

More protest letters against LTTE threats

13 March 2009

The World Socialist Web Site has received further letters in response to the March 9 statement "Oppose LTTE campaign of threats and violence against SEP supporters in Europe! We urge our readers and supporters to send protest letters demanding the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) immediately cease its attempts to suppress political debate within the Tamil community and end all threats against Socialist Equality Party members and supporters. (Previous correspondence can be viewed here.)

To the Comité de coordination tamoul en France
Tamil Confederation—Germany
British Tamils Forum

The International Students for Social Equality at San Diego State University (United States) denounces the coordinated campaign of harassment and intimidation that took place at recent demonstrations in England, France, and Germany.

It has been reported that elements affiliated with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have engaged in thuggish and violent behavior against members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) who were leafleting at public events.

We condemn this behavior as a violation of basic democratic rights. The seizing of leaflets, physical intimidation, and hurling of racist abuse that occurred at the demonstrations is an attack not just against the SEP sympathizers who were the direct target of these actions, but also against the democratic right of workers to discuss and deliberate the political issues that concern them in the broadest possible fashion.

We suspect, moreover, that what took place at the demonstration is not arbitrary or episodic, but flows from the definite political logic of the LTTE and of the organizations affiliated with it. The history of violence and terrorism, of petty as well as criminal chauvinism, and the overall political bankruptcy exhibited by the LTTE in Sri Lanka is bound to find its expression in the actions of its sympathizers in Europe and elsewhere as well. We take the opportunity, therefore, not just to denounce your behavior from the standpoint of democratic rights, but also to affirm our political solidarity with the SEP and the International Committee of the Fourth International, including its section in Sri Lanka.

Sincerely,
ISSE, San Diego State University (United States)

Dear Sirs,

I wish to express my strongest possible protest against violence being perpetrated by the LTTE and supporter organisations in Europe against members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP).

At recent demonstrations in Berlin, London and Paris, members of the

SEP have been subjected to violence and provocations, obstructed from distributing leaflets and subjected to racist abuse.

These attacks are reactionary and an abuse of the democratic rights of the SEP to conduct political work and campaign amongst Tamil citizens.

The SEP has a long history of fighting for a socialist political program in Sri Lanka and is widely respected for its long and principled support of the genuine democratic aspirations of the Tamil masses.

The LTTE does not have a monopoly over political discourse on the issues facing the Tamil people and its conduct in Europe is arrogant and authoritarian in the extreme.

I strongly urge you to take all measures to halt the LTTE from engaging further in this repugnant and politically suppressive conduct.

Yours faithfully,
Harland Koops
Heckenberg & Koops
Lawyers

Dear Sir,

I strongly oppose the anti-democratic attacks by the supporters of the LTTE against the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) members in Europe and also other organisations that are critical of the LTTE.

I know no other political organization as the SEP that is championing the democratic rights of the Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka against the Colombo government's war, repression and discrimination. This party consistently demanded that the state withdraw the occupying Sri Lankan troops from the North and the East of the island, and opposed the war.

I am aware that in the course of this campaign the SEP has been subjected to witch hunts by the state forces and Sinhala extremist groups. I understand this is the main theme of the SEP's campaign for the current Western Provincial Council elections.

The chief responsibility for this war and discrimination goes to successive governments of Sri Lanka. But at the same time, I think, the LTTE bears a major share of responsibility for the terrible conditions the Tamil people in the north and east face today. LTTE has done much to divide Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim workers by inflicting violence against them and spearheading a separatist campaign. It has violated Tamil people's right to hear from other organisations how to overcome the war and oppression of the Sinhala ruling elite.

Stifling the democratic rights of Tamil people is the way the LTTE subjugates the same people it claims to represent. It is averse to political criticism and discussion, as it demonstrated in its threats and attacks on

SEP members in Europe. These attacks of the LTTE supporters against the SEP play directly into the hands of the ruling elite and the protectors of petty chauvinism. LTTE's separatism is the way to divide workers and help the Colombo supremacist ruling elite.

I understand the SEP's policy to unite Tamil and Sinhala workers with their international brothers is the only way forward for ending the war and addressing democratic rights. This is the party that advances the socialist answer against the war and discrimination, and for equality.

I strongly urge you to halt any violence against the supporters of the SEP and ICFI, which we understand constitute the only revolutionary party of the working class of the world, fighting on the grounds of socialist internationalism.

Sanjaya Wilson Jayasekera
Member of Pravada Kavaya of the University of Colombo
Former president of the Human Rights Society of the Faculty of Law of the University of Colombo.

To the British Tamils Forum and LTTE

I am writing to express my profound opposition to the undemocratic actions of LTTE supporters in physically attacking and intimidating sympathisers of the *World Socialist Web Site*, and members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and its supporters in Europe. I insist that the LTTE instruct its European agents to stop their harassment, threats and violent attacks against the Socialist Equality Party and its supporters in Europe.

Stewards from various pro-LTTE organisations, including the Comité de coordination tamoul en France (CCT) and the British Tamils Forum, told SEP supporters to stop distributing leaflets and leave the demonstrations in Berlin, London and Paris on February 4, and at a protest meeting in Stuttgart on February 7. SEP supporters were also subjected to jostling, threats of violence and anti-Sinhala racist abuse. CCT organisers and supporters seized and destroyed the leaflets of SEP supporters campaigning in La Chapelle, Paris for a public meeting to put forward a socialist solution to end the conflict in Sri Lanka. CCT operatives warned that only those who had its permission would be allowed to discuss politics with Tamils living in La Chapelle.

These attacks were entirely unprovoked. Furthermore, they were not isolated attacks but were coordinated. They are a flagrant attack on democratic rights. These attacks are particularly disgraceful since the SEP in Sri Lanka has throughout its existence courageously defended the democratic rights of Tamils and has consistently demanded the unconditional withdrawal of all troops from the north and east of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE has no authority to prevent political discussion or to speak as the sole political leadership of the Tamil people. Rather, such an outlook can only mean the suppression and murder of its political opponents.

The LTTE resorts to violence because it cannot answer political criticism and fears mounting opposition to its pro-capitalist policies among Tamil exiles abroad, as well as among Tamil people within Sri Lanka.

The LTTE's attacks demonstrate that it represents, not ordinary Tamil working people, but the Tamil elites who, like the Sinhala bourgeoisie,

want to become sub-contractors to finance capital in exploiting Tamil workers. There is no question but that should the LTTE ever attain power, it would maintain its rule by the most brutal and anti-democratic means, as it did in those areas of Sri Lanka under its control, where its measures generated fear, resentment and hostility, not political respect or loyalty.

Such methods are entirely out of place among workers, young people and the rural poor who are struggling to overcome social inequality, communalism and war and to find a progressive solution to their plight, not just in Sri Lanka but all over the world.

Jean Shaoul
Professor Public Accountability
University of Manchester
United Kingdom

For the attention of the Comité de coordination tamoul en France

Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Comité de coordination tamoul en France (CCT)

We have learned from the *World Socialist Web Site* about the situation in Sri Lanka and the unacceptable treatment meted out by the government to the Tamils and their organisations. This situation generally goes unreported in the main French media.

We learn that you, who claim to represent the Tamil people in France, insult, threaten and are violent toward WWSW supporters and other left organisations who wish to communicate with them. By not allowing Tamils to have democratic access to other opinions than those of the LTTE, in restricting their right to demonstrate, you show how little consideration you have for your own citizens.

This behaviour confirms that the LTTE's political perspectives appear to be those of a bourgeois party, to establish a statelet, a tax haven where the Tamil bourgeoisie would be free to exploit the Tamil working class, whereas the WWSW proposes a common struggle of the international working class.

We associate ourselves with the organisations and individuals who write to you to demand a stop to the threats and attempts to suppress democratic debate in the Tamil community, in France.

Olivier Lauer (doctoral student) and Maryse Choffel (architect)
Nancy, France

Dear Tamils Forum,

Your aggression against the SEP is cruel, and foolish. You expose yourself through threats and censorship as being weak, lacking the ability of answering the hard political questions the SEP has put forward. The SEP has always voiced itself as being against the war, and against imperialist violence that you advocate through attempts to silence the SEP. Through censoring them you build up an image of oppressing the Tamil community, the opposite of the liberating force you claim to be.

People will begin seeing you as fascists if you bully other political ideologies, and advocate hatred for the Sinhalese. Accept the SEP as a movement, or allow yourselves to be seen as racist thugs who don't allow freedom, even in the Tamil community. Your current policy will only

draw everyone away from your organization on these grounds, so in your best interest accept the SEP.

P. Kuruppu
Colombo

Isaac

Through the WSWs, I came across the disturbing news of LTTE supporters' threats against the members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Europe. I believe that this cowardly act was aimed at preventing the SEP from expressing their views on the Tamil people's plight and campaigning for the solution that they believe in. These threats and intimidations are a violation of democratic rights of not only the SEP members and supporters, but also the Tamil diaspora and the working class. Any person with the least regard for the fundamental rights of the people should strongly oppose these acts of political intimidation.

The SEP has always fought against the war and has demanded the withdrawal of government armed forces from the north and east of Sri Lanka. Because of its principled stand on the national issue of Tamils, its members have frequently been subjected to attacks from the state as well as chauvinists. Current intimidations only prove the LTTE's hatred toward the democratic rights of the Tamil people; a sentiment, which you definitely share with the chauvinistic war mongers of the Colombo regime.

The Socialist Equality Party and its forerunner the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL) were famous for their determined support to safeguard the democratic rights of the Tamils, throughout its history. One such example is the instance when some chauvinists attacked Tamil students in the University of Peradeniya in 1983, just a few months prior to the infamous Black July.

I was there in the Peradeniya University during these eventful days and these memories are still fresh and vivid in my mind. Chauvinists were prevented from carrying out their attacks by a powerful opposition from the students. During the weeks to follow, university teachers and students continued their struggle, demanding safety for Tamil students. When Tamil students left the university for safety reasons, the Engineering Faculty students union, in a meeting attended by nearly 500 Sinhala students (about 90 percent of the total number of Sinhala students of the faculty at that time) unanimously decided to stay away from all academic activities until the Tamil students returned. The very next day, the Peradeniya University Teachers' Association took a similar stand.

The RCL was at the head of this struggle and its campaign had a great impact on the movement of students and teachers. Recognising the RCL's role in this heroic movement against racial discrimination and chauvinism, the Displaced University Students Organisation in Jaffna sent representatives to the RCL anniversary rally held in Colombo in late 1983.

According to my knowledge, the SEP and its website, the WSWs, have consistently been campaigning for the mobilisation of the international working class to safeguard the rights of Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Your attacks and threats only prove your hostility toward such a campaign and your desire to isolate the Tamil masses from the international working class. Such attempts to block the expression of views of others will only prove your inability to successfully counter their views. The LTTE does not represent the interests of the Tamil masses and bets on the support of the ruling elites of Europe, US, India and Japan—the very same elite that demands that you surrender unconditionally.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact