

Greetings from David North to the 50th anniversary meeting of the Sri Lankan SEP

David North
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Dear Comrades,

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Revolutionary Communist League, the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party, in Sri Lanka, is an auspicious occasion. For a half century, the party that was founded in 1968 by an extraordinary group of young revolutionaries has upheld the banner of the International Committee of the Fourth International. This achievement is as inspiring as it is historic.

The founding of the RCL was an expression of unyielding devotion to socialist principles, uncompromising opposition to opportunism, political farsightedness, and, one must add, no small amount of physical courage. The founders of the RCL undertook this task at a time when the political life of the working class and oppressed masses was dominated by parties and related organizations controlled by Stalinists, Maoists, Social Democrats, bourgeois nationalists and even, as in Sri Lanka, renegades from Trotskyism.

The leaders of the new Trotskyist party, with the magnificent audacity of youth, declared war on all the false leaders of the working class. The old organizations, they insisted, would be held accountable for their crimes and betrayals. The future, they proclaimed, belonged to the Fourth International, which represented the principles and program of genuine revolutionary Marxism.

The experience of a half-century has vindicated the stand taken by the founders of the RCL. The old organizations have been weighed in the balance of history, found wanting, and little remains of them but ruins. However, the RCL/SEP has met all the tests with which it has been confronted.

A revolutionary party is based on a scientific program. But it is created and led by real people. The party does not build itself. Therefore, it is fitting, on

this day of celebration, that the International Committee pays tribute to the comrades who founded and devoted their lives to the construction of the RCL/SEP.

Comrade Keerthi Balasuriya, the first national secretary of the Revolutionary Communist League, guided the RCL during the first twenty years of its existence. His work was critical in the construction of the political foundations of the party. In 1985 he led his section, as a key member of the International Committee, in the fight to defend the programmatic principles and heritage of the Fourth International. Despite his untimely death at the age of 39, in December 1987, his work and example continues to inspire his comrades within Sri Lanka and internationally.

The International Committee sends its warmest greetings to Comrade Wije Dias, who has led the Sri Lankan section for the past 30 years. It likewise expresses its respect, love and gratitude to Comrade K. Ratnayake, Comrade Vilani Peiris, Comrade Nanda Wickremesinghe, Comrade Ananda Wakkumbura, Comrade Ratnasiri Malalagama and Comrade R.M. Gunathilake.

We are now entering a new era of world-wide upheaval and struggle. All that has been done and achieved by the RCL/SEP during the past half-century has prepared the party for the struggles that are now unfolding. The SEP is destined to play a colossal historical role in the struggles that lie ahead, not only in Sri Lanka, but throughout Asia.

Long Live the Socialist Equality Party!
Forward to the creation of the United Socialist States of Sri Lanka and Eelam!

Forward to the World Socialist Revolution!

With revolutionary greetings,

David North



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