

# Sri Lanka: An all-out political confrontation?

Wednesday 1 September 2010, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 29 August 2010).

Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, deputy leader of the UNP in a statement last Saturday, called on all opposition parties to unite shedding their differences. The statement indicated that the time is opportune for all Lankan political forces, who are opposed to the tyrannical course the present regime has set for this country, to come together to preserve the future of this nation. It further explained that Lanka is in the midst of a crisis and the euphoria of the war victory can no longer overshadow the grave economic peril, the lawlessness and obvious power hunger.

Karu is a nice bourgeoisie gentleman. He was a contemporary of mine at Ananda College, but we got to know each other only when we got elected to the Colombo Municipal Council. As the Mayor of Colombo, he was receptive and considerate. So naturally I have taken his appeal seriously. However, while he condemned this government of Mahinda as being tyrannical, his leader with a substantial delegation was having a cordial but earnest discussion on constitutional reforms. As one daily paper reported "The government would present a cabinet paper shortly seeking to amend the Constitution whereby the restriction on the number of terms of a president would be removed and the executive presidency would remain, president Mahinda Rajapaksa had told the Opposition yesterday. He had informed that a draft of the cabinet paper would be given to the Opposition for reference before it would be submitted to the cabinet for approval. However, the delegation had told the president that they needed the approval of working committees to discuss the amendments proposed by the president. The president had reportedly said this when he met the UNP delegation led by opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe and Rauff Hakeem at Temple Trees yesterday." I am sure the people reading these two news items will be confused as to what is really happening.

## Common thrust

If the government is tyrannical and corrupt beyond redemption; is there any purpose of having discussions on the serious subject of political power itself. On the other hand, if UNP leaders believe that a lot could still be done by discussions and negotiations, then why are they calling us to join a battle front? I can understand that in order to facilitate and expedite reformist oriented negotiations, a common thrust could be organized using political parties and democratic civil organisations. In the latter case, the purpose is to pressure the regime and make it more democratic. However, the statement does not say so. It certainly arouses us to prepare for the kill, an all-out political confrontation in the name of saving the nation.

Certainly, we are prepared to come out for a political confrontation with this government. We have said that before and in fact supported every democratic struggle against this government. I believe this government is oppressive not only for the Tamil speaking people but also to workers, peasants and fisher folk in general. It is necessary to replace this government with a democratic anti global capitalist regime. It should be possible for the Left to struggle together with people such as Karu with his vision given in the statement. Though he is for an open economy we could find common slogans to go among the masses. However, do others in the UNP believe that this regime is tyrannical, lawless and power hungry? Do they accept that the economy is moving towards disaster? If so, then they will have to explain to us the purpose of negotiations that they are conducting with the leader of tyranny and peril! We experienced before the taste of a bitter let-down, when the leader of the opposition participated in discussions, while we were marching in the streets

challenging the orders of the same tyrannical regime.

## **Strained**

Again and again the unity in the street was strained by the actions of the UNP leadership. I believe this order of things should be changed in future united action programmes.

Then we have another problem. We are struggling for democracy. The biggest problem of democracy we are facing is the Tamil national problem. But it is on that issue the opposition is heavily divided. On the other hand, it is by the genocidal war that Mahinda has stabilized his tyrannical state. He continually poses as the champion of Sinhala hegemony and the hero of the genocidal attack on Tamil nationality. It is the base of his power, and that is used to neutralize the proletarian militancy. As long as the opposition hails the victory of Sinhala chauvinism, it cannot really challenge the Mahinda regime. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna is incapable of dissociating from the strategy of Mahinda due to this political weakness. The truth is, though Tamil Tigers were eliminated by genocidal attacks, the claim of Tamil nationality is still alive and kicking. One million Tamil Diaspora is in one way or the other, still spending millions to canvass for the independence of the Lankan Tamil nation. Even the TNA has not abandoned the campaign for Tamil freedom. We are heavily in debt and the economy is in crisis. In the meantime Mahinda has become a puppet of India and of global capitalism. In other words, the whole country has lost its freedom to the global masters. So, are we prepared to challenge the ideology and the international forces behind the tyrannical state of Mahinda? The opposition has to discuss all this in the course of building a united campaign against the regime.

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\* From Lankabima news 29 August 2010 column.