

SEP (Sri Lanka) presidential election meeting: Fight for international socialism against war, austerity and dictatorship!

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
9 August 2024

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka are holding their first presidential election campaign meeting at the Public Library Auditorium in Colombo on August 16 at 4 p.m. The election will take place on September 21.

The SEP is fielding Pani Wijesiriwardena, a longstanding party leader, as its presidential candidate. He has five decades of experience in fighting for the SEP program for the independent mobilisation of the working class on a socialist and internationalist perspective.

Only our party speaks the truth and explains to workers, the poor and young people the serious situation they confront and the necessity of fighting for a revolutionary socialist alternative.

The presidential election takes place amid a rapidly deepening economic and political crisis of the capitalist system in Sri Lanka and internationally.

The Sri Lankan government like its counterparts around the world is making working people bear the burden—escalating prices, deep job cuts and the slashing of essential services.

The US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine is now in its third year and escalating. The Israeli genocidal war in Gaza backed by the US is widening into a Middle East war targeting Iran. In Asia, Washington is preparing for war against China. These three war fronts are coalescing into a devastating global conflict involving nuclear-armed powers.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has already killed more than 28 million people globally is continuing to take lives as a result of the criminal “let it rip” policy of all governments.

The 2022 April-July mass uprising in Sri Lanka fueled by the catastrophic impact of soaring prices and acute shortages demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses of the working class. Millions joined the protests defying emergency rule, forcing President Rajapakse to flee the country and resign.

Politically, however, the upsurge was dominated by trade unions and fake lefts such as the Frontline Socialist Party (FSP). They promoted the illusion that an “interim government” of the opposition parties—Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)—would solve the immense problems facing working people.

What was the result? Another capitalist government headed by Ranil Wickremesinghe, a veteran pro-US and pro-IMF politician with no popular support, installed anti-democratically by parliament. He has imposed the savage IMF austerity agenda with which the entire Colombo political establishment, including the opposition SJB and JVP and the trade unions, agree.

The IMF program of privatization, job destruction, cuts to subsidies and essential services has resulted in widespread strikes and protests. But again and again, the pro-capitalist trade unions have sabotaged these struggles, opposing any challenge to Wickremesinghe and his repressive measures.

The SEP insists there is no solution to the huge problems facing working people within the framework of capitalism. We are standing in the presidential election to fight for the independent mobilization of the working class in opposition to all the defenders of the profit system.

The working class must draw the necessary conclusions and prepare for the struggles ahead.

Whoever wins the powerful executive presidency and forms the next government will only accelerate the attacks on the social and democratic rights of working people.

The working class can only defend its class interests by taking matters into their own hands. We call for workers to establish action committees in every work place and suburb, independent of all bourgeois political parties and the trade unions.

The SEP calls on workers to fight for the following demands:

No to the IMF austerity! Repudiate all foreign debts!

A vast redistribution of wealth is necessary: Fight for the nationalisation of banks, big companies and plantations under democratic control of workers!

Subsidies and social programs for rural farmers and the needy!

The SEP fights for the unity of the working class. Reject all forms of communalism and nationalism!

We call for a Democratic and Socialist Congress of Workers and Rural Masses based on representatives elected by action committees to map out a political and industrial campaign in opposition to the IMF agenda and lay the basis for bringing a workers' and peasants' government to power to implement a socialist program.

The allies of the Sri Lankan workers are their class brothers and sisters internationally who confront the same acute problems produced by capitalism. The unity of workers around the world is essential in combatting war, social crisis and attacks on democratic rights.

At our election meeting, speakers will elaborate the SEP's program and perspective. It is a forum for working people and youth to discuss these political issues. We urge you to come along and participate.

Meeting venue: Colombo Public Library Auditorium
Date and time: August 16 at 4 p.m.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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