

Haytham Manna

Ocalanism:

Ideological Construction and Practice

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Haytham Manna Foundation

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PREFACE

When I set foot in Al-Jazeera [north eastern region of Syria], I didn't kiss the ground but I looked at the sky. It was clearer and starrier than I have ever seen it before. Forty years since my last visit to the area have passed like a blink of an eye. Although Haval (comrade) Ilham Ahmad had lost her mother the day before, she was completely present. The last time I visited this place I came with two comrades, and here I am visiting it with two [female] Kurdish comrades. In 1976, not one female comrade attended the founding conference of the League of Communist Action in Aleppo due to having lost the only female comrade who was supposed to participate 25 days before the conference. The founding conference of the PKK saw only one woman participation; Sakina Cansiz. It meant a lot to those university colleagues who referred to me as the friend of women's and minorities' issues. We arrived into the Democratic Self-Administration, DSA, in Syria that lies outside government, ISIL, Al-Nusra, etc. territories. Everything that was said about "Rojava" [Kurdish for Western Kurdistan, AKA DSA] whether good or bad became directly observable to me. I was very happy that this [visit] fell on the 29th of February, 2016 [leap year] as I don't care for ceremonies and occasions. I used to dislike standing in a moment of silence in Turkey on Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's birthday, or celebrating Saddam Hussein's birthday.

I used to criticize my Kurdish friends for celebrating Abdullah Ocalan's birthday. I am not very interested in ceremonies.

After a meeting with The Forces of Democratic Syria (FDS), I headed to the apartment of one of our friends to sleep. It was a modest apartment that reminded me of the investigative missions I had been on in conflict zones. Then, just as a doctor once gave me an AK-47 in the African Great Lakes (region), one of our friends gave me a gun in case of an emergency. I smiled and said to him: "Don't worry, I feel safer here than in Paris or Geneva".

Aside from traditional displays of hospitality and the intensive meetings, simplicity, good-heartedness, and love were dominant everywhere I went. However, my level of concentration was at its fullest, in order to explore a new and special humanitarian situation using my senses and critical awareness with integrity that is free of prejudice or courtesy.

For decision-makers, providing security for people is a primary issue. We can pass by tens of villages thinking we are in an area far away from war and violence and not knowing we are in Syria while noticing the signs of the strongest and most organized movement. This brought back memories of the two investigative missions I carried out in Gaza in 2009, where flags of Hamas and pictures of its figures and martyrs' were everywhere. In both cases, this did not prevent there being offices for other organizations and associations. Within this scene, the most present absentee was Abdullah Ocalan, whose pictures were everywhere. And during many intimate discussion, the Apoci [Ocalan supporter] that I spoke to was not embarrassed to say: "If the commander [Ocalan] asked me to die, I am at his disposal".

Since my return, I have begun digging deeper and deeper into the experience of the organizations that followed the Ocalanist ideology, especially that I have carefully followed Ocalan's pleadings at the European Court for Human Rights, that which resulted in a fundamental review of the PKK 's and the KCK's [Kurdistan Communities Union] plans and approaches. When preparations began to announce the federalization of northern

Syria, which is the name that was suggested at the beginning, and after a dispute over an essential matter with comrades in the DSA during a session of The Council of Democratic Syria (CDS), I submitted my resignation on March 19, 2016 as co-president of the CDS. I preferred to step away from the media, political statements, and writing for a while because any statements I was going to issue could have been used and taken out of the context of the democratic, constructive, and critical dialogue that is necessary among the various democratic forces in Syria. Other than that, it [said statements by me] could have been twisted by the chauvinists who represent, unfortunately, a top common denominator among the people in the region. Then I started writing lectures for the new training courses on Human Rights and Democracy in Progressive Critical Thought for the Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights. While preparing the lectures, I came across something in Ocalan's pleadings that was worth pointing out. And so, I left the lectures in order to focus on these critical points in the pleadings and the Ocalanist political experience.

I will not hide from the readers the fact that many Ocalanist dissidents who gave me their testimonies have advised me against writing and publishing [about this matter] saying that the consequences will be dire. I told many friends: "When I was writing about the manufacturing of savagery and Daech, fatwas of murder against me had preceded my pen". Socialist thinking progressed within a century of mutual criticism between its schools, and due to Stalinism, a culture that has enriched the entirety of human knowledge was eliminated. Serious and constructive criticism is the only way that will allow political forces to remain in the movement of history and not to become a stumbling block in the march towards the freedom and progression of the peoples."

It is humanly impossible to count the disastrous results of the European agreements that occurred on the account of the people of the Eastern Mediterranean region since the end of World War

I and until 1939. These “agreements” put an entire people, the Kurdish people, outside the logic of a nation, the state, and the right of self-determination. I have always said to non-Kurds in the region: “Put yourself in the shoes of a Kurdish person reading news about the National Assembly of Kuwait, or the travelling of the President of the State of Qatar, or an event in the Republic of Djibouti, while his talk of the Kurdish national struggle for the rights of forty million people is considered a separatist conspiracy, treason, and terrorism! In Syria you are considered a Syrian Arab citizen regardless of your nationalism, whereas in Turkey, Kurds are considered mountain Turks. The International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent (IFRC) does not recognize the Kurdish Red Crescent because it falls outside the logic of the state. Examples are countless. My identity has never been nationalistic, but it has always been humanistic, and that has always been subject to my own choice. I will always remember what one of the most important critics of communitarianism in the world, the Indian thinker Amartya Sen, once said: “A sense of identity can be, not only a source of pride and happiness, but also the [source of] strength and self-confidence.” (*)

And so, I refuse for this book to be used by any closed-minded, chauvinistic, or religious movements that is trying, through criticizing the practices carried out by a party or a Kurdish organization that are directing efforts towards the notion of the legitimate and inalienable Kurdish rights. I consider this book a modest attempt by its author to discuss the ideas and plans set forth to building a new East that reconsiders fundamentally the relationship between the people of the region, including of course, Turkish and Persian people. As I have always said, we belong to a culture where divorce between husband and wife occurs upon uttering three words, whereas not even a tsunami or an earthquake could change your neighbour. We should appreciate co-existence, mutual advancement, and partnership for a better world, and there is no way other than that for violence, injustice, and arbitrariness to decline in this part of

the planet. And so, I condemn all violations against those who defend not only human rights, but also the rights of their people and their ideas and beliefs. It is an internal grief of mine that imprisonment precludes the right of Abdullah Ocalan to discuss these issues with us freely in an open forum in Diyarbakir, Daraa, Beirut, or Sulaymaniyah.

I was intending to contact, Hussein Shawish (Haval Hrkol) to inquire about some of the issues related to his experience in the Qandil Mountains when I learned that he had passed away in a painful accident on July 19, 2016. Shawish learned Kurdish and Turkish while in Turkish prisons. He also translated poems of Nizar Qabbani to Kurdish and wrote about rejecting ideological rigidity in an article titled *Unity in Diversity* and I quote:

“We cannot come up with an inevitable and absolute diagram as a mathematical equation for the universe, nature, society, and human being. This is because the basis in the process of evolution as a renewal, change, diversification, and multiplication is in the movement of energy that is flowing as different waves and not on a straight line. This happens along various lines and not in an inevitable or absolute form but based on the possibilities that reflect the various natural differences in the framework of the equation “unity is in diversity”. Unity is the overall coherence, effectivity and affectivity, whereas diversity lies in the differences that result from the process of renewal and change. So, this energy and vitality is freedom itself, and this freedom is the soul of the universe, nature, society, and man.

These facts could be confirmed through meditation, deep thinking, and human introspection because the human being is an expression of the universe, nature, and society in all its various and rich details in a brief and useful way.”(**)

Perhaps there is within these lines what allows us to say that the refusal of ideological isolation and dogmatic accomplishment exists, even among those who lived in the shadows of the party for more than a quarter century. Perhaps the permanent stimulation of critical thinking, as opposed to converting an ideology into

an established and available belief, could guarantee a halt to the copying and metamorphosis of practices and experiences that did not remove us from the prevalent “global system” as much as it resulted in the revitalization and stimulation of this system.

Geneva 12/08/2016

INTRODUCTION

Five years ago, during a specialized psychology seminar about political prisoners and the experience of imprisonment, I presented examples of four cases that vary in place, time and experience. I presented examples about Nelson Mandela, Sayyid Qutb Antonio Gramsci, and Abdullah Ocalan. Although there were no Kurdish participants in the seminar, the participants paused at my remarks on Ocalan’s reviews in prison. The debate was heated since an intervention of this kind was held in Paris, and the majority of European countries classify Ocalan as a commander of a terrorist organization. This [my remarks] was considered an audacious and bold movement. The other three cases did not gain notable attention in the debate. Then suddenly at that time, came the popular movement [the revolution in 2011] that started in Tunisia. I did not [get to] translate or prepare the lecture or even use the remarks I wrote in French. I remember saying to one of the protestors: “Why do you refuse to read Ocalan’s pleadings? Are you any less democratic than Hosni Mubarak, the former Egyptian president who released the Jihadi Islamist detainees after [their] reviews in prison? Or are you any less tolerant than the French President Francois Mitterrand who allowed the Italian thinker Antonio Negri to live most of

*Amartya Sen, *Identité et violence*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2007, p. 23.

**Hussein Shawish, *Unity in Diversity*, April 2015:
<http://www.alawset.net>

his productive years pursued in Italy on charges of belonging to the Red Brigades?” His answer was: “There is no comparison there”. At that time, I felt that there was no point in continuing the discussion.

Unfortunately, human nature prefers what it’s accustomed to. The impression that we have about any person remains stronger than the true image of him or her as a reactive human being, to borrow an expression by Lukacs. A human being constantly reacts to the alternatives arising from the changes in society, and redirects the spontaneous trends that contradict this deliberate progression and to which he therefore seeks conscious answers. Here lies the importance of thought revolution as live ammunition which humans arm themselves with to influence their reality and to mature their choices during conclusive historical moments.

Ocalan’s state of imprisonment reminds me of Freud’s book *Moses and Monotheism*. The book begins by saying that there is nothing more difficult than taking away from people their prophet. Freud never dared to publish that book, while Ocalan had the audacity to destroy the premise upon which his actual experience was built regardless of the risks. The most notable of those risks were his physical absence during the intellectual coup which he carried out and the inhumane conditions associated with that absence. There is no doubt that his great ability to comprehend the self and objective transformations that befell the region and the organization played a major role in the cohesion, continuity and endurance. This experience however, launched him on an intellectual adventure that involved disturbance, obscurity, and fundamental contradictions. All of that made linking the person to the cause of the Kurdish people and linking the cause of the people to the totalitarian ideology of the person a central problem. That led to criticism of the prisoner becoming truly difficult to those on a mission, some of the aspects of which Ocalan himself had started addressing in his reviews. Ocalan and those with him thought that the truth has been discovered;

therefore it is impossible to turn back without falling into deviation and intellectual pollution.

Ocalan’s critical contemplations and historical readings are inspired by the classics of leftist intellectuals and movements of the region where he lived, in addition to the classic Marxist-Leninist theses and their critiques whether neo-leftist or neo-liberalism. He considers the socialism, or the Marx-Engels sociology, which emerged as a counter point of view against the global European-cantered capitalist system, to be the most audacious and vulgar deliberation towards the society. Despite its [Marx-Engels socialism’s] claims to antagonize and oppose [capitalism], it could not help itself “but to serve capitalism more than liberalism, which is its official ideology, served capitalism (1). Hence, Ocalan relies in his analysis and conclusions on the most renewing and contemporary voices and critical trends in the West that vary in their intellectual and political positions. Whenever he could, Ocalan looked into the Frankfurt School [of thought] and the works of Fernand Braudel and Michel Foucault. But the biggest impact on Ocalan’s critique of contemporary capitalism, the result of the conflicted admiration, remains to be the great American writer Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein left a big impression on Ocalan’s readings about the past five centuries of human history, particularly the bankruptcy of the capitalist system. His discovery of André Gunder Frank greatly influenced his writings. His political and practical conception undoubtedly derived its primary factors from the social and political ecology and was clearly influenced by the American non-authoritarian Murray Bookchin, who entirely reconsidered the chaotic and libertarian theses. He also adopted an approach inspired by environmental and feminist movements, in addition to the councils’ movement which was influenced by the Paris Commune and the Russian revolution of 1905, and the following experiments that adopted the idea of self-management and “authority of councils”. Between the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, Lafif Lakhdar, Mustafa Al-Khayati, Mohammad

Shoairat, Najeeb Al-Qusibi, and Mohammad Kubah were introduced to the Arabic readers before the group was broken up. New anarchism and its Euro-American mutation became absent in the Eastern Mediterranean until the pleadings of Ocalan. He attempted to come up with a regional understanding that combines the idea of “the democratic nation” and the federal solution in order to break up the nation-state as an alternative to the model of the central state. The latter, God, and capital, were considered by anarchists to be the three evils of all times.

Ocalan summarizes the start of his review by saying: *“I had to present my first major work in the form of a plea which I titled From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Republic, without formulating a particular draft, but also without paying too much attention to that. I had prepared that plea in a hurry where means for serious research were not available to me. I did not aim to develop a model, I only wrote in my improvisational style, which I am known for, about the social reality. Later on, I had the opportunity to research the behavioral patterns of some notable Sociologists like Murray Bookchin, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Fernand Braudel. Furthermore, I comprehended the essence of Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, and some other philosophers. The most important among those was André Gunder Frank, whose book, The World System, managed to collect the ideas of many intellectuals. I was not late to consider the work of this intellectual, whose name I didn't know, as the best defence for my pleading. Recently, other intellectuals presented similar points of view in some of their research works, which urged me to delve deeper into my work on my own draft.*

Originally, my plea contained the important topics in Immanuel Wallerstein's analysis of the global capitalist system on one hand, and Fernand Braudel's analysis of the “comprehensive historical period” on the other. Furthermore, my ongoing explanatory efforts were supported by similar incidents concerning the defeat of the praised socialism. Besides that, I did not find any difficulty in grasping the interpretations of Nietzsche and Michel Foucault on modernity and power, which I have always found to be very close to my main interests. I must also mention Gordon Childe whose book What Happened in History, which he wrote based on the archaeological activities in Mesopotamia, was enlightening. And so, I examined many philosophical

works and accomplishments and considered them as reports. And I found myself having to identify my way before driving my goal towards “a typical element” (2).

It is clear that the conditions of detention, and perhaps the absence of the ability for debate and open discussion, did not allow Ocalan to learn about important periods in the European and Western critical thinking in general. There were some important analytical periods that he built upon the conclusions and works of Western intellectuals and attributed to himself. There were well known conclusions dating back to the last century that he attributed to the twenty first century. The same goes for important debates from the nineties, some of which we find in the book of Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* (1993) (3). Adding to that were other important discussions during the last third of the last century about the “Dependency Theory” and the problems of development between the primary and peripheral countries which were viewed in the writings of American university professors. And except for one passing reference of Samir Amin, we rarely find a follow-up or quotes by a non-Western researcher (4).

The readers cannot conclude that Ocalan had learned about The Situationist International (les situationnistes) and Guy Debord's book, *The Society of the Spectacle* (5), even if they arrive at fundamental intersections. He certainly would not have liked a writer such as the non-authoritarian, Raoul Vaneigem, who refused to put his name on his works so as to not conform to the dominant marketing culture. Ocalan was not yet in prison when my book, *The Challenges of Enlightenment* (1991) (6), came out containing an entire chapter about a fundamental criticism of the western knowledge institution, a subject which Massoud Younes had beat me to through his lectures at the Lebanese University since 1978 (7). Despite that, [said criticism taking place], he [Ocalan] did not acquaint himself with the discussions that took place at the end of the eighties and early nineties of the last century on this subject. It is important to mention that Ocalan

did not learn Arabic, despite living for nearly two decades in Syria and Lebanon. He rarely looked into the critical discussions published in Arabic, something that he tried to compensate for by, unfortunately, having an internal sense of superiority due to which he limitedly needed to enter the Arabic-speaking cultural space. And except for once or twice quoting non-Western researchers and intellectuals, Ocalan's works lack non-Western references. Ironically, this makes him fall into what he considers a central point in his writings and theses, which is European/Western Centralism, **so we can safely say that this “dreaded West” was the subject of his criticism and the source of inspiration for said criticism at the same time.**

Self-experience in Ocalan's plea was present in the reading, evaluation, and analysis. And just so we don't confuse the term with the common meaning of it, by “self-experience” we mean what Ocalan himself meant, and that is the self that refuses to tear the individual apart from his/her social identity (8). There is emphasis on the embodiment of the people in the person and on the reincarnation of the people's suffering within the person. He expressed that [idea] by saying: *“It is clear that it is impossible to talk about enlightening the subject of my cause without unveiling my social identity in all its aspects. Seeing as it [my social identity] outlined the features of our reality as a people who remained, throughout the history of the central civilism system which spanned at least five thousand years, exposed to the most powerful forms of exploitation and oppression. The standards which are indispensable in my approach to my pleas on this comprehensive level, are hidden in these facts. I am compelled to repeat a saying seeing as I am touching upon it: “There are moments when history is hidden in a personality, and vice versa”. It is undeniable that I have relatively shared the honour of this personality, even if that had underwent difficulties. What distinguishes me from others is that I am perfectly aware of these deceits and plots hatched against me because I wanted to play a role beyond the role of “victim of destiny” in this tragic history”* (9).

We notice the features of this merging between the self-the person and the self-the people in analysis and criticism and in

the psychological dimension that connects the psychology of the individual and collective oppression through understanding the history, the reality, and the political and moral project, as well as the ritualistic aspect of the ideological Ocalanist organizations. Despite Ocalan's constant struggle against the intellectual dexterity built upon the belief in the East, and the intellectual ability built upon accountability in the West, we find in the end, that he relied on his critical readings in order to bring in belief to the world of thought, and accountability to the world of belief – the new sect that needs, like any belief, a prophet or saviour. Hence, Ocalan laid the foundation for an approach that emerged from the inspiration and suffering of the self-the individual as the corner stone for “the people project”.

“Ever since I knew myself, doubt has shadowed me like a ghost that does not leave me at all. This situation became a sickness sometimes. I used to feel like I'm in the weakest moment whenever some of my dogmatic beliefs were shaken. What was happening back then was a state of falling to the lowest points of despair in life. Perhaps the most important contribution by my uncertainty towards my personality, even concerning topics that are impossible to be seriously defended, was that lesson embodied in the impossibility of my finding the “truth” easily. I am convinced that my turning everything – including my instincts – into a problematic dilemma, has convinced me to stay away from dogmatic thinking, which is not deeply rooted in the traditions of the Middle Eastern community. In the end, the importance of the topic is evident in how the dominating thinking style centred in Europe remains effective until now in the modernist positivist dogmatism. I have sought to determine my position by comparing between intellectual skill based on the belief in the East, and the intellectual ability based on accountability in the West. Clearly, I was unable to find a place for myself on either sides.

And so, my life normally continued in withdrawal and a widening gap between me and them [above concepts] proportionally as the days went by.

What has been presented did not at all convince me or satisfy my ambition whether in its ideological or logical style. My main criticism concerns how greatly these ideas are responsible for the growth of the social issues. This in turn, did not point out the need to focus criticism on the ideological methodology

of the East and the rational methodology of the West at the same time, which gave me courage in this regard.

Another quality of mine is that my attentive consciousness did not at all affect my social life. Tendencies of participatory nature emerged in my personality very early on. While I went to elementary school (in the neighbouring Jebin village) which I walked to, my planning to lead the prayer for a small group of students with prayers I had memorized was not an easy thing to understand. It was like a game, but I took it very seriously” (10).

Personal experience cannot be judged by the abundance of prison books and papers. We can even say that solitude and schizophrenia have materialized within the Kurdu-Stalinist who lived in Syria and Lebanon and called for the democratic civilization from behind Imrali prison bars. Kurdu in Mullah Bakhtiar’s sense means “the hero”, “the brave” or “the courageous”, titles that are only bestowed upon the fearless warrior and human, who is not afraid of dying for the sake of achieving his noble legitimate purpose” (11).

Solitude, because all attempts to get rid of the idea of the Stalinist organization since the nineties were not reflected in thought or practice. We are facing the process of building a new belief that reminds us exactly of the period during 1925-1952 in the Soviet Union. This belief is based on creating “the unique leader”, the rescuer and the saviour, the unreligious Mahdi who brings to his people and their neighbours the truth, survival, and happiness as their world was filled with injustice and sin.

This is evident in his provisions, including but not limited to, the Frankfurt School, which stood completely against violence and considered the struggle of the word synonymous with praxis (12). Theodor Adorno rejects containable and employable ideas and ideologies, but regards them as a reproduction of authoritarian ideologies, whereas Ocalan wants his plea to become a holy book and a reference to his followers.

“The neurosis of the Turkish model” is also apparent in the writings of Ocalan. He is the son of the Turkish revolutionary left that gave him the most important foundation upon which

the party was launched. Kemal Burkay was the one who floated the idea of Kurdistan as a Turkish colony in his book, *The Liberation Struggle of Kurdish people in Turkey’s Conditions* (published under the pseudonym, Xidir Murat, in 1973). Then, Mahir Çayan, nicknamed as Guevara of Turkey, who was killed in 1972, along with the Turkish group in the Ankara Democratic Higher Education Student Association (ADYOD) (13), and later on, Kemal Pir, Baki and Haki Karer, Fehmi Yilmaz and Duran Kalkan, etc., all played an important role in creating the initial network of the PKK. Kemal Pir was the one to introduce his friend Cemil Bayik to Ocalan. Mazlum Dogan was impressed with Haki Karer. He said: “I have been very impressed with Haki Karer, and over time, that admiration turned into a common struggle of adopting their ideological theses” (Dogan 1994) (14). According to many testimonials and references, the assassination of Haki Karer on the 18th of May resulted in the issuance of two important resolutions by “the Rebels of Kurdistan”. The first one said that it is not possible to continue the political struggle without military protection. The second one concerned founding a revolutionary political party to liberate Kurdistan. The founding of the PKK was considered a continuation of Haki Karer’s struggle and a symbol of Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood (15). Influences of the Indochinese experience and the Vietnamese liberation war seem also evident, particularly the Vietnamese Workers’ Party. The name of the party as well as the figure of Ho Chi Minh were adopted by the attendees in 1978. As for similarities with the Khmer Rouge experience, particularly regarding the members’ lifestyle which was influenced by Buddhist monks, in addition to transitioning to a society without classes and the new concept of self and Kampuchean defence, there are no testimonies or information indicating that PKK founders followed or were interested in that experience (16).

It is also clear that Ocalan’s analysis of the nation-state is a reminder of the Turkish model of the central nationalist ideologist state, which is considered positivist in laws and secular in

reference. It [said state] considers fusing into Turkish nationalism to be the core of its conscious perception of the state, and not just its “national security”. Hence, the idea of “genocide” of the Kurdish people was always present in his thinking, since his youth until his imprisonment.

Before finishing this preface, it is important to highlight three systematic points that I made sure to respect in this book. The first point concerns the psychoanalysis of Ocalan’s character. I avoided what could be called “wild” (sauvage) psychoanalysis since I have never met him [Ocalan] in my life. Only a few of my sources knew him well. So it was inconvenient to enter this minefield through scattered and sometimes contradicting testimonies, which are not devoid of personal-involvement. The second point concerns the nature of this book as a hot topic and the violent confrontations waged by Ocalanist organizations which does not always allow for mentioning names of people related to an event or testimony. The sanctity of liberty and the right of life and resistance does not allow the researcher to let his acquaintances and friendships affect the combative or security situation of those in the midst [of conflict]. Perhaps this could be included in the following editions in respect for scholarly integrity, only when that does not allow for negative consequences for those in question, safety-wise.

The third point concerns our strict position of the dominating disease in our region represented by selective short-term memory. It is not possible to achieve the leap by individuals and groups in the absence of accurate recording of history. History teaches us that all propaganda that attempts to present itself throughout in a positive appearance poses as a transparent process to contaminate the consciousness.

1. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Sociology of Freedom*, Volume 3, translated from Turkish by Zakho Shyar, Mesopotamia Press, Germany, May 2011, p. 17.
2. Ibid. later as “Manifesto”, p. 21-22.
3. André Gunder Frank & Barry K. Gills, *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand*, Routledge, 1993, 320 pages.
4. Debates about the World System have become a key topic in our discussions at the Arab Commission for Human Rights, which I have personally followed while taking an interest in the subject of “the right to development” and the approaches of the progressives of Latin America, the United States, and Africa. The basis for these discussions was how to formulate a rational and coherent international charter about the “right to development” that is achievable within the severe confrontations between supporters of the “Dependency Theory” embraced by critical progressives, and the “Modernism Theory” that can be considered a product of the prevailing system. To proceed with this subject, we have formed, at the Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights/Haytham Manna Foundation, a follow-up circle under the name: Rethinking Right of Development.
5. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Buchet-Chastel editions, Paris, 1967.
6. Haytham Manna, *The Challenges of Enlightenment*, in the Western Cultural Institution, Al-Jamal publications, Cologne, 1991.
7. Dr. Massoud Younes, *The Fields of Sociology*, The Lebanese University, points from lectures, 1977-1978.
8. Manifesto, mentioned, p. 10.
9. Ibid, pp. 9-10.
10. Ibid, pp. 229-230.
11. Hikmat Mohammad Karim “Mullah Bakhtiar”, *Kurdistan Revolution and the Variables of the Era*, Beirut, 5th edition, p. 35.

12. Manifesto, mentioned, p. 239: “Frankfurt School as an official record of this bankruptcy”.
13. ADYOD, Ankara Democratic Higher Education Association, an authorized association that served as an incubator for leftist youth until it was banned in December 1974. In early 1975, a Marxist-Leninist group with a Kurdish majority began to use the term Kurdistan Devrimcileri (Kurdistan rebels).
14. See: Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden, Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey, Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Studies, New York, 2011.) Joost Jongerden and Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya, Born from the Left, The Making of PKK. pp. 123-142. (
15. Ibid, p. 130.
16. Some critics theorize a relationship between the Khmer Rouge and the PKK, considering for example the use of the term A-POT to describe Pol Pot’s supporters, the use of Khmer Rouge of four commandments from Buddhist monks’ twelve “Revolutionary Commandments”: “Do not drink alcohol, do not gamble, do not be a prisoner of lust or use money”. The pivotal role of the Cambodian ethnicity in the building of communism, and being influenced by national Buddhism, Buddhism Theravada (Khmer). Aside from the experience being far removed as an interest of the Labor Party, there are historical fallacies in establishing a relationship of influence, as the use of the term “Apo” has preceded the birth of the expression “A-POT” by years. And the huge admiration of the Vietnamese experience among the Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and Iranians Marxist-Leninists was a cause for a semi-epistemological break in the Khmer Rouge experience.

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

TEXT AND CONTEXT

In a tough position against the accumulation of capital and the complexity of power, Ocalan arrives at the conclusion: *“As long as we do not perfectly understand the unbelievable instances of the accumulation of capital and power, we will face difficulty in giving meaning to the term “democratic civilization”. Cognition in this matter has always been swinging between two types of error: It either completely melted in the pot of authoritarian cognition, or, it was unable to resist submission or subordination to the strict and obsolete doctrines [meaning] unable to independently determine its scientific positions and its political and moral choices. There is no doubt that the role of violence and capital temptation should always be the focus in this context. Without renouncing both prominent concepts within the framework of knowledge, it would be impossible to showcase the option of the democratic civilization (1).”*

Renouncing violence, whether in a radical, revolutionary, or authoritarian way, is unavoidable in order to reveal the option of a democratic civilization. This principle which was adopted by the ecological, civic, peaceful, feminist, and non-authoritarian currents, represents, for Ocalan, an obligatory requirement to escape the notion of reproducing the prevailing world-system.

Such reproduction will occur under new names in order to access a world that is different in quantity and quality, in form and substance, outwardly and inwardly, from that which produces genocides, wars, and power and which is devastating to the political and moral presence in society.

This is where the new ideological construction process collides with the history of the birth of the PKK and the approach which distinguished the movement from of the rest of the leftist Kurdish and Turkish organizations. This birth was clearly distinguished by granting revolutionary violence priority over various means of strife. It was based on an intermarriage between the approaches of the Turkish Marxist-Leninist left and the building of a Kurdish leftist national organization. The word “return” was the first step to exit the Ankara Democratic Higher Education Student Association to Kurdistan which is considered to be the best place for armed struggle and revolutionary change. The speech of the “Rebels of Kurdistan”, which some leftist referred to as Apocu (the partisans of Apo [Ocalan]), was a common language among most of the troops of the revolutionary left (“We are the Band survivor *بەندەگەرانی ئەقرفال*. He who does not join us is a traitor or an agent of the Kamalism, an opportunist or revisionist”) (2). After the arrival of some of its most important commanders, the PKK sought to build training camps after a period of training with the Palestinian leftist troops. The PKK was keen on diversifying the areas and countries of training in order to move more freely than allowed by the authoritarian regimes in the region (3). This was a turbulent era for all political and armed leftist organizations. And although the “Fighting Avant guard of Muslim Brotherhood” was the only organization to adopt violence in Syria, Kurdish armed organizations (except in Syria) grew in number and relations between them were also hostile. This manifested itself in many internal battles and assassinations as part of its conflict over what some called, “the revolutionary legitimacy”, while others referred to it as “the sole legitimate representative of the people”. And so, political assassination came early into its operations (4).

The first political program resembled the “traditional formula” to form a party that depends on “scientific socialism”, democratic centralism, and structures. The statement emphasized the organic relationship between the “peasantry and Kurdism” and considers the “poor and middle class peasants” to be essential forces in the struggle for national liberation. This could only be achieved under an “ideological and organizational leadership of the proletariat” which requires a political organization that adopts the scientific socialism and leads a national liberation front and a strong army of the people (5).

Since the beginning, the founders established the idea of a strict central organization based on revolutionary professionalism as in Lenin’s “what to do?” method, in addition to a strict management of financial resources and military structure. Building a strong media began with a newspaper and continued strongly through special audio-visual aids that facilitated the success of a tactical policy to transfer the organization from the literal phase to the large-scale operations.

THE REVOLUTIONARY KURD AND MARTYRDOM

Aside from texts, a culture of national pride began to grow: “Everything that is truly Kurdistan is universal”; “The creators of the Neolithic society are Kurds”; “The Mountain must be ideologised and the ideology must be mountainised”; “The PKK is a new Abrahamic movement”; and “Urfa, Jerusalem and Mecca are linked”... (6) However, the armed confrontations and loss of founding comrades started to promote the idea of martyrdom (Shêd): “Martyrdom does not mean death, but is a real and tangible embodiment of life”; “The PKK movement has truly reached the phase of party martyrs, but we are still running the marathon” (7). A friend wrote to me after the loss of an iconic member of the PKK and a leader in the People’s Protection Units, Hussein Shawish, on the 19th of July, 2016 in a traffic accident after celebrating the fourth anniversary of the official declaration of the People’s Protection Units (YPG): “The

best thing we could do for martyrs is to maintain the values and achieve the goals that they were martyred for.” I commented: “So what could we do for humans?” He answered: “Only martyrs reside at the top of humanity.”

All elements of violence and martyrdom in the formation of the party increased whenever the Turkish authorities’ violence towards the PKK escalated. Assassinations, kidnappings, torture, extra-judicial killings, an obsession with treason and punishment of traitors are rapidly growing forms of violence and counter-violence bringing the political organization **into a state of existential ties between armed and political struggle**. This situation transformed into a new case in 1982. On March 21, 1982, after experiencing tragic torture and humiliation beyond human endurance, Mazlum Dogan put an end to his life after celebrating the Nowruz by lighting three matches then hanging himself before Turkish security could force him to make televised confessions. Detainees at Diyarbakir prison had staged several hunger strikes but their less than modest requests have rarely been granted. On May 18th, four of the detainees (Ferhat Kurtay, Necmi Oner, Mahmut Zengin, and Eşref Anyık) burned themselves with newspapers which were difficult to bring in to their prison cells. On July 14th, 1982, the detainees went on a hunger strike which they referred to as the strike of death. On the sixteenth day of the strike, Akif Yelmaz, Ali Cirek, and Mehmet Hayri Durmuz passed away. Commander Kemal Pir died 55 days into the hunger strike and after losing his sight on September 7th, 1982 (8).

Self-sacrifice became a part of the party and its ideology. Researcher Olivier Grojean put a lot of effort into studying the concept of martyrdom and self-sacrifice within the PKK by following 83 cases of self-sacrifice from 1982 until 2007 and looking at 44 wills he had collected (9). It is necessary to look into the most important part of his psycho-social analysis of this phenomenon to understand the deeply-rooted concept of “manufacturing the body-weapon” which the Arab world

witnessed in many forms in the experience of the Palestinian resistance under the [Israeli] occupation and behind its bars.

“In every armed conflict, the body is the most important object of violence and control. This observation is, undoubtedly, grossly evident in conflicts of internal differentiation, subject to non-traditional methods like guerrillas and anti-disobedience units that are haunted by the spirit of secession and “terrorism”. Since the eighties, the Turkish state has established anti-insurgency techniques in Kurdish areas in order to eliminate the PKK through population control. We can refer to the sum of operation carried out successively as “Régime Scopique”, which aims at making the intimate space visible, at the same time, concealing with a vague veil all activities related to the general matters.

Criminalizing the mother tongue, monitoring daily activities, politicization and breaking into homes, smashing police cameras in order to keep demonstrators anonymous, preventing journalists from entering conflict zones, keeping all pro-Kurdish activities secret (10), and the large number of assassinations in which the perpetrator remains “unknown” – all those factors helped establish a special system that attempts to overthrow the private space and the public space. But on an individual level, the state and the parliamentary forces focused on the [human] body. There were attempts to discipline the body at schools, the systematic use of torture in security headquarters, incarceration, disappearances, not handing over killed guerrilla fighters’ bodies to their families, the humiliating inspections at border crossings and checkpoints, strategically identifying persons by their faces or dialects, through phonetics (accents), appearance (moustaches may reveal political affiliation), or morphology (having an amputated foot or leg could reveal a clandestine life in the mountains). At certain times, even if those actions were not carried out in the context of anti-disobedience, [some of their acts included] de-humanizing the enemy, creating humiliating situations, and cutting off limbs. For example: Turkish soldiers forced the residents of Yesilyurt village to eat their faeces in January 1989. On March/April 1995, the Turkish army displayed decapitated and mutilated bodies of four PKK fighters. All of these practices lead to the formation of methods for “the political objectification of the body”. It [the methods] could be reformulated by individuals who do not have other ways of protest.

There are a lot of instances of long hunger strikes by strugglers arrested in Turkey as well as by undocumented refugees in Europe. Undergoing ostracism, humiliating detention, bad treatment, rape and/or torture, directly, indirectly, or through the media, could not be separated from personal history. All is equivalent to denying the situation/the status. By resisting the state putting its hand on his body, he on a hunger strike protests the state's monopoly on [practicing] legitimate violence on his body. In an attempt to regain control of his own body, he announces a status or a condition that has been completely denied. The common perception of a hunger strike as a means of a non-violent struggle seem misleading: A study of the Kurdish forms of mobilization in the Europe shows that hunger strike and the use of violence against the other often appear simultaneously. This strategic use of violence against the self may suggest on the other hand that we are facing a form of rational use of the special culture and its own mark. However, many of the most spontaneous forms of violence against the self like setting self on fire or smashing the head against a wall or bus windows as some Iraqi-Kurdish refugees did, show to the extent of imagination the image of a tortured body in the subconscious and without prior planning (11)."

It is not easy to present this analysis without linking it to the direct consequences of the thought and practice among the ranks of the party which faces a war that's simply aimed at politically eradicating it (politicide). What is the difference between the Syrian People's Assembly resolution under Hafez Al-Assad to execute every member of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, the similar decision by Saddam Hussein against the Iraqi Dawa Party in the early seventies, and the Turkish repression policy? (12).

Transferring violence from the tools of repression to those targeted by repression is also a result of tyranny's assassination of civil and political rights. In society, the laws of nature are evoked: "For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction", as per Newton's third law. It is not unlikely for a social and/or political reaction to become a reproduction of the practices of the state's agencies the longer they stand. Just as authorities practice collective punishments upon the entire family of a guerrilla fighter, "revolutionary violence" collectively punishes the family of an individual who deals with the authority or works for "self-

defence" organizations formed by authorities. And just as the repressor practices political assassination, "traitor" assassination becomes a known practice. Unfortunately, until today, the experience of the Eastern Mediterranean with political violence, proved Sigmund Freud right when he said that prolonged coexistence with a repressor makes the repressed adopt the same practices.

Struggle-Puritanism, or monasticism, was an attempt to react against the repression system through moral purity of the comrades by bringing in the ritualism of the religion and the sect to the revolutionary movement: Liberation from the prevailing social decay must happen. There must be a role model and different revolutionary rituals: redefinition of all previous social and familial relationships, as well as clothing, the purity of the body as a reaction to the desecration and mutilation of the body, strict prohibitions in the mountain (prohibition of sex, alcohol, smoking, etc.), aspects of asceticism that remind us of monasteries and Buddhist temples, uniform methods of greeting and speech, using partisan terms, respect for the leader rituals, etc. Reproducing the positioning of the body occurs in an inverted method in order to escape the control of the state to making the body create the "real Kurd" by active participation in the hunger strike in prison by comrades in Europe to show unity in weal and woe between the detained and the free to send the image to the world and to the leader as an expression of deep commitment and internal transformation. The status of women in this process was tougher than men's, considering that the ideological system puts them in the centre of the struggle as a hub for societal change. During travel and missions, I used to notice that Haval [which means comrade in Kurdish language] carried some money for the mission, but I never saw this money being used for personal matters. [For them] money is a tool to achieve PKK missions. Saleh Muslim referred many times to my own way of managing money as an Apoci behaviour.

What are the direct and indirect results of these situations theoretically and practically? It is difficult to provide a satisfactory answer based on an experience limited in time, place and subject. But the results could be witnessed throughout the political and ideological journey of the ideological Ocalanist movement, particularly, in the issue of continuity and discontinuity in the literature of the PKK and the pleas of Ocalan.

Many Kurdish writers and parties accuse Ocalan of abandoning the idea of the “Greater Kurdistan State”, and adopting the federal system’s approach in prison after being influenced by the ideas of the socio-political ecological movement. The fact is, this subject was discussed in the nineties before [his] imprisonment. In order not to enter a futile debate about this matter, I will convey what came out of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, which consisted of Barkey and Fuller, and published in 1998:

“Since the beginning of 1995, the PKK has been undergoing a significant shift in its political orientation. Although Marxist-Leninist thinking is no longer prominent in its rhetoric, one might argue that the party still contains some Leninist features of “democratic centralism.” The PKK now speaks of a political settlement within the existing borders of Turkey. In an interview with the London Arab daily al-Hayat, Ocalan stressed that his vision of the future for the Kurdish areas of the Middle East consisted of a series of federations: Turkish-Kurdish, Arab-Kurdish in Iraq, and Persian-Kurdish in Iran. The PKK no longer claims to be the sole political representative of the Kurdish people. Ocalan has reportedly said that if and when negotiations take place, they need not necessarily be held with him personally. In this way the PKK is seemingly moving toward greater reality in its assessment of the current political environment. At the fifth PKK Congress, held at an undisclosed location in 1995, the party consolidated many of the changes in policy mentioned above.” (13).

It should be noted that the actual change with Ocalan was not in suggesting a federal solution in the common sense of the word, but in the concept of the democratic confederalism and self-management as an alternative to the nation-state and as a cradle

for the democratic nation. The core problem, in our opinion, lies in the continuity of the shift from Marxism-Leninism in its Asian form, which reminds us of Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Kim Il-sung, to criticizing Marxism, and the crossing with the new feminist anarchism and the anti-centralism ecologies. In the past, as today, the concept of the individual and citizenship are still marginal in Ocalan’s pleas. From our point of view, these two concepts are an integral part of struggling for peoples’ rights.

Many third world intellectuals were alerted to this issue. Mohammad Mandour wrote in Egypt since the forties about the slavery of the individual and the people; so did Frantz Fanon and many others. Since writing my book *Childhood of the Thing*, I wrote many interventions on the coherence and integration between the slavery of individuals and the slavery of people. I stressed that *“the relationship between the liberation of individuals and the liberation of people represents the most important link for any liberation movement through the notion of progression and emancipation”* (14). We tried to present this problem at the Arab Commission for Human Rights in our co-authored book *Physical and Mental Integrity, Torture in the Arab World in the 20th* (1998) (15). This was also addressed more broadly throughout the three parts of the *Short Universal Encyclopedia on Human Rights* (16).

Continuity and discontinuity were, in our opinion, the most important problems of the PKK’s ideological re-configuration and the agenda of struggle after Ocalan’s pleas. Perhaps the “revolutionary violence” which spanned nearly a quarter of a century of its history was one of the most important topics of the pleas. The reputation of the party did not stem from its original system which the party has overcome since the conference of 1995, or from Marxism-Leninism which the party ceased to speak of since the beginning of the nineties. It rather stems from its success in attracting to its ranks a young generation influenced by the Vietnamese experience, Che Guevara’s, and the Palestinian resistance, in order to struggle for the liberation of Kurdistan. This speech came to light even in post-2010 statements by

the first generation: “Democracy means running missions. A democratic concept has evolved without a tongue. The scene requires war. Committing to the leader brings anger upon this scene. Any movement which cannot deliver revolutionary waves to the community cannot achieve victory”. *“Partisan units develop in the midst of partisan warfare, and the armed forces cannot evolve without fighting. Partisan units are considered one of the most fearless units. They are known for their amazing courage and willingness to sacrifice. War is the source of life [for these units], which means that they die if they don’t fight”* (17).

It can be said that the arguments have created two major currents within the Apoci movement: an ideological current that does not discuss the ideas of “the leader”, but seeks to interpret and apply them. This current, which is strongly linked to the leader, the mountain, the revolutionary violence, and puritanism, has interpreted all of the leader’s quotes as a continuation of the same approach but, in a new reading. Similarly, ideologising Islam allows for political readings ranging from Salafi Jihadist readings that seek to revive the Rashidun Caliphate and build a modern state that derives from Islam its fundamental concepts of justice, morality, and honouring the human. And just as Marxism-Leninism reflected many aspects and interpretations that could accommodate organizations of armed conflict as well as political organizations that reject violence, the Apoci organization can find what it needs under the roof of ideology. In Furat Dogan’s article titled *Self-defence is one of the main pillars in building a democratic nation*, he presents self-protection as a biological and societal need:

“We can refer to organisms protecting themselves as an instinctive or an emotional protection, which is the case with all organisms. An organic existence is linked to three specific elements: 1. Food 2. Proliferation 3. Protection. Protection is to ensure existence and survival. If there is no protection, there is no life. Beings that do not protect themselves, either die or become prey for others. So their existence depends on self-protection, this is like a law for all organisms. For a human being the situation is a little bit different. A human protects himself by his knowledge, instinct, community, and biology.

He has two basic forms of protection: 1. through his instinct 2. through his community. These two forms are essential for the human being. If there were no protection, there is no community built. Hence, human community is built upon protection. If community turns a being into a human being, this means that without protection, the being is not a human being. The human being, or any person that refers to themselves as a human being, must protect themselves.

So, protection is community and biology based, and can’t be left for anyone. There are some opinions among nations that the army or the state alone protects rights. This [opinion] is false, deceptive, deviate, manipulative, and a far cry from the truth. The right to protection is a sacred and legitimate one that cannot be left to other. No one does the protecting for anyone. Again, [self] protection has to be done by the people themselves, or they will be far away from being human and will become in others’ service, will be a follower in others’ hands, so they must refrain from that.

Those are the principles of the democratic nation. The democratic nation prefers for the human or the communities to live as per their free identity, to come back to its reality and to its essence. This is only achieved by protection. This goes the same for the Kurdish, Turkish, Arab, Alawite, Syriac, Yazidi, nations or small groups, no matter, if he wants to live as per his identity, he must build his own self-defence. If he does not build own self-defence, he does not believe in his existence, his identity, or his faith, in which case, his existence is debatable. This is the basic rule, which is why we must make self-defence essential for the Democratic Nation. When we say self-defence, we are referring to the defence that stems from the biological and the community self. By protection we mean our presence, the continuity of our existence is our defence model whatever and however it may be. The continuity of our presence is our self-protection. So, do we continue in our presence or not? Could a force continue to exist or not? Force that wishes to continue in its own existence will use all methods and means.

To begin with, if there were attacks against the human for the purpose of physical extermination, he is entitled to defend himself with weapons for his survival and continuity (physically), because he is in danger, and he runs the risk of being wiped out of existence. Where there is a risk of physical extermination, if there is no armed defence, other forms of defence often have no value. As we said before, if there is a risk of physical extermination or if

danger is nearby, then self-defence come into play. When an animal attacks another, the attacked defends itself to the extent of its strengths and resists the attack. Eventually, it is either victorious or vanquished. The same goes for humans. If a human was exposed to the danger of physical extermination, he must try all available means to protect himself first and foremost by armed defence.” (18).

In Ocalan’s second plea, we find a stronger and stricter stance on militarization through the basic terms he used. He says of the “military and political solution”:

“Much of what we see in history is to try to solve the difficult problems of the societies that are exposed to internal or external violence. Countries that are based on social stratification have used violence as an approach to achieve everything needed. They made reliance on military force a traditional approach. But coming up with an argument or an excuse is a diplomatic mission. The state which has a stronger military force than others is the one which determines the global system in the end. When production surplus was limited during the times that saw a major disruption on the military side, the state leaned towards establishing a global empire whenever it succeeded militarily. Then the state that comes as substitute for the first, plays the same role. This is the truth that formed the basic rule of history until the mid-twentieth century. After the shocking nuclear balance, it has become necessary to develop positions and commit to political approaches, mainly concerning problems and issues. Scientific and technical revolutions have also made military solutions deficient and useless, where there will be no sense of victory or defeat in any possible world war. Therefore, concentrating on a political solutions became one of the main rules of this time. There is no doubt that the cost of military tactics and its ineffectiveness plays a key role in this matter. Therefore, the solution to existing social problems will be by democratic standards as a fundamental approach. The possibility of resolving national, ethnic, religious and cultural problems without changing the political borders plays a role in the scientific application of this approach.

The march of time in this direction is an appropriate approach to the Kurdish issue and its cause, and allows for a solution through dialogue and consensus based on the basic rules of democracy without feeling the need for the externally imposed military violence, or the self-advanced violence as

a new and real possibility. As long as the military approach leads to big losses for both parties, it would be unreasonable to think they won’t consider ways of achieving gains for both of them. The military course can only stem from a fascist denialist concept that seeks to exterminate. This calls for the defamation of such party and the stripping of the force that resorts to violence at the global level. There are many examples we’ve seen around the world that prove that the fascist approach and denial would not be successful in the long run. Keeping the Kurdish issue away from military approaches and directing it towards a political and democratic forum is very important. The broad and practical application of the civil society that destroys the previous national regime will be able to overcome the remaining psychological barriers of the past, and will prove that peace and tolerance encourage all types of solutions. This will lead to bringing the problem out of the reality of separation that existed for years. This will prove that the unification of powerful nations and countries is achieved through the application of democratic standards necessary for the law of modern citizenship. The modern democratic political approach will allow for this approach. Therefore, the possibilities of success will be increased day after day, and the views opposed to this approach will no longer exist after being ousted and defamed.” (19).

In these texts, we notice the coexistence of conflict between two discourses. The first is an old discourse that retrieves the idea of the genocide Kurds face and the need to deal with it by all means, beginning with armed struggle, and discusses the “self-defence” idea as a democratic necessity to confront the state of oppression and injustice by the same groups. The second, discusses the cost of the military solution and its ineffectiveness, and considers it very important to keep the Kurdish cause away from the military approach and direct it towards a political and democratic forum. Ocalan himself tried to expand the self-defence concept in many subsequent writings to include forms of peaceful civil resistance on several occasions; in a message from prison in which he says: “The self-defence concept that is developing as of now [entails] all methods of the people’s self-organizing, and so the concept of self-defence must evolve to take place within the people. On the other hand, whenever I talk about self-defence, it is [somehow]

understood that I am talking about armament, whereas even the most democratic societies need to protect themselves, and this does not mean armament. Mass democratic demonstrations are a form of self-defence, for example, if people remained in Diyarbakir's streets for days and expressed their demands just like in Egypt, then peace will definitely come. Then see if the AKP stays! Then, Erdogan himself would seek to solve this issue. Also, they have the ability to mobilize millions of people in one space in Diyarbakir – this is also self-defence. By saying this I am not instigating, but I am looking for peaceful democratic solutions for the Kurdish cause. By the way, I want to clarify that the current developments in Tunisia and Egypt have proven what I said that the new millennium will hold the peoples' spring, and the developments confirm my expectations." (20). There is little reverberation to this speech. However, leaderships from Qandil gave a sort of rigid ideological, and sometimes socio-biological, interpretation, of self-defence and the centralism of the role of armed conflict (21).

Here occurs the sacrificing of the epistemological rupture which considers violence in all its expressions as a means to continuing the existing system in order to employ the theory in favour of actual data of the organizational experience.

Perhaps it is easier when it comes to federalism and the democratic confederalism, where the most pragmatic and less ideological current abbreviates its arguments with the supporters of the Kurdish state by saying: "Like any federal project in a nation-state in the West, the federal system could be considered as a practical and necessary step towards building Kurdish federations in the region that could secede from the existing states in order to unit in one national Kurdish entity. Whether the historical moment was permanent or not, as the leader says: "In the event of failure of the national democratic constitutional solution characterized as a semi democratic independence and based on an agreement of first priority, it will turn into a

second priority, that is, unilateral "semi-independent democratic administration"" (22).

Is it a democratic self-administration within the concepts circulating among conciliar, eco-social and new anarchist movements? Or is it merely a local organizational process to control the situation around areas under the YPG's control? What is the difference between them and Iraqi Peshmerga? What is the difference between the police in the common sense and the Assayish? Is it possible to talk about any of the expression of the participatory or direct democracy? Or are we looking at words that have been stripped off their meaning by clinging to revolutionary phraseology reminiscent of experiences that were criticized by the KCK in their lectures and ideological structure after the pleas? Is it necessary to recall the green book and the example of "direct democracy" under Gaddafi, which was an example of the authoritative state but under different names devoid of its meaning and content? Then, what is the difference between the Syrian National Coalition's establishment of a one-sided government or the Syrian government's unilaterally decided procedures, and the declaration of a unilateral federation project? In the Syrian status quo: Is it because of the presence on Syrian territory? So, Daech is also present in Syria and Iraq, and Al-Nusra Front is present in Idlib!

Soviets (workers' and soldiers' councils) were not established by a party's order from above, but they were an independent self-regulated organization. When they became controlled by the Russian Communist Party, we witnessed the experiment described by Ocalan in the worst terms. It is not enough to have strugglers who believe in the ideology of a participatory and direct democracy in order to necessarily impose their convictions arbitrarily upon a societal status. Khmer Rouge's leader, Pol Pot, was not a criminal by nature, nor were commanders of Khmer Rouge vampires. Most of them studied in Paris and belonged to an association not much different from the ADYOD. They believed in the possibility of transition to communism without

passing levels and the creation of a classless society. In short, they followed an ideology and a radical fanaticism of their beliefs, the result was that the skulls of the peasants who did not come to grips with the Khmer Rouge's revolutionary project became the representation of the mass massacres under their rule in Cambodia. I have gathered many neutral testimonies in Cambodia. They described the purity, asceticism, and faith of the Khmer Rouge in their cause, then proceeded by saying: "But they wanted to impose their ideology through revolutionary violence and power!"

In a prison letter, Ocalan talks about the democratic self-administration. He said: "I spoke repeatedly about the need to discuss the work of the democratic self-administration and making it understandable and palatable by the community first and foremost. However, what was done establishing what resembles a founding council in the sense of declaration and without establishment of an infrastructure and without the completion of the things mentioned. This opened the door to misunderstanding. Discussing democratic self-administration is only the beginning, and this is just one condition. Some of my ideas I present here are discussed wrongly in public opinion because they are incompletely addressed. Things will not work out this way. And so, the issue of democratic self-administration was handled superficially, whereas I talked about making this project palatable by the people and debate it fundamentally. But what happened was reflecting the matter onto public opinion in the form of a declaration without doing any of the above." (23).

Personally, during my discussions with the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the rest of the Syrian opposition forces, I used to focus on the **democratic decentralization** in Syria as an existential necessity, not only to get rid of the central authoritarian model, but also because it is the most guaranteed course to the economic, social, and cultural reconstruction under conditions of sustainable development capable of facing the centre's tyranny upon surrounding countries and the state's

tyranny upon the society. Despite the symbolic importance of the Cairo Conference of the Syrian opposition's proposal of this concept in the Syrian National Charter on June 10, 2015, I was confident that a large number of attendees were unaware of how profound, important, and even scary this idea was to them. Hence, I constantly insisted to the TEV-DEM's members and during the Syrian Democratic Council's discussions that the democratic self-administration needs **the power of an example, not the formality of the motto**. I insisted that it is an experience that cannot be achieved through a partisan or political decision from above and that participatory democracy is aptly named; a socio-political process and not just a political program approved by a number of representatives of social and civic organizations. This was done during the declaration of the federalization of Rojava and Northern Syria in March 2016 and was the reason for my resignation from the co-presidency of Syrian Democratic Council (24).

To be honest, it is necessary to point out that our positions were not based on Arab/Kurd nationalism. Many of the KCK commanders were in favour of our position, and several non-Kurdish parties were opposed to it. It is important to point out the opinion of one of Qandil's giants who recently revealed in an interview with the Lebanese newspaper *As-safir*: "We have also criticized the imposition of this vision, the form of its declaration, and the term "Rojava" because it's still a geographic spot within the integrated Syrian unit. It had to be announced differently. We were against this form of federalization declaration. We are in favour of the federalization of Northern Syria. Why Rojava? What about the rest of Syria? They did not think of the rest of Syria... We have also criticized that this was declared before preparing the appropriate grounds for the announcement. This appeared as an imposed vision, which is a negative thing. It would have been better to explain it before declaring it. We are with the idea that term be "federalization of Northern Syria" without "Rojava" being part of the federalization because Rojava means a

national federation specific to the Kurds. Northern Syria contains many elements, and the freer an element is, the freer Kurds will be. This is why we initially focused on the mind revolution, without which things get complicated” (25).

Observing self-administration experiences consistently shows the problems and challenges of the role of party leadership and ideological guidance in curbing participatory democracy. Perhaps the Yugoslavian experience and its outcome remain in the minds of our generation. Replacement is not exclusive to Stalin, Kim Il-sung, and Tito. It's easy to replace people with the party and the party with the leader in every process of rebuilding an old regime. This is because **the establishment of an autonomous or a semi-independent state is done feasibly through the mechanism of the prevailing system. But it is also fragile, so as to not find a defender except within traditional fanaticism to build authority and its methods.** This forces it to look for external support and protection, and it is not long before it becomes hostage to forces once considered the source of the evil and misfortune to the region and its peoples. So what could possibly prevent, under the membership alliance with the International Coalition and the United States, to put this experience under the guillotine of “a functional federalism”, Iraqi-style, rather than being a crucible for individual's and people's rights and a starting point for resisting the various forms dictatorship?

Political and ideological conflicts have not always been conducted through democratic dialogues and majority and minority and different currents in a party. The role of commander, Serok Apo, lead to the continuity of the journey of the Ocalanist experience, whereas the cause of violence is permanently struggling. Perhaps one of the outcomes of the crimes of “savagery making” of Daech and its peers, and the massacres committed against ethnic and religious groups in Iraq and Syria, is the return of the voice that supports revolutionary violence as an essential method of struggle, by positioning legitimate armed

self-defence as a new common denominator for the various ideas opposed to or supportive of armed struggle. This violence characterized PKK's history and became one of the bases of the Ocalanic criticism of self-experience leaving its marks on many practices, as well as on divisions and disagreements (26).

1. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Sociology of Freedom*, Volume 3, translated from Turkish by Zakho Shyar, Mesopotamia Press, Germany, May 2011, pp. 28-29.
2. See: Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden, *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey, Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue, Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Studies*, New York, 2011.) Joost Jongerden and Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya, *Born from the Left, The Making of the PKK*. Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Joost Jongerden, *Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the project of Radical Democracy*. Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief, The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, August 2007, New York University Press, New York & London.
3. Dr. Hazni Hajo, the personal physician of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who later became close to the PKK, points out in his diary which was published by Avesta (Istanbul, 2008) that the existence of the PKK in the Qandil Mountain “dates back to 1982 as an agreement signed in Damascus between the Kurdistan Democratic Party led then by Idris Barzani and Abdullah Ocalan”. That means that the PKK’s presence in Qandil Mountains was in conjunction with its presence in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley in 1982 and before announcing the armed struggle against Turkey on 15/08/1984. The Qandil Mountains’ Loulan area witnessed the meeting in which the PKK decided the method and timing of announcing the armed struggle against Ankara. Despite this old presence in this region, the spotlight was on the PKK’s camp in the Bekaa Valley which was closed in 1992 under pressure from Ankara and Washington on Beirut. Then, the party’s camps moved to Syria to the Damascus suburb (Sehnaya, Shab’aa, Al-Nashabiyah). These three camps were completely closed four years after forcing Ocalan to leave Syria on 10/10/1998. In 2002, Syrian authorities completely took control of these camps following the turning in of PKK’s commander in Syria, Xebat Amed, who is now serving

- life imprisonment in a Turkish prison, in addition to over 100 PKK members delivered in batches to the Turkish authorities. All of that was in accordance with the Adana security agreement signed between Ankara and the Assad regime in the fall of 1998. (Ref: Hoshnek Oussi, Qandil Mountain and its commander, Cemil Bayık, who controls the security of three countries, Al-Arab Daily Newspaper, London, 27/06/2015, No. 9961, p. 12).
4. The distrust and purge discourse is an essential part of the years of growth and all that follows. Dozens of reports and books talked in length with no lack of conspiratorial reading at times and readied accusation at others. Certainly, political assassination was one of the means used by the PKK, which made it subject to accusations whenever there was a political assassination. Even at the assassination of the three militants, Sakine Cansız, Fidan Dogan and Leyla Soylemez by the Turkish security forces on Paris 09/01/2013, media sources, which are closely intimate with Turkish security forces, published more than one article accusing Dr. Fahman Hussein, one of PKK’s co-leaders, of the assassination of his comrade Sakine Cansız, the only female member in the PKK’s founding conference in Paris (?). Criminal investigation is not one of this book’s tasks, but unfortunately there is an absence of everything that allows for such an investigation, due to the nature of the governing authorities in the region, and the secrecy that forms a structural factor for the organizations which embrace armed struggle.
 5. *PKK, Der Weg der Revolution Kurdistans (Manifest)*, Wesanen Serxwebûn/Agri Verlag, Köln, 1986, *traduction de Kurdistan Devrimin Yolu Manifesto*, 1978). The statutes and the manifesto published in French by several authors e.g. http://www.chris-kutschera.com/livre_noir_3.htm
 6. Ali Haydar Kaytan, PKK co-founder, *The Fact of Leadership*, translated from Turkish by Hrkol Derek, Roj Press, February 2010, pp. 3-7.

7. Ibid, pp. 97-98.
8. Olivier Grojean, Olivier Grojean, *Entre témoignage, (auto) biographie d'institution et hagiographie: Pour une analyse généalogique des testaments de martyrs*. Olivier Grojean, «Investissement militant et violence contre soi au sein du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan», *Cultures & Conflicts*, 63 | 2006, 101-112. Bozarslan H., «Le nationalisme kurde, de la violence politique au suicide sacrificiel», *Critique internationale*, n° 21, octobre 2003, pp. 93-115. *Le livre noir du PKK*. http://www.chris-kutschera.com/livre_noir_3.htm (*Between Testimony, autobiography of institution and hagiography: For a genealogical analysis of the martyrs wills*). Olivier Grojean, “Militant investment and violence against self in the PKK”, *Cultures & Conflicts*, 63 | 2006, 101-112. Bozarslan H., “Kurdish nationalism, from political violence to sacrificial suicide”, *International Criticism*, n° 21, October 2003, pp. 93-115. *The black book of PKK*.
9. http://www.chris-kutschera.com/livre_noir_3.htm
10. Olivier Grojean, *Entre témoignage, (auto) biographie d'institution et hagiographie: Pour une analyse généalogique des testaments de martyrs*. *Cultures & Conflicts*, 63 | 2006, pp. 104-105.
11. Perhaps one of the most important “surreal” battles that I have been through at the International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR) in 1995 was during a discussion about a report about Kurdistan, prepared by a research team led by Michel Tubiana, Secretary General of the French League for Human Rights at that time. I demanded that when talking about areas of Turkish people presence that the team talks about it in the same way (Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkish Kurdistan...). The team insisted on using the term “Southeast Turkey” for Turkish Kurdistan. I requested that, in this case, the report be issued under the names of its writers, but the Executive Office of French majority considered the report an IFHR report and adopted it. I requested the right to publish critical comments about the report to make it balanced, and the office required the notes to be in my name and not showing as a debate to avoid giving the idea of a rift in IFHR between me as Vice President and the Executive Office. So I wrote *Reflections on the Kurdish issue* which was published in the official bulletin of the federation in May 1995. During the discussion, the President asked the Executive Director for the European Union and the French Foreign Ministry’s opinion. The answer was that this question was too big to be discussed and the consequences would be dangerous, and that it would be difficult for any judicial control to go to Kurdish detainee trials in Diyarbakir or Ankara after that. Even in the human rights community there was a case of phobia of uttering words or expressions that could irritate a prevailing system such as NATO or the European Commission.
12. Olivier Grojean, “Militant investment and violence against self in the PKK”, *Cultures & Conflicts*.
13. The sum of movements that embraced armed struggle were living the “political extermination nightmare. I have spoken, even though briefly, in *“Les Parias de Damas”*, about the experience of the “Arab Communist Organization”. One evening in Beirut, after returning from a visit to southern Yemen in 1977, while being discrete due to being pursued, one of the militants of the OIPFG, Organization of Iranian *Fedai Khalk* Guerrillas, fleeing the Shah’s regime, told me: “You get the death sentence for distributing flyers and you get the same judgment for arms possession, then why not use arms to overthrow the Shah?” I told him: “I am returning from being with comrades in Dhofar who have decided to stop armed struggle, they even smiled when I played a cassette that had songs of their revolutionary period, they respectfully said: “These songs go back to the time of revolutionary violence which we have left behind”.” He replied: “We

- cannot overcome it, as long as the Shah is still around, it is a battle of life or death, for us and for him”.
14. J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 1998 by Carnegie Corporation of New York, p. 39.
 15. Haytham Manna, *The Childhood of a Thing, The First Labor Pains of Human Rights in the Arab World*, Al-Jamal Publications, Cologne, 1999.
 16. Haytham Manna preparation and supervision in partnership with Moncef Marzouki, Violette Dageurre, Issam Younis, *Salamat al-nafs wa al-jasad*, ACHR, Cairo, First Edition 1998. Released two editions in French titled: Haytham Manna, *Violence et torture dans le monde Arabe*, ACHR, 1998 & Paris, L'Harmatan, 2000.
 17. Haytham Manna (supervision) with 38 researchers, al Im'an fi Huqouq al Insan (*Short Universal Encyclopedia of Human Rights*), three volumes, (Al-Ahali, Bisan, Eurabe and ACHR publications) 2000/2002/2010.
 18. Ali Haydar Kaytan, *The Fact of Leadership*, translated from Turkish by Hrkol Derek (Hussein Shawish), Roj press, February 2010, p. 78. And *Gems of Speech: Excerpts from Apo's Analysis*, People's Defence magazine, Centre for Communication and Media, undated, p. 51.
 19. Furat Dogan, *Self-defence is one of the main pillars in building a democratic nation*, the PKK website, <http://www.pkkonline.com/arabic/index.php?sys=article&artID=976>
 20. Abdullah Ocalan, *From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Republic*, Volume 2, 1st edition in 2002, PDF, pp. 20-21.
 21. Abdullah Ocalan, “It is not the Arab Spring, but the peoples' spring”, February 2nd, 2001, PKK website, <http://www.pkkonline.com/arabic/index.php?sys=article&artID=324>
 22. We cannot limit all that is written and said in PKK's literature about the centralization of the armed struggle,

- which transformed to the term “self-defence”, with all the enthusiasm that comes with arming, “from seven to seventy years old”, and the ideological and political commitment of the PKK etc. The websites of the PKK and Kurdistan's People's Defence Force can be followed as well as the interventions of the military leaders in PKK's media. It is known that the third conference of the PKK in October 1985 approved the Kurdish Military Service Law (each family has to present a young man for the armed struggle). This decision was confirmed throughout subsequent resolutions; most recent of which was a similar resolution in areas of self-administration in Syria.
23. A three-way meeting with a TEV-DEM's leader and another leader from the Kurdish National Council in Geneva, December 2015. Quotation by Ocalan is taken from more than one of his messages on the subject, we included one of them in this book's annexes, “The legal structure of the nation's democracy”. In correspondence with a friend, Sihanouk Dibo, he replied to one of my messages: “Ocalan came up with a new philosophy that lives in a democratic nation. Two options were given [in that philosophy] concerning Kurdish adherents who believe in the validity of his ideas and for leftists and anarchists under different names and organizations; either this model is accepted by repetitive authorities (this is a small chance and if it were to take place, that would be like waiting for the right opportunity to eliminate it), or, which is what we do in Rojava, to be announced by one side and to be defended legitimately, and to occur at the end and in harmony with international politics and in temporary confluence with it, much like the alliance between the two capitalist countries, the US and British, with the Soviet socialism in World War II. I could be fair in this analysis: if a past hundred years were taken back, you will find Apocism in the place of the Russian Leninist revolution, your Apoci comrades in Rojava” (June 2016).

24. Abdullah Ocalan <http://www.pkkonline.com/arabic/index.php?sys=article&artID=314>
25. More than on commander in YPG and TEV-DEM confirm that what is happening in Rojava is the application of the “leader’s” thought and ideology, see Aldar Xalil, Hussein Shawish, Ridor Xalil, and Polat Can. As an example, Hadiya Youssef says: “At the beginning, we congratulate Rojava’s people on the fourth anniversary of the revolution of July 19, and we congratulate the leader Abdullah Ocalan and all people of Kurdistan in the four parts for this great occasion. First, the July 19th revolution did not emerge out of thin air, it was the result of 40 years of struggle by the Kurdish liberation movement led by the leader of the Kurdish people, Abdullah Ocalan. In Rojava, this 40-year struggle occurred at the national level. Due to the Rojava’s people’s passion for free and dignified life, they fought for their freedom”. In Hussein Shawish’s speech he says: “The real owner of the revolution and the almighty of Rojava’s revolution is the leader Apo who fought in this arena for 20 years. The engineer of Rojava’s revolution is Apo himself. Therefore, we congratulate firstly the leader Apo on this occasion. We also congratulate our fellow martyrs who founded Rojava’s revolution with their blood, delivering it to this stage which turned into hope for all Syrians”.
26. *As-safir* newspaper, Mohamed Nouredine’s interview with Riza Altun, PKK’s Foreign Minister, 26/07/2016.
27. “On May 19th, 1978, a member of the rich family of Salimendar killed our militant Halih Cavgun. Two months later, we assassinated the Sheikh of Salimendar, Mehmet Baysal. Today, when you read in the book *NATO’s Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe*, that in the same year, 3,319 fascist attacks happened where 831 people were killed and 3,121 injured, you will consider our story as insignificant compared to the brutality of the overall situation. We were not murderers, we were

in situations that exceeded in its violence any political rationalism” (a testimony of an author of that period who defected from the PKK and focused on research, summer 2016). “On May 2nd, Mehmet Karasungur was killed while attempting reconciliation in the clashes between the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). In June 1985, a group of PKK detained five members of KUK, then killed them. The problem was that one of them was member of the central committee of ICP, Ala Rizgari. On the night of February 17-18, 2005, Kamal Shaheen (Salah al-Din Ali bin Mohammed) was assassinated, he had defected from PKK. On February 6th, 2006, Kani Yilmaz, another dissident was assassinated by a car bomb. The list is long, but if we ask the question: Who is responsible and who benefits? The answer, unfortunately, is more mysterious than you think. I do not justify for you, or consider anyone innocent, because I am against political assassination whatever the reason, but enmities and alliances in Kurdish political circles were not allowing for healthy and sound relations.” (Ibid.). 2002. Ocalan referred to these practices as violence that goes beyond the limits of legitimate self-defence: “Some individuals, figures, and groups within the PKK exercised violence on their comrades, civilians, state institutions and figures who lie outside the framework of violence. It is known that I objected to that and considered it a mistake...” (Abdullah Ocalan, *From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Republic*, Volume 2, 2002, p. 293).

PERSONALITY CULT

In 1975, when was a member in Marxist leagues in Syria, I translated a section of the sessions of the fourteenth congress of the Russian Communist Party held at the end of 1925. It would be useful to re-publish it today:

“Kamenev: We are against the creation of the concept of ‘the leader (Vojd)’”. We are against the erection of ‘the leader’... We cannot consider as natural, but as damaging, the continuation of a situation where the secretary is concentrated on the political and organizational matters. As a result of that, policies will be determined”, (noise in the hall), he continues: “I have reached the conviction that Comrade Stalin cannot play the role of unifier for the staff leadership of the Bolsheviks”. “That’s a lie, empty words, the masks have fallen...” shouted a voice from the audience. While the Leningrad delegation applauded, there was an uproar [in the audience]: “You will not reach the leadership, Stalin, Stalin! (Sheers about the unity of the party around Stalin, standing and applause...) Evdokimov greets the Russian Communist Party and the central committee, while voices cheer for Stalin. The Chair requests that the audience allow Kamenev to finish his presentation. He [Kamenev] says: “I started with these words and I will finish by them: We are against the concept of individual domination, we are against the creation of a ‘leader’” (1).

The session was adjourned for 10 minutes which felt like years. Despite the physical elimination of most of the party's leaders, Soviets, and syndicate leaders (Lev Kamenev, Mikhail Tomsky, Leon Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin, Grigory Zinoviev, Alexei Rykov...) and despite the revisions that took place in the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist Party to criticize the cult of personality and the disasters it created in the Russian experience, the cult of personality remained an epidemic for several Asian communist movements, mainly in China and North Korea.

Unanimously, Marxist groups rejected the idea of a Secretary-General and the leader, and communist action in Syria adhered to collective leadership.

It can be said that the first Ocalani experience in Syria may have seen a case that could be called mutual contempt among the Syrian revolutionary left, Arab and Kurdish on the one hand, and the PKK on the other hand. As for Marxist leftists whose detainees exceeded two hundred prisoners and fugitives upon the arrival of Ocalan to Syrian territory, the PKK is an organization close to the Syrian authorities. An early internal study (after the arrests in 1987) of an opposing communist faction says the following: "We notice that the party's relationship with the Democratic Front, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Struggle Front does not diminish the importance of the interdependence between the PKK and the Assad family with the knowledge of the Syrian President and his guidance. We believe that the party is a tool and a means used by the Syrian regime in its conflict with the Turkish government... We cannot reduce the party's relationship with Jamil Al-Assad, conflict militias, Adnan Badr Hassan, and the Syrian security apparatus to such necessity and alliance of interest because it goes beyond that to providing reciprocal services that reflect negatively on the struggle of the democratic opposition in Syria" (2). That did not prevent the communication between the Syrian and the Turkish Left in struggle and culture. So a group was formed around Fadhil Jtaker Luqman which I and Bou Ali Yassin

participated in to translate the writings of Dr. Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, a Turkish Marxist intellectual whose ideas impressed Ocalan and met with him in the association of the revolutionary culture in the East. Ocalan adopted his famous quote from him: "You are the sons of Mesopotamia" (3). However, the relations with the early arrivals to Syria from Turkey (the most important of which were from the Turkish revolutionary left) happened through the Palestinian factions and the Lebanese National Movement.

In the mobilizing speech until the end of the nineties, the PKK adopted the idea of the central region for Kurdish struggle considering it Turkish Kurdistan where 55% of the world's Kurds live. In an interview by Nabil Melhem with Abdullah Ocalan that was published in a booklet entitled *Leader and People: Seven Days with Apo*, 2nd edition by Al-Farabi Press, Ocalan denied the existence of Kurdistan in Syria and denied the existence of a Kurdish problem. He considered the majority of Syrian Kurds immigrants fleeing Turkish government's oppression and tyranny to Syria. Ocalan criticized those who criticized what he said, saying they are "people with mice brains who do not understand and do not realize the difference between strategy and tactics". Perhaps this recording was the worst he ever said before his tragic abduction in an international and regional conspiracy that ended a whole era of the person's and the party's experience and started a new adventure of thought and practice.

But was the party's experience liberated by Ocalan's pleas from prison from "its starting form" and then the "Syrian experience" and its aftermath? There is no doubt that the task of self-criticism of this era is much more difficult than merely escaping the era. Perhaps not having performed such a task is one of the reasons for there remaining of more than one umbilical cord, particularly for three essential central points:

First: The relationship between the struggle for a democratic civilization and nation and the cult of personality.

Second: The relationship between human rights, citizenship, and peoples' rights.

Third: The relationship between the democratic civic resistance and violence.

There is a systemic problem in Ocalan's writings related, in the Eastern subconscious, to the "true religion" and the "saviour" solution. Ocalan found part of this truth through Anthony Giddens, then considered him a son of English domination. "When Adorno said: "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly", he was illustrating modernity very briefly, but he failed in proposing an alternative" (4)... "Andre Gunder Frank got closer to the truth when he determined the position and importance of the European civilism within the span of five thousand years of civilism. But, just as he sensed his deficiencies deep inside, he was unable to formulate and put forward the solution or the alternative" (5)... "Immanuel Wallerstein was positive and radical in this topic. He does not at all believe in a solution within the existing system. He repeats, without boredom or fatigue, that the lived crisis is structural and connected to the existing system. He correctly proposes clinging to the intellectual, moral, and political tasks, and sticking to it tightly. His flaws however, lie in his inability to extend comprehensive solutions to the question: which system?" (6).

In a scene reminiscent of Newton and the apple, Ocalan seeks to bring the idea of his search for the truth and the way of salvation in the way he addressed those who depended on him in his pleadings. More than twenty quotes about this obsession could be included to emphasize the "eureka!" [moment] in the story. Perhaps he completes the logic to the end when he says: "I did not discover democratic modernism, because it exists in the form of a presumption" (7)... Quite like the laws of gravity, but also *Milestones* by Sayyid Qutb. Everything the "leader" does, is for the people and salvation. Commonality between the people's

cause and the personality of the leader is no different from Stalinist experiences in the last century. Forty years ago, *Imprekor*, a Trotskyist newspaper, published a Russian dissident's letter sent from a mental institution where he was being treated for "ideological deviation pollutants". I read the letter that day when I was pursued by the Syrian security forces, in a secret house in Bab-Musala in Damascus:

"While I was in the hospital lobby, I found a North Korean newspaper. On the cover was Kim Il-Sung's picture hunting. The following was written on the cover: "Kim Il-Sung fishing, but he doesn't only fishing, he thinks of his people too"... What a pity! This also calls itself communism".

THE LEGEND OF LEADERSHIP

Ocalan says of the leader: "Leader is not a person, it is the concept of universe and community, and it is a new concept" (8). Despite attempting in his [Ocalan's] trials to emphasize the idea of Andre Gunther Frank and his supporters that the global system is five thousand years old and not just five hundred years old, we sense while reading Ocalan and his colleagues that the leader idea is a new one although its tyranny in the East exceeded the story of Noah's flood. One of the PKK founders interprets the leader image and his role in an educational book by saying: "The reality of leadership is a series of values by which one must continue to be bound. It is the outcome of all the values, we can even say that he [the leader] is the creator of all values in the essence. Uniting with the leader means uniting with all values, the leader clarifies that "Leader is not a person, it is the concept of universe and community". He adds: "Thinking without Apo even for a moment, means falling into the abyss. Such thinking means not thinking of Kurdistan, means to throw dirt onto the leader to bury him for a moment. This moment could last forever, to wear the coffin for the death and not more. Resurrection could happen in such moment, people are linked to their values. Disrespecting

messengers and prophets leads to the emergence of a death decision against those who do so” (10).

The cult of personality issue was not taken for granted by the PKK and other Ocalanist organizations, it could be argued that this problem reached the limit of an internal conflict early on. The most prominent example of which is the dialogues of 1999-2004. The collection of testimonies in our possession confirm that the pre-1999 phase was the phase of monopolization of decision and policy determination. All the political, military, and diplomatic options had a single decision-maker. In Selman Arslan's testimony, he talks about Cetin Gungot, known as Samir, and says: “Samir was not a dogmatic person, to him, everything must be put on the table to be debated. Decisions do not come from above, strugglers have to benefit from their experiences and their independent personalities in order to make decisions” (11).

In many of Ocalan's presentations, there is emphasis on the sanctity and greatness of leadership. He repeatedly explicitly stresses the superiority of his leadership role: “You see, I struggled more than all of you, so this is my responsibility and I am committed to it. In comparison, between me and you, I fight more than all of you in all areas. Why?! Because I consider myself responsible as towards the history which obliges me to liberate this people. I consider myself responsible toward history” (12).

When he was kidnapped, the party appeared as an orphan who was not prepared for the earthquake. This is why the following years were turbulent but [Ocalan's followers] attempted to comprehend the experience and its consequences. Those years saw many defections and a deep internal crisis that was supposed to be re-examined with regards to the role of the individual leader. One of the dissidents was the brother of Apo, Osman Ocalan, he talks about this problem clearly when he says:

“I have said it before and I will say it now more broadly: when the PKK began its struggle, it was a struggle for leadership and everything was swirling and revolving around it. Little by little, attachment to the leadership became the goal, and attachment to

the people declined. The opinion became that patriotism means the clinging to Abdullah Ocalan; this view was wrong. Maybe in the beginning there might have been, to a certain degree, a need for people to stick with the leadership, but after it had become a strong national movement, sticking by the leadership became a mistake. In the end, leadership became the purpose and they left nationalism behind and this was one of the mistakes that the PKK insisted on. Any Kurdish person must be cared for, but no one should become a substitute of the people. There should not be mixing between loving people and loving the leader. The human must love the people foremost, love the national value, and within this framework, loving any Kurdish leader is normal. The PKK did not understand this fact and continued its mistake” (13).

However, the creation of “the leader” within the Eastern faiths and tradition is more established than generating critical thought. So, all voices that sought to curb the cult of personality within Ocalanist organizations have failed. They were critiqued and discarded and referred to in the worst expressions as a deviation, betrayal, cowardice etc. (14).

1. In his book *Cold Ideology*, chapter 6, Kostas Papaioannou deals in an amazing style with the unraveling of the “Personality Cult”— its formation, composition and disastrous consequences – by analyzing the Stalinist experiment, starting from the possession of truth to the formation of a sect that rehabilitates and reforms the party and society reaching for what Marx calls a “Jesuit State” when he talks about bureaucrats (Chapter 4). He analyses the relationship between building a belief and building a comprehensive and holistic war machine that produces a pseudo religious ideology. The book was released in 1967 and was translated to Arabic by Mustafa Khayati in the eighties. See: Kostas Papaioannou, *L'idéologie froide*, EEN, Paris 2009.
2. Internal letter, personal archive.
3. Fadhil Jtaker Luqman translated many of Kivılcımlı works, and I still have some of the unpublished letters. Arabic Publications: *The Evolution of the Types of Ownership*, Ibn Rushd, Beirut, 1978. *Opportunism and the Labor Party*, Dar Al-Haqaeq, Beirut, 1979. *Revolution Issues in the Third World: Imperialism and the Turkish Model*, Dar Al-Hadatha, Beirut, 1981. *The Alphabet of the Political Economy*, Dar Al-Galil, Damascus, 1986. *The Ottoman History*, Dar Al-Galil, Damascus, 1987.
4. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Sociology of Freedom*, Volume 3, translated from Turkish by Zakho Shyar, Mesopotamia Press, Germany, May 2011, p. 342.
5. Ibid, p. 343.
6. Ibid, p. 343.
7. Ibid, p. 345.
8. Ali Haydar Kaytan (a founder of the PKK), *The Fact of Leadership*, translated from Turkish by Hrkol Derek (Hussein Shawish), Roj press, February 2010, p. 75.
9. Ibid, pp. 74-75.
10. Ibid, p. 75. Texts and writings that exalt the leader are plenty and *The Fact of Leadership* is but one of them. As an example, we will include a section of an article by the Culture and Art Academy from the PKK’s website: “*The appearance of the leader Apo is like a re-growth of the values of the natural society. Just as the emergence of the natural society is like a debut, Apo’s appearance is the second [debut]. He has developed the revolution of life and thought through his community-thinking. He delved deep into the wrong practices applied by the authoritarian regime upon the society permanently, at the same time he introduced new ideas in that regard. But the authoritarian regime had drastically eliminated the power of thought, depth, and development in the society, because the authoritarian regime sees in thought the end of its existence. As we see in our present day, the authoritarian regime seeks to build a world of robots. Because the authoritarian system had created a large gap in the morality and conscience of the society, some people die of hunger, and some live in luxury and wealth. This hunger and luxury destroyed the society at the same time. The authoritarian regime lacks culture, morality, truth, and history, and this is why it seeks to make everything fit to achieve its interests. In this regard, the leader of Kurdish people, Abdullah Ocalan, says: “Home thief, numbs people and enters the souls, but humanity itself reaches the truth and destroys the mentality of the authoritarian regime through the struggle of the PKK. That’s why they wish to eliminate our struggle, but they do not know that this struggle is the struggle of the people and the truth. This struggle has been associated with Apocunist thought and never accepts injustice or lack of ethics. Our struggle has never accepted those points which the authoritarian regime wants to apply to society and the world, and will never accept them either. Ethics are the basis of society”.* <http://www.pkkonline.com/arabic/index.php?sys=article&artID=963>
11. Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief, The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, August 2007, New York University Press, New York & London, p. 90.

12. Abdullah Ocalan, The Real Weapon of the Revolution is the Party and Partisanship, from the People's Defence Forces (HPG) website: http://www.hezenparastin.com/ar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2189:2015-04-24-14-54-40&catid=52:2009-10-08-17-44-47&Itemid=122
13. Discussion with Osman Ocalan (Farhad), Ocalan's brother, conducted by Arif Zervan, Kirkuk, first chapter, 10/10/2004 http://www.amude.net/Hevpeyvîn_Munteda_deep.php?newsLanguage=Munteda&newsId=484
14. Aside from the political or the rival analysis in Turkey, such as their supporters' critiques mutually depicting Ocalan or Erdogan as megalomaniac, the Stalinist Sultan and the Ottoman Sultan, etc., we find several more serious European studies on the issue of "the leader", including but not limited to:
 Olivier Grojean, *The Production of the New Man within the PKK*, European Journal of Turkish Studies 8, 2008, <http://ejts.revues.org/2753>
 Alex de Jong, Stalinist caterpillar into libertarian butterfly? - The evolving ideology of the PKK, Wednesday, March 11th, 2015, <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article3914>

THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS AND THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE

To open this chapter, it should be remembered that all this discussion would not have been possible if the central nation-state (Turkey in this case) did not yield to the European Union's condition to abolish the death penalty. This allowed Ocalan to stay alive and conduct essential reviews of his ideological and political experience. As I write these lines, the voices of decision-makers in Ankara and some riffraff demand bringing back the death penalty after the semi-coup which the political and civil society in Turkey stood against as a rejection of the military establishment ruling the country and its people. Mass arrests have affected all whom the ruling group is seeking to neutralize and eradicate, and the term "fair trial" will be based on "hatred in politics" rather than an independent judiciary decision.

I will begin [discussion of] this incident by saying that the safety of the soul and body and the right to life is not just a bourgeois luxury or liberal understanding of civil rights. Even if we accept, arguably, the limiting of the role of persons to "the political figures resisting on a personal level and who at times had a weight similar to that of the nation." (1) How many potential people were wiped out by arbitrariness and the lack of basic rights of

people before they assumed their role? What do 120,000 people represent in the long history of mankind? (2)

It is necessary, first of all, to distinguish between human rights as a system provided by intergovernmental institutions or national conventions, and these rights as a result of an actual cultural, social, and conflictual process waged by regions and people as a transition from the society of the “minor human” and the “individual” of duties and original sins to the struggle for the rights of persons and groups. Which means the transferring of the concept of human rights to the forefront of confrontation with the prevailing economical and geo-political system, and the progress of this concept toward the centre of the conflict between the arrogance of power, the futility of violence, tyranny of capital, and the existential necessity of justice. In order for the political discourse and democratic values to rise to the level of action effective in growing social and cultural change, it is necessary to come out of the prompting situation to a language of innovation that puts human rights and political movement within the historical movement, not outside of it.

In this sense, there is a full consensus with Ocalan when he says: **“The other phenomenon that cannot be separated from democracy is the validity of the universal legal system. Democracy and law in the modern sense cannot be one without the other. They are two social institutions supporting each other and capable of solving any social problem. Democracy is the legal system of the political arena, and when basic human rights are added to it, standards of a contemporary state of democratic rights appear. There is a fundamental difference between the state of rights and the state that possesses a law and confiscates rights. The opposite of that would be if the state created its own law, so that is the law of the state. If rights did not stem only from the state, were set as a basis for the culture and traditions of the people who were born among them, conformed to universal standards of rights, were**

respectful of the basic human rights standards of the past, this would result in a true state of human rights. The fair and peaceful solution to the problems and social demands within the framework of a democratic system along with commitment to the rights would be the basic rule. And so, the democratic human rights solution will provide security for all and will provide the opportunity for everyone to contribute to the development of society” (3).

However, the Ocalanic analysis itself will depart from this conclusion in the “sociology of freedom” and it will abandon the concept of “democratic state of rights”. Because states, in his opinion, are based on authority and always rush toward excessive centralism, necessity, and nomination from above (Manifesto, p. 443). This makes him consider any form of social organization of individuals in the prevailing system to be based on preparation and rehabilitation “in order to amputate the individual from their membership in the society and transfer them to the membership of the state” (Manifesto, p. 574). This demonstrates the confusion in everything related to the concepts of civilism, civil rights, and civics which he links to the state and the capital, and separates completely from what he calls the moral and political community.

Perhaps this arbitrary separation between individuals’ emancipation and peoples’ emancipation requires the ideology to do such linking which is quite different from the historical facts and the intellectual and social movement itself. So any serious discussion of the democratic state of rights requires a reliable following of the two poles of political modernity: The emergence of the concept of the person and the natural rights of the human being firstly, and the birth of the nation-state secondly, and not just one of them, within a critical and creative reading that aims at a coherent preparation for the process of building a democratic society. Which always brings us back to the big turning points in the life of mankind, at least in its recent revolutions: How to access the intellectual political battles of the French Revolution era? What were the questions of the founding fathers of the

United States of America regarding the shape, the nature and the approach of building a new political body? How did Simon Bolivar face in Central and South America the problem of citizen's affiliation and people's sovereignty? Wasn't the collective approach to rights a reason for the failure of the bureaucratic "socialist" model in Eastern Europe? How could the national liberation movement stand in the face of the nationalization of the patriotism and nationalism of the political and civil rights?

We will not get into Ocalan's secular, liberal, or positivist scientism readings, or the divinity of the central nation-state and the generalization of the central state model over the entire Western experience. Also, we will not get into the relationship between the state and capital in the Western model which is different from that of Eastern societies, especially since inaccurate introductions necessarily give conclusions or results that are unreliable. I have worked, in order not to do the author and the translator injustice, on reviewing the Turkish [language] source of many sections. But there is an additional disappointment when one confirms the projective reading of Ocalan for all nation-state models in the West. Disappointment increases [when one witnesses] that Ocalan was obviously influenced by what I call the "neurosis of the Turkish model". This is similarly the case with the historical movement that produced the concept of the person and restored the concept of citizenship to its place in the social and political conflicts throughout the centuries, as well as his way of connecting the French Revolution to liberalism for example, and the semi-absence of the changes seen by the monarchical systems in Europe. Also, personal feelings are not our [main] concern here. From the moment he says: "Personally, I see that living within the confines of one God who descends from ancient times, is better and a thousand times holier than living under the shadow of the divinity of the current nation-state" (4). I feel that this expression of feelings is a natural right that reminds me of a friend who he had wished, on occasion and for no reason, that he had been born in the golden era of Baghdad, a thousand years

ago, which does not constitute an obligation or a commitment to anyone, in the political, intellectual, or moral sense.

In his talk about the problem of identity, Canadian progressive researcher, Charles Taylor, summarizes his point of view by saying: "*My discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly integral, with others... My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others*" It is necessary to follow many of the non-Western readings about identity. Perhaps the Indian writer, Amartya Sen, is one of the best to do so by spurring interest in its effects on the Indian subcontinent. I have talked about the "creation of identity" and other studies on this subject, so it would be useful to bring up a section that illustrates our point of view: "It is no longer possible to talk about the identity in the tribe, the nation, the state, and religion as pure patterns of human groups. Identity is a process that forms through crises, and although its conceptual basis is based on stability, it's in constant change, quick or slow, by self-factors or by external factors, it does not matter. What is important is that the depth of any sense of identity is absolutely a relative case. The idea of rigidity in identity, which led the left and some liberals throughout political and theoretical confrontations between freedom and identity, citizenship and belonging, the "we" and the "others", is the result of preconceived notions and dualities that no longer have meaning except to explain a typical ideological reality created by the intellectual and the politician. National identity in the Arab world was a result of crisis conditions, or more accurately, a case of rape. Attempts were made to break away from the Ottoman model for favouring the Western concept and not for the purpose of encouraging the possibility of a local derivation resulting from overcoming the historic deadlock. Let's take for example the nationality, syndicates, and courts. There was no significant palatability for those establishments in our societies, and therefore, they remained distant from the popular sense and considered synthetic by many. Some also did not refrain from linking their existence

and elimination to the colonizer, no matter their merits. This chaos in identity and institutions, and the transition between two eras and two different production patterns, has created a huge void in the political configuration of human beings. Benefitting from that was an entire generation that was able to breathe under colonial liberalism which gave people a political and cultural margin that allowed for their self-rehabilitation and cognitive development much better than for the generation of the state of emergency which we have come to know. This allowed for mending major cracks in the great ambition to win the battle of time and necessarily be able to build a different future. Only the new political society's collective feeling of belonging to the major issues allows for building a collective relative civilian identity. We are not in confrontation with the Western civilization, but we are in conflict with the disproportionate global system that imposes upon us a predetermined inferior status and a state of chronic dominance by the American capitalist centre." (5).

This sentence generally sums up the view of the global critical thought of all prior operations of formulating and creating the future society. There is certainly what might be called disposal of all humanitarian emancipation obstacles, personal or collective. It is necessary to dismantle the society of exploitation and tyranny and to publicly expose its violations. But, to set the image of "the anticipated utopian society" and determine the missions of strugglers by applying Sharia, is what progressive struggle and intellectual schools essentially reject and consider an authoritarian approach that does not much differ from the Stalinist attempts in its various forms.

Without self-discovery in human culture, self-renewal in critical thought, the permanent ability to enrich and exchange information and experiences between various cases, discovering the strengths and weaknesses in texts and practices, and without innovation in visualization, text and field performance, would be a downfall that Abul A'la Maududi talked about in his lecture in Lahore in 1933: "Communists carry Stalin's picture to the villages

and we carry the Quran to people, and there is a great difference between the cult of personality and the worship of God!" (6).

Falling from above in the creation of the "we" and the identity and in the silo of a closed ideology, means descending to the dictatorship of identity. Any upper unilateral attempt to impose a theory or ideology without non-formal, (and sometimes caricatured), participation, is a ticking bomb, and its explosion would not necessarily be historical or objective.

When the "ballot box" is imported as a basis for democratic transition in a society where there are no institutions that restrict power's arbitration and are full of lobbies of corruption, the box turns into not only a formality of democratic management, but also a tool for control on its behalf. Democracy is not an order from above, the same goes for the relationship between religion and the state, and the relationship between the state, the groups, and the persons, when we talk about assassinating expressions of citizenship (7), Murray Bookchin writes in *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship* (8). There is talk of real social battles that led to the emergence of the concept of the person and introduced citizenship at the heart of the production and activation/enrichment of the political and social thought, and not just a definition provided by a constitution or a charter in this or that country, showing a prefabricated or formal ideological reading. That was before the achievements of these intellectual and social conflicts, whether on the level of representational formal democracy, or participatory and direct expressions, became targeted by the forces of the monopoly of financial and political decision centres as a fundamental threat to the authority of the "modern state" and the power centres of influence under it. So to jump over the Western paths of the decline and the expressions of its resistance, to consider the collective struggle for the rights of groups as a way not only to liberate the society, but also to emancipate individuals from the control of the group and the state. We are facing a process that takes us back to the individual, which means the lack of historical understanding

of the concept of the person and its importance to the growth and advancement of the resistance and civil and political rights, whether the individual or the collective ones.

In the thirteenth century, the ideas of the early humanists began to resonate throughout eras. The most ancient of which in Europe was the Great Charter of Liberties, or the Magna Carta (1250). In 1628, King Charles I issued a “Bill of Rights” that erected protection from unfair taxation and financial corruption, linking the duties of the citizen to the parliament and not the executive authority. And although there’s still talk of the rights of the English people, the idea of linking freedom to the judiciary authority was introduced in the *Habeas Corpus* and opened prospects for the passing of the bill. Through contemporary reading, we see the “Bill of Rights” in more than one image, inelastic and artificial, or rather an expression of protecting the interests of the ruling classes and the preservation of inequality and the lack of equality in society (9). But reading what was issued and adopted in Britain, France, Prussia, and Geneva leads to a complex and tangled journey to protect the soul and body of the people, which makes way for the fight for social citizenship through the resistance and struggle (10). This is especially since every declaration for the protection of the rights of people constitutes a legal and moral force parallel to what might be called “the rights stipulated by the law or the constitution”, which is considered the rule and reference to what was known as the State of Law/Rule of Law. This represents an object for global and local civil society protest in various arbitrary expressions today. Hence, our focus since the end of the eighties of the last century has been on the theme of “Physical and Mental Integrity” as a basis for the essential growth of the concept of the person.

The idea of global human rights did not stem from nation-states in progress; it came along the idea of “natural right”. The Age of Enlightenment brought this idea by pure intellectual maliciousness, to take from the intellectual and the ideological their discriminatory look against this or that, and from history

the idea of the negative right that connects [the concept of] rights to depriving certain categories of those rights (foreigners, barbarians, women...). The Age of Enlightenment brought it [the idea of global human rights] back in a new positive image in the form of a feud with the history of the church: You could be a Christian or a Buddhist, but the inclusive definition of humanity is the person. And this person has basic natural rights such as the right to ownership, liberty, equality, and resistance. Natural right means the right of every human being.

Perhaps the political/social conflictual nature of this journey manifests in the tragedy of the execution of Olympe de Gouges, the writer of the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen*, whose courage shook the intellectuals and leaders of the French Revolution. She considered women’s rights as natural rights, sacred and non-negotiable (11).

During the age of enlightenment, there was a hostility toward any attempts to achieve a balance between God, nature, and human. The glorification of “human dignity” by Manetti, Marsile Ficin, and Pic de la Mirandole were attempts to restore and amplify the anthropocentrism. The human being is like God in terms of mastery over existence, his vision of himself as a master, and his ability to exercise leadership, and in this case, he cannot be seen as a minor inferior being. It is the announcement of the birth of the person, the birth of a new concept of human rights. The concept of a person is not born from the concept of an individual like the transition of a child to an adult, but rather the result of harsh cultural and social conflicts that have been present since at least three centuries. Originally, there was the group, and we find through various human cultures a position of renouncement against the idea of individuality and an echo of Ṭarafah ibn al-Abd’s grievance when he talks about his vagrancy:

“Until my entire tribe avoided me, and I became as lonely as a tar-coated camel”

The [concept of] capital carried the idea of exclusiveness within it. However, it did not open prospects for the transition

of the individual to the “person” except through an intellectual and cultural revolution and major social transformations that made the end of the era of the minor human a subject open for discussion.

Renaissance thinkers attributed the roots of the idea of human rights to the conflict between wisdom knowledge and religious knowledge during the Age of Enlightenment. The resistance of the people of Europe and America against tyranny civically and militarily laid the foundation of civil and political rights in the modern sense. Eras of enlightenment fought the state of religious or ideological affiliation, as much as it became an inspiration to non-Europeans for the idea of rights of citizenship.

As Moncef Marzouki and Lynn Hunt (12) point out, a paradigmatic feud, as Michel Foucault calls it, goes back with the old perception of torture to the Western culture to Beccaria, the Italian jurist (1738-1794). He wrote *On Crime and Punishments* in 1764, condemning injustices committed in the name of law. He denounced torture and the death penalty. He was the first to defend the idea of education as a means to fight crime. His ideas played a major role in penal reform in many Western countries, including the United States. In the same context, the ideas of Paul Feuerbach (1775-1833) played a key role in Bavaria in Germany. Torture was abolished in Prussia in 1754, Sweden in 1772, Austria in 1776, and finally in France in 1788 before the guillotine was used again by the rebels in 1792 ... “Putting an end to torture, Brissot says in the name of the sacred rights granted by nature to mankind... The current judicial punishments only breathe through blood and death, and only brings rabies and despair to the heart of the convicted (Lynn Hunt, p. 120)”.

In his famous defence of Calas, (who died, strangled after two hours of torture, in 1762, after being unjustly accused of murdering his Protestant son who converted to Catholicism), Voltaire dealt with the crime of torture from various aspects, comparing judges’ cruelty to the ferocity of tigers and the stupidity of cows. As for doctors whose deviation reached the

level of helping executioners prolong torture time, Voltaire reminds again: “*It is impossible to see, according to this principle (human rights), a man saying to another: You have to believe in what I believe in. If not so, you die*”. (13).

Moncef Marzouki notes in *Physical and mental integrity*: “*The success of the shaping of the person from an individual in the West in the last two centuries is apparent not only in political action, but also in the central position he came to occupy within sciences. He is the subject of “Cogito ergo sum” of Descartes and the self that forms the world in Idealism. In psychology, he is the only subject of behaviours and positions. In Sociology, he is the sum of positions, roles, the starting point and the centre of relationships that make up society. In law, he is the subject of duties and rights. In politics, he is the citizen and the voter. In economics, he is the producer and the consumer. We see through all these examples that the person has become central and active and no longer just a cell, tissue, or a number*” (14).

We find in Ocalanic writings reduction and deformity of the vacuum that accompanied the return and growth of the concept of citizenship to history after a long absence. Perhaps the special situation of the Kurdish people and also the Turkish model of the nation-state based on melting societal elements in a single national identity, and the reflection of that onto the idea of citizenship in the Turkish experience, shaped his opinion. When it comes to the definition of citizenship, Ocalan offers the following definition:

“*The term (citizenship) means the link between the person and the state, and it means membership in the state to a certain extent. This is a political term that does not include any ethnic or national value. Belonging to a nation however, means subordination to a specific nationalism. He who has a common history, language, and culture, and carries the bonds of the nation that make up a particular social form, does not [necessarily] carry certain political bonds as they are. He can be of a different nationalism, but there is no need for him to be a citizen of the same state. Membership in the state does not create an obligatory national membership. That could not be imposed except through a fascist totalitarian concept.*” (15).

The return to the concept of citizenship in Europe was not through a relationship with the state or a product of it; it was the

result of a state of rebellion and rejection of the idea of “civilians” and “the minor being”, which limits the role of individuals to the essential task of each tyrannical authority: obedience.

Since the eighteenth century, citizenship formed a very rich subject of debate in France. While the Encyclopaedia of Diderot in 1753 defined the citizen as “**A member of the community**”, Trévoux dictionary defines the words in 1771 as “a term related to the **political community**”.

In *The Social Contract* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau connects this concept to the concept of sovereignty and **obedience to the self at first, liberation from the role of civilians, and the individuals’ enjoyment of self-autonomy**. This liberalization will not be a gift from heaven. Rousseau also asserts in his research about the government in Bologna: “Convenience and freedom are incompatible, one has to choose between them”.

Rousseau claims, each person will enjoy the protection of the common force whilst remaining as free as they were in the state of nature. The key to this reconciliation is the idea of the general will: that is, the collective will of the citizen body taken as a whole. The general will is the source of law and is willed by each and every citizen. In obeying the law each citizen is thus subject to his or her own will, and consequently, according to Rousseau, remains free.

In other words, [that definition points to] the state of contradiction between public resources and private interests. It could be argued that there was a general trend by many intellectuals and politicians in the eighteenth century to not consider citizenship a natural right, but at the same time, not to consider it against nature, as summarized by some: a second nature.

With the French Revolution, the concept was given a loaded idealist charge that is based on the idea that the holder of civil and political rights is considered the core element that forms the nation: the concept was linked to the [concept of] republic,

considering that the collective identity which is made up of all citizens possesses, alone, sovereignty within the State.

The Declaration of Human Rights did not distinguish between the citizen and the human being. But the prevailing thinking in 1789 continued to classify voting as a function rather than a right. We had to wait until later in 1793 where a rule was set forth that a citizen is every person who reached 21 years of age and is therefore a voter.

Also, in 1793 the definition of the citizen was enhanced to be considered national and political in practice, which means emphasis on citizenship as an action rather than a status.

This matter created an essential difference between Anglo-Saxon writings where citizenship corresponds with nationality to a great extent, and francophone writings that emphasize the link between citizenship and effective participation in public life, and the problems of society (the political and moral role of persons).

On 1793 also, Immanuel Kant defined citizenship by the possession of civil rights guaranteed by the bourgeois status, so that only the freeman who is economically independent can be considered a free citizen. Thusly, economic independence is granted citizenship, however, women and children are excluded from this rule.

Condorcet was one of the few political philosophers who adopted the right of women of full citizenship. But, he was too scared to express that in the political battles he fought.

When Olympe de Gouges issued the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* in 1791 which emphasized woman’s right for citizenship, she would pay the price of her struggle under the guillotine on November 3rd, 1793.

Hegelian political thinking did not stop at a possible conflict between “citizenship” and “nationality”; rather, it stressed, on one hand, the positive and active acceptance of the city as a framework for actual moral life, and on the other, it warned of the retrogression of thought. Such retrogression, represents

a devastating threat to the city due to the positive evaluation of internal thinking.

The citizen according to Karl Marx (1818-1883) is the “abstract” subject – unrealistic in an abnormal history. The intersection between the citizen and freedom (political and civil rights), brought back the debate about equality (natural for some, cultural for others). The more the citizen obtained his full right to handle “himself and his possessions”, as per Sieyès, the further away he retreats from that image created by socialist pioneers from *Les Sans Culottes* to Marx.

Owen and Saint-Simon also had a criticism for the “political illusion and the ideas of human rights”, based on the need to achieve a social program as a condition for human emancipation with rigorous criticism for the release of property rights.

The deeper one goes into the French and American experiences, the more one relates to Jacques Zylberberg’s quote: “The passage from truth to relativity leads us, in the systems of free knowledge and rationality, to the principle of doubt that questions, in the name of wisdom, the social construction of the field of citizenship. If citizenship, for those who practice, is to assist the state of law and pluralist democracy, and a pivotal point in the orderliness of the national field, so for the researcher, it is an arbitrary, singular, idealist term that specifically aims at nicely decorating various political projects for multiple political systems”.

The colonial era witnessed the decline of the concept of citizenship. The colonizer replaced the citizen and gained privileges at the expense of occupied peoples whose members do not enjoy any legal status of human rights. For example, Algeria was French for decades and an Algerian was not granted citizenship status. So frenchification was carried out in a racist and sectarian manner by the secular state (citizenship was granted to all Jewish Algerians in 1889, whereas the Algerian was required to abandon Islam to be granted citizenship). However, the biggest problem lies in our opinion of the French model

which produced generations of intellectuals and politicians in the Arab countries, Turkey (Ataturk), and the Middle East in general, and was a role model for those generations. In the French model, we can observe the recession of persons’ rights in the name of a formal citizenship in a strong central state (French nation-state) This direct linking struck the heart of nationalist groups that form the Republic (then the Empire and then the five Republics) on behalf of one people, one language, and one mono-national and “militant” secular culture. Until today, decentralization in the French model is still limited, and the intermediary expressions between the state and the citizen are lacking. Ironically, the government recognizes the religious group or communities, but does not recognize national groups and components. There was a compulsory integration process of the Catalonian people on the French side of Catalonia, whereas Spanish Catalonia enjoyed essential cultural and political rights. French-speakers in the Swiss Confederation live with the German and Italian speakers within a democratic experiment that combines the rights of elements and the rights of persons away from speeches and slogans, whereas the rights of the components became stagnant in the French experiment. The agreement of Michel Rocard, the French prime minister under Mitterrand, with New Caledonia nearly a quarter of a century ago, was the only exception. But despite its success to some extent in breaking the compulsory integration policy exercised in Bretagne, Basque, Alsace, and French overseas departments and territories (DOM TOM), it did not become an example to be followed. Even the inhabitants of the island of Corsica did not succeed in obtaining the status of people in spite of all the violent and parliamentary attempts that occurred in the last century. A deformed expression of this model became evident in the two experiments of Al-Baath Party in Syria and Iraq, where the Syrian Nationality Act still, for example, uses the term “Syrian Arab” for each citizen even if he/she were Armenian, Kurdish, Turkman, Syriac or Chaldean. However, the recent Turkish experiment in the past one hundred years was the most loyal and most tragic in reproducing and deforming the

French version of the nation-state in the region. In this sense, we can understand the Ocalanic problem with the nation-state that deformed the concept of “nation” cancelling all intermediate forms between the components of the society and the state and crushing citizenship rights at the same time. However, it is difficult to consider it coherent and general; the Western experiences can’t be reduced in the French model, and to a lesser extent, failed and successful Latin American experiments. Hence, our defence in the historical era in which we live for democratic legal state in the face of the nation-state (16) and our conviction that chances for an Intellectual and Cultural Revolution based on national and Islamic bases were exhausted. This is a conviction we share with a number of bright intellectuals, such as the poet Adonis for example.

The state, and not nationalism, **is the current historical entity of civilizational cognitive awareness that is based on the partnership of the elements, equal citizenship, and civic bases independent of all of society’s elements and ideologies.** Such state is not ideal or impossible, and it provides our countries with prospects for political and developmental participation. In the end, the state, as per Georges Burdeau, is institutions in the service of an idea (17). There is no magic formula that expels from the states the evils of power, so the duty of its elements and free citizens is to face all that is corrupt or corrupting, and to struggle against all that makes a citizen, a group, or the society subject to an arbitrary individual or partisan leadership, nationalizing it, dominating its institutions, or worse, ideologising it. We can accept the idea of Emmanuel Wallerstein that the term nation-state created an asymptote that all the states tried to reach, if what we are talking about was a specific, albeit long, historical era. However, this idea is no longer a solid base for the future, as he says: “Nations are legends in the sense that they are all social creatures”. (18) If his prophecy was to come true and the current world-system falls by 2050, we don’t know what its fate and the fate of others would be. We live in a turbulent

historical era that puts all of our cognitive systems under the microscope for criticism and reconsideration. The prevalence of absolute truths, ready-made sacred solutions, and ideological fanaticism and sectarian Fast Food in our region is not only an expression of our superficial handling of those changes and the prevailing state of intellectual desertification, it is also a means of self-protection for those who feel the absence of all elements of self-immunity capable of rationally confronting the condition in which we are, the soft underbelly of a decaying global body.

The Soviet experience was unable to humanize and democratize citizens’ rights, and the dictatorships of countries of the south stripped the concept of its political and civic meaning. While talks of citizenship expanded to include providing the basic elements for a democratic and civil society, many do not hesitate to ask an important question: If the citizen was the taxpayer in the establishment of a capitalist society, would he be the consumer in the era of globalization? But in contrast, many world-system critics ask the question: How could we pass to a post-patriarchal or non-authoritarian society in the absence of the rule of free citizenship and free society?

It is true that within authoritarian countries and inside churches we do not find the free term of “the citizen”; the controversial term of “the intellectual” doesn’t exist there either. It is also true that the French Revolution faced during a crucial historical moment, the two concepts of divine right and the right of citizenship. It is true as well, that the European experience introduced the citizen as an entity of right. But this right, which is declared naturally, is flexible in two dimensions with the prevalence of a political one in the executive sense over human rights in the judicial sense. **In the free sense, a human being has not yet become the start point and the finish point in the sum of Western, Southern, and Asian expressions of citizenship, whether revolutionary or conservative, but he remains an intermediary expression.**

America and France shared the process of renewing the battle of citizenship without the symbolic dimension of the French experience: It did not face the brutality of the Roman Catholic Church, did not deal with an absolute monarchy, and did not turn secularism into a political program.

In both cases, facts are shaken by the ideological optimism of the founding fathers in the eighteenth century in France, where the separation of religion from the state was delayed for another century during which France was swinging between periods of horror, Bonapartism, and monarchy. In America, slavery, civil war, and racial discrimination in cooperation with the constitution have established the empire of the green paper (dollar) on which was atrociously written “In God, We Trust”!

It’s difficult to agree with those who say that legal citizenship is rarely voluntary, and that its political status as subject for consideration is the result of a minority’s efforts in everyday life.

In normal situations and crises, the majority rarely takes initiative to change what it considers a formal privilege. The majority is also rarely gracious enough to throw this privilege out the window. Putting a stop to the recession of human rights in citizenship laws and respecting persons in France was not the result of an important, demanding, political movement, but rather that of a small group of document-deprived Africans who wanted to say, in an almost desperate cry, that in secular France, where there’s no longer respect for asylum rights, the church, which is an old system in the collective consciousness, becomes the shelter.

The fact that artists and intellectuals are against severely insulting foreign guests led to limiting the accumulation of conservative arbitrary laws. But doesn’t the war on terror make the achievement of the persons’ rights and the battle for a modern citizen subject to question? Don’t security measures place the concept of the citizen in confrontation with the brown, the black, the bearded, and the veiled? This matter leads to the re-discussion of the issue of people and who belongs to it, and the issue of

citizenship and who is outside of it again based on principles of resistance and opposition rather than on comprehensive and democratic principles.

In a pluralistic and contemporary state, the concepts of nationality and citizenship in reality intertwine to the point of the possibility of reducing each of them to the possibility of a routine participation with the political class in order to choose its elements non-violently and to play an exceptional role as a referee to resolve its conflicts. There are questions that present themselves regarding the problem of citizenship, such as:

- How could the rising individualization of the concept of political citizenship take into account the concept of community and the public interest of groups and individuals including their environmental, economic, and social rights?
- How could the concept of citizenship create population harmony for all the residents of a political unit without eliminating the multicultural and multi-ethnic feature of it?
- How could we invest in the relativity of the sovereignty of the state and its laws through binding international and regional human rights charters that necessarily collide with the arbitrary laws of the national state and allow for human rights values to penetrate it in the struggle for human and peoples’ rights?
- How would it be possible to protect the values of participation and the role of individuals and groups within a specific place and time and exceptional circumstances that are easily employable to strike any accomplishment on the level of the democratic organization of the relationships between people and elements? Does that not require the means to prevent regression and rebound? Such as the presence of super-constitutional principles that are not subject to the decision of the ruling authorities?

- Would it be possible to deal with a single and sole idea of the state and to overlook its mysterious, diverse, and contradictory characteristic exactly like the case of federalism which was born as an institution quite like the state, or rather an institution within the state, and the most amazing practical expressions of which did not succeed in continuing outside the state regardless of the nature, concept, and structures of the latter whether it was a dictatorship or a “democratic confederation”?

It's impossible for the ideas of self-administration and self-management in a canton or region here or there to provide satisfactory answers to these questions. Murray Bookchin, the one who inspired Ocalan primarily, pointed out the dilemma and tried to find an answer to it, not by going beyond the concept of citizenship, but by developing it:

“The development of citizenship, in effect, must become an art, not merely an education, but a creative art in the aesthetic sense that appeals to the deeply human desire for self-expression in a meaningful spiritual community. It must be a personal art in which every citizen is fully aware of the fact that his or her community entrusts its destiny to his or her moral probity, loyalty, and rationality. The very essence of state power and statecraft today is that the “citizen” is incompetent being, indeed infantile and normally untrustworthy, while the state is a disciplinary institution, not an avenue of self-expression” (19).

Considering the obsession with developing an unavoidable “new citizenship” while we suffer authoritarianism in ways that made citizenship in its simplest forms a dream for everyone in our society, citizenship was never the result of a written text, hence the insistence that everyone is a citizen. Because the only common theoretical, moral, and human rights index in the absence of commonalities is the advancement of humanity in its current limits and political forms to the level of substantial rights

that unify human beings, in other words, for all people to become citizens.

The achievement of such a dream undoubtedly represents a revolution that far exceeds in its civilizational dimensions the French Revolution, which was launched from local and authority practices to announce its universality. It exceeds the German experiment that attempted to express the nation through the concept of the people (Volk). It exceeds the Western civilization, in general, which has not yet succeeded in placing the human being deservingly within the power structures, the market economy, and the modern groups of influence. Hence the need for a global civic productive network, not only for the protection of small subjugated communities, but also to protect the individual who is besieged everywhere by non-exclusive forms.

Criticizing existing expressions of citizenship also allows us to dismantle by necessity the forms of injustice that are hidden behind caricatured expressions of legitimacy that gain its respect by the mere presence of a high economic and military authority or a global cultural and political collusion that imposes such respect. However, the totalitarian trend of the various expressions of power cannot be responded to with the totalitarianism of “the sociology of freedom”: “Policy is obliged to be present everywhere, because the authority’s agencies are prevalent everywhere. As long as power pivots to every unit, element, and individual of the society, the policy must also pivot to every unit, individual, and element” (20).

“The superior voluntarism to build an alternative ideology is shown clearly along the action that’s used to describe it: It must be organized and necessarily bound to the substrates of the method and implementation of analyzing the truth... The purpose of rebuilding is to organize all social units, elements, and individuals and to push them towards practice... Primary tasks are in effect at all times... There can be no maximum freedom, equality, or democracy in the ethical and political society except after the implementation of the intellectual, moral, and political tasks in an overlapping way...” (21).

Do the three terms (the moral and political society, the democratic communalism, and the democratic society) emphasized by Ocalan, give a coherent and rational answer that opens prospects to overcome the “civic” liberalism and “the doctrine of constructive socialism?” Is it possible without any fundamental and rigorous critique for the experience, the role, and the modern leader of the Party to seriously discuss “the establishment of the ideology of freedom, an ecological industry, the communalist society, and the democratic confederation” (22). Does the democratic civilization need a pre-drafted ideology and imposed teachings from the outside? In the former Soviet Union, the number of the party’s members (the holders of the communist letter) was estimating to be thirteen million out of nearly two hundred million. How could we align those two numbers with the idea of the self-governing people? YPJ, YPG and Assayish represent a much smaller percentage in areas of self-administrations. So, do the political and military organizations who control everything have a right to impose its ideology in the name of direct and participatory democracy discussed in the limited organizational circle and puts decisions to a vote by a conference that reminds us of “popular” conferences which had nothing to do with the people except its name?

The “organization” or the “party” in Ocalanic ideas and practices remains the central vessel for the most conscious, loyal, and pure elements capable of establishing the political and moral society and restructuring the world on new fundamentals. It [the organization or the party] achieves for the groups awareness of themselves and serves as their mentor and guide because it understands and knows the people’s interests and its elemental or individual relationships at various levels and regulates “policy on the individual, societal, urban, local, regional, national, continental, and global levels”. It [the party or organization] can best time the stages and steps that need to be followed. It is also the one that declares at every stage the creative application of the ideology of “the leader”. In this sense, Ocalanist organizations

could not cut the umbilical cord with the experience of known authoritarian parties, whether nationalist or leftist.

1. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto for a Democratic Civilization, Sociology of Freedom*, Volume 3, translated from Turkish by Zakho Shyar, Mesopotamia Press, Germany, May 2011, pp. 28-548.
2. Ibid. pp. 548-549.
3. Abdullah Ocalan, *From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Republic*, Volume 2, 1st edition in 2002, pp. 17-18.
4. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto*, mentioned, p. 231.
5. Haytham Manna, *Civil Resistance, Elements of the Self-immunity of Societies*, 2nd Edition, the Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights, Geneva, 2015, pp. 164-165.
6. In Abul A'la Maududi, *Nazariat al Islam wa hadiuh (The Theory of Islam and Its Guidance)*, several editions.
7. Haytham Manna, The Modern Citizen, Al Jazeera Net 25/07/2007. It discusses different aspects of the subject in my book *Civil Resistance, Elements of the Self-immunity of Societies*, Chapter: For the Human Being, mentioned.
8. Murray Bookchin, *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1987.
9. Haytham Manna, Human Rights; in History, Philosophy and Law, Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights lectures, September 2009, Antalya.
10. Andrew Heywood, *Political Theory, An Introduction*, Third edition, Palgrave, New York 2004, pp. 184-219.
11. Haytham Manna, *Short Universal Encyclopedia of Human Rights*, Volume 2, Declaration of Women's Rights and Citizenship, (Al-Ahali, Urabe and ACHR publications) Damascus & Beirut, 2003, p. 509.
12. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2007, p. 272. French Edition: Hunt, Lynn: *L'invention des droits de l'homme. Histoire, psychologie et politique*. Genève: Editions Markus Haller, 2013. p. 88.
13. Lynn Hunt, op.cit.
14. Moncef Marzouki, "Eradication of Torture in the Arab World: the surface battles and in-depth battles", in *Physical and Mental Integrity: preparation and supervision by*

- Haytham Manna, in conjunction with Moncef Marzouki, Violette Daguerre, Issam Younis, the Arab Commission for Human Rights, Cairo, First Edition 1998. p. 35.
15. Abdullah Ocalan, *From Sumerian Monk State to Democratic Republic*, mentioned.
 16. The contradiction between ideology and practice is evident in a recent statement by Cemil Bayik, one of the founders of the PKK and co-president of KCK, where he says: "*Today we do not fight for the establishment of the state, because we believe that the state is against freedom, democracy, and the individual. Now we are working for the confederation, and we want to solve the Kurdish problem and the problems of other peoples in Turkey through this system. In the beginning, we adopted the nation's founding as a basis to solve the Kurdish problem, but we saw that the state will not solve our problems and will not ensure democracy and freedom to the community, so we left this phase and made a change in our strategy*". Regarding Iraq, he says: "*We are not against a Kurdish state in Iraqi-Kurdistan, they want to establish a Kurdish state and this is their right and we are ready to defend them whenever they were in any danger. But as for the Turkish Kurdistan, just as I mentioned, we do not want the establishment of a state*". Interview with Hustiar Qader. **We are simply dealing with the ideology of a confederation on demand.** <http://rudaw.net/arabic/kurdistan/27062015>
 17. Georges Burdeau, *l'Etat*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1970 and 2009, pp. 73 & 197.
 18. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Copmrendre le monde*, La découverte, Paris, 2006 and 2009, p. 89.
 19. Murray Bookchin, *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*, op.cit. 259
 20. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto*, mentioned, p. 604
 21. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto*, mentioned, pp. 604-616
 22. Abdullah Ocalan, *Manifesto*, mentioned, p. 604

DEMOCRATIC CIVIL RESISTANCE AND THE SYRIAN WARS

After the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, I embarked, during my night shift at the hospital, on researching dictatorial systems and patterns of democratic transition. This research did not need any statistics or figures, because we were living in the era of transitioning from the bureaucracy of the “socialist” state in several Eastern European countries and collapsed republics of the Soviet Union. The era of military dictatorships had caused a revulsion among the majority of the peoples in countries of Central and South America. South Africa was celebrating the end of apartheid, while elements of modern Yugoslavia were going through bloody civil wars just as were Rwanda and a number of African countries. The first and most important observation in this research concerns the effect of the rising and falling level of violence on the nature of transformation in the state and the society and its impact on the process of democratic construction. Ramadan’s cannon had not yet announced the end of Arabs’ fasting from democracy, and despite the death of the authoritarian image in the hearts and minds, the dead body of the past was heavily falling onto the present. But after 1996, as a group of human rights and civil

activists and writers, we decided to work on dismantling and re-reading the basic concepts of the modern state, sovereignty, dependency, development, legitimacy, renaissance, the rights of persons and peoples, cultural and moral reform, the second independence, and last but not least, deepening the concept of civil resistance. Perhaps one of the first conclusions that we started writing about was the role of violence in strengthening the global system and controlling the process of change in any country or region, especially in the peripheral countries which had turned into a hot and fierce battlefield in a time where “the Cold War” became the most prominent expression of the confrontation between the two poles: NATO and the Warsaw Coalition. We also realized there was a need to invent all forms of non-violent resistance, since the economy of violence is an integral part of the process of reducing the cost of human and material shift in the peripheral countries that are being internally and externally raped.

From Sidi Bouzid to Dara’a, everyone remembers the political conflict we have lived under in order to emphasize the absence of idols, the necessity for a peaceful civil movement, human dignity, and the economic rights of the groups that were marginalized by the corrupt dictatorship. And then there were the slogans: no to violence, no to sectarianism, no to outside intervention in the Syria since the beginning of the uprising.

The idea of peaceful civil struggle was still not mature in the collective consciousness because dictatorships had destroyed the common sense and the political and civil maturity to prevent it from spreading widely. Nevertheless, on several occasions, it seemed like we were fighting windmills, because entering the circuit of violence, as I said in the May/June 2011, would lead to results that couldn’t be calculated or scaled, and the ramifications of which couldn’t be compared with the losses caused by the authorities’ brutal repression of all forms of peaceful struggle.

Human rights investigation missions allowed me to follow up on the construction process of “the Emirate of the Taliban”

and the role of Pakistan’s intelligence in arming, supporting, and providing the financial and military coverage in cooperation with gulf countries. Until the events of September 11, 2001, we had much evidence that a number of western countries have not cut ties with what was known as the Arab Afghans. We have witnessed Hillary Clinton’s “We funded them 20 years ago” with our own eyes before the end of the last century. “Islamic jihad” cells operated almost normally in several European capitals. In Arab countries however, centres of violence and turmoil served as its [Islamic jihad cells] preferred areas of activity (Somalia and Yemen in particular). After the events of September 11, US President George W. Bush promoted al-Qaeda to the rank of “the main enemy” and Sheikh Osama bin Laden to the position of the first warrior against “freedom, democracy, and Western values”. That led to placing al-Qaeda, its internal problems, differences, and alliances under the microscope of the media and research centres and made it subject to the statements of senior western officials. I remember when I discussed a draft for a book by Abu Musab Al-Suri where he talks about “lone wolves” after he was kidnapped in 2005, but the Western Think Tank barely took into consideration what we were talking about. The same goes for our investigative mission to Iraq in 2003. I then wrote in my diary: “Occupation forces have created all objective conditions for devastation and chaos” and restored consideration and strength to the salafist jihadi movement on which it had declared war after September 11, 2001. This movement, and apart from our ideological and political struggle with it, will be the biggest factor in re-establishing consideration for violence as the main tool for political and ideological “struggle” by the ally and the enemy alike. Therefore, we need to build a peaceful civic culture of change, because all of our societies will fall, sooner or later, under the hammer of authoritarian violence and the anvil of takfiri jihadist violence.

Syrian Kurdish political parties were largely approving of this approach. Their struggle since 1957 was [purely] politically. The

first armament among Kurdish communities happened within the groups that were affiliated and working under the banner of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) at the time. We can say that the birth of Ahrar Al-Sham movement which preceded what became known as the Free Syrian Army in addition to Islamic jihadist factions becoming strongly involved in the battle and targeted many Kurdish areas, led to “legitimizing” the involvement of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), a member of the peaceful National Coordination Committee that follows an Ocalanic ideology. PYD resorted to Syrian Kurds with combat experience in the Qandil Mountains, most of whom had not crossed the Syrian borders for many years before 2011.

Fighters who came from Qandil Mountains played a key role in bringing the experience of the “KCK” into Syria through establishing The Movement for a Democratic Society TEV-DEM in Western Kurdistan, which later announced its charter on December 16, 2011 and which represents a reliable Syrian interpretation of the original text. They movement was built to be a larger civil and political body but with a declaration that is more Ocalanic than that of the Democratic Union Party’s political program itself. The transitional phase to establish the People’s Protection Units (YPG) was not difficult. A large number of the party’s activists and Kurdish students of Damascus University and Aleppo University trained since the early nineties in PKK camps in the Bekaa region, and a substantial number of them later joined the fighters in Qandil Mountains. [In Qandil], many of them assumed leadership positions within both the PKK and the KCK. Behrouz Erdal (the code name for Dr. Fahman Hussein, one of the people who were deprived of citizenship in Syria) assumed leadership of the Kurdish People’s Defense Forces (HPG) in Qandil from 2004 to 2009. Rustam Judy (Rustan Othman) was promoted to the membership of the Political Committee until his death in a Turkish air bombing of Qandil Mountains in 2011. Mahmoud Ramadan Muhammad (Khabbat Derek), founder of YPG’s first cells, spent 27 years

in “Kurdistan’s liberation battlefield” as stated in his obituary in early 2012. He also participated in the PKK’s 3rd Congress. Hussein Shawish also joined the PKK in the early nineties of the last century, and he occupied a key position in the training, rehabilitation, and military operations. Shawish was injured in one of the operations in Turkey and was arrested and sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment. He spent most this period in jail before being released and returning to Syria in 2011. In Syria, Shawish enrolled in the YPG till his death in a traffic accident while on “a revolutionary mission”. YPG stated that he followed the road of “comrades Ismail, Madani, and Mohiuddin”. Shawish died after giving a speech at the fourth anniversary of the official declaration of the YPG (July 19, 2016). Eldar Khalil and Redor Khalil were also active members in the mountains. The list is long, but I limited myself to those who informed the media of themselves or those of whom the YPG provided a biography.

PKK leader Jamil Bayek’s knowledge about Syrian society is no less than his knowledge about the rest of the region’s societies. The same goes for PKK’s Foreign Minister Reza Altun and others. As mentioned above, the armed conflict in Turkish Kurdistan for more than two decades were during the presence of the most important PKK leaders in Syria. The Syrian presence in Qandil Mountains is more important than the presence of people who come from other parts of Kurdistan, for many reasons related to upbringing, sharing a language, and sometimes family relations and other social, political, and cultural factors.

It was not easy for the Democratic Union Party, which has agreed with us in various forums and on many occasions that the militarization of the revolution in Syria would have devastating consequences on humans, infrastructure, and the future of democracy, to undergo the experience of armed struggle on Syrian territory. Perhaps the approaches of Ocalan and the PKK after 2001 regarding self-defence facilitated the birth of the People’s Protection Units (YPG). It is clear that early officials of these units were almost exclusively from Qandil Mountains.

The beginnings were troubled, difficult, and were often accompanied with negative results. Between January 7th and January 14 of 2012, Mahmoud Ramadan Muhammad (Khabbat Derek) along with two of his comrades entered Mr. Abdullah Badro's house and demanded that he give back a house that belonged to the party. He had maintained ownership of the house after leaving the party. A clash occurred and gunfire injured Khabbat and the homeowner severely. Three days later, three young men from one family (Ahmad, Nidal, and Ammar) the sons of Mr. Abdullah Badro, were killed, which prompted more than a hundred Kurdish intellectuals and politicians in addition to several human rights organizations to condemn this crime and consider it the beginning of practices that may have dire consequences in the predominantly Kurdish areas. The importance of this incident stems from the fact that "Khabbat Derek" had returned from Qandil after 27 years of fighting against Turkish authorities and that he had trained and been present within an environment of strict behavioural regulations. All of that created a state of fear of the YPG's project, and although its fighters who come from Qandil are the most experienced and seasoned in fighting, their liberation from what Abdullah Ocalan himself once called "excessive violence and banditism" was questionable. Several letters were sent to Qandil after this incident, and internal discussions were held to turn the page of January 2012 and to try make a new start by defining the tasks and adopting self-review, and by forming a better understanding of the special situation in Syria. The incident was followed by the first declaration of the People's Protection Units (YPG). The statement of the headquarters said: "The People's Protection Units is a national force and a defensive organisation that stands at the same distance from all political organizations and the two councils (meaning: The People's Council of West Kurdistan and the Kurdish National Council), and does not interfere with internal political affairs. Its core mission is to protect the national interests of the Kurdish people." In this tone, which is Kurdish in identity and mission, the YPG began its official activity. But the

development of the situation gave it a less nationalistic and more ideological flavour.

There is no doubt that the reason behind the sympathy and response that the People's Protection Units received was the sacrifices they made against the targeting of Kurdish areas by several takfiri groups, rather than their ideological approach. Apoci groups who came from Qandil attempted early on to push The Movement for a Democratic Society TEV-DEM, as a large public alliance, to take the lead. This was followed by considering the official announcement of the birth of the People's Protection Units (YPG) (July 19, 2012) as the official date for the start of the revolution, as if prior to this date political and civil struggle was nothing but a prelude to the birth of an armed body that is able to achieve the objectives of the Kurdish people and the people of the rest region. This event was a turning point in the relationship between Apoci elements themselves and not just the relationship between "Apocis" and the rest of the Syrian and Kurdish parties. On the ground, as it controlled several areas, the YPG in cooperate with TEV-DEM began to apply what it considered to be the Ocalanic ideology for liberation, which resulted in putting all non-Ocalanic forces and expressions in confrontation with it. This was, firstly, because it considered the YPG and the Assayish (police) as the only legal armed force in the areas it controlled, and secondly, because in reality these units were removed from interfering with political affairs. In fact, these units were an armed ideological organisation that reminds us of ideological armies in ideological states. YPG also considered itself as the real interpreter of the thoughts and program of "the leader" Ocalan.

The positive explanation of some of PYD's leaders discusses a work plan in which the PYD focuses more on relationships with Syrian, regional, and international forces, while TEV-DEM officials focus on establishing self-administration as per the Ocalanic ideology within predominantly Kurdish areas which became known as cantons. Another class of observers thinks that

fighters who came from Qandil took control of things and turned the PYD into a façade that is necessary for foreign affairs.

On the field experience level, and starting from the fact that we are fully aware that what is happening is more accurately described as an interim administration for a special situation, it is necessary to say that the real experiment was unable to establish the idea of promoting participatory democracy in the institutional, civil, and military construction. It [the experiment] prevented the ruling of chaos and violence in its regions of control and largely succeeded in facilitating services, providing basic rights for the components of the region... These results however will reach a limit, they will lead to the establishment of an authoritarian power in Rojava instead of a state of societal democracy.

I'm not someone to put myself on a pedestal and give lessons to others, but there are general indicators that place daily practices either within or outside of a central principle: It is not possible to do everything or to search for excuses to do nothing, but it is important for attitudes and practices to be a stepping stone for progress towards what we think is best.

The casualties in peaceful demonstrations, the arrest of political opponents to the self-administration project, the confiscation of public or private properties, the ideological changes in school programs that introduced Ocalanism in the place of Baathism, the issuing of laws that do not differ in their logic of issuance or jurisdictions from those of the old regime (law of political parties and associations, absentees and migrants funds management law, compulsory military service, etc.), abuses in places of detention, and deportation which was a subject of protest by human rights organizations ... these violations are not a destiny imposed by an exceptional case, and it is not possible to consider a justification or explanation to be convincing, and having a few critical voices is not enough. Accountability and putting a stop to the violations were never pursued except when the problem became a major issue.

There is no doubt that the civil administration anaemia, the lack of experienced individuals, and the migration of qualifications and talents played a role in that. Critic's voices met a response in some cases (such as the issue of the recruitment of child soldiers). And sometimes, there was nothing convincing in the continuation of certain practices. For example, I spoke out about the issue of environmental pollution caused by the random use of oil wells (due to the primitive burners "Harrakat"), especially that whom I spoke with considered social ecology to be at the heart of their struggle program. The answer I heard didn't convince me. I discussed the topic again, and the answer was that this would create a bigger problem with the wells' investors! When demanding the release of political detainees, the answer was that they have participated in an unlicensed gathering! As if the person I was speaking to had not heard that more than ninety countries around the world consider protest and sit-ins a natural right, and that countries that require the approval of authorities to protest peacefully are called authoritarian states.

When I arrived in Qamishli, we entered a building that belongs to partisan organisations, but originally it belonged to the Syrian Public Transport department. Here, my memory went back fifty years to the day when a section of the "Nafe'a" (a facility belonging to the Ministry of Transport) was seized by Al-Baath Party and the National Guard. That day, the explanation they provided was that there is no difference between the leading party, the people, and the public sector. One of the lawyers objected that day, saying: *"You cannot dissolve the concept of public in favour of what one party in the society considers as public. Because this party remains private whether it was a political party, a front, a civil organization, or an armed organisation."* No one listened to what the lawyer said, and we had to wait decades for the democratic opposition to add to its program the separation of the party from the state and to give back all of the public facilities confiscated by the party to the public sector.

In short, old forms of authoritarian practices are still strong, and we are still far away from what Ocalan himself calls “politics in the face of authority”. Ocalan considers the accumulation of power as important and dangerous as the accumulation of capital.

BUILDING A CIVIL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

In an internal message from prison, months before the announcement of the self-administration in Rojava, Abdullah Ocalan commanded his comrades in Syria to form “a strong Syrian organization” and not a Kurdish one. One of the PYD leaders told me that “Comrade Apo’s” approaches correspond with my point of view that the era of the nation-state has become past the region’s peoples, and that common struggle alone would allow Syria, with all its components, to become a role model for building a democratic civilization and would prevent authoritarian and obscure forces from monopolizing it. Before this message, we sought to overcome organizational retreat in the National Coordination Body towards a broader and more effective and dynamic organizational structure, and for a cultural renaissance that rises to the level of the sacrifices made by Syrians. The Executive Bureau [at the National Coordination Committee] attempted to expand the loop by calling for the National Salvation Conference in Damascus on September 24, 2012, but the Syrian authorities responded to this initiative by arresting the strugglers: Abdul-Aziz Al-Khair and Iyyas Ayyash (who were arriving with us in Damascus Airport returning from Beijing after an official visit) along with Maher Tahhan who accompanied them in the airport. So the initiative failed. We didn’t want to stop there, so we organized in Geneva on January 29-30, 2013, a conference of more than two hundred activists from inside and outside the country “for a democratic Syrian and a civil state”. We tried to set up the idea of a major democratic civil alliance capable of emphasizing expressions of political struggle and pushing forward the political solution as per

the Geneva communiqué of June 30, 2012. The race between democrats and takfiri jihadist was at its peak. And the regional forces, as well as some international forces, supported the latter financially and militarily overtly or covertly, while democrats suffered a crippling obstruction on all levels (67 opposition figures were banned from attending the Geneva Convention by a direct intervention from French authorities, a number of participants were pursued and arrested for different periods and an arrest warrant was issued against Salih Muslim, and finally, lawyer Raja’a Al-Nasser was kidnapped in Baramkeh neighbourhood in Damascus in November 2013 and has not yet been released). The PYD along with a number of political opposition groups engaged in the set of actions that we undertook for the purpose of establishing a broad democratic front. It [PYD] was also, along with a number of Kurdish forces and figures, among the first to sign the Cairo Conference’s documents (June 9-10, 2015), including the National Charter which approved the democracy and secularism of the state and the non-central democracy. The PYD also worked with “Qamh Movement” and a number of political and civil organizations in order to build an organizational structure that combines the Syrian democrats, especially after the Derek conference in December 2015 and the birth of the Syrian Democratic Council. However, Turkish pressure prevented the party from being present in the Riyadh conference for the Syrian opposition. Turkey was also the cause behind the US veto over the participation of any Kurds from outside the Syrian National Coalition in the third Geneva talks. Our Movement did everything possible to convince the co-sponsoring countries (the Russian Federation and the United States) of the necessity of the participation of all Kurdish parties, without excluding anyone. But, the US insisted on postponing this participation at the same time it was stepping up its military alliance with the Syrian Democratic Forces. This exclusion was one of many factors that strengthened the perspective of the ideological wing that believes that regional and international centres of power will not allow the Kurds to obtain their role and place in the process of building

a Syria's future. Therefore, they have nothing but to declare the "federation" they are fighting for unilaterally, and that, in the opinion of those who follow this trend, is the precise application of Ocalan's instructions. This matter was a blow to the project of the Syrian Democratic Council and made the military progress of the forces, willingly or not, occur on account of the democratic political interaction and partnership on the level of all of Syria and not just a part of it. There is no doubt that such a topic needs to be the subject of extensive, independent research, because it is difficult to draw a reliable map of it under the smoke of war on terror, the complexity of the international intervention, the friendships and hostilities with the internal clashes of multiple fronts, the political paralysis, and the obsession with the military solution that Syria is experiencing today.

FROM THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN TO FEMINISM

One of the ironies of the spectacular Western society is the discovery of the role of Kurdish women in the moments of combat between the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), the People's Protection Units (YPG), and ISIS. This is where the media's curiosity burst to learn about the female Kurdish fighters "who announced that the YPJ and the Syrian Democratic Forces are an integral part of the international coalition against terrorism". "Every Western TV station manager, or even Russian, has requested a report about the female Kurdish fighters. A scene from Darfur was repeating itself when Bernard-Henri Levy stood at the top of a tank with children fighters [fighting] for the liberation of Darfur. Many reports talked about female children fighters such as Mizguin Emrally and Hevedar Mohammed, ages 14 and 12, while there was never news about the dozens of Kurdish women's organizations or the Star Union of Women which is the most important non-governmental feminist organization in Syria". That was something a French writer and journalist who specializes in Middle Eastern affairs once told me.

Where did these women come from? What is the role of the PKK in the social and civil conflict for women's liberation, and

what were the ideological and practical stances that organizations of Ocalanic reference took regarding the cause of women?

Like all Marxist-Leninist organizations in the sixties and the seventies of the twentieth century, despite the PKK's adoption of women's liberation and gender equality causes, women's first steps in the party were stumbles. Kesire Yildirim was the name that we came to know from Ankara's Marxist circles. Kesire later married Apo but she did not attend the founding conference despite having been in a leadership role for about ten years before separating from her husband and the party. At the party's founding conference, there was only one woman, Sakine Cansiz, who was arrested a year after the conference and spent twelve years in prison in Diyarbakir where she experienced the worst forms of torture. After being released in 1991, she went to the PKK's training camps in the Bekaa region and attended the party's forth congress in the same year. Finally, she left to France where she obtained a political asylum in 1998 and continued her struggle in Europe for the Kurdish case and the PKK until her assassination in Paris along with two female party activists (Leyla Soylemez and Fidan Dogan) on the night of January 9, 2013. The assassination took place days after the three women met French President Francois Holland. Although Sakine did not live in Qandil Mountains, she abided by its rules. When I asked a Kurdish union leader in France, he described her as: "Straight-forward, self-confident, simple in her elegance, does not drink coffee or smoke, does not drink alcohol, has no husband or a personal life, wakes up at five in the morning to exercise."

She was the first one to enrol [in the party] not only among committed women conformist Marxists or party members' relatives, but also among those escaping social oppression and the tight restrictions of tradition (1). The number of women soon escalated significantly. More than one study has indicated that the death toll among women reached 1% in 1987 (twenty out of 2,000). Also in 1987, the Union of Patriotic Women of Kurdistan (YJWK) was established.

In 1990-93, popular uprisings "Serhildan" in Turkish Kurdistan created new dynamics and played, without a doubt, the biggest role in involving Kurdish women in political, civil, and military activity. This was reflected in the licensed democratic party, HEP, of Kurdish majority, and the success of activist Leyla Zana in the parliamentary elections in 1991 to become the first Kurdish woman to enter the Turkish parliament in 1991. This was also reflected in the development of more than ten organizations for Kurdish women in Diyarbakir alone, and in the enrolment of a large number of women in guerrilla warfare.

In 1992, a collection of Ocalan's writings entitled *The Issue of Woman and Family* was printed secretly in Istanbul. In this collection, Ocalan compared the oppression of women in Kurdish society to the national persecution against Kurds. A statement released in April 1992 by the party's military wing ARGK talked about female Special Forces comprised of 400 women. In 1995, the PKK congress decided that fighters must be at least 16 years old and approved military service for women. According to James Ciment's information, the number of female fighters reached 10% (2).

A year later, in 1996, suicide bombings started taking place in the classical way: by leaving a will or a letter or more, and by carrying out a combat order in a place where the target is not purely a military one. Of the total twenty suicide bombings, female fighter's carried out 11 operations (3). That [number] sparked in-depth debates, inside and outside the party, about these operations and their legitimacy on one hand, and about the high participation of females on the other hand. This subject was tackled during important discussions of the progressive Kurdish and Turkish political and civil movement as well as within the Kurdish Diaspora, which role in finance and media, as well as its "outside vision" of the struggle movement in Kurdistan, was escalating. The involvement of the women of the Kurdish Diaspora in progressive and feminist movements played a major role in reflecting a different image of the Kurdish cause and

the Kurdish woman. The same way they managed to enter the Turkish and Iraqi Parliament, Kurdish women also succeeded in entering the European Parliament and legislative bodies in a number of European countries (4).

These practices in addition to many books and statements issued by the women who enrolled in the mountain and guerrilla warfare, created a general state of disorder, not only in society, but also within Kurdish women's organizations inside and outside of the party's influence zones. According to more than one testimony, the process of re-evaluation and criticism began before Ocalan's pleas took place, which created suitable grounds for Ocalanic thoughts which were affected by the international feminist movement in matters concerning the task of building a post-patriarchal society and the main role of women, not only in the political and military struggle, but also in drastically changing society.

The party's leadership did not accept criticism, and believed that such criticism was in favour of the security and military campaign against the party's image and it pointed out isolated practices that were being addressed. This was in spite of the fact that many of the female voices that sympathized with the party in Diyarbakir and other cities demanded a fundamental revision of the party's policy. The idea that women's rights will only be properly defended by women themselves became deeply-rooted among the party's female fighters. As Kariane Westrheim, the Norwegian researcher once said: *"Even if the PKK had gender issues on the agenda, and also female co-founders, women have struggled hard to get their voices heard and to develop their own organizational structures... In many ways, the organization of women in the PKK became a movement within the movement."* (5)

Ocalan's pleas had a significant impact on the radical transformation that had struck the idea of the party and its ideology in addition to redefining the organization as a social movement that adopts a democratic self-administration at the local level and a new economic, environmental (ecological), and

feminist pattern in the face of the prevailing "global order". Specifically in the women's cause, Ocalan's ideas responded to the great transformations experienced by Kurdish women through their involvement in various forms of struggle, especially in Turkey's Kurdistan struggle and later in Syria. Ocalan's criticism had a strong impact on curbing the acts of treason within the organization and convicting the critical voices outside of it.

Ocalan blames *"gangs within our organization and open banditry, [which] arranged needless, haphazard operations, sending young people to their death in droves"*, Ocalan also repeatedly admits his own past errors. *"The intensity of the war was caused by the widespread petty-bourgeois mentality, a certain peasant stupidity and the political and military leadership's irresponsibility and incapability"*. *"It has become clear that our theory program and praxis of the 1970s produced nothing but futile separation and violence and worse, that the nationalism we should have to opposed infected all of us"* (6).

[These] Ocalanic writings opened a new horizon to address the issue of women. Lectures of Mahsum Academy/Mahsum Korkmaz about the "New Human" no longer represented any ideological reference for the academy's most notable teachers. This time, the central role of women stemmed from contemporary women's movements and ideas. With the exception of behavioural rituals which the pleas avoid completely, we are facing a speech that considers women's liberation a requirement and a duty for class liberation, national liberation, and for democracy:

"Woman's freedom will play a stabilizing and equalising role in forming the new civilisation and she will take her place under respectable, free and equal conditions. To achieve this, the necessary theoretical, programmatic, organisational and implementation work must be done. The reality of woman is a more concrete and analysable phenomenon than concepts such as "proletariat" and "oppressed nation". The extent to which society can be thoroughly transformed is determined by the extent of the transformation attained by women. Similarly, the level of woman's freedom and equality determines the freedom

and equality of all sections of society. Thus, democratisation of woman is decisive for the permanent establishment of democracy and secularism. For a democratic nation, woman's freedom is of great importance too, as liberated woman constitutes liberated society. Liberated society in turn constitutes democratic nation. Moreover, the need to reverse the role of man is of revolutionary importance." (7)

One no longer needs to look into the status of women in the modern Kurdish history. Recalling names of women like Adela Khanum of Halabja, Mayan Khatun the princess of Yazidis from 1913 to 1957, Margaret the first fighter in the Iraqi Peshmerga, and other women who played an important role in public life, emphasizes women's profound participation and role. There were thousands of female militants in political and civic movements in addition to hundreds of women who enrolled in the mountains. A large female presence in battle fronts led to us reading hundreds of testimonies by women who considered struggling for women's freedom and rights to be essential for obtaining the rights of the Kurdish people. Berivan Atin says she joined the movement because she wanted to fight against the criminals who attacked and killed a lot of us, but that she also wanted liberation from patriarchy. "In Yazidi society, women are housebound and are considered useful only to give birth and do domestic work" (8). Nuve Rashat says she joined them specifically "*because the struggle for the freedom of Kurdistan is linked to their struggle for the liberation of women*". She says: "*We, as women, decide our own fate, and we do not allow men to control our choices. We decide how we learn and organize ourselves*" (9). One former female prisoner in Turkish prisons says: "*We were escaping poverty, deadly restrictions of tradition and domestic violence, even against the most educated like myself (an engineer), and the Turkish oppression that does not recognize my existence as a Kurdish woman. Today I feel like we are at the heart of the women's liberation movement in the Middle East, and not just in Diyarbakir*". Many who follow Sarah Siqueira de Miranda share her point of view that the focus of the KCK on the women's revolution is one of the three key

factors of the success of the Ocalanic experience in occupying a strong place within Kurdish society (the nature of the supra-tribal resistance, the form and the configuration of the party, and the struggle for women's revolution) (10).

On the eve of the Cairo conference for the Syrian opposition, one of the commanding women told me something very meaningful: "*We must learn from the Arab Spring. In Tunisia, if it wasn't for the presence of women, pre-revolutionary achievements of women would not have been maintained, but no progress was achieved. In Egypt, the situation was worse, because women participated strongly but they got nothing. In Syria, jihadist violence and the Islamization of military operations was a strong blow to the involvement of women in peaceful demonstrations and protest... the aggression against Kurds, especially women and children, was our chance as Kurdish women to fight for women's rights as well.*"

The quota system has been used within party leaderships for more than a decade. Forty percent of leadership positions were assumed by women in the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), therefore all organisations of Ocalanic reference adopted the principle of co-presidency (woman and man). This concept became almost normal despite the difficulties in the beginning, to the point where no one discussed it while establishing the Syrian Democratic Council despite the large presence of non-Ocalanic organisations.

Aliza Marcus considers that "understanding the depth of the feminist movement within the ranks of Kurdish women requires looking closer to the BDP than to the PKK". Since its establishment in 2008, the BDP used the principle of the 40% quota in leadership positions and civil and women's rights activists won the lion's share. There is no doubt that the network of feminist civil rights activists in Turkey's Kurdistan played a central and important role in spreading a new culture of a new type of relation between women and men. And that direct communication with the vast society provides great opportunities to destabilize its traditional foundations. This is especially since the Qandil camps had set strict rules of conduct (banning sexual

relations, smoking, alcohol, enforcing uniforms ...) which created an element of reassurance for the region's conservative families that still have their own special definition of family and women's honour, whereas a significant portion of female urban activists consider these strict rules to be constraints by the party that replaced family and social constraints.

Currently in the Turkish Parliament, there are 59 male and female members in the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the third largest political force in the country, of which 23 [members] are women (39%). The list includes the most important elements in Turkey regardless of gender: Armenian (1), Syriac (1), Arab (1), Yazidi (2), Alawite (4), four members from different Muslim backgrounds, and about 40 Kurds and Turks, of whom of course are representatives from the socialist group, according to my friend and parliament member, Nazmi Gur.

In Syria, the late establishment of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in 2003 spared the party the various phases experienced by the PKK, although a number of its leaders had joined Qandil long before the establishment of the party. However, their central struggle was directed towards the north rather than towards Syrian territories. Since its initiation, the party emphasized the central role of women's organizations (this was also the case with left-wing Kurdish parties in Syria). The PYD and TEV-DEM played a major role in the consolidation of this role within democratic self-administration zones after 2011. In general, since the beginning of the popular civil uprising, women's participation played an important role in the widespread involvement of women in peaceful demonstrations and civil resistance. It was the force behind the formation of women's Star Union, the largest non-governmental feminist organization in Syria. Ocalanic expressions reflected this participation in all forms of activism and administration by adhering to the importance of a female leadership quota and the principle of co-presidency, as well as the need to form the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) as a military structure independent of the People's Protection Units (YPG).

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REFLECTIONS ON THE KURDISH CAUSE

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When discussing the Kurdish cause, two approaches prevail:

The first one is “Eastern” and represents the viewpoint of political regimes that are directly concerned in the Kurdish cause, namely: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In these states, whatever the degree of recognition of the cultural and political rights of people, the Kurdish issue remains considered a “ticking bomb that serves the major countries or the neighbouring countries”. And according to this conviction, each state enjoys presenting the Kurdish cause to others, but at the same time, takes liberty in repressing Kurds on its land.

The second one is “Western” which views this cause from the perspective of NATO's interests. So today, for example, it makes the sovereignty and integrity of Turkish territories a subject of reverence and taboo since this matter relates to the eastern

borders of NATO. This discourse continues in its own logic by transferring the sense of guilt towards the Kurdish people onto the local regimes, as per momentary alliances and centres of interest, making the cause recede into a containment covered by “humanitarian” missions rather than treating it as a cause worthy of defence.

Between these two approaches, there is a third opinion that is trying to present itself, which is the opinion of the human rights activists who are involved in the region and its people. Here are the basic ideas of this opinion:

The Kurdish tragedy practically began with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923 by the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on one hand, and Turkey on the other hand. This treaty presented the document of the division of Kurdistan, annexing it to four countries. The absence of Kurds, Arabs, and Armenians from the meeting and agreement of Lausanne is worth noting.

While a report on Kurds was being discussed by the League of Nations in September 1925 in Geneva, the Turkish Army violently suppressed the Piran revolt for the independence of Turkish Kurdistan (upon which foreigners were prevented from entering the region for forty years). Similarly in the same period, the British Army suppressed the second revolt led by Mahmud Barzanji for the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan.

In 1932, while announcing Iraq as a member of the League of Nations, the British army “restored order” to the Kurdistan region?

On July 8th, 1937, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq signed the Treaty of Saadabad, which was the first joint regional and governmental document against the Kurds. The articles of this treaty stated the cooperation against whatever that threatens the possibility to change the existing institutions or borders, in addition to every struggle, armed or unarmed, that works for this goal.

In 1945, the British Air Forces bombed Iraqi Kurdistan to force the Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani to withdraw his troops to Iranian Kurdistan.

In Iranian Kurdistan, the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was announced on January 22nd, 1946 during a large popular celebration. Qazi Muhammad was unanimously elected as president of the first Kurdish republic in history. However, the joy was not complete. The Iranian forces occupied Kurdistan and eliminated the emerging republic and executed its leaders 11 months after its birth. Thus, this experiment, characterized by tolerance between the national and the democratic option, was eliminated in its cradle.

On February 23rd, 1955, the governments of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan founded the Baghdad Pact. Britain joined the pact later on April 4th, 1955. Again, the coordination between these governments targeted the ambitions of the Kurdish people and the peoples of the region.

From 1922 to 1958, England directly suppressed all Kurdish uprisings in Iraq, the country of oil interests belonging to the United Kingdom. It is no coincidence that the first constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people came after the establishment of the Republic on July 14th, 1958 following the Iraqi Free Officers Movement. Article III of the interim constitution issued in July 27th, 1958 stated that the Iraqi society is founded upon full cooperation between all citizens and respect for their rights and freedoms; Arabs and Kurds should work hand-in-hand to build Iraq, and the constitution guarantees national rights within the framework of the Iraqi entity.

The dispute between President Abd al-Karim Qasim and Mr. Mustafa Barzani led to the longest uprising in modern Kurdish history in Iraqi Kurdistan. The absence of political stability in the capital Baghdad fuelled the chauvinistic positions against the Kurds in the name of national unity and the unity of Iraqi soil, etc., until the March 11 agreement which, despite its weaknesses, acknowledged the cultural and political rights of the Kurdish

people. In spite of the conflict with the government in Baghdad, several gains were retained until the unilateral birth of the federal government over two-thirds of the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan in 1992.

As can be noted by any observer, the Kurdish people have previously paid a high price for five basic disadvantages:

1. Kurdistan's oil wealth, which undoubtedly pushed the top colonial power in the region (England) to engage in a direct conflict with the Kurds.
2. The strategic choices of the government of Ankara and its membership in NATO (at least 15 million out of 25 million Kurds in the world, according to statistics, live in Turkish Kurdistan. However, we see human rights organizations forbidding use of the term "Southeast Turkey" and considering the term "Turkish Kurdistan" prohibited!).
3. Unconditional Western support for the Shah of Iran.
4. Regional conflicts for which the Kurdish people often paid the price (Syria supported the PKK in Turkey while Syrian authorities suppressed a million and a half Kurds on its territories. Iraq supported Iranian Kurds and Iran played the Barzani card in order to get border concessions from Iraq, and so on).
5. The shape of Kurdish society. With the exception of Mahabad and the Kurdish cultural movement in Turkey, the [Kurdish] struggle gave priority to the countryside over the city, along with the fatal symptoms of the ailment of the traditional Kurdish society: the tribe. Kendal Nezan, director of the Kurdish Institute in Paris, says: "Tribe appears to us as the main obstacle for the birth of a national consciousness, and even the power of religion, which dominates the Kurdish people, is only a decoration. This phenomenon is responsible, in our opinion, to a large extent for most of the failed uprisings

and revolts that struggled to build an independent and united Kurdish state, and which erupted in Kurdistan since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Treason in the centre of the alliances was the main reason behind its fail, in addition to divisions within the Kurdish front, and the tribal ideology." (Citation: *The Kurds and Kurdistan*, under the supervision of Gerard Chaliand, in French, Maspero, 1978, p. 40). Today, the conflict between Kurds in the self-administration regions gives the best example of the above.

There are acts for show that attempt to blind the neutral observer each time the Kurdish cause is raised in the Middle East, [like]: Iran, which provides aid to its Kurdish refugee guests who are the victims of the Iraqi and Turkish governments, and declares its solidarity with the Muslim Kurdish people; the Iraqi government which includes Kurds in its official delegations whenever necessary; Ankara's government which opens the door to human rights observers during trials against Kurds; the Syrian government which presents Syria's Grand Mufti (of Kurdish background) as an example of the successful integration of the Kurds into the Syrian society; and the government of Iraqi Kurdistan which organizes visits, under its supervision, to present its own point of view.

What do they want to hide behind this facade?

What about the fact that the term "Kurdistan self-administration" in Iran is considered *takfir* (blaspheme)? And the fact that the Syrian authorities still ban Kurdish names and Kurdish schools until this day? And that Turkey rejects the political, cultural, and civil rights of the Kurdish people? And that Iraq and its government, which acknowledged some rights for the Kurdish people, did not hesitate to commit several massacres in Halabja and Anfal and displace a large Kurdish population...

The grave situation in Iraqi Kurdistan will only make matters worse. Hundreds of Kurdish civilians were killed in the conflict

between the militias and the domination policy they have been using for six months.

The various statements of Mr. Jalal Talabani that mitigate the existence of a Kurdish problem in other parts of Kurdistan, provide evidence of the transitional nature of the current phase: between an outdated leadership and young leadership under formation. The Kurdish issue is no longer [the same as] in 1923 or in 1945. The Kurdish political and cultural consciousness is making its way through icons of the future. The figure of Leyla Zana, and not the figure of the Aga, is the one that represents the Kurdish cause day after day. This is strengthened by several factors, including: the large presence of Kurdish intellectuals outside traditional frames, the presence of a large community in the Diaspora that represents Kurdistan and provides a cultural voice and material support, and the growing presence of urban people in the political movement and the Kurdish civil, cultural, and human rights associations.

Some express pessimism about the possibility for Kurds to obtain their rights. But for human rights activists, the first article of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights cannot exclude the Kurdish people:

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

We are approaching a moment where the status quo is becoming a disaster for the Kurds and all the people of the region. And if the task of human rights activists also lies in prevention, then it is also our duty to encourage all forms of creative thinking to come up with future solutions for cooperation between the people and citizens of the region, whether in the context of a self-government, federal government, or other, in a manner that guarantees respect for the Kurdish people's rights.

It is necessary today before tomorrow, to abandon the repression and policy of domination applied by the governments of the region towards the Kurdish people and minorities, in order

to allow for mutual recognition among the people of the region in a framework of respect for human and peoples' rights above the sovereignty of the borders that make up an arbitrary colonial legacy.

We must learn, as peoples and governments, from the lesson of the fall of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in order to re-examine the future and accept the idea of a Kurdish people with its own sovereignty. This is the challenge addressed to all democrats and human rights defenders in the region, before the anti-democratic forces paint our future in another way, and in a new bloodbath.

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THE LEGAL STRUCTURE OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATION

Abdullah Ocalan

The law is the art of ruling with an obscene amount of legal rules that are based on the concept of justice as a formality

The democratic law is a law that is based on diversity, and more importantly, it rarely resorts to legal procedures, and is characterized by a simple uncomplicated structure. And the ruling nation-state is the most common form of the state that shapes legal procedures throughout history. This is due to its involvement in every detail in the society in general, and to its pursuit to eliminate the moral and political society in particular. Ancient societies sought to resolve a large portion of their issues through moral and political actions and measures, whereas the capitalist modernity of our era strives to prop up its legitimacy entirely against a legal background, and its exaggerated intervention in society's affairs and exploitation of it led to its use of the complex tool that is the law, which makes justice a formality.

The law is the art of ruling with an obscene amount of legal rules that are based on the concept of justice as a formality to legitimize forms of arbitrary injustice which were produced by capitalism within the historical context, rather than an integration of laws that regulate the rights and duties of the individual and the society, as commonly promoted. Ruling by laws rather than moral and political principles is mainly specific to the capitalist modernity. Because the bourgeoisie that denies morality and politics resorts to the rule of the law to protect itself with maximum force. This means that the law is a deadly weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. With this weapon, it defends itself in the face of the old moral and political system on one side, and against the working people who are suffering at the bottom on the other. The nation-state draws its strength from the sovereignty of the law that's prepared by one side, meaning that the law is like

Quranic verses by the God of the nation-state, which prefers to rule and control the society by those verses.

For this particular reason, the democratic nation is vigilant when it comes to the law, particularly concerning constitutional law. The democratic nation is a moral and political nation, rather than a nation of the law. The need for the law there appears when interacting with nation-states in order to coexist harmoniously with each other under a common political ceiling. And then, the distinction between national laws and the local administration laws will gain a remarkable importance. The law of the nation-state, which uses one-sided central bureaucratic interests as a foundation, accepts and embraces the local administration laws as a necessity, especially when constantly faced by the resistance of local, democratic, cultural groups. So, federalist and federal law systems are valid in many countries around the world, especially in the United States and the European Union. This means that the systems that balance the interests of the local peoples against the central bureaucracy and the monopolistic capitalism are growing further.

Kurdistan and the Kurds did not acquire their own rights due to being exposed to extermination and a denial of their existence, they did however possess both their traditional and written rights within the Ottoman system. Although there was an official recognition of Kurdistan and the Kurdish identity, and even of the law of the Kurdish self-administration during the national liberation period, their [Kurd's] identity was denied. And after 1925, they were erased from the pages of history using methods of dissolution, conspiracy, and coup. Despite the PKK's confirmation of the Kurdish existence, it was yet to obtain an official and legal recognition of the Kurds. This is why the KCK will essentially work on extracting a legal recognition of the Kurdish existence from nation-states, or else, if the KCK fails to do so, the Kurdish people will focus on formulating their own semi-independence law unilaterally. And the KCK will give priority to finding a place for itself within national constitutions.

And its efforts, which are framed by this priority, will be channelled to include its own democratic semi-independence within democratic, national constitutions. Many of the member states of the European Union which the Turkish Republic is seeking to join have procedures for that. What is basically meant by a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue is the national, democratic, constitutional agreement that is based on a state of democratic semi-independence. What was achieved in Iraq, and what is being intensely debated in Turkey and Kurdistan, is basically the solution in this case. If the KCK fails to achieve a national, democratic, constitutional solution characterized by semi-democratic independence based on compatibility and agreement, it will move on to the method of secondary importance, namely, the unilateral “semi-independent, democratic administration”. This “semi-independent, democratic administration in Kurdistan” is not the same as the valid law in the nation-state, but rather an administration of the democratic modernism of local and regional prospects.

<http://www.pkkonline.com/arabic/index.php?sys=article&artID=951>

A PRISON LETTER FROM ABDULLAH OCALAN IN MAY 2011

Today, we are facing a new situation! You can choose the following sentence as a headline in the press: Turkey, America, and NATO's Gladio, have reached an agreement. There is a comprehensive plan on the agenda to exterminate and purge the Kurds. In exchange for Turkish support, the Turkish State will be given the task of cutting off Kurdish heads. This subject was agreed upon with the United States. This agreement is based on the extermination of Kurds. As you have seen, Erdogan had an urgent meeting with the US Ambassador on a helicopter landing pad and gave him the instructions. The issue is this particular policy. All of this confirms that the United States and Turkey

have agreed with each other. Previously, there was no complete agreement between the United States and Turkey over the Middle East, they could not reach an agreement [before] because of the Kurdish issue. There were some contradictions with the details because of the Kurdish issue, but in our present day, these contradictions have been eliminated as well. The current agreement is similar to the agreement which occurred between Bush and Erdogan on November 5th, 2007. In exchange for Turkish support for US policies in the region, Turkey will be in charge of the task of cutting off Kurdish heads represented by the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK). This is the agreement between them! This subject should be presented as such to the public opinion and to all intellectuals. This is a new situation, the Kurds must discuss this topic for months. An agreement was reached between Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, they have now established a common policy. The issue of bin Laden is also associated with these policies. The death of al-Qaeda leader, bin Laden, is a sophistry. America says: “We have had bin Laden under our surveillance for several years”. This is true. In fact, they were able to disable bin Laden's influence by putting him under surveillance for many years. And in the end, they produced a scene showing us the armed clash during which they killed bin Laden. The truth of the matter is that the countries that supported bin Laden were Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. These countries were behind bin Laden. They drove him in the direction of their goals and they controlled him. The US knew about this. When bin Laden began creating trouble for these countries, they sold him out too, and turned him into a target for the US.

There are new policies for America in the Middle East. Turkey sees that too. They will oust Bashar al-Assad, he cannot resist more than this. They will either make him surrender, or he will resist as Gaddafi did. There is a possibility that he will resist, but eventually he will be overthrown. They sold out Libya. But as for the falling of Syria, Turkey is moving slowly to prolong the falling situation. Turkey does not want to do that simultaneously. At the same time,

Iran's turn will come too. Iran might be late [to fall] and might resist, but eventually, it will also be overthrown. They will try to prolong that phase in Iran but its time will also come. In the past, there was a difference between America and the European Union regarding the policies they followed in the Middle East. There were some small contradictions and disagreements, something similar to the emptiness between the scissors' blades. But now this gap has been filled too, they are operating together at this stage. In order to save itself and continue in power, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has completely surrendered to this American policy, as if it wrapped its arms around the legs of the US. For this reason, [the US] is selling the Kurds the way it sold Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Libya, and will sell Iran as well. Bashar al-Assad is angry at Turkey for this reason, is he not? This was reflected in the media too. It is clear that they are angry. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) was able to secure material interests through its policies towards Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. AKP secured \$18 Billion to Turkey in exchange for its policy towards Syria. During the early days of the intervention in Libya, Turkey spoke differently, but ten days later, it completely reversed its attitude and tone! Turkey made an agreement with the United States and sold Gaddafi, and now we witness, through [Turkey's] securing of a military base to NATO in Izmir, that Turkey has come to a full agreement with the United States and has mobilized all of its powers to serve this policy. It has also sold the Kurds within the framework of this policy where Syrian Kurds are also targeted.

Kurds in Syria, Iran, and Iraq are also targeted by this policy, so the Kurds can seek reconciliation with Syria and Iran at this point. They must say to Syria and Iran: Beware of using the Kurds and playing against them, this would be a real disaster for them, it will be the end for them. I strongly warn them [Syria and Iran]. They must reconcile with the Kurds. They can reach an agreement on the basis of the democratic self-administration. If the Syrian government does not accept these demands, Kurds

could then move there along with opposition forces, and when they move there along with the opposition, they must do so in accordance with the democratization of Syria. At this stage, Kurds will go through the struggle of existence or non-existence. Extermination is imposed upon Kurds, and it is now a question of existence or non-existence.

As of now, this is the way I see the big picture, and our people and everyone should know that. Kurds in Syria and Iran will continue on the path of freedom and will evolve further throughout this course. Kurds in Iraq however, especially some of them, are under the influence of Iran due to their profound and direct relations with Iran. So, Kurds there might separate politically into two divisions, this matter must become known now. We have not subjected ourselves to anyone's influence or command until now, and we will not get into a situation like this in the future. We have remained independent in our policy until this day. We have never gone under the influence of America and we will never do that anymore either. Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria must realize this too. But if they apply more pressure on Kurds and attempt to enforce a policy of genocide and cleansing against them, it would become possible for different agreements to develop as well. Kurds may get into various agreements. The same way America got into an agreement with Turkey to eliminate the Kurds, Kurds will also be able to develop agreements to protect themselves.

The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) says: "We are barely able to stop the people, we are having difficulty stopping them". There is no responsibility or purpose to stopping people on the part of anyone; from now on this tone should be avoided. Stopping people is a crime. Your job is not to stop the people, but to prepare them for a democratic solution and for a democratic transitional phase. At the same time, [people from] Qandil says: "We are working very hard to stop the al-Ansar [guerrilla] forces, we cannot control them, we cannot stop them"; they must refrain from such policy and language. Al-Ansar forces are compelled to defend themselves, no one can stop that. The Peace and

Democracy Party BDP and Qandil must abandon this tone. This tone is incorrect and unethical. The BDP's function is to prepare the people for a democratic solution. Also, the function of Qandil is to secure moving in the right direction. After al-Ansar [guerrillas] cross the borders, there is no such thing as a positive or negative defence, these words are rubbish, because after crossing the borders, al-Ansar will have to perform Ansari acts throughout the day. They must be alert and prepared for all possibilities throughout the day. I told this to the committee that I met with. We have the right of legitimate defence, so if they attack us, we will respond in kind and no one can try to stop al-Ansar in their battle against offensive military operations. They will defend themselves tenfold. They have the right to respond in kind. There are no obstacles facing them in this area. No one can stop them. The entire public opinion should know this fact. I hold Qandil responsible for the recent losses. Qandil is responsible for all lost Ansar fighters and even leaders. They will pay the price.

From now on and above all, the first task is for the Peace and Democracy Party to abandon this tone. The second task is to prepare the people for the democratic self-administration. The youth have the initiative, there is no need to stop them. They have their own organization and they will establish their organizations everywhere. They will elect their leaders by themselves. They will establish their leaderships. There is no need to wait for anyone's advice. They must move independently as was the case in the Palestinian Intifada, that is, through their organizations.

Could the committee that meets with me here be able to do something against the agreement between the Justice and Development Party and America? Can those from the committee or from the state who do not want the war to escalate, and those who want peace, stand in the face of this policy that seeks to exterminate the Kurds? Are they able to stop this policy? I do not know. I repeat, the committee that is meeting with me here frequently has good intentions and is professional in these matters, but does it have enough power to resolve these issues? We will see.

Now, the government has completely succumbed to this policy of war. There should be meetings with the intellectuals. Press also can publish a headline on this matter: Ocalan says: "Turkey and the United States have agreed on a foundation for the amputation Kurds' heads", we must stand up against this policy. I listened to the radio and I understood from Erdogan's manner [of speech] that he has come to an agreement with the United States. In exchange for Turkey's support of the American policy in the Middle East, America will hand over Kurdish heads to Turkey. In the past, they used to trying to impose surrender. But now, even if they [Kurds] surrender, they will not leave them alone. They will eliminate them "politically". I was previously asked whether Erdogan will become like Ozal or like Ciller, Tayyip Erdogan became more like Ciller. He chose Ciller's behaviour. Is this a tactical thing? I do not know, but the current policy indicates that he chose Ciller's behaviour; he continues to kill Kurds all the time. He eliminates Kurds everyday by military and political campaigns.

My assessment of the situation right now is, that the Kurds are between the jaws of an ethnic genocide. There is a new "Gladio" in the works against the Kurds, in a time when we are approaching a solution, and we stand face to face in front of a conspiracy orchestrated by the Gladios of NATO. I will meet with the committee for the last time. The meeting will most likely take place in the beginning of June. In the fifth file of my pleading, I spoke in detail about the structure of the Gladio and its organization, and that's why they refused to hand over my plea to you. Now you must understand what I want to say. This can be used as a news headline as well. By pointing out the date of June 15th, I am not saying that a solution will be reached exactly on this date. I am not expecting that. The important thing is the following point: until June 15th, if the Prime Minister says – the new government will most likely be formed by them again – that he will solve the Kurdish issue, then this statement will be of extreme importance. It is important to be given the green

light by the Prime Minister on this matter. I will be waiting until the evening of June 15 regarding this matter. The committee that I will meet with will most likely have some pointers on this topic. I will wait until June 15th. If the green light was given to include the Kurds in this phase – because before now, they tried to proceed without the Kurds although I expressed resentment towards such behaviour – but if they announce to the public opinion that they will solve the case, I will, in turn, do my best to gather al-Ansar forces in a particular place. Al-Ansar forces will in this case assume a suitable position. The armed clashes will disappear from the agenda and the democratic solution phase will begin. The Prime Minister should appear in public to speak in this period until June 15th and say to me “withdraw your troops to a specific place, and we, in turn, will develop a solution according to a public democratic constitution”, and with these words, this war will come to an end.

I send out this call to our people and organisations: I wanted to take on a field leadership role for you too, but the circumstances in which I live do not allow me to, therefore I play the role of an intellectual leader. Until June 15th, if the green light was not given, and no signs appear to reflect the development of a solution to the issue, then you can consider me dead! After that, uprising and revolt will occur. I call that the people’s revolutionary war.

We are living through historical days and a historic period; significant developments will happen. Everyone should realize that, everyone. The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and Qandil must proceed as per this awareness. I hope for the war not to escalate, and for a solution to develop.

Greetings to the mothers in Batman city. May 18, 2011

THE COMMON CHAMBER OF AHL AL-SHAM

The terms of the truce with the People’s Protection Units (YPG)

1. Phased truce in Aleppo and its suburbs “first phase” between the Common Chamber of Ahl Al-Sham and the YPG.
2. The roads of each party will be used by giving prior notice and with an official document that specifies the destination and the type of vehicle, and should be stamped by the Common Chamber of Ahl Al-Sham in service to the fight against the Nusairi regime.
3. Prisoner exchange between the two parties “clean the prisons”
4. Facilitating the living conditions of the inhabitants of the areas that are under the YPG’s control.
5. Not to establish military points without prior notice to both parties within the areas that are under the YPG’s control.
6. Enforcing a siege to Nabl area and al-Zahra’a, and prohibiting the passage of all people that are present within the area.
7. The agreement is valid for six extendable months.

The Common Chamber of Ahl Al-Sham

People’s Protection Units (YPG)

**A SPEECH BY SALIH MUSLIM MUHAMMAD,
CHAIRMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC UNION PARTY PYD**

Geneva Conference 2013

Conference organizers and fellow members of the conference, I salute you all. I wish I could be present among you [in this conference] but you are aware of the circumstances which prevented me from being there. This conference reflects the cohesion of the Syrian people and represents all of its elements. This is the first time that we were able to hold such conference on an international platform witnessed by the world. The world is used to hearing the voice of bullets and the voice of fighting, but it has not yet heard the democratic voice that represents the majority of the people. They are trying to mute our voices and our breath everywhere. Your conference should come like a slap to the faces of those who try to mute our voices even here in Geneva. On the other hand, in reality, there is currently a fierce attack on Ras al-Ain in a liberated Kurdish area where Arabs, Kurds, and all elements of the Syrian people govern themselves. Ras al-Ain, in the shape of its population and masses, represents a small Syria, such unity which manifested itself in Ras al-Ain is facing a relentless campaign by those who wish harm upon the Syrian people, those who assembled as dark forces allied with forces from abroad. These forces are waging a campaign against Ras al-Ain that is able to push the Syrian revolution off the right track. We want a popular uprising that defends itself in the face of the oppressive regime. But those who resorted to arms turned the revolution into an armed one. Those who bowed to the commands of the Baathist regime in Syria and the Turanian commands from Turkey have driven the revolution off track. There are rivers of blood flowing in Syria and still no one listens to the democratic voice. Today, they are waging a campaign against Ras al-Ain, why this campaign? The answer is because it is the area that represents Syria and which was able to govern itself through the elements of its people. They want to implement

the Turkish plan for the entire Kurdish region and Northern Syria. The attackers confessed that they were carrying out a project to limit the masses to a border strip of ten kilometres, defenceless, unarmed, and an easy target for the Turkish scheme. We are now defeating these forces. The People's Protection Units were established not only by the Kurds, but also by Chechens in Syrian and our noble Arab brothers who are defending their Syrian homeland. There was also a reunion there to fight those dark forces and achieve victories, and we are about to liberate all Ras al-Ain from these forces. We will stick to our principles, we will maintain democracy for the Syrian homeland until we achieve our goals for a pluralistic democratic country that represents all the elements of the Syrian people: Arabs, Kurds, Syriacs, Assyrians, and all minorities for them to enjoy the idea of democracy. We are now forming a northern front to defend this homeland in the face of the dark forces. This dark force has certain links, it is linked to the same forces that prevented us from being present in the Geneva Conference; we must be aware of this. On the other hand, they are meeting the demands of the fascist regime. Our comrade Dr. Abdel Aziz al-Khair is still held there by them as a hostage, not to mention other pressures; on the one hand our comrades are detained by the regime, and on the other hand we are being killed and destroyed at the hands of these dark forces. This force seems to be in agreement with these Baathist fascist forces to destroy the homeland, which is the homeland of all of us and we must protect it and defend it as much as possible. We are now forming the first front with our brothers who live in those areas. They now have other hellish ideas. Yesterday, we were able to liberate the Tel Adas area from the chauvinist regime. There, along with our Arab brothers from the Shummar and Tayy [tribes], we all agreed on the formation of local committees. We want all Syria to be this way, we keep clinging to our goals for unity and democracy, the unity of the Syrian people and democracy for this country because this country is for all of us. We, the Democratic Union Party (PYD),

maintain these goals and will stand by them to the last drop of our blood in defence of this homeland.

Finally, I thank all those who participated in and prepared for this conference and those who attended it despite the difficulties and obstacles. I wish you all success in reaching the goals that we aspire to, and I hope that the decisions of the conference prove important for the future, I also hope that these efforts continue to confront the forces of the fascist chauvinistic regime in Damascus and the dark forces that want to break up Syria and eliminate the Syrian land, people, and homeland.

Thank you all.

A speech by Saleh Muslim Mohammad via Skype at the conference “For a Democratic Syria and a Civil State”, Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights, January 28-29, 2013, Geneva.

CHARTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY MOVEMENT TEV-DEM

CHAPTER I

1. General principles of the Movement:

A. Name of the Movement: The Democratic Society Movement in Western Kurdistan. (Kurdish: TEVGERA CIVAKA DEMOKRATİK A ROJAVAYÊ KURDISTAN)

B. Abbreviated name: TEV-DEM

C. Symbol of the Movement: consists of three lines of colour, parallel and equal in dimensions, in the following order: green at the bottom, followed by red in the centre and yellow at the top.

2. Movement’s objective:

The Democratic Society Movement aims to reach a moral political society (democratic) that considers the struggle of gender liberation and the emancipation of women a measure of the liberation of society, and seeks to achieve coexistence between all elements of society and its cultures including nationalities, religions, sects, denominations, and the various social classes within the framework of the democratic nation and the common homeland, and according to a democratic constitution that is based on foundations and principles of freedom and social justice in Western Kurdistan and Syria, while adopting the Democratic self-administration project as a reference to resolve the Kurdish issue on the practical level. This model is not limited to a particular geography or region, but rather represents the perfect solution to all outstanding issues in Syria.

CHAPTER II

A. Membership in the Movement:

Every natural or legal person, such as any social, political, cultural, or civil society organization, has the right to join the Democratic Society Movement and to assume a position within it after acceptance of its Charter and committing to its decisions and principles.

B. Member's duty:

1. To commit to the democratic society's paradigm, and to adopt the peaceful democratic struggle as a basis for resolving all outstanding issues in society, including the Kurdish issue in Syria.
2. To struggle to achieve the democratic objectives of the Movement.
3. To commit to the instructions and decisions issued by the Movement.
4. To struggle to develop and spread the culture of democracy, and to respect national, linguistic, religious, and gender differences in society, and to fight against all backwards concepts which are results of the ruling regimes.
5. To assume the democratic struggle as a basis to resolve the Kurdish issue in Syria, relying on the democratic self-administration as a key model for the sake of establishing a democratic society in Western Kurdistan and Syria.
6. To believe that women's freedom is the nucleus and the core of the liberation of society upon which the new society will be built.
7. To believe in the right of peoples to self-determination, and to support their struggle for their future and their freedom.

C. Member's Rights:

Every member of the movement has the right to run in elections without restrictions or conditions. Every member also has the right to express their own opinion on all issues, and to propose projects and political programmes in order to achieve the goals of the Movement according to its organizational protocols and principles. Each member has the right of criticism and self-criticism and to fight charges against them and against the Movement according to the protocols and principles of the Movement. Every member has the right to benefit from the training programs of the Movement. Every member has the right to struggle to achieve the democratic goals of the Movement. Every member has the right to self-protection and self-defence which is considered a legitimate right. Every member has the right to submit their resignation to the concerned authorities in the Movement.

D. The mechanism for joining the Movement and withdrawing membership:

1. Individuals become members of the Movement upon the approval of the supreme administrative staff of their membership requests that were submitted to the local administrative staff.
2. Legal persons such as political, social, or cultural organizations and civil society institutions become members upon the approval of the Executive Board of the Democratic Society Movement.
3. Memberships of persons and organizations will be revoked by a judicial decision and the approval of the Executive Board of the Movement for any person or organisation that is involved in an offense against the society and the homeland.

CHAPTER III

The organizational structure of the Movement:

The Social Commune (*komêncivakî*): It is the core of the organization and its foundation. It is established according to the circumstances and social conditions in the villages, towns, and neighbourhoods, and even at the street and small population centre level. Its purpose is to organize all society's ranks within cultural, social, and economic frameworks and at all common societal levels. The administrative staff of the Commune consists of (5-9) members who are elected through direct popular vote from among (15-35) members of the Commune. The administrative staff meets once a week. Councils of the residential sectors and districts include within their ranks a group of neighbourhoods in cities and towns and ancillary villages, and are classified according to population distribution in those areas. These councils consist of (35-45) members elected through direct popular vote by the communes' elements themselves. In turn, they elect an administrative staff of (5-11) members to perform their duties.

Councils of al-Ayalat [territories]: People in Western Kurdistan spread across seven Ayalat. The council of each Ayala [territory] consists of (150-250) members elected through direct vote. This council elects (15-25) members as an administrative staff to conduct and follow-up with its tasks of: representing the people and the community in the relevant residential units, planning the work programmes and developing the necessary plans, making decisions regarding the developments and events in the region during normal and exceptional situations, contributing to and participating in forums and meetings as a representative of the Ayala. Al-Ayalat councils consist of representatives of regions, districts, and their affiliated sectors, in addition to representatives of civil society organizations including political and social parties,

and representatives of national and religious minorities and social, political, and intellectual figures.

Western Kurdistan Parliament (*MECLISA GEL A ROJAVAYÊKURDISTAN*): Is the supreme legislative body of the people and the community in Western Kurdistan and Syria.

The executive staff of the Democratic Society Movement: Consists of twenty-one person who are elected by the General Conference of the Parliament of Western Kurdistan and Syria, without requiring them to be MPs in the parliament. The staff elects a coordination body of five people from its members. The executive staff runs the political and practical affairs of the Movement, and is responsible for following and implementing the decisions of the parliament.

Judicial authority: The People's Supreme Court is elected by the general conference of the parliament and is made up of seven persons as original members and two substitute members. They are not required to be members of the parliament. The People's Supreme Court is in charge of protecting the Movement's system and method, and to resolve outstanding issues between the organizations affiliated with the Movement within the framework of the Charter of the Movement. It is also responsible for building its institutions from the bottom up and for preparing its own internal system which it authenticates through a general popular meeting. The People's Supreme Court focuses on the main issues that concern the people and the society as a whole. It also plays the role of the Court of Cassation, and is in charge of reviewing the provisions of the people's courts to approve or to reject, as the supreme judicial authority in the Movement.

People's Courts: Established in places where there are people's councils. Members are elected through direct vote. However, in the places where these councils do not exist, the court members are elected by democratic organizations. They [the courts] look into the cases and violations that disturb the public and social life and contradict the principles of the moral political society as

per various methods designed to protect the society and achieve justice.

Media: Under the slogan of respecting the citizen's right in receiving correct information. The media has an important and essential role in spreading and developing democratic thought in societies. It is the best way to support the peoples' revolution to achieve liberty and justice within the society, and is a true example of developing and spreading the democratic organization by benefiting from the great technical development, which represents a revolution in this field. The Kurdish history suffered a weakness in the media its uses, but the contemporary Kurdish liberation movement was able to keep up with media development and achieve great improvements in this field. Hence the need to develop the organization and function of the various types of media; auditory, visual, and written, in order to communicate with the minds of the masses, appeal to their senses, hopes, and aspirations, open prospects for freedom and democracy, and to spread its language and culture, preserve it, and consider it a revolutionary gain that should be defended and supported financially and morally in order to become able to face the giant global media monopolies that target the interests of our people and its existence.

Economy and Finance: The Movement relies on the principle of self-sufficiency in its economic and financial policy. The Movement considers that organising the economic life of the community away from exploitation and tyranny is one of the priorities of its obligation to secure a free economy as a foundation for a free and independent life away from the dominance of the global capitalist system of modernity. The Democratic Society Movement's financial system depends on its own [financial] abilities; through donations, members' monthly subscriptions, and by means of productive economic developmental projects that generate revenue to help create activities and events.

Self-protection: Is a right protected by all international covenants and conventions. This right includes defence of

identity, language, culture, and social, political, and even artistic and economic presence, against all dangers that threaten them. Therefore, the society needs self-mechanisms that enable such legitimate defence, starting with local popular committees, passing through language protection and culture development organizations, and ending with people's self-defence units. Defence is not limited to a particular situation or a particular time, it is an ongoing and overlapping process at all times and circumstances.

CHAPTER IV

PRINCIPLES OF THE MOVEMENT

THE DEMOCRATIC NATION:

The Democratic Society Movement TEV-DEM believes in [achieving] values of brotherhood, equality, peaceful coexistence, pluralism, and diversity among the elements of the society in Western Kurdistan and all of Syria. Based on that, it [TEV-DEM] is fully aware that the Democratic Nation is the appropriate framework for coexistence based on the rule of unity in diversity among all the elements of the Syrian society, rather than the nation-state which deepens division and conflict and feeds chauvinism and nationalist denial and dissolution.

THE COMMON DEMOCRATIC HOMELAND:

Proceeding from the idea that Syria is the homeland for all Syrians with varying nationalities, beliefs, and cultures that coexisted on its land for thousands of years, the Movement believes in establishing the Common Democratic Homeland which achieves a stronger bond between the society's elements – despite their different lives and qualities – and the homeland, rather than unilateralism, which means linking the homeland to only one nationality. From this point, the Movement calls for naming Syria as the Democratic Republic of Syria instead of the

Syrian Arab Republic, which suggests national domination and division among the people of the homeland.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION:

The current Constitution contradicts the reality of the society, the era, and history. It does not recognize the existence of the Kurdish people and the other elements of the Syrian society. From this point, the Movement calls for formulating a new democratic constitution that rejects nationalist, religious, and sectarian premises, ensures individual and group freedoms, and recognizes the coexistence of Arab, Kurdish, Syriac, Assyrian, and Armenian people side by side based on the values of brotherhood, justice, and equality in a democratic manner in a democratic Syria.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM:

Freedom is the origin of the nature of the universe, and everything else is incidental and fabricated. So enslavement that stems from gender, national, secular, and fundamental religious authoritarianism, and which is a main pillar for the continuation and the tyranny of the central dictatorial regimes, leads to the emergence of the slave-master duality, like the authoritarian man and the enslaved woman in human society. This situation led to a conflict between nationalities, races, religions, and genders, and between man and nature. So, the Movement believes that freedom is a natural right for all creatures and there is no life without it. The Movement also believes that the freedom of society pivots around the freedom of women.

CHAPTER V

SPECIAL PROVISIONS:

The Movement uses the 40% gender representation rule in the elections to secure the active participation of women in all practical aspects of life. The Movement considers that youth and women have a leading role in achieving democracy. The principle of majority vote is the basis for making and implementing decisions and for all democratic elections.

This Charter was approved on 16-12-2011

**A STATEMENT BY THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,
POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PARTIES, AND CIVIL
GROUPS IN SYRIA'S NORTH-EASTERN REGION**

October 20, 2015

For more than four years, our country Syria has been suffering from exceptional circumstances and all the elements of the Syrian people have been suffering from the scourge of war, destruction, and terrorism. Despite of all that, we the people of Syria's North-Eastern region (al-Jazeera) have maintained the principle of civil peace and coexistence in our country with all its national elements. And due to the exceptional security circumstances, the self-administration was established in al-Jazeera, and we have formed various administrative institutions that issue laws and regulations some of which was not thoroughly considered, causing harm to social and national elements, although governmental institutions still practice their legal, administrative, financial, and military authority.

First: The absentee and migrant's fund management law: Upon meetings and consultations between the representatives of the Christian body in the city of Qamishli and its countryside including churches, organizations, civic and political parties, we have reached the following:

1. The idea of this law opposes the principles of human rights, the right of citizenship, and the right to ownership which a sacred personal right.
2. The attempt to accuse the immigrants of disloyalty (to their patriotism and nationality) is patriotically and nationally unacceptable.
3. The attempt to legalize the formation of the committee of (the custodian of absentees' and immigrants' money) is an attempt to seize others' property under the pretext of investing for the benefit of the community and those affected [by the war].

4. This law represents a demographic threat against all Christians in al-Jazeera by causing a demographic change in housing or ownership, or by attempting to seize agricultural land and estates in the countryside where Christian ownership reaches approximately 35%, which is intimidating for those who remain in the country; and those who immigrated will fear returning.
5. Christians refraining from selling their properties and estates and issuing general or special authorizations to their relatives to manage their properties is a legal right that should not be questioned and is a step on the way back home].

From this perspective, we find that these practices will lead to the rise of sectarian strife between the various ethnic groups of the community, so we consider ourselves plaintiffs by law and legislation before the courts and local and international judicial departments to demand the repeal of this law.

Second: The licence law and the attempt to impose new license fees and taxes is legally unacceptable because they are legal, legitimate, and issued by official Syrian departments and should not be questioned or replaced, burdening people.

Third: The compulsory military service law; it is not acceptable to force a citizen to enrol in the military in his country for two different parties [of conflict].

Fourth: Intervention in church private schools' affairs in al-Jazeera is unjustified and unacceptable due to the privacy of the administrative and educational system. The pressures we witness on our private schools in all areas is but an intervention that impedes the educational process for our children.

Therefore, we call upon everyone to have a spirit of responsibility in managing, and to take good care of the interests of individuals and groups. We wish peace and safety for all parts of Syria, and for the al-Jazeera region with all its national elements to have security, peace, and love.

The Christian churches and the institutions, political parties, civic groups, and organizations that signed this statement:

- Syriac Orthodox Church
- Armenian Orthodox Church
- Armenian Archdiocese in al-Jazeera and the Euphrates
- Chaldean Church in al-Qamishli
- Assyrian Church of the East - Ancient Assyrian Church
- Syrian Catholic Church
- National Evangelical Church
- Syrian Orthodox Civil Peace Organization
- Assyrian Democratic Organization
- Free Aramean Party
- Assyrian Board of Agricultural Villages
- Christian Civilian Assembly
- Mother Syria's Youth Assembly
- Foundation of the National Reconciliation Youth
- Syrian Christian Fortitude Centre

HAYTHAM MANNA

Dr. Haytham Manna was born in the city of Dara'a in southern Syria. He studied General Medicine at Damascus University in 1976 and at the University of Pierre and Marie Curie in France. He received a Diploma in Psychosomatic Treatment from the University of Paris 13, and a Diploma in Sleeping and Waking Disorders from the University of Montpellier in 1989. A year later, he taught a Sleeping Disorders course at the University of Paris North. He studied Social Sciences and was awarded a PhD in Anthropology from the Higher Institute of Social Sciences in Paris in 1983. He is a cofounder of the French-language revue *SOU'AL* (1980), editor in chief of the revue *MOUKARABAT* [Approaches], and editor of the Concise Universal Encyclopedia: Reflections on Human Rights (Volume I: Al-Ahali (2000), Volume II: Al-Ahali and Urabe (2002), Volume III (2011)).

He held several militant stances on an Arab and international level. He was Vice President of the International Federation for Human Rights until November 1997. In 2004, he was elected President of the International Bureau of Humanitarian and Charitable Associations. He was co-founder and spokesperson of the Arab Commission for Human Rights until September 2011. He is Coordinator of the International Coalition against

War Criminals and President of the Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights.

HIS BOOKS IN ARABIC:

- *The Revolt of the Peasant Commune, Damascus*, 1975
- *Women in Islam*, Beirut, 1980
- *The Arab-Islamic Society from Muhammad to Ali*, Paris, 1986
- *The Production of Man in the East of the Mediterranean: The Clan, The Tribe, And The State*, Beirut, 1986
- *The Woman!!* Cologne, 1988
- *The World of Sleep*, Latakia, 1990
- *The Veil*, Cologne, 1990 (in Arabic and Italian)
- *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Beirut, 1990
- *The Challenges of Enlightenment*, Cologne, 1991
- *The Victim and the Executioner*, Cairo, 1995
- *Human Rights in the Arab-Islamic Culture*, Cairo, 1996 (in Arabic and English)
- *Citizenship in the Arab Islamic History*, Cairo 1998 (in Arabic and English)
- *Physical and Mental Integrity, Torture in the Arab World in the 20th Century*, Paris and Cairo, 1998 (in Arabic and French)
- *The Childhood of a Thing, The First Labor Pains of Human Rights in the Arab World*, Cologne, 1999
- *Islamic Fundamentalisms and Human Rights*, Cairo, 1999 - Irbil, Beirut, 2000
- *The State of Law in Tunisia!* Cairo, 1999 - Paris and Damascus - 4 editions
- *Reflections on Human Rights, Beirut and Damascus*, 2000, Volume II, Beirut, Damascus and Paris, 2002, Volume III, 2011
- *Islam and Women's Rights*, Cairo, 2001
- *Freedom in the Literature of the Exile*, Paris, Damascus, 2001
- *Islam and the International Humanitarian Law*, Beirut and Amman, 2002
- *The United States and Human Rights*, 2003

- *A Scream before the Assassination*, Damascus and Beirut, 2004
- *On Human Rights Culture*, 2004
- *Protection of Journalists*, 2005
- *Critical Researches in Human Rights*, 2005
- *The Future of Human Rights, Impunity and International Law*, 2005
- *Children's Rights*, 2006
- *Justice or Barbarism*, 2006
- *The Civilian Resistance*, 2008 - 2015
- *International Justice from Nuremberg to Gaza*, 2009
- *Dictatorship in its Different Forms*, 2010
- *The Spring of Citizenship*, 2013
- *Islam and Europe*; By Haytham Manna, Beirut, Dar Ashtarout and the Arab- European Association for Publishing, 2013.
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- *Islam and Women's Rights*, Bisan, English edition by GNRD, 2015
- *The Civil Resistance*, second edition (in Arabic), 2015
- *Salafism, Muslim Brotherhood, and Human Rights*; By Haytham Manna, the Scandinavian Institute for Human Rights, 2014.
- *The End and the Beginning*, Bisan, Beirut, 2016
- *Ocalanism, Ideological Construction and Praxis*, in Arabic, Beirut, dar al farabi, 2017.

Dr. Manna contributed to several collaborative writings about women and human rights in the Arab world in addition to the *Arab Human Development Report*. He is the author of books in the French language, translated books, and has written more than 5,000 articles and lectures in the Arabic, French, and English languages.

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STUDIES AND REPORTS BY DR. MANNA**OR UNDER HIS SUPERVISION:**

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