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SRI LANKA: THE CRISIS OF THE POST-COLONIAL STATE AND THE CURRENT POLITICAL TURMOIL

Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri

Sri Lanka Chair, South Asia Institute (Department of History, University of Colombo)



The massive crowd, which gathered at the Gall Face Green in Colombo on May 1st, 2017 at the International Workers' Day rally, organized by the 'Joint Opposition' led by the former president Mahinda Rajapaksha, was indeed the highlight of customary May Day demonstrations in Sri Lanka this year. What is remarkable about this mammoth gathering, unprecedented in similar public gatherings in the recent past, is that it indisputably underscored the strong come-back made by Rajapaksha's followers subsequent to two successive election defeats in 2015. More than this, the rally revealed some fault lines in the precarious political equilibrium in Sri Lanka, which is certainly experiencing a multi-faceted crisis. If the Rajapaksha regime could be defeated by a grand coalition that brought together political forces from many constituencies in the highly diverse political landscape of Sri Lanka, this rally, contrastively, showed that the political future of that grand coalition is being held at bay, and could be challenged by a successful mobilization of one particular constituency, i.e. the Sinhala-Buddhist South. This is indeed a serious phenomenon to be reckoned with, taking into consideration the deep-structural and historical roots of the present crisis.