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Revolutionary Ideology
and
Parliamentary Politics
A study of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna(J.V.P)

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ABSTRACT

There are a lot of local and foreign studies carried out about Janatha Vimukthi Peremuna (JVP). Each study has attempted to look into JVP as a n up-and-coming radical movement. The present research study per se deviates from all the other researches in their entirety because it basically attempts to project that JVP is being de-radicalized after 1990s while accentuating on its dynamism from its initial stage. Robert C. Tucker's "Theory of the De-radicalization of Marxist Movements" has been based on in building the theoretical background of the present study. According to him, Marxist Movements including all the radical movements are unavoidably being de-radicalized.

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the nature of the study and it has included a brief introduction to the Tucker's theory. The second chapter is composed of a discussion of the origin of JVP and its evolution as a Marxist radical movement since 1965. It has been pointed out that the JVP was highly influenced by the socio-economics despair and political reasons in Sri Lanka and the international revolutionary tendencies in this process. JVP, during that period was keen on derailing the then existing social system and establishing a socialist social system in the country. In this phase, JVP had categorically rejected parliamentary politics and they believed only in armed strategies in establishing a socialist society. They

attempted to seize state power by an armed revolution in 1971. The government in power defused the armed revolution and as a consequence Rohana Wijeweera, the leader was imprisoned.

Released from prison in 1977, Rohana Wijeweera and his followers resorted to "parliamentary socialism" with the hope of achieving socialist society through a democratic strategy and thus, they had denounced the armed strategy. However, they were allowed to proceed with this strategy only until 1983 as it was coming up as a third political force. The United National Party (UNP) leaders sensing that it would be a threat to them proscribed and outlawed it from the democratic mainstream. Its logical consequence was that it was pushed to resort to the armed strategies. The third chapter looks into above challenges that JVP had to face in the second phase of its evolution from 1977 to 1983.

The fourth chapter focuses on the manner in which JVP was striving hard to make a patriotic government since its proscription. JVP leaders had clandestinely been operating. Then in the sudden wake of the political unrest followed by the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty, JVP evolved as an armed movement. During the period of 1987-1989, JVP carried on an armed struggle to topple the UNP government. Its strategies in this struggle appeared to have a fascist facade.

The fifth chapter broadly examines JVP in parliamentary politics. In this chapter, JVP's adaptation into the parliamentary politics after 1990, in the wake of the national and international tendencies in the political atmosphere is explicitly described. The facts described in this chapter are; JVP adopting the parliamentary politics, its uprising as a third force, establishing its dominance over the left movement, employing patriotism in enhancing public victories, taking a chauvinistic stand to win the heart of Sinhalese in the ethnic conflict, establishing the United peoples' Freedom Alliance (UPFA) along with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), building up a political mechanism in the elections without armed strategies, its socialization as a party with public responsibilities and bonds, showing change in its revolutionary objectives it had at the initial stage.

The last chapter convincingly brings out the conclusion that JVP which originated as a Marxist radical movement has adapted it self into parliamentary politics after 1990s, and it has been transformed and gradually de-radicalized. So Robert C. Tucker's theory has been proved to be true.