Sri Lankan SEP calls public meeting to discuss socialist program to fight the pandemic

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
17 August 2021

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka will hold an online public meeting on the "Surging pandemic, growing class struggle and the need for a socialist program." The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 26 via Zoom and will be livestreamed through the party's Facebook page.

Amid the new global surge of COVID-19 infections dominated by the highly transmissible Delta variant, the number of cases worldwide has officially exceeded 200 million with 4.3 million deaths. Even according to the incomplete government data, Sri Lanka has been recording more than 3,000 infections and over 150 deaths daily. A study by Johns Hopkins University has shown that Sri Lanka now has the fourth highest COVID-19 death rate per capita in the world. Health workers have rapidly become infected and hospital capacities exceeded.

Even in this dire situation, President Gotabhaya Rajapakse's government has arrogantly refused to order a national lockdown, despite warnings from medical experts. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Expert Group recently warned that the government must immediately impose strict travel restrictions to stop a devastating death toll. According to the experts, such steps would avert about 18,000 deaths by January 2022.

Like its counterparts around the world, the Rajapakse government is relentlessly committed to keeping the economy fully open, putting profits above the lives of the people. As a result, factories, offices and public transportation have become breeding grounds for the virus. Nervous about a social explosion due to the unfolding health and social crisis, "opposition parties" like the Samagi Jana Balavegaya and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna have called on people to "self-isolate."

As public opposition mounts to the government's failure to fight the pandemic, workers in a number of sectors have launched strikes and protests, which are part of a resurgence of the class struggle internationally. Among them, almost 250,000 teachers have entered the second month of an online teaching strike over wage demands.

The government has responded by intensifying its preparations for dictatorial forms of rule to crush rising popular opposition and impose the burden of this crisis onto workers and the rural poor. The SEP's meeting will discuss the socialist program needed for working people to fight the devastation caused by the pandemic and take their struggles forward. We urge workers, youth and all other WSWS readers to participate in this meeting and to join the SEP to take up this fight.

Date and time: Thursday, August 26, 7 p.m.

Languages: Sinhala and Tamil

Please register to attend the meeting by clicking the following link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUocu6rrDkjE9Z6ICySMPval66o1QJxat4N

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