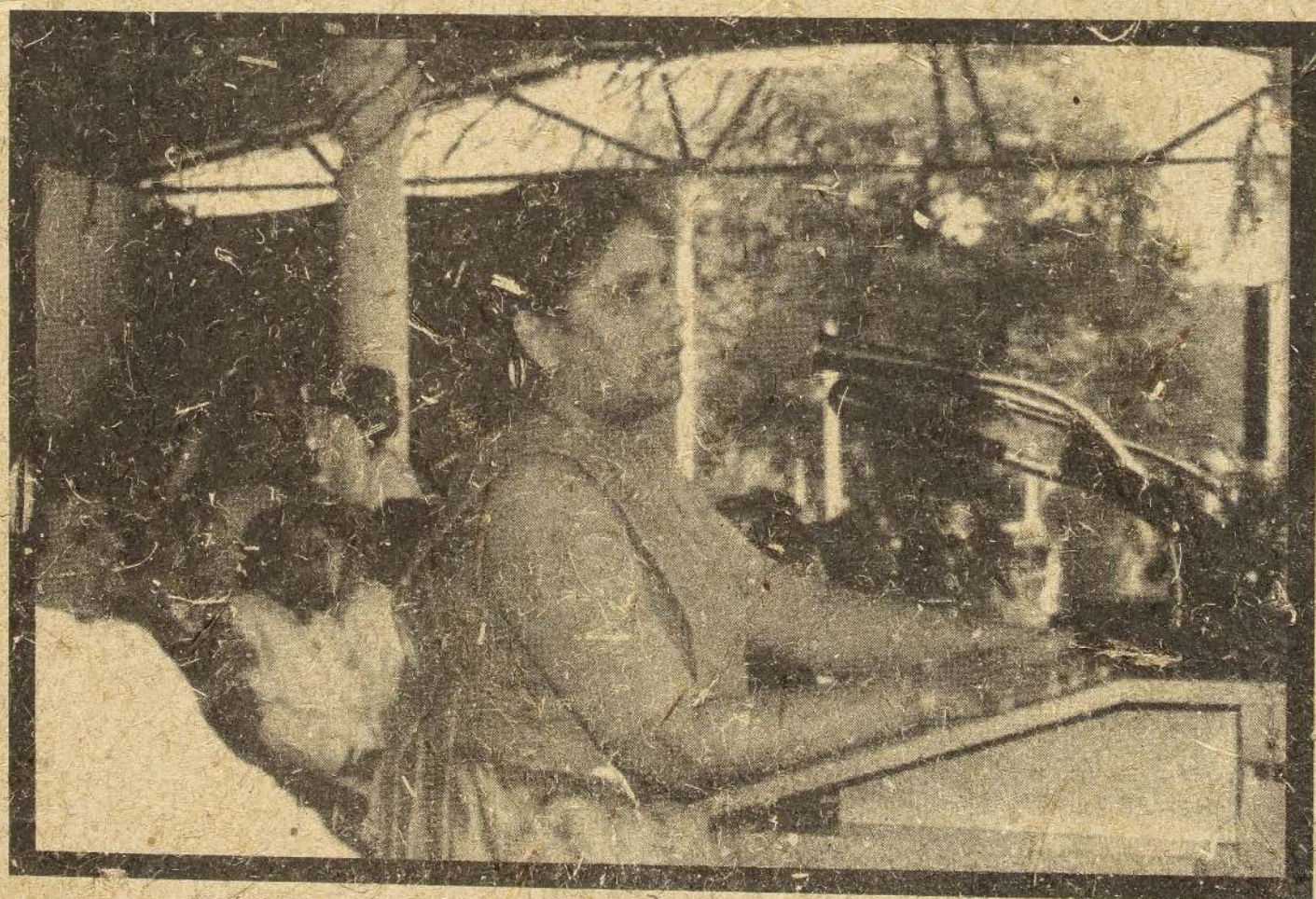


THE POLITICS OF SRI LANKA

VOLUME IV

BY
T. D. S. A. DISSANAYAKA



THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION-1999



Grip Engineering (Pte) Ltd.

Manufacturers of Office, Home & Factory Furniture

With Norwegian and American Collaboration

THE RIGHT - REV. S. JERANESAN
BISHOP OF JAFENNA

With Best Compliments
from



Major Douglas L. Wijesinha
Chairman

GRIP ENGINEERING PTE LTD

Manufacturers of quality furniture for your Office, Home or Auditorium

58 Galle Face Terrace, Colombo 3.

Tel. 348169/70/71

Fax 445180

E mail : grip@sft.lk

<http://www.gripfurniture.com>

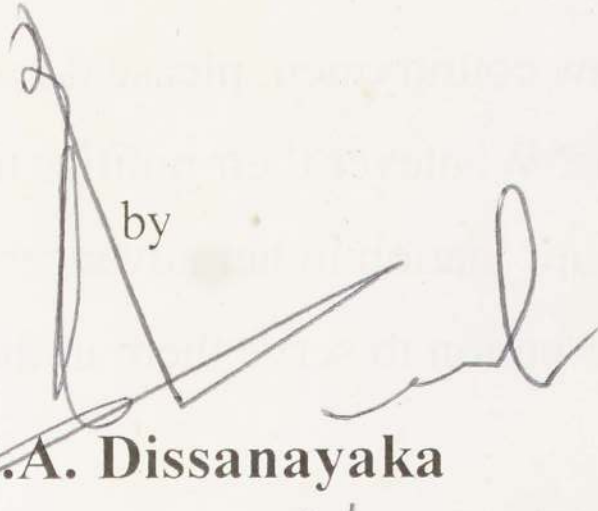
A NEW LOOK AT FURNITURE

Head Office: No. 58, Galle Face Terrace, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka.

Tel: 348169, 348170, 348171 Fax: 445180

E-MAIL: grip@sft.lk

“THE POLITICS OF SRI LANKA” (VOLUME IV)

by 

T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka

March 29th 2000
First day of issue

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 1999

Written without fear or favour
With malice towards none and magnanimity to all.

PRESENTED BY THE BISHOP
Rt. Rev. Dr. S. JEBANESAN

Printed and published

by

SWASTIKA (PRIVATE) LTD.

My fellow countrymen, please do not put your trust in our politicians. Whatever their politics may be, they rarely want to serve our nation in her advancement. Instead they want our nation to serve them in their advancement.

Please do not demean yourself by being beholden to Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers and Members of Parliament. Instead they should be beholden to you, because 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 !

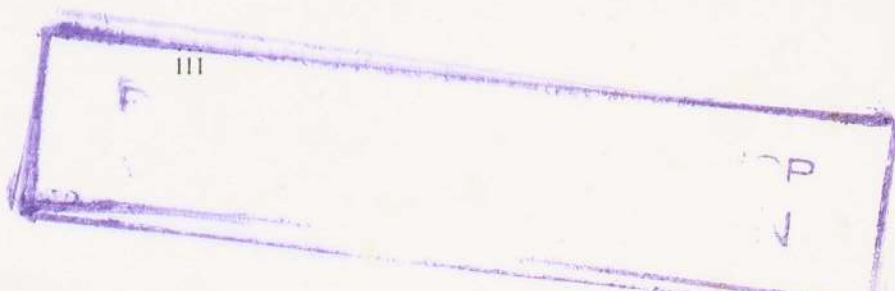
T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka
(1938 -)

	Pages
Volume I (The General Election of 1994)	1 - 169
Volume II (The Presidential Election of 1994)	170 - 269
Volume III (The Provincial Council Elections of 1999)	270 - 454

VOLUME IV

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	455 - 478
CHAPTER XI THE BACKGROUND	479 - 553
CHAPTER XII THE CAMPAIGN	554 - 595
CHAPTER XIII THE VERDICT	596 - 606



All copyright are reserved by the author

First print - March 2000

Printed and published in Sri Lanka

by

SWASTIKA (PRIVATE) LTD.

329, Dam Street

Colombo-12.

ISBN - 955 - 572 - 001 - 0

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)
- 2000 - "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume IV)

PROJECTED PUBLICATIONS

- 2000 - "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume V)
(The General Election of 2000)
- 2001 - "War or Peace in Sri Lanka" (Volume III)

This book is affectionately dedicated to
Chula De Silva P.C.
my classmate at Royal College
and my life long friend.

His unswerving commitment to the truth
has always been an inspiration to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence.

The Department of Elections.

The National Library of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka Police

The University of Colombo.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Godwin Fernando, my classmate at the University of Ceylon and my partner at Physics practicals, who helped me throughout 1999 in the in-depth research to write this book. Indeed he functioned admirably as the Director of Research, for this book, as he has done for all ten of my previous books.

By the same token I am so grateful to S.S. Wijesinha, retired Secretary-General of Parliament and W.T. Jayasinghe, retired Foreign Secretary, who led a battery of top professionals who were my moderators. Some of those moderators are still serving in the higher echelons in the Government of Sri Lanka while others have now retired. Therefore all their names are withheld.

Chula De Silva P.C. and Jayantha Gunasekera P.C., both members of the Royal College Class of 1949 helped me with legal advice pertaining to this book. D.L Seneviratne who was one class our senior at Royal College, edited the final manuscript. Sharmila Perera, the daughter of Godwin Fernando, systematically typed the successive manuscripts, Dushan De Silva of "*Ath Weda*" who handled the electronic print-out with similar zeal, and Kalyani Ranasinghe, Managing Director of Swastika (Private) Ltd. who personally handled the printing. Indeed I am so grateful to all of them.

All profits accruing to me from this Volume will be donated to set up a Trust Fund of the Royal College Class of 1949. When the word was first passed around at our get together last year so many of my classmates, the dearest of my friends, volunteered to assist me and thereby lighten my burden. I must also thank Upali Newspapers and Colombo Business Appliances for their generous assistance.

22, De Fonseka Place,
Colombo-5.

SRI LANKA

Telephone: (00941)-584387

Fax: (00941)-737799

PROLOGUE

“The Politics of Sri Lanka (Volume III) ended on the note:

(Quote)

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 other six Sinhala speaking 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
Sabaragamuwa	47.8	44.9
Southern Province	44.8	39.2
Uva	44.9	44.0
Western Province	43.7	44.5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average	45.0	42.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>

(Source - Department of Elections)

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

(Unquote)

In clearer terms that message was that the Government of President Chandrika Banadaranaike Kumaratunga was effectively challenged by the UNP led by the Leader of the Opposition and former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

In Sri Lanka it is a fact of life that our people talk foolishly but more often than not vote wisely and change Governments by the free and unfettered exercise of their franchise. They knew that at the Provincial Council Elections they could not change the Government of Sri Lanka. They had to live with it till the next Presidential Election or General Election which ever came first.

Few disputed that the President would call for a Presidential Election first as she was more popular than the People's Alliance (PA), also the United National Party (UNP) was more popular than Ranil Wickremasinghe. History repeats itself and the exact parallel was in 1982 when President J.R. Jayewardene perceived that he

was more popular than the UNP and that his principal rival Hector Kobbekaduwa of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and that the SLFP was a more formidable opponent than its Presidential candidate.

Thus the six months July to December 1999 were crucial for the President in the quest of her second term and for Ranil Wickremasinghe in his bid for the Presidency.

For my part I badly needed some rest having written Volume III of this book in three months, at the age of 61 years. Therefore I gladly agreed to travel with the Sri Lanka Athletics team to India in July, to the World Championships in Seville, Spain, in August and to the SAF Games in Kathmandu, Nepal, in September. That was indeed a pleasure and a befitting manner to celebrate my fortieth anniversary of having captained the Sri Lanka Athletics team in 1959.

Ever since her ascendancy to power in 1994, the fifteenth of July was an uncomfortable day for the President. According to the supporters of the UNP and the uncommitted voters who had exercised their franchise in her favour in 1994, she had lied gloriously to the nation at both the General Election and the

Presidential Election that followed, that year. According to them, her moonshine included promising bread at Rs. 3.50 a loaf as against the then prevailing price of Rs. 5.50, to provide unemployed youth a dole of Rs. 1500 per month, to create one million new jobs in two years, and above all to abolish the Presidential system as a matter of urgency. All these promises were made publicly and regularly and appeared in print in the manifesto of the People's Alliance. Indeed it is difficult to find one voter in Sri Lanka, whether they voted for her or against her, who did not hear her say so from public platforms or see her say so over the television. In addition during the Presidential Election of 1994 she assured the Marxist JVP in writing that the Presidency will be abolished no later than July 15th 1995, whereupon the JVP withdrew their Presidential candidate and campaigned for her. After her landslide victory, the landslide being largely due to the Leader of the Opposition Gamini Dissanayake (UNP) being assassinated by the LTTE during that campaign, she reneged on all these promises and even on the issue of abolishing the Presidential form of Government. According to the supporters of the PA her sincerity was beyond question on all these issues, but she could not implement her promises for one reason or another.

On July 15th 1999 Ranil Wickremasinghe unleashed his campaign against the President. A massive contingent from the UNP marched

from Lipton Circus to “Temple Trees”, where the President lives with her children, to hand over a petition signed by one million citizens reminding her of her solemn pledge, made publicly and regularly in 1994, to abolish the Presidency no later than July 15th 1995.

Nobody, not even his numerous detractors call Ranil Wickremasinghe a fool. In fact even his detractors admit grudgingly that he is the most experienced political leader in our nation. An extract of his *curriculum vitae* would read as follows and is self-explanatory.

- 1977 - Elected to Parliament at the age of twenty eight years. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- 1978 - Cabinet Minister for Youth Affairs and Employment.
- 1983 - Cabinet Minister for Education.
- 1989 - Cabinet Minister for Industries.
Leader of the House.
- 1993 - Prime Minister
- 1994 - Leader of the Opposition.
- 1999 - Presidential candidate of the UNP.

Besides he is truly Mr. Clean in the context of the unbelievable

corruption in Sri Lanka. He had served the nation as a Cabinet Minister for sixteen long years, including one year as Prime Minister, and his financial integrity was impeccable and an example to the nation.

Ranil Wickremasinghe had lived at “Temple Trees” in 1993 – 94 when he was Prime Minister and had seen for himself the high security there, especially after the assassination of President R. Premadasa by the LTTE in 1993. Those measures were intensified in 1994 when the LTTE assassinated Gamini Dissanayake, the Leader of the Opposition. Besides Ranil Wickremasinghe was more than aware that no political party is allowed to proceed on a procession without a requisite permit from the Police.

Therefore taking a calculated risk he deliberately provoked the Government by organising a march to “Temple Trees” without permission from the Police. The Government fell into that trap. Firstly, in an unprecedented move the Rapid Deployment Force of the Army, specially trained to combat terrorists, was deployed on the route Lipton Circus – Dharmapala Mawatha - “Temple Trees”, a distance of about two kilometres. Secondly, and more importantly, the Presidential Security Division (PSD), who according to many has become a public nuisance, suddenly swooped on the procession.

The over zealous PSD mercilessly attacked not only the processionists but also the photo-journalists who were accompanying the procession and deliberately smashed up their equipment. Amongst UNP stalwarts who were injured and taken to hospital was the diminutive Mrs. Renuka Herat who was a Cabinet Minister for Health in the last UNP Administration. She was not slow in exhibiting the wounds inflicted on her except on intimate parts of her torso !

The scene, the ensuing pandemonium and the wounds of Renuka Herat were televised by BBC and CNN, perhaps the two best TV stations in the world for the coverage of foreign news. It was beamed around the world and shown in India around 1900 hrs, local time. I was then in Madras with our Athletics team and was a house guest of Ambassador and Mrs. Suhita Gautamadasa, both of whom were a few years my senior at the University of Ceylon. The Ambassador of Sri Lanka to China at the time of his retirement, he is re-employed and posted to Madras because he is a Sinhalese who is fluent in Tamil. (He studied at St. John's College, Jaffna, because both his parents were school teachers who were employed in the Jaffna peninsula.)

Within a few minutes of the telecast by BBC and CNN, Godwin Fernando my classmate at the University of Ceylon and the Director

of Research for this book, vide page (vi), telephoned me. Incidentally he was a superb schoolboy athlete during his days at St. Sebastian's College, Moratuwa. He spoke excitedly,

"Jungle, have you heard of what happened in Colombo today?"

"Sure. I heard the first report over All-India Radio. Then I saw it on BBC TV and CNN a few minutes ago"

"Jungle, I told you not to go on this sentimental journey of yours to India. You are still obsessed with Athletics like you were when you were at Royal and the University of Ceylon. You missed an excellent starting point for your next book. When are you returning to Colombo?"

"Tomorrow night at 2100 hours by Air Lanka flight UL 124".

"Shall I pick you up at the Banadaranaike International Airport? Then we can have a chat on the way home."

"No thank you. Marlyn (my wife) will do so. Would you like to meet me at home at 2230 hours for some coffee and brandy and above all for a chat?"

"Okay. That is a good idea."

Most Sri Lankans sarcastically refer to the UL prefix of Air Lanka as Usually Late. UL 124 arrived that night two hours late on the one hour flight from Madras. The passengers, some 270 of us were fuming in the departure lounge at Annadurai International Airport in Madras. By the same token, Marlyn was fuming in the arrival

lounge at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo. In the meantime Godwin Fernando had telephoned my home to say that he will not come for a chat that night but instead will come for breakfast around 0800 hours the next morning.

At that meeting he said,

“Jungle, can you remember your telephoning me on the cellular phone of Ravi Karunanayake (an up and coming Member of Parliament who is the son of my sister and my Godson) during the Provincial Council Election of last month in the Southern Province?”

“Of course. That was from Ambalantota which is some 200 kms from Colombo and hence my voice was indistinct to you and *vice versa*. I telephoned to get you down for the final meeting of Ranil Wickremasinghe at Ambalangoda the following day”

“Yes. You told me that he had spoken splendidly and that you had not dreamt that he could improve so much in such a short time under the tutelage of Satchi and Satchi of London. (The Public Relations Agent of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the UK)

“That will be a new dimension at the forthcoming Presidential Elections. Another new dimension will be the new battle cry of Ranil Wickremasinghe

(“Pacha malla gedera yawamu”)

(Let us send home the bag of lies).

“So please abandon your forthcoming trip to Spain and instead have a vacation in Sri Lanka in August. You can leisurely visit Anuradhapura, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya and see for your self what is happening”.

“Godwin, we went to all those places during the Provincial Council Elections in April. I already saw what was happening”.

“What the hell is wrong with you Jungle?” He thundered. “You want to visit Europe and see our athletes compete in Seville. Then you want to visit Paris and see the University Olympic Games in which you participated way back in 1959. You sound like the famous athlete you were, once upon a time. Come on, you are not a teenager anymore!”

All of us mortals have our strengths and weaknesses and Ranil Wickremasinghe is no exception to that rule. He is good looking, hard working, scrupulously honest financially and perceptive on political issues. Unfortunately he is an introvert. For example when he was at Royal College his Principal (and mine too) Dudley K.G. De Silva used to say,

“Ranil Wickremasinghe has the genes of his maternal

grandfather D.R. Wijewardene whereas his elder brother Shan has the genes of his paternal grandfather C.L. Wickremasinghe.”

That summed up the personality problems of Ranil Wickremasinghe. D.R. Wijewardene was one of the most successful businessmen in colonial Ceylon. He set up the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited in 1917 and by 1930 it had eclipsed the British-owned “Times of Ceylon”. A highly respected newspaper baron, he was a chronic introvert. His daughter Nalini Wijewardene married Esmond Wickremasinghe the son of the famous civil servant C.L. Wickremasinghe, who was outgoing and complete with immense charm. His impeccable style had enhanced his distinguished career in the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service. Besides that superb style was the hallmark of the entire Wickremasinghe family, barring Ranil.

That Ranil Wickremasinghe was a poor speaker was recognised even by his Godfather President J.R. Jayewardene, a first cousin of his mother. In 1977 he made Ranil Wickremasinghe a Deputy Minister at the age of 28 years and a Cabinet Minister the following year. That was a supreme example of favouritism. Yet Ranil Wickremasinghe was never on the national list of speakers of the UNP during the J.R. Jayewardene Administration from 1977 to

1988. During that period the national list of speakers from the UNP were:

President J.R. Jayewardene

Prime Minister R. Premadasa

and Cabinet Ministers:

Lalith Athulathmudali

Gamini Dissanayake

K.W. Devanayagam (Tamil community)

A.C.S. Hameed (Muslim community)

In fact only once in my life had I heard Ranil Wickremasinghe make a good speech. That was his funeral oration immediately before all that was mortal of President J.R. Jayewardene was consigned to the flames at Kelaniya in 1996. Then one month later he made the worst speech I have ever heard him make in English. That was at the J.R. Jayewardene Memorial meeting at Royal College. He was scheduled to speak for 30 minutes on 'J.R. Jayewardene the Politician'. The next speaker was myself, on 'J.R. Jayewardene on the international scene' followed by 'J.R. Jayewardene and his family' by a relative, J.W. Subasinghe P.C, the distinguished lawyer. Ranil Wickremasinghe spoke such arrant nonsense that I was shaken. As a result my delivery of a 45 minute extempore speech, was faulty in the first crucial minute.

In hindsight that era in his life was over by June or July 1999. Satchi and Satchi had transformed him exactly as J. Walter Thompson Inc. the world famous Public Relation firm based in New York transformed Senator John F. Kennedy in 1957. That was when he began his quest for the Presidency of the United States, in which he was successful in 1960.

John F. Kennedy was a superb speaker ever since his days at Harvard. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1946 at the age of 29 years. In 1952 he became the youngest Senator of the United States in the twentieth century. Unquestionably an intellectual and an author, who was awarded the coveted Pulitzer prize in 1955, his books were directed at the intelligentsia. His speeches were directed likewise. J. Walter Thompson convinced the Senator that he was making a strategic error. They persuaded him to pitch his speech to an audience of high school graduates, G.C.E. (Advanced Level) types in our parlance, and continue writing for a readership of University graduates. J. Walter Thompson then portrayed the Senator as a handsome Harvard – educated intellectual and millionaire whose wife Jaqueline was the beautiful daughter of a millionaire and the couple had a lovely baby Caroline. All of that had a mass appeal in the United States. Thereafter the Senator addressed his audiences at their level, not

at his. However he continued to write books and was persuaded to write feature articles to the "Time" magazine, the "Newsweek" and the "Life" magazine. Those articles were superb and immeasurably enhanced his stature as an intellectual and as a Presidential candidate of a higher calibre than the five - star General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the then President of the United States.

It was providential that Godwin Fernando had forced me to be in Sri Lanka in August 1999 rather than be away in Europe. Firstly, my aged mother was taken seriously ill and I wanted to be with her. Secondly it gave me ample time to follow at leisure President Chandrika Bandaranaike and former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, at a time when both were preparing for a battle royal.

In my judgement both were merely the best available candidates on a realistic basis, as opposed to being Presidential candidates of high calibre like The late Lalith Athulathmudali who was educated at Oxford and Harvard and was assassinated in 1993.

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge is indeed an idealist but comes through as a compulsive liar to everybody except her own supporters. Her idealism was clearly revealed in the exemplary manner in which she restored the international image of Sri Lanka

with respect to Human Rights. In that exercise she even improved on the amazing performance of President Raul Menem of Argentina, during the past decade. For example in 1995, Army personnel who were responsible for the massacre of teenage students in Embilipitiya in 1989 were indicted for abduction and murder. They were given a fair trial in the High Court of Ratnapura, found guilty and given stiff jail sentences. In 1997 Army personnel in Jaffna who raped and murdered school girl Krishnathi Coomaraswamy, her mother, and murdered her brother and their neighbour who had come to their rescue, were duly arrested and given a fair trial in the High Court of Colombo. They were sentenced to death. When one such convicted rapist and murderer alleged that there were mass graves in Jaffna, nearly everyone dismissed it as arrant nonsense. The President reacted differently; she ordered a full public inquiry. That inquiry conclusively proved that the convicted murderer and rapist was in addition a blatant liar.

PRESENTED BY THE BISHOP
Rt. Rev. Dr. S. JEBANESAN

Lying indeed carries its own punishment. Ranil Wickremasinghe effectively portrayed the President as a compulsive liar.

“After lying continuously for five years what right has Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to seek a second term?” He inquired

from every public platform. His audiences always responded with thunderous applause. More often than not, they chanted the battle cry "*Pacha malla gedera yawamu*" (Let us send home the bag of lies)

On the other hand the strategy of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was to exploit the glaring defects of Ranil Wickremasinghe. He just does not have personality or leadership qualities. That is an amazing deficiency for any member of the distinguished Wickremasinghe family because his famous father and his famous paternal grandfather had those attributes in an abundance. His still more famous uncle, Bishop Lakshman Wickramasinghe, (the younger brother of his father) had them in still larger measure. That deficiency in Ranil Wickremasinghe is so pronounced that when the three domestic aides employed in my home saw me writing yet another book, they volunteered to pontificate,

"Ranilta baha" (Ranil cannot)

When I casually mentioned this to Godwin Fernando, he checked the reaction of his domestic aides and all minor employees of his Company, Godwin Fernando Associates. Their response was the same. Against that background we took a survey while wondering around Sri Lanka in October 1999, after my return from Nepal. We

did a random check of all voters in the age group eighteen to eighty years. Of the 1000 Sri Lankans of all strata of society and of both sexes 910 told us the same.

Besides the lack of personality and leadership qualities, it is a matter of opinion whether Ranil Wickremasinghe despite his considerable experience, had much in the way of proven ability.

“He has been Minister for Youth Affairs and Employment, Education and Industries spanning sixteen years from 1978 to 1994. What has he achieved in tangible terms?” sneered Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga from every platform.

She used to pointedly ask, “He was Minister of Education from 1983 to 1988. Yet it was the late Lalith Athulathmudali, Minister of National Security, who introduced the Mahapola Scholarship Scheme which is so popular”. That was indeed a thought provoking question, So was her next question. “Ranil Wickremasinghe was Minister of Youth Affairs and Employment from 1978 to 1983. What did he achieve? In 1988 and 1989 the unemployed youth openly rebelled against the Government and that insurrection by the JVP was crushed in a brutal manner by the UNP.”

Even the highly influential old boy network at Royal College openly grumbled about Ranil Wickremasinghe,

“He played no games, won no prizes and held no office during his days at Royal” In direct contrast President J. R. Jayewardene (Royal College Class of 1917), the Communist Party Leader Pieter Keuneman (Class of 1926) and Lalith Athulathmudali (Class of 1948) were openly acknowledged as being amongst the finest all round products of Royal College in the twentieth century. Besides many look upon Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe (Class of 1937) as being the best all round product of Royal College in the time frame of the twentieth century. He was the Head Prefect, the best all round student, who won three prestigious panel prizes, and several other prizes including the Justice E.W. Jayewardene Memorial Prize (donated by his son J.R. Jayewardene) for the best speaker in the entire school and was a coloursman in Athletics, Rugby Football and Tennis.

On the other hand the alumni of the University of Ceylon looked upon Ranil Wickremasinghe as being a mediocre student. In direct contrast Ronnie De Mel (UNP) for many years Minister of Finance, took a First in History, Felix Dias Bandaranaike (SLFP), for many years Minister of Finance, narrowly missed a First in Law and Bishop Lakshman Wickremasinghe took a First in Economics and Political Science.

A vital factor for a President seeking re-election is the arrogance of power. After five years in power Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was sometimes reckless in her decisions. For example in 1999 Sri Lanka nominated Ambassador Senaka Dias Bandaranayake, Ambassador to France and the UNESCO, for the prestigious post of Director-General of UNESCO. Professor Bandaranayake, a distinguished academic who was educated at Oxford, is eminently suited to be our Ambassador to UNESCO on the basis of a political appointee. However it was a foregone conclusion that the Ambassador of Japan to the UNESCO would be the next Director – General because Japan contributes 25% of the budget of UNESCO ever since the United States left that organisation in anger, some years ago. In fact every retired Ambassador of Sri Lanka I spoke to was of the opinion that the candidature of Ambassador Bandaranayake, able though he be, was ludicrous and that Sri Lanka was asking to be snubbed publicly.

The President however thought otherwise. She not only went ahead with the nomination but spent some fifty million rupees in dispatching delegations to Africa, Latin America and the West canvassing support. The Ambassador of Japan won thirty four of the fifty eight votes. Our able candidate obtained two votes !

Another example of supreme arrogance on the part of the President was in 1999 in the appointment of a successor to retiring Chief Justice G.P.S. De Silva. Ever since Independence such a vacancy has been filled either with the Senior Puisne Justice (Justice Mark Fernando) or the Attorney-General (former Justice Sarath De Silva). A rare exception was in 1978 when President J.R. Jayewardene appointed his friend Neville Samarakoon Q.C, the eminent lawyer, as Chief Justice. The two friends subsequently fell out with disastrous consequences to the nation.

The candidature of Attorney-General Sarath De Silva, eminently qualified though he be, became controversial because there were some vicious allegations that he had abused his high office in tampering with his divorce case. His private life is certainly not the business of the State. Besides mere allegations by an irate husband are no grounds to deprive him of the post of Chief Justice. Such allegations must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. When the Supreme Court was investigating into those allegations, Attorney-General Sarath De Silva was appointed Chief Justice. Such was the transparent arrogance of the President after five years in power.

Nowhere in the world are Presidential Elections won or lost on

account of the appointment of the Chief Justice or the election of the Director-General of UNESCO. On the other hand the arrogance of power has frequently taken a heavy toll on the popularity of the incumbent President on mundane issues that affect the day-to-day life of the masses. For example the Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration, a direct result of the arrogance of power, ruined the popularity of President Premadasa notwithstanding his success in handling the economy. Against that background how did the arrogance of power as unmistakably demonstrated by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga affect her popularity? That complex problem will be handled in the next Chapter.

Another complex problem is the language used by the President. She is the daughter of two Prime Ministers, was educated at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo and The Sorbonne. It is accepted universally that those who were born into *elite* families, educated in *elite* schools and *elite* universities, have a distinctive touch in them in respect of dress, manners, social graces and speech.

Amongst politicians in Sri Lanka, that was amply reflected in Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia and Oxford), Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake (S. Thomas'

College, Mt. Lavinia and Cambridge), in India in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (Harrow and Cambridge), Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (Hill School, Mussoorie and Oxford), Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Dun School, Dehra Dun and Cambridge), in Pakistan in Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Government College, Lahore and Oxford), Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (St. Mary's Convent Karachi, Harvard and Oxford) in the United States in President John F. Kennedy (Choate and Harvard). President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga is an exception to that rule for reasons best known to herself. Her background is always reflected in her clothes and her jewellery but not in her language which in public utterances are sometimes crude and at other times vulgar. For example in addressing the nation on TV during the strike of the Electricity Board in 1995 she actually said,

“I do not know where Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Leader of the Opposition stands on this issue. I wonder whether he will speak through his mouth or through another part of his anatomy”.

On the election platform she rarely speaks as the President of Sri Lanka. Instead she comes through as a street fighter. Insulting her opponents and taking cover behind Presidential immunity is part and parcel of her uncouth conduct. That amazes me because both

her parents, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike, were the epitome of dignity and examples to the nation in general and to their younger daughter in particular.

By October 1999, the voters in the City of Colombo came up with their inane theories on whether Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga or Ranil Wickremasinghe will be the next ruler of Sri Lanka. In every General Election barring that of 1956, when Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike won by a landslide, and at every Presidential Election barring that of 1994, when President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga won by a landslide, the City of Colombo voted UNP. Now the voters in the City loudly proclaimed that Ranil Wickremasinghe will win by a landslide and that Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga will once again have to go into self - imposed exile in the United Kingdom. (Her daughter is currently studying medicine at Cambridge.) Such were their inane theories, which were devoid of reality and need no further analysis in a serious book of this nature.

As the tempo gathered momentum yet another novel and comic feature were the frolics of the State - controlled media, which have been reduced to ludicrous levels of sycophancy. They saw only virtue in Chandrika Banadaranaike Kumaratunga and only evil in

Ranil Wickremasinghe. At the General Election of 1994 when the UNP was in power, the very same State-controlled media had reversed their inane propaganda. In 1999 some components of the privately owned media were no less lopsided. For example “The Sunday Leader” and “The Ravaya” saw only virtue in Ranil Wickremasinghe and only evil in Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.

In the run up to the Presidential Election, the President proved the perennial truth that the female of the species is deadlier than the male. She punched Ranil Wickremasinghe both above and below the belt. He gamely rolled with the punches and returned the insults via TNL, the television station owned by his brother Shan.

On October 26th 1999, the President announced her decision to seek a second term almost an year ahead of schedule. Thus the die was cast.

CHAPTER XI

THE BACKGROUND

Anywhere in the world the critical factors for a President seeking re-election are:

- (a) Burning national issues
- (b) The Economy
- (c) The Governance
- (d) The Opposition

Following the General Election of August 1994, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was duly sworn in as Prime Minister. The quest for peace being one of her key election pledges, she rushed a peace delegation to Jaffna without even ascertaining whether the LTTE wanted war or peace. That delegation of officials led by K. Balapatabendi, Secretary to the Prime Minister, was given a rapturous welcome by the war weary citizens of Jaffna. Quite obviously the citizens of Jaffna were yearning for peace. However there were disturbing omens about the intentions of the LTTE.

On September 19th 1994, just two weeks before the peace delegation left for Jaffna, suicide squads of the LTTE rammed an explosive laden boat against the gunboat SLNS “Sagarawardene” off the coast of Mannar. The gunboat sank and casualties were heavy. On October

23rd 1994 just one week after the peace delegation returned from Jaffna, a suicide bomber from the LTTE assassinated the Leader of the Opposition Gamini Dissanayake. He was the principal rival of Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at the Presidential Election scheduled for November 1994 and his assassination took place while he was addressing a giant rally of the UNP in Colombo. Thereafter there was no trust although peace talks were held periodically. In April 1995 the LTTE abrogated those talks unilaterally and within hours their suicide squads attacked two gunboats of the Sri Lanka Navy on their mooring at Trincomalee. Two weeks later the LTTE fired their first surface-to-air missiles and brought down two Avro aircraft of the Sri Lanka Air Force. Thus ended the peace negotiations with the LTTE.

Against that background a sadder but wiser President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga formulated her next course of action. That was to defeat the LTTE militarily and to offer politically a generous devolution package to the aggrieved Sri Lanka Tamil community. Accordingly “Operation Leap Forward” was launched on July 9th 1995 and the devolution package made public on August 3rd 1995. That draft devolution package needed amplification on several key areas, such as the unit of devolution, land policy and combating the threat of secession. As such the document once presented in Parliament was

referred to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the proposed new Constitution.

According to the repeated public statements made by the President during her campaign at the Presidential Election of 1994, the Executive Presidency was the bane of society because it concentrated too much power in the hands of one person. She emphasised that the only remedy to this evil system was to abolish it as early as practicable and no later than July 15th 1995.

However once ensconced in office she reneged on that solemn promise despite the offer from the UNP to co-operate with the PA in abolishing the Executive Presidency. It was a supreme example of breach of faith which necessarily created a huge credibility gap. In 1995 she offered to combine the abolishing of the Executive Presidency with the devolution package so necessary to normalize the strained relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. That appeased nobody except her Cabinet of Ministers, the Government Parliamentary group and her diehard supporters. All others looked upon the President with disbelief and disenchantment.

The exact parallel was how the nation reacted to President J.R. Jayewardene within one year of his landslide victory in 1977. The

huge mandate he was given was to bring about sweeping changes in the economy and governance. On governance all he sought to achieve was his personal advancement not the advancement of the nation, as exemplified in the Constitution of 1978. In all fairness to President Jayewardene he was a great success in reforming the economy. Indeed his place in history is assured with the success of his open economy and his massive development projects especially on the Mahaveli, the largest of our rivers. Unfortunately he heaped calumny upon himself with his frolics on governance. That dichotomy has been analysed in depth in Volume I of this book which was published in 1994.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was not insensitive to the visible decline in her popularity in not abolishing the Executive Presidency by July 15th 1995, and her failure to negotiate peace. Therefore she embarked on her new programme to handle the LTTE, to wage war.

By August 1995, it was more than obvious to the war weary citizens of the Jaffna peninsula that another military operation was in the offing. They could see that daily the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) was flying five to six sorties, each sortie consisting of five to six aircraft. In practice they were the Ukraine built Antonov – 32B

aircraft and the Chinese built Y-8 aircraft of the SLAF and the Antonov – 24 aircraft of the domestic airline Lion Air. Thus daily 1,000 troops and 30 tonnes of military cargo were ferried across to the Jaffna peninsula. This massive airlift was carried out under the direction of Air Vice Marshall Jayalath Weerakkody RWP and two bars, Director of Operations of the SLAF, who had displayed conspicuous gallantry during “Operation Leap Forward” and earlier in 1995. He was promoted Air Marshall and appointed the Commander of the Air Force as of 1998.

The bulk of the arms, ammunition and equipment for the troops brought into Kankasanturai harbour by two merchant vessels m.v. “Merces Komari” and “Merces Hendala” chartered by the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) or alternatively in Landing Craft (Medium) of the SLN. That massive sea lift from Trincomalee was handled with exemplary skill by Rear-Admiral Daya Sandagiri Commander of the Eastern Naval Area and now the Chief of Staff of the Navy. By September 1995 the SLAF had moved their combat aircraft into their forward bases. A squadron of Ukraine built MI-17 helicopters were sent to the Anuradhapura Air Force Base (AFB) where the last two Base Commanders, Group Captain Roger Weerasinghe WWV, RWP, and Group Captain Shirantha Goonetilleke RWP and two bars, RSP, were killed in action on April 28th and 29th 1995

respectively That was when the LTTE fired their newly acquired, SAM – 7 missiles which they had surreptitiously obtained from Cambodia. The Chinese built F – 7 fighter aircraft were moved into the China Bay AFB which during World War II was an operational base of the Royal Air Force. The MI – 24 helicopter gunships were moved into Minneriya AFB or into Palaly AFB. Palaly also had Sia Marchetti – 260 ground attack aircraft, MI – 17 helicopters and Y12 light transport aircraft.

Major-General Rohan De Silva Daluwatte* RWP, RSP, VSV, the then Chief of Staff of the Army, was the Overall Operations Commander of our Armed Forces in the North and the East. He is a distinguished product of Ananda College, our premier Buddhist school, the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and the National Defence College in New Delhi. The Deputy Overall Operations Commander in the North and the East, was Major-General Srilal Weerasooriya** RWP,RSP,VSV. He is a distinguished product of S. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia, the Pakistan Military Academy at Kakul and the National Defence College in New Delhi. A devout Christian he is a lay preacher in the Assembly of God. So is his wife.

* Commander of the Army from 1996 – 98 and since 1999

The General-Officer-Commanding the Joint Operations Command.

** Currently the Commander of the Army.

In systematically preparing for battle to liberate the Jaffna peninsular General Daluwatte anticipated heavy casualties. That assessment was based on the experience of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) which liberated the Jaffna peninsula in eleven days of heavy fighting in 1987, when 245 officers and other ranks were killed in action. For example Major Ramaswamy Parameshwaran, ironically a Tamil, was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the Indian equivalent of the Victoria Cross and the entire C Company of the 13th Battalion of the Sikh Light Infantry was mowed down after their helicopters descended on to the Campus of the University of Jaffna.

Accordingly General Daluwatte ensured that the Military Hospital at Palaly and the Base Hospital at Anuradhapura carried more than their full complements of surgeons. In Colombo Major-General C. Thurairaja, the most senior Tamil officer in our Armed Forces, took similar action (Another Tamil officer of flag rank is Rear-Admiral Terrence Sundaram currently Commander of the Eastern Naval Area).

General Daluwatte had under him the largest Task Force ever assembled in Sri Lanka, even larger than the Task Force that General Depinder Singh, General Officer Commanding the IPKF had

assembled for the liberation of the Jaffna peninsula in October 1987 and Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton DSO,DSC, Commander-in-Chief Ceylon, had assembled in Colombo in April 1942 in anticipating an amphibious landing by Japan.

The detailed battle plans of General Daluwatte, are excluded from this Volume to protect the interests of the nation. In essence the principal thrust was by the Army, using heavy artillery and armour but a minimum of infantry because all routes to Jaffna were heavily mined. The Air Force would give the necessary air cover and the Navy sealed off the Northern coast, to keep off the Sea Tigers from bringing in men and material to augment the cadres of the LTTE deployed in the Jaffna peninsula. According to General Daluwatte the liberation of the Jaffna peninsula was vitally important to the nation against the background of the increasing military capabilities of the LTTE. By 1995 the Sea Tigers, established in 1992, had grown into a formidable force in the high seas off the coast of Kankasanturai-Mullaitivu-Trincomalee. In 1995 alone, the Sea Tigers had sunk three Israeli built Dovra Fast Attack Craft and six patrol boats of the Sri Lanka Navy. Besides in 1995 the newly acquired SAM – 7 missiles had destroyed two Avro transport aircraft, one Puccara ground attack aircraft and badly damaged a MI-17 helicopter of the Sri Lanka Air Force.

Indeed General Daluwatte was greatly disturbed by the increasing striking power of the LTTE both at sea and in the air. At Army Headquarters he often expressed his misgivings on whether or not the Army could defend itself at Elephant Pass or even at Palaly in the years to come, if the strength of the LTTE at sea and in the air was allowed to grow at the present rate.

General Daluwatte launched his attack "Operation Riviresa" at first light on October 15th 1995 when the 51st Division (Brigadier now Major-General Neil Dias), the 52nd Division (Brigadier now Major-General P.A. Karunatileke), the 53rd Division (Brigadier and subsequently the late Major-General Ananda Hamangoda), the 51st Brigade (Brigadier K.B. Egodawela), the 1st Airmobile Brigade (Brigadier Hiran Halangoda) poured out from the Forward Defended Localities (FDL) at the Army camps at Palaly and Madagal. Task Force I (Brigadier R.P. Liyanage) held Palaly and Madagal and the liberated areas. Task Force II (Brigadier now Major-General Vasantha Perera was ready for battle at the FDL in Elephant Pass in the event of General Daluwatte wanting to open a second front, thus pinning down the LTTE both from the north and the south, in the context of the Jaffna peninsula.

The air cover provided by the SLAF consisted of Puccara ground

attack aircraft, Bell – 212 helicopters and MI – 24 helicopter gunships under the Command of Air Vice Marshall Weerakkody. A distinguished product of Dharmashoka College, Ambalangoda, and our Air Force Academy and a former Captain of the Sri Lanka Swimming team, at 46 years of age this war hero was then the youngest Air Vice Marshall, or equivalent thereof (Major-General or Rear-Admiral), in our Armed Forces.

After the first day of “Operation Riviresa”, General Daluwatte was of the opinion that either his battle plan was wrong or his troops were walking into a trap. All his formation commanders in the rank of Major - General, Brigadier and Lt. Colonel reported that they were not encountering any resistance as such by the enemy. The SLAF aircraft on reconnaissance missions confirmed those reports. In fact based on all reports General Daluwatte came to the conclusion that all casualties were due only to mine explosions and sniper fire.

It was common knowledge that the LTTTE supremo Vellupillai Prabhakaran had ordered all civilians to leave the Valikamam sector of the Jaffna peninsular. Accordingly the majority of them sought sanctuary in the Tennamarachchi and Vadamarachchi sectors while others went further afield to the Wanni. It later transpired that Prabhakaran had taken a calculated risk after hearing of the massive Task Force under General Daluwatte. Prabhakaran himself had

commanded the LTTE in the battle for Jaffna peninsula against the IPKF in 1987, when General Depinder Singh defeated him in eleven days of heavy fighting. In 1991, General Denzil Kobbekaduwa of legendary fame had defeated him in the battle for Elephant Pass. On the other hand Prabhakaran was more than happy that he had kept the IPKF at bay for more than two years of fierce guerilla fighting in the Wanni. It has an extensive forest cover and is thinly populated, thereby making it excellent terrain for a guerilla war. Therefore it was the Wanni, not the Jaffna peninsula, that was the battleground which Prabhakaran had selected for his inevitable confrontation with the Army.

In the meantime in a well orchestrated diversionary operation the LTTE cadres went on the offensive in the border villages off Dehiattekandiya, Maha Oya, Valachchenai and Welikande in the Eastern Province. In the first three days of fighting 14 soldiers were killed in action.

By that time General Daluwatte had moved the 51st, 52nd and 53rd Divisions on the route to Palaly –Achuveli-Neeraveli en-route to Jaffna. He encountered no resistance as such except when the 51st Division (Major-General Neil Dias) was nearing Neeraveli, which had the Command bunker of Prabhakaran. It was a three storey

under ground building complete with a 22 bed hospital. The building was heavily fortified and General Dias re-grouped his Division for the battle. The 511th Brigade (Brigadier Mahendra Wijeratne) and the 513th Brigade (Brigadier Gamini Jayasundara) breached the defenses following excellent reconnaissance work done by the 6th Battalion of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry under Lt. Colonel Daya Ratnayake.

Following their defeat the LTTE insisted that all civilians vacate the Valikamam sector. They also withdrew their cadres. Therefore after the capture of Neerveli, General Daluwatte experienced no serious opposition but moved his Task Force with the greatest of caution because all routes to Jaffna were heavily mined. The overall casualties were 673 killed in action and 3,770 wounded in action, when the City of Jaffna fell on December 5th 1995.

There was much rejoicing in all Sinhala speaking Provinces on the fall of the City of Jaffna and the *de facto* Minister of Defence, Lt. Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte became a national hero. He was looked upon as the twentieth century version of the legendary warrior Sapumal Kumaraya who captured Jaffna in the fourteenth century, during the reign of his foster father King Parakrama Bahu VI of Kotte. He was deservedly promoted to the honorary rank of

General like The late Ranjan Wijeratne in 1991* and Sri John Kotalawela while on his deathbed in 1980.*

General Anuruddha Ratwatte is a scion of the Kandyan aristocracy. The son of the Harischandra Ratwatte, Diwadana Nilame** of the sacred Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, he was educated at Trinity College, Kandy, which according to their school song is the best school of them all (perhaps in Kandy!). A high school drop out he is a supreme example of a late developer. He showed his unmistakable ability when he was appointed the National Organiser of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of the General Election of 1994. His contribution to the People's Alliance, was immense at the grass root level. As explained in depth in Volume I of this book, had he not contested a seat and instead opted for the nominated list as he did in 1989, the SLFP for certain would have won more marginal seats throughout the nation, as his organisation at the grass - root level was superb.

Early in January 1996 our Intelligence was expecting Prabhakaran

* Ranjan Wijeratne, a tea planter by profession, was the *de facto* Defence Minister of President R. Premadasa. He was assassinated by the LTTE. Sir. John Kotalawela was a Colonel in the Light Infantry during World War II and was Prime Minister from 1953 to 56.

** Diyawadana Nilame – lay custodian

to strike strategically within the City of Colombo with suicide bombers. Therefore the security for President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, General Anuruddha Ratwatte and Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadiragamar (because he is a Tamil), was stepped up sometimes to absurd levels. For example when the President was travelling on Galle Road, the principal thoroughfare in Colombo, the parallel Duplication Road her alternate route was also closed thereby causing traffic jams. That was made even worse by the President being perpetually late.

Wednesday 31st January 1996 was just another working day in the City of Colombo where there had been no untoward incidents following the attacks on Kollonnawa and Orugodawatte on October 20th 1995. As usual the traffic was heavy in the Fort, the heart of the commercial area of the city, and there were many lorries carrying building materials. That was a familiar sight because the 35 – storey Bank of Ceylon was recently completed and the 37 – storey twin towers of the World Trade Centre were still under construction.

Blending with that background a lorry carrying building materials negotiated the round about near the Presidential Secretariat, the Hotel Inter Continental and the five-star Hotel Galadari. It turned into President's Road and drove past the Bank of Ceylon Tower

and the 14 storey Ceylinco House, which prior to the ushering of the open economy in 1977 by President J.R. Jayewardene, was the tallest building in Colombo.

The lorry stopped right opposite the Central Bank. There the LTTE Commandos on board in civilian dress got down from the vehicle and opened fire with their AK 47 machine guns. It was purely a diversionary tactic, which allowed the driver of the lorry carrying some 300 –400 kilogrammes of explosive, concealed under the building materials, to reverse his vehicle into the most damaging position. The suicide bomber at the wheel did so. The lorry was on the ramp at the Central Bank as close as possible to the vaults, when a massive explosion which was heard up to 10 kilometres reduced the splendid building to a shattered and burning hulk. The secondary fire that was generated made the Ceylinco House across the road into an inferno. The adjoining building housing George Steuart Ltd., Cargo Boat Despatch Co. Ltd., Mercantile Credit Ltd., Carsons Ltd. and Air Lanka were badly damaged by the explosion. Later that afternoon a shocked nation which had watched the aftermath of the explosion on television was informed that at the first count casualties were 65 dead (the figure increased to 96 within one day), 120 seriously injured and 1185 had received out patient treatment at the National Hospital in Colombo. The damage to

buildings was initially estimated to be between Rs. 1,000 – 2,000 million (US \$ 20 – 40 million).

In October 1995 in retaliation for “Operation Leap Forward” the LTTE blew up the oil storage tanks at Kolonnawa and Orugodawatte. The esimated damage was Rs. 2,000 million. Thus in the course of three months the LTTE twice attacked the economic centres of the City of Colombo, causing damage to property amounting to Rs. 3,000 – 4,000 million (US \$ 60 – 80 million).

The National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) had repeatedly warned the Government of Sri Lanka that for the visit of the Pope John Paul II to Colombo in 1995, the LTTE suicide squads had infiltrated into the City of Colombo under the guise of pilgrims. Consequently there were repeated warning to the citizens to be aware of suspicious strangers and many lodgings of Tamils specially in Kotahena and Grandpass were raided in the teeth of opposition from Human Rights groups. Those raids were intensified after the attack on the oil installations at Kolonnawa and Orugodawatte in October 1995.

A detailed investigation by the NIB revealed that the lorry in question had entered the City of Colombo bringing in a load of rice from Vavuniya and had unloaded it in Kotahena. Thereafter

according to conflicting reports it was kept jacked up for a few days and later towed to a garage in Grandpass where it was subject to an overhaul. Presumably it was there that a huge quantity of explosives, approximately one-third of a tonne, was introduced and duly covered with building materials. Thereafter on January 31st 1996 the lorry made its way through Kotahena, The Pettah, The Fort, where lorries carrying building materials were a familiar sight. This theory resulted in the Police raiding many suspicious lodgings of Tamils in the Grandpass and Kotahena areas and Tamil Members of Parliament and Human Rights Groups howling in protest. It is not untrue that many private grudges were settled on the basis of these intelligence forays. By the same token it is true that after four long years those who perpetrated this dastardly crime have not yet been indicted.

By mid-1996 the new Army- Commander Lt. Gen – Rohan De Silva Daluwatte, the new Chief of Staff Major – General A.M.U. Seneviratne, and the new Overall Operations Commander in the North and the East, Major-General Srilal Weerasooriya, were mapping out their strategy for the Wanni. They were the most experienced of our Generals and none of them underestimated the skill of the LTTE supremo Prabhakaran. All three Generals were more than aware that in 1990 the LTTE overran the Army camps

at Kokavil and Mankulam. In the former camp, Second Lt. Saliya Aladeniya of the 3rd Battalion of the Sinha Regiment defended it to the last soldier and was posthumously awarded the Parama Vira Vibushanaya (PWV) our version of the Victoria Cross. The gallant Second Lt. had under him only one Platoon to defend the Television relaying station at Kokavil. At Mankulam the Army camp consisted of a Company. Therefore what worried the Generals even more was that in 1993 the LTTE successfully attacked the Army camp at Pooneryn, which had a sanctioned strength of one Brigade and also the nearby Naval station at Nagathevanthurai. The casualties were 613 killed in action or missing in action and 923 wounded in action, whereas by their own admission the LTTE had lost 499 killed in action. The enemy captured all five Inshore Patrol Craft at Nagathevanthurai, much of the arms, ammunition and equipment at Pooneryn including two T-55 main battle tanks ! During the peace talks with the LTTE in 1994, the Army camp at Pooneryn was one of the main stumbling blocks. The LTTE wanted it closed because it was an obstruction to civilians who illegally crossed the lagoon at Killali. The Army flatly refused to close that camp because of its strategic location. However with the fall of the Jaffna peninsula Pooneryn had lost its strategic value. All three Generals agreed that now Pooneryn no longer served any useful purpose and therefore it should be closed down. General Anuruddha Ratwatte endorsed that

recommendation. Therefore the Commander-in-Chief, gave her assent.

There was another isolated but strategic camp at Mullaitivu. Whether the 25th Brigade at Mullaitivu should be strengthened or withdrawn was a matter of opinion. Before any definitive decision could be taken the LTTE struck there with devastating skill. The Army camp at Mullaitivu is flanked by the sea in the East, the lagoon on the West and is over six kilometres in length and two kilometres in breadth. The 25th Brigade stationed at Mullaitivu was commanded by Brigadier T.M. Bohoran for nearly two years. On transfer he was succeeded by Colonel Lawrence Fernando. A Brigade usually has three Battalions, each of them commanded by a Lt. – Colonel. As of July 1996 this Brigade had only two Battalions, Major W.M.S. Gunaratne commanding the 9th Battalion of the Sinha Regiment and Major T.R.A. Aliba commanding the 6th Battalion of the Vijayaba Regiment. Thus the 25th Brigade which was isolated but of strategic value, was seriously understaffed. That was well known to our troops and for certain the LTTE would have been aware of it. On the other hand that Army camp was primarily a military depot with its armouries well stocked with all types of arms, ammunition and equipment. Around July 15th 1996, both Colonel Fernando and Major Gunaratne, who was bald ever

since he was an officer cadet and was appropriately nicknamed, left for Colombo on separate important official engagements. Thus the Brigade was temporarily under the command of Major Aliba. That was probably when the LTTE decided to strike. Around 0100 hours on July 18th 1996 the Sea Tigers from across the lagoon and across the sea, launched their attack. The Tigers who had infiltrated the Camp, attacked its artillery and mortar positions from the north and the south. Thus the Camp was under siege simultaneously from all four directions. After the communication centre was knocked out of action, the Brigade headquarters right in the middle was captured by the Sea Tigers who had launched a fierce amphibious attack. The casualties were 1187 officers and men either killed or missing in action. The LTTE took with them almost a ship load of arms, ammunition and equipment. The exact details are withheld from this Volume in the interests of the nation. However it must be emphasised that for the first time the LTTE overran an Army Camp where a Brigade was stationed.

At first light that day General Weerasooriya, the Overall Operations Commander, left Palaly for Trincomalee in a helicopter gunship. There he conferred with Rear – Admiral D.K. Dassanayake, then Commander Eastern Naval Area and later the Chief of Staff of the Navy, and the Acting Base Commander at the China Bay AFB. Air

Force reconnaissance missions quickly established that the Army Camp at Mullaitivu was still under siege. General Weerasooriya ruled out air support as our troops will also be killed in such an operation. Therefore he activated the Reserve Strike Force based in Batticaloa and under the Command of Major-General Janaka Perera, the hero of many battles after whom Janakapura in the Welioya sector is named. It consisted of two crack Brigades, the Air Mobile Brigade (Brigadier Hiran Halangoda) and the Independent Brigade (Brigadier Percy Fernando) consisting of Commandos and Special Forces. The 1st Battalion Special Forces (Lt. Colonel Fazli Laphir) and the 2nd Battalion Special Forces (Lt. Colonel Raj Wijesiri) were airlifted to the China Bay AFB and prepared for battle.

In the meantime General Anuruddha Ratwatte, General Rohan Daluwatte and the Commander of the Navy, Vice – Admiral Mohan Samarasekera VSV, who arrived in Palaly on a previously scheduled operational visit made their own contingency plans. In essence it was to land troops in Mullaitivu and to re-capture the Army Camp at any cost. Accordingly Admiral Samarasekera directed Commodore now Rear – Admiral A.H.M. Razeek, Commander of the Northern Naval Area, to prepare to sea lift two Battalions to Mullaitivu. Admiral Samarasekera also directed Admiral

Dassanayake in Trincomalee to dispatch three Landing Craft Medium with a naval escort to rendezvous at sea off Mullaitivu.

The LTTE ships unloaded their weapons into their launches and fishing boats somewhere off the shores of Mullaitivu. Therefore the sea in that area is subject to intensive patrols by the Sea Tigers. Hence Admiral Dassanayake was cautious in his approach. The Naval escort he arranged was led by the gunboat SLNS "Ranaviru" (Lt.- Commander Prakrama Samaraweera RWP) and six Dobra FACs to sail at sundown. In Palaly General Daluwatte selected the 6th Battalion of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry (the late Lt. Colonel Upul Lanerole) and the 7th Battalion Gemunu Watch (Lt. Colonel Tilak Seneviratne), to undertake the landing at Mullaitivu. At Kankasanturai Admiral Razeek commandeered a Sri Lankan merchant vessel which was in harbour that day and by 1600 hours the troops boarded the ship. The transfer of the troops from the ship to the LCMs took place 30 nautical miles at sea, and was completed before 2359 hours that night.

At first light on July 19th 1997 the three LCM's were to beach at Mullaitivu. However the enemy fire was so intense that no landing was possible. Therefore Lt. Commander Prakrama Samaraweera was contemplating a landing elsewhere when two suicide craft of the

LTTE laden with explosives rammed into the SLNS “Ranaviru”. Following a deafening explosion the “Ranaviru” sank and the casualties were heavy. Therefore the three LCMs prepared for a landing near Alampil some twelve kilometres south of Mullaitivu. The enemy fire power there was even greater. Against that background Admiral Dasanayake aborted the mission.

In the meantime General Anuruddha Ratwatte, General Rohan Daluwatte and Admiral Mohan Samarasekera arrived at the China Bay AFB. They were joined by the Commander of the Air Force, Air Marshal Oliver Ranasinghe VSV, who arrived directly from Colombo. During breakfast at Air House in China Bay they discussed the disasters at Mullaitivu. It was then decided to send the Commandos and the Special Forces by helicopter to Mullaitivu. Admiral Samarasekera dissented on that decision and that angered General Ratwatte.

In a few hours six MI - 17 helicopters under Squadron Leader Royce Gunaratne RSP escorted by two MI – 24 helicopter gunships under Squadron Leader Thilina Kaluarachchi RWP, with the entire formation under Wing Commander Ranil Gurusinghe RWP, RSP were airborne. They flew several sorties and on board the first wave were Special Forces from the Reserve Strike Force, led by

Lt. Colonel Fazli Laphir. Shortly after the helicopters descended between the Mullaitivu lagoon and the Nayaru lagoon, they established a beach head. Lt. Colonel Laphir was killed in action due to mortar fire and altogether nearly 100 elite troops were brought into battle to replace the late Lt. Colonel Fazli Laphir, who was posthumously awarded the WWV, the second highest award for gallantry, and personnel from the Special Forces who were killed in action. Lt. Colonel Wijesiri who arrived with the third wave was lucky to survive with a bullet entering his torso near the shoulder and exiting near the waist. Nearly 200 elite troops were wounded in action, so were Colonel Lawrence Fernando and Major W.M.S. Gunaratne who had rushed back from Colombo and had volunteered to go into battle. By now the three LCMs had made a successful landing near the beach head and thereby the 6th Battalion of the Sri Lanka Light Infantry and the 7th Battalion of the Gemunu Watch went into action. Brigadier Percy Fernando of the Reserve Strike Force commanded ground forces at the Forward Operational Base near Mullaitivu. Had this battle continued no doubt the Army Camp at Mullaitivu would have been re-captured in the next few days. Perhaps anticipating that, the LTTE blew up the entire Camp having emptied all its armouries.

Therefore General Weerasooriya halted operations and ordered the

evacuation of troops to minimize casualties. Then once again Wing – Commander Gurusinghe, Squadron - Leader Gunaratne, Squadron-Leader Kalaurachchi and their air crew risked their lives in the brave performance of duty. Despite intense fire by the enemy, they evacuated the Special Forces. These pilots, were deservedly awarded the WWV. Unfortunately Squadron-Leader Kaluarachchi was not able to receive his WWV personally. He was killed in action in 1997.

Initially many refused to believe that our Armed Forces had liberated Jaffna by a walk over. They were biased either politically or racially, besides their ignorance was blissful. However now it began to dawn even on them that the real war is in the Wanni, and the defeat in Mullaitivu was the first battle in the current phase of a protracted war. Indeed that status quo remained the same throughout 1997, 1998 and last year, right up to the Presidential Election when the LTTE launched massive attacks against Elephant Pass and Vavuniya, after capturing many Army camps in the Wanni in November 1999.

During the years 1996 and 1997, the draft new Constitution evoked much interest in Parliament and in the nation. There were a large number of disparate pressure groups ranging from the *Maha*

*Sangha** to trade unions, from Human Rights groups to vested interests, from families of soldiers who were killed in action to families of soldiers who were deserters, from Sinhala chauvinists to Tamil extremists. This was indeed the first occasion where the general public as such had a hand in evolving a Constitution geared to the contemporary needs of society. In 1931 the Donoughmore Constitution was thrust on our people by the British, who in 1946 did likewise with the Soulbury Constitution. In 1972 the first Republican Constitution was evolved by Parliament functioning as a Constituent Assembly. In 1977 the second Republican Constitution was thrust on our people by Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene. Now at last the people were participating in drafting the Constitution and that reflected much credit on President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.

The unprecedented interest in the proposed new Constitution has indeed produced tantalising results. For the first time since independence the *Maha Sangha*, the traditional guardians of Sinhala Buddhism, were sharply divided. For example in October 1997 the *Maha Sangha* held pro-draft Constitution and anti draft Constitution public rallies at Vihara Maha Devi Park in Colombo. It is common knowledge that the pro-draft Constitution rally drew twice the number of *Maha Sangha* as the anti-draft Constitution rally, spearheaded by

* Maha Sangha – Buddhist Clergy

the vitriolic Venerable Maduluwawe Sobhita.

Taking into account political realities in Sri Lanka, it would be naïve to imagine that the impressive crowds at the pro-draft Constitution rally were gathered without any form of political patronage from the Government. There were 1485 members of the *Maha Sangha* and “The Ceylon Daily News” as usual lied on their front page that there were over 5,000. I spoke to 300 –400 of them and they were members of the *Maha Sangha* from the temples in the border areas from the Districts of Ampara, Polonnaruwa and Vavuniya. They all informed me that they, not the *Mahanayakes**, are personally aware of the ravages of war. They, not the *Mahanayakes*, are defending Buddhism in those border areas and therefore they, not the *Mahanayakes*, have first hand knowledge of the grievances of the Tamils. They wholeheartedly endorsed the draft Constitution and were somewhat disappointed about my reservations.

Indeed there is new thinking amongst a significant minority amongst the *Maha Sangha*. For example my friend, The Venerable Madampagama Assaji, the new *Sanghanayake*** for Colombo, who

* Mahanayake – Archbishop/Bishop in the Buddhist hierarchy

** Sanghanayake – Archdeacon in the Buddhist hierarchy

hails from the deep South as reflected in his name, is openly critical of the *Mahanayakes*. He has repeatedly stated that their views are archaic. As of this writing he is attempting to take a large number of the *Maha Sangha* to Jaffna to explain to the Tamil people there that Lord Buddha has never said one word against the Tamil people or one word in favour of the Sinhala people. Another of my friends, The Venerable Siyambalagaswewa Vipulasara, the *Sanghanayake* for Vavuniya, with whom I stay on my frequent visits to the Northern Province, speaks in the same vein.

He spends at least half his time looking after refugees, both Sinhalese and Tamils, and humbly claims that he is merely attempting to translate into action the teachings of Lord Buddha. He too is critical of the *Mahanayakes*.

The draft Constitution was presented in Parliament on October 24th 1997 as a Sectional paper by Professor G.L. Pieris, in his capacity as a Minister for Constitutional Affairs. It reflected much credit on the Government for its wise approach on all matters, barring the devolution of power. Except in that sensitive area, the proposed Constitution is far superior to the current Constitution, in the dissemination of power, in the protection of Human Rights and in the safeguard of the Public Service. The Cabinet endorsed it

unanimously and the entire Government Parliamentary Group barring three members of the Lalith Front (they were badly divided on this and other issues and have subsequently split asunder). With the support of the Tamil parties the Government is assured of about 135 votes in Parliament, 15 votes less than the requisite two-third majority of 150 in a House consisting of 225 members.

The UNP is fiercely opposed to the creation of a Tamil linguistic Province in the North and East as it would pave the way for secession within one generation. Their thinking is based essentially on the firm stand President J.R. Jayewardene took when he was under relentless pressure from India, where the demarcation of States on a linguistic basis has proved to be a success. However in Sri Lanka, a single linguistic Province for the Tamils would be territorially identical to the State of Tamil Ealam as advocated in the Vaddukodai Resolution of 1976 and the borders of Tamil Ealam as advocated currently by the LTTE. After the retirement of President J.R. Jayewardene there was definitive evidence of the ever present threat of secession. In March 1990 Chief Minister Vartharajah Perumal of the North-Eastern Province, who was detested by the LTTE because he was from the rival EPRLF, made an attempt to unilaterally declare a State of Tamil Ealam. Thereafter he fled to India and his illegal Civil Defence Force trained by the

IPKF was slaughtered by the LTTE. To some that attempt to unilaterally declare a State of Tamil Ealam was nothing more than a publicity stunt. To others it was a grim reminder of what will happen in Sri Lanka within one generation, if the Northern Province and Eastern Province are merged permanently.

As such the bone of contention between the UNP and the SLFP is the devolution of power and the unit of devolution. Chapter XV of the draft constitution pertains to the devolution of power. Therefore Section 127 which is particularly relevant at this juncture, is reproduced in full.

(Quote)

Chapter XV

THE DEVOLUTION OF POWER TO REGIONS

127. (1) A Regional Council shall be established for every Region specified in Part B of the First Schedule with effect from such date as the President shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

(2) (a) The President shall by Order published in the Gazette, require a Referendum to be held in the Administrative District of Trincomalee and Batticaloa, and fix a date thereof to enable the electors of such District to decide on the

question whether or not such Districts and the Administrative Districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar and Mullaitivu should from one Region to be designated the North-Eastern Region.

(b) Where at such Referendum the question

(i) Is answered in the affirmative by a majority of the valid votes cast, a Regional Council shall be established for the North Eastern Region specified in Part C of the First Schedule with effect from such dates as the President shall appoint by order published in the Gazette;

(ii) Is not answered in the affirmative, two separate regional councils shall be established for the Northern Region and the Eastern Region as specified respectively in Part D of the First Schedule with effect from such days as the President shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

(3) Where a Regional Council is to be established for the North Eastern Region in terms of sub-

paragraph (b) (i) of the paragraph

(2) a Regional Council shall be established for the South Eastern Region specified in part C of the Second Schedule from such date as the President shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

(4) (a) Where a Regional Council for the North Eastern Region is to be established in terms of sub-paragraph (b) (1) of paragraph (2), the President shall, by Order published in the Gazette, require a referendum to be held in the polling division of Ampara and fix a date therefore to enable the electors of such division to decide on the question whether or not such division should form a separate Region to be designated the Region of Ampara.

(b) Where at such a Referendum the question.

(i) Is answered in the affirmative by a majority of the valid votes cast, such polling of the division shall form the Region of Ampara as specified in part E of the First Schedule and for which a Regional Council shall be established

from such date as the President shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette.

- (ii) Is not answered in the affirmative the polling division of Ampara shall from part of the Uva Region specified in Part B of the First Schedule and for which a Region Council shall be established from such date as the President shall appoint by Order published in the Gazette and, until such order is made, the polling division of Ampara shall be administered by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Provisions of the Constitution relating to the Capital Territory shall, *mutatis mutandis*, apply.

- (5) The legislative and executive power of the Government of Sri Lanka shall extend to all subjects and functions set out in List II of the Second Schedule in respect of the Capital Territory specified in Part a of the First Schedule which shall not from part of any Region for which a Regional Council has been established under this Article.

(6) For the purpose of the Article 2 and this Article, the boundaries and areas of the Administrative Districts, Polling Divisions and Municipalities referred to this article and in the first schedule shall be those established by or under any written law and in force at the commencement of the Construction.

(7) (a) The holding of the Referenda provided for in this Article shall be deemed to be valid notwithstanding any inconsistency with the provisions of Chapter XII.

(b) Parliament shall by law provide for all matters relating to such Referenda and, until Parliament so provides, the provisions of the Referendum Act No. 7 of 1981 shall, *mutatis mutandis* , apply.

(Unquote)

In terms of Article 127 of the proposed Constitution, there will be simultaneous Referenda in the Districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee to determine whether or not the population there wish to merge with the Northern Province and thereby constitute the North-Eastern Province on a permanent basis. The ethnic breakdown of the population of those two Districts is given overleaf:

<u>Community</u>	<u>Batticaloa</u>	<u>Trincomalee</u>
Muslims	79,317	74,403
Sinhalese	10,646	86,341
Tamils	234,348	86,743
Others	646	1,243

(Source: Census of 1981. The Census scheduled for 1991 has not yet been held because a substantial portion of the Northern Province is still under the rule of the LTTE.)

From these statistics it is more than likely that those two referenda will endorse the Districts of Batticaloa and Trincomalee to merge with the Northern Province and thereby create a linguistic North-Eastern Province.

In such an eventuality the Muslim electorates of Pottuvil, Kalmunai and Samanturai will constitute the new South-East Province, which will be tiny. Another referendum will then be held in the predominantly Sinhalese electorate of Ampara, a result of the land settlement policy of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake. They will be given the option to merge with the District of Monaragala in the Province of Uva. To say the least the Sinhalese are ill-prepared psychologically for

this trifurcation of the Eastern Province, which since the time of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake has had mixed populations of Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils. Barring the *Sama Thavalavama*, the State – sponsored peace caravan of 1998, which at best was a travelling circus, the Government has done little to constructively educate the masses on the heavy political price to be paid for a durable peace.

The proposed devolution package could be by the following disparate elements

- (1) The LTTE
- (2) The Tamil Parties
- (3) The SLFP and its allies
- (4) The UNP and its allies

When the draft Constitution was submitted to Parliament only two of these elements were ostensibly in favour of the package. Even on that day the UNP Parliamentary Group noisily displayed their displeasure when the Minister for Constitutional Affairs presented the draft Constitution in Parliament. Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Leader of the Opposition was then away in India and Nepal. On his return the UNP made a public statement rejecting the draft Constitution. The UNP categorically stated that they cannot agree to any devolution of power in excess of that stipulated in the

Thirteenth Amendment to the present Constitution. The following week the LTTE categorically rejected the proposed Constitution without assigning reasons. As the weeks rolled by the LTTE has all but ridiculed the devolution package and the UNP has expressed their reservations in the strongest possible terms. Indeed as of now, except to those who are blind to reason, the current devolution package is merely an exercise in futility.

Therefore the only options open to the President are:

- (i) To submit the devolution package to a referendum so that the nation, as opposed to Parliament or the President will determine the next step. (Whether that will conflict with sections 85 and 86 of the present Constitution is debatable).
- (ii) To negotiate anew with the UNP on a compromise formula.

The intransigence of the LTTE necessitates that they be annihilated militarily, like the Nazis were by the Allies in World War II. That however is outside the realm of reality, as reflected earlier in this Chapter. Besides in 1988 and 89 the LTTE stubbornly held on to the Wanni against the military might of India. Mercifully the LTTE today is much weaker politically than it was ten years ago. India treats it as a leper ever since the assassination of former Prime

Minister Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 and the United States is doing likewise as of October 1997, following their new legislation against terrorist organisations. As the months roll by it is more than likely that the Tamil Diaspora in Australia, Canada and in the European Union will encounter similar legal obstacles in financing the LTTE, either of their own volition or by compulsion. Thus in the current decade the LTTE will encounter increasing problems in financing the war, which will become a war of attrition for them and continue to be a protracted war for us. Besides the Jaffna peninsula, the home of nearly half of Sri Lankan Tamils, is now controlled by the Army. Therefore recruitment for the LTTE, specially in view of the high casualties in battles in the Wanni, will become a major problem. Indeed thousands will continue to die in the battle fields of the Wanni and in the Eastern Province and the economic centres in the City of Colombo and elsewhere in the Sinhala speaking will continue to face destruction by suicide squads of the LTTE.

It will be truly marvelous when sometime in the twenty first century, the Government of the day and the Opposition will reach a consensus on the devolution package. To reach such a consensus our people must yet be educated accordingly. For example attention could be focused on the injustice to the Tamils by not implementing Article 18 of the present constitution. For purposes of emphasis it

is repeated below:

1. The Official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala.
2. Tamil shall also be an Official language.
3. English shall be the link language.
4. Parliament shall by law provide for the implementation of the provisions of this Chapter.

On the other hand, attention should be focused on the wisdom or otherwise of a single linguistic Province for the Tamils at a time when the LTTE is waging war to establish a State of Tamil Ealam, whose borders are congruent with those of the proposed linguistic Province.

Even the detractors of President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga concede that she has honesty of purpose in her efforts to solve our vexed ethnic problem. Besides she has had the wisdom to transform the SLFP from a racist party as it was under her parents, to a party with a base in all Provinces.

In practical terms a solution to our vexed ethnic problem must necessarily encompass the following considerations in order of complexity.

1. The devolution of power.
2. Utilization of land in the North and in the East.

3. In reality, Tamil being one of the Official languages, not only in theory but also in practice.

Ironically the President has done absolutely nothing to implement Article 18 of the present Constitution. She must come down heavily on the Government Printer, the Inspector-General of Police, the Post Mistress General, the Director-General of Health Services, the Secretary Ministry of Transport, the Secretary for the Ministry of Local Government and all District Secretaries, to ensure that as prescribed in the Constitution, Tamil is given its rightful place in the day-to-day functioning of the nation. Even her detractors concede that by meticulously implementing the provisions in the present Constitution on the safeguard of Human Rights, within an year of coming into office she set right the atrocious Human Rights record of the previous regime. She has to implement Article 18 with the same exemplary vigour.

Since the time of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, the leadership of the Federal Party has protested in the strongest possible terms about, State - aided Sinhalese settlers encroaching on the traditional Tamil homelands. It is a hyper-sensitive issue in the North and the East. Quite clearly the Northern Province corresponds roughly to the former Kingdom of Yalpanam. However there is no evidence

to establish that there was another Tamil kingdom in the East. On the contrary there is definitive evidence that a substantial portion of the Eastern Province was part of the Kingdom of Kandy. Even the British who carved out the Eastern Province have said so. In 1961 in the teeth of opposition from the Federal Party, Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike sent as State-aided settlers some Sinhalese ruffians to Weli-Oya, the confluence of the Northern Province, Eastern Province and the North Central Province. In 1981 President J.R. Jayewardene sent paroled convicts and their families to the Dollar and Kent Farms in Kokilai. The results of these transmigrations speak for themselves. Weli-Oya has been a battle field since 1983 and in 1985 the LTTE massacred every single mortal, be it convict, wife, mistress, child or Government Official in the Dollar and Kent farms. Therefore as a reconciliatory step commencing immediately, no State-aided settlers who are Sinhalese should be sent to the Northern Province.

In fact the attention of the general public must be focused on the wisdom or folly of State-aided Sinhalese settlers being sent to the Eastern Province. For example according to the Census of 1921 and 1981 the Sinhalese population of the area now known as the Districts of Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee, were as given overleaf:

<u>District</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1981</u>
Ampara	8.2%	37.6%
Batticaloa	1.9%	3.2%
Tricomalee	4.5%	33.6%

The transmigration of Sinhalese into the Eastern Province began with the major irrigation schemes undertaken by D.S. Senanayake, the Kantalai project completed in 1938 and the Gal Oya project completed in 1952. There are claims and counter claims as to who the inhabitants of the Eastern Province were at the time of the advent of the British in 1796. However a sobering thought in contemporary times is that the entire Sinhalese population in the Eastern Province is a mere 2.3% of the Sinhalese population of the entire nation. Therefore the pertinent question is whether or not the transmigration of such a small percentage of all Sinhalese in the entire nation into the Eastern Province, over the past sixty years was worth the cost of riots and civil commotion there in 1956, 1958, 1961 and 1977 and the entire Province being transformed into a battle field ever since 1983?

Indeed the Tamils have their grievances. At the advent of our Independence the Tamils from Jaffna were the most conservative of all people who inhabited Ceylon. A quarter century late they were the most volatile and vociferous of all people who inhabited

Sri Lanka. During the second quarter century of Independence their angry voice was heard throughout the world. What caused this sudden transformation? There lies the answer to our vexed ethnic problem.

In a Presidential Election be it held in France or in the United States, in the Phillipines or in Senagal, a vital component of the incumbency factor is the management of the economy. However well a President may handle burning issues, if he or she fails on the economy the prospect of re-election is bleak.

A supreme example was the Presidential election of 1992 in the United States. In 1991 President George Bush was at the height of his popularity after US troops evicted Iraq from the tiny oil rich Shiekdom of Kuwait. The spectacular success of US troops in just two months of fighting restored the image of the military supremacy of the United States, an image which was shattered in earlier generations in Vietnam and Korea. Yet in 1992 he lost the Presidency to a relatively unknown challenger Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, because the American economy was visibly declining.

Against this background, the management of the open economy by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga from 1994 to 1999

was indeed a critically important factor for her re-election.

The Sirima Bandaranaike Administration from 1970 – 1977 could be described as the worst period for our economy during the twentieth century. The Prime Minister relied heavily on her Marxist Finance Minister, Dr. N.M. Perera a Trotskyite with a double doctorate from the London School of Economics. He steered the economy to near total collapse with his Marxist frolics. It was an era where the economy was stifled rather than directed towards growth. It was an era when the Government of the day imposed on this rice eating nation a stipulation that no rice could be served in restaurants and eating houses two days of the week. It was an era when rice barriers were set up so that rice could not be moved from one Province to another, where no sugar was available and tea had to be consumed with juggery; even such a basic commodity such as salt was not available in the market. People had no food and industries were starved of raw materials and vehicles were jacked up on logs due to the non-availability of spare parts. It was in this context the General Election of 1977 was held. Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike was trounced and her representation in Parliament reduced from 117 seats to 8.

The ensuing J.R. Jayewardene Administration heralded an era of economic resurgence. The State-controlled socialist economy was

transformed into a market economy. The nation was flooded with consumer goods as well as luxuries. Above all massive development projects such as the Mahaveli development programme was undertaken with external assistance from the UK, Germany, Sweden and Canada in that order. Besides a Free Trade Zone was set up and a programme for 100,000 low cost houses was undertaken initially and later expanded to a spectacular 1,000,000. Thus 1977 became a watershed in our economy. In fact the Gross Domestic Product for the years under Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike from the SLFP and the years under President J.R. Jayewardene, President R. Premadasa and President D.B. Wijetunga, are indicated below and are self-explanatory:

1971	—	3.17%
1972	—	3.19
1973	—	3.72
1974	—	3.16
1975	—	2.76
1976	—	2.96
1977	—	4.19 (transition to the UNP)
1978	—	8.23
1979	—	6.32
1980	—	5.18
1981	—	5.78
1982	—	5.07
1983	—	4.91

1984	–	5.05%
1985	–	4.96
1986	–	4.28
1987	–	1.45
1988	–	2.70
1989	–	2.25
1990	–	6.17
1991	–	4.61
1992	–	4.28
1993	–	6.95

(Source – Central Bank)

Following her ascendancy to power in 1994, one of the few election promises fulfilled by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge was not to tamper with the economy. A daughter of two Prime Ministers who had espoused socialism and she herself unquestionably a socialist during her days at The Sorbonne and thereafter for two decades, she clearly understood the worldwide repercussions of the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988 and the consequent rejection of both Marxism and socialism. To the amusement and amazement of the UNP, the President also became an adherent of the open economy. The exact parallel is in the UK. Prime Minister Tony Blair from the Labour Party is just as right wing as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Prime Minister John Major of the Conservatives. At the macro-level the best indicator of how well the President handled the open economy is

reflected in the growth rate of the Gross Domestic Products in the five years 1995 – 1999 when compared with corresponding figures for the five years 1990 – 1994 under President R. Premadasa and President D.B. Wijetunga. Those figures are given below and speak for themselves.

UNP Administration

PA Administration

1990 – 6.2%

1995 - 5.6%

1991 – 4.6

1996 - 5.5

1992 – 4.3

1997 - 3.8

1993 – 6.0

1998 - 6.3

1994 – 5.3

1999 - 3.4 *

*(projected figure)

(Source : Central Bank)

Thus the average for the last five years under the UNP was 5.5% which was indeed impressive. The corresponding figure for the first five years under the PA was 5.3 %. From these considerations the irrefutable conclusion is that the President despite her inexperience, has handled the economy well.

In the context of the modern world, the economy of no nation could be viewed in isolation. The years 1990 – 94 was a period of great economic growth in the world economy. By the same token the

years 1995 – 99 was an era of currency meltdown in the Asian economies. For example the GDP growth rates in 1998 in nations of South-East Asia were:

Indonesia	-	- 18%
Malaysia	-	- 6%
Phillipines	-	+ 1.7 %
Thailand	-	- 10%
Sri Lanka	-	+ 4.7%

Reputed economists in the international scene had evaluated that during the period under review, to maintain a supply and demand equilibrium the shut down of manufacturing in some Asian nations had to be as follows:

Indonesia	-	78%
South Korea	-	77%
Malaysia	-	64%
Thailand	-	51%

With an economic severity of that magnitude it is estimated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that ten million people in Asia lost their jobs. In direct contrast according to the ILO our unemployment figures declined from 11.3% to 10.1% during the Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga Administration.

An economic crisis of the magnitude experienced in South East Asia caused havoc in their currencies. For example Indonesia devalued her currency by over 100%, Thailand by 40% and Malaysia by 20% in the period 1995 – 99. The silver lining in that dark cloud was that it was a boon for their export oriented industries. On the other hand it was all but sounded the death knell for the corresponding industries in Sri Lanka.

Ever since the watershed in our economy in 1977 the exports of non – traditional goods have grown by leaps and bounds. Consequently small factories manufacturing for example artificial flowers, brassware, mementos, soft toys etc., have sprung up around the nation. It formed a very useful new dimension to our exports in the years 1977 to 1994. However in more recent years the export of such products in competition with Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia was almost an exercise in futility.

Directors of such industrial establishments cursed the Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga Administration for their woes. In their dilemma, of to be or not to be, they expected a UNP Administration under Ranil Wickremasinghe to be their saviour. Therefore they gravitated towards him and “Siri Kotha”, the Headquarters of the UNP, in search of greener pastures in the years to come. Thus began their clamour for a change of Government.

In direct contrast the larger companies in Sri Lanka which generate their wealth outside the export oriented industries have been in clover. For example John Keels (Chairman- Ken Balendra), Ceylinco Group (Chairman – Lalith Kotalawela) and Aitken Spence (Chairman – Ratna Sivaratnam) have found the business climate in Sri Lanka to be wonderful. For example John Keels recorded massive profits of Rs. 1.4 billion in 1997 and Rs. 1.3 billion in 1998 to become the first company ever to exceed profits of Rs. 1 billion in the history of Sri Lanka. The Ceylinco Group has grown by leaps and bounds since 1994, recording a growth rate bigger than that they recorded in the time of President Jayewardene and President Premadasa. Aitken Spence have declared excellent dividends .

Ratna Sivaratnam (Royal College Class of 1949), Lalith Kotelawela (Class of 1950) and Ken Balendra (Class of 1952) have been my trusted friends since our days at Royal College. On many issues they exchange confidences with me. Never ever have they complained to me about the business climate under President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumratunga. However twenty five years ago I well remember all three cursing the Marxist – socialist frolics of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike.

One of the numerous blessings that Sri Lanka enjoyed under President Jayewardene and President Premadasa was the inflow of foreign capital into the private sector. By the same token, one of the numerous curses introduced into Sri Lanka by President Jayewardene and President Premadasa was the brutal suppression of Human Rights of labour. This dichotomy was covered in great detail in Volume I of this book, released just after the General Election of 1994.

After the UNP was defeated at the General Election of August 1994 and even before the UNP was inevitably defeated at the Presidential Election of November 1994, the workers who were suppressed for seventeen long years went on the rampage. For example a Manager of Prima Mills of Singapore was “captured” by his work force and held prisoner on top of the roof of their three storey building in Colombo. The threat directed at Prima was that either the Company meets the demand of the workers or else their Manager would be thrown out from the roof top! That scene was televised and shown abroad on BBC and CNN news programme. It enraged people in Singapore, and shocked prospective investors throughout the world. In like manner BBC and CNN news programmes showed the Free Trade Zone in Katunayake, where strikes were banned by law but where the on-going strike at the biggest single factory there, Ansell from

Australia was going from bad to worse. That Australian Company manufactures rubber goods ranging from contraceptives to surgical gloves for their worldwide markets. Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, as she then was, personally intervened. She persuaded the irate work force to return to work, as their strike was grossly detrimental to our national interests. That was not telecast by BBC or CNN. However it was covered extensively by Rupavahini, the State-owned TV station.

According to the Department of Labour there were thirty one strikes in foreign owned Companies in Sri Lanka during the four months September to December 1994. According to the same source, there were only four such strikes in the entirety of seventeen years of rule by the UNP !

Since the establishment of the Free Trade Zone in 1979, there was an impressive flow of capital from South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia, in that order. However in the last quarter of 1994 the word quickly spread around that Sri Lanka was no longer a paradise for foreign investors. Consequently at the Board of Investments (BOI) inquiries from prospective investors dropped dramatically.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was confident that

the restlessness amongst the labour would be short lived. She genuinely believed that this was a transitional problem. However the evidence was to the contrary as reflected in the following statistics.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of days lost</u>
1990	1,054
1991	9,841
1992	26,608
1993	13,389
1994	141,088 *
1995	211,035
1996	168,786
1997	255,071
1998	243,685

Source: Central Bank.

(The above figures do not include the man days lost by strikes in the plantation sector which were due to a different set of reasons altogether.)

Against the background of this unsatisfactory situation the PA wisely decided not to proceed with its controversial Workers Charter. Nevertheless by 1997, the half way point in the six year term of the PA, the Directors of the manufacturing Companies

* Over 130,000 man days were lost in the first four months of her Administration.

loathed the Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga Administration. The nett beneficiary was the UNP.

Notwithstanding these strictures, the Government was successful in obtaining foreign capital for its privatization activities. For example in 1996 Shell Company invested US \$ 37 million in the Gas Company which was nationalised by Prime Minister Sirima Bandarnaike and privatised by her daughter. The telephone system since its inception, in the early years of the twentieth century, was State-owned. In 1997 the Nippon Telephone Company secured 40% of the ownership and the right of management. Air Ceylon since its inception in 1948 till 1978 when it became defunct was State-owned. Its successor Air Lanka was State – owned since its inception in 1979. In 1998 Emirate Airways invested \$ 164 million and secured 49% of the ownership and the right of management. In 1999 P & O Shipping Company invested \$ 212 million when the Queen Elizabeth Quay was subject to a similar transformation.

Ranil Wickremasinghe made capital of the loss of confidence of the private sector in President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. Indeed so many Company Directors were gravitating around the Leader of the Opposition and around “Siri Kotha”, the Headquarters of the UNP. In fact the private sector, which is so

knowledgeable on all commercial matters, and so naïve on all political matters, became one of the principal power bases of the UNP. To my mind that was a dubious distinction.

Such Company Directors often met at the Supper Club of the Hotel Lanka Oberoi or in a private dining room at the Colombo Hilton to map out strategy for the UNP. Sometimes they invited me to give my views. Their naivety on the basics of politics was indeed staggering and part of my work ethics is that I steer clear of fools! Accordingly I had no alternative except to politely turn down their invitations, even when they came from old boys of Royal College!!

President R. Premadasa like so many other tyrants down the ages, attempted to muzzle the media. That was indeed the kiss of death. Therefore the PA while in the Opposition promised the moon to the media. Those promises were systematically broken commencing 1994 itself. For example “The Sunday Leader” was hyper – critical of the new Government. Early in 1995 when its controversial editor Lasantha Wickrematunga and his charming wife Raine were returning home routinely after work, their car was attacked and they were assaulted in broad daylight near their home in Nugegoda. It is common knowledge who directed that attack. As of this writing the Police have not apprehended the culprits.

Anywhere in the world, the tragic flaw amongst journalists of low calibre is that they equate the Freedom of the Press to the freedom

of the wild ass. In Sri Lanka even before Independence that was a recurrent decimal because of two factors. Firstly, our journalists are very poorly paid. Secondly, they are very poorly trained. Because of the poor remuneration, more often than not inadequately qualified persons have taken to journalism as a career. Some of them are high school drop outs, most are school leavers and very few are University graduates. In neighbouring India it is the other way around. Further afield in Bangladesh and Pakistan it is no different from that in India, where nearly every journalist is a University graduate. The inadequate training of our journalists is reflected at every level and especially at the level of Editor. For example in other nations the best known authors in current affairs are the best known Editors of newspapers. That is not so in Sri Lanka. In fact of our Editors since Independence, only Tarzie Vittachi became a recognized author in current affairs. He wrote "Emergency 58" (1958), "The Brown Sahibs" (1960) when he was the Editor of "The Observer" and "The Fall of Sukarno" (1966), while stationed in Indonesia as a Director the International Press Institute. A distinguished product of Ananda College and the University of Ceylon, he was one of the finest Editors our nation has ever produced.

The disenchantment of the private sector gave our journalists and hack writers a heaven sent opportunity to attack the President, especially her low credibility. In turn the President gave them a heaven sent opportunity. Her governance was poor.

The President was indeed naïve in the handling of the media, which she herself liberated. The first mistake she made was in 1994, to appoint the popular film star Sanath Goonetilleke who had no experience as a journalist, as the Media Advisor to the President. The next was to prosecute Sinha Ratnatunga, the much respected Editor of “The Sunday Times”, for criminal defamation. That was despite the management of the Wijaya Group of Newspapers was more than ready to apologise unconditionally for a mischievous item of gossip that should never ever have been published because it was based on fiction. Above all she gave the State-controlled Lake House Press the prerogative of the prostitute, influence without responsibility.

As explained in detail in Volume I of this book *Dhushanaya* (corruption) and *Bheeshanaya* (fear) was the battle cry of Chief Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at the General Election of 1994. Thereafter *Dhushanaya* and *Bheeshanaya* was the battle cry of Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at the Presidential Election of 1994.

As Prime Minister she took a flying start in removing *Dhushanaya* and *Beeshanaya* from our society. The Bill introduced by Professor G.L. Pieris, Cabinet Minister for Justice *et al*, on October 4th 1994 was to establish a Permanent Commission to Investigate Bribery and Corruption. In Parliament there were a few modifications to accommodate genuine objections made by the Opposition and

within a few days the Bill was approved unanimously.

In terms of that Bill, the following retired public servants with impeccable records throughout their distinguished careers, were duly appointed as Commissioners in October 1994.

Mr. T.A. De S Wijesundera
(Retired Supreme Court Judge)

Mr. P.M.W. Wijayasuriya
(Retired Auditor General)

Mr. Siva Seliah
(Retired High Court Judge)

Nelum Gamage who was the courageous Bribery Commissioner during the previous UNP Administration and was removed from office for investigating into serious allegations against three Cabinet Ministers in the Premadasa Administration, was deservedly appointed Director-General of the new Commission. Later in 1994 the much respected retired Inspector-General of Police, Rudra Rajasingham, was appointed a Commissioner replacing Mr. Wijayasuriya who resigned due to ill health.

The progress made by the Commission was necessarily slow because they sifted the evidence with the utmost of care as opposed to rushing to conclusions. For example after two years of meticulous

work the Commission decided to prosecute a four – star General. Even then he was discharged by the High Court of Colombo on a technical point.

In the meantime one of the complaints duly received was about the husband of Nelum Gamage. For that and other reasons there was a serious clash of personalities between her and the Commissioners. Within the Commission the situation became untenable and had the President been wise she could have transferred the much respected Nelum Gamage to a post of comparable seniority, for example Additional Secretary to the President or promoted her as a Secretary of a Ministry or appointed her as an Ambassador. Instead the President came down heavily on the three Commissioners and demanded their resignations. When they rightly refused, she withdrew all Police personnel seconded to the Commission and initiated action in Parliament to have the Commissioners removed from office. Rarely has the President acted so foolishly. Thus on the issue of *Dhushanaya* (corruption) she came through as the laughing stock.

Anywhere in the world where multi-party democracy is practised the Government of the day must necessarily loose popularity in some sectors and attempt to make good that shortfall in other sectors. In the years 1994 – 99 the Kumaratunga Administration had angered the powerful Free Media Movement. Her attempt to minimise corruption in public life only reflected her own

inexperience. She gained the respect of the Tamil community by becoming the first ever leader of the SLFP to eschew racism which was an integral part of the folly of both her famous parents. She gained the confidence of the floating vote by rejecting altogether what enchanted her mother, namely socialism. Consumer goods and luxury goods were just as freely available from 1994 – 1999 as during the years 1977 – 94 when the UNP was in office. Above all she scored heavily with her superb Human Rights record, which is not only an example to this nation but to all nations of the Third World. However she stooped to the same folly as President Jayewardene, President Premadasa, President Wijetunga in the implementation of the Rule of Law.

The Rule of Law can be implemented only if no citizen is above the law and no citizen is below the law. That was the thinking of President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States ever since his days at Harvard. That has been successfully achieved in the United States as reflected in the fate that befell President Richard Nixon in 1974 and more recently President Bill Clinton. In direct contrast, in Sri Lanka those in power arrogate themselves to a position above the law.

To the best of my knowledge the President has done so only in respect of abusing her opponents. The Prime Minister has not violated any of the laws of Sri Lanka during the period 1994 – 99. In direct contrast so many Ministers and Members of Parliament

and their next - of -kin do so almost on a daily basis. Their offences range from those under the Motor Traffic Ordinance to those under the Penal Code. Assault and intimidation are common place. Connivance with the under world is fast becoming a way of life for our politicians. Even when common criminals are arrested by the Police, Members of Parliament shamelessly threaten the Police. Those Policemen who stand up for the Rule of the Law are transferred to some God-foresaken station or are conveniently overlooked for promotion.

Ever since 1956 successive Governments of Sri Lanka have brazenly tampered with the Rule of Law. They have chosen to be blind to the fact that all they achieve is a short-term gain and a long-term loss. In implementing the Rule of Law, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was no better than her predecessors in office.

For example she could not be unaware that the sons of a favourite Cabinet Minister are persistently running amok. There is no evidence of corrective action taken by her. She could not be unaware that one of her Members of Parliament is accused in forty one cases several of them for offences under the Penal Code. There is no evidence of her expediting the prosecution under the laws of the land. As the Rule of Law deteriorated year by year, in 1999 there was the infamous Provincial Council Election in Wayamba. The President herself was ashamed at the extent of the breakdown of the Rule of Law. (Vide "The Politics of Sri Lanka" Volume III).

She could easily have had that Provincial Council dissolved after the PA won all other Provincial Council Elections in 1999. She did not have the wisdom to do so.

Ranil Wickremasinghe became Leader of the Opposition in November 1994 following the assassination of Gamini Dissanayake who held that high office for only two months. He thus became the fourth Leader of Opposition from the UNP and the third to eventually serve a period of nearly an entire lifetime of a Parliament. The others were:

Dudley Senanayake (1960 – 64)

J.R. Jayewardene (1970 – 77)

The experience of Ranil Wickremasinghe is beyond dispute but his proven ability is indeed debatable. For example the performance of the UNP at the Provincial Council Elections of 1993 and 1999 were:

	<u>1993</u>	<u>1999</u>
Central Province	UNP	PA
North-Central Province	PA	PA
Sabragamuwa	PA	PA
Uva	PA	PA
Southern Province	UNP	PA
Western Province	UNP	PA

As stated explicitly in Volume III, the PA shamelessly cheated in

Wayamba. Therefore I am unable to accept the PA as being the victor there.

The UNP had won three Provincial Councils in 1993. Under the leadership of Ranil Wickremasinghe it was reduced to an ignominious zero. By the same token under the leadership of Ranil Wickremasinghe, the tally of the UNP in the Local Government Elections of 1997 was reduced drastically.

The UNP suffered humiliating defeats at the General Election of 1956 and 1970. After each of those defeats the Party reformed itself magnificently under the enlightened leadership of Dudley Senanayake and J.R. Jayewardene respectively. There were no such reforms after the defeat of the UNP in 1994. In fact the decline within the UNP was more than evident at the Provincial Council Elections of 1999. For example the flags and bunting of the UNP were systematically hauled down at night by goons from the PA. That could never have happened if the UNP had active grass-root organisations. Besides in many electoral divisions the UNP did not have polling agents from the polling area, the surest method of containing impersonation.

For example at the General Election of 1965, the Leader of the Opposition Dudley Senanayake personally selected me to be his polling agent at Doravaka, a particularly difficult village in the Dedigama electorate. He had selected me because of my burly

appearance and I had unlimited access to the Police because of family connections. By the same token Chula De Silva (to whom this book is dedicated), who had just returned from Oxford after completing his post-graduate work in Law, was assigned to a troublesome village from which Dudley Senanayake expected an election petition. Chula De Silva had never heard of that village. He got lost on his way from Botale *Walauwa*, the ancestral home of The late Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, where we were billeted for the night. He was rescued by a Police mobile patrol ! I fared much worse. I was given a map of Doravaka and asked to proceed on foot because the journey involved crossing a rivulet and several paddy fields. I waded across the rivulet and the first few paddy fields but then suddenly slipped and fell unceremoniously into a muddy paddy field! Thereafter I proceeded to Doravaka covered from head to foot in mud !! Fortunately Godwin Fernando, who was co-ordinating operations at Botale *Walauwa*, had received my distress signal and sent me fresh clothing and a pair of shoes.

In direct contrast at the General Election of 1977 the Leader of the Opposition J.R. Jayewardene used a much more sophisticated technique. He directed his twenty five District Organisers to personally check that every polling agent (there were over 18,000 of them in over 9,000 polling stations throughout the nation,) was a permanent resident within two miles of the polling station to which they were assigned. Thus the UNP polling agents could virtually identify every single voter, thereby making impersonations

next to impossible. Such was the skill of J.R. Jayewardene, accepted by friend and foe alike as the ablest Leader of the Opposition our nation has yet produced.

Such organisational skill was conspicuously missing in his protégé, Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe. Following the rout of the UNP at the Provincial Council Elections of 1999, UNP supporters loudly proclaimed that those elections were rigged. (Wayamba was rigged, not the others.) If so the remedial action was in their hands, to have the UNP organisations at the grass – root level activated. That never happened.

Not surprisingly awkward questions were being asked within the UNP, about the leadership of Ranil Wickremasinghe. One of the several UNP stalwarts who complained bitterly was Professor Stanley Kalpage. He served Prime Minister Dudley Senanayke as a Senator (1965 – 70), President J.R. Jayewardene as the Chairman of the University Grants Commission (1970 – 77), President R. Premadasa as High Commissioner to India (1989-91) and Ambassador to the UN (1991 – 94), his last year at the UN being under President D.B. Wijetunga. Besides he was a member of the Working Committee of the UNP continuously from 1960 – 1989 and after his return from the UN from 1994-99. He was openly critical of the leadership of Ranil Wickremasinghe and privately stated that under his leadership the UNP will continue to remain in the Opposition indefinitely. He crossed over to the Government,

as a dissident from the UNP, on November 5th 1999. So did Susil Moonesinghe M.P (Colombo District) who had served as the Chief Minister of the Western Province (1988 – 1993). Another was Sarath Amunugama MP (Kandy District), a brilliant product of the University of Ceylon in my time. He narrowly missed a First in Sociology, joined the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service, served successive UNP and SLFP Administrations with much acceptance and at 39 years of age became the youngest Secretary of a Ministry in the history of the nation. He opted for early retirement and joined the UNESCO and completed his doctorate at The Sorbonne, while stationed in Paris. He crossed over to the Government, as a dissident from the UNP, in keeping with his consistent belief that only a National Government can conceivably solve our ethnic problem. He was deservedly elevated to Cabinet rank in November 1999.

The departure of Professor Stanley Kalpage, Susil Moonesinghe M.P and Sarath Amunumuga M.P on the same day was indeed a significant blow to the UNP.

Amongst others who crossed-over that day were Wijayapala Mendis M.P and Nanda Mathew M.P who were Cabinet Ministers under President Jayewardene and President Premadasa. The former was indeed controversial having been found guilty of abuse of power by a Presidential Commission, which verdict was subsequently quashed by the Supreme Court. It was common knowledge within the UNP that Ranil Wickremasinghe was against giving both of them nomination to contest at the forthcoming General Election.

Thus their motives for leaving the UNP were questionable. Nevertheless their departure was, in my opinion, a loss to the UNP as it would adversely affect votes of their caste.

There were other cross-overs, including one Parliamentarian Chula Bandara M.P (Kurunegala District) and several Provincial Councillors (e.g Alman Pieris). Their motives too are questionable because for one reason or another they had fallen out with Ranil Wickremasinghe, thus endangering their prospects of receiving nomination from the UNP for the forthcoming General Election. On the other hand they loudly proclaimed that Ranil Wickremasinghe was as good as useless and under him the UNP had no future. In view of these conflicting reports, I am unable to comment further on the motives for their cross-over.

On the other hand the UNP did benefit from the cross-over on November 12th 1999 by Ravi Karunanayke M.P (National list - People's Alliance). He brought with himself the bulk of the Lalith Front, which had split assunder.

On his part Ranil Wikremasinghe brought into the UNP many yuppies (young, upwardly mobile people) such as Milinda Moragoda, Company Managing Director, Niwad Cabraal, Accountant and Company Director, Irwin Weerakkody, Company Managing Director, and Ravi Karunanayke M.P, Accountant and Company Director. That resulted in a backlash from the old guard

of the UNP. The scenario was identical to the unfortunate experiences of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, both of whom by virtue of age, were more in favour of yuppies than the old guard.

It is unfortunate but true that Ranil Wickremasinghe failed to appreciate the battle cry of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in 1994, namely *Bheeshanaya* and *Dhushanaya*. The Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration caused convulsions even in 1999. The spectre of the trye pyres, headless bodies and bodiless heads on the roadside and long lists of the young and not so young who disappeared mysteriously, still rancours in the hearts of our people. People still spit at the UNP for these atrocities. The naïve response of the leadership of the UNP was either to disclaim responsibility or to claim that nobody from the UNP had been convicted in a Court of Law for such alleged Human Rights violations. What the leadership of the UNP failed to realize was that in the 'Court of the People' the UNP was repeatedly condemned and is still being condemned.

In crushing the revolt of the JVP in 1989 the Premadasa Administration was indeed harsh. 'Operation Combine' which handled those matters was led by Major-General Cecil Waidyaratne, later a Lieutenant-General and Commander of the Army, Brigadier Lakshman (Lucky) Algama, later a Major-General and Chief-of-Staff of the Army under Lt.-General Waidyaratne, and Deputy Inspector-General Premadasa Udugampola. All three were very

controversial officers while in harness and controversial even in retirement. By the same token none of them had to face charges in Courts of Law or Departmental inquiries for violation of Human Rights.

Major-General Lucky Algama was publicly campaigning for the UNP and hoping for nomination to contest at the next General Election from the Gampaha District. Premadasa Udugampola was seen rather prominently at UNP meetings. According to UNP sources he had come there voluntarily. These considerations virtually convinced the uncommitted voters that the UNP had not mended their wayward ways in respect of Human Rights.

Added to these problems Ranil Wickremasinghe, who without any doubt was Mr. Clean in the context of financial transactions, was not so clean with his Human Rights record.

As history unfolds itself before our very eyes, we have a contemporary society that looks upon our politicians as compulsive liars. Indeed our politicians are truly able in masquerading as paragons of virtue while they are in the Opposition. In Government they are just as despicable as those whom they supplanted. Consequently more and more of our people, the educated and the not so educated, look upon our politicians as those who have ruined our nation since Independence.

For example our citizens in their forties and older well remember the fund of goodwill that Prime Minister J.R. Jayewardene had in 1977 when he was swept into power by the biggest landslide in the twentieth century anywhere in the world. In 1977 itself he set about the task of drafting a new Constitution. When the draft was made public it was obvious to the articulate that it was not meant for the benefit of the nation but for his own benefit.

In 1978 President J.R. Jayewardene brought in retroactive legislation to strip his principal rival Sirima Bandaranaike of her civic rights. She had readily agreed only to a fact finding Presidential Commission and she obtained an injunction from the Supreme Court against the proposed retroactive legislation. The first Amendment to the Constitution was then introduced nullifying that Court Order. After a lengthy trial she was stripped of her civic rights for five years.

In his first term President J.R. Jayewardene did immense good for the economy of Sri Lanka. In 1977 itself he launched the open economy and relegated the socialist economy of Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike to where it belonged, to the dustbin of history. In 1978 he began the construction of the massive head works of the Mahaveli project. It was the largest development project in the history of Sri Lanka, both ancient and modern. In 1979 he inaugurated the first Free Trade Zone another staggering success. In the meantime the liberization of laws pertaining to passports

resulted in hundred leaving the nation daily in search of petrodollars in the Middle East, and millions of dollars flowing in as expatriate remittances. In fact by 1980 such remittances exceeded our export earnings from coconut and rubber put together. Against this background his re-election at the Presidential Elections of 1982 was a foregone conclusion. He won by a landslide.

Thereafter President Jayewardene veered off at a tangent again. With the approval of the Supreme Court and the approval of the citizens at a Referendum, he extended the life time of Parliament from six to twelve years. However he courted disaster when he obtained un-dated letters of resignation from all the Member of Parliament from the UNP. In the context of the twentieth century that happened only once before, in Ghana under President Kwame Nkrumah. He was deservedly villified for such action. So was President Jayewardene.

Shortly thereafter President Jayewardene did something which no son on of a Supreme Court Judge would dream of. He reversed decisions of the Supreme Court which went against the Police in instances where he had issued illegal orders. He disgraced himself still further when he promoted instantly those officers who were punished by the Supreme Court for violating the Fundamental Rights of citizens.

President J.R. Jayewardene was perhaps the ablest leader ever

produced by the UNP. He could have gone down to history as our version of President Charles De Gaulle of France because of the immense good he did for our nation. Instead he heaped calumny on himself and unfortunately he is remembered today for those unnecessary blunders.

Our citizens in the age group of the sixties and older well remember Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. He was by far the ablest leader the SLFP ever produced. However his folly resulted in this nation having to face a protracted civil with no end in sight.

Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was the scion of aristocracy. Nevertheless ever since his return home from Oxford in 1926, foresaking his aristocratic background he championed the cause of the downtrodden. His bloodless social revolution of 1956 was indeed a watershed in our history. For that he is deservedly honoured by history. However he stooped to folly on his language policy sometime after Independence.

Ever since his return from Oxford he forcefully advocated Sinhala and Tamil to replace English as the State Languages after Independence. In 1926 he visited Jaffna and wrote a splendid article in the newspaper "The Morning Leader" advocating Federalism as the only honourable way to rule Ceylon after the British leave. Thus he was more than twenty years ahead of S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, the revered leader of the Federal Party. Such was

his intellectual brilliance, which made him the most quoted political leader in Sri Lanka in the twentieth century.

His policy of Sinhala and Tamil to replace English was slightly modified in 1951 when he broke away from the UNP to set up the SLFP. The package he offered was Sinhala and Tamil in 24 hours. At the General Election of 1952, for reasons adduced later in this book, the SLFP was badly beaten and Bandaranaike faced oblivion.

In 1953 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, in his wisdom, enunciated his language policy. The States within the Union of India would be demarcated on a linguistic basis. After twenty five years Hindi will become the national language of India.

Then Bandaranaike offered Sinhala only as the Official language of Ceylon in twenty four hours! In fact his battle cry was:

*“Thamunwanselage vedegath chandaya labala mama Aga
Methi unoth, Sinhala pamanak paya
visi hatharakin rajaya bashawa karanawa”*

The English translation of that battle cry would be:

With your precious vote if I become your Prime Minister,
within twenty four hours I will make Sinhala only our sole
national language.

(Thunderous ovation)

The Sinhala masses who gave such thunderous ovation are today

weeping for their sons and daughters who return home from the battle field in coffins or return home minus arms, legs or eyes.

Our citizens in their seventies and older well remembered Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, the architect of our Independence and our first Prime Minister. He won our Independence without shedding a drop of blood and gave Ceylon a remarkably smooth transition from a Crown Colony to a Dominion.

Had he retired from active politics after Independence as he had hoped to do or died in 1948 he would indeed have been accepted by all political parties, not only the UNP, as “The Father of the Nation”. The exact parallel was Governor – General Mohamed Ali Jinnah of Pakistan who died in 1948 and is known as *Quai-di-Assam* (“The Father of the Nation”). Instead after Independence Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake systematically groomed his son Dudley Senanayake (38) and Minister of Agriculture and Lands in his Cabinet since 1947 at the expense of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (49) Leader of the House and a Cabinet Minister since 1936. Already there was a serious cleavage in the basic political thinking of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake and the Leader of the House S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The succession stakes widened that cleavage. Finally Bandaranaike left the UNP in disgust in 1951 to form his SLFP. His fledgling SLFP was routed at the emotional General Election of 1952 after the death of Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake who was succeeded by Prime Minister Dudley

Senanayke. Pushed almost into oblivion and fighting for his political survival, Bandaranaike opted for the populist but explosive “Sinhala Only”.

Nobody then or now refers to Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake, Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike or President J.R. Jayewardene as fools. They were indeed the ablest of leaders this nation produced in living memory. Each produced a watershed in the recent history of our nation namely, Independence (1948), the bloodless social revolution (1956) and the open economy (1977). If so why did they stoop to such folly and ruin our nation? The irresistible conclusion is that they placed their personal ambitions above our national interests.

The agonizing question then is, if that is how the greatest of our political leaders conducted their affairs, what can we conceivably expect from the lesser mortals, such as President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe?

It was against that background a Presidential Election was held on December 21st 1999.

THE CAMPAIGN

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, of her own volition had called for a Presidential Election about an year ahead of the expiry of her six year term. Yet it was her principal opponent, the Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe, who took a flying start in the campaign.

His battle cry,

“Pacha malla gedera yawamu”

(Let us send home the bag of lies)

had an electrifying effect at the giant rallies the UNP held at short notice throughout the nation. Next to his battle cry, his most frequently used slogan,

“I will not promise anything that I cannot deliver”

also brought in rounds of thunderous applause and more chants of,

“Pacha malla gedera yawamu”.

Indeed the flying start of Ranil Wickremasinghe in November 1999 was similar to the flying start the Leader of the Opposition S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike took in March 1956, when Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawela had Parliament dissolved one year ahead of schedule and sought a fresh mandate.

As the days rolled by in November 1999, Ranil Wickremasinghe increased his popularity still more by claiming:

“When I am elected President, with immediate effect I will amend the Constitution and strip the President of immunity from prosecution. (Thunderous applause). To prevent undue political interference, the bane of our society, I will have a Police Commission answerable to Parliament and not to the Government of the day, to administer the Police, a Public Service Commission as a first step towards the establishment of an apolitical Public Service and an Election Commission to handle all matters pertaining to elections. All these Commissions will be independent of the Government of the day and will be answerable to Parliament, which as you know consists both of the Government and the Opposition. I will implement all these promises within six months. I do not break promises like Chandrika does. (Chanting of “*Pacha malla gedera yawamu*”). If I break these promises please do not vote for the UNP at the General Election scheduled for the year 2000.” (Pin drop silence.)

Thus the Ranil Wickremasinghe band wagon rolled along throughout the nation. By Nomination Day, November 16th 1999, the nation was moving towards a closely fought Presidential Election like in 1988, when the results were:

Prime Minister R. Premadasa - 50.4%

Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike - 44.9%

On Nomination Day, thirteen candidates submitted their papers to the Acting Commissioner of Elections (The Commissioner of Elections Dayananda Dissanayake, a model public servant, was unfortunately on medical leave having suffered a heart attack.) The thirteen candidates were:

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga (PA)

Ranil Wickremasinghe (UNP)

Nandana Gunathilaka (JVP)

and ten others who were an assortment of loose cannons, noise makers and lo and behold a bigamist ! They do not merit any further mention in a serious book of this nature.

According to Godwin Fernando and me, on Nomination Day the breakdown of the likely voting was as follows:

The President and the Leader of the Opposition would win a combined 95% of the vote, the JVP 4% (Rohana Wijeweera polled 4% in 1982) and 1% to the comic gang of ten other inconsequential candidates. We then attempted to work out a breakdown of those 95% of votes.

The vital question then was whether Ranil Wickremasinghe had shed in two or three weeks his adverse image of ‘*Ranilta baha*’ which had plagued him for nearly five long years.

“*Ranilta baha*” (Ranil cannot) was indeed a serious indictment, yet now in the first two weeks of November he had taken a flying start. We had ourselves seen that in the four key Provinces namely:

Western Province	3.2 million votes
Central Province	1.5
Southern Province	1.4
Wayamba	1.4
	<hr/>
	7.5 million votes
	<hr/>

According to the Department of Elections these four Provinces account for 7.5 million votes of the 11.8 million votes in the entire nation. It was more than obvious that the President had come through as a compulsive liar for five long years and Ranil Wickremasinghe was making capital of it.

We both agreed that deep rooted opinions take a long time to change. Therefore our considered assessment on Nomination Day was that both the President and the Leader of the Opposition will poll over 45% of the vote, but both under 50%.

To save time, we agreed to tour the nation separately. Accordingly, I took the Central Province and Wayamba, among the key Provinces, and the North-Central Province, because I was then writing the booklet “The Diocese of Kurunagala (1950 – 2000)” which encompasses those three Provinces*. Godwin Fernando took the Southern Province, among the key Provinces, Sabaragamuwa and Uva amongst the other Provinces. Whenever we were in Colombo we agreed to tour together the all important Western Province. That Province had 3.2 million voters or nearly 30% of all voters in Sri Lanka and the breakdown was:

<u>District</u>	<u>Voters</u>
Colombo	1.3 million
Gampaha	1.2
Kalutara	0.7
	<u>3.2 million</u>

The President formally launched her campaign at Anuradhapura after supplicating to the gods at the sacred Sri Maha Bodhiya. The Leader of the Opposition launched his campaign at Kandy after supplicating to the gods at the sacred Temple of the Tooth. The

* That booklet was an official publication of the Diocese of Kurunagala of the Church of Ceyon, for its golden jubilee on February 2nd 2000.

campaigning was brisk with the President travelling in a Bell – 424 helicopter of the Sri Lanka Air Force for security reasons* and the Leader of the Opposition travelling by car.

During the two weeks November 17th to 30th 1999, there was a strange but consistent pattern in the unorthodox campaigning by the President. It was she who was seeking a second term and in the circumstances she had to defend her record during the first term. On the one hand she did that marginally. For example she spoke eloquently on her impeccable Human Rights record and her success in implementing an open economy. (Somehow she forgot to add that it was ushered in by President Jayewardene and further strengthened by President Premadasa and she merely followed suit.) She also spoke of her success in the Samurdhi programme for the poorest of the poor. On the other hand, her main thrust was to villify Ranil Wickremasinghe, his brother Shan, his mother and even his sister who is a private citizen, and to focus attention on the poor Human Rights record of the Premadasa Administration. Her accusations were published gleefully with banner headlines in

* Whenever President Bill Clinton is campaigning and travels in USAF aircraft The Democratic Party pays for it. By the same token whenever President Jacques Chirac of France is out campaigning using RFAF aircraft The Gaullist Party settles the bill. Perhaps that tradition should be introduced into Sri Lanka or alternatively the Leader of the Opposition should have unlimited access to SLAF aircraft.

the front page of the “Ceylon Daily News” and the “Dinamina”. Ironically those two newspapers were launched in 1917 by D.R. Wijewardene, the grandfather of Ranil Wickremasinghe and the founder Chairman of Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited.

In the meantime Ranil Wickremasinghe took the orthodox role of a Leader of the Opposition seeking to defeat the incumbent President. He blasted her and she was indeed vulnerable on two counts. Firstly, her shameless track record of broken promises. Secondly, she had nothing to show in the way of development projects comparable with the giant Mahaveli headworks and the Free Trade Zones under President Jayewardene, the one million houses programme under Prime Minister Premadasa and the two hundred garment factories programme in rural areas under President Premadasa. Besides as an alternative choice for President, Ranil Wickremasinghe offered his own programmes, for example to remove the Presidential immunity, which most people are critical of, the establishment of a Police Commission, an Election Commission and a Public Service Commission also offered a plausible package for the youth. He assured a Youth Corps would be set up whereby unemployed youth and school leavers will be paid a stipend and trained for eighteen months in:

- (a) A working knowledge of English

- (b) Computers
- (c) Making of garments

He emphasised that in the twenty first century a working knowledge of English and the use of computers will be the passport to gainful employment.

A distressing feature in the campaign for the Presidency was the outburst of violence. With a civil war raging in the North and the East since 1983, for example our Army had expanded from a sanctioned strength of 12,000 officers and other ranks in 1983 to over 100,000 in 1999. It has resulted in arms and ammunition being readily available in the black market, the principal supplier being the deserters. The exact parallel is in Pakistan. With a civil war raging in neighbouring Afghanistan, modern arms are freely available in the black market especially in the North-West Frontier Province. Consequently violence in general and election-oriented violence in particular, is rampant in Pakistan. In Sri Lanka there was a three fold increase in election-oriented violence from the Presidential Election in 1994 to that in 1999. According to the Election Secretariat at Police Headquarters the summary of such violence in the month of November 1999 was as given overleaf:

Murders	-	3
Grievous hurt	-	93
Threats of bodily harm	-	24
Arson or robbery	-	8
Major offences	-	<hr/> 128 <hr/>
Minor offences	-	179

Such major offences were particularly common in the Western Province, Wayamba, Uva and the North-Central Province, in that order, and the highlights were as follows:

On November 11th, five days before Nomination Day, Ranil Wickremasinghe made a brief stop to address an election meeting at Eppawela in the Anuradhapura District. Just after he left there was a grenade attack at the UNP meeting in which three persons, including a Sub-Inspector of Police on duty, were killed.

On Nomination Day, around 0200 hours the minor staff of Ravi Karunanayake MP (UNP – National list) was attacked in separate incidents at Kotte and Welikada when they were putting up posters of Ranil Wickremasinghe. On November 22nd around 2000 hours his election office at Welikada came under fire from T-56 guns while he was working there. Two security guards were seriously injured and were rushed to the nearby Jayewardenepura Hospital.

Ravi Karunanayake was singled out for this rough treatment because he is the only MP in the present Parliament to cross over from the PA to the UNP. He did so on November 12th 1999.

On November 19th around 0300 hours goons from the PA in car 17 – 2167 and van 58-5648 opened fire at “Siri Kotha” the UNP Headquarters situated in Kotte. Eye witnesses identified a MP from the PA as the principal culprit. His name is omitted from this Volume on legal advice.

On November 21st goons from the UNP allegedly attacked and killed I.A. Gunapala, a SLFP politician in Pitigala in the Southern Province. On the same day goons from the UNP opened fire with T-56 guns at the home of Wijemuni Soysa M.P (PA – Monaragala district).

On November 23rd Rukmal Bandara, a well known JVP supporter in Sabaragamuwa, complained to the Kegalle Police that his staff was assaulted by goons from the PA. Besides, Anura Jayasinghe one of the victims, was stripped naked.

On November 27th goons from the PA attacked the grocery store of Titus Kariyakarawana situated at Anawilundawa near Chilaw. He is a prospective candidate from the UNP for the Puttalam District

at the forthcoming General Election. Police estimate the damage caused by T-56 guns and grenades to be of the order of Rs.300,000. A leading PA supporter in the Chilaw area has been questioned by the Police. His name is omitted from this Volume on legal advice.

Over the week-end December 3rd and 4th 1999, Godwin Fernando and I covered the Colombo District and the Gampaha District and then got down to analysing the political situation after three weeks of intense campaigning.

Godwin claimed that the Southern Province was still seething with anger against President R. Premadasa, who was assassinated in 1993. Therefore President Chandrika Bandaranaike will win easily. I agreed.

In my judgement, President Premadasa was by far the worst ruler Sri Lanka had produced since Independence. He was our version of Prime Minister Benito Mussolini of Italy, excellent at development work, superb at ensuring that lazy public servants work, but with an awful record on Human Rights. In 1944 the Italians danced in the streets on hearing of his assassination. So did Sri Lankans in 1993 on hearing of the assassination of Premadasa. I agreed that the Southern Province, where the excesses

of the Premadasa Administration were at its worst, will vote for the PA because of its far superior Human Rights record.

Godwin claimed that in Sabaragamuwa the election was too close to call. In Uva, the UNP will be the winner of a close bout.

According to me, the Wayamba was seething with anger against the PA for the outrageous manner in which the Provincial Council Election was conducted on January 27th 1999. In the North -Central Province the UNP organisation was pathetic and Ranil Wickremasinghe will be routed notwithstanding the fact that the Mahaveli diversion scheme of Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake and President J.R. Jayewardene was visibly a success. The Central Province has traditionally voted UNP. However the spadework for the Presidential Election done by three highly energetic Cabinet Ministers S.B. Dissanayake, D.M Jayaratne and Anuruddha Ratwatte was showing results, and questionable results according to complaints from the UNP. My considered opinion was, in the Central Province it was too close to call.

Therefore both Godwin and I agreed that the election will ultimately be decided by the Western Province. The Gampaha district would record a landslide victory for Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga despite her estranged brother Anura Bandaranaike

M.P campaigning vigorously for the UNP. The City of Colombo would record an even bigger landslide for Ranil Wickremasinghe. The suburbs for example Kotte, Dehiwela, Ratmalana, Moratuwa were solidly for Ranil Wickremasinghe. Godwin, whose ancestral home is in Moratuwa, disagreed with my assessment of his hometown. The Kelani Valley belt, Homagama, Kottawa, Avissawella will vote for the descendents of the Marxist leader, The late Phillip Gunewardene. His son Indika is a Cabinet Minister. Another son Dinesh, the much respected leader of the MEP, though out of Parliament was openly supporting the President. The traditionally left-wing Kalutara District was too close to call with the influential Moonesinghe family, Susil Moonesinghe (crossing over to the PA) Anil Moonesinghe (Deputy Speaker) and Mangala Moonesinghe (High Commissioner to India) all solidly behind the President.

Thus at D – day minus 17, the predictions of both Godwin and myself were:

<u>Province</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Prediction</u>
Western	3.2 million	Probably UNP
Central	1.5	Too close to call
Southern	1.4	PA
Wayamba	1.4	UNP

<u>Province</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>Prediction</u>
Sabaragamuwa	1.1	Too close to call
Uva	0.7	UNP
North-Central	0.6	PA

In December 1999 the law and order situation, pertaining to the Presidential Election, deteriorated still further. The principal culprits were the armed supporters of both the PA and the UNP. The worst single incident was at Bibile on December 9th. Goons from the PA, including a Home Guard and a Police Constable under interdiction, arrived at a UNP meeting of Ranjith Madduma Bandara MP (UNP – Badulla District), in a lorry bearing number 226-5877. They then indiscriminately sprayed fire from a T-56. Three UNP supporters were killed and one injured. All persons in that lorry were promptly arrested by the Bibile Police and were remanded.

According to Police Headquarters the major incidents recorded in the last two weeks of the campaign were five times as many as in the last two weeks of the Presidential Election of 1994. Much worse, one in seven of major incidents involved the use of the T-56.

Though Police Headquarters maintained a stoic silence, a repeated complaint was that goons from the Presidential Security Division, especially a Sergeant of questionable reputation, were also behind

the use of the T-56. He was repeatedly named from UNP platforms. However on legal advice his name is omitted from this Volume.

In the last fifteen days of the campaign Godwin Fernando and I picked up information which on the surface was not plausible. C.V. “Puggie” Gooneratne, the Minister of Industries is a dear friend of mine since our days at Royal College. He captained our Rugby Football team in 1955 and I was a member of his team. He told me that the Catholic belt was voting en-bloc for Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga on the premise that she had consistently been generous to the minorities. Despite my fondness for “Puggie” I did not believe his statement. Therefore I asked Godwin Fernando also a close friend of the Minister, to double check on that report. A few days later Godwin contacted me on his cellular telephone from Negombo.

“Jungle, where the hell are you?”

“In Anuradhapura, on my way to Polonnaruwa”

“That report of C.V is absolutely correct. My assessment is that Chilaw, Negombo, Katana, Ja-ela, Wattala, that is the entire Catholic belt barring Colombo -North, is solidly for Chandrika”

“Godwin, the North-Central Province (NCP) is solidly for Chandrika. She will win by a landslide here. I just cannot explain why Dudley Senanayake and J.R. Jayewardene built up the NCP

with the Mahaveli Project, yet this Province is solidly for Chandrika.”

“Are you suggesting that Chandrika will win the Presidential Election?”

“No. It is too close to call. Besides I had some strange information from the East. I will now detour and visit Trincomalee for two days. Please do not tell Marlyn. She will be unnecessarily worried about landmines, ambushes *et cetera*”

“Okay, okay. Good luck but take care”.

My intelligence sources from the Church of Ceylon gave me, with pin point accuracy, whom I should meet in Trincomalee. I travelled by train from Polonnaruwa to Trincomalee. Security on board the train was tight but the Army befriended me after I showed them a copy of my book “War or Peace in Sri Lanka (Volume II)” with an action photograph of Major-General Asoka Jayawardhana RWP, RSP, VSP, USP on the cover. He is currently the Governor of the North-Eastern Province and is greatly admired by the troops he once commanded. In fact on arrival in Trincomalee an Army jeep took me to a guest house which they recommended to me !

A Doctor belonging to the Church of Ceylon gave me the vital information I was looking for and summarized the situation as

follows:

“Ambassador, I have read all your books on our civil war. I disagree with you only on one point. Prabhakaran may be controversial in Jaffna because of his Human Rights record. However here in the East he is genuinely admired. He has directed his cadres to spread the word around that Tamils in the East should vote for Ranil.”

“Doctor, is that applicable to the town of Trincomalee or to the District of Trincomalee.”

“The entire District barring Seruwila, which is a Sinhala speaking electoral division.”

“Could you please arrange for me to visit the hinterland of Trincomalee?”

“Certainly. In fact they are expecting you in China Bay and I will take you there personally.”

The two days I spent in Trincomalee, a predominantly Tamil electoral division, convinced me that Ranil Wickremasinghe would win there by a landslide. I took a train from Trincomalee to Kurunegala and telephoned Marlyn from Kurunegala. She was very pleased that I was working so hard on my new book “The Diocese of Kurunagala* (1950 – 2000)” !

* The State spells that name as Kurunegala, the Church as Kurunagala.

When Godwin Fernando and I next met it was D-day minus 10.

My prediction then was:

Ranil Wickremasinghe - 48%

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga - 47%

His prediction was:

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga - 48%

Ranil Wickremasinghe - 47%

Our breakdown was as follows:

Key Provinces

Western - Too close to call

Central - Too close to call

Southern - PA by a landslide

Wayamba - UNP

Other Provinces

Sabaragamuwa - PA

Uva - UNP

North-Central - PA by a landslide

Eastern - UNP

Northern - No reliable information

Therefore we both agreed that it will be a very closely contested election and the second preferences will determine the victor.

(Under the currently applicable laws, the winning candidate has to poll over 50% of all votes correctly cast.)

When the campaign entered the crucial final stretch on December 11th, almost everybody ranging from the sublime to the ludicrous predicted a close finish. Against that background rigging could conceivably play a significant role. So would the second preferences. By the same token any special issues that were not raised earlier should have a decisive effect on the floating vote.

By now both Godwin Fernando, who celebrated his sixty second birthday during the campaign and I due to do so in January 2000, were thoroughly exhausted. We therefore decided to concentrate our energies on the Provinces listed as 'too close to call'. He took the all important Western Province. I took the Central Province because I have a sister, living in Peradeniya who is the wife of a retired planter.

The Sri Lankans of Indian origin in the plantations areas account for nearly 400,000 voters. With the recent demise of their legendary father figure S. Thondaman, Cabinet Minister for Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure, that vote was sharply divided. In 1994, S. Thondaman then 82 years old, made two fatal mistakes in respect of his Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC). Firstly

he groomed his grandson Arumugam to succeed him at the expense of the heir – apparent S. Sellaswamy, for many years the General Secretary of the CWC. To make matters worse he expelled Sellaswamy from the party. Also, he ruled against a majority decision of the CWC of not entering into an electoral pact* with the ruling UNP. The UNP lost the General Election of 1994 and the six elected MP's from the CWC and technically from the UNP had to languish in the Opposition. Privately S. Thondaman (UNP – National list) acknowledged his mistake. He therefore accepted a Cabinet portfolio under President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. Thus the CWC was in the ludicrous position of sitting in the Opposition while their revered leader was in the Cabinet of Ministers! That ludicrous state of affairs had to end.

It ended with the demise of S. Thondaman on October 30th 1999. Before his death he had pledged his support for the President and after his death his grandson Arumugam Thondaman MP (UNP-Nuwara Eliya District) was promptly appointed the new President of the CWC and a Cabinet Minister, succeeding his famous grandfather. Nevertheless the plantation vote was more or less evenly divided with S. Sellaswamy and P. Chandrasekeran M.P (Independent – Nuwara Eliya District) and a Deputy Minister, who

* In terms of the electoral pact the CWC contested under the banner of the UNP.

crossed over to the Opposition on November 21st 1999, taking a significant fraction of the traditional power base of the CWC. In my judgement Ranil Wickremasinghe was the nett beneficiary by over 100,000 votes.

Against the background of a closely contested election, the preference votes could conceivably play a decisive role. My friend Anura Bandaranaike M.P (UNP – National list) assured me that the JVP would not exercise their second preferences, in favour of his estranged sister. His animosity against her is so great that I wanted the statement double checked. Firstly, Godwin Fernando did so. Then I did so independently in the Hambantota District, the power base of the JVP and the power base of the Rajapakse family. That information about the second preferences was indeed correct.

After my next meeting with the Bishop of Kurunagala and his Archdeacon pertaining to my publication “The Diocese of Kurunagala (1950 – 2000)”, I left on the express train “Yal Devi” for Vavuniya. In the context of our civil war Vavuniya is a border town. Once again security on board the train was very strict. Once again one of my earlier books “War or Peace in Sri Lanka” (Volume I) was used to advantage. The photograph on the cover was that of the legendary Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa RWP and bar RSP and bar, VSV, USP who was killed in action in 1992. Many soldiers

actually kissed that cover page ! On arrival at Vavuniya once again an Army jeep took me to my temporary abode.

I was the guest of The Venerable Siyambalagaswewe Vipulasara the *Sanganayake** of Vavuniya. Many years ago when General Kobbekaduwa was serving in Vavuniya as a Colonel, he introduced me to this very distinguished member of the *Maha Sangha*. The Venerable Vipulasara humbly claims that he is merely following the gospel according to Lord Buddha, in helping at the numerous refugee camps in the Vavuniya District. Those camps teemed with displaced Sinhalese and Tamils. According to the Venerable Vipulasara nowhere has Lord Buddha said to discriminate against Tamils or to favour the Sinhalese. Therefore he has taken upon himself the task of helping all refugees irrespective of their being Sinhalese, Tamils or otherwise. It has truly been a privilege for me to help him in some small way.

The Venerable Vipulasara arranged for me to meet the leaders of the Tamil community in Vavuniya, which account for nearly 75% of the local population. After speaking to them, it was quite obvious that Ranil Wickremasinghe would win in Vavuniya by a landslide. Once again Prabhakaran had passed the word around within the

* *Sanganayake* – Archdeacon in the Buddhist heirarchy.

Tamil community.

The following day The Venerable Vipulasara himself took me to the Vavuniya Railway Station where I was due to board the “Yal Devi” for Colombo. With typical kindness, he had put into his jeep a bag full of mangoes from his temple, for Marlyn and me.

When I returned to Colombo, Godwin Fernando told me that very reliable intelligence reports from the Roman Catholic Church had indicated that Ranil Wickremasinghe will win handsomely in the Tamil areas of Batticaloa District and in the electoral division of Mannar.

Thus Ranil Wickremasinghe would make a clean sweep of the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka except in the Jaffna peninsula where Prabhakaran had ordered the population not to vote.

In view of the foregoing, at our lengthy meeting on D-day minus five (December 16th) at the home of Godwin Fernando in Dehiwela, I predicted that Ranil Wickremasinghe will be our next President. Godwin thought otherwise.

“Jungle our mutual friend, “Puggie” to you and Clement to me, is scoring heavily for Chandrika with some new information at this late stage.

I cannot convince you of how damaging he is with his disclosure. Therefore please join me today to listen to Clement”.

During his Rugby playing days at Royal College C.V “Puggie” Gooneratne was devastating in attack. That streak is now evident in his politics. His description of the rape of Sandra Paul by Gonawela Sunil of the staff of Ranil Wickremasinghe was dignified but graphic. Sandra Paul was a daughter of a much respected Professor. According to medical evidence led in open Court, she was a virgin when she was raped. In fact Professor Paul broke down and wept while giving evidence in open Court. Justice Percy Collin – Thome, a much respected High Court Judge who later became a Supreme Court Judge, found Gonawela Sunil guilty of rape and sentenced him to eight years of rigorous imprisonment. The Court of Appeal upheld that conviction. However within eight months Gonawela Sunil was paroled, by amending the Prisons Ordinance. He then returned home and to his job on the staff of Ranil Wickremasinghe. Furthermore he was appointed a Justice of Peace for the entire Island. Gonawela Sunil was executed by a hit squad from the JVP shortly thereafter !!

C.V. Gooneratne took nearly ten minutes to relate that story in minute detail. His audience listened in pin drop silence. Then he thundered, “Ranil Wickremasinghe went out of his way to help

Gonawela Sunil, a convicted rapist. Did Ranil Wickremasinghe lift a finger to help that innocent girl Sandra Paul during the past twelve or thirteen years ? She is now having psychiatric problems and has opted to remain un-married.

“Ladies, is this the man you want as your next President? Gentlemen, will your wife or daughter or my wife or daughter be safe with this kind of President?”

As the pin drop silence continued, C.V Gooneratne stood in mute silence. Then with a superb sense of theatre he abruptly sat down.

Another costly lapse by Ranil Wickremasinghe was on the issue of the LTTE. In his manifesto he stated that he will initiate dialogue with the LTTE and will endeavour to set up an Interim Council for the North-Eastern Province. In his campaign he elaborated that the Interim Council he envisaged will include representation from the LTTE. With that he trod on a mine. The State-controlled media maximised the damage.

Ranil Wickremasinghe is anything but a fool but frequently gives the impression he is, with frivolous remarks. That has been his style ever since his days at Royal College. He did so periodically during the campaign. One such flippant remark was,

“We will hand over Chandrika to Prabhakaran”

Of course he said it as a joke, but he was never left in peace after that. The Lake House Press and Rupavahini gave him hell. So did many irate women.

During the election campaign I repeatedly heard the allegation that the Presidential Election would be rigged by the PA just like the Presidential Election of 1988 was rigged by the UNP. Regrettably since 1973, when the by-election at Dedigama was rigged by the then ruling SLFP, rigging at elections was not uncommon in Sri Lanka. Everytime the culprit was the Government of the day, be it SLFP or UNP. My considered opinion is that the Government of the day, be it UNP or SLFP, deliberately kept the loopholes open in our archaic Election Ordinance of 1957, so that while in office they can rig elections. In 1991 and 1992 Chandrananda De Silva, the much respected Commissioner of Elections from 1982 – 94 repeatedly complained to the then UNP Administration that the currently applicable requirement of only producing a polling card, without any supporting identification, is an open invitation to rigging. In 1997 Dayananda Dissanayake, the much respected Commissioner of Elections from 1995 to - date complained to the present PA Administration in much stronger language. He pointed out that nearly 600,000 Sri Lankans are working abroad. They account for 5% of the registered voters of nearly twelve million voters. He pointed that as of 1997, as much as 63% of all our adult

citizens had National Identity Cards. (That figure was 69% in 1999). Therefore he recommended in the strongest possible terms that the National Identity Cards or any other suitable form of identification be made mandatory for proving identity before a ballot paper is issued to a voter.

The soundness of these recommendations is beyond dispute. However the UNP and the PA in power have sought to perpetuate themselves at any cost. Against that background, those recommendations were never implemented.

The basic technique in rigging elections practised both by the UNP and the SLFP while in power, is through the misuse of the polling cards. The Party in power coaxes the minions in the Post Offices and illegally obtains the polling cards of those citizens who are either dead or away abroad. For example ever since our marriage Marlyn and I have lived either at 22, De Fonseka Place, Colombo - 5 or abroad. When we were abroad, those polling cards were never delivered to our home !

Once the polling cards are in the wrong hands, impersonation is relatively simple. The marking ink applied on the small finger of the left hand is a farce. Battery acid washes it away without a trace; so does cutex removers.

There was definitive evidence that the PA attempted to rig the Presidential Election in 1999 to the extent the UNP Administration did so successfully at the Presidential Election of 1988. In view of the election petition currently before the Supreme Court, based on legal advice I will not comment any more on this sordid subject.

Godwin Fernando and I next met each other for wide ranging discussions at my ancestral home in Nugegoda on December 17th. That was after Ravi Karunanayake M.P concluded his election meeting at the market square in Nugegoda late that night. After dinner Godwin commenced the discussions saying,

“Jungle, do you agree that Ranil Wickremesinghe has lost ground during the past few days?”

“Of course. Puggie’s attack on him was devastating. Besides Ranil spoke like a fool when he said he will hand Chandrika over to Prabhakaran.”

“So are you saying that he will loose?”

“No. With the Tamil votes Ranil will win 48% to 47% by Chandrika. The mood of the nation is that the people want a change, because of the spiraling cost of living and the broken promises of Chandrika”.

“Jungle, I am unable to agree with you. There is no burning anger against the PA despite five years of rule and misrule.

“Can you remember in 1977 there was a huge current against the SLFP. In 1994 there was a groundswell against the UNP. In 1999 where did you see a tide against the PA except in the City of Colombo, Trincomalee and Vavuniya? My prediction is that Chandrika will win 48% to 47%”.

Thereafter we were splitting hairs for hours justifying our respective versions of the breakdown of 48-47. It was nearly 0300 hours when we finally broke up.

After breakfast I went back to sleep and was woken up by a telephone call by one of my best informants in the Police. His father had worked under my father and the two of us have maintained cordial relations for years. In fact I was his referee when he applied to join the Police.

“Sir, please do not attend that giant rally at Town Hall today. According to the Special Branch of the CID there may be an attempt to assassinate the President”

He rang off very abruptly, even before I could ask him any questions.

I repeated that message to Godwin Fernando because we were due to cover the final meeting of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga at the Town Hall and that of Ranil Wickremasinghe at the Sugathadasa Stadium later that night.

Two months earlier Godwin had actually passed on written confidential information to the President after returning from a business visit to Singapore. Both she and Sonia Gandhi were due to be assassinated by the LTTE during the respective election campaigns in Sri Lanka and India.

I was against Godwin submitting such information because the standard technique in intelligence work is to double check the veracity of the first intelligence report (FIR). That is routinely adopted by the CIA, the KGB, the MI-5 and the RAW. I wanted Godwin to double check his FIR, if necessary to do another visit to Singapore for that purpose. However Godwin insisted on sending a top secret note to the President through C.V. Gooneratne.

Much to my surprise the President gave him a personal interview within twenty four hours. As he walked into the Presidential office with C.V. Gooneratne, he saw sitting outside DIG* (National Intelligence Bureau), DIG (Special Branch) and DIG (Presidential Security Division). Godwin was with the President for over an hour and emphasised that according to his information the LTTE dreaded Sonia Gandhi coming into power in India and she being simultaneously re-elected in Sri Lanka. He further added that Sonia

* Note to foreign readers -

DIG – Deputy Inspector-General of Police

Gandhi is alive because polls forecasts in India had predicted that she will be badly beaten.

On the morning of Saturday 18th December 1999, after conveying to Godwin Fernando the dreadful news, I attempted to contact my friend O.K. Hemachandra, DIG (Special Branch). He was a member of the Sri Lanka Athletics pool when I was the captain of the Sri Lanka Athletics team. Besides he and I were due to join the Police, he as a Sub-Inspector and me as an Assistant Superintendent of Police, on the same day in 1962. Then fate intervened against me.

Unfortunately Hemachandra was neither in his office nor at his home. Therefore I telephoned T.N. De Silva, DIG (Colombo), whose father had served under my father and with whom I had a very cordial relationship ever since he joined the Police. He readily agreed to my request that I come over to his office immediately.

He was astonished when I told him of the information which he himself had heard only an hour earlier. He was not too communicative but listened to me impassively. However he burst out laughing when I told him that the previous night the Ministerial Security Division (MSD) had chased me out at the giant rally of my nephew Ravi Karunanayake M.P at the market square of Nugegoda, about half a kilometre from our ancestral home. Another

who was chased out in like manner was Channa Wickremasinghe, who looks so much like Ranil Wickremasinghe, his elder brother ! We had apparently committed the same offence. We had attempted to walk in the direction of the podium when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking. In fact a semi – circular space of a radius of twenty metres from the podium is routinely cleared of all people, that being the range of a suicide bomber.

It was apparently the lesson the MSD had learned from the assassination of the Leader of the Opposition Gamini Dissanayake during the Presidential Election of 1994. On that occasion the suicide bomber was seated in the third or fourth row away from the podium, about five metres away and the blast had killed 55 people. The injuries on The late Gamini Dissanayake were only on his chest. The shrapnel and the lethal ball bearings had struck him there and some had penetrated his heart thus causing his death. There were no injuries on his head or face, except for a minor cut on his left cheek.

The injuries on the late President R. Premadasa, who took the full blast from a suicide bomber at point blank range, were gruesome. His stomach had burst open and the right eye had come out of its socket. Godwin Fernando who had seen the body before the autopsy was performed, could not eat anything for the next twenty four hours.

The injuries of The late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India were even more gruesome. The entirety of the chest cavity and the stomach was blown apart. It was one huge gaping hole with some entrails hanging loosely. I was so upset by seeing that gruesome sight, at a slide show in Colombo in 1999 during a lecture by a visiting delegation of the Indian Police, that I could not participate in the fellowship which followed.

The DIG (Colombo) and I then discussed the recent unsuccessful attempts of suicide bombers, especially the attempt to assassinate Air Marshall Oliver Ranasinghe outside Air Force Headquarters in 1998 and the bus driver who blew up his vehicle at the Maradana junction in 1999, possibly on his way to the nearby Ananda College, the premier Buddhist school in Sri Lanka. We also spoke of the successful attack on Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam M.P. (TULF – Nominated list) in 1999 while he was on his way to his office.

We discussed the possibilities of such an attack on the Presidential Mercedes Benz or an attack like that on The late Gamini Dissanayake. That conversation is deliberately omitted from this Volume to safeguard our national security. DIG (Colombo) is a very senior post in the Police hierarchy and I readily accepted his advice that I should not be anywhere near the Town Hall that night. To convince him I used his telephone 431428 to call Godwin

Fernando. I remember that number well because 31428 was the un-listed telephone number of my father fifty years ago, when he held the same post ! During school holidays my mother used to telephone him regularly on that line to complain that my sisters and I were playing truant at home. My father used to bawl at us on telephone 31428 and sometimes as further punishment cut off our supplies of chocolates.

That evening the security arrangements were very strict at the Town Hall. Entrance to the meeting was only through the end facing Dharmapala Mawatha (formerly Turret Road). Every man, woman and child going through that entrance was frisked by the Presidential Security Division (PSD). There was a light shower around 1830 hours when inevitably the frisking was reduced. Much worse, during the shower came in two large and noisy processions one lead by the son of Cabinet Minister A.H.M. Fowzie who is himself a Provincial Councillor and another by Bhartha Lakshman M.P (PA – Colombo District). It is widely believed that the suicide bomber from Batticaloa had come in one of these two processions. It is also believed that those enthusiastic PA supporters were not frisked by the PSD because well known politicians from the PA in those processions had assured the PSD that those processionists were ardent supporters of the PA. That explanation was indeed plausible.

As usual the President arrived late at the Town Hall. In a very real sense she is the late President even when she is alive. There was absolutely no attempt to blow up her Mercedes Benz or the identical empty Mercedes Benz on the way from “Temple Trees” to the Town Hall, a distance of about one kilometre. By 2030 hours she was addressing the meeting. Once again her discourse was crude and unbecoming of a Bandaranaike, her famous parents never insulted their opponents in public, unbecoming of a product of St. Bridget’s Convent well known for refinement, and unbecoming of a product of The Sorbonne, the equivalent of Harvard and Oxford in the French speaking world. For example famous alumni of The Sorbonne such as President Vincent Auriol of France, President Francois Mitterand of France, President Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Prime Minister Chou-En-Lai of China never ever attacked a political opponent at a personal level.

During her long and fiery discourse, the message came through the Police network that the controversial Major-General Lucky Algama was assassinated at his last rally at Ja-Ela. Apparently security was tight at that meeting and nobody was allowed within twenty metres of the podium. Therefore the suicide bomber used his supplementary weapon, a Chinese hand grenade routinely used by the Army in operational areas.

General Algama was probably killed instantaneously and irate UNP supporters pounced on the assassin. Then he detonated his suicide kit. His head was blown off nearly fifty metres away and lodged on the roof of a house. With him perished six UNP supporters in the audience.

On the podium at the Town Hall the President was still breathing fire. After she ran out of steam, she bid good bye to her Ministers, A.H.M. Fowzie, Professor G.L. Pieris, Alavi Moulana amongst others. Thereafter she received a hug and a kiss from Srimani Athulathmudali whom she had dropped from her Cabinet in 1996. Then forsaking standard security precautions, she walked towards the crowd for a final farewell !

The first information report submitted in writing by Assistant Superintendent of Police S.D.A.S. Gunawardene to the Special Branch around 1000 hours that day was not corroborated even late in the day. Though the Special Branch took that report very seriously and even dispatched a posse of plain clothsmen to mingle with the crowd, apparently the PSD did not take that warning all that seriously. Consequently the President was not informed about a possible attempt on her life. To say the least, that was a serious lapse in security by the PSD.

Another blunder by the PSD was that there was no escape route for the President from the Town Hall, in the event of anything untoward. A standard security arrangement was therefore observed in the breach. The podium should never have been located behind the only by-road linking F.R. Senanayake Mawatha to the Town Hall. It should have been located in front of the by-road, thereby affording a safe exit for the President routinely or otherwise.

The suicide bomber was waiting for the President right in front of her in the crowd, but outside the twenty metre range of the blast. The President unknowingly walked towards the assassin and was obstructed by a visiting British TV correspondent who asked her some question or another which she answered. Then a quick thinking member of the PSD deflected the path of the President towards the bullet proof Mercedes Benz. Only the head of the President appeared over the vehicle when the suicide bomber detonated her lethal weapon.

The President collapsed with a shrapnel in the right eye, the rest of her body being shielded by the car. Her body guards carried her into her Benz. The chauffeur was killed by the blast and hence another quick thinking member of the PSD deputised as her chauffeur and rushed her to the Nawaloka Hospital.

The carnage at the Town Hall was dreadful. DIG T.N. De Silva, who was between the suicide bomber and the Mercedes Benz was killed instantaneously. The chauffeur who breached standard security arrangements by alighting from the car while the engine was running paid for his folly with his life. Three Security guards from the PSD between the Mercedes Benz and the suicide bomber perished. So did three journalists in that location and two Buddhist priests further afield. The final count was thirty three killed or seriously injured. Emergency surgery was performed on Professor G.L. Pieris and Alavi Moulana. Altogether not less than one hundred people were injured and admitted to hospital or given outpatient treatment. Thus ended the Presidential campaign of 1999 for the People's Alliance. At the Sugathadasa Stadium Ranil Wickremasinghe abruptly ended the campaign for the UNP.

Sri Lanka is a nation where rumours are believed and the truth is disbelieved. There were all manner of rumours and I was searching for the truth. Finally my friend Anura Bandaranaike M.P, with tears in his eyes told me that his sister had probably lost an eye. He is indeed a real gentleman like his famous father. Just two days earlier he was chatting with me at Attanagalla and in private conversation abusing Chandrika. All I told him was,

“Anura, you were educated at Royal College. The best school of

them all has produced countless political leaders at the level of President, Prime Minister and Cabinet Minister from every conceivable Party. Of that distinguished and long list only Cyril Mathew of the Class of 1924 abused his opponents”

“Jungle”, so you want me to behave like my father did.

“Of course. All his political opponents agreed that he was a real gentleman. Both Dudley Senanayake and J.R. Jayewardene asked me to include that when I was writing “Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka” (1973) and “J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka” (1977). Such was the stature of your famous father.”

“Thank you, thank you “Jungle”

On Sunday 19th December 1999 the nation was in a state of shock. This was the second Presidential Election ruined by terrorism, the first being in 1988. Terrorism has sadly become a way of life in Sri Lanka, irrespective of whether the SLFP or the UNP is in office.

On Monday 20th December, Godwin Fernando and I left for Kurunegala to pay our last respects to my departed friend Senior Deputy Inspector-General of Police T.N. De Silva. He was promoted posthumously and deservedly. An epitome of an officer and a gentleman and a true follower of Lord Buddha, he was an example to the Police. He was the highest ranking Policeman in Sri Lanka ever to be killed in the line of duty. I do hope the Police will honour

him with a statue at the Police Academy at Katukurunda where he received his basic training way back in 1963, or alternatively his *Alma Mater*, Dharmasoka College will do so in Ambalangoda.

The circuitous route Godwin Fernando and I took that day was Colombo – Attangalla – Warakapola – Kurunegala – Galagedera – Kandy – Kegalle - Negombo – Colombo. Everywhere there was a massive wave of sympathy for the President. We both concluded she will therefore win the Presidential Election, probably on the first count.

A book of this nature cannot conceivably be written without the active co-operation of thousands of people from all walks of life, of all political parties, and so many disparate organisations, both local and foreign. I was indeed fortunate to receive such assistance. Regrettably I also faced just one outrageous obstacle. The United States Information Service (USIS) in Colombo now operates with the same outrageous style I encountered two decades ago in libraries in Moscow, East Berlin and Havana.

In Communist nations authors are deemed to be pests and discouraged. In the United States the tradition is publish or perish. I never dreamt that in my lifetime any library of the Government of the United States will attempt to follow the Marxist model, where

authors cannot routinely bring in their manuscripts. It can be done only on the basis of an exceptional measure on a case-by-case basis. The argument adduced by the USIS in Colombo is that it obviates the mutilation of books, a feature not uncommon in Sri Lanka. My initial complaint to the USIS in Colombo was in April 1999. For good reason that letter was duly approved by the eminent lawyer Dr. Neelan Tiruchlevam P.C. M.P, who was one year my junior at Harvard. That letter was answered only in December 1999! That too due to relentless pressure by me while they were lying like pickpockets. Besides Peter R. Claussen, the Director of the USIS in Colombo, is so naïve that he cannot even differentiate between a complaint based on a sense of public duty as opposed to one based on a private pique.

One of the imperishable truths I learnt at Harvard was that down the ages barbarians and tyrants have obstructed authors and they must be resisted. I have informed the USIS in Colombo that they are insulting all authors of Sri Lanka, many of whom shun their Library. Therefore any special concession they choose to grant me will not be accepted by me. Either they rescind their obnoxious restriction aping Communist nations or I will handle them the Harvard way.

Accordingly these pages are being sidelined in sending an

autographed first day copy of this Volume to an Ambassador of the United States of my vintage who I met at the UN. She is Magdeline Albright, the current Secretary of State of the United States.

THE VERDICT

On Tuesday 21st December 1999, 11.8 million voters were due to exercise their franchise in 9534 centres in 160 electoral divisions throughout the nation. According to the Election Secretariat of Police Headquarters and at the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV), where I was accorded guest status, disconcerting reports were coming through from mid-morning. Once again I must congratulate Dr. P. Saravanamuttu, a worthy grandson of a famous grandfather whose name he bears, for the excellent leadership he is giving the CMEV.

The first reports at CMEV were that there was systematic rigging in the Gampaha District especially in the Bandaranaike belt. I was wondering whether that was a ploy of gossip queens and noise makers from the UNP, for whom I have nothing but unconcealed contempt. Just then came in adverse reports from the Kurunegala District where both the PA and the UNP were committing offences incompatible with democracy. For example there were three murders. The victims were a UNP supporter, a PA supporter and according to conflicting reports a JVP supporter!

From all accounts, the Gampaha, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura and Chilaw Districts were the worst affected in the morning session.

By afternoon there was evidence of systematic election malpractices in the Colombo District and in the Central Province where the Commissioner of Elections cancelled the polling in several centres for example Gampola (4 booths), Harispatuwa (2). Hewaheta (2), Hanguranketa (4), Nawalapitiya (4), Patha Dumbara (7), Udunuwara (4).

According to Police Headquarters, the Police had to open fire on five occasions . On four of those occasions, those who died were ardent supporters of the People's Alliance, mostly Samurdhi animators. To my mind that was a supreme example of the impartiality of our Police, in the discharge of their duties on 21st December 1999. In direct contrast when the Police in Indonesia opened fire during their Presidential Election of 1999 only the opponents of the incumbent President were killed or injured. So lamented Magawathie Sukarnoputri the *de facto* Leader of the Opposition and now the Vice President of Indonesia.

According to the CMEV in 35 of the 137 electoral divisions in the Sinhala speaking Provinces, the election was flawed. Not surprisingly these considerations and the fact that an additional 100,000 ballots for the Gampaha District were printed, forms the very core of a serious election petition now before the Supreme Court. Therefore on legal advice, I am reluctantly compelled to

condense my original ten pages on election malpractices, to this watered down version.

However it could be safely said that there is definitive evidence that Sri Lanka is now attempting to follow the pathetic example of the Philippines in rigging Presidential Elections. It first happened at the Presidential Election of 1988 under the UNP and now in 1999 under the PA. Corrective action, not empty promises, is indeed necessary if Sri Lanka is to continue as a vibrant multi-party democracy. Such corrective action should be in the three critically important areas.

Firstly, the Commissioner of Elections with limited powers has to be replaced with immediate effect by an Election Commission with vast executive powers. India is a supreme example where that has been achieved. The equivalent of our Commissioner of Elections and his two Deputy Commissioners should constitute the Election Commission as in India, and have the power to declare an election null and void for the rampant violations of our election laws e.g. the Provincial Council Election in Wayamba in 1999 or allow a re-poll in areas where there have been extensive malpractices. e.g. the Presidential Elections of 1988 and 1999.

Secondly, to introduce the legal requirement that all voters must produce their National Identity Cards (NIC) or passports or driving licences, or other specified forms of identification at the polling station for purposes of identifying themselves. As of 1999 every citizen is subject daily to security checks when travelling by car, bus, train, three wheeler or otherwise and has to establish his/her identity with recourse to the NIC or a suitable equivalent. Every citizen has to establish his/her identity before entering any office of the Government of Sri Lanka barring a Post Office. It is therefore ludicrous that as of 1999, no such identification is necessary within a polling booth.

Thirdly, the Police must be apolitical. A Police Commission, answerable to Parliament and not to the Government of the day, must be empowered to appoint, promote, dismiss and transfer Police personnel in the rank of Police Constable up to Senior-Deputy Inspector-General. The Inspector-General of Police must be appointed by Parliament, not the Government of the day, exactly like the Auditor-General ever since Independence and the Commissioner of Elections ever since 1957.

Against the deteriorating law and order situation pertaining to elections in Sri Lanka, there were some redeeming features. There was absolutely no recourse to violence by the two leading candidates, President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and

the Leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe. Another outstanding feature was that the Inspector-General of Police, Lakdasa Kodituwakku, was the embodiment of impartiality.

On the night of December 21st 1999, in keeping with tradition both the State-owned and privately owned radio and television stations gave live coverage to the announcement of election results. That process began around 2000 hours. At the Presidential Elections of 1982, 1988 and 1994 the postal ballots, restricted to Government servants on election duty, gave an early indication of the winner. Indeed the postal ballots constitute a fool-proof system although they account for only two percent of all ballots.

The results of the first ten postal ballots were announced in this order:

Vavuniya	-	Ranil Wickremasinghe
Medawachchiya	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Kurunegala	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Colombo (West)	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Beruwela	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Matara	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Eheliyagoda	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Mannar	-	Ranil Wickremasinghe
Senkadagala	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Matale	-	Chandrika Kumaratunga

By then my telephone was constantly ringing and most of the inquiries came from Company Directors. As a breed they were the parasites who were gravitating around Ranil Wickremasinghe and misleading him. They were the 1999 version of the purple brigade of 1956. The purple brigade consisted of ladies of the high society who gravitated around the playboy Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala. He enjoyed their favours and they enjoyed his patronage !

That night the persistent question of the businessmen was;

“Jungle, what the hell has happened?”

My answer was,

“Please telephone Godwin Fernando at his home on 726134 repeat 726134. His judgement is far superior to mine. In 1977 he predicted the landslide victory of the UNP with amazing accuracy*. Today he predicted that Chandrika will poll 51% to 44% by Ranil. He even faxed his report to that effect to C.V. Gooneratne just before the polling closed at 1600 hours.”

From 0200 hours on Wednesday 22nd December the election results came pouring in as follows:

<u>Electoral division</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Mihintale	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Kekirawa	Chandrika Kumaratunga

* Note to readers - In 1977 Godwin Fernando predicted that the UNP will win 138 seats to 10 of the SLFP. The actual result was 140 - 8

<u>Electoral division</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Anuradhapura East	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Matale	Chandrika Kumaratunga

<u>Electoral division</u>	<u>Winner</u>
Laggala	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Trincomalee	Ranil Wickremasinghe
Muttur	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Vavuniya	Ranil Wickremasinghe
Hambantota	Chandrika Kumaratunga
Mahiyangana	Ranil Wickremasinghe

With her popularity (much greater than I had perceived), sympathy for her injuries (she had lost an eye) and election rigging, President Chandrika Bandaranaike won 131 of the 160 electoral divisions throughout the nation.

Ranil Wickremasinghe won extensively in the Tamil speaking North-East Province. For example in the Batticaloa District, Kalkudah and Paddirippu voted for him and he won Batticaloa with a huge majority. In the Trincomalee District, he won Trincomalee (ethnically a Tamil electorate) by a huge majority, narrowly lost Muttur (ethnically a Muslim electorate) and lost badly in Seruwila (an exclusively Sinhala speaking electorate). In the

Wanni he won by huge majorities in Mannar and Vavuniya and lost Mullaitivu narrowly. However Ranil Wickremasinghe fared poorly in the Sinhala speaking electorates, barring the Badulla District and the City of Colombo which he won by a landslide. He lost the entire Catholic belt, all the electoral divisions in the Colombo District, barring the City of Colombo, the entirety of the Southern Province, the entirety of Wayamba, the entirety of the North-Central Province, the entirety of the Sabaragamuwa. However he did well in the plantations areas. He won Nuwara Eliya – Maskeliya by a huge majority and won the Badulla District. That was the only electoral District he won in the eighteen Sinhala speaking Districts.

Thus Ranil Wickremasinghe under whose leadership the UNP was trounced at the Local Government Elections of 1997, trounced again at the Provincial Council Elections of 1999, was himself trounced at the Presidential Election of 1999.

The final result on a District basis was as follows:

Electoral District	Chandrika Kumaratunga	Ranil Wickremesinghe
1. Colombo	473,310	425,185
2. Gampaha	532,796	353,969
3. Kalutara	281,217	217,423

Electoral District	Chandrika Kumaratunga	Ranil Wickremesinghe
4. Kandy	308,187	276,360
5. Matale	111,232	91,944
6. Nuwara Eliya	147,210	152,836
7. Galle	281,154	95,088
8. Matara	205,685	139,677
9. Hambantota	120,275	95,088
10. Jaffna	52,043	48,005
11. Wanni	16,202	43,803
12. Batticaloa	58,975	104,100
13. Digamadulla	149,593	109,805
14. Trincomalee	56,691	63,351
15. Kurunegala	377,483	326,327
16. Puttalam	141,725	121,615
17. Anuradhapura	189,073	139,180
18. Polonnaruwa	88,663	72,598
19. Badulla	167,000	172,884
20. Monaragala	92,049	73,695
21. Ratnapura	250,409	202,621
22. Kegalle	210,185	176,376
	<u>4,312,157</u>	<u>3,602,748</u>
	<u>51.12%</u>	<u>42.71%</u>

(Source – Department of Elections)

Thus on December 22nd 1999 President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga was duly declared elected as the President of Sri Lanka for a second term. Indeed the nation was quiet when she was sworn in by the Chief Justice the same day. The nation continued to be quiet thereafter. That quiet was indeed very significant, the nation had accepted the verdict.

No nation can afford the luxury of a President who is a proven failure in implementing election promises and simultaneously a Leader of the Opposition who is a still greater proven failure in the discharge of his duties. Indeed I pray that the irresistible conclusion of my analysis is wrong, namely Sri Lanka will continue to go from bad to worse !

My fellow countrymen, please do not put your trust in our politicians. Whatever their politics may be, they rarely want to serve our nation in her advancement. Instead they want our nation to serve them in their advancement.

Please do not demean yourself by being beholden to Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers and Members of Parliament. Instead they should be beholden to you, because 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 !

- This is not the end -

Independence Day

February 4th 2000

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

Ten years ago any author in Sri Lanka who dared to write a book critical of the President of Sri Lanka and the Leader of the Opposition would have disappeared into thin air, like Lakshman Perera M.M.C. (UNP - Dehiwela Galkissa) or be abducted and murdered like Richard De Zoysa, both of whom wrote a script for a political satire. In direct contrast, today I live a free man in a free society, no different from any other citizen enjoying his retirement.

Indeed that transition reflects much credit on President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and her liberalism. I do hope her liberalism will permeate throughout our nation and amongst all our people, irrespective of their political affiliations. It is only then our people will achieve the cherished goal of being truly free, after centuries of imperial servitude followed by generations of indigenous servitude.

CORRECTIONS

Page

469	para 1 line 4 should read	..... massacres
	para 1 line 9 should read	, Krishanthi
476	para 1 line 5 should read	..... Benazir
490	para 1 line 5 should read	..... defences
507	para 2 line 1 should read	..... The UNP is
520	line 3 should read	..... Trincomalee
	para 2 line 3 should read	..... later
521	para 2 line 2 should read	..... Senegal
523	para 1 line 1 should read	..... as well as luxury goods.
527	para 1 line 6 delete	..... was
528	para 1	..... John Keels should read John Keells
	para 2 line 6 should read	..... Kumaratunga
529	para 2 line 11 should read	..... programmes.
530	para 1 line 4 should read	..... Bandaranaike
532	para 2 line 5 should read	..... Bandaranaike
537	para 2 line 14 should read	..... so foolishly
539	para 3 line 3 should read	..... taken
541	para 4 line 2 should read	..... Senanayake
543	para 3 line 4 should read	..... Senanayake
548	para 3 line 9 should read	..... liberalization
549	para 2 line 5 should read	..... Members
550	para 2 line 4 should read	..... civil war
552	para 3 line 8 should read	..... Senanayake
553	para 1 line 1 should read	..... Senanayake
587	para 2 line 7 should read	..... led
595	line 3 should read	..... Madeleine

The cover page of this book is offset printed on "Pachyderm Paper"
handmade out of 75% Elephant dung and 25% waste paper by



Earth Friendly Handmade Recycled Paper

Tel: (94) 075 371111 E-mail: maximus@stl.lk

T. D. S. A. Dissanayaka 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 captained the Sri Lanka national team. As a diplomat, he reached the rank of Ambassador at the young age of thirty nine years.



In 1973 he wrote his first book, "Dudley Senanayake of Sri Lanka" while stationed in Burma. Thereafter "J R 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" (Volumes III and IV), eleven books in all, which followed at regular intervals.

He now lives in retirement in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and works as a volunteer for the Amateur Athletics Association, The Church of Ceylon, The Royal College Old Boys' Union and writes one book every year. His next book will be "The Politics of Sri Lanka" (Volume V), which will be an in-depth account of the forthcoming General Election. He will be writing that book after he returns from the Olympic Games in Sydney, in September 2000.