

# Lêgerin

Number 9

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Insistence on socialism is  
insistence on human being

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# editorial.



**Dear Comrades,**

The great dimensions of the global crisis and its increasing contradictions, which we see play out with imperialist states fighting for hegemony, seeking a strong position in the current multipolar order, have provoked the extension of the 3rd World War in Europe. Now, with a strengthened NATO and a continuously developing crisis, a new period of wars and imperial expansion is approaching.

At the same time, the guerrilla of the mountains continue to resist the inhuman attacks of the Turkish Fascist State. Drones, tactical nuclear bombs and different chemical weapons have not been able to defeat the historical resistance of the free guerrilla of the 21st century. In the absence of results, the AKP-MHP regime, aware that the only way to avoid its own disintegration is to liquidate the PKK, has again concentrated its attacks onto Rojava and North-East Syria. The bombs that are falling on the People in Rojava have the same name as those falling on Ukraine. Both wars are the result of the 3rd World War that has been going on since the intervention of the imperialist states in the Middle East.

But this expansion is not limited to guns, bombs and armies. A hidden war is also taking place in our bodies and thoughts. In this new issue we wanted to focus on colonialism and its effects on our thoughts and ways of life. The expansion of civilisation and ultimately of Capitalist Modernity has led to the homogenisation of the world and culture. Through the Special War, they want to erase our historical memory and disassociate us from our past and our roots. Neo-colonialism is, therefore, a process of self-alienation and self-destruction.

This issue is a call to our memory and historical consciousness; to resistance against neo-colonial expansion; to the liberation of our minds and hearts. With this issue, we want you to reflect and light up this long and dark night like little fireflies.

**Lets together recover our memory, our culture and our roots, lets build a free life!**



# Truth Seeker

**"I was convinced that I could not be free in this world. Here on İmralı Island, I have thought a lot about the differences between the inner and the outer prison. In doing so, I have found that imprisonment outside of dungeon walls is more dangerous for the individual. For a Kurdish individual, the idea of being free outside is a great delusion. A life in error and under the rule of lies is a lost and betrayed life."**

Abdullah Öcalan

There can be nothing more valuable in a person's life than learning the truth about the reality in which they live. The search for truth is the most precious human act. Because the human is a being who makes truth reality. At the beginning of the adventure that was to become my life, I lacked everything. It is not easy to be born and growing up in a family that is falling apart and that is part of a society that is falling apart. The difficulty is the fact that such a family has long lost their own standards. All they have left are empty heads, vulnerable to the endless lies of the rulers. Their problem is a mentality that is too weak to stand up to the lies. Colonized societies or those still beyond colonization will inevitably swallow these lies after a certain time either by force or by persuasion. The world of the rulers draws on a wealth of experience in this respect. They know very well how to use their lies most effectively. By overcoming these hurdles, we begin what we call the revolutionary process.

I am someone who cares little about obstacles. My eventful life inevitably

brought me into confrontation with the truths of the society in which I lived. The different phases of this confrontation I have tried to explain elsewhere. I wanted to show how I searched for truth in ideology and science. All these explanations were directed against those who denied my human and social identity, aimed at annihilation, branded me a criminal and punished me severely. They were also directed against those who set the justice of the system against the individual, the USA, the EU, the Republic of Turkey and their collaborators.

In the past, when I was still fighting in an open-air prison and spent a lot of energy on practice and speeches, I did not find much opportunity to develop my conception of the truth. For people who face big questions, a closed prison is a great teacher. Those who do not let these questions and these conditions destroy them can strengthen their understanding of the truth in prison and fight successfully. Those who fight for a great cause and strive for a little more truth every day can

obtain it here. If the passing moments serve the attainment of truth, even life in prison is worth enduring.

The system of capitalist modernity, led by the USA and the EU, caused my deportation to İmralı. I was brought here not by legitimate organs and in a legal way, but by a large-scale operation of Gladio, the irregular and illegally working force of NATO. Only apparently it was the Turkish security forces who caught me through a successful operation and brought me to the island. This is how it would be presented to the world.

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**"The world of the rulers draws on a wealth of experience in this respect. They know very well how to use their lies most effectively. By overcoming these hurdles, we begin what we call the **revolutionary process.**"**

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I was brought here on February 15, 1999. Exactly 74 years earlier, on February 15, 1925, the conspiracy against Sheikh Said began. After a show trial on the island, the death sentence was passed on June 29, 1999. It was the same June 29 that Sheikh Said and his friends were executed. For three quarters of a century, the state continued its great denial and extermination operation against the Kurds. The EU and the US had agreed on the death penalty. It was to serve as a threat, but its execution was to be prevented by the European Court of Human Rights. Through me, the revolutionary movement, the Kurdish liberation struggle and the PKK, all of which were beyond their control, were to be liquidated. They secretly agreed on this common policy. It also included leaving the legitimate paths of the "fight against terrorism".

The plot against me was to leave no room for hope. For this reason, the execution of the death sentence was

kept on the agenda for a long time. In the first days, I could not imagine enduring the extreme isolation. To survive even one year seemed unthinkable to me. I thought, "How can they put millions of people in a cramped cell?" As a Kurdish national leader, I had actually become a synthesis of millions due to the circumstances of my deportation. Many people cannot bear to live separated from their family and children for long periods of time - how could I bear to be torn away forever from millions of people closely associated with me? I was not allowed to receive even the shortest letters from outside. With a few exceptions, I did not receive any mail except for a few censored letters from other prisoners. I could not send letters either. All this may somewhat explain the situation of isolation. But my situation has some peculiarities.

I have initiated many things in our society. We need all these unfinished projects for a free life. My "I" was just merged in the realm of social free-

dom. Just at such a moment, a new stage began with my imprisonment. Even if the external conditions were brilliant and the prison itself palatial, this would not be able to describe how I endure the isolation. This has nothing to do with the external conditions or the attitude of the state. What is decisive is that I engage in the isolation. I need such great motivation that I can withstand isolation and prove that a great life is possible despite isolation. In this context, I would like to draw attention to two concepts.

The first is about the social situation of the Kurds. My train of thought was the following: In order for me to strive for a free life, the society to which I belong must be free. More precisely, individual liberation is not possible without society. Sociologically speaking, individual freedom depends entirely on the freedom of society. But Kurdish society, the Kurdish people, live as if in a dark dungeon without visible walls.

The second point is the need to commit to an ethical principle in order to fully grasp the concept. The individual must realize that they can live only in connection with a society. An essential conception of modernity is the conviction that one can live without social ties. This is a false narrative. Such a life does not exist, at best as a produced, virtual reality. The fact that this principle has been lost reflects the decay of morality. Morality and truth intertwine here. Liberal individualism becomes possible only through the dissolution of moral society and the severing of the bond between it and truth. That this is presented to us as the prevailing way of life of our time does not prove that it is the right one. I also drew this conclusion from my involvement with Kurdish reality and the Kurdish question.

Here I must point out a dichotomy in my life. On the one hand, I tried to escape being Kurdish; on the other hand, I was drawn to being Kurdish. Because of the cultural genocide, there was abundant opportunity for me to turn away. Escape always seemed attractive. But this is precisely where a moral principle takes hold. Can it be right to save oneself individually at the price of fleeing one's own society? I was about to graduate from university, which would have guaranteed my personal survival. But it was at this time that I made a conscious decision to be Kurdish and thus to return to the moral principle. The individual must feel a sense of belonging to a social entity in order to be able to act ethically. I could not refuse to do this. When I speak of morality in this context, I mean ethical action. I am not talking about primitive moral concepts such as lifelong belonging to and dependence on a family or other community. Turning to Kurdish society and addressing its problems was only possible through morality and ethics. The still persisting absolute servitude of the Kurds definitely prevented my dreams of a free life.

I was convinced that I could not be free in this world. Here on İmralı Island, I thought a lot about the differences between the inner and outer prison. In doing so, I have found that imprisonment outside of dungeon walls is more dangerous for the individual. For a Kurdish individual, the idea of being free outside is a great delusion. Living in error and under the rule of lies is a lost

and betrayed life. Outside, life is worth living only under one condition: the uninterrupted struggle for the freedom of the Kurds. For a Kurd, the only way to live morally is to be a freedom fighter 24 hours a day.

If I apply this standard to my former life, I recognize it as moral. By its very nature, it is punishable by death or imprisonment - a life without struggle would be dishonest and dishonorable. So not enduring prison would contradict my motivation for living. Just as the struggle against annihilation and for freedom is inevitable, so is imprisonment. It is part of the struggle for a free life. For Kurds, especially for socialist Kurds who are not under the yoke of liberalism or perverse religious fanaticism, there is no other life and no other world than that of the struggle for a moral and ethical life.

The second concept in this context is "truth." Developing a concept of truth is the only way to survive prison. Even in an ordinary life, a strong concept of truth makes it possible to grasp joyful moments, that is, the meaning of life. For a person who has grasped the meaning of their life, the question of where they live is no longer a problem. A life of lies and falsehood loses its meaning. Degeneration without motivation, depression, conflicts and violence is the natural consequence. However, one who develops a good concept of truth can perceive life as a miracle. It becomes a source of excitement and joy. In life lies the meaning of the universe. Whoever discovers this mystery can endure any life, even in prison. In any case, a stay in prison for the sake of freedom will contribute to the development of the concept of truth. Thus, even the greatest pain can be transformed into happiness.

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### **“Can it be right to save oneself individually at the price of fleeing one's own society?”**

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For me, İmralı Prison became the arena of my struggle for truth, to understand the Kurdish phenomenon and to explore possible solutions. Outside, it was more about talking and acting; in prison, it's all about understanding. The reflections on political philosophy that I outlined in my prison writings would have been very difficult to develop outside. The very concept of politics is already difficult to grasp and requires a good understanding of truth.




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**“Because of the cultural genocide, there was abundant opportunity for me to turn away. Escape always seemed attractive. But this is precisely where a moral principle takes hold”**

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Isolation did much to help me realize what a positivist dogmatist I was. I understood better that there can be different notions of modernity and many different models for building a nation - and that all social structures are human-made fictional entities with flexible natures.

Of particular importance to me was the overcoming of the nation-state. For a long time, this concept had possessed for me the status of an immutable Marxist-Leninist dogma. In the meantime, my research on history, civilization and modernity showed me that the nation-state can have nothing to do with socialism, but is a relic of class civilization and the most concentrated expression of social domination, deriving its legitimacy from capitalism. Therefore, I did not hesitate to reject it. If we ever arrive at a scientific socialism, it is at this point that the classics of real socialism must move. That they adopted a capitalist concept was a great mistake and did great harm to the cause of socialism.

My profound (all-encompassing) insight that capitalist liberalism is a powerful ideological hegemony led me to a better analysis of modernity. I understood that democratic modernity is not only possible but both more realistic and more timely and livable than capitalist modernity. Real socialism had not overcome the concept of the nation-state, but had understood it as a fundamental fact of modernity.

Therefore, we never thought of the possibility of another kind of nation, for example, a democratic nation. In the past, a nation absolutely had to have a state! The Kurds formed a nation, so they also needed a state! But when I looked further into it, I recognized in the nation itself one of the most sinister facts of the last centuries. It was formed under the strong influence of capitalism and developed into an iron cage for societies, especially through the model of the nation-state. I realized the preciousness of the concepts of 'freedom' and 'sociality'. The realization that a struggle for nation-statehood is a struggle for capitalism led to a major transformation in my political philosophy. Narrowing the struggle to nation and class struggle amounts to the same thing and ultimately only strengthens capitalism.

Another insight was that the knowledge of society that modernism propagates is not science but myth. This deepened my awareness of history and society. My concept of truth underwent a revolutionary change. Tearing apart the capitalist dogmas and recognizing history and society anew with their inherent truth gave me great pleasure. Since then, I have considered myself a "truth seeker." Through a holistic understanding of truth, everything gained an incomparably higher meaning; be it in the social, physical or biological realm. Under prison conditions, I was able to discover any number of revolutionary truths. Nothing else could have given me so much power to resist.

The deepened understanding of truth also enabled me to develop better solutions to problems. The Turkish statist mentality is always seen as sacred and without alternative. The state appears in it as the only conceivable way of administration. This mentality originated with the Sumerians, is closely interwoven with the concept of divinity, and was also passed on to the Arab and Iranian ruling cultures. The concept of one god is also rooted to a good extent in the phenomenon of power. The emerging power elites of the Turks developed perhaps the fourth or fifth version of it. They did not know the etymological (structuralist) meaning of the concept, but were impressed by its implications in each case. Under the Seljuks and Ottomans,

power lost its meaning; to gain it, sometimes brothers, sisters, and relatives were executed without batting an eye. This thinking was given a new cover by the Republic. More precisely, the concepts of national sovereignty and nation-state developed in Europe were imposed on this power. Thus, with the Turkish nation-state, an even more dangerous Leviathan (a biblical-mythological sea monster) was created. Anyone who touched it was executed. Nothing was more sacred than the nation-state. This was especially true of the bureaucratic class.

## **The question of power and the state became the most complicated social problem of all time.**

In Imrali, I thought most about the concepts of "power" and "state." When I understood the role they play in Turkish-Kurdish relations, I felt the urgent need to find concrete and practical solutions. I also found it necessary to go back to the Hittites for a consideration of power and state in Turkish-Kurdish relations, which have been going on for about 1000 years. There is a close geopolitical and geostrategic relationship between the cultures of power and state in Mesopotamia and Anatolia.

Applying this insight to the Turkish-Kurdish relationship made it clear to me that a division of power and state is not a meaningful method. Because power and state, are concepts that are contrary to the concept of democracy, I reject them. When I realized how much society loses when it leaves all administration to the rulers and the state, I broadened my understanding of the meaning of democracy. However, because I am aware that an anarchist-style rejection of power and the state leads to a dead end in practice, I realized that the complete negation (rejection) of a division of power and the state does not correspond to historical realities - even though this can by no means be a solution method that I advocate. Our primary choice is democratic administration.



However, I saw that simply rejecting the culture of power and state, without an understanding of the justifiable aspects of a division, cannot lead to viable results. As a result, I developed a better understanding of the importance of the concepts of "shared power" and "shared state."

Throughout history, relations between Anatolia and Mesopotamia played a major role in the strategies and policies of rulers and states. Partnership models were often tried out. In all critical phases of Turkish-Kurdish relations, such models were given preference, most recently in the National Liberation War. I described these in detail in my previous book. I did not leave it at a discussion of a theoretical model, but presented a practical solution project. Since similar problems are widespread, I believe this has the potential to provide a way out of the impasse, not only for Turkish-Kurdish relations, but for the Middle East as a whole. In contrast to the positivist dogmatism of capitalist modernity, it harmonizes with historical realities and contains elements of a practical solution that should be close to ideal for all. In view of historical developments, with regard to the problems of power and the state,



I think the concepts I have developed, "democratic modernity," "democratic nation," and "democratic autonomy," are helpful.

Another finding was that historically centralized power as a concept has been the exception, while local power has been the rule. I understood why centralized nation-states are presented as the only and absolute model, how this relates to capitalism, and what this actually means. This also opened up to me the great importance that local and regional solutions have for democracy.

Finally, I drew my conclusions about the relationship between violence and power. Obviously, our choice cannot be to gain power through violence and become a nation. Except for the purpose of necessary self-defense, using violence to gain benefit has nothing to do with socialism. All forms of violence except self-defense can only benefit the monopolies of the rulers and exploiters. This realization formed the basis for me to approach the question of peace in a more principled and sensitive way. In this way, I acquired the necessary conceptual and theoretical tools to shed the labels "separatist" and "terrorist" that are attached not only to the Kurds, but to all oppressed groups by the states and rulers that oppress them.

Apart from the health problems, I can endure the life in Imrali. My morals, consciousness and willpower have not weakened, but have become even stronger. In addition, there is a heightened awareness of aesthetics and beauty. Explaining social truths through science, philosophy and aesthetics also increases the possibilities for a good, true and beautiful life. I would prefer a life here, alone in my cell, to a life with people whom capitalism has led astray from the path of truth.

To sum up: For me, life is only possible when it is lived freely. An unethical, unjust and apolitical life is a life that should not exist in a society. Through ideological pressure, civilization in general, especially capitalist modernity, enables and promotes a false life with multiple forms of slavery, lies, demagoguery and individualism. This is how the so-called social problems arise. Revolutionaries, whether we call them socialist, libertarian, democratic or communist, must oppose the civilization based on the oppression of class, city and power, and the dominant modern way of life. Otherwise, a just, free, democratic and collective way of life cannot emerge, therefore it cannot be lived. Otherwise, we continue to live a mendacious, false, bad and ugly life; a life without proper foundation. This life I have analyzed as problematic, it is a problem in itself. I have always rejected this life with full conviction and fought against it.

Another aspect that attracts great interest is the question of living with women. In the conditions of modernity, this is an important question. It is at the center of social problems, and in order to solve it we must approach it scientifically, philosophically, ethically and aesthetically. Today, under the conditions of capitalist modernity, a free life based on partnership requires a great sense of responsibility and a strong scientific, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic understanding. It is imperative to take into account the status of women in civilization and in modernity, and to display ethical and aesthetic behavior, otherwise any attempt and form of cohabitation will amount to falseness, immorality and ugliness.

The primitive sexism that the power-based, civilisatorial morality of modernity imposes on women produces immorality and ugliness in excess. To overcome this attitude, against which I have fought so vigorously, every man and woman must liberate themselves. In order for women in particular to be empowered, liberated and reach appropriate levels in all areas of society, we must constantly develop, organize and implement scientific, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic positions and practices into the mentality and institutions of the democratic nation. Whether in prison or outside, in the womb or somewhere in the universe, human beings can only live socially free, equally in diversity, and democratically. Life outside of this is perverted and sick. To correct and heal this, we struggle in diverse social discourses and actions including revolution. For this, we must first grow an ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and scientific mentality.

So, if I ever come out, no matter where and when I live then, I will of course fight tirelessly in word and deed for a democratic nation for the Kurds, a democratic union of nations as a model of solution and emancipation for the neighboring peoples, the peoples of the Middle East and the world. With the ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and scientific attitude that constitutes my personality as a seeker of truth, I will go forward, win life and share it with all.

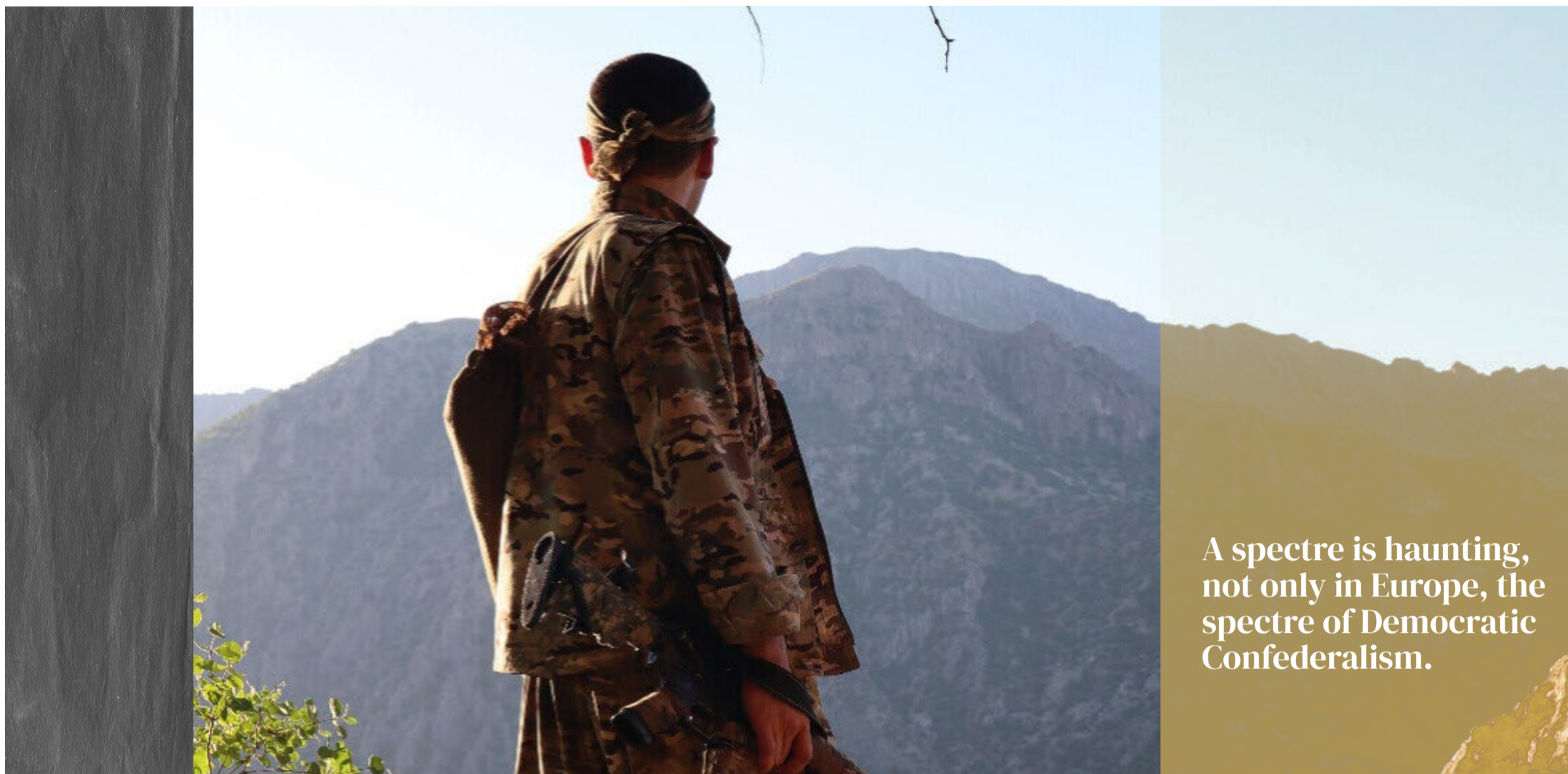
**Abdullah Öcalan**

Imrali High Security Prison



**“To sum up: For me, life is only possible when it is lived freely. An unethical, unjust and apolitical life is a life that should not exist in a society. ”**

**“Today, under the conditions of capitalist modernity, a free life based on partnership requires a great sense of responsibility and a strong scientific, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic understanding. ”**



**A spectre is haunting,  
not only in Europe, the  
spectre of Democratic  
Confederalism.**

# Internationalist perspective

Internationalist commune

## Dear comrades,

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the hope for socialism, capitalism was able to present its ideology on the stage as the only solution for a "free" life. Capitalist modernity has created an unprecedented hegemony with its ideology of liberalism, which declares itself as a natural theory and way of life by denying ideological existence. Capitalist modernity rages over humanity and tries to cover up its existential crisis with new interventions in the life of societies and to create new ways of securing existence. As a result, liberalism and its effects on societies and individuals are no longer visible or difficult to decipher. The crisis in which capitalist modernity finds itself, with its characteristic of self-destruction, is causing more and more problems in the world and is eating away at the beauty of life like a cancer. Through war propa-

ganda, democracy continues to be dismantled and fascism and patriarchy spread like a virus across the world. The 3rd World War, which has been continuing since the intervention of the imperialist states in the Middle East, is culminating in a new critical turning point through the physical spread of the theatre of war to Europe.

Thus, World War 3 enters a new phase with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. The war, previously invisible to many, and felt only by the societies and peoples of the Middle East, is becoming a reality of life. The disintegration of states, the destruction of natural livelihoods, the destruction of nature, genocides, and the displacement of millions from their homes and forced resettlement, are all features of the deep crisis of capi-

talism. All these effects are the product of the barbarity of international capital. Actors like the USA, Russia, Germany, China and the UK are duelling for hegemony and the strongest positions in the multi-polar world order, destroying whole countries like Iraq and now Ukraine, and people who give their lives are celebrated like gladiators for the games of international capital in the arena.

The 3rd World War is not a war of ideologies, the imperialist states all follow the same logic and represent the same ideology. The USA wants to push back the strengthening of Europe and minimize the influence of Russia. Russia, which has been fighting for years for more influence in the capitalist world order, wants a good place in the multipolar world order but has nothing new to offer.

Whereas countries like China are increasing their global economic power day by day. Also, the UK, which remains rather inconspicuous, but after Brexit makes new claims and continues to accumulate power with the old, familiar strategy of "divide and rule", is back in the fight for world power. Since the war in the Ukraine, there is finally an enemy again who can be blamed. There is talk of a 3rd world war and the war is supposed to serve the defense of freedom. The serious problems of NATO, the global social grievances, the crisis of climate change and the internal conflicts become secondary. With the war in Ukraine and the psychological warfare, NATO wants to clean its bad prestige and overcome its problems.



## Dear comrades,

100 years ago, with the intervention of Europe and the Sykes Picot order, the West tried to shape the Middle East in its own image. But in none of the countries of the Middle East could the concept from Europe gain a foothold. Turkey was to play a decisive role for the USA in the "Great Middle East Project", wiping out the Kurdish freedom movement and opening the door for the USA to the Middle East and its resources. Iran, which is experiencing massive unrest at home, is also trying to destabilize the region according to its own interests. The political upheavals and resistance in the Middle East show that societies are dissatisfied and in search of a democratic alternative. Turkey, which was the key to the Middle East's resources, is also struggling to find its feet. After the interstate conspiracy against Rêber APO, the role of the AKP is to keep the progressive and socialist ideas out of the region and to eradicate them. The total isolation and inhuman conditions of Imrali prison island show the fear of imperialism towards the ideas and alternative of Rêber APO for the Middle East. The whole existence of the AKP- MHP regime is limited to the denial of the Kurds and the war against the Kurdish freedom move-

ment. While the imperialist states are busy with themselves, Erdogan and his terror regime are using the opportunity to intensify their war against the Kurdish freedom movement and to satisfy their neo-Ottoman dreams. The plan of liquidating the PKK in the mountains of Kurdistan and then fully occupying the cities of Rojava and Şengal, was destroyed by the incredible resistance of the Guerrilla, despite the daily use of chemical weapons. Ankara's defeat in the mountains of Kurdistan drastically influenced the situation at home. The social, political and economic situation of the society puts Erdogan under pressure. Therefore, Erdogan is trying to get the green light for a new invasion on Rojava and is using the contradictions and conflicts of the imperialist states to achieve his short-term and medium-term goals. While the war is raging in Ukraine, a drone terror is breaking out over Rojava. Children and families are targeted and the villages on the border are shelled with artillery. The AKP-MHP regime is trying to displace the population through low-intensity warfare and slowly occupying the villages. Ankara's water war against the region also continues and is just another example of its psychological

and biological warfare. However, the influence of Rêber APO's ideas are gaining approval every day and are proving their steadfastness and consistency despite the embargo, war, and psychological warfare.



**“While the imperialist states are busy with themselves, Erdogan and his terror regime are using the opportunity to intensify their war against the Kurdish freedom movement and to satisfy their neo-Ottoman dreams.”**

**“Therefore, Erdogan is trying to get the green light for a new invasion on Rojava and is using the contradictions and conflicts of the imperialist states to achieve his short-term and medium-term goals.”**

## Dear comrades,

Capitalism is kept alive with the blood of millions of people, women, and animals. Capitalism is fed with the exploitation of whole countries, peoples, and nature. With different instruments and strategies, society is manipulated and humanity experiences alienation to its own reality. With biological weapons of war and psychological warfare, attempts are made to destabilize societies and to create powerlessness with fear and terror. The neo-colonialism of capitalist modernity is trying with all its might to smash sociality and uproot the individual from its history. The aim of capitalist modernity is to erase the memory of peoples, to establish the culture of capitalist modernity globally. The new culture is called individualism and is the surreal self-incarnation of man and his life. In this way, cultures, and peoples are being auto-assimilated step by step. One's own language, culture, and way of life are interpreted as backward and wrong.

In this way, anticolonial struggles are disintegrated and a homogenization of the masses is created. The neo-colonialism of capitalist modernity is supposed to ensure the voluntary integration of the individual

into the Western world. Through digital media, the propaganda of the USA is brought into every city, every village, and every home. Through psychologically perfected programs, every receptive person is forced to consume the surreal world. The propaganda of objectivity and freedom that we are told about the internet is just another lie of liberalism. Especially the youth is forced to flee to the digital world, to Instagram or Netflix. International capital tries to lock the youth into a spiral of individualism and meaninglessness through sex, sport, and art. By alluding to our primitive primal instincts and emotions, and massively sexualizing society, there is considerable interference in the nature of society. Many revolutionary groups and organizations have been infected by the virus of liberalism and have lost their orientation in the revolutionary struggle. The war waged by imperialism in all spheres of life must be answered with radical militancy. We must fight all influences in our thoughts, our emotions, and our deeds with collective revolutionary force.

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**“Capitalism is fed with the exploitation of whole countries, peoples, and nature.”**

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## Dear comrades,

The more capitalism tries to force people globally to an unnatural social model and system through new war plans, the stronger the demand for an alternative life model becomes. Even if capitalist modernity could realize some plans in Northern Europe and America, the failure of imperialism's plans in the Middle East has made it clear that the societies are fighting back and raising the flag of socialism from the ruins of hopelessness as the answer of humanity with the pioneering role of the PKK, by defending sociality and its human values. The political upheavals in Latin America also show that the search for a better life has already begun. There is strong social resistance in South America and the election results in Bolivia and Chile and the coming elections in Brazil

and Colombia are signs of society's turning away from capitalist modernity. Societies are waking up from their nightmare and calling for freedom. All over the world, women and the youth are fighting for an end to the capitalist world order. They try to stifle Rêber APO's voice on the torture island of Imrali, but his ideas flourish all over the world. Physical isolation cannot withstand the love and freedom of revolution. His voice is translated into all languages and heard by people in all parts of the world.

There is a spectre going around, not only in Europe, the spectre of democratic world confederalism of peoples and societies. The springtime of democratic forces, the springtime of socialism is at

hand. The peoples will fight for their right to self-determination and democracy and displace the darkness of capitalist modernity. The people will not allow the imperialist states to play their greedy power games at the cost of our planet and human lives. Women will unite. The peoples of the Middle East and Latin America will join hands. The youth of the metropolises and cities of Europe will become the avenging fire of revolution. We will speak the languages of the forgotten and be the color of the unseen. We will haunt your countries and metropolises and be the new, free world.

**All power  
to the people!  
Together towards  
democratic world  
confederalism!**

**¡Bijî Serok  
APO!**



# Beauty and the Beast

What is beauty? Is it something visual? A feeling? Is it something different for each person? Is beauty really in the eye of the beholder, as the saying goes?

We say no.

Young Internationalist Women



Beauty cannot be evaluated materially and cannot be limited to individuality. Beauty is a perception based on interaction; we are not talking about the classical ideas of beauty propagated by the capitalist system.

We do not want to turn this text into another one of many texts that merely deconstruct and criticize the beauty ideals of the capitalist system. For, the discussion about "true" or "natural" beauty, has always revolved only around clearly defined appearances. What is actually understood as beauty, the essence of aesthetics, is not questioned. The question of beauty is often approached in this superficial way. However, it is not only through a completely twisted image of beauty that the system ensures

that we overlook its true essence. In the midst of all the ugliness of the system, beauty is actually becoming less and less, because capitalism feeds on the destruction of the source of beauty.

Wherever it buries the world under thick layers of tar and asphalt, between colonialism and wars, it suffocates beauty. It disorientates people with its garish neon signs until they become blind to the true beauty, as well as to the ugliness of this world. It creates personalities who, in the place of beauty, are so full of themselves that, dominated by their own egoism, they are incapable of recognizing beauty, or of creating it. And yet we can perceive beauty, even if we do

not always immediately understand what we are encountering. For example, even before we had a closer look at the ideology of the Apoist Freedom Movement, we felt an inexplicable attraction just from looking at the images of the guerrillas of the PKK. Without knowing these people personally, we feel the warmth they radiate, the cooperativeness and an irrefragable inner strength. They embody a beauty that you are not be able to turn away from. To this day, a warm shiver runs through us when we see the laughter of the guerrillas in pictures. The laughter of these friends is an expression of beauty. But what is it exactly that makes these people so attractive? What is the secret of true beauty?

## Beauty lies in everything that is alive or that creates life. If we look at nature, we see beauty wherever there is diversity



A wild flower meadow is more beautiful than a monoculture. For nature, diversity means life and homogenization means death. The same is true for our societies. What defines society is the ability to develop values and principles together and in this way to protect diversity. Sociality, which is created in this way, is what makes us human, is what life and, consequently, beauty are expressed in.

Therefore, if we think again about why beauty is so difficult to recognize in everyday life, why the ugliness we perceive grows with each passing day, now we know how: It is the destruction of sociality from which patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and all their ugliness excesses feed themselves. It is the decay of our values and principles that is being pushed to keep the system alive.

Liberalism has taken this to the extreme, with ever more insane ideals of beauty and absolute individualism, it propagates a path that leads people to the exact opposite of beauty. Under the influence of this system, all concentration falls on the individual. This creates ugly personalities who try to create a certain external appearance through consumption and live a "beautiful" life according to the system's standards without consideration for others. But beauty cannot be owned, or lived out individually. It can only be created together and preserved through sharing.

Reber APO's theory of the rose explains how aesthetics is naturally linked to self-defense. How roses are viewed today is symbolic for the prevailing misconception of beauty. Hardly anyone who admires roses for their beauty takes notice of them in their wholeness. The flowers are seen separately from the rest of the plant, and value is ascribed to them alone. The rose blossom has been made a symbol of capitalist "love" and romance. Yet it would never be possible for the rose to grow its flowers - to create aesthetics, and to preserve them - without the thorny branches. Without its thorns, it would be eaten away unprotected, just as society in the capitalist system is eaten away by various influences. If the rose were cut off, it would wither in no time. Also, if the rose is separated from its roots, the foundation from which it draws its aesthetics is lost. Self-defense and connection to the roots are thus the secrets of natural beauty.

Now we can apply the symbol of the rose to society in order to understand even more deeply how true beauty, or aesthetics, is created. In the times of natural society, the woman was considered the creator of life, creator of beauty. Myths reveal what values the society had and that the woman (in the form of mother goddesses) was considered its creator and protector. She was the unifying force in matricentric societies, she organized and maintained society around her, ensured harmony and cohesion.

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### **“What defines society is the ability to develop values and principles together and in this way to protect diversity.”**

Without exception, everything beautiful that mankind has created was created through or for the wellbeing of the societies. We can say sociability was and is the basis of the creation and defense of life. Democracy, free life, were created through sociality. But the system tries to appropriate all these achievements of societies, markets them as its own ideas, empties their content and basically uses them against societies.

Accordingly, then, it becomes clear that everything that is an expression of societal values, and principles, moral convictions, become an expression of beauty. Everything that liberates life, all living beings, nature, and the mentality of people, is deeply connected with beauty. To live in the right way, to live according to the principles of freedom, and especially to struggle for freedom, are the expressions of beauty. Martyr Şehid Beritan already said, "Who fights becomes free, who is free becomes beautiful, who is beautiful will be loved." Şehid Beritan brings out the connection between struggle and beauty. And this reminds us again of the images of the fighting women and men in the mountains of Kurdistan. If we wonder what makes them so enchanting, we should ask ourselves: is there anything more beautiful than the struggle for freedom? These friends defend the beautiful life, defend the principles on which life is based. Just as a rose defends its beauty with its thorns.



Devemos seguir seu exemplo, porque We must follow their example, because - like the rose - we too are cut into parts, separated from our roots, our history and society. We grow up without connection to our societies, their values and principles, or are deprived of them piece by piece while living in the system. Without self-defense, we are defenseless against the ugliness of the system. Capitalism and patriarchy, liberalism and colonialism eat unhindered through our bodies and personalities, reducing our perspective to the supposed "beauty" ideals of the system.

The problem here is not that we all strive for beauty, but the false idea of beauty that the system propagates. Once we start our search all over again, we can understand that we achieve beauty only by fighting against all the ugliness of this system, against the personalities it has created in us.

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For the system is like a beast that we keep alive by merely sitting still and waiting for it to suddenly change into something less ugly. In doing so, it holds us captive no matter what face it presents itself with. Beauty can only return, only be created, when we take an active role in its development. Only by fighting for it can we realize the truth of beauty.

**We must ask ourselves, what is our reaction to all the ugliness of the system? Do we want to continue living in slavery, to continue being crushed by injustice in this world ruled by war, or do we want a beautiful life for everybody?**

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# To Defend our Culture is to Fight Against Colonialism

Cemil Cudi

The form that the capitalist system developed to expand and dominate territories and their people was through colonialism, which in large proportions and forms becomes imperialism. This form of control is ancient, dating back to the first great empires of civilization. The Sumerian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman empires, as well as the expansion of empires in the East such as the famous Mongol empire under Genghis Khan or the Qing Empire in China are also examples where the practice of conquering territories was crucial for the expansion of their forces and control.

Once a territory was conquered, it had to be occupied by different nations, peoples, and cultures, and had to conform to the principles imposed by the dominant order and the whims of the empire. This happened in many different ways, according to the location of the territory, its history and people. Sometimes it was imposed militarily, with the execution of local

leaders, their families, and the repression of any form of protest or discontent. Sometimes it was through political assimilation, where the empire dominated the institutions and ways of organizing itself politically, having in its control people either directly related to the dominant order or at least accepting it. And there was the form in which it was a matter of a complete assimilation of these people, where they were forbidden to express themselves culturally according to their traditions, forbidden to speak their original languages, where it was necessary to participate in the education provided by the empire, and as time went by to be seen as citizens, but, always marginalized, treated as third class, and socially ignored.

Regardless of the form, the fact is that the colonizing process always seeks to alienate people from their origins and characteristics, in order to gain control over the territory in a deeper

way. Of course, this also depends on the purpose for which the territory was occupied. If it was an occupation aimed at extracting natural resources in order to develop their economies, the most common practice adopted by the imperialist forces was to enslave the population and quickly exhaust their resources. In almost all cases, this form of colonization and oppression ended in a revolt of the oppressed peoples fighting for their liberation, but left as a consequence ecologically, economically and politically destroyed nations.

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**“Once a territory was conquered, it had to be occupied by different nations, peoples, and cultures, and had to conform to the principles imposed by the dominant order and the whims of the empire.”**

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## The process of colonialism has deep and bitter memories for all the peoples that were subjected to this process.

Especially in the period of modernity, the capitalist system instrumentalized colonialism as its main form of expansion and control over the world, a role especially played by the European nations that spread to the four corners of the world, spreading their way of life as the correct one and "taming savages" found along the way (as they themselves said in their accounts of the period). Under the banner of liberating the souls of heretics, whole nations were conquered, occupied, and exploited on scales never before seen by mankind.

It was a moment of change in the paradigm of the evolution of the human species, which planted its roots and left deep marks present in our societies today. In particular, after the period of the liberal revolution and its mentality being established as the basis of the new system that was being formed, the colonialist practices that were still present under this period began to have more depth, on an interpersonal and individual level. The liberal way of relating in society

and seeing other peoples and nations around the world gave rise to Eurocentrism and the eugenics of the white man as the holder of truth, the power of life and death. It was during this period, driven by mercantilism and followed by the industrial revolution, that these nations were able to control more than half of the world according to their wishes and desires.

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**“The liberal way of relating in society and seeing other peoples and nations around the world gave rise to Eurocentrism and the eugenics of the white man as the holder of truth”**

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However, it had not been a passive occupation. In virtually, if not all occupied territories, the peoples of these already existing nations, and their cultural and historical practices, rebelled against colonial forces at various points in history. From the first slave revolts in the mid-16th century to the revolutions of the national liberation

movements of the 20th century. Both had the same roots, a desire for freedom and the possibility of being able to live under their own understandings of society, their own culture and their own language. With the "end" of colonialism (at least as many people understand it) and the formation of hundreds of new nation-states (these created and divided by the nations that dominated and oppressed them) several internal conflicts broke out around the globe due to cultural, social and economic differences ignored by the nations that drew the borders of these new states. One of the major consequences of this bitter period of human history has been this. It is up to us to analyze how this has not been a "mistake" of the dominant nations, but rather is a consciously developed system of unequal distribution. These imperialistic nations generate problems in these relatively newly formed nation-states so that they can then present themselves as a mediating force to solve their conflicts, the result of which is the practice of neocolonialisation.



**“Several internal conflicts broke out around the globe due to cultural, social and economic differences ignored by the nations that drew the borders of these new states.”**

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Furthermore, once the capitalist system established itself as the dominant order in the world, especially after the end of the USSR in 1991 and the declaration of the "end of history", the mentality underpinning this system spread like a virus across the globe. Liberalism and neoliberalism became compulsory and present in all global societies forced to integrate into the financial market, a necessity imposed by this system. With this, various cultures and forms of social organization have been suppressed,

instilled in them the dominant mentality of the system, which is based on a European eugenicist culture. With this, the system began to mold other societies based on the guiding principle that the liberal and capitalist model is the correct model for all societies in the world, ignoring their cultural, local and historical characteristics.

For example, in the context of capitalist modernity, countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Dubai and

Israel echo the hierarchical and patriarchal capitalist mentality of the system in the Middle East, as do South Korea in Asia and Australia in Oceania. Of course, these countries claim to have adopted the economic system while retaining their cultural characteristics, and this may be true on superficial levels and in appearance, but the capitalist culture itself is antagonistic to the authentic culture of these peoples; these being rooted in communality, horizontality and democratic practices.

To defend culture is to defend its history, its roots, its ancestry, which are constantly under attack by capitalist modernity that seeks to create a homogeneous mass of consumers that encompasses all the cultures and peoples of the world. It doesn't matter whether you were born and raised in the center of European capitalism or in a historical tribe of an African village, you have to consume. In this sense, to defend your traditions, rituals, cultural practices and customs is also to fight against capitalist modernity. This means coherently analyzing which features are in line with democratic modernity and which are traditional practices that do not, such as tribal honor codes and forced intermarriage. The way we can find the right path to resist the process of assimilation and liberalization of our societies and peoples is precisely by

knowing our origins, our history, and our culture. It is by creating and living under a decolonial system that takes into account the whole historical process that has suppressed these cultures and their histories.

There are important examples around the globe of how defending your cultural-historical roots is important to defend yourself against the attacks of capitalist modernity and liberalism. One of the clearest being the defense of the Kurdish people in their struggle for freedom and existence. Under the Rêber APO paradigm, the understanding of the need to know one's own history and culture before developing a revolutionary movement had been crucial to the development and success of the Kurdish revolutionary liberation movement.

**“To defend your traditions, rituals, cultural practices and customs is also to fight against capitalist modernity.”**



My own identity connected to my homeland has always been unclear, constantly defined through negations – what I am not, rather than what I am. Growing up in the 90s, right after the formation of the Slovenian nation state and in transition from a socialist to a capitalist model, has influenced my feelings of being somewhere in the middle, but somehow not belonging anywhere. This state of inbetweenness, not fully part of one or another identity, has been very present in my home country. It is a result of labeling every identity as completely separate and incompatible with others, on creating otherness<sup>1</sup>. The identity created in this way is put into a certain categories that narrowly defines what is included in it and what not. As a consequence people are put into tight spaces to which certain characteristics are assigned.

Understanding how this process has been enforced on us (and later on enforced by us) is how I started the path back to my true self. My true self that is not defined by the outside forces imposing their images of reality unknown to them onto me. Also not defined by my society which has blindly followed these categories and meanings assigned to them, degrading themselves as a result. It means finding what identity means to me, that is not based on self denial and voluntarily subordination; or on perceiving people who are seen to not belong to your identity as something less and yourself above them.

## In Between Identities

Zozan Çekdar

The territory of what is nowadays Slovenia has been constantly ruled over by big empires, mostly Germanic ones. Throughout history the Slovenians were never the ones with the political power on the territory on which they were living. In the beginning of 20th century, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was formed where Slovenians formed a political unit with other southern Slavic nations. There were different reasons that lead to this, one of them being the necessity to join powers in order to defend themselves and stand up to empires trying to occupy them. Another reason was an understanding of the similarities and connections to south Slavic nations and perceiving it as the path to bring us closer to our roots. In the 1980s the ideas of separation of Slovenia from former Yugoslavia and establishing its own nation state became more wide spread. Through this, certain narratives about identities were created that has continued until present.

The Balkans have been constructed as the "other" for Western Europe since the beginning of 20th century. The idea of the Balkans was used for Europeans to define themselves through formulating what the Balkans is and what they are not. This was even more visible when the Balkans were used as a basis for European Union states to create a common identity, deciding a European identity by creating an image of the other, that which is not and should not be mistaken as such. The Balkans represented the primitive, backwards, and the savage. Through this image, these EU states established the idea of themselves as modern, advanced, developed, enlightened; supposed respecters of human rights.



Another image of the Balkans has been as a mysterious, wild place. From the 90s on, the term former Yugoslavia became more rare and substituted by the term Balkan, which has a stronger negative connotation from its use in the past and as a continuum of that, in the present as well.

**“The Balkans represented the primitive, backwards, and the savage. Through this image, these EU states established the idea of themselves as modern, advanced, developed, enlightened; supposed respecters of human rights.”**

<sup>1</sup> Othering is the process in which you assign certain characteristics to a group of people, put them into category and present them as fundamentally different (dehumanizing).

A photograph of a stone wall with graffiti that reads "WHAT TYPE OF A DEMOCRACY IS THIS?". The wall is made of large, rectangular stone blocks. The graffiti is written in a simple, hand-painted style. The background shows a building with a green door and some debris on the roof.

“The administrative erasure of  
**25.671 people**  
 living in Slovenia.”

Slovenia took an important role in participating in this discourse, especially after its independence. It constructed Balkans and Europe as completely mutually exclusive, one can not be both at the same time, as belonging to one identity automatically negates the other. The path of Slovenia as a newly formed nation state was presented as a metaphysical journey that has two possible directions – one is Europe and the other one is Balkan. Europe being the desired destination. Through this, Slovenia put itself into a place in between, while at the same time argumentating that the journey has already been reached in an ideological, cultural way – “we are Central Europe, and it only remains a question of time for the rest of the Europeans to realize that”. Suddenly the empires that ruled over the Slovenians and the Germanisation through history were used as a further proof of our Europeaness. The Germanisation that used to be presented as a threat to the Slovenian nation and the dehumanizing narratives and violence of the empires, were then erased from the common narrative and transformed into something positive – being part of the European empires differentiate us from the Balkans and gives us a right to belong to Europe, as we have always done.

The idea of Slovenia becoming a second Switzerland was very present from the 90s on and even though it

has been given up on, it is still thought of nostalgically – what our potentials were and how we stopped ourselves from reaching them (through corruption, bankruptcy etc.) This can, ironically, be seen as a testimony to our Balkan identity, if analyzed through exactly the same narratives that Slovenia has been using on other former Yugoslavian countries. Switching between feelings of superiority towards certain nations and at the same time keeping the narrative of being a nation of servants, the self degradation often involved in worshipping Western Europe, with its “modern” lifestyle, is very much present in this.

These narratives were implemented in every day life through direct systematic discrimination towards people from other former Yugoslavian republics who lived in Slovenia, some newly arrived and some having been living there for decades. The administrative erasure of 25,671 people living in Slovenia, leaving them without any legal status, as well as closing the borders on refugees from the war in the former Yugoslavia, that were just a few years ago part of the same country, are examples of the most brutal manifestations of how harmful and violent these narratives are. On one hand this even further ruptured the connections to the ideas of sisterhood and brotherhood existing in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it ironically brought us closer to Europe with

implementing the practice, typical for Western Europe, that is on the outside presenting itself as modern and democratic, but behind closed doors committing horrendous crimes that are denied and justified at the same time.

While growing up, I often saw a switching between exclusion and inclusion in my environment, and a changing of identity based on it. For example, the comments my father was making while watching football on TV. If Slovenian football players with roots from other former Yugoslavian republics, at a certain moment played good, they were “ours”, if not, they were “čefurji”, who should return back to their countries. This switching happened in the time span of moments, back and forward. It shows clearly that the imagined line between us and them, who is Slovenian and what does this identity mean, is not as clearly cut out as presented in the common narratives

**“I have built the wall between me and my society and culture by allowing others to define who I am and how I understand myself.”**

There is a certain pity towards Slovenians from other former Yugoslavian nations. It comes from us trying so hard to please and prove ourselves, to get confirmation from what we perceive as Europe, even for the price of self denial and humiliation. Through distancing ourselves from what is seen as Balkan and putting degrading characteristics to it, there are a lot of feelings of superiority.

I rejected the idea of what developed and civilized means in a way that is presented from Europe. Through this rejection I got closer to the other cultures in the former Yugoslavia and found it easier to identify with them. This shaped my understanding of what being Slovenian means, seeing it as something negative that I can't connect to, something to negate. I have built the wall between me and my society and culture by allowing others to define who I am and how I understand myself. Without realizing I embraced the negative self image of not being enough, of being something less, that needed to be confirmed through European lenses. I thought I was rejecting the idea of Europeaness, but I still looked at Balkans through the same lenses, just in some ways romanticizing and glorifying negative attributes imposed on it. I stayed in the boxes of categories assigned to us, just shifting them around, but not thinking outside of this given framework. Being in Rojava brought me closer to my roots, than I have ever felt, through learning new ways of understanding what loving your society and land means. Ways that are not based on nationalism, exclusion and feelings of superiority. Loving your land means loving all the people, groups and cultures living on it.

All of this realizations brings up in me more questions than answers: How to understand my identities, not based on one exclusive identity and looked through the lenses of Western Europe? How to create my own meanings of belonging and perceiving identity, based on my own reality, life experiences, and understanding of history and present with its transitions? How do I find connections back to my roots? What do the Balkans mean to me, how do I connect with them and their diverse cultures? How do I think of Balkans without being influenced by all this discourse that I have been listening to all my life? Where do I see Slovenia and my Slovenian identity in all of this?

To answer these questions, I have to start with analyzing and understanding history through to the present. I must learn how to think outside of the framework given to



me. I must connect with people in my home country and my region more deeply; to not look for a list of similarities that prove I belong, or a list of differences that make me doubt that, but to feel the connection without needing to justify it on outside "objective" facts. To let myself be part of multiple identities at the same time, one not excluding or minimalising another, one not being superior than other. To see revolutionary potential in my region from the history of oppression and resistance, by finding ways to connect over the drawn state borders. To start to understand my identity as resistance to European imperialism dictating what is cultural, what is modern and advanced and what development means. To hold on to, and deepen, communal approaches that resist individualism.

I am recreating my identity with rooting it in society and region, basing it on feelings of belonging, connections, friendship and awareness of common struggle and on love. Love is not something that we have limited amounts of; loving something or someone, does not mean that there is not enough love for another. We can love the people, the land and the nature, the richness and the diversities of cultures. Love does not stop at drawn state borders, it does not exclude and see someone as better than another.

It means meeting a stranger in Serbia, who, upon telling him where I am from, responds with: "Pa ti si naša" – "You are ours". This shows that there is something bigger than all the nationalistic and self

degrading discourses trying to separate us and keep us fixed inside the drawn state borders. There is something that goes deeper than this. Seeing this as an act of resistance, not in a frame of excluding others, but through recognition of belonging and directly opposing imperialistic power relations, local nationalisms, state borders, and divisions. Building a world where we strive to "all be ours" has to start somewhere. There is an alternative possible, outside the capitalist system of division and hegemonic relationships. It is just on us to build it.

The Balkans can and I believe, will, play an important role in this from their strong revolutionary potential, the possibility in learning together to strengthen the relationships we have, in recreating the idea of sisterhood and brotherhood that crosses state borders, and seeing our differences as a strength and beauty that enriches us all.

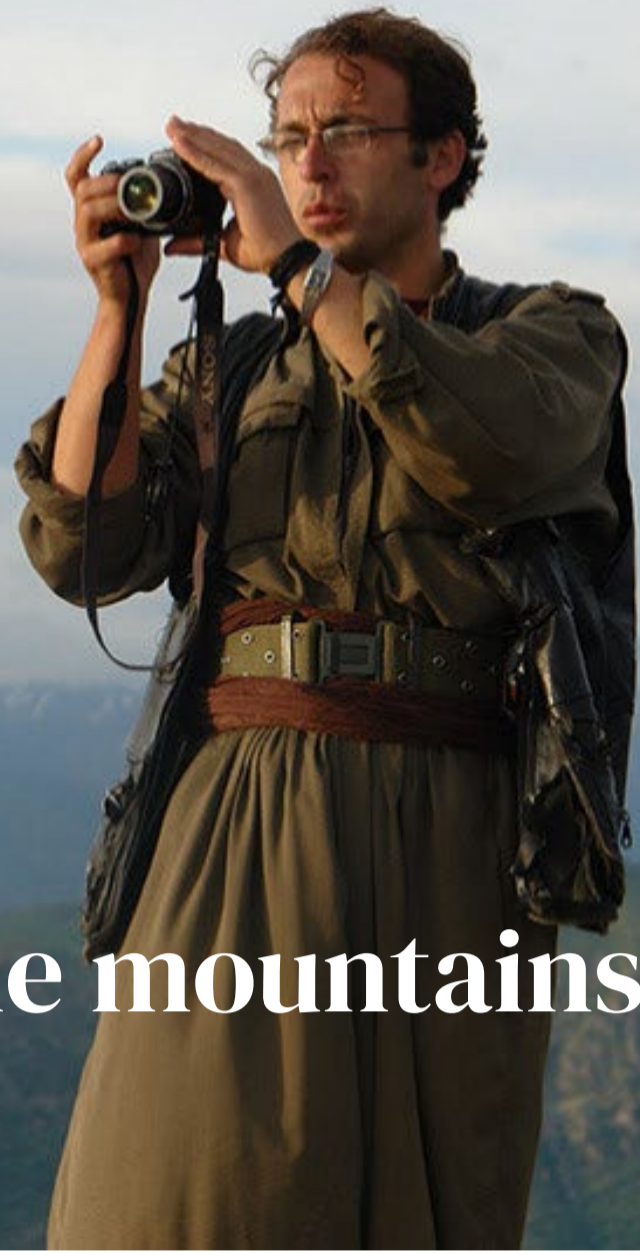
In the end, I do not choose either the Balkans or Europe, as none of them really exist in the way they are presented. Instead, I choose to build understandings outside the framework that was given to me. I choose identity based on my reality and the reality of those of the people around me.

## **I choose connections, people and resistance!**

**Zozan Çekdar**

# I learned to laugh in the mountains you know...

Ş. Halil Dağ



## A Short introduction

Language. Language is the expression of our common culture, our thoughts, and our feelings. When thoughts become words and leave our bodies, we initiate change. The order of words, the melody and the emotions hidden in them are secret codes that tell us the history of peoples. Languages are keys to our history, to the history of peoples. Each language has a culture, a history, a past that is sometimes difficult to translate. With each spoken word, we move closer to the past of these cultures, understand our present and overcome the boundaries between space and time. We can feel and taste, see the world in other eyes. Languages open doors to new cultures, sometimes foreign to us. With every spoken, learned language, we gain beauty. The beauty of cultures decorates our souls and opens our hearts. Each word is a small piece of truth from the history of mankind. Each word is a piece of the treasure map that holds the way to the past.

Words are sacred, they say in Kurdistan. Through speaking, we can read people, enable interpersonal communication and connection, and access thoughts, feelings, and moments. Through writing, we can capture and share moments. We share what we feel, what we think, and what we live. Our longings, our dreams, our fears, our joy, and our love. When we read, we fall into a new world, a world that is sometimes not ours, that is foreign to us. However, it meets us with new colors. Sometimes out of escape, sometimes out of curiosity, and sometimes a search, we are united with people. Through direct encounter with another, it is then possible for us to see ourselves through our reflection. With diversity and heterogeneity, it is possible to define ourselves. It is the mirror of life. Through diversity, we can express and find ourselves. Through diversity, we can gain infinite possibilities of life. It is the highest art of humanity to communicate interculturally and to open ourselves up, to understand, and to conquer our limits.

Şehîd Halil Dağ is the expression of this reality. In his book "Beni bağışlayın" he describes beautifully the emotions, the thoughts, of a seeker. A seeker, a stranger who finds the beauty of life, in his search for true life in the mountains of Kurdistan. The mountains, the friends and the life, teach him to understand a new language and to merge with it. Heval Halil Dağ is one of the first friends, who through his films and books, narrated to the world the beauty of the resistance and the love of the freedom fighters. If we want to understand the mountains, we have to speak their language. Open ourselves to a new world. Heval Halil Dağ is a bridge to this new world. He is not only an artist who revolutionizes art and culture, he is a friend, a comrade, who through humility, self-criticism, and love, becomes the main character of his story. Heval Halil Dağ teaches us one thing above all: the story we tell does not need objectivity. On the contrary, the story we want to tell must not speak the language of the others, but the language of the protagonists.

“Through diversity, we can express and find ourselves.”



## **I learned to laugh in the mountains you know...**

I Learned To Laugh In The Mountains you know; before I came to this forest in the mountains, I could not laugh at all. But here with my friends, I can be happy, and laugh, and be free. I learned to laugh in the mountains you know... And in that crowded forest, the two of them catch my eye first. I don't see them, I hear them. Now green is true green and blue is true blue, And every corner of the forest is a perfect spot for the guerrillas. But it is hard to find water in the forests, huge oak trees leave little for these young Kurdish children. So surely, in some corner where no one visits, some small spring will give life to these fledgling guerrillas... I wander through the whole forest searching for water and for life.

And then I hear them. Their voices echo somewhere in the forest, but I am lost. I know that trees shouldn't echo this way. I cannot hear where these voices come from. I hear only the smiles that lie behind them. It was a mistake to set out in the midday heat but the laughter in the forest drives me on. The air makes me dizzy, and the light hurts my eyes. Green fades into deeper green. I know, trees near water should have darker greens but all these greens blend together now. It was a mistake to set out in the midday heat but the laughter in the forest drives me on. This laughter, fading between the rustle of squirrels and tweets birds is my best guide. I try to chase the smiles through the dense trees but the forest is laughing at me. I know soon I will meet young people who make this forest ring with their laughter and who are one with the forest, but I think "why do they laugh?". What amuses these children so? What here could bring them so much joy?

I am aware that I am getting desperate. Extreme heat, unbearable thirst, and the mosquitoes circling all over me are unbearable. But the laughter in the forest drives me on, and somehow, it overwhelms me with its joy. I stop and laugh to myself. Where are these happy children hiding? It is no time for photography, but I can't help but record the owners of these smiles, these happy children, on film somehow. I take a short break, I prepare my camera and then I continue again. And then I see them. The owners of the smiles among the trees. They are not yet aware of me. They don't know I am thirsty. But I know them both... One is named Serhat, the other is Kawa... One is twenty-three years old, the other is twenty-four... One of them was born in the villages of Adiyaman and the other in Qamishlo. One left the streets of Istanbul, the other the back quarters of Aleppo... One has spoken Turkish throughout his life, the other Arabic... Now both of them are laughing in Kurdish on this mountain top, in this forest, in the middle of this fierce war...

I used to believe that every photograph has a story. I learned in these mountains that some stories also create photographs. Capturing this moment comes before a glass of water. These children's laughter makes me forget my thirst. Their smiling voices ring through the lush forest. Thousands of soldiers are clustered around them, the ancient empires of the Middle East barter the land beneath them, these expansionist states draw their plans against them, who cares... They are laughing to their heart's content...

I balance the light to soothe my eyes and I press the shutter button. I stayed in the mountains for years just for frames like these. I slowly approach them. As soon as they notice me, they shut up. My heart begs them 'Don't be silent, laugh to your heart's content', but my silent cries go unanswered. I know, the smile they have tucked between their lips is a bird ready to fly at any moment. If I were to only touch them, they will laugh together again.

Seeing my thirst Kawa runs to get water. I sit next to Serhat. I don't have a word to say. His eyes are shining brightly, they are still smiling. I want to know what made these children laugh. But I will not ask. I saw how they laughed, that's enough for me. Kawa comes with a big jar in his hand. While I am drinking water, Serhat speaks as if he has read all my thoughts.

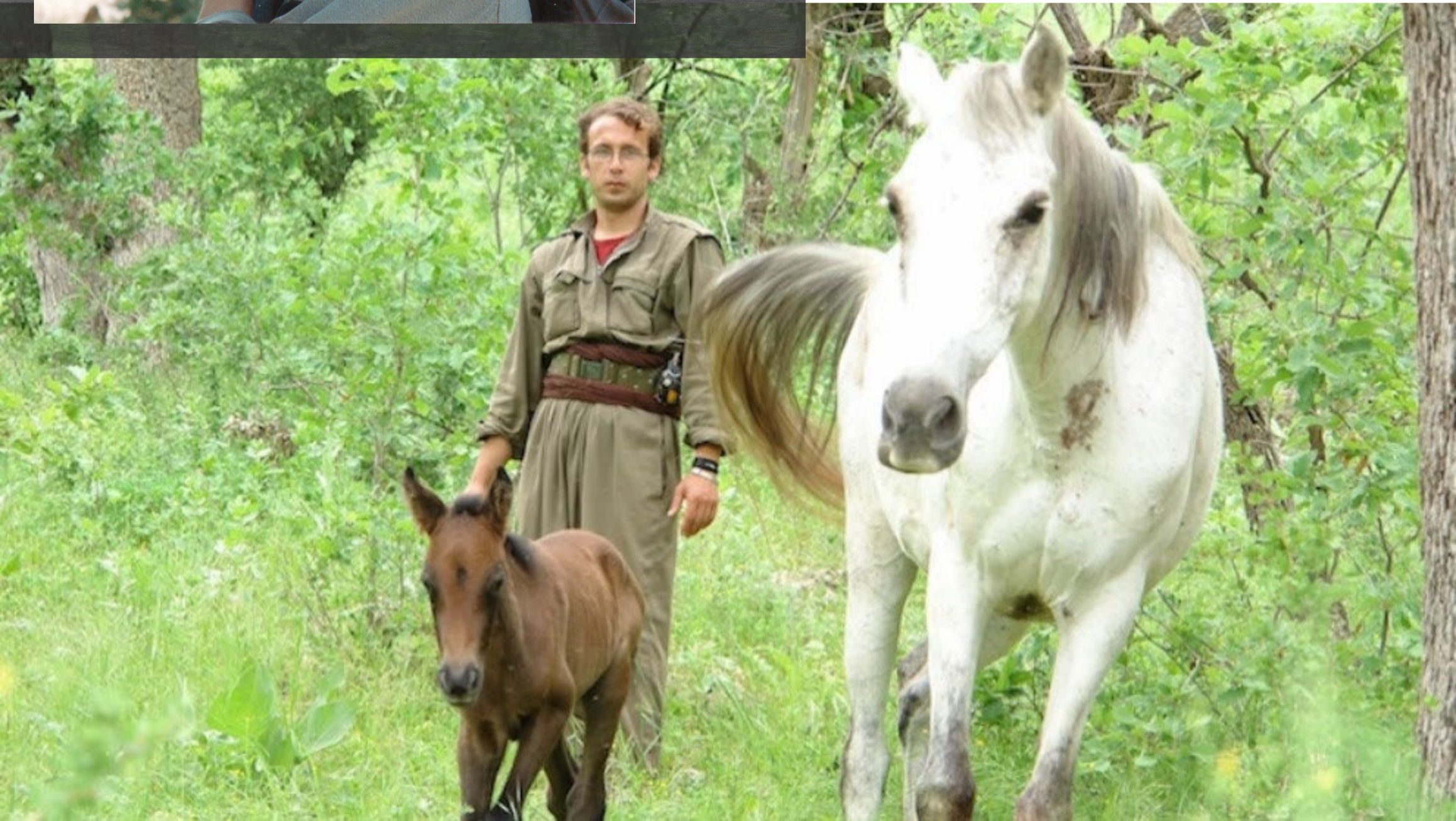
**I Learned To Laugh In The Mountains you know; before I came to this forest in the mountains, I could not laugh at all. But here with my friends, I can be happy, and laugh, and be free. I learned to laugh in the mountains you know...**

The last words of Serhat, this little sage, stuck in my brain. Like a harpoon, pinning me to the beginning of this article.

It is the cause of my insomnia in the forest, which makes me think all night long. I don't care what they're laughing at. But I will not ask. I saw how they laughed, that's enough for me. Kawa arrives with a big drum in hand. While I am drinking water, Serhat speaks as if he has read all my thoughts. You know, before I came to the mountains, I wasn't laughing so much, I couldn't laugh. However, among my friends, I can be happy in this forest, I can laugh with peace of mind. You know, I learned to laugh in the mountains...



**Martyr Halil Dağ / Forgive Me**





“Power has tried to annihilate our way of thinking or understanding the world and practising life.”

# Basque Country and its national contradiction

Rizgar Etxebarrieta

The history of civilisation is, at the same time, the history of millions of communities that have been annihilated, exploited or assimilated. Beneath the foundations of capitalist modernity lie the remnants of different cultures, languages, nations and identities that have been violently colonised and subjected to the power of the ruling class. The sap of life has been usurped by the guardians of exploitation and enslavement, whose nourishment is the blood of oppressed peoples. My people, Euskal Herria, is one of those who, from the development of civilisation to the consolidation of capitalist modernity, has had to face colonial violence; and who, even today, is able to resist. However we cannot avoid the fact that, as a territory of the imperial core, our people extract benefits from the colonised countries in the global south. People from our land participated, in collaboration with the Spanish Empire, in the plundering of the indigenous communities of Latin America, benefiting from this expropriation. Today, the expression of this colonial identity is found in the national bourgeoisie, whose wealth is extracted from native and foreign exploitation. How can a colony be at the same time a coloniser? This places us in a great contradiction that we must overcome, therefore we cannot speak of national liberation as long as we continue to exploit our equals. The liberation of our people cannot come without the liberation of all oppressed peoples and the abolition of all oppression of class, race or gender.

Colonisation, as a process of exploitation and assimilation, begins with the domination over women. With the development of private property, control over reproduction, which means women's bodies, became indispensable. Thus, from the family, a new social structure emerges sustained by social relations of domination and exploitation. The family is not only a small representation of the state but also its very origin. This small structure of domination was reproduced on a social scale and gradually spread and consolidated across different territories and communities through conquest and violent assimilation. For more than 5,000 years our hearts, minds and bodies have already been chained by the various forms of power, and all aspects of our social life subordinated to the process of assimilation and colonisation. There are, therefore, many communities in the imperial core that were colonised before the arrival of the empires in the lands of America. This is where Euskal Herria is situated, in the resistance to the expansion and domination of different civilisations. Through centuries of struggle we have survived our complete disintegration, but the vivid colours of our culture and way of life have lost their clarity with the passing of time.



Power has tried to annihilate our way of thinking, understanding the world and practising life. First different civilisations planted their seeds in our lands. Although they did not dominate us directly, there were certain types of relations and exchanges, both cultural and commercial. Trade began to develop on a larger scale and with it an overproduction of goods that did not respond to the direct needs of the community. Thus, over time, different expressions of violence began to cross our community. The Spanish empire arrived and with it came the wars and the fueros (the old laws) and the privatization of communal lands and goods. During the Carlist Wars thousands of lives were taken and much blood was shed in the name of the Spanish empire. On the other hand, the Catholic Church and the state system, even more consolidated in the Kingdom of Spain, began to exert more influence over our people. Thus, not only did our beliefs begin to change but a certain kind of conservatism began to spread. Industrialisation came and with it the development of the city and the metropolis. The baserris<sup>1</sup> (Rural houses) were emptied and the baserritarras (those in charge of the Rural houses) were forced to leave their land and move to the factories. This meant the development of a class placed under the domination of capital and a completely alienated relationship to labour. With the disintegration of communal land management, the consolidation of municipal councils and the rural exodus, all those communities that worked communally and organised themselves through popular assemblies, without the need for a state to mediate our relations, were drastically reduced. At the same time, Franco's dictatorship banned our language and denied our identity, through cruel repression and inhuman violence, plunging our people into an era of darkness. Finally, the current development of Capitalist Modernity is infiltrating through every pore of our body. Colonial violence is therefore not only a power dynamic that expresses itself through the domination of capital, i.e. through the economic and political subordination of one nation over another, but also, and especially, over our bodies and thoughts. What is dangerous is when this violence remains hidden in the shadows and we are unable to react to it.



Leaving aside the complexities involved in any social change, we see how a way of interacting with our environment, our history and our culture is being taken away. Without ignoring the contradictions that may exist and without falling into a romantic idealisation of the past, that culture that embraced the natural economy, communal lands, collective logics of relating to each other, or democratic-communal structures (councils, assemblies) is disappearing. Not to mention the Basque language, one of the oldest languages in the world, which is increasingly institutionalised and influenced by new social relations. If it were not for all those popular organisations that continue to try to maintain part of this culture and shine a ray of light on the shadows that besiege us, words like 'auzolan'<sup>2</sup> would cease to have any value.

**“The baserris<sup>1</sup> (Rural houses) were emptied and the baserritarras (those in charge of the Rural houses) were forced to leave their land and move to the factories. This meant the development of a class placed under the domination of capital and a completely alienated relationship to labour.”**

<sup>1</sup> Literally 'forest villages'

<sup>2</sup> This word has no translation but makes reference to the communitarian work that we make between the neighbours.



More than 50 years ago it was the violence inflicted on our people, and the violence with which our people responded that shook our conscience, and made the memory of a unique culture and language emerge from the ashes of oblivion. Artists, intellectuals and workers began to reclaim our history, while militants called for struggle. The determination of those who confronted the enemy to its ultimate consequences showed us that we must not silently succumb to state domination and our slow assimilation. But the "peace process" and the control that the national bourgeoisie has taken over the liberation movement has extinguished the fire that cried out for victory. We must regain the spirit of resistance, feel again that flame that still lies within us and defend life to the last consequences. We must rise up against the national bourgeoisie that exploits us as well as the comrades of other communities and liberate our people from its colonial expressions. We still have a world to conquer and in our culture, our history, as in the ones from other communities that embrace democratic values, lies the key to a free life.

The only answer to overcome our contradictions is therefore the insistence on internationalism and socialism. Only through a clear direct confrontation against the system can we free ourselves from these chains that condemn us to a colourless and meaningless life. But this firm determination for struggle and liberation requires a historical consciousness, a (re)linkage with our past, our roots.

We must recover the meaning of life through our culture, our language and our struggle. We cannot love life under the framework offered by global capitalism. We have to unchain ourselves from its influence, overcome those limits and liberate our body, our mind and, most importantly, our heart.

The Kurdish people are showing us the way. After almost 50 years of struggle against colonial forces and the implementation of Democratic Confederalism, they are building social relations linked to collectivity, love and freedom. Their minds are being liberated and their hearts unchained from the oppressive and domineering mentality of the system. At the same time they know better than anyone that complete freedom cannot come without the liberation of all peoples.

**There is a door above us that leads us to the utopia drawn by the Kurdish Liberation Movement. Now we only have to free our thoughts and feelings from the limitations to which they are subject.**

**Rizgar Etxebarrieta**

# **The Poetry of Revolution – Arlen Siu Bermudaz**

Roza Shanina

**When you left for this great destiny  
you left me your guitar, your unfinished painting  
your prophetic poem, and the book Juan Salvador Gaviota  
so that I could feel your love  
far beyond heaven and earth**

(Excerpt of a poem from Arlen's father to Arlen after her death)

## Who gives us the strength and courage to go into revolutionary struggle? What does it take to dare to take the first step? Who gives us the certainty that we will eventually win? Who gives us the unstoppable motivation to keep fighting, even in the most difficult times?

It is the hope that blossoms in us when we learn about people, especially young women around the globe, across history, who not only dreamed big, but fought with determination to make those dreams come true. Dreams, not just for their own lives, but for life itself. It is the hope and inspiration we draw from women who have shown that it takes selfless pioneers to move the masses. People who dared to break out of the old and become a source of inspiration. Young women who proved that there is nothing more valuable than being a small part in the great struggle for freedom. They are young women who defend life and give their own in return, always knowing that there will be followers who will carry on the legacy in the struggle and ultimately realize the common dream.

One of them is Arlen Siu Bermudaz, a young woman from Nicaragua who became immortal at the age of only 20. Arlen was truly a source of inspiration. With a poetic streak, she wrote, painted, danced, and played music from an early age. Probably her best-known poetic work is her self-written song "Maria Rural", which she dedicated to the mothers in Nicaragua who work in the fields and plantations. It is both a poetic and political work. Arlen wrote this song in a country whose economy was mainly based on agriculture, at a time when women had hardly any rights. Many women worked day in and day out in the fields of Nicaragua for barely a starvation wage and were also exposed to the violence of the fieldlords. In her other texts, she also writes about sexual violence against women, about kidnappings of women by the soldiers of the then ruling Somoza regime, and about the sacred role of peasant women.

Arlen's deep connection to the roots of life is not only expressed in her respect for mothers connected to the

land. Arlen was also in search of her own roots. Her mother came from Nicaragua and her father, a former soldier in the Communist Revolutionary Army, came from China to Nicaragua in the 1940s. Arlen, understanding the importance of her own roots and mother tongue, wanted to learn her father's mother tongue from him. He, however, refused, which did not stop Arlen from doing what she thought was right. So she let her grandmother teach her the language.

Raised between two cultures, Arlen embodies the internationalism needed to progress the socialist revolution. She has ancestors from both South America and the Far East. These are both regions that have produced both socialist thinkers and practical socialist experiences, because of which we can move forward today and learn from mistakes made. If there is one thing we have learned, it is that socialism only works internationally. According to the motto: we are only free when everyone is free.

Arlen studied to become a teacher with the desire to fight illiteracy in the country. At university, Arlen met the Sandinista. A socialist revolutionary party called the Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN), which came of age amid Nicaragua's student movements in the 1960s. The Sandinistas are named after Augusto César Sandino, who fought successfully against U.S. imperialism in the 1920s and pushed U.S. troops out of the country in 1933. A year later, Sandino was executed by Anastasio Somoza, who two years afterwards carried out a coup d'état that turned his family clan into a dynasty. The dictatorship and corruption of the Somoza regime so drastically worsened the situation of society that in the 1970s, mass protests broke out across the country. At the same time, the ranks of the Sandinistas were rapidly filling up, especially with young

people. Arlen, too, found her way to active resistance at the young age of 18. With her political writings on Marxism and women's liberation, as well as her political song lyrics, Arlen soon became the well-known voice of the Nicaraguan women's movement. She also contributed greatly to the political development of women within the Sandinistas, making her a leading figure for women revolutionaries in Nicaragua to this day.

Arlen's political influence, mainly through her poetry, became an increasing thorn in the Somoza regime's side. During Arlen's musical performances, snipers were often positioned around the university. In 1975, just two years after she joined the Sandinistas, Arlen and some of her friends were murdered in the mountains near the city of León, close to a Sandinista training camp, in an ambush by the Somoza regime

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**The murder of Arlen and her friends caused nationwide outcry and strong demonstrations against the National Guard. Arlen has become immortal. Through her political struggle, her poetry and her revolutionary songs, she continues to inspire many young women in Nicaragua and beyond, in the past, today, and in the future**

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What Arlen dreamed of and fought for happened a few years later on 19th July 1979, when the Somoza regime was overthrown by the Sandinista revolution. Through the struggle of the guerrillas, their country was freed from dictatorship. Through many new laws and the work of the women's movement, the situation of women in Nicaragua improved significantly, and health programmes and agrarian



reforms raised the general standard of living. Land was democratized and given to peasant families, creating the basis for Nicaragua's self-sufficiency model that exists today.

But what would have pleased Arlen most was the cultural revolution that took place under the Sandinistas. With campaigns against illiteracy, the illiteracy rate was reduced from 50% of the population to 13% within only a few months after the official start of the revolution.

Arlen, who was a bridge between culture and revolution for the people of Nicaragua, shows us the role of culture in the revolutionary process. A strong connection to one's culture means finding oneself, exploring one's roots.

**Isn't it actually often the horror of one's own alienation from one's own culture, that is, from one's true self, that sets us off on revolutionary thoughts?**

In art and culture, e.g. through music and painting, we can give expression to our dreams, our values. We can use art to

make a statement against the destruction of culture by imperialism, which is trying to standardize us all and separate us from the heritage of our ancestors. Arlen inspired and politicised people with her music during her lifetime and beyond. Her voice became the harbinger of the Nicaraguan revolution.

This socialist revolution in the midst of the cold war was the result of youthful courage. It was the blossoming of seeds sown by young women like Arlen at the most difficult times, to leave fertile soil as a source of life for the mothers of the future.

Those who knew Arlen know that from her early youth, Arlen had major contradictions with the injustice of the prevailing system. She started asking questions about poverty and justice at an early age.

Revolution is a matter of conscience. History has shown us again and again that (even if it is usually not specifically mentioned) it is the youth who give the decisive impulses to question the old and to demand new things, to demand justice and to take to the streets for it. We

all know it. When we were little children, we used to pester our parents with questions. And often enough, we stumbled upon facts and circumstances that just didn't make sense. Like war, for example. Or famine. Or that our elders must have always had the last word. It is this spirit, the childlike search for truth and justice, that is very much alive in the youth today. It is not without reason that Reber Apo emphasizes the indispensability of the role of the youth in revolutions. The youth are the engine of social change!


**Arlen is further proof of the importance of the role of young women in revolutionary struggle. With a sense of justice, a poetic understanding of life, and a strong connection to her own country and roots, she shows us the way of the revolution. In Nicaragua, in Rojava, and in the world.**





# Hot Art

Rêbin Koçer



**"I am a singer, I do theatre, but I cannot close myself in this discourse that art is a form of struggle, of course it is, but as long as in a situation of repression or territorial recovery, the artist is also there accompanying, putting his or her body, supporting territorial recoveries, giving food, shelter, participating in those ceremonies where it is cold and anguish because you don't know when the repression is going to arrive. It is necessary to get out of that comfort zone, "I am Mapuche and I vindicate the struggle from a stage, from a book", that struggle is real and necessary when I also put my body and my newen [force] in the territories that are in conflict."**

Soraya Maicoño, Mapuche singer and actress

Extract from the book: REUNIÓN / LOF LAFKEN WINKUL MAPU / DANI ZELKO  
Puel Mapu / 2019<sup>1</sup>

## Helarte

In the cultural centre which I am involved in Argentina we like to play with words and give them new meanings. We once wrote a manifesto that said that "art" was not masculine, and that we had to take away that attribute because EL-ARTE- H-ELARTE- (It is an untranslatable pun (game of words) : "El Arte" = the art and "Helarte" = freezing you) is to reach a limit because of too much cold. And that's a bit what we from the working classes feel when we go to museums, cold, and not because there is air conditioning in those places and not in our homes, cold because there is a policeman at the door who looks us up and down as soon as we approach, cold because everything is too clean and tidy, and for us art is a mess, because the whole façade is often more valuable than what's inside.

In Latin America and in Europe, to see "art" you often have to pay an entrance fee, and the people who exhibit they either are chosen by affinity or have the money to participate. That which is proclaimed as art often contains a cryptic and academic message that excludes those who don't belong to their circle or social class, and in their meetings and congresses the questions are always the same:

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**What is art? Can the artist be separated from his work? Clear questions that distract from more important questions: Why and since when is this the way it is? Can it be otherwise?**

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A song of the Koçer community had and has the function of preserving stories, of transmitting messages, a Mapuche song in "Abya Yala" <sup>2</sup> put a child to sleep while teaching him the love for his land, Kurdish dance steps show the animals in the area, and the way bodies contort when performing certain jobs, the sound of the Peruvian cajones in the southwest of South America was used as a way of communication among the black community when a slave revealed himself. In non-stified communities, the artist has a place in the community, as does the cook, as does the soldier or the fire-keeper. Everyone expresses in the best way their gift as food for the people, no one becomes more important for doing so, it is an offering and at the same time the necessary part. Art is the projection of the people, the artist is the spokesperson of a collective historical moment and time, art is revolutionary or it is a product, something that does not transform on a collective level cannot be called art

<sup>2</sup> Abya Yala é o nome mais antigo conhecido até hoje para um território americano. Literalmente significa terra em plena maturidade ou terra de sangue vital.

Capitalism did what it knows how to do: enclosing, fragmenting, and taking away value. The same thing it did with all the metaphysical projections of the human being: ethics, religion and art in all its branches. Ethics is enclosed in a palace of bourgeoisie justice, religion behind the doors of corrupt and abusive buildings where a punishing and moralistic god lives, the places of meetings and social exchanges as entertainment shows, and art inside those facades that they call museums, academies, galleries, and other places that have nothing to do with the popular. What was an expression of liberation and representation of the people becomes a tool of exclusion, punishment and indoctrination and, most importantly, a product that can be sold.

Karl Marx said, more or less, that the worker performed a repetitive activity: for example, his task consisted of

screwing a nut on bolts that were to form part of a car that he could not buy. His work did not represent him, nor did it represent an image of himself, his place, his culture, his community. When the worker does not find himself in his work, and we call work any transformation of nature to satisfy a need, when he does not see himself in what he projects, he loses himself and in the face of this loss capitalism offers a borrowed identity, at a good price and at a bad cost, because this identity is not in accordance with what the person and his community need. The same thing happens in art, art helps us to transform nature, to symbolize, to create fictions in order to think about reality in a different way. For thousands of years, art has been used to ask questions as individuals and as a people, to give thanks and to ask for more harvests, to find in other ways what words are not enough for, to sing the liberations that are needed.



**Abdulla Ocalan in the book "The Origins of Civilisation" historicises the role of art in the Sumerian age, and explains the place and value of epic songs in expressing a tribal identity and a nostalgia for the free life. He explains how these expressions, as they came to be dominated by state authorities, first in the form of priests and then in more organized forms of statehood, lost their sacred value as a representation of the people and became a final object of consumption.**

Referring to the same book, we can see how art is no longer a place of representation of the events of the people, but a representation of force and ostentation of power. The patriarchy in its systematic task of destruction replaces the figures of the Goddess-mother represented in the Neolithic with different figures that will put the strength of the man at the centre. With capitalism the place of women will not only be denied in the scene of artistic expression but will occupy a place of inspirational muse and fetish object for male creators.

## Alarte

**"Al-ARTE (Another pun that only works in Spanish: "Al Arte" = to art and "Alarte" = to give you wings) is how we are going to name our expressions from now on, because we are going towards it in search of the impossible, alarte is giving us wings "**

continues the manifesto made in the cultural centre, where workshops for 200 girls and boys are currently given free of charge. They are full of writers,

journalists, actors, filmmakers, photographers, and circus performers who dismantle and put together the workshops every time the workshop doesn't say what they want to say. This is how the plays talk about the problems of the neighborhood, the short films of the neighbours who want to rename and remember, the photos of their relatives which are often the first ones being taken of them.

To rethink the place of art is to rethink how much patriarchy and colonialism is in our expressions that we believe to be liberation, just as the place of representation of women was usurped, so too, by dialectical causality, was the place of expression. It is always the same gender that occupies the places within the spaces of art, it is always the same social classes that have the place to represent themselves and even represent other classes with their device of prejudices.

In Kurdistan, the revolution did not only allow material freedoms, but also immaterial rights that have to do with the opportunity to symbolise and recover one's own culture. For example, today in Pargin, a cultural space in Kocerata, young people are recording,

filming songs and stories of the Koçer community, reconstructing their own culture with stories that would probably be lost if it were not for the freedoms provided by the revolution.

The 'Rojava Film Komîna' gives the opportunity to tell stories about Kurdish culture that were previously forbidden by the Syrian regime, theatre, poetry, dance made from the mountains or from the streets of Rojava; the cry, the painting, the music representing the people, honouring the fallen and raising morale in time of so many attacks by the Turkish state, put art in an indispensable place in the struggle, art when it is by the people and for the people is pure blazing power.

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**"To rethink the place of art is to rethink how much patriarchy and colonialism is in our expressions that we believe to be liberation, just as the place of representation of women was usurped, so too, by dialectical causality, was the place of expression."**

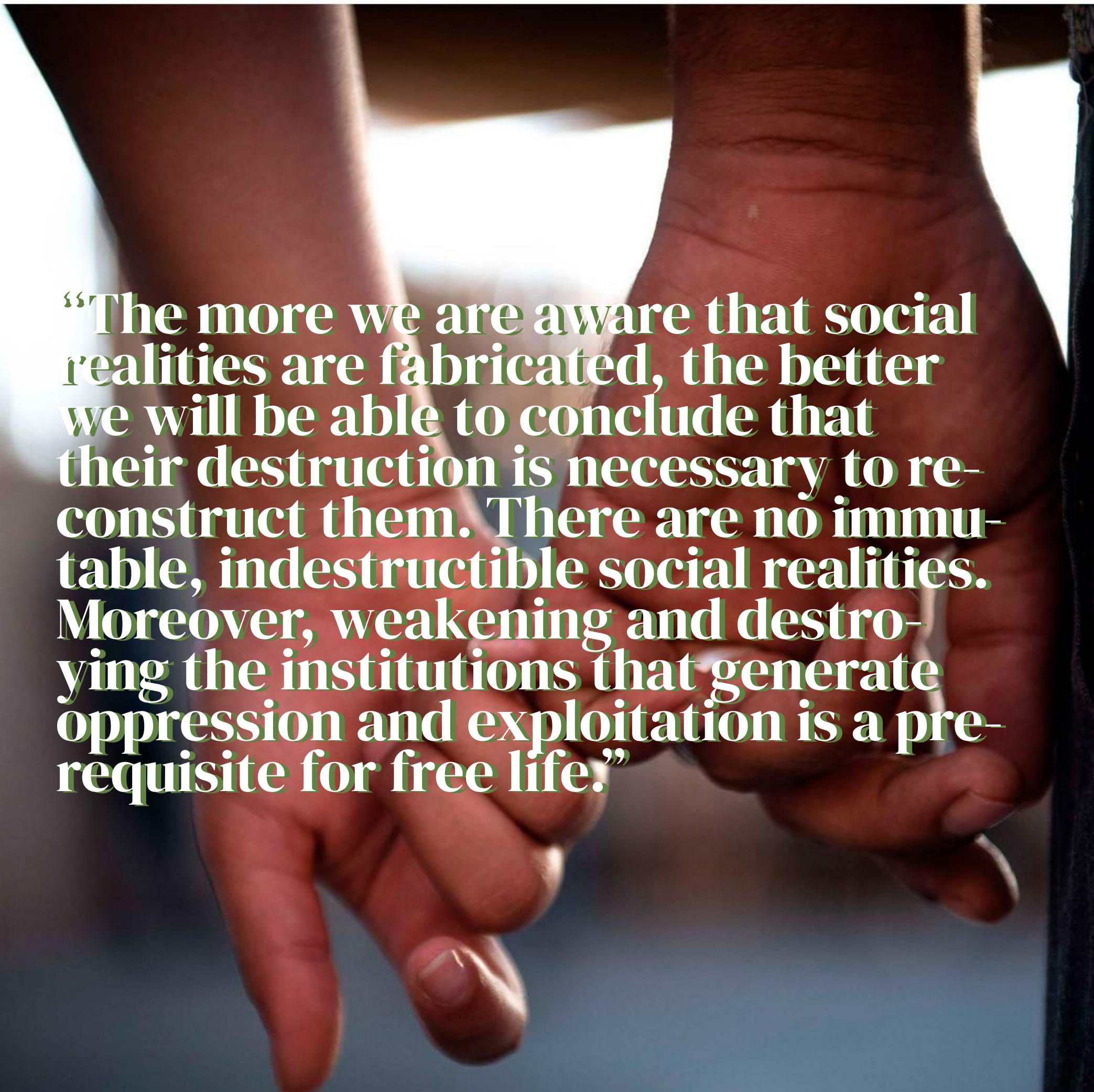
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It is crucial to think about ourselves as internationalists who work expressing or teaching art, how colonized are our expectations, how patriarchal are our ways of carrying out our work, to be attentive to see how much of what we are looking at is not an imposture. It is necessary to deconstruct what we bring and let the revolution pass through us to know which is the way of expression we need today to liberate ourselves together with the people. Art is not exported, art is constructed, you cannot teach art without knowing a community, without knowing what it needs, there is no correct way to take a photo, to film, I cannot bring it from America, nor from Europe, I cannot tell a story without first sitting down and listening to it.

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**“The more we are aware that social realities are fabricated, the better we will be able to conclude that their destruction is necessary to reconstruct them. There are no immutable, indestructible social realities. Moreover, weakening and destroying the institutions that generate oppression and exploitation is a prerequisite for free life.”**

# Language and the Historical Memory of “Resistance”: Against the Assimilation of Capital

Iraultza Şiyar

**“The whole of language is a continuous process of metaphor, and the history of semantics is an aspect of the history of culture; language is at the same time a living thing and a museum of fossils of life and civilizations.”**

Selections From The Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci

Oppressed languages in contexts of bourgeois national assimilation should be protected and treated as a critical component of social revolution and the liberation struggle against capital. All over the world, from Mesopotamia and the Indian subcontinent, to Ireland and Euskal Herria, to Latin America and Africa, assimilation into capital has and is resulting in the loss of languages and a historical memory of resistance against central civilization and the development of capitalism along with it. It is a cultural genocide bringing us permanently further away from total social revolution.

These languages often have their roots and constructions deriving from natural forms of organization before the development of exploitative relationships between people, and also nature. In the present they contain in them a worldview and historical memory rooted in resistance, the struggle of the displaced, and exploited.

As oppressed peoples are assimilated into the mechanizations of capital, with alienation of ones labor working hand in hand with assimilation, they are forced to adopt the language of the bourgeois

nation-state, and ever more increasingly international languages of capital. Arguing from a point of chauvinism and positivism, some argue this is to be a beneficial feature, often ignoring the mass social violence which leads to this stage of assimilation, and then, the resulting effects for the displaced, the proletarian class. They argue that as the proletariat is homogenized, or in other words, violently assimilated on behalf of a bourgeoisie and an encompassing bourgeois nation-state ideology, and begins to speak, think, and live in the language of the nation-state, that at least wider com-

munication is enabled to use against shared oppression. However, language is much more than just a method of communication for the proletariat. Language constructs an entire world view and in most bourgeois nation-states today, especially in the centers of capitalism, the language has previously undergone a process in which it has lost social meaning, lost consciousness of class and resistance.

Language shape the understanding of ones relationship with people and nature, and in it, in the case of many living ancient an oppressed languages, contains a history of a class within a people, a class consciousness related to a history of resistance to private property in its different manifestations; patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. When a people lose their language, they lose this historical memory and instead the memory of the language of capital, in all its meaninglessness signs and alienation to what it means to be human, the language of the nation-state and its empty commodified culture, replaces it. The ideological hegemony of this nation-state subsumes the historical memory of resistance and eliminates the ability for powerful class expressions from modes of thinking and relating that naturally oppose capitalism. This has been an ongoing historical process, which has ripped through most of the world, destroying pre-capitalist nations in the shredder of value-form and using their pulverized remains to construct ever forming, ever stronger bourgeois

nation-states which can manage capital at the expense of billions of human lives, innumerable suffering, and the destruction of our world in which only one class plans to make it out alive.

This process has already ripped through the land mass we call europe, with the partial exception of nations such as Euskal Herria, whose language is a survivor of this pulverization through the resistance against thousands of years of oppression and domination by the relatively newly arrived indo-europe. If we take a look at the ancient basque language, Euskera, we can see the way in which the society of Euskal Herria understood the relations within the world and the community. Thus, there is a reason why the word "harreman" means to receive (hartu) and to give (eman). The word expresses the principles of collectivity under which Basque society was organized. In the same way, in the etymology of several words we find signs of relationships impossible in the framework of self-alienation today, revealing all that is hidden behind material elements and nature. The word "bihotza" (bi/two + ahotsa/ voice) is one. The heart is not only two sounds but two voices that speak to us, guide us and move us at every step. Our heart and our feelings were, therefore, connected to us at different intimate levels.

We can say that in our way of thinking and observing, everything in the world had its vitality, and the border between life and death was blurred as expressed by the words ilargi (moon) or hilerri (gra-

veyard). Ilargia comes from the words hilaren (death) and argia (light) and means the light of the dead. The moon, or the light of the dead, has always been a guiding point for our people. The moon is a constant reference to our ancestors, it connects us and them with the natural world, and is a reminder that their sacrifices is what gives us the opportunity to fight for a free life today. In the same way "Hilerri" means the village or land of the dead. Their deaths are never forgotten, and in fact, they are alive and remain with us.

But the beauty of this language is that, while the spring can make an unlimited world bloom, it is now being pulverized by the long winter of capitalism. Precisely as I write these words, I feel how far I am from them and perceive the assimilation I am confronted with. Even if the language is kept alive because of the efforts of thousands of militants and revolutionaries, it is being institutionalized and influenced by the State and its institutions, a process aided by the Basque bourgeoisie and their plan of special warfare against authentic Basque culture rooted in recreated proto-communist values. Thus, with commodification and ideological hegemony, words lose their meaning and vitality, we lose a memory of historical resistance, leaving us in a position of vulnerability in which we can only think under the parameters of the French and Spanish nation-states and their bourgeois ideology.

**"A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign cultures. Thus, it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture."**

National Liberation and Culture, Amilcar Cabral

When we lose history in this way, we lose a guiding point for the recreation of and revitalization of a just society, we exclude the possibility of purging our oppressed national cultures from the influence of domination in exchange for a more disconnected understanding of the world and the continuation of domination. In many cases, we lose the pride and class consciousnesses expressed in these languages. The struggle of peasants against landowners, the resistance to inhuman social relations and exploitation of the environment. We lose the proto-communist history of our people and their natural ways of organization. We lose the central position of the woman in life. We lose the whole universe, our being in it, and inexpressible social meaning we have given it in a process of thousands of years. These struggles are then rewritten in the bourgeois colonial states as primitive resistance to modernization, backwards reaction to industrialization and technologization, and we lose an important period of struggle to classist and imperialist revision.

Today, there are tens of millions of Kurdish people who no longer speak their language, who have become assimilated in various nation-states, forgetting who they are. The movement of capital and the nature of colonialism has pushed them to work all over the world. Along with intense alienation of their labor, they have been assimilated and a consciousness of a long history of resistance to colonialism has been severed as a result.

In Kurdish, the word "berxwedan" has a very specific historical context that is understood by the Kurdish people who are still defending themselves from assimilation today: the self-sacrifice action of Şehid Mazlum Dogan on the day of Newroz. This sacrifice has been the impetus for society to take on large scale sacrifices in the face of colonial domination, and if you ask a Kurdish person what berxwedan means, the chances that the name of Şehid Mazlum is mentioned is very high. The word literally means to put oneself in front, from the construction of ber (in front), xwe (oneself), and dan (to put), and the word is understood with heavy connotations of sacrifice connected to this specific historical experience.

However, when we translate this word to other languages, the embedded meaning of the word which attaches it to this historical experience, putting oneself in front, is erased. In other languages, such as Turkish, it is simply translated to "resistance", or more precisely holding back from something. This lacks an explicit sacrificial meaning embedded in an action, and in a capitalist context, the word becomes devoid of any meaning at all—the resistance of the couch against the floor—let alone what it means in the context of historical memory of many Kurdish people in the struggle against imperialism. And so, the enemy attacks the people through their assimilation, knowing if they can erase the historical memory, they can also erase the people.

The language of our historical resistances must be the languages of our social revolutions, otherwise the recreation of a new society will be put at a disadvantage, limited by the bourgeois ideology of capitalist nation-states. The etymology of independence in both Kurdish and Euskera, languages of historical resistance but with no connection, relates directly to the control over one's head. For serxwebun (Kurdish) and burujabetasuna (Euskera), ser and buru means head, and then xwe and jabe means oneself and owner.

When material domination has been cast out and a space has been liberated in which we have reestablished the primacy of the value form, social relationships no longer constituted around private property and its all encompassing patriarchy, such as in the free mountains of Kurdistan, the expressions begin to take on a new form closer to their original meaning and these constructions aid the creation of the new human, a new way of thinking based on unity with nature, matriarchy, and communal life—things which are hidden in these languages and comes out as capitalism is destroyed and the transformation process of a group of people can take hold without the imposition of foreign domination.

## Iraultza Şiyar

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**“the etymology of independence in both Kurdish and Euskera, languages of historical resistance but with no connection, relates directly to the control over one's head. For serxwebun (Kurdish) and burujabetasuna (Euskera), ser and buru means head, and then xwe and jabe means oneself and owner”**

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# What happened in history ?

1962

## July 3

Algeria proclaimed independence from the French state. That day marked the end of the war that had begun eight years earlier and which, according to sources, had claimed more than 300,000 lives. In the referendum held two days earlier, the vote was 99.7 per cent in favour. This began the exodus of Europeans, leaving only 124,000 of the nearly million settlers who had been there at the beginning of the year. On the other hand, the Harkis, some 100,000 Algerians who fought for the French and were left behind, are considered victims of independence

1917

## July 3-7

July 16-20 Gregorian Calendar

The so called "July days" in the process of the Russian revolution take place. Leaders of the Bolsheviks start an attempt to overthrow the provisional government of the Kerensky-Offensive that still existed parallel to the Soviet of Petrograd founded in the February revolution of the same year. Due to the failure of the general strike called out for that reason and other tactical mistakes, the attempts turned into the opposite and lead to the Kerensky-Offensive being the only ruling power again and Lenin and the Bolsheviks being forced to organise illegally and in the underground again. As a consequence of their party congress at the end of July, they therefore decided to start armed uprising to take over power and started the preparations for that .

1789

## July 14

Mehmet Hayri Durmuş, Kemal Pir, Akif Yılmaz and Ali Çiçek start a hunger strike in the prison of Amed, continuing and bringing to life again the line of hope and resistance started by Mazlum Doğan on Newroz (new years celebration in the Middle East on the 21st of March) in 1982, when he did his self-sacrifice action putting three lightened matches in his cell and taking his life to express: "surrender is betrayal, resistance brings victory". The historical hunger strike and the whole Amed prison resistance proved that the will of PKK can never be broken by the enemy and spread a huge new wave of believe and hope all over Kurdistan, thus creating the fundament for the strength developed in the continuing struggle of the movement

1936

## July 19

The Catalan revolution takes place. A military coup aims to overthrow the Popular Front government of the 2nd Spanish republic and to take over the main cities. The coup is beaten down by the Catalan people in Barcelona, lead by organised workers and anarcho-syndicalists. As a consequence, the CNT ( Confederación Nacional del Trabajo / National Confederation of Labour) can hold the power in the capital city until May 1937. It is the only revolution in history where anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists played a determining role. Due to separation within leftist revolutionary groups by Stalinists and the PSUC (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya / Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia) starting to take a position of counterrevolution, the way was paved for the Nationalists to regain their power. As a consequence, the fascist forces of Franco won the Spanish Civil War 1939.

1979

The Nicaraguan revolution takes place. After long years of resistance the people of Nicaragua rise up in masses lead by the Sandinist National Liberation Front and overthrow the fascist dictator regime of Anastasio Somozas. Especially young women and men, workers and farmers participated in the uprisings, but also Christians and other faith and social groups. This was also the source of strength of this revolution - a great majority of the Nicaraguan people stood together against the regime, united by the long years of struggle lead by many different kinds of groups, all faced huge violence and repression by the regime. The government that was formed by the revolution lost its support by the people after some time due to several mistakes in their practice, as a consequence the FSLN - the party of the Sandinists - restructured themselves for the sake of keeping their power in the government and thus turned their contents and values away from the ideals of the Guerillero Alberto César Sandino, which is why the aims of democracy, equality, justice and independence could not fully be achieved

2012

The Rojava revolution begins. The uprisings in Kobane where the people were fighting the so-called ISIS and opposing the Syrian regime open the doors for a wave of change that spreads hope to all parts of the world. In 2022 the 10th anniversary of the revolution is celebrated, while being constantly confronted with various kinds of warfare, the seeds that were planted at the start of the revolutionary process grew a lot all over Rojava and North East Syria in this first decade, the autonomous self-administration and the system of democratic confederalism built up a real democratic alternative for the people of Kurdistan and the Middle East. A lot has been achieved, but a lot is also still left to fight for and the struggle, the revolution continues and grows every day, having the clear internationalist vision to defeat the whole capitalist, patriarchal, colonial system.

1964

**July 20**

The First Guerilla Conference in Colombia takes place. As a reaction to a military attack on Marquetalia and other communities that were building up living alternatives with a focus on the needs of the rural population, the Guerillas of the region organised a meeting with other revolutionary groups and forces of the country to develop a strategy and form a united Guerilla group that was back then named the Southern Bloc, to oppose the attacks and repression of the government. In their second conference, they renamed themselves to FARC ( Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia ) under which they are nowadays mostly known. .

2001

Italian Police killed Carlo Giuliani in Genova in a demonstration against G8. In the middle of a fight, from a military car a police shot and then stepped on him. The young Carlo Giuliani became a symbol of the movement against the globalisation

1988

**July 27**

This day is assumed to be the starting day of massacres against political prisoners in Iranian prisons. Militant leftist activists and revolutionaries were supposed to be eliminated. Prisoners with connection to the militant organisation People's Mujahedin of Iran were especially targeted, as well as those who belonged to other radical leftist, socialist and communist organisations. Huge violence and torture was used against all of them, Thousands have been killed in the course of these events, the martyrs were secretly buried in mass graves.

1979

Marielle Franco, Afro-Brazilian feminist and socialist activist, is born. She proclaimed herself in the municipal elections as a defender of "poor women and favela dwellers". She was shot dead by the police. Thousands of people took to the streets to denounce the murder.

1914

**July 28**

World War I broke out as the clashes between European empires reached their peak.

2006

**July 30**

Murray Bookchin died at age of 85. He was an American socialist and founded the concept of social ecology and libertarian municipalism.

1962

**July 31**

In Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, the first Pan African Women's day takes place. In this conference Africa's first and oldest women's collective was founded as an organisation against colonialism, apartheid and the oppression and discrimination of African women. The PAWO especially points out the unity of all African women, their achievements and realities.



1968

## August 2

As their first planned attack, ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna - Bask underground organisation) kills Melitón Manzanas González. He was a police man in Spain during the dictatorship of Franco, collaborator of the Gestapo during World War 2 and leader of the franquist police "political-social brigade" of Gipuzkoa. In these positions he tortured a huge amount of people and for this got finally punished on that day by this action of ETA.

2014

## August 3

Os 74 massacres contra o povo yazidi de Sengal aconteceram, os chamados ISIS atacaram e ocuparam Sengal com um imenso nível de violência e brutalidade. Milhares de pessoas foram assassinadas ou viram sua única saída fugindo de suas casas, milhares de mulheres e crianças foram seqüestradas, violadas e vendidas como escravas. Durante mais de um ano, o povo de Sengal lutou contra a ocupação do chamado ISIS, que resultou na libertação de Sengal em 13 de novembro de 2015

1967

## August 4

Alberto Bayo morre em Havana. Nascido em Cuba, uma colônia da Espanha, foi levado para a Guerra do Rif no norte da África no exército espanhol, apesar de estar do lado da resistência do Rif. Na Guerra de 36, ele lutou contra Franco como piloto de linha aérea. Depois de perder a guerra, mudou-se para o México e em 1947 fez parte da Lei da República Dominicana e do Caribe criada para expulsar os ditadores nicaraguenses. Em 1955 ele se juntou a Fidel Castro e participou da revolução cubana contra a ditadura de Fulgencio Batista, ensinando táticas de guerrilha.

1936

## August 5

The anarcho-syndicalist José Buenaventura Durruti Dumange, who was a militant of the CNT and played an important role in the Catalan revolution and the Spanish Civil War, said in an interview that was published on that day: "The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute."

1933

## August 7

3000 Assyrians get murdered by the Iraqi government in the village of Simele, for this reason this day is being remembered as the Assyrian Martyrs Day.

1936

## August 8

The French state closes the border with Spain, where revolution is happening at that time. As a consequence those internationalists coming in huge amounts from different places to join the fight against fascism were supposed to be hold back, discouraged or eliminated on the way due to this, they were forced to cross the Pyrenees mountains. Nevertheless, thousands still came from around the world to participate and fight in the Catalan revolution.

2003

## August 9

Establishment and announcement of the Caracoles (snails) y Juntas de Buen Gobierno (the councils of the good government) as a new strategy and a widening of the autonomy of the Zapatistas. The councils aim to secure the revolutionary laws of the EZLN and their communities and the exchange for coordination and solution finding of the people. The name Caracoles is symbolic for autonomous self-administration, collective decision making and the spiral of ongoing political discussion between all different voices and colours to find compromise. The changes that were put into practice by this stood under the line of the statement: A good government is ruling with reason and not with an army.

1956

A march of 20,000 women takes place in Pretoria, South Africa to take a stand against pass laws which were apartheid laws controlling and oppressing the freedom of movement for Black and Indian people. This strong march was the starting point for a wave of civil disobedience. This day is therefore commemorated in South Africa as Women's Day

2016

## August 13

The city of Minbic was liberated from ISIS in a 75-days-fight of resistance, heroism, efforts and martyrdoms. The forces YPJ & YPG (SDF) could bring the light of hope back to the people.



1984

## August 15

Beginning of the armed struggle of the PKK. In the conditions and the reality of the torture and the hunger strike in Amed prison, the necessity for armed struggle in order to fight Turkish fascism got finally clear. In continuity of the will power and hope that was brought to life again in the prison resistance in Amed, the historical 2nd congress of the PKK committee decided to go back to Kurdistan and start armed struggle. After 2 years of preparation, the first bullet was shot on this day.

1947

India declared its independence from Great Britain. Thousands of people mobilized and staged numerous violent protests and riots over the years. The ethnic divisions promoted by the British over the years in the country led to instability in the newly liberated country.

1940

## August 21

Leon Trotsky gets assassinated. He was a Russian Ukrainian Marxist that founded the Red Army in the Soviet Union and was its first leader

1982

## August 20-25

The 2nd party congress of PKK takes place. Their own praxis and developments as well as the whole political situation at that time got self-critically reflected, evaluated and analysed and the strategy got adjusted according to this. The core point of this 2nd congress was the decision to go back to Kurdistan and to take up weapons against the enemy as one necessary dimension of the struggle.

1942

## August 25

In Yugoslavia they formed the first unit of partisans composed exclusively by women, to fight against the nazis. Immediately, these groups began to organise and propagate. When the resistance was put in motion, the communist party of Yugoslavia called upon the women to work at the rear, however there was already a lot of armed women amongst the partisans

# Poem

## Love Lessons in a Time of Settlers Colonialism



*I am not murdered, and I am not missing, but parts of me have been disappeared.*  
— Leanne Simpson

They too know all too well that some cracks were built just for us to fall through. We live in a world that tries to steal spirits each day; they steal ours by taking us away

From Industrial Schools to forced assimilation, genocide means removal of those who birth nations — our living threatens. Colonization has been choking

us for generations. I tell my girls they are vessels of spirit, air to lungs expanding; this world cannot breathe without us. There are days

I wish I didn't have to teach these lessons, but as an Indigenous woman silence is deadening. There is danger in being seen, our bodies are targets

marked for violence. We carry the Earth's me too inside us, a howling wind, our mothers & their mothers swallowed these bullets long ago.

The voices ricochet I wish I were invisible I wish I were invisible I wish echoes in my eardrums — we know what it's like to live in fear. Colonialism's bullet sits cocked,

waiting behind a finger on trigger. We breathe and speak and sing for survival. We carve out in lines; we write — I know joy I know pain I know love

I know love I know — lessons we've carried throughout time. Should I go missing: don't stop searching; drag every river until it turns red and the waters of our names

stretch a flood so wide it catches everything. And we find each other whole and sacred, alive and breathing and breathing and breathing.

**Tanaya Winder.**



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Internationalist Women's Podcast from the Heart of the Revolution



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Every woman carries a fire of pure life in herself, and now more and more women remember again that they are meant to use this fire to light themselves and society the way out of the darkness of oppression.

# JINA AMINI

