

# A socialist perspective for Sri Lankan workers

18 August 2011

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) will hold a public meeting in Colombo on August 22 to discuss a socialist perspective for the rising wave of working class struggles in the island.

During the past few weeks, employees in the electricity, telecom and university sectors have engaged in militant struggles over wages and conditions. While workers have expressed their willingness to fight, the chief obstacle has been the trade unions, which have blocked any political struggle against the government and the profit system it defends.

The strikes and protests in Sri Lanka are part of a growing resurgence of the class struggle in the US, Europe, North Africa and Middle East, including Israel. Workers are being propelled into action by the deepening crisis of global capitalism and the imposition of the austerity measures being demanded internationally by finance capital.

In Sri Lanka, as in every country, the trade unions have functioned as industrial policemen for the government and employers. While holding strikes and protests to let off steam, union leaders accept the framework of capitalism and the government's austerity agenda. Having fostered the illusion that President Mahinda Rajapakse could be pressured for concessions, all of them agreed to the government's basic demands.

The SEP proposes a fundamentally different course of action that is based on a political struggle for a workers' and peasants' government to implement socialist policies. As a first step, workers have to make a complete break with the trade unions and all the parties of the Colombo political establishment, including the various ex-left organisations, and form

independent Action Committees to prosecute their demands. These struggles must be unified and a turn made to other sections of the working class and rural poor in Sri Lanka and internationally.

That is the basis for the SEP's program for a socialist republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam, as part of a union of socialist republics of South Asia and internationally.

The main speaker at the meeting will be SEP general secretary Wije Dias. We urge workers, youth, intellectuals and WSWS readers to attend our meeting and take part in this vital discussion.

**Date and time:** Monday August 22, 4.00 p.m.

**Venue:** Public Library Auditorium, Colombo



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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