

The images of kings topple before their thrones do. What happens in these kinds of situations is that the peoples' perception of their ruler gets destroyed. There are famous illustrations in history: the Affair of the Queen's Necklace before the French Revolution and the Rasputin case before the Russian Revolution. In our own case, observers have noticed how in just 14 days the image of President

Making Sense

Mahinda Rajapakse has suffered severe scars. Just before that period Mahinda had been uncrowned monarch (Maharajaneni) in Lanka and he seemed to have been in an impregnable situation heading for a twelve year haul. Any social situation requires the participation and cooperation of relevant social partners for its sustenance. The Maharajaneni social phenomenon has now burst with social partners refusing to accept it. Workers are now ready to go on strike and bring the show down as they have already done. And then, the biggest blow of all: The great war warrior General Sarath Fonseka has emerged out of obedience to challenge MR for the latter's very survival. Other splits usually follow. Is the mother of all battles about to unfold in Sri Lanka? Mahinda may yet win but if he does not have a radical change of attitude and approach he is going to have a very rough ride during a second term. All the kings men and all the king's horses will not be able to put Humpty Dumpty together again. What one notices is a textbook case of

classic failure to manage success. A leader who manages success well utilises the edge that such success brings to take his group (and therefore himself) to greater heights. It is what Shakespeare referred to as "taking at the tide." Likewise, our President should have harnessed the immense popularity he had achieved after trouncing the LTTE to refashion the substance and style of his governance in a way that would have taken the country towards a constructive future. He was in an enviable situation of being able to take the hard decisions that were needed to go that way.

For this, Mahinda Rajapakse had to transform himself from playing a manipulating and partisan politician to play the role of a true statesman who speaks and acts for the whole nation. In this way he could have muffled his critics and consolidated himself with concrete. The very first act of a leader of statesmanlike calibre would have been to express humility in triumph and sorrow for the lives of injured and dead soldiers and the dispossessed Tamil civilians. Also, he should have taken on board or pattrippuwa the Army Commander and the other Service



Shyamon Jayasinghe

Commanders, showed them up before the people, and shared the public accolades. Such an act would have been a true declaration of title to the war triumph against the world's powerful terrorist leader. Next, President Rajapakse should have gone back to the drawing board and with the help of professionals drawn up a short and long term plan that would have placated the Tamil community and granted relief to the millions of ordinary people in the coun-

try who had patiently borne harsh economic conditions for the sake of the war. He could have won over his Western critics and repaired bad diplomatic relations, too, by sincere and positive measures in such a direction. Western aid would have flowed into the country and there would have been little fear of losing GSP Plus. Short term measures would have included a quick resettlement of IDPs. They would also have included immediate measures to offer a political settlement to the Tamil question. The political settlement is a necessity if the country is not going to have another Prabhakaran sooner or later. By that token Mahinda Rajapakse would also have positioned himself as a fair-minded and visionary ruler. Furthermore, he could have taken resolute steps to restore law and order, to stop kidnappings, to stop threats to the lives of individuals and media personnel and to cease extrajudicial killings. Towards establishing good governance and law and order President Rajapakse should have taken steps to bring the 17th Amendment into effect. That would go a

long way to keep out political interference in the Police, Elections office and Public Service. Unless and until these institutions are so protected they cannot become professional and they cannot deliver law and order. A remodelled Rajapakse should have turned his attention to bring back transparency and accountability in government dealings. As said above, for all this to happen a qualitative change in the

The images of kings topple before their thrones do. MAHINDA'S FAILURE IN HANDLING SUCCESS



psyche of Mahinda Rajapakse was required. It is a change commensurate with the new success level that he had reached. To the misfortune of the Sri Lankan community such a transformation of Mahinda Rajapakse has not taken place. He was a manipulating Machiavellian and he continues to remain one. In a piece written for the Sunday Leader Victor Ivan has put this point very effectively: "Even after he became a great leader of the people, it was only that small man who lived within him. This did not match his newly acquired greatness and this contradiction is the central reason for the chaotic situation seen at present," stated Victor Ivan, the veteran writer and former rebel. Mahinda Rajapakse's advisors are

To Horizon 3

Left Front decided to put forward Vickramabahu as its Presidential Candidate

We are suffering because we have failed to resolve basic problems in our country. We cannot claim to be a free and democratic country unless we resolve the national problem and also stop international global capitalist interference. Mahinda regime used military forces backed by India and global powers to crush the Tamil uprising caused by continuous discrimination and repression.



Campbell park meeting - 1988. Vijaya, Bahu. Few weeks before Vijay's death

They claim it is a great victory. However our country is devastated. Thousands were killed; thousands disappeared; thousands are disabled, and thousands are made political prisoners. Large numbers living abroad curse the rulers who brought this misery to them. In Sinhala areas too a large number is killed while a larger number are made invalids. The people in general are made poorer. Many young people are unemployed. Cost of living is simply unbearable and the working masses are forced to bear the cost of the war. Continuation of 300,000 armed forces means that they are unable to find suitable jobs for them. On the other hand the war is not over. In this situation continues, and there is no other way out, inevitably youth will take up arms against oppression and discrimination. In the

mean time unbelievable corruption exists from top to bottom. Corruption and misappropriation has become the common practice in society. Indian and global companies are gobbling up the economy. We have become vassals of Indian rulers.

Estate worker's powerful strike started a wave of strikes that came to Colombo shaking the regime. The inability of Mahinda to use the military power accumulated during the war, against the workers, created a big hole in the system. The repercussion of this strike wave was a split in the monolithic chauvinist structure. The inability of Mahinda Regime to crush worker's strikes, student's actions and mass protests, made the capitalists to seek an alternative leadership from a military hard liner, General Sarath.

Mahinda followed the agenda given by the Indian rulers backed by Global powers. He is still prompted by these masters to continue

their agenda. On the other hand the terrible bankruptcy in Lankan society is used by far-right militaristic section of the global powers to put forward General Sarath. Sarath hails bloody devastation created by the war and stands for strengthening the military, and also for centralization. JVP four points proposal designed to eliminate devolution and crush aspirations of Tamil speaking people is accepted as the common programme of General Sarath. It is no way an answer to the tragedy created by Mahinda Chinthanaya.

It is necessary to condemn what Mahinda regime has done and sharply take up the issue of national unity based on Equality, Autonomy, and the Rights of Self Determination. Democracy and freedom can prevail only if there is state based on national unity. Without this fundamental task achieved, no development could take place, and we will be eternally trampled by Global powers. Therefore on behalf of workers, peasants, fishers and other suffering masses, Left Front with the support of other left and democratic parties, organizations and intellectuals decided to put forward Comrade Vickramabahu as its Presidential Candidate.

Vickramabahu was born in March 08, 1943 at Lunugala in Badulla in a traditional teacher's family. His father was late Mudiyanse Karunaratne. Mother was late Vimala Kothalawale; both retired as principals.



General strike - 1980. Vasu, Bahu. Taken to courts from the Magazine prison

He received primary education at Ananda Shasthralaya, Mathugama. Joined Ananda College Colombo in 1953. Passed university entrance from Ananda College, Colombo in mathematics stream and entered the Engineering faculty of the University of Ceylon. He graduated as a first class electrical engineer and qualified for a commonwealth scholarship to read for a doctorate at the Cambridge University. With a doctorate from Cambridge he returned to Lanka in 1970. As an undergraduate he joined the LSSP in 1962. He was elected to the Central Committee in 1972. But



in the same year he was sacked from the party for opposing opportunist politics of the leadership.

While being brilliant in education, he excelled as a sportsman and a sculpture artist as well.

While teaching at Peradeniya University, he was thoroughly engaged in politics. In 1978, he was sacked from university and jailed for hoisting black flags against the draconian constitution of J. R. Jayawardhane.

Since then, he dedicated his life for left politics. He always actively participated in struggles of workers and for the rights of the communities that were marginalized gender wise, racial wise and economic wise. He was in remand for long periods and in 88 he was shot by the JVP for defending the rights of the Tamil speaking people

Dr. Vickramabahu Karunaratne is contesting Presidential elections as the candidate of the Left Front.