

Protest letters against LTTE threats

14 March 2009

The World Socialist Web Site has received more 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.)

For the attention of the British Tamils Forum:

I am writing to demand, in the strongest possible terms, that the LTTE leadership instructs its supporters in Europe to cease their violent attacks against members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party.

The behaviour of the LTTE thugs is reminiscent of the way in which the Communist Party, of which I was then a member, tried to prevent its members from coming into contact with supporters of the Fourth International in the 1940s and 50s. They snatched leaflets out of our hands and told us that on no account should we discuss with these "enemies of the working class". This was not done from a position of strength but because the CP was totally opposed to the building of a party based on a programme of socialist internationalism and on the lessons of the international workers movement.

This is the position of the LTTE today. You arrogantly claim to be the sole representative of Tamil people in an attempt to suppress political debate. In London, Paris, Sydney and elsewhere you have attempted to prevent supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* and Socialist Equality Party from distributing their material—material which exposes the war crimes being committed by the Sri Lankan government and highlights the campaign being waged by the SEP in Sri Lanka to demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from the north and east.

I know that the SEP in Sri Lanka and its forerunner, the RCL, have always fought for the principles of socialist internationalism and for the unity of the Tamil and Sinhala masses. The war in the north has been accompanied by attacks on democratic rights and living standards in the south, to "pay for the war". Recent attacks against students and workers in Colombo are clear evidence of this.

The coming class battles will raise the necessity for a united struggle of all working people and youth in Sri Lanka. This is opposed by the reactionary separatist policies of the LTTE, who on the one hand appeal to the imperialist powers to support the formation of a separate state and on the other hand blame the Sinhala nation as a whole for the atrocities being committed by the Sri Lankan military.

I demand that you cease your attacks on SEP members and supporters and allow free discussion among Tamils.

Barbara Slaughter,

England

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

The International Students for Social Equality of the Université du Québec à Montréal (ISSE-UQAM) demand that your organization cease the campaign of threats and intimidation against members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party in Europe that you have undertaken at the behest of the LTTE.

This campaign speaks volumes about your organization and your pretensions to represent the Tamil masses. You attack an organization that for decades has opposed Sinhala chauvinism and the racist war mounted by the Sri Lankan state and fought for the perspective of uniting the Sinhala and Tamil masses on a socialist and internationalist basis. This is the only perspective that can move the Sri Lankan masses out of the civil war and the economic crisis and secure their democratic rights and basic social needs.

As for the LTTE that you defend, its petty-bourgeois nationalist perspective of carving out a small ethnic Tamil nation-state, where the Tamil elite would serve as a subcontractor for the imperialists, has led the Tamil masses into a political and economic disaster.

We reiterate that the supporters of the SEP in Europe have the right to present a socialist perspective to Tamil immigrants and all the European working class, and demand you immediately cease and desist in your anti-democratic intimidation campaign.

ISSE-UQAM
Montreal, Canada

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

It is with indignation that I have learned from reading the *World Socialist Web Site* that the LTTE is using brutal, anti-democratic methods, habitually employed by enemies of the working class and oppressed masses, against supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Europe.

As a lawyer, member of the Defense Lawyers Association of Montreal (AADM), member of the Association of Youth Law Lawyers (Association des avocats en droit de la jeunesse), and unconditional defender of democratic rights and freedoms, I vigorously condemn the intimidation and attacks mounted by the LTTE against not only the SEP supporters in Europe, but against any group that wishes to express its political opinions peacefully in the public arena.

Your criminal hostility to public debate and criticism can only be a

reflection of the political bankruptcy and desperation of your organization.

The attacks against supporters of the SEP and the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) are particularly odious given their and their predecessors' unblemished record in defence of the democratic rights of the Sri Lankan people, irrespective of ethnicity, and fight for a socialist perspective. I have only the deepest esteem for the WSWS and the SEP.

The nationalist politics of the LTTE, on the other hand, promote racism, division, confusion and hate.

The LTTE and its satellite organizations must immediately cease their attacks on the basic democratic rights of SEP supporters in Europe and let the political force of their arguments speak for themselves.

François De Vette, Lawyer
Boucherville, Quebec

Following letter has been signed by six students of Pachaiyappa College, ten from Ambethkar Arts College, two from The New College and 27 from Nandanam Arts College. These colleges are affiliated to the University of Madras, Chennai in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Comité de coordination tamoul
Tamil Confederation—Germany
British Tamils Forum

Under the bogus claim of fighting terrorism, the Sri Lankan capitalist state with the support of the Indian government and the US, European and Japanese imperialist powers has been waging a criminal communal war against the Tamil minorities in Sri Lanka.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, is the only party to oppose the war and to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Sri Lankan military forces from the North and East of the island. The SEP fights for the revolutionary socialist perspective of a United Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam as an integral part of United Socialist States of South Asia.

In this revolutionary struggle six members of the SEP have been killed, either by Sri Lankan state or the Sinhala chauvinist gunmen of the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

On the basis of this socialist perspective, European members and supporters of the SEP have been distributing leaflets during anti-war protest rallies and processions held in London, Paris and Berlin. In all these cities and other places the LTTE's European supporters have used intimidation and physical violence against SEP members and supporters.

The LTTE also recently tried to prevent a rally in Paris, organised by other Tamil organisations with the support of some left-wing movements. These acts of the LTTE's European supporters constitute gross violations of democratic rights.

We call on the European supporters of the LTTE to immediately stop all intimidations and harassments of SEP members and supporters in Europe and cease undemocratic attempts to prevent political debate within Tamil Diaspora.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this to strongly protest against the undemocratic harassing and intimidating members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Committee of the Fourth International and the sympathisers of the *World Socialist Web Site* in various European cities.

On the one hand, this act is in no way justifiable and should be condemned as it violates the fundamental right of a political group to express its views in a democratic manner. On the other hand, the LTTE has used violence against the SEP, a Marxist organisation that has a long history of fighting against all forms of discrimination, social inequality and oppression of the working masses throughout the world.

Also this coincides with the deep crisis in the capitalist system that has, as a result, unleashed direct and indirect structural violence against the masses. The act of harassing SEP, therefore, undoubtedly favours capitalist-imperialist hands against the working class.

George Cooray
Retd. Professor of International Relations, University of Colombo

To the Members and Supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

It has come to our attention that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have instructed pro-LTTE organisations in Europe, including the Comité de coordination tamoul en France (CCT) and the British Tamils Forum, to attempt to censor, with threats of violence and intimidation, members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) for distributing leaflets and promoting an international socialist perspective to end the 25-year civil war and the oppression of the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

The idea that the solution to the crisis facing the working class of Sri Lanka is going to be advanced by the violent thuggery of the LTTE and its supporters, promoting a chauvinist nationalist solution, is inevitably going to encourage the continuation of the slaughter of innocent Sri Lankan people.

The SEP has a long and principled history of struggle for the democratic rights of the Tamil people, and the LTTE and its supporters have no right to claim that they are the only organisations that are allowed to speak for the Tamil people and they definitely have no right to enforce that opinion with violence against others that express an opposing perspective.

There is a quote by the French philosopher Voltaire that the LTTE and its supporters would do well to consider, it reads "Think for yourselves and let others enjoy the privilege to do so too." This has later been paraphrased as "I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it". The latter has become a slogan for the democratic right to freedom of speech, and freedom of speech has never been extinguished by the infantile thuggery of those who insist on intimidation and violence as a means of enforcing their flawed ideas.

Stop the terror tactics against those that don't agree with you!

David & Stacey
Australia

Dear Sir,

It has been brought to my attention through the *World Socialist Web Site* that your members have engaged in violent intimidation of supporters of

the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) at demonstrations across Europe. I call upon your supporters to cease such threatening behaviour, which testifies to the inability of your organisation to answer the ICFI's political criticism.

The actions of your supporters are a gross violation of the democratic rights of working people, including the Tamil community whom you claim to represent. The targeting of SEP members for violent attacks by an organisation claiming to defend the Tamil people is outrageous. The ICFI supporters have been campaigning against the brutal war being waged by the Colombo government against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. The SEP has a long tradition of defending the rights of the Tamil people against the communalist policies of the Sinhala-dominated government in Colombo. As well as calling for the unconditional withdrawal of all troops from the North and East of Sri Lanka and an end to discrimination against Tamils, this defence has been based on uncompromising opposition to all forms of Tamil separatism, including the call for an independent Tamil statelet.

These bullying tactics confirm that the LTTE and its supporters fear a socialist programme to end the war in Sri Lanka reaching Tamil workers, since it will expose the pro-capitalist perspective of the LTTE.

I demand that you instruct your supporters to immediately cease their campaign of intimidation against the SEP and the ICFI, as well as the increasingly aggressive actions directed against any group attempting to protest against the war outside the control of the LTTE. The willingness to permit your members to engage in such actions only testifies to your organisation's hostility towards the working class.

Jordan Smith,
Scotland, UK



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact