Asian tsunami disaster: the political issues

SEP/WSWS public meeting in Ambalangoda, Sri Lanka

24 February 2005

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka is holding a public meeting in Ambalangoda, one of the south coast towns hard hit by the December 26 tsunami, to discuss the historical and political issues raised by the disaster.

Two months after the tsunami struck Sri Lanka and other countries in southern Asia, tens of thousands of survivors are still living from hand to mouth in makeshift conditions. Promises of aid have not materialised. Plans for new housing have been delayed. Fearing growing anger, the government has enacted sweeping emergency powers and put the army in charge of relief.

The political parties in Colombo and foreign powers alike have been exploiting the disaster for their own ends. The ruling United Peoples Freedom Alliance used the tragedy to appeal for “unity” and to stifle criticism of its policies. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has been hinting that the army should restart the war against a weakened Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The US has exploited the tragedy to reforge military links in South East Asia, dispatching its largest naval armada to the region since the Vietnam War.

The last priority is the plight of the victims, who overwhelmingly are from the poorest strata of society. This contempt and indifference simply underscores the fact that the ruling class has no solution to any of the immense social problems confronting working people. The WSWS/SEP meeting in Ambalangoda will advance a socialist alternative to poverty, social inequality and war.

The main report will be delivered by Wije Dias, SEP General Secretary and a member of the WSWS International Editorial Board.

Date and time: February 27, 4.00 p.m.
Venue: Town Hall, Ambalangoda

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