

Left failed to champion the Tamil cause

Friday 26 June 2009, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 7 May 2009).

Some Left oriented analysts argue that the biggest obstacle to the international working class and trade unions to intervene in the Lankan conflict is not the lack of approach from the Tamil polity, but the huge mobilisation of almost all the groups of working people and their political representatives (JVP, CP, LSSP, Vasudeva, DLF, SLFP trade unions, even the Indian workers of Tamil origin with their leaders holding cabinet positions in the Mahinda regime, etc) behind Mahinda Rajapaksa. They further argue that the entire rural peasantry - without any progressive political leadership on this question - was mobilised by the Sinhala bourgeois to give away their underlings to provide fighters to the army.

Primary for victory

It is obvious that the support of the workers' parties and organisations was primary for the victory of the Sinhala armed forces. But then in Israel too all so called Communists, Socialists and Democrats supported the basic policy of Zionism. But that did not affect the international solidarity of the Palestinian people. The national deprivation of the Palestinian people has been well documented and very widely taken to the international workers movement.

Palestinian solidarity in the entire developed world is conducted by far Left groups. The Fourth International and associated groups play a very important role in making the people aware of the injustice done to the Palestinian people. This is in spite of the fact that prominent Left parties in Israel basically support the Israel foreign policy.

Let us look at the policy of Hadash, the socialist alliance in Israel - "The party supports evacuation of all Israeli settlements, a complete withdrawal by Israel from all territories occupied as a result of the Six-Day War, and the establishment of a Palestinian state in those territories.

It also supports the right of return or compensation for Palestinian refugees. In addition to issues of peace and security, Hadash is also known for being active on social and environmental issues. Hadash defines itself as a non-Zionist party, originally in keeping with Marxist opposition to nationalism. It calls for recognition of Palestinian Arabs as a national minority within Israel." Now in relation to the Tamil national problem the position of the old Sama Samaja communist parties (Vasudeva included) is very similar. Also, Hadash is not involved in Palestine solidarity work. And they behave very much like the old Left in Lanka. But in spite of that Palestinians have developed an important voice internationally. Significantly, this was through the activities of all radical Marxist contacts in the West and elsewhere.

In Lanka the division of international forces took a peculiar turn with a large number of countries with 'Left and liberationist' leaderships siding with the Mahinda regime. Mahinda took the Indian slogan of 'crush the terrorist and then give devolution' as his international trademark in addition to playing the underdog card in relation to the Western powers.

Old Left betrayed

Many countries which consistently sided with the Palestinian liberation organisation and the Palestinian people voted with the Lankan resolution. These countries have not seen the similarity

between the plight of the Tamil people and that of the Palestinian people. In fact they have seen just the opposite: Sinhala underdogs fighting against Tamil aggression backed by global powers! This is not entirely due to the betrayal of the old Left. Of course the old Left betrayed the Tamil people by joining with racist parties in a ruling bourgeoisie coalition.

But in comparison with the Palestinian issue it shows that there are other problems which have to be discussed if one is serious about liberating the Tamil people.

In February 2009, I addressed the International Committee of the Fourth International on the Tamil national problem. Of course they supported my resolution but I was surprised when Pierre Rouse and other leaders of the ACP, the party of Oliver the postman, said that they were not aware of the gravity of the problem! Of course the NSSP is also at fault. But what about the Tamils, the over one-hundred-thousand, living in Paris and other cities of France?

P.S.

* From Lakkbimanews column 7 June 2009.