On the Appointment of Hon. Sambandan as Leader of the Opposition:

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The Appointment of Hon. Sambandan as Leader of the Opposition has elicited arguments both in favour and against. One argument made by people such as Dr. Dayan Jayatileke is that this appointment has deprived the Sinhala-Buddhist majority that had voted for the UPFA of its sovereignty. This is a lame argument. The UPFA, *as a party*, has decided to join the so-called ‘national government’. How then can a party that is part of the government function as the Opposition? Only the pro-Mahinda UPFA rump is in the Opposition, along with the TNA/ITAK and the JVP. Not only is this argument stupid, it reveals the extent that the pro-Mahinda camp shall sell its intellectual soul to the devil just to destabilize the new government by inciting chauvinism and preserve some chance of returning to power. This is part of the good doctor’s convoluted and revolting racist gimmickry which he displays with such comic intellectual sophistry, just to fall in line for his supper.

The second argument is positive. It is that this appointment confers high parliamentary legitimacy and responsibility to the TNA/ITAK Tamil leadership as an equal and integral partner of the State. It opens the door to a culture of cooperation, compromise and collaboration towards achieving reconciliation, based on a democratic political solution. It is seen as a beginning towards dismantling the chauvinist-supremacist, theocratic-hegemonic State constructed by Mahinda Rajapakse. This view, in my humble opinion, is positive, but it is myopic and fatally illusory. The new Sirisena-Ranil dispensation is as committed to the preservation of the chauvinist-supremacist, hegemonic, Unitary State, if not by conviction, then by the sheer logic of political survival.

The third argument requires elaboration. This argument does not care about the unfounded ruse that the appointment is not legitimate, although it may be legal, and that it has robbed the Sinhala-Buddhist majority of its sovereignty. This particular argument is as hollow as it is supremely hypocritical. Not a single major party in the fray has any regard for respecting popular sovereignty, even by conventional bourgeois democratic standards. At one time, the UNP under JR robbed the people’s sovereignty wholesale through the ruse of a referendum. The previous Rajapakse regime bribed, manipulated and robbed the people’s sovereignty by provoking defections from the Opposition to gain a 2/3 majority in Parliament. Then the Rajapakse government made a public mockery of popular sovereignty by using this illegitimate majority to adopt the 18th Amendment, which was designed to enthrone a dynastic dictatorship through perpetuity. The new government is also made up of mafia criminals rejected by the people. Even the JVP has nominated defeated candidates through the National List. So, let’s not go all high and mighty about popular sovereignty and honouring the democratic mandate of the people! This colonial State has been rigged up to rob the popular mandate and to make it serve to legitimize the rule of a parasitic and corrupt Comprador Capitalist ruling class and its class dictatorship, whatever the party, colour or personality!

There is both opportunity and danger in the appointment of Hon. Sambandan as the Leader of the Opposition. The opportunities are that this move affords a degree of constitutional legality and legitimacy to the national-democratic rights, demands and aspirations of the Tamil nation and its people, as presented by the TNA/ITAK mandate. It offers space for these rights, demands and aspirations to be represented formally and constitutionally, as opposed to being arbitrarily marginalized, wilfully manipulated and discarded , as by the previous regime. It may serve to deflect the raw edge of militant, feudal-tribal chauvinism and to promote a culture of coexistence and reconciliation. On the other hand, it may provide more ammunition to the neo-fascist vanguard to mobilize its Neanderthal political base by creating a constitutional crisis.

However, the TNA leadership, and Hon. Sambandan himself, would have to swear allegiance to the existing Constitution and to the Unitary State, including the 6th Amendment that prohibits the advocacy of the principle of self-determination and the aspiration of a separate state, even in a federal form. Then, he would have walked into a constitutional trap, where he would have to both honour the electoral mandate he received which articulated the demand for self-determination within a federal solution and the Constitutional provisions as specified. The election manifesto also called for an international investigation into violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws, as prescribed in the US resolution in Geneva. The Northern Provincial Council has also adopted a resolution against the genocide perpetrated against the Tamil nation and its people. How could the TNA imagine to carry out its mandate and sworn pledges to the Tamil people and still abide by the Constitution that outlaws that mandate, as the Leader of the Opposition? How to pledge allegiance to the Unitary State and abide by the 6th Amendment and still honour its mandate for self-determination and a separate state under a federal system of sharing power? The Sirisena-Ranil combine will ensure that the domestic investigation into violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity will be so diluted, that nothing will come out of it. They can go into a ‘Truth and Reconciliation’ facade and declare a General Amnesty, so all the war criminals, whether that of the Rjapakse Regime or of the LTTE, will just go scot free. Just as in almost all cases of such Presidential Commissions of Inquiry and other such tragi-comic mechanisms, Justice will NOT be served to the Tamil people or to Humanity under any Regime under this defunct neo-colonial State. Hon. Sambandan will have to hunt with the hounds *and* run with the rabbits at the same time. Perhaps it is that the TNA is trying to please the US, India and sections of the Comprador Diaspora by playing the game of appeasement, conciliation and compromise with the Sirisena-Ranil government. Perhaps it sees the position as the Leader of the Opposition as some fragile, though ‘dignified’ basis to gain legitimacy as a loyal and trusted bourgeois partner of the Capitalist State. Perhaps it sees this position as a source of leverage to serve the priority needs of the Tamil people in the North-East. Perhaps it is all about staying alive and surviving in power for its own selfish class interests. But, there will be a price to play for this folly. The oppressed Tamil masses, along with the oppressed people of Lanka shall realize the diabolical game being played with their lives, their freedom and their future. They shall decide to overthrow the table, drive out the masters and take command of their lives, their dreams and their future.

We shall not deny any democratic advantage that the Tamil nation may gain by the politics of compromise and appeasement. But, we shall not stand for any form of *capitulation* *and betrayal* to imperialism and the neo-colonial State. We shall stand and struggle with the oppressed Tamil people to win their fundamental democratic right of self-determination. We shall strive to integrate this struggle with the revolutionary class struggle of the people of Lanka to achieve a united, independent and democratic **People’s Republic of Lanka.**