

Sri Lankan union endorses SEP presidential candidate

Our correspondent
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The Executive Committee of the Central Bank Employees Union (CBEU) passed a resolution, January 15, to endorse the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) candidate Wije Dias in Sri Lanka's January 26 presidential election.

The resolution by one of the country's leading trade unions supporting the election campaign and political perspective of the SEP provides a guide for the rest of the working class in the island: the working class must organize under the leadership of the SEP to fight back against the attack that will be launched on its social conditions and democratic rights whichever capitalist candidate, either the incumbent Mahinda Rajapakse or the former army commander Sarath Fonseka, wins the election.

For several decades, the CBEU membership has continuously elected members of the SEP and its forerunner, the Revolutionary Communist League, to leading positions. Under their leadership the CBEU has opposed the anti-Tamil war—even after the LTTE mounted a criminal attack on the CBEU headquarters in 1996 that killed scores of workers—and stood for the unity of all working people, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim, in the struggle for a socialist alternative to the capitalist rule.

The SEP appreciates the categorical support given by the CBEU to its candidate Wije Dias and also its decision to reproduce its resolution of support in print for mass distribution.

The Presidential election campaign of SEP candidate Wije Dias is part of the struggle to build the international socialist party, the International Committee of the Fourth International, in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally.

The resolution of the CBEU executive committee reads:

**Endorse the International Working Class Program!
Vote for SEP Candidate Wije Dias!**

The Presidential election in Sri Lanka is to be held at a major political turning point for the working class.

President Rajapakse has called the election two years ahead of schedule in order to strengthen his hand for a fresh series of attacks on the working people. He is under orders from the IMF to do so. He is bound to further increase the tax burden on the toiling masses and cut education, health and other social expenditure.

President Rajapakse was well aware that if he were to impose these burdens and go for an election he would lose. Instead, is he hoping to use the military victory to secure his re-election, then launch the International Monetary Fund-dictated assault on the masses.

The other capitalist class candidate, General Fonseka, has no different agenda. The UNP which is the main party that is supporting him has a notorious history of enforcing IMF conditions on the masses.

The pledges of ensuring democracy, economic prosperity and reducing the cost of living and resolving the unemployment problem being made by these two candidates are nothing but a trick to deceive the people and win power.

The record of Rajapakse and Fonseka is: launching brutal war to suppress the Tamil people of the north and the east, internment of nearly 300,000 war refugees in concentration camps, imposing repressive laws including the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Laws on the oppressed masses, threatening workers who struggled for their rights as accomplices of terrorism, suppressing the media, and kidnapping, disappearing, and assassinating opponents using gangsters under the aegis of the defense forces.

During the past 60 years the voters have changed one capitalist government for another hoping to escape

oppressive conditions; however the social and economic problems of the masses have deteriorated daily. The working people cannot support either of the two main candidates.

Whichever of them comes to power will intensify military police repression against the workers and oppressed masses and will trample on democratic rights.

A section of the capitalist class has concluded that it would be easier to bring about a police state under the “non-party” candidate Sarath Fonseka.

Unless we correctly grasp the implications of the world crisis of capitalism and build a social system based on scientific socialism, the problems will magnify leading to nothing but war, poverty, and social misery resulting in the destruction of the entire mass of the people. Time has now arrived to organize ourselves with a full understanding of the implications of the situation.

The Central Bank Employees Union endorses the position advanced by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) that the working masses can defend their democratic rights and living conditions only by the bringing to power a workers and peasants government. Such a government would put into effect the international socialist program, a program against the profit system and in the interests of the toiling masses through the reorganization of the entire economy on international socialist lines.

The working class should under no circumstances be deceived by the “solutions” presented by the ruling class candidates. Wije Dias, the General Secretary of the SEP, is the only candidate who is campaigning for a socialist program in the current election campaign.

Not only the two major capitalist candidates but also all the other 19 candidates are promoting policies aimed at upholding capitalism.

The Central Bank Employees Union calls upon the working class and the other oppressed masses to reject the capitalist party candidates and the opportunists and vote for the SEP candidate, Wije Dias.



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