# Sri Lankan SEP/IYSSE demonstrates in Colombo against Israel's genocidal war in Gaza

**Our correspondents**
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka held a powerful protest outside the Colombo Fort Railway Station on November 9. It was part of action being taken by workers and youth around the world on that day to denounce Israel's genocidal attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

SEP/IYSSE members, supporters and youth took part in the event, chanting slogans and displaying placards. These included, "Stop Israel's genocide in Gaza Strip," "Stop shipment of weapons to Israel," "For a united socialist state of Jewish and Arab workers," "Build workers' and youths' anti-war movement," "Stop US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine" and "Stop the drive to a third world war."

Participants distributed hundreds of copies of Sinhala and Tamil versions of the WSWS Editorial Board statement calling for unified action by the international working class against Israel's illegal military assault.

The Colombo demonstration, which was held in the late afternoon, drew the attention of hundreds of workers and youth returning home from work and studies. The protest concluded with SEP Assistant Secretary Saman Gunadasa addressing the gathering in Sinhala. His speech was translated into Tamil by Shree Haran, an SEP political committee member.

Gunadasa began by explaining that the demonstration was part of a huge wave of protests sweeping across America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa against Israel's genocidal attacks.

"Today, tens of thousands of people trapped inside a small plot of land are being bombed even as they are being deprived of drinking water, food, fuel and electricity," he said. "Now they [the Israel regime] have deployed battle tanks to besieged Gaza City and have begun ground-level attacks. Almost half of the 10,000 dead are children."

Gunadasa explained the establishment of Israel in 1948 and its development as part Washington's long-term strategy to dominate the Middle East. Israel's brutal military assault, which was fully endorsed by all the imperialist powers, he said, was posing the danger of a third world war. It was in line with the intensifying US provocations against Iran and its military encirclement of China.

"The blessings for this genocide from all the major powers mean that imperialism will not hesitate to launch wars that would wipe out human civilisation in order to preserve its power," Gunadasa warned. The imperialists' goal was to establish their domination, and that was what was involved in their war against Russia, and now its extension into the Middle East and across the globe.

Gunadasa said it was impossible to stop this escalating militarism by appealing to, or exerting pressure on, the imperialist powers. The fight to stop war "is a battle against the major powers of every country and their allies, such as India and Sri Lanka," he explained.

"The only social force that can immediately stop the genocidal attacks on the Palestinians and the drive towards a third world war is the international working class.

"Protests by millions of people around the world are extremely important but these actions must be developed into a political general strike in the major imperialist countries. The working class has the power and ability to shut down all the facilities—harbour ports,

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airports and factories—that supply Israel with weapons and equipment.”

The main obstacle to this sort of a struggle was the trade union bureaucracies, Gunadasa continued. “Union bureaucracies, such as the AFL-CIO in the US, the TUC in the UK, the CGT in France and IG Metall in Germany, etc., have aligned themselves with the imperialist powers in their own countries and in support Israel’s attacks.

“It is necessary to break with the union bureaucracy and organise independent workers’ action committees. The world working class needs to support the demands made by the Palestinian trade unions for blocking war materials to Israel.”

Gunadasa concluded: “The future of the world working class is tied to the issue of the Palestinian people and the answer to that question is tied up with the program of socialist reorganisation of the entire planet.”

WSWS correspondents spoke with several participants who listened to Gunadasa’s speech.

Shohail, a young resident from near Colombo, who attended the protest, said: “I’m a Muslim and appreciate the picket protest against the massacres in Palestine, regardless of the questions of ethnicity and religion.

“While we mostly see how struggles are divided along ethnic or religious lines, I realised today that it is the ruling class which divides the masses in order to protect its system. I admire the SEP’s struggle for a socialist unification of Jewish and Arab workers, and would like to learn more about this.”

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