

Pirapaharan

By: T. Sabaratnam

Introduction

(Continued)

The Language

Tamil youths had been radicalized by the late 1960s. Language is a matter that touches the heart of every Tamil. They are proud of the antiquity and richness of their language, and linguistic nationalism is part of the psyche of every Tamil. When, in 1956, the Bandaranaike Government enacted the Sinhala Only Act, Tamils were enraged. They were hurt the Sinhala leaders went back on their earlier promise of parity of status for the Sinhala and Tamil languages.

The Federal Party decision to perform satyagraha (non-violent protest) at Galle Face Green opposite the Parliament building evoked a sympathetic response among the Tamil people. The satyagraha held on 5 June 1956 was disturbed by organized Sinhala hooligans. The Federal Party then took the opposition to the Sinhala Only Act to the Tamil people. The TULF organized the "Thirumalai Yatra (March to Trincomalle) in April 1957, which was followed by a 3-day convention. The Convention placed a 4-point demand before the government and gave the Government one year to implement the demands. The demands were:

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

Bandaranaike agreed to talk with the leaders of the Federal Party and to work out a solution. Regarding the language issue, it was agreed to work out an adjustment without abandoning the two parties' respective positions: Sinhala Only by Bandaranaike and parity of status by Chelvanayakam. The agreement worked out was the recognition of Tamil as a national language and that the administration of the Northern and the Eastern Provinces would be done in Tamil.

That agreement was not honoured. Neither was the agreement of

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1965 in which Dudley Senanayake promised to make Tamil the Language of Administration and of Record in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Senanayake's undertaking to enable Tamil-speaking persons to transact business in Tamil throughout the island was also not honoured.

Safety and Security

Tamils as a whole, and youths in particular, had lost faith in the Sinhala leadership by 1968 when the Federal Party quit Dudley Senanayake's government in disgust. By then Sinhala leaders had unleashed the armed might of the state and the strength of the unruly mob to silence non-violent protest by the Tamils. The mob attack on the satyagrahis at Galle Face was followed by attacks on Tamil officers and cultivators in the Gal Oya scheme. Two years later, in May 1958, there was widespread attacks on Tamils. These attacks started at Polonnaruwa where Sinhala colonists from the Padaviya Colonization Scheme attacked the Batticaloa- Colombo train. Attacks spread to Anuradhapura, Colombo and then to the hill country. Tamils were attacked, their homes burnt, children were thrown into boiling tar barrels, many were chased out with barely the clothes they were wearing to the refugee camps and many refugees were then sent by trains and ships to the north and east.

The Bandaranaike government, intent on pacifying the Sinhalese, detained Federal Party leaders from 4 June 1958 to 4 September 1958, accusing them of instigating the riots. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government again detained Federal Party leaders nearly three years later on 17 April 1961 charging them with trying to establish a separate state. Addressing the nation that night on radio, Sirimavo Bandaranaike said:

Since last week the Federal Party has opened, what they call, a postal service and formed a police force. They have also established land kachcheries to allot crown land to their supporters. It will thus be clear that the Federal Party leaders had challenged the lawfully established government of the country with the view to establish a separate state.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike's key ministers, Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike and C. P. de Silva, who had obtained Thanthai Chelva's assistance to defeat the Dudley Senanayake government in March 1960, won the election in July 1960 and started to implement the Sinhala Only in the Tamil provinces from 1 January 1961. The Federal Party launched a satyagraha campaign on 20 February opposite the Jaffna Kachcheri (Secretariat). This satyagraha grew into a People's Protest. The people blocked the gates of the secretariat preventing administration in Sinhala.

On 30 March the government airlifted a naval unit to Jaffna (the first airlift in Sri Lanka's history) to cordon off the secretariat, but that exercise failed as the people used the by-lanes and private compounds to go to the secretariat. The Federal Party retaliated for the deployment of the naval unit by extending the campaign to Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalle and Batticaloa secretariats.

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Making use of the growing support it received from the people, the Federal Party leaders decided to court arrest by breaking selected laws. They inaugurated the Tamil Arasu Postal Service on April 14. Thanthai Chelva, functioning as the Postmaster General, sold thousands of stamps. The next day, April 16, the Federal Party inaugurated the Tamil Arasu Land Kachcheri in which applications for the allotment of state land were received.

The government reacted to the Federal Party expanding the satyagraha into a civil disobedience movement. It declared a state of emergency and made use of the army to break up the satyagraha movement. It arrested the leaders and the youth leaders involved in organizational work. The satyagraha, though subdued, had unleashed among the Tamil people the desire for freedom and had brought Tamil youth into conflict with the armed forces.

The Breaking Point

The 1961 satyagraha was a turning point in Sri Lanka's Sinhala – Tamil relations. It made the Tamils politically conscious and active. It drew the youths and the students, who had been mere spectators, into becoming participants. From then on the youth started questioning their leaders, pressing for action. The failure of Thanthai Chelva's experiment at cooperation during Dudley Senanayake's National Government made the youth assertive.

The Sirimavo Bandaranaike government that succeeded Dudley Senanayake in 1970 marked the breaking point. This government touched the sore point in Tamil mind - higher education and employment. The requirement that knowledge of Sinhala language was essential for state employment almost completely barred the Tamils from an area that had been their priority. Then Bandaranaike introduced language-wise standardization for university entrance.

Interference in education not only estranged Tamil youths from the Sinhalese, it also alienated them from their own leaders, who failed to understand immediately the impact of standardization. The Federal Party, from its inception, had been the agent of Tamil government servants and Tamil teachers, who made use of the party to safeguard their interests. The Action Committee of the party raised the question of standardization as only one of the six acts of government that affected the Tamil people. Angered youths decided not to rely on their leaders and formed the Tamil Manavar Peravai (Tamil Students League) to agitate for solutions to their problems. This league was headed by Ponnuthurai Sathyaseelan. Pirapaharan, Sivakumaran and Sri Sabaratnam were important members. Later the league was converted into the Tamil Elaignar Peravai (Tamil Youth League).

The Tamil Manavar Peravai was involved in agitating against the 1972 constitution along with its anti-standardization efforts. The United Front, comprising the SLFP, Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party, which won the 1970 election, set up a constituent assembly consisting the members of parliament to draft and enact a new constitution. The Federal Party presented a model constitution to the constituent assembly. Article 1 of the FP's model constitution said Sri Lanka should be a federal state comprising a central government and five autonomous states. The five states proposed were: a state comprising the western and southern provinces; a state comprising the

north-central and north-western provinces; a state comprising Uva, Sabaragamiva and Central Provinces; a state comprising the northern province and the districts of Trincomalle and Batticoloa of the eastern province and a state comprising the south-eastern district of Amparai.

The constituent assembly did not even consider the Federal Party's suggestions. Instead, it adopted the following basic resolution: "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall be a unitary state." The assembly also adopted the resolution that Sinhala would be the only official language and Buddhism would be accorded the pride of place amongst the country's religions. Tamil youths, now vociferous, demanded that the Federal Party quit the constituent assembly and the Federal Party bowed to their demand. Thanthai Chelva called the 1972 constitution "a charter of slavery."

The 1972 constitution started the movement towards the demand for a separate Tamil state. On 14 May 1972, eight days before the proclamation of the constitution, Tamil parties formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) comprising the Federal Party, All Ceylon Tamil Congress, the Ceylon Workers Congress, the Eelath Thamilar Ootumai Munnani, the All Ceylon Tamil Conference and some Tamil trade unions. The TUF organized a massive protest against the new constitution on 22 May 1972. The youths took the protest to the villages. Village level demonstrations and meetings were held, the national flag was burnt and bonfires made of the copies of the new constitution.

Thanthai Chelva resigned his seat in parliament to give the government an opportunity to test the reaction of the Tamil people to the new constitution. The government postponed the by-election for his seat until 1975.

The government retaliated against the protests about the new constitution by arresting over 70 youth leaders. That brought the police and the armed forces into direct confrontation with the youths. As the impact of standardization began to be felt among the students, they became ever more strident in their protests. They started telling the people that the path of cooperation and non-violent protest have failed. Armed struggle, as in Bangladesh and the violent revolt by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in southern Sri Lanka, was considered the only possible option. Secret armed groups sprang up. One of these armed groups was Pirapaharan's Tamil New Tigers (TNT).

The 1974 January Tamil Research Conference Massacre infuriated the youth, especially Sivakumaran. The youths were wild with anger. They charged the government with engineering the police attack. Youths organized a series of protests. Sivakumaran was determined to take revenge. His target was Posts and Telecommunications Minister C. Kumarasuriyar, Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiapph and ASP Chandrasekera, the Sinhala police officer held responsible for the deaths of civilians at the conference. Sivakumaran committed suicide by swallowing the cyanide capsule he was wearing when he was trapped while trying to rob the Kopay branch of the People's Bank on 4 June 1974. His death created an emotional environment in Jaffna.

The massive victory Thanthai Chelva won in the Kankesanthurai by-election held on 6 February 1975 generated an intense movement towards separation. In his victory speech Thanthai Chelva declared;

Throughout the ages, the Sinhalese and the Tamils in this country lived as distinct sovereign people until they were brought under foreign domination. We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure our political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon. It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people. I wish to announce to my people and the country that I consider the verdict at the election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free. On behalf of the Tamil United Front, I give you my solemn assurance that we will carry out our mandate.

Youths raised a victory cry. “Tamil Eelam and nothing else,” they chorused. Some pricked their index finger with a pin and applied the blood on Thanthai Chelva’s forehead (the traditional Iratha Thilagam) indicating their preparedness for any sacrifice, setting the stage for the historic Vaddukoddai Resolution. On 5 May 1976, nine days before the adoption of the Vaddukoddai resolution, 21-year old Pirapaharan, *thamby* as he was known then, transformed his TNT into a well-knit guerrilla outfit and renamed it the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), pledging to make the Vaddukoddai Resolution a reality.

Vaddukoddai Resolution

The Tamil United Front held its first annual convention at Pannakam in the Vaddukoddai electorate on 14 May 1976. Youths, especially those who had secretly set up militant groups, participated in full strength. They were there to ensure the adoption of the historic resolution that called for the establishment of a separate state for the Tamil people and the conversion of the Tamil United Front into a liberation organization called the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).

The resolution was moved by Thanthai Chelva and seconded by M. Sivasithamparam of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress. The full text of the resolution is given in Annexure-1. The resolution proclaimed;

The first National Convention of the Tamil United Front meeting at Pannakam (Vaddukoddai Constituency) on the 14th day of May, 1976, hereby declares that the Tamils of Ceylon, by virtue of their great language, their religions, their separate culture and heritage, their history of independent existence as a separate state over a distinct territory for several centuries till they were conquered by the armed might of the European invaders and above all by their will to exist as a separate entity ruling themselves in their own territory, are a nation distinct and apart from the Sinhalese and this Convention announces to the world that the Republican Constitution of 1972 has made the Tamils a slave nation ruled by the new colonial masters, the Sinhalese, who are using the power they have wrongly usurped to deprive the Tamil Nation of its territory, language citizenship, economic life, and opportunities for employment and education, thereby destroying all the attributes of nationhood of the Tamil people... This convention resolves that restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM,

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based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation, has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil Nation in this Country.

The Mandate

In my third book; *The Murder of a Moderate*, I told the story of how the moderates were marginalized, through their own faults and through the strategies of Sinhala chauvinism. Appapillai Amirthalingam took over TULF leadership after Thanthai Chelva died on 5 April 1977 and his first task was to face the election of 1977 July.

The TULF decided to make use of the election to obtain the endorsement of the people for the Vaddukoddai Resolution and to get their mandate for the elected representatives to constitute themselves into a National Assembly of Tamil Eelam for the purpose of drafting and implementing a constitution. The relevant paragraph read;

Tamil speaking representatives who get elected through the vote will also form themselves into a National Assembly of Tamil Eelam which will draft a constitution for a state of Eelam to establish the independence of Tamil Eelam by bringing the constitution into operation either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle.

People gave the TULF the required mandate, electing 17 of their candidates with massive majorities. In his electorate of Kankesanthurai, Amirthalingam polled 31,155 votes to his opponent's 5322. In a moving victory speech, Amirthalingam announced that the people had given his party the mandate it asked for and vowed:

From now onwards there is no looking back. We will march forward to achieve the goal of Eelam.

After the election Amirthalingam went back on his word. The TULF parliamentary group forgot entirely its promise to form itself into a National Assembly of Tamil Eelam and to draft a constitution for a state of Eelam. Instead, the parliamentary group that met at Vavuniya decided to accept the post of the Leader of the Opposition and to function in Parliament as a responsible opposition. The TULF attended the Sri Lankan parliament on 4 August 1977 and Amirthalingam occupied the seat of the Leader of the Opposition. He seconded the name of Ananthatissa de Alwis for the post of speaker, proposed by the Leader of the House R. Premadasa. Congratulating the Speaker on his unanimous election Amirthalingam said:

The TULF would fulfill its obligations in terms of the conventions of the House and would cooperate with the Chair.

The TULF attended the ceremonial opening of the Parliament, breaking its 20-year boycott and made a patient effort to build an amicable relationship with the government. That brought about a cleavage between Amirthalingam and Tamil youths, whose darling he was during 1970-1977, the period he was out of Parliament. Youths adored him as their *Thalapathi*, meaning General. President Jayewardene took all possible steps to widen this cleavage. He provided Amirthalingam with an official residence, a car, security and other facilities and responded favourably to most TULF personal requests.

Amirthalingam took further steps to strengthen the bond between the TULF and the Government; the TULF attended parliamentary committee meetings, it attended monthly meetings with the cabinet to sort out the problems of the Tamils, and in June 1981 it contested the District Development Council elections and captured all the ten seats in the Jaffna District Development Council, polling 263,369 votes against the UNP's 23,302 and the Tamil Congress's 21,682. But the TULF's hold on the Tamil people vanished during the local government election of 18 May 1983.

In that election the Tamil people changed their loyalty from the TULF to the LTTE and obeyed the LTTE's command to boycott the election. In Jaffna 86% of the voters kept away. In Chavakachcheri 85%, in Point Pedro 99% and in Pirapaharan's birthplace, Valvettithurai, 98% of the voters kept away. The local government members elected by the few who voted at the election obeyed the LTTE order not to attend the inaugural meetings of the Councils fixed for June 16. Only the Point Pedro Town Council met that day.

Amirthalingam admitted that the people had discarded the TULF and chosen a new leadership. He told the Daily News;

We were reduced to a position that we could not reply to the Tiger charge that the District Development Councils have failed. We had nothing concrete to show the people other than the empty shells of the Development Councils

Youths warned the TULF and Amirthalingam that they were not honouring the mandate that the people had given them. They were also warned that they were being taken for a ride by Jayewardene. Young people repeatedly reminded the TULF leaders of their obligation with posters, whenever Amirthalingam visited Jaffna, which read: "What has happened to the Mandate. When is the National Assembly of Tamil Eelam meeting?" They also stepped up their attacks on the police and the army.

Jayewardene aided the estrangement of the Tamil moderate leadership - Amirthalingam and the TULF - from the Tamil people by refusing to strengthen them by granting the District Development Councils any basic legislating and taxing powers. Jayewardene and his advisors resorted to the strategy of weakening the TULF in the hope that the Tamil agitation for a separate state would wither away. They organized the Cyril

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Mathew group to unleash a virulent propaganda against Amirthalingam, who was accused of being the brain behind the militant groups. A no-confidence motion was moved against him, the Leader of the Opposition, a first in the parliamentary history of the world. He was accused of being a traitor by government members. They said he should be publicly torn to pieces, the worst punishment Sinhala kings of yore imposed on traitors.

Jayewardene and his strategists unleashed two mob attacks on Tamils - in 1977 on Sri Lankan Tamils and in 1979 on Indian Tamils - to carry forward their scheme of weakening the Tamils. The same strategy with added severity was implemented 1983 and thereafter. That phase, indicated briefly in the *The Murder of a Moderate*, will form the first part of the biography, *Pirapaharan*.

Pirapaharan's Mission

Pirapaharan's mission is to attain the objective of the Vaddukoddai Resolution - "a State of Tamil Eelam... to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil nation in Sri Lanka." The Tamil people gave the required mandate to the TULF in 1977 to draft a separate constitution and bring it into operation "either by peaceful means or by direct action or struggle."

The TULF failed to honour that mandate. The TULF demonstrated that "peaceful means" had totally failed as a method for obtaining Tamil rights. The failure of Thanthai Chelva's experiments at negotiations and cooperation has demonstrated that non-violent "direct action or struggle," too, would not succeed. Pirapaharan thus chose the only other option available; armed rebellion.

The events that forced him to come to that conclusion, his attempts at organizing an urban guerrilla group, the hardships he underwent during that process, his failures and successes, his achievement in converting a guerrilla group into a conventional army, his building of a suicide force, the establishment of a powerful naval unit, the organization of a police force, a judicial system and an efficient administrative network are all unparalleled achievements in the history of revolutions in the world.

In writing my fourth biography, *Pirapaharan*. I am fully aware of the difficulties I will have to face. Writing the first three biographies was relatively easy. I had known Thondaman, Chelvanayakam and Amirthalingam since 1957. I maintained close contact with them until their deaths. I moved closely with them and covered most of the important events in their lives. I had regular meetings with them and discussed the events that affected their lives and times. I have never met Pirapaharan, nor any of his top assistants. As a Lake House staffer, I have read more the army handouts and covered innumerable defence ministry press briefings - a definite disqualification to write about Pirapaharan, the most wanted man in Sri Lanka.

However, I possess a qualification which no other biographer of Pirapaharan can claim. I have moved very closely with the Tamil moderate leadership. More importantly, I have also moved closely with the main Sinhala actors involved in the ethnic conflict - Cyril Mathew, Lalith Athulathmudali, Gamini Dissanayake, Ranjan Wijeratne, Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prof. G. L. Peiris, among others. I have also

moved intimately with three Indian envoys who influenced Indian Sri Lankan policy - G, K, Chatwaal, J, N. Dixit and L. Mehotra.

The idea of writing this book was born in 1996, soon after I launched the book on Amirthalingam. I called on Neelan Tiruchelvam to thank him for attending the launch. He suggested that I should next write about Pirapaharan. I was bewildered. "He is going to take our struggle to a conclusion," Neelan prophesized. From Neelan's office at Kinsey Terrace I went to Kumar Ponnambalam's Queen's Road home. He endorsed Neelan's suggestion. He promised to give me the necessary help.

I am aware that this is a sensitive project. My professional training has taught me to be impassionate, objective, balanced. Facts are sacred and sacred they will be in this narrative. If there are any inaccuracy and inadequacy, I take responsibility. I will correct them whenever they are pointed out. I hope my attempt will prompt better, fully authentic biographies on Pirapaharan, a genius of our time.

Annexure-1

VADDUKODDAI RESOLUTION

THE RESOLUTION

Unanimously adopted at the First National Convention of the
TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT
held at Vaddukoddai
on May 14, 1976

Whereas, throughout the centuries from the dawn of history, the Sinhalese and Tamil nations have divided between themselves the possession of Ceylon, the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior of the country in its Southern and Western parts from the river Walawe to that of Chilaw and the Tamils possessing the Northern and Eastern districts; And,

Whereas, the Tamil Kingdom was overthrown in war and conquered by the Portuguese in 1619, and from them by the Dutch and the British in turn, independent of the Sinhalese Kingdoms; And,

Whereas, the British Colonists, who ruled the territories of the Sinhalese and Tamil Kingdoms separately, joined under compulsion the territories of the Sinhalese and the Tamil Kingdoms for purposes of administrative convenience on the recommendation of the Colebrooke Commission in 1833; And,

Whereas, the Tamil Leaders were in the forefront of the Freedom movement to rid Ceylon of colonial bondage which ultimately led to the grant of independence to Ceylon in 1948; And,

Whereas, the foregoing facts of history were completely overlooked, and power over the entire country was transferred to the Sinhalese nation on the basis of a numerical majority, thereby reducing the Tamil nation to the position of subject people; And,

Whereas, successive Sinhalese governments since independence have always encouraged and fostered the aggressive nationalism of the Sinhalese people and have used their political power to the detriment of the Tamils by-

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- (a) Depriving one half of the Tamil people of their citizenship and franchise rights thereby reducing Tamil representation in Parliament,
- (b) Making serious inroads into the territories of the former Tamil Kingdom by a system of planned and state-aided Sinhalese colonization and large scale regularization of recently encouraged Sinhalese encroachments, calculated to make the Tamils a minority in their own homeland,
- (c) Making Sinhala the only official language throughout Ceylon thereby placing the stamp of inferiority on the Tamils and the Tamil Language,
- (d) Giving the foremost place to Buddhism under the Republican constitution thereby reducing the Hindus, Christians, and Muslims to second class status in this Country,
- (e) Denying to the Tamils equality of opportunity in the spheres of employment, education, land alienation and economic life in general and starving Tamil areas of large scale industries and development schemes thereby seriously endangering their very existence in Ceylon,
- (f) Systematically cutting them off from the main-stream of Tamil cultures in South India while denying them opportunities of developing their language and culture in Ceylon, thereby working inexorably towards the cultural genocide of the Tamils,
- (g) Permitting and unleashing communal violence and intimidation against the Tamil speaking people as happened in Amparai and Colombo in 1956; all over the country in 1958; army reign of terror in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in 1961; police violence at the International Tamil Research Conference in 1974 resulting in the death of nine persons in Jaffna; police and communal violence against Tamil speaking Muslims at Puttalam and various other parts of Ceylon in 1976 - all these calculated to instill terror in the minds of the Tamil speaking people, thereby breaking their spirit and the will to resist injustices heaped on them,
- (h) By terrorizing, torturing, and imprisoning Tamil youths without trial for long periods on the flimsiest grounds,
- (i) Capping it all by imposing on the Tamil Nation a constitution drafted, under conditions of emergency without opportunities for free discussion, by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of the Soulbury Constitution distorted by the Citizenship laws resulting in weightage in representation to the Sinhalese majority, thereby depriving the Tamils of even the remnants of safeguards they had under the earlier constitution, And,

Whereas, all attempts by the various Tamil political parties to win their rights, by co-operating with the governments, by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary agitations, by entering into pacts and understandings with successive Prime Ministers, in order to achieve the bare minimum of political rights consistent with the self-respect of the Tamil people have proved to be futile; And,

Whereas, the efforts of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress to ensure non-domination of the minorities by the majority by the adoption of a scheme of balanced representation in a Unitary Constitution have failed and even the meagre safeguards provided in article 29 of the Soulbury Constitution against discriminatory legislation have been removed by the Republican Constitution; And,

Whereas, the proposals submitted to the Constituent Assembly by the Ilankai Thamil Arasu Kadchi for maintaining the unity of the country while preserving the integrity of the Tamil people by the establishment of an autonomous Tamil State within the framework of a Federal Republic of

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Ceylon were summarily and totally rejected without even the courtesy of a consideration of its merits; And,

Whereas, the amendments to the basic resolutions, intended to ensure the minimum of safeguards to the Tamil people moved on the basis of the nine point demands formulated at the conference of all Tamil Political parties at Valvettithurai on 7th February 1971 and by individual parties and Tamil members of Parliament including those now in the government party, were rejected in toto by the government and Constituent Assembly; And,

Whereas, even amendments to the draft proposals relating to language, religion, and fundamental-rights including one calculated to ensure that at least the provisions of the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Regulations of 1956 be included in the Constitution, were defeated, resulting in the boycott of the Constituent Assembly by a large majority of the Tamil members of Parliament; And,

Whereas, the Tamil United Liberation Front, after rejecting the Republican Constitution adopted on the 22nd of May, 1972, presented a six point demand to the Prime Minister and the Government on 25th June, 1972, and gave three months time within which the Government was called upon to take meaningful steps to amend the Constitution so as to meet the aspirations of the Tamil Nation on the basis of the six points, and informed the Government that if it failed to do so the Tamil United Liberation Front would launch a non-violent direct action against the Government in order to win the freedom and the rights of the Tamil Nation on the basis of the right of self-determination; And,

Whereas, this last attempt by the Tamil United Liberation Front to win Constitutional recognition of the rights of the Tamil Nation without jeopardizing the unity of the country was callously ignored by the Prime Minister and the Government; And,

Whereas, the opportunity provided by the Tamil United Liberation leader to vindicate the Government's contention that their constitution had the backing of the Tamil people, by resigning from his membership of the National State Assembly and creating a by-election was deliberately put off for over two years in utter disregard of the democratic right of the Tamil voters of Kankesanthurai, and,

Whereas, in the by-election held on the 6th February 1975, the voters of Kankesanthurai by a preponderant majority not only rejected the Republican Constitution imposed on them by the Sinhalese Government, but also gave a mandate to Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, Q.C. and through him to the Tamil United Liberation Front for the restoration and reconstitution of the Free Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM.

The first National Convention of the Tamil United Liberation Front meeting at Pannakam (Vaddukoddai Constituency) on the 14th day of May, 1976, hereby declares that the Tamils of Ceylon by virtue of their great language, their religions, their separate culture and heritage, their history of independent existence as a separate state over a distinct territory for several centuries till they were conquered by the armed might of the European invaders and above all by their will to exist as a separate entity ruling themselves in their own territory, are a nation distinct and apart from Sinhalese and this Convention announces to the world that the Republican Constitution of 1972 has made the Tamils a slave nation ruled by the new colonial masters, the Sinhalese ,who are using the power they have wrongly usurped to deprive the Tamil Nation of its territory, language citizenship, economic life, opportunities of employment and education, thereby destroying all the attributes of nationhood of the Tamil people.

And, while taking note of the reservations in relation to its commitment to the setting up of a separated state of TAMIL EELAM expressed by the Ceylon

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Workers Congress as a Trade Union of the Plantation Workers, the majority of whom live and work outside the Northern and Eastern areas,

This convention resolves that restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of TAMIL EELAM, based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation, has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil Nation in this Country.

This Convention further declares -

- a. that the State of TAMIL EELAM shall consist of the people of the Northern and Eastern provinces and shall also ensure full and equal rights of citizenship of the State of TAMIL EELAM to all Tamil speaking people living in any part of Ceylon and to Tamils of EELAM origin living in any part of the world who may opt for citizenship of TAMIL EELAM.**
- b. that the constitution of TAMIL EELAM shall be based on the principle of democratic decentralization so as to ensure the non-domination of any religious or territorial community of TAMIL EELAM by any other section.**
- c. that in the state of Tamil Eelam caste shall be abolished and the observance of the pernicious practice of untouchability or inequality of any type based on birth shall be totally eradicated and its observance in any form punished by law.**
- d. that TAMIL EELAM shall be a secular state giving equal protection and assistance to all religions to which the people of the state may belong.**
- e. that Tamil shall be the language of the State, but the rights of Sinhalese speaking minorities in Tamil Eelam to education and transaction of business in their language shall be protected on a reciprocal basis with the Tamil speaking minorities in the Sinhala State.**
- f. that Tamil Eelam shall be a Socialist State wherein the exploitation of man by man shall be forbidden, the dignity of labor shall be recognized, the means of production and distribution shall be subject to public ownership and control while permitting private enterprise in these branches within limit prescribed by law, economic development shall be on the basis of socialist planning and there shall be a ceiling on the total wealth that any individual of family may acquire.**

This Convention directs the Action Committee of the TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT to formulate a plan of action and launch without undue delay the struggle for winning the sovereignty and freedom of the Tamil Nation;

And this Convention calls upon the Tamil Nation in general and the Tamil youth in particular to come forward to throw themselves fully into the sacred fight for freedom and to flinch not till the goal of a sovereign state of TAMIL EELAM is reached.

