

Protest letters against LTTE threats

23 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.)

To the LTTE,

The attacks and threats by supporters of your separatist organisation against the members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) even outside Sri Lanka demonstrates nothing but your program [is one of] intimidating all your political opponents, undemocratically and ruthlessly, violating basic democratic rights for speech and dialogue, while defending by all means your pro-capitalist agenda of creating a separate capitalist state in the North of Sri Lanka, with the backing of the bourgeois elite of the Tamil community at the expense of the Tamil working class and the youth.

The atrocities you have committed against the population of the working class of Sri Lanka for decades have bestowed on workers and us youth in this country, who have lived a considerable part of their lives under fear and inhuman conditions created by this decaying capitalist system, backed by you and all bourgeois governments that came to power in Sri Lanka, nothing but tears, sorrows, pains, death and brutal suppression by you and the governments in the south. [The conflict has created] the war mentality, an unending emergency situation and fruitless chauvinism separating the Sinhalese and Tamil masses against a collective class consciousness within the region.

The article "The war in Sri Lanka: the political and class issues" published by the SEP Sri Lanka on March 11 2009 on the *World Socialist Web Site* aptly describes your position in the political context: "The LTTE bears its share of political responsibility for the terrible outcome of Colombo's aggression. It has never been oriented towards the working class. Its program represents the interests of the Tamil bourgeoisie, which has sought to secure its own privileges by establishing a separate capitalist state. The program of Tamil separatism mirrors the Sinhala supremacism of the Colombo establishment and entrenches communal divisions. Far from uniting working people against anti-Tamil discrimination, the LTTE blames the 'Sinhala nation'. Its violent attacks on Sinhalese civilians have played directly into the government's hands, and its separatist perspective is what has led to its current political isolation."

Your betrayal of the Tamil and Sinhalese working class to the hands of the capitalist elite was a practice also exercised by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna during their history that brought mass destruction to the working class on the wrong line of Che Guevarism. [The JVP] showed their ignorance of the fact that the working class as a whole is the only revolutionary force that can challenge this outdated capitalist system and bring a socialist world that guarantees all masses equality, democratic

rights and better life conditions. The destruction of many of the separatist organisations and religious fundamentalist groups against ruling bourgeoisie governments backed by world imperialists throughout the globe clearly depicts this simple fact of the revolutionary capacity of the working class and socialist internationalism.

It is a fact that your organisation should clearly understand that creating conditions to separate the working class on communal or nationalist bases and creating separate states to open more doors to imperialism cannot solve the problems faced by the Tamils in this country. [Instead, that requires] leading the masses under the growing objective conditions to a class consciousness in building a socialist Sri Lanka as part to a socialist solidarity throughout the region and the world. Without that, no separatist ideal will solve the problems of the people and also the youth, especially their right to free and equal education.

So we as students of this country and sons and daughters of working people strongly urge that you protect the democratic rights of other political groups, cease attempts to suppress dialogue within the Tamil community and let the Tamil youth join hands with the working class in their fight against capitalism. We strongly condemn assaults made against SEP supporters in France, Germany and UK, and urge you to halt any violence against supporters of the SEP and ICFI, which is widely recognised as the only revolutionary party of the working class of the world, fighting on the grounds of socialist internationalism. It has also been the party that defended the democratic rights of the Tamil community against all communalism throughout a history of decades. It is our understanding that the SEP is also the only party that demands an immediate halt to, and withdrawal of troops from, the war in the East that brings misery to the Tamils. It is within such conditions that a common united struggle of the Sinhalese and Tamil working class of the country for their rights is made possible.

So we strongly demand that you cease any attempt to intimidate the supporters of the SEP and the Tamil community anymore.

Vimukthi Vidarshana

Editor in chief,

Sisu Handa (Voice of Students) of Sri Lanka.

Sirs,

I demand an end to the violent actions and threats of LTTE members and supporters against members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party. The SEP is conducting a legitimate campaign to present to the Sri Lankan workers—Tamil and Sinhalese—and their class brothers in Europe and Canada an international socialist alternative to the civil war and the poverty of the workers and peasants in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, the SEP is well within its democratic rights to participate and intervene in the worldwide demonstrations of Sri Lankan, European and

Canadian workers against the Sri Lankan offensive in northern Sri Lanka.

The Sinhalese bourgeoisie are criminally responsible for the civil war they launched to divide Sinhalese workers from their Tamil class brothers and to develop a social base for a bourgeois state founded on racism. More than 70,000 people have died and an ever deeper poverty is the end result. Now, while the government presses hard for total victory against the LTTE, repressive measures are being put in place against the Sri Lankan working class, who will pay for the rising cost of this brutal war.

For decades, the SEP has been the only political party to defend Tamils on the principled basis of uniting Sinhalese and Tamil workers to fight for socialism against both the Sinhalese and Tamil ruling elites. Members and supporters have been murdered, injured and jailed in this struggle.

SEP members and supporters have been harmed not only by Sinhalese chauvinists but also by Tamil chauvinists—LTTE members and supporters. Their current acts and threats of violence in Europe and Canada are of a piece with their bloody history against the SEP.

Common to the LTTE and its Sinhalese rivals is their nationalist program of creating a state and negotiating with the imperialist powers, such as the US, for a better deal for their own bourgeoisie while exploiting in common the working classes in Sri Lanka. Both the LTTE and its Sinhalese rivals recognise in the SEP a principled and unrelenting opponent of their program.

History has proven time and time again that their common nationalist program is a dead-end for the international working class. The impending defeat of the LTTE and the bankruptcy of the Sinhalese state are added proof of this.

While, unhappily, workers and peasants have paid and are paying the price for the failures of the Sinhalese and Tamil bourgeoisie, the SEP firmly believes the day is not long off when finally the international working class settles accounts with the bourgeoisie and their lackeys.

Dante Pastrana,
The Philippines

20 March 2009

As a reader and supporter of the WWS and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Australia, I demand that your organisation ends its threats and intimidation against the SEP and its supporters in Europe and Canada.

I am a postgraduate student of Secondary Teaching. My parents are both of Sinhala origin, and I was raised as such. Despite the distorted, one-sided version of history the average Sinhalese child receives as a matter of course, I have fortunately grown up to develop a cultural and political literacy that allows me to confront and freely admit the shameful truths about Sri Lanka's past—truths which have for decades been buried beneath various forms of nationalist/identity politics and the reactionary myths surrounding Indo-Aryan supremacy. Chief among these is the fact that the power-sharing arrangements propped up by former colonial powers following the 1948 independence left our Sinhala ethnic majority very much in a position to exploit and oppress the Tamil minority, inflaming to new heights tensions that had already existed for centuries prior to the conquests and settlements of the British.

Much in the same vein as the successive Sinhala supremacist

governments it has fought, the LTTE has a long and verifiable record of violating human rights. The LTTE is notorious for its methods of ruthless exploitation and harassment of expatriate Tamil workers and small business people into financing its politically bankrupt campaign. The LTTE, like the Colombo administration, seeks to suppress political discussion outside of the official confines of the brokering and power-sharing agreements of big business. It attempts to stifle the rights to free speech and organisation of Tamils independently of its control. More than anything else, the LTTE finds ready enemies in the ever increasing number of Tamil workers who stand opposed to placing their political allegiance in their self-proclaimed "sole representative". Despite its desperate efforts, the LTTE fails to inspire, much less win over, the youth it seeks to draw into its web of separatist politics. I am personally acquainted with many Tamils who laugh at the suggestion that the LTTE represents their interests. Tamil youth all over the world are waking up to the fact that the LTTE represents little more than a dangerous political dead-end.

The LTTE is a thoroughly discredited organisation, yet it continues to employ these methods of thuggery and extortion to this day. The reason for this can be no clearer: the LTTE has no progressive political solution to the problems confronting the Sri Lankan population. These problems find their most brutal and distressing expression in the decades-long civil war, but also encompass the widespread poverty that wracks the island's inhabitants (particularly since the 2004 tsunami), the continuous attacks on the democratic rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and the exponentially increasing costs of living, which have now been further exacerbated by the global financial crisis.

By contrast, the SEP holds a long and proud record of not only defending the democratic rights of the Tamil people, but also of the LTTE's right to political status. It stands in firm opposition to the corrupt regime of the Rajapakse administration, whose aims extend far beyond wiping out the LTTE by force as part of its avowed loyalty to the "war on terror". The Rajapakse administration, like the LTTE, seeks to prevent all genuinely independent political debate amongst the working class, which it knows is well capable of organising as an independent social force, armed with a revolutionary political strategy that would undermine both of these organisations.

In the face of the present financial meltdown, neither the government nor the LTTE can achieve these respective aims by democratic means, and both sides will stop at nothing to consolidate, on the one hand, the supremacist rule of Sinhala capitalists, and on the other, the ethnic nationalist rule of Tamil separatists. It is telling that the LTTE would so violently attack the right of the SEP—and any other party—to unite, organise and rally Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim workers and students against the Rajapakse government and its imperialist backers. It is a position that indicates, above all, that the LTTE has no interest in democratic rights or civil liberties at all.

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wws.org/contact