

Self-Defense is Existential

Komun Academy

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Self-defense is a form of self-realization of an existence, similar to other necessary dimensions like nutrition and reproduction. In the plant and animal world, self-defense primarily concerns the protection of the physical realm. In the human condition however, where existence attained a deepening and broadening quality with sociality, self-defense transcends the physical manifestations of existence. We are human not simply due to our biological existence, but perhaps even more so due to the values created by our metaphysical world. These values we create inside of our community, with sociality. That is why our self-defense implies the protection of the values that make us human, as well as of the community that we are a part of.

Capitalist modernity makes use of a variety of approaches when attacking the foundations of human sociality, ideologically, economically, politically, culturally and, when deemed necessary, militarily. Communities around the world are fighting back against these attacks in their quest for a free and equal life. Whether these are the indigenous peoples in the Americas and Australia, who stand firm to protect their ecology and way of life; black people in white supremacist countries, who struggle against racialized policies, prisons industries and police brutality; or communities in Africa and Asia, who have been subject to genocide and colonization; or women, youth and workers around the world.

Capitalist modernity does not merely physically suppress, enslave and exterminate communities and individuals. A more insidious form of assault takes place when the nation-statist mentality and system separate humans from the values that make them human by alienating them to design a factory product-like monotonous individual in a monolithic society. This constitutes an assault on the vitality, diversity, spontaneity and creativity that lie at the essence of human life. Not only are we as humans only one expression in the multitude of life in nature, our many different cultures and communities express all the languages, sounds, beliefs, shapes, and colors of human life, while within each of these communities, our individualities create universes of their own. When this unlimited, luscious river of life is under threat, when the values and creations of human life and society are endangered by authoritarian rule, a defense of life itself is at stake.

It is our sociality that makes us human. Our ethical, democratic-communal values are essential to the assertion of our existence. Throughout the history of statist civilization, there have been attacks on fundamental human means of self-defense, such as solidarity, culture, art, and the means of production and reproduction. Under capitalist modernity, these assaults deepened and widened in scope, which means that people are increasingly more deprived of even the most basic

means of self-defense and self-preservation. Parallel to physical annihilation, the divorce of human beings from sociality and community pacify their will and ability to resist. Without access to production, care, sharing, solidarity, community and love, in a world of isolation, individuals are condemned to a terrifyingly meaningless life. Uprooted and alienated from themselves, people are turned into obedient robots of modernity, who lack the ability or means to lead an autonomous existence.

Every existence in nature has its essential means of defense and protection against threats to its existence. Against the attacks of statist civilization with capitalist modernity as its peak, people are defending themselves with the values of democratic modernity. These are ethical-political values that make society and are related to mentality and immateriality, the areas that are under the fiercest attacks by capitalist modernity. In fact, assaults on humans' mental and spiritual life-worlds are as old as statist civilization itself. A person whose inner world has been occupied becomes vulnerable to be manipulated by any powerful entity. The system has long ago realized its need to design society in a certain image in order to be able to control it. Individuals, who are separated from collective social memory, live on a daily basis and since their emotions, senses and feelings get increasingly more divorced from societal values, they are prone to individualism, materiality and instinct-driven behavior. As a result, they become persons, who do not know themselves and do not find meaning or purpose in life. Let alone protecting their community, such a person is unable to protect even their own self. This person lacks love, is unable to foster love for their own self or for society and their social reflexes and reactions are detached from the values that would enable them to understand the importance of self-defense. Particularly the individual under advanced capitalism is vulnerable because of a lack of consciousness and knowledge of their own self. That is precisely what the dominant system requires. To the extent to which individuals and society are rendered vulnerable and unable to defend themselves, the system will succeed in occupying, colonizing and exploiting them for their profit-driven interests.

For this reason, against the system's ideological attacks, defending oneself also requires knowledge and awareness of oneself and one's conditions. One must be able to render meaningful one's existence and life in general. A person who knows themselves is someone, who can mobilize the ability to stand against all sorts of attacks by the system. That is why consciousness is vital. Consciousness consists of a person's self-realization based on values of societal freedom, as well as their action and struggle for these values. Consciousness is a manifestation of ideologization. This ideologization in turn is a style of life and struggle that develops around certain thoughts. Unless such social values find reflection in life, unless they become a driving force for real action, we cannot speak of ideologization. At best, we can speak of an opportunistic, individualist, materialist or corrupted personality, a product of capitalist modernity that lost a sense for meaning. To the extent to which I know myself, I can understand and find meaning in society and vice versa. By ourselves we can live, but we do not necessarily express meaning on our own, but only in community. Being aware of our communities' pains and joys, defending their means of life, rising up to mobilize, are all expressions of a communal spirit that can challenge capitalist modernity.

We become a power only through organization. Against capitalist modernity's attempts to infiltrate the deepest cells of individual and social life to distort its fabric, we must organize against the system with democratic-communal values. Democracy in this sense is the free life-form of society. Since sociality is related to freedom, freedom can only be lived in spheres of democracy. Radical democracy grows society's freedom spheres. It prevents us from being suppressed and

annihilated by statist systems that occupy, alienate, colonize and destroy us. Moreover, it helps us become people, who can speak, discuss, decide and act on their own behalf. Radical democracy brings out human willpower. It enables people to be themselves. Such people can meaningfully contribute to their societies. To the extent to which such a person participates in society with their own different attributes, they will create diversity and increase the freedom of that society and of themselves.

Freedom is strongly related to taking up responsibility. Radical democracy is the basis for this aspect to find meaning. To the extent to which radical democracy is employed meaningfully and powerfully, freedom will be realized. To the extent to which freedom expresses itself, democracy will grow, consolidate and diversify. This will render people able to administer themselves and run their own lives according to their own visions, without reliance on the state. That is why the democratization of society can only happen through struggle.

In today's day and age, where people have been reduced to objects of state that don't have the ability or right to speak on their own behalf, humanity can only get back in touch with itself through democracy. The threats imposed on individuals and societies can be systematically fought with a freedom-based notion of democracy. In this sense, democracy is another name for the action that expresses the conscious human. It is the name for the system that can be shared and defended if necessary by people from all languages, cultures, backgrounds and beliefs. Such individuals and communities develop a great sense for the need to defend themselves; their reflexes against dangers are strong and they are unlikely to accept any form of domination. They would rather physically die than to surrender to a life in unfreedom. Respecting their own existence, they live and struggle for freedom. Free individuals and communities flourish in democracy that is based on freedom. Such atmospheres in turn can only be created by individuals and communities that have a strong consciousness of freedom.

Democracy means an organized society. This requires a system that reaches from the local to the general, to meet the needs and requirements of the smaller and larger scaled forms of organizing life. Communes, councils and congresses, alongside educational efforts in the academies and economic organizing in the cooperatives, will enable all organs of organized society to function. This in turn will demonstrate that human beings can very well live free and equally in a democratic civilizational system outside of the power-holding, statist civilization. They can exist and protect their existence by struggling against statist civilization. Therefore, with a democratic consciousness, individuals and communities will know how to live and what to do, while being able to defend themselves against danger by mobilizing self-defense. In such moments, there will not be a need for anyone to say what needs to be done. Conscious and active communities and their individuals will engage in different kinds of organization to struggle and resist to protect their community, lands and culture. They engage in the simplest and most complex forms of resistance. Any form of mobilization to this end, whether civil or militant, is legitimate.

Self-defense knows no limits. Whether it is a child throwing stones at the police or a young person joining uprisings or guerrilla ranks or an old person praying for change – these are all ways in which people try to defend their existence. The self-defense struggle does not just affect violence and occupation forces that suppress people, but also individual struggles against people and institutions that capitalize on such vital values for their own profit. It is the most legitimate thing for a being to act in defense of its existence. If the right to live is not something that can be sanctioned by states or any other authority that rules by force, but is sacred and fundamental,

then the philosophy of warfare based on legitimate self-defense is founded on the inalienable right to live.

Under statist civilization and its era of capitalist modernity, people can only continue their existence with a strong, principled and organized self-defense. Just as we cannot continue to exist without nutrition and reproduction, we cannot live without self-defense. Self-defense is existential. That is why we must act with a self-defending consciousness and organize our ability and means to protect ourselves and our communities to assert our will to not only survive, but also to live freely and meaningfully.

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