SEP and IYSSE in Sri Lanka call public meeting to oppose state repression against anti-government protesters

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka will hold an online public meeting entitled "Stop the repression of anti-government protesters! Release all political prisoners!" at 4 p.m. on Sunday, September 25. The event will be broadcast via Zoom and live-streamed on the party's Facebook page. Register here.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has intensified the police crackdown against anti-government protesters, arresting prominent activists, and more than 1,000 are still being held in remand or detention camps. The draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) is being used to incarcerate some activists at detention camps for months.

Wickremesinghe has declared: "If the protesters do not work in accordance with the constitution, action should be taken against them." This is nothing but criminalising any action taken by workers and the poor to defend their social and democratic rights, or to oppose the country's thoroughly anti-democratic constitution, the state and the capitalist system.

The recent popular uprising, which involved the active support of millions of workers and the poor, shook the ruling class to the core. Wickremesinghe knows that this mass opposition will erupt on an ever-greater scale as he imposes the austerity dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He is ruthlessly preparing to take on the working class.

This assault on democratic rights is not limited to Sri Lanka. The ruling classes in every country are turning towards fascist and dictatorial forms of rule to impose the burden of the deepening global economic crisis.

The trade unions, the pseudo-left Frontline Socialist Party, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and middle-class protest groups are responsible for facilitating the repression. They betrayed the mass struggles that erupted in April against President Gotabhaya Rajapakse's government, paving the way for Wickremesinghe to assume power.

Now these forces are forging an alliance with opposition capitalist parties, such as the Samagi Jana Balawegaya, aimed at diverting the struggle against Wickremesinghe's repression into appeals to the imperialist powers and the state. Their aim is to block an independent movement of the working class.

In opposition to this reactionary program, the SEP insists that the repression can be defeated only by an independent mobilisation of the working class, rallying the rural masses against capitalism on the basis of an international socialist program.

The SEP has brought forward this perspective in its campaign for a Democratic and Socialist Congress of Workers and Rural Masses, based on delegates from action committees of workers and the poor, to advance the fight for a workers' and peasants' government. We urge workers, youth and all rural oppressed people to participate in this important meeting to discuss this program.

Register link here.

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