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Obituary

# Walter Kanelutti (1955-2017)

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**Walter Kanelutti (born April, 7th, 1955, in Vienna, died July, 5th, 2017, in Vienna) was a leading member of the small Austrian section of the Fourth International, Sozialistische Alternative/SOAL (Socialist Alternative). In 1977, as a student at the age of 22, he joined the Gruppe Revolutionäre Marxisten/GRM (Group of Revolutionary Marxists) which would change its name to SOAL in 1986.**

During the 1970s, the radical left in Austria was at the peak of its influence at universities and in other parts of society. The most important campaign of GRM was the protest against the nuclear power plant Zwentendorf an der Donau which was constructed but never put into operation: a referendum in 1978 meant the end for nuclear energy in Austria.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Walter was first and foremost active in the movement supporting the Sandinista revolution; he also spent four months with the working brigades in Nicaragua. After his return, he changed from university work to the editorial staff of our newspaper Die Linke (The Left). It was due to Walter's ability to get to the heart of matters, to reach clarity, and to react to unexpected developments that we managed for nearly 25 years to produce a well made bi-weekly (until the end of the printed edition in 2006). Given the many imponderables of production (will the promised articles come or not ...) the bi-weekly pattern formed part of his life for years.

After a sojourn in Algeria where he cooperated with comrades of the Socialist Workers Party (PST), he always remained aware of the developments in this post-revolutionary country. He detested those not able to look further than the end of their nose and preferring petty power struggles in the Austrian backyard over an internationalist perspective.

Walter's membership in SOAL and the Fourth International always remained the guiding line for his revolutionary activism - in spite of attempts of little avail to socially and politically anchor the organization (interventions in social-democratic youth organizations, "turn to Industry", cooperation in and building of the Alternative List later becoming the Green Party). He did not yield (without representing dogmatic or sectarian positions at any time) even when the Marxist left - and, also, our organization - lost the drive of the 1970s during the 1980s and the majority of a whole generation accommodated to the bourgeois mainstream.

At the end of the 1980s, it was shocking to observe the rise of the FPÖ- [\[1\]](#) and open manifestations of anti-semitism, xenophobia and parts of National-Socialist ideology. Still, the movement against the "blue-black government" of the year 2000 (with chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel of the Ö-VP [\[2\]](#) and Joerg Haider of the FPÖ-) formed a glimmer of hope and a mandate to continue.

Due to the engagement of SOAL in globalization-critical movements, Walter joined the European Social Fora in Florence and Paris. As a delegate, he represented SOAL several times at the World Congress of the Fourth International; there, he was known to many under the name "Boris Jezek" which was also his nom de plume for many articles in Die Linke.

During the last years Walter was active in refugee support. Together with fellow activists he founded the association "Herein" (Come in) renting and providing apartments for refugee families.

Walter was successful in his professional life, as a coach, and, before that, as a publishing editor and in other

professions. But there were more important aims in his life. He concentrated his energy in the way Bert Brecht called for: "Change the world! It needs it!"

*PS:*

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[1] Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Freedom Party of Austria.

[2] Österreichische Volkspartei - the Austrian People's Party, Christian Democratic Party.