

Comrade Halil Çelik blazed the socialist-internationalist path the workers of Turkey must follow

Keith Jones
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We are publishing here the tribute given by Keith Jones, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Canada), to Halil Çelik, founder and leader of the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu which is the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Jones' remarks were read at a memorial meeting for Halil on the fifth anniversary of his death held Sunday, January 14 in Istanbul.

It is an honor to pay tribute to Comrade Halil Celik at the meeting the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu, the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, has convened to mark five years since his death on December 31, 2018 at the age of just 57.

I had the privilege of meeting, discussing, and to a limited extent, due to distance and time, of working with Comrade Halil. He was a remarkable revolutionary leader. Halil's modest demeanour belied his personal and political courage, determination to advance the liberation of the working class, and steadfastness in upholding political principle.

Comrade Halil's death at such a relatively young age was a cruel blow. All the more so because he was beginning to realize the aim that had animated his life—the building of a genuine revolutionary party of the Turkish working class on the basis of the socialist internationalist program and principles that had animated the October Revolution.

As you well know, in his four decades as a revolutionary fighter, Halil endured much, including repression, imprisonment, isolation and numerous frustrations and setbacks. Having broken with Stalinism, he and the group of comrades he led went through one bitter experience after another with various Pabloite counterfeit Trotskyist organizations.

Organizations which, whatever their tactical disagreements, were united in their indifference and hostility to the program and principles that must animate the struggle for the political independence and hegemony of the working class.

It is to his everlasting credit, that Halil turned to the International Committee of the Fourth International. Having made a painstaking review of its long struggle to defend and develop the program of world socialist revolution against Pabloism, Stalinism, Maoism and all manner of petty bourgeois nationalist forces, Halil recognized that the only viable and principled path forward for he and his supporters was to undertake the difficult task of laying the political-theoretical foundations for the building of a Turkish section of the ICFI.

The importance of the work Comrade Halil accomplished in the last decade of his life in laying those foundations and in educating a cadre based on the history and perspectives of the ICFI, that is genuine Trotskyism, is demonstrated by the major strides the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu has been able to make in the five years since his death—above all, its further integration into the ICFI with its acceptance as its Turkish section in June 2022.

Today, as the working class in Turkey enters alongside workers around the world into revolutionary struggle, it will find in Comrade Halil's life and work a source of inspiration, but most of all a powerful Trotskyist political-theoretical compass.

Keith Jones, National Secretary SEP (Canada)



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