

“Only the SEP advances a clear program against war and social inequality”

Colombo meeting participants attracted to internationalism

Our correspondents
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World Socialist Web Site reporters spoke to a number of those who attended the final Socialist Equality Party (SEP) meeting last Saturday for the November 17 presidential election in Sri Lanka.

Sujith, a young worker from Badulla in the central hills districts, said he only found out about the SEP during the presidential election campaign.

“I had a chance to read one of your leaflets announcing that your party was contesting these elections. After reading that leaflet, I thought this might be the party that I’ve been searching for over the past several years. I have been looking for a party to scientifically explain political and social issues such as war and poverty. I participated in the SEP’s campaign meeting in Badulla,” he said.

Sujith said he had been impressed by the lecture at the Badulla meeting. “It was very scientific and enthusiastic. Actually, before that lecture, I did not know anything about internationalism. The lecture motivated a great interest in internationalism in my mind. Then I read the SEP’s election manifesto and learnt that the invasion of Iraq was not just another invasion but part of the new colonialism launched by the US imperialists. As the SEP says, it cannot be stopped by a local program. To defeat this, workers must unite internationally to fight for international socialism.

“When we come to the presidential elections in Sri Lanka, the SEP’s Wije Dias is the only candidate who advances a clear program against war and social inequality. After considering these facts I decided to participate in this final meeting. Finally I can say that have already decided to join the SEP.”

Nimal, a student from Bandarawela also in the central hills, said he had developed a close relationship with the SEP over the past two years. “I’ve had a chance to participate in several meetings in Colombo. What I

mainly noticed is, except for the SEP, every other party in Sri Lanka is limited to the boundaries of the island. How can we solve any problem by limiting ourselves to this tiny island in a globalised era?

“My knowledge of English is poor so I can’t read the WSWs materials in English but I used to read some Sinhala translations provided by SEP members. Through those articles I rapidly developed my knowledge in every field, not only the politics.

“After reading the SEP manifesto, I distributed copies among my friends. They appreciated it and said the SEP manifesto was the only one that contained a perspective without giving any false promises. After sitting for the advanced level exams next year, I hope to fully devote myself to fighting for this perspective. It’s a pleasure to shoulder these historical tasks of mankind.”

A young couple from Colombo said they had come to know about the SEP and its perspective during their university days. The husband is a government officer and dramatist and his wife teaches. “We were particularly interested in the art reviews published on the WSWs. We both wanted to participate in the meeting addressed by the US SEP presidential candidate Bill Van Auken in Colombo last year. Unfortunately we couldn’t do that. However, we were eagerly waiting for another event organised by your party, when we learnt about this meeting. The central point that attracted us to your activities is the international character of your organisation.”

A young journalist working for a popular television channel wanted to express his views but asked to remain anonymous because of the possible reaction from his employers.

“My work in this media organisation is to find world news. While I was looking for news on the Internet, I

came across the *World Socialist Web Site*. However, I now read the WSWWS not to get news but to broaden my knowledge. I came to understand through the WSWWS that there is a broad social dynamic behind every story.

“I wanted to understand the Socialist Equality Party when I saw the politically bold attitude of Wije Dias participating on the *Kinihira* (Anvil) talk show on Swarnawahini [a popular TV channel in Sri Lanka]. I am enthusiastically waiting to hear his speech today.”

Explaining the hardships he faces, he stated: “I have worked at this channel for about one year but I am only drawing only 6,000 rupees [\$US60] a month as a salary. I am from the outstations and have to board in Colombo. I can’t save a cent after paying boarding fees and for meals. I was in search of a job for about six years studying various courses, but to no avail.”

A lecturer from the University of Moratuwa made the following comments.

“I’ve always had a great deal of respect toward Leon Trotsky because of his incomparable talent as a writer, an intellectual, a revolutionary political figure and his analytical skills. I have read some of his writings before coming to know about SEP and the International Committee. This meeting is my first experience with the SEP and I have never seen any other political party or a presidential candidate presenting such a concrete and all-embracing analysis on the present socio-economic and political situation the way Wije Dias and other leaders did today. I am so impressed by the way they presented the perspective of the international movement.

“And I found answers and explanations to some of the most crucial questions that were probing my mind. I find very enlightening the analysis the SEP provided about the recent tendencies in the Indian ruling class and its connections with American imperialism. They have given up the old-style nationalist slogans and aligned themselves with the Bush administration. And the likes of Natwar Singh are being wiped off from the scene! These are the symptoms of this trend as comrade Wije Dias explained. It will do no good to the masses in these countries.

“I come from a Sama Samaja [LSSP] background, and my parents and grandparents were involved in that movement in 1950s and 1960s. But the betrayal carried out by Sama Samaja party in 1964 was entirely a mystery to me. The Sama Samaja party never produced an acceptable explanation. No one speaks about it today except the SEP. I listened to the lectures very carefully and have had some discussions with SEP members too. It

became clear to me the nature of the betrayal and how costly it was from the point of view of the working class in the Indian subcontinent. Further, it has paved the way for communal, terrorist and also somewhat fascist organisations like JVP and LTTE. Today, we all are experiencing its devastating outcome.

“I have to confess that I am a person, like many others, who used to believe that the SLFP-LSSP-CP coalitions represented an alternative to the bourgeois policies of the UNP. It is a widespread opinion, and it is very difficult to get rid of it. But the historical record shows the real nature of these coalitions.

“I am convinced that fighting against all sorts of superimposed divisions among working people and making every effort to unify them is the key to achieve socialism in this subcontinent. It was the agenda of the British imperialists to divide the whole region along communal and racist lines. I know the BLPI stood against it. Thus, the BLPI represented the Trotskyist tradition of international socialism in this region and I’m glad to see the SEP fighting to defend that tradition.

“For many years I’ve been observing the way the ruling class puts every possible effort into creating and enlarging communal gulfs between ordinary people. Now I understand that it is an organic method of capitalism employed to distract masses from class struggle. The working class should not play into their hands but organise independently. I’m willing to get involved in further discussions and would like to study the history of the international movement. I purchased a copy of *The Heritage We Defend* by David North to study further. In addition I want to know more about the critique of the SEP of China and Cuba.”



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