

Theoretical Seminar 2018: Key theses of the introductory speech by the Kurdish Women's Movement

- About the Kurdistan Women's Liberation Movement: Having a history of 40 years in total, the women within the Kurdish National Liberation Struggle are organising themselves autonomously since the early 1990's. This process that started first within the guerrilla ranks by establishing a women's guerrilla army today has reached a level of equal participation and representation in all parts of the struggle. Inside the women are organised autonomously and are the ones that take all decisions on women. But the ideological and practical struggle for true liberation continues as it aims to liberate both women and men from the patriarchal and capitalist-modernist mind of state. The women's struggle within the Kurdish liberation movement marks a revolution within a revolution. It is based on the idea that true revolutions must be female; that liberation theories and ideologies need to take the issue of women's liberation in it's centre. The one who started first analysis on women's status within the society and the liberation of women was the founder and leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan. He was abducted through a NATO-operation in 1999 and since then kept in solitary confinement on a prison island in Turkey. Sakine Cansiz, nom de guerre 'Sara', was one of the first female revolutionaries in Kurdistan. Cansiz was founding member of the PKK. She was imprisoned in 1980 and brutally tortured. By leading the resistance in the prisons against the colonialist Turkish state she became a

living legend. She was at the same time a living history of the Kurdish women's liberation struggle. On January 9, 2013 Sakine Cansiz, together with her comrades Fidan Dogan and Leyla Saylemez, was assassinated by the Turkish intelligence service in Paris/France.

- **Woman's question as primary conflict**

The woman's question marks the most profound, deep-rooted question in society and history. Women are the most oppressed race, nation or class. All other forms of enslavement have been implemented on the basis of housewifisation. Without an analysis of woman's status in the hierarchical system and the conditions under which she was enslaved, neither the state nor the classed system that it rests upon can be understood. Without a thorough analysis of women's enslavement and establishing the conditions for overcoming it, no other slavery can be analysed or overcome.

- **Importance to analyse masculinity as system**

Power is synonymous to masculinity. If we want to understand the fundamental characteristics of the consequent male-dominant social culture, we need to analyse the process through which woman was socially overcome. Class and sexual oppression develop together; masculinity has generated ruling gender, ruling class, and ruling state. Overcoming masculinity as a system must be the fundamental principle of socialism.

- **Sexism as the basic ideology of power**

Ever since the hierarchical order's enormous leap forward, sexism has been the basic ideology of power. It is closely linked to class division and the wielding of power. Power and sexism in society share the same essence.

- **Importance of organizing women autonomously**

Liberating life is impossible without a radical women's revolution, which would change man's mentality and life.

But it's also impossible to make a revolution with slave women. The extent to which society can be thoroughly transformed is determined by the extent of the transformation attained by women. The level of woman's freedom and equality determined the freedom and equality of all sections of society. Women need to be an organized autonomous force within liberation movements to be able to create real change – starting at themselves.

Main concepts and theories of the Kurdistan Women's Liberation Movement

- *Break-off theory*: Ideational and physical breaking off by women from the patriarchal mentality
- *Total divorce*: The ability to divorce from the five thousand years old culture of male domination
- *Transformation of the man*: Liberation is not just a matter of women but of men also
- *Women's liberation ideology*: Expression of the need of an ideological ground of women's liberation struggle
- *Jineology*: The science of woman and life that rejects the relation between power and science and at the same time nourishes the scientific character of ideology
- *Free partner life*: Alternative that aims to liberate the institution of marriage and reorganize the relation between women and men