was to get the party to oppose the sending of troops to crush the Tamil militants in the late seventies. This too the JVP would have agreed to only so as to present a pacifistic, democratic face to a public wary their non-violent *bona fides*. Thus in October 1979, the JVP joined with several left parties to agitate against several measures taken by the government to combat the rising tide of militancy in the North. In a joint com-

muniqué issued on September 24 1979, the JVP along with four other left parties called for the withdrawal of the Essential Public Services Bill, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and a revocation of the emergency and military control of the Jaffna district. And they called on the government to respect the basic democratic rights of the people of Jaffna. These demands were the main points in the campaign launched on October 2 1979, with a mass rally in Colombo. The other parties associated with the JVP in this campaign were the LSSP, CPSL, NSSP and the Revolutionary Marxist Party. The September 24 communiqué was signed by Bernard Soysa (LSSP), D.W.Subasinghe (CPSL), Vasudeva Nanayakkara (NSSP), Bala Tampoe (RMP) and Upatissa Gamanayake on behalf of the JVP. This was at the time that President J. R. Jayewardene had sent Brig. Tissa Weeratunga to the North with a mandate to "wipe out terrorism".

The public stand taken by the JVP on this occasion was probably the first as well as the last of its kind. In subsequent years, they preferred to play it safe and be ambiguous about the whole Northern question. Their main objective at this stage was to build up the party to become a main factor in the opposition. And for this they needed some government patronage. The JVP at that time was a pampered pet, getting the best sites for their rallies and so on. The Town Hall grounds were denied to the SLFP but given to the JVP on a number of occasions to hold their May Day meetings. The desire to continue to receive such "favours" had a lot to do with moulding the JVP's attitude towards the North. As Bopage comments in his letter of resignation of February 1984,

"It is the duty of the revolutionary movement to maintain some sort of contact with the militant movements that arise from among the Tamil people. Though they would resort to terrorist acts in the beginning, if later, they show a willingness to come forward as progressives, it is the task of a revolutionary movement to organise them around a correct policy. Instead of this, if we use the possibility of state repression as an excuse not to form such contacts, it is certainly not going to augur well for the future of the country. The only way in which the Tamil people can be rallied around the banner of the Sri Lankan revolution would be by joining up with them in agitating to resolve their problems. Nothing will be gained by being frightened and running away from their problems".

It cannot be denied that the youth who were attracted to the JVP had their ideals. But sometimes the JVP leadership have been known to act like hard-boiled cynics. Nothing was sacred to them when it came to power building. Any ideal that did not go with their future aspirations to power was liable to be unceremoniously thrown overboard. They were very definitely anti-UNP. But when it came to building up their party at the expense of others they sought to tag along with the UNP. What they expected most from the UNP at this stage, was the freedom to organise their movement without hindrance. The UNP was willing to grant this provided the JVP did not become too much of a nuisance to them. The JVP knew this and took precautions not to go beyond a certain limit. In spite of their image as a "radical left movement" during these years, sometimes the "limit" fell far short of even the democratic bourgeois parties. The JVP refused to take part in the 1980 July strike because they thought it would "offend" the government. Also, they sought to augment their own position by undermining the strike. The supporters of the JVP within the trade union movement had been instructed to walk out with the strikers but to report back to work later. The Ceylon Teachers Union broke away from the JVP owing to differences that arose concerning this strike.

Even after the JVP was proscribed in July 1983, they continued to play it safe until their position was more secure. One cannot of course find fault with them on this matter since it was the only rational thing they could do. Thus in June 1984 when the medical student Padmasiri was shot dead during a tussle with the Police inside the Peradeniya University, the Samajavadi Sisya Sangamaya of the JVP was opposed to launching anything but a token protest saying that if they go beyond that, severe state repression was bound to follow. This was at a time when the JVP was preparing the ground work for their underground military organisation and they did not want to get involved in anything that would draw the attention of the government and the security forces towards them. When the students did launch a massive protest campaign and Rohana Ratnayake of the University of Colombo was also shot dead as a result of it, the JVP student unions published leaflets saying that Ratnayake lost his life because of the "adventuristic policies" of the Independent Students Union. The JVP's public stand on the ethnic issue was also swayed by such considerations. Their constant refrain after

proscription was "The JVP is anti-Eelamist. Why is the government looking for us without going after the pro-Eelamists?" What the JVP wanted at this stage was to deflect attention from themselves as much as possible.

16. JVP Opposed Cholan Ambitions

The 1983 July ethnic riots had a big impact on the JVP's attitude towards the Tamil issue. The spontaneity of the riots would have shown the JVP that it was political suicide to take a public stand in favour of the Tamil militants. On the other hand, they thought it may be helpful to oppose the Tamil Eelamists by way of attracting more people to the movement. The hardliners on the Tamil issue among whom were Wijeweera, Somawansa Amerasinghe and others triumphed within the party and the liberals led by Bopage had to leave. Bopage was arrested soon after the proscription of the party in July 1983. He was released towards the end of the year. The final split took place only after his release. The JVP was now the most anti-Eelamist political group in the country. They even accused the capitalist Sri Lankan government of pursuing the anti-Eelam war in the North and East only half-heartedly because they had a secret pact with the Tamil capitalists in Jaffna to grant them separate rule at some future date. In order to highlight the 'Tamil capitalist component' in the ruling party, the JVP began to refer to the UNP regime as the Jayewardene-Thondaman government. This was a time when the JVP's slogans became more and more aggressive, and anti-separatist. Some of their slogans scrawled on the city walls at this time went as follows.

- * *Death to Prabhakaran!*
- * *Patriotic brothers of the armed services, the UNP government is out to grant Eelam!*
- * *The JVP is banned while the TULF leaders are assured of their physical safety!*

And more to this effect. The JVP's accusation was that the real reason why they were proscribed in July 1983 was because it was they who most resolutely opposed the Eelam cry. A leaflet published by the proscribed JVP on December 16 1984 accused the government of being unable to ensure the unity and sovereignty of the country because of their pro-American foreign policy. *"They do not mind the loss of the Northern and Eastern Provinces as long as they were able to continue their luxurious and degenerate lifestyles, and they seek to cover up their impotence by victimising the left movement. The JVP is resolutely opposed to the division of the country. The JVP policy declaration very clearly states that it is opposed both to the division of the country as well as to autocratic centralism"*.

The main grouse of the JVP at this stage was that the government was falsely accusing them of having links with the Tamil guerrillas while there were plenty of others who actually did have links with the Tamil movements, but were not victimised in any way by the government. It has to be admitted that the JVP had a genuine grievance here. The Government's attempt to establish a fictitious link between the JVP and the Northern movements at this stage never sounded convincing. What the government was trying to do was obviously to find some excuse to justify the continued proscription of the JVP. In the absence of conclusive proof that the JVP was involved in the 1983 July riots, one has to surmise that the JVP was proscribed because the establishment did not feel safe with the JVP's fundamentally anti-systemic bent. After the release of the JVP leadership from prison in 1977, the UNP pampered them to build them up as a counter to the SLFP. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's civic rights were taken away and the UNP won the 1982 Presidential elections. After thus consolidating themselves in power, the UNP felt that the JVP was no longer necessary for its future plans. And they had always been wary of the JVP anyway. So they made use of the first opportunity that came their way to ditch the JVP.

What the JVP was planning at this stage was to combine an armed uprising with the anti-separatist struggle. The advocacy of Sinhala aspirations against Tamil ambitions was to be the populist base of the JVP's revolutionary struggle. The JVP has always been very flexible in its policies outside the sphere of economic change. They were anti-systemic only as regards the capitalist economic structure. Anything else was subject to compromise and change as and when necessary. Though a section of the JVP continued to retain elements of Chinese political thinking in 1971, they dropped it in later years. And anyway after 1971 all the leaders who had been most influenced by the China line had either died or left the party. While their India policy was very liberal between 1977 and 1985, they changed that as well when Indian intervention on behalf of the Tamils in Sri Lanka provided another issue for mass mobilisation.

It may not be incorrect to say that outside the sphere of economic change, one could never have any guarantee as to whether the JVP actually meant what they proclaimed in public. They often had two conflicting policies on the same issue. One was held in private with a view to actual future implementation, while the other was only for mass consumption as a mobilizing issue. Thus they voiced rabidly anti-Indian views during their last few years in public while privately they looked at India as a potential partner in their endeavour to combat the Tamil Eelam militants. In a similar fashion, they vehemently opposed the Tamil Eelam separatists and any efforts by the Government to grant the Tamil people of the North and East a certain degree of self-rule. But in private, the JVP acknowledged that the Tamils did have grievances that had to be redressed. To a chosen section of their support base they hinted that the JVP might not be so much against Tamil aspirations as they gave out the impression of being at present. In opposing the political aspirations of the Tamils and attempting to retain them by any means available within the Sinhala dominated state structure, the JVP was in effect Sinhala supremacist. But they differed from the usual stereotype of the "Sinhala chauvinist" by freely admitting that the Tamils had a number of problems in the fields of language, education, state employment, land utilization and other such matters. This willingness to accept even in a limited way, the grievances of the Tamil people was to stand the JVP in good stead during the period following the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord when certain "tactical" contacts were made between the JVP and the Tamil militants.

In the main, the JVP's opposition to the political aspirations of the Tamils came in the form of being against any claim to territory that the Tamil militants put forward. The JVP was not willing to tolerate the separatist cry. Neither were they prepared to accept any kind of regional autonomy. As we saw earlier, what they envisaged was a Stalinist kind of rigidly centralised state. This opposition to Tamilian regional autonomy also served the JVP as a good platform to appeal to the Sinhalese. They portrayed the government which was on the verge of instituting some reforms as being unpatriotic and having sold out to the Indians and the Tamil separatists. In August 1986, the JVP put out a statement declaring why they opposed the granting of regional autonomy to the Tamils under the proposed Provincial Councils system which was being discussed at that time. They argued that while the North and East provinces had only 11% of the population of the country, they comprised 30% of the land mass, 58% of the land available for future development, 60% of the sea shore, 54% of the fisheries resources and five out of the ten main fishing harbours in the country. The JVP alleged that to set up a provincial council for the North and East in such circumstances was to discriminate against the other 89% of the Sri Lankan population.

The rationality of this was of course beyond reproach. Basing themselves on this, they criticised the government for agreeing to establish Provincial Councils and India for trying to force it on Sri Lanka. The JVP began to turn against India publicly only after the Indians began to sponsor the Provincial Councils proposals. Except for this the JVP did not have any grouse against India and always believed that they could work out something with them. A dichotomy between their actual beliefs and public projections became apparent here. They had earlier viewed the pro-American foreign policy of the government as the main reason why India was intervening on behalf of the Tamils. The JVP felt confident that once they came into power with their anti-American and anti-capitalist views, India would refrain from intervening in local Tamil politics. This was generally the same view held by the opposition. The JVP accused the UNP of being so subservient to American imperialism that they were even willing to betray the country and allow a separate state in the North and East on the orders of their American imperialist masters who were out to divide and rule in the Indian

Ocean Zone. They claimed that the American imperialists were against strong unitary states but wanted weak and fragmented satellite states which were more amenable to their control. Hence they not only wanted a separate state of Eelam, they also had much more ambitious projects to "Balkanize" and fragment India itself. The JVP alleged that the "Jayewardene-Thondaman" government was deliberately giving in to the demands of the Tamil bourgeoisie in accordance with instructions received from their imperialist masters. In their August 1986 statement, the JVP adduced the following points to say that the UNP was hand in glove with the Eelamists.

- * *By appointing Eelamists as ambassadors to several countries after 1977, the Jayawardene government helped to turn world opinion in favour of Eelam.*
- * *By retaining Tamil Eelamists like A. J. Wilson (Constitutional Advisor to the President) and Satyendra (Secretary to the Ministry of Labour till 1983) in responsible positions within the government, they were aiding the Eelamist movement.*
- * *While the fact that the Tamil Eelam terrorist movement was founded by the TULF has been revealed by the Sansoni Commission and accepted publicly by Uma Maheswaran, why is it that the TULF has not been proscribed while the JVP which resolutely opposes the division of the country has been proscribed?*
- * *The government has aided the Eelam movement by issuing a passport with diplomatic privileges to the leader of the opposition—a privilege not available before, so that Amirthalingam could go around building world opinion for Eelam.*
- * *While on the orders of Amirthalingam, the Tamil Eelam terrorists are engaged in killing scores of infants, ordinary folks and soldiers, the government has deployed the same Army to give Amirthalingam protection so that secret talks on the division of the country could continue.*
- * *The Eelamists have entered J. R.'s Cabinet as well. Thondaman, Rajadurai and Devanayagam were founder members of the TULF. They are now successfully working for the realisation of Eelam.*

The JVP always had a predilection for conspiracy theories. As far as they were concerned, there was nothing fortuitous about politics. Everything happened according to a pre-arranged plan. Very often the JVP overstepped their mark in concocting such theories and went to absurd lengths. These theories were usually

for mass consumption. But nobody really took them seriously except the blind devotees. To see a nexus between the UNP and the Eelamist militants was as absurd as asserting that the DJV was not a part of the JVP. If the JVP managed to win support to their cause, it was certainly not because the public believed their conspiracy theory about UNP-Tamil terrorist linkages but because they opposed the granting of regional autonomy to the Tamils. There were other opposition groups who also benefited on the anti-Provincial Councils issue. The JVP represented the "radical wing" of the anti-autonomists. Like the other opposition parties, the JVP too had to make political capital out of the difficulties faced by the UNP. It was the vulture theory, you hover around waiting for the opportunity to pounce on the prey. In the same August 1986 publication quoted above, the JVP had given further reasons for their mistrust of the UNP's ethnic policy.

"After Jayewardene came into power in 1977, and in the nine years intervening, the Tamil Eelam movement has scored many political and military victories. This was as a result of obeying the orders of their imperialist masters in the face of the Tamil Eelamists, and deliberately retreating militarily".

- * *The beginning of this process was the secret J.R.-Amirthalingam pact of 1977. This was the first victory of the Eelamists and the first step in the betrayal of the country.*
- * *In accordance with this pact, the Northern Sea-shore Protection Force was withdrawn in 1978. Thereby, opportunities were provided for the Tigers to freely go to India for training and bring back arms.*
- * *The Army which is supposed to protect the country has been prohibited from confronting the Tigers and have been confined to their camps as easy prey for the Tigers so as to bring down their morale.*
- * *Thereby, the Tigers were allowed a free hand to extend their military might all over the North.*
- * *It is on this basis that Jayaratnam Wilson has stated in America that there was an agreement with Jayewardene to win Eelam step by step.*
- * *The release of Valluvan, a brother-in-law of Amirthalingam's son who was captured in Mannar with allegedly incriminating documents.*

What the JVP was stressing at this stage was that the J. R. Jayewardene regime was being far too lenient on the Tamil Eelamists. The corollary to that would be that the Sinhala people could expect more resolute action against them under a JVP regime. The JVP was quick to seize upon the "bourgeois liberality" of the UNP government towards the TULF to whip up fears among the public. This was a constant refrain of the JVP in the years between 1984 and 1989. In an appeal addressed to the "patriots" of the armed services, the police and the secret police, the JVP had called on them to oust the J.R. Jayewardene regime because it was betraying the country to the Tigers.

The reason given by the JVP for being opposed to the Tamil Eelam militant movements in the North was because the Tamilian militants were "racist". In Wijeweera's book "Solutions to the Tamil Eelam Question" he has expanded on this theme. He accuses the Tamil militants of being motivated by the "Cholan ambitions" of the DMK of once again creating a Tamilian empire based in Tamil Nadu and the Northern regions of Sri Lanka. He alleges that the reason why the LTTE had adopted the "Tiger" symbol was to resuscitate the symbolism of the Cholan empire which also used the "Tiger" emblem. Even the name "Eelam" is traced back to the "Eelam Mandalam" of the 10th and 11th centuries when the Northern regions of Sri Lanka was governed as the ninth province of the Cholan empire. Wijeweera sees a link between this "Eelam" of the Tigers and the "Dravida Nadu" demanded by the DMK. Both were demanding from their respective governments what Wijeweera termed "the historical heritage of the Cholan empire". Wijeweera viewed the entire Eelam movement as being fundamentally racist in nature. He opposed vehemently the very concept of a Tamilian "homeland" in the North and East. He traces back the peopling of the North and East with Tamils to the Tamilian invasions which had continuously taken place from the Pre-Christian era. The campaign of the Tamil Eelamists was seen as an attempt to consolidate the gains of the Tamil invasions.

However, in his book "Solutions to the Tamil Eelam Question" Wijeweera freely acknowledged that the Tamils have just grievances in the fields of language, education and religion. And he categorised the Indian Tamil plantation labourers as being the most oppressed section of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka. In his own words, *"They have been selling their labour here for*

generations at extremely low prices. But yet they have no country, no citizenship. "They have no place of their own except the line rooms in the estates. They are one of the most exploited sections of society. They do not possess even the few democratic freedoms and rights enjoyed by other oppressed people. They have the lowest levels in education. The situation in health care is the same. The capitalist governments of India and Sri Lanka bargain about their fate without consulting them. Even those who are to be given citizenship are placed on a different citizenship register...." However, Wijeweera refuses to acknowledge that the only reason for the Eelam cry was national oppression. He sees the main reason as being the machinations of American imperialism and the Tamilian expansionist ideology of the DMK. Thus while beating their breasts and promising to redress all grievances of the Tamils, the JVP opposes tooth and nail the creation of a separate Tamil state.

In their provisional programme for the aborted six party front put out in November 1988, they promised that "equality between all nationalities in Sri Lanka will be accepted. Every national language will be declared equal. No privileges as regards land distribution will be allowed. The right to communicate and be educated in any national language will be guaranteed. The cultural heritage of the various ethnic groups will be protected". While thus accepting the fact that there was an "ethnic problem" in the country, the JVP was opposed to the Eelam cry on the same grounds that Lionel Bopage opposed separatism. There was no need to agree to each and every demand of oppressed nations. And in a situation where this demand originated not in national oppression, but as the JVP claimed, in the imperialist ambitions of superpowers and racist Tamilian ideology, the revolutionary movement was not called upon to support it.

The JVP had aspirations to state power and the Eelamists sought to secede from the state the JVP wanted to rule. Thus there was a fundamental divergence of interest between the JVP and the Eelamists. Given the general attitude of the JVP towards the Tamils, they appeared to be harking back to the days of the "cosmopolitan Sinhala state" of Kings like Parakramabahu VI in the fifteenth century and Rajasinha II in the seventeenth century. These were days when the Sinhalese held state power but accorded full equality to the minorities to attain their fullest potential. Unfortunately however, the JVP's outward rhetoric did

nothing to raise their esteem among the Tamil people. And they never did anything to win the confidence of the Tamils. Their political appeal was exclusively to the Sinhalese.

17. Jathika Chintanaya and Elite Conflict

Jathika Chintanaya is a school of thought among local intellectuals which arose as a result of the UNP coming into power in 1977. It can be described as a reaction to the cultural and economic changes taking place in the country as a result of the UNP's "open door" policy. Its main protagonists are upper-middle class professionals, products of "free education" who are generally first or second generation migrants from the villages to the towns. These people have benefited in every way from the "open door" policy of the UNP in terms of education for themselves and their children, living standards, foreign employment, foreign travel etc. But they express concern about what they conceive to be the breakdown of traditional mores and customs in an increasingly commercialised society. Writers of this school of thought received a great deal of publicity in the Sinhala press throughout the decade of the eighties. With the new line adopted by the JVP after 1984, there emerged a convergence of interest between the JVP and the JC protagonists. At a populist level, the JVP gathered a great deal of strength from JC propaganda in the years between 1984 and 1989.

As a social phenomenon, Jathika Chintanaya came to be seen as a reaction of the newly emergent Sinhala-Buddhist technocracy against the entrenched "English educated" bourgeoisie in Colombo. The system of free education through the access it af-

forded to the higher professions, tended to uproot the traditional Sinhala villager and vault him suddenly into positions of affluence and prestige within the short space of a few years. A village child who has lived all his life in rural surroundings may suddenly find himself placed in a prestigious faculty in a university upon passing an examination. Because of the comparatively widespread schools system and the selection process to the Universities, even a rural child had access to the most prestigious professions. But those who thus find themselves in positions of prestige and affluence discover that the English educated urban bourgeoisie still controls the destiny of the land. Thus *Jathika Chintanaya* is mainly an expression of elite conflict. The rural based and Sinhala educated are against the urban based and English educated. There are no actual differences between the two in terms of living standards and future aspirations. The Sinhala technocracy including the JC protagonists themselves have been solidly integrated into capitalist consumerist society. The difficulties arise in self-perception and power-projection. The roots of *Jathika Chintanaya* lie as much in psychology as in sociology.

It can be noticed that in the JVP insurrection of 1987-89 there were large numbers of high-status professionals and students from prestigious faculties involved whereas in 1971, the vast majority of the students involved were from the Arts Faculty. The presence of a large number of Medical, Engineering and Science students in the JVP can be ascribed to the elite conflict which had been brewing over the decade of the eighties. With the confluence of interest between JC and the JVP after 1984, many members of the emergent technocratic classes whose vistas and aspirations had been vastly broadened by the prospects placed before them by the "open door" policy of the UNP gravitated to the JVP in an attempt to displace the final barrier to their complete ascendancy in Sri Lankan society.

Just as in 1971 the JVP drew heavily – with or without acknowledgement – upon certain Sinhala intellectuals like Prof. Tennakoon Wimalananda and cultural figures like Amaradeva and Nanda Malini to enhance their popular appeal, they drew upon *Jathika Chintanaya* ideologues like Gunadasa Amarasekera and Dr. Nalin de Silva for intellectual justification of their cause in the eighties. Nanda Malini also once again indirectly contributed to the cause of the JVP with her immensely popular song recital "Pawana" which was introduced in June 1987. The timing of it

in mid-1987 just as the JVP was about to launch their armed struggle came almost as a god-send to them. "Pawana" can be described as the most antisystemic and radical cultural show ever to be seen on the popular stage in Sri Lanka. Going beyond the usual critique of the ruling class and clergy, it even condoned the use of violence to redress social injustices. The songs generally were very direct references to social evils. It called on the armed services to realise that those whom they kill and torture on orders from above are in fact their own class-brethren. Songs like "Seethala Polowa", "Rana Derane" and "Yadamin Benda" are especially relevant in this regard. The popularity of this recital can be gauged from the fact it was staged over 250 times between June 1987 and December 1988. Likewise, the publicists of Jathika Chintanaya also rendered much service to the JVP during the initial stages. This is of course not to say that these artistes or writers were in any way connected organisationally with the JVP. But certain things they believed in and advocated publicly were tacitly accepted by the JVP and put to good use as auxiliary propaganda.

There were several points of convergence between the JVP and JC, which can be seen through an examination of Gunadasa Amarasekera's essay "Gananduru Mediyama Arunalu Dakinemi". Gunadasa Amarasekera is commonly thought of as the "God-father" of the Jathika Chintanaya school of thought and it would not be incorrect to take his views as being generally representative of the thinking of its other ideologues as well.

The most crucial point of convergence between Jathika Chintanaya and the JVP was on the question of opposition to the open economic policy of the UNP. JC opposes the system of private property on the grounds that a society based on humanistic principals can never be built on the framework of the capitalist system. JC believes in the socialisation of property relations. They claim that what we have is a neo-colonial economy completely subservient to the imperialists, and that there is nothing indigenous or "national" left in it. Capitalism which has turned into neo-colonial domination and the resulting erosion of traditional mores and values is the main enemy. Since capitalism came from outside, the weapon which destroys it also will come from outside. That weapon is Marxism. But Marxism should be adapted to local conditions. Socialist economics exerted an attraction for the JC ideologues because it came close to their notion

of Buddhistic simplicity "Alpechchathavaya" in its emphasis on utility, frugality and equal distribution. Also, the actual conditions prevailing in Eastern Europe and the Communist Bloc, where poverty and luxury were equally scarce and a situation of generalised simplicity existed were thought of as being in accordance with the "national spirit" of the Sinhalese. Another reason for the opposition to private property relations would have been the need to consolidate their elite position in society. In the absence of private property, it is the technocracy which rises to the position of ruling class. And the Sinhala educated professionals very definitely had ambitions of guiding the destiny of the country.

Another important idea shared by the JVP and JC is the emphasis on organising Sinhala Buddhist rural youth to the exclusion of other sections of society. The JVP had a natural inclination towards the rural youth – a bent which they have never tried to justify theoretically. It was a practice which characterised the JVP and marked them apart from all other left-wing movements in the country. And it had given rise to the accusation that the JVP was mainly "petit bourgeois" in composition. The orthodox argument was presented by Bopage in his letter of resignation.

"Though we paid lip service to the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, our emphasis has always been on the provincial sector, in organising students and unemployed youth. They too should be organised. But in the struggle to win state power, only the working class has proved capable of withstanding repression unleashed by the capitalist class. Though it is true that students and youth have an important role to play in the revolution, their role becomes very limited in a situation of repression. They will be the first to desert the party in a situation of repression. Hence, I have always stressed that the party should place more emphasis on organising the working class and increasing their militancy. But I never saw this being practiced within the party."

Gunadasa Amarasekera has taken this ideological bull by the horns. He has questioned the sanctity of the "leading role of the proletariat" in revolutionary change and upheld the rural youth as the torch bearers of the socialist revolution in Sri Lanka. Amarasekera rejects the orthodox Marxist emphasis on the leading role of the proletariat on the grounds that the assumptions on

which Marx originally formulated this theory had been proved false by later history. Marx argued that the worker is as important as the capitalist in the capitalist mode of production and that as the capitalist system develops, so does the strength of the working class. Thus the working class has the strength to destroy the capitalist system. As the capitalist system develops, the destitution and misery of the working class also increases and the worker is driven towards class conflict and the overthrow of the capitalist class. The most alienated individual in capitalist society is the worker. And this alienation increases with the development of capitalism.

Amarasekera points out quite rightly that the development of western society has taken a different turn to that anticipated by Marx. The strength of the working class has increased both numerically and organisationally, but their standards of living have also improved to the point where the western worker considers himself to be middle class rather than poor. They have been fully integrated into the consumerism of western society. Hence it would only be chimeral to expect them to be the vanguard of the revolution. Moreover, Marx had expected class consciousness to arise from within the working class, but history has shown that it had to be brought from outside by a class of "professional revolutionaries" who are usually "petit bourgeois" in origin.

Basing himself on this, Amerasekera argues that hope should be placed on the Sinhala-Buddhist rural youth in Sri Lanka for the task of ushering in social change. Amarasekera's attempt here can be described as an effort to bring Marxist thinking into line with the existing reality in Sri Lanka where the most vigorous, ambitious and forward looking social forces have got concentrated in the rural and urban lower-middle classes. This vast "petit bourgeois" social strata is the most highly politicised in Sri Lankan society at present. Many public figures in the field of politics, business enterprise, social service, education, the professions and so on, have emerged out of this social strata. Their influence in electoral politics is also substantial because of their numbers and political consciousness. One might in fact say that it is this strata of rural and urban petit-bourgeoisie which controls the destiny of Sri Lanka today. They are also the most "upwardly mobile" section of Sri Lankan society.

Amarasekera accepts the fact that these rural youth may not be the most oppressed section of the population. But he claims that they are the most acutely conscious of this oppression. It is they who feel destitution, and helplessness most keenly and are in fact the most alienated section of society. He states, that as a result of this alienation, these youth very often end up as fanatics and madmen. He draws attention to his own attempts to examine the demented mentality of these youth in his novels "Katha Paha", "Asatya Kathavak" and "Premeye Satya Kathava".

Another major area in which Gunadasa Amarasekera provided the JVP with intellectual justification was where the JVP concentrated their political efforts exclusively on the Sinhala population. Amarasekera believed that socialism should be built by appealing to the majority Sinhala Buddhists. The vanguard of the revolution will emerge from within the Sinhala Buddhist rural society. Amarasekera claims that the most significant contribution made by Mr.S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was to consolidate and empower the rural base on which this revolutionary vanguard would emerge through his language and economic policies. Exclusive concentration on the Sinhala population in political agitation was another point which the JVP has always practiced but never tried to justify in theory. Amarasekera has described the idea of getting the minorities involved in the revolution as attempting to grab a pile of oranges with both arms – all the fruits are ultimately lost. The JVP also restricted its organisational efforts exclusively to the Sinhalese because of this practical convenience and not because they were rabidly Sinhala Chauvinist.

At least in outward expression, a difference between JC and the JVP on India policy is manifest. Amarasekera's attitude towards India was generally the same as held by Wijeweera in his book "Solutions to the Tamil Eelam Struggle". However, Amarasekera tended to regard with apprehension the JVP's increasingly strident criticism of India after around mid-1986. In the preface to his book "Gananduru Mediyama" he warns that it will not be wise to antagonise India, and that if estrangement continues further we may even end up losing our sovereignty. His attitude towards India is that of a benevolent relation. And he blames the present alienation on the pro-imperialist foreign policy of a reactionary government. He warns the JVP against conveying the impression that they too were out to act against India.

Though describing the JVP instigated violence and killings in the country after the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord as "terrorism", Amerasekera may have been carried away by the success of the JVP in their campaign of terror against the government. In a short story published in late 1988, at the height of the JVP's campaign of terror, he clearly hints that perhaps the JVP's methods were the only way in which the cherished ambitions of the rural masses could be attained. In "Gal pilimaya saha bol pilimaya" he weaves a tale around the statue of the reclining Buddha at the Gal Viharaya in Polonnaruwa. One day, the government installs a replica of the original statue in the vicinity of the Gal Viharaya and the aged caretaker of the Gal Viharaya notes with concern the increasing attachment shown by the villagers towards the replica and their neglect of the genuine statue. He carries on a lone campaign for the real statue. But the villagers are blinded by the replica. The caretaker like the other older folks in the village tends to be wary of the JVP because they are "murderers". But ultimately it is the village JVP activist who blasts to pieces the replica and thereby upholds the respect of the original statue. One might interpret this story as an attempt on the part of an older, 1956 generation to come to terms with the violence of a new generation of village based political activists. The morale would be, that however unacceptable the JVP's methods, they were aimed at preserving and upholding what was good and destroying the bad.

In a similar vein, the "Kalaya" magazine edited by Dr. Nalin de Silva, another one of the Jathika Chintanaya ideologues carried an article entitled "Bayalitis Bheetiya" which gleefully describes the effect of the JVP induced fear psychosis on government politicians. Up to the end of 1988 the JC ideologues generally tended to turn a blind eye towards the terrorist actions of the JVP. This was probably because they could hardly disguise their glee that someone was so effectively challenging the power of the hated capitalist class. The fashionable idea at the time was that the JVP could do no wrong and that the state was always wrong. In his book "Gananduru Mediyama," Amarasekera states that the killing of the student leader Daya Pathirana was not done by the JVP but that it was being made use of by the left to sling mud at the JVP. Another short story "hora police, hevath sahasikaya ellima," woven around the dramatic arrest of the Parliamentary bomb suspect Ajith Kumara, seeks to show that the

person who was arrested was just another innocent individual being victimised by an establishment seeking to claim credit and win promotions. The fact that at the initial stages, the violence of the JVP had the blessings of the Jathika Chintanaya ideologues is quite clear. The students who subscribed to this trend of thought continued to remain with the JVP dominated Inter-University Students Federation till the end of 1988.

The rift between the JC student unions and the JVP first arose over the question of Mrs. Bandaranaike's candidacy at the Presidential elections held in December 1988. The IUSF was one of the negotiating parties in the talks that were held between various political groupings to decide on this matter. The IUSF delegation to the six party alliance of the SLFP, MEP, DWC, LP, SLMC and JVP was led by one Champika – a Jathika Chintanaya student leader from the University of Moratuwa. Following these negotiations, the JC and SLFP student unions which were at that time represented within the IUSF decided to support Mrs. Bandaranaike. But the JVP decided to withdraw their support from all candidates at the elections, and they issued an order for the boycott of the election.

It was only after this that the JC ideologues sought to criticise the JVP's terror tactics. The April 1989 issue of the *Kalaya* magazine carried an article on the killing of Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo and severely berated the IUSF for failing to condemn or make any comment on that act of terrorism within the University premises. The May 1989 issue of *Kalaya* carried an even more condemnatory article by G.I.D. Dharmasekera entitled "Jatiya wanasana ghatana desapalanaya" where the writer warns that the JVP's brutal methods would only drive the general public into the hands of the enemy. He takes examples from history to show that unwarranted cruelty on the part of local kings drove the people to consider even foreign invaders as saviours. He states that today's patriots should not renounce the noble ethics of the Sinhala Buddhists even on the battlefield. He states that the temporary victory which may be won by throwing overboard such ethics is in itself a defeat. In the period following May 1989, these proved to be prophetic words indeed. Following the rift between the JVP and the JC students, there was a brief battle on the University of Colombo premises where several students belonging to the Jathika Chintanaya faction were mercilessly thrashed by a gang led by Karunaratne and Koggala—two top JVP student leaders.

18. Policy of Violence

The Sinhalese are a peace-loving people who abhor violence—so the saying goes. But given the facts, this is only a half-truth. There is indeed an element of pacifism in the Sinhala mind which seeks to conform to the peaceful and non-aggressive ethics of Buddhism. But underneath this pacifistic surface lie violent passions which tend to surface with unbridled ferocity at times. Violence in self-defence has always been considered justifiable. For instance, Sinhala tradition condones the use of any kind of violence to protect Buddhism and the Sinhala nation from danger either real or imagined. The concept of resorting to violence in self-defence and for the defence of the motherland had always figured prominently in the JVP as we noted earlier. In 1971, the JVP sought to "save the country" from Western imperialism and Indian expansionist designs. In 1987–89, they again sought to save the country from an unholy trinity of American imperialism, Indian imperialism and Tamilian expansionism. In both insurrections, they had to put forward a bogey of "state repression" to justify even to their own cadres the need to resort to violence. The JVP leadership insisted almost pedantically that it was the enemy who forced them to resort to violence. The main feature of Sinhala Buddhist pacifism is never to take the initiative in violence. It is like the Buddhist attitude to the consumption of meat – no adverse karmic consequences as long as the initiative in killing the animal did not come from

the consumer. Thus, even the Buddha ate meat and his death was caused by consuming a dish of contaminated pork.

The Sinhalese had a threshold which they had to pass to find justification for violence. Beyond this threshold no holds were barred. Thus the Sinhalese had a deep-rooted tradition of extreme violence in redressing either real or imagined wrongs committed against them. This is also a prominent aspect of popular Buddhist soteriology which has a concept of "Niraya" (Purgatory) where wrongdoers are sent to suffer for their sins. The ruler of this realm or "Yamarajjuruwo" assigns the wrongdoers to the various hells according to their crimes. Those who administer torturers or the assistants of "Yamarajjuruwo" are the "Yamapalla's". There are many temple paintings all over the island which depict the various tortures administered to wrongdoers in hell. The "narakadiya" has always figured prominently in Buddhist art.

Coupled to this streak of violence in an otherwise extremely pacifistic religion is also a latent predilection to violence in the "national consciousness" of the Sinhalese. Social Darwinist writers like Desmond Morris have argued that emotions like fear, envy, hate and aggression are a part of the natural order of things which are conducive to the survival of the species. The Sinhalese too would not have survived to date if not for their capacity to hate and react. And there has always been an aggressive core beneath a pacifistic surface. One notices that ours is the only national flag in the world which has a ferocious wild beast depicted on it. As if to enhance the power-projection of this symbol, the Lion is depicted clutching another symbol of power and aggression – a sword – in its right paw. The origin of this national motif as related in the Mahavamsa is in itself an incredibly tempestuous tale of violent passions, parricide and incest. One finds it difficult to reconcile the pacifistic protestations of the average Sinhalese with the national traditions.

According to the Mahavamsa, the nymphomaniac and wayward daughter of a Bengali king copulates with a lion and begets two children. The son, on account of having hands like the paws of a lion is called Sinhabahu, the daughter as Sinhasivali. When the children grow up they flee with their mother from the clutches of the old Lion. The princess is recognised and married by the commander of the troops in her father's kingdom. The old Lion, grief stricken at the loss of his loved

ones roams about from village to village looking for them and thus strikes fear into the population. The people complain to the king of a marauding Lion and the king offers various rewards for slaying the Lion and even offers up his kingdom to the person who succeeds. Sinhabahu accepts it and kills his own father. Then he hands over the newly won kingdom to his mother's husband and takes his sister Sinhasivali as wife and founds a new kingdom in the forest where he was born. They have thirty two sons. The eldest of whom was Vijaya. Vijaya was an evil and violent man and he was exiled by his father with all his followers. Thus did they come to Lanka to found the Sinhala race. This is hardly a flattering account of our origins!

Some Sinhala ideologues like Munidasa Cumaratunga who found it hard to digest the Sinhabahu story tried to introduce the story that the "Sinhalese" were actually the "Hela" people descended from Ravana (of Ramayana fame) and not from Vijaya. As Munidasa Cumaratunga commented, *"It is an insult on the Hela people to say that they were descended from the arch-robber Vijaya"*. But this attempt at myth-substitution was never successful mostly because it never had the backing of any kind of written or unwritten tradition. And the Vijayan myth with all its horrendous violence still claims the allegiance of the Sinhalese. Another episode which further brings to light this ferocious hidden side of the Sinhalese is related in the Mahavamsa in relation to the birth of the primal Sinhala hero - Dutugemunu. The Mahavamsa reports that when Viharadevi was pregnant, she had several pregnancy cravings one of which was to *"drink the water that had served to cleanse the sword with which the head of the first warrior among King Elara's warriors had been struck off and she longed to drink it standing on this very head..."* Velusumana is detailed with the task of bringing the head and the Queen satisfies her longings. All this happens with Buddhism still very much in the foreground. In fact the soothsayers interpret this particularly bizarre pregnancy craving to mean that *"the queen's son when he has vanquished the Damilas and built up a united kingdom, will make the doctrine shine forth brightly"*. The protection of Buddhism is often used in Sinhala tradition as an excuse for extreme violence. A classic example of religious intolerance comes at the end of the Dutugemunu - Elara war. As reported in the Mahavamsa, King Dutugemunu, after vanquishing all the Damila's and building a unified state, was in a

depressed mood. Eight Arahants then arrive to comfort the King. Dutugemunu queries "how can there be any comfort for me O venerable Sirs, since by me was caused the slaughter of a great host numbering millions? The "arahants" reply; *From this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven. Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee O'lord of men. The one had come unto the (three) refuges, the other had taken on himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest and not more to be esteemed than beasts.*"

These were only a few prominent examples. The great chronicle of the Sinhalese is replete with gory episodes intermingled with Buddhistic piety. The violence in the Mahavamsa is no doubt rather embarrassing to educated Buddhists today. The use of organised violence as a "necessary evil" has however, been very much a part of the Sinhala tradition. In fact, this was also tied up with popular Buddhism which has a strong emphasis on the punishing of wrongdoers. The JVP also believed in administering summary "punishments" on its opponents. At the beginning of their campaign of violent rebellion after July 1987, a poster appeared on the walls in Colombo which said "*otthu dennanta dedi danduwam pamunuwanu eta!*" (Informants will be severely punished). As time went on, it became clear that what the JVP meant by "severe punishment" was death. Hundreds of ordinary people suspected of having passed information on JVP activities to the security forces were brutally done to death. Victims were often burnt alive, chopped to bits, beheaded, disemboweled and tortured in various ways reminiscent of the "Niraya" scenes depicted on the temple wall paintings. Later, this brutality was extended to others as well, often for failing to obey orders issued by the Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya. Thus they were able to induce a national level fear psychosis of a kind never before experienced by the people of Sri Lanka.

The violence of the JVP was not an alien intrusion into Sri Lankan culture as some have argued. It was certainly not a by-product of the JVP's Marxist philosophy. On the contrary, it was a manifestation of a very indigenous trend deeply rooted in the mass psychology of the Sinhalese. The concept of "danduwama" or punishment for wrongs committed is very much a part of popular Buddhism. And these punishments are often extremely cruel and bloody. When a Sinhalese is wronged in some way, he usually desires to "advance" the punishment without wait-

ing for the wrongdoer to suffer in hell. In other words, the "Yamapalla's" were invoked and "brought forward" into the present world to mete out punishment to wrongdoers here and now. Thus the folk religion of the Sinhalese have rituals like the "suniyama" also known as the "kodivina" which was used to invoke powerful curses on wrongdoers in the hope that they would be punished immediately by supernatural forces. 'Suniyam' is extremely popular among the Sinhala Buddhist urban and rural poor. Recourse will be had to these demonic and baneful rituals for various reasons, economic, political and personal. And they reflect the infinite capacity of the Sinhalese to hate, envy and cruelty when they feel called upon to do so. Cruelty in the Sinhala mind manifests itself as a reaction to "wrongs" committed. When the Sinhalese react, it is in their nature to react with the most unbridled ferocity. I quote below a "suniyam," curse invoked by a deserted woman against her errant husband. This is taken from Bruce Kapferer's book "Legends of People: Myths of State".

*O'Siddha Suniyam, king of the Gods, victorious hero,
You who have the power of fiery destruction,
I tell you lord that someone has threatened this holder of
life (pranakaraya) beaten her and disappeared.
Cast your divine eye upon the maker of this trouble.
Gather your demon army. Raise your sword of Vadiga in
judgement.*

*Take hold of this evil husband.
Seize him by the neck, squeeze the breath from his body.
Crush his wind-pipe. Give him up as a sacrifice to the
blood demon (Riri Yakkha).*

*We do this incantation (Kannalauwa) so that you will give
the.*

Appropriate Punishment (Sudusu danduwama) .

*If the husband should climb a tree, a rocky mountain or
any high place, drag him down.*

*When he walks on the street, let him meet with an acci-
dent.*

*Smash his skull into pieces no larger than grains of rice.
Tear his body apart.*

*If he goes near the sea, river or stream, make him drown.
O God! Infect him with disease small pox, eczema leprosy.*

*Cause his skin to itch.
Give him the thirty two sufferings (vada tis deka)
Make this woman's heart full of happiness by meting out
this punishment.*

There is another ritual performed before a shrine of Bhadrakali the Hindu goddess of divine destruction which is mainly practiced by Sinhala Buddhists where the priests (Kapuralas) inscribes the names of the enemies of the supplicants on eggs and crushes them to signify the destruction of the enemy. A typical curse at the Bhadrakali Kovil would go like this. "*O' Goddess Bhadrakali, take him (the wrongdoer) by the leg, dash him on the ground, break open his throat and drink his blood....*"

Thus, when the JVP began to "punish" their opponents, they were in fact acting in accordance with a deep rooted folk tradition of the Sinhalese. In some instances, the people too began to look to the JVP as "redressers of wrongs". There was a "Kannalauwa" addressed by a woman of Ambalangoda in the form of a poster asking the "deshapremi sahodarayas", to do something to stop her alcoholic husband from drinking. Her suggestion was that the "deshapremi sahodaraya's" should "punish" those who were brewing bootleg liquor!

In his book "Ganandura Mediyama" Gunadasa Amarasekera has contended that the Marxist slogan of "Dhanapathiyanta Bhangawewa" did not go down well among the Sinhala Buddhist people because it was incompatible with the Buddhistic tenet of "Siyalu satvayo niduk wetwa" (May all beings be well and happy). His idea is that the people thus saw Marxism as a heartless and demonic creed. But given the actual facts, it would have been better if the Marxists had dropped "Dhanapathiyanta bhangawewa" and said instead "Api dhanapthiyange boku keutu kamu!" (Let us eat the intestines and liver of the capitalists!) This would have been more in accordance with the real Jathika Chintanaya of the Sinhala people. Buddhistic societies have been known for extreme violence. One classic example is Teravada Buddhist Kampuchea. there was one particular incident which was reported by an international news magazine and deserves special mention since it was a literal rendering of the familiar Sinhala threat "thoge boku keutu kanava!" During the war between Premier Lon Nol's government and the Khmer Rouge in 1970-75,

a brother of the Prime Minister, Lon Non was captured by rebellious peasants in a provincial town and killed. The peasants then ripped open his belly, extracted his liver, put it on a platter and paraded it all over town. Then they took it to a Chinese restaurant, got it cooked and everybody present ate a piece of it.

Those who have even a nodding acquaintance with Sinhala history will recall the famous "dasa vada" (ten tortures) and "vada tis deka" (the thirty two tortures). These do have resonances in the modern world too. During the 1983 anti-Tamil riots the mobs in Matara had thrashed every Tamil in sight. One unfortunate Tamil who had been living in Matara for a long time and had married a Sinhala woman was captured by a mob and tied to two arecanut trees preparatory to being ripped apart, but had been rescued by the relatives of his wife in the nick of time. For all its Buddhistic protestations, it must be said that the Sinhala state of yore was particularly ingenuous at dreaming up excruciating tortures for wrongdoers and "traitors". With a nationalism that harks back to the past and thrives on images drawn from antiquity, it was only natural that an element of that particularly Sinhala Buddhist cruelty should surface in modern times as well.

19. Regionalism and the Caste Factor

The JVP has always had a "Southern" bias. It was seen that the JVP always drew on Sinhala nationalism in their popular appeal, and the deep South has always been the very fountain head of this nationalism. Besides, the South has a vast stratum of impoverished and educated youth with high aspirations. A large number of those "upwardly mobile" provincial petit-bourgeois come from Ruhuna. It is this seething mass of lower-middle class Southern youth who have provided the country with most of the Sinhalese prominent today in the fields of trade, industry, the professions, education etc. The Southerner has always been noted for his outgoing enterprise and desire for advancement. Thus, while being the cradle of Sinhala Buddhist business enterprise, the South was also the main base of the left parties which promised social change and employment for all.

The unemployed youth of the South with their nationalistic bias was one of the main bases of the JVP even in 1971. Almost all its leadership in 1971 came from the Southern Province. As the following indicates, more than half of those leaders charged before the CJC were from the deep South.

Rohana Wijeweera - Tangalle.

Lionel Bopage - Weligama.

James Uyangoda - Kamburupitiya.

Anura Ranjith Kurukulasuriya - Ambalangoda.

Sunanda Deshapriya - Ambalangoda.

Victor Ivan (Podi Athula) - Akmeemana.

Somasiri Kumanayake - Elpitiya.
Wasantha Karunaratne - Galle.
Cecil Chandra - Ambalangoda.
Piyasiri - Ambalangoda.
Sunil Ratnasiri - Kahawe.
Wijepala - Balapitiya.
Lakshman Mahaduwege - Ambalangoda.
Mahinda Wijesekera - Devundara.
Kelly Senanayake - Balapitiya.
Aladin Subasinghe - Elpitiya.
Nayanananda Wijekulatilake - Ambalangoda.
Sanath (NO. 2 - deceased) - Amabalangoda.
Susil Wickrema (Dist. Secy: Matara - deceased) - Matara.

A generally prevalent fallacy is that the Sinhalese perceive themselves to be a pacifistic people. This is not strictly correct. Though the Sinhalese do have a non-aggressive demeanour, those from the very heartland of the Sinhalese, from Ruhuna consider themselves to be exactly the opposite. As was seen earlier, the Sinhalese are pacifistic when they are not provoked. But the prevailing economic conditions in the South, with its large population concentration and landlessness, tends to keep society constantly near the boiling point. The people of Ruhuna generally consider themselves to be of an aggressive disposition. A statement to the effect of "being from the South" in a situation of conflict (*Api dakune minissu!*) is generally supposed to be taken as a threat. Researchers have commented on the manner in which the folk of Balapitiya like to openly describe themselves as "vasa" (hot-tempered) and "napuru" (ferocious). Prof. Ediriweera Sarachchandra in one of his autobiographical writings has described the people of the Ratgama-Dadalla-Boosa area as being *"hot tempered, ferocious and a totally incorrigible lot"*. This is a general tendency in the deep South where people often like to present an aggressive face to the world. This goes directly contrary to the usual picture of the pacifistic Sinhalese. Aggression is an important aspect of Ruhuna ideology. It is this that has enabled the Southerner to compete on an equal footing with other more entrenched communities in the fields of business enterprise, education, overseas migration etc. This aspect of Sinhala ideology has been examined in my book "Ruhuna - A Study of the His-

tory, Society and Ideology of Southern Sri Lanka" and hence need not be dealt with here.

It is interesting to note that many Southern temples have hell-scenes depicted prominently in their murals. Perhaps these paintings appeal to the people's minds being on the subject of violence which is always present in Southern society. Even in peacetime, the deep South always had the highest incidence of homicide in the country. Ferocious family feuds were quite common. And caste-based clashes have precipitated spectacular massacres. Even when there was a literary efflorescence in the Southern regions towards the end of the eighteenth century, the tempestuous emotions of the people found vent in "vas kavi" or curses expressed in poetry. The writing of vas kavi was extremely popular during the Matara period.

The constantly deteriorating economic conditions in the South provided the JVP with a base even in the late eighties. The pattern of development after 1977 tended to concentrate development in and around the metropolis while the provinces continued to stagnate. Thus, thirteen of the 42 members of the 1987-89 Central Committee were known to hail from the deep South.

Rohana Wijeweera - Tangalle
Piyadasa Ranasinghe - Kirama
Sumith Athukorala - Weeraketiya
Easwarage Ariyasena - Beliatte
Gunapala Satharasinghe - Angunakolapelessa
Beligalle Siriwardena - Beligalle
K. G. Jindasa - Galle
Algiriye Munasinghe - Akuressa
Norman Manawadu - Rathgama
S. K. Jayatilake - Matara
Palitha Dissanayake - Tissamaharama
Nandatilake Galappatthi - Tissamaharama
Dharmawardana Munasinghe - Galle

In addition to this, Upatissa Gamanayake the political cum military secretary of the Southern zone, though born in Kantale, is believed to hail from an "Oli" community in the South. P. B. Wimalaratne, a member of the politbureau, though resident in Trincomalee, is also believed to be from the South. Most Sin-

halese living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces are migrants from the Southern Province. In 1987-89 the JVP was not as "South centric" as it was in 1971 in terms of drawing its leadership. But during this period, the South functioned as the main base of the JVP and played a much more important role than in 1971. The reason for this was the fact that in 1987-89, the JVP's campaign was linked to the issue of the IPKF presence on Sri Lankan soil. This issue originally received a great deal of sympathy from the people of the South who have a popular ideology of having traditionally opposed foreign intrusions of all kinds throughout history. These were based on historical records of Ruhuna kings like Dutugemunu who drove out South Indian invaders. The code name of the DJV leader was after the Sinhala hero Keerthi Wijayabahu who vanquished South Indian invaders with an army recruited from Ruhuna. The JVP played up symbols like this during their campaign.

Following the Indo-Lanka peace accord, the JVP managed to turn the Southern Province into their main base of activity. And it is through this that they expanded their military operations into other areas of the country. Cadres from the South were sent to many other areas to conduct operations. Military officials operating outside the Southern Province have usually found that the Southern JVP'ers were generally of a tougher and more resilient type than the local cadres. The JVP later lost their Southern base mainly due to the same reason that they won it. If the people of the South formed a favourable impression of the JVP owing to their anti-IPKF stand, they soon became disillusioned when the JVP did nothing to confront the "invader". Some say that the JVP did not have the military capability to attack the IPKF. But this is not correct. It would have been much easier for the JVP to have attacked the Indian jawans in the border areas than to fight the Sri Lanka Army.

The JVP had a quantity of quick firing automatic rifles while the Indian soldiers were armed mainly with cumbersome self-loading rifles which had no burst facility. Besides, the Indian's were on unfamiliar terrain, which the JVP could have turned to their advantage. The JVP of course could never have fought the IPKF the way the LTTE did. But it was necessary to do something to fire the imagination of the Southerner who would have appreciated even the "foolhardy bravery" of taking on the IPKF in however small a way. When the JVP did nothing

of the sort despite their loud rhetoric about Indian imperialism, they gradually began to lose their support base in the South. The average Southerner, when it comes to confronting the foreign enemy, would not have been interested in the "subtle statecraft" of the JVP leadership in "using" the Indian presence to get themselves installed in power first. On the contrary, this kind of "subtlety" would be looked upon with contempt as a kind of political brigandage, which in fact it is. It is a commonly accepted fact that the popularity of the LTTE among Tamils is mainly due to the sympathy arising from the feeling that the LTTE "whatever said and done, have actually fought the enemy". The Southerners who are generally fond of their aggressive image would have expected a similar performance by the JVP in the absence of which they felt betrayed.

Caste has always played an important role in the JVP. It is said that Wijeweera could accurately tell the caste of a person by his name and place of origin. There certainly was an element of caste favouritism in the JVP in 1971. Most of the 1971 leaders were Southern Karava's. There were accusations that Wijeweera was showing favour to men of his caste from his native region. While the full-time cadres were often native to the places they worked in, the leaders who were sent to supervise them were Southern Karava's. Thus even districts like Kandy and Badulla had Ambalangoda Karava's as leaders. It was also seen that the JVP had a considerable amount of support from the other underprivileged castes like the Batgam, Wahumpura and Rada in 1971. In 1987-89, the JVP no longer has the "Karava bias" in its leadership mostly because the entire 1971 old guard had left its ranks by then. There was now a different set of men from a wider caste background. Because of the long drawn out nature of the struggle in 1987-89, the caste factor was more visibly seen unlike in 1971 when the JVP was able to hold out only for a few weeks. Sri Lanka has a kind of "tyranny of the majority" in terms of caste oppression. Castes like the Wahumpura's (hakuru) and Batgam (padu) are the most numerous after the Govigama's. But they are sorely under-represented in business, education and general economic prosperity. This oppression is never discussed or acknowledged in any way. It is almost as if such a problem did not exist. The Govigama's, Karava's, Salagama's and Durava can be classed as the privileged castes and in the tug of war between these, the others who have less

access to power and publicity tend to be forgotten. Thus, living in a situation of economic deprivation and inarticulateness, the underprivileged castes generally tended to throw in their lot with the JVP.

The JVP too for its part, made conscious attempts to organise and arm this base as a strategy in their urban guerrilla war. This was a unique strategy in revolutionary warfare whereby the JVP managed to wage a long term war against the state without a base that could be held in a head-on confrontation. Among the oppressed castes, the JVP was like a fish in the water in accordance with the Marxist ideal. Very often it was seen that even the economically and socially privileged persons who belonged to the oppressed castes tended to sympathise with the JVP since many of them would be first generation go-getters who had just risen from their caste situations and were not likely to have forgotten the frustration and resentment against the Govigama and KSD dominated status quo.

It was found in the Matara district that the Wahumpura villages of Ellewela and Ketanwila had a strong JVP support base while the neighbouring Govigama village of Lenama did not have a JVP following. Not even the younger generation was attracted to the JVP. Again, the Wahumpura villages of Veliketiya and Bangama near the Galle-Matara district border had a JVP base while the neighbouring Govigama village of Udugama in the Galle district had no JVP sympathisers. The "Hakuru Kalliya" of the Wahumpura villages of Penegama, Kiyanduwa and Kanake were responsible among other things, for numerous killings. In Govigama areas like Morawaka and Pitabaddala, there was virtually no support for the JVP. In the Hakmana area, the Wahumpura and Rada were the main bases of JVP support. The Karava stretch of Devundara, Batheegama, Kottegoda and Dickwella also had JVP bases.

In the Kandyan Provinces, this pattern of caste based activity was obvious. Kegalle and Kurunegala were hot beds of JVP activity even in 1971. The reason is quite clear. These districts have a majority of the underprivileged Wahumpura and Batgam castes. In the Kegalle district the Batgam predominate. The Batgam villages of Deewala, Atugoda, Kudagama, Hewadeewala and Talampitiya were centres of JVP activity. But the Bhadala village of Molagoda did not have so much support for the JVP. In the

Kurunegala district, the Wahumpura concentrations in Malsiripura-Kadahapola, Dodangaslanda, Maduragoda, Rantetikanda and Bulugoda were centres of JVP acitivity.

In the Kandyan districts as a whole, the Wahumpura are the largest group next to the Govigamas. The Batgam caste generally comes after the Navandanna, Rada and Berava and tend to be mainly concentrated in the Kegalle area. It is interesting to note that the Navandanna and Berava castes appear to have been as aloof from the JVP as the Govigama's. One would have expected the younger generation of the Berava with their close relationship to demonic rituals to have been well represented in the JVP killer squads. In fact, the JVP's brutality provoked such speculations among sociologists. But this is not correct. However it does appear that the Oli who also have a traditional role in demonic ritual, was heavily involved in the JVP. The advantage that the Oli had like the Rada was of being scattered widely. There being only a few such households in a neighbourhood which was often of some other caste. In most semi-urban and village areas, the JVP was often a faceless and unseen force. Letters and death threats arrived without the courier being seen. The "deshapremi" gangs which roamed the countryside and visited houses for various purposes were masked. Thus the anonymity of the JVP activist was assured. In such situations, it has often been found that the Oli and Rada had a hand in controlling the more reticent "privileged caste" villages. The oppressed Oli and Rada living on the outskirts of a Govigama village would at night become the "deshapremi balakaya" of the area.

This is of course not to say that the privileged castes did not support the JVP. They certainly did. But this was more in an urban setting among a social stratum more ideologically conscious. The ordinary folk in the villages generally tended to go on caste lines in their political affiliations. The JVP initially had the support of the "forgotten castes" who would have seen in it an instrument of destroying the Govigama - KSD hegemony. Most of the regions where the JVP was strongest had large concentrations of these castes. Whenever "Balakaya's" were formed, the JVP leadership made it a point to arm the most oppressed castes. Thus, the economic factor was linked to a powerful "primordial loyalty" which served as a good mobilising factor. It was seen that the JVP always tended to make their progress to social revolution easier by appealing to primordial loyalties like

land and ethnicity. The use of caste was another weapon in the JVP armoury, which helped them to penetrate to the very heart of the establishment. Many privileged persons sympathised with the JVP because of these caste affiliations. Some were absolutely horrified at the repression launched against the JVP because they were acutely aware that it was **their** people who were appearing in the rivers and on tyres on the roadsides. This is of course not to say that the repression of the JVP was wholly a privileged caste affair. The indiscriminate violence and unscrupulousness of the JVP soon alienated most of those who originally looked to them with some expectations.

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20. Ruhuna as Danger Zone

The first tremors of the events to come were felt in the deep South. This was at a time when hostilities had broken out in the North between the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE. From March 1987, the security forces detachments in the Southern Province were placed on "red alert" and the areas of Matara, Tangalle, Hambantota, Tissamaharama and Hungama were declared danger zones. This was due to certain alarming tendencies becoming manifest in these regions. The Hambegamuwa camp which was one of the major JVP training centres located in the dense jungles between Uda Walawe and Wellawaya in the Uva Province was discovered in mid-March. Thereafter, searches were launched all over the jungle tracts to the north of the Southern Province bordering on the Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces. By June 1987, the Police reported that over 500 youths had been arrested islandwide for alleged involvement in the JVP. Over seventy per cent of these arrests had been made in the South. A large number of youth from the interior of the Southern Province and the bordering jungle tracts of the Uva Province were reported to be missing from their homes. They had gone into the jungles to receive training as a part of the JVP's accelerated military training programme. Earlier, from 1984 onwards, the JVP had infiltrated the armed forces with their men so that they would later have sufficient military instructors. From 1984 to June 1987, over one hundred and fifty desertions from the armed services were reported to have taken place. Most of those who had vacated

their posts were field personnel. As the JVP's military programme got off ground, the number of desertions registered an alarming increase. Two hundred and fifty desertions were reported in the first half of 1987. The illegal exodus gathers momentum later. By March 1988, the total number of desertions over the past four years had risen to 2250! No doubt many of these men were used by the JVP as military instructors for their cadres and as hit-men. During this period, some servicemen also had their services terminated on it being discovered that they were in league with the JVP.

On January 10 1987, there occurred an incident in Ratgama in the Galle district which was perhaps a harbinger of things to come. Two Policemen from the Ratgama Police station who went to arrest two criminal suspects in Gomebedda – a small village in the vicinity of Ratgama were waylaid and severely assaulted by the people of the area. There were immediate reprisals which left many injured and several houses completely destroyed. A high level Police inquiry was launched and the incident received wide publicity. There did not appear to be any outside instigation and the incident was to all appearances spontaneous. There are many pockets in the deep South where the police would be wary of entering even in peacetime. People in many parts of the South tend to be quite lawless and ferociously independent. Ratgama in the Galle district was just one such area. One would however have expected that with a highly publicised "patriotic" war raging in the North and East and a disproportionate number of sons of the South taking part in it as soldiers of the state, some change in traditional attitudes would have taken place. What the Ratgama incident showed was that there had emerged an irreconcilable breach between the more spirited sections of the general public and the coercive arm of the state.

It can be seen that the JVP tended to seize upon certain spontaneous incidents like this to decide on their future policies and courses of action. They sometimes even tended to get carried away by their interpretation of such incidents. Between 1984 and 1987, the JVP was faced with a major dilemma as a group that opposed the government. The Government was involved in a major civil war in the North and East which by and large had the backing of the Sinhala public. Hence, most of those who opposed the UNP did not oppose the war in the North and East. The JVP, with its plans for toppling the government through an

armed uprising was faced with the question of how they could attack the government from behind, while they were engaged in the war in the North and East. The JVP feared an adverse public reaction. Hence they accused the government of being too lenient on the Tamil separatists. They utilised even the "bourgeois liberality" of the government to show that the government was not actually anti-Eelam but pro-Eelam because the UNP had an agreement with the imperialist powers to grant the Tamil bourgeoisie a separate state of Eelam in gradual stages. The JVP tried to assume the image of being the only genuine anti-separatists. They thus sought to win the support or sympathy of that vast stratum of Sinhala hardliners ranging from the ordinary soldiers and common Sinhala villagers to the extremist Sinhala politicians and bhikkus. The slogans scrawled by the JVP on city walls at this time went as follows. Hang Prabhakaran! No concessions to the Eelamists! Patriotic soldiers, we salute you! The JVP is proscribed, but Amirthalingam is assured of protection in Colombo! The patriotic soldier is our brother! Death to the Eelamists! etc, etc.

What the Gomebedda incident showed the JVP was that despite the war in the North and East, there still was a section of people especially at the village level to whom the "patriotic war" was a very distant event and whose day to day attitudes were in no way changed by it. Thus, as far as public opinion was concerned, the JVP thought it safe to start collecting arms from the military camps. Later in the year, in mid-June there was another incident in Ratgama where three Policemen who went out to arrest some robbers were waylaid and stabbed. But this time, the whole thing was organised by a University student who had been sent to the area by the JVP to organise the "radical elements". Later, the mob had gone on the rampage and damaged several houses including that of the Ratgama Police OIC. The JVP thus began to push to the maximum the rebellious attitudes of the village folk to lay the groundwork for their plan of armed insurrection. As will be seen later, the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord and the events following its announcement came as an unexpected bonanza for the JVP. Before July 1987 therefore, their strategy was to mark out "pockets of resistance" to authority all over the country and work intensively in these to build a base for an urban guerrilla war against the government. Since there were many such pockets in the deep South, a lot of intensive work

was done there in preparation for the commencement of hostilities. Ratgama appears to have been one of the favoured points of concentration during this period. In May, three JVPers including a bhikku were arrested by the Police while carrying a 5 kg bomb and firearms in Gammeddegoda in Ratgama. In early July, a UNP organiser named Michael was shot dead by the JVP. This was one of the first such political killings carried out by the JVP during their incipient period. Incidents like the Gomebedda clash would have shown the JVP that there were bases which could be organised and armed despite the patriotic war raging in the North and East.

There was also at this time, a dichotomy in the thinking of the both the public and the JVP brought about by the fact that it was mostly the Police that was mobilised in the South while the Army, Air Force and Navy were mostly engaged in the North. This was why the soldiers were seen as patriots while the Police were identified with the coercive power of the state. During the disturbances in the South following the peace accord, the only vehicles allowed on the roads unhindered by the protestors were Army vehicles. One would have expected the war in the North to have at least toned down the anti-government feeling among the public. The realisation that it was not so would have been the reason why the JVP decided to make use of the Northern conflict for their own purposes, the chief of which was the collection of weapons.

The JVP launched their attacks on military establishments in the South at the height of the war in the North. The first such raid was on the Pallekelle Army camp on April 14, 1987. The 2nd (volunteer) Armoured Corps was in charge of the camp at that time. A dozen T-56 assault rifles and seven submachine guns were spirited away. The Army was thus being attacked from behind while they were battling it out in the North. The JVP always waited for a crisis to crop up in the Northern front so that while all eyes were glued to the North, they could surprise the military from behind. Thus, the Kotalawela Defence Academy and the Katunayake Air Force base were attacked on June 6, 1987. This was the day following the massacre of 32 bhikkus by the LTTE at Arantalawa and the air-drop of food and medicine over Jaffna by the Indians following the boat drama on the Palk Straits where the Indians tried to ferry in supplies to Jaffna by boat. A total of eleven T-56 rifles, fifteen sub-machine

guns, one light machine gun and two self-loading rifles were taken from the KDA. The Air Force authorities claimed that the attack on the Katunayake base was unsuccessful and that the armoury was "untouched". But there is reason to believe that an unspecified number of weapons had in fact been taken from Katunayake as well.

The reason why the JVP had the audacity to attack the military bases in this manner when the entire country was facing internal as well as external threats can only be interpreted in terms of their reading of the mood of the masses. Perhaps their view of the situation was that of a "total crisis" which called for a revolutionary replacement of the ruling classes before going on to anything else. Images of the 1918 Russian revolution where the Bolsheviks came into power while the first world war raged on the frontiers of the country would perhaps have influenced their thinking. Lenin was called a "German spy" by the Russian government for attempting to undermine the rule of the Tsar while the country was at war with a ruthless external enemy. But that did not prevent Lenin from being able to capture power. In that case, the unpopularity of the autocratic government overrode all other considerations. The JVP would have formed a similar opinion of the UNP government of 1987. Hence they assumed, for the time being correctly, that their arms grabs from the military bases would not provoke an adverse public reaction. It was not so much the arms grabs that made the JVP unpopular as the use these arms were put to in later times.

21. The Collection of Weapons

The JVP was not the only group to make use of the Northern war to push their demands on the government. There were others too who judged that a beleaguered government would be more amenable to their requests. It was on May 30 1987 at the height of the Vadamarachchi operation that Thondaman decided to press for the granting of citizenship to the up-country Tamils. Probably having seen the success of Thondaman's campaign, a six party alliance comprising the SLFP, SLMP, CP, MEP, NSSP, and DWC decided to press for general elections in a campaign launched towards the end of June 1987. It was also towards the end of July 1987 and just before the signing of the Indo-Lanka peace accord that the GMOA decided to go on strike in protest against the granting of the University of Colombo MBBS degree to the North Colombo Private Medical College.

Sri Lanka appeared to be going in a direction contrary to that of other nations when faced with similar situations. In Argentina the Falklands war united a Mother's front for disappeared youth behind a repressive military regime. In pre-revolutionary China the Japanese invasion managed to unite the Communist forces of Mao Tse Tung and the Republican Chiang Kai Shek. The reason why the Northern war failed to achieve a similar effect in Sri Lanka was due to two reasons. Firstly there has always been something lacking in the Sinhala national spirit and the concept of a common endeavour has never been part of our political ethos. Secondly, the government itself had become so unpopular

among certain sections of the population that they would make use of any opportunity to destabilise the government. The JVP was watching these processes and making future plans accordingly. The only "patriot" in the conventional sense, who emerged during this period was Thondaman who immediately called off his "prayer campaign" in the hill country the moment he got assurance from the government that the stateless Tamil workers would be given citizenship soon. The others persisted in their demands to the very end.

The collection of weapons by the JVP started in early 1987 on a small scale. Before the large scale grabs began from April, the main method was pilferage. JVP infiltrators in the armed services flied guns and ammunition whenever an opportunity offered itself. By November 1986, twenty 12 bore shotguns* had been stolen from various parts of the country. Around the first week of January 1987, a 303 rifle was stolen from the Bentota Police station with ten rounds of ammunition. Police expressed concern over the increasing thefts of firearms. Five of these had been in Kurunegala. In most instances, only the gun and ammunition was taken leaving all other belongings of the owners intact. A T-56 assault rifle was stolen along with 35 rounds of ammunition from the Kotalawela Defence Academy in March 1987. Another T-56 was stolen from the Panagoda Army camp with sixty rounds. Yet another was reported missing from the Rock House Army camp in Modera. These were the first automatic weapons that came into the possession of the JVP. In mid-April several youths had broken into houses in the Hakmana area and removed licenced weapons – mostly shot guns – belonging to the villagers. This was a pattern which was to be repeated islandwide in the months to come.

On the same day that the JVP broke into the Pallekele camp, five men were arrested at Meetiya goda in possession of Air Force uniforms, a .38 revolver, two "Galkatas" and some rounds of T-56 ammunition. It was also discovered that after the commencement of hostilities in the North, some soldiers were engaged in pilfering grenades and ammunition to be sold outside. This was rife among the personnel on duty in the North. The modus operandi was to go out on operations and then submit a claim for more ammunition and grenades than they had actually spent. These were then brought to Colombo when they were on leave and sold to the underworld. Weapons when captured from

the Tamil militants were sometimes concealed and not entered in the registers. These too were brought to Colombo and sold. Pistols and revolvers were in great demand. It was common knowledge that during this period, even AK-47's and sub-machine guns were available for those who wanted them and were able to pay the price. The same sources would provide a steady supply of ammunition. It is believed that politico's and businessmen would have been the main customers in this illegal gun racket. The servicemen who engaged in filching guns and ammunition from the Northern front were not necessarily JVP. A large number of them would have engaged in it simply as an extra source of income.

But given the situation in the country, it was inevitable that some of this equipment should find its way to the JVP. Also there were the party faithfuls in the services who would have filched weapons and rounds exclusively for the use of the JVP. Thus in the Ratgama area which was fast developing as one of the hot beds of JVP activity in the South, two powerful landmines, a revolver and a grenade were found by the Police carefully concealed in the vicinity of a house belonging to a retired government employee whose two sons were members of the armed forces serving in the North. There was no doubt that weapons pilfered off the battle fields in the North were finding their way into the hands of the JVP. They were at this time engaged in collecting weapons from any available source. They even employed members of the "nimble fingered brotherhood" in Colombo to collect the stuff for them. Thus on May 28 1987 an NIB ASP reported that his 9 milimeter Browning pistol along with three cartridge clips and 25 rounds of ammunition had been stolen from his car in Ratmalana while he had parked on the kerb and gone into a shop to purchase some household items.

It was also discovered that dynamite from the various development projects in the country was finding its way to the JVP. A large quantity of improvised hand bombs discovered in the Galagedara area in the Central Province contained the red variety which was especially imported from Sweden for the development projects. The bombs were made of small plastic containers inside which were packed dynamite, two penlight batteries for power and small iron ball bearings, pieces of metal, quarry dust and shrapnel. The improvised fuses had a duration of five seconds. Around this time, the JVP exploded its first experimental

landmine in Kumbiyangoda in Matale about half a mile from town. It is believed that landmine technology was given to the JVP by PLOTE which was later to foment very close links with the JVP. An explosives expert belonging to this movement had given a small batch of JVPers training in the improvisation of landmines in the jungles between the Matale and Batticaloa districts. During the first experimental blast at Kumbiyangoda a Tamil instructor had been present on the scene. The thefts of firearms in the Province now became more regular. The robbers were now often reported to be clad in military fatigues. A spate of gun thefts were reported from Hakmana, Deniyaya, Noch-chiyagama and Balangoda. In Balangoda a payroll of nearly Rs. 400,000 was also reported to have been stolen. In late April 1987, the Army uniforms and bombs used in the Pallekele raid were found at Mt. Mary estate in Teldeniya. A number of soldiers were arrested while on leave for having in their possession unauthorised amounts of ammunition. An explosives dealer in Galle was also taken into custody for having in his possession more than commercial quantities of explosives.

In early May 1987, the name "Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya" was used for the first time by youths collecting weapons from houses in the deep South. An increasing number of youth are reported to be arrested for having in their possession detailed maps of Army camps, important government institutions, residences of government politicians etc. A youth having in his possession several maps of the Panagoda Army camp was apprehended by the Police at Grandpass. Thus it was becoming obvious that the JVP was planning large-scale strikes against the state.

Another disturbing trend was noticed in the South. The Tangalle area in the South had always been well known for the manufacture of illicit firearms popularly known as "Galkatas". The adjacent Kirama area was well known in antiquity for the high quality of the metal goods produced there. Perhaps it was a reflection of this traditional expertise that the 'Galkatas' turned out in the South were reputed to be the best in the country. The manufacturers of these weapons were mostly in the jungles around Weerakeitya, Beliatta and Middeniya. In the first half of 1987, the prices of these weapons which was never above a few hundred rupees suddenly dropped, thus indicating a freer market and greater availability. The galkatas makers were working over-

time to supply the JVP demand. This weapon, which is made to fire a shot gun cartridge is larger than a pistol and a deadly weapon at close range.

On May 14 1987, a chief henchman of the Tangalle MP Jinadasa Weerasinghe was abducted by the JVP in Angunakolapelessa and held hostage in the deep jungles. He was later killed. This was one of the first such village based operations of the JVP which was to become a familiar pattern in the coming months. A few days afterwards the then Prime Minister R. Premadasa issued his first peace call to the JVP at the opening of Udugalmotugama in Beliatta stating that the proscription would be lifted if they gave up violence. He further stated that *"interested persons were using the JVP as a scapegoat and for every robbery and untoward incident that takes place, the blame is placed on the JVP"*. President Premadasa's attitude to the JVP was very different to most of the UNP leadership. This was a result of a long term effort to understand sympathetically the causes for the rise of the JVP. As he had later related to some colleagues in the UNP, he had keenly followed the trial of Wijeweera before the Criminal Justice Commission after the 1971 insurgency. Perhaps President Premadasa was better placed than most of the UNP leadership to understand the forces that were being channelled into the political field through the JVP. Firstly, he is a man who rose to the top from the bottom, working his way up from being a MMC to a Member of Parliament to Prime Minister and now President, over a period of about four decades. Thus he would have experienced the resistance of vested interests at every step and would be better able to understand similar grievances expressed by the JVP. Secondly, he too traces his ancestry to the deep South (Balapitiya) and would not be unaware of that primal urge among Southern youth to rise up in life and get out of the doldrums.

In other words, the President's attitude towards the JVP was founded on an understanding of root causes. Hence the call to peace despite the JVP's increasing brutality and irrationality was continued to the very end. Some thought that this was a diabolical UNP plot to destroy the JVP, where one section of the party preached peace while another section fanned the flames of repression against them. This was the "blow hot, blow cold" theory. This is not totally improbable. But like all conspiracy theories, this was a little too elaborate to fit the reality.

Many people in the establishment did have a genuine sympathy for the JVP, often because they themselves had experienced some of the frustrations articulated by the JVP when they were young. Also, it might have been due to remorse and guilt at what a decade of UNP rule had produced. One might ask "does the bourgeoisie have a conscience?" In fact, in a country like Sri Lanka, the possibility exists. A large section of the local bourgeoisie, top businessmen and professionals are not "inheritors" where privileges pass from one generation to another in unbroken line. We normally do not have "dynasties". Continuity is an almost unknown thing in Sri Lankan capitalism. As one businessman commented, the usual trend here is for "the first generation to earn the money and for the second generation to have a pukka time spending it". By the third generation, everybody is back to square one. Hence at any given point, most people prominent as "pillars of the capitalist system" would be newcomers who had risen by dint of hard work, good luck and ingenuity. Thus, many of them have not forgotten what life was like "down there". Many would have felt that the unemployed and underprivileged youth had a right to revolt. Despite the very visible lack of heroism and moral uprightness in the JVP, most sympathetic people in the establishment thought they would turn over a new leaf with time.

22. Student Militancy

The student component in the party has always been inordinately important to the JVP. All its most important leaders were politicised within the student movement. This is obvious in examining the background of the 1987-89 politbureau. Rohana Wijeweera got drawn into politics when he was a student at Lumumba University. Had he not got entangled in politics there, he would have ended up as a Soviet qualified doctor and the history of modern Sri Lanka might have been different. D.M.Ananda the No. 3 in the JVP (really the No. 1 in functional terms) was a bhikku when he first entered the University of Peradeniya. Later he gave up robes to take to full-time political activity. Saman Piyasiri Fernando was also a student of Kelaniya University when he got drawn into politics. Sumith Atukorale and Nandathilake Galappatthi were students at the Peradeniya University when they joined the JVP in 1969-70. H.B. Herath and Lalith Wijeratne were student activists in Sri Jayawardenapura University and Peradeniya respectively. Shantha Bandara was also a student of Peradeniya University when he joined the JVP. Thus in a politbureau of thirteen, eight were former student activists. Even at Central Committee level, quite a number were student activists. Even in 1971, the students were the most important group within the party. In the 1987-89 phase, the students were at the forefront of the events at the beginning and the end of the JVP insurrection.

The last organised attempt of the JVP leadership to make a comeback after the capture and death of its leaders in late 1989 was through its student wing. This was the attempt to assassinate the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the State Minister of Defence Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne. As the party leaders were arrested one by one, their places were taken by members of the JVP's student wing. And as the strength of the military wing declined, their places too were taken by the military wing of the Socialist Students Union. Accordingly, the task of killing Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne was handed over to the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya. The Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya was formed towards the middle of 1989. The man who was put in charge of the new outfit was one Jayaratne Siriwardene alias Pieris, a young man hailing from Hambantota and a 2nd year Engineering student of the University of Moratuwa. He had been given weapons training and some orientation in the use of explosives at a camp in the Siripada foothills in mid-1987. A twelve-man team was attached to him, the majority of whom were school boys. There were two students from Isipathana Vidyalaya. Chanaka and Jayakody in the O/L and A/L classes respectively. There were two from a school in Beliatte, Hirantha (O/L) and Neil (A/L's). There was a grade 10 student from Ratmalana called Kapila and another A/L student known as Jayawardene. Among the more mature members of the team were Robert, a Veterinary Science student of the University of Peradeniya and Ranjith, an NDT student of the University of Moratuwa.

After its formation, the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya had carried out a number of small robberies, the most daring of which was the heist at a casino in Colpetty in mid-1989. Thereafter, two radio transmitters had been robbed from a private firm dealing in such equipment and two others had been taken from radio cabs belonging to Q cabs Ltd. The only killing to their credit at the time of their outfit being busted was that of K.L. Dhar-masiri the leader of the Independent Students Union in August 1989. The generally prevalent idea is that the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya was formed in order to act as a counterbalance to the military wing of the party which had begun to run riot by mid-1989. D.M. Ananda and Gamanayake are said to have freely admitted after their capture that they had lost control of the military units at the provincial level. In creating a military wing in the students section, the leadership obviously wanted a military or-

ganisation more amenable to rational instructions and less prone to go off on tangents of their own. The Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya was essentially the brainchild of D.M. Ananda who had been in charge of the student wing of the party for several years.

At the outset, the Balasuriya Balakaya was issued with one sub-machine gun, one 9 mm pistol and two .38 revolvers. In October, when Raja Mahattaya, the Colombo division two leader was arrested by the Rapid Deployment Force, cadres of D-2 began to be arrested by the droves. Thus the weapons belonging to D-2 were given to the Balasuriya Balakaya for safekeeping. This included two T-81 and one T-56 assault rifles and one Heckler and Koch MP-5 submachine gun. The MP-5 had been captured from the Army commando's in an ambush in Hungama earlier on. Thus as the military wing of the party collapsed, the party leadership sought to build up the student military wing. The reason why the task of killing Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne was given to the student wing was probably to enhance its prestige in the eyes of the rest of the organisation. The plan was to ram Mr. Wijeratne's escort with a car packed with explosives set to go off on impact. The plan to kill Mr. Wijeratne had been formulated much earlier by D.M. Ananda. But with the repression launched against the JVP, they were not able to muster enough resources to carry it out. Explosives had to be found in sufficient quantity to blow up the entire escort and a car had to be found to pack it in. Then there was the question of finding somebody to drive the vehicle. Most JVPers at individual level never had the concept of "laying down their lives" for the cause even though they loudly proclaimed such sentiments in public. Nevertheless, after the capture of the top leadership including D.M. Ananda, those remaining thought that the Ranjan Wijeratne plan should be reactivated to make a spectacular comeback. And plans were set afoot to collect the items necessary for the operation. Around seventy kilo's of TNT were handed over to Peiris by the Galle district leader S.K. Jayatillake at a house near the Mallikaramaya Temple in Ratmalana on December 24 1989. The explosives were transported in a car with Robert driving and another, one Jagath, a Grade 10 schoolboy from Godagama for company to a house in Bomiriya in the Kaduwela area. The plan was uncovered and the entire Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya arrested

before the plan could be put into action. This was the last organised attempt made by the JVP to make a comeback.

The student wing of the JVP, the Socialist Students Union was an entity which pulsed with a life of its own. The controlling body of the SSU was known as the Headquarters Committee. This comprised of nine persons. The politbureau's nominee, the five zonal leaders, the Colombo district leader, the leader of the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya and the representative of the Inter-University Students Federation. Thus at the end of 1989, the headquarters committee of the SSU was as follows.

- 1) Politbureau nominee and Secretary of the SSU - D.M.Ananda.
- 2) Colombo/Sabaragamuwa Zonal leader - Chirantha, a 3rd year student, Colombo Medical Faculty.
- 3) Southern Zone - Palitha, an NDT student, University of Moratuwa.
- 4) Central Zone - Nandasiri, 4th year Public Administration student, University of Sri Jayawardenapura.
- 5) Uva/Eastern Zone - Lasantha, third year student, Arts Faculty, University of Ruhuna.
- 6) Rajarata Zone - Kamal, 2nd year Engineering student, University of Peradeniya.
- 7) Colombo District leader - Ramanayake, Arts Faculty, Ruhuna University.
- 8) Military wing leader - Jayaratne Siriwardene, alias Pieris, 2nd year Engineering Faculty, University of Moratuwa.
- 9) IUSF representative - Edirisinghe, Medical Faculty, University of Colombo.

Since the University Student Councils were abolished in early 1983, student politics had centred mainly around the tough guys in campus. Without a strong will, and stronger limbs, one would not get very far in campus politics. Even when the student councils were functioning, a certain amount of thuggery was necessary. University politics during the student councils days were a reflection of electoral politics outside. Each side tried to put the other down with the use of physical violence. Among those who were involved in politics, the use of violence was a normally accepted thing. When the Independent Students Union was in its incipient stages in 1980, one of its key activists was severely assaulted by the JVP. He was waylaid and given the bicycle chain treatment one night when he was returning to his

boarding house in Kohuwela after lectures. This was the time honoured JVP method of discouraging competition. Thereafter, the ISU retaliated and mercilessly thrashed every JVP'er in the University. This was reported in the newspapers and received wide publicity. Thus began a decade long feud between the ISU and the JVP which lasted throughout the eighties. This riot was the "coming of age ceremony" for the ISU which was able to win the election to the student councils in 1981 barely nine months after it was founded. The ISU can be described as a Liberal-Marxist group and its members were usually better read and ideologically conscious than the usual university types. It was also something like an "intellectual club" for students of a certain ideological bent. Most importantly, it also functioned as a kind of "fortified refugee camp" for politicised students who were against the JVP.

There was a bizarre kind of symbiotic relationship between the JVP and the ISU. Though sworn enemies, the ISU owed the rationale for its existence to the JVP. Similarly, the JVP tended to draw its student leadership from the places where the JVP-ISU antagonism was sharpest. This was because the JVP had to have above average people to contend against the ISU where it was strong. Thus, in the year 1985-86, when the ISU-SSU antagonism came to a head, both organisations were led by students of the University of Colombo. In later years, as the JVP waxed strong, so did the ISU - by organising those opposed to the JVP. Thus, when the JVP leadership was suddenly decimated in late 1989, the ISU lost its main mobilising platform. They too were left in the lurch as much as the JVP rank and file. Hence the ISU was disbanded on December 15 1989 on the third anniversary of the killing of Daya Pathirana. While the ISU functioned however, they generally held the upper hand especially in the University of Colombo. Hence they had a reputation of being "tough guys". During the time of Daya Pathirana, this reputation the ISU had of being inclined towards thuggery reached its apogee. Pathirana, a man from Aparekka in the Matara district, had a philosophy based on the grand Southern tradition. It was a case of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and no quarter asked for, or given. Little wonder that the JVP wanted to get rid of him at the first opportunity. He was killed on December 15 1986.

23. The Killing of Daya Pathirana

At the beginning, when the JVP was flexing its muscles for the showdown, the new trends became apparent in the Universities. Every move of the JVP before it was introduced at the national level, was first tested on the student front. The precursor of the Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya (DJV) was the Deshapremi Sisya Vyaparaya (DSV). Though the DSV was formed in the Universities in October 1986, the DJV made its appearance only around mid-1987, before the Indo-Lanka accord. The DSV was formed within the universities by the JVP in order to broad-base their hold by getting in the SLFP, MEP and the Jathika Chintanaya students. The two points of convergence which brought all these disparate elements together was firstly, an overarching anti-UNPism, and opposition to any kind of regional autonomy being granted to the Tamil people. The JVP was quite successful in this attempt to broad-base their influence within the Universities. Around mid-October 1986, the then convenor of the Inter-University Students Federation, Sarath Edirisinghe, a student of the Law Faculty of the University of Colombo, converged on the Colombo Campus gymnasium with a host of JVP supporters from the Universities of Kelaniya, Sri Jayawardenapura and Moratuwa and announced a meeting. They were then joined by students belonging to the SLFP unions and members of the Jathika Chintanaya movement. The announcement of the meeting in the gymnasium was an act of deliberate provocation against the ISU since in Campus, the prevalent custom was that no one encroaches on

another's territory. And the gymnasium was generally considered to be an "ISU area." Members of the Independent Students Union whose hangout had thus been rudely and unexpectedly invaded, wanted to know the reason for the disturbance. Sarath Edirisinghe explained that the crowd had come together to form the "Deshapremi Sisya Vyaparaya". When asked whether the ISU too could join the new organisation, Edirisinghe had declined, commenting that the new movement was meant exclusively for "deshapremi" (patriotic) elements only. Claiming that they too were "deshapremi's" the ISU crowd also decided to participate regardless of objections. The inevitable happened and speaker after speaker of the newly-formed DSV was shouted down and jeered at. Insults and blows were exchanged and the Deshapremi Sisya Vyaparaya went into retreat.

The enraged deshapremi students left threatening the ISU students with death. That night, an ISU student of the Colombo Campus who happened to be resident near the Sri Jayawardenapura University was dragged out of his boarding house by a group of JVP students and taken to the Sri Jayawardenapura University hostel and assaulted. Earlier, during the riot Sarath Edirisinghe had pulled out a revolver but did not have the courage to use it. He was chased for some distance by ISU students who wanted to shoot Edirisinghe with his own weapon. Bringing firearms or lethal weapons into the University was taboo despite all the rivalry among student groups. But towards the end of 1986, with the launching of the JVP's military wing under Saman Piyasiri Fernando, it appeared that the JVP was all out to eliminate opposition by any means necessary. Even at that time, it was D.M. Ananda who had been in charge of the JVP student wing. In October 1986, following the disruption of the inaugural meeting of the DSV, D.M. Ananda summoned a meeting of Inter-University Students Federation representatives at a boarding house in Piliyandala to discuss the situation. There he had given the pledge that the party would "look after" those who opposed the Samajavadi Sisya Sangamaya. Murder was not mentioned as a method of eradicating opposition, since the assembled students were from diverse backgrounds, and at that time, political murder was something that was discussed only in secret and in whispers. But it was at this discussion that the party took the responsibility of "looking into" the difficulties faced by their students in the Universities. D.M. Ananda had closed the meeting

with a request that the representatives of the various Universities meet him separately so that they could discuss matters individually. The University of Colombo was represented by Sarath Edirisinghe, Roshan Gunasekera and Karunaratne, who insisted that Pathirana should be got rid of. D.M. Ananda pledged that it would be done and summoned representatives from other Universities to ask them whether they thought they could contain the reaction to such a killing. Gamini Marasinghe and Kodagoda from the Sri Jayawardenapura University gave their blessings to the project. So did Ranjitham Gunaratnam of Peradeniya University and Ronnie of Kelaniya.

The job was handed over to one of the JVP's first hit teams in the Piliyandala area. From the time of its proscription in July 1983, the JVP had been engaging in robberies to keep themselves in funds. Thus, one arm of the JVP had fomented close links with the underworld. This link, which was soon to spread islandwide and finally swallow up the JVP itself, began in the Piliyandala area. There were a number of professional killers and robbers with whom the JVP had formed close links. As a proscribed party, the JVP was a kind of "underworld" itself. And the events at that subterranean level tended to fuse together. A person named Adiris Costa who rose to prominence as a result of the Pathirana killing was the main contact between the Piliyandala underworld and the JVP. Thus, it was he who was entrusted with the task of carrying out the murder. At that time, the JVP did not have good hit squads. So Costa hired two professional killers from the area for a sum of Rs. 2500/- each. The two killers had no idea as to whom they were going to murder. As far as they were concerned, it was just another "University fellow". With Adiris Costa and the driver of the vehicle and two other JVP toughs, the party comprised six persons in all.

Earlier, two students of the Sri Jayawardenapura University had been detailed to win the confidence of Pathirana and K.L. Dharmasiri and lure them out of the Campus premises. Accordingly, these two students had come to the Colombo Campus, befriended Pathirana and had discussions with him over cups of tea and cigarettes. They had come on two consecutive days to continue the talks. On the third day, the two students had suggested that they go somewhere to continue the talks during the night. The time would have been around 6.30 or 7.00 in the evening on December 15, 1986 and it was a Poya day. Thus

there weren't many students on Campus. But a few who were there saw Pathirana, and Somasiri an ISU student who accompanied Pathirana, leaving with the other two. They had wanted K.L. Dharmasiri also to come for the discussion but he had fortunately not been available that day. Later, Dharmasiri had commented that had he been there he would not have allowed Pathirana to go with the two students from Sri Jayawardenapura because he had been suspicious of the two from the time they first made their appearance.

Pathirana, Somasiri and the two decoys had left through the Thurstan Road gate of the Colombo Campus and one of the decoys had left the others standing by and gone to the "Raheema Hotel" on the pretext of buying some cigarettes. Thereby, he gave notice to the party led by Adiris Costa who had been in a van parked nearby, that the quarry had come out. Sarath Edirisinghe had also been there on a motorbike with another party comrade to make sure that everything went well. The assailants in the van followed at a distance while the four walked towards the Thunmulla junction and proceeded along the High Level Road towards the Police Park grounds. The van suddenly overtook them near the petrol shed in front of B.P.de Silva's jewellery showrooms and screeched to a halt. Two men got off with revolvers and said, "Api CID, nagapan!" and bundled Pathirana and the others into the van. Since in those days, most student leaders lived with the constant threat of being taken in for questioning by the CID, Pathirana had complied without much fuss. Since it was a Poya day, the High Level Road at that spot was deserted. But he could have easily shouted and attracted attention as the van proceeded through more populated areas of the city. But Pathirana did not do so sincerely believing that his abductors were CID personnel. Adiris Costa and the others also made it a point to keep up the pretence. All along the way Pathirana and Somasiri were assaulted and questioned. At one point Pathirana had said, "Why do you want to harass Somasiri? He knows nothing. I'm the leader and you should be asking me!" To the very end, Pathirana was unaware that his abductors were JVP. It was the first operation of the kind launched by the JVP. After driving along for nearly two hours and letting off the two decoys, the van proceeded to a lonely spot at Piliyandala by the Bolgoda lake and Pathirana and Somasiri were told to get off. Earlier while in the van itself, they had been told to remove their

clothes. The plan was to kill Pathirana and Somasiri and dump their bodies in the lake wrapped in a gunny bag and weighted with stones. That way, the murder would never have been discovered. And even if the bodies were found later, there would be no clothes to identify them. In other words the JVP wanted Pathirana to simply "disappear without trace." He was dragged to the waterfront and knocked unconscious with the blunt end of an axe and one of the hired killers cut his neck with a razor blade killing him instantly. In the meantime, Somasiri was being stabbed in the back and having his neck cut with an axe used like a knife inside an abandoned "ambalama" a few yards away. Just then, the killers had heard the sound of the approaching ferry on the lake and got excited. They hurriedly left leaving Somasiri for dead. But Somasiri had been playing possum. The blunt axe had not severed any vital parts of his neck and he was able to recover later. The two gunny bags in which the bodies were to be disposed of were also found at the site of the murder. Villagers who arrived on the scene within minutes took Somasiri to hospital. Had the hit squad succeeded in dumping the dead bodies in the lake, the whole episode would have remained a mystery to date. This was the beginning of a totally new trend in the country which some people took a long time to realise. At first, they could not comprehend it. Even the JVP was shaken by the event. JVP students did not sight the Colombo Campus for months afterwards. They always flatly denied that they had anything to do with the killing. This is the only "VIP killing" for which the JVP or DJV has not accepted responsibility up to this date.

24. The JVP Predominates

Most of the students involved in the decision to kill Daya Pathirana later came to grief. Sarath Edirisinghe who went underground after the killing of Pathirana was abducted by unknown persons from the Hunupitiya Gangaramaya English class which he was attending under a false identity in October 1989. Eye-witnesses state that Edirisinghe had been sitting in the crowded classroom as usual at about 9.00 a.m. in the morning when a pistol-wielding assailant had appeared from nowhere, grabbed him by the collar and started hitting him on the head. Edirisinghe had put up a valiant resistance struggling with the gunman to snatch the weapon. But two more toughs had arrived on the scene and bodily carried off Edirisinghe to a waiting white van which then sped off. The Gangarama "Podihamuduruwo" who was unaware of Edirisinghe's real identity had frantically contacted Maj. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne of the Ops Combine to complain that one of his students had been "lifted" in broad daylight in front of dozens of people. The identity of the victim however, later came to light after an examination of his photographs. Edirisinghe has not been heard of since and is presumed to be dead.

Roshan Gunasekera, a graduate in Sociology of the University of Colombo and resident in Ratmalana, was later arrested for conspiring to kill Mrs. Sunethra Ranasinghe MP for Dehiwala and the then Minister of Teaching Hospitals and was incarcerated at the Boossa Prison Camp for several months. He was later

released by the government in January 1989 as a good will measure to get the JVP to the negotiating table. While he had been in Boossa, he had been the "leader" among the JVP detenees. After his release, he went underground and resumed party activity. It is said that vigilante groups had visited his house in Ratmalana several times, but he had fortunately not been at home. It is believed that he is still living underground. Some also say that he has left the country.

Karunaratne, a final year student of the Law Faculty, University of Colombo is believed to have given himself up to the security forces. Hailing from Tangalle, he is said to have joined the JVP long before entering University. Gamini Marasinghe of the University of Sri Jayawardenapura was arrested, and shot while trying to escape from a prison camp, in late 1988. Victor Kodagoda is an interesting case. A hardcore JVP activist, he was the live wire in the SSU in the years 1984-85. He also appears to have been some sort of a double agent with close links with the security forces. It is not clear as to who was using whom, whether Kodagoda was using the forces or the forces using him. But it is clear that sections of the security establishment thought of him as an informant. There were occasions when the security establishment knew where he was living but did not take him in. The story is that it was he who gave the tip off to the security forces which led to the arrest of his long term colleague Gamini Marasinghe. Of late however, he is stated to have gone underground. Ranjitham Gunaratnam who was the Kurunegala district leader gave himself up to the Police after the killing of Wijeweera and the others. Ronnie of the Kelaniya University who was generally of a bold and outgoing disposition and one of the few JVP student leaders who had real physical courage died in the second attack on the Katunayake Air Force Base in April 1988. The newspapers carried photographs of him sprawled dead at the base of the signal tower. When he was climbing up the tower, the airman on duty at the top had heard him coming up the ladder and fired through the trap door. Ronnie had hurled a handgrenade through the trap door which had bounced back and exploded killing him on the spot.

The killing of Daya Pathirana marked the beginning of a long drawn out series of gang wars between the ISU and the Deshapremi Sisy Vyaparaya. Two weeks after the killing of Daya Pathirana, the Inspector General of Police issued a statement

to the effect that the JVP was carrying on a propaganda campaign to lay the blame for the killing of Pathirana on the government. *"The proscribed JVP was trying to meet their ends by creating an anti-government atmosphere through false allegations that it was the government that was behind the killing of Pathirana."* There was indeed an effort on the part of the SSU to hold the government responsible for the Pathirana killing. In this they were aided and abetted by the elements which had gravitated around the newly formed DSV. On January 5 1987 the SSU put out a leaflet which claimed that the government was attempting to put the JVP into "disrepute" by placing the blame for the Pathirana killing on them.

On January 21 1987, a new student body as an alternative to the DSV dominated IUSF was formed by the coming together of the ISU and the student unions of the LSSP, CP, NSSP and the SLMP. Thereafter, this new formation refused to recognise the IUSF. The announcement of this new organisation resulted in clashes between the JVP and the ISU at the University of Colombo. The following day, the University authorities imposed a dusk to dawn ban on entering the University premises. The University premises were declared out of bounds to all students between 6.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. On January 24, the new ISU leader K.L. Dharmasiri was arrested by the Cinnamon Gardens Police as the ISU prepared for a massive anti-JVP propaganda campaign and a large quantity of printed posters and leaflets were confiscated. A few days later the government proscribed both the SSU and the DSV. The ban however, was ineffective since there were practical difficulties in its implementation. Both organisations continued to function within the Universities without hindrance.

Meanwhile, the clashes also continued intermittently. As Universities re-opened for the new term on February 5, the ISU attacked the JVP in a massive riot which hit the headlines in several national dailies. During this period, none of the hardcore JVP activists appeared on Campus and the rioting was mainly between the ISU on the one hand and the SLFP and Jathika Chintanaya students on the other. The ISU had imposed a "ban" on JVP activists from entering the university premises. One day, around mid-February, A JVP bhikku who had graduated and was working fulltime for the party came into the premises probably believing that since he had graduated, no one would know his political affiliations. However, this monk who was known as

Soratha was better known than he thought and was immediately surrounded by a group of ISU students. He had been slapped several times on the face by K.L. Dharmasiri who had taken over the leadership of the ISU after Pathirana was killed. A member of the University administrative staff who had tried to rescue the monk had also been slapped by other students standing by. Following this incident, posters appeared all over Colombo stating that the ISU had brutally assaulted a Buddhist monk and that they were out to destroy the Bauddha Sasana. On February 19, about 150 monks from the Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya, Sri Jayawardenapura and Moratuwa converged on the Buddha statue at the Thunmulla junction in Bambalapitiya to stage a satyagraha against the ISU. The monks were later peacefully dispersed by a Police party led by SSP Gaffoor.

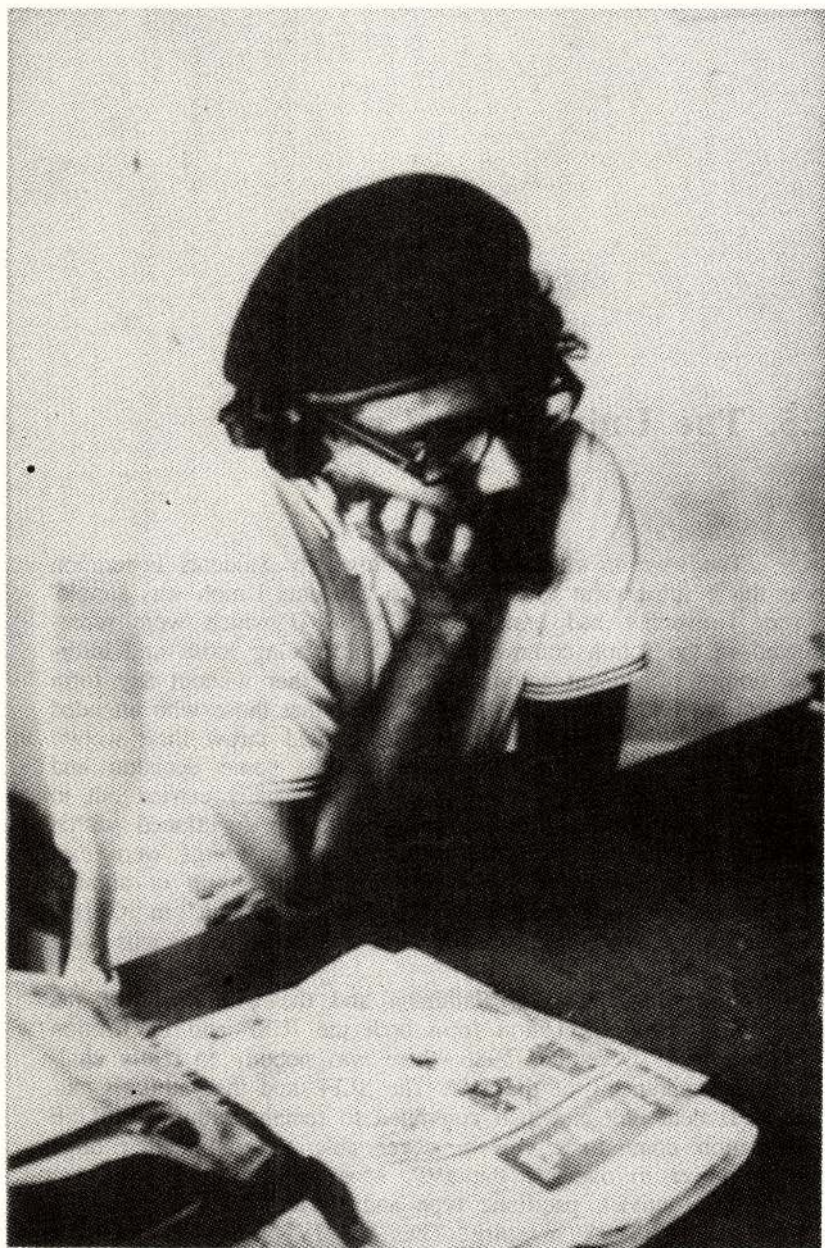
In mid-March 1987, began a process which was to cause the closure of the universities for the next three years. The JVP imposed a forced pace on the students egging them on to protests and demonstrations at the slightest excuse. On March 11, students of the Universities of Colombo, Kelaniya and Sri Jayawardenapura boycotted lectures for a number of irrelevant issues. The SSU and the ISU held separate meetings on the university of Colombo during the boycott. The JVP was making use of the student movement to create the maximum amount of disturbance in the vital metropolitan area of Colombo as groundwork for their projected guerrilla campaign. On March 20 1987, bhikku undergraduates of the Kelaniya University occupied a lecture hall to bring to the notice of the authorities the lack of hostel facilities. The occupation went on for several days. This was a pattern soon to become typical. A protest would begin somewhere and all the other Universities would boycott lectures in "sympathy". It was obvious that the JVP was forcing the pace. Around this time, an event took place which was to have momentous implications for the University community. An organised student body comprising of all the elements in the DSV took ten ISU students hostage and assaulted them severely. The ISU was taken by surprise since the "operation" had been launched early in the morning by waiting for the ISU students as they arrived by bus in the morning and collecting them one by one as they arrived. This was the first time that the ISU had ever been at the receiving end in their history. Retaliation followed with the ISU assaulting a number of DSV students during the next few days.

But the ISU's days as the dominant force was now over. Thereafter, the DSV dominated the scene though the ISU did continue to exist and wax stronger as the JVP fell in popularity. One of the main advantages the JVP had during this period was the build up of their military strength on an islandwide basis. They were thus able to intimidate the ordinary students on Campus more successfully. And their opponents including the ISU, were constrained to retire for some time into a sullen silence.

25. The Universities Crisis

The way in which the Inter-University Students Federation was made subservient to the Socialist Students Union was simple. Every University had branches of the SSU which were represented in the action committee. The latter being loose and informal bodies of student activists coming together without any form of election. By and large, it was accepted that those who attended the action committees were those who could throw their weight about. When the "tough guys" arrived at some decision and notified the timid masses, the orders were usually carried out to the letter. The "doggie theory of space" also functioned within the Universities. parts of the premises and buildings were earmarked as being the exclusive domain of one group or another and no one but that group was allowed to "hangout" in it. This in fact was a trend which began while the Student Councils were still functioning.

After the killing of Pathirana and the withdrawal of the Independent Students Union from both the IUSF and the Action Committees in December 1986, there was nobody to really challenge the supremacy of the JVP. The SLFP and the Jathika Chin-tanaya student unions which continued to remain within the IUSF and action committees, were never able to command enough muscle-power to override the JVP. Most of their students were of the non-activist, pacifistic type and tended to be numerically substantial but weak in spirit. Thus the JVP came to dominate the Universities. The IUSF was considered a subsidiary unit of



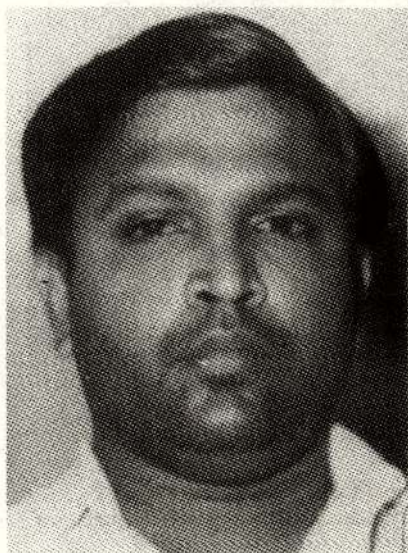
Rohana Wijeweera in a pensive mood. The democratic phase 1982.



The ostentatious revolutionary: Rohana Wijeweera getting into the new car which created a great deal of controversy both within and outside the party. The democratic phase 1982.



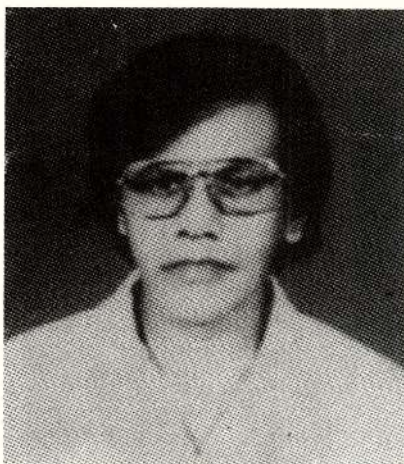
Upatissa Gamanayake: second in command of the JVP.



Saman Piyasiri Fernando: The rather ineffectual military leader of the JVP. He functioned more as the administrative secretary of the JVP's military wing.



Lionel Bopage: one time General Secretary of the JVP 1980-83. He made many predictions in his letter of resignation from the party which were soon to prove uncannily accurate.



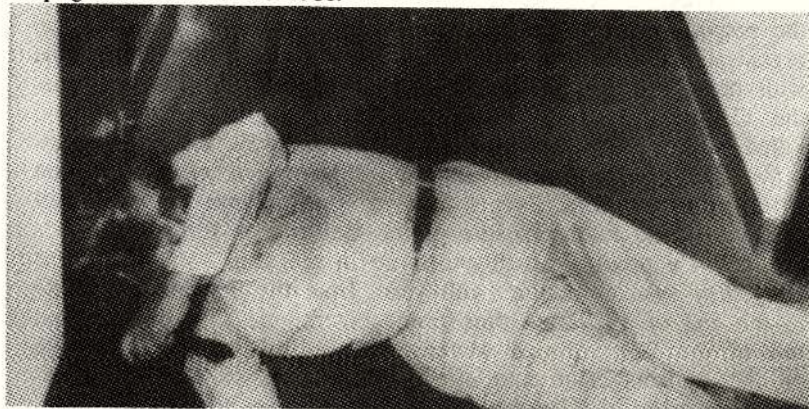
Adiris Costa: leader of the JVP's Piliyandala mafia which was the precursor of the dreaded DJV.



Shantha Bandara: a political bureau member of the JVP. He was captured in 1988 but later released by Ravi Jayewardene in the hope that the JVP would come to the negotiating table.



Daya Pathirana: leader of the Independent Students Union first victim of the JVP's campaign of terror December 1986.



Professor Stanley Wijesundara shot dead inside College House



Voter shot dead at polling booth — December 1988

the JVP and had representation in the Headquarters Committee of the SSU.

In mid-1988, a formation called the *Jathika Sisya Madyasthanaya* was set up by the JVP to facilitate the widespread agitation launched among school students. Nimalsiri, a 3rd year Arts student from the University of Ruhuna was appointed as its President. But all the actual work was done through the mechanism of the SSU organisation. The SSU was well organised down to district level. Each district was separated into a number of divisions according to convenience. The SSU district committee comprised of the divisional leaders, a women's representative, a representative of the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya and the Universities representative. The leadership of the district committee was the responsibility of the Universities representative. This was the organisational structure which enabled the JVP to mobilise the widespread protests by school children in 1987-88. Tirimavithana, the Colombo Medical Faculty student who was abducted and killed in late 1988, was the SSU district leader for Ratnapura.

The new tendency within the student movement was soon to come to the fore. Events followed one another in quick succession leading to the closure of the Universities for long periods of time - a process which ended up in the total paralysis of the University system for three full years from the beginning of 1987 to the end of 1989 - a time frame coterminus with the rise and fall of the JVP. Around March 1987, a government crackdown on the students came into effect. At the end of March, 30 undergraduates of the University of Ruhuna were arrested for holding a secret discussion for the overthrow of the government. The JVP had by this time instructed their students to stage protests, demonstrations or any such public shows which would have an anti-government effect. Thus the students of the Galle polytechnic staged a demonstration during the first week of April, demanding the release of the eight soldiers held hostage in Jaffna by the LTTE. Such impossible demands were soon to become a regular feature of JVP - led student protests. The more impossible the demand, the more scope there was for continued anti-government agitation.

Following the Pettah bomb blast in April 1987, the students of Peradeniya University staged a protest march against massacres carried out by the Eelam terrorists. A satyagraha was performed at the Getambe temple and a meeting was held at the Galaha

junction calling on the government to resign because they had failed to curb terrorism. A few days later, a number of undergraduates were arrested and detained by the Kandy Police under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. That year, the government also banned all May Day rallies allegedly for security reasons. Regardless of the ban, some opposition parties did come out to celebrate the International workers day. The IUSF, along with the "Maubima Surekeeme Sanvidhanaya" which was founded by the Ven. Maduluwawe Sobitha and Ven. Muruttetuwe Ananda, gathered at the Abeyarama Temple in Narahenpita. In the Police shooting which took place when they tried to come out in a procession, three persons died. One of them happened to be a student of the Sri Jayawardenapura Campus. There were large scale arrests of University students following protests against the killings at the Abeyarama Temple.

The activism of the JVP students later took on a more violent and less populist form. In an unprecedented move, five senior lecturers and the marshall of the University of Colombo were taken hostage and held for several hours. On May 5, barely two days after the Colombo hostage drama, a similar incident occurred at the University of Sri Jayawardenapura where 14 members of the academic staff were held hostage. This was to demand the release of students taken into Police custody following protest actions against the Abeyarama shooting incident. A senior lecturer of the University of Colombo who was among those taken hostage stated that those who were involved were not Colombo Campus students. There had been a few students among them "looking desperate". The ring leaders had shaken the lecturers by their collars and threatened them with death if the Police were called in and they were forced to phone the Vice-Chancellor over one hundred times demanding the release of the students from custody. In response to this, nine students of the University of Colombo were released on bail by the Police. One of the lawyers who appeared for the students was Charitha Lankapura - then a newly qualified attorney. The academic community in the Universities was shaken up as never before by this hostage episode. The Arts Faculty of the University of Colombo reacted strongly. In a statement issued on May 8 they resolved that,

- (a) The members of the Faculty who hold the posts of student councillors and posts involving student associations will resign from those posts herewith.
- (b) The teachers will not resume their undergraduate teaching and personal tutoring until such time that they are convinced that the conditions are conducive for the resumption of those functions.

The statement which was signed by Prof. W.D. Lakshman further requested that the Vice Chancellor take whatever steps necessary to stop outsiders from entering the University premises and to take whatever punitive action deemed necessary to prevent the recurrence of incidents like those of May 5 1987. The prevailing mood among the staff appeared to be that they had been needlessly harassed for matters not in their control. In the running battle between the government and the JVP, there was little the staff could do. The JVP obviously knew this, but encouraged such activity as a phase in their trend towards total war - to leave no onlookers in their struggle against the state. But the lecturers could not understand this desire on the part of the JVP to drag in everybody into the conflict. Lecturers of the University of Colombo even refused to endorse the bank installments of the students. All University members who held Patron, Secretary and Treasurer posts in the various student bodies and bursaries resigned.

The IUSF was however not swayed. They claimed full responsibility for the hostage incidents alleging that they were forced to do so because no one in the administration was willing to give a hearing to their problems. Meanwhile, the IUSF was doing its best to involve the schools as well in the prevailing ferment. Small bands of University students had visited all the big schools in the Matale area to incite them to protest against the Abeyarama killings. But this plan was discovered by the Police and foiled. This indicated growing confidence among the student wing as the military wing of the JVP continued to wax stronger and stronger. On May 12 1987, the University of Colombo was declared out of bounds to students and closed indefinitely. It re-opened on June 29 but a section of the students continued to boycott lectures. A new issue that had come up was the call for general elections by a five party alliance comprising the SLFP, SLMP, CP, MEP and NSSP. All students of the University of Colombo boycotted lectures on June 30 in sympathy with the

call for general elections. They were joined by the students of Ruhuna University. It was around this time on July 15, that the doctors strike led by the GMOA to protest against the granting of the Colombo Medical Degree to the Private Medical College began. Over 1500 doctors walked out on strike. The undergraduates joined in, and at Colombo University a "month of protest" was declared and the students continued to boycott lectures. There were rumours floating around during this period about an impending agreement with India. The Maha Sangha issued a statement protesting against the proposed merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Meanwhile nine patients had died in hospital due to the lack of attention following the doctors strike. The undergraduates of the Kelaniya University launched a strike against the proposed merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Then the holocaust associated with the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord overtook all events.

26. The July 1987 Riots

The JVP was aware for a long time that India would attempt to force the Sri Lankan Government into a compromise with the Tamil groups and impose a solution in keeping with its interests in the region. During 1984-86, the analysis of the JVP as we saw earlier, was that India was helping the Tamil militants because of the pro-western foreign policy of the government. The Thimpu talks in 1985 and the following negotiations between the two governments made it clear that an agreement was in the offing. From around the last quarter of 1986, the JVP made preparations to oppose any steps the government would take to compromise with the Tamil militants under Indian pressure. From October 1986 the JVP issued a barrage of leaflets alleging that the government was out to compromise with the Eelamists and allow the creation of Eelam. They put out at least one such publication every month between January and June 1987. The gist of their whole propaganda thrust during this period was directed against what they called, "The conspiracy to divide the country which was being hatched by the Rajiv-JR-Prabhakaran clique." And the JVP claimed to be the only organisation that genuinely opposed the division of the country. In a leaflet put out on May 14 1987, they stated that *"anybody who opposes in any manner the forward march of the JVP should be severely warned that they are acting against the freedom of our motherland... Any action taken against the members of the Janatha Vimukthi*

Peramuna is in effect to allow the Tigers and the foreign invaders to swallow up our motherland."

The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord turned out to be an unexpected bonanza for the JVP. In many ways, it caught them unprepared. Considering the suddenness with which the Accord was announced and signed, they were not able to spearhead the agitation in an organised way. All they were able to do was to add a dimension of radicalism to the satyagraha started by the SLFP in the Pettah on July 29 and add some fire and thunder into the various spontaneous protests which erupted all over the country. The Southern Province was the worst affected during the riots following the signing of the ILPA. But this was not led by the JVP and was largely spontaneous.

On July 25 Upatissa Gamanayake, the military cum political leader of the Southern Zone was in Galle to discuss with some party cadres the possibility of launching a weapons grabbing raid on the Army Camp within the Galle Fort. The raid was scheduled for July 30 and would have been carried out if not for the intervening events. On July 25 however, Gamanayake did not appear to have been aware that such a thing like the ILPA was on the cards. He had discussed the plans for the raid and left for Colombo. The next day, the party cadets in Galle received an urgent message from Colombo stating that the government was going to come to an agreement with India and that some Opposition Parties had planned to organise a satyagraha in Colombo to protest against it. The cadres were told to await a message from Colombo with precise instructions on what to do and in the meantime, they were to make all preparations to launch a campaign of agitation.

The ILPA was signed on July 29. Rumours circulated about widespread rioting in Colombo. No public transport or private vehicles were to be seen on the roads. But still the Galle cadets did not receive any instructions from Colombo. This meant that instructions had not reached Matara and Hambantota as well. Later it transpired that the message had in fact arrived but had been mis-directed. Anyway, party cadres intoxicated by the news filtering in from Colombo went out on their own and set fire to a lorry in Galle town on July 29. This ignited the flame and rioting spread all over the Southern Province. When the curfew was lifted at 11.00 a.m. on July 30, Shantha Bandara had come rushing to Galle with instructions to take the leadership in the

agitation and rioting. The idea was to collect weapons from Police stations by overrunning them at the head of mass demonstrations. The taking of weapons was to be done openly as a way of "arming the people" against the government. Stocks of rice and other foodstuffs were also to be obtained in this manner so as to enable the cadres to continue the struggle. But by the time Shantha Bandara arrived in Galle all starry eyed and raring to go, the enthusiasm of the masses had subsided in the wake of a ruthless crackdown by the state. Curfew violators had been shot on sight and Police had fired on rioting crowds in Colombo killing over a hundred. Hence, by July 30, the general public was distinctly reluctant to participate in mass demonstrations.

• The JVP now had to take the initiative themselves. While they were quite unprepared for the events that followed the ILPA, they appear to have got carried away by the prospects it apparently opened before them. The apparent spontaneity of the anti-government rioting which took place led them to believe that the government had completely lost control of the situation and that collapse was imminent. Perhaps they thought that all that was necessary for the tottering regime to fall was only a slight nudge. One incident which would have given a further boost to their views would have been the murder of the MP for Tangalle Mr. Jinadasa Weerasinghe on July 30. Though everybody ascribed the killing to the JVP, the fact was that it was done entirely independently by anti-government agitators who did not have any link at all with the JVP. One might almost say that it had been unintentionally done in the heat of the moment. The actual incident was that while motoring along the Embilipitiya - Hambantota road without an escort and accompanied only by his son, Mr. Weerasinghe had come across agitators digging trenches on the road to block traffic. Fearing that harm might be done to him, Mr. Weerasinghe had revved up the engine and hurriedly tried to reverse the vehicle. Thereupon, the men tearing up the road had stopped work and stoned the car heavily. Mr. Weerasinghe had been forced to get out and had been recognised. The men had then set upon them with clubs and katties and left them for dead. *That was at a time when the mobs could easily have been induced to murder anyone even remotely connected to the UNP government.*

Vijitha Rohana, the Naval rating who struck Premier Rajiv Gandhi with the butt of his rifle during the guard of honour after the signing of the ILPA, was widely suspected to have JVP affiliations. But this does not appear to have been correct. Vijitha Rohana, said to hail from Ratgama, did not have any connection with the JVP. He appears to have been simply another aggressive and high-strung Southerner, an "action man" so to speak. While on active service, he had been prone to get punished by his service seniors for various small acts of insubordination and general insolence. He is also said to have had a tendency to get involved in any available scrap. The South teems with people of this sort who go around looking for excuses to fight. When seeing Rajiv Gandhi at close quarters Vijitha Rohana probably could not resist the temptation to hit him. He had been grinding his teeth as Rajiv Gandhi approached, and then he had swung his rifle on to the Premier's head.

Incidents such as these which the JVP knew very well to be happening without any direction from them would have convinced them that the people were now ahead of them and that a revolutionary overthrow of the government was imminent. The JVP was now in a delirium. Leaders who had been in hiding for the past three or four years came out to participate and make the best use of the great events. H. B. Herath, a politbureau member of the JVP was seen on July 29 in Colombo Fort on top of a water bowser parked near the Lake House Bookshop, screaming incoherently and gesticulating wildly to the crowds so as to incite them to further acts of violence. Most of the JVP agitators in Colombo during the July 1987 riots were University students. A large number of them were found to be among casualties and the detainees in the Police action which followed. The ILPA had caught the JVP so unawares that they did not have enough manpower in Colombo to lead the rioting. Hence, whoever happened to be in Colombo at that moment, even important leaders like H.B. Herath had to be mobilised to take advantage of the situation. Fortunately for the JVP, the four Universities in Colombo had been in session and a large number of good agitators were mobilised from the Universities; without whom the JVP would have been quite helpless in Colombo.

27. Arming the Desperados

The wave of violence which suddenly swept Sri Lanka after 1987 cannot be explained except in societal terms. There were suddenly, large numbers of people who were willing to indulge in acts of violence to pursue their interests, and still larger numbers who were willing to accept such violence as necessary or even good. After the restoration of "normalcy" towards the end of 1989, the orgy of violence of the past three years would appear to most as a bad dream. How did Sri Lanka suddenly descend to the depths of depravity for a brief period in a manner which would have been inconceivable a few months before the slide into darkness began?

One notices that there was a general increase in crime related violence in the first half of 1987 – a reflection perhaps of a deep going malaise in society which erupted occasionally like the Gomebedda incident in January 1987. Police reported a massive increase in crime between January and June 1987. There was a general increase in murder, rape, abduction and holdups. The criminal gangs also became more sophisticated in the methods and weapons used with the Northern war acting as a pipeline to obtain even AK-47's, 9mm pistols and handgrenades. Other than pilferage from the Northern front, there was another unique method by which the Colombo underworld obtained their weapons. This was via a smuggling racket involving housemaids returning from Lebanon. Prices were high in Sri Lanka and weapons cheaply and readily available in Beirut. In early Decem-

ber 1987, a housemaid returning from Lebanon was arrested at the Katunayake Airport while trying to smuggle in an AK-47 rifle and four 9mm pistols.

Moving in line with the wave of violence launched by the JVP, the general public also appeared to have taken to it with gusto. In early September 1987, a case was reported where six persons had been done to death over a dispute which included three of the same family – a ten year old girl and two women. In another incident reported from Weligama, a mother and her six children were cut and chopped to death. This had been over some frivolous dispute over a "charm". People in the deep South take their occult practices very seriously. The assailants had even eaten a meal of manioc served by their victims before they committed the murders. Another incident from Pannala in Elabodagama was reported in early September where a man named Nizamdeen and his pregnant wife were shot and killed. Someone had sprayed bullets into the couple with a T-56 rifle from a speeding Nissan Sunny car. This appeared to be a "contract killing". The JVP had no hand in any of these murders and what they reflected was a general tendency towards violence among the ordinary masses. According to Police statistics, there was a leap in the first half of 1987 with 1604 murders, the highest in the Sinhala areas reported from Kurunegala 106, Galle 100 and Tangalle 86. Abductions numbered over 200. There were 272 cases of rape, Badulla was highest with 26, Anuradhapura 23 and Kurunegala 22. The interesting thing to note is that this increase in crime is reported mainly from areas where JVP activity was to register a massive increase in later months. The JVP's violence went hand in hand with a general social trend and was in fact also an expression of it.

The spontaneous riots of July 1987 made the JVP think erroneously that a quick victory was within their grasp. The warning that Lionel Bopage issued in his letter of resignation in 1984, that the party had a tendency to collect numbers with no regard for quality now became a reality. It was during the riots that the JVP decided to "arm the people". What this meant was that the JVP began to distribute the weapons they had been collecting over the past six months among people whom they loosely identified as "patriots". Very often, patriots were identified as those in each village or neighbourhood who took part prominently in the rioting and agitation following the accord. JVP full-timers

made contact with such people and convinced them that they should support the JVP and that only they were able to fulfil the aspirations of the youth. Visions of an imminent victory were dangled before the eyes of the potential recruits and they were persuaded to join. In making such recruitments at the village level, the JVP was shrewd enough to make contact with the most downtrodden and desperate elements. Caste differences and poverty were the main mobilising planks of the JVP. Needless to say that those whom the JVP attracted to their ranks with this strategy were the genuine village "yakko" types – the lumpen proletariat. Anarchist theorists of nineteenth century Europe, primarily Mikhail Bakunin stressed the revolutionary potential of the "declassé" elements in society; the criminals, murderers, prostitutes and other assorted desperados. What the JVP was attempting to do was to tap this vast reservoir of desperation and wild temperaments for their own purposes. These "elemental" elements were organised under the banner of the Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya and issued with weapons. The JVP was wary of taking these "barbarians" into their midst and kept them at a safe distance outside the gates. But the barbarians were acting under the orders of the JVP and everybody knew it.

The downfall of the JVP can in large measure be ascribed to the activity of these lumpen elements. The leaders were able to have all their whims and fancies carried out by the yakko's. It was seen earlier, that in 1971, the ruthlessness and bloodlust of the leadership was curbed to some extent because the cadres at that time, had enough political consciousness not to commit excesses. But the "patriotic militiamen" of 1987–89 indulged in all their old habits while still being in the JVP. Murders were committed for personal reasons and robberies for personal gain. The shortsighted leaders for their own part, encouraged these gangs to indulge in the most brutal actions as a way of making the public more amenable to their orders. Perhaps the JVP thought they could control the vast barbaric horde whom they had armed and unleashed. But they later lost control of their proteges. The main reason for this was that the JVP always had only short-term plans. They never conceived anything in the long-term. When they began to recruit criminals, they thought of it only as a temporary expedient to augment their ranks till they captured power. It was much easier to recruit robbers and murderers who already had experience in killing and robbing than to

train new people in the art. It was a different thing to give people weapons training. But to kill, needs special expertise. There were instances when JVP killer squads took neophytes with them when they were out on "missions" and got them to shoot and stab the victim after a senior member had first fired at the victim's legs and downed him. This was the crucial "first blood" without which even the best weapons training would be useless. When the JVP suddenly was in need of large numbers of killers after 1987, they had no option but to rely on recruiting professional killers who already had the necessary experience. This was a natural outgrowth of the policy followed by the JVP after 1984 of fomenting links with the underworld to facilitate robberies to keep the organisation in funds. As the prospects of gaining power receded more and more into the distance, the JVP found it more and more difficult to control their barbaric hordes. Ultimately when D.M. Ananda was captured in October 1989, he plaintively declared "we lost control of the organisation". The strategists had become the victims of their own strategy. They were gobbled up by their own pet monster.

The students left an indelible mark on the 1987 July riots following the ILPA. The burning issue on the student front at that time was the Private Medical College problem against which the government employed doctors had come out on strike a couple of weeks before the ILPA was signed. Hence the students burned down the Ministry of Teaching Hospitals building in Colombo Fort and completely destroyed it. This was the only such government building to be completely destroyed during the rioting. The deep South was badly affected during the riots. Over 500 people had been arrested in the Southern Province for involvement in the rioting. During the first weeks of August 1987, the then President J.R. Jayewardene formed a special command wing under the Joint Operations Command in the South to combat the rising tide of terrorism. Hundreds of troops withdrawn from the North were sent directly to the South under this new command. Soon after the accord, in addition to the killing of the Tangalle MP, two UNP candidates for the Pradesheeya Sabha elections were killed by the JVP in Angunakolapelessa and Buttala. During the previous week, 30 shotguns had been forcibly removed from villagers in the Polonnaruwa area. The same thing was repeated in the Moneragala area and forty shotguns were reported to have been stolen.

On August 11, the doctors ended their 27 day strike after the Private Medical College was delinked from the University of Colombo and awarded a separate degree. This was the second longest strike in recent times after the nurses strike in 1986 which lasted 30 days. The doctors had been joined earlier on August 5 by the health workers unions. Thus with the complete paralysis of the health sector, the government had to give in. With the burgeoning crisis in the country between April and July, it was not surprising that the government was forced to come to an agreement with India. With the Army battling it out in the North with the Tigers, the Indians dropping food parcels over Jaffna to halt the army offensive, the JVP attacking and collecting weapons from military installations in the South, the doctors out on strike over the PMC affair, Minister Thondaman calling for the granting of citizenship rights for Tamil estate workers, and all the main opposition parties launching a campaign to force the government to hold general elections, the government had a full blown crisis on its hands. As Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne commented later, "President Jayewardene was at a point where if surface to air missiles had been given to Prabhakaran, they would have shot down our planes. If they shot down our planes, we could not have taken food to Palaly. Even the cabbage was taken by plane from Colombo to Palaly. So if the planes couldn't fly there was no war. So at that crucial moment when Gandhi extended the hand of friendship after dropping the food, the President grabbed it. He was at a loose end not knowing what to do next".

Meanwhile, the Police had stumbled upon a JVP hideout in the dense jungles of Wellawaya. On August 11, the Aluthgama OIC was shot at and injured by a pillion rider on a speeding motorcycle. The familiar road obstacles and speed-breakers on the roads near Police stations and military installations were put in place after this incident. Later in a leaflet put out on August 19 following the Parliamentary bomb blast, the DJV claimed that the Aluthgama OIC had beaten a "patriot" to death while in Police custody. The attempt on his life had been in retaliation. Meanwhile, the Air Force arrested 30 youth from villages in the vicinity of the Air Force base in Wirawila. The Karandagolla farm in Kundasale belonging to the Department of Agriculture was attacked and the weapons of the security guards removed after the buildings and vehicles were set on fire. Kundasale was

an area with a high concentration of the Batgam caste and was always a hotbed of JVP activity.

The SLMP and CP protested against the indiscriminate arrests of their party cadres on suspicion of being JVP activists. The universities were also closed. An attack on the Saliyapura Army detachment in Anuradhapura was foiled. On August 18 two grenades were lobbed at the UNP Parliamentary group meeting inside the Parliamentary complex. President Jayewardene had been presiding. One of the "baby grenades" killed the MP for Deniyaya and the other rolled under the chair of the Minister of National Security Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali injuring him seriously. Also injured in the blast were Public Administration Minister Montague Jayawickreme, Agricultural Research Minister Gamini Jayasuriya, Parliamentary Affairs and Sports Minister M. Vincent Perera, Cultural Affairs Minister E.L.B. Hurulle, Deputy Minister's S.M. Alawathuwela, Dayananda Wickremasinghe, Percy Samaraweera, G.D. Mahindasoma and Habaraduwa MP G.V.S.de Silva. The very next day, the DJV accepted responsibility for this attack in a leaflet which was titled *Drohini! api thopata bomba gasuwe me nisai!* (Traitors ! these are the reasons why we threw bombs at you!) and it proceeded to list a long series of accusations. The main of which were the ILPA and the invitation of the IPKF.

In an interview with the BBC, Ronnie de Mel the then Minister of Finance, said that all indications were that it was an inside job. The public galleries had been closed and only the staff was allowed inside. Asked whether the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord was unpopular among the people, the Minister says: *"I don't think it is unpopular at all. The peace accord I am aware, is popular with the people of the country. I don't think it is unpopular with the majority. All this is being done by a small minority"*. By this time, about three thousand "subversive suspects" had been arrested islandwide. A committee of rehabilitation was appointed to look into the affairs of the arrested youth. Around late August, a trend towards taking action against Police informants by the JVP was noticed. The Borawakumbukka Post Master was arrested for tampering with letters addressed to the Police in order to intercept information about JVP activities. This was the period when the JVP put up posters all over the country warning that people who inform the Police about JVP activities would be severely punished. *"Othhu dennanta dedi danduwam!"* A large number of people were gunned down for allegedly giving infor-

mation to the Police. By October, a sharp decline in the information coming to the security forces was recorded. The JVP's campaign to kill informants was having its effect. The highest decline in information received was noted in the Southern Province. This was a big blow for anti-JVP operations. During this period, another rash of posters appeared with the ingratiatingly polite request "*Nirbhithava Editharava Otthu Diyau !!*" (Give us information without fear!) This was the response of some interested party that was visibly upset about the decline in the information coming in about JVP activity.

28. Panic in the UNP

By September 1987, the JVP's attacks on the ruling party became more open and daring. They were moving in for the kill when they sensed that the enemy was getting weaker. A van with a large haul of weapons was apprehended at Wadduwa on September 6 and it transpired that this was a JVP hit squad on its way to attack the house of the Panadura MP Mervyn J. Cooray. The van had a sticker on its windshield which identified it as an army vehicle. The JVP was becoming more and more audacious. The attack was to be carried out in broad daylight on a massive scale. They wanted to give the ruling party a real taste of terror. Inside the vehicle were found eleven shotguns, two T-56 rifles, 18 handbombs and khaki uniforms. There was also evidence that the JVP was planning daring attacks in Colombo. A large haul of handbombs and T-56 ammunition was found in a house in Pamankada. The Special Task Force was deployed in the South in late September because of the deteriorating conditions there. By December, there were five STF camps in the South - in Walasmulla, Angunakolapelessa, Diddenipotha, at the Matara Teachers Training College and at Morayaya. This represented about one fourth of the STF strength in Batticaloa which was deployed in the South after the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. The situation in the Southern Province was such that the UNP politico's there were in a bad state of fright - infected one might say with what Dr. Nalin de Silva gleefully described as "bayalitis".

Asoka Somaratne, the UNP MP for Ratgama, resigned his seat on September 24 claiming that the ILPA had resulted in a massive loss of sovereignty for Sri Lanka and that he did not want to be held responsible for it by the people. This resignation was the first of its kind and reflected the nervousness of the politicians in the face of the mood prevailing in the deep South where rioting was worst after the signing of the ILPA. Considering the build up of anti-government feeling in Ratgama even before the ILPA, it was not surprising that the Ratgama MP was the first to resign. A JVP leaflet put out under the name of the DJV on August 19, the day following the bomb attack in Parliament clearly stated *"All those MPs and their lackeys who like to live, should resign their seats and confess their faults and rise up against Jayewardene"*.

The UNP Members of Parliament in the South were far more nervous of the people's reaction than those in other areas of the country. Later, the two MP's who failed to vote on the Provincial Councils Bill and the Thirteenth Amendment on November 10 1987, were also from the South. Kamburupitiya MP Chandra Kumar Wijegunawardene and Hakmana MP Mahinda Yapa Abeywardene were sacked a few days later by the UNP Working Committee when they failed to give account of themselves for not voting. Earlier, the October 11 issue of the DJV's news bulletin "Vedihanda" announced that five UNP MP's in the deep South had handed over their letters of resignation to the President and that the Hakmana MP and the Habaraduwa MP were definitely among those five. This news flash however proved to be erroneous since it was the Kamburupitiya MP and not the Habaraduwa MP who was later to dissent. The DJV also welcomed the resignation of Asoka Somaratne. The 1987 September 27 issue of "Vedihanda" carried banner headlines which praised his resignation as a "great act". It further stated that Mr. Somaratne's course of action is an example to others and that the DJV's criteria is based not on UNP and anti-UNP lines but on pro-accord and anti-accord lines which means that *"those who were in favour of the accord will receive the same treatment whatever their political affiliations were"*.

The JVP was using the "carrot and stick" method, to get UNP MPs to resign and put the government into a crisis. While threatening them with death if they did not resign, they welcomed those who did as heroes. The resignation of the UNP MPs was

part of a wave of fear and panic which swept through the UNP during the latter half of 1987. The DJV's "Vedihanda" carried the constant refrain "*all traitors from village level up to the ruling house will be exterminated*". Thus in the latter half of 1987, began that exodus from the ruling party which was to become such a familiar and regular event in 1988. In mid-November 1987, seven senior members of the Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya, Bank of Ceylon branch resigned their posts. This included the President, Secretary and Treasurer of that branch. Soon afterwards, the Peradeniya University Branch of the Samavadi Sisyā Sangamaya (UNP Student Union) was dissolved.

On September 28 the JVP raided the Talgaswela army detachment in Galle and got away with six T-56 rifles. The OIC and driver of the Seeduwa police were injured when two youths riding a motorcycle lobbed a grenade into their jeep and sped off. A bomb attack on the JSS branch at the Colombo Port killed the branch President A. Mahindapala and another. The District Minister for Trincomalee Mr. H.G.P. Nelson and his private secretary were injured in a grenade attack at his office at Kaduruwela. On October 12 1987, the police sergeant detailed to investigate this bomb attack was himself shot and injured at his home in Hingurakgoda. The JVP was not giving the government any breathing space. They became more audacious as their attacks on the government began to have its effect. The DJV staged an open demonstration at Kirullapone and Maliban junction, Ratmalana. The Ratmalana demonstrators picketed and peacefully dispersed. But the Kirullapone demonstrators attempted to stop cars and buses and paste posters on them. The state reacted only half-heartedly to these open challenges.

Two constables of the Nuwara-Eliya police who were detailed to guard the residence of Minister Thondaman were stabbed and their rifles stolen with 35 rounds of ammunition at Tawalamtenne junction while on their way to the Minister's residence. A bomb went off in the compound of Deputy Minister A.R.M.B. Attanayake's house in Aruppola. The JVP also made a concerted effort during this period to isolate those holding elected office by getting rid of the lower level party functionaries of the UNP who acted as links between the masses and the elected officials. The threat of death was extended to these categories as well and those who did not resign were brutally done to death. In 1988, it was a familiar sight to see signs, banners and posters

at various public places, bus stands, junctions, sometimes outside the houses of the concerned individuals, announcing for the edification of the "deshapremi sahodaraya's". that they have resigned from this post or that membership, and that they humbly beg forgiveness for their past sins etc. etc. Those who would not comply were "severely punished". Anamaduwa MP Asoka Wadigamangawa's private secretary Ebert Balasuriya was hacked to death at home. In Badulla, MP Vincent Dias's office was razed to the ground. Suriyawewa branch President of the UNP J.A. Diyonis was burnt alive at his house. G.P. Weerasiri, a Grama Seva Niladhari was shot dead in his house at Weligama while having his dinner. A policeman was shot dead at the Hingurakgoda bus stand. In Kamburupitiya, a lawyer named Ranatunga was killed at his home. A Grama Seva Niladhari was killed at Veyangoda.

Meanwhile, the undergraduates of Colombo, Moratuwa and Peradeniya Universities launched a demonstration against the proposed Provincial Councils Bill. The JVP also launched a protest against the voting in Parliament of the Provincial Councils Bill on November 10. Transport services were badly affected in the North Central, Central, Western and Southern Provinces. Power supplies in Matale, Galle, Tangalle and Medawachchiya were cut off. Train services to the South were disrupted because the "fish plates" had been removed from the rails at Moratuwa. A powerful bomb which killed over forty people also ripped through Maradana. This was the LTTE's response to the Provincial Councils Bill. There was also an attempt to disrupt telecommunications in Kandy. Two bombs exploded under the relaying tower in Kandy but failed to damage it. A Grama Sevaka was shot dead in Telijjawila in Matara while he was having his dinner at home. The essence of the JVP's terror campaign was to completely disrupt "normal life," and to make life as uncertain as possible for their enemies.

29. The Eastern Province Imbroglia

The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord was a necessary measure given the situation which prevailed in the country in mid-1987. However, the agreement came as a surprise to many even within the regime. The element of surprise was what finally prevented the JVP from organising a massive protest campaign. At the time the Indian troops first came into the country, no one but the President J.R. Jayewardene and the Minister for Mahaveli Development Gamini Dissanayake knew about it. The Minister of National Security, the Presidential Advisor on Security Mr. Ravi Jayawardene, the Defence Secretary and the JOC Commander were all ignorant of what was going on. The signing of the ILPA was boycotted by both the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security. Later, explaining the reasons for his absence at the signing of the ILPA, the PM declared "I cannot respect my country and at the same time respect someone who had disrespected my country". He cited the Indian drop of food parcels as a transgression of our sovereignty and the granting of sanctuary and weapons training for the LTTE as ways in which India has disrespected Sri Lanka. The coming of the IPKF had raised hell within the regime. PM Premadasa, Ministers Ranil Wickremasinghe, Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Jayasuriya did not turn up for the tea party that was given to Premier Rajiv Gandhi on the day the accord was signed. President Jayewardene had asked his son Ravi whether he was coming for the party, Ravi J had brusquely replied No! President Jayewardene had then

pleaded with his son saying "Rajiv is an honourable man, so are you. If you have anything to say to him, tell him so at the party but come anyway." Still, Ravi J did not come for the tea party. The accord, however necessary it may have been to avoid complete anarchy in the country, proved to be very unpopular among sections of the government. Discord was present even at President Jayewardene's own home at his own dinner table in the form of his son Ravi Jayewardene.

Considering the fact that the ILPA was a historical necessity at that particular juncture, it is difficult to see why those so close to the apex of power as the PM and Ravi Jayewardene should have so vehemently opposed it. Perhaps their frame of thinking was like what the Israeli war hero Moshe Levi once told President Jayewardene. Moshe Levi was a good friend of Ravi Jayewardene and the only recipient of the "Star of David" after Yigal Alon and Moshe Dayan. "There's only one mother and one country, you cannot compromise on these... you don't talk to terrorists, you kill them!" President Jayewardene had replied. "But they have the fourth largest Army behind them..." To which Moshe Levi had said "your Excellency, what matters is not the biggest but the best. We four million Jews have 400 million Arabs against us...but we are the best".

The Kallar army camp in the Eastern Province was attacked by the JVP at the height of the IPKF sponsored LTTE attacks on the Sinhala peasants in Trincomalee in early October 1987. The cyanide episode where 14 LTTE cadres including two central committee members, Kumarappa and Pulendran committed suicide while in the custody of the Sri Lankan forces sparked off Tiger attacks on Sinhala villages in Trincomalee which was aided and abetted quite openly by the IPKF. The NIB had intercepted a radio message from an Indian Army Major by the name of Mutiah giving the LTTE instructions on how to marshall their fighting units. Thousands of Sinhala refugees streamed into the Matale District and Colombo, some going down South to their native villages. After the massacre of the Sinhala peasants by the LTTE with IPKF connivance began, the Government got down the Indian Defence Minister K.C. Pant and the Indian Army Commander Krishnaswamy Sundarji to complain about the activities of the IPKF. When they arrived, a meeting was held at the President's house. Present on the occasion were President Jayewardene, Defence Secretary Sepala Atygalle, JOC Commander Cyril

Ranatunga, the three service commanders, Security Advisor to the President Ravi Jayewardene and two or three senior Ministers. The Indians were represented by Pant, Sundarji, High Commissioner Dixit and others. Proceedings commenced but nobody raised the issue for which the Indian VIP's had been brought down in the first place. Because nobody else was talking, it was ultimately Ravi Jayewardene who had brought up the question and said "The Indian Army is responsible for the massacre of the Sinhalese in Trincomalee." The Indian Army Commander Sundarji had retorted saying "you shouldn't be saying such things, you don't know the facts". Ravi J had snapped back "I know all about it because I have been there". Dixit had then piped in to say "No, no, such a thing has not happened" and managed to divert the topic with a lot of diplomatic verbiage.

There was one undeniable fact which stood in favour of Ravi Jayewardene's contention – the reality that the Sinhalese had to leave Trincomalee only after the IPKF arrived. Earlier, Ravi J had armed and trained the Sinhala peasants in Welioya, Padaviya and Trinco areas to resist Tamil terrorist attacks - which was done successfully. Under the conditions of the accord, all the Sinhala cultivators had been disarmed. And the STF which was also Ravi J's brainchild had been withdrawn from the East. At the Thimpu talks held in 1985, the only thing on which all the Tamil groups had concurred was the need to disarm the Sinhala cultivators in the East and to unconditionally disband the STF – both creations of Ravi Jayewardene. The STF was however not disbanded because they were called on to guard the important installations in Colombo and provide security for VIP's. This was because of their reputation of being the best fighting force in the country – a force which the LTTE dreaded. Ravi Jayewardene was a quiet patriot who had the best interests of the country at heart. His answer to the Tamil separatist challenge was to form the STF and arm the Sinhala peasants. And whatever he did was done the way he lived – incognito and without frills and fanfare.

While arguments were going on inside President's House, Indian para-commando's patrolled Janadhipathi Mawatha. An interesting incident occurred here which indicated the mood of the people. A nephew of a former UNP Mayor of Colombo, the late V.A. Sugathadasa happened to come out of the General Post Office opposite President's House with a parcel he had just got

cleared. He was stopped by an Indian Army officer in civies who asked him "What's in that parcel?" the Lankan had retorted asking "who are you?" The Indian had said "I'm an Indian security officer". The Lankan had brushed him aside saying, "you can't check my bag, this is Sri Lanka. We are not under the Indian Government". The Indian security man had then tried to grab the parcel. The Lankan had told the Indian to go xxx and walked away with the parcel. All the while, he had been getting encouraging signals from the Sri Lankan security men posted nearby. The parcel contained a karate kit sent to him from Japan.

On October 4 1987, the Ven. Rambukkana Dharmalankara was shot dead by the IPKF near China Bay, Trincomalee as the Sinhalese in the area prepared to stage a Satyagraha against the LTTE's indiscriminate killings. On the same day, the JVP attacked the Kallar army camp in Kantale and after a twenty-thirty minute gun battle, overran it and removed an unspecified number of weapons. This was the largest haul of weapons by the JVP to that date. The crisis in Trinco offered itself as a golden opportunity for the JVP to prove their patriotic bona fides to the people by at least defending the Sinhala peasants from the LTTE. But they never took it. The reason was that they considered the Trinco crisis to be an ideal issue to put the government into hot water. Thus they tried to make political capital out of it. JVP mobs stopped the lorries carrying the refugees out of Trincomalee district and attached banners to them which read "Tirikunamalayen, thavath anathain pirisak!" (Another load of refugees from Trincomalee!) so that Sinhala sentiments would be aroused against the government which invited the IPKF into the country.

There were allegations during this period that the JVP was in collusion with the Tigers in Trincomalee. This appeared to be correct. There was one instance where an armed JVP contingent had come face to face with an LTTE contingent in the Trincomalee jungles and the JVP warned the LTTE not to proceed in a certain direction because there was a unit of the Sri Lanka Army moving around that area. Then again, some refugees who arrived in Colombo swear that they were absolutely certain that some of the attackers who drove them from their villages were Sinhalese. One peasant described an episode where when a group of men knocked on his door, he jumped out of a window and fled into the jungle. It was pitch dark outside. One of the party

who had given chase for a short distance had been shouting obscenities in perfect Sinhala in a manner which made it quite plain that the assailants were Sinhalese and not Tamil. The peasant insisted that they were all out to kill him.

Could the JVP have committed that supremely cynical act of killing and chasing out some Sinhala villagers themselves so as to inflate the number of refugees and thus bring the government into disrepute? Considering the JVP's conduct in other areas of the country, this is not at all improbable. Around this time, it was also noted that when the LTTE swooped down on a Sinhala village, they would avoid going to the homes of the JVP activists in the village and they were left by and large, unmolested. Considering the general disposition of the JVP leadership, anything was possible. They made every attempt to make political capital of the Trinco refugees. The "Vedihanda" of October 11, 1987 appealed in sanctimonious fashion for all patriots to collect funds for the refugees from towns, villages, universities, schools, offices, workplaces and homes. They thus sought to mobilise a mass force to help in the struggle to set up a "patriotic government".

All this was happening while the DJV was putting out leaflets to whip up the patriotic sentiments of the people. One such document put out on October 5 1987, at the height of the Trincomalee incidents carried the title, "*The nation salutes those patriots who laid down their lives for the motherland*". In addition to this there were slogans like.

- * *We will protect the motherland with the seized weapons!*
- * *Drive away the Indian monkey army from our motherland!*
- * *Prevent non-Tamil people from being driven away from the East.*
- * *Save our motherland from Indian imperialism.*

In this document the JVP claimed that all the weapons taken from the Talgaswela (Galle) and Kallar Army camps will be used to "*save the motherland which has been betrayed to the Indian imperialists by Jayewardene and his henchmen*". It also stated that these weapons will be used to "*fight unto death all enemies of the motherland*". Quite obviously, this was meant to vindicate their actions in the eyes of the public. The JVP was becoming alive to the fact that their taking on the security forces from behind when the country was facing dangers both internally and externally was beginning to have an adverse impact on public

opinion. The Kallar Army camp attack had cast the JVP's patriotic bona fides in serious doubt. In order to cover up, the October 5 proclamation of the DJV claimed, *"Today, the Sri Lankan security forces have become prisoners of the Indian Army. They stand around mutely as the Indian imperialists swallow up our motherland. What therefore is the purpose in their keeping weapons which have been purchased with public funds? If they do not protect either the motherland or the people, they do not need all those weapons. These are needed by the patriots who are fighting to protect the people and the motherland. This is the reason why our armed cadres decided to seize their weapons"*. To further justify their actions the DJV claimed in the same publication, *"we will use these weapons for the freedom of the motherland... to drive away the Indian monkey army and the Tigers who have been a curse on the motherland"*. But the JVP never did any such thing. They concentrated on killing their Sinhala opponents with the weapons they took from the army camps. Thus the JVP killed in the space of two and a half years several times the number of innocent Sinhalese killed by the murderous attacks of the Tamil terrorists over the past decade. The LTTE was also accused of having killed more Tamil militants than the Sri Lanka Army. But while killing their own people, the LTTE also fought the Sri Lanka Army and the IPKF. Thus, they had some saving graces which left them a considerable amount of sympathy to bank on. The JVP never killed a single Tamil terrorist or an Indian soldier. Thus, when public opinion turned against the JVP, there were no extenuating factors to mitigate the fury of the reaction.

30. Patriots by Proxy

The JVP's attitude towards the armed services is an interesting field of inquiry. The mishandling of their relationship with the military was the main cause for their downfall in 1989. Even in 1971 when the country was much less militarised, the JVP placed emphasis on infiltrating the armed services. Originally, it was Podi Athula under the instructions of Loku Athula who was in charge of co-ordinating the JVP's military contacts in 1971. Later, this section was handled by Uyangoda. It is said that quite a number in the Air Force including the entire rugby team was arrested on suspicion of having close links with the JVP. The Navy, Army and Police were also infiltrated to a limited extent. After the 1971 insurgency failed, some of these contact men who had been dismissed from service joined the party in prison. Ex Constable Easwarage Ariyasena of the Maradana Police later became a Central Committee member of the JVP. Petty Officer Vincent Samarasekara later became a close personal confidante of Wijeweera. Captain Kularatne of the Army was in the Central Committee from 1977 to 1979 when he left owing to differences with Wijeweera. In 1971, the JVP boasted that they had forty percent of the armed services on their side. This was a gross overestimation of their actual strength which never went above ten individuals in each of the four branches of the Security Services. So few indeed that the JVP had to explore the possibility of getting their few infiltrators to introduce laxatives and sleeping pills into the food consumed by the servicemen in various camps

on the night before the insurgency so that they would be indisposed and unable to oppose the JVP takeover! This was a plan they considered very seriously and was known as the "Japala plot." The JVP leaders distributed sleeping pills and a local ayurvedic laxative made of japala seeds to their military contacts. Japala seeds when roasted and ground, tastes very much like coffee. If taken in excess, it can even cause death through dehydration. The plan was never put into effect. But had it succeeded, it would have been a unique event in the annals of social revolution where the repressive arm of the bourgeois state is "purged" and disarmed!

More latterly, the JVP had a different kind of "Japala treatment" to give the armed services. Their infiltration of the armed services in 1987-89 was far more successful than in 1971. Now they claimed to have 80 per cent support in the armed services. This was again, a grossly exaggerated figure as in 1971. But this time, the number of contacts and sympathisers the JVP had was distinctly greater in number. At the initial stages, the majority in the services were rather slow to go out against the JVP not necessarily because they were sympathetic to the JVP but because of the polarisation in their thinking which had taken place during the civil war with the Tamil militants. During the initial stages in 1987, the JVP youth might have been seen as potential allies in the war against the Tamil militants; more since the JVP too was at this stage hailing the armed services as hero's and patriots and breathing fire and brimstone against the Tamil militants. After the JVP commenced their military operations around March-April 1987, the government discovered that the armed services were not over-enthusiastic in bringing the JVP to book. Their attitude appeared to be, "we should be fighting the Tigers, not our own boys." Realising the value of this sympathy among sections of the armed services, the JVP attempted to keep it going. In an undated leaflet which was put out sometime between April and July 1987, the JVP appealed to the "*Patriots of the Armed Services, Police and Secret Police*" in the following terms, "*Patriots within the security forces, you should understand that we have no intention of causing harm to you. We will link up with you against the traitors. Get prepared to point your guns not at patriots but at the traitors. As soldiers who love the motherland, your duty is not to protect a murderous ruler who stays illegally in power. You should be protecting the patriots. You should link*

up with the patriots. In this crucial period, we rely on your intelligent decision and activity. We make this appeal in the name of the motherland, the people and our children."

What the JVP apparently expected from the armed services was a large-scale mutiny. By harping on the grievances of the soldiers, the chief of which was the government's handling of the war in the North, the JVP sought to utilize dissent within the armed services for its own purposes. The above mentioned publication further stated, *"It is your responsibility to protect the legally-elected government, the people and the country. But what is Jayewardene trying to get you to do today? To protect the country or the people? Definitely not! Jayewardene is consciously and deliberately betraying the nation and the country to the Rajiv Gandhi-MGR-Prabhakaran-Amirthalingam gang. The lives of soldiers and ordinary people are being sacrificed to the Tigers ... During the time of Jayewardene's rule, terrorism has consolidated its power and not retreated one bit. This happened with the connivance of Jayewardene. Amirthalingam is brought for discussions on a red carpet. Prabhakaran, Kittu, Rahim and others have no threats against them. Today they are the rulers of Jaffna."* Obviously, one of the sensitive spots the JVP was trying to touch was the fact that the armed services were not given a free hand to operate in the North during the Jayewardene regime. After the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord when the forces were confined to barracks, the JVP put out another leaflet under the name of the DJV on October 5 which went as follows, *"We do not have any quarrel with the Sri Lankan armed services who have been betrayed by treacherous leaders and turned into prisoners. We have no intention of harming the life of even a single soldier. We will use weapons against the forces only for our own protection ... Patriotic soldiers join us to save the country, sacrifice your lives on the battlefield. Turn your weapons against the traitors and save the motherland."*

The JVP actually expected exactly what they asked for here – that the patriotic soldiers would sacrifice their lives on the battlefield on behalf of the JVP. A patriotic war by proxy! In another leaflet put out a few days later on October 10, under the name of the DJV they claimed ... *"In a situation where the rulers have become the enemies of the people, if they betrayed the country, it is your duty to take the side of the people and turn against them ... Patriotic armed services the world over have*

resorted to such actions in similar situations ... Your comrades in the North and East have been surrounded by the tanks of the Indian monkey army and turned into prisoners on the instructions of Jayewardene. He released thousands of Tigers ... Moreover, because of the mistrust he has of you, he threatens to bring the monkey army to the South as well. Therefore, why should you obey his orders any further? Why delay in getting together with patriots fighting against him? Comrades, the people have placed their faith only on yourselves and us. They bless us. They will also protect us in the struggle to save the motherland ... Patriotic soldiers of the armed services, rebel against the government which has betrayed the country! Join the patriots to save the motherland! Move forward towards a united patriotic people's government."

Perhaps the reason why the JVP never took on either the LTTE or the Indian Army by itself would have been because of this expectation of a mutiny in the armed services. Their plan appears to have been to use the army to fight the war in the North against the Tamil militants and if necessary the IPKF, while they used their own armed cadres to consolidate their power in the South. They expected the mutiny to come about any day. And in constant expectation of this they continued to postpone taking part in the "patriotic war" on their own account. It was a vicious cycle. Some sections of the forces were waiting for a more positively patriotic attitude on the part of the JVP and the JVP was waiting for the forces to come over to their side. Ultimately, it was the JVP which lost out on this. They always had the unfortunate tendency to overestimate their support base within the armed services. Wijeweera, when incarcerated in the Jaffna prison after the 1971 insurgency was smashed, had put on a superior air and told a fellow prisoner ..."Comrade, do you know that we even had Lieutenant-Colonels and Colonels on our side ... only Comrade Sanath and I knew these things ..." Similarly, in the 1987-89 phase, the JVP again overestimated their support base within the forces.

But of course, had the JVP exhibited some heroism and genuine patriotism, a larger section of the forces would have gravitated towards them. The JVP was later to find out the hard way that in politics it simply does not pay to be "too clever by half". A certain amount of basic honesty and calculated naivety is always necessary. The JVP was quick to seize upon the Vijitha

Rohana incident in their propaganda work. In the mass enthusiasm which followed the assault on Rajiv Gandhi the JVP was at the forefront, showering Vijitha Rohana with praise. Leaflets and posters were put out by the JVP commending the "patriotic people's Naval rating". But the JVP failed to learn anything from this experience – the most important being that the people respect only those who display genuine bravery and make real sacrifices. Mere rhetoric has never held the people's attention for long. Had the JVP taken Vijitha Rohana's example and launched a few independent attacks on the Indian Army and the Tamil Tigers, this would have given their public image a tremendous boost both within the forces and among the general public. One could recall the euphoria among the general public when Sepala Ekanayake became the first Sinhalese to hijack an aircraft in 1983. The ordinary man on the street was not interested in the fact that it was a crime to hijack a plane or the mental stress caused to the unfortunate passengers. All they were interested in was that it was one of us "ape ekek!" who did it.

If the JVP had occasionally shot at the IPKF in the East, that alone would have been sufficient for them to be hailed as heroes. And the Sinhala people would have worshiped them as saviours. The JVP apparently never considered what sort of an impact this would have had on the ordinary soldier. Had they displayed some self-sacrificing heroism, they would not have been decimated with such unbridled ferocity. The question arises whether the JVP leadership was unaware of the advantages of a bit of "calculated naivety" in winning over a section of the armed services to their cause. But probably, they were blinded by their own belief that a large scale mutiny in the armed services was imminent and that they could use the same machinery to fight the war in the North and East. This expectation of an "imminent victory" which has characterised the JVP from its very beginnings, made them postpone many a vital decision until it was too late. With the frustration arising from the non-materialisation of the expected mass mutiny in the military, the JVP was later to resort to unnecessarily unprincipled actions which antagonised the armed services and finally led to their own extermination.

31. The Piliyandala Mafia

In December 1987, Senior Superintendent of Police Terence Perera head of the Counter Subversive Unit and Mr. Harsha Abhayawardana Chairman of the UNP were gunned down in broad daylight in two daring escapades. These killings shook the establishment to its very foundations. Terence Perera was known as one of the best officers in the Police force and was well acquainted with the JVP through his experiences in 1971. A gang of JVP criminals based in Piliyandala was suspected of being behind these VIP killings. In the investigation which followed the killing of Daya Pathirana in December 1986, it transpired that the JVP had close links with criminals in the Piliyandala area and that they were using these links to keep the party in funds. The same group was also used to do away with Daya Pathirana. The gang had started with armed robberies and slowly graduated into doing hit jobs for the JVP. And it was the same crowd the Police suspected was behind the killing of Terence Perera and Harsha Abhayawardana. Four names were announced by the Police in January 1988.

1. Keselwatte Gamaralage Siripala.
2. Sugath Pushpakumara.
3. *Handagawa Tilak Kumaratunga.*
4. Adiris Costa.

As was related previously, Adiris Costa was the main culprit behind the Daya Pathirana killing. The "Piliyandala Mafia" which was in the main the creation of Adiris Costa, was famous for its daring exploits, and was in many ways the pioneers of the JVP's military wing. In early June 1987, the Piliyandala Mafia mounted a daring rescue operation to save some of their comrades who had been arrested and remanded at the Panadura Remand Prison for robberies and hold-ups. JVP storm troopers mounted on motorbikes had stopped the van in which the five prisoners were being transported over the Bolgoda bridge close to the Ratnapura-Panadura main road, threatened the driver and jail guards with revolvers and driven away with the van and its occupants. This daring rescue operation had the effect of giving the JVP a terrific morale boost. There was also a brief power struggle for supremacy among the Piliyandala gangs with the JVP faction soon attaining dominance. Adiris Costa went into hiding soon after the Pathirana murder. But the two hired killers whom he had recruited to murder Pathirana soon fell out with him, when the political differences began to surface especially after July 1987. The struggle was between the JVP and the UNP sections of the underworld.

In late 1987, unknown gunmen had raided Adiris Costa's home and abducted his wife. Her body was discovered a short while later dumped in a drain. After having absconded for a long time, Adiris Costa was captured by the Piliyandala Police in January 1990. At the time of his arrest, he is said to have been of an unkempt appearance with long matted hair gone prematurely gray and had very few teeth left. He was but a shadow of his former self. After mid-1987, he does not appear to have fulfilled any important function in the party and appears to have spent most of 1989 as a fugitive which appears to have told on him physically. Adiris Costa was a veteran member of the JVP and had been a full-timer in 1971, and a staunch Wijeweera loyalist. Sometime in 1970, when the leadership had issued orders to their cadres to collect money from every available source, some had started robbing from shops and houses. Some 1971 veterans state that Adiris Costa in his enthusiasm had gone to rob a house and got caught in the act. He was soundly thrashed by the occupants of the house and had to spend some time in hospital. For all his contacts with the underworld, Adiris Costa was not one with those whom he associated. He was a "culture enthusiast" and an

accomplished violinist. Yet it was Adiris Costa and Ragama Some who laid the groundwork for the forming of the DJV. Unlike Ragama Some, however, Adiris Costa never held any important posts in the party. Perhaps his activism dropped before he could be taken up the ladder. And at the time of his capture, he was just an ordinary JVP'er and a rather pathetic figure.

The last months of 1987 were also characterised by a great deal of "student unrest" as part of the JVP's strategy to keep the urban areas of the country constantly on the boil. Some students of the Universities of Sri Jayawardenapura and Moratuwa launched a "fast unto death" demanding the abrogation of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord, and the sending back of the Indian Army. Fifty students from Moratuwa and sixty from Sri Jayawardenapura including ten bhikkus participated in this fast unto death which was called off a couple of days later. It was during this period that the JVP put forward the slogan "palamuwa maubima devanuwa igenuma" and decreed that the students should boycott lectures indefinitely until "peace is restored". The students of Kelaniya University boycotted lectures demanding the release of arrested comrades. Students of the Medical Faculties of Ruhuna and Peradeniya boycotted lectures in dissatisfaction with the resolution offered by the government to the PMC issue. Students of Sri Jayawardenapura had been agitating for over a week demanding under threats that the academic staff quit their posts in support of their struggle. The students of Kelaniya also began a protest demanding that the Mahapola scholarship be increased from Rs. 350/- to Rs. 750/- per month. During this protest, the students were chased away from the University premises by a combined team of the Police and the Army. Meanwhile, violent incidents proliferated in the provinces. The residence of the UNP MP's for Badulla and Polonnaruwa were attacked. Two policemen on duty at the Pitakotte junction were assaulted and their weapons stolen. This was in very close proximity to the UNP headquarters at Pitakotte. A small arms factory turning out "galkatas" for the JVP was discovered by the Police at Galenbindunuwewa in the Anuradhapura district.

In the war between the JVP and the State security forces, the operations in Embilipitiya deserve special mention. At a time when the JVP sought to give the impression of widespread popular support and military invincibility, it was the Army in Embilipitiya that shattered such myths. At a time when the JVP

was killing important politico's, Police officers and the like with gay abandon in the rest of the country, Embilipitiya lay quiet. For the first time, the lethargic and fear stricken state was shown how the problem could be solved. Due credit should be given to the young and highly motivated band of officers who worked in Embilipitiya during this period. It was through this that Brigadier Lakshman Algama became famous overnight. He was appointed as the co-ordinating officer of the Ratnapura district in September 1987.

One of the major incidents which took place in this area in September was the tripple murder of the Embilipitiya branch chairman, secretary and treasurer of the UNP at the Tunkama market place. The trio were traders at the market. They had been accosted at the market at around 7.00 o' clock in the evening and shot and hacked to death by a group of JVP hit men. Fear gripped the region. Thereafter, political murders multiplied daily. There were some main areas of intense JVP activity in the region, Colonne, Embilipitiya, Suriyawewa, Panamure, Balangoda and Kuttigala. Embilipitiya was a kind of economic nerve centre in the region with rice from Uda Walawe and produce from other areas being brought there to be sold.

Colonne was one of the main areas of unrest. At the outset, there appeared to be a lot of support for the JVP. The inhabitants of Colonne were mainly of the Wahumpura caste, the second most numerous caste grouping among the Sinhalese but one of the most underprivileged. Moreover, almost all of them were impoverished cultivators and thus very susceptible to JVP propaganda. At first, the JVP's rhetoric might have convinced these people that they were the saviours of the people. Later, the fear psychosis engendered by the JVP's ruthless methods would have induced more people to "support" the JVP. Anyhow, when the Army began their operations in this region, there appeared to be ninety percent support for the JVP. There was no information coming from the public and the Army had to grope in the dark. Earlier, the young and dynamic MP for Colonne Mr. Nanda Matthew had complained about the inability of the security forces in his area to combat the rising tide of terrorism. But he never stopped visiting his electorate. Undaunted by threats, he would open culverts and sub-post offices with only a bare minimum of security personnel. The Upright stand taken by the politicians in Colonne had been a great boon to the Army, whose task had been much simplified thereby.

The first breakthrough in Colonne, was the capture of "Chandi" who was at one time, a bodyguard of Wijeweera. Then the Army began to arrest those putting up posters usually by lying in ambush in the night. On information received from people arrested in this manner, they were able to arrest a number of people who had attended the five lectures. Thereafter, information about JVP activities became less scarce. Informants who had their heads covered to avoid recognition popularly known as "billa's" were taken to the weekly fairs to identify JVP activists. The houses of people known to be helping the JVP were set on fire by unknown persons. Thus a counter to the fear psychosis of the JVP was created. Information now began to come in the form of anonymous letters alleging that this person or that was involved in the JVP and that illegal weapons were being kept at such and such a place etc.

Measures were also taken by the Army to win the hearts and minds of the people. "Janahamuwa's" were held to persuade the people to come forward to oppose the JVP openly and to give information to the Army. Around this time, the JVP began to circulate letters demanding cash contributions. As a method of reducing the fear the people had for the JVP, the Army intercepted mail at the Post Office and removed suspicious letters which were then opened and checked for cash demands and death threats. That way, the people were prevented from receiving such intimidatory mail. Another instance where the Army managed to win the confidence of the people was their handling of the pro-JVP school children in the area. At that time, the Colonne Wijeriya Maha Vidyalaya was a hot bed of JVP activity. Quite a lot of the economic and infrastructural sabotage in the region was carried out by students of this school.

One day, the Army walked into the school and arrested six grade 10 students. The other students and teachers protested that the students were innocent and the Army team was hooted and jeered at. Three days later, the six students were brought back to the school by the Army. There amidst the assembled teachers and students, the six accused voluntarily admitted having participated in various acts of violence. They then called upon their other young accomplices to come forward and surrender voluntarily. Then and there, a student by the name of Bandula gave himself up to the Army. Since none of the previously arrested students appeared to have been tortured or mistreated in

any way, the teachers of the school were at a loss for words and they desisted from interfering in Army operations thereafter. What had happened was that being of an impressionable age, the students had been attracted to the JVP because of its rhetoric. The Army team in Embilipitiya obviously had better talkers than the JVP who could harangue the students into cooperating with them. With peasant boys in their mid-teens, this would not have been such a difficult operation. All these students were allowed to sit for their O/L examination in December 1987 to prepare for which they were allowed to have their books brought to the Army Camp at which they were detained. They were later released to attend A/L classes after their O/L results were announced. The frightened principal had to be prevailed upon by the Army to take back the young insurgents and to allow them to continue their schooling.

In addition to this combination of hard and soft methods, there were some spectacular breakthrough's from around mid-December 1987 which helped the Army to gain complete control of the area in a short time. On December 18 1987, a JVP hideout at Pahe Ela in Moraketiya was cordoned off and five people arrested. All the weapons used in the Tunkama tripple murder were recovered. There were six shot guns, four galkatas and a quantity of knives and swords stored in plastic containers and buried. Among the arrested were Pentis and Wilbert - the latter was at one and the same time, the Secretary of the UNP branch at Kuttigala as well as the area committee secretary of the JVP. The owner of the hut where the weapons were found, one Dingi Mahattaya who happened to be an old supporter of the JVP from 1971 was also arrested.

On December 30, the Kahawatte Police station was attacked and a haul of weapons, uniforms and explosives removed by the JVP. At that time, the Army had in their custody two students known as Ranatunga and Premasiri who had been given weapons training at the JVP's Hambegamuwa camp. An alert Officer recalled that the duo had mentioned a plan to attack a Police station which was discussed at the Hambegamuwa Camp. After another round of interrogation, the Army was convinced that the attack on the Kahawatte Police station had been planned at the Hambegamuwa camp. Suspicion centred round the JVP district leader for Hambantota, Beligalle Siriwardene and Saman Karunaratne, the military leader of the Embilipitiya area. It was

also known that Shantha Bandara was also hanging around somewhere in the region.

A search for the stolen weapons was launched. A hideout at the 16th mile post on the Embilipitiya – Tanamalwila road was raided. However, the place was deserted. But an underground armoury was discovered. It was a concrete structure nine feet long, 3½ feet broad and about three feet deep. The structure was destroyed but no weapons were found. The reasons for the failure of this mission was that an Army team had raided a homestead in the vicinity the previous day while pursuing one "Shok mahattaya". Later a more successful raid was carried out on another JVP hideout at Kahakurullanpelessa in Tanamalwila. A special team from an artillery regiment had been summoned from Colombo to attack this camp which was located in the dense jungles. In this raid, one "Ronnie" an important member of the Embilipitiya military wing of the JVP was arrested. Another man, known as "Rathumalli" escaped into the jungle with gunshot injuries. Ronnie was able to give the Army 67 kilos of explosives, 75 kilos of gunpowder, three typewriters and a quantity of Police uniforms and caps with insigna which were found buried near his home at Muttetupola in Pallebedda. All this was material taken from the Kahawatte Police station.

Ronnie had also revealed that fourteen people had taken part in the attack on the Kahawatte police station. With Ronnie's help, the Army was able to capture another one of the attackers, one "Wadu Chandare" a military wing member of the JVP. Wadu Chandare led the Army to another hideout at Kakkangodella on the Embilipitiya–Middeniya road. The raid was carried out on February 4 1988. Six JVP area leaders were arrested here in one of the best breaks in the anti-JVP operations at that time. Among them were, the Colonne leader Pathirana, the Embilipitiya leader Kalumahattaya, the area military leader Vimukthi Gune and his brother Vimukthi Ari and the Embilipitiya student leader Priyankara. "Ruhune Ranahanda" a clandestine newsletter of the JVP which was produced and distributed in the South from this hideout was also effectively neutralised. Among the equipment captured were roneo machines, an electro stencil machine, stencils, quantities of paper, five shot guns and three 'galkatas'. Another hideout was subsequently discovered at Bandokkayaya near Panamure. Sophisticated radio equipment and gun powder etc, were discovered inside a concrete bunker near a latrine.

In March 1988, Kalumahattaya, the Embilipitiya area leader, took the Army to an important hideout in Meegahajandura in Suriyawewa. The entire area was first cordoned off by about two companies and a small team of ten led by three officers entered the main camp at about 3.30 in the morning. The troops found the place deserted but a fire glowing inside a hut which indicated that the occupants had been around in the night. Just as they were about to settle down to wait, they heard the cry of a deer in the jungles nearby. By this time, they had decided that the raid was a failure and a Police sergeant who had been temporarily attached to the Army because of his familiarity with the terrain, set out with another Army officer to try and shoot the deer for meat. While proceeding in the direction of the animal through the undergrowth, they came across a group of men sleeping in a hut in an adjoining chena. The police sergeant pounced on the whole lot while the Army officer covered them with his T-56 rifle. A shout for help brought the rest of the team running to discover the breakthrough which effectively broke the back of the JVP in Embilipitiya. The entire divisional committee of Embilipitiya was now in Army custody. Among them were Samson, the military leader in charge of all the armouries in the Embilipitiya division, Hettiarachchi a 1971 veteran and the leader of the Uda Walawe region, Victor, the Balangoda leader and Dayaratne, an ex-soldier and military wing man of the JVP who had that very evening been given the task of assassinating Brig. Algama. That same morning, Samson revealed the whereabouts of some of the weapons stolen from the Kahawatte Police station. One T-56 rifle, two sub-machine guns, three .303 rifles and five shotguns were recovered along with Police uniforms, tear gas and ammunition. A VHF radio set was also found.

Thereafter, the Embilipitiya area was effectively cleared. For almost one year, there were no incidents reported from this region. Bringing this region under control was no mean task considering the difficult terrain, the vast jungle tracts and the social condition of the people which was a veritable breeding ground for rebellion. This difficult region which includes parts of the Southern, Sabaragamuwa and Uva provinces can be described as one of the most wretched in the island. It was a combination of military action and timely diplomacy which won the day. The JVP for their own part gave added strength to the Army campaign by making themselves an unbearable nuisance to the ordinary people of the area.

32. The Caste Factor in Galle

The operations in Galle were among the most vital in the whole thrust against the JVP. Considering the number of incidents in the Southern Province, one might without exaggeration say that half the battle was fought down South. Thus the fact that the forces were soon able to gain control over the Galle district was a vital factor in the downfall of the JVP. The quick victory of the forces in Galle can partly be ascribed to the fact that support for the JVP was noticeably much lesser here than in the Matara and Hambantota districts. There certainly were some pockets of JVP activity in Galle, but these were soon cleared by the forces. The lack of support for the JVP in Galle can perhaps be ascribed to the fact that in the Galle district, the Karava, Salagama and Durava castes together constitute about sixty percent of the population while the Govigama's and the other castes make up the other forty percent. The Govigama's and the KSD castes generally shied away from the JVP in the 1987-89 phase. The principal habitat of the Salagama's is in Balapitiya which lies within the Galle district. Ambalangoda is a major centre of the Southern Karava's. In 1971, when the Karava's dominated the JVP, Ambalangoda was a hotbed of JVP activity. Rohana Wijeweera studied for some time at Dharmasoka College and many students of his alma mater joined his movement. The school teacher Sanath who was then the second in command of the JVP was himself a native of Ambalangoda and he held the

Ambalangoda area for about two weeks before the forces were able to break through.

In 1987–89 however, Ambalangoda was not an important centre of JVP activity. The Salagama stronghold of Balapitiya also remained largely aloof from the JVP. However, there was an initial build up in the Salagama pocket in Ratgama. But this appears to have been an artificial thing which soon fizzled out after the main JVP activists in the area had been arrested. Though the Karawa community in Galle was generally dormant, the Karawa pockets in the Hambantota and Matara districts were hives of JVP activity. Most notable were Hungama, Dickwella, Devundara, and Gandara. While Matara and Hambantota districts were practically under a state of seige, Galle enjoyed a fairly placid existence. Thus at the Provincial Council election held in June 1988, the Hambantota district polled only 7% of the total number of registered voters and Matara only 20%, while Galle had 42%. The JVP's boycott call was not as successful in Galle as in other areas of the Southern Province. Most of the people who observed to the letter, the JVP's boycott calls were those from the most oppressed castes. Security forces deployed in the South, found that in some areas the JVP ban was completely effective without a single vote being cast. When they had inquired into the reasons for this, they had found out that these were Wahumpura villages. Wahumpura's were generally not found in large numbers in the Galle district except perhaps in the Karadeniya electorate.

In mid-1988, four infantry battalions, the 1st Gemunu Watch, the 4th Gemunu Watch, the 1st Sri Lanka Light Infantry and the 3rd SLLI were deployed in the South and Colonel Patrick Fernando was posted to Galle as the co-ordinating officer. Some of the junior officers working under Colonel Fernando were able to get at the district leadership by dint of good luck. At the time that the new command under Brig. Algama was moved down South, there was no information about JVP activity. Like in Embilipitiya, it was mostly a case of groping in the dark during the initial stages. But a major breakthrough was achieved with the capture of a Bhikku by the name of Mangala and the subsequent arrest of the military leader for the district and the district women's leader. The Bhikku Mangala was said to have been in the company of a woman by the name of Dayawathi at the time of his arrest. The forces in the South were always care-

ful about their handling of the Bhikku's in the South. The Bhikku fraternities are fragmented along caste lines and in the South each caste has its own temple and own Bhikku's. Thus, the arrest of a monk could raise a hornet's nest with some people feeling that this was caste discrimination. Each bhikku, however immoral he may be in practice, had his own little base because of these caste affiliations. Hence the forces left the temple's in the South severely alone. Because of this relative immunity enjoyed by the Southern temple's, most of the JVP bhikku leaders like Vilegoda Ariyadewa, Balaharuwe Soma and Kongasdeniye Ananda sought refuge in Temples in the South when things began to get hot for them in Colombo. Thus when the Army wanted to get at the Bhikku Mangala, they surprised him at his mistress' house. He had just returned from an all night piriith ceremony and had been in bed with his mistress when the Army team arrived and dragged him out of the house. It appears that he had been shot later while trying to escape. The Army was also able to arrest Neville Mahattaya, an important member of the Galle district committee and his son Wasantha, a member of the military wing with over fifteen killings to his credit, and the district leader for Galle Thilakaraine. Information received from these people helped to clean up Galle completely. After his arrest, Upatissa Gamanayake who was the political cum military leader of the Southern zone had admitted that the one place where they really got cleaned out quite early on was Galle. The operations in Galle were so accurate that they were never able to pick up the pieces again.

In January 1988, the JVP declared war on various left wing organisations in the country. After the killing of Daya Pathirana, the JVP's terror campaign had not affected the left as much as it had weighed on the UNP. But on January 18 1988, the JVP put out a statement under the name of the "*National campaign to punish traitors to the motherland*" which named Vijaya Kumaratunga and his SLMP, the LSSP, CP, NSSP, the Independent Students Union, the Devasarana Development Centre of Rev. Yohann Devananda, and sections of the All Lanka Peasants Congress as traitors to the motherland. The statement further declared, "*to wipe out these people is an inseparable part of the struggle against Jayewardene and the Indian imperialists. We have clearly identified the enemy. They will be punished accordingly*"

This same document accused Jamis Athugala, an activist of the All Lanka Peasants Congress who had been gunned down by the JVP in January 1988, of being a "brown tiger" who had been trained by PLOTE and given weapons and unleashed by the Jayewardene government against the patriots. They also accused Nandana Marasinghe, a one time JVP leader who had been shot dead earlier in November 1987 as being one of the organisers of this "massive conspiracy" to eliminate patriots. The JVP also accused this "anti-patriotic" grouping of having sent threatening letters to anti-Indian politicians, intellectuals, journalists and bhikkus. Another publication put out by the JVP under the name of the "*Combined Headquarters of the Patriotic Armed Forces*" on January 25 1988, declared the following categories of people as traitors to the motherland.

1. *All those who support the Rajiv Gandhi - JR pact and the provincial councils system.*
2. *All those who support the Jayewardene regime.*
3. *All those who whitewash the destructive acts of the Indian Army and describe them as a "peace keeping force."*
4. *All those who betray patriots to the Jayewardene puppet regime.*
5. *All those who implement the repressive laws of the state against the patriotic forces.*
6. *All those who form various terrorist groups in connivance with the Jayewardene regime to crush the DJV.*
7. *All those engaged in activity relating to misleading the public against the patriots.*

The stage was now well set for the reign of terror.

33. Massacring the Left

Nandana Marasinghe, a hero of the 1971 JVP insurgency was gunned down in November 1987 at the Anuradhapura market where he ran a small footwear business. Marasinghe had joined the JVP as far back as in 1968 after attending one of its first educational camps held in Middeniya. During the insurgency, he functioned as the district leader for Anuradhapura. After his arrest in 1971, he made a series of daring jail breaks which were all followed by re-arrest. But these jail breaks made him something of a living legend in his native place in Anuradhapura and within the JVP. He was during this period, a staunch Wijeweera loyalist. In the intervals between his jail breaks and being re-arrested, his main function was to ensure that Wijeweera's writ still ran among those comrades who had not yet been captured and were in the jungles. He was vehemently opposed to anyone taking up an independent command over the remnants of the JVP that had managed to evade arrest. In the course of these struggles he is even said to have betrayed to the police some of these comrades who were trying to continue the struggle independently without Wijeweera. As was seen earlier, it was in the prisons that Wijeweera was able to consolidate his dictatorial hold over the party which remained intact till his death in 1989.

After the release of the prisoners in 1977, Nandana continued to work for the party. But his loyalty to Wijeweera during 1971-77 was not rewarded by the cunning leader who could not bear having to tolerate a man who perhaps had more charismatic

appeal among the rank and file than himself. All the 1971 leaders who had exhibited military prowess and bravery were either dead or had left the party owing to differences with Wijeweera. And among the worms who came out in 1977 to re-constitute the JVP, Nandana Marasinghe bestrode the scene like a colossus. With his spectacular jail breaks and his record one year in chains, he had become a kind of revolutionary hero and a living symbol of the struggle among the rank and file of the party which Wijeweera could not tolerate. Hence he was sidelined in the party and not given any position of responsibility. Life was made intolerable and Nandana Marasinghe left the party in 1981. After he began to raise questions about Wijeweera's leadership, he had been fiercely hounded by the Wijeweera cronies inside the party.

Thereafter he became a culture enthusiast and a social worker. At the time of his death he was the secretary of the Anuradhapura Citizens Committee. The skills he had honed while in the JVP orchestra "Vimukthigee" and his reading during the prison years were developed further. Generally, he lived frugally with no regular income and a young family of three to support. Sometime before he was gunned down, he had been approached by SSP Terence Perera who was then the head of the Counter Subversive Unit and asked to help him fight the JVP. Nandana Marasinghe could have given Terence Perera all the help he needed, because if anybody knew the JVP inside out, it was Marasinghe. Terence Perera had also formed an admiration for Marasinghe from the time they had come face to face during the 1971 insurrection; Marasinghe as an insurgent and Terence Perera as a Police Inspector. Terence Perera had come to respect the intrepid fighter from Rajarata. But when in 1987 Terence Perera had approached Marasinghe for help in weeding out the JVP, the latter had refused, saying he would not betray the party at any cost. The reason for this was not because he had any sympathy for the JVP, but because he was acutely conscious of what he had done in the old days when he himself was a JVP activist and a Wijeweera loyalist. He was familiar with that blind fanaticism which grips young people who join the JVP, and he knew that they would soon grow out of it the way he himself did. He was not willing to betray anybody whom he felt was not really responsible for their acts. Though he had refused to tell Terence Perera anything he knew, he was still gunned down by the JVP as a potential danger to the movement. There was

also the fact that his position as a former JVP leader gave him an edge in putting forward ideas that were opposed to the new JVP policies. Thus, his work in the Anuradhapura Citizens Committee, especially on the ethnic issue, was thought of as a big headache to the JVP. A few days after Nandana Marasinghe was shot dead, Terence Perera was also shot and killed at Battaramulla in December 1987.

After the killing of Nandana Marasinghe, the JVP launched a massive campaign against leftwing political activists whom they considered to be their rivals. K.A.D. Saddhatissa, a 65-year-old retired school principal and a leading activist of the CPSL was shot and killed at Akuressa while sick and in bed. Ranjith Saddhatissa, his son, was killed on the same day. The JVP had put up posters banning the hoisting of white flags and claimed that Saddhatissa had been "punished" because he had been responsible for having unleashed the police on the JVP in 1971 when he was an influential man in the region during the United Front government. Though the people in the area were perturbed about this double killing, nobody expressed dissent. Not a single white flag was seen in the area for fear of the JVP. This was to set the pattern for the future. The left was now in a state of siege. Jamis Athugala, an activist of the SLMP and Assistant Secretary of the District Committee for Kurunegala of the All Lanka Peasants Congress, was shot through the window of his hut one night in January. In mid-February 1988 Gamini Medagedara, an Attorney-at-Law and a member of the CPSL was shot dead at Polonnaruwa. Yapa Bandara, a student leader of the SLMP was shot dead at a "chummery" in Kelaniya. This was at a house located in close proximity to the Kelaniya University. It had earlier been occupied by a group of law students belonging to the Independent Students Union. The assailant had walked into the house with a T-56 automatic and started firing at everyone inside. Afterwards, realising that he had not got the person whom he wanted most, the gunman had loitered around the neighbourhood for about forty-five minutes until his quarry arrived. This was the Kelaniya University SLMP student leader Gunawardene. The intended victim who had been surprised in the dark however, had grabbed the gunman in a tight bear-hug and raised cries for help. In grappling together, the gun went off and the bullet grazed Gunawardene's thigh and nicked the tip of his right toe. The gunman had then fled into the darkness. It was while these

SLMP student leaders were still in hospital that Vijaya Kumaratunga was gunned down near his Polhengoda residence.

As the JVP's October 11 1987 issue of "Vedihanda" had announced much earlier, their criteria was not along pro-UNP and anti-UNP lines but on pro-accord and anti-accord lines. Days after the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord, Vijaya Kumaratunga had written to the 'Sunday Observer' welcoming the ILPA and expressed very sanguine hopes about its ability to solve the ethnic problem. From this time onwards, Vijaya was a marked man. But the only reason for his death was not this. Wijeweera in particular, was very apprehensive of Vijaya's rising popularity. Vijaya was one of those figures who could change history simply by force of his personal charisma. And the JVP saw him as a dangerous rival. Vijaya however, had an unfortunate tendency to neglect his personal security and no amount of pleading by his colleagues could persuade him to take even basic precautions. And at the time he was killed, he was standing in front of his house on a busy main road chatting to some people. The killing of Vijaya Kumaratunga was a high water-mark in the JVP's campaign of terror. This had been carried out on the orders of Al-giriye Munasinghe the district military leader for Colombo. The JVP had earlier issued sweeping orders that all whom they consider traitors including national figures like Vijaya should be killed. And it was the responsibility of the military leader of each district to make sure that their areas were cleaned out. Though there were rumours that the JVP politbureau had met to decide on Vijaya's killing and that some sections of the leadership had been against it, this was not correct. Some of the leaders would have met in Colombo to discuss the matter, but certainly nobody opposed it.

It was after the killing of Vijaya Kumaratunga that the Independent Students Union passed the death sentence on Wijeweera. Earlier in January 1988, Vijaya had been the main speaker at the commemoration of the first death anniversary of Daya Pathirana held at the New Town Hall premises in Colombo. Here Vijaya had declared publicly in a way no left leader had the courage to do before, that "whatever anybody may say, Pathirana was murdered by the JVP". At the funeral procession of the slain SLMP leader, the ISU came at the tail-end, chanting slogans calling for Wijeweera's blood. The most frequent one was "Damau Damau, Mara Damau, Vije Aiyawa Mara Dapu

Wijeweera Mara Damau". They were soon joined by the drunkards and yakko's in the city who had come to pay homage to the fallen political leader and film idol and the tail-end of the procession was soon a seething mob howling for blood and revenge. It was ironic that such a spectacle should manifest itself at the funeral procession of the very man a London-based newspaper once described as "Sri Lanka's man of peace". The representatives of the various left parties who had turned up for Vijaya's funeral were thoroughly embarrassed by the howling hordes in the rear, and they walked on in front in glum silence after no amount of pleading had succeeded in getting the ISU to stop their blood thirsty howling.

34. Fanatics, Visionaries, and Hardliners

While the behaviour of the Independent Students Union at Vijaya Kumaratunga's funeral was in a sense a sign of the times, it was also an expression of the prophetic vision of K.L. Dharmasiri, the young man who led the ISU at that time. In February 1988, to shout anti-JVP slogans in public was considered tantamount to committing suicide. But the ISU did it with a kind of fanatical obstinacy which many people found hard to come to terms with. A few weeks later, the city walls were covered with hundreds of ISU posters which made even more gory announcements. Some of which went as follows: "Anthima JVP karaya Wijeweerage badawelen ella damana thuru janathavata vimukthiya neta! (Until the last JVP is hung with Wijeweera's entrails, the people will have no liberation!) "Wijeweerata kuriru maranaya, janathavata vimukthiya!" (Slow agonising death for Wijeweera! Liberation for the people!) "JVP alugosuvangen maubima bera ganiu!" (Save the motherland from the JVP killer squads!) Wijeweera ella maramu!" (Hang Wijeweera!) Some of these posters had been put up under the name of the "Janathava denuwath kereeme vyaparaya" (Campaign to inform the people) This was a front organisation run by Bandula Senaratne, a young black belt karate instructor from Anuradhapura who had come into contact with the ISU. He had started his campaign to inform the people in Anuradhapura on Dharmasiri's instructions mainly as an experiment in countering the JVP's propaganda effort. Later, after the killing of Vijaya Kumaratunga, he stopped conducting

karate classes and came to Colombo to work full time for the ISU. Thus when the anti-JVP poster campaign got off the ground, both the ISU and the Campaign to Inform the People put their names to it. The posters were put up in such numbers as to make it obvious that the security forces had turned a blind eye to what was going on. They had not been instructed to intercept anti-JVP posters however uncouth they were, and moreover, perhaps the posters expressed what certain sections of the armed services were beginning to feel about the JVP by that time.

Nobody in this country ever thought in their wildest dreams that the JVP could ever be so totally smashed as it was at the end of 1989. But the ISU leadership, primarily K.L. Dharmasiri foresaw it. They paid for their prophetic albeit somewhat blood spattered vision with their lives. Bandula was shot dead in Rabewa in October 1988. Dharmasiri was shot dead in August 1989. Both men were so totally convinced that they were on the correct path that they neglected to take even the most rudimentary precautions as to personal security. They adhered to an almost religious belief that what they say will come to pass whether they live to see it or not. They finally proved to be correct. More correct in their predictions in fact, than they themselves would have dared to imagine.

Meanwhile in January 1988, the JVP's campaign of terror was in full swing. Two lamp-post killings were reported from Inginiyagala and Matara. Here the JVP was perhaps trying to emulate the LTTE by tying their victims on lamp posts and appending a charge sheet to the dead body. This kind of thing gives terrorist killings a macabre kind of decorum and a quasi-judicial air. But for some reason the JVP never took to this with the same kind of facility that the LTTE did. The JVP showed a distinct preference to mutilate dead bodies rather than to leave them tied to lamp posts. Unlike the LTTE perhaps the JVP thought of their time-frame as being very limited, and they were in a hurry. They wanted to use the method which induces the greatest amount of terror in the shortest possible time. The JVP during this period also launched an attack on the home guard training centre at Kahatuduwa which was unsuccessful.

In mid-January 1988, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne was appointed as the Chairman of the UNP after the killing of Harsha Abhayawardana. This appointment was to have far reaching effects on the JVP. Ranjan Wijeratne was one of those die-hard UNP'ers

who have proved to be the biggest asset the UNP has. From the age of seventeen he had been in the UNP youth league, the President of which was then Sir John Kotalawala. The young Ranjan had been a member of the Wellawatte Galkissa branch. The main motive Ranjan Wijeratne had to join the UNP at that time was his family connections. His mother was a first cousin of D.S. Senanayake and he used to be taken to meet the old man during his school holidays. Gradually, the young RW had come to hero-worship D.S. At the age of 19, he had taken to planting as a career and politics did not intrude into his life as before. But perhaps as some say, it was during his planting career that he formed certain habits of thought he was later to bring with him into politics.

By the time of the 1971 insurgency, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne had become the Chairman of the Planters Association of Ceylon. When the insurgency began in April 1971, he was in Badulla. He had been hurriedly summoned to Colombo by Mrs. Bandaranaike and had presented himself at Temple Trees along with Mr. Anesly Perera, the Secretary of the Planters Association and Mr. Dodwell Jayamanne who was Chairman of the Agency section of the Planters Association. At Temple Trees, they were told what had happened and were asked by Mrs. Bandaranaike whether she could rely on their support. All three had declared their support without any hesitation and Mrs. Bandaranaike had requested them to look after the plantation areas as best as they could. Ranjan Wijeratne had organised planters to man Police Stations in order to relieve overtaxed Policemen. After the 1971 insurgency, he had come to Colombo as a director of a leading private firm and after the UNP was elected to power in 1977, he was appointed as the Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture.

In January 1988, after Mr. Harsha Abhayawardana had been gunned down, President Jayawardene had consulted several senior ministers and invited Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne to take over the Chairmanship of the Party. It was soon apparent that something new had come into the UNP. In a situation where "bayalitis" had got the better of a large number of UNPers, Ranjan Wijeratne could calmly explain to the newspapers that SP Terence Perera had died because he did not have a backup vehicle. Very few people at that time were in a state of mind to make rational appraisals of the JVP's terror tactics. Without exaggeration it can be said that the appointment of Mr. Ranjan

Wijeratne to the post of Chairman and President Jayawardene's own determination were the only factors which kept the UNP intact during that crucial year. Even some of the very senior ministers panicked and made forlorn predictions to trusted friends that "this government might not last another two weeks". Some ministers followed the newspaper reports on the JVP's activities and made predictions based on the kind of weapons used by the JVP. One instance where there appeared to be evidence that the JVP had used a grenade launcher was seized on by a distraught minister who had said "now the JVP cant, be defeated." Some consulted astrologers. Others consulted various degenerate "revolutionary thinkers" who wrote papers saying that there was a possibility of the JVP capturing power. This frightened some people even more. But President Jayawardene and Ranjan Wijeratne hung on doggedly. Sometime in 1988, at a meeting of UNP branch representatives held at the Sugathadasa Stadium, Ranjan Wijeratne had declared in the presence of the entire Cabinet including the President and Prime Minister Premadasa that "we are going to stand and fight it out, those who dont want to do so can leave." This had elicited prolonged applause and wild cheering from the audience.

President Jayawardene knew what had to be done and he shouted it out from the housetops. His most celebrated phrase was uttered in Beliatte "they should be crushed like animals." But nobody was willing to take the political and personal risk of implementing it. It was finally Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne as State minister for Defence who implemented it after President Jayawardene had been succeeded by President Premadasa. Many leaders of opposition political parties privately admit That it was Ranjan Wijeratne's loud-mouthed braggadacio even at the worst times during the JVP terror that boosted their own flagging spirits. It gave them the reassuring feeling that all was not lost yet. In a situation where it was the JVP against everybody else, everybody who was not totally with the JVP had an interest in getting rid of them. Despite the sanctimonious tittle tattle that followed the deaths of the JVP leaders, everybody was happy with the turn of events.

On January 14 1988, some soldiers marketing in Walas-mulla were attacked in an attempt to grab their weapons. Six civilians were killed in the crossfire. Investigations drew a blank because people were too frightened to give evidence. Meanwhile,

the reaction against the JVP had begun in a small way. A man had been shot dead in Morawaka in early January and a board placed near the corpse read: "Death to JVP'ers." This was the first of the "retaliatory killings by vigilantes" which were to gather momentum during 1988 and wreak havoc within the JVP. In Tangalle, a body of a JVP activist was found stabbed to death and face partially burnt. A board placed near the dead body read "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." In late January 1988, Gunasena Warnapatabendi, an area leader of the JVP was killed in an STF operation in Beliatta. A temporary but sharp drop in JVP activity was reported from the South. Killings were however reported from Tangalle, Akuressa and Matara. On February 1 1988, an assistant lecturer of the Ruhuna University Mr. Satyapala Wannigama was reported to have disappeared. He had been abducted and killed by unknown persons. The JVP student wing later named Ruhuna University as the "Satyapala Wannigama University" by way of honouring their fallen comrade.

Meanwhile, the Private Medical College issue dragged on, and caused unrest in the health sector. In early February, the MEP, CP, SLMP, ELJP and NSSP protested against the awarding of the MBBS degree to the NCMC and they declared their support for the stand taken by the GMOA and the Medical Students Association. The JVP had by this time issued orders for all those holding office in the government in various capacities to resign. Scores did, and they put up banners in front of their houses to announce that they had done so. The Panadura Urban Council chairman had resigned without giving any reason. In an unusual move, a bhikku replied to the DJV in a press statement saying that he held certain posts only for the purpose of social service and he went on to enumerate the work he had done for the people by utilising the posts he held. The JVP had by now made significant inroads into the health sector utilising the NCMC crisis. Using these contacts, especially among the hospital minor staff, the JVP rescued a hard core JVP'er from the accident ward where he had been brought with a spinal ailment. A JVP hit team stormed the ward in broad daylight, stabbed and assaulted the four guards, grabbed their weapons and fled with the prisoner. The prisoner had been chained to the bed and the team had to spend about ten minutes trying to get him free. This was one of most daring of such escapades reported in the city. It was

also one of the most successful since neither the attackers or the rescued patient could be traced thereafter.

An attempt was also made on the life of the People's Bank Chairman S.G.T. Fernando. The University of Ruhuna called a strike demanding that Satyapala Wannigama be released and that the IPKF be sent back. The University of Peradeniya also struck work demanding a postponement of examinations. The University of Peradeniya closed down after this and the Vice Chancellor Prof. Panabokke expressed his desire to resign. There was nobody willing to take his place, a normally coveted post. The Matara Urban Council was attacked with grenades and nine people injured including B.Y. Tudawe, a Communist Party stalwart and a former Deputy Minister of Education. Two Police constables were shot dead in Tangalle and Beliatta. An STF constable was killed at Tissamaharama. An Army Lieutenant was also killed at Akuressa while trying to defuse a bomb. Doctors once again called a token strike over the NCMC issue. The JVP imposed a ban on Sinhala New Year festivities and in mid-April a threatening letter was circulated to shops in the South to close down before the festive season. The Katunayake Air Force Base was attacked for the second time unsuccessfully. A police patrol was attacked at Kochchikade. A SLTB bus was set on fire in Kamburugamuwa. Thereafter, buses plying on the Southern routes were sent in convoys with army protection. In April 1988, the first Provincial Council elections were held in the North Western, North Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. These elections were banned by the JVP and boycotted by the SLFP, MEP and ELJP. Despite this, the voter turnout was a satisfactory 61.49 per cent.

On May Day 1988, the UNP postponed their rally and only the SLFP and the USA held any meetings. The District Minister for Galle G.V.S. de Silva was shot dead. The man behind this killing was a JVP "superteam" man from Weligama known as Jayalath. Within the party, he was known by the name of "Sudu Mahattaya". This same man also led the attack on D.I.G. Udugampola's ancestral home and killed his mother, brother and two young nephews.

The University examinations scheduled for May 3 at the Universities of Colombo, Ruhuna and Peradeniya were not held owing to threats from the JVP. At Ruhuna, not a single student turned up for the examination. At Colombo, some students arrived

but walked out after Karunaratne, a Law Faculty student and a key JVP activist had mounted a table and quivering with rage, had threatened to kill all those who sit for the exam. At Peradeniya however, the final year batch of the Science Faculty braved death threats to sit for the exam while all others yielded to JVP pressure. Earlier the JVP had sent threatening letters to the academic staff in the Universities not to turn up to supervise the examination. At the Colombo University, a Jathika Chintanaya student leader who was at that time very thick with the JVP, had tried to remove the trousers of the head of the Commerce Department saying that if he could supervise exams when the country was in such a state, then he was totally shameless and therefore did not need his clothes. The staff issued a statement deploring this act of humiliation perpetrated on a senior academic.

35. The Great Hoax

In May 1988 there occurred a bizarre incident which has not been fully explained yet. This was the pact signed by the then Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali and K.C. Senanayake who purported to represent the JVP. K.C. Senanayake was a student of the Law Faculty of the Colombo University and noted to be an eccentric. He was over thirty years old when he entered University and had earlier been an English teacher. Hailing from Medawachchiya, he was from the same village as H.B. Herat, the JVP politbureau man. Being of about the same age as Herat, perhaps they would have gone to school together. One of K.C. Senanayake's particular idiosyncrasies was to claim that he was a nephew of Maitripala Senanayake and that he stayed at Maitripala Senanayake's house which he said was somewhere in Jawatte or thereabouts. Some believed it and others did not take much notice of it. Anyway, he was able to make friends with a girl from the coveted Law Faculty English medium batch with his claim of eminent family background.

Thus when the Government-JVP pact was announced, many members of the ISU, especially those in the law final year batch to which K.C. himself belonged, could hardly believe their eyes. Lo and behold, it was the campus clown appearing on TV with the high and mighty! What many people did not know about K.C. was that he was a master forger and con man. He behaved like an idiot in everyday life. But once he had got a bee into his bonnet and had started on a mission, he carried it through

like an expert. The JVP in 1987-89 for its part, had a particular panache to organise and make use of such "sick minds" in their work. Many young men who showed signs of becoming compulsive murderers were taken into their military wing after a careful study of their backgrounds, and provided with the wherewithal to indulge in their inclination. It is obvious that their connection with K.C. Senanayake would have been based on this tendency to recruit psychopaths and misfits.

In 1985, K.C. was caught red handed while cheating at the 2nd year examination and suspended from attending University for three years. After this he lived on his wits and became a professional con man. He was held at the Remand Prison Colombo for some time over a fraud case. He had collected money from people on some pretext or another with a subscription list which bore the signature and official seal of Maitripala Senanayake which he had forged. After he was released from prison he was not heard of for some time and surfaced again only with the "pact".

K.C. had first approached Fr. Tissa Balasooriya with the suggestion that the JVP was willing to talk to the government. Fr. Balasooriya had then phoned Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and fixed up an appointment for K.C. According to Mr. Athulathmudali, K.C. Senanayake had with him a letter from Upatissa Gamanayake giving him the authority to speak to the government on behalf of the JVP. The signature on this document had been proved beyond doubt to be authentic. The letter however, was on an ordinary piece of paper and not on a letterhead. It is of course obvious that the JVP would not have set up K.C. to do a job without first giving him the credentials to get into the act. K.C. had put forward demands which sounded genuine enough and promised to get the agreement of the JVP leadership. The conditions were that the government should lift the proscription and return to the JVP their Kohilawatte press, their 48 private buses and 2 cars and in exchange, the JVP would return 96 weapons taken from military installations, and 600 taken from civilians. The weapons on the suggestion of K.C., were to be surrendered to the temples. This latter point caused a hue and cry after the pact turned out to be a hoax. Pro-JVP bhikku's propagated the idea that it was Fr. Balasooriya who had put in that suggestion in order to embarrass and undermine the Buddhists. But it was actually K.C. who had made the suggestion.

The terms and conditions of the pact had been agreed to over a period of five days. The government would convey their position to K.C. and he would convey it to a JVP contact man who would in turn communicate the JVP position to him. Every thing had been in writing. At the end of these discussions, K.C. had taken the "pact" and vanished for some time and surfaced again with the signatures of Wijeweera and Gamanayake. When Mr. Athulathmudali had received the signed document, he had informed the President of the matter. President Jayewardene had removed the proscription. Later the Government analyst had reported that the signature of Wijeweera was definitely not authentic and that they could not be certain of that of Gamanayake. Both signatures were obviously good forgeries. The pact soon turned out to be a hoax. A couple of days later, Wijeweera wrote in to the papers to say that no such pact has been signed by the JVP. However, K.C. definitely had the go ahead from the JVP to talk to the government. The immediate islandwide cessation of JVP activities after the signing of the pact and the fact that K.C. could freely walk about even after the pact was declared to be false, is alone testimony to the fact that he had party sanction. The JVP however, for public consumption put up posters announcing the death sentence on "The imposter" K.C. Senanayake who had collaborated with the government in organising the fraudulent pact. K.C. himself had got frightened when he saw these posters and he had gone to see Fr. Tissa Balasooriya literally gibbering in fear. Later, he was arrested by the Army while trying to tear down anti-JVP posters put up by the ISU and was taken in for questioning. He was recognised only a week later and sent to Boossa. The leader of the JVP detainees was at that time a Colombo Campus student who knew K.C., and if the JVP wanted to do him harm, it could have been done at Boossa.

Thus the fact remains that K.C. definitely had the concurrence of the JVP in what he did. But the most perplexing question is, what did the JVP expect to get out of it? The lifting of the proscription and a very temporary easing of the pressure were the only benefits that accrued to the JVP through this escapade. Both were not of much use to them. When Rohana Wijeweera was asked about this episode after his capture in November 1989, he had laughed and said "K.C. Senanayake is a madman." One of the conclusions that can be arrived at is

that the JVP wanted to make monkey's out of the government by using K.C. This was the lighter side of their struggle! It is also likely that a section of the party wanted some respite to consolidate their position and wanted to halt activity for some time. K.C. might have been sent out as a decoy to see whether it was safe for some of the leaders to surface. The confusion of the signatures might have been an indication of different strands of thought in the party. All this however, is only speculation and the mystery of the K.C. Senanayake episode remains unexplained to date.

K.C. Senanayake knew how to size up a person and make him tantalizing offers that nobody could possibly resist even if they knew he was lunatic. Many months after the hoax he pulled off on the government, he was back to his old tricks. This time, his victim was none other than his own batchmate K.L. Dharmasiri who knew K.C. inside out and was one of the people who laughed loudest when the May "pact" was announced. After he was released from Boossa in January 1989, he had approached Dharmasiri and told him "I was badly beaten while in Army custody. I want to get out of all this and start life anew abroad. Can you help me in some way?" Dharmasiri had then told him that he would try to see what can be done if K.C. would divulge the whereabouts of certain JVP student leaders. K.C. had said that he would think it over and had made an appointment for another day. On the appointed day they had met and K.C. had asked Dharmasiri what he would get if he reveals a safe house where Gamanayake and a couple of other leaders met for discussion. There was also the possibility that Wijeweera might visit the place. Dharmasiri had conveyed this to a Defence Ministry contact and got the pledge of one hundred thousand US dollars and documents that would help K.C. to obtain citizenship in a western country of his choice. K.C. had also mentioned something about a caste clash among the JVP leadership with the Govigama's revolting against the other castes which dominated the party. The Govigama's had become uncomfortable with the JVP's policy of arming the non - govi castes and wanted to "democratise" the issue of weapons etc. The Defence Ministry had apparently been highly taken up by this bit of information. Thus the offer to K.C. was made as attractive as possible. In return, the Ministry wanted some conclusive proof that K.C. knew some safe houses. K.C. agreed to show Dharmasiri a couple of

places and had taken him round and round the city in buses, cars, trishaws and on foot but had not shown him anything. After sometime, Dharmasiri realised that he had been duped. It appeared that K.C. was a compulsive con man. He couldn't stop conning people any more than a kleptomaniac could stop stealing. After uttering many curses, taunts and jibes, Dharmasiri had parted company with K.C. at Borella. Thereafter K.C. was not heard of for some time. Much later, it appears that he was arrested by the Navy and detained at the Welisara Naval base.

36. The Shantha Bandara Episode

Shantha Bandara was arrested in Tangalle in mid-1988. His precise identity was not known at the time of his arrest and all his captors knew was that he was a very important member of the JVP. When the JVP got to know that Shantha Bandara had been arrested, they had tried to offer a bribe of Rs. one million to the STF officer concerned just to tell them where he was being held. But the officer had reported the offer to his superiors. It was after this that the defence establishment knew that they had got a very big fish. He was subsequently airlifted to Colombo and detained at the NIB headquarters. While Shantha Bandara was being held there, Malinga Herman Gunaratne, the author of the book "For a Sovereign State" had obtained permission from the President and the National Security Minister and had spoken to Shantha Bandara in the presence of Zerny Wijesuriya, the Director of the NIB at the STF camp in Kelaniya. Herman Gunaratne had spoken to Shantha Bandara on behalf of Ravi Jayawardene. Bandara subsequently agreed to speak to Ravi J. and a series of discussions were held at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel to which Shantha Bandara was brought under heavy security. During these discussions, Ravi had told Shantha, "You and I are not here today as politicians. If the Sinhalese do not get together, we will soon be under India. Your claim is that you are against India meddling around with our country. I too am against it".

Ravi Jayawardene took the JVP's professed patriotism at

face value. Perhaps he thought that the JVP would be seriously interested in opposing the Indians. He expected the JVP to go into the dense jungles of the Vanni regions and actually fight the Indian army the way the LTTE was doing. Ravi J. told Shantha Bandara, "If you really want to take on the Indians, you should be in Vavuniya, you should not be killing our own people. We'll fight together! I will give you automatic weapons, I will give you training, and I will even lead you in the field". Shantha Bandara had asked "then Mr. Ravi, how about the government?" to which Ravi J. had replied "did the LTTE start with the government's help?" Ravi J. also offered to talk to Wijeweera and was willing to guarantee his security if he came to talk. In order to convince Shantha Bandara of his bona fides, Ravi J. had shown him several albums of photographs of the way the Eastern Province Sinhala peasants had been armed by him to resist the terrorist attacks of the LTTE. At the insistence of Ravi Jayawardene, Shantha Bandara was released from the Welisara Naval base. As Mr. Athulathmudali put it later, "Ravi convinced me on this matter". Shantha Bandara had refused to be released to anybody except to Mr. Herman Gunaratne. So both had got into an STF jeep and Herman Gunaratne had taken Shantha to his home in Pitakotte where a press conference had been arranged. After a few days, Shantha Bandara vanished from his home again to go underground and resume party activity. Later, he wrote a letter to Mr. Herman Gunaratne which is excerpted below. It was a long rambling letter written in the sickly sweet sanctimonious fashion adopted by the JVP when they put on the "martyr airs".

*Colombo
November 19th*

*Dear Mr. Herman Gunaratne,
I have received all your letters and messages, I am thankful for these. I regret not having been able to respond earlier. I have been placed in a very difficult position as a result of the teacher who was arrested with me, not being released. Though I have been released, I am sure you realise the difficulties I face. I regret not having a chance to meet and talk to you.
Those who opposed my being released are now on the lookout for me. This situation has arisen because there are elements within the government who do not desire peace.*

Why is it that those who started the problem are not taking steps to solve it ? Since the lifting of the proscription on the party, there have been many violent acts against us...If an honest attempt is made to restore peace, it may prove to be fruitful. I have reported to the party about our earlier conversations. The party has conveyed to me certain matters that should be brought to your notice.

- * Repeal the emergency.
- * Abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act..
- * Release all political prisoners unconditionally.
- * All illegal armed groups should be disbanded.
- * Parliament, Provincial Councils and all local bodies should be dissolved.
- * The President should step down and an independent caretaker government should be formed under the most senior member of the Supreme Court and,
- * Both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections should be held under this caretaker government.

Sgd. Shantha.

Shantha Bandara also conveyed the JVP demand that the "Invading Indian Army" be sent back and the Sri Lanka Army be deployed to provide security in the North and East. Despite the sanguine expectations of honest patriots like Ravi Jayawardena, it was plain that the JVP never even considered taking on the IPKF or even the Tamil terrorists by themselves. They wanted to get their dirty work done by the security forces. Hence the demand that "the Army be deployed to provide security to the North and East". It was to be a patriotic war by proxy. The forces were going to have the singular honour of laying down their lives for the country! At one point when Ravi J. had asked Shantha Bandara what they intended doing with the LTTE once they were in power, Shantha had replied "Oh we'll take care of that problem in a week!" But he had not specified how. In his anxiety to get rid of the IPKF, Ravi J. seems to have seized on the JVP as a potential ally. But he was later to bitterly regret having taken the JVP's rhetoric at face value without making a proper study of the organisation and its leaders. What follows is Ravi Jayewardene's reply to Shantha Bandara's letter to Herman Gunaratne.

Ravi Jayewardene,
No. 66 Ward Place,
Colombo 7.

Dear Shantha,

I have read your letter to Mr. Herman Gunaratne with interest, and I feel that I should bring certain matters to your notice.

Firstly, I have had to face innumerable accusations regarding your release as the situation in the country has deteriorated since, with the stepping up of the activities of your party and the escalation of violence and killings. When we spoke last, I believed that we had both resolved to see that no more lives were lost unnecessarily in this country of ours. I do not think your party will achieve successful results by basing your actions on such a non-humanitarian attitude. It is not a done thing to sacrifice human life to gain political power because life is much more precious. If you believe that the killing of innocent people because they work for the government or because they do not yield to a threat that asks them to stop the work that brings them their daily wage will lead your party towards the support of the masses, then you are living under a delusion.

I am aware that Sri Lankan mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters have been done to death by your party comrades and I am also sorry to note that the number of such families massacred is very large indeed. Having known you and your concern for your own family, I find it hard to believe that you belong to a party such as this, an organisation that is attempting to achieve its objectives through "rivers of blood and mountains of bodies." I must also emphasise that I am against killing of any kind whether they be done by your comrades or by the armed forces, therefore I am requesting you to bring your party towards some dialogue which I can still arrange with the Hon. Prime Minister, before it is too late.

If by some chance your revolution is successful and Sinhala brothers fight brothers, Sri Lanka would be turned into slaves of the Indian Empire. The Indians are in constant preparation and are waiting to send their troops across the Palk Straits.

Your party will provide the Indians with a superb excuse to consolidate their hegemony over the Indian Ocean Zone. I do not think your leaders want to provide them with such an opportunity. Therefore, I say to your leaders, don't be intoxicated with the prospect of capturing power. Open your eyes and look at the dangers facing the country.

You say in your letter that any genuine attempt at peace would not be in vain. What more genuine attempt at peace can be made than your release? If your release is not followed up by a genuine attempt at finding a peaceful solution, then certainly your release becomes a joke for which I have already had to take the responsibility. You must realise that according to the law of this country you were not a political prisoner but one who had been arrested for committing a criminal act of leading an armed attack on a military establishment and stealing weapons. However, if after your unconditional release an attempt had been made to talk to myself and Mr. Herman Gunaratne, we could have been the mediators for your leaders to talk to the government to see whether your demands could be met and some solution reached. This did not take place but instead violence increased and your party stepped up their rate of killings, and as a result today I stand condemned by the government as the person responsible for the escalation of violence in the country by releasing you. I have no power today to get Ruwan Ranatunga released or anybody else released, or to halt the onslaught of this government against the violence unleashed by your party. I am very sad that this situation prevails in the country today, but yet it may not be too late to see that this country does not get overrun and subjugated by India. The answer is in your hands.

Yours sincerely
Sgd. Ravi Jayawardene

Shantha Bandara was recaptured and killed in January 1990 by unknown persons.

37. The Plot against Ravi Jayawardene

After the brief cessation of hostilities on both sides following the signing of the "pact" between the government and K.C. Senanayake, the JVP commenced hostilities a couple of days later by killing a UNP organiser in the Buttala area. Another UNP candidate was killed in Beruwela. Five people were also killed when the JVP attacked a UNP PC candidate's house in Akuressa. The JVP was back in action with a vengeance. Meanwhile, the doctor's strike dragged on, seven hundred and fifty doctors, 400 nurses and 10,000 hospital workers were out on strike. The new UNP Secretary General Mr. Nandalal Fernando was shot and killed on May 20 1988. A rumour was afoot that Mr. Nandalal Fernando could have been saved if the health services had been functioning properly. Killings of UNPers and USA members were reported from Galewela, Morontuduwa, and Alubomulla. School children boycotted classes in Dickwella and Tangalle. A Police jeep was fired at in Angunakolapelessa. The entire family of a UNP PC candidate was murdered at Homagama and a government employee was shot dead at Dompe.

A spate of violence was reported from the South on the eve of the Southern Provincial Council Election in June 1989. The JVP had decreed that the first five voters would be shot. In Hambantota, an early voter was shot dead. A UNP PC member was also shot dead in Medirigiriya. Meanwhile, a spate of

strikes spread through the schools once more. Several Colombo schools were shut down after attempts were made to disrupt sessions. Students of several small schools in the Kandy district boycotted classes. One student was killed in Dickwella during a clash with the Police. Students in the South refused to give their teachers any assurance that there would be no more demonstrations. On June 27 L.W. Panditha, the Communist Party Trade Union stalwart was stabbed to death at Dematagoda.

In July, the Special Task Force was asked to pull out of Hambantota. They had already pulled out of the Matara district. The JVP launched an attack on the Wattagama bazaar killing two people and damaging several shops. It was said that this attack was motivated by the non-payment of extortion money to the JVP. By-elections to the electorates of Kekirawa, Katugampola, Ratnapura and Welimada were also held in July. Except for Ratnapura, all other seats went to the UNP. Ratnapura was won by Nanda Ellawala of the SLFP. In mid-July, there was another doctor's strike over the NCMC issue. DIG Udugampola's ancestral home in the South was attacked and his mother, brother and his brother's two children were burnt alive. Following this incident, a curfew was declared in the Matara and Hambantota districts. The Digana People's Bank was also robbed of an estimated Rs. 8 million.

The most notable incident during this period was the death of the lawyer Wijedasa Liyanaarachchi. The funeral was held in the South. Thousands of school children boycotted in protest against this killing and Colombo walls were covered with posters condemning it. In the South, bombs went off in several places and shops and government institutions remained closed. All transport had been halted. Coconut trees had been felled across roads and electricity posts torn down. At the time of this funeral, Mrs. Bandaranaike had been at a hotel in Tangalle having arrived there to address a series of meetings as a warm up for the Presidential campaign. Two JVP representatives had presented themselves at the hotel and given notice that since it was a day of protest, the scheduled meetings at Middeniya and Hakmana should not be held. These were cancelled accordingly. Chamal Rajapakse, Middeniya organiser for the SLFP had suggested to Mrs. Bandaranaike that she should go for the funeral. Mrs. B had declined. However, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike had agreed to the suggestion and had attended Liyanaarachchi's funeral.

Some time before the Wijedasa Liyanarachchi incident, a certain medical doctor had been arrested for allegedly plotting the murder of Ravi Jayewardene. This doctor according to security sources, had been a long standing member of the JVP and one of the mainstays of the intellectuals supporting the movement. He was involved in human rights organisations sympathetic to the JVP. He was alleged to have been involved in the plot to kill Ravi Jayewardene and his work place had been in a position to keep a tab on Ravi J's movements. Somawansa Amarasinghe had apparently met this doctor at his house and discussed the operation with him. The JVP had two bits of information about Ravi Jayewardene. One was that he never went around with an escort. The other was that he had his lunch everyday at a restaurant down Chatham Street in the Fort. The main problem they faced was that nobody knew what Ravi J looked like. Nepotism was never one of President Jayewardene's faults. JRJ's slogan at the 1982 Presidential elections that "he has no prince to crown as successor or any need to feather the nest of his descendants" was literally true. Ravi Jayewardene for his own part never thought of himself as a "crown prince" destined to inherit his father's mantle. Though the son of a man known to be one of Asia's most astute politicians, he has never shown the slightest interest in politics. He is a man of contrasts, at one and the same time a firearms expert and a meditation enthusiast given to long bouts of meditation in various hideouts here and abroad.

At no point during his father's tenure of office did Ravi J allow his photograph to appear anywhere. Nor was he seen at any public function with his father or hold any position of responsibility except that of security advisor to the President, the duties of which he dispensed in his characteristic anonymity. The only section of the general public accustomed to seeing him regularly were the Padaviya peasants! Thus, his would-be assassins had to first find out what the man looked like. This was no easy task. Ravi J was a simple man, soft spoken and with absolutely no air of "being important" about him. He never took power very seriously. He always drove his own car and went about all alone, though of course, being one of Asia's finest marksmen, he would have felt confident enough to handle any situation with the 9 mm automatic pistol he always carried about with him. Hence he never had an escort even during the worst days of 1988 and 1989.

The plan formulated by his would-be assassins was to identify Ravi J, follow him from Ward Place and kill him either at the restaurant in Fort or at the YMBA headquarters where he often went to meet monks arriving from the Eastern Province. However, the leader was arrested by the NIB a few days before the plan was put into effect. Ravi J had been duly informed of the plot and preparations were made to catch the culprits in the act. A mock up of the Chatham Street restaurant was arranged at the Kalutara STF camp and rehearsals were held and moves practiced by a team of STF men for one full day. This was known as "operation rice and curry". On the day the plan was to be carried out, Ravi J had walked in as a decoy and had his meal as usual. The special team was already in the restaurant. But no killers turned up. The arrest of the leader had warned them in time. The leader was later released as a goodwill measure to get the JVP to the negotiating table.

In October began an intensified round of JVP activity aimed mainly at disrupting the Presidential elections to be held in December 1988. In early October, a defeated USA PC candidate was killed in Godagama. Another defeated PC candidate was killed at Galle. At Dehiattakandiya in the East, the JVP had seized the weapons given to the peasants to repel Tamil terrorist attacks. Thereafter, the security forces had withdrawn all such weapons issued to the peasants. A main feature of the October agitation was the large scale involvement of school children. On October 3, about two thousand children from the elite schools in Galle, St. Aloysius, Mahinda, Richmond, Southlands Balika and Sangamitta Balika and Ripon Balika demonstrated in Galle. The children had left home on the pretext of going to school and had joined the demonstration. The significant fact about this was that most of those demonstrating were from the more privileged schools in the district. In Kalutara, about 1000 demonstrating school kids had been tear gassed and chased away by the police. Schools in Hambantota, Tangalle, Ambalantota, Tissamaharama and Debarawewa were also closed following agitation by the children. Demonstrations also erupted in Anuradhapura at St. Joseph's College and Anuradhapura Central. Demonstrating school kids had stoned a police patrol and injured six policemen. In Ambalantota, an Army detachment had been attacked with stones by demonstrating school kids. In Matale, students of St. Thomas', Wijeya College and Science College also joined in the street

demonstrations. In Matara, students of Rahula College and Sujatha Balika Vidyalaya were also tear gassed. Demonstrations spread to Colombo and Kandy as well, with Isipathana Vidyalaya and Vidyarthi College also joining in. Soon afterwards, all schools were closed indefinitely. Later it was announced that 115 schools would remain closed while others would re-commence work. Among the schools that were to remain closed were mostly the privileged schools in the various districts. In Colombo it was Ananda, Nalanda, Thurstan, D.S. Senanayake Vidyalaya, Isipathana, Mahanama, Ananda Sastralaya Kotte, Dharmapala Vidyalaya Pannipitiya and Prince of Wales Moratuwa. In Galle, it was Richmond, Mahinda, St. Aloysius, Ambalangoda Dharmasoka, Ripon Balika Vidyalaya. In Matara, it was Rahula, Sujatha Balika, St. Thomas' College and St. Thomas' Balika Vidyalaya. Later, when some schools other than these 115 reopened in mid-October, demonstrations erupted again. Schools that had not been previously affected by the unrest now came out on strike. In the Colombo district, Veluwana Maha Vidyalaya in Dematagoda, Carey College, Janadhipathi Vidyalaya Kotte, Lumbini Vidyalaya, Mahabodhi Vidyalaya and St. Thomas' and Samudradevi in Nugegoda demonstrated.

Most people began to read into the student demonstrations ideas that never existed. Some thought there were "root causes" for the children to come out. The crisis was of such proportions that people began to suspect deep things behind every simple occurrence. Nothing was uncomplicated anymore. Everything was fraught with unfathomable meanings. On October 7 1988, at a meeting in Mabile, Mrs. Bandaranaike hazarded the view that "the students were trying to restore democracy." She also said that "the students were at the forefront of the struggle to restore democracy and independence in Sri Lanka and that if the government postpones elections there would be another Burma! Nobody paused to think that the students were out only for a bit of fun. What does the average student, even those in the A/L's know about politics? During these student demonstrations one saw the phenomenon of primary school children waving black flags and crying "Pala baba apata epa!." They could not even pronounce "palath sabha" properly. Ever since, Provincial Councillors have been known tongue in cheek, as "pala baba's". Most of the kids had come out to have a bit of fun, to play truant from school and generally to throw discipline to the winds for a brief while.

Those from the elite schools were definitely out for this. It will be remembered that during the agitation by students against the white paper on education in 1981, which was led by D. M. Ananda then a Kelaniya Campus student leader, the students of Ananda College, Colombo remained aloof from what was going on outside. The reason was that they were already having their fun in a strike to oust a school official and no amount of coaxing by the University students could get the Anandians out.

In the South, the then Provincial Commander Brig. Algama took matters to hand in his characteristic manner. He summoned all the teachers of the leading schools in Galle and told them bluntly in Sinhala "those who can't control their pupils are like the urchins who look after buffaloes". One school principal who also happened to be a volunteer officer in the Army had then stood up and asked Brig. Algama "Have you ever considered the reasons and "root causes" for the children to strike?" Brig. Algama had snapped back "you sit down idiot!" This incident was highlighted in the press and accusations made that "educated people" were being treated like dirt by the Army. But there was plenty of justification for this approach. It was ridiculous to look for the "root causes" for school kids in elite schools to demonstrate. They were simply out for a bit of fun. Being of a naturally rebellious age, they were quick to respond to the call of the JVP, or any other rebel sources available. The students of elite schools all over the island responded in similar manner to the call of pro-UNP agitators in 1976 during the protests following the killing of the University student Weerasooriya.

Demonstrations in rural schools however, had a different dimension. Students especially at Advanced Level, are generally acutely aware of the discrimination against small rural schools in the allocation of resources and staff. Each district has its own elite schools and a lot of resentment is to be seen in the smaller schools at the second rate treatment they get. The JVP knew how to make good use of this readily available source of discontent. They had a deliberate policy of putting up posters in close proximity to schools so that an awareness of the JVP would enter the students minds during their formative years. By the time they were in the A/L's most would have through curiosity formed some kind of contact with the JVP. This was one of their most valued sources of recruitment. In some places, in the remote hinterlands of the South and Uva, striking school kids were heard

to cry, "Colombata Kiri Apata Kekiri." This was an expression of a genuine grievance over the discrimination practiced through the free education system. However, the October 1988 schools agitation was mainly a phenomenon centred around the elite schools in Colombo and the Provinces. There was also an element of elite conflict in this agitation since none of the English speaking "ivy league" schools like Royal, St. Thomas', Ladies College etc. were involved. Only the schools of the "Sinhala" elite were involved. This was again a ramification of the Jathika Chintanaya tendency.

38. The JVP "Trade Union"

While the schools boiled, the situation in the country as a whole deteriorated further. A Police commando and a soldier who went to attend the funeral of a relative were gunned down in Middeniya. A top education ministry official was killed in Weligama. The chief organiser of the NSSP in Horana was also done to death by the JVP. An unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of Shantha Premaratne, the leader of the opposition of the NCP Provincial Council. An assailant obviously unaccustomed to the T-56 rifle he was wielding, had sprayed bullets at Mr. Premaratne's office hitting everything and everybody except the target who emerged unscathed from the experience. The person standing next to Mr. Premaratne had dropped dead with a bullet in his head. Meanwhile, the JVP had ordered islandwide protests against the temporary merger of the North and East. Police fired on a demonstration in Amparai and injured about fifteen persons. The Matara district was placed under a 24 hour curfew after Police managed to disperse a massive anti-government demonstration, but not before three buses had been set on fire. In Matale, a demonstration by about 1500 people was also dispersed. The LTTE contributed to the general confusion by killing forty five Sinhala villagers in Anuradhapura. Two parcel bombs went off in Colombo but no one was injured. Urgent stocks of blood were sent to the South for those injured during the demonstrations. All transport was halted on October 10 1988, when the JVP called for an anti-merger hartal. The Kadugannawa

railway station was attacked and set on fire. A mass demonstration was also held at Menikhinna in the Kandy area. Menikhinna was a stronghold of the Batgam caste and always a hot bed of JVP activity. A reserve Police constable was beheaded in Matara. Four more killings were reported from Kamburupitiya, Ambalangoda and Wellawaya.

An interesting episode was reported from Meetiyagoda where villagers had beaten to death two JVP hit men and arrested another with one T-81 assault rifle when they had arrived to kill a native of a village in the area. When the assailants had arrived at the house of their intended victims, the occupants had raised cries for help whereupon the village folk had surrounded the place and severely thrashed all three hit men. Not being accustomed to the T-81 they had brought along, they were unable to shoot before the villagers were upon them. Two succumbed to their injuries and the other was handed over to the Police along with the T-81 rifle. Later however, most of the village youth responsible for this incident panicked and fled the village after the JVP issued them with death threats. A similar incident was reported from Colombo where an attempt was made on the life of a USA Provincial Councillor. The PCM had been sitting in his house with his father and brother when a T-56 wielding gunman had walked into the house. Before he could even lift his gun to fire, the father of the PCM had been upon him and the gun fell on the floor. The PCM had then whipped out his revolver and fired point blank at the head of the would be killer. Seeing what was coming, the would be assassin had begged for mercy shouting "buduammo maranna epo!" Commenting on this episode, "Ran Pilima" a collection of anonymous Sinhala poems published in February 1989 quipped as follows.

*He realised that he too had a right to live
only at the moment of death.
To provide them with this moment
is to give them wisdom
and succour to the country.*

Meanwhile, in the Moneragala district, a defeated UNP PC candidate was killed. An AGA's office employee was killed in Ransagoda. Two co-operative managers were shot dead. A spate of robberies was also reported from the South totalling altogether to about Rs. one million. The Police garage in Pallekele was

raided and five 303 rifles, a radio transmitting set and large quantities of Police uniforms were stolen. The JSS secretary of the Tyre Corporation was gunned down at his house in Maharagama. A PC attached to the Sapugaskanda counter subversive unit was shot and killed. Tudor Keerthiratne, an executive committee member of the UNP was shot and killed with his wife at Nawala. The reason for this had apparently been because Mr. Keerthiratne had taken several bus loads of UNP supporters to President Premadasa's inaugural rally in his Presidential election campaign in Kandy. Threatening letters by the JVP which had by now become routine, brought out demonstrators in Eppawela in the NCP. About three or four thousand had demonstrated carrying anti-government posters. Government establishments were closed in Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Matale, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and Panadura. Curfew was declared in the municipal areas of Galle and Matara. Nine persons were reported to have died in these disturbances.

Meanwhile, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, leader of the opposition had reported to Parliament that three students, Pathmasiri Trimavithana, Banduardene and Ranjith Perera had been abducted and killed in Ratnapura. Trimavithana was the Ratnapura district leader of the JVP's student wing and had been responsible in large measure for building up the JVP organisation in Ratnapura. The JVP had always been weak in Ratnapura. Trimavithana himself was not a native of the district; he was a native of Tissamaharama and a 2nd year Medical student of the University of Colombo. His two companions who died with him were accountancy students. Being a rich gem mining area, the people of Ratnapura apparently had lesser grievances than those in other areas of the Sabaragamuwa Province with the trickle down from the gem industry. Hence their commitment to politics never went beyond casting a vote. Outsiders had to come into the district to create a semblance of dissent. At the by elections held in the four electorates of Welimada, Kekirawa, Ratnapura and Katugampola in mid-July 1988, the JVP had decided to support the SLFP candidates. Thus Trimavithana had supported Mr. Nanda Ellawela. The dedication shown by the JVP youth at these elections in fact lulled the SLFP leadership into complacency and they took it for granted that the JVP youth would work for them with similar enthusiasm even at future elections. Trimavithana for

his own part, made good use of the election campaign to bring in JVP propaganda to Ratnapura.

The corpses of the three students were exhumed in Wellawaya. Susantha PUNCHINILAME, the defeated UNP candidate at the by elections, was suspected for these killings and taken into custody. The JVP organised a protest march in Wellawaya against these killings. PUNCHINILAME senior, who was then the Chief Minister of the Sabaragamuwa Province resigned owing to the scandal involving his son. The funeral of Pathmasiri Trimavithana was held in Colombo. The procession began from the Colombo Medical faculty where the decomposed corpse was displayed to the public through a sealed glass covering over the coffin. The JVP had ordered that all establishments close by noon so as to allow the public to pay their respects to the fallen student leader. Everybody who wanted to get into the good books of the JVP came for this funeral. Mere concern for human rights has never evoked much more than sympathetic comments. But here, various trade unions, professionals, student bodies, mass organisations, religious associations and even old boy associations of certain schools marched in the procession with prominently displayed banners so as to make sure that the JVP made note of their presence. Talking about and expressing concern about the JVP's human rights suddenly became a major issue and everybody seized on it as a risk-free method of ingratiating themselves with the "unknown gunmen". Nobody however, dared open their mouths about the violation by the JVP, of other people's human rights. The intelligence services video filmed the entire procession and this was used later to identify JVP activists. Informants with inside knowledge of the JVP were got down and given lists of names and told to identify the people as the faces appeared on the screen. This had proved to be quite a useful exercise.

The Trimavithana incident, coming so soon after the allegations surrounding the death of Wijedasa Liyanaarachchi and the arrest of Dr. Athula Sumathipala, proved to be a profound embarrassment to the government. On October 20, the government had suspended anti-JVP operations for one week and released fifty detainees as a goodwill measure. There was however, no response from the JVP. They only intensified their activity. Railway transport was made inoperative by sending threatening letters to railway employees. The Tulhiriya Textile Mill was closed down when workers who had reported for work had started shouting

slogans and lighted fire crackers. The Padukka police station was attacked and several weapons removed. A UNP branch meeting at Kotahena was attacked with hand grenades and seven people were killed. This meeting, which had been held on the second story of a building in a crowded section of Kotahena had been disturbed by three men, one of whom had been carrying a sub-machine gun. Confronting the assembled crowd the gunman had shouted "keep quiet or I'll kill you!" So saying, he had pulled the trigger, but the gun had jammed. Thereupon, another assailant had taken two grenades from a bag he was carrying and had lobbed them into the crowd and fled. At the Mattakkuliya SLTB depot, 150 workers stopped work after printed orders had been issued by the JVP. Meanwhile, the DJV declared November 3 1988 a national day of mourning for Trimavithana and Sumith Atukorala, the politbureau member of the JVP who had been killed earlier in Wennappuwa. The order issued by the DJV on this occasion was as follows.

***Joint Commanding Headquarters of the Patriotic People's Armed
Troops***

Order No. 14

My No. 0509

By order to all owners of business establishments and vehicles.

The following orders are issued in relation to the November 3rd National day of protest against the killing of Sumith Athukorale a great patriot and leader of the anti-imperialist struggle.... and the three students Pathmasiri Trimavithana, Banduwardene and Ranjith Perera of Ratnapura.

- 1. All shops, hotels, private industrial establishments and commercial establishments should be closed.*
- 2. All state institutions, and government industrial establishments, banks and offices should be closed.*
- 3. All state and private transport should stop.*
- 4. All fuel stations should close.*
- 5. No one should watch the government television or listen to the government radio.*
- 6. On the third November, everybody should switch off their lights and remain in darkness until 12.00 midnight.*
- 7. As a mark of respect for the patriots, all houses and institutions should hoist red and white flags.*

All Sri Lankan citizens should follow these orders. Nobody should be deceived by the false propaganda made in our name by the government. Those who mislead the public and all those who disobey these orders will be severely punished.

Sgd: Keerthi Vijayabahu
Supreme Commanding Officer,
Joint Commanding Headquarters of the
Patriotic People's Armed Troops.

This protest was a great success and everybody obeyed all orders to the letter. The streets were deserted and all business establishments and government institutions were closed. In Kandy, those who switched on their lights even for a few minutes soon had someone banging on their doors and shouting at them to switch the lights off. The JVP was closely monitoring their hartal. Seeing the success of their campaign of sabotage which reached its apogee with this November 3 "hartal" the JVP sought to do it in a systematic and organised way. Thus, they set up a new body known as the "Jathika Kamkaru Satan Madyasthanaya" (Centre for National Worker's Struggles) – an organisation soon to become notorious. Important members of the politbureau were allocated functions in the new organisation as follows.

Jathika Kamkaru Satan Madyasthanaya — Officials.

General Secretary: P.B. Wimalaratne.

Propaganda Secretary: Upatissa Gamanayake and D.M. Ananda.

Financial Secretary: P.B. Wimalaratne.

International Relations Secretary: Somawansa Amarasinghe.

Zonal leaders:

Colombo/Sabaragamuwa: D.M. Ananda.

South: Gamini Wijegunasekera.

Central: Manawadu.

Rajarata: Indraratne.

Uva: Aruna Wijesuriya.

For the purpose of organisation, work was divided into sectors:

1. State Sector: Ministries, Departments, Banks etc.
2. Private Sector: Free Trade Zone, companies etc.

3. Transport: Harbour, SLTB, Private transport, government railways.
4. Public Administration: Pradesheeya sabhas, Urban/Municipal Councils.
5. Energy and Public Utilities: Water, electricity, gas.
6. Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Rupavahini.
7. The Estate Sector: Workers.
8. Education: Teachers and minor staff of schools and Universities.

On November 1, the JVP had attacked the Pannala National Auxiliary Force training camp. An unspecified number of weapons had been removed. This was the biggest arms haul for the JVP exceeding even that of the Kallar Army camp attack an year earlier. The attackers had even left behind on their escape route, substantial numbers of guns which they felt were too primitive for them. For some time, there had been allegations that the North Western Province JVP cadres were being given second rate treatment by the central command. Weapons in this province had been woefully inadequate. The Pannala attack rectified the imbalance.

This was also a period of spectacular jail breaks. Over one hundred inmates of the Pelawatte Rehabilitation camp in Meegahatenna - most of them hardcore JVP'ers escaped through a tunnel they had cut. Prisoners staged demonstrations in Welikada, Badulla, and Bogambara prisons. Twelve were killed and 30 injured as Army commando's were called in to quell a prison riot at Welikada. The prisoners had chased away the prison guards and taken over the control of the prison. They had cooked their own food and run the laundry and formed committees to oversee the agitation. The Minister of Justice Mr. Nissanka Wijeratne and his Deputy Minister Mr. Shelton Ranaraja both resigned from their posts following the prison deaths. Mr. Nissanka Wijeratne sent in his resignation from Paris. A wave of panic had again begun to run through the UNP. Earlier, the Seruwila MP Mr. H.D.L. Leelaratne had sent in his resignation. The situation in October - November 1988 was unlike anything experienced ever before in Sri Lanka.

39. The Nemesis of Terror

The People's Revolutionary Red Army (PRRA) made its first appearance in October 1988. Huge handwritten "PRRA" posters were displayed all over Colombo with slogans like "Death to Wijeweera" and warning that "All supporters of the JVP would be crushed like flies and mosquitoes". The first killing by "PRRA" was reported from Matara in late November 1988. A man suspected of being a JVP'er was shot dead and hung on a fence near the Matara Hospital with a notice which announced that "this man was shot because he killed an innocent hospital employee". PRRA claimed responsibility. To all appearances, this was in retaliation for the killing by the JVP of a male nurse in the hospital, P.G. Premapala who was a member of the Communist Party and an official of the Public Services Nurses Union. Thereafter, such revenge killings increased tremendously. Bodies began to appear everywhere especially in the Southern Province with notices claiming responsibility by PRRA. This was the first of the "vigilante groups" which were to wreak havoc on the JVP in 1989. PRRA was followed a short while later by "Black Cats" and "Ukussa" which operated in the North Central Province and the Central Province respectively. In addition to this, there arose in 1989 another nameless and faceless force based in the Western Province and with groups operating all over the country which simply killed and killed without even bothering to claim responsibility. Only the fresh corpses on the roads, inside houses, hotels and workplaces bore testimony to the activity of this group.

PRRA had also been apparently putting into practice some of their blood curdling threats. A JVP colour offset poster put out in early 1989 depicted gruesome scenes alleged to be the work of PRRA. Naked bodies with gaping wounds and faces burnt beyond recognition, others disembowelled and beheaded. In one photograph, there were only two legs which had been chopped off, tied to a piece of string and slung across a wall. There was also a massive poster campaign by PRRA in the South. Posters began to appear for various reasons. Most often, it would be to countermand a JVP hartal order. PRRA posters threatened with death anybody who carried out the JVP's orders. If the JVP ordered the closure of anything, PRRA would demand that it should be kept open. PRRA never really killed any ordinary citizen for obeying JVP orders. But they would mete out some punishment like for instance ordering an errant shopkeeper to distribute a bag of rice free to passers by at a junction. But any suspected JVP'ers they got hold of were killed with impunity.

There was a great deal of speculation as to who was running PRRA. Some said the PRRA was not a real organisation but just a name used by everybody who wanted to hit the JVP. Others thought that PRRA was the military wing of the Independent Students Union. The reason why many people were erroneously led to believe that the ISU was behind PRRA was that such an organisation seemed to fit in with the attitude of the ISU towards the JVP. Thus when PRRA made its appearance, with its left-wing sounding name, everybody naturally surmised that the only left group that could organise anything of this sort would be the ISU. There were also many aggressive remarks made by K.L. Dharmasiri at various places, which to many frightened people, was a clear indication that the ISU wielded some unseen power. At the funeral of Jamis Athugala, Dharmasiri had stated in his speech "no JVP'er should be allowed to die of natural causes or accidents. They should all be captured and made to die of unnatural causes". Then again, referring to the killing of one Solomon Singho, a sixty five year old peasant activist of the NSSP at a commemorative meeting held in Kurunegala, Dharmasiri had stated "comrade Solomon Singho has shown us through example, the way the left should take in a crisis like this. During the second world war when the Russians joined the British and the Americans to fight against Fascist Germany, comrade Solomon Singho joined the allied Army and

fought against the fascists. It was only after he returned that he took to electoral politics with the LSSP. Following the example of Solomon Singho, we too should unite with the government forces and crush the JVP". Most of the left leaders were not happy with this piece of golden wisdom and a leading light of the NSSP was heard to comment that "Dharmasiri was formulating theory for the STF". At a time when almost everybody who spoke at the funerals of comrades killed never mentioned the JVP by name, and only referred to them as "unknown gunmen", Dharmasiri was openly calling on the people to turn on the JVP and kill them. Little wonder that he was identified as the leader of PRRA. Dharmasiri however, had nothing to do with PRRA. He had in fact gone around demanding weapons from various people in the government. But knowing the fanatical hatred the ISU had for the JVP, nobody gave him weapons. They were apprehensive of the repercussions of arming an implacable gang like the ISU. The government however, appears to have been willing to turn a blind eye to Dharmasiri's propaganda efforts against the JVP.

Information available now indicates that PRRA was in fact a creation of some left-wing activists. There was a genuine organisation. But nobody associated with any of the mainline left political parties, the LSSP, SLMP, CPSL or NSSP were involved in PRRA. Each of these parties however, had the usual quota of braggarts who would insinuate to people whom they wanted to impress, that it was they who were running PRRA. The moment PRRA announced its name, others who had been waiting impatiently to get at the JVP without the usual accusing finger pointing at them, soon took over. There was a time when everybody who had anything to do with anti-JVP operations did it under PRRA. This became so hackneyed that new names had to be used. Thus came the "Black Cats" and "Ukussa". The real PRRA was sidelined and left high and dry without any real contribution to make. But at the funeral procession of K.L. Dharmasiri at Kanatte, a young man was seen to carry an expensive wreath with the letters PRRA made out in red flowers. This apparently was the real PRRA come to pay tribute to the slain student leader who articulated a philosophy so close to theirs.

Many left wing political activists had plenty of reason to boil with resentment. Erasiri Mahindabahu (NSSP) Amara Wellappili an Attorney-at-law (LSSP) Dr. Nandasena Fernando (NSSP) S.B. Yalagama former SLFP MP for Rattota (SLMP)

L.W. Panditha (CPSL) George Ratnayake (CPSL) T.B. Wijesuriya (SLMP) Bandula Senaratne (ISU) Deva Bandara Senaratne (SLMP) Ananda Weerakoon (Peasants Congress) Ven. Pohodaramulle Pemaloka (SLMP) P.D. Wimalasena (LSSP) were among the many hundreds of left wing leaders, activists and sympathisers who were killed by the JVP in 1988 and 1989. "Ranpilima" a collection of anonymous Sinhala poems published in February 1989 expressed very poignantly the feelings of many young left wing cadres.

*The dead comrades
performed their duties to
usher in a better society.
Yet the murderers say
they are traitors.
They did not desire to see
anyone's children orphaned.
They never dreamt of
killing anybody's parents.
They discussed matters with
those who made political mistakes.
They never handed over discussion to the gun.
The patriots however
killed student leaders
and claimed to fight for
student rights.
They killed infants
and frail old people
and claimed to be
dedicated to the
welfare of the people.
Asked why they kill
invalids and cripples
they say,
"It is for the revolution"
Their politics is full of killings.
For what purpose?
At times there is no reason.
Then again, reasons are made up.
For addressing a meeting,
for delivering the eulogy at a funeral,*

for having been with them and left.
for subscribing to an ideology.
for not subscribing to their ideology.
Death! Death!
At times, the head is cut off
and separated from the body.
Hands and legs are chopped off.
Organs are cut off....
It is disgusting even to relate.
In a world inhabited
by such as these
can anyone else
build a pleasant society?
Lord Buddha! allow me
to lay aside metta
for a moment.
Lord Jesus! I beg your leave
to set aside love
for a moment.
Because I cannot do without
hate, fury and anger
to stop the executioners.
May hate become an Aryan virtue!
May fury become a blessing from God!
For the love of compassion
is it wrong to make
the bullet
my religion?
The moment this task is over,
I will give you my weapon.
Then you may shoot me
if you wish.
I will die with great joy
because by creating an
environment for others
to live in peace,
I have lived a full life.

Many young cadres of the left parties put their names onto the electoral lists at the Provincial Councils and Parliamentary elections in 1988 and 1989 in order to legitimately draw weapons

from the government. Some had an idea of using these weapons in anti-JVP operations. But nobody really did so, mainly because of restraining pressure from their party leaders and the need to retain the image necessary for electoral politics. These weapons were however, a deterrent to the JVP and saved thousands of innocent lives. But had even half the vast arsenal given by the government to the various left parties been used in anti-JVP operations, the JVP would have collapsed much earlier. The left parties made a mistake in leaving everything to the government and retreating with their weapons to their homes and offices. Thus the only people who benefited when the JVP was crushed was the government. The UNP has emerged stronger than ever. Everybody was at one time blaming the government for not being able to guarantee the security of the people. The unmentioned corollary to this was that the government should either crush the JVP or resign. They preferred to crush the JVP.

During this period, events apparently moved too fast for the myopic left. The problem had appeared and disappeared before they were even able to get their much vaunted "theoretical bearings." When Upatissa Gamanayake was arrested late in 1989, he had been asked who he thought was behind PRRA. Gamanayake's guess was that it was "Vasu's crowd". This showed how poor the JVP's intelligence network really was. Gamanayake knew that there was some left wing element in it. But he could not pinpoint who it was. PRRA was mainly active in the South. And as the Political cum Military Secretary of the Southern zone, what Gamanayake was saying in effect was that he did not know who hit him. Mr. Vasudeva Nanayakkara and his NSSP could never have been behind PRRA. In fact they virulently criticised PRRA through their newspaper "Haraya". Despite the beard and the fiery speeches Vasu is a good bourgeois gent who would be horrified to know that anybody suspected him of leading a band of ruthless killers! The reason why Gamanayake had thought Vasu was behind PRRA would have been because the NSSP had good links with several Tamil militant groups. Perhaps Gamanayake thought that the NSSP had obtained weapons from these sources and had started gunning for them. But the NSSP most certainly had nothing to do with PRRA. It is interesting to note here that Leon Trotsky to whose theories the NSSP purports to subscribe, was a good military thinker. In his autobiography "My Life" he advocated terrorism

to fight terrorism and in justifying the "red terror" he launched during the civil war against the enemies of the Russian revolution he states "it kills one and terrorises thousands".

40. The SLFP-JVP Honeymoon

In June 1988, President J. R. Jayewardene announced that Presidential elections would be held in December or January. By the end of September seven parties had decided to back Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike as their common candidate. These were the SLFP, MEP, ACTC, DWC, SLMC, ELJP and the Liberal Party. They had also requested the JVP to support this decision. In July, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike had asked the JVP to rally round the SLFP. Most SLFP leaders expected the JVP to back them at the Presidential elections, the way they did at the four by elections in July 1988. Talks were held with a representative of the JVP who it was said later, could have been Somawansa Amarasinghe appearing incognito. Even after the JVP began military operations in 1987, some JVP top rankers were in the habit of frequenting the homes of certain opposition politicians. One such contact man was described by eyewitnesses as having come in a brand new Japanese car and was bald, fair and well dressed. Judging by the physical description, this could only have been Piyadasa Ranasinghe. It is said that Piyadasa Ranasinghe was also involved in the negotiations with the seven party alliance. After the initial contact was made, the JVP interest was represented through the Inter-University Students Federation. After some time, there was growing confidence that the JVP would back up the SLFP. This became the subject of President Premadasa's inaugural address in opening his campaign in Kandy. He stated that the very people who accused him of helping the JVP to get back into the

mainstream of politics after 1977 are now seeking their co-operation. When he wanted the JVP to get into the mainstream of politics after the proscription was lifted in 1977, those now seeking the JVP's co-operation even branded him as one of the JVP leaders. He gave the JVP venues to address their meetings, but those who opposed them went and booked the same venues. Mr. Premadasa said he had witnessed the entire proceedings of the case against the JVP which was conducted by the former regime under the CJC. He had to get a pass to attend the courts with great difficulty. He said he attended the trials because he wanted to find out the cause for the youth to rebel. But that it was quite surprising that those seeking the assistance and co-operation of the JVP had quite conveniently forgotten that they were responsible for the thousands who were killed in 1971!

A commonly prevalent mistake was to see the JVP insurrection in the abstract, as a "youth rebellion." While actually the youth were in fact in revolt, in concrete terms, it was the youth organised under the JVP banner that was in revolt. The JVP as a political phenomenon was unlike anything experienced by politicians of the democratic mould. The JVP was a hard headed and cynical organization with a ruthless leadership. Noble sentiments were never taken into consideration in making vital decisions within the JVP. The rank and file may have joined out of idealistic sentiments but their leaders led them with a cynicism and ruthlessness inconceivable to politicians cast in the democratic mould. Few men could exercise the kind of despotic power wielded within the JVP by Wijeweera. And not many can motivate their party cadres to do what Wijeweera got his men to do. For instance, Wijeweera was at the Peradeniya University when the explosion at the JVP bomb factory at Nelundeniya took place in March 1971. When told by the students that all five comrades who had been inside had died, Wijeweera had said without batting an eyelid, "So what? People have to die in a revolution, stop worrying about it and continue with your work!" So saying, he had left the next morning for Badulla. While his "cool" can be appreciated, it goes to show the kind of hardheaded ruthlessness with which the JVP pursued their aims.

If they ever formed a link with anyone, it would only have been until they attained their objective. No alliance with however friendly a force was considered to be permanent. The SLFP for instance, would have been helped to the extent that it

would have weakened the ruling party. The by elections for the four electorates held in mid-July 1988 were not of any importance in bringing about a change of power, and the JVP made use of this opportunity to weaken the government. But when it came to a decisive national election, the JVP had other plans. The JVP always laboured under the notion that it was them and them alone who should exercise power; sharing it with anyone was inconceivable. Some people made a bad mistake in looking only at the JVP's youth and student base. In doing so, they tended to forget that the JVP was a distinctive organisation with a political programme of its own.

On October 18, the now eight party alliance (with the concurrence of the JVP) put out a statement condemning the "massacres unleashed by the state". They however not only omitted to condemn the JVP's own violence, but also did nothing to even remonstrate against the JVP's order issued a couple of days later for the people to agitate for general elections on pain of "severe punishment". In response to threatening letters sent by the JVP, thousands of workers walked out of their work places in Galle, Matara, Kalutara and Panadura. In Galle, thousands signed on at 10.00 a.m. and proceeded to the Dharmapala udyanaya to shout slogans. Only Health Department workers were asked to continue with their work. The bus services from the South to Colombo were disrupted. So were the train services. Some employees of the Ports Authority and Maligawatta Railway yard also held demonstrations. In Ratmalana some employees of a private sector firm were teargassed. But the seven parties were so taken up with their success in getting the JVP to talk to them that they chose to ignore what the JVP was doing.

The SLFP was so confident that the JVP would back them that Mr Anura Bandaranaike went around threatening the UNP with drastic measures. At a meeting in Badulla in October 1988, he stated that the UNP and the SLMP were sending threatening letters to the SLFP organisers not to hold public meetings under the threat of death. "They use the name of the JVP to send these letters. They have also threatened the people not to attend the meetings saying they will be attacked with bombs..... if they do not stop this nonsense immediately we will take steps to prevent Mr. Premadasa's meetings." He added that the SLFP was hoping for a peaceful election but if the UNP persisted in un-

democratic actions, the SLFP will be compelled to take drastic measures. How confident Mr. Anura Bandaranaike was of the JVP's support can be gauged from an incident some time earlier. After attending the funeral of Wijedasa Liyanaarachchi at Mid-deniya in September 1988, Mr. Anura Bandaranaike and his entourage had gone to the "Bamunusinghe Walauwa" at Walasgala for lunch. There they were joined by a certain correspondent of an international news magazine who turned the table talk to the JVP with a story about something that happened to him while on his way from Colombo to cover the funeral. His car had been stopped in Matara by two bhikku's and a youth who had recognised him to be a journalist. They had then identified themselves as JVP'ers and asked whether they could get a lift in his car. The journalist had complied and on the way he had asked them a few questions. Asked why they had engaged in all that destruction of public property they had said "since we don't have guns to fight against the government, we had to resort to sabotage". The curious journalist had then switched to politics and asked his companions whom they were going to support at the Presidential elections. They had said that they would not support anybody since it would not change matters much anyway. Asked as to whom they would vote for, the trio had said unanimously, the UNP since it was much easier to grab power from them if the UNP continued in power. At this point, Messrs Anura Bandaranaike and Halim Ishak had burst out laughing and said "what nonsense! The JVP will definitely back us at the elections!" It was plain that the SLFP leadership had swallowed the JVP's bait, hook, line and sinker. The JVP never had even the remotest idea of supporting Mrs. Bandaranaike at the Presidential elections. They only made feints in that direction in order to enlist the support of the SLFP to push the government into crisis.

The JVP's strategy of virtually horse-whipping the public into opposing the government, was seen to also have the sanction of the SLFP. Thus, the link with the JVP deprived the SLFP of a large number of votes of people who were not happy with what the JVP was doing. During those months, a lot of people felt that to elect the SLFP into power would be tantamount to bringing JVP rule upon themselves. On the other hand, the SLFP got no votes from the support base of the JVP either. They were taken out on a loose limb and dropped flat on the ground. In a sense, it was sheer lack of political acumen to imagine that

the JVP would help them to come into power. The JVP has never owed allegiance to anything but itself. And as far as the JVP was concerned, it was far more advantageous to have the UNP remain in power. Had the SLFP won, this would have been a complete political change and would have retarded the anti-government momentum the JVP had built up by several years. Moreover, such a political change would have provided legitimacy for a severe crackdown by the State against the JVP. The JVP apparently never forgot what happened to them at the 1970 May elections when they supported Mrs. Bandaranaike to throw the UNP government into crisis and the SLFP won state power contrary to their expectations, thus taking the wind out of their sails. They did not want the UNP to be defeated in 1988 the way it was in 1970. This does not necessarily mean that the JVP supported President Premadasa. Their idea was to scuttle the entire electoral process and create a situation where there would be no legitimate government in the country.

There was also the fact that the JVP lived in mortal fear of Mrs. Bandaranaike's aristocratic arrogance. They were convinced that if madam came into power, she would hand over matters to the military and stay in the background as happened in 1971. H.B. Herat had summoned a meeting of full-timers in the North Central Province and told them in explaining the party position on the Presidential election that it was advantageous on many counts if the UNP continued in power. On the one hand, the UNP and its policies would remain the same and they would be able to continue their agitation. They also felt that as an individual, President Premadasa would be far more lenient towards them than Mrs. Bandaranaike. They wanted to utilise to the maximum any leniency shown by the government towards them. The JVP expressed their opinion of the SLFP in the following terms in a leaflet published on November 23 1988.

"The patriotic people are aware that the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna suggested that a United Front for National Emancipation be set up to agitate against the Jayewardene - Rajiv Gandhi pact at the very time it was signed over an year ago. While making this appeal publicly, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna also wrote to the leaders of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Eksath Lanka Janatha Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna inviting them for this. At this stage Mrs. Bandaranaike proclaimed herself

as the Presidential candidate and commenced propaganda work. Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike and her relations hope to win votes not on their merits but on the demerits of the Jayewardena's. They hope to win votes by selling the dead bodies of the members of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna who have laid down their lives for the rights of the nation and the motherland. Jayewardene did this in 1977. What Sirima is attempting to do today is the same. The Sri Lanka Freedom party leadership which looked on helplessly as the Jayewardene-Thondaman illegal fascist clique flouted the democratic rights of the people one by one, betrayed the country to the Indian imperialists, and postponed elections have acted with a clear conspiratorial intent. This was to mislead the people by utilizing the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and somehow bring her family clique into power. In the meantime, the leaders of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party acted in conspiratorial fashion in not agreeing to a common set of principles and a common programme. Today the policies of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party are the same as those of the UNP. Not only has Sirima Bandaranaike accepted the black market policy of Jayewardene's open economy, she even hopes to have it implemented by Ronnie de Mel, the very man who implemented it under Jayewardene. For this reason, she has opposed even a transitory mixed economic policy. Even as regards foreign policy, she has promised Dixit that she would continue Jayewardene's pro-Indian foreign policy. Hence she did not agree to an independent foreign policy which protects the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the country. She does not like to give the people their basic rights. So she was unable to agree even to a minimum programme for democracy."

"The national question and other problems attained today's crisis proportions because of the wrong policies of the UNP as well as the SLFP and their lacky's the Samasamaja and Communist Parties. Therefore, the Bandaranaike's are as responsible as the Jayewardene's for today's destruction in Sri Lanka. Just as the Jayewardene's could not solve any problems of the country, the Bandaranaike's are also unable to solve a single problem. Just as they deceived the people in 1970 saying that they would get rice from the moon, they try to mislead the people claiming that they have a secret programme to solve the national problem. This is because they do not have any such programme. Moreover, in order to get votes from the North and

win the election somehow, they are having secret discussions with the Tigers."

This rather unflattering tirade against the SLFP was caused by not having agreed to some points put forward by the JVP. In a leaflet put out on September 25 1988, the JVP suggested that in order to have a just, democratic and legal election, the Presidency should be vacated and a senior member of the Supreme Court appointed to act in his place. Parliament should be dissolved and a temporary government formed. The Provincial Councils should be dissolved. This was the constant refrain of the JVP in those days. The point they harped on most was the vacation of the Presidency and the appointment of a Supreme Court judge to act in his place. The JVP accused the SLFP of purposely prevaricating and stalling for time by having endless discussions with opposition parties until the onset of the election date without giving a firm commitment to these demands. In the same publication, the JVP warned that they would not accept the result of any election held without these two basic demands being fulfilled. They also called upon the genuine opposition parties and the patriotic people not to be a party to such a deceitful conspiracy and to continue to agitate for a free, fair and legal Presidential and General Election.

The JVP rejected the SLFP openly when it became plain that the SLFP leadership was not willing to go the whole hog with them. The SLFP agreed to come forward for Presidential elections even with the President still in office and the Parliament sitting. At least a section of the SLFP leadership had realized by now that the JVP was not going to help them into power. And they realized that the demand that the President step down and Parliament be dissolved was only to create a power vacuum for the JVP to come into power. Considering the situation which developed in the last months of 1988 it is obvious that no Supreme Court judge could have held the government together. Had the President stepped down and Parliament been dissolved, there would have been no election at all. The JVP would simply have taken over the reins of government. For a time, however, the JVP managed to get all the mainline opposition parties except the United Socialist Alliance to toe their line and ring their bells by holding out the tantalizing carrot of electoral support. The JVP never had many votes. But in 1987-89, the JVP had the power to order people on pain of "severe punishment" to vote for the

JVP's choice. Such was the effect of the terror they had unleashed on the public. The opposition also knew that the most valuable aspect of the JVP's support was this coercive power, which outdid anything the repressive machinery of the flabby bourgeois state could even imagine.

41. The Presidential Stakes

Within the UNP too there were problems about the selection of the Presidential candidate. Messrs Premadasa, Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake were all vying for the top post. Mr. Premadasa was however President Jayawardene's personal choice for the candidacy. Not only was Mr. Premadasa the most senior contender he also had as President Jayawardene had said to some close friends, qualities that entitled him to it. As one politico put it, the JVP made a bad mistake in killing Mr. Harsha Abhayawardene and putting Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne in his place. When problems cropped up in the party about the best candidate for the Presidency, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne had backed Mr. Premadasa "because he was a sure win". And he had managed to get the UNP leaders to agree to put forward Mr. Premadasa as candidate. According to this politico; "had Mr. Harsha Abhayawardene remained as Chairman and things gone on in the same old way, there might have been squabbles in the party and they would have never arrived at a good candidate". In addition to this there was another, perhaps unknown lobby for Mr. Premadasa inside President's House. This was Ravi Jayawardene. His influence over his father was of crucial importance in the final selection of Mr. Premadasa as Presidential candidate. His reason for being in favour of Mr. Premadasa's candidacy was mainly because Mr. Premadasa wanted to send back the Indian troops as fast as possible. And also Ravi J appears to have been of the opinion that Mr. Premadasa knew what he was about. The

No. 1 contender for the candidacy after Mr. Premadasa was Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, who in Ravi J's eyes was simply no comparison. It is known that Ravi J did not see eye to eye with Mr. Dissanayake on many points.

The period between the closing of nominations on November 10 1988 and the Presidential elections on December 19 was an extremely turbulent period. And the elections were held under circumstances never before experienced in the country. In their November 23 leaflet, the JVP had announced a ban on the Presidential election in the following terms.

"The Presidential election to be held by Jayewardene is a false election. This is being held on the instructions of Rajiv Gandhi in order to confirm Sri Lanka as a colony of India. This election is being held without vacating the Presidential office, without dissolving Parliament and utilising the powers of the surreptitiously constituted Provincial Councils. Moreover, nobody who is against Indian imperialism is allowed to contest. So whoever wins, the situation remains the same. All three contestants are representatives of Jayewardene's destructive policies. All three are representatives of Indian imperialism. None of the three can solve even one of the basic problems of the country."

"The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna will categorically reject any result emanating from this election, which is being held on the instructions of Rajiv Gandhi. It is further requested from all patriotic people that they reject the result of this false election, and refrain from participating in it and continue to struggle for a genuine election"

Nominations were handed over on November 10 under partial curfew in parts of the country. The JVP had organised the now familiar forced demonstrations. Hundreds of curfew violators were arrested and many were gunned down in Tissamaharama, Moneragala and Tangalle. The bodies of those gunned down in the South were not handed over to their next of kin. Meanwhile, the JVP had attempted to halt transport and fuel supplies to the provinces. The Army was moved in to operate buses and distribute fuel. The Navy took over the security and control of the Colombo Port. Five SLTB drivers were gunned down in the week following nominations for not obeying the JVP strike call. An engineer of the Ports Authority was gunned down at Kotte. The inaugural rally of the SLMP was bombed at Grandpass. Power supplies to Galle and Matara were disrupted.

Work at election offices in the South were crippled. The distribution of ballot papers were affected because transport and postal services were disrupted. Galle was completely crippled with all government and private institutions closed. The principal of Yatagala Maha Vidyalyaya was beheaded and five others shot dead. Meanwhile the Ven Palipane Chandananda, Mahanayake of the Asgiriya Chapter issued a call which by now had become a cry in the wilderness. "Stop the killings - bring back normalcy". This was made in the abstract without mentioning any names, and had become more a matter of form and propriety. Nobody actually believed it would be heeded.

Earlier, in October, the Mahanayake theras of the Malwatte and Asgiriya chapters and of the Amarapura and Ramanna Nikayas had made a statement requesting the President to dissolve Parliament and hold both elections under a caretaker government. This was basically in accordance with what the JVP wanted. Mrs. Bandaranaike also latched on to this and called on the President to dissolve Parliament and the Provincial Councils, relax the emergency, disband all para-military groups and release all political detainees and students before elections were held. Very soon the JVP had a "chorus line" on the election issue with almost everybody articulating their demands with one voice. On November 1, a body known as the National Bhikku Federation convened a meeting at the Vidyodaya Pirivena in Colombo and called for the holding of both elections together, the dissolution of Parliament, and the abolition of the Provincial Councils. This meeting had been convened by the Chancellor of the Ruhuna University Ven. Parawahera Pannananda and Ven. Itthepane Dhammalankara. Towards the end of October, the seven party alliance of the SLFP, TC, MEP, ELJP, SLMC, LP and DWC put forward ten demands among which were, that the country be governed by an interim council of representatives of political parties until the conclusion of both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the suspension of Provincial Councils and the dissolution of local bodies of which the terms had been arbitrarily extended.

These demands became a convenient bandwagon even for the ordinary man on the street who desired to be somehow delivered from the plight he was in. The prevalent attitude appeared to be "do something for god's sake! Give over power to the JVP if necessary, but save us from this harassment!" At the end of November 1988, the State Administrative Services Union

wrote to the President to say that threats and intimidation were becoming a bar to their work and that the government should accede to the call of the Mahanayakes. They suggested that;

- a) Parliament be dissolved with immediate effect.
- b) Appoint an interim cabinet acceptable to all sections.
- c) Conduct Presidential and General Elections under this interim government.
- d) Announce the date for holding general elections.

Soon afterwards, nineteen key trade unions called for the dissolution of Parliament. They claimed that the government which was responsible for maintaining safe working conditions has no right to endanger the lives of the workers by compelling them to work without adequate protection. The unions had written to the President demanding that the government yield to the overwhelming weight of public opinion in the country by immediately dissolving Parliament and ensuring free and fair elections. The members of these unions had been threatened by various groups with dire consequences if they perform their normal duties and in some cases, the threats have been translated into concrete action. On the other hand the letter added, their members have been threatened, harassed and humiliated by the security forces who demand the performance of various duties regardless of the prevailing circumstances. The unions which appended their names to this statement were among the most powerful in the country. The GMOA, Ceylon Bank Employees Union, (CEBU), Union of Post and Telecommunications Officers (UPTO), Ceylon Electricity Board Engineers Union, Statutory Boards and Corporations Engineers Union, Sri Lanka Posts and Telecommunications Services Union, Sri Lanka Ports Authority Technical Staff Officers Association, Federation of University Teachers Associations, Ceylon Electricity Board Technical Officers Union, Central Bank Executive Officers Union, Irrigation Department Engineers Union and others.

At this time, trusted friends began to ask President Jayewardene "Your Excellency, is this a time to hold elections?" Two prominent individuals claiming to represent a certain opposition political party approached President Jayewardene and suggested to him that in view of the threat posed by the JVP, he should declare himself President for life with the leader of that opposition party as Prime Minister. Coming from the anti-UNP opposition, this was a unique and unprecedented move. Before President Jayewardene could even collect his thoughts on this un-

expected suggestion, Ravi Jayewardene who happened to be there had told his father "you shouldn't even be considering this without Mr. Premadasa's presence. He's your candidate and he's out in the field campaigning despite everything". In the family centred politics of Sri Lanka, it is an unusual thing for a son to oppose the suggestion that his father be declared President for life especially when the suggestion is made by the main political opponents of the regime. But that was the Jayewardene mind. To Ravi Jayewardene, President Jayewardene was simply his father, not an endless source of patronage. Thus Ravi J had no need to look at politics in terms of personal advantages. He on the contrary, appears to have been more interested in the policy. Firstly, he wanted to get the IPKF out of the country. Secondly, he wanted the security of the Eastern Province Sinhalese guaranteed. His pet projects during his tenure as Security Advisor to the President was to form the Special Task Force and to arm the Sinhala peasants in the East. In one of the ironies of politics, the father had to sign away most of the son's achievements with the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. The STF was withdrawn from the Batticaloa District and the Sinhala peasants were disarmed. This in his view was going to have disastrous repercussions on the country, and his fears became real with what the Madras Regiment and Major Muttiah did to the unarmed peasants in Trincomalee in October 1987. Hence his backing of Mr. Premadasa's candidacy even against that section of the opposition who preferred his father to remain in power.

Meanwhile, the situation in the country continued to deteriorate. The SLMP rally at Kadawatha was attacked and politbureau member Deva Bandara Senaratne was killed. At the moment he was struck by the bullets he had been concluding a tirade against the JVP. The assailants had fired at the stage from a speeding vehicle. They had also flung a few hand bombs. Detention centres were opened in various parts of the country to hold public servants and to bring them to work. Col. Algama had opened one such centre in Boossa to get the public servants to work. They were detained at these camps, taken to work by the Army and brought back to the centres after work. Even senior state officials were not immune to this. Things were beginning to border more and more on the burlesque.

The JVP was also becoming more audacious. In a daring escapade, a JVP gang masquerading as military personnel had

freed five of their comrades from the Bogambara prison. The Welikada jail was also attacked and scores of JVP prisoners escaped. This had been done with inside help from JVP infiltrators among the Air Force personnel who had been guarding the Welikada prison at that time. A hole had been blasted in the wall by a 20-30 strong JVP rescue party and the prisoners fled through the opening. This happened just as dusk was approaching. Bystanders saw the escaped prisoners fleeing along the railway track behind the prison tucking their shirts into their trousers as they ran. The Ranjith Parakrama balakaya of the DJV accepted responsibility for the jail break.

At the Presidential elections held on December 19 1988, only 55% of the total number of registered voters turned out to cast their votes. This was one of the lowest polls at any major election in recent times. The JVP had done everything possible to scuttle it. Well over one hundred civilians died in JVP attacks in the 48 hours during which elections were held. After the elections, the DJV's Hambantota District bulletin "Ruhune Ranahanda" in its second issue for December 1988 announced in a banner headline "Another brutal President" and alleged widespread electoral malpractices. It announced in the editorial "*Premadasa has crowned himself through a despicable looting of the people's votes... we therefore appeal to the patriotic people to reject the results of this Presidential poll and come forward to drive away this vote robber*". After the Presidential polls, there was a distinct lull in JVP activity. Despite the ban on elections called by the JVP, the mere fact that it was held at all was a tremendous source of relief to the general public.

42. Between the Elections

The short interlude of peace after the Presidential elections was soon over and the JVP resumed hostilities. The emergency which had been in force from July 1983 was lifted in January 1989, and a large number of JVP detainees, about 1500 were released from the detention centres of Boossa and the Tyrone Fernando Stadium in Moratuwa. But the JVP resumed their killing of informants and political opponents. The Senkadagala UNP office which had been opened to co-ordinate election work was bombed and six persons died. A police sergeant was shot dead in Middeniya and a planter was killed at Elpitiya. Six members of a family supporting the NSSP were killed at their home in Pujapitiya in Katugastota. This had been a well planned operation. The assailants had come on two consecutive days in full Police uniform on the pretext of inquiring into an incident following a motor cycle accident. They had arrived on the third day and said they would like to check on the weapons Nissanka Karunatilake, one of the brothers in the family, had got for the Provincial Council Elections. Unsuspectingly, the householders had handed over their weapons. The assailants had then rounded up the four men present which included the defeated Provincial Council candidate and his brother-in-law Ananda Navaratne, a former leader of the NSSP's student-wing, took them down to an adjoining paddy field and shot them. Ananda Navaratne had been shot through the mouth. The killing of this family had been a big blow to the NSSP's electoral efforts in the Kandy district. Violent

incidents were also reported from Hakmana, Akuressa, Deniyaya and Kamburupitiya. A top-level meeting of the IGP, Army Commander and the Security Advisor to the President Gen. Cyril Ranatunga was held to discuss the escalating violence in the South.

During this period, SLFP Parliamentary candidates and supporters were killed by the droves. The attack on the SLFP actually began even before the Presidential elections. In October 1988, a SLFP meeting in Badulla had to be postponed due to a bomb attack on the men putting up the stage which killed three people. "Green Tigers" were suspected to have been behind it. But there were also rumours that it had been done by the regional balakaya of the JVP which had by then made it clear that they were not going to support the SLFP at the elections. On the day before the Presidential elections, the SLFP's chief organiser in Dambulla was also shot dead. This was followed by a spate of killings of SLFP Parliamentary candidates in the interval between the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Indrapala Abeyweera, SLFP candidate for Kalutara, Hussain Hajjar a candidate for Matara, lawyer Sepala Ratnayake candidate for Hakmana were among those killed in addition to scores of SLFP supporters during this period. Other than the JVP, there were plenty of others with a grouse against the SLFP. And there was a lot of confusion as to who was behind these killings. For some of these, the JVP was definitely responsible. A lot of people believed that the killing of Indrapala Abeyweera was done by interested groups other than the JVP. But it so appears that this was done by the JVP. A SLFP supporter by the name of Martin had helped the JVP to do the job. This was at a time when SLFP organisers had neither weapons nor security. Hence they were frightened of the JVP and took precautions not to offend them. Hence when Martin had approached Mr. Abeyweera and told him that the area leader of the JVP wanted to meet him, he had immediately agreed. Mr. Abeyweera was killed while on his way to this meeting. The vehicle they were travelling in was driven by Mr. Soysa himself a candidate for Parliamentary elections, and Martin accompanied them as guide and contact man. On the way, a motorcycle had suddenly overtaken them and blocked the road. The pillion rider had then fired a blast from a sawn off shotgun which smashed the windscreen and killed

Mr. Soysa. He had then fired a pistol at Mr. Abeyweera and also killed their accomplice Martin so as not to leave any evidence.

Two weeks prior to the General Elections, the JVP again escalated attacks. They had made a declaration banning the election. The UNP office in Weligama was bombed and one person died. On February 1 and 2, 35 people had been gunned down by the JVP in Tangalle, Galle, Kosgoda and Devinuwara. The Susil Wickrema balakaya had accepted responsibility for some of the killings in Matara. Considering the security situation in the South, a top-level meeting of the Defence Secretary Sepala Attygalle, The Security Advisor to the President Gen. Cyril Ranatunga, the Commanders of the Army, Navy, Air Force and the IGP decided that the troops withdrawn from the South after the lifting of the emergency should be re-deployed there as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the attacks on the SLFP continued. The SLFP inaugural rally for the General Elections at Hingurakgoda was attacked. And Mrs. Bandaranaike had barely escaped death. Stones had been thrown at the stage first. Former Petty Officer Silva who was a bodyguard of Mrs. Bandaranaike and was wearing a bullet-proof vest had stood in front of her in order to ward off the stones. Suddenly, a smoke bomb had been thrown onto the stage and the whole place was covered with thick smoke. Then came the sound of automatic gunfire and everybody ducked for cover with "PO" Silva covering Mrs. Bandaranaike. Two hand grenades were also flung onto the stage. One exploded and the other was found with the pin only half pulled out. This was picked up and flung aside by Udyama Niyathapala. The gunmen had mistaken Mrs. Lanerolle, a friend of Mrs. B who had accompanied her to this meeting, for Mrs. Bandaranaike and fired at her injuring her hand. Mrs. Lanerolle had been dressed like Mrs. B in a blue saree. At this stage, everybody had started firing, the soldiers detailed to guard Mrs. Bandaranaike, the policemen on duty at the rally and the private guards of the SLFP organisers had all opened fire more out of panic than any awareness as to who or what they were shooting at. After the firing stopped, Mrs. Bandaranaike was taken under heavy escort to the Hingurakgoda SLFP organiser's house from where she returned to Colombo by helicopter.

A bomb attack was also made on the SLFP rally held at Uyanwatte in Matara a few days afterwards. It was during this period that the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy was attacked and the weapons of a group of soldiers guarding the shrine were removed. The Wellawatte People's Bank was robbed of an estimated Rs. 20 million in cash and jewellery in broad daylight. Jayantha Mallimarachchi a Member of the Colombo Municipal Council and the son of the Colombo District Minister Mr. Weerasinghe Mallimarachchi was shot dead at Dematagoda. The JVP's campaign of intimidation against voters continued. On the day of the elections, on February 15 four bodies were found near a polling booth at Tissamaharama. At the elections, 63% of the registered voters had cast their votes. There was an escalation of violence in the South following the elections. Buses were forced off the roads, shops closed and attendance in schools was very low. A statement put out by Rohana Wijeweera on March 28 1989 sized up this situation as follows.

"While Sri Lanka's Marcos has retreated behind the curtain, Sri Lanka's Idi Amin has come forward and is carrying on a massacre of the people while hiding behind "Janasaviya". They have got together with the Indian invading Army and their stooges the EPRLF and are terrorising and driving away whole villages inhabited by Sinhalese and Muslims from the East and North Central Provinces. The referendum which was promised to separate the arbitrarily merged Northern and Eastern Provinces is postponed continuously. The Indian invading Army controls one third of the country. It is nonsense to say that the UNP will send them back. Instead of this, they have built up various fascist armies and fascist style intelligence organisations to massacre ordinary people protesting against these matters. These scoundrels who have forcibly grabbed power from the people do not even recognise human rights, justice and equity. These criminals who have been a curse on the nation have spawned the Black cats, Green tigers, PRRA, SRRA and are engaged in killing the nation's youth"

"In this situation, what would have happened to our fatherland if not for the honest, courageous patriotic and intelligent youth of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna? Patriotic citizens, think of this for a moment..... today the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna is fighting for the rights of the entire nation.... therefore patriotic citizens, discard all uncertainties. Delay might precipitate disaster.

Join us in order to save the country from disaster. Give us, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, help in every possible way"

Despite the triumphalistic verbiage in this statement, one cannot but notice the defeatist undertones. The repression during the period prior to the Presidential elections and the lack of public support after the conclusion of the two elections had begun to tell on the JVP. A lot of the anti-government sentiment in the country was due to the fact that Parliamentary elections had not been held since 1977. Now elections had been held, the government's two thirds majority had gone and the opposition had secured satisfactory representation in Parliament. Thus, the JVP found that it was not as easy to mobilise the masses as earlier.

There also occurred an incident in January 1989 (or December 1988? The dates are somewhat confused during this turbulent period) which shook the JVP to its very foundations. This was the spectacular killing of their Colombo District military leader Algiriye Munasinghe, at a shop in Ratmalana. The shop at which he was gunned down was located on the Galle road near the Maliban junction. The owner of the shop was one Ranjith who had been taken into the movement by a man named Sarath who had been employed for some time in the Middle East and had been given Ranjith's name and address by another JVP sympathiser employed in the Middle East. After returning to Sri Lanka, Sarath had established contact with Ranjith and his shop became the main centre of JVP activity in Colombo. How Ranjith got drawn into the thick of things was typical of the JVP's modus operandi. After someone is "hooked in" they give him some tasks which gets him involved inextricably in the movement. Gradually, the demands increase and the victim is now unable to refuse since he had already done something to commit himself. Thus, Ranjith was soon a virtual prisoner of the JVP. Telephone calls threatening various people were conveyed over his phone, and leaflets were brought there prior to being distributed to the full-timers in Colombo. Photocopies of the JVP's underground documents were made there. His shop was also frequented by JVP VIP's like D.M. Ananda, Algiriye Munasinghe and Adiris Costa.

Meanwhile, a group of people who had an interest in undermining the JVP had approached the Joint Operations Command and informed them about this place. Some members of the group had also successfully infiltrated the JVP organisation in Colombo.

These infiltrators had even worked their way into this shop, in Ratmalana. The JOC had made plans to raid the place on a certain Sunday, when it was reliably learnt that D.M. Ananda and Algiriye Munasinghe were both due to meet with some Colombo District full-timers. But before the planned raid could take place, some unknown group had arrived on Thursday and killed Algiriye Munasinghe inside the shop. The hit-team had arrived in a yellow pick up truck and two men had got off with T-56 automatics. One had walked into the air-conditioned shop and allowed the tinted glass door to close behind him. The other stood on alert outside. The assailant inside the shop had then proceeded to spray the place with bullets and fired at everyone present. Algiriye Munasinghe had got two bursts across his chest in the shape of a cross. The assailant had come into the shop seconds after Munasinghe had arrived. Obviously, they had been waiting for him to turn up. Or it could be that they were out on some other mission when they happened to see Munasinghe and decided to do away with him. The JOC infiltrator who happened to be inside the shop was also shot at and injured. Later, he was hard put to explain his presence to the NIB who refused to believe that the JOC could have infiltrated so deep in to the JVP organisation. Subsequently, he was rescued from the NIB by an STF officer who happened to know him as a JOC contact man. Had Algiriye Munasinghe not been shot prematurely, the forces would have got a breakthrough to the JVP leadership much earlier. But at that time, with the JVP riding high, even the killing of the leadership would not have arrested the momentum gathered by the organisation. And replacements would have been found more readily. The killing of Munasinghe played a major role in driving fear into the rank and file of the JVP. They were treated to a dose of their own medicine. The JVP was so shaken up that they did not even acknowledge that Algiriye Munasinghe was one of their people. They kept quiet and pretended that nothing untoward had happened.

43. The Nugegoda Rally

The Universities crisis was one of the most intractable problems in the country and at any given opportunity, the government always made attempts to re-open the Universities. An attempt was made in this direction after the General Election in March 1989. But the JVP gunned down Prof. Stanley Wijesundara, the outgoing Vice-Chancellor of the University of Colombo in order to stall the plan to re-open the Universities. Some said that Prof. Wijesundara had been killed because he took an uncompromising stand on the Private Medical College issue. But this killing was regarded with consternation by all except the JVP. "Kalaya" the organ of the Jathika Chintanaya group stated that though Prof. Wijesundara was from the privileged class, he was nevertheless an academic and the Vice Chancellor of a University and his killing gravely endangers the freedom of the academics in the country. They also criticised the Inter-University Students Federation for failing to make any comment on this killing which had been committed on the University premises itself. As usual, the Independent Students Union put out a leaflet blaming the JVP for the killing. This was distributed at the funeral. Most people at the funeral on receiving the leaflet, would take one look at the title and hurriedly put it into their pockets with a look of abject fear on their faces. Everybody seemed to be on pins. Prof. Stanley Wijesundara was one of those gentlemanly types who shied away from political favouritism and underhand practices. And he did not owe his position to any kind of politi-

cal patronage. He had been elected to that position by the Academic staff several years ago. Hence the conscientious middle class was badly shaken up by this killing.

In early April, President Premadasa appealed to both the LTTE and the JVP to come into the mainstream. The appeal for dialogue was made at the 'Yovunpura' in Mahiyangana. In appealing to the JVP, the President asked "Wasn't it I who repealed the five year emergency? Have we not released every prisoner against whom charges could not be brought in a court of law?" Meanwhile, the JVP commemorated the eighteenth anniversary of the 1971 insurgency with a "Hartal" - shops, business establishments, government departments and transport were all brought to a standstill on April 5. They were very serious about enforcing the ban on transport. In the Kurunegala district a pregnant mother was killed when the JVP fired at an ambulance transporting her to a hospital for emergency care.

During this period, the JVP also began to make use of the landmine know-how imparted to them by PLOTE. From mid-1988 rumours were floating around that PLOTE was training Sinhala extremists. A report to this effect had appeared in an Indian Journal. This was a time when PLOTE was gradually beginning to adopt an anti-Indian stance. Their relations with the IPKF had always been cool. But in mid-1988, relations deteriorated further. The JVP had been in dialogue with PLOTE from late 1987. It is reliably learnt that some weapons training especially in the use of explosives were given by PLOTE to the JVP. Manikkadasan, the military leader of PLOTE is rumoured to be closely related to Upatissa Gamanayake. Perhaps this relationship would also have facilitated early contacts between PLOTE and the JVP. In early 1989 a prominent member of PLOTE had been seen in Akuressa. His task was to train members of the Matara District committee in the use of landmines. Two landmines went off on the eve of the Sinhala new year in Weerawila and Hungama killing six policemen and injuring seventeen. The President again called for Wijeweera and Gamanayake to meet him for talks. A couple of days later the LTTE accepted the President's call and came forward for talks. But the JVP continued to maintain a silence. After the new year, a spate of landmine blasts shook the South. One went off on the Embilipitiya- Panamura road and four soldiers were killed. On April 20, four landmines went off in Hungama, Tissamaharama, Angunakolapelessa and again on the

Embilipitiya – Panamure road. Landmines were also exploded in Kamburupitiya, Urubokka and Middeniya. Meanwhile, the Pitigala Police station in Galle was attacked. Train services to Badulla were suspended following the shooting of a student during a demonstration. A spate of killings by the JVP was reported from Kamburupitiya and Akuressa. A landmine also went off in Medirigiriya in the Polonnaruwa district, killing four police officers. More killings by the JVP were reported from Meetiyanagoda and Baddegama.

An unsuccessful attack on the Panagoda Army Camp was launched. JVP cadres had come with gunny bags to carry away the weapons. But it was repulsed. Despondency spread through the ranks of the JVP because of this failure. Panagoda is the principal Army installation in the country and was a coveted prize even in 1971 when the insurgents tried to introduce laxatives into the food of the soldiers in order to overrun Panagoda. Much later, when the cadres who took part in the attack on Panagoda began to be captured, not one admitted to having carried or fired a weapon during the attack. An Air Force deserter who admitted to have taken part in the attack when asked what he did had said that "he carried a gunny bag". The security forces were highly tickled at this and the Panagoda attackers were thereafter referred to as the "gunny bag crew". The JVP was however, more successful in the South. A soldier of the Gemunu Watch was beheaded while on leave at Weeraketiya. The JVP also scored a military victory when they successfully ambushed an Army commando unit sent out on a special mission to track down some JVP killers at Kirula in the Hungama area. Three commandos lost their lives. One of the Heckler and Koch MP-5 submachine guns taken from the commando's here later found its way into the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya and was recovered with the arrest of its leader Siriwardena. Meanwhile, the JVP's killing spree continued. Thirty five were killed during a single weekend.

On May 10, Universities were re-opened but no lectures were held. The minor staff went on strike demanding a wage increase and Rs. 2500 as basic salary. The students also boycotted lectures in order to commemorate dead comrades. About one thousand University employees congregated at the Moratuwa University and chanted slogans demanding a wage hike. Ruhuna University had the lowest attendance with only 70 out of 2000 turning up on the first day. Later, Universities commenced work

only to be stalled by a minor employees strike a week later demanding Rs. 2500 as basic salary. Twenty two killings were reported from the areas of Baddegama, Middeniya, Galagedara and Dikwella. The JVP also launched an islandwide poster campaign alleging the killing of their members by PRRA and other vigilante groups. The Panadura Urban Council Chairperson Dorothy Dharmage was shot and chopped to death.

P.D. Wimalasena, a veteran trade union activist of the LSSP and the manager of the Star Press in Maradana was shot dead inside Star Press on the night of May 30, 1989. Three men had come into the premises with 9 mm pistols and asked for Mr. Wimalasena. None of them apparently knew Wimalasena by sight. But they found his identity card in his shirt pocket which was spread out on a chair while he had his bath. The assailants had then gone inside the bathroom and dragged Wimalasena out and shot him once through the eye near the entrance to the Press. Then they proceeded to pour petrol over the stocks of paper and machinery and set fire to the building. The workers who had been herded into the manager's cubicle had watched helplessly. But the flames were soon doused by the workers after the attackers had fled. This same hit team later killed a UNP Provincial Councillor Leslie Ranagala in Wanathamulla, by flinging a grenade at him in his house.

On June 1, 1989, President Premadasa made his famous Battaramulla proclamation demanding the withdrawal of IPKF. Pro-JVP University students had by now taken charge of the minor staff strike and were leading demonstrations on their behalf. One such demonstration with the combined strength of the JVP students and the minor staff of all the Colombo-based Universities went in procession from Colombo Campus upto the Lipton Circus at Union Place where they held a meeting and dispersed. The OIC and a PC of the Wellawaya Police Station were killed in an ambush. SSP Bennet Perera was gunned down in Mt. Lavinia. Police apparently suspected a certain official attached to the Police Department of having been an accomplice in the killing of Bennet Perera. He had probably provided information to the JVP on Benett Perera's movements. This official had formerly been a JVP student leader of the Kelaniya University and had succeeded Upali Jayaweera as the President of the Kelaniya Campus SSU. Later, he is said to have inveigled himself into the confidence of a well placed relative by pretending to

have joined the UNP and managed to get a recommendation to join the Police Department as an accountant in 1987. After some time, he had been posted to the CID accounts staff and had been there until suspicion got the better of his superiors and he was transferred to the Field Force Headquarters at Thimbrigasyaya. While he was attached to the CID, he had apparently been channelling CID files to the JVP. Police were able to capture photocopies of CID documents from certain JVP hideouts raided. The suspicion was that the same man had also given the JVP the information and contacts to make the raid on the Field Force HQ on August 2 1989. Thereafter, he was transferred out of the Police Dept. altogether.

In early June 1989, the JVP held a massive rally at Nugegoda. Anti-Indianism was one of the main topics at this mammoth rally. In the period following the two elections, the JVP concentrated on harping on the Indian presence in the country as a mobilising issue. During this period, the JVP issued an order for the boycott of all Indian products. On May 14 1989, an order was personally issued to the public by Rohana Wijeweera to boycott all Indian produced goods, to sever all connections with Indian banks and insurance companies and to refrain from having any commercial or economic contact with India. The order further stated that the Patriotic Liberation Army has been instructed to regard all those who disobey these orders as traitors to the fatherland. Colourful stickers asking the public to boycott Indian goods were pasted forcibly on vehicles and a charge of Rs. 10 levied. The June rally proved to be a great morale booster for the JVP. The meeting was organised with the participation of the Inter-University Students Federation. The Inter-University Bhikku Federation, the All Lanka University Students and Parents Federation, the ELJP and the Sri Lanka Progressive Front. The SLFP MP Thilak Karunaratne was also a speaker at this meeting which is said to have drawn a crowd of about 60,000. This was also advertised islandwide. Colombo city was covered with posters announcing the "great patriotic rally". The government had given the permission and the venue for the meeting. Young JVP firebrands screamed their defiance of the government from the stage. Thilak Karunaratne was hooted at and his speech was disturbed several times by the delirious JVP activists who had become intoxicated with confidence at the sight of the unprecedented crowd. This was the JVP's last great public show. And

they did it with their characteristic flamboyance. A brightly decorated stage had been constructed and there had even been a speaker who had been made up and dressed to look like Wijeweera. A large number of people were seen carrying parcels which suggested concealed weapons. And again as of old, JVP cadres from all over the island had flocked to Colombo to be present at the grand occasion. The following day, the University minor employees were given their Rs. 2500 basic wage demand and the Inter-University Trade Union Federation which had been leading the strike had called it off and gone back to work.

44. The Transport Board Strike

In follow-up action after the June 6 rally at Nugegoda, anti-government student demonstrations were once more seen on the roads. A student demonstration was teargassed at the Thunmulla Junction in Bambalapitiya. Work at Royal, Ananda, Nalanda, Lumbini, Isipathana, Dharmapala College Pannipitiya and St. Paul's girl's school Milagiriya were disrupted. Student demonstrations were reported from Badulla, Bandarawela, Matara, Hambantota, Anuradhapura, Matale, Piliyandala and Kegalle. In Teldeniya, a student was killed when police opened fire at an unruly demonstration. At the Peradeniya University, the official vehicle of a State Minister was set on fire and three of the occupants abducted and killed by the JVP students in the University. A fourth person said to have been the brother of the State Minister had managed to flee and make good his escape. Prof. Arjuna Aluvihare, Vice Chancellor of the Peradeniya University put out a statement saying that his students did not have anything to do with this incident. In a press statement issued the next day, Prof. Aluvihare stated...*"The Action Committee agreed that these three persons should be released. And they had been on the grass for some time. Later, some other people in a vehicle had abducted them."* The men in the vehicle were in reality some members of the Action Committee itself. The University academic staff especially those holding administrative posts generally lived in fear of their lives since they had no security. After Prof. Panabokke retired, there were no takers for the Peradeniya VC's post. Ul-

timately it appears that some sections of the government had prevailed upon Prof. Aluvihare to accept the post. From the beginning, Prof. Aluvihare had to adopt various tactics to handle the explosive situation. He would go to student rallies and listen to what the students had to say. At one point, he had cyclostyled the government communique announcing the nationalisation of the Private Medical College and distributed it himself at a student meeting. He also maintained a down to earth relationship with Nizmi, the JVP leader in the University. Nizmi was a Muslim orphan brought up in a Buddhist temple and who had become JVP through the Bhikku's associated with him. He is said to have come to campus neatly dressed in polished shoes, creased trousers and long sleeved shirts. On rainy days he would bring a "brolly" along with him. Prof. Aluvihare had maintained a "gentleman to gentleman" relationship with the slick agitator. When Nizmi was seen on the road, Prof. Aluvihare would stop his car and offer him a lift. Whenever Nizmi entered his office, Prof. Aluvihare would politely stand up to receive him and to shake his hand. This policy definitely paid dividends, since the JVP was adequately flattered and had no grounds to whip up the students against the Vice Chancellor. Thus a semblance of order was maintained. Less flexible persons in the same category were made to pay the supreme price by the JVP. When in late 1989, Prof. Aluvihare took leave of Peradeniya University to become Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Nizmi organised a farewell for him with a printed souvenir for the occasion. This souvenir contained details of students who had disappeared. And it had a message from the Action Committee which while appreciating Prof. Aluvihare's attitude, warns him that he should continue in the same way in his new post as well, or that they would have to regard him in the same manner as they regarded people like Prof. Karunasena Kodituwakku (the former VC of Sri Jayawardenapura University) and Prof. Stanley Kalpage (outgoing Chairman of the UGC). Though Prof. Aluvihare denied that his students were involved in the June 8 triple murder, students who had been involved in this incident had apparently been captured and killed by the security forces later. Peradeniya University was one of the main centres of JVP activity in Kandy. Some members of the minor staff and University security personnel had also been involved in the JVP's military wing.

In mid-June, there was a lightning strike by the SLTB. Trouble had been brewing in the SLTB for some time. In early April the SLTB went on strike over the underpayment of the new year allowance of which only half the stipulated amount had been given out. Then in mid-May, there was another strike at the Anuradhapura depot calling for higher wages. All the various trade unions were involved in these strikes. Thus there was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction within the SLTB which the JVP sought to utilise the way they made use of the University minor employee's wages issue. The JVP was mindful of the support this would win them as happened in the case of the University minor employees, who became sympathetic towards the JVP students who helped them to obtain their Rs. 2500/- basic salary demand. Hence, in June the JVP took matters into their own hands and issued an order for all SLTB employees to strike. They guaranteed success and told the SLTB employees to co-operate fully. In order to make the strike fully effective, the JVP banned private omnibus transport a few days later. A week afterwards, the Port and Railways were forced to join the strike. Even the three wheel scooter taxis were ordered to halt transport and perform a satyagraha on Galle Face. Soldiers of the Echelon Square Army HQ watched in surprise while hundreds of scooter taxis began to arrive at Galle Face green and were parked in neat rows while the drivers shouted slogans in support of the SLTB strike. They were later all chased away by the soldiers, who threatened to burn their scooters if they did not leave.

The emergency which had been lifted in January was re-imposed in June 1989 in view of the prevalent situation. In between January and June nearly two thousand people had died in the conflict between the government and the JVP. Thus the lifting of the emergency had not only been futile, but also negative in effect. The re-introduction of the emergency however, did nothing in the short term to arrest the momentum of the JVP. Soon after the emergency was declared, the telecommunications and postal workers were forced to come out on strike. The Deshapremi Ek-sath Peramuna comprising the JVP, IUSF, IUBF, Sri Lanka Progressive Front and the ELJP declared the "general strike" a success. These were the same groups that had got together at the Nugegoda rally. Meanwhile, the Army was deployed to run the buses. The food ships in the Colombo Port remained unloaded until the Navy took charge of these functions. All was however,

not smooth on the strike front. The JVP had to continue the strike with the use of an unprecedented amount of coercion. By the end of the month-long strike, the JVP had killed an estimated 130 SLTB employees, destroyed about 200 buses both state owned and private, in an effort to keep the level of terror on a "constant high" throughout the strike. This was made necessary because the government also maintained its position and did not give in. They could not afford to, since it was impossible to make Rs. 2500/- the basic salary in the SLTB. They were willing instead to offer a Rs. 180/- wage increase for all categories. If they had given in to the Rs. 2500/- demand, it would only have been a matter of time till other sections of the state services also took up the demand and the end result would have been inflation in the economy.

The SLTB strike was the crucial tug of war between the government and the JVP which finally decided the victor. The incident which turned the tide was the killing of two key JVP agitators in Ratmalana. The SLTB strike had been controlled by a shadowy "Eksath Kamkaru Satan Madyasthanaya" which was actually, the JVP front formed earlier as the National Centre for Workers' Struggles. For a few days after the strike began in mid-June, everybody including most of the SLTB workers themselves had been at a loss to explain why they were on strike. It was then that a "Transport Board United Action Front" supposedly based in Badulla had come forward to explain their demands to the government. Earlier, representatives of the established trade unions had met the government delegation appointed to look into the matter and told them very frankly that the matter was not in their hands and that the government should discuss it with the JVP. Silva and Ranatunga, of the Mt. Lavinia depot were two of the key negotiators of the "Transport Board United Action Front." On July 6, the two had come to the Mt. Lavinia depot to meet the workers, and were unsuspectingly standing on the kerb on the Galle Road smoking cigarettes when two gunmen had appeared from nowhere and shot both of them several times in the head and neck. The assailants had then made good their escape in a van which had been parked a little distance away. This sent a wave of terror through the ranks of the JVP. At the same time, it gave people the confidence that the JVP was not as invincible as they gave out. A few private buses were seen on the roads after this and a semblance of normalcy began to

return to the country. Postal and other services disrupted by the JVP campaign slowly began to limp back to normal. A week later, after normalcy had almost been restored, the Transport Board United Action Front called off the strike and agreed to what the government had agreed to give from the beginning - a salary increment of Rs. 180/-. The government was relieved. So relieved in fact it was the state-owned media that announced that "the strike had ended with a great victory for the working class!" For the JVP, this was an unmitigated defeat and they knew it. This was the beginning of the end.

In the meantime in early June, the Tissamaharama Police station was raided and a quantity of weapons removed. And in late June, a powerful car bomb was placed at the Galle Town Hall and set to explode while the Provincial Council was in session. Five people had died in this attack. A man posing off as a Provincial councillor had arrived at the Town Hall as if for the meeting, parked the vehicle and vanished. After the blast, the mangled engine of the vehicle was found on the Galle road about 100 yards away. The Gam Udawa celebrations in Mahiyangana was also attacked with grenades on July 2. Two soldiers were knifed at the Tyre Corporation and their weapons removed. Two NIB officers were gunned down at Thimbirigasyaya. And the former Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs Mr. W.M.G.T. Banda was shot dead at his house in Galagedara.

In late June, there occurred an incident at the Sri Jayawardenapura University very similar to what took place earlier at Peradeniya. Three persons were captured by the students in the vicinity of the University, soundly beaten up and tied to trees while an anti-government meeting was held inside the University premises. Students then stood round the three captives and chanted anti-government slogans. Then a group of men masked and armed with revolvers suddenly arrived, untied the three captives and took them away. This whole episode was video filmed by a BBC correspondent who happened to be present and was shown in the BBC documentary on Sri Lanka "Island of Terror". The students had shown the BBC correspondent a diary belonging to one of the men which indicated that he frequently met some government politico's and insisted that the three men were "vigilantes" who had come to mark out their victims. This was at a time when the Inter-University Students Federation had called for islandwide mass agitation. Following the Sri Jayawar-

denapura episode, the government decided to close the Universities. The Peradeniya University was surrounded by a combined Army and Police team. The night before the raid, surveillance had been intensified in the vicinity of the campus. Nizmi made good his escape the moment he got to know that the University was surrounded by feigning to be a patient inside an ambulance which had been brought in to smuggle him away. Somaratne, another JVP student leader who was arrested later by the RDF in Colombo and another student had donned Army uniforms and walked out of the University premises the next morning after having smartly saluted the officer at the gate. The previous day, the JVP had told the students not to vacate the premises under any circumstances. But most did. Only a group of students in the Hilda Obeysekera Hall held out. Here the students had been asked to destroy their record books and all other forms of identification. This was to prevent the police from identifying them. These were burnt and flushed down the toilets. However, no untoward incidents were reported during the evacuation and the security forces had acted with restraint. All Universities were closed in July and were not re-opened until January 1990.

45. The Ultimatum

During this period, several important personalities not directly involved in politics were killed by the JVP. The politicians had by this time beefed up their security arrangements in such manner as to make things difficult for the JVP hit squads. Hence, they sought to compensate by killing those who had no security. Thevis Guruge, the 65 year old Competent Authority for ITN and Chairman of the SLBC was gunned down one evening in July while he was out shopping at a boutique. At the time of his death he was the head of the censorship board appointed by the government. The government immediately lifted the press censorship. In early August, Premakeerthi de Alwis, the popular Sinhala announcer, was gunned down at his house in Homagama. The Ven. Kotikawatte Saddhatissa, one of the best and most popular Buddhist preachers both here and abroad, was gunned down at the Kolonnawa temple. Dr. (Mrs) Gladys Jayawardena, Chairperson of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation was killed at Slave Island in her car. Meril Kariyawasam, the former MP for Agalawatte who had retired from politics and had been appointed Chairman of the Rubber Research Institute was killed at his office at Ratmalana. Prof. Patuwathavithana, the VC of the Moratuwa University was gunned down while he sat in his office. A man of integrity, he had earlier resigned from the Plywood Corporation because he had been asked to reinstate four officers and nine employees of the Kosgama Complex who had been dismissed for fraud. Unable per-

haps by nature to give in to pressure, he had to pay the price. The Chief News Editor of the Rupavahini Corporation Mr. Kulasiri Amaratunga was also shot dead in his home in Mt. Lavinia. The most pathetic in this entire series of killings was that of the TV presenter Sagarika Gomes in September 1989. Her only sin had apparently been to be engaged to be married to an Army officer. Those involved in this killing had been arrested later by an Ops Combine team. The net result of the killing of all these media personnel was that a fair number either resigned or kept away from work. And the security forces had to take over the running of the state-owned electronic media. Competent Authorities from the Army, Navy and Airforce were appointed to these institutions and even the new announcers were often officers in civies. There were occasions when young Navy sub-lieutenants disposed official duties in the Chair of the Competent Authority at Rupavahini Corporation. But still the media functioned without break. This was certainly no mean achievement.

Meanwhile, the JVP commemorated the second anniversary of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord with an islandwide hartal. An order had been issued by the Joint Commanding HQ of the People's Patriotic Armed Troops to the effect that the people should;

- * Congregate at places of worship and demonstrate against the Indian presence in Sri Lanka
- * Not to be seen on the roads and to close shops and put up black flags.

On the previous day, about five thousand bhikkus had demonstrated at Maligakanda wearing black masks. They called for an end to the killings and abductions by various "para-military terrorist organisations". A bomb was also flung at the State Bank of India building in Colombo Fort. Demonstrations were reported from Kandy, Kurunegala, Badulla, Moneragala and from all over the South. Over 150 deaths were reported on the first day by the security forces. In most areas, as one instance reported from Pilimatalawa showed, the forces were compelled to open fire as the crowds did not heed their order to halt. In Pilimatalawa, the soldiers had been surrounded by a crowd which continued to advance on them not heeding their orders to stop. They had then opened fire indiscriminately into the crowd and people had fled in all directions. Some had managed to run even with near fatal

bullet wounds and were found the next day having bled to death after collapsing under tea bushes. In some places, people had only been waiting for an excuse to flee and at the first sound of gunfire, they turned and ran back to their homes. In the South, each family had been ordered to send several of its members to the demonstrations. The JVP had also coaxed people to join saying that the Army would not shoot because "We have our people placed inside". But the Army did fire when ordered to do so. The JVP cadres who ordered the villagers out, however never went in front but always stayed in the rear so that they would not get killed if the forces did open fire. This in fact was a practice they followed from the time they first began to organise these forced demonstrations. The logic behind this was that the patriots had a duty to live in order to fulfil the great task of national liberation and could not afford to take unnecessary risks. In an earlier such demonstration in the South, an enterprising officer had got down a helicopter gunship to fire at the rear of the procession. The JVP always got those in their bad books to walk in front of these demonstrations so that they would be the first to be killed if the forces did open fire. An early favourite were the petty officials, lackeys of politicians and the such like. Later, the family members of security forces personnel were also made to walk at the head of these demonstrations. It was reported that nearly a thousand people were killed in the one month between mid-July and mid-August 1989.

Since the emergency was re-imposed in June, the monthly death toll never fell below a thousand until January 1990. This was also at a conservative estimate. Many deaths went unnoticed. Those reported were only those found on the roadsides. Many more dead bodies were disposed off more discreetly. Many family members of the JVP activists never sought to look for their sons, brothers and fathers since they knew it would yield no results. On July 26 1989, the JVP had made a proclamation saying that the patriotic sections of the armed services would join them during the hartal on the 2nd anniversary of the signing of the ILPA. They expected a general uprising to take place. Obviously, with the defeat of the SLTB strike previously, and the very effective wave of counter-terror unleashed against them, the JVP was becoming desperate. Things had to happen soon or all was lost. They had been waiting a long time for the forces to mutiny and come over to their side. But nothing happened. Hence they

sought to force the pace. The July 26 proclamation was a clear order that those who were for them should now come out. The ILPA anniversary hartal in 1989, was meant to be a mass uprising with which sections of the security forces would side and topple the government. They were however, to be disappointed once again.

In mid-August, the Bentota Police station was raided and several firearms removed. Four PC's were killed in a landmine blast in Embilipitiya. In late August, there was a partial paralysis of government departments, transport and banks after the JVP issued threatening letters. This was the last such hartal that the JVP was able to pull off. By now the people had begun to realize that the JVP was on the run and that the state forces were gaining the upper hand. Charitha Lankapura was a young JVP lawyer who had been a key activist of the Socialist Students Union while he was an undergraduate of the Law Faculty at the University of Colombo. On July 7, he was shot dead at his boarding house at Slave Island. He had just returned from courts when he heard a knock at the door and went to open it. The moment he had opened the door and peeped out to see who it was, the assailant had shot him in the neck and chest several times and coolly walked off. With the killing of the SLTB satan peramuna men in Ratmalana a couple of days earlier, the JVP knew that some new element had come onto the scene. There was a new urban guerilla movement against the JVP. They arrived at the most unexpected moments and killed with cold blooded ruthlessness. It was also obvious that they had accurate inside information and had probably heavily infiltrated the organisation. D.M. Ananda had stated after his capture that the incidents which made them go underground once again were these killings. Upto that time, the JVP's confidence had grown to the extent where their supporters openly carried out activities inside workplaces and villages. Following the killing of Silva, Ranatunga and Charitha Lankapura, most JVP activists scuttled for cover. Some however, were caught napping and there was a spate of killings of JVP trade union activists and area leaders. An important military wing man was shot dead inside the Singer factory in Ratmalana. All these assassinations hurt the JVP badly. They tried to utilise these to whip up mass sympathy for them by carrying on a massive propaganda campaign. For months every SLTB bus bore posters denouncing the killing of Silva and Ranatunga. For months, there

were posters put up all over the island denouncing the killing of Charitha Lankapura. On the day the military wing man was killed inside the Singer factory, the Moratuwa Police Station was attacked and five policemen killed apparently in retaliation.

On August 11, the JVP forced hospitals to stop work over the arrest of two hospital employees who had been taken in for putting up JVP posters within the hospital premises. The JVP forced even private hospitals and dispensaries to close in support of the campaign to get the two hospital workers released. On August 17 a medical student named Saman who was involved in the JVP health workers union was shot dead in broad daylight near the general hospital. His body was later removed from the Colombo mortuary by an unidentified armed group. On August 19, the leader of the Independent Students Union K.L. Dharmasiri was gunned down at Kotahena. His funeral was held at Kanatte. Delivering the funeral oration, Dr. Rajitha Senaratne, a leading left-wing politician invited all the left leaders to follow in the footsteps of K.L. Dharmasiri. Many people present felt that the only practical person in the left was now gone for good. PRRA was also present at this funeral. They had come with an expensive wreath for Dharmasiri. Before the pyre was lit, there was a gun salute for the fallen student leader. For several minutes live ammunition from weapons of all kinds were fired into the air. On August 19, a dental surgeon was shot and injured at Maradana. He appeared to consider himself immune to the JVP's ban on private practice during the hospital strike and was at his clinic when a gunman had walked in and pumped several bullets into his stomach. The very next day, the intensive care unit of the general hospital was opened to accommodate this dental surgeon. There were various rumours about this episode. Some said that it was done by the JVP itself for having violated their "no work" order. Others said that it could have been done by those who wanted the hospitals to commence work.

The matter of habeas corpus applications also deserves further inquiry. It was D.M. Ananda who had said of a certain lawyer - politician who is now out of the country that "he made money out of the party." It so appeared that all habeas corpus applications were paid for, if not by the applicants relatives and friends, then at least by some aid programme or another. A prominent JVP lawyer is said to have been paid Rs. 3000/- for each application. But he had been in the habit of getting the

applications processed by his sympathetic colleagues free of charge. Once when a colleague had asked for Rs. 100/- as typing fees, he had replied "I dont get any money for these things." Another more senior lawyer is said to have got Rs. 10,000/- per application. Mr. Prins Gunasekera, a human rights activist and a lawyer prominent in the habeas corpus applications business, caused a furor by arriving at the airport in a diplomatic vehicle and receiving a diplomatically cleared parcel just before he boarded the plane. Questions about what was going on had been asked in Parliament by a number of irate MP's. Some wags said that the undertakers' were not the only people who benefited from the JVP - government hostilities. Earlier in September 1989, a nephew of Mr. Prins Gunasekera, Mr. Kanchana Abhayapala also a lawyer, was gunned down by two men who had come to see him on the pretext of making a habeas corpus application for a "disappeared" relative. After the killing of Kanchana Abhayapala, many intellectuals who had publicly expressed sympathy for the JVP fled the country.

46. Sizing up the Military

The problem of the armed services began to obsess the JVP in 1989. In "Ranabima" the bulletin of the DJV's combined headquarters of April 21 1989, they stated in a proclamation entitled "to the relatives of the blood suckers", as follows. *"The blood relatives of the blood suckers in the Army and Police who are engaged in massacring patriots should take steps to stop this crime immediately. If they do not do so, the patriotic people's armed troops will adopt merciless measures against them (the relatives) as well."* The same publication in an editorial entitled "Massacre for Massacre" stated as follows.

"While the government turns a blind eye to the massacres perpetrated by the Indian imperialist army and their stooges the EPRLF, against the people of the country, they have unleashed hired killers to massacre the patriots who are fighting for the rights of the people. Who can tolerate such a state of affairs? We have made many efforts to put an end to this. But to no avail. The UNP'ers taken into the forces recently, the RDF murderers, the STF murderers and some blood thirsty policemen continue to murder patriots with promotions and honours in view. What can be done in such a situation? Can we further allow them to destroy the valuable lives of patriots and ruin the country and nation? No! We are certainly not prepared to permit that!"

"We have realised that the majority of the armed services were only trying to earn a living and were not murderers. Hence

we have no intention of killing soldiers and policemen like the northern separatists. If at all we have harmed soldiers or policemen, it has only been on occasions when we have acted to appropriate weapons which they possess but do not use for the defence of the country. Those who did not oppose us on such occasions, were not harmed".

"Other than this, we have punished a few murderers and criminals, this was because it was the only way in which we could deal with such criminals. Since there are a lot of innocent people in the armed services, we have acted with care and responsibility, so as not to cause any harm to them. But now in the new situation, we have been forced to abandon this policy. The only reply to massacre, is massacre. There is no other legitimate response. We have resorted to the landmine and mortar for this purpose. But still we have not begun to use these without restraint. We have attempted to use these only against the mass murderers. We have "sent up" only those scoundrels who sought to move up with promotions. The Lunugamvehera, Gandara, Hungama, Eppawela, Ankumbura police scoundrels have established records for murder. The Army teams deployed all over the South are the same. The RDF murderers in the North Western Province and Udugampola's "Black Cats" in the North Central Province are the same".

"Thus, it should be clear to all Army and Police personnel that we are still trying to separate and mark out the murderers. We are still using our weapons of mass destruction only in certain chosen areas. Everybody should take care not to create a situation where these weapons are used in their regions as well. For this we request all concerned to change the hitherto established policy of blindly obeying orders coming from above. How can one reconcile the contradiction of serving the country and working for these treacherous fascist rulers? What happens today is to get the soldiers to massacre the public for a fee of two or three thousand. This is the reason why we have been compelled to use the landmine and the mortar. We accept that both these should stop. But you have to take the initiative in this. Only you can do something about it.. Rise up, against the treacherous rulers! Reject their murderous orders! Prepare to link up with the people and move forward!"

The headlines in the same issue of "Ranabima" screamed out "Soldiers!, join the patriots and save Trincomalee!" They were

trying desperately to touch a responsive chord in the armed services.

"Soldiers! open your eyes! while some scoundrels continue to kill patriots by the thousands in the South, what is happening in the North and East? Indian imperialists who captured Jaffna yesterday are trying to capture Trincomalee today. Tomorrow it will be Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura, and the day after it will be the plantation areas and the whole island. Are you going to be deceived by the treacherous Jayewardene's and Premadasa's and permit this crime? Are you going to be a party to handing over the country to the Indian imperialists after murdering the patriots who love the people and the country? Soldiers! You need not be a party to this crime. You need not act against the people, country and nation in subservience to a salary of two or three thousand. Do not lift your weapons against the country. Realise that this amounts to lifting your gun against your children. Also realise that such an act would amount to getting the guns of the patriots turned against yourselves"

During this period, the JVP put out an undated leaflet under the name of the Joint Commanding Headquarters of the Patriotic People's Armed Troops, which was as follows.

A PLOT TO MASSACRE ANTI-GOVERNMENT SECTIONS OF THE ARMED SERVICES.

The Premadasa - Ranjan Wijeratne fascist clique who have permitted the Indian Army to chase away and capture the lands of the innocent North Central Province villagers and are engaged in a massacre of the Southern youth have now hatched a plan to kill the progressive sections of the armed services and to turn these into murderous fascist armies.

In accordance with this, the loyalist political intelligence services that have been activated within the forces have categorised all officers and soldiers as FORWARD, NEUTRAL and AGAINST. FORWARD are the loyalists who are willing to do anything to keep this fascist clique in power. NEUTRAL are those who have not taken any sides. AGAINST are all kinds of anti-government elements within the forces.

It has been planned to eliminate this "AGAINST" group in various ways. This task has been entrusted to the newly raised RDF murderers, the STF murderers, and the FORWARD group

in the forces itself, especially the "I" section. Hence, some will die in frequent "misfires". Another section will be killed by the murderers of the RDF and the STF while on leave at home and the responsibility will be palmed off on the Patriotic Armed Troops. Another section will be transferred to the North and East where the EPRLF and the Indian Army will finish them off. The six Navy personnel who died in a landmine explosion in Trincomalee were all members of this AGAINST group. It has been found that this landmine was set up not by the Tigers but by the FORWARD group.

Moreover it has been planned to kill off the popular individuals within the NEUTRAL group while they were on leave and put the blame on the patriots as a way of building up hatred against the patriots among the progressive and independent sections of the armed services. Already there have been a number of incidents like this and we declaim responsibility for these.

Anyhow, all progressive sections should realise that there is a plan to eliminate all progressives within the armed forces, and to utilise the RDF and STF fascist murderers to turn the entire Army into a reactionary murderous force. We request all progressive and independent soldiers and officers to immediately take steps to stall this attempt.

Joint Commanding Headquarters of the Patriotic People's Armed Troops

The services never categorised their men in the manner described above. It was the JVP's own categorisation which they were trying to utilise to spread dissension within the Armed Services at this eleventh hour. In the beginning, it was only a small minority of the forces that had been involved in the anti-subversive operations. The JVP knew this and through intelligence gathered from their inside contacts, they had categorised the service personnel. After his capture, Gamanayake had explained the categories. According to him, only ten to twenty percent of the armed services were against the JVP. This was the FORWARD group. Fifty percent were in the NEUTRAL group. The remaining thirty or forty percent were against the government and in favour of the JVP. This was the AGAINST group. When in August 1989 the JVP issued death threats to the families of service personnel they were actually expecting mainly to terrorise the active ten or twenty percent into subservience.

47. The Military Viewpoint

The war against the JVP was an unconventional one. It was not a battle or even a skirmish. It was a hit-job war. It was not superior weaponry, training or numerical strength that won the day. It was accurate information and the element of surprise. The JVP rose when they had an edge on these matters over their opponents. And they fell when their enemies began to outstrip them. The war against the JVP did not necessitate superior weaponry. The most effective weapon against the JVP was the hand gun. The hand gun and the van were the chief implements of war against the JVP. The war was as much a war of words as a war of nerves. Part of the battle was what the forces called "psy-ops" or propaganda efforts made to isolate the JVP. The following are excerpts from a circular sent by Maj. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne in March 1989 to all officers of the 1st division on the conduct of anti-JVP operations.

"There is no reason why we cannot overcome the insurgents within a month or two through a campaign of winning hearts and minds and through hard hitting operations and through good intelligence. We have the following advantages over the insurgent.

- (a) They are minimal in number.*
- (b) They are ill trained.*
- (c) They are poorly equipped.*
- (d) Their weapons are limited in number.*
- (e) Their only sources for obtaining weapons are from the*

Security Forces, private individuals and private security personnel.

- (f) They have no proper support.
- (g) Their funds are limited.
- (h) Their hiding places are not that vast and that inaccessible.
- (i) Their training areas are limited.
- (j) They cannot move out of the country.
- (k) They have no international support by way of propaganda, finances and weapons.
- (l) Language is no barrier like in the north.

He is fighting against all these odds. You are not. Those are your advantages. Here are a list of measures that can be undertaken to win the hearts and minds of the people.

Do's

- (a) Organising janahamuwas.
- (b) Providing medical facilities for villagers.
- (c) Distribution of food.
- (d) Sramadana.
- (e) Repair of roads.
- (f) Cleaning and colourwashing hospitals.
- (g) Organising water supply.
- (h) Assistance to needy people.
- (i) Avoiding the use of abusive language.
- (j) Maintenance of essential services.
- (k) Distribution of clothes to needy people.
- (l) Donating food.
- (m) Respecting elderly citizens.
- (n) Assistance in agricultural activities.
- (o) Organising and conducting of village school-level sports activities.
- (p) Organising of village-level religious activities.
- (q) Organising of student leadership through such activities as cadeting.

Don't's

- (a) Stealing of valuables.
- (b) Use of abusive language.
- (c) Molesting.
- (d) Rape.

- (e) Killing of innocents.
- (f) Taking over buildings and vehicles by force.
- (g) Torturing suspects.
- (h) Obtaining items without payment.
- (i) Misuse of private property.
- (j) Entering private property without permission.
- (k) Drunkenness.

Gen. Waidyaratne continues as follows. "During my address to you, I have also spoken a lot about fish and water. The fish here is in reference to the insurgent and the water to the villagers who support him in the hideouts in which he could move about and the peripheral supporters from whom he gets support from. All this enables the insurgent to move about freely like a fish in water. If we can catch all the fish, we can terminate the insurgency. But to accomplish the task of catching all the fish, we need more accurate intelligence. Although today information is flowing very freely, we haven't been able to get accurate intelligence.... The next best thing we could do is to dry up the water, so that the fish are not permitted to move freely..... the fundamental thing to do is to win the hearts and minds of the people and thereby deprive the insurgents the freedom of movement in the villages. By this process we can dominate the periphery... this will also prevent new recruitment... The insurgent will perform be restricted to the jungles."

"You also must understand that the insurgent on his part has won over hearts and minds successfully through a superficial, exhibition of fair play and justice. They take punitive action against those who indulge in indisciplined acts such as molesting girls, stealing, killing innocents etc. This is their main strategy to win hearts and minds apart from other forms of indoctrination."

"Therefore, our codes of conduct must be far more superior to them in these matters particularly in being better disciplined and regimented.... Use of excessive fire or force will bring us back to zero. Let us be guided by the principle of minimum force. Use no more force than necessary even if it means to risk your own self. If you have to fire, resort to single rounds rather than bursts. Your approach and attitude when clearing towns and villages should be totally different to what you would do when tackling known enemy hideouts. In clearing congested areas, at no stage should area weapons like grenades

be used... Even if you come under fire you should not resort to spraying areas with fire. You must surround such places and get the subversives to surrender even though such process is time consuming and risky..."

In another document dated May 28 1989 also authored by Gen. Waidyaratne, the strategy is further elucidated as follows.

"Under no circumstances should the present state be permitted to deteriorate. Your task is to improve speedily on the present situation and finally bring your areas to absolute normalcy.... Common acts that have often ruined your good image are stealing, molesting girls, assaulting innocents, killing innocents during operations, not using minimum force, abusive language, irrational retaliation and excesses such as burning houses, shops etc resorted to by a few ill-bred individuals. If any of you resorts to any of these acts, you will be collectively called an Army of robbers and rogues, rapists or villains, thugs or brutes etc. They will run away when you approach. They will soon develop a hatred and you will be soon creating more subversives and helping them to swell their cadres. Some quarters of the public have accused us of this..."

Gen. Waidyaratne further elucidates that this war is basically a Platoon commander's and corporal's battle and outlines the pattern of operations as follows.

- (a) Mark out critical areas and re-deploy troops in accordance with threats posed.
- (b) Emphasis on two platoon bases rather than single platoon bases in order to maximise limited resources in troops, communications, transport etc.
- (c) Detachments to be used only as rest places. Operations from permanent accommodation is counter productive.
- (d) Mini-groups should be out in the field all the time. The maximum number must spend maximum time out in the field.
- (e) Each base should have (1) a guard group (2) a reinforcement group (3) a deep penetration group. These three groups should operate in rotation.
- (f) Patrolling should cover an extensive area and snap road blocks should be established to keep the enemy guessing.

- (g) *Patrolling should be done in impressive military manner with canopy removed and in standing position with guns held ready.*
- (h) *All areas should be dominated mostly by night. Presence should be shown to the people to give confidence.*
- (i) *Resort to night moves to avoid landmines and avoid overloading of vehicles.*
- (j) *Avoid use of same route and normal routines and stagger timings.*
- (k) *Move by foot whenever possible.*
- (l) *Encourage information from people. If people are frightened advise them to indicate landmines by placing two sticks on the road or by some other method.*
- (m) *Avoid discussion of moves on telephone and use a code to indicate location while on the move.*
- (n) *Close supervision should be maintained to identify subverted security forces personnel.*
- (o) *Tabs should be kept on what the soldiers get involved in during leave periods.*

"Some officers have performed excellently by following up relentlessly night and day to achieve set objectives. Such work will be recognised and where deserving, they will be assessed on their performance and promoted above others who sleep or are unable to produce results and are incapable of working without supervision.... Those who cannot produce results will be replaced with serious adverse effects on them.

*Sgd.
L.D.C.E.Waidyaratne
Major General
G.O.C. 1 Div.*

It is important to note here what Gen. Waidyaratne says about the anti-JVP thrust being mainly a Platoon commander's and Corporal's battle. This was literally the case. All the operational work was done by young lieutenants and corporals. The small team with a vehicle and communications equipment was the norm. The RDF operated like this and so did the other teams all over the country. The importance of being a lieutenant was that he was junior enough to take part in the operations and senior enough to conduct the interrogation and follow up.

Mobility and inconspicuousness were the key factors. The enemy had to be kept guessing and not knowing what would happen next. One of the biggest problems was to guard against JVP infiltration. Thus, the operational teams isolated themselves from the rest and kept mum about their work.

48. The Beginning of the End

The JVP issued death threats to the families of service personnel in August 1989. Having waited for months and years for the armed services to revolt against the government, the JVP was now trying desperate expedients to get them to do so. For a long time since the start of their campaign of terror in 1987 and even before that, the JVP had been hailing the armed services as the heroes who prevented the separation of the country by waging war against the Tamil terrorists. Now the JVP condemned to death not only these very same heroes, but their families as well. Earlier, the JVP had been sporadically killing soldiers and policemen while on leave and at home. In 1988, the JVP had tried to instil terror within the STF by demanding that they resign or that their families would be killed. But this was never followed up and was soon forgotten. In August 1989, however, the JVP was deadly serious. The death threats provoked a wave of indignation within the armed services and as one officer put it, "even the fellows who were sweeping the camps went out with their broomsticks against the JVP". It was soon obvious that the JVP had badly miscalculated the possible reaction of the armed services. They hoped to terrorise the FORWARD twenty percent, but succeeded only in activating the NEUTRAL fifty percent and a good part of the AGAINST forty percent. How the JVP could have expected any soldier to put up with the ignominy of having to resign under death threats to their families is hard to understand. Especially so since the JVP was

not in a position to provide them with alternative employment either. When some party full-timers had panicked and asked the leadership about the wisdom of this move, one politbureau member had confidently brushed aside protests saying "you wait and see comrade, the patriotic sections of the armed services are now ready to come to our side". The JVP knew that the only obstacle which stood between them and absolute power was the armed services. And they wanted it removed at any cost. Earlier, the JVP had scornfully dismissed the idea that the forces were gaining the upper hand. In their April 21 issue of "Ranabima" they had referred to the anti-subversive strategies of the military in the following terms in an article entitled "Win hearts and minds he says!"

"Maj. General Waidyaratne, the commanding officer of the 1st Division has circulated a paper entitled "The hearts and minds campaign" to his officers stating that it was possible to win the war against the Southern terrorists and that it was necessary to win the hearts and minds of the people for this. The paper also contains instructions as to how this could be achieved".

"By this he has attempted to show that the reason for the deterioration in the respect the people had for the armed services during the war with the northern separatists, was because of some shortcomings in the soldiers themselves. This is to completely distort the truth. The actual fact is that the soldiers are today unable to go to their homes even to see their parents for the new year because they have been massacring people on the instructions of service chiefs who have decided to fulfill the treacherous ambitions of the rulers and obtain promotions and honours. The main reason why the respect of the people for the Army has deteriorated is not because of the shortcomings and faults of the soldiers but because the Army has been utilised in committing various crimes against the people for political motives. Service chiefs like General Waidyaratne, Lucky Algama, Patrick Fernando, Janaka Perera and Asoka Jayawardene are responsible for this. The people will make them pay for this in the not too distant future. The orders given by J.R., and today by his disciple Ranjan Wijeratne to kill! and kill! are being implemented by these service chiefs who have forgotten that the main factor in winning a war was not weaponry but the people. Today we see corpses exhibited all over the country. The mur-

derer Algama could devastate Embilipitiya but he could not stop the people's struggle. This is the reality in the Southern province as well. The lessons taught by the people of the North Central and North Western Provinces to police murderers like Udugampola and Solangaarachchi is the same".

"In a poem written by Ananda Weerasekera, the commander of the North Central Province, to the "Divaina" newspaper, he states that the soldiers who were protected by the people in the war with the Northern separatists are now unable even to visit their homes. The reason for this is none other than that on the instructions of the cruel rulers, sections of the Army have launched a war against the people. While such a murderous war is in progress, you cannot deceive the people by throwing slops at them. While there are endless cordon and search operations, arrests and murder, how can the hatred of the people against the security forces be mitigated by giving them slops? In a situation where one's husband, child or neighbour has got targeted by state repression and has been forced to flee their villages in the face of mounting repression, you will never be able to win the hearts and minds of such people. You will discover soon that to think that the people are such fools is a bad miscalculation in terms of military science. Therefore General, either withdraw your booklet and destroy it! Or realise that this war against the people will never be won and keep out of it immediately. Or you will have to pay a heavy price for serving a treacherous cause!"

Later, when the leaders began to be arrested one by one, not one had admitted to have taken the decision to kill the families of the servicemen. D.M. Ananda and Piyadasa Ranasinghe who and been detained together had said that everybody except the two of them had insisted on the murder of the military families. Rohana Wijeweera had said that he had opposed it. When asked whose decision it was, he had said that "it was a decision of the politbureau" Gamanayake had also said the same thing. They were all frightened of the repercussions if they admitted to have participated in such a decision. But it was an ignominious end for those who had been so confident a short while earlier. The JVP knew after a while that they had made a fatal mistake. Soon after they issued death threats to the families of servicemen, posters appeared all over the country announcing "Ape ekakata thope dolahak!" (Twelve of yours for one

of ours!) The twelve to one retaliation was literally carried out and sometimes even exceeded. A "vigilante" group known as the "Deshapremi Sinhala Tharuna Peramuna" (Patriotic Sinhala Youth Front) under which name some of the "twelve to one" posters appeared also circulated a note to the families of known JVP'ers which went as follows.

Dear father/Mother/Sister,

We know that your son/brother/ husband is engaged in brutal murder under the pretence of patriotism. Your son/brother/husband, the so called patriot, has cruelly taken the lives of mothers like you, of sisters, of innocent little children. In addition, he has started killing the family members of the heroic Sinhalese soldiers who fought with the Tamil Tigers and, sacrificed their lives in order to protect the motherland.

Is it not among us, ourselves, the Sinhala people that your son/brother / husband has launched the conflict in the name of patriotism? Is it then right that you who are the wife/mother/sister of this person who engages in inhuman murder or your children should be free to live? Is it not justified to put you to death? From this moment, you and all your family members must be ready to die!

*May you attain Nirvana!
Patriotic Sinhala Youth Front.*

From August 1989 onwards, reprisal killings against the JVP became a common feature. Bodies began to appear on the roads everyday. On any given day there were around 25 to 50 bodies found dumped on the roadsides. Some of the most spectacular killings were reported from Kandy. In the Menikhinna-Kundasale area, almost an entire village was wiped out when 200 bodies were found after the families of three servicemen (sixteen people in all) had been hacked to death by the JVP. The Menikhinna area was a stronghold of the Batgam caste and thus the JVP had a great deal of support. Some villages in the area were wholly sympathetic to the JVP. Thus on the night of September 14, "Ukussa" swooped down on the area and massacred a large number of villagers. Then again, in October after Captain T.E. Nagahawatte, the Assistant Registrar of the Peradeniya University and a volunteer soldier was killed by two gunmen inside the

University premises, eighteen heads were found the next day placed neatly around the University pond. The headless corpses had been placed in various postures in the vicinity. In the rest of the country, bodies kept on appearing everyday by the dozens.

The onslaught by the security forces and the vigilantes affected the JVP's peripheral support badly. Members and supporters were killed by the droves. On September 27 1989, the government declared a 72 - hour ceasefire. This was later extended by another 72 hours when there was no response from the JVP. The decision not to come for negotiations was to prove fatal to the JVP. The April 21 issue of "Ranabima" explained the JVP's position on negotiations with the government in the following terms.

"Premadasa who came into power with a false election and military coercion is now endlessly praying for peace..... If Premadasa wants peace what he should do is to halt all anti-democratic and treacherous acts perpetrated by his party instead of making false appeals for peace" They alleged that while appeals for peace were being made in public, arrangements were being made to suppress the JVP militarily. They alleged that legislation was being prepared to enable indefinite detention and indemnify the forces from responsibility for various atrocities committed. They alleged that a list of militant workers, students and such like had been prepared and earmarked for elimination. They state *"this is what the man of peace is doing behind the scenes. We know all this. At no stage are we prepared to think or be deceived that murderers like this actually want peace"*.

Some members of the JVP however, realising that the war was over, surrendered to the forces. Over a thousand surrenders had been noted following the ceasefire, over a period of three weeks. The government announced that over 7200 were under detention for involvement in the JVP. Some of the most highly publicised surrenders took place in the Anuradhapura district where the Co-ordinating officer Col. Ananda Weerasekera made an appeal couched liberally in Buddhist phraseology over national TV for the misled youth to surrender. There was a big response from JVP activists fleeing the North Western and Central Provinces where security forces activity was high. And they came in their dozens to the Anuradhapura district to surrender. But in the Anuradhapura district itself, both the vigilantes and the JVP continued to battle it out. In March 1989, fourteen bodies were found near the site of a landmine explosion which killed three

police officers. The "Black Cats" accepted responsibility. Later in the year after the JVP had begun killing the families of servicemen, three Army families had been killed in the Anuradhapura district; and the vigilantes had killed over seventy people in retaliation over a period of three days. Heads also appeared on stakes all over the district. It so appears that one of the key figures in the JVP in Anuradhapura, a certain doctor had been living under the noses of the security forces for a long time. He had also been given a repeater shotgun and a revolver for his protection by somebody. Later, vigilantes had visited his home when he had been away. Following the ominous visit, the doctor had packed his bags and moved out quietly. It is now believed that he has gone abroad.

49. The Military Streamlines Operations

Maj. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne was the most senior officer of the armed services in the anti-JVP thrust. The Operations Combine which he headed had unadulterated control over the security forces in Colombo. The "Ops Combine" as it is popularly known, was started in November 1987 to take over the security of the Colombo district after the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord. This new organisation was meant to co-ordinate the Army, Navy, Airforce and Police activity in the Colombo district. The first commander of this outfit was Brig. Vijaya Wimalaratne. The Ops Combine had 36 platoons assigned to it originally. In mid-1988, this was increased to 58 platoons. During this period the forces generally went slow on the JVP. One officer described it as a result of the "fall out mentality" after the cessation of hostilities in the North. "Operation Liberation" in Vadamarachchi had been halted in its tracks and the soldiers sent back to barracks after the Indo-Lanka Accord. This had resulted in quite a lot of disillusionment and lack of faith in the government's commitment, which the service personnel felt, did not match their own. Hence during the initial stages, some officers had to go from camp to camp explaining to the soldiers, why the Northern operations had to be stopped and their duties as soldiers in the new situation. As we noted earlier, this was a period when the JVP's propaganda offensive was at its zenith and they constantly harped on the way the government sent the soldiers back to barracks at the

height of the Northern war. Hence it was no easy task to get the soldiers round to face the new situation.

The emphasis during the initial stages had been to protect the public and to keep the essential services running. After the initial spate of VIP assassinations, three man teams were deployed at every junction so as to discourage gunmen from taking up positions at such places. During the elections in 1988, the Ops Combine had been mainly concerned with containment – not attack. Most of the JVP's peripheral cadets had adopted the strategy of leaning against the established political parties for cover and hence any operations would have created a dicey situation. During this period, the main area of JVP concentration was the Piliyandala, Homagama, Hokandara, Kahatuduwa circle. Attempts were made quite early on by the Ops Combine with Col. Janaka Perera's leadership to clean up this crucial area. Based on the Mattegoda Army Camp where Col. Janaka Perera was the commanding officer, a thrust was launched all over this area. A large number of suspects were held at the Tyrone Fernando Stadium in Moratuwa, but quite a number were released later in January 1989 as a goodwill measure to get the JVP to the negotiating table.

The Ops Combine operated in a series of stages. Stage Green was when the police controlled security and the army stood by. Stage Purple was when the Army comes out in assistance to the Police. Stage Red was when the Army was fully deployed and in charge of the situation. The period following the Presidential and Parliamentary election was "green" until July 1989. In mid 1989, there were some changes made in the Army Command structure which streamlined operations and was the key to the successes recorded towards the end of the year. The country was divided into three area commands. Area one was placed under Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne which comprised the Western Province less the Colombo district which was under the Ops Combine, and the Southern, Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces. Area two comprised the North Central, Central and North Western Provinces and came under Brig. Vajaya Wimalaratne who relinquished his duties as the commander of the Ops Combine to take up the new command. Area three comprised the Northern and Eastern Provinces and came under Maj. Gen. Stanley Silva.

In July, Maj. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne had been asked by President Premadasa to take over the security of Colombo. Gen.

Waidyaratne had requested that he be given unadulterated control over the Ops Combine without anybody being able to give direct orders to the Ops Combine without his mediation. Earlier, three authorities had the power to issue orders to the Ops Combine; the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence, the Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry (formerly known as the Joint Operations Command) and Army Headquarters. Gen. Waidyaratne wanted control over Ops Combine to be centralised under him. After some delay and exchange of letters, this was achieved. And on August 4, the Ops combine became operational under the new command. In view of the importance of Colombo, a lot of facilities were placed at the disposal of the Ops Combine. One hundred platoons drawn from the Army, Navy and Airforce were placed under the new Command. In addition to this, the entire RDF regiment was deployed in Colombo. Ten handpicked officers from the Army were put in charge of intelligence under Brig. Algama. Col. Janaka Perera was in charge of special operations. It was the RDF, Col. Janaka Perera's special teams and the Ops Combine "I" section that did most of the "cleaning up" in Colombo.

In the running of the Ops Combine, Gen. Waidyaratne had to work in close liaison with Mr. Sirisena Cooray who had been appointed by the President as the political co-ordinating authority. At the first meeting of the new Ops Combine Command, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne had told those assembled; "You all have undertaken to do this and that. ... I don't know...but be careful, if you fail, your necks will get cut." Subsequent to the capture of the JVP leadership, it was thought that the Ops Combine was responsible for everything. This was not correct. The Ops Combine controlled Colombo and all events in the country had a tendency to centre on Colombo. Thus the Ops Combine was at the centre of all happenings. But a lot of work was done by Police operatives too. The Police captured Gunaratne Wanasinghe, Saman Piyasiri Fernando, Lalith Wijeratne and Nandatillake Galappathi in addition to numerous other lesser leaders and activists. In other areas also, the various Police and Army teams operated successfully. But the senior officers of the Ops Combine did their duty as soldiers and facilitated and gave encouragement to the anti-JVP thrust. And the bulk of the work was done by the Army. Thus they ran the risk of being marked out by the JVP as their most dangerous enemies.

Raja Mahattaya, the Colombo District division two leader had been arrested by the RDF in October 1989. The young lieutenant who had mounted the operation had raided the house a few hours too early and they missed D.M. Ananda who also used to stay at the same house. The house at which Raja Mahattaya was found had been large and well appointed with modern facilities. Raja Mahattaya had even fancier meeting places in Colombo 7 where he had frightened several rich mudalalis into giving him their houses for his clandestine meetings. He had also been frequently seen at the stately home of a certain opposition politician whose servant's quarters had been a JVP den. The JVP always had a panache for making public proclamations about their honesty, dedication and frugality of life style. In a DJV leaflet dated as late as September 10 1989, addressed to all judicial officers, the JVP stated that *"they need no mansions, they have no vehicles and have no personal luxuries. Their only hope is to completely change this inequitable social system"* Two months later, the State TV showed to the public the mansions, cars and the personal luxuries including Israeli manufactured aphrodisiacs used by the top JVP leadership.

Later, through information received from Raja Mahattaya and others, the RDF was once again able to trace D.M. Ananda and arrest him in the Ratnapura area to which he had fled. Owing to the islandwide onslaught against the JVP, their hiding places had become restricted since no ordinary person was willing to accommodate them. And they had to make do with places already available. The JVP's grip on the masses had visibly weakened by this time. No amount of threats from the JVP could prevent the first Presidential Mobile Ministry which was held on November 2 1989 at Rahula college, Matara from taking place. People turned up in their thousands. A few months earlier, a JVP threat would have elicited almost total compliance. D.M. Ananda was functionally the No. 1 in the JVP. The politbureau never met in full session. They got together only in two's or three's. It was Ananda who conveyed decisions from one group to another. This when combined with his other functions as the political cum military leader of the Colombo/Sabaragamuwa area, the leader of the Bhikku, womens' and workers' fronts and the leader of the Jathika Kamkaru Satan Madyasthanaya, made him the single most powerful person in the organisation. This is not to say that Wijeweera was superseded as the charismatic leader

of the movement. But Ananda's sphere of responsibility in the organisation was much larger than Wijeweera's. A hardworking man, Ananda had slaved indefatigably to build up the movement. Many of the others appear to have grown fat and lazy with the influx of money into the movement. And their grip on the organisation had also loosened, giving rise to a kind of anarchy within their own ranks.

50. The Capture of the Leaders

D.M. Ananda was held at the Mattegoda Army camp and efforts were made to coax information from him. Nobody attempted to rush things. Earlier, the forces had been able to capture important leaders, but no useful information was got from them. Sumith Atukorala was captured in 1988 in Wennappuwa and recognised to be an important JVP leader, but he died without divulging any important information to the Police. P.B. Wimalaratne, the leader of the workers wing in the party was captured and kept in custody for a long time by the Army in 1989, but nothing useful was got from him either. It was only with the capture of D.M. Ananda that a real breakthrough was achieved. Even D.M. Ananda had tried to stall for time. But he had mentioned Araliya Estate in Galaha as their headquarters in the region.

This bit of information was immediately followed up and a party led by Col. Janaka Perera and Maj. Gamini Hettiarachchi had set off for Galaha. Col. Janaka Perera, a 42 year old Sandhurst trained officer had the reputation of being one of the finest soldiers in the Army. He was a specialist in terrorism with a masters' degree in defence studies in this subject. A qualified engineer, he commanded the Engineers Regiment and distinguished himself in the East as the co-ordinating officer of Welioya in 1986-1988. He was the Provincial Commander of the North Western Province in addition to being in charge of special operations at the Ops Combine in Colombo. Maj. Gamini Hettiarachchi

was the commanding officer of the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). The RDF had been raised by Brig. Wimalaratne for operations in the North at the height of the Northern war. Maj. Hettiarachchi was an officer of the Armoured Corps and had distinguished himself at Vadamarachchi. His brother, a planter had earlier been beheaded by the JVP for having dared to raise the national flag on independence day in 1989 when the JVP had banned all the traditional activities and celebrations. An old Thomian, Maj. Hettiarachchi was described as having been a "guttu guy" even while in school.

Piyadasa Ranasinghe and H.B. Herat were arrested in Galaha. These were the two leaders who met most frequently with Wijeweera. Herat had told the team the whereabouts of Wijeweera after a brief interrogation. A few hours later Wijeweera was arrested at Ulapane at his well appointed estate bungalow where he lived masquerading as a planter under the false name of Attanayake. When the party had arrived at around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Wijeweera had been taking a shave. The Army team had clambered over the gate and surrounded the house. Wijeweera had come out saying "I'm Attanayaka, you have no right to come here. I'm a peace-loving man!" Col. Janaka Perera had got flustered at the confident air put on by Wijeweera and thought they had come to the wrong place. Still, he had cocked his pistol, put it to "Attanayake's" head and asked "Oya Wijeweerada?" "Attanayake" fearing that the Colonel would pull the trigger, had admitted that he was Wijeweera and said "I will come with you, but don't harm my family". There were two women "servants" in the house other than Wijeweera's wife, and all the women had started wailing as Wijeweera was led out.

Later, at the Ops Combine headquarters at Havelock town in Colombo, everybody in the Defence establishment flocked in to see the prize catch. Minister Ranjan Wijeratne had also arrived to look at Wijeweera. Brig. Algama had earned himself a bad reputation in the eyes of the JVP in Embilipitiya and Galle. He would go to Janahamuwa's and tell the public "if anybody tries to deliver threatening letters or comes to ask for extortion money to your homes or workplaces, kill them! throw acid at them.... hack the bastards to death with katties!" Now the dreaded JVP persecutor was face to face with the rebel Supremo. Chubby and talkative, Brig. Algama's appearance bares no resemblance to his reputation. Wijeweera had chatted to him for a long time without

knowing who he was. Later, Brig. Algama had asked Wijeweera "Do you know who I am? I'm Algama". Wijeweera had clasped his hand and said "You are a wonderful personality, I'm sorry I sentenced you to death".

Thereafter, the NIB cameramen had video filmed Wijeweera's voluntary appeal to the JVP to lay down arms and halt the violence. Some thought that this statement had been coerced from Wijeweera and that he had been assaulted before the filming. But this was not correct. Once in captivity, Wijeweera was far more docile than his public speeches and proclamations would have one believe. After his arrest in 1971, Wijeweera had told the CID everything about everybody else while trying to hide his own responsibility for the 1971 insurgency. His recorded 1971 statement went on to 400 typed pages. In 1989, his voluntary statement was brief. And it was broadcast to the nation.

Soon afterwards, Wijeweera died. The Army said he had been shot dead in a confrontation between the JVP and an Army team that had taken Wijeweera to look for a JVP safe house. Some said that Wijeweera had been taken to the Borella cemetery, shot in the legs and burned alive in the crematorium. Others said that his finger nails and teeth had been pulled out and that he was put inside a gunny bag and dashed against a wall. Such horror stories were totally unfounded and reflected what the people liked to imagine to be the way Wijeweera died.

Upatissa Gamanayake was captured and killed the next day. The main lead to Gamanayake had been Thilakarathne the District secretary for Galle who had been captured by two young Gemunu Regiment officers earlier in the year in Galle. Thilakarathne had brought the Army to Bandaragama saying he was certain that Gamanayake was somewhere around. But the Army was unable to trace him. Later in the year, a one-time hardcore activist of the JVP and a former District Secretary for Jaffna known as Fonseka was captured by a Gemunu Regiment Captain working under Brig. Wimalaratne. Two days prior to his capture, Fonseka had met Upatissa Gamanayake at the town hall junction in front of the STF headquarters and Gamanayake had told him "comrade, you must start work again" and taken him for a discussion to a place in Bandaragama which he owned under an assumed name. This was one of the lines which led to his capture a few hours after Wijeweera.

Commenting on the capture of the JVP leaders, Varatharaja Perumal the Chief Minister of the Northern and Eastern Provinces had said in his heavy Jaffna drawl "I say, Prabhakaran wouldn't have died like that. He would have died fighting. If he was in a tight spot he would take cyanide. But he would never be taken alive to be spat upon by his enemies!" A large number of Sinhalese were bitterly disappointed with the JVP leadership. As one embittered non-political VIP said, "These fellows have disgraced the entire Sinhala race". The JVP leadership did not display much bravery in captivity. Some of the lower cadres however, did display a great deal of resilience. Some were beaten till they were quite silly with agony, yet no information was extracted. When it came to the top leadership however, there wasn't 24 hours between the capture of one leader and the next. Some time ago, when Shantha Bandara was in captivity, Ravi Jayawardena had asked him why the JVP cadres don't use cyanide like the LTTE to avoid disclosing secrets. Shantha Bandara had waved his hand and said "oh we don't need that". But it is clear that had the JVP distributed cyanide capsules at least to their central committee, the 1989 debacle could have been avoided. The JVP was only willing to kill for their cause; not to die for it. Moreover, prolonged existence in a situation of affluence had turned many of them into softies. Che Guevara had declared that "the city was graveyard of the guerilla". The lifestyle of the city had a corrupting effect on the guerilla and made him soft and unable to put up with hardship. This happened to the JVP.

For a long time, President Jayawardene had been totally convinced that Wijeweera was hiding in the Sinharaja forest and he had kept on telling the Army to search the Sinharaja jungles. But combing the Sinharaja jungles would have needed a whole division even to attempt it. Had Wijeweera been in the jungles, he would never have got caught. In the jungle tracts of the Southern, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, no JVP jungle hideout was ever raided with much success. The established practice was to build watch posts on top of trees so that whenever any suspicious movements are noticed, the occupants could flee into the jungles. Some Tamil militants ask, "the South has much more jungle cover than the North and East. How is it that the JVP leaders got captured?" The answer is simple. The JVP leadership had become too fat and lazy to go into the jungles. They had joined the jet set driving new Japanese cars, eating

turkey grilled in microwave ovens and carrying flasks of scotch in their brief-cases. The absurdity of it is enough to blow one's mind.

This was also the reason why the JVP leadership gradually lost control over the organisation. By the time D.M. Ananda was captured, he had come to the conclusion that it was useless to continue. It would only result in further death and destruction. This was why the Army was able to get more information from him than from anybody else, and without using any of the customary forms of coercion. Sometime before the capture of D.M. Ananda, at least a section of the JVP leadership wanted to have a dialogue with the government and Shantha Bandara had made contact with Minister Thondaman from his hideout in Nuwara Eliya. But the majority opinion within the organisation was that they should continue the same way. This was more a reaction of despair than of rationality. Many middle rankers and lower level cadres realised that they would never be able to face the people without the gun. The gun had become an indispensable part of their lives and they did not want to have their fangs drawn. After the crimes they had committed in the name of patriotism and social revolution, they had no option but to try and get out using the same methods they adopted to get in.

The JVP's attitude towards the All Party Conference which was mooted in September 1989 in conjunction with the unilateral ceasefire by the government was equally bull-headed. They declared that the APC would only help Indian imperialism and named the Sri Lanka Progressive Front lead by Mr. S.D. Bandaranaike as the only anti-Indian force. They described the APC as a ruse to hoodwink donor agencies and convey the impression of stability. They stated that the educated youth were fighting not to snatch power from Premadasa and give it to Sirima but to

- * Abrogate the ILPA
- * Free the country from the autocracy of the Northern and Eastern Provinces
- * Drive away the Indian Army
- * To solve problems without foreign interference.
- * Disband illegal fascist forces.

After their capture however, the JVP leadership had been anxious to avail themselves of any leniency on the part of the government. They had all wanted to meet the President. Some had wanted to have a politbureau meeting in captivity to decide on their future course of action. How they could expect such VIP treatment after what they had done is inexplicable except in

terms that they had for a long time been living in a world of their own. Many of them did not appear to know what had happened to them. They were so close to capturing absolute power.... Now when everything they had worked for lay about them in ruins, they could not accept it.

Soon after the killing of Wijeweera and Gamanayake, the leadership was assumed by Saman Piyasiri Fernando. Upali Jayaweera, Gamini Wijegunasekara and Kitulagoda had been promoted to the politbureau. At the initial stages, the new leadership tried to maintain that Wijeweera had not been captured and killed. They launched a poster campaign urging the people not to be misled by the "false propaganda" of the Government. But soon the weight of evidence bore down on them and they were forced to admit that their supremacy was no more. After the demise of Gamanayake, the leadership of the Southern zone was taken over by Gamini Wijegunasekara. Instead of going underground and re-grouping in order to make a comeback, Gamini Wijegunasekera ordered an immediate escalation of violence in the South. Thus, the Paddy Marketing Board office at Tissamaharama, the Paddy Research Centre at Bentota, the SLTB depot at Akuresa and about 40 SLTB buses were torched in the South in the last two weeks of November 1989. Killings of UNP supporters were also reported from Middeniya, Beliatte, Morawaka, Ambalangoda, Karadeniya, and Beliatte. Disturbances in the South continued up to mid-December with killings and arson being reported from Tangalle, Ahangama, Poddala, Ambalangoda, Hikkaduwa, Akuresa and Baddegama. But this too fizzled out when towards the end of December, Saman Piyasiri Fernando and Lalith Wijeratne were captured and killed by special police teams from Welikada and Katugastota respectively. Gamini Wijegunasekera himself was captured in January 1990 by the Army. So was Upali Jayaweera. The last meeting of the Socialist Students Union was held towards the end of December 1989 at the "Sweet House" outlet at Kirullapone on the High Level Road. Present on the occasion had been Upali Jayaweera, Upul Kitsiri, the new leader of the SSU and Siriwardene, the leader of the Nimal Balasuriya Balakaya.

They had met to discuss what they were going to do when the Universities re-opened in January. A leaflet had been drafted by Upali Jayaweera but this never saw the light of day since they were captured before it could be printed and distributed.

The student wing was at the forefront of the JVP's attempts to make a comeback. In addition to the attempt to murder Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, they had also made an attempt to murder two volunteer Army officers, Brigadier Panabokke and Col. Pelpola. The SSU women's leader Deepani, a twenty year old undergraduate of the Sri Jayawardenapura University and Robert, one of those involved in the plot to kill Mr Ranjan Wijeratne had gone to Galle Face arm in arm pretending to be just another young couple in order to be on the look out for the two officers when they came for their evening stroll. After the officers arrived, the assailants had come in a car and shot at and stabbed the two officers who however were able to grapple with the hit men and chase them off. The new JVP leadership had also attempted to make a comeback with a four page leaflet which however was busted by the Army. By January 1990, the JVP had thus been completely devastated.

What now? Some people are still not convinced that the JVP is gone for good. One hears rumours about the JVP making attempts to regroup. Some robberies have been carried out and some prisoners among whom was Adiris Costa, have escaped. But this means nothing. Sporadic activity went on till 1976 after the 1971 insurgency. This time, the JVP had much larger numbers and more reason not to surrender. Hence one can expect sporadic activity by JVP cadres who have fled to the jungles for a long time to come. There is a group of about forty or more in the Kumana jungles and there are many more such groups all over the country. They cannot come out to surrender even if they want to. Hence their only alternative is to try and hold on the way they are. Among the remnants, there are of course some people who harbour delusions of building up the JVP once more. But this is a pipe dream. Even after the 1971 insurgency, the ordinary public looked at the JVP with fear and apprehension. After what they did in 1987-89, they will never again be able to build up a mass following. Somawansa Amarasinghe is still alive and at large. This too has no significance. Somawansa Amarasinghe was never an organiser. There however is one thing to guard against. This is the JVP's policy of always concentrating on the new generation. When Wijeweera was alive, the JVP had developed the art of indoctrinating young minds. The youngsters who came under their spell were at the most impressionable age and unaware of the wiles of the world and JVP's own sordid

history. Though the people who were best at this are now dead, it would be wise to guard against any approaches being made to school kids and the such like. The tragedies of 1971 and 1987-89 should never be allowed to happen again.

51. The Collective Suicide of a Generation

About forty thousand people on both sides lost their lives during the JVP insurrection 1987-89. Some feel that the number killed was much larger. But though there were a few spectacular massacres like at Menikhinna where over 200 people were killed, such occurrences were rare and the numbers killed at any single place rarely exceeded a dozen at a time. Most of the killings by the security forces and the vigilantes were concentrated in the six months between and including August 1989 and January 1990. During this period, at least fifteen thousand people lost their lives. On any given month, the number of killings rarely fell below 1500.

In the preceding two years between August 1987 and July 1989, security forces activity was not very intense and nothing more than eight thousand killings were done by them in the entire two years. This in fact was one factor which went against the JVP in the end. During the period when security forces activity was lax, they became bolder and bolder and some of their activists began to work openly in their work places and villages. By the time the security forces began their activity, quite a lot of JVP cadres had exposed themselves and had nowhere to hide. Thus about 23,000 killings can be attributed to the security forces and the "vigilantes". Over the two and a half year period of the insurrection the JVP finished off about 17,000 people. The many

hundreds of people who were gunned down by the security forces during the forced marches organised by the JVP should actually be included in the JVP's lot because this was a deliberate policy to get the security forces to fire on a human buffer and thereby kill ordinary citizens and as they hoped, to build up resentment against the security forces. Such a strategy was carried out by the LTTE in the North against both the Sri Lankan security forces and the IPKF. Thereby the LTTE was able to turn public opinion against their enemy. The JVP was adopting a similar method and the deaths resulting therefrom should in all fairness be attributed to them. In addition to this loss of human life, billions of rupees worth of property was destroyed during the two and a half year madness.

If one asks what drove so many young men and women to the JVP, the answer is simple; unemployment. For many years, the economy has not been able to absorb the yearly inflow into the labour market. Unemployment is now estimated to be well over twenty percent of the employable population. It could even be as high as 25%. Accurate statistics are not available. But empirical evidence speaks volumes. There was also the psychological factor, the hopes and aspirations created by the new vistas opened up by the post-77 economic policy and the envy and anger of those who could not make it. There was also the social fall out resulting from the enthronement of the English language. The loss of prestige and employment prospects resulting from this drove many into the arms of the JVP.

In his 1977 novel "Asatya Kathavak" Gunadasa Amarasekera has described the mind set of the JVP as a "suicidal mania". He characterises the revolutionary as an individual who sometimes takes to the path of violent revolution due to existential reasons which have no relation to social problems or realities. For instance, the trauma of the break up of a love affair can be the main motivation to take to the path of revolution. To an individual at a loose end with no proper reason to go on living, the path of revolution presents new vistas. The theory of social revolution gives such youth the zest for life. The revolutionary is by definition, the supreme good personified. He lives not for himself but for the good of others. He is selfless, dedicated and the creator of history. In a disjointed world this appears to be the only thing to latch on to. "The cause" becomes an all-consuming passion. The world is seen in black and white terms.

There are only heroes and villains. The sense of history is exaggerated and one's own role overestimated. A dementia seizes the revolutionary. He attacks what he perceives to be the black and the bad with boiling hatred.

The revolutionary in other words, is the epitome of the blackest despair. The JVP was on many counts more a product of despair rather than hope. It is true that they had a kind of Stalinist socialism in view for the future. But the dominant element was not hope but despair. This was why the JVP never had patience and had a marked tendency to act as if there was no tomorrow. They tended to act more according to their psychological needs than to a rationally thought out political programme. The JVP was the nemesis of societal complacency and under development – a fatal mixture. In a situation of economic stagnation, widespread poverty and unemployment, when the privileged continue to live it up with their standards of living rising ever higher, it tends to breed envy of the sickest kind. Envy which finds no mitigation and spreads in concentric circles around the individual, embracing everybody. To the JVP, even average middle class comforts were signs of social privilege. Some newspapers carried reports of sarcastic and envious comments made by members of the "deshapremi" squads that visited average middle class homes. They never considered the effort and toil expended to acquire such comforts. All they knew was that they did not have such comforts. To the JVP even the village boutique keeper was a capitalist and the small-time village officials, gramasevakas, co-operative chairmen and gramodaya mandala chairmen were members of the privileged exploiting classes. On some occasions, even those who had water or electricity supplies to their homes or could afford three meals a day, were considered to be privileged.

Since they were not employed, they thought nothing of ordering week long work stoppages and the hardship caused to those who had to earn their living. They just could not care less. The JVP was actually out more for revenge than for change. The senseless slaughter they perpetrated and their lack of concern for public opinion was a reflection of this mentality. To be fair, it must be said that there was some justification for the JVP being what it was. Sinhala society got what it fully deserved. Most of those who joined the JVP were hard boiled yakko's who had adopted all the worst characteristics the system bred. Idealism and

good intentions were never a part of their plan to capture power. They knew that this was a society which knew no gratitude. Hence they wanted to capture power with the least possible danger to themselves. In the society they lived in, they knew that self-sacrificing heroism would not win them anything more than temporary popularity. Had they chosen the heroic path and failed to capture power, they would have got no gratitude from the public. Hence they preferred to be cynical and play it safe. Looking at this phenomenon from the opposite side, the same story holds. The security forces personnel who finally finished off the JVP receive no thanks today. Some sections of the public have even branded them as murderers.

The JVP knew that the memory span of the public was very short. When the decision was taken to kill Vijaya Kumaratunga, they banked on this. One central committee member when asked about the wisdom of killing a man of Vijaya's stature had cynically replied "people will mourn for Vijaya for two weeks at most, then he will be forgotten". This was a correct assessment. The same assessment was also applicable to the JVP itself. Within two weeks of the killing of the JVP leaders, they had been relegated to the limbo of history. To the general public, the events of 1987-89 are now nothing but a bad dream. The vanquished and the victors are both equally irrelevant to them.

This in a sense may be a blessing. A country at war cannot afford to have a long memory. People should be able to forget, collect the pieces and continue. But when this has become a social norm in all situations, problems emerge. One reason why the JVP never considered it wrong to virtually horsewhip the public into line was because they knew that everything depended on success. If they failed they were done for. One sees some parallels in the LTTE in the North. The LTTE is obsessed with the idea of getting themselves recognised as the only representatives of the Tamil people. And they have a policy of killing off all possible rivals. This is probably because they realise through experience that they would be conveniently forgotten the moment the goal was achieved. They know their people well enough to know that others might get crowned after they did all the fighting.

The JVP was thus an expression of a struggle by society against itself. There was a basic flaw in the post-77 policies in that it bred complacency and lack of commitment. While the civil

war raged in the North and East, the carnival went on in the rest of the country. Though Sri Lanka was one of the worst scenes of conflict in the whole world, the country was not on a war footing. The country was suffering from a surfeit of liberality. By not putting the country on a war footing with the inevitable austerity measures, the UNP managed to retain and consolidate its popular electoral support. But at what cost to the country? It was not a case of elections being held for the people, but the people being pepped up and groomed for the elections; like in ancient Rome where voters were kept happy with free bread and circuses. One cannot in a sense blame the government for this. Mindful of their own continued political survival they balked at imposing any hardship on the public. In July 1987, the then Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel had been able to frighten the cabinet into agreeing to the Indo-Lanka accord by stating that if the accord was not signed and the war continued, he would have to impose austerity measures on the country. Gunadasa Amarasekera once wrote that he realised for the first time that ours were a people who asked for food, drink and clothing above everything else only at the 1977 elections. The UNP too knew this. The "low intensity conflict" attitude adopted by the UNP from the beginning of the Northern war was a recipe for a social disaster. In the North, patriotism had its price. Nobody could become a patriot by word of mouth. But in the South, the entire public were armchair patriots. Fat cats in Colombo held forth on the hostilities from their plush homes and the chauvinist Sinhala media created a public who were more frenzied spectators than enthusiastic participants in the "great patriotic war". No public opinion was created to put the country on a war footing and to finish the war. It was only when a bomb went off in Colombo that the public was awakened to the realities of war. But such was the soul-destroying power of the great carnival that whenever a bomb went off in Colombo, the scene of the blast was soon full of bounty hunters who took jewellery and other valuables off the dead and the dying. Earrings off smashed heads, rings and bangles off severed arms. Even the injured found their valuables missing by the time they were brought to hospital. After the corpses were hauled away and the debris cleared, life went back to normal and the carnival continued. This is the same society which produced the JVP. They wanted power without commitment. It was easier to build up

compliance through terror than through commitment. They knew that their earnestness would only be laughed at and soon forgotten after the work was done. Hence the "slave driver" attitude towards the public. None of the JVP leaders seemed to be repentant of what they had done. It seemed to them the only rational course of action.

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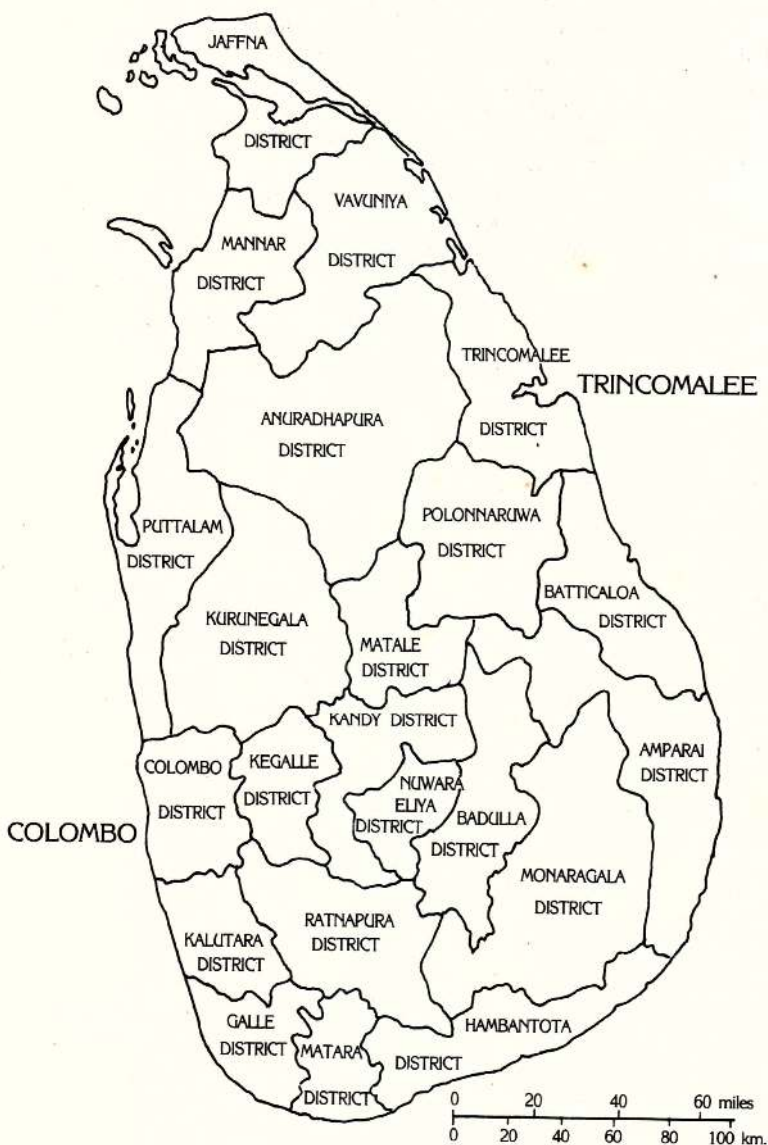
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACTC	: ALL CEYLON TAMIL CONGRESS
AGA	: ASSISTANT GOVERNMENT AGENT
AIADMK	: ALL INDIA ANNA DRAVIDA MUNNETHRA KASAGAM
BBC	: BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
CCP	: CEYLON COMMUNIST PARTY
CPSL	: COMMUNIST PARTY OF SRI LANKA
CWC	: CEYLON WORKER'S CONGRESS
CID	: CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
CJC	: CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION
DJV	: DESHAPREMI JANATHA VYAPARYA (PATRIOTIC PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT)
DWC	: DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' CONGRESS
DMK	: DRAVIDA MUNNETHRA KASAGAM (ASSOCIATION FOR DRAVIDIAN PROGRESS)
DSV	: DESHAPREMI SISYA VYAPARAYA (PATRIOTIC STUDENT'S MOVEMENT)
ELJP	: EKSATH LANKA JANATHA PARTY
EPRLF	: EELAM PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY LIBERATION FRONT
GA	: GOVERNMENT AGENT
GMOA	: GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION
ILPA	: INDO-LANKA PEACE ACCORD
IPKF	: INDIAN PEACE KEEPING FORCE
IUBF	: INTER UNIVERSITY BHIKKU'S FEDERATION
IUSF	: INTER UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S FEDERATION
ISU	: INDEPENDENT STUDENT'S UNION
JVP	: JANATHA VIMUKTHI PERAMUNA (PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT)
JC	: JATHIKA CHINTHANAYA
KSD	: KARAVA, DURAVA, SALAGAMA
LP	: LIBERAL PARTY
LSSP	: LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY
LTTE	: LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM
MEP	: MAHAJANA EKSATH PERAMUNA
NCP	: NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE
NIB	: NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU
NCMC	: NORTH COLOMBO MEDICAL COLLEGE (PMC)
NSSP	: NAVA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY
PLOTE	: PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ORGANISATION OF TAMIL EELAM
PC	: PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
PCM	: PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBER
PMC	: PRIVATE MEDICAL COLLEGE (NCMC)
PRRA	: PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY RED ARMY

RDF : RAPID DEPLOYMENT FORCE
RMP : REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST PARTY
SLMP : SRI LANKA MAHAJANA PARTY
SSU : SOCIALIST STUDENT'S UNION
STF : SPECIAL TASK FORCE
SLTB : SRI LANKA TRANSPORT BOARD
SLFP : SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY
TULF : TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT
UNP : UNITED NATIONAL PARTY
USA : UNITED SOCIALIST ALLIANCE.



SRI LANKA: THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front) or the J.V.P. as it was popularly known, was a militant youth organisation which emerged in Sri Lanka in the late sixties. Throughout its turbulent existence, it was dominated and overshadowed by one of its founding members, Rohana Wijeweera. The J.V.P. was responsible for initiating two bloody rebellions, the first in April 1971 and the second in the period 1987-1989. Both insurgencies were a blot on the history of post independence Sri Lanka. Both dragged the country into a morass of unprecedented violence. The 1987-1989 insurgency was much worse than the comparatively mild 1971 episode. On both occasions, the J.V.P. faced defeat and brutal repression. What unfolds in this book is the tragic, brutal and sordid story of the J.V.P.'s second insurrection in the years 1987-89.

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