Resolution for the Fourth National Congress of the SEP (Sri Lanka)—Part 3

The strategy and program of the SEP in the fight against the JVP government and capitalism

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
2 October 2026

We are publishing here the third (final) part of the main resolution of the Fourth Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka), held from September 11–13, 2026, in Colombo. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Congress. The first part and second part were published on October 1 and October 2.

The unresolved and deepening crisis

68. The political and economic crisis that erupted in 2022 is not only unresolved but is intensifying. The failure of the working class to take an independent political path allowed the ruling elite to maintain its grip, first through the Wickremesinghe regime and now through the JVP-led government.

69. Yet this political stabilization is temporary and fragile. The explosive gap between popular expectations and the class-war agenda of the JVP/NPP government is continuously widening. As the JVP government intensifies austerity, deploys emergency powers and expands repressive legislation, using the trade unions as state auxiliaries to suppress resistance, the stage is set for convulsive struggles.?

70. Throughout 2025, working-class opposition mounted across multiple sectors: health, postal, power, plantations and education. In every case, the trade unions called limited actions then shut them down, bowing to the government's threats and bogus promises. JVP-affiliated unions openly declared opposition to strikes, with union leaders now serving as government ministers. President Dissanayake contemptuously told protesting doctors, in a statement meant for all workers: "Do not ask for more—the government has no funds. Go home instead of standing on the streets; standing on the streets brings you nothing."?

71. The economic and political crisis confronting the JVP/NPP government and bourgeois rule in Sri Lanka has been greatly intensified, first by the massive devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah, and then by the US-Israeli war against Iran, which has hit every country with geopolitical and economic shockwaves. The government is aggressively moving to place the whole burden of the crisis on working people, committing to harsh IMF-dictated austerity measures. None of the parties of the political establishment—the SJB, UNP, SLPP, SLFP and Tamil and Muslim bourgeois parties—have any fundamental differences with the JVP/NPP government's IMF-based economic policies.

72. These attacks come on top of already devastated social and living conditions. Approximately 22 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with another 10 percent hovering just above it—double the pre-crisis rate. Over 55 percent struggle with food insecurity. Real wages in the public and private sectors have collapsed by 24 and 14 percent respectively since 2022. The restructuring of over 400 state-owned enterprises threatens hundreds of thousands of jobs. The IMF has set the fiscal target at maintaining a 2.3 percent surplus in the primary account of the budget to service approximately $5 billion annually in debt repayments from 2028, signaling further massive cuts to all social programs, including public health and education.

73. Given growing popular opposition to its austerity measures, the JVP/NPP government depends, on the one hand, on the backing of the trade union apparatus and its betrayal of working-class struggles, supported by the pseudo-left groups including the FSP. On the other hand, knowing very well that its economic policies cannot be implemented peacefully and within democratic forms of rule, as is the case internationally, the government is heading towards dictatorial forms of rule. It declared draconian emergency regulations following Cyclone Ditwah, and has imposed essential services orders on key state services, while keeping the armed forces on standby.

74. Farmers are confronted with increasingly harsh conditions due to the policies of successive governments. Landlessness is a major issue, with 27 percent of farmers effectively without land, forcing them into insecure tenancy, tiny subsistence plots, or seasonal labor. This extreme fragmentation of land ownership condemns millions of rural families to poverty and insecurity. Pro-investor economic reforms carried out by successive governments have blocked access to affordable credit. Only about 10 percent of farmers obtain loans from banks, forcing nearly 60 percent to depend on private financiers, rice millers and moneylenders who tie loans to harvests on exploitative terms. IMF austerity and the high cost of farm inputs have deepened the crisis facing farmers. While the JVP/NPP exploited farmers' grievances to come to power, it has reneged on its promises including the cancellation of farmers' loans, in line with the IMF austerity program, leaving farmers to their own plight.

75. Plantation unions, also functioning as political parties, play a particularly sinister role in dividing plantation workers from the rest of the working class and politically subordinating them to bourgeois rule. Most of these bureaucratic organizations, including the Ceylon Workers

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Congress, the main plantation union, National Union of Workers (NUW), Democratic Workers Congress (DWC), Up-country People's Front (UPF) and Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union, have allied with successive governments, holding ministerial posts, and thus played a direct role in imposing harsh austerity measures on the working class, including plantation workers. Although not formally partnered with the current JVP/NPP government, they are all fully supporting it to enforce IMF-dictated austerity measures.

76. Far from representing a genuine democratic or social advance for plantation workers, the unions and their associated parties promote reactionary ethnic identity politics that divide the working class along communal lines. The DWC, NUW and UPF advance the idea that "Malaiyaha Tamils", i.e., Upcountry Tamils working in plantations, constitute a separate ethnic bloc, in order to bargain for economic, political and social privileges for a narrow layer of the elite and upper-middle class in the plantation area. This is another trap to divide plantation workers from the rest of the working class. Plantation workers must reject this and join with their class brothers and sisters in urban and other areas of the island in a common struggle against ruling-class austerity.

77. Various Tamil bourgeois parties, such as the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi (ITAK) and the Tamil National People's Front (TNPF), are collaborating with the JVP/NPP government to secure the interests of the Tamil elite at the expense of the vast majority of Tamil people. The differences among them are tactical, over what is the best way to secure the privileges of the Tamil elite. Contrary to their claims, none of them has any concern for the interests of Tamil-speaking workers and the rural poor. The "political solution" to the Tamil national problem promoted by these parties—the "devolution of power" to the north and east of the island—aims to secure privileges for the Tamil elite through a power-sharing arrangement between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim elites. These parties have enthusiastically supported the US-India geopolitical offensive against China and are seeking the support of Washington and New Delhi to pressure Colombo for such a power-sharing deal.

78. Tamil-speaking workers and youth must reject the reactionary nationalist politics of all bourgeois parties, which divide them along racial lines from the rest of the workers and oppressed masses. They must join with Sinhala and Muslim workers in a fight for a united revolutionary movement of the working class, cutting across communal lines. The working class must demand the immediate withdrawal of troops from the north and east, the return of military-occupied lands to their original owners and the release of all political prisoners. Overthrowing bourgeois rule and establishing a government of workers and peasants, committed to socialist policies, is the path for securing the long-suppressed democratic rights of all minorities, including the Tamil people.

79. The trajectory from the 2022 uprising to the JVP government's intensified assault on the social and democratic rights of working people vindicates the fundamental insights of Trotskyism, particularly the Theory of Permanent Revolution. In the epoch of imperialism and world socialist revolution, no bourgeois or petty-bourgeois party can play a progressive role, because the national bourgeoisie is organically tied to imperialism and terrified of unleashing working-class revolutionary power. The JVP government's record follows the pattern internationally: Parties claiming to be "left," like Syriza in Greece, are elevated to power when traditional bourgeois parties lose credibility, only to impose savage austerity themselves and to shift to dictatorial rule.

The tasks of the SEP

80. The SEP's program is based on Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution, which has been powerfully vindicated by bitter strategic experiences in South Asia since early last century. The communal partition of the Indian subcontinent into Hindu-dominated India and Muslim Pakistan in 1947 by the British colonial rulers with the assistance of both sections of the national bourgeoisie—the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League—has produced an endless ethno-religious rivalry between the two states, leading to wars and war scares on several occasions. Since the formation of so-called independent states through the communal carve-up of the region in 1947–48, all sections of national bourgeoisie in South Asia have failed to address the basic social and democratic issues facing the working class and oppressed masses. Every faction of the ruling elite in these countries has demonstrated their allegiance to imperialism and, in the context of the deepening world capitalist crisis, have become open pro-imperialist lackeys supporting the US drive for global hegemony.

81. The SEP's program—for a Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam as part of the broader struggle for socialism in South Asia and internationally—flows from this analysis. Throughout its history, the RCL/SEP has fought to build a united independent political movement of the working class, based on socialist policies, cutting across all communal divisions promoted by various sections of the bourgeoisie, rallying all other oppressed masses, against ruling class attacks on social and democratic rights. Our struggle against the anti-Tamil racialist war carried out by successive governments, and our demand for the unconditional withdrawal of Sri Lankan forces from the north and east, has been an integral part of that fight.

82. A major task of the SEP is to fight for workers and youth in Sri Lanka, India and across South Asia to build an anti-war movement of the international working class based on socialist policies. The criminal US-Israeli war against Iran, NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine, Washington's preparations for war against China and the increasing complicity of governments in India and Sri Lanka in these war efforts make this struggle an urgent necessity.

83. In opposition to the JVP/NPP government and all factions of the bourgeoisie, the SEP advances a program to mobilize the working class in an independent political movement, rallying the rural poor, against the assault on social and democratic rights, with the aim of overthrowing bourgeois rule and establishing a government of the workers and peasants, committed to international socialism. The decisive task is to break the working class from the political, ideological and organizational influence of bourgeois and petty?bourgeois parties and trade union bureaucracies. The political and theoretical clarification and exposure of the reactionary character of these forces and their pseudo-left hangers-on is an essential part of this struggle.

84. The SEP must expose the fact that the crisis of bourgeois rule in Sri Lanka has material roots in the deepening crisis of global capitalism, not the corruption of individual politicians and state bureaucrats, as is claimed by the JVP/NPP. This political orientation was central to the SEP's analysis in 2022 and remains essential: There is no solution to the burning social and democratic issues facing the masses within capitalism and its nation-state system.

85. For the SEP to provide revolutionary leadership, it is crucial for the party to arm workers with the strategic experiences of the working class in the last century, concentrated in the decades-long political and theoretical struggle of the ICFI.

As David North explained in the preface to his volume of essays, *Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century*:

> The historical experiences of the past century thoroughly tested all political movements, parties, and tendencies that claimed to be leading the struggle against capitalism. But the upheavals of the

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twentieth century have exposed the counterrevolutionary role of the Stalinists, Social Democrats, Maoists, bourgeois nationalists, anarchists, and Pabloites. Only the Fourth International, led by the International Committee, has met the test of history. The international revolutionary socialist movement of the working class on every continent will develop on the theoretical and political foundations of Trotskyism, the Marxism of the twenty-first century.

86. With this understanding, the SEP must politically and theoretically combat the fake-left organizations, including the FSP, various intellectuals and academics who serve as props for capitalism and imperialism. This is an essential part of preparing the working class for the coming battles. The FSP was formed in 2012 by a section of JVP members who split from the parent party in 2011 but did not politically break from the JVP. It continues to defend the JVP's bloody anti-working class history and traditions. With a thoroughly nationalist, reformist program, hiding behind occasional socialist rhetoric, the FSP gravitates around the bourgeois parties and trade union bureaucracies. The FSP defends the JVP/NPP government, claiming that it expresses "popular expectations" and propagating the deadly illusion that it can be pushed to the "left" through pressure.

87. The SEP must develop its struggle to build action committees in every factory, workplace, plantation and neighbourhood, independent of the capitalist political establishment and the unions. The recent struggles of the working class demonstrate the urgency of building such democratic organisations. The pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracies—mostly controlled by the ruling and opposition parties—support the IMF austerity being implemented by the government and enforce the attacks carried out by big business by shutting down struggles and demobilizing workers. The SEP must conduct political work to help workers overcome the grip of these bureaucratic industrial police and build their own independent action committees. The SEP has already initiated such committees among health, education, port and plantation workers, but must accelerate this work among all key sections of the working class.

88. The SEP must advance transitional demands for workers and the rural poor to fight for through their independent action committees in order to build an independent political movement of the working class, rallying the rural poor, youth and other oppressed masses, including Tamils. A consistent struggle for such demands will raise the consciousness of workers to the level required by objective developments, i.e., the need for a socialist and internationalist program and perspective. As Trotsky said in *The Transitional Program: The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*: "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

89. The SEP must devote special attention to the worsening conditions confronting poor and marginalized farmers. Various organizations operating among the rural poor tie them to capitalist parties, including the ruling JVP, which defends the profit system. The rural masses can secure a solution to their pressing problems only through the intervention of the working class in the struggle to break the grip of capitalist profit by nationalizing the major banks, agribusiness and key sectors of the economy under workers' democratic control and providing the resources necessary for cultivation at affordable prices. As Trotsky explained, the working class can forge the alliance with the rural masses and provide this alternative only through a decisive political break from all capitalist parties. In turn, the rural poor must establish their own action committees and unite with the working class in the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government.

90. The fight to defend democratic rights is part of the independent mobilization of the working class. This struggle includes demands for the abolition of the unitary state constitution, which enshrines Buddhism and Sinhala; abolition of the autocratic executive presidency; the repeal of all repressive laws such as the PTA, emergency regulations, the Essential Services Act and various laws against freedom of expression. Established in 1978 by J. R. Jayawardene, the executive presidency, with its sweeping powers, has been used to wage communal war and to suppress the struggles of workers and the poor. After making false promises to abolish the executive presidency, the current president Dissanayake is making use of all these repressive laws.

91. Flowing from the SEP's perspective and at the center of its struggle is the fight to build the Democratic and Socialist Congress of Workers and Rural Masses. Such a Congress, composed of democratically elected delegates from independent action committees of workers and the rural poor, would form the embryonic organ of working?class power. Its tasks would include mobilizing the working class for the overthrow of bourgeois rule; establishing a workers' and peasants' government, which would implement socialist policies; and guaranteeing full democratic rights for all nationalities through the establishment of a Sri Lanka?Eelam Socialist Republic, as part of a Union of Socialist Republics in South Asia and internationally.

92. The struggle to build action committees and the Democratic and Socialist Congress is inseparable from the fight to forge a strategic alliance between workers in Sri Lanka and their class brothers and sisters in South Asia, mainly in India, directed against both the regional bourgeoisies and the imperialist powers. This is the internationalist perspective that the working class must advance against the JVP/NPP government's integration of Sri Lanka into the US-led war drive against China, backed by every faction of the ruling elite.

93. The launching of Socialism AI by the ICFI on December 12, 2025, was a significant step in the fight for socialist consciousness. It will assist in politically and theoretically preparing workers and youth throughout the world for revolutionary battles against bourgeois rule. The SEP must work to popularize this new AI tool as a powerful instrument for political orientation, clarification and action.

95. We have entered the second half of the decade, which the ICFI and the WSWS characterized at the start of 2020 as "the decade of socialist revolution." A WSWS Editorial Board statement issued on December 12, 2025 announcing the launching of Socialism AI, said:

"The second half of this decade will be marked by the growth of powerful working class resistance. The world capitalist system is beset by contradictions it cannot resolve… The global working class is entering into struggle: Mass strikes, popular uprisings and political insurgencies are emerging on every continent."

The statement explained: "Marxism has always insisted that the spontaneous struggles of workers, however powerful, do not by themselves produce a coherent revolutionary perspective. Consciousness must be developed; historical experience must be assimilated; theoretical insight must be achieved."

96. As an important part of our struggle to raise the political consciousness of workers and youth, the SEP must deepen our constant polemics against the ideological influence of reactionary currents like Stalinism, Maoism, postmodernism and Pabloite revisionism. The party must explain the lessons of the struggle of the Trotskyist movement for international socialism in articles for the WSWS exposing these tendencies.

97. The struggle to? build sections of the ICFI in South Asia, especially in India, is crucial to the fight for international working-class unity. The

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SEP is working closely with the ICFI in this fight. Building new ICFI sections is a strategic task, and developing a systematic Marxist analysis on political, economic and social developments in India and South Asia through the WSWS is essential.

98. Sri Lankan workers cannot win in isolation. The crisis of capitalism is global; its solution must be international. The SEP fights for action committees in Sri Lanka to join with the International Workers Alliance of Rank?and?File Committees to coordinate their struggles with those of workers internationally. Class independence from all bourgeois parties is a prerequisite for such unity.

99. Winning working?class leadership requires patient political and theoretical training. The SEP must expand the political education of workers and youth—on Marxism, Trotskyism, and the history of Trotskyist movement, including its struggle against all varieties of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism—while developing disciplined cadres capable of leading workplaces, action committees and mass bodies. The SEP will publish several important works of Leon Trotsky and major ICFI publications, including those authored by David North, in Sinhala and Tamil in the coming period.

100. The SEP must make energetic efforts to build the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) among students and young workers. We must expand our work at the universities, other higher educational institutions and at schools throughout the island. This involves a theoretical and political struggle against anti-Marxist identity politics, such as “student power,” which is promoted by academics and fake lefts such as the FSP. This struggle can win the best elements of the younger generation to the revolutionary party. Facing education cuts, unemployment and a future of wage slavery, young people are being increasingly radicalized against the JVP/NPP government. Only the SEP/IYSSE can present a perspective for them to fight for a socialist future.

101. The consistent fight against all forms of communalism and nationalism is fundamental to the international unity of the working class across ethnic lines. As the economic and political crisis deepens and workers are entering into struggles against attacks on their social and democratic rights, the ruling JVP/NPP and opposition parties will increasingly resort to anti-Tamil and anti-Muslim chauvinism to divide the working class and derail a unified struggle. The JVP/NPP’s calls for “national unity” do not represent any break from the JVP’s chauvinist character; in Sri Lanka, “national unity” has historically been synonymous with majoritarian Sinhala communalism.

Likewise, the SEP opposes Tamil and Muslim communal politics, including Tamil separatism, which serve the interests of the ruling elite by subordinating workers to rival capitalist interests, thereby obstructing the unification of workers in a common struggle for social equality.

102. The SEP is advancing our struggle for the program and perspective of international socialism. The role of the subjective factor—the party—is crucial in the current objective situation. Our task is to bring socialist consciousness to the working class. The SEP is conducting political and theoretical work to educate the working class on the program and perspective of international socialism, primarily through the WSWS. We must develop our systematic and timely analysis on political developments in Sri Lanka, India and South Asia, writing for the English, Sinhala and Tamil sections of the WSWS. In the coming period, the SEP will prepare major political documents, including on the lessons of the 2022 mass uprising, the evolution of the JVP from a radical petty-bourgeois movement into a party of the political establishment and on the history of anti-Tamil racialist war in Sri Lanka. By explaining these experiences to workers, youth and the rural poor, we will win cadres for our party and build it as the mass revolutionary party of the working class.

Concluded.

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