

Condolences on the death of Guy Charron

12 August 2014

Guy Charron, a leader of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada) and daily contributor to the work of the French section of the World Socialist Web Site, drowned July 28 while vacationing with his family (see, Guy Charron, 1962-2014: Canadian fighter for Trotskyism). In the two weeks since Guy's tragic death, the SEP and WSWs have received many messages from comrades around the world who knew and worked with Guy and who wished to offer their condolences as well as express their appreciation for Guy as a friend and fighter for Trotskyism.

Here we are publishing a selection of these condolence letters.

The news of Comrade Guy's death came as a shock to me. It was through him that I was first introduced to the Socialist Equality Party. I remember our first meetings in a Montreal café as if they were yesterday—meetings at which Guy took the time to answer my questions and explain the necessity of arming the working class with a socialist program.

There was never a discussion that was too long for Guy. As he remarked recently, "time stopped" when he began a discussion. Passionate for life, Guy could speak about all manner of subjects and always had interesting things to say about philosophy, music, architecture, science and, of course, social questions, politics, and history.

The greatest contribution of Comrade Guy was to have assimilated the heritage of the world Trotskyist movement and to be able to transmit that to others. He had also developed a profound understanding of the Quebec independence movement and of its bourgeois and reactionary character.

He was a great person—a revolutionary. We will miss him.

My sympathies go to all who knew him: his family, friends and comrades.

Louis Girard

It was with an immense feeling of loss that I learned of the death of Comrade Guy. It is such a terrible waste. He was at the height of his powers: a Marxist with a great scientific culture and steeped in dialectical materialism. He was independent-minded, yet with a profound loyalty to the Trotskyist movement. In the Bolshevik tradition, he brought his own contribution to the ICFI's developing analysis of the objective movement of history.

I worked with Guy consistently over the last ten years when

we were asked to lead the work of developing the French page of the WSWs into a daily news source. In the early period of our collaboration, we spoke very frequently—even, for some periods, every morning—in order to discuss what needed to be translated into French. In our work together, he was tireless in his efforts to develop the French page. He conceived of this work as an essential internationalist collaboration, a contribution to the allying of the European and the North American working class on a world revolutionary socialist perspective.

Often our discussions, very early in the morning for Guy, developed into broader discussions of politics and culture. Also we sometimes met at US SEP summer schools. In this way, I got to know and appreciate not only his acquired culture but also his curiosity and interest in all aspects of human culture—the sciences, the arts, philosophy and their history. Indeed his insatiable curiosity is bound up in the manner of his dying: snorkling, observing marine life while enjoying a holiday with his family.

I was extremely moved to see the photograph of Guy surrounded by his family which was sent by his partner Viviane—the photo that tragically proved to be the last ever taken of him.

He was a warm and sensitive comrade and friend. He had a wry sense of humour and sense of fun. I was particularly pleased to receive a call from him only a few days before he died, direct to the hospital where I was being treated for a heart condition.

I feel strongly the sense of loss that his family, Viviane, his children and grandchildren are suffering. I both empathise and sympathise with them, and also his comrades for whom he was a great source of strength and wisdom.

The comrades in France will do everything we can to help our Canadian comrades to overcome this loss and work together to build the movement that Guy gave his life to.

Tony/Antoine Lerougetel

I read Guy's obituary on the website. I'm sorry to hear about the sudden loss of a comrade who was heavily involved with SEP and its commitment to socialism. I don't remember meeting him when he was in Toronto, but I do remember him participating in a few of the weekly IYSSE meeting with the Canadian youths on Skype. He had a keen interest in our intellectual development, and I hope we'll all honour his

memory by continuing with the struggle.

Ashley (York IYSSE)

I join all the comrades in France in mourning the loss of Guy and extending heartfelt condolences to his family and his comrades in the SEP (Canada). How unjust to have someone die in the prime of his life and who had so much to give to the building of our party and the socialist emancipation of the working class.

We met last year in Paris and I will treasure the discussion we had on different historians' interpretations of the French Revolution.

His going must be commemorated by re-dedicating ourselves to the fight for Trotskyism which motivated his life.

Mick P.

It is with great sorrow that we learned through the WSWs announcement written by Comrade Keith Jones of the death of our Canadian Comrade Guy Charron.

On behalf of the Social Equality group, Turkish supporters of the ICFI, I wish to express our deep condolences to his family and all his and our comrades in the SEP (Canada).

Facing with such sad news, I'm at a loss for words. However, let me please say that his enthusiasm and commitment to the cause of the world socialist revolution, which "was born of a generosity of spirit, theoretically and politically leavened by a Marxist understanding of the

crisis of capitalism and the decisive significance of revolutionary leadership" will be taken by us as example in our struggle against the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois pseudo-left followers.

Comrade Charron's struggle will live on in the work of the ICFI, including our work to build the Turkish section of the ICFI as the leadership of the coming revolutionary mobilizations of the working class against imperialism and capitalism.

HC

Please accept my deepest sympathies on the tragic loss of Guy Charron, a leading member of the Canadian Trotskyist movement over a period spanning almost three decades. I first met Guy in 1987, shortly after he had joined the SEP's predecessor, the Workers League, the Canadian sympathizing section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. At the time, both he and I were making a thorough study of the lessons of the historic split with the British Workers Revolutionary Party and we spent many hours discussing how the WRP, in adapting to petty-bourgeois nationalism and the trade union bureaucracy, had abandoned the fight to organize the working class on the basis of a socialist internationalist program independent of all non-proletarian class forces.

I campaigned with Guy on many early morning shift changes

at Montreal hospitals. We also worked together in the campaign the party mounted during the 1988 "free trade" federal election against the nationalist fervor promoted by the mainstream political parties and the trade union bureaucracy.

Whilst awaiting the shift changes at the various plants in Ontario and Quebec at which we intervened so as to urge workers to reject both Canadian and Quebecois nationalism and join forces with US workers in a common struggle against big business and their governments on both sides of the border, we had much opportunity for discussion and on a wide range of political, historical and cultural questions.

Guy was always very interested in the idioms and slangs associated with the English language and questioned me incessantly on the precise meaning of this or that saying. That interest stood him in good stead over the many subsequent years in which he played a crucial role in translating political material into French and later, building and maintaining the ICFI's French language website.

The contributions Guy made to the party, as a leader of the SEP (Canada), writer for the WSWs, and daily participant in the work of the French WSWs will be sorely missed.

Carl Bronski

With great sadness Helmut and I heard about the sudden and tragic death of Comrade Guy Charron. What an incredible loss, how hard for you to even grasp and believe it. This must be an enormous shock for his family, his wife, children and grandchildren, as well as for you, his comrades and longstanding friends.

I had the chance to meet Comrade Guy in the international WSWs conference in March 2003 in Ann Arbor, and in addition I always could observe the team-work of the French WSWs group. Although I met him only shortly, I found in him a wholehearted, reliable and extremely sympathetic comrade.

Is there anything one can say for consolation?

The only words that coming to mind are from a speech Leon Trotsky gave via electrical recording to a 1938 meeting in New York to the mark founding of the Fourth International: "For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself. Yes, our party takes each one of us wholly. But in return it gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the consciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life will not have been lived in vain."

Helmut and Marianne Arens



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