

More protest letters against LTTE threats

21 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](#).)

Comité de coordination tamoul en France,
Tamil Confederation—Germany and
The British Tamils Forum
Dear Sir,

I condemn the violence and threats by supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against Socialist Equality Party (SEP) members and supporters while they were carrying out legitimate political work. I am aware that LTTE supporters made these anti-democratic acts on February 4 in London, Berlin and Paris and February 7 in Stuttgart while SEP members were distributing leaflets in anti-war demonstrations. LTTE must instruct its supporters and members to cease these acts.

I have experienced the SEP's struggle for about two decades. It is defending the democratic rights of the Tamil masses against the attacks by the Sri Lankan government and racist thugs as part of SEP's fight for socialism.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka is a test case. Members of the SEP and its forerunner, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL) in the Central Bank have consistently explained the disastrous consequences of anti-Tamil discrimination and the war of the Sinhala ruling class to the working class. This party has consistently demanded an end to the war and the withdrawal of Sri Lankan forces from the north and east as part of its struggle to unite Sinhala and Tamil workers against the capitalist classes of both camps.

The LTTE is against such a unity. In January 1996, the LTTE carried out a major bomb attack on the Central Bank, killing 91 and injuring more than one thousand. Many of the victims were employees of the bank. This attack played into the hands of the Colombo government and Sinhala communal groups seeking to sow hatred against Tamils and justify the war.

Sinhala chauvinists are branding those who oppose the war and discrimination against Tamils as Sinhala Tigers or Sinhala LTTE members. Leading SEP member and president of the Central Bank Employees Union, M.G. Kiribanda and supporters of the party were attacked as Sinhala Tigers by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in 2007. Now the SEP members and supporters are attacked by the LTTE's supporters because this party opposes the LTTE's separatist capitalist perspective.

There must be complete democratic freedom to oppose and discuss alternative perspectives of the working class against Sri Lanka's capitalist class and its government. Similarly, the LTTE should not attack the democratic rights of its political opponents, including those who criticise the LTTE's separatist politics and advance a socialist alternative.

Premasiri Palpage
General Secretary of the Central Bank Employees Union
Sri Lanka

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

I am writing from Annefield Estate at Hatton in the central hills of Sri Lanka. I must register my vehement condemnation and outrage over attacks on the members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Paris, Berlin and London by LTTE supporters. I heard today yet another similar attack on SEP members took place on Sunday in Toronto, Canada.

SEP members and supporters were attacked because they were distributing leaflets to participants of the demonstrations against the Sri Lankan military's anti-Tamil war. The leaflets called for the unity of Sinhala and Tamil workers to end the war and fight for socialist policies.

I can understand why the LTTE and its supporters are deadly hostile to the SEP's policies. The LTTE has not urged the support of plantation workers, or any other section of the working class in the south, or the world working class, at any time against the war in the north and east and the repression against Tamils.

The LTTE is seeking the support of the Indian capitalist government and urging the support of the US and European powers. The LTTE is representing the Tamil bourgeoisie and fighting for a capitalist statelet. These powers now actually support the war. They are concerned only about their strategic interests. The establishment of a capitalist statelet with the help of the major powers, as the LTTE demands, will definitely be a trap for the Tamil workers and poor.

The SEP's perspective is the socialist unity of the working class and the fight for a Sri Lanka-Eelam Socialist Republic as part of a socialist South Asia and international socialism. The SEP urges workers to oppose the war and demand the withdrawal of troops from the north and east. This is essential for the unity of the Sinhala and Tamil-speaking working class.

In February I contested the Central Provincial Council election from Nuwara Eliya District as an SEP candidate. Now I am contesting in the Colombo district in the Western Provincial Council elections. We are explaining this perspective to the working people and youth.

In 1948 the then government of the United National Party (UNP) abolished the citizenship rights of plantation workers. Later on, various governments declared they had restored the citizenship rights of these workers. But still Tamil-speaking plantation workers are treated as second class citizens in this country. During the last provincial elections, tens of thousands of workers did not receive voting rights. The reason given was that they did not have national identity cards.

The working class, including those in the plantations, is facing the brunt of the war. After the war started in 1983, hundreds of plantation youth were arrested as LTTE suspects without any evidence. I was arrested along with 22 others by the police in March 1995 and kept in various prisons for 18 months.

The police were forced to release 18 of us because of the vigorous campaign of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the forerunner of the SEP, with the support of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International. The RCL exposed the criminal war in the north and east, the plight of plantation workers and the arbitrary arrest of youth. We were inspired and decided to join the party because we saw a viable perspective.

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) leader Thondaman and Upcountry Peoples Front (UPF) leader P. Chandrasekaran were in the cabinet of the capitalist government. They or their trade unions did nothing to release us. Instead they supported taking us into custody.

If we have learned at least one lesson since so-called independence in Sri Lanka, it is that the defence of the democratic rights of Tamil people and plantation workers cannot be achieved under the capitalist order and under any capitalist party, Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim. The LTTE shows no alternative to Tamil people but a blind alley and disaster. Democratic rights can be achieved only in the struggle for socialism.

I demand that the LTTE and its supportive organisations in Europe and elsewhere in the world stop all kinds of attempts to suppress political discussion among Tamil people and stop the violence and intimidation against SEP members.

T. Savarimuttu
Sri Lanka

Comité de coordination tamoul en France,

It is with deep regret that I have been reading about the seemingly orchestrated interference with the rights of free speech and political advocacy of supporters of oppressed Tamils. The descriptions of claims (accompanied by violent instances of physical repression) that only the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are entitled to take up the cause of Tamil emancipation smacks of arrogance and illogical sectarianism, at best, and ugly intolerance, at worst.

I urge all LTTE supporters to be inclusionary, as opposed to exclusionary, in furthering the worthy goals of liberty and respect for all in Sri Lanka and of the universality of freedom of speech, especially if it is controversial.

H.J. Glasbeek
Professor Emeritus and Senior Scholar
York University, Toronto

To the LTTE,

Threats and physical attacks by supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) against Socialist Equality Party (SEP) members and supporters distributing SEP literature during last month's Tamil diaspora demonstrations in Paris, London, Berlin, Stuttgart and Toronto in Canada deserve the condemnation of all right thinking people.

The SEP drew the ire of the LTTE because it offered an alternative to the latter's bankrupt line of currying favour with the imperialist powers. Instead the SEP called for the mobilisation of the international working class to demand the unconditional withdrawal of Sri Lankan military forces from the North and the East of the island.

The LTTE's perspective is the creation of a separate statelet in the North and the Eastern portion of Sri Lanka to serve the interests of the Tamil capitalist class. It hopes to create such a state through the mediation of the major powers internationally. Such a state will be a capitalist state for the working class, no less than the state run by the Colombo capitalists. The LTTE is organically hostile to the working class and cannot allow democratic freedoms so essential to defend the rights of the working class.

The major powers have nothing but their own global interest in taking sides in this civil war. Against the attempts to whip up racial, ethnic and religious communalism, the SEP fights to unite the working class internationally. It fights for the establishment of a Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam as part of a United Socialist Republics of South Asia. Its perspective of international socialist revolution alone is the road out of racial discrimination and repression everywhere.

This perspective lines up its adherents with millions of workers the world over who are now coming forward against the burdens of the world crisis of capitalism. The separatist perspective of the LTTE, which runs after the capitalist oppressors of the same millions, isolates the Tamil oppressed minority from the international working class.

The current LTTE attack on the democratic rights of the SEP is not episodic. In 1998 the LTTE arrested and detained four SEP cadres in the Wanni for more than 50 days, physically assaulting them.

The LTTE disenfranchised the Tamil people forcibly in the 2005 presidential election and prevented the SEP from holding an election meeting in Jaffna city with a death threat.

Before that, in 2003 an LTTE thug stabbed SEP member N. Kodeswaran with a spike at Kayts Island near Jaffna. Several weeks before this incident, Semmanan, the then LTTE political head for the islands off Jaffna, openly threatened SEP members in the leadership of the Kayts fishermen's union after they refused to provide funds for the LTTE.

The LTTE fears that the SEP's internationalist socialist perspective will penetrate the Tamil diaspora, which is overwhelmingly working class. While calling all those who uphold democratic rights to condemn the LTTE attack, I urge workers, intellectuals and especially youth to join the SEP and the International Committee of Fourth International to liberate humanity from exploitation and oppression.

Sincerely yours,
T. Ram
Socialist Equality Party
Jaffna Branch, Sri Lanka



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact