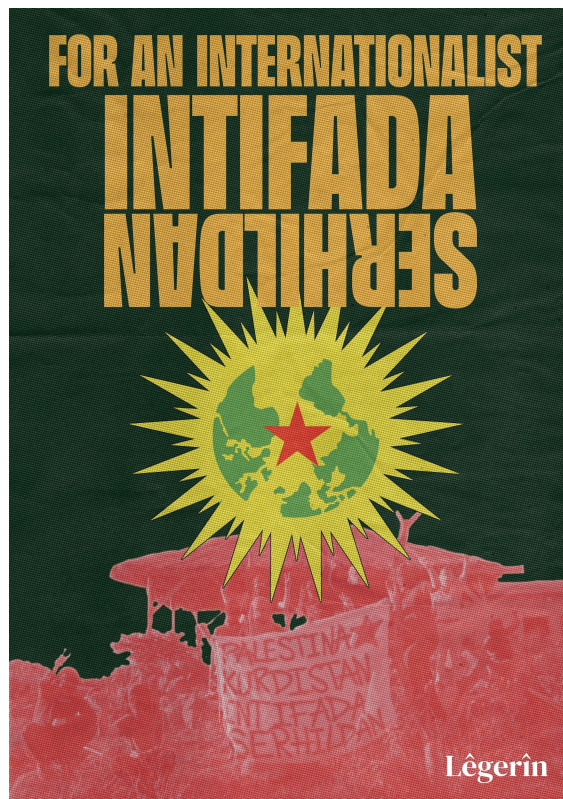


For an Internationalist Intifada/Serhildan

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To the courageous students and young people who stand up for justice on campuses everywhere

Internationalist Commune of Rojava, 8th of May 2024

From the liberated territories of Rojava, in Northeast Syria and Kurdistan, we extend solidarity-filled greetings. You have emerged as a powerful voice against the genocide of the Palestinian people, echoing from university campuses in the US, Germany, France, Mexico, and beyond.

When youth, the most dynamic force of society, take a stance, the forces of hegemony resort to violence and special warfare methods to silence them. Despite relentless efforts to lead youth toward meaningless and numb lives—through mass propaganda, drug promotion, sexism, competition and egoism—despite the consumerist and nihilistic lifestyles promoted by capitalism's culture industry, you are rising up. Despite the brute force of police against peaceful protesters, you remain steadfast.

As soon as you set up the first protest camps, you were immediately facing brutal attacks. The reason for this response: They fear your conscience; your humanity threatens their profits and power. They understand that when young people awaken to their potential and embrace their historical responsibility, they become capable of achieving the impossible. Your resolute actions not only have the potential to halt the genocide in Palestine but also to challenge exploitation and colonial practices worldwide.

We, youth from around the world, stand in solidarity with you, because the struggle against Nationalism, Colonialism & Exploitation, here in Rojava, or elsewhere must be internationalist. As we face common threats and enemies, a coordinated response is required. Your actions are proof of an internationalist understanding among us. What happens in the Middle East is recognized and related to, just as we relate to the numerous struggles around the world. We are together in this fight. Together, solidarity among the people will confront the blocs of power that no longer offer solutions to the existential problems of our time. Following in the footsteps of the students, youth, women, workers, unemployed, and intellectuals of the 1968 revolution, it is now our responsibility, as today's youth, to be the driving force for change. For a dignified life for everyone, an end to colonialism & occupation. For a Free Palestine, Free Kurdistan, Free Balochistan, and ultimately, a Free World!

We extend our wishes for victory to you, as the Kurdish Freedom Movement says: 'Serkeftin an Serkeftin!' — 'Victory or Victory!'

The statist paradigm as the cause of the Middle East conflict¹

Cemil Bayik, Co-Chair of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK)

As the globalisation of capital increases, all places with human populations become important to the forces of capitalist modernity. This is one of the main reasons why the contradictions and rivalries in Asia and the Pacific have increased in recent years. Because today the capitalist system grows and develops through consumption. That is why today's world is called a consumer society, which is a correct term. The system of capitalist modernity has reached the stage of a consumer society. Thanks to the development of science and technology, the problem of production has already been solved: everything imaginable can be produced. However, this does not mean that the problems have been solved.

On the contrary, we are in a phase in which the problems are particularly great. This is because the system of capitalist modernity is still dominant. The existence of capitalist modernity prevents the problems from being solved. On the other hand, the fact that consumption has become the main means of capital has led to the problems being shifted to the outside of people and society. This manifests itself in the destruction of nature, the destruction of ecology and the increasingly uninhabitable state of our planet. When the main goal was consumption itself, everything, including nature, became more

¹ Statism refers to a political assumption according to which economic, social or ecological problems can be overcome through government action.

and more objectified. Abdullah Ocalan² has stated that the system of civilisation, which has developed through the separation of subject and object and the deepening of the difference between them, has reached its maximum depth in the system of capitalist modernity and will gradually reach a stage where even the subject is objectified. We are now experiencing such a stage. This is naturally reflected in more contradictions, competition, conflicts and wars. This is happening in the form of the Third World War³. Because contradictions are not local or regional, but universal. The respective contradiction arises from the system itself.

Abdullah Ocalan has already stated that all contradictions and conflicts today fall within the realm of the Third World War. This is best illustrated by recent developments in the Middle East. If this were not the case, the most modern war systems in the world would not have been brought to this region. The most modern war fleet in the world is currently in the Middle East.

The founding of the state of Israel, which led to a renewed escalation of the historical Arab-Jewish question and the emergence of the Palestinian question, is closely linked to the Middle East policy of the forces of capitalist modernity. For one of the cornerstones of the established order in the Middle East is the existence and security of the state of Israel. One result of this order is the Palestinian question. Because of this situation, the Palestinian question is a question that affects the entire Middle East to this day. The deepening contradictions between the forces of capitalist modernity and the deepening crisis of the system show that developments will take place within the framework of the Third World War.

This is also reflected in the attitudes that are expressed. On the other hand, the development is not only to be observed in the Middle East. Developments in other parts of the world are also heading in this direction. The war in Ukraine is an example of this. With Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Third World War has left the borders of the Middle East for the first time. However, current developments indicate that the centre of the war will once again be the Middle East. In fact, it has always been the centre of war, without interruption. In Kurdistan and Palestine, there has been uninterrupted war for a hundred years. The whole region has always been a battleground for the Kurdish and Palestinian question. What is new now is that capitalist modernity has reached the stage of consumer society and its consequences are coming to light. The most important conclusion we must draw from this is that the Third World War is intensifying in the Middle East as well as in other parts of the world and that future developments will take place on this basis.

For the Kurdish and Palestinian issues, just as for the Jewish people, a real and lasting solution is important

One of the main pillars of the existing order in the Middle East is undoubtedly the policy based on the genocide of the Kurds. This reality must be taken into account when analysing the Palestinian question, the order in the Middle East and the new developments. Otherwise, one cannot properly understand the origin of the problems, the nature of the developments and thus the results that will emerge. The order imposed in Kurdistan and Palestine is an expression of the order established in the Middle East. This is based on the genocide of both peoples. Therefore, the positive and negative developments in Kurdistan and Palestine have an impact on the entire region. While the struggle of the two peoples and their striving for freedom shake the genocidal, colonialist order in the Middle East, the prevailing "order" strengthens it. And likewise, the existence and the question of the Jewish people is a reality in the Middle East. This is also an important fact of the region. The existence and the question of the Jewish people cannot be ignored or denied.

The change of the order that has emerged in the Middle East, which is based on the interests of capitalist modernity, can only be achieved in this way: a process on a democratic basis with the over-

² Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), in solitary confinement in Turkey since 1999

³ "Towards a common fight for peace", KR 224, p. 41

coming of the relations of domination and exploitation and the enabling of a free and equal coexistence of the peoples. It is important to look at the Kurdish, Arab and Jewish question from such a perspective. All other approaches are absolutely wrong and incomplete. Arab nationalism (in the context of anti-Semitism) sees the problem in the return of the Jews to the Middle East, while Jewish nationalism (Zionism) sees the problem in the existence of the Arabs: For some to exist, the others must disappear. This is a completely wrong approach. These approaches, which are the result of nationalism and a nation-statist mentality, have only deepened the problems to this day. These approaches are the reason for all the painful losses. At the same time, this approach, which has developed as a result of the statist mentality and its nation-state variant, is presented as the only option. But in reality, it is not the only option for the peoples.

The nation-state approach exacerbates the Problems

The fact that problems cannot be solved with the nation-state model, but are exacerbated, is best illustrated by the Arab-Jewish question, the emergence of the Kurdish question and the fact that these issues remain unresolved. This is also a result of the nation-state approach, just as other problems in the Middle East are based on this very approach. Since it could not be overcome in the Middle East, it has not been possible to solve the problems. Almost none of the problems have been solved and no developments have been set in motion to solve them. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shows, there are serious problems that could plunge the entire region into war at any time. The same applies to the Kurdish question. The genocidal, colonialist and nation-state mentality of the Turkish state against the Kurds and its corresponding policies are linked to conflicts, war and genocide in the Middle East. This situation shows that in reality there is no development and that what is called development is purely formal and not real. Moreover, the constant interference of the powers of capitalist modernity in the Middle East, their organisation and management of the Middle East according to their interests, is also due to this mentality. It was the forces of capitalist modernity that designed the Middle East on the basis of nation states. This system still exists. If there has been a change, it has been in the form of US and NATO intervention in some regimes based on the needs of the global capital system. This is not a qualitative change. National-statism continues to dominate thinking and policy in the Middle East.

The role of the nation-state approach in the current phase of the Palestinian question is crucial. Arab nationalism against Jewish nationalism has not only failed to solve the problem, it has actually exacerbated it. It has gone so far as to adopt a fanatical stance on the one hand, while on the other it can adopt the opposite stance when conditions change. The fact that the Arab nation states have not always stood up for the cause of the Palestinian people has hurt the Palestinian cause the most, especially at the beginning of the conflict. With the official establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab nation states adopted a radical stance towards Israel. Over time, however, opposition to Israel and the Palestinian cause have taken a political form.

With the coming to power of Nasserism⁴ and later the Baath parties⁵ in Syria and Iraq, the Israeli question and the Palestinian cause became a political rivalry. This approach of the Arab nation states also prevented or hindered the independent development of the Palestinian movement. A generalised approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is undoubtedly wrong. In order to understand the truth, it is important to look at events and phenomena in their historical development, their contexts and interconnections. However, this should not be done in such a way that everything is equalised. It is the mentality and policies of the Israeli state that have created the Palestinian question. Just like the Turkish state, the Israeli state also suffers from a genocidal mentality. The Israeli state deals with the

⁴ Gamal Abdel Nasser's (Prime Minister of Egypt from 1952–54) version of the idea of a unified Arab nation from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf is known as Nasserism.

⁵ The ideology of Baathism combines nationalist pan-Arabism and revolutionary secularism with the elements of Arab socialism.

Palestinian people in the same way as the Turkish state deals with the Kurdish people. The Turkish state builds its existence on the Kurdish genocide. In the same way, the Israeli state has built its existence on the genocide and annihilation of the Palestinian people.

After the defeat of the Arab nation-states by Israel in 1967, the Palestinian movement began to strengthen and fight for the liberation of the Palestinian people by truly embracing the Palestinian cause. Since then, the struggle of the Palestinian people has grown stronger and is recognized throughout the world. The Palestinian movement and the struggle of the Palestinian people have been supported by the peoples of the Middle East and around the world. Many people from the Middle East and the world have joined the fight for the cause of the Palestinian people in the ranks of the Palestinian movement. Support for the Palestinian cause in the region and in the world undoubtedly rests on the fact that the **Palestinian movement has a socialist perspective**. It received support from many socialist countries and movements, especially the Soviets. As is known, the PKK also traveled to the areas where the Palestinian movement was present and carried out actions in solidarity with the Palestinian movement. During this time, the PKK, which had just completed its formative phase, fought on the front line during the Israeli attack on Beirut, and as a guerrilla movement it suffered its first casualties here. These relationships forged by the Kurdish freedom movement have enabled the peoples of Palestine and Kurdistan to stand in solidarity with each other to this day.

The internationalist youth fights for the success and liberation of humanity!

At the same time that a Molotov cocktail crashes in Prosfygika between plainclothes state security agents; young women destroy the cars of police officers and women killers in Mexico; the youth of Palestine in the fire of the Intifada and the youth of Tamil Eelam in battle against Sinhalese fascism. Just as today we look with great interest at the streets of India, France, Colombia, or Kurdistan, in the 20th century humanity's attention was focused on the construction of socialism in China, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Angola, and dozens of other nations that fought for their liberation from capitalism. Similarly, thousands of years ago, we see exemplary resistance to the enslavement of humanity in the uprising of Spartacus and in philosophies like those of Jesus Christ and Mani. What all these historical struggles have in common is that they were carried out under the vanguard of youth. Youth, historically and sociologically, is the sector of the population least tied to conformity with the backward aspects of the system. That is why they naturally tend to understand freedom as the highest value. In the October Revolution of Russia, Lenin asked, "What is to be done?" to provide an answer to the bourgeoisie that destroys humanity and nature. Today, in the 21st century, we ask ourselves, "What is to be done?" We think about it and find ourselves confronted with thousands of problems. A labyrinth of questions and problems so vast that we often don't know where to go. We move completely without guidance, and instead of freeing ourselves from the chains of the system, we become even more entangled in them until they tighten so much around us that we are almost suffocating.

We are looking for a meaningful action.

How to destroy this system? We can join the march happening tomorrow in our city with our faces covered and gasoline in our backpacks; we can aspire to become members of a political party in parliament; or we can throw the hundredth stone at an Israeli settler attempting to annex our village. But if we truly want to achieve the goal of building a free and dignified life, we have to question whether the methods we are using are the most suitable to get closer to that objective.

What do we achieve by reacting over and over again to the attacks of the system? We are attacked and we respond. A new attack, and once again, another response. But remaining anchored in a reactive

state means not having the possibility to focus on creating and protecting an alternative, ultimately leading us into passivity. We have to abandon this passivity. Passivity has been imposed on us as a curse, forcing us to always be in a mode of response and never in a mode of construction. What the system fears and why it desperately attacks us is the construction of an ideology strong enough to dissolve the hegemony of capitalism.

Liberalism, with its countless offensives against morality and society, wants to corner us to the point where it becomes impossible for us to see the bigger picture, let alone understand it. It wants to confuse us to the extent that we become trapped within ourselves. Plato wrote about this in the “Allegory of the Cave.” It tells the story of four men who have spent their entire lives chained in a cave, facing a flat wall. On the wall of the cave, they see shadows that represent everything that is their world. They don’t know that there is a world beyond to explore. For them, everything is about interpreting those shadows. They don’t know that the shadows are not reality but a play of light and templates. One day, one of the men manages to escape and sees the light of the outside world for the first time in his life. After the pain in his eyes fades from the intense sunlight, he falls into a deep crisis. “What is this that surrounds me?” This freedom seems so abstract and unreal, so dangerous and repulsive, that it drives him to madness. He is so mentally trapped in the cave that the iron chains and shadows appear to him as the truth. Nobody forces him to go back, but he abandons the reality he has briefly seen and chains himself once again.

Isn’t that what liberalism does to us, mentally enslaving us? It not only crushes our hope and belief in another world, but it also prevents them from even arising. Society has been locked in a similar prison, and the only chance to free it is to take it out of that darkness. No matter how impossible it may seem! In his letter from the free mountains of Kurdistan, German internationalist Şehid Bager Nujiyan wrote:

“I want to live a revenge by laughing against the long time of obstructed love and blocked desires, a revenge that doesn’t destroy but forces everything false to change and recognize the truth.”

The laughter of this revenge resonates with the shots of the weapon of Şehid Farasin Sidar in the streets of Amed, with the cry of “Jin Jiyan Azadi” (Woman Life Freedom) as a call for women’s freedom worldwide. The struggles we are carrying out are inseparably connected. Whether in Argentina, in the streets of Amed, or in the free mountains of Kurdistan, our role as youth in the 21st century is to unite to defeat capitalism, its liberal and fascist ideology, as well as patriarchy, with the strength of the united peoples.

Spreading the message of Democratic Confederalism around the world is a proposal to the peoples, women, and youth of the world that we have new methods that we want to discuss with them, to find together new ways to bring our struggles, stories, diversities, and dignities to achieve the goals we have always wanted to reach. The construction of a life worth living.

With every step, we feel the power of the hundreds of thousands of youth who walked before us on this path and stood firm until the end for a free humanity. Above all, the resistance of Abdullah Ocalan shows us that, no matter where we are and in what state we find ourselves, our power, when organized, is sufficient to deliver the final blow to this system.

“When, if not now? Who, if not us?”

We have to overcome our separation and find a way to reach the people, we have to start organizational processes with more seriousness, and I think Rojava is a great opportunity for that. As a Palestinian, there are other motives for me as well.

Democratic confederalism with its refusal of state structures and the possibilities of self-organization at its base could be also be helpful for the Palestinian and Israeli left. In a time where everyone is talking about the contradictions of a one-state or two-state-solution it would be something new to propose a non-state-solution. Democratic Confederalism and Democratic Autonomy already have proved themselves

in Rojava, especially with regards to the co-existence of different people who previously fought one another.

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