

# PRESS RELEASE

On 3rd September at about 10.00 A.M. Dr. Ramanatham, Vice-President of the State APCLC, President of the Warangal Unit of APCLC, and leading pediatrician of Warangal was shot dead by a gang of about twenty drunken policemen. K.G. Kannabiran, Kaloji Narayan Rao, Dr. Rajagopalan and others visited Warangal on the 3rd evening. Enquiries there revealed the following sequence of events:

On 2nd September, evening around 7.30, Sub-Inspector N. Yadagiri Reddy (SI, Law and Order, Kazipet Police Station, Warangal) was killed in Kazipet railway station. According to initial news reports six persons armed with country made bombs and firearms attacked the police official and he was killed on the spot while two others were injured. Although the assailants are unidentified, it is widely believed to have been done by Naxalites. Yadagiri Reddy's name is associated with a number of custodial deaths and encounters.

Next morning on 3rd September, a procession of two hundred policemen followed Yadagiri Reddy's dead body from Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) Hospital, Warangal, enroute to Abbayapalem a nearby village and the native place of Yadagiri Reddy. It appears that both the Deputy Inspector General of Police and Superintendent of Police, Warangal were also present in the procession. As the procession reached Warangal main road, it went past the clinic of Dr. A. Ramanatham, Vice-President of APCLC. A section of the processionists attacked the clinic and Dr. Ramanatham was shot dead.

Dr. Ramanatham's clinic is situated on the main road of Warangal, opposite the State Bank of Hyderabad, Next to the clinic is a shop, Kalpana Optical. On 3rd September Dr. Ramanatham opened his clinic as usual at 9.30 A.M. about 10'0 clock the policemen's procession carrying the dead body of Yadagiri Reddy went past his clinic. The front door of the waiting hall of his clinic was bolted from inside at that time. Since the procession was an aggressive, armed procession, every one on the route of the procession closed their doors. Ramanatham, along with two neighbours went over to the neighbour's shop, Kalpana Optical through the back door. The clinic, like all the shops in the lane, has a back door. It was then that the clinic was attacked.

The assailants who were part of the procession were about twenty policemen. Half of them were in civil dress and the rest were in uniform. They broke open the front door, ransacked the clinic and beat up the compounder and patients. Most of the patients waiting were children with their mothers, Dr. Ramanatham being a pediatrician. They entered the backroom where the doctor usually sits, not finding him there they went through the back door. Alarmed by the mob of furious policemen, the two persons who were with the doctor ran away. He was already in Kalpana Optical, having entered it through the backdoor. The police chased him there. He was shot at point blank range. From all accounts, it appears that the revolver was fitted with a silencer. After he was shot down the mob of policemen rejoined the procession.

He was immediately taken to M.G.M. Hospital by two persons. Soon after he reached the hospital, he was declared dead.

Dr.A. Ramanatham, in his fifties hails from of Khammam district. He graduated from Osmania Medical College in 1960. Later he took a post graduate diploma in child health. He was a member of the teaching faculty of Kakatiya Medical College for two years from 1966-68. In 1968 he resigned from the State service and started his own private clinic for children. Soon he became a reputed pediatrician of the city. Every day atleast a hundred patients visit his clinic. Two years ago he also wrote a book in Telugu, called 'Medical Guide', a kind of self-help health and medical guide for people which became very popular and has already seen two editions. He is popular as a poor people's doctor in Warangal City. He stood not only for the welfare of the poor but also for their rights. He was associated with APCLC right from its inception, and was the pioneer of the civil rights movement in Warangal. During the emergency he was in jail for two months. This year, in January he was arrested alongwith other civil right activists and was in prison for a week. For the last five years he was also the vice-president of our state unit.

Dr. Ramanatham died of bullet wounds. One bullet hit him just below the sternum and another hit him in the region of the epigastrium. There were also bruises on his fore head. The doctor whom we interviewed confirmed that the fatal injuries were caused by a service revolver fired at point blank range.

Two questions come up here. One is the killing of Yadagiri Reddy, the other is the murder of the Ramanantham. Firstly the APCLC does not support the killing of Yadagiri Reddy or any act of private vengeance. It firmly believes that all such crimes should be dealt with in accordance with the due process of law. The murderers of Yadagiri Reddy could have been identified and brought to book. Instead the police have resorted to a private vendetta. What is significant is the choice of an APCLC office bearer as the object of revenge. The manner in which a civil liberties organisation is consistently focussed as the source of law and order problems by the police is important. By no stretch of imagination can the APCLC be connected with Yadagiri Reddy's murder. But the APCLC exposes the extra constitutional methods used by police. And therefore its members are to be eliminated. There is a deliberately orchestrated hysteria against the civil liberties groups which are sought to be exterminated. There is a calculated attempt to blur the distinction between civil liberties work and extremist political activity. So that the attack on one is not distinguished from the other. The police seem to be openly saying that they will not function unless all constitutional curbs are lifted. Unless these implications are recognised and countered by the public, no one including the present political authorities will be exempt from the lawless-ness and private vendetta of the guardians of law and order. Over the last few months, civil liberties office bearers have become the target of concerted attack by the police. The Government in its indifference has allowed the trend to reach a point where respected citizen is gunned down by the police in broad day light before hundreds of people.

In this context the minimum that the government should do is to order a judicial enquiry into the incident and suspend all the senior police officials to enable an impartial and fair enquiry to take place.

Finally the APCLC places on record a sorrowful tribute to the valuable services of Dr. Ramanantham to the Civil Liberties Movement.

4.9.1985

K.G. KANNABIRAN  
President, APCLC

ASSAULT ON APCLC ACTIVISTS: A CHRONOLOGY (1985)

1. 12.1.1985 Gopi Rajanna (Advocate, Jagityal) Vice-President Jagityal Unit killed by BJP - RSS hoodlums.
2. 18.1.1985 Dr.A. Ramanatham (Pediatrician, Warangal), Sri K. Seetha Rama Rao (Lecturer, Kakatiya University) were arrested in SP office and were charged with distributing arms.
3. 23.1.1985 Dr.K. Balagopal, General Secretary arrested by Warangal Police and was implicated in three false cases.
4. 12.4.1985 Shri D. Mallikarjuna Rao (Advocate, Karimnagar) Joint Secretary, Karimnagar Unit was tortured by Jagityal Police and was subjected to 'Roller treatment'.
5. 20.4.1985 Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty (Delhi University), Executive Member PUDR, Delhi Dr.K. Balagopal, Dr. Murali Manohar and Shri K. Seetha Rama Rao (all from Kakatiya University) were arrested by Adilabad police at Gudihattanur and were implicated in false cases.
6. 16.5.1985 Dr.K. Balagopal was assaulted by ABVP goondas at Jagityal bus stand. Shri Shankar (Advocate) was also injured.
7. 26.5.1985 S. Subhas Chandra Bose (Advocate, Vijayawada) Executive Member of State Unit, Dr.K. Narayan Rao (Medical Practitioner, Rajahmundry) President East Godavari Unit, D. Venkateshwar Rao (Lecturer, Rajahmundry) Secretary of East Godavari Unit of OPDR were kept in illegal detention in four police stations and finally charged with sedition.
8. 28.5.1985 Shri A. Subrahmanyam (Lecturer in Law Nagarjuna University, Guntur) Vice-President, Guntur Unit, Shri A.B. Gurnatham (Advocate, Pathipadu) were arrested at A.S.P. office, Kakinada, when they went to submit a memorandum. They were charged with sedition.
9. 2.6.1985 Shri P. Papa Rao (Advocate, Karimnagar) President Karimnagar Unit was threatened with the destruction of his property if he does not stop civil rights work.
10. 19.6.1985 Dr. Janardhan Rao, President Khammam Unit was arrested and harrassed.
11. 3.9.1985 Dr.A. Ramanatham, Vice-President State Unit was shot dead by Warangal Police.