

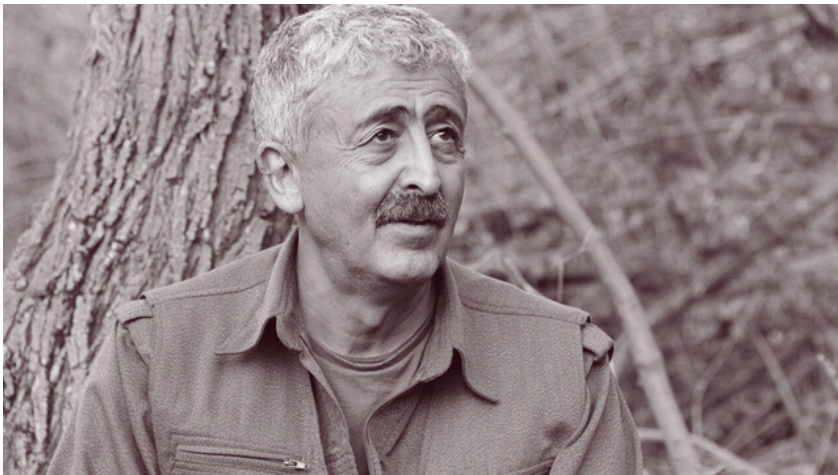


# **THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE CHAOS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**OUR STRATEGIC ALLIES ARE  
THE ANTI-SYSTEMIC FORCES  
OF THE WORLD**

**- RIZA ALTUN -**

[riseup4rojava.org](http://riseup4rojava.org)



Riza Altun (born January 1, 1956, in Kayseri – martyred September 25, 2019 in Southern Kurdistan) was a leading figure in the Kurdish political movement and one of the founding members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Active in the movement since the late 1970s, he was imprisoned from 1980 until 1995, during which time he played a major role in the prison resistance. Over the years, he held various positions in the organization, including responsibilities in its political and foreign affairs branches, and managed operations across regions such as Iran and Europe. The PKK honored him as a “symbol of all those who walk together in comradeship on the road to freedom.”

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## **PREFACE BY THE INTERNATIONALIST COMMUNE OF ROJAVA**

In 2018, during an interview in the mountains of Southern Kurdistan, Riza Altun—founding member of the PKK—described the unfolding global crisis as the Third World War, a systemic collapse with its roots in Capitalist Modernity. Seven years later, his words ring more urgently than ever.

The redesigning of the Middle East in the context of World War III is clearly taking shape. The Assad regime in Syria has been overthrown and, in cooperation with the USA, Israel is trying to assert its hegemonic claims in the region, while Turkey has continued to lose importance in the USA's regional concept. Turkey's role as a key partner in the USA and Israel's strategies for the region was largely consolidated during the Cold War, particularly as a bulwark against communism and as a strategic front for Israel. However, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the evolving interests of the hegemoninc powers in the region, Turkey's strategic importance has shifted. The escalation in the war between Israel and Iran has also set off alarm bells in Ankara: Bahçeli, leader of the fascist MHP, warning: "The operation against Iran is, in one aspect, a sinister message directed at Turkey." Bahçeli's warning highlights why the Turkish state can no longer ignore the strategic necessity of dialogue with the Kurdish freedom movement, and especially with Öcalan.

In this dangerous moment for the region, Abdullah Öcalan intervened with his "Call for Peace and a Democratic Society," urging the movement to step into a new era. The party followed his call to end the armed struggle and dissolve the PKK with its party congress on May 5–7. After the two-day congress in the mountains of Kurdistan, the party announced its dissolution in order to pave the way for a form of struggle that corresponds to the New Paradigm and does away with the dogmatism and other burden of real socialism. The goal is to continue the fight for democratic socialism on an international level



and organize Democratic Confederalism everywhere on the basis of Women's Freedom, Ecology and Radical Democracy.

During the congress it was also announced that Rıza Altun, co-founder of the party had fallen on September 25, 2019 due to an Turkish airstrike in the Qandil mountains. We republish this interview not only to commemorate his lifelong struggle for a free life, but because his analysis continues to enlighten our current reality: The structural crisis of capitalism and global instability have further intensified—especially in light of the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, and Iran. Capitalist modernity cannot resolve its own contradictions, and the systemic nature of the global economic and environmental crises has further intensified. To develop a force from the countless resistances, movements, and countervailing powers, we need strategic alliances. As Öcalan explains at the end of his perspective for the last PKK party congress, it is time for a new International: "This resolution also necessitates a new International. It would be a sound and historic step to initiate an internationalist effort with our friends—without delay."

This text, and the evaluations of Rıza Altun, remain an excellent guide for those seeking to unite the anti-systemic forces of our time—youth, women, the oppressed, and all those fighting for a Free Life worldwide.

**Internationalist Commune of Rojava,  
29.06.2025**



## **THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE CHAOS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

We have to deal with the global system, because without understanding this system we cannot understand the situation in the Middle East. Our basic assumption is that capitalism, which has been the dominant system for 400 to 500 years, is currently in a structural crisis. In our opinion, this crisis is not a periodic crisis, which occurs again and again under capitalism. It is so profound that capitalist modernity will either tackle the problem at its root and renew itself completely to keep itself alive, or face a comprehensive crisis without a foreseeable course and outcome. This crisis is very visible. The capitalist system with its centers in the USA and Europe is going through a deep political, cultural and economic crisis. The consequences can be felt much more clearly in the other parts of the world than in the system's centers. We call this state of chaos the Third World War. But it is very different from the first two world wars. Its consequences can be observed in different ways all over the world. This war is an expression of the existing chaos. The consequences of the crisis can be felt in different ways in different parts of the world. For some time South America was a center of crisis to which international politics devoted its attention. Later it was Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Then the Caucasus. All these are regional manifestations of the general structural crisis of the system. Interventions and wars took place in all these parts of the world. But it was not possible to develop far-reaching solutions. The crisis could therefore not be overcome. The most recent expression of the general crisis is the chaos in the Middle East. Especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the crisis has gradually deepened and expanded. From time to time it openly leads to wars. The current situation in the Middle East is an expression of these conditions. Those who follow the situation closely can see the following: The system is looking for ways out of the crisis. Each imperialist country designs and pursues its own plans to overcome the crisis.

They are in contradictions and struggles with each other. At the same time, they are competing on a global level, creating global chaos. To make it clearer, I would like to give a concrete example: Let us take a look at the USA under Trump. On one hand, the USA, together with Europe, is part of an international coalition that intervenes in various parts of the world within the framework of a common policy. On the other hand, the USA is in great contradictions and conflicts with other actors. We can also consider Britain's withdrawal from the European Union or the contradictions between France and Germany as further examples of the existing contradictions. Especially the relations and contradictions between the USA and Germany, the USA and Great Britain but also the USA and France are an expression of the comprehensive crisis. The European countries pursue a policy in which, on one side, they take their place within the global hegemony project designed by the USA, but, on the other hand, they distance themselves from it and demand their share within the global system. While the two global powers, the USA and Russia, are engaged in intense conflict with each other, the USA is trying to establish a common front against Russia within the framework of an alliance with its European partners. At the same time, there are European countries that don't want to give up their relations with Russia. While the USA is developing a new policy towards Iran to enforce its own hegemony in the Middle East, Germany, France and Great Britain are reacting in a reserved manner and are trying to stay out of this conflict as far as possible. Also, the relations and contradictions between the USA and Turkey take on new dimensions. They are characterized by constant ups and downs. Some European countries, especially Germany, are trying to pursue a completely different policy and put their relations with Turkey on a new level. Apart from that, it is also very interesting to look at the economic level and trade relations, for example the current policy of punitive tariffs. All these developments are facets of the global crisis. The global superpowers like the US, Russia and China are part of this crisis, as is the EU.

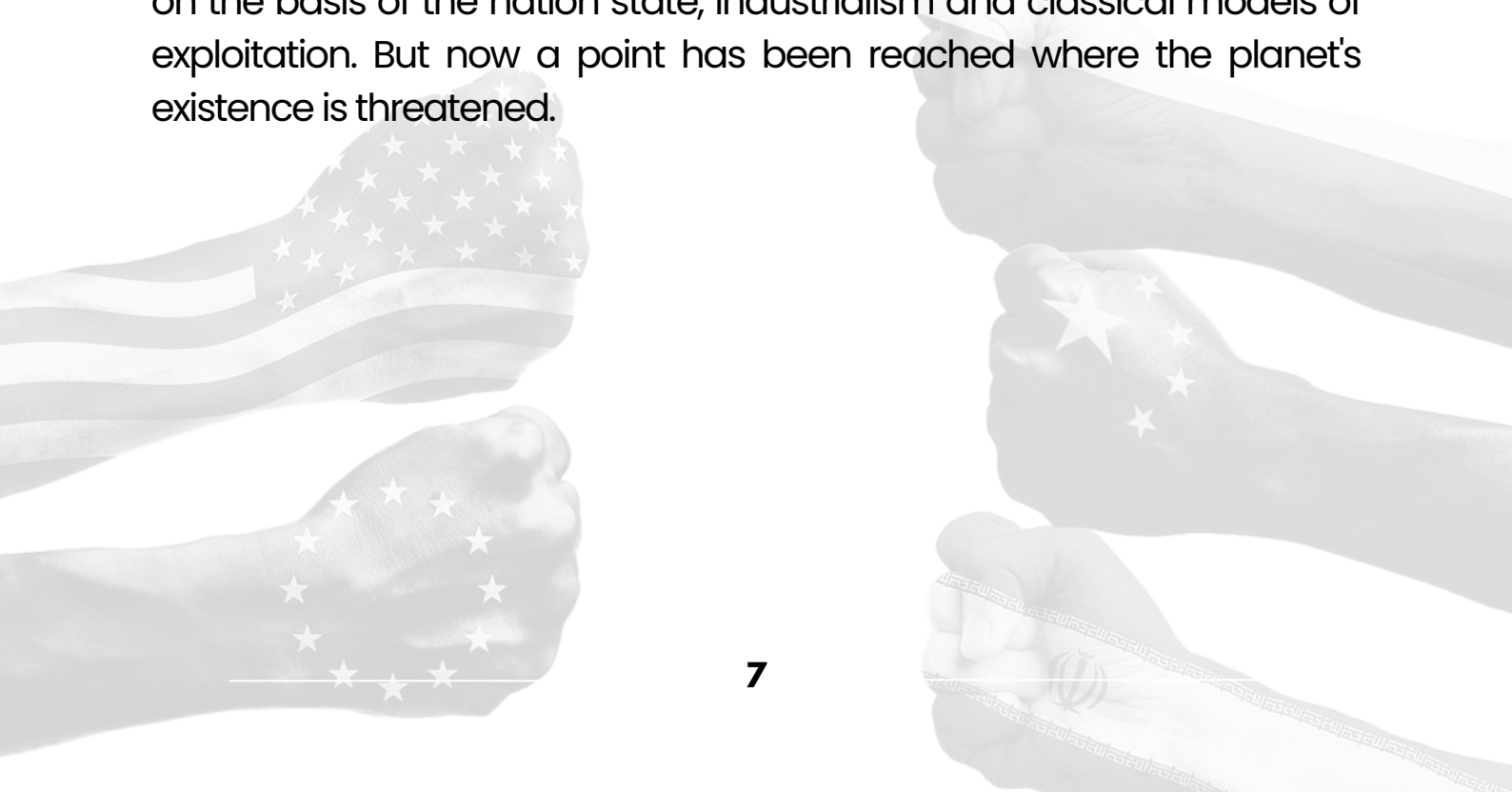
On one hand, it [the EU] is clearly taking one side of the conflict and, on the other hand, it is trying to develop an independent position. All these actors are pursuing their own policies to overcome the crisis. However, we will see whether they will really manage to find a way out of the crisis and whether capitalist modernity can take on a new form, or whether capitalism will collapse. Thus, we call this situation the Third World War. However, this war does not resemble the logic of the first two world wars or classic wars in which the states let their armies fight each other on the battlefield. Instead, they are all part of this world war, which is waged in different ways and with different means. Nobody stands outside this global chaos. There is no part of the world that is not affected. Even if one were to try, one could not name a country or a society that in one way or another would not be affected by the chaos. Even any small country in the Far East feels the consequences of the global crisis. It feels the consequences of the Third World War in some way. Both in the form of external interventions and in the form of internal problems triggered by the general crisis. Perhaps individuals are not aware of it, but even at the level of the individual there is no one who is not affected by the current chaos. Everyone is definitely feeling the consequences. On economic, social, cultural and all other levels, every human being in the world is definitely feeling the consequences of this chaos.

At this point, there are some important questions that we should take a closer look at:

What does capitalist modernity think in this situation? What kind of solutions is it looking for? What are its plans? What does it want to do? Are all these real solutions?

All these questions are very important. There are global superpowers who represent the system. They maintain relationships with each other and at the same time they are in contradiction with each other. On one hand, they want to renew the global system, while, on the other hand, they want to build their own global system and hegemony within the framework of conflicts and contradictions. At the top is the USA, whose position resembles that of a 'gendarmier of the system'. Although the capitalist system was developed in Europe and its roots are the oldest there, Europe ceded its own pioneering role to the USA after 1945. Since then it has tried to maintain its own position in the global system by maintaining a balance with the USA. Especially after the Second World War, Europe recognized the USA as a global superpower and pursued a policy aimed at securing its own existence in the shadow of the USA. The current chaos, however, has led Europe to maintain such relations with the USA and at the same time to enter into contradictions with the USA in order to maintain its own position. If we look at the recent tensions between these two actors, we can see Europe's intention to establish a different balance. Europe is trying to do this by contradicting US hegemony and policy and by intensifying relations with many other countries. This situation has now led the USA to refuse to support Europe as it has done in the past and to build up increasing economic and military pressure. Russia has succeeded in rebuilding itself since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The country claims to compete with the USA in becoming a global superpower again. Asian countries such as China, India and Indonesia also claim to be global powers on the basis of their economic strength.

We can take a closer look at the politics of individual countries in the context of the ongoing crisis of capitalist modernity. Russia is trying to find a way out of the crisis through traditional concepts such as the nation state and centralism. However, Russia will by no means succeed on this path. China is pursuing a policy of intensified exploitation and a nation-state paradigm. These powers are trying to find a place in the new system on the basis of capitalist methods that are 100 to 200 years old. However, this approach will definitely not lead to any solution. Rather, it will deepen the existing crisis and chaos. This is what we are already seeing. Since these two powers only later became part of the global system, they do not have extensive experience with capitalism. They, therefore, have a backward-looking capitalist mentality. Russian policy is aimed at forcing others into their own political-military hegemony. China is trying to do the same with a kind of hyper-exploitation of its own workforce. These are all phenomena that belong to the past of capitalism. Building a global hegemony on the basis of these approaches will not be possible. Europe is the real founder of the capitalist system and it, therefore, has the most extensive experience with this system. The European Union is a model with which the European states have predicted very well that the crisis of capitalism is imminent. With the help of the EU, they are trying to find a way out of the crisis. The world of Europe was shaped on the basis of the nation state, industrialism and classical models of exploitation. But now a point has been reached where the planet's existence is threatened.





Hence, the need to renew the system. This renewal is a project to change or mitigate the problematic aspects. The removal of national borders, the removal of customs duties, the development of a common policy, e.g. concerning the economy, and similar features are all facets of this quest for a way out of the EU crisis. These are all developments that we should take very seriously. The softening of the nation-state system, the removal of customs duties, the weakening of nationalism – all these touch the foundations of capitalism. The nation state, customs duties or borders are basic tools of capitalism. But within the EU, all these things are overcome to some extent. Not completely, but a policy is being pursued to create a much more flexible and liberal world. However, this project was only developed for the European countries. It has, therefore, not been possible to turn the project into a solution for the whole world. Instead of moving towards a new global system, this project became Europe's attempt to secure its own position in a changing world. Perhaps Europe has succeeded in mitigating its own problems, but at the international level the exact opposite has happened. The deep crisis has continued. Thus, the EU model has not managed to become a solution for the whole world. Since the EU has not succeeded in becoming an adequate solution and in overcoming the crisis, problems arise within the EU. Britain's withdrawal from the EU is an example of this. But Trump's almost daily statements towards the EU make it also appear as a project on the brink of failure. Apart from the EU project, there is no other project from Europe to solve the global crisis. Neither is there an approach by the EU as a whole, nor by individual European countries through interventions in other regions of the world, to find answers to the crisis. Rather, each country tries to protect its own interests by means of bilateral agreements alone. All this can lead to major disasters.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the USA became the only global superpower. Its current position looks something like this: In the past it lived out the drunkenness and comfort of a superpower, but today it feels the responsibility that comes with its position.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also meant that from now on there was no alternative power to the USA. Liberal capitalism proclaimed its victory and declared itself to be 'the end of history'. The fact that this was not the case became clear shortly afterwards. After all, the crisis of capitalist modernity has reached a very large scale. The global problems are very comprehensive and profound. In the past, the existence of the Soviet Union led to a balance. With the dissolution of this equilibrium, all existing problems came to light. The USA became the sole responsible entity for all these problems. Thus, step by step, the real problem was understood. It is important to see what form the world system took after the end of the Soviet Union. The events of the past 500 years represent a great chaos anyway. Therefore, it was necessary to find a new form for the system in order to find ways out of the crisis. Otherwise it would have been impossible to overcome chaos. Everything began to shake back then. On one hand, the drunkenness of success, on the other hand, the inability to develop solutions to the constantly emerging problems and the associated hopelessness. The phase at that time was characterized by this interesting mixture. Of course, it was attempted to overcome this situation in the course of time. But all the attempts at a solution at that time were nothing more than the repetition of the past. On one hand, the demonstration of political-military hegemony, violence and economic pressure tried to force everyone to follow. On the other hand, with limited reforms, attempts were made to introduce certain innovations within capitalism. Thus, it was a very interesting opportunist attitude. Both approaches do not lead to viable results, because while the USA tries to establish a new balance according to its own interests, the old conditions resist against that. While, for example, certain relaxations and renewals are carried out at the level of the nation states, resistance arises against them. This in turn prevents a solution from being found. The powers that represent the status quo in the world and the nation-state approach take a position that do not accept any changes in relation to themselves.



Saving capitalism with the same means that led it into this crisis does not seem to be a very promising way. We can see this very clearly at the moment. The states that have existed for a long time in harmony with the global system now all have conflicts with each other. Even Turkey and the United States are currently engaged in a bitter dispute. Turkey is also in serious conflict with the EU. Iran is in conflicts with the world. Likewise, Brazil is in a similar position. The same applies to Latin America. They all have conflicts with each other. We can therefore, see that there is global chaos. At the same time, we have to recognize that there is no real project in sight at the moment that would be a way out of this chaos. Thus, there is no project that could extend the life of capitalism by 100 or 200 years through renewal. Instead, the pragmatic interests of the individual actors are much more important. They all try to preserve their own share and their own power according to the current economic situation. However, nobody sees the light at the end of the tunnel. Everyone is so busy protecting their day-to-day interests that they cannot draw up any plans for the future. In order to understand what is currently happening in the Middle East, one must understand the perspective and situation of the global system. The general situation in the Middle East is neither isolated from the global system, nor are current events in the Middle East independent of the global system.



On the contrary, current developments are the regional expressions of the global systemic crisis. Since the Middle East is much more autonomous historically, socially, and in the nature of its status quo, the contradictions emerge in such a massive way that the region becomes a center of conflict. The Middle East and the Asian region must not be equated with other parts or countries of the world. The situation here is very peculiar. Without securing supremacy over the Middle East, one cannot establish a global system, nor make any changes to the existing system. After all, this region is marked by its very own events. Historically, the Middle East is the region with the oldest traces of social life. It is the center of social development and the oldest civilizations, much older than in Europe and other parts of the world. Deeply rooted cultures and social structures exist here. As the capitalist contradictions come together with the historical contradictions of the region, the current chaos arises. This is why the region has become a center where the destiny of the world will be decided. To make that even clearer: The situation in Latin America was very chaotic for a while. However, this chaos was alleviated within 10 to 15 years, without, of course, finding a solution to the real problems. Latin America, therefore, moved out of the global focus. Later, Eastern Europe and the Balkans came onto the agenda. Here, too, the root of the problem was not addressed. Nevertheless, a conflict lasting five to six years managed to rearrange the region and thereby to guarantee a certain peace. In the Caucasus, we are currently experiencing the same. In the Middle East, however, the problem is deepening and seems increasingly insoluble. In the current situation, it is impossible to predict when the problem will be solved.

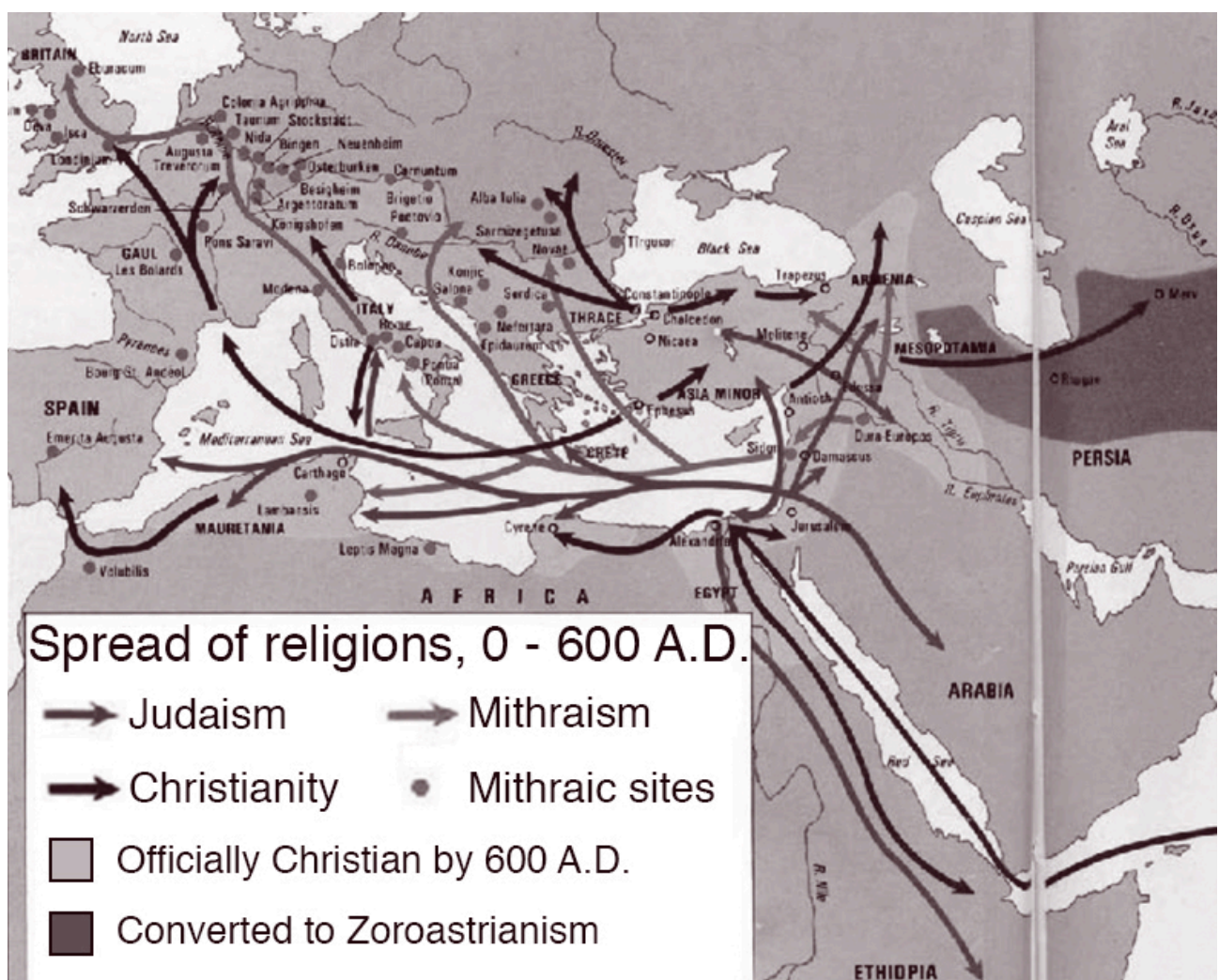
Today, the Middle East is the center of all political-military contradictions and conflicts of the global powers. All global powers that shape the destiny of the world are active in the Middle East. They are politically represented here and have military bases on the ground. The USA is active in the Middle East with all its strength, just like every single European country.

China and Russia are also represented in the region with all their power. What are all these powers doing in the Middle East? It is not enough to look at the situation just from the background of competition for energy resources. Of course, it is important to have them, but if we approach the situation scientifically, we will see that there are only energy reserves in the region for the next 40 to 50 years. For energy reserves that will run out within the next 50 years, the whole world will not be at war in the Middle East. Raw materials may be one of the reasons, but not the decisive one. There must, therefore, be a very different reason why all these countries are active here in the region.

Firstly, the Middle East is a theater of war, an expression of the global crisis. The whole region has become a theater of war for all powers. Secondly, all actors know that you have to control the Middle East in order to rule the world. Today in the Middle East, there are not only the global powers, which I listed above. Germany, the Netherlands, France or England are all militarily active in the region. They all came to the Middle East with their rockets and tanks and organize a kind of arms fair here. However, these countries are not the only ones. Indeed, everyone is here. All global powers and regional actors like Turkey, Iran or Iraq are active here in the region, especially in Syria. Whenever wars break out in a particular country, all these powers become active. Just as all the world powers are represented in the Middle East, regional powers such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran are also intervening in Syria, creating a huge chaos. They are all part of the conflict and the global crisis. We can, thus, say the following: At the moment, there are no discernible developments that could stand for a way out of the global crisis and chaos. Instead, a world system is developing whose conflicts and crises are increasingly deepening and widening. The global crisis is more evident in the Middle East; thus, outside the centers of capitalist modernity. Since the capitalist forces see the Middle East as the center where they can carry out their struggles and contradictions and thus weakening their crisis, they do not develop perspectives for a solution of the crisis in the region.

The relations that are built up within the framework of this war are not much more than the attempt to secure one's own share of hegemony and profits. These are also the causes of the current crisis. It would, therefore, be very naïve to expect that a solution to the problems in the Middle East will be found in the near future. The current problems will become even worse, take on new forms and persist in this way. Let us talk in more detail about the situation in the Middle East. It is important to look closely at the situation in the region in order to develop a proper understanding of current events and what underlies them. The Middle East is a region with a long history. The beginnings of human history lies to a significant extent here in the region. Here, the Neolithic revolution took place, huge civilisations and empires emerged. People who do not know the region well regard the Middle East as a backward and not as a particularly ancient area. That is of course wrong. Instead, the Middle East must be seen as a historical center of social development from which people spread throughout the world after emigrating from the African continent. We must also see that the Neolithic reached its peak in the Middle East. If we take all this into account, we can understand very well why this region has such an ancient and comprehensive significance. It is very important to see that the region was the center of the Neolithic. The geography of the Middle East led to the first socialization of humankind. From here, sociality as a form of life and organization spread all over the world. At the same time, the region is also the place where civilization came into being, i.e. what we describe as class society and the state. The emergence of the Sumerian civilization around 4000BC, the Egyptian civilization and many others – the origin of all these civilizations lies here in the Middle East. The Middle East is, therefore, also a center of the division of society into classes and the emergence of the state. In the course of history, these states became empires. Between 4000 BC and 500 BC, until the emergence of the Greek civilization, this region was the center of the further development of states into empires. Here lies the center of many scientific and technical advances and inventions.

The Middle East is also the center of religions. All three monotheistic religions emerged here. Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated in the Middle East. This is where the Islamic teachings of the Umma and the Christian teachings of the kingdom originated. It would therefore be very wrong and dangerous to regard the Middle East as a backward region. Even Greek philosophy developed on the basis of Middle Eastern culture. Greek philosophers learned and profited from Middle Eastern civilizations and their experiences. Almost all ancient philosophers spent part of their lives in the Egyptian, Persian or other Middle Eastern palaces. They developed their philosophical ideas on the basis of their experiences there.





## **WE HAVE TO LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE CURRENT ATROCITIES**

If we look at the Middle East, then, without knowing all these historical backgrounds, we will neither understand the current problems in themselves, nor their intensity, nor the reasons for their emergence. We have to look behind the scenes of the current atrocities that are happening here in the region. There is a reason why the whole world, with all its technology and weapons, is present here in the Middle East. There are reasons why power in the Middle East is enforced in such a backward, open and brutal way. Although the region is the oldest center of human socialization, today it is so fragmented that millions of people have to flee. There are reasons for all this. Answers to this situation can only be found on the basis of a deep and comprehensive understanding of the region. We do not understand anything at all if we look exclusively at the violence and the refugee movements this violence has caused across the Mediterranean. This point of view does nothing more than result in bad humanism. That is what is happening, however, in a way. Following the motto: 'The situation in the Middle East is bad and backward. Therefore, people are fleeing their homes. We have to support the people who are suffering from this situation.' This attitude opens the door to serious errors of judgment. We must, therefore, see that the Middle East is very important both from the point of view of the global system and for all the powers that want to build a global hegemony. That is why they are all active in the Middle East, waging war here and trying to secure their hegemony over the region. If this is the case, then events in the Middle East are not an exclusive Middle Eastern problem, but a problem of global scale and of the global system.

Through wars here in the Middle East, everyone tries to solve the problems, conflicts and contradictions in their own countries and thus also tries to cover them up. Just as all the problems of the global system were revealed in an explosive way after the collapse of the Soviet Union, all these countries will have to recognize their own internal problems much more clearly as soon as the crisis in the Middle East is solved. Therefore, all of them are waging war in the Middle East to conceal their own problems. As a result, the crisis in the Middle East is intensifying and becoming a kind of impasse from which it is practically impossible to get out. That is the reason for all the barbaric crimes, the massacres, the kidnappings and the flight of so many people across the Mediterranean, who accept their deaths to do so.

We have to see that the Middle East has not been part of the global capitalist system for very long. Compared to the 500- to 600-year-old history of capitalist modernity, this is still a fairly recent development. Only after World War I did the region become part of the global system. The Middle Eastern social structures in the period before World War I were quite different. The Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire were the predominant actors at that time. People organized themselves locally in the form of tribes. It was not until the end of World War I that the map of the region was redrawn and given the form that still exists today. With the advent of capitalism in the region, the system also attempted to establish corresponding social structures. The structures remaining from the earlier centuries were all destroyed to a large extent. The Ottoman Empire, the Persian Empire, but also the Arab tribal structures were largely destroyed, and the entire region was completely reorganized through the establishment of nation states. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, most of the Ottoman influence in the Middle East was reorganized. Instead of the great Ottoman Empire, a small nation state was established in Anatolia- the Republic of Turkey. Both in the East and in the Balkans, dozens of new nation states were established at the same time.

Even the Arabs, although they represent one nation, were divided into 23 separate Arab nation states. All the Arab states we find today in the Middle East are actually based on a single nation. However, they were divided, they were assigned individual states and so rifts were made between them. This development led to the present state of the Arab nation. The Persian Empire was also dissolved like the Ottoman Empire and replaced by today's Islamic Republic in the form of a nation state. Turkey and Iran were thus made into one nation state and the Arabs were divided among numerous nation states. All other social groups of the Middle East, which had not received any status within this new order, were denied and forced to integrate into the new order. Although the Kurds are one of the oldest peoples in the region, their existence was denied. They were divided into four parts: One part was given to Iran, one part to Turkey and two other parts to the Arabs. Ezidis were denied. Christians were denied. Assyrians were denied. A large part of the ethnicities and faith groups were not recognized. Only those forces that had received a nation state were integrated into the global system and became representatives of the system in the region. All others were denied, subordinated to the new nation states and thus made part of the global system. All this exacerbated the long-standing problems in the Middle East. The 4000- year-old contradictions in the region, based on the contradictions of different empires, ethnicities, classes and faiths, were escalated by the artificial structures of capitalism and turned the region into a powder keg. The construction of nation states in the Middle East extended the rule of the state to the smallest cells of society. This was achieved through the use of repression and violence. The traditional contradictions were exacerbated to an intolerable degree by the newly created nation states.

What do the character and the hegemony of the state force upon the people? The state divides society into classes and establishes the hegemony and violence of one class over all others.



However, this is also accompanied by the suppression of religions that do not correspond to the religion of the ruling class. The same applies to denominations. The unification and monopolization imposed by the nation state create massive pressure on the entire diversity of society. The hegemonic class oppresses all other groups in society. Capitalism builds its own system by dividing society into classes within a nation state and declaring one class hegemonic. By introducing this nation-state system into the Middle East, capitalism established its rule in the Middle East. In the process, all these newly emerging nation states established relations with the global system, became dependent on the system, and paved the way for limitless exploitation and oppression of the population. Understanding these relationships is very important and not very difficult.

Although the Middle East, with all its natural resources, is one of the richest regions in the world and today about 60–70% of the world's fossil resources come from this region, the region is in a situation where there are only a handful of rich people and millions of people leave their homes to flee to other parts of the world. The reasons for all this lie in the developments I have described. The global capitalist system has advanced very late into the region, but it has managed to integrate the Middle East. It was only in this way that capitalism could become a global system. Although the capitalist powers were also able to act largely freely beforehand, the Middle and Far East remained largely closed to them. We must, therefore, also understand World War I as a historical event in the course of which the capitalist system succeeded in advancing into the Middle East, which enabled the global system to be established. This system, which was built by capitalism around 1918 and lasted until the 2000s, had to struggle both with the historical contradictions of the Middle East and with the newly emerging contradictions. We speak of a combination of the 4000-year-old civilizational contradictions of the region and the contradictions added over the course of 60 to 70 years by the global capitalist system.

This conglomerate of contradictions has shaped the region today. In the Middle East there is unlimited exploitation. All riches were monopolized and their exploitation integrated into the global system of exploitation. Here in the region, we are talking about a system of government that is put under pressure right down to its smallest cells and has no rights of its own. No matter which Middle Eastern country you take a closer look at – in all of them the situation of human rights, the rights of youth and women, but also of social rights in general is extremely backward compared to global standards. This applies even to countries such as Turkey, which describes itself as the most democratic country in the region. The different religions are in contradictions and conflicts with each other: Christians with Muslims, Muslims with Jews. In addition, denominations within the individual religions are fighting with each other. The global system creates a lasting chaos in the region by constantly fueling these contradictions and involving peoples in conflicts with each other. There is a seemingly endless conflict between Judaism and Islam. The same applies to the Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim conflicts. All these conflicts lead to constant wars in the region. Within Islam, the Sunni-Shiite conflict leads to a permanent war. The denominational disputes within Christianity may not lead to open conflicts, but also here denominational contradictions exist. Regardless of this, there are many smaller religious communities in the Middle East. These include, for instance, Ezidis or various agnostic groups. All of them are consistently denied. Nor is the existence of ethnic groups such as the Kurds or Assyrians recognized in the same manner. In a region like the Middle East, all these contradictions lead to an almost hopeless situation. If we look at this situation in its connection to the global system, it becomes understandable why the global crisis must have such devastating effects on the Middle East.

The emergence of various Salafist groups, such as the Islamic State (IS) or Al-Nusra, is closely related to this situation. In addition to the instrumentalization of these groups by international powers, there is also a social situation in the Middle East that provides a breeding ground for such groups. There are clear reasons why the global crisis is taking on a very brutal form in the region, making the problems more complex and deepening. We must be aware of these reasons if we want to understand the Middle East. The region has long been marked by contradictions and conflicts. However, in the 1990s, under the leadership of the USA, a phase began in which different regions of the world were to be changed in the name of democratization. This also affected the Middle East at that time. There was an intervention centered on Iraq. What reasons were cited as justification at the time? The states were regressive and undemocratic. No democracy prevailed, which is why the West had to democratize the region. Of course, it is true that the current Middle East is not a particularly democratic region. But the greatest responsibility for this situation lies with these powers, which intervened under the banner of democracy at the time. For 500 years now, Europe has had a mentality that has led to the conquest of the most diverse regions of the world. Today, there is practically no place in the world where the system has not been exported. This is a very old tradition. The conquest of North America was also carried out under the pretext of spreading the values of civilization. The establishment of nation states in the Middle East after World War I was also justified by the desire to civilize and to democratize the region. In the 1990s, the war against Saddam Hussein in Iraq was waged under the pretext of fighting against dictatorship and for democratization. It is, of course, true that Saddam was a dictator and a fascist. That is all right. But who brought this fascist to power? Who supported him? Who protected him as part of the global system? If you look at all these facts, you see that the global capitalist system then began to put the internal contradictions in the background and started to renew capitalism itself on the basis of intervention and transformation in the Middle East.

Saddam was used as a pretext for this and the impression was created that one was fighting for democracy and humanity. It was on this basis that the system was to be renewed, and in the 1990s the implementation of this plan actually began. The USA then intervened in the Middle East with the support of Europe. It did so by presenting itself on the one hand as the saviour of oppressed groups in the region and on the other as a global champion of democracy, giving now democracy to a backward region. Since many of the oppressed, exploited and persecuted social groups in the Middle East were not organized, they regarded this intervention as a rescue and fell into the delusion that Europe and the USA were their saviors. The people of the United States and Europe believed that their governments were exporting their own democratic values to the unenlightened regions of the world. All this was, of course, a huge misconception. All European countries are active in the Middle East within the framework of the International Coalition and are following the American line. Thus, there was an intervention in the Middle East at the time, but since 1992 the region has neither been democratized nor positively changed. Every day new wars and conflicts are being added.



Every day new balances are created, which only lead to an even more confusing situation. In the Middle East, truly terrible things are happening today. All the nation states in this region are bad. All the religious centers are the starting point of many bad developments. Groups such as the IS or Al-Nusra that have been created by them are terrible organizations. They only bring out bad things. All this is true. However, the bad things brought into the region from outside by the global powers are by no means less severe. What is Russia doing in the Middle East? It tries to keep the Assad regime in Syria alive, which is in fact on the brink of collapse and commits massacres among its own people every day. Where is the good in that, please? The USA claims it wants to overthrow a despotic regime in Syria, just as in Iraq, and to replace it with a democratic system. It itself has supported this despotism for 40 years. All European countries are active in the Middle East within the framework of the International Coalition and are following the American line. If we look at the presence of the individual European states here in the region, we must recognize that all the bad things that originate in the Middle East itself are exceeded a thousand times over by the consequences of the intervention of these external powers and the global system. So why don't they solve the problems? If one looks closely, the following becomes clear: No solution is found for a single problem in the Middle East!

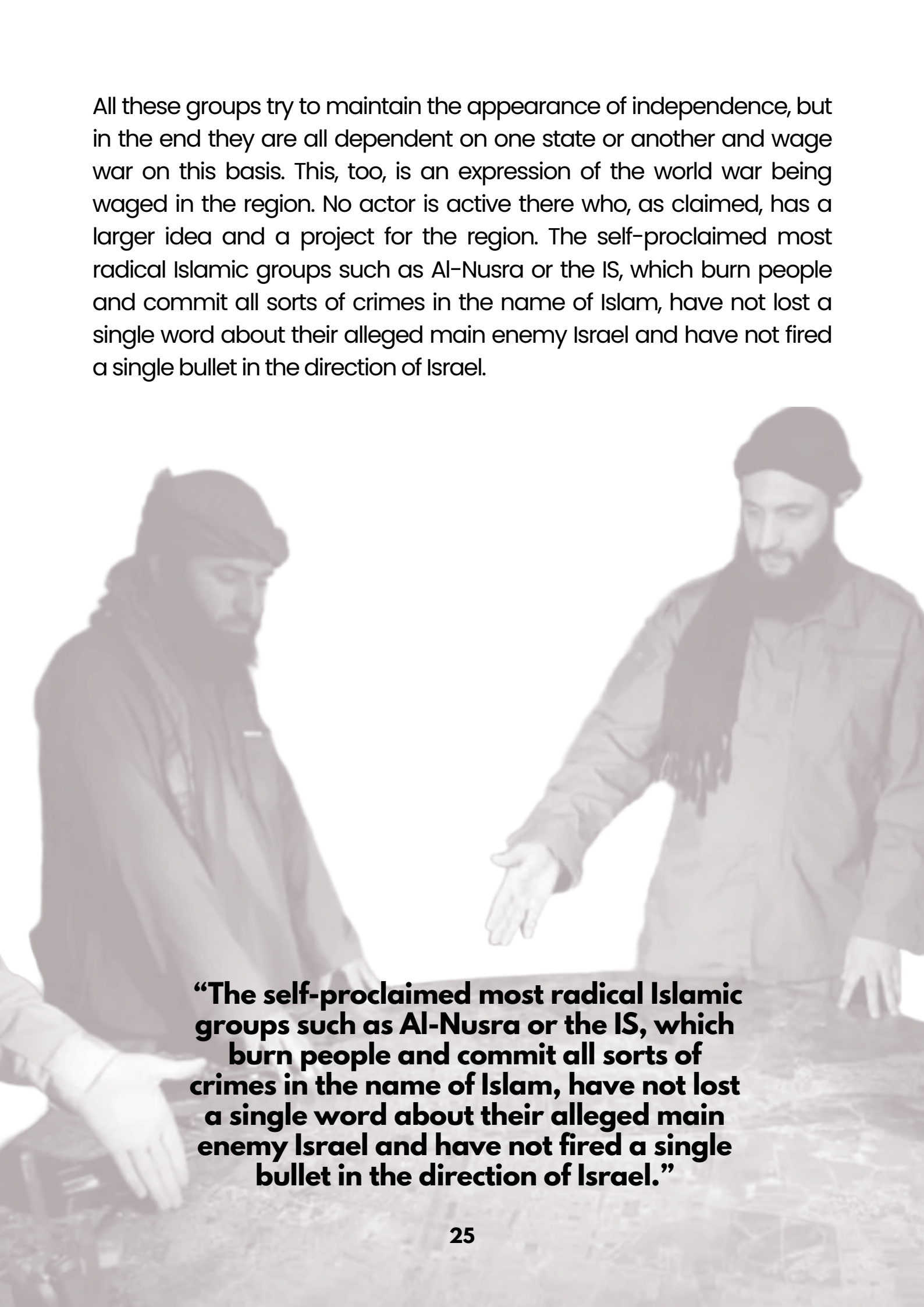
Let us take the intervention against Saddam in 2003 as an example. Saddam's downfall was followed by a federal state. The intention was to create a model by granting certain rights to the Shiites and some ethnic groups. This led to expectations throughout the region, a kind of American wave, which assumed that all the despotic regimes in the region would now be replaced by democratic governments. However, it soon became clear that the Americans had very different intentions and goals. Although Saddam was overthrown, instability, poverty and war in Iraq are much worse today than they were during his regime. Although Saddam was such a fascist and barbaric person, the number of people killed over the past seven years exceeds the number killed during Saddam's 30-year reign. Poverty and flight have reached a new peak.

The clashes resemble a never-ending war. The contradictions in Iraq are so great that new massacres can occur at any time. Under Saddam, an Iraqi dinar was equivalent to three dollars. Thus, the Iraqi currency was very valuable, if not one of the most valuable currencies in the world. Today, the Iraqi currency has no value at all. Why is that? Saddam was undoubtedly a dictator. However, those who govern Iraq instead of Saddam today have put the country in a much worse situation. We must acknowledge that there has been a major intervention in the Middle East. However, this intervention has not democratized the region. It has not replaced dictatorial regimes with democratic systems of government. Quite the opposite: the intervention is an intervention within the framework of the global systemic crisis. The aim is once again to secure control over the region. The Iraq intervention of the USA and Europe was actually intended to bring about a change in the region within a very short period of time. But their plans did not work. They practically ran into a wall and got stuck in Iraq. With this first offensive, they neither managed to find a solution for Iraq after the fall of Saddam, nor to make the country a model for the Middle East. Instead of new solutions, chaos was created and Iraq remained in this state in a sense. Shortly after the intervention in Iraq, a new phase began.

The uprisings in Tunisia marked the beginning of the 'Arab Spring'. The dissatisfaction with the economic situation was then channeled and led to an outbreak. With the help of people's anger at their economic situation, the aim was to bring about changes in the regimes from within. The 'Arab Spring' was thus started in Tunisia and continued in Egypt, Libya and the Gulf states. However, the attempt to find a solution that would neither meet the demands of the people nor completely move away from the old regimes did not lead to a stable new balance. In Tunisia, there were uprisings, as a result of which the regime was overthrown and new people were put in its place. But none of the existing problems were solved. The problems were suspended and continue to exist today. New uprisings can therefore occur at any time.

In Libya, Gaddafi was killed. However, until today no one has been found who could run the affairs of the country. Instead a tribal war rages there. In Egypt, Mubarak was overthrown and the putschist Sisi was placed at the top of the country. It does not differ in anyway from the previous Egyptian regime. Let us take a look at the situation in the Gulf States: In Yemen they intervene by daily changing tactical alliances. However, it has not been possible to overcome the old situation and bring about a new situation. This type of intervention has ensured that today there are various local powers that can very easily exploit the external powers for their own purposes. The emergence of so many Salafist groups is directly related to this. There is, of course, a historical and social basis enabling organizations, such as the IS and Al-Nusra, to emerge. Islam is one of these foundations. That is true so far. However, the emergence and rapid expansion of these two organizations in the Middle East is also directly related to the international powers. If we take a closer look at the development phase of Al-Nusra, the IS and many other similar organizations in Syria, we can see that they all came into being through direct relations with the USA, Russia, Israel or regional powers, and are now waging war along the interests of all these actors. Although Al-Nusra and Al-Qaeda have long been classified as terrorist organizations, their history of origin and of spreading in Syria makes it very easy for us to see how they were supported by Saudi Arabia, organized by Israel and involved in the Syrian war by the United States. Al-Nusra has been involved in the Syrian war under the direct influence of countries like Saudi Arabia, Israel or the USA in order to deepen the chaos there. Israel, the USA and regional states also played a direct role in the emergence of the IS. These states have consistently used forces such as the IS or Al-Nusra to establish their hegemony over the population. They did so by addressing the religious and historical feelings of society and by spreading fear everywhere. Society was more or less taken for fools. If we look at the situation in Syria, for example, we come across many different groups, all of which are dependent on individual states, such as on Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt or Russia.

All these groups try to maintain the appearance of independence, but in the end they are all dependent on one state or another and wage war on this basis. This, too, is an expression of the world war being waged in the region. No actor is active there who, as claimed, has a larger idea and a project for the region. The self-proclaimed most radical Islamic groups such as Al-Nusra or the IS, which burn people and commit all sorts of crimes in the name of Islam, have not lost a single word about their alleged main enemy Israel and have not fired a single bullet in the direction of Israel.



**“The self-proclaimed most radical Islamic groups such as Al-Nusra or the IS, which burn people and commit all sorts of crimes in the name of Islam, have not lost a single word about their alleged main enemy Israel and have not fired a single bullet in the direction of Israel.”**



Many of these groups are waging war from the Golan Heights, which are under Israeli control. When the situation in the region was not so chaotic, all Muslim groups fought against Israel. Yet today, in a situation of complete chaos in the region, everyone has suddenly forgotten Israel and does not even mention the country anymore. All these groups are now fighting against each other. However, nobody touches Israel. This means that the plans in the course of the invasion of Iraq did not work out and the phase of the 'Arab Spring' was initiated. The 'Arab Spring', as well, only created additional chaos and did not lead to any solutions. The proxy forces of the individual states deepened the chaos even further, adding the war in Syria. Now, we are in a situation where the shift of centers of conflict from Syria to Turkey and Iran is foreseeable. At the same time, it remains unpredictable where exactly further clashes will lead. Syria is one of the smallest countries of the Middle East and has practically no riches. There are practically no oil deposits or other mineral resources in the country. Not even forests exist there. And yet the whole world participates in the war in Syria. Why? There is practically nothing there. Why is the whole world fighting for the division of this country? Russia, Turkey, the USA, Iran and the European countries are all active there. They are all waging war there with all their strength and yet there are practically no natural resources or other riches. So, what are they all doing in Syria? Why are they taking part in the war in Syria? The war in Syria is a war that affects the whole region. That is why everyone is taking part in the war of distribution that is currently taking place in Syria. This war could be shifted to Iraq or Iran tomorrow and could take on an entirely new form. All actors maintain relations with one another and at the same time find themselves in contradictions along which they shape their respective policies. However, nobody says a single word about their plans for the future or takes concrete steps towards a solution. Neither in Geneva nor in Astana are solutions found. Instead, the chaos is constantly deepened and the society is increasingly drawn into this chaos. Thus, we see that capitalism does not have a plan for overcoming its own crisis. However, as long as the global crisis is not

resolved, no solution can be found to the crisis in the Middle East. The crisis of capitalist modernity is manifesting itself in the Middle East in a very brutal way in the form of great chaos and war. Therefore, we do not see any glimmer of hope for an imminent solution to the crisis in the Middle East. Nor should we fall into an approach of seeking isolated solutions for Syria or Iraq. The crisis is a holistic crisis. It has a global and regional dimension. As long as no solution is found at the global and regional level, the problems in the individual countries cannot be solved either. It would therefore be wrong to hope that a solution will be found in Iraq or that Russia will solve the problems in Syria. We find ourselves in a situation in which all actors are striving for a Syria according to their own ideas. That applies to Turkey, Russia or the USA. And this despite the lack of riches in Syria. They all have their very own plans for Syria. The wishes of the Syrian society or of the Syrian rulers have no meaning whatsoever. The foreign powers are trying to rearrange the country according to their own ideas. Russia, Turkey and Iran meet regularly in Astana or Sochi to find a solution for Syria. Syrian voices themselves are not given any hearing. Countless meetings took place in Geneva with the participation of Russia, the USA, European countries, Turkey and Iran. All this shows us that the crisis in the Middle East is not a purely regional crisis. Rather, global plans are being pursued at the expense of the Middle East. Part of these plans is the hegemony in the Middle East. The Middle Eastern crisis is therefore closely linked to the global crisis. As long as the global crisis is not resolved, the crisis in the Middle East cannot end either. If we leave the quest for solutions to the forces of capitalist modernity, only new hegemonic conditions will emerge. They would perhaps alleviate the crisis for a certain time, but the real problems would remain or new ones would be added. Therefore, we should not expect these forces to solve the problems. Capitalism, nation states and imperialism will not produce solutions. They are the reason for all the problems in the Middle East. A solution must be based on projects of freedom and the societies that implement them.

Since all this is not present in the Middle East at the moment, the real forces are not able to produce solutions. Since society has not developed a sufficiently strong consciousness of freedom and is not sufficiently organized, it turns to the most dangerous and backward forces on the basis of certain traditions and hopes to rescue them. Hoping for something from the USA, Europe or Russia is nothing more than a sign of helplessness and of a lack of alternatives. The international powers make very effective use of the lack of knowledge and the lack of awareness in society. Society in the Middle East was shattered down to its smallest cells and its various groups were turned into mutual enemies. We are talking about an unorganized society. The ruling classes and the political rulers pursue a policy of preventing social organization. Due to its poor level of knowledge and awareness, Middle Eastern society is falling into the erroneous belief that forces such as the IS or Al-Nusra will save it in the name of Islam. There are, of course, many individuals in the Middle East who are well informed and have a strong awareness of what is happening. However, in no country is there a force that has organized itself, has a program and pursues politics on that basis. Even though the current crisis offers great opportunities, the ruling classes are using the crisis to their own advantage instead of the oppressed society carrying out a revolution and fighting for freedom. Although the population in Tunisia started an uprising in reaction to the death of a vendor and expressed their economic demands, they were unable to push their own freedom rights through. They succeeded only in bringing about a simple change of power. But the new rulers were not much better than the old ones. These are the practical consequences of the disorganization and the lack of consciousness in society.

In Libya, the international powers played an important role in overthrowing Gaddafi and, along with the popular uprising, they led to the overthrow of the dictator. After his overthrow, there was nothing left that we can call 'population'. Today, proxy forces from various countries and tribes are fighting against each other and are plunging the country into chaos.

In Egypt, it was the people in the squares of Cairo that drove Mubarak from power. The Muslim Brothers immediately seized power, but were overthrown by a coup when the international powers could not make friends with them. That is how Sisi came to power. Actually, it was the population that had triggered all these developments, but in the end they acted against its will. The conditions are actually very favourable, provided that the population is organized to a certain extent, has a certain awareness, knows its own goals and is committed to them. The conditions are indeed very favourable, but the population is very unorganized. Therefore, no solution is developed that meets the demands of society. Due to all these shortcomings, in other words, due to the lack of social organization, numerous forces can act on behalf of the society, even though they pursue a very hostile policy towards the population.

The international powers also make very effective use of society's lack of knowledge and of awareness, and they establish their own hegemony in the region. The Kurds and with them the PKK have characteristics that make them indispensable in this situation. The Kurds are the most organized people in the whole Middle East. They have organizational structures in all parts of Kurdistan, i.e. Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. But within the Kurdish people, there are two different lines of organization. One line aims at securing a place within the global capitalist order along nationalist and nation-state principles. The other line, led by the PKK, opposes international capitalism and the hegemony of the states and advocates communal life based on the equality of the peoples. The nationalist and nation-state line led by the KDP does not have a very strong base in the population, no matter how much it tries to present itself as a peoples' movement. On the one hand, its politics is characterized by direct relations with the international system, according to whose standards it conducts politics. On the other hand, it represents a state paradigm and tries to position itself towards the people as a state structure. This may correspond to a certain longing of the Kurdish people, who are among

the poorest peoples in the world, but this approach does not make a real contribution to a free and equal life of the Kurds. Even if this political line were to achieve the objective of a state of its own, it would not become more powerful than the Iranian, Iraqi or Syrian state. None of this would bring freedom to the Kurds. A place within the global system can only be achieved by collaborating with the international powers. That is not the way to achieve freedom. Let me give you a small example: In 2003, a federal state was created in Iraq, and the Kurds secured certain rights. Fifteen years have passed since then, but if we look closely we can see that the Kurdish people have gained nothing from this. They have not even managed to build a state or a federal structure. In all this time they have not been able to build a common political or military structure. If they had pursued appropriate politics, that is, politics based on their own will, Iraq could have become a Middle Eastern paradise. By protecting and financing the international powers and by including Iraq's own riches, the country could have been turned into a liberal and economic paradise. Despite these favourable conditions, however, the country is now in a deep political and economic crisis, with the result that Iraq has virtually no functioning government today. It is herein Iraq that the largest oil reserves are to be found. In addition, there are natural resources of unimaginable dimensions. Despite all these riches, Iraq is experiencing a severe economic crisis. A federal system was established in Northern Iraq under the protection of the international powers, but no functioning government has been formed to date. The source of all these problems lies in the following: Capitalism is in a deep crisis and in a phase of its own dissolution. In the wake of the crisis it is no longer able to stand on its feet. Yet, here in the region we have only recently begun to turn towards capitalism. Thus, while capitalism is in a deep crisis, the Kurdish circles around the KDP have high hopes, but these hopes are completely unrealistic.

We take a different approach based on the 40 years of resistance in Turkey and its practical implementation in Rojava. The two approaches are very different. As an alternative to capitalism, the classes, the state and the exploitation system, we

advocate a system based on self-administration, equality and freedom. We are convinced that solutions cannot be expected from the international system, the USA or Russia. We also believe that the social problems in the Middle East cannot be solved by the division into classes, the state or power. Instead, we believe that there is a need for democratic conditions in which all social groups can work for their own interests. We have seen in Syria and other parts of the Middle East that this system can be implemented within a short period of time, offers practical solutions and is also quickly accepted by the population if it is well-organized and its spread is guaranteed. The organization of the Kurds in Rojava in the midst of this chaos has enabled them, on one hand, to defend themselves against the extensive attacks and, on the other hand, to secure their own freedom in the form of societal self-organization, completely independent of external powers. They achieved this by rejecting all the approaches that were used for decades to break and divide society and at the same time developing their own alternatives. In this way, they succeeded in developing their own system and, through its practical implementation, in winning the trust of the population. If this model really develops and solidifies, it will be a solution for the entire Middle East. However, since it is still very new and limited to a relatively small region, i.e. the paradigm is not yet widely spread, it is only implemented in concrete terms in Rojava, and attempts are being made to suppress it through various political games.



## **THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PKK IS BASED ON THE EQUALITY OF ALL PEOPLE**

The model we are proposing does not look at things selectively from the perspective of a purely ethnic or religious perspective, but takes into account the society as a whole. This is a very important attitude. Of course, the Kurds are an ethnic group, but making their ethnic identity to a hegemonic identity would open the door to new genocides. So it's important, not to deny ethnic identities, but also not to prefer any ethnic group and give them power over other social groups. In the past, Persians, Arabs or Turks secured power for themselves by oppressing and destroying the Kurds. It became a kind of tradition. However, the PKK's approach is precisely against this and prevents these ethnic conflicts in a targeted manner. The perspective of the PKK is based on equality of all people and recognizes the ethnic differences, without preferring any groups. In Rojava all ethnic groups, that are Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Ezidis, Turks, Turkmen or Circassians, are treated equally. They are free to live out their rights of freedom and identity. In addition, there is the fact that historically, religious and confessional contradictions in the Middle East have been most instrumentalized and used as a source of conflict. The political structures in the Middle East are ideologically oriented towards religious-denominational divisions.

But in Rojava, a completely different approach is represented. All religious and denominational groups are represented as part of the cultural wealth of the society. Within the framework of this freedom of faith it is not accepted that only a single one of these groups can have political power. All religious and denominational groups are represented as part of the cultural wealth of society. Within that framework of freedom of faith it is not accepted that a single one of these groups seizes political power. This is an expression of a fundamental cultural and social mood, that is promoted within society. If the freedom of the ethnic and religious groups in society is guaranteed and at the same time it is prevented that one of these many groups takes over the state structures or the

power, division and conflicts within society are deprived of their basis. In Rojava we can observe all this very well. All the ethnic groups I have mentioned have a common policy there. There is no conflict between these groups. Also all the faith groups and their respective denominations manage to participate together in the social life and the political system and they avoid conflicts with each other. This is a new development and a completely new approach in the Middle East. The fact that the different nations are not opposed to each other and that ruling systems are established on the basis of their conflicts is a new historical development in the region. An alternative has emerged in which all social groups can secure their own existence and defend their own interests. All these ideas that I have talked about, however, do not remain merely theoretical considerations. The system of social self- administration of all these groups creates solutions in practice that address the roots of the problems. The division of the various social groups and the denial of individual groups is the expression of a very dangerous policy, which leads to serious disputes within society. Two principles follow from this: First, each social group must be able to organize itself and determine its own leadership. On the other hand, there must be a system which guarantees the common management and policy of all these groups, i.e. which creates a common structure. By our proposal for democratic confederalism, we mean precisely this: a system in which the various social groups can take their own interests into account in order to achieve a common administration and policy for all these groups. And at the same time, all groups can conduct politics together. We propose a system in which all ethnic and religious groups can organize and lead themselves.





This system is based on the principle of autonomy. A further principle of this system is that all these autonomously organized social groups can be organized under the common roof of a confederate system. On the basis of the principle of autonomy all groups are organized in Rojava autonomously: From the Arab population, from the Assyrian to the Kurdish, they all organize themselves and make their own decisions. At the same time, there is a common management level at which all the different social groups come together and network confederatively. Therefore, no one has the desire to declare another group as an enemy or to make decisions over their heads. Rather, it creates a system in which all groups and society as a whole administrate themselves. Of course, all this does not only apply to ethnic and religious groups in society. In conjunction with the free and autonomous organization and administration of the various social groups in society, the whole results in a truly free system of social self-government.

We must acknowledge that the society of the Middle East is sexist. The woman's freedom is practically zero. This is, of course, a social matter. If the woman organizes herself, directs her affairs herself, and thereby gains strength, she can become a powerful part of the confederal system and represent her own interests within this system. The same applies to young people. All groups in society, such as the various professional groups, can organize themselves in this way and defend their interests within the confederal system. The situation in Rojava has changed a lot today: All groups can express their own interests without any problems. At the same time, the new social system is able to defend itself against the attacks of different actors. All this has been achieved because the principles described above have been followed since the beginning of the revolution. It is therefore a real alternative. But because this model opposes global capitalist modernity and represents a completely new approach in the region, it has not yet succeeded in persuading all social groups to become involved in the system and defend it. The system we are proposing, of course, also has social and economic aspects. I will not be able to go into this in detail here.

However, the following is important to note: The social and economic issues are dealt with on the basis of principles such as freedom and equality. So we are talking about an anti-capitalist and anti-monopolistic perspective. Monopolies are not provided for in this system. It must be recognized that no state in the region accepts this system. It is also interesting in this context that neither the EU nor the USA accept this model. At the beginning of all the developments I have mentioned, the United States was not active on the ground. It was not until the system gained in organization and strength that the United States made contact. However, despite the existing tactical relations in the fight against the IS, the US shows no sign that it considers the Rojava system right or accepts it as a solution. Because the regional states view the situation from an ethnic-religious perspective and on the basis of the denial of Kurdish existence, they immediately declared Rojava an enemy. What exactly do they want? For example, what does Russia want? Russia proposes to restore the old Syrian regime and to grant the Kurds a few rights under its rule. This is how the Russian side thinks it can solve the Kurdish question. What is the position of the USA? It constantly talks about democracy, but what exactly it means is completely unclear. What exactly the US wants remains in the dark. Nor does it say exactly what measures are needed to find a solution. What about Europe? Europe is calling for the recognition of limited Kurdish rights. However, the model I mentioned earlier is not only aimed at the Kurdish people. I did not just talk about Kurds, but about the freedom of the peoples in the region. All the various actors support nationalist demands. But as soon as we talk about social freedom and demand it, they turn away. At the beginning of relations, the USA and the European states, in their meetings with the YPG in Rojava, took the position that the Kurds should not cooperate with the Arabs or other peoples. The USA and Europe urge the forces in Rojava to limit themselves to the recognition of Kurdish rights and promise that on this basis a better solution to the problems is possible. These international powers support the demand for limited ethnic rights and a nationalist attitude, but they definitely reject a liberal

perspective. In this context, let us look again at the fight against the ISIS: KDP forces have not fired a bullet in the fight against ISIS. It was the PKK forces that took up the struggle and have since crushed ISIS. But Germany supplied weapons to the KDP. The same goes for France, Russia and the USA. They all supplied weapons to the KDP forces under the pretext of helping the Kurds, even though they did not fight against ISIS. But nothing was given to the YPG. The KDP accepts the national state framework and rejects demands for social freedom. It does not support the forces that are fighting for the freedom of society and are actually fighting against the ISIS. Instead, they are arming the groups close to the KDP and claim that they are supporting the Kurds in this way. All the weapons that were handed over to the regional government and the South Kurdish parliament, most of which were provided by the German government, were kept by the KDP and brought to their own arms depots. These weapons were later sold by the KDP. We also bought many of these weapons from the KDP. The German government has recently set up a commission to find out what happened to the arms supplied from Germany in Southern Kurdistan. All these weapons have been sold and are in the possession of different forces. I would like to express the following: To end the global crisis, but also the crisis in the Middle East, we need a profound alternative. Only in this way all the problems can be solved. There are no small, limited solutions, for example at a purely political or diplomatic level. An actual solution must address the problems in a comprehensive and profound way. In Rojava they are trying to implement just such a solution. We see the model we are proposing as an anti-capitalist alternative, which is not only a perspective for Rojava or the Middle East.



The global crisis and global capitalism can be overcome with the help of the model that Rojava stands for. This is precisely what is currently being tried in Rojava and is already bearing fruit. Interest in the Rojava model is growing both here in the region and internationally.

Groups all over the world who are dissatisfied with the current global situation are interested in Rojava and want to see developments on the ground with their own eyes. Throughout history there have been moments like this again and again. In the 60s and 70s it was the revolution in Vietnam that influenced the whole world. Later, it was Palestine that attracted the attention of all those who were looking for new ways. Today it is Rojava that attracts the attention of all the oppressed social groups, who are looking for solutions. But we must not forget that the revolution in Rojava is exposed to massive attacks by various actors from all over the world. And this despite the fact that the revolution itself is still very fresh and is, in a way, in its early stages. It is appropriate to call the revolution in Rojava a revolution in search of itself. A revolution that builds and develops itself. For society, this revolution has created great hopes.



## **WHY DOES ROJAVA STILL NOT EXPERIENCE ANY BIG REFUGEE MOVEMENTS ?**

There is a huge catastrophe in the entire Middle East. Just in Rojava we can observe a completely different situation. Yet Rojava is such an embattled region, shaken by poverty and a comprehensive embargo. Why is it that there are still no major refugee movements in Rojava? Although Southern Kurdistan is a federal state and is under international protection, more people have fled to Europe from Southern Kurdistan than from Rojava in the last five years. Although a state has been proclaimed in South Kurdistan that supposedly provides freedom and security, many more people are fleeing from this region. The society is being deceived. If we look at German politics, we can see that, for example, its relations with Turkey are almost entirely based on fending off refugees. Turkey is seen as playing a central role in this, although it is one of the main reasons for the flight movements from the Middle East. At the same time, a project like Rojava is being fought, which is actively and comprehensively fighting causes of escape. As I said, all global powers are active in Rojava. They all have one basic goal: the destruction of the self-administrative system in Rojava. None of these powers accept this system. We must emphasise this very clearly. Iran, the Syrian regime or Turkey are strictly against it anyway. They do not even accept the existence of the Kurds, not to mention the system in Rojava. The United States' aim is to give the Kurds a few rights, to instrumentalise them and to integrate them as a marginal ethnic group into the system of the new Syrian regime, which is still in the process of being established. Russia is trying to make the Kurds part of the restored Assad regime and to grant them certain rights. In order to get the Kurds to play a part in these plans, the USA and Russia use countries like Iran and Turkey. In this way, they are trying to bring the Kurds under their control, especially the PKK. Those who are not familiar with the situation and history of the Middle East may say that the Kurds are joining forces with the imperialist powers in Rojava and are therefore not anti-imperialist. This is a very superficial, dogmatic and uninformed view.

They do not understand that the situation in the Middle East today is chaos, they do not understand who is fighting with whom and they do not understand that all the struggles are interrelated. They try to understand on the basis of Marxist dialectics, anarchist approaches or Maoist perspectives. But these are approaches that have lost their validity and no longer do justice to today's circumstances. The times are over in which the world consisted of two blocs and the struggle for freedom was fought by joining one of the two blocs. This block formation itself also represented a great danger at that time. The attempt to understand the world in a new way, to develop alternatives for changing the world and to fight for this change has taken on completely different forms today. I would like to give an example so that all of this becomes easier to understand: Let's look at the countries of Latin America, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua. All these are countries where long guerrilla fights and revolutions have taken place and which are still considered anti-imperialist today. If one evaluates the situation in the Middle East from their perspective, Iran and Turkey are considered as anti-imperialist. They understand the Kurdish Freedom Movement as a force that collaborates with imperialism.

To consider Turkey and Iran as anti-imperialist shows a maximum of ignorance of the situation. They call these two barbaric forces of the Middle East, which carry out massacres in the Middle East, increase confessional tensions, promote religious fundamentalism and function as ridiculous representatives of the global capitalist system, anti-imperialist! The greatest Iranian murderer, Ahmadinejad, was welcomed on the red carpet in Latin America. Venezuelan President Maduro calls Turkey anti-imperialist and maintains close relations with the country. But movements like ours call them collaborators of imperialism. This is a totally misguided view. Some left-wing groups in Europe take similar positions. Instead of really trying to understand the situation in its entirety and complexity, they fallback on their well-tried positions and remain within their own horizon. Instead of understanding the context properly, they think in stereotypes.

What can you understand when you try to understand the situation in the Middle East with the help of Marxist dialectics?

What will you see in Kurdistan? Nothing at all. More than 150 years have passed since the publication of the Communist Manifesto. To adopt the thoughts of the Communist Manifesto one by one and not to update them in order to understand the current situation in the Middle East is a disaster. As if nothing had changed since then. It is also impossible to exist in the world if, from an anarchist perspective, one rejects political power and domination while avoiding any form of organization. There can be no unorganized society. If society is organized, it must necessarily administer itself. It is also important that management does not necessarily mean state management. It is capitalism that rejects society and its organization. A liberal paradigm and freedom in itself cannot be achieved by encapsulating and individualizing all people from their society in the name of freedom. If we look at the Latin American countries, Marxism or traditional anarchism from this perspective, it becomes clear that their assessments are completely wrong and inadequate. The assertion that we are collaborating with the USA is completely false. Even if we wanted to, it would not happen. That should be obvious to everyone. What is really happening is the smashing of the revolution in the Middle East. It is not difficult to understand this: the PKK has been put on international terror lists. The forces in Rojava that are fighting against the ISIS are also put in a similar category. There's a reason for all this. The forces that have put the PKK on the terror list are building a state for the KDP in Southern Kurdistan. All this is done visibly. The PYD is not invited to all the international negotiation formats like Geneva, Astana or Sochi. And this despite the fact that it is the one that is leading the most determined struggle against the ISIS and is the most free organization. If there really was a collaboration, as some claim, PYD would have been invited to Astana, Sochi and Geneva. Everyone is invited except the PYD and the Kurds. At the very moment there are international efforts to negotiate a new constitution for Syria.

People have been invited from all corners of the world, even Salafist groups and various states. But the Kurds are being left out. This is a really big problem. The global system is thereby saying very clearly that no one must move outside the systemic framework. But Rojava openly appears as an alternative system. All the forces described above do not see the struggle between this alternative and the global system. Instead, they see the tactical alliances in the war as collaboration. Afrin for example was a very free region. The canton was self-governed. From self-defence, to economy, to social organization, there were no problems at all. Neither Syria, Turkey, Russia nor ISIS could enter Afrin. What exactly led to Russia opening the North-Syrian airspace to Turkey, allowing the Turkish invasion of Afrin? The US took the position that Afrin was beyond their control, so nothing could be done. So all the players worked hand in hand and in a sense handed Afrin over to Turkey.

What we need to understand at this point is this: Especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the complete defeat of the paradigm, it is a huge disaster for capitalist modernity that this perspective for freedom has recently reappeared. There has been a revolution in a place as unexpected as Rojava and carried out by people they had not expected. And now the whole world is trying to work hand in hand against this revolution and suffocate it. Of course I don't mean that everything is perfect in Rojava. We are still at the beginning of the process, but the attitude of the revolution is clear. So this revolution, which is still in its early stages, is supposed to be eliminated now. The revolution is resisting all these attacks. We must be clear about this. This revolution is not an easy revolution. If it were based only on ethnic demands, it would be much easier to this carry out. One would then take nationalist positions, demand a Kurdish state or Kurdish autonomy and achieve all these goals on the basis of collaboration. All the actors are ready to fulfill such demands. But the revolution follows a new paradigm. It is about changing the social mentality that has developed during the 4000 to 5000 year old history of hegemony.



All social developments are to be turned upside down by this new paradigm. To carry out such a revolution is by no means easy. It is a very difficult task. To convince the present society of principles such as freedom and equality is a revolution. It is the most difficult task. To bring together groups in society that are committed to a long history of enmity, and in the fight against the enemy is an incredibly difficult thing to unite. It would be very easy to unite Kurds and involving Arabs in a war with each other. The same applies to Muslims and Christians. It would be one of the easiest jobs in the world, Sunni and Shia to get them to kill each other. But it is one of the most difficult tasks in the world to get people to organize themselves freely on the basis of their own identity and faith and to convince them that all can live together in a humane way. The revolution in Rojava includes all this. On one hand, we are experiencing difficulties in the attempt to win society for the revolution with the help of the new paradigm. On the other hand, we are trying to defend ourselves against the united attacks of the global powers and stay on our feet. All revolutions in the course of human history had a similar fate. Whenever a revolution reached a scale that influenced the whole world, all reactionary forces joined together and tried to stifle it. Either they succeeded or the revolution managed to assert itself and spread all over the world. Without praising the French Revolution to the skies, it must be acknowledged that it too meant to be eliminated for the same reasons. The world system of the French Revolution, which came to light in the person of Napoleon, was fought jointly by all the reactionary forces of Europe and the revolution was thus suppressed. The Russian Revolution was dealt with in a very similar way. Although this revolution also had many shortcomings, all these European forces united against the revolution and tried to crush it. There are many more examples all over the world that could be mentioned now, for example the developments in the Spanish Civil War. In Rojava exactly the same thing is happening at the moment. In this sense, Rojava shares its fate with all the revolutions in human history. All the forces that have a truly liberal and revolutionary

perspective, that closely follow developments in the world and the region and adopt an appropriate stance on this basis, can play a very important role in this situation. But if you misunderstand the world, you can fall into a very bad attitude of collaboration with the reactionary forces without realizing it. The crisis in the Middle East can only be solved on the basis of our new paradigm. It will not be possible to solve the crisis with the global imperialist powers. The paradigm has the potential to end the current crisis. The basis of this new paradigm is the society with its different groups and the equality and freedom of the social groups. All the other paths do not represent a solution. Perhaps from time to time there will be a reduction of the struggles. But this will not lead to free conditions. Rather, there will always be a deepening of the chaos and crisis, which will inevitably lead to new conflicts.



## **DEMOCRATIC MODERNITY – A PERSPECTIVE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD**

All that I have said before ultimately leads to the following conclusion: without developing an alternative to the global capitalist system, it is impossible to wage the struggle for freedom. Therefore, this is not just about a single country, an isolated region or a particular society. In the end, we are dealing with a universal concern. The world is a whole. It is currently governed by a centralist system in which a clear distinction can be made between those who rule and those who are ruled. Although there may be many regional differences and peculiarities, in today's world no one is freer than people in other parts of the world. Just as the peoples of the Middle East are oppressed and exploited, I also believe that the people in the USA, in England or in Germany are not really free. Of course I don't want to lump it all together. Certainly there are important differences between the different parts of the world. There are other traditions and other forms of oppression in the Middle East, especially in comparison to all the achievements that have been fought for in Europe over the past centuries. These struggles have inevitably had quite different effects on Europe than on the Middle East. But there is one fundamental event and that is the capitalist system itself, which destroys not only freedom, but also nature and society. In this sense, capitalism represents a very great danger. Where capitalism exists, nothing and nobody can be free. I think that no one can be free who lives in an exploitative system based on the power of monopolies. Authoritarian, centralist state systems may have different attributes and names, but wherever they exist, there can be no freedom. This reality affects us all in one way or another. We must all fight against it together. If our analysis is correct and we can speak of a structural crisis of capitalism, then we have reached the following turning point: capitalism has managed to hold its ground for 500 years. At this point, capitalism can either reinvent itself, make certain changes and thereby prolong its life a little. But if it fails to do so, the system will collapse. In the course of human history, these points have come up again and again.

According to this dialectical principle, every modernity has either renewed itself in phases of chaos or has collapsed in itself. Let's look, for example, at the era of the slave-owning states, which began with Sumer and lasted until the Roman Empire, i.e. for a total of 4000 years. During this historical epoch there were crises and chaos, which the slave-owning system used to make certain changes and reforms. Thus the system managed to keep itself alive. Until when? Until the monotheistic religions emerged and an alternative paradigm spread in the process. The paradigm of monotheism ultimately led to the collapse of the Roman Empire. Of course, the attacks of the Germanic, Goths or Franks also weakened the Roman Empire and contributed to its collapse. But they were not the decisive factor in the destruction of Rome. It was the new paradigm that destroyed Rome. The new paradigm spread the idea of monotheistic religions. The attacks of the other tribes and peoples of Europe played a military role, but it was the new paradigm that dealt Rome the decisive blow. Without the new monotheistic paradigm, all the attacks of the Germanic or Huns would not have led to the destruction of Rome. This is also an example in relation to capitalism, because this system is currently experiencing a chaos comparable to that of Rome. There are also smaller anti-systemic, anti-capitalist movements today. There are even very many. They and their struggle resemble in some ways the tribes of the Germanic, Hun or Frankish people who fought against the Roman Empire at that time. All these small movements are characterized by their anti-systemic attitude, which inflicts and drives capitalism into crisis. But because they do not manage to develop a comprehensive and profound alternative paradigm, that is, an alternative modernity, they do not succeed in conducting the necessary struggle and developing the necessary organization. That is why they remain marginal to the system and are unable to implement changes. Various things have been tried, but due to the numerous weaknesses of these approaches, no fundamental changes have been made. Take the example of Karl Marx. His ideas were a very important departure. Anarchism was also a very important philosophy.

We must recognize the importance of these approaches. Marxism and anarchism, but also many related approaches, are very important. But if we look at them in the light of the current phase, all their weaknesses and the hopelessness they have brought about, which has become apparent in the course of history, we see that they are no longer an option or an alternative today. To develop an alternative model and an alternative modernity, i.e. a democratic modernity, is at this position crucial. However, another modernity and an alternative can not be developed and embodied by using the basic instruments of existing system. I would like to elaborate on this a little further so that it is not misunderstood. If we take a closer look at how the philosophical foundations of Marxism were developed, how it declares industrialism and economic prosperity to be the basis of a country's wealth, how it defines the state within the framework of the concept of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', we can see that, paradigmatically, Marxism is not a change of system. Marxism thus sought freedom by the means of capitalist modernity. In practice, we can see clearly what all these wrong approaches lead to. What happened?

Real socialism collapsed, had to surrender to capitalism, and in the end, like fresh blood, gave capitalism new strength. So this means that with the help of the state you can't create an alternative modernity. With a perspective that makes the state and power the basis, you cannot develop a model that corresponds to the will and needs of society. The state is one of the fundamental tools of civilization. It is impossible to make this tool of civilization a tool of freedom. Industrialism is a basic tool of capitalist modernity, which organizes the exploitation of society based on the mentality of capitalist modernity. We must not understand it only as industrial development. Industrialism is also a system for shaping a society and promoting its exploitation. If we understand industrialism exclusively as great and boundless progress, we pave the way for a social and ecological catastrophe. To make all social values face widespread competition, to subordinate all social resources to the military sphere,

in other words, to put the importance of the military and competition above everything else; these are all approaches that are diametrically opposed to the principle of freedom. We can say similar things about the various anarchist movements. What are their basic problems? They understand state and power as a great danger, but they make great mistakes in trying to draw conclusions from it. They attach such a serious philosophical significance to their rejection of state and power that they themselves examine and reduce the cohabitation or relationship of two people only from the perspective of power. Society makes them into single individuals in the name of freedom. They try to develop an alternative on the basis of this exaggeration: they negate the existence of society and completely reject the necessary relationships for the maintenance of society. But this is fundamentally wrong and does not in the least correspond to the reality of society, but serves the interests of capitalism.

**The more capitalism succeeds in breaking society down into individuals and distorting the understanding of freedom in the name of individual freedom, the bigger becomes its power over the individual human being.**

So if you follow these approaches, you ultimately create the perfect breeding ground for capitalism. We attach great importance to all currents which, on the basis of freedom and equality, oppose capitalism, all monopolies and all forms of exploitation. Whether they are large or small is not decisive. They all represent anti-systemic forces and parts of democratic modernity for us. So if we understand them as fundamental parts of Democratic Modernity, we see that there is a very strong structure in the world that is directed against capitalism. But because these groups use their own imperfections against each other, constantly rejecting each other and negating their individual right to exist, they remain in a marginal and severely weakened position. But if all these groups succeed in coming closer to each other and building relationships with each other on the basis of

internationalism, I am firmly convinced that a force and a paradigm will arise that can provide an alternative to capitalism. We are the majority. All the parts of democratic modernity together are ten times as many as the representatives of capitalist modernity. Also with regard to the feminist movement, it can be said that all other feminist groups, except for a current of liberal feminists, are anti-capitalist.

The youth is in a similar situation. There is an incredible anti-capitalist potential if we also include the various nations, the Marxists, anarchists, Trotskyists, the land movements, the religious and confessional movements in our consideration. In our opinion, it is the task of all of us to recognize this situation and to use it for something positive in order to develop a force against capitalism. We think that is very important now. Not by rejecting our differences at the outset, but by bringing together the legitimate diversity of all of us and, over time, making our diversity a new paradigm that is a real alternative. That is very important. So far, it has gone like this: Marxism considered anarchism as the enemy. Others declared Trotskyism the enemy. Everybody declared somebody as an enemy. And so a mechanism developed by which everyone made enemies of those who were actually closest to them. It is really very important to leave the domain of purely intellectual, theoretical discussions and see which approaches bear the most fruit in practice. Otherwise you become a pawn in the game of capitalism and represent only water on the mills of the existing system. Against this background, it is crucial to build relationships with all anti-systemic forces. It is therefore important that we hold discussions with each other within the framework of common platforms. It is a great thing when all these different groups carry out joint education and discuss with each other within this framework. If we continue in the style of the old, self-destructive relationships, we will not be able to save ourselves. The first condition for this is definitely not to reject and negate my counterpart, who is also committed to the fight against the system, but to build relationships with him. We have to build relationships with each other without wanting to push our own views on the other person or seeking in him or her only that which is

like ourselves. We can bring about these positive conditions by having free discussions with each other and by living a culture of free thinking together. Therefore, in our opinion, it is inevitable that the anti-systemic forces from all the different areas fight common struggles, carry out common educational work, all get involved in the common work, develop positive relationships with each other and turn all this into a common organization in order to develop and build an alternative system. Our approach also includes some radical dimensions. Let's look at feminism or the women's movement, for example. The various anti-systemic currents all have their views on this topic. The extent to which they are effective is the subject of discussion. In spite of all the different approaches in this regard, we must together acknowledge the omnipresent sexism and the pressing women's issue. We can approach this issue and discuss it, without trying to make the others equal to us, but by trying to convince each other. As far as feminism and the women's movement is concerned, we are an extremely radical movement that has reached a very high level. It is easy to discuss the question of women on an intellectual and philosophical level. But nobody has succeeded in reaching our level in practice. We have developed a practice that goes far beyond what others only discuss theoretically. For example, some speak of the fact that women are automatically free when society is free. Or people claim that in a socialist society there can be no exploitation, which is why women will then automatically be free. But we see it quite differently. We are a movement that succeeds in freeing women from all their shackles in a backward society like the Middle East, making them one of the freest individuals and enabling them to make their own decisions. All this is very important. To free a woman in the Middle East from the shackles of her father, mother, siblings, tribe and state is an achievement whose significance cannot be expressed in words. Added to this is our approach to make women aware that the women's issue is actually a man's problem. That is a remarkable approach. The fundamental responsibility for the women's issue lies with men.



It is an approach of the PKK to defend women's freedom also against the PKK itself. That in itself, of course, says nothing. What is fundamental is to turn this approach into the organization of women. That is the essential work. You can't defend feminism by organizing women only within the framework of general social organization. We are a movement whose progressiveness is expressed by the fact that the autonomous organization of women in spite of society, or in some cases even against society; that we guarantee the freedom of women and and also arm them so that it becomes a self-defense force. If women today play such a crucial role, both quantitatively and qualitatively in the PKK and in the Rojava revolution, then the reason for this is the approach I have just described. We could find other examples of this. We are therefore also convinced that democratic modernity requires an internationalist or international structure. With the Rojava revolution and the Kobane resistance, a great interest arose, which over time developed into joint actions and work in Europe. This means that we can develop a serious opposition if we start from these examples and continue. This opposition force can reach a strength anywhere in the world, not only in the Middle East, with which it can lead the struggle for democracy, freedom and democratic modernity. What this means in concrete terms for each individual country we must find out and develop through joint discussions. In places like Rojava and the whole of the Middle East, where the contradictions are so openly apparent, the way of fighting is of course different from that in Europe. Neither the aims nor the methods are the same. What is important, however, is this: to fight for democratic modernity and therefore against capitalism.



**INTERNATIONALISM**

Once we have achieved the basis for this at the level of mentality, it is not difficult to fight this fight. But of course we cannot standardize the different places with their own conditions of resistance. I do not consider Europe to be a particularly liberal area. Of course, Europe is characterized by liberalism, and certain rights are granted in this context. But that is not the main point. Because at its core, Europe is not very democratic. This is, of course, a huge issue which we cannot now devote ourselves entirely to in the short term. But it is possible to state fundamentally that Europe is under extensive hegemonic control, which controls all of life and turns the individual into a kind of machine. People there are in such a disastrous situation that they are unaware whether the things they use bring them freedom or slavery. They are not aware whether their telephones, their internet, their subways or their airplanes make them freer or just more enslaved. In my opinion, all these are means that do not bring freedom but slavery. They are tools that serve both exploitation and intensify control over people. The state is informed about everything: who is friends with whom; how much money is withdrawn from which person's account each day; how many minutes people spend on what. All this is controlled by the state. The system knows what you watch on the Internet, what news you read online or to whom you write messages or letters. All these possibilities and this technology available to people in Europe have the particularity of making people believe that they are freer, when in fact they are making them more and more enslaved. I myself feel much freer: I have no money, don't use the phone, nobody knows where I am. All this makes me a much freer person. I am firmly convinced of that. The individual in Europe is not free: it is rather a society in which people are secured by a certain minimum salary and social benefits, which simplify their lives and have them under control with the help of simple tools of everyday life. The European States are extremely rich. To prevent refugees from Turkey come to Europe, they give Turkey six billion euros, but their own population, they feed them with a few hundred euros in social welfare. Nobody is really free in Europe. But when people there begin to ask themselves how they can be free and

what demands they have to make in the struggle for freedom, then they themselves will come up with what they can do. The current capitalist system in Europe can be questioned on this basis. The same applies to the state system there. The interests-led policy of the European bourgeoisie can be questioned. And by questioning all these aspects and by criticizing the existing conditions, the necessary awareness can be promoted in society. A society that has this awareness can be told about the paradigm of freedom and shown the way towards an alternative modernity. This is of course very difficult in today's Europe. But it must be done, nevertheless. They have not even managed to build a state or a federal structure. In all this time they have not been able to build a common political or military structure.

If they had pursued appropriate politics, that is, politics based on their own will, Iraq could have become a Middle Eastern paradise. By protecting and financing the international powers and by including Iraq's own riches, the country could have been turned into a libertarian and economic paradise. Despite these favourable conditions, however, the country is now in a deep political and economic crisis, with the result that Iraq has virtually no functioning government today. It is here in Iraq that the largest oil reserves are to be found. In addition, there are natural resources of unimaginable dimensions. Despite all these riches, Iraq is experiencing a severe economic crisis. A federal system was established in Northern Iraq under the protection of the international powers, but no functioning government has been formed to date. The source of all these problems lies in the following: Capitalism is in a deep crisis and in a phase of its own dissolution. In the wake of the crisis it is no longer able to stand on its feet. Yet, here in the region we have only recently begun to turn towards capitalism. Thus, while capitalism is in a deep crisis, the Kurdish circles around the KDP have high hopes, but these hopes are completely unrealistic. We take a different approach based on the 40 years of resistance in Turkey and its practical implementation in Rojava. The two approaches are very different. As an alternative to capitalism, the classes, the state and the exploitation system, we

advocate a system based on self-administration, equality and freedom. We are convinced that solutions cannot be expected from the international system, the USA or Russia. We also believe that the social problems in the Middle East cannot be solved by the division into classes, the state or power. Instead, we believe that there is a need for democratic conditions in which all social groups can work for their own interests. We have seen in Syria and other parts of the Middle East that this system can be implemented within a short period of time, offers practical solutions and is also quickly accepted by the population if it is well-organized and its spread is guaranteed. The organization of the Kurds in Rojava in the midst of this chaos has enabled them, on the one hand, to defend themselves against the extensive attacks and, on the other hand, to secure their own freedom in the form of societal self-organization, completely independent of external powers. They achieved this by rejecting all the approaches that were used for decades to break and divide society and at the same time developing their own alternatives. In this way, they succeeded in developing their own system and, through its practical implementation, in winning the trust of the population. If this model really develops and solidifies, it will be a solution for the entire Middle East. However, since it is still very new and limited to a relatively small region, i.e. the paradigm is not yet widely spread, it is only implemented in concrete terms in Rojava, and attempts are being made to suppress it through various political games.



## **THE STATES OF THE WORLD WILL NEVER SOLVE THE KURDISH QUESTIONS**

International solidarity is undoubtedly very important. The freedom movements and the freedom struggles in the different parts of the world must definitely support each other. Everyone must lead the fight for freedom in their particular place. In the end, we must change the whole world. We must make changing the world our common goal. However, if a person in Europe who is opposed to the system defines himself or herself only in terms of support for Rojava, that is very insufficient. Just as important as defending the revolution in Rojava is, it is also a fundamental duty to advance the revolution in Germany. Our own work in Europe also has clear weaknesses. Although we as a movement have enjoyed the support of broad social circles in Europe since the 1980s, we have not yet succeeded sufficiently in establishing sufficient relations with the anti-systemic forces in Europe and developing joint struggles with them. A nationalist perspective, mainly limited to Kurds, has put us in a marginal position there. This perspective has also meant that to a certain extent we have deprived ourselves of the opportunity to explain our intentions to the people of Europe. We have always demanded that the people in the European countries join or support our struggle. But our own contribution to the struggles there has been too weak. The fact is that our responsibility for participating in the struggle for freedom in Europe is as great as the responsibility of internationalists for defending the revolution in Rojava. Because of these shortcomings, we have not yet managed to take the necessary steps to implement our paradigm. Not only can we criticize others, but we must also recognize our own role in not implementing our paradigm properly.

However, in recent times this has slowly begun to change. In particular, the sympathy for Rojava and the protests against the attacks there have led to a slow rapprochement, which makes it possible to reach the necessary level of cooperation I have spoken of. It is not, therefore, a question of helping the revolution in Rojava, but of taking responsibility for it and treating it as one's own

revolution to see. This is accompanied by the fact that the Kurds struggles in Europe in the same way as they participate in the struggle for freedom. in Kurdistan. All this requires both a common paradigm, as well as a common organization. Due to nationalism, there is a certain misunderstanding among the Kurds: they consider the left as marginal, weak and without influence and try to solve their own problems with the help of the states. This is a big mistake. We have been trying for 40 years to explain to people that this is a wrong approach. The states are the reason why Kurdistan is in the current situation. The states of this world will never solve the Kurdish question because they themselves are the ones who put Kurdistan in this situation. The leftist or anti-systemic forces have no responsibility for the current situation in Kurdistan. They are the only force that is unconditionally fighting for the freedom in Kurdistan. So, they are the ones who will be our strategic partners. The states and ruling classes always pursue policies that oriented exclusively to their own interests and advantages. They only do that, what it takes to realize their benefits. The European states have recognized, that they can best assert their interests when they see Kurdistan shared in four parts. So they created the parts and put Kurdistan in the situation we're in today. Even today, they are only interested in certain rights of the Kurds, if it corresponds to their own interests. The anti-systemic forces are very different from all these states. I would like to give a very concrete example: During the struggle against the IS, the PYD was praised to the skies by the international community. The French received them in the Elysee Palace, as did the Italians. The Germans also held talks with them at official state level. But they all knew that there were relations between the PYD and the PKK. Nevertheless, they received the PYD and held official talks with them because it was convenient for them to present themselves as fighters against ISIS. But when Turkey attacked Afrin, they did not support Afrin in the least. This clearly shows that states always do what is to their advantage. They know no other principle. That is why our approach to the state is crucial. The origin of all problems is the state.

The solution to problems will never come from the state. Then who will solve the problems? It is the anti-systemic movements that will find solutions to the problems. They are not in the least as marginal as is always claimed. They are a large part of society. What we call capitalism is only a small group. It is the group of the ruling class. The group of capitalists is limited only to the circle of the ruling class. They are not the society. The rulers are the capitalists. Society is not capitalist and therefore falls by the wayside. We must not confuse society with capitalism or the group of the ruling class. Instead of considering the anti-systemic forces and the large part of the population behind them as marginal, we must rather see that it is the capitalists who are in a marginal position.

## **ROJAVA – AN INTERNATIONALIST REVOLUTION WITH ITS OWN PROBLEMS**

We are already observing that this is changing with Rojava, especially by all those who go to Rojava and stay there for a certain time. This is also true for the left-wing friends in Europe. But they have big difficulties. That is something quite natural. Everyone has to face difficulties. The hardest work in the world is our revolution. No revolution is as hard as our revolution. No one has said we are great or outstanding. Because we are fighting with the biggest difficulties in the world and we are trying to pave a way for the revolution through the most interesting approaches. No more and no less we do. So there is no reason to exaggerate all this. But it can be said that we are currently the force that has advanced furthest in the world. The following is important: people are coming to Rojava from all over the world. They come there with revolutionary enthusiasm and idealism, but the difficulties of life on the ground cannot be dismissed. To be like the people from the population, to find solutions to their problems, to offer them solutions every day, to show them how to deal with their backwardness, to find a way to protect them against all, to prepare them for future attacks, to teach them how to handle weapons and to

defend yourself – all this is very difficult. All these are tasks that are new for all those who are on their way to Rojava. The real challenge cannot be understood if one approaches it with an idealistic attitude, in the sense that he has eaten half a bread, more than everyone else. There is no socialism here. The struggle is marked by difficulties, but the most exciting aspect of all these difficulties is the search for freedom itself. This search is something breathtaking. All problems can be solved in the end. Lack of consciousness or other shortcomings can be overcome. The excitement that comes with this search is our reward for all the effort. In the 1930s the internationalist brigades in Spain had to deal with exactly the same problems. And yet Spain was a breathtaking experience. All the shortcomings that I have mentioned and criticized before were the reason for the defeat in the Spanish Civil War at that time. But with the lessons we learn from the Spanish Civil War, we can lead Rojava to success.

Those who come to Rojava we attach exactly this importance. We do not want them to fall in battle there. We try to keep them out of dangerous situations. But they deliberately want to take these dangers too. Both are expressions of a wonderful humanity: on one hand we try to protect them from the dangers of war and on the other hand they insist on risking their lives for the revolution. No one can feel the same pain that we feel in the face of the fallen internationalists who came to Rojava with their strong desire for freedom. We attach a very special significance to them. It is not decisive for us whether someone fights or does not fight in this war, loses his life or not. What is important for us is what I spoke about before: to fight for freedom, to fight this fight. That is important for us. The Palestinians did this: They sent the people from all over the world who joined their struggle directly to the front line. They took a very pragmatic approach in trying to profit from the death of the internationalists. This is not an internationalist attitude. We do exactly the opposite: our basic claim is to make all those for whom war is something unusual and who did not grow up in war zones are to be held back from the front lines.



But the internationalists and Internationalists who come here constantly lead discussions and arguments with us, because they demand to fight in the front and to make their stay in Rojava to give it a meaning. If there is a possibility, we want to make it possible for all interested people to come to places like Rojava, to live there in society, to help building the system, to educate the people and to participate in the administration of the system. To take advantage of these opportunities is a great chance for all interested people. That is why we have always been open to all interested people and have made it possible for them to come. For this reason, we have created the conditions for not only ourselves to express ourselves, but for these opportunities to be available to all people here. But the state actors have become well aware of this in the meantime and therefore try to prevent internationalists from coming here. One day the KDP does this with reference to the USA, another day with reference to Turkey. There are many different ways and means of hindering the freedom struggle. If we want to prevent us from coming together in such a place of revolution, then we must make it our goal to make every place in the world a place of revolution. There is no difference between those who have fought in Kobane and Afrin and those who have been on the streets in all parts of the world during these periods to defend Kobane and Afrin. They all did what they could do in their own circumstances. I believe that Europe is an important place to fight this battle. Whether common discussions, education or protests on the street – they are all part of the common fight.

## **COMMON STRUGGLES IN EUROPE**

As far as this issue is concerned, we have already given clear orders to all the structures of the movement. All our structures have been charged with organizing this type of events and meetings regularly themselves, supporting them when necessary and participating in them. That is our perspective. If these events are to take place together, they must also be organized by joint committees. These committees must be enabled to make their own decisions. We as a movement must not claim any rights to special influence. Our task is to support the preparation and participation in the events. In this regard, we have taken very clear decisions and given orders. We have decided that we will participate in all these events and not only in those directly related to Kurdistan. It is about participating in the diversity of actions in the different countries. We are convinced of the importance of this kind of events and happenings. Of course it can always be about Kobane, Afrin or Rojava. But there are many more occasions and fights, for example in Europe. We must use all these occasions to intensify the fight against the system and to bring the different anti-systemic forces closer together. We attach great importance to this. Recently, trade unions in Great Britain have paid a lot of attention to the demand for freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. We as a movement do not play a central role in this. The trade unions and individuals have taken the initiative here. One of the presidents of an English trade union came to us here too and I spoke to him. He is also a member of the Labour Party. In the conversation we only presented our ideas on the British trade union campaign for the freedom of Öcalan and offered the participation of the Kurdish community in England. But the trade unions and individuals in England have taken full responsibility for the campaign themselves. Their efforts have resulted in five to six million people taking part in the trade union campaign. This is something very important. Maybe it is not one hundred percent in line with our own ideas, but as a movement we

can support and promote many more such actions. The British trade union campaign is also slowly being joined by large South American trade unions. So there is a chance that this will develop into a worldwide campaign for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan, starting in Britain. Because behind it are large and influential trade unions and workers' parties. Perhaps it won't happen and the campaign will take place on a smaller scale. In a village, a city or an individual country, such a campaign can be launched. These kinds of actions should be joint actions in which everyone can participate with their own identities and issues. It is very important to create a public sphere of its own with this type of campaign, without a single group taking over the whole. If we are so build up a counter-public, e.g. in Germany, we will definitely influence the German state. This is a huge contribution.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE CRIMINALIZATION IN EUROPE**

The bourgeoisie is really a very dishonest and sneaky class. The PKK has been fighting for 40 years. For a long time it wasn't classified as a terrorist organization. Do you know when the PKK was put on the terrorist list in the EU? In 2002. At that time, the PKK wanted to end the armed struggle. It worked on changing its paradigm and aimed at a political solution. During all these years of armed struggle, the PKK was not put on the terrorist list, but when it wanted to end the armed struggle and bring about a political solution, it was put on the EU terrorist list. What does this mean? It means that the EU is ultimately saying: 'This war must not end under any circumstances! The Kurdish question must not be solved! It profits from this war and can enforce its own interests through it. The public is given the impression that the PKK has been a terrorist organization and that the German or any other state is modern and democratic. It is clear why the PKK is still on the terrorist list: The war should continue and a solution to the Kurdish question should be prevented. We must see how many weapons Germany has sold to Turkey since the PKK was put on the EU terrorist list in 2002. France, Italy, Israel or England have also sold vast

quantities of weapons to Turkey since then. Turkey has also awarded many lucrative contracts to all these countries. All these countries are playing with the fate of a people in order to impose their own interests. When our chairman, Abdullah Öcalan, left Syria in 1998 and came to Italy, not a single European country wanted to imprison him and prosecute him legally. And this despite the fact that he was portrayed as a terrorist in all these countries and should actually have been prosecuted accordingly. No country in the EU wanted to allow Öcalan to enter. The situation at that time could have been understood by the EU countries as a PKK peace initiative and Öcalan as a PKK peace envoy. But they deliberately refused to do so. Instead, they did everything to intensify the war and deepen the chaos. The EU states went so far as to actively participate in Öcalan's arrest in Kenya and his handover to Turkey. This policy is not aimed at ending the war, but at intensifying it. The war should continue so that the states can continue to sell their weapons. This is the attitude behind it. After Öcalan was handed over to Turkey, he was sentenced there in a show trial. If we look at the way in which Öcalan was sentenced and imprisoned, we can say quite clearly that all this is neither the universal human rights, still corresponds to the values of Europe. Would a morally thinking society in the face of such massive violations of the universal Human rights remain silent? I guess that means that the societies there are not are particularly moral. They declare their own values meaningless. That is shown by the handling of Abdullah Öcalan. Despite Öcalan's imprisonment and numerous infringements of European values and standards, Turkey is supported and no responsibility is taken for Abdullah Öcalan. Europe declares these universal values and rights only in terms of on itself for valid. From the declaration of universal human rights in the USA and France to the institutionalization of these rights in the form of the EU, these universal rights were granted to all people. But when it comes to our chairman Abdullah Öcalan, nobody cares about these universal values. Although it disregards each and every one of these universal values and breaks the rights resulting from them, the international

community of states remains silent. The rights and support that were given to Mandela are withheld from Öcalan. While the states are doing this, the Kurds are exercising one of their most basic democratic rights and fighting for the freedom of their representative Abdullah Öcalan. The EU states in turn respond to this by even regularly banning protests and demonstrations for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. Even if they allow such protests, symbols and flags referring to Abdullah Öcalan are banned. I do not have the words for this. The banning of the PKK, the listing of the PKK on the EU terror list or the banning of symbols and flags is implemented in Germany in particular, but is not restricted to that one country. Within NATO, Germany has been given the main responsibility for developing and implementing a policy against the PKK. For this reason, even the slightest expression of sympathy or support for the PKK is stopped and criminalized. It is interesting to note that during the Kobane resistance the state pursued a very flexible policy. It is not for nothing that I said at the beginning that the bourgeoisie is a very dishonest and sneaky class. The state knew at that time that there was a great anger in the population against the ISIS. So it was extremely beneficial for the state to build relations with those forces that fought against ISIS. All states, whether Holland, Italy or Germany, celebrated the fighters who resisted ISIS as heroes. The symbols of PKK, Abdullah Öcalan or PYD were allowed in all these countries at that time. Now that ISIS has been defeated, for example, the symbols of the PYD are banned in the same countries. We have understood that the pictures of Abdullah Öcalan will be banned because of his connections to the PKK. But why were the flags of the YPG banned? To what extent has the YPG harmed Germany or the rest of the world? Their only crime is that they defeated ISIS. And what is Germany doing? It bans the YPG's symbols. Do you know what Germany's ultimate agenda is? While Germany is banning all these symbols and organizations, it is constantly pumping money into Turkey in an attempt to keep Erdogan on his feet. The EU has paid six billion euros to Turkey in recent months. EU countries continue to supply Turkey with tanks and other weapons. All this is in

an attempt to keep Erdogan alive. All this is undeniable. We still cannot fully understand why the German Government is pursuing an anti-Kurdish policy to the same extent as the Turkish state. While there is a great resentment among the population and especially in the media landscape of Germany about the current situation in Turkey, those in power in Germany are pursuing a policy that is diametrically opposed to the mood of German society and is entirely aimed at supporting the AKP and Erdogan. This is of course a broad and complex issue. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to understand German-Turkish relations: Since the relations of the German Emperor Wilhelm with the Ottoman ruler Abulhamid until today, both states have very close relations with each other. Added to this is the role in the fight against the PKK, which was given to Germany by NATO. These two points are crucial for understanding German-Turkish relations. It may well be that the wrong actions have been taken in Germany. If this is the case, they were based on local initiatives. But the PKK has never, during its 40 years of struggle, pursued a policy of deliberate and planned harming of the German population and German interests. So why does the German state pursue such a hostile policy towards the PKK?

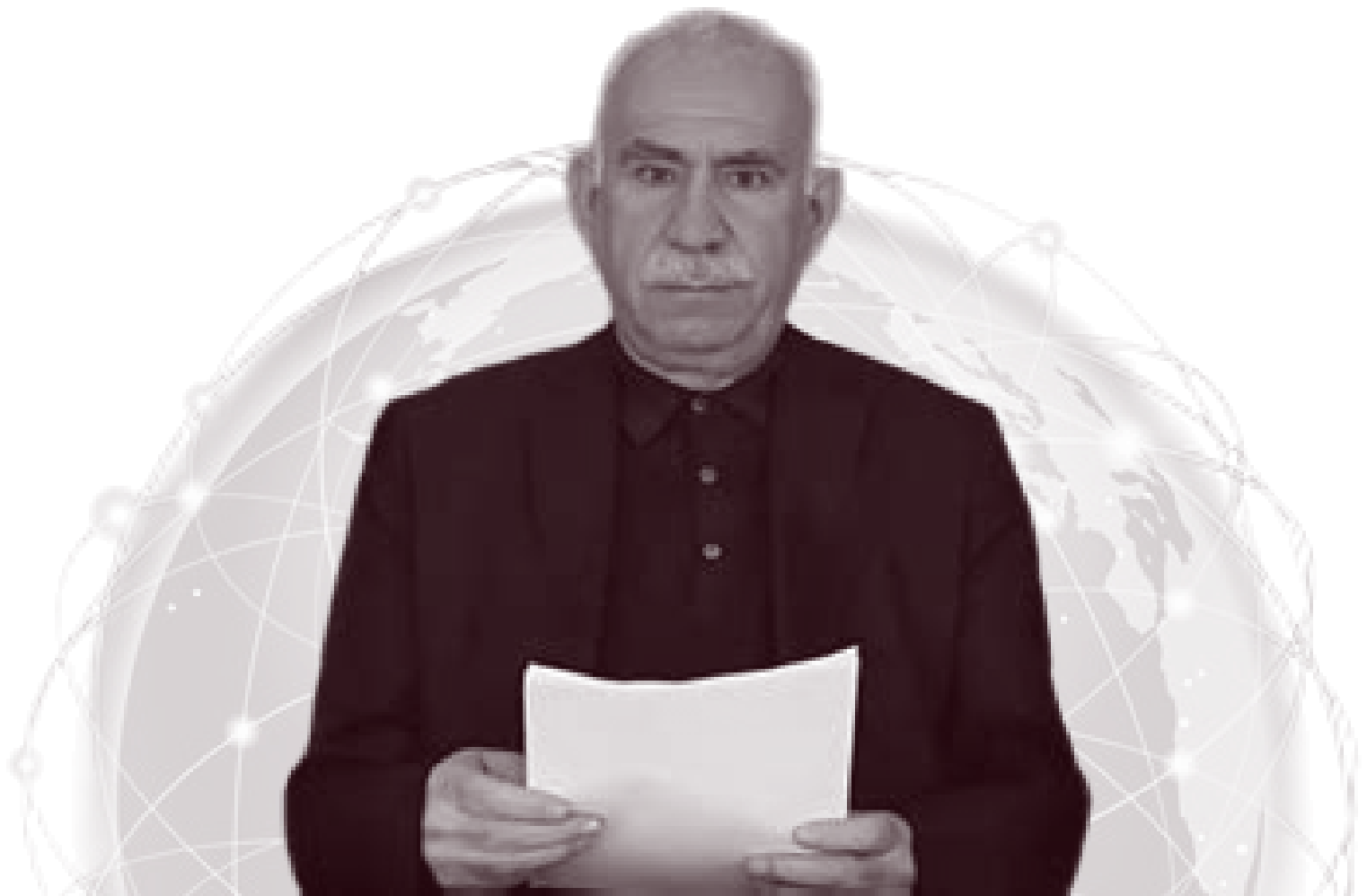


## CONCLUSION

Riza Altun's life and work were rooted in a deep understanding of the need for Internationalism to counter global hegemony. What he told the comrades in 2018 remains true today as we confront a world sliding further into chaos and fragmentation.

Democratic Confederalism is no longer just a theory—it is a living alternative. Built on radical Democracy, Ecology, and Women's Freedom, it offers a path forward for all who resist capitalism, fascism, and patriarchy. In Gaza, Iran, Kurdistan, and beyond, people fight for life and dignity. But without shared strategy, our struggles risk isolation. As Öcalan has said, it is time to build a new International—a network not just of resistance, but of creation and a democratic society.

Let our answer to this historic call be a spark that lights the flame of resistance everywhere and weave our resistances and struggles into one.









**[www.riseup4rojava.org](http://www.riseup4rojava.org)**

**@RISEUP4ROJAVA**

**[riseup4rojava@riseup.net](mailto:riseup4rojava@riseup.net)**