

STOP ALL MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST
THE TAMILS !

GRANT THE JUST DEMANDS OF TAMILS :

WORKING-CLASS INTERVENTION ON THE SIDE
OF THE TAMILS UNPOSTPONABLE !

Only the possible adverse international repercussions has temporarily halted the murderous military operations of the Jayewardene UNP regime in its genocidal action against the Tamil people who are demanding their just rights and the ending of 4 years of systematic atrocities against them by the brutalised armed forces of this regime.

The violation of Sri Lankan Air-space by India through Air droppings of Food Rations to the beleaguered people of Jaffna was clearly conditioned by the growing anti-Indian, and pro-U.S. imperialist policies of the Jayewardene Government.

While the Indian action served as a contributory factor in the temporary suspension of the military operations, it has been used by Jayewardene, who has long ago bartered away the Independence of Sri Lanka to U.S. imperialism, to pose as its defender, and to step up anti-Indian and anti-Tamil, and pro-Sinhala chauvinist campaigning in the country. And, it has been the fact that the capitulation of large sections of the Sinhala working-class to Sinhala chauvinism has seriously undermined the development of the class-struggle and the blocking the road to the Sinhala working-class and toilers solidarising with, and supporting the Tamil liberation struggle.

Thanks to certain sections of international news media, it has not been possible for the Jayewardene regime to mask the reality of the unprecedented slaughter of the Tamils, it has perpetrated through its military operations.

This military operations which had in fact commenced from the beginning of March (1987) has from the out-set resulted in the killing of several hundreds of Tamil people, very largely civilians, and the maiming for life of many more hundreds; the whole-sale destruction of hundreds of dwelling houses of the Tamil people, their business houses, shops, temples and hospitals.

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Among the notable exploits during this military operations is the execution by UNP goondas of 43 Tamils, inside the hospital of the "sacred city" of Anuradhapura, where they had been transported from the North, allegedly for medical treatment. And it was during these same days that Jayewardene's army-men added to their heroic deeds the gunning down to death of 7 young boys inside the army detention-camp at Boosa (South Sri Lanka). The seven boys were among 4000 other very young boys indiscriminately collected by the armed forces from among the innocent civilians in the North - the so-called army camp at Boosa being an abandoned old ware-house simply inconcievable as a human habitation.

This genocidal military operations by the Jayewardene UNP regime is comparable (albeit on a different scale) only to the physical extermination of the 6 million Jews in Hitlers Gas Chambers during World War II. It is now well known that Hitler demanded it, Himmler ordered it - Adolf Eichman did it. Even so, it is now the truth that the United National Party racialists demanded the genocide of the Tamils, Jayewardene ordered it - "War" Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali achieved much sucess in doing it.

It was not just a six day military operations begun on 26 May that was suspended shortly after the Indian incident of June 4 (1987). It is too well known, that during the 3 months preceding, from the beginning of March (1987) that, the much dreaded military operations of Jayewardene was launched with the massing of about 5000 troops, with Air bombings, commencing geographically from the Southern borders of the Tamil predominant Northern Province.

And it was in preparation for this major military offensive that the Jayewardene regime imposed an economic blockade of the Northern Province of about 850,000 Tamils, cutting off of all petroleum products to the Province, which meant the halting of all food transport to the Tamil people. This exercise commenced from January (1987).

Without much avail though, the Tamil people protested against this move by Jayewardene to bring death by starvation to their people. Usually the most articulate sections of the people, the students of colleges in the Jaffna Peninsula, boycotted classes in protest against

this fuel embargo. Protests came more forcefully from the Tamil predominant Batticaloa District of the Eastern Province. The 48-hour Hartal (work stoppage) brought the whole of the Batticaloa District to a crippling halt.

From the time the economic boycott commenced in January (1987), the Gandhi regime in India lodged strong protests and called upon the Sri Lankan Government to lift the ban. India further called upon Jayewardene to abandon his plan of military operations. But Jayewardene turned a deaf ear, as by now he was preparing to implement his plan of military action. And, this is precisely what Jayewardene did from January (1987) to June 4.

After remaining tongue-tied for 5 days after the Air-droppings of food rations by India, Jayewardene even then spoke, not to the people, but to his Parliamentary Group. Jayewardene said that "his Government did not wish that a single person, Indian or Sri Lankan, should be harmed - that was why he informed his people (after 5 days!) not to retaliate in any way, and that by "non-violence and truth" to persuade India" to do the correct thing by Sri Lanka.

Jayewardene talks of non-violence as his policy in regard to India, but during the last 4 years when India, intervening as a mediator at Sri Lanka Government's request, was urging him to abandon military action and seek a non-violent peaceful resolution of the Tamil problem, he continued nothing but a policy of violence against the Tamils.

The All Party Conference called by Jayewardene in 1984, direct talks between Jayewardene and Rajiv Gandhi, the Thimpu (Bhutan) Conference in which there were direct talks between the Sri Lanka Government representatives and delegates of Tamil Freedom Fighters, followed by many more discussions until the end of last year (1986) to work out a political solution to the Tamil National Problem - all these parleys were only a game that Jayewardene was playing.

It was not at all the truth that it was the intransigence of the Tamil fighting groups that led to failure to arrive at a political solution. It was the fact that these fighting groups participated in

negotiations for less than their goal - they negotiated for regional autonomy, and up to date, may be, their readiness to negotiate on such a basis remains.

The truth was and remains that Jayewardene's rooted Sinhala chauvinism and his links with the most reactionary sections of the Sinhala chauvinists demands his resistance to any "concessions" to the Tamils, and the continuation of Tamil oppression as State policy.

And the game that Jayewardene was playing during all his talks and discussions, was to gain time until he was sufficiently ready to launch effective military operations to disrupt and destroy the Tamil Liberation Struggle.

Quite for some time, after 1983, Jayewardene could not seriously think of a military solution. This was not because he was opposed to such a solution. Not at all. The only reason was that the armed forces of the Jayewardene regime were insufficient and ill equipped for an all out offensive against the Tamil guerillas - a force of about 10,000 armed youth who had dedicated themselves - to their cause.

Before 1983/84, the Sri Lankan army was largely a ceremonial army, with limited training and weaponry. But soon Jayewardene began to take meaningful steps to change this situation. Today, the armed forces man power exceeds 35,000. The Police has grown in size to 20,000 which includes over 1000 in a Special Task Force personnel, especially charged with "counter-insurgency". The civilian militia of the Government (Home Guards) have been formed, especially in the East and their size now approaches 15,000.

As for training of armed forces, for a long time now, all recruits are sent regularly to Pakistan where U.S. imperialism has a team of experts on a virtual permanent assignment. Also, for some time now, the Israel Secret Service - the Mossad and the British ex-S.A.S. Commandos have been employed as regular Instructors in "anti-guerilla fighting". And with regard to training in the use of military Air Craft and Helicopter Gunships, the U.S. Air Force Instructors make their regular visits to Sri Lanka in that regard.

How seriously Jayewardene got his regime into a state of readiness for his military solution is more clearly manifested by the spectacular escalation of "Defense" expenditure from Rs.500 million in 1977 to more than a 20 times increase, i.e. to Rs.15 billion, or 35% of the domestic budget as at today.

By the end of 1986 (last year), Jayewardene was confident that the time had come to launch military operations. The dreadful question of the heavy civilian casualties that would follow in the wake of such an all out offensive was simply irrelevant to Jayewardene, the devotee of Theravada Buddhism, and also to his co-horts who are regularly seen in the Shrine Rooms of Buddhist temples invoking the Buddhist principles of non-violence and "Maithri" (compassion).

With a rare ruthlessness, after bringing death and devastation to a larger part of the Tamil dominated Northern Province, Jayewardene looked forward gleefully for the final phase of this offensive - to capture militarily the Jaffna Peninsula. Speaking to a gathering of conservative Bankers in Colombo (May 28), Jayewardene said "We have decided to fight. And the fight will go on until either they or we win". Three days later (May 31) Jayewardene, seeing the vision of victory and enlivened with the smell of the blood of Tamil people, added "It is over our dead bodies that our freedom and unitary status can be destroyed..... we will not allow that to happen. If we were to allow that, I and my Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentary group and the UNP will have to be prepared to sacrifice our lives".

However, three days after the air-droppings of food rations by India both Foreign Minister Hameed and "War" Minister Athulathmudali announced that military operations in the North was over, adding that it was now a question of consolidation. Minister Athulathmudali also said that they would not take over Jaffna town militarily - that they had no such intentions; also that, in any case, they had not the forces to keep control of Jaffna militarily !

Incidentally, no victories or defeats were announced by the government. But we are told that the military operations are over. What then has happened to the fight to a finish? No one knows !

Also, no dead bodies of the President or his brave Cabinet Ministers have been seen! None of them have sacrificed their lives to retain the independence of Sri Lanka or its unitary State! On the other hand, the armed forces of Jayewardene have made dead bodies of hundreds of Tamil people who have sacrificed their lives for the liberation of the Tamils from Sinhala bourgeois slavery.

In any event, with the mask of the non-violent Buddhist completely off, it is simply madness to ask Jayewardene and his blood thirsty Cabinet stooges to consider a political solution. It will be once again a useless exercise for Rajiv Gandhi and his government to engage in discussions on this issue with the Jayewardene regime.

In this context, what is relevant for the Tamil people, the Tamil Liberation Fighters and all the workers and toilers of Sri Lanka is to organise struggle for the overthrow of this dictatorial fascistic Jayewardene regime. Such a task cannot be assigned to the Indian bourgeois Government or any other Government. It is unquestionably the unpostponable task of the workers and toilers of all communities in the whole of Sri Lanka.

It is time for the Sinhala workers and toilers in this country to understand that Jayewardene and his fascistic regime is their enemy. It is time that the Sinhala workers and toilers who are a majority in relation to the Tamil people understand that they cannot look on while Jayewardene is engaged in the slaughter of the Tamils and in the destruction of the liberation struggle of the Tamils.

The struggle of the Tamils for their just rights - the right to a separate State is inextricably linked to their struggle against capitalist oppression by the dictatorial Jayewardene regime for the last decade. And, in this regard it is relevant to repeat a thousand times the profound truth uttered by Marx in regard to the struggle of the Irish people against British imperialists - "What a misfortune it is for a Nation to have subjugated another". Also speaking to the English workers, Lenin echoed Marx - "The English reaction in England had its roots in the subjugation of Ireland".

Stating more specifically, the Presidential dictatorship of Jayewardene, his withdrawal of virtually all the important democratic rights of the people, the illegalisation of strikes, the sacking of over 100,000 workers who went on strike in 1980, the suppression and violence against the University students, the arrest and detention without trial of hundreds of Sinhala youth and workers in the South - all this unprecedented repression, is inextricably linked to the denial of the just rights of the Tamils, their systematic repression and the genocidal war against the Tamils.

Undoubtedly, the failure of the working class and toilers to come to the protection and defence of the Tamils in this military suppression, is the failure of the leaders of so-called Left parties that have directly or indirectly capitulated to Sinhala chauvinism, and in that way, lending their support to all bourgeois governments including the Jayewardene fascistic regime in its suppression of the Tamils.

The Tamil peoples armed struggle is a just struggle for their just demands for equal rights and self determination, which has no other meaning than the right to a separate State. Whether the Tamil liberation fighters insist on their demand for a separate Tamil State, or are willing to negotiate on a suitable form of regional autonomy - that is their choice. Under all circumstances, the Tamil workers and toilers are aware that their closest allies are the workers and toilers of the whole of Sri Lanka.

The emancipation of the Sinhala workers and toilers cannot be otherwise than through the overthrow of capitalist class rule, and concretely today this means the overthrow of the fascistic Jayewardene regime. Similarly, the real liberation of the Tamil workers and toilers is through the overthrow of capitalist class rule and the achievement of socialism. Thus, the aims and the related tasks of the Sinhala workers and toilers converge with the aims and tasks of the Tamil workers and toilers.

Thus, the defence of their own vital interests for the Sinhala workers and toilers is to start from today the defense of the Tamils from their military oppression by the Jayewardene regime on the basis of the recognition of the just rights of the Tamils - concretised in their right to a separate State. It is this struggle for the defense of the Tamils that the workers and toilers of the whole of Sri Lanka must develop into the joint struggle with the Tamils for the overthrow of the fascistic Jayewardene regime and the achievement of a workers and peasants government in the perspective of Socialism.

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