Sri Lanka: SEP bids farewell to long-standing Trotskyist Ananda Daulagala

Our reporters
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On August 14, family members, comrades, and friends gathered at the funeral parlour near Mahaiyawa Cemetery in Kandy to pay their final respects to Comrade Ananda Daulagala. He was a long-standing, leading member of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), the Sri Lankan section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

Daulagala—affectionately known among party comrades and friends as "Daule"—passed away on August 13 at his home, at the age of 77, following a prolonged illness.

He became a member of the Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), the SEP's predecessor, during the nationwide public-sector general strike in 1980. He served on the party's central committee and political committee.

Daulagala led the Kandy branch for an extended period until he was paralysed a few years ago. He was also a regular translator of *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) articles from English to Sinhala.

The funeral was held on Thursday afternoon at Mahaiyawa Cemetery in Kandy and was attended by family members, SEP comrades, and friends from across the country.

Daulagala's casket was taken in a solemn procession from the funeral parlour to the nearby cemetery. The SEP held a memorial meeting before the cremation to honour the life and political contributions of this long-standing Trotskyist.

SEP Political Committee member Pani Wijesiriwardena gave introductory remarks at the meeting, speaking about his decades-long political collaboration with Daulagala.

Wijesiriwardena explained that Daulagala became an RCL member during the July 1980 public-sector strike and waged a relentless fight against the repression carried out by successive Sri Lankan bourgeois governments.

"He fought through whatever difficulties came his way. In 1984, he was detained for 28 days by the then United National Party (UNP) administration during the RCL's struggle against its White Paper aimed at privatising free education in Sri Lanka," he said.

Wijesiriwardena went on to describe a brief conversation he had with Daulagala's daughter, Vidurangi. She characterised her father as a dedicated party fighter who devoted his life to fighting for the future of children—not just his own, but children across the world.

"He sometimes converted our home into a discussion forum with workers and students from nearby Peradeniya University," Vidurangi said, recalling her father's political activities.

Wijesiriwardena concluded his remarks by noting that even after Daulagala became ill, "his main concern was the development of the party and the escalating political crisis of the global capitalist system. Trotskyist leaders like Daulagala are essential to building the revolutionary party."

WSWS national editor and SEP Political Committee member K. Ratnayake also addressed the gathering. He began by saying: "I am speaking here as a comrade who has been with Daulagala since the day he joined the party and began his lifelong fight as a Trotskyist."

Ratnayake said Daulagala's political strength as a lifelong fighter for Trotskyism was deeply based on the international socialist perspective and program represented by the SEP. Daulagala's political work spanned the Kandy region, where he lived and worked among tea plantation workers and Peradeniya University students and employees.

Ratnayake quoted from a WSWS interview with

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Daulagala from 13 years ago, when he was an SEP election candidate for Kegalle District in the 2012 Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council election.

"We are the only working-class party contesting this election. We offer an internationalist program to resolve the difficulties confronted by the workers, the poor, and the youth," Daulagala said.

"We intend to bring the problems of the people in the Kegalle area—as well as the socialist solutions to those problems—to the attention of working people nationally, regionally, and internationally, because such international awareness and the intervention of the working class are necessary to solve these challenges."

These comments, Ratnayake said, highlight Comrade Daulagala's internationalist outlook in the fight for working-class interests.

Ratnayake also outlined the SEP's internationalist program amid the worsening political crisis of world imperialism. He warned that the fascistic agenda advanced under US President Donald Trump's rule had serious implications for working people across the globe.

The SEP, he continued, is the only party in Sri Lanka—together with its sister parties internationally—that is fighting to organise the international working class to defeat the preparations for a third world war now being advanced by the imperialist powers.

"Daulagala always paid close attention to world developments and the necessity of fighting for the program of world socialist revolution. That is why he dedicated his life to building this party."

Ratnayake concluded his speech by urging those present to reflect on the significance of Daulagala's life and political struggle.

The WSWS will publish a full obituary of Comrade Daulagala later this week.

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