

SEP-ISSE memorial meeting

Twenty years since the death of Sri Lankan Trotskyist leader Keerthi Balasuriya

5 December 2007

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) in Sri Lanka will hold a public meeting in Colombo on December 23 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the death of Keerthi Balasuriya.

Comrade Keerthi was the general secretary of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the forerunner of the SEP, and a leader of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). His premature death on December 18, 1987, at the age of just 39, robbed the world Trotskyist movement of one of its finest representatives of the post-World War II period.

An intellectual prodigy and a gifted artist, Keerthi dedicated his entire adult life, from the age of 16, to building the ICFI. At just 19, he assumed the leadership of the RCL at its founding in 1968, an expression of his thorough assimilation of the theoretical foundations of Marxism. His lifelong struggle for Trotskyism has immense importance for the present generation of young people who are turning to revolutionary politics.

Keerthi entered political life amid the immense difficulties created by the betrayal of the two leading Trotskyist parties—the reunification of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States with opportunist United Secretariat in 1963 and the entry of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) into a bourgeois government led by the Sri Lankan Freedom Party in Sri Lanka in 1964.

In seeking to clarify these great betrayals, Keerthi stood firmly against the widespread infatuation with bourgeois nationalist movements and figures such as Mao Tse Tung, Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. Basing himself on Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution, Keerthi insisted that the working class remained the

sole consistently revolutionary force in society and steadfastly fought for its independence from the bourgeoisie and all of its political agencies.

The transformation of China, Vietnam and Cuba into cheap labour platforms for international finance capital underscores Keerthi's farsightedness. His life and work have an immediate relevance to workers and youth, not only in Sri Lanka, but throughout Asia and internationally. The SEP invites supporters and WSWS readers to attend our memorial meeting, which will review the historical significance of Keerthi's political and theoretical contributions to the struggle for the world socialist revolution.

Time: 3.00 p.m. Sunday December 23.

Venue: Mahaweli Center, Green Path, Colombo 7.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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