

“We should not be in a ‘non-aligned’ position, but in an anti-war position”

## Sri Lanka: Workers and students call for mobilization against the US-Israeli war on Iran

**Our correspondent**  
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka urge workers and students to attend the public meeting, “Stop the US-Israeli war against Iran,” on April 7 at 3.30 p.m. at the Orient Educational institute in Hindagala, near the University of Peradeniya.

There is mounting opposition among workers and youth in Sri Lanka to the US-Israeli war against Iran, which is widely recognised as being driven by predatory imperialist interests. Anger has intensified amid statements by the fascistic US President Donald Trump that his administration will not stop until it fulfils its long-term drive to fully subordinate Iran.

The war has exacerbated a severe economic and energy crisis in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, broad layers of people recognise the utter hypocrisy of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake’s bogus “neutral” posture, even as his government provides tacit support to the US and Israel.

As part of the global fight to build an internationalist socialist anti-war movement, the SEP and the IYSSE in Sri Lanka are holding a series of meetings and campaigns among workers and university students. A well-attended public meeting was held in Colombo on March 17 and another will be held on April 7 in Peradeniya, Kandy.

Those who attended the March 17 meeting responded enthusiastically to the discussion of a socialist anti-war program.

**Akalanka Seneviratne, a law student**, listened to the live broadcast of the meeting on Facebook. He said it exposed the real roots of the war, in contrast to other parties that are trying to mislead the public.

“Capitalist parties, pseudo-left parties, various political organizations, America, Israel are saying different things about this war. They have an interest in preventing the public from knowing its real purpose. They say it is to liberate the people from the Iranian regime. None of this is true.”

He agreed with the explanation that the root cause of the war is the global crisis of the capitalist system, but he added that the war would only exacerbate the crisis, not resolve it.

He said, “The government talks about a non-aligned policy, but we should not be in a non-aligned position but in an anti-war position. If this war continues, the common people will be the victims.”

Akalanka stated that the JVP/NPP government’s “neutral” posture is “just a thin line of words” used to cover up its pro-imperialist stance. He noted that he had seen a news report that the US military had supplied helicopters to the Sri Lankan government after the start of the war, which revealed the ties between the two governments.

He rejected claims by pseudo-left organisations such as the Frontline Socialist Party (FSP) that Sri Lanka is compelled to intervene in the war due to agreements signed with the US and India. “Even if those agreements were not signed, small states like Sri Lanka are victims of these wars. We saw that in previous world wars as well.”

Akalanka said the *World Socialist Web Site’s* warning made after the Trump administration halted the 12-day war against Iran in 2025—“This is a delay in preparing for another large-scale war”—has now been confirmed. He

wanted to know how this socialist analysis could reach a wider layer of the working class to build a genuine anti-war movement.

In response, a member of the IYSSE referred to the lessons of the Russian Revolution that brought an end to World War I and emphasised the need to transform the growing struggles of the working class into a conscious struggle against capitalism. There was more discussion on how to develop a theoretical and political struggle to educate workers on the roots of the war and the measures required to stop it.

SEP campaigners also spoke with **Illangakon, a worker at the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation** in Colombo. He began by condemning the United States and Israel for starting the war.

He stated: “Iran was not bothering anyone; America’s action is unjustifiable. They want to take control of oil. They think that if they can take ownership of these resources, they can do anything in the world.” He noted that a top official in the US government, Joe Kent, who served as director of the National Counterterrorism Center, had resigned, admitting that Iran posed no imminent threat to the US.

Illangakon added, “This should be stopped. The whole world is at a standstill, and all work has been disrupted.” He said it was already having an impact on his industry, which is connected to fuel imports and delivery.

**A railway worker, Palitha** said: “We don’t need a war. This is not our war. This is a war for hegemonic power and other aims. We do not know how long we can bear this pressure. I agree with you that it’s important we organize to stop the war. Yes, the rulers only direct the workers, but workers are the ones carrying out the work. If we stop, everything will stop.”

**Gamage, a Samurahi welfare officer in Hasalaka, Kandy**, spoke about the war’s impact on working people. He denounced the massive increase in oil prices imposed by the government in response to global market hikes.

“If this war is going to continue for another month or two, it will be devastating for entire world’s population,” Gamage said. Describing the escalating social crisis, he explained, “People who could previously get various jobs are now waiting by the roadside without work, as those who employed them have no money, and are themselves searching for jobs. No one can even produce new agricultural products; it is too difficult to bear the cost.”

He pointed out that the capitalist system, including the state, does not exist to provide social welfare or ensure the well-being of the population, but to enrich a small layer of

the wealthy. Governments around the world, he said, function in the interests of big business. He added that war is an extension of this system, driven by the profit motive and carried out without regard for human life.

**R. Robinson, a small shop owner** in Glenugie Estate at Upcot in the Nuwara Eliya District, said the war was started illegally by the United States and its Middle Eastern “watchdog” Israel.

As a supporter of the SEP, Robinson said he was familiar with analyses published by the WSWs. “I agree that this war cannot be stopped by appealing to the same imperialist powers who need war to maintain global hegemony.” Even if the US stopped its attacks, this would only be temporary, he said. “War will not stop without overcoming capitalist regimes that cause war. Otherwise, they will annihilate the workers.”

Robinson discussed at length how the plight of Tamil tea plantation workers has worsened due to massive increases in oil and gas prices. These workers, he said, are the most oppressed section of the Sri Lankan working class, enduring slave-like conditions. He said the government’s recent wage increase of about \$US2 a day was wholly inadequate.

“Massive oil price increases overnight have eaten up that salary increase. Even before this war begun, plantation workers had been suffering immensely. With the fuel price rise, prices of all consumer goods and services increased, pushing working people from the frying pan into the fire,” Robinson said.

He added that only the international working class can stop the war: “Workers throughout the world must unite. Arming them with an internationalist socialist perspective is vital and we need a world party for that.”



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