

Sri Lanka: SEP marks 40 years of struggle for socialist internationalism

11 July 2008

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Students for Social Equality (ISSE) in Sri Lanka are holding a public meeting on July 16 to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL)—the SEP's predecessor.

The RCL was established in 1968 after the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) betrayed the principles of Trotskyism and joined the capitalist government of Madame Sirima Bandaranaike in 1964. The LSSP's political treachery had profound consequences for the working class not only in Sri Lanka, but throughout Asia and internationally.

Those who founded the RCL not only rejected the LSSP's decision to join the Bandaranaike government, but traced the political roots of that betrayal to the emergence of the opportunist tendency led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel within the Fourth International following World War II. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) was founded in 1953 to defend the program of socialist internationalism against Pabloite opportunism. The RCL was established as the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI.

From its founding, the RCL was firmly grounded on the principles of Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and waged an intransigent struggle for the political independence of the working class in opposition to all forms of middle class radicalism and the prevailing infatuation with figures such as Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh and Che Guevara. The political confusion generated by the LSSP's betrayal led to the formation of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which led radicalised layers of Sinhala and Tamil youth down the reactionary path of communal chauvinism and war.

The SEP and its forerunner the RCL have alone stood the test of time in opposing nationalism and separatism,

fighting for the unity of all workers—regardless of race, colour, nationality or ethnicity—and advancing a socialist program to end the country's protracted civil war as part of the broader struggle for socialism throughout South Asia and around the world. The rich lessons of the struggles of the RCL/SEP during the past 40 years are directly relevant for workers and youth everywhere, particularly in Asia, Latin America and Africa. We warmly invite young people, workers and intellectuals to attend our meeting.

The main speaker will be SEP General Secretary Wije Dias, a founding member of the RCL.

Venue: Public Library Auditorium, Colombo

Time: 4.00 p.m., July 16



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