

ஈழ மக்கள் செய்தி தொடர்பு நிலையம்

EELAM PEOPLE'S INFORMATION CENTRE



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Militancy — the last way out

Madras:

IS Eelam negotiable, is Jaffna peninsula under the control of any particular single militant group, what is the root cause of the internecine clashes between different Tamil militant groups, does Jayawardene sincerely want to settle the ethnic crisis, can the Eelam struggle be compared with the Khalistani struggle, in an exclusive interview with our staff correspondent S Dorairaj, Secretary General of the Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), K Padmanabha responds to these questions. Excerpts of the interview.

Question: How do you characterise the present situation in Sri Lanka?

Answer: Two distinct tendencies are seen in Sri Lanka, one in the Tamil areas of the North and Eastern provinces and parts of the Central highlands and the other in the rest of the country.

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The nationality problem has further intensified. A further widening and deepening of national oppression has come to encompass the entirety of the people. The situation can be characterised by an intensification of military offensive on all fronts and stiff resistance from our side.

This situation is continuing despite the so called peace talks which make one wonder whether the peace process can at all be used to solve the crisis. Practically there has been no peace for our people.

As far as the people of the central highlands, the plantation hills are concerned, they seem to be inseparably linked to the people of Eelam with the same. They are continuing to face the dual oppression of being subjugated as a Tamil people and exploited as a class while the people in the South districts particularly the political activists, human rights activists are facing repressive actions of the Jayawardene regime. These Sinhalese have been highlighting the neo-facist character of the Jayawardene regime and trying to expose and present before the Sinhala masses the problems faced by their Tamil brethren in the North East and Central provinces. Over the last three-

four months about 500 persons have been arrested in the South.

Q: There have been reports that a particular Tamil militant is extremely powerful. In the north and the entire Jaffna peninsula is under its comprehensive control. Would that be correct?

A: This is not at all true. The armed struggle in the North is conducted by different groups. No individual group can claim that it is extremely powerful. However it can be said that both the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the EPRLF are military-wise stronger than the other groups. It can also be said that the EPRLF enjoys bigger mass backing there as in the East. It will be wrong to claim that the armed forces have been completely driven out of Jaffna. On the contrary, they continue to resort to shelling from the army camps and at times even try to come out of their camps. But they could not succeed due to the collective strength of the Tamil militants.

Q: How is the balance of forces in the Eastern province?

A: In the Eastern province the army has stepped up its operations. The military is trying to take advantage of the geographical position of the Eastern side. And lack of transportation and communication facilities pose a big problem to the militants. Besides this, the Government itself has been fanning up communal clashes between the Muslims and the Hindus including Tamils. Though the Islamic Fundamentalists and the Buddhist Revivalists are backing the Government, poor peasants and landless agricultural workers among the Muslims are with the militants.

Q: What is the root cause of the internecine clashes between different Tamil groups. Don't you think such clashes would tarnish the image of these groups.

A: These clashes will definitely lower the prestige of the militant groups and demoralise the people. The reason for the clashes are the weaknesses within the militant organisations, particularly those who feel that they can impose their hegemony over the entire movement through the barrel of the gun. This tendency is represented by one section of the liberation movement.

Secondly, the external elements who highlight these weakness and feel that such organisations can be manoeuvred and exploited to further Weaken the struggle. This tendency is represented by the Sri Lankan Government. Thirdly, the imperialist forces which in addition to strengthening the Sri Lankan Government would also like to see that they wield some influence within the liberation movements.



Q: Do you think that the fight for separate Eelam can be continued on a political front under the present circumstances?

A: We sincerely believe in that because ours is a struggle based on justice. Temporary setbacks cannot deter us from marching towards our ultimate goal. Ours is also a mass struggle. The masses are very much with us.

Q: What is your assessment of the talks between the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and the UNP regime? Will Jayawardene sincerely resort to efforts to settle the ethnic issue?

A: Nothing will emerge from the current talks between Government and the TULF representatives. The basic question is whether the TULF can represent a national movement. In fact it seems to reflect its on parochial interest or class interest that it represents. It can be con-

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சமதாய் மறுத்தை நிர்மாணம் செய்வோம்.**

sidered as a talk between the TULF, an exparliamentary party which has lost the support of the masses and the UNP, a ruling party which is losing the support of the masses.

Q: What is the political ideology of the EPRLF? Are the Tamil militants divided between nationalists and socialists?

A: There is a general opinion that either our struggle is entirely a resistant movement against State terrorism or entirely a separatist movement. EPRLF's position negates both. We are not demanding a separate State of Eelam as a birth right. Or because we are a distinct nationality. We are demanding a separate state of Eelam because we are an oppressed distinct nationality and all oppressed nationalities have the inalienable right of self-determination. So, ours is a national liberation movement. If the national oppression ceases to exist, the demand for a separate state ceases to be valid.

But in the present circumstances, the Sri Lanka Government lacks the capacity to solve the nationality problem within one country. And we have no option but to continue our armed struggle to create conditions for genuine peace. These conditions can be created only through fundamental transformation all over the country. Both the Sinhalese and Tamil nations have to undergo fundamental transformations. These processes have to be parallel to make a liberation movement. Our liberation concept does not exclude the progressive forces among the Sinhala people. The mobilising of the Sinhala masses towards an immediate transformation seems difficult at the moment. But we want to create these conditions which means, developing links with the progressive forces in the South. And this is what makes as different from other organisations.

Q: How do you evaluate India's initiative to bring about a solution to the ethnic problem? Do you think that the Indian Government has been pressurising the Tamil groups to accept any proposal put forward by President Jayewardene?

A: The Government of India has strengthened us at no stage. We have been extending our fullest cooperation to the efforts taken by the Indian Government to bring about a solution to the ethnic crisis. At the same time, we cannot shun our responsibility to defend

our people from the onslaught of the Sri Lanka Government.

Q: Attempts are being made to draw a parallel between the terrorist activities of the Khalistanis and the fight for Tamil Eelam. Certain elements in India have openly spelt out their plans to mobilise a private army led by Khalistanis to liberate Eelam. Do you think such a step would serve your purpose?

A: Recently there was a conference in the United States attended by Dr Subramaniam Swamy of the Hindustan Army, ex-army general Bhullar the president of the World Sikh Federation and members of certain Eelam expatriates. At this conference, Bhullar extended all practical support to the Eelam struggle. And Subramaniam Swamy also made a similar statement. Following this conference we issued a statement to the effect that while we solicit support from all progressive peoples of the world, we are wary of machinations and manoeuvres proposed by international reactionary forces to dilute and undermine the primacy of our struggle.

With regard to comparing our strug-

gle with that of the Khalistanis, it is uncomparable. These are two separate distinct situations. Ours is not a separatist movement. We see it as liberation movement. Secondly we see ourselves as an oppressed, distinct nationality. We have faced national oppression. We do not think that this situation applies to the Khalistani case although the Sikh people might have specific problems of their own which may distinct from other peoples of India. It certainly does not take on the dimensions and proportions of the type of oppression that our people faced in Sri Lanka.

Our case is very different as we have to place our struggle in the context of the Indian sub-continent. What are the forces which are supporting the separatist forces in India? What are the forces which are undermining peace and stability? The very forces which are supporting the Sri Lankan State are also trying to destabilise India, undermine India's anti-imperialist foreign policy which has been a nuisance value to the imperialist block. They always wanted to undermine India's role in the international arena. We cannot be a party to this.

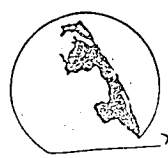
தினமணி, சென்னை, ஞாயிற்றுக்கிழமை, அக்டோபர் 19, 1986

போராளி தாக்குதலால் வவுனியா ராணுவ முகாம் முடப்பட்டது

சென்னை, அக். 18— யேறி மாங்குளம் ராணுவ ஈழமக்கள் புரட்சிகர விடுதலை முகாமை சென்றடைந்தனர். முன்னணி மக்கள் விடுதலைப் படைகள் இத்தாக்குதலில் மக்கள் படையின் தாக்குதலால் வவுனியா மாவட்டத்தில் திறக்கப் பட்டவிருந்த ராணுவ முகாம் முடப்பட்டது. போராளிகள் தாக்குதலால் புதியதாக திறக்கப்பட்டவிருந்த ராணுவ முகாம் ஒன்று முடப்பட்டது இதுவே முதற் தடவையாகும் என்று ஈழமக்கள் புரட்சிகர விடுதலை முன்னணி தெரிவித்துள்ளது. வவுனியா மாவட்டத்தில் உள்ள மாங்குளம் ராணுவ முகாமிலிருந்து புறப்பட்ட முன்னூறு ராணுவத்தினர் வன் விவிளான் குளம் என்னுமிடத்தில் உள்ள பாடசாலையிலும், அதனருகிலுள்ள கோவிலிலும் புதிய மினி ராணுவ முகாம் ஒன்றை அமைக்கும் முயற்சியில் ஈடுபட்டனர். இச்செய்தியை அறிந்த ஈழமக்கள் புரட்சிகர விடுதலை முன்னணியின் மக்கள் விடுதலைப் படையினர் மிகப் பெரிய தாக்குதல் ஒன்றை ராணுவத்தினர் மீது மேற்கொண்டனர்.

இத்தாக்குதல் நடைபெற்றுக் கொண்டிருக்கும்போது ஏனைய முகாம்களிலிருந்து ராணுவத்தினர் உதவிக்கு வந்து விடாமல் தடை செய்வதற்காக மாங்குளம், துணுக்காய் வீதியில் உள்ள இரண்டு பாலங்களும் தகர்க்கப்பட்டன. இத்தாக்குதலில் ராணுவத்தினர் பலர் காயமடைந்தனர். இத்தாக்குதலை அடுத்து வன்னி விளான் குளத்தில் அமைக்கப்பட்ட ராணுவ முகாமை விட்டு ராணுவத்தினர் வெளி

Sri Lanka soldiers clash with EPRLF men 16-10-1986
THE HINDU MADRAS, Oct. 15.
Clashes broke out between Sri Lankan soldiers and members of Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front yesterday at Periyathambannai in Vavuniya district, according to the EPRLF here today.
A press release said that the Sri Lankan army consisting of a contingent of about 500 soldiers withdrew after the EPRLF's onslaught. Later, two Sri Lankan bomber planes and two helicopter gunships strafed the area in which an EPRLF camp was damaged.



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