

“The expansion of the ICFI in Turkey was made possible by the determined struggle of Comrade Helen and her generation of Trotskyist leaders”

Ula? Ate?çi
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We are publishing here the tribute to Helen Halyard given by Ula? Ate?çi, a leading member of the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group) of Turkey. Comrade Helen, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Party (US) and the International Committee of the Fourth International for more than half a century, died suddenly on November 28. Comrade Ate?çi delivered his tribute to a memorial meeting for Helen held on December 3.

Dear comrades, friends and relatives of Helen Halyard,

On behalf of the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group--SEG) in Turkey, we share your deep sorrow at the loss of Comrade Helen. I would like to report that we dedicated today's public meeting in Istanbul, titled “Stop Israel's Genocide in Gaza,” to her memory and to the memory of Comrade Halil Çelik, leader of the SEG, who died five years ago on December 31.

Comrade Helen's death is a great political and personal loss to her comrades in the US and internationally. It is sad that I did not have the opportunity to work many years with her, and only recently met her personally. But socialists like Helen leave behind not only sad comrades and friends, but also an inspiring political legacy.

The tributes written by both Comrade David North and Comrade Patrick Martin make this clear.

When we look at the political life of Comrade Helen, we see that as early as 1971, at a very young age, she took a stand that required both courage and political consciousness, which she pursued consistently to the

end of her life: A decisive political break with all forms of nationalism and a commitment to the struggle for revolutionary internationalism, that is, for Trotskyism.

As the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) conferences on the centenary of Trotskyism have explained, this has been and still is the key to the fundamental problems of the epoch of imperialist war and socialist revolution. We argue that if the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky, defending the programme of socialist internationalism on which the October Revolution of 1917 was based, had triumphed over Stalinism, it would have meant the victory of the world socialist revolution. This is indeed true.

The political role played by Comrade Helen during her 52 years in the Trotskyist movement rightly places her name in a central position in the history of our movement. This is a highly honourable position, which applies in particular to the comrades who joined the movement in the 1960s and '70s, and whose struggle played a decisive role in ensuring the political continuity of the Trotskyist movement.

The struggle of the Workers League after Wohlforth's desertion, not only to maintain its existence, but to defend and advance Trotskyist principles against Stalinism and Pabloite revisionism, was the necessary basis for opposing the national-opportunist degeneration of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain and for the ultimate political victory of the International Committee. Comrade Helen was part of the generation of leaders who ensured the continuity of the international party at these critical

turning points.

Today, the expansion of the ICFI in Turkey and in various parts of the world, including the former Soviet Union, has been made possible by the conscious and determined struggles of this generation of Trotskyist leaders, including Comrade Helen.

For this we are grateful to Comrade Helen. Her life will provide an inspiring example to a new generation of Trotskyist revolutionary workers and youth in the United States and around the world, including in Turkey, and her name will live on in the international struggle for socialism.



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