

What is beyond the Nation-State?

Interview from Tejiendo la Palabra to Havin Guneser- Kurdish Movement Freedom in Mexico City 2015.

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Tejiendo la Palabra (TG): In the “The Resistance as a way of life” talk you said some items very interesting, first of all I would like to know how the State is actually a hegemonic political structure in our society?

Havin Guneser (HG): Usually the State has been shown to all of us to be something progressive, but when we try to go back to history, from the early times until today, trace how the State was originally formed and the way that it has changed in form and shape until today, we see that in fact it's far from being progressive. It is a tool originally established to appropriate the surplus product that has been created by the humans you know, five thousand let's say years ago and then it started by the institutionalization and monopolization of that power to take the surplus product and for that what do you need? You need to have a monopoly over the use of violence as well, you know. And until today it has continue to grow where the form of state today is the Nation- States which is based on one ethnicity and it creates a lot of problems for a lot of people all around the world. And of course when we go and see what the State is, we see that its roots is in patriarchy, and when we look at that we see that is then based on the enslavement of women who were the actual leaders of the matriarchal society. So, for patriarchy to take place, matriarchy had to be overcome in a negative sense of course. So, therefore there is a very direct relationship between state formation and the enslavement of women, man, society, etc. But the bad thing is that it disguises itself as if it offers protection, as if it offers us food, as if it offers us the senate and that is also done with our money anyway, even if it is done.

So this is what Abdullah Öcalan the founder of the PKK and leader of the Kurdish people, determined he came to that conclusion. Therefore this is why he also came to the conclusion that as a result, having a State is not something progressive, so he says “even if it's given to me in a golden plate I will not take it” because it's an oppressive tool which cannot bring freedom.

TP: From this point of view, what is the Kurdish alternative?

HG: The Kurdish Alternative looks at the past history of people and the past struggles and tries to deduce results from there, principal results – you know- including the Kurdish priory way of living. And therefore we can really sum it up as saying that it rest upon more than a political society which means to make their own decisions in every sense of the term- you

know- in terms of economy or in terms of if there it's gonna be mining or how much of it you know, whatever that community needs they will have to decide itself, so, moral in a political society is very important for that aspect and then we are not rejecting industry, but what we are rejecting is the industrialism. So when we said that we look in the past it doesn't mean we want to go and live in Stone Age or something. But what we want to do is correct this mentality mind-set.

So in that order there are different things to propose like Democratic Confederation that is the political tool proposed instead of Nation-State for example and that rest into democratic autonomy, self-defence, alternative economy, women's freedom, men's freedom all this things that we are talking about. With the absence of one or the other you will not have Democratic Autonomy, Confederation or something else and it just repeat patriarchy.

TP: How the Democratic Confederation recover the old Kurdish organization and how the State monopolize our lives? I think that both question are important in case when we talk about education or history.

HG: I mean they don't listen the official record of history, because if we look the official record of history it's a bunch of men fighting over this states, that dynasty and- you know- of this area, this territory, this is what we are seen as a history: collapse of empires and states and the establishment of new one, so Abdullah thought that it cannot be the history of the humanity. What about the normal people like us? What we were doing at the time? Just like today, I mean you have UK, Iran, Russia and USA, fighting over things and sharing power or whatever and interest, but there are we, the people. What are we doing? We are doing something all the time. So Abdullah Öcalan is interesting in this. And he looked at both, official and non-official historical records, no? Like mythologies, no? but he cares about mythologies, right? Because people think that -you know- they are just stories but there's a lot of things to be understood from them, and... this way.

He saw that like even the Kurdish history, that history can be suppressed and instead of it the powerful can place and new history instead the real one. So this is how the discussion, the research, the analysis works and yes is a political choice to in power woman and the people choose to make reconstruct history.

TP: What is the relationship between member of the PKK and the people who are not militants of the party?

HG: There is multilayer relationship I would said, first of all of course the caterers of PKK are responsible of the self-defence and in the case of Kobanê and Rojava and now in the Turkish Kurdistan we see that there are people's militia as well and they take up also self-defense when required -you know- but what's been happening is that -you know- capitalism also

is trying to devalue the value of, I'm not going to call them leaders, because that word has been abused so much. But guidance, - you know- because they would like people to be without guidance -you know- and so I would put the relationship like this, -you know- because their only target is to gather knowledge, -you know- share it together, learn from one another and make sure if there is a sacrifice to be done, sacrifice themselves to make sure that **the path is paved** for that knowledge to be seen by others and to protect the society that has been attacked from so many sides. So, what they are trying to do, from what I understand, is that these caterers are trying to achieve a prototype society -you know- to show that it can be done. That you can yourself decide on what kind of a woman you want to be -you know- in organization, not in isolation. Because, as we said within the PKK, woman is organized autonomously and they decide for themselves like from bottom to top, top to bottom. No man gives a decision on a single woman.

TP: In that line, how did the Kurdish cities, towns or communities start to organize themselves and what is the political and economic relationship between them?

HG: Different parts are at different levels -you know-. For example, Rojava is at a completely different level because there's no state power -you know-. There's a war between different forces, internal and external and, at the beginning, at the onset of the war, the middle class and the feudal lords left. So, therefore, you basically have people were there when a defender -you know- homeland, and or who had nowhere to go, the poor basically -you know-. So, it's a little bit easier to be able to implement -you know- in discussion with the people and, ah, so what kind of an alternative economy, what kind of an alternative education, and things like that. It is relatively easier. Whereas with Turkey, for example, there is the state -you know- and then there is the municipalities which are in the hands of the Kurdish people, and then there is the jewel approach: the state doesn't want to allow you to implement your democratic autonomy and you want to make sure you do implement it, so, and this, this, this doesn't give enough room for implementation because it is continuously disrupted through the internal mechanisms of state inside your society. So that's a bit more difficult -you know-. Ah, but we are seeing that -you know- I talked about the little bit inside as well, unless, you know, we can, ah, create, people can create for themselves alternative ways and means of living, ah, they have to depend on the state. So, therefore, you know, the state then, sometimes, let's say, leaves them unemployed, then they are in trouble, they have no means of feeding themselves or paying for their rent or whatever. So, the more you can, the more the people are becoming independent of state, the more they are able to fearlessly, you know, understand and implement these ideas.

TP: How does that organization, how does that democratic autonomy resist to the ISIS and NATO?

HG: They don't work with ISIS or NATO anyway, you know.

TP: Yes, yes, but the war with Turkey... the war with ...

HG: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it's just the insistence on how we wanna live, you know. I mean, not just the Kurdish people, we as people, as women, we are killed every day, anyway. Every day! Whether you resist or not, you know. You're killed! So you might as well get ah, just gonna say, you know, you might as well resist! And, with that resistance, you know, this is where we are made to think that, you know, state is too strong, NATO is too strong, you can't make anything alternative. No, we can! For example, we are not saying every day: Oh, you know, America is like this..! We are explaining what imperialism is, what capitalism is, you know, but instead of getting into a rhetoric, you know, we get into practice of what we wanna do. And defend that. And they have been attacking it like for years anyway, you know. And we are just saying: "this is what we believe, this is how we want to live and we want everyone to accept this. And if they don't and they come to attack, we will resist! "

TP: How do you explain to the people of the cities, of the towns, of the communities, what is the capitalism, what is the colonialism ...eh... the situation?

HG: They live it every day! ... They are subject to it every day, you know. Agriculture is nearly finished in Kurdistan. Animal husbandry is nearly finished in Kurdistan, you know. So, people are every day seeing what it means to live in a capitalist society and a colonized country, you know. In Kurdistan, capitalism is coupled with colonization. It's not very separated, you know. So, in that sense, you know, people can see what's happening.

TP: But, for example in Mexico, we know we are in capitalism but people are disorganized, so..

HG: Don't forget, you know, that kurds have been struggling for many years and in the last forty years it's been with the PKK. So, there's a lot of organization of the people, there's a lot of discussion with the people, you know, there's a lot of learning, education, awareness. So, forty years have been really dynamic and full, you know.

TP: Finally, what is the women roll in the city organization in the democratic autonomy?

HG: I mean, there are very many different levels of organization with the kurds but, what is new and important is the fact that we base the ideology on the axis of women's freedom because we see that to be the very first class and nation and colony after woman was enslaved, nature, men, society everyone else was enslaved, through the same method. So, this then doesn't leave any room for deception, you know, ah, it's very radical, because man is also enslaved and exploited by the system but, to draw men into equilibrium woman is given to him so that he is quiet because he has something to exploit as well, you see. This

is how then the system of exploitation can, it's life time can be prolonged, ok? Because man is given something as well in return for his exploitation.

TP: How do you see the Kurdish movement in the next few years, in the future?

HG: I mean, you know, when you look at the last ten years, nobody had heard of Kurdish people. And in the last two years, even all the way in Latin America everybody knows what's going on there, no? Really! I mean, this is directly proportional to the level of implementation. So, what I can say is that Kurdish people will continue to discuss how to build their future, openly with the whole world and continue to resist and build it!