

# **Call to Kurdish workers, labourers, and intellectuals: Postmodernism leads to surrender, revolutionary Marxism leads to victory!**

*Revolutionary Marxism* Editorial Board

A page is closing in the Kurdish people's two-hundred-year struggle for freedom. Those who study Kurdish history will look back and be astonished to see how the struggle of an oppressed nation was attempted to be put in a form that would enable new colonialist adventures of the oppressor nation-state. But now we have urgent tasks: as revolutionary Marxists, we must warn all the working people of the region, especially the Kurdish workers and labourers who constitute the majority of the Kurdish people, about this process.

The real name of the process, so-called "peace and democratic society" or, in the words of the autocratic regime, "Turkey without terrorism" is the "oil opening." One of the prerequisites for a new colonialist policy, long dreamed of by the Turkish bourgeoisie and targeting wider areas of Kurdistan and perhaps beyond, is being fulfilled, under the heel of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) leader Abdullah Öcalan,

MHP (Nationalist Action Party) chairman Devlet Bahçeli, and the public officials of the Republic of Turkey authorised by this task, in line with the common interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie and the Kurdish bourgeoisie, which has betrayed its own people by allying with the former. Within this project, Öcalan, who has abandoned proletarian internationalism long ago, is leading Kurds into a sectarian, imperialist and Zionist-friendly front in the region by steering the course of the PKK's 12th Congress with postmodern arguments. Today, every Kurd who wants freedom for their people must urgently detach from this line and prepare for new struggles along the lines of revolutionary Marxism as soon as possible.

### **The question of method**

The “oil opening” conceives of nothing beyond the PKK laying down its arms. If there is anything else, it is hidden behind the smokescreen created by secret diplomacy. Although it is claimed that there is no bargaining, all signs indicate that bargaining has been going on for a long time. Such secret diplomacy is defended on the grounds of the sensitivity of the process and the failure of similar processes in the past due to certain interventions. However, this secrecy, unfortunately accepted as normal by the majority of the Turkish socialist movement, does not prevent distortions. On the contrary, it guarantees a policy shaped by interventions against the interests of the masses. What needs to be done is to defend the rejection of secret diplomacy, a historical principle inherited from the October Revolution, in the Kurdish question today, and to abandon the approach of observing such a significant historical moment from the outside with the attitude of “they must know something.” The peace would be reached by the end of two different processes, one includes no steps towards eliminating the oppression of the Kurdish nation, and the other guarantees serious changes in this direction. Although neither ultimately constitutes peace, is it possible to consider the two in the same way? Moreover, can we support a “peace” that, as all signs indicate today, will turn the oppressed nation into the military force of the oppressing nation's bourgeoisie? Therefore, we must reject secret diplomacy and advocate for the immediate disclosure of all details of the process to the public.

### **From the dream of democracy and constitution to the reality of colonialism**

A more serious issue than the question of method is that the parties involved in the process can put forward “facts” about its content that are clearly untrue. The autocratic front is once again repeating its long-standing lie that “the Kurdish problem has been solved.” This shamelessness alone is enough to cause serious doubts about the policy proposed by the autocracy. But it does not end there. In his statement,

Öcalan, the long-imprisoned leader of the PKK, distorts the facts and mentions “the resolution of identity denial and developments in freedom of expression” in Turkey among the reasons for the dissolution of the PKK. “Identity denial” has been one of the generally accepted parameters of the Turkish Armed Forces’ approach to the Kurdish issue. Although some claim that its intensity has diminished, it has not ended entirely. For example, more recently, when DEM Party (People’s Equality and Democracy Party) MP Gülistan Koçyiğit said in Kurdish from the rostrum of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, “Cejna zimanê kurdi pîroz be” (Happy Kurdish Language Day), the microphone was turned off by the MHP deputy chair. Moreover, overcoming the denial of Kurdish identity cannot substitute for a solution to the Kurdish question. At best, it can be accepted as a first step if it is part of a project that will truly grant rights to the Kurdish nation. On the contrary, the AKP-MHP autocracy’s project, which also aims to turn Kurds into soldiers in a sectarian war, has the potential to create fragmentation among the Kurdish people rather than alleviate their oppression. Indeed, a part of the Kurdish people are Alevi. Whilst the issue of freedom of expression, which forms the second part of Öcalan’s statement, can only be regarded as an unfortunate observation considering recent developments in Turkey.

Of course, within the limits of this issue, it could be argued that Öcalan’s position as a prisoner to some extent justifies his use of such surreal expressions. Even if we accept this, what can be said about the rest of the Kurdish movement? Especially those who negotiate these issues with Öcalan? We must ask them: Is your responsibility to your people limited to accepting the views of a negotiator in captivity without question? Does it not seem odd that the reality of poverty and political oppression faced by the Kurdish people stands in contrast to the direction Öcalan wants to take the movement? Doesn’t it make you suspicious that this is happening at a time when imperialism and Zionism are making moves in the region, and new, united fronts are forming against the Axis of Resistance and the Palestinians?

Wouldn’t it be expected that the environment in which a solution to the Kurdish question is to be achieved at least include democratisation across the country, and that if this is to be a genuine peace process, it takes place in a conjuncture where rights and freedoms are generally expanding? Should not there at least be a roadmap, and some headings outlining which improvements are going to be made regarding the situation of Kurdish people? Should not it be clearly stated what will or will not be done regarding issues such as the equality of nations and languages, and the situation of political prisoners?

Undoubtedly, all of these should have been done. The reason for their absence must be sought in the consistency of the AKP’s policy on the Kurdish issue since it came to power. Following its establishment, the AKP continued the denialist stance

of the preceding bourgeois parties on the Kurdish issue for a time, and only in Kurdish provinces did it attempt to win Kurds to its side through an Islamist policy and social aid to the Kurdish poor. The PKK's attack on Dağlica in 2007 was a turning point in many ways, including the AKP's policy on Kurdistan. Until then, the AKP government, which had been experiencing tense relations with the US due to the 1 March 2003 resolution, gained US support against the PKK following the famous Erdoğan-Bush meeting on 5 November 2007. With this support, and with the backing of the pro-US administration in South Kurdistan, it turned to the destruction of the PKK by military force, but failed. Only after this moment, did the AKP turn to Plan B, namely the so-called "democratic opening processes" over time. In other words, the opening process was actually an integral part of the destruction policy and always remained true to its essence. That is why the closure of the DTP (Democratic Society Party), the arrests of BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) mayors, the attacks on Kurdish cities, and the appointment of trustees to municipalities all accompanied the opening processes in one way or another.

On the other hand, if the outcome of secret diplomacy is that whatever is to be given to the Kurdish people depends on the making of a new constitution, then woe betide us! Because the 'new constitution' today is merely a code name for the Turkish bourgeoisie's desire to get rid of the current constitution, which has become too restrictive for its purposes. The issue is that, in a manner agreed upon by different camps of the Turkish bourgeoisie and with the tacit or explicit approval of imperialism, Turkey aims to seize Kurdish regions in Iraq and Syria and, beyond that, several oil fields. The pursuit of this goal entails the abandoning the 'peace at home, peace in the world' approach which had, to some extent, shaped the spirit of the old constitution and limited the colonisation of Kurdistan to the north. This project has long adorned the bourgeoisie's dreams of a return to the *Misak-ı Milli* (the National Pact of 1920), and since the Iraq War, many companies have made significant investments in South Kurdistan. The despotic regime that threatened the Kurds when they sought independence in 2017 is now, with the approval of imperialism, pursuing a process aimed at claiming guardianship over those same Kurdish forces, along with the Turkmen, establishing a permanent presence in Iraq and Syria, and aspiring to Sunni leadership in the region. If a new constitution is made, it will be shaped to ensure the safety of this process. If the carrot of the "opening process" is offered to the Kurds, it will be only in exchange for lining them up in the trenches on behalf of the imperialists, Zionists, and the Turkish and Kurdish bourgeoisies.

It is impossible for realpolitik analyses or Öcalan's references to history and theory to conceal this reality. Pointing to a Sunni Islamic alliance, as Öcalan has done, saying that Alparslan defeated Byzantium and Selim I (known as Yavuz) defeated the Mamluks with the support of the Kurds, means voluntarily enlisting the

Kurds in the bourgeoisie's adventures. This is not the first time Öcalan has done this. Previously, in his Newroz message in 2013, which was an important turning point in the "opening process" at the time, he mentioned Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood alongside the concept of 'living together under the thousand-year-old banner of Islam' and presented the perspective of a Turkish-Kurdish alliance in the context of Sunni Islamic brotherhood.

Supporting the new constitution agenda, and linking the gains of the Kurdish people, or more generally democratisation, to the drafting of a new constitution, is not for the benefit of the working class and labouring people within the country either. All the data indicates that Erdoğan, the enemy of the working class and labouring people, is not expecting an early election for his third term as president, but rather a constitutional amendment. However, it is evident that this would be more difficult without the DEM Party, whereas with the joint support of the DEM and *Yeni Yol* (New Path) groups, the constitutional amendment could be passed even without a referendum. Therefore, the new constitution is detrimental to Turkish and Kurdish workers and labourers, both at home and abroad. The long-term implications for the Kurds of the two or three articles added to the constitution must be assessed from this perspective. We can already feel the spirit of "Not enough, but yes," the slogan that symbolized the shameful support given by liberals and left-wing liberals to the constitutional amendment proposed by the AKP-Gülenist fraternity alliance in the 2010 referendum, especially in the politics of the DEM Party. It is clear that this policy will lead socialists, all workers and labourers to disaster.

On the other hand, the fact that the Turkish bourgeoisie has formed an alliance around a colonialist policy does not mean that all its political representatives can engage in this policy without friction. Although the CHP (Republican People's Party) has no objection to the process and both Özgür Özel and the recently-arrested mayor of Istanbul, and the party's declared candidate to run for the presidential election, Ekrem İmamoğlu have supported it, the issue should be considered in the context of the autocracy's broader internal balances. The dynamics of rapprochement between the AKP and the CHP, as well as the partnership between the CHP and DEM, expressed in the "urban compromise," have been attacked by the MHP, which represents a wing of the semi-military regime in the political arena. The assault on Özgür Özel in May 2025 and the operation against the CHP-run Esenyurt Municipality in October 2024 are part of this attack. Bahçeli is exerting pressure to maintain control over the process. This lends the process its repressive character. Therefore, from this perspective, the increase in the intensity of repression alongside the "opening process" is not contradictory but rather a logical unity.

## **From postmodernism to surrender**

As the *Revolutionary Marxism* Editorial Board, we presented our analyses on postmodernism in detail in the 50th issue of *Devrimci Marksizm* in Turkish and defined the postmodern offensive in social theory and its reflections as an ideological counter-revolution without hesitation. Öcalan's justifications for the liquidation of the PKK confirm this once again. Indeed, Öcalan's article titled "Perspective," published in the organisation's Europe-printed *Serxwebun* magazine and explaining why the dissolution of the PKK is necessary, constitutes an explicit postmodern manifesto and provides evidence in this direction. This is true not only in terms of its propositions but also in the sense that its fundamental opponent is Marxism.

Öcalan's statements are a continuation of the line he developed after his capture in 1999, which diverges from Marxism and sees the contradiction between the state and civil society as the fundamental social contradiction, replacing class struggles with the opposition between "oppressive modernity" and the "democratic modernity." This line shelve the PKK's early goal of an Independent United Kurdistan and the goal of a West Asian (Middle Eastern) revolution ignited by the Kurdish revolution, and moreover, it does not replace it with a coherent strategy. His latest statement addresses a wide range of issues, from the Neolithic revolution to prostitution and the Big Bang, yet fails to address the region's most pressing issues, namely imperialism and Zionism, especially as the region braces for new sectarian wars.

This text reads history with an obvious idealism, as we are accustomed in Öcalan's previous analyses, while not neglecting to mention materialism. Öcalan carelessly lists ideas mostly put forward by Murray Bookchin without mentioning his name, claiming that class struggle has been replaced by a definition of socialism based on the dilemma between the state and the "commune." His excessive insistence on presenting Marxism as the fundamental adversary gives the impression that he is trying, for a moment, to make the reader think that the oppression of the Kurdish nation might have something to do with Marxist ideology. He claims that modernity (the name given by him to the triad of capitalism, "industrialism," and the nation-state) ruins humanity. The hidden subject of this claim soon becomes clear to be Marxism itself, when he accuses Marxism of embracing the nation-state and "industrialism." In a world rapidly driven to barbarism by imperialism and Zionism, Öcalan's attacks on Marxism throughout the text are, in our view, incomprehensible.

Öcalan's postmodern analyses could be criticised at length. We recommend, to those who read Turkish, our aforementioned 50th issue as a source where our readers can find our criticisms of postmodernism in a concise form. Here, we will limit ourselves to mentioning only two conclusions. Firstly, these analyses paint a bleak picture for the future of the Kurdish movement. The idea of "communes

against the state,” which replaced class struggle, for example, results in equating the communes that emerged during the dissolution of feudalism in Europe (and later evolved into local administrations) with the municipalities established in the Ottoman modernisation process to strengthen central power. It then argues that communal society can be organised through the municipalities, which have been not only severed from their historical context but also detached from their current economic and financial duties. Thus, as we shall discuss shortly, the right of nations to self-determination is replaced by local government elections (these elections are, of course, important as part of larger strategies for oppressed nations, but here they form the main backbone of the strategy).

These postmodern analyses also paint a bleak picture for the future of the Kurdish movement's relations with its most likely regional allies. Öcalan pauses at a seemingly irrelevant point in the text. He strips the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the uprising of the Palestinian people who are facing genocide, of its historical context. According to him, the Palestinians first attacked and then “begged for help” from the “UN and some kind of human rights commission of the EU”, institutions “on which Israel has stamped its mark.” According to Öcalan, Palestinians must either submit to the hegemony or wage a real war (!). In doing so, Öcalan deliberately attacks all Palestinian organisations by lumping them together. He also ignores the fact that the international legal system of the bourgeoisie, like the national one, can be exploited when necessary, without any illusions. Moreover, he overlooks the legal struggle experiences of the Kurdish movement on this issue (which, unfortunately, has sometimes fallen prey to such delusions).

### **Revolutionary Marxism for internationalist politics!**

The Kurdish question, whose roots extend back to the Ottoman Empire, is rooted in the establishment and shaping of the Turkish nation-state as part of the development of capitalism in its current form. The Kurds, whose national identity was denied, have opposed this situation throughout the history of the republic. Struggles that were initially led by landowners and clerics progressed alongside the class struggles and Marxism in the 1960s and were greatly influenced by them. The PKK itself is (or was) a Marxist party founded on the basis of Dev-Genç (Revolutionary Youth).

Marxists view class struggles and resulting workers' seizure of power within individual nations as the key to freedom, while approaching the national question from the perspective expressed by Engels: “A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations.” Lenin concretised and implemented this policy by putting forward the right of nations to self-determination. This required the socialists of oppressor nation to openly defend the right of the oppressed

nation to secession, and the socialists of oppressed nation to take up the struggle for independence in their own lands. The right of nations to self-determination is not a simple political principle. On the contrary, it is the key to the joint struggle of the proletariat of the oppressor and oppressed nations against exploitation and the guarantee of trust between them. More importantly, it transformed the Soviet Union from a prison of nations into a country where nations lived freely, despite all its problems.

This principle also assigns the socialists of the oppressed nation the tasks of taking up the national independence struggle, seizing the leadership of the nation, protecting the working masses not only against the colonialists but also against their own bourgeoisie, and taking measures even during the national independence struggle. Today, this is the only programme that can protect the working Kurdish people from both colonialist powers and their own bourgeoisie.

We are not talking about defending military solutions to the Kurdish question or being against peace. We are drawing attention to the ambitions of the Turkish bourgeoisie and issuing a warning regarding the “constitution debates.” More importantly, we argue that Öcalan’s approach, which has also been accepted by the PKK, will serve no purpose other than drawing the Kurds into a sectarian struggle in favour of their own colonialists. It will not bring freedom to the Kurdish working people and could paralyse all the reflexes of this people in the face of imperialism and Zionism.

Öcalan’s text dated 27 April 2025 ends with the statement: “Nation-state socialism leads to defeat, democratic society socialism leads to victory.” However, we are certain that the exact opposite is true: postmodernism leads to defeat, revolutionary Marxism leads to victory! That is why we call on Kurdish intellectuals and youth to join the ranks of revolutionary Marxism. The Marxism that Öcalan attacks is not merely a caricature of a theory distorted by practices such as Stalinism and Maoism. As defenders of the theoretical-political line that Lenin called “revolutionary Marxism,” we respond to Öcalan’s criticisms of Marxism, inspired by Bookchin and others. We argue that postmodernism constitutes a significant theoretical obstacle that stands in the way of the success of the struggles of workers and oppressed nations such as the Kurdish nation. Come, let us discuss, we are ready to work to convince you.