

History of the JVP

(People's Liberation Front - Sri Lanka)

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A word...

This volume that discusses the path of the JVP from 1965 to 1994 has been compiled from a collection of articles published by 'Niyamuwa' from May, 2008 under the pseudonym 'Mahogaya'.

The volume discusses the period from 1965 to 1994 in the history of the JVP that completes its 47 years of existence by 2012 and the analysis regarding the period from there onwards had to be presented in the future.

There are several factors that influenced publishing the history of the JVP either in the form of a book or in sections. On one hand groups that left the party on various petty personal matters or wrong political concepts are attempting to distort the history of the JVP for their petty and vicious interests.

These opportunistic, counter-revolutionary groups attempt to hide their opportunistic agendas by publishing distorted views on the history of the JVP and the philosophy and moves of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. This is one reason why the true history of the JVP should be taken before the masses.

The other reason is those who had been with the JVP since 1971

but later became slaves of the capitalist system after leaving the JVP as betrayers, traitors and those who have lost confidence of the party who have left the party and given up the struggle halfway due to their ineffectiveness and inability to cope with difficulties have begun distorting the history of the JVP.

Specially, such person who give interviews or write articles to weekend newspapers hiding their treacherousness, weaknesses, cowardliness and the selfishness of willingly becoming stooges of capitalism, in an attempt to become pseudo heroes, write what they want about the JVP, harming the party but attempting to steal the glory the party has achieved in the society.

The supplements issued with weekend national newspapers are full of such jokers and actors. The newspapers in Sri Lanka too reserve pages for these jesters due to their market needs.

Knowing that JVP is the only party that has a history that could attract masses despite there are many other political parties in Sri Lanka, they provide ample space in their newspapers for these jokers so that their business would benefit but, in the process, harming the JVP. We should understand that the capitalist print media need to make their businesses profitable but also has the need to thump the JVP by the jokers as well as betrayers.

It is due to the aforesaid reasons the importance arises to present the history of the JVP, though concisely, but scientifically and truthfully without unscientifically focusing on individuals.

It is no easy matter writing the history of a party that is built with small and large incidents with the participation of a large number of people and in a complex process. Writing the history of the JVP is a very difficult task. Writing the history of the JVP, when the founder of the party who contributed from its inception has been assassinated, when a large number of leaders of the party who had contributed and knew its history well have been assassinated, when documents and other paraphernalia belonging to the party have been destroyed during the suppression, while those who had fled and betrayed the JVP come out with falsehoods, is not easy at all. This volume is an attempt to fulfill this difficult task.

Here, our attention was drawn not to record various incidents of information about the party but to record essential events, incidents and facts to bring out the political substance of the party history; instead of presenting incidents abstractly or in isolation we attempted to identify the historical conditions, social environment and subjective situations that influenced such events and considered the path of the party historically, subjectively and its interconnection with the class.

Our intention was to analyze the party history in a political vision instead of looking at it in a personal outlook. We believe this volume would give a general and correct picture of the JVP.

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Foreword...

"Party struggles lend a party strength and vitality; the greatest proof of a party's weakness is its diffuseness and the blurring of clear demarcations; a party becomes strong by purging itself."

(From a letter to Marx from Lassalle-24th June 1852- What is to be done –Lenin)

The JVP that carried out many massive struggles along the political passage of Sri Lanka completes 49 years this year. The path the JVP had to take during this 49 year period was not flat or smooth and without obstacles.

During its path the JVP experienced victories as well as defeats, developments as well as many reverses. It gained experience through this path and politically matured.

From the inception of the JVP, during its hither to history, many groups have left it. From the Dharmasekera group that was eliminated from the party just 4 years after it was born in 1965 and those who have been sacked or those who have left on their own since then have all said the JVP was theoretically or politically wrong and they would take measures to build a more correct political party. All those who found new political

movements completed their tasks and fell to the historical garbage pit adding humour as well as tragedy to history.

All those who left the JVP to build new political movements attempted to copy Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. It is evident that the question "Why can't we build a new party if Wijeweera could do it after leaving the 'Chinese wing'" was in their petty bourgeois heads. What those who attempted to imitate Comrade Rohana Wijeweera throughout history and still continue to do so are displaying is nothing but their theoretical and political bankruptcy. Inability to recognize the dialectics of historical development and not identifying the task of the individual in history as well as the petty bourgeoisie egoism and being deceived by their own images are the reasons for such inadequacy.

Once Lenin said many become victims of deception and self-deception when they do not comprehend politics in its class sense and in its entirety.

This is what Lenin said:

"People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the INTERESTS of some class or the other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises"

(Lenin – Marx Engels Marxism – pg. 67. "Three sources and three components parts of Marxism.")

As such, the attention of the masses should not be on attractive statements of various people, their 'sweet lyrics', sympathetic stories or radical type speeches but whose interests are behind them. It has been made necessary to use a scientific method to study the real history of the JVP at a time the history of the JVP is being distorted for petty interests and objectives of various individuals. This is an opening for such a study.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and several youths founded the JVP as the revolutionary political party of the proletariat of this country; as the Socialist Party of the downtrodden masses in this country. In doing so Comrade Rohana Wijeweera made several important impressions in politics of this country that were different from the old left. Instead of heaping Marxism mechanically on Sri Lanka, he shifted away from dogmas but fulfilled a creative task by adapting Marxism to suit the

country, its political reality and cultural uniqueness. At the same time he took measures to organize the proletariat independently as a class deviating from the revisionist policy of making the proletariat a tail of the capitalist class. Meanwhile he taught in practice the manner of selecting modern strategies and tactics for the class interest of proletarian politics.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who understood the importance of a revolutionary theory, took measures to build the JVP on a very correct and explicit theoretical vision. In doing so he exposed all guises of opportunism and carried out an unceasing struggle against it. All petty bourgeoisie opportunists that lived throughout history have had the same symptoms. It was the phobia they had regarding theory; their dislike for it. It was like throwing kerosene oil on a rat snake. Their wish was to have opportunity to do whatever they like, without a definite theory and according to their petty bourgeois intentions. However, this is how Lenin shows the necessity of a revolutionary theory:

"Without Revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. At this point, we wish to state only that the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.

(Lenin- selected works vol. 5 pg. 368)

It is how Lenin saw the need for a correct theory. The JVP was built on this vision. It's true that the JVP is a dire obstacle to petty bourgeoisie that clasps hands with the narrow glamour of practicality that comes up within the proletarian movement. However, a real left movement should be built on a correct theory. It is the secret of JVP coming intact through all the ordeals it came across. Also, the theory followed by a real left movement should not be a burden for its correct practical functioning. The JVP, throughout its history, has functioned making theory a guide for practice and not making it a shackle. This is how Lenin had explained it:

"Their creation is facilitated by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement."

(Lenin, selected works vol. 10 - "Left -Wing Communism, An infantile disorder.)

The inception and the path of the JVP were created with a correct theory and linking this theory with the practical function of a revolutionary and a real mass organization. Marxism has shown us that practice without theory is blind and theory without practice is sterile. The theory and practice of a left political movement represents its dialectics. Inability to understand this is ideological impotency.

Too often two tendencies that harm proletarian revolutionary political movements come up. One is the aforesaid petty bourgeois opportunism that comes with the narrow glamour of practicality that takes the guise of pragmatism and ignores theoretical guidance in politics.

The other is the dogmatic idealistic group that reiterates theoretical formulae but without any practicality or functioning.

The opportunism of both these groups has harmed the JVP though the JVP has been able to defeat opportunism of both these types. There are live examples regarding this in the past history as well as in the recent history of the JVP.

As in any revolutionary party the history of the JVP is a multitude of experiences. There are victories as well as defeats, correct as well as incorrect measures, heroic sacrifices as well as treacherous betrayals in it. A revolutionary movement is not a creation of god. It is a complex process built by people living within capitalism but struggling against it. This is why all that is mentioned earlier could be seen in a history of a political party. The JVP, as the genuine revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka, is a party that has proved that it carried out and continues to carry out an unceasing struggle against everything negative and unsuited that was created and is being created in the party. Its history is full of such experiences. This volume attempts to discuss this history full of such experiences.

**Political Bureau,
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
(People's Liberation Front – JVP)
13th November, 2014**

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14th May, 1965 was a Wesak Poya Day. It was a significant day not only because it was a Wesak Day. Seven youths who gathered at a worker's house at Akmeemana in Galle on this day engaged in a discussion to form a new revolutionary movement in Sri Lanka. The discussion of the group of youths was lead by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who was 22 years of age then. It is this discussion that paved the way for the political movement Janatha Vikukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front).

The new revolutionary movement of the youths that was later named Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna was formed not as a result of willfulness of a person or as an accident. It was to fulfill a definite historical social necessity. There were several conditions that had emerged in the local and international stage that paved the way for the creation of the JVP. Several factors that were set forth by the local and international politics were instrumental in forming the JVP.

The left movement in Sri Lanka commenced with the formation of the LSSP in 1935. The left movement marked by the creation of the LSSP, from its inception and from the class basis of those contributed to it, their

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ideology, policies and practice, was a petit bourgeois and a revisionist movement. The old left movement, on one side fragmented into various scholastic factions and on several occasions betrayed the working class. The most serious instance was the betrayal of 21 demands of the working class in 1964. As a result, the objective and subjective factors that were developing in the local and international politics opened an avenue for a new left. The JVP was created to fulfill this historical stage.

A special significance is the 'Chinese – Soviet' conflict that developed in the international stage in 1963. People's China and the Soviet Union that were the powerful pals in world socialist movement and that gave immense inspiration and support to revolutionaries all over the world initiated an ideological and power conflict in the beginning of 1960s and in 1963 became two states at enmity with each other. With the China – Soviet conflict communist parties all over the world polarized into Chinese and Soviet wings. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka did not escape this fate either. The Soviet wing was headed by S.A. Wickremesinghe and Peter Keuneman while the Chinese wing was led by premalal Kumarasiri and N. Shanmugadasan. When this division took place more militant and radical youth of the world were attracted to the Chinese wings.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who was a medical student at Lumumba University in Soviet Russia, took a stand supporting China. As China and Soviet Union engaged in an ideological conflict each attempting to claim they were the true Marxist-Leninists and many young revolutionaries were involved in the debate, they were compelled to make a comprehensive study of Marxism Leninism. As such, the conflict opened avenues to reread Marxism Leninism for a massive ideological exploration and also influenced the creation of new revolutionary movements.

On one hand the China – Soviet conflict brought about an ideological awakening in the world and on the other youths were invigorated as liberation struggles in several countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America were moving towards victory. The liberation struggles in Congo, Algeria, Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau in Africa,

Vietnam and Indo-China in Asia and Nicaragua, El Salvador in Latin America were moving forward. Specially, the victory of Cuban Revolution in 1959 inspired masses in Latin American and African countries, provided international cooperation and all these occurrences gave inspiration and encouragement to young revolutionaries all over the world. This environment contributed to the creation of new left movements and founding of the JVP too was a result of this international political background.

This was a period the backward capitalist system in Sri Lanka was in crisis. The SLFP regime that came to power in 1960 was confronted with a serious crisis in 1964. The government had come to a state that it had to change four finance ministers as it was unable to prepare its budget due to the escalating economic crisis. Meanwhile, the left (LSSP, CP and MEP) that had been divided until then joined to form United Left Front. By then all trade unions in the country had joined to form the trade union center. They put forward 21 demands to the government. The LSSP that was in the ULF betrayed the 21 demands and breaking the ULF joined the SLFP government in exchange for three ministerial and two deputy ministerial posts.

This was one of the worst betrayals that had occurred in the left movement of Sri Lanka. This created a serious crisis in the left movement. A vacuum was created when the left movement that should represent interests of the proletariat betrayed the class and becomes a partner of a capitalist regime. As LSSP leaders crossed over to the SLFP, the so-called left wriggled to the right, the inevitable need for a genuine revolutionary left surfaced. The JVP was created to fulfill this indispensable need; to fill the historical need of a new revolutionary left that would organize the class independently within politics in Sri Lanka. This is also the secret of the JVP marching through all obstacles placed against it and arriving at the present juncture.

Creation of the JVP to fill the vacuum created by the old left when it betrayed and rejected the proletariat and became a partner of a capitalist government and rejecting being a prisoner of a capitalist

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government but took the path of organizing the masses independently cannot be compared to the petit attempt of setting up of a so-called political party in 2008 by a few rightist opportunists who were cast away from the party who ended up by becoming trusted subordinates of the ruling capitalist regime. Also, the attempt of a clique that acted as a gang of conspirators in the party and fled when their scheme was exposed, now articulating ultra-leftist type slogans but in reality is rubbing shoulders with all sorts of extremists and petty bourgeois gangs cannot be equaled to the creation of the JVP in 1965.

Throughout the history of the world left movement groups quitting left political parties can be understood in two ways. One is the correct group leaves the party that goes on a wrong direction to create a new party. The other is cliques and groups that are wrong leave the party that moves on a correct path to set up their own parties. History has taught us that this type of parties do not last long but become loyal subordinates of the reactionaries. When a group leaves a political party whether its intention and moves are right or wrong could be determined from the manner they conduct themselves, present their political criticism and how they go about building their party. Most of the cliques that leave parties after acting with petty intentions act apolitically. This is why they insult the political party they have left instead of coming out with political criticism against it. They slander, expose everything to the enemy and behave idiotically. Both cliques that were chased out from the JVP recently behaved apolitically and idiotically exposing who they were. However, the group that contributed to create the JVP in 1996 acted wisely and politically. This could be understood from the event that led to the creation of the JVP and the manner it was created.

The JVP had to be revolutionary at its inception due to the local and international factors that led to its creation. As such, it had to be a young revolutionary movement. The JVP, from its inception, was an extreme challenge for imperialism, capitalism as well as opportunism. This is why the capitalist class as well as the petit bourgeoisie considered it as its main enemy. The group of youths who were instrumental in creating the JVP was aware of it. This is why the JVP was created having

discussions under a semi- secret environment in workers' sheds or farmers' huts.

As the JVP from its inception, was the revolutionary party of the proletariat, it did not get international conference halls for its discussions or meetings. The JVP did not get protection from government security forces. For, revolutionary movements cannot be created with the protection of security forces of capitalist governments or with the blessings of capitalists. Only, petite bourgeois organizations that fulfill the needs of the capitalist class could be created with such support. Also, the JVP, in its inception, did not stand together with NGOs or susceptible foreign countries or organizations. It did not rally with various opportunist cliques and groups. It did not get any money from such organizations. Instead, it strived under very trying conditions to build the new movement. As such, the beginning of the JVP was a very severe one. It is under this severe path that the policies; organizational structure and the discipline of the party were created and nurtured under these trying conditions.

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please: they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.

(Marx – Engels Selected Works. Vol. 1 Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte. - Page 96. Progress Publishers. 1975)

The truth Marx pointed out regarding building history is valid to the history of a political party as well. This doesn't under estimate the conscious task or the responsibility of individuals or leaders in building a political party but to indicate that a party cannot be built only on people's wishes. Despite the seven individuals who participated at the Akmeemana discussion in 1965 to build a new left contributing to create the JVP at the beginning, the path of the JVP was not decided only on their wishes. It was decided on an inter connection of individual objectives as well as the subjective factors and functioning of other forces.

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Political movement is not an act of a single person. Marxism rejects heroics of individuals in history. However, it doesn't reject the special contribution of individuals in building history. For, such individuals too are creations of the needs of history. When discussing the inception of the JVP it is impossible not to mention Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who took the initiative gave ideological, theoretical and organizational guidance and dedicated his whole life for the creation of the JVP.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was born to a poor family at Tangalle on 14th July, 1943. His full name is Don Nandasiri Wijeweera. Comrade Wijeweera's father was an activist of the Communist Party. As the family moved from Tangalle to Kottegoda in Matara when Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was very young his first school was Godauda Vidyalaya at Kottegoda. Later, in 1959 he entered Dharmashoka Vidyalaya at Ambalangoda. As his father was an activist of the Communist party and he had the opportunity to associate leaders of the Communist Party at Matara Comrade Wijeweera held communist views from his young days. He had read Communist Manifesto as a school boy and had read Liu Shaoqi's 'How to Be a Good Communist'.

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On 25th September he entered Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow (This was later named after Patrice Lumumba) on a scholarship to study medicine. During this period he also studied other subjects such as Political Science and Historical Materialism from Soviet Communist Party School and was hastily drawn towards politics. He visited Moldavia and Georgia in Soviet Union during vacations in the University in 1961. He has also addressed farmers in Moldavia. He, the youngest student from Sri Lanka in that batch, won the gold medal for the brightest student in 1961.

Despite having a great interest in Socialism as he had seen and studied Socialist ideology in Soviet Union he was getting disgruntled regarding the manner the Communist Party in Sri Lanka was functioning. When the China – Soviet conflict intensified Comrade Rohana Wijeweera took the side of the more radical Chinese side while staying in Soviet Union. Due to the conflict between China and Soviet Union all communist parties in the world split. The Communist Party in Sri Lanka too was divided and when Premalal Kumarasiri, Shanmugadasan and a group left and formed the Chinese wing Comrade Rohana Wijeweera sent his greetings.

Meanwhile, he came to Sri Lanka for the vacation in 1964 as he was sick due to breaking rest and exhaustion. He met those in the Chinese wing of the Communist Party. When he went to the Soviet Embassy to get a visa to go back to the Soviet Union he was refused visa. It was due to the interference of the Moscow wing of the Communist Party in Sri Lanka. He was told to join the Moscow wing to get a visa to go to Moscow. It was a decisive turning point of Comrade Wijeweera's life. When the issue whether to go to Soviet Union for his medical degree betraying his principles or preserve his principles casting away the medical degree came up Comrade Wijeweera decided to cast away the degree to preserve his principles. It was his first sacrifice for politics.

Then onwards he worked in the Chinese wing and was popular among youths of the wing. It was Comrade Wijeweera who was the translator when groups of Indonesian Communist Party and Albanian

Communist Party met the Chinese wing during the 1964 – 65 period. Meanwhile Comrade Wijeweera was appointed as the secretary to the reconstruction of the youth organizations of the Chinese wing. Despite the Chinese wing had broken away from the Communist party its practice was still traditional. As such, Comrade Rohana started to be aware of the weaknesses of the Chinese wing and when Premalal Kumarasiri left the Chinese wing and Shanmugadasan became its head the situation became serious. It is under such a background that Comrade Rohana thought that Chinese wing should be taken on a correct path. The discussion held on 14th May, 1965 was for this purpose.

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These seven who met at the residence of Akmeemana Karunaratna on 14th May, 1965 were Rohana Wijeweera, Wijesena Vitharana alias Sanath, H. Milton, Wilson Dedigama, W.T. Karunaratna, Delgoda Raja and Siripala Abeygunawardene. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera made a broad analysis on the local and international politics and emphasized the necessity of a genuine left movement under such circumstances. It was decided to strive to correct the Chinese wing and Comrade Rohana to function as a full timer of the Chinese wing.

Comrade Rohana and the group of youths acted to correct the Chinese wing on the decision taken at the Akmeemana discussion on 14th May, 1965. Shanmugadasan who came to know of the move expelled Comrade Rohana Wijeweera from the Chinese wing. As a result the attempt to correct the Chinese wing was unsuccessful. However, the need for a revolutionary party still existed. As such, the group of youths held another discussion at Akmeemana in 1966 and began building a party from the very beginning. It was a very arduous task. However, it was necessary to carry out this difficult task as it was a historical need. Comrade Rohana and the few youths who left the Chinese wing

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confronted the challenge. This is how the JVP was founded.

1966-67 was the most difficult period the JVP spent as an organization. This period was known as the 'Agrarian Research Period'. As the working class had been betrayed by the old left it was difficult to organize the working class. The class was disillusioned. The trust of the class had to be brought back. As such, it was decided to work among the farmer community, a sector that the old left had not spoilt. It was a period to gather revolutionaries. Working with the farmer community was a different experience. They were not an organized lot. They were not politically conscious. However, they were distressed. Comrade Rohana, under very trying conditions started working with farmer communities in Giruwapaththuwa. Difficulties such as money for travelling, lack of food and hunger were constant occurrences. At times Comrade Rohana with another had to work as porters at Tissamaharama bus stand to earn money for the organization. Later this economic adventure was abandoned. The farm at Kirinda was begun during this period. It became a lodging. Comrade Rohana collected people for the new party using the farm as a center.

The JVP was born as a new political movement against opportunism that had engulfed the left movement in Sri Lanka and to fulfill the necessity of a correct new revolutionary left. However, within two weeks of the founding of the JVP, it had to struggle against anti-Marxist opportunistic tendency that attempted to surface within the movement. The 'Kalaththawa discussion' at Kalaththawa in Anuradhapura was held in December, 1967 for this purpose.

The most difficult period of building the JVP was 1966 and 1967 years. Rallying people for the need of changing the society was very difficult. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who gave leadership to the JVP, and other comrades were confronted with a massive challenge. They had to build a Marxist-Leninist Communist Revolutionary party. To build such a party there should be Marxist-Leninists, revolutionaries and Communists. However, the old left had not created such persons. Also, those who were born were not born as Marxist-Leninists. They were born

to a capitalists system as people obedient to and suitable to that system. Their task was to build Communists, Marxists and Revolutionaries from people born under such a system. It was a very arduous task – to create an incorrupt individual within the corrupt capitalist system. It was an arduous task that would discourage anyone and force a person to find shortcuts.

Those who contributed to originate the JVP were confronted with the difficulties immensely. It is under such circumstances that an anti-Marxist opportunistic tendency surfaced within the JVP. Due to the difficulties confronted in building a communist, revolutionary mass organization within capitalism certain individuals thought of an easy path instead of a building a broad political party. Also, instead of considering the existing general state as well as the special features of the country and dialectically analyze the objective realities to prepare a path of struggle that suits the country, certain individuals were tempted to copy experiences of other countries in toto. This tendency could be observed not only in 1967 but also at present. The interest to copy others' experiences indicates nothing but the bankruptcy of their politics.

By December, 1967 such tendencies surfaced among several who were with the political movement that gave birth to the JVP as well. It surfaced through the proposal to copy the form of Cuban Revolution. With the killing of one of the greatest revolutionaries Comrade Che Guevera in Bolivia on 8th October, 1967 attention throughout the world was drawn to 'Che' and Cuban guerilla struggle. Several who had the petty view that the Cuban Revolution was a result of a guerilla struggle that was carried out in Sierra Maestra mountain range by a few revolutionaries proposed a Cuban type guerilla struggle to Sri Lanka. They would have thought that the guerilla struggle carried out by small groups was easier than building a broad political party. As Cuban guerilla struggle ended in victory and such guerilla struggles broke out in several countries in Latin America and Africa we were faced with the question 'What is to be done?' We too had the debate whether to form guerilla groups or build a political party. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, taking into consideration the world situation that existed and based on Marxism-Leninism solved

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the issues perspicuously. In his volume 'A few experiences' written by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera while in the prison after the 1971 uprising he states, "We have again acted correctly in deciding which organization we should build. Do we have to organize ourselves as a guerilla outfit or as a political party? Today, this issue has brought about drastic controversies and conflicts within the international revolutionary movement. We, who understood the interconnection between the two, decided that we should build a political party which would be ready for armed struggle when the class struggle reaches its climax and as the vanguard of the revolution would guide and give leadership to the masses to march forward..."

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had taken a gigantic attempt to correct anti-Marxist tendencies that had surfaced within the party even when organizational structure of the infant political movement had not been created as ideological clarity was important for the path of a political movement. Defeating opportunistic tendencies that wriggle through various ideologies is essential for the victory of a left movement. A lot of information regarding that could be found in Leninist teachings. Lenin once said, "

"Opportunism is not one that occurred suddenly or by mistake or due to treacherousness of individuals. It is a social product of a complete historical period. The inevitability of revisionism is decided by the class roots that exist in the modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon." The sources of opportunism that surface in a left movement within a capitalist society represent petty bourgeois interests. This is why opportunism is considered as a disguised capitalist ideology within the movement of the proletariat. Opportunism could surface in any left political party at any time but it is the responsibility of such a left party to recognize it beforehand and defeat it. When opportunism surfaces within a political party either it has to move towards opportunism or it should defeat opportunism and completely eradicate it from the party. The Kalaththawa discussion was convened in 1967 for this purpose.

4

The discussion known as ‘Kalaththawa discussion’ convened at Kalaththawa in Anuraddhapura in the latter part of 1967 is an important and decisive event in the history of the JVP. The clarity of the ideology of the party and framing of educational discussions to give political education to those who join the party in the process of building the party were the result of the discussion.

A group that was in the forefront of the party was called for the ‘Kalaththawa discussion’. At the discussion, held for several days, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera speaking from a standpoint of Marxism-Leninism defeated the point of view copying Cuban example. Instead he established that revolution in Sri Lanka should take a Sri Lankan form, it should be carried out on scopes that would open during the struggle. The discussion was the basis for ‘The path Sri Lankan revolution should take’, one of the series of discussions the JVP used in its process to educate the masses.

The JVP, from its inception, identified wrong ideologies that surfaced within it and was able to defeat them ideologically. This is

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why the 'Kalaththawa Discussion' is important in the history of the JVP. Despite the notion of copying Cuban example was defeated, the effect it had on certain persons mind could not be completely eradicated. This point of view that had not been cast away by some would have had some effect on the 1971 uprising. However, what is significant is that the JVP did recognize anti-Marxist tendencies as they cropped up and was able to defeat them.

In the path of proletarian movement surfacing of opportunism is a possibility. However, defeating opportunism is an essential factor in bringing victory to the movement. This is collaborated in what Lenin stated in the report he presented to the 2nd Congress of the 3rd International held on 19th June, 1920. He states:

"Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism. It has been shown in practice that working-class activists who follow the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeois themselves. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power.

This is where our principal enemy is, an enemy we must overcome. We must leave this congress firmly resolved to carry on this struggle to the very end, in all parties. That is our main task. "

(Lenin – Collected Works Vol.31 pg. 231. Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International-Progress Publishers.Moscow.1966)

This is how Lenin emphasized the importance of defeating opportunism. As in all genuine left movements in the world, the signs of unceasing struggle against opportunism carried out by the JVP too could be observed. The JVP, as the left movement of Sri Lanka, was nourished by the unceasing struggles it carried out against the capitalist system

and the ultra-left and rightist opportunism. The aforesaid 'Kalaththawa Discussion' is an important landmark of this struggle. Later, it manifested in the struggle against 'Dharmasekera group'.

Opportunism in the party that was defeated at the 'Kalaththawa Discussion' in 1967 resurfaced in another form in 1969 via Dharmasekera group. To understand the opportunistic tendencies that surfaced through Dharmasekera group it is necessary to pay attention to the important incidents that occurred and other factors on the path of the JVP during 1968-69 period.

There is no object or phenomenon in this universe that has been created or self-generated without any defects. All are born simple but are developed in their evolutionary paths. This is common to a political party as well. As such, the JVP too became a matured organization with broad experiences along its historical path. The challenges the JVP was confronted with along its path, the strategies and practices used to overcome them and what transpired as a result were not decided by the young revolutionaries who took the initiative to create the JVP. They had to act according to the objective realities that were before them and what history had to offer to them. This is how most of the incidents that we meet along the path of the JVP could be understood.

As we have mentioned earlier the JVP, at the beginning, had to work among the farmer community and the youth instead of the working class not because they selected to do so. It was due to the old left had betrayed the working class and had allowed despondency to settle in among the class but the farmer community had not been subjected to such dejection.

This is how the popular '5 classes' were created. The youths who initiated to build a new revolutionary left movement were confronted with a massive challenge. Their intention was not to build a reformist political movement within the existing system that would give those privileges but a revolutionary politics that would completely uproot the existing system. For this there should be revolutionaries. They needed Marxists, communists for this. However, the existing capitalist system

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was creating not such people but those who were suitable for it. As such, it was necessary to make revolutionaries from people who were born in the capitalist system, live according to and were familiar with capitalist concepts.

It could be done only through an ideological struggle that gives Marxist education and on the other hand tempering them with experiences and practices within an organization and by example. It is this challenge Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and the group of youths overcame amidst obstacles.

At the Kalaththawa Discussion in 1967 apart from defeating opportunistic ideology another important decision was taken. It is to teach politics to the people who join the movement. Instead of commencing with complex subjects it was decided to give political knowledge with a few simple discussions. It was decided to draw up several discussions.

They were:

- i. Crisis in capitalism
- ii. Independence is a device of colonialism
- iii. Indian expansionism
- iv. The left movement in Sri Lanka
- v. The path Sri Lanka revolution should take

It was these discussions that became known as '5 classes' later. These discussions nourished knowledge of youths and were instrumental in their understanding the real state of capitalism. These 'five classes' changed according to the times and their topic too changed. As such, the JVP is the only political party in Sri Lanka that prepared, with the physical resources that existed at that time, an educational programme to give political education to its members and arm them with the correct ideology. Later, educational camps were organized for further education. They were held continuously for several days.

Those who participated in political 'classes' and accepted the ideology were put into organizations. The organizational process commenced on a decision taken after the 'Kalaththawa Discussion.' The process was to identify, give them knowledge and put them into organizations. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, instead of building the party from top to bottom, built the organizational structure from the bottom to the top. Accordingly, 'committee of five' was built as the grassroots level organization. Later, district committees were built and district secretaries were appointed. In the book 'Several Experiences' Comrade Rohana Wijeweera says, "When the issue of organizing came up as revolutionaries were being built to form an organization, the issue was handled with a correct Marxist-Leninist foundation. We didn't build the organizations of our party from the top to the bottom like the old left movements or capitalist political parties. Instead, we did build an organization from the bottom to the top. Accordingly, the process was to build from the party branch, the village committee, divisional committee to district committee."

During the 1968-69 period the political ideology of the organization filtered to universities, rapidly spread throughout universities, university students in return brought back the ideology to the youths in villages and towns speedily enlarging the organization. It is under this environment groups were created in universities and the opportunism of Dharmasekara group was identified.

The organizational policy of a Marxist-Leninist political party is formed according to the organizational principle of 'democratic centralism'. Despite elementary signs of this principle were present in the earlier organizational structure of the JVP, it was not a complete or ideal organizational structure. It was not possible to expect such a structure during that period.

Meanwhile, certain disciplinary practices and ethics that are exclusive to the JVP were created during this historical period. The leaders and activists of the JVP were teetotalers, non-smokers and refrained from extravagant living but leading frugal lives. The principle or practice

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of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks and abstaining from smoking during the 1966-67 period when comrades had to go through a very trying period. Kirinda farm existed then but there was no money to carry out necessary work, transport and for food. There were no sympathizers from whom money could be asked for. For, there was no such a tradition created at that time.

During this period Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and several others worked full time and others who were in the top circle (Eg. Sanath, Siripala Abeygunawardene, Delgoda Raja and Karunaratna) were employed. They got monthly salaries and they, like others in the society, spent for liquor and cigarettes. When they gathered at Kirinda Farm Comrade Rohana Wijeweera explaining the financial difficulties the party is confronted with had made a proposal. That is those in the organization who are employed should stop consuming liquor and smoking, to save this money and contribute for the activities of the organization. As everyone agreed it was implemented thereafter. As such, abstaining from consuming liquor and smoking is carried out in the JVP not for any health reason but as a solution for financial difficulties. It was also a precious example. The JVP was able to stop consumption of liquor and smoking of those who could not be prevented from such habits even by religions and philosophies. It is a unique quality of the JVP.

The functions of the JVP creating various ethics, forming new examples, providing knowledge and building organizations were able to attract youths and its rapid spreading among the university community alarmed rulers and the suppression was unleashed. On the other hand forming of groups, opportunism and due to them internal conflicts too were created.

5

The JVP was rapidly expanding among the youths after the 1967 Kalaththawa Discussion and during the 1968/69 period. Specially, university students and village youths were attracted quickly towards JVP ideology. It is evident that the young generation was attracted towards the JVP due to the prevailing socio-economic situation and as a result of frustration they had been subjected to by the existing regime by not finding solutions for the issues they were confronted with.

When the JVP developed as a new political movement it was also confronted with a large number of challenges and issues. The issues that were confronted were ones that a new political movement would not be able to withstand normally; the JVP politics progressed through these issues, being tempered by them. There were several serious issues the JVP confronted during the 1967-70 period. They are:

- i. Slanders and revelations by the enemy
- ii. Sectarianism that surfaced in the organization
- iii. State repression and

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iv. Internal crises in the organization

These issues did serious harm to the JVP and they were somewhat responsible for the 1971 uprising.

Unlike in other countries in the world, the first attack on the JVP, the new proletarian revolutionary movement, was carried out by the so-called left. We have already stated that the reason for the creation of the JVP was the betrayal of the old left movement to move towards the right. As such, a large number of youths who had connections with the old left that movement and rallied with the JVP. When their youth movements were disintegrating and the members of youths' associations questioned theoretical weaknesses of the leaders of the old left they knew something was happening. They placed spies in the movement to find out about the new movement. As the creation of the JVP was a challenge for the old left, it is the old left that became the first enemy of the JVP.

Accordingly, 'Aththa' (The truth), the organ of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, made the first exposure and the first slander regarding the JVP. The exposure was carried out with banner headlines stating 'CIA snare to trap youths to attack UF government'. This not only exposed the young revolutionary movement to the enemy but also labeled it as a pawn of the 'CIA'.

The Communist Party, during this period, had placed a spy to get information regarding the JVP. This spy joined the JVP and participated in the educational camp held at Thanamalwila at the end of 1969. About 7 day long educational camps to give further education on Marxism were held for those who had completed the basic educational classes after 1968 and were operational within the movement. They were held under very trying conditions and with minimum facilities. The leaders of the Communist Party who, on information given by their spy, learnt that a new revolutionary movement was active and thought of destroying the JVP in its cradle.

This is how the JVP was labeled a 'CIA' pawn, that it was an organization against the 'United Front' that had been created by the combination of SLFP, LSSP and CP and the JVP was exposed to the state machinery.

Meanwhile, the other crisis the JVP was confronted with was the sectarian tendency that surfaced within the movement. Three groups that had their beginnings could be seen within the JVP in 1969.

i Dharmasekera group

ii. D.A. Gunasekera group also known as Kotte group

iii. Sarath Wijesinghe group aka Peradeniya group.

The biggest harm to the movement was done by Dharmasekera group. A political party is a group of people that gather around a series of certain policies and a constitution. However, a group is not one that gets together around policies but around a certain individual. They, instead of following the party's common organizational structure, act as a separate clique within the party. It is a state that seriously harms a political party. It is like a cancer in a human body. The sectarianism that existed in the party in 1969 should be understood not as a group that had grown within the party but as an attempt to maintain the group that had been planted in the party. Dharmasekera, who was the head of the students union of Vidyadalankara University, joined the party as a group. Sarath Wijesinghe who was in Peradeniya too joined the party in a group. The other group was D.A. Gunasekera group from Kotte.

The relaxed organizational nature of the JVP at its beginning and on the other hand the urgent need to create organizers and leaders when the JVP started spreading quickly among the masses made these individuals who showed leadership ability and efficiency taken into the party. Despite they were expected to get free from their sectarian mentality, they continued to act as groups. In this issue of sectarianism the group from Kotte could be managed with minimum hassle. Sarath Wijesinghe of Peradeniya group later cast away his sectarian tendency and functioned in the party. However, Dharmasekera group could not

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be similarly managed. As such, Dharmasekera group had to be chased out of the movement in 1969. Thereafter, Dharmasekera group acted as a hostile group against the JVP and provided opportunities for the UF government that came to power in 1970 to suppress the JVP. By 1971 they appeared as 'Maovadee Tharuna Peramuna' (Maoist Youth Front) and Mathrubhume Arakshaka Sangamaya (Front to protect Motherland).

There were many betrayals and conspiracies Dharmasekera group carried out against the party and Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. Some of them are: N.A. Nandasiri of Dharmasekera group betrayed Comrade Rohana Wijeweera by giving information to the CID. Also, Haburugala Jayasekera and Rosandel Perera of Bandaragama exposed the party. That was when they were arrested with a pistol in their possession by Bandaragama Police. Once, Rosandel Perera went to Comrade Siripala's residence at Katharagama disguised as an egg trader in an attempt to assassinate Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. Also, all information regarding the party was revealed to Illangaratna through Katepola Samathipala thero, an associate of Dharmasekera, and Illangaratna had given this information to J.R. Jayawardene, who was the Minister of State during the 1970 period. Dharmasekera group provided information to the enemy and carried out the role of a counter-revolutionary clique appearing as radical revolutionaries.

The betrayals of Dharmasekera clique during 1969 and 1970 marked the beginning of the suppression against the JVP. Before we discuss the repressive situation that occurred with the beginning of 1970, we should draw our attention to the special characteristics on the path of the JVP during the 1968 and 1969 years.

6

The creation of the JVP as a proletarian revolutionary organization was not an accident nor did it occur in a vacuum. Also, the path it took was decided not in an empty space but within the subjective environment and to meet its contradictions. The JVP had to move on a path that it wished for or selected, but on a path that the existing socio-economic framework had made available. This is why the journey was arduous and complex. It should be understood not subjectively but according to dialectics of development.

By 1970 the JVP did not have a definite name. Also, it had not become a formal political party having held conventions or having constitutionally established leadership bodies. It moved forward fulfilling the task of the vanguard of a future genuine Communist party. Accordingly, there was no definite group that took decisions on behalf of the organization. Discussions were held participated by those who were in the front of the organization at the moment. At times district secretaries were convened and at times district secretaries and others who were engaged in the relevant sectors were called. 21 people participated at a discussion held in 1970 and this was named 'Organization of 21'. It carried

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out the functions of a central committee. The first group that participated with an organizational structure was the Kalaththawa Discussion held in 1967. However, it was not an organization. An organizational form could be seen only in discussions held from time to time. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, in his book 'A few experiences', states "We really didn't have a political bureau; or a central committee. For, the JVP had not organized itself to that level. However, during the last stages we maintained a committee of district secretaries, assistant secretaries and others that functioned in other sections to temporarily function as a sort of central committee to take important decisions and to maintain cohesion until a party convention is held."

After the 'Kalaththawa Discussion' in 1967 such preliminary group was convened, political analysis made and decisions were taken. Among the most important discussions that were held were the discussions held at Madampalalla in Negombo (It was held in the residence of Comrade Dhanapala who worked in Land Commissioner General's Department), the Urubokka discussion held in the latter part of 1969, in 1970 the Devinuwara discussion and the Kamburupitiya discussion.

The discussion held at Urubokka in 1969 was a very special one. It was at this discussion that the topic that the existing UNP government was getting ready for a military rule without holding the general election due in 1970 came up. There were factors and reasons to come to such a conclusion. The arrival of ship 'Hope' belonging to US Navy in Sri Lanka, Dudley's government establishing a 'farmers' army' consisting of party members, constructing certain roads and hotels like forts were certain factors to come to this conclusion. The security of the organization and moves that could be taken if the UNP government was establishing a military government was discussed. It was also decided to establish defensive villages, organizers to have pseudonyms and if necessary to experiment regarding weapons. However, certain aforementioned moves were not implemented as the situation changed and the government decided to go for an election. Dudley's government had to hold the general election in 1970 without going for a military rule. However, the JVP was conscious enough to foresee such a danger.

The JVP developed the ability to foresee political events and dangers from its inception. The Indian influence the country is subjected to at present was seen by the JVP as far as in 1967 as Indian expansionism. All incidents that look like being carried out due to the needs of the ruling classes or that get lined up do not occur as they are expected to take place. However, to assume what would happen when events get lined up and be prepared is the skill of a resourceful political movement. The JVP is a political party that has displayed this skill well.

When the JVP began from farm lands in 1965 and spread to universities and the young generation during the 67-68 period, it did not abandon the attempt to do politics among the working class. This effort was successful in certain institutions. One such main institution was the Department of Land Development. As soon as heads of trade unions in the Department of Land Development joined the party, the JVP intensified its politics in the institution. During the 1966-69 period Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had held classes in about 80 worksites. Also, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera wrote articles to the newspaper 'Sanwardene Handa' (Voice of Development), the news paper of the trade union. The first article Comrade Rohana Wijeweera wrote in a pseudename was 'Lakmawa Koibatada' (Whither Mother Lanka). Comrade Dhanapala, a leader of the trade union, played an important role.

Another uniqueness the JVP had from its inception was to be revolutionary in its work. It is this revolutionary work pattern and design that allowed the JVP to overcome serious challenges and difficulties normal people could not defeat. The main characteristics were dedication for the objective, endure hardships and work continuously for 24 hours. It was Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who trained the JVP not to dream about revolution on arm chairs but to work in a revolutionary manner at grassroots level for revolution. Even today there is no political movement that could parallel this practice.

On the other hand the JVP had to work during this period under very complex situations. The JVP had to carry out its functions together with the crisis in the capitalist system and moves of capitalist

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governments and on the other the opportunist and deceitful practices of the old left and obstructions created by the generally backward society. It was not an easy political environment. It was within this subjective environment that sectarianism surfaced in the organization, progressed into betrayals and treachery and state suppression began.

1970 decade began with a fierce suppression by the capitalist state machinery against the infant revolutionary movement through various betrayals and exposures by the Dharmasekera clique that had been chased away from the organization. Dharmasekera clique carried out serious betrayals. While the capitalist state machinery was given false information regarding the young revolutionary movement the 'Maoist Youth Front' set up by Dharmasekera and his likes carried out an indecent mudslinging campaign against the JVP and especially against Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. They branded Comrade Rohana Wijeweera a CIA agent. At the same time they appeared as strong patriots. They appeared as 'Maoist Youth Front' at times and on other occasions as 'Front to protect Motherland' or revolutionaries. Whatever names they used Dharmasekera clique's practice was counter-revolutionary and reactionary. This state could be compared with certain incidents in the present. Dharmasekera, who disguised himself as a patriot, a revolutionary and contributed to counter-revolution then has become 'Anagarika' today and reveals his true nature. Inability to understand this to even the honest people should be a lesson today.

When the JVP stepped on to the 1970 decade it was only five years old. Despite being a young party of five years, the JVP was functioning as a revolutionary movement and was turning out to be an organized party. However, there were several obstacles before it. Sectarianism that surfaced in the organization we mentioned earlier did serious harm to the organization. It was a strong contributor to bring suppression quickly. The real reason for the repression of the JVP should be found in politics of classes. The existing capitalist regime opposed the JVP as it was a revolutionary organization that had its objective to change the existing social system. The JVP and the existing regime represented different class necessities. As such, the ruling class wanted to weaken the new young

revolutionary movement at its inception. Dharmasekera clique that was chased out of the movement contributed immensely for this.

There is one common factor that the history of revolutionary and left movements throughout the world point out. It shows that when the wrongdoers are chased out or leave the movement they become traitors or counter-revolutionaries, provide the capitalist system with maximum information and engage in counter-revolutionary moves exceeding the expectations of the capitalist class. It is a common nature for any period. Accordingly, Dharmasekera clique carried out various betrayals, exposed the party to the enemy and paved the way for suppression.

Meanwhile, with the information that the general election in 1970 would be held the main group of the party met at Devinuwara in the beginning of 1970 and discussed what steps should be taken. The election was to be held on 27th May, 1970. The main topic of the discussion held at Devinuwara in 1970 was what measures the organization should take at the election. As the JVP was a young organization there was no possibility of contesting at the general election. As such, the subject of contesting did not come up. However, there was no possibility of being silent at an election and the movement had to take a stand. The UNP government was a pro-USA reactionary regime and it was getting prepared to suppress the party. On the other hand the SLFP, LSSP and the CP had joined to form the United Front and there was the thought it would act progressively. Under the circumstances as it was necessary to defeat the UNP and a democratic and independent environment was needed to carry out party activities and as the SLFP was thought to be progressive when compared with the UNP, it was decided to support the United Front at that election. (However, when looking back selfcritically after 1971 this decision was seen as not correct).

However, a decision was taken to support the United Front at the '70 election and issue a leaflet explaining the reason to take such a decision. It was necessary to explain that United Front didn't have solutions for the capitalist crisis, it is necessary to build Socialism to find solutions and the support for the United Front is with the intention of

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defeating the UNP and getting democracy. It was necessary to have a definite name to issue the leaflet. Several names were put forward and in the end the name 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' was selected. As such, the party was named 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' at the Devinuwara discussion in 1970.

The name 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' (People's Liberation Front) was taken for the organization with very clear and definite political reasons. Correctly, the party should have been named the 'Communist Party'. However, two Communist parties – the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Moscow wing) and Lanka Communist Party (Chinese wing) – existed in Sri Lanka then and these two parties had abused the name 'Communist Party' by then. Hence, naming the organization as a Communist party was disadvantageous. On the other hand the organization had not become a Communist party constitutionally or did not have the characteristics and qualities that should be in a Communist party. As such, it was named 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' as the initial stage or the transition stage of a future Communist party.

It also linked with the strategy of the JVP. The JVP was an anti-imperialist organization and its strategy was people's liberation struggle. There was also the necessity of a front to bring liberation to the people and it was another reason for the name 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna'. The organization was named 'Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna' for all these reasons and the first move of the organization as the JVP was issuing a leaflet extending its support to the United Front.

While the JVP was taking these measures for the approaching election, the UNP government was taking steps one by one to suppress the JVP. One of the steps taken by the government to suppress the JVP was appointing a spy ring called 'Che Guevara Bureau' in April, 1970 to spy on the party. The bureau built as a special unit of the CID was to find information on the JVP only. In 1969 the Communist Party labeled the JVP as a CIA trap and by 1970 Lake House newspapers labeled the JVP as 'Cheguevara'. Government's suppression did not end with the appointment of the Bureau. Next, arrest of JVP activists commenced.

Comrade Premasiri Siriwardene, a science teacher and a strong JVP activist at that time, was arrested on 1st May, 1970. (The first JVP member arrested by the police was Comrade Sumith Athukorala (Diyonis Nandasinghe Wijenayaka. He was arrested at Muthiyanganaya Temple at the beginning of 1970). Next they started pursuing Comrade Rohana Wijeweera.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had to take precautions to avoid state suppression and he stayed at a secret place at Joolgamuwa in Hambantota District. The occupants of the house where he stayed did not know who he was. However, the police, acting on information, arrested Comrade Rohana Wijeweera on 12th May, 1970. According to law a person arrested should be brought before a magistrate within 24 hours. However, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was taken to the head quarters of the CID, taken finger prints, photographed, taken before a Magistrate at Nuwaraeliya and was remanded. The police had acted according to a plan. Their duty reports state Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was arrested at Joolgamuwa and was released but later he was arrested with a pistol at Nuwaraeliya. The story about the pistol and arresting at Nuwaraeliya were fabrications. With the arrest of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera another crisis surfaced in the party.

The Parliamentary election was held on 27th May, 1970, the United Front defeated the UNP and came to power with a 2/3rd majority. However, the suppressive attitude against the JVP did not change despite a new government coming to power. Hereafter, the JVP had to function amidst state suppression and internal crises. It is this situation that paved the way for the 1971 struggle.

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At the Parliamentary election held on 27th May, 1970 the alliance of the SLFP, LSSP and CP (United Front) won a massive victory. At the time Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was in remand prison. Despite expecting that Comrade Rohana Wijeweera would be released and the suppression would be stopped once the UF came to power, it never occurred. It is in such circumstances that the party decided to launch a campaign demanding the release of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera.

Accordingly, Comrade Rohana was to be taken before courts on 9th July, 1970 and a campaign demanding his release was launched the day before. Hand written posters were put up throughout the island and slogans were written on parapet walls. The slogans read "Release Rohana Wijeweera, the patriot!"

This campaign launched by the JVP became historically important for two things. First, it was the first poster campaign the JVP carried out in its own name. This marked a revolutionary change in the art of advertisement in the country. This is how the handwritten poster advertisement art came to the fore instead of the printed advertisement

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system that existed until then. It was the JVP that introduced the poster art that is very popular in Sri Lanka today. Until then there hadn't been any island wide advertisement campaign in the country. The JVP still holds the ability to put up posters throughout the island in one night. The other special reason was the government had to pay its serious attention regarding the organizational strength of the JVP as the advertisement campaign was launched with the same design throughout the island in one night. With this campaign the government was seen to be getting more irritated.

However, in such an environment Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was released by the Nuwaraeliya Magistrates Court on 9th July, 1970. The JVP launched a massive propaganda campaign and the country came to know Comrade Rohana Wijeweera as a captivating orator due to this political publicity.

It is during this period that the internal crises within the party escalated. The party identified this internal conflict as the 'contradiction between the old and the talented new'. Those who were talented and with ability than Loku Athula and Karunaratna, who were old hands, joined the party. Specially, people like Lionel Bopage and Uyangoda, who joined from universities, were talented. A revolutionary movement should always give opportunities and responsibilities to the efficient and the talented. However, the inefficient and old members in the party were not in favour of this. This is how the contradiction between the inefficient old members and efficient new surfaced. As Comrade Rohana Wijeweera gave responsibilities to the efficient, the old members like Loku Athula, who had hidden personal agendas, developed contradictions with Comrade Rohana Wijeweera.

One of the results of the internal conflict was Loku Athula dissolved the 'principal organization' while Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was in prison. Loku Athula, who dissolved the 'principal organization' that did the task of a central committee, maintained a collective of persons favourable to him and acted to oust and spread false rumours regarding persons such as Bopage, whom he didn't like. It has been affirmed

that revolutionary movements are severely harmed when people with private agendas and greedy for leadership and power join revolutionary movements. However, a revolutionary movement cannot exist without confronting such debacles as it gets experiences and get tempered by confronting such events.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera became publicly active in JVP politics with a strong propaganda plan despite the aforesaid internal conflict and unceasing state suppression. The JVP commenced its ideological propaganda programme with the public lecture Comrade Rohana Wijeweera delivered at Vidyodaya University on 14th July, 1970. The topic of the lecture was 'CIA karayo' (CIA personnel). The reason for this was that the old left had branded the JVP as a CIA snare and it was necessary to reply to this. When this lecture was delivered Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was the Secretary of the party and was its chief orator.

Subsequently, the JVP commenced a series of propaganda rallies. The inaugural rally of the JVP was held at Hyde Park in Colombo on 10th August, 1970. This inaugural rally marked several firsts in politics of this country. It was confirmed again the JVP was a left movement while being patriotic. The background of the stage was adorned with not only pictures of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the founders of Marxism but also with pictures of persons like Kappetipola, who were heroes of Sri Lanka's struggle against colonialism. The structure of the stage too was different than the traditional stages. The most exclusive feature of the rally participated by a massive crowd of mostly youths was people's responses. When Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, the main speaker of the rally, made an appeal to the crowd after his speech to donate to develop the party certain young women donated their necklaces and some their ear rings. Young men contributed their wristwatches. This was an incident that terrorized rulers. When the Leader of the JVP asked for donations a girl removing her gold necklace to donate it and a youth removing his wristwatch to make his contribution indicated how strongly the youth of the country was attracted to the new movement and how dedicated they

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were. It is no surprise the ruling class got terrorized when they saw this enthusiasm of the youth. Thus, when the JVP was attracting the youths of the country towards it, the United Front government intensified its state suppression. As a result of the suppression and due to internal conflict the propaganda programme that commenced in August, 1970 had to be abandoned at the beginning of 1971.

The series of propaganda rallies of the JVP that was launched on 10th August, 1970 from Colombo Hyde Park was held in several towns throughout the island attracting the young generation to it. The JVP introduced to the country an attractive, alternate which replaced the old traditional stage of political parties. Also, people came to know that Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was a skilful, efficient and attractive orator through this series of rallies. It is no exaggeration to say that there is still no orator who could come closer to Comrade Rohana Wijeweera's oratory or the essence of his speeches.

It was Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who taught that oratory is not loquacity but it is explaining to the masses deep and complex political facts in an attractive and simple manner. All his speeches had something new to be learnt, were rich in meaning and addressed the ordinary people's consciousness combining culture and folklore. The series of rallies that commenced from Hyde Park in Colombo had to be terminated (due to suppression) in a short time of 6 months. However, the JVP was able to hold rallies in several principal towns. They were at Anuradhapura on 21st August, at Hingurakgoda on 31st August, at Kurunegala on 7th September, at Wellawaya on 23rd September, at Tangalle on 25th September, Tissamaharamaya on 26th September, Bogambara Grounds in Kandy on 29th September, at Galle on 2nd October, Negombo on 6th October, at Chilaw on 7th October, Moratuwa on 28th October, at Elpitiya on 29th October and 21st February, 1971 at Hyde Park, Colombo.

Accordingly, the series of rallies held throughout the island terminated with the rally held at Hyde Park in Colombo on 21st February, 1971. While the rallies were being held Comrade Rohana Wijeweera also addressed a series of seminars held throughout the island. They were on

topics 'Trade union politics and working class politics', 'Socialism of the coalition and the budget', 'The path our student movement should take', 'The Parliament and Revolution', 'Independence is a colonial strategy' and 'Towards a Red Asia'.

The main reason for the termination of the aforesaid rallies and seminars was the escalating state suppression. The internal conflict that was surfacing in the party too contributed for ending this programme. According to democracy a political movement that holds public rallies, seminars, publishes newspapers and spreads its ideology among masses should be allowed to do so. However, the United Front government acted completely contrary to this.

When the JVP was preparing to hold its inaugural rally on 10th August, 1970, on the 9th the three secretaries of the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP – the three parties that formed the United Front alliance – issued a joint statement stating that the JVP was a reactionary movement, it should be suppressed and people's support for the act was necessary. However, the following day, what happened was entirely different. There was a huge mass participation for the rally and the youth came forward to donate their necklaces, ear rings and watches to support the JVP. It was also a warning to the government. The government was visibly disturbed. This was indicated in a communiqué issued by the then permanent secretary to the Ministry of Defense Arthur Rajkumar Ratnavel. Two days after the Hyde Park rally – on 12th August – in his communiqué Mr. Ratnavel states, "The Cheguevara Movement that is raising its head in the country is enemy No.1 of the government. It should be pursued and eradicated. The government is enacting laws for this." However, 'Ceylon Observer' of 10th June, 1970 reports there is "No evidence regarding subversive acts".

The statement of the defense secretary of the United Front government indicated that the government was prepared to pursue and eradicate the JVP considering it as government's No.1 enemy. However, the government had not explained how the JVP became its No.1 enemy or whether eradicating it is democratically right. Instead, the government,

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acting according to the communiqué, brought suppression to the JVP. The government committed illegal and undemocratic acts against the JVP. At times police permission was not given for rallies or given at the last moment. Permission was given to identify JVP activists in the areas. The comrades engaged in propaganda campaigns for the permitted rallies were arrested, taken to police stations, illegally obtained information and photographed. Due to such obstacles and also due to obstacles from Loku Athula clique the propaganda campaign had to be abandoned.

At that time the JVP carried out its propaganda campaign not only by holding rallies. Several registered newspapers were maintained. The central organ of the JVP was 'Janatha Vimukthi' while 'Rathu Lanka' was the newspaper for the workers. In addition there was 'Rathu Balaya' 'Deshapremi' (for the students' wing) and 'Rathu Kekulu' for child pioneers. However, as the suppression intensified maintaining newspapers became difficult. The printing presses were often raided by the police and the owners of the presses were threatened. Comrades who were involved in the distribution of papers were arrested and questioned. It became difficult to maintain newspapers. The United Front government acted arbitrarily while the JVP was engaged in open politics. The JVP had to abandon propaganda campaigns and the suppression too intensified. While the suppression intensified the internal crisis too intensified and they paved the way for the 1971 struggle.

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The 1971 struggle was an incident that created a massive tremor in Sri Lanka's politics. The first armed youth uprising in the history of capitalism in Sri Lanka. It was the JVP that was only 6 years old at the time that gave leadership to this uprising. Today, 41 years after the April struggle various views and analysis come up regarding the struggle. There were such various views from the moment the '71 struggle commenced. Traitors who betrayed the '71 uprising, those who could not endure the defeat of the struggle and fled to the enemy and various groups of the ruling class that suppressed the struggle put forward their own views from their positions. All of them were unscientific and distorted truths; they were nothing but trash. Even today 'retired rebels', through the media, make various statements or write articles, distorting the truth to take over credit of the struggle. However, it is not the genuine history of the JVP.

Like any other incident, 1971 April struggle should be viewed according to dialectics of Marxist philosophy. When looking at any phenomenon the correct way is to understand it historically, subjectively and in its interconnections. We have to study the '71 struggle accordingly.

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The 1971 struggle was not an accident or a conspiracy to topple the government or a result of a person's arbitrariness. It was the logical result of the circumstances that were forming in politics at the moment. If we review this in a nut shell, the backward capitalist system in Sri Lanka was confronted with a crisis at the moment. Meanwhile, National liberation struggles had erupted in several countries in the world and several nations were moving towards Socialism. The vacuum created by the old left movement betraying the left and crawling to the right had been filled by a revolutionary left. It was the JVP. However, the ruling class with the support of the old left took various steps to destroy the JVP at its birth. The atrocities that were carried out ideologically, organizationally, militarily and legally against the JVP developed into a brutal repression by 1971. The response of the JVP against the planned repression of its just and reasonable politics by the ruling class was the '71 struggle. The response of the young proletarian movement against the capitalist suppression should have been avoidance instead of a sudden armed uprising. However, the nature of the suppression and the internal conflict in the JVP did not allow it. It is how the events lead to the 71 struggle. As such, the positive qualities such as heroics, militancy, sacrifices as well as weaknesses the JVP displayed within the struggle should be studied in relation to the aforesaid conditions but not separated from them.

The discussion of district secretaries held in January, 1971 was an important and a decisive one. Several important decisions were taken at the discussion. The political situation in the country, the state of the suppression by the government and the internal conflict in the party were discussed. Attention was drawn to overcome the internal conflicts. The most serious decision taken at this discussion was the decision to collect arms.

Despite there had been an effort to produce weapons and a tendency to collect them existed, an organizational decision for it was taken only at this discussion. The decision to collect arms was taken not to attack but to fight in self – defense if the government suppression escalated.

At the discussion the experiences of the counter revolution in Indonesia had been seriously reviewed. Sukarno's reformist alliance government that existed in Indonesia was toppled by a coup carried out by the military headed by Suharto. The Communist Party was large in numbers. However, the Indonesian Communist Party was annihilated in one night as it could not confront the suppression. According to this experience it was explained that the party should be armed to confront the enemy if it takes steps to annihilate the party in one night.

Accordingly, it was decided to collect arms, produce them and store them by full time activists. However, decision had been sloppy as members in primary organizations too had been deployed to collect and produce weapons. As the move to arm the party went beyond the full time activists level, the enemy got the information that the JVP was collecting arms. What should be understood here is that despite taking a decision, on the situation that existed and international experiences, to arm the party as a revolutionary party, no decision was taken to attack. Deciding to collect arms is not a decision to attack.

Another decision was taken at the aforesaid discussion. It was regarding commemorating the May Day in 1971. It was decided to hold May Day rallies in several principle towns. It is evidence that there hadn't been any thought of an attack in April, 1971.

The internal conflict has devastatingly affected the party in the move to collect and store weapons. Specially, the attempt by Loku Athula and the group to have weapons in their care had created additional issues.

Meanwhile, the suppression that was launched since the end of 1970 intensified. The serious statement issued by the Defense Secretary after the inaugural rally on 10th August, 1970 has been mentioned earlier. The unceasing suppression carried out by the government against the JVP could be understood from several headlines published then.

'Police decides to intensify its attempt to crush Che Guevera movement'
– Ceylon Daily Mirror on 11th August

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'IGP explains plans to collect information regarding JVP' – 'Sun' of 20th August, 1970 on the discussion of Police Superintendents on 8th August, 1970.

IGP on insurgents — New laws and regulations to suppress rebels – Ceylon Daily News, 20th August, 1970 (the word 'insurgent' has been used. There wasn't any insurgency. The government would have wanted to name members of the JVP as insurgents.)

61 intelligence services units established – 'Sun', 5th September, 1970

Plans to broaden the special investigations unit of the CID – 'Ceylon Daily Mirror', 19th September, 1970

Police force to be expanded by 5000 – 'Daily News', October, 1970

Security forces on alert; Govt. says there is an attempt to spread terror, steps to be taken after the National Monitoring Council meets – 'Sun', 22nd February, 1971

Special laws to fight insurgency - 'Daily News', March, 1971

The suppression was aligned in this manner while the JVP had launched a series of rallies throughout the island and was engaged in open politics. It is due to the repression the series of rallies had to be terminated after the Hyde Park rally on 21st February, 1971.

Meanwhile, there was an attempt to get the suppression stopped. Advice was sought to take legal action against police action and the people were made aware of the suppression. Then Parliamentarians Prince Gunasekera, MP for Habaraduwa and P. de S. Kularatna, MP from Ambalangoda, spoke in Parliament against the suppression. There was an attempt to get a discussion with the Prime Minister but she did not show any interest for such a discussion. The environment was such when 6th of March, 1971 dawned. Two serious incidents took place on this day. With this the suppression developed into a qualitative stage.

6th March, 1971 was special for several reasons. At that time the coordinating center of the JVP for Colombo was maintained at Comrade Osmond Silva's residence at Wanathamulla. On 6th March,

1971 Comrade Rohana Wijeweera dropped in to the house while he was on his way to some other work. He saw several district secretaries in the residence. They had said Loku Athula had convened a meeting of district secretaries and they dropped in at Comrade Osmond's residence on their way for the meeting. This shows that Loku Athula had convened a meeting of several district secretaries favourable to him without the knowledge of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who was the General Secretary of the party. After some time a few more district secretaries and Loku Athula too came there. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera taking a decision as the general secretary of the party began the discussion then and there. At the discussion Comrade Rohana Wijeweera accused Loku Athula regarding several moves. Accusations against him were acting sectarian manner and creating dissention among comrades, misuse of party resources and funds, conspiring against the party leadership and personal conduct unsuitable for a member of the party. Loku Athula had attempted to deny the charges. The experiences the party collected on its path confirmed this type of conduct is common to all traitors to the party. As certain district secretaries came forward with facts that confirmed accusations against Loku Athula, he was answerless. What should have been done next was to declare Loku Athula guilty and oust him from the party. However, this was prevented due to one incident. The police raided Comrade Osmond's residence while the meeting was progressing. The participants who got information regarding the police raid fled the place but could not meet again during the next few days. However, Loku Athula knew what decision would be taken against him and he with this mentality moved to take all powers of the party.

The police raid on Osmond's residence on 6th March, 1971 was not an accident. While the discussion was going on, without their knowledge, an incident occurred at Kollupitiya. Dharmasekera and his group threw a petrol bomb at the American Embassy and attacked several vehicles parked opposite it. The published intention was to protest against the war carried out by the US against Vietnam. The attack did not do any damage to the Embassy. Only a few vehicles parked outside were damaged. A police officer on duty at the time outside the embassy

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was killed by stabbing. The police raided Osmond's residence as a result of this incidence. It was an incident that affected seriously the historical path of the JVP. Historically it indicates the harm such incidents that occur without any control do to revolutionary movements. The act of throwing a petrol bomb to US Embassy carried out by Dharmasekera group was made a good opportunity by the UF government to suppress the JVP. The government declared emergency regulations immediately and began the suppression. The counter revolutionary act of Dharmasekera and his group was really a provocation. It was paving the way for the government to destroy the JVP.

In 1930s Hitler's regime in Germany used the burning down of Reichstag, the German parliament, to ban the Communist Party and destroy it. Marinus Van der Lubbe, a former member of the Communist Party was used for the torching of Reichstag. In Sri Lanka Dharmasekera fulfilled the task of Van der Lubbe. Dharmasekera, who was chased out of the JVP in 1969 founded 'Front to protect Motherland' and 'Maoist Youth Front' and functioned under those names. The theory of minor struggles, protracted people's war and base camp theory were their subjects. However, in practice this group had an understanding with the then government and functioned as a group serving counter revolution. Those who are chased out from revolutionary parties very often build organizations using progressive names but directly or indirectly serve counter revolution and become pawns of capitalism. This has been confirmed in incidents that occurred in distant past as well as our experiences in the present. After the incidents of 6th March, 1971 the serious incident that occurred was the arrest of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and Kellie Senanayaka in Ampara on 13th March, 1971. The arrest could have been carried out on information. Loku Athula and his gang knew Comrade Rohana Wijeweera's visit to Ampara and it is suspected that they would have given the information to police. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and Kelly Senanayaka were brought to Colombo and after two days they were taken to Jaffna prison and detained under detention orders. When taken into custody no charges were made against Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and Kelly Senanayaka.

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With the arrest of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera the party was confronted with a grave crisis situation. The unanimity of the party was weakened and various comrades developed varied opinions. As the suppression intensified some developed the idea of attacking as the best source of self defense. Also, those who did not understand the social revolution deeply and those who treated grabbing power by attack a joyous event were interested in an attack. Sunanda Deshapriya, who was the district secretary for Badulla was one such person. He had said he would attack at Badulla even if no one else does so. On the other hand Loku Athula and the group used the situation for their need. It seems that Loku Athula thought he could get the command of the party and the country by taking advantage of the arrest of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and at a time the party was denied his leadership. As such, he, discussing with members favourable to him, was getting ready for an attack. The fondness for an attack displayed by many comrades was an advantage for Loku Athula. Meanwhile, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera's mother and Comrade Osmand's mother Comrade Seelawathie visited Comrade Rohana Wijeweera detained in Jaffna prison. They had special permission

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to talk with Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had said certain points to Comrade Osmand's mother and had asked her to deliver the message to comrades in the party. As confirmed on several occasions later comrade Rohana Wijeweera had given following instructions:

To distribute a leaflet to make the masses aware regarding the repression, carry out other propaganda campaigns, full time activists to change their areas to avoid suppression and to retreat at places where repression is high. Also, to meet lawyers favourable to the party regarding taking legal action to get Comrade Rohana Wijeweera released were the instructions given by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. According to the instructions Comrade Seelawathie (Comrade Osmand's mother) had met Mr. Edmond Samarakkody to get legal assistance. She has given the information to Loku Athula as well. However, Loku Athula, without considering any instructions, got prepared for a sudden attack.

Meanwhile, the government, taking advantage of the situation began intensifying the repression. On 16th March, 1971 the government, under emergency regulations, passed several special regulations. Among them was to destroy dead bodies without an inquests. It was a serious situation and it also indicated that the government was getting ready for an annihilation of youth. For, at the time there were no dead bodies to be destroyed. It reminded the massacre carried out by the counter-revolutionary Army coup in Indonesia in 1965. All these factors unfolded not to prevent an armed uprising but towards creating such a debacle.

Studying any forceful social political event or a struggle indicates that it has occurred as the result of a very complex process or an activity. This general truth could be applied to the '71 uprising as well. It cannot be taken as a result of a few isolated incidents. The real cause for the '71 uprising is the counter-revolutionary suppression of the ruling class. The internal conflict in the party, the originating of opportunism as well as the extremist mentality of some due to incomprehensibility was stimulus for this. As such, while understanding the personal limitations as well as treachery, the international experiences and the counter-

revolutionary suppression that pushed the party towards an armed uprising too should be seriously considered. History had shown that left and revolutionary movements that functioned peacefully in many countries in the world were annihilated without being able to put up a fight. The best example was Indonesia. The Indonesian Communist Party was completely destroyed by an Army coup lead by General Suharto in 1965 while the Communist Party was functioning democratically in an alliance government. It is this experience that forced the JVP to be armed for self-defense.

However, the leadership of the party weakened with the arrest and detention of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera on 13th March, 1971 under emergency regulations. This was a good opportunity for the opportunist clique that existed at the time to get its objectives fulfilled. Accordingly, Loku Athula and the clique took steps to use the opportunity for their petty interests and meanwhile, the government intensified its suppression.

The opinion of the society is that the government suppressed the JVP after the 71 uprising. However, this is not the truth. The government had launched a brutal suppression against the JVP before the April uprising and it was being continuously intensified. The arrest of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera on 13th March without any charges and detaining him in Jaffna prison was a forceful instance of the suppression and the suppression continued unabated. It is this environment that made it easy for Loku Athula and the clique to get a decision in the party to attack in self-defense.

We mentioned earlier that the government on 16th March, 1971 enacted draconian regulations including destroying dead bodies without an inquest. The government did not stop at it. As Defense Secretary Arthur Rajkumar Ratnavel had said on 12th August, 1970, the state machinery was pursuing the JVP to eradicate it. This could be understood from the following reports published by the media:

Police will be able to arrest all leaders of the rebel movement during the next few days – ‘Weekend’ 18th March, 1971

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On 19th March, 1971 it was announced that police and Army were given broad powers. At the time the number taken into custody was only 100.

The Department of Information reported on 20th March, 1971 that the number taken into custody was 120. The security forces set fire to a house for the first time at Mawarala in Matara.

The Department of Information reported on 27th March, 1971 that the number arrested was about 300. Many who were arrested did not have any charges against them. Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara campuses were raided on this day.

Police will be able to arrest all leaders of the rebel movement during the next few days – ‘Weekend’ 18th March, 1971

By 30th March 1971, the number arrested was 375.

According to the "Daily News" paper by 1st April 1971 the Security Council had reported to the Prime Minister that

there were 410 in custody and the Che Guevara Movement had been weakened.

While the suppression was continuing Loku Athula and the clique fixed dates for an armed struggle. According to available information Loku Athula and several others met on the 30th or 31st March, 1971 and decided to attack at dawn on 5th April, 1971. However, Loku Athula knew the attack could not be successful without others in the party joining. At the time many district secretaries who gave leadership in districts did not belong to Loku Athula's clique. Specially, Lionel Bopage who acted as the Colombo District Secretary, J. Uyangoda who was the leader of Peliyagoda area – then named as ‘Kandy Road’, Susil Wickrema, the District Secretary for Matara and many other leaders were not with Loku Athula's clique but were faithful to the party. As it was necessary to get the contribution of these leaders for the decision taken Loku Athula convened a discussion. It is one of the most decisive discussions of the history of the JVP.

The discussion was held at Sangaramaya in Vidyodaya University on 2nd April, 1971. Nine people participated in the discussion. They are Piyatilleke, Lionel Bopage, J. Uyangoda, Anura Ranjith, Sunanda Deshapriya, Loku Athula, Susil Wickrema, Sanath and Karunaratna. Sunanda Deshapriya was the Badulla District Secretary and supported Loku Athula. The discussion was a decisive one. The intention of the discussion was to craftily put the decision taken by Loku Athula and the clique earlier on others. As such, they did not allow Bopage and others to know that they had met at the end of March.

Loku Athula who commenced the discussion had said they should go for an attack immediately. Lionel Bopage, Uyangoda and others had said there was no capability for such an attack, it should be avoided and had said what was needed was protection. It was then that Loku Athula had said about a 'message Wijeweera had sent'. Loku Athula had said Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had sent a message from the prison to attack. It was a total lie and later it was revealed that Loku Athula had come up with the fabrication to get the group supporting Comrade Rohana Wijeweera to agree with their decision. According to the 'message' Bopage and others too agreed for an attack. All agreed to carry out the attack at 11.00 p.m. on 5th April, 1971.

With this decision an issue was left unsolved. Loku Athula and his clique had earlier taken a decision to attack at dawn on 5th April. As it was not possible to say they had already taken a decision to attack in the morning Loku Athula had to agree to the decision to attack at night. Now, he had to inform the districts lead by his supporters regarding the new decision to attack at night. However, communication was not as easy as it is today. Monaragala had not received the decision to change the time. Already, comrades in Monaragala had taken their positions to attack. As such, Wellawaya Police station was attacked, according to earlier decision, at dawn on 5th April, 1971.

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With the attack on Wellawaya police station at dawn on 5th April, 1971 the first armed uprising of Sri Lanka that occurred after the so-called independence was launched. It joins history as the first proletarian armed struggle against capitalist regime in Sri Lanka. The '71 armed uprising began with many weaknesses. Certain weaknesses could not be avoided according to the prevailing situation then but certain others were created by the sectarians. The attack on Wellawaya police at dawn on 5th April was the result of weak communication. With the attack on Wellawaya police station the government got the opportunity to keep all police stations in the country on alert. As a result others who went to attack other police stations in the island had to confront police that was prepared for counter-attack. This caused serious difficulties to the movement at the commencement of the uprising.

Many stories have been said regarding the 1971 armed uprising, various incidents that occurred, acts carried out, various contributions of individuals etc. However, most of them are stories that were said or are being said by people having their personal agendas and to protect their personal images. There are lies and half truths that have been said to

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get away from responsibilities. There are also fabrications and distortions added by state authorities and political opponents. It is our responsibility to cast aside all gossips, lies and fabrications but to look at general facts regarding the '71 armed struggle through a Marxist vision.

The personnel who were involved in the 1971 April uprising were persons who have had no systematic armed training or long term military training. There was no opportunity for such an armed training. As such, most of those who joined the attack had very little knowledge about using weapons. Also, they did not have any idea about military science or art of war. Also the weapons used by the youths were very primitive types. Their weapons were cartridge guns and hand grenades they had produced. The incidents in the struggle indicate they were very weak and inadequate for an attack.

However, their courage, determination, fighting spirit and dedication were in a very high level. Other than several like Loku Athula who had petty interests, all others were real heroes who came forward to sacrifice their lives for a common cause – to create a better society for the human beings. Despite having no proper training and armed only with primitive weapons, they were able to mark the struggle with heroism and sacrifice in the first round of the struggle. They displayed their fighting spirit and courage by fighting against the state machinery that was well trained and better armed. It was heroism, fighting spirit and sacrifice that surprised the enemy.

According to official record of the government, youths that commenced the attack on 5th April, 1971 had attacked 92 police stations throughout the island. 57 of them were damaged and fighters were able to capture 5 police stations. The police stations that were captured were Deniyaya, Uragaha, Rajanganaya, Katharagama and Warakapola. As the attack that was carried out on one day throughout the island was perilous certain police stations had to be withdrawn strategically. Accordingly, police had to temporarily withdraw 43 stations.

The rule in 35 police divisions in the country fell to the hands of the youths. Katharagama, Deniyaya, Warakapola, Elpitiya areas fell to the

youths. Elpitiya was special. Elpitiya was under the militants for about a week. The administration by militants carried out by blocking roads with cut down trees was called 'Kotang Anduwa' (log administration).

Despite grave weaknesses, the first attack of the April uprising was a serious challenge to the government. Attacks on certain police stations failed but several local police stations had to be withdrawn and personnel had to withdraw to headquarter police stations as rule of these police administration areas fell to the hands of the youths. It was a challenge to the government. The government, realizing the seriousness of the situation had to ask for assistance from other countries as it could not confront the uprising on its own. Prime Minister Sirimawo Bandaranayake's government overpowered the uprising of the youth thanks to aid received from foreign countries.

With the request by the government for aid 14 countries came forward to give military aid to Sri Lanka. The USA, the USSR, India, Pakistan, China, Yugoslavia, Egypt and Britain were among the front of the countries that promised military aid. The USA provided the government of Sri Lanka with 'Bell' helicopters while the USSR gave 'Mig' fighter jets. China provided a large number of weapons and 5 military boats with letters SWRD painted on them. Yugoslavia provided 'Mountain Artillery' cannons. India too provided a lot of weapons and a 'Gurka' battalion was kept ready to be sent here. The government that was strengthened with military, financial and political aid from abroad took steps to completely defeat the 1971 April uprising.

When the 1971 uprising was defeated in a few days the police and security forces had killed about 10,000 youths and detained about 20,000 others. Out of those who were killed only a few died in the struggle. A large number of youths died after they were arrested, subjected to various kinds of torture before they were murdered. The government, violating the military law, murdered the arrested and displayed its barbarity by letting the bodies of those killed float in the rivers and burning them along the roads. It was the UF government that introduced 'the tire, a gallon of fuel and the pyre' to Sri Lanka.

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While the government was displaying its brutality by killing the arrested youth and raping young women, the youths of the JVP that were involved in the struggle displayed their heroism. The '71 struggle is full of men and women who did not cry down before the killers but embraced death with dignity and courage on behalf of the people and the political philosophy they stood for.

The ruling class was able to completely defeat the youth uprising that began on 5th April, 1971 with the support of local and foreign reactionaries. The struggle taught valuable lessons for the masses. The UNP that was in the opposition gave the UF government its fullest cooperation in suppressing the '71 April uprising. JR Jayawardene who was the leader of the opposition took the lead in its support to the government. How the capitalist class sets aside its temporary contradictions and unites to meet any challenge from the proletariat was well displayed.

Also, the opportunist political parties of the old left in Sri Lanka too gave their fullest support to the capitalist government in the suppression of the youth uprising. The Communist Party of Sri Lanka founded an organization called 'Red Brigade' to mobilize voluntary groups, deployed them to protect police stations and help the police to capture JVP members in villages. The LSSP too built voluntary groups called NSR (Hansa Brigades) and deployed them to protect the government. Sri Lanka too added to the numerous experiences the world has had regarding the opportunism that adorns red and shout slogans of the left but selects its true position beside capitalism at the decisive moment. We could experience this yet again during 1988-89 period.

When the ruling class and opportunists combine to crush the uprising and when the struggle gets defeated the political reality that surfaces in any defeat surfaced here as well. It is the emergence of betrayers and traitors. This tendency comes to light when selecting life instead of death and confidence regarding evolution has been broken down. In 1971 Loku Athula and many others consciously became betrayers and traitors.

The struggle created heroes as well. Many who sacrificed their lives in 1971 struggle displayed unimaginable fighting spirit, courage and heroism. What helped them to be what they were was their unshakeable trust in the cause they stood for. We could remember a few who sacrificed their lives without falling down on their knees before death.

In the ideological struggle that surfaced after the 71 struggle the left opportunists that were with the government and opportunists and traitors that were germinated in the party professed the view that the JVP arbitrarily attempted a revolution. However, this is not the truth. In 1971 there was no condition for a revolution. April struggle was an armed uprising against the capitalist suppression. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera describes this vividly in his book *WE MAY BE KILLED BUT OUR VOICE WILL NEVER DIE*. He states, "In April 1971 the revolutionary preconditions for the seizure of power by the proletariat and for an armed revolutionary struggle were absent. That is my view. In the absence of a revolutionary situation - i.e. both objective and subjective conditions - an armed uprising was not possible. My view is that the conditions were not ripe for organizing an armed revolutionary uprising to seize state power. The objective conditions were maturing fast, but they were still unripe. It had not reached a stage where the masses saw no other solution but revolution. It is true, however, that then, as now society was moving in that direction. The subjective conditions were also lacking: that is, the existence of a revolutionary party that has steeled itself, won the support of the masses and is fit to lead them in an armed struggle for power. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna was developing and moving towards that goal, but had not reached full maturity."

The analysis Comrade Rohana Wijeweera has made on the direction a political party should take within the path of class struggle suits today as well.

The government that prepared schemes to liquidate the party in prisons next made preparations for legal action against those who had been arrested connected with the April struggle. The government that discarded the prevailing law of the country or using normal courts passed

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special laws that was affective to the past and established special courts.

There were several challenges before the government that defeated the 1971 uprising with a massacre of youths. The first was to justify the massacre carried by it. It was necessary to make 'rebels' perpetrators. Second was not to allow the movement to raise its head again. It was necessary to liquidate weak individuals; betrayers and traitors had to be won over and those with courage should be given long term imprisonments. The UF government commenced a complex and a well planned programme to get these needs fulfilled. The government carried out its project based in prisons and detention camps as all leaders and activists of the JVP (except those who were killed) were imprisoned and detained. First the government took steps to spread various wrong views regarding the defeat of the struggle. For this the support of those who betrayed the struggle and defected to the government as well as those who had lost hope and those who had acted sectarian manner was obtained deceitfully. An attempt was made to put all mistakes on the shoulders of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. The views that originated in this attempt were in a broad purview – from mudslinging at personal level to anti-Marxist analyses.

Those who had been arrested for petty reasons, were unable to take legal action against and should be released were forced to admit 'guilt' instead of releasing them. Many who wanted to be released admitted 'guilt' to get themselves released. Many others who admitted 'guilt' were sent to so-called rehabilitation camps. It was to rehabilitate 'misguided rebels'. Despite it was necessary to rehabilitate the existing vile social system, the government attempted to 'rehabilitate' those who attempted to change the vile system. When many admitted 'guilt' as they were forced to do so, the government took measures to break loose of its responsibilities by announcing to the world that 'rebels' had admitted their 'guilt'. Meanwhile, the government commenced legal action. The government knowing that all those who were detained would have to be released if they were tried according to normal law passed in parliament the Criminal Justice Commissions Act of 1972, providing for the establishment of special commissions outside the normal judicial

structure and empowered it to conduct cases free from the usual procedure. They established the criminal justice commission. This was an unethical act. Normal tradition and ethics accepted all over the world is to punish any wrong according to the existing law of the country. Enacting laws affecting to the past (retrospective) mainly to punish is an act against natural justice. However, the UF government did not have a morality to protect. The main trials of the April uprising were heard by the Criminal Justice Commission. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera protested against the unethical act of the government stating, "This capitalist institution has been used against me in a somewhat heavy way. I am not surprised. I know that the ruling class sets up its institution to serve the needs of capitalism. Pleading my case before this Commission could be considered a futile exercise if it simply provided a legal cover for the unscrupulous and arbitrary decisions, and the disgraceful course of action, on which you have embarked." However, the act against natural ethics was passed by the government and cases were heard by the established commission. It was composed of retired Chief Justice H N G Fernando (Chairman), retired Justice A. C. Alles, retired Justice V T Thamotheram, retired Justice H Dheragoda and retired Justice T. W. Rajaratnam. As Rajaratnam was indisposed retired Justice D. Wimalaratna replaced him and continued to sit in the commission. Then the government named the suspects of the main court case of April uprising. The naming was not done with a correct procedure but according to their design. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and few others who even then were representing the party and a majority of persons who had become state witnesses and those who had mentally broken down and given up the struggle were together named as suspects. As such, the names of the main court case of April uprising were 1. Samaratna Vithanaarachchige Piyatileke, 2. Bopage Lionel alias Laiya alias Lionel, 3. Uyangoda Maharadage James alias OO Mahaththaya alias Seneviratna (J. Uyangoda), 4. Boosabaduge Anura Ranjith Kurukulasuriya alias Ranjith, 5. Baduge Mithrasiri Sunanda Deshapriya alias Ashoka, 6. Wijemuni Devage Nimalsiri Jayasinghe alias Loku Athula, 7. Majuwana Kankanamge Victor Ivan alias Pody Athula, 8. Maharage Don Nevil Nimalaratna alias Nimal Maharage, 9. Somasiri Kumanayaka, 10.

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Wasantha de Silva Kanakaratna, 11. David Abeywickrema Gunasekera, 12. Thevahandi Dinindu Mithra Silva (T.D. Silva), 13. Patabandige Don Nandasiri Wijeweera alias Rohana Wijeweera, 14. Anduthanthrige Sisil Chandra, 15. Hettiarachchige Kularatna Banda alias Piyasiri, 16. Sunil Ratnasiri de Silva, 17. Viraj Prema Lakpriya Fernando alias Viraj, 18. Maha Marakkala Wijepala Silva alias Sumith Rajapaksa, 19. Bentota Muhandirage Nihal Ananda de Silva, 20. Samuel Dias Bandaranayake, 21. Wickremarachchi Osmand de Silva, 22. Jayakody Pathirana Helage Premadasa Dhanapala, 23. Lakshman GunaratnaMahanduwage alias Thady Lakshman, 24. Susil Siriwardene, 25. Mahindapala Wijesekera, 26. Nanediri Kelly Magelian Senanayaka, 27. Panian Dewage Themis Silva alias Batapola Athula, 28. Aladdin Subasinghe alias Sudu Hakuru Subasinghe, 29. Lakshman Chandrasena alias Kalu Lucky, 30. Lakshman Jayampathy Munasinghe alias Pody Lucky, 31. Kariyawasam GonapinuwalaGamage Merril Jayasiri, 32. N. Premaratna alias Chucky Premaratna, 33. Wijesena Vitharana alias Sanath (deceased), 34. Susil Wickrema (killed in combat), 35. Sarath Wijesinghe (killed in combat), 36. Milton (killed in combat), 37. W.T. Karunaratna, 38. Hewabatage Premapala, 39. Nayananda Wijekulatileke, 40. D.P. Wimala Gune and 41. J.A.G. Jayakody.

The 41 suspects were charged with

1. the breach of Sections 114 and 115 of the Penal Code and conspiring against the Queen's Government between the beginning of 1968 and the end of 1971
2. During the period conspired criminally to overthrow the Government of Ceylon.
3. Waging war against the Queen in many parts of the island between 4th April, 1971 and 1st July, 1971
4. To have abetted such act.

These charges were presented separately for individuals relevant to their supposed participation in the struggle. The debate whether to participate or not in the court case came up before the

case was heard. The party's view was to appear for the case and make the commission a stage. At the beginning of the hearing the evidence of the prosecution collapsed. Then Loku Athula, Somasiri Kumanayaka and T.D. Silva turned witnesses of the state and acted according to the wishes of the government. Only Rohana Wijeweera, Lionel Bopage, Kelly Senanayaka and J. Uyangoda appeared for the case holding high the ideology of the party. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, without any legal assistance, appeared for himself. He gave evidence for more than 40 days exposing the government suppression and the conspiracy. Finally, the commission asked Comrade Rohana Wijeweera to forward written submission. It is this submission that was printed as a book later with the title "WE MAY BE KILLED BUT OUR VOICE WILL NEVER DIE'.

However, at the end of the hearing sentences were given. The commission, exceeding its legal limits, sentenced Comrade Rohana Wijeweera for life. However, the commission correcting its error later changed Comrade Rohana Wijeweera's sentence to 20 years rigorous imprisonment, the highest sentence the commission could give. The intention of the rulers was exposed by sentencing Comrade Rohana Wijeweera to life imprisonment.

The criminal justice commission that heard the main court case against the participants of the '71 uprising also heard several other cases. One such case was 'Rosmead case'. The case was heard on charges of attempting to abduct then Prime Minister Sirimawo Bandaranayaka. There were 22 defendants out of which 7 were women and 6 of them were under graduates. At the end of the case 15 out of the 22 defendants pleaded guilty and among those who did not plead guilty was the present leader of the JVP Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe and Comrade U.A. Nandaseeli who is still active in the party. Those who pleaded guilty were given sentences.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who was detained in Jaffna prison was brought to Colombo for the hearing and was detained at New Magazine Prison. He took measures to build contacts with comrades who were detained in various parts in the prison during the period the hearing

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was taking place. It was not easy to do so. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was detained in 'P' section of the Magazine Prison which was a prison within a prison. It was isolated from other halls by high walls. However, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, using various strategies and manoeuvres, was able to have contact with comrades who continued to be with the party.

By this time the whole party was trapped in prisons and various cliques, groups and tendencies too had developed. This situation that occurred after the defeat of the struggle was very complex. Certain groups were based on regions. Certain other groups were built around an individual. There were also various dogmas created due to inability to understand the reasons for the defeat or being unable to endure it. In addition there were individuals who had issues due to the fabrications and canards sowed by the government and its puppets. Meanwhile, certain groups had begun representing Maoism as their ideology. Under such an environment it was a serious challenge to stabilize the truth about the party, the real reasons for the struggle and the Marxist-Leninist stand on the socialist Revolution and rebuild the party. It was more difficult due to the repressive conditions that existed in prisons and restrictions followed strictly by the officials. However, Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and the limited number of comrades who were left for the party overcame these obstacles.

As such, a massive ideological struggle began within prisons. Dialogues surfaced regarding the mistakes committed. There were debates with opposing groups. Certain debates developed into clashes. Once, a group that acted against the party suddenly broke into the hall where Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was detained carrying sharp weapons from the carpentry shed to kill Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. However, the attempt was thwarted.

A group that was involved in the '71 uprising but was not taken into custody was secretly active in the country. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera attempted to have contacts with them. However, most of the members of this group were arrested in 1973. Among the arrested was Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka. There were also attempts to dig mines and escape from prisons. A group escaped from Anuradhapura prison.

Those who were caught attempting to escape were inhumanly tortured by prison authorities. Time went on amidst clashes, debates, admissions of guilt, getting released, escapes and punishments. Once the main court case was completed and judgments were given the uneasiness that existed in prisons changed a little. The ideological struggle intensified after that. While facing the main court case Comrade Rohana Wijeweera also took measures to answer questions asked by comrades and get the answers distributed among them. (It is this document that was recently printed as 'A few experiences'). This answered practical as well as theoretical issues certain comrades had. After winning the right to get books and newspapers as political prisoners the study of Marxism-Leninism intensified and became regular. When rulers made universities prisons the revolutionaries made prisons their universities. It is during this period that the party was brought to a more correct standpoint. During this period the party completely cast away certain Maoist concepts and arrived at a Marxist-Leninist stand. It is in prisons that the stand that a Leninist Bolshevik party should be created in Sri Lanka came up. Also, researches were carried out in prisons regarding various historical and political facts. Until then the pre capitalist social system of Sri Lanka was identified generally as feudalism. However, the new discovery that pre capitalist system in Sri Lanka was different from feudalism in Europe and it is the social system of Asiatic mode of production was made by the JVP in prisons. It is a massive step to correctly analyze the history of our country.

An important step was taken in prison on 18th March, 1975 in redeveloping the JVP. March 18th was the 104th commemoration of Paris Commune. On that day, with the guidance of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, a temporary central committee was formed in prison for the JVP. It was the most important step in developing the JVP as a Bolshevik party. Until then the JVP existed as a temporary organizational structure. It was not developed on the organisation principle of democratic centralism which is the Leninist organizational policy. However, on 18th March, 1975 the formal organizational pattern commenced with the formation of a temporary central committee.

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Kottegode, Matara home where Wijeweeras lived.



At the Collective Farm in Moldaviya, Soviet Union.



At the collective Farm in Moldaviya, Soviet Union.



**On The Day Comrade Rohana was Discharged at Courts
in Nuwara Eliya.**

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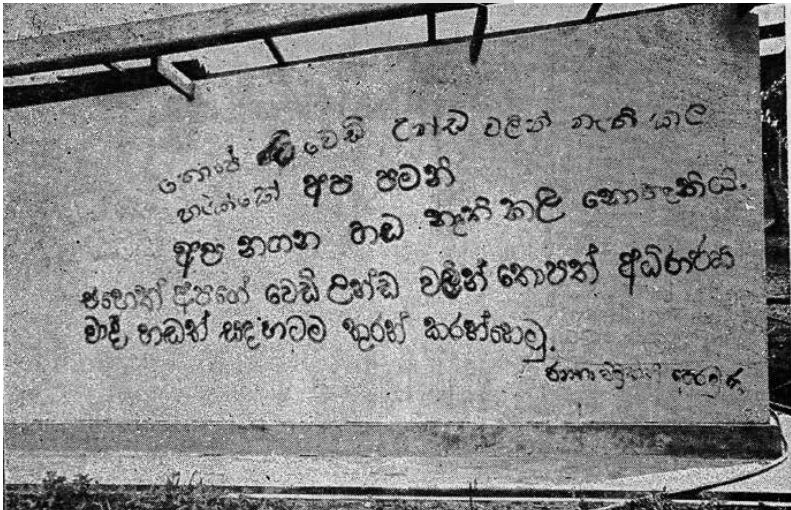
The first Press conference of the JVP



Comrade Rohana Wijeweera addressing the huge rally at Hyde Park, Colombo on the 27th February 1971.

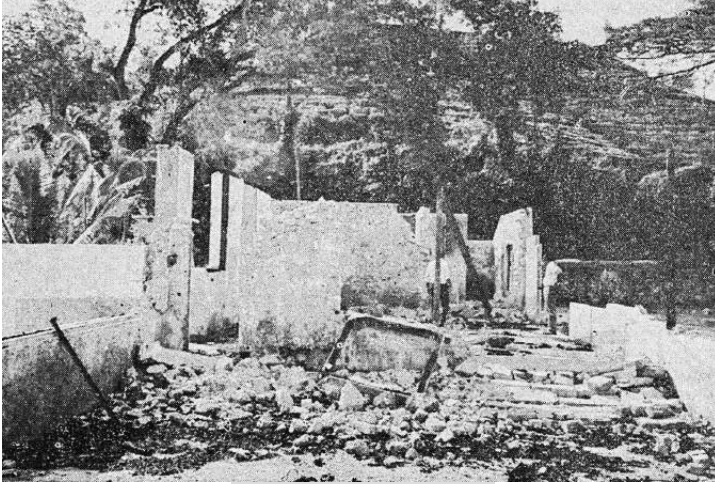


Government Media before uprising in April 1971. (Head Line reads as" Collecting Arms to Create Troubles")



A slogan written on a prison wall.
YOUR BULLETS COULD ANNIHILATE US.
BUT OUR VOICE WILL NEVER DIE.
OUR BULLETS WILL ANNIHILATE VOICE OF IMPERIALISM
FOR EVER.

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Deniyaya Police Station After the Attack.



Comrade Rohan Wijeweera was being brought before the Criminal Justice Commission.



Released from Prison



Town Hall Rally after Release

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11

The 1971 struggle, despite being defeated, had a massive effect on the society and the capitalist government. The land reformation carried out in 1975 that restricted the extent of land a person could own to 50 acres and taking over of estate companies was influenced by the '71 struggle. In 1972 the existed constitution was amended and a new constitution was adopted. Despite Sri Lanka being named a republic, it also created many issues. However, politics in Sri Lanka gradually changed after 1975. The LSSP, a strong partner in UF government withdrew from the government due to internal crisis. There was also a critical economic crisis in the country during this period. Due to the crisis that began in 1973 food stuffs became scarce and people had to buy them on a rationing system. Restrictions were on for transport of rice and chillies. With this began the deterioration of the UF government. Frauds and corruption too had their effect. Anti-government student struggles spread with the murder of Weerasuriya, a student of University of Peradeniya. The situation of the government became critical with the railway strike that commenced at this time. Meanwhile, the Communist Party too left the government. The opposition planned to bring a no confidence motion against Sirimawo Bandaranayaka government and Ms. Bandaranayaka put off convening Parliament as she was unable to face the no confidence motion. The result of this decision was the emergency law that was continuously maintained

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by passing it in Parliament until then with a majority vote could not be extended. With the revocation of the emergency law the government had to release many who were detained for their involvement in '71 struggle. All, other than those who were sentenced, had to be released. There were several who were detained under detention orders even after their prison terms had been completed. Accordingly, several comrades including Upatissa Gamanayaka and Somawansa Amarasinghe were released. The ban on the party that existed on emergency laws too had to be lifted. With this the JVP restarted its politics in public.

The JVP that began as a semi-secretive organization in 1965 entered public politics in 1970 but could not continue due to suppression. With the ban on the party in March, 1971 and the defeat of the April uprising and imprisonment of the party one chapter of the party was concluded. Then began the period the JVP developed as a mass movement and an organized political party within public politics. It began with the lifting of the ban in December, 1976.

The suppressive environment had not changed despite the emergency law was lifted or several comrades came out of prison after being released. As a result of the suppression of the '71 struggle and the fabrications and slanders sown in the society by the UF government the masses looked at the party with a suspicious eye. On the other hand despite there was a political space in the society for the existence of the party, there was no physical facilities at all. As such, those who came out of prisons first had to find protection, study the society and begin their moves.

However, the enemy was swift. It was being established, like it is happening now, that those who betrayed the proletarian movement and fled from it were more vicious in politics than the class enemy. The group consisting of Patrick Fernando, Wasantha Dissanayaka, Sarath Fernando, Justin Fernando that appeared as Kegalle group in prisons had planned to get the name of the party, to represent as the JVP and had already taken measures for that. A part of the group had not been imprisoned or had not been suppressed. As there was information that

they were attempting to hold a press conference appearing as the JVP it was necessary to act swiftly to protect the official ownership of the party. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who was in prison had sent instructions to comrades who were released to hold a press conference immediately and to protect the official ownership of the party.

Accordingly, the official ownership of the JVP was confirmed by holding a press conference headed by Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka as the acting General Secretary in February, 1977. The first press conference was held at the residence of Attorney at Law M.B. Ratnayaka. Also, a public rally was held at Hyde Park in Colombo at the beginning of March, 1977. The propaganda, putting up the stage and all work regarding the rally had to be carried out by a few comrades including Comrades Gamanayaka, Somawansa, Ragama Some and Kelly Senanayaka. People participated in the rally with some nervousness. People were reluctant to enter Hyde Park. The JVP commenced its new chapter despite such tough circumstances. Rallies were held in several places in the island after this and on 1st May, 1977 the JVP held its first May Day rally headed by Comrade Gamanayaka to commemorate the International Workers' Day at Dematagoda Grounds. There was no possibility of having a May Day march and rally.

With the move to protect the name of the JVP the conspiracy to plunder the name was temporarily defeated and the Kegalla group started posing as 'Janatha Sangamaya' (People's Union). Later, a few of them functioned as 'Diyasa Adyayana Kavaya' (Diyasa Study Circle). Until they degenerated completely their practice was opposing the JVP.

On 5th April every year after 1971 comrades of the party, who had preserved the spirit of the party and wherever they were, commemorated April Heroes. These commemorations were held secretly until 1977 and often in prisons. However, the party decided to commence publishing 'Niyamuwa' as the central organ of the party on the occasion of April Commemoration in 1977.

The party did not have any resource to publish the newspaper. Finding funds too was a challenge. Most of the funds to publish the

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newspaper were contributed by comrades who were in prisons. They collected money by donating blood. They also asked the loved ones to limit their visits to prison and donate the transport expenses to the newspaper fund. They also sold t-shirts donated to them from Red Cross and contributed the money for the newspaper fund. They taught that revolutionaries could do anything if there was a need.

The structure of the newspaper and a number of articles had been compiled and sent by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera from the prison. The next main question that cropped up was finding a printing press. Many printing press owners feared to print a JVP newspaper. Despite several printers agreeing to print, later they were unwilling as they had been intimidated by the police. However, in the end owners of 'Thusitha' Printers of Rajagiriya and Star Printers at Jayantha Weerasekera Mawatha in Maradana agreed to print the newspaper regardless of obstructions from the CID. This should be mentioned as a tribute to them. In the end the party was able to launch the inaugural issue of 'Niyamuwa'.

The general election was held in 1977. The party decided to contest the election wherever it was possible to do so. At the time the JVP was not registered as a political party by the Commissioner of Elections. As such, an application form was forwarded to the Commissioner of Elections to get the party registered. The application was rejected.

As such, the candidates of the party had to contest as independent candidates. Accordingly, the party put forward four candidates with the 'bell' as the symbol. Vijitha Ranaweera from Tangalle, Chandrapala from Anuradhapura West, Ranatunga from Horowpatana and Robert Jayasekera from Hakmana contested from the party. The election campaign was a very arduous one. The number of votes received by the candidates of the party was: Vijitha Ranaweera, Tangalle – 1234, Chandrapala, Anuradhapura West – 797, K. Ranatunga, Horowpatana – 687 and Robert Jayasekera, Hakmana – 724. The JVP that entered the public politics arena in this manner achieved a massive development once Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and other comrades were released from prison at the end of 1977.

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The General election held in July 1977 was one that brought about grievous changes in the path of politics in Sri Lanka. At the election the UNP lead by J.R. Jayawardene won 140 of the 168 seats and consolidated a majority of 5/6th in Parliament. The United Front that ruled the country during 70 – 77 period had been nullified and the SLFP contested with 'hand' symbol. The SLFP was able to get only 8 seats. Out of the 8 of them two seats were from Colombo Central and Nuwaraeliya-Maskeliya electorates which were multi-member seats. Halim Ishak came third in Colombo Central and Anura Bandaranayaka was second in Nuwaraeliya-Maskeliya.

The LSSP and the CP that were partners of the UF government and contested on their own failed to win any seat and were utterly beaten. The Tamil United Liberation Front won 18 seats and for the first time became the opposition in Parliament. Mr. Appapillai Amirthalingam became the Leader of the Opposition.

Jayawardene regime making use of its colossal majority immediately began a process to change the existing constitution and

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bring in a constitution with executive presidency. The UNP got the new constitution passed in 1978 and using the powers of the executive presidency and 5/6th majority in Parliament introduced free market economic policies to Sri Lanka beginning a very destructive political path. After 1977 the JVP had to be built and function in this political environment.

From the point of view of the JVP the important event that occurred after the 1977 election was the abolishing of criminal justice commission and many including Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who were imprisoned under it were released in November, 1977. Despite J.R. Jayawardene regime defining it as a release of political prisoners, President Jayawardene had taken the decision due to many reasons.

A main promise of the UNP at the '77 general election was releasing youths involved in the '71 uprising. By this the UNP expected to get the votes of the families of these youths. After the victory of the election it was not possible to evade fulfilling the promise. On the other hand those who had been convicted had spent most of their sentences. Within the next two years many of them were to be released after spending their sentences. Jayawardene had thought that if the youths were not released before their sentences were over but get released later he would not get any political advantage. It has also been felt that existence of 'political prisoners' in prisons of the country would deter would be investors that were expected under the open economy the regime wanted to establish in the country. More than any of these reasons the UNP also had the requirement to get strong UNP supporters such as Thaha, Mukthar, the foreign exchange racketeers, who had been imprisoned by the UF government using the criminal justice commission, released. This is the reason that influenced the UNP regime to abolish criminal justice commission.

Accordingly, the draft bill to abolish the criminal justice commission and the amended foreign exchange control act appointed by the UF government and functioned under it was presented to Parliament and was passed on 27th October, 1977. With this the exchange racketeers

as well as those who were involved in the '71 struggle who were sentenced under the acts were released. Despite defining the move as a release of political prisoners the 13 comrades who had been sentenced by civil courts were not released.

However, the release of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, Lionel Bopage and others gave the party a colossal velocity. With the release of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera a series of very successful rallies chaired by him were held throughout the island. The first rally headed by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was held at Town Hall grounds in Colombo. The second was held at Bogambara Grounds in Kandy and later rallies were held throughout the island. Youths, casting away the bitter memories of suppression during the '71 struggle, rallied round the JVP.

It is hereafter that the JVP became a theoretically more correct and organizationally methodical political party. The inaugural convention of the party was held in 1978 and a new Central Committee was elected. A party programme was adopted as well. The revolutionary policy framework that had been already compiled was adopted by the convention and was presented to the country. The party programme identified correctly that Sri Lanka was a capitalist country with a backward economic development, the capitalism that had been imposed by the British administration had not fulfilled capitalist democratic tasks and the capitalist class in Sri Lanka was weak and pro-imperialist. It was also established that the answer to capitalism in Sri Lanka was Socialism and even the capitalist democratic tasks that had not been fulfilled have to be solved as a by-product of a Socialist administration. The anti-Marxist views put forward by Maoist and Stalinist schools of thought that the capitalist class in Sri Lanka could be divided into two and one section of it – the progressive capitalist class - could be engaged in the capitalist democratic revolution were decisively rejected by this programme.

It was also decided to develop the JVP as a Leninist Bolshevik party by rallying masses. Accordingly, the secondary organizations of the party – Socialist Workers' Union, Socialist Youth Union, Socialist Students' Union and Socialist Women's Union were developed after holding their

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conventions during the 78/79 period. Also, Socialist Farmers' Union, Socialist Bhikku Union and Union of Socialist Arts and Culture were also formed.

The JVP entered working class politics by forming the Socialist Workers' Union strongly challenging the existing opportunism that had taken over the working class movement. The JVP, emphasizing that working class politics should be taken forward instead of trade union politics, put forward the slogan to organize the class. It was "Union for a profession, center for the class". With this opportunists in old left were enraged and the conflict existed until 1980 July strike. Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka, as the leader of Socialist Workers' Union, gave leadership to build a new working class movement.

After 1977 the students' movement, from the beginning, was the strongest and most widely active. By 1979 the leadership of the students' movement in universities was with the JVP. Meanwhile, the workers movement and the youth movement too developed strongly. Other organizations too developed in various ratios.

While the JVP held congresses and took successful and strong steps organizationally after 1977, it was able to have new impressions in Sri Lankan politics in several aspects. It carried out a massive ideological and organizational struggle against old left opportunism and the traces of opportunistic tendencies that were exposed in '71 struggle and in a very short time was able to become the main left movement in Sri Lanka and the third force in Sri Lankan politics. Also, the JVP that became a model in discipline, dedication, sacrifice and organizational ability made its mark in aesthetics as well. We could discuss these points according to their occurrences in history of the party.

Meanwhile, there is a special fact that should be mentioned. The government that came to power in 1977 appointed a special presidential commission to investigate unlawful use of power during the rule of UF government. Charges were specially made against Ms. Sirima Bandaranayaka and Felix Dias Bandaranayaka. The leaders of the JVP too were called to give evidence at the commission and the JVP

decided to give evidence. Whatever the intentions of Jayawardene was, the JVP took the decision to give evidence as it was necessary to expose the undemocratic moves carried out by the UF government against the JVP. Certain leaders of the old left and the SLFP, who were filled with fear, accused the JVP of giving evidence before a capitalist commission and it was not proper for a left movement. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera responding to this accusation asked the old left "Was the criminal justice commission you appointed against us in 1972 a Socialist one?" Comrade Rohana Wijeweera did not give evidence before this commission though several others did so.

At the end of the investigation the commission found Sirima Bandaranayaka guilty and her civil rights were suspended.

The JVP achieved a vigorous development after 1977. The party started its operations powerfully in several spheres and created new precedents. On one hand it formed as a constitutional and organized political party by holding party conventions and conventions of its mass organizations and on the other took measures to recruit new members by carrying out house to house canvassing campaigns to educate masses in politics. Within this process many who joined the party became full time activists and a new generation that absorbed the experiences and the fighting spirit of the cadres who had been tempered in '71 struggle was created. However, the process was not without obstacles. The existing old left began a new round of vilifications against the JVP and also it was difficult to overcome the slanders and fabrications sown by the enemy during the '71 struggle. However, activists of the party were armed with energy and revolutionary spirit to overcome all these challenges.

The JVP that entered the electioneering process with the 1977 election continued with it. Earlier, the party did not have an election structure. The physical resources and facilities too were minimal. The party was not registered as a political party by the Commissioner of Elections until 1982. As such, the party had to contest as independent groups. Despite all these obstacles the party carried out its functions in the election sector and defeated the old left to become the main left

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movement in Sri Lanka. The party made the election stages a stage to take the correct ideology to the masses.

The election for the Colombo Municipality was held in 1978 and the party fielded a team headed by Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka. Despite being unable to get any comrade elected to the Municipal Council, the party obtained more votes than LSSP or CP and became the main left movement in Colombo as well. After the general election in 1977 several bi-elections were held. Jayawardene regime had introduced Proportional Representation System under the new constitution. However, there were provisions to have bi-elections under the old 'first past the post' system. Accordingly, bi-elections were held for Dehiwela in November 1977, Colombo West in March 1978, Galle in December 1979, Anamaduwa in May 1980 and Kalawana in January 1981. JVP contested only Galle and Anamaduwa electorates. It was under 'bell' symbol as independent candidates. Lionel Bopage contested Galle electorate and was placed third polling 3366 votes. Victor Ivan contested the bi-election from the LSSP against the JVP and many who betrayed the party after the '71 struggle got on to his stage. However, he polled only 634 votes.

Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka contested the Anamaduwa electorate from the party and he polled only 857 votes. The JVP received seats under the Proportional Representation System only at the District Development Councils election held in 1981. The JVP, while being engaged in the electoral politics, carried out a broad propaganda project as well. Propaganda rallies, commemoration ceremonies, May Day rallies participated by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and also poster campaigns carried out throughout the island were foremost in the program. The JVP was able to build a separate identity and uniqueness in its propaganda campaigns and created the hand painted poster instead of the printed one and made it a strong advertising weapon that won the attention and respect of the country.

The JVP held its first May Day demonstration in 1978. It was the JVP that gave a new significance and a tilt to the May Day demonstrations in Sri Lanka. This is evident in that no other party has been able to surpass

the discipline, elegance and variety of the demonstration and the splendor, grandeur and dignity of the stage for the rally. It is the JVP that created a disciplined, orderly, organized and creative May Day demonstration with fighting spirit and sans cigarettes or liquor instead of the disorganized processions with vulgar behavior by other parties. Floats that depicted Socialism and fighting spirit were added to the demonstration which drew attention and was praised.

On the other hand the JVP entered the literature and art sector as well. 'Vimukthi Gee' (Songs of Liberation) was its forceful medium. 'Vimukthi Gee' brought a new experience to the country. On one hand it was a collective task. Lyrics, tunes, music and singing were done by party members or sympathizers. Despite lyrics lacked literary finness, they presented alternative views and militant themes. They were revolutionary. The tunes suited the mood. It was in a 'Vimukthi Gee' presentation that western and oriental musical instruments were first used in harmony in our country. It is clear that 'Vimukthi Gee' presented a good opportunity for radical young artists to talk politics in art.

'Vimukthi Gee' performance was held by Union of Socialist Arts and Culture of the JVP. Socialist Arts Union produced a drama based on the killing of Comrade Premawathi Manamperi of Kathargama. It was named 'Milana wu Malak Nove' (Not a withered bloom). It was first staged at the inaugural convention of the Socialist Youth Union held at the end of 1979. It could never be staged again as the government banned it.

Communal clashes broke out in 1978 in Sri Lanka and the JVP, as a Marxist movement, took an anti-communalist stand. The JVP held a series of seminars throughout the island getting also V.L. Pereira, the leader of a small left leaning organization in upcountry, to participate. By 1979 the JVP commenced political work in Jaffna. The JVP was able to carry out anti-communalist politics amidst obstructions from Sinhalese and Tamil communalists.

By this time the official communist parties of the Socialist movement were affiliated to the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union had transactions with official communist parties that were loyal to it, China

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helped communist groups loyal to it. Meanwhile, some other parties were connected to Trotskyite groups of the 4th International. In such an environment, genuine Marxist-Leninist parties that were not connected to any of these schools of thought were confronted with hardships. They had to function in isolation. In Sri Lanka the JVP had difficulty in building international political relations as it did not fall into Stalinism, Maoism or Trotskyism. As such, the affairs in international sphere of the JVP were not adequate despite it being strong and becoming the main left political movement in the country. Initially, international affairs were limited to JVP branch in London and the relations it had with then ruling Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in Iraq.

The JVP that marked its existence in several spheres in its forward march was able to become a strong left movement in the country. It also, confronted several critical points in its history.

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The JVP had several challenges before it in the political field after 1976. On one hand the party that was destroyed in 1971 suppression had to be re-built. New cadres, organizers and party cadres had to be built and the party strengthened. Meanwhile, it had to be established as a common man's party and a mass organization. The JVP had to fulfill these tasks not on a simple or convenient political environment. The Jayawardene regime that came to power in 1977 introduced the free market economic system blasting the monopoly of the state capitalist economy of the UF government that existed on one hand and paved the way for an economic expansion (temporarily). With this the cultural and ideological changes were carried out to suit its open economy. Despite providing avenues for the maturity of objective factors for a social change, it obstructed the development of subjective factor. The UNP government strived to show the country and the younger generation a 'dream state'. At the same time it created new laws and institutions to confront and suppress forces that obstruct its political path. The JVP had to engage in its politics under such a political environment confronting the suppression by the UNP regime.

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An important occurrence took place in 1978 in the new political path the JVP commenced in 1976. The JVP, for the first time in its history, participated, on invitation, in an international political event. The World Federation of Democratic Youth and International Student Union that still existing was under the guidance of the Socialist camp headed by then existing Soviet Union. Most of the cost of holding the 'World Festival of Youth and Students' that was held every 4 years was borne by the Soviet Union. The 'World Festival of Youth and Students' was held in Havana in Democratic Socialist Republic of Cuba in 1978. The JVP too received an invitation and 5 representatives of the JVP participated in the event. As all travelling expenses were borne by the Soviet Union the parties did not have to be burdened with the expenses.

The five from the JVP that represented the 'World Festival of Youth and Students' held in Havana were Rohana Wijeweera, Somawansa Amarasinghe, Vaas Tillekeratna, Kelly Senanayaka and Sunila Abeysekera. Sunila Abeysekera had joined the party at the time and was a singer of the 'Vimkthi Gee' troupe. The reason for her inclusion in the team to Havana was her ability of using foreign languages.

A massive attempt was made by the old left, specially the Communist party, to prevent the JVP participating in the Havana youth festival. At the time the official representative in Sri Lanka of the Soviet Union was the Communist party. As its attempt to stop JVP participation was unsuccessful it attempted to conspire against and show hostility against the JVP in Havana. One incident was the party banner was cut down by a thief. The JVP representatives had displayed the party banner at the hotel the delegation was staying. It was like picking the eyes of the representatives of the old left with needles who had forgotten even to take a banner of their parties. They had removed the JVP banner at night. However, the journey to Havana was a new experience for the JVP and the members met representatives of left and communist parties of many countries and were able to build new relationships.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera visited UK, Portugal and several other countries on his journey to Havana and he established the JVP

branch in London. He had also met Trujillo, a leftist leader who had been active in toppling the dictatorship in Portugal.

The next important political event we meet is the left unity built at the initiative of the JVP. It was not a left front but a united process that was begun with left parties. The JVP, from its inception, rejected reformist, revisionist and class-collaborationist united fronts but believed in class struggle and social revolution. The JVP was forced to go for a united left procedure due to the critical moves engaged by Jayawardene regime to abolish democracy. In 1979 JR Jayewardene regime got two special acts passed in the parliament. One was the 'Prevention of terrorism (temporary provisions) act and the other was Proscription of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam and Other Similar Organizations Law (The prevention of terrorism act still exists). The JVP that correctly comprehended that the moves by Jayawardene regime were to abolish democracy in the country and suppress opposition political parties decided to launch an agitation against such moves. JVP, deciding that it was necessary to carry out a struggle with the left parties instead of going it alone, took the initiative.

Discussions, initiated by the JVP, were held with the Communist Party of Sri Lanka, LSSP, NLSSP and Communist Party (Marxist) headed by Bala Tampoe. All agreed for an agitation against the two acts. Accordingly, the first united rally of the five parties was held at Hyde Park in Colombo in 1979. As the initiative for the united action was taken by the JVP it was decided to give the chairmanship of the first rally to the JVP and other parties given the chairmanship of other rallies to be held subsequently. As such, Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka chaired the first rally. The rally was addressed by Bala Tampoe on behalf of the Communist Party (Marxist), Vasudeva Nanayakkara representing NLSSP, Athavuda Seneviratna on behalf of the LSSP, Peter Kuenaman for the Communist Party and Comrade Rohana Wijeweera representing the JVP.

The government that was befuddled when the move of the five parties commenced carried out a campaign of vituperations. JR Jayawardene had said Soviet Union was behind the move to unite left parties. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera responding to this at the Hyde Park

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rally said left parties that had various differences were brought to one stage not by the Soviet Union but by Jayawardene himself through his moves to abolish democracy.

Various issues cropped up within the left united action from the first rally held. The deceitful policies of the old left were an obstacle for a long journey. Vasudeva and the CP wanted the process begun as a limited united action on behalf of democracy to be transferred to a left united front. However, the JVP acted not to set up united fronts but to launch united actions against suppressive acts. At this the old left publicly accused the JVP as sectarian. The second rally of the five parties was held in Bogambara Grounds in Kandy. Contradictions surfaced here and the united action of the five parties terminated with the rally at Bogambara. Despite the united action of the five parties terminating, the JVP was accepted as the head of the left parties due to its initiative in the united action. Also the JVP was established as a party that had the maturity in politics to select and carry out strategies on behalf of and the requirement of the masses. Despite Jayawardene not abolishing the PTA due to the agitations, he had to abolish Proscription of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organizations Law. Though the united action of the five parties was abandoned, the JVP received a certain advantage from the move.

The political journey that commenced from 1976 was not without internal conflicts or disciplinary issues that cropped up from time to time. The party that acted with experiences of its past moved instantly to take measures against such anomalies. One such instance was four members of the provisional central committee conspired to take control of the party at the party convention held in 1978. The conspiracy was exposed before the convention and the four were immediately sacked from the party. This incident was not given much notice and the four were known as 'clique of four' within the party. The members of the 'clique of four' were Piyadasa Madarasinghe, Captain Kularatna, Rosmead Nimal and Robert Jaysekera. Robert Jayasekera was the candidate from the JVP that contested Hakmana seat at the 1977 election.

Next, by 1979 the party had to take disciplinary action against Kelly Senanayaka. It was due to having a love affair with Sunila Abeysekera and hiding it from the party. Sunila Abeysekera was already a married woman and was not legally separated from her husband. However, in taking disciplinary action against Kelly Senanayaka what the party considered foremost was his dishonesty to the party. Kelly Senanayaka was removed from the political bureau of the party. He functioned as a full time activist for a little while and gradually distanced himself from the party. As a result Sunila Abeysekera too left the party. Later Kellie Senanayaka became a traitor to the party and Sunila too acted against the party.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was the general secretary of the party since 1965. However, after the '71 struggle, when the temporary central committee was established in 1976 and work began publicly Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka was appointed the general secretary of the party. After the 1978 congress Daya Wanniarachchi was appointed the general secretary. Later from 1980 until the proscription of the party in 1983 Lionel Bopage functioned as the general secretary.

1980 July strike was a crossroad for the working class movement as well as the JVP. On one hand it was the last general strike called by the old left. It was also the decisive struggle that reflected the opportunism of the old left that existed within the trade union movement and marked the beginning of the breaking down of the trade union 'empire' the old left possessed. On the other hand it was the struggle that allowed the JVP to intensify its work among working class movement and organize trade union movement according to Marxist-Leninist teachings and revolutionary practice.

The JVP intensified its work in all sectors after 1976 and paid a special attention to strengthen its political work within the working class movement. One of the slanders the old left spread against the JVP was that it was not a political party of the working class but a petite bourgeoisie party of the youths and students. The example they pointed out to prove their point was that the JVP did not have trade unions.

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For, at the time the JVP had not established any trade unions. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, responding to this argument once stated that the biggest workers' party in the country would be the UNP which has the most number of trade unions if a political party is decided whether it is a party of the proletariat or not from the number of trade unions it has. After 1977 the UNP, using its state power, was enlarging 'Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya' (JSS) and a large number of employees were in the trade union. However, the JVP entered the working class movement not with the purpose of trade unionism but based on Marxist-Leninist principles.

Leninist teaching on working class movement was the standpoint of the JVP. As such, the objective of the JVP was to liberate the working class from 'trade unionism' and bring them into 'working class politics'. It was necessary to unite the working class that had been disunited and was divided into small trade unions. The slogan of the JVP was 'One union for one Trade, A Centre for the working class'.

A large number of trade unions were established in the country with the law brought in by the Bandaranayke regime in 1956 that a gathering with 7 members could be registered as a trade union. Trade unions were divided with every division that took place in the left movement. There were several trade unions for the same profession. Some trade unions belonged to political parties and some were 'independent'. The division of the working class into political parties and the disunity it created was a serious disadvantage for the liberation struggle of the working class. The challenge before the JVP was uniting the already divided working class instead of forming more trade unions and dividing the class further. The trade union movement of the JVP had to overcome this challenge at the beginning of its work among the working class.

Accordingly, the initial policy of the JVP was to prevent from forming new trade unions. For, it was not necessary to divide the already disunited working class. As such, the JVP, instead of forming new trade unions, built the Socialist Workers' Union. The Socialist Workers' Union was not a trade union but is the mass organization of the party to establish class politics within the working class and to give it leadership.

The party set up the Socialist Workers' Union, held its inaugural summit and elected Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka as its General Secretary. The Socialist Workers' Union functioned under the leadership of Comrade Gamanayaka.

The strategy employed by the party to bring victory to the slogan 'One union for one Trade, A centre for the working class' was to grab power of the existing trade unions instead of forming new ones. Groups of Militant young workers intensified their functions in trade unions and gradually got elected to the leadership of the trade unions they represented. The old left formed their trade unions and maintained them in an undemocratic manner so that they could be in power forever. However, the membership of the Socialist Workers' Union of the JVP was able to overcome such obstacles and come to the forefront of the trade unions they represented. The process was more successful within trade unions of the private sector. At the time Bala Tampoe's Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) was the strongest among the private sector trade unions. The JVP was able to establish its control over many trade unions under the CMU. The best example was the trade union at Elephant House (Ceylon Cold Stores) in Colombo.

The Old left could not stay away from paying attention to the situation that was developing by 1980. The old left could not accept defeat when its trade union 'empire' was being denied to it and revolutionary young workers 'encroach upon' what existed as their domains. They had to fight to prevent the 'invasion' by the revolutionary workers. The only strategy left to them was to drag the working class to a struggle at a time it was not prepared and was disadvantageous to it and thereby sacrifice to the suppression of the class enemy the militant and revolutionary active sections that had taken the leadership of many trade unions and protect their claim for the leadership of the trade union movement. This is how the subjective factors for the July '80 strike lined up in an environment the aforesaid need of the old left existed.

Due to the suppressive agenda carried out by the UNP government that came to power in 1977 and introduced open economy

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limiting rights of the working class and also due to issues confronted by the working class in their struggle to overcome prevailing economic difficulties, struggles surfaced against the government. Initially, they were limited to various isolated protests. However, the UNP government retaliated with suppression. One of the high points of these struggles was when a comrade called Somapala was murdered by UNP thugs. With this the impatience for a struggle intensified and the old left could not subdue it. It is in such an environment that all parties of the old left took a decision for the July '80 strike.

The old left that gathered under Joint Trade Union Action Committee (JTUAC) took a decision for a general strike without preparing the working class for such a massive struggle or without studying the ability or preparedness of the class for such a struggle. The decision they took was a wobbly, sloppy decision. Instead of calling the strike on one day the trade unions were allowed to join the strike on days they chose.

The JVP that was certain that the old left would betray the struggle warned the working class regarding it. It appealed to the membership not to allow leaders to betray or abandon the struggle. The JVP also challenged the leaders of the old left to hold a day's token strike to find out whether the working class was prepared for a general strike. The old left did not take any notice of this and due to its weak decision taken regarding the strike and betrayal of the struggle on the way the UNP regime using emergency laws, its thugs and security forces smashed the strike. The struggle ended in defeat. More than 100,000 were considered as those who relinquished their services and were dismissed from employment while many others decided to go back for employment under very disadvantageous conditions. Some committed suicide and the militant sections were left out.

As soon as the strike ended in failure the old left carried out a massive propaganda campaign accusing the JVP of betraying the strike. What was surprising was they were the ones who continuously boasted that all trade unions were with them but the JVP did not have any trade unions. However, one reason existed for them to make this accusation

against the JVP. It was the manner Ceylon Teachers' Union (CTU) acted in the strike.

When the July '80 strike occurred CTU had accepted JVP political leadership and was working together with the JVP. At the time CTU was the strongest and most militant trade union in the education sector. H.N. Fernando was its president while Chithral Perera was the General Secretary. H.N. Fernando had joined the JVP during 1969. By 1980 he was a JVP activist and it was to his younger sister that Comrade Rohana Wijeweera got married. Chithral Perera had links with the Communist Party and later worked with the JVP.

JVP was active in CTU since 1974 and by 1976 the influence of JVP politics increased. When the JVP entered public politics in 1976 the CTU functioned with the JVP. JVP politics and organizations were responsible for the strengthening of the CTU while the Teachers' Union too made a big contribution for the political activities of the JVP. However, CTU prepared to act abandoning the strategical stand the party took regarding the July '80 strike. The JVP standpoint was to struggle not in isolation but with other trade unions as the risk of the old left betraying the strike existed. The strategical stand a revolutionary movement selects would not be always simple and easy. To understand them and to act accordingly a class consciousness that goes beyond the class feeling which is the political knowledge and experiences are needed. CTU, unable to understand the most correct stand taken by the party regarding the July '80 strike and opportunism that existed in certain sections of the teachers' union, decided to act against the party decision and was dragged towards an anti-JVP stand. It also instantly joined the old left in slandering the JVP stating the party betrayed the strike.

The person who took the initiative in this vile act was Chithral Perera. H.N. Fernando acted according to instructions of Chithral Perera. The opportunists who had been hiding their heads within the CTU began acting against the JVP. Opposition to the party stand by the CTU was not something that happened on the spur of the moment or due to indiscretion but due to the treacherousness displayed by the

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opportunists at the decisive moment. With this many district secretaries and sections that accepted JVP ideology left the trade union and formed a new teachers' union.

The move of the CTU was a blessing for the old left that was slandering the JVP to hide its treacherousness of betraying the July strike. Despite the situation being a very harmful one, the JVP did not change its stand or feared the disadvantageous situation. Instead, it strongly appeared for its stand and took measures to logically expose to the working class the betrayal of the old left. Despite certain political strategies harm revolutionary movements at a certain moment, if they are correct they would bring good results. This was proved in situations that occurred subsequently.

With the defeat of July strike one fact was proved. It was that the opportunist fund-mongering trade union traders would never allow the power in trade unions to be changed democratically. In such a situation the JVP's strategy of not forming new trade unions was not valid. This situation forced the JVP to change its former strategy of not forming new trade unions and take new strategical practices without changing its strategy of uniting the working class. Accordingly, the JVP decided to establish trade unions with the intention of rallying them to one centre.

With the JVP's decision to form trade unions in the state sector as well as in the private sector the militant and the working masses that were disgusted with the revisionist and opportunist moves of the old left and rejecting the slander that July strike was betrayed by the JVP started joining JVP unions. With this began the breaking down of the trade union empire of the old left. At a later stage the JVP centralized all trade unions of the state sector and established All Ceylon Trade Union Federation as their centre and created Inter Company Employees' Union as the centre for the private sector unions. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was elected as the president of the ACTUF and Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka was elected its general secretary. The head of the Inter Company employees' Union was Lionel Bopage, who was then the general secretary of the

party. Later a union for estate employees was formed headed by Comrade Thangaraja.

In 1981 the JVP had to confront two struggles. One was against the white paper on education brought in by Jayawardene regime to abolish free education. The other was taking part in the development council election in 1981. Both these struggles were able to bring some sort of an achievement to the JVP.

In 1981 Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe was the Minister of Youth Affairs, Employment and Education of the Jayawardene government. The UNP government that was taking measures to establish free market economy in Sri Lanka decided to change education in the country to suit their new policy. The main intention was to gradually abolish free education. Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe presented the 'white paper' on education under such an environment. The white paper was vehemently opposed by the students' movement as soon as it was presented. By that time Socialist Students Union of the JVP was in power in most of the students' councils in universities. The Inter University Students Federation functioned under the political guidance of the JVP and the leadership of the Socialist Students' Union. As such, the JVP directly contributed to the struggle begun by the students' movement against the 'white paper'.

A massive wave of protests including seminars, rallies, agitations and demonstrations was created and the government that had crushed the July strike got prepared similarly to subdue the student protests using thugs and suppression. While the JVP, with students' movement, took the struggle against the 'white paper' to its hands President JR Jayawardene too entered the fight to implement the white paper. Meanwhile, JR Jayawardene addressing a meeting had said 'the white paper would not be withdrawn whatever protests and demonstrations are held.' Jayawardene regime attacked student agitations while various actions were taken against student leaders. Mounted police force was deployed against a student agitation held in Colombo and several students were injured when they were kicked and trampled by horses. In these struggles Comrades H.B. Herath and K.W.S. Amarasiri, who were student leaders, were injured.

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However, Jayawardene regime had to accept defeat and temporarily withdraw the white paper. It was generally a victory for the students' movement. Despite the July strike of the working class movement lead by opportunist left leaders was suppressed, President Jayawardene had to accept defeat at the students movement lead by the revolutionary movement. However, all governments that came to power since then have attempted to implement policies of the white paper. These attempts still continue.

The other struggle the JVP confronted in 1981 was the development council election. The JVP that entered electoral politics in 1977 by putting forward candidates for 4 seats could not get its members elected as people's representatives until 1981. The election for district development councils was held in June 1981. Jayawardene regime that drafted a new constitution and got it passed introduced district development councils as a district level structure in addition to already existing local government councils. There were no provincial councils then. The explanation given by Jayawardene regime regarding district development councils was that they were an administrative structure on a district level. Of course there were the seeds of devolution concept in the process.

However, the district development councils formed in 1981 were special for several reasons. One specialty was it was the first election held under proportional representation system. Despite holding it according to proportionate representative system the preference voting system did not exist. Instead, political parties or independent groups had to forward a list of candidates and according to votes polled by parties or independent groups a number of seats were given and councilors were selected according to the order of the names in the list. This system was not an issue for the JVP though it was a problem for other parties. For, those whose names were lower down in the list did not engage in the campaign. Later, preferential system was introduced to solve this issue.

The other specialty in the district development council election was the government itself abolished the district development councils

after the first round. The term for district development councils was 4 years. After the first round no election was held for them and they were allowed to get abolished.

On the other hand when district development council election was being held several internal crises had developed within the SLFP that was in the opposition then. The presidential commission appointed to investigate abuse of power during Sirima Bandaranayake administration had found Ms. Sirima Bandaranayake guilty of abuse of power and she was deprived of her civic rights for 7 years from October, 1980. Due to this situation she was legally obstructed from engaging in politics or giving leadership to a political organization. The position was her involvement in any election would have affected the election of candidates put forward by the party. Like being done at present, the intention of the Jayawardene regime was to weaken the opposition and pave the way for a single party administration.

With this situation an internal crisis developed in the SLFP. Despite legal obstructions, Sirima Bandaranayake did not want to give up the post of president of the SLFP. This is similar to the situation the UNP is confronted today. The crisis crippled the SLFP drastically. As a result the SLFP decided to boycott the district development election. It was not due to any policy decision but due to its inability and crises within the party. Following this decision of the SLFP, the LSSP and the CP too decided to boycott the election.

However, the JVP was not prepared to forego the situation that gave it an opportunity to take its politics to the public. The JVP decided to contest in districts in which it could do so. However, at the time, the Commissioner of Elections had not registered JVP as a recognized political party. Registering JVP as a political party was deliberately delayed despite forwarding applications several times. As a result the JVP had to contest the district development councils election in 1981 as an independent groups.

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JVP put forward groups to several districts. Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka headed the Colombo District group while Gampaha group was lead by Vaas Thilekeratna. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe headed the Kalutara group and Galle group was lead by Lionel Bopage. Comrade Piyasena Ramanayaka headed the Hambantota group while Comrade Sisira Randeniya lead Anuradhapura group and Wickremapala Herath headed Badulla group.

The district development election in 1981 too was not free of violence and frauds. Gangs of thugs that went to Jaffna accompanied by powerful ministers of the government plundered a large number of ballot boxes and set fire to Jaffna library. This is how the UNP prepared the field for the separatist war that surfaced in later years.

The JVP was able to mark its first election victories by getting 13 of its candidates elected at the district development councils election, the first election to be held under proportional representation system. It was a giant step the JVP took towards mass politics. It was also an important opportunity for the JVP leaders, who had not been tested in public institutions, to be tested.

Once Lenin has said:

The German “Lefts” complain about bad “leaders” in their party, give way to despair, and go to the absurd length of “repudiating” “leaders.” But when conditions are such that it is often necessary to hide, “leaders” underground, the development of good, reliable, experienced and authoritative “leaders” is a very difficult matter, and these difficulties cannot be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and without testing the “leaders” among other ways, in the parliamentary arena as well.”

***(Lenin - “Left Wing” Communism – An Infantile Disorder”)
Against Right-Wing and Left-Wing Opportunism. Page 423)***

This is how the 13 members of the JVP were elected: 4 from Colombo, 3 from Gampaha, 2 each from Galle and Badulla and 1 each from Hambantota and Anuradapura. It was not a situation the UNP expected and was also a defeat for the SLFP. A code of ethics was introduced to the members from the JVP and by deciding not to spend the allowance received as members but to credit it to the party fund the JVP introduced to Sri Lanka the first people's representatives that do not receive a salary for personnel spending.

After this the JVP increased its affairs within mass politics and electoral structure. Specially, forming electoral branches was intensified and building a fund of Rs.2.5 million to face future elections was launched in November, 1981.

Next important event the JVP comes across is the presidential election in 1982.

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By 1982 the political situation in Sri Lanka was changing. Jayawardene regime that came to power with a 5/6th majority in Parliament was deteriorating due to the repressive rule it was following, not fulfilling promises such as 'eight pounds of serials' and the burden of the economy the general public had to bear. As such, Jayawardene thought of holding a sudden presidential election before his popularity deteriorated further and expending his tenure for another six years. According to the constitution created in 1978 the term of a president was 6 years. JR Jayawardene had taken oaths at Galle Face Green on 4th February, 1978 without holding a presidential election and the presidential election was due in 1984. However, President Jayawardene thought waiting until then would be disadvantageous for him.

As such, the provision to hold presidential election after 4 years of holding the position was presented to Parliament and it was passed in August, 1982. This is how the presidential election was held in 1982.

The JVP understood that JR Jayawardene amended the constitution and was preparing to hold a sudden presidential election to

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get 6 more years in power to go on an undemocratic despotic journey. Jayawardene regime developing into a dictatorship should be defeated. It was necessary to avoid Jayawardene winning the election and the political step of abolishing the executive presidential system too should be taken. Under such conditions the JVP created a very correct strategical slogan, declared it and began working for it. The slogan was to put forward an apolitical common candidate to abolish executive presidency, support him/her by all opposition parties and bring victory. It was an advanced strategical slogan.

However, SLFP, the main opposition political party, did not agree. Sirima Bandaranayake, who had been denied her civic rights, did not want to defeat Jayawardene. She wanted to put forward a weak candidate for the 1982 presidential election so that she could contest at the next election when her civic rights have been restored. The internal crises in the opposition too influenced this decision. SLFP announced Hector Kobbekaduwa would be put forward as its candidate.

The JVP putting forward an alternative proposal with its slogan stated if it was not possible to put forward an apolitical candidate to put forward a common candidate from the left and this candidate should compulsorily be from the JVP. At this Colvin R. de Silva (LSSP) announced he would contest as the common candidate of the left. With this Vasudeva Nanayakkara (NLSSP) also announced his candidature.

The JVP, considering the situation, finally decided to put forward a candidate. The party decision was that Comrade Rohana Wijeweera should be the candidate from the JVP. Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Elections registered the JVP as a recognized political party before the presidential election. The first election the JVP contested as a registered political party was the presidential election. The JVP was also able to establish 'bell' as its election symbol.

Nominations for the first presidential election were accepted on 17th September, 1982. The Commissioner of Elections accepted the nominations of JR Jayawardene from the UNP, Hector Kobbekaduwa from

the SLFP, Rohana Wijeweera from the JVP, Colvin R. de Silva from the LSSP, Vasudeva Nanayakkara from NLSSP and Kumar Ponnambalam from All Ceylon Tamil Congress. The election was to be held on 20th October, 1982.

Throughout the election campaign President Jayawardene abused his executive powers, 5/6th majority in Parliament as well as violence and thugs. Certain leaders of the SLFP too addressed Jayewardene's election meetings supporting him. Meanwhile, the SLFP campaign was an unenthusiastic and a weak one. However, the JVP carried out a massive and strong campaign and its election theme was "Rata Hadanna Apata Denna" (Give us the country to develop). Many propaganda rallies participated by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera were held throughout the country and large crowds attended these rallies. Within the election campaign the JVP had become a challenge to JR Jayawardene and many people were attracted to the JVP campaign. Later incidents indicated that certain activists of the party overestimated the outcome due to the large public attendance of the meetings. It was at this election that JR Jayawardene announced that the election map would be folded for 10 years.

According to results of the first presidential election held on 20th October JR Jayawardene won by polling 3,450,811 votes. Hector Kobbekaduwa came second with 2,548,438 votes. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera came third polling 273,428 votes making the JVP the third political force and the main left force in the country. Kumar Ponnambalam polled 173,934 votes while Colvin R. de Silva polled 58,531 votes. Vasudeva Nanayakkara polled only 17,005 votes.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera received the highest percentage and the number of votes from Hambantota which was 28,835. The other districts from which he received more than 20,000 votes were Colombo (28,580), Gampaha (23,701), Matara (22,117) Kurunegala (21,835) and Galle (20,962). What was special was that Comrade Rohana Wijeweera received votes from districts in Northern and Eastern provinces despite various slanders were spread and obstructions placed against the party.

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He had polled 3098 votes from Jaffna, 2286 from Wanni, 1287 votes from Batticaloa, 5395 from Trincomalee and 7679 from Digamadulla.

Despite the JVP becoming the third and the leader in the left, the number of votes polled was relatively less than what was expected. As such, the result of the presidential election was not a satisfying one. As a result of engaging in election politics and the overestimation at the presidential election created some sort of a slump in certain sections of the party. However, leaders of the party including Comrade Rohana Wijeweera took measures to overcome this situation and build confidence among the party cadres.

Capitalist elections would never be free or fair. The capitalist class employs powers of money, thugs, state and also the weaknesses among the people for its victory. Rulers deploy all undemocratic moves of giving false promises, impersonation and intimidation of opposition voters to grab victory. This is how they achieve their victories.

Proletarian movements should realize this reality when engaging in its battles. Also, election results should be analyzed taking into consideration that capitalist elections are not held on just, common grounds and under the above mentioned conditions. However, certain sections of the proletariat fall blindly into tendencies of 'electionism' harming the movement. This is the situation that came up with the presidential election in '82.

After the presidential election the JVP had to confront a referendum and several bi elections.

J.R. Jayawardene, who won the presidential election, took steps to fold the election map as promised in election stages. He, instead of holding the general election that was due in 1983, decided to hold a referendum and extend the period of the existing Parliament by another six years. Jayawardene acted in a manner again confirming the saying that 'the law of the country is the wish of the ruling class of that era' and laws introduced by rulers for their power are blatantly violated when they boomerang on the rulers that enacted them.

The general election on 1983 should have been held according to the proportional representation system Jayawardene introduced to the country for his own advantage. However, Jayewardene, from the results of the presidential election of '82 knew he would get only a simple majority in Parliament if the general election was held. Jayawardene also knew that he would lose his 5/6th majority in Parliament and according to the proportional representation system several members of the JVP too would get elected to Parliament. Jayawardene wanted to stop this. This is why Jayawardene thought of extending the Parliament with 5/6th majority for another 6 years.

The 4th constitutional amendment presented to Parliament on 4th November, 1982 and adopted with a 2/3rd majority proposed to extend the term of the Parliament. The amendment stated " (e) unless sooner dissolved, the First Parliament shall continue until August 4, 1989, and no longer, and shall thereupon stand dissolved..." However, this amendment could not be implemented only with the 2/3rd majority in Parliament. It had to be approved in a referendum. This is how the 1982 referendum was held. On powers vested on him by the '78 constitution Jayawardene fixed dates for the referendum to extend the term of the Parliament by 6 years. The referendum was to be held on 22nd December, 1982.

The JVP that saw the move as a serious step towards denying capitalist democracy decided to defeat the move and protect people's right to vote. The JVP realizing the value of the limited opportunities that exist in capitalist democracy and seeing the harm of the undemocratic journey of the ruling class that possessed an immense power decided to defeat the move. The JVP declaring its stand on the referendum stated, "We have found the common candidate we were looking to defeat Jayewardene regime and all parties of the opposition should bring victory to the common symbol to defeat Jayewardene. According to the constitution those who vote for the proposal was assigned the symbol 'lamp' and those who oppose it the 'pot'. Accordingly, the common symbol of anti-government forces was the 'pot'.

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The SLFP that was divided due to internal crises did not take the referendum as a challenge nor did they have an ability to do so. At the time Vijaya Kumaratunga had been taken into custody on charges of 'Naxalite' conspiracy. Jayawardene had said the Parliament election was postponed to prevent 'Naxalites' from entering Parliament. However, his real intention was to prevent the JVP entering parliament.

At the presidential election struggle the SLFP carried out a very sloppy and weak campaign. It had abandoned most of the time given to address the people on the TV and the radio. SLFP seniors such as Kalugalla got on to the stage of the government. However, the JVP fought with all its might to defeat the government. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera asked voters not to use their votes to get their right for voting nullified coming out with a simile not to 'buy a book of pictures after selling the two eyes'.

However, using violence and carrying out election violations and frauds the 'lamp and pot game' of the referendum was won by the government. 3,141,223 votes were received by the 'lamp' (the government) but the opposition (pot) received only 2,605,983 votes. The government won the referendum by a majority of 532,240 votes.

After the referendum two important political events took place. One is the decision taken by JR Jayawardene to hold bi-elections at electorates where 'the lamp' (government) was defeated. The other is the decision by the JVP to take legal action challenging the result of the referendum.

Though JR Jayawardene won the referendum, he had been defeated in several districts. Those districts were Hambantota, Jaffna, Wanni and Batticaloa. In addition the government had lost in certain electorates of other districts. 'The lamp' had lost 48 of the 168 electorates. Except the 19 electorates in the North and the East bi-elections were to be held in 18 of the 29 electorates the government had lost in other electorates. Accordingly, the sitting MPs of the electorates resigned and the bi-elections were scheduled to be held on 18th May, 1983.

There was the need to defeat the UNP in the bi-elections. The JVP put forward a proposal to the SLFP for a no contest pact. The JVP proposal was for 5 of the 18 seats for the JVP and the rest for the SLFP and the old left. The SLFP, influenced by the old left stated the JVP could be given only one seat. It was completely disregarding JVP's strength and displayed the inability of the SLFP to gauge political challenges, its stupidity and insincerity. As such, the JVP decided to contest the bi-election on its own, The JVP put forward candidates for Tangalle, Beliatta, Devinuwara, Kamburupitiya and Ratgama electorates. Vijitha Ranaweera was the candidate for Tangalle, Ariyasena Eashwarage for Beliatta, K.H. Jayantha for Devinuwara, Premachandra Munasinghe for Kamburupitiya and Dr. K.S.N. Fernando for Ratgama contested from the JVP. Mr. Prince Gunasekera who contested Habaraduwa electorate as an independent candidate was supported by the JVP.

According to bi-election results the UNP won 14 of the 18 seats. The JVP polling considerable numbers of votes came third in many seats but was not able to win any electorate.

Meanwhile, the JVP launched a campaign of agitations and propaganda under the theme "1982 referendum is a fraud, hold '83 election". One of the important tasks of this campaign was the legal action taken by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera challenging the results of the referendum. The report of the then Commissioner of Elections Chandananda de Silva too carried evidence to prove that the election was corrupt. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera coming forward to take legal action while the SLFP kept quite was appreciated by many.

Another special incident was added to history. The responsibility of filing the case on behalf of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was on Prince Gunasekera. The assistance of able lawyers was needed for the case. One person came forward voluntarily to be responsible to appear for the case. He was none other than Felix Dias Bandaranayke who was a powerful minister of the United Front government of 1970 -77 period and was also took a major part in the suppression of the JVP in 1971. He met Comrade Rohana Wijeweera through Prince Gunasekera and expressed

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his willingness to appear for the case considering the importance of the case and Comrade Rohana Wijeweera's involvement in it.

Corroborating the saying that the 'mockery of history topples everything' the person who attempted to destroy the JVP and gave political leadership to keep Comrade Rohana Wijeweera in prison for life became the lawyer representing Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, proving that he was a matured political leader and not making the past of Felix Dias Bandaranayke an obstacle handed over the referendum case to him.

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1983 was a decisive year for the JVP as well as for the country. By this time President Jayawardene had commenced his second term. Also, the 5/6th majority in Parliament had been extended for another 6 years. The July'80 strike had weakened the trade union movement of the conventional left. The SLFP had been weakened and had been divided into helpless sections. In such an environment the only challenge before JR Jayawardene was the JVP. Jayawardene too had said this several times. This indicated that the UNP government was preparing for a direct confrontation with the JVP.

In such a situation, when the country was socially, economically and politically deteriorating and the government was carrying on with suppression and denying democracy to the masses, the JVP that should have come forward to confront and defeat the crisis was at the time in a state of downturn after engaging in the presidential election and the referendum which did not bring it much success. Certain sections of the party that had high hopes regarding the elections were in a state of lethargy and certain full timers were withdrawing from work coming

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up with personal economic difficulties. Meanwhile, signs of political and ethical degeneration could be seen among certain sections of the party. The JVP had to confront Jayawardene's undemocratic regime while fighting against this tendency of degeneration that surfaced in the party. The JVP that took it as a challenge acted accordingly.

As a result of the party engaging in public politics and developing into a mass organization by making inroads to the masses through massive propaganda campaigns and elections certain sections of the party were falling into propagandism and electionism. The situation was serious as several senior leaders of the party had given up their revolutionary standing by the end of 1982. They were morally deteriorated and were engaging in receiving money, carrying out financial projects and spending without the knowledge of the party organizations. This was then identified by the party as economism. These types of tendencies surface in left movements when they are confronted with temporary fallbacks. They should be identified and measures should be taken to defeat such tendencies. The JVP acted accordingly.

The party had to purge several whose lives had degenerated to a level that could not be corrected and also due to their indisciplinary conduct in the party. Accordingly, several including Vaas Tillekeratna and Mahinda Pathirana were expelled from the party and measures were taken to change responsibilities of several others. Vaas Tillekeratna was a Member of the Political Bureau of the party and was a Member of the Gampaha District Development Council. Mahinda Pathirana was a Member of the Central Committee and a Member of the Colombo District Development council. Among the persons who were expelled, was the district secretary for Gampaha District. Vaas Tillekeratna and Mahinda Pathirana became traitors to the party later.

Among those who were expelled from the party or disciplinary action taken against were several who were involved in public politics and functioned as 'people's representatives'. There were also some who had functioned under semi-secretive politics during 1971 struggle and had been with the party in prisons winning confidence of the party. By

1982 Upali Randeniya, who was a Member of the Political Bureau, left the party. It was with issues he developed with the party due to his liberalist conduct. These situations are not new developments for revolutionary movements. History has shown that those who are successful in one environment would be unsuccessful or weak in a different environment. Party leaders should not be discouraged by such situations and need not prevent them from engaging in politics or as people's representatives. What should be done, as Lenin had said, is to test them in all sectors.

While taking disciplinary steps to defeat economism and ethical degeneration that surfaced in the party, steps were also taken to defeat them politically and consolidate revolutionary quality of the party. As such, with the beginning of 1983 more attention was paid to Socialist Youth Union in a bid to build the party with revolutionary spirit. In building the Youth Union more attention was given to organizational and education sectors. It should be noted that it was the Youth Union structure that filled the vacuum when the party was proscribed in 1983 and many organizers who were engaged in public politics were unable to engage in their work.

By May Day in 1983 the undemocratic conduct of Jayawardene regime was intensifying and the government was carrying on a campaign of vituperation against the JVP and the background was being prepared to suppress the JVP. On 1st May, 1983 a poster, pretending to be from the JVP, had been put up at a prominent place in Colombo and it was given publicity by the state media (There was no electronic media then). Several items were mentioned as JVP policies including fabrications such as 'Even bicycles would be taken over by a JVP government' which could distance middle class and lower middle class sections from the JVP. It was said that the 'mud' poster had been created by the then permanent secretary of the ministry of plan implementation Wickrema Weerasooriya, who was a number one reactionary and brother-in-law of Minister Gamini Dissanayaka. Amidst slanders and intimidation by the government the JVP was able to successfully hold the May Day in 1983.

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Jayawardene regime assumed, with the defeat at presidential election and the referendum in 1982, that the JVP would not be able to hold a successful May Day. However, falsifying all their assumptions, the JVP was able to hold a very militant and organized May Day with the participation of a massive crowd. This is a peculiarity the JVP has the capitalist rulers are unable to understand. In its history the JVP has been able to maintain its party organizations and its cadre unmarred despite its drawbacks, specially in elections. As such, even at very serious retreats the JVP has been able to deploy its organizations to make affairs successful. The theme of this May Day was "Referendum was a fraud, hold general election '83".

While Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, who was the main speaker of the May Day rally of the JVP warned people regarding the undemocratic path Jayawardene regime was taking, JR Jayawardene who was the main speaker of the UNP May Day rally warned that the force they would have to confront thereafter would be the JVP.

The successfully held JVP May Day demonstration and the rally were responsible for intensifying the class fear of Jayawardene. It is clear Jayawardene regime created the background to hunt down the JVP since then. At the time the national question was surpassing all other issues in Sri Lanka. It appeared as an arising struggle of militant Tamil youths against injustices of the capitalist government. The militant youth movement that was born from the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) despite representing the separatist politics attempted to have a left appearance at its beginning. As a result, certain sections of the left, without comprehending the essence of the movement, supported the struggle and on the other hand ultra reactionaries and pseudo-revolutionaries such as Dayan Jayatilleke, who were disguised as leftists, also contributed for the movement. At the beginning the main organization of the separatist armed movement was Uma Maheshwaran's People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Elam (PLOTE). It too appeared as a left organization but Elam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) of K. Pathmanaba had a more leftist appearance. This was another reason for left sections to be dazzled.

When the national question heightened and the separatist armed youth organizations came to the stage certain sections of the JVP too had a confusion regarding the national question. Lionel Bopage, the general secretary of the party at the time and several others looked at Tamil separatist struggle with approval and saying it should be supported and quoting Lenin's formula 'The right of nations to self-determination'. Under the situation the JVP standpoint on the national question had to be untangled. The party took measures to convene a meeting of the Central Committee at the latter part of July, 1983 for this purpose.

It was under such an environment that a full session of the Central Committee of the JVP was held at Vitharandeniya in Tangalle on 21st, 22nd and 23rd July, 1983. This session of the Central Committee had a special importance. At the time the Tamil separatist armed movement was functioning with a left appearance. Some, without deeply analyzing it, considered it as a liberation movement. Under the circumstances several in the JVP too had wrong views regarding the Tamil separatist movement. As such, a Marxist analysis on the national question in Sri Lanka was a critical need to change this situation. This was the main reason that forced the holding of the aforesaid session of the Central Committee.

Comrade Rohana Wijeweera made a broad and clear presentation regarding the beginning of the national question in Sri Lanka, its nature, the Marxist-Leninist stand on national question and why 'The right of nations to self-determination' formula could not be applied to the issue in Sri Lanka. However, Ratnayaka (Podi Ratna), a member of the political bureau, and Lionel Bopage, then general secretary, put forward a different point of view saying JVP should join forces with the Tamil separatist armed movement. Ratnayaka said the Tamil Separatist movement was a liberation movement of the oppressed people, the JVP should collaborate with it and should unconditionally support it. He also said he was not prepared to work with the party if the party does not come to such a standpoint. However, Lionel Bopage, instead of expressing his view directly, showed indecision and uncertainty. The standpoint of the majority of the party was that separatist armed movement fighting

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for a Tamil Elam was not a progressive left movement but an anti-Marxist and reactionary movement that obstructs the unity of the class.

By this time the JVP realized that Jayawardene regime using the tense situation in the North was preparing to suppress the JVP and attention was paid to this at the Central Committee mentioned earlier. The security of the party and its leaders and to take security measures when necessary too was discussed. However, the full session of the Central Committee had to be abandoned after two days due to the seriousness of information received regarding the situation in the country and the party had to take measures to confront the situation. One incident that occurred after the session was that Ratnayaka left the party.



Comrade Rohana Wijeweera at a May Day March



First congress of the JVP

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Comrade Upatissa Gamanayake Addressing a Rally



**Comrade Rohana Wijeweera In Front Of Marx Memorial
At Highgate Cemetary In London.**



**Comrade Rohana Wijeweera during the
Presidential Election 1982.**



**Comrade Rohana Wijeweera addressing the people at
Presidential Election 1982**



Comrade Rohana Wijeweera Addressing a Rally



Comrade Rohana Wijeweera at a May Day March



Collecting money at the end of a Rally.



**"Songs of Liberation" - Production of the
Society for Arts & Culture.**

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With deaths of 13 soldiers in a mine attack in the North on 23rd July, 1983 communal riots spread throughout the country from 26th July, 1983 with the full support of the UNP. UNP communal thugs who took the law in to their hands attacking and murdering Tamils in various places and plundering their shops and houses carried out a massive destruction. Jayawardene regime that did not mediate to control the situation used it and communal clashes for its political objectives.

The communal clashes that began on 26th July, 1983 continued for three days after which the government taking a sudden decision proscribed three political parties including the JVP and stated that the parties were behind the communal riots and a conspiracy was being hatched to create a situation of anarchy in the country to topple the government. It was also stated that the Soviet Union was behind this conspiracy. The UNP government that proscribed the JVP using communal riots created by the UNP attempted to find answers undemocratically and conspiratorially for the political challenge the JVP was becoming to it. What the government really wanted was to proscribe the JVP and suppress it. As carrying out this conspiracy only against the JVP would

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expose government's vile objective, the CP and NLSSP too were proscribed together with the JVP. It is confirmed that Jayawardene had no intention of proscribing the two parties as their proscription was removed after a few months, in December, but the proscription of the JVP continued.

Jayawardene regime proscribed the JVP with a plan. Government's intention was to proscribe the JVP at an unsuspecting moment, arrest and detain all senior leaders and thereby weaken the JVP. The government had prepared a list of over 300 activists to be arrested on the first day. However, the cautiousness and the ability to foresee the danger ahead and act accordingly the JVP possessed as a revolutionary political party defeated the government in the first round itself. For, the government could not arrest the number it expected to arrest.

As soon as information received that the party would be proscribed leaders including Comrade Rohana Wijeweera went to safe places for their security. An understanding regarding such an eventuality had been reached a few days earlier. However, Lionel Bopage, who was the general secretary of the party then, did not follow the protective programme. He, ignoring the general decision of the party, stayed at home. When police came to his house he was watching TV and was arrested without any trouble. It seems that it was the result of a political degeneration that had developed in Bopage at the time. It was clear from what happened later he did not want to hide himself for protection as if he was arrested later he would have to linger in a prison for a longer period and spend a difficult time. Instead getting arrested sooner would make his stay in prison shorter and he would be able to lead a normal life. Lionel Bopage got arrested on the first night of the proscription and on the next day the Member of the Political Bureau Somaratna Kaluarachchi, who was travelling in a bus, was arrested by police at Nelundeniya. Later it was revealed that Kaluarachchi was arrested on information given by a person who had betrayed the party and became a traitor. In addition several intellectuals that helped the party were arrested. However, the

government could arrest only Lionel Bopage who got arrested willingly and Somaratna Kaluarachchi who was arrested on information. Despite several persons who were not front line leaders but were known to the public were arrested during the time, the government failed to arrest any popular leader of the party.

The government had named 5 leaders who should be arrested immediately and their photographs were published in newspapers. The five were Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka, Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe, Wickremabahu Karunaratna and Vasudeva Nanayakkara. After several days Wickremabahu and Nanayakkara surrendered but the government was unable to find JVP leaders. Then the government announced that anyone giving information regarding Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka would be given a present of Rs.50,000 and government's incapacity was displayed when no one came forward to get Jayawardene's Rs.50,000.

Jayawardene regime that used July '80 communal riots to proscribe the party maintained the proscription carrying out various conspiracies and campaigns of mudslinging to suppress and annihilate the party. Meanwhile, the party as a revolutionary movement carried on its work secretly despite the proscription.

With the proscription the JVP had to function in a very complex environment and overcoming various challenges. As the JVP was founded as a political movement against capitalist system it was not prepared to obey the proscription of the capitalist government. Instead, the JVP chose to function within the proscription. One of the serious issues the party confronted with the proscription was the situation created when a large number of people including activists left the party unable to endure the proscription. As a result many organizations became non functional and the organizational network broke down. Those who had fallen into 'parliamentary politics' when the party was engaged in public politics and those who got scared of the proscription left the party. It should be also mentioned that a considerable number of them joined the party again.

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However, due to the situations mentioned earlier the party confronted many challenges. The first was to protect party leaders and other cadres who had been engaged in public politics. It was necessary to protect them without allowing them to be arrested. Despite various difficulties the party was able to fulfill this task. The security sections not having any serious conflicts with the party and their lukewarm attitude and the controversy that had developed among the officers of National Intelligence Bureau were an advantage here. The other challenge was to build the broken down organizational machinery. It should be mentioned that Comrades Piyadasa Ranasinghe and Sumith Athukorala, who were not in public politics, did a great service. They went round the country; meeting comrades in district committees who had not been exposed and with them were able to rebuild the organizational network within a few months. Thereafter, an organizational network that suited the proscription was strongly built and a routine to convene and maintain them was created.

Meanwhile, there were also, though not in a level to influence the party, anti-Marxist opinions surfacing in the party. They did not influence the party as such opinions were represented by a small section. There were two such tendencies.

The proscription, at its beginning, did a serious harm to the party. The breakdown of organizations, their disintegration was felt by party sections as defeats. As such, anti-Marxist views that come up in any revolutionary movement when confronted with defeat or a drawback had some space in the party. Once Lenin said,

"Historical experience teaches us that always, in all revolutions, at a time when a revolution takes an abrupt turn from swift victory to severe defeats, there comes a period of pseudo-revolutionary phrase-making that invariably causes the greatest damage to the development of the revolution"

(Lenin - Selected Works vol. 2. Pg. 573 - Speech at the extraordinary fourth all-Russia congress of Soviets)

Confirming Lenin's above mentioned teaching a small minority in the party came out on one hand with a view that the party should be dissolved and on the other a more radical view of the party should be armed.

It was Lionel Bopage, who was then the general secretary of the party that was in the forefront of the view that the party should be dissolved. Bopage was released after a few months, in December 1983, as there were no charges against him. The party, after an organizational decision, decided to get him to meet the leadership for future work of the party. Bopage shrewdly avoided an opportunity created with utmost care and security to meet Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. Without stopping at that he wrote a letter to the Central Committee and left the party. Meanwhile, he took measures to publicize the letter through enemies of the party. In his letter Lionel Bopage had criticized the propaganda campaigns carried out when the party was engaged in public politics, participating in elections and had stated that the party had moved away from where it was in the national question. Of course, he had been careful not to reveal where he was. He had ended his letter stating there was a danger of the party being dragged to another extreme and the task of the JVP had terminated. It was clearly a letter creating indecisiveness in the party to get the party disbanded. The enemies of the party as well as those who fled from the party used this letter to justify their decisions.

Meanwhile, several who were in the party but were having connections with several who had left the party put forward a view that appeared more radical. Their view was that the party should immediately take up arms and get ready to attack the government. Those who had defined Tamil Separatist movement as a left movement and were stating that armed Tamil separatist movements should be a part of the Sri Lankan revolution too rallied with this tendency. It was Dayan Jayatilke, who was an ardent reactionary even at that time, who provided ideological and theoretical muscle to those who held this view. Later, Dayan Jayatilke founded NJVP (new tendency) with this minority in the party and those who formed 'Janatha Sangamaya'. However, the Party, without falling into

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any of these extremes, without any anger or fear but taking a Leninist standpoint engaged, combining underground politics with public politics, to re-build the party.

The Party spent the first year of proscription not to begin new political affairs but to reorganize the scattered party organizations. Despite proscription and suppressive environment, the party was able to rebuild the party structure to a considerable level and create a programme to work to defeat proscription. The party was able to re display its strength by launching a massive propaganda campaign throughout the island on the first 'anniversary' of the proscription. The party could draw the attention of the masses by carrying out a poster campaign with the slogan 'One year for proscription, lift the proscription of the JVP immediately!' and displaying it written on other vantage points.

Also, the Party that had been made illegal due to the proscription was built under such circumstances while legal mass organizations of all sectors were maintained. When party leaders who were being pursued to be arrested and who were members of development councils could not participate in sessions, the party found alternative persons to participate in them. A petition was filed in court against the proscription. It was filed by Comrade Piyasoma Mallikarachchi, a Member of Colombo District Development Council. Later the petition was dismissed. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera wrote a letter to the Chief Justice requesting the proscription to be removed. Attempts were made to get the proscription removed by writing to UNO, human rights organizations, embassies and high commissions etc. While in hiding Comrade Rohana Wijeweera participated in an interview with a journalist and released several cassettes for the masses. Also, several other attempts were made to get the proscription lifted. In 1984 a discussion was held with Dr, Patricia Hyndman of 'Law Asia' to get the proscription lifted. A group of Parliamentarians from European Union was met in Sri Lanka, they were made aware of the proscription and were requested to pressurize the government to withdraw the proscription.

Despite the government proscribing the party in 1983, the trade union federations and Socialist Students Union affiliated to the party were not banned. As such, until they were banned later, the party functioned using them. The All Ceylon Trade Union Federation and Inter Company Employees Union, the trade union federations of the party, were used for this purpose. Gamini Wijegunasekera acted as the head of the trade union section of the party after the proscription. As 'Niyamuwa' could not be published 'Malima' was published as a publication of the trade Union Federation. Comrade Gamini Jayalath, a Member of the Colombo District Development Council mediated to establish a mass organization called 'Anti intoxicant Organization and its branches were established in certain districts. Religious leaders as well as police officers participated in these organizations.

While the party carried out its functions systematically and broadened its organizations after the proscription the government launched a massive slandering campaign against the party. Those who betrayed the party and others who had connections with the separatist movement in the North were used for this purpose.

By 1985 the JVP was able to evade the drawback it suffered after the proscription and engage actively in politics while the proscription remained. By this time the quitting the party had ended and several were coming back to the party. New comers too were accommodated. An organizational structure had been developed to suit the proscribed situation and political educational classes too were changed to suit the situation. The five classes that existed were shortened to three classes.

When Lionel Bopage left the party in 1984, Somrathna Kaluarachchi, who was a Member of the Political Bureau and was released from prison like Bopage, became inactive together with Daya Wanniarachchi, another Member of the Political Bureau. However, the Party functioned filling the vacancies created and reorganization all party organizations. After Lionel Bopage left the party after the proscription Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka was appointed as the general secretary of the party. He was the general Secretary of the party until he was murdered in 1989.

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Despite proscribing the party in 1983, the Jayawardene regime failed to breakdown the functions of the Party or arrest its leaders. As such, after one year of the proscription the government carried out a one day raid throughout the country using its armed forces. Only about 150 persons were arrested during this raid. A majority of the arrested were those who had left the party and were staying at home. Government's programme was a failure.

Under the circumstances the government launched war on two fronts. One was to make arrests and a plan to assassinate Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. The other was to spread slanders and lies regarding the party and its leaders in a bid to make them detested by the people and to justify the suppression. Interestingly, it was the Tamil Elam struggle in the North that was used by the government to slander the party. During the end of 1984 and beginning of 1985 the government spread the lie that the JVP was having connections with armed groups in the North. Henry Perera, an anti-JVP person, who had been arrested, was used for this.

Henry Perera, who had been working with an armed group in the North, had been arrested with several weapons. He was a Trotskyite and had worked with Bala Tampoe for some time. The government that got all this information published that 'Connection between JVP and Tamil armed groups was revealed in a statement by Henry Perera'. At the same time a cartoon poster planned by Wickrema Weerasooriya (a bitter anti-JVP person), brother-in-law of Minister Gamini Dissanayaka, was pasted throughout the country. The poster had a picture of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and a tiger with hands on each other's shoulders and marked the place where Comrade Rohana Wijeweera supposed to be hiding in Tamil Nadu. This is the type of reckless lies the government fabricated during this time.

The government through these slandering campaigns on one hand attempted to shrug off the shame of not being able to arrest Comrade Rohana Wijeweera who was a very popular figure in the country and on the other attempted to target the hostility of Sinhalese communalist forces against the JVP.

Meanwhile, the May Day in 1986 was a very important May Day. Generally, the JVP was unable to hold May Day rallies but sections of the JVP maneuvered into LSSP and CP demonstrations in 84, 85 and managed to shout out slogans of the party. They shouted slogans such as “Which path do we take – We take Wijeweera’s path” and carried banners stating ‘Lift proscription of JVP immediately!’

The 1986 May Day was important for the JVP as an important incident occurred on this day. A May Day meeting had been arranged by the Trade Union Federation affiliated to the JVP at New Town Hall in Colombo. It was at this rally the book ‘What is the solution to Tamil Eelam struggle’ written by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and printed secretly was launched.

The book compiled by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera on behalf of the party was an important one. The tactical goals of imperialism in the world, India’s strategical goals within South Asian Region, how the national question is placed within this plane and the Marxist-Leninist perspective regarding it is explained in the book in a new approach. This volume was a fulfillment of a massive task and a class requirement. It removed ambiguous ideologies regarding the national question within the party, nullified uncertainty and established a theoretical accord. The volume was connected with the dialogue carried out regarding the national question in the Central Committee meeting held before the proscription in 1983. It was also a fulfillment of an assignment handed over to Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. The volume compiled after studying politics, history, international experiences, Marxism–Leninism and the national question and collecting loads of information was written not under a normal and comfortable environment. The production of this volume is further valuable as Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had to write it while hiding due to proscription of the party, moving from place to place for protection and with minimum facilities.

The launching of the volume on the 1st of May, 1986 was not without obstacles. While the book was being printed secretly setting types by hand for printing on a letterpress machine in a small printing

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press at Homagama area, police raided the printing press and took the machine, manuscripts, printed pages, Comrade Gunarathna Wanasinghe and another comrade who were engaged in printing the book. Comrade Wanasinghe was then in charge of the education section of the party and was a Member of the Political Bureau. Later, it was revealed that the police had raided the printing press not on information received regarding the printing of the book but on a tip off from residents that a group resembling LTTE members were staying there. Once the printing press was raided the machines, parts of the books and Comrade Wanasinghe and the other comrade were taken into custody.

With this incident the launching of the book got delayed. The more serious issue was that certain chapters had to be rewritten. The party confronted the challenge. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera rewrote certain paragraphs. Subsequently, another small printing press was set up secretly in September, 1985 and the printing of the book commenced. The work was carried out very carefully and comrades who were involved in the printing had to stay in the press for weeks sometimes without coming out. 500 volumes were printed as the first edition and the party was able to release the volume in 1986.

After 1986 the period when the party increased its influence on the society through its workers movement, student movement and mass organizations begins. With the signing of Indo-Lanka pact in 1987 the period when the party leadership dedicated itself for armed patriotic struggle commenced.

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1987 was a very decisive year in politics of Sri Lanka. The signing of notorious Indo-Lanka pact, accepting provincial councils through the pact as a structure for devolution of power, invasion of Indian forces and the beginning of a patriotic armed struggle occurred during this year.

By 1987 conditions were lining for serious occurrences in politics of Sri Lanka. This had been clearly comprehended by the leadership of the JVP. Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had broadly analyzed the situation in his book 'What is the solution to Tamil Eelam struggle'. President JR Jayawardene, from the beginning of his political life functioned as a strong US sympathizer. He was called 'Yankee Dickie' due to his pro-US stance. JR, going along the strategy of the US had become a puppet of the US. He was prepared to give the Trincomalee Harbour and the oil tank farm beside it to the US. Already, a land on the coastal belt in Puttalam District (Iranawila) had been given over to establish a broadcasting centre of 'Voice of America'. During this period India, the regional power in world politics, was following an anti-US but pro-USSR politics. As such, India did not tolerate any US economic, political or military involvement in the South Asian region and did not put up with Sri Lanka government's

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pro-US stance. India was strategically using Tamil ealam armed groups to teach JR a lesson. As such, there was a danger of Sri Lanka being giving in to the US as well as the danger of an Indian intervention in Sri Lanka. Jayawardene regime began Wadamarachchi operation against the LTTE and India arbitrarily interfered and stopped the operation. The Indian High Commissioner at the time J.N. Dixith played a major role in the exercise. At the time the government of India had given armed training to youths of Tamil separatist organizations.

On one hand the pro-imperialist and anti-democratic politics of Jayawardene regime took Sri Lanka towards a foreign invasion and on the other the regime had intensified suppression against the JVP taking counter-revolutionary measures against the party in a bid to destroy it. The overall situation that was developing forced the JVP to take up arms. The JVP, as a revolutionary party that acts according to the subjective realities, had no other alternative but to get ready to confront the situations that were surfacing in the country. It is in such an environment the JVP took measures to prepare the party organizationally, ideologically and materially for armed engagement.

The UNP government that unjustly proscribed the JVP not only continued the proscription but was also taking counter revolutionary measures and intensified the suppression. JVP members were arrested under prevention of terrorism act (PTA) and emergency regulations, they were detained, assaulted and murdered in police stations, intelligence services were strengthened, special suppressive units were created and conspiracies were hatched to assassinate Comrade Rohana Wijeweera. There were many examples for such acts.

First comrade to be killed by the police after the proscription in 1983 was Comrade Dissanayaka from Anuradhapura. It was in 1984. He was arrested while pasting the poster that stated 'Lift proscription of the JVP', was assaulted while in police custody and was killed. Also, Comrade Dharme of Thalpawila in Matara was arrested in March, 1985, tortured and killed. 24 comrades including Comrade Gunapala Satharasinghe were taken into custody on 8th November, 1984 at Deniya area at Hungama

while having a discussion and were detained under the PTA. It was the first time PTA was used to detain members of the JVP. They were detained for 15 months and 8 days. This is how suppression against the JVP launched.

The JVP was taking actions against the treacherous, un-democratic, counter-revolutionary measures of the pro-imperialist Jayawardene regime on several fronts. An agitation front was activated through trade unions and students movements and a broad mass organization too was built. This is how the 'Movement to defend Motherland' was formed. Ven. Maduluwawe Sobhitha Thero, Ven. Muruththettuwa Ananda Thero, Dinesh Gunawardene, the Secretary of 'Eksath Lanka Janatha Party (United Lanka Peoples Party) Gamini Wijesekera and Rukman Senanayaka played a leading role in the organization. The 'Movement to defend Motherland' marked the beginning of the formation of a broad anti-imperialist movement and it was directed by the JVP.

As a revolutionary party the JVP had to move according to the political environment that was developing. The 'Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya' (Patriotic Peoples Movement) came into existence and armed responses commenced under these circumstances and these moves were being carried out. Despite people who did not belong to the JVP too joined it later, it was created by the JVP. The attack on Pallekale Army camp marked the forceful launch of the process. Next, Kotalawala Defense Faculty and the Air Force Camp at Katunayaka were attacked simultaneously on 7th June, 1987. Despite calling them 'attacks', they were really operations carried out to capture weapons by breaking into the camps. As the intention of the operations was not to harm soldiers or officers there weren't any deaths for soldiers or officers though four patriots made the supreme sacrifice at Katunayaka attack.

According to reports of government security sections 12 T-56 rifles and 7 sub machine guns had been removed from Pallekale Camp and 15 T-56 rifles, 15 sub machine guns 7 light machine guns and SLR weapons, one sub machine gun and 6 pistols were removed from

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Kotalawala Defense Academy. This indicates the attacks were not aimed at security forces but to collect weapons.

Meanwhile, government suppression was intensifying. The May Day in 1987 was banned by the government. However, trade unions attached to the JVP and the student movement got ready to celebrate May Day ignoring the ban. The masses gathered at Abeyaramaya at Narahenpita. The police shot those who had gathered to celebrate the May Day killing two persons.

Abeyaramaya was bathed in patriots' blood. One of the killed was Kithsiri Mewan Ranawaka, a university student and the other was Comrade Lesley Ananda Kiribathgoda who represented the trade union section. The student Kithsiri Mevan Ranawaka was a resident of Panadura. His funeral was held amidst police obstructions but a very large gathering was present. After the funeral rights were over people carried out a massive agitation in Panadura town.

By this time a massive opposition to the government had been creaked. It went beyond opposition to other government and turned into an opposition to Jayawardene. The SLFP that was weak at the time could not give leadership to this opposition. The JVP that comprehended the situation despite being banned played the role of leadership to the opposition. The people's opposition to the government fell in line in agitations and protest struggles. Government's attempt to suppress the agitations made them develop further. The areas of battle in agitation front were advantageous to the JVP. This had opened a path for militant politics. The fight between the government and the JVP was become severe. The JVP, without getting isolated as a party, took measures to rally and give leadership to all anti-government forces achieving successes in the field.

Jayawardene regime signed the Indo-Sri Lanka pact at the end of July, 1987 in such a political environment. With the signing of this pact a massive series of agitations were held and a civil war situation was created.

The JR – Rajiv pact or the Indo – Sri Lanka pact signed on 29th July, 1987 was a turning point in Sri Lanka's politics as well as in the history of the JVP. India that used force to get pro-US JR to bow down violated Sri Lanka's air space to drop dhal to terrify JR, stop operation Wadamarachchi that was operative against the LTTE at the moment and forced Indo – Lanka pact on Sri Lanka. Accordingly, India's premier Rajiv Gandhi who came to Sri Lanka on 29th July, 1987 signed the pact with President Jayawardene. Even before 24 hours had passed after signing the pact Indian forces (so-called Indian peace keeping forces – IPKF) broke into Sri Lanka. This was clearly a betrayal and an invasion of Sri Lanka.

JR Jayewardene had to sign the Indo – Lanka pact amidst a massive mass opposition. It was the JVP that took the lead in arousing people's opposition. The JVP calling Indo – Lanka pact an agreement of betrayal, Jayawardene a traitor and Indian forces are an invading army, created a gigantic public opinion against them all. Despite Jayawardene declaring a curfew on the day the pact was signed, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated throughout the country closing down roads to protest against the pact. The government that ordered police to shoot at peaceful people's demonstrations murdered about 147 demonstrators throughout the country. The opposition to the pact was not restricted to ordinary folk. It had spread to other security sections too. As a result, the following day a Navy rating hit Rajiv Gandhi with a rifle butt while he was receiving the 'guard of honour'.

Since then the JVP took measures to create a gigantic opposition against Indian invasion and Jayawardene's undemocratic treacherous regime and build a massive people's power. It functioned in the agitational sector, mass sector as well as armed sector. With this the Patriotic People's Movement developed and became a movement that could make a powerful impact on the country. One of the forceful events that took place after the signing of the pact was a meeting of the ruling party in Parliament was attacked with a bomb on 18th August, 1987. Minister Athulathmudali was injured while Parliamentarian Keerthi Abeywickrema and an employee were killed.

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The Indo-Lanka pact forced provincial council structure on Sri Lanka and Jayawardene government added it to the Constitution of Sri Lanka as the 13th amendment. Subsequently, before elections for provincial councils were held the President, in an extra ordinary gazette released on 8th September, 1987, merged the Northern and Eastern provinces. As the opposition to the Indo-Lanka pact emerged for the provincial councils as well, it was difficult to hold provincial council elections. It was stated that nominations would be received for the first provincial council election from 2nd to 9th March, 1988. However, the President had to postpone elections for Western, Southern, Central and Northern provincial councils. The elections for provinces nominations were accepted were held on 28th April, 1988 while elections for the postponed provincial councils were held sporadically. Accordingly, elections for Western and Central provinces were held on 2nd June, southern provincial election was held on 8th June and the Northern PC election was held on 19th November.

The JVP decided to boycott the provincial council elections and the SLFP too decided to boycott it. United Socialist Front, Muslim Congress, Liberal Party, EPRLF contested with the UNP. The polling percentage at the election held with state power and amidst massive opposition to it was very low. The polling percentage for the whole country was 49.7 but in Hambantota it was 7.97.

After this the conflict between the masses and the government became bitter. The Patriotic People's Movement rallied masses against the government and held very successful 'days of protest' from time to time while the worker's center for struggle that had been formed by then gave leadership to trade union struggles. The Workers Center for Struggle was the workers center built with the leadership of the JVP. The student movement which was very militant had come to the fore of the struggle.

Meanwhile, the government through various conspiracies and mudslinging took steps to deceive the masses and at the same time unleashed state suppression against the JVP. The government published that an agreement was signed by the JVP and the government on 10th

May, 1988 and the proscription against the JVP was lifted. It was mediated by one K.C. Senanayaka, supposed to be a leader of the JVP and Fr. Tissa Balasuriya. It was a conspiracy of the government. K.C. Senanayaka who was not a leader or even a sympathizer of the JVP had been used for the conspiracy. As the JVP exposed the conspiracy and rejected the government rumour the conspiracy failed. It was clear that the intention of the government was to get activists of the JVP to the open.

A 48 hour protest was organized by the Patriotic People's Movement on 29th July, 1988 to mark one year for the Indo-Lanka pact and five years for the proscription of the JVP. The campaign was very successful.

Also, in August 1988 a protest campaign was carried out throughout the island to protest against the arrest, torture and murder of Comrade Sumith Athukorale, a Member of the Political Bureau of the JVP. Comrade Athukorale was arrested at Marawila in Puttalam District. This national protest campaign was very successful. Simultaneous with this campaign a revolt occurred at Welikada prison on 3rd November, 1988. Prisoners took charge of the administration within the prison. This was not carried out by the party. After several days the revolt was brought under control. The government continued to arrest leaders of the JVP and murder them. In September 1988 Comrade Wijedasa Liyanarachchi was arrested by security sections, tortured, brought to Batalanda torture chamber and was murdered on 12th September, 1988. A national mourning day was declared against this killing and a massive protest campaign has been carried out throughout the island. Also, a 'harthal' campaign was carried out throughout the island against merging of the Northern and Eastern districts. The JVP held opposition campaigns against anti-people's programmes of the government and was able to rally large crowds for its campaigns. Student campaigns, class boycotts and workers' struggles were carried out successfully with the participation of large numbers. The all island token strike on 26th October, 1988 is an example.

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While moves of the JVP and Patriotic People's Movement were intensifying the government too intensified its counter revolutionary schemes. As there was no serious contradiction between armed forces and the JVP, they couldn't generally deploy against the JVP and the government had to build unofficial murderous gangs. The 'Kola Kotty' (green tigers) set up with members of the UNP and Army officers sympathetic to the UNP and 'PRRA' assembled with 'left' groups were in the forefront among those murderous gangs.

Meanwhile, the Patriotic People's Movement broke into several Army camps and police stations to collect weapons taking steps to minimize harm to personnel. Among such operations were the attacks on Thalgaswala army camp on 28th September, 1987, Kahawatta Police on 30th December, 1987, Katunayaka Air force Camp (second time) on 22nd April, 1988 and Wattala police on 1st November, 1988. In addition weapons were seized from several police stations throughout the island. Another important incident was the attack on the Magazine Prison on 13th December, 1988 and setting free political prisoners imprisoned there. There were also escapes from detention camps. One of the main escapes was detainees escaping from time to time from a tunnel dug from inside the Pelawatta detention camp.

By now many ministers of the government maintained their own armed gangs and torture chambers. Many who had some connection with the JVP were tortured and murdered by these gangs in torture chambers maintained by government ministers. Among such brutal murders were the torturing of Thrima Vithana, a medical student and Ranjith and Banduwardene, who were abducted with him and killing them later. It is said that Susantha Punchinilame, a UNP politicians from Ratnapura, was involved in these three murders. Massive protest campaigns sprang up against the murders and on 3rd November Thrima Vithana's funeral rights were conducted amidst a large crowd together with the student movement.

It is under these conditions discussions were held between the JVP and several other political parties to build a united front to defeat the traitorous, undemocratic, murderous UNP regime. The discussions targeting to build a united front to save the nation commenced with the SLFP and several other parties at the end of 1988. It was in such an environment the government decided to hold the presidential election at the end of 1988.

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President JR Jayawardene, who won the presidential election in 1982 and extended the 5 /6th majority in Parliament by a referendum held in December, 1982, had the intention of amending the constitution so that he could have a third term as the president. According to the '78 constitution one person can hold the post of president only twice. Jayawardene intended to change this. As he did not have a successor, had a contradiction with R. Premadasa and the need to be in power for a longer period to continue the open economic policy in the imperialist agenda were the reasons that made Jayawardene want to go for a third term.

However, the enmity towards Jayawardene that flared up in the country with the signing of the Indo-Lanka pact in 1987 increased by the end of 1988. The struggle against Jayawardene had transformed into a struggle against capitalism, imperialism, Indian expansionisms and separatism and the JVP was in the forefront of this struggle and the Patriotic People's Movement directed all the attacks. It was under such an environment that the JVP decided to commence a political discussion to defeat UNP regime headed Jayawardene, abolish executive presidency

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and targeting to establish a government to rescue the Nation. According to the constitution the presidential election was due in November, 1988 and the discussion was begun aiming the election. The JVP that analyzed then existing political situation decided to begin discussions to defeat UNP regime, win democracy and strengthen the political role of the party as a strategy of the tactic to change the system through a change of government.

The discussions were first held with the SLFP. It was at the end of August and beginning of September, 1988. Once the JVP and the SLFP discussions came to a certain understanding the MEP and 'Eksath Lanka Janatha Party (United Lanka People's Party) too joined the discussion. There was also an agreement to get more parties to join for a proposed programme once the four parties have continued the discussion. The other parties were Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Liberal Party, Tamil Congress and Democratic Workers Congress. The Inter University Students Federation too joined in coordinating the discussions.

While the discussions were going on the JVP in September, 1988 put forward a programme of 45 clauses to establish a National Salvation Front. Among the main points in the programme were vacating the executive presidency, resignation of the government, establishing a neutral caretaker government, dissolve provincial councils, abolishing Jayewardene – Rajiv agreement, stop suppression, presidential and general elections to be held under a caretaker government and establishing a National Salvation Front.

The SLFP, instead of completing the discussions regarding the National Salvation Front, followed a policy of prolonging the discussions. It looked as if the MEP too followed a hypocritical policy. SLFP was represented at discussions at times by Sirima Bandaranayke, Haleem Ishak, SLFP General Secretary Indrapala Abeyweera, Anura Bandaranayke and Anuruddha Ratwatte. The MEP was represented by Dinesh Gunawardene and Bandula Gunawardene and United Lanka People's Party was represented by Rukman Senanayaka and its General Secretary Gamini Wijesekera. Comrades Somawansa Amarasinghe and Ananda

Idamegama represented the JVP. The groups held several discussions at Rosmead Place, Woodlands, the head office of United Lanka People's Party, Haleem Ishak's residence and at Ratwatte's residence. The final discussion was held at Bandula Gunawardene's residence.

With the increase in suppression unleashed by the government on masses and the opposition to the government and Jayewardene that intensified with it as well as the affect the discussions for a National Salvation Front and the need to hold a free and fair election had boosted the pressure on the government brought about by various organizations. Due to the awareness campaigns carried out by the JVP and the situation that had come at the time The Mahanayakas of Malwatte and Asgiriya released a statement at the beginning of October, 1988 requesting the government to dissolve Parliament and to hold both elections under a caretaker government. Also, 20 powerful trade unions and organizations made this request from the government. On 18th October, 1988 eight parties including the JVP made a joint statement. The parties that made the joint statement were JVP, SLFP, MEP, Sri Lanka People's Party, Muslim Congress, Tamil Congress, Liberal Party and DWC.

As a result of the rigorous protest that surfaced in the country Jayewardene unwillingly had to give the steering wheel of the UNP to Ranasinghe Premadasa. Here, Jayewardene, instead of his personal interests, had thought about the existence of his class. Despite an opposition to Jayewardene existed throughout the island, Premadasa did not have such an opposition. As such, Jayewardene had no other alternative but to make Premadasa the presidential candidate. As such, the UNP announced that Premadasa would be its candidate for the next presidential election.

The nominations were to be received on 10th November, 1988. Even then the discussions regarding a National Salvation Front had not come to an end. The SLFP schemed to prolong the discussions, show the public that it receives the support of the JVP, get people's support, win the presidential election, conduct the general election according to their wishes and win it. The JVP realized that the SLFP was following

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a plan to avoid agreeing to a programme and the composition of the proposed National Salvation Front. As the final efforts to come to a definite agreement failed the JVP had to withdraw from the discussion held to form a National Salvation Front. As soon as the presidential election was announced Sirima Bandaranayke announced that she would contest while Oswin Abeygunasekara from Sri Lanka People's Party too announced his candidature.

As the SLFP and other parties contested the presidential election without confronting it with a common programme the only alternative left to the JVP that was proscribed at the time was to boycott the election. As such, the JVP and the Patriotic People's Front that appealed to the people to boycott the election functioned according to this decision. Despite it being not the best decision taken at that presidential election it was the only decision that could be taken according to the objective environment that existed.

Premadasa won the presidential election held on 19th December, 1988. It was a presidential election held amidst immense opposition to it and held using state power and suppression to the maximum. The JVP action of boycotting the election too had gained some support. Only 55.32% of the registered voters had used their votes. The polling was at a very low level in areas where JVP influence was stronger. In Monaragala District voting did not take place in 49 polling stations. In 207 polling stations of 13 districts ballot boxes did not have a single ballot paper. 79 of those polling stations were from Matara District. As such, Premadasa's victory was not a real victory.

However, it was the JVP that had to face the disastrous situation due to the casting away by the SLFP and other parties of the opportunity to build a National Salvation Front. As a result of the decision to boycott the elections contradictions developed between the grassroots levels of the JVP and the SLFP. It was a temporary advantage for the UNP.

Premadasa who won the 1988 presidential election dissolved the Parliament. It was announced that nominations for the general

election would be received from 30th December, 1988 to 6th January, 1989. The reason for holding the general election was that the term of the existing Parliament had ended and Premadasa wished to have his own group in Parliament.

With the dissolution of the Parliament the emergency regulations that were adopted monthly in Parliament abolished. With this more than thousand who had been detained without any legal proceedings but on emergency regulations were released. However, some could not get released. That was due to the government used Prevention of Terrorism Act instead of emergency regulations to detain those who the government wished to be detained.

The general election was held under the Premadasa regime on 15th February, 1989 and the JVP had to boycott it as well. It was the first election held under proportional representative electoral system. The UNP won the election. The actions taken by the Patriotic People's Front due to the decision to boycott the election and the suppression of security forces the election was full of clashes, attacks killings and state terror.

In the year that began with the general election in 1989 the suppression and terror intensified unprecedentedly and the collapse of the JVP began during this period.

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The repression against the JVP continued unabated even after the general election held on 15th February, 1989. There were no decrease in repression and murders despite the emergency regulations had to be lifted and the proscription against the JVP had officially lapsed. The security forces as well as various state sponsored armed murderous gangs were active at this period and continued to murder JVP activists. Among unofficial armed gangs that were active in destroying the JVP were 'Kola Koty (green tigers), Black Cats, Yellow Cats, and PRRA. In these cliques there were those betrayers who fled from the JVP, those who were sacked from the JVP for disciplinary reasons as well as those who pretended to be leftists and spies.

By the beginning of 1989 the JVP had lost a large section of its cadres who had experience, organizational discipline and maturity. Those who were absorbed to fill the vacuum were without experience, unfamiliar with discipline, joined for mere adventurism and also to fulfill their personal agendas causing the quality and discipline of the struggle to degenerate. The party had seriously considered this situation. Accordingly, a qualitative development year between April, 1989 and

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April 1990 was named with the '89 April Commemoration. However, events that took place did not allow this to take place.

One of the important events that occurred in 1989 was the holding of patriotic rally at Nugegoda on 9th June. Holding such a rally amidst huge suppression carried out by the government was indeed a challenge. However, Intern University Students' Federation, Inter University Bhikku Federation, All Ceylon University Students' Parents Federation, United Lanka People's Party, Sri Lanka Progressive Front and several others participated. Sending back Indian forces and stopping the suppression were the main topics addressed.

President Premadasa had to take the decision to send back Indian forces due to the opposition and pressure from patriotic forces including the JVP. As such, President Premadasa, in June 1989, asked India to recall Indian forces. During this period Varadaraja Perumal, Chief Minister of North-Eastern Provincial Council unilaterally declared a separate state. President Premadasa had had discussions with the LTTE and had given them money and weapons. The LTTE attacked the EPRLF that was in power in the North-Eastern Provincial Council and 'Tamil National Army' set up by EPRLF with the assistance of Indian forces and seized their weapons. LTTE became powerful from here onwards.

Meanwhile, another important incident occurred during this time. It is the beginning of the strike by CTB employees. This struggle commenced from Badulla Depot without any preparation or plan by the JVP or the National Center for Workers Struggles. Due to the political power the JVP held at the time personnel in many institutions began various struggles including strike action. There was also a strike by prison officers which ended in victory for the employees. Despite the CTB began from Badulla Depot as an isolated struggle, the JVP could not allow it to be isolated. As such the National Center for Workers Struggles got involved in the struggle. The government, at first, rejected giving into workers' demands and the struggle was moving towards an all-out general strike with the participation of other sections. Also, force had to be used as the government attempted to sabotage the strike by

deploying security forces and private transport services. The government, making use of this situation, declared emergency regulations throughout the island on 22nd June. Suppression intensified. At the same time the strike continued. The government held several rounds of discussions with members of the National Center for Workers Struggles and in the end the government agreed to give into the demands of the workers and settle the strike. The strike ended in victory. The government had to broadcast an announcement by the National Center for Workers Struggles.

Despite the CTB struggle ended in victory due to the massive involvement of the Party and the National Center for Workers Struggles, the situation created by the struggle - the enactment of emergency regulations and intensifying of suppression was disadvantageous for the party.

By now what existed in the country was a dual power situation. The JVP and the Patriotic People's Front were powerful on one side and the government was making a bid to protect its slipping authority. People took steps to get certain local administrative and other issues solved through Patriotic People's Front. Of course they got many of their issues solved immediately. There were many instances of people who were affected by drugs and liquor seeking relief from Patriotic People's Front. This is how the dual power was developing.

Meanwhile, taking the struggle against the government to a higher level, Patriotic People's Front appealed to members of security forces to resign. As the traitorous government had betrayed the country to India and it was a repressive and undemocratic government the members of security forces were asked to refrain from defending the government and to vacate their posts. The government immediately turned it to their advantage and took steps to create animosity and hatred between the JVP and members of families of armed forces. Due to the complex situation the JVP could not grasp the intention of the government and expose it. The government publishing that the JVP was attacking families of armed forces took its advantage.

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On the other hand the government maintained torture chambers deploying officers of armed forces who had cultivated hatred towards the JVP and other murderous cliques, tortured those who were arrested and developed a process to get information from them and make them informants. Those who had been degenerated and were weak in political spirit were deployed this way to get information regarding the party and activists. These spies were known as 'goni billas' (bogeymen) at the time. A tendency of more and more party leaders and activists getting arrested was being created. Despite employing tactics of changing areas of the activists were carried out, they were not adequate to confront the situation. Meanwhile, certain fortuitous incidents affected the JVP drastically. By November, 1989, many divisional leaders specially in Colombo District were arrested weakening the functions of the party and from information given by some of them several leaders of the party were arrested.

One of the decisive turning points of these arrests was the arrest of D.M. Ananda at Ratnapura while he was going to a safe house. Several days later several party leaders including H.B. Herath were arrested and at the end of this series of arrests the security forces were able to arrest Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka. The party failed to break the process of arrests carried out by the government.

From the proscription of the party until November, 1989 – for more than six years - the popular leaders of the JVP including Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka were able to function while hiding. It was a serious defeat for the security and intelligence sections of the government. The capability and resourcefulness of the party to protect its leaders was exceptional. However, with all the maneuvers carried out by the party, with the arrest of party leaders in 1989 the security sections were able to take into custody Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka. It was a victory for the security sections but a massive defeat for the party. It is evident that Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka were arrested not due to the efficiency of security sections but due to the betrayal of the weaklings.

On information received from those who were arrested earlier Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was arrested at the safe house at St. Mary's Estate at Ulapane on 12th November, 1989 and Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka was arrested at the house he was staying at Bandaragama on the same day.

Security forces murdered Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka on the same day while Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was taken to Joint Operation Command, questioned; a statement recorded and was shot and cremated at Kanaththa on 13th November, 1989. The government that murdered Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka while in custody came out with its usual fake explanation. The murders of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera, the founder and the leader who gave the JVP a colossal theoretical and organizational leadership and Comrade Upatissa Gamanayaka, the General Secretary of the JVP, while they were in custody, was the most arduous defeat the JVP confronted in its history. More comrades including Member of the Political Bureau Comrade Piyadasa Ranasinghe were also murdered during the same period. It was the most difficult situation the party had come across.

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The party was confronted with a serious crisis when Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka were taken into custody in November, 1989 by security sections and murdered while in custody. Despite there had been many crises in the history of the JVP since its inception in 1965, the crisis that surfaced and the defeat the party was subjected to due to the assassination of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera in 1989 was the most serious and disastrous crisis.

As soon as it was known that Comrades Rohana Wijeweera and Upatissa Gamanayaka were assassinated many in the party broke down mentally and gave up the belief in the struggle. Some who were in custody and were taken into custody during those arduous days became weaklings in front of the enemy and started revealing information.

This state existed to a certain extent in prisons as well. However, even at such difficult times there were many in the party who did not lose determination and were prepared to wade through the difficult times. The party was protected and was able to be rebuilt due to their determination and mediation.

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The situation created due to the assassination of Rohana Wijeweera, the founder of the party and who gave leadership to the party at serious crises such as the defeat of 1971 struggle and the proscription of the party in 1983 was unparalleled in the history of the party. The leadership of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was so bonded with the party that to think about the JVP without Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was unthinkable. As such, the defeat in 1989 was enormous. However, the intention of the enemy, that is to destroy the JVP, could not be fulfilled as the party Comrade Rohana Wijeweera founded and built was a party of the masses that could not be destroyed even if he did not exist and a party that goes forward whatever obstacle is placed before it.

After the party lost Comrade Rohana Wijeweera the other comrades of the Political Bureau exchanging views according to the existing conditions elected Comrade Saman Piyasiri to the leadership of the party to take it forward. Accordingly, the party decided to function under Comrade Saman Piyasiri. However, several comrades in the forefront of the party including Comrade Saman Piyasiri were arrested and assassinated this attempt of salvaging the party too failed.

Exactly a month after Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was assassinated the party launched a protest campaign throughout the island. It was somewhat successful but arrests and murders continued with the suppression the government had launched. By now security sections of the government had obtained many secrets and information of the party, names of personnel, organizational devices and designs. They could gain this vital information not due to their efficiency but due to betrayal and exposure of betrayers and weaklings. In such a situation the party should have taken a step back, analyze the situation and change all tactics and strategy. However, the party was unable to take this action immediately. The message Comrade Rohana Wijeweera gave the party while he was in custody was to 'change everything'. As the party failed to implement this promptly the enemy continued with its suppression causing more harm to the party.

At the beginning of January, 1990 the security sections were able to arrest Comrade Saman Piyasiri. He was questioned and tortured until he died. Comrade Saman Piyasiri died like a hero without spilling any word regarding the party. During the same period Comrade Lalith Wijeratna, a Member of the Political Bureau was arrested by security forces and murdered. When Comrade Saman Piyasiri was murdered the leadership of the party had been handed over to Comrade Lalith Wijeratna. During January, 1990 Comrade Shantha Bandara, a Member of the Political Bureau, was arrested by security forces, detained at Maththegoda Army camp, tortured for several days and was murdered. Comrade Shantha Bandara sacrificed his life like a hero without uttering a word regarding the party. The government was able to arrest and murder within a few weeks all other members of the Political Bureau except Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe. With this the party was confronted with a dire situation.

In the suppressive and murderous process only Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe was able to save his life and he continued function fully comprehending the serious situation. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe and several other comrades decided to go abroad as the enemy had all information regarding the functions of the party and the places members of the party had taken refuge and the weaklings were walking about with security sections betraying not only party activists but sympathizers to the enemy. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe went abroad on a day between February and March, 1990.

Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe took measures to have connections with comrades in Sri Lanka during this period. At the start letters were sent to the address of Comrade J.R. Peiris at Moratuwa and established connections with Comrade Jinadasa Kithulegoda. Accordingly, Comrade Kithulegoda attempted to set up some sort of organizational structure by developing connections with comrades who were still living and had held responsibilities of the party. However, with the arrest of Comrade Kithulegoda in November, 1990 this attempt to centralize the party too failed. The party, without an organizational centralization, was scattering.

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By 1991 the party existed as scattered groups. Some had gone abroad due to suppression. Some were in prisons. There were also some in small groups hiding in jungles or remote places. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe, who had gone abroad, attempted to link with those who had gone abroad to set up an organizational pattern under very trying conditions. Accordingly, party organizational structures were being set up in several countries in the Middle East, Europe and in Japan, South Korea and Australia. Also, he established contacts with various groups in the country and several others including Comrade Tilvin Silva who were imprisoned. As there were spies, informants and weaklings everywhere and the situation was very complex the human resource that had been left to the party had to be protected and centralizing was dangerous. As such, they were left to function separately in areas they existed and contacts with each of them were carried out separately. It was the best way that could be followed under the existing conditions.

Meanwhile, Ranjan Wijeratna, who was the deputy Minister of Defense and who played a main role in suppressing the JVP was killed in a bomb explosion in Colombo. Also, President Premadasa died in another bomb explosion on 1st May, 1993. With this the suppressive mechanism of the UNP government weakened. As such, there was a change in the political situation. With the death of Premadasa Mr. D.B. Wijetunga, who was the Prime Minister then, became the President. The suppressive machine further weakened under him. This was due to the people started ignoring emergency regulations. Specially, at the election held for the Southern Provincial Council in 1993, the people did not allow the government to win the election using emergency regulations. Annuling emergency regulations was similar to revoking it. The JVP demanded the government to revoke emergency regulations officially for it to re-enter public politics. The party had reached this stage. However, the functions of the party was at a very minimal level.

People's opposition for the murders committed by the UNP government too was surfacing. The SLFP had used this opposition to fulfill its political targets. Chandrika Kumartunga, Mangala Samaraweera and

Mahinda Rajapaksa were actively involved in getting closer to this target. The political situation was gradually changing and the UNP government had to hold general election in 1994. The JVP re-entered public politics with the general election in 1994. Emergency regulations had not been officially removed until the Parliament was dissolved for the general election 1994.

The general election in 1994 was a crucial opening for the JVP. The attempt by the enemy to destroy the JVP had to be defeated and it was necessary to re-build the party. It was an immensely difficult task considering that the party had been dismantled and scattered, a large majority of leaders had been murdered and a suppressive environment still existed. However, the time had come for the JVP to break into public politics. As there was no one to open the door, the JVP had to do it on its own. This is why participating in the general election of 1994 was unavoidably important.

Even at this time there was no organizational centralism established to the party in the country. The party existed as scattered groups. The party had to temporarily combine the scattered groups to face the election. Also, comrades who were active in the island did not have any experienced regarding facing elections. These talks too fell on Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe who was abroad at the time.

The other serious obstacle that existed when coming forward for the election was the official ownership of the JVP. With the assassination of party leader s there came up a scheme to steal the official ownership of the party. However, Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe, while staying abroad, had taken measures to consolidate the official ownership of the party by writing letters to the Commissioner of Elections. Accordingly, it was Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe who had contacts with the Commissioner of Elections as the General Secretary of the party. When forwarding nominations he had to sign the papers as the General Secretary. However, Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe coming to the country to sign the nomination papers was dangerous due to security situation in the country. There was also the difficulty that existed to contest as the

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JVP. Considering these difficulties and the prevailing political situation the JVP decided to build a front to contest the general election and the National Salvation Front was built with Mr. Ariya Bulegoda's Sri Lanka Progressive Front.

There were several attempts to grab the official ownership of the JVP. As such, Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe had to take action to protect the official ownership of the party. In 1993 Vasudeva Nanayakkara forwarded an application to the Commissioner of Elections requesting to register a party with the name 'Janatha Vimukthi Party'. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe took action to defeat the attempt of Vasudeva Nanayakkara to plunder the image of the party by stealing the official name. Writing a letter to the Commissioner of elections Comrade Amarasinghe asked the Commissioner of Elections not to take measures to register a political party with a name similar to the JVP. The party was able to defeat the scheming attempt of Vasudeva Nanayakkara. Again, in September 1994 an issue developed regarding the official ownership of the party. Chandana Clarence Peiris and Subhas Chandra Fernando who attempted to steal the official ownership of the party had written a letter to the Commissioner of Elections stating their right for the JVP. Accordingly, the Commissioner of Elections decided to hold an investigation to decide who were the real owners of the JVP and wrote a letter asking representatives of the JVP to appear before him. Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe, who was living abroad at the time, transferred powers to several who were in the forefront of the party at the time and made them appear on behalf of the party. The party was again able to defeat the attempt to steal the ownership of the party and protect it.

Throughout its history enemies attempted several times to steal the official name of the JVP. Defeating all these attempts was an extraordinary victory for the party.

There was a debate regarding the decision to participate in the general election in 1994. Certain comrades who had not completely comprehended the prevailing political situation stating it was not the time for the party to contest an election, by doing so comrades who

had not been exposed until then would be exposed and suppression would come to them, expressed objections for the decision to contest. However, Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe and other comrades, whose stand point was that the election was an unavoidable and obligatory opportunity for the party to re-enter public politics, carried out the decision to contest. The decision to contest the general election in 1994 is in the forefront of all the correct decisions taken by the JVP and its correctness was confirmed later.

The JVP contested under the National Salvation Front preparing nomination papers under very trying conditions but at the end was able to win a Parliamentary seat from Hambantota District. It was the first Parliamentary seat the JVP won in its history. It was a very important victory for the party and the JVP recommenced its path of public politics with this Parliamentary seat. With this the JVP was able to prove incorrect all the predictions enemies of the JVP made with the vicious suppression of 1989. After Comrade Rohana Wijeweera was assassinated in 1989 Ranjan Wijeratna, who was the deputy minister of defense then, had told the media 'The match is over'. While the class enemy bragged that the JVP was demolished the weaklings of the party and those who had betrayed had reiterated and had affirmed that the JVP would not be built again. However, comrades who functioned as genuine revolutionaries, even when Comrade Rohana Wijeweera had been brutally taken away, re-built the party and showed what type of a political movement the JVP is. JVP has already become the main left movement in Sri Lanka and is marching forward as one of the three main political parties in the country.

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There are several crossroads in the history of the JVP. The first was the Akmeemana discussion held by Comrade Rohana Wijeweera giving birth to the party. With the suppression of April, 1971 uprising one chapter of the JVP was completed and from 1977 it functioned with a new vigour. It stepped on to a new political chapter. Again in 1983 as the party was denied democracy and was proscribed its chapter of public politics had to be ended and the party had to engage again in clandestine politics. It is during this period when democracy was denied to it and Sri Lanka was betrayed to India that the armed struggle began in 1987. With the assassination of Comrade Rohana Wijeweera and other comrades another chapter of JVP politics ended. The party commenced a new political chapter with the general election in 1994.

During the 46 year period from 1965 the JVP had to confront suppressions of the enemy during 1970 – 71 and 1983 – 89 periods. The JVP also gave leadership to two armed uprisings against the suppression of the enemy as well as against foreign invasions. Thousands of comrades made the supreme sacrifice in these struggles on behalf of the country. The path the JVP has trodden for 46 years has never been a smooth and paved path of roses. The journey the party had to make through

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challenges, crises, conspiracies, betrayals, treachery, sectarianism, suppression and murders was an extremely complex and arduous one. Along this journey the JVP met with victories as well as defeats. There were positive as well as negative achievements. There were good moves as well as errors. The JVP, as a Marxist-Leninist political party has always comprehended its mistakes, corrected them to move forward.

During this whole period the JVP selected various strategies; taken various actions. They have brought positive results as well as negative ones. However, the JVP has never ever betrayed its class; never acted in a treacherous manner. No one can defile the honour the JVP has as a party that never betrayed its class or its politics even when threatened with death.

During its past history the JVP had confronted attacks from external enemies (capitalist class) as well as attacks, conspiracies and betrayals of internal enemies. The JVP has gained a multitude of experiences during the 1970-71 repression, in prisons after 1971, during the proscription after 1983, confronting the bloody suppression during 1988-89 and after entering public politics after 1994. The JVP was able to defeat conspiracies of cliques within the party, their betrayals and treachery and forward march. It was an extraordinary experience. Political movements develop through the moves of both theory and practice and experiences gained through such moves. Political parties should learn not only to attack but also to retreat and they learn through their own experiences.

Lenin has said,

The revolutionary parties must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realize that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realize-and the revolutionary class is taught to realize it by its own bitter experience-that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly.

(Lenin - "Left Wing Communism" An infantile Disorder)

The JVP is a party that has learnt from bitter experiences it confronted during its history. The journey of political parties is decided not on an individual's personal aspiration. It is decided on objective or subjective factors. It is decided not only on the wishes of the revolutionary class. It is decided on the contradiction that exists between revolutionary class and the enemies within the class struggle. It is the dialects of historical development. The responsibility of the party is to comprehend this, select solutions, strategies for the challenges that are created before it, take decisions and implement them. The history the JVP has moved through so far is such a live history. It is a history of class struggle. We discussed here only a few landmarks of this history; how this history flowed out. We discussed the path of the party from 1965 to 1994 period.

There is no end to history. It moves forward uninterrupted leaving experiences to the past. As such, writing on history cannot be completed. This is the truth about the history of a political party as well. We end the short discussion on the history of the JVP expecting to discuss its history from 1994 onwards.

History of the JVP



Navy Soldier attacks Rajiv Gandhi - 1987



Huge Rally At Nugegoda Against the Indo-Lanka Agreement

[illegible][illegible]

(disorder -
in the analysis)

**of the Medical Student
State Sponsored Killers.**

phana Wijeweera in Cust
13th November 1989.



One of The Attempts to Challenge The Legitimate Ownership of the JVP



CHANDRANA CLARENCE PIERIS.
Acting General Secretary,
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
(Sri Lanka),
No.86, Willorawatta Road,
Willorawatta,
Moratuwa.

22nd September, 1994.

Hon. Chandananda Silva,
Commissioner of Elections,
Election Commissioner's Office,
Rajagiriya,
Colombo.

Dear Sir,

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS NOVEMBER 1994.

Our Party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front) was recognised as a Political Party under the provisions of the Parliamentary Elections Act in or around 1979 and forwarded the Constitution of our party together with the list of office bearers of our party of which Mr. Lionel Bopege was the Secretary of the party and late Mr. Rohana Wijeweera was the Chairman, and S.D. Somaratna was the Treasurer of the party and I was the Secretary of the International Secretariat of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in London.

After the extra judicial execution of our leader late Mr. Rohana Wijeweera whilst in the state custody Mr. Lionel Bopege was elected as the acting chairman by the members in exile and members then under ground in Sri Lanka, and I was appointed as the acting General Secretary in the year 1989, and I have functioned as such from 1989 upto date and will continue to act until the congress is held and a secretary is appointed democratically.

The following members were also unanimously appointed as members of the Acting Politburo of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna :-

- (1) Mr. L. Danoris
- (2) Mr. Chandrana Clarence Pieris
- (3) Mr. S.D. Somaratna
- (4) Mr. M.B. Ratnayake
- (5) Mr. Vijitha Ranaweera
- (6) Mr. Lionel Bopege
- (7) Dr. Subash Chandra Fernando
- (8) Mr. Kelly Senanayake

- 2 -

- (9) Dr. M. Illango
- (10) Dr. E. M. Mohideen
- (11) Dr. Mrs. Asoka Tenabadu
- (12) Dr. Edward Perera

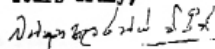
and the aforesaid acting members of the Politburo has now unanimously selected Dr. Subhash Chandra Fernando to be the Presidential Candidate of our party at the forthcoming Presidential Elections scheduled to be held on 7th November, 1994. Dr. S. C. Fernando was the founder member of J.V.P. along with R. Wijeweera in 1964.

In the absence of the congress being held and the Secretary being appointed, by the congress Mr. Somawansa - Amerasinghe contention that he is the Secretary of our party cannot hold good and further he is presently not even a member of our party being a French citizen.

I, as acting Secretary of our party has had several correspondence, with you in regard to our political activities and in particular my appointment as acting General Secretary and the aforesaid twelve members as acting members of the Politburo since 1989.

I shall be grateful if an opportunity is given to me to place before you the relevant facts and documents and witnesses in proof of the facts set out above in this letter and to furnish whatever material you require so as to enable you to accept me as the duly elected acting General Secretary of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Sri Lanka) and in turn accept our unanimous choice Dr. Subhash Chandra Fernando as the Presidential Candidate at the Presidential Elections scheduled to be held on the 7th November, 1994.

Many Thanks,
With Kind Regards and Respect,
Yours Truly,



Acting General Secretary
JANATHA VIMUKTHI PERAMUNA.



The Commissioner of Elections Order After The Inquiry

APPROVED SYMBOL, THE NAME & ADDRESS OF
THE SECRETARY OF EACH RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTY

NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY	APPROVED SYMBOL	NAME OF SECRETARY	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS OF SECRETARY	COLORNO
-Ellantai Tamil Arasu Kaatchi	House	Mr. S. Senathirajah		-410/27, Buddhaloka No.	COLORNO 7.
-Eelavar Democratic Front	Plough	Mr. V. Balasak		-39, Temple Road.	JAYPMA.
-Eelavar People's Democratic Party	Venus	Mr. Douglas Desavanda	394961, 503467	No.121, Part Road,	COLORNO 5
-Eelavar People's Revolutionary Liberation Front	Flower	Mr. L. Premachandran	680026	8619, Potuna Road, Mendala,	WATTAJA.
-Eelavar National Democratic Liberation Front	Bell	Mr. G. Ramaswami		315, Kandy Rd.	KILLMOUCHI.
United National Party	Elephant	Dr. Ganini Wijesekera	865375-90	-400, Kotte Road,	SRI JAYAWARDENAPURA.
United Socialist Alliance	Clay Lamp	Mr. D.C. Raja Kollure	595520	-39, Dr. M.M. Perera Wasantha	COLORNO 8.
The National Union Of Workers.	Peacock	Mr. P.V. Kandiah	598538	618 1/2, Galle Rd.,	COLORNO 3.
-Janatha Vimuthi Peramuna	Bell	Mr. Soawansa Marasinghe		No.174, Niyal, Maligawatta,	MALAWA.
Tamil Eelavar Liberation Organization	Light House	Mr. K.K. Sivajilingam	581045	No.80/38, Layards Road,	COLORNO 5.
Tamil United Liberation Front	Sun	Mr. R. Sapanthan	503831	-146/15, Haydock Rd.	COLORNO 5.
-Becha Vimalakki Janatha Pakshaya	Ear of Paddy	Mr. P.M. Podiappahay	338812, 508821	-136/64, Maligawatta Flats	COLORNO 10.
-Javan Sasa Saazaya Party	Umbrella	Dr. K.M. Wickramanayake	24053	-17, Barrack Lane,	COLORNO 2.
Peoples Alliance	Chair	Mr. R.M. Jayarathna	696285, 696539	No.45, Roosevelt Place,	COLORNO 7.
Democratic United National Front	Eagle	Mr. Chandra Sankanda	573902, 573723	10, 28th Lane,	COLORNO 3.
Democratic Worker's Congress (P. Ming)	Ladder	Mr. G. Manoharan	691275, 24533	92 1/2, Siri Vajiragana No.	COLORNO 9.
Democratic People's Liberation Front	Anchor	Mr. S. Sathyanathan	586289	16, Raig Road, Rumbalgitiya	COLORNO 4.
People's Freedom Front	Butterfly	Mr. B. Victor Perera	554485	-140/1, Reddegama Road,	SRI JAYAWARDENAPURA.
Mahajana Ekuth Peramuna	Cartwheel	Mr. Piyasena Wissanayake	582989	7115, Kiriella Road,	COLORNO 5.
Nustie United Liberation Front	Horse	Mr. R.I.R. Nadeem	596147	37 1/1, Morris Canal Rd.,	COLORNO 10.
Ceylon Worker's Congress (P. Ming)	Cockerel	Mr. R.S. Sallaseay	438341	-19, St. Michel's Rd.	COLORNO 3.
Lanka Sasa Saazaya Party	Key	Mr. Ratty Weeraton	596993	-467, Union Place,	COLORNO 2.
The Liberal Party	Book	Mr. Chandra Saurabhanga	591395, 590565	-12, Castle Lane,	COLORNO 4.
People's Front of Liberation Tigers	Tiger	Mr. Thengathana Yogi	696889	-41, Abdul Cifloor Wasantha	COLORNO 3.
-Sri Lanka Freedom Party	Hand	Mr. Munasinghi Sumanayake	596528, 622204	-201, T.R. Jaya Wasantha	COLORNO 10.
-Sri Lanka Progressive Front	Flower Vase	Mr. Ariya Rilegoda		-48, 1/7th Lane, Pagoda Rd.	MOEGODNA.
-Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya	Eye	Mr. Sonapala Kodiravama	431711	-58, Kollomana Road	WELLAMPITITTE.
-Sri Lanka Nustie Congress	Tree	Mr. Abdul Rasif Hishanell Mahzen	695528	-58, Vauxhall Lane,	COLORNO 2.
Communist Party Of Sri Lanka	Star	Mr. K.P. Silva	581677, 586222	-41, Dr. M.M. Perera Wasantha.	COLORNO 8.
All Ceylon Tamil Congress	Bicycle	Mr. G.G. Ponnambala	581677, 586222	No.15, Buenos Road,	COLORNO 3.
Sinhalese Mahasammatha Bhoomajathra Pakshaya,	Aeroplane	Mr. P.B. Ranabekelle	520220	156/6, Mahola Rd, Kiribathgoda	KELANIYA.

R.K. Chandramanda de Silva
COMMISSIONER OF ELECTIONS

July 03rd, 1994,
Office of The Commissioner of Elections,
Elections Secretariat,
Sarasu Wasantha, Rajagiriya,

