

Sri Lankan SEP letter to JVP demanding end to threats of violence

28 August 2007

The following letter has been sent by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) to demand an end to threats of violence against the International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) at Peradeniya University. The incident was reported in full on the World Socialist Web Site (see “Sri Lanka: JVP student leader physically threatens ISSE campus team”).

Mr. Tilvin Silva,
Secretary, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)

I am writing to you regarding threats of violence made by students belonging to your Inter University Students' Federation (IUSF) against the members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) at Peradeniya University on August 7.

The incident took place while SEP and ISSE members were holding a book exhibition at the senate building of Peradeniya University and campaigning among students against the US-led military occupation of Iraq and the renewed civil war in Sri Lanka. The ISSE had applied for and received written permission from the university authorities to conduct its campaign.

As the campaign proceeded, a group of more than a dozen IUSF members gathered nearby and watched for nearly one and a half hours. At about 10.30 a.m., several student leaders—including Chinthaka Thuduwege, Dushmantha Abesinghe and Rangana Jayakody—all IUSF members, approached the stall and demanded to know on whose authority it had been set up.

When told of the university registrar's permission, Chinthaka falsely claimed that the ISSE only had a permit to display books, not to “agitate” among students. He ordered ISSE and SEP members to “get out forthwith” or “the situation and consequences will get worse.” Asked if he were making a threat,

Chinthaka boasted: “Yes we are. Can't we make a threat! If you do not go, we will forcibly eject you.” Naming a particular ISSE member, he also warned: “If he enters this campus again, we will beat him up.”

These threats are unacceptable—and the SEP is obliged to take them very seriously. As you know, similar threats, made in the period of 1989-1990, were followed by the assassination of three of our members—Comrades R.A. Pitawela, P.H. Gunapala and Greshan Geekiyanage—by members of the JVP.

We must assume that Chinthaka Thuduwege, Dushmantha Abesinghe and Rangana Jayakody, as members of the IUSF, act under the authority of your organisation. As secretary, it is your responsibility to call them to order. If the threats are repeated, rest assured we will hold you politically and legally accountable.

Wije Dias,
General Secretary,
Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)



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