

Comrade Halil successfully laid the foundations for the establishment in 2022 of a Turkish section of the International Committee

Chris Marsden
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We are publishing the tribute given by Chris Marsden, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in Britain, to Halil Çelik, founder and leader of the Sösyalist E?itlik Grubu, the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Marsden's remarks were read at a memorial meeting for Halil on the fifth anniversary of his death held Sunday, January 14 in Istanbul.

Dear comrades of the Sösyalist E?itlik group and esteemed members of the family of Halil Çelik.

I send greetings from the Socialist Equality Party here in Britain to this meeting marking five years since the passing of our beloved comrade.

The passage of five years does not lessen the sense of loss resulting from Halil's all too early death in late December 2018. We in the European sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International had by then spent a decade working in political collaboration with Halil as he dedicated himself to the forging of a Turkish section of our world party.

I and others came to know someone characterised by intellectual rigour, a commitment to socialist principles, and an objective approach to the complex task of constructing the revolutionary movement and the training of its cadre.

We knew from the beginning that we were dealing with an extraordinary comrade, someone who had become politically active as a young man, who had broken with Stalinism and who became an admirer and then later a partisan of Trotsky and Trotskyism. He did so under fire, suffering arrest and imprisonment for his courageous political activities.

We also knew that, given the political milieu he found himself in, as the ICFI wrote on his death, "the path to genuine Marxist internationalism turned out to be a long and arduous one."

Halil took that path and followed it to the very end. It involved protracted and painful experiences, in Turkey, Germany and Greece, with the myriad counterfeit Pabloite groupings and tendencies and their opportunist adaptations to nationalism, Stalinism, Maoism and the trade union bureaucracy. But from his study of the genuine history and programme of Trotskyism, undertaken through his reading of the *World Socialist Web Site*, he began his final break with Pabloism, including his repudiation of the EEK in Greece, led by Savas Michael-Matsas.

This involved at least two years of collective study, together with his group, of major statements and lectures produced by the ICFI, that led to a fundamental political reorientation, after which Halil made formal contact with and then met with representatives of the ICFI in 2007.

It is a measure of the man that, despite his long years associating with alien political tendencies, Halil never came across as alien himself. He was serious, objective and comradely in his dealings with others, not driven by ego but by a commitment to the socialist liberation of humanity.

In the years since then, until cancer claimed his life, Halil worked continuously on the essential, intimately related tasks of clarifying himself on the international perspective of our movement, working through its implications for the complexities of constructing a

section of the ICFI in Turkey, and educating the cadre charged with this historic mission.

Halil succeeded, securing the agreement of the ICFI in 2014 to work collectively towards establishing a section of the International Committee in Turkey. The decade that followed included five years that were the most consequential and productive of Halil's life, including his translation of *The Heritage We Defend*, *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*, and other fundamental works.

Halil successfully laid the foundations for the establishment in 2022 of a Turkish section of the International Committee and trained the leadership that will complete the task of building the revolutionary leadership of the Turkish working class, amid tumultuous events that pose decisively the struggle for world socialist revolution.

Those young workers coming into struggle against social and political reaction, against the genocide in Gaza and the spread of war from Ukraine to the Middle East and seeking a revolutionary party will salute the memory of comrade Halil Çelik, just as we do today. His legacy will endure.

With comradely greetings,
Chris Marsden



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