

THE POLITICS OF SRI LANKA (Volume III)

by
T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka





*This book was donated in
memory of
Mr. Chaminda Rajakaruna
(Attorney-at-Law)*

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THE POLITICS OF SRI LANKA

(Volume III)

by

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T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS OF 1999

Written without fear or favour

Written at his very best in his tenth book on Sri Lanka

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NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

During the past year or two, so many top professionals in every conceivable profession in Sri Lanka have suggested to me that I should write a book on how the politicians of Sri Lanka have ruined our nation ever since Independence. I accepted the challenge.

By accident of birth, those who made that proposal represented every stratum of society from the poorest of the poor to the wealthy. We were all educated at the University of Ceylon, in our time the only seat of higher learning in our nation. Thereafter we proceeded to the best of Universities in the world for our post graduate studies. Most of us are now in retirement and the shadows are beginning to lengthen on our lives. We all live in material comfort, by standards applicable to Sri Lanka. However we wonder what will be left for the next generation, if our politicians continue to ruin our nation.

To say the least, I must thank those who urged me to write this book. Indeed they have done me great honour.

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February 4th 1999

(ii)

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This book is affectionately dedicated
to the memory of
my classmate at Royal College
and my lifelong friend
UPALI WIJEWARDENE
(1938 - 1983)

PROLOGUE

February 4th 1999

Today as we celebrate the fifty first anniversary of our Independence, it is sad but true that millions of Sri Lankans are thinking aloud whether the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) or the United National Party (UNP) is more skilled in the sordid art of rigging elections

Such nefarious activities with the patronage of the State, first surfaced in 1973 at the by-election in Dedigama following the death of the much loved former Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake. Then some elements of the SLFP not without influence, shamelessly attempted to rig that by-election.

The UNP blatantly rigged several elections during the period 1977 – 94, when they both ruled and mis-ruled Sri Lanka. For example, at the infamous District Council Election of 1981, for the first time since 1931 when adult franchise was introduced, sealed ballot boxes disappeared. Besides for the first time since 1931, a public building went up in smoke during an election. The tragic victim was the splendid Public Library of Jaffna which had so many priceless manuscripts. At the nonsensical Referendum which President J.R. Jayewardene held in 1982 in lieu of a

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General Election, the Attanagalle and Dompe electoral areas, pocket boroughs of the Banadaranaike family, mysteriously voted UNP. Another mystery was that when Hector Kobbekaduwa, the Presidential candidate from the SLFP, and Pieter Keuneman, the much respected leader of the Communist Party, went to their respective polling booths to exercise their franchise, they had already been impersonated. At another polling booth a UNP Member of Parliament brandished a revolver and threatened everybody around him. In the spate of by-elections which followed in 1983, the UNP unleashed unprecedented thuggery and intimidation in the Mahara electorate which resulted in Vijaya Kumaranatunga (SLFP) losing that seat by a mere 44 votes. At the Presidential Election of 1988 common criminals like Soththi Upali and Mora Sunil played a role that was not insignificant. During that infamous election, held at the height of a JVP insurrection, hooligans and thugs from the UNP came in State-owned vehicles sans number plates and committed all manner of election offences. Besides in predominantly SLFP areas, trees and live electric wires were cut and placed across the roads and violence unleashed to prevent voters from exercising their franchise. President R.Premadasa claimed that the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the Marxist-oriented terrorists, were responsible for it. That was a supreme example of sophistry.

Now the UNP is reaping what they have sown. At the recent Provincial Council Election in Wayamba, the SLFP even surpassed the UNP in the art of rigging elections. That unbelievable story is narrated in graphic detail in the first

Chapter, “ Wayamba – That Day of Infamy”. Indeed January 25th 1999 was the culmination of the most disgraceful election campaign in the history of Sri Lanka.

As history unfolds itself before our very eyes, we have a contemporary society that looks upon our politicians, irrespective of their predilections as compulsive liars. Indeed our politicians are truly able to masquerade themselves as paragons of virtue while in the Opposition. In Government they are just as despicable as those whom they supplanted. Yet the very society that looks upon our politicians with the contempt which they so richly deserve, venerate them while in office. It is indeed a tragedy that our people are more than willing to sell their souls for a mess of pottage.

My fellow citizens, put not your trust in politicians. It is they who have ruined our nation since Independence. At best most of our Presidents and Prime Ministers have been charlatans. It is some of them who have foisted upon us a Civil war of frightful proportions, by placing their personal ambitions above our national interests. My fellow citizens, please do not demean yourselves by venerating Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament. They are your servants not your masters. They must be beholden to you, not you to them.!

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First print - May 1999

Second print - June 1999

Printed and published in Sri Lanka

By

SWASTIKA (PRIVATE) LTD.

329, Dam Street

COLOMBO -12.

ISBN - 955-572-001-0

(vii)

BOOKS WRITTEN BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Printed and published by

SWASTIKA (PRIVATE) LTD.

- 1973 “Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka”
- 1977 “J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka”
- 1983 “The Agony of Sri Lanka”
- 1992 “The Dilemma of Sri Lanka”
- 1994 “The Politics of Sri Lanka” (Volume I)
- 1994 “The Politics of Sri Lanka” (Volume II)
- 1995 “War or Peace in Sri Lanka” (Volume I)
- 1996 “The Glorious Cricketers of Sri Lanka”
- 1998 “War or Peace in Sri Lanka” (Volume II)
- 1999 “The Politics of Sri Lanka” (Volume III)

PROJECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2000 “The Politics of Sri Lanka” (Volume IV)
(The forthcoming Presidential Election)
- 2001 “War or Peace in Sri Lanka” (Volume III)

Chapter VIII

WAYAMBA

That Day of Infamy

It is largely a matter of opinion whether the Provincial Councils have served any worthwhile purpose, ever since they were first established in 1988. The principal purpose of the Provincial Councils, established under The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution introduced by President J.R. Jayewardene in 1987 after he signed the Indo- Sri Lanka Accord, was to devolve power from the centre to the periphery, to appease the clamour for devolution by the Tamil community. As the Constitution precludes preferential treatment for any one community, the Provincial Councils pertain to all Provinces in Sri Lanka.

In theory that proposition is indeed sound. In practice the Provincial Councils are a farce due to limitations in scope and financial viability. For example most citizens do not even know the name of the Chief Minister of their Province or what his functions are. In fact as a private citizen my contact with the Provincial Council of the Western Province is restricted to just once an year. That is when I pay the annual registration fee for my car to that Provincial Council and not any more to the Government of Sri Lanka. Against this pathetic background, the

Provincial Councils serve hardly any worthwhile purpose. The elections to these Councils are held every five years and they are a very useful barometer of political opinion.

For example, the last round of Provincial Council Elections were in 1993. During the campaign two of the three national leaders in Sri Lanka were assassinated. They were Lalith Athulathmudali who led the breakaway Democratic United National Front (DUNF) and President R.Premadasa who led a weakened UNP following many defections to the DUNF. Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike, the third leader at the national level, was then the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the SLFP. She was ill having suffered a stroke. Nevertheless the results of those Provincial Councils Elections were indeed revealing to the articulate. For the first time since 1977 the UNP polled less than 50%. As against the 46.7% polled by the UNP the People's Alliance (PA), the SLFP- led Coalition with Marxist parties, together with the DUNF polled 53.3%. That shift balance of power was particularly revealing in two Provinces, the Wayamba and in the Southern Province where the respective tallies were as follows;

	Wayamba	Southern Province
UNP	- 25 seats	- 27 seats
Combined Opposition	- 27 seats	- 28 seats

The Governors in the Wayamba and in the Southern Province were former UNP Cabinet Ministers Montague Jayewickrema and M.A. Bakeer Markar, respectively. Both Governors hastily swore-in the UNP candidates for the post of Chief Minister. The Supreme Court reversed both verdicts. Thus the new Chief Ministers were both from the Peoples' Alliance, namely Nimal Bandara (Wayamba) and Amarasiri Dodangoda (Southern Province). The Provincial Council of the Southern Province was in constant turmoil. Therefore on the recommendation of the Chief Minister the new Governor of the Southern Province, Dr.L.M. Jayaratne a learned lawyer who had served as a High Court Judge in Fiji, dissolved the Council and called for a fresh election. With the health of Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike deteriorating, the campaign of the PA was led by her daughter Chief Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga of the Western Province. The verdict of the Southern Province was :

PA	-	32 seats
UNP	-	23 seats

Thus even to the layman the writing on the wall was clear. The beginning of the end of the rule by the UNP for seventeen long years had now begun. Besides a new charismatic leader had emerged, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, the daughter of Prime Minister S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike. By August 1994 she led the PA to victory at a General Election that was not expected that year. As

Prime Minister she won the Presidential Election of November 1994 by a staggering vote of 62.3% only missing the world record of 65.2% set up by President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in 1993.

The Presidency of Chandrika Banadaranaike Kumaratunga has been marked by two clear features. Her idealism (neither President Jayewardene nor President Premadasa had any), and her lack of experience (both President Jayewardene and President Premadasa had it in abundance).

During her campaign in 1994 her battle cry was *Dhushanaya* (corruption) and *Beeshanaya* (fear) and her apology was for the intolerable day – to – day living from 1970 to 77 due to the socialist economy advocated by the last Sirima Bandaranaike Administration. Therefore her performance must of necessity be measured against those parameters.

Firstly, she exorcised from the SLFP the curse of socialism. From 1977–94 the economy had flourished under the open economy introduced by President Jayewardene. With the worldwide trend against socialism, she brushed aside opposition from her mother, the new Prime Minister, her Marxist allies in the PA and other socialist elements in the SLFP and opted for the open economy. Thus day-to-day living has continued to be as good as during the years 1977-94, the only discordant feature being the spiraling cost of living.

Secondly, President Kumaratunga earned the respect of the nation and the world at large for her courageous stand on Human Rights. Within her first year in office she raised our Human Rights record to acceptable levels in the North and the East and to international levels in the seven Sinhala-speaking Provinces. In direct contrast it is only a fool or a liar from the UNP who would claim that the Human Rights record of President Jayewardene was good and only those altogether blind to reason would claim that the Human Rights record of President Premadasa was good.

Commencing 1995, systematically the horror stories of Human Rights atrocities during the Premadasa Administration were exposed before the bar of public opinion. For example in 1989 in Embilipitiya about twenty five school children aged sixteen or seventeen were abducted by the Army during the height of the JVP insurrection. They had disappeared into thin air and the Premadasa Administration ignored the pleas of their parents. Within a month of coming into office in 1994 Prime Minister Kumaratunga ordered a meticulous inquiry and the skeletal remains of the slaughtered teenagers were located at Suriyakanda near Embilipitiya. Thereafter the Principal of the Embilipitiya Maha Vidyalaya, Dayananda Lokugalappathy, his son a Lieutenant in the Army, Brigadier R.P. Liyanage who commanded the Army establishment at Embilipitiya, three Majors and three Non-Commissioned Officer of the Army were arrested and tried for murder and abduction before the High Court of Ratnapura. After a trial that took three years and revealed to the general public in graphic detail the atrocities committed against school

children, seven defendants were sentenced to ten years of rigorous imprisonment. The Brigadier was exonerated of all charges under the Penal Code. So was the Lieutenant.

Another revealing trial was that pertaining to the torture chambers at Batalanda, close to the electoral residence of former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe of the UNP. The macabre stories which surfaced at the Presidential Commission and were well substantiated were worse than the stories which emanate periodically from some African nations. On the findings of that Commission one Senior Deputy Inspector – General of Police, two Superintendents, one Assistant Superintendent of Police, three Inspectors and six Sergeants and Constables were suspended from duty. As of this writing the Attorney General is examining the possibility of framing charges against them under the Penal Code, while the Supreme Court has quashed the verdict against Merryl Gunaratne, the Senior Deputy Inspector-General.

In 1996 some soldiers manning a check point at Chemmani near Jaffna had an altercation with a saucy school girl Krishanthi Coomaraswamy aged eighteen years. She was detained but the other schoolgirls accompanying her were allowed to proceed on their journey. When Mrs. Coomaraswamy was informed of the plight of her daughter she and her son accompanied by a neighbour rushed to the checkpoint. A week or so later four dead bodies were found in a shallow grave nearby. The verdict of the autopsy was that Krishanthi Cumaraswamy and her mother were

gang raped and then strangled to death. The brother and the neighbour were also strangled to death. Nine soldiers and Policemen were indicted for murder and rape at a Trial-at-Bar before the High Court of Colombo. Two became State witnesses and one was discharged. The other six were sentenced to death.

Thus *Beeshanaya* (fear) the accusation of the President in 1994, has been amply justified and more importantly, that evil has been eliminated from our society. That was barring January 25th 1999, the day of infamy in Wayamba.

The lack of experience of the President was first revealed to the nation in 1994 itself. In her idealism she was trying to negotiate with Prabhakaran and the LTTE. It was folly comparable with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain of Great Britain trying to negotiate peace with Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in 1938. Once she realised her folly she ordered the liberation of the Jaffna peninsula, the emotional, political and military epicentre of the LTTE. Accordingly by October 1995 the largest Task Force ever assembled in Sri Lanka in the twentieth century, substantially larger than what the British had under Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton in 1942 to stave off an attack by Japan, and substantially larger than what Lieutenant-General Depinder Singh, the Commander of the Indian Peace Keeping Force had in Jaffna in 1986 to liberate the Jaffna peninsula, was placed under Major - General Rohan de Silva Daluwatte RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, the Chief of Staff of the Army. That subject was dealt with in graphic detail in my last book "War or Peace in Sri Lanka" (Volume II). General

Daluwatte achieved his objective in eleven weeks, when the LTTE fled to the Wanni, the Districts of Mannar, Mullaitivu, Killinochi and Vavuniya. He was deservedly promoted Lieutenant-General and appointed the Commander of the Army in 1996.

Since then our Armed Forces, like the Indian Peace Keeping Force, could not defeat the LTTE in the Wanni. That was despite some of our best Generals, Major General Asoka Jayawardhana RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, currently the Governor of the North-Eastern Province and Major General Srilal Weerasooriya RWP, RSP, VSV, USP, currently the Commander of the Army in the rank of Lieutenant-General, being our principal field Commanders in the North during the years 1996 to 98. Therefore now the nation has by and large accepted that we have a protracted war on our hands. Many in fact curse our politicians, especially Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who was responsible for the Official Language Act of 1956, which completely broke down the tenuous relationship that always existed between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. That subject will be analysed in the last Chapter of this book.

On the issue of *Dhushanaya* (corruption) the performance of President Kumaratunga is anything but satisfactory, for reasons not clear to me. For example Sri Lanka Railways floated a tender for the purchase of locomotives. The duly constituted Tender Board awarded the contract jointly to G.E.C. in the United States and Daewoo in South Korea. By a Presidential directive that award was cancelled and the contract awarded to Alsthom of France

which is best known for the manufacture of engines for ships ! The Galle Harbour contract was awarded to a fly by night operator. Even the President has openly admitted that it was an embarrassment to her. The Thawakkal contract for the privatisation of Puttalam Cement was another scandal. So was the privatisation of Air Lanka. These issues have been highlighted in the media which spearheaded her campaign in 1994 and whom she has dealt with shabbily ever since she was ensconced in power. The nett result is that the PA now seems just as corrupt as the UNP.

Due to her lack of experience, the President handled her drive to minimise corruption in public life with a rare degree of incompetence. The Bill presented in Parliament as early as October 1994 (when she was still Prime Minister) envisaged far reaching reforms. For example Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament against whom there was *prima facie* evidence could be brought to trial without seeking the permission of the Speaker. In direct contrast in 1992 Speaker M.H. Mohammed of the UNP did not allow the request for the prosecution of three Cabinet Ministers of the UNP against whom Bribery Commissioner Nelum Gamage had *prima facie* evidence Thereafter the UNP transferred Nelum Gamage from her post. She was brought back as Director-General of The Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption. She was answerable to Parliament (not to the Government of the day) So were the three distinguished Members of the Commission. They were retired Supreme Court Judge T.A.de S. Wijesundera, retired Appeal Court Judge Siva

Selliah and retired Auditor-General P.M.W. Wijayasuriya. The latter resigned for personal reasons and retired Inspector-General of Police Rudra Rajasingham was appointed to fill the vacancy. All four Commissioners had long and distinguished records of being Public servants who were incorruptible. The Commission received numerous complaints against all manner of politicians and public servants, including the husband of Nelum Gamage. With that her relations with the Commissioners became strained and later untenable. Had the President been wise she could have quietly sent Nelum Gamage away as an Ambassador. Instead she came down heavily on the Commissioners and demanded their resignations. When they refused, she withdrew the Police personnel seconded to the Commission to conduct investigations. Thus the Commission has ceased to function, while the President is still struggling to remove the Commissioners from office with a motion in Parliament.

There is another issue on which the President disgraced herself. During the campaign at the General Election and the Presidential Election she publicly and frequently condemned the Presidential form of Government and spurned it as the embodiment of evil. Indeed the PA manifesto explicitly stated

(Quote)

The Executive Presidential system which has been the bane of our country since 1978, will be abolished as a matter of the highest priority, and the supremacy people's political will be restored by means of a return without delay to the system

of Cabinet and Parliamentary Government. The contemporary experience of our country leaves no room for doubt that the concentration of an unparalleled volume of the power in the Executive President, without any viable effective system of checks and balances, is wholly destructive of core values anchored in freedom, initiative and creativity - in sum, all that is best in human nature, individually and collectively. The Executive Presidency has debased and debilitated all other institutions (such as the Courts, Parliament and media) which had previously enriched the political life of the nation. The People's Alliance is irrevocably committed to the re-empowerment of our people by the restoration of the Cabinet system of Government, headed by a Prime Minister having membership of, and responsibility to, Parliament, while a ceremonial President will function as the Head of State.

(Unquote)

During the campaign for the Presidency she repeatedly emphasised

“ the Presidential form of Government will be abolished no later than June 15th 1995.”

However once ensconced in power she displayed remarkable intellectual dishonesty and the Presidential form of Government still exists. That will be dealt with in depth in the next Chapter.

Nowhere in the world are elections won or lost on abstruse issues like the Constitution. As Stanley Baldwin, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, said:

“The British voters are not interested in the British Empire or the balance of power in Europe. They vote on mundane issues like the cost of bus fares and cigarettes.”

That truism applies in its full measure to Sri Lanka. At the election campaigns of 1994 Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga promised to reduce the price of kerosene from Rs. 11 to Rs. 9 per litre, to pay a dole of Rs. 1,500 per month to the unemployed youth and to create two million new jobs in two years. Those were supreme examples of falsehoods. Unable to deliver the goods and saddled with cost-of-living at intolerable levels, from every platform she berates the UNP to her hearts content, for their sins during the period 1977 to 94 .

The UNP in Opposition after 17 long years in office was more than due for an overhaul. Dead wood had to be removed, the bad image caused by *Dhushanaya* and *Beeshanaya* had to be exorcised and the party machine had to be re-vamped. That was a huge challenge. However, after four years there has been no visible change as such. On the contrary there is definitive evidence that the UNP has deliberately decided to soft pedal issues on corruption. A Presidential Commission on Corruption, found veteran Cabinet Minister Wijeyapala Mendis guilty and recommended that he be stripped of his civic rights. To do so a

two-thirds majority is necessary in Parliament. In 1980 the UNP voted with relish to strip the civic rights of former Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, former Cabinet Minister Felix Dias Banadaranaike and former Mayor of Colombo A.H.M.Fowzie when they were found guilty by Presidential Commissions. Now the UNP in Opposition refused to do so when one of their own was found guilty of corruption by a Presidential Commission. The initial message to the masses was too obvious to need amplification here, notwithstanding the fact that subsequently Wijeyapala Mendis successfully obtained redress from the Supreme Court whereby the earlier verdict of the Presidential Commission was quashed.

The UNP has no concept of the hatred still directed against it for the atrocious Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration. Our people have short memories but they never ever forgive arrogance or murder. After the debacle of 1956 the UNP refused to accept that arrogance was one of major causes for their defeat. After 1994 the UNP has refused to learn that mass murders were one of the principal causes for their defeat.

Indeed the UN Human Rights Committee has repeatedly passed severe strictures on the Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration. However the atrocities committed by the Premadasa Administration are best known not to the UN Human Rights Committee but to our own people at the grass roots level. It is they who saw their loved ones abducted. It is they who saw headless bodies, bodiless heads and the dreaded tyre pyres. Rightly

or wrongly the name of retired Deputy Inspector-General Premadasa Udugampola is one of the names associated with those atrocities. Others claim that he was a patriot without whom the savage JVP insurrection could never have been crushed. What the truth is I do not know, but I do know that DIG Udugampola is one of the most controversial senior Officers the Police has ever produced. He is now actively campaigning for the UNP. The UNP, displaying its usual apathy on Human Rights, proclaimed that Udugampola was never tried let alone convicted on offences against Human Rights. That is factually correct but the UNP in their naïveté allowed him to campaign. Thus the message to the masses is that the UNP is still insensitive to concepts of Human Rights whereas upholding Human Rights was part and parcel of the policies of the People's Alliance till the fiasco of January 25th 1999.

Friend and foe alike agree that J.R. Jayewardene was the most effective Leader of the Opposition the nation has ever produced. It is also the consensus of opinion that he ran the best ever election campaign at the national level at the General Election of 1977. As Leader of the Opposition he had only 17 Members in a Parliament of 151. Yet he campaigned systematically and won the General Election of 1977 with a staggering 142 Members in a new Parliament of 168. How he did that is described in detail in my second book "J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka" (1977). Pages 134 and 135 are particularly relevant at this juncture and hence are reproduced verbatim.

(Quote)

J.R.Jayewardane achieved that primarily through an efficient grass-roots organisation which took the basic thinking of the UNP to every village and every town and also maximised the unpopularity of the discredited Sirima Bandaranaike Administration. Thus he generated a tide which surged through towns and villages and swept aside almost every rival. That splendid organisation also caused the thinking at the grass-roots level to sweep upwards and thereby allowed J.R.Jayewardana to assess on a realistic basis what the new programmes and policies of the UNP should be, over and above the rejection of socialism and reaction.

The performance of that grass-roots organisation was self-evident at every turn. Whereas in 1970 and before a UNP pandal or rostrum was constructed by one or more mudalalis*, in 1977 it was constructed entirely with contributions of cash and labour of several hundred UNP members in the area. To cite an example, when J.R.Jayewardane visited Nattandiya on April 3rd 1977 his motorcade traversed a distance of 8 miles with gokkola** decorations on both sides of the road and green bunting across the road. It represented the labour of over 5,000 UNP members working continuously over a period of 24 hours. It was no accident that Harold Herat, who sought election to Parliament for the first time, won with a

Note to foreign readers

* mudalalis – rich businessmen of peasant stock

** gokkola – young coconut leaves

majority of 6,499 eclipsing the performance of even Sir Albert Peries MP (UNP- Nattandiya) who was Speaker of the House of Representatives on more than one occasion. To cite another example, E.L.Senanayake who has contested almost every General Election since 1952 claimed that he had never seen such enthusiasm for the UNP in the Kandy district as in 1977. When J.R. Jayewardene announced that he would launch his campaign for the General Election from Kandy on May 25th, over 25,000 UNP workers from Mahanuwara, Senkadagala, Hewaheta, Udunuwara, Yatinuwara, Harispathuwa, Pata Dumbara and Kundasale poured into Kandy and its environs and worked two days and one night to prepare for him the most appropriate atmosphere in which to launch the campaign. Here again it was no coincidence that Mahanuwara, Senkadagala, Hewaheta, Udunuwara, Harispathu, Pata Dumbara and Kundasale recorded UNP victories by unprecedented majorities and in Yatinuwara Sunil Abeysundera despite the handicap of belonging to a minority caste defeated the powerful Hector Kobbekaduwa.

In Moratuwa UNP workers visited every home twice or thrice and the Oxford- educated Tyrone Fernando, on his first attempt to enter Parliament won by a staggering majority of 14,874. The UNP electoral network was so well organised in Colombo Central that when R. Premadasa lost his mother every single household received a personal intimation within 24 hours of the death. In the North-Western Province (now

called Wayamba) which was exceptionally well organised that devastating booklet of cartoons 'The Seven Year Scourge' reached every village within a week of publication, even before Wickrema Weerasooriya was arrested. Once again it was no coincidence that Premadasa won the multi-member seat of Colombo Central by 35,156 votes and the UNP won 20 out of 21 seats in the North Western Province, despite the extensive land reforms affected in that Province by the Sirima Bandaranaike Administration.

In direct contrast S.A. Raheem the UNP candidate for Mannar, who won that seat by 75 votes in 1974 (he lost it by 69 in 1970) refused to learn the new campaigning techniques of the UNP. Despite several warnings he did not enroll even one member on the Rs. 1/= Membership Drive and had no electoral network comparable with that of other UNP candidates. The result was that he lost by 2,212 votes to the TULF despite another Tamil contesting as an Independent.

(Unquote)

Since 1994 Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Leader of the Opposition, has not been successful in setting up a complex system of grass - roots organisations like J.R. Jayewardene did. The evidence of that is indeed definitive.

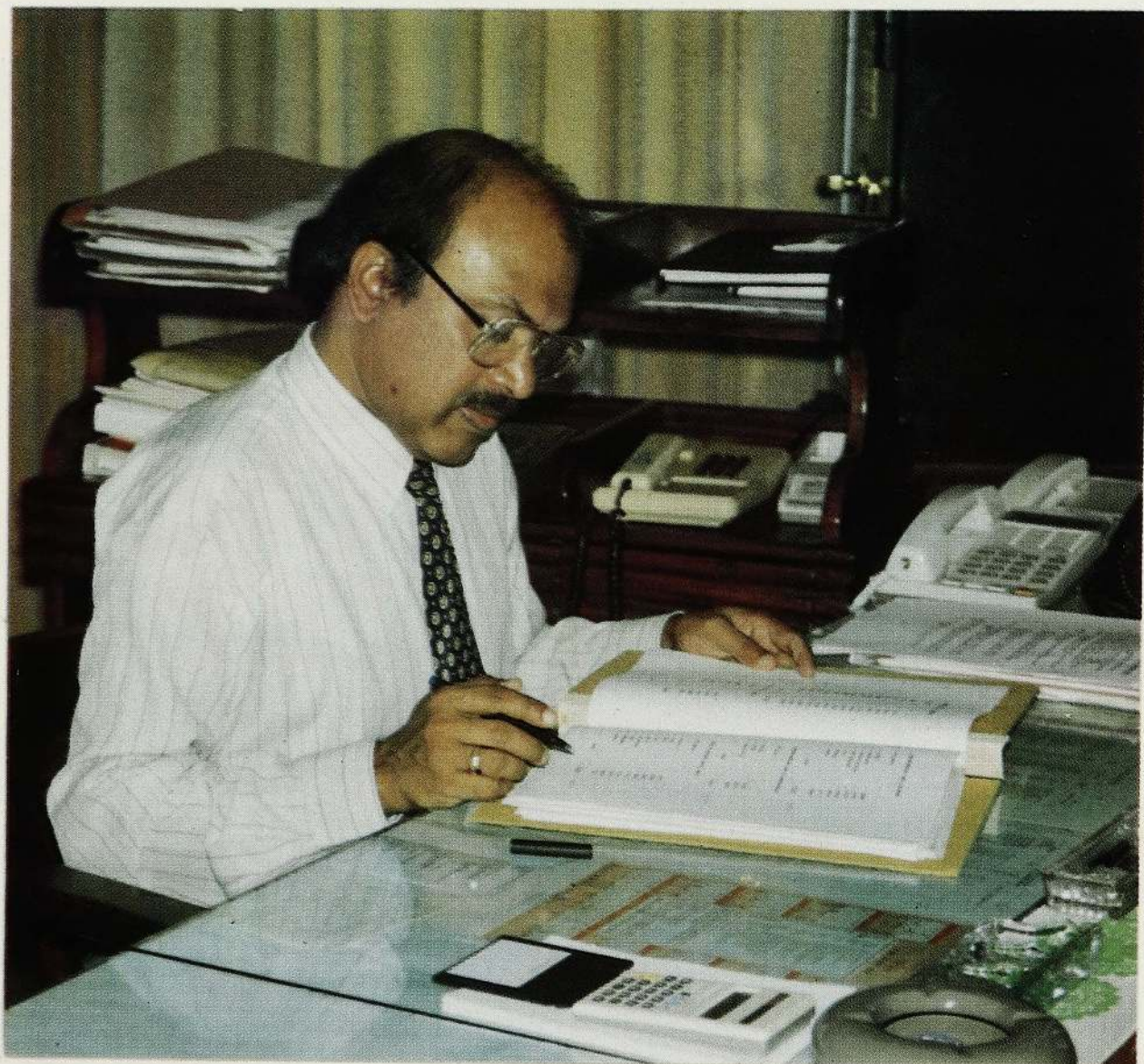
During the Local Government Elections of 1997 a Member of Parliament, Nalanda Ellawala, (SLFP - Ratnapura District), was

shot dead in broad daylight allegedly by another Member of Parliament, Susantha Punchinilame (UNP- Ratnapura District). Hell broke loose for the UNP when that murder took place at Kuruwita during the Nomination week. Had the UNP an effective grass roots organisation, like under J.R. Jayewardene, the massive dose of propaganda by the PA could have been contained. That never happened.

In August 1998 the PA celebrated four years in power with success stories that were by and large fictitious. As Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe called for 150 protest rallies throughout the nation. They were pathetic failures. In direct contrast in 1975 when Leader of the Opposition J.R. Jayewardene called for such 150 protest rallies, the Sirima Banadaranaiké Administration was shaken to its very foundations.

Thus after four years of inauspicious Government by the PA and four years of ineffective Opposition by the UNP the verdict of the nation on their relative merits would indeed be welcome, both to the articulate and to the inarticulate. Such an opportunity would be afforded at the Provincial Council Elections which in terms of the Constitution became due between August 1998 and June 1999.

The Councils of the Central Province, North - Central Province, Sabaragamuwa, Uva and Western Province dissolved automatically in June 1998, having completed their five year term. Therefore in terms of The Provincial Councils Act 2 of 1988 the Commissioner of Elections Dayananda Dissanayake, fixed August



The Commissioner of Elections
Dayananda Dissanayake,
like all his predecessors in office,
enjoys a reputation of being
a model public servant.

(by courtesy of "The Sunday Island")

28th 1998 as the date for the Elections to the five Provincial Councils mentioned earlier. The present Commissioner of Elections, like all of his predecessors, is a model public servant. A distinguished product of St. Bede's College, Badulla, and the Vidyalankara University in Kelaniya (now the University of Kelaniya), he counts nearly thirty year of service in the Department of Elections.

However the Government was apprehensive of five Provincial Elections being held on August 28th 1998 at a time when our Armed Forces on the Northern Front were locked in fierce battle with the LTTE. Casualties were very heavy on both sides and the Army regularly wanted replenishments both of men and material. The claims of General Anuruddha Ratwatte, the *de facto* Minister of Defence, that the war will end soon was a fairy tale best appreciated by himself. Taking all these factors into account, the President issued an edict under Emergency Regulations postponing the five Provincial Council Elections. That decision was challenged in the Supreme Court by some irate voters claiming that their Fundamental Rights were violated. During the pendency of that case the Provincial Council of Wayamba automatically dissolved on November 11th 1998 on the completion of five years. Accordingly the Commissioner of Elections, announced that the Nomination week for the election to the Province of Wayamba would be from December 1st to 8th 1998. After receiving the nominations an election was scheduled for January 25th 1999.

Unfortunately there were some altercations and fisticuffs between supporters of rival parties, during the Nomination week. Besides supporters of the PA tore down bunting, decorations and posters of the UNP and had a series of tyre pyres. They were effectively brought under control by the Wayamba Police under Deputy Inspector-General Camillus Abeygoonewardene. During his distinguished career the DIG was known for two attributes, his good looks which the ladies admired and his strict impartiality which the Police admired. On December 18th 1998 he was suddenly transferred to Colombo without reasons being assigned. In rapid succession followed the transfers of Officers-in-Charge of Police Stations at Dankotuwa, Galgamuwa, Katupotha, Marawila, Mawatagama, Polgahawela, Wanathavilluwa and Wariyapola. There too no reasons were assigned. But their replacements were not known to be impartial Police Officers. That was the first definitive indication that the PA wanted to win the Provincial Council Elections by fair or foul means.

From December 1st to 21st 1998 I was away at the Asian Games in Bangkok with the Sri Lanka team. It was a wonderful re-union for all of us, from different nations, who took part in the Asian Games of 1958 in Tokyo forty long years ago ! Besides our team had not won a Gold Medal since the Asian Games in Teheran in 1974 and in 1998 we were certain of two Gold Medals through Sugath Tilakaratne and Damayanthi Dharsha in the 400 metres for men and women, respectively. We won three Gold Medals and hence we were overjoyed. Therefore I was in a world of my own and did not bother to follow events in Wayamba. I finally

got there after the festive season for Christmas and the New Year. What I saw there was unbelievable.

The entire Province was full of blue decorations, blue bunting and blue posters. Nowhere did I see green decorations, green bunting and green posters. Quite obviously the PA had good electoral organisations and the UNP did not. Whenever I met UNP supporters I asked them,

“ Why are there no decorations, buntings and posters from the UNP”?

Their standard reply was,

“Sir, those bastards from the PA tore it down.

My standard retort was,

“If the UNP had grass roots organisations like it had in 1977, then it will be impossible for those fellows from the PA to tear down your decorations, bunting and posters. ”

My tenth book was scheduled for the year 2000. It was to be “The Politics of Sri Lanka” (Volume III) sub - titled “The Presidential Election of 2000”. To write that book in 2000, I already had at my disposal an intelligence gathering system. It was the grass- roots organisations of the Church of Ceylon (to which my wife and I belong) and the corresponding organisations of the Roman Catholic Church (to which Godwin Fernando, my classmate at the University of Ceylon and the Director of Research for all my books and his wife belong). As explained in Volumes I and II of this book, those two grass-roots organisations predicted

the result of the General Election of 1994 and the Presidential Election of 1994 with amazing accuracy. In 1998 their assessment of the overall situation in Sri Lanka was:

1. The Government is very unpopular because of the soaring cost of living and the broken promises of President Kumaratunga.
2. The UNP in Opposition is not effective and has no concept that it is still hated for the Human Rights abuses during the Premadasa Administration.

In the context of this Provincial Council Election my first visit to Wayamba was on Saturday 3rd January 1999 which was 22 days before the D-Day January 25th 1999. The intelligence reports at the end of 1998 in respect of the Wayamba were that the Provincial Council Election will be very closely fought and the PA will win by a very small majority.

Therefore repeatedly I asked myself the question, why would the PA want to rig this election? If they did not want to rig this election why did they tamper with the Police so brazenly? Why was the Governor of Wayamba suddenly replaced?

To the best of my knowledge the only occasion when the SLFP made a concerted attempt to rig an election with the resources of the State was at the by-election at Dedigama in 1973. That was following the death of the much lamented Dudley Senanayake, who died not in office but in the political wilderness. Yet according

to Police reports more than three million people, approximately one-quarter of the then population of Sri Lanka, attended his funeral. The relevant extracts pertaining to the rigging of the by-election in Dedigama appeared in pages 46, 47 and 48 of "J.R.Jayewardene of Sri Lanka" (1977). They are herewith reproduced verbatim.

(Quote)

After nomination day there was a sudden spate of transfers in the Inspectorate in the Police Stations of Warakapola, Pindeniya, Dedigama, and Kegalle which accounted for all stations within the electorate and in the immediate neighbourhood. The replacements were Inspector and Sub-Inspectors with well established partiality to the Sirima Bandaranaike Administration. The volunteer units of the Army guarding the textile mill at Thulhiriya were withdrawn and replaced with a guard from the National Service Regiment. That was a volunteer regiment under the command of Colonel Hector Divitotawela who is married to the younger sister of Sirima Bandaranaike. Colonel Divitotawela, a senior Planter in the Whittals Agency, was anything but a professional soldier. He had a brief spell as a Lieutenant in the Ceylon Light Infantry during the World War II and was demobilized but was suddenly made a Colonel in 1971. The Field Security Division under Lt. Colonel Anurudha Ratwatte was also deployed in Dedigama. Lt. Colonel Ratwatte was a Lieutenant in the Singha Regiment (Volunteers) in 1970 when he contested the

Senkadagala seat as the SLFP candidate and lost narrowly. He was overnight promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel and put in charge of the security of the Prime Minister. However his nameboard proudly announced that he was still the SLFP Electoral Organizer for Senkadagala. The soldiers from the National Service Regiment and The Field Security Division not only carried out security operations but while off duty and dressed in civilian clothing, campaigned for the SLFP. During the by-election 43 written complains of mischief, robbery, assault, and damage to property were made to the Police Stations in the electorate by UNP supporters. Despite definitive evidence, the Police made a proper investigation only in one case. On countless occasions UNP supporters were chased out by the recently manoeuvred Inspectorate. In several cases Members of Parliament from the United Front brazenly gave orders direct to the Police who obediently carried them out. When J.R.Jayewardene heard these complaints he sent Fairlie Wijemanne, former Minister of Justice, to make a first hand report. Wijemanne was abused and all but chased out of the Warakapola Police Station.

On the eve of the election 62 UNP supporters including 33 of the 102 polling agents were arrested on fabricated charges. They were subsequently released by the Kegalle Magistrate because there was no evidence to warrant indictments. On the day of the election the Government arranged interviews in Colombo for the unemployed youth of Dedigama. Above all several United Front Parliamentarians unleashed a wave

of thuggery to prevent UNP voters from exercising their franchise.

J.R.Jayewardene toured the electorate on election day and made the following statement to the Warakapola Police Station:

I must congratulate the members of the United Front who organized the Dedigama by-election held today. They have utilized the State machinery to the fullest. Likewise they have utilized vehicles of Corporations Government Departments and the Armed Forces. If this pattern is followed up to the end of the counting then the result of the election would be as they desired. From nomination day they have threatened and intimidated our supporters. They have promised jobs in Corporations and to distribute land on estates acquired after nomination day. They man the Police Stations with their favourites or relations. On the day before the election massive crowds in red and blue lined some of the streets and hooted and jeered at our vehicles, stoned them, broke our offices and surrounded houses where our workers were staying. Some of our workers and even many of our polling agents were taken into custody. They were arrested on frivolous complaints and remanded.

This behavior continued on the day of the election. As I am making this complaint a group of people was brought in a SLFP jeep. They were arrested by the SLFP and deposited in the Police Station. The organization of the undemocratic

campaign is superb. I am going round as many booths as I can. I will make a statement in Parliament for the information of the public. I congratulate the organizers. They have succeeded in driving the first nail into the coffin they are preparing for democracy in Sri Lanka.

I was then stationed in Rangoon, Burma, with the UN and during my leisure wrote my first book "Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka". His brother Robert Senanayake wrote to me as follows:

"My youngest son Rukman won with a majority of 4508 votes but we have not yet got over the shock at the methods resorted to by the Government. Dedigama was not a by-election but a civil war. I pray that our country will never again see what I saw there".

According to T.B.Werapitiya, then Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police,

"Never in my entire career have I seen of the Police Ordinance being observed in the breach as at Dedigama. It would be a travesty of justice if the entire episode is not subject to an inquiry by an impartial body".

(Unquote)

Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike came down heavily on the

young Turks in the SLFP who were responsible for this disgrace in Dedigama. In fact many of them were chased out. Indeed the next two by-elections held in 1975 were scrupulously fair and the UNP won easily at Ja-Ela and Kalawewa much to the chagrin of the SLFP. At the by-election of 1976 the SLFP retained Mulkirigala and the UNP accepted it as a fair election. In 1977 at the General Election of 1977 the UNP humiliated the SLFP by winning with a staggering 142 seats in a Parliament of 168. Significantly both the victor and the vanquished accepted that the General Election was conducted fairly and both sides thanked the Police headed by Inspector – General Stanley Senanayake for their impartiality.

As described in the Prologue during the seventeen years of rule and mis-rule by the UNP, some elections were fair and others were not. For example the Presidential Election of October 1982 was fair, barring the disenfranchisement of Sirima Bandaranaike. The Referendum of December 1982 was anything but fair. The Presidential Election of December 1988 was anything but fair but the General Election of February 1989 was fair, so was the General Election of August 1994.

There is a serious doubt in my mind whether the Local Government Elections of March 1997, the first of the major elections held under the SLFP – led People's Alliance was fair or not. The tragic murder of Nalanda Ellawela MP (SLFP – Ratnapura District) allegedly by Susantha Punchinilame MP (UNP

– Ratnapura District) greatly disturbed the emotional equilibrium of the nation and generated a tidal wave of resentment against the UNP. *Beeshanaya* was once again the campaign theme of the People's Alliance and the verdict of the nation was:

People's Alliance	-	50.1%
UNP	-	41.3%

My considered opinion is that after the assassination of Nanda Ellawala, allegedly by a Member of Parliament of the UNP, the People's Alliance had to win. However there were many nefarious activities by SLFP elements in the Districts of Chilaw, Gampaha, Kandy, Kurunegala and Polonnaruwa. More disturbing was that anti-social elements were brought into the campaign in significant numbers by Members of Parliament of the SLFP, some of whom were Ministers and even Cabinet Ministers. The information I had in 1997 was not sufficiently corroborated to accuse anybody by name but a sad feature was that the Police was impotent in the Districts under reference. Much worse, the Government took no remedial action.

The Sorbonne-educated Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga is unquestionably a member of the intelligentsia. Her intellectual capacity is more than obvious to anyone who speaks to her in English or French. Somehow her style of speaking is so different in Sinhala. In that language she is both coarse and inelegant and suffers in comparison to her mother. That blemish is certainly strange because both mother and daughter are products of St.

Bridget's Convent, Colombo, which has such a well established reputation for refinement.

On the election platforms the Sinhala used by the President is even worse. With her repertoire of the colloquial and the bawdy in Sinhala, she comes through not as intellectual but as a street fighter, at best as a fiery Leader of the Opposition and anything but a President of Sri Lanka.

She was indeed in a very aggressive mood campaigning in Wayamba. Rather than defend her performance as President of Sri Lanka and that of her Administration, she berated the UNP and berated the Leader of the Opposition, Ranil Wickremasinghe, as if he was a pickpocket. As she gathered momentum she attacked not only Ranil Wickremasinghe, but even his mother, once a wealthy land owner in Wayamba and elsewhere, his brother Shan who operates Teleshan Network Ltd .(TNL) and even his sister who is merely a private citizen !

That puzzled me greatly because at the General Election of 1994 she was the *de facto* Leader of the Opposition, because her mother was too ill to campaign. Now more than four years into a six year term as President she was speaking in the same vein. Besides she had a habit of stating,

“Api kohoma hari Wayamba dinananawa”

(We will somehow win Wayamba)

The operative word was somehow. That meant different things to

different people. I wondered why she repeatedly said “We will somehow win Wayamba”, because the People’s Alliance was winning anyway according to so many diverse intelligence reports.

On the other hand Ranil Wickremasinghe conducted himself with great dignity on the election platform. It was drilled into him by his Godfather, President J.R. Jayewardene, that he must never ever abuse people. He has perfected that art to such an extent that he cannot breath fire even as the Leader of the Opposition ! Ranil Wickremasinghe was such a lacklustre speaker as a Cabinet Minister, that his Godfather kept him away from the UNP national platform which for years was dominated by such superb orators like Prime Minister R. Premadasa, Cabinet Ministers Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali and of course President J.R. Jayewardene himself. As Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe has improved considerably as a speaker. However he has to improve so much more to match the previous Leaders of the Opposition from the UNP, namely Dudley Senanayake (1960 – 65), J.R.Jayewardene (1970 – 77) and Gamini Dissanayake (August – November 1994).

The campaign in Wayamba began around January 10th 1999. In the fray were the President, the Leader of the Opposition, a multitude of Cabinet Ministers and former Cabinet Ministers. They campaigned against a background of escalating violence.

On January 11th a gang of approximately 100 goons form the

People's Alliance (PA) attacked the UNP candidate Johnson Fernando and damaged his office at Mawatagama. The damage was estimated to be around Rs.250,000. This incident took place just 400 metres from the Mawatagama Police Station.. The Policemen watched nonchalantly. That night, jeep loads of goons from the PA attacked the home of UNP candidate Mrs. S.L.K. Wadugodapitiya in Wariyapola. They threatened her and her young daughters with dire consequences if she decided to complain to the Wariyapola Police Station. On January 12th two JVP supporters M.T. Chaminda and R.G. Premaratne were attacked with iron rods at Mawatagama by goons from the PA. Both were admitted to the Kurunegala General Hospital. On January 13th the Chief Ministerial candidate of the New Left Front, Patrick Fernando, and the leader of that Front Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne, a Cambridge - educated Marxist, were attacked by unknown assailants and both were admitted to the Kurunegala General Hospital. The same night Leslie Gunawardene of the PA and his son were attacked by goons from the UNP. Both were taken to the Kurunegala Police Station and their complaint was duly recorded by the Police. The complainant being the PA, the Mawatagama Police shed their nonchalance and went into action. They arrested the goons, Abdul Ishan Mohammed, H.D. Nandasena, Sunil Premachandra, G.G. Piyasena and Edward Piyasena. They were immediately produced before the Kurunegala Magistrate and duly remanded for two weeks.

On January 14th the convoy of the Leader of the Opposition, travelling to Marawila, was attacked by some supporters of the

PA. One van was damaged and the extent of damage was assessed at Rs. 35,000.

During early hours of January 15th several shots were fired at the residence of UNP candidate Nimal Fernando. He escaped unhurt but his house guest Premaratne Gunasekera M.P. (UNP – Colombo District) was slightly wounded. He received treatment at the Out Patients Department at the National Hospital in Colombo. Heavily bandaged he appeared on TNL Television the next day while the Rupavahini TV took great trouble to refute these allegations.

On the night of January 15th the home of UNP candidate Gamini Dissanayake at Hettipola came under fire by T-56 machine guns. His wife was shot in the chest and was admitted to the Kurunegala General Hospital and underwent surgery. His house guest K.S.M. Tudor was shot in the stomach and underwent surgery. Another house guest P. Siva, the Treasurer of the UNP Youth League, was shot dead. After opening fire the assailants fled in two double cabs, a white Toyota Hiace van and a blue Pajero. They were allowed to go through a check point just 200 metres away. The Police manning the check point, PC Mangala, PC Tillekeratne, PC Kamal and PC Adikari were interdicted the following day.

As the violence escalated there were 152 incidents reported to the Police Station at Kuliyaipitiya and 69 incidents reported to the Police Station at Mawatagama. What Police action was taken remains a mystery. For example Mohammed Thaha Anous alias Anju was specifically named in five separate complaints. Yet the

Mawatagama Police could not apprehend him as of the end of January 1999.

On the night of January 17th armed gangs from the PA attacked the home of D.M. Bandaranayake MP (UNP-Kurunegala District) at Daladagama near Maho. In broad day light on January 18th, the supporters of A.M.S. Adikari, former Cabinet Minister from the UNP for Post and Telecommunications, and the PA supporters of Bandula Basnayake MP (SLFP-Kurunegala District) clashed at the Galgamuwa Junction. Each side threw stones at the other causing damage to their vehicles. At the Police Station at Galgamuwa each side blamed the other. The Police claimed that they would inquire into the complaints. But did nothing.

With five days of campaigning left the Wayamba was transformed into a battlefield. Somehow all parties contesting the Provincial Council Election barring the ruling People's Alliance were severely attacked. The People's Alliance was seriously attacked only twice, at Mawatagama and at Galgamuwa.

January 19th 1999, will indeed go down to the annals of history as a unique day for women in Sri Lanka. On that day "Kasippu" * Lal a goon from the PA from Gantiriyawa and his fellow goons

*Note to foreign readers

Kasippu is a cheap local brew which is banned, because it is detrimental to health.

armed with T-56 machine guns and travelling in a van accosted UNP supporters from the Southern Province who were on a house-to-house campaign at Gantiriyawa. The men, including Provincial Councilor Justin Galapathy were mercilessly assaulted. Then the machine guns were turned on a 50 year old grandmother B.M. Chandrawathie from Akuressa. She was asked to remove her clothes. She refused and she was assaulted. In fear she then removed the top button of her blouse, hoping her humiliation would stop there. Just the opposite happened. Some of the goons ripped off her blouse, others ripped off her brassiere. When Justin Gallapathy gallantly went to her rescue he was hit with the butt of the T-56 machine gun. Then some goons pulled off the cloth of Chandrawathie, others her underskirt. Thus she was stark naked. Then with a machine gun at her back, she was made to run on the road. She ran into a nearby scrub jungle. With whatever scanty clothes she could collect she finally made it to the Katupotha Police Station and lodged her complaint there. No action was taken by the Police during the month of January 1999.

The following day the same ritual was performed in Wariyapola by another gang of goons from the PA riding in a numberless Pajero and armed with T-56 machine guns. The victim that day was an 18 year old school leaver Dulani from Wariyapola who was taken to the Wariyapola hospital by her family. She lodged a complaint with the Wariyapola Police. She too identified her attackers but no action was taken by the Police during the month of January 1999.

When the campaign was on its last three days, the violence increased still further. The JVP meeting at Pannala had to be cancelled because the stage and the sound system was set on fire that very afternoon, January 20th. The Police who were on duty merely watched the spectacle. Shortly after dusk the same day at Palaviya junction, M.M. Gamini a supporter of the PA and a businessman was shot dead outside a bar he owned. According to the Puttalam Police the assailant probably walked in with the murder weapon, a shot gun, because the Police check point clearly confirmed that no vehicle entered or departed from the scene of the murder. The CID subsequently established that the murder was the result of a private feud.

The following night when the Agence France Presse (AFP) and the Press Trust of India (PTI) sent their journalists and photographers to cover a UNP meeting at Anamaduwa and a PA meeting at Chilaw, their convoy was shot at. Mercifully there were no casualties. Later that night the UNP office at Chilaw was attacked savagely. When Ranil Wickremasinghe was addressing the UNP rally at Anamaduwa still later that night thousands of PA and UNP supporters hurled insults at each other. For once the Police was effective in preventing a breach of the peace. Two truck loads of personnel from the Special Task Force, who were on stand-by duty, intervened effectively.

On the last day of campaigning, namely January 22nd, Mervyn De Silva M.P. (UNP – Hambantota District) and two UNP supporters

were shot at Nochiyagama and were admitted to the Anuradhapura General Hospital. At the final rally of the UNP at Kuliyaipitiya once again UNP and PA supporters were trading insults and the atmosphere was most tense when the Leader of the Opposition was winding up his campaign. Once again detachments of the Special Task Force brought in from Colombo earlier that day maintained law and order. In direct contrast at the giant rally of the People's Alliance at Kurunegala the President wound up her campaign breathing fire at the UNP at a meeting which was devoid of incidents.

Till the dawn of 1999 the Wayamba was very tranquil. For years that Province had been spared of the agony of terrorism by the JVP, by the LTTE, or by the State. Yet it was transformed into a battlefield within ten days. According to the President while campaigning for the Presidency in 1994,

“Our people must live in dignity and with self-respect. We assure you a free and vibrant democracy, law and order and the freedom to live in peace. My Government will be committed to non-violence and the democratic way of life”.

Reacting to the allegation that her Government had resorted to terror tactics at the Local Government Elections of 1997 she stated:

“Terror tactics are the last resort of the weak and foolish politicians who have neither a vision nor political courage.

We have the human values, the vision, the backing of our people and the courage to arrive at a consensus. Therefore

there is no necessity for us to resort to terror tactics”.

Since Independence Wayamba has been a unique electorate, the only Province to vote with a winning party every time. Their impressive record is as follows:

<u>General Election</u>	<u>Voting pattern</u>
1952	UNP
1956	SLFP led - Coalition
1960 (March)	UNP
1960 (July)	SLFP led - Coalition
1965	UNP led – Coalition
1970	SLFP led – Coalition
1977	UNP
1989	UNP
1994	SLFP led – Coalition

In 1956 Wayamba saw the Leader of the Opposition S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike lead his campaign and return a few months later as Prime Minister. In 1965 it was Leader of the Opposition Dudley Senanayake who led the campaign of the UNP and was duly elected Prime Minister. In 1970 it was Leader of the Opposition Sirima Bandaranaike, who led the campaign of the SLFP, she was duly elected Prime Minister. In 1977 the Leader of the Opposition J.R. Jayewardene led the UNP to a landslide victory throughout the nation, winning 20 out of 21 electorates in Wayamba. In 1994 the Leader of the Opposition Sirima Bandaranaike was too weak to lead the campaign, having suffered a stroke. Her daughter Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga

deputised for her. She was duly elected Prime Minister.

Why did the SLFP, not the other components of the People's Alliance namely the LSSP, the Communist Party, the Sri Lanka Muslim League or the United Lalith Front, behave so badly during the election campaign in January 1999? Why was the Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe not allowed to address the people of Wayamba without being heckled by thousands of SLFP supporters? Why did the SLFP led by a woman since 1960 and with a woman President of Sri Lanka since 1994 demean itself by stripping two women till they were stark naked and then force them to parade on the road? Those questions must be answered truthfully sooner rather than later. Indeed I hope the SLFP will be brave enough to face itself when it is guilty. Otherwise the future of democracy in Sri Lanka is indeed in peril.

Over the week-end Saturday 23rd – Sunday 24th January 1999 I met amongst others The Right-Reverend Andrew Kumarage, the saintly Bishop of Kurunegala of the Church of Ceylon. He was indeed horrified by what he had seen and heard. He said that the least I owed the nation was to write an impartial book on what happened in Wayamba during the past two weeks and what will happen on January 25th 1999.

The apprehensions of the Bishop were indeed vindicated. Over that week-end all manner of State-owned vehicles without their number plates suddenly came into Wayamba. Armed security personnel from several State owned Corporations came by their

hundreds some even in their uniforms! The Ministerial Security Division (MSD) was there in full strength reportedly to provide security for the 21 Ministers, in Cabinet rank or otherwise, who were assigned to the 21 electoral areas, former Parliamentary electorates in the first past the post system. Those personnel from the MSD were heavily armed with T-56 machine guns adequate to equip a Company in the Sri Lanka Army on operational duties in the North. Above all hundreds of buses from depots of the Sri Lanka Transport Board throughout the nation barring the North and the East and scores of taxis from the Bandaranaike International Airport brought in thousands of strangers to Wayamba. In the meantime this phenomenon was watched with nonchalance by thousands of dummies from the Sri Lanka Police on election duty in Wayamba.

By dawn on Monday 25th January the dummies of the Sri Lanka Police and the election staff manning the 1150 polling booths in Wayamba moved into their assigned positions. Polling commenced without incidents as scheduled at 7 a.m. that morning.

By 8 a.m. mayhem had broken out in over 200 polling booths. As a sample, the polling at the following booths was near 100% by 11 a.m.

Anamaduwa (all booths)

Boraluwewa

Chilaw (Carmel Maha Vidyalaya)

Kalpitiya (Toranaheva)

Kotagama Government School
Mawatagama (all booths)
Nikaweratiya (Babakmeegalla Muslim School)
Pannala
Polgahawela (all booths)
Puttalam (most booths)
Wennapuwa (Dankotuwa Girls School)

Throughout Wayamba the role of the Police was indeed disgraceful. They were consistently of passive deportment and watched the day of infamy with total indifference. Indeed they were no different to the proverbial three monkeys, who did no evil, who saw no evil and who heard no evil. Indeed January 25th 1999 was not only a day of infamy for Wayamba but also for the Sri Lanka Police. The breakdown in law and order could not have been conceivably worse.

The new Inspector-General of Police, Lakdasa Kodituwakku, has a reputation within the service of having an impeccable Human Rights record and being scrupulously honest both financially and intellectually. He also has a reputation of being timid. He openly admitted the breakdown in law and order was total. His predecessor W.B. Rajaguru, my colleague at the University of Ceylon, fared even worse. On two occasions the Supreme Court ordered unprecedently that he pay from his personal funds Rs. 15,000, to an Inspector of Police whom he had transferred arbitrarily and Rs. 50,000 to Anura Bandaranaike MP (UNP – Nominated list) whose home he had ordered be searched without the requisite search warrant. According to the Supreme Court he

was guilty of violating their Fundamental Rights. While the Inspectors-General of Police during the present SLFP – led Coalition have thus disgraced themselves by errors of omission and commission, the Inspector – General of Police during the last SLFP led Coalition from 1970 – 1977, Stanley Senanayake, stands out as an example worthy of emulation.

For justifiable reasons I will now deviate from my commentary on Wayamba to pay tribute to Inspector-General Stanley Senanayake who graced that high office from 1970 – 1978 and was the longest serving Inspector – General of Police since Independence. In my knowledge of the Sri Lanka Police, Stanley Senanayake was an officer and gentleman of the highest possible calibre. He passed away in 1990 and I am so sad that he is still being vilified by people who should know better. The bone of contention was the 1962 *coup d'etat* led by the *de facto* Inspector- General of Police* at that time C.C.Dissanayaka, my father, and Colonel F.C.De Saram his schoolmate at Royal College and his lifelong friend. He would undoubtedly have been a Major- General and the Commander of the Army by then had he not retired prematurely to head the family firm of lawyers, D.L. & F.De Saram Solicitors, pursuant to the will of his late father. Both my father and Colonel F.C.De Saram were officers of exceptional ability, who were adored by their subordinates. That was first recognised by the British during World War II and duly

* The *de jure* Inspector - General of Police was a political appointee who knew nothing of Police work.

encouraged. Both were selected by British Intelligence to serve with their underground should Ceylon fall to the Japanese in 1942, after the fall of Burma, Malaya and Singapore in 1942. After Independence in 1948, both used their immense popularity to enhance their respective Services. For example during the *hartal* of 1953 when my father was Superintendent of Police, Colombo, and his friend was the Commanding Officer of the Ceylon Artillery, one of the finest regiments in the Ceylon Army, the two of them ensured that the city of Colombo was safe for the members of the general public, and the anti- social elements fled in fear. They were both commended by Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake. They repeated their performance in 1958 during the racial riots of that year, when my father was Deputy Inspector- General of Police (Range I) and his friend a brevet Colonel in the Ceylon Volunteer Force, having retired from the Ceylon Army. They were both commended by Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. They both loathed politicians and used the best known four letter words in the English language to describe them. Just once in their lifetime they used their immense influence over the Police and the Army respectively, to the detriment of the nation. In 1962 they decided to overthrow the legally elected Government of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike with a bloodless *coup d'etat*. Both were University educated and both recognised that they knew nothing of politics. Therefore they would seize power and hand over the Government of Ceylon to the Governor- General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke . I cannot ever forget that day, Saturday 27th January 1962. It was the last week- end for me in my parental home because I had

been selected as a Probationary Assistant Superintendent of Police, and the following week was due to leave for the Police Training School in Katukurunda. Parting was such sweet sorrow for my parents and my mother was often in tears especially because the previous Saturday was the wedding of my younger sister Carmi, (the mother of Ravi Karunanayake M.P). My bedroom was full of her wedding gifts therefore I had to go downstairs to my father's dressing room to pack my bags to proceed to the Police Training School .

From that room I heard my father speaking to his officers in the dining room. I was not eavesdropping, but if I could not hear what they were speaking then surely I should have been certified as being deaf and found medically unfit to join the Police. Our home, Police bungalow, C-73, Longden Place, Colombo -7, was so quiet that afternoon because my father had deliberately sent my mother and two unmarried sisters away on a shopping expedition to purchase what was necessary for the home coming of Carmi.

The first to arrive that afternoon was Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Terry Wijesinghe, the Personal Assistant of my father. To the best of my recollection their conversation was as follows:

“I have no more questions, Sir.”

“Very good. Wijesinghe, please report to me at Queen's House at 2359 hours. I will be in charge of all operations there. Just in case you are challenged by the sentries the pass word will be

Dowbiggin” (Sir Herbert Dowbiggin was Inspector- General of Police from 1912- 1937)

Sometime after ASP Terry Wijesinghe left, ASP Lionel Jirasinghe came in. He must have come in uniform complete with side arms. (I could not see him but could hear their conversation clearly) My father said,

“ Jirasinghe I am sorry if I forgot to tell you. No officer of mine will carry even side arms tonight. Please leave your revolver at home”.

“Yes, Sir.”

“ This will be a real gentlemen’s *coup d’etat* exactly what General Ayub Khan did in Pakistan a few years ago. After you complete the duties I have already assigned you from 2200 hours to 0100 hours tonight, you will assist the Army at “ Temple Trees ”. You should please report to Lt- Colonel Willie Abrahams, the Commanding Officer of the Ceylon Artillery. The pass word will be “The British Grenadier” , which is the marching tune of the Ceylon Artillery.

“Please treat the Prime Minister with the greatest of respect and her children especially her two good looking daughters with the greatest of care. Food for the Bandaranaike family will be ordered directly from the Galle Face Hotel. Any doctors of their choice may visit them at “Temple Trees” at any time.

“ Jirasinghe you are a real gentleman who went to Trinity College, Kandy. You would have become an even better gentleman had

you gone to Royal College. (Loud laughter)

“ I am putting you in charge of Police operations at “ Temple Trees. commencing 0100 hours tonight.”

“ Sir, what are you going to do with Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike?”

“ That is our headache. Colonel F.C.De Saram as you know is an Oxford Blue. He will speak to his friends at Oxford and have Sunethra admitted to Oxford without delay. She is yearning to go there. Hopefully we will coax the Prime Minister to also educate Chandrika and Anura in England. Then she herself can go to England and run house for her kids on a generous pension in sterling paid by the State. She is very good at running a home, hopeless at running a Government” (Loud laughter)

“ Sir, what exactly have I to do at “ Temple Trees. ” ?

“ When troops surround “ Temple Trees ” around 2359 hours, Colonel F.C.De Saram a cousin of S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike will personally speak to the Prime Minister and ask for her surrender. After the *coup d'etat* is over Major- General F.C. De Saram, General- Officer- Commanding Ceylon, will command all Military establishments. He will also personally handle all details at “Temple Trees” and ensure that the Prime Minister will be our guest. Only the finest of gentlemen from the Ceylon Artillery which was once commanded by Colonel F.C.De Saram will be posted at “ Temple Trees ”. Do please help the Army in whatever way you can in your capacity of a perfect gentleman.”

“ Thank you, Sir ”

I heard ASP Jirasinghe click his heels and the sound of him saluting my father.

The next to come in was Stanley Senanayake Superintendent of Police, Colombo. He was my father's favourite senior officer and he had predicted for many years that his protégé would one day be Inspector - General of Police. In more recent weeks he had a habit of saying in my presence,

“ Senanayake, when you are the IG (Inspector- General), I will be dead and gone. Please look after my son. Something is wrong with that donkey. Like me, he did a degree in Science but he is more interested in Political Science. He can quote John F.Kennedy, Jawaharlal Nehru, Nasser and that bearded fellow from Cuba, like you and I can quote the Police Ordinance. (Loud laughter from me)

That afternoon he spoke more seriously to Stanley Senanayake.

“ Senanayake, I will now continue what I told you this morning during our walk at Galle Face Green. For good reason I brought you into this *coup d'etat* only this morning .

“At 2200 hours tonight I will issue the Take Post Order. I want the Colombo Police to clear all main thoroughfares by 2230 hours. Johnpillai (ASP Traffic) should please be in charge of that operation . Colonel F.C. De Saram will move his troops and armoured columns swiftly commencing 2300 hours. By 0100 hours all Military operations will be completed and the Governor- General will dissolve Parliament and remove the Prime Minister from office. He is empowered to do both under the Soulbury Constitution.

“This *coup d'etat* will be absolutely bloodless repeat absolutely bloodless exactly what General Ayub Khan did in Pakistan, a

few years ago. Therefore none of my Gazetted officers will carry even side arms tonight.”

“ Sir, may I now reiterate what I told you this morning at the Galle Face Green, when for the first time you asked me to join your *coup d’etat* .

“ I am totally opposed to a democratically elected Government being overthrown by a *coup d’etat* be it bloodless or otherwise, be it run by gentlemen or otherwise.

“ I agree with you that this Government is most unpopular and Mrs. Bandaranaike has no experience to run a Government. If this Government must go, then it must be defeated at a General Election sooner rather than later.

“ Besides Sir, it was you who taught me when I was a young ASP at Ratnapura and you were SP Sabaragamuwa that I do not have to carry out an illegal order. You told me, Senanayake over there is a mad dog frothing from its mouth. Take out your revolver and shoot it dead. That you said is a legal order. On the other hand you said over there is a Sub- Inspector whom I do not like. Take out your revolver and shoot him dead. That you said is an illegal order. You do not have to carry out such an order. If you do we both will be charged for murder.

“ Please Sir I cannot carry out an illegal order issued by you, although I admire you greatly. ”

My father then attempted to persuade Stanley Senanayake, but that was an exercise in futility.

Shortly after midnight that night detachments of the Army, Navy and Air Force surrounded our home and arrested my father. When

he was taken away, for the last time he wore his uniform. In the morning I had a telephone call from the Welikade Jail asking me to bring his clothes and toiletries and to take away his uniform. Just after his clothing and toiletries were handed over I heard two bursts of gunfire at close range. I thought it was a firing squad and fainted. When I revived I was assured that it was a nearby dog shooter doing his work (He was chased away lest he frighten other distraught next- of- kin.) By that time ASP Jirasinghe, ASP Johnpillai and Colonel De Saram were also inside the Welikade Jail. Altogether thirtyone people, Commissioned Officers from the Army and the Navy, Gazetted Officers from the Police and one civil servant were arrested. The following week the Governor- General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke KCMG, KCVO, was relieved of his duties. He opted to go into self- imposed exile in England. In the meantime I was waiting for my letter of appointment as an ASP. That letter never came.

Of those arrested, twenty six were given a trial before the Supreme Court and the balance five were not prosecuted due to lack of evidence. A very impartial bench consisting of Chief Justice M.C.Sansoni , Justice (later Chief Justice) H.N.G.Fernando and Justice L.B.De Silva (my father's partner at bridge) conducted the Trial- at- bar which went on for almost three years. In April 1965 eleven of the accused were convicted and given long prison sentences. In December 1965 the Privy Council upheld the plea of the eleven convicted prisoners, that they were tried under retroactive legislation that applied only to them and not to any other citizens of Ceylon.. They were duly

discharged.

After his release from prison, the personality of my father underwent a complete change. He was no longer the gracious man he was, who went out of his way to help other human beings. He did not even help himself. Several times I told him he must have Stanley Senanayake re-instated. He merely brushed me aside. In mid-1966 I went on a lecture tour of the United States on a Rotary scholarship and another award took me to China and Vietnam, then at the height of the war. When I returned home in time for Christmas, Stanley Senanayake was still not re-instated. Much worse, he was distrusted by the UNP then in power as much as he was distrusted by the SLFP earlier in power. Everybody accepted the verdict of the Supreme Court that Stanley Senanayake was an honest witness. The Supreme Court stated that ASP Wijesinghe and ASP Jirasinghe were brought into the *coup d'etat* early in January 1962. The two key Crown witnesses ASP Johnpillai and ASP Vanden Drisen freely admitted that they were a party to the *coup* from early January. Therefore by deduction both the SLFP and the UNP Administrations surmised that Stanley Senanayake as SP Colombo would surely have been brought in to the *coup* early in January and got cold feet at the last moment.

By that time Harvard University had short listed me for a scholarship and the UN had short listed me for recruitment, my

interviews having been done during my recent visit to the United States. In 1967 I was appointed to the Sri Lanka Delegation to the UN General Assembly. Therefore I sought an appointment with Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake to thank him for his kindness. I knew him quite well and therefore the appointment was readily granted. I was requested to meet the Prime Minister in his office in the House of Representatives and an aide reminded me that the time allocated for me to say good-bye was five minutes. Having thanked the Prime Minister for his kindness, I plucked up courage and told him my version of the innocence of Stanley Senanayake. He was so astonished by my story that his pipe almost fell out of his mouth. Periodically his aide came into the room to remind the Prime Ministers that there were others to meet him. He was politely sent away everytime. The dialogue took over one hour. When the quorum bell rang, the Prime Minister went into the Chamber of the House of Representatives having informed his staff that I should wait behind. When he came back he grilled me for an hour or more. In conclusion he assured me that he will have a chat with my father who for many years had played golf with him. To prevent a clash at home, I requested the Prime Minister to meet my father after I had left for New York, later that week. He readily agreed.

During the *tete e'tete* the Prime Minister had with my father, he corroborated my statement in full. Therefore the Prime Minister was convinced that Stanley Senanayake was brought in to the *coup d'etat* not in early January but instead on the morning of Saturday 27th January 1962. Even then he had flatly refused to be

a part of that *coup d'état* and he had reiterated his position that afternoon.

Within a month Stanley Senanayake was re-instated on a recommendation made in writing by Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake to the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, E.A. Nugawela, earlier one of his trusted Cabinet Ministers. In 1968 Stanley Senanayake was promoted Deputy Inspector – General of Police (DIG) a rank commensurate with his seniority. In 1970 Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike promoted him deservedly to the rank of Inspector- General of Police, superseding two more senior DIGs. The day he assumed that high office he had read in the morning newspapers that my father had passed away. After the ceremonial welcome at Police Headquarters, in the full regalia of an Inspector- General of Police he visited my parental home. There he broke down and wept at the coffin of his *guru*.

For several years he was haunted by what my father had prophesied in January 1962, “Senanayake when you are the Inspector- General I will be dead and gone. Please look after my son because something is wrong with that donkey ”

In 1977 he did that in style. I was elevated to the rank of

Ambassador at the age of thirty nine years*. Because of my age my father's generation was outraged by that appointment. (My generation thought otherwise !) Nobody in my father's generation, not even my *guru* Raju Coomaraswamy, Assistant Secretary - General of the UN, who had recommended that Ambassadorial appointment to Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene, defended me to the extent Stanley Senanayake did. Then many of my father's friends sneered at me,

“Why the hell is Stanley Senanayake so fond of you ? ”

Many times I had invited Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Senanayake to be my honoured guests wherever I may be stationed as an Ambassador. Finally Mrs. Senanayake arrived in Cairo in February 1989. During the Independence Day celebration I declared her the guest of honour of that Embassy and she unfurled the National flag. After her departure from Cairo so many Sri Lankans asked me,

“Ambassador Dissanayaka, was Mrs. Stanley Senanayake the wife of that fellow Stanley Senanayake who got cold feet at the last moment during the abortive *coup d'etat* of

*Note by the Publisher

As the twentieth century draws to its end, it can now be said that T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka was the youngest professional diplomat in Sri Lanka in this century to reach the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

your late father ?”

Thus twenty seven long years after 1962 Stanley Senanayake was still being maligned. Therefore I told myself that one day I will somehow exonerate him.

It is a matter of opinion whether the Official Secrets Act which operates for thirty years ceased to apply to the 1962 *coup d'etat* in 1992 or in 1995 thirty years after the case was concluded.. Erring on the side of safety, as I always do, since 1995 I have told the widow of Stanley Senanayake and those sons of theirs whom I know personally, that I will vindicate him in one of my books.

The book I wrote in 1996 was “The Glorious Cricketers of Sri Lanka”, the inside story of how Sri Lanka won the World Cup of that year. There was no reference whatsoever to the Police in that book. In 1997 and 1998 I wrote “War or Peace in Sri Lanka” (Volume II). There the reference to the Police was peripheral, hence it was not possible to have a ten page inset on the *coup d'etat* of 1962. Thus the first real opportunity I had was in this book. I do hope Stanley Senanayake, though no longer in our midst, has now been fully exonerated !!

Now reverting to Wayamba, that day of infamy raised a howl of protests from political parties both within the Government and in the Opposition, the Commissioner of Elections Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO's) covering the polls

and religious leaders of the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic faiths which accounts for almost the entirety of the population of Wayamba.

The Commissioner of Elections, Dayananda Dissanayake, who by virtue of his high office is answerable not to the Government of the day but to Parliament made the following statement to MTV for their nightly news broadcast on Monday 25th January.

“In 212 polling stations out of 1150, there was large scale stuffing of ballot boxes. Ballot boxes from nine polling booths have not yet reached the counting centres and probably never will. Six ballot boxes have been burnt.

This is the worst election I have ever seen in my personal experience.

Where are we now heading?”

That question was indeed pregnant with meaning. The MTV newscaster then asked the Commissioner of Elections, in the circumstances why he does not declare the election null and void. He explained that under the prevailing election laws promulgated in 1957, the Commissioner of Elections has no authority to declare an election null and void. Only the Supreme Court could do so on the basis of an election petition.

At this stage it would be pertinent for me to add that forty one election petitions pertaining to Wayamba, an all time record for Sri Lanka, are now before the Supreme Court. Moreover it is

relevant to add that in terms of recent legislation in India, the Election Commission (consisting of the Commissioner of Elections and his two Deputies) is empowered to declare an election null and void in the light of extensive malpractices and to authorise a re-poll if such malpractices are confined to a specific area.

The Right- Reverend Dr. Frank Marcus Fernando, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Chilaw, in the Province of Wayamba, stated, more in sorrow in anger,

“ We are deeply disturbed by the large scale thuggery, intimidation and impersonation that took place today in Wayamba. Surviving that election was like surviving a war. “We hear of people talking of violence and fraud in the past. That does not justify violence and fraud in the present.

“The fabric of our nation is coming apart. We cannot go on like this. I dread to think of what would happen to our country if we were to face a few more elections like this. This election must be annulled.

“Parliament must pass legislation to ensure just and fair elections with fool- proof guarantees in the context of our contemporary society. Before that this election must be annulled.”

The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) which

had issued an adverse report that afternoon, issued a three - page statement that evening which is herewith quoted verbatim. Excerpts were quoted widely both by the local media and in the international wire services such as Reuter, Associated Press, Agence France Presse and the United Press of India.

(Quote)

Wayamba Election Should Be Declared Null And Void

Widespread election violations of every stripe are being reported mainly against the People's Alliance (PA) by CMEV monitors in the field, independent observers and Opposition sources. In the Wayamba Provincial Council Election of today, charges of systematic voter intimidation, the removal of opposition agents through the use of force, the blatant stuffing of ballot boxes in full view of observers/ monitors/ voters, the physical assault of opponents and members of the Media, and the sheer brute force of the PA' s violent presence in the vicinity of polling booths have, in the considered view of CMEV, irrevocably undermined the validity of this election as an exercise of the public's free and fair choice.

The scale and magnitude of the violence as reported both directly to CMEV and through the Police, other independent monitors and parties is unprecedented for an election of its kind even in Sri Lanka's troubled past. Moreover, this election is not taking place in the war arena, nor is there a breakdown of civil society due to an

insurrection of armed youth. In comparison to the Local Government Elections of 1983, 1991 and 1997 as well as the 1993 Provincial Council Election, election day violation in the 1999 Wayamba Election appear to be greater in magnitude and scope.

The Police appears to be unwilling and unable to check the violence. In a number of the more serious incidents, they were merely by-standers, and have expressed feelings of frustration and helplessness to CMEV monitors on the spot. The Government seems to have pinned its faith in the end result of all this violence and election fraud, oblivious to the toll on its own credibility and the very democratic electoral processes that brought it in to power.

Reports received by CMEV have cited Ministers and party stalwarts of the People's Alliance as having aided and abetted in the election violations. Their names
.....
.....

(Those names are deleted from this book, on legal advice)

At the time of finalising this report, UNP sources are alleging that at least one death has taken place today due to election- related violence, but no confirmation of this was obtained from other sources. CMEV has confirmed four reports of life-threatening injury due to shooting and

the use of sharp weapons, all of whom are UNP supporters.

A total of approximately 125 complaints have been received, of which 41 are Police complaints and the balance direct reports to CMEV. In addition, CMEV monitors have indicated that they are convinced, as eye witnesses to the incidents, that serious violations in over 50 Polling Stations have rendered the polling in at least these Stations meaningless. In general, it is estimated that in around 75% of the Polling Stations, the Opposition polling agents have been intimidated into leaving the station, thus providing access to illegal voters.

In the Puttalam District over 25 complaints have been lodged with CMEV, of which alleged ballot stuffing by the PA has been reported from seven police areas, and polling agents have been chased out of eight stations. In fact, CMEV monitors in the Puttalam area record that it is only in one polling station out of eight visited that there were opposition polling agents present. Of the incidents reported to CMEV, only two are against the UNP, while the balance implicate the PA.

An example of the type of election violation recorded from Puttalam can be seen from the following incidents reported to CMEV from one of its own monitors who was an eye witness. At approximately 1.45pm a crowd

of approximately 100 PA supporters jumped over the wall to enter Station No: 5 (Weaving Centre), sent the officials including Police out and “polled ” ten bundles of votes within a space of 25 minutes. In Station No: 7 which is located opposite the residence of PA candidate MHM Navavi, approximately 30 PA supporters led by Minister D.M. Jayaratne allegedly attempted to cast illegal votes. However, due to the quick action of the Presiding Officer who locked up the ballot boxes and the support extended by the Police on duty, the Minister and his gang had left the premises, allegedly threatening to have all the officials concerned punished.

In Kalpitiya, it is reported that the early stuffing of ballot boxes led to the closing of two polling stations in the morning itself.

In the Kurunegala District approximately 50 incidents have been reported directly to CMEV. In at least five Polling Stations in Polgahawela, the voting appeared to have been a mockery, with PA candidate Tikiri Banda Adhikari allegedly polling approximately 150 illegal votes according to CMEV monitors who were eye witnesses to the incident. The Police in the vicinity remained passive onlookers. Adhikari is also alleged to have distributed ballot papers outside the polling stations.

In Yapahuwa and Galgamuwa there appear to have been

no serious problems. However, in Giribawa Police area, at the Thambutta Polling station, PA supporters are alleged to have forcibly removed seven ballot books of fifty votes each. That was reported by election officers to CMEV monitors, who also estimated that over 75% of the votes cast today at that station were fraudulent.

In the Pannala and Giriulla Police areas, 57 of the 65 polling booths respectively do not have any non-PA polling agents due to threats and the use of physical force. According to UNP Chief Ministerial candidate Jayawickrema Perera, only 25-30% of the polling booths in the Kurunegala District are manned by UNP polling agents.

In Wariyapola, CMEV monitors reported that when the Police dispersed the crowd outside the polling booth near the Wariyapola Police station, the Police were threatened by a group of PA supporters. If they came out again they will be shot dead. The Police have been ordered by the PA Chief Ministerial candidate, S.B.Nawinna, to halt all Police mobile units, " otherwise they would be shot ." Minister Nimal Siripala Silva was present at Mr. Nawinna's residence when CMEV monitors visited him in order to obtain confirmation of this statement. He said that he was unaware of the incident. CMEV monitors confirm that all Police vehicles remained parked in that Police Station.

The three polling booths at the National School in

Mawatagama were closed at 8.30 a.m. today just one-and-a-half hours after it opened for voting. According to the Presiding Officer and the Police at the centre, about 150 PA supporters armed with T -56 automatic rifles and other weapons surrounded the centre and ordered the Police to stand aside. They then proceeded to stuff the ballot boxes.

In Polling Station No. 41 Tittawelgela, the JVP polling agent Sumith Nandana Gunawardena was abducted , allegedly by PA supporters, in full view of the Police who had expressed embarrassment that they were unable to intervene for fear of the consequences. In Kumbukgete, when UNP polling agent AM Iranganie was threatened and had to leave the Polling Station, the Police mobile patrol gallantly transported her to her home.

The two polling booths at the Roman Catholic Primary School in Mawatagama were also effectively closed after a group of people, allegedly supporters of the PA candidate Neranjan Wickremasinghe, stuffed the ballot boxes. People of the area told CMEV monitors that they are not going to the polling booths since their votes have already been cast. The Presiding Officer said that by 10.30 a.m. out of a total 1301 votes , 1182 (91%) had been cast.

In Boreluwewa Polling Station 1500 (or 89%) out of a total

of 1694 registered votes had been polled illegally according to officials. Some individuals are reported to have made more than ten visits to the booth. The practice of removing the indelible ink after voting took place openly in many areas, often within sight of the polling station itself.

The Committee for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) was formed in 1997 by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), the Free Media Movement (FMM) and the Coalition Against Political Violence as an independent and non-partisan organisation to monitor the incidence of election-related violence.

(Unquote)

The same night the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL) issued the following public statement.

(Quote)

**PAFFREL STATEMENT ON THE ELECTION IN
WAYAMBA**

As a civic organisation concerned with the rights of citizens, PAFFREL viewed with grave concern the run up to the Wayamba election. An unprecedented number of acts of election-related violence were reported. These included murder, attempted murder, intimidation, assault, robbery, arson and damage to property. Supporters of candidates were attacked and stripped of their clothing. Spouses, children and family members of candidates were subjected to physical

attack and intimidation, even when the candidates were away from home. PAFFREL deplors the fact that Government did not take adequate action to deter this violence.

The reports that PAFFREL has been receiving from its election monitors, clearly indicate that the conduct of the election did not fulfil the criteria of a free and fair election. There were reports of stuffing of ballot boxes, the inability of large numbers of voters to cast their votes due to impersonation, the chasing away and physical assault of polling agents *et cetera*. These malpractices have occurred on a widespread and systematic basis throughout the Province. According to information received by PAFFREL these have been committed predominantly by the People's Alliance.

We provide a sample of the many serious electoral malpractices at today's election in the Wayamba reported to us by our PAFFREL field monitors.

STUFFING OF BALLOT BOXES

Kurunegala District

- 1) Wadakada Maha Vidyalaya (9 ballot books)
- 2) No 61 Hettiruppuwa Junior School (2 ballot books)
- 3) Nikaweratiya, Babakmeegalla Muslim School
- 4) Nikaweratiya Samarapitiya Viharaya
- 5) Pahala Talampala
- 6) Kalamvehera Temple
- 7) Pannala

- 8) Ballawela (2 ballot books)
- 9) Polgahawela, Ranjangama (ballot box burnt)

Puttalam District

- 1) Anamaduwa , No 11 Kirula Primary School , Madurankuliya
- 2) Chilaw, No: 34 Carmel Maha Vidyalaya
- 3) Wennppowa , No: 59 Dankotuwa Girls School
- 4) Chilaw , No: 39 Munneswaram Kovil.

CHASING AWAY OF POLLING AGENTS

Kurunegala District.

- 1) Mawatagama, Neethanwela.
- 2) Mawathagama, Potubona.
- 3) Illukwela Temple.
- 4) Mawatagama, Maneloluwa.
- 5) Dodangaslanda, Koswatte.
- 6) Dodangaslanda, Balaratuwa.
- 7) Kurunegala, Hadiriwalana.
- 8) Nikeweratiya, Mahakeliyana.
- 9) Nikeweratiya, Asweduma.
- 10) Wariyapola Wangumana.
- 11) Kuliypitiya, Toranahawa.
- 12) Panduwasnuwara, Gomugamuwa.
- 13) Yapahuwa, Kasilotte.
- 14) Panduwasnuwara, Apaladeniya.
- 15) Galgamuwa, Giribawa.
- 16) Galgamuwa, Warapokuna.

- 17) Galamuwayaya,
- 18) Parakumpura.
- 19) Galgamuwa, Palawewa.
- 20) Poliyaganna, Hisbullah MMV

Puttalam District

- 1) No 13 Surakkulam
- 2) No 34 Upallawatte.
- 3) No 37 Madulankuti
- 4) Kotagama Government School

PAFFREL will submit a full report on the elections shortly. In the meanwhile, PAFFEREL believes that the Wayamba Provincial Council Election is irretrievably flawed. We therefore request that this election held today be invalidated and that a fresh election be held as a suitable remedial measure to ensure a free and fair poll.

(Unquote)

The Venerable Horawadunne Rajindra Thero, The Chief Incumbent of the Sama Viharaya (a Buddhist Temple) in Chilaw said,

“What happened yesterday is no secret, The rights of the people were grossly violated. Although the people had the right to vote, that right could not be exercised. The People’s Alliance could have won this election by virtue of their performance since 1994. Now the people have lost their respect for the Government. Therefore this election must be

annulled and a fresh election held without delay.”

The Al-Haj Mahamood Alim Lebbe, Principal of the Cassimiya Arabic College, Puttalam, and a religious dignitary said,

“The correct conduct of an election is more important than winning an election. All Muslim men and women we met said that this election was a fraud.

“The statement by Government agencies about the conduct of the election and that opposition groups were responsible for what happened is not acceptable to the Muslim people here.

“This situation has caused much damage to the reputation of the President. If she is to regain that respect, the Government must have an impartial inquiry. Before that she should annul this election and have a fresh election.”

The following day more broadsides were directed at the Government by religious dignitaries. The Venerable Maduluwawe Sobitha Thero publicly stated,

“With the elections in Wayamba the faith our people have in democracy and in elections fell to its lowest level ever. The unfair election in Wayamba should be legally annulled.”

Later in the day the Venerable Madihe Pannaseela, Mahanayake



This photograph reflects not the scene of a riot but the mayhem in Wayamba during January 1999.

Thero of the Amarapura Nikaya, in separate open letters to the President and the Prime Minister stated that the election in Wayamba was a disgrace to the Bandaranaike family. He recommended that the election be declared null and void. Those letters were given wide publicity in the media.

The Venerable Sri Wipassi, Mahanayake of the Malwatte Chapter, complained to the Speaker that he was greatly perturbed by the events in Wayamba.

In rapid succession came statements from the powerful and well established professional bodies, The Government Medical Association (GMOA) and the Sri Lanka Bar Council. Every political party in Opposition in Parliament condemned the election violence in Wayamba. More importantly four components of The People's Alliance, namely the Sri Lanka Muslim League, The Lanka Sama Samaja Party, the Communist Party and the United Lalith Front condemned the election violence. Some wanted the election annulled others wanted a public inquiry.

Only two elements saw anything positive in the Provincial Election in Wayamba. The first was the State-owned media, the Lake House Press, Rupavahini TV and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, all reduced to ludicrous levels of sycophancy. Their reports cannot conceivably be included in a serious book of this nature and are therefore ignored with the contempt they deserve. The second was the new Chief Minister for Wayamba, S.B.Nawinna. He publicly stated that the Provincial Council

Election January 25th 1999 was fair and reflected the will of the people of Wayamba. He then proceeded to appoint to his Cabinet of Ministers, some of the worst perpetrators of violence in Wayamba!

Against the background of forty one election petitions filed in the Supreme Court, including one by an SLFP candidate, I would prefer not to comment further in the first edition of this book scheduled to be released in May 1999 as it would still be *sub-judice*.

Very significant in this macabre episode were the reactions of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike and the Cabinet of Ministers.

The President did admit on the Rupavahini news programme on January 25th that she was perturbed by the election violence in Wayamba and had made a personal request to The Commissioner of Elections to consider invalidating the poll in the violence stricken areas. (She cannot order The Commissioner of Elections because he is answerable to Parliament and not to the Government of the day.)

The meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers of that week was attended by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike who is now an invalid and confined to a wheel chair. She does not normally attend such meetings because of her poor health. That Wednesday she came, breathed fire at the Cabinet of Ministers and the President and

departed angrily.

Cabinet Minister M.H.M. Ashroff from the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress had shown commendable courage and publicly called for the election to be declared null and void. He reiterated his statement at that Cabinet meeting. Surprisingly another Cabinet Minister Jeyaraj Fernandopulle about whom there were several adverse references in the public statements issued by the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence, telephoned the local newspapers from Bangladesh, where he was attending a conference at Ministerial level, to publicly demand that the election be declared null and void. He reiterated that statement when he returned to Sri Lanka. He is a devout Roman Catholic and a Member of Parliament from the Catholic belt. Probably he was influenced by the condemnation made publicly by the Roman Catholic Bishops for Chilaw and Kurunegala. Alternatively this is yet another example of God moving in a mysterious way !

In every dark cloud there is a silver lining and that ray of hope was evident on January 27th 1999. The Supreme Court gave a landmark verdict on the Provincial Council Elections for the five Provinces scheduled for August 28th 1998 being indefinitely postponed because of a Presidential directive issued under Emergency Regulations. The Supreme Court was critical of that Presidential directive and ruled that

“the arbitrary and unreasonable postponement of such Elections had infringed upon the Fundamental Rights of the petitioners.”

Accordingly Their Lordships directed the Commissioner of Elections to hold the five Provincial Council Elections within three months of the judgement and to announce the date of such elections within two weeks thereof. That was indeed a historic verdict of the Supreme Court whereby in future even the President cannot arbitrarily postpone elections. Therefore the relevant portion of that judgement is reproduced below:

(Quote)

The Respondents have failed to adduce any material whatever which suggest that in August 1998 that there was any such threat to the security of the nation. Accordingly suspensions of the notices by means of the impugned Regulations was arbitrary and unreasonable. That suspension infringed the fundamental rights of the petitioners under Articles 12 (1) and 141 (1) (a), for the reasons already stated.

Should the 1st Respondent (the Commissioner of Elections) have insisted on the poll being held on August 1998? While I appreciate the difficult situation in which he was, nevertheless it is necessary to remember that the Constitution assures him independence, so that he may fearlessly insist on due compliance with the law in regard to all aspects of elections, if necessary, by instituting appropriate legal proceedings in order to obtain judicial orders. But the material available to the Court indicates that he made no effort to ascertain the legal position, or to have recourse to legal remedies.

I grant the petitioners declaration that 1st to 13th Respondents have infringed their fundamental rights under Articles 12 (1) and 14 (1) (a) by the suspension of the issue of postal ballots, thereby contributing to the postponement of the poll; and that the 1st Respondent has infringed their fundamental rights under articles 12 (1) and 14 (1) (a) by failing to take steps to enable the taking of the poll, for the five Provincial Council elections, on 28th August 1998, and by failing to fix a new date of poll.

I direct the 1st Respondent to take immediate action to fix, within two weeks from today, in respect of all five elections (a) a new date or dates, not later than four weeks from today, for the issue of postal ballot papers, and (b) a new date or dates of poll, not later than three months from today.

(Unquote)

The events in the aftermath of that day of infamy in Wayamba were an embarrassment to the People's Alliance, both in private and in public.

January 26th 1999 was the National Day of both Australia and India . Every year both High Commissions issue invitations by the hundreds for their National Day celebrations in Colombo and the two functions are staggered to enable those who are in the diplomatic cocktail party circuit as such, to attend both functions.

At both functions Sunethra Bandaranaike, the Oxford - educated elder sister of the President, and Dr. Mackie Ratwatte, the younger brother of the Prime Minister, castigated the People's Alliance for everybody to hear.

The following day Jayasena Rajakaruna MP (SLFP – Kurunegala District) publicly expressed his disgust and announced his retirement from politics.

The role of the People's Alliance in Wayamba was indefensible, to say the least. Somehow seven Cabinet Ministers, all from the SLFP thought otherwise and attempted to defend the Government over Rupavahini TV. The arrant nonsense they spoke is best ignored with the contempt it deserves and is hence omitted from this book..

Another controversial decision by the Government was to announce that Senior Superintendents of Police, Daya Jayasundera and N.K. Illangakoon who were posted to Wayamba on election duty were promoted Deputy Inspectors-General of Police as of February 1st 1999. Both were way down on the seniority list. However it is debatable which came first, the decision to promote them to the rank of Deputy Inspector-General or the decision to post them to Wayamba on election duty.

It is a matter of opinion whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should have or should not have issued a Third Person Note to all

Diplomatic Missions and Agencies of the UN, to the effect that under the Vienna Convention no member of the Diplomatic Corps was expected to express publicly an opinion on the recent Provincial Council Election in Wayamba. (That is technically correct). That any Diplomatic Missions wishing to do so shall confine themselves to the normal diplomatic channels of communication. (That is also technically correct). The Ministry then pontificated that, "No Diplomat nor Diplomatic Missions accredited to Sri Lanka is in a position to make an objective assessment of the facts surrounding the conduct of this Election before the completion of domestic procedures. Such procedures are judicial in nature and
..... (That is arrant nonsense. I have myself seen two brilliant and comprehensive reports despatched by an Embassy and a High Commission in Colombo.)

Ambassador C. Mahendran, former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to China, South Korea and Japan, one of the best Ambassadors that Sri Lanka had in my time and in retirement a politician with the UNP, publicly ridiculed that statement. Much worse, most Western envoys based in Colombo indicated their misgivings to the much respected Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. They said that their Governments were perturbed by events in Wayamba and expressed the hope of their Governments that there would be no repetition in the next round of Provincial Elections.

Aid from the West, accounts for about 40% of all aid received by Sri Lanka. In my knowledge of foreign relations that would be in jeopardy if the fiasco in Wayamba is repeated just once

more.

At this juncture I will be less than honest unless I add the misgivings of so many foreign Ambassadors and High Commissioners based in Colombo. Most of the abler ones and I are on a first name basis and they were wondering whether or not Sri Lanka will become a second Philippines.

The Philippines received her Independence from the United States in 1945 after careful tutelage on the American political system for well over three generations, including a transition from a Commonwealth to a Republic over the period 1927 - 45. Their Constitution provided for an executive President, a Senate and a House of Representatives exactly like in the United States. In 1945 Manuel Roxas the last President of the transitional Commonwealth was elected as the first President of the Republic. Upon his death in 1948, he was succeeded by Vice - President Elpidio Quirino. Thereafter the Presidency was as follows:

1949 President Quirino re-elected for a second term.

1953 President Quirino defeated by Senator Ramon Magsaysay.

1957 President Magsaysay re-elected for a second term.

1957 President Magsaysay killed in an air crash and succeeded by Vice - President Carlos Garcia.

1961 President Garcia defeated by Senator Diosdado Macapagal

1965 President Macapagal defeated by Senator Ferdinand Marcos

Thus till 1965 the Presidency of the Philippines functioned very smoothly. Then President Marcos ruined it all. That subject, so pertinent to Sri Lanka, is dealt with in greater detail in the next

Chapter.

On Independence day February 4th 1999 the President while addressing the nation from Independence Square said *inter alia*;

“We shall never permit the phantoms from the past to destroy our hard won gains, nor shall we allow anyone from our ranks to sully our greatest of victories. If some persons from our camp have indulged in any activities that are contrary to the pledges we have given our people, I pledge here and now that my Government and our political party will take the strictest of action against all such persons. We shall also ensure that no such repetitions will take place in the future.”

Those were splendid words spoken by the President who while seeking the Presidency in November 1994, when she was the Prime Minister stated from every platform,

“The executive Presidency is the bane of our society. It will be abolished as a matter of priority no later than June 15th 1995.”

Therefore it is a matter of opinion whether this time she spoke the truth, the half-truth or the untruth. To say the least, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has no concept of the calumny she has heaped upon herself when she repeated that diabolical lie pertaining to unconditionally abolishing the executive Presidency. Nevertheless the pledge she made on Independence day was the first meaningful step she took in

administering remedial action, on the premise that what she stated was the truth and nothing but the truth.

Against that background the *coup de grace* on this shameful chapter in our history was delivered by Archbishop Nicholas Marcus Fernando of the Roman Catholic Church in his message to the nation on Independence Day:

(Quote)

Having completed and celebrated fifty years of freedom we have arrived at the fifty first anniversary to begin the second half of a century of freedom. What have we to be proud about? Wayamba? Yes that is where we have arrived after all these years of freedom. Indiscipline is not freedom. Freedom is not the power to do what we want but to do what we ought. People who try to be free through indiscipline will find that they are as free as a ship when it loses its rudder. Free to go nowhere.

Our people do want democracy. But political parties have proved themselves to be wreckers of democracy. Let there be a people's movement to restore democracy. As proposed in recent times we could begin by demanding an Independent Elections Commission with steel - bound safeguards of their own independence. If that too fails, then we have no choice but to find a partyless system of democracy more suited to our country and its ethos.

(Unquote)

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESIDENTS OF SRI LANKA.

WHY THEY ALL FAILED

Since the executive Presidency was introduced on February 4th 1978 to increase the stability of the Government of Sri Lanka, four were duly sworn-in to that high office. They were:

1978 - 88	President J.R.Jayewardene.
1989 - 93	President R. Premadasa
1993 - 94	President D.B. Wijetunga
1994 - to date.	President Chandrika Bandaranäike Kumaratunga

The first three were very experienced politicians. For example President Jayewardene who entered the Legislature in 1943 had thirty years of experience, four years in the State Council, fourteen years in Parliament as a Cabinet Minister, five years in the Opposition and seven years as Leader of the Opposition. He was Prime Minister briefly when he introduced the current Constitution by virtue of which he became President. His successor President R. Premadasa was from a different social stratum from all other Heads of Governments in Sri Lanka. He was born in Kehelwatte,

an impoverished area in Colombo, studied mostly at the obscure St. Lorenz College, Maradana, walking distance from his home and was not remotely associated with the social elite till he became Prime Minister in 1978. That was after serving thirteen years in Parliament, more or less evenly in Government and in Opposition. After serving as Prime Minister for nearly eleven years he was elected President in December 1988, at the height of the JVP insurrection. He was assassinated in May 1993 whereupon Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunga was elected President by Parliament to complete the balance term of President Premadasa. In direct contrast when President Chandrika Bandaranaike was elected in November 1994 she had only eighteen months of experience in high office, fifteen months as the Chief Minister of the Western Province and three months as Prime Minister. However her political legacy is unique. Her father was elected Prime Minister when she was eleven years old and her mother elected Prime Minister when she was a teenager and so elected once more when she was at The Sorbonne. Therefore it can be said of her that she was raised in an environment of Prime Ministers and that accounted for her being politically astute, like her elder sister and younger brother.

These four Presidents have one common factor, a dubious one. They have disgraced themselves in office.

President Jayewardene was by far the ablest politician I have known in Sri Lanka. I first saw him in 1945 when I was the page boy at the wedding of his sister Dulcie and my mother's brother

Rick Abeywardene. I next saw him in 1947 when I entered Royal Primary School and his son Ravi was one class my senior and my friend. In adult life I got to know him in 1957 when I was a freshman at the University of Ceylon. Both he and I were serving in the Games Council of the Royal College Old Boy's Union. Ever since then and till he became Prime Minister, leading the UNP to a landslide victory in 1977, I admired him greatly. In my judgement he had everything a leader must have, namely ability, honesty, dedication, vision and an impeccable social background. In fact in 1976 when I was the equivalent of a Counsellor in the UN, I accepted his offer to handle the covert intelligence operations for his campaign at the General Election of 1977 and to write the book "J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka"*

Regrettably my disenchantment with him began a few months later when he made public the first draft of the current Constitution. It was drafted by his brother and eminent lawyer H.W. Jayewardene QC. Till that draft was released the contents were known only unto God, the Prime Minister and his brother. In my judgement that Constitution was not so much geared to give Sri Lanka a sound Government but geared to give legal authority to Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene to be a benevolent dictator, as President of Sri Lanka.

*Note by the Publisher

"J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka" became the all-time best-seller in Sri Lanka as of 1977. His next book "The Agony of Sri Lanka" (1983) easily surpassed that record. In fact it is still being sold at the Lake House Bookshops and the Vijitha Yapa Bookshops.

By that time I was Ambassador- designate of Sri Lanka to Indonesia. Before I assumed duties in Jakarta, I was invited to Washington for a seminar on the General Elections of 1977 in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. I made it a point to visit Harvard University, where I had studied, to get their opinion on the draft Constitution. They were horrified and predicted that with such a Constitution Sri Lanka will end up like the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos.

About that time Upali Wijewardene, my classmate at Royal College and my life long friend, and then the newly appointed Chairman of the Greater Colombo Economic Commission (now re-named the Board of Investments) visited London routinely on business. He took time off to visit Cambridge University, where he had studied, to discuss the new Constitution. They too were horrified. They equated it to the notorious Constitution of Ghana, formulated by Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah who went off at a tangent when he became President. Upali Wijewardene and I had played key roles in the campaign of J.R.Jayewardene in 1976-77 . A multi-millionaire and first cousin of the new Prime Minister, he was one of the principal financiers of the campaign. Before the end of 1977 both of us were disenchanted with the Prime Minister J.R.Jayewardene because of his new Constitution. Privately we argued with him fiercely. Our arguments were solid, more often than not based on the advice we had received from Harvard and Cambridge The Prime Minister, who had a son of our age, was supposedly wise. For the first time we thought him to be otherwise. For the first time we thought J. R. Jayewardene

was putting his interests above that of the nation, a ready made formula for disaster anywhere in the world.

With the Prime Minister having a staggering majority of 142 seats in a Parliament of 168, there was no serious difficulty in adopting the new Constitution. Thus on Independence Day 1978, Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene was sworn in as our first executive President.

The first sign of President J.R. Jayewardene veering off at a tangent was when he decided to somehow strip his principal rival former Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike of her civic rights. That process began in 1978 itself.

In 1972 when Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike introduced her land reforms, she reduced ownership to fifty acres per individual. The Bandaranaike coconut plantations in Horagolla were nearly a thousand acres. Thus in terms of her Land Reform Bill 1972, she was left with fifty acres for herself and fifty acres each for her grown up children Sunethra, Chandrika, and Anura. Indeed it was a huge personal sacrifice she was making because of her deep rooted belief in socialism, However in 1976 Dr. Colvin. R. De Silva M.P. (LSSP*- Agalawatte) raised the question in Parliament whether the Prime Minister armed with the inside information of the envisaged Bill had in practice sold part of the

* Note to foreign readers

LSSP – The Lanka Sama Samaja Party the only Trotskyite political party in the world.

Bandaranaike lands for a good price. It was common knowledge that land prices would plummet after the Bill was passed. Dr. Colvin R. De Silva, who was her Minister for Plantations before the LSSP was unceremoniously removed from her Government in 1975, berated her in Parliament while the Leader of the Opposition J.R. Jayewardene (his classmate at Royal College) listened impassively. In 1978 President Jayewardene appointed a Presidential Commission to investigate her actions. Sirima Bandaranaike welcomed such a Commission perceiving it to be a fact finding inquiry. What she did not realise in making that statement was that J.R. Jayewardene was bringing in retroactive legislation to strip the civic rights of those found guilty by Presidential Commissions. Then she took a writ in the Supreme Court to declare such Presidential Commissions illegal. The Supreme Court upheld her objection. President Jayewardene responded with The First Amendment to the Constitution nullifying the verdict of the Supreme Court. Thereafter a Presidential Commission consisting of Justice S. Sharvananda, Justice J.G.T. Weeraratne and District Judge K.C.E. De Alwis were appointed. In anger Sirima Bandaranaike boycotted the Commission. In 1980 the Presidential Commission found the former Prime Minister to be guilty of abuse of power and recommended that she be stripped of her civic rights for a period of seven years. Thus President Jayewardene deviously got rid of his principal political opponent. Sri Lanka was thus proceeding on the same road to ruination that Ghana took under President Nkrumah and the Philippines under President Marcos.

By 1980 President Jayewardene had produced an economic miracle. The open economy he introduced in 1977, supplanting the socialist economy of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, was flourishing. Only a liar or a fool from the SLFP would not have acknowledged it. By the same token President Jayewardene had produced a miracle on the development front. Somehow he obtained external financing from the UK, Germany, Sweden and Canada, quantitatively in that order to telescope the massive Mahaweli Diversion Scheme from thirty years to less than ten years. Once again it was only a fool or a liar from the SLFP who did not acknowledge that President Jayewardene was well on the way to eclipsing even Prime Minister D.S.Senanayake on development work.

Anywhere in the world a Government is like a cantilever bridge supported by two massive bases, one at each end. One base is the economy and the other, governance. The performance of President Jayewardene with respect to the economy was truly brilliant. By the same token his performance in respect of governance truly disastrous.

In October 1982 he won the Presidential election by a landslide. The basic issue was the open economy of the UNP versus the socialist economy of the SLFP. The President polled 52.9% of the vote and Hector Kobbekaduwa, the second stringer from the SLFP in the absence of Sirima Bandaranaike, 39.1%. A General Election was due in 1983 and the UNP was now certain of winning it comfortably. However with the new Proportional Representation

(PR) system introduced into the Constitution of 1978 a two-thirds majority was out of the question. Nowhere in the world where the PR system prevailed, was that possible. On his part President Jayewardene had a sinister plan. He wanted to retain his two-third majority at any cost. To do so he lied to the Government Parliamentary Group that there was a Naxalite plot to destroy democracy. No such evidence was fed to the President by the Police, under the much respected Inspector-General Rudra Rajasingham. No statement pertaining to a threat to democracy was ever made to Parliament by Prime Minister R.Premadasa, nor was the subject ever discussed at a Cabinet Meeting. In fact the only evidence the President had about a Naxalite plot was an un-corroborated report sent to him privately by Tyrrel Goonetilleke, DIG (CID).

The President informed the Government Parliamentary Group that because of the threat of the Naxalites, he would hold a Referendum instead of a General Election, to extend the lifetime of Parliament by six years. Then he rebuked unpopular MPs in the Government Parliamentary Group saying they were an embarrassment to him. He therefore called for un-dated letters of resignation of the entire Government Parliamentary Group. S.Thondaman M.P (CWC-Nuwara Eliya) and a Cabinet Minister said he would not submit such a letter because he was not a member of the UNP. M.H. Naina Marikar M.P. (UNP- Puttalam) explained a finer point of the law he had learnt at Cambridge University whereby he never ever issued an un-dated cheque or an un-dated letter of resignation. He then offered to resign his

seat. The President declined the offer. All other 141 MPs of the 143 member Government Parliamentary Group including my life long friend and schoolmate Lalith Athulathmudali, the Oxford and Harvard educated intellectual and powerful Cabinet Minister, shamelessly gave un-dated letters of resignation. Our intelligentsia was outraged, so were all parties in the Opposition. The campaign against the Referendum was strident. The clergy, both Buddhist and Christian, came out openly against the Referendum. Upali Wijewardene, still haunted by the advice Cambridge had given him, saw in his first cousin 'Dickie Aiya' (President Jayewardene) an Asian version of President Nkrumah. He made a public statement to the effect that the only Sri Lankan leader he really respected was Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. 'Dickie Aiya' quietly got rid of him from his influential post as Chairman of the Greater Colombo Economic Commission. The clergy issued a weekly tabloid "Paavadi Handa" (The Voice of the Clergy). The President sent the Police to confiscate the printing press which was located at the Saama Vihare in Gampaha. In the *fracas* which ensued the Rev. Yohan Devananda of the Church of Ceylon, the Cambridge- educated grandson of the freedom fighter The late Sir James Peiris, was assaulted and his clerical robes torn. An enraged Chief Incumbent of the Vihare, The Venerable Dharmittipola Ratnasara, filed a Fundamental Rights suit in the Supreme Court. The concept of Fundamental Rights being justiciable was introduced into the Constitution of 1978 by the President himself. The Supreme Court gave the verdict in favour of The Venerable and ordered Premadasa Udugampola, Superintendent of Police Gampaha, to pay Rs. 10,000 as damages

to the priest. President Jayewardene then gave Udugampola an instant promotion to the rank of Senior Superintendent, thus breaking a tradition since the inception of the Police in 1864 of no Gazetted Officer being given an instant promotion, and the State paid the fine of Rs. 10,000. As to who the Naxalites were, was known only unto God and President Jayewardene. However Vijaya Kumaranatunga, the matinee idol turned politician and the husband of Chandrika Bandaranaike, was arrested as a Naxalite and imprisoned under Emergency Regulations. No other Naxalite was ever found. To the best of my knowledge the Naxalites were some troublesome fellows some 2000 kilometres away in Bengal, India !

On my part I was more than convinced that Sri Lanka under President Jayewardene was going the same way as the Philippines under President Marcos. I was certainly not going to vote UNP at the Referendum. However President Jayewardene had reposed so much of trust in me, the gentlemanly way to handle him would be for me to tell him of my decision.

President Jayewardene normally finished his work in the morning at 7.30 a.m. and sat down for breakfast with his wife at 7.45 a.m. Therefore one morning in November 1982 around 7.30 a.m. I showed my head over the swing doors of his study at his private residence at 66, Ward Place, Colombo - 7. The President was alone, in a relaxed mood and he spotted me. To the best of my recollection our dialogue that morning was as follows:

“ Jungle*, please come in you look so worried. Have you had

another fight with Hameed?”

(Foreign Minister Hameed whom I loathed because he was a chaotic administrator)

“No, Excellency”

“Do you want to go abroad again as an Ambassador”

“No, Excellency. I am getting married next April. I just cannot risk taking on a wife and a new Embassy at the same time.” (Loud laughter by both)

“Then Jungle, why do you look so worried ?”

“Excellency, I am against your Referendum and I will be voting against you. If the present trends continue Sri Lanka will become another Philippines before you complete your second term.”

“Jungle, you wrote such a good book about me in 1977. I autographed hundreds of copies even before you left for Indonesia as my Ambassador and thousands of copies when you were away in Indonesia. Now you imply that I am another rotter like Marcos.”

“Excellency, can you remember how strongly I opposed your new Constitution, when it still was in the draft stage?”

“Yes, of course. You went to Harvard and you are very familiar with the Constitution of the United States. Our Constitution is based on the French model. Had you gone to The Sorbonne instead of Harvard you would appreciate our new Constitution. What do you know of the Constitution of France?”

“Nothing.”

*Note by the Publisher

“Jungle” – That is the nickname of the author. He inherited it from his much respected father.

“There you are. Besides I wish to make another point. Of my senior officials Upali Wijewardene and you both fiercely opposed my taking away the civic rights of Mrs. Bandaranaike. It was she who wanted a Commission of Inquiry”

“Excellency, that is only a half truth. She wanted a Commission of Inquiry to establish her innocence. When you brought in the clause to remove the civic rights of those found guilty by Presidential Commissions she took the issue to the Supreme Court who upheld her objection. Then you brought in your notorious First Amendment to the Constitution”

“Upali Wijewardena is married to a niece of Sirima Bandaranaike. I can understand why he is defending her. On the other hand Sirima Bandaranaike wanted to hang your father for leading the 1962 *coup d'etat*. Moreover she cancelled your appointment to the Police, which you love so dearly. Therefore I thought you will want me to imprison Sirima Bandaranaike. Instead you defend her at every turn. Why?

“Daddy was tried under retroactive legislation. That was sheer cruelty. Ever since then I have opposed any mortal being tried under retroactive legislation. You tried Sirima Bandaranaike under retroactive legislation. Therefore I opposed you.

“For purposes of hypothesis, if Your Excellency ever tries anybody, friend or foe of mine, under retroactive legislation then I will oppose you again”

“I appreciate your point of view.

“Jungle, now you are opposed to my Referendum ?”

“Of course. Excellency, your governance is atrocious. History

will condemn you for it. Only President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana had the dubious distinction of asking Members of Parliament from his Convention Peoples Party for un-dated letters of resignation. Now you disgrace yourself by following in the footsteps of Kwame Nkrumah.”

“Jungle, our Supreme Court has ruled that a Referendum endorsed by two-thirds majority in Parliament is equivalent to a General Election. Here is their verdict,” he said showing me the document.

“Excellency, you are now talking of juridical issues, whereas I am talking of political issues. In theory a Parliament represents the will of the people. In practice Parliament reflects the will of the people accurately, only in the first one or two years of its lifetime. (He nodded in agreement.) So you told me when I was writing “J.R.Jayewardne of Sri Lanka.” and it is from you that I first heard those words of wisdom.

“Since 1977 you have brought in sweeping reforms in the economy.. On the other hand the situation in the North is deteriorating day by day since 1977. What the mood of the nation is today you will know only by holding a General Election. A General Election will help you to govern this nation wisely. You reject such wisdom. That is precisely what President Marcos is doing in the Philippines.

“So you equate me to President Nkrumah of Ghana and President Marcos of the Phillipines.”

“Excellency, in 1977 you called Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike a dictator. Now you are worse than her in respect of governance?”

“Jungle, how are my economic programmes?”

“Excellency, on the economy you are a genius. You are a greater leader than what I perceived you to be in 1977. History will honour you for telescoping the thirty year Mahaweli Diversion Scheme into less than ten years. Already millions thank you for your open economy and having saved the nation from the curse, the socialist economy of Sirima Bandaranaike. No leader of Sri Lanka since Independence has done so much for the economy as you.”

“Excellency, in my judgement you have undertaken even more development work than King Parakrama Bahu the Great. Some day when I retire from diplomacy I will write about you in that vein”

“Jungle, you praise me like you did in “J.R.Jayewardene of Sri Lanka in 1977. Thank you. I do appreciate your candour. Do please join me for breakfast. It is quite late now.”

President Jayewardene was such a gracious host that I just could not refuse his invitation although I already had my breakfast at home.

At the Referendum of December 1982 the Government polled much less than at the Presidential Election of October 1982. Nevertheless it was more than 50% of all votes cast, legitimately or otherwise. Therefore the lifetime of the Parliament was extended for another six years. That exercise was unparalleled in the history of the world in the twentieth century, in nations where Parliamentary democracy was or is practised.

Rigging was rampant in that Referendum, because some Members of Parliament in the Opposition with justifiable anger withdrew their polling agents. In fact Sirima Bandaranaike, who was livid, boycotted the Referendum in Attanagalle and Dompe, pocket boroughs of the Bandaranaike family. Goons from the UNP then rigged the polls there shamelessly resulting in the UNP recording a landslide victory in those electorates.

The second term of President Jayewardene was a disaster politically but he was so successful in the management of the economy. The headworks of the Mahaweli Diversion Scheme were all completed before 1987 as scheduled, foreign investments came in increasing amounts despite the ugly racial riots of 1983. On the issues of governance President Jayewardene blundered along. In his first term he ruined democracy by stripping Sirima Bandaranaike of her civic rights and holding a Referendum instead of a General Election. In his second term he antagonised the Supreme Court. Judgements given by the highest Court in our nation were negated by Presidential directives. Whenever a Police Officer was convicted by the Supreme Court for violating the Fundamental Rights of a citizen, he was promoted instantly. When goons from the UNP demonstrated before the homes of Justice Percy Collin - Thome and two other Judges of the Supreme Court, in broad daylight, the President informed the Police that they were merely exercising their democratic rights as explicitly expressed by their Lordships in a recent judgement.

Bribery and corruption was rampant during the J.R.Jayewardene Administration. That has happened everywhere in the world, when a socialist economy was transformed into an open economy. However in 1987 due to mounting public opinion he appointed a Presidential Commission of Inquiry on Bribery and Corruption for offences committed after 1977. Justice Collin - Thome handled the Commission with great care and wisdom. Therefore progress was slow but steady In 1988 the Commission summoned Gamini Dissanayake, Minister for Mahaweli Development, to appear before them to defend himself against serious allegations made against him. The week before he was scheduled to face the Commission, President Jayewardene refused to extend the lifetime of the Commission, with an edict which was routinely issued every six months. Thus the Commission was dissolved even before Gamini Dissanayake could defend himself!.

On issues of the economy President .Jayewardene was indeed great. On the issues of governance President Jayewardene was indeed a pathetic failure. Therefore he was a failure as President of Sri Lanka.

On January 1st 1989, Ranasinghe Premadasa was sworn in as the second executive President of Sri-Lanka. He quickly got into his stride and established his own style of governance. Indeed he was an indefatigable worker and the unquestioned champion of the poor, the stratum of society he was born into in 1924. Since Independence no Prime Minister or executive President

endeavoured so much as he did to help in the upliftment of the poor. His vision of two hundred garment factories in rural areas including remote areas gave employment to tens of thousands of the rural poor. Like President Jayewardena, President Premadasa saw great virtue in the private sector as engines of growth. With extensive privatisation programmes the frontiers of socialism began to recede and prosperity came in its wake. In the modern world an executive President is not a master leader but a master broker. President Premadasa was neither. He perceived himself to be an autocrat within the multi-party system in Sri-Lanka which had stood the test of time since Independence. Of course he tolerated the Opposition in Parliament, led by former Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike. However he tolerated no dissent within the Government Parliamentary Group. He preached the enlightened philosophy of consultation, compromise and consensus. He practised the anti-thesis, the one man show. Thus President Premadasa reduced his Cabinet of Ministers to a farce, the Government Parliamentary group to impotency, Parliament to a rubber stamping device and reduced senior public servants to Palace servants. Above all he created a fear psychosis which permeated through society with people not knowing when and how the wrath of a President would descend on them mysteriously or otherwise. Part of that mystery was that those who opposed the President either mysteriously disappeared into thin air like Lakshman Perera MMC (UNP-Dehiwela- Galkissa) or were mysteriously murdered like Richard De Zoysa the well known actor and playwright. Of course President Premadasa was one of the first to pay his last respects to that dead actor and to pontificate

that the murderers would be brought to justice. His piety was confined to empty rhetoric in this instance and in the numerous disappearances of those who opposed him, be it in leading industrial disputes, strikes at our Universities or the murders of those who were a threat to him wherever they be even on the battlefield. To this day who the murderers were remains a mystery.

President Premadasa had twenty four years of experience in Parliament, serving two-thirds of that time in Government and one third in Opposition. Twenty four years is a long time, long enough to be habit forming. President Premadasa entered Parliament in March 1960 and his ascendancy began in 1965 when he returned to Parliament and was appointed Deputy Minister for Local Government, Housing and Construction. He took on that portfolio with Cabinet rank in 1968. From 1970-77 he was the Chief Opposition Whip and from 1978-88 the Prime Minister.

Thus his distinguished career was steeped in a wealth of Parliamentary experience. Therefore the natural expectation was that as President he would strengthen the Parliamentary system, What he did was the very anti-thesis. In the short space of twenty four months he undid everything he held as sacrosanct for twenty four years. He equated dissent to treason, and considered himself to be the fount of all wisdom. Barring directing a surgeon on how to perform surgery, he directed everybody else in every conceivable profession serving the Government of Sri-Lanka. Truly that was a reflection of the educational background of the

President. He was a high school dropout without any professional experience whatsoever! Indeed he publicly ridiculed the educated and extolled the virtues of the uneducated. Nobody within the Government dare tell him that he was courting disaster, well knowing the consequences.

Of the dissenters Gamini Dissanaike, a senior Cabinet Minister and a Presidential aspirant in 1988, was suddenly dropped from the Cabinet. Lalith Athulathmudali, another senior Cabinet Minister and another Presidential aspirant in 1988, nearly suffered the same fate. While the President was isolating himself from the intelligentsia he became friendly with all manner of nefarious characters. For example common criminals like Soththi Upali and Mora Sunil, who had the identical educational qualifications as the President and who were born in slums like the President, became increasingly influential. So did his valet Mohideen. According to the President that was the social revolution he was spearheading, a transition from Kurunduwatte to Kehelwatte.* For example he appointed a Sanitary Inspector as an Ambassador. A few of us Ambassadors do have experience with the underground. The only experience his Ambassador to Kuwait and the Maldives had with the underground was confined to the sewerage system!

*Note to foreign readers

Kurunduwatte or Cinnamon Gardens is where the elite in Colombo has lived during this century. Kehelwatte is the slum into which President Premadasa was born. In more recent years he owned a villa in Cinnamon Gardens.

I was then his Ambassador to the European Union and a particularly good friend of mine in Brussels was the Ambassador of the Philippines. A son of a famous Foreign Minister, he was educated at Harvard. He saw in President Premadasa another President Marcos. He saw in our Constitution so many similarities with the then Constitution of the Phillipines and an amazing similarity the way President Marcos emasculated the Congress and his Cabinet and the way President Premadasa emasculated Parliament and his Cabinet. The night Lalith Athulathmudali was assassinated he telephoned me from Manila (I was then back in Colombo) and exclaimed,

“Jungle, remember what I told you when we were in Brussels Senator Aquino the principal rival of President Marcos was assassinated Your friend Athulathmudali who was the principal rival of President Premadasa is now assassinated.”

Indeed the similarity between President Marcos and President Premadasa was very striking. President Marcos had his Palace Guards who were up to all manner of nefarious activities. President Premadasa had his Presidential Security Division who would do anything for him. It is common knowledge that the Presidential Security Division had a hand in the abduction and murder of Richard De Zoysa . President Marcos had retired Police Generals to pry into the income tax files and foreign exchange transactions of his political foes. President Premadasa had two retired Deputy Inspectors-General of Police performing the identical functions.

From every platform President Marcos lavished praise on the democratic system. President Premadasa did precisely the same. President Marcos mowed down one group of terrorists and negotiated for peace with the other group of terrorists. President Premadasa mowed down the JVP and he negotiated for peace with the LTTE! President Marcos perfected the role of State-owned vehicles sans number plates operating with his goons running amok during elections. President Premadasa achieved the same degree of perfection when he introduced it to Sri Lanka for the Presidential Elections in December 1988!

Many a fool in Sri Lanka equates President Premadasa to President Abraham Lincoln of the United States. I cannot think of a better method of insulting one of the greatest Presidents of the United States.

President Lincoln went from the log cabin to the White House, President Premadasa from a slum to the President's House. President Lincoln was an orator in English, President Premadasa in Sinhala. President Lincoln was assassinated. President Premadasa was also assassinated. The similarities stop there.

President Lincoln championed the cause of democracy and preached and practised the sophisticated doctrine, the Government of the people, by the people, for the people. Whatever President Premadasa preached, he practised the evil doctrine of the one-man show. Even in the midst of the Civil war President Lincoln had an impeccable Human Rights record. During our

Civil war President Premadasa had the worst Human Rights record of all nations wedded to democracy, President Lincoln was a highly educated man. He went to Springfield College in Massachusetts because he could not afford to go to the nearby Harvard University. As President of the United States, he instituted a number of scholarships so that the poorest of the poor could go to Harvard if they had the requisite high grades. President Premadasa was a high school drop out. He made a virtue of being ill-educated and ridiculed the well educated.

When Ranasinghe Premadasa adorned our Parliament for twenty four years, he served with distinction both in Government and in Opposition. Indeed he was held in high esteem by both sides of the House. His being elected President of Sri Lanka was a logical concomitant. Yet once elected President he all but negated the role of Parliament and supplanted it with his one-man show. To say the least, his governance was a disaster. Consequently he was a failure as a President of Sri Lanka.

President D.B. Wijetunga assumed duties within a week of the assassination of President Premadasa, to complete his unfinished term of one and a half years. He counted nineteen years in Parliament, five as a MP, ten as a Cabinet Minister and four as Prime Minister. He was a simpleton and was completely out of his depth as a Prime Minister and even more so as President, which he became by a historical accident. He allowed the economy to grow as it did without making any changes whatsoever and thereby benefited from the sound management of the economy

by President Premadasa. On governance, he removed many of the repressive measures of President Premadasa. However President Wijetunga made his own contribution to bad governance.

In 1992 the High Court of Kurunegala convicted two well known supporters of the UNP for attempted murder and sentenced them to five years of rigorous imprisonment. The Court of Appeal reduced that sentence to three years. Accordingly the Court of Appeal conveyed that decision to the High Court of Kurunegala. The accused who were on bail were summoned for sentencing. They failed to appear, therefore a warrant was issued for their arrest in 1994. At that point of time President Wijetunga granted these two convicted criminals from the UNP an executive pardon!

In 1994 Chief Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga of the Western Province found a member of her Cabinet of Ministers, Premaratne Gunasekera (DUNF), was gravitating towards the UNP. Therefore she wanted him removed from office and accordingly made a formal request to Governor S. Sharvananda, a retired Chief Justice. Premaratne Gunasekera was a Member of Parliament from the UNP from 1977-91 and had defected on the issue of the impeachment of President Premadasa. Following the assassination of President Premadasa had indeed gravitated towards the UNP and there was definitive evidence. To say the least Governor Sharvananda, through force of habit made a thorough investigation. There was corroborative evidence and therefore he removed Premaratne Gunasekera from the Cabinet

of Ministers of the Western Province.

President Wijetunga was enraged and demanded for the resignation of Governor Sharvanada. Once again party interests were placed above national interests, more specifically the Constitution of Sri Lanka. For these reasons and for reasons of his own limitations, he was a failure as President of Sri Lanka.

From 1978 – 94 the UNP had produced three executive Presidents of Sri Lanka. They ranged from the sublime to the ludicrous but had one common factor. All three placed party interests above national interests. Therefore the Presidential form of Government was manifestly unsuited for Sri Lanka under the UNP.

The fourth executive President of Sri Lanka was President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. Her father was one of the two truly liberal Heads of Government in Ceylon. He was educated at Oxford. The other was Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake who was educated at Cambridge. They were indeed a credit to Oxford and Cambridge respectively, two of the most famous and liberal Universities in the world. (Incidentally both were distinguished products of S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia.) President Kumaratunga was educated at The Sorbonne also one of the most famous and liberal Universities in the world. Not surprisingly she took a courageous stand on the issue of Human Rights and vowed to set right our Human Rights record after years of shameless abuse. Her success in those noble

endeavours earned her the respect of the nation and the world at large.

As of January 1st 1999, four years into a six - year term as President, she towered over President Jayewardene and President Premadasa on the issue of Human Rights. That would indeed be her trump card at whatever elections the People's Alliance may have to face in 1999 and 2000.

On most other issues her performance was anything but good. Her string of broken promises are even more indefensible than her being perpetually late. In my perception her basic problem is that her ability does not match her aspirations. She just does not have the executive ability to match that of her famous mother who was a high school drop out. The exact parallel in the UNP was Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake, the Cambridge educated intellectual who just did not have the executive ability his famous father had though he was a high school drop out.

I well remember interviewing Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in 1994 when I was writing "Politics of Sri Lanka" Volumes (I and II). She was a liberal to a fault. It brought back to me happy memories of my interviews with Dudley Senanayake in 1972 when I was writing my first book "Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka." (1973). I was amazed at the similarities in their liberal views. Such liberal thinking was indeed deeply ingrained in each of them.

Democracy is a many splendoured thing. Those who support the Government of the day that is duly elected serve their nation well. By the same token, those who support a duly elected Opposition serve their nation even better. To the best of my knowledge, both President Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake freely subscribed to these views, so eloquently expressed by President John. F. Kennedy of the United States. He was a distinguished product of Harvard University, one of the most famous citadels of liberal education in the world.

Therefore I was distressed how President Chandrika Badaranaike Kumaratunga deceived the people of Sri Lanka after winning the Presidential Election of 1994. She had sworn from every platform while campaigning as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka .

“The Presidential system of Government was thoroughly unsuited for Sri Lanka and it will be abolished as a matter of priority and no later than June 15th 1995. ”

That was indeed an unconditional statement and stated in no uncertain terms and given in writing at the request of the JVP who then withdrew their Presidential candidate.

During the campaign for the Presidency she was more than aware that her voting strength in Parliament. was at best 124 – 99. That was the voting on the election of the Speaker in September 1994 when the contestants were K.B. Ratnayake MP (People’s Alliance – Nominated list) and Anura Bandaranaike MP (UNP- Nominated list). That voting was not adequate for a two- thirds majority in

Parliament, necessary to amend the Constitution. However after the UNP was soundly beaten in the Presidential Election of November 1994, Rānil Wickremasinghe the new Leader of the Opposition and the new President of the UNP in succession to Gamini Dissanayake who was assassinated, openly stated both within and without Parliament, that the UNP would now support the abolition of the executive Presidency.

Thus President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was assured of more than 200 votes in a Parliament of 225. She now had a two-thirds majority to change the Constitution and all she had to do was to direct the Legal Draughtsman to prepare a new draft Constitution and thereafter present it to Parliament. For certain the new Constitution would have been operative well before the deadline she set herself.

Regrettably she took no such action. Instead she displayed the same capacity for machinations and intellectual dishonesty that President Jayewardene did, whenever he deviated from the standard practices of democracy. She then claimed that the new Constitution abolishing the Presidency and her Devolution package to appease the Tamils must be woven into one new Constitution. That was indeed a supreme example of her sophistry. Not suprisingly both the new Constitution and the Devolution package have yet to see the light of day. Therefore President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga stands exposed as one who wilfully deceived the nation.

Incidentally, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was not the first member of the illustrious Bandaranaike family to deceive the people of Sri Lanka on the issue of the new Constitution. Her mother Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike had the dubious distinction of doing so when she ushered in the first Republican Constitution in 1972. In 1970 she was elected for a five year term as stipulated in the Soulbury Constitution of 1946. The United Front, which was a SLFP led Coalition, had won 117 seats in a Parliament of 151 and thus had a two - thirds majority, necessary to amend the Constitution. Mis-using that two-thirds majority the new Constitution stated that the Government of the day would be for five years commencing 1972. Thus the people of Sri Lanka were denied electing a new Government in 1975., as a result of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike placing her party interests above national interests.

Of our four executive Presidents, who have ruled us since 1978, two had both proven ability and experience, one was a historical accident, and the other had much in idealism and little in experience. All four advocated the open economy which has turned out to be a blessing as opposed to that curse, the socialist economy of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike. On the other hand the governance by all four executive Presidents was disastrous because all four placed their party interests above national interests. Therefore the irresistible conclusion is that the executive Presidency is thoroughly unsuited for Sri Lanka.

Indeed there is a nexus between self-interest, party interests and national interests. All four executive Presidents have behaved shamelessly by placing either self-interest or party politics or both above national interests, a certain recipe for disaster. For example President Jayewardene, to safeguard his self-interests, had the civic rights of his principal rival removed through the device of retroactive legislation. Thus he ruined our two - party system. Placing party interests above national interests, he opted for a Referendum in lieu of a General Election. Thereby he ruined our Parliamentary system and provoked the JVP to revolt once again. For reasons known only unto God and to President Jayewardene, a son of a Supreme Court Judge, a brother of a President of the Bar Council of Sri Lanka, and a scion of one of the most respected legal families in Sri Lanka, he decided to negate judgements of the Supreme Court with Presidential directives. All he achieved was to ruin our Judiciary. President Premadasa did even worse. Placing his self-interest above both party politics and national interests, he instituted his nefarious one-man show. That was the closest we ever came to a naked dictatorship. Not surprisingly on May Day 1993 when he was assassinated, the news was greeted neither with sorrow nor with our traditional respect of the dead, but with the lighting of crackers and with May Day revellers dancing in the streets! President Wijetunga can only be viewed with a mixture of amusement and amazement. He too placed party interests above national interests when he pardoned convicted criminals from the UNP even before they began their jail sentences. Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranayaike Kumaratunga seeking the Presidency,

in her wisdom swore publicly to abolish the executive Presidency no later than June 15th 1995. That would indeed have exorcised from our society a curse. However once elected President she placed party interests before national interests and reneged on her solemn promise.

In theory the executive Presidency gives a more stable Government than the Westminster model. In practice in Sri Lanka every executive President has shamelessly placed party interests above national interests. Therefore the executive Presidency must be abolished forthwith and replaced with the Westminster model which we had from 1947 – 1977. The present system of Cabinet Ministers only from the Government Parliamentary Group should be supplanted with the executive Cabinet of the Donoughmore Constitution, with Cabinet Ministers from all parties. Then it will be next to impossible for any leader to place party politics above national interests. It is only then that our democracy could move towards a Government of the people, by the people, for the people.

CHAPTER X

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS - APRIL 1999

By Independence Day in 1999, Sri Lanka was at the cross-roads, not knowing which turn to make. Are we to become a second Philippines or are we to remain a participatory democracy ?

In the eyes of our people our politicians are the scum of the earth. Today such thinking is widely prevalent in every stratum ranging from the poor to the rich, from the ill-educated to the well educated from the youth to the elderly, from the ethnic majority to the ethnic minorities. Having reached such levels of maturity, our people ruin it all by being subservient to politicians in power, irrespective of their politics.

Thus correcting our politicians, who serve themselves rather than serve our nation, has become a problem of immense proportions. However on the premise that the wish of our people is that Sri Lanka should be a participatory democracy and not a second Philippines, our democratic frame work must be strengthened and corrective measures must be applied as early as practicable.

Firstly, an Independent Election Commission consisting of the Commissioner of Elections and his two Deputies, with in-built safeguards including the power to declare an election null and void against a background of widespread malpractices, (e.g the recent election in Wayamba) or alternatively to include the power

to call for a re-poll in the areas of localized malpractices (e.g. at the Referendum of 1982)

Secondly, an Independent Police Commission must be set up to transfer, appoint, promote and dismiss Police personnel. Besides the Inspector- General of Police, like the Commissioner of Elections and the Auditor- General, must be appointed by Parliament and be answerable to Parliament as opposed to the Government of the day.

It is indeed heartening that the SLFP and the UNP, the two major parties which have ruled and mis-ruled our nation since Independence, are both in favour of an Independent Police Commission to enhance the Rule of Law and an Independent Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections.

However the immediate problem was to hold free and fair Provincial Council Elections scheduled for April 1999 in the Sabaragamuwa, Uva, the Central, North - Central and Western Provinces. The first step in that direction was taken by the Government when President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga returned to the Island from a visit to Jamaica on February 15th 1999. She displayed wisdom in summoning an All- Party Election Monitoring Committee and displayed her characteristic folly in sending the following insulting letter to the Leader of the Opposition, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

(Quote)

I am aware that allegations of irregularities and malpractices at the recently held Wayamba Provincial Council Elections have been levelled against some PA members as well as members of other political parties.

I am deeply concerned at this new development which occurred for the first time in the four and a half years of Government. My Government and especially myself are committed now, as always, to safeguard democracy and all the institutions that ensure the proper functioning of democracy, freedom and decency.

I am sure you are aware of the great pains we went to, in order to ensure the maintenance of law and order, after the 1994 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, under circumstances where over 3000 people whose houses were set on fire by the UNP organisations after the 1977 UNP victory, together with over 100,000 people who were sacked from their jobs after a one day legal strike of Trade Unions in 1980, as well as parents of around 50,000 children killed during the UNP Government were requesting for permission from this Government to take revenge for their suffering from those who perpetrated those acts.

It was with immense difficulty that we brought under control all these forces, in a country where State terror had successfully created a culture of political violence. Our

action gave protection to every single UNP supporter, and their leaders, including those known to be responsible for violence during nearly two decades. We believe and still, do so, that they must be dealt with by the normal law of the country.

In the same vein, we will do all that is required to ensure a free and fair election, in the forthcoming Provincial Council Elections. I believe that it is the duty of the Government, as well as the Opposition to ensure this.

I would like to invite you as the leader of the UNP, together with a delegation of your party to a conference of all parties, contesting the Provincial Council Elections, to discuss the methods and procedures that need to be adopted to eliminate election malpractices and violence during the election campaign and on election day.

I would like to suggest any one of the following dates for the conference.

23rd, 24th or 25th of February, any time between 9.00 am and 12.00 noon.

I shall be grateful for an early reply.

(Unquote)

It is a shame that Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga speaks and writes in that obnoxious manner. All Bandaranaiques have

class but she refuses to exhibit hers except in the choice of her clothing and her jewellery. On the other hand not all Bandaranaiques are well educated. She is, having studied at one of the best Universities in the world, The Sorbonne in Paris. In the political arena she even hides her education. Indeed she is the anti-thesis of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan both of whom were also daughters of Prime Ministers, studied at Oxford and Harvard, took to politics and championed the cause of the down trodden.

The All-Party Election Monitoring Committee met in an atmosphere of cordiality at the Presidential Secretariat on February 25th 1999. The general impression created that day was that the President wanted to make amends for the debacle at Wayamba. Even the UNP grudgingly admitted it. However everybody wanted tangible proof not empty rhetoric, at which President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and all previous executive Presidents of Sri Lanka were good at.

Her corrective measures were both swift and effective. Consequently the Police, from the Inspector- General downwards, moved into action. "Kasippu" Lal, an ardent supporter of Chief Minister S.B. Nawinna of Wayamba, was duly arrested and produced before the Magistrate in Kurunegala for having outraged the modesty Mrs M.A. Chandrawathie from Akuressa and thereafter making her parade in public in the nude. Bail was disallowed by the Magistrate and therefore "Kasippu" Lal was incarcerated pending trial. In rapid succession followed the arrest

of Mayor Chandra De Silva (SLFP –Kotte) for assault. He too was remanded for two weeks. Within a day or two a warrant was issued for the arrest of Jinadasa Nandasena MP (SLFP -Gampaha District) who had attacked and set on fire the JVP office in Kelaniya. He surrendered to Court. Eleven goons from the PA were produced in the Magistrate's Court in Kurunegala for having caused damage to the extent of Rs.250,000 to the election office of Johnson Fernando in Mawatagama. They were remanded for two weeks and then released on bail. Mohamed Anoo alias Anju was arrested and produced in the Magistrate's Court in Paragahaeniya. He was indicted for three offences under the Penal Code and remanded for two weeks.

Thus the President quickly established that she would not tolerate anybody associated with the PA transgressing the Rule of Law. Unfortunately she initiated no action against her Ministers nor did she unceremoniously remove from office those Minister whose gross misconduct in Wayamba warranted such dismissal. To say the least they figured prominently in many of the forty one election petitions before the Supreme Court. Had they been unceremoniously removed from office, she would certainly have paid a very heavy price on the short – term but on the long - term would go down to history as a just President, a phenomenon yet unknown to Sri Lanka.

Originally the next round of Provincial Elections were scheduled for April 1st 1999 by virtue of a Gazette notification issued by the Commissioner of Elections, Dayananda Dissanayake.

Despite his unquestionable ability and integrity, he made a *bonafide* error in scheduling the Election for Thursday 1st April during a week that unbelievably had three public holidays pertaining to three different religions, namely Haj, Medin Poya, and Good Friday. Besides there was a precedent in 1977 when the Supreme Court had allowed the postponement of some Village Council Elections which were scheduled for during the Holy Week for Christians. (Holy Week includes Good Friday when Jesus Christ was crucified and climaxes with Easter Sunday when he rose from the dead three days later. Holy Week is therefore observed with piety even by the unholy amongst Christians.)

The Commissioner of Elections was indeed cautious after the verdict of the Supreme Court delivered on January 27th 1999, and critical of him amongst others. Pursuant to that directive of the Supreme Court, the Commissioner of Elections had to announce the date for the Elections before February 10th 1999. Therefore he issued the Gazette notification on February 8th. The Election Ordinance states “..... that the election shall be held not before five weeks and not later than eight weeks after the Gazette notification.....”. After the debacle in Wayamba, the Commissioner of Elections wanted the stipulated maximum of eight weeks for preparations. Counting the eight weeks from Monday 8th February 1999, the Provincial Council Elections must be held before Monday 5th April 1999. With Sunday and Saturday being statutory holidays and Good Friday a public holiday, he announced the date of the Provincial Council

Elections to be Thursday 1st April. It was right in the middle of the three public holidays and the day before Good Friday. There were wide spread protests from the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic faiths, with strident protests from the Roman Catholic Church. Quite clearly the Commissioner of Elections had made a *bona fide* mistake. Unfortunately under the archaic Election Ordinance of 1957, he cannot change the date of an election unless due to “ civil commotion, floods..... etc.” Only the Supreme Court is empowered to do so. Both the President and the Commissioner of Elections were sensitive to the objections of the Roman Catholic Church . Therefore on a directive from the President, the Attorney-General filed a motion before the Supreme Court. The objection was upheld and the new date was Gazetted as Tuesday 6th April 1999.

In the meantime the All Party Election Monitoring Committee met on a weekly basis in a cordial atmosphere. The deliberations were indeed frank. The desirability of an Independent Police Commission and an Independent Election Commission was the consensus of opinion. By the same token the near consensus of opinion was, that such far reaching changes would take time and just could not be implemented in time for April 6th 1999.

Therefore the All Party Election Monitoring Committee, under the Chairmanship of the President and with the active participation of the Leader of the Opposition, attempted to achieve by consensus all that was practicable. Instructions were duly issued by the President to the Inspector-General of Police, that

the Police Ordinance be rigidly enforced in its applicability to the conduct of a free and fair election. Also, the Police ensure that public nuisances, like posters being pasted on walls, motorcades with loud speakers, be stopped through firm action. Both were accomplished with a great degree of success by the Police, who for once enforced the Police Ordinance.

Thus by March 25th 1999, two months after that day of infamy in Wayamba and one month after the first meeting of the All-Party Election Monitoring Committee, Sri Lanka was no longer at the cross roads, whether or to not be a second Philippines. The consensus of opinion was quite clearly to consolidate our heritage since Independence, of being a participatory democracy.

In reaching that consensus, the nation owed a debt of gratitude to our intelligentsia. The current disenchantment of the intelligentsia with politicians of all shades of opinion, is a factor not understood by fools and lightweights. It is the intelligentsia as represented by the Mahanayakes, the Archbishop of Colombo, the High Priests of all religions practised in Sri Lanka, and the professions, who rallied round the nation so magnificently in her hour of need in the aftermath of Wayamba.

Anywhere in the world, the intelligentsia revolts differently from lesser mortals. In the context of Sri Lanka there were no noisy lunch time protests around Liptons Circus, a sanctuary for the emotional juveniles like undergraduates, or the ill - educated like minor employees who vent their spleens on all manner of

mundane issues. Anywhere in the world the intelligentsia makes people pause to think and from that fresh thinking follows action.

The Provincial Council Elections scheduled for April 6th 1999 involved five of our eight Provinces, thus the entire nation barring the North – Eastern Province, the Southern Province and Wayamba. It involved 7.2 million of our 11.6 million voters. Indeed Sri Lanka was preparing for a trial run for the General Election and the Presidential Election, due to be held no later than November 2000, in terms of our Constitution.

The campaigning intensified by March 20th, which was D-Day minus 15. Of course there were a spate of minor violations after the campaign gathered momentum. That was inevitable and it happened, for example, immediately before the General Elections of 1994, 1989, 1977, 1970 and 1965, all of which were generally accepted as peaceful elections.

Leading the campaign of the Government was President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. She routinely breathed fire at the UNP in general and at Ranil Wickremasinghe in particular. Incidentally her SLAF helicopter also breathed fire at Bandarawela when the anti missile systems were accidentally activated. Seven inquisitive bystanders were taken to hospital suffering from burns ! One of them was a Christian. She groaned rather loudly that the wrath of God had descended upon her. !!

The President campaigned with her customary vigour and berated the UNP for all problems in our society except the current heat wave. She blasted Ranil Wickremasinghe calling him worst leader the UNP had ever produced. She then spoke at length on the Human Rights violations during the Premadasa Administration and trumpeted that it was she who restored the Human Rights record of Sri Lanka to acceptable levels. (Thunderous applause).

The poor Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration from 1989 – 93 is still a viable force in our political arena. People still spit at the UNP for what they did. Under Ranil Wickremesinghe, the UNP has done absolutely nothing in Opposition to change that atrocious image.

Many years ago there was a similar phenomenon. The arrogance of the UNP was one of the major factors for its rout in 1956 at the hands of the then Leader of the Opposition S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. In 1956 the UNP did not understand what caused the debacle. The initial reaction was to blame Prime Minister Sir John Kotalawela (1953 – 56) who had the image of being a playboy ever since his days at Cambridge University. The UNP got rid of him and replaced him with the Cambridge-educated intellectual Dudley Senanayake who was Prime Minister from 1952 – 53. When I was writing “Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka” in 1973, Dudley Senanayake himself told me that it took the UNP ten long years after the debacle of 1956 to convince to our masses that the UNP had changed for the better.

The popular concept before and after 1956 was that the UNP had a Government of the *elite*, by the *elite*, for the *elite*, whereas the SLFP projected an image of having produced a Government of the people, by the people, for the people. According to Dudley Senanayake it was only in 1966, one year after returning to power in 1965, that the UNP convinced the masses that it had actually changed for the better. Therefore it is a pity that neither Ranil Wickremasinghe nor the bulk of the Working Committee of the UNP has even a vague idea of how greatly the UNP is detested because of the Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration. That indeed is a costly error which may win for the UNP a second term in Opposition !

On the other hand, events in Wayamba ruined the impeccable Human Rights record of the Chandrika Administration. Ranil Wickremasinghe was certainly not slow in seizing the opportunity. He flayed the PA and so did all leading spokesmen for the UNP, namely Karu Jayasuriya,, Susil Munasinghe, Ronnie De Mel, Sarath Amunugama, Karunasena Kodituwakku, John Amaratunga and Tyronne Fernando. Such attacks would no doubt have had a significant impact on the floating vote.

Anywhere in the world the crucial factor in an election is the floating vote. In Sri Lanka the voting pattern of the UNP and SLFP at the past five General Elections were as follows:

	<u>UNP (%)</u>	<u>SLFP (%)</u>
1965	39.3	30.2
1970	37.9	36.9
1977	50.9	29.7
1989	50.7	31.9
1994	40.1	43.9

Thus the minimum vote of the UNP, otherwise known as its vote bank, is 37.9% and the corresponding figure for the SLFP is 29.7%. The two vote banks added amount to 67.6%. Leaving 5-6% of the vote for the Marxist elements including the JVP, the floating vote is the balance 26-27% when applied to the Sinhala - speaking electorates. Thus in practical terms one in every four voters in the Sinhala - speaking areas constitute the floating vote. It is that vote, not the vote bank of the UNP or the SLFP, that determines the victor and the vanquished at our periodic elections.

Therefore on a rational basis both the President and the Leader of the Opposition must woo one-fourth of the population which constitutes the floating vote. Instead both preached to the converted, evoked thunderous applause and left their meetings grinning from ear to ear, she by helicopter and he by motorcade.

As described earlier, the President flayed the UNP in general and Ranil Wickremasinghe in particular. Invective of that type was

useless in winning the floating vote except on the issue of Human Rights where the track record of the UNP was atrocious. By the same token, the UNP in general and Ranil Wickremasinghe in particular failed to grasp a fundamental change since 1994. The SLFP no longer champions the cause of socialism. Since 1994 the SLFP, just like the UNP, has espoused the open economy. Therefore the nett difference between the UNP and the SLFP has been narrowed down drastically. The identical scenario is applicable to the UK where the huge difference that once existed between the Labour Party and the Conservatives has been narrowed down drastically with Prime Minister Tony Blair having totally rejected socialism and thereby leading the Labour Party to greener pastures. Consequently the Conservatives have to work out a new strategy to oust Labour and the new Leader of the Opposition, William Hague, has so far not been capable of doing so.

Perhaps the new role model for the SLFP *vis-à-vis* UNP is akin to the traditional relationship between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States. Their differences are confined to nuances. For example the Democrats are more liberal than the Republicans on issues of labour (the trade unions), the Afro-Americans on welfare measures (particularly health) and the Republicans more conservative than the Democrats on sensitive issues such as abortion and gun control.

Throughout the campaign in the Provincial Council Elections, the UNP revealed that they had no clear strategy to topple the

new SLFP which had eschewed socialism. That was indeed a costly mistake. Unless corrected it may result in the UNP being in the Opposition for the next six years.

Ranil Wickremesinghe hammered home the message that it was the UNP that was responsible for the giant Mahaweli Diversion Scheme. That evoked thunderous applause in the Central Province and Uva where tangible benefits are visible. On the other hand Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was particularly successful with her old battlecry *Beeshanaya*. She narrated in detail how in 1989 the Army had massacred over 25 teenagers at Embilipitiya at the behest of their school Principal. Most of those accused were given ten year jail sentences earlier this year, after a trial in the High Court of Ratnapura that began in 1996. She scored heavily when she reminded her captive audiences that in direct contrast the Premadasa Administration and the Wijetunga Administration merely turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the parents of those slaughtered teenagers. It was only her Administration that took the remedial action (Thunderous applause). Then she reminded her audiences the fate of Nalanda Ellawala MP (SLFP – Ratnapura District) in 1997, allegedly at the hands of a UNP MP from the same District. (Thunderous applause)

Otherwise both Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Ranil Wickremesinghe were indulging in rhetoric, each side blaming the other. Such was their pantomime ! Not surprisingly both indulged in a lacklustre campaign with the President proving the

perennial truth, the female of the species is more deadly than the male !

Perhaps it would be pertinent now to revert to the Provincial Council Election in Wayamba. By all accounts it was the most disgraceful election in the history of Sri Lanka. It could not have happened if the SLFP had not run amok. Therefore in applying remedial action, the President had used her authority wisely and had seen to it that Ministers and Parliamentarians from the PA conducted themselves in conformity with the Election Ordinance. Nevertheless there were several incidents where the directives of the President were observed in the breach by her own rank and file.

In the Mahiyangana electoral area, commencing March 28th there was an unusual presence of strangers. According to Police reports those strangers were from the Matara district. There were many complaints and counter complaints from Members of Parliament from the Badulla district, both from the UNP and the PA, about those strangers. Nevertheless the hard cold fact was that they came in vehicles bearing numbers 251-9481, 252-6499, 252-8591, 251-7167, 251-9475, 50 Sri 974, 32-7526, 57-9438, and SLTB buses from the Matara Depot bearing numbers 63-077, 29 Sri 5307. The allegations were that these strangers purchased polling cards or alternatively took them by force.

In the Gampaha district commencing March 14th there were a spate of complaints about supporters of a MP whose name has

been associated with thuggery since 1994. The MP in question had abided by the Presidential directive that henceforth Provincial Council Election must be free and fair. However his staff acted very differently and had threatened several candidates from the UNP and the JVP. Some of the victims had lodged written complaints at the Minuwangoda Police Station but received no redress.

In the Anuradhapura district on March 17th Jayantha Dissanayake, Chairman of the UNP branch organisation in Hidagama, lodged a complaint with the Anuradhapura Police that his home was shot at during the previous night. His complaint was complete with the number of the vehicle used by the assailants. The Police who recovered two spent cartridges from the scene of the crime were convinced that some goons from the PA were responsible for this crime which has traumatized the six year old son of the complainant. Jayantha Dissanayake was so shattered by the condition of his son that he vowed to give up politics.

There were two bizarre episodes of internecine warfare within the PA. On March 19th when R.G. Samaranayake, the Chairman of the Kundasale Pradeshiya Sabha, was making arrangements for the meeting at Digana to be addressed by the President on the following day. He was attacked by some goons who came in a double cab bearing number 250-1449. Inside that vehicle was a candidate from the PA for the Kandy district. On March 31st near the Lunawa Railway Station a youthful PA supporter was hacked to death by some goons from the PA, who arrived in a double cab

bearing number 53-9866. According to the Coroner the victim was beheaded !

The activity of goons was not confined to the PA alone. Three goons from the UNP stabbed a supporter of Mrs. Suranganie Ellawala, the widow of the late Nalanda Ellawala MP and mother of the late Nanda Ellawala MP. The victim was stabbed in the stomach, at Kuruwita where Nanda Ellawala was murdered in 1977. He was rushed to the General Hospital at Ratnapura.

A much worse incident was at Gampola on March 9th when a convoy carrying Keheliya Rambukwella, UNP candidate and a rising star in the Central-Province, Abdul Cader Mohideen M.P. (UNP – Kandy district) and two other UNP candidates clashed with the SLFP outside the Pradeshiya Sabha office in Kurunduwatte near Gampola. In the battle of the goons the UNP goons lobbed two Mills grenades, of the type currently used by the Army. It resulted in a fish monger from the PA being killed, the PA candidate Mahinda Ananda Aluthgama being seriously injured and four other PA supporters receiving minor injuries due to shrapnel. All injured personnel were treated at the General Hospital in Kandy and Aluthgama who underwent surgery and was in critical condition for several days.

It is unfortunate but true that the breaches of the Rule of Law were not the work of goons alone. For example, the Inspector-General of Police had endless trouble with so many Police Officers acting on their own volition, in open defiance of the Police

Ordinance but unfailingly in support of the Government. On February 2nd 1999 the Opposition had organised a giant rally at Hyde Park to protest against the outrageous events in Wayamba. Permission was duly obtained from the Police. Accordingly banners and decorations in white, (the traditional colour for mourning in Sri Lanka) signifying the death of democracy, appeared in many areas in Colombo. On the morning of February 2nd, Mayor Karu Jayasuriya of Colombo (who is also the Chairman of the UNP) saw some miscreants removing those banners and decorations near his official residence. He ordered his security guards to apprehend them and to hand them over to the Cinnamon Gardens Police. It then transpired that the miscreants were Police Constables in muffti from the Cinnamon Gardens Police Station acting on the explicit instructions of their Officer – in – Charge (OIC). Later it transpired that in the City of Colombo several OIC's had issued the identical instructions. A livid Mayor then contacted the Inspector-General of Police, who quickly brought the situation under control and even apologised to the Mayor. The price for such folly was a Fundamental Rights Case filed in the Supreme Court by Mayor Karu Jayasuriya against the errant Constables, the OIC's and even the Inspector-General !

On March 28th the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka had its Annual General meeting. It appeared that the incumbent President Thilanga Sumathipala would be re-elected unanimously. However at the last moment Clifford Ratwatte, the youngest brother of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike and a favourite uncle of the President, announced his candidature. A fierce battle

raged in cricket circles and the Annual General Meeting was held exactly on the lines of the Provincial Council Election in Wayamba !

An enraged Clifford Ratwatte stormed out in protest and that was shown on the news programme of Rupavahini TV. That TV footage also showed some burly characters overpowering the security guards at the Headquarters of the Board of Control for Cricket. A closer examination of the TV footage revealed that they were personnel from the Presidential Security Division! Therefore a pertinent question is whether the Presidential Security Division came to that Annual General Meeting on their own volition or not. As of this writing the Inspector-General of Police has chosen to remain silent in public. That silence is indeed deafening !

On March 31st the Officer-in-Charge of the Wattala Police wanted to question the Committee for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) having its headquarters in Cinnamon Gardens, for having criminally defamed a SLFP politician living in Wattala. Criminal defamation comes directly under the purview of the Attorney-General himself, not under a mere Chief Inspector of Police. Therefore the CMEV snubbed the OIC Wattala. So did his superiors in the Police. Thus ended the alleged defamation, criminal or otherwise !

At 2359 hours on Saturday 3rd April, the campaigning ended in conformity with the Election Ordinance. Of course there were

isolated incidents of violence , many of a minor nature, throughout the Sabaragamuwa, Uva, the Central, North-Central and Western Provinces. The few serious incidents were already described earlier in this Chapter. Regrettably there were a few more serious incidents on the last day of the campaign and even thereafter. The most serious of these incidents was during the early hours of Sunday 4th April when two Chinese hand grenades were lobbed into the office in Kegalle of UNP candidate W. Somadasa. The caretaker was killed and three others injured, one seriously.

There were a few noteworthy features in the campaign in the five Provinces under review. The President and the Leader of the Opposition campaigned with great vigour. So did the incumbent Ministers and the former Ministers from the UNP and candidates of all political parties. Their enthusiasm was not reflected in the voters of the five Provinces. They showed considerable apathy and disinterest. Many in fact griped aloud that the UNP and the SLFP were just as bad ! How true !!

The Committee for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) came under heavy fire by the Government during the last week of the campaign. The CMEV made a superb contribution exposing the mayhem in Wayamba and their reports were taken very seriously indeed, amongst others by the international news media and Diplomatic Corps in Colombo. The CMEV represents a new trend in elections in the Third World, pioneered by former President Jimmy Carter of the United States. Many elections at the

national level in Asia and Africa were decisively influenced by his international election monitoring committees which are absolutely impartial. The defeat of President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia in 1994 after 31 years of one-party rule is attributed to ensuring a free and fair election. By the same token the restoration of the two party system in Guyana and the re-emergence of Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan, a well known Marxist, though he be, is attributed to the skill of the international election monitoring committees led by President Jimmy Carter. Not surprisingly he was invited this year by Nigeria to help at their recent Presidential Election and return to civilian rule. He will be there in South Africa at the invitation of President Nelson Mandela, who retires this year, to help at the forthcoming Presidential Election.

Not surprisingly several Cabinet Ministers who were featured in poor light by the CMEV during the mayhem in Wayamba, attacked the CMEV in turn. That is understandable. What defies my understanding is why the intellectually more sophisticated President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga also attacked the CMEV. If she is wise she will give her benedictions to the CMEV and PAFFREL and encourage the emergence of more similar organisations.

The campaigning in Sabaragamuwa, Uva, the Central, North-Central and Western Provinces, barring a few notable exceptions, was both fair and peaceful. While mobile patrols of the Police were intensive during the two day moratorium from

campaigning on Sunday 4th April and Monday 5th April, the UNP was still wary about violence on election day. They never trusted the President, not even when she publicly appealed to the supporters of the PA at her last election rally, at the Town Hall in Colombo on the night of Saturday 3rd April saying,

(Quote)

“I am telling all of you here that you must not resort to impersonation under any circumstances at the Provincial Council Elections on 6th April.

I have issued strict instructions to the Police to take into custody anyone attempting to impersonate. You must obey the law.

“I do not want a victory by a rigged election. A rigged election victory is no election victory.

“I do not want the Wayamba mistake to be repeated. Some of our people, provoked by the UNP, resorted to questionable practices. This time everybody must obey the election laws. Breakers of the law in any form will not be tolerated.”

(Unquote)

The President was thus quite explicit. Moreover her statement was given the widest possible publicity by the Lake House Press, Rupavahini TV and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation. One day later the next statement by the President was given even more

publicity by these institutions.

(Quote)

More than seven million voters of our nation will once again use their invaluable and cherished franchise today to elect new administrations in five Provinces.

All necessary arrangements have been made by now, to ensure that the people will be able to use their absolute right to vote without any cause for fear, in accordance with the traditions that govern a free and democratic society.

Our Government has acted with complete dedication, in the past several weeks, towards the conduct of a free and fair election. We were able to reach agreement on a number of valuable and fruitful decisions in this regard through the Election Monitoring Committee chaired by me. This is considered a historic occasion in the tradition of elections in Sri Lanka, because this is the first time in which a bold and decisive step has been taken. The majority of the political parties that participated in the meetings of this monitoring committee, have placed their signature to the joint appeal to the public calling for their co-operation in ensuring a free and fair election. This statement holds great promise of being very fruitful in achieving a fair election. While all parties that participated in the Election Monitoring Committee agreed on the need to

issue such a joint appeal, the UNP showed a very special interest in this appeal and sent several reminders to this office to obtain drafts of the appeal. Subsequently, the UNP submitted several amendments to the draft appeal. However, after these amendments too were incorporated into it, the UNP suddenly announced its refusal to sign the appeal, for no acceptable reason whatsoever.

Our Government has carried out an impressive task in sweeping away the conditions that prevailed during 17 years, when the election laws were openly flouted, the people were oppressed and their freedom denied. Our task resulted in the re-establishment of democracy and the freedom of man and human dignity in our country. My appeal to all members and activists of the People's Alliance, is that in this Provincial Council Election they do not act in any manner that would damage and distort the major victories we have won so far, and protect and uphold the elections laws in such a manner as to contribute towards the holding of a fair election. I would like to remind that this responsibility falls squarely on the organisers of our parties at the electorate level.

The leaders of the four parties in the Election Monitoring Committee that refused to sign the appeal that was intended to be signed by all, and especially the United National Party, have so far not made any appeal to their members and activists, not to carry out

any activities in violation of the election laws. I make a very special request to the leaders of these parties to make such an appeal even now. It is my sincere hope and expectation that these parties too would contribute to the success of the honest and effective steps taken by our Government to conduct a free and fair election.

Similarly I appeal to all sections of the people of our nation to extend their fullest co-operation to enable the Provincial Council Elections due to be held tomorrow, to be conducted in a just and fair manner. I make a special appeal to all officers of the State engaged in election duty, to carry out their services with impartiality. I call upon all personnel of the Police and the Services to carry out their duties in strict compliance with the law, whatever be the obstacles in their way.

I take this opportunity to give a special reminder to all parties associated with the People's Alliance, their members, and supporters of the People's Alliance.

Various groups who cannot accept defeat will seek to tarnish and cause damage to our efforts to conduct a free and fair election. It is my earnest appeal to you not fall victim to this emerging trend. It is my belief that remaining calm, unprovoked and patient in the face of whatever provocative strategies adopted by these forces, it will be possible to defeat all such attempts at

sabotaging the rights of the people.

I kindly appeal to all the citizens of this nation to extend your unstinted support in every manner to this exercise in justice and fair play by us, in conducting a free and fair election.

(Unquote)

Over that week-end, the intelligence systems feeding this book were near unanimous with their information. Firstly, except in the Mahiyangana electoral area there were no Sri Lanka Transport Board buses nor Government vehicles sans number plates bringing in strangers. Therefore the large scale stuffing of ballot boxes, could be safely ruled out everywhere except in Mahiyangana. Secondly, the verdict of the nation would be as follows:

Central Province	-	People's Alliance
North Central Province	-	People's Alliance
Uva	-	People's Alliance
Sabargamuwa	-	People's Alliance
Western Province	-	United National Party

Both Godwin Fernando and I were severely hampered in gathering intelligence reports because of the Holy Week. The parish priests traditionally observe it as a period of mourning and it would therefore have been sacrilegious for us to intrude to discuss politics.

On Easter Sunday (April 4th) Godwin and I had a long working session complete with dinner. By then I had access to confidential Police reports which indicated that the Police was not expecting any large scale malpractices. Instead senior officers were determined to enforce the Police Ordinance because that was precisely what the President wanted them to do. Besides, in each Province one brigade from the Army was on stand-by duty to assist the Police in the event of breakdown of law and order. Such brigades were wisely kept away from the view of the general public.

My intelligence reports indicated that the tussle between the PA and the UNP will be particularly close in Uva and in the Western Province. In both the UNP and the PA had lost ground considerably since the General Election of 1994. According to the intelligence reports of Godwin the tussle in the Kandy and Nuwara-Eliya districts would also be very close. He also had an extraordinary intelligence report pertaining to the Roman Catholic vote in the Western Province. Notwithstanding the courageous stand of the Archbishop and several Bishops on the issue of Wayamba, there was no perceptible swing to the UNP in the Catholic belt. Accordingly his report was that the Catholic vote will be evenly divided between the UNP and the PA and the likely voting in the Catholic belt would be,

Negombo	-	UNP
Katana	-	PA
Ja-Ela	-	PA

Wattala	-	UNP
Colombo North	-	UNP

According to all reports, notwithstanding Anura Bandaranaike campaigning vigorously for the UNP, in the Bandaranaike belt consisting of Attanagalle, Dompe and Gampaha, the PA will win comfortably but with a diminished majorities. The city of Colombo, as usual, was solidly UNP and the hinterland was more with the UNP than with the PA. Therefore the balance of power will be with the Kalutara District.

On Election day, Tuesday 6th April, according to all reports reaching Police Headquarters, the Department of Elections, the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) and the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), there were no untoward events from 0700 – 0900 hours. However by mid-morning adverse reports came in on all four networks.

The first such serious reports was in the electoral area of Anuradhapura West. At the Polling Centre at the Devanampiyatissa Maha Vidyalaya, some unruly PA supporters attempted to stuff ballot boxes. Police Constable 15834 Silva of the Vavuniya Police opened fire and quickly brought the situation under control. Thereafter Sunil Tilakaratane a Samurdhi animator, and A.M. Tikiri Banda were rushed in Police vehicles to the Anuradhapura General Hospital.

I do hope Police Constable 15834 Silva will be promoted Sergeant and upheld as an example to the Sri Lanka Police.

Shortly afterwards there were three bad incidents of election rigging in the Kandy district. At the Polling Station at the Hataraliyadde Vidyalaya in the Galagedera electoral area, about thirty PA supporters who were patiently awaiting their turn to exercise their franchise, suddenly attacked the election staff and stole a large number of ballot papers. The Senior Presiding Officer immediately closed the Polling Station for the day. Under a heavy Police guard, he left for the Kandy District Secretariat taking with him the ballot boxes. Three hours later some PA supporters attempted to storm into the Polling Station at Mawalmadama in the Kundasale electoral area, Police Sergeant 16662 Herath opened fire and the goons fled in fear. I do hope he too will be promoted. About the same time at the Polling Station at the Nelumpokuna Junior School in the Senkadagala electoral area, two groups of PA supporters shot at each other following a heated argument over preference votes ! Consequently four people were admitted to the Kandy General Hospital with injuries, one in serious condition !!

About that time there was an adverse report from the Colombo district, which was otherwise quiet. At the polling station at Gonakovilla in Attidiya in the Ratmalana electoral area, there were some allegations of large scale impersonations by the PA. According to UNP sources the PA supporters had obtained polling cards of Sri Lankan expatriates in the Middle East and were indulging in impersonations. According to PA sources the UNP was also indulging in large scale impersonations by

providing battery water to remove the indelible ink routinely applied on the thumb of the voters, at Polling Stations. These allegations and counter allegations reached the JVP and the UNP. Therefore key officials of both parties personally visited the scene. Both groups were attacked, some hospitalised and Karu Jayasuriya, the Chairman of the UNP, was lucky to escape injuries !

I spent Election day at the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) as the guest of their Executive Director Dr. P Saravanamuttu. Educated at S. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia, and the University of London, he is a superb intellectual with a maturity well in excess of his age of forty years. A worthy grandson of an illustrious grandfather whose name he bears, he heads an organisation which is rendering yeomen service to the nation. Unfortunately of late the contemptible "Ceylon Daily News" ridiculed the CMEV. Suffice it to state that the front page of the "Ceylon Daily News" daily insults the intelligence of its readers, with its puerile attempts to be subservient to the Government of the day.

I watched the CMEV receive umpteen complaints on the telephone of election malpractices. Most complaints were about the illegal collection of polling cards by PA supporters. The UNP which was clearly loosing the Provincial Council Elections made a stupid mistake that day of issuing a public statement to the effect that the election was rigged. In direct contrast the CMEV with commendable restraint made investigations for 48 hours. It was

only thereafter their public statement issued on April 8th stated,
(Quote)

The elections to the Central, North – Central and Western Provinces, Sabaragamuwa and Uva were flawed but not to the extent that would render the results.....
unsatisfactory Polling Stations have been computed at 5.34% of the total number of Polling Stations (5964) in the five Provinces. Therefore the situation in at least one in every twenty polling booths was not conducive to a free and fair election.

(Unquote)

By the same token PAFFREL issued a public statement that the Provincial Council Elections were free and fair except in 3.5% of the polling booths.

On Election day the key TV channels in Sri Lanka, namely Rupavahini, TNL and MTV, had all night election programmes commencing at 2200 hours. Consistently such programmes begin with the Commissioner of Elections making his observations. He was indeed pleased, that by and large the Provincial Council Elections were conducted in a free and fair manner. He regretted the sporadic outbursts of violence which resulted in three murders that day, but confirmed that those tragedies did not in any way affect the outcome of the election even in those specific areas.

Subsequently it was established that of these three murders two were not connected with the Provincial Council Elections. The

third murder was at Uda Dumbara, when goons from the UNP lobbed a hand grenade and opened fire. They killed a PA supporter who was a Samurdhi animator and injured several more. To those who had watched the Commissioner of Elections speak on Television on the night of January 25th 1999 from Wayamba, that was indeed a great relief.

The next to appear on TV was the Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Elections), O.K. Hemachandra, who in his younger days represented Sri Lanka in Athletics. He stated that Police Headquarters had received 298 complaints on Election day but of them only 10 were of a serious nature. He then elaborated on them.

The counting had begun at 2000 hours commencing with the postal votes. Those results were announced from 2200 hours onwards. Uniformly the public servants had voted in favour of the PA. That was indeed revealing.

The first election results, as such, were telecast commencing around 0200 hours on Wednesday 7th April. The PA was winning handsomely in the Anuradhapura district but in the Badulla and Kandy districts the contest between the PA and the UNP was very close and the actual voting was:

District	PA	UNP
Kandy	247,250	232,934
Nuwara-Eliya	79,264	88,020

All results were duly announced by 1000 that day and were as follows;

CENTRAL PROVINCE

Political Party	Votes	%	Seats
People's Alliance	421,629	43.2	26
United Nation Party	391,659	40.1	23
National Union of Workers	95,701	9.8	6
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna	28,974	3.0	1
Up Country People's Font	22,896	2.3	2
Others	15,968 58	1.6	0
Total	<u>976,777</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>58</u>

(Source – Department of Elections)

From the view point of the UNP their performance was particularly good taking into account that three Cabinet Ministers D.M. Jayaratne M.P. (SLFP – Kandy district) Anuruddha Ratwatte M.P. (SLFP – Kandy district) and S.B. Dissanayake M.P. (SLFP – Nuwara-Eliya district) had campaigned with the utmost of vigour in their own districts.

Another significant feature in the Central Province was the performance of the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) now contesting under the nomenclature National Union of Workers (NUW). It is conceptually a Trade Union under the able

leadership of S.Thondaman, who has been an influential Cabinet Minister under all four executive Presidents.

The NUW won six seats in this Provincial Council. The break down being:

District	Number of seats
Nuwara-Eliya	4
Kandy	1
Matale	1
Total	6

Somehow the CWC as the electoral ally of the UNP won eleven seats under the banner of the UNP, at the Provincial Council Elections of 1993. There is much soul searching in the NUW as to how their tally dropped from eleven to six seats. Nevertheless the NUW will hold the balance of power in this Provincial Council as they did in the past. Following discussions with the PA and the UNP they announced that they will support the PA in all Provincial Councils, until further notice.

According to all pre-election reports the UNP was particularly weak in the North-Central Province due to faulty agricultural policies after the Mahaweli down stream project was completed, more than ten years ago.

At the time of the General Election of 1994, there was a spate of suicides by farmers unable to pay their loans, resulting in the UNP faring badly. Since 1994 the PA rectified those problems.

As of now the UNP is weakest in the North-Central Province. It reflects poorly on the leadership of Ranil Wickremesinghe because it is this Province that has benefited most from the Mahaweli diversion scheme.

The results were;

NORTH - CENTRAL PROVINCE

Political Party	Votes	%	Seats
People's Alliance	231,757	53.5	19
United National Party	171,307	39.6	12
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna	22,695	5.1	2
Others	9,415	1.8	0
Total	<u>434,074</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>33</u>

(Source – Department of Elections)

In Sabaragamuwa, the PA was particularly severe on the Human Rights record of the UNP in the Ratnapura district. The massacre of school children in Embilipitiya in 1989, the callous indifference of the Premadasa Administration to that tragedy and the exemplary role of the Chandrika Administration in prosecuting the offenders together with the recent verdict of the High Court of Ratnapura was indeed an emotional issue. Another emotional issue was the assassination in 1997 of Nalanda Ellawala M.P. (PA - Ratnapura district) allegedly by Susantha Punchinilame M.P. (UNP - Ratnapura district). Contrary to expectations those issues did not produce a landslide for the PA,

merely a comfortable victory. The actual voting was:

PA	-	191,502
UNP	-	175,912

The detailed results were:

SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE

Political Party	Votes	%	Seats
People's Alliance	356,543	47.8	22
United Nation Party	334,415	44.9	19
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna	32,737	4.4	2
National Union of Workers	11,937	1.6	1
Others	10,092	1.3	0
Total	745,624	100.0	44

(Source – Department of Elections)

The PA was particularly weak in Uva during the Provincial Council Elections of 1993 and the General Election of 1994. Their victory in the Badulla district is questionable because of the influx of so many strangers who went round collecting poll cards in the Mahiyangana electoral area. Besides the UNP was handicapped because their charismatic Chief Minister Percy Samaraweera was ailing for quite sometime and passed away during the election campaign. The UNP was still further handicapped when it nominated the wrong candidate to be his successor.

The break down of results in this Province were;

UVA PROVINCE			
Political Party	Votes	%	Seats
People's Alliance	190,105	49.9	17
United National Party	186,293	44.0	14
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna	20,099	4.8	2
National Union of Workers	19,914	4.7	1
Others	4,063	1.6	0
Total	<u>461,374</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>34</u>

(Source – Department of Elections)

Much was expected in the Colombo District by the UNP where their campaign was led by Mayor Karu Jayasuriya, their rising star. His popularity was amply reflected in that he won 250,129 preference votes in the Colombo district, by far the highest recorded by any candidate in the Provincial Council Elections of 1999. (In 1993 Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga won 323,123 preference votes to establish a record.) Karu Jayasuriya who was born in 1940 and educated at Ananda College, the premier Buddhist school in Sri Lanka, has had a meteoric rise in politics like Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali had in the decade of the seventies. A tycoon who has proven skill in reviving ailing Companies, he was a great success in managing C.W. Mackie and Co. and Korea - Ceylon Footware which were on the verge of collapse when his skills were infused. They

became thriving business ventures when he was at the helm. His success was just as spectacular in the realm of politics. He was invited to join the UNP in 1994 after its defeat and after his return from Germany where he was the Ambassador of Sri Lanka.

However the performance of the UNP as a whole was not so impressive in the Colombo district where the voting was:

UNP -	362,636	(45.07%)
PA -	313,576	(38.98%)

The overall results in this Province were;

WESTERN PROVINCE

Political Party	Votes	%	Seats
People's Alliance	888,454	43.7	46
United Nation Party	879,388	43.5	44
Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna	141,985	6.9	8
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna	65,649	3.3	3
United Left Front	22,976	1.0	1
National Union of Workers	16,561	0.8	0
Others	19,222	0.8	0
Total	<u>2,034,155</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>102</u>

(Source – Department of Elections)

There were several striking features in the voting pattern in the Western Province, by far the most educated Province in the Sinhala-speaking areas. For example, the voter turn out was poor as reflected in the following data pertaining to the Provincial Council Elections in 1993 and 1999 on a district basis

	Colombo	Gampaha	Kalutara
1993	82.1%	83.8%	81.8%
1999	64.5%	68.2%	70.8%

(Source – Department of Elections)

In my judgement that was a certain indicator of voter apathy, not the unexpected rain in the city of Colombo that day, our educated voters are disgusted with both the SLFP and the UNP. That was evident again in the number of rejected votes, where the corresponding figures at the national level were:

1993	4.1%
1999	7.3%

(Source – Department of Elections)

I deliberately spoiled my vote. So did many top professionals associated with this book. Indeed we are perturbed that we do not have a party worthy of our franchise, hence this book written by me at their request.

I am aware that both the President and the Leader of the Opposition are perturbed by the unusually high percentage of rejected votes. Indeed these figures are revealing as reflected in the statistics overleaf.

THE REJECTED VOTES

Province	PA Votes Polled	UNP Votes Polled	Difference	Rejected
Western		888,454	870,638 88	127,516
Central	421,629	391,659	29,970	91,924
Sabaragamuwa	356,543	334,415	22,128	53,514
Uva	190,105	186,293	3,812	39,335
North-Central	321,757	171,307	60,450	22,391

(Source – Department of Election)

Thus in all Provinces barring the North-Central Province, the rejected votes were far in excess of the nett difference between the PA and the UNP. On the premise that 7.3% of all ballots were rejected as against the national average for this decade of 4.1%, then 3.2% deliberately spoilt their votes. The numbers of those who deliberately spoilt their votes were also in excess of the nett difference between the victor and the vanquished, in all Provinces barring the North Central Province.

Admittedly the PA defeated the UNP in all five Provinces. However the contest was precariously close in Uva and in the Western Province where the voting was;

	Uva	Western Province
PA	207,163	888,454
UNP	202,777	879,399

Perhaps a more realistic verdict would have been had the PA won one of these two Provinces and the UNP the other. However fate decreed otherwise or alternatively the lucky streak of the President still continues.

In 1997 the assassination of Nalanda Ellawala allegedly by a Member of Parliament from the UNP during Nomination week, resulted in a landslide victory for the PA. In 1994 She certainly would have won the Presidency but the assassination of Gamini Dissananyake, the Leader of the Opposition and her principal rival, resulted in her almost breaking the world record for Presidential Elections. Earlier in 1994 she was elected Prime Minister largely because of freak circumstances. In 1993 President R. Premadasa (UNP) and Lalith Athulathmudali (DUNF) were assassinated within a few days of each other and the Leader of the Opposition Sirima Bandaranaike (SLFP) was in poor health. Thus Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga who was a struggling politician at the beginning of 1993, suddenly became the *prima donna*. In fact she became Prime Minister in her maiden attempt to enter Parliament in August 1994 !

As stated in the very first page of this book, the Provincial Councils have achieved next to nothing since they became

operational in 1988. Their only worthwhile purpose hitherto was to function as a useful barometer of political opinion. The Provincial Council Elections of April 1999 has certainly achieved that and the following statistics speak for themselves.

	<u>Votes polled</u>	<u>% poll</u>
PA	2,105,546	45.26
UNP	1,979,546	42.56
JVP	248,799	5.14
NUW(formerly CWC)	145,350	3.16
MEP	79,465	1.82
NLF(New Left Front)	38,005	0.81
All other parties	19,113	0.42
Total	4,665,004	100.0
Spoilt votes	348,135	7.3

It is a stubborn fact of life that anywhere in the world, fools and lightweights gossip on politics whereas the intelligentsia analyse politics. Those who gossip in Sri Lanka were in their element when they proclaimed that the JVP had emerged as a third force. Factually that is anything but the truth.

The JVP has contested elections throughout the nation only twice, the Presidential Election of 1982 and the Provincial Council Elections in 1999. In 1982 they obtained 4.2% of the vote and in 1999 so far they have obtained 5.3% of the vote. Their power

base is the Hambantota district, where Rohana Wijeweera was born and raised. At the Presidential Election of 1982 the JVP won 14.2% of the vote there. At the General Election of 1994 the corresponding figure was 11.8% resulting in the JVP having a Member of Parliament for that district. The corresponding figure for 1999 will be known about ten days after the first edition of this book is released. Therefore the second edition scheduled for July 1999 will include, under the Postscript, a commentary and analysis of the Provincial Council Election for the Southern Province to be held on June 10th 1999.

Admittedly the JVP did receive 248,779 votes on April 6th 1999. Of them 141,985 were in the Western Province. On the premise that a voter is entitled to three preference votes, the JVP should have received well over 400,000 preference votes in the Western Province. In practice they received a little over 100,000. In their embarrassment the JVP has admitted privately that they will nominate their representatives rather than abide by the ludicrous numbers of preference votes won by their eight successful candidates.

This phenomena is a clear indication that the 141,985 who voted for the JVP were not all in support of those brigands who wreaked havoc in 1988 and 89 and earlier in 1971. The irresistible conclusion is that a substantial number of protest votes went to the JVP. Those who exercised such protest votes against both the PA and the UNP, just did not even bother to know to whom to give their preference votes within the JVP !

The breakdown of the performance of the JVP was as follows:

<u>Province</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>
Western	141,985	8
Sabaragamuwa	32,737	2
North Central	22,695	2
Uva	22,398	2
Central	28,984	1
	<u>248,799</u>	<u>15</u>

Quite clearly the JVP have their cells in all five Provinces and from there they unleashed their violence in 1988 and 89. However what percentage of their votes came from their cells and what percentage came from those who are disgusted with both the PA and the UNP, will remain a mystery.

To my mind, the exact parallel is the voting pattern in Australia. Those who are fed up with the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, who have shared power for generations, vote for the Communist Party which averaged around 1% of the vote. Under the laws of Australia every citizen must vote or be subject to a fine of \$ 500. Some in their anger deliberately spoilt their vote, as some did recently in Sri Lanka, while others vote for the Communist Party, the equivalent of that in Sri Lanka is voting for the JVP !

It is common knowledge that President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga is more popular than the People's Alliance. Besides she perceives that the UNP is a more formidable

opponent than Ranil Wickremasinghe. The exact parallel in the past was in 1982. President J.R. Jayewardene was more popular than the UNP. Besides, he perceived that the SLFP was a more formidable opponent than Presidential candidate Hector Kobbekaduwa of the SLFP. Therefore I anticipate history to repeat itself in 1999, sometime after the Provincial Council Election in the Southern Province. According to those who are well versed in the occult science, a field about which I know absolutely nothing, the month of August is reportedly favourable to the President because her planets will be in conjunction. Therefore taking all factors, political and astrological into account, I anticipate the relevant Gazette notification to be issued in August 1999.

A Presidential Election between Chandrika Banadaranaiké Kumaratunga and Ranil Wickremasinghe be it in 1999 or in 2000 would indeed be an interesting exercise. It will be the subject of my next book "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume IV) sub-titled 'The Presidential Election of

Such a Presidential Election will be anything but easy for Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga because at the closely contested General Election of August 1994 the PA polled 50.8% and at the closely contested Provincial Council Elections of April 1999 that figure diminished to 45.2%. That is an indictment on how she has led the PA in Government.

On the other hand, the UNP which polled 40.7% at the General

Election of 1994 has increased their tally to only 42.5%, despite the unpopularity of the Government. That is an indictment on how Ranil Wickremasinghe has led the UNP in Opposition. To say the least, the Presidential Election will be an uphill task for him.

The disenchantment of so many with both the PA and the UNP has been reflected very clearly. Only 70.9% exercised their franchise on April 6th 1999, the corresponding figure at the last Provincial Council Elections in 1993 being 81.2%. Of those who exercised their franchise, about 3.2% deliberately spoiled their votes. Besides many in their anger voted for the JVP, not that they ever endorsed the terrorism of the JVP!

The break down on a district basis of the voting at the General Election of 1994 and the Provincial Council Elections of 1999 so far, is indeed revealing.

<u>District</u>	<u>People's Alliance</u>		<u>United National Party</u>	
	1994(%)	1999(%)	1994(%)	1999(%)
Colombo	50.94	38.98	41.77	45.07
Gampaha	56.79	48.30	41.91	40.79
Kalutara	53.77	44.08	43.95	44.16
Mahanuwara	46.43	47.54	52.35*	44.79
Matale	49.85	51.38	48.61*	38.20
Nuwara Eliya	32.35	29.18	58.12*	32.41
Anuradhapura	55.19	54.09	43.45	38.51

*Including the votes of the CWC, Their electoral ally.

Polonnaruwa	51.18	52.01	47.62	41.37
Badulla	43.48	44.69	54.04*	43.78
Moneragala	50.40	45.31	43.81	45.35
Ratnapura	50.77	47.92	47.96	44.02
Kegalle	47.91	47.70	51.24	45.81

Thus both the President and the Leader of the Opposition will have to woo those who did not vote in April 1999 and those who deliberately spoilt their vote. Indeed those two entities reflect much discredit on both the President and the Leader of the Opposition for the quality of leadership they have given the nation since 1994.

On the other hand the President has done well in handling her Coalition partners. On August 25th 1994, when the present Parliament convened, there were 113 MPs from five parties. At the end of April 1999 111 MPs are still with the PA, the only defectors being Vasudeva Nanayakkara (LSSP – Ratnapura district) and Ravi Karunanayake (Lalith Front – Nominated list). However to complicate this equation still further, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) has already announced that they will in future neither campaign under the umbrella of the PA nor become an electoral ally of the UNP. Conceivably the SLMC could win a seat at the next General Election either in the Colombo district or in the Kalutara district, due to the preponderance of Muslims in the Beruwela electoral area. For certain they will win a seat or two in the Puttalam district which has the highest concentration of Muslims outside the North – Eastern Province. By the same token the National Union of Workers (formerly the

Ceylon Workers Congress) has made public statements to the effect, that in future they will be associated neither with the PA nor the UNP for purposes of elections.

By all accounts, the exercise of the franchise is now feasible in the Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya districts in the North but not in the Killinochi and Mullaitivu districts, the current theatres of action in our Civil war. As in 1994, in the former Eastern Province there will be no difficulty in the exercise of the franchise in the Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts. Therefore the North- Eastern Province may well hold the balance of power, against the background of a very close contest in the seven Sinhala speaking Provinces. It will certainly be interesting to watch how the charismatic but wayward Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga will handle herself and also how Ranil Wickremasinghe, who has been an introvert since his days at Royal College and the University of Ceylon, will handle himself.

Breathing fire at the UNP, like being habitually late, is second nature to the President. Suffice it to state that berating the UNP is no way to woo the floating vote, let alone those who in disgust did not vote or deliberately spoilt their vote. By the same token inability to clearly spell out remedial action to the current ills in our society, is one of the several liabilities of the Leader of the Opposition.

The Provincial Council Elections of April 1999 were held against the background of that day of infamy in Wayamba. The remedial

action taken by the President was effective throughout the five Provinces except in the Mahiyangana electoral area and in patches in the Districts of Anuradhapura, Kandy and Nuwara-Eliya.

In the Mahiyangana electoral area, the only such area in the entire Island which the President did not win during the landslide at the Presidential Election of 1994, there was rampant impersonation but no stuffing of ballot boxes. The strangers brought into that electoral area from Matara They and their fellow travellers in Mahiyangana may well have cast more than 5,000 ballots whereas in the entirety of Uva the PA defeated the UNP by 207,163 votes as against 202,777. The election petition due to be filed by Lakshman Seneviratne MP (UNP – Badulla district) is well documented and lays the blame fairly and squarely on a Minister from the Southern Province and a MP from the Badulla district.

On the other hand the nefarious activities in the Districts of Anuradhapura, Kandy and Nuwara-Eliya reflect discredit on two Ministers. However such rigging was on a small scale and conceivably could not have affected the outcome of the Provincial Council Elections in those Provinces.

The repeated directives of the President, both in private and in public, was that these Provincial Council Elections must be scrupulously fair. Those directives have been flagrantly violated by two Ministers and one Member of Parliament. Last week her wrath descended on them in rather a spectacular manner. However I doubt that being adequate remedial action. They must



The Honourable Lakshman Jayakoddy M.P.
Minister for Cultural and Religious Affairs.
Whether he is in Government, in Opposition,
or in the political wilderness, he has always
conducted himself as a personification of a gentleman.

(by courtesy of "The Sunday Island")

be subjected to deterrent punishment administered publicly.

I endorse the conclusions of PAFFREL and CMEV that this election was rigged in certain limited areas. However I am unable to associate myself with the claims of the UNP, circulated privately as of now, that the Provincial Council Elections of April 6th were blatantly rigged and that is why they lost. In fact if the UNP does not learn from the recent verdict of the nation, then for certain they will have to spend another six years languishing in Opposition.

This book is so critical of Presidents, Prime Ministers and Cabinet Ministers from all political parties and both genders, that some readers could conceivably wonder whether my views are utopian to the extent of being totally unrealistic. Personally I think otherwise.

A supreme example of a role model in the current Parliament is Lakshman Jayakody MP (SLFP – Gampaha district). A superb cricketer and rugby player during his days at Trinity College, Kandy, he entered Parliament in 1960 and counts around 35 years of experience in the Legislature. He has served with much acceptance both in Government and in Opposition and is currently the Cabinet Minister for Cultural and Religious Affairs. He is so honest, both financially and conceptually, has an impeccable Human Right record and is humble to a fault. I do hope he will be the next Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

Ten years ago there was another role model in Parliament. He

was The late Gamini Jayasuriya MP (UNP – Homagama). A kinsman of the venerated Anagarika Dharmapala, he was educated at Royal College and entered Parliament in 1960. He counted 15 years in the Legislature and many more years in the political wilderness. He was Cabinet Minister for Agriculture and Lands when he resigned his portfolio and his membership of the UNP in 1987, when he disagreed strongly with the proposed Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. He too was so honest, both financially and conceptually, had an impeccable Human Rights record and was humble to a fault.

I do hope that the SLFP and the UNP, both of which have produced so many errant Presidents, Prime Ministers, and Cabinet Ministers, look up to these respective role models from their own parties.

In the first Chapter of this book “Wayamba - That Day of Infamy” it was my painful duty to pass severe strictures on the Sri Lanka Police. For emotional reasons it was difficult for me to do so. Therefore I sought the guidance of three retired Inspectors-General of Police, all distinguished products of the University of Ceylon, whom I have known personally ever since they served under my father. I was pleasantly surprised that they did not disagree with my assessment of pathetic performance of the Police in Wayamba.

Therefore I will be less than honest unless I emphasise that the Police functioned magnificently at the Provincial Council

Elections of April 1999. Indeed this book will not be complete unless I congratulate Inspector-General Lakdasa Kodituwakku, the Gazetted Officers, the Inspectorate and the Constabulary of the Sri Lanka Police for their superb performance everywhere, except in the Mahiyangana electoral area.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Commissioner of Elections Dayanada Dissanayake and the Department of Elections. In my judgement that is the finest Department in our Public Service. It was truly my privilege to state so in "J.R.Jayewardene of Sri Lanka" the inside story of the General Election of 1977 and "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume I), an in - depth account of the General Election of 1994. It is indeed my privilege to repeat those encomiums in this book.

Ten years ago an author living in Sri Lanka and writing a book of this nature would have either disappeared mysteriously or would have been found dead mysteriously . Today our society is so different. Therefore I must congratulate President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga for the miracle she has performed in the space of a few years. Indeed her Human Rights record is an example to the Third World.

EPILOGUE

The principal purpose of this book is to focus attention on our politicians, a contemptible breed at the best of times, who have ruined our nation since Independence.

We obtained our Independence in 1948, one month after Burma obtained hers and six months after India and Pakistan obtained theirs in 1947. Of other British colonies in our part of the world, Malaya was scheduled to obtain hers in 1951 but that was delayed by six years because of her terrorist problems.

In 1948 we were visibly more prosperous, more stable and better governed than Burma, India, Malaya and Pakistan. The credit for that goes to the British not to us. After fifty years of Independence we are certainly better off than Burma, one of the most chaotic nations in Asia. However who in their senses would claim that we are now more stable and better governed than India, Malaysia and Pakistan. The nett decline is what our politicians, irrespective of their predilections, have done to Sri Lanka.

In the past fifty years India has produced statesmen of the calibre of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. Pakistan has produced Governor -General Mohamed Ali Jinnah and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. Malaysia has produced Tengku Abdul

Rahaman who in 1951 refused Independence from Britain, till Britain exterminated the terrorism they initiated in 1942 to evict occupation forces from Japan. Somehow those terrorists continued to grow in stature after the cessation of hostilities in World War II. It is a tragedy that Sri Lanka has produced no statesmen since Independence. Unquestionably able leaders like Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Banadaranaiké and President J.R. Jayewardene were anything but statesmen. They were merely able politicians, who systematically placed their own interests above the interests of our nation. What they sowed, our people unfortunately had to reap.

A tragic feature in our political evolution since Independence were the disastrous roles of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, at the height of his power, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Banadaranaiké, as Leader of the Opposition, and President J.R. Jayewardene, at the height of his power.

Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake was at the pinnacle of his glory on February 4th 1948 when he obtained our Independence without shedding a drop of blood. He was then 64 years old and not in the best of health because of complications due to diabetes and high blood pressure. Had he died an year after Independence, as did Governor - General Mohamed Ali Jinnah of Pakistan the architect of their Independence, in the eyes of our nation he would have gone down to history as our greatest leader in the twentieth century. Alternatively, in 1949 had he retired from active politics

and become Governor – General in succession to Sir Henry Monk Mason Moore KCMG, perhaps the same overall result would have been achieved. Instead the Prime Minister continued in office and groomed his son Dudley to succeed him, by passing the logical successor S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the Leader of the House.

Bandaranaike was born in 1899 and reached Cabinet rank in 1936, whereas Dudley Senanayake was born in 1911 and reached Cabinet rank in 1947. Both had proven ability, thus the natural successor was obvious.

Why did D.S. Senanayake act in this reprehensible manner well knowing the dire consequences of his actions?

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had a deep understanding of our politics from the grass-roots level upwards. In 1926 he visited Jaffna for the first time, the year after he returned home from Oxford. After that visit he wrote a superb article for public consumption in one of our newspapers*. There he advocated Federalism as the only viable solution to our ethnic problem, nearly twenty five years before S.J.V. Chelvanayakam did so ! Such was his stature as an intellectual. Not surprisingly he is the most frequently quoted intellectual in the political firmament of

* If I recollect correctly that article appeared in “The Morning Leader”. I will be most grateful for any reader of this book who could spare me a reproduction.

Sri Lanka, in the context of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, commencing 1953, when India opted to make Hindi its Official Language in twenty five years, he advocated that Sinhala be made the Official Language in twenty four hours! He thus rejected his own thinking ever since his return from Oxford, namely that English be supplanted with both Sinhala and Tamil. Swept into power on a tidal wave of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism in 1956, the Official Language Act of 1956 was promulgated whereby Sinhala replaced English. Racial riots broke out immediately. Such riots were a periodic feature in Sri Lanka thereafter and in 1983 it turned into a Civil war.

Why did S.W.R.D. Banadaranaikē behave in this reprehensible manner well knowing the dire consequences of his action?

In 1977 when Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene was swept into power with an unbelievable majority, he had everything needed for good Government. He was the most experienced Prime Minister Sri Lanka had produced since Independence. He had an experienced Cabinet and a huge majority in Parliament.

Besides, he was the scion of one of the most distinguished of our legal families . His father E.W. Jayewardene K.C. and one the younger brothers of his father, A. St. V. Jayewardene K.C. were Supreme Court Judges during the British Administration. In more recent times his younger brother H.W. Jayewardene Q.C. was

the much respected President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. Therefore even the detractors of President J.R. Jayewardene were confident that he would be the personification of rectitude in upholding the Rule of Law. Commencing 1982 he was the anti-thesis of that. So many verdicts of the Supreme Court were reversed by Presidential directives !.

Why did J.R. Jayewardene act in this reprehensible manner, well knowing the dire consequences of his actions.?

Considering the pathetic performance of our leaders ranging from Presidents and Prime Ministers to Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament, their powers must be reduced substantially. Basically they do not serve the nation, instead they want the nation to serve them.

On the other hand the powers of the bureaucracy, so systematically usurped by politicians must be increased to their levels at the advent of our Independence, because our bureaucracy has served the nation so well. For example, since 1948 the Ceylon Civil Service produced so many Permanent Secretaries and since 1972 the Sri Lanka Administrative Service produced so many Secretaries of Ministers, as that high rank is currently known. Not one of them was accused, in a meaningful sense, of corruption or dishonourable conduct. Indeed that is the common thread that runs through our Public Service at its highest level. For example our Ambassadors and High Commissioners range from the sublime to the ludicrous. Yet of

the professional diplomats to reach that high rank, fifty eight of them from the Sri Lanka Foreign Service and six from the UN, only one was found guilty of professional misconduct. He was reduced in rank and therefore he opted to retire prematurely.

Most politicians, be they Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers or Members of Parliament, have willfully undermined the Rule of Law. Such vermin must be disciplined before they destroy the very fabric of our society. That can be done through institutional checks and balances. Therefore the Police must be placed under a Police Commission totally independent of the Government of the day and answerable only to Parliament. Thus the proposed Police Commission, not our politicians, would henceforth be responsible for transfers, appointments, promotions and dismissals of all Police personnel. Paradoxically both the PA and the UNP have agreed to this recommendation. That must be implemented in 1999 itself so that a new era, where no citizen is above the law and no citizen below the law, may dawn with the new millennium.

Politics is the art of the possible in the realm of the unknown. If the abolition of the executive Presidency must be postponed temporarily, then it must be reviewed as early as practicable. In Sri Lanka where all executive Presidents have disgraced themselves by placing their party interests above national interests, the Presidential system just cannot work. However

after Independence, democracy has become a way of life in Sri Lanka. Therefore our traditions in democracy have not only to be strengthened but also made indigenous to our nation. Party loyalties in Sri Lanka have the same destructive capability that tribalism has in Africa. Therefore such loyalties must be contained. That can be done with the Cabinet of Ministers being selected not from the Government Parliamentary Group but from Parliament itself. Ironically that was a technique successfully used by the British in Ceylon from 1931 to 1947 under the Donoughmore Constitution.

The life blood of democracy is the periodic free and fair elections. Therefore that process must be refined. That can be achieved by modernising the archaic Election Ordinance of 1957. All Commissioners of Election have served the nation with distinction. Therefore their powers must be enhanced by allowing the Commissioner of Elections or better still an Election Commission consisting of the Commissioner and two Deputy Commissioners, vested with the power to declare an election null and void in the event of widespread malpractices or to order a re-poll locally in the event of localised malpractices. Here again the PA and the UNP think alike. Such thinking must be translated into action, more specifically with a new Election Ordinance of 1999.

Such an envisaged Election Ordinance must include new reforms to combat the growing menace of impersonation, because over 600,000 of our citizens or five percent of all voters are working

abroad. As of now two-thirds of our adult population possess National Identity Cards and within five years all adults will be duly covered. Therefore commencing 2004 that vital document must be produced by the voter to prove his or her identity at the Polling Station. Otherwise no ballot paper will be issued. Moreover, the Penal Code and the Election Ordinance must be amended with immediate effect, to enable our Courts to inflict deterrent punishment on those guilty of impersonation in the exercise of the franchise.

It is a sad reflection of our times, that in a nation where graduate unemployment is currently rampant, less than ten percent of the elected Members of Parliament are University graduates. In direct contrast at the advent of Independence when such unemployment was unheard of, over fifteen percent of our first Parliament consisted of University graduates. It is common knowledge that our professional elite shuns politics, whereas the scum of our society revels in it. That dangerous trend must be reversed before it ruins our nation altogether. Therefore we should follow the example of Malaysia and enforce minimum educational standards to enter Parliament. that should be the G. C. E. (Ordinary Level)

None of these proposals will have the desired effect, unless the people of Sri Lanka do their duty by the nation. Our people have nothing but contempt for our politicians and justifiably so. However, the very same people debase themselves by venerating

politicians in power. To say the least, our politicians from the highest in the land downwards should be socially ostracised. Besides, in the exercise of the franchise more and more citizens must show their contempt for politicians by willfully spoiling their votes.

My fellow citizens, please do not be beholden to Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentarians. It is they who should be beholden to you. Please remember that they are your servants not your masters.

Politicians of Sri Lanka condemn me if you must. However please remember History will absolve me, not you. !

April 30th 1999

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am truly grateful to the following organisations for the generous assistance they gave me in undertaking research for this book:

The Alumni Association of the University of Ceylon

The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence

The Department of Elections

The National Library of Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Police

In particular I must thank Godwin Fernando, my classmate at the University of Ceylon, who once again functioned admirably as the Director of Research. S.S. Wijesingha, retired Secretary-General of Parliament, led a battery of top professionals who functioned as my moderators. Jayantha Gunasekera P.C., my classmate at Royal College, was my legal adviser. V.P. Vittachi and D.L. Seneviratne edited the final manuscript. Without their generous assistance it would have been impossible for me to write this book in the space of three months.

Successive manuscript were typed diligently by Sharmila Perera, the daughter of Godwin Fernando and the proprietor of Thushan Business centre. She also prepared the final discquette and Washuk Gunasinghe transferred it to the format ready for plate making. Upali Palisena of Premadasa and Sons supervised the plate making and Prabath Fernando of Swastika (Private)Ltd.

supervised the printing. To all of them I owe a debt of gratitude.

It is my wish that all profits accruing to me from this book are donated to:

The Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe Memorial Fund.

The Bishop who returned to his Maker in 1983, was my friend, philosopher and guide, ever since my days as an undergraduate at the University of Ceylon when he was the Chaplain. Against that background I am most grateful to Charles Singarayar, Chairman of Ceylon Business Appliances Ltd. who waived the cost of photo copying successive manuscripts and Dr. Sivali Ratwatte, Chairman of the Upali Group of Newspapers, who ensured wide publicity for this book thus minimising the expenditure on advertisements.

My intention of donating all profits from this book was first made public when "The Sunday Island" serialized this book during May 1999. Then many admirers of The late Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Islamic faiths, volunteered to make their own token contributions. Such donations may please be sent directly to:

The Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe Memorial Fund

c/o The Bishop of Kurunegala of The Church of Ceylon

31, Kandy Road

Kurunegala

SRI LANKA

June 1st 1999

POSTSCRIPT

THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE

The Provincial Council of the Southern Province completed its term of five years on April 6th 1999. Therefore it stood dissolved as of the following day, when the Commissioner of Elections announced that nominations would be received in the first week of May. Thereafter another Gazette notification issued by him indicated that the Provincial Council Election would be held on June 10th 1999.

With my having completed the writing of this book within three months on April 30th 1999, I badly needed some rest during May. Hence regular visits to the Southern Province was a pleasant diversion.

Before doing so I repeatedly checked with the intelligence reports from the Church of Ceylon, which were remarkably accurate in predicting the results in the Southern Province at the last Provincial Election held in March 1994. By the same token Godwin Fernando checked the intelligence reports from the Roman Catholic Church which were just as accurate in 1994. Both sets tallied. According to those reports basically the political situation in the Southern Province was,

- (a) The Government is unpopular because of the spiraling cost of living and the broken promises of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.
- (b) The UNP is even more unpopular because it is ineffective in Opposition and was repressive in Government. The Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration was the biggest single liability of the UNP in the Southern Province.
- (c) Consequently the People's Alliance will win the Provincial Council Election comfortably.

The volatile Southern Province has its own special role in our politics. That Province is more parochial than other Sinhala speaking Provinces because of the deep rooted concept of *pita gan karaya*, which translated into English would mean outsiders. To those in the Southern Province only people in the South matters, not any outsiders. (My mother who was from the Southern Province dinned that into me when I was a teenager. My friend Upali Wijewardene used to tell me that his mother who was also from the Southern Province dinned the same message into him). Besides breakdowns in law and order were common place at the time of elections when exchange of fire, usually with shot guns, took place. Moreover the Province has the highest C – 3 murders (accused unknown murders) and the highest unemployment rate in the Sinhala speaking areas, That in turn fuelled the volatile nature of the Southern Province.

Basically the politics of the Southern Province was hostile to the UNP. For example in the first two Parliaments of Sri Lanka, when D.S. Senanayake and Dudley Senanayake were Prime Ministers, there was not a single Cabinet Minister from the South. That honour first went to Montague Jayawickrema (UNP – Weligama) when Sir John Kotalawela was Prime Minister. After fifty years of Independence there was only one more stalwart from the UNP who had gone through the mill of having been a Member of Parliament, Deputy Minister and Cabinet Minister. That was Dr. Ranjit Atapattu (UNP – Beliatte), who was a few years my senior at Royal College and at the University of Ceylon.

In direct contrast the Marxist parties have had a significant role in the Southern Province. For example the Matara district has been the epicentre of Communist influence in Sri Lanka, largely due to the role of Dr. S.A. Wickremasinghe (Communist Party – Akuressa) and Pieter Keuneman. (His ancestral home was in Matara though he contested in the multi-member constituency of Colombo Central.) Both were Presidents of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka for several decades and had espoused the cause of Communism while undergraduates in England. S.A. Wickremasinghe studied Medicine at the University of London and Pieter Keuneman Classics at Cambridge. The latter was perhaps the finest all – round student Royal College produced in the twentieth century, with a school record even more brilliant than that of President J.R. Jayewardene and Lalith Athulathmudali.

With their pervasive influence in the Matara district, the

Communist Party produced so many Members of Parliament for example Premalal Kumarasiri (Hakmana) in 1947, B.Y. Tudawe (Matara) in 1970, Chandra Gajaweera and Eugene Samarasinghe in 1994.

A more dramatic event in recent years was that the Hambantota district produced the JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera who was expelled from the Lumumba University in Moscow, because of his radicalism! Unlike the Communist Party, which advocated Parliamentary democracy, he advocated violent revolution. The insurrections in 1971 and 1988/89 were clearly his work and even after his extermination in 1989 the JVP is anything but dead.

Besides the SLFP has a solid base in the Hambantota district, the home of the Rajapakse family which has produced more Members of Parliament than even the Bandaranaike and Senanayake families.. At every General Election except in 1977 at least one Rajapakse was elected to Parliament. Three were elected in 1994, namely Mahinda Rajapakse, Minister of Fisheries, his good looking cousin Nirupama Rajapakse, the Deputy Minister for Tourism and his younger brother Chamal Rajapakse.

Against this background the UNP having an uphill task in the Southern Province in 1999, was not unexpected. In fact the Southern Province had solidly voted UNP only once, during the massive landslide of 1977.

The President led the PA addressing 35 meetings. The Leader of the Opposition led the UNP addressing 76 meetings. Cabinet Ministers and former Cabinet Ministers also entered the fray and campaigning was indeed lively from the week-end May 15th/16th till midnight on Monday 7th June, when it had to cease in conformity with our election laws.

An outstanding feature of the campaign was the superb performance of the Police under the able leadership of Bodhi Liyanage, Deputy Inspector – General (Southern Range). He even outshone Ernest Perera, Senior Superintendent of Police (Southern Province) in 1977 and later Inspector-General of Police. I was truly amazed to observe the Police advising the chauffers of Cabinet Ministers that they had parked their Pajeros in the wrong place and politely requesting them to park elsewhere! More importantly every single complaint, be it by the PA, UNP, JVP or anybody else, was thoroughly investigated sometimes to the chagrin of Cabinet Ministers. For example when Cabinet Minister Richard Pathirana barged in and made loud and unsubstantiated comments that the Police was partial towards the UNP, the DIG firmly stood his ground.

Other new features in the campaign was that for once Chandrika Banadaranaikē Kumaratunga conducted herself as the President of Sri Lanka. Her language was no longer bawdy and no longer did she abuse Ranil Wickremasinghe from public platforms. Instead she narrated the problems the nation was facing and challenged the Leader of the Opposition to publicly give his

solutions to those problems. Ranil Wickremasinghe was indeed equal to that task. He gave a superb interview on a programme on TNL, the TV network owned by his brother Shan, and more importantly delivered some splendid election speeches thereafter. I heard his addresses at Ambalantota and Ambalangoda and was more than impressed. Another new feature was the excellent campaigning by the JVP in their principal base, the Hambantota district.

The campaigning of the JVP in that district reminded me of the magnificent campaigning by the UNP in 1977 under the Leader of the Opposition J.R. Jayewardene, who is looked upon by all parties as the greatest Leader of the Opposition the nation has yet produced. The JVP like the UNP in 1977, did not rely on large public meetings. Instead they relied on hundreds of pocket meetings, with the public rallies being the culmination of their campaign at the grass –roots level. They carried their message very effectively. Their claim was that in 1994 the President deliberately lied when she stated from every platform that the Presidential system will be abolished no later than June 15th 1995. She lied again when she said that the Government would build an express highway from Hambantota to Colombo and a new fisheries harbour in Hambantota. They circulated among their audiences photocopies of the letter issued by the President (she was Prime Minister then) assuring the JVP of the abolition of the Presidential system no later than June 15th 1999, whereupon the JVP withdrew their Presidential candidate . They then inquired from their audiences what had happened to that

promise. They asked their audiences to show the new express highway Hambantota to Colombo (laughter) and the new fisheries harbour at Hambantota (loud laughter). With a superb sense of theatre, the JVP campaign stopped there.

In direct contrast the UNP campaigned mostly through public rallies. There they ranted on the countless broken promises of the President like reducing the price of kerosene, creating two million new jobs, the dole of Rs. 1,500 per month *et cetera*. That litany of woes lacked the pungency of the campaign by the JVP. Besides the election machine of the UNP in all three districts was ridden with internecine conflicts thus diminishing its overall effectiveness.

As the campaigns of the PA, UNP and JVP gathered momentum, by early June it was visible to an articulate observer that the PA will defeat the UNP comfortably, by about 5 percentage points, in the Galle and Matara districts. However in the Hambantota district it would be a fierce battle, perhaps with the PA winning by one percentage point and the JVP taking about twenty per cent of the vote.

The other emerging factors were that the JVP was poorly organized in the Galle and Matara districts, where they would poll around 10% of the vote, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga for once not making any rash promises and Ranil Wickremasinghe speaking to the point as opposed to prattling. He repeatedly said that he will not make any rash promises which

conceivably cannot be implemented. He did not mention the President by name but every time he referred to broken promises there was much mirth in the audience.

There were three distressing factors during the campaign. Firstly, the UNP was oblivious to the fact that the Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration was their biggest liability. Some former Cabinet Ministers told me that it was merely propaganda on the part of the PA. Others challenged me to name any member of the Premadasa Administration who was convicted in a Court of Law for violating the Human Rights of any citizen. Suffice it to state that with such naivety the UNP will remain in the Opposition for a second term.

To my mind the role of President R. Premadasa in Sri Lanka was similar to the role of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini in Italy. Nearly all Italians I knew claim that Mussolini was superb for development work. For example he built more roads in Italy than any other leader in Italy during the twentieth century. By the same token they hold him in supreme contempt for his atrocious Human Rights record. The overall impact is that even today Italians loathe Mussolini.

The second of the distressing features was the role of the State-controlled Lake House Press contemptuously referred in Sinhala as the *Beira gedera pacha patraya* (the Lake House con papers), whether it was owned by the Wijewardene family or following State-control since 1972 by SLFP – led

Administrations or UNP Administrations. The Lake House Press lied gloriously and even claimed that in Hambantota, over and above the fisheries harbour and an express highway which the President promised in 1994, there will be a new international airport!

The third was the foul language used on UNP platforms by Mervyn De Silva MP. (UNP – Hambantota district) and Dr. Ranjitha Senaratne MP. (UNP – National list). I do hope Ranil Wickremasinghe will take stern disciplinary action against them.

The campaigning in the Southern Province reached its climax around the week-end Saturday 5th/ Sunday 6th June. Ranil Wickremasinghe held his final rally on Sunday 6th June at Ambalangoda. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga addressed a meeting at Matara the same day and at Galle the following day. “The Light House”, the new four-star tourist Hotel in Galle was full of Cabinet Ministers, ex-Cabinet Ministers and party dignitaries around that week –end. I was also there, usually having breakfast with the UNP hierarchy and dinner with the PA hierarchy or *vice versa*. Both sides agreed on two matters. Despite their intensive campaigning the voters showed total apathy. (I chimed in saying that the voters were fed up with both the UNP and the SLFP.) The JVP was a force to reckon within the Hambantota district not elsewhere. (I fully agree with that statement.) Paradoxically, the PA was so consious of its superb record on Human Rights but so oblivious to its disastrous record in development work. The UNP was so consious of its superb

record in development work but so oblivious to its disastrous record on Human Rights.

In living memory, the election held on June 10th 1999 was the most peaceful in the Southern Province. Election violence was part and parcel of life in the Southern Province ever since 1931, when adult franchise was introduced to Ceylon. However this election was so peaceful barring for some incidents of thuggery in Beliatte and Deniyaya. That was the assessment of the much respected Commissioner of Elections, Dayananda Dissanayake, and the astute Director of the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence, Dr. Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu.

As usual Rupavahini, the State-owned television station, had an all night programme and the results began to trickle in by 0200 hours the following day. The overall results were as follows:

GALLE DISTRICT

Party	Votes	% Vote	Seats
PA	214,714	46.70	11
UNP	188,921	41.09	9
JVP	38,817	8.44	2
Others	20,214	4.77	0

MATARA DISTRICT

Party	Vote	%Vote	Seats
PA	157,762	46.36	8
UNP	130,843	38.45	7
JVP	40,276	11.85	2

HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT

PA	89,483	39.09	6
UNP	82,786	36.26	5
JVP	47,296	20.66	3
Others	11,942	3.99	0

(Source – Department of Elections)

With the two bonus seats being awarded to the PA, the breakdown in the new Provincial Council would be as follows :

PA	-	27
UNP	-	21
JVP	-	7
		<u>55</u>

Therefore once again a minority element, the JVP, will hold the balance of power in a Provincial Council.

As stated in the first page in this book and repeated in the last Chapter, the Provincial Councils have achieved nothing tangible since their inception in 1988. The new Provincial Council in the Southern Province will undoubtedly follow suit, because by virtue of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution the Provincial Councils are impotent. They must be energized if the devolution of power through the Provincial Councils is to become meaningful. By the same token the Provincial Council Elections in 1988 and 1993 were a good barometer for measuring political popularity. That certainly was so in 1999 too.

This year so far seven Provincial Council Elections have been held. The election in the Wayamba was a disgrace and must be annulled, either by the Supreme Court or better still dissolved voluntarily and a new election held. In the six other Provinces the relative strength of the PA and the UNP were as follows:

	PA (%)	UNP (%)
Central Province	43.2	40.1
North Central Province	53.5	39.6

	PA(%)	UNP(%)
Sabaragamuwa	47.8	44.9
Southern Province	44.8	39.2
Uva	49.9	44.0
Western Province	43.7	43.5
Total	45.0	42.0

(Source – Department of Elections)

In the context of the forthcoming Presidential Election and General Election, these results indeed carry a message to the nation.

- This is not the end -

June 25th 1999

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பொதுசன நூலகம்
யாழ்ப்பாணம்

CORRECTIONS

Page 321 penultimate paragraph, line 6 should read,
After her departure from Cairo.....

Page 322 paragraph 2, line 4 should read,
Erring on the.....

Page 372 last paragraph, line 4 should read,
.....in August 1994

Page 390 penultimate paragraph, line 6. There should be a coma
after Afro – Americans.

Page 398 paragraph 1, line 7. The coma after Marxist should be
deleted.

Page 423 footnote should read,
Including the votes of the CWC, their
electoral ally.

Page 426 paragraph 2, line 5 should read,
electoral area were from Matara.

13994 a



A. G. Dissanayake was born in 1938 and educated at Royal College, the University of Ceylon and Harvard University, where he was a visiting scholar in the fields of foreign relations and political science. He has had the unique distinction of rising to the highest levels in Sri Lanka in three separate spheres of activity, as a track and field athlete, a diplomat and an author.

As an athlete he represented Sri Lanka at the Asian Games, the University Olympic Games and captained the Sri Lanka Athletics Team. As a diplomat he addressed the UN General Assembly at the age of twenty nine years and rose to the rank of Ambassador ten years later, after serving with the UN in the United States, Indonesia, Nepal and Burma with war-time assignments in Bangladesh and Nigeria. He served Sri Lanka with distinction as Ambassador to Indonesia, Egypt and the European Union. As an author he wrote his first book "Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka", while stationed in Burma. Thereafter "The Jayewardene of Sri Lanka", "The Agony of Sri Lanka", "The Dilemma of Sri Lanka", "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volumes I and II), "War or Peace in Sri Lanka" (Volume I), "The Glorious Cricketers of Sri Lanka", "War or Peace in Sri Lanka" (Volume II) and "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume III) followed at regular intervals.

He now lives in retirement in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and works as a volunteer with the Amateur Athletics Association, The Church of Ceylon, The Royal Ceylon Old Boy's Union and writes one book every year. His next book will be "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume IV), which will be an in-depth account of the next Presidential Election.