

Sri Lankan SEP to commemorate anniversary of Keerthi Balasuriya's death

29 December 2005

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka will hold a public lecture to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of the death of Keerthi Balasuriya, the founding general secretary of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the SEP's forerunner. Comrade Keerthi died of a sudden heart attack on December 18, 1987 at the age of just 39. His untimely death was a great loss to the RCL and to the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) as a whole.

Keerthi Balasuriya played a leading role in the ICFI's political and theoretical struggle against the betrayal of Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), which in 1964 joined the bourgeois government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The LSSP's actions had terrible consequences for the working class in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally. By abandoning the struggle to unify workers on the basis of socialist internationalism, the LSSP opened the door for the emergence of radical middle class organisations based on communalism and paved the way for the island's catastrophic civil war.

At the age of just 19, Keerthi Balasuriya became the RCL's founding general secretary in 1968 and devoted his entire adult life to constructing a party based on Marxist principle in a struggle against all varieties of political opportunism. One of his main concerns was to establish the political lessons of the LSSP's betrayal, which continue to have great relevance for the international working class today.

Wije Dias, SEP general secretary and a member of the WSWs International Editorial Board, will deliver the lecture on the theme "Seventy years of the LSSP—its rise and fall". We warmly invite workers, young people and intellectuals to attend.

Date and Time: 4.30 p.m. January 5, 2006

Venue: Public Library Auditorium, Colombo.



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