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Sri Lanka

No holds barred to establish Sinhala chauvinism

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This election is in a sense similar to the JR's referendum which was held in 1983. It is being held just after the presidential election with the main contender for presidency being under arrest.

In 1983, though Hector was the main opposition candidate, the campaign was led by Vijaya Kumaranatunge. Vijaya and a few others were taken into custody just after the presidential elections, thus removing the spirit of the SLFP. Terror was unleashed everywhere and the referendum was a historic fraud. In this election too, with the opposition in disarray, state terror is evident everywhere. The only difference is that the in-fighting within the government camp is also widespread. Those who are close to the president, or to his family, demand special treatment. This has pushed others out of the preferences campaign. For example the "Panchayuda Kumaraya", Wimal Weerawansa, is a separate "establishment" in the Colombo district.

In the Kandy district, Mahindananda Aluthgamage behaves like a feudal prince. I was surprised to see only Mahindananda pictures, posters and cutouts in the entire area of Nawalapitiya. Not even the leader of the district, Sarath dares to challenge him. Apparently even the president was hooted when he mentioned the name of Sarath as the leader of the Kandy UPFA list. When we went around distributing leaflets I felt that people were looking at us in amazement. The atmosphere was such that many told me to be careful and not to stay in one place for long. However nothing interesting happened until we started to address the crowd gathered near the bus stand. A police officer came and began pleading with us to stop the meeting. I explained to him that it was normal for a political leader to address the crowd gathered for a few minutes. I have been doing this since 1975 and I was challenged only by political intruders. Such a situation arose recently at Ratmalana where a group of thugs led by a UPFA municipal councillor tried to stop us by abuse and intimidation. We did not yield and in the end they had to retreat as many residents were against them. In Nawalapitiya it was a different story. The police officer pleaded with us to understand his plight if he allowed us to address the crowd gathered. It was clear that he had to act according to political instructions instead of protecting law and order. I had to give-in partially as I could not be responsible for the penalty he will have to pay. However, I addressed the crowd without any amplifiers and was successful in giving my message. I was fortunate to come back without much trouble. on the next day it was reported that in a clash between two groups of UPFA supporters, some were hospitalized while others were in police custody. This had taken place between Gampola and Nawalapitiya.

Consolidated at any cost

Elections are mini civil wars in many parts of the country. Perpetrators of violence do that in the name of the Sinhala nation. It is said that the victory of the Sinhala nation over the Tamil rebellion has to be consolidated at any cost. Hence those who vociferously defend the war, such as Wimal are to be given a special place. "Do your duty to him" screams the banner of Wimal Weerawansa. He has defended the Sinhala nation with his silver tongue! Hence he has assumed the title of the "Prince of Five weapons". All these mythological factors are brought in to strengthen Sinhala chauvinism at any cost. In order to establish democracy and freedom, one has to face this fierce Sinhala nationalism. This is amply proved by what is taking place in Nawalapitiya and other such places. Obviously we cannot expect a free and fair election, but we must do our best to achieve one.

[NSSP](#)

contributions:

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