

SEP-ISSE meeting in Sri Lanka

## A socialist program to oppose war and its economic burdens

2 November 2007

The Socialist Equality Party and International Students for Social Equality are holding a public meeting on November 13 to oppose Sri Lanka's intensifying civil war, the economic burdens being imposed on working people and the attacks on basic democratic rights.

The Colombo government has openly flouted the 2002 ceasefire and plunged the island back to war. Lining up with the crimes of the Bush administration in Afghanistan and Iraq, President Mahinda Rajapakse claims to be fighting a "war on terror". In reality, the military is fighting a communal war to benefit the country's ruling elite at the expense of the working class—Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim alike.

The death toll is already estimated at more than 6,000, hundreds more have "disappeared" and over 250,000 people have been displaced. While spending billions of rupees on the war, the Rajapakse government has slashed real wages, government subsidies and public services, making life intolerable for ordinary working people in the cities and the villages.

Whenever workers have tried to defend their living standards and basic rights, the government has branded them as "supporters of terrorism" or "traitors to the motherland". Rajapakse has maintained the state of emergency that was reimposed in 2004 and introduced new regulations and laws aimed at suppressing any political opposition.

Without a political program to oppose the war, workers cannot defend their most basic rights—that is the bitter lesson of the strikes and protests of the past year. All the political parties of the establishment have lined up behind the war or promote illusions in the phony international peace process. Not surprisingly,

their affiliated unions have refused to challenge the government's demand that everything be sacrificed for the war.

The Socialist Equality Party is fighting to build an independent movement of the working class, cutting across the ethnic divisions and mobilising the oppressed masses behind it. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the military from the North and East as the first step to unite workers and replace capitalist rule with a workers' and peasants' government—a Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Eelam.

The SEP calls for the complete reorganisation of the economy on socialist lines to meet the pressing needs of the vast majority, not the profits of the privileged few. This program can only be realised as part of the broader fight for socialism throughout South Asia and internationally.

**Venue:** Public Library Auditorium, Colombo

**Time:** 4.00 p.m., November 13

To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>