

தமிழர் விடுதலைக் கூட்டணி
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Comrade Somawansa Amarasinghe,
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Dear Comrades,

SOLUTION TO THE ETHNIC PROBLEM IS IN THE HANDS OF THE JVP

It is with mixed feeling that I read your statement, released on the eve of the Peace Talks in Geneva. I am pleased with the boldness with which you have expressed your views relating to the Dictatorial regime illegally established by the LTTE in parts of the Northern and Eastern Provinces but disappointed a little with some others. I am indeed happy about your conceding that the people who have suffered the most in the war have been those in the North and East. I am in full agreement with you that a large number of Tamils from these areas, ran away due to the erosion of democratic rights and settled either in other parts of Sri Lanka or migrated to foreign countries. To add to your views, interference with the fundamental rights of the people and large scale Human Rights violations can also be attributed for this exodus. I do not deny that those who settled within Sri Lanka are living peacefully with the other ethnic groups who have happily welcomed them in their midst, with sympathy and affection. It is evident that the country is gradually getting united and shunning communalism.

I too regret the mass exodus and the brain drain of Tamils and strongly urge that everyone who loves the country and wants peace should help to make it possible for them to return to their mother land, by removing the impediments that stand on their way. The need for their return is now felt more than ever before, seeing the calibre of persons who are taking part in the negotiations and their capacity to present their case for a negotiated settlement. It is a pity to see the present state of the Tamil community. It was once enriched with highly educated Scholars, Professors, Academics, Judges, lawyers and many others who had specialized in various fields, most of whom have either been silenced by the LTTE's bullets or migrated to foreign countries. The remaining few dare not open their mouths against the LTTE.

It is wrong even to assume, that the meetings in Geneva will remove the impediments there, for all the people of Sri Lanka to enjoy all their rights because Mr. S.P. Thamilselvan before

being brought to Colombo by a Sri Lanka Air Force helicopter had issued a statement to say that they will discuss the proper implementation of the CFA only and nothing else. Please note that the SLMM, a creation of the CFA composed of representatives of Nordic countries has attributed to the LTTE, over three thousand (3000) serious violations. It may not be irrelevant to mention here that the SLMM pointed an accusing finger at the LTTE for firing a few shots at a Sri Lankan Air Force owned helicopter.

The time has now come for all the Political parties and the people to forget all their political and other differences and to get together to help to liberate the Tamils from the iron clutches of the LTTE. Let it not appear that one ethnic group grants the rights to the other ethnic groups. It should appear as if all ethnic groups share power and enjoy equal rights irrespective of whatever ethnic or religious group, one may belong to.

As a Tamil I am ashamed of what had happened to the Muslim and Sinhalese of the North. It is a disgrace for the Tamils, if the Sinhalese and Muslim students are not assured of full protection by the LTTE. The responsibility is theirs because the people will not dare to do a thing that will not be pleasing to the LTTE cadre. No one has any right to drive away a person from any part of the country. I am sure that you will feel for the sorry-plight of the Tamils and Muslims whose democratic rights had been seriously violated. No parents will be prepared to part with their children. But the LTTE that had already sacrificed over eighteen thousand Tamil youths in the war front, do not utter one word about their killings of a substantial number of youths from other groups, which will be also a few thousands. During the period of ceasefire they had abducted one thousand seven hundred innocent children of poor families and Tsunami orphans, depriving them of all their rights and recruited them by force as child soldiers, to be used as cannon fodder. Apart from this, over six hundred(600) adults too had been abducted with their fate also not known. It is regrettable to note that the children of the leaders are exempted from conscription. Is there no remedy or end to these activities? is the question often asked by everyboby from everywhere. My answer is that there is a solution if only the Janatha Vimukthi Peremuna will show some sympathy towards these unfortunate Tamils and Muslims. You know the suffering of our people in minute detail. Yet I list out some for your information.

The sufferings of the Tamils did not start with the LTTE taking over some areas in the North and East. In the seventies with the assassination of the Ex Mayor of Jaffna Mr. Alfred Thuraiappa, killings started. The Government forces retaliated and due to the foolish administrative orders a number of Tamil youth were killed in the seventees. Since then there were killings on both sides mostly retaliatory killings. In July 1983 with the killings of 13 soldiers by the LTTE's claymore mine attack communal riots broke out. No one can forget the black July, 1983 during which the worst of all communal riots took place. During this periods thousands of Tamils were killed and billions worth of property belonging to the Tamils, destroyed.

It is only after the riots of July- August, 1983 we, the 17 TULF members of Parliament quit office voluntarily, protesting against the referendum, held to extend the term of Parliament.

From then onwards the militants took over the leadership of the Tamils. Things would have been different today if the LTTE had not started killing leaders and Members of the other groups, to gain superiority over others. Since then there was blood shed every where in the North and the Es. Young boys and girls were killed. Youths from other Tamil Armed groups were killed. Men, women and children were killed. Respectable people tied to lamp posts and shot dead. Families destroyed. Houses destroyed. Widows and orphans were created in thousands. There were destitute persons everywhere . There was a mass exodus of Tamils to India. Many fled to foreign countries. Railway tracks were removed and sleepers, railings and pebbles on the track were all removed for the construction of bunkers. Telephone wire and electricity wires were removed to be used for making bombs and concrete posts removed and broken to be used for the construction of bunkers. The towns were deserted and became ghost towns. People lost all their belongings:- jewellery, books, life time savings, furniture etc. Houses were destroyed, window frames doors and roofs were removed. Some areas still look like ruined cities. People are living in refugee camps for years. Many became paupers over night. The Muslim of Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar who had to leave behind everything and go with only Rs. 500 are still in refugee camps for several years, without privacy or any comfort. The people know that all these suffering are not created by one party. It is a question of whether it is the hen or egg that came first. The number of people killed by the army or police cannot be even a small fraction of the number killed by the LTTE, which gave different interpretations for the destruction of Human life and property by them and by the forces. All what they did and still do help to glorify them and any thing done in retaliation is condemned as treacherous. The net loss to the Tamils and Muslims in the North amounts to many billions of dollars. Human life lost according to official figures is 60 - 70 thousands . It is certainly much more, if the unaccounted killings are also taken into account.

I am asking you one simple question. Did the Tamils endure all these for over 23 years only to be told to find a solution under the Unitary system, which did not bring any relief for fifty years. I guarantee you that the Tamils will never agree for a unitary constitution as a solution to our problem and that is a justifiable stand. They are prepared to give up separation as an alternative to a Federal Constitution. If the word “Federal” is allergic to some Sinhalese and “Unitary” allergic to some Tamils let us all agree to find a solution based on the Indian model which is neither Federal nor Unitary in character. The Indians take pride in saying that their constitution is based on “Unity in diversity” which will be welcomed by most of the Sri Lankan also. I very humbly plead with you to change your stand in the interest of our country, to have the country united, to find a solution to the suffering Tamils and Muslims and to free them from the LTTE’s bondage. The whole world will acclaim you all as true patriots, if you accept my proposal as the final solution to our problem. By your refusal to accept a solution within a United Sri Lanka, you will be driving the Tamils back into the LTTE fold. Merely because I am no more in Parliament, the reason for which is very well known to the world, please do not discard me and my views. If you do so, you will be conceding the LTTE as the sole representatives of the Tamil people. I may not live long to see the dawn of peace in our country. But if you take my advice a solution to our problem is very near. You may recall that I had been repeatedly saying that Peace is knocking at our door and it is left to us whether to let it in or shut it out.

I mentioned that I read your statement with mixed feelings because although I appreciated and agreed on many of your views I am sorry I cannot agree with your claims that the mandate was given at the recent Presidential Election for a Unitary State. Assuming that all the 50.3 % votes obtained by H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa was for a Unitary State, the fact that in the North East the LTTE had prevented under threat, 3-4 hundred thousand voters from voting, cannot be ignored. On the other hand the UNP offered Federalism as a solution to

the ethnic problem at the Presidential Election campaign. The left parties also during the elections openly said that they were not bound to accept the Unitary State concept. The Jathika Hela Urumaya too during the Election campaign indicated their support for an Indian Model . Above all the Sri Lanka Freedom Party had at their last convention adopted a resolution to offer “Federal Constitution” as a solution to the ethnic problem. One important factor that we should not fail to take into consideration is that, this is the first time in the history of Sri Lanka Federalism is offered as a solution to the ethnic problem at an important election. A massive mandate was given to H.E. the President to solve the problem with the support of all the parties, based on federalism.

I earnestly appeal to you to agree to my proposal to adopt the Indian Model taking into consideration (i) That the plight of the Tamils and the Muslims of the North and East is very pathetic and should come to end. (ii) That the Unitary System has failed to solve the problem these 50 years and bound to go on for another 50 year. (iii) That if agreed to by the JVP solution can be found in a very short period (iv) That the International Community is insisting on a United Sri Lanka and will not support separation (v) That the Indian Government too will support a solution within a United Sri Lanka and will oppose separation (vi) That the support of the International Community will be available to pressurize the LTTE to accept this and a number of other advantages too will be available.

You are well aware that without any reservations I used to confide in you all what I think about the ethnic problem and other related matters. Please pardon me if you find my observation unacceptable or offending to you. But one day, after I am dead and gone not only you all, everyone in this country including those Tamils who blindly support the LTTE out of fear and some for personal gains, will regret their mistake of not heeding my advice. When the Tamil media branded you and your party as chauvinistic, it was I who had been defending you. I still stand by it. Your statement exonerates you from the charge of being communal. What the Tamil media say about me I do not bother. I have a duty by our people which I must do till I breath my last, inspite of the humiliation and embarrassment they cause me.

There is a new generation coming up among the Tamils thoroughly brain washed and communal venom injected by the LTTE. These children should be saved from them before it is too late. The communal venom in them should be neutralized and innocent children redeemed during my lifetime.

I think I have the capacity and the experience to advice you on Political matters and my advice will be beneficial to you and for your party in the long run. I have lived with Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims and also studied together with Sinhalese Tamils, and Muslims. I studied under Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim teachers and as a teachers taught Sinhalese Tamil and Muslim students. Therefore I know very much about these communities.

In Politics my experience is certainly much more then anyone of you in your party. Of my 73 years in this world over fifty years had been devoted to Politics and social work. I am the most senior Tamil Politician and Parliamentarian still active in Politics. Of the 14 Parliamentary elections I had contested eleven, since 1960 and won all election after 1970 held fairly and freely. I had been in Parliament with all Prime Ministers except the first three. Above all I had the privilege of being in Parliament with all top leader of all Political parties and had been associated with all Presidents of our country. I was very close to the two well respected Tamil Leaders Hon.G.G. Ponnambalam QC the founder of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and Hon S.J.V. Chelvanayagam founder of the Federal Party who later founded the Tamil United Liberation Front of which I was a founder member. I first

represented the ACTC and later the TULF in Parliament .When I first contested the Colombo Municipal Council Election, except Comrade Somawansa, I don't think any one of you was born. My long experience as a Politician and the contacts I had with top level and reputed Political Leaders will prove to be beneficial to you and your party and will never turn out to be detrimental to your course. Hence you need not hesitate to take my advice. If you will give me a chance to meet your Politburo or Central Committee I will be too glade to do so.

Thanking you
Your's sincerely

V. Anandasangree.
President
TULF