



## A Revolution Of Two Sorts In The Offing

I sense that the year 2015 will be written in history as a watershed year of considerable importance for Sri Lanka.

In two ways. Firstly, it will mark the liberation of the people of the island from a decade of authoritarian rule that had intermittent marks of tyranny. A third term for Mahinda Rajapaksa (MR) would have, perhaps, led to the worsening of the tyrannical elements of his ruling style. Of course, he

matunge, had been butchered to death on that dreadful morning while going to work. A secret party had been following Lasantha for some time before. The blood was spilled in the vicinity of a security zone. The assassins took quite a while to inflict their cruelty before they got away but they escaped unnoticed by any security personnel. Rajapaksa's government took no real interest to catch the culprit.

That message effectively spread the word to other journalists and dissenters that they can criticize the family only at risk.

Collectively a string of similar incidents helped create an appalling consciousness among a once free-loving people. That consciousness was described by Venerable Maduluwawe Sobitha during the election campaign as 'maru bhiya,' (fear for life). The influential monk stated that 'thrutha bhiya,' (fear of terrorism) had been replaced in the country with maru bhiya. This had been the public perception. Right down to the lowest executive level of Pradeshiya Sabha councilors the threat of assault and intimidation to 'those against us,' prevailed in a very real sense.

Bringing the police and law enforcement servants of state under the hegemony of open political control had been deliberately done to sync with the enthronement of state terror. Justice is the last bastion of the individual seeking redress from oppressors. But Rajapaksa managed to transform the once independent judiciary into a virtual chattel service to him. There were officials ready and willing for personal gain to cooperate with Mahinda Rajapaksa in the latter's invasion.

The Rajapaksa oppression was set up by other measures, too. For instance, the repeal of the 17th Amendment and doing away with independent commissions to manage the Police, elections, judiciary and Public Service had been on the spot. A parliament already rendered servile that included impotent old revolutionaries could do nothing but give approval to the relevant bill. The potential further dread came with the 18th Amendment that in practice would have helped ensure the continuance of dynastic rule.

In this way, Sri Lankans were asked to be ready to suffer this family for as long as their memory lasts.

I believe that the country will be liberated from much of these fears and that our people can walk head high in dignity. This is a key objective of the proposals of the common candidate, new President Maitripala Sirisena. The restoration of democratic mechanisms are enshrined in these proposals and a calendar schedule for achievement is laid down. The set of proposals is unlikely to receive opposition because these proposals are enabling anyone or any party doing politics in the country in the future. Together they are empowering the people.

I have referred to two sorts of revolutions. The second is

a revolution in political practice. The com-

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wore a smiling face. Of course, he kissed babies and embraced old folk. Of course, he used to hug the sacred bo tree at Sri Maha Bodhiya. On the other hand, he hadn't space in his mind to tolerate opponents. He wouldn't listen. The knife would come down.

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