

The SEP (Sri Lanka) launches party development fund to expand its political work

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
22 April 2024

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), the Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), has decided to launch a 3.5 million-rupee (\$US11,650) party development fund to carry out the urgent political tasks confronting the party.

Political developments in Sri Lanka are coming into sharp focus in the aftermath of the April–July 2022 mass uprising involving millions of workers that led to the downfall of former President Gotabhaya Rajapakse, and the escalating social attacks by the Wickremesinghe government.

Anger is rising among workers, the poor and young people over the ruthless International Monetary Fund (IMF)-ordered austerity program now being implemented by President Ranil Wickremesinghe and his government, with deeper social attacks planned.

Last week, the government’s restructuring unit for the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) announced that it wants to conclude all transactions related to SOEs by August this year. Tens of thousands of jobs of the 500,000 workers in these institutions will be destroyed, wages slashed, workloads increased, and higher costs imposed for electricity and water.

The trade union bureaucracies, conniving with the opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) with the help of fake left Frontline Socialist Party (FSP), are deliberately dissipating working-class opposition to these attacks, diverting it into futile appeals to Colombo while calling for a change of government in the forthcoming presidential and national elections.

This political agenda is a fraud. All of Sri Lanka’s opposition parties are fully committed to the IMF’s dictates. Like the Wickremesinghe regime, they will attempt to crush workers’ resistance and suppress democratic rights in implementing the IMF’s demands.

Sri Lanka’s discredited bourgeois political parties are acutely nervous about the outcome of this year’s presidential election due to be held between September 18 and October 18.

Wickremesinghe’s hated United National Party (UNP) is a rump, with the president forced to contest the election as an “independent candidate.” The ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna does not have a presidential candidate and many MPs are leaving it. The SJB, a breakaway from the UNP, is in crisis and could see many MPs endorse Wickremesinghe. The JVP, which is attempting to cover up its own political history, is contesting the election under the cover of its upper middle class National People’s Power.

Responding to this deepening political crisis, the Wickremesinghe government last week decided to impose a series of new measures to exclude political opponents, particularly genuine socialists, from all future elections. Accordingly, the Sri Lankan cabinet of ministers decided to impose an unprecedented 52-fold increase in the security deposit for presidential election candidates of registered parties hiking it to 2.6 million rupees, and from the current 75,000-rupee deposit to 3.1 million rupees for independent candidates. Deposits for other elections have also been increased.

This anti-democratic decision is to confine voters to the candidates of the establishment political parties—i.e., those selected and funded by the rich—and to marginalise political opponents and independent candidates criticising government policies. Above all, it is to block any discussion on a genuine socialist program, the only way workers, the poor and youth can defeat the attacks on their social and democratic rights.

As the statement of Sri Lankan SEP issued on April 18 explained:

“The SEP in Sri Lanka is the only party advancing

socialist policies to fight social devastation, inequality and war, and to defend democratic rights. There is no solution for workers and the poor within the framework of the profit system and the IMF's austerity dictates to which the government, the parliamentary opposition and the trade unions are all committed.”

The global crisis of capitalism, triggered by the coronavirus pandemic and intensified by the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, Israel's imperialist-backed genocidal war on Gaza and military provocations against Iran, is dragging the mankind into a catastrophic world war. The Wickremesinghe regime's anti-democratic electoral laws and brutal austerity measures, are part of the global assault on democratic and social rights now under way in every country.

The SEP in Sri Lanka, along with our sister parties of the ICFI, is the only organisation fighting to unite the working class on a revolutionary socialist and internationalist perspective. This includes the unification of the working class and the rural masses across the Indian subcontinent.

In line with this perspective, the SEP is launching an ambitious program to recruit more members to the party and build the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). We also need to further develop our coverage in the *World Socialist Web Site* and expand our publication of Marxist literature in the Sinhala and Tamil languages.

When and if elections are announced, the SEP will contest them to popularise our socialist perspective and educate workers and youth on the urgent necessity for the building of the revolutionary Marxist-Trotskyist party, the Socialist Equality Party. We urge workers, students, and serious layers of the intelligentsia to support this endeavour.

The SEP calls on all those who agree with this perspective and defend democratic rights to generously contribute to our 3.5-million-rupee development fund which we want to complete by the end of August.

Details of our party account:

Account number: 1472834301

Name of account holder: Socialist Equality Party

Bank: Commercial Bank

Branch: Kirulapona

Country: Sri Lanka

We also urge all readers to contact us via the

telephone/WhatsApp number below to discuss the SEP's program.

Telephone/WhatsApp number: +94773562327



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact