

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka) issues urgent protest

LTTE authorities in the north of Sri Lanka arrest Tamil socialists

The WSWs Editorial Board
5 August 1998

The Socialist Equality Party of Sri Lanka learned on Tuesday that several SEP members in Kilinochchi, a region in the north of the island controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have been arrested by LTTE authorities.

The Sri Lankan SEP is attempting to gather more detailed information about the number and identity of those who have been seized, but it is already clear that the individuals involved are in serious danger. Relatives of those taken into custody spoke with the LTTE official in charge of the area, who said he knew that those arrested were members of the SEP, the Trotskyist party in Sri Lanka. The official, Theepan, said the SEP's politics had become an obstruction to the LTTE's activities.

This official said the arrested SEP members had been handed over to one Pottu Amman, the head of the LTTE police, and claimed he had no information as to their whereabouts. He suggested, ominously, that the police might already have taken action against them. Pottu Amman is notorious for his brutality, and has been cited in published reports for reckless and criminal actions.

The arrest of the SEP members is a politically motivated outrage against basic democratic rights. On several occasions over the past several years members and supporters of the Sri Lankan Trotskyist movement living in exile in Europe have come under attack from LTTE supporters, because of the SEP's principled struggle for socialist and internationalist policies.

We are publishing here a letter of protest sent by Wije Dias, the general secretary of the Sri Lankan SEP, to the LTTE leadership.

04/08/98

To the leadership of the LTTE:

I, Wije Dias, the general secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), the Sri Lankan section of the Fourth International, send this note of strong protest to the LTTE for arresting a number of our party members working in the area of Kilinochchi.

I have reliable information that the LTTE leader in the Kilinochchi area, Theepan, arrested our members and handed them over to the head of the police, Pottu Amman. This is what Theepan told the relatives of the arrested SEP members.

As you know, the SEP (formerly, the Revolutionary Communist League) is the only party in the country that has consistently defended the democratic rights of the Tamil masses and campaigned vigorously against the Sinhala racists and their state, demanding an end to the racist war and the withdrawal of the armies from the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Therefore, I must say, the arrest of our members by your organisation and any harm done to them will be exposed, in the eyes of your own supporters and the Tamil people you claim to represent, as actions diametrically opposed to the genuine aspirations of the Tamil masses.

We call upon you to immediately release the members of the SEP you have taken under arrest. We reserve our right to inform and mobilise world opinion, through our world party, the International Committee of the Fourth International, against any delay in this regard.

We expect a rapid and favourable reply.

Yours sincerely, Wije Dias General Secretary

The *World Socialist Web Site* urgently calls on all of its readers, all labor and human rights organizations,

and all those who defend basic democratic rights to send letters, faxes and Email messages to the LTTE condemning the arrest of the SEP members in Kilinochchi and demanding their immediate release and the dropping of all charges.

Statements should be sent to:

The LTTE,
c/o Eelam House,
202 Long Lane,
London SE1 4QB,
United Kingdom
Telephone: 44-171-403-4554
Fax: 44-171-403-1653

Please send copies of all statements of protest to the WSWs at:

Email: editor@wsws.org
Post: PO Box 48377
Oak Park, Mi 48237
USA
Fax: 248-967-3023



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact