

Sri Lanka: SEP and ISSE public meeting to launch provincial election campaign

7 January 2009

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), the Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), is contesting two provincial council elections scheduled to be held on February 14, 2009. The SEP and the International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) will hold a public meeting tomorrow, January 8, at the Public Library Auditorium in Colombo to launch our campaign.

The SEP will field 38 candidates in the districts of Nuwara Eliya and Puttalam in the Central and North-western provincial councils respectively. The Nuwara Eliya district in the central hills is home to the majority of Tamil-speaking plantation workers, the most oppressed layer of the Sri Lankan working class. The Puttalam district has a mixed population of ethnic Sinhala, Muslim and Tamil people, and fishing is the primary occupation.

The SEP is participating in the elections to demand an immediate end to the 25-year-long racist war, and the immediate withdrawal of all government forces from the north and east of the country.

While President Mahinda Rajapakse is hailing the capture of Kilinochchi last Friday by the Sri Lankan military as a major victory that portends an end to the war and peace, it is nothing of the sort. It will be utilised to justify further brutality against the country's Tamil population and to intensify the growing militarisation of society as a whole.

Rajapakse's relaunch of the war and his reignition of Sinhala chauvinism is a product of his government's inability to address any of the serious social problems afflicting the majority of ordinary working people and

an attempt to divert growing mass discontent towards its policies.

The country's economic crisis is deepening daily, as a result of the government's massive war expenditure, now combined with the global recession and credit crunch. Rajapakse's agenda is to place the full burden of this crisis directly on the backs of ordinary working people, in the form of an assault on living standards and social conditions and on fundamental democratic rights.

Every section of Colombo's ruling elite is complicit in Rajapakse's filthy war. From the Sinhala chauvinist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which played a key role in egging it on, to the main "opposition" party, the United National Party (UNP), all have pledged their allegiance to the military and the war. They are organically and historically incapable of addressing the democratic and social aspirations of the working class—Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim alike.

As for the LTTE, its separatist program represents the interests, not of the Tamil masses, but of an aspiring Tamil bourgeoisie, willing to manoeuvre between the various imperialist powers to establish its own sphere of influence and profits.

The SEP is the only party that provides a viable perspective, based on socialist internationalism, to end the war and to address the social and democratic problems of the working class and masses. We call for the formation of a workers and peasants government, in the form of a Sri Lanka-Eelam Socialist Republic as part a Union of Socialist Republics of South Asia. The SEP and ISSE will campaign vigorously for this perspective in the coming provincial council elections.

We invite workers, young people and intellectuals to attend the public meeting, hear and discuss our analysis and program, and participate in our campaign.

Venue: Public Library Auditorium, Colombo 7.

Time: Thursday, January 8 at 4 p.m.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact