Sri Lanka: SEP/IYSSE meeting participants
denounce US-NATO war and Russian
invasion of Ukraine

Our correspondents
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Workers, youth and students in Sri Lanka who attended the recent “Oppose US–NATO war drive and the Russian invasion of Ukraine” online meeting organised by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) spoke last week to the World Socialist Web Site about the event.

The meeting was addressed by David North, chairperson of the WSWS International Editorial Board and the SEP in the US, as well as speakers from the SEP and IYSSE in Sri Lanka.

Charitha Wickremesinghe, a technician the from University of Ruhuna in Matara, said the meeting provided the “only scientific analysis” of the Ukraine war and its consequences.

“The US and NATO backed a regime-change operation in Ukraine in 2014, their aim being to grab the resources in the Eurasian region and to impose this sort of change in Russia itself. The Putin regime, however, represents the interests of the Russian ruling elite, which has no other solution but to intensify military operations,” he said.

Referring to David North’s remarks, Wickremesinghe said, “What has happened to the claims in 1991 that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a triumph for capitalism? What we’ve seen since 1991 are continuous invasions by the US and destruction. The current war preparations of the US against Russia pose an enormous threat for the entire world again.

“By participating in this meeting, I learnt we have to study the real historical and international context when we try to comprehend the crises that we face today. I will further study the video of this meeting and try to better understand the contents of all the lectures given.”

Sunil Harischandra, an artist from the cinema and drama sectors, said the meeting gave him an understanding of the relationship between the imperialist war drive and the obsolete nature of the nation state system.

“The destruction created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the drive towards a third world war clearly shows that capitalism neither wants nor is able to resolve the basic questions faced by mankind.

“As only the SEP has explained, a war conducted with nuclear weapons would see the complete destruction of human civilisation. The scenes of war presented by the media, and the lamentations of the people, are already heartbreaking. This catastrophe must be stopped.

“As Comrade North and other speakers correctly pointed out, the only way to stop this catastrophe is through the mobilisation of the working class in every country for socialist revolution across national borders,” Harischandra said.

Piyumi Hansika, a second-year student from the University of Peradeniya, said: “The most important feature of this meeting was the presentation of a political program for the working class to end this war. This has not been presented in any other examinations of this war. The discussion also helped me to further understand the political roots of the US-led imperialist powers’ decision to launch a war against Russia.

“The other main point was that the working class and oppressed people around the world will have to pay for the devastation of this war, which is being waged on behalf of a handful of capitalists. The people are against war but, as explained at the meeting, the challenge is to
turn this opposition into a conscious political
movement for socialism,” she said.

Hemal Deepthi, a teacher in Bandarawela, said: “By
participating in this meeting, I understood that the
preparations made by the US and the NATO powers are
in order to subjugate Russia. The capitalist media in Sri
Lanka is incapable of explaining this. The fact that
Ukraine received arms from the US, particularly before
the Russian invasion, and the expansion of NATO to
encircle Russia is clear evidence that this was a long-
planned US offensive against Russia.

“This is how we need to understand US activities in
the Indian Ocean region. It is to encircle China. The US
and other imperialist powers see no other solution to
their economic decline than to use their military might
to force countries to surrender. The working class,
however, has an alternative solution through the
establishment of international socialism,” he said.

Afkar, a Peradeniya University science student, said:
“The meeting was aimed at giving expression to the
emerging struggles and transferring political power
from the capitalist class to the working class. This
requires the overthrow of the world capitalist system
through the building of a movement of the working
class and youth. The efforts you are making are very
important.

“American imperialism sees Russia as an obstacle to
achieving its predatory aims. It tempted it into invading
Ukraine in order to destabilise the Russian economy
and now both the Russian and Ukrainian masses are
suffering this tragedy,” he said.

“The war has created a big refugee crisis, and
although it seems that other European countries are
welcoming refugees, they are doing it on the basis of
anti-Russian propaganda. I don’t think these oppressed
people will find their democratic or social rights as
refugees in those countries.

“The masses do not need any war. They need their
own government to represent their interest, and to this
end a working-class government must be brought to
power.

“The world crisis, which is created by capitalist
policies, is not unique to any single country and cannot
be solved in any particular country. Capitalist rule sees
the emerging struggles of the working class in country
after country as a threat to the world capitalist system
and its economic interests. War is a response to this
threat,” Afkar added.