

# Sri Lankan workers and youth express support for online May Day Rally

Our reporters  
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Socialist Equality Party members in Sri Lanka have received an enthusiastic response to their campaign in Colombo for the upcoming online May Day rally on May 4 organised by the International Committee of the Fourth International. Campaigners delivered thousands of leaflets with the Sinhalese translation of a *World Socialist Web Site* perspective—No to imperialist War! Reclaim the revolutionary traditions of May Day—by David North, chairman of the WSWs International Editorial Board and national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in the US.

As a part of Washington's aggressive "pivot to Asia," which aims to militarily encircle and diplomatically isolate China, Sri Lanka has been dragged into an increasingly dangerous geostrategic rivalry. US imperialism is demanding the Sri Lankan government distance itself from Beijing, using the war crimes committed during the civil war against the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as a means of pressuring Colombo to line up with the war preparations against China.

Pankaja is a student from the science faculty of Sri Jayawardenapura University, where the administration has suspended dozens of students in response to their campaign against the government's elimination of free education.

Pankaja told SEP campaigners that he and several other students were following the WSWs, after being first attracted by its campaign to defend US National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden. "It is very important that you campaign on the question of world war. Although it is the most urgent issue before the masses, there is almost no attention paid to this in the media. Your work is most important. We will register for the International May Day and try to get others to do so," he said.

"According to many theoreticians, after the collapse of the USSR, Marxism is outdated and so we must go for new-fangled theories. But as you say, how do these theorists explain the latest world developments? The drive to world war must be explained and combated. I agree that it is necessary to bring the experience of historical science to educate the working class."

Prageeth, another student from the same faculty, said, "I agree with Pankaja. We have heard many people speaking about internationalism, but here is something concrete and practical. Your party is going to hold a genuine International May Day meeting. I came to realise that a possible Third World War is the question of life and death before all human beings today. You point out that the international working class is the force that is capable of pre-empting another world war. This is a great encouragement to young people like me."

SEP members also visited Colombo harbour and spoke with different layers of workers. A civil engineer, Wilson, said: "The issue you raise, the need to stop another world war, shocked me to think about. You made me realise this is urgent ... Please give me some of your leaflets, in Sinhala and Tamil. I want to distribute amongst workers in my workplace. I will register for your International May Day meeting on the internet."

A harbour worker said: "It is just now, from you that I came to know that the American imperialists are preparing a third world war. You told me about the devastating impact of the atomic bombs dropped in Nagasaki and Hiroshima—why did the Americans drop these bombs if the war was already won by them? If they are preparing a new war with even more powerful weapons, that will affect the people in non-combatant countries too. What will happen to human culture, to our children? This is the first time that I came to think

of these questions. Thank you. I will come to your meeting on May 1 in Colombo.”

Two young workers from the Maldives also spoke to the SEP campaign team. One worker, Muhammad Thoriq, after listening to the discussion, said: “We are very much impressed by your campaigning against the threat of a third world war. It is even more important that you pinpoint US imperialism as the chief culprit. Ours is a tiny country, but they want to make use of it too as a military base in their war plans ... You mentioned Ukraine and Syria—the US is placed thousands of miles away across the ocean. What legitimate interest can the imperialists have in distant countries, big and small? They are the provocateurs, they want to dominate the world. What you say is heartening, that there is a force that can fight the US war drive, the international working class, and that your organisation is holding an International May Day against the drive to war.”



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