

Youth and workers in Sri Lanka speak on IYSSE global anti-war webinar

Our reporters

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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) spoke in recent days to young people in Sri Lanka who participated in the global IYSSE rally, “*For a Mass Movement of Students and Youth to Stop the War in Ukraine!*”

Developments since the December 10 webinar have further vindicated the perspective elaborated at the rally to mobilise the working class to prevent a global nuclear conflagration.

Thushan, a fourth-year university student in Colombo, explained what he understood from the rally. He said: “The military, social, environmental and political antagonisms between the major powers arise out of the global crisis of capitalism. The imperialist countries are seeking to monopolise resources.”

Thushan said the webinar speakers elaborated an internationalist perspective. “All other parties and political tendencies speak about nationalist solutions for every problem. But the rally powerfully demonstrated there are no national solutions for the grave problems faced by working people.”

He continued: “The imperialist powers are trying to resolve their crisis by using small countries as bait for their geopolitical interests. We are on the eve of nuclear war, so I agree with the call to build a mass movement of students and youth to stop the war in Ukraine.”

Chamod, a 16-year-old school student from Colombo, commented: “The rally on December 10 was a very special event. It sought to unite workers and youth worldwide. Comrade Kapila Fernando’s speech impressed me. It explained the prospect for building an international anti-war movement in the South Asian region.”

Fernando had paid attention to developments in South Asia and the role played by the right-wing [prime minister Narendra] Modi government in India. Chamod said those things were not being discussed in the local media.

After participating in the meeting, “I got knowledge about what is imperialism and how the decay of capitalism affects the lives of youth. Those theoretical points provide us essential preparation for the development of an anti-war movement.”

Chamod added: “Youth need a real socialist movement to fight against this nuclear war threat. Fake socialist groups don’t say anything about these developments. We must fight to expose why they are silent about these critical developments.”

Pishon, a fourth-year student at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, explained: “The imperialist governments spend billions of dollars preparing to wage war abroad. At the same time, they hypocritically try to posture as protectors of human rights. Capitalism is not an alternative for working people. Workers and youths are paying for this war drive.”

He noted: “Sri Lanka can’t insulate itself from the developments toward global war. As the speakers demonstrated in the anti-war webinar, we must fight to prevent this war, which could develop into a nuclear conflict. Against the attacks on their living conditions, workers in every country are coming into struggle. In Sri Lanka, we experienced a mass upsurge. We must mobilise the working class on an international socialist perspective. As youth we can play a critical role in that task.”

Pishon added: “The latest developments of the war prove the things discussed in the webinar.” He pointed out that Ukraine killed three Russian soldiers in a drone attack on the Engels airbase near Saratov in Russia.

In Kandy, three students gathered to discuss their response to the webinar.

Muneera, a Peradeniya University political science student, said: “From the webinar I learned about what is happening around the world. The capitalist system has brought the world to the brink of nuclear war.

“In the meeting the speakers explained the lessons of

previous world wars. I can't imagine what will be the result of the next world war. It will be a global catastrophe. Through the lessons of previous world wars I understand that the cause of world war is rooted in the contradictions of capitalist nation-state system."

Alanka, an advanced level student, commented: "American imperialism is ready to achieve its geopolitical interests using any means, including nuclear weapons. The highest expression of those actions will be world war.

"There are many resources in Russia, such as gas and minerals, which are critical for them in a war against China. That's one reason to wage a proxy war against Russia by the imperialist countries."

Only the working class can fight against this war because "they are not tied to the nation-state system," he concluded.

Thisal, another school student from Kandy, said: "The root cause of this war drive lies in the contradiction between the global economy and the nation-state system. Every single imperialist country is trying to dominate the global economy by expanding its market. These actions are coming into conflict with other countries.

"A third world war will be more dangerous than other wars, as explained in the IYSSE statement announcing the webinar. Because technological developments now have been used to produce nuclear weapons, it will be nuclear warfare. It's not a simple thing like lose or win. That will destroy the whole world."

The imperialists' drive to another world war was an expression of the growing chasm between the working class and the capitalist elite, Thisal added. The ruling regimes in the US and Europe wanted to divert social tensions in their countries. "The majority of the world's people don't need a war. They are starting to fight against the capitalist system to defend their living and social conditions."

As speakers had mentioned in the webinar, the only way to resolve these contradictions in a progressive way was to overthrow the capitalist system and build up a global socialist economy.

Dinojan, a Jaffna University student, explained: "I watched this webinar with much interest, which helped me to understand the developments toward a catastrophic world war. The COVID-19 pandemic killed millions of lives. The major powers allowed this catastrophe, in order to maintain the profit system. Similarly, they are ready to allow millions to die in a war. Now Ukraine's people are facing a life-threatening situation. They are dying and becoming refugees."

Dinojan said he experienced the brutal communal war against the Tamil people waged by Colombo regimes, which ended in May 2009. He said: "I am living in a war zone. Since the end of the war, people have not been able to reach even their previous living standards. But in a world war, the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable. I have always opposed war. I will raise my voice with the IYSSE, which is campaigning to build an international anti-war movement."

A Colombo port worker said: "The invasion of Ukraine launched by Russia on February 24 is a response to US-NATO war preparations against Russia. I agree that it is a proxy war and is likely to be the greatest human annihilation of this century.

"The danger of a third world war using thermo-nuclear weapons is looming. As the speakers in the rally explained, there is no government or trade union that can stop this war."

He concluded: "As a port worker, I would like to contribute my best to this IYSSE call to build an international anti-war movement based on socialism, with the working class at the frontline."

Lakmal, a lecturer at the Open University in Nawala, said: "The anti-war webinar demonstrates the potential for building a global anti-war movement. Speakers from different countries spoke based on one international perspective. They explained that the only way to prevent a third world war is the independent intervention of the working class.

"When most intellectuals talk about the war, they argue about which side we are taking—Russia or Ukraine. But this is not our war. As Lenin explained during World War I, this war is also an imperialist war waged for profits. American imperialism plays the main role in the war. Workers and masses can't take the side of one or another nation state."



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