

Geethananda Balasuriya Jayasekara (1955–2026): A fighter for Trotskyism

Socialist Equality Party (Sri Lanka)
6 July 2026

The last rites for comrade Geethananda Balasuriya Jayasekara, a longtime member of the Socialist Equality Party in Sri Lanka and its predecessor Revolutionary Communist League (RCL), known as Geetha in the party, were held on July 1 in Colombo.

Around one hundred party members, sympathisers and relatives took part. The funeral procession marched about a kilometre from the gate of the Borella Cemetery in Colombo, to the meeting hall, where the SEP paid tributes to comrade Geetha.

The meeting was addressed by SEP general secretary Deepal Jayasekera, WSWs national editor K. Ratnayake, party leaders Vilani Peiris and M. Thevarajah, and Kapila Fernando, convener of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). Geetha's nephew, Rajiv George, spoke for his relatives. Condolences were received from SEP (Australia) national secretary Cheryl Crisp and its WSWs national editor, Peter Symonds.

The comrade died just two months before his 71st birthday on September 13. Joining the party in 1983, he dedicated four decades of his life to the international socialist perspectives of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the SEP, its Sri Lankan section.

Geetha was admitted to the National Hospital of Sri Lanka, in Colombo, for treatment of a high fever and cough on June 24. Five days later, on June 29, he passed away from heart failure aggravated by persistent fever.

Geetha was born in 1955 in Chilaw, in northwestern province, as the fifth of six children in the family. His father was a former agricultural instructor. He lived in Colombo and was educated at the prestigious Ananda College in the city. One of his elder sisters said her brother, in fact, had been vulnerable to illness since the

age of nine.

Though he was an energetic and efficient student, illness hampered his education. He was unable to participate in any extracurricular activities at school except singing events. Though he was able to pass the Advanced Level in the science stream, a heart problem stalled further education.

He underwent two heart valve surgeries—one during his school years in 1974 and the other in 1994, more than three decades ago.

The turning point in his political life was the influence of his elder brother, the late comrade Keerthi Balasuriya, the founding general secretary of the RCL and prominent international Trotskyist leader. He died prematurely of a sudden heart attack at the age of just 39 on December 18, 1987.

Geetha joined the Young Socialists (YS), then the youth movement of the RCL, in the late 1970s while still a student. He began studying Trotskyism and engaged in RCL political activities. He then joined the party in the early 1980s. At the time, he was working as a mathematics tutor, but later gave up tutoring in order to devote himself full-time to building the Trotskyist movement.

Geetha joined the party amid heightened class tensions. The rightwing United National Party (UNP) government of President J.R. Jayawardene systematically provoked anti-Tamil racialism to divide working-class resistance against its pro-market policies and the dismantling of social gains. An island-wide pogrom against Tamils in 1983 plunged the country into a protracted communal war against the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The RCL took the lead in opposing the government's Sinhala chauvinist campaign, military-police repression and reactionary war. Only the RCL/SEP called for the

unity of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim workers to demand the withdrawal of troops from the North and East of the island as part of a political struggle for socialism.

The party waged this political struggle courageously, in the face of violent attacks by thugs and police-military repression. Leading comrades were arrested, including the late SEP general secretary Wije Dias.

Geetha himself was attacked while he and two other comrades were campaigning against the war. Racist thugs aligned with the UNP government assaulted them in Kotahena, a multi-ethnic working-class neighbourhood in Colombo, while they were selling the RCL's Sinhala and Tamil language newspapers. All three were hospitalised.

Geetha took the lead in organising campaigns at the meetings of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), Stalinist Communist Party and Nava Sama Samaja Party, to distribute party literature. When organisers tried to remove our teams, he courageously challenged them and defended the party's democratic rights.

Comrades recalled that Geetha patiently educated them in the party's Trotskyist heritage. He had a good knowledge of the ICFI's Security and the Fourth International investigation into assassination of Leon Trotsky, co-leader of 1917 Russian revolution, and founder of the Fourth International.

Geetha sided with the ICFI's defence of genuine Trotskyism in the 1985–1986 split with the opportunist leadership of the Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain. He was particularly enthusiastic about the launching of the WSWS in 1998 that vastly expanded the scope and reach of the ICFI.

Geetha was instrumental in the posting of articles in the Sinhala language on the WSWS. That work began in 2002 and ended three months before his death due to deteriorating health. He also proofread Sinhala-language articles and those translated into Sinhala from English.

His meticulous proofreading helped ensure that the party's political perspectives were communicated to workers and youth with the necessary precision, clarity, and authority. Over the past two decades, he proofread virtually all of the Sinhala translations of Marxist works published by the party. His last work was on the Sinhala version of Trotsky's *Whither France?*, the final major translation completed by Wije Dias.

Geetha was a very cultured person and was held in

affection by party comrades for his humane disposition and readiness to assist whenever needed. His interest in the arts was influenced in part by his elder brother, Keerthi. He had a considerable knowledge of music and poetry, as well as the ability to sing. He particularly loved Beethoven's symphonies and broadly appreciated Indian music and musicians.

On one occasion, Geetha participated in singing the Sinhala version of the Internationale alongside prominent cultural figures, including the classical vocalist W. D. Amaradeva, the dramatist Dhamma Jagoda, and the late SEP comrade, Professor Piyaseeli Wijegunasinghe of the University of Colombo.

Geetha's life stands as an example to all comrades and to all those in the future who will take up the struggle for socialism of what it means to be a Trotskyist fighter. His memory will last long in the party and the Trotskyist movement internationally.



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