# Hundreds attend funeral of Senthil Ravee

**Our reporter**
**29 March 2007**

The funeral of Senthil Ravee, a member of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), took place in the Crown Hill Crematorium in Milton Keynes, England on Friday, March 16. More than 300 people attended. These included his relatives, party members, supporters and friends. They came from Britain, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, and Canada.

Despite the worsening social and employment situation, a very large number of people in diverse occupations took time off work and traveled long distances to attend the funeral. This was a tribute to Selthilravi's 14 years of political struggle for socialism.

Senthil led a very simple life, but his farsightedness broke him away from all forms of nationalism and led him to an internationalist working class perspective. From the moment he joined the ICFI in his 25th year until his passing away, he worked tirelessly to build its influence among Tamil migrants in Europe.

Many of those gathered recalled his indefatigable struggles and his achievements. Addressing the gathering, Chris Marsden, national secretary of the British section of the ICFI, the Socialist Equality Party said,

"I am here to offer the condolences of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Socialist Equality Party of Britain.

"There is nothing I can say that can sweeten the bitter pill of comrade Senthil's death. He was too young and left us too early for that.

"All I can do is state clearly the deep sense of loss we all feel and to hold out a hand of friendship to his family, and to Anparasi and their three boys in particular.

"Senthil achieved much in his short life and would have achieved much, much more.

"He was a man in his prime, his character and political outlook already shaped by profound experiences and tempered by his growing understanding of Marxism—of the historical legacy of all that is best in the workers' movement that he found in the International Committee.

"Every experience he made since first arriving in France, he made as a conscious political fighter for the international unity of working people and as someone dedicated to the building of a socialist world.

"He would have understood very well the spirit of Trotsky's statement made while exiled in Mexico in February 1940, even as world war raged in Europe and Stalin's murder machine sought his own death.

"Trotsky wrote, 'My faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth . . . Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence, and enjoy it to the full.'

"Senthil had seen political persecution, and had been forced into exile from his own country. He knew personal hardship and sacrifice better than most.

"But he was full of the joys of life, not simply because of his own confidence in a better future, but because he was surrounded by those who loved and respected him and was living each day with a purpose. That is, I must stress, the best thing that any of us can do.

"And unlike those who seek solace in the chimera of religion, socialism does not require us to don a hair-shirt and ask for redemption for our supposed sins. It calls on us to embrace the world and all that it offers, to acquaint ourselves with the highest cultural achievements of mankind at the apex of which stands the Marxist canon.

"It means that we can sing, and drink and sometimes even dance if the feeling takes us. And in that too Senthil excelled.

"He was and remains an example to us all. And we will honour him. Not only when the occasion demands, but every single day by dedicating ourselves to fulfilling the historic mission that Senthil believed in so passionately.

"Senthil was a wonderful human being and we miss him."

Athiyan, on behalf of his family, friends and comrades from France, talked of Sethilravi's past experiences:

"Comrade Senthil was the embodiment of man's civilized conduct. He led a very simple life, but was cultured and thought deeply about any subject—patiently explained the core of the same to his listeners.

"He opposed the profit-motive of a few who want to sweep mankind to a level of barbarism and fought for a revolutionary socialist perspective until his last breath. To the end he had firm faith and commitment in the perspective of the Fourth International and worked joyfully to achieve that end.

"He had a deep rooted conviction that the oppressed people of Tamil origin in Sri Lanka would find true liberation only by the success of a socialist revolution in the Indian sub-continent. Accordingly he understood the need for constructing a section

© World Socialist Web Site

of the Fourth International in the Indian Sub-continent and dedicated himself to this goal.

"He was determined to study in depth Indian history and human history in general. In the days when we were together he often used to say that this alone would make it possible to create a great future for mankind.

"Senthil was very keen on studying the creative writings of 20th and 21st century Marxists. Four days before his passing away he had sent an e-mail to me in which he gave a long list of such great books. He had made particular mention of the works of Lenin, Trotsky and David North.

"The French working class will engrave Senthil's name in its history for his contribution in placing before it the perspective of the Fourth International.

"Both in Paris and London, when protest rallies were held against the American invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, he took up the struggle for a socialist opposition to war.

"Similarly, his contribution in building a Tamil section of the *World Socialist Web Site* was immense. Many were shocked to learn of the premature demise of this human being with a unique history who had loved mankind.

"Hearing the news of his passing away, many people from different lands, who did not know him personally, sent condolences. These identified especially Senthil as one who had risen above considerations of race, religion and language.

"When he met me in Paris, the day before he left us, he said historical laws were far more powerful than the repressive weapons of reactionaries. Those words are still fresh in my mind.

"Though Comrade Senthil had led a simple life, not only the French working class but the British, Indian and the world working class will look with fond memories of him. I am of the firm conviction that the present day conscious young generation will hold up his struggle as its role model."

Arun Kumar, Secretary of Socialist Labour League of India, said,

"Comrade Senthil's tragic and sudden death is a big loss for our international Trotskyist movement. All of us here, his comrades, his family, relatives and his friends, are deeply unhappy over his loss.

"Nevertheless it has to be said that his memory will never die. He was an internationalist. He had complete faith in the international socialist perspective of the International Committee of the Fourth International and dedicated himself passionately to the struggle for the international unity of the working class.

"After his initial political experience in the national movement, he realised that there could be no progressive solution to the problems of national oppression within the framework of the island of Sri Lanka. He clearly understood the problems of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka could be resolved only as part of the world socialist revolution.

"He worked to bring the international perspectives of the ICFI to French, British and European working class. He also encouraged his comrades and friends to fight for this great task.

"He visited India many times. When I met him few days before his death in London, he was happy and expressed a keen interest in discussing political, theoretical and cultural problems in relation to building the section of the ICFI in India.

"We honour comrade Senthil and his revolutionary struggle. He fought for the emancipation of the working people and for a better future for humanity. The best way to honour him is to carry his struggle forward."

Mr. Kasilingam, former editor of the Tamil newspaper *Eezhaha Nadu*, published in Jaffna and Paris, and now working as a journalist in France, spoke of his relationship with Senthil:

"Comrades have made the point that Senthilravi was deeply committed to the realization of a world in which Marxist Communist ideologies would hold their sway; they also indicated how world politics is taking place. This makes it very clear to us that Senthilravi was dedicated to building a decent society, against war. These speeches have also enabled a large number of people to know about the great attributes of Senthil.

"As a close relation of Senthilravi's family, I thank all those who have given due consideration of the human characteristics of Senthilravi."

On behalf of the supporters of the International Committtee from Germany, Antony Thass who participated in the proceedings, said, "Today we have all gathered at the funeral rites of Senthil. These are only the final rites for Senthil's body. His struggle for a noble perspective, his love of internationalism will be a shining example for a thousand new generations of youngsters. Not only that, his struggles will inspire and live vividly in the thoughts of the next generation.

"His struggle against barbarism, with the help of great perspectives, will protect human civilization, and great democratic and human values."

Many of those present had contributed towards a fund which will help Senthil's wife Anparasi and his three children.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**wsws.org/contact**


© World Socialist Web Site