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Abdullah Öcalan
Democratic Confederalism
2011

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The word “Qwam” plural “Aqwam” can mean “people”, “nation”, or “tribe” depending on the context. The translator incorrectly translated, in reference to the kurdish people as a kurdish “state” when in reality Ocalan rejects the notion of a state — originally published by: Transmedia Publishing Ltd. – London, Cologne
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East had not been difficult. The project of a homogeneous nation as propagated by the nation-states furthered their cultural decline.

9. The Caucasian ethnic groups also have social problems which are not insignificant. Again and again they have migrated into the Middle East and stimulated its cultures. They have unquestionably contributed to its cultural wealth. The arrival of modernity almost made these minority cultures disappear. They, too, would find their adequate place in a confederate structure.

Finally, let me state again that the fundamental problems of the Middle East are deeply rooted in the class civilization. They have tightened with the global crisis of the capitalist modernity. This modernity and its claim to dominance cannot offer any solutions not to mention a long-term perspective for the Middle-East region. The future is democratic confederalism.

Writings by Abdullah Ocalan Prison Writings: The Roots of Civilisation, London, 2007 ISBN: 978–0745326160 Prison Writings: The PKK and the Kurdish Question in the 21st Century, London, 2011 ISBN: 978–0956751409 War and Peace in Kurdistan, Cologne, 2009, PDF www.freedom-for-ocalan.com The Road Map for Democratization of Turkey and Solution to the Kurdish Question (Summary), Cologne, 2011, PDF www.freedom-for-ocalan.com

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bloodshed; what remains is the difficult legacy of seemingly irresolvable problems. The Israel-Palestine example shows the complete failure of the capitalist modernity and the nation-state.

The Jews belong to the culture bearers of the Middle East. Denial of their right to existence is an attack on the Middle East as such. Their transformation into a democratic nation just as for Armenians and Arameans would make their participation in a democratic confederation of the Middle East easier. The project of an "East-Aegean Democratic Confederation" would be a positive start. Strict and exclusive national and religious identities may evolve into flexible and open identities under this project. Israel may also evolve into a more acceptable open democratic nation. Undoubtedly though its neighbours must also go through such a transformation.

Tensions and armed conflicts in the Middle East make a transformation of the paradigm of modernity seem inevitable. Without it a solution of the difficult social problems and national questions is impossible. Democratic modernity offers an alternative to the system that is unable to resolve problems.

8. The annihilation of Hellenic culture in Anatolia is a loss that cannot be compensated. The ethnic cleansing arranged by the Turkish and Greek nation-states in the first quarter of the last century has left its mark. No state has the right to drive people from their ancestral cultural region. Nevertheless, the nationstates showed their inhuman approach towards such issues again and again. The attacks on the Hellenic, Jewish, Aramean and Armenian cultures were stepped up while Islam spread throughout the Middle East. This, in turn, contributed to the decline of the Middle-Eastern Civilization. The Islamic culture has never been able to fill the emerging void. In the 19th century when the capitalist modernity advanced into the Middle East it found a cultural desert created by self-inflicted cultural erosion. Cultural diversity also strengthens the defence mechanism of a society. Monocultures are less robust. Hence, the conquest of the Middle

ple in the Middle East. They shared a settlement area with the Kurds but also with other people. Like the Armenians they suffered from repression by the Muslim majority paving the way for European-style nationalism among the Aramean bourgeoisie. Eventually the Arameans too fell victims to genocide at the hands of the Turks under the leadership of the fascist Committee of Unity and Progress. The collaborationist Kurds lent a helping hand in this genocide. The question of Aramean national society has its roots in the civilization but has also developed further with Christianity and ideologies of modernity. For a solution there is a need for a radical transformation of the Arameans. Their real salvation may be to break away from the mentality of classical civilization and capitalist modernity and instead embrace democratic civilization and renew their rich cultural memory as an element of democratic modernity in order to re-construct themselves as the "Aramean Democratic Nation".

7. The history of the Jewish people also gives expression to the overall problematic cultural history of the Middle East. The search for the backdrop of expulsion, pogroms and genocide amounts to balancing the accounts of the civilizations. The Jew-ish community has taken up the influences of the old Sumerian and Egyptian cultures as well as those of regional tribal cultures. It has contributed a lot to the culture of the Middle East. Like the Arameans they fell victims to extreme developments of modernity. Against this background, intellectuals of Jewish descent developed a complex point of view towards these issues. However, this is by far not enough. For a solution of the problems as they exist today a renewed appropriation of the history of the Middle East is needed on a democratic basis. The Israeli nationstate is at war since its foundation. The slogan is: an eye for an eye. Fire cannot be fought by fire, though. Even if Israel enjoys relative security thanks to its international support, this is not a sustainable solution. Nothing will be permanently safe as long as the capitalist modernity has not been overcome.

The Palestine conflict makes it clear that the nation-state paradigm is not helpful for a solution. There has been much

I. Preface

For more than thirty years the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has been struggling for the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people. Our struggle, our fight for liberation turned the Kurdish question into an international issue which affected the entire Middle East and brought a solution of the Kurdish question within reach. When the PKK was formed in the 1970s the international ideological and political climate was characterized by the bipolar world of the Cold War and the conflict between the socialist and the capitalist camps. The PKK was inspired at that time by the rise of decolonialization movements all over the world. In this context we tried to find our own way in agreement with the particular situation in our homeland. The PKK never regarded the Kurdish question as a mere problem of ethnicity or nationhood. Rather, we believed, it was the project of liberating the society and democratizing it. These aims increasingly determined our actions since the 1990s. We also recognized a causal link between the Kurdish question and the global domination of the modern capitalist system. Without questioning and challenging this link a solution would not be possible. Otherwise we would only become involved in new dependencies. So far, with a view to issues of ethnicity and nationhood like the Kurdish question, which have their roots deep in history and at the foundations of society, there seemed to be only one viable. solution: the creation of a nation-state, which was the paradigm of the capitalist modernity at that time. We did not believe, however, that any ready-made political blueprints would be able to sustainably improve the situation of the people in the Middle East. Had it not been nationalism and nation-states which had created so many

problems in the Middle East? Let us therefore take a closer look at the historical background of this paradigm and see whether we can map a solution that avoids the trap of nationalism and fits the situation of the Middle East better.

They shared much of their settlement area with the Kurds. While the Kurds live primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry the Armenians engaged in arts and crafts. Just like the Kurds, the Armenians cultivated a tradition of self-defence. Apart from some short episodes the Armenians never successfully founded a state. They rely on Christian culture which gives them their identity and their faith in salvation. Because of their religion they often suffered repression at the hands of the Muslim majority. Hence, the emerging nationalism bore fruit with the Armenian bourgeoisie. Soon there were differences with the Turkish nationalists eventually ending in the genocide of the Armenians by the Turks.

Apart from the Jews the Armenians are the second-largest people which live primarily in the Diaspora. The foundation of an Armenian state in the west of Azerbaijan, however, did not solve the Armenian national question. The consequences of the genocide can hardly be put into words. The search for the lost country defines their national psyche and is at the heart of the Armenian question. The issue is aggravated by the fact that these areas have been settled by other people since then. Any concepts based on a nation-state cannot offer a solution. There is neither a homogenous population structure there nor any clear borders as is required by the capitalist modernity. The thinking of their opponents may be fascist; however, it is not enough to only bring the genocide to one's mind. Confederate structures could be an alternative for the Armenians. The foundation of a democratic Armenian nation in line with the paradigm of the democratic modernity promises the Armenians an opportunity to reinvent themselves. It could enable them to return to their place in the cultural plurality of the Middle East. In the event that they renew themselves under the Armenian democratic nation not only shall they continue to play their historical role within the Middle East culture but they shall also find the right path to liberation.

6. In modern times the Christian Arameans (Assyrians) also suffered the fate of the Armenians. They too are one of the oldest peo-

ratization of their society would be synonymous with the freedom of the whole region and its societies.

4. The reasons for today's problems of the Persian or Iranian nation can be found in the interventions of historical civilizations and the capitalist modernity. Although their original identity was a result of Zoroastrian and Mithraic tradition these have been annulled by a derivative of Islam. Manichaeism that emerged as the synthesis of Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism with Greek philosophy was not able to prevail against the ideology of the official civilization. Indeed, it went no further then to nurture the tradition of rebellion. It has hence converted the Islamic tradition into Shi'ah denomination and adopted it to be its latest civilizational ideology. Presently there are efforts made to modernize itself by passing the elements of capitalist modernity through its Shi'ah filter.

The Iranian society is multi-ethnic and multi-religious and blessed with a rich culture. All national and religious identities of the Middle East can be found there. This diversity is in strong contrast to the hegemonic claim of the theocracy, which cultivates a subtle religious nationalism and the ruling class does not shrink back from anti-modernist propaganda whenever it serves their interests. Revolutionary and democratic tendencies have been integrated by the traditional civilization. A despotic regime skilfully governs the country. The negative effects of American and European sanctions are not negligible here.

Despite strong centralist efforts in Iran, from the grass-roots already some kind of federalism exists. When elements of democratic civilisation and federalist elements including Azeris, Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs, and Turkmens intersect, the project of a "Democratic Confederation of Iran" can emerge and become attractive. Women's movement and communal traditions will play a special role here

5. The Armenian national question contains one of the greatest tragedies that the progress of the capitalist modernity has brought about in the Middle East. The Armenians are a very old people.

II. The Nation-State

A. Basics

With the sedentarization of people they began to form an idea of the area that they were living in, its extension and its boundaries, which were mostly determined by nature and features of the landscape. Clans and tribes that had settled in a certain area and lived there for a long period of time developed the notions of a common identity and of the homeland. The boundaries between what the tribes saw as their homelands were not yet borders. Commerce, culture or language were not restricted by the boundaries. Territorial borders remained flexible for a long time. Feudal structures prevailed almost everywhere and now and then dynastic monarchies or great multi-ethnic empires rose with continuously changing borders and many different languages and religious communities like the Roman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire or the British Empire. They survived long periods of time and many political changes because their feudal basis enabled them to distribute power flexibly over a wide range of smaller secondary power centres.

1. Nation-state and Power

With the appearance of the nation-state trade, commerce and finance pushed for political participation and subsequently added their power to the traditional state structures. The development of the nation-state at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution more than two hundred years ago went hand in hand with the unregu-

lated accumulation of capital on the one hand and the unhindered exploitation of the fast growing population on the other hand. The new bourgeoisie which rose from this revolution wanted to take part in the political decisions and state structures. Capitalism, their new economic system, thus became an inherent component of the new nation-state. The nation-state needed the bourgeoisie and the power of the capital in order to replace the old feudal order and its ideology which rested on tribal structures and inherited rights by a new national ideology which united all tribes and clans under the roof of the nation. In this way, capitalism and nation-state became so closely linked to each other that neither could be imagined to exist without the other. As a consequence of this, exploitation was not only sanctioned by the state but even encouraged and facilitated. But above all the nation-state must be thought as the maximum form of power. None of the other types of state have such a capacity of power. One of the main reasons for this is that the upper part of the middle-class has been linked to the process of monopolization in an ever-more increasing manner. The nationstate itself is the most developed complete monopoly. It is the most developed unity of monopolies such as trade, industrial, finance and power. One should also think of ideological monopoly as an indivisible part of the power monopoly.

2. The State and its Religious Roots

The religious roots of the state have already been discussed in detail (A. Ocalan, The Roots of Civilisation, London, 2007). Many contemporary political concepts and notions have their origin in religious or theological concepts or structures. In fact, a closer look reveals that religion and divine imagination brought about the first social identities in history. They formed the ideological glue of many tribes and other pre-state communities and defined their existence as communities.

Not having a state of their own has advantages and disadvantages. The excrescences of state-based civilizations have only been taken in to a limited extent. This can be a benefit in the realization of alternative social concepts beyond the capitalist modernity. Their settlement area is divided by the national borders of four countries and lies in a geo-strategically important region, thus providing the Kurds a strategic advantage. The Kurds do not have the chance to form a national society through the use of state-power. Although there is a Kurdish political entity today in Iraqi-Kurdistan, it is not a nation-state but rather a parastatal entity.

Kurdistan had also been home to Armenian and Aramaic minorities before these fell victims to genocides. There are also smaller groups of Arabs and Turks. Even today there are many different religions and faiths living side by side there. There also rudiments of a clan and tribal culture while there is almost no presence of urban culture there.

All these properties are a blessing for new democratic political formations. Communal cooperatives in farming but also in the water economy and the energy sector offer themselves as ideal ways of production. The situation is also favourable for the development of an ethical political society. Even the patriarchal ideology is less deeply rooted here than in the neighbouring societies. This is beneficial for the establishment of a democratic society where women's freedom and equality are to form one of the main pillars. It also offers the conditions for the creation of a democratic environment-friendly nation in line with the paradigm of the democratic modernity. The construction of a democratic nation based on multi-national identities is the ideal solution when faced with the dead-end street nation-state. The emerging entity could become a blueprint for the entire Middle East and expand dynamically into neighbouring countries. Convincing the neighbouring nations of this model shall change the fate of the Middle East and shall reinforce the chance of democratic modernity to create an alternative. In this sense, therefore, the freedom of the Kurds and the democ-

form a stratum whose interests are compatible with democracy and communalism. The national problems are quite complex. The power strive of the nation-state, distinct nationalism and a sexist patriarchal society prevail and create a very conservative society. The family is regarded as the smallest cell of the state. Both individuals and institutions have taken in these aspects. Turkish and Turkmen communities struggle for power. Other ethnic groups are subjected to a distinct policy of subjugation. The centralist power structures of the Turkish nation-state and the rigid official ideology have prevented a solution to the Kurdish question until today. The society is made to believe that there is no alternative to the state. There is no balance between the individual and the state. Obedience is regarded as the greatest virtue

In contrast to this, the theory of the democratic modernity offers an adequate approach to all national communities in Turkey to solve their national problems. Community based project of a democratic Turkish confederation would both strengthen its internal unity and and create the conditions for a peaceful coexistence with the neighbours that it lives with. Borders have lost its former meaning when it comes to social unity. In spite of geographic boundaries today's modern communication tools allow for a virtual unity between individuals and communities wherever they are. A democratic confederation of the Turkish national communities could be a contribution to world peace and the system of democratic modernity.

3. The Kurdish national society is very complex. Worldwide, the Kurds are the biggest nation without a state of their own. They have been settling in their present settlement areas since the Neolithic. Agriculture and stock breeding as well as their readiness to defend themselves using the geographic advantages of their mountainous homeland helped the Kurds to survive as a native people. The Kurdish national question rises from the fact that they have been denied their right to nationhood. Others tried to assimilate them, annihilate them, and in the end flatly denied their existence.

Later, after state structures had already developed, the traditional links between state, power and society began to weaken. The sacred and divine ideas and practices which had been present at the origin of the community increasingly lost their meaning for the common identity and were, instead, transferred onto power structures like monarchs or dictators. The state and its power were derived from divine will and law and its ruler became king by the grace of God. They represented divine power on earth.

Today, most modern states call themselves secular, claiming that the old bonds between religion and state have been severed and that religion is no longer a part of the state. This is arguably only half the truth. Even if religious institutions or representatives of the clergy do no longer participate in political and social decision-making they still do influence these decisions to an extent just as they are influenced themselves by political or social ideas and developments. Therefore, secularism, or laicism as it is called in Turkey, still contains religious elements. The separation of state and religion is the result of a political decision. It did not come naturally. This is why even today power and state seem to be something given, god-given we might even say. Notions like secular state or secular power remain ambiguous. The nation-state has also allocated a number of attributes which serve to replace older religiously rooted attributes like: nation, fatherland, national flag, national anthem, and many others. Particularly notions like the unity of state and nation serve to transcend the material political structures and are, as such, reminiscent of the pre-state unity with God. They have been put in the place of the divine

When in former times a tribe subjugated another tribe its members had to worship the gods of the victors. We may arguably call this process a process of colonization, even assimilation. The nation-state is a centralized state with quasi-divine attributes that has completely disarmed the society and monopolizes the use of force.

3. Bureaucracy and the Nation-State

Since the nation-state transcends its material basis, the citizens, it assumes an existence beyond its political institutions. It needs additional institutions of its own to protect its ideological basis as well as legal, economic and religious structures. The resulting ever-expanding civil and military bureaucracy is expensive and serves only the preservation of the transcendent state itself, which in turn elevates the bureaucracy above the people. During the European modernity the state had all means at its disposal to expand its bureaucracy into all strata of the society. There it grew like cancer infecting all lifelines of the society. Bureaucracy and nation-state cannot exist without each other. If the nation-state is the backbone of the capitalist modernity it certainly is the cage of the natural society. Its bureaucracy secures the smooth functioning of the system, secures the basis of the production of goods, and secures the profits for the relevant economic actors in both the real-socialist and the business-friendly nation-state. The nation-state domesticates the society in the name of capitalism and alienates the community from its natural foundations. Any analysis meant to localize and solve social problems needs to take a close look at these links

4. Nation-State and Homogeneity

The nation-state in its original form aimed at the monopolization of all social processes. Diversity and plurality had to be fought, an approach that led into assimilation and genocide. It does not only exploit the ideas and the labour potential of the society and colonize the heads of the people in the name of capitalism. It also assimilates all kinds of spiritual and intellectual ideas and cultures in order to preserve its own existence. It aims at creating a single national culture, a single national identity, and a single unified religious community. Thus it also enforces a homogeneous citizenship. The notion of citizen has been created as a result of the quest for

In this context we can speak of four majority nations: Arabs, Persians, Turks, and Kurds. I do not wish to divide nations into majority or minority as I do not find this to be appropriate. But due to demographic considerations I shall speak of majority nations. In the same context we may also use the term minority nations.

1. There are more than twenty Arab nation-states which divide the Arab community and damage their societies by wars. This is one of the main factors responsible for the alienation of cultural values and the apparent hopelessness of the Arab national question. These nation-states have not even been able to form a cross-national economic community. They are the main reason of the problematic situation of the Arab nation. A religiously motivated tribal nationalism together with a sexist patriarchal society pervades all areas of the society resulting in distinct conservatism and slavish obedience. Nobody believes that the Arabs will be able to find an Arab national solution to their internal and crossnational problems. However, democratization and a communalist approach might provide such a solution. Their weakness towards Israel, which the Arab nation-states regard as a competitor, is not only the result of international support by the hegemonic powers. Rather, it is the result of a strong internal democratic and communal institutions within Israel. Over the last century, the society of the Arab nation has been weakened by radical nationalism and Islamism. Yet, if they are able to unite communal socialism which they are not a stranger to with that of the understanding of a democratic nation then they may be able to find themselves a secure, long-term solution.

2. The Turks and Turkmens form another influential nation. They share a similar understandings of power and ideology with the Arabs. They are strict nation-statists and have a profound religious and racial nationalism engraved in them. From a sociological point of view, the Turks and Turkmens are quite different. The relations between Turkmen and Turkish aristocracy resemble the tensed relations between Bedouins and Arab aristocracy. They

V. Problems of the Peoples in the Middle East and Possible Ways to a Solution

The national question is not a phantasm of the capitalist modernity. Nevertheless it was the capitalist modernity which imposed the national question on the society. The nation replaced the religious community. However, the transition to a national society needs the overcoming of the capitalist modernity if the nation is not to remain the disguise of repressive monopolies.

As negative as is the over-emphasis of the national category in the Middle East as severe would be the consequences of neglecting the collective national aspect. Hence the method in handling the issue should not be ideological but scientific and not nationstatist but based on the concept of democratic nation and democratic communalism. The contents of such an approach are the fundamental elements of democratic modernity.

Over the past two centuries nationalism and tendency for nation-states have been fuelled in the societies of the Middle East. The national issues have not been solved but rather have been aggravated in all areas of the society. Instead of cultivating productive competition the capital enforces internal and external wars in the name of the nation-state.

The theory of communalism would be an alternative to capitalism. In the framework of democratic nations which do not strive for power monopolies it may lead to peace in a region which has only been the field of gory wars and genocides.

such a homogeneity. The citizenship of modernity defines nothing but the transition made from private slavery to state slavery. Capitalism can not attain profit in the absence of such modern slave armies. The homogenic national society is the most artificial society to have ever been created and is the result of the "social engineering project". These goals are generally accomplished by the use of force or by financial incentives and have often resulted in the physical annihilation of minorities, cultures, or languages or in forced assimilation. The history of the last two centuries is full of examples illustrating the violent attempts at creating a nation that corresponds to the imaginary reality of a true nation-state.

5. Nation-State and Society

It is often said that the nation-state is concerned with the fate of the common people. This is not true. Rather, it is the national governor of the worldwide capitalist system, a vassal of the capitalist modernity which is more deeply entangled in the dominant structures of the capital than we usually tend to assume: It is a colony of the capital. Regardless how nationalist the nationstate may present itself, it serves to the same extent the capitalist processes of exploitation. There is no other explanation for the horrible redistribution wars of the capitalist modernity. Thus the nationstate is not with the common people – it is an enemy of the peoples. Relations between other nation-states and international monopolies are coordinated by the diplomats of the nation-state. Without the recognition by other nation-states none of them could survive. The reason can be found in the logic of the worldwide capitalist system. Nation-states which leave the phalanx of the capitalist system will be overtaken by the same fate that the Saddam regime in Iraq experienced or it will be brought to its knees by means of economic embargoes. Let us now derive some characteristics of the nation-state from the example of the Republic of Turkey.

B. Ideological Foundations of the Nation-State

In the past the history of states was often equated with the history of their rulers, which lent them almost divine qualities. This practice changed with the rise of the nation-state. Now the entire state was idealized and elevated to a divine level.

1. Nationalism

Assuming that we would compare the nation-state to a living god then nationalism would be the correspondent religion. In spite of some seemingly positive elements, nation-state and nationalism show metaphysical characteristics. In this context, capitalist profit and the accumulation of capital appear as categories shrouded in mystery. There is a network of contradictory relations behind these terms that is based on force and exploitation. Their hegemonic strive for power serves the maximization of profits. In this sense, nationalism appears as a quasi-religious justification. Its true mission, however, is its service to the virtually divine nation-state and its ideological vision which pervades all areas of the society. Arts, science, and social awareness: none of them is independent. A true intellectual enlightenment therefore needs a fundamental analysis of these elements of modernity.

2. Positivist Science

The paradigm of a positivist or descriptive science forms another ideological pillar of the nation-state. It fuels nationalist ideology but also laicism which has taken the form of a new religion. On the other hand it is one of the ideological foundations of modernity and its dogmata have influenced the social sciences sustainably. Positivism can be circumscribed as a philosophical approach that is strictly confined to the appearance of things, which it equates

the peoples by the advancement of democracy in all parts of Kurdistan without questioning the existing political borders. Its goal is not the foundation of a Kurdish nationstate. The movement intends to establish federal structures in Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq that are open for all Kurds and at the same time form an umbrella confederation for all four parts of Kurdistan

IV. Principles of Democratic Confederalism

1. The right of self-determination of the peoples includes the right to a state of their own. However, the foundation of a state does not increase the freedom of a people. The system of the United Nations that is based on nation-states has remained inefficient. Meanwhile, nation-states have become serious obstacles for any social development. Democratic confederalism is the contrasting paradigm of the oppressed people.

2. Democratic confederalism is a non-state social paradigm. It is not controlled by a state. At the same time, democratic confederalism is the cultural organizational blueprint of a democratic nation.

3. Democratic confederalism is based on grass-roots participation. Its decision-making processes lie with the communities. Higher levels only serve the coordination and implementation of the will of the communities that send their delegates to the general assemblies. For limited space of time they are both mouthpiece and executive institutions. However, the basic power of decision rests with the local grass-roots institutions.

4. In the Middle East, democracy cannot be imposed by the capitalist system and its imperial powers which only damage democracy. The propagation of grass-roots democracy is elementary. It is the only approach that can cope with diverse ethnical groups, religions, and class differences. It also goes together well with the traditional confederate structure of the society

5. Democratic confederalism in Kurdistan is an anti-nationalist movement as well. It aims at realizing the right of self-defence of

with reality itself. Since in positivism appearance is reality, nothing that has no appearance can be part of reality. We know from quantum physics, astronomy, some fields of biology and even the gist of thought itself that reality occurs in worlds that are beyond observable events. The truth, in the relationship between the observed and the observer, has mystified itself to the extent that it no longer fits any physical scale or definition. Positivism denies this and thus, to an extent, resembles the idol worshipping of ancient times, where the idol constitutes the image of reality.

3. Sexism

Another ideological pillar of the nation-state is the sexism that pervades the entire society. Many civilized systems have employed sexism in order to preserve their own power. They enforced women's exploitation and used them as a valuable reservoir of cheap labour. Women are also regarded as a valuable resource in so far as they produce offspring and provide the reproduction of men. Thus, woman is both a sexual object and a commodity. She is a tool for the preservation of male power and can at best advance to become an accessory of the patriarchal male society. On the one hand, the sexism of the society of the nation-state strengthens the power of the men; on the other hand the nationstate turns its society into a colony by the exploitation of women. In this respect women can also be regarded as an exploited nation. In the course of the history of civilization the patriarchy consolidated the traditional framework of hierarchies, which in the nation-state is fuelled by sexism. Socially rooted sexism is just like nationalism an ideological product of the nation-state and of power. Socially rooted sexism is not less dangerous than capitalism. The patriarchy, however, tries to hide these facts at any rate. This is understandable with a view to the fact that all power relations and state ideologies are fuelled by sexist concepts and behaviour. Without the repression of the women the repression of the entire

society is not conceivable. The sexism within the nation-state society while on the one hand gives the male the maximum power on the other hand turns the society through the woman into the worst colony of all. Hence woman is the historical-society's colony nation which has reached its worst position within the nation-state. All the power and state ideologies stem from sexist attitudes and behaviour. Woman's slavery is the most profound and disguised social area where all types of slavery, oppression and colonization are realized. Capitalism and nation-state act in full awareness of this. Without woman's slavery none of the other types of slavery can exist let alone develop. Capitalism and nation-state denote the most institutionalized dominant male. More boldly and openly spoken: capitalism and nation-state are the monopolism of the despotic and exploitative male.

4. Religiousness

Even if it acts seemingly like a secular state, the nation-state does not shy away from using a mélange of nationalism and religion for its purposes. The reason is simple: religion still plays an important part in some societies or parts of them. In particular Islam is very agile in this respect. However, religion in the age of modernity does no longer play its traditional role. Whether it is a radical of a moderate belief, religion in the nation-state does no longer have a mission in the society. It can only do what it is permitted by the nation-state. Its still existing influence and its functionality, which can be mis-used for the promotion of nationalism, are interesting aspects for the nation-state. In some cases religion even takes on the part of nationalism. The Shi'ah of Iran is one of the most powerful ideological weapons of the Iranian state. In Turkey the Sunni ideology plays a similar but more limited part.

Democratic confederalism is not at war with any nation-state but it will not stand idly by at assimilation efforts. Revolutionary overthrow or the foundation of a new state does not create sustainable change. In the long run, freedom and justice can only be accomplished within a democratic-confederate dynamic process.

Neither total rejection nor complete recognition of the state is useful for the democratic efforts of the civil society. The overcoming of the state, particularly the nation-state, is a long-term process.

The state will be overcome when democratic confederalism has proved its problem-solving capacities with a view to social issues. This does not mean, though, that attacks by nation-states have to be accepted. Democratic confederations will sustain self-defence forces at all times. Democratic confederations will not be limited to organize themselves within a single particular territory. They will become cross-border confederations when the societies concerned so desire.

the classic type of civilization. Democratic civilizations reject hegemonic powers and ideologies. Any ways of expression which cut across the boundaries of democratic self-administration would carry self-administration and freedom of expression ad absurdum. The collective handling of matters of the society needs understanding, respect of dissenting opinions and democratic ways of decisionmaking. This is in contrast to the understanding of leadership in the capitalist modernity where arbitrary bureaucratic decisions of nation-state character are diametrically opposed to the democratic-confederate leadership in line with ethic foundations. In democratic confederalism leadership institutions do not need ideological legitimization. Hence, they need not strive for hegemony

G. Democratic Confederate Structures at a Global scale

Although in democratic confederalism the focus is on the local level, organizing confederalism globally is not excluded. Contrariwise, we need to put up a platform of national civil societies in terms of a confederate assembly to oppose the United Nations as an association of nation-states under the leadership of the superpowers. In this way we might get better decisions with a view to peace, ecology, justice and productivity in the world.

H. Conclusion

Democratic confederalism can be described as a kind of selfadministration in contrast to the administration by the nationstate. However, under certain circumstances peaceful coexistence is possible as long as the nation-state does not interfere with central matters of self-administration. All such interventions would call for the self-defence of the civil society.

C. The Kurds and the Nation-State

After the preceding short introduction into the nation-state and its ideological basics we will now see why the foundation of a separate Kurdish nation-state does not make sense for the Kurds. Over the last decades the Kurds have not only struggled against repression by the dominant powers and for the recognition of their existence but also for the liberation of their society from the grip of feudalism. Hence it does not make sense to replace the old chains by new ones or even enhance the repression. This is what the foundation of a nation-state would mean in the context of the capitalist modernity. Without opposition against the capitalist modernity there will be no place for the liberation of the peoples. This is why the founding of a Kurdish nation-state is not an option for me. The call for a separate nation-state results from the interests of the ruling class or the interests of the bourgeoisie but does not reflect the interests of the people since another state would only be the creation of additional injustice and would curtail the right to freedom even more. The solution to the Kurdish question, therefore, needs to be found in an approach that weakens the capitalist modernity or pushes it back. There are historical reasons, social peculiarities and actual developments as well as the fact that the settlement area of the Kurds extends over the territories of four different countries which make a democratic solution indispensable. Furthermore, there is also the important fact that the entire Middle East suffers from a democracy deficit. Thanks to the geostrategic situation of the Kurdish settlement area successful Kurdish democratic projects promise to advance the democratization of the Middle East in general. Let us call this democratic project democratic confederalism.

III. Democratic Confederalism

This kind of rule or administration can be called a non-state political administration or a democracy without a state. Democratic decision-making processes must not be confused with the processes known from public administration. States only administrate while democracies govern. States are founded on power; democracies are based on collective consensus. Office in the state is determined by decree, even though it may be in part legitimized by elections. Democracies use direct elections. The state uses coercion as a legitimate means. Democracies rest on voluntary participation. Democratic confederalism is open towards other political groups and factions. It is flexible, multi-cultural, anti-monopolistic, and consensus-oriented. Ecology and feminism are central pillars. In the frame of this kind of self-administration an alternative economy will become necessary, which increases the resources of the society instead of exploiting them and thus does justice to the manifold needs of the society

A. Participation and the Diversity of the Political Landscape

The contradictory composition of the society necessitates political groups with both vertical and horizontal formations. Central, regional and local groups need to be balanced in this way. Only they, each for itself, are able to deal with its special concrete situation and develop appropriate solutions for far-reaching social problems. It is a natural right to express one's cultural, ethnic, or

this does not keep them from seeking authoritarian solutions at the highpoint of a crisis caused by the system itself. Fascist exercise of power is the nature of the nation-state. Fascism is the purest form of the nation-state.

This militarization can only be pushed back with the help of self-defence. Societies without any mechanism of self-defence lose their identities, their capability of democratic decision-making, and their political nature. Therefore, the self-defence of a society is not limited to the military dimension alone. It also presupposes the preservation of its identity, its own political awareness, and a process of democratization. Only then can we talk about self-defence.

Against this background democratic confederalism can be called a system of self-defence of the society. Only with the help of confederate networks can there be a basis to oppose the global domination of the monopolies and nation-state militarism. Against the network of monopolies we must build up an equally strong network of social confederacies.

This means in particular that the social paradigm of confederalism does not involve a military monopoly for the armed forces, which do only have the task of ensuring the internal and external security. They are under direct control of the democratic institutions. The society itself must be able to determine their duties. One of their tasks will be the defence of the free will of the society from internal and external interventions. The composition of the military leadership needs to be determined in equal terms and parts by both the political institutions and the confederate groupings.

F. Democratic Confederalism Versus Strife for Hegemony

In democratic confederalism there is no room for any kind of hegemony striving. This is particularly true in the field of ideology. Hegemony is a principle that is usually followed by

and even denies it, democratic confederalism constitutes a continuous democratic process.

The social actors, which are each for itself federative units, are the germ cells of participative democracy. They can combine and associate into new groups and confederations according to the situation. Each of the political units involved in participative democracy is essentially democratic. In this way, what we call democracy then is the application of democratic processes of decision-making from the local level to the global level in the framework of a continuous political process. This process will affect the structure of the social web of the society in contrast to the striving for homogeneity of the nation-state, a construct that can only be realized by force thus bringing about the loss of freedom.

I have already addressed the point that the local level is the level where the decisions are made. However, the thinking leading to these decisions needs to be in line with global issues. We need to become aware of the fact that even villages and urban neighbourhoods require confederate structures. All areas of the society need to be given to self-administration, all levels of it need to be free to participate.

E. Democratic Confederalism and Self-Defence

Essentially, the nation-state is a militarily structured entity. Nation-states are eventually the products of all kinds of internal and external warfare. None of the existing nation-states has come into existence all by itself. Invariably, they have a record of wars. This process is not limited to their founding phase but, rather, it builds on the militarization of the entire society. The civil leadership of the state is only an accessory of the military apparatus. Liberal democracies even outdo this by painting their militaristic structures in democratic and liberal colours. However,

national identity with the help of political associations. However, this right needs an ethical and political society. Whether nation-state, republic, or democracy – democratic confederalism is open for compromises concerning state or governmental traditions. It allows for equal coexistence

B. The Heritage of the Society and the Accumulation of Historical Knowledge

Then again, democratic confederalism rests on the historical experience of the society and its collective heritage. It is not an arbitrary modern political system but, rather, accumulates history and experience. It is the offspring of the life of the society. The state continuously orientates itself towards centralism in order to pursue the interests of the power monopolies. Just the opposite is true for confederalism. Not the monopolies but the society is at the centre of political focus. The heterogeneous structure of the society is in contradiction to all forms of centralism. Distinct centralism only results in social eruptions. Within living memory people have always formed loose groups of clans, tribes or other communities with federal qualities. In this way they were able to preserve their internal autonomy. Even the internal government of empires employed diverse methods of self-administration for their different parts, which included religious authorities, tribal councils, kingdoms, and even republics. Hence it is important to understand, that even centralist seeming empires follow a confederate organizational structure. The centralist model is not an administrative model wanted by the society. Instead, it has its source in the preservation of power of the monopolies.

C. Ethics and Political Awareness

The classification of the society in categories and terms after a certain pattern is produced artificially by the capitalist monopolies. What counts in a society like that is not what you are but what you appear to be. The putative alienation of the society from its own existence encourages the withdrawal from active participation, a reaction which is often called disenchantment with politics. However, societies are essentially political and value-oriented. Economic, political, ideological, and military monopolies are constructions which contradict the nature of society by merely striving for the accumulation of surplus. They do not create values. Nor can a revolution create a new society. It can only influence the ethical and political web of a society. Anything else is at the discretion of the ethics-based political society. I mentioned already that the capitalist modernity enforces the centralization of the state. The political and military power centres within the society have been deprived of their influence. The nation-state as a modern substitute of monarchy left a weakened and defenceless society behind. In this respect, legal order and public peace only imply the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Power constitutes itself in the central state and becomes one of the fundamental administrative paradigms of modernity. This puts the nation-state in contrast to democracy and republicanism. Our project of "democratic modernity" is meant as an alternative draft to modernity as we know it. It builds on democratic confederalism as a fundamental political paradigm. Democratic modernity is the roof of an ethics-based political society. As long as we make the mistake to believe that societies need to be homogeneous monolithic entities it will be difficult to understand confederalism. Modernity's history is also a history of four centuries of cultural and physical genocide in the name of an imaginary unitary society. Democratic confederalism as a sociological category is the counterpart of this history and it rests on the will to fight if necessary as well as on ethnic, cultural, and political diversity. The crisis of the financial system is an inherent consequence of the capitalist nation-state. However, all efforts of the neoliberals to change the nation-state have remained unsuccessful. The Middle East provides instructive examples.

D. Democratic Confederalism and a Democratic Political System

In contrast to a centralist and bureaucratic understanding of administration and exercise of power confederalism poses a type of political self-administration where all groups of the society and all cultural identities can express themselves in local meetings, general conventions and councils. This understanding of democracy opens the political space to all strata of the society and allows for the formation of different and diverse political groups. In this way it also advances the political integration of the society as a whole. Politics becomes a part of everyday life. Without politics the crisis of the state cannot be solved since the crisis is fuelled by a lack of representation of the political society. Terms like federalism or self administration as they can be found in liberal democracies need to be conceived anew. Essentially, they should not be conceived as hierarchical levels of the administration of the nation-state but rather as central tools of social expression and participation. This, in turn, will advance the politicization of the society. We do not need big theories here, what we need is the will to lend expression to the social needs by strengthening the autonomy of the social actors structurally and by creating the conditions for the organization of the society as a whole. The creation of an operational level where all kinds of social and political groups, religious communities, or intellectual tendencies can express themselves directly in all local decision-making processes can also be called participative democracy. The stronger the participation the more powerful is this kind of democracy. While the nation-state is in contrast to democracy,