

US SEP presidential candidate declines to meet LSSP

29 August 2012

We publish below a letter from the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) asking to meet with Jerry White, the presidential candidate of the US Socialist Equality Party. White's reply explains why he declined the invitation.

White is currently touring Sri Lanka at the invitation of the SEP (Sri Lanka), the sister party of the US SEP, to address three public meetings. The Sri Lankan SEP's forerunner, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), was founded in 1968 as a section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) after drawing the lessons of the LSSP's betrayal in 1964 when it joined a bourgeois coalition government.

The LSSP was founded in 1935 and its leaders were instrumental in establishing the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI) in 1942, the Indian section of the Fourth International. During and after the war, the BLPI played a prominent role in the struggles against British colonial rule in India and Sri Lanka. In 1950, however, the BLPI merged with a revived, opportunist LSSP. The LSSP's 1964 betrayal was the product of protracted political backsliding by the LSSP leadership, aided and abetted by the opportunist Pabloite international. The LSSP has since served in a succession of bourgeois governments, including the current regime of President Mahinda Rajapakse.

The vital political lessons of the struggle for Trotskyism in South Asia are summed up in The Historical and International Foundations of the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka).

Dear Comrade,

I am a member of one of the pioneering political parties (Lanka Sama Samaja Party—the First Socialist Party in Sri Lanka), and I heard that your presidential

candidate Com. Jerry White is supposed to visit Sri Lanka and have a meeting on Sunday 26th, August 2012.

My party leader and I are keen on meeting him to share our political views. Therefore, please, if you could arrange an appointment it will be highly appreciated.

Thank you,
Waiting for a positive early reply,

Nuresh Rajapakse,
Secretary for Foreign Affairs,
Lanka Sama Samaja Party, Sri Lanka.

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Dear Comrade Rajapakse,

I cannot accept your invitation for a meeting. I have come to Sri Lanka as a US presidential candidate and the guest of our sister Socialist Equality Party, not to hold private discussions with any other political party.

I am very familiar with the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the pioneering role it played in the socialist movement throughout South Asia in the 1930s and 1940s. In fact the Workers League, the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party in the US, was formed on the basis of drawing the political lessons of your party's betrayal of the revolutionary principles it once fought for.

In particular, this concerned the decision by the LSSP to join the coalition government of Madame Bandaranaike in 1964—the first time in history a party calling itself Trotskyist joined a bourgeois government.

This decision has produced tragic consequences for the workers and oppressed masses of Sri Lanka and throughout Asia.

It has been decades since our political tendencies have diverged and therefore I do not believe there would be anything gained in a party-to-party discussion.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry White



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