

“Plot to Kill the Editor of the Sunday Leader”.
Statement by the Ceylon Communist Party (Maoist)

Under the above heading, the Sunday Leader (Vol: 17 No 14: October 10 – 2010) carried a news item that read, in part: “At a secret meeting of senior officials of the Sri Lankan intelligence service attached to the Defense Ministry held in Colombo, a plan has been hatched to assassinate the chief editor of the Sunday Leader, Frederica Jansz, the Sri Lanka Guardian learns. According to the information provided to the Sri Lanka Guardian of the military intelligence “killing the editor is the best option to turn the heat over the situation. Even it will help to direct the accusation at General Fonseka’s men for the assassination”.

If this news item is correct, it constitutes a most damning criminal indictment of the present Regime and of the Defense Ministry in particular. The Sunday Leader would not have printed this item if it is not correct, particularly given that the Defense Secretary, Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapakse has been at legal loggerheads with Ms. Frederica Jansz over a news item carried by her. In fact, the Defense Secretary had sued Frederica Jansz for defamation, demanding an astronomical sum as compensation. The conflict was further exacerbated when Frederica Jansz reported an interview where General Sarath Fonseka had stated that he was provided information by a journalist attached to the 58th brigade, that Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapakse had ordered that leaders of the LTTE who had surrendered during the final assault to be killed. This has now come to be known as the infamous “White Flag” story. The degree of venomous antagonism of the Defense Secretary towards Frederica Jansz and the Sunday Leader need not be documented.

The Sunday Leader would not deliberately invoke the wrath of the Defense Ministry and of the Defense Secretary by publishing such an explosive news item, without verification and evidence. Particularly given the fact that the Sunday Leader has been under sustained attack by marauding goon squads, including the daylight assassination of its late founder leader, Mr. Lasantha Wickrematunga, within a high security perimeter in Ratmalana. These attacks and the assassination continue to be shrouded in diabolical secrecy, where not a single person has been yet indicted, and where the entire investigative process has lost all credibility. The Sunday Leader would simply not publish such a damning news item frivolously or maliciously. The evidence that Frederica Jansz is attesting to in Court, including that her note book containing notes of the interview with General Sarath Fonseka which had been handed over to the CID, had been ‘badly handled’ seems to be the immediate background leading to the alleged plot.

If the news item is correct, the whole of civil society, the political opposition, religious institutions and the free media establishment should raise their voice in screeching protest against the Regime and the Defense Ministry, since this assassination plot would cap a veritable litany of murder, abduction and intimidation of the media and other opposition forces by the Regime. The existence of such a plot- let alone if it is carried out- would irrevocably stamp the Ministry and the Regime as the most tyrannical, arbitrary and blood-thirsty dictatorship in the history of the country. Frederica Jansz, following in the great, fearless journalistic tradition of Lasantha and Sonali and the Sunday Leader, is one of the few remaining warriors in the struggle for truth and justice. Following on the heels of the despicable cashiering and then incarceration of General Sarath Fonseka (for whom we hold no political-ideological brief), this plot would certainly add fire and fury to the rising tide of opposition of the masses against the Regime. Even despotism of the worst kind will ultimately reach its bloody limits, once the masses are awakened and begin to write their own history. Onwards, Frederica! You are as a rose that blooms in the desert. A true and daring tribune of the people!