

SEP and IYSSE hold successful meetings in Sri Lanka opposing the US-Israel War on Iran

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 two public meetings under the title “Oppose the Israel-US war on Iran!”—one online via Zoom on July 6, and another at Veerasingham Hall in Jaffna, in the war-ravaged Northern Province, on July 8.

The events were part of the International Committee of the Fourth International’s (ICFI) global campaign to build an anti-war movement of the working class against the developing world war. Both meetings were conducted in Sinhala and Tamil, with the main report delivered by SEP General Secretary Deepal Jayasekera.

The current war on Iran began with unprovoked, US-backed Israeli air and missile strikes on June 12. The US formally entered the conflict by launching a massive bombing raid on Iran’s main nuclear facilities on June 22. The US-Israel war on Iran is part of a broader campaign by US imperialism in the Middle East, tied to the war against Russia and war preparations against China. What is unfolding is a world war.

Prior to the meetings, SEP/IYSSE members and supporters campaigned extensively at universities, workplaces, and neighbourhoods, distributing thousands of copies of *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) articles about the US-Israel war on Iran in both Sinhala and Tamil.

The online meeting, chaired by SEP Political Committee member Pani Wijesiriwardene, drew around 80 participants from across Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, India. It was also live-streamed, reaching over 3,000 viewers.

Pakistani Trotskyists who support the ICFI sent greetings to the meeting, expressing support for building a global anti-war movement. Jayasekera read their statement before his speech.

The statement emphasised the significance of the SEP/IYSSE meetings for the working class in the region. “These meetings are being held in the wake of unprovoked

US military strikes on Iranian nuclear energy facilities, following several days of Israeli-led attacks on Iran. Using its Israeli proxy, the US and its NATO allies are promoting war against Iran, aiming for regime change, the re-division of the Middle East, the formation of a Greater Israel, and the plundering of energy resources.”

Their statement concluded: “Imperialist war can be stopped, and the social and democratic rights of the masses—including genuine and full equality among all national groups—can only be secured by the working class rallying the rural toilers behind it, against all factions of the bourgeoisie, in the fight for a workers’ government and the establishment—opposed to the reactionary state borders created by colonialism, imperialism, and the craven national bourgeoisie—of the Socialist United States of South Asia.”

The Jaffna meeting was chaired by SEP Political Committee member P.T. Sampanthar and attended by about 30 people, including party members, supporters, and members of the Fishermen’s Action Committee. In his opening remarks, Sampanthar noted that despite the indifference and pessimism promoted by Tamil bourgeois nationalist politicians, Tamil workers and the oppressed—who endured similar experiences during the three-decade communal war waged by Colombo against Tamils—expressed deep empathy for the people of Gaza and Iran.

Jayasekera delivered a comprehensive political report at both meetings, condemning the US and Israeli attacks on Iran and outlining the Marxist perspective on war from a historical and geopolitical standpoint. He emphasised that opposing this imperialist war was an urgent responsibility for workers, youth, and the oppressed across South Asia.

He exposed the fraudulent claim by the US and Israel that Iran poses a nuclear threat, calling it an “outright lie.” The Iranian nuclear facilities attacked on June 22 are under International Atomic Energy Agency supervision and operate within the framework of the Nuclear Non-

Proliferation Treaty (NPT). By contrast, Israel remains outside the NPT and possesses nuclear weapons with full US backing. The US itself holds the world's second-largest nuclear arsenal, just behind that of Russia.

Jayasekera outlined the strategic objectives of US imperialism in waging war on Iran: to reimpose neocolonial control, secure dominance over the oil-rich region and global trade routes, prepare for war against Russia and China, and deflect attention from deepening domestic crises. The SEP unequivocally calls for the military defeat of US imperialism and its Israeli proxy, while giving no political support to the reactionary Iranian bourgeois nationalist regime.

Rejecting the argument that Iran's reactionary regime nullifies its right to self-defense, Jayasekera invoked Leon Trotsky's 1937 defense of China against Japanese imperialism. Trotsky insisted that socialists must defend oppressed nations under imperialist attack, regardless of their governments' political character.

Jayasekera warned that the temporary ceasefire declared by Trump after the initial air strikes offers no guarantee of peace, but is merely a tactical pause in preparation for further escalation. He stressed that wars are not waged simply to increase arms sales, as claimed by some pseudo-left groups and media pundits, but stem from the predatory interests of imperialist powers.

He also criticised the shameful responses from the Sri Lankan and Indian governments. The Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry, under the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna/National People's Power (JVP/NPP) government, issued a perfunctory three-sentence statement after the US airstrike on Iran. It avoided naming any of the countries involved—US, Israel, or Iran—signalling its pro-US stance and fear of popular opposition to imperialism.

The parliamentary opposition, mainly Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), also shares this pro-imperialist position. Tamil nationalist parties such as ITAK and TNPF have remained virtually silent on the US-Israel war on Iran.

Pseudo-left groups like the Youth for Change, affiliated with the Frontline Socialist Party (FSP), held a seminar in Colombo titled "Imperialist War and Challenges in the 21st Century." However, in the main lecture lasting nearly two and a half hours, FSP leader Lahiru Weerasekera failed to condemn the US-Israel war on Iran, revealing their pro-imperialist orientation.

Jayasekera condemned the Indian government's tacit support for the US-Israel war, underscoring India's role as a frontline state in Washington's anti-China military strategy.

He concluded by stating that the same contradictions of capitalism driving world war were also fuelling explosive class struggles around the globe. The mass June 14 protest by over 15 million workers, youth and others in the US

marks only the beginning.

The critical task is to transform this growing movement into a politically conscious revolutionary force to abolish capitalism. Only the ICFI and SEP are building the revolutionary leadership needed to unite the global working class in the struggle for socialism.

During the Q&A session of the online meeting, a listener asked about the role of revolutionary socialists during World War I and World War II.

Jayasekera reviewed how the Marxist movement fought for the independent revolutionary mobilisation of the working class against the wars, as advocated by Lenin and Trotsky. He highlighted Lenin's call to transform the imperialist war into a civil war in which the proletariat could overthrow bourgeois rule. The October 1917 Russian Revolution, in which the working class took power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party co-led by Lenin and Trotsky, marked the beginning of the end of World War I.

The speaker explained that the Trotskyist Fourth International continued this fight during World War II, calling for the independent mobilisation of the international working class against imperialist war. It defied repression from both the imperialist governments and the Stalinist bureaucracy, which aligned with the imperialist camp of the US and UK.

At the Jaffna meeting, a participant questioned the SEP's limited participation in local elections, asking why the party contests only a few councils rather than across the island.

Jayasekera explained that the SEP is centrally focused on mobilising the working class independently on international socialist program, rather than chasing votes. He emphasised that the SEP uses elections primarily as a platform to present its revolutionary policies to broader layers of workers, youth, and the rural poor.



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