

ICFI/WSWS supporters in India hold public meeting on danger of world war

By our correspondents
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Supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) held a successful public meeting in Nungambakkam, Chennai last Sunday to discuss the socialist answer to the danger of world war. Students from a number of colleges, as well as workers, participated.

Opening the meeting, chairman Sathish Simon noted that the Indian media maintained a virtual blackout on the growing danger of imperialist war. Only the ICFI/WSWS supporters in India were explaining the potentially catastrophic developments and advocating an alternative socialist perspective for the working class.

The first speaker, ICFI/WSWS supporters' group convenor Arun Kumar, drew attention to US President Barack Obama's provocative remarks against Russia and China at the recent G20 meeting in Australia. These were another clear indication of the rapidly mounting danger of imperialist conflagration, he warned.

Kumar said New Delhi was "tilting ever more closely into the US 'orbit' and encouraging Washington's anti-China 'pivot to Asia.'" He pointed out that the US and Japan were also urging New Delhi to "assert itself against China in the South China Sea and in other territorial disputes, as a part of their attempts to integrate India more closely into 'pivot.'"

The speaker told the meeting: "The danger of imperialist war and the attacks against the working class can be defeated only through the overthrow of the capitalist system worldwide. In this struggle the Indian working class must base itself on Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution against the various Stalinist parties that are the chief prop of the Indian capitalist class."

The second speaker, Sri Lankan SEP Political Committee member M. Aravindan, brought fraternal greetings from the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI. He said the meeting "reflected important political changes among workers and students who are turning toward a socialist perspective in response to the rapid escalation in world geopolitical tensions and the development of class struggles."

Quoting from the recent ICFI plenum resolution, "Socialism and the fight against imperialist war," Aravindan explained that the US and other imperialist powers were once again dragging humanity toward another world war, as they did twice in the 20th century.

Aravindan pointed to the essential historical lessons of last century: that World War I was only brought to an end by the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, led by the Bolshevik Party, and that the betrayal of the international socialist perspective of the Russian Revolution by the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy helped create the conditions for the WWII.

The speaker continued: "During the second world war, the Stalinist Communist Party of India, under instructions from the Soviet bureaucracy, supported British imperialism, under the guise of defending 'democracy' against fascist Germany, and backed the Congress party, which also endorsed British imperialism's war effort. It was only the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI), the Indian sub-continent section of the Fourth International, which fought against war and British imperialist rule in the region."

Turning to current developments, Aravindan pointed out that the US, as part of its geo-political agenda against China, was using the war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan military during Colombo's civil war against the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE) to exert pressure on Sri Lanka's Rajapakse government.

"Washington's real concern is not the war crimes or human rights violations against the Tamils but to break Rajapakse's close ties with China and for Sri Lanka to integrate fully with US geo-strategic aims," the speaker said. "If Colombo agreed to tilt toward the US, all these charges of war crimes would be abandoned immediately."

Aravindan concluded by calling upon those in attendance to seriously study the perspectives of the Trotskyist movement and participate in the struggle waged by the ICFI and its Sri Lankan section to build a section of the Fourth International in India.

A lively discussion followed the speeches. Replying to a question on why socialists were unable to prevent the civil war in Sri Lanka, Aravindan reviewed the political circumstances that produced the war and in particular the impact of the betrayal carried out by the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP).

The speaker explained that in 1964 the LSSP, which claimed to be Trotskyist, joined the bourgeois government of Sirima Bandaranaike. This betrayal of the working class, he said, not only defended the Sri Lankan ruling class but encouraged the growth of anti-Tamil racialist politics and ultimately led to the eruption of civil war in 1983. The Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the SEP's predecessor, was established in 1968 as the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI to revive and continue the revolutionary Trotskyist traditions against the LSSP's betrayal.

Aravindan said: "Only the RCL/SEP fought against Colombo's war, demanding the unconditional withdrawal of all Sri Lankan troops from the north and east of the island. History has vindicated the revolutionary perspective of the RCL/SEP and its consistent fight for socialist internationalism against all the petty-bourgeois national movements, such as the JVP and the LTTE.

"The democratic rights of the Tamil people can only be defended as part of the struggle for the overthrow of all capitalist regimes in the region and for the establishment of a Union of Socialist Republics in South Asia, as a part of broader struggle for international socialism."

After the meeting, WSWS correspondents spoke with several audience members.

Sathish said: "It's right to talk about the threat of world war. I wondered how it was possible to fight against the US but after listening to the speeches I now understand that the US is an economically weaker nation and is only strong militarily. Only by mobilising the powerful American working class in unity with the international working class can such a war be stopped. I also understand that the deep economic crisis in the US has driven it to war."

Sakthivel, a law student, said: "No country in the Asian region, including India and Sri Lanka, can escape the US preparations against China. I agree that an anti-war movement must be built across the world. It must go beyond the state borders and be on a mass scale for the intervention of the international working class to fight for revolution to establish socialist equality."

Raja, a worker, said: "I realise that we must fight for socialism. That is the only way to prevent war. I'm very happy to know that there is a world party fighting to unite the international working class."

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