

Oppose the Sri Lankan plantation unions' sellout agreement!

Resolution of the Abbotsleigh Estate Workers Action Committee
29 January 2019

A meeting of the Abbotsleigh Estate Workers Action Committee on Sunday passed the following resolution.

The Abbotsleigh Estate Workers Action Committee vehemently condemns the agreement between the Ceylon Workers Congress, the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union, the United Plantation Trade Union Centre, the plantation companies and the government.

By limiting increases to estate workers' basic daily wage to only 200 rupees, the agreement abandons workers' demands for a 500 rupee increase to 1,000 rupees per day. This is a betrayal of our long struggle.

Workers do not know the contents of the agreement. It has been prepared in secret by the companies and the government, in discussion with the unions, without workers being consulted or provided any information.

This agreement undoubtedly includes plans for speedups and other cuts to conditions, as have previous collective agreements signed by the unions. The estate companies are insisting on the implementation of a system akin to sharecropping, based on intensifying productivity and abolishing even the meagre social rights won by workers in past struggles.

The Abbotsleigh Estate Workers Action Committee calls on our brothers and sisters in all estates to reject this agreement and unite in a struggle for decent wages and living conditions.

The trade unions have once again demonstrated that they defend the profit interests of estate employers, not the rights and interests of the working class. We therefore call for the establishment of action committees independent of the unions, through democratic votes of workers, at all estates, factories and workplaces.

Such action committees should organise the struggle for a decent wage, decent housing, free healthcare and proper education for all.

The estate companies and the ruling elite will mobilise all of their forces against such a fight. We therefore propose that these action committees discuss an alternative political program, aimed at bringing a workers' and peasants' government to power to counter the reactionary policies of the bourgeoisie.

The Abbotsleigh Estate Workers Action Committee believes that estate workers' problems can only be achieved through the fight for a socialist program. In such a struggle, plantation workers can rally the support of other workers in Sri Lanka and from the international working class.



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