

In memory of Halil Celik (1961–2018)

The International Committee of the Fourth International
2 January 2019

Halil Celik, the founder and leader of the Sosyalist E?itlik group, which supports the International Committee of the Fourth International in Turkey, died on December 31, 2018 after a serious illness at the age of 57. The following message was sent by the ICFI to the funeral of the unrelenting revolutionary and fighter for Trotskyism, which took place in Istanbul on Tuesday.

To the family of Halil Celik and his comrades in *Sosyalist E?itlik*:

With profound respect, and a sense of deep loss, I extend to you the condolences of the International Committee of the Fourth International on the death of Comrade Halil Celik.

Halil was, personally and politically, an extraordinary person. In late 1977, at the age of 16, he engaged in socialist activity and remained a revolutionary fighter to the end of his life. The political course he pursued required political vision, personal courage and inexhaustible energy.

Rapidly breaking with the Stalinist milieu, where he began his political activities, Halil developed an intense interest in Trotskyism. In the early 1980s, while still a young man in his twenties, he studied Trotsky's *Struggle against Fascism in Germany*. "I started to re-read Marx, Engels and Lenin, and recognized that Stalin was the enemy of Marxism," he later wrote.

But in a country where Trotsky's writings were difficult to find and the political left was dominated by myriad nationalist and petty-bourgeois tendencies, the path to genuine Marxist internationalism turned out to be a long and arduous one. But Halil was a genuine fighter, determined to establish a revolutionary movement of the working class. He could not be discouraged by prison, repression or his experiences with numerous political charlatans.

Comrade Halil first made contact with the International Committee in 2005. This took place in

Berlin. It was clear that this was a courageous and deeply principled man. Halil had studied the history of the ICFI and declared his agreement with its defense of Trotskyist principles. After his return to Turkey in 2007, Halil began systematic work on political reorientation and education. With indefatigable energy, he wrote articles, gave classes and undertook translations, both from English into Turkish and vice versa, while at the same time guiding the practical work of *Sosyalist E?itlik*.

Halil was inspired by the long struggle of the International Committee in defense of Trotskyism. As he later wrote, his turn to the International Committee was the outcome of his own bitter experiences with the unprincipled and national opportunist politics of the Pabloite organizations.

He understood that the development of the Trotskyist movement in Turkey was possible only on the basis of revolutionary internationalism. This required the education of young revolutionists in the history of the International Committee. This is why he was determined to translate Comrade David North's *The Heritage We Defend*, a history of the International Committee, into Turkish. He personally urged Comrade North to write a special introduction to this work for the new Turkish edition, which was published in 2017.

Though afflicted with the disease that was to claim his life, Comrade Halil travelled frequently to Europe to consult with the International Committee and attend its meetings. The final years of his life were dedicated to the establishment of a section of the International Committee in Turkey. The founding of *Sosyalist E?itlik* was a critical milestone in the development of the work of the ICFI in that country.

The death of Comrade Halil at the age of 57 is a great loss to his comrades in Turkey, in whose political education he played such an immense role, and to his comrades throughout the world. But Halil's life work

will continue. Determined to proceed with his unfinished work, the fight to build the Trotskyist movement in Turkey will go forward. There can be no greater tribute to the memory of Comrade Halil than to realize his goal of establishing *Sosyalist E?itlik* as the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Long Live the Memory of Comrade Halil Celik!

Long Live *Sosyalist E?itlik*!

Forward to the founding of the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International!

Peter Schwarz, Secretary of the ICFI

Berlin, December 31, 2018



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