

Sri Lanka: ISSE/SEP public meeting against university privatisation

22 November 2010

The International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka will hold a public meeting in Colombo this Thursday against the privatisation of university education.

As part of the budget-cutting measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Sri Lankan government plans to pass legislation enabling the establishment of private foreign universities. This is a major attack on the right to free education, fought for by the working class for decades.

These universities will charge exorbitant fees and will only be accessible to those who can afford to pay—the sons and daughters of the wealthy elite in Sri Lanka or from overseas. The private institutions will further erode the conditions in the under-funded public universities and deepen social inequality in the education system.

The government of President Mahinda Rajapakse has already carried out police repression against protesting students, accompanied by slanderous claims that an “insurgency” is being prepared “using university students”. Hundreds of students have been suspended and dozens detained. Within the universities, political discussion has been virtually banned, and student unions and societies suppressed.

The Inter University Student Federation, affiliated to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), is promoting the fatal illusion that student protests can pressure the government to withdraw its plans. In reality, the JVP, a Sinhala chauvinist party, has already hinted that it has no objection in principle to university privatisation.

University students cannot defend public education alone but must turn to the working class, which is also

confronting serious attacks on jobs, conditions and essential services as the government implements the IMF’s austerity agenda. Above all, this involves a political fight to build an independent movement of workers and youth against the Rajapakse government on the basis of a social program. (See: “Sri Lanka: Fight against university privatisation”[Statement of the International Students for Social Equality]).

The ISSE and SEP urge students, academics, youth and workers to attend this public meeting to discuss the way forward.

Date: Thursday November 25

Time: 3.00 p.m.

Venue: Auditorium Lobby, Colombo Public Library



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact