

# Public meeting in Paris: Twentieth anniversary of the death of Trotskyist leader Keerthi Balasuriya

26 February 2008

The International Committee of the Fourth international (ICFI) and the *World Socialist Web Site* will hold a meeting in Paris on March 16 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the death of Keerthi Balasuriya, the general secretary of the Revolutionary Communist League, the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party of Sri Lanka, and a leader of the ICFI.

In a period when nationalist movements like the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Castro's July 26 movement were glorified by radical tendencies throughout the world as the new revolutionary vanguard, Keerthi defended the basic Marxist concept that the working class is the only consistently revolutionary class.

At the age of 19 he became the leader of the RCL, which was founded in 1968 as an answer to the historic betrayal of the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party). This former Trotskyist party, which had a mass following in the Sri Lankan working class, succumbed to the pressure of nationalism and joined the coalition government in 1964. The LSSP supported a Sinhalese chauvinist policy and abandoned the Tamil workers.

This historic betrayal had fatal consequences, leading to the bloody civil war that is still raging after 25 years and has claimed over 70,000 lives.

Keerthi Balasuriya's consistent opposition to the LSSP's betrayal and his defence of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution have enormous significance for workers all over the world today when the most naked forms of imperialist oppression are re-emerging and the political bankruptcy of national movements can be seen everywhere.

The lessons of the struggles that Keerthi Balasuriya waged throughout his life for an internationalist

working class perspective are of vital importance today. The meeting commemorating Comrade Keerthi will discuss these lessons, which are of utmost significance for workers and youth all over the world who are looking for a way out of permanent attacks on their living standards and rights and are beginning to turn to revolutionary politics.

## Public meeting

Sunday, March 16, 2:30 p.m.

AGECA, 177 rue de Charonne, 75011 Paris

Métro: Charonne—ligne 9, Alexandre Dumas—ligne 2, Nation—RER, Bus—ligne 76.

## Speakers

Amuthan: main editor of the Tamil-language page of the WSWs

Chris Marsden, national secretary, Socialist Equality Party, Britain

Peter Schwarz, secretary of the ICFI



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