

Sri Lankan workers and youth support forthcoming SEP-IYSSE public meeting on the danger of nuclear war

Our reporters
13 October 2022

Workers and students have enthusiastically responded to the online anti-war meeting being held by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at 4 p.m. this Sunday in Sri Lanka.

The meeting is entitled Build an international working class movement to stop nuclear war danger. It will explain that the provocative US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine is the first stage of a third world war, which threatens nothing less than a catastrophe and the destruction of millions of people around the world.

The working class must reject the complacency being promoted by the corporate media as well as the capitalist and pseudo-left parties and trade union bureaucracies and respond to this danger with the utmost seriousness. The only way to prevent the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine from escalating into a nuclear disaster is through the building of an anti-war movement of the international working class based on a socialist perspective.

SEP and IYSSE campaigners have won strong support for the forthcoming meeting from students and workers in key Sri Lankan cities and universities over the past week.

At Jaffna University, in northern Sri Lanka, students, university workers and others were attracted to a literature table established by party campaigners near the campus main gate on October 11. Several students registered on the spot to attend the Sunday meeting.

Many spoke about the horrors of war, in particular the crimes perpetrated during the almost three-decade communal war waged by Colombo governments against the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Several drew parallels with the war in

Ukraine.

K. Sankavi, a science faculty student, said: “This destructive war [in Ukraine] should be stopped. I’m aware of what happened with [the US atomic bombing] of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan and that the people there are still suffering today. If they use nuclear weapons in this war, it will be a disaster.”

At the University of Colombo, **Savindu**, from the Faculty of Management, told campaigners that he supported the public meeting.

“I’m in full agreement with your points about the war in Ukraine. All of our future plans will vanish if a nuclear war starts. In fact, we cannot even begin to think about a future for mankind under conditions where a nuclear war is about to break out.”

Savindu said that the US and Russia were not equally responsible for the war in Ukraine and added, “I remember how the US with NATO powers wanted this war and how they provoked Russia.

“I’m against the war. I didn’t think there was a way to stop it before talking to you. But as you said, it can be stopped if the international working class comes to a political understanding that an anti-war movement can be built. We need to create a broad understanding among workers about the destruction of war. This meeting will be really important in taking forward this task,” he said.

SEP/IYSSE members also established a literature table at Jayawardenapura University on the outskirts of Colombo and campaigned there.

Prem, a student from Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka’s plantation districts, bought a copy of the Tamil-language version of *Socialism and the Fight Against*

War.

“From generation to generation we have been driven into poverty, but capitalists and the ruling elite become richer and richer year after year,” he said. “I regard this war as another fight by the capitalists to become even richer. I will participate in your meeting because I want to know how to fight against war.”

Chandra Kumar, a Mahaweli Authority worker, said: “I’m aware that this war has been intensifying for months but didn’t know about the nuclear threat. If such a nuclear war erupts in this region, no one in the world will be spared. We must unify and resist this war. Organising a global anti-war movement is a necessity. None of the so-called left parties are doing this.”

A Survey Department worker spoke to campaigners about the difficulties facing state sector workers trying to deal with runaway inflation and high interest rates on housing loans. Having participated in the mass demonstrations against the former Rajapakse government in July, he also denounced the repressive measures now being used to silence workers.

“Following your explanations, I now understand that the crisis in this country is part of the global crisis,” he said. “Because of the war instigated in Ukraine by the western powers, the world is clearly divided into two camps and nuclear war is a real danger. I think that the program you have put forward is correct.”

R. Gophiraj, a young journalist living with his parents at Fairlawn estate, in the Upcot plantation area, said: “The US is the main reason for the escalation of the war in Ukraine. While the US always says it is defending the human rights of people in other countries it has destroyed many countries, such as Iraq, Syria and Libya.

“We know how dangerous nuclear war would be because we know what happened in Hiroshima. This war must be stopped and we have to work for that. I agree that war cannot be stopped under capitalism and that the international working class must intervene to stop the war by overthrowing capitalism.”

Gophiraj said he would register and attend Sunday’s meeting and share the meeting link amongst his media colleagues.

R. Pathmawathy, a teacher from Hatton, said: “US policy dominates the world, that is why NATO and the US are conducting this war in Ukraine. This dangerous war must be stopped immediately.”

Pathmawathy noted that the war in Ukraine was intensifying the social crisis around the world. “The cost of living is now unbearable for people. Many students in our school want to get a job to earn some money and fulfill their needs because of their parents’ economic difficulties. There are about 1,000 students at our school but every day nearly 300 students are absent.

“Even though some students have got university entrance, they don’t want to go because they would have to spend four years there and those expenses are unbearable.”

A young ATG Ceylon worker spoke with SEP campaigners. The company manufactures high-quality gloves for export and is located in the Katunayake Free Trade Zone. He said he supported the forthcoming public meeting, stating: “A worldwide anti-war movement must be built and you [the SEP] must have the strength to break down the barricades of capitalists who spend so much wealth on this war.”

Pushpa Wickramanayake, a retired teacher, said: “The US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine is an imperialist war, which has been planned for a long time. The only social force that can prevent this great catastrophe—a nuclear Armageddon which threatens the very existence of mankind on earth—is the international working class. The online public meeting called to build an anti-war movement of the international working class is a decisive meeting.”



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