

Memorial meeting to honour comrade Wije Dias: A fighter for Trotskyism

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
10 July 2023

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka will hold a memorial meeting in Colombo on Saturday July 29, to pay tribute to Wije Dias.

Comrade Wije was general secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka) and its forerunner, the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), from December 1987 until May 2022, when he was elected to the post of SEP chairperson.

Wije died of a sudden heart attack in Colombo on the morning of July 27, 2022, just one month before his 81st birthday. He was a towering figure in the fight for Trotskyism in Sri Lanka, South Asia and internationally.

As the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) noted in its statement last year: “Wije was an implacable protagonist of the socialist internationalist program of Permanent Revolution and fighter for the political independence of the working class. He was unyielding in his defense of Marxist and Trotskyist principles because he had witnessed the catastrophic consequences—in the form of political disorientation, reaction and tragic loss of life—that result from their abandonment and betrayal.”

Wije and Keerthi Balasuriya were part of a remarkable group of young people who opposed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party’s (LSSP) decision to join the bourgeois coalition government of Sirima Bandaranaike in 1964. Responding to the ICFI’s analysis of the responsibility of Pabloite opportunism for the LSSP’s betrayal, Wije, Balasuriya and others in the group established the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL) as the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI in 1968, with Balasuriya as its founding general secretary.

Comrade Wije took up the challenge of leading the RCL following the untimely death of Comrade Keerthi

in 1987, amid the political crisis provoked by Colombo’s communal war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Indian army’s occupation of the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Wije was instrumental in overcoming the tragic loss of Comrade Keerthi and reconsolidating the cadre to continue the struggle for socialist internationalism under the difficult conditions of the intensifying civil war and police-military and fascist violence against the working class and the rural masses.

Comrade Wije played this decisive role with enormous political courage and steadfastness until his death. His unwavering and uncompromising fight for a revolutionary internationalist orientation and his integrity as a Marxist-Trotskyist has been a great source of encouragement to the party cadre in maintaining the unity of the party and leading it forward.

We welcome workers, youth, students, WSWs readers and all fighters against capitalist oppression to attend this meeting to discuss the political relevance of Comrade Wije’s life and its lessons in the current context of the intensifying US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the explosive growth of class struggles around the world.

Date and time: Saturday, July 29, 3.00 p.m.

Venue: Auditorium, Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo 7



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