

Comrade Halil Çelik: An inspiration for workers and youth internationally

Peter Symonds
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We are publishing here the tribute given by Peter Symonds, leading member of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia), 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. Symonds' remarks were read at a memorial meeting for Halil on the fifth anniversary of his death held Sunday, January 14 in Istanbul.

Dear comrades and friends of the *Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu*,

I send you revolutionary greetings on behalf of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) to your memorial meeting to mark the fifth anniversary of the death of Comrade Halil Çelik.

Halil was instrumental in laying the political foundations for a Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). His translations of key articles and statements of the *World Socialist Web Site* brought the work of the Trotskyist movement to the Turkish working class making possible its political connection to, and integration with, the Fourth International and the international proletariat.

Halil understood that it was essential to differentiate from all manner of fake lefts and socialists, particularly those that had split from the Fourth International and falsified the fundamentals of Trotskyism. He undertook the difficult task of translating David North's seminal work—*The Heritage We Defend*—that centres on the political struggles waged in the founding of the ICFI in 1953 against the revisionism of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel.

It had been a hard political road for Halil himself to identify the ICFI as the genuine party of revolutionary Marxism. As the ICFI statement on his untimely death explained:

“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.”

I was fortunate to meet Halil in 2014 in Berlin. He was keenly interested in the work of the ICFI and its sections. He had an intimate knowledge of the politics of Turkey and the broader Middle East and closely followed events internationally. We spoke about the geopolitical ambitions of the Turkish ruling class as well as the Kurdish question in Turkey and the region. He had a firm grasp of the Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution and its implications for countries like Turkey. Halil struck me as serious revolutionary who had finally found his proper political home.

Halil's life and work are an inspiration not only for Turkish workers and youth but for the working class internationally. That includes in Asia where Stalinism and Maoism and their betrayals, along with their pseudo-left apologists, have played such a politically destructive role for decades. In these countries, his example will undoubtedly assist workers and youth seeking revolutionary solutions to the immense crises facing humanity to also find their way to the ICFI, the world party of socialist revolution.

Long live the memory of Comrade Halil Çelik!

Yours fraternally,

Peter Symonds,

For the Socialist Equality Party (Australia)



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