

# SAMA SAMAJA NEWS

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## THE TASK BEFORE US

Activity in regard to the building of an alliance broad enough to include not only the SLFP but also any party that is willing to take an oppositional position to the Premadasa Government and to struggle for the preservation of democratic rights continues. Already, the SLFP, the LSSP, the CPSL, the BNP (Chandrika) and Nihal Perera's DVJP regularly meet and plan out common action. Several meetings in principal towns have been held by these five parties acting together. Agitation campaigns such as the distribution of leaflets protesting against the rise in the cost of living have also been undertaken. Nevertheless, in the absence of some degree of polarisation of opinion within the SLFP in regard to the Premadasa Government there is the persisting difficulty of giving to this alliance a clear form and definition. There is in the SLFP a section that is against the formation of this alliance. Stanley Tilekeratne, Managala Moonesinghe, have at all times acted as a Premadasa lobby inside the SLFP. Anura Bandaranaike has shown a preference for an alliance with the MEP in preference to an alliance with the Left. The SLFP's inability to formulate political and economic positions as alternatives to those of the UNP and still retain or attract the commercial capitalist class that has gained by the UNP's "open economy" may be one reason for this but at present the main reason appears to be the desire of these sections in the SLFP to participate fully in the current war effort of the Government and to gain by. The LSSP understands that this can be countered inside the SLFP itself only by compelling it to take a clear oppositional line against the Premadasa Government. Although this is a line that will have immense mass appeal it should not be forgotten that within the United Socialist Alliance itself we came across opposition to such a move in the S.L.M.P. The Party is at present discussing the basis of its future work within this perspective and the Central Committee has been summoned for the beginning of October. The Resolution approved by the C.C. will appear in our next issue.

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L.T.T.E. BREAKS TENUOUS PEACE

(LSSP Statement of 13th June 1990)

The LTTE with its widespread attacks on police stations and the armed services in the Northern and Eastern provinces has shredded to tatters the tenuous peace in the two provinces which the Government held up as its main achievement during the several months it has been in office.

It should be observed that apart from its professions of consultation and consensus the Government has had no policy on the question of restoring normalcy to the North and the East after the IPKF quit the region. In lieu of a definite policy it entered into undisclosed talks with the LTTE to the exclusion of all other Tamil speaking groupings and the result of this was the virtual handing over of the North and the East to a heavily armed LTTE. The LTTE made no secret of its intolerance of opposition and dissent. That its next step should be the resumption of military operations is no surprise.

The LSSP condemns the LTTE's on-going attacks on police stations and the armed services as uncalled for and provocative. Such action will result in untold misery to the people of the North and the East. The LSSP recognises that the Government can have no alternative but to proceed to take control of the situation. It however cautions the Government that great care should be taken to safeguard the people of the region from the consequences of indiscriminate military operations. The LSSP sees that it is possible for the Government to act so as to politically isolate the LTTE.

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THE RICHARD DE SOYSA CASE

The abduction and murder of the Human Rights Journalist Richard de Zoysa took a dramatic turn when the murdered man's mother Dr. (Mrs) Manorani Saravanamuttu succeeded in identifying the man who led the abductors to her house in the early hours of 18th February, 1990 and took away her son as a Senior Superintendent of Police, Ronnie Gunasinghe. The Magistrate to whom Mrs. Saravanamuttu stated her case through her lawyer, Comrade Batty Weerakoon ordered the arrest and production of this suspect. The Police however did not carry out this order and the Attorney General justified this action of the Police stating to Court that there was not sufficient evidence to take steps against this suspect. In the face of the Attorney General's decision the Magistrate had no alternative but to discontinue the inquiry proceedings. However she did not rescind her order to arrest and produce the suspect. This clearly shows that the Magistrate Mrs. Rohini Walgama does not agree with the Attorney General's decision. But in an inquiry of this nature the Attorney General's powers are so wide as to enable to act in this manner.

Now that the proceedings in Court have been discontinued the agitation is being taken up in Parliament and elsewhere for the appointment of an Independent Commission of Inquiry. This case is important because it is the first instance when it has been possible to trace a death squad to the Police.

The Government has to take steps to ensure that the people of the North from the Tamil people of the region. This can be done only by ensuring that the Tamil people that the Government has to find a political solution for their problem and that the people should be able to fight their cause. It is regrettable that the Government has not yet taken any steps to ensure that the Government cannot act upon the stage of the people's movement at a solution. The Independent Commission of Inquiry should really be the Government's responsibility for a political solution of the Tamil people's problem. There are instances where the Government has not taken any steps to ensure that the Government cannot act upon the stage of the people's movement at a solution.

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## L.S.S.P. CONDEMNS MASSACRE OF MUSLIMS IN THE EAST

The L.T.T.E's terrorist attack on hundreds of Muslim men and children in their mosques in Kattankudi on Friday, the 3rd August draws upon itself universal condemnation. Those who attempt to draw a parallel between the LTTE's terrorist attack in Anuradhapura in 1985 and the Kattankudi, Akkaraipattu and related recent attacks by these terrorists on the East Coast Muslims are only misleading themselves. The Anuradhapura attack was an isolated one and the terrorists themselves claimed it to be reprisal. The LTTE's attacks on the East coast are by terrorists who freely penetrated this region up to Amparai during its fifteen months of sham negotiations with the Government.

At the time of the EPRLF administration of the Eastern Province through a Provincial Council in which the Muslims too were sizably represented the LTTE was shut out of that region. It is only after the EPRLF administration collapsed that the LTTE had a free run in the region. The LTTE took advantage of the freedom and the facilities offered to them by the Government in order to establish themselves in this region in such manner as permits them even now to have hit-and-run squads operate fearlessly.

These brutalities perpetrated on the Muslims are acts calculated to call upon the Tamil villages in the area a backlash of terror from those who have been attacked and from State agencies. It is through such methods that hit-and-run squads transform themselves into guerilla bands indentifying themselves with a people who are themselves under attack. This being so the Government has to take every conceivable step to isolate the LTTE from the Tamil people of the region. This can be done only by showing to the Tamil people that the Government has an adequate political solution for their problems and that the LTTE has no need to fight their cause. It is regrettable that the Government has not as yet taken this step. A responsible Government cannot call upon the whole world to get together with it to hammer out a solution. The intermittent calls to an All-Party Conference really betrays the Government's refusal to take responsibility for a political solution. That unwillingness to take responsibility can have disastrous consequences.

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The Lanka Sama Samaja Party sees that whilst the provision of adequate security to the people of the Eastern province is important that by itself is no solution to the problem or deterrent to attacks. The Government must address itself to the real problem which is to keep the LTTE terrorists politically isolated from the people of the region.

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U.S. AND ITS ALLIES MUST WITHDRAW FROM THE GULF

(Statement on the Gulf Crisis)

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party recognises the need for Iraq to withdraw its armed forces from Kuwait. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was however a wholly regional issue and should have been best left for the region itself to settle it through the several fora it has for this purpose. But the United States of America refused to leave it at that level. In its anxiety to protect its own vested interests in the region it drummed up the charge of an imminent invasion of its ally Saudi Arabia by Iraq and put itself on a war-footing in the Gulf. It has dragged behind itself some of its allies in the region.

The U.S.A. got up this war situation in the region despite it being clear that left to itself Iraq had no reason to invade or attack Saudi Arabia and what had been mishandled or mismanaged was wholly an Iraqi-Kuwait problem. It is tragic to think that detente between the big powers should leave any of them free to think that it can brow-beat smaller nations with impunity.

The U.S.A.'s belligerent intervention has only promoted a further deterioration of the situation. Iraq has, presumably as a result of this intervention, converted its invasion of Kuwait into an annexation and occupation of that country. It is perhaps one way of countering the growing USA backed military threat if one did not wish to be cowed by it. It is not difficult to think of the several situations in which measures which are presently being described by the USA as defensive precipitately turning into clearly offensive ones.

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party wishes to add its voice to those who would call upon the USA and its allies in the present exercise to withdraw from the region their forces which have been added since the beginning of this month and thus pave the way for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. That can be the only way for a peaceful settlement of the issues between Iraq and Kuwait.

(Statement released on 10.8.90)

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## TRANSPORT FARE HIKE UNJUSTIFIED - WITHDRAW IT!

- demands LSSP, CPSL and BNP in Joint Statement

Cooperation:

" Commuters will have to pay about 50% more for their railway journeys. Bus fares have also been increased by between 30 to 50% with the variation depending on sections and routes. In effect, the transport bill for a person who travels a distance of 40 miles to and from his work and whose monthly income is in the region of Rs.2,000/- will amount to about 40% of his monthly earnings. The position of lower income groups is far worse."

" Since the UNP government took office in 1977, it has periodically increased bus fares by over 120 per cent. The most recent increase of a further 30 to 50% will be a serious blow to the common man, whose cost of living index has already reached the astronomical figure of 1023."

" The government's efforts to take refuge behind the increase in world fuel prices following on the Gulf crisis are unconvincing. Not only are the increased fares made applicable to stocks imported before the rise in international fuel prices, but the size of the increase suggests that the government is really out to make commuters pay to recoup accumulated losses in operating costs due to thirteen years of its gross mismanagement."

"The government's decision to impose such a sharp increase in fares has been taken in conjunction with its notorious "peoplisation" policy which is, in effect, designed to privatise and liquidate the public road transport system. Its reckless and unjustified increase in fares are part of its efforts to implement this policy."

"The people cannot be fairly asked to bear this additional burden. We therefore demand that the government's decision to increase bus and rail fares once again be rescinded."

(Statement issued on 31st August, 1990)

## E V E N T S

### N.M. Commemoration:

The 11th Anniversary of the death of late Dr.N.M. Perera was marked on a wide scale throughout the country this year. This took the form of commemorative meetings, seminars, pinkamas, essay competitions and elocution contests.

The main event was the N.M. Memorial Lecture which was held for the fifth time on 28th August 1990 at Ananda College, Colombo. The Guest Lecturer was Professor Sirisena Tilekeratne, Head, Economics Dept. of the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. The theme of his lecture was "SOCIAL EQUITY & WELFARE".

Prof.Tilekeratne dealt with the movement led by the LSSP which contributed largely to the wide-ranging social welfare measures Sri Lanka adopted. He also pointed out that with the weakening of the Left the welfare system the country enjoyed hitherto came under attack due to financial pressures exerted by international lending institutions.

The commemorative event was presided over by Comrade Bernard Soysa, General Secretary, LSSP. It was attended by a large and distinguished gathering.

### LEON TROTSKY REMEMBERED:

The L.S.S.P. observed the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the 1917 Great October Revolution.

The Memorial Meeting was addressed by Prof.Osmund Jayaratne and Dr. Sumanasiri Liyanage. The speakers stressed the contemporary relevance of Trotsky's ideas and pointed to the fast changing political situation in the USSR and East Europe. Describing the situation in these parts of the world as complex and fluid the speakers underlined the need for political clarity on the basis of Trotsky's teachings which they said provide a key to the understanding of the complex and complicated events now unfolding on the international plane.

The meeting was largely attended and was presided over by Comrade Chandra Gunasekera.