

BAGER NÛJIYAN

The Seeker of Truth

2nd edition



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Bager Nûjîyan - Xelîl Vîyan - Michael Panser

1988 - ∞

INTRODUCTION



Dear friends,

We are writing this brochure in the autumn, which is a time of change and the favorite season of Şehîd¹ Bager Nûjiyan. An old time is passing to make way for a new one. Şehîd Bager fell martyr on December 14, 2018, due to a drone attack by the Turkish state in the Medya Defense Areas. When we commemorate our martyrs in the Kurdish freedom movement—those who gave their lives for the struggle for freedom—we promise to avenge them. We are one with them, inseparable from each other. When a friend falls, it is like a leaf falling from a tree. It falls and becomes new earth, a new foundation for the tree, for a new growth, and with even stronger branches. This tree grows relentlessly. We have no doubt that everything in us is striving for life.

Who was Şehîd Bager? We did not know him personally, just as a large part of the youth movement did not. When he left Europe, we were children or had just started to gain political conscience in school. By the time we got to know the Kurdish movement, he had already fallen several years before. Nevertheless, we got to know the movement through him. Maybe we first saw his face at events, in books, brochures, or as a photo in the homes of friends. Maybe we first heard a story about him, a memory of a moment a friend spent with him, or we heard of his analyses that later shaped our worldview. Many of us found the brochure with his writings somewhere, the same ones you are holding now. The texts we are republishing here are his thoughts

1 - Şehîd (spoken “Shehid”) means martyr in Kurdish. Everybody that has given their life for the revolution is titled a Şehîd. Those who have fallen martyr are honoured in the Kurdish society and movement.

from the mountains, his letters to friends and companioned movements, memories from his friends. To the first edition of the brochure, we added an interview with an old friend of his and an email he wrote from Rojava to Europe, giving those who were fighting there a perspective. His thoughts continue to travel around the world.

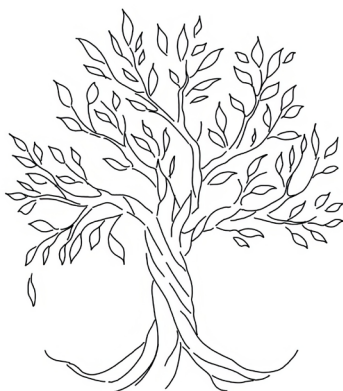
Şehîd Bager Nûjîyan was born with the name Michael Panser in September 1988. He spent his childhood in East Germany with his siblings and cousins. He played a lot of music, violin, bass, and guitar, and sang as well. He read widely and deeply. He let himself be touched by what he read. He thought about those who thought differently and developed a search for an alternative, for freedom. In 2009, he traveled to southeastern Mexico for the first time and built a connection with the Zapatistas that would never leave him. In 2012, he traveled to Kurdistan for the first time. He travelled from Amed in Bakur (Northern Kurdistan, Turkey) to Başûr (Southern Kurdistan, Iraq). Between a responsibility he felt for society in Europe and the solutions he saw in Kurdistan, he traveled back and forth. Eventually, he went to Rojava (Western Kurdistan, Syria) and Şengal, the historic homeland of the Ezidis. Finally, he went to the “free mountains of Kurdistan,” in the Medya Defense Areas.

We know that the Internationalist Commune in Rojava, as it works today, having become a center for internationalists from around the world, would not have been possible without Şehîd Bager. Through the commune, we establish contact between the revolution in Rojava and the whole world, we see education and live in a communal and socialist way. The year 2025 is marked by the “Call for Peace and a Democratic Society.” This process was started by Abdullah Öcalan on February 27. The responsibility we take on in this phase could not have been carried without Şehîd Bager’s work. His friends say he had great dreams and visions. He knew exactly what a huge opportunity it was to come here.

He foresaw and dreamt ahead about what it would take for an internationalist movement in Europe, an International of Hope, from communes all over the world. When he came to Rojava, it was only the internationalists that were missing, and he fought with all his might to ensure that as many as possible would come here. He wanted us to see with our own eyes that socialism is possible and that we are building it here in Rojava. That's why we want to say: Şehîd Bager, Heval, now we are here. We see the path you walked and will do everything we can to continue drawing it.

Micha presente!
Şehîd namirin!
Martyrs never die!

Rojava, October 2025
Internationalist Commune of Rojava



A SOCIALIST FIGHTER: ŞEHÎD BAGER NÛJIYAN

written by Şehîd Qasim Engîn



The freedom movement is like a river. For years, exceptional fighters from all four corners of the earth have been flowing into this river. When the process of becoming society, also called sociality by scholars, becomes the ideological beacon of hope for humanity, Kurdistan becomes the home for a person from the other parts of the world. A socialist from Kurdistan, as a revolutionary, also sees the other side of the world as one's home. As Che Guevara said in his time, "Above all, always be capable of feeling deeply any injustice committed against anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the most beautiful quality in a revolutionary". These words

grace the heart of every revolutionary. We know that Che Guevara was a personality with a spirit of uprising, against every injustice and the imperialist system that produces this injustice. This uprising is not only with words. It is also not a resistance that is without plan, aimless and frugal. Che's uprising is taking responsibility for his inner voice and conscience. Che is dedicated to people. His devotion to people is dedicated to all humanity. Against occupation, exclusion, enslavement, oppression, and humiliation, he cultivates an infinite anger and wrath. He wants a just world. He is longing for a world in which human beings live like human beings, together and equal.

Our friend Bager listened to the voice of his heart and, in the spirit of good fellowship and friendship, followed the footsteps of Che and his socialist thinking. Our friend Bager took Abdullah Öcalan's words, "Do not betray your childhood dreams", as a basis for himself and followed his path in this sense. Isn't the most beautiful description of the guerrillas the fact that they are children of nature? Or when one says that they are loyal fighters of their dreams and utopias? Could a better description be, "those who have not betrayed their childhood dreams"? Could it be that they are the ones who, in the spirit of the greatest utopias, set out into the free river of life and are inspired? By never bowing down, with their proud attitude, as the strongest weapon for the implementation of justice, they take their heart into their hands and rise up in resistance against death in the most difficult circumstances and conditions. Aren't the guerrillas, with their great faith and conviction for the creation of a free future, first and foremost, those who follow the dreams of Che? When we speak of Che, it is fitting that our friend Bager Nûjiyan comes to mind.

I met Heval Bager in the spring of 2018. Before that, I had already heard of him. He wrote in a 15-page report, which he had addressed to the party, that he wanted to get to

know the new paradigm from close up and learn about it, especially at the Central Party Academy. His proposal was considered to be a reasonable one. His report was considered to be very thorough and profound. Overall, his report looked at socialist thinking, socialism and the new human being. The friends told us that he had shared extensive thoughts and deepening in his report. As I myself am also partly involved in the educational work, I also heard from Heval Bager in this context. Since I myself, coming from Kurdistan, grew up in Germany, I always have a special relation to the friends who came from Germany and also a special relationship and attention for the young people who came to the mountains of Kurdistan from other countries of the world. We, as revolutionaries, see ourselves as part of the revolution worldwide. Therefore, our relationship and attention to internationalists of the world, coming to the mountains, has always been a special one. In this context, I always had a special relationship with the German friends, who came to the mountains, because we simply develop a relationship with each other in a natural way.

So, before I met the friend Bager, I had already been told a lot about him. However, in order to understand someone, to recognise someone, to form an opinion about someone, one has to get to know the person, to spend time together, to experience each other, to discuss – in short, and said in the Kurdish way, to live together. When one first saw Heval Bager, a calm personality, with strong ability to observe, to listen, to be a bit reserved when talking, but at the same time very enlightened, a person who knows where to say what, and in this respect, with a great awareness in life. In short, one saw a person with a personality and characteristics that are inherent to a revolutionary. When people discussed with Heval Bager and got to know him, they noticed that he had a profound wealth of knowledge and they recognized his belief in socialism. When we speak of socialism, we do not speak of socialism based on

domination, state, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The socialism we take as a basis is a socialism beyond the state, far from statehood and domination, and against any form of hierarchy and oppression. When we first met, we talked in German. The more I got to know him, however, I saw that the friend Bager could speak Kurdish better than many Kurds. His Kurdish was so beautiful and I noticed that he was teaching, reading and writing Kurdish at the Mazlûm Doğan Academy as well as reading many incoming perspectives and explanations in fluent Kurdish in front of the whole class.

I was more or less aware that Europeans are well qualified to learn new languages. Even though I am not aware of the historical and sociological basis for this, I got to know from first hand experience the fact that Europeans, and especially Germans, simply learn languages. But a person who comes from a foreign place and teaches the fighters of this people in Kurdish was really of great interest and insightful for us.

The morale evenings among the guerrillas are well-known. When we talk about morale evenings, we mean the following: Every 15 days, each guerrilla unit organises a morale evening in order to develop their own cultural skills. At these celebrations, some friends recount memories, some recite their own poems or the poems of well-known revolutionaries and socialists, some friends sing songs, some imitate the movements of other friends, and, if circumstances permit, there is traditionally also dancing, theatre, or pantomime. A revolutionary or guerrilla is not only a good fighter; since one's struggle is for the creation of a new human being, it is first and foremost a cultural struggle. One is a fighter against every regression, exclusion, injustice, and inequality. Therefore, a fighter for being and becoming oneself. For this reason, every guerrilla should possess the precision and sensitivity of an artist. If one's life

is not artistic, then it is insufficient and wrong, and those who use the wrong methods in life as a guerrilla are flawed. As Che Guevara says, "The new man is only possible with the developed culture of the revolutionaries". A developed culture is the love of freedom, and means a proud and dignified attitude against any form of oppression and humiliation.

Perhaps you are now saying "Why are you telling us this?". Since in recent years, Heval Bager was always at the forefront and played a role, even before all others, both at the official celebrations and on special days and anniversaries that have been held, where friends participate with their tembûr, guitar, drums, and their other instruments. Heval Bager sang revolutionary songs at the official celebrations, of course, in many languages and together with the other friends, and he shared dozens of songs one after the other with the others at the spontaneous moral evenings. Every friend watched with enthusiasm the internationalist revolutionary comrade who had come from another country. Especially, when he sang the song of Natalia, called "Commandante Che Guevara", all the friends were clapping and singing along with all their hearts. Another song that Heval Bager always sang is the song "Sê Jinên Azad – Three Free Women" by Heval Delîla. This song was directly associated with Heval Bager in the academy. Another song that everyone associated with him was another song by Heval Delîla called "Zîlan". At first I got to know the friend Bager in this way. Without a doubt, our getting to know each other didn't stop there. The more people got to know him, the more his love and trust towards people became visible, as well as his connection with socialism, and without a doubt his deep love for the paradigm of Abdullah Öcalan.

I hope it is not misunderstood when I say that the environment in which people grow up influences and shapes them. Europe is the centre of capitalist modernity. It

takes its centralism above all from the peculiarity that it does not leave a single person alone until they are integrated into the system. It is such a centralist attitude that looks down on other people around it. Up to the point that in the days when people from Africa were sold at markets, there were discussions about whether they were people and whether their bodies felt pain or not! It is a modernity that is so convinced of itself that it was precisely very humanitarian people who put them in this position. Such approaches ensured at that time that Christopher Columbus and his companions did the same thing against the indigenous Americans. At the same time, these undertakings, which deprived humans of their humanity, are legitimised by biblical psalms. We can read about what happened in dozens of writings by popes and pastors. So, Europe is self-centered and centralistic. And this is exactly what it passes onto its society, or it is drummed into them. Its society and the individuals in it make them feel that they are very special people, thus making them supporters of its worldwide colonialism and silencing them. In short, European people look from above down onto people in Africa, Asia, and of course the Middle East. What I am talking about does not have its source in the good or the bad of human beings.

The system of capitalist modernity, through its educational system, does everything possible to put European people into this position. The deceased writer Immanuel Wallerstein did not say, without reason, "We are all a little bit children of capitalist modernity." Although it is not their intention to exaggerate, to condescend others, to put themselves in a position of domination. All this is also visible in our units. However, I can say that I did not see even a little bit of selfishness and of egoism in the personality of Heval Bager. At school, he was perhaps the most communal of his friends, the one who shared the most, who interacted with everyone, who tried with all the strength at his disposal to find solutions to the worries of all; in other words, he was

a societal role model from his own standpoint and was very modest with his attitude in life. If one looked at him in this way – if he had not had his red and blond colour – one would not have noticed that he was a German friend. Therefore, on his way to the mountains he had taken Che's methods as a basis.

When Che said goodbye to his mother, it was not without reason that he had said: "Once again I feel beneath my heels the ribs of Rocinante. Once more, I'm on the road." And when Che left Cuba and set out in the service of the revolution to a still unclear country in Africa, he said to Fidel, not without reason: "Other nations of the world summon my modest efforts of assistance." A person who attempts to give their modest help in another country in the world must first become one with the revolutionaries on the ground and the society there in order to succeed in their efforts. The problem is not the backwardness or the progressiveness in these places; the problem is the injustice that happens there, to be able to feel it in a profound way, and thus, to find a little bit of a solution to their problems. This solution can undoubtedly be put into practice through modesty. The friend Bager, as much as he was enthusiastic about Che, he was also a good comrade to him. He was the kind of person who, in order to become a revolutionary, first travelled to the country of Che and then to many countries in Latin America. Besides German and English he also spoke Spanish. Language is ultimately the pivotal point of any exchange. To build a good relationship with people, you have to talk to them. To be able to speak, you have to know the language. Heval Bager recognised this truth early on and wherever he went, he learned and spoke the language in the best possible way. A fundamental characteristic of a revolutionary is also to maintain contact and exchange wherever one goes. The great Turkish internationalist and comrade Kemal Pîr said: "If I don't see the faces of a hundred people every day, I cannot remain calm." Looking into the

faces of a hundred people means making connections. To become one with them in spirit. To feel one another from the bottom of the heart. The comrade Bager, both through his exchange and through his unity in spirit, became a mature fighter of the mountains in a very short time.

There is no doubt that one cannot always and everywhere meet such a comrade or meet such a friend whenever one wants to. Sometimes fate brings one into contact with such an angelic, tender, loving, sensitive, and considerate revolutionary, with great intellect, devoted in his efforts, and by his attitude a revolutionary. Our friend Bager was such a complete and chosen revolutionary and fighter. One is always on the lookout for such personalities and comrades and we long for them. He was the kind of friend that one would patiently push the marbles of one's Tezbî chain onward until he said his words. He was the sort of person that one would walk for miles to see him, to see his lively face, and when greeting him, embracing him deeply and extensively, and asking about his wellbeing from the bottom of one's heart and in deep connectedness. He was a personality that people do not forget. Although being revolutionary is something communal, such comrades are always with us in the depths of our hearts. If I am not mistaken, I gave two lessons at the school where Heval Bager was staying, as well. One of them was on the history of Kurdistan. If we treat the history of Kurdistan as a lesson, we are of course not only considering the Kurds and Kurdistan. We are looking at the forces of democratic modernity, which take their place in the front against the authoritarian, violent, and state-based capitalist modernity. When we dealt with the slave-owning Roman Empire in this context, we especially evaluated the internal Christian movements that were in revolt against slave-owning Rome, as well as the movements from the North and the Germanic peoples who, in order not to become slaves, made their way to Rome, wave after wave, and took their revenge. Moreover,

also the movements of the Teutons, the Alemanni, and undoubtedly also the Gauls, the Normans, and all those peoples who resisted against the slave rule of Rome. When we deal with them and evaluate them, we try in particular to understand their character. We try to understand and recognise the heritage of those who were not enslaved. From these analyses we try to draw the lessons that are necessary for us. Therefore, deepening our understanding of the role of these movements is very important for us. On the one hand, we recognise the Germanic-Alemanni who do not surrender and do not bow down, and on the other hand, the Germanic-Alemanni who are arbitrarily simple-minded, stubborn, narrow-minded, angry and know no one but themselves; we deal with these issues and discuss them. In these discussions, we accompanied our friend Bager into the depths of German history and asked him many questions.

What is very impressive is that no matter where in the world we live, if it is in a place where tribes have lived in a very pronounced way, then we resemble each other. Now, when Heval Bager stood up and explained a little bit about himself and a little about the Germanic tribes, the whole academy was impressed by the fact that Germanic and Kurdish people, and therefore also Germanic and Arab people, Germanic and Persian people, and other peoples with tribal traditions in other places of the world, resemble each other. If anything has changed, then especially in the last 200 years, that is, by nothing other than the age of the monster called the nation-state, racism, fundamentalism, sexism, and positivist ideologies which divide peoples and make them enemies to one another. The more we become aware of this, the more we embrace communal and natural life and develop more and more our utopia in the fight against racism and every other disease that the nation-state has spread.

As we connect everything, we see Che standing up in one part of the world and setting out on his way to Africa to bring about the revolution. The comrade Bager also comes from one part of the earth to another part of the world, to another country, in order to take part in the ranks of the revolution for the revolution and freedom of a people with the fighting spirit of his people. In this way we have discussed with our friend Bager in many lessons. He asked and the friends answered, the friends asked and he answered. Is being revolutionary not precisely about completing each other? If being revolutionary is completing each other, then the friend Bager gave the friends what he could give and the friends gave what needed to be given and to be enriched.

The more we saw the deepening that went on inside the friend, the further our discussions carried us to many places in the world. It soon became clear that the friend Bager had deliberately chosen to come to the mountains of Kurdistan. In this way, I understood through him the great interest with which the paradigm of Abdullah Öcalan is being received, first in Europe, but also in many other places around the world. First since 1990 until today, he lists one by one the new quests that have developed in many places worldwide. Really, the more he tells, the broader my horizon and that of all the friends becomes. When one learns that one shares the same feelings and thoughts with comrades in another place in the world and lives in the same spirit, it expands the heart of each individual and broadens the horizon of each individual. Of course, there is research that we do and study, especially with many German friends that I have met, with whom I have discussed, with the many internationalists that I have met, I can clearly say that I have discussed Abdullah Öcalan's paradigm most of all with Heval Bager. The educational journey was coming to an end. We have platforms before the end of education. Our platforms are the pivotal point for the awareness and change of each and every one of us. The criticism of friends for us and our self-

criticism for them – we understand life as worthy of criticism and we correct it. Platforms are our form of action for this. The most effective weapon of freedom fighters is criticism and self-criticism. The most fundamental goal of these platforms is to recognise for ourselves our characteristics that do not correspond to democratic modernity and to overcome them through criticism and self-criticism. The platform of Heval Bager took place as well. In the platform it became clear how much the friends appreciated and respected Heval Bager.

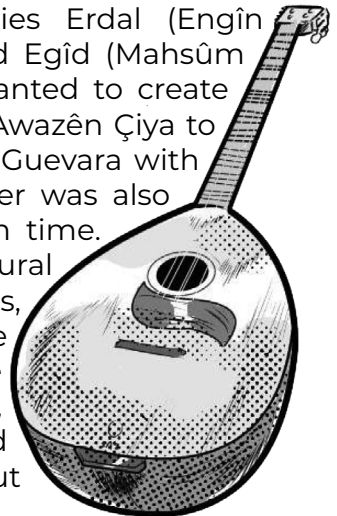
It is without a doubt that a revolutionary themselves must create the respect that one is distinguished by. And what created the respect that was given to him was his loyal, socialist personality. Perhaps you will notice it particularly, but I want to say it again. The reality that we freedom fighters defend in the utmost way is that each one of us contributes to the revolutionary struggle with one's own way and colour. We want everyone to contribute with one's own colour and culture. Whoever comes from the Arab society, with the colour of the Arabs, a Turk with the colour of the Turkish society, an Armenian with the colour of the Armenian society, a Suryoye participates with the colour of the Suryoye society. Or also Alevi, Yezidi, or another faith participates with the colours of their society. Those who do not participate with their own colour in the struggle of the revolution cannot develop their full potential. Who instead imitates someone or some others cannot become conscious of oneself. Heval Bager had a mature and conscious attitude in his life, his approach, his language, his songs, and the relationships with his friends. In the platforms, his exemplary attitude became a real criticism for the friends who had not written their report in Kurdish. At the same time, he always reflected deeply on the reality of German society in his platforms, because every herb and every flower blossoms on its own roots. So, a German friend should not become a Kurd; to understand the Kurds, an

empathic approach is undoubtedly necessary; accordingly, he has done so. Heval Bager was such a friend. He was so united with being guerilla and being revolutionary that his friends admired him. At the end of the educational unit, the music group Amara came to the celebrations of the Party's Mazlûm Doğan Academy.

Heval Bager sang dozens of songs in various languages with the group and inspired all his friends. As a friend who grew up in Germany, I asked him to sing the song "Roter Wedding", which he did with great joy. After years, hearing the German revolutionary song "Roter Wedding" with the voice of Heval Bager brought me great joy and motivation. Almost all friends knew about the skill and abilities of Heval Bager. Among many talents, he played the guitar and violin beautifully. All students at the school saw and knew that he played the guitar.

The friend Bager not only played the guitar and violin, but he also beautifully sang songs to it. There was much discussion and a cultural committee was set up to create songs in many different languages. The basic aim was to write and sing songs in different languages about the great commanders and revolutionaries Erdal (Engîn Sîncer), Atakan (Suleyman Çoban), and Egîd (Mahsûm Korkmaz). For a whole winter, they wanted to create songs together with the music group Awazên Çiya to make these friends immortal like Che Guevara with his song. For this purpose, Heval Bager was also sent to the cultural work for a certain time.

When Heval Bager was in the cultural work, we also saw each other sometimes, but more than seeing each other we wrote to each other. Since he made very profound ideological evaluations, he sent me some texts to pass on. I had also suggested that he write texts about



the paradigm. He also asked me for material and sources on German-Turkish and German-Kurdish relations to do research on it. I collected the material, requested it from archives, compiled it, and sent it to him.

At a time when we were full of expectation for the guerilla of Kurdistan and for the paradigm of Democratic Modernity, for its deepening, multiplication, and in this respect its new creation in cultural and artistic terms, planes of the fascist Turkish state attacked the Medya defence areas on 14th December 2018, and we received the sad news that he had fallen. It is fitting to say that all friends who knew Heval Bager were shattered. The words had dried up in their mouths!

The harshness of winters in Kurdistan is well known. In this month of heavy winter, the friends lifted the body of Heval Bager from the place where he had fallen and brought it to the cemetery of the fallen with an impressive memorial ceremony. When his body was buried in the cemetery, I was present. No friend was able to say a single word, but the tears in their eyes did not stop. Almost all the friends who buried him knew him themselves. The greatest anger of the friends was that a friend came from the other part of the world, reviving Che's path and way of life in order to fight for the revolution in Kurdistan and making his last journey among us. Fighters who join the revolution know that, once they take their steps in this struggle, revolution and being a revolutionary has its price. Those who believe that another world is possible know without a doubt that this will not happen without sacrifices. Therefore, tens of thousands of beautiful souls have already dedicated themselves to the revolution in the freedom struggle of Kurdistan! The attitude of every revolutionary who has turned towards the mountains and towards the guerrilla is always hidden in these words of Che, in the feeling "Wherever death may surprise us, let it be welcome if our battle cry has reached

even one receptive ear, if another hand reaches out to take up our arms, and other men come forward to join in our funeral dirge with the rattling of machine guns and with new cries of battle and victory.” As much as we are aware of this, our heart does not let go and does not accept that a friend from the other side of the earth came and fought shoulder to shoulder with us on our land for the revolution of Kurdistan, became the bridge of the revolution, was taken from us and had to leave. We never accept this. With the words of Emma Goldman, “Until the dreams are only a grape in the sunlight”, we, in the personality of Heval Bager, will continue our struggle at the highest level until we succeed to realise the dreams, utopias, and goals of all revolutionaries for freedom. Our words for life, our quest in life, and our standard in life always and at every step:

Hasta la victoria siempre!

**An Sosyalîzm an Sosyalîzm! Either socialism or socialism!
Jiyan an dê azad be yan azad be! Life will either be free
or be free!**

Şehîd Qasim Engîn (Ismail Nazlikul) was a member of the PKK Central Committee. He fell in a targeted air strike on guerrilla areas in the Bradost region of South Kurdistan on 27 May 2020. He was a representative of a revolutionary youth spirit and one of the creators of the new internationalism. With his practical and open approach, he laid the foundation for today’s internationalist practice already in the 1980s and made an invaluable contribution to the spread of the revolution. As part of his revolutionary work, he organised the Kurdish society in the diaspora and took on major responsibilities, particularly in youth, cultural and diplomatic work. In Germany, he was also taking a substantial place in the creation and distribution of the magazine ‘Kurdistan Report’, thereby making a major contribution to raising awareness of the struggle for freedom and the emergence of the solidarity movement.



A NEW LIFE, A LIFE STRIVING FOR FREEDOM

In a video recorded in 2017/2018 during an education in the mountains, Şehîd Bager talks about his origins, his search for freedom, and his reflections.

My name is Bager Nûjiyan, before that my name was Xelîl Viyan. My family name is Michael Panser. I was born on September 1, 1988 in the city of Potsdam, in East Germany.

My family are people that love their country and society, and at this period they were connected to the paradigm of real socialism. They are people rooted in solidarity principles, with an emotional connection to it. With the collapse of real socialism, they of course went through a crisis, but they continue to stand for it and are connected to socialist values and ethics. I believe that this is also a basis for my quest for the truth of the revolution. At the young age of about 14 years, I took an active role in the left and began my quest. The fact that I later got to know the PKK and the philosophy of Abdullah Öcalan is certainly also based on this phase. I participated in antifascist and leftist works in Germany. I gained a lot of experiences, but it became clear that these experiences were not enough on my quest. The setting of a liberal life, trapped in the constraints of the capitalist system, is very far away from the reality of the revolution. Thus, a break from it and a further quest followed.

In 2011/2012, I got to know the first hevals, especially through the Youth and Women's Movement. At first, getting to know each other did not involve learning about the practice, society or the reality in Kurdistan, but I did get to know the philosophy of Abdullah Öcalan. This is what my

quest was: What are the weaknesses of the revolutionary quest we intended to carry out? With our theoretical and philosophical quest, we wanted to find and develop a liberation ideology. In the context of the European society, this was of course coupled with great difficulties. On this quest the way to Kurdistan opened up self-evidently. We got to know Abdullah Öcalan's philosophy, we read and studied the translated books. In this time, we understood quite a few things: What we are looking for in Europe is what lies hidden – beyond Western civilisation and capitalist modernity – here in the Middle East, whose history got lost. Now these revolutionary achievements are developing anew here, offering new answers. At the same time when real socialism was collapsing in our midst, the way for a new revolutionary reality was paved in Kurdistan. On our quest we became aware of this. We made contacts and found our way to Kurdistan.

We were beginning to understand one thing: The European problem is linked to the solution of capitalist modernity, the capitalist way of life. We must be aware that Germany is taking a leading role in the enforcement of the capitalist system of exploitation. We have also realised that no solution to this problem is possible without an internationalist perspective, a revolutionary perspective that overcomes closed borders. In this way we slowly got to know the revolution in Kurdistan and I actually started to join the revolution seriously during this time. Since 2012 we deepened our thoughts further, we educated ourselves and tried to build a movement according to the values of the paradigm which was the content of our discussions. The experiences and weaknesses that presented themselves in this phase made one thing clear to us: that it does not work to participate just half-heartedly in the revolution. It was during this time that I made my decision. Being a true revolutionary must mean to think holistically. A revolutionary must be contemporary and must free oneself

from the narrow-minded thinking of Eurocentrism and the perspectives offered by so-called modernity. Otherwise it is impossible to be successful.

I gained this insight through ideological deepening and it meant that joining the Kurdistan Workers' Party would make possible what I consider necessary: to build up the revolutionary strength. I realised that. It also became clear to me that a contemporary revolution cannot know borders. That would be impossible, revolution cannot work like that. The revolution in Europe begins with the revolution in Kurdistan. This connection definitely exists. After all, the paradigm, which maintains its dominance in Europe in a close-meshed and crude way, imposes a liberal life on society and makes exploitation the absolute basis of its social order, is the very paradigm which today carries out the heavy attacks on Kurdistan. We understood that the first thing we had to do was gain experience of revolutionary practice. In this way, I have devoted myself entirely to the revolution. Initially, I participated in internationalist practice, not only spreading Abdullah Öcalan's thinking and the new paradigm in Europe, but especially learning to better understand capitalist modernity, which imposes itself as the most recent form of the male-dominant mentality on society. We did research on this, and we also developed a certain practice. Then I came to Kurdistan. At the centre of the revolution is the revolutionary change of consciousness. This is the basic task in the work area of the academies. That which you could not think before in society, because especially in the capitalist centre of Europe, thinking is divided and incoherent, and thus does not allow the emergence of a new consciousness. Thus, in the broad sense of a new paradigm, there is no quest emerging. No new philosophy can emerge that takes life itself as its basis and seeks to put a true socialism into practice. We are talking about the defence of sociality, of love for society. The love for society is not possible in an exploited society.

It became clear to me that those who are on a revolutionary quest must go very far in their quest. They must consistently get to the heart of the matter. If we want to create a new realisation of socialist life, we must go where freedom is most widely realised. The mountains of Kurdistan are an extraordinary place. They offer the opportunity to experience oneself in practice. They make you realise what it means to be committed and to make an effort; and they make you understand the meaning of this effort anew. How deep are the traces that the system leaves in our way of thinking? All the problems and shortcomings in our consciousness that are created by the dominant way of thinking become clear in communal life as it is lived in the mountains. A communal living community, a revolutionary environment based on a common will to promote humanity and to free individual personalities from the constraints of the patterns of domination. This opportunity was really created here. The ruling system cannot simply attack this foundation that has been created. Of course, military attacks are taking place, but in the fight against the ideological and psychological consequences of the dominant way of thinking, we can create a new consciousness here through serious efforts and work. That was the reason why I came here to the academy on my own request. In practice, I was able to develop my thinking. However, there was the necessity to go to this special place.

After all, the academy creates an environment in which intensive and concrete work is carried out to raise awareness of one's own dominant way of thinking and, at the same time, work is done towards its alternative. This is done in an environment that is characterised by communal life, communal work, exchange with one another; everything is there from shared values to mutual support.

Real friendship is most clearly lived in academies. We analyse in a mutual manner very precisely which remains

of the system of exploitation show up in the behaviour of a friend. It is not the case here that we have to separate the individual from the community, or that an individual has to adapt to the characteristics of the group. I can say from my time in the left that we were unable to resolve this contradiction. Finding the right balance between the individual person leading an inner struggle and their environment so that they strengthen and build each other up. It cannot be everything to recognise and protect a friend in the present form – because everyone in this society has been taught dominant ways of behaving. What does true friendship mean which we want to live and create here? We do not take a friend as what they have become and how they stand before me, but according to their goals and potential. It is our approach to develop each friend according to their strength. In this sense, we criticise each other and search for methods to develop our personalities. That is why I came to the academy and it is a very intense inner struggle. Through these efforts we create the foundation for this life.

Because we are aware that the socialism that we want to create – that is, a new life, a life striving for freedom, an equal life that understands the value of the human being, that recognises the value of social achievements – is based on the potential of society itself and the wisdom and struggles that have been waged. If we want to build our dreams and utopias, where do we have to start? In our own personality. Abdullah Öcalan stresses in particular the consequences of patriarchy. His analysis is transferable to the entire hegemonic civilisation by saying: If inner patriarchal masculinity is not overcome, socialism will always remain incomplete. A socialism that does not go into the substance, i.e. does not begin in the human being itself and does not create a new personality, a free personality, cannot bring about new achievements. In this way we evaluate the past socialism, the historical attempts that have taken place and their insufficiencies. There was a

fighting society and a leadership developed, but the root of the problem was not grasped: What is a free human being? That is the fundamental question. What are the effects of domination in the human being? That is the fundamental problem. Since these issues have not been addressed, the system has repeated itself. There was no detachment from the dominant way of thinking. Although so many gave their lives in this struggle, great efforts were undertaken and so much blood and sweat were shed, these attempts may not have failed completely, but certainly did not achieve the desired results. We have to realise that.

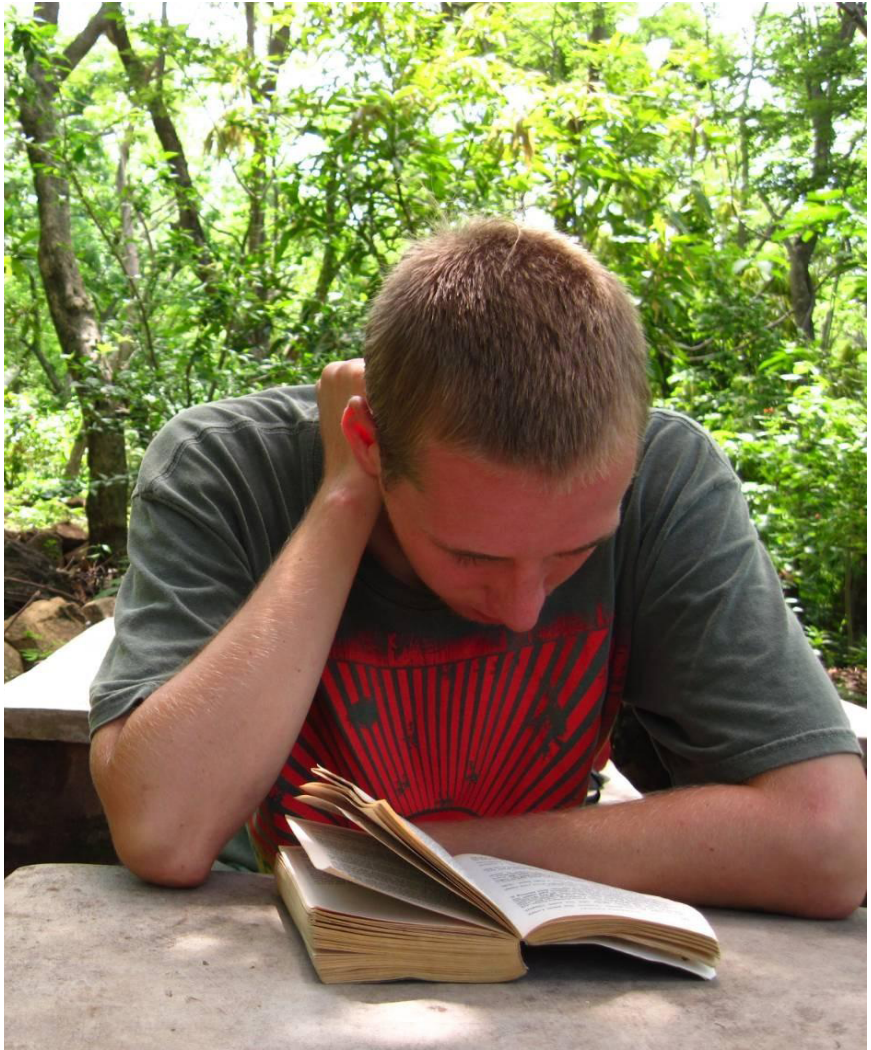
The life in the academy is the effort to free oneself. Revolution is not something that happens all at once. It is neither a single uprising nor a military victory. That is not possible. Revolution is a lasting condition that begins with a step, with a decision: the decision to participate in the revolution and to detach oneself from the ruling system; the realisation that the life we are forced to live in this system is wrong and that it is necessary to build up something new. Perhaps the revolution begins in every human being with an uprising, but in itself it is a lasting condition. If it does not become a process that is oriented along existing and future circumstances, then it is not a revolution. This is an uprising or a revolt, but not a revolution. This was often historically misunderstood and became an obstacle.

We are building our foundation on this knowledge. Our future participation also depends on this and cannot be predicted. The path of the revolution cannot be designed and implemented according to a plan. History has shown that this is impossible. Therefore, the preparations we are making here are to build up a militant personality. What does it mean to be a militant personality? We must be prepared for everything; just as the current phase demands of us. Thus, we create holistic thinking, the method of understanding what the current phase is, the historical

significance of the current situation, the dangers of the current situation in which we find ourselves and also its potentials.

If we live in this way and understand it that way, then it is not so important where we are going anyway – in which country we are active, in which part of Kurdistan or if we are going to another continent. In practice, of course, there are differences, but holism is decisive. To understand our ideas correctly, to develop our organisation further, the correct language, the correct form of communication and criticism – and in this sense to organise our lives correctly. If we carry out these things well and strive for good practice, appreciate the value of our efforts, and understand the efforts of our friends correctly, we can act accordingly. In particular, the importance of the effort and commitment of the martyrs who have given their lives in this struggle – if we understand all these points correctly, by creating the unity of thinking-feeling-acting, we can create militants who can carry out everything that will be necessary. That was indeed proven in the development of this revolution, wasn't it?

A human being who is clear in their will and who really connects in their feelings and desires with the quest for freedom, the correct struggle to reveal the truth, can achieve anything! There are examples in our movement, and also in other revolutions before us there are tens of thousands of examples of revolutionaries, how they act, what efforts they make and how they participate. It is both our goal and our duty to take a stand for this and to act accordingly. I can say this much about that. A lot of success to you all!



E-MAIL TO TWO FRIENDS

May 2016, Rojava

[...]

I hope you are well. Finally I have found some time to write you a few words about how our story continued and what could come of it. Right now I am sitting in a hospital (a socialist one: the doctors dance before going into an operation). However I am just here as companion and as a translator. A friend who is visiting the internationalist center has a moderate water intoxication or acute dehydration or something similar and is staying the night. This has the positive side effect that I have some time to sort out my thoughts and reflections. Now I want to try and report our perspective here so you and the others can have some clarity about it. Maybe you'll find connecting lines to your situation and thoughts you can return to.

Since we are here we have spoken with many friends from the movement, about their assessments, what they understand by revolutionary internationalism, how they evaluate our approach, what they think makes sense, here as well as for other organisations in Europe. During the course of the discussion, we gradually built connections to friends who support our perspective: as you know in the last years we have been following the approach of building a revolutionary perspective for Europe. For me this process started in 2011, when I dropped out of university and the questions about perspective connected with other friends. Since then this process has become deeper, has found ways to Kurdistan and by now we can clearly say what we want and – according to what we think – need: a revolutionary organisation for Europe, that is capable of taking initiative, of providing a sustainable defense and of enabling the

development of autonomy on a broader social basis. That also includes finding clarity and ways of dealing with parts of the society which are becoming fascist, with them being on the offensive today, and at the same time concentrating on the people who are open to a new beginning. There certainly aren't masses of them, but, based on the limited experience we have had so far, there are more than we often think when we actually look for them.

I would say that the clarity, that we couldn't formulate with the same determination and conviction before, ultimately consolidated itself here. It has become increasingly clear to us that the entrenched structures and milieus of the German and European Left are currently having great difficulty developing real militancy from within themselves. By that I mean making profound decisions to choose the uncertainty of the revolutionary struggle. Of course there are many friends with the will, the right feeling and the clarity that there is nothing much to lose. But we need to recognise that, in all the chaos in Europe - the fascist aggressions, the neoliberal mobilisation and isolation, the repression and the barriers - no positive, determined and collective awakening could be achieved.

I would say that crucial lines of revolutionary organisation aren't connecting: There are secure and stable circles of friends who can catch and support each other. I particularly see this in small anarchist circles that dominate the leftist circles in East Germany and elsewhere. There are organisations that advocate for the subversion of the current situation in their most radical and deepest analyses - the academic left and the big institutionalised socialist groups. However, the former cannot engage decisively with the larger social problems without becoming uncertain again and the latter cannot come to a militant praxis as long as they don't take the individual, special situations and insecurities of the organised friends as a starting point.

What does that tell us? That the leftist circles have a fundamental problem with the negotiation between the individual and the collective, with the building of collectives and forms of communal life from formerly isolated people. Essentially, it raises the very problem that made past socialist experiments so traumatic: The creation of the new human, who is a self-empowered part of a free society, has unleashed terrifying practices, completely unethical consequences drawn from the realization of the necessity that humanity is something that only comes into being in the process of liberation. Capitalism and patriarchal rule have made us all so weak that we are naturally unable to live emancipatory lives in our current situation. I think we need to re-appropriate this project of creating the socialist person, even if it isn't in the old sense of the strong, heroic worker. I think we need to think of a free personality more as a friend who can act with empowerment, who is aware of their connection to history and society in every situation. Above all, it means having clarity about the values on which one's own life and actions are based and being able to act rationally and strategically on that basis. For me, that means an ethical-political form of militancy. The confrontation with one's own ethical stance is something that comes first here, in the Kurdish movement, and I would say that it was probably the decisive factor that other previous movements lacked. When in doubt, defending the value of life and friendship is not a rational decision and is more important than any strategic consideration.

Well, I don't think it takes much to make a start. In any case, some madness is necessary, irrationality, which is also inherent in the unquestionable friendship - we cannot expect to be able to rationally deduce what is simply inconceivable in this society. Being revolutionary inevitably means staggering into chaos, accepting the void and the possibility of doom and marching into the unknown. It is a matter of drawing confidence solely from one's own

strength and the alliance of those fighting for freedom. I think that's the reason why it's so difficult to become revolutionary in Europe right now. We need to understand well the psychology of liberalism and capitalism, how they have developed patriarchal domination: Capitalism aims to destroy people's value for themselves, to poison their sense of self-worth and associate it with liberal values. You are only accepted if you consume, study, have prospects on the job market, are not poor, accept your social standing, respect authority, follow the scene's code, conform to the norm. The slavery of the West is self-assimilation - not being told that you should be different, but actually wanting to be different from who you actually are all the time, rather than developing a will that has to do with what you could do and what world you want. In all of this, doubt grows about one's own perspective (What is still to come?) and one's own situation (Actually, we are not doing so badly or not badly enough, or we have to continue to theorize about how we are doing, or explicitly regardless of how we are doing, or there is no need, no connection, no concern that is given any meaning). When the discussions about one's own life and the common future come to an end and everyone just confirms how bad the world is, how great they are, how stupid the others are, how hopeless the situation is - then the system has won, because there is no more power to act, no possible alliance to fight for a way out.

Well, I think we've found an alliance. One that emerged from friends who, for some reason, were able to draw so much trust from their encounters that they could give their word to fight together to the end and take revenge for the violence that subjugates society and does not allow us to rest. A friend here expressed it very well when he suggested that we only need to connect three dots: Dignity, revenge and freedom. We should ask ourselves what we understand as our dignity, what a way of life looks like that we consider worthy of our families and friends, of our society. Based

on this, we must recognize what seeks to deprive us of this dignity and take revenge on it. Our revenge should be bound to our situation of lack of dignity and ultimately be directed in defense of the third value, freedom, in order to make it possible again. Well, I found the idea very simple and clear, and I think it goes a long way.

Fundamentally, this is also what the bat people¹ say, who grew their worthy rage and brought the fire from the mountains to the cities. It is easy to see how conventional lifestyles no longer allow room for these values due to the capitalist form of society and the patriarchal system. Carrying out work with no dignity that has no meaning for us; accepting everything without dignity, without the thought of seeking an appropriate radical response; it's undignified to no longer have a clear idea of freedom. I think in a certain way this also describes what is expressed in the process of our becoming conscious and organized. I, we have further deepened this clarity in our exchange with the movement here, and we can now trace the path that has brought us here. It leads to the other point, the internationalist perspective. I think we would have failed very early on, lost our way, fallen into resignation or split up in dispute if we hadn't had the connection to our friends in Mesopotamia.

There is something unclear, mystical in it and I now believe that it needs this: the knowledge that there is something greater that is not yet tangible, understandable, but which proves that doubts are appropriate, but above all should be an incentive to continue searching and not fall into dogmatic judgments. A utopian void. The more I bit by bit come to understand the secrets that make the movement here come to life, the more I realize our potential role, our strengths and the weaknesses we have to fight against.

1 - Refers to the Zapatista linguistic image of the bat men and women who appear in some of Subcomandante Marcos' tales.

Apo once said that in our time, Europe is saturated and slipping into inactivity as far as real historical awakenings are concerned, that an external force is needed to trigger a new revolution there. This force does not have to be an invasion from outside, it is enough to have a connection to new ideas of liberation that seep in from other struggles. The Middle East has struggled for so long with unresolved problems that have come from outside and from inside, that have dragged on and on, that they were bound to generate contradictions that are now being positively discharged in the upsurge of revolution in Kurdistan and are fighting for a new alternative.

Thanks to the prudent work of the ideological core of the PKK, the women's movement and Rêber Apo², this awakening is very deep and constructive. And because it is based on deep social values and is strategically driven, it can transcend the national framework and reshape the entire Middle East. This is not hypothetical, it is already happening on a broad level - in Syria more and more parts of society are gathering in the project of the Federation of Northern Syria - Rojava, which was proclaimed shortly before Newroz; in Turkey the anti-fascist alliance of all forces of March 20 against AKP fascism was proclaimed, in Iran discussions with other left-wing forces are underway and the council system is being established. We believe that the uprising in Kurdistan is the training ground in which we can gather crucial energy within ourselves to wake up Europe with ideas and methods developed here and show a way out of hostility, autocracy, isolation and fascism.

The question is at what level an alternative for Europe can be fought for. I believe it is dangerous to try to proceed at

2 - This refers to Abdullah Öcalan. Rêber means "the one who paves the way" and Apo (English: uncle, also short for Abdullah) is a respectful nickname. The name was given to him to honor his ideological and political leadership of the Kurdish people.

the national level, which is what necessarily happens when we give more weight to the movement in Germany than to our affinity with the struggles in other parts of Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. Of course, it is our responsibility and duty to find a form of revenge for the violence unleashed by the history of German rule. But only a few friends are prepared to build a revolutionary movement in Germany right now, the historical traumas weigh too heavily: the trauma of colonialism, the distant trauma of the Nazi rule, the defeat of the revolt of 1968, the RAF and the autonomous movement (which still exist, but often no longer represent a solution, instead at best they build tactical defenses and hold positions). The trauma of the self-authoritarianized GDR (German Democratic Republic), which was often well-intentioned and yet degenerated into a machine, there too it was not possible to begin with and believe in the people and their ability to change. Attempts were made with unclear means and the basis was not sufficient to drive out the spirit of fascism and opportunism.

Of course, a revolutionary movement is just as possible in Central Europe as anywhere else if we understand how the form of rule works there, how capitalism colonizes people's psyches, desires and ways of life, forcing them under its own paradigm. There is a simple thought here that is repeatedly formulated and goes a long way: We do not analyze the situation, but history, not the individual, but society. For the individual and society are mirrored in each other and the problems that individuals have at certain moments are in reality not their problems, but an expression of the struggle that is waged between the rule of patriarchy, the state and capitalism on the one hand and the life and resistance of the oppressed on the other, whose desire is always directed towards breaking out of the torpor and isolation of domination, whether unconsciously or clearly and strategically. There are no individual problems, that has become very clear to me here in practice, not just as a

theoretical abstraction. And those who want to manage on their own and have lost or never learned the ability to ask for help have the hardest time. I believe that the problem we face in Europe is precisely, that entire societies have forgotten all forms of social trust and many are no longer able to unite on the basis of real equality. That means recognizing each other and fighting for each other. This is definitely something we have been able to acquire over time - the confidence that there is a way if we are patient enough, not falling into a false sense of urgency and not being afraid that something might get lost. An increasing number of isolated soldiers of fortune, genuine crusaders who want to fight the devil, adventurers who are tired of life are striking out here. Most of them leave because they are not able to take the change happening within them seriously enough and isolate themselves in their minds, always talking about 'the others' (usually in the form of blame) and not being able to see themselves. But by now we also have more and more revolutionaries coming to look for a sustainable connection and change. We have learned to recognize them. Most importantly, we are confronted here on a microscopic scale with all the conflicts that are currently paralyzing the progressive forces in Europe. If we can learn to understand and solve them here, it is only a question of organizing ourselves to do the same in Europe.

Does that paint a picture for you? Those of us who organise ourselves here together are spread across the canton and are involved in various activities or in one of the academies. It's a slightly different temporality, a different speed and way of working. Plans are developed slowly over months, we decide the direction together and then go to our respective places. Mine is at the internationalist center to work on building connections with other movements and making the philosophy and paradigm of the movement useful for other struggles. A different kind of trust in each other develops when it is no longer a question of wanting to

decide everything together, of always depending on each other, but of being put in a role individually, of fulfilling tasks responsibly, being accountable for them and standing up for them, instead of hiding in the crowd, in one's own group or in private. This is something that we have never been able to realize in such depth in Europe for any length of time. It concerns the relationship to one's own work and the value that arises from it: working for something that has meaning without being able to be paid; and at the same time working together to create the basis for providing for everyone.

Unfortunately, in all the chaos here, I didn't manage to get in touch with you sooner. I hope that didn't cause any uncertainty. In the journey we have been on here, my thoughts have been constantly in Europe, in Germany, with you and the friends with whom we have walked earlier parts of the path. I believe that everything is connected and that this connection will deepen when the time comes (that is, from now on, if you will). We are discussing thoughts and plans here because it is very clear that the urgency in Germany and Europe is different and that answers need to be found. Especially when it comes to the defense perspective, there are some very helpful thoughts here, in addition to practical experience. I'm still working on some thoughts on the theory of legitimate self-defense. I think this expresses what we have often lacked as a line of defense in Germany: the relationship between defense, revolutionary organisation and the development of social autonomy. More on that when the time comes. Well, I look forward to hearing from you. We are very dependent here on thoughts from outside, because of course we only see a small part of the world here too. We are working towards making it easier to bridge the gap between the worlds. I await your answer.

Say hello to the friends and take care of yourself. X.

OVERCOMING THE FEAR REFLEXES

Interview with an internationalist in the Kurdish mountains by Wolfgang Struwe

I met Demhat¹, a friend from Europe, in autumn 2013 in Qandîl, in the PKK-controlled Medya Defence Areas. He was on his way to receive his basic training. I used the time we could spend together and asked him some questions. What is his intention to come here, what are his reasons, what does he associate with it? Are they similar reasons why I had set out twenty years ago?

Why did you come to this area? How did you get the idea to come here to these mountains, to Qandîl?

It has to do with my personal search, a personal process of detachment, of emancipation. For a long time I was active in the German left, in antifascist groups. Exactly eight years ago, I started to do antifa-work in an autonomous antifascist group. I was in a university group and I wanted to build autonomous education. But it was still a compromise, staying attached to the state, through a university or school career. It was always hobby politics, so to speak, a very identitarian framework. Over time I have passed through spaces that did not really offer me a lasting perspective, where the personal moment of self-liberation was never present. A room that closes itself off alternating with the next room that closes itself off.

1 - Demhat is the name Şehîd Bager was using at this time.

But isn't antifascist work very important, especially in the metropolis?

In any case, the joke is, if it takes place in districts, where there are no fascists. Then you just distance yourself from other societal groups. The city where I come from has very specific districts. The district where the antifascist work took place was definitely not the district where the most massive problems were.

Did you have the possibility to include social groups in the neighborhood in your work?

No, this was also not the real aim.

Then what was the aim?

I do not come directly from the city. I lived about ten kilometers away and had massive problems with Nazis at school there, so I came to the city. Due to this concern I wanted to organize a form of collective self-defense and I went to antifascist self-defense groups. They tried to build up a physical self-defense. There was also self-education work. There were many historical reference points, the Spanish Civil War, internationalism, Latin America, the Zapatistas... But this political education work was only ever internal.

Did the Kurdish movement already play a role for you?

No, not at all.

How did you then come to deal with the Kurdish movement?

That actually came much later. I have not known the movement for very long, it has only been one and a half years. Before that, it had been circulating in the scene

as a term - Kurdistan, rumors that there were somehow very progressive approaches. But there was quickly a very orientalist reflex that made it impossible to imagine that such a progressive approach, or a women's movement on such a scale, was conceivable in the Middle East, in Kurdistan. "But this is a workers' party"; for me, anarchist approaches were much more interesting, to assume such an identity.

This gave me a defensive reflex against everything that refers to a socialist tradition. That always swayed a little, also there are many places of remembrance that were quite important to me that were connected with socialist movements, but it was inconceivable to me that a movement with this kind of rhetoric could play a role precisely in the present. Therefore, Kurdistan was not present in my imagination. I first came across the movement through a friend of mine who was at the congress "Capitalist Modernity and the Kurdish Awakening" in Hamburg last year and saw the extent of the movement there. Internationalists and friends from the movement spoke there. What was so important for her and what she passed on to me is how a movement has managed to simply question a form of masculinity. Older friends spoke there, who, in terms of impression and appearance, emphasized the gender struggle in such a convincing way and its importance. It is very unorthodox by itself, especially with this image of the Middle East and the masculinity there, which existed in the left, at least for me. I first heard about the movement like this. Through the friend I went to Kurdish structures in Germany - to a community center - and I met a completely different kind of open-mindedness I did not know from the left. The people were very happy that a German friend came at all, someone who just wanted to listen. They told me a lot about the movement, their own positions, how they perceive themselves and their critics. It was a lot of information. One friend directly gifted me a book from Abdullah Öcalan - "Beyond State, Power and

Violence". Through this openness and of course through the book I have found an ideological approach. I then began to deal with the ideology of the movement. This process also came at the same time as a personal process of detachment. At that time, I had already broken off my studies for half a year because I was not getting much from it personally.

What were you studying?

History, Latin American studies, which had content that was valuable for me, and also useful for my self-perception and the analysis of my situation. I was also at a rather progressive institute. But I soon realized that it was not a framework in which I could learn particularly effectively. I had studied three semesters and then spent half a year traveling in Latin America. I had studied for one month after the trip, but I didn't really get in again. I have been in Colombia, Nicaragua and Mexico. After travelling I realized, that the experiences and different worlds I had got to know in Latin America, had no connection at all to the space in which I then found myself in again. I had not been aware of the blatant interventions of colonialism and that complete social structures are totally disrupted. Colombia in particular was majorly affected in this respect, how its culture is strongly oriented towards the North American ideal - consumer culture - which is linked to a large social division. In Bogotá, in the city center, there is a highly individualized, bureaucratized world. At the same time next door, three kilometers further on in the neighborhoods of the city where I lived with friends, people were completely on their own. These people found completely chaotic but somehow manageable ways of making ends meet. These were experiences that made me question the reality in Germany. How was this world, in which I then found myself in again, connected at all?

Have you found a similar experience here to what you found in Latin America?

Yes, in the end a strong affection by a colonial system and a social counter-organization. In Colombia, the resistance seemed very diffuse to me. As I said, it was a matter of making ends meet. In Kurdistan, the difference is that there is a collective, strategic counter-organization being build.

Of the population?

Yes, of the population and by the guerrilla, which ultimately emerged from it. Precisely from this consternation and through it the guerrilla could develop its strategy. The situation is ultimately a comparable one, this contrast of such a periphery that must deal with these colonial interventions, which is not a system that has ever been overcome.

We are here in the Medya Defense Areas, a relatively liberated area, have you also got to know other regions of Kurdistan?

I've already been to Kurdistan once last year. I was here for three months in total, one and a half months in the north and then in the south, in Heftanin and Qandil.

Are there differences in the society in the different parts of Kurdistan, concerning the degree of organization?

Yes, and also in terms of how you perceive things. In the north, I could simply feel that there is a de facto military occupation in many cities. I went to a large rally in Amed (Diyarbakir), which had been banned. One to two million people had been expected, it was simply civil war-like conditions. Not so much of what happened, there was a lot of skirmishes, which I was more of an observer. The

police were extremely afraid of people looking European. The people were not allowed to go out on the streets in their own neighborhood, they were immediately attacked. Massive attempts were made to gain the upper hand militarily. In any case, it was quite impressive. There were completely different impressions in the north, where the confrontation took place on a military and police level of state attacks, much more obvious than for example in the south, where there is a blatant consumer culture and where state weapons are no longer needed.

What goals do you have for your stay here? What do you want to do here?

I have come here to think about perspectives; for myself, how I imagine life to be, how that is even possible collectively. In Europe, I have always encountered a stark individualization. Even if there were friends who somehow had similar perspectives, there was a complete insecurity and blatant doubts about a collective anti-state organization. For me definitely this is a place here from which a strategic perspective can be thought, also for Europe. For example, the youth in Europe is facing a massive problem, the state system is becoming even more fascist and taking on brute characteristics. What is happening in the periphery of Europe already holds something like a new fascism in my opinion. That plays a big role for me personally. How can the youth organise itself, or grapple with itself, to become aware of its role again? The main problem I have encountered is that people cannot imagine that they play a role or that they can have an impact on the world around them.

Do you think you will find an answer here?

I think that it can definitely be a beginning - no, not a beginning, I have definitely already started - where this process can be conducted on another level. Because

de facto there can be no state attack here any more, except a purely military one. And that can bring about consciousness. I'm in exchange with the friends here and I want to stay in contact with the friends in Germany or in Europe too, so that this process can be taken to a new level as well. Also with regard to my personal confrontation, the individualism in my behavior, the collectivization of all thoughts, perspectives and also doubts.

Do you see yourself in a historical tradition?

The International Brigades in Spain or anarchist points of reference such as Catalonia in 1936 played an important role in the development of consciousness, as did the concept of history in the Kurdish movement, and every form of anti-colonial struggle, such as that of the Zapatistas. They have taken on a completely different meaning because of the concept of history that exists here. It is this tradition of a quasi anti-state struggle. Because in principle what is happening in Mexico, what has been happening in Latin America for 500 years, is in many ways simply an attempt to defend a natural way of life against a state attack that is trying to enforce itself through a colonial system. I became aware of this in addition to what I knew from Europe: From anarchist traditions in Italy and Andalusia, the further development of anarchism, what is currently being discussed in North America or is being published in France with "The Coming Insurrection", and so on. These also precisely express the continuity of simple forms of resistance, which do not explicitly quote themselves as political, but simply defend a way of life. Just like, what Apo also writes, that nomadic groups, simply by their way of life, have already shown resistance against a model of civilization. These are definitely points of reference for me, besides Nicaragua, for example, which has caused a great fascination.

Where do you want to go? Which academy did you apply for?

I want to go to Şervanên nû, to the new fighters...

What are the tasks there?

I get military and ideological training there, which lasts two to four months. It always varies a bit and depends on the progress the friends make there.

The term Hevaltî is very important here. Did you hear about it?

Yes, definitely. It's a way of dealing with people that has opened up a completely different approach for me than in other political circles, from spaces in Europe, the left in Germany, to the Zapatistas, where a guest status is something completely different. It is simply this concept of Hevaltî, how a new form of sociality can arise...

Can you briefly describe what it means for you?

I understand it as a thought of complicity - that's how I would most likely translate it - where there is simply a consciousness and a way of dealing with people in which the accomplices, the Hevals and the Hevalas around me are no more or less important than me and my needs and affinities. It is actually a symbiotic process of a collective and the individual, between which there always has to be a connection and nobody can be excluded. There is a fear that came with me here, this fear of being excluded. Because it is actually the standard among left-wing groups in Europe to simply throw people out because of accusations. Their personal progress is not acknowledged. That is exactly the point here, that through this Hevaltî concept a trust is developed, which guides the personal processes and

therefore the friends are pushed forward in their personal development and awareness. It works through a solidarity network.

A spontaneous answer, what was the best experience so far?

I rather have pictures in my mind of friends, when we arrived at a camp just a week ago. The friends from the political unit were there, also older friends and especially the ones from the women's movement, with an unbelievable openness, who could meet us with complete trust.

Do you have something you would like to say to the people of Europe?

What I came across in Germany is a big fear. I have often heard the question "Won't this be a trap in which you get caught and completely lost? To build solidarity with a movement that could provoke negative developments with these progressive thoughts?" And exactly these doubts, this reflex shown towards the movement from outside, is not a comradely criticism, but a barrier that exists. This is why it is so difficult for the Kurdish movement to find real allies in Europe. The fear is simply too big, because the symbols are also so extreme. For me however the KCK system, and this idea behind it, is an incredible perspective that I can imagine as a model for Europe, if it is developed further and revised. It can be a perspective of how a form of new living could emerge at all. I hope and wish that there will be bigger openness to it in the left in the coming years. Not only in the left, but by people who are simply open-minded, that are searching.

Have you been accused of something like escape by your friends?

Yes, I think so. In fact, it is a term I would appropriate for myself. For me it is definitely a social flight from Europe, from spaces where I was always faced with strong isolation. Perhaps I could also call it a strategic retreat.

Do you see this as a place where a new internationalism can be developed?

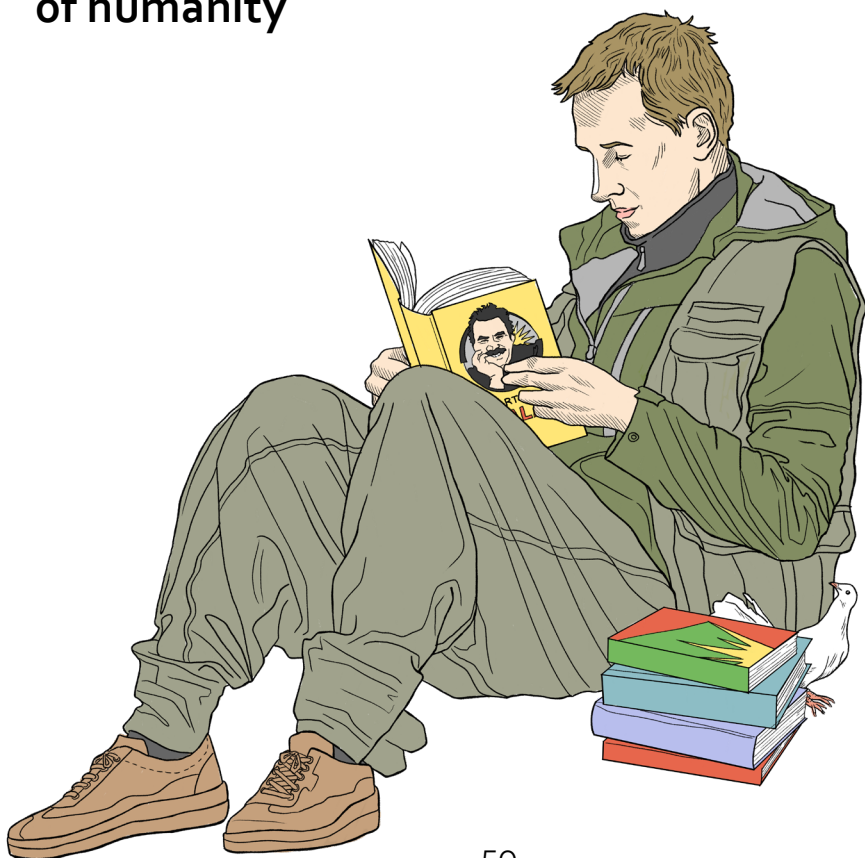
Definitely. Especially these concepts with their very open character. But they are carried by symbols that can be a deterrent for people from Europe. As an example Rêber Apo: It just looks very biased for many on the left. It is exactly this rejection that many people bring with them. But actually it is about the ideology. It is simply the way I am received here. This alone proves that it is a basis on which we can think on a new global level. And internationalism is precisely the connection of life realities, of worlds. The possibilities that are offered to me here alone are signs that there is also the will to push this forward. I can imagine that this perspective is also necessary because of the acute situation in Europe, which will become even more acute in the next few years - when we see what is now happening in the periphery.

What do you wish from your comrades from Europe?

I wish for a shared self-reflection about the own struggle and how statehood is affecting us. Beyond that, a reflection on the fear that prevents us from setting off. I have experienced a strong helplessness from many friends who simply cannot imagine leaving their safe space of study, state funding for students, scholarship, only out of political idealism.

INTERNATIONALISM AND THE QUESTION OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

Realising a heritage
of humanity



Part 1: Experiences and shortcomings of global liberation movements

Resistance against any forms of oppression and exploitation and the search for freedom are social realities which no system of power has ever been able to eradicate. These social resistances and struggles for a life of dignity, freedom and equality reflect fundamental human values, such as conscience and morality, collective culture of remembering, social awareness and the art of political self-organization and leadership. All these struggles form a unity, a virtually unwritten history contrary to the history of centralistic-dominated civilization - a civilization based on state, class domination and the appropriation of social values. For 5000 years this civilization has been in war with nature, free natural society and the heritage of a matriarchal culture. This civilization has always been forced to find the means to break the spirit of this social heritage of equality and freedom and to smother the consciousness of subjugated societies and their emancipation. In history, we encounter three major lines of social resistance: moral and social resistance in the tradition of communities struggling within (revolting slaves, free cities, rebellious peasants) or outside (indigenous, nomadic) centralized civilization; secondly, spiritual-idealistic and ethical resistance in the tradition of prophets, saints, philosophers, wise women, alchemists and resulting religious movements; thirdly, the tradition of Marxism-Leninism, which transforms the consciousness of social historical resistance into an organized-ideological form and political struggle.

Establishment of the nation state as a new model of domination

After 300 years of expanding power, in the 19th century the system of Capitalist Modernity had reached its preliminary peak through Industrialism and Colonialism, subjugating

the enslaved societies with extensive slavery, assimilation, and genocide. With the establishment of the nation state as a new model of domination, social consciousness was bound to the new system of domination through the logic of competition, a culture of war and chauvinism on the ideological basis of nationalism and thus diverted from social self-defense, awareness and resistance to exploitation and cultural alienation. Against this project of the centralized power civilization the socialist line of liberation struggle and resistance developed on the basis of the philosophical works of Marx and Engels. With the emergence of socialist movements in all industrialized countries, the idea of Internationalism became a strategic baseline of the liberation struggle. Against the chauvinistic logic of nationalism and hostility between peoples and the cold logic of global capital, the spirit of internationalism became the source of hope and utopias of the oppressed. This fight has been going on since then, for 150 years, with the proclamation "Workers of the world, unite!"

Crisis of the progressive, liberal and socialist forces of Europe

In the 1990s and 2000s, when we began to follow the footsteps of this heritage of revolutionary tradition, Europe's progressive, liberal and socialist forces were in deep crisis. After the collapse of Real Socialism, the system of Capitalist Modernity, above all the newly united German nation state, proclaimed its victory and the end of history. A large-scale operation was carried out against German society to establish a neoliberal regime of wage labour, bureaucracy and police state. At the same time, this was ideologically masked by fomented nationalism, therefore fascist gangs were on the rise. Thoughts and hopes, dedicated to revolution and socialism, met with massive counter-propaganda and defamation. The old national Liberation Movements of Europe in Ireland (Irish Republican Army) and in the Basque

Country (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) weren't able to overcome their ideological deficiencies and were isolated by the system. The remnants of the urban Guerillas were forced into the underground or declared their self-dissolution. The heritage of the movements of 1968 had been largely assimilated by the system (such as feminist and ecological movements) or continued its marginalized existence (such as anarchist milieus and sectarian communist groups) in niches and subcultures.

Heritage of revolutionary internationalism as a source of hope and certainty of victory

Without having utopias, resistance and struggle become impossible in the long run. We grew up in this social climate of ideological genocide – a genocide that was directed, above all, against the hope, the belief, and the spiritual-idealistic and moral resistance of society – in short, a genocide against the possibility of another life. During that time, joining the left-wing scene was often motivated by an attitude of rebelliousness, by emotional rejection of the social conditions and as a rebellion against the cruelty and coldness of the system. Moral self-assertion and the resistance of the conscience naturally led into the ranks of the anti-fascist movement and to rejection of any national chauvinism. Anti-fascist self-defense against fascist gangs was the task of the time. Despite the perceived immobility, the legacy of revolutionary Internationalism became a source of hope and certainty of victory for us. In a way, this universal line of social resistance was our secret leadership. Against a liberal system, a bureaucratic and police regime which tried to enforce deceptive normality, pacification and a life of alienation, spiritually we joined this internationalist line of struggle and assertion of socialist values. That secret leadership, still unconscious and without a clear expression, finally should lead us into the heart of the revolution in Kurdistan and brought us to the confrontation with the

question of real revolutionary leadership. It is said that we're able to understand our current situation only with regard to the history and the social struggles of all times. As we commit ourselves to the goal and struggle for a free society and universal human and socialist values, as we oppose a world of subjugation and exploitation, it must be clear to us that we can only be successful if we are linked to the experiences of all the previous revolutionary struggles. The system of Capitalist Modernity wants to establish its project of subjugation and exploitation on a global level. Therefore, the struggle for another world on the base of a life in freedom, equality and dignity must be fought on a global scale. The tradition of revolutionary Internationalism created a multitude of experiences and values which continue to be important today and constitute valuable lessons for our fight and path. We can take these values of historical resistance with some examples to properly classify their basic understanding:

a) The experience of the international

In the 19th century, huge worker's movements emerged in the industrialised countries of Europe and North-America. At the beginning of the 20th century, the contradictions between the imperial powers led to the outbreak of the First World War. This became the opportunity for the system to massacre millions of workers on the battlefields and therefore anticipate a socialist revolution. The reformist social-democratic forces joined the line of war and national chauvinism and so threw themselves into the arms of the imperialist forces. Against the politics of war and collaboration, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht defended in Germany a radical attitude of international solidarity and the alliance of all workers and oppressed peoples against the capitalist system. With the victory of the Russian Revolution under the leadership of the Bolsheviks and the organisation of the Communist International

(ComIntern), for the first time a leadership organisation emerged which committed itself also to supporting socialist revolutions in other countries. The paradigm of Marxism-Leninism based on Hegelian philosophy, which was fouled by the idea of the nation-state in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat continued its existence in Real Socialism. This idea of a society able to organise itself in the form of a state and thus move towards freedom is until today one of the biggest mistakes of Marxist tradition. The reference to the state as well as Stalin's principle of "Socialism in one country" made the ComIntern quickly turn into a tool of power for an industrialised state who used this to enforce their diplomatic-political and military interests. Numerous militants and revolutionaries committed to the idea of the International became victims of Stalin's politics of power, which betrayed internationalist values and handed over hundreds of Communists to Nazi Germany.

b) The experience of the Spanish Civil War and the International Brigades

In 1936, the societies of Spain started broad resistance against the fascist military coup. The workers, peasants and women's response to the coup attempt was the social revolution based on anarchist self-organisation. A council system and self-defense forces emerged. To an appeal of the antifascist government of the Socialist Party and the ComIntern, the answer of thousands of Communist and Socialists was to pour into the country to join the International Brigades. The defeat of the antifascist forces can be exemplified in two points: First, instead of supporting the revolution as well as broad social mobilisation and the organisation of self-defense through the militias, the socialist government insisted on conservative and centralistic politics which propagated "first the defeat of the fascists, later the social revolution". In this way, achievements of the revolution were eliminated, brought under government control and thus

weakened the spirit of resistance of society. Second, the attachment of the International Brigades to the socialist government and to the praxis of the ComIntern under the direction of Stalin ensured as a diplomatic weapon that Spain's fate was sealed at the level of interstate power politics. The two-edged role of the International Brigades and the undermining of the antifascist forces through state power politics both internally and internationally turned Spain into a painful experience and a meaningful example of international liberation struggle.

c) National Liberation and the 1968's revolt

After the Second World War, in many countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia national liberation movements against colonial occupation emerged. In this phase of international liberation struggle important experiences in both theory and practise would be gained; also important victories were won in liberation wars against imperialist Hegemony and occupying armies. In the sixties and seventies, an internationalist spirit developed that gave self-confidence and spirit of resistance to societies under occupation and foreign domination. Awareness of the unity of all liberation struggles was also manifested in the alliance of progressive and socialist forces within the metropolis, which in solidarity and mutual support were related to anti-colonial liberation movements and, by supporting the Soviet Union, formed an anti-pole to the hegemony of the leading capitalist states. Mao's guerrilla war strategy had brought the Chinese Revolution to victory. The nature of guerrilla warfare as a protracted people's war, their own form of organisation and tactics developed into the recipe for success of oppressed societies in the struggle for liberation against technologically superior occupation armies. In Cuba, the brothers Raúl and Fidél Castro proved that the Guerilla concept is transferable. As the Guerilla gained its strength out of village communes

and the communal base of society, it also organised itself in a decentral way and, above all, gave form to the desire for freedom and will of society for self-determination, in many countries the occupying armies could not continue for much longer.

In France, broad networks emerged in support of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria. In connection to the liberation struggle, the work of the psychologist Frantz Fanon was particularly important. His work "The Wretched of the Earth" is a manifesto of anti-colonial liberation. Above all, he devoted himself to investigating the psychological effects of colonial rule and worked towards strategies of liberation. Only by expressing one's own identity and a collective consciousness of resistance can the psychology of slavery be overcome and liberation consistently achieved. From the experience of social education work in Brazil, Paulo Freire developed his concept of education as a method of emancipation. In particular, it is important to understand how the struggles and experiences of this time and epoch of the freedom struggle respond to each other, mutually reinforce each other and create an internationalist awareness of the unity of all these struggles. With the Vietnam War and the 1968 youth revolt, this epoch of liberation struggle reached its peak. The unity of struggle in the metropolis (in the industrialised countries of Western Europe and North America) and countries under colonial occupation establishes a shared awareness of the possibility of global liberation. The Vietnamese people becoming an army and the development of the Urban Guerilla are important experiences and a deepening of the strategic militancy of the struggle. The struggles and attempts of 1968 were not only the search for an alternative to the capitalist system of domination, but also tried to find new ways besides the mistakes and defects of Real Socialism and the Soviet Union. From these attempts, only the PKK could assert itself, become a sustainable force and develop

its own revolutionary leadership principle. The military victories of national liberation movements could not prevent capture and incorporation by the capitalist system. Liberation movements arose in the nation-state model of Modernity and could not provide a social alternative to the dominant mentality and organisation. The movements of the metropolis, such as the Black Panther Party, the Red Brigades, and the late generations of the RAF (Red Army Faction), could be cut off in the absence of areas to retreat and were finally undermined by the concerted attacks of secret intelligence counter-insurgency programs.

d) The Advance of Neoliberalism and the Anti-Globalisation movement

In the 1980s, the leading states of Capitalist Modernity began to implement their concept of global neo-liberal rule, which aims to appropriate and integrate all areas of society into the order of finance Capitalism. As a new global project of control, the politics of the Green Belt and the creation of political Islam were promoted in the 1980s as a way to contain the Soviet Union, frozen in bureaucratism and conservatism, and after its collapse as a project of global reorganization. With the creation of Gladio, secret NATO counterinsurgency programs were launched, especially in Germany, Italy and Turkey. In Latin America and elsewhere, counter-revolutions have been carried out through military campaigns, paramilitary warfare and with the help of agent-states. With few exceptions, such as the liberation movement in Kurdistan and the Colombian guerrillas, revolutionary forces worldwide got into a defensive position. In the metropolis, left-wing forces tried to think of alternatives and to process and overcome mistakes of earlier revolutionary attempts particularly through theoretical work and analysis.

The leading G8 states pushed ahead their project of global hegemony on summits, while a globalisation-critical movement formed with counter-summits (such as the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre) and summit protests. Despite all attempts, the Anti-Globalisation Movement couldn't formulate a lasting alternative, couldn't develop an effective system of self-defense or couldn't overcome its own protest character. An important experience is the Peoples' Global Action network and its model of organisation. A network of national and regional committees had been created on a global level to coordinate and agree on summit mobilisations and perspective discussions. This network brought together diverse movements from indigenous communities, Australian Aborigines and Indian Communists to European anarchists, Russian feminists and Canadian eco-activists. Because of their potential to form a new internationalist force, the movement and leading activists faced a massive assault and torture by police and intelligence agencies at the G8 summit protests in Genoa, Italy, which stifled the movement before it could take a clear form.

e) The Zapatista uprising and the turning point of the natural society

As the Zapatista Army of the National Liberation (EZLN) went to uprising at New Year 1994 in southeastern Mexico, it immediately attracted the attention of the world public. The Zapatista uprising began on the same day, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Canada, and Mexico came into effect. By this means, it got the symbolic power of a struggle for dignity and hope against both a system of total domination and neoliberal slavery and exploitation. The uprising, based on rural indigenous village communities, draws on a deep mythological tradition of natural sociability and 500 years of struggle against colonial subjugation, exploitation and

genocide. It is particularly inspired by the struggle of Emiliano Zapata in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, who represents as a role model and namesake the revolutionary leadership of the oppressed. The Zapatistas draw their strength from the combination of communal values and natural sociality with socialist philosophy, an organised structure of militants, guerrilla struggle and militia system as a self-defense concept. Against the Mexican neo-liberal and US-compliant government (the “bad government”), the movement has built its own system of democratic autonomy of councils, municipalities, women’s movement, education and health as “good government”. The 1994 uprising was preceded by ten years of clandestine organization and preparation. From a thinking based on social reality and mythological traditions, self-governing principles had been developed. They are based on holistic inclusion and change, and expressed as principles such as “asking questions while walking” (as a method of uniting theory and practice) and “lead by obeying” (as a principle of leadership and responsibility). The struggle of the Zapatistas is based both on a deep culturindigenous heritage and a corresponding identity, as well as on broad national, regional and international alliances against the system of centralized and oppressive civilization. “The Other Campaign” was launched as a national campaign to democratize Mexico. In particular, it is instructive how the Zapatistas consciously and creatively use media, visibility and clandestinity as a mechanism of self-defense, tool for alliances and inspiration of movements worldwide as a strategic weapon. Since 2013, the “Little School” project has been used to create internationalist Zapatista academies, while on the Internet, seminars on autonomy and revolutionary experience have been organised for allies. The Zapatist struggle therefore plays a strategic role for the Latin-American societies. The role and location of Mexico vis-à-vis the United States is comparable to Turkey’s role and position vis-à-vis the EU and its stability. Accordingly

forceful, is the attempt of the system to stifle the fight of the Zapatistas through economic projects against the social basis of the movement and low intensity warfare using Contras. Despite all attempts, the Zapatistas resist and represent today one of the most important and leading projects for building a Democratic Modernity.





Part 2: The continuity of the Internationalist Liberation Struggle and the question of revolutionary leadership

What we want to show is the continuity and richness of experiences of the internationalist liberation struggle. The tradition of revolutionary Internationalism represents in a sense the conscious line of historical social resistances and its actualisation. In practise, the struggle for freedom was always internationalist. Especially the rich tradition of resistance of Middle Eastern societies, from Zarathustra, Babek and the Churramites, to the attitude of Mahir Çayan and the revolution in Kurdistan, impressively demonstrate this millennium-old line of social struggle for freedom. The awareness of the values and achievements, the experiences and the unity of these international struggles forms the basis of a socialist consciousness and the project of a democratic modernity. The awareness of the values and achievements, the experiences and the unity of these international struggles forms the basis of a socialist consciousness and the project of a Democratic Modernity. The question of revolutionary leadership, which can help a society to renew itself, has been the subject of discussion and controversy since the emergence of the socialist movement in all attempts and break-ups of the freedom struggle. A society that is linked to its cultural heritage, that has moral standards and political awareness, is able to lead itself, to organise both basic necessities and self-defense, and to sustainably enable social life. A society that does not have the power of self-leadership is always subject to subjugation, occupation, exploitation, alienation, assimilation and genocide. Systems of power of all times have always sought to alienate society from its self-leading power and keep it unconscious in order to exploit it for its own purposes. The first and most vehement attack of the system of domination is aimed at the woman

and her social role as natural leader, moral authority and organisational center. The woman embodies the oldest form of social leadership. In all resistances and movements of social renewal, the role of women was a leading one, and the success of these struggles was tied to the participation and strength of women. Just as the degree of freedom of a society is measured by the freedom of women, so every project of domination must first subjugate the woman in order to crush the social moral power of self-defense. The resistance of revolting slaves, of nomadic and indigenous societies, represents a form of cultural resistance with underlying values of earliest communal self-leading and the memory of a life in dignity. Religious resistance and the tradition of prophetic movements are based on the assertion of moral values and ethical conduct of life that questions the totality of domination. Both historical lines, the communal and the ideational tradition of resistance, were not able to withstand the appropriation and assimilation by state centralist domination in the long run. Marxist philosophy and socialist movements sought to put the question of revolutionary leadership on a conscious political and organized foundation. For the first time, with the idea of the Communist Party as an organized initiative force and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the idea of revolutionary leadership was deliberately negotiated as a strategic issue.

The question of revolutionary leadership

The fundamental problem of all revolutionary movements and the question of their persistent success revolve around the revolutionary leadership – none of the previous movements was immune to being handed over to the system because the question of revolutionary leadership remained unanswered. The principle of revolutionary leadership is the goal as well as the fighting strategy of a social revolutionary movement, it decides on the form of organization, political

guidelines and tactics of struggle. Although the goal of a free, moral, value-oriented, and communalist society is clearly formulated in anarchist philosophy, anarchist movements in practice had problems of sustaining organizational unity, long-term strategy, and self-defense, and transforming their struggles into persistent social renewal. The defeat of the Spanish Revolution as a result of state intervention and appropriation points in this direction. The problem of defense and persistent revolutionary leadership is also reflected in the experience of the revolt of 68: The leading figures of the movements, in Turkey in person of Mahir Çayan, Ibrahim Kaypakkaya and Deniz Gezmiş, in Germany in person of Rudi Dutschke, were eliminated by provocation and assassinations, which meant for the movements the loss of their initiatives. The fragmented character of both the German and the Turkish left is the result of the loss of one's own revolutionary leadership. In the tradition of Marxism-Leninism, the question of revolutionary leadership was tied to the appropriation of the central power and the taking over of the state. Objectively, adopting the state form of organisation always meant imprisoning society in static forms and alienating it from its own power of awareness and moral self-correction – centralised domination, whether in the form of the bourgeois nation state or the dictatorship of the proletariat, means for the society always to be forced into passivity and a legally organisational framework. As a result to the reference to the state, Real Socialism transformed social revolutions and societies from Russia till Vietnam and Nicaragua, that were in a condition of anti-imperial liberation struggles into bureaucratic apparatuses that narrowed and blocked society's search for articulation and freedom. A memorable and negative example in this respect is the experience of the Prague Spring, which was as a cultural and communal movement crushed by the Red Army in 1968. Another problem of Marxist philosophy is the notion of the goal of a socialist society: historical progress follows the idea of a

linear movement that necessarily leads from capitalism to socialism. The Marxist historical understanding was not able to overcome the philosophy of Hegel and therefore not in the position to define correctly the field of tension between the centralised-domination modernity and the line of the historical society, that always acted as a anti-pole in contradiction and spirit of resistance against the civilised modernity. In a sense, the misfortune of Marxist philosophy is that at the time of Marx and Engels' work in anthropology and archeology, knowledge and the state of research on natural societies and the Neolithic as sources of human society and culture were not yet as advanced. From this void of historical knowledge, shortcomings followed in the understanding of society, especially regarding the original character of society as a communalist community, which is well able of self-leadership on the basis of moral collective memory and political confederal organization without state superstructure. Especially regarding the position of the woman as original central source of power for society, regarding the understanding of social freedom and equality, the Marxist paradigm was therefore open for misunderstandings. The struggle for social liberation and consciousness lies in the negotiation for the right method of leadership, in the question of the right way to live. Both in the collective, but also in the personal perspective on the way to live. A socialist method of leadership has to be stronger than the guidance of the system that just aims to assimilate and to pacify the society. A socialist leadership has therefore the responsibility to convey the correct understanding of the social reality as well as a persistent and importance-giving method of understanding the truth. Above all, a revolutionary leadership method must be a way of life that conveys principles and standards of daily life to militants and revolutionaries. Regarding this point, almost all classic left-wing movements (with the exception of a few natural leaders) were subject to the system's command and attraction in the long run. It is important to realize that a

way of life that is unable to develop a proper understanding of struggle, society, socialism, and truth can not solve the problem of an alienated and dominated society. A lifestyle that remains in a purely oppositional attitude and can not implement its own paradigm of socialist collectivity in life will objectively prolong the dominated and alienated situation and contribute to the support of the system. Many classical left-wing currents and movements, such as feminist and ecological movements, the academic left, and above all the state-socialist version of modernity, took the position, despite revolutionary intentions, to rejuvenate the system of capitalist modernity, since they did not take a profound and holistic approach to oppose an alternative to the system's leadership. In this way, Real Socialism was condemned to prolong the crisis of the system of Capitalist Modernity by a 150 years.

Communal experience and attempts of alternative life are prevented

Since the offensive of the system of Capitalist Modernity to assert and expand its own hegemony, and the transition to finance capitalism in the early seventies, it developed the form of leadership called Bio-power. This method no longer relies, as before, primarily on the exploitation of social surplus value by industrial production, but aims to transform all social spheres of life into sources of capital accumulation. From the influence on social desire over education, health and art up to interpersonal relations, life itself becomes a commodity and is subjected to the logic of capital. The leadership of Bio-power is most obviously perceptible as financial commander of the ubiquity of the money, which organizes the social exchanges even into friendships and family relationships. In this way, an individualistic and selfish, anti-communal lifestyle is imposed on society. The system creates a totalitarian culture of material values that transforms every social value and meaning of communal

life into something dead, purely material and overlays this with the lack of culture of limitless consumption. With this method, the truth (as a category of thinking, of the perception of reality) is stifled within the limits of the purely material, the measurable and the positivist scientific. Life loses all uniqueness, is ripped of every secret, without search, and becomes the pure administration of the everyday and banal. The emptiness that this kind of enforced life had left in our lives since the Nineties awakened dissatisfaction with the existing and set us on the move. We looked for answers and ways of how the right struggle for liberation could be led, how to live a proper life. We were aware of the disgusting nature of the system, but the intangibility of the domination of Liberalism and its ideological hegemony prevented us from thinking of real alternatives. The nature of liberal living, forced careerism, opportunism and individualism prevent communal experience and condemn all attempts of an alternative life to be pushed into isolation and marginalization.

We searched for ways out by exploring historical internationalist struggles, revolutionary theory, and forms of life and culture outside the European metropolis. It is said that in the shadow of fortresses and cathedrals, and under police control of the system's henchmen, free thinking is difficult, and so we left our old world. Any search for freedom, any attempt at deep understanding leads back to the source, and so our search led us to Mesopotamia, the site of the first great revolution of humanity, the source of culture, the revolution of language, thought and settlement. We learned that in the mountains, plains and cities of Kurdistan, the tradition of revolutionary internationalism continued, and here the struggle for a socialist society was linked to the resistance of the old, natural society, in which the power of the woman and the culture of the mother goddess was still acting. Above all, in the struggle of the PKK and in the person of Abdullah Öcalan, we encountered

a deep revolutionary leadership that far exceeded the limits of classical leftist movements and embodied the possibility of true revolutionary life.

The cultural roots as well as the resistance are to be broken

Of course, the emergence of revolutionary leadership in the form of the Kurdish movement can not be separated from the current shape of the Capitalist Modernity's project of domination. Nor is it a coincidence that the search for a way out of Europe's social crisis leads to Mesopotamia (the historical heartland of the Neolithic revolution between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers). The emergence of the revolutionary leadership in Kurdistan is an answer to the same attack of the system. The offensive of Capitalist Modernity against the Middle East represents the latest and most recent wave of attack of the system, after having asserted its leadership over the societies of Europe and North America over the past 400 years. The system of Capitalist Modernity is always forced to foster the accumulation of capital and to integrate new sources into the system. After the colonial era and the colonial subjugation of three continents since the 16th century and industrialism in the 19th century, in the age of finance capitalism only the societies and areas of the Middle East remain that are not fully integrated into the system of regimes of production and creation of value. The biggest obstacle to the system's ability to gain a foothold in the region is its deeply rooted social culture, dating back to the Neolithic period and its ideal culture. The leading forces of modernity (especially the leading NATO states USA, Britain, Germany and France and supranational institutions) are well aware that the Kurdish societies are to the fullest extent root and source of the old non-state, value-oriented culture. For 200 years (beginning with the Napoleonic maneuver in Egypt and the establishment of de facto control over the politics of the Ottoman Empire),

a comprehensive strategically-led war of varying intensity is taking place against the societies of the region, which aims to cut off the cultural roots of Mesopotamia and to break its resistance. At the center of this strategic attack is the Kurdish question, which received its present form with the division of Kurdish society and territories after the reorganisation of the region after the First World War. The division of Kurdistan into the borders of four nation states meant the beginning of a extensive genocidal policy, which also affected the region's Armenian, Aramaic and Assyrian societies. Between 1925 and 1940, the attack on the Kurdish society in the form of physical genocide (ending with the massacre in Dersim) was carried out, from 1940 in the form of a cultural genocide regime. The ideal culture of Kurdistan and its social autonomy should be completely destroyed, with the traumatising by genocide and the breaking of the social will, their political force of self-organisation should be suffocated. The aim of the cultural genocide regime was the eradication of the Kurdish language, the collective memory, the cultural mentality, and it was planned to break up the rural-peasant and nomadic livestock culture in order to eradicate the social identity at the roots. Especially the Kurdish women have become the target of genocidal politics in the form of reeducation, in order to start cultural alienation via the educational role a mother plays. Through forced migration into the cities and demographic change, a huge mass of human labour force, alienated from their own culture, should be integrated into the system of value creation. The structure of the regional nation states and the anchoring of modernist ideologies such as fomented nationalism and religious fundamentalism (especially in the form of a political Islam) should support the cultural genocide policy and infiltrate the base of society with these. The AKP government plays the role of a neoliberal political-islamic front project of the West that should bring the social restructuring into the base of society. We see that the Kurdish question and the cultural genocide themselves

are results and strategic parts of the Capitalist Modernity's project of securing their domination in the Middle East. In particular, the domination of the system in form of Biopower should be implemented through neoliberal regimes in Turkey (AKP) and North Iraq/ South Kurdistan (PDK). Genocide and the enforcement of Biopower which means the integration of social life into capitalist value creation, are two faces of the same practice. Biopower and genocide are mutually dependent.

The core of socialism is hidden in the natural society

The emergence of revolutionary leadership in Kurdistan is the dialectical response to the regime of cultural genocide which represents an attack intended to secure comprehensive total control over society. With the domination of Capitalist Modernity, the river of centralized civilization reaches a climax that does not accept social life outside its own control and accessibility. According to the vehemence of the attack, the opposing revolutionary leadership that has universal values of sociality, cultural self-assertion, and search for freedom. From the Kurdish question and the contradictions to which Kurdish society was exposed as a result of cultural decomposition, resistance, departure and struggle first developed in the person of Abdullah Öcalan. In his early socialization and social experience, remnants of the heritage of the Mother Goddess culture are reflected, which inherits a strong foundation of morality and conscience. However, due to the perceptible crisis of social life in the Kurdish village society, Öcalan's search first leads to the metropolis to gain an identity and a proper form of struggle. The search for social freedom and self-awareness leads to the connection to the tradition of socialist struggle, with time Öcalan carries out the ideological synthesis of national liberation and socialism. In the form of the revolutionary leadership that Öcalan developed, we must clearly recognise a unity

of independent national identity and a universal search for freedom and truth in the form of the struggle for a free and equal society based on socialism. The insistence on cultural and original social values and the simultaneous assertion of values of revolutionary Internationalism do not contradict each other, but form two poles that complement each other. In this way, in Öcalan's path and experience, the 1968 Youth Revolt - based on an Internationalist and utopian spirit-, combines with the deeply rooted culture of Mesopotamia into a synthesis quickly gaining social trust. The International Conspiracy, which leads Öcalan's arrest in 1999 through a coordinated action by more than 30 intelligence agencies and the participation of all the world's leading powers, is directed against the profound force of this form of revolutionary leadership, which gained mass character through the process of building the PKK and its social and armed struggle. After the conspiracy and deportation to the Imrali prison island, Öcalan resisted in the form of theorising the dimensions of the cultural genocide regime and providing comprehensive solutions to the Kurdish question and chaos in the Middle East. His concepts of social organisation as Democratic Nations in the form of democratic autonomy for overcoming Capitalist Modernity, which is the pinnacle of centralized civilization and patriarchal rule, are a comprehensive response to the International Conspiracy. In Öcalan's writings, socialism is no longer the result of the progress of Modernity, but moreover itself the fundamental historical constant and a basic characteristic of the historical society. The core of socialism hides in the natural society and through history continues its existence as communal life in form of the moral and political society. The moral-political society was always internationalist, pluralist and equal. The paradigm of Democratic Modernity and its organisational form of Democratic Confederalism helps society to become conscious of itself, to build consciousness of societal freedom and truth, and therefore to live Democratic Socialism. The

revolutionary leadership of the Kurdish Movement defines the freedom struggle as change and reappropriation of historical values, natural sociality and holism at the level of a third nature in which the balance of nature and society is restored. Revolutionary Internationalism plays a strategic role in creating socialist consciousness, organising international alliances with other revolutionary forces, and defending societies. Building on the tradition of the socialist struggle for freedom, in the philosophy of revolutionary leadership the creation of the militant personality constitutes a basic element and substantial force for the reconstruction of social life. From the beginning, the PKK's understanding of militancy aimed to overcome the shortcomings of Real Socialism. Supplying society with its original power and reality can only be made possible by militants, who exemplify in themselves ideal values, conscientiousness and force of political initiative. Militancy means becoming the force of solution to social problems that arise from the influence of power and domination on society. Militancy is a way of life that lives radically ideational values of solidarity, affinity and responsibility. The PKK's understanding of militancy is primarily based on the historical line of prophecy, saints and dervishes and brings its way of ascetic life in a revolutionary form. Power of consciousness, effort, inner struggle and dedication to society, freedom and seeking the truth are fundamental characteristics. Above all, militant life means to reflect in oneself the social contradictions of class, nationality and gender and to overcome them through confrontation. Especially the gender struggle as the creation of free partnership life and non-sexualised true friendship plays a central role in the liberation of the personality from appropriation by the system. The revolutionary leadership embodies a unity of ideology (lived consciousness) and lifestyle that opposes the form of Biopower domination and submission. Militant personality means to socialise one's own desire as a platonic and universal love and thus to embody an attitude of conscientiousness, faith,

positivity and solution-seeking force; above all, militancy means acting according to the need of the situation and responsibility. First of all, the socialist struggle has to be won within one's own personality, albeit not in an individualised way, but in the form of a revolutionary organisation, in friendship and a collective alliance against the genocidal regimes of Capitalist Modernity. In this way, Militancy means the implementation of the revolution in one's own consciousness and conscience. The building of personality and the implementation of militant values is certainly a learning process that knows no end and can only be preceded by common negotiation, failure and overcoming of one's own boundaries and obstacles. In this way, individuals can become aware of their own strength and learn to take responsibility. Militants as followers of the revolutionary leadership, have the tasks to raise society's awareness, to help to build its independent self-organisation without state and its self-defense, and thus to lay the foundations of the social revolution. The development of a militant personality is tied to the creation of the revolutionary party - in Kurdistan, the Middle East, this role is played by the PKK, which implements the principle of revolutionary leadership in form of the guerrilla and militants

Internationalist practice

Building up the revolutionary leadership as a model of militant and ideational life is today of fundamental necessity for societies which are alienated from their sociality through the influence of the system. The phenomenon of revolutionary leadership, the revolution of Kurdistan and the question of the world revolution form a dialectical unity in our time. In our time and on a global scale, the leading role in revolutionary theory and practice has passed to Kurdistan. It became the center of this struggle, currently the last link in a chain of 150 years of socialist and liberation attempts. Like the turns of a

river, the experiences of 150 years of revolutionary spirit are connected to each other; from the first hunger strike of workers in the US, the first International in Europe over the Chinese revolution, Vietnam, the youth revolt of 68, the revolutions of Latin America, the experience of the urban Guerrilla until the resistance of Kobanê and the Guerrillas of the Kurdish mountains. Since the Zapatista uprising and the solidarity with Kobanê, this unity and global potential has become perceptible in the form of an International of Hope. Although internationally there are still few in numbers joining the Revolution of Kurdistan, the isolation and encirclement in which the system seeks to choke the culture and resistance of the Mesopotamian societies are broken on the ideational level. The spirit of revolutionary leadership, both in the person of Abdullah Öcalan and in the form of the PKK's struggle based on the heritage of the martyrs of the revolution, became a symbol of the struggle for universal liberation. The interest and the determination to understand the force of this revolutionary leadership is tangible globally. Communicating and linking these lines of struggle and the potential of Kurdistan's revolution to connect with progressive forces worldwide, is the task of the time and means to be committed to the heritage of all revolutions. What does this mean for a contemporary internationalist practice? According to the ideas formulated above, we can cite some points about how the tradition of revolutionary internationalism can be combined with the line of revolutionary leadership that has spawned Abdullah Öcalan's path and the PKK's struggle.

a) Fundamental tasks are spreading and discussing the writings and thoughts of Öcalan. The confrontation with the thinking that has produced the greatest and most advanced force against Capitalist Modernity, is a necessary effort to facilitate the exchange and discussion between progressive forces and struggling societies about our current situation, our revolutionary heritage, the potential

and the danger of the moment of history in which we find ourselves right now. It is necessary to gain the awareness of this moment of freedom, in which we can choose to become ourselves the conscious force in this ongoing war. Through international spreading of the experiences in Kurdistan and globally through media and networks, we are able to create both alertness and mutual commitment, on which we can build up a new Internationalist alliance.

b) Regarding the organisational point of view, it is important that the creation of revolutionary initiative and militancy does not accept the limits that the system wants to impose on us. If we want to become a force which is able to react to the attacks of the global domination system, we need strong connections with allies and a strong international organisation. What we need to talk about today, regarding the chaos of the Middle East and the social crisis of the West, is the creation of a new International. Especially in the centres of the western metropolis, an internationalist perception of the struggle for a life in dignity is important. Through self-education, organisational linkage and diplomatic defence of the struggles in Kurdistan and elsewhere, a broad base of a new socialist force can emerge. What the leading forces of the system are most anxious about is the spread of resisting places in the spirit of the PKK, which relate to each other, become a self-confident social force, and spread to other countries. As in Northern Kurdistan in 1976, there is now the possibility and necessity of spreading the revolutionary struggle from the areas of the Kurdish revolution to the countries of the Middle East and the western metropolis.

c) International involvement in the defence of the Kurdistan Revolution and the Middle East Renaissance is particularly important in military practice. The idea and the memory of the International Brigades is still alive in the freedom forces of Europe. Today the construction of a international military

force means the continuation of this line of tradition. Participation in the ranks of the defence forces of Kurdistan also relates as one of the tasks and responsibility of the youth of Europe and the West. Without the revolution in the Middle East, a revolution in the countries of the western metropolis in our time will not be possible. The international joining to the YPG / YPJ (People's/ Women's Defense Units) in Rojava were a good start, but were mostly late and remained limited in number - a fundamental weakness in the correct mediation and in the assessment of the situation revealed itself on the side of many of those connected to the Kurdish revolution. Experiences have been slowly accumulating in recent years, such as how the military organisation of Internationalists can look like. For the defence of the Revolution of Rojava and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, many Internationalists gave their lives - the continuation of their struggle is our responsibility to defend the values they have created. In particular, with a view to a possible revolution in Iran and in East Kurdistan, awareness is required to do justice to the historical situation at the right time and to oppose the utopia of a free society to the oldest state in the world. In the mythology of the socialist movements, there was the idea of a last war that will end all wars. This war happens in the form of a global war, centred around the Middle East and Kurdistan today. The path of revolutionary leadership is the solution to this war and for the struggle of a free society. In this sense, the experience of revolutionary leadership today undoubtedly represents a heritage of humanity. If we properly understand, to connect our search and the way to lead our lives, with the revolutionary leadership, we will be able to live corresponding intensively and to take the first step on the trace of revolutionary Internationalism to turn this war into the struggle of our liberation. This requires the courage, the hope, to overcome every border on the path of militant life through effort and the power of a deep consciousness and to insist on another world.



FROM THE FREE MOUNTAINS OF KURDISTAN TO THE SOUTHEAST OF MEXICO

In the free mountains of Kurdistan, internationalist and guerrilla fighter Michael Panser (Bager Nûjiyan) wrote in December 2018 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the uprising of dignity, which the resistance fighters of the Zapatista National Liberation Army EZLN carried out in Chiapas, southern Mexico, on New Year's Day 1994. "Your struggle and our struggles are one, indivisible, part of a global revolution, which in this sense is a cultural revolution: the struggle for a different way of life." Much later, it became known that Michael Panser fell martyr only some days later on December 14, 2018, in an air strike by the Turkish army in the Medya Defense Zones.

On the way to a revolutionary culture of global freedom struggle

In a time of uncertainty and chaos, the spirit of the revolution is arising again, and a time is beginning in which the strength of the imagination can give new hope to the struggle. The two times of the revolution are alive, they represent our movement, our history that continues. The one time, that is the long line of the struggle for freedom for a free society that began with Marx, the line of socialist utopia, of slow, patient growth, a gathering of experience and growing consciousness. The other time, that is the time of uprising, the moment of struggle, the split second of history in which everything is possible and which anticipates the coming world - our moment of freedom, of action. These two

times form a unity, our unity, the two sides of our history, our path. It is these two poles of our movement: the line of historical sociality, the legacy of Neolithic communality and prophetic-philosophical search for truth on the one hand, and the creative power of events on the other hand, which for a moment deeply shook the dominant reality, most recently in the uprising of 1968 - an uprising that is not over, but which shines as a secret fire until today and has become the starting point of a new line of struggle. This line connects worlds, times, creates connections from Vietnam to Mexico and Kurdistan, because we are all the children of this moment of hope.

The great fields of struggle that will determine our century are marked out. It is their reason, the reason of their system, which today more than ever threatens social life, life on this planet in general. It is the reason of the dominant man, the positive idea of the reason of the rational spirit, which has subjected nature and is shaping this world according to its will - male creation of power. Not only through the devastation of our planet and the horror of the industrial mass murder by fascism have we painfully experienced where the predominance of unrestricted reason, a patriarchal reason, the cold rationality of the white man, facing the "wild nature", the "primitive societies" and the feminine, can lead. We know that this reason, which divides, analyzes, splits into classes and hierarchies, splits living diversity and transforms it into dead objects and raw materials, is not the height of human cultural creation but its end; not the progressive society but its decay. It is our utopia of a free society against its domination by nation states, capitalism and industrial exploitation; against the isolation and domination of money our democratic confederalism that unites the communities. Against their lack of culture, assimilation and genocide; against the exploitation, destruction and alienation our culture of life, the spirit of the commune, our worldwide party, our taking sides.

What is at stake is the unfolding of a democratic culture that brings these thoughts to life. Because the free society is not an abstract idea, but our concrete way of living, our way of connecting with struggle and utopia on a daily basis. Our culture is meaning, is life, is creativity, is awareness, empathy and understanding; it is search, a process of acting, pausing, criticizing, overcoming. Our culture is self-organization, self-defense, a common struggle, daily creation - a rejection & creation, social activity beyond exploitation and dead work. Resistive culture today must find its beginning in the radical rejection of this capitalist modernity, in the consciousness and will to appropriate our lives - a rejection and creation. The human being, for us, is not a single individual, and certainly not the solitary man. We know that the human is society, communal life, organized around the woman, conscience and equality, a feeling & thinking, a common working & fighting, living in dignity. We are children of the motherline, of the culture of the Mother Goddess, which is nature, which is society, which is life, which is unity - a growing, an ending & becoming, a depth, experience and wisdom, a desire that does not go away. This culture is myth, it is knowledge, and it is thousands of years older than the system we face. It is as utopian as the strength of our imagination and as real as the resistance of the historical societies, the witches, the slaves, the prophets, the communal movements of all ages, as determined as the struggles of the working people, as dynamic as in '68, as flowing underground and dignified as the insurgents somewhere in the south of Mexico, carried by love and anger like the guerrillas in the free mountains; as shy and clear in its meaning as the tentative search for another world.

It is true that we are at war, but it is not war that defeats us. We lose in life if we do not manage to develop a culture of resistance and self-determined life. Just as the guerrilla is not only the force of defending a territory or the naked life;

it is the defender of society, and the bearer of a culture of free life, of responsibility and meaning, a force of creativity. This is the reason that has made the EZLN a symbol of the search for a different life and has inspired freedom-seekers on every continent. On New Year's Day, the EZLN's resisters celebrate the 25th anniversary of their Uprising of Dignity. Their struggle and our struggles are one, indivisible, part of a global revolution, which in this sense is a cultural revolution: the struggle for a different way of life.

It is time for a new alliance. Against their capitalist modernity, a new culture of diplomacy, an International of hope, which makes a democratic age, a democratic modernity possible.





¡Somos un río!
de lucha

CREATING SPACE FOR EACH OTHER IN OUR HEARTS

Conversation with a friend

For the brochure, we wanted to see Şehîd Bager through the eyes of the friends who have walked alongside him. As the Internationalist Commune, we spoke to a friend who learned about the Kurdish movement and paradigm through him. She first came to Rojava with him and she remains part of the revolution in Rojava today. We asked her how Şehîd Bager shaped the movement we are a part of today and what we can learn from him in the process of peace and a democratic society.

I'll just tell the story chronologically. I met Şehîd Bager after he had already been in the mountains for quite some time and had also made a delegation trip to Rojava with the YXK¹. He had just returned. They had gone with a fairly large group, and many friends decided to stay there. He and two others in particular decided that they wanted to come back to build an ideological group based on Rêber Apo's paradigm. They wanted to spread the paradigm throughout the German-speaking world and, in fact, throughout Europe, bringing the left into contact with Rêber Apo's ideas so that something new could emerge from it. That is why, in various housing projects, residential projects and practically all left-wing projects that wanted to live a different life, they tried to establish contacts and connect them to each other. These were places where they used to stay and between which they travelled. At that

1 - Yekîtiya Xwendekarên Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Students Unity.

point, I had decided not to continue my life and my political struggle in its previous form because I wasn't making real changes. But I didn't know exactly what I could do instead. Revolutionary movements had always fascinated me, but for me, revolution was far away, unreachable. I had grown up with the narrative of the end of history and had no hope that a revolution would ever be possible again. I got to know Şehîd Bager, so to speak, because of this shared search. At that time, I knew nothing about Kurdistan, the Kurdish movement and its struggle for women's freedom. A friend told him about me and then he wrote me a message: "I heard you're searching. It would be nice if we could meet... P.S. And there's also lots of chocolate."

That was another side of Şehîd Bager, to give meaning. Sometimes we had one bar of chocolate for ten people and then we broke it down into the smallest pieces and ate it together. In the end, everyone might have gotten a small part, but everyone ate it in ten pieces and we celebrated the joy that comes when we can share something beautiful together. We met again and again, discussing the situation in the world, the situation of the left, the situation of the women's movement. We spoke about how we want to live, always going deeper in our conversations. He had a personality that enabled him to always engage with others in such a way that their dreams and visions developed from those discussions. He himself was profoundly imaginative and simply incredibly ambitious. The difficulty for him was finding the path to putting these strengths into practice. He was aware of this issue, so always tried to work collectively and do everything alongside friends so each brought their different strengths and complemented each other.

We wanted change and went everywhere. But wherever we went, people spoke to us saying things like, "Oh, you want to change things? Who do you think you are? We've got 20 years of experience, you just don't understand yet."

Your heads are all messed up. How can you talk about revolution, nothing works here in Germany. The only thing we can do is make sure we don't make it worse." Stuff like that. It was really exhausting to be constantly confronted with this despair and disbelief in change, and everyone had built themselves a niche where they couldn't be confronted with the reality that they had to do more, had to fight a bigger battle; it was really mentally draining for us. So we did our best to have each others back.

This was something I admired about Şehîd Bager. It really got him down too, but he never lost his big ideas, his faith and his hope. Now I can understand that, but back then I didn't know any of that, I hadn't read any defense writings², I hadn't met any friends from the movement. That's why I was so impressed that he just kept going. People said terrible things to him. Of course, not everyone was like that, and we also found people everywhere who were really open, listened to us and supported us a lot.

We also had a profound gender struggle. Şehîd Bager always understood theoretically that women are the vanguards. Şehîd Zîlan³ and Şehîd Vîyan⁴ were always the examples he took as guidance. In the Kurdish movement, too, he always

2 - After his arrest in 1999, Abdullah Öcalan formulated the theoretical basis for the new paradigm of the Kurdish freedom movement. He submitted his works as a defence in court, and they were later published as books.

3 - Şehîd Zîlan carried out the first Fedayî action, an action where she sacrificed her life. In doing so, she fundamentally changed the image of women in the Kurdish freedom movement and played a decisive role in shaping the path of women's liberation that the movement has taken. She became a martyr on 30 June 1996.

4 - Şehîd Vîyan also carried out a Fedayî action on the evening of 1 February 2006. In the Heftanîn region, she burned herself to death in protest against the conspiracy against Abdullah Öcalan and the policy of isolation against him.

looked up to the women, who were the vanguards for him, and he always wanted to learn from them. He really always tried to connect women with one another, bringing them in contact instead of binding them to himself. He took his dealings with men seriously, trying to wage a struggle with his own gender and building real friendships out of that as well. He had definitely depended on the emotional support of women, because his male friendships did not provide that. That was all ten years ago. Back then, things weren't as advanced as they are now, especially in terms of understanding and practice. We were just beginning to know the concepts of the movement, such as "free living together" (hevjiyana azad) and "killing the dominant man within yourself," and simply often misunderstood or misapplied them. This is what gave rise to major difficulties in our gender struggle.

After some time we reached a point where we realised that we didn't understand ourselves well enough yet and that we didn't have enough strength to put in practice what we had imagined. At that time, there was a call from Rêber Apo, who said that Rojava should be a place of education for all revolutionaries across the world. Hearing this call, we went to Rojava. With what we saw in Rojava we reflected the experiences we had in Germany. We saw how society organises itself here; how the youth organises themselves and how the women organise themselves. We discussed everything we had tried in Germany with our friends here. Based on their feedback, Şehîd Bager came to the conclusion that he needed to work on himself even more. That's why he went to Şengal. He needed time to deepen his self-understanding, living completely within collective structures. These questions were also an important issue for him: how to live collectively, how to live in connection to society? Because he grew up in East Germany, and he also wrote in his letters about how the fall of the Berlin Wall has been a rupture while he was growing up. That was when he

was two years old. On the one hand it was a total disruption in his family's life, especially for his mother. It was also a total breaking point in his personal life. From then, collective, socialist living was an ongoing point of struggle in his life.

Another important issue for him was this fear in social relationships. He was an open person inside and always wanted to build friendship. He did everything he could and put in lots of effort. Though, he struggled to cope with the coldness he so often faced from others. I felt that he wasn't cut out for the types of cold relationships we are taught to build in the patriarchal system.

When we came to Rojava, I got to know him as if he were a new person because he blossomed like never before. I didn't speak Kurdish at the time, so I didn't understand what he talked about with the Kurdish friends. But when he spoke with them, I could tell from his posture, his relaxed manner and his smile that he was in his element. I always had the feeling that he was himself when he was with Kurdish people, but with others it just didn't work. This also had to do with the pressures of patriarchal masculinity leaving him always feeling, "I have to prove myself, I have to live up to an image, I have to be this way and that way." That put a lot of pressure on him. This wasn't his natural way of being.

On the other hand, his visionary nature didn't really fit in with the circles he moved in. He had lots of friends and friendships that were very dear to him, and he tried everything to stay in touch with them and move forward together. But he simply couldn't accept the status quo and therefore couldn't accept the character traits we have learned through living in capitalist modernity. I think people were impressed by him. But because he wasn't so normal, so hopeless, so cold, many didn't take him seriously or didn't know how to deal with him. They found him uncomfortable because he confronted them with their uglier parts so that

their beautiful parts could take more space. This was what love and friendship meant for him, but for many it was too difficult. In Kurdish society, that was never a problem; it was there he found what he was looking for - a collective life of constant struggle and movement. You could see that he belonged here. But not because he didn't like his family, friends and society in Germany. What stood out to me was his love for Rêber Apo. He never tried to convince anyone, but he was simply convinced himself. At some point he came and said, "I have to improve my Turkish again. I've already started, but I've realised once more that I really want to understand Rêber Apo. It's not enough for me to read the translation, I really want to know what he's saying." And so he began learning Turkish and reading the defense writings in Turkish.

When he was frustrated with someone or something, when a problem arose, he would always sit down to read from the defence writings or *Beyond State, Power and Violence* to better understand the problem. He would come back to discuss how we could find a solution. And when we had made progress, he would always say: "Rêber Apo is so wise... And so are we." He admired him deeply. He did not have an only philosophical approach to Rêber Apo, but also a loving one.

At that time he spoke constantly about the International. This is the question we are asking ourselves again more intensively with the beginning of the new phase that was initiated by Rêber Apo's call.⁵ What did you imagine this to mean? Are these thoughts that were further developed with the new phase?

5 - On 27 February 2025, Abdullah Öcalan called for a new phase for the Kurdish movement. This phase is particularly marked by democratic society and peace. At the same time, he called on the PKK to dissolve.

Of course, I always wished that he were still alive. And since Rêber Apo put internationalism back on the agenda, I always thought that he would have played a very important role now. That he simply fell too soon. Without him, we would not have reached the point where we are now. At that time, we discussed a new internationalism a lot. We were convinced we needed to connect the global struggles in order to build the necessary strength. He was everywhere, trying to connect everything. For example, this text on the Zapatistas.⁶

He spoke about the struggles in the mountains, how much is happening in the world, how similar the struggles across the world are, and how important it is for us to strengthen each other by building connections. He dreamed of an exchange between the Zapatistas and the Kurdish movement. That was his big dream. It was completely clear to him that these were the two movements fighting in the most meaningful way in this world, that they definitely belonged together and that are actually learning from each other now. He was not the only part of making this happen, but he made a huge contribution to the work. He was also good at communicating, discussing theory and ideology with friends in a way that conveyed the significance of movements like the Zapatistas. He and his work were really important, and his friends loved him and became very impressed by him, and by how he managed to connect people and movements together.

Before we went to meet a new friend, he spoke to me about her in advance. "This friend is so good at this or that, she's really great, she's interested in this and that..." He'd give the friend so much meaning before I had even met her – making sure that I already knew and liked her and understood why she was such an important person. By speaking to me about friends in advance, it made it possible

6 - The text is on page 79 of this brochure.

for me to build connections with people I otherwise would have been too different to in order to connect. But he told me about another person and, in the same way, told this person about me. It wasn't only something like, "She's really good at writing," but the things he emphasised were characterised by vision and big thinking, by the question of what revolutionary qualities we have and how they fit together.

He saw people's potentials and not only as they are. Not just how she had become, but how she could become in the struggle. That's what he told us. He practically created space in the hearts of friends for others, and he did the same with movements. All the people I saw who knew him told me that he had told them so much about the Zapatistas. He always had the music of the Zapatistas with him, he always had the stories of Subcommandante Marcos with him, and told these stories in Kurdish. He had been there and told us how he had experienced it. He spoke about their difficulties and their ideology and, above all, about the significance of the struggles they are waging and how they can influence each other. Few people can do that, giving meaning, seeing their potential and knowing how to approach things accordingly.

We discussed with many, many friends in Rojava how we can build a revolutionary movement worldwide and how we can implement Rêber Apo's paradigm in our context - what revolution actually means. Seeing the practical implementation of the revolution in Rojava deeply impressed us and made us aware of the depth and breadth that a revolutionary struggle, waged together with society, requires. Our friends in Rojava told us how, in the midst of all the attacks, they quickly had to ensure that millions of people were provided with at least the bare minimum, and how they suddenly became responsible for the oil production facilities because the vast majority of experts

had left the region. We realised that we cannot simply do what we think is right, but that we must share all our ideas and visions with society and convince them of them. Above all, we realised the importance of autonomous women's organisation for the liberation of society as a whole. I think it became clear to us at that time that we are fighting the same struggle and that if we want to realise our dreams, we must do so with the movement. For us, the decision was either to continue the struggle with the movement or to eventually no longer be able to fight, or to settle into a small niche because the organisation as a whole was simply too weak, fragmented and ineffective.

At that time, there were few internationalist structures in Rojava, and in Germany they were also only setting up. We saw very little contact in Europe between organised Kurdish society and the left. It became clear that we needed many people from different contexts to dedicate their lives to the struggle and to wage this struggle within the movement. It was the confirmation and actualisation of the internationalist spirit of the movement, which had been inherent in it from the beginning and which Rêber Apo always gave great importance to. All our discussions - getting to know and understand each other, where we come from, how we grew up, how the system of domination affected us, etc... This refined and strengthened our analysis, deepening our ability to deal with diversity and solve problems together, understanding the mysteries of life in order to eventually become free people. This process has strengthened us as a freedom movement for humanity. All of this made obvious the reasons that Rêber Apo made his call. We needed strength, including ideological and quantitative, to establish a new International.

It is important to consider all these questions frankly again after the call. The question of whether or not to join this struggle cannot be a question of individual needs. It

requires honest reflection: are there certain things, certain privileges, that we simply do not want to give up? Is it really a privilege to live in such a world and to feel as if we have no influence on it? Is it a privilege to live in a small bubble while the world around us is being destroyed? I'm not sure, I could never sleep at night living this way...

There is no validity any more in the argument that the Kurdish movement is only fighting in Kurdistan and that all those who decide to live and fight in Kurdistan have turned their backs on their own society. Rêber Apo made it very clear in his call that the struggle for a democratic society must be fought by all of us everywhere. We will not be able to build a democratic society in just one place. We are all connected. The struggles being fought in Kurdistan influence the possibilities for struggles in Europe and vice versa. It is therefore more a question of how we see ourselves as part of this world, how much we care, and how much responsibility we are willing to take on. It is easy to abandon our responsibilities to make change, instead blaming powerful white men for the way things are. This is what we are encouraged to do, to dismiss our own abilities to make change.

I can perhaps understand when people say "I am not capable of this. I do not feel like a revolutionary, it is too big for me." And that, too, is a question of perspective. "No revolutionary has ever fallen from the sky," as the saying goes. We weren't born revolutionaries either. We all try to use every moment of our lives to learn, gain experience, improve our methods and thus build our revolutionary personality. And we don't do this alone. We do it through interaction with our friends and society, who give us feedback, perhaps not always verbal. In this way, we set each other in motion and, by changing ourselves, we also change the world.

Today, there are many more opportunities to work together. If we want to take this seriously, then Rêber Apo's call also means that we dedicate our lives and all our abilities to the struggle for building democratic societies everywhere in the world. The decision is: do I throw myself into it completely and do everything for it, or do I do some things with reservations? Do I still have one foot in "safety"? People in Europe have this option, but here in Rojava, where the war is being fought with full physical force, you don't have that choice. War comes directly to you and doesn't ask whether you want to fight or not. And that's how it is in many places around the world – and if things continue like this, this will probably soon be the case in Europe too. The struggle for peace is not a romanticised idea that lacks radicalism. Peace is the prerequisite for a dignified and free life, and in order to create peace, democratic societies are needed everywhere. Peace is not the absence of war, but the building of a society that recognises and values diversity and finds an appropriate political system to organise a free and collective life. The struggle for peace is what unites our societies.

And if we no longer ask ourselves so much the question of "whether?" and "where?", then we have much more room for the more important question: "how?" do we fight our struggle? This is the question that moves us forward together.

Of course, we are asking ourselves these questions too. An observation that Şehîd Bager wrote in a letter home made quite an impression on me: "What is impressive is how people have built up such trust in such a short time that they have the will to go all the way, until the end."

During our time in Germany, we had a very strong bond. Our understanding of friendship meant that we were stuck together, and that we belonged together. No one can leave

a bond like that. But, it can be dangerous for connection to become only about itself, and no longer about what you're doing together and why, and what your shared goal is. The connection becomes too narrow, too inflexible, and, it eventually breaks. That's the stark thing about the movement: connection remains strong, but the movement has become so big that it has a flexibility that makes it less fragile. And why has it become so big? Because the goals are clear and because it is clear that the goals will be achieved as well. Because it is really being put into practice. Because everyone feels responsible for it. The focus is not on our interpersonal relationships for their sake alone, but on the common understanding that our relationships serve as a base for achieving our goals. It is clear to everyone that we cannot fight alone. We need each other. Everyone has developed such a strong sense of responsibility that they know they cannot wait for someone else to liberate them, to do everything and then simply copy them, but rather that we all build something together.

What Şehîd Bager had learned in the Kurdish freedom movement, he sought to build himself. When he realised that his strength was not enough, that this was not something that an individual or a small group could achieve, his path became clearer. He had such a great passion, a real desire for collective life and struggle, that when he realised that this path could not continue in Germany, he did not want to keep attempting something that would not work. He knew he would be able to continue his path by joining the movement, where he would find the strength to walk it. When people ask themselves "should we go back to our countries or should we stay in Kurdistan?", they are not asking the most important question. The important thing is to know what we want, that we are willing to fight for it, and that we share this path with many, in Kurdistan and across the world.

“IN A TIME OF
UNCERTAINTY AND CHAOS,
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