Letters on the WSWS coverage of Sri Lanka

21 December 2000

Dear friends at the *WSWS*,

I am a regular reader of your reports and I commend your work. *WSWS* reports are informative, analytical and rightly sympathetic towards the victims of injustice and violence. More often than not the mainstream press in Sri Lanka is a source of misinformation on major issues. They speak of the freedom of the press but exercise a self-censorship that is worse than the censorship imposed by the government. Your website is an alternative source of information and analysis. I am sure many Lankans and others interested in Sri Lankan politics are reading your reports. I wish you all the best.

NS

To the *WSWS*,

I write to say thank you for your objective, unbiased reporting on Sri Lankan affairs. Continue the good work!

BP,

Australia

The following letter is in response to the WSWS*'s interview with the Sri Lankan Olympic medallist Susanthika Jayasinghe. [http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/nov2000/oly-n20.shtml]*

Dear Sir,

I will be much obliged if you will forward my message to this young athlete from my homeland.

Susanthika has a courage which is sadly lacking in today's youngsters who fear loss of privileges if they are outspoken. Susanthika has no trouble stating the facts and has therefore earned the wrath of the politicians of Sri Lanka. She should be honoured and given the keys to advise Sri Lanka on how to go about and improve the training facilities for future athletes. It is a fact that the Third World lacks basic facilities, and without the current hi-tech gizmos of today's sports clinics we will be back to zero if we do not grab at the opportunities that are there. It is sad to see that India with a billion-plus people has no recognised medal holder in today's sporting world.

Sincerely,

TH

The following letters, which have been edited for publication, comment on an exchange of views on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, published on the WSWS *. [The Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka replies to a supporter of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/sep2000/ltte-s29.shtml]*

Dear Sir,

First let me introduce myself. First of all I am a human being. My origin is full Tamil. I am an ex-PLOTE [Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam] member. After 1986 I left politics; now I am living in a foreign country as a refugee. However I am concerned about the developments in Sri Lanka. I followed the discussion between the Socialist Equality Party and SR on the *WSWS's* Tamil site.

Like SR, I also read the *WSWS* with great consideration. I don't think this correspondence is a simple matter. The political situation in Sri Lanka shows that there is a deepening crisis. In this situation all political parties and organisations speak about how to bring peace, but this has to be assessed through their programs.

Through its election statement, reports and articles, the SEP shows how to stop the war and bring peace. SR (without mentioning his organisation) put his opinion about the SEP's standpoint. I think the two sides express the interests of opposed classes. The SEP, on the basis of Marxism and an historical basis, puts forward the interests of the working masses.

The SEP explains clearly that both the UNP and the SLFP and its coalition partners are responsible for the terrible events after so-called independence from the British. To defend the capitalist order they used what they learnt from their colonial masters—the divide and rule principle. The SEP scientifically explained the betrayal of the LSSP—how they gave up their principles, subordinated themselves to capitalist governments and betrayed international socialism and the working class.

SR represents the standpoint of a tiny Tamil capitalist class, which has developed very speedily in Sri Lanka and foreign countries. His standpoint is that if the SEP doesn't support the creation of a Tamil capitalist state, it is a Sinhala chauvinist party; if it supports the creation of a Tamil capitalist state, it's an international socialist party.

Explaining the LSSP's record, SEP made it clear that Pabloism was an opportunist trend within the Fourth International, which adapted itself to developments after the Second World War. In unifying with the Pabloites, the LSSP adapted itself to the parliamentary system. The LSSP abandoned the conception that in the undeveloped countries the unsolved democratic tasks could be solved through defending the political independence of the working class from all forms of national capitalist tendencies, and fighting for the socialist revolution and dictatorship of the working class. Instead of fighting for this perspective the LSSP came to the catastrophic conclusion that by unifying with Srimao Bandaranaike's SLFP they could solve these unresolvable democratic tasks. The SEP explained how the LSSP became an open defender of the capitalist rule.

If anyone considers this responsibly, he will come to the conclusion that by abandoning the unification of Tamil and Sinhala workers on the basis of the international socialist perspective the LSSP paved the way for capitalism to create the bloodshed of the oppressed masses and youth. Tamil and Sinhala capitalist parties exploited the confusion caused by the LSSP's

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betrayal and absence of a party to unify the working masses regardless of race, language and religion.

SR writes that the LTTE is the only organisation of Tamils. Good, this is his opinion. He has the right to have his opinion. The Tamil masses didn't give the LTTE the right to be “the sole representatives of Tamils”. If a movement calls itself the organisation of a particular nationality, it must answer to the main issues. Whose interests does it represent? What is its political perspective? What is its economic program? Through this everyone can identify its class interests. Does the LTTE represent the majority of the Tamil working masses? The answer is no: the LTTE represent the interests of the people who impose the taxes on the working masses and poor peasants.

All of the Tamil organisations, including the LTTE, have from their origin been under the influence of Indian bourgeoisie. It started with the Thimbu talks, the Bangalore talks and ended with Indo-Sri Lanka pact. After that, except for the LTTE, they made tight relations with Sri Lankan bourgeoisie. When the LTTE's bargaining with [previous president] Premadasa and [present president] Chandrika broke down, they called on imperialist forces—the “international community”—to intervene in the conflict. These are the same mass murderers who killed millions of children, women and elderly people in Iraq, the Balkans, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti and Serbia. To support their call, the LTTE published countless declarations, conducted demonstrations in front of the UN and European parliament, organised long train journeys, bus trips and sent countless postcards.

Now, I want to ask a question. Is the struggle for the creation of a separate state historically necessary? My answer is, unlike the English and French bourgeois revolutions, it is not a product of historical necessity. The Tamil bourgeoisie cannot develop the productive forces or play even a small role in the development of economy and culture. If we ask what they can do, the answer is that they can police Tamil workers and peasants for the exploitation of transnational corporations. Through this they will get their commission from the imperialists. This is the only role that can be played by the national bourgeoisie in backward countries. This is not the inability of this or that representative of a particular national bourgeoisie but it is the outcome of the bankrupt perspective of the national bourgeoisie.

The neighbouring country is the most suitable example. The Indian National Congress took the power in 1947 on behalf of Indian bourgeoisie. To defend imperialist interests, it massacred over five million people. Further, it chased millions of people from their homelands and divided India into Hindu and Muslim states.

Over the next four decades with the famous slogan, “be Indian, buy Indian”, it claimed to be building a national economy. What it created for the masses in the name of so-called independence was mass murder, the destruction of living and working standards, poverty, famine and disease. Now it is selling the young generation to the transnational corporations for cheap labour. All nationalised properties are being sold one after the other. If anyone protests against it, they are jailed.

If we turn to Sri Lanka in the light of this experience, the struggle for a mini Tamil state does not come from historical necessity but from a historical betrayal. If the LSSP hadn't given up their principles then there would be no necessity for the emergence of the SEP and Tamil and Sinhala racist organisations.

The young generation must come forward to discuss these questions. Is there no possibility to change the situation and create a peaceful coexistence of different nationalities? Has such a peaceful coexistence existed before in the history? Which social force can change the situation, stop the bloodshed and defend democratic rights?

These complex historical questions must be discussed. If anyone does not have good English, I suggest they read the *WSWS* Tamil site. There they will find astonishing articles.

In my opinion, Chandrika Kumaratunga's invitation to the SEP to participate in the all-party conference [in May] shows the crisis of Sri Lankan bourgeoisie and the SEP's influence among the advanced layers of Sinhala masses. Now SR's letter shows the crisis of Tamil bourgeoisie and the influence of SEP among the conscious Tamil masses. When the SEP rejected SR's letter, he threatened the SEP in his second letter. I warn SEP and its co-thinkers all over the world—you must take this as a death threat from the LTTE.

Yours faithfully,

A.

To the *WSWS*,

The LTTE is scared of the SEP [Sri Lankan Socialist Equality Party] members because the LTTE tries to put over to the rest of the world that the Tamil people have only one voice and that's the voice of the low caste fisherman [Prabhakaran]. You see, socialists believe in basic truths, in life and ask basic questions in life. What right has one man over another? Why should the Tamil people live with a new master, that is the LTTE, whose record on human rights is so bad that only Hitler can match it? The LTTE walks around the human rights circles in London and pay for the lunches of MPs at the House of Commons, like Corbin MP and Robin Cook MP. They say all the Tamil people of Sri Lanka are dead or refugees with no political freedom. They raise lots of money. And another group comes along and says I am here, look at me. I am a socialist, I am Tamil and I believe in the rights of all to speak, but I do not believe in the fascist LTTE. The LTTE hits the roof every time the name SEP is said.

G.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

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