

# Terrorism — next year's election platform?

The LTTE's International Secretariat in London has claimed that Pooneryn was their most successful and the biggest ever military operation against the government's security forces. It also says that the sophisticated arms and ammunition captured from the Pooneryn army base, valued at approximately 50 million US dollars, would substantially enhance the LTTE's fighting capacity.

Meanwhile, special interest groups, religious and social service organizations and non-committed political activists are closing ranks with a view to making the Northern Terrorism the principal election platform in the forthcoming Presidential and Parliamentary election scheduled for next year. According to current indications, at least major political parties will be compelled to commit themselves firmly from the time they come to power to militarily defeat the LTTE's terrorist campaign within a specified period. It will be in many ways similar but more vigorous than the 1956 campaign for the adoption of Sinhala as the official language.

It is significant that at the conclusion of the National Executive Committee meeting of the U.N.P. held last weekend, President Wijetunga, who was unanimously nominated as the Party's presidential candidate, reiterated his earlier stand vis-a-vis the LTTE. He repeated that there was no ethnic problem in Sri Lanka and that what the country faced was a terrorist problem. This was clearly an attempt to accommodate the most popular demand put forward by the spe-



President Wijetunga  
special interest groups and independent organizations.

The view that the LTTE is a fascist and terrorist organization has been steadily gaining ground over the last ten years. Its irrevocable commitment to terrorism has recently been acknowledged even by some of its most ardent supporters in Western countries, for example, the statement issued at the conclusion of the European Parliamentary Delegation's recent visit to the country, unequivocally stated that the LTTE resorted to terrorist methods to achieve its political ambitions. The series of cold blooded murders carried out by the LTTE during the past several years, beginning with the killing of innocent and sleeping villagers at Nayaru and Kokilai and ending with the most recent massacre of civilians at Welioya proved beyond all doubts among its local sympathisers that the LTTE believed only in violent means. This is the considered view of most Tamils too, but they are unable to say so openly because if they do so the LTTE will take revenge from their kith and kin still living in Jaffna.

## Exodus from Jaffna

It is now well known

that except the hard core members of the LTTE, the Tamils in Jaffna have realized that the LTTE is solely responsible for their current misery. They are also convinced that they have been led up the garden path by the LTTE for the sake of the latter's benefit. It is no longer a secret that the top ranking members of the LTTE are among the wealthiest in Jaffna and that they have very substantial investments abroad. Lately, many thousands have stealthily left Jaffna and have gone into predominantly Sinhala areas for safety and in search of peace of mind. The extent of their disillusionment is amply demonstrated by the fact that more Tamils now live outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces than within them.

The unnecessary letting of blood of the civilians and the enormous sums of money literally 'burnt' in order to maintain law and order in the rest of the country have naturally angered the Sinhala and Muslim communities. They are unanimous in their belief that the ongoing terrorist war in the North and East has unnecessarily sapped the valuable resources of the country which could otherwise have been utilized for development. It is therefore for these reasons that the vast majority of people belonging to all communities are determined today that the highest priority must be accorded to the crushing of terrorism in the North and East. It is precisely in response to that feeling and belief that the independent political activists and religious and social service organizations will



Mrs. Bandaranaike  
exert the maximum possible pressure on the major political parties to commit themselves firmly to end terrorism by whatever means possible.

These activists are not prepared to give an indefinite period of time to accomplish this. Their patience is running out and they want quick action taken. Surely, this will be too powerful a force to ignore by any political party that will make a genuine bid to come to power. Hence our assumption that the crushing of terrorism will be the principal election issue at the next Presidential and Parliamentary elections